

'It is Said That at Least 300,000 *Reichstaler* of Capital Are Required for a Raft Trade'

German Traders and the Dutch Timber Trade in the Eighteenth Century'

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Abstract

Although the Dutch timber trade from the seventeenth to the nineteenth centuries has been the subject of many historical studies, the development of the capital-intensive timber wholesale trade has remained rather underexposed by economic historians with regard to the actors involved. This lack is surprising since a capital of up to 600,000 *Reichstaler* had to be raised for the Dutch timber trade – amounts that were hardly invested in any other commercial enterprise in Germany at the time. The article therefore focuses on the timber wholesalers of the eighteenth century and analyzes in detail, based on our own archival research and previous research results, how the timber wholesalers organized their business (business strategies, business practices, etc.) and what significance their income had for the economic development of the participating economic regions of west and southwest Germany in the long term. It appears that around 1750, the German timber wholesaler and the timber companies from the Black Forest had long since driven out their Dutch competitors and acquired large fortunes. With the Dutch timber trade, capitalist practices (creation and management of companies, accounting, new methods of credit financing, etc.) also spread, which also formed an important building block for the further development of the southwest and west German economy. However, the most important thing was undoubtedly the emergence of a risk-loving entrepreneurial class with a sufficient capital base and business knowledge, which had long since broken away from 'artisan' self-reliance. Because the timber wholesalers often also invested their capital acquired in the Dutch timber trade

1 C. Hüpeden, 'Vom Rheinhandel. Aus St. Goar, den 1. Juni 1781', in: August Ludwig Schlözer, *Schlözers Stats-Anzeigen* (Göttingen 1982) H.1, 18.

in other industries, and because these often formed a crystallization point for the west and southwest German industrialization after 1815, it can be said that the timber trade with the Netherlands not only generated an enormous volume in the eighteenth century and supported west German economic growth from 1740 onward, but in the long term also contributed to the socioeconomic structural changes of the nineteenth century.

Introduction

They [the raftsmen] are occupied with their forest, felling and splitting up the trees, which they float down the Nagold to the Neckar, and thence to the Rhine and to far-away Holland. The Black Foresters and their rafts are familiar objects even to the inhabitants of the remote coastal regions. The raftsmen touch at every town along the river, proudly awaiting offers for their balks and beams; but the strongest and the longest of the former they sell for gold to the Mynheers, who build ships of them. ...

When these giants [the raftsmen] came over to his side of the forest, in all their glory of apparel, their buttons, chains, and buckles representing great weight and wealth of silver; when they stood with outstretched legs looking on at the dancing, swearing Dutch oaths, and smoking yard-long Rhenish pipes like the grandest Mynheers, each of these handsome raftsmen appeared to him to be a perfect representation of a really happy man. ...

All three of them [the three most wealthy timber traders, RB] had one great failing which made them hated by all; and this common failing was their inhuman avarice, their callousness towards debtors and the poor, for the Black Foresters were a kindly and good-hearted people. Nevertheless, as is often found in such cases, though they were hated because of their covetousness, they were held in awe because of their money; for who but they could fling thalers broadcast as though by simply shaking the pine-trees the money fell into their hands.²

Wilhelm Hauff's fairy tale *The Cold Heart*, written in 1827, is probably the most famous story about the Dutch timber trade and its social impact on the Black Forest. In this fairy tale, Haupt skillfully gives the impression that the trade in Black Forest oaks and firs had poisoned the previously well-ordered and intact world of a peasant society through

2 Wilhelm Haupt, 'Das kalte Herz. Erste Abtheilung', in: Max Mendheim (ed.), *W. Hauffs Werke, Vol. IV: Märchen-Almanach auf das Jahr 1828* (Leipzig 1891-1909) 143-148.

the penetration of big money and the conspicuous consumption of colonial goods, as well as the spread of capitalist practices. Although this romantic ideal of the author is simply a distortion of the pre-industrial conditions of rural society in the Black Forest, his portrayal contains an authentic core. In fact, since the middle of the seventeenth century, the timber trading companies of the Black Forest have achieved considerable turnover, and their shareholders have earned large fortunes.

Although the Dutch timber trade from the seventeenth to the nineteenth centuries has been the subject of numerous studies in various historical disciplines, in technical, forestry, economic and regional historiography,³ the development of this capital-intensive wholesale trade in western Germany has been underexposed by the economic-historical discipline with regard to the actors involved. Only Dietrich Ebeling in his fundamental study of 1992, along with Clé Lesger in 1992, as well as the two forestry scientists Max Scheifele and Uwe E. Schmidt, who examined the Black Forest and several other regions in Germany, can be mentioned as exceptions.⁴ This tally is very surprising, since the importance of wood as a central raw material and fuel for pre-industrial society has been emphasized many times in historical research since the 1980s.⁵ It is also well known that enormous amounts of capital of up to 400,000 *Reichstaler* had to be raised for the shipping and export of the giant rafts on the Rhine⁶ – sums that were hardly invested in any other German business of the eighteenth century. Contemporaries already rhymed about 1800 at the Saar: 'The raft is of silver, the oar of gold, and so are the *Menscher* [girls], so dear to the raftsmen'.⁷

3 For the history of rafting, see the annually updated rafting bibliography of Hans-Walter Keweloh: Hans-Walter Keweloh, *Flößerei-Bibliographie* (Bremerhaven 2019); See also: Joachim Radkau, Ingrid Schäfer, *Holz. Ein Naturstoff in der Technikgeschichte* (Hamburg 1987); Joachim Radkau, *Holz. Wie ein Naturstoff Geschichte schreibt* (Hamburg 2006).

4 Dietrich Ebeling, *Der Holländerholzhandel in den Rheinlanden. Zu den Handelsbeziehungen zwischen den Niederlanden und dem westlichen Deutschland im 17. und 18. Jahrhundert* (Stuttgart 1992); Max Scheifele, *Als die Wälder auf Reisen gingen. Wald, Holz, Flößerei in der Wirtschaftsgeschichte des Enz-Nagold-Gebietes* (Karlsruhe 1996); Uwe Eduard Schmidt, *Der Wald in Deutschland im 18. und 19. Jahrhundert* (Saarbrücken 2002); See also: Clé Lesger, 'Lange-termijnprocessen en de betekenis van politieke factoren in de Nederlandse houthandel ten tijde van de Republiek', in: *Economisch- en Sociaal-Historisch Jaarboek* 55 (1992) 105-142.

5 Joachim Radkau, *Technik in Deutschland. Vom 18. Jahrhundert bis zur Gegenwart* (Frankfurt/ New York 2016) 73-126.

6 Ebeling, *Der Holländerholzhandel*, 147.

7 Uwe Eduard Schmidt, 'Der Holländerholzhandel auf der Saar', *Zeitschrift für die Geschichte der Saargegend* (1998) 67-98, here 92.



Illustration 1 Wood raft on the Rhine near Bonn
 (source: colored copper engraving by J.E. Grave, after a model by J. Bulthuis, 1796
 Siebengebirgsmuseum, Königswinter, Germany.)

The considerable revenues from the Dutch timber trade not only compensated the negative balance of payments with the Netherlands and – together with other exports – made the import and consumption of colonial goods in western and southwestern Germany possible.⁸ They also were invested in other industries and infrastructure, which is why the question arises as to what long-term consequences the Dutch timber trade had for the economic development of the economic regions involved. Thus, in addition to the classical problem of the source of investment capital for the industrial enterprises of early industrialization – and also in reference to Haupt’s cold heart – the question also comes up as to whether and to what extent capitalist practices and attitudes spread in the German hinterland through the Dutch timber trade, and from which social classes the actors in this timber trade came.

These and the question of how the Dutch timber trade from the forest regions down the Rhine to Dordrecht was organized will be investigated in the following contribution. By analyzing the various players and their business strategies in more detail on the basis of archival research and previous studies, we mean to gain a more complete picture of the entire value chain of the Dutch timber trade on

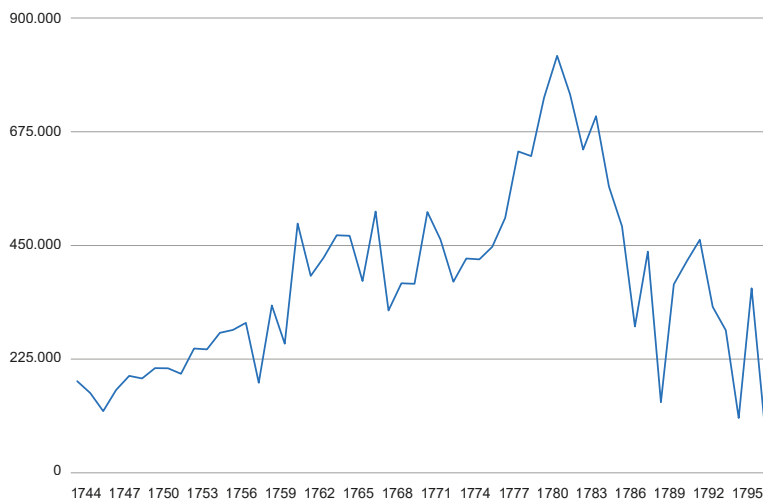
8 Ebeling, *Der Holländerholzhandel*, 147.

the Rhine and their most important stakeholder. Namely, after a brief overview of the economic development of timber exports on the Rhine to the Netherlands, the case study of Wilhelm Mauritz from Wesel will be used as an example to show how a timber dealer organized his business in the mid-eighteenth century. In the third and fourth part of our investigation, the question is then raised regarding who the timber dealers were and what significance they had.

