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Dark horses of business : overseas entrepreneurship in seventeenth-century Nordic trade in the Indian and Atlantic oceans

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Dark Horses of Business

Overseas Entrepreneurship in Seventeenth-Century Nordic Trade in the
Indian and Atlantic Oceans

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Tammerfors 2018

Summary in English and in Dutch

This dissertation deals with the development of seventeenth-century overseas business through the perspective of individuals. The way individuals acted in the overseas business, especially in connection to the Nordic trading companies, allows for an in-depth study of how they projected, established, coordinated and developed business through entrepreneurial mechanisms. The dissertation closely follows the careers of two businessmen and simultaneously studies their careers through a conceptual framework of overseas entrepreneurship in two oceanic spaces.

By focusing on European overseas business through the perspective of entrepreneurship, the study problematises simplistic perceptions of the role of the individuals, often seen as employees of companies. Therefore, I call for a change in perspective: rather than placing these individuals in a specific category, their careers are studied through their entrepreneurial behaviour, enabling new perspectives on how individuals operated early modern overseas business.

Throughout this dissertation, I demonstrate how individuals participated actively, negotiated their role in trading institutions and underscored their importance for the early modern trading companies. The individuals were operating within a larger structure in the overseas trade, a sector including not only trading companies, but also European rulers and partnerships with locals. Thereby, they also played a role in several cross-imperial interactions. In Europe, they were influenced by the surrounding political situation.

Through the individuals' career moves, their connections became international and this alters the perspective on how business developed. In northern Europe, their frequent change of company affiliations made the companies multinational and cross-imperial with close connections to the competing companies, thus, making them a part of a joint narrative of European expansion. This is especially important in a Nordic context, where the formative years of these enterprises were strongly influenced by a large number of international initiatives, as well as by experienced international participants. Highlighted through these internationally experienced individuals, Nordic overseas trading in the seventeenth century becomes an important part of the general seventeenth-century northern European overseas historiography.

The contribution of this dissertation is to offer an alternative way of studying the development of northern European overseas business, Nordic in particular. Less attention is given to the companies and more to the individuals, as it demonstrates how connected and international northern European overseas business was. The study also contributes to understanding of the mechanisms at the core of overseas entrepreneurship. In the five research chapters, I analyse the partly overlapping mechanisms of overseas entrepreneurship: training, specialisation, balancing of connections, knowledge and violence. Each research chapter has focused on a certain aspect of the mechanisms, spaces or processes in which overseas entrepreneurship occurred. The entrepreneurial framework is applied on a comparison of two oceans and it highlights that similar entrepreneurial mechanisms were employed both in the East and in the West, regardless of the geographical and cultural differences between the Indian and the Atlantic Oceans.

The novelty of my approach is that entrepreneurship as a theoretical framework has hitherto mainly been studied in a European context. The competition between Europeans, the long distances and slow information distribution made the overseas business a lucrative opportunity for those who

were willing to take risks. Because of the volatile and uncertain conditions overseas, these individuals were both moulded by the context and took advantage of it.

In this dissertation, overseas entrepreneurship is thus a mode of behaviour chosen by individuals in order to make a profit and improve professional and ultimately social mobility. It differs from the traditional perception of entrepreneurs as individuals merely interested in making profit through trade. In the overseas context, the balancing of social connections, violence and exploitation of knowledge were also used as mechanisms of entrepreneurship. Overseas entrepreneurship as an approach hence offers a possibility to better understand the social and institutional environment, to which these individuals belonged, whether in the Indian or the Atlantic Ocean.

Samenvatting

Dit proefschrift gaat over de ontwikkeling van zeventiende-eeuws zakendoen overzee door de lens van het individu. De manier waarop individuen zakendeden overzee, in het bijzonder in relatie tot de Noordse (Denemarken-Noorwegen en Zweden met Finland en Duitse provincies) handelscompagnieën, laat gedetailleerd zien hoe de individuen hun zaken voorspiegelden, vormgaven, coördineerden en ontwikkelden door ondernemersmechanismen. Het proefschrift volgt nauwgezet de carrières van twee zakenmannen en bestudeert tegelijkertijd hun carrières door een conceptueel raamwerk van overzees ondernemerschap in twee oceanen.

Door zich via het perspectief van ondernemerschap te richten op Europese overzeese handel problematiseert deze studie simplistische percepties over de rol van individuen – die vaak worden afgeschilderd als medewerkers van handelscompagnieën. Juist daarom stelt dit proefschrift een nieuw perspectief voor: in plaats van deze individuen in een specifieke categorie te plaatsen, bestudeert dit proefschrift hun carrières door hun ondernemersgedrag. Dit geeft de mogelijkheid tot nieuwe perspectieven over hoe individuen opereerden in de vroegmoderne overzeese onderneming.

Dit proefschrift laat zien hoe individuen in handelscompagnieën en daaraan gerelateerde organisaties actief participeerden, onderhandelden over hun rol, en hun eigen belangrijkheid onderstreepten. De individuen opereerden in een grotere structuur in de overzeese handel. Deze sector behelsde niet alleen handelscompagnieën, maar ook Europese heersers en partnerschappen met de lokale bevolking. Derhalve hadden ze ook een belangrijke rol in het faciliteren van uitwisseling tussen verschillende rijken. In Europa werd hun handelen beïnvloed door de politieke situatie.

Door carrièrebewegingen werden de verbanden van de individuen internationaal, en dit verandert het perspectief over hoe zaken ontwikkelden. In noord-Europa maakte de regelmatige verandering van compagnie-alliantie van de individuen de compagnies multinational en opererend tussen verschillende rijken in, terwijl ze nauwe contacten onderhielden met concurrerende compagnieën. Derhalve werd dit een gedeeld en gezamenlijk verhaal van Europese expansie. Dit is met name van belang in een Noordse context waarin de beginjaren van deze ondernemingen sterk beïnvloed werden door een groot aantal internationale initiatieven en ervaren internationale participanten. Noordse overzeese handel wordt, door de nadruk op deze internationale ervaren individuen, een belangrijke bijdrage aan de algehele zeventiende-eeuwse Noord-Europese historiografie.

De bijdrage van dit proefschrift is om een alternatief te bieden om de ontwikkeling van Noord-Europese overzeese handel te bestuderen – de Noordse overzeese handel in het bijzonder. Er is relatief

minder aandacht voor de compagnieën en meer voor de individuen, daar ze laten zien hoe verbonden en internationaal de Noord-Europese overzeese handel was. Deze studie draagt ook bij aan een beter begrip van de mechanismen die centraal zijn aan overzees ondernemerschap: oefening, specialisatie, balanceren van relaties, kennis, en geweld. Elk hoofdstuk richt op een specifiek element van deze mechanismen, plaatsen, of processen van overzees ondernemerschap. Het raamwerk van ondernemerschap is toegepast op een vergelijking tussen twee oceanen en onderstreept dat vergelijkbare ondernemersmechanismen in zowel de Oost als de West voorkwamen. Dat was dus onafhankelijk van geografische en culturele verschillen tussen de Indische en Atlantische oceaan.

Het innovatieve van deze aanpak is dat ondernemerschap als theoretisch raamwerk tot nu toe vooral bestudeerd is in een Europese context. De rivaliteit tussen Europeanen, de lange afstanden, en trage informatiestromen maakten de overzeese onderneming lucratief voor hen die bereid waren risico te nemen. Aangezien de omstandigheden onzeker waren en snel konden veranderen, werden de individuen zowel gevormd door de omstandigheden als dat ze er gebruik van konden maken.

In dit proefschrift is overzees ondernemerschap derhalve een gedragsmodus gekozen door individuen met als doel winst te maken en beroepsmatig, en uiteindelijk sociaal, vooruitgang te boeken. Het verschilt van de traditionele perceptie van ondernemers als individuen die slechts winstbejag voor ogen hadden. In de overzeese context, werden het balanceren van sociale relaties, geweld, en uitbuiting van kennis ook gebruikt als mechanismen van ondernemerschap. Overzees ondernemerschap als een benadering biedt derhalve de mogelijkheid tot beter begrip van de sociale en institutionele omgevingen waartoe deze individuen behoorden – zij het in de Indische of de Atlantische oceaan.

Abbreviations

SAC: Swedish Africa Company
DEIC: Danish East India Company
VOC: Vereenigde Oostindische Compagnie
WIC: West Indische Compagnie
FWIC: French West India Company
EIC: English East India Company
NL-HaNA: Nationaal Archief, Den Haag, Netherlands
OWIC: Oude Westindische Compagnie
S.G.: States General
RAC: Rigsarkivet Copenhagen, Denmark
RAS: Riksarkivet Stockholm, Sweden
DK: Danske Kancelli
TKIA Tyske Kancelli indenrigske afdelning
TKUA Tyske Kancelli udenrigske afdelning
LA: Leufsta arkiv
H&S: Handel och sjöfart
BN: Bibliothèque nationale
SAA: Staatsarchief Amsterdam
NA: Notarieel archief
FC: Furley Collection
RP: Riksrådets protokoll
RR: Riksregistraturen
VLA: Vadstena Landsarkiv,
FBA: Finspångsbruk arkiv
KKA: Kommerskollegium, huvudarkivet
UUB Uppsala Universitets Bibliotek
HCA High court of Admiralty
ANOM: Archives nationales d’Outre-mer

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1 Individuals in Seventeenth-Century Overseas Business

1.1 Willem Leyel and Henrich Carloff introduced

In 1648, the commander of the Danish East India Company (DEIC), Willem Leyel (ca. 1593–1654), suffered a mutiny and was arrested by his subordinates, being accused of having traded for his own benefit. According to the mutineers, he had thereby broken the rules of the company.¹ The background to this event was the parlous condition of Danish trade in the East. The company was facing overwhelming challenges, since no further company ships had sailed from Copenhagen to Tranquebar following Leyel's arrival there.² The Danish King Christian IV was unable to send additional ships to Asia due to his participation in the Thirty Years' War (1618-1648), thus effectively leaving the company to its own devices.³ Indeed, the king was even contemplating selling the company and its fort, and negotiations had already been initiated with Brandenburg, England and France.⁴ In Tranquebar, Leyel was unaware of these negotiations, being sequestered in Fort Dansborg, the operational headquarters of the Danes. Nevertheless, he succeeded in maintaining a successful trade, and, despite such challenges, the fortunes of the Danish East India Company were being gradually restored under his command. After his arrival in India, Leyel had developed an extensive regional trading network, which he maintained through violence, both for the sake of the company and for his own personal profit. In particular, Leyel was able to maintain an active and profitable network thanks to his knowledge of the Indian Ocean, which he had acquired during his service in the Dutch East India Company (VOC) in Batavia.⁵ Indeed, his reports, sent to the company directors in Copenhagen, and his letters to his business contacts in the Indian Ocean attest to this knowledge.⁶

In 1636, prior to his voyage to India as a commander of the DEIC, Leyel had been appointed director of the company in Copenhagen. At least in theory, upon his arrival in India, he was to become simultaneously commander and director, a position that would put him in charge of trade operations in India and, at the same time, grant him access to the information discussed at boardroom meetings in Copenhagen. In practice, however, Leyel was absent from Copenhagen for longer than he had expected, and his links to the board thus weakened. Nonetheless, Leyel's Asian career turned out to be extensive in both duration and experience, and he was active in India at a moment when the Danish were attempting to establish a permanent foothold in the area. Since support from Copenhagen remained modest, Leyel saw no other option than to use his own overseas skills to keep trade afloat.

¹ Asta Bredsdorff, *The Trials and Travels of Willem Leyel: An Account of the Danish East India Company in Tranquebar, 1639-48* (Copenhagen: Museum Tusculanum Press, 2009).

² Tranquebar is today called Tharangambadi. I have chosen to follow the name Tranquebar in this dissertation.

³ Ole Feldbæk, "No Ship for Tranquebar for Twenty-Nine Years. Or: The Art of Survival of a Mid-Seventeenth Century European Settlement in India," in *Emporia, Commodities and Entrepreneurs in Asian Maritime Trade, c. 1400-1750*, ed. Roderich Ptak and Dietmar Rothermund (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1991), 29–36.

⁴ Heinrich Sieveking, "Die Glückstädter Guineafahrt im 17. Jahrhundert. Ein Stück deutscher Kolonialgeschichte," *Vierteljahrschrift für Sozial- und Wirtschaftsgeschichte* 30, no. 1 (1937): 19–71; Kay Larsen, *Dansk-Ostindiske koloniers historie* (Copenhagen: Centralførlaget, 1907).

⁵ For more details of his appointments in Asia, see Larsen, *Dansk-Ostindiske koloniers*. Bredsdorff, *The Trials and Travels*.

⁶ Rigsarkivet, Copenhagen (RAC), Danske Kancelli (DK) (Rentekammerafdelningen), B 246 A, B and C, Willum Leyel arkiv.

However, he did so in a manner that affronted and antagonised his peers, who eventually succeeded in ousting him from his position.

In the same year of 1648, while Leyel was facing a mutiny in Tranquebar, a ship sailing under the Swedish flag appeared on the Gold Coast in Western Africa. The ship's captain, Arent Gabbesen, a Dutchman, carried a license from the Swedish Crown to trade on the Western Coast of Africa. The arrival of the ship generated suspicion among Dutch West India Company (WIC) officials, and the Director-General of the company dispatched his prosecutor, Henrich Carloff, to investigate the Swedish vessel. Initially, Carloff questioned Gabbesen's right to sail on the coast, but eventually decided to let him continue his voyage. Shortly after this encounter, Carloff left for Europe, where he signed a contract with Gabbesen's employer, Louis de Geer, a moment that would transform both his career and the history of the Gold Coast. For the next twenty years, the Atlantic world became Carloff's space of entrepreneurship.⁷

After abandoning the WIC, Carloff participated in the launching of Swedish, Danish, and French Atlantic endeavours, finally returning to Dutch employment in the 1670s. During his time in the Swedish Africa Company (SAC, 1649–1663), he was first employed as commander, and later as co-director. Like that of Leyel, Carloff's career benefited greatly from the knowledge and experience that he had accumulated in the different companies, starting with the WIC. Working in Africa, he established an extensive network of contacts with Europeans and non-Europeans alike. However, having returned to Dutch service, he was arrested in 1676, having launched a series of violent attacks against the French Caribbean, following his promise to the Admiralty Board in Amsterdam that he would conquer and incorporate the territories under Dutch rule. The man who arrested Carloff, the Dutch commodore Binckes, believed that Carloff had conspired against him, and that he was motivated solely by private gain.⁸ Thus, like Leyel, Carloff encountered opposition from his colleagues, and was accused of attempting to advance his own private interests.

Together, Leyel and Carloff serve to illustrate a specific category of early modern entrepreneurial behaviour, namely that of overseas entrepreneurship. They pose various historiographical challenges, such as tracing their social and economic affiliations to European companies, reconstructing their role in early modern European overseas business, and making sense of their use of violence as part of their entrepreneurial endeavours. Of course, in the seventeenth century, there were many similar business-minded Europeans willing to join chartered or joint stock colonial companies, only to leave them when new opportunities arose. Some examples are Ferdinand Cron, Francisco Vieira de Figueiredo, Samuel Blommaert, Peter Minuit, Arent de Groot, Augustine Hermann, John Smith, Thomas Dale, Jacob Leisler and François Caron.⁹ Indeed, such men effectively

⁷ Henk den Heijer, "Een dienaar van vele heren – de Atlantische carrier van Hendrick Caerloff," in *Het verre gezicht – politieke en culturele relaties tussen Nederland en Azië, Afrika en Amerika*, ed. Thomas Lindblad and Alicia Schrikker (Franeker: Van Wijnen, 2011), 162–80; György Nováky, *Handelskompanier och kompanihandel – Svenska Afrikakompaniet 1649-1663 en studie i feodal handel* (Uppsala: Uppsala University Library, 1990), 82; Robert Porter, *European Activity on the Gold Coast, 1620-1667*, PhD dissertation, (Pretoria: University of South Africa, 1975).

⁸ Cornelis De Jonge, *Geschiedenis van het Nederlandsche zeewezen*, pt. 2, vol. 3, (Gravenhage: Gebroedersvan Cleef, 1837); Cornelis Christiaan Goslinga, *The Dutch in the Caribbean and on the Wild Coast 1580-1680* (Assen, Van Gorcum, 1971).

⁹ Christian J. Koot, "The Merchant, the Map, and Empire: Augustine Herrman's Chesapeake and Interimperial Trade, 1644–73," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 67, no. 4 (2010), 603–44; Jaap Jacobs, *New Netherland: A Dutch Colony in Seventeenth-Century America* (Boston/Leiden: Brill, 2005); Jaap Jacobs, *The Colony of New Netherland: A Dutch Settlement in Seventeenth-Century America* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2009); Alison Games, *The Web of Empire: English Cosmopolitans in an Age of Expansion, 1560-1660* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008); Claudia Schnurmann, "Representative Atlantic Entrepreneur Jacob Leisler, 1640-1691," in *Riches from Atlantic*

blurred the commercial borders imposed by European powers, through their overseas entrepreneurial activities, connections, social positioning and knowledge-accumulation. Although they have been studied by scholars, it is surprising how little is known about the role they played in early modern European overseas business.

The following dissertation is not a biography of individuals. My focus is not on life stories, but rather on the type of behaviour that Leyel and Carloff represented. The dissertation aims to analyse the role that individuals played during the seventeenth century in the development of overseas business, particularly in the Nordic kingdoms. In what follows, *overseas business* refers to how individuals, trading companies and states organised, planned and maintained long distance trade. I focus on business, because my dissertation is primarily concerned with the structure of economic activities overseas, and does not merely study how trade (the selling and buying of goods) was conducted. Business is understood as part of a long distance economic system, in which goods and services are important, as are different forms of financial activities. Additionally, within this context, personal privileges and prerogatives acquire a political dimension. In this sense, I understand business-as-trade and business-as-organisation as two inextricably connected subjects.

Studying individual activities, strategies and behaviours in an overseas context will serve to improve our understanding of, on the one hand, the similarities between business practices in the Indian and the Atlantic oceans, and, on the other, how overseas businessmen initiated and extended Nordic overseas participation during the early modern period.¹⁰

The structure of this dissertation revolves around the concept of *overseas entrepreneurship*. Each chapter focuses on a theme directly related to this concept. The chapters illustrate and analyse the activities and behaviours of Leyel and Carloff, and show how they were able to move between European and non-European empires, at a time when the prevailing mercantilism imposed strict regulations on trade and colonial affairs. The concept of overseas entrepreneurship also encapsulates the way in which individuals manoeuvred between competing networks in Europe and overseas, their unlimited access to asymmetric information, and how these elements were used to attain professional advancement and personal wealth. Through such processes, Leyel and Carloff accumulated experience, knowledge, connections and reputation, ultimately attaining considerable upward social mobility. Finally, although entrepreneurship is often associated with attempts to reduce risk and avoid conflicts, in the overseas context, conflict and violence became instruments that enabled entrepreneurs to attain competitive advantages.

A focus on the careers of Leyel, Carloff and their entrepreneurial behaviour raises the following research questions: *What are the backgrounds and the mechanisms of overseas entrepreneurship, and how do these relate to the Nordic institutional context of the seventeenth century? By studying individuals in relation to trading companies, what new insights can be gained regarding early modern overseas business?*

This dissertation contributes to overseas business history by giving voice to the individuals involved in overseas business, thus re-orientating the focus away from the trading companies and

Commerce: Dutch Transatlantic Trade and Shipping, 1585-1817, ed. Victor Enthoven and Johannes Postma (Boston/Leiden: Brill, 2003), 259–83; Sanjay Subrahmanyam, “An Augsburg in Asia Portuguese: Further Light on the Commercial World of Ferdinand Cron, 1587-1624,” in *Emporia, Commodities, and Entrepreneurs in Asian Maritime Trade, C. 1400-1750*, ed. Roderich Ptak and Dietmar Rothermund (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1991), 407–11; C. R. Boxer, *Francisco Vieira de Figueiredo: A Portuguese Merchant-Adventurer in South East Asia, 1624-1667* (Gravenhage: Martinus Nijhoff, 1967).

¹⁰ In this dissertation, “Nordic” refers to the present Nordic states: Denmark, Iceland, Norway, Sweden and Finland.

empires with which they were affiliated. Indeed, earlier research has failed to deal comprehensively with the entrepreneurship of individuals in European overseas business. As a consequence, there is a gap in our knowledge concerning how individuals in Northern Europe, and in the Nordic countries in particular, operated in overseas territories and in spheres of European influence.

Twentieth-century historiography on overseas trade has successfully elucidated the development of trading companies and the role of Europeans in world history. The studies by James Tracy, George Scammell, Niels Steensgaard, Femme Gaastra and Leonard Blussé pioneered ideas about the role of European overseas trade in a broader context, comparing and contrasting various European empires.¹¹

Towards the end of the twentieth century, the Indian and Atlantic oceans as spaces of exchange were also subjected to spatial analyses. While these two oceans were still primarily studied separately, an interconnected perspective was gradually introduced, stressing the ties between these regions. This approach has yielded a more nuanced framework for the study of overseas trade, which does not only include the perspective of states and companies, but also focuses on the participation of European and non-European agents in the construction of European empires.¹²

Such studies of the Indian and Atlantic oceans have sparked interest in the understanding of regional systems of trade. They have also addressed a wide range of topics, including demography, economics, politics, religion and ideas, as well as structures, trade, societies, and environments. Such oceanic perspectives have also yielded an understanding of the diversity of actors in the construction of trading systems, whether affiliated with the European chartered companies or not. This body of literature also clarifies how local, non-European societies participated in European overseas business. A good example of this approach is Mark Meuwse's work on two indigenous employees of the WIC and the Portuguese. As Meuwse has shown, these men effectively exploited European dependency on the local population to their own personal advantage. In a similar vein, John Thornton has demonstrated the importance of Africans in the construction of the Atlantic World, thus going beyond the tragedies associated with the transatlantic slave trade.¹³ Similarly, studies by Kirti Chaudhuri, Michael Pearson and Sanjay Subrahmanyam have highlighted the importance of the indigenous populations in the construction of the Indian Ocean World.¹⁴ In this sense, studying overseas business

¹¹ Geoffrey Vaughn Scammell, *The First Imperial Age: European Overseas Expansion C. 1400-1715* (New York: Routledge, 1989); Geoffrey Vaughn Scammell, *The World Encompassed: The First European Maritime Empires, C. 800-1650* (Berkeley/Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1981); Geoffrey Vaughn Scammell, *Ships, Oceans, and Empire: Studies in European Maritime and Colonial History, 1400-1750* (Aldershot: Variorum, 1995); James D. Tracy, ed., *The Political Economy of Merchant Empires: State Power and World Trade, 1350-1750* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991); James D. Tracy, ed., *The Rise of Merchant Empires: Long Distance Trade in the Early Modern World 1350-1750* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993); Niels Steensgaard, *The Asian Trade Revolution: The East India Companies and the Decline of the Caravan Trade* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1973); Leonard Blussé and Femme Gaastra, eds., *Companies and Trade Essays on Overseas Trading Companies during the Ancien Régime (Comparative Studies in Overseas History)* (Leiden: Leiden University Press, 1981).

¹² Michael Pearson, *The Indian Ocean*, 1 edition (London: Routledge, 2003); Ashin Das Gupta and M. N. Pearson, eds., *India and the Indian Ocean 1500-1800* (Calcutta; New York: Oxford University Press, 1987); Bernard Bailyn, *Atlantic History: Concept and Contours* (Cambridge, Mass; London: Harvard University Press, 2005); John H. Elliott, *Empires of the Atlantic World: Britain and Spain in America 1492-1830* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007).

¹³ John Thornton, *Africa and Africans in the Making of the Atlantic World, 1400-1800* (Cambridge/New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998); Mark Meuwese, "Indigenous Leaders and the Atlantic World: The Parallel Lives of Dom Antonio Filipe Camarao and Pieter Poty, 1600-1650," in *Atlantic Biographies: Individuals and Peoples in the Atlantic World*, ed. Jeffrey A. Fortin and Mark Meuwese (Boston/Leiden: Brill, 2014), 213-33.

¹⁴ Chaudhuri, *Trade and Civilisation in the Indian Ocean: An Economic History from the Rise of Islam to 1750*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985; Gupta and Pearson, *India and the Indian Ocean*; Sanjay Subrahmanyam

through an oceanic lens offers an opportunity to contextualise multiple European and non-European voices, including those that have been neglected by mainstream colonial history.

This dissertation will combine two oceanic spaces (the Indian and the Atlantic) with an actor-centred approach (focusing on Leyel and Carloff), and will thereby elucidate the role of individual entrepreneurial behaviour in the creation of overseas economic opportunities and the shaping of spaces of exchange. During the years of Leyel's career in the Indian Ocean and Carloff's career in the Atlantic, the political situation in Europe in general, and especially in the Nordic kingdoms, was marked by instability and uncertainty. Although little-known, in the midst of the political conflicts in Europe, Nordic monarchs had clear ambitions regarding their participation in overseas trade, and for men such as Leyel and Carloff, political conflict and competition in Europe translated into entrepreneurial opportunities abroad. This dissertation is novel in that it provides a Nordic perspective on overseas business; it focuses on Nordic overseas ambitions, as realised by individual actors. Two different oceanic spaces are analysed and contrasted, and competing actors, simultaneously active in the same regions, are taken into account. A combination of Nordic and other European sources gives the study archival depth, and the theoretical framework of overseas entrepreneurship carries the research into environments that have previously been overlooked.

While the historiography has been preoccupied with comparing empires and trading companies, and the relationship between Europeans and non-Europeans, this dissertation takes a different point of departure. Rather than focusing on individual empires as presumed national entities, it instead focuses on the individuals employed by said companies. In doing so, it will challenge the historiographical paradigm of the trading companies as representations of specific European states. Finally, it will contextualise the role of the lesser known Nordic trading companies, with special reference to the Swedish Africa Company, the Glückstadt Company and the Danish East India Company.

The history of business and entrepreneurship in seventeenth-century Nordic overseas trade arose from a more general change in the development of the Nordic economies. The historian Mirkka Lappalainen has referred to the European seventeenth century as the "odd century", a period that was still characterised by a medieval political and economic system, but which also witnessed the development of premodern forms of business and capitalism.¹⁵ Indeed, Nordic participation in long-distance trade served to accelerate this transition. In the more established scholarship on European overseas expansion, the Nordic experience is largely forgotten, and this dissertation aims to fill this gap.

My core argument is that during the seventeenth century, individuals, acting as entrepreneurs, were responsible for a growing number of intercontinental connections. Such entrepreneurs bridged different types of economic, political and social worlds, as they participated in trade negotiations, intervened in local politics, actively engaged in social agreements, and expanded other kinds of social relationships at a global level. Thus, this study is not exclusively European. While indeed focusing on European entrepreneurship, it does so in an overseas context, including non-European agents, business practices and modes of negotiation as integral parts of a joint narrative.

and Christopher Bayly, "Portfolio Capitalists and the Political Economy of Early Modern India," *Indian Economic & Social History Review* 25, no. 401 (1988): 401–24.

¹⁵ Mirkka Lappalainen, *Maailman painavin raha* (Helsinki: WSOY, 2007), 7.

1.2 Why the entrepreneurial lens?

In general terms, “entrepreneurship” means an individual’s capacity and willingness to organise, manage and develop business strategies in order to make a profit, despite risks and uncertainties.¹⁶ However, my aim here is not to apply a modern definition of entrepreneurship, nor is it to study the self-perception of early modern individuals. Rather, the goal is to explore the role of the individual through the perspective of entrepreneurship in an early modern overseas business context.

Nevertheless, some theoretical discussion of the concept *entrepreneurship* is required. The economist Mark Casson, who specialises in business history, has defined an entrepreneur as “someone who specializes in taking judgmental decisions about the coordination of scarce resources.”¹⁷ In a more historical context, Mark and Catherine Casson have suggested that historical studies of entrepreneurship should focus on the personal characteristics of the individual, and the roles that he or she plays in business. The personal characteristics of an entrepreneur include, for example, *imagination, intuition, alertness, ambition* and *openness to approach risk*. Although personality is unique, the behaviour of individuals within a specific environment nonetheless reveals general patterns, and serves to delineate an entrepreneurial culture.¹⁸ I would add that in an overseas context, categories such as *adaptation, control, defiance, balancing* and *capacity for violence* are also of considerable importance.

Entrepreneurs are individuals willing to take risks, to introduce innovations and to make decisions when the opportunity arises.¹⁹ For Marina Della Giusta and Mark Casson, entrepreneurship is often a risky activity. As such, entrepreneurs perceive risk differently than other people, for two main reasons. First, the entrepreneurial-minded person has information not accessible to others; and second, such a person sees an opportunity where others see only risk, and is thus more prone to act.²⁰ Catherine and Mark Casson have nevertheless emphasised the importance of critical detachment, so as to avoid generalisations of behaviour or glorification of heroes.²¹

Entrepreneurship is closely connected to risk and uncertainty.²² Even if these are concepts that are often used interchangeably, they remain two different things. Risk refers to the probability of a future event, including the possible interference of internal and external factors. Risk can be minimised by preventive methods, such as risk analysis through market intelligence research, or various forms of insurance. In an economic sense, risk thus relates to the probability of returns on an investment. Uncertainty, on the other hand, arises from imperfect or unknown information. Especially in overseas trade, gaps in information flows create considerable uncertainty, and it can thus be almost impossible to foresee specific outcomes. Unlike risk, in which potential undesirable outcomes can at

¹⁶ Surprisingly few economists have addressed the importance of entrepreneurship in economic development. Generally, economists consider individual agency to have only limited impact on economic development. See Mark Casson, ed., *Entrepreneurship: Theory, Networks, History* (Cheltenham, UK; Northampton, MA: Edward Elgar, 2010), 3–4.

¹⁷ Mark Casson, *The Entrepreneur: An Economic Theory*, 2 edition (Cheltenham, UK ; Northampton, MA: Edward Elgar Pub, 2003), 20.

¹⁸ Mark Casson and Catherine Casson, “The History of Entrepreneurship: Medieval Origins of a Modern Phenomenon,” *Business History* 56, no. 8 (2014): 1223–42, 1226.

¹⁹ Casson, *The Entrepreneur*, 20.

²⁰ Mark Casson and Marina Della Giusta, “Entrepreneurship and Social Capital: Analysing the Impact of Social Networks on Entrepreneurial Activity from a Rational Action Perspective,” *International Small Business Journal* 25, no. 3 (June 1, 2007): 220–44, 223.

²¹ Casson and Casson, “The History of Entrepreneurship”, 1227.

²² From a theoretical perspective, Frank Knight has discussed risk and uncertainty in relation to entrepreneurship. See Frank Knight, *Risk Uncertainty and Profit* (Boston: Hart Schaffner & Marx; Houghton Mifflin Co., 1921).

least be measured and reduced, in the case of uncertainty, it is impossible to predict the outcome. In short, risk is about the possibility of gaining or losing something of value, whereas uncertainty is the condition of not knowing. Risk can be minimised, whereas uncertainty remains uncontrollable.²³ When studying entrepreneurship, both concepts are important, since the individual is the one assessing the risks and facing the uncertainties. However, as chapter five will demonstrate, at least in the overseas context, individuals can take advantage of both.

While Casson has been the most important author to analyse entrepreneurship theoretically, historians such as Clé Lesger, Violet Barbour, Peter Klein, Jan Willem Veluwenkamp, Karel Davids, Leo Noordegraaf and Ferry de Goey have all studied the role of entrepreneurship in Dutch markets during the early modern period. Throughout, their aim was to understand the rapid advancement of the early modern Dutch economy, particularly during the period known as the Dutch Golden Age (1590–1660). During these years, Amsterdam witnessed the development of small and large-scale businesses, as well as institutions such as a staple market, a bank, a stock exchange, notaries and a booming shipping industry, all of which facilitated an array of entrepreneurial behaviours.²⁴ For the historian, they have also yielded a rich body of primary sources.

Instead of focusing on markets and supply chains, my application of the concept of entrepreneurship is related to two different thematic approaches: first, the role of the individual in overseas business through participation in trading companies; and second, the social side of entrepreneurship. I have chosen to adopt these approaches because in the existing overseas historiography, the people employed by the companies have conventionally been considered mere employees or officials of the said companies, and not as semi-independent actor-entrepreneurs. In my view, the motive behind the behaviour of these men was twofold. On the one hand, they worked for the benefit of the trading companies, while on the other, their main motive was personal profit and career advancement. As noted above, the latter has been the focus of many business historians. For these reasons, I have chosen to adopt a conceptual framework of early modern entrepreneurship for my thesis.

Regarding the relationship between the individual and the trading company, one important historiographical issue is the way in which innovation and risk management were organised in an institutional setting that differed considerably from that of today.²⁵ The Danish historian Ole Feldbæk underlines that early modern trading companies varied greatly from one another. Moreover, they are comparable to the organisations of today only to a very limited extent.²⁶ In chapters three and four,

²³ For a general description of risk in a business context, see Casson, *Entrepreneurship*, 7.

²⁴ Clé Lesger, *The Rise of the Amsterdam Market and Information Exchange: Merchants, Commercial Expansion and Change in the Spatial Economy of the Low Countries, c.1550–1630*, trans. J.C. Grayson (Aldershot; Burlington: Ashgate, 2006); Ferry de Goey and Jan Willem Veluwenkamp, eds., *Entrepreneurs and Institutions in Europe and Asia, 1500–2000* (Amsterdam: Aksant, 2002); Jan Willem Veluwenkamp, *Archangel: Nederlandse ondernemers in Rusland, 1550–1785*, 1 edition (Amsterdam: Balans, 2000); Clé Lesger and Leo Noordegraaf, eds., *Entrepreneurs and Entrepreneurship in Early Modern Times: Merchants and Industrialists Within the Orbit of the Dutch Staple Market* (Den Haag: Stichting Hollandse Historische Reeks, 1995); P. W. Klein and Jan Willem Veluwenkamp, “The Role of the Entrepreneur in the Economic Expansion of the Dutch Republic,” in *Dutch Republic in the Golden Age*, ed. Karel Davids and Leo Noordegraaf (Amsterdam: Nederlandsch Economisch-Historisch Archief, 1993), 27–53; Karel Davids and Leo Noordegraaf, eds., *The Dutch Economy in the Golden Age* (Amsterdam: Nederlandsch Economisch-Historisch Archief, 1993); Violet Barbour, *Capitalism in Amsterdam in The Seventeenth Century* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1950).

²⁵ Casson and Casson, “The History of Entrepreneurship”, 1237.

²⁶ Ole Feldbæk, “The Danish Trading Companies of the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries,” *Scandinavian Economic History Review* 34, no. 3 (1986): 204–18, 205.

some of these differences will become evident, as I explain how individuals navigated between the different companies, and how that mobility was translated into economic profit and upward social mobility.

The focus on entrepreneurship in relation to early modern trading organisations presents a twofold, reciprocal aspect. In particular, it focuses on the intersections of interests between individuals and larger economic entities (such as trading companies), stressing that these were connected and co-dependent.²⁷ Hence, trading companies must be analysed from their employees' perspective, and the latter must be understood as active historical actors. As Casson reminds us, entrepreneurship occurs in an institutional context (firms, potential competitors and partners), which should not be overlooked. In an international business environment such as that of early modern overseas trade, business-related challenges are more complex than in purely domestic (intra-European) settings, due to the presence of many more competitors.²⁸ For this reason, this dissertation will situate the individual entrepreneurial strategies of Willem Leyel and Henrich Carloff within the framework of monarchies, trading companies and business partnerships or competitors.

Mark and Catherine Casson point out that in early modern business history, the focus is still mainly on the firm as a managerial unit. Thus, they argue that "there needs to be more emphasis on identifying the individual entrepreneurs within the firms and analysing their influence in the decision making."²⁹ In this sense, there is much to gain from a more biographical and individual approach to early modern entrepreneurship, which can serve to shift the focus towards individuals participating in organisations, a goal that this dissertation aims to fulfil.³⁰

Entrepreneurs are central to the foundation and development of firms. In many cases, a successful entrepreneur belongs to a social minority, or can even be an outsider. Such individuals often seek out alternative avenues for social advancement, since the conventional ones are closed to them.³¹ Indeed, this will be the argument of chapters two and three.

Historical studies of an individual entrepreneur's relationship with an organisation need not always be a story of success. To the contrary, personal and organisational failures can be just as rewarding to address. In particular, they can offer insights into the different forms of risks and uncertainties in trade. For this reason, one of the goals of this dissertation will be to study all of the business strategies applied in overseas exchanges, and not only those which were most successful. According to Casson, smaller enterprises often fail during their first years of existence, due to over-confidence, bad timing, incompetence or bad luck.³² Luck is of course not a strategy, but it is a factor that needs to be considered in the present study, since environmental adjustment was essential in the overseas context, a subject to which I will return later in the dissertation.

This dissertation will also argue that fixed categories such as "governor", "merchant", or "administrator" do not fully express the role played by specific individuals in the overseas context.

²⁷ Full description on the theory is outside the scope of this dissertation, see Anthony Giddens, *The Constitution of Society: Outline of the Theory of Structuration* (Berkley/Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1984), 25–28; An application of the theory in an Entrepreneurship context, see Yolanda Sarason, Tom Dean, and Jesse F. Dillard, "Entrepreneurship as the Nexus of Individual and Opportunity: A Structuration View," *Journal of Business Venturing* 21, no. 3 (2006): 286–305.

²⁸ Casson, *Entrepreneurship*, 11.

²⁹ Casson and Casson, "The History of Entrepreneurship", 1223.

³⁰ *Ibid*, 1224.

³¹ Casson, *The Entrepreneur*, 11.

³² Casson, *Entrepreneurship*, 14.

Leyel and Carloff ought rather to be seen as individuals moving on a sliding scale of representations, who held different social positions with different kinds of expectations during their careers.³³ They were, either successively or simultaneously, employees of overseas commercial companies, governors, privateers, traders, soldiers and sailors. They were able to switch their social and professional identities when necessary, and to become a combination of diplomat, merchant and colonial official. I thus study their behaviour through the lens of overseas entrepreneurship, because this offers a more complete understanding of the multiple roles that they played within different empires and companies.

Conceptually, my research is closest to the recent studies by Alison Games, Maxine Berg *et al.* According to Games:

The typical leader of a commercial or colonial venture – in America, the East Indies, Europe, or the Mediterranean – was precisely this kind of cosmopolitan figure, a man who had been elsewhere or who was on his way there. Such global experience permeated colonial societies and trade factories from governors, ministers, factors, ambassadors, consuls, and officers down to colonists, traders, and the tars who manned English ships. No one knew what type of venture would prove viable or profitable, so men who grasped the enthusiasms of the age tried them all.³⁴

For Berg *et al.*, a supercargo in Asia was a “curious mix between commission agent, entrepreneur and diplomat”,³⁵ whilst Meike von Brescius’s research has situated a small group of British interlopers and their informal networks within the landscape of the chartered company.³⁶ Von Brescius did not focus on the life stories of the interlopers, but rather placed them within the wider context of colonial empires and the business history of the early modern period.³⁷

It is worth stating that not all overseas entrepreneurship was conducted within the company framework, and this dissertation will also acknowledge the other possibilities for overseas entrepreneurship. However, in the Northern European, and especially in the Nordic context, companies remained the primary framework for doing business.

It is important to state that in the case of this dissertation, overseas entrepreneurship occurs within the context of trading organisations. However, rather than studying entrepreneurial behaviour through the lens of the organisations, I wish to study the individual behaviour of entrepreneurs in relation to the companies, but without simply treating them as representatives of organisations within fixed categories. Focusing exclusively on the relationship between the individual and the administration of the company does not necessarily provide enough information as to how the individual used his entrepreneurship to acquire his position within a trading organisation. As such, social strategies are also relevant in this study.

³³ For a discussion of the blurred lines and/or overlapping interests between agents and empire, see Cátia Antunes, “Free Agents and Formal Institutions in the Portuguese Empire: Towards a Framework of Analysis,” *Portuguese Studies* 28, no. 2 (2012): 173–85, 184.

³⁴ Alison Games, “Beyond the Atlantic: English Globetrotters and Transoceanic Connections,” *The William and Mary Quarterly* 63, no. 4 (2006): 675–92, 679.

³⁵ Berg, M., Davies, T., von Brescius, M., Gottmann, F., Hodacs, H., Nierstraz, C., “Private Trade and Monopoly Structures: The East India Companies and the Commodity Trade to Europe in the Eighteenth Century”, in Erikson, E.(ed), *Chartering Capitalism: Organizing Markets, States and Publics*, (Bingley, West Yorkshire: Emerald Group Publishing, 2015), 123–145, 134.

³⁶ A supercargo was the person in charge of trade onboard the ships. An interloper was an illegal or unlicensed merchant.

³⁷ Meike Von Brescius, *Private Enterprise and the China Trade: British Interlopers and Their Informal Networks*, PhD-Dissertation (Warwick: University of Warwick, 2016), 27–28.

The other thematic approach in this dissertation is related to the social side of entrepreneurship. Clé Lesger, Luuc Kooijmans and Leos Müller have stressed that entrepreneurship in the early modern period was not only a matter of economics, but also of sociability.³⁸ They stress the importance of analysing entrepreneurship through a social lens, looking into the role played by friends, acquaintances, business partners, family members and in-laws. Furthermore, Casson and Casson suggest that family background and education must be taken into account alongside the institutional environment in which individuals lived and worked.³⁹

Kooijmans stresses that in the early modern period, individuals were always looking for ways to accumulate the means to improve their social standing. Indeed, this could in itself provide a reason to participate in entrepreneurial activities.⁴⁰ Following Kooijmans' advice, this dissertation will consider improvements in social status and power as the social capital that an individual accumulated over time. Here, capital refers particularly to the improvement of one's position through social networking.⁴¹ However, the search for social capital could also lead to power struggles between socially ambitious individuals. In short, the concept helps to explain the relationship between entrepreneurship and upward social mobility. Furthermore, Kooijmans adds that jobs, education, culture and relationships constituted the social capital of the entrepreneur. For the latter, it was essential to maintain or develop his position in society through the management of social capital. A successful entrepreneur invested in his children's education, made secure investments and, above all, cultivated good relations in order to maintain his social position.⁴² Similarly, Lesger has emphasised that entrepreneurs in seventeenth-century Amsterdam were not only economic, but also social actors.⁴³ He underlines the importance of the accumulation of social power and prestige, and the enhancement of business prospects through social connections.⁴⁴ Leos Müller also notes that entrepreneurial behaviour combined short and long-term strategies, which individuals used to improve the social and economic position of themselves and their families.⁴⁵ For Müller, social reproduction was thus at the core of early modern entrepreneurial behaviour. In chapter two, I present the family backgrounds and connections of Level and Carloff at the time when they entered the service of the trading companies. In chapter four, I demonstrate that individuals, while working for

³⁸ Leos Müller, *The Merchant Houses of Stockholm, C. 1640-1800: A Comparative Study of Early-Modern Entrepreneurial Behaviour* (Uppsala: Uppsala University Library, 1998); L. Kooijmans, *Vriendschap: en de kunst van het overleven in de zeventiende en achttiende eeuw* (Amsterdam: B. Bakker, 1997); L. Kooijmans, "Risk and Reputation: On the Mentality of Merchants in the early modern Period," in *Entrepreneurs and Entrepreneurship*, ed. Lesger and Noordegraaf, 25–35; Lesger and Noordegraaf, *Entrepreneurs and Entrepreneurship in Early Modern Times*.

³⁹ Casson and Casson, "The History of Entrepreneurship", 1227.

⁴⁰ Kooijmans, L., "Risk and Reputation", 30.

⁴¹ Casson and Della Giusta have discussed the close connection between social networks and social capital, and considered social capital from an economic perspective. Casson and Della Giusta, "Entrepreneurship and Social Capital", 220–244.

⁴² Kooijmans L., "Risk and Reputation", 31.

⁴³ Clé Lesger, "The 'Visible Hand': Views on Entrepreneurs and Entrepreneurship in Holland, 1580-1850," in *Small Business Entrepreneurs in Asia and Europe: Towards a Comparative Perspective*, ed. Mario Rutten and Carol Upadhyaya (New Delhi: Sage, 1997), 255–77, 270.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 270.

⁴⁵ Leos Müller "Familjen och släkten - Socialt nätverk och borgerliga klassresor", in Martin Åberg & Tomas Nilson, eds., *Företagaren som kulturbärare*, (Lund: Studentlitteratur, 2007) 179–199; Leos Müller, "The Role of the Merchant Network - A Case History of Two Swedish Trading Housers 1650-1800," in *Entrepreneurship and Entrepreneurs*, ed. Lesger and Noordegraaf, 147–163.

the trading companies in their outposts, continued to remain dependent on key social connections. This had a crucial impact on business overseas.

In sum, this dissertation emphasises that early modern entrepreneurship is a historical category that combines business and social approaches. In this sense, the relationship between an individual and a firm (or company) can also be considered as a social relationship, since it focuses on how individuals use social strategies to interact with organisations. In this dissertation, such an approach will be applied to the overseas context.

1.3 The general and Nordic contexts during the seventeenth century

The framework for entrepreneurial behaviour in the seventeenth century was created by changes in the political landscape, and in the prevailing mercantilist beliefs of European rulers. Seventeenth-century Europe was characterised by warfare and conflict. Especially relevant was the Thirty Years' War (1618–1648), which had a significant impact on the evolution of the European political and economic landscape. For example, the European continent was marked by a continuous conflict between Spain and the United Provinces until 1648. The latter strove to become independent of the Habsburg monarchy, within the broader context of the conflict between Catholic and Protestant polities across the continent. At the same time, France and England were hostile to the Dutch Republic because of its growing commercial success, which had already begun during the sixteenth century. The Dutch were shipping products to most parts of Europe, and had a well-functioning commercial fleet specialising in the transport of bulk goods between the producing outlets in the Baltic and the rest of Europe. For one thing, this forced the Dutch to intervene in the conflicts between the two Nordic kingdoms of Denmark-Norway and Sweden.⁴⁶

Figure 1-1 Chronologies of the Northern European wars

Sweden - Denmark		Thirty Years' War		Anglo-Dutch	
1611-1613	<i>Kalmar War</i>	1618	<i>Beginning</i>	1652-1654	<i>First War</i>
1643-1645	<i>Torstensons War</i>	1625-1629	<i>Denmark in War</i>	1665-1667	<i>Second War</i>
1657-1658	<i>Karl X Gustavs I war</i>	1630-1648	<i>Sweden in War</i>	1672-1674	<i>Third War</i>
1658-1660	<i>Karl X Gustavs II war</i>	1648	<i>Peace at Westphalia</i>	1672-1678	<i>Franco-Dutch War</i>

Nordic overseas expansion needs to be understood on one hand as part of the general political and economic ambitions of Europeans during the seventeenth century, and, on the other, and as part of the specific power struggle between the two Nordic kingdoms within the context of the Thirty Year's War. Such overseas expansion coincided with Danish decline in the Baltic area, and the growth of Swedish dominance, through new territorial conquests around the Baltic and Northern German territories. A short overview of this internal rivalry is thus required.

In the Nordic kingdoms during the seventeenth century, political and economic trends were heavily influenced by war. Moreover, it was during this century that the Nordic kingdoms became commercially and politically intertwined with the continental states, and this had both direct and

⁴⁶ Jonathan I. Israel, *Dutch Primacy in World Trade*; Milja van Tielhof, *The "Mother of All Trades": The Baltic Grain Trade in Amsterdam from the Late 16th to the Early 19th Century* (Boston/Leiden: Brill, 2002); Hanno Brand and Leos Müller eds., *The Dynamics of Economic Culture in the North Sea and Baltic Region: In the Late Middle Ages and Early Modern Period* (Hilversum: Uitgeverij Verloren, 2007).

indirect repercussions on prospects for overseas business. The main issue dividing the countries around the Baltic was control over waterways, and especially control over tolls. For his part, the Danish king claimed control over trade and customs through *Øresundtolden* (the Sound Toll). In this way, Denmark was able to maintain a leading position in the Baltic during a long period of time.⁴⁷ However, the Dutch Republic supported Sweden in challenging the dominant position of Denmark, including through the conquest of Reval (Tallinn) in 1561, as well as the Nordic Seven Years War (1563–1570).⁴⁸ This served to give the Swedish the upper hand in trade with Russia. These Nordic disputes continued during the seventeenth century, for instance through the Kalmar War (1611–1613), which was immediately followed by the Thirty Years War (1618–1648), during which the Holy Roman Emperor attacked Denmark. The Danish king Christian IV was defeated at Lutter am Barenberge in 1626, and the Danes were forced to withdraw from the war.⁴⁹

Sweden had also been engaged in a long-standing conflict with Russia since the late sixteenth century. In this case too, the conflict was largely about Baltic trade. However, in 1617, as a result of the peace of Stolbova, the conflict finally came to an end. From this point onward, the Swedish king, Gustav II Adolf, was able to focus instead on continental politics, although he still had to face a dynastic struggle at home, namely the threat that the Polish branch of the Vasa family might attempt to claim the Swedish throne. In Sweden, the prospect of a Catholic king created unrest, which in turn led to aggression. First, Swedish troops conquered one of the largest Baltic cities, Riga, in Livonia (Latvia), and this was followed by further campaigns in Poland-Lithuania.⁵⁰ Thanks to these victories, Gustav II Adolf was able to access revenue from several important Baltic ports, and to quash possible threats from the Polish branch of the Vasa family.

By the end of the 1630s, Danish-Swedish hostilities had reignited. Again, Swedish aggression was directly linked to control over the Baltic revenue streams. In 1641, Swedish troops marched into Denmark, and in the treaty of Brömsebro in 1645, Sweden acquired Jämtland, Härjedalen, Gotland, Ösel and Halland. Sweden was also exempted from paying the Sound tolls, which made access to trade beyond the Baltic both open and profitable. Even more important, however, was control over tolls in the Baltic, and especially control over several port cities, which involved the right to levy taxes, mostly on the Dutch who traded in the Baltic. After 1650, the situation changed again, because trade between the Dutch and the Swedes was growing. In exchange for Dutch capital, Sweden became the Republic's main supplier of goods such as bar iron, copper and tar.⁵¹

During the mid-seventeenth century, the connection between the Nordic kingdoms and the Dutch Republic remained strong. Several Dutch and German capitalists offered credit for the Nordic war industries, and developed manufactories and forges, producing the supplies necessary for wars and shipping alike. Albert Baltser Berns, Gabriel Marselis and Louis de Geer were among the

⁴⁷ Mar Jonsson, "Denmark-Norway as a Potential World Power in the Early Modern Seventeenth Century," *Itinerario* XXXIII, no. 2 (2007): 17–27.

⁴⁸ Reval was Swedish: 1561–1721.

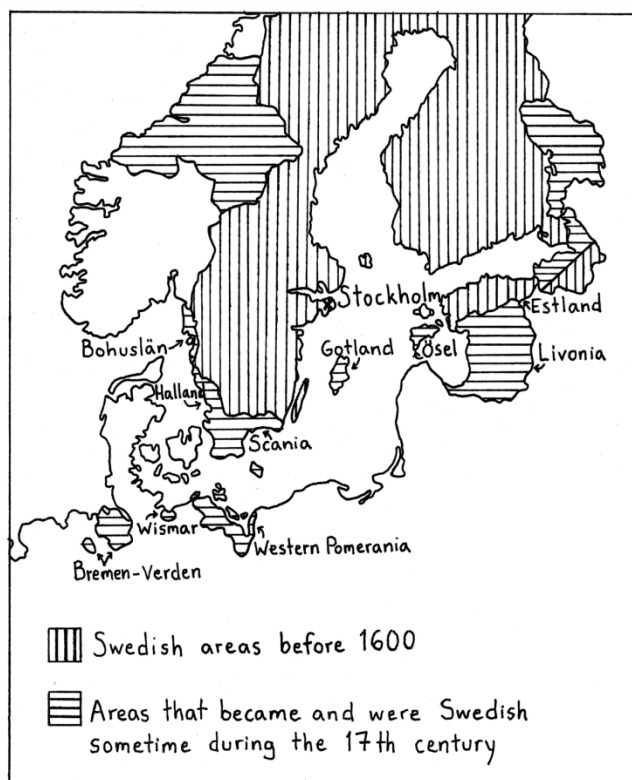
⁴⁹ Harald Gustafsson, *Nordens historia: en europeisk region under 1200 år* (Studentlitteratur, 1997), 103; T.K. Derry, *A History of Scandinavia: Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Finland and Iceland* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1979), 115–119.

⁵⁰ Livonia was Swedish: 1621–1721.

⁵¹ Gustafsson, *Nordens historia*, 116; J. Thomas Lindblad, *Sweden's Trade with the Dutch Republic 1738-1795: A Quantitative Analysis of the Relationship between Economic Growth and International Trade in the Eighteenth Century* (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1982), 12; Øystein Rian, "Introduction: Government and Society in Early Modern Scandinavia 1560-1721," in *A Revolution from Above? The Power State of 16th and 17th Century Scandinavia*, ed. Leon Jespersen (Odense: University Press of Southern Denmark, 2000), 13–30, 23.

prominent financiers who helped to forge such connections between the Dutch Republic and the Nordic kings.⁵² In particular, Louis de Geer, who will figure extensively in this dissertation, serves as the best example of the close connections between the Republic and Sweden. De Geer provided the Swedish crown with numerous ironworks, brass and steel factories, mills, shipyards and credit facilities, and, at the height of the Dutch-Swedish relationship (1640-1645), even fitted out a fleet for the Swedish-Danish war.

Figure 1-2 Map of Swedish areas around the Baltic in the seventeenth century



Map created by Henrik Pulli

In 1648, the peace treaty of Westphalia was signed, and Sweden acquired the region of Vorpommern along with Rügen, Stettin and Wismar, as well as the Duchies of Bremen and Verden.⁵³ The main motivation in annexing these German provinces was to gain a foothold inside the Holy Roman Empire, and, to a certain degree, to gain control over tolls. Although the tolls at Narva and Riga were important for the Swedish crown, and the Sound toll for the Danish, full control was an illusion, since merchants always sought ways to circumvent duties, either through political pressure, land routes, or use of the alternative Archangel route.⁵⁴ Nordic interests in Northern Germany were mainly related

⁵² Gustafsson, *Nordens historia*, 117; Lindblad, *Sweden's Trade*, 12.

⁵³ Pommern 1648–1815, Wismar 1648–1903, Bremen-Verden 1648–1715; Rian, “Introduction”, 23. Gustafsson, *Nordens historia*, 103; Petri Karonen, *Pohjoinen suurvalta: Ruotsi ja Suomi 1521–1809* (Helsinki: WSOY, 1999), 225–227.

⁵⁴ Gustafsson, *Nordens historia*, 118; Rian, “Introduction”, 24.

to access to markets in the Holy Roman Empire.⁵⁵ Indeed, this was why both kingdoms had expanded into the Elbe basin. The Danish King, in his capacity as Duke of Schleswig-Holstein, and the Swedish King, in his capacity as protector of Stralsund, served to guarantee peace within the Holy Roman Empire.⁵⁶ In several Nordic towns, both the merchants and the nobility were of German origin. They spoke German, and were linked to the Nordic elites through connections at the royal courts.⁵⁷

Figure 1-3 Nordic monarchs during the first half of the seventeenth century

YEARS	DENMARK KING	YEARS	SWEDEN KING/QUEEN
1588-1648	Christian IV	1604-1632	Gustav II Adolf
1648-1670	Fredrik III	1632 (1644)-1654	Queen Christina
		1654-1660	Karl X Gustav

Thus, while Leye was in India, and Carloff was about to enter Swedish service, a general European peace had just been signed, and Sweden had resultantly become a major power. Christina, the daughter of Gustav II Adolf, succeeded her father. Queen Christina then abdicated in 1654, and her cousin, Count Karl Gustav, was crowned king. The new king faced severe financial problems, due to the large number of soldiers from previous wars who were still awaiting compensation. The king's solution was to start a new war against Poland. In 1655, troops were sent to Krakow and Warsaw, while Russia, yet again, declared war against Sweden. Waging war on two fronts made it difficult for Karl X Gustav to maintain a balance in the state's finances. Meanwhile, the relationship between the Dutch Republic and Sweden had deteriorated. Additional fees levied on ships arriving from the Baltic irritated the Swedish, whereas the Dutch were displeased with recent Swedish customs demands. The situation worsened in 1655, when the Swedish king decided to attack Poland-Lithuania, which jeopardized the supply route for Baltic grain.⁵⁸

In this context, the new Danish King, Fredrik III, saw an opportunity to attack Sweden, and Denmark declared war in 1657. As such, King Karl X Gustav had to abandon the war in Poland in order to fight Denmark. After a surprise march by the Swedish army over the ice from Jylland to the island of Zealand, the Danish capital was besieged. The Danish Kingdom nevertheless managed to survive, thanks to a Dutch rescue fleet, dispatched in order to prevent Swedish dominance over the Baltic. However, the terms of the peace treaty signed at Roskilde in 1658 were a disaster for Denmark: Sweden acquired Scania, Halland, Blekinge, and Bornholm, as well as Trondhjem-län in Norway. Although in another treaty, signed in 1660, after Karl X Gustav's death, Sweden gave up Bornholm and Trondheim, war nonetheless broke out again in 1675, when Denmark, joined by the Dutch, attacked Sweden in hope of reclaiming the other lost territories.⁵⁹

An important part of the rivalry between the different European powers was interest in and access to overseas trade. In Northern Europe, the English and the Dutch had been pioneers, creating chartered and joint stock companies with exclusive rights to trade overseas. Trading monopolies and

⁵⁵ The German empire refers to the Holy Roman Empire, ruled by the Habsburgs in Wien. This empire consisted of over a hundred smaller states, duchies, bishoprics, counties and free cities scattered across Central Western Europe.

⁵⁶ Schleswig-Holstein was a fief under the Danish crown. The main part of the fief was ruled by the Danish king in his capacity as Duke of Schleswig and Holstein.

⁵⁷ Rian, "Introduction", 20.

⁵⁸ Karonen, *Pohjoinen suurvalta*, 220.

⁵⁹ Jörgen Weibull, *Sveriges historia* (Stockholm: Förlags AB Wiken Svenska Institutet, 1993), 29–49; Lindblad, *Sweden's Trade*, 14.

close cooperation between governments and private merchants were thus no new phenomenon, although they became increasingly associated with new forms of investment and a larger geographical scale.⁶⁰ In 1600, the English parliament had granted the English East India Company (EIC) privileges, and in 1602, the Dutch Verenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie (VOC) had been established.⁶¹ However, these companies were not entirely novel in conducting trade in Asia, Africa and the Americas, but rather drew upon the earlier experience of Portuguese and Spanish colonising enterprises.⁶²

The strategy of the Europeans rested upon building trading stations (or factories) at various strategic points in the Indian Ocean. These settlements were sometimes fortified, and often had ports, which functioned as centres for trade. Moreover, the European *modus operandi* within the trade of Asia continued to follow the model that had been established by the Portuguese. When the Portuguese had first arrived in the Indian Ocean, they had found a fully developed system of intra-Asian trade, and thus had had little choice but to adapt to local trade rhythms. One of the few goods that had interested Asian merchants was the silver that had been brought from Mexico. Furthermore, it did not take long for the Portuguese to realise how much profit they could make by exchanging Indian textiles for local spices on the Indonesian archipelago. In turn, these spices could then be shipped to Europe via the so-called Cape Route. However, after the Portuguese, other competitors soon arrived. The English and Dutch also participated in inter-Asian trade to a considerable extent, and, eventually, European intra-Asian trade came to be dominated by first the Dutch, and then the English. The VOC, for instance, traded bullion (silver and gold) from Japan and Taiwan in return for Indian textiles, the latter in turn being exchanged for spices, which were then dispatched to Europe.⁶³ Thus, participation in intra-Asian trade ultimately provided Europeans with goods that could then be sold in Europe, and also allowed them to profit from internal Asian trade, which in turn made them less dependent on supplies of bullion.

The participation of northern European countries in the trade of Asia was based on trading companies. The charters of the latter had granted them extensive rights and privileges overseas, such as the right to wage war, to enforce contracts and to hold property. They had also granted the directors of the companies legal jurisdiction over their employees overseas, and, most importantly, they had

⁶⁰ Wim Klooster, *The Dutch Moment: War, Trade, and Settlement in the Seventeenth-Century Atlantic World*, 1 edition (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2016), 35.

⁶¹ Niels Steensgaard, "The Dutch East India Company as an Institutional Innovation," in *Dutch Capital and World Capitalism: Capitalisme Hollondais et Capitalisme Mondial*, ed. Maurice Aymard (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 235–58.

⁶² In general about the Europeans in Asia, Om Prakash, *European Commercial Enterprise in Pre-Colonial India* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998); Holden Furber, *Rival Empires of Trade in the Orient 1600-1800* (Minneapolis: Univ. of Minnesota Press, 1976); About the English East India Company, K. N. Chaudhuri, *The English East India Company: The Study of an Early Joint-Stock Company 1600-1640* (London: Frank Cass and Co. Ltd., 1965); About the English Atlantic companies, William Pettigrew, *Freedom's Debt: The Royal African Company and the Politics of the Atlantic Slave Trade, 1672-1752* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2014); K. G. Davies, *The Royal African Company* (London: Longmans, 1957); About the establishment and launch of the VOC, Israel, *Dutch Primacy*; Femme S. Gaastra, *The Dutch East India Company: Expansion and Decline*, First English Language edition (Zutphen: Walburg Pers, 2003).

⁶³ About the role and importance of intra-Asian trade and the strength of the VOC, see Sanjay Subrahmanyam, *The Portuguese Empire in Asia, 1500-1700: A Political and Economic History* (Chichester: John Wiley & Sons, 2012), 223; Om Prakash, "The Portuguese and the Dutch in Asian Maritime Trade: A Comparative Analysis," in *Merchants, Companies and Trade: Europe and Asia in The Early Modern Era*, ed. Sushil Chaudhury and Michel Morineau (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 175–88; Furber, *Rival Empires*.

signalled to competitors that the company operated under the aegis of the crown or state.⁶⁴ In the Indian Ocean, first the VOC, and later the EIC became the predominant powers, at times having an almost complete monopoly over certain Asian markets, such as that of spice. For example, the strength of the VOC was based on its strong capital base in the Republic, but also on its willingness to deploy violence in order to achieve favourable trading positions in the Indian Ocean.⁶⁵

In the Atlantic, however, the situation was rather different. On the Western Coast of Africa, the WIC had been in a strong position only for a brief period during the first half of the seventeenth century. Subsequently, a succession of costly wars between the Republic and Portugal, combined with the Anglo-Dutch conflict and competition from other Europeans, Brazilians and assorted interlopers, effectively destroyed the once strong position of the WIC, and the company went bankrupt in 1674.⁶⁶

In addition to these English and Dutch ventures, the seventeenth century also witness attempts at competition from various other European powers. For instance, the French founded a series of companies targeted at the Asian and Atlantic markets.⁶⁷ Indeed, even the Duke of Courland and the Elector of Brandenburg initiated trading companies in imitation of their Northern European neighbours.⁶⁸ The similarity of these companies arose from the fact that they were inspired by and modelled on the already existing EIC, VOC and WIC.

Although often neglected, Nordic maritime expansion played an important role in European overseas trade. Because of their links to the Dutch Republic, the Nordic companies have been dismissed as ‘pseudo-Dutch’, ‘Dutchmen sailing under strange flags’, and even ‘imitation’, ‘puppet’ or ‘decoy’ companies.⁶⁹ Indeed, some historians have even argued that the Nordic companies did not

⁶⁴ Janice E. Thomson, *Mercenaries, Pirates, and Sovereigns: State-Building and Extraterritorial Violence in Early Modern Europe* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1996), 35.

⁶⁵ Israel, *Dutch Primacy*, 171-187; Furber, *Rival Empires*, 187-191 and 191-193. On the investment of capital in the company, see Oscar Gelderblom, Abe de Jong, and Joost Jonker, “The Formative Years of the Modern Corporation: The Dutch East India Company VOC, 1602-1623,” *The Journal of Economic History* 73, no. 4 (2013): 1050-1076.

⁶⁶ Henk den Heijer, *De geschiedenis van de WIC* (Zutphen: Walburg, 2002); Henk den Heijer, *Goud, ivoor en slaven: scheepvaart en handel van de Tweede Westindische Compagnie op Afrika, 1674-1740* (Zutphen: Walburg, 1997); Henk den Heijer, *The Dutch West India Company, 1621-1791*, ” In *Riches from Atlantic Commerce: Dutch Transatlantic Trade and Shipping, 1585-1817*, edited by Victor Enthoven and Johannes Postma, 82-85. Boston/Leiden: Brill, 2003; Ruud Paesie, *Lorrendrayen op Africa de illegale goederen- en slavenhandel op West-Afrika tijdens het achttiende-eeuwse handelsmonopolie van de West-Indische Compagnie, 1700-1734* (Amsterdam: De Bataafsche Leeuw, 2005); Roquinaldo Ferreira, “From Brazil to West Africa: Dutch-Portuguese Rivalry, Gold Smuggling and African Politics in the Bight of Benin,” in *The Legacy of Dutch Brazil*, ed. Michiel van Groesen (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 77-104; Porter, “European Activity on the Gold Coast.”; Klaas Ratelband, *Nederlanders in West-Afrika 1600-1650: Angola, Kongo en São Tomé*. 1 edition. Zutphen: Walburg Pers, 2000.

⁶⁷ Elisabeth Heijmans, “The Agency of Empire: Personal Connections and Individual Strategies of the French Early Modern Expansion (1686-1746).”, PhD-dissertation, Leiden: Leiden University, 2018; Christina Brauner, *Kompanien, Könige und caboceers, Interkulturelle Diplomatie an Gold- und Sklavenküste im 17. und 18. Jahrhundert* (Berlin, Boston: Böhlau, 2015); Felicia Gottmann, “French-Asian Connections: the Compagnies des Indes, France's Eastern Trade, and new Directions in Historical Scholarship,” *The Historical Journal* 56, no. 2 (2013): 537-52; Philippe Haudrère, *Les Compagnies des Indes Orientales: trois siècles de rencontre entre Orientaux et Occidentaux (1600-1858)* (Paris: Desjonquères, 2006).

⁶⁸ Holger Weiss, “Danskar och Svenskar i den Atlantiska slavhandeln 1650-1850,” in *Global historia från periferin*, ed. Leos Müller, Holger Weiss, and Göran Rydén (Lund: Studentlitteratur, 2010), 39-74, here, 46-50; Edgar Anderson, “Die Kurländische Kolonie Tobago,” *Baltische Hefte* 8, no. 1 (1961): 216-32; Otto Heinz Mattiesen, *Die Kolonial und Überseepolitik Herzog Jakobs von Kurland, 1640-1660* (Stuttgart: Druck von Rohlhammer, 1939).

⁶⁹ Holden Furber, *Rival Empires*, 211; Kristoff Glamann, “The Danish East India Company,” in *Sociétés et Compagnies de Commerce en Orient et dans l'Océan Indien*, ed. Michiel Mollet (Paris, 1970), 471-81; Weiss, “Danskar och Svenskar”; Wim Klooster, *The Dutch Moment*, 187.

play any significant role in overseas trade.⁷⁰ Of course, the Nordic companies did not have anything like the impact of the VOC and EIC. Nevertheless, they can still provide important historiographical insights, since they provided employment to those entrepreneurially-minded individuals who did not fit into the larger trading companies. In this sense, they can also shed light on the differing structures of differing companies, and also raise important questions about how historians perceive corporate success.

It has often been assumed that the companies were national enterprises tied closely to the state. However, they were not national enterprises in the modern sense. In reality, many of them, the VOC and EIC included, benefitted from foreign capital, foreign workers, and foreign knowledge, both European and non-European alike.⁷¹ If we place too much emphasis on the supposedly national framework, we risk losing sight of such cross-imperial business networks.⁷²

With regard to the specific Nordic context, the pioneering works of Georg Nørregård, Kay Larsen and Victor Granlund all employed an exclusively national framework, focusing on the Danish and Swedish presence in Asia and Africa.⁷³ For their part, Stephen Diller and Martin Krieger studied the Danish presence in Asia in the *longue durée*, but still from a purely Danish perspective.⁷⁴ Heinrich Sieveking has focused on Northern German overseas trade, including its close connections to Nordic trade.⁷⁵ Although in a different geographical context, Sune Dalgård's work on the competition between Dutch and Danish whalers in the Arctic has offered additional insights into the centrality of individuals to the development of Danish international trade.⁷⁶

However, the work of Ole Feldbæk and György Nováky on the role of the Nordic trading companies will provide the starting point for the current research.⁷⁷ The former has studied the

⁷⁰ For example, in a recent edited volume, Leos Müller and Dan Andersen have concluded that overseas trade did not have any significant impact on the Danish and Swedish economies. Political motives, they argue, came first, and economic motives only second. This is true from the perspective of the state, but my focus is different. From the perspective of an individual, overseas business did play a significant role, particularly in the shape of opportunity. See L. Müller and P. Andersen, P. Emmer, O. Petre-Grenouilleau, and Jessica Roitman, eds., *A Deus Ex Machina Revisited: Atlantic Colonial Trade and European Economic Development* (Boston/Leiden: Brill, 2006); Tapan Raychaudhuri, *Jan Company in Coromandel, 1605-1690: A Study in the Interrelations of European Commerce and Traditional Economies* (Gravenhage: Martinus Nijhoff, 1962), 113.

⁷¹ Chapter three will study this question in greater depth.

⁷² Wim Klooster has made a similar observation that many Dutch capitalist did not necessarily experience loyalty towards the Republic but rather to their home community, Klooster, *The Dutch Moment*, 187.

⁷³ Georg Nørregård, *Danish Settlements in West Africa, 1658-1850* (Boston: Boston University Press, 1966); Larsen, *Dansk-Ostindiske koloniers historie*; Victor Granlund, *En svensk koloni i Afrika: eller Svenska afrikanska kompaniets historia* (Stockholm: P. A. Norstedt, 1879).

⁷⁴ Stephan Diller, *Die Dänen in Indien, Südostasien und China (1620-1845)* (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz Verlag, 1999); Martin Krieger, *Kaufleute, Seeräuber und Diplomaten. Der Dänische Handel auf dem Indischen Ozean (1620 - 1868)*, (Köln: Böhlau Verlag, 1998). The study by Krieger has been crucial to a better understanding of the development of Danish trade in Asia. It also emphasises the importance of individuals in the Danish trading companies. According to Krieger, Danish trade in Asia was based on a symbiosis between the interests of the companies and those of their employees.

⁷⁵ Sieveking, "Die Glückstädter Guineafahrt".

⁷⁶ The whaling trade was lucrative. The oil produced from the whale fat was used to make soaps and lubricants, and was also sold for several other purposes. On the whaling trade in a Danish context, see Sune Dalgård, *Dansk-Norsk hvalfangst, 1615-1660 en studie over Danmarks-Norges stilling i Europæisk merkantil expansion*, (Copenhagen: G.E.C. Gad, 1962), especially chapter 2.

⁷⁷ Feldbæk, "The Danish Trading Companies"; Ole Feldbæk, "The Organization and Structure of the Danish East India, West India and Guinea Companies in the 17th and 18th Centuries," in *Companies and Trade*, ed. Leonard Blussé and Femme Gastra (Leiden: Leiden University Press, 1981), 131-158; Nováky, *Handelskompanier*; György Nováky, "Small Company Trade and the Gold Coast: The Swedish Africa Company 1650-1663," *Itinerario*, 16, no. 01 (1992): 57-76.

organisational aspects of the Danish East India and West India companies, and has demonstrated that their character was multifaceted. They strongly resembled the Dutch model, but at times improvised novel solutions in response to the local Danish political and economic contexts. Nováky's study of the Swedish Africa Company has shown that the SAC was not as unsuccessful as it might seem: at times, it managed to challenge the WIC, and even to turn a profit.

Currently, the predominant focus of Nordic overseas historiography is the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.⁷⁸ Although giving more importance to the role of individuals, these studies are still primarily focused on particular companies and 'national' empires. Although my own research has benefited considerably from these approaches, it focuses more strongly on the individuals who stood at the formative moment of the companies, and who subsequently managed them. In contrast to previous research, this dissertation thus places individual employees or traders and their careers on centre stage, moving beyond a strictly Nordic overseas history, towards a more transnational scope of analysis.

Politically, the focus of the dissertation will be on the Nordic kingdoms, specifically Denmark-Norway, Sweden, and those German polities that were part of the early modern Nordic empires.⁷⁹ However, this dissertation is not only about Nordic overseas trade, nor is it simply a study of institutions. In particular, the close links to the Dutch Republic need to be underlined. Moreover, this is also not a study of the development of intra-European trade relationships. However, the general trends in trade do need to be addressed, in order to understand the framework in which the activities of men such as Leyel and Carloff occurred. Rather than focusing on states, regions or physical borders, the approach of this thesis will be transnational. Indeed, the actions of the men in question blurred physical borders and state laws, especially overseas. In particular, they took advantage of the porous borders created by imperial rivalries, and thus called into question conventional organisational affiliations.

1.4 A smaller scale of analysis – placing the individual in the spotlight

During recent decades, there has been a growing interest in smaller units of analysis within overseas historiography. Indeed, such agency-oriented studies have shed new light on the individuals involved in seventeenth-century overseas trade. For example, Chris Nierstrasz has illustrated how VOC employees were able to benefit from trade in India.⁸⁰ For his part, Søren Mentz has discussed how EIC officials participated in the private diamond trade in Asia.⁸¹ In the Nordic context, pioneering works by Leos Müller and Lisa Hellman have extended our understanding of the individuals involved in Swedish trade with China. Indeed, Müller's study of merchant networks in eighteenth-century

⁷⁸ Magdalena Naum and Jonas M. Nordin, eds., *Scandinavian Colonialism and the Rise of Modernity: Small Time Agents in a Global Arena*, (New York: Springer, 2013); Holger Weiss, ed., *Ports of Globalisation, Places of Creolisation: Nordic Possessions in the Atlantic World during the Era of the Slave Trade* (Boston/Leiden: Brill, 2015).

⁷⁹ At the time Finland was part of the Swedish kingdom.

⁸⁰ Chris Nierstrasz, "Reguleren of Corrumperen? De VOC en hervormingen in de privé-handel," *Tijdschrift voor Zeegechiedenis* 25 (2006): 165–176; Chris Nierstrasz, *In the Shadow of the Company: The Dutch East India Company and Its Servants in the Period of Its Decline* (Boston/Leiden: Brill, 2012).

⁸¹ Søren Mentz, *The English Gentleman Merchant at Work: Madras and the City of London 1660-1740* (Copenhagen: Museum Tusculanum Press, 2005). Mentz has thus been a pioneer in bridging the gap between company studies in Europe and Asia.

Canton has shown just how international the Swedish overseas trade was.⁸² Moreover, Hellman's dissertation on the everyday life of Swedish East India Company officials in Canton has demonstrated just how intertwined European interests in China were, and how the complex hierarchical order of trade and politics at the port were a result of local Chinese politics.⁸³ In the Danish context, Pernille Ipsen has emphasised the importance of social relationships between Danish company officials and local women on the Gold Coast.⁸⁴

Research on the socio-economic aspects of early modern overseas trade has increasingly highlighted the role of merchant groups, diasporas and networks.⁸⁵ In particular, a series of works on Southern European overseas trade have elucidated the importance of trust and reputation in early modern business networks. Moreover, they have also addressed the importance of cross-cultural trade networks in the overseas context.⁸⁶ Indeed, the topics of trust and reputation will feature in the following dissertation. However, chapter four will also discuss the dynamics of social relationships in an opposing sense, namely as instances of fragility and vulnerability.

In a recent edited volume, Cátia Antunes and Amélia Polónia have emphasised the importance of studying individuals operating both within and outside imperial monopolies, these two groups

⁸² Leos Müller, "Trading with Asia without a Colonial Empire in Asia: Swedish Merchant Networks and Chartered Company Trade, 1760-1790," in *Beyond Empires*, ed. Antunes and Polónia, 236–52; Leos Müller, "The Swedish East India Company: Strategies and Functions of an Interloper," in *Small Is Beautiful? Interlopers and Smaller Trading Nations in the Pre-Industrial Period*, ed. Markus Denzel, Jan de Vries, and Philipp Robinson Rössner (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2011), 73–93.

