The Power of Persuasion: Becoming a Merchant in the 18th Century

Haasis, Lucas

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Lucas Haasis

THE POWER OF PERSUASION

Becoming a Merchant in the 18th Century

[transcript] Practices|of|Subjectivation

Lucas Haasis
The Power of Persuasion

Practices of Subjectivation | Volume 23

Editorial

Post-structuralism and practice theories have shaken the Cartesian universal notion of the self-reflecting subject to its core. No longer is the subject viewed as the autonomous point of origin for initiative, but rather is analysed in the context of its respective social identity constructed by discourse and produced by social practices. This perspective has proven itself to be of exceptional utility for cultural and social analysis. The analytical value of the ensuing concept of subjectivation is the potential of supplementing related terms such as individualisation, disciplinary power, or habitualization by bringing new aspects of self-making to the fore. In this context, the analyses of the DFG Research Training Group »Self-Making. Practices of Subjectivation in Historical and Interdisciplinary Perspective« aim to contribute to the development of a revised understanding of the subject. They still take the fundamental dimensions of subjectivity such as agency and reflexivity into account, but do not overlook or lose sight of the historicity and sociality of the subject. Thus, the ultimate aim is to reach a deeper understanding of the interplay of doing subject and doing culture in various spaces of (and in) time.

Poststrukturalismus und Praxistheorien haben die cartesianische Universalie eines sich selbst reflektierenden Subjekts aufgelöst. Das Subjekt gilt nicht länger als autonomes Zentrum der Initiative, sondern wird in seiner jeweiligen sozialen Identität als Diskurseffekt oder Produkt sozialer Praktiken analysiert. Dieser Zugang hat sich als außerordentlich produktiv für kritische Kultur- und Gesellschaftsanalysen erwiesen. Der analytische Wert der Kategorie der Subjektivierung besteht darin, verwandte Konzepte der Individuierung, Disziplinierung oder der Habitualisierung zu ergänzen, indem sie andere Momente der Selbst-Bildung in den Blick rückt. So verstehen sich die Analysen des DFG-Graduiertenkollegs »Selbst-Bildungen. Praktiken der Subjektivierung in historischer und interdisziplinärer Perspektive« als Beiträge zur Entwicklung eines revidierten Subjektverständnisses. Sie tragen zentralen Dimensionen der Subjektivität wie Handlungsfähigkeit und Reflexionsvermögen Rechnung, ohne hinter die Einsicht in die Geschichtlichkeit und die Gesellschaftlichkeit des Subjekts zurückzufallen. Auf diese Weise soll ein vertieftes Verständnis des Wechselspiels von doing subject und doing culture in verschiedenen Zeit-Räumen entstehen.

Lucas Haasis is a postdoctoral researcher and the research coordinator of the UK-German Prize Papers Project (www.prizepapers.de). He is also a lecturer of Early Modern History at the Carl von Ossietzky University of Oldenburg, Germany. His research focusses on 18th-century letter-writing practices, mercantile culture of the 18th century, materiality studies, and praxeological approaches in historiography and global microhistory.

Lucas Haasis

The Power of Persuasion

Becoming a Merchant in the 18th Century

[transcript]

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Contents

For Hanne, Janne and Lele

Acknowledgements

In August 2012, my friend Siem van Eeten secretly took a picture of me in the reading rooms of the National Archives London. He sent it to me right after my first research trip to London, which I spent together with Els van Eijck van Heslinga, the director of the Royal Library of the Netherlands at the time, and her team from the Sailing Letters project. I will be forever grateful to Els for inviting me to join the group in 2012 because this trip changed my life as a historian. I am also grateful to Siem for taking this photo because he captured the moment that would bring about this change, the moment when I first made contact with the Prize Papers collection. In the picture, I am sitting full of awe at one of tables in the reading room. I still have short hair, I am wearing white gloves, staring at a pile of old documents, full of amazement. I still feel that way today when I work with the documents at TNA. I actually feel that way already every time when we disembark the tube at Kew station and turn into the road leading to TNA, full of anticipation, especially now because of many long-standing colleagues working there whom I would count as close friends such as Amanda Bevan, Randolph Cock and Maria Cardamone. During the pandemic, I learned that I could even feel that way when opening digital images of the records or particularly when watching another brilliant video of original documents unfolded by Randolph and filmed by Maria. I even learned that I could feel that way when we worked together in the team at Oldenburg university, discussing for hours the characteristics of a new historical document type found in the collection. Today, I work at the Prize Papers Project that is digitizing the entire Prize Papers collection, a privilege I owe to Dagmar Freist, my supervisor and mentor, and to my dear colleagues and close friends Annika Raapke and Christina Beckers, who have walked this path with me right from the beginning.

The picture that Siem took of me is almost 10 years old now. It is 2021, and this is no typo. Finally, this book will be published in 2022. I cannot believe that I have finally made it. During the last decade, I moved three times, had five contracts, got married, became a father of two wonderful sons. Our younger boy was born during the pandemic. Even my little brother is a father now. I have taught over 1100 students and introduced them to the Early Modern Period. Many of them are teachers now. Time flies, many things have changed. The world has changed. In 2022, I guess as we all hope, finally for the better. I have also changed, and not only my hair style. I still have to comprehend that

this mammoth project is over and admittedly I also still have to process and find out whether it was all worth it in the end. My family and friends had to swallow many bitter pills during the last years.

What I can say today is that I am proud to have finished this project, not alone, but with the help of many and only through the constant support of my family and their understanding. And I still love to talk about Nicolaus Gottlieb Luetkens, the merchant at the heart of the book, even after 10 years, which is a good sign. I never felt tired of doing the actual research, because it always led to surprises. These surprises are the reason why I became a historian in the first place and as I would learn from the Prize Papers, these surprises will never cease and will never stop to amaze me. Just when I was finishing the manuscript for this book, I found out that the cantata that Carl Friedrich Telemann composed for the consecration of Luetkens' brother Joachim in Hamburg will be performed for the first time at a concert in Bern in December 2021. The Luetkens story keeps on giving. I also still love to think back and remember the very first time that I sat in the archive opening the boxes containing the Luetkens archive and the wine that we drank in a wonderful small restaurant in London after this experience with Els, her husband Nico, Erik van der Doe, Perry Moree, Roelof Hol and Siem.

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To my friends Antonia, Andi, André, Christoph, Christopher, Claas, Felix, Julia, Michi, Nico, and Robert.
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To my family in the Swabian Alb and my extended family in Graben-Neudorf.
To my brother, his wife and their daughter.
To my sons.
To my wife.

“What is a letter? If not simply a piece of paper that one can tear into pieces or crumple together, but that one can also keep as a treasure and make it yellow and weather.”
Ludwig Christoph Heinrich Hölty. Sämtlich hinterlaßne Gedichte, edited by Adam Friedrich Geisler. Halle: Hendel, 1782.

“But letter writing is now a mere tossing of omelettes to me.”
Letter from Virginia Woolf to Gerald Brenan, December 1, 1923. In Virginia Woolf: The Complete Collection. Eugene: Oregan Publishing, 2017.

“We see from your letter, dear friend, that love on the one hand and the pursuit of profit on the other fight a battle in your heart. […] But we very much wished for E.E., and for our interests, that the dear child will grant E.E. a bit more time to fill the bag with ducats, for which E.E. has the best opportunity at the moment.”
Letter from Jobst Henning Hertzer & Christopher von Bobartt to Nicolaus Gottlieb Luetkens, March 5, 1745, The Luetkens Archive, The National Archives, Kew, London, HCA 30/234.

All translations by the author.

1 Introduction

1.1 The Luetkens Archive

In August 1745, in the French harbour of Brest, a merchant loaded his business archive, stored in a wooden travel chest, onto a ship.[1] This merchant was Nicolaus Gottlieb Luetkens, this book's main protagonist. Little did he know that this moment in Brest would be the last time he would ever see his business archive. Luetkens, born and raised in Billwärder, apprenticed in the free and imperial city of Hamburg, was the son of a priest, however, his uncles were successful businessmen.[2] He had spent the previous two years in France as a "travelling merchant" as he called himself, visiting, living and trading in the booming cities of French Atlantic trade, making a name for himself as a wholesale merchant. The aims of his travels were "to prove himself in trade" and "to make friends and settle some correspondence in foreign lands."[3] The business trip to France would ultimately seal his transformation into a well-established settled merchant.

Brest was the final station on his business trip through France, which led him all the way along the French west coast, from Bayonne and Bordeaux in the south to Brest

1 Today, the Luetkens archive is stored as part of the Prize Papers Collection, the archival records of the English High Court of Admiralty (HCA) of the National Archives (TNA), Kew, London, UK, HCA 30/232-236. In the following, I will use the abbreviated form of reference TNA, HCA 30/232-236. Corresponding court papers regarding the court case of the ship *Hope*, the ship on which the archive was once loaded before capture, can be found in HCA 32/115/14, HCA 13/90, HCA 30/775/4, and HCA 42/36. See our detailed catalogue reference here: https://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/details/r/C4249188-C4249192. A second ship captured by the English during the same time and owned by Luetkens was the *Post van Hamburg*. All corresponding court records regarding the court case of this ship can be found in TNA, HCA 32/143/17.

2 See for a short introduction "Luetkens (Nicolaus Gottlieb), 601-602." In *Lexikon der Hamburgischen Schriftsteller bis zur Gegenwart*, vol. 4, edited by Hans Schröder, 598-602. Hamburg: Perthes-Besser u. Mauke, 1866. Nicolaus Gottlieb Luetkens (also spelled Lütkens or Lutkens, but he preferred the spelling Luetkens) will be introduced in detail in the next chapter.

3 Original translation by the court of "Summarische Deposition des erbaren Nicolaus Gottlieb Lutkens und der erbaren Hertzer & von Bobart", TNA, HCA 32/143/17: "Reisender Kaufmann", "sich in der Handlung habilitiren", "sich Correspondenten und Freunde in auswärtigen Örtern zu erwerben".

and St. Malo in the north. This business trip, already his second after a first journey through England, Spain, the Netherlands and France in the years 1739-1742, filled his "bags with ducats", as his business friends Jobst Henning Hertzer and Christopher van Bobartt put it, and furnished his pocketbook of correspondents with hundreds of names of reputable merchants and merchant houses.[4] Through his business trips he gained a sturdy foundation of experience in Atlantic trade, lucrative enterprises and a not unsubstantial fortune. At the end of the year of 1745, he was ready and well equipped to bring his establishment phase to an end.

It was time for him to return to his hometown and finally settle down. In Hamburg, his future wife, Ilsabe Engelhardt, daughter of a respectable Hamburg merchant family, already awaited him together with his future business partner, Ehrenfried Engelhardt, who was the brother of his bride, had been educated in the same house as Luetkens, and with whom Luetkens would open the merchant house *Luetkens & Engelhardt* in the Elbe city. Even before his return, the merchants Hertzer & von Bobartt, his longest trading partners, his "undoubted agents and attorneys" in Hamburg, had rented a stately merchant house in his name in the famous merchant quarter *Huxter Fleet* in the *Katharinenstraße* in Hamburg.[5] His return to his hometown, his wedding and the opening of his own merchant house in Hamburg in November 1745, after having spent years abroad, crowned Luetkens' successful establishment phase. By that time, he was 29 years old, a typical age for merchants of the time to marry and to reach the next stage of their career as an established merchant.[6] As the last step before starting this new chapter in his life, however, the Hamburg merchant first had to transfer all his business records and personal belongings, including some clothing, from France to Hamburg, a crucial prerequisite for opening the merchant house, which is why we find him in the harbour of Brest in August 1745.

Luetkens chose one of his own ships for the transport. During that time, he already owned nine ships with three of them lying at anchor in Brest. He entrusted one of his most reliable ship's captains, Rieweert Frerecks, with his valuable freight.[7] He himself had decided to travel back to Hamburg by horse and stagecoach with a last short

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4 "Beutel mit Ducaten", Letter from Hertzer & van Bobartt to Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, March 5, 1745, TNA, HCA 30/234. The *pocketbook of correspondents* is stored in TNA, HCA 30/232. Regarding the importance of mercantile network building, see as an introduction Glaisyer, Natasha. "Networking: Trade and Exchange in the Eighteenth-Century British Empire." *Historical Journal* 47 (2004): 451-76. See Subrahmanyam, Sanjay, ed. *Merchant Networks in the Early Modern World*. Aldershot: Variorum, 1996.

5 Attestation issued by the ruling authorities of Hamburg with translation, letter of attorney with translation, brought into court 23 October 1745, HCA 32/143/17. Detailed information about the merchant house in the Katharinenstraße can be found in the chapter on Luetkens' marriage preparations.

6 See Grassby, Richard. *The Business Community of Seventeenth-Century England*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995, 303, 331. See Earle, Peter. *The Making of the English Middle Class. Business, Society and Family Life in London, 1660-1730*. Berkeley/Los Angeles/Oxford: University of California Press, 1989, 177-184. See Holloway, Sally. *The Game of Love in Georgian England: Courtship, Emotions, and Material Culture*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019, 12.

7 See examinations of Rieweert Frerecks, captain of the *Hope*, and Ties Christian Thiel, mate of the *Hope*, taken at Deal, 24 and 26 August 1745, TNA, HCA 32/115/14.

stopover in Paris. Later the seamen would report that they saw him eagerly patrolling the ship's deck and the docks controlling the loading procedure.[8] In fact, the merchant had good reason to be nervous. In 1745, France was at war with Great Britain during the *War of the Austrian Succession* (1740-1748).[9] This, in turn, entailed that ships passing through the English Channel, *La Manche* in French, coming from France were exposed to the danger of enemy attacks by British ships. In the case of commercial vessels, these attacks aimed less to damage or destroy the ships, but far more often to capture them in order to contribute to the economic weakening of the enemy. During the entire Early Modern Period it was common practice by all belligerent parties to capture enemy ships as a means of tactical warfare.[10] This task was often carried out by ships coming from the private sector supplementing the Royal Navies as auxiliary troops in times of war. The auxiliary ships were called privateers, *corsairs* in French.[11] Thus, the situation facing the merchant Luetkens in August 1745 was that his ships were at risk of running into British ships of war during the passage. To make matters even worse, the departure of Luetkens' ships coincided with a major British privateering campaign against French commercial shipping. With rumours swirling regarding the beginning of this campaign since the summer, Luetkens' ship departed from Brest at the exact time when Great Britain had decided to prey upon almost "all ships coming from France & Spain with destination Hamburg."[12]

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8 See examination of Samuel Tunis, boatswain of the *Hope*, taken at Deal, 24 and 26 August 1745, TNA, HCA 32/115/14.

9 See Anderson, Matthew S. *The War of the Austrian Succession, 1740-1748*. London/New York: Routledge, 1995. See Browning, Reed. *The War of the Austrian Succession*. New York: St. Martin's, 1993.

10 See for instance Anno Regni Annæ Reginæ Magnæ Britanniæ, Franciæ, & Hiberniæ, sexto. *Act for the better securing the Trade of this Kingdom by Cruisers and Convoys.* [...] London: Charles Bill, and the executrix of Thomas Newcomb deceas'd, 1707.

11 See Starkey, David J. *British Privateering Enterprise in the Eighteenth Century*. Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1990. See Starkey, David J. "A Restless Spirit: British Privateering Enterprise 1739-1815." In *Pirates and Privateers. New Perspectives on the War on Trade in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries*, edited by David J. Starkey, Els van Eijck van Heslinga and Jan de Moor, 126-140. Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1997. See Petrie, Donald. *The Prize Game. Lawful looting on the high seas in the days of fighting sail*. Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1999, 161-162. See Anderson, Gary M., and Adam Gifford, Jr. "Privateering and the Private Production of Naval Power." *Cato Journal* 11, no. 1 (1991): 99-122, here 106-108. See Perl-Rosenthal, Nathan. "Reading Cargoes: Letters and the Problem of Nationality in the Age of Privateering." In *A World at Sea. Maritime Practices and Global History*, edited by Lauren Benton and Nathan Perl-Rosenthal, 75-88. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2020. See Blakemore, Richard, and James Davey, eds. *The Maritime World of Early Modern Britain*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2020.
For the French perspective see Barazzutti, Roberto. "La guerre de course. Guerre au commerce et commerce de guerre." In *Economic Warfare. Storia dell'Arma Economica* (Quaderno Sism), edited by Virgilio Ilari et Giuseppe della Torre, 89-106. Milan: Acies Edizioni, 2017. See Aumont, Michel. "La guerre de course française en Atlantique sous Louis XV et Louis XVI (1744-1783)." In *Histoire des pirates et des corsaires de l'Antiquité à nos jours*, edited by Gilbert Buti and Philippe Hrodej, 285-298. Paris: CNRS Éditions, 2016. See Villiers, Patrick. *Marine royale, corsaires et trafic dans l'Atlantique de Louis XIV à Louis XVI*. 2 vols. Lille: Atelier national de reproduction des thèses, 1991. See Bromley, John Selwyn. *Corsairs and Navies 1660-1760*. London: Hambledon Press, 1987.

12 See letter from Luetkens, Anthony to Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, June 21, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/233, court bundle B.

As a ship with a Hamburg flag and shipowner, with Hamburg being a neutral maritime power during almost the entire Early Modern Period, Luetkens' ship would, however, normally be spared this fate and instead "enjoy all the benefits and the privileges of a Hambro ship", meaning safe passage.[13] In contrast to piracy, privateering followed strict rules and was legalised by maritime law. One of these rules was that belligerent powers were forbidden to capture neutral ships. Neutral ships were ships flying the flag of all the ruling authorities uninvolved in the prevailing war, often maintaining peace and trade treaties with the warring parties.[14] The only condition appended to this rule was that the captains and ship owners of the neutral ships were not caught in the act of trading and collaborating with the enemy. For Luetkens, this meant that he had to ensure that no one could find out about his business archive filled with business records and hundreds of letters providing evidence about Luetkens' deep involvement and strong ties with the French economy. In order to play it safe, the merchant let the men hide his travel chest with the archive in the hold of the ship under some heavy casks of sugar and coffee that filled the rest of the cargo space.[15] He likely felt that this solved his problem. However, in the end, it was unfortunately precisely this hidden spot that was too conspicuous leading to his misfortune.

All quotations from the original letters written in German, French and Dutch and all quotes from contemporary literature, including German or French letter-writing manuals and business manuals, French legal records or Dutch insurance records, are translated into English by the author. In all cases where I have used more loose translations of the letter text instead of literal word-for-word translations, for reasons of historical accuracy in terms of the contemporary meaning of the letter text in the original language, I provide the original letter text in square brackets or in the footnote according to the best of my knowledge and based on my knowledge of the respective letter context. The same rule applies to all letter text entailing formative letter formulae, typical contemporary set phrases used in letters in different languages, that are important for the analysis and that are also added in the original language. Complete transcriptions of the letters in their original language are available on request. For reasons of brevity, I have made the pragmatic choice of not quoting the entire original letter text in the footnotes.

13 Examination of Diderich Glasshoff, ship's broker, in Hamburg, HCA 32/143/17, CP 34.

14 See Müller, Leos. "The Forgotten History of Maritime Neutrality, 1500-1800." In *Notions of Neutralities*, edited by Pascal Lottaz, Herbert R. Reginbogin, 67-86. London: Lexington Books, 2019. See Müller, Leos. *Neutrality in World History*. London/New York: Routledge, 2018. See Schnakenbourg, Éric. *Entre la guerre et la paix : Neutralité et relations internationales, XVII-XVIIIe siècles.* Rennes : Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2013. See Brinkman-Schwartz, Anna. "The Antigallican Affair: Public and Ministerial Responses to Anglo-Spanish Maritime Conflict in the Seven Years War, 1756–1758." *The English Historical Review* 135, no. 576 (2020): 1132-1164. Regarding Hamburg's maritime neutrality, see Pantel, Isabell. *Die hamburgische Neutralität im Siebenjährigen Krieg*. Münster: LIT, 2011. See Newman, Karen. "Hamburg in the European Economy, 1660-1750." *Journal of European Economic History* 14, no. 1 (1985): 57-93. See for instance the Treaties of Peace and Commerce in Jenkinson, Charles, Earl of Liverpool. *A Collection of All the Treaties of Peace, Alliance, and Commerce, Between Great-Britain and Other Powers*. London: J. Debrett, 1785.

15 See attestation as to papers by Nicholas Craven, 24 and 26 August 1745, TNA, HCA 32/115/14. See examination of James Doran, September 10, 1745. *Instance and Prize Courts: Examinations and Answers*, Examinations 1744-1747, TNA, HCA 13/90.

The ship the merchant had entrusted his precious business archive with was called the *Hoffnung*, otherwise *L'Ésperance* or the *Hope*.[16] Unfortunately, this turned out to be quite the misnomer. "Five Leagues to the Southward of Beachy Head", a notorious capture spot at the south-easternmost tip of England, the *Hope* was captured by a British privateer called the *Charming Molly*. On the "23d. of August 1745", the ship *Hope* was "stopt attacked and seized by an English private ship of war called the Charming Molly (Nicholas Craven commanding) and first brought into the Downs and afterwards brought to Deal under pretence that the said ship and goods did belong to and were the property of subjects of the French king or other enemies of the crown of Great Britain [...] without any resistance being made" as court papers reveal.[17] It was only later that Luetkens would discover that the *Hope* was unfortunately not even the only ship of his that was captured during this time. Two weeks earlier, the English had also captured the *Post van Hamburg*, a second ship that had left Brest in August 1745, which was seized off the coast of Dungeness.[18] Receiving this news must have been a shock to the merchant, when he finally arrived in Hamburg by land in September 1745. It was perhaps some consolation that nobody was physically hurt during the captures, but with this ship Luetkens' mercantile archive was now lost to him forever.

Instead, the business archive, as part of British war loot, met with a fate that was completely different than its intended purpose. In fact, being deprived of its original purpose and of its owner led to it still being preserved today. After the capture of the *Hope*, the archive passed into the hands of the British authorities and military administration. This happened immediately after the hostile takeover and was part of the normal procedure that awaited every ship that was taken by an English privateer during that time.[19] In Deal, to where the ship was escorted post-capture, the ship was handed over to the crew of the *Charming Molly* and the local military authorities, and with it the cargo of the ship also changed hands, also including items such as numerous heavy casks of sugar and coffee which were later sold and the contents of the hidden archive.[20] Luetkens' wooden chest was discovered by the two military men James Doran and Bartlet Bartholomew Coleman during the inspection of the ship which served

16 Court Papers in TNA, HCA 32/115/14. Captured ship: *Die Hoffnung* of Hamburg, otherwise *L'Ésperance*, *De Hoop*, or *The Hope* (previously the English *L'Upton* or *Upton*, taken as prize and sold in France), Rieweert Frerecks master. History: a Hamburg merchant ship (English plantation built, 250 tons, 15 guns) bound from Brest to Hamburg, laden with sugar, coffee berries, vinegar, cork, butter, linen, beef and a chest; taken on 23 August 1745 by the privateer *Charming Molly* (Nicholas Craven commanding) and brought into Deal.

17 Allegation for the master, dated 5 August 1746, TNA, HCA 32/115/14.

18 Court Papers in TNA, HCA 32/143/17. Captured ship: *Post van Hamburg*, master Herman Andreas Paatz. History: a Hamburg ship (70 Hamburg lasts, 11 men), bound from Brest to Rotterdam, laden with sugar and paper; taken on 7 August 1745 off Dungeness by the privateer Swift, George Hudson commanding, and brought into Deal.

19 See Freist, Dagmar. "The Prize Papers. Uncurated Histories of Global Scope." In *Das Meer. Maritime Welten in der Frühen Neuzeit / The Sea: Maritime Worlds in the Early Modern Period*, edited by Peter Burschel and Sünne Juterczenka, 267-279. Cologne/Weimar/Vienna: Böhlau, 2021.

20 Commissions of appraisal and sale of the ships and the cargo, March 1746, as well as detailed appraisals of the ship and the cargo, together with auction arrangements for the cargo, details of sales by auction at Garraways Coffee House, Exchange Alley, Cornhill, London on 17 April 1746, ac-

the purpose of finding evidence of potential fraud. As the court records from 1745 state, "after the said Capt. Frerecks was sent on shore at Deal in order to be exam'd by the commissioners a large chest of papers was found hid under the cargo in the afterhold of the said ship and this deponent caused the said papers to be taken thereout because the said chest could not conveniently be [—] removed and all the s[aid] papers are contained in the bag hereto annext."[21] The records were transferred to the High Court of Admiralty in London, the court that was administrating the British privateering endeavours, where a court process was opened challenging the neutrality of the ship. In the court proceedings, the business archive became the main piece of evidence against the shipowner who was accused of having visited "Brest and other parts in France [...] with the premeditated design to trade and traffick there in ships and goods [...] and he the said Nicholas Gotlieb Lutkens did accordingly continue to live and reside in France and carried on such Trade and Commerce there in the mutual Profit and advantage of himself and of the subjects of the French king and to the great encouragement of their privateers until in or about the month of September 1745."[22]

After the court proceedings, which lasted until 1748, the archive as a piece of evidence was subsequently transferred to the archive of the court, which later moved into the Tower of London and, in the end, found its way into the UK National Archives, Kew, London, where I rediscovered it 268 years after Luetkens had loaded it onto his ship in Brest. The only item missing today is the wooden travel chest that the records were originally stored in, simply because the officers Doran and Coleman had not been able to remove the wooden chest stuck in the hold of the ship, and "some wearing apparroll" stored in the chest that must have been sold on spot.[23] Everything else has remained intact over three centuries in precisely the condition it was left in by the merchant Nicolaus Gottlieb Luetkens in Brest in 1745 and the court personnel in London.