The Dutch timber trade before 1800: Scope and importance

As Dietrich Ebeling pointed out in his study, the western German timber trade with the Netherlands did not decline in the eighteenth century despite the shrinking of the Dutch industry, but instead increased strongly, especially after 1750.

Figure 1 The sale of wood at the Dordrecht auctions in Dutch guilders (hfl) 1744-1797



Source: Created on the basis of data from: Ebeling *Der Holländerholzhandel*, 206-226, and Lesger, *'Lange-termijnprocessen'*, 105-142.

On the basis of the Dordrecht auctions, at which approximately 50 to 60 percent of the timber floated on the Rhine to the Netherlands was auctioned, the increase in the quantities of the timber sold is also clearly visible in the number of pieces sold, which, however, increased less than

the turnover between 1750 and the 1780s due to increases in the price of timber (oak and softwood sales at the Dordrecht auctions).⁹ Thus, despite a few setbacks in various years from 1744 to the peak in 1781, the turnover of the timber auctioned in Dordrecht grew four and a half times over, from 181,390 to 825,563 Dutch guilders (hfl). Contemporary data even estimated the total export of Dutch timber down the Rhine in the peak periods of the 1780s between 6 to 6.5 million guilders, which Ebeling considers too high due to the – in comparison more trustworthy – Dordrecht auction sales. According to Ebeling – and also Dufraise – the total value of timber imported into the Netherlands in the 1780s was probably between one to two million guilders in normal years and three to four million guilders in peak years (e.g., 1781). According to Ebeling's estimate, this sum meant a share of between 10 and 40 percent of total German exports to the Netherlands.¹⁰

Figure 2 The amount of timber rafts registered at the Schenkenschans toll in million square feet 1710-1796¹¹



Source: The graph, which shows a five-year moving average, is from Leendert van Prooije, 'De invoer van Rijns hout per vlot 1650-1795', *Economisch- en Sociaal-historisch Jaarboek* (1990) 30-79.

9 Ebeling, *Der Holländerholzhandel*, 83-84.

10 Ibid., 92-94.

11 On the development of the Dutch timber market, see also: Jaap Buis, *Historia Forestis. Nederlandse bosgeschiedenis* (Wageningen 1985) Vol.2, 488-509; Lesger, 'Lange-termijnprocessen', 105-142; W.F. Leemans, *De grote Gelderse tolleren en de tollenaars in de 18de en het begin der 19de eeuw* (Arnhem 1981) 101-107.

Ebeling's estimates are also confirmed by Van Prooije's data on the number of rafts between 1710 and 1796, as not only did the number of rafts increase again after 1750, but also larger rafts were shipped to the Netherlands. It was only due to the political turmoil from the 1780s onward (the British-Dutch War, Dutch Patriot riots, revolutionary wars) that imports fluctuated greatly and only amounted to the level of the 1760s and 1770s in the good years. The sharp rise in German timber exports to the Netherlands – and here mainly oaks and large fir logs – was partly due to the fact that the Dutch timber dealers were increasingly facing British competition in Scandinavia and the Baltic States, and that German timber was becoming more competitive due to higher timber prices in northern and northeastern Europe.¹² In any case, the timber trade formed an important, at least partial compensation for the probably rather negative German trade balance. In addition, between 335,000 and 1.2 million Dutch guilders flowed into German wallets.¹³

Table 1 The average annual turnover of the Dordrecht auction of Dutch timber in Dutch guilders 1744-1797

Year	Turnover in hfl
1744-1749	167,273
1750-1759	246,619
1760-1769	409,676
1770-1779	479,054
1780-1789	595,710
1790-1797	303,901

Source: Author's calculation based on the data of Ebeling, *Der Holländerholzhandel*, 206-226.

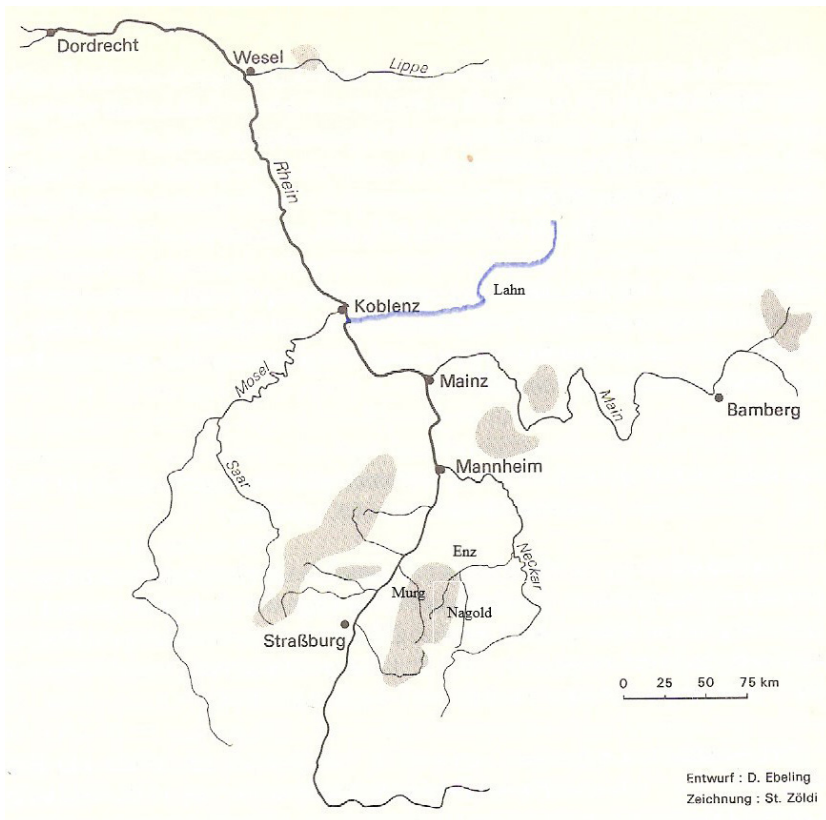
Irrespective of the exact amount, timber exports to the Netherlands undoubtedly contributed significantly to the economic development of western and southwestern Germany – also due to the spatial division of labor and the supra-regional value chains – through the spread of capitalist practices, income effects, and the creation of large fortunes

12 One reason for this was that the Dutch were at a disadvantage in the competition for Russian timber since the Anglo-Russian trade treaty of 1734, as the British were able to pay import duties in rubles instead of the more expensive Rixdollars, a cost advantage of 10 percent to 14 percent. Margrit Schulte Beerbühl, *Deutsche Kaufleute in London. Welthandel und Einbürgerung (1600-1818)* (Munich 2007) 220-221.

13 Ebeling, *Der Holländerholzhandel*, 92-95, 206-226.

in the hands of timber traders. These revenues benefited not only the wood-supplying regions in the Black Forest – which moved the rafts via the Neckar tributaries Enz and Nagold or the Murg flowing into the Rhine – but also those densely wooded areas along the Moselle, from the Saar to the Vosges, and the Rhine itself (Middle Rhine, Palatinate) or on the right bank of the Rhine along the Lahn (Westerwald), the Main (Franconia), and the Lippe (Sauerland).¹⁴

Figure 3 The most important regions for the Dutch timber trade



Source: Ebeling, *Der Holländerholzhandel*, 60.

14 In contrast to the very well investigated Dutch timber trade of the northern Black Forest or the partly described trade at Saar and Moselle, the trade from the forest areas along the Main River (Spessart, Upper Franconia) is not well researched.

