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

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3 One Foot at Home, the Other Overseas

3.1 Introduction

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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[314] Raychaudhuri, *Jan Company in Coromandel*, 113.
[315] Radhika Seshan, *Trade and Politics on the Coromandel Coast: Seventeenth and Early Eighteenth Centuries* (Delhi: Primus Books, 2012).
[316] Furber, *Rival Empires*, 211, 216.
[317] Sanjay Subrahmanyam, "The Coromandel Trade of the Danish East India Company, 1618–1649," *Scandinavian Economic History Review* 37, no. 1 (1989): 41–56, 56.
[318] Ibid, 56.
[319] This argument is corrobated by Krieger, *Kaufleute,* 230–231.
[320] Ole Feldbæk, "The Danish Trading Companies", 206.
[321] Ibidem.
[322] Krieger, *Kaufleute*, 231–32.
[323] Kay Larsen, *Guvernører*, 60.

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

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

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

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

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

[324] See previous chapter for more detailed discussion.
[325] In practice, the King invested even more. Some 5,000 riksdalers of his shares were actually invested by his son, Christian Ulrich Gyldenlove, and 1,500 riksdalers by his mistress, Kirsten Munk. The nobility invested 27,000 riksdalers, out of which Albert Skeel owned the largest share, worth 3,400 riksdalers. Erik Grubbe (2,500 riksdalers) and Holger Rosenkrantz (1,250 riksdalers) were also significant contributors. The rest of the participants consisted of professors and the Copenhagen political elite, such as the mayor. Citizens like Jakob Michelsen, Reinholdt Hansen, Jørgen Danielsen, Simon Surbeck, Mikkel Vibe and Peter Andersen owned shares between 300 and 2,000 riksdalers. Jan and David de Willum invested 10,500 riksdalers together. These Dutch brothers had probably been naturalised Danish by this point. Willerslev, "Danmarks første aktieselskab", 622–625.
[326] Ibid, 625.
[327] Ibid, 626.
[328] Ibid, 623–628.
[329] "Att K:M. Naadigst ville beuilge att ingen aff de personer som ehre Vdj Companiens thieniste eller deris schibe, admunition eller huad dett ahnhörer, schall bliffue brugtt Vdj Rigens thienniste, om Kriigh paakommer." Feldbæk, *Danske Handelskompagnier*, 33.

translations from that of the VOC from 1602.[330] A few differences can be found in the references to the companies that preceded the VOC, the so-called *voorcompagnien*.[331] Another difference was that the VOC was divided into chambers for political reasons, whereas the DEIC retained a centralised administration. However, perhaps the most important difference was that the VOC had the right to sign contracts and treaties with local rulers and authorities. In the case of the DEIC, that right remained a royal prerogative.

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

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

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

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

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[330] Willerslev, "Danmarks første aktieselskab.", 614–615.
[331] The right to sell shares is given as an example.
[332] Ibid, 610; Feldbæk, *Danske Handelskompagnier 1616-1843,* 25–34 and 489–494.
[333] Jan Rindom, "Ostindisk Kompagni 1616-50 – et Spørgsmål om organisatorisk udvikling og interne magtkampe" *Årbog / Handels- og søfartsmuseet på kronborg* 59 (2000): 99–125, 106.
[334] Ibid, 107.
[335] *Kancelliets brevbøger,* 1624-26*,* 570; *Kancelliets brevbøger* 1635-36, 138; Willerslev, "Danmarks første aktieselskab", 629.
[336] Jan Rindom, "Ostindisk Kompagni", 110.
[337] "hovedbeskærmer og største participant" Willerslev, "Danmarks første aktieselskab", 632.
[338] *Kancelliets brevbøger*, 1635-36*,* 255 and 714.

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

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

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

[339] Ibid, 450.; Willerslev, "Danmarks første aktieselskab", 633.
[340] Rindom, "Ostindisk Kompagni", 108.
[341] Ibid, 111.
[342] Ibid, 116.