This story stands at the beginning of this book. With each retelling, I never tire of considering the coincidences and the odds leading to that fact that this archive has survived until today and I feel privileged that I was fortunate enough to discover it in 2012 among the English privateering records that the UK still preserves today in the *Prize Papers* collection in the National Archives in London. The story still beggars belief: Were it not for this incident in 1745, the Luetkens archive would most probably never have survived, as

count of sale, and account of duty on sugar and coffee (part of the cargo was decreed on 15 March 1746 to be restored as neutral), TNA, HCA 32/115/14.

21 See attestation regarding papers by Nicholas Craven, 24 and 26 August 1745, TNA, HCA 32/115/14. The wrapper of this court document says "L'Esperance otherwise De Hoffnung Rieweert Frerecks Master. Attestation of Nicholas Craven with 63 ship papers & a large [bag]g of papers brought in by Ste[vens] [28]th August 1745." See examinations of James Doran and Bartlet Bartholomew Coleman, September 10, 1745. *Instance and Prize Courts: Examinations and Answers*, Examinations 1744-1747, TNA, HCA 13/90.

22 Allegation, given by Stevens, brought into court 16 March 1748, HCA 32/143/17. Luetkens was accused of buying "ships and goods taken from the English by the French and brought into their ports and condemned there as Prize." The *Hope* was originally an English ship called L'Upton but captured by a Spanish privateer and bought by Luetkens at an auction in Vannes, France.

23 Examination of James Doran, September 10, 1745. Instance and Prize Courts: Examinations and Answers, Examinations 1744-1747, TNA, HCA 13/90.

was the tragic fate of many private archives from the past that were destroyed or thrown away over the course of time. Regarding records from Hamburg and its merchants in particular, the situation is even worse because Hamburg's state archive, the *Staatsarchiv Hamburg*, and its library of commerce, the *Commerzbibliothek*, suffered severe losses of records through the Great Fire of Hamburg in 1842 and during the bombings of the Second World War.[24] But due to the capture of the ship Hope in 1745, the Luetkens archive has survived, which is a windfall for historical research. Into the bargain, the archive has survived in remarkable and unique condition. It was preserved as a time capsule from 1748, the time when the court proceedings ended. After the case was closed and all the evidence neatly and safely stowed away, the archive sank into oblivion and gathered dust in the archive's registry for centuries. This was not an isolated case, but happened on a large scale with thousands of British Prize records. As a remnant of a practice that was eventually abandoned during the 19th century, after the court case the Luetkens archive became a shelf warmer in the archive of the court, relegated to an existence in the dark alongside thousands of other records and pieces of evidence stemming from over 35,000 English privateering raids and captures between the years 1652 and 1815.[25] It seems unbelievable, but all these records were forgotten for centuries. It was not until the end of the 20th and particularly the beginning of the 21st century when Dutch Scholars together with the National Archives in London rediscovered this collection and began the reappraisal and in-depth research process regarding this collection, the Prize Papers collection.[26] In 2012, I enjoyed the privilege of joining the Dutch consortium during a research trip, which was when I found the Luetkens archive. In 2018, I started working in the Prize Papers Project, a research project digitizing the entire Prize Papers collection.[27]

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24 See Loose, Hans-Dieter. "Das Stadtarchiv der Freien und Hansestadt Hamburg im Großen Brand von 1842." In *Aus erster Quelle. Beiträge zum 300-jährigen Jubiläum des Staatsarchivs der Freien und Hansestadt Hamburg*, edited by Joachim W. Frank und Thomas Brakmann, 51-84. Hamburg: Hamburg University Press, 2013. See Schubert, Dirk. "The Great Fire of Hamburg, 1842: From Catastrophe to Reform." In *Flammable Cities: Urban Conflagration and the Making of the Modern World*, edited by Greg Bankoff, Uwe Lübken and Jordan Sand, 212-234. Madison: University of Wisconsin, 2012.

25 For a concise introduction to the collection see Bevan, Amanda, and Randolph Cock. "High Court of Admiralty Prize Papers, 1652–1815. Challenges in improving access to older Records." *Archives* 53, no. 137 (2018): 34-58.

26 See Van der Doe, Erik, Perry Moree and Dirk Tang, eds. *Sailing Letters Journaal* I-V. Zutphen: Walburg Pers, 2008-2013. See Kimbell, Caroline, and Laura Simpson. "Saving and Keeping. The Prize Papers at the National Archives." In *Buitgemaakt en teruggevonden. Nederlandse brieven en scheepspapieren in een Engels archief, Sailing Letters Journaal V*, edited by Erik van der Doe, Perry Moree and Dirk J. Tang, 25-30. Zutphen: Walburg Pers, 2013. Another intriguing time capsule is presented in Van Eeten, Siem van. *Andries van Pallandt van Eerde: belevenissen van een 19e-eeuwse klokkenluider.* Zutphen: WalburgPers, 2015. See also Van Eijck van Heslinga, Els. "'Wij beleven een bedroefden tijd'. Post voor Nederlandse krijgsgevangenen in Engeland, 1799." In *Buitgemaakt en teruggevonden. Nedelandse brieven en scheepspapieren in een Engels archief*, edited by Erik van der Doe et al., 272-280. Walburg Pers, 2013.

27 The *Prize Papers Project*, based at the University of Oldenburg, Germany, and the National Archives of the UK, is part of the Göttingen Academy of Sciences and Humanities in Germany. The aim of the Prize Papers project is the complete digitization of the Prize Papers collection. This includes the preservation of the collection's materiality, initial and in-depth cataloguing, the creation of

As a result of its eventful history, the Luetkens records have survived untouched and in pristine condition. Even in view of the total sum of records in the Prize Papers collection, the Luetkens archive represents a rare find. Not a single document has left the corpus; dozens of original bundles of incoming letters were still intact and still bound together in bundles when I found them. There were originally folded letters, unredeemed bills of exchange, outstanding accounts. Luetkens large Letter Book concluded with the last letter copied in on Monday, the 14th of June 1745. The archive is preserved in such a way as if the merchant Nicolaus Gottlieb Luetkens had just left it. I could only imagine, despite the joy and enthusiasm that I felt about this discovery, the great loss and pain and most probably anger that the merchant must have felt upon losing his precious material, particularly during this crucial time of his life and career. The latter fact, however, at the same time underlines the immense value of this archive for historical research today. Based on this source, we now get a glimpse into this stage in the life of this Hamburg merchant in the most direct way possible and we can derive from it the challenges of an 18th-century mercantile establishment phase. For me, finding the Luetkens archive was nothing less than a stroke of luck. This moment in 2012 became the reason and the historical background for my being able to write this book.

1.2 The Mercantile Establishment Phase

This book investigates one of the most crucial stages in the life of an Early Modern wholesale merchant. It covers the period between apprenticeship and the opening of one's own merchant house which again often went hand in hand with marriage. This book offers a comprehensive study into the mercantile establishment phase.[28] In 18th

research-oriented metadata and finally the presentation of digital copies and metadata in an open access research portal. As of 2018, the Prize Papers Project is part of the Academies Programme of the Union of the German Academies of Sciences and Humanities. Thus, it is funded by the German state and the federal state of Lower Saxony. The prospective funding period is 2018 – 2037, see prizepapers.de.

28 Literature on the topic of the mercantile establishment phase is still sparse. It is telling in this regard that one of the basic readings is still Wolfgang Ruppert's article "Der Bürger als Kaufmann: Erziehung und Lebensformen" from 1982, which was reprinted in an extended version as the book chapter "Lebenswelt des Bürgertums" in Ruppert, *Bürgerlicher Wandel*, as well as Peter Earle's book chapters on "Business Life", "Apprenticeship", and "Starting a Business". See Ruppert, Wolfgang. "Der Bürger als Kaufmann: Erziehung und Lebensformen, Weltbild und Kultur." In *Die Bildung des Bürgers. Die Formierung der bürgerlichen Gesellschaft und die Gebildeten im 18. Jahrhundert*, edited by Ulrich Herrmann, 287-305. Weinheim/Basel: Beltz Verlag, 1982. See Ruppert, Wolfgang. *Bürgerlicher Wandel. Die Geburt der modernen deutschen Gesellschaft im 18. Jahrhundert*. Frankfurt a.M.: Fischer, 1984, here 57-103. See Earle, *Making of the English Middle Class*, 85-111. As basic reading, see also Jeannin, Pierre. "Distinction des compétences et niveaux de qualification: les savoirs négociants dans l`Europe moderne." In *Marchands d'Europe. Pratiques et savoirs à l'époque moderne*, edited by Jacques Bottin and Marie-Louise Pelus-Kaplan, 309-340. Paris: Editions Rue d'Ulm, 2002. See Deges, Frank. "Zusammenfassende Übersicht über den Inhalt des Buches *Der getreue und geschickte Handels-Diener* von Paul Jacob Marperger." In *Paul Jakob Marpergers Getreuer und Geschickter Handels=Diener*. Nachdruck der Ausgabe von 1715. Mit einer Einführung in das Werk, edited by Frank Deges, XV-LXV. Cologne: Bachem, 1999. In part, the establishment phase of an Early Modern mer-

century German, this career stage was called the period of "Etablissement", the time when merchants or "merchant servants started their own business".[29] Usually, merchants were between 25 and 30 years old when reaching this stage in their career. It could easily span several years.

Wholesale merchants were merchants active in long-distance trade of goods in large lots.[30] The careers of these men were often remarkably elaborate, long and complex processes due to the high requirements of the profession. Life as a wholesale merchant demanded experience, in-depth expertise in goods, business skills and acumen, language

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chant is discussed in the books and source editions by David Hancock, Thomas M. Doerflinger, Richard Grassby, Henry Roseveare, Kenneth Morgan, Iris Origo, and Paul Butel. However, the focus of their works mostly rests on the activities of already established merchants, their networks and enterprises. In previous research, there still exists no comprehensive book focusing primarily on the topic of the merchant's establishment phase as a crucial stage and phase of a merchant's life. See Hancock, David. *Citizens of the World: London Merchants and the Integration of the British Atlantic Community: 1735–1785*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995. See Grassby, *The Business Community.* In his work, Grassby generally focuses on the entire commercial community of England including many different commercial professions. His book nevertheless also provides valuable information about wholesale merchants. See Doerflinger, Thomas M. *A Vigorous Spirit of Enterprise: Merchants and Economic Development in Revolutionary Philadelphia*. Chapel Hill/London: University of North Carolina Press, 1986. See Roseveare, Henry. *Markets and Merchants of the Late Seventeenth Century: The Maresco-David Letters 1668-1680*. Oxford: Published for the British Academy by the Oxford University Press, 1987. See Morgan, Kenneth, ed. *The Bright-Meyler papers: A Bristol-West India connection, 1732-1837*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007. Morgan himself points to the potential research opportunities regarding a merchant's establishment phase in his introduction to the collection, particularly with regard to the case of Jeremiah Meyler. See Morgan, Kenneth. "Introduction." In *The Bright-Meyler papers*, 80-99 ("Making a fortune", "Manners, Marriage, Trust", "The risk environment"). The edition of the Bright-Meyler papers provides fascinating material and insight into "how merchants made profitable careers tor themselves and their connections." Burnard, Trevor. "Book Review: The Bright-Meyler Papers: A Bristol-West India Connection, 1732–1837." *International Journal of Maritime History* 20, no. 2 (2008): 433-35, here 435. See Origo, Iris. *Im Namen Gottes und des Geschäfts. Lebensbild eines toskanischen Kaufmanns der Frührenaissance, Francesco di Marco Datini (1335–1410)*. Munich: C. H. Beck, 1985. See Butel, Paul. "La maison Schröder et Schyler de Bordeaux. Fondation et premier essor." *Bulletin du centre d'histoire des espaces atlantique* 3 (1987): 3-20.

29 As defined by Marperger, Paul Jacob. *Getreuer und geschickter Handelsdiener* […]. Nuremberg/Leipzig: Peter Conrad Monath, 1715, "Cap. XIV Von denen Kauffmanns-Diener / die ihren eigenen Handel / mit geringem Capital angefangen […] [und] zu seinem künfftigen Etablissement führen können," 481.

30 Wholesaling "is usually defined as 'the sale of goods in large lots.' The wholesale function denotes transactions by individuals in pursuit of a trade, 'rather than simply to satisfy a personal or family need.' Further clarification indicates that wholesaling involves 'the sales of one entrepreneur to another, intended for resale by the second.' […] [The] 'purpose rather than the scale is the determinant in these instances.'" Glasmeier, Amy. "The Role of Merchant Wholesalers in Industrial Agglomeration Formation." *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 80, no. 3 (1990): 394-417, here 396. On Early Modern wholesale trade in general, see Price, Jacob M. *Overseas Trade and Traders*. Aldershot: Ashgate, 1996. See Price, Jacob M. "What Did Merchants Do? Reflections on British Overseas Trade, 1660–1790." *Journal of Economic History* 49, no. 2 (1989): 267-284. Regarding typical career paths of wholesale merchants, see Doerflinger, *A Vigorous Spirit of Enterprise*, 45-59. See Kansikas, Juha. "Career Paths in Institutional Business Elites: Finnish Family Firms from 1762–2010." *Enterprise and Society* 17, no. 1 (2016): 1-38.

proficiency, routinised professionalism, a wide network and sufficient capital, and often also a generous serving of good luck.[31] Building a career as wholesale merchant required time, dedication and perseverance. But eventually, in the best-case scenario, one's arduous long path culminated in success, leading to wealth, a good reputation and social advancement. The book will take us directly to the crossroads of the careers of these men, the phase when their careers still hung in the balance and much was at stake, the phase preceding settling down.

These years of establishment were particularly crucial for the merchants and a juncture in their lives for two reasons. The first reason was that this stage of life was a phase of probation. During this time, the merchants had to prove their capability as a merchant. The second reason was that it was at the same time a phase of high mobility. In order to become a reputable merchant, the merchants often went on extensive business trips.[32] Both characteristics reveal this period as a defining moment in the lives of the merchants leaving a lasting effect on their professional advancement. Moreover, this underlines the pressures characterizing this time.

Finally, a third feature of a mercantile establishment phase has to be added as typical for this stage in life that ultimately results from the first two aspects. This typical feature, however, represents less another experience or a further challenge to be passed during the establishment phase, but rather it shows the means and the merchant's immediate response to the other two challenges. This third characteristic is that this phase was strongly shaped by letter-writing practice.[33] It was letters that helped the merchants to manage their business and reach their career goals during the time of establishment despite, indeed defying, the turbulence and obstacles put in their way. As I will argue, proficient and convincing skills in the practice of letter writing and shrewd business practice via this medium were key to the success of the mercantile establishment phase. The combination of all three characteristics ultimately turned this stage of life into a very formative experience for every merchant.

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31 See Haggerty, Sheryllynne. *Merely for Money? Business Culture in the British Atlantic, 1750-1815*. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2012. See Trivellato, Francesca. *The Familiarity of Strangers. The Sephardic Diaspora, Livorno, and Cross-Cultural Trade in the Early Modern Period*. New Haven/London: Yale University Press, 2009. See Smith, Edmond. *Merchants. The Community That Shaped England's Trade and Empire.* New Haven/London: Yale University Press, 2021.

32 Regarding the mercantile business trip as the merchants' alternative to the aristocratic and bourgeois Grand Tour and Cavalier's Tour still see Ruppert, *Bürgerlicher Wandel*, 86-90; extended remake of Ruppert, "Der Bürger als Kaufmann," 287-305. For a comparable example of a mercantile business trip see Henninger, Wolfgang. *Johann Jakob von Bethmann 1717-1792. Kaufmann, Reeder und kaiserlicher Konsul in Bordeaux*. 2 vol. Bochum: Brockmeyer, 1993, 129-134. Johann Jakob von Bethmann was one of Luetkens's closest trading partners. He will play a crucial role in the book.

33 Regarding letters and correspondence as mainstays of a merchant's business see Trivellato, Francesca. "Merchant's letters across geographical and social boundaries." In *Correspondence and Cultural Exchange in Europe 1400-1700*, edited by Francisco Bethencourt and Florike Egmond, 80-103. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007. See Ditz, Toby L. "Formative Ventures. Eighteenth-Century Commercial Letters and the Articulation of Experience." In *Epistolary Selves: Letters and Letter-writers, 1600-1945*, edited by Rebecca Earle, 59-78. Aldershot: Ashgate, 1999. See Trivellato, *Familiarity of Strangers.*

The Pressure of Success

The first characteristic of the mercantile establishment phase of a wholesale merchant was that it was a time when the merchants had to prove themselves.[34] This phase was the ultimate litmus test during a merchant's career.[35] As a result, this stage of life was shaped by immense pressure to succeed. During the years of establishment, the merchants had to show what they were capable of and that they were ready to be welcomed into the ranks of the established mercantile circles. They no longer were apprentices, often having already worked for several years as merchant servants or clerks, but as merchants in establishment they would now for the first time in their lives also begin to take on complete responsibility for their own actions and business, starting to trade on their own or begin their career as commission agents entrusted by other merchants.[36] The merchants had to demonstrate their skills and their suitability as full and worthy members of the mercantile profession. Most often it was only because of the achievements, the networks and the experiences of these defining years that merchants were able to build up their career and become established wholesale merchants in the first place. During these times, the aspiring merchants established their trade and business portfolio, setting foot in major business fields of wholesale trade. They also aimed at finding long-term trading partners as well as business partners for their merchant houses. Finally, this time also served the purpose of finding a wife, finalising the establishment phase with marriage. Marriage in the 18th century still often entailed the merger of two mercantile families and led to the opening of a joint merchant house. Thus, even marriage was an intrinsic part of a merchant's business strategy during establishment. In the 18th century and still well into the 19th century, marriage in mercantile circles often remained a highly commercial business.[37]

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34 "Une réputation d`habileté ou de maîtrise supérieure reflétait en partie une position de fortune établie et certains avaient la chance de la trouver déjà inscrite ou préfigurée dans leur héritage." Jeannin, "Distinction des compétences," 309.

35 They needed to learn by experience "how to comport themselves in the business world." Harreld, Donald J. "An Education in Commerce: Transmitting Business Information in Early Modern Europe." Paper given at the *XIV International Economic History Congress*, Helsinki 2006, Session 1. Available at http://www.helsinki.fi/iehc2006/papers1/Harreld.pdf., accessed October 14, 2020.

36 See Ruppert, *Bürgerlicher Wandel*, 57-103; Ruppert, "Der Bürger als Kaufmann," 287-305; Earle, *Making of the English Middle Class*, 85-111; Deges, "Handelsdiener." On the role of commission agents and the difference between commission agents and merchant factors see as an introduction Häberlein, Mark. "Trading Companies." *Europäische Geschichte Online* (EGO), edited by the Leibniz-Institut für Europäische Geschichte (IEG), Mayence 2018, http://www.ieg-ego.eu/haeberleinm-2016-en, accessed February 20, 2020. See Veluwenkamp, Jan Willem. "International Business Communication Patterns in the Dutch Commercial System, 1500-1800." In *Your Humble Servant. Agents in Early Modern Europe*, edited by Hans Cools, Maria Keblusek and Badeloch Noldus, 121 - 134. Hilversum: Uitgeverij Verloren, 2006.

37 See Hancock, *Citizens of the World*, 245. See Schulte Beerbühl, Margrit. *The Forgotten Majority: German Merchants in London, Naturalization, and Global Trade 1660-1815*. New York/Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2014, 116; Schulte Beerbühl, Margrit. *Deutsche Kaufleute in London: Welthandel und Einbürgerung (1660-1818)*. Munich: Oldenbourg, 2007.

As the five crucial steps and fields of activity of a mercantile establishment phase I present in this book commission trade, the shipping business as a shipowner, high-risk trade, finding a business partner and a merchant clerk for the founding of a merchant house and finally marriage as the ultimate stages towards establishment. These concrete steps paved the way into becoming a wholesale merchant in the 18th century. At the same time, the steps did not exclude the possibility of setbacks along the way. On the contrary, setbacks essentially came part and parcel with the steps of the establishment process. However, regarding such setbacks, the important point is that the merchants found solutions or alternative routes to deal with the occurring problems. Those who mastered the steps were ultimately forged in the crucible of establishment for a life in the hazardous field of trade, which still held ready a world full of enough imponderables, risks and uncertainties. But after the tough school of establishment, the merchants were at least equipped with experience, skills, competences and certain character traits in order to rise to the challenge. These features, together with good luck and perseverance, were the ingredients of a successful career. The establishment phase was a trial phase with little to no room for major failure. It was a time when careers started, and others ended abruptly. Therefore, this time was one of the most formative moments in the life cycle of Early Modern merchants.

Mobility

The second characteristic feature and challenge of the mercantile establishment phase not only adds to this impression, but reinforces the notion that this phase was to a great extent a leap into the unknown. The second reason why this stage had a lasting effect on the career of these merchants was that it was often characterised by a high level of mobility.[38] During this time the merchants not only started their careers and began to stand on their own two feet, but they also learned the hard way while travelling in foreign lands. Many young merchants used this time for extensive travel abroad.[39] Such travel would serve as the springboard for a successful career in wholesale business. During the entire Early Modern Period, it was customary practice and held in high regard among merchants to encourage the mercantile offspring to take to the road and gain experience abroad, either already during their apprenticeship or during the transition period before settling down in business.[40] Many aspiring merchants followed this call, using the period for long business travels on their own account or on the account of other merchants, working as travelling merchants, commission agents,

38 See Ruppert, *Bürgerlicher Wandel*, 86-90. See also Weber, *Deutsche Kaufleute*, 187. See Henninger, *Bethmann*, 129-134. Regarding the importance of mobility for Hamburg merchants in general see Weber, *Deutsche Kaufleute*, 17-21.

39 For a comparable case see Johan Jakob Bethmann's business trip, "Kundenwerbereise", during the years 1744-1745. See Henninger, *Bethmann*, 129-134.

40 See Häberlein, Mark, Hans-Jörg Künast and Irmgard Schwanke, eds. *Die Korrespondenz der Augsburger Patrizierfamilie Endorfer 1620-1627. Briefe aus Italien und Frankreich im Zeitalter des Dreißigjährigen Krieges.* Augsburg: Wißner, 2010. See Van der Wal, Marijke. *Koopmanszoon Michiel Heusch op Italiëreis: brieven van het thuisfront (1664-1665).* Hilversum: Uitgeverij Verloren, 2019.

merchant clerks or even as ship owners in business houses abroad in the booming trading cities of Europe or even overseas. The streets and cities of North-Atlantic trade were literally crowded with young merchants trying their luck in foreign lands. It is a remarkable contemporary phenomenon mirroring an Early Modern world in motion, shaped by growing internationalisation with a young generation of merchants who held a decisive stake in the process.[41] The merchant trips resembled similar tours that young noblemen, as well as men of letters, students or craftsmen, undertook during the same time, Grand Tours or Educational Tours, which were also a typical phenomenon of the Early Modern Period.[42] All forms of tour aimed at creating men of the world. The goal of the merchant trip, however, in contrast to the Grand Tour in particular, was often far more pragmatic. It aimed less at leisure than business, although sightseeing and amusement were surely a part of their trips, but most of all the business trips were born out of necessity rather than being a pastime. They served business purposes. The mercantile business trip as an obligatory part of a mercantile career served the goal of making a name for oneself, of getting to know foreign countries and people, foreign cultures, customs, behaviours, goods and local usances, of establishing important business contacts, of gaining experience and improving their skills in wholesale trade, in commission trade and the shipping business, and raising solid capital as a foundation for a future career.[43] The business travels were intended to pave the way for successful careers as respectable and established members of the merchant community. The "great journey was the most important means of mercantile education."[44] The years abroad shaped and defined the merchants' careers and self-perceptions, their self-esteem and their attitudes as international merchants.[45] As Luetkens himself put it, the

41 See Brock, Aske, and Guido van Meersbergen and Edmond Smith, eds. *Trading Companies and Travel Knowledge in the Early Modern World*. Abingdon/New York: Routledge, 2021. See Steele, Ian K. *The English Atlantic, 1675-1740: An Exploration of Communication and Community*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986.

42 See Grosser, Thomas. "Reisen und soziale Eliten. Kavalierstour – Patrizierreise – bürgerliche Bildungsreise." In *Neue Impulse der Reiseforschung*, edited by Michael Maurer, 135-176. Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1999. See as an introduction Leibetseder, Mathis. "Educational Journey, Grand Tour." *Europäische Geschichte Online (EGO)*, edited by the Leibniz-Institut für Europäische Geschichte, Mayence 2013, http://www.ieg-ego.eu/leibetsederm-2013-en, accessed February 07, 2019. See Bertrand, Gilles. *Le Grand Tour revisité : Pour une archéologie du tourisme. Le voyage des français en Italie, milieu XVIIIe siècle-début XIXe siècle*. Rome : École Française, 2008. See Ansell, Richard. *Complete Gentlemen. Educational Travel and Family Strategy, 1650-1750*. Oxford : Oxford University Press, 2022. See the Grand Tour Project at Cesta Stanford University: Ceserani, Giovanna et al. "British Travelers in Eighteenth-Century Italy: The Grand Tour and the Profession of Architecture." *The American Historical Review* 122, no. 2 (2017): 425-450.

43 Regarding the necessary condition of the creation of "an initial stake" see Hancock, *Citizens of the World*, 241. See Grassby, *Business Community*, 82-84, 401; Earle, *Making of the English Middle Class*, 100-111; Deges, "Handelsdiener," LIV-LXII.