⁸³ Lisa Hellman, *Navigating the Foreign Quarters – Everyday Life of the Swedish East India Company Employees in Canton and Macao 1730-1830*, (Stockholm: Stockholm University, 2015).

⁸⁴ Pernille Ipsen, *Daughters of the Trade: Atlantic Slavers and Interracial Marriage on the Gold Coast* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015); Pernille Ipsen, "'The Christened Mulatresses': Euro-African Families in a Slave-Trading Town," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 70, no. 2 (2013): 371–98; Pernille Ipsen, *Koko's Daughters – Danish Men Marrying Ga Women in an Atlantic Slave Trading Port in the Eighteenth Century*, (Copenhagen: University of Copenhagen, 2008). In the Dutch context a similar study by Natalie Everts, "Social Outcomes of Trade Relations: Ties between Africans and Europeans in the Hubs of the Slave Trade on the Guinea Coast." In *Migration, Trade and Slavery in an Expanding World. Essays in Honor of Pieter Emmer*, edited by Wim Klooster, 141–64. Boston/Leiden: Brill, 2009.

⁸⁵ Sebouh David Aslanian, *From the Indian Ocean to the Mediterranean: The Global Trade Networks of Armenian Merchants from New Julfa* (Berkley/Los Angeles: Univ of California Press, 2011); Francesca Trivellato, *The Familiarity of Strangers: The Sephardic Diaspora, Livorno, and Cross-Cultural Trade in the Early Modern Period* (New Heaven: Yale University Press, 2014); Francesca Trivellato, Leor Halevi, and Cátia Antunes, ed., *Religion and Trade: Cross-Cultural Exchanges in World History, 1000-1900*, 1 edition (Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press, 2014); Tijl Vanneste, *Global Trade and Commercial Networks: Eighteenth-Century Diamond Merchants*, 1 edition (London Vermont: Routledge, 2011); Ina Baghdiantz McCabe, Gelina Harlaftis, and Ioanna Pepelasis Minoglou, *Diaspora Entrepreneurial Networks: Four Centuries of History* (Oxford/New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2005).

⁸⁶ Sanjay Subrahmanyam, edit, *Merchant Networks in the Early Modern World, 1450–1800*, vol. 8 (London/ New York: Routledge, 1976); Daviken Studnicki-Gizbert, *A Nation upon the Ocean Sea: Portugal's Atlantic Diaspora and the Crisis of the Spanish Empire, 1492-1640* (Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press, 2007); Xabier Lamikiz, *Trade and Trust in the Eighteenth-Century Atlantic World: Spanish Merchants and Their Overseas Networks* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2013); Philip D. Curtin, *Cross-Cultural Trade in World History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984); Peter Mark and Professor José da Silva Horta, *The Forgotten Diaspora: Jewish Communities in West Africa and the Making of the Atlantic World*, Reprint edition (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013); Claude Markovits, "Trading Networks and Global History," in *Explorations in History and Globalization*, ed. Cátia Antunes and Karwan Fatah-Black (New York: Routledge, 2016), 63–75; Cátia Antunes and Jos Gommans, eds. *Exploring the Dutch Empire: Agents, Networks and Institutions, 1600-2000*. London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2015; Cátia Antunes, Cross-Cultural Business Cooperation in the Dutch Trading World, 1580-1776. A View from Amsterdam's Notarial Contracts." In *Religion and Trade: Cross-Cultural Exchanges in World History, 1000-1900*, edited by Francesca Trivellato, Leor Halevi, and Cátia Antunes, 150–68. New York: Oxford University Press, 2014.

being linked through self-organised networks.⁸⁷ In particular, they argue that individuals in self-organised networks posed serious challenges to the state, the church and the monopolistic institutions with which they were affiliated. Although early modern states were crucial to the construction of overseas empires, being based on large and complex logistical mechanisms, and commanding largescale financing, they remained, nonetheless, implicitly or explicitly dependent on the cooperation of individuals.⁸⁸ Cooperation and self-organisation also take centre stage in the works of David Hancock and Meike Von Brescius, the latter revealing the relationship between private companies and British interlopers in early modern Chinese trade.⁸⁹

For their part, Antunes and Pólonia underline the importance of mechanisms of interaction between self-organised networks and states. In their work, the dynamic of early modern trade is conceptualised as a series of individual relationships, which together amounted to a system of global interactions.⁹⁰ In this dissertation, the aim will be to move away from an exclusive emphasis on networks, and to analyse instead the strategies of specific individuals within these interactions. Indeed, this implies an even smaller scale of analysis than that employed by Antunes and Polónia.

The individuals who feature in this dissertation acted on a smaller scale than the companies with which they were affiliated. However, this does not mean that they were unimportant. To the contrary, a number of studies of early modern colonial history have argued persuasively for the importance of focusing on individuals, and small-scale case studies, within larger oceanic and imperial spaces.⁹¹ For example, Alison Games has studied individuals in a global context, and concluded that the early modern period witnessed a growing connectedness between the various continents of the world. This connectedness was not only characterized by flows of commodities, but also by relationships between people. As Games points out, “people were at the heart of this process of globalization, which was shaped not by an inanimate force but rather by individuals who linked the world through ever-thickening connections.”⁹² However, such global individuals have received less attention in the historiography than large-scale organisations. According to Games, the reason for this is twofold. On the one hand, colonial historiography has mainly focused on larger entities, such as trading companies, and situated these within large spaces, such as the Atlantic Ocean. On the other hand, studies of individuals have been confined to the framework of national historiographies.

In order to remedy these defects, Christian Koot and Claudia Schnurmann have encouraged historians to examine the biographies of those overseas individuals who encountered and traversed different organisations and empires.⁹³ According to Koot, organisations struggled to impose their authority directly in decentralised and peripheral environments, and decision-making was thus often

⁸⁷ Cátia Antunes and Amelia Pólonia, eds., *Beyond Empires: Global, Self-Organizing, Cross-Imperial Networks, 1500-1800*. Boston/Leiden: Brill, 2016, see introduction, 2–11.

⁸⁸ Ibid, 5.

⁸⁹ David Hancock, “Self-Organized Complexity and the Emergence of an Atlantic Market Economy, 1651-1815: The Case of Madeira,” in *The Atlantic Economy during the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries: Organization, Operation, Practice, and Personnel*, ed. Peter A. Coclanis (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2005), 30–71; David Hancock, “The Trouble with Networks: Managing the Scots’ Early-Modern Madeira Trade,” *The Business History Review* 79, no. 3 (2005): 467–91; David Hancock, *Oceans of Wine: Madeira and the Emergence of American Trade and Taste* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009); Von Brescius, “Private Enterprise”.

⁹⁰ Antunes and Pólonia, *Beyond Empires*, 5.

⁹¹ Jeffrey Fortin and Mark Meuwese, eds., *Atlantic Biographies: Individuals and Peoples in the Atlantic World* (Boston/Leiden: Brill, 2013); Lisa Lindsay and John Wood Sweet, eds., *Biography and the Black Atlantic* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013).

⁹² Games, “Beyond the Atlantic”, 678.

⁹³ Schnurmann, “Representative Atlantic Entrepreneur”; Koot, “The Merchant”.

left to the initiative of individuals. Indeed, Koot argues that by studying the agency of such individuals, we can better understand how early modern empires were constantly forced into processes of negotiation.⁹⁴ For his part, Jeffrey Fortin also stresses the danger of neglecting the importance of individuals, a view shared by Joseph Miller and Alison Games.⁹⁵ As Fortin puts it: “What can go missing in mountains of data, scores of examinations about race, economies, gender, politics and numerous other topics are the individuals and small groups who proved central to the development of the Atlantic World.”⁹⁶

When dealing with individuals, the question of “representativeness” must be addressed. Indeed, this question will be familiar to practitioners of microhistory. Carlo Ginzburg, Giovanni Levi, Matti Peltonen, Hans Renders, Binne de Haan and Sigurdur Gylfi Magnússon, among others, have all considered the matter, and have argued for its importance, both from a theoretical and practical standpoint.⁹⁷

The historian Francesca Trivellato has also discussed how studying overseas expansion on a smaller scale can help to clarify those business practices that have often been overlooked or deprecated by histories written on a macro scale.⁹⁸ Indeed, it can also serve to nuance and refine concepts that are often taken for granted, such as trading companies, company officials, pirates or merchants.⁹⁹ Similarly, the historian Maria Fusaro has underlined that in studies on oceanic spaces, micro-analysis can offer significantly new knowledge, and thus provide a means to revise grand narratives. Methodologically, micro-analysis eschews the nation-state paradigm, since it pursues research topics outside the realm of the nation state. This does not mean that the state and its institutions were unimportant, but it does offer greater consideration to the actions of the individuals. According to Fusaro: “it is in the relationship between institutions and individuals that the results of research are proving to be most fruitful and challenging.”¹⁰⁰ Moreover, Fusaro also emphasises the importance of the constant renegotiation of terms between governments and individual actors.¹⁰¹ Indeed, traders such as Leyel and Carloff can provide excellent case studies in this regard, uniting individual agency with institutional and political frameworks.

⁹⁴ Koot, “The Merchant”, 606.

⁹⁵ Jeffrey Fortin, “Preface,” in *Atlantic Biographies*, ed. Fortin and Meuwese (Boston/Leiden: Brill, 2013), x–xvi; Joseph C. Miller, “A Historical Appreciation of the Biographical Turn,” in *Biography and the Black Atlantic*, ed. Lisa A. Lindsay and John Wood Sweet (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013), 19–47; Games, “Beyond the Atlantic.”

⁹⁶ Fortin, “Preface.”, x.

⁹⁷ Carlo Ginzburg, “Latitude, Slaves, and the Bible: An Experiment in Microhistory,” *Critical Inquiry* 31, no. 3 (2005): 665–683; Giovanni Levi, “On Microhistory,” in *New Perspectives on Historical Writing*, ed. Peter Burke (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2001), 97–119; Matti Peltonen, “Clues, Margins, and Monads: The Micro-Macro Link in Historical Research,” *History and Theory* 40, no. 3 (2001): 347–59; Hans Renders, Binne de Haan, and Jonne Harmsma, eds., *The Biographical Turn: Lives in History* (New York: Routledge, 2016); Sigurður Gylfi Magnússon, “Social History as ‘Sites of Memory’? The Institutionalization of History: Microhistory and the Grand Narrative,” *Journal of Social History* 39, no. 3 (2006): 891–913; Hans Renders, Binne de Haan, and Nigel Hamilton, eds., *Theoretical Discussions of Biography: Approaches from History, Microhistory, and Life Writing* (Lewiston, New York: Edwin Mellen Press, 2013).

⁹⁸ Trivellato, “*The Familiarity of Strangers*”, 8.

⁹⁹ Francesca Trivellato, “Is There a Future for Italian Microhistory in the Age of Global History?” *California Italian Studies* 2, no. 1 (2011), VII.

¹⁰⁰ Maria Fusaro, “A Reassessment of Mediterranean History between the Northern Invasion and the Caravane Maritime,” in *Trade and Cultural Exchange in the Early Modern Mediterranean: Braudel’s Maritime Legacy*, ed. Mohamed-Salah Omri, Colin Heywood, and Maria Fusaro (London/New York: I.B. Tauris, 2010), 1–22, 10.

¹⁰¹ Ibidem.

This dissertation is not concerned solely with people either “from below” or “from above”, but rather with those “in-between.” In the history of European overseas expansion, such intermediate individuals remain relatively unknown. However, if we study how they operated in an overseas business context, we can unravel various connections, overlaps, similarities and differences, which stretched beyond specific states, regions, companies and trades. In short, macro and micro history are not mutually exclusive, and this study will combine both scales, situating the careers of two individuals within a larger thematic, temporal and spatial context, namely that of seventeenth-century Nordic overseas commercial expansion. As such, it will be possible to grasp the symbiotic relationships that existed between individuals, companies and states, and the specific characteristics of seventeenth-century overseas business to which they gave rise.

This dissertation will study the ways in which individuals, information, knowledge, trade and social relationships cut across institutional, organisational, national and imperial boundaries. By studying two regional systems, I will be able to elucidate some of the entanglements that characterised the history of overseas business. Thus, this study will adopt an approach of “connective comparison”, a term coined by Weinbaum, Ramamurthy and Dong.¹⁰² Studying both connections and manifestations of difference will mean that individual cases will be understood both individually and collectively, and this will permit a deeper understanding of how the connections worked. This dissertation will encompass concurrent events in several regions of the globe, such as the Indian Ocean, Western Africa, Central America, and Western, Southern and Northern Europe. It thus spans from the Caribbean to the Indian Ocean, and studies global entanglements through human interactions and daily trading activities. The study thus focuses on the individuals involved, rather than on any specific national or regional border, and privileges the encounters between European and non-European merchants, whether these occurred in Europe, the Caribbean, Asia or Africa.

1.5 What is known about Leyel and Carloff so far? – Presenting the literature and primary sources

Leyel and Carloff are not completely unknown. However, relative to the mass of sources available regarding their careers in the Indian and Atlantic Oceans, they have been understudied. In this section, I will review the existing literature on Leyel and Carloff. It demonstrates that the activities of Leyel and Carloff have mainly been studied as isolated cases, rather than situated within broader analytical categories.¹⁰³

The oldest work regarding Leyel is the so-called Henning Engelhart manuscript, written in the late eighteenth century, and based on documents in the Danish national archives. This provides a general description of the initial years of the Danish East India Company, namely from the

¹⁰² Alys Eve Weinbaum et al., eds., *The Modern Girl Around the World: Consumption, Modernity, and Globalization* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008).

¹⁰³ For the first fruits of this project, see Kaarle Wirta, “Henrich Carloffin monet kasvot 1600-luvun maailmankauapassa,” in *Pohjola, Atlantti ja maailma: ylijärjaisen vuorovaikutuksen historiaa 1600-1900-luvuilla*, ed. Kalle Kananoja and Lauri Tähtinen (Helsinki: SKS, Finnish Literature Society, 2018), 50–84; Kaarle Wirta, “Rediscovering Agency in the Atlantic: A Biographical Approach Linking Entrepreneurial Spirit and Overseas Companies,” in *The Biographical Turn Lives in History*, ed. Hans Renders, Binne de Haan, and Jonne Harmsma (New York: Routledge, 2016), 118–29; Kaarle Wirta, “Entreprenörskap utan gränser, individer och fordisk färrhandel i jämförande perspektiv under 1600-talet,” in *Från tidigmoderna rum till samtida rumsligheter*, edited by P. Hettula F. Petersson, and L. Hollsten, (Åbo: Juvenes Print, 2016), 9–34.

seventeenth to the end of the eighteenth century.¹⁰⁴ It presents Løvel's role neutrally, portraying him as a company employee who faced a mutiny, before being sent back home. In 1805, Barthold Georg Niebuhr wrote a study of Løvel, describing him as "a man whose powerful soul, outstanding talents and deft administration cannot but command admiration."¹⁰⁵ In Niebuhr's work, Løvel was thus a true hero.¹⁰⁶

During the early twentieth century, Kay Larsen contributed significantly to our knowledge of Danish overseas trade. In Larsen's works, Løvel received some attention.¹⁰⁷ Most of Larsen's considerations in this regard were based, at least to a certain extent, on the reports Løvel sent to the directors of the Danish East India Company in Copenhagen. Larsen depicted Løvel as an obedient company employee, who was abandoned to his own devices in Asia. Notwithstanding his isolation, he managed to improve Danish trade, and especially the local trade in Asia, before his accomplishments were ruined by the mutiny of 1648. Similar views were put forward by Gunnar Olsen and Ole Feldbæk, who studied the period of Løvel's rule in India.¹⁰⁸ These studies were more neutral in their tone, but dedicated remarkably little attention to the sources regarding Løvel himself. Rather, they were more concerned with the larger framework of the Danish presence in Asia. Since Olsen and Feldbæk relied heavily on the earlier study by Larsen, they also concluded that Løvel was an obedient employee of the company, albeit situating him within a broader context of analysis.

Since 2000, two further accounts of Løvel have been published. A recent article by Kathrin Wellen provided a detailed and informative account of Løvel's involvement in attacks against local trading ships in the Bay of Bengal.¹⁰⁹ Although Wellen's primary focus was on the Danish warfare against the Mughals, Løvel nonetheless played a central role. However, the most extensive work dealing with Løvel is that of Asta Bredsdorff, who, in the early twenty-first century, wrote a biography based on the Løvel collections.¹¹⁰ Her work is an impressive account of Løvel's career, but, due to a lack of references, it is difficult to check her account against specific archival material.

In terms of primary sources, the most important are the Willem Løvel archives, which include material regarding his career between 1639 and 1648, and offer rich information regarding the relatively unexplored topic of Danish seventeenth-century trade in the Indian Ocean.¹¹¹ Moreover, they comprise documents written in Danish, Dutch, English, French, Spanish, Portuguese, Tamil and Persian. For my part, I have focused on the material in Danish, and the period between Løvel's arrival at Tranquebar in 1643 and the revolt he faced in 1648. All the reports that Løvel wrote to the directors of the Danish East India Company in Europe have been rigorously consulted, as well as his correspondence with the other employees of the company. Additionally, I have made use of the passports that Løvel issued, and the instructions that he wrote during his period in command of the

¹⁰⁴ RAC, håndskriftsamlingen VII E 1 a), De Ostindiske etablissemeters historie, undated, but probably written in the late 18th century.

¹⁰⁵ "hvored jeg blev bekjendt med en mand, hvis kraftfulde sjel, glimrende talenter og kloge administration maatte opvække en høi beundring". in Barthold G. Niebuhr, "Nogle efterretninger om Wilhelm Løvel Og Den Danske Ostindiske Handel under Hans Bestyrelse," *Det Skandinaviske litteraturselskabs skriften* 1 (1805): 142–69, 143.

¹⁰⁶ Despite his subjective view, Niebuhr based his arguments on primary sources.

¹⁰⁷ Larsen, *Dansk-Ostindiske koloniers historie*.

¹⁰⁸ Gunnar Olsen, "Dansk Ostindien," in *Vore gamle tropenkolonier*, ed. Johannes Brøndsted, vol. 1 (Copenhagen: Westermann, 1952); Ole Feldbæk and Ole Justesen, eds., *Kolonierne i Asien og Afrika* (Copenhagen: Politiken, 1980).

¹⁰⁹ Kathryn Wellen, "The Danish East India Company's War against the Mughal Empire, 1642-1698," *Journal of Early Modern History* 19, no. 5 (September 2, 2015): 439–61.

¹¹⁰ Bredsdorff, *The Trials and Travels*.

¹¹¹ RAC, DK, B 246, A, B and C, Willem Løvel arkiv.

Danish company. This material offers an unusual amount of qualitative information regarding the role that Leye played within Danish business in Asia.

In addition to the Leye archives, I have also drawn upon the correspondence of the Danish Chancellery, as well as the personal letters of Christian IV, to the degree that they refer to the Danish East India trade and the Leye family.¹¹² Moreover, I have also included the scarce and scattered sources relating to the first Danish East India Company. Unfortunately, little material has survived in this regard. Since the surviving material mostly relates to the company's first voyage in 1620, rather than to the period when Leye was in charge in Asia, I have mainly used the information regarding the finances of the company during the 1630s.¹¹³ In addition, I have found useful contextual information concerning the Danish India trade between 1630 and 1648 in incoming letters from the VOC (the so-called *Generale Missiven*), as well as the *Daghregister* (daily register).¹¹⁴

The career of Henrich Carloff is better known than that of Leye. An early report on Carloff from 1673 has been ascribed to Johan Müller.¹¹⁵ Source-based studies of Carloff date back to the late nineteenth century. First, Nicolas de Roever published an article on the Danish and Swedish competitors of the WIC in the Africa trade during the mid-seventeenth century.¹¹⁶ This situates Carloff within a world of adventurers and heroes on the Gold Coast and in Europe. The same approach was adopted by Victor Granlund, who, a few years later, published the first source-based history of the Swedish Africa Company.¹¹⁷ Granlund allotted Carloff a central role in his study, in which he emphasised categories such as heroes and traitors. However, Granlund regretted not having consulted the Dutch archives in person. Furthermore, Carloff also featured in Cornelis de Jonge's study of Dutch maritime history, in which he is portrayed as part of a world of unscrupulous adventurers.¹¹⁸ For his part, Cornelis Goslinga considered Carloff an efficient man, but not an honourable hero.¹¹⁹ A more neutral approach was adopted by Henrich Sieveking, Georg Nørregård and Ole Justesen, who studied Carloff's actions within the Danish sphere of influence.¹²⁰

In most studies of Carloff's career, the dominant approach has been to observe Carloff from the standpoint of the trading companies. In 1975, Robert Porter studied the competing European companies on the Gold Coast.¹²¹ His extensive study was largely based on the Furley collection, to

¹¹² There are several collected volumes of the letters, see for example, Erik Marquard, ed., *Kancelliets brevbøger vedrørende Danmarks indre forhold: 1635-36* (Copenhagen: C.A. Reitzel Nielsen & Lydische, 1940) (Henceforth: *Kancelliets brevbøger* with years); C.F. Bricka and J.A. Fridericia, eds., *Kong Christian den fjerdes egenhændige breve 1636-1640* (Copenhagen: Selskabet for Udgivelse af Kilder til Dansk Historie, 1969). (Henceforth: *Kong Christian Den Fjerdes Egenhændige Breve 1636-1640*).

¹¹³ RAC, Tyske Kancelliet Indenrigske afdeling (TKIA), *Diverse akter vedr. det ostindiske kompagni og Guinea 1618-59*; RAC, DK, *Diverse Breve Dokumenter og breve det ostindiske kompagni vedkommende 1616-1660*.

¹¹⁴ W.P.H. Coolhaas, ed., *Generale missiven van gouverneurs-generaal en raden aan heren XVII der Vereenigde Oostindische Compagnie*, deel 1, 1610-1638 (Gravenhage: Martinus Nijhoff, 1960); H.T. Colenbrander, ed., *Dagh-register gehouden int casteel Batavia vant passerende daer ter plaetse als over geheel Nederlandts-India: 1643-44* (Gravenhage: Martinus Nijhoff, 1902).

¹¹⁵ The Journal of Müller printed in, Adam Jones, *German Sources for West African History, 1599-1669* (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1983).

¹¹⁶ Nicholas De Roever, "Twee Concurrenten van de Eerste West-Indische Compagnie," *Oud-Holland; nieuw bijdragen voor de geschiedenis der Nederlandsche kunst, letterkunde, nijverheid, enz.* 7 (1889): 195-220.

¹¹⁷ Granlund, *En svensk koloni i Afrika*.

¹¹⁸ De Jonge, *Geschiedenis van het Nederlandsche zeewezen*.

¹¹⁹ Goslinga, *The Dutch in the Caribbean*.

¹²⁰ Sieveking, "Die Glückstädter Guineafahrt"; Nørregård, *Danish Settlements*; Feldbæk and Justesen, *Kolonierne i Asien og Afrika*.

¹²¹ Porter, *European Activity*.

which I will soon return. Especially in chapters three and four, this work was closely connected to that of Porter. For Porter, Carloff was a *notable Guinea adventurer*.¹²² Porter's focus was on the competition between Europeans on the Gold Coast, and he was less concerned with the trading companies and their relationships with individuals. Another study based on the Furley collection was that of Kwame Daaku, in which Daaku focused on the relationship between Europeans and Africans on the Gold Coast.¹²³ Daaku and Porter both discussed the role of Carloff in West Africa, arguing that he was able to establish a personal relationship with local African rulers and merchants.

In the 1990s, György Nováky also explored Carloff's participation in the Swedish Africa Company.¹²⁴ Nováky's study was based on extensive archival research conducted in Sweden, Denmark and the Netherlands, and showed how Carloff formed a link between the Swedish, the Dutch and the Danish. The most recent works on Carloff are by Henk den Heijer and Angela Sutton.¹²⁵ The former is the first historian to consult the Amsterdam Notarial Archives on this topic, and has thus been able to collect additional information regarding Carloff's personal life, considering him an *adventurer entrepreneur*. For her part, Sutton has discussed the potential of the Nordic archives regarding trade in seventeenth-century West Africa. For Sutton, Carloff was a *Baltic adventurer*, who exemplified the men involved in the seventeenth-century slave trade.

The primary sources relating to Carloff are scattered throughout multiple European archives. The Swedish Africa Company Archives in Stockholm include the correspondence between the company administrators, the de Geer family and Carloff himself.¹²⁶ The material relates mainly to the administration of the company in Europe, and is less informative about events overseas. The Danish archives contain diffuse information regarding Carloff's role within Danish trade in Africa.¹²⁷ For their part, the French archives contain some clues as to how French West India Company officials saw Carloff, as well as a personal testimony by Carloff himself, stating his own role in the overseas trade.¹²⁸ In short, despite the extent of his role in early Swedish and Danish trade in Africa, Carloff has left remarkably little trace in the archives. The most fruitful archival material on his activities is located in the Netherlands. It includes material relating to the Dutch possessions on the Gold Coast,¹²⁹ the collection of the States General,¹³⁰ and the Notarial Archives of Amsterdam.¹³¹ The early years of Carloff's life will unfortunately remain difficult to trace, due to a lack of material. By far the best documented period of Carloff's career are the years between 1649 and 1659, during which he served the Swedish and the Danish companies.

¹²² Ibid, 386.

¹²³ Daaku also found the Furley collection useful. Kwame Yeboa Daaku, *Trade and Politics on the Gold Coast, 1600-1720: A Study of the African Reaction to European Trade* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970).

¹²⁴ Nováky, "Small Company"; Nováky, *Handelskompanier*.

¹²⁵ Heijer, "Een dienaar"; Angela Sutton, "The Seventeenth-Century Slave Trade in the Documents of the English, Dutch, Swedish, Danish and Prussian Royal Slave Trading Companies," *Slavery & Abolition* 36, no. 3 (July 3, 2015): 445–59.

¹²⁶ Riksarkivet, Stockholm, Sweden (henceforth: RAS), Especially in Handel och Sjöfart (henceforth: H&S), volume 42; Leufsta arkiv (henceforth: LA), vol. 82.

¹²⁷ RAC, TKIA, Diverse akter vedr. det ostindiske kompagni og Guinea 1618-59.

¹²⁸ I would like to thank Elisabeth Heijmans for assistance in the translation of the French documents. Bibliothèque nationale (BN), Manuscrits (Ms), Collection Morel de Thoisy 52, f°263, Henrich Carloff to Jean-Baptiste Colbert, undated.

¹²⁹ Nationaal Archief, Den Haag (henceforth: NL-HaNA), Oude West-Indische Compagnie (henceforth: OWIC), 1.05.01.01, inventarisnummer 11 and 13A.

¹³⁰ Material related to Sweden and Denmark; NL-HaNA, Staten-Generaal (henceforth, S.G.), 1.01.02, inv.nr. 12571.38.1 and NL-HaNA, Staten-Generaal, 1.01.02, inv.nr. 12572.41.

¹³¹ Stadsarchief Amsterdam (henceforth: SAA), Notarieel archief (henceforth: NA), several entries.

The details of Carloff's activities in Western Africa have become more accessible thanks to the previously mentioned Furley Collection (FC), which consists of various European archival sources collected, transcribed and translated into English. However, this collection needs to be treated with some caution.¹³² While it can offer initial directions towards relevant primary sources, it is sometimes difficult to know from precisely where the information originates. In other instances, the material has been re-arranged. Throughout this dissertation, I have checked the information from the Furley Collection against the primary sources held in the original archives, whenever it has been possible to do so. Through such cross-checking, I can verify that the information is reliable, at least for the period covered in this dissertation.

Albert Van Danzig has discussed the relevance and usability of the Furley Collection.¹³³ In this dissertation, I have mainly used the N (Netherlands) section, which comprises Dutch sources. Regarding this section, Van Danzig states that: "most of the N-section is in English spiced with Dutch, but a fairly large part of it consists of archival transcripts in Dutch, in a handwriting quite different from Furley's... it was obviously copied by a Dutch person whom Furley must have commissioned."¹³⁴

However, Van Danzig has also discussed the limitations of the material. First, it is possible and to a certain extent demonstrable that Furley and his Dutch clerk made occasional mistakes in reading the originals. Second, Furley's handwriting was rather peculiar, making use of shorthand and abbreviations. The greatest problem, however, is that Furley was not acquainted with early modern Dutch, and was thus not a reliable translator.¹³⁵ Therefore, although the collection is useful, it has considerable limitations and poses considerable challenges.¹³⁶

There is also a linguistic challenge in studying the careers of individuals such as Leyel and Carloff. Even in Nordic archives, the vast majority of the relevant sources regarding trading activities are written in German, French or Dutch. Other material, regarding trade, or regarding the state itself, is written in the Nordic languages. In addition, the overseas documents also feature Portuguese and non-European words.

To conclude, both Leyel and Carloff have received some attention in the existing historiography. Generally, it can be stated that for historians, the main priority has been to situate them within the framework of a trading company. Moreover, the older these studies are, the more they tend to assume the nation state as the primary frame of reference. In contrast, I argue that even in the most recent studies, the roles of Leyel and Carloff have not been sufficiently understood. In order to do so, I will focus on what Leyel and Carloff did for overseas business, rather than what they did for particular trading companies.

Two important differences should be underlined concerning the sources and historiography of the two case studies. First, in the case of Leyel, Bredsdorff's study offers important insights into

¹³² John Talford Furley 1878-1956 was the secretary of Native Affairs of the Gold Coast Colony 1917-23. After his retirement Furley collected both literature and primary sources for a publication of the history of Ghana. There is an issue with the access to the material. I have accessed the Furley Collection online through the digital collections of University of Ghana, at <http://ugspace.ug.edu.gh/handle/123456789/3>, but at times the website is not working due to reasons unknown to me.

¹³³ Albert Van Dantzig, *The Furley Collection: Its Value and Limitations for the Study of Ghana's History*, European Sources for Sub-Saharan Africa before 1900: Use and Abuse (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1987).

¹³⁴ Ibid, 425.

¹³⁵ Ibid, 428-429.

¹³⁶ Van Danzig stated that the seventeenth century documents are much more elaborated than the later period, although less systematised. Ibidem.

Leyel's role in Asian trade. In the case of Carloff, no comparably thorough study exists. Second, in the case of Carloff, I have had access to the Furley collection, which makes it quicker and easier to get an impression of his career in Africa. In the case of Leyel, no such resource exists.

The two case studies are thus unequal in terms of sources and historiography. However, as John Elliott has shown, disparity in primary sources should not be allowed to prevent comparison between historical figures. Indeed, he encourages his fellow historians to contextualise the material available through reference to existing literature.¹³⁷ Thus, the disparity in the source material does not pose a hindrance to my study, but rather opens up an opportunity for innovative comparisons.

A final word regarding the choice of these two case studies. First, both individuals represent an "in-between" scale of Nordic overseas expansion, hitherto underrepresented in the international historiography. Moreover, they were both engaged in the development of Nordic overseas trade at a time when Nordic ambitions were growing more permanent. Second, on a more practical level, sufficient archival sources are available in both cases. Although these are scattered, and offer little insight into Leyel and Carloff's personal lives, they have at least made it possible to investigate the type of business that they represented.

1.6 Outline of the study

The second chapter will focus on cross-company behaviour and the migration patterns of northern European overseas veterans during the seventeenth century. It will discuss why the Nordic countries became fertile ground for overseas entrepreneurship, particularly through a process referred to as *institutional sheltering*. The chapter will also pay attention to the background of the individuals concerned, and will ask why overseas business became an opportunity for so many people.

The third chapter will analyse entrepreneurship and specialisation in overseas business within the framework of the trading company. The focus will be on individuals, operating within the boundaries of the companies via entrepreneurial mechanisms. Here, it will be asked why early modern entrepreneurship was beneficial for both the trading organisations and the individuals concerned.

Chapter four will explore the importance of social relationships and business contacts for individuals, both in Europe and overseas. The main argument will be that overseas entrepreneurship was a difficult balancing act between various networks, revealing how vulnerable such overseas connections really were.

Chapter five will focus on the accumulation of knowledge necessary to building an entrepreneurial profile overseas. The chapter will study the ways in which individuals could influence how they were perceived by institutions, and the ways in which access to information and experience was crucial for overseas entrepreneurship.

Chapter six will focus on a seldom noticed aspect of overseas entrepreneurship, *i.e.* the use of violence. The chapter argues that violence played a crucial role in seventeenth-century overseas entrepreneurship. Even though individuals were not actively seeking out violent disputes, they at least had to be prepared to use violence in order to achieve their goals.

The last chapter of the dissertation is a concluding discussion, elaborating on the results of the research. Here, I will also discuss the added value contributed by the concept of overseas entrepreneurship.

¹³⁷ J. H. Elliott, *Richelieu and Olivares*, Revised ed. edition (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 5. Elliott does this by comparing Richelieu's France and Olivares' Spain.

2 The Grass is Always Greener on the Other Side

2.1 Introduction

In 1639, the Danish East India Company, under the close supervision of King Christian IV, had four directors: Johan Braem, Roeland Crappe, Jacob Michelsen and Willem Level.¹³⁸ The king had made Roeland Crappe, a previous employee of the VOC, director of the company. He had also appointed Willem Level, another previous employee of the VOC, as his representative on the board of directors. Indeed, employing men with Dutch connections or backgrounds was common enough in seventeenth-century Nordic trading companies.¹³⁹

Some years later, a Danish ship appeared at the WIC headquarters at Elmina castle in Western Africa. Here, it was inspected by the WIC prosecutor, Henrich Carloff. Sailing under a Danish commission, the vessel had obtained a passport from the Danish King, Christian IV. Moreover, the freighter and the crew turned out to be primarily previous employees of the WIC.¹⁴⁰ A few years later, another ship, this time sailing under the Swedish flag, also appeared on the coast. Again, the ship was inspected by Carloff, who concluded that it was freighted, and was sailing under foreign ownership with a foreign crew.¹⁴¹

But why did early Nordic overseas enterprises attract previous employees of the WIC and the VOC? In other words, what kind of entrepreneurial opportunities were available to seventeenth-century individuals, seeking to make a fortune and to attain professional advancement by crossing organisational lines, that is, by switching employment between overseas trading companies?

This chapter sets out from Mark Casson and Marina Della Giusta's observation that entrepreneurship occurs when individuals, who are actively seeking opportunities, make a decision. In particular, this applies to individuals who consider themselves equipped to recognise and to exploit such opportunities.¹⁴² Entrepreneurship requires individuals to be alert to the surrounding world: when they recognise an opportunity they have been waiting for, they seize it before anyone else can. In this chapter, this observation will be pursued with reference to several individuals who crossed company and imperial lines, and who thus had close connections to both Nordic and Dutch overseas businesses. This is an important topic within early modern overseas business history, since it provides a better understanding of how overseas businesses were initiated in regions with limited experience of overseas trade. As has been discussed in the introduction, context always plays a relevant role in entrepreneurship, and it is thus important to elaborate on the economic and political context first of all, in order to better situate the early overseas entrepreneurial and cross-imperial activities of Level and Carloff.

¹³⁸ *Kancelliets brevbøger*, 1637–39, 868. Johan Braem was one of the most important figures in Danish international trade. As early as 1636, he made an attempt to establish Danish trade in Western Africa, but without success. He was also the main entrepreneur in the development of the Danish whaling trade. See Dalgård, *Dansk-Norsk*; Nørregård, *Danish Settlements*, 8.

¹³⁹ Erik Gøbel, "Danes in the Service of the Dutch East India Company in the Seventeenth Century," *International Journal of Maritime History* 16, no. 1 (June 1, 2004): 77–94.

¹⁴⁰ NL-HaNa, OWIC, 1.05.01.01, inv.nr.11, Henrich Carloff to the Heeren XIX, 05.03.1647, (scans 1061–1065); FC, N4, 162; Ratelband, *Vijf Dagregisters*, 249. In the references of this dissertation, the word scans refer to the Dutch National Archives and to those archival collections which are available online. The specific page numbers of the scans relate to the sources.

¹⁴¹ Ratelband, *Vijf Dagregisters*, XLIII.

¹⁴² Casson and Della Giusta, "Entrepreneurship and Social Capital", 223.

2.2 *The Nordic region – the kingdoms of entrepreneurial opportunity*

Nordic overseas ambitions had begun to emerge during the reigns of Christina of Sweden and Christian IV of Denmark. In the Nordic countries, overseas business had started to grow in importance, mainly as a result of the competition between Denmark and Sweden. For both countries, overseas ambitions were a way to demonstrate their power.¹⁴³ As has been discussed in the introduction, Sweden's increasing and Denmark's declining power should also be taken into consideration. Wars, trade and overseas settlements all featured in the Nordic struggle for hegemony in the Baltic.

As Nordic overseas ambitions grew, attention turned towards places where overseas trade had already been established. The trading networks and operations built by the Portuguese, the English, the French and the Dutch also attracted the Nordic kingdoms, which lacked such already established practices, knowledge, capital, specialised labour and connections. The Nordic situation was different from other countries in Western Europe and especially from the Dutch Republic, where the movement of people had already furthered the acquisition of knowledge of overseas trade, and of how to establish trading companies. The Dutch approach, with Amsterdam at its centre, served as a model for Nordic overseas expansion.¹⁴⁴

The Dutch Republic managed to build up a successful maritime trade in the Indian Ocean and in the Atlantic, and to become the most dynamic seventeenth-century economy on the continent. Jan de Vries and Ad van der Woude suggest that seventeenth-century Dutch mercantile and economic success occurred because the domestic economy was able to respond to international specialisation.¹⁴⁵ Jonathan Israel states that during the seventeenth century, a specific type of economic climate had developed in the Dutch Republic. One of the main reasons for this was the transition from "bulk trade" within the Baltic (grains, salt and timber) to "rich trade" in Asia and the Caribbean (luxury products and goods). This development was accompanied by the rise of a merchant elite, who controlled politics and trade. Furthermore, Israel also emphasises the role of developing skills, in order to meet the requirements of the market. Indeed, such intensified specialisation in one sector further enhanced the strength of Dutch mercantile practices.¹⁴⁶

Another reason for Dutch success was the welcoming of different entrepreneurial networks, such as the Portuguese 'Nation' or the German-Belgian manufacturers.¹⁴⁷ The Dutch also benefitted from immigration, especially from the Southern Low Countries following the fall of Antwerp in 1585. The immigrants brought with them capital, knowledge and the ability to operate within international

¹⁴³ The Nordic kingdoms already had long-distance trade connections during the Viking era. However, in this dissertation, the focus is on the clear shift towards more organised forms of long-distance commerce.

¹⁴⁴ Barbour, *Capitalism in Amsterdam*, 130.

¹⁴⁵ Jan de Vries and Ad van der Woude, *The First Modern Economy: Success, Failure, and Perseverance of the Dutch Economy, 1500-1815* (Cambridge/New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 402–408.

¹⁴⁶ Jonathan Israel has written about the role of the Dutch bulk trade, for example in Jonathan Israel, *Dutch Primacy*, chapter 2; Jonathan Israel, *The Dutch Republic: Its Rise, Greatness and Fall, 1477-1806* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), 315–318.

¹⁴⁷ Cátia Antunes and Filipa Ribeiro da Silva, "Cross-Cultural Entrepreneurship in the Atlantic: Africans, Dutch and Sephardic Jews in Western Africa, 1580-1674," *Itinerario* 35, no. 1 (April 2011): 49–76; Miriam Bodian, *Hebrews of the Portuguese Nation: Conversos and Community in Early Modern Amsterdam* (Bloomington/Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1999); Lesger, *The Rise of the Amsterdam*; Klein, *De Trippen in de 17e Eeuw: een studie over het ondernemersgedrag op de Hollandse stapelmarkt*. (Rotterdam: Van Gorcum, 1965).

merchant networks.¹⁴⁸ During the early modern period, almost a million people travelled to the East Indies from the Republic. Of these, around fifty per cent were foreigners, and served in various positions within the VOC.¹⁴⁹ Approximately forty per cent of the employees of the WIC were foreigners.¹⁵⁰ Moreover, people from the Nordic kingdoms were also employed in the Dutch trading companies. As Kristoff Glamann reminds us: “during the seventeenth-century the Dutch navy was the main training camp for Northern-European naval officers and seamen, including those of the Nordic countries.”¹⁵¹ Indeed, there were also many Danes and Norwegians in the service of the VOC throughout its existence.¹⁵² Many Norwegian sailors went into Dutch service in the seventeenth century.¹⁵³ Hiring Danish and Norwegian sailors on Dutch vessels was fairly common, since they were often skilled and experienced. The attractiveness of the VOC came from its reputation for paying its personnel’s wages punctually, and from offering a fair chance to climb the company ranks.¹⁵⁴

While the Nordic kingdoms were developing their first overseas enterprises, they witnessed a growing demand for foreign capital and labour experts. However, this demand was not only in relation to overseas trade, but was also experienced in a broader Nordic context: silk weavers, construction workers, architects, town planners and harbour workers were in high demand, as much in Sweden as in Denmark. Particularly in the development of international trade, there was a large number of Dutch and German merchants.¹⁵⁵ Mark Casson points out that countries developing their business with a limited number of local merchants are more likely to invite foreigners, since the establishment of firms requires entrepreneurial effort and the availability of capital.¹⁵⁶ By inviting outsiders, Nordic economies were able to access new resources and to acquire necessary skills.

The lack of skilled and well-capitalised local entrepreneurs forced the Nordic kingdoms to look elsewhere. Their preference for the Dutch was two-fold. Firstly, from a purely practical standpoint, the Dutch were already experienced in overseas business. Secondly, a long-standing tradition of interaction in the Baltic trade made the connection with the Dutch seem natural.¹⁵⁷ For both these

¹⁴⁸ Oscar Gelderblom, *Zuid-Nederlandse kooplieden en de opkomst van de Amsterdamse stapelmarkt (1578-1630)* (Hilversum: Uitgeverij Verloren, 2000); Erika Kuijpers, *Migrantenstad: immigratie en sociale verhoudingen in 17e-eeuws Amsterdam* (Hilversum: Uitgeverij Verloren, 2005).

¹⁴⁹ Lucassen, J., Lucassen, L., “The Netherlands”, in: Bade, K., Emmer, P., Lucassen, L., Oltmer, J., *The Encyclopedia of European Migration and Minorities, From the Seventeenth Century to the Present*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 36; One of the reasons for foreigners to work in the Dutch companies was in fact the prospect of having their wages paid. See Jelle van Lottum, *Across the North Sea: The Impact of the Dutch Republic on International Labour Migration, c. 1550-1850* (Aksant: Academic Publishers, 1632), chapter 1; J. R. Bruijn, F. S. Gaastra, and I. Schöffer, ed., *Dutch-Asiatic Shipping in the 17th and 18th Centuries*, vol. 1 (Gravenhage: Martinus Nijhoff, 1979), 152–157.

¹⁵⁰ Ribeiro da Silva, *Dutch and Portuguese*, 131.

¹⁵¹ Kristoff Glamann, “The Danish East India Company”, 476.

¹⁵² Gøbel, “Danes in the Service”, 90.

¹⁵³ Knut Kjeldstadli, “Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Finland,” in *The Encyclopedia of European Migration and Minorities: From the Seventeenth Century to the Present*, ed. Klaus J. Bade et al. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 5–15, 6.

¹⁵⁴ The Lucassens have mentioned high wages as one of the reasons why Northern Europeans and Germans migrated to the Republic. See Lucassen and Lucassen, “The Netherlands,” 36.

¹⁵⁵ On the role of Dutchmen in both the public and the private sector in the Nordic kingdoms, see Leon Jespersen, *A Revolution from Above?*, 101–105.

¹⁵⁶ Casson, *The Entrepreneur*, 11.

¹⁵⁷ On Dutch and especially Amsterdam’s trade in the Baltic, see Milja van Tielhof, *The Mother of All Trades*, especially chapter 1; Leos Müller, “The Dutch Entrepreneurial Networks and Sweden in the Age of Greatness.” In *Trade, Diplomacy and Cultural Exchange: Continuity and Change in the North Sea Area and the Baltic c.1350-1750*, edited by Hanno Brand, 58–74. Hilversum: Uitgeverij Verloren, 2005; Leos Müller, “The Role of the Merchant Network - A Case History of Two Swedish Trading Housers 1650-1800.” In *Entrepreneurship and Entrepreneurs in*

reasons, several large-scale investors and entrepreneurs moved from the Low Countries to the Nordic kingdoms, or at least built extensive trading networks there.¹⁵⁸ These exchanges and cooperative activities have been classified by the historian Erik Gøbel as a strong mutual influence between the Dutch and Danish.¹⁵⁹

Nordic monarchs thus encouraged immigration of skilled labour. There was even an active recruitment policy: some immigrants were offered prospects for upward social mobility and economic success. The Swedish army enlisted Scots, Germans and Baltic Germans.¹⁶⁰ Indeed, the same pattern was followed in Denmark.¹⁶¹ Moreover, the numerous wars between the two monarchies imposed a heavy burden on local investors. At least partly for this reason, the Nordic rulers welcomed foreigners, especially those with capital. Another motivation for the recruitment of foreigners was a lack of overseas business experience amongst the Nordic people. As Hermann Kellenbenz states, the Dutch worked on a larger scale in their international trade, and this suited Nordic merchants well: they could borrow capital, be hired as agents, and receive a basic training from their Dutch principals. Afterwards, some were even able to set up an independent enterprise. Thus, a large and wealthy group of merchants that depended on Dutch and foreign expertise developed in Denmark.¹⁶²

To a certain extent, the way in which the Dutch Republic set up its trading companies also served as a model in the North. It has been claimed that the charters of the Nordic companies were almost exact copies of the Dutch ones, especially the VOC.¹⁶³ However, beyond simply copying a charter, this was not really the case. In reality, Dutch organisations and investments were much larger than their Nordic counterparts.¹⁶⁴ The Dutch companies were able to attain temporary dominant positions in Western Africa and the Indian Ocean, and Dutch settlements and trade in the New Netherlands, the Gold Coast and Batavia were but a few examples of the larger scale of operations.

the Early Modern Times. Merchants and Industrialists within the Orbit of the Dutch Staple Market, edited by Clé Lesger and Leo Noordegraaf, 147–63. Den Haag: Hollandse Historische Reeks, 1995; Cátia. “Amsterdam Cross-Cultural Partnerships in the Baltic-Atlantic Link, 1580-1674.” In *The Rise of the Atlantic Economy and the North Sea/Baltic Trade, 1500-1800*, edited by Leos Müller, Philipp Robinson Rössner, and Toshiaki Tamaki, 103–19. Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2011.

¹⁵⁸ Erik Wilhelm Dahlgren, *Louis de Geer, 1587-1652, Hans lif och verk*, vol. 1 (Uppsala: Almqvist och Wicksell, 1923); Thomas Lindblad, “Louis de Geer (1587-1652); Dutch Entrepreneur and the Father of Swedish Industry,” in *Entrepreneurs and Entrepreneurship* ed. Lesger and Noordegraaf (Den Haag: Hollandse Historische Reeks, 1995), 77–84.

¹⁵⁹ Gøbel, “Danes in the Service”.

¹⁶⁰ Furthermore, a significant number of individuals from Scotland migrated to other Northern European countries. The Scots migrated and took employment in Dutch, Portuguese, English and other European commercial companies. See Steve Murdoch, *Network North: Scottish Kin, Commercial And Covert Associations in Northern Europe 1603-1746* (Boston/Leiden: Brill, 2006); Steve Murdoch, “Community, Commodity, and Commerce: The Stockholm-Scots in the Seventeenth Century,” in *British and Irish Emigrants and Exiles in Europe, 1603-1688*, ed. David Worthington (Boston/Leiden: Brill, 2010), 31–67; Alexia Grosjean and Steve Murdoch, *Scottish Communities Abroad in the Early Modern Period* (Boston/Leiden: Brill, 2005). For other studies on Scotsmen at European trading centres involved in maritime trade, see L. H. J. Sicking, *Neptune and the Netherlands: State, Economy, and War at Sea in the Renaissance* (Boston/Leiden: Brill, 2004); John Davidson and Alexander Gray *The Scottish Staple at Veere: A Study in the Economic History of Scotland*, First edition (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1909).

¹⁶¹ Karonen, *Pohjoinen suurvalta*, 172–173; Kjeldstadli, “Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Finland.”, 6.

¹⁶² Hermann Kellenbenz, *The Rise of the European Economy: An Economic History of Continental Europe from the Fifteenth to the Eighteenth Century* (New York: Holmes & Meier Publishers, 1976), 165.

¹⁶³ Printed version of the charter, Ole Feldbæk, *Danske handelskompagnier 1616-1843: oktrojer og interne ledelsesregler* (Copenhagen: Selskabet for Udgivelse af Kilder til Dansk Historie, 1986).

¹⁶⁴ Israel, *The Dutch Republic*, 940–946; Israel, *Dutch Primacy*, 70–73; regarding the trade volume of the first Danish East India company, see Ole Feldbæk, “Den Danske Asienhandel 1616-1807: værdi og volumen,” *Historisk Tidsskrift* B15, no. 5 (1990): 320–52, 323–326.

In Asia, the VOC monopoly was effective, at least in the case of the spice trade. Moreover, the VOC was also prepared for armed conflicts. It had gained experience in the wars against the Iberian Empires in the Indian Ocean and the Atlantic. The Dutch companies could also wage war, which the Nordic ones could not. The Nordic companies operated on a much smaller level, encountering difficulties in establishing permanent trade, and in Asia, the DEIC was not even allowed to conclude contracts with local rulers, since this was a royal prerogative. Also, on the European markets, the economic outcome for the early Nordic companies was not good.¹⁶⁵ In the Nordic region, the consumption of colonial goods was modest compared to places like London or Amsterdam. For Nordic companies, business was thus a question of survival rather than of domination. Despite the smaller scale and the challenges encountered, the Nordic kingdoms were as involved in overseas business as the rest of Europe, and an analysis of individuals such as Leye and Carloff, who operated within these companies, will serve to reveal an alternative early modern business model.

2.3 *Foreigners and migration in the early Nordic overseas ventures*

From an early stage, the importance of individuals to the Nordic enterprises was obvious. In Sweden in the 1630s, growing interest in overseas expansion resulted in the establishment of the first overseas trading company, Söderkompaniet (South Company).¹⁶⁶ By 1637, two Dutchmen, Samuel Blommaert and Peter Minuit, had managed to obtain a charter for a Swedish colony in the New World. The company settled at the Delaware River, in close proximity to the WIC, which had already had a settlement in the region since 1624.¹⁶⁷ The connection of Minuit and Blommaert to the Republic was clear. In particular, both men had previously been employed by the WIC in New Netherland. Samuel Blommaert had begun his career in the 1610s in Dutch trade with Angola. For his part, Blommaert had also been involved in the New Netherland venture at an early stage in his career. In 1622, he became one of the directors of the newly founded WIC, but was simultaneously involved in the copper industry and arms trade. In 1635, he changed profession, starting a brass factory outside Stockholm, and in 1636, he became the Swedish consul in Amsterdam. Around the same time, Blommaert was engaged in equipping and fitting ships for a Swedish expedition to North America.¹⁶⁸

Minuit, who had joined the WIC in the 1620s, was sent to New Netherland in 1625, in order to seek out new trading opportunities for the company, particularly by canvassing products other than

¹⁶⁵ Ole Feldbæk, *Danske handelskompagnier*.

¹⁶⁶ On the Swedes and the Finns in North America, see Stellan Dahlgren and Han Norman, *The Rise and Fall of New Sweden: Gov. Johan Risingh's Journal*, Uppsala: Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis, 1988;

Amandus Johnson, *The Swedish Settlements on the Delaware: Their History and Relation to the Indians, Dutch and English, 1638-1664: With an Account of the South, the New Sweden, and the American Companies, and the Efforts of Sweden to Regain the Colony* (Lancaster: The New Era Printing Company, 1911); John Munroe, *History of Delaware* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2006), 19–26; Bernard Bailyn, *The Barbarous Years: The Peopling of British North America: The Conflict of Civilizations, 1600-1675* (Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group, 2012), 276–321.

¹⁶⁷ On the Dutch in North America, see Jaap Jacobs, *New Netherland: A Dutch Colony in Seventeenth-Century America* (Boston/Leiden: Brill, 2005); Jaap Jacobs, *The Colony of New Netherland: A Dutch Settlement in Seventeenth-Century America* (Ithaca/London: Cornell University Press, 2009); Unknown, *1609-1909. The Dutch in New Netherland and the United States* (New York: Netherland Chamber of Commerce in America, 1909); John Munroe, *History of Delaware* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2006), chapter 1.

¹⁶⁸ Oscar Gelderblom, Jaap Jacobs and Peter Klein have several notes about Blommaert. See Oscar Gelderblom, *Zuid-Nederlandse kooplieden*; Klein, *Die Trippen*, 279; Jacobs, *New Netherland*.

fur.¹⁶⁹ Eventually, Minuit became the director of the WIC in New Netherland.¹⁷⁰ In 1631, he was suspended from his position, because the other directors doubted his loyalty, and was recalled to Amsterdam. There, he met with Willem Usselinx and Samuel Blommaert. The latter approached the Swedish chancellor, received privileges for a commercial company, and established the Swedish settlement in Delaware 1637.¹⁷¹

Willem Usselinx, Blommaert and Minuit's business partner, also had a career characterised by shifting affiliations.¹⁷² After his travels in Spain and Portugal, Usselinx had learned about the opportunities for colonial trade, and moved to the Northern Netherlands during the late 1590s. In 1621, he was among the founding members of the WIC, and was also part of the group that established New Netherland.¹⁷³ Much like Minuit, Usselinx eventually left the company and moved to Sweden. According to the royal charter that Usselinx received from the Swedish king Gustav II Adolf, his mission was to establish a permanent Swedish trading settlement in the Delaware region. As early as 1627, however, Usselinx had attempted to establish a colony in the Caribbean under the protection of the duke of Courland, but had ultimately failed to do so.¹⁷⁴

Another Dutchman, Abraham Cabiljau, migrated to Sweden around 1604. The Amsterdam-based merchant participated in the founding of the city of Gothenburg, serving as mayor after 1609, and simultaneously became one of the king's financiers. After 1617, Cabiljau moved between Amsterdam and Sweden, before eventually settling in Stockholm. He introduced the Italian method of double entry bookkeeping to Sweden, and became a director in the Swedish Shipping Company, which in 1631 merged with the South Company.¹⁷⁵

This kind of cross-company migration also played an important role in the establishment of the first Danish East India Company. In 1615, Jan de Willem of Amsterdam and Herman Rosenkrantz of Rotterdam approached the Danish king Christian IV, proposing to create a Danish trading company.¹⁷⁶ In March 1616, the king issued a charter, which gave the enterprise a twelve-year monopoly on trade between Asia and Denmark. Indeed, the early years of the Danish East India Company were strongly marked by foreign participation, especially by the Dutch.

According to Ole Feldbæk, the strong connection to the VOC was clear in the company's charter, which copied entire paragraphs from its Dutch counterpart. In particular, it offered protection to navigators and merchants, including foreign navigators and merchants in Danish employment. It stated that:

¹⁶⁹ Minuit was not Dutch by birth. Minuit was born in Wesel, Rheinland, in Westfalen. He was a director of the WIC 1625–32 and governor of New Netherland 1626–32. On Minuit, see *Peter Minuit*, <https://sok.riksarkivet.se/sbl/artikel/9361>, *Svenskt biografiskt lexikon*, [accessed 21 February 2018]; Unknown, *1609-1909. The Dutch in New Netherland and the United States*, 25–27.

¹⁷⁰ Barbour, *Capitalism in Amsterdam*, 136.

¹⁷¹ Unknown, *1609-1909. The Dutch in New Netherland and the United States*, 40-41; *Peter Minuit*, <https://sok.riksarkivet.se/sbl/artikel/9361>, *Svenskt biografiskt lexikon*, [accessed 21 February 2018].

¹⁷² On Usselinx, see, for example, Benjamin Schmidt, *Innocence Abroad: The Dutch Imagination and the New World, 1570-1670* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

¹⁷³ For a recent study of the role of Usselinx in the WIC, see Joris Van den Tol, "Lobbying in Company Mechanisms of Political Decision-Making and Economic Interests in the History of Dutch Brazil, 1621-1656" PhD-Dissertation, (Leiden: Leiden University, 2018).

¹⁷⁴ Barbour, *Capitalism in Amsterdam*, 136-138; Goslinga, *The Dutch in the Caribbean*, 437.

¹⁷⁵ Abraham Cabiljau, <https://sok.riksarkivet.se/sbl/artikel/16310>, *Svenskt biografiskt lexikon*, [accessed 21 February 2018]; Lindblad, *Sweden's Trade*, 12.

¹⁷⁶ The initial licence of Rosenkrantz is to be found in RAC, DK, *Diverse breve dokumenter og breve det ostindiska kompgani vedkommende 1616-1660*; Olsen, "Dansk Ostindien", 22.

Everyone in the company, whether as skippers, pilots, sailors or other personnel, shall be treated in the same way as those who are born in the country of the king, and no additional burdens shall be laid upon them.¹⁷⁷

According to Feldbæk, the VOC responded quickly to the establishment of the DEIC. Nine months after its establishment, the VOC forbade Dutch seamen, skippers and pilots from joining foreign enterprises.¹⁷⁸ Despite this prohibition, the first Danish expedition to India was mainly manned by a Dutch crew.¹⁷⁹

In its initial phase, the company had problems sending out ships due to lack of financial support. However, the interest of potential investors increased after 1617, when a Dutchman, Marcelis Michielszoon de Boshouwer, arrived in Copenhagen with an enticing proposal. He had already worked for the VOC on the Coromandel Coast during the 1610s, and in 1612, he had served at the court of the King of Candy on the island of Ceylon. In 1615, he returned to Europe, and requested Dutch assistance on behalf of the King of Candy in order to fight against the Portuguese. His request was rejected by the VOC, so he decided to approach the Danish king instead. Indeed, the king was drawn in by Boshouwer's claims regarding the riches that could be expected from Ceylon. Boshouwer's proposal was sufficient to convince the king, and most of the potential investors, to commit to an expedition to India. The idea was to enter into Indian Ocean trade through Ceylon, where a friendly relationship with Candy appeared to be forthcoming.¹⁸⁰

The company also managed to employ another former VOC employee, Roeland Crappe, as an advisor to the company. This was, in Crappe's own words, "After I had been employed by the Dutch East Indian Company for many years."¹⁸¹ In particular, Crappe accepted employment in the Danish company in order to secure a significant promotion, namely the post of Director-General of the Danish East India Company.¹⁸²

Roeland Crappe is yet another example of cross-company individuals in early Danish trade in Asia.¹⁸³ He was Dutch-born and a previous employee of the VOC, and became one of the key figures in early Danish entrepreneurship in Asia. Before joining the Danish Company, Crappe had also purchased property in Batavia.¹⁸⁴ His connections to the Republic should also be underlined, since

¹⁷⁷ "Att alle och huer sierdelis, saauell Companiett sielff som schiperne, Styrmenndh, Bodzmen, eller Huad naffin de haffue Kunnde, som for thete Companies Schall fare eller bruigs, Vdj deris thienniste maa Ahntagis och methandlis, som Kong: Maytts: eigen indföd Vndersotter, och dennom ingenn Ivdere besuerinng att paaleggis..." Charter 16.03.1616, Feldbæk, *Danske handelskompagnier*, 26.

¹⁷⁸ The same issue was experienced within competition in the Arctic trade. The Dutch Noordsche Compagnie, which enjoyed a monopoly over the Dutch whaling trade, complained to the States General that the Danish operations under Braem were making use of Dutch capital and expertise. In 1633, the States General decreed that Dutchmen were not allowed to invest in foreign whaling enterprises, and were also forbidden from taking employment in foreign enterprises. See Dalgård, *Dansk-Norsk*, 176–192.

¹⁷⁹ Feldbæk and Justesen, *Kolonierne i Asien og Afrika*, 48; Richard Willerslev, "Danmarks første aktieselskab" *Historisk Tidsskrift* 10, no. 6 (1944): 609–36, 620.

¹⁸⁰ Olsen, "Dansk Ostindien", 22.

¹⁸¹ "Na ick lange jaeren in dienst van Nederlandtsche oost indisch compagnie geweest", In, RAC, TKIA, Diverse akter vedr. det ostindiske kompagni og Guinea 1618–59, Roland Crappe declaration - undated document.

¹⁸² "hebbende ik wel genegen sijn maystet van denemarcken ende denselve oost-indische compagnie te dienen met op de cust als director generaal...." In, RAC, TKIA, Diverse akter vedr. det ostindiske kompagni og Guinea 1618–59, Roland Crappe declaration - undated document.

¹⁸³ Kay Larsen, *Guvernører: residenter, kommandanter og chefer* (Copenhagen: Arthur Jensens Forlag, 1940), 60.

¹⁸⁴ RAC, DK, Diverse breve dokumenter og breve det ostindiske kompagni vedkommende 1616–1659, two letters dealing with Crappe's house in Batavia, 10.12.1635 and 07.12.1634,

his sister, Maria Crappe, was living in Amsterdam, and had a local merchant, Thijmon Jacobsen Hinlopen, as her guardian. In a letter dated 9 August 1636, the VOC was asked to pay 8000 *reals* to Maria. Indeed, Hinlopen himself was active in the Dutch Whaling Company, the Noordsche Compagnie, the fur trade through the New Netherland Company, and the slave trade on the Western Coast of Africa.¹⁸⁵

After Crappe joined the company, a contract between the company and the King of Candy was drawn up.¹⁸⁶ After numerous drafts, the contract was signed on 30 March 1618, and by November 1618, the expedition was ready to set sail, with two company and two naval ships.¹⁸⁷ The naval ships were to provide protection during the voyage, and assistance to the King of Candy.¹⁸⁸ Admiral Ove Giedde was put in charge of the expedition, but lacked experience in Indian trade. The solution to this problem was to appoint Crappe and Boshouwer to take responsibility for trade in the east.¹⁸⁹

When Crappe arrived in Ceylon, he tried to negotiate with the King of Candy, but in vain. He also opened up hostilities by attacking Portuguese vessels in Southern India, especially around Negapatnam. The Portuguese swiftly sank one of the Danish ships, and arrested Crappe. He was handed over to one of the local rulers on the Coromandel Coast, the Nayak of Tanjore, since Negapatnam, where the Portuguese had a trading post, was under the Nayak's jurisdiction.¹⁹⁰

While the Portuguese detained Crappe, Giedde and his fleet arrived in Ceylon, and began negotiations to build a fort in Trincomalee. Boschouwer died before arriving in Ceylon, leaving Giedde without assistance in his negotiations with the King of Candy. Upon arrival in Ceylon, it became clear that Boschouwer had made up the tale of future trade with Candy. In this sense, the Boschouwer case illustrates the frequently unpredictable nature of European overseas expansion, whereby an experienced adventurer–projector would sell “dreams” to a king, hoping to gain favours, and possibly thereby to earn a fortune. Eventually, the Danish were unable to build a fort in Ceylon, and Giedde was forced to move elsewhere.¹⁹¹ In October 1620, he decided to try his luck on the Coromandel coast, and was permitted an audience at the court of the Nayak in Tanjore. In November the same year, a treaty between the Nayak and the king of Denmark was signed, allowing the Danish to build a fort in Tranquebar.¹⁹² During these negotiations, Crappe was released from captivity. In 1622, Giedde set sail to Europe, and Crappe was placed in charge of Tranquebar.¹⁹³ Yet another Dutchman, Christoffer van der Molen, who had previously been employed by the VOC in Java,

¹⁸⁵ J.E. Elias, *De Vroedschap van Amsterdam 1578-1795*, vol. 1 (Amsterdam: N. Israel, 1963), 310; RAC, DK, Diverse breve dokumenter og breve det ostindiske kompagnis vedkommende 1618-1660, Letter from Hinlopen 09.08.1636.

¹⁸⁶ Several versions of the contract and its different drafts is located in the RAC, TKIA, Diverse akter vedr. det ostindiske kompagni og Guinea 1618-59.

¹⁸⁷ I would like to thank Professor Steve Murdoch for accessing this information: Anders Svensson, *Svensk agent ved Sundet: Toldkommissær og agent i Helsingør Anders Svenssons depecher til Gustav II Adolf og Axel Oxenstierna 1621-1626*, edit. Leo Tandrup (Aarhus: Universitetsforlaget i Aarhus, 1971), 117-118.

¹⁸⁸ Olsen, “Dansk Ostindien”, 25; regarding the first expedition, see Esther Fihl, “Shipwrecked on the Coromandel: The First Indian-Danish Contact, 1620,” in *Beyond Tranquebar Grappling Across Cultural Borders in South India*, ed. Esther Fihl and A.R. Vēṅkaṭācalapati (Delhi: Orient Blackswan, 2014), 229-56; Torben Abd-el Dayem, *Ove Geddes rejse til Ceylon og Indien 1618-22*, No. 19 (Esbjerg: Fiseri-og Søfartsmuseets, 2006).

¹⁸⁹ Olsen, “Dansk Ostindien”, 23-25.

¹⁹⁰ The Nayak will be discussed further in chapters three and four; Larsen, *Dansk-Ostindiske koloniers historie*, 17.

¹⁹¹ A report by Crappe revealed that De Boshouwer had sold the Danish Company lies. See RAC, TKIA, Diverse akter vedr. det ostindiske kompagni og Guinea 1618-59, Ausführliche relativ von der Reise die die Jacht gethan auch wie die genommen under endlich das conto und fort off Tranquebar gebaut Von Roland Crappe 1621.

¹⁹² Fihl has also discussed the development of the trade relationship between Crappe and the Nayak of Tanjore. Fihl, “Shipwrecked on the Coromandel”.

¹⁹³ Larsen, *Dansk-Ostindiske koloniers historie*, 20.

served as Crappe's assistant, and possibly his successor, in India.¹⁹⁴ When the first permanent Danish outpost had been built, and trade with the locals had been established, the day-to-day operations of the company in Asia were conducted by a number of previous VOC employees.

This section has highlighted the fact that many previous VOC and WIC employees participated in, or even initiated, the first Nordic overseas voyages. Blommaert, Minuit, Crappe and Boschouwer were all foreigners. Although foreign influence was of great significance in the establishment of the Danish East India trade, I underline the importance of their entrepreneurship rather than their origin. Indeed, it was their previous employment that provided them with the tools, knowledge, access to information and capital that were so essential to the Nordic enterprises. In the Nordic context, such experienced overseas veterans, with an entrepreneurial mindset, as described by Casson and Della Giusta, were the answer to the ambitions of the Nordic kingdoms. The following section will explain why so many previous VOC and WIC employees chose to switch their allegiance to the Nordic Companies.

2.4 *Glückstadt: a case of institutional sheltering*

If, as is commonly accepted, Dutch business culture was the strongest in Europe during the seventeenth century, why did men like Minuit, Bloemmart and Crappe decide to seek out alternative opportunities in the Nordic kingdoms? Although Dutch markets and commercial companies were larger, they were not without their limitations. On the one hand, not everyone was able to participate in Dutch economic development, and, as such, some were forced to seek alternatives elsewhere, especially in the Nordic kingdoms.¹⁹⁵ On the other hand, due to the reasons described below, some experienced overseas veterans were also interested in diverting their business outside of the Republic.

A clear and illustrative example of the Nordic approach to international trade was developed in the Danish Empire under Christian IV and later Fredrik III. For his part, Christian IV founded a new city, Glückstadt, in order to pursue his overseas ambitions and to attract international expertise.¹⁹⁶ The Danish council of the realm had little say in matters concerning the city, since the latter was situated in the duchy of Schleswig-Holstein, a private domain of the king. In Denmark proper, the king had to rule the kingdom on equal terms with the council, but in the duchy, the king could act as

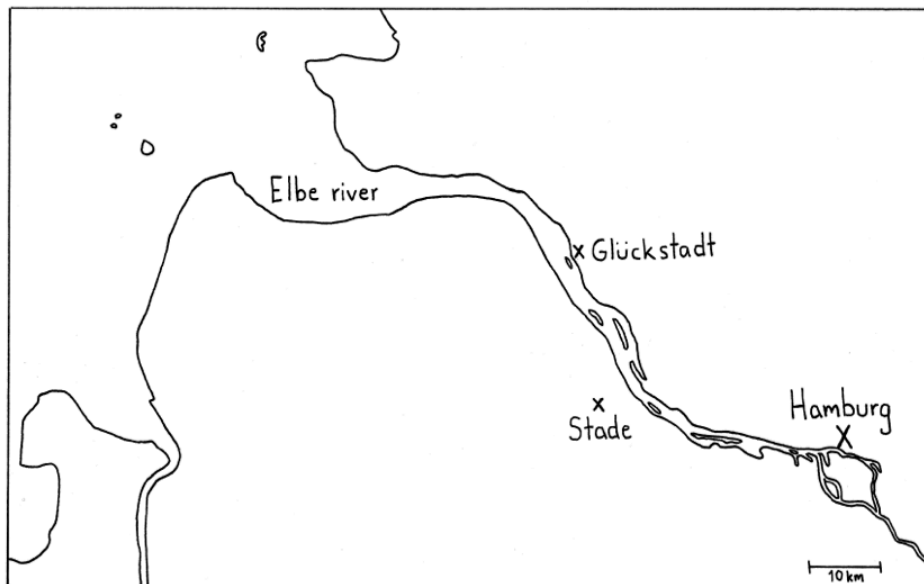
¹⁹⁴ Ibid, 23.

¹⁹⁵ Such behaviour was typical within the maritime communities from the Low Countries. Many individuals also found themselves working for the English and French overseas enterprises. One of the most famous examples is François Caron (1600-1673). As a Huguenot, he served the Dutch East India Company for almost 30 years. His career began as a cabin boy, but he swiftly rose through the ranks. Caron served the VOC in Japan, but returned to the Netherlands in 1641. In 1644, he returned to Asia, and was named governor of Formosa. In 1647, he was appointed Director-General in Batavia, but in 1651, he was called back to Europe following accusations of having engaged in private trade. Because of these accusations, Caron decided to leave the company, and approached the French Finance minister, Jean-Baptiste Colbert, instead. Thus, Caron was appointed Director-General of the company, and, in the 1660s, established French outposts in Surat and Masulipatnam in India. Indeed, Caron's case resembles that of Carloff—both managed to successfully change employer, and to rise to high positions in overseas trading companies. See Glenn Ames, *Colbert Mercantilism & the French Quest for Asian Trade* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1996), 30; Barbour, *Capitalism in Amsterdam*, 132; Christine Petto, *Mapping and Charting in Early Modern England and France: Power, Patronage, and Production* (Lanham/Boulder/New York/London: Lexington Books, 2015), 164.

¹⁹⁶ Glückstadt is situated north of Hamburg on the Elber river.

a feudal lord, and thus had almost complete freedom to pursue his ambitious overseas projects. In practice, Glückstadt was a protected environment within the Danish empire.¹⁹⁷

Figure 2-1 Map of Nordic interests on the Elbe river



Map created by Henrik Pulli

Glückstadt was founded in 1619, in order to attract foreign merchants connected to international trading routes. In line with the overall development of the early modern Nordic kingdoms, cities were established as centres for trade, for accumulating capital and for garnering the monarch tax revenues.¹⁹⁸ By offering religious toleration, extensive privileges and tax exemptions to foreigners, the king was able to recruit Portuguese Sephardic Jews, as well as reformed Dutch merchants and skippers.¹⁹⁹ The Thirty Year's War (1618–48), Twelve Year's Truce (1609–21) and the Synod of Dordrecht (1618–19) led some Dutchmen and Sephardic Jews to seek protection and/or business opportunities elsewhere.²⁰⁰ For example, during the early seventeenth century, the aggravation of

¹⁹⁷ Paul Lockhart, "Denmark and the Empire: A Reassessment of Danish Foreign Policy under King Christian IV", *Scandinavian Studies*, 63, no. 3, (1992) 390–416, 393–395.

¹⁹⁸ Karonen, *Pohjoinen suurvalta*, 177.

¹⁹⁹ Der Portugysen in der Glückstadt Privilegium, vom 3. August 1619, printed in Gerhard Köhn, *Die Bevölkerung der Residenz, Festung und Exulantenstadt Glückstadt von der Gründung 1616 bis zum Endausbau 1652: Methoden und Möglichkeiten einer historisch-demographischen Untersuchung mit Hilfe der elektronischen Datenverarbeitung* (Neumünster: Karl Wachholtz Verlag, 1974, 165, appendix 3; RAC, TKIA, A.10.1, Patenten 1655-56, 196b; RAC, TKIA, 1626-1669 Patenten, A10.1, several entries with privileges (e.g. privileges to the Dutch and the Portuguese); RAC, TKIA 1627-1704, Memorialer vedr. Hertugdøm kgl. Undersåtters commercium, B153-B154, Several entries of different privileges to Dutch and Portuguese merchants; Kellenbenz, *Sephardim an der Unteren Elbe...*: 64; Jacobs, Joachim., "Der Jüdische Friedhof von Glückstadt", in, Boldt C., Loebert, S., Puymnaa, K., *Erinnerungsorte – im auftrag des heimatverbandes für den kreis Steinburg*, Steinburger Jahrbuch, Itzehoe 2014, 65–82, 67..

²⁰⁰ Glückstadt, Das Stadtarchiv, Bürgerbuch, several entries between 1620 and 1660 show an increase in Dutch skippers and merchants receiving residency permits. Köhn has shown that until 1652, approximately 25% of the inhabitants came from the Low Countries (either Dutch or Sephardic Jews). Gerhard Köhn, *Die Niederlande und der Europäische Nordosten ein Jahrtausend weitläufiger Beziehungen* (Neumünster: Karl Wachholtz Verlag, 1992, 300 and 310; Israel, *The Dutch Republic*, 460–465.

religious factionalism within the Republic drove certain groups of people away. The Calvinist church of the Republic was divided into two factions, the Gomarians and the Arminians. Soon, the religious conflict escalated into a political one. In particular, the latter hinged upon the relationship between the church and the state, and developed into a controversy regarding the sovereignty of the seven provinces vis-à-vis the States General. The Arminians supported the sovereignty of the seven provinces, whereas the Gomarians called for a division between the provinces and the States General. The conflict escalated further during 1618. By 1619, the Gomarians had seized power within the Republic, and accused the Arminians of political treason. The Arminians were called to the Synod of Dordrecht, and were pressed to accept the outlawing of their religious practices. Those who disapproved of the Gomarians' plans were deported from the country, and this was one of the reasons behind some of the emigration to Glückstadt.²⁰¹

Another reason for emigration to Glückstadt was the turbulence that occurred between the end of the Twelve Years' Truce (1621) and the secession of Portugal from Spain (1640).²⁰² During these years, ships sailing with Dutch passports were barred from Iberian ports, which had clear repercussions on the Dutch carrier trade, and hit several merchants hard. Some of the latter thus moved to Hamburg and Glückstadt, seeking to take advantage of a treaty between the Spanish and Danish kings.²⁰³ After the truce had ended in 1621, the Spanish monarchy had tried to put an end to the Dutch carrier trade between the Baltic and Iberian Peninsula. The Spanish king had approached the Danish King Christian IV, hoping for his cooperation in the struggle against Dutch dominance in trade; in particular, he wanted all ships sailing between the Iberian and Baltic ports to be inspected and certified by the authorities in Glückstadt. In short, the aim was to prevent Dutch skippers from continuing the Baltic–Iberian trade. Through the treaty signed between Spain and Denmark in 1630, Glückstadt became the staple market for Iberian products in the Baltic.²⁰⁴ However, from the perspective of Christian IV, the treaty did not prevent international businessmen from trading with the Iberian world from Glückstadt. Therefore, the treaty prompted several Dutch skippers to request residency in Glückstadt, since they would thereby receive Danish passports, and thus enjoy official Danish protection.²⁰⁵ As such, residency in Glückstadt could open up new trading opportunities for

²⁰¹ Israel, *The Dutch Republic*, 460–465; Köhn, *Die Niederland*, 300.