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

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

3.4 The First Charter – 1645–1652

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

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

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

[343] SAA NA: 875, fo.315, 12.10.1649; Nováky, *Handelskompanier*, 88.
[344] For additional information about the investments of Carloff in the SAC, see VLA (Vadstena Landsarkiv) FBA (Finspångsbruk arkiv) inv.nr.62A.
[345] About the business of de Geer, see Dahlgren, *Louis de Geer*; Lindblad, "Louis de Geer".
[346] Nováky, *Handelskompanier*, 76.
[347] Dahlgren, *Louis de Geer,* 292.
[348] RAS, LA 82, 12.09.1647, Licence for Gabbesen.

hand, the limited interest from the council and the chancellor did not necessarily imply scepticism about the Africa trade. Rather, it merely suggests that their priorities in international trade lay elsewhere, for example in the salt trade with Portugal.[349] On the other hand, the Board of Commerce, which was responsible for international trade, was not averse to overseas trading companies, as reflected in the fact that many other companies were supported by the board after its renewal in 1651.[350] The largest obstacle for the SAC was the limited funding that was available, due to the costly wars in which Sweden was currently embroiled. In this sense, the challenges faced by the Swedish were similar to those encountered by the Danish: the numerous wars on the continent and the internal Baltic rivalry had worsened the financial situation of both crowns, as well as that of potential investors. However, at the same time, warfare accelerated empire building: successful wars could make many aristocrats rich, and encourage them to signal their status by buying exotic and luxurious goods from overseas. This means that while imperial ambitions existed, the capacity of the Swedes to pursue them remained limited, due to the ever-growing demands of the war effort. In turn, this created an opportunity for foreigners with experience and capital to enter into Swedish international trade. The protocol of the royal council stated that: "our nation is not known in those lands" (referring to the Gold Coast).[351] In my view, this implies that the Swedish lacked know-how and recognition on the Coast, which internationally experienced Gold Coast veterans could supply. Finally, Queen Christina advocated de Geer's business plans, and, on 15 January 1648, yet another passport was issued. On the latter, the word "company" appeared for the first time.[352]

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

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

[349] Salt was one of the most important commodities in the Swedish international trade. Severin Bergh, ed., *Svenska Riksrådets Protokoll* (RP), vol. XI: 1645-1646 (Stockholm: Norstedt & Söner, 1906), RP 19.01.1946; Nováky, *Handelskompanier*, 80–81.
[350] Sven Gerentz, *Kommerskollegium och näringslivet, 1651-1951* (Stockholm: Nordisk Rotogravyr, 1951), 57.
[351] RP, 19.01.1646.
[352] Nováky, *Handelskompanier*, 81; Dahlgren, *Louis de Geer*, 334.
[353] Nováky, *Handelskompanier,* 81.
[354] RAS, LA 82 Christina to the Council of Stade; 04.02.1648 and 25.02.1648; Nováky, *Handelskompanier*, 82.
[355] Dahlgren, *Louis de Geer*, 335.
[356] Wouters was a long-term business associate of de Geer. Wouters organised the wholesale trade for de Geer in Hamburg, where he was well acquainted with the markets. He was also participating in the Swedish-Iberian trade. He

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

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

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

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

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

[357] Ibid, 83.

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

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

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

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

[362] Ibidem.

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

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

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

3.5 The SAC 1652–1657

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

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

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[363] The actual date of the marriage is unknown. On the marriage, see Heijer, "Een dienaar", 175.
[364] RAS, LA 10, Correspondance with Jan Wolzogen, 1647, 55, 56; Correspondance between Wolzogen and de Geer, Louis de Geer, *Louis de Geers brev och affärshandlingar 1614-1652*, ed. Erik Wilhelm Dahlgren (Stockholm: P.A. Norstedt & Söner, 1934). October 1641, August 1648 and March 1651; Heijer, "Een dienaar", 175–177.
[365] RAS, LA 111, Räkenskaper, C), Henrich Carloff and D) Jan Wolzogen accounts.
[366] SAA NA: 875, fo.315, 12.10.1649.
[367] Dahlgren, *Louis de Geer*, 338.
[368] Nováky, *Handelskompanier*, 88; RAS, Riksregistraturen (RR) shows that there was a letter sent 20.11.1649, but I did not find the actual letter, only the register.
[369] RAS LA 82, Power of Attorney, Christina to Carloff, undated.
[370] Dahlgren, *Louis de Geer*, 342.