44 Ruppert, "Bürgerlicher Wandel," 86.

45 See Jacob, Margaret C., and Catherine Secretan. "Introduction." In *The Self-Perception of Early Modern Capitalists*, edited by Margaret C. Jacob and Catherine Secretan, 1-16. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008. See Trivellato, Francesca. "A Republic of Merchants?" In *Finding Europe. Discourses on Margins, Communities, Images*, edited by Anthony Molho, Diogo Ramada Curto and Niki Koniordos, 133-158. New York: Berghahn Books, 2007. See Schulte Beerbühl, Margit and Jörg Vögele, eds. *Spin-*

time served the purpose to prove himself in trade, "sich in der Handlung habilitiren" as he wrote in German.[46] At the same time, it once more becomes clear that never again in a merchant's life would their career be under a greater threat of failure than during these years of establishment.

The Significance of Letters

The third characteristic feature of the mercantile establishment phase ultimately answers the question of how the merchants were able to cope with the tough situation and how they dealt with the key challenges of this time, the mobility and the pressure to success. It shows how the merchants managed to lay the groundwork for establishing themselves in the field of trade while travelling and to rise to the challenge of constantly showing and providing proof of their capability as merchants at the same time. They used a typical means of how to face and cope with distances and separation in life and business to overcome the challenges of the Early Modern Period: they wrote letters.[47] The great need to write letters, in contrast to the other two characteristics, surely was not specific or limited only to the mercantile establishment phase and not even to the mercantile group. The importance of letters and correspondence was yet another hallmark of the period in general.[48] Therefore, it is comprehensible that letter writing also represented one of the most crucial features and a typical important facet of the establishment phase of a merchant. Merchants put immense effort into the practice of letter writing and relied heavily upon the medium of the letter in business and life.[49]

ning the Commercial Web. International Trade, Merchants, and Commercial Cities, c. 1640-1939. Frankfurt a.M.: Peter Lang, 2004.

46 Original translation by the High Court of Admiralty of "Summarische Deposition," TNA, HCA 32/143/17.

47 Regarding merchant letters see Trivellato, "Merchant's letters"; Ditz, "Formative Ventures." For the 19th century see Dossena, Marina. "Handwritten Communication in Nineteenth-century Business Correspondence." In *Communicating Early English Manuscripts*, edited by Andreas H. Jucker and Päivi Pahta, 133-146. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011.

48 See Whyman, Susan. *The Pen and the People. English Letter Writers, 1660-1800*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010. See Del Lungo Camiciotti, Gabriella. "Letters and Letter Writing in Early Modern Culture: An Introduction." *Journal of Early Modern Studies* 3 (2014): 17-35. See Daybell, James, and Andrew Gordon, eds. *Cultures of Correspondence in Early Modern Britain*. Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016. See Nevalainen, Terttu, and Sanna-Kaisa Tanskanen, eds. *Letter-Writing*. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 2007. See Matthews-Schlinzig, Marie Isabel, and Jörg Schuster, Gesa Steinbrink, Jochen Strobel, eds. *Handbuch Brief: Von der Frühen Neuzeit bis zur Gegenwart*. Berlin/Boston: De Gruyter, 2020. See Barton, David, and Nigel Hall, eds. *Letter Writing as a Social Practice*. Philadelphia: Benjamins, 1999. See Findlen, Paula, and Suzanne Sutherland, eds. *The Renaissance of Letters. Knowledge and Community in Italy, 1300.-1650*. London/New York: Routledge, 2020. See Gerber, David A. *Authors of Their Lives. The Personal Correspondence of British Immigrants to North America in the Nineteenth Century*. New York: New York University Press, 2006.

49 See Trivellato, "Merchants' letters," 81-84. See Trivellato, *The Familiarity of Strangers*, 153-176. Apart from Ditz, "Formative Ventures," see also Ditz, Toby L. "Secret Selves, Credible Personas: The Problematics of Trust and Public Display in the Writing of Eighteenth-Century Philadelphia Merchants." In *Possible Pasts: Becoming Colonial in Early America*, edited by Robert Blair St. George, 219-242. Ithaca/London: Cornell University Press, 2000. See Ditz, Toby L. "Shipwrecked; or, Masculinity Imperiled:

During the time of establishment when they were highly mobile, the letter offered the merchants the opportunity to bridge distances and stay in contact with their trading partners, family and friends. The letter became one of the most important social sites of their life during establishment.[50] Almost no area of life and no branch of business remained untouched by the practice of letter writing.[51] The letter was relevant in business, in private, in friendships, in business partnerships. It was important during the search for business partners or one's future wife. For the merchant's business and career, the letter provided the means to not only continue but also to improve and refine their skills and business during their travelling activity. Letters allowed the travelling merchants during their establishment phase to conduct regular business, to remain in steady contact with trading partners and to maintain an overview of all enterprises despite being on the road and while simultaneously getting to know many different places, visiting, living and trading in many different merchant houses and learning about trade customs in foreign land. Letters were also used to learn language skills and to practice different languages when merchants wrote letters in their native language and in the language of their guest countries.[52] They always continued to write in their own mother tongue but supplemented their linguistic toolset with language proficiency and letter practice in two or three further languages. Wholesale merchants were often polyglot since this was a necessary requirement for entering the international stage of business and because they visited many different countries during their career.[53] A stay abroad was always a very important language learning experience. In the typical business fields in which wholesale merchants were active during this time, namely commission trade and the shipping business or high-risk trade, the merchants relied heavily on letter exchange. In almost all these fields, letters held the actual power to act in order to conduct business. In these fields, the letter served in a representative function for the merchants, representing or even embodying their actions, as it was widely accepted in mercantile culture.[54] As a contemporary merchant manual, a typical instruction book for mer-

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Mercantile Representations of Failure and the Gendered Self in Eighteenth-Century Philadelphia." *Journal of American History* 81, no. 1 (1994): 51-80.

50 See Schatzki, Theodore R. *The Site of the Social. A Philosophical Account of the Constitution of Social Life and Change*, University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2010.

51 See Earle, Rebecca. "Introduction: letters, writers, and the historian." In *Epistolary Selves: Letters and Letter-writers, 1600-1945*, edited by Rebecca Earle, 1-14. Aldershot: Ashgate, 1999. See Couchman, Jane, and Ann Crabb, eds. *Women's Letter across Europe, 1400-1700: Form and Persuasion*. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005.

52 With a focus on mercantile education see Häberlein, Mark, and Christian Kuhn. *Fremde Sprachen in frühneuzeitlichen Städten. Lernende, Lehrende und Lehrwerke.* Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2010. See Gallagher, John. *Learning Languages in Early Modern England.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019.

53 See Trivellato, *Familiarity of Strangers*, 178-184; Trivellato, "Merchant's letters." See Trivellato, Francesca. "Discourse and Practice of Trust in Business Correspondence during the Early Modern Period," unpubl. paper, Yale University, 2004, 19.

54 See O'Neill, Lindsay. *The Opened Letter. Networking in the Early Modern British World.* Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015. See Fitzmaurice, Susan M. "Like talking on paper? The pragmatics of courtship and the eighteenth-century familiar letter." *Language Sciences* 22 (2000): 359-383. See Daybell, James. *Women Letter-Writers in Tudor England.* Oxford: Oxford University Press,

chants, stated, letters held the power "to buy for us, to speak for us and to sell for us".[55] A quote in the contemporary *Kruenitz encyclopaedia* confirms this statement by stating that in the business letter, the written word alone authorised business. The letter was a sufficient means to conduct business based on it, the letter was effective "paratam executionem".[56] This is why merchant were so reliant on letters, particularly in commission trade, the trade in goods by order of other merchants. The same applies to the shipping business and being a ship owner or ship's husband, a business field that included the buying, selling and outfitting of ships as well as the provision of logistic transports by ship including the shipment of one's own goods. Both business fields would not have been practically implementable had they not been carried out by letters. These business fields were key businesses used as a foundation for burgeoning careers. Letters held the same significance in high-risk trade, which required comprehensive enquiries and negotiations in letter exchanges, and, last but not least, also in the insurance and banking business letters were pivotal.

Ultimately, in all fields of business analysed in this book, letters will be shown to have played a fundamental role as a control and nerve centre for the merchants. To keep their businesses running, merchants on travel wrote between 5-20 letters a day. This may not seem much compared to the letter production of larger merchant houses, but it was a considerable number of letters in view of the fact that these men were on travel, often alone, sometimes travelling with a travel companion but only rarely with a clerk, meaning that they wrote and copied all their letter themselves, even during the times they were staying in merchant houses in their guest country.[57] The number of letters per day once more underlines the important role that letter writing played during the daily life of these merchants and in their career development.

In sum, the letter offered the space, and at the same time a necessary extension of the self, to conduct business during a merchant's establishment phase and to take it to the next level. This is why this medium was such an indispensable asset for a mercantile establishment phase. At the same time, it becomes clear that there was of course a lot of pressure resting on the shoulders of the writing merchants right from the start. There was always a strong connection and interrelation between the importance of the letter for a merchant during this time and the outlined second main challenge of a mercantile establishment phase, which was the requirement of a merchant to be convincing in his

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2006. See the project *Material Identities, Social Bodies: Embodiment in British Letters c.1680*-1820, a Leverhulme Trust funded project based in the School of History and Cultures at the University of Birmingham, https://socialbodies.bham.ac.uk, accessed October 20, 2020.

55 "für uns kaufen, reden und verkaufen". May, Johann Carl. *Versuch in Handlungs-Briefen und grössern kaufmännischen Aufsätzen nach den Gellertschen Regeln. Nebst einer Abhandlung von dem guten Geschmacke in Handlungsbriefen*. Lübeck: Jversen und Comp., 1794, 1 (first edition 1756, fourth edition 1765, complete edition 1794). See Faulstich, Werner. *Die bürgerliche Mediengesellschaft (1700-1830)*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2002, 85.

56 "Die bloße Handschrift eines Kaufmannes zieht paratam executionem nach sich." "Handels=Mann, Kaufmann, Negociant, L. Mercator, Fr. Marchand, Négociant." *Oekonomische Encyklopädie*, edited by Johann Georg Krünitz. 242 volumes. Berlin, 1773-1858, vol. 21, 747-754, here 753.

57 For comparison, see Morgan, *Bright-Meyler papers.*

words and actions during establishment. In this regard, too, the letter offered a remedy and a necessary platform. During this time, when the pressure was high and proof of success indispensable, the letter also offered the merchants a stage to prove their capabilities and to provide hard evidence that they were worthy of being welcomed as wholesale merchants in the ranks of the mercantile elite. Letters were, therefore, not only used to conduct business and to communicate, but they were also decidedly used to demonstrate skills and strong self-assertion, reliability, negotiation savvy, trustworthiness and success as a merchant.[58] Furthermore, letters were used to actively engage with each other, to negotiate, to bargain, to enquire, to conduct transactions or to send samples of goods. At the same time these letters were used to convince trading partners of certain trading opportunities, to exert influence on negotiations, to convince partners to buy or sell, to conduct insider trading, to convince merchants to join an enterprise or a network, to manipulate addressees in certain ways and ask for help and support. When trading partners were unreliable or did not keep their promises, letters were used for rebukes and for taking certain counteractions. When business enterprises threatened to fail, letters were used to change course. Letters were used to find compromises and agreements between correspondents, to overcome difficulties, solve problems and settle disputes. Letters were also used to terminate partnerships in cases where enterprises or partnerships failed or disputes were unsolvable, a situation that was, however, to be avoided. Letters were far more than only an important communication medium for merchants during their establishment phase due to their separation. They were a crucial field of action in their own right, an important and indispensable place for the negotiation, planning and implementation of mercantile life and business, a trading floor sui generis strongly intertwined with trade on spot and often shaping it decisively.

As I will argue in this book, in view of the situation the young merchants faced during this time, letters became the main proving ground for their careers during their establishment phase. Letters and the powers of persuasion and action that letters incorporated as tools of communication, negotiation and persuasion, were the decisive tool and lubricant that enabled the merchants to master their establishment phase, which required special measures and the courage to put everything on the line, for which letters provided the adequate means. If performed skilfully and convincingly, letters and the practice of letter writing were ultimately the key to a successful establishment phase as a wholesale merchant.

Letters continued to play an important role in the life of merchants during their entire career. As research has shown, letters had been the backbone of mercantile business since at least the Middle Ages, gaining in importance during the 18th century and be-

58 Regarding persuasion in letters in general see Couchman, Jane, and Ann Crabb. “Chapter One. Form and Persuasion in Women’s Letters, 1400-1700.” in *Women’s Letter across Europe, 1400-1700: Form and Persuasion*, edited by Jane Couchman and Ann Crabb, 3-18. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005. See Van Houdt, Toon et al., ed. *Self-Presentation and Social Identification: The Rhetoric and Pragmatics of Letter Writing in Early Modern Times*. Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2002.

coming particularly important in wholesale business.[59] The 18th century world of trade was strongly shaped by long distances, a great variety of products and services, moving markets and economic cycles, and a rapidly growing finance sector.[60] Letters and letter exchanges provided the means to keep pace with these developments, and vice versa the letter and the emerging postal services were major driving forces that enabled these developments in the first place. During the entire Early Modern Period, letters "served as sinews holding together the entire organic structure of […] long distance trade" and stood at the centre of mercantile business and life.[61] In "the eighteenth century, business depended on the organized exchange of letters" as Max Weber already observed.[62]

The major point that I will make and add to this perspective in this book is that I assume that, although the letter remained important during the merchant's entire life, due to the special characteristics and the special requirements of the establishment phase, a skilful and convincing practice of letter writing was particularly significant during establishment. During this time, the merchants learned the subtleties, the promising principles and practices, the tips and tricks of business practice and letter practice and they learned them in practice, and by trial and error. Merchants would draw on this experience for their entire lives. Furthermore, the requirements were high during this time because it was not only business enterprises, but ultimately entire careers that were at stake. It was letters that would facilitate the process of how these careers would turn out with regard to success. On the one hand, this means that letters offered a certain stability and relative calculability and the necessary room for manoeuvre during a time that was characterised by the exact opposite, that was delicate and unstable and to a great extent also adventurous. On the other hand, however, the merchants were also constantly being tested by every letter they wrote and by every enterprise they started. They did not only use letters to manage their business and maintain the trust of their partners conducting reliable businesses, but with every single letter they wrote they also always bore testimony to their capability as a merchant. They had to prove that they possessed the necessary qualities and skills of a wholesale merchant. Almost every letter they wrote could have sealed the end of their career because every enterprise counted during this time and the merchants did not yet have sufficient capital reserves to cope with too many setbacks. It is for this reason that the merchants were under immense pressure to be convincing in their words and actions, in their letters and in their business and it is for the same reason that they learned what was necessary for putting their plans into practice, come what may. In this time, they learned to use every means possible and necessary, even if this meant acting in legal grey areas for the sake of business. This special tension notably characterised the mercantile establishment phase.

For a successful career, merchants ultimately needed two skill sets. A merchant needed business skills and acumen and he needed a high proficiency in the practice

59 See Trivellato, "Merchants' letters," 81-82 and 84. See Greif, Avner. *Institutions and the Path to the Modern Economy: Lessons from Medieval Trade*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006.

60 See Smith, *Merchants*, 1-13.

61 Greif, *Institutions and the Path to the Modern Economy*, 21.

62 Weber, Max. *General Economic History*. New Brunswick/London: Transaction Books, 1981, 295.

of letter writing. Both fields of practice, business practice and letter-writing practice, however, represent in many ways the two sides of the same coin because business relied and was mostly settled in letters and, vice versa, the letters and their form and characteristics and the letter negotiations were highly depended on business practices. In order to pass their test of establishment merchants needed to convince the mercantile community of their skills and capabilities in both areas of expertise and in their successful combination. What ultimately prepared a wholesale merchant for a life in trade was that the merchant possessed the necessary *powers of persuasion* in both business and letters. This is the titular historical fact of this book and the main argument I wish to make therein.

Writing about an Early Modern merchant establishment phase means writing about a merchant's letters and a merchant's skills to conduct his business by means of paper and quill pen. The concept of the book is to show how merchants actively made use of the medium of the letter in all its facets for the sake of their establishment phase.[63] We will learn how merchants utilised all the opportunities letters provided, their textual, material, linguistic, performative and rhetoric elements, as a highly complex and at the same time very flexible tool to put concrete plans into action, to achieve goals, conduct negotiations and start enterprises and, therefore, successfully complete a mercantile establishment phase. We will learn how letters tipped the scales of an Early Modern mercantile establishment phase and how merchants exploited all the possibilities that letters provided in order to impose their will on their mercantile fates.

The Early Modern World of Trade

All three features, the pressure for success, the mobility and the significance of letters define the establishment phase of a merchant as one of the most remarkable periods in the life of wholesale merchants. Against this background, this stage in merchants' careers reveals itself to be a rewarding subject to study for both cultural and economic historians. It was a time when merchants were made and mercantile careers were forged. Investigating the establishment phase of a wholesale merchant takes us to the heart of the question of what it meant to be a merchant in the Early Modern Period and what it took to become one during this time – questions to which I will deliver answers in this book. These answers will provide insight into the life and business of European merchants, into mercantile culture and the mercantile world of Atlantic trade in the 18th century, the merchants' practices, discourse, the languages they spoke, the negotiation skills they had, their argument strategies, worldview and self-perception. At the same time, this phase in a merchant life will provide us with a mirror of a larger world, a world striving towards a "world economy in-the-making", as Mary Lindemann put it, the "Atlantic stage of European economic development", as François Crouzet summarized it, with global markets, global flows of goods, professionalisation, a consumer and communication revolution, the eve of a capitalistic society, yet shaped and driven by colonialism and colonial wars and massive human exploitation through slavery, which

63 See Couchman/Crab, "Form and Persuasion," 5.

all characterised the Early Modern world of trade.[64] Luetkens was not directly involved in the slave trade, but he was a beneficiary of it, involved in the sugar trade and other colonial goods coming from the French colonies or from prize ships.[65]

Regarding his career, the large-scale developments bore out a very concrete result. It was during the Early Modern Period that the capitalistic idea of individual reliability and the individual pressure to succeed, the idea that every man is the architect of his own fortune, started to take root, which is ultimately also reflected in the requirements of the mercantile establishment phase.[66] Yet, at the same time the Early Modern world of trade was also still characterised by being built upon cooperation and networking, a shared business culture, shared enterprises, trust relationships, mutual support, exchange processes and also cultural contacts across countries, cultures, languages, sometimes even across religions – features that are also mirrored in the characteristics of

64 Lindemann, Mary. "The Anxious Merchant, the Bold Spectator, and the Malicous Bankrupt: Doing Business in 18th century Hamburg." In *The Self-Perception of Early Modern Capitalists*, edited by Margaret C. Jacob and Catherine Secretan, 161-182. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008, here 163. Crouzet, François. "Wars, Blockade, and Economic Change in Europe, 1792–1815." In *Trade and the Industrial Revolution, 1700-1850*, vol. 2, edited by Stanley Engerman, 191-212. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing, 1996, here 192. See Canny, Nicholas, and Philip Morgan, eds. *The Oxford Handbook of the Atlantic World. 1450-1850*. Oxford: Oxford University Press 2011. See Beckert, Sven, and Seth Rockman. "Introduction. Slavery's Capitalism." In *Slavery's Capitalism. A New History of American Economic Development*, edited by Sven Beckert and Seth Rockman, 1-28. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016. See Freist, Dagmar. "Expansion, space and people." In *Interpreting Early Modern Europe*, edited by C. Scott Dixon and Beat Kümin, 268-297. London: Routledge, 2019. See Osterhammel, Jürgen, and Niels P. Petersson. *Geschichte der Globalisierung. Dimensionen, Prozesse, Epochen*. Munich: C.H. Beck, 2019.

65 For France, see Stein, Robert Louis. *The French Sugar Business in the Eighteenth Century.* Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1988. See Villeret, Maud. Legoûtdel'orblanc. *Le sucre en France au XVIIIe siècle.* Rennes : PUR, 2017. For Hamburg, see Ressel, Magnus. "Hamburg und die Niederelbe im atlantischen Sklavenhandel der Frühen Neuzeit." *WerkstattGeschichte* 66/67 (2014): 75-96. For Germany, see Mallinckrodt, Rebekka von, Josef Köstlbauer, and Sarah Lentz, eds. *Beyond Exceptionalism. Traces of Slavery and the Slave Trade in Early Modern Germany, 1650–1850*. Berlin/Boston: De Gruyter Oldenbourg, 2021. See Morgan, Kenneth. "Sugar Refining in Bristol." In *From Family Firms to Corporate Capitalism. Essays in Business and Industrial History in Honour of Peter Mathias*, edited by Kristine Bruland and Patrick K. O'Brien, 138-169. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998. See in general Mintz, Sidney Wilfred. *Sweetness and Power: The Place of Sugar in Modern History*. London: Penguin, 1986, 35-73.

66 See Reinert, Sophus A., and Robert Fredona. "Merchants and the Origins of Capitalism." In *The Routledge Companion to the Makers of Global Business*, edited by Teresa da Silva Lopes, Christina Lubinski, and Heidi J.S. Tworek, 171-188. London/New York: Routledge, 2020. See Engel, Alexander. "Homo oeconomicus trifft ehrbaren Kaufmann. Theoretische Dimensionen und historische Spezifität kaufmännischen Handelns." In *Praktiken des Handels. Geschäfte und soziale Beziehungen europäischer Kaufleute in Mittelalter und Neuzeit*, edited by Mark Häberlein and Christof Jeggle, 145-172. Konstanz: UVK, 2010. See Bruland, Kristine and Patrick K. O'Brien, eds. *From Family Firms to Corporate Capitalism. Essays in Business and Industrial History in Honour of Peter Mathias*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998. In this book's conclusion, I strongly argue against the concept of the homo oeconomicus as a suitable blueprint to explain Luetkens' behaviour, business strategy and his establishment phase. See in general Braudel, Fernand. *Civilization and Capitalism, 15th-18th Century*, vol 2. *The Wheels of Commerce*. Berkely/Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1992, 433-455.

the establishment phase.[67] This correlation also represents a reason why the mercantile establishment phase in the 18th century represents a rewarding field of study, because it shows how both developments overlapped during this century, providing us with a significant snapshot of this momentous period. On the one hand, during this century hundreds of men set out on the road on their own and in their own interest to turn themselves into successful merchants. On the other hand, they already knew or quickly learned that this process was impossible without the support and goodwill of other merchants and adjusted accordingly. The order of the day for the merchants of the 18th century was to win the support and trust of other merchants, to convince them of their own capabilities followed by the necessity to make sure that all partners followed orders and kept their promises. This latter fact underlines why at the end of the 18th century, we are still a long way off from the idea of 'rags to riches' propagating in capitalistic societies.

In this book, I will therefore not tell an individual success story, but instead I will portray the far more accurate story of the typical case of mercantile self-making during the 18th century.[68] I will show how merchants became string-pullers in business

67 See Jacob/Secretan. "Introduction," 1-16. See Canny, Nicholas, and Philip Morgan. "Introduction: The Making and Unmaking of an Atlantic World." In *The Oxford Handbook of the Atlantic World. 1450-1850*, PAGES. Oxford: Oxford University Press 2011. See Coclanis, Peter A., ed. *The Atlantic Economy during the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries: Organization, Operation, Practice, and Personnel*. Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2005. See Lesger, Clé. *The Rise of the Amsterdam Market and Information Exchange: Merchants, Commercial Expansion and Change in the Spatial Economy of the Low Countries: c. 1550–1630*. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006. See Gervais, Pierre, Yannick Lemarchand, Dominique Margairaz, eds. *Merchants and Profit in the Age of Commerce, 1680-1830*. London: Picking & Chatto, 2014. See Grassby, Richard. *Kinship and Capitalism: Marriage, Family, and Business in the English-Speaking World*, 1580-1740. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001. See Lamikiz, Xabier. *Trade and Trust in the Eighteenth-Century Atlantic World: Spanish Merchants and Their Overseas Networks*. Rochester: Boydell Press, 141-181. See Smith, *Merchants*, 1-13; Haggerty, *Merely for Money*, 66-96.

68 With the term "self-making" I am referring to the process of turning oneself into a merchant by means of performing practices as it was developed in the Oldenburg Graduate School 1608/1/2 "Self-Making. Practices of Subjectivation", of which I was a member from 2011-2014. See for an introduction Freist, Dagmar. "Ich will Dir selbst ein Bild von mir entwerfen. Praktiken der Selbst-Bildung im Spannungsfeld ständischer Normen und gesellschaftliche Dynamik." In Selbst-Bildungen: Soziale und kulturelle Praktiken der Subjektivierung, edited by Thomas Alkemeyer, Dagmar Freist, and Gunilla Budde, 151-174. Bielefeld: transcript, 2013. The concept of self-making is also, in part, already at the centre of the book by Wahrmann, Dror. *The Making of the Modern Self – Identity and Culture in Eighteenth-Century England*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004. Examples of books presenting individual success stories of firm or merchant biographies are Henninger, *Bethmann*; Hasenclever, Adolf. *Peter Hasenclever aus Remscheid-Ehringhausen, ein deutscher Kaufmann des 18. Jahrhunderts*. Gotha: Gotha FA Perthes, 1922; Brulez, Wilfrid. *De firma della Faille en de internationale handel van Vlaamse firma's in de 16e eeuw*. Brussels: Paleis der Academiën, 1959; Schramm, Percy Ernst. *Neun Generationen. Dreihundert Jahre deutscher „Kulturgeschichte" im Lichte der Schicksale einer Hamburger Bürgerfamilie (1648–1948)*. 2 vols. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1963-1964; Price, Jacob M. *Perry of London: A Family and a Firm on the Seaborne Frontier: 1615-1753*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1992; Ville, Simon P. *English Shipowning During the Industrial Revolution: Michael Henley and Son, London Shipowners, 1770-1830*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1990.; Buist, Marten G. *At spes non fracta. Hope & Co. 1770-1815*. The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff,

and life and how they used letter writing for this purpose. We will learn that only by gaining influence as string-pullers and by way of cooperation when concocting plans to overcome difficulties these men were able to manage and succeed in their establishment phase. Investigating the letters, we will learn about the great effort, the concrete practices and strategies merchants used to win over other merchants for their plans and how they were able to put their enterprises and private endeavours into practice. Their letters are impressive testimonies of the powers of persuasion attributed to letters by the contemporaries and they show us how people performed these powers of persuasion in letters.[69]

In the book, I will present how business and private life were conducted, negotiated and settled in letters. I will provide a catalogue of the practices used to influence and convince correspondents and trading partners in letters and business, and finally, the contemporary principles of persuasion mobilised to achieve one's goals in business and private life. It is my firm conviction that the moment we understand what practices, reasons, motives, arguments or material rhetoric letter writers used in the past to convince their correspondents of a certain enterprise, is the moment we come closer to understanding more of how people lived and socialised, conducted trade or negotiated life in the past.