In these regions, not only the timber merchants, forest owners, and shareholders in the timber trading companies benefited, but also numerous raftsmen and laborers, as well as the territorial lords along the rivers. The territorial rulers earned considerable income from the sale of timber of the manorial forests, but also from customs duties and tolls, as well as charges for raft shelves and other manorial rights.¹⁵ Even before the boom of the Württemberg Dutch timber trade at the end of the 1730s, the income from the raft timber trade accounted for about 9-10 percent of the ducal state budget of Württemberg.¹⁶ Many communities, monasteries and private individuals also recorded considerable income from their forest holdings, partly because the price of Dutch timber skyrocketed in the eighteenth century. For example, the price of a 70-foot-high Dutch fir in the Neuenbürger and Altensteiger Forst (Württemberg) rose from 30 kreuzer in 1692 to 30 guilders in 1801.¹⁷ In addition, bankers, merchants, numerous innkeepers, and various producers of equipment for the rafts (iron anchors, ropes, food, beer, etc.), which were also frequently used as a means of transport for other bulk goods such as wine, profited from the timber trade.¹⁸ These forward coupling effects were mainly observed in places where different rafts were combined to form larger units (e.g., in Pforzheim, Mannheim, Mainz, Neuendorf near Koblenz, Andernach-Namedy, or Wesel).¹⁹ Finally, the Dutch timber trade had considerable income effects. In addition to the actual tree-felling, numerous workers were also needed in the forest areas for the major infrastructure investments: the small streams and rivers had to be made navigable for rafting. These were dams, waterworks, or the so-called *Riesen* (wooden or stone slides for the logs)²⁰ built at a cost of thousands of guilders per stream.

15 Ebeling, *Der Holländerholzhandel*, 145.

16 Scheifele, *Als die Wälder auf Reisen gingen*, 144.

17 *Ibid.*, 123.

18 *Ibid.*, 197, 321-227 and 325-329; Max Scheifele, 'Schwarzwälder Holzkönige als Industriepioniere im 18. Jahrhundert. Lebensbilder aus der Wirtschaftsgeschichte des Nordschwarzwaldes', *Zeitschrift für die Geschichte des Oberrheins* (1996) 301-314, here 304; Gerhard Seibold, *Röchling. Kontinuität im Wandel* (Stuttgart 2001) 49; Friedrich Wilhelm Euler, 'Die Familie Schmidtborn', *Zeitschrift für die Geschichte der Saargegend* (1971) 478-496, here 482-483.

19 Hanspeter Rings, *Mannheim auf Kurs* (Mannheim 2003) 30-35; Sabine Pich, 'Mannheim und die Flößerei im 18. und 19. Jahrhundert', in: Hans-Walter Keweloh (ed.), *Auf den Spuren der Flößer. Wirtschafts- und Sozialgeschichte eines Gewerbes* (Stuttgart 1988) 129-135; Sabine Pich, 'Flößerei und Holzhandel in Mannheim', *Mannheimer Hefte* (1989) 106-113; Hans Hunder, *Andernach. Darstellungen zur Geschichte der Stadt*. (Andernach 1986) Part 2, 51-58.

20 A *Waterstube* – a pond dammed up by a weir – cost around 1,200-1,500 guilders around 1800, whereby several *Wasserstuben* were usually required per stream. In 1765 there were a total of 75

Furthermore, many people were also employed for the assembly of rafts and their transport downstream; for the large rafts on the Rhine up to 500 people were needed per raft. On these large rafts down the Rhine, the helmsmen earned up to 600 thalers a year, while simple raftsmen and laborers got 5½ to 9 guilders per trip from Mainz to Dordrecht, including food.²¹

The insolvency of the Wesel Dutch timber merchant Wilhelm Mauritz, 1764

Although many of the more well-founded studies on rafting on the Rhine and its tributaries repeatedly address the importance of timber dealers, it is surprising that only a few offer a detailed analysis of the macroeconomic implications and are otherwise content to name just some important wholesalers.²² This dearth is undoubtedly also due to the lack of sources which is why it can certainly be described as fortunate that the business of the timber barons can be analyzed in detail on the basis of an alleged insolvency of the timber merchant Wilhelm Mauritz due to a court case at the *Reichskammergericht*.²³ Mauritz came from a family of timber traders in Wesel, had settled in Dordrecht and Vlissingen (Zeeland); in the mid-1760s he had already been exporting firs, oaks, and beeches from the Black Forest, Franconia, Saar, Moselle, Lahn, and Rhine for more than 20 years, as his factor for the Saar region Peter Lauer stated after the insolvency.²⁴ In the late summer of 1764, he ran into a liquidity problems because his brother Heinrich had left the

Wasserstuben in the Enz-Nagold area. From 1718 to 1730, about 50,000 guilders were spent on the rafting infrastructure of the Upper Murg alone. Scheifele, *Als die Wälder auf Reisen gingen*, 174-193; Ebeling, *Der Holländerholzhandel*, 100-105.

21 Ebeling, *Der Holländerholzhandel*, 143.

22 Only in Ebeling's study one can find some remarks about the trading families of the Van der Waal from Wesel, the Von Stockums from Wesel and Frankfurt, the Nells from Koblenz and Trier, and the Von Hausen from the Saar area. Ebeling, *Der Holländerholzhandel*, 135-139. See also Leemans, *De grote Gelderse tollén*, 101-107.

23 Wahre Geschichts-Erzählung nebst einem summarischen Acten-Auszuge wie auch Angehängten Rechts-Fragen und deren gründlichen Erörterung in Sachen Mauritzscher Creditoren, namentlich der Wittib Weyl. Carl Geyß zu Frankfurt am Mayn, und Consorten, Appellanten wieder Marien van Booven, jetzt verehelichte van Hof zu Arnheim, Joh. Caspar von Rosenthal zu Wesel und Mathias Goßwin Lups zu Orsoy, im Clevischen, Appellaten, Prioritatis, hat Anlagen mit Lit. A biß YY beydes inclusivè, und darunter sub Lit. TT. in: State archive NRW Duisburg (StA Duisburg) Reichskammergericht (RKM) M557-1412 no. 3666.

24 Schmid, 'Der Holländerholzhandel', 76.

company with a payment of 80,000 *Reichstaler*, and the price of wood fell significantly after the end of the Seven Years' War.²⁵ In addition, his Dordrecht commissioners Bootsmann, Boonen & van Eysden – who sold most of the timber supplied by the German timber merchants for the auctions in Dordrecht during this period and up to the 1820s, from where it was shipped to the Dutch places of consumption – also put him under pressure because of his large outstanding debts. They protested a Mauritz draft of 1,300 guilders, although they had always co-financed Mauritz's business through overdraft facilities before. Mauritz was therefore forced to sell – in addition to his real estate and other possessions²⁶ – two large wooden rafts already in Dordrecht to the Rotterdam timber dealer Terwen for 80,000 Dutch guilders, massively undervalued, in order to avoid insolvency.²⁷

His two relatives from the Lower Rhine – wine merchant Rosenthal from Wesel and cloth manufacturer Goswin Lüps from Orsoy and Dinslaken – as well as the widow van Booven from Arnhem took his liquidity problems as an opportunity to put a third timber raft, which was ready to leave for Dordrecht at Andernach-Namey, under judicial arrest by reference to his Dordrecht bankruptcy.²⁸ The purpose of this measure was to secure their loans to Mauritz for their satisfaction, as it was difficult to put a hold on his assets in the Netherlands.²⁹ Thereupon the wood of the Andernach raft was publicly auctioned on site for 28,000 to 29,000 guilders.³⁰ Numerous other creditors of

25 Wahre Geschichts-Erzählung in StA NRW Duisburg RKM M557-1412 no. 3666.

26 Mauritz also owned a house in Dordrecht as well as half of two estates in the duchy of Cleves from his parents' inheritance, and half of a war debt of about 150 *Reichstaler* still owed to the Cleves principedom. After all was said and done, he was allowed to use the annual income from an inheritance to his children for life. Wahre Geschichts-Erzählung, in: StA NRW Duisburg RKM M557-1412 no. 3666.

27 Wahre Geschichts-Erzählung, in: StA NRW Duisburg RKM M557-1412 no. 3666, § 1 a. Lit. PP.

28 Wahre Geschichts-Erzählung, in: StA NRW Duisburg RKM M557-1412 no. 3666, § 1 a. Lit. UU.

29 Wahre Geschichts-Erzählung, in: StA NRW Duisburg RKM M557-1412 no. 3666, Lit. II, Lit. KK a. Lit. LL.

30 It is not always possible to distinguish in the sources whether the currency quoted is the Dutch guilder or the currency circulating in southern Germany, which was also named guilder. Therefore, in what follows, it is pragmatically assumed that currency denominations in the Netherlands and in the lower Lower Rhine region – which was actually a thaler area – are the Dutch guilder, whereas in the southwestern German Black Forest they are the southern German guilder. However, since in some source passages there is always only talk of guilders, other sales (such as the sale of the raft at Andernach) were possibly also quoted in Dutch guilders, which does not make much difference in the calculation of Mauritz's assets and his total sales. According to the contemporary conversions of the Frankfurt banker Geyß, one *Reichstaler* was worth 1.75 Dutch guilders, while one *Taler* was worth 1.68 (southern) German guilders. For better legibility, only the Dutch guilder was always designated as such. Wahre Geschichts-Erzählung in StA NRW Duisburg RKM M557-1412 Nr. 3666.