²⁰² The truce was part of the Eighty Years' War (1568–1648), also known as The Dutch war of Independence, in which the Dutch provinces revolted against the rule of Philip II of Spain. The cause of the revolt was a combination of religious tension and resentment towards Spanish rule and hegemony. During this time, the low countries (Belgium and the Netherlands) were divided between Catholic southern provinces (present day Belgium) and Protestant / Calvinist northern provinces (the Netherlands). Between 1568 and 1609, the revolt escalated into several armed conflicts. The conflict also extended beyond Europe into the overseas world. Exhausted with fighting, and frustrated with the decline in trade, a twelve-year truce was concluded in 1609. Due to the beginning of the Thirty Years' War, the hostilities between the Republic and Spain escalated again. The end of the Eighty Years' War was signalled by the peace treaty of Münster in 1648 (a part of the peace treaty of Westphalia), in which the northern seven provinces were recognised as the Dutch Republic, whereas the remaining ten provinces remained a part of the Habsburg Empire.

²⁰³ Israel, *Empires and Entrepots. The Dutch, the Spanish monarchy and the Jews, 1585-1713* (London-Ronceverte: The Hambledon Press, 1990), 428.

²⁰⁴ A Sephardic Jew Alberto Dinis represented the Danish part of the negotiations with the Spanish king.

²⁰⁵ Köhn, *Die Bevölkerung der Residenz*, 53.

individuals.²⁰⁶ After the end of the Eighty Years War (1568–1648), Danish passports became less valuable.²⁰⁷

The king granted businessmen residing in Glückstadt exclusive privileges for trade with Augsburg, Finnmark (today in Northern Norway), Iceland and Northern Africa.²⁰⁸ He also granted experienced producers and traders of Portuguese Jewish origin monopoly privileges over the import of sugar and the minting of coins.²⁰⁹ The presence of foreign businessmen and their networks increased the availability of capital, as well as facilitating the introduction of new technologies and know-how. One notable example of the extensive privileges bestowed upon the Portuguese Jewish community was the Pallache family, who received exclusive privileges regarding trade with Morocco.²¹⁰ As early as 1647, the king issued passports to two Sephardic Jews, Simon and Henrique de Casseres, allowing them to sail to Guinea and the Caribbean.²¹¹ By the 1680s, when the Danish West India Company had established its headquarters in Copenhagen, the king appointed yet another Sephardic Jew, Moses Joshua Henriques, to be the factor of the company in Glückstadt, where he was largely responsible for sending company ships to the Atlantic, thus gaining the city a share of the products arriving from Africa and the Americas.²¹²

However, the protection that foreigners received from the Danish monarchy was at the expense of their native Danish counterparts. Glückstadt, as a royal domain, insulated its residents from the competition of merchants in Copenhagen, as well as from the laws of the Danish kingdom. Understandably, this created tension within the kingdom, forcing the king to concede new privileges to Danish merchants in Copenhagen. The competition between the two cities regarding overseas commerce was severe, but the international business community in Glückstadt was more interested in profit than local politics.²¹³ For this reason, the king was able to outsource his own overseas designs to men whose political weight was low.

However, the structure and administration of the Dutch trading companies provided another reason for moving business to Glückstadt. These organisations, although large by seventeenth-century standards, did not offer equal opportunities to everyone. As will be discussed in chapter four, for those skippers and merchants who had been interloping or practicing illicit trade and smuggling while employed by the WIC, Glückstadt represented an opportunity to continue making profit under the official protection of the monarch.

For example, Willem Usselinx, already introduced above, recorded in his memoirs in 1644 that: “I was eager to see the new city of Glückstadt and Frederickstad in Holstein, as well as

²⁰⁶ Israel, Jonathan, “The Politics of International Trade Rivalry during the Thirty Years’ War: Gabriel de Roy and Olivares’s mercantilist Projects, 1621-1645”, *Empires and Entrepôts*, 213–247; Charles Hill, *The Danish Sound Dues and the Command of the Baltic*. Durham: Duke University Press, 1926; 104; Köhn, *Die Bevölkerung der Residenz*, 52–53; on the treaty between Spain and Denmark, see L. Laursen, *Danmark-Norges Traktater, 1523-1750*, Vol. IV (1626-1649) (Copenhagen: Nielsen & Lydische, 1917), 87–8.

²⁰⁷ Köhn, *Die Bevölkerung der Residenz*, 55.d

²⁰⁸ RAC, Regeringskancelliet i Glückstadt, 1630-1703 Akter. Vedr. Glückstad by og fæstning, 146, file, 1 Nr 3 Conv. 4.

²⁰⁹ Der Zucker refinirer privilegium in der Glückstadt, vom 10. August 1620, printed in, Köhn, *Die Bevölkerung der Residenz*, 167 anlage 4.

²¹⁰ RAC, Regeringskancelliet i Glückstadt, 1630-1703 Akter. Vedr. Glückstad by og fæstning, 146, file, 1 Nr 3 Conv. 4; Mercedes García-Arenal and Gerard Albert Wiegers, *A Man of Three Worlds: Samuel Pallache, a Moroccan Jew in Catholic and Protestant Europe* (Baltimore : John Hopkins University Press, 2003).

²¹¹ Nørregård, *Danish Settlements*, 12.

²¹² RAC, TKIA, Inländische registratur 1685-1686, B12.10, Appointment of Moses Joshua Henriques.

²¹³ Nørregård, *Danish Settlements*, 13.

Gothenburg in Sweden.”²¹⁴ Indeed, some entrepreneurially-minded individuals were impatient and frustrated by the narrow conservatism and closed-mindedness of the Dutch companies.²¹⁵ The historian Violet Barbour states that this was the motive for Usselincx and others to join foreign companies. Furthermore, she indicates that there were several pamphlet attacks against the directors of the Dutch companies. According to Barbour, the shareholders had almost no control over the directors, and accused the board of incompetence, speculation, waste and nepotism.²¹⁶ Thus, the individuals who looked for opportunities elsewhere were ready to use their entrepreneurial skills against the WIC and VOC if an opportunity arose, as the case of Usselincx and others demonstrate.

A third reason for moving to Glückstadt was economic, and linked to the specificities of overseas trade. During the seventeenth century, the opportunities for investment in trade were limited, and investment in overseas trade was riskier than investment in intra-European trade. However, the profits were higher, which appealed to investors. Another economic factor, at least in the Swedish case, was the possibility of access to highly important and valuable sources of goods, such as copper, iron and tar. These were also important in overseas trade, since they were used not only for building and maintaining company and navy ships, but also as trade goods. For example, much Swedish iron was transformed into tools used in the slave trade and on slave plantations, but it was also traded on the Western African market. The goods were also interesting for German, Dutch, French and English manufacturers, who saw an opportunity to make a profit in the Nordic kingdoms.²¹⁷

For many of these men, investment in Nordic ventures proved to be an option worthy of serious consideration. The shelter which the Nordic monarchs provided, such as easily available residency, tax exemptions and religious freedom, was enticing. Furthermore, the possibilities for upward social mobility and expansion of business networks and opportunities were attractive prospects.

There is yet another argument worth considering. In the WIC and the VOC, employees worked on a contract basis, usually for four to six years, or at least in theory. After the contract expired, they had to choose what to do with their accumulated experience. Often, employees were forced to continue serving, due to a lack of manpower at the company’s outposts. Others re-enrolled in the companies, because there was no better alternative. Thus, many employees continued to work for the company, whether out of free will or constraint. From the standpoint of the individual, dangerous working conditions were compensated by the possibility of making a good career in the companies. This applied to foreigners, especially Nordic employees, but excluded German speaking employees, who had fewer prospects.²¹⁸ Although good career opportunities existed, the highest positions were reserved for the Dutch, and even among them, only for the elite classes. In this sense, exclusive networks of patronage rendered the highest positions inaccessible to outsiders, regardless of their

²¹⁴ I would like to thank Joris Van den Tol for providing this source. NL-HaNA, Staten-Generaal 1.01.02, inv. nr. 5758 Liassen WIC, 3.10.1644 *Memory by Willem Usselincx*, “ik begeerich was om de nieuwe stede van Gluckstadt en Frederickstadt in Holsteijn ende Gottenborch in Sweeden te sien.”

²¹⁵ Barbour, *Capitalism in Amsterdam*, 137.

²¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 138.

²¹⁷ Katja Tikka, “Kauppaa ja laivoja: Komppaniatoiminnan kehityspiirteitä 1600-luvun Itämerellä,” in *Työ merellä*, ed. Tapio Bergholm (Helsinki: Museovirasto, 2016), 1–17; Göran Rydén and Chris Evans, *Baltic Iron in the Atlantic World in the Eighteenth Century*. First edition. Boston/Leiden: Brill, 2007; P. W. Klein, “17th Century Monopoly Game: The Swedish-Dutch Trade in Tar and Pitch,” in *Wirtschaftswege und Wirtschaftskräfte*, ed. Jürgen Schneider, vol. 2 (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1978); Dahlgren, *Louis de Geer*.

²¹⁸ Germans had difficulties in advancing within the VOC, because they had a bad reputation in the Republic, they did not speak or write Dutch, and they were not allowed to openly confess their Lutheran religion. Roelof van Gelder, *Het Oost-Indisch avontuur: Duitsers in dienst van de VOC (1600-1800)* (Nijmegen: SUN, 1997), 284.

origin.²¹⁹ For experienced but excluded individuals, the prospect of career progression within the Nordic companies could be an attractive option.

There was also an economic incentive to join a Nordic company. Many officials had worked for years in the outposts, had built up connections, developed private business initiatives and were accustomed to the local trading cultures. This often meant that they had accumulated personal wealth (or knew how to do so), but were not allowed to bring it back to Europe on the company ships, since their contracts with the WIC and the VOC prohibited employees from engaging in private trade on an extensive scale. Therefore, after their contracts expired, such men were interested in the employment alternatives and transferability of wealth offered by the Nordic companies.²²⁰

The “institutional sheltering” practised by the Nordic kingdoms is best understood as the process whereby the individuals who had been recruited could negotiate with local institutions, organisations or rulers regarding the prospect of joining a local enterprise, and thereby create the circumstances necessary for mutual benefit – whether social, political or economic.²²¹ This political protection, during a time when trading companies claimed a monopoly on overseas trade, enabled individuals to secure employment, and potentially also to raise their social standing. In the Nordic kingdoms, easy access to residency eliminated the issue of breaching the charter rights of the Dutch companies, which deprived all others than their own company investors from trading in the given charter areas.

This period was characterised by increasing competition for overseas trade. This competition took many forms, and individuals played an important role by offering organisations the instruments they needed to compete – for example, business intelligence regarding local market prices and products, and other business-related information such as with whom to trade, or how to establish settlements. An experienced company employee knew how to operate locally, knowledge that was highly sought-after by the companies in Europe. To employ someone with extensive connections, experience and knowledge overseas could confer a competitive advantage, just as much as having capable administrators in Europe. The aim was thus not only to protect assets and goods, but also to protect know-how and information within a highly competitive business sector.

From a Nordic perspective, the attractiveness of the Sephardic Jews, and the German and Dutch skippers and merchants, arose from the fact that they could offer ships, capital and connections (through family or religious networks), and often had previous experience in the areas in which they traded. From an entrepreneurial perspective, the Nordic companies could offer protection under a Nordic flag, protection against their previous employers, and the possibility of transcontinental transfers of wealth. There were, however, complicating factors in the sheltering process. Since the city and its privileges were entirely dependent upon the king as feudal lord, the situation could change rapidly if the king or his successor so wished. The connection of the privileged trading groups to the king was thus highly precarious.

²¹⁹ Gelder, *Het Oost-Indisch avontuur*, 186, 284; on the role of patronage networks in the VOC, see Matthias van Rossum, *Werkers van de Wereld: Globalisering, arbeid en interculturele ontmoetingen tussen Aziatische en Europese zeelieden in dienst van de VOC, 1600–1800*, (Hilversum: Verloren, 2014), 272–278.

²²⁰ In the Swedish East India Company, the supercargoes could bring parts of the return cargo for their personal benefit, which made the position very lucrative and competitive. Müller, “Trading with Asia”, 236–52, for example, 244.

²²¹ A similar idea has been developed by P.W. Klein, albeit for a different purpose and in a different context. The idea behind institutional sheltering in Klein’s argument is that in the early modern period, entrepreneurs were offered “shelter” to invest their capital through monopoly privileges. As Jan Willem Veluwenkamp has pointed out, such monopoly privileges rarely worked. See Klein and Veluwenkamp, “The Role of the Entrepreneur”.

As discussed, institutional sheltering required specific skills on the part of individuals, such as knowledge of markets, experience of overseas trade, the capacity to access information, and business connections overseas. These skills were exchanged in return for protection from the monarchs. This chapter will now turn to two case studies, which will shed light on the years spent accumulating these skills. In particular focus will be the importance of experience accumulated within Dutch organisations. In short, how did overseas experience translate into entrepreneurial advantage when one sought employment in the Nordic trading companies?

2.5 Willem Leyel and the elite of Elsinore

In 1593, Willem Leyel (Lejel, Leyll, Lyall) was born in Elsinore, Denmark, a city whose close proximity to the Sound made it important for Danish maritime trade.²²² In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Elsinore was a transit port for itinerant voyagers – people with knowledge of, and stories about, distant lands, where great fortunes and prosperity could be attained.²²³

The city occupied a significant position in the Danish Kingdom, because it was also an entry point to the Baltic trading zone, and the place where the Sound toll was collected and administered. Indeed, this position lay at the foundation of the fortunes of several merchant families based there. The city, which peaked between 1590 and 1650, was also the place with the largest share of foreigners in the Danish Kingdom,²²⁴ although this was still small in comparison with other European port cities, such as Hamburg, Lisbon or Amsterdam.

Willem was born to a family with a relatively high socio-economic standing. The Leyel family, originally from Scotland, had migrated to the Nordic kingdoms during the first half of the sixteenth century.²²⁵ Leyel's maternal great grandfather, Sander Leyel, had been an influential man in local Danish society, and especially close to the king. In 1548, he had been appointed collector of the Sound toll. From then onwards, the Leyel family had become the hereditary keepers of the Sound toll, and possibly the largest tax farmers in the kingdom. The Sound toll was a tax collected of every ship passing the Sound between Elsinore and Helsingborg, and constituted a great source of income not only for the king, but also for the Leyel family. Indeed, the position of Sound toll collector was one of the most powerful positions that a person could obtain in the king's administration. As toll collector, Sander Leyel was also able to report to the king the latest events in international trade, since he was able to gather intelligence from abroad. Moreover, he also acted as royal factor.²²⁶

²²² The city has become famous for its geographical location and its economic function. It is located next to the narrow strait close to Sweden. In the 15th century, the Danish King Erik av Pommern established the Sound toll, which meant that every passing ship had to pay a toll. The revenues belonged to the king, not to the kingdom. For a long time, this was the single most important revenue stream for the king.

²²³ For thorough studies on the importance of the Sound toll, see Torben Hvidegaard, "Øresundstolden på Christian 4.'s tid - Sundtoldens betydning 1613-1645 for forholdet mellem Danmark, Sverige og Nederlandene," *Fortid og nutid* 1 (2000), 199–219; Hill, *The Danish Sound Dues*.

²²⁴ For an overview of the Dutch merchants residing in Elsinore, see Allan Tønnesen, *'Al het Hollandse volk dat hier nu woont': Nederlanders in Helsingør, circa 1550-1600*, (Hilversum Verloren 2003).

Harald Holck, "Om Slægten Leyel," *Personalthistorisk tidsskrift* 6, no. 13 (1958); Thomas Riis, *Should Auld Acquaintance Be Forgot: Scottish-Danish Relations C. 1450-1707* (Odense: Odense University Press, 1988), 155.

²²⁵ During this period, it was not unusual for Scottish families to migrate to Elsinore and the neighbouring areas. See Kathrin Zickermann, *Across the German Sea: Early Modern Scottish Connections with the Wider Elbe-Weser Region* (Boston/Leiden: Brill, 2013).

²²⁶ Riis, *Should Auld Acquaintance*, 163.

Indicative of Sander Leyel's social status was the fact that, according to Asta Bredsdorff, the king had agreed to act as godfather to one of Sander's sons. The family also owned several ships, and conducted a lucrative business in the Baltic. Another important aspect is that although Sander held the highest office in the city, he was not legally Danish, but remained a Scottish immigrant, married to a Scottish woman, Elline Davidsdatter, the daughter of David Thomson, mayor of Elsinore in 1521.²²⁷ Sander's legal status only changed in 1558, when he was naturalised as Danish.²²⁸ Willem's mother, Ingeborg Fredriksdatter Leyel, was married to Johan Willumsen (Willem's father), who became mayor of Elsinore in 1618. When Willem was 30 years old, his father passed away, and, in 1623, his mother re-married, to Matthias Hansen, a mayor in Copenhagen.²²⁹

2.6 *From Elsinore to Batavia*

As collectors of the Sound toll, the Leyel family was in a position to receive the latest news regarding maritime trade. Indeed, it is fair to say that they might well have been better informed about international trade than the king. How and why Willem Leyel initially entered the orbit of the Dutch empire, becoming a part of the VOC's operations in Asia, is unclear.

In a report dated 1644, he wrote to the directors of the Danish East India Company that he had in the past served in Batavia, with a captain called Jürgen Boddin.²³⁰ There, Leyel had married a Dutch widow, who had given birth to a daughter, Christina.²³¹ Erik Odegard's research on the governors of the VOC has shown that marrying a widow in the Dutch East Indies could significantly improve one's prospects of career advancement. In this way, one could marry into an already existing network of members of the company.²³² In addition to his daughter, Leyel also had two sons, Hans and Anders.²³³ Thus, it seems that Leyel was from an early date rooted in the world of Asian trade.

As gleaned from the archives in Copenhagen, Willem Leyel read and wrote several languages. He was apparently fluent in Danish, German and Portuguese, and also in English and Persian. Such language skills were only possible due to a certain educational background, which his family had been capable of providing. He had probably learned English and Danish at home, and German was the second official language in Denmark at that time. He possibly learned Dutch and Portuguese during his early years in Asia, but it is equally possible that Leyel acquired the Dutch language through his family's business connections in the Republic. Dutch was, after all, widely spoken in Denmark – especially within maritime communities. Leyel joined the VOC at a time before Denmark had its own overseas companies, so it is possible that he was sent by his family to join the company in order to gain experience and expertise, particularly on how to conduct long distance trade and how to manage a business. Whether the family had plans to subsequently participate in an Asian company in Denmark is less clear.

²²⁷ Going back even further in the history of the Leyel family, there were several other mayors both in Elsinore and Copenhagen, dating back to 1477. See, *ibid*, 188–189.

²²⁸ *Ibid*, 169.

²²⁹ Bredsdorff, *The Trials and Travels*, 18.

²³⁰ RAC, DK, B 246 A, Leyel to the directors, 22.11.1644.

²³¹ Bredsdorff, *The Trials and Travels*, 20.

²³² Erik Odegard, "Colonial Careers: Johan Maurits van Nassau Siegen, Rijckloff Volckertsz. van Goens and Career-Making in the Early Modern Dutch Empire" PhD-Dissertation, (Leiden: Leiden University, 2018).

²³³ Bredsdorff, *The Trials and Travel*, 20.

Ludovicus de Dieu provided a contemporary account of Willem Level's early years in Asia. In his introduction to *Historia Christi*, he explains that: "I owe it to the Danish merchant Willem Level, who now is the director of the Danish East India Company, to confess that the information that this man, raised above the ordinary spirit of commerce, though no scholar, while he still lived in Persia, learned to speak, read, and write the Persian language, passed on to me, when he spent some time in Leyden, has been very useful."²³⁴

The text suggests that Level also learned Persian during his employment in the VOC. Indeed, the letters and fragments amongst his papers confirm this suspicion. Bredsdorff has concluded that Level's interest in learning Persian is an exception to a commonly held image of the Danish merchant:

The men who conducted the business of buying and selling in the distant Danish possession, are usually viewed as sitting with their noses buried in their accounts, longing for the day *when* they could return home with a large store of gold pieces in the bottom of their chests. Men who evinced no interest whatsoever in the magnificent culture of the East, in its history or literature, if only they could make a good profit.²³⁵

Bredsdorff's view of Level may be accurate, and it is possible that Level was fascinated by non-European cultures. However, I would suggest that the reason for Level's eagerness was more related to his business ambitions. During the period of Mughal rule, Persian was the administrative language of the empire, and was commonly used in Asia as a language of business.²³⁶ The same could be said of Portuguese, which, during the seventeenth century, was the *de facto* overseas business language both in the Indian and in the Atlantic arenas. This, I believe that learning Persian and Portuguese would have been extremely prudent, if not absolutely necessary, for Level.

One might wonder why Willem Level did not continue in his family's footsteps, that is, by becoming a Sound toll collector. There are three possible reasons. The first is institutional – it is possible that Willem simply did not have the opportunity to continue his family's profession, due to a change in the administration of the Sound toll. Søren Mentz's research on English merchants in Asia has shown that many of the latter belonged to the gentry or to merchant families, but were younger sons, thus having no prospect of inheriting the social position of their fathers. Therefore, they had no choice but to establish their own careers. Such men often worked in sectors of the civil service, in the army or the church, while others served apprenticeships at well-known merchant houses. In England, employment in the East India Company was a highly respectable option. Those who had connections to influential people in the company had a good chance of gaining employment.²³⁷ Indeed, a somewhat similar situation must have pertained in the Nordic context. Thus, serving overseas might have offered Willem a chance to prove his abilities after the death of his father.

²³⁴ Bredsdorff, *The Trials and Travels*, 19; the quote is a translation by Bredsdorff from Niebuhr's study. "Jeg skylder, siger han, den Danske kjøbmand Wilhelm Level, som for nærværende Tid er Kgl. dansk Direktør for den ostindiske Handel, at tilstaae: at de Oplysninger, som denne Mand, der, ophøjet over den almindelige Kjøbmanssaand, endskjönt ingen Videnskabsmand, medens han opholdt sig i Persien, har lært at tale, læse og skrive det persiske Sprog, har meddeelt mig, da han tilbragte nogen Tid hos os i Leyden, har været mig særdeles nyttige." Niebuhr, "Nogle efterretninger om Wilhelm Level", 147.

²³⁵ Ibid, 19–20.

²³⁶ Ibid, 20.

²³⁷ Mentz, *The English Gentleman*, 229.

The second possible reason is a change in the strategy of the family. During Leyel's adolescence, the Danish king had issued charters for ventures in Asia, and it is possible that stories of great wealth and fortune attracted the attention of the Leyel family. Since they had a long history of involvement in maritime trade, it is plausible that Willem was sent to receive training in the Republic, where the family had trading connections. Indeed, Willem was not the only member of the Leyel family to enter overseas service. According to Steve Murdoch, Robert Lyall, a member of the same clan, entered DEIC service directly from Scotland. Other members of the clan continued to enter VOC service, as did John Lyall in 1641.²³⁸

A third possible explanation is that, after Leyel's father passed away, his new stepfather had no desire to maintain and provide for his stepson. Thus, Leyel would have had no choice but to strike out on his own.

Whatever the reason for Leyel's entry into the VOC, it is clear that he began his mercantile career with the Dutch. During these formative years, Leyel developed his business skills, amongst which languages, bookkeeping and knowledge of local trading practices were preeminent.

The first recorded reference to an association between Willem Leyel and the Danish East India Company occurred in 1626 at Pipley, on the coast of Bengal.²³⁹ He and his close business associate, Claus Rytter, were noted as trading for the DEIC.²⁴⁰ Crappe, the commander of the company in Asia, had plans to establish a trading post there, but these plans did not meet with success. Leyel and Rytter were thus called back to Tranquebar, and then departed for Europe towards the end of 1628.²⁴¹ In a letter dated 22 February 1635, Leyel wrote that he had previously traded in Surat and in Persia. He expressed his belief that a trade connection with Persia was important for the DEIC, especially in order to acquire products that could be exchanged in Bantam and Makassar. Furthermore, Leyel wrote that he had already tried to access Persian trade in 1626, when Crappe had sent him and Rytter to Pipley. They had, however, failed in their efforts, since the local rulers had deemed their gifts to be unsatisfactory.²⁴²

Ten years later, in 1636, Crappe was ready to return home. When he left Tranquebar, Danish trade in India was in decline, and he had failed to present the Nayak with a promised tribute.²⁴³ Furthermore, he had negotiated with the VOC regarding the possibility of selling Dansborg to the Dutch.²⁴⁴ These negotiations had never been concluded, but Crappe had secured factors in Masulipatnam (the East Coast of India), at Balasore (the Ganges delta), in Achin (the northern tip of Sumatra), at Japara and Bantam (on Java) and in Makassar (Celebes).²⁴⁵

Crappe's successor was Barent Pessart, a seasoned overseas merchant, who, like Crappe and Boschouwer, had previously lived in Batavia as a free burgher (*vrijburger*).²⁴⁶ As it turned out,

²³⁸ Victor Enthoven et al., eds., *The Navigator: The Log of John Anderson, VOC Pilot-Major, 1640-1643* (Boston/Leiden: Brill, 2010), 92; Murdoch, *Network North*, 210.

²³⁹ RAC, DK, *Diverse breve dokumenter og breve det ostindiska kompgani vedkommende 1616–1660*, Leyel recounted the expedition to Pipley in a letter dated 22.02.1635.

²⁴⁰ Bredsdorff, *The Trials and Travels*, 20.

²⁴¹ Ibid, 20; Olsen, "Dansk Ostindien", 58.

²⁴² RAC, DK, *Diverse breve dokumenter og breve det ostindiska kompgani vedkommende*, Willem Leyel 22.02.1635.

²⁴³ Olsen, "Dansk Ostindien", 60–61.

²⁴⁴ Coolhas, ed., *Generale missiven*, deel 1, 1610-1638 (Gravenhage: Martinus Nijhoff, 1960), 265.

²⁴⁵ Bredsdorff, *The Trials and Travels*, 13.

²⁴⁶ RAC, DK, *Diverse Breve Dokumenter og breve det ostindiska kompgani vedkommende 1616–1660*, in a letter dated 09.11.1636, Crappe wrote that he had made Pessart the president of the DEIC in Asia; H.T. Colenbrander, ed., *Dagh-register gehouden int casteel Batavia: 1636* (Gravenhage: Martinus Nijhoff, 1899), 14.03.1636, 95 and 294.

however, he was a poor choice for the Danish company. The paucity of his accounts, unpaid rents to local rulers, and the enormous debts that he incurred all combined to weaken his reputation within the company.²⁴⁷ Indeed, the period of Pessart's tenure shows that Danish operations in Asia were not on a solid basis, and testifies to the influence that individuals could have upon a small trading company like the DEIC. But why did Crappe, a man who was heavily involved in the organisation of the company in Europe, choose Pessart? It has been claimed that Pessart was "intelligent but unreliable".²⁴⁸ The historian Martin Krieger has shown that Pessart was only interested in private gain, and treated the DEIC as an instrument for conducting private trade in the Indian Ocean.²⁴⁹ However, it needs to be underlined that being an employee in a company was quite different from being in charge of the company overseas. A merchant was responsible for daily trade, whereas the person in charge was supposed to guarantee that the entire business was conducted correctly. Indeed, I will return to this issue in the next two chapters. As head of operations, Pessart was responsible for keeping the books, and for the improvement of trading relationships with local merchants and rulers.²⁵⁰ Pessart failed in his most essential tasks, although admittedly in a context where support from Copenhagen was weak. All in all, even if Pessart and Crappe were both Dutchmen and ex-employees of the VOC, they stood in sharp contrast to each other during their time of employment with the DEIC.

The difference between Crappe and Pessart indicates that individuals had a significant impact on the business of the DEIC. To make a successful career in the first Danish East India Company, one needed not only to be experienced, but also to be capable of running the business, and governing the company in Asia. In other words, governance and management required different types of know-how and experience to regular trade and warfare. Although this was true of most trading ventures at the time, it was especially crucial for a company that operated on such a small scale. Indeed, a lack of manpower and resources remained a challenge for the DEIC throughout its existence.

2.7 *Return to Copenhagen and new plans*

In 1628, Willem Leyel returned to Copenhagen after his years spent in Asia, in the midst of the Thirty Year's War. He was appointed captain in the Royal Danish Navy, with an annual salary of 200 riksdaler.²⁵¹ However, he did not have to participate in the war for long, since Christian IV withdrew from it in 1629, as a result of having made peace with the Emperor. Leyel's appointment should be seen in the light of an experienced individual with family connections to the king. Indeed, this might have been a combination of two factors; it was possible that the king wished to show appreciation for Leyel's service in Asia, but at the same time it is highly likely that he simply needed experienced officers to man his fleet.

While Leyel was captain in the royal navy, two ships were due to be sent to India. The directors of the company had decided that all shareholders should pay a sum of twenty per cent over and above their original contribution, in order to cover necessary expenses and to maintain business. If they did

²⁴⁷ Olsen, "Dansk Ostindien", 66–67.

²⁴⁸ "Pessart var en intelligent, men højst utilforladelig man", Larsen, *Dansk-Ostindiske koloniers historie*, 30.

²⁴⁹ Krieger, *Kaufleute*, 207–211.

²⁵⁰ RAC, DK, *Diverse kongelige ekspeditioner det Ostindiske Kompagni vedkommende*, The instructions from the directors to the president of the DEIC in Asia and to the merchants, 1623.

²⁵¹ *Kancelliets brevbøger*, 1627–29, 01.05.1628: 406; Bredsdorff, *The Trials and Travels*, 24.

not pay, the directors kept the investors' previous investments. Indeed, this is indicative of the challenging state of the finances of the Danish East India Company. Put simply, the investors were simply compelled to keep investing. Despite this added pressure, the company continued to experience financial difficulties, which eventually resulted in a financial rescue operation by the king, who, it was noted, paid a "considerable" amount. As a result, he became the lord of the company, and used this position to appoint company directors, amongst other things.²⁵²

Despite the king's rescue operation, the administration of the company was facing overwhelming challenges by the 1630s. On 9 January 1634, the king expressed his dissatisfaction with the company's situation in India. He had appointed Albert Skeel, one of the main shareholders of the company, to investigate how to improve trade. In the same letter, the king had ordered Willem Leyel to express what he thought should be done regarding trade in India. "The king commanded this Vilm Leyel, who had recently returned from East India, to visit him (Skeel), and to give him a report on the state of affairs."²⁵³ The king evidently thought that Leyel, having returned from Asia in 1628, had the most up-to-date knowledge regarding trade in India. This indicates how difficult it was to get reliable and up-to-date information in Copenhagen, a situation that confirms the thesis that individuals with access to information were of crucial importance.

Soon after the meeting between Skeel and Leyel, the king requested a meeting with his council, in order to discuss how the DEIC trade should be improved. In the king's letters to his treasurer, he informed the latter that Leyel was to receive 200 riksdalers in August 1634, in order to undertake a voyage to the Dutch Republic on his Majesty's service.²⁵⁴ It was not specified exactly what Leyel's mission was. Supposedly, he was sent to the Republic in order to gather intelligence regarding the latest developments in European trade, and particularly in the Indian Ocean.

The king also gave Leyel the task of equipping the vessel *St Anna* for a voyage to India.²⁵⁵ In December 1634, the king requested that his treasurer hand over the requisite funds to Leyel, who was to manage the goods and the capital in the best interest of the company.²⁵⁶

In 1635, the king decided to further tighten his grip on the company, and on Leyel. In a council letter dated 14 September 1635, he announced that Leyel, now a director in the company, was to receive an annual salary of 300 riksdalers. In return, he was required to do his utmost to serve the company, as embodied in an oath of loyalty, sworn on 11 March 1636. In this regard, the council's letter books recorded that:

In the presence of chancellor Christian Friis, Vincent Bilde, and Ove Juel, Villumb Lejel has taken the oath as director of the Danish East India Company. He promises to be loyal to the king, to do his best for the king and the participants of the Danish East India Company and to do his best not to cause any harm to them. He shall always act for the benefit of the company. He shall not reveal anything about the state of trade to the detriment of the company.²⁵⁷

²⁵² Bredsdorff, *The Trials and Travels*, 22.

²⁵³ "har kongen befalet denne Vilm Leyel, som for kort Tid siden er kommet fra Ostindien, at begive sig til ham og give ham Beretning om same Tilstand" in, *Kancelliets brevbøger*, 1633–34, 09.01.1634: 403–404.

²⁵⁴ *Kong Christian den fjerdes egenhændige breve*, Christian IV till rentemestere, 20.12.1634: 314–316.

²⁵⁵ *Kancelliets brevbøger*, 1633–34, 31.01.1634: 433–435.

²⁵⁶ *Kong Christian den fjerdes egenhændige breve*, 20.12.1634: 314–316: 818–819.

²⁵⁷ "Ed, som Villumb Lejel har aflagt i nærværlese af Kansleren Hr. Christian Friis, Vincent Bilde til Nes og Ove Juel til Meilgaard, i hans Egenskab af Bewinthebber og Forvalter for det danske ostindiske Kompagni. Han lover og forpligter sig til at vaere Kongen huld og tro, vide og ramme Kongens og det ostindiske Kopmagnies participanters Bedste og af yderste Evne afvende deres Skade. Han skal ikke aabenbar nogen noget om Handelens tilstand til Skade

Moreover, an earlier draft preserved among the papers of the Council included the sentence: “He promises to be loyal to the king and the company”²⁵⁸ This means that in the actual oath, the company was given more prominence. On the one hand, this demonstrates that Leye had become significant for the king. He was personally appointed as director, and as the king’s representative in the company. At this point, it becomes clear that Leye had a patron-client relationship with Christian IV. However, the appointment was in contravention of the original charter of the company. The latter stated that only directors were to appoint new directors, and only in the case that one of the previous directors had died. This time, however, Leye was appointed by the king, which suggests that he enjoyed a unique position. On the other hand, it also shows that the king, who needed to save the company financially, assumed that he should have an active say in the way the company was managed.

The letter to the council further emphasised that the other directors should treat Leye as their equal.²⁵⁹ Indeed, this suggests that the directorship Leye held was different from that of the other directors. In contrast to the appointment of Leye, the king had in an earlier letter stated that he did not care who was appointed director, so long as he knew what he was doing.²⁶⁰

Leye was appointed by the king to serve his and the company’s interest in Asia (in this order). This was an extraordinary position for someone who had not invested money in the company. For the king, it was important to have a trustworthy director and employee, who would work for the benefit of the Crown and the company simultaneously. In exchange for safeguarding the royal interests in the company, Leye was given a prominent position. Leye’s position changed yet again in June 1639, when he was appointed bookkeeper.²⁶¹ His experience in the Indian Ocean was reason enough for the king to appreciate and to reward him. He was also the right person to collect information, and to guard the king’s interests vis-à-vis the directors of the company.

Asta Bredsdorff claims that Leye was appointed chief merchant onboard the *St Anna*, which set sail from Copenhagen to India on 19 November 1635. However, as we have seen, the king had already appointed Leye as director in 1635, and Leye had sworn an oath in March 1636, in front of chancellor Christian Friis, Vincent Bilde and Ove Juel. Furthermore, the king had written in a letter dated 4 November 1636 that a certain Joachim Pedersen had been appointed director in the same company, and was to work jointly with Leye.²⁶² Bredsdorff has suggested that the other Willem Leye was perhaps a relative of the Willem Leye in question here.²⁶³

Towards the end of the decade, Leye’s career would take yet a new turn. Commander Pessart’s behaviour had caused the administration of the company great concern.²⁶⁴ He had failed to send reports, and the directors were unaware of the state of the company. However, the situation in Tranquebar forced the directors to act, and Leye was dispatched to deal with the situation. In October

for kompagniet.”, in, *Kancelliets brevbøger*, 1635–36, 11.03.1636: 450; *Kancelliets brevbøger*, 1635–36, 14.09.1635: 255–256.

²⁵⁸ han lover og forpligter sig til at være Kongen og Kompani huld og tro, Ibid, 451.

²⁵⁹ Ibid, 451.

²⁶⁰ Kong Christian den Fjerdes egenhændige breve, Christian IV to Christian Friis, 23.02.1626, 3–6.

²⁶¹ *Kancelliets brevbøger*, 1637–39, 20.06.1639: 868.

²⁶² *Kancelliets brevbøger*, 1635–36, 04.11.1636: 715.

²⁶³ Bredsdorff states that Leye had himself written that he had been onboard the ship, I have not been able to locate the source. Bredsdorff, *The Trials and Travels*, 34–35.

²⁶⁴ Olsen, “Dansk Ostindien”, 70.

1639, two ships, the *Christianshavn* and *Den Forgylte Sol*, set sail for Tranquebar. However, it ultimately took Willem Level four years to reach the Coromandel Coast.²⁶⁵

To summarise, Willem Level was Danish, but with Scottish ancestry. He was unable to replicate the careers of his ancestors as Sound toll collector and mayor, and was thus educated in overseas and long-distance trade via his employment in the VOC. Upon his return to Danish service, he quickly climbed the military and social ranks. In this regard, his years of experience in Asia with the VOC were decisive. The Danish King Christian IV, acting as the largest shareholder of the DEIC, appointed Level as director, notwithstanding his lack of capital investment in the venture. In short, he was needed for his expertise, and in order to safeguard the royal interest within the company and in Asia.

Level's background shows that family connections were important to starting a career in overseas business, or at least to a certain extent. These connections provided him with reading and writing skills that enabled him to serve in the naval and commercial sectors. Nevertheless, his background was less decisive than his previous experience and knowledge of Asian trade, and his capacity to translate that experience into an entrepreneurial advantage.

2.8 *Hard times, new opportunities – Henrich Carloff and the WIC*

Contrary to the case of Level, little is known about Henrich Carloff's (Caerlof, Carolof and Carlove) background. Judging from the sources, he was a German speaker. He is said to have been born in Rostock (Germany), either in 1621 or 1622.²⁶⁶ However, Albert van Danzig and Johannes Postma have suggested that Carloff was actually born in Pillau (Poland), and would thus have been of Polish origin.²⁶⁷ In an Amsterdam notarial act dated 1644, he is mentioned as coming from Suomen.²⁶⁸ In another source, Carloff is said to have come from Groningen, and to have gone overseas in January 1639.²⁶⁹ This statement probably relates to the initial period of his overseas career. Indeed, he is likely to have started his career in Groningen by enrolling as a soldier in the WIC chamber, *Stad en Lande*.

In the employment records of the WIC, Carloff is registered coming from Rostock.²⁷⁰ During the seventeenth century, it was common for young men from the small German states to seek employment with the Dutch trading companies, as a means to escape the perils of war, religious persecution and poverty.²⁷¹ Based on the sources that Carloff produced, it is clear that he did not command any Scandinavian language, but was fluent in German and Dutch.

²⁶⁵ His ship *Christianshavn* was captured in the Canary Islands by the Spanish fleet, suspected for piracy, causing a long delay. See more about this episode, Bredsdorff, *The Trials and Travels*, 64–71.

²⁶⁶ P. C Emmer, *The Dutch Slave Trade, 1500-1850*, trans. Chris Emery (New York, Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2006), 30; György Nováky, *Handelskompanier*, 87.

²⁶⁷ Johannes Postma, *The Dutch in the Atlantic Slave Trade, 1600-1815*, 1 edition (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 75; Albert van Dantzig, *Forts and Castles of Ghana* (Accra: Sedco Publishing, 1980), 23.

²⁶⁸ Stadsarchief Amsterdam (SAA) Notarieel Archief (NA):1289, fol. 8v-19, 02.08.1644; It is unclear which place is referred to here. The closest to Suomen would be Suomi, which refers to Finland. During this period, Suomi often referred to southwest Finland, mainly around the town of Åbo/Turku. This, however, seems not to be the real place of origin of Carloff. If he were from Finland, he would have been reading and writing Swedish, but he was not.

²⁶⁹ NL-HaNA, OWIC, 1.05.01.01, inv. nr. 25, 13.11.1643, (scan 262).

²⁷⁰ NL-HaNA, OWIC, 1.05.01.01, inv.nr. 11. Monster Rolle WIC (1645), (scans 242–249), FC, N3, 203.

²⁷¹ Only a few studies have acknowledged the Germans who served in the Dutch trading companies. See Postma, *The Dutch in the Atlantic*; Tim Wachelder, *Avonturen in Brazilië en op de Goudkust. Vier Duitsers in dienst van de WIC (1623-1645)*, PhD-dissertation (Nijmegen: Radboud Universiteit Nijmegen, 2004); Van Gelder, *Het Oost-Indisch avontuur*.

In 1639, Carloff enrolled in the WIC, and served as a soldier and scribe for a company of landed militia under commander Gerrit Entes in Dutch Brazil.²⁷² In 1630, the Dutch had seized the North-eastern part of present-day Brazil, which they duly lost to the Portuguese in 1654.²⁷³ Serving in Brazil opened up the world of the South Atlantic to Carloff. In Brazil, most of the Europeans spoke Dutch, German, English or Portuguese.²⁷⁴ He thus began his Atlantic career surrounded by these languages, which would later become important for his career.

During his twenties, Carloff's career changed. In 1641, the governor of Dutch Brazil, Johan Maurits van Nassau-Siegen, gave orders to dispatch an expedition to Western Africa, in order to attack the Portuguese territories there. In charge of this attack was Cornelis Jol, who managed to capture the town of Luanda, in Angola, as well as the island of São Tomé. For his part, Carloff also participated in this expedition. Subsequently, he worked as a clerk in Western Africa for the WIC, although between November 1641 and June 1642, he also worked as an officer on the Island of São Tomé, where he was sent to mediate between the Portuguese sugar planters and the WIC.²⁷⁵ Unsurprisingly, the Portuguese planters were not particularly keen on the presence of the company on the island. The fact that he was selected for this role suggests that Carloff was capable of functioning as a broker between conflicting parties. It is also a strong indicator that Carloff spoke Portuguese, which was commonly used in Western Africa at the time. In 1644, he returned to Amsterdam, where he worked in the administration of the WIC.²⁷⁶ First, this trajectory demonstrates that from an early age, Carloff had experience of warfare on sea and on land. Second, he gained experience as a mediator, using his knowledge of languages and of the local context to his advantage. Third, he was sufficiently educated to hold a job in the administration of the company in Europe. Like Leyel, Carloff was thus also able to work with protocols and salaries, as well as with other administrative tasks. Moreover, the fact that he decided to return to Western Africa despite having secured employment in Europe implies choice rather imposition.

Carloff's early career thus clearly demonstrates that he was able to continuously improve his position within the WIC. However, it is difficult to verify exactly which variables made his early career possible. Indeed, demographic factors and luck might have been partly behind Carloff's rapid advancement: although he was ill for a long period in 1641, he did not die of the disease, nor did he perish in one of the shipwrecks that was common at this time.²⁷⁷ There is no mention of a patron having assisted him in his career, as was the case with Leyel.

Fortunately, Carloff's career can be charted in greater detail between the years of 1645 and 1649. The reports written by the two WIC Director-Generals, Jan Ruyschaver and Jacob van der Wel, alongside his own reports, permit an analysis of the role that he played as a young employee of the company.²⁷⁸ It also makes it possible to understand what experience and entrepreneurial skills he accumulated whilst in the employment of the WIC.

²⁷² Schrijver and Voetknechten.

²⁷³ For more on the Dutch in Brazil, see Van den Tol, "Lobbying in Company"; Charles Ralph Boxer, *The Dutch in Brazil, 1624-1654* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1957); Charles Ralph Boxer, *Salvador de Sá and the Struggle for Brazil and Angola, 1602-1686* (London: University of London, 1952); Michiel van Groesen, *Amsterdam's Atlantic: Print Culture and the Making of Dutch Brazil* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016).

²⁷⁴ Many of the soldiers were of German and Scottish origin.

²⁷⁵ SAA NA: 1289, fol. 28v-29v, 03.05.1644.

²⁷⁶ Ibidem.

²⁷⁷ Ibidem.

²⁷⁸ Jan Ruyschaver was the Director-General 06.01.1641–18.12.1645 and Jacob van der Wel was the Director-General 18.12.1645–09.04.1650.

The mid 1640s had been a rough period for the personnel of the company. In particular, changes were occurring in the structure of the company's management in Western Africa. Between March and July 1645, seventy company employees had died, and there was a constant scarcity of experienced and seasoned officials.²⁷⁹ For Carloff, this scarcity turned out to be an opportunity. Among Carloff's formative years in Africa, 1645 holds a special place, because it provides the first detailed glimpse into his career. During this year, he was promoted to the post of prosecutor (*fiscaal*) in the WIC in Western Africa.²⁸⁰ As such, he held one of the highest positions in the region. A prosecutor was expected to investigate and prosecute possible interlopers, as well as company personnel engaged in illicit trade, interloping and smuggling. Initially, Carloff hesitated to take the job, although such a promotion clearly represented upward mobility within the company structure.²⁸¹ As such, his reluctance might seem surprising, especially considering his modest background. According to a report by the newly appointed director, Jacob van der Wel, he had had to encourage Carloff to accept the position – Carloff himself would have preferred to become a chief factor at one of the main trading posts.²⁸² Nonetheless, Carloff had promised to take the appointment until the Heeren XIX decided otherwise.²⁸³ Van der Wel had initially served as a merchant on the coast, before being appointed prosecutor of the company in 1643, by Ruychaver, who was at the time Director-General.²⁸⁴ As prosecutors, Van der Wel, and later Carloff, were less mobile, and more bound to the company headquarters. In terms of income, the Director-General's salary amounted to 300 guilders monthly, whereas the prosecutor only made 72 guilders, although he also had the right to one-third of all goods confiscated from interloping ships. In spite of the differences in income, the prosecutor was also able to learn the best methods of smuggling and illicit trade through direct experience.²⁸⁵ The position also posed certain challenges. First, as prosecutor, one did not make many friends, since the prosecutor was responsible for ship investigations and halting illegal activities, in which other company officials were frequently engaged. Second, as a factor, the prospects of eventually becoming Director-General were higher, since factors developed regular trading contacts with local merchants and rulers, and moved around extensively on the coast.²⁸⁶ Factors thus had the best connections at a local level, whereas a prosecutor had greater responsibilities. In this light, it is not surprising that Carloff was not keen on assuming the position. However, as will be shown, this did not stop him from subsequently taking advantage of his position as prosecutor.

The reason for Carloff's hesitance was thus related to the hierarchy and possibilities that existed on the coast. Carloff's powerful position taught him much about local conditions, and how trade and local politics functioned. However, I agree with the judgment of Henk den Heijer, who suggests that Carloff's experience on the coast also taught him how to operate in his own interest.²⁸⁷ However,

²⁷⁹ Ratelband, *Vijf Dagregisters*, XLIV; NL-HaNA OWIC, 1.05.01.01, inv.nr. 11. Jacob Van der Wel, to Heeren XIX, 01.06.1646, (scans 731–742); FC (N4), 34.

²⁸⁰ Ratelband, *Vijf Dagregisters*, LVIII.

²⁸¹ NL-HaNA OWIC, 1.05.01.01, inv.nr. 11, Jacob Van der Wel to the Heeren XIX, 21.12.1645, (scans 211–223, 215); FC, N3, 197.

²⁸² NL-HaNA OWIC, 1.05.01.01, inv.nr. 11, Jacob Van der Wel to the Heeren XIX, 21.12.1645, (scans 211–223, 218); FC, N3, 197.

²⁸³ NL-HaNA OWIC, 1.05.01.01, inv.nr. 11, Journal kept by Jacob Van der Wel, 11.10.1645 (scans 266–290); FC, N3 242.

²⁸⁴ Ratelband, *Vijf Dagregisters*, XLIX.

²⁸⁵ *Ibid*, LVIII.

²⁸⁶ *Ibid*, LVIII–LX.

²⁸⁷ Heijer, "Een dienaar", 162–80, 165–67.

being a prosecutor for the WIC was not necessarily a desirable position for the entrepreneurially driven Carloff, the salary was modest, and his position had the potential to make him many enemies. He was also more accountable to the company as prosecutor, working under the Director-General, than he would have been as a factor in one of the outposts. He was still young, and it is possible that the council in Africa did not consider him sufficiently experienced and connected to become a factor. Nevertheless, Carloff's appointment as prosecutor progressed quickly. Only one day after his appointment, he was instructed to board the *Eendracht* from Enkhuizen. The director had asked him to investigate the ship, looking for possible smuggling activities, and Carloff duly discovered a significant load of products not listed in the books. Large quantities of liquor, sheets and fishing hooks were thus confiscated.²⁸⁸ During the following years, Carloff was to be involved in a number of other investigations, of ships both Dutch and foreign. During his investigations, Carloff often encountered ships sailing under English, French and Nordic flags. These ships were frequently operated by international merchants, skippers and crews. Of the confiscated goods, Carloff took one-third for himself, while the other two-thirds went to the company and the other employees. Carloff was often sent to different areas on the coast. He reported directly to Director-General Van der Wel, and often travelled together with Isaac Coymans.

In his report to the directors, Carloff testified to the vexed situation of the company on the coast. He described how many men had become ill, and how several employees had recently died. He also complained that the company had failed to send experienced men to Africa. All the lodges and forts were maintained without any reinforcements, particularly by promoting junior employees to senior positions. The death of the factor at Fort Nassau, as well as those of two of his sub-factors, had worsened the situation. Carloff also pointed out that because the previous factors, Cock, Foullon and Director-General Ruychaver, had left the coast, there were currently only four capable senior factors left. The situation on the coast also necessitated double appointments. For example, one of the most respected employees, Isaac Coymans, was initially appointed factor, but was simultaneously asked to do the bookkeeping for trade in general and for the garrison.²⁸⁹

Director-General Van der Wel reported on 1 June 1646 that the company was in desperate need of manpower from Europe. He needed at least three experienced factors and three bookkeepers, otherwise the organisation would perish. By this point, Van der Wel claimed, the lack of competent men was doing more damage to the company than were smugglers. He also explained that Coymans, who had already served six years in Africa, wished to return home, but, due to these unfortunate circumstances, they had had no choice but to prolong his employment. Indeed, Van der Wel feared that if Coymans left, there would be no one capable of succeeding him in the directorship. The only one who could be educated to the task was Jeremia Loten, who was still learning bookkeeping, and lacked experience.²⁹⁰ Van der Wel did not mention Carloff as a potential successor, which gives the impression that he was never a contender for the position. With reference to the VOC, Matthias van Rossum and Roelof van Gelder have shown that, at least during the eighteenth century, it was difficult

²⁸⁸ NL-HaNA OWIC, 1.05.01.01, inv.nr. 11, Jacob Van der Wel to the Heeren XIX, 21.12.1645 (scans 211–223); FC, N3 Collection, 193–197.

²⁸⁹ NL-HaNA OWIC, 1.05.01.01, inv.nr. 11, Henrich Carloff to the Heeren XIX WIC 21.05.1646 (scans 785–787); FC, N4, 29–30.

²⁹⁰ NL-HaNA OWIC, 1.05.01.01, inv.nr. 11, Jacob Van der Wel to Heeren XIX, 01.06.1646 (scans 731–742); FC, N4, 35.

if not impossible for employees of German origin to attain the highest positions in the company.²⁹¹ Indeed, it is plausible that a similar situation pertained in the WIC.

In a letter dated 1 June 1646, Van der Wel explained to the directors that the situation in Accra, where the company had established a lodge some years before, had become worrying. Van der Wel had been forced to move the factor Joris Hogenhoeck from Accra to Fort Nassau, due to the importance of the latter for trade. Hogenhoeck had served the company for over six years, and wanted to go home. The director's solution to the problem created by the vacancy was to appoint Carloff, who thus suddenly became factor in Accra. This additional appointment of course threatened to undermine Carloff's campaign against smuggling. Evidently, it was difficult for Carloff to be in two places at the same time. Therefore, Van der Wel also instructed another WIC official, Van Perr, to return from São Tomé, and to take up the position of second prosecutor. According to the Director-General, Carloff had confirmed that Van Perr was a good and reliable employee.²⁹²

Upon arrival in Accra, Carloff explained in a letter to the directors that the situation was still volatile. There was a conflict between two local leaders, who were fighting for power in Accra. As such, he counselled, the WIC should approach Accra with caution, and make sure not to pick sides, otherwise trade could be ruined. Carloff was then ordered by the company to negotiate peace, and to help to diffuse the tensions between the contending parties. Carloff explained that he was uneasy about this request, but that the Director-General had promised him full support and supervision in this task.²⁹³ Whether there was a real tension is unclear, but Carloff at least wanted the directors in Europe to believe so. In any case, his position as a broker in relation to intra-African conflicts on the coast was established.

Two examples of Carloff's activities on the Gold Coast can be used to show how diverse his employment for the company was, and how it taught him about local trading circuits. The first example is related to the arrival of competitors on the coast. On 12 January 1647, Carloff sent a letter to the Heeren XIX, explaining that on 1 August 1646, a ship sailing under the Swedish flag had arrived on the coast. The ship, the *St Jacob*, had sailed to Western Africa to buy slaves, and its captain was Arent Gabbesen. Carloff investigated the ship, and came to the conclusion that most of the men onboard were actually Dutch. As such, Carloff protested, and ordered all Dutchmen on the ship to leave and go ashore. Gabbesen replied that he could not give up the men on board, since the ship would be unmanageable with only the remaining Swedish and Danish sailors, and this would force the ship to seek refuge on the coast. Carloff agreed that this would indeed be the case.²⁹⁴ In the company journal, director Van der Wel explained that as soon as he had heard about a Swedish ship sailing on the coast, he had called for Carloff to quickly return to Elmina, and, alongside Coymans and Loten, to prepare to board the ship and investigate.²⁹⁵ Furthermore, in Van der Wel's report to the Heeren XIX of 14 August 1646, he explained that a ship sailing under the Swedish flag had arrived

²⁹¹ Van Rossum, *Werkers van de Wereld*, 272–278; Van Gelder, *Het Oost-Indisch avontuur*, 186, 284.

²⁹² NL-HaNA OWIC, 1.05.01.01, inv.nr. 11, Jacob Van der Wel to Heeren XIX, 01.06.1646 (scans 731–742); FC, N4, 35.

²⁹³ NL-HaNA OWIC, 1.05.01.01, inv.nr. 11, Henrich Carloff to the Heeren XIX WIC 21.05.1646 (scans 785–787, 786–787); FC, N4, 29.

²⁹⁴ NL-HaNA OWIC, 1.05.01.01, inv.nr. 11, Henrich Carloff to the Heeren XIX 12 .01. 1647 (scans 1067–1069); FC, N4, 127–129.

²⁹⁵ NL-HaNA OWIC, 1.05.01.01, inv.nr. 11, Daily Journal (Dagregisters) 01.01.1645–31.03.1647, 01.08.1646, (scans 1079 – 1237); FC, N4, 81; Ratelband, *Vijf Dagregisters*, 208.

on the coast. The Director-General was baffled by the fact that he had not heard from the directors in Europe regarding how to proceed.²⁹⁶

This incident was the first encounter that the company had had with a ship under the Swedish flag in Western Africa. In the near future, there would be many more. Van der Wel's concern regarding the lack of instructions from Europe in relation to the Swedes was an example of the irregular communication between Europe and the coast. As was the case with the Danish East India Trade, disruptions in communication were a constant issue in Atlantic trade.²⁹⁷

The second example is a series of events in Accra, where Carloff served as factor. In Carloff's report to the Heeren XIX, he explained that he had been forced to delay his report to the directors, since he was trapped in a complicated situation. He had understood that the king of Accra had closed the trading roads, but he needed to leave for Accra as soon as possible in order to investigate the rumours. According to Carloff, he had had a meeting with the king of Accra immediately upon arrival, which had gone well, and the king had promised to re-open the trade routes.²⁹⁸ Later that autumn, on 16 November, Van der Wel received another letter from Carloff, in which the latter explained that he had visited the King of Oquy, approximately five miles north of Accra. Apparently, there was tension between the Oquy and the Kingdom of Accra. According to Carloff, someone from Accra had killed the father of the King of Oquy. Carloff then explained that he had helped to settle the question by mediating, and by offering gifts to the King of Oquy. The king had responded by promising to re-open the trade routes yet again.²⁹⁹ These events in Accra demonstrate, on the one hand, the importance of connections between Africans and Europeans, and, on the other hand, the value of local knowledge in acting as a mediator and broker. Indeed, this will be discussed further in chapters four and six.

It can be argued that Carloff was chosen as prosecutor in Elmina and then factor in Accra not due to patronage, but rather the wider context. The death of other senior officials and the problems of the organisation offered Carloff a chance, and it seems that he made the best of the opportunities presented to him. Nevertheless, the experience that he gained in Western African trade and local politics was an important factor in building up his reputation. He had served the WIC in many places along the coast, and had obtained a significant amount of information regarding the means of trade. His competence and reputation, combined with a degree of luck, made his early experience important to his future career progression.

2.9 *Negotiated loyalties in Western Africa*

Judging by the sources regarding Carloff's early career, it seems that he was an obedient employee of the company. When events are contextualised, however, it is clear that working for the company did not necessarily imply pride and commitment to the organisation. Indeed, Carloff most likely needed the income, and had for that reason signed the contract. He needed a company to make his career move forward, and the WIC provided him with an opportunity.

²⁹⁶ NL-HaNA OWIC, 1.05.01.01, inv.nr. 11, Jacob Van der Wel to Heeren XIX, 14.08.1646, (scans 879–887), FC, N4, 41–49.

²⁹⁷ For more on the importance of information and communication, see chapter five below.

²⁹⁸ NL-HaNA OWIC, 1.05.01.01, inv.nr. 11, Henrich Carloff to the Heeren XIX, 12.01.1647, (scans 1067–1069), FC, N4, 127–129.

²⁹⁹ NL-HaNA OWIC, 1.05.01.01, inv.nr. 11, Daily Journal (Dagregisters) 01.01.1645 - 31.03.1647, 16.11.1647 (scans, 1079 – 1237); FC, N4, 98; Ratelband, *Vijf Dagregisters*, 262.

The decision to accept the position of prosecutor suggests that he might not have had other alternatives. If this was the case, it shows that this was the only way to improve his position within the company structure in Western Africa. However, he might also have accepted the position because it allowed him to build up a reputation as a good employee, and, in this way, maintain the possibility of becoming Director-General. In addition, it also allowed him to accumulate capital in the form of the goods that he confiscated. In this regard, it was important for Carloff to sell the goods as quickly as possible. After all, the demand from African merchants determined the value of the goods, and their taste could change quickly. This meant that for Carloff, it was crucial to act swiftly. In this way, he entered the scene of local trade.

Whether Carloff had a patron in Africa is less clear. The increasing frequency of the correspondence between Van der Wel and Carloff suggests that at least on a certain level, the Director-General was involved in advancing Carloff's career. On at least two occasions, Van der Wel told Carloff that he enjoyed his full support as prosecutor and factor. The previous director, Ruychaver, had also assured the Heeren XIX that he had no doubts about Carloff's loyalty.³⁰⁰

From an entrepreneurial point of view, Carloff was able to provide recent updates regarding trade in Africa. This was something that would have been interesting to the newly established Swedish Africa Company. Indeed, Van der Wel's letter from 18 March 1647 to the Heeren XIX indicated that other employees were ready to change company affiliation. An English merchant, Metcalf, had approached Van der Wel, offering to work for the WIC. Metcalf had complained that the other officials working for the English in Africa had treated him badly, and that he was ready to join the WIC instead. In the same letter, Van der Wel explained that a French ship had arrived on the coast with a previous WIC employee, Henrick van den Burch, as skipper. During the investigation of the ship, Carloff had asked Van den Burch why he had gone over to French service. Van den Burch replied that he had been disappointed by the WIC, which had hindered his progress with empty promises, and that he had now found more trustworthy employers.³⁰¹ In Carloff's report from 5 March 1647, he communicated that the skipper, Albert Smit, had also previously been employed by the WIC, had subsequently accepted a French commission.³⁰²

This tendency towards changing company affiliation also became apparent to Carloff through another incident that occurred on the coast. In 1647, a ship sailing under the Danish flag appeared, and Carloff was dispatched to investigate. On board the *Prince of Denmark*, the Dutch skipper, Thielman Wilkens, explained to Carloff that he was sailing with a genuine commission, issued by the Danish King. He showed Carloff his documents, stating that he had received a license from the king, and that he personally had right of residence in Glückstadt. According to Van der Wel, other factors on the Gold Coast had complained about the fact that the Heeren XIX had not renewed the contract of Wilkens, who had sailed to Africa on several occasions. Indeed, these rumours had fostered mistrust towards the company among the factors.³⁰³ In this context, it becomes evident that Carloff was constantly confronted with cross-imperial activity.

³⁰⁰ NL-HaNA OWIC, 1.05.01.01, inv.nr. 11, Jan Ruychaver to the Heeren XIX, 22.02.1646, (scans 371–393), FC, N4, 50–59, especially 53.

³⁰¹ NL-HaNA OWIC, 1.05.01.01, inv.nr. 11, Jacob Van der Wel to the Heeren XIX, 18.03.1647, (scans 982–1022); FC, N4, 129–157.

³⁰² NL-HaNA OWIC, 1.05.01.01, inv.nr. 11, Henrich Carloff to the Heeren XIX, 05.03.1647, (scans 1061–1065); FC, N4, 163–165.

³⁰³ NL-HaNA OWIC, 1.05.01.01, inv.nr. 11, Jacob Van der Wel to the Heeren XIX, 18.03.1647, (scans 982–1022); FC, N4, 129–157.

Carloff's role, the loyalty that he felt towards the WIC, and his entrepreneurial career all changed abruptly in 1648. The aforementioned skipper, Arent Gabbesen, who had sailed under a Swedish commission, soon returned to Africa, at a time when a group of investors in Sweden had begun to plan a permanent company.³⁰⁴ On 17 April 1648, Gabbesen left Sweden with the ship *Christina*.³⁰⁵ The voyage was rather short, and the ship returned during the summer of 1649. An immediate result of this second voyage, however, was that an active plan for establishing a Swedish Africa Company came to the fore. A clear indicator that such a company was being established came on 12 October 1649, when a contract was signed between one of the founders of the company, Laurens de Geer, and Henrich Carloff.³⁰⁶ This contract was signed in Amsterdam, to which Carloff had recently returned, probably on board the ship *Christina*. Most importantly, it made Carloff commander of the newly established Swedish Africa Company in Africa, for a period of three years.

I believe that Carloff was recruited by Gabbesen. As the records of Gabbesen's first trip to the coast demonstrate, Carloff and Gabbesen already knew each other. Indeed, Carloff had referred to Gabbesen as a "well-known member of the fatherland's maritime community".³⁰⁷ In the daily register from 1646, Jacob van der Wel also stated that Gabbesen was well-known on the coast.³⁰⁸ Even though Carloff had protested against Gabbesen, this had resulted in no actual harm, and this may have been the moment when Gabbesen offered Carloff the prospect of advancement within a future Swedish company. Although the sources are silent regarding this possible recruitment, I believe that it did take place. Gabbesen had been told by Carloff that he was dissatisfied with his employment with the WIC, and was looking for new opportunities. For his part, Gabbesen was a broker between the investors in Sweden and the people on the coast. It is thus likely that Carloff shared his experiences on the coast and the challenges the WIC was facing in Western Africa with his new partners in Sweden.

The WIC was facing serious challenges in the 1640s despite its strong position on the Gold Coast. The company's financial situation was vulnerable due to the war in Brazil.³⁰⁹ Many WIC company officials had decided to seek new opportunities in Hamburg, England, Stockholm and Glückstadt. As reflected in his reports from the Guinea Coast, it is clear that Carloff was aware of the serious problems confronting the company. Its position had become particularly precarious during this period, when new European competitors began to appear on the African market, making promises of career advancement to WIC employees.³¹⁰

Unfortunately, the archives do not contain Carloff's employment contract with the WIC, which would have stated for how long he was on the payroll. After all, in his report of 26 September 1647, he had complained that he had already served the WIC for almost ten years, and believed that he had done everything he could for the company. From another perspective, it is possible that due to the poor internal economy of the WIC, as well as a lack of manpower and deficient communication with Europe, the Director-General had decided to keep Carloff on the payroll. Still, he had not received a proper promotion. Carloff suggested that if his wishes were taken into account, he would be willing

³⁰⁴ More about the Swedish company and the people involved in the company chapter 4.

³⁰⁵ Nováky, *Handelskompanier*, 82.

³⁰⁶ SAA NA: 875, fol. 315, Contract between Henrich Carloff and Laurens de Geer, 12.10.1649.

³⁰⁷ "Welbekent van de vaderlandiesen bootsvolck", see NL-HaNA OWIC, 1.05.01.01, inv.nr. 11, Henrich Carloff to the Heeren XIX, 12.01.1647, (scan 1067–1069, 1067).

³⁰⁸ NL-HaNA OWIC, 1.05.01.01, inv.nr. 11, Daily Journal (Dagregisters) 01.01.1645 - 31.03.1647, 03.08.1646 (scans, 1079 – 1237); FC, N4, 81; Ratelband, *Vijf Dagregisters*, 209.

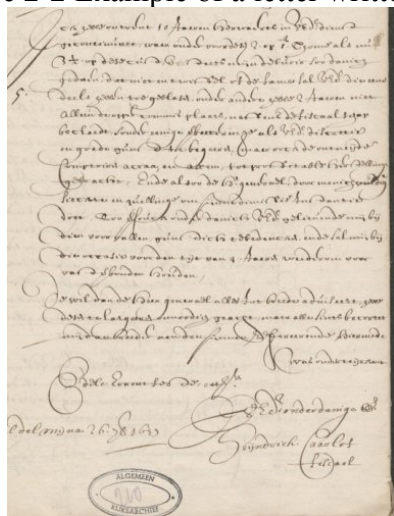
³⁰⁹ Heijer, "Een dienaar", p.167.

³¹⁰ See previous chapter.

to work for the company for another four years.³¹¹ He was already factor and prosecutor, which were fairly senior positions. The only possible advancement for him was the post of Director-General, which could offer upward social mobility upon return to Europe. For example, the previous Director-General, Ruychaver, had been rewarded with admission into the *Vroedschap* of Haarlem after ten years of service in Western Africa.³¹² In the end, Carloff was not appointed Director-General, which suggests that his origin and lack of patronage in Europe made his desired career goals impossible to achieve within the WIC.

Thus, from Carloff's perspective, an offer from Gabbesen would have been appealing. He had realised that the WIC would never make him a Director-General, a position he desired. For Carloff, the Swedish company was offering a more senior position, and the Swedish rules regarding conduct were more relaxed.

Figure 2-2 Example of a letter written by Carloff in his capacity as prosecutor of the WIC



NL-HaNA OWIC, 1.05.01.01, inv.nr. 11, Henrich Carloff to the Heeren XIX, 26.09.1647, (Scan 695).

2.10 Conclusion

Willem Leyel and Henrich Carloff began their careers in overseas business at a similar age, but they hailed from different backgrounds. Leyel was part of the local elite in Elsinore, although his family, originally from Scotland, had consisted of a long line of merchants, who had achieved social mobility in Denmark, becoming closely connected to the Danish king. For unknown reasons, he was unable to pursue his family's hereditary positions as mayor of Elsinore and collector of the Sound toll. He thus chose, or was forced to choose, a different path, and began his overseas career in the employment of the VOC. His mastery of languages, his reputation and his family background were all important instruments in establishing his overseas career.

Henrich Carloff, on the other hand, was of unknown background. What he had in common with Leyel was the fact that he had begun his career in the employment of a Dutch company, namely the WIC. Under its aegis, he was able to learn several languages, bookkeeping, how to operate on local markets, how to establish contacts with non-European and European merchants, how to take advantage of the privileges of the trading companies, and how to navigate organisationally.

³¹¹ NL-HaNA OWIC, 1.05.01.01, inv.nr. 11, Henrich Carloff to the Heeren XIX, 26.09.1647, (scans 688–695, 695) FC, N4, 179–185.

³¹² Ratelband, *Vijf Dagregisters*, XLIX.

This chapter has shown that the Dutch commercial companies served as an important stepping stone in the early careers of these men. In particular, both Leyel and Carloff learned and practiced their entrepreneurship within these organisations. Dutch companies were thus central to their training.

This chapter has also confirmed Casson and Della Giusta's argument that individuals, who consider themselves equipped to recognise and exploit an opportunity, will do so if an opportunity arises. Leyel and Carloff were both alert to the world surrounding them, and their rapid career advancement serves to underscore the fact that they were able to recognise and seize upon opportunities. The personal appointment of Leyel by Christian IV, and the contract between Carloff and de Geer, both support the argument that their early advances were made possible through their training in the Dutch companies, which could then be transferred to the Nordic companies.

This chapter has provided some additional insights into the Nordic companies, particularly by assessing the background and training of some of their key employees. Indeed, several key aspects stand out. First, the Nordic kingdoms were open to people from a foreign background. The organisations needed young, aspirational employees already based overseas, who were well-connected, experienced and willing to defy uncertainty and risk. In return, the Nordic kingdoms offered institutional shelter, which served as an incentive for international businessmen to take up employment in the Nordic companies. Tolerance, privileges and freedom of taxation were also pull factors for international businessmen. Second, by contextualising these two cases within a larger framework of cross-company behaviour and recruitment patterns, it becomes clear that this was a common form of employment in seventeenth-century overseas organisations. In this sense, Leyel and Carloff were not unique, but rather representative of early Nordic overseas endeavours. Third, the two cases demonstrate that if a company did not provide opportunities, individuals would offer their services elsewhere. Indeed, this coincided with a growing interest in overseas trade among rival European powers. In other words, for men like Leyel and Carloff, there were now more employment opportunities than ever before. Finally, and most crucially, when the employees left their original companies, they took with them important skills and knowledge, which were difficult to replace.

3 One Foot at Home, the Other Overseas

3.1 Introduction

The previous chapter has studied the formative years of Leyel and Carloff's overseas careers, and the question as to why internationally experienced individuals switched their affiliation to the Nordic overseas companies. The latter evidently depended on a combination of neglect by their previous employers (the VOC and the WIC), and opportunities for professional advancement offered by the Nordic kingdoms. In this chapter, I will discuss the role of entrepreneurship in the Nordic overseas companies, from both a European and an overseas perspective.

Leyel and Carloff held dual roles within the enterprises for which they worked. In the DEIC, Leyel was simultaneously a director in Europe, and the commander of operations in Tranquebar. In the SAC, Carloff was first commander and head of operations in Africa, and later co-director of the company in Europe. The reason for Leyel and Carloff to hold these dual positions, and to expand their careers into Nordic service, relates to the entrance of these kingdoms into the overseas trade as new actors. Studying Leyel and Carloff's experiences in Danish and Swedish employment advances our understanding of the role that individuals played in seventeenth-century overseas enterprises, and also elucidates the close connection between politics and trade. The Nordic companies made concessions regarding the opportunities they permitted their staff to amass personal wealth and status. In short, they allowed personal entrepreneurial skills to be developed, rather than attempting to curb them. In practice, this meant allowing private trade, exemption from taxation, residence permits, and professional and social advancement.

There is a common misunderstanding that entrepreneurship always refers to self-employment. However, in many trading companies, the salaried managers and administrators were more entrepreneurial than one might expect. Furthermore, Casson and Della Giusta have emphasised that entrepreneurship is really about specialisation in running a business. After all, the trading companies were run by individuals, and it was as individuals that they took more or less informed decisions in managing the investments of others. To manage a business, many decisions regarding investment, capital distribution, employment and various other matters had to be made. Thus, entrepreneurship does not necessarily require a business of one's own. Receiving a salary, with additional benefits for successfully executed operations, is just as entrepreneurial as self-employment.³¹³

The main point that this chapter will seek to make is that overseas entrepreneurship did not necessarily have to take place outside the company structure, but could just as well occur inside it. In particular, I will focus on how Leyel and Carloff managed business within the Nordic trading companies. The chapter will be divided into two parts. The first will explain the structure of the company, and will thus explore its organisational setting in Europe. The second will inquire into Leyel and Carloff's areas of specialisation overseas, and will consider how their skills influenced their entrepreneurial opportunities, as well as those of the Nordic trading companies.

3.2 *Leyel and the First Danish East India Company – an overwhelming challenge*

In his classic study of European trading companies on the Coromandel Coast, Tapan Raychaudri states that: "While the trade of the English and, to a lesser extent, that of the Portuguese, were serious

³¹³ Mark Casson and Marina Della Giusta, "Entrepreneurship and Social Capital", 223.

problems for the Dutch, the activities of the Danish on the coast were no more than a minor irritant.”³¹⁴ In a more recent study, Radhika Seshan does not even mention the existence of the Danish at all.³¹⁵ In contrast, Holden Furber puts forward a different perspective. According to him, there were only two large-scale trading companies in Asia during this period, namely the EIC and VOC. The rest, he claims, were mere observers, with the exception of the DEIC. In Furber’s words, the Danish “had the longest history and the best record of efficiency”.³¹⁶ This might well be true from a long-term perspective, but, for the seventeenth century, the company is better understood as struggling. For his part, Sanjay Subrahmanyam has presented an alternative view of the Danish on the Coromandel Coast during the seventeenth century, emphasising that the Danish companies operated almost exclusively within intra-Asian trade, and that Asian-European trade was considerably less important for them than it was for the EIC and VOC. Consequently, the DEIC is better understood not as an intercontinental chartered company, but rather as a private firm operating in the Indian Ocean, not dissimilar to local firms such as those of Francisco Vieira (a Portuguese merchant, intermediary, diplomat and factor of the sultan of Macassar) or Mir Kamal-al-din (an influential Persian merchant based in Masulipatnam).³¹⁷ As such, making comparisons with the bigger companies is not the best way to understand the role of the DEIC in Asia.³¹⁸ Given that I do not intend to prove the importance or success of the DEIC, but rather to study the entrepreneurial opportunities that the company offered its employees, Subrahmanyam’s argument offers a good interpretative framework. My framework of analysis will thus at least partly correlate with Subrahmanyam’s understanding of the role of the Nordic trading companies as private local firms.³¹⁹

Here, the focus will be on the years between 1642 and 1648, the period of Leyel’s rule in India. To situate Leyel within the wider context of the company, it will be necessary to understand the institutional environment of the first DEIC. According to Ole Feldbæk, “the First Danish East India Company was an economic fiasco”.³²⁰ According to Feldbæk, the only reason why the company survived until 1650 was that Christian IV refused to let the directors and shareholders liquidate it, hoping that it would eventually become profitable.³²¹ Martin Krieger, however, suggests a different interpretation. He underscores the fact that although the DEIC as a company was not able to compete with its larger rivals, it did, nonetheless, offer economic profit to those individuals who were engaged in private trade at the outposts.³²² The Danish East India Company thus offered a relatively strong institutional environment, in which entrepreneurially-driven people could advance their careers. One of the best examples of such rapid advancement was the Dutchman Roeland Crappe, who was ennobled in 1635 for his services to the DEIC, receiving the name Crappé. He was thus allowed to trade privately alongside the company, and served as an inspiration to men like Leyel.³²³

³¹⁴ Raychaudhuri, *Jan Company in Coromandel*, 113.

³¹⁵ Radhika Seshan, *Trade and Politics on the Coromandel Coast: Seventeenth and Early Eighteenth Centuries* (Delhi: Primus Books, 2012).

³¹⁶ Furber, *Rival Empires*, 211, 216.

³¹⁷ Sanjay Subrahmanyam, “The Coromandel Trade of the Danish East India Company, 1618–1649,” *Scandinavian Economic History Review* 37, no. 1 (1989): 41–56, 56.

³¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 56.

³¹⁹ This argument is corroborated by Krieger, *Kaufleute*, 230–231.

³²⁰ Ole Feldbæk, “The Danish Trading Companies”, 206.

³²¹ *Ibidem.*

³²² Krieger, *Kaufleute*, 231–32.

³²³ Kay Larsen, *Guvernører*, 60.