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

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

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

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

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

[373] Dahlgren, *Louis de Geer*, 342.

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

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

[376] Swedish: Kommerskollegiet.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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[379] Material about the investors and their role in the company in, RAS, H&S, vol. 45.
[380] The secretary of the board, Johan Rising, had studied in the Dutch Republic. In 1653, he was sent as governor to New Sweden. He became the last governor of the Swedish settlement, Gerentz, *Kommerskollegium,* 36–37; on the investors in the companies, see Dahlgren, *Louis de Geer*, 337.
[381] Nováky, *Handelskompanier*, 191.
[382] Gerentz, *Kommerskollegium*, 43.
[383] Kommerskollegium, Huvudarkivet (KKA) , Protokoll, 1651-1654, A1 AA:1, protocol, 11.08.1654; Nováky, *Handelskompanier*, 163; Dahlgren, *Louis de Geer,* 346–348.
[384] Nováky, *Handelskompanier*, 191; Bulstrode Whitelocke, *Journal of the Swedish Embassy in the Years 1653 and 1654*, ed. Henry Reeve (London: Longman, Brown, Green and Longmans, 1855), 06.05.1654, 200, (name: carloe), I have used the online the version; http://www.gutenberg.org/files/17407/17407-h/17407-h.htm, [accessed 21 February 2018].
[385] There are several documents related to the negotiations between the English and the Swedish about the Africa trade, Uppsala Universitets Bibliotek (UUB), N430. For a closer reading of the plans, see Nováky, *Handelskompanier*, 186–190.
[386] For the most recent study of early English trade in Africa, see Julie Mo Svalastog, "Mastering the Worst of Trades: England's Early Africa Companies and Their Traders, 1618-1672" PhD-dissertation (Leiden: Leiden University, 2018); Porter, *European Activity*, 106–163, 219–278, 362–470.
[387] In Swedish, *hufvudparticipant***.**

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

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

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

Source: Nováky, Handelskompanier, 175.

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

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

[388] Granlund, *En svensk koloni i Afrika*, appendix 3.
[389] Nováky has compiled a useful list from the Swedish national archives: Nováky, *Handelskompanier*, 175.
[390] Mirkka Lappalainen, *Suku, valta, suurvalta. Creutzit 1600-luvun Ruotsissa ja Suomessa* (Helsinki: WSOY, 2005), 45.
[391] Nováky, *Handelskompanier*, 178.
[392] Bernhard Schlegel and Carl Arvid Klingspor, *Den med sköldebref förlänade men ej å riddarhuset introducerade svenska adelns ättartaflor* (Stockholm, 1875).