Mauritz – including the Frankfurt banker Carl Geyß, the heirs of the Cologne banker Simon Peltzers, the timber suppliers banker Bologne from Trier and Franz Pescatore from Koblenz, as well as the Black Forest timber company Vischer & Co (who had learned of Mauritz’s financial difficulties later than the three creditors from the Lower Rhine) – protested afterwards against the quick sale of Andernach rafts. They argued that the widow Booven from Arnhem, the brother-in-law Rosenthal from Wesel, and Lüps from Dinslaken had knowingly made false statements when applying for the arrest. These additional creditors claimed they had greater rights to the proceeds of the sale of the raft from Andernach than the related creditors from the Lower Rhine.³¹ Moreover, the hastily forced sale had caused great losses, for the auction of the raft from Andernach would have yielded at least 40,000, possibly 50,000 guilders and more, if it had been sold in the Netherlands or another more advantageous place.³²

As a summarizing expert report of the long-lasting court case with numerous details of Mauritz’s management shows how Wilhelm Mauritz had organized both the purchase of wood and the assembly and transport of the rafts before his insolvency by letter of instruction. According to the report, he had instructed his master servants Nicolas Bondskirch in Koblenz or Peter Sauer on the Saar, as well as his timber suppliers and raftsmen, by letter from Dordrecht or Vlissingen, when timber should be bought at what price and where it should be rafted to.³³ Bondskirch wrote therefore once to the Frankfurt banker Geyß on December 28, 1763, that at the beginning of February, on Mauritz’s instructions, he was to go to the Black Forest to buy timber for the raft that Mauritz was going to have made in the summer.³⁴

Mauritz also organized the necessary financial transactions by letter or assignment. So, he instructed not only Bondorf and Lauer to pay suppliers and raftsmen, but above all his Frankfurt banker Carl Geyß. Geyß, for example, demonstrably paid 600 *Taler* to the raftsman Johann Michael Schaaf on Mauritz’s order or 287.68 *Reichstaler* to Johann Caesar, who supplied beer for one of the Mauritz’s rafts.³⁵ Even more frequently, on the instructions of Bondskirch or Lauer, Geyß transferred considerable sums of money to various suppliers and

31 Wahre Geschichts-Erzählung, in: StA NRW Duisburg RKM M557-1412 no. 3666, § VII, XXI a. XXIII.

32 Wahre Geschichts-Erzählung, in: StA NRW Duisburg RKM M557-1412 no. 3666, § XVIII.

33 Wahre Geschichts-Erzählung, in: StA NRW Duisburg RKM M557-1412 no. 3666, Lit. QQ a. Lit RR.

34 Wahre Geschichts-Erzählung, in: StA NRW Duisburg RKM M557-1412 no. 3666, Lit. CC a. Lit. Z.

35 Wahre Geschichts-Erzählung, in: StA NRW Duisburg RKM M557-1412 no. 3666, Lit. D-DD a. EE.

service providers – for instance, for the wages of trenchers and carts or for rafting – to the debit of Mauritz's account. For buying some lots of fir wood in Mainz, Geyß paid also the raftsman Mondorf 300 guilders, which he transferred to the Mainz innkeeper Würtzenthal as intermediary.³⁶ The Black Forest timber company Vischer & Co in turn received an assignment of 6,000 guilders from Bondskirch, which Geyß then paid Vischer, to whom Mauritz also owed 15,782.28 guilders.³⁷ And Bondskirch at least made payments to several communities on the Lahn via Geyß, who had sold wood to Mauritz.³⁸ Lauer also instructed Geyß, for example, to pay 4,000 guilders to the earl of St. Ingbert for wood deliveries so that we 'would not lose our credit'.³⁹

As Geyß proved in the *Reichskammergericht* trial in detail on the basis of his account ledger and correspondence with Mauritz, Lauer, and Bondskirch – as well as with suppliers such as Vischer – he not only organized the numerous payments for Mauritz but also pre-financed his expenses. For this reason, Mauritz's debt to Geyß in September 1764 amounted to 10,123 *Reichstaler* – his latest debts on his current account with Geyß, which he had previously always settled by bills of exchange and remittances from Dordrecht.⁴⁰ However, the Frankfurt banker was not the only debtor, for Mauritz financed his business transactions to a considerable extent with foreign money. In addition to Geyß and its suppliers and service providers, he also took credit from its customers in the Netherlands. These were, on the one hand, the Dordrecht commission agents Bootsmann, Bonen & van Eysden and other Dordrecht creditors about whom nothing more is known. Mauritz owed all Dutch creditors together at least 80,000 Dutch guilders (i.e., about 45,700 *Reichstaler*).

36 Wahre Geschichts-Erzählung, in: StA NRW Duisburg RKM M557-1412 no. 3666, Lit. C-DD.

37 Mauritz bought also wood on the Lahn River in 1756. See the church books of the village Haichen: [https://bad-camberg.bistumlimburg.de/beitrag/archivstueck-des-quartals-iv-2018/\(3.3.2020\)](https://bad-camberg.bistumlimburg.de/beitrag/archivstueck-des-quartals-iv-2018/(3.3.2020)); Wahre Geschichts-Erzählung, in: StA NRW Duisburg RKM M557-1412 no. 3666, Lit. C-DD.

38 Wahre Geschichts-Erzählung, in: StA NRW Duisburg RKM M557-1412 no. 3666, Lit. L, Lit N a. Lit. Y.

39 Wahre Geschichts-Erzählung, in: StA NRW Duisburg RKM M557-1412 no. 3666, Lit. O, Lit. P und Lit. BB.

40 Wahre Geschichts-Erzählung, in: StA NRW Duisburg RKM M557-1412 no. 3666, IV a. XVIII sowie Lit. C.

Table 2 List of German creditors of Wilhelm Mauritz in Reichstaler 1764/1765

No.	Creditor	Date of registration	Rthlr	in %
1	Marie van Booven, now married to Van Hoff, two bills from October 12 a. November 8, 1763	Sept. 10, 1764	4,731	8,5
2	wine dealer Rosenthal, Wesel, bill from February 1, 1756	Sept. 11, 1764	6,021	10.9
3	cloth manufacturer Mathias Goswin Lüps, Wesel, 2 bills from October 9 a. October 10, 1762	Sept. 9, 1764	4,754	8.6
4	Simon Peltzer's heirs in Cologne, 400 pieces Schild Louis d'or and another book debt	Sept. 15, 1764	14,349	25.9
5	Hofkammerrat Bologne, banker in Trier, for transports on the Moselle	Sept. 17, 1764	1,347	2.4
6	Franz Pescatore in Ehrenbreitstein/Koblenz, Merchant, for transports on the Rhine	Sept. 22, 1764	1,786	3.2
7	Carl Geyß, banker, Frankfurt am Main, bills of exchange	Sept. 24, 1764	10,123	18.3
8	Vischer & Compagnie, Calw, wood supplier, Württemberg	Dec. 14, 1764	9,541	17.2
9	Brewer Kurten, Cologne	Febr. 8, 1765	645	1.2
10	the Dutch helmsmen Rietscholt	Febr. 8, 1765	218	0.4
11	Hubert Berresheim	Febr. 28, 1765	26	0.0
12	Wilhelm Fellingner	Mar. 1, 1765	191	0.3
13	Michel Schaaf, Koblenz, for transport on the Rhine from Mainz to Andernach	Mar. 1, 1765	660	1.2
14	Wilhelm Schaaf	Mar. 1, 1765	349	0.6
15	Customs officer Flig, Koblenz, for customs duties	Apr. 22, 1765	26	0.0
16	April 22, widow Mondorf in Koblenz, transport from Mainz to Andernach	Apr. 22, 1765	667	1.2
	Total		55,434	

Source: *Wahre Geschichts-Erzählung, in: StA NRW Duisburg RKM M557-1412 no. 3666.*

On the German side his debt was even higher, namely, 55,434 *Reichstaler*. Here he was indebted mainly to bankers, merchants, and wood suppliers who worked closely with Mauritz and who had given him credit. In addition, he was also in long-term debt to his relatives and their bills of exchange were repeatedly renewed year after year.