This is a book about the mercantile establishment phase as the ultimate testing ground for aspiring wholesale merchants of the 18th century. It introduces the reader to the major business fields, business practices, skills and competences of a merchant during his establishment phase and it will show how letters in all their elements, in their form and content, their language and materiality, by means of the language used and the language registers mobilised, were actively used during this process and turned into effective tools of mercantile communication, negotiation, persuasion and implementation in both the social and commercial realm of Atlantic trade. This book is about the powers of persuasion during the establishment phase of an Early Modern merchant and about the historical practice that helped to pass this litmus test that was letter writing.

The Merchant Nicolaus Gottlieb Luetkens and His Letters

The study is based on the case of Hamburg merchant Nicolaus Gottlieb Luetkens (1716-1788), who went forth from his hometown at the end of the year 1743 to travel through

1974. For a convincing social history of a merchant firm, see Gorißen, Stefan. *Vom Handelshaus zum Unternehmen: Sozialgeschichte der Firma Harkort im Zeitalter der Protoindustrie (1720–1820)*, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2002. See also Ferguson, Niall. *The House of Rothschild*, 2 volumes. London: Penguin Books, 2000. For a convincing approach, see Rothschild, Emma. *The Inner Life of Empires: An Eighteenth-Century History*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011. Magnus Ressel is currently working on a biography of the merchant and slave trader Friedrich Romberg based on the archive of Romberg.

69 The analytical concept driving the analysis of powers of persuasion will be explained in detail in the part on the research approach.

France in order to become a successful wholesale merchant.[70] Two years later, he returned to the Elbe city as a respectable man of trade. How Luetkens succeeded in this regard, in these efforts to take the final steps towards completing his establishment phase, is the main storyline of the book. Based on his example and following his path, we will learn what it meant to become a successful merchant because he simply had no other option than to be successful. Everything else would have meant disaster for his career. But Luetkens passed the test with flying colours. His establishment phase laid the foundation for a highly successful career. The merchant house of *Luetkens & Engelhardt* became the third largest merchant house in the sugar trade in Hamburg with a handling volume in goods comparable in success only to the large Huguenot merchant houses.[71] Later Luetkens became a reputable senator and praetor of the city of Hamburg. Together with the merchant and senator Johann Schuback, Luetkens was responsible for one of the most important bank reforms in Hamburg in the 18th century.[72] His magnificent *Bel Etage* of his imposing merchant house in the merchant quarter around the *Huxter Fleet* in Hamburg, is displayed today in the *Hamburg Museum of Arts and Crafts*.[73] His portrait still hangs in the Hamburg city hall. Apparently, during his establishment phase Luetkens must have done something right. He had set the right course and was

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70 Regarding Hamburg merchants and their role as important contributors to the Atlantic business community of the 18th century see the important reference work by Weber, Klaus. *Deutsche Kaufleute im Atlantikhandel 1680-1830. Unternehmen und Familien in Hamburg, Cadiz und Bordeaux*. Munich: Beck, 2004. See Weber, Klaus. "German Merchants in the Atlantic Trade of Colonial Goods and European Manufactured Goods, Linking Hamburg, Cadiz, and Bordeaux (1700-1830)." *Jahrbuch für Europäische Überseegeschichte* 1 (2000): 169-174.

71 See *Admiralitaets Zoll und Convoy Einnahme*. Staatsarchiv Hamburg, Admiralitätskollegium, 371-2, F6, vol. 18 (De Anno 1753) and vol. 25 (De Anno 1769). I would like to thank Gabrielle Robilliard for her support with these records. See Denzel, Markus A. "Der seewärtige Einfuhrhandel Hamburgs nach den Admiralitäts- und Convoygeld-Einnahmebüchern (1733–1798)." *Vierteljahrschrift für Sozial- und Wirtschaftsgeschichte* 102, no. 2 (2015): 131-160. See Schulenburg, Frank. "Die Auswertung der hamburgischen Admiralitätszoll- und Convoygeld-Einnahmebücher: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der wirtschaftlichen Rückwirkungen der europäischen Expansion." *Jahrbuch für Europäische Überseegeschichte* 1 (2001): 175-180. The firm "Luetkens & Engelhardt" is also mentioned in Klaus Webers' tables of all sugar imports to Hamburg, also based on the Admiralty records of the Staatsarchiv Hamburg as the third-largest Hamburg sugar importer after the renowned Huguenot merchant firms of Pierre His and Pierre Boué. See Weber, *Deutsche Kaufleute*, 250. Weber, however, nonetheless concludes that Hamburg sugar trade was dominated and controlled by Huguenot merchants only, excluding the important Hamburg firm of Luetkens and his partner Engelhardt in his book. See ibid., 248.

72 Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, and Johann Schuback. "An die sämtliche Herren Kaufleute, welche die gemäßigte Vorstellung und Bitte wegen Abänderung der bey der hiesigen Lehnbanco eingerissenen Missbräuche an die löbl. Deputation des Commercii unterschrieben haben." In *Drey Schriften über Geld und Banken, besonders über die Hamburgische Bank. Zweyte Auflage*; edited by Hamburgischen Commerzdeputation. Hamburg: Treder, 1791.

73 Luetkens' *Bel Etage* showing a decorative Louis Seize style boiserie once installed in his merchant house in the Katharinenstraße is displayed today as a *Period Room* ("Louis-Seize-Raum") in the *Hamburg Museum of Arts and Crafts* (Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe, MK&G). Information found on https://www.mkg-hamburg.de/en/collection/permanent-collection/period-rooms/louis-seize-room.html, accessed March 8, 2019.

able to build the foundations upon which his later career could prosper. In this book, we will learn how he managed to achieve this goal.

Yet, the book will not tell another success story of a self-made man. Not only did Luetkens suffer severe setbacks along the way and in almost all fields of trade, which he, however, was often able to compensate, but what is even more important is that he never actually acted in isolation or only on his own behalf during his establishment phase. Instead, we will hear about a man who was highly dependent on the goodwill, the cooperation and the support of other merchants. He also learned from his trading partners. These other merchants, more than 40 merchant houses, banking firms or single merchants, ranging from close family members and friends, to trading partners, business friends, business partners, or even to complete strangers, were located in the Holy Roman Empire, the Hanseatic cities, France, the Netherlands, Spain, England, Poland, Switzerland, and Italy.[74] They were mainly Protestant merchants, but Catholic merchants were also among Luetkens' trading partners. Many of these merchants will have their say in the book and are part of the analyses because they were not only involved in Luetkens' businesses, but particularly because they exchanged letters with him that are still stored in the letter piles in the Luetkens archive.

As a result, and as an important aim of this book, I will not look at Luetkens' example only as an isolated case of a mercantile career, but I will present the Hamburg merchant, his business and letter practices, as a part of a larger community and network of European merchants active in Atlantic trade. Luetkens' task was to win the trust and respect of the other merchants with his enterprises and his letters, for which he was highly reliant on the approval of the other merchants. But the merchant managed to turn this situation into a positive outcome. In the end, he was able to prevail. Thus, we will meet a man, who was persistent enough to overcome the hurdles put in his way and who found ways to undermine boundaries set around him, sometimes through persistence, sometimes by chance, most often however by means of persuasive effort, shrewd strategies and tricks and by finding loopholes with his business and trading partners in business and legal matters as well as in private and interpersonal matters, circumventing or undermining any restrictions he faced in the best way possible. Luetkens knew whom to contact in what matters, whom to involve and how to persuade his correspondents, both business and private, to support his plans and undertakings for the sake of business, even if this would mean using grey areas and insider trade. This was key to his success. The latter, in turn, was quite symptomatic of Europe and Atlantic trade during the 18th century, where and during which economic and political interests were not necessarily always congruent.[75]

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74 Find Nicolaus Gottlieb Luetkens' entire network of correspondents and family members represented in the letters of the Luetkens archive in the detailed catalogue entry in TNA Discovery, which Amanda Bevan and I have compiled in 2017: https://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/details/r/C4249188-C4249192.

75 See Weber, *Deutsche Kaufleute*. See Marzagalli, Silvia. "Négoce et politique des étrangers en France à l'époque moderne: discours et pratiques de rejet et d'intégration." In *Les Étrangers dans les villes-ports atlantiques. Expériences françaises et allemandes XVe-XIXe siècle*, edited by Mickael Augeron and Pascal Even, 45-62. Paris: Les Indes savantes, 2010. See Truxes, Thomas M. "The Breakdown of Borders. Commerce Raiding during the Seven Years' War, 1756-1763." In *Commerce Raiding. Historical*

This book is therefore no biography, but a book about a man who became influential pulling strings in business and life, also offering a larger view on the 18th century world of Atlantic trade and its merchants. In Luetkens, we will meet a man who was in many ways typical, in any case indicative of his age and his profession as a wholesale merchant, a pragmatic man and a man who knew how to talk to people, who knew his business and how to use his skills in letter writing. All these elements proved to be decisive features for a striving man conducting wholesale trade in the 18th century, as was true for Luetkens and many other young merchants trying their luck in trade during the 18th century. What armed and qualified Luetkens for a life in trade as a wholesale merchant in the 18th century were his powers of persuasion and his mastery of putting this skill on paper. Luetkens' establishment phase was surely no sure-fire success but rather a contested, demanding and competitive pathway, which Luetkens, however, happened to navigate with success.

In order to tell his story and recreate Luetkens' path to become a settled merchant, I enjoyed the privilege of working with Luetkens' business and letter archive. The remarkable thing about this archive is that it was stolen from him at precisely the moment when he had entered the home stretch of this endeavour. The British privateers took it from him only shortly before his marriage and his return to his hometown of Hamburg. This is the reason why the Luetkens archive provides us today with first-hand account of a wholesale merchant's establishment phase. Due to the confiscation at this crucial point in time, this archive offers a unique and notably the most direct insight possible into the events and the process of a mercantile establishment phase. Nobody has altered the records since the time of the court proceedings. The stories have been concealed for centuries. Not even Luetkens had the chance to alter anything. Only thus, I was able to reconstruct the concrete process and present the major steps of a mercantile career and the most important practice during this time, letter writing, in such detail, because I had access to all of Luetkens' records and to all his letters that meticulously document this process.

The Luetkens archive still contains all the letters that Luetkens kept in his travel chest in 1745. In total, the Luetkens archive consists of 2,286 letters underlining the importance of the practice of letter writing for his business and career. Both incoming and outgoing letters have survived, in three languages, German, French, and Dutch, showing his multilingualism. Letters account for more than two thirds of the surviving records in the Luetkens archive. Two of the three archive boxes in which the archive is stored in London today are filled exclusively with letters, neatly stored in letter bundles. Half of the third box is filled with Luetkens own large Letter Book, smaller Letter Books and other books. These letters allow a detailed insight into Luetkens professional and

Case Studies, 1755-2009, edited by Bruce A. Elleman and Sarah C.M. Paine, 9-26. Newport: Naval War College Press, 2013. See Truxes, Thomas M. *Defying Empire: Trading with the Enemy in Colonial New York*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008. See Rupert, Linda M. *Creolization and Contraband: Curacao in the Early Modern Atlantic World*. Athens/London: University of Georgia Press, 2012. See Trivellato, Francesca, Leor Halevi and Catia Antunes, eds. *Religion and Trade: Cross-Cultural Exchanges in World History, 1000-1900*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2014.

private achievements as well as into setbacks and failures. They represent the ups and downs of a mercantile establishment phase. Thus, I will not only tell Luetkens' story and analyse his establishment phase and show how he became part of Europe's large business community, but I will reconstruct this process based on the analysis of his letters. By showing how his letters practically worked in life and business, and how they were used by the letter writers for their concrete purposes, I will demonstrate how business worked, how personal arrangements were made, how lives and careers were shaped and how merchants closed rank in a world that expanded dramatically, and by doing this, I provide an accurate picture of what characterised life and business in 18th century Europe and Atlantic trade.[76]

1.3 New Impulses

Finding a merchant archive such as the Luetkens archive filled to the brim with letters, from an era that historians have long called the *Age of Letters*, was no surprise.[77] It was also nothing out of the ordinary that a person would write and receive, own and store that many letters during this time. The 18th century was strongly shaped by the practice of letter writing, particularly in the case of merchants and people of the middling sort.[78] Research on Early Modern letters therefore has a long tradition. During the last decade, however, it has been noticeably revitalised due to new questions and methodologies in research, the existence and expansion of large databases such as *Early Modern Letter Online*, large sociolinguistic projects, advances in automated text recognition software, large volunteer projects and, last but not least, due to advances in cataloguing that brought to light previously unexplored collections.[79] New discoveries of letter collections and personal letter archives have been made, from the contents of original

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76 See Stewart, Alan. "Letters." In *The Oxford Handbook of English Prose, 1500–1640*, edited by Andrew Handfield, 417-433. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013, here 417.

77 "Das 18. Jahrhundert war das Jahrhundert des Briefes und der Freundschaft." Steinhausen, Georg. *Geschichte des deutschen Briefes*. 2 vol. Berlin: Gaertners Verlagsbuchhandlung, vol. 2, 1891, 302. See Vellusig, Robert. *Schriftliche Gespräche. Briefkultur im 18. Jahrhundert*. Cologne/Weimar/Vienna: Böhlau, 2000, 8.

78 See Trivellato, *Familiarity of Strangers*; Whyman, *Pen and the People*; Matthews-Schlinzig et al., *Handbuch Brief*; Camiciotti, "Letter Writing." See Pearsall, Sarah. *Atlantic Families. Lives and Letters in the Later Eighteenth Century*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008. See Berg, Temma. *The Lives and Letters of an Eighteenth-Century Circle of Acquaintance*. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006. See Boran, Elisabeth et al. "Letters." In *Reassembling the Republic of Letters in the Digital Age*, edited by Howard Hotson and Thomas Wallnig, 63-67. Göttingen: Göttingen University Press, 2019. See Hunt, Margaret R. *The Middling Sort: Commerce, Gender, and the Family in England, 1680-1780*. Berkeley/Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1996.

79 Early Modern Letters Online: http://emlo.bodleian.ox.ac.uk; Dutch Prize Papers: https://prizepapers.huygens.knaw.nl; Transkribus: https://readcoop.eu/de/transkribus; Transcribe Bentham: https://blogs.ucl.ac.uk/transcribe-bentham; Mapping the Republic of Letters: http://republicofletters.stanford.edu. See Edelstein, Dan, and Paula Findlen, Giovanna Ceserani, Caroline Winterer, Nicole Coleman. "Historical Research in a Digital Age: Reflections from the Mapping the Republic of Letters Project." *The American Historical Review* 122, no. 2 (2017): 400-424.

postbags in the Prize Papers collection found by Thomas M. Truxes to a remarkable surviving postmaster trunk filled with letters in the Netherlands found by the *Unlocking History* team.[80] For the first time, longer-known large collections of Early Modern letters in archives have become part of large-scale research and digitisation projects in the Georgian Papers Programme, Letters as Loot, Unlocking the Mary Hamilton Papers, Elizabeth Montagu's Correspondence online, the Cultures of Knowledge project, the Feathers project or once again the UK-German Prize Papers Project.[81] This renaissance in research on letters will sustainably shape the field for years to come.

Among these newly discovered or newly explored letter collections, the collection of letters of the Luetkens archive represents a moderate find in terms of the number of letters. Yet, in terms of content-value and character, this archive provides important new insights, and it allows valuable new findings. For research on Atlantic merchants and mercantile letters, the Luetkens archive marks an exceptional find and it represents an invaluable source for advances in both the fields of economic and cultural history of the 18th century. The reasons for this are threefold, which all come back to the state of preservation of this collection and its three unique characteristics. Based on these characteristics, I was able to develop my research approach and delineate the aims and goals of this book, with which I hope to contribute to research and provide new stimuli for existing literature in the fields of research on Atlantic merchants and mercantile culture in the 18th century, both in France and in Hamburg, on letters, their role and importance in life and business as well on mercantile self-making in the 18th century.

80 See Truxes, Thomas M., and Louis M. Cullen and John Shovlin, eds. *The Bordeaux-Dublin Letters, 1757: Correspondence of an Irish Community Abroad*. Oxford: Oxford University Press for the British Academy, 2013. See *Signed, Sealed, & Undelivered*, Brienne.org: http://brienne.org. See Ahrendt, Rebekah, and David van der Linden. "The Postmasters' Piggy Bank: Experiencing the Accidental Archive." *French Historical Studies* 40, no. 2 (2017): 189-213. See Ahrendt, Rebekah, and Nadine Akkerman, Jana Dambrogio, Daniel Starza Smith, David van der Linden. "The Brienne Collection." *Early Modern Letters Online.* http://emlo-portal.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/collections/?catalogue=brienne-collection (2017), accessed September 14, 2020. The Unlocking History team was recently able to virtually unfold a still sealed letter: Dambrogio, Jana, and Amanda Ghassaei, Daniel Starza Smith, Holly Jackson et al. "Unlocking history through automated virtual unfolding of sealed documents imaged by X-ray microtomography." *Nature Communications* 12:1184 (2021): https://doi.org/10.1038/s41467-021-21326-w

81 Georgian Papers Programme: https://georgianpapers.com, February 19, 2021. Letters as Loot: https://brievenalsbuit.inl.nl, accessed July 7, 2021. See Van der Wal, Marijke, and Gijsbert Rutten. *Letters as Loot. A sociolinguistic approach to seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Dutch*. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 2014. Unlocking the Mary Hamilton Papers: https://www.projects.alc.manchester.ac.uk/maryhamiltonpapers, February 6, 2021. EMCO: http://emco.swansea.ac.uk, accessed December 5, 2021. Cultures of Knowledge, Networking the Republic of Letters, 1550–1750: http://www.culturesofknowledge.org, accessed September 14, 2020. Feathers: https://www.universiteitleiden.nl/en/news/2019/12/major-european-subsidy-for-nadine-akkerman-and-detective-work-into-old-handwritten-documents, accessed October 5, 2020. Prize Papers Project: https://www.prizepapers.de, accessed July 7, 2021.

Filling the Gap

The first special characteristic of the Luetkens archive is that it offers a comprehensive and dense documentation of a time in a merchant's life that usually left sparse records in Early Modern business archives: the establishment phase of a wholesale merchant. The reason for this sparseness is that curated or donated mercantile archives, whether family-owned or bequeathed to archives, concentrate on the most memorable, successful years in a merchant's or a firm's history, which is naturally the time after the firm was founded.[82] The fact that the Luetkens archive has survived as a time capsule from the years preceding this crucial moment in time is therefore a stroke of luck. There is no comparable mercantile archive that has survived in such a complete form and in such an unspoiled state of preservation covering a merchant's establishment phase in the Early Modern Period.[83] Due to the destruction caused by the Great Fire of Hamburg in 1842 and the Second World War, there is not even a comparable collection in the Hamburg state archive, library of commerce or chamber of commerce or in the Hanseatic Business Archives.[84] Finding the Luetkens archive in London therefore also is a stroke of luck for the history of Hamburg and its merchants. Last but not least, the Luetkens archive represents one of the most extensive travel archives from a foreign merchant travelling in France. Many young merchants took to the road during the Early Modern Period, kept a travel archive or wrote letters during their stays abroad and during their apprenticeship. Most notably this is demonstrated in newly discovered rare collections of letters by young merchants from the Augsburg Endorfer family found by Mark Häberlein and his team and the letters by the Hamburg Heusch family sent home from Italy found by Marijke van der Wal.[85] The Luetkens archive is probably one of the most comprehensive personal archives of a young Hamburger travelling foreign lands, encompassing all his business records as well as his business and personal letters. It is one of the most complete documentations of a business journey of a Hamburg merchant in France in the 18th century.[86] Based on these features, I aim to contribute to two major research fields: the research on Early Modern merchant's careers and the research on the role of German merchants active in Early Modern Atlantic trade, particularly with regard to Hamburg merchants trading in France in the 18th century.

82 See Butel, "La maison Schröder et Schyler"; Henninger, *Bethmann*, Morgan, *Bright-Meyler papers*.

83 For comparable mercantile source collections see the books and source collections by David Hancock, Thomas M. Doerflinger, Richard Grassby, Henry Roseveare and Kenneth Morgan, Wolfgang Henninger, Marijke van der Wal and Iris Origo.

84 Staatsarchiv Hamburg, Commerzbibliothek Hamburg, Archiv der Handelskammer, Hanseatisches Wirtschaftsarchiv. No letters, but still highly rewarding source material from another Hamburg merchant family has been found by Spalding, Almut and Paul S. Spalding. *The Account Books of the Reimarus Family of Hamburg, 1728-1780. Turf and Tailors, Books and Beer*. 2 vols. Leiden/Bosten: Brill, 2015. See Loose, "Das Stadtarchiv".

85 See Häberlein, *Endorfer*; Van der Wal, *Heusch Letters*.

86 As a recent letter edition see Green, Michaël. *Le Grand Tour 1701-1703. Lettres de Henry Bentinck et de son précepteur Paul Rapin-Thoyras, à Hans Willem Bentinck. Édition critique établie*. Paris: Honoré Champion, 2021.

This book offers the first comprehensive study of a mercantile establishment phase in the 18th century. Previous research has hitherto mainly focussed on the years of apprenticeship or after settlement, it has examined large firm archives or family archives of merchant families, resulting in books on Economic History, company histories or works with a biographical focus on merchants, including works by Mark Häberlein, Wolfgang Henninger, Stefan Gorißen, Paul Butel, Kenneth Morgan, Emma Rothschild, Iris Origo, Leos Müller, Anne-Charlott Trepp, or Magnus Ressel.[87] These studies often concentrate on established, often well-known merchants or merchant families, including names such as Endorfer, Bethmann, Harkort, Schröder et Schyler, Bright-Meyler, Rothschild, Datini, Momma-Reenstierna, Grill, Benecke, or Romberg, not least because of the fact that for these merchants due to their later careers there are rich source collections available. Particularly the Romberg archives, which are currently undergoing a detailed examination by Magnus Ressel, promise new research findings.[88] The interest in Early Modern merchants continues unabated. Most prominent is a research focus that combines a historical cross-section through entire careers of merchants or firms, studies into cross-generational merchant families, a focus on business communities and merchant groups from certain regions, or transatlantic networks, linked with the questions of nationality, global networks, expansion or empire. The present book draws on extensive literature including the crucial works by David Hancock and Richard Grassby, Thomas M. Doerflinger, and more current books by Francesca Trivellato, Catia Antunes, Sheryllynne Haggerty, Edmond Smith, Xabier Lamikiz, Christopher Ebert and Tijl Vanneste.[89] The phase between apprenticeship and establishment plays a part in previous research, too, often presented as a transition period. Particularly the discovery and commented edition of the Heusch letters provides important findings for this present book.[90] However, a concrete comprehensive study and case study of

87 See Häberlein, *Endorfer*; Henninger, *Bethmann*; Gorißen, *Vom Handelshaus zum Unternehmen*, Butel, "La maison Schröder et Schyler"; Morgan, Bright-Meyler papers; Rothschild, *Inner Life of Empires*; Origo, *Datini*. See Müller, Leos. *The Merchant Houses of Stockholm, C. 1640-1800: A Comparative Study of Early-modern Entrepreneurial Behaviour*. Uppsala: Acta Universitatis, 1998. See Trepp, Anne-Charlott. *Sanfte Männlichkeit und selbständige Weiblichkeit: Frauen und Männer im Hamburger Bürgertum zwischen 1770 und 1840*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1996.

88 See the Romberg Project by Magnus Ressel: https://www.geschichte.uni-frankfurt.de/102309703/Romberg_Projekt. See the video series: https://lisa.gerda-henkel-stiftung.de/aufstieg_zum_geschaeftsmann?nav_id=9586. See also Ressel, Magnus. "The global Presence of Merchants from the German Empire," 239-270. See Ressel, Magnus. "Die Stärke der schwachen Akteure. Die hanseatische Gemeinschaft im europäischen Handelssystem des 18. Jahrhunderts." *Niedersächsisches Jahrbuch für Landesgeschichte* 92 (2020): 95-136. See Huang, Angela. "Nun sag, wie hast du's mit der Hanse? Von den Wechselbeziehungen alter Hansebilder und neuer Hanseforschungen." *Geschichte für heute. Zeitschrift für historisch-politische Bildung* 13, no. 3 (2020): 5-16.