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

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

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

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

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

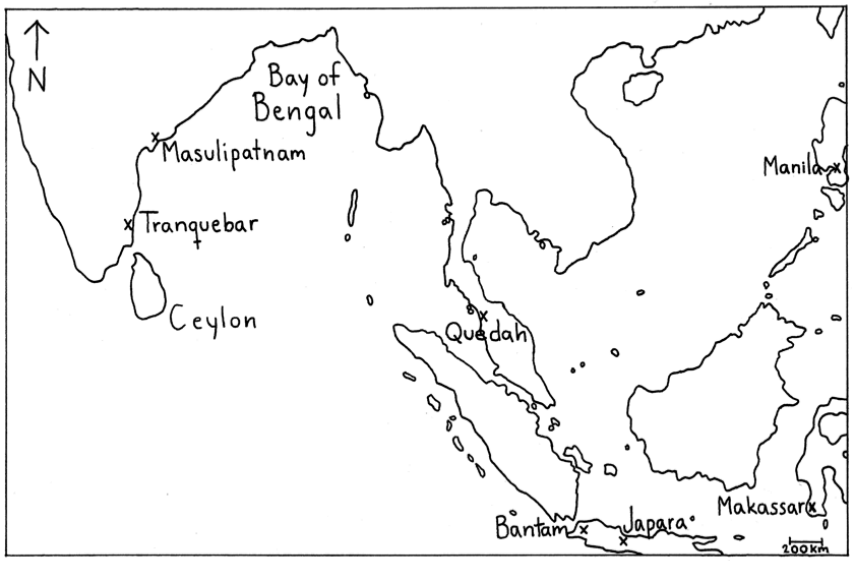
Leyel arrived at Tranquebar in 1643, where he found Danish operations in a precarious condition. Having arrived, Leyel informed the directors that Pessart had proved unsuitable as commander, and that the state of affairs was by now desperate. He reported that Pessart had stolen everything there was to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

[393] Nováky, *Handelskompanier*, 164.

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

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

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



Map created by Henrik Pulli

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

[394] RAC, DK, B 246 A, Leyel to the directors 22.11.1644; Bredsdorff, *The Trials and Travels*, 91.
[395] RAC, DK, B 246 A, Leyel to the diretors, 22.11.1644.
[396] Larsen, *Dansk-Ostindiske koloniers historie*, 32.
[397] RAC, DK, B 246 A, Leyel to the diretors, 22.11.1644.
[398] Ibid, 27.
[399] There will be more about this transition in chapter four.
[400] "Wat het uijteijnde van desen Leijel sijn bedrijf wesen sal leert den tijt", H.T. Colenbrander, ed., *Dagh-register gehouden int casteel Batavia vant passerende daer ter plaetse als over geheel Nederlandts-India: 1643-44* (Gravenhage: Martinus Nijhoff, 1902), July 1644: 129.
[401] RAC, DK, B 246 A, Leyel to the diretors, 12.12.1645.

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

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

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

3.7 Coordinating negotiations

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

[402] Ibidem.
[403] RAC, DK, B 246 A, Leyel to P. Hansen, 17.09.1646.
[404] RAC, DK, B 246 A, Leyel to the diretors, 22.11.1644.
[405] Larsen, *Dansk-Ostindiske koloniers historie,* 24.
[406] Leyel used the word "bequomme pershoner", which I translate to capable people.
[407] RAC, DK, B 246 A, Leyel to P. Nielsen, 20.10.1645.
[408] RAC, DK, B 246 A, Leyel to the directors, 22.11.1644.
[409] "wi maa roe med de aarer wy haffuer", RAC, DK, B 246 A, Leyel to the directors, 22.11.1644.

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

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

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

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

[410] Joseph J. Brennig, "Chief Merchants and the European Enclaves of Seventeenth-Century Coromandel," *Modern Asian Studies* 11, no. 3 (1977): 321–40, 322–323.
[411] Daniel Jeyaraj, *Bartholomäus Ziegenbalg, the Father of Modern Protestant Mission: An Indian Assessment* (New Delhi: ISPCK, 2006), 20; Seshan, *Trade and Politics,* 30–32 and 42–43.
[412] RAC, DK, B 246 A, Leyel to A. Nielsen, 03.03.1645.
[413] RAC, DK, B 246 A, Leyel to P. Nielsen, 20.10.1645.
[414] RAC, DK, B 246 A, A. Nielsen to Leyel, 23.03.1645; Bredsdorff, *The Trials and Travels*, 146.
[415] RAC, DK, B 246 A, Leyel to the directors, 22.11.1644; Bredsdorff, *The Trials and Travels*, 130 and 136.