Table 3 The Dutch and German creditors of Wilhelm Mauritz in *Reichstaler* 1764 /1765

Dutch creditors	Rtlr	in %
Bootsmann, Boonen & van Eysden, among other unknown Dutch creditors	45,714	45.2
German creditors (incl. Marie van Boonen)	55,434	54.8
relatives from the Lower Rhine a. Marie van Boonen	15,506	15.3
banker a. merchants	27,605	27.3
supplier of wood	9,541	9.4
helmsmen and raftsmen	1,894	1.9
supplier of goods	645	0.6
unknown	217	0.2
Custom duties	26	0.0

Source: *Wahre Geschichts-Erzählung*, in: StA NRW Duisburg RKM M557-1412 no. 3666.

However, Mauritz's liquidity problems in 1764 were not necessarily a consequence of his poor financial situation, as his debts of at least 101,148 *Taler* were offset by all three rafts in Dordrecht and Andernach before the insolvency.⁴¹ Their actual sales value can only be estimated, as the sales proceeds of 46,000 *Taler* in Dordrecht and 29,000 *Taler* in Andernach did not correspond to the sales values achieved in a regular auction. For the Andernach raft, one calculated between 40,000 and 60,000 *Taler*, which is why the value of all three rafts together can be estimated at least 120,000 *Taler*, assuming that all three were about the same size, but probably the value was higher. In addition, there were other logs already purchased in German forests. Thus, in October 1764 (i.e., after the seizure of the Andernach raft itself), Mauritz spoke of the fact that he knowingly still owned about 160,000 guilders worth of timber in Germany (i.e., about 95,000 thalers). Of these, 40,000 guilders or 23,800 *Reichstaler* worth were still lying along the Saar alone. If you add to this his securities of 28,600 *Taler*, his debts were at least matched by assets of 224,000 *Taler*, to which must be added his shares in two estates in the Cleves region, his house in Dordrecht, movables, cash, and receivables. Mauritz suffered from a liquidity bottleneck in the late summer of 1764 for debts were offset by his assets in what was a typical problem of merchants in times of crisis. Apparently, despite all the legal

41 *Wahre Geschichts-Erzählung*, in: StA NRW Duisburg RKM M557-1412 no. 3666, Lit. XVIII.

proceedings among the German creditors, Mauritz probably did not go bankrupt, as he – or a close family member – remained active as a wholesaler in the Dutch timber trade in the following years.⁴²

The timber trade along the Rhine and its tributaries

Mauritz's assets of more than 224,000 thalers were a very high sum for the eighteenth century, even in comparison with the largest commercial production companies in Germany before 1800. Yet Wilhelm Mauritz or his family business was not even the largest timber dealer on the Rhine. This situation is also indicated by the contemporary saying from the end of the eighteenth century that 'at least 300,000 rt capital is required' for the raft trade: '100,000 rt in the forest, 100,000 rt on the water, and 100,000 rt for all the costs to be spent on it'.⁴³

According to Van Prooije's analysis of the Dordrecht auction records of the firm Boonen & van Eysden – later called Boonen & Hoogstraten – through which approximately 50 to 60 percent of the total turnover of the Dutch timber trade can be recorded in the eighteenth century, almost all of them came from the Moselle, Saar, Rhine, and Lower Main. The only known exception were van Terwen and Bischon from Rotterdam.⁴⁴ This development was already evident in the late seventeenth century, when the Van der Wall family from Wesel took a leading position in the Dutch timber trade and also had a branch in Dordrecht. It has been proven that in 1628, a Jan van der Wall passed through the Emmerich customs in the direction of the Netherlands⁴⁵ on three rafts, and soon after the end of the war in 1648, this family concluded the first contracts with the margrave of Baden-Baden for oak purchases which were exported to the Netherlands. In 1715, Johann and Arnold von der Wahl then ran an agency in Pforzheim, and several descendants continued to run the timber trade until the end of the 1760s.⁴⁶

42 Wahre Geschichts-Erzählung, in: StA NRW Duisburg RKM M557-1412 Nr. 3666, Lit. PP. a. Lit TT.

43 Hüpeden, 'Vom Rheinhandel', 18.

44 Scheifele, *Als die Wälder auf Reisen gingen*, 121-122, 150-151 a. 215. See also: Leemans, *De grote Gelderse tollén*, 101-107.

45 Marie Scholz-Babisch, *Quellen zur Geschichte des klevischen Rheinzollwesens vom 11. bis 18. Jahrhundert*. (Wiesbaden 1971) Vol. 1, 561 and Vol. 2, 620-621, 653-654, 669-670 and 756; Ebeling, *Der Holländerholzhandel*, 75-79.

46 According to Leendert van Prooije's handwritten notes on the Dordrecht auctions, which were kindly made available to the author (henceforth cited as Van Prooije, *Notes*), several wooden rafts of a 'Heervan de Wal' and a 'Johan van de Wall' from Nijmegen, respectively, were still auctioned in Dordrecht

However, from the 1730s onward, the van der Wall's business was no longer of any great importance, as the company was mainly carried on by Johann van Stockum, a son-in-law who joined the company in 1657, or by his descendants.⁴⁷ By the middle of the seventeenth century at the latest, the van der Waals – whose enterprise had probably grown by exporting logs from the Sauerland via the Lippe – and the Stockums also obtained wood from the Vogelsberg, Franconia, and Alsace. At least since the 1690s, the purchase of wood from the Baden part of the Black Forest was added. According to Dietz, van Stockum also had blastings made in the Bingener Loch at his own expense in the 1660s for these timber transports, in order to get through the widened narrow passage better with larger rafts. Although Wesel was initially a favorable location for timber wholesaling on the Rhine – because it was close to the Dutch consumer regions and the best place to assemble the Lippe rafts at the Lippe estuary – this advantage was lost from the end of the seventeenth century onward, as more and more timber was exported to Holland from regions upstream of the Rhine. This and the better procurement of the necessary capital for the trade might have induced Heinrich von Stockum to move to Frankfurt am Main in 1697 – he was followed by his brother Thomas in 1707 – and to run the Dutch timber trade from there. After the death of Heinrich and Thomas von Stockum in 1736 and 1738, Thomas von Stockum's two sons continued the business, for which they also had a branch in Dordrecht. The brothers also leased the Neunkirch ironworks on the Saar. While their business was abandoned again after the death of the two brothers in 1762, widow of Johann

in 1762 and 1769. Cf. Leendert van Prooije, 'De invoer van Rijns hout per vlot 1650-1795', *Economisch-en Sociaal-historisch Jaarboek* (1990) 30-79; Idem, 'Zur Geschichte der Holzverarbeitung und Flößerei in den Niederlanden im 17. und 18. Jahrhundert', in: Hans-Walter Keweloh (ed.), *Auf den Spuren der Flößer. Wirtschafts- und Sozialgeschichte eines Gewerbes* (Stuttgart 1988) 100-110; Idem, 'Dordrecht als centrum van de Rijnse houthandel in de 17e en 18e eeuw', *Economisch- en Sociaal-historisch Jaarboek* (1992) 143-158; Idem, 'De houtvlotterij en Dordrecht in de 17e en 18e eeuw', *Oud Rhenen* (2005) 12-25; Idem, 'Timber from the Rhine area. Its use in shipbuilding in the Dutch Republic in the 17th and 18th centuries – an inquiry into the quantity of timber used for shipbuilding', in: Josef Kreiner (ed.) *The road to Japan. Social and economic aspects of early European-Japanese contacts* (Bonn 2005) 110-139; Scheifele, *Als die Wälder auf Reisen gingen*, 121-122; Ebeling, *Der Holländerholzhandel*, 76-79.

47 Ebeling, *Der Holländerholzhandel*, 76, 97-100, 107, 135, 142, 148 and 160; Scheifele, *Als die Wälder auf Reisen gingen*, 142. Leemans, *De grote Gelderse tollén*, 101-107. Zur Wesels Holländerholzhandel: Clemens von Looz-Corswarem, 'Wirtschafts- und Sozialgeschichte Wesels in brandenburgisch-preußischer und französischer Zeit (1609-1814)', in: Jutta Prieur (ed.), *Geschichte der Stadt Wesel* (Düsseldorf 1991) Vol. 2, 230-278, here 268; Dietrich Ebeling, 'Vloyten ende plancken. Der Holzhandel am Niederrhein vom 15. bis zum 18. Jahrhundert 168-178', in: Werner Arand (ed.), 'Zu Allen theilen Inß mittel gelegen.' *Wesel und die Hanse an Rhein, IJssel und Lippe* (Wesel 1991) 172-176; Leemans, *De grote Gelderse tollén*, 101-107.