89 See Hancock, *Citizens of the World*; Grassby, *Business Community*, Doerflinger, *A Vigorous Spirit of Enterprise*; Trivellato, *Familiary of Strangers*; Antunes/Hallevi/Trivellato, *Religion and Trade*; Haggerty, *Merely for Money*; Smith, *Merchant*. Lamikiz, *Trade and Trust*; See Ebert, Christopher. *Between Empires. Brazilian Sugar in the Early Atlantic Economy, 1550-1630*. Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2008. See Vanneste, Tijl. *Global Trade and Commercial Networks. Eighteenth-Century Diamond Merchants*. London: Pickering and Chatto, 2011.

90 Van der Wal, *Heusch letters*.

the establishment phase in a merchant's life, including a focussed perspective on the important necessary steps leading to establishment, is still pending. The sparse existing and older literature on the topic, including articles and book chapters by Wolfgang Ruppert and Peter Earle, Frank Deges, Jan Willem Veluwenkamp or Pierre Jeannin – though highly important for this book –, often limit the focus and source background mainly to mercantile advice literature regarding the topic due to a lack of other sources.[91] With this study, I aim at filling the gap between apprenticeship and settlement and offer a case study of an Early Modern mercantile establishment phase and imbue this career stage at the same time with a particular significance. Today, the merchant Luetkens, his career, life and letters have fallen into complete obscurity. Yet during his time, he was successful and integrated into powerful merchant networks with manifold links to renowned and leading merchant houses in France, Hamburg and beyond, some of which still exist today. He represented a typical representative and example of an aspiring wholesale merchant on travel and interacted with the careers of other merchants during his establishment phase. He was also a typical representative of a foreign merchant active in French Atlantic trade. As such, his story represents a suitable starting point for a case study that goes beyond a biographic approach. In the end, his case reveals to us how the mercantile world worked in Atlantic trade of the 18th century and what opportunities it held for a Hamburger merchant to play a part in it.

A Hamburg Merchant in France

The state of research regarding the role of German merchants in foreign trade is more extensive compared to the sparse literature on the establishment phase. The book can draw on pioneer works on the topic of German merchants and German 'nations', "Les Colonies Germaniques" as they were called in France, trading and residing in the ports and cities of Europe, as in France, but also in Spain, Portugal, Finland, the Netherlands or England.[92] These works, including the most fundamental book *Deutsche Kaufleute im*

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91 See Ruppert, "Der Bürger als Kaufmann"; Earle, *Making of the English Middle Class*; Deges, "Handelsdiener"; Veluwenkamp, "International Business"; Jeannin, "Distinction des compétences."

92 Regarding these German communities or 'nations' in Bordeaux and Cádix see in detail Weber, *Deutsche Kaufleute*. See Weber, Klaus. "The Atlantic Coast of German Trade. German Rural Industry and Trade in the Atlantic, 1680-1840." *Itinerario, European Journal of Overseas History* 26, no. 2 (2002): 99-119. See Butel, Paul. "Les négociants allemands de Bordeaux dans la deuxième moitié du XVIIIe siècle." In *Wirtschaftskräfte in der europäischen Expension*, edited by Hermann Kellenbenz and Jürgen Schneider, 589-613. Stuttgart: Klett-Contra, 1978. See Leroux, Alfred. *La Colonie Germanique de Bordeaux: Étude Historique, Juridique, Statistique, Économique, d'après les sources allemandes et françaises, Tome 1, De 1462 à 1870*. Bordeaux: E. Feret, 1918, chapter "Prépondérance des allemands (1697-1870)," 45-149. See Schulte Beerbühl, *German Merchants*. See Newman, Karen. *Anglo-Hamburg Trade in the Late Seventeenth and Early 18th Century*. Unpublished PhD-thesis. London: London School of Economics and Political Science, 1979. Such nations could also be found in other countries, see Ressel, Magnus. "Von reichsstädtischen Kommissionären zu europäischen Unternehmern. Die deutschen Händler in Venedig im 18. Jahrhundert." *Vierteljahrschrift für Sozial- und Wirtschaftsgeschichte* 107, no. 2 (2020): 163-193. See Poettering, Jorun. *Handel, Nation und Religion: Kaufleute zwischen Hamburg und Portugal im 17. Jahrhundert*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2013. See Pohl, Hans. Die Beziehungen Hamburgs zu Spanien und dem Spanischen Amerika in der Zeit von 1740 bis 1806.

Atlantikhandel by Klaus Weber as well as his articles, the crucial works by Pierrick Pourchasse, Silvia Marzagalli, Paul Butel, the edited volume *Les Étrangers dans les villes-ports atlantiques* by Mickael Augeron and Pascal Even, complemented by works by Peter Höfer, Wolfgang Henninger, Margaret Schulte-Beerbühl, Jorun Poettering and Magnus Ressel, have shown and underlined the important role that German, particularly Hanseatic merchants played in the economies of the colonial superpowers.[93] In the case of Hamburg, as merchants from a neutral power, a maritime trading nation uninvolved in the prevailing war activities and spared from any fight or sanctions from warring parties, Hamburg merchants were welcome guests in many foreign countries of the time.[94]

Wiesbaden: Steiner, 1963. For Finland, see Ijäs, Ulla. “German Families and Their Family Strategies: Marriage and Education in Eighteenth- and Nineteenth-Century Provincial Towns in the Northern Baltic.” In *Families, Values, and the Transfer of Knowledge in Northern Societies, 1500-2000*, edited by Ulla Aatsinki, Johanna Annola, and Mervi Kaarninen, 79-101. London/New York: Routledge, 2019. See also Steffen, Anka, and Klaus Weber. “Spinning and Weaving for the Slave Trade: Proto-Industry in Eighteenth-Century Silesia.” In *Slavery Hinterland. Transatlantic Slavery and Continental Europe, 1680-1850*, edited by Felix Brahm, and Eve Rosenhaft, 87-107. Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2016.

93 See Weber, *Deutsche Kaufleute*; Weber, “German Merchants.” See Pourchasse, Pierrick. *Le commerce du Nord. La France et le commerce de l’Europe septentrionale au XVIIIe siècle*. Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2006. See Pourchasse, Pierrick. “Dynamism and Integration of the North European Merchant Communities in French Ports in the 18th Century.” in *Merchant Colonies in the Early Modern Period*, edited by Victor N. Zakharov, Gelina Harlaftis, and Olga Katsiardi-Hering. 45-60. London/New York: Routledge, 2016. See Pourchasse, Pierrick. “L’immigration négociante ou le développement d’un capitalisme sans frontières auf Xiiie siècle.” In *Les Étrangers dans les villes-ports atlantiques. Expériences françaises et allemandes XVe-XIXe siècle*, edited by Mickael Augeron and Pascal Even, 317-332. Paris: Les Indes savantes, 2010. See Pourchasse, Pierrick. “Problems of French Trade with the North in the eighteenth century.” Paper presented at the annual conference of the Economic History Society, April 1, 2006, www.ehs.org.uk/conference2006/Assets/IIDPourchasse.doc. See Marzagalli, “Négoce et politique des étrangers en France.” See Marzagalli, “Trade across religious boundaries in Early Modern France.” In *Religion and Trade: Cross-Cultural Exchanges in World History, 1000-1900*, edited by Francesca Trivellato, Leor Halevi and Catia Antunes, 169-191. Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press, 2014. See Butel, Paul. “Le négoce international en France au XVIII siècle.” In *Le négoce international: XIIIe-XXe siècle*, edited by François M. Crouzet, M., 140-152, Paris: Economica, 1989. See Butel, Paul. “Les négociants allemands de Bordeaux dans la deuxième moitié du XVIIIe siècle.“ In *Wirtschaftskräfte und Wirtschaftswege, II: Wirtschaftskräfte in der europäischen Expansion. Festschrift für Hermann Kellenbenz*, edited by Jürgen Schneider, 589-611. Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1978. See Augeron/Even, *Les Étrangers dans les villes-ports atlantiques;* Butel, “Les négociants allemands“; Butel, “La maison Schröder et Schyler.“ See also Höfer, Peter. *Deutsch-französische Handelsbeziehungen im 18. Jahrhundert: die Firma Breton frères in Nantes (1763–1766)*. Stuttgart: Klett Cotta, 1977. See Henninger, *Bethmann*, Schulte-Beerbühl, *German Merchants*; Poettering, *Handel, Nation und Religion* and Ressel, “Romberg.” See Ressel, Magnus. “The global Presence of Merchants from the German Empire: Linking the Continental Overland and Seaborne Trade.” In *Migrationsforschung – interdisziplinär und diskursiv. Internationale Forschungserträge zu Migration in Wirtschaft, Geschichte und Gesellschaft*, edited by Margrit Schulte Beerbühl and Heike Knortz, 239-270. Göttingen: V&R, 2021. See Espagne, Michel, and Werner Greiling, eds. *Frankreichfreunde. Mittler des französisch-deutschen Kulturtransfers (1750-1850)*. Leipzig: Universitätsverlag, 1996.

94 See Weber, *Deutsche Kaufleute*, 159-166. See Pourchasse, “Dynamism and Integration,” 46. See Pourchasse, *Le commerce du Nord*, particularly “Quatrième partie. La stratégie du négoce étranger,” 267-328. See Huhn, Fred-Konrad. *Die Handelsbeziehungen zwischen Frankreich und Hamburg im 18. Jahrhundert: unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Handelsverträge von 1716 und 1769*. 2 vol. Unpu-

In France, they even enjoyed extensive legal privileges.[95] As the research by Pierrick Pourchasse on Franco-Hamburg relations has shown, Hamburg wholesale merchants were responsible for a large part of the re-distribution and re-export of colonial goods from France to Hamburg with Hamburg being one of the main hubs and transhipment ports of the time.[96] From Hamburg, the goods were shipped both into the Baltic and the German hinterland, cushioning the surplus of goods prevailing in France.[97] Many Hamburg merchants thus specialised particularly in the trade of raw materials such as raw cane sugar, which they transported to the Elbe city. In Hamburg and its hinterland, the sugar was refined, strengthening the local economy.[98] Foreign merchants were important economic actors in the French economy as commission agents and shipowners, as logistic service providers and freight forwarders. They were active as insurers or invested in French prize auctions. These merchants assumed tasks and took on the role of intermediaries in Atlantic trade, which was a profitable business and which turned them into enablers of the Atlantic market.

From the perspective of the foreign merchants themselves, in France or Spain, these ways of doing business provided the basis for actively participating in Atlantic trade despite the fact that, due to mercantilist policies and restrictions of the colonial superpowers, they were strictly not allowed to trade directly with the colonies.

Previous research has shown this important role of foreign merchants and presented the underlying structures of this sophisticated system from the perspective of Economic History, in a long-term perspective and based on extensive prosopographical studies.[99] In addition to these works, this book offers and undertakes a detailed case study into the concrete workings and events of Hamburg trade participation in France

blished PhD-thesis. Hamburg: Hamburg University, 1952, 34. See Tarrade, Jean. *Le commerce colonial de la France à la fin de l'Ancien Régime. L'évolution du régime de «l'Exclusif» de 1763 à 1789*. 2 vol. Paris: P.U.F., 1972, 83-112. See Doyle, William, ed. *Old Regime France 1648-1788*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001. See Butel, Paul: *L'Économie française au XVIIIe siècle*. Paris: Sedes, 1993. See already Wurm, Christian Friedrich. *Von der Neutralität des deutschen Seehandels in Kriegszeiten*. Hamburg: Joh. Auf. Meissner, 1841, 11- 21.

95 France allowed the foreign merchants to rent premises and warehouses in the French ports. Hamburg merchants had to pay neither the "Dixiéme" (the tithe) nor the general taxes which applied for French citizens (the "capitation") up until one year of staying in France. They also enjoyed privileges of low duties on imports. They were exempted from special taxes such as the "droit de tonneau", which was a tax on casks loaded onto or offloaded from their ships. In the commercial and peace treaty of 1716 between France and Hamburg, the droit d'Aubaine, too, was suspended, the right of the French crown to confiscate all property when a citizen died.

96 See Pourchasse, *Le Commerce de Nord*, 291-327. See Pourchasse, "L'immigration négociante," 317-332. See Pourchasse, "French Trade," 19-23. See Marzagalli, "Négoce et politique des étrangers en France," 58-59. See Butel, *L'Économie française*, "Les marchés de l'Europe du nord et d'Allemagne," 89-97.

97 See Kikuchi, Yuta. *Hamburgs Ostsee- und Mitteleuropahandel 1600-1800: Warenaustausch und Hinterlandnetzwerke*. Cologne: Böhlau, 2018, 256-298.

98 See Petersson, Astrid. *Zuckersiedergewerbe und Zuckerhandel in Hamburg im Zeitraum von 1814 bis 1834. Entwicklung und Struktur zweier wichtiger Hamburger Wirtschaftszweige des vorindustriellen Zeitalters*. Stuttgart: Steiner, 1998.

99 Weber, Henninger, Pourchasse, Butel. For a prosopographical study of Hamburg and its merchants see also Reißmann, Martin. *Die hamburgische Kaufmannschaft des 17. Jahrhunderts in sozialgeschichtlicher Sicht*. Hamburg: Christians, 1975.

in the mid-18th century from the perspective of a travelling wholesale merchant. The book will offer vivid examples of various enterprises undertaken by groups of several merchants, both foreign and French merchants in cooperation, and show how these enterprises were negotiated and implemented in practice. Often the merchants in these networks shared the same religious background: a Protestant background. Lutherans, Calvinist merchants and French Huguenots merchants worked together. Today, this phenomenon is known under the term *Protestant International*, which had a crucial economic function for the integration of Hamburg merchants in France.[100]

In this book, I attempt to bring together the macro contexts of economic developments with the perspective of the individuals shaping them. This perspective will show the subtleties and complexities of Hamburg trade participation and the challenges of doing business as a Hamburg merchant in France. Hamburg merchants, though finding mostly favourable conditions in France, still were presented with many obstacles and had to fight their way to conducting a profitable business. They often had to find legal loopholes, find compromises and work closely together with local merchants to find and adapt solutions. These merchants often also relied on broad interpretations of law and customs and had to negotiate social and legal grey areas in order to advance in business, an aspect which is underrepresented in previous research. Key to success in mercantile business was negotiation and adaptation skills, persuasive efforts as well as in-depth knowledge of the trading customs, languages and legal opportunities of the time, social skills and the mastery of several forms of social etiquette together with the necessary business acumen, capital and networks.

How a Merchant organised his Business Archive

The second special characteristic of the Luetkens archive is that it has survived in both great detail and in its original material condition of the mid-18th century, still encompassing all incoming and outgoing letters the merchant had received and sent during his stay in France. When I found the archive in 2012, large parts of the archive were still in the condition of 1745, as if Luetkens had just left it behind. The other parts were in the condition of 1748, when the court proceedings ended.[101] The only paper added in the following centuries was a small memo, a leaflet as we find them hundredfold in the Prize Papers collection today, drawn up by Paul Gaskoin, the archivist, who compiled

100 The *Protestant International* will be discussed in detail in the chapter on commission trade. See Bosher, John F. "Huguenot Merchants and the Protestant International in the Seventeenth Century." *The William and Mary Quarterly* 52, no. 1 (1995): 77-102. See Lüthy, Herbert. *La Banque protestante en France et la révocation de l'édit de Nantes à la Révolution*, 2 vol. Paris: S.E.V.P.E.N., 1961. For a good introduction, see Marzagalli, Silvia. "Trade across religious boundaries in Early Modern France." In *Religion and Trade: Cross-Cultural Exchanges in World History, 1000-1900*, edited by Francesca Trivellato, Leor Halevi and Catia Antunes, 169-191. Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press, 2014.

101 Today, all the papers of the Luetkens archive are neatly stored in dozens of standard archival blue folders, which for their part are filed into three standard archival boxes. The current situation is the result of cooperation that Amanda Bevan and I undertook in February 2017 when we created the detailed catalogue entry for TNA Discovery together, after the records had undergone conservation measures.

the first registry of captured ship represented in the collection in the 1750s.[102] Some records from the Luetkens archive served as pieces of evidence during the court proceedings and were piled up in separate court bundles and marked as evidence, the rest of the records were kept in the original condition for centuries.[103]

Figure 1: Left: Content of one of the three archive boxes in which the Luetkens archive was originally stored in 2012 with Nicolaus Gottlieb Luetkens' original letter bundles. Right: Luetkens' large Letter Book.

Source: Left: The National Archives, ref. HCA 30/234. Right: The National Archives, ref. HCA 30/232. Pictures by the author.

Opening up the archive boxes during my research, I was presented with a completely intact business archive, with its order system also still intact and ready to be decoded and reinitiated for the purpose of my research.[104] This original order system of the letter archive served as the basis for my analyses because it allowed the reconstruction of letter exchanges from scratch and based on the immediacy of direct material evidence from the past. Right from the beginning, I reconstructed order practices and organising principles of an archive from the past and not archival practices. The most apparent organising principle structuring the Luetkens archive was that the incoming letters were all neatly sorted in letter bundles and letter piles, sorted by addressees. The letters in the piles were unfolded vertically and marked with a particular file mark at the top of the unfolded letter by Luetkens stating a name, date of receipt and date of response. In this way, the letter bundles represented an easily accessible letter filing system, with letter piles that could be flipped through whenever a letter response was due, comparable to computer backup programs today. As we learn from contemporary merchant manuals and portraits, this was a typical storing practice.

102 Regarding Gaskoin's role and work on the Prize Papers in general see Bevan/Cock, "Prize Papers." Except for Gaskoin, the last person, who went through the Luetkens archive was the honourable secretary of the High Court of Admiralty: Philipp Stevens.

103 Court bundles of letters used as exhibits, TNA, HCA 30/233. These are court selections of the business archive of Luetkens, removed by the court from his original arrangement, for use as exhibits.

104 Regarding historical archive practices and record-keeping, see Ketelaar, Eric. *Archiving People. A Social History of Dutch Archives*. 's-Gravenhage: Stichting Archiefpublicaties, 2020. On mercantile record-keeping, see Ketelaar, Eric. "The Dutch comptoir as information centre." *Archival Science* 18 (2018): 333-341.

Paul Jacob Marperger wrote in 1717 in his merchant manual *Getreuer und geschickter Handelsdiener* that it was advisable for merchants to "put together and pile up incoming letters in letter bundles" ["auf Stapel legen"] and to store them in "compartments" ["Brieffächer"].[105] We find the exact same system in the background of a portrait by Simon Moritz Bethmann, one of Luetkens' correspondents.[106] In the portrait, Bethmann is sitting at his writing desk, behind him we see a cabinet containing hundreds and hundreds of letters, all stacked and bundled in letter bundles. Marperger furthermore advised merchants to once more "pile together these letter bundles in packages, each compartment separately, after each year of business and store them in postbags."[107] This ordering principle is represented in the Luetkens archive and many other archives of the Early Modern Period.[108]

Figure 2: Nicolaus Gottlieb Luetkens did not store his incoming letters in their original folded state in his archive, but he refolded them in such a way that he used the original creases of the letter while folding out the overlapping parts of the original letter fold, which once had been tucked into the folded letter. This practice allowed the merchant to easily file the letters and add notes on the upper side of the refolded letter. In the picture: refolded letters with Luetkens' notes regarding the correspondents, the dates of receipt and the date of dispatch of his response letter; Figure 3: Oil portrait of Simon Moritz Bethmann (1721-1782), showing neatly stored letter bundles in the background. The portrait was painted between 1755-1775.

Source: The National Archives, ref. HCA 30/234. Picture by the author (fig. 2); By courtesy of the Senckenberg Stiftung (fig. 3).

105 Marperger, *Getreuer und geschickter Handelsdiener*, 199. Regarding the practice of storing letters in bundles and stacks see also Ruppert, *Bürgerlicher Wandel*, 60.

106 Oil portrait of Simon Moritz Bethmann (1721-1782), showing neatly stored letter bundles in the background. The portrait was painted between 1755-1775. By courtesy of the Senckenberg Stiftung.

107 Marperger, *Getreuer und geschickter Handelsdiener*, 1058.

108 See Wolfe, Heather, and Peter Stallybrass. "The Material Culture of Record-Keeping in Early Modern England." In *Archives and Information in the Early Modern World*, edited by Liesbeth Corens, Kate Peters and Alexandra Walsham, 179-208. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018.

In contrast to the letter piles and bundles, Luetkens' large Letter Book with all his outgoing letters, a large volume bound together from several paper books, was not kept sorted by correspondents, but instead in continuous order, sorted by date, but still giving the names of the addressees. This fact allowed me to match the outgoing letters in the Letter Book with the incoming letters in the letter bundles, reinitiate the order system of the Luetkens archive and recreate entire letter exchanges among several correspondents over time. An address book as well as a small book with a list of all outgoing letters, in which we also find letters not copied into the large Letter Book, completed the picture. Apart from still showing their original storage arrangement, many letters also still exhibited further original material features such as creases from the original folding techniques. Many letter packets, with letters enclosing other letters, were still intact and stored together. There were still enclosures in some of the letters such as linen fabric or cotton samples. In sum, the Luetkens archive has survived in an intriguingly dense and a genuine state providing valuable tangible insights into Early Modern letter practices and mercantile record-keeping.

Based on these unique features of the archive, in this book I am able to reconstruct complete letter conversations from the 18th century. By bringing together the letter bundles with the Letter Book and the list of outgoing letters, I am able to read letter correspondence alternatingly, and due to the original condition, in a materially genuine way. This served as the basis for being able to extrapolate and derive from these records all textual and material elements and resources shaping and structuring the letter exchanges and the business these letters facilitated. I learned how people adapted to different situations and how they communicated and dealt with each other in the historical real-time of the contemporary postal systems. In short, these reconstructions are ultimately as close as we can get to learning about the actual letter and business practices performed on the basis of letters during the 18th century.

Mercantile Letter Conversations and a Catalogue of Letter Practices

The Luetkens archive allowed me to draw on two sides of 18th-century letter correspondence, to include several correspondents in the analysis and to document the letter exchanges without interruption. I capitalise on this fact in the book and present written letter conversations as "polyphonic conversations", a term borrowed from Francesca Trivellato. Trivellato emphasises in her work the importance of such forms of conversations and communication platforms for mercantile sociability and business of the 18th century.[109] I also follow the argument by Alison Wiggins, who points out that reading "letters as part of the sequences of exchange within which they were sent and received, is vital to re-contextualising and historicising the letters."[110] The term "written conversations", also prominently used by Robert Vellusig, was already used by the contemporaries, who themselves regarded their letters as a distinct sphere of communication.[111]

109 Trivellato, "Merchants' Letters," 89.

110 Wiggins, Alison. *Bess of Hardwick's Letters: Language, Materiality and Early Modern Epistolary Culture*. Oxford/New York: Routledge, 2016, 25.

111 See Vellusig, *Schriftliche Gespräche*.

Figure 4: Reading, analysing and cataloguing the Luetkens archive together with Amanda Bevan in The National Archives, Kew, London.

Source: Letters on the table: The National Archives, ref. HCA 30/233. Picture by the author.

This contemporary discourse represents a crucial basis for the understanding of this present book.

As we can read in contemporary letter-writing manuals, letters served the purpose to "compensate for the lack of possibility of oral conversations by means of the written conversation."[112] The Luetkens letters also broach the issue on a regular basis. Johann Jakob Bethmann, as one of Luetkens' main correspondents, wrote in his letters that there "is still some time left to enter into a distant conversation with you", his brother Simon Moritz Bethmann wrote that although they were "far away" from each other, he and Luetkens would continue their "long distance conversation".[113] Letter utterances as such are often dismissed in research as mere letter formulae. However, as I argue in this book, following pioneer works in the field of Historical Sociolinguistics, it was meant literally.[114] Business and life were settled in letters and people of the past knew

112 "Mangel der mündlichen Unterredung durch schriftliche Correspondence ersetzen." Hunold, Christian Friedrich (pseud.: Menantes): *Die Allerneueste Art Höflich und Galant zu Schreiben oder auserlesene Briefe [...]*. Hamburg: Gottfried Liebernickel im Dohm, 1707, 53.

113 "Noch [...] bleibt mir ein Augenblick Zeit mich mit Euch zu unterhalten", "Perßon mit welcher ich mich so zu sagen noch ein einem weit entfernten Gespräche befinde" in the original German letters. Letter from Bethmann, Johann Jakob to Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, November 9, 1743, TNA, HCA 30/234. Letter from Bethmann, Simon Moritz to Luetkens Nicolaus Gottlieb, April 17, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/234.

114 See Fitzmaurice, Susan M. *The Familiar Letter in Early Modern English. A pragmatic approach*. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 2002. See Van der Wal, Marijke, and Rutten, Gijsbert. "The

exactly which ways and means to use and which resources to mobilise in their letters to make a decisive impact on their correspondents with their letters during the letter conversations. Marperger defined a correspondent in his letter manual *Der allzeitfertige Handels-Correspondent* as "someone who conducts written actions" ["schriftliche Handlung pflegt"] on the basis of letters. He added, that "we correspond together" ["wir correspondieren zusammen"].[115] The people of the 18th century acted on the basis of letters. This is the reason why the powers of persuasion in letters discussed in this book were not only decisive for the smooth running of correspondence, but with letter writing regarded as its own decisive sphere of action, the powers of persuasion in letters also had a direct impact on the merchant's life, their success and career in general.