Leyel became the director of the company at a time when it had already been active for nineteen years. From the beginning, the company had faced large challenges: the wars in which Denmark was involved hampered its development; the domestic market was insufficient for the goods imported from Asia; the merchants of Copenhagen were reluctant to invest; and, finally, there was heavy competition from larger enterprises, such as the EIC, but especially the Portuguese and the VOC.³²⁴

To begin with, the company's internal struggles help to explain the possibilities and limitations of Leyel's entrepreneurship. The company had considerable difficulties obtaining sufficient capital, and only did so by forcing the nobility and the richer merchants of Copenhagen to invest. By such desperate expedients, it managed to amass 180,000 riksdalers of start-up capital by 1620. The company had approximately 300 shareholders, many for the Danish context. The individual shares varied greatly, from 50 to 16,000 riksdalers; the largest shareholder was the king, with an initial investment of 25,000 riksdalers.³²⁵ This was partly achieved by making loans to potential investors who currently lacked the means to do so. The directors were supposed to invest at least 3,000 riksdalers, but, since it was difficult to find investors willing to invest such a large sum, during the early years, the directors' investments were pooled from multiple investors.³²⁶ Residents from elsewhere invested on a smaller scale than those from Copenhagen. For example, residents from Hamburg invested a total of 4,800 riksdalers. Only three Dutch merchants contributed, Peter Petersen Billefeld and Hugo Sfringk with 8,400 riksdalers each, and Pael de Willum with 5,000 riksdalers.³²⁷

The company had also taken loans from its directors in 1618 and 1622. Roland Crappe lent 7,000 riksdalers, and Jakob Mickelsen and Johan Braem 4,000 riksdalers each. The king continued to pour capital into the company: in 1618, 1619 and 1622, he invested an additional 42,000, 21,000 and 264,900 riksdalers respectively. By 1624, the king had invested 307,395 riksdalers in total.³²⁸ This means that in only four years, he had increased his investment from 25,000 to almost 308,000 riksdalers. Thus, from early on, the king played a central role in the company.

In the initial charter, the possibility for the state to intervene had been limited. The only responsibility the company had towards the state was to swear an oath to the king, promising good conduct. It is also worth noting that in times of war or conflict, neither the company's ships nor its employees were to be recruited into the navy. "The king has decided that no personnel from the company, or crew from the ships, will be forced to serve the state in times of war."³²⁹ This demonstrates the independent status of the company vis-à-vis the state. However, in practice, this did not apply to the crown, a question to which I will return.

The historian Richard Willerslev has stated that most articles of the charter were direct

³²⁴ See previous chapter for more detailed discussion.

³²⁵ In practice, the King invested even more. Some 5,000 riksdalers of his shares were actually invested by his son, Christian Ulrich Gyldenlove, and 1,500 riksdalers by his mistress, Kirsten Munk. The nobility invested 27,000 riksdalers, out of which Albert Skeel owned the largest share, worth 3,400 riksdalers. Erik Grubbe (2,500 riksdalers) and Holger Rosenkrantz (1,250 riksdalers) were also significant contributors. The rest of the participants consisted of professors and the Copenhagen political elite, such as the mayor. Citizens like Jakob Michelsen, Reinholdt Hansen, Jørgen Danielsen, Simon Surbeck, Mikkel Vibe and Peter Andersen owned shares between 300 and 2,000 riksdalers. Jan and David de Willum invested 10,500 riksdalers together. These Dutch brothers had probably been naturalised Danish by this point. Willerslev, "Danmarks første aktieselskab", 622–625.

³²⁶ Ibid, 625.

³²⁷ Ibid, 626.

³²⁸ Ibid, 623–628.

³²⁹ "Att K:M. Naadigst ville beuylge att ingen aff de personer som ehre Vdj Companiens thieniste eller deris schibe, admunition eller huad dett ahnhörer, schall bliffue brugtt Vdj Rigens thienniste, om Kriigh paakommer." Feldbæk, *Danske Handelskompagnier*, 33.

translations from that of the VOC from 1602.³³⁰ A few differences can be found in the references to the companies that preceded the VOC, the so-called *voorcompagnien*.³³¹ Another difference was that the VOC was divided into chambers for political reasons, whereas the DEIC retained a centralised administration. However, perhaps the most important difference was that the VOC had the right to sign contracts and treaties with local rulers and authorities. In the case of the DEIC, that right remained a royal prerogative.

According to Willerslev, at least on paper, the charter of the DEIC from March 1616 gave the nine initial directors a relatively strong position, similar to that of the directors of other contemporary Danish trading companies, such as the Danish Salt Company and the Icelandic Company.³³² In contrast to the SAC, the Danish trading companies thus initially had powerful directors, but this eventually changed. On 24 April 1621, the king decided to insert additional clauses into the charter. This increased the directors' responsibility for the administration: they were required to keep accounts, to produce reports, and to demonstrate their personal good conduct and loyalty to the company. According to the historian Jan Rindom, this indicates that the directors were not as powerful as Willerslev argued.³³³ In the first DEIC, the investors had limited access to decision-making. The shareholders had no say in the purchase of cargoes for the ships, which remained a matter for the directors.³³⁴ This eventually changed after the Danish lost on all fronts during the Thirty Years' War.

With regard to the return on investments, Willerslev notes that it is impossible to calculate the value of the return cargos. Few ships made it back to Copenhagen, and the goods were sold to foreigners. Indeed, this did not please Christian IV, who had envisioned the goods being sold to Danish customers.³³⁵ The challenges surrounding the import of goods, combined with modest interest from potential investors, had already exposed the company to financial problems by the 1620s. As such, the king decided to apply more aggressive methods in order to increase capital.

By 1628, twelve years had elapsed since the initial privileges were granted. The Thirty Years' War had depleted the financial power of many of the investors, and inflation endangered the survival of the company. In 1629, the company required its participants to supply an additional twenty per cent outlay. If they failed to do so, their initial investment would be confiscated. This method was borrowed from the WIC, which, in 1624, had similarly demanded significantly increased investments.³³⁶

Similar requests for additional investment were successfully made in 1631, 1635 and 1636. To keep the company afloat, Christian IV also increased his own contribution. The company was thus becoming more of a royal-owned enterprise than a chartered company, with Christian IV as its "main protector and biggest participant."³³⁷ This resulted in the directors becoming the king's servants, appointed with a fixed salary.³³⁸ Rindom and Willerslev agree that by the mid-1630s, the king had

³³⁰ Willerslev, "Danmarks første aktieselskab.", 614–615.

³³¹ The right to sell shares is given as an example.

³³² Ibid, 610; Feldbæk, *Danske Handelskompagnier 1616-1843*, 25–34 and 489–494.

³³³ Jan Rindom, "Ostindisk Kompagni 1616-50 – et Spørgsmål om organisatorisk udvikling og interne magtkampe" *Årbog / Handels- og søfartsmuseet på kronborg* 59 (2000): 99–125, 106.

³³⁴ Ibid, 107.

³³⁵ *Kancelliets brevbøger*, 1624-26, 570; *Kancelliets brevbøger* 1635-36, 138; Willerslev, "Danmarks første aktieselskab", 629.

³³⁶ Jan Rindom, "Ostindisk Kompagni", 110.

³³⁷ "hovedbeskærmer og største participant" Willerslev, "Danmarks første aktieselskab", 632.

³³⁸ *Kancelliets brevbøger*, 1635-36, 255 and 714.

effectively taken over the company, leaving little influence to its directors. According to Willerslev, this served to scare away foreign capital; by March 1636, the king owned more than half the company. In 1643, thanks to Roland Crappé's loan, the king's total capital had increased to 428,438 riksdalers.³³⁹ He continued to invest in the company for reasons of symbolic power and prestige, since, as king, he had lost considerable political clout through his defeat in the Thirty Years' War. Indeed, the East India trade became important for Christian IV as a means of regaining some of his prestige.³⁴⁰

From Leye's perspective, an array of new opportunities arrived in 1634. The king had asked one of his main investors and partners, Albert Skeel, to raise as much capital as possible from the nobility and the citizenry, in order to finance a new expedition to India.³⁴¹ In relation to this task, the king had also met with the shareholders and directors of the company on 10 March. He once again invited shareholders to contribute yet more capital prior to the voyage, in return for more influence over decision-making. However, the meeting yielded no concrete results, and the king grew increasingly impatient. In 1635, he personally appointed Leye as director, thus nullifying the charter of 1616, which had stated that only the directors could appoint a new director. The other directors were now expected to treat Leye as their equal, and were made even more accountable to the king; for example, they were no longer allowed to participate in the selling and buying of goods. In the initial charter, the directors had been allowed to receive dividends following a successful voyage, but this right now came to an end. Instead, they were all allotted an annual salary, as was Leye, of around 300 riksdalers.³⁴²

The institutional environment in Denmark thus proved challenging for many of those who sought to profit personally from the company. However, the contrary applied to Leye; despite the many wars and lack of funding, the directorship of the company constituted a moment of entrepreneurial opportunity for him. Indeed, the king's constant support suggests that Leye's East India skills had made him necessary. Thus, the king's frustration served to further augment this opportunity; the king needed someone who was experienced in Asian trade, and who could build up a regular relationship with Tranquebar. The king thus took control of the company, and initiated a patron-client relationship with Leye (similar to the relationship that de Geer and Carloff would enjoy with the Swedish Africa Company, as will be discussed below). Although the fact that the king had personally appointed a director represented career advancement for Leye, it also effectively split the administration of the company, which now included both royal and company-appointed employees. In other words, Leye's appointment had a downside; being personally appointed by the king did not necessarily put him in a favourable position vis-à-vis the other directors. Another downside was that Leye was left personally dependent upon the king's continuing favour. If the king should die, or change his mind, Leye would most likely lose his job. Despite these disadvantages, however, the appointment should be seen first and foremost as a moment of career advancement for Leye. Indeed, if Leye were to be successful, he might be rewarded with ennoblement, as had been the case with Crappe.

³³⁹ Ibid, 450.; Willerslev, "Danmarks første aktieselskab", 633.

³⁴⁰ Rindom, "Ostindisk Kompagni", 108.

³⁴¹ Ibid, 111.

³⁴² Ibid, 116.

3.3 *Carloff in the Nordic kingdoms, and his years with the Swedish Africa Company, 1649-1657*

In December 1649, Laurens de Geer, the representative of the de Geer family in Amsterdam, signed a contract with Henrich Carloff, appointing him commander of the SAC for a period of three years.³⁴³ In particular, the contract made Carloff commander and governor of any future Swedish settlements in Western Africa. Moreover, Carloff was also the second largest investor in the company (the financing of his investments will be dealt with in the next chapter).³⁴⁴ His participation in the company can be divided into two main periods. During the first, the *Louis de Geer* period (1645–1652), Carloff's patron de Geer ran the company with Carloff's assistance. Indeed, their partnership illustrates the blurring of lines that occurred between individual and company interests. This was the period for entrepreneurial opportunity, since it was when the SAC entered into the highly competitive African markets. The second period was that of *divided management* (1652–1657), during which other members of the company challenged Carloff's position, which resulted in the adoption of a second charter. This ultimately altered the institutional environment of the company, restricting concomitantly Carloff's entrepreneurial opportunities.

3.4 *The First Charter – 1645–1652*

The institutional environment of the SAC is best understood through reference to the patron of the company, Louis de Geer, also known as the “father of Swedish industry”. An iron-manufacturer, de Geer was one of the wealthiest men in the kingdom. Originally from the Low Countries, he had been naturalised Swedish.³⁴⁵ Between 1645 and 1649, de Geer had expanded his business into the Atlantic trade. He had learned of the potential of the growing Atlantic trade through his networks in continental Europe. When he embarked upon his Atlantic project, he lacked a complete trading company, but benefitted from the protection of the Swedish Crown.³⁴⁶ Indeed, it was not difficult to win the support of the crown for his business plans. After all, de Geer had supported the crown financially on various occasions, and also had a close connection with Axel Oxenstierna, the royal chancellor and the most powerful man in the kingdom.³⁴⁷

The Swedish Queen granted de Geer a license for a voyage to the Guinea Coast (also known as the first voyage of Arent Gabbesen, as discussed in the previous chapter). The voyage was important for de Geer, since it provided him with the experience and the knowledge that he needed in order to understand the trade, and how to communicate with competitors like the English and the WIC. It also provided important insights into how to interact with local rulers and merchants on the coast. Subsequently, de Geer decided that he was willing to continue trading in Africa, and invested in new expeditions. On 12 September 1647, Gabbesen received his second license for a voyage to Guinea.³⁴⁸

However, support for a more permanent trading organisation from the royal council and Axel Oxenstierna remained limited. Nonetheless, de Geer continued planning, and even upgraded operations through the purchase of two new ships, the *Christina* and the *Stockholms Slott*. On the one

³⁴³ SAA NA: 875, fo.315, 12.10.1649; Nováky, *Handelskompanier*, 88.

³⁴⁴ For additional information about the investments of Carloff in the SAC, see VLA (Vadstena Landsarkiv) FBA (Finspångsbruk arkiv) inv.nr.62A.

³⁴⁵ About the business of de Geer, see Dahlgren, *Louis de Geer*; Lindblad, “Louis de Geer”.

³⁴⁶ Nováky, *Handelskompanier*, 76.

³⁴⁷ Dahlgren, *Louis de Geer*, 292.

³⁴⁸ RAS, LA 82, 12.09.1647, Licence for Gabbesen.

hand, the limited interest from the council and the chancellor did not necessarily imply scepticism about the Africa trade. Rather, it merely suggests that their priorities in international trade lay elsewhere, for example in the salt trade with Portugal.³⁴⁹ On the other hand, the Board of Commerce, which was responsible for international trade, was not averse to overseas trading companies, as reflected in the fact that many other companies were supported by the board after its renewal in 1651.³⁵⁰ The largest obstacle for the SAC was the limited funding that was available, due to the costly wars in which Sweden was currently embroiled. In this sense, the challenges faced by the Swedish were similar to those encountered by the Danish: the numerous wars on the continent and the internal Baltic rivalry had worsened the financial situation of both crowns, as well as that of potential investors. However, at the same time, warfare accelerated empire building: successful wars could make many aristocrats rich, and encourage them to signal their status by buying exotic and luxurious goods from overseas. This means that while imperial ambitions existed, the capacity of the Swedes to pursue them remained limited, due to the ever-growing demands of the war effort. In turn, this created an opportunity for foreigners with experience and capital to enter into Swedish international trade. The protocol of the royal council stated that: “our nation is not known in those lands” (referring to the Gold Coast).³⁵¹ In my view, this implies that the Swedish lacked know-how and recognition on the Coast, which internationally experienced Gold Coast veterans could supply. Finally, Queen Christina advocated de Geer’s business plans, and, on 15 January 1648, yet another passport was issued. On the latter, the word “company” appeared for the first time.³⁵²

The headquarters of the company were in Gothenburg, in order to make it appear more Swedish. However, its main operational base was in Stade in Northern Germany (see figure 2-1 in previous chapter). Indeed, Stade had a more strategic position: it had an established port, and was closer to the main consumer markets for company products. Sweden had, at the peace of Westphalia in 1648, incorporated the bishopric of Bremen-Verden into its empire, and Stade thus fell under its jurisdiction.³⁵³ Queen Christina had also demanded that the council of Stade do everything in their power to improve the Africa trade.³⁵⁴ In a letter to the council, Christina had demanded that the city provide merchants with burgher rights and licences, under her royal authority, to sail and trade on the Western Coast of Africa.³⁵⁵ Indeed, this policy was similar to that of Christian IV regarding Glückstadt.

In addition to Stade, the organisation had two other important centres. The markets in Amsterdam and Hamburg were crucial to the success of the new company, since the domestic markets in Sweden and Denmark were too limited for a profitable trade. In Amsterdam, de Geer placed his own son Laurens, who served as one of the company’s main agents, being responsible for contracts with future employees and for shipping. In Hamburg, de Geer’s main agent was Liebert Wouters.³⁵⁶ The

³⁴⁹ Salt was one of the most important commodities in the Swedish international trade. Severin Bergh, ed., *Svenska Riksrådets Protokoll* (RP), vol. XI: 1645-1646 (Stockholm: Norstedt & Söner, 1906), RP 19.01.1946; Nováky, *Handelskompanier*, 80–81.

³⁵⁰ Sven Gerentz, *Kommerskollegium och näringslivet, 1651-1951* (Stockholm: Nordisk Rotogravyr, 1951), 57.

³⁵¹ RP, 19.01.1646.

³⁵² Nováky, *Handelskompanier*, 81; Dahlgren, *Louis de Geer*, 334.

³⁵³ Nováky, *Handelskompanier*, 81.

³⁵⁴ RAS, LA 82 Christina to the Council of Stade; 04.02.1648 and 25.02.1648; Nováky, *Handelskompanier*, 82.

³⁵⁵ Dahlgren, *Louis de Geer*, 335.

³⁵⁶ Wouters was a long-term business associate of de Geer. Wouters organised the wholesale trade for de Geer in Hamburg, where he was well acquainted with the markets. He was also participating in the Swedish-Iberian trade. He

structure of the company had a clear purpose. The principal aim was to avoid being confronted with the privileges of the WIC and to gain access to the main markets in Hamburg.³⁵⁷ Indeed, the close proximity between Stade and Hamburg made the trade more logistically convenient. In short, the placement of companies in strategic locations such as Stade demonstrates that such ports could offer entrepreneurial opportunities, despite being far away from the centres of political power.

Like other trading companies, the SAC had directors. In the SAC, however, the latter did not play any significant role: for example, they did not receive a salary or commission. Indeed, they had little incentive to be involved in the management of the trade at all. Instead, their main function was to mediate between the traders and the administration of the central government. In his declaration of 1662, Carloff had referred to the company as a *simulatie* (a simulacrum or simulation).³⁵⁸ The actual administration of the business in Europe was in the hands of a few key individuals in Hamburg and Amsterdam.³⁵⁹ Wouters, the commissioner of the de Geer family, was not even officially appointed by the company, yet received commissions for the business that he managed in Hamburg. According to Carloff, the freighting of the ships took place in Amsterdam, and Hans Boor was the factor who bought and loaded the cargoes there. In 1649, Boor equipped the *Christina* and the *De Liefde* with Dutch crews.³⁶⁰

The planned structure of the company thus showed that the organisation would be tightly connected to de Geer. After all, he was without doubt the largest investor. The second in command of the company was Carloff, who was charged with managing the operation in Africa. This responsibility was a specialised task, which would rely upon his experience and skills.

In a notarial declaration on 12 October 1662, Carloff explained that, after having unilaterally terminated his contract with the WIC and arriving in Amsterdam, he had met with de Geer. According to Carloff, de Geer had offered him a contract, because he knew that he had the best knowledge and most up-to-date information regarding trade in Africa.³⁶¹ Moreover, Carloff declared, the other large investors were Louis, Emmanuel, Steven and Johannes de Geer, and Jan Wouters, who was surely a relative of Liebert Wouters, de Geer's man in Hamburg. Thus, the business had two key aspects, namely the financial backing of the de Geer consortium, and the skillset and market access of Carloff.³⁶² The meeting between de Geer, representing the SAC, and Carloff, as an individual, suggests that both parties could benefit from a contract. In that contract, Carloff was given the highest operational position in the company, being made responsible for the overseas operations on the ground. Thus, even if the first charter has often been described as the "Louis de Geer Company", Carloff's role ought not to be underestimated. From his point of view, Carloff had achieved the position that he had desired, but which he had been unable to attain in the WIC.

was also personally involved with Louis who was his brother-in-law. Liebert Wouters was married to Barbara Geraerts, who was the sister to Louis de Geer's wife Adrienne, see Nováky, *Handelskompanier*, 83.

³⁵⁷ Ibid, 83.

³⁵⁸ Carloff declaration, 12.10.1662; NL-HaNA, Staten-Generaal, 1.01.02, inv.nr. 12572.41; printed in De Roever, "Twee Concurrenten".

³⁵⁹ This is confirmed by an Account book of de Geer. VLA, FBA, inv.nr.62A.

³⁶⁰ Carloff declaration, 12.10.1662, Carloff declaration 12.10.1662, NL-HaNA, Staten-Generaal, 1.01.02, inv.nr. 12572.41; De Roever, "Twee Concurrenten van de Eerste West-Indische Compagnie."; confirmed by the information in VLA FBA inv.nr.62A.

³⁶¹ Carloff declaration 12.10.1662, NL-HaNA, Staten-Generaal, 1.01.02, inv.nr. 12572.41; printed in: De Roever, "Twee Concurrenten."

³⁶² Ibidem.

The contract between Carloff and de Geer was further strengthened through social mechanisms such as marriage. Indeed, it is tempting to argue that Carloff's choice of wife was at least partly related to the de Geer family. While employed in the SAC, Carloff married Sophia Felicitas Wolzogen.³⁶³ The Wolzogens were an old Austrian noble family, who had migrated to the Low Countries in the sixteenth century. In Louis de Geer's personal correspondence, there are letters exchanged with Lodewijk Wolzogen, Sophia's brother.³⁶⁴ One of de Geer's accounting books also reveals that when Carloff and Jan Wolzogen (likely another brother of Sophia, also known as Johann and Jean Andre) visited the de Geer mansion in Sweden, de Geer bore the costs.³⁶⁵

Carloff's monthly salary of 100 guilders was an improvement, representing an increase of 28 guilders on his salary as prosecutor in the WIC. However, he no longer had a right to 1/3 of confiscated goods. On the plus side, he was now allowed to engage in private trade, up to the amount of 2,000 guilders, so long as it did not harm the interests of the SAC.³⁶⁶ Beyond the provisions of the contract, it is also evident that Carloff was expected to invest in the SAC. Indeed, his investment of 10,000 riksdalers made him the second largest investor after Louis de Geer.³⁶⁷

Prior to Carloff's first voyage with the SAC, the Queen made it clear who was in charge of the Swedish overseas operations.³⁶⁸ Using power of attorney, Christina appointed Carloff the commander of the SAC, and the head of operations in Western Africa. Moreover, the Queen stated that Carloff should contact his African business partners, and aim to build up friendly commercial relations between the Swedish crown and local kings.³⁶⁹

3.5 *The SAC 1652–1657*

In 1652, when Carloff's initial contract expired, the management and structure of the company underwent significant changes, on account of several simultaneously occurring events. In 1652, de Geer died in Amsterdam, and Carloff left the African coast for Europe. In 1654, Queen Christina abdicated, and chancellor Axel Oxenstierna died. When Carloff left Western Africa, he had fulfilled his contract, and was set to renegotiate his role in the company with the directors. He was, however, captured by the English navy at the entrance to the English Channel, being suspected of sailing with false papers.³⁷⁰ The English accused the Swedish ships of not really being Swedish, but rather Dutch. The return voyage took place at the height of the First Anglo-Dutch War (1652–54), and the English were eager to harm Dutch interests. As such, Carloff and the SAC ships fell victim to this policy.

On 7 January 1652, two Swedish ships, the *Christina* and the *Norrköping*, were captured by one Captain Stoeckes in the English Channel, and taken to Plymouth. Later the same year, a third ship, the *Stockholms Slott*, was also captured, and met with the same fate. The crews were imprisoned

³⁶³ The actual date of the marriage is unknown. On the marriage, see Heijer, "Een dienaar", 175.

³⁶⁴ RAS, LA 10, Correspondance with Jan Wolzogen, 1647, 55, 56; Correspondance between Wolzogen and de Geer, Louis de Geer, *Louis de Geers brev och affärshandlingar 1614–1652*, ed. Erik Wilhelm Dahlgren (Stockholm: P.A. Norstedt & Söner, 1934). October 1641, August 1648 and March 1651; Heijer, "Een dienaar", 175–177.

³⁶⁵ RAS, LA 111, Räkenskaper, C), Henrich Carloff and D) Jan Wolzogen accounts.

³⁶⁶ SAA NA: 875, fō.315, 12.10.1649.

³⁶⁷ Dahlgren, *Louis de Geer*, 338.

³⁶⁸ Nováky, *Handelskompanier*, 88; RAS, Riksregistraturen (RR) shows that there was a letter sent 20.11.1649, but I did not find the actual letter, only the register.

³⁶⁹ RAS LA 82, Power of Attorney, Christina to Carloff, undated.

³⁷⁰ Dahlgren, *Louis de Geer*, 342.

pending trial, whereas Carloff was taken straight to London.³⁷¹ While there, Carloff took action to have the ships released. In a petition to the English council of state, he requested that the ships be released as quickly as possible, since the costs of maintaining them in England were high, and they had already been detained for months. Many of the crew had abandoned the ships, and more would probably follow, creating the risk of not having a sufficient crew to sail back to Sweden. Furthermore, Carloff requested the restitution of all products and goods, which he claimed had been illegally confiscated by Captain Stoeckes.³⁷²

The English Parliament informed the Queen of Sweden, most likely through Carloff, that the ships had been detained because they appeared to be sailing illegally under the Swedish flag, while being financed by a resident of Amsterdam (Laurens de Geer). As such, they represented the enemy of England, the Dutch Republic.³⁷³ Queen Christina argued against this presumption, and sent a letter to Carloff, which he presented to Parliament, in order to prove that the ships were rightfully and legally sailing under the Swedish flag, and should therefore be released immediately.³⁷⁴ The ships, and the gold they carried, were eventually released in 1653, and Carloff and his crew continued the voyage to Stade, where they returned the gold to Steven de Geer. The company ships laid anchor at Hamburg, from where the return cargo was consigned to Wouters.³⁷⁵

While Carloff was in Western Africa, the SAC had undergone a period of considerable change. In particular, the queen and her council had re-established and improved the old Board of Commerce, which was responsible for international trade, manufacturing and shipping.³⁷⁶ This restructuring indicates the growing desire of the state to participate more actively in company affairs.³⁷⁷ The first councillor, Peter Julius Coyet, and the first president, Christer Bonde, were both investors in the SAC. Both men were attempting to bring the company closer to the state, leaving less space for individual entrepreneurial manoeuvres.³⁷⁸ From an institutional perspective, the management of the company became more embedded in the state, particularly through the sharing of posts between directors in

³⁷¹ Carloff Declaration 12.10.1662, Carloff declaration 12.10.1662, NL-HaNA, Staten-Generaal, 1.01.02, inv.nr. 12572.41; De Roever, "Twee Concurrenten".

³⁷² State Papers, 1653: January', in A Collection of the State Papers of John Thurloe, Volume 1, 1638-1653, ed. Thomas Birch (London, 1742), 222-224, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/thurloe-papers/vol1/>, [accessed 21 February 2018]; In Carloff's declaration, he stated that it was admiral Blaek who had arrested the ships, Carloff declaration, 12.10.1662, Carloff declaration 12.10.1662, NL-HaNA, Staten-Generaal, 1.01.02, inv.nr. 12572.41; printed in, De Roever, "Twee Concurrenten".

³⁷³ Dahlgren, *Louis de Geer*, 342.

³⁷⁴ State Papers, 1653: January', in A Collection of the State Papers of John Thurloe, Volume 1, 1638-1653, ed. Thomas Birch (London, 1742), 222-224 <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/thurloe-papers/vol1/>, [accessed 21 February 2018].

³⁷⁵ Carloff declaration, 12.10.1662, Carloff declaration 12.10.1662, NL-HaNA, Staten-Generaal, 1.01.02, inv.nr. 12572.41; printed in De Roever, "Twee Concurrenten van de Eerste West-Indische Compagnie."; Dahlgren, *Louis de Geer*, 342-343.

³⁷⁶ Swedish: Kommerskollegiet.

³⁷⁷ The Board was the central Swedish economic body during the seventeenth century. Its first presidents were Johan Bernds, Erik Oxenstierna and Christer Bonde. In 1652, after the death of Johan Bernds, Erik Oxenstierna, who was also the governor of Reval, was appointed president. He was the son of chancellor Axel Oxenstierna and Anna Bååt (another prominent Swedish noble family). Erik Oxenstierna himself was married to Elsa Brahe, whose family also invested in the Swedish Africa Company. Nováky has shown that there was also another direct link to de Geer through Erik Oxenstierna. One of Erik Oxenstierna's advisors for war, trade and politics was Lars Broman, who was also the brother-in-law of Arent Gabbesen. In 1645, he was in Amsterdam to meet various merchants. He was investigating whether there would be interest in a company based in Gothenburg. However, these plans were not realized. Erik eventually succeeded his father as chancellor in 1654, and was succeeded by Christer Bonde in the Board of Commerce. Nováky, *Handelskompanier*, 162-163 and 176-80; Gerentz, *Kommerskollegium*, 36-42.

³⁷⁸ The brother of Peter Coyet was Frederick Coyet, the commander of the VOC in Formosa.

the company and councillors on the Board of Commerce.³⁷⁹ The key figures on the board supported privilege-based trading companies, such as the Tar Company, the Västervik Shipping Company, the Salt companies, the New Sweden companies and the Swedish Africa Company.³⁸⁰ Indeed, when Erik Oxenstierna was appointed president of the Board of Commerce, he also became director of the New Sweden Company.³⁸¹ The close connection between these enterprises and the board was also evident in the person of Erik Rosenholt, who was simultaneously director of the Tobacco Company, councillor of the Board of Commerce and mayor of Stockholm.³⁸²

By 1654, the Board of Commerce had practically taken over the SAC. After Carloff had returned to Europe, and after his release by the English, he was invited to Uppsala, where the board was temporarily seated due to the plague that was ravaging Stockholm. Here, he attended a meeting with Chairman Oxenstierna and Vice-Chairman Lagerfelt to discuss the company's future, and, especially, its relationship to England. Indeed, this invitation shows that the Board of Commerce was interested in listening to Carloff. At the meeting, the reorganisation process was discussed, and plans began to take shape: in particular, the aim was to reduce the role of the de Geer family, and to tie the company more closely to Sweden, by preventing foreigners from investing in the company.³⁸³

Carloff approved the plans for reorganisation, but much remained unclear. Prior to the meeting, Queen Christina had spoken with Bulstrode Whitelocke, the English ambassador, regarding the possibility of withdrawing the privileges of the company, and transferring them to a new English investor.³⁸⁴ This might, however, have been an unwarranted inference on Whitelocke's part. In any case, at least in theory, there was an idea of bringing the English and the Swedish overseas interests closer together: for instance, the EIC and the SAC had plans for co-operation in the gold trade.³⁸⁵ Indeed, this was at least partly the reason for Whitelocke's presence in Uppsala. At the time, the EIC held the charter for African trade, and had direct access to the Western Coast of Africa.³⁸⁶ If the relationship between England and Sweden had become closer, it would potentially have diminished Carloff's role, since new actors would have entered the scene.

However, the Swedish and English plans fell through, and the reorganisation of the charter proceeded. In 1654, the queen abdicated, and Karl X Gustav became King of Sweden. The new king also issued new privileges to the company. A minimum investment of five hundred riksdalers was explicitly specified, while a "principal shareholder" had to invest at least 3,000 riksdaler.³⁸⁷ The new

³⁷⁹ Material about the investors and their role in the company in, RAS, H&S, vol. 45.

³⁸⁰ The secretary of the board, Johan Rising, had studied in the Dutch Republic. In 1653, he was sent as governor to New Sweden. He became the last governor of the Swedish settlement, Gerentz, *Kommerskollegium*, 36–37; on the investors in the companies, see Dahlgren, *Louis de Geer*, 337.

³⁸¹ Nováky, *Handelskompanier*, 191.

³⁸² Gerentz, *Kommerskollegium*, 43.

³⁸³ *Kommerskollegium*, Huvudarkivet (KKA), Protokoll, 1651–1654, A1 AA:1, protocol, 11.08.1654; Nováky, *Handelskompanier*, 163; Dahlgren, *Louis de Geer*, 346–348.

³⁸⁴ Nováky, *Handelskompanier*, 191; Bulstrode Whitelocke, *Journal of the Swedish Embassy in the Years 1653 and 1654*, ed. Henry Reeve (London: Longman, Brown, Green and Longmans, 1855), 06.05.1654, 200, (name: carloe), I have used the online version; <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/17407/17407-h/17407-h.htm>, [accessed 21 February 2018].

³⁸⁵ There are several documents related to the negotiations between the English and the Swedish about the Africa trade, Uppsala Universitets Bibliotek (UUB), N430. For a closer reading of the plans, see Nováky, *Handelskompanier*, 186–190.

³⁸⁶ For the most recent study of early English trade in Africa, see Julie Mo Svalastog, "Mastering the Worst of Trades: England's Early Africa Companies and Their Traders, 1618–1672" PhD-dissertation (Leiden: Leiden University, 2018); Porter, *European Activity*, 106–163, 219–278, 362–470.

³⁸⁷ In Swedish, *hufvudparticipant*.

privileges excluded foreign investors, and stricter regulations regarding transparency and loyalty to the company were imposed.³⁸⁸ However, in the second charter, the de Geer family estate remained the largest investor. Carloff was yet again the second largest, with an investment of 15,000 riksdaler. To judge from the list of new participants, it is clear that there were more Swedish noble families involved than had been the case in the first charter, among them Bonde, Brahe, de la Gardie, Sparre and Oxenstierna.³⁸⁹ Indeed, these investors belonged to some of the most influential families in Sweden.³⁹⁰

Figure 3-1 Table of the ten main investors during the second charter of the SAC

Main participant	<i>Riksdalers</i>
Louis de Geer (estate)	90,500
Henrich Carloff	15,000
Erik Oxenstierna.	6,000
Joachim Pötter Lillienhoff	6,000
Johan Beyer	3,000
Gustav Bonde.	3,000
Christer Bonde	3,000
Ebba Brahe	3,000
Peter Julius Coyet	3,000

Source: Nováky, *Handelskompanier*, 175.

Although the company allowed only Swedish investors, it tolerated the investment of foreign capital through Swedish principals, who would be recognised as shareholders. Nováky has illustrated this process in the case of Pötter, who invested 6,000 riksdalers in the SAC, of which at least 4,000 originated from the Amsterdam merchants and brothers Guillaume, Matthias and Volquin Momma.³⁹¹ Nováky suggests that this was probably an exception. However, I believe that this type of investment was in fact common. This phenomenon, which I call *ghost investing*, will be studied in detail in chapter four. Nevertheless, in order for Carloff to openly invest in the second charter, he had to be naturalised Swedish. Carloff was duly ennobled in 1654, and, as a Swedish nobleman, he could continue to invest.³⁹² However, it is possible that he was also representing other investors, as will be demonstrated in the next chapter.

The new company had its headquarters in Stockholm and was led by a ‘Main Director’, who was to be one of the main investors and ‘a renowned man’. In practice, this referred to the president of the Board of Commerce. Directly under the main director were three directors responsible for the day-to-day running of the company, assisted by co-directors responsible for the markets in Stade and Hamburg. The first Main Director was Erik Oxenstierna, who had previously held the same position in the New Sweden Company. The three directors were Israel Lagerfeldt, Joachim Pötter and

³⁸⁸ Granlund, *En svensk koloni i Afrika*, appendix 3.

³⁸⁹ Nováky has compiled a useful list from the Swedish national archives: Nováky, *Handelskompanier*, 175.

³⁹⁰ Mirkka Lappalainen, *Suku, valta, suurvalta. Creutzit 1600-luvun Ruotsissa ja Suomessa* (Helsinki: WSOY, 2005), 45.

³⁹¹ Nováky, *Handelskompanier*, 178.

³⁹² Bernhard Schlegel and Carl Arvid Klingspor, *Den med sköldebref förlänade men ej å riddarhuset introducerade svenska adelns ättartaflor* (Stockholm, 1875).

Hendrick de Moucheron. The sub-director in Hamburg was Wouters, who was assisted by Carloff until 1656. Hans Kramer, who had also been responsible for the New Sweden Company books, was appointed bookkeeper.³⁹³

The contrast with the first charter is remarkable. While under the first charter, the company was administered by de Geers and Wouters, under the second charter, it was officially governed by prominent Swedes. In practice, however, the de Geer family was still represented at the directors' meetings, through de Moucheron, even though the latter did not have his own shares, a fact that contradicted the company regulations. Consequently, the influence of the de Geer family remained strong. Notably, they owned their shares in the company not as individuals, but as a group. For his part, Wouters maintained his powerful position in Hamburg. Thus, the company developed a double character, with its official administration being moved to Stockholm, and its daily affairs being conducted from Hamburg, Stade and Amsterdam.

The company did not entirely follow its new design; in the second charter, the co-directors and the freighters continued to be foreign, and to play a central role. The businesses in Amsterdam and Hamburg, which were run by agents, remained the entry point of the company into the consumer and financial markets. Thus, although the SAC administration had new aims, the company still depended on individuals with the experience and skills necessary to handle day-to-day business, and adapted its operations accordingly.

Nováky has shown that Louis de Geer's death seriously diminished Carloff's room for manoeuvre. While this is true, it ought to be added that the abdication of Queen Christina and the death of Axel Oxenstierna in 1654 also had negative consequences for Carloff. These deaths, along with the establishment of the Board of Commerce, represented setbacks in Christina's attempt to insert Sweden into a new international order. It can thus be concluded that Carloff's initial participation in the Swedish African trade relied on Sweden's inability to develop its own overseas business. With time, however, Carloff's advantage in this regard declined. Although Carloff was ennobled, his influence was diminishing, since bringing the company closer to the state was not in his interest. These developments were also reflected in the constraints that Carloff had to face in Western Africa. The development of the SAC demonstrates that a business that began almost as a private enterprise became more and more anchored in the state. In turn, this reveals that company trade was not only attractive to a few capitalists, but also represented an issue of considerable contention within the institutions of the state. Having discussed the structure and administration of the companies in Europe, and the roles of Leyel and Carloff within them, I will now examine their activities on the Coromandel and Western African coasts.

3.6 The status of the DEIC and its first steps in India

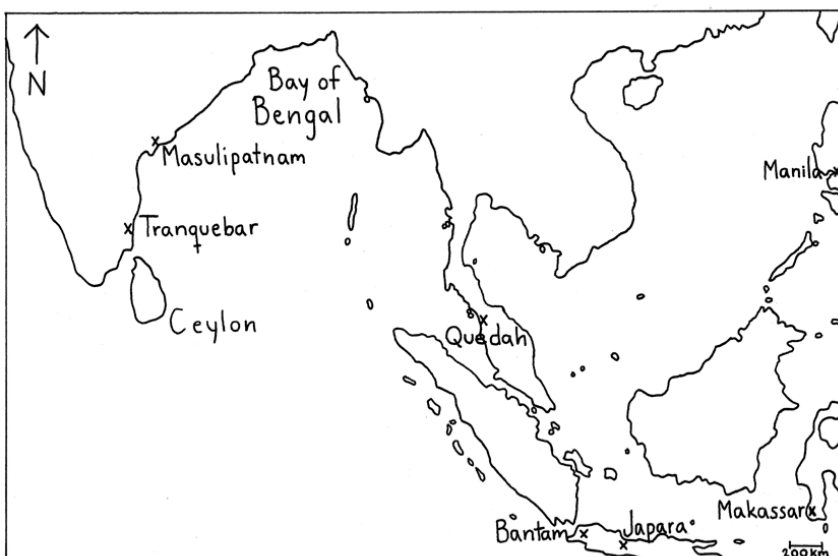
Leyel arrived at Tranquebar in 1643, where he found Danish operations in a precarious condition. Having arrived, Leyel informed the directors that Pessart had proved unsuitable as commander, and that the state of affairs was by now desperate. He reported that Pessart had stolen everything there was to steal, and, having inspected the accounts, he had realised that Pessart had not kept any records regarding trade. Trade with Ceylon, Masulipatnam and Makassar was in shambles, and the factory at Masulipatnam had been lost, since the director had been unable to provide suitable gifts or to pay the

³⁹³ Nováky, *Handelskompanier*, 164.

expected tribute to the local ruler. Pessart's local creditors currently held his wife and family hostage in Masulipatnam.³⁹⁴ Moreover, Pessart had also failed to pay the annual tribute to the Nayak, which had served to further worsen the overall situation in Tranquebar.³⁹⁵ Finally, Pessart had also quarrelled with the Bengali rulers, and a broader conflict was looming.³⁹⁶ According to Level, the other Europeans were laughing at the misery of the Danes.³⁹⁷

In terms of solutions, Level intended to regain and to improve the settlements that Crappe had established at Makassar (Celebes), Japara, Succadana, Mattam, Balsaroe, and, most importantly, Masulipatnam.³⁹⁸ Balsaroe, Succadana, Mattam and Masulipatanam had already been lost, and Level thus faced considerable challenges with regard to trade and politics in Bengal, Masulipatnam and Tranquebar. By 1644, Pessart had left the employment of the DEIC, and Level had informed the company administration that the DEIC was now under his control.³⁹⁹ In response, the VOC officials noted in their registers: "what will be the outcome of Level's rule, only time will tell."⁴⁰⁰

Figure 3-2 Map of Danish factories and support nodes in Asia



Map created by Henrik Pulli

One of Level's most important tasks was to manage the company's forts and trading factories. Indeed, he was worried about the company's weak infrastructure, and particularly its lack of functioning ships. In 1645, there had been the *Christianshavn*, the *St Michael* and the *Walby*, of which the *Christianshavn* was the only large vessel. At the same time, Level noted that the Danish had only Fort Dansborg and a factor in Makassar at their disposal.⁴⁰¹ Level's reports to the directors reveal that

³⁹⁴ RAC, DK, B 246 A, Level to the directors 22.11.1644; Bredsdorff, *The Trials and Travels*, 91.

³⁹⁵ RAC, DK, B 246 A, Level to the directors, 22.11.1644.

³⁹⁶ Larsen, *Dansk-Ostindiske koloniers historie*, 32.

³⁹⁷ RAC, DK, B 246 A, Level to the directors, 22.11.1644.

³⁹⁸ Ibid, 27.

³⁹⁹ There will be more about this transition in chapter four.

⁴⁰⁰ "Wat het uijteijnde van desen Leijel zijn bedrijf wesen sal leert den tijt", H.T. Colenbrander, ed., *Dagh-register gehouden int casteel Batavia vant passerende daer ter plaetse als over geheel Nederlandts-India: 1643-44* (Gravenhage: Martinus Nijhoff, 1902), July 1644: 129.

⁴⁰¹ RAC, DK, B 246 A, Level to the directors, 12.12.1645.

he was gravely concerned regarding the status of Fort Dansborg. In 1645, he wrote that he had been repairing the fort between February and October, and that it was now in much better condition.⁴⁰² In the meantime, the town of Tranquebar had fallen prey to famine due to food shortages; people were starving, falling ill or dying, and food prices had risen significantly, creating unrest among the inhabitants. To curb the crisis, Leyel ordered emergency food supplies from Ceylon.⁴⁰³

Leyel also faced problems with the company employees. He claimed that there were only seventeen European men in the fort, all married to local slaves. Of those seventeen, only six were Danes; most of the other had come to Tranquebar as runaways from Dutch Ceylon.⁴⁰⁴ In 1623, by contrast, Dansborg had been garrisoned by no less than seventy European employees.⁴⁰⁵ On 20 October 1645, Leyel wrote regarding the severe shortage of manpower at Tranquebar, and requested that the directors of the company hire more employees, and preferably trustworthy Northern Europeans.⁴⁰⁶ At the end of his letter, Leyel listed the current employees stationed at the fort. The other inhabitants were locals, especially Portuguese-speakers and a Catholic priest.⁴⁰⁷ Their number had decreased yet further from the previous year. Many of these men had already been in India for a long time, and there was a pressing need for new recruits from Denmark. Leyel did not trust the local employees, and stated that he even had difficulty trusting his own men. He appointed Anders Nielsen, who had previously served as factor in Makassar, as acting governor of Dansborg, since he himself needed to travel in order to improve trade.⁴⁰⁸

Because navigation was dependent upon the monsoon season, the organisation of trading expeditions was subject to severe constraints. From Tranquebar, Leyel's ships crossed the Straits of Malacca to Bantam, from whence they continued via Japara and Cherabon to Makassar. They returned by the same route to Bantam, continued via Ceylon, and returned to Tranquebar at the time of the subsequent monsoon. Regarding the weakness of the company, and of the generally desperate state of affairs, Leyel wrote: "We must row with the oars that we have".⁴⁰⁹ In terms of men, ships and factories, the company was much smaller than both the VOC and the Portuguese trading operations. Therefore, as Subrahmanyam argues, the Danish operations should not be understood in the same context as those of the other Europeans, or at least not as the Portuguese *Estado*, the EIC or the VOC. However, as we shall see, the smaller scale of the Danish operations left considerable space for individual agency.

3.7 Coordinating negotiations

During the subsequent years, Leyel encountered several obstacles. With regard to trade maintenance and development, his main priority was to resolve the conflict with the ruler of Tranquebar, the Nayak, which had arisen from Pessart's failure to pay the necessary tributes. At the time, there were several Nayaks ruling in the Tamil regions, which had functioned as commercial hubs for centuries, and which had also been central to interregional trade under the emperor of Vijayanagara. In the early

⁴⁰² Ibidem.

⁴⁰³ RAC, DK, B 246 A, Leyel to P. Hansen, 17.09.1646.

⁴⁰⁴ RAC, DK, B 246 A, Leyel to the directors, 22.11.1644.

⁴⁰⁵ Larsen, *Dansk-Ostindiske koloniers historie*, 24.

⁴⁰⁶ Leyel used the word "bequomme pershoner", which I translate to capable people.

⁴⁰⁷ RAC, DK, B 246 A, Leyel to P. Nielsen, 20.10.1645.

⁴⁰⁸ RAC, DK, B 246 A, Leyel to the directors, 22.11.1644.

⁴⁰⁹ "wi maa roe med de aarer wy haffuer", RAC, DK, B 246 A, Leyel to the directors, 22.11.1644.

seventeenth century, the Coromandel Coast was divided into two distinctive political regions: in the north, the Muslim Kingdom of Golconda; and in the south, the Nayak of Tanjore.⁴¹⁰ Tranquebar, on the Coromandel Coast, was part of the Kingdom of Tanjore. The Nayak of Tanjore was then an independent sovereign, with the formal title Nayakkan or Nayak. Often, the Nayak was considered a peace maker. If he could not bring peace via diplomacy, he could mobilise large armies to solve existing conflicts.⁴¹¹ In 1645, Leyel sent the merchant Anders Nielsen to negotiate with the Nayak, particularly regarding the maintenance of the DEIC headquarters in Tranquebar (Nielsen's mission will be studied thoroughly in the next chapter).

In a letter to Nielsen, Leyel had explained that an official from the Nayak's court, Tiagapule, had visited Tranquebar the year before. He had perpetrated various outrages against the inhabitants, and burnt down several houses. Leyel's translator, Sima Marca, had been killed. Marca had been the company's best translator, and had worked for the DEIC during the reigns of both the current Nayak and his father. Tiagapule had also prevented the merchants of Tranquebar from accessing their ships and sailing to Ceylon. Indeed, Leyel claimed that it was due to these actions that the DEIC had been unable to pay its tribute to the Nayak. Thus, given the behaviour of Tiagapule, it was unreasonable for the Nayak to demand the regular annual tribute, plus the support of the DEIC in times of war, plus courtly visits on demand.⁴¹² Leyel claimed to have concluded peace with Tiagapule, and promised to pay him 500 *pardous* to end the hostilities. Although he lamented the fact that he had to pay this sum, he argued that it was the only way to restore good relations with the Nayak, who otherwise would transfer his allegiance to the VOC.⁴¹³ Indeed, Leyel was convinced that the VOC had been involved in the hostilities, supporting Tiagapule, bribing him and slandering the Danish. In 1645, an official visit to the Nayak's court resulted in an agreement regarding payment, and a promise of mutual aid at times of conflict.⁴¹⁴

Thus, Leyel managed to re-establish the connection with the Nayak, which was the basis for the company's entire presence in the region. The episode with Tiagapule demonstrates that the VOC was intent on harming DEIC operations, and that the competition between the two companies had become intertwined with local politics. For Leyel, it was paramount to keep the Nayak friendly. Without paying the demanded tributes, the Danish company would have been ousted from Tranquebar, and without Tranquebar, the DEIC would have lost its headquarters and a large share of its income. Indeed, Leyel intended to redirect local ships travelling from Ceylon to Porto Novo into the port at Tranquebar, so that he could charge them import and customs duties. According to Leyel, this was a viable strategy, since many merchants from Porto Novo had already decided to settle and establish their operations in Tranquebar.⁴¹⁵

During the period of Leyel's rule, the company participated in the Indian Ocean trade via three main networks. The first, and perhaps the most important, was that between Tranquebar and Ceylon. The second ran from Tranquebar to Makassar via Java, and the third from Masulipatnam to Emeldy in the north. Leyel's reports suggest that the main product for the DEIC at this time was Coromandel

⁴¹⁰ Joseph J. Brenning, "Chief Merchants and the European Enclaves of Seventeenth-Century Coromandel," *Modern Asian Studies* 11, no. 3 (1977): 321–40, 322–323.

⁴¹¹ Daniel Jeyaraj, *Bartholomäus Ziegenbalg, the Father of Modern Protestant Mission: An Indian Assessment* (New Delhi: ISPCK, 2006), 20; Seshan, *Trade and Politics*, 30–32 and 42–43.

⁴¹² RAC, DK, B 246 A, Leyel to A. Nielsen, 03.03.1645.

⁴¹³ RAC, DK, B 246 A, Leyel to P. Nielsen, 20.10.1645.

⁴¹⁴ RAC, DK, B 246 A, A. Nielsen to Leyel, 23.03.1645; Bredsdorff, *The Trials and Travels*, 146.

⁴¹⁵ RAC, DK, B 246 A, Leyel to the directors, 22.11.1644; Bredsdorff, *The Trials and Travels*, 130 and 136.

textiles, which were for the most part sold in the Sunda Islands.⁴¹⁶ On these islands, the Danish purchased in turn silk, tin, gold and diamonds, which were then resold on the Coromandel Coast. Salt and saltpetre were traded through factories located in the Golconda towns. From the Indonesian archipelago, the DEIC obtained spices. The clove trade was especially profitable for the Europeans, since the purchases from Makassar were resold in Masulipatnam. According to Tapan Raychaudri, the Danes were primarily involved in the trade of cloves, sandal wood, radix china, tortoise shells, and silk from Makassar. From the Coromandel Coast, they exported textiles, and from the Bay of Bengal, sugar.⁴¹⁷

The first regular trade network was with Ceylon, and consisted in arrack, cinnamon and elephants, all of which were key products, providing a competitive advantage in the world of Indian Ocean trade. The key to entering the Ceylon trade was the ruler, the King of Candy. The Portuguese and the VOC had been fighting over dominance over the island, and the tensions between the two created an opportunity for the Danish to enter the Ceylon trade. In November 1644, Leyel wrote that the VOC and the Portuguese were at war over the jurisdiction of Gale, a highly profitable region for the VOC, in which the Portuguese were not willing to give up their position. The VOC had already sent fourteen vessels with 2,500 soldiers to Ceylon, aiming to take over the Portuguese settlements, but had met with such fierce resistance that over half of the VOC soldiers had been killed, and the rest had had to retreat.⁴¹⁸ For Leyel, the ongoing tension between the Portuguese and the VOC represented an opportunity to penetrate a new and potentially lucrative market.

In 1644, Leyel appointed Adrian Jacobsen as his ambassador to Ceylon. His instructions were to sail to Cutiara, establish contact with the King of Candy, and attempt to procure an invitation to his court.⁴¹⁹ Jacobsen's task was to present the king with several lavish gifts, including a large Japanese chest, round mirrors, glasses, textiles, hunting dogs, and an instrument to distil water. If the king was dissatisfied with the gifts, Jacobsen was to assure him that his superiors would do their utmost to obtain whatever he desired instead. The aim was to establish a favourable relationship and, ideally, to access trade in Ceylon without having to pay customs duties. Jacobsen was to obtain a written agreement, if at all possible.⁴²⁰ In October, Anders Nielsen reported to Leyel that one of their local contacts had returned from Ceylon with an elephant, given as a gift by the King of Candy. Jacobsen himself had not yet returned from his mission, since he was still visiting the king's court.⁴²¹

The following year, Leyel reported that the King of Candy had granted the company trading rights and certain custom exemptions.⁴²² Leyel was apparently not entirely satisfied, given that a few years later, he sent yet another embassy to Ceylon, this time under the command of his son-in-law, Josias Stael.⁴²³ Leyel equipped Stael with an array of gifts that were to be delivered to the king: four horses, three from Makassar and one from Java; a large Japanese scriptorium, a sombrero, globes, Javanese gold and two cats. The aim of the mission was to boost trade, especially in wax, cinnamon,

⁴¹⁶ Seshan has written about the importance of the textile trade for the Europeans established on the Coromandel Coast. See Seshan *Trade and Politics*, 13–15.

⁴¹⁷ Raychaudhuri, *Jan Company in Coromandel*, 113.

⁴¹⁸ RAC, DK, B 246 A, Leyel to the directors, 22.11.1644.

⁴¹⁹ Cutiara was also known as Koddiaar and Cotiaar. It was located south of Trincomalee on Ceylon.

⁴²⁰ RAC, DK, B 246 A, Leyel to A. Jacobsen, 26.07.1644; Leyel also mentioned the sending of Adrian Jacobsen to the directors in a second report. RAC, DK, B 246 A, Leyel to the directors, 12.12.1645.

⁴²¹ According to Bredsdorff, Jacobsen returned in October, having concluded the agreement with the King of Candy. I was not, however, able to date his arrival from the letters by Nielsen.

⁴²² RAC, DK, B 246 A, Leyel to the directors, 12.12.1645.

⁴²³ There is only scattered information about Josias Stael in the archives.

elephants and rice. According to his instructions, Stael should ask for the king's permission to access the trade route between Cutiara and Jafnapatnam, and to be exempted from local taxation.⁴²⁴ However, Stael's mission was in the end unsuccessful. Having received the news of the failed voyage, Leyel intended to send his own brokers, Chedam Benada and Antonio Gomes, with new supplies for yet another visit to the court, hoping that they would be more successful. Leyel suspected that one of the men in the former mission, Razia Pahsa Mudeliar, had not done his best, and stated that he should no longer be trusted.⁴²⁵ There is no record of any further embassies to Ceylon. It appears that Leyel was successful in opening up a trade connection with Ceylon, but that a permanent route with completely free trade was never realised.

The second main trade network was with Makassar, one of the central trading ports of the Indonesian archipelago, and a hub for the collection and distribution of spices.⁴²⁶ Leyel emphasised that the trade in cloves had been particularly profitable through Makassar, and that he had got a better price for the cloves in Porto Novo than in Masulipatnam (on the Coromandel Coast). The intra-Asian clove trade was beneficial for the Danish, especially since the King of Golconda had been eager to acquire cloves from the company. The *Christianshavn* thus left Dansborg for Bantam, Charabon and Japara on the coast of Java. From there, it sailed on to Makassar, where the DEIC traded in pepper with the Dutch.⁴²⁷ Of particular significance was Leyel's participation in the journey that opened up the Makassar trade.

Following this journey, Leyel reported that he had conducted profitable trade in Charabon with the king, who was not favourable to the VOC, and who had appreciated Leyel's arrival. Indeed, he had granted Leyel exemption from customs duties, "for now and forever", and had promised to sell him as much pepper as his ships could carry annually. According to Leyel, this would provide sufficient pepper for both the European and the local markets. Leyel also received permission to build a factory in Charabon, and was welcomed in Japara, where a trading relationship was established with the local ruler. Upon arrival in Makassar, Pessart's outstanding debts were paid, and Leyel appointed Poul Hansen Korsør and Johan Polman as factor and assistant factor respectively.⁴²⁸ The importance of the Makassar trade also stemmed from Leyel's desire to expand trade with Manila. Due to its central location, Makassar was vital for the trade in gold, silk and cotton with Canton and Macao, silver with Manila, and textiles with the Coromandel Coast.⁴²⁹ The Spanish sent silver from Mexico to Asian markets through Manila, and, in turn, textiles, satin and spices were sent from Manila to Mexico. As such, Leyel requested that the Danish king initiate negotiations with the Spanish empire, in order to establish a trade connection between the Spanish and the DEIC in Manila, which would facilitate the acquisition of valuable products. With these goods, the DEIC would have something to offer on the Asian markets. According to Leyel, the Danish King might try referring to the recent Danish-Spanish treaty of 1630, as a means to convince the Spanish king.⁴³⁰ This request demonstrates that coordinating the company in Asia forced Leyel to attempt to influence decision-making in Europe, particularly by reporting his plans to improve trade in Asia. It also shows that

⁴²⁴ RAC, DK, B 246 A, Leyel to J. Stael, 19.02.1647.

⁴²⁵ RAC, DK, B 246 A, Leyel to J. Hansen, 24.05.1647 and Leyel to N. Samson, 24.05.1647.

⁴²⁶ Stefan Halikowski Smith, *Creolization and Diaspora in the Portuguese Indies: The Social World of Ayutthaya, 1640-1720* (Boston/Leiden: Brill, 2011), 39.

⁴²⁷ RAC, DK, B 246 A, Leyel to the directors, 12.12.1645.

⁴²⁸ RAC, DK, B 246 A, Leyel to the directors, 15.11.1646.

⁴²⁹ Smith, *Creolization and Diaspora*, 39–40.

⁴³⁰ RAC, DK, B 246 A, Leyel to the king, 12.12.1645; Bredsdorff, *The Trials and Travels*, 158.

Leyel had specialised knowledge regarding European diplomatic arrangements, which he used in an overseas context to advise the king. In this way, European and overseas diplomacy and trade became intertwined.

The third trade network began north of the Coromandel, and continued along the coast of Bengal. Masulipatnam was important, but since Pessart had failed to repay his debts, Leyel was unable to reopen trade there. In the Bengal delta, Leyel participated in the slave trade, which was then common in the Indian Ocean.⁴³¹ For Leyel, the slave trade was a means to obtain quick profits, which could then be used for gifts, tributes and outstanding debts. In particular, the DEIC sold the crews of Bengali ships, which they had seized as prizes (chapter six will study these seizures more closely). The slave trade was widespread in the Indian Ocean, and other powers also participated. Leyel, who was familiar with the region following previous visits to Pipley during 1626, when the DEIC had attempted to build a trading station there, knew that due to developments within local politics, the Portuguese had lost their trading stations on the Bengal Coast, especially at Tamluk, Hughli, Balsaroe and Pipley. These had traditionally been considered slave ports, and their loss coincided with the general decline of Portuguese dominance in the region.⁴³² For Portuguese private traders, the Bengal slave trade had offered a solution to the declining strength of the *Estado da Índia*. Similarly, the DEIC also obtained slaves at the Bengali ports, whom they then transported to Ceylon for trade, and as gifts for the local rulers. For example, in his instructions to skipper Hans Ekman, Leyel stated that thirty-eight slaves (both Muslims and Hindus) could be offered as gifts to the king in Quedah.⁴³³ Indeed, Leyel was himself a slave owner. In a letter to Jörgen Hansen, the skipper of the *Christianshavn*, Leyel noted that if Ismael Nina, Leyel's business partner, brought slaves onboard, they should be considered his (i.e. Leyel's) property. In the same letter, he also discussed how to procure provisions for the slaves on board the ships.⁴³⁴ This demonstrates that slave trading also took place among the DEIC and its officials. Indeed, such slave trading represented a gravitation towards the rhythms of intra-Asian trade, a gravitation that had been adapted by Leyel.

Under Leyel's administration, trade in the Indian Ocean was characterised by three strategies: first, the issuing of passports and instructions for company employees; second, the organisation of trading activities on the ground; and third, the use of a significant number of brokers and translators. By issuing passports on behalf of the Danish king, Leyel functioned as the king's representative. However, these passports were not the same as passports today. To the contrary, they were more like sea letters intended for a ship and its crew.⁴³⁵ These passports and the instructions given to merchants were often issued simultaneously. An example of such instructions was a letter dated 19 September 1645, from Leyel to the skipper and pilot of the *St. Michael*, namely Simon Charstenson and Willem Mouridsen. According to Leyel, the ship was to sail to Quedah, on the Malaysian coast, where the crew would establish contact with the broker Seyed Nina, who had been hired by Leyel to handle

⁴³¹ Martin Krieger has written about the Danish slave trade in the Indian Ocean. See Martin Krieger, "Der Dänische Sklavenhandel auf dem Indischen Ozean im 17. Und 18. Jahrhundert," in *Jahrbuch für Europäische Überseegeschichte*, vol. 12 (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2012), 9–30.

⁴³² Rila Mukherjee, "Portuguese Slave Ports in Bengal 1500-1700," in *Seaports in the First Global Age Portuguese Agents, Networks and Interactions (1500-1800)*, ed. Cátia Antunes and Amelia Polónia (Porto: Uporto Edições, 2016), 221–41, 221–224.

⁴³³ RAC, DK, B 246 A, Leyel to H. Ekman, 21.09.1646.

⁴³⁴ RAC, DK, B 246 A, Leyel to J. Hansen, 19.02.1647.

⁴³⁵ A sea letter was a certificate issued by a maritime power to neutral merchant vessels during times of war, granting them permission to sail in the Indian Ocean. The document vouched for the neutrality of the vessel, guaranteeing that it would be allowed to continue its journey unharmed, especially if it encountered the naval forces of the issuing state.

trade for the DEIC. Together, they would undertake the purchase of elephants as their main goal. The ship was to be particularly wary of other Europeans, who might attempt to hinder its progress. If this happened, they were to show their passport and protest. Similar statements recurred in most of the instructions and passports issued by Leyel. However, issuing passports was not an activity specific to the DEIC; the VOC, and in particular the Portuguese, also issued passports. Since the early sixteenth century, the Portuguese *cartazes* had been principally used to control Asian shipping and sea routes. The Portuguese, like the VOC after them, enjoyed naval superiority in Asia, which enabled them to stop other ships and demand the *cartazes*. If the ship failed to present such a licence, the ship itself would be confiscated, and the skipper and crew accused of engaging in illegal trade.⁴³⁶ The *cartezas* were thus primarily a means to extort money, and only secondarily a passport in the sense that the term would be understood today. The challenge with the *cartazes* was that it required the Portuguese to have sufficient force to control the seas. By contrast, the passports of Leyel were issued for a different purpose. The *cartazes* were sold to offer protection to local merchants and ships, whereas Leyel's passports were issued to offer protection for local merchants onboard Danish ships. After all, onboard the DEIC ships, a significant amount of both European and non-European private trade was conducted.

All in all, the DEIC passports demonstrate Leyel's capacity to adapt to the rhythms of local trade, a capacity that he had developed during his previous visits to the Indian Ocean. They also demonstrate his capacity to adapt to local business practices, in order to maximise the gains of the company and of himself.

The numerous passports contained in the Leyel archives show that Leyel was in a remarkable position overseas. He was acting similarly to the Portuguese viceroy in Goa, which again underlines the way he envisaged the activities of the company overseas.⁴³⁷ The passports and instructions always stated the desired crew, the route they were to sail, the products they were expected to trade and how to respond when facing threats. Leyel often wrote instructions to the skipper, the pilot and the merchants of the ships. Here, he also clarified the hierarchy of the personnel, and even explained the hierarchy that would pertain in case of death.

A significant part of the instructions regarded how to act upon arrival at the different destinations, and how to undertake the various tasks assigned to the personnel. One of the issues that frequently recurred in the instructions was the abuse of alcohol. In this regard, Leyel stressed the need to avoid excessive drinking, which, he claimed, lay at the root of all the company's problems in India. Indeed, this suggests that during his years in the Asian trade, Leyel had seen many Europeans misbehave under the influence of alcohol, causing problems that then had to be resolved by authorities like himself. He also recommended purchasing as much arrack (a liquor or spirit) and as many elephants as possible.⁴³⁸ These commodities were important, due to their widespread use in the Indian

⁴³⁶ Raychaudhuri, *Jan Company in Coromandel*, 96 and 119–123. About patrolling, Seshan, *Trade and Politics*, 23.

⁴³⁷ Jürgen Osterhammel has argued that “a viceroy [can be] loosely defined as the head of the political hierarchy in a given territorial unit at the periphery”. According to Osterhammel, the viceroy represented the king at the local level, and was, in most cases, responsible for the specialised tasks of imperial crisis management. With regard to the VOC, use of the term “viceroy” might seem problematic, given that there was no king. Nevertheless, the function of the VOC *gouverneur-general* was broadly similar. While the VOC used the term *gouverneur-general*, the EIC used the term *proconsul*, and the Danish referred to the *commander*. See Jürgen Osterhammel, “The Imperial Viceroy: Reflections on an Historical Type,” in *The Dynastic Centre and the Provinces: Agents and Interactions*, ed. Jeroen Duindam and Sabine Dabringhaus (Boston/Leiden: Brill, 2014), 13–29, 20.

⁴³⁸ RAC, DK, B 247 B, Leyel Passport, 19.09.1645.

Ocean as gifts for rulers and merchants, helping to establish and improve business relationships.⁴³⁹ Thus, while Leyel condemned heavy alcohol consumption, he nevertheless considered it as one of the most important commercial products.

Another common theme in the instructions was the role of brokers and translators in the company. Local brokers were instrumental for the development of business, since they were responsible for business transactions, and were often better connected and better informed than the company's own officials. For example, in relation to establishing trade in Porto Novo, Leyel described his local clerk, Canacapel Tayapa, as "a decent and trustworthy servant for our trade."⁴⁴⁰ The use of brokers was also widespread in Bantam, Java and Makassar. In Bantam, Leyel wanted the company to trade through a Chinese merchant, Ziu Ziu. Even in Batavia, Leyel instructed Anders Nielsen to trade through Ambrosius van der Keer, to assist him in any way possible, and to diligently compensate him for his services. In Japara, Nielsen was to trade with Abdul Latif, with whom the prospects of the gold and timber trade were to be discussed.⁴⁴¹ The brokers were also important for providing additional assistance in cross-imperial trade. The broker Simão D'Almeida, a merchant in Negapatnam, assisted the Danish with purchasing gunpowder, which could be used at Dansborg. D'Almeida exported some of this gunpowder to Ceylon, delivering it to the Portuguese general Don Filipe de Mascarenhas in return for cinnamon.⁴⁴² Even in Masulipatnam, where the DEIC had many problems, a broker called Virna acted as merchant and translator. Leyel wrote that Virna was to negotiate with the local governor, or with Thomas Penniston at the English factory. Furthermore, along the trade routes to Ceylon, Leyel had various other contacts, who were to assist the ships he had sent with purchasing elephants, cinnamon and arrack.⁴⁴³ The importance of brokers was also clear in Makassar. There, factor Poul Hansen Korsør was told to consult with broker Francisco Mendes in matters relating to the Manila trade.⁴⁴⁴ Hansen, Leyel specified, should not act independently, but should rather consult one of Leyel's agents. Mendes most likely belonged to the "Portuguese tribe" that operated outside the control of the *Estado*.⁴⁴⁵ Members of "the tribe", or diaspora, as Halikowski-Smith has pointed out, were central facilitators of the international trade to-and-from Makassar.⁴⁴⁶

The instructions that Leyel provided demonstrate his insights into local trading conditions, and his attempts to instrumentalise that knowledge for the good of the DEIC. He encouraged the use of a local workforce, promoted sobriety, and even recommended the acquisition of as much arrack and as many elephants as possible, since these were in widespread use in Indian Ocean trade.

As these various reports, instructions and passports indicate, the environment that Leyel faced in India was demanding: there was no support from Europe, there was a constant shortage of men, and there were serious trading issues with local rulers, often caused by unpaid debts and tributes. Leyel's lack of any direct connection with Europe further aggravated the situation – indeed, it is

⁴³⁹ I will return to the topic of gifts in the next chapter.

⁴⁴⁰ RAC, DK, B 246 A, Leyel to P. Nielsen, 20.10.1645.

⁴⁴¹ RAC, DK, B 246 A, Leyel to A. Nielsen, 01.02.1647.

⁴⁴² RAC, DK, B 246 A, Leyel to A. Nielsen, 04.09.1644.

⁴⁴³ RAC, DK, B 246 A, Leyel to A. Jacobsen, 26.07.1644.

⁴⁴⁴ RAC, DK, B 246 A, Leyel to A. Nielsen, 01.02.1647.

⁴⁴⁵ Smith, *Creolization and Diaspora*; George Winius, "The 'Shadow Empire' of Goa in the Bay of Bengal," *Itinerario* 7, no. 2 (1983): 83–101; Sanjay Subrahmanyam, *The Political Economy of Commerce: Southern India 1500-1650* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

⁴⁴⁶ Smith, *Creolization and Diaspora*, 39–40.

surprising that the company continued to trade at all. However, despite such challenging circumstances and limited resources, Leyel managed to keep the business afloat. This was possible largely due to his specialised knowledge of intra-Asian trade and management: he issued passports to his subordinates with detailed instructions, and traded in slaves to pay the company debts; he attempted to improve the infrastructure of the company, and allocated materials for repairs; and he personally travelled around the Indian Ocean, attempting to improve the company's business with the locals.

3.8 *Carloff in Western Africa*

Prior to Carloff's arrival on the Gold Coast as an employee of the SAC, an English merchant, Thomas Crispe, had received permission from the Fetu King to establish a trading station at Cape Coast.⁴⁴⁷ The Fetu people were one of the older Kingdoms on the Cape Coast, being also referred to as Ogu. The king of a larger town or state was called the *Onehe*, and the main officials were known as the *caboceers*.⁴⁴⁸ In the Fetu Kingdom, power was divided between the king and his two closest men, the *caboceers*, the *Braffo* and the *Dey*. The king, who lived on the inland, was mainly responsible for politics and representation. The *Braffo* was a military commander, whereas the *Dey* managed finances and trade, and thus lived on the coast adjacent to the European forts, where most of the trade was conducted. In particular, the Cape Coast was one of the main markets for gold on the so-called Gold Coast. Indeed, gold was the main reason for Europeans to trade there. However, the Fetu were mainly fishermen, and offered transportation through their system of canoes.⁴⁴⁹ Furthermore, much of the Fetu's trade was done via Elmina castle, which was situated at the border between the Fetu and the neighbouring Kommenda. Elmina had a semi-independent status as a result of Portuguese involvement on the coast, and was an import contact point for the Fetu and the Europeans alike. As such, the Fetu had the advantage of having two important marketplaces in relative proximity to their core region of dwelling. Although the Fetu played an important role as mediators in the gold trade, the Akani people, who lived in the interior, were the main exporters of gold, which they sold on the coast, and especially the Cape Coast. The importance of the gold trade was often noted by contemporaries, such as the Dutch Director-General, Valckenburgh.⁴⁵⁰ Although the gold trade became the main reason for the European presence on the Gold Coast, it was not the only thing that Europeans traded; for instance, ivory, wax and sugar from São Tomé were also in high demand. Although slave trading did occur, it was still of marginal importance during the 1640s.

Between the 1640s and the 1660s, the Fetu Kingdom was represented by the *Onehe* and two powerful *caboceers*, John Ahenakwa (Hennequa) and Jan Claessen (Acrosan). During the course of the 1650s, they became the most influential men on the Gold Coast, and when Hennequa died in

⁴⁴⁷ Van Dantzig, *Forts and Castles*, 24; Porter, *European Activity*, 296–297.

⁴⁴⁸ Porter, *European Activity*, 38.

⁴⁴⁹ Ibid., 42; Robin Law, "Between the Sea and the Lagoons: The Interaction of Maritime and Inland Navigation on the Precolonial Slave Coast (Entre Mer et Lagune: Les Interactions de la Navigation Maritime et Continentale sur la Côte Des Esclaves avant la Colonisation)," *Cahiers d'Études Africaines* 29, no. 114 (1989): 209–37.

⁴⁵⁰ Valckenburgh mentioned the importance of gold several times in a report from 1659 (De Jonge gives the year as 1656, but this is mistaken), Cornelis De Jonge, *De Oorsprong van Nederland's Bezittingen op de Kust van Guinea* (Gravenhage: Martinus Nijhoff, 1871), 51–69.

1656, Acrosan became *de facto* the most powerful man in the whole region.⁴⁵¹ As such, Acrosan's position is important to understanding Carloff's actions on the coast.

At one point, the relationship between the WIC and Acrosan has deteriorated to such an extent that the company had plans to poison him.⁴⁵² After the death of the Fetu King, Bodema, the Fetu had tried to make Acrosan the Onehe, but he refused, and instead appointed one of his relatives as the acting king. As king, Acrosan would have lost the position of principal trader, and thus significant amounts of money. Furthermore, on several occasions, he functioned as a mediator in European conflicts on the coast, successfully aiming to keep the African markets open to as many Europeans as possible.⁴⁵³

From the 1630s onwards, the English had increasingly begun to make their own voyages to the Gold Coast. The patron of the English trade, Nicholas Crispe, who played a role similar to that of Louis de Geer, was one of the earliest Africa trade capitalists of the 1630s and the 1640s.⁴⁵⁴ In April 1650, Hennequa gave the English permission to build a house on the coast. According to the English agent Thomas Crispe (a relative of Nicholas Crispe), Carloff, representing the SAC, arrived on the coast only a few days after the English, meeting with Hennequa and Acrosan. The outcome of this meeting was that Carloff was permitted to build another house next to that of the English, which, according to Crispe, violated the agreement that the English had made with the Fetu.⁴⁵⁵ Crispe and the WIC Director-General, Henrik Doedens, protested against this decision, but in vain. As Carloff himself explained, he had convinced the Fetu officials by offering them more lavish gifts, and selling them goods at a lower price, than the other Europeans. Furthermore, he also claimed to have purchased intelligence from Hennequa and Acrosan, particularly regarding the state of the WIC and the current market conditions.⁴⁵⁶ Apparently, no WIC ships had been sent to the coast in 1648 and 1649; thus, it is possible that Carloff knew about the increasing weakness of the WIC, and used this information to his advantage.⁴⁵⁷ On 28 May 1650, Carloff signed a contract between the SAC and the King of Fetu – only a few days later than the contract that had been concluded between Crispe and the king.⁴⁵⁸ Carloff soon managed to stabilise the SAC position on the coast, and acquired the right to build additional smaller lodges at Anomabo, Takorari, Butri, Orsu, Jumoree and Cape Apollonia.

⁴⁵¹ Daaku, *Trade and Politics*, 107.

⁴⁵² Brieven, confessie; mitsgaders, advisen van verscheyden rechtsgeleerden in de saeck van Isaac Coymans gegeven; als mede de sententie daer op gevolgt (Rotterdam 1662), 25.03.1660; W.B. Den Blanken, "Imperium in Imperio Sovereign Powers of the First Dutch West India Company" (M.A. Dissertation - Leiden University, 2014), 40.

⁴⁵³ Ibidem.

⁴⁵⁴ On the English advancement in Western Africa, see Porter, *European Activity*, 118–140.

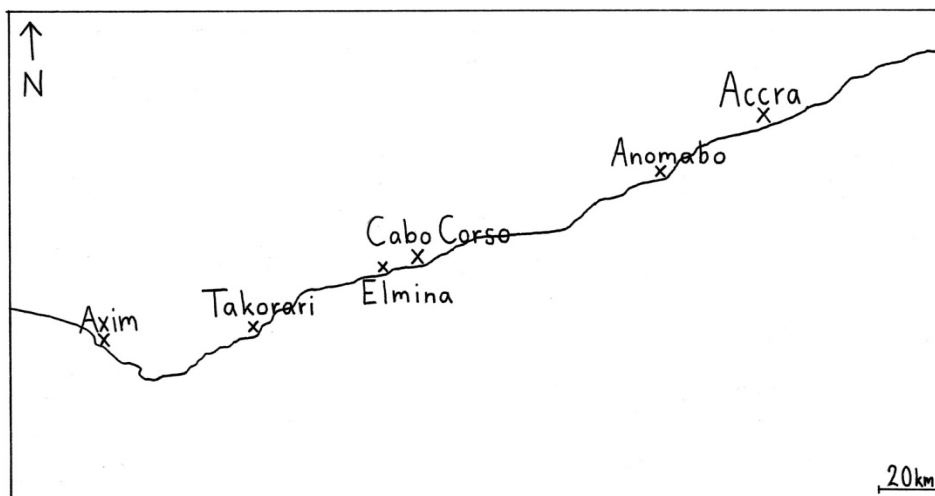
⁴⁵⁵ London, National Archives, HCA (High court of Admiralty) 24/111, no.182, declaration by Thomas Crispe; I would like to thank Julie Mo Svalastog for providing this source.

⁴⁵⁶ Carloff declaration, 12.10.1662, Carloff declaration 12.10.1662, NL-HaNA, Staten-Generaal, 1.01.02, inv.nr. 12572.41, printed in De Roever, "Twee Concurrenten".

⁴⁵⁷ Dahlgren, *Louis de Geer*, 336.

⁴⁵⁸ NL-HaNA, OWIC, 1.05.01.01, inv.nr. 13A, Contract, Carloff – King of Fetu, 28.05.1650, file: 512–514, (scans 514–516).