Jacob, Elisabeth von Stockum, continued the timber trade with her two sons at least until 1792, in which the Frankfurt timber merchant Christian Ziegler also took a share.⁴⁸

In addition to the early active trading families of the van der Waal and von Stockums, there were numerous other wholesalers in the Dutch timber trade on the Rhine. The trading families Mauritz from Wesel, Nell from Trier, von Hausen from Saargemünd (Sarreguemines), Ziegler from Frankfurt, and Schmidborn/Röchling from Saarbrücken were the most important timber traders, who according to the lists of the brokerage firms Boonen & van Eysden and Boonen & Hoogstraten had the largest turnover in Dordrecht (see tables 4 and 5).⁴⁹

Table 4 The largest timber traders in Dordrecht 1772-1792

	Auction sales by register in hfl	Total sales in hfl	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.
1769	375,136	611,449	Terwen, Rotterdam	Nell, Trier	van Stockum (Frankfurt)	van Hausen & Dor, Saargemünd	Döll, Cochem
1781	825,563	1,827,820	Nell, Trier	Döll, Cochem	van Hausen & Dor, Saargemünd	Mohr & Hartmann, Würzburg	von Stockum, Frankfurt
1792	461,397	1,145,659	Nell, Jacobi & Ziegler, Trier, Saargemünd, Frankfurt	Döll, Trier	Schmidborn, Saarbrücken	Röchling, Saarbrücken	Arntzen, Schermbeck-Gahlen

Source: Van Prooije, Notes.

48 Alexander Dietz, *Frankfurter Handelsgeschichte* (Frankfurt am Main 1925) Vol. 4.2, 425, 435, 437 and 477-488; Ebeling, *Der Holländerholzhandel*, 76, 97-100, 107 and 137-138; Scheifele, *Als die Wälder auf Reisen gingen*, 121-122, 130, 135, 150-151 and 160; Maximilian Ferdinand Gritzner (ed.), *Standes-Erhebungen und Gnaden-Acte Deutscher Landesfürsten während der letzten 3 Jahrhunderte* (Görlitz 1877) 51; Ernst Heinrich Kneschke (ed.), *Neues Allgemeines Deutsches Adels-Lexicon* (Leipzig 1870) Vol. 9, 51.

49 Schmidt, *Der Wald in Deutschland*, 43-48, 98, 146 and 218; Schmidt, 'Der Holländerholzhandel', 67-98; Dietz, *Frankfurter Handelsgeschichte*, Vol. 4.2, 477-488; Scheifele, *Als die Wälder auf Reisen gingen*, 121-122, 151 a.215; Ebeling, *Der Holländerholzhandel*, 132-139; Anton Korn, 'Die Kaufmannsfamilie Koehl aus St. Johann', *Saarländische Familienkunde* (2004) 252; Elmar Maier (ed.), *Vom Herrenhaus des Heinrich Wahlster zum Reha-Zentrum der Saarbergwerke AG. Schloss Bietschied/ Heusweiler* (Heusweiler 1990) 9-11; Van Prooije, Notes.

Table 5 The accounts of the largest timber dealers at the Dordrecht brokers Boonen & Eysden and Boonen & Hoogstraten, 1769 and 1797

	1769			1797		
	debit	credit	balance	debit	credit	balance
Stockum, Frankfurt	82,086	96,470	14,383	21,499	33,185	11,685
Döll, Cochem	63,385	50,270	-13,114	166,886	179,471	12,584
Nell, Trier	45,794	78,481	32,694	133,051	250,281	117,229
Hausen, Saargemünd	85,287	85,287	-	-	-	-
Mauritz, Wesel	21,427	22,974	1,547	21,499	33,184	11,685
von Hausen & C, Saargemünd	102,732	127,735	-25,003	-	-	-
Ziegler & Co, Frankfurt	-	-	-	138,302	220,026	81,724
Cassel, Wesel	-	-	-	81,713	90,176	8,463
Jacobi & Co, Saargemünd	-	-	-	44,798	68,303	23,505
Schmidtborn, Saarbrücken	-	-	-	83,171	133,415	50,244
Total	400,711	461,217	10,507	690,919	1,008,041	317,119

Source: Ebeling, *Der Holländerholzhandel, 137-138.*

The Nell family originally came from Neuendorf near Koblenz, and it has been shown that they first traded in timber in 1675. For this purpose, Peter Christian Nell travelled to the forest regions along the Rhine and to the Netherlands, where he died in an accident in 1713. Nell's sons and grandsons, who permanently moved the timber trade from Neuendorf to Trier, also ran the business like their ancestors. The Nells also cooperated several times with other timber merchants, for example with the Rotterdam timber trader Bischoff after 1750. In 1786, they also established a joint trading company with the Ziegler brothers and the von Hausens, in which the Dutch merchants Jacob Staesz van Hoogstraten, Arnoldus Noteman Janszoon, and Johann Breus from Dordrecht, as well as the Rotterdam timber merchant Bischoff, also had a share. Although Nell's trading house devoted itself more to the

banking and forwarding business after 1815, the sixth generation at the end of the nineteenth century still owned a timber business.⁵⁰

The Zieglers trading family had been based in Frankfurt since the late seventeenth century at the latest and were active in the trade with Flemish cloth. Equipped with sufficient assets, Christian Ziegler took a one-third share in a raft belonging to the Stockums in 1781, and in 1786 they established – together with the von Hausen and von Nell (one third each) and the three Dordrecht timber merchants van Hoogstraten, Janszoon, and Brewus – the trading company Brother Ziegler & Co, which existed until 1824 and achieved high sales at the Dordrecht auctions in the 1790s.⁵¹

In contrast, the von Hausen trading family had been active in the Dutch timber business considerably longer than the Zieglers. Originally from the region around Trier, the Hausens had settled in the Saargemünd and were described in 1718 as wholesalers of Dutch wood in 1722. From 1737 to 1766, the Hausens were entitled to take 42,000 feet of timber from the forests of the Seigneurie des Bitche, with an additional 7,000 feet free of charge. It has been demonstrated that the von Hausens also obtained timber from the Black Forest – where they had their own branches in the Murg valley – which they mostly took over in Mannheim. In the late eighteenth century, they often participated in joint timber companies, including with the Nells from Trier and the von Stockums and Zieglers from Frankfurt.⁵²

Finally, at the end of the eighteenth century, the trading families of the Röchlings and Schmidtborns from Saarbrücken, who were related to each other, also played a significant role. Here it was Johann

50 Dietrich Ebeling, 'Die von Nell. Eine rheinische Familie zwischen Ancien Régime und Moderne', *Kurtrierisches Jahrbuch* (1991) 183-201; Ebeling, *Der Holländerholzhandel*, 136 and 151; Günther Molz, 'Die Familie von Nell im Trierer Land', in: Kreis Trier-Saarburg (ed.), *Jahrbuch zur Information und Unterhaltung* (1970) 208-214; Scheifele, *Als die Wälder auf Reisen gingen*, 121-122; Roger Dufraisse, 'Flottes et floteurs de bois du Rhin à l'époque napoléonienne', in: Roger Dufraisse, *L'Allemagne à l'époque napoléonienne* (Bonn/ Berlin 1992) 217-245; Van Prooije, *Notes*.

51 Dietz, *Frankfurter Handelsgeschichte*, Vol. 4.1, 71, 149, 154, 157 and 308; Idem, Vol. 4.2, 425, 435, 437, 477-488, 546, 643, 644, 700, 743-744 and 772; Ebeling, *Der Holländerholzhandel*, 151; Scheifele, *Als die Wälder auf Reisen gingen*, 121-122, 151 and 215; Van Prooije, *Notes*.

52 Ebeling, *Der Holländerholzhandel*, 133-138, 144, 147-158 and 187-203; Joseph Rohr, 'La famille d'Hausen. Seigneurs de Rémelfing et de Weidesheim', *Les Cahiers Sarregueminois* (1966) 99-110; Scheifele, *Als die Wälder auf Reisen gingen*, 122; Van Prooije, *Notes*; C.F. Franzen, 'Ein Saarburger Schiffergeschlecht unter den Ahnen der lothringischen Hüttendynastie', *Heimatjahrbuch des Kreises Saarburg* (1963) 35-36; Leemans, *De grote Gelderse tollén*, 101-107; Ralf Banken, *Die Industrialisierung der Saarregion 1815-1914* (Stuttgart 2000) Vol 1: Die Frühindustrialisierung 1815-1850, 75, 107, 225, 228, 258-259, 263 and 323.