As part of the reconstruction of the letter conversations, the surviving letters allowed me to ask about the decisive elements that turned letters into powerful tools of practical persuasion. These elements included textual, material, linguistic, discursive, rhetorical, argumentative and performative elements that all shaped the process of writing, folding, sealing, sending and receiving letters. I analyse these elements as part of the reconstruction of letter practices that were used during correspondence. Letter practices are defined in the book as typical patterns of action that are used and performed on the basis of the letter material and text.[116] The outcome of my analyses is a catalogue of typical letter practices used by merchants of the 18th century. Furthermore, I will show which of these practices were most effective in the letter negotiations for the business purposes.

The Luetkens archive furthermore provided a cross-section across different groups of correspondents and status groups, from merchants, to bankers, to ships' captains, to clerks, to family members. This in turn allowed me to ask the question of how people from different fields of business and from different social ranks approached each other in different situations in letters, wrote to each other for different purposes in different national languages, using different letter styles and mobilised different language registers to achieve a desired effect. A particular emphasis is put on language registers mobilised in the Luetkens correspondence. A language register is defined as a "conventional way of using language that is appropriate in a specific context."[117] "People use different linguistic forms on different occasions."[118] Presenting several letter styles and

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Practice of Letter Writing: Skills, Models, and Early Modern Dutch Manuals." *Language and History* 56, no. 1 (2013): 18-32. See Nevalainen, Terttu, and Sanna-Kaisa Tanskanen. "Letter Writing." *Journal of Historical Pragmatics* 5, no. 2 (2004): 181-336. See Nevalainen/Tanskanen, *Letter-Writing*.

115 Marperger, Paul Jacob. *Der allzeitfertige Handels-Correspondent* […]. Hamburg: Schiller, 1717, 80.

116 On practices in detail, see the next part of this chapter on the research approach. See for an introduction Haasis, Lucas, and Constantin Rieske. "Historische Praxeologie. Zur Einführung." In *Historische Praxeologie. Dimensionen vergangenen Handelns*, edited by Lucas Haasis and Constantin Rieske, 7-54. Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 2015. See Spiegel, Gabrielle M., ed. *Practicing History. New directions in historical writing after the linguistic turn*. London/New York: Routledge, 2005.

117 Yule, George. *The Study of Language*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014, 210.

118 Biber, Douglas, and Susan Conrad. *Register, Genre and Style*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009, 4. See Agha, Asif. "Art. Registers of language." In *A Companion to Linguistic Anthropology*, edited by Alessandro Duranti, 23-45. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2006. Regarding registers in praxeological approaches, see Welskopp, Thomas. "Sprache und Kommunikation in praxistheoretischen Geschichtsansätzen." In *Unternehmen Praxisgeschichte. Historische Perspektiven auf*

language registers in this book, we gain a comprehensive insight into typical ways of communicating, negotiating and trading of a merchant in Atlantic trade, in different life situations, business fields and relationships. Taking both features, the unique material condition and the survival of a two-sided correspondence as a starting point for my research, I can once more contribute to current debates in three research fields. I aim to contribute to current culturalist approaches in Economic History, provide new insights in the research on Early Modern letters while at the same time putting a special emphasis on the materiality of letters.

The two main sources of inspiration for this book were the works of Francesca Trivellato and Toby L. Ditz. In her book *Familiarity of Strangers*, Trivellato puts special emphasis on the importance of letters and letter practice for mercantile business. As a representative of a more culturally oriented Economic History, Trivellato's research shows that besides the mastery of business practices, letter writing practices were crucial for the business and career advancement of Early Modern merchants. Trivellato highlights that letters were "the primary tool for weaving webs of commercial relations across space and social groups." Correspondence was the "cement that enabled distant agents to create solid webs across distant localities and wide cultural gulfs, [...] the backbone of European long-distance trade long past that time. [...] Business correspondence was a crucial instrument [...] in forging and maintaining [...] informal cross-cultural networks".[119] In my analyses, I confirm her assessments and supplement her work by providing a detailed catalogue of typical letter practices used by wholesale merchant in the 18th century.

The basic assumptions as to the role, importance and the main characteristics of merchant letters I share with Toby L. Ditz, whose articles also inspired this book. Ditz highlights that like "other written traces of the past, merchants' letters do not simply record or describe their surrounding economic and social reality [...]; they 'inscribe' and 'rework' it. [...] When merchants articulated intentions and defined situations, they did so within the matrix of possibilities and constraints posed by the genre and narrative conventions, symbolic repertoires, discourses, and vocabularies that they mobilized and reworked in their letters. The self-representations [in the letters] worked out with the help of existing cultural resources helped to define mercantile desire and interest. [...] [Therefore, the merchants made] use of culturally available genres, discourses, and vocabularies in order to make sense of recent actions and situations and to chart a future course."[120]

As part of my analyses, I provide all context necessary to understand the respective letter conversation. This includes information on the resources used, ranging from language registers to the letter styles, to fixed vocabularies and terminologies, to discourses shaping the conversations or specific material and social events framing it. The contextualisation serves the purpose of making the practices, both letter and business, and the content of the letters understandable. Ditz emphasises that business letters

Kapitalismus, Arbeit und Klassengesellschaft, edited by Thomas Welskopp, 105-131. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2014.

119 Trivellato, "Merchants' letters," 81-82 and 84, as well as Trivellato, *Discourse and Practice*, 19.

120 Ditz, "Formative Ventures," 62.

were characterized as always "yoked to practical claims on others".[121] Most mercantile "letters had immediate pragmatic goals; the writers' figurative and narrative imagery, and their self-representations, were associated with appeals to others for practical assistance – for example, to transport and sell cargoes, to obtain loans or to extend the time for their repayment."[122] The Luetkens letters will confirm this assumption in a vivid manner. In order to understand these various operations and to see how they were conducted on the basis of letters, context is needed. In addition to Ditz' articles, in this book I provide information on the letter practices and business practices and the resources employed during the performance of these practices that were used to reach the respective goals. I concentrate on the processes and the manifold manifestations of persuasive efforts and persuasive powers applied in letters. How did the letter writers use their letters to reach their goals and what resources came into effect during the process? Which resources were most promising? This line of thinking was mainly influenced by research in the field of *Historical Sociolinguistics*, the research field that for the first time attributes actual powers and agency to the medium of the letter.

Susan Fitzmaurice, in her ground-breaking book on the *Familiar Letter in Modern English*, pioneered an approach to research on letters by defining "both fictional and real [letters] as a pragmatic act" at the centre of which stood the "writer and his or her intention in constructing a letter as an act designed to have some effect upon an addressee."[123] We have to analyse the "variety of functions performed by epistolary discourse and the ways in which writers go about ensuring that their addressees get their message."[124] Her work, and many that would follow by Terttu Nevalainen, Sanna-Kaisa Tanskanen, Marijke van der Wal, Gijsbert Rutten, Andreas H. Jucker or Helen Newsome, shape the idea behind the present book.[125] The assumption that letters had the ability to act is indeed highly applicable to merchant letters because in mercantile business letters were regularly used to conduct business. The letters had the intrinsic feature of bearing the power to act. In this book, I will demonstrate how this process worked. In my view, the ultimate purpose of writing a letter not only in business, but also in many other situations in the life of a merchant was to have an effect on the addressee, the challenge then being how to achieve this effect.[126]

Adding to Fitzmaurice's perspective, who mainly emphasised the side of the letter writer, I concentrate in this book on the coordination processes between the correspondents, often including 3-5 correspondents in the analysis. I integrate the perspectives of both sender and receiver. Therefore, I can analyse how effects were achieved, how signals were received and, if this was not the case, how the correspondents adapted to the situation. Looking at courses of action in letter exchanges and observing the effects of

121 Ibid., 53.

122 Ibid., 62.

123 Fitzmaurice, *The Familiar Letter*, 1.

124 Ibid., 8.

125 Those not already quoted above are Jucker, Andreas H. and Päivi Pahta, eds. *Communicating Early English Manuscripts*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011. See Newsome, Helen. "The function, format, and performance of Margaret Tudor's January 1522 diplomatic memorial." *Renaissance Studies* 35, no. 3 (2020): 403-424.

126 See Stewart, "Letters."

exerting influence in particular ways, I am ultimately able to extrapolate certain practical principles of persuasion underlying, and applied in, 18th century correspondence and business.[127] These principles created the basis for a powerful and successful letter negotiation practice. I define these principles as practical principles of persuasion, since they relate to letters, letter-writing practices and were often a result of material practices rather than of rhetorical thinking. The focus on the material side of persuasion and the materiality of letters links to the third research field to which this book contributes, namely materiality studies.

The Materiality of Letters

The interest in letters as material items experienced a genuine renaissance in research in recent years. The research focusses on the multiple ways of how people of the past deliberately manipulated their letters in their form by means of folding, cutting, locking, arranging, packeting, tying up, and sealing their letters. This approach taking seriously the significance of the materiality of letters was pioneered by James Daybell in his book *Material Letters* and his articles, as well as in the works and workshops of the *Unlocking History* team and the letterlocking team led by Daniel Starza Smith and Jana Dambrogio, complemented by the books and articles inter alia by Alison Wiggins, Nadine Akkermann, Laura Findlen, Leonie Hannan, or Siobhan Talbott.[128] I have participated in this

127 The practical principles will be discussed in detail in the following part on the research approach.

128 See Daybell, James. *The Material Letter in Early Modern England: Manuscript Letters and the Culture and Practices of Letter-Writing, 1512-1635*. Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2012. See Daybell, James. *Women Letter-Writers in Tudor England*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006, 32-60. Daybell, James. “Material Meanings and the Social Signs of Manuscript Letters in Early Modern England.“ *Literature Compass* 6, no. 3 (2009): 647-667. See Daybell, James, and Peter Hinds, eds. *Material Readings of Early Modern Culture, 1580-1700*. Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2010. See Dambrogio/Ghassaei/Smith/Jackson, “Unlocking history.” Dambrogio, Jana, and Daniel Starza Smith. “Letterlocking. Securing Correspondence before Envelopes.” In *The Routledge Encyclopedia of the Renaissance World*, edited by Lauren Shohet. London: Routledge, forthcoming 2021. See Dambrogio, Jana , and Daniel Starza Smith et al. “The Spiral-Locked Letters of Elizabeth I and Mary, Queen of Scots.” *eBLJ 2021*, Article 11 (2021): DOI: 10.23636/gyhc-b427. See Dambrogio, Jana, and Daniel Starza Smith, and Unlocking History Research Group. *The Dictionary of Letterlocking*, http://letterlocking.org/dictionary (DoLL, 2019), accessed March 23, 2019. See Wiggins, *Bess of Hardwick's Letters*. See Akkerman, Nadine. *Invisible Agents: Women and Espionage in Seventeenth-Century Britain*. Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press, 2018. See Findlen, Paula, and Suzanne Sutherland. “Introduction. With a letter in hand – writing, communication, and representation in Renaissance Italy.” In *The Renaissance of Letters. Knowledge and Community in Italy, 1300.-1650*, edited by Paula Findlen and Suzanne Sutherland, 1-28. London/New York: Routledge, 2020. See Hannan, Leonie. *Women of Letters. Gender, Writing, and Life of the Mind in Early Modern England*. Manchester University Press, 2016.Siobhan Talbotts’ most current work is an edition of a Letter Book of a 17th-century merchant that shows striking similarities to Luetkens’ Letter Book. See Talbott, Siobhan. *The Letter-Book of Thomas Baret of Norwich: Merchant and textile manufacturer, 1672-1677*. Norwich: Norfolk Record Society publications, 2021.
See also Decker, William Merrill. *Epistolary Practices: Letter Writing in America before Telecommunications*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998. See also Steen, Sara Jane. “Reading Beyond the Words: Material Letters and the Process of the Interpretation Process.” *Quidditas* 22 (2001): 55-69. See Stewart, Alan. *Shakespeare's Letters*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2008. See Henzel, Katrin. “Materialität des Briefs.” In *Handbuch Brief. Von der Frühen Neuzeit bis zur Gegenwart*, edited by Maria

strand of research since the day I started working on the Luetkens archive and on the collection of the Prize Papers.[129] The Prize Papers collection is a vivid example of a largely uncurated material archive and one of the largest collections in the world holding thousands of records still in their original condition allowing unique research on the materiality of the past.[130]

Studying the Luetkens archive, I am able to show how material features were deliberately used by the letter writers as concrete means and an intrinsic part of letter persuasion processes in 18th century correspondence. The focus of previous research on letters often still rests on the text, but the analysis of letter materiality has gained immense ground. Even in materiality studies, however, research still concentrates on the task of identification and categorisation of the material features of letters. The most impressive current result is the *Dictionary of Letterlocking* presenting the Early Modern "technology of folding and securing an epistolary writing substrate to function as its own envelope", created by Jana Dambrogio and Daniel Smith.[131] With my analysis I hope to add to the research on letter materiality by providing case studies as to how the material practices were concretely performed during letter conversations with the specific focus on the still pending question *why* they were performed and what effects ensued.

Therefore, apart from the textual analysis, I will show how material practices were used as a concrete means of persuasion during Early Modern letter conversations. I try to answer the questions of what different the purposes were for which letter writers, why they used certain folding techniques or different paper, or why they arranged letter packets in particular ways.[132] One of the main questions is what form of a "material rhetoric" was used as an intrinsic part of Early Modern letter exchanges, as Carlos Spoerhase defines it.[133] As will become apparent, in most cases, material rhetoric served

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Matthews-Schlinzig et al., 222-231, Berlin/Boston: De Gruyter, 2020. See also Bittel, Carla, Elaine Leong and Christine von Oertzen, eds. *Working with Paper: Gendered Practices in the History of Knowledge*. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2019. See Archer-Parré, Caroline, and Malcom, Dick, eds. *Pen, Print and Communication in the Eighteenth Century*. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2020.

129 Haasis, Lucas. "Papier, das nötigt und Zeit, die ~~drängt~~ übereilt. Zur Materialität und Zeitlichkeit von Briefpraxis im 18. Jahrhundert und ihrer Handhabe." In *Praktiken der Frühen Neuzeit*, edited by Arndt Brendecke, 305-319. Cologne/Weimar/Vienna: Böhlau, 2015.

130 In the Prize Papers Project, we put great emphasis on the preservation and presentation of the collection's unique materiality. See the Materiality Homepage of the Prize Papers Project, www.prizepapers.de, accessed 22 October 2021.

131 See Dambrogio/Ghassaei/Smith/Jackson, "Unlocking History." The Categories and Formats chart in this article is the first complete method for systematizing letterlocking.

132 On the importance of paper during the Early Modern Period, the history of paper and paper trade and book history see Bellingradt, Daniel. *Vernetzte Papiermärkte. Einblicke in den Amsterdamer Handel mit Papier im 18. Jahrhundert*. Köln: Herbert von Halem, 2020. See Bellingradt, Daniel, and Anna Reynolds, eds. *The Paper Trade in Early Modern Europe. Practices, Materials, Networks*. Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2021.

133 See Spoerhase, Carlos. *Das Format der Literatur. Praktiken materieller Textualität zwischen 1740 und 1830*. Göttingen: Wallstein, 2018.

the purpose of putting pressure on the addressee, explicitly or implicitly, and reinforcing one's will. Material letter practices were deliberately used as a tool to reinforce the written word or to send messages between the lines. As such they mainly appear as manipulative practices. These, as I will argue, were highly important for the success of the plans and enterprises and the advancement of the merchant in 18th century trade, an assumption that I can further underline with the help of the third special characteristic of the Luetkens archive, which is that this archive still holds letters clearly exhibiting forms of wilful manipulation. In this archive, we can find many kinds of letters that would have rarely survived in other archival contexts.

On Becoming a String-Puller and on Dubious Practices

The third and last special characteristic of the Luetkens archive is that, due to its conservation, this archive still comprises rare kinds of letters. These are letters that probably would have left the corpus or would have been removed from the archive if the archive had undergone the usual kind of archival preservation. Usually, such private or mercantile archives survive by being donated to a public archive by the merchant firm, the original owner of the archive or his family or descendants. This most often means that, in all likelihood, some letters will have been removed and extracted from the archive. The letters most likely to befall this fate are those not meant for the eyes of strangers such as personal letters, family letters and love letters. Furthermore, letters regarded as irrelevant or not memorable are removed, like letters documenting day to day business, letters exchanged with clerks and ship's captains. Last but not least, most probably all letters from a mercantile archive with unflattering, negative or problematic contents, letters that could shed a negative light on the original owners of the archive by presenting failures, losses, setbacks, warnings, open debts or insider trades, are whisked away from the eyes of prying historians. This usual kind of conservation, however, was not the case in the survival of the records of Nicolaus Gottlieb Luetkens, which is the reason why letters of all these kinds are still present in the archive.

The business archive, stored in the National Archives, still contains all of the papers, both business and private, that Luetkens carried with him until the end of the year 1745 and we are presented with a collection that has not undergone any kind of revision of familial censorship. Due to the confiscation of his personal belongings, Luetkens had no chance of removing or destroying any of his documents. The archive offers us a time capsule and a snapshot of the two years of his stay abroad including many records that Luetkens himself most probably would not have wanted people to see, which is why working with his archive also comes with the responsibility of being as accurate as possible. Precisely because of this fact, having access to these letters today provides us with the unique opportunity to gain a comprehensive, unobstructed and undisguised view on Luetkens' activities during the years 1743-1745.

On the basis of these letters, we are able to learn about Luetkens' insider dealings, his behaviour in disputes, which the contemporaries called "quill pen fencing", "federfechten" in German, in which the merchant and his correspondents used rather drastic means to restore order.[134] We learn about how merchants made use of juridical grey areas and often exploited situations of legal limbo in order to put their plans into practice, how they exercised certain discretionary powers by means of rhetorical means as well as by means of material rhetoric, conducted different information policies and used rather personal ways of exerting influence on their correspondents by issuing threats or offering instruction.[135] All of these elements represented important parts and decisive factors of Luetkens' business approach and it fostered his success as a merchant. These strategies helped him to pave the way for the success of establishment just as his other competences in mercantile and negotiation practice did, which is why the letters documenting these elements represent such a valuable resource to learn about an Early Modern mercantile establishment phase. One can even conclude that these elements represented intrinsic parts of his mercantile agenda and negotiation practices, helping Luetkens to implement his plans. In this regard, the book in some respect contributes to research fields and debates relating to illegal trade, smuggling, malpractice in mercantile business, as for instance represented in Mark Häberlein's book *Brüder, Freunde und Betrüger* or Thomas M. Truxes' *Defying Empire*, or to works on mercantile coping mechanisms with war.[136] It also might provide impulses for the field of research into conflict management, Early Modern diplomacy or risk management, which have become highly popular in recent years.[137] Last but not least, it contributes to literature on merchant strategy, risk and the use of maritime neutrality in the Early Modern Period.[138]

134 The term "fehder fechten" is for instance used by the merchants Hertzer & van Bobartt in their letter to Luetkens on February 2, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/234. See also "Federfechten." *Deutsches Wörterbuch von Jacob Grimm und Wilhelm Grimm*, 32 volumes. Leipzig, 1854-1961, vol. 3, 1399.

135 See Spoerhase, Carlos. *Das Format der Literatur*.

136 See Häberlein, Mark. *Brüder, Freunde und Betrüger. Soziale Beziehungen, Normen und Konflikte in der Augsburger Kaufmannschaft um die Mitte des 16. Jahrhunderts*. Berlin: Akad.-Verl., 1998. See Truxes, *Defying Empire*. See Talbott, Siobhan. "'What Cannot Be Helped Must Be Indured': Coping with Obstacles to Business During the Anglo-Dutch Wars, 1652–1674." *Enterprise & Society* (2021): 1-35. See Ebert, *Brazilian Sugar*, 131-150.

137 See Goetze, Dorothée, and Lena Oetzel, eds. *Warum Friedenschließen so schwer ist. Frühneuzeitliche Friedensfindung am Beispiel des Westfälischen Friedenskongresses*. Münster: Aschendorff Verlag, 2019. See Goetze, Dorothée, and Lena Oetzel, eds. *Early Modern European Diplomacy. A Handbook*. Munich/Berlin/Boston: De Gruyter, 2022. See also the NWO Vide Project "Managing multi-level conflict in commercial cities in Northern Europe (c. 1350-1570): https://premodernconflictmanagement.org. See Wubs-Mrozewicz, Justyna. "Conflicts about property: ships and inheritances in Danzig and in the Hanse area (15th-16th centuries)." In *Cultures of Law in Urban Northern Europe*, edited by Jackson W. Armstrong and Edda Frankot. 192-208. Abingdon/New York: Routledge, 2020.

138 See Gervais, *Merchants and Profit.* Gervais, Pierre. "Early Modern Merchant Strategies and the Historicization of Market Practices." *Economic Sociology* 15, no. 3 (2014), European Electronic Newsletter, Max Planck Institute for the Study of Societies, http://econsoc.mpifg.de/downloads/15_3/gervais_15_3.pdf, accessed March 14, 2019. Gervais, Pierre. "Why Profit and Loss Didn't Matter. The Historicized Rationality of Early Modern Merchant Accounting." In *Merchants and Profit in the Age of Commerce, 1680-1830*, edited by Pierre Gervais, Yannick Lemarchand, and Dominique Margairaz, 33-52. London: Picking & Chatto, 2014. See Mathias, Peter. "Risk, Credit and Kinship in Early Modern Enterprise." In *The Early Modern Atlantic Economy*, edited by John J. McCusker and Kenneth Morgan, 15-35. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000. See Zahedieh, Nuala. "Credit, Risk and Reputation in Late Seventeenth-Century Colonial Trade." In *Merchant Organization and Maritime Trade in the North Atlantic, 1660-1815*, edited by Olaf U. Janzen, 53-74. St Johns, Newfoundland: Interna-

Maritime neutrality was the one major asset that Hamburg-born merchants such as Luetkens exploited heavily to their advantage in business.[139] The crucial difference between a perspective on any form of malpractice and this book is, however, that from a contemporary legal standpoint as well as from Luetkens' own standpoint, dealing with his merchant strategies, we are not dealing with malpractice or any type of illegal behaviour.[140] Quite on the contrary, from a contemporary point of view, the merchants pushed boundaries or quite literally, were pushing the envelope of what was possible, by playing with grey areas. Thus, neither could Luetkens nor his partners be made culpable for illegal actions during the time, nor did they show any doubt or scruples as to the necessity and legitimacy of their actions. The latter, in turn, relates not only to legal matters, but also to questionable forms of social interaction such as tactics of concealment, preferential treatment or withholding information. As I will show in the following chapters, at the centre of the merchants' self-perception stood the strong conviction that as merchants they did nothing wrong and never acted illegitimately or illegally. Instead, the merchants took the view that they only used the opportunities and loopholes provided to them and that were necessary for their advancement as well as for making a living.[141] The practices and methods they used were often highly questionable from a modern-day perspective, but they always stayed within the realms of what was legally possible at the time. In fact, the merchants always made sure that all their actions were legally secured, which did not mean that they were any less questionable. On the other hand, Luetkens and his trading partners also appear in their letters and actions as very loyal businessmen amongst themselves. Luetkens himself did not harm or ruin any of his partners by his actions, but what he did in his business was mainly to circumvent political structures to reach his goals; he always paid his debts; and, last but not least, he himself never fell from grace but represented a reliable partner to his correspondents and trading partners. His network was very stable. All of this raises the question of what character traits a merchant had to have to become a successful merchant and how we should evaluate his behaviour from an ethical point of view. I will comment on this in detail in the conclusion of the book after the analyses and after I have demonstrated the many ways in which these merchants were able to conduct a successful business during the times of establishment.

The aim of the book is, however, not to judge Luetkens morally, neither to condemn nor to absolve him from his questionable actions. The aim is to demonstrate how mer-

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tional Maritime History Association, 1998. Relating to neutrality, apart from the works by Müller and Pantel see: Marzagalli, Silvia, and Leos Müller, eds. Forum: "'In apparent disagreement with all law of nations in the world': negotiating neutrality for shipping and trade during the French Revolutionary Wars." *International Journal of Maritime History* 28, no. 1 (2016): 108-192. See Pourchasse, Pierrick. "Speculations and Embargoes on the Grain Trade at the Time of the Revolutionay Wars (1792-1795)." In *Revisting Napoleon's Continental System*, edited by Katherine B. Aalestad and Johan Joor, 69-80. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015.

139 Based on the peace and trade treaty with France, 1716: K*ommerz- und Seetraktat zwischen Ludwig XV. und den Hansestädten Bremen, Hamburg und Lübeck*, 1716. Staatsarchiv Hamburg, Senat Cl. VI Nr. 5 Vol. 1 Fasc1a2.

140 See ibid.

141 See Hancock, *Citizens of the World*, 17.

chants managed their establishment phase during the 18th century and, as I will argue in this book, a necessary part of this was to find loopholes. In order to react to and face the challenges of his age and lifetime and the obstacles that were put in his way during this time, Luetkens and his trading partners needed to find solutions that pushed the limits of what was permissible at the time and exhaust the personal limits of the trust relationship he maintained with his trading partners and family members. Otherwise, as the records show, Luetkens' establishment phase and his business travel in France would have presented a very difficult task and most probably would have failed – a fact that speaks volumes as to the historical specificity of Atlantic trade in the 18th century. As Konstantin Dierks puts it, the merchant did everything "in his power" to pass this stage of his life with success and reach his ultimate goal, which was to establish himself as a wholesale merchant in 18th century European trade, even though this would require dubious practices as special measures during special times.[142]

We will not meet a person with a clean slate. We meet a person with very rough edges, a string-puller, a manipulator, who at the same time was appreciated by many as a man of character and a respected merchant and trading partner, a person who dealt with the challenges of his lifetime. As such, he represents, in my point of view, the typical wholesale merchant of the 18th century. We will read the story of a man who learned early on how to pull the strings and take the reins in order to put his plans into practice. What makes the Luetkens archive such an extraordinary source for historical research is that it partially dents the image of what is widely known as the concept of the honourable tradesman, the "Ehrbare Kaufmann" in German. However, at the same time, the archive also vividly demonstrates that it was precisely Luetkens' shrewdness and inventiveness, flexibility and adaptiveness along with the dubious practices that allowed him, as a foreign merchant in France, room for manoeuvre. His strategies provided him with ample freedoms during a time and a place, the Atlantic market in the 18th century, that were otherwise characterised by strict isolation and restrictions and a mercantilist policy shaped by trade barriers and by the social exclusion or even expulsion of all people that were deemed foreign, including people of other religions.[143] The tension between these factors, the narrow path between legal and illegal, honourable and dubious, is key

142 Dierks, Konstantin. *In My Power. Letter Writing and Communications in Early America*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009, 1-8, here 5.