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

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

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

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

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[416] Seshan has written about the importance of the textile trade for the Europeans established on the Coromandel Coast. See Seshan *Trade and Politics,* 13–15.
[417] Raychaudhuri, *Jan Company in Coromandel,*113.
[418] RAC, DK, B 246 A, Leyel to the directors, 22.11.1644.
[419] Cutiara was also known as Koddiyaar and Cotiaar. It was located south of Trincomalee on Ceylon.
[420] RAC, DK, B 246 A, Leyel to A. Jacobsen, 26.07.1644; Leyel also mentioned the sending of Adrian Jacobsen to the directors in a second report. RAC, DK, B 246 A, Leyel to the directors, 12.12.1645.
[421] According to Bredsdorff, Jacobsen returned in October, having concluded the agreement with the King of Candy. I was not, however, able to date his arrival from the letters by Nielsen.
[422] RAC, DK, B 246 A, Leyel to the directors, 12.12.1645.
[423] There is only scattered information about Josias Stael in the archives.

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

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

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

[424] RAC, DK, B 246 A, Leyel to J. Stael, 19.02.1647.
[425] RAC, DK, B 246 A, Leyel to J. Hansen, 24.05.1647 and Leyel to N. Samson, 24.05.1647.
[426] Stefan Halikowski Smith, *Creolization and Diaspora in the Portuguese Indies: The Social World of Ayutthaya, 1640-1720* (Boston/Leiden: Brill, 2011), 39.
[427] RAC, DK, B 246 A, Leyel to the directors, 12.12.1645.
[428] RAC, DK, B 246 A, Leyel to the directors, 15.11.1646.
[429] Smith, *Creolization and Diaspora*, 39–40.
[430] RAC, DK, B 246 A, Leyel to the king, 12.12.1645; Bredsdorff, *The Trials and Travels*, 158.

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

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

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

[431] Martin Krieger has written about the Danish slave trade in the Indian Ocean. See Martin Krieger, "Der Dänische Sklavenhandel auf dem Indischen Ozean im 17. Und 18. Jahrhundert," in *Jahrbuch für Europäische Überseegeschichte*, vol. 12 (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2012), 9–30.
[432] Rila Mukherjee, "Portuguese Slave Ports in Bengal 1500-1700," in *Seaports in the First Global Age Portuguese Agents, Networks and Interactions (1500-1800)*, ed. Cátia Antunes and Amelia Polónia (Porto: Uporto Edições, 2016), 221–41, 221–224.
[433] RAC, DK, B 246 A, Leyel to H. Ekman, 21.09.1646.
[434] RAC, DK, B 246 A, Leyer to J. Hansen, 19.02.1647.
[435] A sea letter was a certificate issued by a maritime power to neutral merchant vessels during times of war, granting them permission to sail in the Indian Ocean. The document vouched for the neutrality of the vessel, guaranteeing that it would be allowed to continue its journey unharmed, especially if it encountered the naval forces of the issuing state.

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

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

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

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

[436] Raychaudhuri, *Jan Company in Coromandel,* 96 and 119–123. About patrolling, Seshan, *Trade and Politics*, 23.
[437] Jürgen Osterhammel has argued that "*a viceroy* [can be] *loosely defined as the head of the political hierarchy in a given territorial unit at the periphery*". According to Osterhammel, the viceroy represented the king at the local level, and was, in most cases, responsible for the specialised tasks of imperial crisis management. With regard to the VOC, use of the term "viceroy" might seem problematic, given that there was no king. Nevertheless, the function of the VOC *governeur-general* was broadly similar. While the VOC used the term *gouverneur-general*, the EIC used the term *proconsul*, and the Danish referred to the *commander*. See Jürgen Osterhammel, "The Imperial Viceroy: Reflections on an Historical Type," in *The Dynastic Centre and the Provinces: Agents and Interactions*, ed. Jeroen Duindam and Sabrine Dabringhaus (Boston/Leiden: Brill, 2014), 13–29, 20.
[438] RAC, DK, B 247 B, Leyel Passport, 19.09.1645.