Figure 3-3 Map of the Gold Coast



Map created by Henrik Pulli

To understand the events that took place around 1650, we must first analyse the period prior to the signing of the contract between Carloff and the Fetu king. During the 1640s, Carloff had worked for the WIC in Western Africa. His position as prosecutor had necessitated much travelling, and he had become familiar with the people of the region and their various trading customs. At that time, Carloff had also become aware of the ambitions of the English on the Gold Coast: he knew that Crispe planned to build a fort, but had so far failed to do so, due to competition from the WIC. Indeed, towards the end of the 1640s, the Dutch had once again regained control over the area. The WIC increased the price of the goods it sold to Africans, to such a point that the Fetu refused to pay, and, in 1649, trade came to a standstill.⁴⁵⁹ Already in 1647, while still prosecutor for the WIC, Carloff had noted that English expansion on the coast had slowed. Moreover, he claimed that the Cape Coast had been devoid of Europeans for most of 1648, and the entirety of 1649.⁴⁶⁰ As such, the shifting balance of power between the English and the WIC created a space for the SAC to enter the region in 1650.

For their part, the English were not at all pleased by the arrival of the SAC; one agent of the English company stated that the area already belonged to the English, and that the SAC should leave. Furthermore, the English also accused Carloff of being violent, and of having won the support of the Fetu by offering them goods at a lower price than the English.⁴⁶¹ At the same time, the disputes between Carloff and various WIC officials, namely Henrik Doedens, Arent Cock, Jan Ruychaver and Jan Valckenburgh, also offer insights into the specialised entrepreneurial strategies that Carloff applied on behalf of the SAC. The Director-General of the WIC, Arent Cock, was not pleased with Carloff's arrival, and reported having sent the WIC prosecutor, Jan Valckenburgh, to Accra, in order

⁴⁵⁹ Nørregård, *Danish Settlements*, 10.

⁴⁶⁰ NL-HaNa, OWIC, 1.05.01.01, inv.nr 11, Henrich Carloff to Heeren XIX, 26.09.1647, (scans 686–695); FC, N4, 179–185; Porter, *European Activity*, 294.

⁴⁶¹ London, National Archives, HCA (High court of Admiralty) 24/111, no.182, declaration by Thomas Crispe; NL-HaNa, Staten-Generaal, 1.01.02, inv.nr. 12571.38.1, Arent Cock to the Heeren XIX, 13.10.1650; FC, N5, 85.

to prevent Carloff from establishing trade there.⁴⁶² When the prosecutor returned, he informed Cock that Carloff had arrived in Accra before him, had already visited the local rulers, and had established an excellent relationship with them by providing lavish gifts.⁴⁶³ Valckenburgh penned a missive of protest to Carloff in Accra on 26 July, in which he accused him of having used the same strategies on the Cape Coast. Valckenburgh claimed that Carloff was seeking to sabotage the WIC, and that he was motivated by his own personal hatred towards the company.⁴⁶⁴ Indeed, Director-General Ruychaver confirmed in 1651 that Carloff had already begun to hate the WIC, even before the termination of his contract.⁴⁶⁵ Furthermore, Valckenburgh indicated in 1650 that Carloff had also jeopardised the friendly relationship between the Swedish and the Dutch. He added that Carloff, more than anyone else, ought to be aware of the special relationship between the rulers of Accra and the WIC, and to respect the treaties that had been signed in 1643 and 1649 (that is, during the period of Carloff's employment with the WIC).⁴⁶⁶ Cock subsequently reported to the directors of the WIC that Carloff had attempted to build a house in Accra, although the local officials of the WIC had succeeded in obstructing him. Seeking an alternative, Carloff had moved to nearby Orsu.⁴⁶⁷ For his part, Carloff responded to Valckenburgh's protest in May 1650, arguing that he was sailing under the legal commission of the Swedish Queen, and that documents proving this had already been presented to the previous Director-General. Carloff argued that the coastal waters were free to navigate for all, and that the WIC's jurisdiction did not extend beyond the area that it could defend by cannon.⁴⁶⁸

Carloff also knew the trade in Accra; for example, while he had been in the employment of the WIC, he had once travelled inland so as to resolve a dispute between local rulers.⁴⁶⁹ Thus, Carloff's past diplomatic service on behalf of the King of Accra enabled him to open up a trading lodge there. The historian Van Dantzig has thus concluded that: "Although Caerlof in fact did nothing more than establish a number of non-fortified lodges, he opened up new outlets for the African trade and thus laid the basis of a number of new forts, two of which were even to be raised to the status of castle."⁴⁷⁰ Carloff's protest exemplifies the strategies of argument and the experience that he had developed on the coast in his capacity as prosecutor of the WIC; in particular, he knew what to do in order to evade hostile accusations from his previous employers. Moreover, it also demonstrates just how little the WIC officials could do to prevent Carloff (and other competitors) from establishing a foothold in their territory.

When Carloff arrived in Western Africa at the beginning of the 1650s, he found a number of competitors already established on the coast, where he had planned for the Swedish company to settle. He was well acquainted with the region, and knew that the WIC had abandoned their lodge at Cape Coast, since they had wanted to divert trade towards Elmina, so as to avoid purchasing gold inland

⁴⁶² The previous Director-General Henrik Doedens was succeeded by Arent Cock in summer 1650, Nováky, *Handelskompanier*, 101.

⁴⁶³ NL-HaNA, Staten-Generaal, 1.01.02, inv.nr. 12571.38.1, Arent Cock to the Heeren XIX, 13.10.1650; FC, N5, 85.

⁴⁶⁴ NL-HaNA, Staten-Generaal, 1.01.02, inv.nr. 12571.38.1, Jan Valckenburgh to Henrich Carloff, 26.07.1650; FC, N5, 86–88.

⁴⁶⁵ NL-HaNA, OWIC, 1.05.01.01, inv.nr. 13A, Jan Ruychaver to Henrich Carloff, 10.07.1651, file.115–119, 124–134 (scan147–149, here it gives as the date 20.07.1651); FC, N5, 118–121.

⁴⁶⁶ NL-HaNA, OWIC, 1.05.01.01, inv.nr. 13A, Jan Valckenburgh to Henrich Carloff, 28.07.1650, file.115–119, (scans 117–121); FC, N5, 96.

⁴⁶⁷ NL-HaNA, Staten-Generaal, 1.01.02, inv.nr. 12571.38.1, Arent Cock to the Heeren XIX, 13.10.1650; FC, N5, 89.

⁴⁶⁸ NL-HaNA, OWIC, 1.05.01.01, inv.nr. 13A, Henrich Carloff to the Heeren XIX, May 1650, file: 504–507, (scans, 506–509); FC, N5, 90.

⁴⁶⁹ Klaas Ratelband, *Vijf Dagregisters*, 16.11.1646, 262; Heijer, "Een dienaar", 166.

⁴⁷⁰ Van Dantzig, *Forts and Castles*, 24.

brokered by the Fetu. For Carloff, this meant that it was easier to establish a foothold on Cape Coast, not only because there were no European competitors, but also because he could easily gain the support of the Fetu caboceers, who felt threatened by the WIC.⁴⁷¹

However, Carloff was not satisfied with the SAC settling only at Cape Coast. To the contrary, he wanted to expand yet further, and he therefore also took possession of an abandoned WIC lodge at Anomabo, somewhat to the east of Cape Coast. After that, he turned towards the Western region of the coast, building small lodges at Takorari, Butri and Jumoree. These districts had recently been subject to a degree of aggression from the WIC, in that the company had begun to levy a toll on local merchants. This practice had already been introduced by the Portuguese, and many African merchants had in fact welcomed the WIC, since its tolls were less onerous than those of the Portuguese. Now, however, they transferred their allegiance to Carloff, who promised to end the WIC tolls altogether.⁴⁷² Indeed, Carloff knew how to approach and establish connections with the coastal societies. Being very much aware of the weaknesses of the WIC, he turned them to his own advantage. On the African coast, as in Europe, the institutional environment was now propitious for Carloff's entrepreneurship.

In 1651, the newly appointed Director-General of the WIC, Jan Ruychaver (second-term as Director-General), decided to mount an even stronger stand against Carloff. He claimed that Carloff had overstepped his authority on the coast by attacking the WIC ship *Enkhuizen*, harassing its crew, and ignoring the protests issued by the company. Ruychaver considered this disgraceful, stating that Carloff was devoid of all honour, and that he had ruined his own reputation.⁴⁷³ However, two days later, Ruychaver sent another letter of protest to Carloff, this time in more moderate tones. Here, he claimed that that he had nothing against Carloff and his subordinates personally, but merely wished to handle all matters on the coast according to the dictates of protocol and decency. Moreover, he also stated that he wanted to maintain his friendship with Carloff and the SAC, and even offered some slaves as a sign of friendship.⁴⁷⁴ One cannot help wondering how this sudden change occurred. Ruychaver and Carloff were certainly known to each other. After all, it was Ruychaver who had appointed Carloff as the prosecutor of the WIC.

Carloff replied to Ruychaver, confirming that the protests of the WIC had been conveyed to the Swedish Queen. Carloff was still waiting to hear the response of the States General, but he himself rejected the accusations, claiming that he had always been open and friendly towards the WIC. Furthermore, he claimed that he had been willing to discuss matters, but had been met with threats from WIC officials. At some point, he continued, he would like to address these accusations, but, for the meantime, the conduct of trade on the coast was more important to him. Regarding the confiscation of the ship *Enkhuizen*, Carloff claimed to have evidence showing that it did not fall under the jurisdiction of the WIC. Indeed, he continued, he could prove that both the ship and its cargo belonged to various Dutch, French and Swedish proprietors. As such, the ship had departed from Texel without the appropriate documents.⁴⁷⁵ Once again, it is clear that Carloff was here applying the methods that he had learned at the WIC; particularly important were his references to the right to

⁴⁷¹ Porter, *European Activity*, 294.

⁴⁷² Van Dantzig, *Forts and Castles*, 18; Nørregård, *Danish Settlements*, 10.

⁴⁷³ NL-HaNa, OWIC, 1.05.01.01, inv.nr. 13A, Jan Ruychaver to Henrich Carloff, 10.07.1651, file, 124–134, (scan, 126–136); FC, N5, 118–121.

⁴⁷⁴ NL-HaNa, OWIC, 1.05.01.01, inv.nr. 13A, Jan Ruychaver to Henrich Carloff, 13.07.1651, file, 139–142, (scans, 141–144); FC, N5, 139.

⁴⁷⁵ NL-HaNa, OWIC, 1.05.01.01, inv.nr. 13A, Henrich Carloff to Jan Ruychaver 14.07.1651, file, 142–149, (scans, 144–151); FC, N5, 124.

trade, the origin of the ships, the ownership of the cargo, and whether the official paperwork was in order. By these means, Carloff justified his actions and demonstrated his power.

From a broader coastal perspective, however, this intra-European quarrel had little significance. What really mattered were the connections between the Europeans and the African authorities, and the inner tensions within the company administration. Despite the existence of competitors, the SAC had managed to establish itself on the coast, and the other European powers had more or less accepted its presence. When Carloff left for Sweden in 1652, his position was ambivalent: he was the second largest investor in the company, and the commander of operations at its outpost. However, new appointments to the SAC administration in Europe would soon throw the internal politics of the company at Cape Coast into disarray.

In October 1653, de Geer appointed Jan Daniel Rosa, one of his business associates, as company prosecutor, for a period of three years.⁴⁷⁶ It seems that his intention was to then appoint Rosa as governor when his term as prosecutor ended. When Carloff left for Europe in 1652, he had been succeeded by Isaac Mivilla, but suddenly, in July 1654, Mivilla died, prompting a breakdown of organisation on the coast.⁴⁷⁷ Rosa, who at the time of Mivilla's death was in Takorari, feared that he would miss out on the now vacant position of governor. When he attempted to re-enter Cape Coast, planning to seize the governorship, he was informed that the position had already been filled.⁴⁷⁸ Indeed, another employee of the SAC, Joost Cramer (also a former WIC employee), had already been appointed. Furthermore, the WIC had already recognised the appointment: a WIC official, Loys Dammaert, had acknowledged the death of Mivilla and congratulated Cramer on his selection. Dammaert also reported that two WIC officials had visited Cape Coast, in order to pay their respects to the new governor.⁴⁷⁹

However, Cramer's governorship did not last for long. In August 1655, the SAC directors in Europe decided to send a new governor, Johann Philip von Krusenstierna.⁴⁸⁰ Cramer remained vice-governor, but additional Swedish officials were now recruited, in the hope of bringing about a more organic connection between the company and its Swedish sponsors. Significantly, Nováky has stressed that none of these new officials had prior experience in West African trade.⁴⁸¹ Thus, despite such new recruitment, many of the key positions on the coast remained in the hands of Dutchmen and Germans who did have such experience, Joost Cramer and Sigmund Jeunisch being the most prominent examples.⁴⁸²

This duality in the structure of the organisation on the coast created tension among those in the service of the company. While Cramer was governor (1654–1655), and later vice-governor, he and Carloff operated a smuggling network. A ship returning to Europe had been inspected by

⁴⁷⁶ Ibid, 167. A notary statement from around the same time indicates that Rosa was actually hired as head merchant of the company. SAA NA: 875, fol. 170, 09.10.1653. "opperkoopman", In the Amsterdam notarial archives, there are several entries between 1647–1661 regarding the business partnership between de Geer and Rosa.

⁴⁷⁷ Nováky, *Handelskompanier*, 166–167.

⁴⁷⁸ SAA NA: 870, fol.147, 29.08.1656; SAA NA: 878, fol. 170, 09.10.1653; SAA NA: 879, fol. 148, 29.08.1656; Nováky, *Handelskompanier*, 168.

⁴⁷⁹ NL-HaNa, OWIC, 1.05.01.01, inv. nr. 47, Loy Dammerts Journal, 10.07.1654, 13.07.1654, 14.07.1654; Nováky, *Handelskompanier*, 168.

⁴⁸⁰ Although an experienced trader, Krusenstierna was not familiar with the Guinea coast. He was a close associate and advisor of Erik Oxenstierna, which suggests that the Board of Commerce in Sweden might have been trying to influence the trajectory of the company in Africa.

⁴⁸¹ Ibid, 169.

⁴⁸² Ibidem.

company officials, who had discovered gold worth 300 marks belonging to Carloff and his business associates. The gold was confiscated, by the same Rosa who had earlier missed out on the position of governor. Carloff's associates in this venture were a captain of the SAC, Alexander Loncq, his brother, the skipper Frans Gijsbertsen, and Cramer, at that time acting vice-governor. Following the confiscation, the company kept the gold, although Carloff was compensated for the goods that had been sent from Europe to Africa.⁴⁸³ Notably, Nováky's research has elucidated these episodes. In 1656, Loncq had been accused of bringing cargo from Europe to Africa without the directors' knowledge, an activity in which Cramer had also been implicated.⁴⁸⁴ Loy Dammert noted that when Cramer left Western Africa, he had obtained gold to the value of 27,000 guilders through private trading.⁴⁸⁵ In a later investigation, this valuation was increased to 35,000 guilders, a truly remarkable sum, which clearly demonstrates the gains to be made through private trading in gold.⁴⁸⁶ The trading activities in which Carloff participated thus had a considerable impact upon his relationship with the company. He argued in a letter to the president of the Board of Commerce, Christer Bonde, that he had been prevented from contacting Krustenstierna before his departure for the Gold Coast in 1655.⁴⁸⁷ This was due to the fact that the other directors in Europe were already aware of the smuggling network that Carloff was operating. Nováky has thus suggested that there were two factions in the SAC. On the one side, there were Krusenstierna, Rosa and their supporters, who remained loyal to the SAC directors in Europe. On the other side, there were the supporters of Carloff and Cramer, consisting largely of those officials most committed to continuing their own private trade alongside that of the company.⁴⁸⁸

The gold trade also helps to explain why Carloff wanted the SAC to establish itself at Cape Coast. After all, the latter was a major market for gold. In addition, the standing of the WIC there was in decline, and Carloff still had many valuable contacts from his time in the WIC. Therefore, despite his smuggling activities, the company still allowed Carloff to stay on. This can be explained by reference to the opportunities that his presence supplied: after all, he had the knowledge of the markets overseas, and knew how to navigate the complex competition between the different European powers. Moreover, he was also able to handle the competition and conflicts between the various African rulers and their representatives, as has been illustrated above. Furthermore, the directors also knew that if Carloff did not remain in the company, he would probably offer his services to its competitors. Once again, this underlines the importance of individuals. In short, Carloff's knowledge and skills made him indispensable.

The institutional environment of the SAC was favourable for entrepreneurship, and the changes in the company administration had a considerable effect on Carloff's options. Nevertheless, his controversial behaviour illustrates the challenges that the companies faced in attempting to access local markets. Although Carloff used his knowledge and skills to open up African markets for the

⁴⁸³ Nováky, *Handelskompanier*, 172.

⁴⁸⁴ NL-HaNa, OWIC, 1.05.01.01, inv. nr. 47, Loy Dammerts Journal, 29.05.1655; Nováky, *Handelskompanier*, 173. A notarial deed from 1657 reveals that Jean Neumann (probably Hans Neumann) had served under Laurens de Geer, and had thus been in Swedish employment. He had been on the coast in January 1657, as was Joost Cramer. According to Neumann, governor Krusenstierna had asked Cramer whether he knew that skipper Alexander Loncq had been trading for his own benefit. SAA NA: 880, fol.88, 30.07.1657; UUB N 430 fol 309, Jochim Pötter, 22.12.1656.

⁴⁸⁵ NL-HaNa, OWIC, 1.05.01.01, inv. nr. 47, Loy Dammerts Journal, 29.05.1655.

⁴⁸⁶ Nováky, *Handelskompanier*, 173.

⁴⁸⁷ RAS, H&S, 42, Henrich Carloff to Christer Bonde, 21.02.1657.

⁴⁸⁸ Nováky, *Handelskompanier*, 168.

company, his loyalty was conditional upon being allowed to privately accumulate capital. His partnership with de Geer provides an illustration of the entrepreneurial strategies pursued within this institutional environment. Thus, rapid shifts of institutional loyalty ought not to be considered exceptional, but rather as an entirely normal strategy within seventeenth-century business.

3.9 Conclusion

The DEIC and the SAC were vehicles of the commercial and expansionist ambitions of the Nordic kingdoms. They hired individual entrepreneurs to direct their overseas endeavours, incorporating them into the company hierarchy. The DEIC and the SAC were obliged to pay tributes to local rulers, including lavish gifts, in order to access local markets, as did other companies. As such, it made sense to employ men who already knew how to operate in these regions. Leye and Carloff attained a strong position within the companies in Europe and overseas, a phenomenon that highlights the shortage of experienced and knowledgeable employees within the Nordic companies.

However, Leye and Carloff also differed in the ways in which they participated in the Nordic companies. While they both had to deal with competitors, Carloff's main focus was to break the strong position of the WIC, whereas Leye faced primarily internal problems within the DEIC itself. Carloff preferred to negotiate personally with his African counterparts, whereas Leye used brokers. This difference was not inherent to the different trading mechanisms in the Atlantic and the Indian Ocean, but rather a personal choice, indicating different individual approaches.

In chapter two, I argued that individuals needed the companies, at least in the Nordic context. In the current chapter, I have demonstrated that the companies also need the individuals, and that this gave the latter considerable leeway in their activities. Indeed, certain individuals were able to operate almost independently at the outposts. They took decisions on the ground regarding company business, and, simultaneously, profited from the trade themselves. Most importantly, they coordinated the activities of the company overseas, using their knowledge of the local context to their own benefit. Thus, as Subrahmanyam has demonstrated, the best way to understand the DEIC is as a form of private trade in the Indian Ocean. This argument holds true in the case of Leye, and also in the case of Carloff, given that the changing political and trading patterns on the Gold Coast depended more on the decisions of individuals than on the ambitions of the directors in Europe.

The organisational environment could be both a blessing and a curse for entrepreneurship. Leye was forced to make the Indian Ocean trade work without reinforcements from Europe. Ultimately, he succeeded in remaining active in Ceylon and Makassar, despite numerous institutional setbacks. Carloff, on the other hand, was mobile throughout his Swedish employment, and enjoyed a rather unique position. He represented an asset that the company needed in order to access trade on the Western coast of Africa. However, his opportunities for professional advancement diminished as the company became more closely tied to the Swedish state and the domestic Swedish elite. As the organisational environment changed, Carloff encountered increasing hindrances to independent action. At the same time, the complaints that the WIC made against Carloff demonstrate that organisations were under constant pressure from individuals, who were able to manipulate the political and economic context to their own advantage. Indeed, this is why competing trading companies were willing to pay a premium for their services.

4 Like a Spider in the Web

4.1 Introduction

Whilst overseas, individuals were not only economic actors specialising in trade routes, markets and finances, but were also part of a larger social structure.⁴⁸⁹ Social relationships connected the European and overseas worlds, providing opportunities and imposing limitations. As such, entrepreneurship ought not to be seen as a purely individualist endeavour, but rather as a phenomenon that was socially embedded within network structures.⁴⁹⁰ In this chapter, I will discuss the ways in which Leye and Carloff were connected to overseas communities, and how this simultaneously influenced both their individual careers and the prospects of the trading companies in Europe and overseas.

There has been considerable historiographical interest in the role of networks in early modern maritime business history.⁴⁹¹ Research has demonstrated the importance of studying not only the worldwide circulation of ships, products and people, but also the role of formal and informal networks in developing trade. Although I acknowledge the benefits of network analysis, I argue here that reducing overseas entrepreneurship to a series of “social networks” tends to underestimate the role played by specific individuals.⁴⁹² Networks require both reciprocity and a steady exchange of connections. In the overseas context, where distances tended to grow, maintaining continuous contact was nearly impossible.⁴⁹³

Furthermore, there seems to be a general assumption that networks are neutral in terms of power structures, and lack hierarchies.⁴⁹⁴ However, Hasselberg *et al* have argued that networks do in fact contain internal power relationships.⁴⁹⁵ Indeed, they have their own hierarchies, and participation in such networks via various social relationships means that individuals stand to both win and lose. Therefore, networks can be considered as relationships of exchange: collaborating with certain actors might result in exclusion from other networks; assuming a dominant role might empower a person, but might also expose the same person to tension with other members of the network.

Overseas, competition was fierce, and, as has been demonstrated in the previous chapters, switching allegiance from one empire to another was not uncommon. This serves to draw attention to central concepts of network analysis such as loyalty, trust and reciprocity. In the current chapter, I propose that in the case of overseas business, uncertainty was always present, and choosing whether or not to trust someone could have decisive consequences. Trust should therefore be understood in relation to the constant uncertainty that pervaded business relationships, rather as a simple relationship between two parties. Furthermore, Casson and Della Giusta have emphasised that trust

⁴⁸⁹ See chapter one for a more elaborate discussion of the social sides of entrepreneurship.

⁴⁹⁰ Mark Casson and Marina Della Giusta, “Entrepreneurship and Social Capital”, 222.

⁴⁹¹ The research on the topic is too large for a single footnote. One of the most important recent edited volumes on networks is Antunes and Polónia, eds., *Beyond Empires*.

⁴⁹² Similarly argued by Casson and Giusta, “Entrepreneurship and Social Capital.”, 224.

⁴⁹³ Ibid; similarly argued by Mark Granovetter and Leos Müller, Mark Granovetter, “Economic Action and Social Structure: The Problem of Embeddedness,” *American Journal of Sociology* 91, no. 3 (1985): 481–510; Leos Müller, *The Merchant Houses of Stockholm*, 36–39.

⁴⁹⁴ Discussion on networks and hierarchy, see Walter Powell, “Neither Market nor Hierarchy: Network Forms in Organization,” in *Markets, Hierarchies and Networks: The Coordination of Social Life*, ed. Grahame Thompson (London: SAGE, 1991), 265–276; Ylva Hasselberg, Leos Müller, and Niklas Stenlås, “Åter till historiens nätverk,” in *Sociala nätverk och fält*, ed. Håkan Gunneriusson (Uppsala: Historiska Institutionen, 2002), 7–32.

⁴⁹⁵ Hasselberg, Müller, and Stenlås, “Åter till historiens nätverk”, 16.

is an ambiguous concept. In their opinion, trust is a belief that a person holds about someone else.⁴⁹⁶ In the overseas context, I argue, the notion of trust as expressed in private correspondence was aspirational, a negotiating tool and a reflection of the uncertainty of business, rather than a corroboration of actual relationships. It is possible that some forms of trust did in fact exist, as Trivellato has demonstrated; however, this chapter will show that trust was not permanent, and could change quickly if personnel were replaced or if a breach of trust occurred.⁴⁹⁷ Although it might seem like a truism, trust was not necessarily a mutual feeling, since it was not necessarily mutually experienced. Moreover, I argue that trust within a mercantile network, for example in Denmark and Sweden, was considerably different to trust in an overseas business context. Overseas, the role of capacity, competence and know-how were of greater importance than in the domestic context. Indeed, this also explains the shifting employment patterns that occurred between companies and empires. Thus, these enterprises should be considered less as facilitators of mutual understanding and trust, and more as vehicles of entrepreneurial competition.

Rather than making general observations about the position of overseas connections within networks, I will study the role of specific actors. First, I will study the ways in which individuals were connected within overseas trade. Second, I will demonstrate that these connections were not static, but rather changed over time. I will also suggest that personal connections were context-bound: the behaviour of individuals in relation to their contacts depended on their interpretation of their surroundings. Moreover, wider contexts impacted on networks, which in turn impacted upon connections between individuals.

This chapter will focus on how individuals interpreted social relationships, and how they balanced numerous overlapping and competing connections, both in Europe and abroad. Focusing on the role of relationships will demonstrate the close interconnection between entrepreneurship and sociability. Leyel and Carloff can offer particularly valuable insights into this subject, since they maintained several business connections in Europe and overseas. An analysis of these connections will elucidate the endeavours and the fate of the Nordic trading companies, as well as the influence of personal relationships on business and entrepreneurship.

4.2 *Leyel's relationships within the Danish East India Company*

The metaphor of a “spider in a web” is especially appropriate in the Indian Ocean context, in which multiple networks overlapped and coincided, despite being motivated by distinct interests and needs. Between the many competing European companies, and even within the companies themselves, individuals faced great social challenges. In addition, they also had to navigate a multitude of Asian networks. In this sense, Leyel resembled a spider in a web.⁴⁹⁸

The relationships that Leyel developed within the company in Asia were initially strongly linked to Barent Pessart. The original reason for Leyel's departure for India was to investigate the state of the company, since Europe had heard nothing from Pessart for some time. Leyel demanded

⁴⁹⁶ Casson and Giusta, “Entrepreneurship and Social Capital”, 228.

⁴⁹⁷ On trust in long-distance trade, see Trivellato, *Familiarity of Strangers*.

⁴⁹⁸ Compared to the case of Carloff, there are relatively few sources regarding Leyel's activities in Europe, and this complicates any attempt to analyse his networks. Despite this deficiency, studying Leyel's overseas entrepreneurship can still provide insights into the fragile social relationships that characterised Danish trade in Asia.

that Pessart send a report regarding the state of affairs in Asia, which he failed to do.⁴⁹⁹ Leyel immediately went to great lengths to demonstrate Pessart's disobedience, and reported that he had been shocked upon arrival, particularly due to the decadent behaviour and heavy drinking of the company employees. Leyel doubted Pessart's administrative capacity, and especially condemned his thirst for alcohol.⁵⁰⁰

In detail, Leyel went on to outline his concern that Pessart would seek to evade his duties and rob the company of its goods, leaving Leyel empty-handed. Since they were supposed to share the command of operations, Leyel had decided to keep a close eye on Pessart. While still sharing command, both men sailed to Masulipatnam in order to trade the goods that Leyel had brought from Europe.⁵⁰¹ This trip was intended to be a test for Pessart. During the trip to Masulipatnam, Leyel realised that a conflict was inevitable. Pessart sailed with the ship *Bengalske Prise*, and Leyel followed aboard the *Christianshavn*. Although they were supposed to sail to Masulipatnam, Pessart insisted on first stopping at Madras for a meeting with the English agent, Francis Day. At Madras, Leyel was once again scandalised by Pessart's drinking. Upon arrival at Masulipatnam, Leyel experienced problems with the locals, apparently, at least in part, due to the credit of the company having been exhausted by Pessart's outstanding debts.⁵⁰² Pessart owed his creditors over 100,000 riksdalers, and although it was common for Europeans to borrow money there, Pessart had never repaid his debts.⁵⁰³ Unfortunately, Leyel did not specify whether Pessart's loans were personal or made in the name of the company. Pessart had apparently taken credit from several merchants and "moors" (i.e. Muslims) in Masulipatnam. This money had not been used to improve the trade of the DEIC, which suggests that it was rather intended for Pessart's private use. Due to these debts, no further credit could be obtained from the lenders concerned. Although loans were sometimes made to individual employees, companies still had to trade on the same markets, and were often called to stand as guarantors when the employees failed to pay their debts. In practice, companies were often forced to pay someone else's debts, either through repayment of loans or through gifts to local rulers and merchants.

The hostile reception encountered at Masulipatnam forced Leyel and the DEIC ships to continue to Emeldy in the Kingdom of Golconda.⁵⁰⁴ Leyel soon realised that Pessart, his skipper Michell Kroutsen and several other crew members had planned to escape with the ship *Wahlby* and a large *shalup*.⁵⁰⁵ While the men were ashore at Emeldy, Leyel boarded the ship in order to ensure that they would not be able to escape.⁵⁰⁶ Despite these efforts, Pessart and his associates still managed to take a small boat and escape from Leyel. By the time Leyel realised, Pessart was already sailing back to Tranquebar. Thus, it is evident that not everyone was pleased with Leyel's arrival, and that there was a clear division in the governance of the company.

While Pessart was sailing to Tranquebar, Leyel sent a messenger to the acting governor of Dansborg, Jakob von Stakenborrig, explaining the incident that had occurred at Masulipatnam. Leyel

⁴⁹⁹ RAC, DK, B 246 A, Leyel to the directors 22.11.1644.

⁵⁰⁰ RAC, DK, B 246 A, Leyel to the directors 22.11.1644.

⁵⁰¹ Pessart had for the last years been in favour of abandoning Dansborg and moving the headquarters to Masulipatnam where the Northern textile trade was more profitable.

⁵⁰² RAC, DK, B 246 A, Leyel to the directors 22.11.1644.

⁵⁰³ RAC, DK, B 246 A, Sentence declaration over Pessart, 28.06.1644.

⁵⁰⁴ Emeldy and the coast of Zinzley are in the Golconda kingdom.

⁵⁰⁵ A local merchant boat used in the Indian Ocean.

⁵⁰⁶ RAC, DK, B 246 A, Leyel to the directors 22.11.1644.

stated that Pessart should be arrested, if he eventually arrived. However, Leye's messenger was intercepted by Pessart, who had spent fourteen days at São Tomé of Meliapor.⁵⁰⁷ Concerned with what Leye might do to him, Pessart had been expecting a messenger, lay in wait for him, beat him up, and confiscated Leye's letter.⁵⁰⁸ Ultimately, Leye was able to contact Stakenborrig by other means. In his second letter, Leye declared that Pessart's command should be terminated, but that other employees should be forgiven. He insisted that he had the Nayak's support, and that therefore Stakenborrig had no choice but to arrest Pessart.⁵⁰⁹ Promising the other employees that they would not be held responsible for Pessart's conduct was Leye's way of gaining the support of the employees at Dansborg. However, the latter refused Leye's command, stating that they had no obligation to assist in this matter, since they were already working in the interest of the Danish crown.⁵¹⁰ Moreover, it is unclear whether Leye really had the Nayak's support, since he had not been in Tranquebar long enough to send a proper embassy to his court; in fact, at this point, Leye hardly knew how bad his situation was.

When Leye was in sight of Tranquebar, he requested that governor Stakenborrig send supplies to the ship. However, he was denied not only supplies, but also assistance and entry. Thus, Leye decided to sail to Carical, south of Tranquebar, where he encountered Simão D'Almeida, who claimed to be a highly respected Portuguese merchant from Negapatnam. D'Almeida explained that several Coromandel merchants had been treated unfairly by Pessart.⁵¹¹ As will be shown later in this chapter, D'Almeida was one Leye's close business associates, and it is thus not surprising that he supported the latter in besmirching Pessart. Subsequently, Leye began to refer to Pessart and his men as rebels. Eventually, he decided to attack Dansborg with D'Almeida's assistance, a subject to which I will return in chapter six in greater detail.⁵¹² Prior to Leye's arrival in June 1644, Pessart had already left Dansborg. He had bought a small ship from his Portuguese connections in Negapatnam, and had taken everything worth stealing from Dansborg. This illustrates how Leye's connections outside of the company affected both his own business and his relations with the DEIC. Later in this chapter, I will return to his relationships with local merchants.

Leye's difficulties in maintaining good business relationships with Indian rulers and merchants were also reflected in the accusations he made against Pessart. Leye informed a company employee, Hans Knutsen, that he could not accept Pessart and his associates' behaviour. Since Pessart had stolen or destroyed all of the accounts, Leye did not know which employees had been paid their salaries, nor which payments (if any) had been made to the Nayak. Leye mentioned the bad reputation that Pessart had given the Danish, stating that "God shall forgive him who has so shamefully damaged our reputation in these lands."⁵¹³ In a sense, it does not matter if the money concerned was company money or not, because either way it hurt the reputation of the DEIC. This shows that the relationship between Leye and Pessart also had repercussions on Leye's relationships with others on the coast. The first task was to guarantee that all ties to Pessart would be severed.

⁵⁰⁷ Today, it is located in the southern part of the city of Chennai, on the Coromandel Coast.

⁵⁰⁸ RAC, DK, B 246 A, Leye to the directors 22.11.1644.

⁵⁰⁹ RAC, DK, B 246 A, Copy of the letter from Leye to J. Stakenborrig, 18.11.1643, Masulipatanam.

⁵¹⁰ RAC, DK, B 246 A, The fort council's reply to Leye 12.06.1644.

⁵¹¹ I will return to Simão D'Almeida later in this chapter.

⁵¹² RAC, DK, B 246 A, Leye to the directors 22.11.1644.

⁵¹³ "gud folade hannem som saa skammeligen haffue udset worsi nations gode naffn og rökte udi disse land.", RAC, DK, B 246 A, Leye to H. Knutsen, 01.07.1644.

In June 1644, Leyel announced Pessart's official withdrawal as commander of the DEIC in Asia. All his rights were annulled, his salary was suspended, and his goods confiscated. The same applied to his companions, or fellow rebels, as Leyel called them. Leyel also summoned the council of the ship *Christianshavn* to open the instructions from Copenhagen, and he was placed in charge of the DEIC in Asia. Shortly thereafter, Leyel wrote out a statement, clarifying how Pessart had failed in Masulipatnam, the Bay of Bengal and Makassar. He further claimed that his rival had stolen the accounts and records of the company. For all of these reasons, he argued, Pessart and his associates should have no right to represent the Danish Kingdom in the future. The statement was signed by Leyel, Jörgen Hansen, Carsten Loodewycksten and Simon Janssen.⁵¹⁴

It became crucial for Leyel to justify his take-over before the directors in Europe and the DEIC employees in Asia. The different ways in which Leyel and Pessart had been appointed (the former by the king, and the latter by the directors, as represented by Crappe) reflected a conflict of interest that was waiting to happen, and which had been exacerbated further by Pessart's debts. Leyel's relationship with Pessart demonstrates that in an overseas setting, being in charge meant having the power not only to determine the destiny of the company, but also to use the company's resources to further one's own interests. In other words, one could acquire personal profit, income or opportunity by acting under the aegis of the company. The issue of taking out loans and then leaving the company to pay the debts is but one example of this. As seen in the instructions from the directors to the commander of the DEIC, being in charge also implied the duty and opportunity of communicating with the directors in Europe.⁵¹⁵ Leyel justified his power by discrediting Pessart's personal, moral and business abilities. Leyel, who had already been employed by the company during Crappe's time, understood the importance of being in a position of power, and pursued this by all means at his disposal. Leyel portrayed himself as having rescued the company, particularly by stressing Pessart's flaws, and using them to justify his own actions. Since we only have a record of Leyel's side of the story, it is difficult to determine whether Pessart's actions were really as damaging as Leyel claimed. Nonetheless, Leyel's account serves to underline the rivalry that existed within the highest ranks of the DEIC in Asia.

4.3 *Betrayal of the trusted men and the mutiny: 1648*

Leyel's relationships within the company also demonstrate that he did not really know how to relate to his subordinates; subtle signs of tension are present throughout the sources. Indeed, Leyel continuously bemoaned the untrustworthiness and incompetence of the DEIC employees. For example, in a letter of instruction to merchant Poul Nielsen, he wrote that it was difficult to find trustworthy and capable employees, such as Hans Ekman and Adrien Jakobsen: men who, according to Leyel, knew that one could not trust foreigners.⁵¹⁶ In this sense, Leyel was isolated in India, and clearly expected problems, since few of the employees were on his side, a fact that resulted partly from the muddled hierarchy of the company. In 1645, Leyel appointed Poul Nielsen as governor of Dansborg during his own absence. Nielsen was to be in charge of all officers and soldiers, and also responsible for the town of Tranquebar. He could be released from his duties only by Leyel or the

⁵¹⁴ RAC, DK, B 246 A, Sentence declaration over Pessart, 28.06.1644.

⁵¹⁵ RAC, DK, B 246 A, Instructions to the commander.

⁵¹⁶ RAC, DK, B 246 A, Leyel to P. Nielsen, 20.10.1645.

king (for example, if a royal ship arrived from Copenhagen during Leye's absence). If Nielsen died, then his main assistants, Ekman and sergeant Jakobsen, would take his place.⁵¹⁷ Once again, Leye emphasised that the latter were among the very few people that he trusted.⁵¹⁸

To the letter was attached a copy of a document, containing oaths sworn by the officers and merchants of the DEIC, to the effect that they were committed to serving under acting governor Nielsen in Leye's absence. They promised not to take any orders from Pessart or his associates, in the event that they appeared. The officers and merchants of Tranquebar also promised to defend the fort against all possible attacks. In a third document, the officers and merchants also swore to be loyal to Leye himself.⁵¹⁹ Although the men had sworn to serve both Leye and the company, it is difficult to distinguish which took precedence. Leye represented the interests of the king, but were these the same as the interests of the company and its employees? They now had a new chief of operations in Asia, who had not only overthrown the previous commander, but had also implemented a far harsher regime. In the eyes of the employees, this could have negative consequences on their private trading activities. Such instructions and letters underline the fact that the various employees were not necessarily on good terms with each other. Indeed, this strengthens the argument that a shared nationality or employer did not necessarily imply common goals and aims while overseas.

Anders Nielsen, who Leye considered one of the most capable merchants in the DEIC in Asia, was also entrusted with diplomatic missions, as has been mentioned in the previous chapter. Nielsen was important because he understood local languages and customs, and was experienced in the Indian Ocean trade more generally.⁵²⁰ Leye also sent Nielsen to Makassar to supervise trade with the surrounding areas, especially Java, and to utilise his Chinese business connections in the interests of the company.⁵²¹ Thus, the case of Anders Nielsen highlights two important issues: Nielsen was specialised in the Indian Ocean trade, and Leye was dependent on his skills and know-how. In particular, Nielsen's role was to streamline connections with merchant networks beyond the DEIC at Makassar. This gives the impression that Leye was at the centre of the DEIC's web, striving to weave together connections with the outside world. However, as will be demonstrated below, the centre of the web could turn out to be a vulnerable position.

Early in 1648, the relationship between Nielsen and Leye took a new course. Nielsen wrote to Leye that he did not agree with the latter's plan to dispatch the *St Peter* and the *St Poul* to Makassar, due to the proximity of the monsoon season. Leye, Nielsen added, ought to be aware that their mutual colleague, Claus Rytter, had tried to do the same thing in 1642, and had never reached Bantam. Nielsen hoped that Leye would take his advice, especially since he had been a loyal servant for twelve years.⁵²² At this point, Nielsen for the first time demonstrated signs of discontent with Leye. After all, Leye's order to sail to Makassar put the lives of Nielsen and his crew at risk.

Leye had problems with other company employees as well. In particular, the heavy drinking of his men was a constant problem. According to Leye's first report, chaplains Christer Sturm and Niels Udbynder had been drinking every day, and flouting all possible rules and regulations. A complaint from the people of Tranquebar had accused the priests of behaving badly towards

⁵¹⁷ RAC, DK, B 246 A, Letter to the king, 18.10.1645.

⁵¹⁸ RAC, DK, B 246 A, Leye to P. Nielsen, 20.10.1645.

⁵¹⁹ RAC, DK, B 246 A, oath to serve acting governor P. Nielsen, 18.10.1645.

⁵²⁰ RAC, DK, B 246 A, Leye to the directors, 12.12.1645.

⁵²¹ RAC, DK, B 246 A, Leye to P. Hansen, 01.02.1647.

⁵²² RAC, DK, B 246 A, A. Nielsen to Leye, 10.02.1648.

Christians, Muslims and pagans in the town; for example, they had ostensibly harassed and beaten some of the inhabitants.⁵²³ According to Leyel, Udbyneder was the worst, even though he had initially made a promising start to his career in Tranquebar, quickly learning Portuguese in order to preach more widely. Eventually, however, he had changed, becoming increasingly hostile and violent. One day, Udbyneder had arrived in town brandishing a Japanese sword, killing a horse and destroying private property. He had also chased after several of the inhabitants with violent intent, and the latter had barely escaped unscathed. The owner of the horse had complained to Stakenborrig, who had decided to do nothing, since Udbyneder was liked by his Danish colleagues. Indeed, the Europeans at Dansborg do not seem to have regarded mistreatment of the local population as problematic, and the company employees turned a blind eye to Udbyneder's behaviour. However, Leyel continued to receive complaints from the local people. On one occasion, Udbyneder beat a woman called Francisca so badly that she died of her wounds. For Leyel, this damaged the reputation of the Danes in the eyes of other Europeans and the local populace alike.⁵²⁴

On 30 January 1645, Jörgen Lauridsen, another company employee, wrote to Leyel that he had been involved in a fight with Christian Sturm aboard the *Fortuna* the previous year. They had quarrelled because Lauridsen did not wish to harm Danish company trade. In retaliation, Sturm had conspired with some local Portuguese sailors to throw Lauridsen overboard. Fortunately, he had been saved by the crew of the *St Michael*, which had been travelling behind them, and the *Fortuna* had been boarded for investigation. During the night, Sturm had once again assaulted Lauridsen, before the rest of the crew had intervened, and bound him to the mast for bad conduct. Now, Lauridsen revealed that an agreement had been made to report nothing to the commander, so as to avoid any problems.⁵²⁵ Leyel replied on 30 January 1645 that he would handle the conflict and arrest Sturm, whose salary would be discontinued and his slaves liberated.⁵²⁶ Based on the evidence, it is impossible to assess what was the intent behind Sturm's behaviour. However, it is clear that there was considerable tension among the Danish employees in Asia.

On 8 October 1645, Leyel sentenced Udbyneder and Sturm to exile.⁵²⁷ This sentence increased the potential for unrest. Both priests were fairly popular among the other employees, and exile was a harsh punishment. Respect for Leyel, the man who held judicial power over the Danish community, subsequently withered.⁵²⁸ Leyel's harsh sentencing arose from his need to improve his relationship with the locals, upon whom trade depended (I will discuss this further later).

Ultimately, Leyel's government had caused too many problems for his fellow employees. Late in 1648, Leyel's command of the DEIC in India abruptly ended, when his closest partners overthrew him in a mutiny, and he was replaced by Poul Hansen Korsør.⁵²⁹ Korsør, Poul Nielsen and Anders Nielsen collected information regarding Leyel's actions, and sent it to the directors in Copenhagen, using similar language to that which Leyel had used against Pessart. Indeed, Leyel's rivalry with Pessart had been one of the reasons for the mutiny in the first place. Korsør had written to Leyel in 1646 that Pessart had been a good employee, that he had done the best he could according to his

⁵²³ RAC, DK, B 246 A, petition from the people of the town Tranquebar to Leyel, 26.07.1645.

⁵²⁴ RAC, DK, B 246 A, Leyel to the directors, 22.11.1644. More extensively about the two priests see Bredsdorff, *The Trials and Travels*, 106–119.

⁵²⁵ RAC, DK, B 246 A, J. Lauridsen to Leyel, 30.01.1645.

⁵²⁶ RAC, DK, B 246 A, Leyel's reply to J. Lauridsen, 30.01.1645.

⁵²⁷ RAC, DK, B 246 A, Leyel to the directors, 22.11.1644.

⁵²⁸ RAC, DK, B 246 A, Sentences over N. Udbyer and C. Sturm, 08.10.1645.

⁵²⁹ RAC, DK, B 246 A, Mutiny document, unknown author, most likely the mutineers. 31.12.1648.

knowledge, and that he ought not to be blamed for the severe problems of the DEIC.⁵³⁰ According to Bredsdorff, Korsør led the mutiny against Leye in 1648; he may, however, have been merely one participant amongst many.⁵³¹ Nikolai Samson and Anders Nielsen were also part of the mutiny, even though Leye had earlier stated that they were his most trusted employees.⁵³² Although trade had improved, according to Leye, the mutineers did not consider him a suitable commander, accusing him of misconduct and stealing from the company. One possible reason for the mutiny may have been that Leye did not want to give any of the more experienced employees management positions. One of Leye's last orders as commander had been addressed to Poul Hansen, appointing him acting governor of the fort during his absence. If something were to happen to Leye, his son-in-law Josias Stael would be put in charge.⁵³³ Thus, neither Poul Hansen nor Anders Nielsen would be promoted to commander, as they had probably been expecting.

There is only scattered information regarding the mutiny. In a "memoria", it is claimed that Leye had been trading for his own benefit.⁵³⁴ According to this document, Leye had traded at least 61 17/32 ounces of gold on his own account, and had also paid Tiagapule, the minister of the Nayak, the considerable sum of 500 *pardous*. The document also alleges that Leye had traded arrack from Ceylon for his own profit. In addition, he was reported to have sold a large quantity of sulphur, tobacco and pepper to local intermediaries.⁵³⁵ The document states that these goods were booty that had been captured from Bengali ships, and that Leye had sold them for his own profit. When Leye was confronted with these accusations, he claimed to have traded only for the benefit of the king. However, the document contradicts this claim. If this is true, it demonstrates the possibility for accumulating personal wealth and power by conspiring with local authorities and merchants.

It seems that the most important reason for the mutiny was Leye's decision to exclude DEIC officials and employees from privateering, one of the few ways in which they could make a significant profit. For example, the captured *St Michael*, a large Bengali ship, carried large amounts of cowrie shells from the Maldives, these being used as currency in local trade, in China and in Western Africa. The cargo of the *St Michael* was sold for 3,000 riksdalers, a considerable amount of money for a company that was continuously struggling to survive.⁵³⁶ The temptation to pocket such gains was thus high. The fact that Leye did not share the profits underlines the importance of balancing different loyalties. On the one hand, it suggests that Leye was participating extensively in business networks with local merchants outside of the company. On the other hand, it shows that the most important factor in becoming rich in Asia was not how many networks one participated in, nor the size of the networks. Rather, what was crucial was the extent to which men like Leye managed (or did not manage) to keep the various members of a network satisfied, within a complex nexus of reciprocity and income distribution.

It can be concluded that Leye was unsuccessful in his attempt to maintain order within the company hierarchy. A final remark regarding the tensions he experienced arises from a note that Leye wrote in 1644. He was having dinner with an English agent, Thomas Juie, in Tranquebar, when

⁵³⁰ RAC, DK, B 246 A, P. Hansen to Willem Leye, 08.01.1646.

⁵³¹ Bredsdorff, *The Trials and Travels*, 167–171.

⁵³² RAC, DK, B 246 A, Leye Report, 06.10.1643.

⁵³³ RAC, DK, B 246 A, Leye to P. Hansen, 31.07.1647.

⁵³⁴ RAC, DK, B 246 A, Mutiny document, unknown author, most likely the mutineers. 31.12.1648. Bredsdorff on the mutiny, see Bredsdorff, *The Trials and Travels*, 167–171.

⁵³⁵ Roberto White (in some sources Roberto Blanco) and Antonio Carvalho were mentioned as the local intermediaries.

⁵³⁶ RAC, DK, B 246 A, Leye to the directors, 12.12.1645; Bredsdorff, *The Trials and Travels*, 134.

suddenly Peter Lutzen, a drunken DEIC merchant, entered the dining room and attempted to shoot him with a pistol.⁵³⁷ Without more information, it is impossible to establish the reasons behind this attack. However, this and the other examples cited above strongly suggest that discontent with Leyel was widespread; in short, many of the men had been more satisfied with Pessart. Hoping to please the King and to enrich himself, Leyel had misunderstood his position within the DEIC's Asian web: while he successfully spun new connections with local merchants, brokers and rulers, he failed to share the proceeds with his fellow employees. As such, knowledge, skills and experience were not enough if one did not understand the different actors within the company itself.

4.4 *Connections outside the DEIC*

This section will focus on Leyel's views regarding relationships outside of the DEIC. Of primary importance in this regard were the relationships with the King of Candy (Ceylon) and the Nayak of Tanjore. Furthermore, the relationships with the local merchants, the VOC and the Portuguese will also be discussed.⁵³⁸ From a business point of view, the most important relationship was that with the Nayak of Tanjore. Without him, the company's presence in Tranquebar would have been simply impossible.⁵³⁹ When problems with Pessart arose, it was to the Nayak that Leyel went. According to Leyel, the Nayak had demanded a personal visit, but Pessart had failed to comply. This refusal was the cause of the Nayak's initial coolness towards Leyel. In order to be accepted again as a full trading partner, Leyel offered to pay an additional 1000 riksdalers, and, as a result, the standing of the DEIC with the Nayak improved substantially.⁵⁴⁰ However, even if it was of the utmost importance to remain on good terms with the Nayak, Leyel was still not prepared to meet with him in person. In 1645, he thus sent Anders Nielsen to negotiate with the Nayak.⁵⁴¹ Apparently, the relationship with the Nayak was vexed, to the extent that the ambassador of the company would be risking his life. According to Leyel, it would thus be "better to lose an egg than a hen".⁵⁴² That Leyel attached little value to Nielsen's life is evident, and it is thus not surprising that Nielsen later turned against him.

The Europeans understood that in order to improve their relationship with the Nayak, lavish gifts would be essential, particularly elephants. Indeed, the economy of gift-giving was a central part of early modern trade in the Indian Ocean. Throughout the region, elephants were prized for an array of economic, military and cultural reasons.⁵⁴³ Exotic gifts and gift-exchanging ceremonies demonstrated symbolic power, and thus served as an essential instrument for building trade connections, forging political alliances, legitimising authority, and making a statement about the power relations between Europeans and non-Europeans.⁵⁴⁴ In Leyel's case, the elephants were mostly purchased from the Ceylon. Other gifts were also important, and Leyel referred to these various

⁵³⁷ RAC, DK, B 246 A, Leyel to the directors, 22.11.1644.

⁵³⁸ The connections with the English were less frequent, and are thus left out of consideration in this dissertation.

⁵³⁹ More on the position of the Nayak see previous chapter.

⁵⁴⁰ RAC, DK, B 246 A, Leyel to the directors, 12.12.1645.

⁵⁴¹ RAC, DK, B 246 A, Leyel to A. Nielsen, March 1645.

⁵⁴² RAC, DK, B 246 A, Leyel to the directors 12.12.1645.

⁵⁴³ Martha Chaiklin, "Elephants and the Making of Early Modern India," in *The Indian Ocean in the Making of Early Modern India*, ed. Pius Malekandathil (New York: Routledge, 2017), 457–75, 459–460.

⁵⁴⁴ Frans Birkenholz, "Merchant-Kings and Lords of the World: Diplomatic Gift-Exchange between the Dutch East India Company and the Safavid and Mughal Empires in the Seventeenth Century," in *Practices of Diplomacy in the Early Modern World c.1410-1800*, ed. Tracey Sowerby and Jan Hennings (New York: Routledge, 2017), 219–36.

expenses as the “*protection costs*”, reflecting the importance of the security that the Nayak provided for the DEIC.⁵⁴⁵

Gift-giving also occurred during Nielsen’s visit to the Nayak. Together with Antonio Pacheco, one of Leyel’s trusted brokers, Nielsen went to Tranquebar to negotiate with the Nayak. To strengthen their case, Nielsen and Pacheco delivered a group of elephants to the Nayak’s court. Nielsen had obeyed Leyel’s orders, namely to pave the way for a possible visit by Leyel himself. Another of Nielsen’s important tasks was to aim for a reduction of the annual tribute. He was expected to negotiate free trade for the DEIC, both within the territory governed by the Nayak and the hinterland between the inland and the coast, as was the case with the Portuguese in Negapatnam.⁵⁴⁶ Nielsen was only one of many European merchants to undertake such a mission to the court of an Asian ruler. Guido van Meersbergen refers to such emissaries as “merchant-diplomats”, and emphasises their role as commercial agents with a political agenda.⁵⁴⁷

In March 1645, Nielsen wrote to say that he had arrived in Tanjore, and had been invited to the Nayak’s court. He had given the Nayak the gifts that he had brought, and these had been appreciated. Although Nielsen visited the Nayak four times, the latter initially refused to enter into negotiations regarding trade, and this impasse continued for weeks. On 23 March 1645, Nielsen finally met the Nayak in person, and wrote to Leyel that the DEIC was expected to pay the annual tribute as usual. Continuing, Nielsen wrote that if Leyel wanted compensation for the violent attack that had been made by one of the Nayak’s ministers, he would have to visit the Nayak himself.⁵⁴⁸

Following Nielsen’s visit, the relationship between the Nayak and the DEIC improved. In his second letter, Leyel informed the company directors that the trade with Porto Novo was flourishing. The relationship with the Nayaks at Tanjore and in Porto Novo was now better than that with the King of Golconda.⁵⁴⁹ Because Dansborg was in the region of the Nayaks, it was essential to ensure that they were pleased. Leyel reported that he also wanted to improve relationships with Golconda, and especially with the governor of Masulipatnam.⁵⁵⁰ For this reason, he had sent the *Ellefant* to Masulipatnam, carrying four elephants as gifts, in order to convince the governor of his good intentions. Masulipatnam was a central hub for the intra-Asian trade, especially for textiles.⁵⁵¹ The broker of the relationship was Virna, Leyel’s veteran and capable translator.⁵⁵² In a report written in December 1645, Leyel wrote of his disappointment in participating in the trade at Masulipatnam. In the end, he had had as little success as Pessart and Crappe before him.⁵⁵³

As with the Nayak of Tanjore, Leyel also tried to establish a friendly relationship with the King of Candy. In his first report, he informed the directors that he had sent a “white man”, Adrian Jakobsen, to Ceylon, carrying goods that Leyel had personally handpicked for the King of Candy.⁵⁵⁴

⁵⁴⁵ In the original document, “*forsækrings kostnader*”, RAC, DK, B 246 A, Leyel to the directors 12.12.1645.

⁵⁴⁶ RAC, DK, B 246 A, Leyel to the directors, 12.12.1645.

⁵⁴⁷ Guido Meersbergen van, “The Dutch Merchant-Diplomat in Comparative Perspective: Embassies to the Court Aurangzeb, 1660-1666,” in *Practices of Diplomacy in the Early Modern World c.1410-1800*, ed. Tracey Sowerby and Jan Hennings (New York: Routledge, 2017), 147–165.

⁵⁴⁸ The attack is discussed more in detail in the previous chapter. RAC, DK, B 246 A, several letters: 08.03.1645 – 25.0.3.1645.

⁵⁴⁹ RAC, DK, B 246 A, Leyel to the directors, 12.12.1645.

⁵⁵⁰ RAC, DK, B 246 A, Leyel to the directors, 22.11.1644.

⁵⁵¹ Tapan Raychaudhuri, *Jan Company*, 7.

⁵⁵² RAC, DK, B 246 A, Instructions to frigate *Ellefant*, 16.04.1644.

⁵⁵³ RAC, DK, B 246 A, Leyel to the directors, 12.11.1645.

⁵⁵⁴ RAC, DK, B 246 A, Leyel to the directors, 22.11.1644.

Leyel hoped that the Danish would be allowed to trade at the Baticallao port, and had thus sent his most trustworthy men to the king, including Jacobsen. From Ceylon, the DEIC imported wax, cinnamon and arrack, all of which were important goods in the intra-Asian trade. It was thus imperative to have access to ports in Ceylon, despite the political conflicts then underway between Candy, the VOC and the Portuguese.⁵⁵⁵ In other words, free trade and friendly relations between the DEIC and Candy were crucial.⁵⁵⁶ In his third report, Leyel reported that the King of Candy had rejected the VOC, and, for that reason, was on good terms with Leyel's representatives.⁵⁵⁷ As we have already seen, Leyel's grand design for a permanent free trade route between Tranquebar and Ceylon ultimately failed, but a profitable trade relationship was nonetheless established.

Leyel's relationship with the local brokers was vital. He instructed the Danish skipper, Simon Charstenson, and his pilot, Willem Mouridsen, to contact Seyed Nina, a local merchant, upon their arrival in Quedah. They were to maintain good relationships with him, since he was a crucial connection to the local markets, spoke the local language, knew the local customs, and, most importantly, specialised in the elephant trade.⁵⁵⁸ Consequently, Leyel was not only dependent on employees such as Nielsen, but also, and perhaps more significantly, on local merchants. Indeed, Sanjay Subrahmanyam has argued that the 1640s were an important moment in the growing interconnectedness between European companies and local merchant networks on the Coromandel Coast.⁵⁵⁹

The goods carried on board the *St Michael* were co-owned by Seyed Nina and Leyel, within the framework of a partnership. Most of the goods were not recorded, but the ship certainly carried slaves as a bulk commodity.⁵⁶⁰ Seyed Nina probably belonged to the Keling community, an originally Tamil-speaking people from India who had settled on the Malay Peninsula. Merchants from this community were the backbone of trade, and particularly trade with the Spice Islands.⁵⁶¹ Besides elephants, Seyed Nina was also able to provide timber for ship repairs, and was thus often entrusted with maintaining the DEIC's ships.⁵⁶² However, Seyed Nina was not the only broker upon whom Leyel relied. In addition, Ismael Nina was also involved in his network, and DEIC employees were advised to conduct any trade in Cutiara through him. For his part, Leyel transported slaves belonging to Nina, whilst the latter opened up the services of his agency to Leyel's colleagues.⁵⁶³

⁵⁵⁵ From 1527–1658, there occurred a series of conflicts between the Portuguese and the kingdom of Ceylon, which was under the rule of Candy. The VOC often intervened in these conflicts, especially between 1639 and 1658, usually allying itself with Candy. The conflict thus became a part of the Portuguese – Dutch rivalry in the East. Eventually, the alliance between the Candy kingdom and the VOC broke down, and all parties declared war against each other. See George Davison Winius, *The Fatal History of Portuguese Ceylon: Transition to Dutch Rule* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1971).

⁵⁵⁶ RAC, DK, B 246 A, Leyel instructions to A. Jacobsen, 26.07.1644.

⁵⁵⁷ RAC, DK, B 246 A, Leyel to the directors, 15.11.1646.

⁵⁵⁸ RAC, DK, B247 B, Leyel instruction to S. Charstenson and W. Mouridsen, 19.09.1645; 21.09.1646.

⁵⁵⁹ Subrahmanyam, *The Political Economy of Commerce*, 167.

⁵⁶⁰ The *St Michael* made several business voyages to the Malayan peninsula, RAC, DK, B247 B, Leyel instruction to S. Charstenson and W. Mouridsen, 19.09.1645; 21.09.1646; RAC, DK, B247 B, Leyel instructions to Torstenson, 19.02.1645; Bredsdorff, *The Trials and Travels*, 149.

⁵⁶¹ Luis Felipe Ferreira Reis Thomaz, "The Indian Merchant Communities in Malacca under the Portuguese Rule," in *Indo-Portuguese History: Old Issues, New Questions*, ed. Teotonio de Souza (New Delhi: Concept Publishing Company, 1985), 56–72, 57–62.

⁵⁶² RAC, DK, B247 B, Leyel instructions to Torstenson, 19.02.1645; RAC, DK, B247 B, Leyel instruction to S. Charstenson and W. Mouridsen, 19.09.1645.

⁵⁶³ RAC, DK, B 246 A, Instruction to Jakob Andersen on Wahlby 05.11.1646 and instruction on Jörgen Hansen Christianshavn 19.02.1647.

Leyel's relationships with local merchants offer important insights into how the latter were involved in company trade, but without being officially in the company's service. Making use of his royal commission, Leyel issued a passport to the *Trangabara*, a small ship belonging to Michael van Danzig and his partners, and under the responsibility of skipper Rama Pule. Danish protection enabled the ship to trade in the Indian Ocean, and the Danish passport made it possible to transport a cargo to Malacca.⁵⁶⁴

In the instructions that he provided to his fellow company employees, Leyel emphasised the need to listen to and to take advice from local merchants, due to their superior knowledge of trade. Leading by example, Leyel used the services of men like Anina Marca in Ceylon (who specialised in the trade of elephants), ZiuZiu, a Chinese merchant in Bantam, Abdul Latif in Japara, and Francisco Mendes in Makassar.⁵⁶⁵

Thus, it appears that there was more trade than that which Leyel reported to the company's directors in Copenhagen, at least to judge from the number of passports that he issued to merchants not on the payroll of the company. These merchants and their personal relationships with Leyel serve to illustrate, in many ways, the way in which he developed and maintained trade. Moreover, such external connections tended to subvert the purpose of the company: although operating under a European charter, the company evolved an Indian Ocean enterprise directed by Leyel, who used his relationships with local merchants as a means to enrich himself. Furthermore, local merchants benefitted from sailing under Danish protection, since this allowed them to avoid harassment by other Europeans.

One of the most important relationships that Leyel maintained was with the Portuguese in India, or, more precisely, with two different groups of Portuguese in India. First, Leyel had connections with the formal Portuguese empire, the *Estado da Índia*, which had its headquarters in Goa. Second, and far more importantly, he also had connections with the informal Portuguese empire, i.e. those Portuguese who operated outside of the *Estado*. Indeed, there has been a great deal of research into the latter group. In general terms, the dominion of the Portuguese crown in India lay mainly to the west of Cape Comorin, whereas the informal Portuguese networks lay to the east, extending all the way to the South China Sea and Timor.⁵⁶⁶ During the seventeenth century, the *Estado* also had factories east of the Cape: Masulipatnam (1598–1610), Pulicat (1518–1610), São Tomé of Meliapor (1523–1749) and Negaptnam (1507–1657). In practice, by maintaining relations with both groups, Leyel was able to simultaneously participate in both European and Indian Ocean networks.

Subrahmanyam has characterised the Portuguese-Asian society that existed east of the cape as footloose, freewheeling, mercenary and renegade.⁵⁶⁷ For his part, George Winus has referred to these elements of Portuguese society as a shadow empire, with its own logic and aims. Some of those

⁵⁶⁴ RAC, DK, B 246 A, Passport to ship *Trangabara*, 28.08.1644.

⁵⁶⁵ RAC, DK, B 246 A, instructions to Adrian Jacobsen, 27.07.1644; RAC, DK, B 246 A, Leyel to A. Nielsen, 01.02.1647.

⁵⁶⁶ Leonard Y. Andaya, "The 'Informal Portuguese Empire' and the Topasses in the Solor Archipelago and Timor in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries," *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 41, no. 3 (October 2010): 391–420; Stefan Halikowski Smith, *Creolization and Diaspora*; Anthony Disney, *The Portuguese in India and Other Studies, 1500–1700*. New York: Routledge, 2009; Maria Augusta Lima Cruz, "Exiles and Renegades in Early Sixteenth Century Portuguese India," *The Indian Economic & Social History Review* 23, no. 3 (1986): 249–62.

⁵⁶⁷ Subrahmanyam, *The Portuguese Empire in Asia*.

involved were willing to work for other Europeans, and many were connected to Leyel.⁵⁶⁸ The identities of these communities were multifaceted and diverse, and here it is sufficient to examine Leyel's connections to the *Estado* and to what Subrahmanyam has called "the fifth column".⁵⁶⁹

Leyel's relationship with the Portuguese in Tranquebar was particularly important. In his first report to the directors, Leyel wrote that he had allowed the local Portuguese community in Tranquebar to build their own Catholic church. In his explanation to the directors, he argued that it was important to let the locals express their faith, to worship their gods and to have their own religious symbols, as this was beneficial for trade.⁵⁷⁰ Leyel always wrote highly of the Portuguese agents, and appreciated their knowledge and experience of intra-Asian trade.⁵⁷¹ Moreover, they were also involved in Leyel's personal trading activities. In a letter from Anders Nielsen to Leyel, Nielsen informed his commander of the arrival of Simão D'Almeida from Negapatnam, along with large quantities of tobacco and gold from Makassar. D'Almeida had announced that he wished to contribute to Danish trade, but Nielsen was suspicious,⁵⁷² perhaps not without reason. Although Nielsen did not specify the nature of his suspicion, it probably related to the partnership between Leyel and D'Almeida, which centred on trade in gunpowder with viceroy Mascarenhas.⁵⁷³

Bearing in mind the importance of D'Almeida, Carvalho and Pacheco, as well as that of the Portuguese merchants at Tranquebar, it is not surprising that local Portuguese merchants and their partners featured prominently in Leyel's correspondence. In the short term, the DEIC headquarters became a safe haven for entire Portuguese merchant families from Negapatnam, São Tomé of Meliapor, Manar and Ceylon, who had been driven out by the territorial advances of the VOC.⁵⁷⁴ According to Tapan Raychaudri, Danish ships kept bringing Portuguese refugees from Masulipatnam to Tranquebar, and people thus continued to arrive in great numbers.⁵⁷⁵ In his second report to Copenhagen, Leyel informed the directors that the Portuguese connections in Tranquebar were trading successfully with Ceylon, and were making a good profit for the DEIC.⁵⁷⁶

Leyel also used his Portuguese connections to improve trade with Ceylon, and sent Antonio Gomes and Razia Pahsa to visit the King of Candy, bearing gifts in the hope of opening up trade.⁵⁷⁷ Furthermore, Leyel established strong relationships with the Portuguese merchants in Porto Novo. He sent one of his best brokers, Canacapel Tayapa, to establish a factory there,⁵⁷⁸ since the trade in Porto Novo was particularly important to him.⁵⁷⁹ The close connection with the Portuguese also included direct employment with the DEIC. In a list of the employees at Dansborg compiled in 1645, only six had Danish names, whereas the majority had either Indian or Portuguese names.⁵⁸⁰ In fact,

⁵⁶⁸ Winius, "The 'Shadow Empire'", 83–101.

⁵⁶⁹ Subrahmanyam, *The Portuguese Empire in Asia*, 261–292.

⁵⁷⁰ RAC, DK, B 246 A, Leyel to the directors, 22.11.1644.

⁵⁷¹ Readers familiar with the historiography of the Indian Ocean might wonder whether the local Portuguese were Topazes (mixed-race, European-Asian Christians, who were not necessarily connected to the official Portuguese authorities). Based on the sources at hand, it is difficult to say one way or the other.

⁵⁷² RAC, DK, B 246 A, A. Nielsen to Leyel, 11.10.1644.

⁵⁷³ RAC, DK, B 246 A, Leyel instructions to A. Nielsen, 04.09.1644.

⁵⁷⁴ RAC, DK, B 246 A, Leyel to the directors, 22.11.1644.

⁵⁷⁵ Raychaudhuri, *Jan Company*, 114. Confirmed by Leyel. RAC, DK, B 246 A, Leyel to the directors, 22.11.1644.

⁵⁷⁶ RAC, DK, B 246 A, Leyel to the directors, 12.12.1645.

⁵⁷⁷ RAC, DK, B 246 A, Leyel to N. Samson, 24.05.1647.

⁵⁷⁸ His salary was 4 *pardous*, which was a considerable amount in the Danish context. Poul Nielsen, the acting governor, had a monthly salary of 10 *pardous*. RAC, DK, B 246 A, Instructions to P. Nielsen, 20.10.1645.

⁵⁷⁹ RAC, DK, B 246 A, Instructions to P. Nielsen, 20.10.1645.

⁵⁸⁰ RAC, DK, B 246 A, Instructions to P. Nielsen, 20.10.1645.

maintaining connections with the Portuguese on the Coromandel was one of Løvel's priorities, and I believe that it was one of the reasons for his initial commercial success.

Løvel also developed a relationship with the formal Portuguese empire, the *Estado*. Indeed, he often stressed his good relationship with the viceroy, D. Filipe de Mascarenhas: "*We correspond much with each other*", he wrote. According to Løvel, Mascarenhas had received orders from the King of Portugal to remain friendly with Løvel. For this reason, the DEIC was allowed to trade in all Portuguese ports and factories in India. Moreover, the viceroy also offered support in the conflicts that the Danish were facing in Bengal.⁵⁸¹ According to Raychaudhuri, the Danish provided the Portuguese with secret intelligence regarding the VOC, and carried their cargo on board Danish ships.⁵⁸² Løvel had also traded with a fleet of "*barcos de remos*" (canoes), which had been sent from Goa to the Coromandel.⁵⁸³ Although it is unclear whether the fleet was sent specifically to trade with Løvel, it nonetheless reveals the trading connection between the headquarters of the *Estado* in Goa and Løvel.

The close collaboration of the Danish and Portuguese crowns also had a diplomatic aspect. Løvel wrote of a treaty that had brought great benefit to the Danish, who had been treated more favourably than the Dutch or the English.⁵⁸⁴ The viceroy had also received orders to allow the Danish to trade within all Portuguese spheres of influence, including Macao. Løvel emphasised that he had goods stored at Dansborg, and that these should be transferred to Manila on a ship that would depart in May the following year, arriving in June and returning in November. From Manila, the Danish would transport silver to Macao, where Chinese goods could be purchased using the proceeds.⁵⁸⁵ Indeed, this exchange had the potential to yield a high profit in Europe. If the ship eventually returned to Dansborg by February, a significant profit could be made in only ten months. For the journey between Manila and Macao, Løvel relied on the Danish-Dutch treaty, which allowed the Danish to sail freely between those two ports.⁵⁸⁶

Løvel's other important external relationship was to the VOC, which he himself hardly mentioned as a company, referring simply to "the Dutch". During the seventeenth century, the VOC had managed to undermine Portuguese dominance, and had thus become the dominant commercial power in the Indian Ocean. The VOC had capitalised on its power by acquiring exclusive rights in the spice trade, and to a large extent came to control the latter. On the Coromandel Coast, the VOC

⁵⁸¹ "vi corresponderer meget med huarandra", RAC, DK, B 246 A, Løvel to the directors, 15.11.1646.

⁵⁸² Raychaudhuri, *Jan Company*, 98 and 113.

⁵⁸³ RAC, DK, B 246 A, Løvel to J. Hansen, 24.05.1647.

⁵⁸⁴ It is unclear to which treaty Løvel was referring. Future research might focus on Danish foreign policy towards Portugal, but this is of little importance to the present study, which concentrates on entrepreneurship. Nevertheless, it is important to stress that in the first half of the seventeenth century, there was no centralized Danish foreign policy. Responsibility for foreign relations was divided between the Danish Chancery and the German Chancery, and the relationship between the two chanceries was diffuse. Throughout the 1640s, Denmark's main concern was the venomous relationship with Sweden and particularly the situation in the Baltic. Even during the Thirty Year's War, Denmark tried to maintain an equal standing in relation to the continental powers, but eventually failed due to its diminished position in the Baltic. From this perspective, it is plausible that Denmark aimed at maintaining a good relationship with the Portuguese king. From the Portuguese end, after gaining independence from Spain, the Portuguese crown had concluded an alliance with Sweden in 1641. The Portuguese relationship with Denmark requires further research. However, considering the numerous overseas battles between the Dutch Republic and Portugal, including in the Indian Ocean, it would not be surprising if the Portuguese crown had been open to the possibility of a diplomatic arrangement with the Danish, who were fellow competitors against the Dutch.

⁵⁸⁵ Although the trade was still under monopoly control, silver was the main currency, and therefore crucial to successful trade in China.

⁵⁸⁶ RAC, DK, B 246 A, Løvel to the directors, 15.11.1646.

possessed a relatively large factory in Pulicat and a smaller trading post in Masulipatnam.⁵⁸⁷ In the South of the Coromandel, the VOC used local brokers, although during the 1640s, they also tried to acquire permanent factories.⁵⁸⁸ Indeed, the VOC took the retreat of the Portuguese on the Coromandel as a sign to increase their own presence, as Raychaudhuri has noted.⁵⁸⁹

In 1645, Leyel reported that the VOC had rescued the survivors of a DEIC shipwreck off the coast of Bengal, only to deliver the men into the hands of the “moors” of neighbouring Pipeley, who had taken them prisoner.⁵⁹⁰ Coincidentally, the DEIC had encountered the VOC ship *Lys* at sea, this being the ship that had delivered the DEIC employees to the “moors”. Danish troops, under the command of Poul Nielsen, managed to rescue the prisoners shortly thereafter.⁵⁹¹

Soon after this episode, Leyel reported that some Dutchmen had arrived from Carical, which lay at a short distance from Dansborg. They were following orders from the VOC governor in Pulicat, Arnold Heussen, to obstruct trade and communication between the Danish and the Nayak. Leyel also noted that two VOC ships, the *De Haen* and the *Lys*, were patrolling the adjacent waters. Officers from the *De Haen* had earlier boarded a Danish ship by force, a sign that Leyel read as the VOC wanting to get rid of the DEIC in Tranquebar.⁵⁹²

Leyel’s suspicions turned out to be well founded, and he soon reported that the VOC was willing to pay the Nayak more than the DEIC. Luckily for Leyel, the Nayak had decided to stay loyal to the DEIC, and rejected the overtures of the VOC. The VOC representative had showered lavish gifts upon the father of the Nayak, Regnade Naiq, but the Nayak had refused to have any further contact with the English or the Dutch.⁵⁹³ Leyel also stated that the VOC should not trespass on the lands of the Nayak of Tanjore, since this would harm the DEIC’s trade. The DEIC had been trading in Negapatnam alongside the Portuguese for twenty-five years, and the Nayak had agreed to exclude the VOC, the EIC and the French from his realm. Leyel attached great value to this exclusive access, having paid a large sum to the Nayak in order to establish the relationship.⁵⁹⁴

However, Leyel reported that the VOC continued to obstruct the DEIC in both Porto Novo and the territory of the Nayak of Sines. For trade purposes, Leyel had entrusted business to one of his old partners, Malaio Chinene Cheti, who had 35 years’ experience of trading in Pulicat and on the Coromandel Coast, and who enjoyed good relations with the local rulers. The VOC opposed the activities of DEIC and Malaio by obstructing their access to Pondicherry, Porto Novo and Tegnapatnam. Leyel retorted that all trade was conducted in agreement with the local rulers, as brokered by Malaio. In 1645, Leyel remarked with reference to the latter: “I maintain correspondence and friendship with him because he is really capable, and can be of great help to us not only in relation to the King and the Nayaks, but also in our struggle against the Dutch”. Leyel thus felt that his

⁵⁸⁷ Seshan, *Trade and Politics*, 24; In Masulipatnam the VOC did not have a fortification, Subrahmanyam, *The Political Economy of Commerce*, 168.

⁵⁸⁸ Subrahmanyam, *The Political Economy of Commerce*, 168.

⁵⁸⁹ Raychaudhuri, *Jan Company*, 2–3.

⁵⁹⁰ Bredsdorff, *The Trials and Travels*, 134–135.

⁵⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 91.

⁵⁹² RAC, DK, B 246 A, Leyel to the directors, 12.12.1645.