143 On the honourable merchant, see Lütge, Christoph, and Christoph Strosetzki, eds.*The Honorable Merchant – Between Modesty and Risk-Taking: Intercultural and Literary Aspects*. Cham: Springer, 2019. See Strosetzky, Christoph. "The Merchant from Patristics to the Honnete Homme in the Writings of Savary." In *The Honorable Merchant – Between Modesty and Risk-Taking: Intercultural and Literary Aspects*, edited by Christoph Lütge and Christoph Strosetzki, 3-18. Cham: Springer, 2019. See Tietz, Manfred. "The Honest Merchant Before Adam Smith. The Genesis and Rise of a Literary Prototype in Britain." In *The Honorable Merchant – Between Modesty and Risk-Taking: Intercultural and Literary Aspects*, edited by Christoph Lütge and Christoph Strosetzki, 77-94. Cham: Springer, 2019. See Klink, Daniel. "Der Ehrbare Kaufmann – Das ursprüngliche Leitbild der Betriebswirtschaftslehre und individuelle Grundlage für die CSR-Forschung." In *Corporate Social Responsibility (Zeitschrift für Betriebswirtschaft / Journal of Business Economics Special Issue 3)*, edited by Joachim Schwalbach, 57-79. Wiesbaden: Gabler, 2008.

to understanding the idea behind this present book. It stands at the core of what it meant to become a merchant in the 18th century.

In sum, all three features of the Luetkens archive allow us to ask new questions and provide impulses to existing research fields. From a methodological point of view, the archive furthermore allows both a close-up perspective and a wide-angle shot. The Luetkens records offer a detailed insight into the life and letters of Nicolaus Gottlieb Luetkens and his correspondents. At the same time, he is representative of many merchants who shared his career path, went on travel, had to establish themselves and wrote several hundreds of letters for this purpose. Luetkens was part of an international merchant community and business network of Protestant merchants. He participated in a shared Atlantic business culture, spoke and wrote in several languages and invested in typical fields of trade that shaped the Atlantic economy. In short, when writing this case study on the basis of the dense collection of the Luetkens archive, the aim was not only to write about the career of a merchant, but to also offer insight into the wider Atlantic world of the 18th century. In historiography, this particular approach is widely known today and associated with the approach of microhistory. In this book, I offer a microhistory of the establishment phase of an Early Modern merchant with the special focus that my analysis primarily rests on the investigation of 18th century letter practices.

1.4 Writing a Praxeological Microhistory

This book is a microhistory. Microhistory means investigating a historical topic on the basis and with the help of a limited field of observation using the method of extensive contextualisation of the respective research object and all sources available in order to arrive at detailed conclusions about the phenomenon and the larger context of which it was once a part and which it shaped at the same time.[144] It is a practice "essentially based on the reduction of the scale of observation, on a microscopic analysis and an intensive study of the documentary material", however, not aiming at the "investigation of small things, but it investigates in small scale" in order to arrive at general insights about the characteristics of a time period under investigation, as Giovanni Levi puts it.[145] The basic assumption behind the microhistorical approach is summarised

144 See Medick, Hans. "Mikro-Historie." In *Sozialgeschichte, Alltagsgeschichte, Mikro-Historie—eine Diskussion*, edited by Winfried Schulze, 40-53. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1994, 44. See Medick, Hans. "Mikrohistorie." In *Lexikon der Geschichtswissenschaft. 100 Grundbegriffe*, edited by Stefan Jordan, 215-217. Stuttgart: Reclam, 2002. See Ginzburg, Carlo, and Carlo Poni. "Was ist Mikrogeschichte?" *Geschichtswerkstatt* 6 (1985): 48-52. See Brewer, John. "Microhistory and the Histories of Everyday Life." *Cultural and Social History* 7, no. 1 (2010): 87-109. See Ulbricht, Otto. *Mikrogeschichte. Menschen und Konflikte in der Frühen Neuzeit*. Frankfurt a.M.: Campus, 2009. See Magnússon, Sigurður Gylfi, and István M. Szijártó. *What is Microhistory? Theory and Practice*. London: Routledge, 2013.

145 First quote, Levi, Giovanni. "On Microhistory." In *New Perspectives on Historical Writing*, edited by Peter Burke, 93-113. Cambridge: Polity Press, 1991, here 95. Second quote, Giovanni Levi quoted after Medick, "Mikro-Historie," 40.

by Roger Chartier, who admits that "it is on this reduced scale, and probably only on this scale, that we can understand, without deterministic reduction, the relationships between systems of beliefs, of values and representations on the one hand, and social affiliations on the other."[146] In a similar way, Lawrence Stone writes in his renowned article about the *Return of the Narrative* that a "whole social system and set of values can be brilliantly illuminated by the searchlight method of recording in elaborate detail a single event, provided that it is very carefully set in its total context and very carefully analysed for its cultural meaning."[147] This searchlight method is also the general approach pursued in the present book.

Typical fields of observation of microhistorical studies in the past were villages, court processes, families or the story of often exceptional individuals who were spotlighted, represented in the crucial works by Hans Medick, Natalie Zemon Davis, Laurel Thatcher Ulrich, Carlo Ginzburg, Giovanni Levi, or David Sabean.[148] With this present book, I aim to continue in this tradition. The book represents a traditional microhistory in the sense that it tells the story of an individual while at the same time using his example as a starting point to exemplify larger contexts and correlations, namely the Atlantic business community and the Atlantic world of trade in motion. The book is a microhistory about the establishment phase of 18th century wholesale merchants based on the records of Hamburg merchant Nicolaus Gottlieb Luetkens and his establishment phase in France and in the Atlantic Trade in the years 1743-1745.

At the same time, however, my microhistorical approach introduces a novel focus for microhistorical research. Based on the Luetkens archive, I am able to align the searchlight with a new type of research focus for a microhistory. The aim of the study is not only to tell the story of 18th-century merchant Luetkens, but rather to broaden the analytical focus to include mercantile letter practice and business correspondence at the very core of the mercantile establishment phase. At the centre of the book and the research approach is the microhistorical investigation of past practices, letter practices and business practices and their correlation during an Early Modern mercantile establishment phase. I elaborate how merchants used their letters as an instrument to put

146 Chartier, Roger. "Intellectual history or Sociocultural history? The French Trajectories." In *Modern European Intellectual History. Reappraisals and New Perspectives*, edited by Dominick LaCapra and Steven L. Kaplan, 13-46. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1982, here 32. This quote about *The Cheese and the Worms* by Carlo Ginzburg notwithstanding, Chartier remains sceptical about the microhistorical approach till today. See Ginzburg, Carlo. "Microhistory, Two or Three Things That I Know about It." *Critical Inquiry* 20, no. 1 (1993): 10-35.

147 Stone, Lawrence. "The Revival of Narrative: Reflections on a New Old History." *Past and Present* 85, no. 11 (1979): 3-24, here 13-14. See Daniel, Ute. "Clio unter Kulturschock." *Geschichte in Wissenschaft und Unterricht* 48, no. 4 (1997): 195-219.

148 See Medick, Hans. *Weben und Überleben in Laichingen 1650-1900. Lokalgeschichte als Allgemeine Geschichte*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1997. See Zemon Davis, Natalie. *The Return of Martin Guerre*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1983. See Ulrich, Laurel Thatcher. *A Midwife's Tale: The Life of Martha Ballard, Based on Her Diary, 1785-1812*. New York: Vintage Books, 1990. See Ginzburg, Carlo. *The Cheese and the Worms: The Cosmos of a Sixteenth Century Miller*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980. See Levi, Giovanni. *Das immaterielle Erbe. Eine bäuerliche Welt an der Schwelle zur Moderne*. Berlin: Wagenbach, 1986. See Sabean, David. *Kinship in Neckarhausen*, 1700–1870. Cambridge/New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998.

their plans and enterprises into action. In order to do so, in my analyses, I set these practices and the letter episodes they created in broader contexts in order to be able to understand and explain the practices and to demonstrate how they worked in past times as a crucial feature and characteristic of the Atlantic business community as well as typical shared forms of communication of the 18th century. As letter episodes I define the letter exchanges and polyphonic letter conversations I reconstructed from the archive that were all conducted among the correspondents regarding a specific topic, often a particular business enterprise. These letter episodes often have a particular starting point, the letter phrase that a letter writer "came up the idea", "bin auf den Gedancken gekommen", were conducted over a certain time during which the enterprise was called "affaire en question", until the enterprise was concluded.[149] Presenting over eight letter episodes relating to different fields of business typical for Atlantic long-distance wholesale trade, or relating to family matters of a merchant family, distributed over five analytical chapters offering comprehensive case studies, with this book I aim to arrive at a comprehensive view of the North-European world of trade in the 18th century.

The field of investigation of my microhistorical undertaking in the book is the actual material contents of the three archive boxes that hold the Luetkens archive today. The starting point of the study is the original, previously undocumented and forgotten letter and business archive of the merchant Luetkens. In my research I explored this archive and extracted all the information from the concrete records in this personal archive in an ethnographically inspired way.[150] Thus, I reconstructed the practices and the letter conversations the letters created from scratch and, as I found them in this archive, in both their textual form and material state. The reconstruction and the analyses were also always predetermined by the historical order system that has survived in this historical archive. The findings about the practices were subsequently put into historical context using various other types of sources in order to understand and explain the practices encountered in the Luetkens archive.

As further source material I used contemporary advice literature, merchant manuals, and letter-writing manuals in three languages. Such manuals were contemporary books that aimed at teaching and providing concrete instructions as to the appropriate

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149 Luetkens used this sentence and this exact formulation, inter alia, in the following letters: Letter from Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb to Bethmann, Simon Moritz, November 19, 1743, TNA, HCA 30/232, Letter Book II, unnumbered; Letter from Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb to Luetkens, Joachim and Luetkens, Anton, May 5, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/232, Letter Book I, No. 1. It was also used by his correspondents. The letter formulae can also be found in letter-writing manuals: See Hunold, *Die allerneueste Art Höflich und Galant zu schreiben*, 50-52. See Gottsched, Johann Christoph. *Ausführliche Redekunst* […]. Leipzig: Bernhard Christoph Breitkopf, 1736, 193. See Hunold, Christian Friedrich (pseud.: Menantes). *Einleitung zur Teutschen Oratorie und Brief-Verfassung* […]. Halle: Johann Friderich Zeitler Wittwe, 1726, 2 (first published 1709, second edition 1715, third edition 1726). See Hunold, Christian Friedrich (pseud.: Menantes). Auserlesene neue Briefe. Nebst einer Anleitung wie in den aller-meisten Begebenheiten die Feder nach dem Wohlstand und der Klugheit zu führen. Halle: Wäysenhaus, 1735. See Weise, Christian. *Curiöse Gedancken Von Teutschen Brieffen wie ein junger Mensch […] Die galante Welt wohl vergnügen soll.* Dresden: Johann Christoph Mieth, 1691. "auf Gedanken gebracht werden". Frisch, Johann Leonhard. *Teutsch-Lateinisches Wörter-Buch* […]. Berlin: Christoph Gottlieb Nicolai, 1741, 184.

150 See Medick, "Missionaries in the Row Boat."

ways of doing business and the correct way of writing letters.[151] Letter-writing manuals were, as already noted by Georg Steinhausen, the pioneer in the research on letter writing, "almost encyclopaedia of everything knowledgeable. For every imaginable life situation they provided example letters" and a veritable "arsenal of formulaic expressions".[152]

Furthermore, I used court records, including examinations of crew members, attestations by dozens of citizens of Hamburg as well as juridical statements and briefs of the authorities in London, Amsterdam and Hamburg, stemming from both the court case of the *Hope* and the case of the *Post van Hamburg*. I also used contemporary peace and trade treaties as well as other trade agreements, such as company or employment contracts. Last but not least, I made use of contemporary novels, short biographies and obituaries of the people involved, biographical dictionaries, supplemented by sources like commemorative medals, school registers, books of expenditures, portraits and other paintings, architectural drawings and prints, and material culture such as pieces of jewellery and furniture or wooden figurines of sailors that are displayed in museums today. Using various kinds of additional sources as intertextual and material resources I was able to put the letters and their contents in a "broader explanatory context", to borrow the words of David Hancock.[153] This allowed me to broaden the horizon of the analysis of letter-writing and business practices and arrive at a "wall-sized culturescape", as Clifford Geertz put it.[154] In other words, analysing practices and providing contexts we arrive at a comprehensive picture of this tense time and place that Nicolaus Gottlieb Luetkens was living in: France in the 18th century as the place of his establishment phase. The letter episodes allow me to present in detail and based on rich evidence the major steppingstones of a mercantile establishment phase of a wholesale merchant during the 18th century that not only Luetkens, but almost all of his fellow contemporary merchants had to undergo and pass when becoming a wholesale merchant in the 18th century.

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151 On merchant manuals, see Hoock, Jochen, Pierre Jeannin, and Wolfgang Kaiser, eds. *Ars Mercatoria: Handbücher und Traktate für den Gebrauch des Kaufmanns: 1470-1820: Eine analytische Bibliographie* (= Manuels et traités à l'usage des marchands), 6 volumes. Paderborn: Schöningh, 1991-2001. On letter-writing manuals, see Furger, Carmen. *Briefsteller. Das Medium Brief im 17. und frühen 18. Jahrhundert*. Cologne/Weimar/Vienna: Böhlau, 2010. See Chartier, Roger, ed. *La correspondance. Les usages de la lettre au XIXe siècle*. Paris: Fayard, 1991. See Chartier, Roger. "Secrétaires for the People? Model letters of the ancien régime: between court literature and popular chapbook." In *La correspondance. Les usages de la lettre au XIXe siècle*, edited by Roger Chartier, 59-111. Paris: Fayard, 1991. See Bannet, Eve Tavor. *Empire of Letters: Letter writing manuals and Transatlantic Correspondence, 1680-1820*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005. See Gurkin Altman, Janet. *Epistolarity: Approaches to a Form*. Columbus, OH: Ohio State University Press, 1982. See Nickisch, Reinhard M. G. *Die Stilprinzipien in den deutschen Briefstellern des 17. und 18. Jahrhunderts. Mit einer Bibliographie zur Briefschreiblehre (1474-1800)*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1969. See Ruberg, Willemijn. *Conventional Correspondence: Epistolary Culture of the Dutch Elite, 1770-1850*. Leiden: Brill, 2011.

152 Steinhausen, *Geschichte des deutschen Briefes*, 302. Translation by the author. See also Vellusig, *Schriftliche Gespräche*, 43, 53.

153 Hancock, *Citizens of the World*, 9.

154 Geertz, Clifford. "Thick Description: Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture." In *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays*, edited by Clifford Geertz, 3-30. New York: Basic Books, 1973, 21.

Practices

In the last decade, the investigation of past practices has become a very fruitful addition and a new methodology in historiography. The research approach is known today under the term of *Historical Praxeology*.[155] Practices are defined in this research approach as common past patterns of action which are collectively shared and performed by several people or groups of people in the past that were shaping and constituting these peoples' life, their encounters and their dealings with each other.[156] Following *Practice Theory*, practices are seen as decisive carriers of social life and interaction.[157] The conditions and the basic elements involved and coming together during the formation and performances of practices are constant, their interplay, however, differs from situation to situation, allowing both routinised elements and creative elements to shape the practice.[158] Practices are constituted and composed of performed actions shaping

155 See Freist, Dagmar, ed. *Diskurse-Körper-Artefakte. Historische Praxeologie in der Frühneuzeitforschung*. Bielefeld: transcript, 2015. See Reichardt, Sven. "Praxeologische Geschichtswissenschaft. Eine Diskussionsanregung." *Sozial.Geschichte* 22, no. 3 (2007): 43-65. See Mergel, Thomas, and Sven Reichardt. "Praxeologie in der Geschichtswissenschaft: eine Zwischenbetrachtung." In *Entbehrung und Erfüllung. Praktiken von Arbeit, Körper und Konsum in der Geschichte moderner Gesellschaften. Für Thomas Welskopp 1961–2021*, edited by Gleb J. Albert, Daniel Siemens, and Frank Wolff, 79-102. Bonn: Dietz, 2021. See Füssel, Marian. "Die Rückkehr des ›Subjekts‹ in der Kulturgeschichte. Beobachtungen aus praxeologischer Perspektive." In *Historisierte Subjekte – Subjektivierte Historie. Zur Verfügbarkeit und Unverfügbarkeit von Geschichte*, edited by Stefan Deines, Stephan Jaeger and Ansgar Nünning, 141-159. Berlin/New York: De Gruyter, 2003. See Brendecke, Arndt, ed. *Praktiken der Frühen Neuzeit. Akteure – Handlungen – Artefakte*. Cologne/Weimar/ Vienna: Böhlau, 2015. See Spiegel, *Practicing History.* See the convincing edited volume Jung, Theo, ed. *Zwischen Handeln und Nichthandeln. Unterlassungspraktiken in der europäischen Moderne*. Frankfurt a.M.: Campus Verlag, 2019. See Sepp, Benedikt. "Beyond the Buttocks as a Political-Geographical Model - A Praxeological Approach to West Germany's National Revolutionaries." *Moving the Social. Journal for Social History and the History of Social Movements* 56 (2016): 73-92. See Mariss, Anne. *"A world of new things". Praktiken der Naturgeschichte bei Johann Reinhold Forster*. Frankfurt a.M.: Campus Verlag, 2015.

156 See Füssel, Marian. "Praxeologische Perspektiven in der Frühneuzeitforschung." In *Praktiken der Frühen Neuzeit. Akteure – Handlungen – Artefakte*, edited by Arndt Brendecke, 21-33. Cologne/ Weimar/Vienna: Böhlau, 2015. See Haasis, Lucas, and Constantin Rieske. "Historische Praxeologie. Zur Einführung." In *Historische Praxeologie. Dimensionen vergangenen Handelns*, edited by Lucas Haasis and Constantin Rieske, 7-54. Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 2015.

157 See Reckwitz, Andreas. "Toward a Theory of Social Practices. A Development in Culturalist Theorizing." *European Journal of Social Theory* 2 (2002): 245-265, reprint in: Spiegel, Gabrielle M., ed. *Practicing History. New directions in historical writing after the linguistic turn*, 245-263. London/New York: Routledge, 2005. See Alkemeyer, Thomas, Dagmar Freist, and Gunilla Budde. "Einleitung." In *Selbst-Bildungen: Soziale und kulturelle Praktiken der Subjektivierung*, edited by Thomas Alkemeyer, Dagmar Freist, and Gunilla Budde, 9-32. Bielefeld: transcript, 2013. See Hörning, Karl H. and Julia Reuter, eds. *Doing Culture. Neue Positionen zum Verhältnis von Kultur und sozialer Praxis*. Bielefeld: transcript, 2004. See Schatzki, Theodore R. *Social Practices. A Wittgensteinian Approach to Human Activity and the Social*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996, 89. See Hörning, Karl H. *Experten des Alltags. Die Wiederentdeckung des praktischen Wissens*. Weilerswist: Velbrück, 2001.

158 See for instance the works by Andersson, Gudrun, and Jon Stobart, eds. *Daily Lives and Daily Routines in the Long Eighteenth Century*. New York/Abingdon: Routledge, 2022. See Withington, Phil. "Where Was the Coffee in Early Modern England?" *The Journal of Modern History* 92, no. 1 (2020): 40-75. See Raapke, Annika. "Well, that escalated slowly. Prekäre Balancen, Konflikt und Eskalation in Brief-

and embedded in certain cultural contexts; they entail the use of certain artefacts and materials, like quill pen and paper, and the mobilisation of certain cultural resources, like language registers, that provide the respective actions with meaning. Following the definition of the sociologists Elisabeth Shove, Mika Pantzar and Matt Watson, practices represent the interplay of "materials, meanings und competence".[159] They are composed as a "a nexus of doings and sayings" according to Theodore Schatzki's definition.[160] Investigating practices, as Constantin Rieske and I defined it in our edited volume on *Historical Praxeology* from 2015, always includes the detailed analyses of the materiality, the processuality, the performativity and, last but not least, the historicity, the historic specificity and context of the respective practices as well as correlation and interplay of these elements.[161] The crucial assumption of the praxeological approach is that people now and in the past developed and adhered to certain patterns of practices that gave their actions order and stability and provided their actions with contemporary meaning and significance. The assumption is that we are still able to reconstruct past practices as patterns of actions today because the practices have left marks and traces in the sources. Past practices are identifiable because they have inscribed or imprinted themselves in the source materials or perpetuated themselves in the text of the sources, which is why in this book the analysis of practices rests on both the analysis of both text and materiality of the letters and why I regard the letter conversations ultimately as material, textual and social events that are reconstructable.[162]

Letter writing was one of the most popular and widespread practices during the 18th century.[163] This practice entailed several others, including material practices (folding, bundling paper or creating letter packets of several letters), linguistic practices (a particular language use and rhetoric), textual and performative practices (such as mobilising

beziehungen zwischen Frankreich und den Karibikkolonien, 1778-1793." *Historische Anthropologie* 29, no. 2 (2021): 189-208.

159 Shove, Pantzar, Watson conclude that "if practices are composed of materials, meanings and competence, histories of practice need to take note of the conjunction of all three elements at once." Shove, Elisabeth, Mika Pantzar, and Matt Watson. *The Dynamics of Social Practice. Everyday Life and How it Changes*. London: Sage, 2012, 29.

160 Schatzki, *Social Practices*, 89. "Social life is plied by a range of such practices as negotiation practices, political practices, cooking practices, banking practices, religious practices, recreation practices, and educational practices." As paraphrased by Schatzki, Theodore R. *The Site of the Social. A Philosophical Account of the Constitution of Social Life and Change*, University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2010, 70.

161 See Haasis/Rieske, "Historische Praxeologie. Zur Einführung," 26-49. See Shove/Pantzar/Watson, *Social Practice*, 29. Andreas Reckwitz defines practices ("Praktiken") as "a routinized type of behaviour which consists of several elements, interconnected to one other: forms of bodily activities, forms of mental activities, things and their use, a background knowledge in the form of understanding, know-how, states of emotion and motivational knowledge." Reckwitz, "Toward a Theory of Social Practices," 249.

162 Haasis/Rieske, "Historische Praxeologie. Zur Einführung"; Haasis, "Materialität." Regarding these patterns as "material events", see also Hillebrandt, Frank. *Soziologische Praxistheorien. Eine Einführung*. Wiesbaden: Springer VS, 2014, 55.

163 See inter alia Whyman, *Pen and the People*; Nevalainen/Tanskanen, *Letter-Writing*; Dierks, *In my Power*; O'Neill, *The Opened Letter.*

language registers from common parlance or represented in contemporary manuals) and discursive practices (adhering to certain rules of gallantry or politeness or codes of conduct prevailing in the mercantile community during the letter conversations). All these elements came together in letter practice and turned the letter into an effective tool of written communication and of exerting influence on correspondents. Based on these practices, merchants negotiated and conducted business and private life. Merchants would actively use letter practices and combine them with typical contemporary ways and strategies as to how to conduct business in the 18th century. The interest of this book lies in the combination in perspective of both letter practices and business practices, which ultimately allows me to paint a vivid picture of multiple events presenting themselves in an Early Modern mercantile establishment phase.

The stimulating aspect of adding a praxeological perspective to the approach of microhistory is that the research unit of practices already fulfils a prerequisite that microhistory understands as one of its key features. It combines both micro and macro perspectives while already representing a kind of a meso-level of investigation.[164] Practices are always shaped by both individual actions and structural conditions, however, their effectiveness stems from the sphere of shared performances in action. The focus of a praxeological perspective is on patterns of actions rather than on the individuals performing them or the structures shaping them. For microhistory this means that it is still possible as combined with a praxeological approach to follow the approach's main aim of answering large questions on a small scale.[165] Therefore, praxeological perspectives create new stimuli and new questions for microhistorical research. Thus, the research approach of this book is one of praxeological microhistory. From the perspective of Historical Praxeology, on the other hand, the combination with microhistory is promising because it allows the combination of detailed analysis of practices with the necessary step of dense historical contextualisation for which microhistory offers well-established proven methods. Significant with regard to the method chosen for this book is the fact that both approaches share a common source of inspiration. Both microhistory and praxeology are highly influenced by ethnography, a research approach and perspective that in many ways resembles working on untreated original sources found in an historical archive that has gathered dust for centuries.