Thomas Röchling from Westphalia, who first worked as a factor for the Frankfurt trader von Stockum, settled in Saarbrücken, and married the daughter of a merchant family living there. From 1723, Röchlings and his ancestors traded in both timber and coal. Finally, the Schmidtborn family, closely related to the Röchlings, also conducted Dutch timber trading in the second half under the name of Georg Schmidtborn & Sons and achieved considerable sales at the Dordrecht auctions in the 1780s and 1790s. For this purpose, the trading house maintained a branch office until 1836.⁵³

From the middle of the seventeenth century onward, the development of the timber trade in the northern part of the Black Forest differed significantly from that of other western German regions. Neither private timber trading companies nor temporary casual companies initially appeared in Württemberg and Baden due to the territorial economic policy, but rather state privileged monopoly companies from 1700 onwards.⁵⁴ Originally (i.e. shortly after the Thirty Years' War), private dealers from the Netherlands and the Lower Rhine region had started the Dutch timber trade immediately with the help of their local factors by directly purchasing timber in the forest areas. Due to the numerous wars with Louis XIV's France, the purchase of Dutch timber shifted from the areas along the Murg and the Upper Rhine to the forest regions along the Enz and Nagold, from where the logs were then rafted across the Neckar to Mannheim on the Rhine. There the rafts were sold to one of the timber dealers from the Netherlands or the Rhineland, as the onward transport posed a great commercial risk for the monopoly companies due to their lack of knowledge of the Rhine route and the Dutch market. As the timber dealer had to be credited for months with the purchase price until the timber was sold in Dordrecht, the costs for the onward transport on

53 Gerhard Seibold, *Röchling. Kontinuität im Wandel* (Stuttgart 2001) 21-32, 35, 39-44, 47 and 49; Richard Nutzinger et al., *50 Jahre Röchling Völklingen. Die Entwicklungen eines rheinischen Industrie-Unternehmens. Saarbrücken (Völklingen 1931)* 7-8; Alexander Tille, *Das Haus Röchling und seine Unternehmungen* (Saarbrücken 1907) 19-29; Schmidt, *Der Wald in Deutschland*, 43-48; Schmidt, 'Der Holländerholzhandel', 67-98; Friedrich Wilhelm Euler, 'Die Familie Schmidtborn', *Zeitschrift für die Geschichte der Saargegend* (1971) S.478-496; Dietz, *Frankfurter Handelsgeschichte*, Vol. 4.2, 490; Dufraisse, 'Flottes et flotteurs', 220; Van Prooijje, *Notes*.

54 The following description of the development of the Dutch timber trade in the northern Black Forest is essentially based on: Scheifele, *Als die Wälder auf Reisen gingen*, 228-263; Idem, *Aus der Waldgeschichte des Schwarzwaldes: die Trift von Brenn- und Kohlholz* (Stuttgart 2004); Cf.: Ebeling, *Der Holländerholzhandel*, 110-131; Idem, 'Organisationsformen des Holländerholzhandels im Schwarzwald während des 17. und 18. Jahrhundert', in: Hans-Walter Keweloh (ed.), *Auf den Spuren der Flößer. Wirtschafts- und Sozialgeschichte eines Gewerbes* (Stuttgart 1988) 81-99.

the Rhine – around 1800 about 120,000 fl – usually overstretched the capital strength of the Württemberg and Baden companies. In 1766, a contemporary calculated that for the Dutch timber trade the enormous capital of 700,000 to one million guilders was required for the time. As the Mauritz case shows, the Dordrecht market was also dependent on Dutch brokers, without whom it would have been virtually impossible to sell at a favorable price at the public auctions held every six weeks. The broker collected between 15 and 20 percent commission, because they often gave German timber dealers advance credit and at the same time were liable for payment of the timber by the Dutch buyers.⁵⁵

In contrast to the private timber traders, the monopoly companies came into being because in 1713, the Württemberg exchequer granted the sole right to trade and export Dutch timber on the Enz and Nagold rivers to the Johann Jacob Vischer Company for six years, so as to counteract the market power of the timber dealers from abroad. However, the privilege was repeatedly withdrawn from the first monopoly companies, to which only members from the region around Calw belonged, because of mismanagement (bad bookkeeping and organization) or embezzlement (too many trees felled and not paid for, etc.). After a short time, it was finally passed on to new companies, because the income from the raft timber trade represented about 9 to 10 percent of the country's budget.⁵⁶ It was not until the company Christoph Friedrich Lidell was granted a trading monopoly in 1746, that a well-organized company took over the export of Dutch timber for the first time, which was then again only floated to Mannheim and sold there to private timber dealers.⁵⁷ In 1755, the Calwer Holländer Holzkompanie (Calw timber companies) Jakob Christoph Vischer & Co. received the contract due to a better offer and kept the timber trade monopoly until 1808, through which it made high profits.⁵⁸

55 Scheifele, *Als die Wälder auf Reisen gingen*, 106-134 and 214-227. Cf. Ebeling, *Der Holländerholzhandel*, 139-162. For the Dordrecht auctions see: Van Prooije, 'De invoer van Rijns hout', 44-45; Van Prooije, 'De houtvlotterij', 143-158; Willem Frijhoff et al., *Geschiedenis van Dordrecht van 1572 tot 1813* (Hilversum 1998) 155-158.

56 Scheifele, *Als die Wälder auf Reisen gingen*, 134-144; Cf.: Ebeling, *Der Holländerholzhandel*, 112.

57 Scheifele, *Als die Wälder auf Reisen gingen*, 144-146.

58 Scheifele, *Als die Wälder auf Reisen gingen*, 145-154; Cf.: Gerd Höschle, *Calw. Geschichte einer Stadt. Wirtschaftsgeschichte I. Von den Anfängen bis zum 18. Jahrhundert* (Calw 2006) 45-56.

Table 6 The profits of the Calwer Holländer Holzkompagnien Vischer 1755-1809

contract period	profit in guilders	annual return in %
1755-1767	353,200	56.6
1768-1787	657,000	17.12
1788-1802	476,390	17.7
1802-1809	419,687	36.4

Source: Scheifele, *Als die Wälder auf Reisen gingen*, 150.

One reason for the success of the Calwer Holländer Holzkompagnie was also the cooperation with timber suppliers and raftsmen from neighbouring Baden where the Pforzheimer Flößerzunft-Verein (Pforzheim Rafter Guild Association) – led by financially strong timber merchants with an enterprising spirit such as Johann Jacob Mayer or Johann Jacob Fauler – also held a privilege to buy all Dutch timber in the Baden dominion forest. From 1763 until the separation in 1778, both companies cooperated and made considerable profits. After the separation from the Calwer Holzkompagnie, the private timber trading company Böhringer outstripped the Pforzheimer Flößerverein, with which the company merged in 1801, and then also successfully operated the direct sale of Dutch timber to the Netherlands.⁵⁹ The Calwer Holzkompagnie also continued to record considerable profits until the early nineteenth century, despite the considerable devastation of the forests in Württemberg, before the private company Staelin & Co then successfully continued its Dutch timber trade from 1800 onwards.⁶⁰

Long-term implications of the Dutch timber trade for the western German economy

Although private timber dealers in Baden and Württemberg only became successful from the end of the eighteenth century onward, the granting of monopoly privileges to various timber trading companies also made it possible for some shareholders to acquire large fortunes. Even some destitute and small traders succeeded in doing

59 Ibid., 154-164; Max Scheifele, *Die Murgschifferschaft. Geschichte des Floßhandels, des Waldes, und der Holzindustrie im Murgtal* (Gernsbach 1995).

60 Scheifele, *Als die Wälder auf Reisen gingen*, 281-284.

so, as numerous individual examples show.⁶¹ A good one is the trained butcher and son of a miller, Johann Friedrich Gossweiler (1722-1785), from Neuenbürg. In 1749, Gossweiler invested inherited money in a few shares in the Lidellsche Holzcompagnie and was also involved in all subsequent Calw timber trading companies afterward, in which he held also a leading position both through his participation and his offices – in 1777, he was technical director responsible for rafting and hauling. He also invested in other timber companies, sawmills, and glassworks; ran a wine trade; and granted personal loans. At the time of his death in 1785, he had total assets of 328,596 fl, including shares in the Calwer Holzkompagnie in the amount of 25,000 fl.⁶² The innkeeper Johann Adam Benkiser (1708-1763) made a similar social advancement, participating in various sawmills in the area and in the local timber trade. In 1746, he became a partner in a Black Forest timber company for the first time and also took part in commercial enterprises in his region (potash and faience factories). In 1755, together with Christoph Friedrich Lidell, he finally acquired the Pforzheim ironworks for 28,000 guilders, which his descendants successfully operated as a bridge construction company until 1910.⁶³

In addition to these and other examples,⁶⁴ even several factors of foreign timber dealer also succeeded in amassing a considerable fortune. Some of these also rose to become timber dealers, like Johann Georg Boehringer (1711-1775) in the Black Forest. For many years he was active for the timber merchants Terwen, Nell, and Bischon. Afterward, Boehringer entered the Dutch timber trade on its own account. However, like other wealthy shareholders in the Black Forest timber companies, the Boehringer family also invested their profits from the timber trade in other industries.⁶⁵ These and other examples of social advancement and acquisition of large fortunes in the

61 See for the example of the raftsman Abraham Krauth: Scheifele, *Als die Wälder auf Reisen gingen*, 283-286.

62 *Ibid.*, 325-329

63 Scheifele, 'Schwarzwälder Holzkönige', 301-314, here 305.

64 See for Christoph Friedrich Lidell and Franz Anton Dürr: Scheifele, 'Schwarzwälder Holzkönige', 305 and 310; Rolf Gustav Haebler, 'Franz Anton Dürr – Markgräflicher Consilarius Commercium et Aerarii Serenissimi', *Die Ortenau* (1961) 43-73.