⁵⁹³ *Ibidem.*

⁵⁹⁴ *Ibidem.*

relationship with Malaio was significant, and that his collaboration with the DEIC was particularly valuable in competing against the VOC.⁵⁹⁵

Malaio belonged to the principal trading community of South India, the Chettis. During the seventeenth century, the latter were involved in many commercial enterprises, offering a combination of brokerage and moneylending. Remarkably, many Chettis originated from the same family. In particular, it is known that Malaio Chetti and his brother Chinanna Chetti were important shipowners and merchants.⁵⁹⁶ It is difficult to pinpoint exactly to whom Leyel was referring, but, according to Dutch sources, Malaio Chetti, had already died in 1634, prior to Leyel's appointment as commander.⁵⁹⁷ It is thus more likely that Leyel was referring to Chinanna Chetti, who had considerable experience in Pulicat and connections to the VOC, having worked as the latter's chief broker in Pulicat.⁵⁹⁸ Subsequently, the VOC put an end to their dealings with Chinanna, for reasons that remain unclear. However, Radika Seshan has suggested that the VOC feared losing control over their main broker, to the point that they had his family imprisoned in Pulicat. Chinanna had his revenge by besieging Pulicat and damaging the interests of the VOC on the Coromandel Coast. Subsequently, in 1657, he established a business in the Kingdom of Tanjore.⁵⁹⁹ Leyel, emphasising his relationship to Malaio (Chinanna Chetti), demonstrates that the competing European powers were attempting to win the support of local rulers and merchants for their own ends.⁶⁰⁰

The VOC had also visited the Nayak's minister Tiagapule and his brother Regnapdopule in the hope of establishing trade relations. The Nayak himself had been in Tranquebar during Leyel's absence, in order to discuss the matters that had arisen from Tiagapule's attempt to confiscate money from the inhabitants of the town. The reason for this aggression was that Tiagapule had the right to tax certain regions in the Nayak's territory, and had decided to tax the inhabitants of Tranquebar. To Leyel, this was unacceptable. The DEIC had refused to pay, stating that their agreement with the Nayak of Tanjore exempted Tranquebar from Tiagapule's taxes. Tiagapule was furious, surrounded the town and began to burn down houses. Nielsen, who at the time was the acting governor, had decided to open the fort, in order to provide shelter to the general population. According to Leyel, the VOC had assisted Tiagapule in his attack, which proved that it was willing to go to any lengths to damage the DEIC.⁶⁰¹

The relationship between the DEIC and the VOC was also reflected in the disputes between Leyel and Pessart. As has been discussed previously, Pessart had left the employment of the DEIC. Prior to his departure, he had bought a small ship from the local Portuguese at Negapatnam. He and his associates had then stolen all the ray-skins from the warehouse at Dansborg and set sail for Japan. During the voyage, Pessart had posed as a representative of the DEIC, even though he was no longer part of the company. Leyel reported that the VOC had encountered Pessart sailing in the Straits of Malacca. When the VOC boarded Pessart's ship, they had immediately perceived that everyone was

⁵⁹⁵ "jeg holder goed correspondent og wenskab med hannom eptersom hand meget for maar. Baade hoss formentioned kong ogh naiquerne ogh hand kand oss megit were behuelpelig imod hollenderne.", RAC, DK, B 246 A, Leyel to the directors, 12.12.1645.

⁵⁹⁶ Seshan, *Trade and Politics*, 62–64.

⁵⁹⁷ Malaio Chetti, also known as Astrappa Chetti, Coolhas, ed., *Generale missiven*, deel 1, 1610-1638, 07.03.1631, 298; Subrahmanyam also confirms this, *The political Economy of Commerce*, 307.

⁵⁹⁸ Chinanna Chetti, also known as Malaio Chinene.

⁵⁹⁹ On the career of Chinanna, see *ibid*, 307–314.

⁶⁰⁰ Brenning has discussed the importance of the Malaya family as key brokers in the Coromandel trade. See Brenning, "Chief Merchants", 323–329.

⁶⁰¹ RAC, DK, B 246 A, Leyel to the directors, 12.12.1645.

drunk. The skipper, Michiell Kroutsen, had punched the VOC captain, at which point the VOC captain had Pessart's entire crew arrested and the ship confiscated. The ship was then taken to Malacca, while Pessart and some of his men were sent to Batavia, being accused of having sailed in closed waters; in other words, the VOC did not accept that the ship had a right to sail to Japan or China.⁶⁰² The authorities at Batavia confirmed the lawful apprehension of the ship, and confiscated a large amount of ray-skins, which could yield an enormous profit in Japan, where they were highly in demand.⁶⁰³ For his part, Pessart was given a relatively mild sentence by the VOC. According to Leye, the VOC officials had pressured Pessart to undertake espionage for them, and particularly to travel to Manila posing as a trade convoy, while really reconnoitring the strength of the Spanish defences there.⁶⁰⁴

In June the following year, Pessart had been captured along with the ship *Den Goede Hand* during a storm north of Manila. He had dropped anchor in La Bahia Honda on the Spanish island of Luzon (the same island on which Manila is situated). After six days, a group of locals had raided the ship, and Pessart was killed by an arrow. The rest of the crew continued on their voyage, but were eventually taken prisoner in Manila, being accused of undertaking espionage on behalf of the Dutch.⁶⁰⁵ Thus, Pessart's competition with Leye ended with the death of Pessart.

Leye's desire to cultivate trade with Manila and Macao necessarily implied conflict with the VOC, which maintained a policy of harassing DEIC ships in the Straits of Malacca, levying custom duties and rights of passage. Leye explained to the directors in Copenhagen that the Portuguese, by contrast, never demanded any payment when the DEIC sailed through Malacca.⁶⁰⁶ Indeed, Leye had attempted to make this case before the Dutch authorities in Batavia, but the VOC had replied that they did not allow the DEIC to trade with Japan or China, or on the coast of Sumatra, where the gold and pepper markets were already saturated.⁶⁰⁷

However, Leye's relationship with the Dutch was not unremittingly hostile. In 1646, during a return voyage from Makassar, the ship *Christianshavn* called at Batavia to buy supplies. They discovered that at least since July, no ships had arrived from the Republic, and that the VOC was currently without a governor; Cornelis van der Lyn, an elderly council member, was occupying the position on an interim basis. Van der Lyn treated the DEIC well, and provided them with a new bookkeeper and materials for repairs. Some fifteen Danish employees from the VOC enlisted with the DEIC.⁶⁰⁸

In a letter dated 1 October 1645, Leye instructed Poul Nielsen to maintain friendly relations with other Europeans, including the VOC. According to Leye, there were VOC merchants who wished to trade with the DEIC in Tranquebar, and it would be prudent to conduct negotiations with them in private, so as to conceal the affair from the Nayak. Leye was in favour of such trade, so long as the VOC agreed to pay the DEIC twenty per cent tax. Leye also suggested that the English should

⁶⁰² Ibidem.

⁶⁰³ Indeed, the fact that Pessart had stolen the ray-skins from Dansborg would suggest that the DEIC had plans to trade in Japan. Japan was completely closed for other European powers, except for the VOC, who obtained the small island of Deshima outside Nagasaki as a trading station. On ray-skins, see, Raychaudhuri, *Jan Company*, 177.

⁶⁰⁴ RAC, DK, B 246 A, Leye to the directors, 12.12.1645.

⁶⁰⁵ RAC, DK, B 246 A, Leye to the directors, 15.11.1646; the rest of the episode falls outside the scope of this dissertation, but is dealt by Bredsdorff. Bredsdorff, *The Trials and Travels*, 120–125.

⁶⁰⁶ RAC, DK, B 246 A, Leye to the directors, 15.11.1646; Bredsdorff, *The Trials and Travels*, 159.

⁶⁰⁷ Ibidem.

⁶⁰⁸ Ibidem.

be invited to participate in the trade with Tranquebar, through the medium of Calipa and Jayapa, Leyel's brokers, and in return for the same tax.⁶⁰⁹

The different events on the Coromandel Coast and around Manila demonstrate the sheer number of relationships that Leyel was attempting to balance. On the one hand, he avoided contact with the VOC, because of its dominant trading position, but on the other hand, he was willing to participate in cross-imperial trade. However, he remained suspicious and cautious regarding the VOC. In all of his reports, he stated that the VOC had tried to harm the DEIC, and, in a letter of instruction to skipper Hans Ekman dated 21 September 1646, Leyel insisted that Ekman should ignore all gossip regarding the VOC.⁶¹⁰ Rumours were circulating regarding the possible intentions of the Dutch towards the DEIC, but Leyel preferred to remain within the realm of actual realities. Flows of information were difficult to control, and balancing various types of information, as well as relationships with other employees, competing companies and local merchants, was indeed a challenge.

To summarise, Leyel had to balance competing and overlapping networks. The different types of relationships he had with the VOC underline the fact that the companies were run by people who had their own ways of doing business, especially in the local context. The relationship with the Portuguese demonstrates that Leyel was engaged not only with the *Estado*, but especially with the merchants outside of the *Estado*. Such local connections were vital for Leyel, and it was largely through local merchants that he managed to develop business in Asia. Indeed, this highlights the importance of focusing not only on the business relationships between royal monopolies and trading companies, but also on the merchants who operated outside of the states and companies. Their dependency on certain key individuals was not only a challenge for the companies, but also for the employees representing them. In the end, Leyel proved better at balancing his connections with local merchants than with DEIC employees. In fact, Leyel's complicated balancing act demonstrates just how international, intertwined and multifaceted social connections overseas were.

4.5 Carloff: from the SAC to Glückstadt, and into the spider's web of networks

During Henrich Carloff's overseas career, the conquest of Fort Carolusborg in 1658 was a unique moment in history.⁶¹¹ The attack was led by Carloff, sailing under a Danish commission. In the aftermath of the conquest, Carloff's business partner, Samuel Smidt, surrendered the fort to the WIC. This series of events has been of interest to historians working on the Gold Coast during the mid-seventeenth century, and was even noted in contemporary travel journals.⁶¹² Until now, analysis of these events has been on a large scale, at the level of companies and imperial powers.⁶¹³ The aim of this section is not to provide a complete narrative of the events, but rather to demonstrate how the balance between social relationships related to the conquest of the fort. The first part of the section

⁶⁰⁹ RAC, DK, B 246 A, Leyel instruction to P. Nielsen 01.10.1645.

⁶¹⁰ RAC, DK, B 246 A, Leyel to H. Ekman, 21.09.1646.

⁶¹¹ Chapter six will focus on the actual attack on the fort.

⁶¹² Nováky, *Handelskompanier*; Granlund, *En svensk koloni i Afrika*; Heijer, "Een dienaar" Weiss, "Danskar och svenskar" to mention the main authors. Especially the work by Porter is of central relevance. See Porter, *European Activity*; Wilhelm Johann Müllers description of the Fetu Country, 1662-9, Adam Jones, *German Sources for West African History, 1599-1669* (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1983), 134-181.

⁶¹³ Porter, *European Activity*; Nováky, *Handelskompanier*; Nørregård, *Danish Settlements*; Granlund, *En svensk koloni i Afrika*.

will focus on how Carloff planned and financed the attack, and the second part will focus on how a number of ruptures in Carloff's relationships eventually excluded him from the Gold Coast trade.

As was discussed in the previous chapter, due to the diminishing power of the Swedish Africa Company (SAC), Carloff decided to leave the SAC in 1657. He then approached the Danish King Fredrik III, requesting a commission to attack the SAC fort on the Cape Coast. In short, he promised to seize the fort and hand it over to the Danish king.⁶¹⁴ On 1 August 1657, Carloff received his commission and began to prepare his attack, which would take place during the Danish-Swedish War of 1657. Carloff arrived on the coast on 25 January 1658. Assisted by the WIC and the Fetu caboceer Acrosan, he marched into the fort and took it from the SAC. He met with limited resistance, and the support of the Fetu people served to hinder any European response. Carloff took over other Swedish possessions, including lodges at Takorari, Anomabo, Jumoree and Orsu, and also captured the SAC ship *Stockholms Slott* along with the gold it was carrying. As early as 28 February 1658, Carloff was able to sail back to Europe, leaving Samuel Smidt as the acting governor of the fort, to be assisted by the factor Johan Canter.

4.6 Carloff and the establishment of the Glückstadt Company

When Carloff returned to Glückstadt on 8 June 1658, the Danish-Swedish war had resulted in heavy losses for Denmark. The peace treaty of Roskilde, signed on 26 February 1658, stated amongst other things that the Danish were to return all the captured forts to the Swedish, including Carolusborg. The Swedish representatives had heard what had happened in Africa, and wanted to have Carloff arrested. Carloff therefore fled from Glückstadt and hid abroad for several months.⁶¹⁵ However, his connection with the Danes remained intact. After the conflict between Sweden and Denmark had been resolved, in 1659, the Danes contacted Carloff in Groningen in the Dutch Republic. The Danish representative, Poul Klingenberg, offered Carloff and his companions trade rights in Africa under Danish protection. In May 1659, a new contract was signed. Carloff could keep the gold from the captured ship *Stockholms Slott*, and Carolusborg would become the property of the Kingdom of Denmark.⁶¹⁶ According to the agreement, Carloff and his associates would also be allowed to trade in Western Africa. The commanders of the fort would be servants of the king, but would also assist Carloff with trade.⁶¹⁷ Klingenberg, who represented the interest of the Danish crown, was an important connection for Carloff. Through this connection, he could balance his personal interest with that of his new patron, Fredrik III (1648-1670). The negotiations were held in Hamburg, where Carloff was represented by his business partner, Jan de Swaen.⁶¹⁸ Right after the agreement between Carloff and Klingenberg, on 20 May 1659, the Glückstadt Company was established, being destined to hold a monopoly over Danish trade in Africa for twenty-five years. Once again, a Nordic company with close links to an international maritime community had been established, and this time the most

⁶¹⁴ RAC, TKIA, Diverse akter vdr. Det ostindiske kompagni og Guinea, Contract between Carloff and Fredrik III, 01.08.1657; Justesen, *Danish Sources*, 1–3.

⁶¹⁵ Henrich Sieveking, "Die Glückstädter Guineafahrt", 30; The diplomatic negotiations have been extensively dealt with by Granlund, *En svensk koloni i Afrika*, 32; Nováky, *Handelskompanier*, 205.

⁶¹⁶ Sieveking and Nørregård give different dates. I have decided to follow Nørregård's date in this case.

⁶¹⁷ Nørregård, *Danish Settlements*, 23.

⁶¹⁸ SAA NA: 1128, fol.272-273, 15.03.1659.

prominent investors had come from Hamburg.⁶¹⁹ The company was established to serve the interests of both the king and the foreign investors. The initial regulations of the company suggest that these investors had a strong role in the company, and it was first and foremost their interests that were to be developed. Later, however, when the king transferred the charter to merchants based in Copenhagen, the situation changed.⁶²⁰

The relationship between the WIC and the Glückstadt Company in Europe was also important for their activities on the Gold Coast. On 8 July 1659, the Danish resident in The Hague, Peter Charsius, negotiated with the States General regarding Danish trade in Africa, proposing a friendly agreement to be observed by the Glückstadt Company and the WIC. The States General approved, and ordered the WIC to maintain good relations with the Glückstadt Company on the Gold Coast.⁶²¹ These negotiations were bound up with a shift in relations concerning the Baltic trade, in which the Dutch had transferred their allegiance from the Swedish to the Danish. Initially, the States General had remained neutral towards the Glückstadt Company, since it had no desire to disrupt its relationship with the Danish king, with whom it had entered into alliance in 1645 (the alliance was then renewed in 1653).⁶²² This view was not shared by the WIC, however, which did not desire competitors on the coast. Over the subsequent years, the tension between the WIC and the Glückstadt Company continued. In 1662, the WIC accused the Danish company of being operated by a group of Amsterdam merchants, being a Danish operation only on paper.⁶²³ This context will be important for the next section of this chapter, which focuses on how Carloff balanced between business and politics, using his overseas connections to profit from trade in Africa. Particular attention will be given to the financing of Carloff's voyages, and the ways in which the Glückstadt Company was built financially.

4.7 Carloff, ghost investments and internal business network connections

The contract of August 1657 with Denmark stated that Carloff should finance the attack on Carolusborg on his own account. As such, he contacted a group of Amsterdam merchants for financial assistance: Jasper Vinckel, Jean le Vainqueur, Jan Vlasblom, Floris Elias, Cornelis Joosten Heyns and Nicholas Pancreas. Together, they agreed to provide a ship called the *Diamant*, which would be renamed the *Glückstadt*, and which would set sail from Emden to Glückstadt, and from there to

⁶¹⁹ The first three years were tax-free for the investors. The sixth article of the charter shows that most of the initial capital came from Hamburg. One third was supposed to come from Danish residents. Of the twenty-four investors, twelve were from Hamburg and five from Glückstadt. Some other main investors were: Jacob del Boe, Johan Beckman, Corenlius von der My (representing Loys du Boyd), Adam von Sorgen, and Cornelis Jansen. Others invested in smaller shares. In 1661, Gerrit Bremer and Marten Baers joined the company with considerable investments. The company directors were Vincent Klingenberg and Jacob del Boe, both stationed in Hamburg. Vincent Klingeberg, the nephew of Poul Klingenberg, was a valuable connection between Carloff and the new company directors. The ships were expected to depart from and return to Glückstadt. See Feldbæk, *Danske Handelskompagnier*, 355–363.

⁶²⁰ Nørregård, *Danish Settlements*, 47–55.

⁶²¹ Sieveking, "Die Glückstädter Guineafahrt", 33.

⁶²² This alliance had been established as a result of the increasingly central presence of the Swedish empire in the Baltic. For the Dutch economy, the Baltic trade was necessary, and for the Danes, the growth of Sweden, especially in the German provinces, had caused disquiet. However, the alliance was primarily a defensive alliance, intended to protect Denmark against Sweden. L. Laursen, *Danmark-Norges Traktater, 1523-1750*, Vol. V (1650-1664) (Copenhagen: C.A. Reitzel Nielsen & Lydische, 1920), 28–37.

⁶²³ The statements analysed in this chapter were given to justify the transfer of the settlements in case of issues between the competing companies. Thus, the WIC could use the statement as a document of proof, in the case that complications arose between them and the Danes. Ibid, 36–37; Nicholas De Roeve, "Twee Concurrenten", 195–220.

Africa, before finally returning to Glückstadt.⁶²⁴ The reason for this stopover in Glückstadt was that the ship would receive its official Danish documents from the factor of the city, and thus acquire a Danish façade. During the voyage to the Cape Coast, Carloff was supposed to make another stopover in Sierra Leone and deliver a cargo to the local factor, Gerrit Bremer. Thus, the attack on the Swedish possessions was not the sole intention of the voyage.

The financing of the voyage was performed through what will be referred to here as *ghost investing*.⁶²⁵ In principle, a ghost investor was someone who wanted to remain anonymous, due to the logic of mercantilism, whereby countries did not allow their subjects to invest in foreign trading enterprises and ventures.⁶²⁶ This kind of ghost identity protected Dutch investors and previous employees of the WIC.⁶²⁷ In practice, ghost investments were made through fake bottomry loans, in which the official freighter of the ship was a strawman for the real investors. As referred to in this chapter, bottomry loans (a contract based on a combination of credit and insurance) were usually made to skippers, who had also received foreign passports. The freighter of the ship could purchase a bottomry in advance of the voyage. If the voyage was successful, the freighter would pay back the creditor with interest, but if the voyage was not completed, the creditor would cover the losses. Basically, the bottomry loan revolved around the question of who the actual owner of the cargo was. In the passports, the skipper had the license for the voyage, and also appeared as the owner of the cargo. In the licenses, there was nothing about bottomry contracts. Thus, it would be almost impossible for inspectors and prosecutors to know who was providing or paying for the trading goods. Ghost investing was thus a widely used practice in Western Europe. At the end of the 1640s, ghost investors from Amsterdam had already participated in African voyages that had set out from Glückstadt. Thielman Wilkens, Carloff's colleague during his time with the WIC on the Gold Coast, was officially running similar investments, in which the funding really came from Amsterdam. Here, too, the aim was to circumvent the privileges of the WIC.⁶²⁸ Officially, Carloff ran the operations, but, in reality, much of the capital came from the Amsterdam investors.

Carloff stated that he had invested money in the voyage himself. However, the real financial means were provided by Abel Verbeeck and Andries Sael. The reason why the latter chose to offer their support is unclear, but it would seem that Carloff did not possess enough capital. According to Carloff, the combined investors had invested a total of 50,000 guilders in the operation, and he was supposed to return their investment plus interest. His previous personal investments in the SAC had likely been a combination of his own capital, earned during his years as prosecutor, and similar *ghost investments*. Carloff himself claimed that he had used the money that he had accumulated as a WIC

⁶²⁴ In 1662 Carloff was forced to declare the events around 1659 because the WIC had pressed charges against the Glückstadt Company and Carloff would otherwise have been accused for treasoning. Via the declaration he received immunity for the charges; Sieveking, "Die Glückstädter Guineafahrt", 37; NL-HaNA, Staten-Generaal, 1.01.02, inv.nr. 12572.41, Carloff declaration, 12.10.1662; Carloff's declaration printed in De Roever, "Twee Concurrenten".

⁶²⁵ A similar concept has been discussed by Filipa Ribeiro da Silva, who has referred to investors involved in these kinds of activities as silent or passive investors, Filipa Ribeiro da Silva, "Private Businessmen in the Angolan Trade, 1590s to 1780s: Insurance, Commerce and Agency," in *Networks and Trans-Cultural Exchange: Slave Trading in the South Atlantic, 1590-1867*, ed. David Richardson and Filipa Ribeiro da Silva (Boston/Leiden: Brill, 2014), 90.

⁶²⁶ NL-HaNA, Staten-Generaal, 1.01.02, inv.nr. 12572.41, Placaten of the WIC 1624, 1632 and 1657.

⁶²⁷ Christian IV also made similar arrangements when financing the first DEIC. See chapter three.

⁶²⁸ SAA NA: 2278, fol.63, 25.10.1650.

official.⁶²⁹ However, the amount of capital invested was so large that it could not, I claim, have come from Carloff alone.

Carloff did not only discuss his own role in the 1657 operation, but also shed light upon other ghost investments, or, as Carloff called them, “*simulatie*”. In 1662, he declared that there had not been a single Dane involved in the plans for the African voyages, even though the official head of planning was Marten Baers, a resident and factor of Glückstadt, whom Carloff knew very well.⁶³⁰ In 1651 and 1656, the Danish king granted Baers licences for trade in Africa. The licence of 1656 was granted to three residents of Glückstadt: Henry and Marten Baers and Gerrit Bremer, the factor of the Amsterdam merchants in Sierra Leone.⁶³¹ Baers was involved in negotiating favourable terms for the Glückstadt merchants, not only for trade in Africa but also for trade in the North Atlantic.⁶³² According to Carloff, Baers had no own capital invested, and it was merchants from Amsterdam who were footing the bill. Baers later complained that the investors had failed to pay for his services.⁶³³ This complaint probably referred to the license that Baers, his brother and Bremer obtained in 1656. Notwithstanding, Baers and Bremer invested a considerable sum in the Glückstadt Company in 1661.⁶³⁴ This was also a ghost investment. According to Carloff, the company ships *St Marten* and *Die Liebe* (previously *Stockholms Slott*) were covered by ghost investors. The company ships *Postellion von Venedig* and *Fredricus* were also financed by similar false bottomry loans. Apparently, the ship *Graaf Enno*, which was investigated on the Gold Coast by the WIC on suspicion of interloping, was also equipped and financed by the same people.⁶³⁵ As we see in the case of ships sailing with Glückstadt licenses, private investors could thus take advantage of the mercantile framework. This suggests that the main function of the company was to further the private interests of the foreign investors. The company offered a legal framework within which such individuals could pursue their business. Indeed, this was a quicker way to make a profit from the African trade than buying shares in larger companies and waiting for dividends. As such, a significant portion of the early shipping to the African coast from the Nordic countries was based on these types of ghost investments.

Carloff's relations with the Amsterdam investors made him aware of the mechanism of ghost investing. Carloff later stated that he had heard from Jasper Vinckel that the bottomry loans between the investors and Baers were intended to avoid raising suspicion amongst WIC officials, who might encounter the *Glückstadt*.⁶³⁶ This demonstrates that investors in Amsterdam, Dutch skippers in Glückstadt and the royal factors in Denmark were all aware of the opportunities and risks that bottomries offered. Furthermore, Carloff served as the central node that connected the various different parties. It is worth noting that his knowledge of how to balance these different networks had

⁶²⁹ NL-HaNA, Staten-Generaal, 1.01.02, inv.nr. 12572.41, Carloff declaration, 12.10.1662; De Roever, “Twee Concurrenten”, 200; Dahlgren, *Louis de Geer*, 348; Porter, *European Activity*, 378.

⁶³⁰ In 1625 Baers became a resident in Glückstadt. Glückstadt, Das Stadtarchiv, Bürgerbuch, Baers Bürger rights, 06.01.1625; NL-HaNA, Staten-Generaal, 1.01.02, inv.nr. 12572.41, Declaration by Carloff 12.10.1662, Carloff's declaration printed in De Roever, “Twee Concurrenten”.

⁶³¹ Nørregård, *Danish Settlements*, 13.

⁶³² Glückstadt, Das Stadtarchiv, urkunden 12, 16.05.1651; Nørregård, *Danish Settlements*, 12.

⁶³³ NL-HaNA, Staten-Generaal, 1.01.02, inv.nr. 12572.41, Carloff declaration, 12.10.1662; Carloff's declaration printed in De Roever, “Twee Concurrenten”.

⁶³⁴ Nørregård, *Danish Settlements*, 22.

⁶³⁵ De Roever, “Twee Concurrenten”, 216.

⁶³⁶ NL-HaNA, Staten-Generaal, 1.01.02, inv.nr. 12572.41, Carloff declaration, 12.10.1662; Carloff's declaration printed in De Roever, “Twee Concurrenten”.

been acquired during his years as WIC prosecutor on the Gold Coast. In particular, it was during this time that he learned how shipping documents could be used for or against specific freighters and skippers.

Carloff set sail from Glückstadt for the Gold Coast in December 1657, returning to Glückstadt in the summer 1658. On his return voyage, he stopped at Harlingen, in Frisia, in the most Northern Province of the Dutch Republic. There, he unloaded the gold that he had taken from the *Stockholms Slott*.⁶³⁷ For Carloff, returning to Europe via Harlingen was a way of transporting the gold back to his initial investors while avoiding suspicion. At the time, the province of Friesland did not have its own chamber in the WIC. This meant that there would be no enquiries from the company. Carloff eventually went to Amsterdam, where he met the financial backers of the voyage, who promptly demanded their premium back.⁶³⁸ Carloff was willing to pay, although he stressed the fact that he had borne the expenses of equipping the ship and paying the crew. The investors, who met with Carloff at Cornelis Joosten Heyns' home, agreed to reimburse him for these expenses, but still required the return of their original loan plus the agreed rate of interest.⁶³⁹

The international financiers in Amsterdam had provided Carloff with the necessary capital to annex the Swedish possessions in Western Africa on behalf of the Danish king, who in turn provided Carloff with a royal commission. Consequently, if we are to understand the role played by Carloff and his fellow business partners, it is paramount to understand that many did not themselves finance overseas operations, but rather represented networks looking to invest risk capital in new ventures. Overseas entrepreneurs were able to attract such investors because of their connections and expertise overseas, which increased the chance of a profitable return on any investment. This particular case demonstrates the mutual dependency between Carloff and the Amsterdam network. Without the network, Carloff would have had no means to make the voyages, but without Carloff, the investors would not have been able to access profits from the African trade.

When the Glückstadt Company was founded, several preparatory meetings were held at Jan de Swaen's house in Amsterdam. According to Carloff, Isaac Coymans and Gerard von Tets were frequently involved in the planning. Both were previous WIC employees. Indeed, I would suggest that there were three contextual reasons for Coymans, von Tets, Cramer and Carloff to join the Glückstadt company, all of which stemmed from their time in the WIC: first, they were aware of the financial challenges that the WIC faced as a result of its numerous conflicts with Portugal in the South Atlantic; second, they knew that other WIC employees had received licenses in Glückstadt; and third, they knew that there was a strong possibility of being able to access the profitable gold trade, particularly by offering their expertise to Nordic rulers in exchange for the right to operate the Nordic trade in Africa. Danish licenses also enabled individuals like Coymans, Carloff and Cramer to make a personal profit. Therefore, ghost investments constituted an entrepreneurial opportunity for investors and overseas entrepreneurs alike. As Clé Lesger has shown, not all entrepreneurial mechanisms were ethical or legal from the point of view of the communities in which they were based. Nevertheless, they were an important feature of early modern societies, and ought thus to be taken into account when analysing early modern entrepreneurship.⁶⁴⁰

⁶³⁷ NL-HaNA, Staten-Generaal, 1.01.02, inv.nr. 12572.41, Carloff declaration, 12.10.1662; Carloff's declaration printed in De Roever, "Twee Concurrenten".

⁶³⁸ *opgeld* = premium.

⁶³⁹ De Roever, "Twee Concurrenten", 211.

⁶⁴⁰ See the introduction for discussion of Lesger.

According to Carloff, de Swaen was the largest investor in the Amsterdam network, making a profit of approximately 8,000 guilders on each successful trip, which constituted a strong incentive for further investment. For Coymans, the reason to join the Glückstadt Company was the possibility of trading his personal goods on the coast.⁶⁴¹ The skippers of the *Die Liebe* and the *St Marten*, Jorrien Schroeder and Joost Cramer, both previous SAC employees under Carloff, were also present at the meetings at de Swaen's house.⁶⁴² However, the records in the Glückstadt municipal archives state that the captain of the *St Marten* was Cornelis Janssen, who had been born in Voorburg (in the Netherlands), had received burgher rights in Glückstadt, and had been granted a license to travel to Guinea.⁶⁴³

Things eventually took a surprising turn, to the point that Carloff withdrew his power of attorney from de Swaen on 14 October 1659.⁶⁴⁴ Apparently, Carloff expressed considerable unease with regard to de Swaen, and did not want to have his name associated with him anymore. However, this may have been only a pretext given in an official declaration, and, without further evidence, it is impossible to know the exact reason for Carloff's decision. Perhaps he feared what might happen if the WIC eventually prosecuted the Dutch consortia for having accepted foreign commissions. Indeed, this would later happen to one of Carloff's business partners, Coymans, who was convicted of treason.⁶⁴⁵ Carloff was not charged, since he had turned himself in, and had assisted the Dutch in investigating and dismantling the network.

According to Carloff, de Swaen had wanted Poul Klingenberg to act as advisor to the company, since he was highly respected in the circles of the Danish court. His participation would also provide the company with a more Danish appearance. De Swaen and Coymans proposed to transport half of the capital of the company directly to Hamburg, in order to further improve the credibility of the company.⁶⁴⁶ This suggestion was not supported by the Danish resident in The Hague, Peter Charsius, who stated that the company should be based in Glückstadt, where investors and employees held burgher rights. Charsius' standpoint was clear: he was aware of the possible conflict between the company and other European companies operating on the coast, and wanted to avoid giving the latter sufficient reason to apprehend the ships sailing under Danish commission. In the 1660s, he represented the company in The Hague, when the conflict between the WIC and the Glückstadt Company eventually became public in the aftermath of the events of 1659.⁶⁴⁷

Finally, a series of notarised statements exemplify how Carloff, de Swaen and the Amsterdam merchants financed the Glückstadt Company's ships. In August 1660, Carloff, then residing in

⁶⁴¹ De Roever, "Twee Concurrenten", 216.

⁶⁴² NL-HaNA, Staten-Generaal, 1.01.02, inv.nr. 12572.41, Carloff declaration, 12.10.1662; Carloff's declaration printed in De Roever, "Twee Concurrenten".

⁶⁴³ Glückstadt, Das Stadtarchiv, Bürgerbuch 23.04.1660, It is not clear why Carloff stated that the other captain was Schroeder.

⁶⁴⁴ De Roever, "Twee Concurrenten", 214.

⁶⁴⁵ For more about this event, see Brieven, confessie; mitsgaders, advisen van verscheyden rechtsgeleerden in de saeck van Isaac Coymans gegeven; als mede de sententie daer op gevolgt, (Rotterdam 1662); Den Blanken, "Imperium in Imperio".

⁶⁴⁶ Hamburg was chosen because at the time it was partly under Danish rule, since the Danish king considered Hamburg to be a part of Holstein. Although the city considered itself a free "Reichstadt", the Danish kingdom did not recognise Hamburg until in 1769.

⁶⁴⁷ Pamflet Knuttel 8905A, 'remonstrantie aen de Ho: Mo: Heeren de Staten-Generael der Vereenighde Nederlanden: Overgegeven den Junij 1664 Bij de Heeren de Bewint-hebberen van de Geotroyeerde West-indische Compagnie der Vereenighde Nederlanden. Opende jegens Verscheyde Memorien van den Heer Resident Charsius, wegens de (gepretendeerde) Deensche Africaensche Compagnie, aen haer Ho: Mo: overgegeven.' (Amsterdam 1664).

Amsterdam, declared that he had, on his patrons' behalf, given de Swaen, the factor of the Glückstadt Company, a bottomry loan in order to outfit the *Die Liebe* and the *St Marten* for a cargo worth 20,000 guilders, to be transported from Amsterdam to the Gold Coast and from there back to Glückstadt. However, he also declared that many of the goods remained unsold. Because of the privileges in the charter of the WIC, Carloff had been forced to transfer the "bottomry loan, with premium" to Jacob del Boe, the director of the Glückstadt Company.⁶⁴⁸ In this notarised statement, three things stand out. First, Carloff had received funds from his patrons, and was still in 1660 involved in ghost investing. Second, the Amsterdam merchants were involved not only as investors in the Glückstadt Company, but also in the provision of cargoes to be traded in Western Africa. Third, because of the privileges enshrined in the charter of the WIC, Carloff, at that point resident in Amsterdam, was obliged to transfer the bottomry and premium through Jacob del Boe, instead of dealing directly with his ghost investors. What stands out, however, is that even though Carloff had withdrawn his power of attorney from de Swaen, he had no problem raising funds to invest in Danish ships.

Another notarised statement from November 1660 shows that Carloff transferred shares in the Glückstadt Company worth 25,000 guilders to the Hamburg merchant Adam van Sorgen. 18,000 guilders were to be used to equip the ships *St Marten* and *Die Liebe* in return for six percent interest, while 7,000 guilders were to be used for the ship *Fredricus*.⁶⁴⁹ In another notarised statement, de Swaen stated that he owed Carloff 6,000 guilders, which he had borrowed to equip the *Die Liebe*. De Swaen had entrusted the ship to Jürgen Schröder (Jorrien Schroeder) as skipper, and had expected him to sail to the Gold Coast and São Tomé, before returning to Glückstadt. Upon arrival, de Swaen would repay Carloff his loan, plus thirty percent interest.⁶⁵⁰ These notarised statements illustrate how Amsterdam investors transferred capital and resources abroad, via their connections in Hamburg and Glückstadt, in order to circumvent the monopoly of the WIC.

Carloff stood at the intersection of several networks. On the one hand, there was a pool of Amsterdam investors, among them Jasper Vinckel, Jean le Vainqueur, Jan Vlasblom, Floris Elias, Cornelis Joosten Heyns and Nicholas Pancras. Given that all these men held burgher rights in Amsterdam, they were covered by the WIC charter. However, they used Carloff to transfer capital, resources, and powers of attorney to de Swaen in Amsterdam and Adam van Sorgen in Hamburg. Officially, van Sorgen was a large-scale investor, but, in reality, much of his capital was raised by Carloff, via his pool of Amsterdam investors.

In the end, ghost investments serve to highlight the complexity of the social relationships between the businessmen who supported overseas entrepreneurship. It was partly Carloff's own desire for profit, but partly also his social connections that forced him to act. He was thus never completely free to do as he pleased, but rather compelled to balance various connections and to mediate between the interests of different networks.

4.8 *Carloff, difficult relationships and connections in Western Africa*

The challenges that Carloff faced with his different networks were even more apparent during the aftermath of the conquest. On the Gold Coast, he fulfilled a similar role as in the European context,

⁶⁴⁸ SAA NA: 1134, fol.143, 03.08.1660. "bodemerijgeld with opgeld".

⁶⁴⁹ SAA NA: 1761, fol.834, 20.11.1660.

⁶⁵⁰ NL-HaNA, Staten-Generaal, 1.01.02, inv.nr. 12572.41, de Swaen signed the declaration 03.07.1659; FC, N8, 183.

having as his main counterparts Samuel Smidt, his subordinate and the acting governor of Carolusborg, the caboceer Acrosan, and other WIC personnel such as Jan Valckenburgh. All of these connections played a role in the events that followed Carloff's conquest of the Swedish possessions on behalf of the Danish king.

The correspondence that Carloff maintained with the WIC officials show that Carloff was not only serving the interest of the Danish king, but also played a high-risk game in which he offered his services to several people, and then took advantage of his business partners in order to turn the conquest to the best possible advantage. The correspondence also highlights the volatility of business relationships. The tone of the correspondence could quickly turn from friendly to hostile and back again. Some of the correspondence between Carloff and Valckenburgh suggests a close partnership, whereas other letters suggest frustration, and even bitterness.

The relationship between Carloff and the WIC Director-Generals, Jan Valckenburgh and Casper van Heussen, was complicated, yet at the same time representative of the relationships that Europeans had with each other on the coast.⁶⁵¹ Valckenburgh had been employed by the WIC as prosecutor during the same period that Carloff had been employed by the SAC, and it was under his directorship that the WIC lent Carloff military support in attacking the SAC's possessions.⁶⁵² Their personal relationship was also essential to the political and commercial changes that were taking place on the coast.

Initially, Carloff was friendly, and suggested a mutually beneficial plan to maintain trade on the coast.⁶⁵³ Carloff assured Valckenburgh that following the conquest of the SAC's assets, the SAC employees would swear an oath to him. Those who refused would be arrested and sent back to Europe. Among the men who had sworn allegiance to Carloff, Carloff chose Samuel Smidt as acting governor. Indeed, Smidt was perhaps the most important connection in Carloff's plan. He had previously been employed by the WIC and the SAC under the patronage of Carloff, and remained a reliable asset.⁶⁵⁴ Smidt was already close to Carloff prior to the conquest. In a declaration to which I will return later, Smidt stated that in 1657, he had been hired by Carloff to accompany him onboard the ship *Glückstadt* on a voyage to Guinea. The ship owners were Carloff, Mr. Lavinqueur (Vainqueur), Mr. Vinckel and Mr. van de Beecken. Smidt knew all three personally, since they had bought cargo for Africa together. Lavinqueur (Vainqueur) also accompanied Smidt to Friesland, in order to purchase cloth from the merchant Geert Oeges.⁶⁵⁵ The cloth was delivered in Amsterdam to Vinckel and other shipowners, and then dispatched along with the rest of the cargo on the *Glückstadt*, which sailed to Guinea under Carloff's direct command.⁶⁵⁶ Smidt's declaration demonstrates that he was well informed about Carloff's network of investors in Europe. Although only a junior partner, Smidt was well connected himself, and aware of Carloff's social and business relations in Europe. It is therefore not surprising that Carloff appointed him as acting governor.

⁶⁵¹ Valckenburgh was the Director-General of Elmina 24.01.1656 – 27.04.1659 and Casper Van Heussen 27.04.1659 – 07.04.1662.

⁶⁵² Nørregård, *Danish Settlements*, 16; Porter, *European Activity*, 380.

⁶⁵³ NL-HaNA, Staten-Generaal, 1.01.02, inv.nr. 12571.38.1, Henrich Carloff to Jan Valckenburgh, 15.02.1658, FC, N8, 41–43.

⁶⁵⁴ NL-HaNA, Staten-Generaal, 1.01.02, inv.nr. 12571.38.1, Henrich Carloff to Jan Valckenburgh, 15.02.1658, FC, N8, 41–43.

⁶⁵⁵ At the time, cloth was one of the primary European products on the Western African market.

⁶⁵⁶ NL-HaNA, Staten-Generaal, 1.01.02, inv.nr. 12572.41, Declaration by Samuel Smidt, at Elmina, 22.07.1659; FC, N8, 184.

Carloff's correspondence with Valckenburgh shed further light on his plan for the region. He envisaged the entire Gold Coast under one (European) ruler, and made a proposal to this effect to the Directors of the WIC in Amsterdam. He also proposed that Valckenburgh should be called to Amsterdam to testify in favour of this plan. Carloff would also have appreciated a personal meeting with Valckenburgh. However, at that time, such a meeting might be seen as suspicious.⁶⁵⁷ Considering that the two companies were supposed to be competing, it was probably a wise precaution to avoid gossip that might call into question Carloff and Valckenburgh's loyalties.

In another letter, Carloff wrote that he was pleased that Valckenburgh had agreed to the idea of bringing the coast under one ruler.⁶⁵⁸ Carloff had received confidential information from Coenrad van Beuningen, who at this time was the Ambassador of the Dutch Republic in Denmark. Apparently, van Beuningen had recommended that the Danish crown turn over the management of the Swedish possessions to an ally of Denmark. The ally in question was of course the Republic, which had signed an alliance with Denmark in 1645. The connection to van Beuningen endured for a considerable time. Almost twenty years later, van Beuningen wrote a recommendation letter on behalf of Carloff to the States General, arguing in favour of appointing him governor of Suriname.⁶⁵⁹ Indeed, Carloff was well connected within the diplomatic and political circles of the Republic.

Carloff added that he had already discussed the topic with Eduard Man, the director of the WIC in Amsterdam, who thought that it would be better to destroy the fort altogether. Man's suggestion to destroy Carolusborg arose because the WIC wanted to attract trade to Elmina instead, and to put an end to the use of Fetu merchants as middlemen (as has been discussed in earlier chapters). According to Carloff, Man did not understand coastal politics: demolishing the fort was impossible, because the locals would oppose it. In the event of such opposition, he believed, the fort would fall into the hands of the English, to the detriment of all parties concerned. As such, Carloff's plan was to raise the topic once again with the WIC. He would do his best to keep the Danish out of the enterprise, and he desired Valckenburgh's assistance in doing so. Carloff concluded his letter by requesting that Valckenburgh keep its contents a secret, and, if necessary, burn the letter.

Carloff's two letters to Valckenburgh highlight the events that occurred in Western Africa following the conquest of the SAC fort. The letters reveal a reality that was radically different to what had been envisaged in the contract (August 1657) between the Danish monarch and Carloff: in particular, it becomes clear that Carloff had never entirely severed his connections with the WIC. Although negotiating with WIC officials in Western Africa, he was at the time sailing under a Danish commission, financed with Dutch capital, and making use of his local African connections. All of this demonstrates that Carloff was entangled in several competing networks.

The events in Western Africa also influenced Carloff's relationships in Europe. Having returned to Europe, he once again approached Eduard Man, suggesting an agreement between Smidt and the WIC.⁶⁶⁰ Carloff suggested that the handing over of the fort should be done in Smidt's name. Thus, the Danish would not be able to accuse him of misconduct in the future. Indeed, Carloff did not wish to interfere with the agreement, but merely to keep the gold and merchandise he had procured

⁶⁵⁷ NL-HaNA, Staten-Generaal, 1.01.02, inv.nr. 12571.38.1, Henrich Carloff to Jan Valckenburgh, 15.02.1658, FC, N8, 41–43.

⁶⁵⁸ NL-HaNA, Staten-Generaal, 1.01.02, inv.nr. 12571.38.1, Henrich Carloff to Jan Valckenburgh, 16.02.1658, A copy of the letter from 16.02.1658 also in, NL-HaNA, 1.01.02, inv. nr. 12572.41; FC, N8, 43–44.

⁶⁵⁹ NL-HaNA, Verspreide West-Indische Stukken, 1.05.06, inventarisnummer 1178. Van Beuningen recommendation letter on behalf of Carloff, Undated document.

⁶⁶⁰ NL-HaNA, Staten-Generaal, 1.01.02, inv.nr. 12571.38.1, Carloff to Man, 11/21.01.1659, FC, N8, 166.

during the attack on the settlement. However, I would argue that Carloff wanted to remove any possible suspicion of wrong-doing in the event of any future collaboration with the WIC. In March, Carloff wrote to Smidt once again.⁶⁶¹ Here, he stated his suspicion that Klingenberg, Marselis and other potential investors were planning to continue trading in Africa without him.⁶⁶²

Judging from the letter to Smidt, it seems that the Danish did not have a long-term plan for Carloff. Indeed, he may have used this fact as an excuse to justify the transfer of the fort to the WIC. Carloff continued his letter to Smidt by stating that the Swedish had made an agreement with the English to attack Carolusborg together. According to Carloff, it would thus be preferable for the Danes to voluntarily cede the fort to their Dutch ally. As such, Casper van Heussen should prepare a document preparing the surrender of the fort.⁶⁶³ In other words, Carloff was almost ordering Smidt to surrender the fort to the WIC.

However, matters were more complicated than they appeared. After all, during the spring of 1659, Carloff was still negotiating with the Danes regarding the progress of Danish trade in Africa. However, at the same time, he entered into an agreement with representatives of the WIC chamber in Amsterdam. On 20 March 1659, it was agreed that Carloff would order Smidt to transfer the fort to the WIC. As a result, Smidt and Carloff would be treated with respect by the WIC. The agreement further stipulated that Carloff would be allowed to sell the goods that he accumulated in Africa in Amsterdam. These goods would be transported to Amsterdam on WIC ships, under his name.⁶⁶⁴

Eventually, Carloff changed his mind, and sent a new letter to Smidt. All of a sudden, he no longer wanted to surrender the fort to the WIC, but to the Danish crown instead. In Carloff's words, the situation had changed in Europe, due to the shifting political relationship between Sweden and Denmark. Once again, he had the chance to send ships to Western Africa, but Smidt would have to be patient. Smidt ought to be aware of the possibility of English ships coming to the coast, and to remain alert and suspicious towards the WIC and English merchants at all times.⁶⁶⁵ As mentioned at the beginning of this section (4.8.), in May 1659, an agreement had been made between Poul Klingenberg and Carloff (Jan de Swaen had represented Carloff in these negotiations). This agreement acknowledged that Carloff would surrender the fort to the Danish king, but that he was to be allowed to keep the gold from the ships. Furthermore, it was stated that Carloff and his business partners were to be allowed to trade in the regions that he had surrendered to the Danish crown. Carloff was to be respected on the coast, and the Danish officials should always assist Carloff.⁶⁶⁶ The agreement was a result of the political changes that were taking place in Europe, and new opportunities were thus arising for Carloff. In this respect, it is plausible that the political context in

⁶⁶¹ RAC, Tyske Kancelliet Udenrigske Afdelning (TKUA), Nederlanderne: akter vedr. Det poltiiska forhold, 1660-1665, 70-14-70-1, Henrich Carloff to Samuel Smidt, 2/12.03.1659; FC, N8, 169-170.

⁶⁶² Carloff must be referring to the Klingenberg family. On the Klingenberg and Marselis family, see John Lauridsen, *Marselis konsortiet: en studie over forholdet mellem handelskapital og kongemagt i 1600-talets Danmark* (Copenhagen: Jysk Selskab for Historie 1987); Sieveking, "Die Glückstädter Guineafahrt", 24; Nørregård, *Danish Settlements*, 11 and 15.

⁶⁶³ RAC, TKUA, Nederlanderne: akter vedr. Det poltiiska forhold, 1660-1665, 70-14-70-1, Henrich Carloff to Samuel Smidt, 2/12.03.1659; FC, N8, 169-170.

⁶⁶⁴ NL-HaNA, Staten-Generaal, 1.01.02, inv.nr. 12572.41, Contract: Henrich Carloff – WIC, 20.03.1659, FC, N8, 175.

⁶⁶⁵ NL-HaNA, Staten-Generaal, 1.01.02, inv.nr. 12571.36, Henrich Carloff to Samuel Smidt, 13.04.1659; FC, N8, 178-179; NL-HaNA, Staten-Generaal, 1.01.02, inv.nr. 12572.41, Henrich Carloff to Samuel Smidt, 26.07.1659, FC, N8, 185.

⁶⁶⁶ RAC, TKUA, Diverse akter vdr. Det ostindiske kompagni og Guinea. Contract between Poul Klingenberg and Henrich Carloff, 28.03.1659 and 10.05.1659, The date from March indicates that this negotiation had started already in March.

Europe played an important role in how Carloff perceived his business opportunities. This episode demonstrates that Carloff was playing a high-risk game with two different parties. On the one hand, he was negotiating future plans for the Africa trade in Denmark. On the other hand, he was attempting to improve his relationship with the WIC by promising to surrender Carolusborg to the Dutch.

However, Carloff's last letter to Smidt did not have the intended outcome. Unbeknown to Carloff, Smidt had already surrendered the fort to the WIC. In this regard, an official statement sheds light on how Smidt and Canter had justified the surrender of the fort to the WIC.⁶⁶⁷ Smidt, Canter and the others who had sworn an oath to Carloff had decided to transfer all the possessions to the WIC, because Carloff had not kept to his side of the bargain. In particular, he had failed to send four ships to the coast with cargo and means of payment for the caboceers. Smidt and Canter explained that Carloff had clearly lied, since the promised ships had never arrived.⁶⁶⁸ The reason why Carloff had failed to send ships was most likely that the Glückstadt Company had not yet fully taken form; the Danish King Fredrik III was busy with the peace negotiations that followed the peace of Roskilde in 1658, and, soon after the peace, war broke out once again. Acrosan was disappointed with the absence of ships that could be used for trade. Carloff had failed to deliver on his promises to Smidt, Canter and Acrosan, and this had ultimately resulted in Carloff losing the trust of his local connections. For Carloff, the worst blow was the loss of Acrosan.⁶⁶⁹

Smidt went to great lengths to explain that it was Carloff's failure to send ships and payments that had damaged the relationship between the men on the ground and Acrosan. Acrosan's anger had been exacerbated by the fact that he had dismissed several Swedish ships, which had attempted to reclaim the Swedish possessions. According to the caboceer, the contract with Carloff was still valid, and he had full trust in his former partner, and, for that reason, he had not allowed the Swedish ships to land on the coast. However, Carloff's failure to appear had left Acrosan with no other option than to trade in gold with an English ship, even though he had forbidden the English to establish contact with the Danish. Acrosan had isolated Smidt and Canter, and his subordinates had been unable to conduct trade. According to Smidt, the trade was in shambles because of Acrosan's aggression. This illustrates the state of dependency in which Europeans found themselves when operating in African markets with African partners or associates.

Smidt and Canter felt that they had been abandoned by Carloff, a feeling that had been exacerbated by the fact that when the WIC ships *Eyckenboom* and *Coninck Salomon* had arrived on the coast, they carried no letters addressed to them. Most of all, Smidt and Canter feared the incipient alliance between the English and Acrosan, since this could potentially ruin not only Carloff's investment, but also Smidt and Canter personally. As such, they discussed the situation with their subordinates, and concluded that transferring the fort to a friendly ally was the only possible solution. Smidt and Canter's arguments indicate that Carloff did not manage to convince his subordinates to continue under his patronage. In this case, none of his contacts had shown any real sign of loyalty,

⁶⁶⁷ The statements were later used as proof in the dispute between the WIC and the Danish representatives regarding rights to trade on the coast. For Smidt and Canter, the statement was given to provide a detailed overview, and to show that they had been left with no choice, since Carloff had failed to send reinforcements. RAC, TKUA, Nederlanderne: akter vedr. Det poltiiska forhold, 1660-1665, Samuel Smidt & Johan Canter to Dirck Wilree 18.04.1659; Copies of the declaration, NL-HaNA, Staten-Generaal, 1.01.02, inv.nr. 12571.38.1, 22.08.1662; NL-HaNA, Staten-Generaal, 1.01.02, inv.nr. 12572.41, 27.06.1664.

FC, N8, 205–206.

⁶⁶⁸ It is likely that the WIC employees managed to intercept the letters coming from Europe.

⁶⁶⁹ Acrosan was the richest and most powerful man not only in the Fetu kingdom, but on the entire Gold Coast.

since they all knew that loyalties could shift rapidly. In addition, the WIC officials had attempted to use the slow information flow between Carloff and Smidt to their own advantage. Indeed, it is likely that they confiscated letters sent from Europe, and circulated malicious rumours and gossip.

After his official statement, Smidt wrote a letter to Carloff.⁶⁷⁰ He indicated that due to the desperate state of affairs, the fort and lodges at Cape Coast, Anomabo, Takorari and Orsu had been transferred to the WIC. Smidt described in great detail that he had done as Carloff had instructed him. Smidt further argued that they had had no other choice, because Carloff had not sent any more ships to the coast. In particular, the caboceer Acrosan was not pleased with the fact that no goods or payments were forthcoming. Smidt also stated that Carloff had acted under false pretences, and had not kept his promises. People on the coast had eventually perceived Carloff's dishonest behaviour, which Smidt already knew well from his earlier personal experience. Smidt ended his letter by informing Carloff that the WIC had hired him to manage their trade on the coast. He was pleased with the fact that the WIC had chosen to offer him employment, despite his previous actions. Smidt had changed allegiance, and the way that he addressed Carloff was not the way to treat a trading partner. The relationship between Smidt and Carloff had thus changed dramatically.

However, it is important to consider the other motives behind the surrender. The contract had stipulated the transfer of the fort and lodges to the WIC.⁶⁷¹ The remaining gold in the fort was to be transferred to Carloff. All previous Danish employees who were willing to accept a new job offer would be entitled to do so, and those who wanted to return home could. Furthermore, the employees were allowed to keep or to trade their belongings, including slaves, who could be sold at a fixed price on the coast. The commander (Smidt) and the upper factor (Canter) were allowed to either take employment with the WIC or to wait for a suitable moment to depart for Europe. The WIC would cover their daily expenses on the coast while they awaited transport. Smidt and Canter were also offered a bonus for their favours to the WIC (Smidt 5,000 Guilders, and Canter 4,000 Guilders). Canter returned to Europe late in 1659 with a significant quantity of gold, with which he meant to compensate Carloff for the surrender of the fort. However, Canter deposited the gold with the WIC, and the company only released it to Carloff after he had formally signed off the surrender of the fort.⁶⁷² In short, for Smidt and Canter, there were also financial and career motives behind the transfer. Employment in the WIC could provide them with new opportunities, and potentially greater stability than that offered by Carloff.

In the autumn of 1659, still unaware of the transfer on the coast, Carloff tried to maintain his balancing act in Europe. On 14 September 1659, de Swaen informed Carloff that he had become aware of his true intentions. According to de Swaen, he had already done more in Carloff's favour than his power of attorney allowed him to do, and he was not satisfied with what Carloff had done for him in return.⁶⁷³ Consequently, Carloff withdrew the power of attorney from de Swaen.⁶⁷⁴ Around

⁶⁷⁰ NL-HaNA, Staten-Generaal, 1.01.02, inv.nr. 12572.41, Samuel Smidt to Henrich Carloff, 31.07.1659; FC, N8, 189–191.

⁶⁷¹ This is a combination of capitulations from three different sources. NL-HaNA, Staten-Generaal, 1.01.02, inv.nr. 12571.38.1; NL-HaNA, Staten-Generaal, 1.01.02, inv.nr. 12571.36; NL-HaNA, Staten-Generaal, 1.01.02, inv.nr. 12572.41; FC, N8, 201–202.

⁶⁷² Porter, *European Activity*, 397; Brieven, confessie; mitsgaders, advisen van verscheyden rechtsgeleerden in de saeck van Isaac Coymans gegeven; als mede de sententie daer op gevolgt, (Rotterdam 1662).

⁶⁷³ NL-HaNA, Staten-Generaal, 1.01.02, inv.nr. 12572.41, Jan de Swaen to Carloff, 14.09.1659; FC, N8, 193.

⁶⁷⁴ NL-HaNA, Staten-Generaal, 1.01.02, inv.nr. 12572.41, Henrich Carloff to Jan de Swaen, 15.03.1659 (the withdrawal was added to the power of attorney document 04.10.1659); FC, N8, 171–173.

the same time, Carloff wrote to the upper factor Johan Canter, stating that he wanted to know about the state of affairs there.⁶⁷⁵ In another letter to Smidt, he wrote that he knew about four ships being equipped to sail to Guinea. According to Carloff, the WIC had received orders to treat Danish ships with respect.⁶⁷⁶ These letters demonstrate that Carloff was not aware of the current state of business in Western Africa. However, he continued to try to reconnect with his subordinates. This highlights how challenging it was to maintain connections with people at a distance through ineffective modes of communication.

The challenges of the networks in question can also be observed in a letter that Smidt wrote in April 1659 to Dirck Wilree, factor of the WIC.⁶⁷⁷ Smidt wrote that he had heard from Van Heussen that the Swedish had allied themselves with the English, and that a Swedish ship was sailing to the coast under a double commission. Smidt informed Wilree that Carloff had joined the English, and that he was going to attack Carolusborg with English support.⁶⁷⁸ Smidt also wrote that he had not heard from Carloff. This letter exemplifies the impact that unfounded rumours could have overseas; in fact, there was no proof that Carloff had made any kind of agreement with the English. Nevertheless, van Heussen had in effect convinced Smidt that Carloff had once again changed his loyalty. Indeed, Robert Porter has suggested that van Heussen had intercepted and confiscated incoming letters, and that Smidt had thus been unaware of Carloff's change of plans.⁶⁷⁹ It is impossible to know exactly what had happened and why events turned out as they did. However, the correspondence discussed above shows not only how difficult it was to balance between different networks, but also how difficult it was to navigate between different types of information produced within these networks.

Matters were further complicated by local issues. In a letter to the representatives of the SAC dated May 1659, Acrosan claimed to have been mistreated by Carloff and his men.⁶⁸⁰ In 1658, Carloff had promised that when he arrived on the coast, he would continue to improve trade with Acrosan and the Fetu. However, Acrosan had eventually understood that Carloff had broken his promises, and sold him a pack of lies. Indeed, this was the reason why Acrosan had conquered the fort when it was transferred to the WIC. He wished to remain loyal to the SAC, and to allow only the Swedish company to enter the fort. He confirmed that Carloff's behaviour was the reason for his decision, and that he would hand over the fort to a Swedish representative if one appeared within a year. In the meantime, he would be in charge. If the SAC did arrive within the stipulated period, they would only have to pay the monthly tribute and other customary gifts for the time that Acrosan had taken care of the fort. Whether Acrosan would have been able to keep his promises is unclear, since the SAC was unable to send ships to the coast by the time of the deadline.

Finally, in October, the first Glückstadt Company ship arrived on the coast. In charge was Joost Cramer, the previous business partner of Carloff in the SAC, who was now employed by the

⁶⁷⁵ Carloff sent the letter with Joost Cramer on the *St Marten* to the coast.

⁶⁷⁶ NL-HaNA, Staten-Generaal, 1.01.02, inv.nr. 12572.41, Carloff to Canter, 01.10.1659; FC, N8, 198.

⁶⁷⁷ Wilree would eventually become the Director-General of Elmina. He was also involved in the transfer of the fort.

⁶⁷⁸ RAC, TKUA, Nederlanden: akter vedr. Det politiska förhold, 1660-1665, Samuel Smidt to Dirck Wilree, On 18.04.1659; FC N8, 203.

⁶⁷⁹ Porter, *European Activity*, 394.

⁶⁸⁰ NL-HaNA, Staten-Generaal, 1.01.02, inv.nr. 12571.38.1, Jan Claessen (Acrosan) to the directors of the SAC, 29.05.1659; FC, N8, 215.

Glückstadt Company.⁶⁸¹ Cramer soon realised what had happened in April, and found himself unable to enter Fort Carolusborg. Cramer did not manage to claim Carolusborg for the Glückstadt Company, but did receive Acrosan's permission to build another fort further east on the coast. Cramer tried to protest against the WIC, but in vain. Over the subsequent years, the Cape Coast would remain a contested region.⁶⁸² The WIC remained a strong power on the Gold Coast, and the English and the Danish also managed to establish permanent settlements. The SAC also tried once more to establish itself, but eventually left the coast having had little success.

To conclude, this section has emphasised the difficulties that Carloff faced on the Gold Coast during the years 1657–1659. He had attacked his former employee the SAC, under Danish protection, and supported with Dutch capital. Thereafter, he had played a double role, offering his loyalty to both the WIC and the Danish officials. At first, he was unsure what the Danes could offer him. In the context of the Swedish wars, siding with the Danes might have seemed a less attractive prospect than simply surrendering the fort to the WIC. Therefore, Carloff decided to surrender the fort to the WIC, but at the same time to keep negotiating with Danish officials about the possibility of trading in Western Africa under Danish protection. The negotiations with the Danes dragged on, probably because of the war with Sweden, and Carloff ultimately failed to send ships to the Cape Coast. Smidt, due to other reasons, interpreted the situation as Carloff having failed in his enterprise, and therefore decided to transfer the fort to the WIC. Because of the slow flow of information, Carloff was completely oblivious of Smidt's decision, and continued planning his future business with the Danes.

Eventually, Carloff realised that his opportunities on the Cape Coast had evaporated, and that even his former ally Acrosan had abandoned him. During a subsequent dispute between the WIC and the Glückstadt Company (1662–1665), Carloff took the side of the WIC, and openly declared that the Glückstadt Company had been a sham. He was pressured to pick a side so as to avoid being accused of treason (at the time, he resided in Amsterdam). He even managed to keep the gold that he had stolen from the SAC. However, Carloff no longer returned to the Gold Coast.

This section has shown that Carloff ultimately failed to balance his connections. However, at the same time, it has demonstrated just how fragile these social connections were for all Europeans. Furthermore, the section has shown the ways in which the European political context had an impact on how individuals perceived business opportunities. In short, the different modes of agency between competitors and collaborators on the coast could change almost overnight, with serious implications for the balance of business networks, and ultimately for the trading companies themselves. Indeed, this made business uncertain, and even chaotic, a fact of which the individuals concerned were abundantly aware.

4.9 Conclusion

This chapter has argued that although people in the seventeenth century did not use the term “networks”, they were, nonetheless, aware of the different sets of connections that linked them personally to others. As such, the management and optimal balancing of connections was crucial to

⁶⁸¹ NL-HaNA, OWIC, 1.05.01.01, inv.nr. 134, Joost Cramer to Casper Van Heussen, 11.10.1659, 461–465 (scan 463–467); FC, N8, 221–222.

⁶⁸² NL-HaNA, OWIC, 1.05.01.01, inv.nr. 134, Joost Cramer to Casper Van Heussen, 11.10.1659, 461–465 (scan 463–467); FC, N8, 221–222; NL-HaNA, OWIC, 1.05.01.01, inv.nr. 134, Casper Van Heussen to Joost Cramer, 22.10.1659, 466–475. (scans, 468–477); FC, N8, 223–225.

career opportunities and economic success. Business and exchanges, in Europe and overseas, included several competing, overlapping and collaborating networks, which could change quickly if their participants decided to enter, leave, support or even betray a network.

This chapter has explained why balancing different connections was important in overseas entrepreneurship. Løvel not only had to manage the accounts and books of the company, but also had to please local rulers and merchants in order to maintain effective trading relationships. He managed these connections by instructing company employees and local merchants, who were directly or indirectly involved with the DEIC. Through Løvel, several overlapping business networks became intertwined. The experiences of Løvel and Carloff also show that relationships with local rulers and merchants were crucial. Local business relationships were built upon the promise of selling goods at low prices in the local market, paying tributes, offering lavish gifts, and obeying local rulers. As such, the local relationships of individuals were key to the success of the companies they served.

Carloff's involvement in ghost investing shows how the interests of individuals alternately coexisted and conflicted with those of the trading companies. A study of the investments made through the Glückstadt Company shows how complex systems were devised in order to circumvent the privileges of chartered companies, in this case, the WIC. These systems were operated through both individuals and interest groups. As has previously been noted, in the Nordic context, overseas entrepreneurship required coexistence between the trading companies and individuals on almost an equal footing. In addition, the interests of the various individuals were important either within, or in relation to, the local trading systems and networks in which they operated.

Carloff, who balanced between his own interests and those of the Danish, the Swedish and the Dutch, provides a good example. However, through close study of the challenges that such individuals faced, it becomes apparent that these connections were extremely fragile. The ruthlessness of seventeenth-century overseas business stemmed from the way in which relationships could be transformed almost overnight. Without good relationships with local rulers, European merchants and employees were at the mercy of their rivals. Here, the difference between Løvel and Carloff was that Løvel was more isolated and forced to survive with only a few men, with whom he ultimately failed to reach a mutual understanding. His relationships with the Nielsens and Hansen show this well: one day, he appointed them as acting governors or factors, and the next day, they conspired to overthrow him. The explanation is that Løvel represented the interests of the king, and simultaneously collaborated with local merchants, both of which were disliked by the other company employees. Carloff, on the other hand, was moving back and forth between Europe and Africa, and was more closely connected to his European networks. In the end, Løvel remained loyal to the king, whereas Carloff switched his allegiance multiple times. Løvel hoped that his loyalty would bring him upward social mobility, whereas Carloff was in a different position, and demonstrated no enduring loyalty to any monarch, or indeed, to anyone at all.

This chapter has also demonstrated that Løvel and Carloff often chose to act in an individualistic fashion. In particular, they were unable to maintain any inner coherence in the social relationships within the companies. The fact that both men had problems with the companies they worked for suggests, on the one hand, that they failed to develop their social connections within the companies effectively. On the other hand, it suggests that the companies were not harmonious enterprises, but were rather riven by conflicts of interest between the various employees.

Choosing the right business associates is crucial for an individual entrepreneur. Indeed, this choice says much about the individual's capacity to interpret his social environment. The choice of

connections is based on the individual's evaluation of the potential benefits, which again indicates the individual's intentions. If the intention is understood, it becomes clearer why individuals choose to connect with some and not with others.⁶⁸³ In my view, this approach can shed new light on the concepts and uses of trust and loyalty. When Leye and Carloff faced questions regarding the loyalty and trust of others, they unconsciously signalled that they too were subject to chains of trust and loyalty. The people involved in overseas trade were aware of how quickly loyalty could shift, and knew that trust was a vague, rhetorical matter. In the end, Leye and Carloff ultimately failed to balance the networks they were supposed to connect. Leye was overthrown in a mutiny, and Smidt handed Carolusborg over to the WIC just as Carloff had decided that the fort should not be transferred to them after all. Trust was fluid and negotiable, as was the line between loyalty and betrayal.

Both Leye and Carloff were indeed moving like spiders in a web. The cases studied above show just how difficult it was to balance different interests in an overseas business context. As for the spiders, the web served as a means to draw in and trap what they sought. For both Leye and Carloff, their connections were worth pursuing, but eventually the webs became too complex, ultimately causing the threads to break.

⁶⁸³ Mark Casson, *Entrepreneurship*, 24–26.

5 Gatekeepers of Knowledge from Overseas

5.1 Introduction

During the seventeenth century, all European trading enterprises faced the challenge of how to access and process scarce and irregular flows of information between Europe and overseas. Due to reasons characteristic of transcontinental trade, such as long distances and uncertain sailing conditions, there was a pressing need for the local knowledge of the men stationed overseas. The latter were crucial for the perception and planning of business in Europe, since they had the most up-to-date knowledge of local business rhythms and patterns. Such individuals were also responsible for conducting business in practice, which meant that they needed an understanding of how to trade with both non-European merchants and European competitors, in environments that were remarkably different from those at home.

This chapter will focus on the importance of accumulation of knowledge to overseas business. I understand the latter as the individual's experience of business conducted overseas through his own continuous presence and active participation, as well as his capacity to access and translate business information, both for his own benefit and for that of the trading enterprises for which he worked. This can be summed up as *knowledge of overseas trade*, which, for an individual with an entrepreneurial mindset, was something worth pursuing, particularly in order to demonstrate an aptitude for entrepreneurship to the directors of the companies in Europe.

I have chosen to use the concept *knowledge* rather than that of *know-how*. The reason for this is that although practical skills in conducting trade (*know-how*) are included within the more general term *knowledge*, the latter extends far beyond the merely practical sphere of the former. Thus, business know-how is a subordinate aspect of my larger concept of knowledge.

The concept of experience refers to the accumulated practices of long-term service overseas, as well as the capacity to navigate different zones of social and economic interaction. Information includes two factors. First, access to information refers to the capacity for gathering and accumulating information about trade overseas. Second, based on their previous experience, individuals knew how accumulated information could be used, for example, to exploit rumours and reports in order to influence the overseas trading situation, or to promote their career and social advancement in Europe. Thus, knowledge was an essential means for individuals to demonstrate added value, and to thus justify their relevance for the companies that employed them.

For their part, Leyel and Carloff not only had access to existing information, but also actively produced new information for the companies they served, a service that gave them a competitive advantage as entrepreneurs.⁶⁸⁴ Indeed, Leyel and Carloff went even further: they translated information into knowledge – a skill that not everyone possessed. In this sense, the exclusivity of knowledge, and not just information, constituted an important entrepreneurial asset.

The role of knowledge in long-distance and global trade has been discussed by Karel Davids, who has argued for its importance in the development of infrastructures, trade and institutions.⁶⁸⁵

⁶⁸⁴ Della Giusta and Casson corroborate that entrepreneurs differ from others because of the way they can access information, Casson and Della Giusta, "Entrepreneurship and Social Capital", 220–44.

⁶⁸⁵ Karel Davids, "On Machines, Self-Organization, and the Global Traveling of Knowledge, circa 1500–1900," *Isis* 106, no. 4 (2015): 866–74; Karel Davids, "River Control and the Evolution of Knowledge: A Comparison between Regions in China and Europe, 1400–1850," *Journal of Global History* 1, no. 1 (2006): 59–79.

Dauids has demonstrated how centralised institutions, such as states and trading companies, coordinated information from above. However, he has also claimed that this top-down focus has been one-sided, and has tended to obscure the other side of the flow and circulation of knowledge, that is, a bottom-up consideration of the role of individuals and groups in the finding, reproduction and circulation of knowledge. As Davids has made clear, recent studies of self-organised networks have attempted to rectify this imbalance.⁶⁸⁶ Indeed, the accumulation, processing and diffusion of knowledge were vital for the trading companies. While institutions remained responsible for the coordination of these processes, the contribution of experts with knowledge was crucial to their success.⁶⁸⁷

Chartered companies had limited face-to-face contact with their employees and their business counterparts – communication mainly occurred through personal correspondence and official reports.⁶⁸⁸ Direct contact between the governing elites of long-distance corporations and their overseas employees and agents was, by the very nature of the enterprise, less frequent, due in large part to delayed postal cycles. Conversely, chartered companies were organisations that needed regular and reliable intelligence from overseas.⁶⁸⁹

Steven Harris has shown that company employees “were bound by both written and unwritten rules of conduct, and corporate leaders had at their disposal mechanisms for the social and cognitive training and disciplining of members.”⁶⁹⁰ Trading companies needed to recruit reliable employees, and to send them overseas in order to develop business and to provide up-to-date correspondence and intelligence reports. The success of these information circuits varied greatly between the different companies.⁶⁹¹ However, all companies attached great importance to them, which meant that the companies were the preferred employers for men with more or less sophisticated writing and reading skills. Therefore, the contribution of individuals was absolutely essential for the companies, regardless of their organisational structure or economic success.⁶⁹²

The close correlation between experience, access to information and knowledge is important to emphasise. These three elements added value to one’s worth in employment and leadership in a long-distance trading organisation, where many individuals cultivated the image of a knowledgeable man. As such, this chapter will address the importance of the accumulation, use and misuse of knowledge.

⁶⁸⁶ David Hancock, “The Triumphs of Mercury: Connection and Control in the Emerging Atlantic Economy,” in *Soundings in Atlantic History: Latent Structures and Intellectual Currents, 1500-1830*, ed. Bernard Bailyn and Patricia L. Denault (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard Univ. Press, 2009), 112–140; Antunes, “Free Agents”; Polónia And Owen, “Cooperation-Based”.

⁶⁸⁷ Davids, “On Machines, Self-Organization”, 876.

⁶⁸⁸ Steven J. Harris, “Long-Distance Corporations, Big Sciences, and the Geography of Knowledge,” *Configurations* 6, no. 2 (1998): 269–304, 279.

⁶⁸⁹ Harris, “Long-Distance Corporations”, 279.

⁶⁹⁰ Steven J. Harris, “Networks of Travel, Correspondence and Exchange,” in *Networks of Travel, Correspondence and Exchange: Volume 3, Early Modern Science*, ed. Katharine Park and Lorraine Daston (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 341–64, 357.

⁶⁹¹ Harris, “Networks of Travel”, 358.

⁶⁹² Regarding the importance of individuals and their knowledge, see Miles Ogborn’s work on English East India Company employees, Miles Ogborn, *Indian Ink: Script and Print in the Making of the English East India Company* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008).

5.2 *The definition of knowledge overseas*

Of special interest for this chapter is the word “experience”, which played a crucial role in the activities of both Leyel and Carloff. In this regard, Robert Porter has written about the importance of hiring men with extensive experience on the Gold Coast. According to Porter, the English were particularly fortunate in managing to secure the services of Arent de Groot for their first expedition to the Gold Coast. As Porter put it: “De Geer made an even more spectacular catch, for he was able to engage as Director-Commandant of the Swedish company the man who was perhaps the most energetic, enterprising and experienced of all the WIC officials on the Gold Coast – the fiscal, Hendrick Carloff.”⁶⁹³

In this quotation, experience refers to an individual’s continuous presence in a physical space, as well as his capacity to process learning by doing (in this case, business and administration). Simultaneously, experience refers to the understanding of the local context, including its various actors, competitors, political entanglements, and cultural and social constraints. Experience can thus be understood as the understanding of multiple settings, through continuous visits and relational trial and error. In the long run, the successful management of experience resulted in a more effective adaptation of oneself and use of available means, in a process that transformed experience into usable knowledge. Overseas, not everyone was able to translate experience into knowledge, either due to personal limitations, such as a lack of literacy or cultural adaptability, or due to environmental constraints, for instance, difficulties in surviving in inhospitable environments. Entrepreneurial-minded individuals such as Leyel and Carloff were among those who successfully managed to convert experience into knowledge.

Leyel accumulated experience during his earlier years in the service of the VOC. Travelling through multiple ports in the Indian Ocean, developing a command of the major trading languages, practising different customs of trade, and entangling his interests with those of local merchants all resulted in a certain degree of adaptation to the social and cultural world of the Indian Ocean. When Leyel entered DEIC employment, he was thus able to translate the acquired experiences into knowledge, which he attempted, not always successfully, to apply in practice.

Carloff also accumulated experience whilst in the employment of the WIC. His numerous voyages to and in Western Africa illustrate the way in which he acquired experience, with particular emphasis on the geography of local markets, the daily administration of trade and the management of sensitive political conflicts (between Africans, between Africans and Europeans and between competing Europeans). His service in Angola, the island of São Tomé, and the vast Guinea Coast, his skills as a slave trader on the Slave Coast, and his role as an intermediate between the hinterland and the coastal trade in Accra, all contributed to the conversion of accumulated experience into knowledge, which Carloff would later deploy in practice whilst in the service of the WIC, SAC and the Glückstadt Company. However, as with Leyel, the use of knowledge did not always result in the expected outcomes.

The accumulation of knowledge was as dependent upon experience as it was upon the capability of acquiring and managing information. The importance of relevant information for the companies has been noted by Mark Casson, who points out that information was not freely accessible to everyone, and, for that reason, individuals holding privileged information had an advantage in intervening either in the company or in the wider marketplace. Indeed, this is the main reason for

⁶⁹³ Porter, *European Activity*, 290.

which Casson considers information, when transformed into knowledge, as an important element in entrepreneurship and an asset for entrepreneurs. This is why, in the seventeenth century, knowledgeable individuals became so crucial for companies and investors. As Casson puts it, experience, information and knowledge are highly localised, and only people on the ground are able to make full sense of them, since they are the only ones who observe the actual events.⁶⁹⁴

Donald Harreld emphasises the companies' need for up-to-date information regarding market conditions. In the case of the early modern period, information flowed slowly due to long distances and infrastructural constraints. As Harreld stresses: "Very large joint-stock companies, like the East India Companies, relied most heavily on their individual functionaries abroad to provide market information."⁶⁹⁵ In a similar fashion, Ann Carlos and Santhi Hejeebu argue that such overseas agents "were the vital generators of information that oiled the wheels of transcontinental commerce."⁶⁹⁶ In practice, agents, who possessed crucial information regarding market conditions, had an extensive knowledge of the availability of products, of foreign competitors, and of suppliers, and thus held a competitive advantage compared to their counterparts.

The importance of accessing and managing flows of information is generally referred to in economics as the "principal-agent theory". The relationship between the principal and the agent might become complicated when the agent makes decisions on behalf of his principal, and the principal does not have access to the same information as the agent. This becomes problematic, especially when the agent is motivated by his own interest and might thus be tempted to harm the interest of the principal. The main reason for such problems is the asymmetric access to information, which means that the agent has more up-to-date knowledge, for instance, of local markets and trading customs.