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

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

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

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

[439] I will return to the topic of gifts in the next chapter.
[440] RAC, DK, B 246 A, Leyel to P. Nielsen, 20.10.1645.
[441] RAC, DK, B 246 A, Leyel to A. Nielsen, 01.02.1647.
[442] RAC, DK, B 246 A, Leyel to A. Nielsen, 04.09.1644.
[443] RAC, DK, B 246 A, Leyel to A. Jacobsen, 26.07.1644.
[444] RAC, DK, B 246 A, Leyel to A. Nielsen, 01.02.1647.
[445] Smith, *Creolization and Diaspora*; George Winius, "The 'Shadow Empire' of Goa in the Bay of Bengal," *Itinerario* 7, no. 2 (1983): 83–101; Sanjay Subrahmanyam, *The Political Economy of Commerce: Southern India 1500-1650* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).
[446] Smith, *Creolization and Diaspora*, 39–40.

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

3.8 Carloff in Western Africa

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

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

[447] Van Dantzig, *Forts and Castles*, 24; Porter, *European Activity*, 296–297.
[448] Porter, *European Activity*, 38.
[449] Ibid., 42; Robin Law, "Between the Sea and the Lagoons: The Interaction of Maritime and Inland Navigation on the Precolonial Slave Coast (Entre Mer et Lagune: Les Interactions de la Navigation Maritime et Continentale sur la Côte Des Esclaves avant la Colonisation)," *Cahiers d'Études Africaines* 29, no. 114 (1989): 209–37.
[450] Valckenburgh mentioned the importance of gold several times in a report from 1659 (De Jonge gives the year as 1656, but this is mistaken), Cornelis De Jonge, *De Oorsprong van Nederland's Bezittingen op de Kust van Guinea* (Gravenhage: Martinus Nijhoff, 1871), 51– 69.

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

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

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

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[451] Daaku, *Trade and Politics*, 107.

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

[453] Ibidem.

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

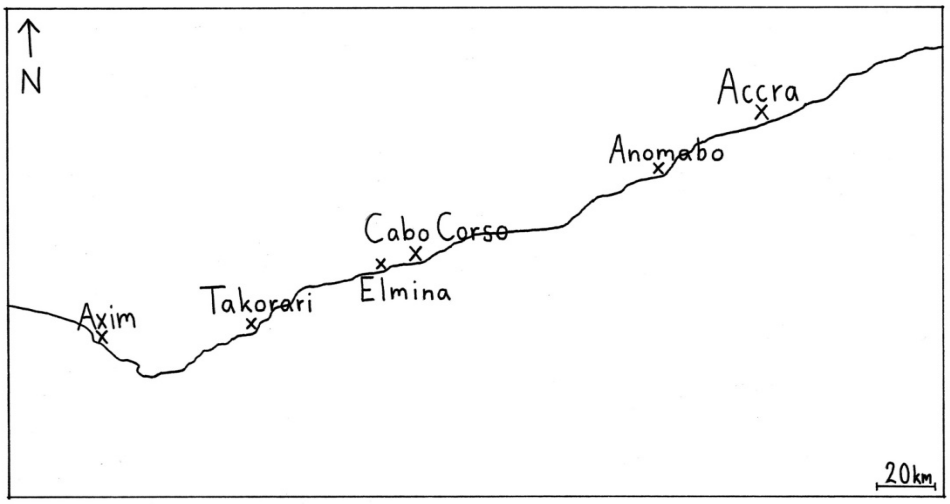
[455] London, National Archives, HCA (High court of Admiralty) 24/111, no.182, declaration by Thomas Crispe; I would like to thank Julie Mo Svalastog for providing this source.

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

[457] Dahlgren, *Louis de Geer,* 336.