65 Scheifele, *Als die Wälder auf Reisen gingen*, 160-164.

northern Black Forest (e.g., Franz Anton Rindenschwender (1725-1803)⁶⁶) can also be observed in other regions of the Rhineland.⁶⁷

A large part of the profits from the Dutch timber trade was eventually invested in other branches of business and formed an important economic impulse for the western German economy in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, which can be illustrated here only by individual examples. Thus, the Vischer family expanded into the colonial goods trade or into mining, while the son-in-law of Johann Jacob Fauler, Daniel Konrad Wohnlich (1721-1799), ran a cloth factory in addition to the wood business and also financed the newly emerging jewelry industry of Pforzheim around 1800. The grandson (1782-1851) of Johann Adam Benkiser in turn founded a chemical factory also in Pforzheim and in 1823 bought a salmiac works, which formed the basis for the family's later chemical business. Other shareholders in the Calwer Kompagnie invested their profits from the timber trade in ore mining, metal production, salt works, salt trade, sugar refining, or paint production.⁶⁸

Outside the northern Black Forest, profits from the timber trade were also often invested in other branches. For example, the Röchlings expanded into the coal trade. The von Hausens from Saargemünd also invested in the iron industry and acquired the Kreuzwalder Ironworks in the Lorraine part of the Saar region in 1799. Finally, in addition to timber trading and financial transactions, the Frankfurt Stockum brothers also operated the Neunkircher ironworks on a lease basis between 1748 and 1776. Even some factors of the Rhineland timber dealer were ultimately active in other industries. For example, the Mauritz's factor in the Saar region, Peter Lauer, leased the princely St. Ingbert ironworks from 1759 to 1778, and Franz Pescatore from Koblenz was active in the export of mineral water from the Middle Rhine as well as a partner in the Cologne lottery company.⁶⁹

66 Scheifele, 'Schwarzwälder Holzkönige', 312-314; Kurt Andermann, 'Anton Rindenschwender 1725-1803. Wirtschaftspionier im Nordschwarzwald', *Badische Heimat* (2003) 627-629.

67 A typical example is Wilhelm Heinrich Wahlster (1775-1848), the son of a farmer who, through direct timber trade to the Netherlands since the 1790s, was able to acquire a considerable fortune, which he invested in agricultural estate and a horse stud farm in the Saar region during the French period. Schmidt, 'Der Holländerholzhandel', 90; Maier, *Von Herrenhaus*, 9-11.

68 Further investments were made in porcelain production, cloth production, potash and glass production, as well as in trade of colonial goods, indigo, and wine, or the banking and exchange business. Scheifele, 'Schwarzwälder Holzkönige', 304.

69 Wolfgang Krämer, *Geschichte des Eisenwerkes zu St. Ingbert, mit besonderer Berücksichtigung der Frühzeit* (Speyer 1933) 40-57; Banken, *Die Industrialisierung*, 225; Dietz, *Frankfurter Handelsgeschichte*, Vol. 4.2, 477-478; Johannes Angel, *Italienische Einwanderung und Wirtschaftstätigkeit in rheinischen Städten des 17. und 18. Jahrhunderts* (Bonn 1971) 44, 114, 128, 145 and 418.

In addition to these investments in other branches of the economy, however, the spread of capitalist practices associated with the Dutch timber trade (new methods of credit financing, the spread of double-entry bookkeeping, the establishment of corporations, etc.) was an important factor in the further development of the German economy, as by was shown with the earlier example of Mauritz. This situation is particularly evident in the multiple failures of the early timber companies in the northern Black Forest, where not only the management was not controlled, but in some cases, they did not truly keep accounts (e.g., using chalk on the table or wall for accounting).⁷⁰ It was not until the middle of the eighteenth century that experienced businessmen from the northern Black Forest – especially from Calw and Pforzheim – succeeded in setting up well-run and profitable timber companies and began to transport the rafts from the Black Forest directly to the Netherlands around 1800. This is probably due not only to the greater business experience and capital strength but also to the recourse to the postal and financial infrastructure created by Rhenish timber dealers.⁷¹

Conclusion

Although Wilhelm Haupt's fairy tale *The Cold Heart* correctly depicted numerous structural features of the Dutch timber trade (e.g., the infiltration of capitalist practices and the creation of large fortunes), he depicted others – probably for dramaturgical reasons – in a distorted way.⁷² German timber dealers and the Black Forest timber companies had long since ousted their Dutch competitors and acquired large fortunes. However, the wealthy timber merchants and shareholders of the timber companies used their large fortunes acquired in the Dutch timber trade in the main less for conspicuous consumption than for investments in other branches of industry. These investments undoubtedly formed important starting points for western and southwestern German industrialization in the nineteenth century, especially since several of the former timber merchant families, such as

70 Scheifele, *Als die Wälder auf Reisen gingen*, 135.

71 Scheifele, *Als die Wälder auf Reisen gingen*, 134-164.

72 Without doubt, Hauff was referring partly to an old topos and an eighteenth-century image of Holland, according to which the Dutch in Germany were considered rich, stingy, and unfeeling. See in general: Julia Bientjes, *Holland und der Holländer in Urteil deutscher Reisender* (Groningen 1967); Anja Cahles de Beaulieu, *Deutsche Reisende in den Niederlanden. The picture of a neighbour between 1648 and 1795* (Frankfurt am Main etc. 2000).

the Röchlings or Benkisers, invested their money directly in the newly emerging industrial enterprises even after 1815.

Independent of these long-term effects of the Dutch timber trade in the decades after 1800, others can also be observed for the economy in the eighteenth century. In economic terms, timber exports to the Netherlands allowed partial compensation for the otherwise heavily deficient balance of trade with the Netherlands, thus enabling the permanent import of colonial goods and their consumption even among the lower classes of the participating regions. There is no doubt that the Dutch timber trade also contributed to the state formation of the individual participating territories along the Rhine and its tributaries, as they recorded higher revenues for their budgets through numerous levies and customs duties, as well as increased tax payments and proceeds from the sale of timber. Because of the often unproductive expenditures of the territorial princes, the forward linkages on other economic sectors (food, equipment, postal and financial services, etc.) caused by the demand of the timber trade are also likely to have been of importance for the economic development and infrastructure of western Germany. The widespread use of capitalist practices (establishment and management of corporations, bookkeeping, new methods of credit financing, etc.) that resulted from the timber trade formed an important building block for the further development of the southwestern and western German economy, too. Furthermore, the participation of large sections of the population in the timber trade, which in many cases triggered social advancement and, in any case, had considerable income effects, was also an important consequence of the Dutch timber trade.

Most important, however, was undoubtedly the emergence of a risk-loving entrepreneurial class with a sufficient capital base and business knowledge, which – unlike before 1700 – controlled their whole business from their central headquarters. The Mauritz case study documents all these effects very concretely, showing not only the financing of the timber business, but also how he organized the whole business. The examples show how Mauritz handled his expenditures for the raftsmen's wages, for the provision of the rafts with food and other necessities, as well as for customs duties and other fees, or how he made payments and money transfers to the timber sellers and his regional timber factors via bills of exchange and assignments via the Frankfurt merchant banker Geyß. While Mauritz, as an entrepreneur, managed his business centrally from Dordrecht by letter of instruction,

his regional factors organized the purchase of timber, raft construction, and onward transport of the timber locally.

Although previous research has concentrated primarily on the Dutch timber trade of the northern Black Forest, many other – less well-studied – German forest regions and numerous places along the major rivers (Mannheim, Koblenz, Andernach, Wesel, etc.) have also benefited from timber exports to the Netherlands and the associated forward and backward linkages. This was particularly the case toward the end of the eighteenth century, when large areas of the Black Forest were already heavily devastated by the unsustainable felling practices and the export of logs from other forest regions outweighed that from Baden and Württemberg. Irrespective of the question of the long-term sustainability of the Dutch timber trade after 1800 – in fact it was still practiced well into the second half of the nineteenth century on a greater scale – it can be stated that the Dutch timber trade in the eighteenth century was not only enormous in scope and supported western German economic growth from 1740 onwards – even if it cannot be quantified due to a lack of data – but it also contributed to economic and social structural change in the long run, with the emergence of modern entrepreneurship and the spread of capitalist practices undoubtedly the most important consequence.

About the author

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