Carlos and Nicholas propose that during the early modern period, international markets were characterised by uncertainty and asymmetric information. Trading companies did their best to decrease transaction costs by collecting, processing and coordinating information on tastes, commodities and prices.⁶⁹⁷ The source of this information was the employees and local agents. For that reason, companies devised ways to supervise their personnel, in an attempt to reduce risk and to increase the opportunities for profit.⁶⁹⁸ One such mechanism of control was the labour contract. By this means, companies could specify fixed and incentive payments, so as to increase the chance of maintaining a stable and cooperative workforce. A second mechanism was to oblige officials to produce information for the administrative centres of the company. One of the ways in which companies tried to ensure the cooperation and loyalty of their employees was to allow a certain degree of private trading. From the perspective of the company, this incentive ensured that employees would remain vehicles of information circulation, without disturbing the strategic goals of the organisation. Furthermore, this mechanism was also a way of compensating for low and/or unpaid salaries.

⁶⁹⁴ Casson, ed., *Entrepreneurship*, 9.

⁶⁹⁵ Donald Harreld, "An Education in Commerce: Transmitting Business Information in Early Modern Europe," in *Information Flows: New Approaches in the Historical Study of Business Information*, ed. Leos Müller and Jari Ojala (Helsinki: SKS, Finnish Literature Society, 2007), 63–83, 67.

⁶⁹⁶ Ann Carlos and Santhi Hejeebu, "Specific Information and the English Chartered Companies, 1650-1750," in *Information Flows*, eds. Müller and Ojala, 139–69, 140.

⁶⁹⁷ Ann Carlos and Stephen Nicholas, "Theory and History: Seventeenth-Century Joint-Stock Chartered Trading Companies," *The Journal of Economic History* 56, no. 04 (1996): 916–24, 916.

⁶⁹⁸ Ann Carlos and Stephen Nicholas, "Agency Problems in Early Chartered Companies: The Case of the Hudson's Bay Company," *The Journal of Economic History* 50, no. 4 (1990): 853–75, 858.

If permitted, private trade was a common practice in the Indian Ocean. To the contrary, it seldom occurred in the Atlantic Ocean. For example, Carlos and Hejeebu argue that the English companies in the Atlantic controlled several exclusive markets, such as the fur trade in North America. If the companies had allowed private trade, they would have had to deal with direct competition from their own employees or agents. As an alternative, companies paid higher salaries, although in the case of the African trade, collaterals or bonds had to be deposited by new employees to guarantee loyalty.⁶⁹⁹ Following on from the arguments of chapters two and four, it should be stated that in the Atlantic Ocean, interloping was easier than in the Indian Ocean. For this reason, the danger was that a company's employees would offer their skills to competitors, whether these were private partnerships or other chartered companies.

The arguments of Carlos, Nicholas and Hejeebu probably hold true for the English context and the English companies. However, this dissertation will take a different approach. I am less concerned with the need of companies to recruit agents with the required knowledge, and more concerned with the agents themselves, the way they acquired and developed knowledge, and how they pitched that knowledge as a personal asset and reason for employment. Thus, I am turning the principal-agent problem the other way around.

From an entrepreneurial point of view, Jari Ojala and Leos Müller have demonstrated that asymmetries in the distribution of information were certainly beneficial for individuals. As they put it, "the bigger the information asymmetry, the greater the advantage and the potential profit for the well-informed actor."⁷⁰⁰ In line with these findings, I hypothesise that individuals with exclusive access to information would be tempted to use their position to strengthen such asymmetries, and to hinder companies from developing new information-gathering strategies. In short, this would ensure that the individuals concerned would remain indispensable. Information asymmetry was a source of profit, at least for some. It allowed individuals to mobilise their experience, to gather information, to translate it into knowledge, and to channel it in the way that most benefitted themselves personally, and eventually also the companies they served.

Leyel had access to information in a way that most employees did not, since unlike those experts on Indian Ocean trade based at the European headquarters of the companies, he had actually participated in the operations concerned. Leyel's privileged access to information, especially about local markets and possible competitors, was partly thanks to his local trading partners. Leyel was thus the repository for different information flows. Intriguingly, only a few letters sent from Europe to Tranquebar, were addressed to Leyel.⁷⁰¹

In the case of Carloff, the fact that he had been employed by the Dutch, the Swedish, the Danish and the French had served to enhance his access to information. When he entered the employment of the SAC, he had already known that the Cape Coast did not currently have any permanent European settlements.⁷⁰² From his service with the WIC, Carloff also knew that the Dutch wanted to attract local trade closer to Elmina castle, particularly by undercutting the role of the Fetu in the hinterland trade, which had kept the latter largely closed to Europeans.⁷⁰³ However, Carloff's

⁶⁹⁹ Carlos and Hejeebu, "Specific Information", 163–164.

⁷⁰⁰ Leos Müller and Jari Ojala, "Information Flows and Economic Performance Over the Long Term: An Introduction," in *Information Flows*, ed. Müller and Ojala, 14–28, 21.

⁷⁰¹ RAC, DK, B 246 A, H. Leyel to W. Leyel, 28.12.1646.

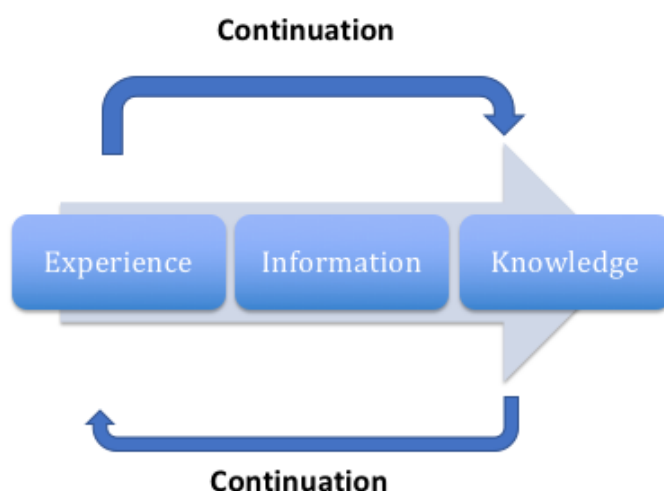
⁷⁰² Nørregård, *Danish Settlements*, 10; chapter three in this dissertation.

⁷⁰³ Daaku, *Trade and Politics*, 107.

best source of knowledge was his duty as WIC prosecutor to inspect all incoming ships suspected of smuggling. During these inspections, he met men like Arent Gabbesen, and learned not only about European affairs, but also about methods of commercial interloping. It is thus not surprising that even men such as Jan Valckenburgh were willing to take the position of prosecutor, a post that has attracted less interest than that of governor in the historiography, despite its crucial importance for business.⁷⁰⁴

The central argument of this chapter is that information and experience should not be treated as separate things, but rather as overlapping characteristics, which combined to constitute knowledge of overseas trade. Over time, once knowledge was acquired, one could adapt and develop new and more profitable experiences. Therefore, continuity over time was essential for the knowledge accumulation process, as illustrated in figure 5-1.

Figure 5-1 Process of knowledge accumulation



5.3 *Leyel and knowledge in the Indian Ocean*

Leyel was required to report to the directors of the company in Copenhagen, and was accountable for DEIC business in Asia. His reports were supposed to provide the directors and the king with sufficient information about the state of the company in India.⁷⁰⁵ In the DEIC, the person responsible for reporting to Europe was the commander, so the directors in Copenhagen had high expectations of this person.

From early on, Leyel sought to create the impression of being the right man for the position. One of his strategies was to exploit the information he was able to gather for his own benefit. He often began reports by underlining the bad conduct of fellow employees, especially Pessart, thus making his own actions appear in a good light. In other words, he presented himself as the man who was in the right place at the right time to save the company. To emphasise his importance, after the siege and subsequent inspection of Fort Dansborg, he reported that all matters regarding the company were in a desperate state, that the whole affair was embarrassing and that it endangered Danish respectability in the eyes of other Europeans.⁷⁰⁶

⁷⁰⁴ About the role of the prosecutor, see chapter two; Valckenburgh as prosecutor, see chapter three.

⁷⁰⁵ RAC, DK, Diverse kongelige ekspeditioner det Ostindiske Kompagni vedkommende, Instructions to the commander, undated, but related to the First DEIC.

⁷⁰⁶ RAC, DK, B 246 A, Leyel to the directors, 22.11.1644.

Another recurring theme in Leye's reports was his complaints regarding his colleagues' heavy alcohol consumption. "Here more than anywhere else in the world, opportunities for drinking and loose behaviour abound."⁷⁰⁷ To reinforce his role as saviour of the company Leye drew an association between the immoral behaviour of other employees and administrative difficulties. This became a convenient way for Leye to send signals about who was to blame for the bad management of the company in Asia. The fault lay with his nemesis Pessart and his companions, whom Leye referred to as rebels, rhetorically placing them outside of the orderly and morally superior space of the company.⁷⁰⁸

Leye continued to cultivate his image as the only person capable of securing the best interests of the company. For example, he informed Copenhagen that trade in Makassar was about to collapse, largely because of Pessart's unpaid debts. Had Leye not made the journey there, the entire factory would have been lost to other Europeans, and the DEIC would have faced great losses, since Makassar was the place in which it made most profit. He promised the directors that within one year, he would repay the outstanding debts and continue to expand trade.⁷⁰⁹

Furthermore, Leye portrayed himself as the only trustworthy employee in the East. He complained that he had no one else he could trust, and, for that reason, he had been forced to appoint Anders Nielsen as the acting governor at fort Dansborg, so that he could travel in order to sort out the problems that had been caused by his predecessor.⁷¹⁰ However, what he failed to report was that this travelling often involved trading for his own benefit.

Leye also insisted on demonstrating his knowledge of local customs to the directors in Europe, particularly by explaining how gift-giving was an essential part of his duties, and how well he performed it, particularly in relation to the Nayak. He also compared his own skill in these matters to that of his predecessor Crappe, a man who was much admired by the company directors in Denmark.⁷¹¹

From Leye's reports, a director in Copenhagen, without access to any other information, could easily believe that the company was in trouble, and that forceful measures were needed. By blaming his co-commander for everything that had gone wrong with the company, Leye justified his decision to take charge of the DEIC in Asia.⁷¹² For Leye, it was important to protect the image of his own superior judgement. Indeed, this was probably why Leye's communiques were so personal, disclosing only the vaguest information about the details of business.⁷¹³

In a separate report addressed to the King of Denmark, Leye described what had happened in India since he had arrived. In general, the information was the same as that which he gave to the directors. However, in the letter to the king, one gets the impression that Leye emphasised his own importance even more strongly. He stated to the king that he had done his utmost to improve trade in India, and that he would demonstrate his success in his subsequent reports.⁷¹⁴ Leye perhaps saw an opportunity to send divergent information to the directors and to the king, and to thus manipulate the

⁷⁰⁷ "eptersom her giffis meehre leylihed till druekenskab og losagtighed end paa nogen stadre i warden.", RAC, DK, B 246 A, Leye to the directors, 22.11.1644.

⁷⁰⁸ RAC, DK, B 246 A, Leye to the directors, 22.11.1644.

⁷⁰⁹ RAC, DK, B 246 A, Leye to the directors, 12.12.1645.

⁷¹⁰ RAC, DK, B 246 A, Leye to the directors, 22.11.1644.

⁷¹¹ RAC, DK, B 246 A, Leye to the directors, 12.12.1645.

⁷¹² RAC, DK, B 246 A, Leye to the directors, 22.11.1644.

⁷¹³ Similar argument by Casson. See Casson, *The Entrepreneur*, 42.

⁷¹⁴ RAC, DK, B 246 A, Leye to the king, 12.12.1645.

situation to his own advantage.⁷¹⁵ Indeed, this would have been quite feasible, given the monopoly that Løvel held over information.

Among the things that Løvel omitted from his reports to the directors and the king, was the fact that he was allowing the Dutch and the English to trade at Tranquebar, provided they kept their flags hidden.⁷¹⁶ Similarly, he made no mention of the fact that he was providing employment to local merchants, or that he was extending credit to other DEIC employees. In his reports, Løvel gave the impression that he was operating alone in India, whereas in reality he depended upon a multiplicity of different networks (as has been demonstrated in the previous chapter).

One way in which Løvel conveyed his own importance was to give detailed explanations of how he had improved trade. In particular, Løvel wanted to give the impression that he had made Tranquebar a more attractive venue for trade by stabilising exchange rates. In addition, Løvel was keen to emphasize that security had improved since the construction of the fort, and that new houses had been built using materials from Emeldy, Japara and Makassar.⁷¹⁷ Løvel went to great lengths to demonstrate how he had saved the position of the Danish in Asia. His reports especially underlined the role of knowledge: Løvel understood what was needed, and demonstrated his knowledge regarding competitors, the challenges of business and, most importantly, the measures required to improve trade. After all, he was on a royal mission. “I would prefer to leave India, but I would be ashamed of doing so before I have, with the help of God, developed trade for the better, and before the king has sent someone else to relieve me.”⁷¹⁸ Løvel felt that he was a valuable asset for the company, and stressed his importance by accentuating the burden of serving in Tranquebar.

As discussed in chapter two and four, the company relied on only a few men in India. Therefore, an experienced overseas employee like Løvel was invaluable. Nothing in his appointment suggests that the other directors doubted his capabilities. However, despite the lack of critical voices, the other directors might not have been pleased with Løvel’s personal appointment by the king. It was, after all, against the original charter of the company, and it was difficult to know who Løvel was really representing: the king or the company. His appointment in India was perhaps a relief for the other directors, since it seemed that he was representing the king’s interests foremost.

In his reports, Løvel also gave the impression of being knowledgeable. He took the liberty to present his vision of how trade should be conducted in practice. As an example, Løvel claimed that it was absolutely necessary that the directors send additional ships to India, preferably large ships, along with one hundred and eighty newly recruited men. If this could not be done, Løvel suggested hiring people from other companies, especially officers, carpenters and smiths. Alternatively, he suggested that seasoned India trade veterans could be hired in Europe, and sent out to serve under the DEIC.⁷¹⁹ He often returned to his request for ships, of between 120 and 150 lasts, which would be deployed in the intra-Asian trade. With these ships, it would be possible to sail continuously from the Coromandel Coast to Ceylon, Sumatra and Java.⁷²⁰

⁷¹⁵ RAC, DK, B 246 A, Løvel to the directors and the king, 12.12.1645.

⁷¹⁶ RAC, DK, B 246 A, Løvel to P. Nielsen, 20.09.1645.

⁷¹⁷ RAC, DK, B 246 A, Løvel to the directors, 12.12.1645.

⁷¹⁸ “jeg vill hemskt gjerne begire at forlōdis naff India. Mens jeg skammer mig at giōrre det. Indtill jeg med guds hjelp haffuer braegt alting ude een god status og nogen merelhlig thienste for hands majestet og faderlander aff mig skiber her.”, RAC, DK, B 246 A, Løvel to the directors, 22.11.1644.

⁷¹⁹ RAC, DK, B 246 A, Løvel to the directors 12.12.1645; RAC, DK, B 246 A, Løvel to the king 12.12.1645.

⁷²⁰ Ibidem.

In addition to his request for equipment and ships, Leyel also demanded men and women. The men should be trained up to become employees of the company, while the women would serve to sustain the continuity of the settlement. This suggests that Leyel planned to embed the company in the intra-Asian trade by fostering a more permanent DEIC settlement. Also, in his report to the king, Leyel demanded further reinforcements. He stated that he hoped to send the *Christianshavn* back to Copenhagen with a handsome profit, but that he currently could not spare the ship and its crew without risking the Danish position in the intra-Asian trade. He suggested imitating the strategy of the Portuguese in Goa, who carried their goods under the flags of other companies, but maintained forts and settlements as property of the king.⁷²¹

Leyel had yet more suggestions. Since reinforcements from Europe had failed to arrive, he proposed allowing other Europeans to handle the shipping between Europe and Tranquebar. He envisaged a non-Danish country or institution assuming the costs and the risks of transport, paying a recognition fee to the DEIC, but retaining the profits from the sale of the goods in Europe. This controversial proposal illustrates the dire straits that the DEIC was in. However, at the same time, it shows Leyel's ability to adapt to a difficult situation.⁷²²

Leyel's suggestions extended into the diplomatic realm as well. He was in favour of a diplomatic treaty with Portugal, as a means of reciprocating the royal decree that had granted the Danish access to Macao, as well as to all the other places within the Portuguese sphere of influence. He concluded that ultimately, the Portuguese had been friendlier and more accommodating than the English or the Dutch. Leyel's enthusiasm for entering Macao was driven by his desire to connect the Spanish American-Manila trade with Macao, and consequently with China. He had a vested interest in the transport of goods from Dansborg to Manila in exchange for silver, which he wanted to trade in Macao for Chinese products, which would in turn bring a high profit upon their sale in Europe. If the deal was timed well, Leyel argued, significant profits could be obtained within ten months. However, in order to fulfil his plan, Leyel needed the Danish crown to finalise yet another diplomatic treaty, this time with the Dutch, so as to secure passage through the Straits of Malacca (the only route to Manila).⁷²³ To facilitate DEIC access to the markets in Manila, Leyel also insisted on a treaty with Madrid. In sum, such references to European diplomacy was yet another way for Leyel to demonstrate his own knowledge and expertise to the king. At the same time, these efforts reveal Leyel's vision of the world, in which trade in Asia was deeply intertwined with politics in Europe and vice-versa.

Given the lack of contact with Copenhagen, there was another problem that Leyel needed to face, namely the proliferation of unreliable information through rumours and gossip. Leyel had no choice but to depend upon such sources to obtain information from Europe. For example, in his first report, Leyel noted that he had heard rumours from Dutch merchants regarding the arrival of a ship from Glückstadt at Cutiara, in Ceylon.⁷²⁴ However, in a letter to Nielsen dated 1644, Leyel admitted that he possessed no detailed information about that ship, and ordered Nielsen to investigate and report the crew and the merchant responsible as soon as possible.⁷²⁵

Second-hand information also played another role. News from Europe was often received through rumours. In a letter to Poul Hansen dated 1646, Leyel wrote that in Bantam, he had heard

⁷²¹ Ibidem.

⁷²² Ibidem.

⁷²³ RAC, DK, B 246 A, Leyel to the directors, 15.11.1646.

⁷²⁴ RAC, DK, B 246 A, Leyel to the directors 22.11.1644.

⁷²⁵ RAC, DK, B 246 A, Leyel to A. Nielsen, 06.11.1644.

from the Dutch that Denmark had concluded peace with Sweden. In the same letter, he also repeated the rumour that the VOC would send 6,000 men to Batavia that year, a measure that had become necessary since the Dutch company had lost 500 men in Ceylon, whilst fighting against the King of Candy.⁷²⁶

Leyel also gathered information from newspapers. For example, on one occasion, he reported that seven ships had arrived from Portugal in Goa, carrying newspapers. Through the latter, he had learned that in 1646, the Dutch had sent 70 ships to the West Indies in order to fight the Spanish Atlantic fleet.⁷²⁷ The arrival of newspapers from Portugal in Goa, and from England in Madras, was again mentioned in letters to Poul Nielsen and Jørgen Hansen dated December 1646. Through these newspapers, Leyel had been able to reconstruct political developments back in Europe. He was keen to stress the growing tensions between the Dutch Republic and England, and between the former and the Portuguese.⁷²⁸ He was also astonished by the fact that the King of England had been defeated by the Parliamentarians in the Civil War, and had fled to a castle in Scotland. He was afraid of what would happen in England in the future, and mourned the fact that he had received “no news from home or from Holland.”⁷²⁹

News finally arrived from home in a letter from Leyel’s son, Hans, and his wife Ellenor Leyel, dated 28 December 1646. After several incidents in the service of the DEIC, Hans had ended up in England. He explained to his father that the Danish King was planning to create a new company, as soon as the court official Corfiz Ulfeldt returned to Copenhagen. Meanwhile, some non-company Danish ships were being prepared to set sail to India.⁷³⁰ In a subsequent letter, Hans informed his father that Johan Braem, Jacob Mickelsen and Roeland Crape, the veteran directors of the DEIC, had all died.⁷³¹

Rumours, gossip, personal correspondence and newspapers were thus the sources of information at Leyel’s disposal. These different sources varied as to their reliability. In practice, Leyel had to decide how to deal with the existing information, which news to trust, which to disseminate, which to withhold, and which to “adapt” in order to advance the interests of the DEIC, to secure the loyalty of its employees, or to further Leyel’s own personal ambitions.

5.4 *Carloff and the accumulation of knowledge in the Atlantic*

For Heinrich Carloff, his accumulated knowledge was the starting-point for his employment with the SAC. Carloff’s 1646 mission to São Tomé, while in the employ of the WIC, had enabled him to become acquainted with the island, its population and its mode of sugar production. This was essential knowledge for the SAC, since Louis de Geer’s argument for founding a company in Sweden had been precisely in order to tap into the sugar trade with São Tomé. According to Louis de Geer, this had the potential to become as lucrative as the Asian trade.⁷³² Although sugar was an important motive, the SAC would eventually focus on the gold trade on the Gold Coast. For Queen Christina, hiring Carloff

⁷²⁶ RAC, DK, B 246 A, Leyel to P. Hansen, 08.08.1646.

⁷²⁷ RAC, DK, B 246 A, Leyel to P. Hansen and J. Hansen, 16.11.1646.

⁷²⁸ RAC, DK, B 246 A, Leyel to P. Hansen and J. Hansen, 15.12.1646.

⁷²⁹ “jeg haffue indted nyt udaff wore land eller udaf Holland”, RAC, DK, B 246 A, Leyel to J. Hansen, 24.05.1647.

⁷³⁰ RAC, DK, B 246 A, H. Leyel to W. Leyel, 28.12.1646.

⁷³¹ *Ibidem*.

⁷³² Nováky, *Handelskompanier*, 91; Dahlgren, *Louis de Geer*, 336; Granlund, *En svensk koloni i Afrika*, 7; RP, 06.12.1649.

was a means to reach the King of Fetu, with whom she wished to establish good relations.⁷³³ After all, it was through the Fetu that Europeans could buy gold from the hinterland. From an entrepreneurial point of view, these two events demonstrate how Carloff's overseas knowledge was the reason for his hiring and the consequent establishment of the SAC. De Geer and the queen believed that employing Carloff would improve the prospects for Swedish trade in Africa. However, when de Geer presented his plans for a Swedish Africa Company, he met with a cold response from the Royal Council, something which can be explained by reference to internal power struggles rather than by any specific opposition to the plan. Indeed, this was one of the reasons for which de Geer approached the queen in person. Unlike the council, she agreed to his proposal.

A second occasion on which Carloff's knowledge was specifically mentioned as a motive for hiring him was his entrance into the French West India Company (FWIC) (1664–1674).⁷³⁴ The company operated on the Slave Coast in Western Africa, and hired Carloff on 8 February 1665.⁷³⁵ Even if a contract was signed between the FWIC and Carloff, it was his brother-in-law, Jean Andre Wolzogen, who represented him in the negotiations in Paris.⁷³⁶ Wolzogen became his representative in France partly because of their family connection, but first and foremost because he belonged to an Austrian noble family, spoke French, and was acquainted with French court culture. He facilitated Carloff's access to the French overseas networks, and helped him during the process of naturalisation in France.⁷³⁷ Wolzogen's role was thus surely important for Carloff's entrance into the French company. However, more decisive was Carloff's knowledge of African trade. He was hired to take command of all the outposts and factories that would be established in the Kingdoms of Luanda, Congo, and Angola, and any other region between the Equator and the Cape of Good Hope, for a period of six years. His contract also bound him to carry slaves to the French West Indies.⁷³⁸ In Carloff's contract, Angola likely referred to the whole Central West African coast, specifically the Luango Coast, and possibly Benguela.⁷³⁹

⁷³³ RAS, LA, 82, The power of attorney by the queen, undated; Granlund has transcribed and translated the letter. Granlund, *En svensk koloni i Afrika*, Appendix 2.

⁷³⁴ Compagnie Française des Indes occidentales.

⁷³⁵ Regular trade on the Slave Coast was established in the seventeenth century, but the Portuguese had begun to trade slaves in the region already around 1550. See Law, *Slave Coast*, 117–121; A Ly, *La Compagnie du Sénégal de 1675 à 1696*, PhD-dissertation (Bordeaux: Université de Bordeaux, 1955), 94–95; Mims, *Colbert's West India Policy*, 117.

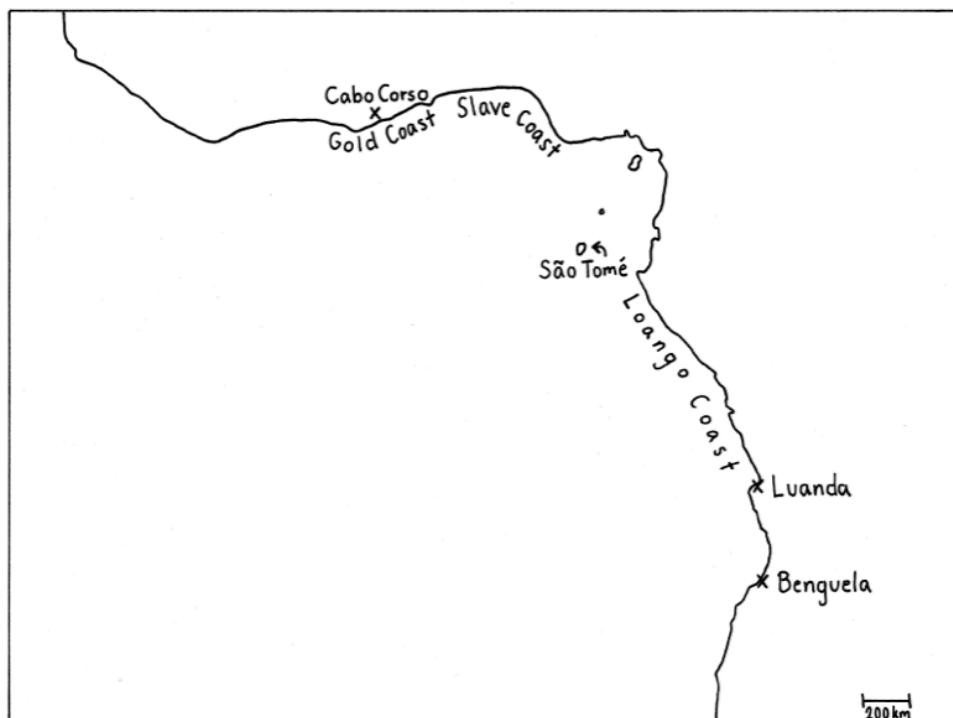
⁷³⁶ Archives Nationales (AN), Minutier central des notaires de Paris (MN), AN/MC/ET/VI/527, Commercial treaty, 28.08.1665; Mims, *Colbert's West India Policy*, 117.

⁷³⁷ Mims, *Colbert's West India Policy*, 117.

⁷³⁸ However, there are problems with the place names in the contract. Filipa Ribeiro da Silva and Stacey Sommerdyk have stated with reference to the slave trade in Central Western Africa that “the definition of Angola's location and size differs from one group of European traders to the next, and shifts significantly over time.” Filipa Ribeiro da Silva and Stacey Sommerdyk, “Reexamining the Geography and Merchants of the West Central African Trade: Looking behind Numbers,” *African Economic History* 28 (2010): 77–105, 78.

⁷³⁹ Ribeiro da Silva and Sommerdyk, “Reexamining the Geography”, 77–82.

Figure 5-2 Map of the region of Western Africa in which Carloff was active



Map created by Henrik Pulli

Even if many of the places mentioned in Carloff's French contract related to areas controlled by Portugal, the geographical terminology implied that the French company were using Carloff to forge a link with the Portuguese in the South Atlantic.⁷⁴⁰ The Portuguese already controlled the Luanda trade, and, for this reason, Northern European slave traders tended to resort to other regions of Central Western Africa. However, even in the Luango, Northern Europeans could easily buy slaves from African traders without Portuguese intervention. In other regions, such as in Benguela, it was not uncommon for Northern Europeans to interlope Portuguese slaving fleets, with the active support of Luso-African merchants on the coast.⁷⁴¹ These activities were not unknown to Carloff. He had an extensive knowledge of the Portuguese sphere of influence, by virtue of having acted as a mediator in São Tomé between the local Portuguese administration and the WIC, and through his service in Dutch Brazil. His contract also specified that he was to be allowed to buy or capture slaves to supply the Caribbean market. This is remarkable, since capturing slaves was not a common European

⁷⁴⁰ During the period 1660–1675, there was a significant increase in the Dutch slave trade in Western Africa. At the same time, there was a decline in the Portuguese slave trade. See Ribeiro da Silva, *Dutch and Portuguese*, 250–254.

⁷⁴¹ Concerning the structure of Central Western African trade and the decline of Luanda trade, see Ribeiro da Silva, *Dutch and Portuguese*, 200; Roquinaldo Ferreira, "Transforming Atlantic Slaving: Trade, Warfare and Territorial Control in Angola, 1650–1800" PhD-dissertation, (Los Angeles: University of California, 2003), chapter 1; On the importance of Luango and Benguela, see Mariana Candido, "The Formation of a Colonial Society in the African Coast: Benguela and the Atlantic World, 1600–1780," in *Seaports in the First Global Age Portuguese Agents, Networks and Interactions (1500–1800)*, ed. Cátia Antunes and Amelia Polónia (Porto: Uporto Edições, 2016), 197–219, 209–210; Arlindo Caldeira, "Angola and 17th Century. South Atlantic Slave Trade," in *Networks and Trans-Cultural Exchange: Slave Trading in the South Atlantic, 1590–1867*, ed. Filipa Ribeiro da Silva and David Richardson (Boston/Leiden: Brill, 2014), 101–42, 113.

practice on the Gold Coast. However, the Portuguese had been doing it for decades in Central Western Africa.⁷⁴²

The contract between the French company and Carloff was atypical, since he was not officially put on the company's payroll. Carloff was free to sell slaves on the Caribbean islands, on the condition that the French company had first pick of seven percent of the slaves. The return cargoes of sugar that Carloff would receive in the West Indies should then preferably be transported to La Rochelle or Dunkirk. If that was impossible, he should make use of other French ports. The company would pay all import duties and expenses incurred in the unloading of the cargo. Any exports from Guinea to France would earn Carloff a recognition fee of seven percent. Finally, Carloff was allowed to fly the company's flags on all his ships.⁷⁴³ With this contract, Carloff thus moved from being an entrepreneur in Africa to being an entrepreneur in the Atlantic, and shifted his focus from trading in Africa (as had been the case during his time with the SAC and the Glückstadt company) to trading with Africa.

During a time of increased interest in the slave trade, Carloff was by no means the only one to sign a contract with the French company. A similar contract was drawn up and signed by a man called Jacquet, who became director of commerce in Senegal, in an outpost that he had himself established.⁷⁴⁴ Carloff was in a position where he knew that his experience and knowledge was valued in France. The contract with the French company shows that he did not only offer companies knowledge of how to operate in Western Africa, but also used that knowledge to convince rulers in Europe to grant him the opportunity to personally profit from Africa through trade.

The contract with the French company was important in other ways. The moment that Carloff signed this new agreement was prior to the second Anglo-Dutch war, in which France also played an important role. Carloff, who had ceased to trade on the Gold Coast after the skirmish of 1659, was looking for a new outlet. The first step was to become naturalised as French, since the French company did not officially allow the participation of foreigners. In this sense, Carloff's naturalisation as French was similar to his ennoblement in Sweden in 1654.⁷⁴⁵

James Pritchard has stated that the biggest obstacle for French overseas commerce was the limited demand for colonial goods, a situation that also existed in the Nordic kingdoms, where Carloff had served previously. The French chartered companies, such as the West India Company (1664), the Senegal Company (1674), the Guinea Company (1685) and the Saint-Domingue Company (1698) provided services to the state rather than being commercial enterprises. By 1668, foreign trade was forbidden in French colonies and all trade officially monopolised by the companies.⁷⁴⁶ For Pritchard, these companies were not economic success stories. However, this conclusion is only partly correct: certain individuals were profiting from the overseas trade, but these were not necessarily the investors of the companies. As Mims has demonstrated, private merchants were able to challenge the monopoly

⁷⁴² Candido, "The Formation of a Colonial Society", 206–207.

⁷⁴³ The contract has been transcribed by Ly and translated by Mims, *Colbert's West India Policy*, 118. However, he does not reveal the source of the information, and therefore it is impossible to know what the original sources stated.

⁷⁴⁴ Mims, *Colbert's West India Policy*, 117.

⁷⁴⁵ See chapters three and four.

⁷⁴⁶ James Pritchard, *In Search of Empire: The French in the Americas, 1670-1730* (Cambridge/New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 191.

of the company, among them Dutch smugglers, who profited greatly from the French plantations.⁷⁴⁷ Like the Dutch, Carloff benefitted by establishing a private enterprise, while continuing to assist in the development of company trade. This is why his contract cannot be considered either a typical labour contract, or a proof of property (in shares or bonds) in the FWIC. The following section will focus on the impact that Carloff and his knowledge had within the French company.

The *Journal du voyage du Sieur Delbee* provides a unique contemporary account of the accumulation of knowledge, and particularly Carloff's knowledge of Western Africa.⁷⁴⁸ According to Stewart Mims, the French Navy Captain, François Delbée, wrote about Carloff with great respect, stating that he had considerable experience in the African trade and an impressive knowledge of local practices.⁷⁴⁹ "Mister Carolof, who has traded for a long time in this country, has retained great knowledge of it... [thus] it would not be right if what he has done were to be forgotten, since it has the potential to help those who will conduct similar enterprises in the future. Moreover, his knowledge will be useful and agreeable to the public."⁷⁵⁰ Unlike Leyel, Carloff thus had someone else to sing his praises, a fact that served only to increase his reputation in the eyes of others.

Carloff arrived at Offra in the Kingdom of Ardres (a coastal area in present-day Benin) on 4 January 1670 aboard the *La Justice*.⁷⁵¹ His task was to negotiate a favourable trading location for the French company. To this end, Carloff had a first meeting with the *Fidalgo* (the chief or governor), who was responsible for the commercial affairs of the kingdom. Carloff made an official request to meet the king, and, at the same time, sent a personal envoy to the king on his own initiative. Carloff hoped for a quick reply, but none came for four days. In his message to the king, Carloff had reminded him of the fact that they had previously drunk the *Bocca á Bocca* together.⁷⁵² Finally, a messenger arrived on 16 January, bearing the reply that the king had not forgotten his long relationship with Carloff. Considering this relationship, he did not require the French company to present him with gifts in advance of an audience, as was customary when receiving Europeans. In addition, the king promised the French the same trading rights as other Europeans in the region. The favour the king showed towards the French thus arose from his personal relationship with Carloff.⁷⁵³ As a result, the company obtained unconditional access to the local market and permission to establish a permanent factory. For a recently established company, Carloff's knowledge of the market and negotiating practices were indeed a valuable asset.

However, the historian Eberhart Schmitt has claimed that Carloff could not have been the person who had previously drunk *Bocca á Bocca* with the king. According to Schmitt, Carloff had

⁷⁴⁷ Wim Klooster has also studied such cross-imperial actions, Wim Klooster, "Curaçao as a Transit Center to the Spanish Main and the French West Indies," in *Dutch Atlantic Connections, 1680-1800: Linking Empires, Bridging Borders*, ed. Gert Oostindie and Jessica Vance Roitman (Boston/Leiden: Brill, 2014), 25–51.

⁷⁴⁸ François Delbée, *Journal du Voyage du Sieur Delbee, Commissaire General de la Marine aux Isles, dans la Coste de Guinee pour l'establissement du Commerce en ces Pays en l'annee 1669* (Paris, 1671).

⁷⁴⁹ Mims, *Colbert's West India Policy*, 165.

⁷⁵⁰ "Sier Carolof, qui ayant long-temps trafiqué en ce pais, y avoit conserve beaucoup de connoissance & d habitude: cette pensée me paroissant d'autant plus raisonnable, qu'il ne seroit pas juste que ce qu'il a fait demeure comme ensevely dan l'oubly, puis qu'il peut servir de regle á ceux qui formeron á l'avenir de pareilles entreprises & sa connoissance est aussi utile qu'agreable au public.", Delbée, *Journal du Voyage du Sieur Delbee*, 387–388.

⁷⁵¹ The kingdom has various spellings: Ardrah, Ardres, Adra and Arrada. The present-day name is Allada. Offra was a sea port region controlled by the inland Kingdom of Ardres. The region was famous for its slave trade; present-day name: Benin.

⁷⁵² A cultural ritual, to show respect towards each other.

⁷⁵³ Mims, *Colbert's West India Policy*, 168–169.

previously worked on the Gold Coast, and not in Offra.⁷⁵⁴ Nevertheless, Carloff did have access to information regarding local customs, and thus had the knowledge required for this type of operation. Having only the account of Delbée to go by, it is not possible to establish whether or how Carloff exploited the information that Delbée had reported. It is known, however, that the latter – who was greatly respected in France – had decided to report on the establishment of trade connections in Western Africa based on the knowledge of Carloff. I would thus nuance Schmitt's claim. Carloff's knowledge of the Slave Coast was based on his previous experience, prior to joining the French company. In 1662, Carloff had sailed with a Dutch licence to Angola, in order to buy slaves from the Portuguese.⁷⁵⁵ It is entirely possible that Carloff visited the King of Ardra during this trip, since many ships stopped there while heading to Angola. At the same time, during Carloff's employment with the WIC, the company made several exploratory voyages to the Kingdom of Ardra, and, according to Robin Law, the SAC and the Glückstadt Company also traded there during the 1650s, at a time when Carloff was on their payroll.⁷⁵⁶

However, not all of Carloff's knowledge was used for the benefit of the trading companies. He also used his knowledge of the Western African trade, and in particular the slave trade. According to the Transatlantic Slave Trade Database (TSTD), in 1662, Carloff owned the *St Joris*, which completed a successful Atlantic voyage around that time.⁷⁵⁷ The ship departed from Texel (in the Dutch Republic) for Luanda, where 373 slaves were purchased. It then sailed for Cayenne and Guadeloupe, where the slaves were sold. In January 1665, the ship returned to La Rochelle, with captain Volkert Claas Roem. Den Heijer has mentioned this voyage, and has stated that Carloff was the captain of the ship. However, he was not an experienced sailor, and had thus hired Volkert Claas Roem to pilot the vessel.⁷⁵⁸ There are methodological problems with the names used in the TSTD and their function within a ship, as has been pointed out by Silva and Sommerdyk: "often captains, pilots, freighters and ship owners performed various tasks and roles related not only with sailing but also to business. Their tasks often included operating as accountants in charge of commercial transactions on board the ships and on the coast, where they would conduct trade with local traders whether they were African, Euro-African or European."⁷⁵⁹ Whatever the position attributed to him in the TSTD, Carloff's participation in yet another business in Africa demonstrates his flexibility and wide-ranging knowledge.⁷⁶⁰

⁷⁵⁴ Eberhard Schmitt, "Die Französische Westindienkompanie Verhandelt mit dem König von Ardra wegen einer Befestigten Handelsstation und Der Guinea-Küste 1670," in *Der Aufbau Der Kolonialreiche* (München: Otto Harrassowitz Verlag, 1987), 193–203, 197.

⁷⁵⁵ Heijer, "Een dienaar", 171.

⁷⁵⁶ Law, *The Slave Coast*, 124.

⁷⁵⁷ Slave trade database, search profile: captain, name: Carloff, [http://www.slavevoyages.org/voyage/search,\(TSTD\)](http://www.slavevoyages.org/voyage/search,(TSTD)) Voyage number: 11389; Issues considering the usage of the slave trade database, Julie Svalastog M., *The Transatlantic Slave Trade Database: Qualitative Possibilities and Quantitative Limitations*, M.A. dissertation King's College London, 2012.

⁷⁵⁸ Heijer, "Een dienaar", 171.

⁷⁵⁹ Ribeiro da Silva and Sommerdyk, "Reexamining the Geography", 96.

⁷⁶⁰ On the different roles onboard these ships, see Ibid.

Figure 5-3 Slave trade voyages involving Carloff

COMMISSION/ COMPANY	TIME PERIOD	ROUTE	SHIP	CARGO	CAPTAIN
Amsterdam	1662-1665	Texel/Luanda/Cayenne/Guadeloupe	<i>St Joris</i>	373 slaves	Roem Volkert, Carloff: owner
French West India Company	1666-1668	Texel/Congo North/French Caribbean	<i>Tijdsverdrif</i>	316 slaves	Carloff
French West India Company	1669-1670	Le Havre/Offra/Martinique	<i>La Justice</i>	750 slaves	D'Elbée
French West India Company	1671-1672	Le Havre/Offra/ Guadeloupe	<i>Unknown</i>	450 slaves	Carloff

Source: <http://www.slavevoyages.org/voyage/>.⁷⁶¹

Quirijn Spranger, the director of the colony at Guyana, reported that on 9 April 1664, Carloff had arrived aboard the *St Joris*. The papers of the ship confirmed that Carloff was sailing under a commission from Amsterdam.⁷⁶² He had received this commission, it would seem, on the condition that he would not approach the Gold Coast.⁷⁶³ However, Carloff was not the only Amsterdam resident involved in such slave trade voyages; men such as Henrique Mathias, Jan Foullon, Isaac Coymans, Cornelis Hendricksen, and Dirck Gerloffsen were also involved in similar enterprises, and some of them, like Carloff, were also previous WIC employees.⁷⁶⁴ The slave trade that emanated out from Amsterdam was not a new business.⁷⁶⁵ While Carloff had been prosecutor on the Gold Coast, a Portuguese merchant residing in Amsterdam, Samuel Lumbroso, declared that in 1646, he had been aboard the *De Eendracht* as a passenger, and had sailed to Guinea, where the ship had purchased 200 slaves.⁷⁶⁶ The previous skipper of de Geer, Arent Gabbesen, had also traded slaves in Western Africa towards the end of the 1650s.⁷⁶⁷ In 1671, Thielman Wilkens declared that he and Claes Janssen had been employed by the WIC as merchants on the Gold Coast and the Slave Coast in 1659, 1660, and in 1663. There, they had traded in gold, ivory and above all slaves.⁷⁶⁸ In other words, many previous WIC, SAC and Glückstadt Company employees had been involved in the slave trade. This involvement marked a transition away from trading primarily in gold, and underscores the importance of entrepreneurial adaptation and versatility.

When a new voyage began in 1666, Carloff was captain of the *Tijdsverdrif*. He departed from Texel and sailed to Western Africa, where he purchased 316 slaves, who were then sold at an

⁷⁶¹ TSTD, Voyage nr: 11389, 21561, 44266 and 21560.

⁷⁶² SAA NA: 3188, fol.386, 25.12.1665.

⁷⁶³ Heijer, "Een dienaar", 171.

⁷⁶⁴ Several notary entries show this: SAA NA: 1117, fol.191, 16.06.1656, SAA NA: 604, fol. 193, 12.12.1651; SAA NA: 2118, fol. -, 01.08.1657.

⁷⁶⁵ On the role of Amsterdam merchants in the Africa trade, see the works by Antunes and Ribeiro Da Silva, "Cross-Cultural Entrepreneurship," *Itinerario* 35, no. 1 (April 2011): 49–76; Filipa Ribeiro da Silva, "Crossing Empires: Portuguese, Sephardic, and Dutch Business Networks in the Atlantic Slave Trade, 1580–1674," *The Americas* 68, no. 1 (2011): 7–32.

⁷⁶⁶ SAA NA: 1690, fol. A/1009, 09.06.1648.

⁷⁶⁷ SAA NA: 1899, fol. 173, 03.10.1657.

⁷⁶⁸ SAA NA: 3589, fol. 258, 15.09.1671.

unspecified French Caribbean port. Carloff eventually returned to Zealand in 1668. Upon his return, the *Tijdsverdrif* was sailing under the French flag and was owned by the FWIC.⁷⁶⁹

Among Carloff's slave trading voyages, I have also included the voyage he made under the French flag with captain Delbée in 1669. During this voyage, Carloff transported 750 slaves to Martinique.⁷⁷⁰ Two years later, in 1671, he set sail from Le Havre, heading for Whydah,⁷⁷¹ where he bought 450 slaves, who were then transported across the Atlantic to Guadeloupe. He lost about 100 of them in the middle passage; a great loss of life, and earnings.⁷⁷² Indeed, the number of casualties during this voyage demonstrates the sheer cruelty of this type of trade. Thus, Carloff accumulated experience in the slave trade during his employment with the WIC, the SAC and the Glückstadt Company, as well as with the French. The experience that he and others gained during such company service could then be transferred into new forms of business.

Knowledge was accumulated through experience, but also through the ability to access information about how trade was being developed and conducted between Europe, Africa and the Americas. Indeed, Carloff had both. For the SAC, the Glückstadt Company and the FWIC, having someone capable of making the connection between various networks and markets was a valuable asset.

Carloff's knowledge was of obvious value to his contemporaries. The governor of Guadeloupe, Du Lion, wrote to Colbert on 18 July 1670 that Carloff had completed a successful slave voyage, and had received payment for his human cargo.⁷⁷³ He also praised Carloff for his excellent knowledge of trade in gold, ivory and slaves.⁷⁷⁴ Indeed, his appreciation of Carloff's know-how was such that Du Lion agreed to grant Carloff land close to Grand Cul-de-sac, for the purpose of building a plantation. Together, he reported, they had plans for building a church, a sugar mill and a warehouse. In the letter that followed, Du Lion, continued to praise Carloff for his knowledge of Africa, and requested Colbert's approval for their joint plans. He also mentioned that Carloff had been offered jobs by the English and the Dutch, but that he had declined.⁷⁷⁵ Later, Du Lion reported that Carloff had returned to the island with yet another 350 slaves.⁷⁷⁶

Du Lion was not alone in praising Carloff's knowledge. In October 1670, the governor of the island Marie-Galante, Jacques De Boisseret, reported that he had been selling slaves on Carloff's account.⁷⁷⁷ In these reports, Carloff was represented as a trustworthy source of information, a regular supply of slaves, and knowledge. The letters by Du Lion and De Boisseret were appreciative of Carloff's knowledge of the Africa trade, meaning primarily the slave trade. However, they also reflected Carloff's transformation into an Atlantic businessman, with access to plantations and the associated trade in cash crops.

The importance of the circulation of overseas knowledge was also apparent in Carloff's communiques to the French Company regarding the slave trade, and especially local trading practices.

⁷⁶⁹ TSTD, Voyage number: 44266.

⁷⁷⁰ Schmitt, "Die Französische Westindienkompanie", 195.

⁷⁷¹ It is possible that Whydah here refers to Offra.

⁷⁷² Schmitt, "Die Französische Westindienkompanie", 194; TSTD, Voyage number: 21561.

⁷⁷³ France (FR), Archives nationales d'Outre-mer (ANOM), Secrétariat d'Etat à la Marine - Correspondance à l'arrivée en provenance de la Guadeloupe, C7A1 F 253; 18.07.1670. Du Lion to Secretaria d'Etat à la Marine.

⁷⁷⁴ FR ANOM C7A1 F° 275, 25.07.1670. Du Lion to Secretaria d'Etat à la Marine.

⁷⁷⁵ FR ANOM C7A1 F° 279, 28.07.1670. Du Lion to Secretaria d'Etat à la Marine.

⁷⁷⁶ FR ANOM C7A1 F°46, 07.03.1672. Du Lion to Secretaria d'Etat à la Marine.

⁷⁷⁷ FR ANOM C7A1 F°371, 03.10.1670. Jacques de Boisseret to Secretaria d'Etat à la Marine.

His understanding of daily practices, the need for gift-giving and tributes, and personal connections, which he had acquired whilst in WIC employment, culminated in the writing of a manual for French captains of slave ships.⁷⁷⁸ The manual was included as an appendix to the journal of Delbée. In the manual, Carloff transferred his knowledge to the French company, providing privileged and detailed information about the slave trade. For instance, he recommended hiring canoers from the Gold Coast to navigate the waters of the Slave Coast for the benefit of European slave traders.⁷⁷⁹ Indeed, the lack of natural harbours on the Slave Coast hindered the landing of European ships, and forced entire fleets into dangerous bays on the Guinea Coast. The use of canoers was thus a practical solution to a long-standing challenge.

Carloff's manual offers a unique opportunity to understand the importance of his access to information combined with his previous service. The first part of the instructions dealt with the voyage prior to arrival on the Slave Coast. Captains should be careful after having passed the latitude of Cape Verde, because of the currents surrounding the islands. Indeed, it was not uncommon for ships to be seized by these currents and swept onto sandbanks. After reaching the Western African coastline, Carloff recommended sailing close to the land, since local merchants would probably have their canoes loaded and ready to come on board. He further suggested that Gran Sestre would be a good place to trade iron for malagette (pepper).⁷⁸⁰ The next stop should be at the river of Saint Andre, to pick up water and firewood. However, he warned that the locals there were hostile and might try to attack the ships. After taking in provisions, captains should then advance towards the shoreline. Locals would probably try to sell ivory, but prices would be prohibitive. After the cape of Three Points, the voyage should continue with smaller sails, and captains should be aware of the rocks at Takorari. At Ante, captains should anchor the ship and buy a canoe, since these were absolutely necessary in Ardres. A canoe should have between sixteen and twenty rowers, and should be paid for with muskets, the only object of barter accepted in the area. According to Carloff, captains would need approximately 50 muskets for each canoe. Once aboard the canoes, captains should continue the four-day journey to Ardres. They were also advised to ask the carpenter on board to acquire wood to strengthen the canoe.⁷⁸¹ The Gold Coast canoes were usually dug out from a single tree trunk, and were thus unsuitable for the Slave Coast, and required modification.⁷⁸² Upon arrival in Ardres, captains should delegate the canoes to the *Commis General*. The General was then responsible for the loading of the merchandise brought from Europe into a boat, which should cross the water where the dangerous currents began. The goods should then be returned to the canoes, which should then be entrusted to the local agent, who would know how to navigate the waters. When enough slaves had been purchased, the expedition should depart.⁷⁸³

The final part of the manual was devoted to the crossing of the Atlantic. From Fernand Po, where the wind was usually very strong, skilled captains should reach Cabo Lopo. Once there, captains should provision their ships with plenty of water and wood, because these could be easily obtained there. After setting out from Cabo Lopo, captains would face the challenge of manoeuvring into the open Atlantic, or risk being thrown back to where they had departed from, where they would

⁷⁷⁸ Manual by Henrich Carloff to the French Ship Captains printed in, Delbée, *Journal du Voyage du Sieur Delbee*, 475–494.

⁷⁷⁹ Law, *The Slave Coast*, 126 and 149.

⁷⁸⁰ Delbée, *Journal du Voyage du Sieur Delbee*, 478.

⁷⁸¹ *Ibid*, 483.

⁷⁸² Law, "Between the Sea and the Lagoons.", 226.

⁷⁸³ Delbée, *Journal du Voyage du Sieur Delbee*, 484.

then have to wait for another month or so. If this happened twice, provisions would be exhausted, and the ship would be forced to anchor at *São Tomé*.⁷⁸⁴ If the right course were taken, ships should then head to Annabon Island, where provisions for the sailors and slaves could be obtained cheaply. Once the ships were provisioned, captains should head for the southeast, or risk being delayed for months. This leg of the journey would be the greatest test for any captain.⁷⁸⁵ The southeast winds would be favourable to the crossing of the Atlantic, reaching in the first instance Penedo São Paulo, and from there the Caribbean.⁷⁸⁶ At this point, Carloff ended his instructions, stating that the remaining voyage was already well known. This last part of the instructions reveals Carloff's knowledge of navigation in Western Africa and the Atlantic, particularly through the vivid and detailed descriptions.

Carloff's manual was a rich source of information for French captains unfamiliar with the African waters and with the slave trade. The fact that he provided detailed and accurate information implies that this was by no means a new subject for him. He was able to give advice on how to sail, how to purchase goods and provisions, and how to avoid the pitfalls of the journey. His information also provided a good overview of the challenges, risks and uncertainties associated with this type of trade. However, although Robin Law has noted that Carloff was the first to recommend the use of canoers from the Gold Coast for slave purchases on the Slave Coast, it seems likely that this was already an established practice.⁷⁸⁷ Nevertheless, from an entrepreneurial point of view, Carloff disseminated a great deal of important knowledge to the French and others.

5.5 Conclusion

This chapter has argued that experience and access to information were entrepreneurial assets that resulted in knowledge. They were utilised by Leye and Carloff to enhance their importance to the companies they served. The starting-point for this chapter was an analysis of the principal-agent problem from the point of view of the agent rather than the principal. Instead of looking at how companies tried to control their employees, I demonstrated how employees used informational asymmetries within the companies to their own advantage.

Studying the principal-agent problem from a reversed perspective shows that information became an important asset for individuals, and thus created competition for those positions that involved channelling information to Europe. Aiming to accumulate as much knowledge as possible, individuals often overstated their own importance, which further complicated the channelling of information. In this sense, it cannot be argued that individuals solved principal-agency problems, but rather changed their form. The cases of Leye and Carloff also show that they wanted to keep the knowledge they had accumulated as their own exclusive property. This individualistic attitude was at times a cause of tension. In particular, rivals within the companies sometimes saw Leye and Carloff as threats.

This chapter has highlighted the fact that as long as information was circulated unevenly, the need for individuals with up-to-date knowledge remained essential for the companies. Individuals played an indispensable role in the transformation of experience and information into usable and competitive knowledge.

⁷⁸⁴ Ibid, 487–488.

⁷⁸⁵ Ibid, 490.

⁷⁸⁶ Ibid, 491.

⁷⁸⁷ Law, "Between the Sea and the Lagoons.", 225.

Knowledge was demonstrated through the written word. Reports, correspondence, instructions, manuals and narratives remained central to the production of knowledge. Leyel and Carloff both sought to control the distribution of information, and this suggests that they were aware of the value of the knowledge they possessed. Nonetheless, for this knowledge, Leyel and Carloff depended on their own physical presence in trading zones, their access to local information and practices, their capacity for mobility and travel, their acquaintance with local trading cultures, and, as discussed in the previous chapter, simply knowing the right people.

Effectively safeguarding their own individual knowledge required a balancing act, and was full of potential conflicts of interests. Leyel and Carloff made sure that they provided their employers with information that was beneficial for the companies. The information provided was, however, carefully selected. For this reason, even if company administrators tried to control employees by forcing them to regularly report on the state of affairs, employees could subvert this demand by selectively editing the contents of their reports.

Knowledge could also be translated into entrepreneurial opportunities. Leyel and Carloff possessed knowledge that was indubitably essential for the companies they served, but they tended to exaggerate this yet further for purposes of self-promotion. At the headquarters of the companies, the directors hoped for the best outcome for overseas trade. As the case of Leyel demonstrates, monarchs also had high expectations for the success of trade, but they were also motivated by rivalries with other European powers.

During the seventeenth century, individuals who possessed the right type of knowledge were valuable assets. However, they were also a threat. Directors in Europe simply did not have the information that these men had. Companies could never be sure about the information their agents transmitted. Leyel did send extensive reports back to Europe, and represented himself as the saviour of the company. However, whether his plans were actually implemented at the meetings of the directors is unclear. Around the time of the mutiny, the Danish King Christian IV had died (1648), and what would happen to the company remained unknown. Eventually, the company was restructured, and continued to operate, with various additional restructurings, well into the mid-nineteenth century. Carloff provided the French company with useful knowledge about how to engage with the local rulers on the Slave Coast, and also about how to participate in the slave trade. Even if the results of their reports are not entirely clear, they do at least demonstrate the importance of the knowledge they had accumulated. In practice, such individuals were indeed gatekeepers of overseas knowledge, a fact that gave them a considerable competitive advantage.

6 Brokers of Violence

6.1 Introduction

In the history of business and entrepreneurship, the primary focus has conventionally been on trade. In contrast, the role of violence has been dismissed as counterproductive, in that it increased uncertainty and risk, thereby heightening transaction costs. Indeed, studies of entrepreneurship have been almost completely silent regarding the relationship between trade and violence. In other words, historians have rarely moved beyond the assumption that violence is always costly for business. However, Sanjay Subrahmanyam has argued that individuals involved in overseas trade often behaved like warriors as well as merchants.⁷⁸⁸ As such, it is also important to study business from the perspective of violence. In this chapter I will argue that the deployment of violence within an entrepreneurial context can in fact be an effective way of achieving personal business goals.

To illustrate the role of violence in early modern overseas entrepreneurship, I will focus on Leyel's use of violence as a means to shatter the social hierarchy of the Danish settlement at Tranquebar, as well as his use of violence against local ships in the Bay of Bengal. In the case of Carloff, I will focus on how violence was used to disrupt the hierarchy of the Swedish settlement at Carolusborg (1658), as well as in the course of a maritime campaign in the Caribbean (1676). These events were related to the maritime world of trade, business and violence, even if some of them occurred on land. Violence was common in the overseas context, and Leyel and Carloff were not only willing to use it for purposes of business, but also internalised it as an essential feature of overseas entrepreneurship.

6.2 The use of violence in seventeenth-century maritime trade

Although there have been relatively few studies of the relationship between violence and entrepreneurship, the wider historiography of early modern trade has often touched upon the question of violence. For the Swedish historian Jan Glete, "the sea was a violent place of work".⁷⁸⁹ The maritime world offered many incentives for ship captains, pilots, sailors and merchants to use violence; attacking and plundering ships was a good source of income, a means for political engagement and a way for states to assert their sovereignty.⁷⁹⁰ At the time, the definition of legality and illegality was a question of political power. States, companies and individual traders defined the borders of legality in accordance with their own interests. This made overseas business different from business in Europe. Investigating ships suspected of illegal practices provided a means to earn a

⁷⁸⁸ Subrahmanyam, "Introduction", in *Merchant Networks in the Early Modern World*, xiii–xxiii, xiii.

⁷⁸⁹ Jan Glete, *Warfare at Sea, 1500-1650: Maritime Conflicts and the Transformation of Europe* (New York: Routledge, 2000), 40.

⁷⁹⁰ The literature on the topic is too extensive for one footnote. However, some examples are: Carlo M. Cipolla, *Guns and Sails in the Early Phase of European Expansion, 1400-1700* (New York: Random House, 1965); Geoffrey Parker, *The Military Revolution: Military Innovation and the Rise of the West, 1500-1800* (Cambridge/New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), chapter 3; L. H. J. Sicking, "Naval Warfare in Europe, c.1330–c.1680", in *European Warfare, 1350-1750*, ed. Frank Tallett and D. J. B. Trim (Cambridge/New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 236–63; L. H. J. Sicking, *Neptune and the Netherlands: State, Economy, and War at Sea in the Renaissance* (Boston/Leiden: Brill, 2004).

living, and here, too, violence played a crucial role. The line between trade, privateering and piracy was blurred, and became increasingly so the further one was from Europe.⁷⁹¹

Violence at sea included pirates, privateers, corsairs and buccaneers.⁷⁹² Privateering was an activity in which ships belonging to private owners and sailing under state commission (so-called “letter of marque”) seized enemy vessels and cargoes. This meant that privateering was confined to periods of war. On the other hand, piracy was an act of maritime robbery. The main difference was that a privateer acted under the authority of a state.⁷⁹³ While a privateer would share his “prize” with the state, a pirate, if caught, would be hanged.⁷⁹⁴

However, at this time, the largest source of maritime violence was states themselves. The seventeenth century witnessed the expansion of navies, through which commercial companies and convoy systems could maintain an immense apparatus of violence, particularly for purposes of overseas expansion. For example, the studies of Erik Odegard, Henk den Heijer, Michiel de Jong, Gerrit Knaap, Han Jordaen and Victor Enthoven have convincingly demonstrated the way in which the Dutch trading companies were, to a certain extent, developed in order to participate in wars (WIC), and to have the capacity to engage in naval battles (VOC).⁷⁹⁵ In this chapter, however, the aim is not to study the companies as instruments of war, but rather to acknowledge that they had a violent side. For many companies, using violence was common. For example, as has already been mentioned in chapter two, while Carloff was employed by the WIC, he took part in the military expeditions of Cornelis Jol in Luanda and São Tomé.⁷⁹⁶

Adam Clulow has argued that the reality of Asia was often very different from the discussions regarding the use of violence that took place in Europe. In his words, “company agents on the ground in Asia tended to pile a number of ideas on top of another with little thought to connection or consistency, or to rely on the more basic notion that force was essential to doing business in Asia.”⁷⁹⁷ Either way, maritime violence was an integral part of overseas business. Indeed, an act of violence such as privateering was potentially very profitable. However, it could also be ineffective: instructions to fleets were written by people lacking specific knowledge of the areas concerned, often the wrong ships were captured, captains and crews risked their own lives as well as those of those on board the ships they sought to capture, and there was a possibility that some of these captains and crews would overstep the limits specified by the original commissions, turning from privateers into pirates.⁷⁹⁸

⁷⁹¹ On these different forms of illegal activities in global history, see S. Amirel and L. Müller, eds., *Persistent Piracy: Maritime Violence and State-Formation in Global Historical Perspective* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014).

⁷⁹² Janice E. Thomson, *Mercenaries, Pirates, and Sovereigns*; Kris Lane has extensively studied the different kinds of privateers, corsairs, sea rovers and buccaneers. See Kris Lane, *Pillaging the Empire: Global Piracy on the High Seas, 1500-1750*, 1 edition (New York: Routledge, 2015).

⁷⁹³ Thomson, *Mercenaries, Pirates, and Sovereigns*, 22–23.

⁷⁹⁴ Terms like *corsair* and *buccaneer* also fell under the umbrella of the term *pirate*, but these are concepts directly related to the French and Spanish Caribbean, Lane, *Pillaging the Empire*, chapter 1.

⁷⁹⁵ Erik Odegard, “The Sixth Admiralty: The Dutch East India Company and the Military Revolution at Sea, c. 1639–1667,” *International Journal of Maritime History* 26, no. 4 (2014): 669–84; Victor Enthoven, Henk den Heijer, Han Jordaen, (eds.), *Geweld in de West : een militaire geschiedenis van de Nederlandse Atlantische wereld, 1600-1800*, Boston/Leiden: Brill, 2013; Michiel de Jong, Gerrit Knaap and Henk den Heijer, *Oorlogen overzee: militair optreden door compagnie en staat buiten Europa 1595-1814*. Amsterdam: Uitgeverij Boom, 2015.

⁷⁹⁶ On Cornelis Jol and other similar military expeditions by the WIC, see Enthoven, Heijer, Jordaen, *Geweld in de West*, 20–29.

⁷⁹⁷ Adam Clulow, “European Maritime Violence and Territorial States in Early Modern Asia, 1600-1650” *Itinerario* 33, no. 3 (2009): 72–94, 79.

⁷⁹⁸ Clulow, “European Maritime Violence” 79.

For individuals, the sea brought both opportunities and risks, in both legal and illegal settings. The risks included premature death, illness, shipwreck and accidents on board, all of which risks were increased by violent attacks at sea. However, since violence was used for aggression and for protection, delimitation and justification of violence was performed in contracts, charters, commissions and treaties. Lastly, violence could be justified as a means to improve trade. In this sense, Jan Glete has suggested that violence was one of the skills acquired by seamen in pre-modern times. He has further stated that long-distance trade tended to be controlled by those groups that used violence most efficiently at sea.⁷⁹⁹ Violence thus played a crucial role in early modern expansion and trade. To paraphrase Carlo Cipolla, during the early modern period, guns, sails and empire were closely intertwined.⁸⁰⁰

The role of violence as an entrepreneurial tool has nevertheless attracted very little attention from historians, with the exception of the historiography relating to the Portuguese empire.⁸⁰¹ The Indian and Atlantic Oceans were zones of opportunity, and violence was a natural means of pursuing the latter, giving the sea the character of a frontier, on which trade and violence were intertwined. The sources and the nature of violence were often unclear: states sponsored some acts and forbade others, violence was performed by private entrepreneurs, and the dividing line between the state and private violence was often unclear. Rulers offered individuals opportunities for privateering, a decision that entailed several consequences. First, at least in theory, states became stronger as privateers used violence in their name. However, violence often backfired, especially in Asia. Second, privateering was a means of upholding mercantilism, since attacks on foreign ships were in keeping with this ideology. Third, rulers used privateering licenses as a means to distribute privilege and power among specific social groups, in an attempt to win support for the mounting expenses that maritime expansion entailed. Fourth, states provided a cover of legitimacy for violence by private parties. Indeed, this can be referred to as the ‘nationalisation’ of violence, this being part of the process of the monopolisation of violence that was inherent to modern states. Finally, violence at sea during times of peace was a way of maintaining a constant preparedness for war.

Privateers, pirates, and admirals and captains at the service of overseas companies have been omitted from the recently well-defined category of “military entrepreneurs”.⁸⁰² For Jeffrey Fynn-Paul and his co-authors, a military entrepreneur was “a person who undertakes to supply the state with the means to wage war.”⁸⁰³ According to these authors, such a person needed to either supply the state with additional financial capacity, to provide troop levies or to supply arms, goods, uniforms or other

⁷⁹⁹ Glete, *Warfare at Sea, 1500-1650*, 42.

⁸⁰⁰ Cipolla, *Guns and Sails*.

⁸⁰¹ There are several examples in the Portuguese historiography that relate to violence and entrepreneurship. Pedro Teixeira, Diogo Pereira and Francisco Vieira de Figueiredo, to name but a few examples, combined violence and entrepreneurship. See for example, Sanjay Subrahmanyam, *The Portuguese Empire in Asia, 1500-1700: A Political and Economic History* (Chichester: John Wiley & Sons, 2012), 253–258; C. R. Boxer, *Francisco Vieira de Figueiredo: A Portuguese Merchant-Adventurer in South East Asia, 1624-1667* (Gravenhage: Martinus Nijhoff, 1967); A. J. R. Russell-Wood, *The Portuguese Empire, 1415-1808: A World on the Move* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1998), 94–105, 96.

⁸⁰² David Parrott, *The Business of War: Military Enterprise and Military Revolution in Early Modern Europe* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012); David Parrott, “The Military Enterpriser in the Thirty Years’ War,” in *War, Entrepreneurs, and the State in Europe and the Mediterranean, 1300-1800*, ed. Jeff Fynn-Paul (Boston/Leiden: Brill, 2014), 63–86.

⁸⁰³ Jeff Fynn-Paul, Marjolein ’t Hart, and Griet Vermeesch, “Entrepreneurs, Military Supply, and State Formation in the Late Medieval and Early Modern Periods: New Directions,” in *War, Entrepreneurs, and the State in Europe and the Mediterranean, 1300-1800*, ed. Jeff Fynn-Paul (Boston/Leiden: Brill, 2014), 1–13, no 8.

material necessary for violence. Their approach focused on those men who developed a war industry, rather than those who used violence for social or economic gains. Unlike the large war contractors of European states, Leye and Carloff's main concern was not logistics or supply. Rather, they had the means of violence provided to them by the companies that they served, and were able to use these in a very direct way to further their own entrepreneurial projects.

According to Glete, the relevance of men like Leye and Carloff can be explained by the demand for "*private entrepreneurs*". In short, states lacked fleets and skilled men to participate in long-distance trade. Hence, private entrepreneurs, connected with local maritime communities, offered a potential solution. As already stated in chapter five, the latter were able to provide the necessary provisions and personnel, and offered experience and knowledge to the enterprises that they served.⁸⁰⁴ Although private entrepreneurs were often a diffuse group, they shared common features: they often belonged to social groups inferior to those that provided officers in the navy and commercial fleets, and they often used their role to attain upward social mobility. Furthermore, most early modern societies believed that violence against those from different cultures and religions was permissible, and, as the distances grew, the more permissible it became. Indeed, this belief will be illustrated with reference to the cases of Leye and Carloff.⁸⁰⁵

Needless to say, not all overseas entrepreneurship involved violent behaviour. There were in fact several merchant groups who did business without violence, and even condemned the use of it by others. Nonetheless, at least in the Nordic companies, violence was often present. This does not mean that individuals always chose violence in order to make profit, but rather that they were prepared to use violence if necessary to secure new opportunities for profit. Thus, violence was not necessarily a priority, but rather an option. Unlike most of those studied in historical accounts of entrepreneurship, overseas entrepreneurs did not shy away from deploying violence if necessary. From a short-term perspective, one could profit from privateering or pillaging settlements. However, from a long-term perspective, violence was seldom successful, because it created potential enemies and weakened the capacity of the workforce overseas.

6.3 *Leye and violence in the Indian Ocean*

In 1628, Leye was appointed captain in the Danish navy, a fact which suggests that he was deemed ready to engage in combat. The task was, however, short lived, since the King, Christian IV, left the Thirty Year's War only one year after Leye's appointment.⁸⁰⁶ Later, in the Indian Ocean, Leye's first experience of violence came in 1643, during the siege of Fort Dansborg. After Leye's return from Emeldy and Masulipatnam, he corresponded with the governor, Jakob van Stakenborrig, and Chaplain Niels Andersen Udbynder. In these letters, he threatened to use violence if he was not allowed to enter the fort.⁸⁰⁷ When he was refused entry on 21 June, he justified his recourse to violence as part of his mission to rescue the DEIC. He was assisted in this endeavour by Simão D'Almeida, his Portuguese contact in Negapatnam. On 22 June, Leye arrived at Tranquebar with 70 soldiers, both European and local. In the town, he met three DEIC employees, who had left the fort, and who informed him that the people inside would not resist in the case of an attack. According to

⁸⁰⁴ Glete, *Warfare at Sea, 1500-1650*, 42.

⁸⁰⁵ *Ibidem*.

⁸⁰⁶ *Kancelliets brevbøger, 1627-1629*, 01.05.1628, Leye appointed as captain in the Danish navy, 406-407.

⁸⁰⁷ See chapter four for further discussion of this tension.

Leyel, the inhabitants of Tranquebar saw his troops as liberators from the tyranny of Pessart and Udbyneder. Soon after that, Leyel, assisted by the people of Tranquebar as well as the firepower of the *Christianshavn*, took over the fort, meeting with little resistance.⁸⁰⁸ Although he may have exaggerated the local response to his arrival, violence proved an excellent means of achieving his aims.

The instructions and rules devised to punish company employees indicate that physical violence was not exceptional. Rigorous discipline was expected of all DEIC employees. For example, the crews had to participate in daily prayers. The punishment for failing to obey this rule was being tied to the mast. The crew was punished severely for misconduct, the captain could cut their wages, meals and drinks, and corporal punishment was not uncommon. The person receiving the punishment could be tied to the mast, stabbed with a knife through the hand, or even keel-hauled.⁸⁰⁹ In the case of an attack on a commander, captain or merchant, the assailant was punished with death.⁸¹⁰ Throughout Leyel's rule in India, he deployed violence as a means to maintain control within the settlement. Thus, it is important to stress that not all violent behaviour was directed towards other companies and competitors. Indeed, within the companies themselves, violent acts were often used to punish deviant behaviour, as we have seen in the example of the siege of the fort and the subsequent punishment of its employees. Such harsh discipline and punishments demonstrate that men like Leyel and Carloff were constantly surrounded by violence. As such, it is not surprising that violence was also an integral part of trade. To paraphrase the Swedish historian Jan Glete, maritime trade was indeed a violent workplace, particularly overseas.

The violence that arose from attempts to control assets (forts, factories, castles, etc.) and people (discipline) serve to partially explain the blurring of the line between legitimate and illegitimate violence. Furthermore, raiding as a means to destroy competitors was a common feature of European activities in the Indian Ocean. Leyel's participation in privateering raids against Bengali ships in the Bay of Bengal provides an example of this. Although the DEIC was involved in such activities, the latter were not typically associated with the trading companies. For her part, Kathryn Wellen has raised the question of why such a small company would choose to attack one of the largest powers in the world through acts of privateering.⁸¹¹ In response, she has suggested that the motive was to profit from the seized ships, especially since the Mughals, with their almost non-existent navy, were hardly capable of resisting the DEIC at sea.

European naval advantage has long been understood by historians, and Wellen goes to great lengths to account for the DEIC's raids, presenting her argument from the company's perspective. In my view, Leyel's participation in the raids in Bengal can also be explained from an entrepreneurial point of view: in short, the circumstances and the opportunity to make a profit coincided. The administration in Europe hardly knew what was going on in the Indian Ocean. This was different to the case of the VOC and EIC, whose directors were aware of the situation in the Indian Ocean, and occasionally intervened to stop privateering and to keep profit-driven agents at bay.⁸¹² The word privateering as used here is based on the seventeenth-century justification of violence at sea. As the

⁸⁰⁸ RAC, DK, B 246 A, Leyel to the directors, 22.11.1644.

⁸⁰⁹ RAC, DK, B 246 A, Instructions to the commander.

⁸¹⁰ Ibidem. On discipline onboard ships, see N. A. M. Rodger, *The Wooden World: An Anatomy of the Georgian Navy* (London: W. W. Norton & Company, 1996), 205–244.

⁸¹¹ Wellen, "The Danish East India" 439–61.

⁸¹² Clulow, "European Maritime Violence.", 78.

representative of the king in India, Leyel used his authority to justify privateering, so as to avoid accusations of piracy back in Europe. However, for their part, local merchants and rulers probably saw such violent attacks as a clear-cut case of piracy.

After studying the privateering campaigns in the Gulf of Bengal, Kay Larsen, Gunnar Olsen and Kathryn Wellen have concluded that these began with the loss of the DEIC ship *St Jacob* in 1640. The ship was sailing from Makassar to Masulipatnam, but a storm forced it to seek shelter on the coast. The local authorities refused assistance and the ship was wrecked, the crew imprisoned and the cargo seized. The crew was eventually freed, but the cargo was not returned. As a result, Pessart, commander at the time, declared a naval war on the Bengalis, using the *St Jacob* and its treatment by the local authorities as his *casus belli*.⁸¹³ The violence against the Bengali ships continued when Leyel arrived. However, in his case, privateering took on a more organised form, becoming an important source of income and business, especially during the years when Copenhagen failed to support the company. On 24 August 1644, Leyel wrote a document in Portuguese, justifying the use of violence against the Bengalis.⁸¹⁴ He provided a detailed overview of events dating back to 1625, while using strong language and doing everything in his power to vindicate his own actions. The five-page document concluded by stating that the Danes had been forced to cease trading in some places due to acts of robbery and tyranny committed by the Bengalis.⁸¹⁵ For Leyel, the aim was to justify acts of violence as a morally legitimate reaction to the injustices of the locals, even if such violence was technically illegal.

Kathryn Wellen has suggested that early modern European justifications of violence were often built upon complex narratives. According to Wellen: “company agents wrote complicated, and sometimes convoluted, arguments to justify their use of violence. Often, they compiled long lists of grievances, made assumptions about who was responsible for losses incurred, and supplemented these with accounts of unsuccessful attempts at obtaining compensation.”⁸¹⁶ In his reports to the directors, Leyel stated that he had intervened against the Bengalis because they had seized a Danish frigate, which had been carrying four elephants intended for the governor in Masulipatnam.⁸¹⁷ However, he also acknowledged that Danish raids were a means to improve the difficult state of the company and to increase the wealth of its employees. Leyel also wrote of how the *Wahlby* and the *Christianshavn* had raided the Bay of Bengal, capturing several ships with valuable cargoes.⁸¹⁸ In 1644, the company continued with these actions, seizing both smaller and larger ships, some as big as 250 lasts.⁸¹⁹ Leyel explained that between September and January, he had developed a patrolling system to detect Bengali ships, and as a result would be able to seize up to thirty-five ships of various sizes during the winter months. During the raids, the cargo was seized, and the confiscated ships came under company authority. The growing organisation of the raids proves that Leyel had no intention of ending these attacks. However, such continuous raids did not necessarily mean that Leyel was planning a full-scale

⁸¹³ Larsen, *Dansk-Ostindiske koloniers historie*, 435; Olsen, “Dansk Ostindien,” 126; Wellen, “The Danish East India”, 448.

⁸¹⁴ RAC, DK, B247A, Manifest 24.08.1644; This manifest has been extensively studied by Wellen; her study will form the basis for this discussion. Wellen, “The Danish East India”, 449–450.

⁸¹⁵ Wellen, “The Danish East India”, 449.