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

Figure 3-3 Map of the Gold Coast



Map created by Henrik Pulli

To understand the events that took place around 1650, we must first analyse the period prior to the signing of the contract between Carloff and the Fetu king. During the 1640s, Carloff had worked for the WIC in Western Africa. His position as prosecutor had necessitated much travelling, and he had become familiar with the people of the region and their various trading customs. At that time, Carloff had also become aware of the ambitions of the English on the Gold Coast: he knew that Crispe planned to build a fort, but had so far failed to do so, due to competition from the WIC. Indeed, towards the end of the 1640s, the Dutch had once again regained control over the area. The WIC increased the price of the goods it sold to Africans, to such a point that the Fetu refused to pay, and, in 1649, trade came to a standstill.[459] Already in 1647, while still prosecutor for the WIC, Carloff had noted that English expansion on the coast had slowed. Moreover, he claimed that the Cape Coast had been devoid of Europeans for most of 1648, and the entirety of 1649.[460] As such, the shifting balance of power between the English and the WIC created a space for the SAC to enter the region in 1650.

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

[459] Nørregård, *Danish Settlements*, 10.
[460] NL-HaNa, OWIC, 1.05.01.01, inv.nr *11*, Henrich Carloff to Heeren XIX, 26.09.1647, (scans 686–695); FC, N4, 179–185; Porter, *European Activity*, 294.
[461] London, National Archives, HCA (High court of Admiralty) 24/111, no.182, declaration by Thomas Crispe; NL-HaNA, Staten-Generaal, 1.01.02, inv.nr. *12571.38.1,* Arent Cock to the Heeren XIX, 13.10.1650; FC, N5, 85.

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

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

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

[462] The previous Director-General Henrik Doedens was succeeded by Arent Cock in summer 1650, Nováky, *Handelskompanier*, 101.
[463] NL-HaNA, Staten-Generaal, 1.01.02, inv.nr. *12571.38.1,* Arent Cock to the Heeren XIX, 13.10.1650; FC, N5, 85.
[464] NL-HaNA, Staten-Generaal, 1.01.02, inv.nr. *12571.38.1,* Jan Valckenburgh to Henrich Carloff , 26.07.1650; FC, N5, 86–88.
[465] NL-HaNa, OWIC, 1.05.01.01, inv.nr. *13A*, Jan Ruychaver to Henrich Carloff, 10.07.1651, file.115–119, 124–134 (scan147–149, here it gives as the date 20.07.1651); FC, N5, 118–121.
[466] NL-HaNa, OWIC, 1.05.01.01, inv.nr. *13A*, Jan Valckenburgh to Henrich Carloff ,28.07.1650, file.115–119, (scans 117–121); FC, N5, 96.
[467] NL-HaNA, Staten-Generaal, 1.01.02, inv.nr. *12571.38.1,* Arent Cock to the Heeren XIX, 13.10.1650; FC, N5, 89.
[468] NL-HaNa, OWIC, 1.05.01.01, inv.nr. *13A*, Henrich Carloff to the Heeren XIX, May 1650, file: 504–507, (scans, 506–509); FC, N5, 90.
[469] Klaas Ratelband, *Vijf Dagregisters*, 16.11.1646, 262; Heijer, "Een dienaar", 166.
[470] Van Dantzig, *Forts and Castles*, 24.

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

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

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

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

[471] Porter, *European Activity*, 294.
[472] Van Dantzig, *Forts and Castles*, 18; Nørregård, *Danish Settlements*, 10.
[473] NL-HaNa, OWIC, 1.05.01.01, inv.nr. *13A*, Jan Ruychaver to Henrich Carloff, 10.07.1651, file, 124–134, (scan, 126–136); FC, N5, 118–121.
[474] NL-HaNa, OWIC, 1.05.01.01, inv.nr. *13A*, Jan Ruychaer to Henrich Carloff, 13.07.1651, file, 139–142, (scans, 141–144); FC, N5, 139.
[475] NL-HaNa, OWIC, 1.05.01.01, inv.nr. *13A*, Henrich Carloff to Jan Ruychaver 14.07.1651, file, 142–149, (scans, 144–151); FC, N5, 124.

