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

Wirta, K.H.

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 Leyel.[138] The king had made Roeland Crappe, a previous employee of the VOC, director of the company. He had also appointed Willem Leyel, 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 Leyel and Carloff.

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[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*; Nørregårnd, *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 became 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

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[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

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[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.

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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 Leyel 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

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[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 Usselincx 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 Usselincx, Blommaert and Minuit's business partner, also had a career characterised by shifting affiliations.[172] After his travels in Spain and Portugal, Usselincx 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, Usselincx eventually left the company and moved to Sweden. According to the royal charter that Usselincx 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, Usselincx 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:

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[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 Usselincx, 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 Usselincx 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. Boshouwers'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

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[177] "Att alle och huer sierdelis, saauell Companiett sielff som schiperne, Styrmendh, Bodzmen, eller Huad naffn 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 ostindiska kompgani 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,

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[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 ostindiska kompgani 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

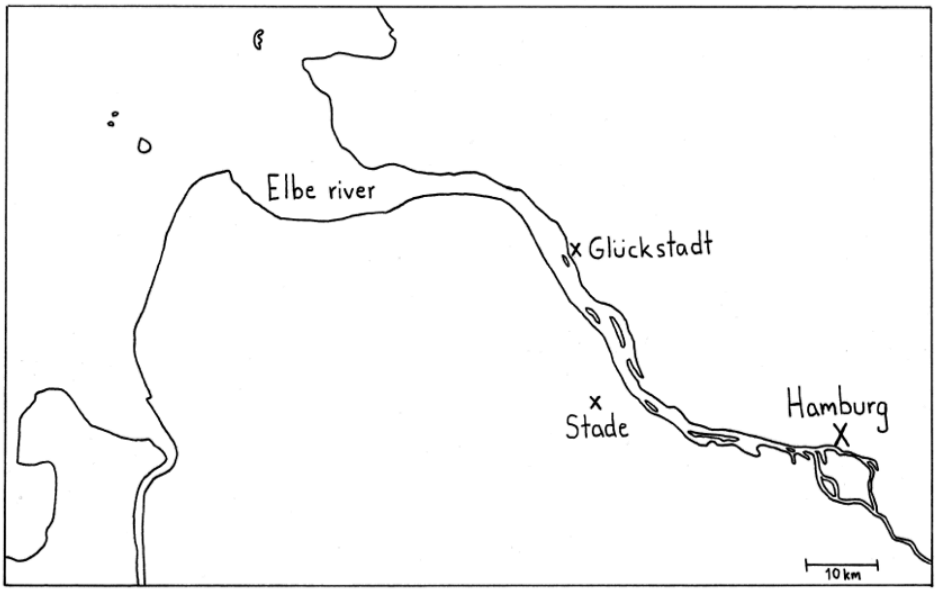
[194] Ibid, 23.

[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 Niederland und der Europäische Nordosten ein Jahrtausend weitäumiger 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 Usselincx, 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

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[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 Entrepots*, 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

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[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.

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[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]

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[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," *Personalhistorisk 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.

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[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 Leyel's early years in Asia. In his introduction to *Historia Christi*, he explains that: "I owe it to the Danish merchant Willem Leyel, 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 Leyel also learned Persian during his employment in the VOC. Indeed, the letters and fragments amongst his papers confirm this suspicion. Bredsdorff has concluded that Leyel'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 Leyel may be accurate, and it is possible that Leyel was fascinated by non-European cultures. However, I would suggest that the reason for Leyel'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 Leyel.

One might wonder why Willem Leyel 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.

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[234] Bredsdorff, *The Trials and Travels*, 19; the quote is a translation by Bredsdorff from Niebuhr's study. "Jeg skylder, siger han, den Danske kjöbmand Wilhelm Leyel, som for nærvarende Tid er Kgl. dansk Direktör for den ostindiske Handel, at tilstaae: at de Oplysninger, som denne Mand, der, ophöjet over den almindelige Kjöbmansaand, endskjöndt 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 Leyel", 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,

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[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]

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[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 nærvaerlese 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 Leyel 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 Leyel 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, Leyel 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 Leyel as their equal.[259] Indeed, this suggests that the directorship Leyel held was different from that of the other directors. In contrast to the appointment of Leyel, 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]

Leyel 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, Leyel was given a prominent position. Leyel'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-á-vis the directors of the company.

Asta Bredsdorff claims that Leyel 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 Leyel as director in 1635, and Leyel 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 Leyel.[262] Bredsdorff has suggested that the other Willem Leyel was perhaps a relative of the Willem Leyel in question here.[263]

Towards the end of the decade, Leyel'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 Leyel was dispatched to deal with the situation. In October

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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 vaere 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 Leyel 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 Leyel four years to reach the Coromandel Coast.[265]

To summarise, Willem Leyel 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 Leyel 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.

Leyel'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 Leyel, 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.

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[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 Ruychaver 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.

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[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 Ruychaver 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,

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[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 (scans785–787); 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.

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[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.

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[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]

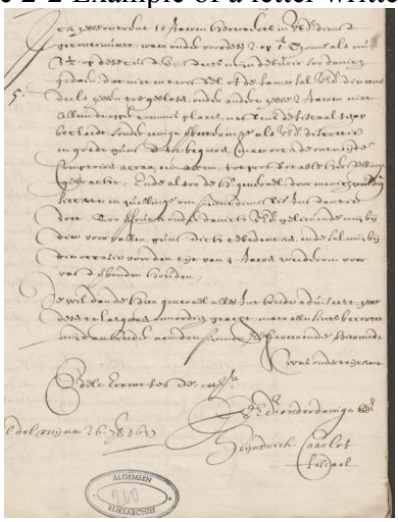
Unfortunately, the archives do not contain Carloff's employment contract with the WIC, which would have stated for how long he was on the payroll. After all, in his report of 26 September 1647, he had complained that he had already served the WIC for almost ten years, and believed that he had done everything 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.