⁸¹⁶ Wellen, “The Danish East India”, 450.

⁸¹⁷ RAC, DK, B 246 A, Leyel to the directors, 22.11.1644.

⁸¹⁸ RAC, DK, B 246 A, Leyel to the directors, 22.11.1644.

⁸¹⁹ Wellen, “The Danish East India”, 451–452.

war against the Mughals.⁸²⁰ In this case, maritime violence remained primarily a tool to achieve an economic goal.

Towards the end of 1645, Leyel commented on the prospect of ending the privateering raids. The Prince of Bengal had declared his willingness to negotiate with the DEIC, and Leyel was also willing to negotiate, on the condition that the prince would send ambassadors to Tranquebar.⁸²¹ However, he complained that the VOC would oppose this plan, since the prospective treaty would entitle the DEIC to enter the Bay of Bengal legally and to establish a factory there, which was against the interests of the VOC.⁸²² Privateering and violence had thus given Leyel a way into trade in the Bay of Bengal. Curiously, when writing to the king, Leyel does not mention the privateering raids, despite the fact that he usually provided detailed information about events on the coast and further afield in Asia. The reason for this silence was probably his concern about the king's reaction, especially if the latter were to discover that these raids had been committed under royal authority. Even when Leyel did relay some information about the privateering raids, he tended to associate these with trading endeavours, particularly the purchase of rice on the coast of Zinzley in Bengal.⁸²³

Tales of violence were far more evident in local correspondence.⁸²⁴ This stemmed from Leyel's need to defend his actions, to show resilience and to command respect from others. In an instruction to skipper Simon Charstenson and pilot Willem Mouridsen of the *St Michael*, Leyel ordered them to be on the alert for the Bengalis, since the latter were everyone's "worst enemies". As such, he explained, attacking Bengali ships was a "fair deed".⁸²⁵ In 1646, Leyel continued to assert that the Bengalis had severely mistreated the Danes, and even condemned them for murdering Danish company employees. In Leyel's mind, this meant that his subordinates ought to attack them at all costs, and he wished them: "God be on your side and bring plenty of success."⁸²⁶

Leyel also disclosed some practical information about the raids in his correspondence with his subordinates. He advised his men to embark upon these raids without hoisting the company flag, in order to avoid unpleasant reactions from the EIC or the VOC.⁸²⁷ He also ordered the captains to head for the coast of Bengal during the night, and to harass and attack as many Bengali ships as possible.⁸²⁸ Having seized the ships, Leyel made an inventory of what they carried and to whom they belonged. One of his most reliable sources of information in this regard was his local Portuguese connections.⁸²⁹ The availability and organisation of this information enabled Leyel to estimate the value of the cargo on board, and to intimidate local rulers into compliance by threatening to attack their ships. How many of the raided ships and goods became assets of the company and how many went to enrich Leyel and his employees personally remains unclear.

⁸²⁰ RAC, DK, B 246 A, Leyel to the directors, 12.12.1645.

⁸²¹ The prince refers to the nawab/governor Shazada Muhammed Shah Shuja (1616–?). He was the son of the Mughal emperor Shah Jahan (1592–1666).

⁸²² RAC, DK, B 246 A, Leyel to the directors, 12.12.1645.

⁸²³ RAC, DK, B 246 A, Leyel to the directors, 16.11.1646; RAC, DK, B 246 A, Leyel to P. Nielsen, 16.09.1646; RAC, DK, B 246 A, Leyel to J. Hansen and S. Janssen, 22.08.1644.

⁸²⁴ For example the letters: RAC, DK, B 246 A, Leyel to J. Hansen, 04.08.1647; RAC, DK, B 246 A, Leyel to J. Hansen, 09.08.1644; Wellen, "The Danish East India", 451.

⁸²⁵ RAC, DK, B247 B, Instruction S. Charstenson and W. Mouridsen 19.09.1645.

⁸²⁶ RAC, DK, B 246 A, Leyel to J. Hansen and S. Janssen, 22.08.1644.

⁸²⁷ Ibid.

⁸²⁸ RAC, DK, B247 B, Instruction S. Charstenson and W. Mouridsen 19.09.1645.

⁸²⁹ RAC, DK, B 246 A, Leyel to J. Hansen and S. Janssen, 22.08.1644.

Several unsuccessful attempts were made to re-establish peace. Unable to reach an agreement with Leyel, Mughal officials pressured other Europeans to serve as a buffer between the DEIC and their merchant shipping in the Bay of Bengal.⁸³⁰ However, VOC officials replied that they would not take measures against the Danish. On the one hand, this underlines the degree of toleration for such actions. On the other hand, it also shows that the companies wished to avoid confrontation with one another. The Mughal requests were thus to no avail; privateering continued throughout the seventeenth century. Indeed, this was unsurprising, given that it was one of the best ways for the company personnel to make a profit.⁸³¹

Under Leyel's command, the DEIC was involved in continuous and extensive raids against Bengali ships. Wellen has pointedly argued that the success of the DEIC stemmed from its technological superiority in ships and weapons. In addition, I would suggest that these raids also provided a solution to the problems that arose from the lack of support from the home country. The fact that Leyel went to such great lengths to justify his actions suggests that he was aware that many of these raids were unacceptable. Leyel claimed that the root of the problem lay with the attacks by the Mughals, and projected a direct correlation between those events and the raids. Since Leyel was appointed to represent the interest of the king, it was not difficult for him to politically justify his privateering. However, it is probable that the locals saw the latter as nothing more than piracy.

6.4 *Carloff: an act of revenge or an entrepreneurial opportunity in Western Africa?*

In February 1657, Carloff informed the directors of the Swedish Africa Company that he was leaving the company. The directors were aware that Carloff had traded for his own benefit and had thus harmed the company interest. However, they still they wanted him to continue as either co-director or governor in Africa.⁸³² Carloff was thus simultaneously a liability and an asset for the company. Even though the Swedish elite had become increasingly interested in the revenues that could be had from overseas trade, they were not willing to get their own hands dirty, and thus preferred to hire others to act on their behalf. In 1656, the president of the SAC, Christer Bonde, tried to persuade Carloff to stay, although to no avail.⁸³³

Nováky has suggested that the main reason for Carloff's departure was his weakened position within the company.⁸³⁴ In a letter to Bonde, dated 1657, Carloff protested that he had been excluded from the administration of the company, and that the directors had neither paid his dividends from past ventures nor followed his suggestions for restructuring the company.⁸³⁵ In a subsequent letter to the Danish King, Fredrik III, Carloff further elaborated on his decision to leave the SAC, stating that the directors had refused to refund his initial investments, and that he was disappointed with the restructuring of the company, which he felt had diminished the power of the de Geer family and himself. Furthermore, Carloff added that the company was now administered by incompetent men.⁸³⁶ Indeed,

⁸³⁰ Wellen, "The Danish East India", 455.

⁸³¹ Ibid, 457–459.

⁸³² RAS, H&S, vol. 42, Henrich Carloff to Christer Bonde, 21.02.1657.

⁸³³ See chapter three for further discussion on the topic. See also, Nováky, *Handelskompanier*, 201.

⁸³⁴ Ibidem.

⁸³⁵ RAS, H&S vol.42 Henrich Carloff to Christer Bonde, 21.02.1657; Nováky, *Handelskompanier*, 201.

⁸³⁶ RAC, TKIA, Diverse akter vedr. Det ostindiske kompagni og Guinea, Henrich Carloff to Fredrik III, 27.05.1657.

Nováky has noted that the influence of the de Geer family had remained untouched after the re-organisation, and that Carloff's own position had thus probably been weakened.⁸³⁷

In my opinion, this letter to the Danish king was a sort of a job application; Carloff offered the king his expertise, emphasising his proficiency in the systematic use of violence. First, Carloff explained how he had begun his career in the WIC in Brazil, and how he had participated in the endemic state of war that characterised the Dutch presence there. While still on the payroll of the WIC, he had then participated in the conquests of Angola, Luanda and São Tomé. His participation in these conquests was not described in detail, and he probably overemphasised his role, since he had still been a low-ranking company soldier, at least in Brazil. Stressing his military past, Carloff proposed sailing to Africa under a Danish commission in order to attack the Swedish possessions there. Nothing regarding the establishment of permanent Danish trade in Africa was mentioned in the letter.⁸³⁸

On 1 August 1657, Carloff and Fredrik III signed a contract.⁸³⁹ It was hardly a coincidence that Carloff had submitted his job application exactly at the moment when Denmark was once again at war with Sweden in Europe. Approaching the Danish king in such a combative manner was thus an efficient way for Carloff to win support for his plans. The commission, which Carloff received, can therefore be considered a "privateering commission". For Carloff, however, a privateering commission meant entrepreneurial opportunity, and he lost no time in turning the use of violence into an entrepreneurial strategy. For the Danish king, offering Carloff a commission was a way to attack Swedish possessions overseas. Secondly, around 1657, the Danish crown had initiated a series of attempts to establish an organised trade between Denmark and Africa, and Carloff's proposal was a necessary first step in that direction.

The contract between Carloff and Fredrik III must also be understood as a mechanism through which to challenge Swedish interests in Africa at a relatively low cost. In the contract, Carloff acknowledged that King Fredrik III had granted him a commission to attack Swedish possessions and property in Guinea, but only under six conditions. The first was that he should equip, supply and arm the ships at his own expense. He could then dispose of any seized goods and ships as he saw fit, so long as he first brought them to Glückstadt. The second condition was that if Carloff captured Fort Carolusborg, he was to be responsible for holding onto it until the negotiations between the Danish crown and himself were concluded. If the king decided to start a company, Carloff was to be allowed to invest in it, and he would also become one of the directors, receiving a fixed percentage of the dividends. If the king decided not to start a company, Carloff was to be allowed to transfer the fort to whomever he wished, so long as this was not a hostile power. The third condition was that if Carloff failed in his mission, or if he had to rely on the assistance of Africans or other powers on the coast, he would be obliged to pay the king every tenth "pfenning" of whatever he obtained during the expedition. The fourth and the fifth conditions were that Carloff committed himself to confiscating and plundering the cargoes of Swedish ships. The sixth condition was that he had to allow all ships from Denmark and its provinces to come and go freely on the Guinea coast. Georg Nørregård has

⁸³⁷ In 1654, at the meeting in Uppsala after de Geer's death, Carloff claimed that the de Geer family had too much power in the company. RAS, Kommerskollegium, Huvudarkivet (KKA), Protokoll, 1651–1654, A1 AA:1; see previous chapters 3 and 4.

⁸³⁸ RAC, TKIA, Diverse akter vdr. Det ostindiske kompagni og Guinea, Henrich Carloff to Fredrik III, 27.05.1657.

⁸³⁹ RAC, TKIA, Diverse akter vdr. Det ostindiske kompagni og Guinea, Contract: Henrich Carloff and Fredrik III, 01.08.1657; Justesen, *Danish Sources*, 1–3.

claimed that this contract placed Carloff in an unusual position, granting him something approaching sovereign independence, on a level equivalent to that of the leading Danish ministers Corfiz Ulfeldt and Hannibal Sehested.⁸⁴⁰ In my view, the contract was a way for Carloff to demonstrate that he was capable of mastering Western Africa, including through the use of violence. For Fredrik III, it was simply a means to attack the Swedes.

Carloff's unusual position and the conditions of the contract resulted from the fact that this project required a large amount of capital. As stated in the contract, Carloff had to acquire the latter; the king did not want to invest in this expedition. However, equipping a ship, purchasing the outbound cargo and paying the salaries of a crew was not cheap. In chapter four, the way in which Carloff financed the expedition was discussed. In return for investments, Carloff had promised the investors gold from Africa. The overlap between the interests of the investors in Amsterdam, Carloff's entrepreneurship, and the political tension between Sweden and Denmark had created a unique situation.

On 25 January 1658, the *Glückstadt* arrived in Western Africa. The ship first landed in Jumoree, after which it continued to Axim, where Carloff received additional support from the WIC. In particular, the Dutch officials provided Carloff with four cannons and forty-six local soldiers. A few days later, Carloff approached Elmina, and negotiated with the WIC regarding his intended attack.⁸⁴¹ Much like Leye, Carloff received additional support, and managed to take over the fort without hardly any resistance.

Our information regarding the campaign in Africa is mostly drawn from a travel journal by Johan Müller, as well as a memoir written by the SAC governor, Johan Philip Krusenstierna, who was overthrown by Carloff.⁸⁴² Müller had visited Cape Coast right after the attack, was an eye witness, and other sources largely confirm his version of events. As he put it:

One morning in 1658, between five and six o'clock, this castle was captured by stealth by Henrich Carloff; for Carloff had gone to Guinea in the service of His Royal Majesty the king of Denmark and Norway etc. in order to seize control of some Swedish places and forts, insofar as occasion arose; and his wish came true. He landed unsuspected at night with several people, and at Cape Coast he met his good friend Acrosan or Johann Classen, who had been friendly and well inclined towards Carloff when the latter was still in Swedish service. Carloff revealed his intention to Acrosan and sought his approval, which he immediately obtained.⁸⁴³

Consequently, the attack took only a few hours, and succeeded without serious resistance. This was unsurprising, since Carloff's troops far outnumbered the SAC employees of the fort. After the fort was captured, part of the garrison, consisting mostly of Germans and Dutchmen, decided to turn to Carloff for employment; the rest were imprisoned then sent to Glückstadt. Moreover, the attack on Carolusborg also resulted in the seizing of the Swedish vessel the *Stockholms Slott*, which had been anchored outside. It was loaded with gold and was taken as a prize. The rest of the Swedish possessions at Takorari, Anomabo, Jumoree and Orsu were soon seized too.⁸⁴⁴

⁸⁴⁰ Nørregård, *Danish Settlements*, 16.

⁸⁴¹ Nørregård, *Danish Settlements*, 16; Van Dantzig, *Forts and Castles*, 21.

⁸⁴² Johan Müller was the priest of Glückstadt Company. He was originally from Hamburg and had entered service in the 1660s. Travel journal by Müller in Jones, *German Sources*; RAS, H&S 42, Krusenstiernas memorial 25.06.1658.

⁸⁴³ Travel journal by Müller in, *German Sources*, 143.

⁸⁴⁴ Nováky, *Handelskompanier*, 202.

A letter from Carloff to the Dutch governor, Jan Valckenburgh, reveals how Carloff had managed to convince the caboceer: in particular, Carloff stated that he and Acrosan had a long-standing personal relationship. For the sake of their relationship, Carloff promised to forgive Acrosan's debts to the Swedish company, a promise that may have increased the caboceer's willingness to strike an agreement.⁸⁴⁵ However, Nováky has argued that forgiveness of debts was probably not a strong enough reason to bind Acrosan to Carloff, since the SAC lacked the means to collect the debts anyway. Most likely, Carloff had also promised lavish gifts and better prices for African goods.⁸⁴⁶ However, Nováky's interpretation can be further nuanced through consideration of a letter from May 1659. Here, Acrosan told the SAC directors that he had been under the impression that when Carloff had returned to the coast in 1658, he had still been in the service of the SAC. Carloff had supposedly told him that the reason for the attack was an internal struggle between the SAC officials. Acrosan further stated that he had made a personal agreement with Carloff to support and assist him when necessary, and had only later realised that Carloff had deceived him. His disappointment was such that he reaffirmed his loyalty to the SAC.⁸⁴⁷

Carloff's attack on Carolusborg also needs to be analysed from the point of view of the Fetus, since this episode relates to the importance of balancing between different local groups, as discussed in chapter four. Carloff's personal relationship with the rulers and merchants shows how crucial this network was. The Fetus supported Carloff even after the take-over of Carolusborg. In the aftermath of the conquest, two SAC ships arrived at Cape Coast. The ships attempted to attack the fort, but were repelled by Carloff's men and his Fetu allies.⁸⁴⁸ It is likely that this type of support was forthcoming because Carloff had managed to portray himself as a man who could deliver European goods, such as gunpowder, alcohol and textiles, at lower prices than others. He seemed to have connections all over Europe, and this was certainly valued by the African merchants. Conversely, he also fulfilled a function in the African market.

Carloff's entrepreneurship was equally important to the other Europeans on the coast. The success of the attack resulted from Carloff's personal connection to Acrosan, the internal struggle within the SAC and the support of the WIC. Even though the attack was carried out with both WIC and African support, it benefitted from the fact that the SAC was internally divided between those loyal to the company, such as Krusenstierna, and those loyal to Carloff, such as Samuel Smidt and Joost Cramer. In effect, this means that Carloff had supporters waiting for him on the coast. These men had been working with him for a long time, and Carloff had managed to maintain a firm relationship with them.⁸⁴⁹

After the take-over, Carloff summoned all SAC officials (with the exception of Krusenstierna, who was arrested immediately), and offered them the chance to join his service, on the condition that they swore him a personal oath. Carloff was uncertain about what to do with the Swedish employees, but most of them rejected his offer anyway. By contrast, most Dutch and German officials were willing to join Carloff. These included Samuel Smidt, who had joined the SAC in 1649, and also Abraham Heintzel, Johan Cornelesen, Sigmund Jeunisch and Johan Christiansen Canter. The rest of

⁸⁴⁵ NL-HaNA, Staten-Generaal, 1.01.02, inv.nr. 12571.38.1, Henrich Carloff to Jan Valckenburgh, 15.02.1658, FC, N8, 41–43; RAS, H&S vol. 42, Krusenstiernas memorial 25.6.1658; Nováky, *Handelskompanier*, 202.

⁸⁴⁶ *Ibid*, 203.

⁸⁴⁷ NL-HaNA, Staten-Generaal, 1.01.02, inv.nr. 12571.38.1, Jan Claessen (Acrosan) to the directors of the SAC, 29.05.1659; FC, N8, 215.

⁸⁴⁸ For more about the two ships, see Nováky, *Handelskompanier*, 204.

⁸⁴⁹ See chapter four on these relationships.

the personnel were arrested.⁸⁵⁰ The internal tension between the factions thus became a part of Carloff's strategy. After the conquest of the fort, he decided that he would get rid of those employees who had previously defied him. As Robert Porter argues: "Carloff's greatest asset was his knowledge of the coast and its people. He was able to use this to full advantage as he proceeded – so much that this operation may be taken as a textbook example of how Gold Coast forts could be captured with very limited resources."⁸⁵¹ Carloff's successful conquest earned him gold, and changed the balance of power between the Swedish, Dutch and Danish interests on the Gold Coast.

6.5 *From Western Africa to the Caribbean Sea*

A second set of events also illustrates Carloff's use of violence, namely his activities in the Caribbean following his return to Dutch service. In 1676, a squadron was dispatched by the Admiralty of Amsterdam, under the command of vice-admiral Jacob Binckes, who was assisted by Captains Jan Bont and Henrich Carloff. Their mission was to attack the French possessions in the Caribbean and to rebuild the Dutch settlement in Tobago. The initial attack was successful, but in 1677, the French retaliated in force, and the Dutch were forced to abandon the conquered islands and regions. This marked the end of the Dutch interest in this region, and their focus now shifted towards the island of Curaçao, to Suriname, and to Essequibo and Demerara.⁸⁵² Between 1674 and 1676, however, the Atlantic arena provided another opportunity for Carloff to use violence in furtherance of his career. While the attack of 1676 might not have brought tangible benefits, its motive, and the way in which it was performed, provide support for the argument that violence was a key means of overseas entrepreneurship.

The contract that Carloff had signed with the French West India Company in 1665 had bound him to serve his French masters for six years.⁸⁵³ In 1671, the contract expired, and Carloff's interest in French trade declined; the FWIC was no longer appealing enough, and he now looked for new opportunities. He also knew of the challenges faced by the WIC: in 1674, it was facing bankruptcy. Indeed, the early 1670s were generally challenging for the Republic, which was again at war, first with England, and then with France. For Carloff, political events such as the Third Anglo-Dutch War and the Franco-Dutch War represented a source of entrepreneurial opportunity.

In 1676, the most important overseas arena for Carloff was the Caribbean, especially the island of Tobago and the city of Cayenne (in present-day French Guiana). With regard to the latter, the French had seized Cayenne from the Dutch in 1664. Cayenne was an important port, and its possession was contested by the European powers. For its part, Tobago had been successively occupied by the English, the French, the Dutch and the Courlanders over the course of the seventeenth century. Its strategic location was important, since it offered a good anchoring point for slave-trading ships travelling from Western Africa to the Caribbean. Furthermore, its climate and soil were favourable for Europeans. In 1650, a Dutch family, the Lampsins, had received permission from the

⁸⁵⁰ RAS, H&S 42, Krusenstiernas memorial 25.06.1658; NL-HaNA, Staten-Generaal, 1.01.02, inv.nr. 12571.38.1, *Henrich Carloff to Jan Valckenburgh* 15.02.1658 and 16.02.1658; Nováky, *Handelskompanier*, 202–203.

⁸⁵¹ Porter, *European Activity*, 380.

⁸⁵² The events in the Caribbean during the 1670s have been studied by Cornelis de Jonge and Cornelis Goslinga. Goslinga, *The Dutch in the Caribbean*; De Jonge, *Geschiedenis van Het Nederlandsche Zeewezen*. Additionally, W. Menkman has studied the events in Tobago. See W.R. Menkman, "TOBAGO: een bijdrage tot de geschiedenis der Nederlandsche kolonisatie in tropisch Amerika IV," *De West-Indische Gids* 21 (1940): 33–46.

⁸⁵³ On the contract, see chapter five.

States General to establish a settlement on Tobago. In 1654, a large group of Zeeland settlers had arrived. The island had gradually prospered, annually harvesting crops of tobacco, dye, indigo, sugar and cotton. The Lampsins had also allowed a large number of French planters to settle on the island, and both the Dutch and the French co-operated with the Courlandian settlers. Surprisingly, and for unknown reasons, Cornelis Lampsins then approached Louis XIV to request protection for the settlement. The Dutch historian Cornelis Goslinga has suggested that Lampsins perhaps believed that French support would improve his own position on the island. In 1662, Lampsins received the requested protection, and would eventually become a member of the French aristocracy, with the title of Baron of Tobago.⁸⁵⁴ The main result was that the island now fell into both the French and the Dutch spheres of interest.

On the eve of the Second Anglo-Dutch War, the English conquered the island for a short period. It was also offered to the Courlanders, but, in the peace treaty of Breda, Tobago was restored to the Dutch. However, the French and the Courlanders remained interested in the island. In 1672, the English conquered Tobago. According to Goslinga, this was the first Caribbean action in the war between the Dutch Republic, England and France.⁸⁵⁵ James Pritchard has stated that the Caribbean wars of 1672 to 1678 made France a stronger power in the West Indies. He has further argued that it was through naval action that the French managed to exclude the Dutch from their Caribbean colonies, rather than through commercial competition.⁸⁵⁶ However, as will be demonstrated, before 1676, the French were still weaker in the West Indies than the Dutch. Due to events in Europe, the French believed that the Dutch were too tied-down to be able to act effectively in the West Indies, and Colbert therefore devised a plan to expel all Dutch forces from the region. In August 1673, the Dutch planned to conquer the French islands with the aid of their Spanish allies. In Europe, the situation for France worsened in 1674, when England ended its alliance with France, and Charles II signed a separate treaty with the Dutch at the peace of Westminster. This gave the Dutch an opportunity to expel the French from the Netherlands, since France also had to defend its Atlantic and overseas possessions.⁸⁵⁷

The Westminster treaty thus put an end to the Second Anglo-Dutch War. However, the conflict between the Dutch and the French continued. At the peace treaty, the Dutch had once again acquired Tobago. Now, the Lampsins sold the island to the states of Holland, and it was placed under the authority of the Admiralty of Amsterdam. As such, the newly founded second WIC (1674-1792) was excluded from the administration of the island.⁸⁵⁸

From 1674 to 1675, at the time when Cayenne was in French hands and Tobago offered to the states of Holland, Carloff approached Hiob de Wildt, the secretary of the Admiralty, with a new scheme. In consultation with Gaspar Fagel, the Grand pensionary (*Raadspensionaris*), an expedition to the Caribbean was planned.⁸⁵⁹ It was no coincidence that Carloff approached the Board of the Admiralty at precisely that moment. During his service in the FWIC, Carloff had already sailed to the Caribbean and had sold slaves in Cayenne and Guadeloupe.⁸⁶⁰ He had up-to-date knowledge of

⁸⁵⁴ Goslinga, *The Dutch in the Caribbean*, 447.

⁸⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 449.

⁸⁵⁶ Pritchard, *In Search of Empire*, 269.

⁸⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 279.

⁸⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 450.

⁸⁵⁹ The Grand pensionary came from an influential political family. The position gave Fagel significant influence in the local politics and society; Cornelis De Jonge, *Geschiedenis van Het Nederlandsche Zeewezen*, pt. 2, Vol. 3, 295.

⁸⁶⁰ See the previous chapter for the slave trade voyages of Carloff.

the French colonies and trade in the Caribbean, was familiar with the region, and was thus well-equipped to take advantage of the complex political situation there. He wanted to attack the French possessions in the Caribbean, and to set about rebuilding Tobago. He had experience in the deployment of violence, and it was thus only logical that he contacted the Admiralty. Since his relationship with the WIC had deteriorated following the events of 1659, this new arrangement would give him a means to continue trading in the Atlantic while bypassing the company.

Hiob de Wildt presented Carloff's plan to the Admiralty. Such an attack in the Caribbean could potentially provide a quick source of revenue, through seizure of enemy ships and confiscation goods, and Carloff thus expected to be rewarded with a governorship or a plantation afterwards. According to Goslinga, the WIC chamber of Amsterdam was willing to support the venture, but the chamber of Zeeland protested.⁸⁶¹

The timing of Carloff's approach made sense. During the previous years, the conflicts between the French, the English and the Dutch had left the settlements in the Caribbean in a vulnerable position. Many forts had been severely damaged, and defences were in many places weak. Privateering in the archipelago had harmed shipping and trade, and previous attempts to take over the French islands, for example Martinique in 1674, had weakened the French defences.⁸⁶² At the time, France was also practically incapable of sending reinforcements to the West Indies. At the beginning of the war, one of the reasons for French weakness in the West Indies was that the French navy was relatively new compared to its English and Dutch counterparts. As such, it lacked experience. Moreover, Colbert accused the navy's captains of lacking discipline and being inept in matters of provisioning.⁸⁶³ Indeed, this was in keeping with what Carloff had experienced on the FWIC's ships.

Based on Carloff and de Wildt's proposal, the Admiralty decided to dispatch a squadron to the Caribbean, with Binckes as commodore. During the expedition, Carloff was supposed to act as "commissioner general" and "second in command in the war council", and would later be appointed "governor of the island of Tobago".⁸⁶⁴ For his part, Binckes already had considerable experience in the region. Together with Cornelis Evertsen, he had led an expedition in the Caribbean in 1673, seizing French and English ships around Guadeloupe and Cul de Sac.⁸⁶⁵ However, these attacks had been more concerned with quick revenue through plunder rather than with territorial conquest.⁸⁶⁶

⁸⁶¹ Goslinga, *The Dutch in the Caribbean*, 450.

⁸⁶² Pritchard, *In Search of Empire*, 280.

⁸⁶³ Ibid, 287.

⁸⁶⁴ "commissaris generaal en tweede persoon inde hooge kriegsraat ober deze expeditie, en bij nader acte tot een guverneur want Ejlandet Tabago", NL-HaNA, Raadpensionaris Fagel, 3.01.18, inv.nr. 191, Jacob Binckes to Gaspar Fagel, 27.11.1676.

⁸⁶⁵ Goslinga, *The Dutch in the Caribbean*, 469–472.

⁸⁶⁶ Pritchard, *In Search of Empire*, 277.

Figure 6-1 Map of the attacks in the Caribbean Sea



Map created by Henrik Pulli

6.6 The attack

The expedition of Binckes, Bont and Carloff arrived at Cayenne on 4 May 1676. The squadron landed with nine hundred men prepared to fight. The French offered no resistance and surrendered, and, within a few days, the entire settlement was under Dutch control.⁸⁶⁷

After the attack on Cayenne, the squadron sailed on to the French island of Marie Galante, which they quickly captured and pillaged. Many French planters on the island accepted Binckes' offer to join the Dutch and to settle in Tobago instead.⁸⁶⁸ The next destination was Guadeloupe, where the Dutch Squadron arrived on 16 June 1676. There, however, they had to abandon their plans of conquest, as they encountered a French squadron. Thereafter, Binckes sailed to St. Martin, an island inhabited by French and Dutch settlers, where he met with heavy French resistance, which he overcame only with great difficulty. As soon as the squadron left, the island was retaken by the French.

After departing from St. Martin, Binckes divided the squadron in two. Binckes himself led one part of it to Hispaniola and Puerto Rico. The purpose of this voyage remains unclear, but Pritchard has suggested that Binckes attempted to convince the planters of Saint-Domingue, the French part of Hispaniola, to revolt against their French masters.⁸⁶⁹ The other part of the squadron, under the

⁸⁶⁷ NL-HaNA, Raadpensionaris Fagel, 3.01.18, inv.nr. 191, Henrich Carloff to Gaspar Fagel, 12.05.1676.

⁸⁶⁸ Pritchard, *In Search of Empire*, 288.

⁸⁶⁹ *Ibid*, 289.

command of Bont, headed towards Tobago.⁸⁷⁰ Bont was accompanied by Carloff, more than a hundred newly recruited settlers from Marie Galante, and a few hundred slaves. However, events soon took an unexpected turn, when Bont decided to leave the rest of the squadron and disappeared.⁸⁷¹ This naturally weakened the Dutch forces, but also left Carloff in charge. After calling at Hispaniola, Binckes' part of the squadron set sail towards Tobago, arriving in September 1676.⁸⁷² They immediately began to construct defences, since they were expecting a new attack by the French, which in fact took place only one year later. The French fleet, under the command of vice-admiral Jean Désrée, defeated the Dutch at the Second Battle of Tobago in December 1677. Binckes was killed in battle.⁸⁷³ Thus, the final outcome was a failure for the Dutch: they had to settle for only Suriname and Curaçao, and the ambitious plan for Tobago was abandoned.

What happened to Carloff after the events of 1676 is unclear. A peace between the French and the Dutch was signed on 10 August 1678. This mainly concerned the war as fought in Europe, but there was also a clause that stipulated that the French would receive Tobago, Cayenne and the Island of Gorée in Western Africa. The French also signed peace treaties with Spain and the Holy Roman Empire. Collectively, these treaties are known as the peace of Nijmegen (1679).⁸⁷⁴

In the light of these events, it is clear that the Caribbean was a contested region, and a great deal is already known about the imperial competition between Europeans. However, less is known about the private motives of the individuals who participated in such expeditions. In the historiography of the events of 1676, most scholars have based their studies on the seminal research of Johannes Cornelis de Jonge (1837). De Jonge had consulted the most relevant archives regarding the Dutch activities in the Caribbean. However, it is unclear why he only made use of Binckes's letters to Grand pensionary Fagel, while ignoring the letters from Carloff to Fagel. By taking Carloff into account, it can be seen how violence also constituted an entrepreneurial opportunity.

The squadron arrived at Cayenne on 4 May 1676, a date confirmed by both Binckes and Carloff. In many other regards, however, their respective reports to the Grand pensionary diverged. According to Binckes, he sent a trumpeter to the fort to demand the French surrender. Carloff, on the other hand, states that it was he who sent the trumpeter, along with his son Andreas, to the fort to negotiate. Even prior to the landing of the troops, Carloff had stated that he had sent his son on a reconnaissance mission to investigate the conditions of the fort.⁸⁷⁵ Both men attempted to take credit for the successful attack. However, Carloff did at least acknowledge Binckes in his reports, whereas the latter completely ignored Carloff.

After the attack, Carloff reported to Grand pensionary Fagel that the fort's defences had been weak. He had found only twelve soldiers and about 300 slaves, although the fort itself was in good order, despite still bearing the marks of the previous attacks by English ships. However, Carloff explained that he had had an idea about how to improve the settlement. He requested that the Grand pensionary send two to three thousand soldiers as a deterrent against possible slave revolts, and in order to provide defence against French attacks. Carloff explained in detail the infrastructure of the settlement, and promised to provide maps and accounts from the fort. There were nineteen sugar

⁸⁷⁰ Goslinga, *The Dutch in the Caribbean*, 478–479.

⁸⁷¹ According to Goslinga, Bont set sail to Europe, and sailed first to Cadiz, from where he continued to the Republic, where he was arrested and eventually beheaded. Why the naval officer decided leave the squadron is unclear. Ibid, 451.

⁸⁷² NL-HaNA, Raadpensionaris Fagel, 3.01.18, inv.nr. 191, Henrich Carloff to Gaspar Fagel, 16.09.1676.

⁸⁷³ Goslinga, *The Dutch in the Caribbean*, 451.

⁸⁷⁴ Pritchard, *In Search of Empire*, 295–296.

⁸⁷⁵ NL-HaNA, Raadpensionaris Fagel, 3.01.18, inv.nr. 191, Henrich Carloff to Gaspar Fagel, 12.05.1676.

mills, producing good quantities of sugar, and cassava had also been planted. The settlement was inhabited by 400 slaves, 1,000 cattle, but only a few horses. The great strength of the settlement was its sugar production, whereas cotton, tobacco and indigo did not grow well. Towards the end of the letter, Carloff argued that the islands of Guadeloupe and Saint Christoffer (Saint Kitts) ought also to be brought under Dutch authority, something that could easily be accomplished with a little extra assistance and effort.⁸⁷⁶

The attacks offered Carloff an opportunity to envision how he would restructure the settlements. He also emphasised that further Dutch expansion was desirable, and acknowledged the importance of support from Europe, both against possible French attacks and against slave revolts. According to the initial plan, Carloff would become governor of Tobago, and it was therefore understandable that he offered his opinions regarding plantations and trade. The fact that he discussed the development of the plantations and their labour force suggests that he had developed an interest in combining slave trading with the Caribbean plantations. Carloff wanted to position himself as a person capable of taking charge, but who also cared about business. In order to achieve his goal, he was not averse to using violence.

Binckes did not share Carloff's view. In his letter to Fagel of 13 May 1676, Binckes focused on his own role in the attack on Cayenne. He described the strategy of the attack, and how he had mobilised the troops.⁸⁷⁷ In his letters, he did not mention Carloff, being more concerned with the naval side of the expedition. Binckes also wrote an instruction letter to Carloff's son, Andreas Carloff. The latter was to deliver secret missives to Grand pensionary Fagel, and to return home to The Hague. Above all else, he was to avoid all contact with the French.⁸⁷⁸ It is unclear why Binckes sent Carloff's son on this voyage. One could speculate that Binckes did not want to have father and son working together, since this might have created difficulties for Binckes himself. Hence, sending Andreas to Europe was a convenient solution.

Carloff later reported that after the attack on St Martin, Binckes had decided to send a smaller squadron to take over Tobago—the second squadron mentioned above.⁸⁷⁹ Carloff arrived on 4 August, and Binckes with his squadron on 29 September. According to Carloff, the population of the island had received them well. Having arrived, Binckes and Carloff immediately began repairing the fort, while waiting for instructions from home. Eventually, in November 1676, the tensions between the two men escalated, and Binckes had Carloff arrested, arguing that he had compromised his position. Indeed, Carloff's appointment had created problems for Binckes. According to Binckes, they were both working under the instructions and orders of the Admiralty. However, Carloff had become too confident of his own position, and had refused to follow orders from Binckes' staff. Binckes explained that he had great respect for Carloff, but that he had endangered the expedition. Furthermore, Binckes' claimed that Carloff had conspired with other captains, and had spread lies regarding Binckes' actions during the expedition. For example, Carloff had accused Binckes of plundering the island of Marie Galante for his own personal benefit. Thus, Binckes claimed that Carloff had tried to harm his reputation, and had thereby endangered the entire expedition.⁸⁸⁰ In a

⁸⁷⁶ Ibidem.

⁸⁷⁷ NL-HaNA, Raadpensionaris Fagel, 3.01.18, inv.nr. 191, Jacob Binckes to Gaspar Fagel 13.05.1676.

⁸⁷⁸ NL-HaNA, Raadpensionaris Fagel, 3.01.18, inv.nr. 191, Instructions to Andreas Carloff, 14.05.1676.

⁸⁷⁹ NL-HaNA, Raadpensionaris Fagel, 3.01.18, inv.nr. 191, Carloff to ? (Recipient unclear but it was most likely Fagel) 08.10.1676.

⁸⁸⁰ NL-HaNA, Raadpensionaris Fagel, 3.01.18, inv.nr. 191, Jacob Binckes to Gaspar Fagel, 27.11.1676.

subsequent letter, other members of the council of war (*krijgsraad*) agreed that Carloff had tried to destroy Binckes' reputation through false accusations, and therefore ordered Carloff's arrest.⁸⁸¹

In a notarised statement from 1677, Elias Pietersen, Hendrik de Verwer and Adrian Martensen, all crewmembers of the *Poppiesbergh*, captained by Pieter Sotlwijk, declared that in June 1676, Commander Binckes sailed straight past a French fleet in the waters between Dominique and Guadeloupe, without offering resistance. Indeed, several captains complained of Binckes' passivity.⁸⁸² In November 1676, however, the same captains had testified against Carloff.

Carloff's violent displays in the Caribbean primarily served the interests of the Admiralty of Amsterdam. However, deployment of violence had opened up new opportunities for Carloff himself, especially in the slave trade, the acquisition of plantations, and the possibility of becoming governor of Tobago. The letters from Binckes and Carloff attest to the confusion that prevailed in the Caribbean. Although it is impossible to know who was telling the truth, the letters nonetheless show that attacking possessions and plundering islands was seen as an effective way to profit from expeditions. As such, these expeditions were not only a long-term attempt to establish plantations and to expand the frontiers of empire, but also a short-term quest for profit. To people like Carloff and Binckes, numerous wars and conflicts led to instability, which in turn opened up opportunities for profit.

The attacks in Western Africa and the Caribbean were similar, in the sense that in both cases, Carloff had first approached rulers or administrators in Europe who could offer support for his violence. In both cases, violence had taken on an entrepreneurial dimension – there was a prospect not only of making profit, but also of improving social status. In the attack on Carolusborg in Western Africa, Carloff took charge, while in the Caribbean, he might easily have become governor of Tobago, in charge of the sugar plantations, and having a share in the slave trade.

Carloff approached European states during times of war or political conflict. Taking prizes, confiscating ships, and handing over forts and settlements could yield a large profit, as the plundering of the SAC's ship and fort demonstrate. In both campaigns, Carloff chose locations and targets based on his own previous knowledge of a region. Hence, knowledge and violence were complementary.

The confiscation of the gold reserves from the ship and the fort yielded a quick profit. However, while Carloff thus benefitted in the short term, it is unclear whether the attacks really benefitted him in the long run. Arguably, by expanding Danish trade in Western Africa, Carloff indirectly sought to maximise the return on the bottomry loans that he had investing in this trade. Thus, there was a connection between the attack and the making of profit after the attack.

In the Caribbean context, the motive to use violence was different. From a long-term perspective, the violent attacks on Cayenne and Tobago were a way of demonstrating the capacity for using violence as a means to master the region. It seems as if Carloff's idea was to convince his patrons in Amsterdam that he would be a good choice for governor of Tobago, since he would be capable of defending the settlement. In hindsight, it is known that he did not succeed in his plans. Nonetheless, his behaviour demonstrates that there was an entrepreneurial idea behind his violent acts. From a short-term perspective, whether Carloff actually wanted to become governor is unclear – it is possible that he was more interested in the prospect of making a fortune from privateering, as Binckes had done before him. In such an uncertain world, and given his life experience, he probably

⁸⁸¹ NL-HaNA, Raadpensionaris Fagel, 3.01.18, inv.nr. 191, Declaration by the council, 18.11.1676.

⁸⁸² SAA NA: 4737, fol. 489, 17.10.1676.

hoped for both. In sum, when we study the connection between entrepreneurship and violence, we should not focus only on the value of the cargo looted or the gold stolen, but also on the usefulness of violence in developing new business.

6.7 Conclusion

Leyel and Carloff lived in a world in which violence and coercion were omnipresent; in particular, wars and conflicts between European states had repercussions overseas. While abroad, men were accustomed to interloping, piracy, competition with fellow Europeans, and violent forms of commerce such as the slave trade. In this context, it is understandable that individuals like Leyel and Carloff saw an opportunity to make profits through coercive means. Both men chose to use violence, even if they could have chosen differently (many others did not engage in violence). However, the two cases studied here demonstrate that violence was common in the Nordic overseas ventures, and highlight the fact that for men like Leyel and Carloff, violence was often a viable policy.

In the Indian Ocean, Leyel had lost contact with the rest of the administration of the company, and thus found himself in a precarious position. Lacking reinforcements from Europe and being embroiled in a dispute with his predecessor, he turned to attacking ships in the Bay of Bengal as a means to keep business afloat. Leyel often participated personally in these privateering voyages, although he also issued passports to other skippers for the same purpose. Furthermore, Leyel justified his actions through complex descriptions and arguments, which were typical of the time. In the Atlantic context, Henrich Carloff used violence in Western Africa and the Caribbean. The violent attacks on fort Carolusborg, and on Cayenne and Tobago, occurred overseas, although they stemmed from European wars on the old continent.

Violence also materialised in the form of *threats*. As the conquests of the various forts suggest, it was not always necessary to actually engage in violence in order to achieve one's goals. Indeed, the mere threat of violence was often sufficient, and this served to make threats commonplace. For Leyel and Carloff, violence and coercion had very practical aims, and were often a matter of choice. Indeed, they helped to pay salaries, to pay rents and tributes to local rulers, and to generate quick profits. Furthermore, violence could also be justified politically, which made the transition from regular methods of trade into sanctioned or unsanctioned violence easier. In this sense, violence was as much about making profit as it was a political instrument in the struggle between states and empires. For the state, deploying men like Leyel and Carloff was a way to exercise power. If an undertaking such as Carloff's attack were successful, the state could claim a share of the success and profits. If it failed, the ruler could attribute the failure to a private enterprise. Yet again, the interests of rulers and private entrepreneurs overlapped.

In contrast with the previous historiography on entrepreneurship, this chapter has underlined the importance of violence in overseas entrepreneurship. As Clulow, Glete, Wellen and many others have shown, violence did exist as a common seaborne culture in the context of maritime trade. However, this has not hitherto been observed within the framework of entrepreneurship. By studying violence in an overseas context, we can understand how violence created entrepreneurial opportunity, inasmuch as it was constantly present in business.

Because of the type of business activities in which Leyel and Carloff were engaged, the results of violence were often difficult to predict. Indeed, it is not surprising that little is known about the actual value of the goods that were plundered and confiscated. In this chapter, it has been shown that

Leyel's privateering gave him a personal advantage, in terms of both personal profit and the acquisition of means to keep the DEIC afloat. For his part, Carloff eventually obtained gold from the attack in Western Africa. In the Caribbean context, the prospect of becoming a plantation governor was reason enough to engage in violence. While striving after this goal, Carloff could at the same time carry out privateering raids against French ships. Whatever the monetary value of such entrepreneurship, it clearly demonstrates how closely connected violence and entrepreneurship were, at least in an overseas setting.

The central conclusion of this chapter is that the prospect of making a profit through coercive means was often linked to a specific political context. In other words, individuals could benefit from the competition and conflict between different political powers. Men such as Leyel and Carloff were important cogs in the machinery of violence, offering a means to convert both private and public money into violence overseas. On the ground, they attempted to appropriate as much power, money and resources as possible. In sum, by seizing ships, privateering, capturing forts, and negotiating with local rulers, such men acted as *brokers of violence*.

7 Conclusions

This dissertation has studied the development of seventeenth-century overseas business from the perspective of individuals. The overseas business activities of Willem Leyel and Henrich Carloff, especially in relation to the Nordic kingdoms, have provided the occasion for an in-depth study of the ways in which individuals initiated, established, coordinated and developed overseas trade through their entrepreneurship. The microscopic approach applied in this dissertation has allowed us to situate the careers of Leyel and Carloff within a larger interpretative framework. It thus stands in the tradition of microhistory, which takes in-depth studies of individuals (entrepreneurship) as an entry point into larger debates (business overseas).

This dissertation has charted the careers of Leyel and Carloff in detail, and has also analysed their activities within the conceptual framework of overseas entrepreneurship. This dual approach has allowed for a study of the daily overseas business behaviour of individuals, and has challenged the traditional narrative of European trading companies and empires as purely national entities. In particular, this dissertation has shown that Leyel and Carloff represented a business reality that was far more international than it was national.

In the introduction, the following research questions were proposed: *What were the backgrounds and the mechanisms of overseas entrepreneurship, and how did these relate to the Nordic institutional context of the seventeenth century? By studying individuals in relation to trading companies, what new insights can be gained regarding early modern overseas business?* This concluding chapter will provide answers to these questions, and will be divided into two parts. In the first part, I will summarise Leyel's and Carloff's careers, discuss the concept of overseas entrepreneurship, and review the mechanisms through which it functioned. In the second part, I will briefly reflect upon Leyel and Carloff's self-perception, since this provides a glimpse into how they positioned themselves in the overseas business context. Finally, I will present the new insights that can be gained from the concept of overseas entrepreneurship, and explain why the concept is important to a better understanding of early modern European overseas business.

7.1 Overseas business through the eyes of the individual

Willem Leyel of Elsinore had the right kind of background for an entrepreneurial career in the Indian Ocean. He began his career with the VOC during the 1610s and early 1620s. In 1626, he was already serving with the Danske Ostindiske compaignie (DEIC), and, in 1628, during the Thirty Years' War, he enlisted in the Danish navy as a lieutenant. The Danish King, Christian IV, appointed Leyel director of the DEIC during the 1630s.

In 1639, Leyel was sent to India as commander of the DEIC, in order to investigate possible abuses by his predecessor, Barent Pessart. In 1643, Leyel disclosed that the company's trade was on the brink of collapse, especially on the Coromandel Coast, but also elsewhere in the Indian Ocean. As the new commander of the DEIC, Leyel was charged with resolving the problems that had been created by his predecessor. Moreover, these problems were compounded by the fact that the company did not send any reinforcements from Europe for several years, meaning that Leyel was cut off from support from Denmark. In response, Leyel's chosen solutions were privateering (seizing Bengali ships) and intra-Asian trade. According to Leyel, privateering against local ships was justified,

because the Mughals had treated the Danish even more badly. Between 1644 and 1647, Leyel was active in the Indian Ocean trade, and developed connections with several merchants, even attempting to establish trade with Macao and Manila. For Leyel, his connection with the Portuguese was particularly important. Although Leyel managed to improve the company's position, his subordinates were not satisfied with his rule, and, in 1648, Leyel was deposed by a mutiny and sent back to Europe to face trial.

In 1648, the same year as the overthrowal of Leyel and the signing of the Treaty of Westphalia, Henrich Carloff of Rostock was preparing to return to Europe from his employment with the WIC in Africa. Carloff's career had been similar to that of Leyel. He had initially joined the WIC in 1639 as a soldier in Brazil, and, during the following decade, he had scaled the ranks of the company, serving as prosecutor, and also as factor in Accra, to the east of Elmina. As prosecutor, he held one of the highest ranks in Western Africa. However, Carloff was not satisfied with his opportunities in the WIC, and, in 1649, he joined the newly established SAC. The SAC gave Carloff an opportunity to return to the Gold Coast, where he already knew how to operate, thanks to the experience and the connections he had accumulated during his previous WIC employment. He made the company's arrival on the coast a success. However, back in Europe, he faced obstacles from within the SAC, and accusations of illegal trade, as well as the death of his patron, Louis de Geer, made him reconsider his position in the company. Despite having been ennobled in 1654, Carloff resigned from the SAC in 1657. Instead, he offered his services to the Danish king.

Since Denmark was at war with Sweden, the king was happy to receive Carloff. Carloff promised the king that he would attack the SAC possessions in Africa at his own cost, so long as he could sail under the Danish flag. Carloff had a deep knowledge of the Swedish gold trade, and such an attack had the potential to yield a quick and easy profit. In 1659, Carloff returned to Europe, in order to negotiate with the Danish king about the possibility of establishing an Atlantic company in Denmark. In addition, he planned to sell the former Swedish fort and other possessions to the WIC. However, Carloff was ultimately unsuccessful in this plan, since his successor, Samuel Smidt, had already surrendered the fort to the WIC.

By 1660, Carloff had no obvious reason to remain on the Gold Coast, being in conflict with both his European and his African connections. Nonetheless, in 1665, he returned to the Western African trade and the Slave Coast, this time working for the French West India Company. During his French period, Carloff instructed skippers on how to organise the slave trade efficiently, as well as how to navigate the Atlantic waters. Carloff paid the French company a commission for his slave trading, but also made a profit from his voyages to the Caribbean plantations. During these years, he became acquainted with European imperial interests in the Caribbean. Under the French flag, he had learnt about the trade opportunities in the islands, and, in 1674, he therefore suggested that the Admiralty of Amsterdam rebuild the island of Tobago as a plantation colony, with himself as governor.

The careers of Leyel and Carloff demonstrated hitherto unstudied modes of entrepreneurial behaviour. Taking into consideration the context of seventeenth-century European overseas trade, this study has aimed to bring about a better understanding of their entrepreneurship. Now, it is time to return to the research question that was posed at the outset of this dissertation, namely: *What were the backgrounds and the mechanisms of overseas entrepreneurship, and how did these relate to the Nordic institutional context of the seventeenth century?*

Leyel and Carloff's careers show how individuals navigated overseas business: they participated actively and negotiated their role within trading institutions. Thus, they clearly demonstrate the importance of individuals within the early modern trading companies. However, individuals operated within larger structures, including not only trading companies, but also European governments, and partnerships with local traders and rulers. As such, individuals played an important role in several cross-imperial political events. Indeed, they were continually influenced by the political situation in Europe. Each chapter of this study has focused on a certain aspect of the mechanisms, spaces or processes within which overseas entrepreneurship took place.

Studying European overseas business from the perspective of entrepreneurship serves to refine simplistic perceptions of the role of the individual, who is often seen as a mere servant of the companies that employed him. Depending on the perspective of the scholar concerned, individuals have variously been described as privateers, pirates, governors, commanders, merchants, soldiers, adventurers and even traitors. I argue that Leyel and Carloff transcended such simple categories. They were colonial commanders and governors, but they were also merchants. While being commanders, governors and merchants, they were also engaged in what some would argue were justified acts of violence, and others would condemn as piracy. Therefore, rather than restrictively confining individuals to a specific category, it would be better to study them through their entrepreneurial behaviour. This enables a better understanding of how individuals operated within early modern trading companies.

Leyel and Carloff's careers yield important insights regarding the years during which the Nordic overseas ventures were established. It can plausibly be argued that especially in the Nordic context, individuals and their actions were the vehicles of these endeavours and aspirations. Individuals like Leyel and Carloff established, maintained and even misused the companies. For the individual, the Nordic trading companies served as a mercantilist instrument through which to conduct overseas business. This dissertation has also shown that Leyel and Carloff's type of behaviour was especially fitting for the Nordic companies. Indeed, their entrepreneurial ambitions coincided with those of the Nordic kingdoms. The newly-founded Nordic companies opened up significant room for manoeuvre for men like Leyel and Carloff. It would be interesting to establish whether similar individual behaviour was in evidence during the formative years of the Dutch, English, German and French trading companies.

Individuals also made overseas business more international, connected and even global. Particularly in Northern Europe, individuals frequently changed company affiliation, and this transformed the companies into multinational and cross-imperial enterprises. In the Nordic kingdoms, the struggle for hegemony in the Baltic escalated into several wars, which sometimes drew in other European states. In the course of these political and economic conflicts, overseas possessions also played a role. The formative years of the companies were strongly influenced by a large number of international initiatives, as well as by experienced international participants. Viewed through the activities of such individuals, Nordic overseas trade becomes an important part of the more general historiography of seventeenth-century European overseas business.

7.2 Mechanisms of overseas entrepreneurship

This dissertation has sought to apply an entrepreneurial framework to the individuals involved in Nordic overseas business. The novelty of this approach is that entrepreneurship, as a theoretical

framework, has hitherto been mainly studied in a European context. In the introduction, it was emphasised that entrepreneurship during the early modern period was about more than being self-employed, participating in trade, coordinating resources and doing business in new and innovative ways.⁸⁸³ Two aspects were especially crucial; the individual's relationship to the Nordic trading companies, and the social aspects of business. In the overseas context, the mechanisms of entrepreneurship required the individual to participate in overseas business structures, which were based on different expectations than those of Europe.

In the five chapters of this dissertation, I have analysed the various mechanisms of overseas entrepreneurship: training, specialisation, balancing of connections, knowledge and violence. Most of the time, these mechanisms overlapped, and they were also context-bound. As such, it was possible for certain features of certain mechanisms to also occur in other mechanisms. Collectively, these mechanisms were the driving engine of overseas entrepreneurship.

Chapter two focused on the background of the individuals concerned, and explained why the experience they had accumulated overseas represented an entrepreneurial asset. Indeed, when Leye and Carloff were employed by the Nordic companies, their previous experience and training proved crucial. The Nordic kingdoms lacked knowledge and experience of overseas trade, and, in order to access the latter, they needed people who could provide these. Indeed, this was what brought several internationally experienced individuals to the North. A certain level of education and upbringing was important for starting an overseas career, but family background was not the most important factor: to the contrary, joining a chartered company, such as the WIC or VOC, was a far better starting point. In effect, the Dutch trading companies served as training grounds for individuals who aspired to an overseas career. During these formative years, Leye and Carloff learned about general practices for doing business: bookkeeping, languages and sailing routes, to name but a few. Equally important were the lessons about how to act locally in a context that was very different from Europe. Experience gained through the Dutch companies gave individuals a competitive advantage when moving into the Nordic trading companies. Even starting out from a lowly position, it was possible to make a successful career. In exchange for employment, individuals offered their expertise in overseas business. This mutually beneficial arrangement developed into a symbiosis, which has been referred to in this dissertation as institutional sheltering. Chapter two also emphasised the close connection between, on the one hand, the prospect of professional advancement and patronage, and, on the other hand, reward. In particular, I argued that the Nordic companies offered individuals an opportunity to attain a higher position than they otherwise could, and thus social advancement within Europe. The chapter also showed that background was important to a certain degree, but was no guarantee for career advancement. Clearly, what mattered most in the Nordic context was training in Dutch companies.

Chapter three focused on entrepreneurship within trading companies. During the early modern period, the overseas trade of the Kingdoms of Denmark and Sweden was mainly carried out through trading companies. These were based on privileges and charters, issued by the state in order to promote trade. For their part, both Leye and Carloff chose to work within the trading companies, rather than outside them. In a Nordic context, the company framework was indeed important. There were of course plenty of interlopers and pirates, both in the Indian and the Atlantic Oceans. However,

⁸⁸³ On general definitions on entrepreneurship, see Casson, *The Entrepreneur*; Joseph Schumpeter, *The Entrepreneur*, ed. T Knudsen, M Becker, and R Swedberg (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2011).

the concern of this dissertation has been primarily with entrepreneurship as developed within the company framework. As organisations, the Nordic companies were able to offer business opportunities to international businessmen, since they offered a protected environment in which to trade. Several of the individuals involved in the Nordic companies would have otherwise been condemned as interlopers. This study has shown that such categories were indeed blurred within the early Nordic overseas enterprises. The type of entrepreneurship practiced by Leyel and Carloff was particularly common in the Nordic companies. International businessmen such as Leyel and Carloff demonstrate just how multinational and multifaceted seventeenth-century overseas business was. Indeed, if one wants to fully understand Dutch overseas trade, it is not enough to focus only on Dutch companies established within the Republic. In addition, one must also take into account those numerous Dutchmen who took employment in the Nordic companies. In fact, the strategies and operations of Dutch businessmen were extended into and through the latter. As such, an analysis of international business as developed in the Nordic companies can also provide insights into Dutch overseas business. From an overseas perspective, it is equally important to address the role of local trading partners, without whom the establishment of the Nordic companies would have been impossible in the first place. Indeed, in order to fully understand European overseas business, it is important to acknowledge the extent to which European and non-European business activities were intertwined.

In this dissertation, I have primarily studied the company's trade, since the individuals in question were hired as specialists in the establishment and maintenance of overseas business. Their accumulated experience facilitated their ability to make decisions on behalf of the directors and investors in Europe. In the Nordic kingdoms, this created entrepreneurial opportunities for both Leyel and Carloff. Chapter three emphasised that although in theory the charter was the predominant form of organising overseas business, the practical operations of the company abroad were almost entirely dependent on the entrepreneurship of individuals. The reasons for this were the long distances involved, the different business milieus, and the other challenges with which the less experienced board members and investors were unfamiliar. Of course, the contexts could differ from one case to another. Leyel, for example, was cut off from support from Europe, but also represented the king, and made almost all the decisions regarding trade in the Indian Ocean. In contrast, Carloff was more mobile, and enabled the SAC to enter the West African market through his specialisation in the Western Africa trade.

A unique feature of the Nordic context was that both Leyel and Carloff were engaged in the administration of the companies both in Europe and overseas. Leyel was appointed director and bookkeeper, and was present at the boardroom meetings prior to his voyage in 1639, while in India, he was the overall commander of operations, having been personally appointed by the king. In the SAC, Carloff was the second largest investor, the co-director in Europe and also the commander of the first SAC voyage in 1649. Both Leyel and Carloff were supposed to negotiate with local rulers, to maintain, coordinate and develop business overseas, and to be responsible to their patrons, whether these were directors or monarchs. They were supposed to know how to operate the business on the ground, including performing daily business transactions, communicating in several languages, maintaining contact with possible business partners, and providing knowledge of trade routes, products and local business cultures. Thus, they were both chosen for their specialised skills, for which there was a great demand in the Nordic kingdoms. Presenting themselves as experts in overseas business was an important strategy for individuals like Leyel and Carloff.

Chapter four analysed the importance of social connections for Leye and Carloff. These were essential to navigating between different institutional and social environments. In this chapter, I emphasised that for both Leye and Carloff, being connected with both European and local merchants and rulers was absolutely essential to business. The chapter argued that such social connections were not static, but rather loosely structured, being under constant pressure and tension. This altered the ways in which trade opportunities appeared or disappeared, both for individuals and trading institutions. Without well-maintained connections with local rulers and merchants, business could not develop. Indeed, this was why for both Leye and Carloff, paying tributes and offering lavish gifts were essential to maintaining good business connections. However, both men failed to maintain good relationships with their colleagues and subordinates, having prioritised their own personal ambitions over the morale and motivation of the latter. In the end, Leye was overthrown in a mutiny, while Carloff lost his position on the Gold Coast, due to the decision of his colleague, Samuel Smidt, to surrender the fort to the WIC. In this chapter, the question of trust was also addressed. Both Leye and Carloff claimed that they only had a few colleagues whom they could trust. Significantly, even these “trustworthy” men eventually turned against Leye and Carloff.

The chapter argued that trust was a rhetorical tool, which Leye and Carloff employed to emphasise their own business partnerships and positions. However, since they were themselves engaged in smuggling and private trading, attempting to portray themselves as trustworthy was disingenuous. Nevertheless, they wanted to advertise who was part of their overseas network, and to justify why they had chosen to work with these people. Both Leye and Carloff were also prone to individualistic behaviour. Neither of them was able to sustain any kind of inner harmony within their companies, and their relationships with their colleagues and subordinates remained tense. On several occasions, their self-serving behaviour backfired on them, something which demonstrates the importance of social relationships within the companies.

Chapter four also argued that a narrow focus on social networks can serve to limit our understanding of overseas entrepreneurship; to the contrary, I have preferred to discuss the wider context in which a social relationship or network functioned. In my view, this context reveals a great deal about why, how and when individuals chose to establish connections, how they maintained them, and what role these relationships played in their entrepreneurship. This means that the establishment and maintenance of social connections were of great importance for individuals, but could also at times become a liability.

Chapter five argued that one of the central mechanisms of overseas entrepreneurship was the accumulation of knowledge. In particular, I have argued that day-to-day business experience and access to information provided the basis of overseas knowledge. I focused on how this accumulated knowledge was used to gain entrepreneurial advantage, and demonstrated how individuals could take advantage of the company’s attempts to monitor and control overseas business. The companies requested that their employees write reports and keep the company books in good order. The need for control resulted from the problem of information asymmetry, which was caused by long distances and slow communication flows. Experienced individuals knew this, played along with the companies’ requests, and manipulated reports and correspondence to demonstrate their own importance and indispensability. In other cases, reports were used to comment on the capacity of others, such as when the French captain Delbée and governor Du Lion testified to the importance of Carloff in the development of French overseas business.

Controlling the flow of information was one of Level's specialities. As the commander of the company, he alone was responsible for writing reports to the directors, and he used the latter to demonstrate his own importance to the company. Moreover, the reports could also function as a shield against possible accusations of wrong-doing. In many instances, Level wrote about who was a capable employee, or which problems had been caused by other employees. As he was the only person reporting from India, he held significant power over the distribution of information. Hence, control over knowledge and its distribution should be understood as a key entrepreneurial strategy overseas. Such documents were a way for individuals to show their knowledge of overseas trade, and to thereby make themselves indispensable to the organisations that employed them.

Chapter six focused on the role of violence and coercion in overseas entrepreneurial activity, a topic that has traditionally been neglected in the historiography. Individuals did not always plan acts of violence, but they were prepared to use them, since sometimes they were the only way to make a profit. Glete and Clulow, among others, have shown that violence was characteristic of the era, especially in maritime trade. However, in the case of overseas entrepreneurship, violence should not be confused with warfare. It was considered a way to improve trade and to ensure quick revenue, as well as to advance one's career. Warfare also featured in Carloff and Level's careers, but it was not the main cause of violence. Therefore, the concept of military entrepreneurship, as recently discussed by Jeff Fynn Paul and others, is only distantly related to violence in overseas entrepreneurship.

Before concluding this dissertation, it is necessary to comment upon how Level and Carloff perceived their own positions. Indeed, a discussion of their self-perception demonstrates how they experienced their role in overseas business.⁸⁸⁴ By analysing their self-perception, it is possible to understand their motives and the reasons for their behaviour, not only from an analytical, entrepreneurial point of view, but also from their own perspective.

Willem Level certainly considered himself an important figure in the early Danish East Asia trade. However, he had little respect for the trading company that employed him; in fact, he never mentioned the word "company", but instead referred to the king. After all, it was the king who had appointed him, and he saw himself as different to the rest of the employees – his loyalty was to the king, and not to the company. On the one hand, Level often distanced himself from the other employees in his reports, condemning their drunkenness and other immoral behaviour, such as gambling and sexual dalliances with local women. On the other hand, as discussed in chapter four, Level often wrote respectfully of the local merchants, and especially the Portuguese, whom he saw as trustworthy. Although chapter four demonstrated that the words "respect" and "trust" are problematic, Level certainly understood that in order to build a functioning business in Asia, good relationships with the various merchant communities around the Indian Ocean were of great importance.

The way in which Level understood his role in India can be seen in the reports that he sent to the directors and the king. Level hoped that the trade in Asia would develop along the same lines as the Portuguese *Estado* in Goa, where the viceroy was the highest authority and the representative of the king. Of course, Level assumed that he himself would become the Danish viceroy, having already been appointed commander by the king. For Level, his loyalty was with the king, and, in return, he expected royal recognition, possibly even ennoblement. Indeed, his predecessors, such as Crappe,

⁸⁸⁴ For a more thorough discussion on self-perception of early modern merchants see the edited volume, Margaret Jacob and Catherine Secretan, eds., *The Self-Perception of Early Modern Capitalists* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008).

had been ennobled by way of reward for their service. In one of his reports, Leye stated that he would personally rather leave India, but he felt that it was his duty to stay and ensure that business was kept afloat. He had the necessary background to consider himself as belonging to the upper echelon of Danish society, and especially to those closely connected to the king. In my view, he considered his career in the East as a strategy through which to prove his value and capability to the king.

Henrich Carloff was from a more modest background. However, he was skilled in bookkeeping and managing overseas business. Carloff was energetic, and had high expectations of himself. His self-perception was that of a man who had no loyalty, and was prepared to offer his services to competing parties in order to attain business success. His career moves suggest that he took advantage of the political conflicts between European states. However, while profit was important to him, so was his family. His wife belonged to a wealthy and noble lineage, which served to improve his social status, having begun his career as a regular company soldier in Brazil. Carloff's son accompanied him on his expedition to the French Caribbean. However, their relationship later took a downward turn, and Carloff even erased him from his will.⁸⁸⁵ His daughter Johanna, in contrast, inherited capital from her parents, part of which she invested in the VOC.⁸⁸⁶ In 1660, Carloff and his wife Sofia Wolzogen bought a house on the Keizersgracht in Amsterdam, close to the homes of several prominent overseas families, such as the de Geers.⁸⁸⁷

Carloff's self-perception is clearly visible in his request for compensation and a pension from the French King Louis XIV. Here, he stressed the faithful service and favours he had performed for the French in their Atlantic trade. He explicitly stated that because of his knowledge of the African trade, and his experience with other European competitors, he had enabled the French to establish a profitable trade, and thus deserved compensation. Furthermore, as he saw it, it was because of his service to the French king that he, his wife and their four children had had to move from Amsterdam to Paris, thus incurring many expenses. Carloff made a remarkable comparison of himself to his overseas colleague François Caron, who, according to Carloff, had contributed far less to the French overseas trade. Therefore, he claimed, he deserved to receive at least as much in compensation as Caron. Clearly, Carloff, like Leye, considered himself to be a very important person in overseas business.⁸⁸⁸

Leye and Carloff made sure that their superiors and subordinates were aware of their importance, going to great lengths to demonstrate the latter. In the early modern period, an experienced overseas veteran was aware of his own importance, and used it as a strategy to improve his position and reputation in the eyes of others. Leye and Carloff did not perceive themselves as entrepreneurs, but certainly as men of importance. Their constant need to emphasise their undertakings demonstrates that they were not as high up in the social hierarchy as they desired. This desire was what drove them to move forward. They defied uncertainty, engaged in highly risky forms of business, and used methods that many of their contemporaries perceived to be morally questionable. Indeed, the fact that they used such methods underlines their strong desire to climb the social hierarchy. They were neither heroes nor adventurers, but persistent individuals who considered

⁸⁸⁵ Heijer, "Een dienaar" 177.

⁸⁸⁶ Het Utrechts Archief, Utrecht (NL-UTHUA), 34-4 Notarissen in de stad Utrecht 1560-1905, inventarisnummer. *U141a002*, Johanna Carloff's investment in the VOC, 04.07.1721.

⁸⁸⁷ SAA NAA: 1133, fol. 107, 24.04.1660.

⁸⁸⁸ Bibliothèque nationale de France (BN), Département des manuscrits (Ms), Collection Morel de Thoisy 52, f°263, Carloff to Colbert, undated. About Caron see chapter two.

themselves important to business development. Both men also considered their experience and knowledge of overseas business to be superior to those of others. However, it was particularly striking that both Leye and Carloff were highly individualistic in their attitudes and behaviour, and that they both had difficulties in maintaining relationships with others. Indeed, this reflects their determined yet troublesome characters.

Overseas entrepreneurship is thus best understood as a series of entrepreneurial mechanisms (activities, strategies and behaviours), employed by individuals in a challenging overseas context. Because of the volatile and uncertain conditions overseas, these individuals were both moulded by the context and took advantage of it. The competition between Europeans, the long distances and the slow circulation of information made overseas business a lucrative opportunity for those who were willing to take risks to overcome uncertainties. Overseas entrepreneurship is a mode of behaviour chosen by individuals in order to make a profit, and to improve their professional and social mobility. It differs from the conventional belief that individuals involved in entrepreneurship were only interested in making a profit through trade. In the overseas context, balancing of social connections, violence and exploitation of knowledge were also used as mechanisms of entrepreneurship.

7.3 Overseas entrepreneurship in business history

The comparison between Leye and Carloff highlights two important conclusions. First, regardless of the geographical and cultural differences between the Indian and the Atlantic Oceans, similar entrepreneurial mechanisms were employed both in the East and in the West. Second, the behaviour of men like Leye and Carloff was quite typical for the early Nordic trading companies. Given the representative character of their behaviour, a study of their overseas entrepreneurship allows for new insights into the role of individuals in early modern overseas business, particularly from a global history perspective. In this final part of the conclusion, I will discuss these two aspects in greater detail.

In terms of early modern business history and entrepreneurship, several insights are to be gained from a comparison between Leye and Carloff. First, it should be understood that overseas entrepreneurship took place in a violent context. For example, Leye's decision to attack Bengali ships, and Carloff's decision to assail the French Caribbean and Fort Carolusborg, were responses to a violent context. Leye was cut off from support from home and needed to make profit, and therefore decided that attacking merchant vessels was a solution. For Carloff, the rivalry and escalating wars between Denmark and Sweden, and also between the Dutch and the French, proved to be catalysts for violent behaviour. Campaigns such as these were a quick way to make profit, and to demonstrate power to their patrons, who might then hire them for future services.

Second, Leye and Carloff demonstrate that having control over the flow of information in long-distance trade could be used as means to promote oneself to one's superiors. The fact that they cultivated an impression of importance through their correspondence, journals and reports highlights two things. On the one hand, they rehearsed their own perception of their own importance to their companies. This means that when historians read overseas business documents, they ought to understand such texts as a strategy of entrepreneurship, rather than statements that were factually true. On the other hand, the knowledge that individuals had accumulated was highly valued. Not many people travelled overseas as businessmen, and not many managed to make a career of it. Those who did were of great importance to the trading companies. Even the directors were aware that if they

did not treat their employees properly, there was a risk that the employees would turn to interloping, smuggling or even defection to another company. Indeed, the latter could potentially be catastrophic, given the highly competitive nature of trade in Asia and Western Africa.

Third, the comparison between Leye and Carloff shows the importance of connections. Both Leye and Carloff were surrounded by both European and non-European collaborators and rivals. The internal relationships within the company were subject to constant change, which had serious consequences for both individual advancement and the collective success of the companies. Leye faced a mutiny, initiated by his closest colleagues, and Carloff eventually failed in his relationships with his business partners de Geer and Samuel Smidt. This highlights that the overseas trading companies were fraught with internal tension.

Fourth, overseas entrepreneurship was in its nature an act of survival. This dissertation has argued that overseas entrepreneurship was shaped by a reality of long distances, acts of survival, luck, and competition regarding expertise. Those few businessmen who had served abroad grew rapidly in importance, since their experience and knowledge enabled them to achieve higher positions. Language skills, education, adaptation, social contacts and knowledge of trade routes, goods and local business cultures were all part of their expertise. I have argued that this aspect is crucial to understanding what type of individuals participated, survived and thrived in overseas business.

The comparison between Leye and Carloff also shows just how fragile and vulnerable overseas business was. In fact, uncertain business prospects and risk were the basic conditions of trade. Overseas trade entailed even higher risks than European maritime trade, such as unknown diseases, shipwrecks, fraud, violent conflicts and bankruptcy. Of course, all of these were possible in Europe, but the sheer scale was far larger overseas. As such, the aim of this dissertation was not to focus on success, but rather on the adaptation mechanisms that entrepreneurially minded individuals used in response to uncertain conditions. To be sure, this does not mean that every individual was successful. To the contrary, Leye and Carloff eventually failed to achieve many of their long-term goals. Their careers nevertheless manifested similar motives, mechanisms and goals, both in the Indian and the Atlantic Oceans.

However, in the Northern European context, companies remained the predominant form of conducting overseas business – and especially if the individual was interested in a long-term career and upward social mobility. As such, the individual needed the company framework. However, at the same time, the companies needed the individuals and their skills, in order to operate in highly competitive markets, far away from administrative centres. This interdependency was both the cause and the result of overseas entrepreneurship. In the overseas context, entrepreneurship was thus based on a constant interplay between individuals and the trading companies. These similarities and differences show that if we apply the framework of entrepreneurship to individuals in two different regions, certain common denominators are revealed. Similar strategies were used in both regions. This approach has also given this study a more global dimension, and suggests that in the future, it would be beneficial to apply this framework to other regions, and to establish whether these strategies were applied, for example, in the Mediterranean or the Baltic trade. Finally, the comparison has emphasised that through entrepreneurship, overseas trade became more connected. Although the individuals concerned were not the same, except for the rulers and perhaps the courts and councils in Europe, their strategies were similar. This was because overseas business tended to attract people like Leye and Carloff, and because their entrepreneurial behaviour fulfilled the needs of overseas trade.

For Leyel and Carloff, what mattered was overseas trade, rather than trade in the Indian or the Atlantic Ocean *per se*.

The international careers of Leyel and Carloff within the Nordic companies also reveal certain similarities in terms of the Nordic overseas trade. First, both men exploited the immaturity of the Nordic trading companies. They had both been trained in the already established Dutch trading companies, and their experience was significant when they entered the Nordic companies. Second, both men were prepared to use violence to achieve their goals overseas. Third, both men obtained dual positions in the Nordic companies they worked for. Indeed, the fact that they both held positions overseas and were involved in the administrations of the companies in Europe demonstrates that, at least in the case of the Nordic trading companies, the principal-agency theorem is problematic, because in cases such as these, the principal and the agent were the same person.

There were also differences in the Nordic careers of Leyel and Carloff. First of all, during the years covered in this study, Carloff was more mobile than Leyel. The latter worked in the Indian Ocean without a direct connection to Europe, whereas Carloff was able to sail back and forth across the Atlantic. This resulted in the second main difference: Carloff changed company affiliation more often than Leyel. The difference here was not necessarily a difference of setting, but rather a difference of loyalty and character. In the end, these differences were not that substantial. What is important to understand is why these men chose to change company affiliation, to participate in privateering, to engage in the slave trade, to betray patrons and to establish cross-cultural trade connections. Most of those who participated in overseas trade were involved in many of these practices. However, what this dissertation has shown is that in both the Indian and the Atlantic Oceans, similar behaviour took place.

Comparisons of entrepreneurial behaviour are valuable for business history, because they give an alternative perspective on European activities in early modern global history. As comparisons stretch beyond one specific ocean, region or company, they allow for a more connected overseas history. Using the concept of entrepreneurship has enabled this dissertation to identify similarities and differences in the behaviour of business-minded individuals, moving beyond a restrictive focus on companies and empires.

As a final conclusion, this dissertation has demonstrated the need to carry out in-depth studies of the individuals involved in early modern overseas business, for four main reasons. First, their entrepreneurial careers shed light on international business patterns in which national affiliations were less pronounced. Second, the comparison between two different case studies in two different oceanic spaces suggests that the distinction between the Atlantic and the Indian Oceans is not necessarily that significant, especially if we apply a social perspective to the people conducting business there. Third, adopting the concept of overseas entrepreneurship permits a better understanding of how and why individuals used violence in their overseas business activities. From this perspective, it also becomes clear just how important connections, experience and knowledge were for the individual. All of these were components of overseas entrepreneurship, being characteristics that the companies desired, and for which they were willing to pay, in order to build up successful overseas business. As such, the concept of overseas entrepreneurship facilitates a better understanding of the social and institutional environment in which these individuals operated. Last but not least, a study of the role of individuals in overseas business helps to restore human agents to the forefront of global history, which is precisely where they belong.

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Curriculum vitae

Kaarle Wirta was born on the 30th of August 1987 in Tampere, Finland. In 2006, he started his bachelor studies in history at the Swedish-speaking Åbo Akademi University in Finland, followed by a Master's degree in history from the same university. As part of his education, he studied at the University of Leipzig, Germany, for one academic year. His master's thesis focused on the experiences of the Danish colonial officials in Western Africa in the mid-eighteenth century.

In 2013, he started his PhD entitled *Dark Horses of Business: Overseas Entrepreneurship in Seventeenth-Century Nordic Trade in the Indian and Atlantic Oceans* in the ERC funded project "Fighting Monopolies, Defying Empires 1500-1750" at Leiden University, Institute for History under supervision of Prof. dr. Cátia Antunes and Prof. dr. Leos Müller. During his PhD studies, he completed the N.W. Posthumus Institute graduate training program and taught bachelor and master research seminars at Leiden University. He has published several articles in English, Finnish and Swedish and given a significant number of talks at various international conferences. After obtaining his PhD, he started as a postdoctoral researcher at University of Tampere, Finland, focusing on early modern Finnish tar trade in an international business context.