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

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

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

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

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

[476] Ibid, 167. A notary statement from around the same time indicates that Rosa was actually hired as head merchant of the company. SAA NA: 875, fol. 170, 09.10.1653. "opperkoopman", In the Amsterdam notarial archives, there are several entries between 1647-1661 regarding the business partnership between de Geer and Rosa.
[477] Nováky, *Handelskompanier,* 166–167.
[478] SAA NA: 870, fol.147, 29.08.1656; SAA NA: 878, fol. 170, 09.10.1653; SAA NA: 879, fol. 148, 29.08.1656; Nováky, *Handelskompanier*, 168.
[479] NL-HaNa, OWIC, 1.05.01.01, inv. nr. *47*, Loy Dammerts Journal, 10.07.1654, 13.07.1654, 14.07.1654; Nováky, *Handelskompanier*, 168.
[480] Although an experienced trader, Krusenstierna was not familiar with the Guinea coast. He was a close associate and advisor of Erik Oxenstierna, which suggests that the Board of Commerce in Sweden might have been trying to influence the trajectory of the company in Africa.
[481] Ibid*,* 169.
[482] Ibidem.

company officials, who had discovered gold worth 300 marks belonging to Carloff and his business associates. The gold was confiscated, by the same Rosa who had earlier missed out on the position of governor. Carloff's associates in this venture were a captain of the SAC, Alexander Loncq, his brother, the skipper Frans Gijsbertsen, and Cramer, at that time acting vice-governor. Following the confiscation, the company kept the gold, although Carloff was compensated for the goods that had been sent from Europe to Africa.[483] Notably, Nováky's research has elucidated these episodes. In 1656, Loncq had been accused of bringing cargo from Europe to Africa without the directors' knowledge, an activity in which Cramer had also been implicated.[484] Loy Dammert noted that when Cramer left Western Africa, he had obtained gold to the value of 27,000 guilders through private trading.[485] In a later investigation, this valuation was increased to 35,000 guilders, a truly remarkable sum, which clearly demonstrates the gains to be made through private trading in gold.[486] The trading activities in which Carloff participated thus had a considerable impact upon his relationship with the company. He argued in a letter to the president of the Board of Commerce, Christer Bonde, that he had been prevented from contacting Krustenstierna before his departure for the Gold Coast in 1655.[487] This was due to the fact that the other directors in Europe were already aware of the smuggling network that Carloff was operating. Nováky has thus suggested that there were two factions in the SAC. On the one side, there were Krusenstierna, Rosa and their supporters, who remained loyal to the SAC directors in Europe. On the other side, there were the supporters of Carloff and Cramer, consisting largely of those officials most committed to continuing their own private trade alongside that of the company.[488]

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

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

[483] Nováky, *Handelskompanier*, 172.
[484] NL-HaNa, OWIC, 1.05.01.01, inv. nr. *47*, Loy Dammerts Journal, 29.05.1655; Nováky, *Handelskompanier*, 173. A notarial deed from 1657 reveals that Jean Neumann (probably Hans Neumann) had served under Laurens de Geer, and had thus been in Swedish employment. He had been on the coast in January 1657, as was Joost Cramer. According to Neumann, governor Krusenstierna had asked Cramer whether he knew that skipper Alexander Loncq had been trading for his own benefit. SAA NA: 880, fol.88, 30.07.1657; UUB N 430 fol 309, Jochim Pötter, 22.12.1656.
[485] NL-HaNa, OWIC, 1.05.01.01, inv. nr. *47*, Loy Dammerts Journal, 29.05.1655.
[486] Nováky, *Handelskompanier*, 173.
[487] RAS, H&S, 42, Henrich Carloff to Christer Bonde, 21.02.1657.
[488] Nováky, *Handelskompanier*, 168.

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

3.9 Conclusion

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

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

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

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