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164 See Alkemeyer/Freist/Budde, "Einleitung." See Schlumbohm, Jürgen. *Mikrogeschichte – Makrogeschichte. Komplementär oder inkommensurabel?* Göttingen: Wallstein-Verlag, 2000. See Revel, Jacques. "Microanalysis and the Construction of the Social." In *Histories. French Constructions of the Past*, edited by Jacques Revel and Lynn Hunt, 492-502. New York: New Press, 1996. See Schegloff, Emanuel A. "Between Macro and Micro: Contexts and Other Connections." In *The Macro-Micro Link*, edited by Jeffrey C. Alexander et al., 207-234. Berkeley/Los Angeles/London: University of California Press, 1987.

165 See Hiebl, Ewald, and Ernst Langthaler, eds. *Im Kleinen das Große suchen: Mikrogeschichte in Theorie und Praxis.* Innsbruck: Studien Verlag, 2013. See Pomata, Gianna. "Close-Ups and Long Shots: Combining Particular and General in Writing the Histories of Women and Men?" In *Geschlechtergeschichte und Allgemeine Geschichte: Herausforderungen und Perspektiven*, edited by Hans Medick and Anne-Charlott Trepp, 101-124. Göttingen: Wallstein Verlag, 1998.

Praxeological Thick Descriptions

The method used in this book in order to analyse and explain both practices and their contexts stems from ethnography.[166] I use an extended variant of the method of thick description. Thick description is a method that combines participatory observation or, in historiography, close reading of sources relating to an inexplicable phenomenon with a thick contextualisation that aims at finding probable explanations for the phenomenon or source material.[167] The aim of this method is to "make the distant seem familiar and the familiar look foreign", which means that the method argues that there are no anthropological constants or any matters of course with regard to phenomena from foreign cultures in the present or in the past.[168] The method used in this book is an extension of the original method because, instead of rituals or everyday life as typical research objects of thick descriptions, my work focuses on past letter and business practices, and instead of indigenous cultures I study the uncharted territory of an original 18th century letter and business archive.[169] The book offers praxeological thick descriptions, meaning descriptions that aim to make understandable past practices, the practices of letter writing and of conducting business. Thick descriptions in microhistory start from the assumption that the past is ultimately a foreign country.[170] The defamiliarization with the historical research object is crucial because it takes seriously the otherness of the past.[171] At the same time, it becomes indispensable and mandatory to explain, contextualise and historicise every aspect found in the source material instead of relying on any forms of presuppositions.[172] This is particularly important when investigating such a historical commonplace item as a letter archive from the 18th century or past letters, which invite readers today to familiarise, or even worse, romanticise

166 See Schegloff, "Between Macro and Micro". On mutual accountability within practices see also Wenger, Etienne. *Communities of Practice. Learning, Meaning, and Identity*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998, 77. See in general Garfinkel, Harold. *Studies in Ethnomethodology*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 1984. I owe a lot of my methodological thinking in terms of ethnography to the constant exchange and friendship with Robert Mitchell. See Mitchell, Robert. *Ballet and Taiji in Practice. A Comparative Autoethnography of Movement Systems*. Bielefeld: transcript 2022.

167 See Geertz, "Thick Description." See Levi, "On Microhistory," 100. Geertz, Clifford. "Deep Play: Notes on the Balinese Cockfight." In *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays*, edited by Clifford Geertz, 412-453. New York: Basic Books, 1973. One of the best history books ever written, applying the method of the thick description in historiography, is Darnton, Robert, *The Great Cat Massacre and Other Episodes in French Cultural History*. New York: Basic Books, 1984, revised version 2009.

168 Darnton, Robert. "On Clifford Geertz: Field Notes from the Classroom." *The New York Review of Books* 11 (2007), https://www.nybooks.com/articles/2007/01/11/on-clifford-geertz-field-notes-from-the-classroom, accessed September 12, 2016, 32.

169 In contrast to Geertz, "Deep Play" on the Balinese Cockfight or Robert Darnton's *Great Cat Massacre*.

170 Lowental, David. *The Past Is a Foreign Country – Revisited*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015, the first version was published in 1985.

171 Darnton rightly observes and writes that "we constantly need to be shaken out of a false sense of familiarity with the past, to be administered doses of cultural shock." Darnton, *The Great Cat Massacre*, 4. See Freist, Dagmar. "Historische Praxeologie als Mikro-Historie." In *Praktiken der Frühen Neuzeit. Akteure – Handlungen – Artefakte*, edited by Arndt Brendecke, 62-77. Cologne/Weimar/Vienna: Böhlau, 2015.

172 Medick, "Missionaries in the Row Boat."

them. As this book will show, in the past the practice of letter writing was a very specific historical practice reacting to contemporary phenomena and fulfilling clear contemporary purposes and reasons. The letters of the past were different to letters today and followed their own historical rules and purposes. This book will show the historical role and significance that letters played in the life of merchants, introducing their specific language, their texts, their materiality and their contemporary function. Thick descriptions raise awareness of the fact that researchers should not fall into the trap of taking anything for granted when it comes to investigating past practices. On the contrary, it invites us to ask questions of the historical sources that might seem banal or trivial in the first place. For this book I have decided to ask a rather obvious and trivial question, just to learn that it is not trivial at all, and this, in turn, makes it a legitimate question. The question appears only trivial at first glance. The sources and my interpretations of them will prove the exact opposite, namely that the answers to this question are highly complex. The question that I will ask is how letters worked in letter negotiations and business enterprises conducted by merchants in the past. More precisely, I inquire how merchants used letters to approach and to influence other people in life and business for the sake of their establishment phase. The mission statement behind this question is that we should never underestimate the capacity of people to utilise their historical opportunities. The practice of letter writing is only a well-known terrain for us at first glance. In fact, this practice remains a largely undiscovered country especially when it comes to how and for what purposes people used the practice in different contexts.

The concrete research strategy of thick description is to create plausible frameworks, provide intelligible thick contexts around the research object in order to arrive at probable explanations about the research object.[173] The assumption is that the research object remains inexplicable for the researcher until embedded in a contemporary context that makes it understandable again. In this book the starting point of the approach is the investigation of the three archive boxes holding the Luetkens archive from which I recreated letter practices and business practices. The letters and letter conversations that I investigate, however, have lost the direct context in which they were directly understandable. These letters are still the same letters as they were in the 1740s; they are still in the same condition. But they have lost the historical context in which they were intelligible, comprehensible, "accountable" and recognisable for the reader.[174] Applying the method of thick description to the Luetkens archive following Geertz means putting the reconstructed letter practices and business practices in a "context, something within which they can be intelligibly – that is, thickly – described" and therefore explained in their contemporary meaning, functionality and their specific historicity.[175] Still, thick descriptions always unavoidably remain "intrinsically incomplete", as Geertz points out, because they always only focus on a particular part, a snippet of a respective foreign culture.[176] This part of a foreign culture is analysed and contextualised in the

173 See Geertz, "Thick Description", 14. See Darnton, *The Great Cat Massacre*, 5. See Zemon Davis, *The Return of Martin Guerre*, viii.

174 Schegloff, "Between Macro and Micro," 207.

175 Geertz, "Thick Description," 14.

176 Ibid., 29.

most detailed manner possible. The analyses of thick description are also always intrinsically subjective because it is always the interpreter who recreates the contexts and not the observed actors themselves.[177] As in ethnography, historians are faced with the challenge of "trying to read (in the sense of "constructing a reading of") a manuscript – foreign, faded, full of ellipses, incoherencies, suspicious emendations, and tendentious commentaries" while having the task of making sense of this manuscript.[178] This means that all explanations given are to be seen as only suggestions as to how to understand the respective historical situation, not as a form of a claimed truth.

The result of this research attitude for concrete practice as a historian is that "the researcher's point of view becomes an intrinsic part of the account."[179] Particularly the latter point has become highly influential and not only a standard but one of the hallmarks of both microhistory and the praxeological approaches. I am a strong advocate of the position that in historiographic narration even historians must reflect their role as narrator and this means historians have to allow for "hypotheses, the doubts, the uncertainties […] [to become] part of the narration", as Carlo Ginzburg puts it.[180] The same was already suggested by Pierre Nora.[181] We have to admit the fact that what we offer in our analyses are in the end only probable explanations about the past, "historical possibilities [with room for the] […] 'perhapses', the 'may-have-beens'," as summarised by Natalie Zemon Davis.[182] Thick description is an interpretative hermeneutic.[183] It offers suggestions as to how we might be able to understand certain historical events and actions in the past.

Point of departure of thick descriptions are most often moments of surprise, perplexity, amazement or incomprehension with regard to the records or material events observed.[184] These moments are taken as a starting point of the analyses because they require the researcher to delve deeper into the historical logic of the respective research object, set it into context in order to obtain the knowledge necessary to explain the respective phenomenon and to solve the moment of surprise. As Robert Darnton's defines the approach in his book the *Great Cat Massacre*, the line of thinking is that "when we cannot get a proverb, or a joke, or a ritual, or a poem, we know we are on to something. By picking at the document where it is most opaque, we may be able to unravel an alien system of meaning. The thread might even lead into a strange and wonderful

177 Ibid.

178 Ibid., 10.

179 Levi, "On Microhistory," 106. See also Brewer, "Microhistory," 12.

180 Ginzburg, "Microhistory," 24.

181 See Nora, Pierre. "Is 'Ego-Histoire' Possible?" In *Ngapartji ngapartji, in turn, in turn: ego-histoire, Europe and Indigenous Australia*, edited by Vanessa Castejon et al., 289-296. Canberra: ANU Press, 2014. In critical retrospective to all romanticizing tendencies of thick descriptions, see Geertz, Clifford. *After the Fact: Two Countries, Four Decades, One Anthropologist. The Jerusalem-Harvard Lectures*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1995. See Bachmann-Medick, Doris. *Cultural Turns: New Orientations in the Study of Culture*. Berlin/Boston: De Gruyter, 2016, 103-130.

182 Zemon Davis, *The Return of Martin Guerre*, viii.

183 See Levi, "On Microhistory," 96-100.

184 Darnton, *The Great Cat Massacre*, 5

worldview."[185] Moments of surprise or amazement that I will tell of in this book were for instance finding out about peculiar ways of how the merchant Luetkens folded and arranged letters in letter packets, learning about the fact that Luetkens and his correspondents wrote in several national languages and chose particular language registers when conducting business or that their business letters are all marked by a very effective international epistolary formularity, which even as a standard included terms of drastic language when it came to rebukes. Furthermore, I became intrigued by the fact that people trusted in simple material forms of personal insurance in the sea business or even trusted in verbal promises even if this meant setting course for dangerous seas. Last but not least, moments of surprise were the discovery of Luetkens' *Bel Etage* in the *Hamburg Museum for the Arts and Crafts* and the moment when I learned about the fact that Luetkens, though in France, once asked his brother in London to buy and send his wedding jewellery hidden in a letter packet to Hamburg. All these moments served as the starting points for my analytical chapters, because they all prompted me to research the backgrounds of the respective phenomena. In the chapters, I subsequently recreated the historical context that allowed me to understand these moments of surprise or amazement and simultaneously learned about the world in which these features were once understandable for the contemporaries. As typical for thick descriptions, all the chapters represent self-contained units, they all represent complete stories and episodes because each chapter aims to explain and solve one or two moments of surprise. At the same time, I dedicate each chapter to a particular field of business or activity in the life and business of the merchant Luetkens that was linked to the moment of surprise. These different business fields represent the general topics of the chapters mirrored in both the respective contexts and the practices analysed. These topics of the chapters are the 18th-century shipping business, commission trade, high-risk trade, the founding of a merchant house and marriage as the mercantile steps and stations towards establishment. The chapters can be read in any order, each chapter individually, since all chapters represent their own demarcated case studies. However, they can also be read consecutively since each chapter represents one of the building blocks of an Early Modern mercantile establishment phase. As Geertz stated as an assumption regarding thick descriptions, this book allows the reader to "start anywhere in a culture's repertoire of forms and end up anywhere else."[186]

The concrete procedure in the analytical chapters is that the thick description "starts from a set of signifying signs [as to how to understand the research object] and tries to fit them into an intelligible framework", to quote Giovanni Levi once more.[187] In praxeological thick descriptions these signs relate to the practices or certain elements of practices identified in the reconstructed letter conversations. The practices are reconstructed on the basis of an approved method in Historical Praxeology. For the identification and reconstruction of practices the perspective focusses on characteristic elements of practices, which are their materiality, their processuality, performativity and

185 Ibid.

186 Geertz, "Deep Play," 453.

187 Levi, "On Microhistory," 98.

historicity.[188] Analysing practices means investigating the material used, the processes taking place during practice, the performances conducted on the basis of the practice and the historical context providing meaning and lending significance to the practice. The latter point is the respective link to the method of thick description which provides this context and enables the researcher to draw conclusions about the effectiveness and functionality as well as the "historicity value", as Achim Landwehr puts it, of the examined practice.[189] In this book, I analyse letter practices and business practices as intertwined processes. The question thus raised is how business was conducted as well as how private matters were settled by means of letters. When examining letters as practices, as Alison Wiggins expresses it, the Early Modern letter will present itself as an intriguing "multi-layered technology of communication, where the linguistic, material and social intersect".[190] This intersection turns the letter into a performative medium and this medium, as I argue in this book, was equipped with immense powers of persuasion that provided the letter writers with extensive powers and opportunities to act on the basis of letters. It provided the means to influence or even manipulate the course of letter negotiations and to influence the ways business was conducted and life decisions were made by putting quill pen to paper.

The letter practices presented in this book are typical ones used by merchants of the 18th century. The catalogue of typical practices can be grouped under four headings. Regarding the material form, we will learn about the practices of bundling letters and of arranging letter packets, the practice of letter folding, the practice of deliberately sending unsealed letters, "unbeschwerte Briefe" as they were called by Hamburg merchants, the practice of deliberately inserting extra sheets of paper into folded letters, which allows the extra pages to be removed if necessary, copy practice in Letter Books as well as letter citation and letter copying as typical practices in letter conversations. Regarding forms of transport, we learn about hand-to-hand delivery and the usage of postal routes, which often took a deliberately zigzag course. Regarding language use, linguistics and rhetoric, the practices presented are the usage of letter formulae, the usage of fixed business terminologies and a common, shared vocabulary in business that was highly effective and internationally acknowledged, practices of choosing to write in different national languages and mobilising different language registers. With regard to performative practices, we will learn about the practice of using historical speech acts, of writing a postscript, the practice of reading letters aloud, the usage of indirect speech in letters and the usage of drastic language and swear words.

These practices provided the basis for manifold business practices taking place on the basis of letters, including the buying, hiring, loading and maintaining of ships in the shipping business, conducting commission enterprises, including bank and finance

188 See Haasis/Rieske, "Historische Praxeologie," chapter "Arbeitsweise der Historischen Praxeologie," 26-49. See Shove/Pantzar/Watson, *Social Practice*, 29.

189 "Historizitätswert", Haasis, Lucas, Constantin Rieske, together with Nikolaus Buschmann, Dagmar Freist, Marian Füssel, Achim Landwehr, Frank Hillebrandt. "Was ist und was kann die Historische Praxeologie? Ein runder Tisch." In *Historische Praxeologie. Dimensionen vergangenen Handelns*, edited by Lucas Haasis and Constantin Rieske, 199-236. Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 2015.

190 Wiggins, *Bess of Hardwick's Letters*, 4.

business, conducting high-risk trade, including insurance business, and negotiation practices in mercantile marriage initiation or contract negotiations regarding trading partnerships and the founding of a merchant house.

As further historical contexts presented in the analytical chapter which are also necessary for understanding the respective practices, we will hear about Early Modern travel culture, cultural contacts in France as well as clashes with the Ottoman Empire, postal conditions, the rise of the private merchant firm and the joint partner company as a business model, martial law and commercial law, maritime neutrality, the powerful religious diaspora network of the Protestant International, as well as about contemporary definitions of love and gallantry, the material culture of marriage and Early Enlightenment in the 18th century, all topics linked to the analysis of the letter and business practices of the merchant Nicolaus Gottlieb Luetkens and his correspondents.[191] In the end, the focus of the book is best described as a perspective on the effective functioning of past letter practices as a driving force and interlaced with business practices within the historical contexts of an Early Modern establishment phase taking place in the larger world of Atlantic business.

The crucial advantage of working with the Luetkens archive conserved in its special condition is that I was offered the unique opportunity to analyse these practices in my thick descriptions not as single events, but as part of ongoing letter conversations. All practices are analysed as they find their application within polyphonic letter conversations among several letter writers during which the various practices were used by the historical actors to shape and structure the conversation and manage their mercantile and private affairs. The letter exchanges mostly happened in a linear order. However, as in oral conversations, letters between several correspondents could also overlap, interrupt the conversation or a new correspondent joined in. Analysing letter conversations allows me to reconstruct in detail "which historical actors belonging to which group of people, standing in which particular relationship, in which situations, under which conditions and under which rules of language, with which intentions have negotiated certain matters and things in their letters" as Peter Bürgel summarises the most crucial questions of historical letter analysis.[192] On the basis of the two-sided letter conversations, I am able to outline all crucial "properties and effects" of letter practices and business practices, to take Dan Hicks's fitting terms, all the contemporary material and cultural means and resources that turned the letter into an effective tool of persuasion, for communication and negotiation.[193] I am furthermore able to show how people approached each other, negotiated and convinced each other and worked together in the 18th century offering a cross-section across the group of people working in or linked to

191 Detailed information and footnotes in the individual chapters.

192 Bürgel, Peter. "Der Privatbrief. Entwurf eines heuristischen Modells." *Deutsche Vierteljahresschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Geistesgeschichte* 50 (1976): 281-297, here 291. Translation by the author. See also Wiggins, *Bess of Hardwick's Letters*, 4.

193 Hicks, Dan. "The Material-Cultural Turn. Event and Effect." In *The Oxford Handbook of Material Culture Studies*, edited by Dan Hicks and Mary C. Beaudry, 25-98. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010, here 74.

the business sector: including people of different ages, genders, from different countries, in the same profession such as merchants, or in different professions including captains, clerks, senators, court personnel, people from different families or family backgrounds, brothers, uncles, mothers-in-law, brothers-in-law, business partners, in different situation and fields of activity.

A final major feature of my analyses is the reconstruction of the language registers used in mercantile correspondence and mobilised in mercantile business, which were used in a very well-considered manner by the letter writers. The crucial language registers of the 18th century presented in the book are the language registers of business and trade, patronage, gallantry, love and friendship. The letter types presented are the family letter, business letter, ship's captain letters, friendship letter and letters of warning and rebuke. The letter languages are the three languages German, French and Dutch. Analysing and contextualising these letters and the letter episodes, and integrating into the analysis hundreds of letters both from Luetkens and his correspondents, not only provides insight into particular letter practices or business enterprises, or events and occurrences in the life of a single merchant, but it also profoundly broadens historiographic knowledge about the Atlantic world of trade, its trading practices and business culture, its common forms of communication and social interaction in letters of the 18th century written by wholesale merchants in Hamburg-French trade during this time.

Practical Principles of Persuasion

The Luetkens archive finally demonstrates its significance by providing reliable conclusions about the effectiveness of letter and business practices in the past. Having access to all letters sent and received we can follow the courses of action and the letter exchanges, and we also get to know about the ultimate results and consequences of the negotiations and the future of the respective enterprises. We learn how letter writers actually "conversed with the pen", as Bruce Redford calls it, and what concrete impact their actions had within the practices on the other correspondents, but also on business and life.[194] It also becomes clear and tangible in the process which elements of letter practice and which strategies in business were crowned with success and why these were effective while others failed. By taking the bird's eye view on the letter episodes, it becomes clear how the correspondents reacted to each other and to every letter and argument of their correspondents. The major observation and outcome from analysing entire letter episodes represents the last and final area of knowledge for which this book offers results.

The result of the analyses of complete letter conversations and entire business enterprises in the case studies is that I learned that these conversations and enterprises were not only shaped randomly by manifold practices but that these practices were also connected with each other and followed clear motives during their implementation. The practices again formed intertwined practices, practice arrangements during the letter conversations which, when analysed in an integrated approach, reveal with great

194 Redford, Bruce. *The Converse of the Pen. Acts of Intimacy in the. Eighteenth-Century Familiar Letter.* Chicago/London: University of Chicago Press, 1986, 1-15.

clarity certain underlying practical principles, mechanisms apparently effective in letter correspondences of the 18th century. The principles show how correspondents tried to influence their addressees in the long run and how they were successful. The letter conversations were clearly shaped by certain contemporary practical principles of persuasion applied by correspondents in order to exert influence on the addressees. These principals were practical by nature, not only rhetorically shaped and predetermined, but always influenced by the opportunities and constraints provided by the medium of the letter. They appear as not always intended or strategically planned out, but as quite routinized ways of dealing with certain matters and of reacting to certain situations in practice and in different contemporary contexts. The practical principles of persuasion become transparent only in the bird's eye view and only to the researcher overlooking the entire letter episodes. For the contemporary actors, however, these ways of dealing with matters must have felt rather natural. As such, as I would argue, the principles ultimately mirror more general principles of persuasion prevailing in 18th century public life and society. The principles are highly informative about how people negotiated, argued and legitimised their actions in the Early Modern world.

The concept of principles of persuasion stems from Robert Cialdini, who in his renowned book *Influence. The Psychology of Persuasion* worked on modern day business culture identifying and examining the crucial factors that influence people today to say 'yes'.[195] In his book, which is based on research on today's compliance practitioners and marketing practices, Cialdini elaborates on these factors, simultaneously summarising his scientific findings that although "there are thousands of tactics that […] [people] employ to produce yes, the majority fall within six basic categories. Each of these categories is governed by a fundamental psychological principle that directs human behaviour and, in doing so, give the tactics their power. […] The principles – consistency, reciprocation, social proof, authority, liking, and scarcity – are [subsequently] discussed [in his book] in terms of their function in the society and in terms of how their enormous force can be commissioned by the […] professional who deftly incorporates them into [his daily workings, which are in Cialdini's example] […] requests for purchases, donations, concessions, votes, assent."[196] Cialdini is able to identify certain principles of persuasions in modern day business as to how people influence each other and how they developed "automatic, stereotyped behaviour" or "shortcuts in order to react adequately and cope with this circumstance".[197] This way of thinking is transferable to my approach because it coincides with the idea of practices shaping people's lives.[198] At the same time, the focus of my research approach and book is not psychological because I concentrate on material and textual practices of the past. Still Cialdini's concept is applicable as a methodological tool when researching the Luetkens letters. It can also be combined with microhistorical approaches which explicitly argue that "all social action [must be] seen to be the result of an individual's constant negotiation, manipulation,

195 Cialdini, Robert B. *Influence. The Psychology of Persuasion*. New York, NY: Harper Collins Publishers, 2007, "Weapons of Influence," 1-16.

196 Cialdini, *Influence*, xiii.

197 Ibid., 6-7.

198 Ibid.

choices and decisions in the face of a normative reality which, though pervasive, nevertheless offers many possibilities for personal interpretations and freedoms", to quote Giovanni Levi one final time, and these choices are particularly reflected in practices like letter writing and business practice.[199] In this book, I use Robert Cialdini's concept as an inspiration to find a suitable way to accurately describe the events presented to me in the letter conversations analysed. The outcome of my research on practical principles of persuasion in letters is that I am able to identify nine principles of persuasion active and effective in the 18th century. These practical principles of persuasion in letter practices and the business culture of 18th century trade are the following: demands for loyalty, the sledgehammer method, persuasion by showing efficiency, making firm promises and providing material assurances, meeting as equals, keeping a low profile, insider dealings, which is connected to the principle of giving correspondents preferential treatment by creating the feeling of exclusivity, and, finally, the practical principle of mollification.

Performing practices, the historical actors did not act randomly, but their letters equalled manipulation attempts to positively manipulate the result of the negotiations to their liking and in line with their own aims and interests. The principles of persuasion becoming apparent from the analyses are in this regard still not the same as strategies or rhetoric because they do not follow written rules or are necessarily rational, and they are neither thematised or scrutinised by the contemporaries in their letters themselves or directly described in them. Analysing and presenting these principles means using a methodological concept to find a way to describe the practical mechanisms that clearly structured the letter episodes as they were performed. We learn from the identification of these practical principles, borrowing David Hancock's words, that "each type of business was guided by its own specific, fundamental business imperative for […] achieving success".[200] Mastering these imperatives was key to success in mercantile business and as such it was key to passing the mercantile establishment phase, by which we arrive back at the general topic of my book. The premise behind the principles also represents a major premise of mercantile establishment in general. It is that all practices needed to be performed convincingly. Speaking of the practice of letter writing this ultimately takes us to the very core of this practice and its purpose, which in my opinion often remains largely underexposed in research on letters.

The 18th-century lawyer and writer of novels and letter-writing manuals August Bohse, also known as Talander, brilliantly summarised this ultimate purpose. With recourse to classical thinkers, Bohse stated that "the purpose and the ultimate goal of someone writing a letter is similar to the purpose and goal of a talented orator or speaker: he seeks to convince ["persuadiren"] his audience about what he tells them, and to move their emotions ["affecten"] in order to gain their approval ["Beyfall geben"] and to win them over to his side ["auf seine Seite treten"]."[201] Early Modern letters were

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199 Levi, "On Microhistory," 94.

200 Hancock, *Citizens of the World*, 83.

201 Bohse, August (pseud.: Talander). *Der allzeitfertige Briefsteller* […]. Frankfurt a.M./Leipzig/Dresden: Johann Theodor Boerio, 1690, 4.

products of practice rather than of classical rhetoric, the motives, however, remain the same.

The merchant Luetkens was highly skilled in the practice of persuasion. He was a master of pulling strings and of influencing correspondents and letter conversations according to his will. Luetkens did so without being a rhetorically trained man. He was no man of theoretical thinking. But he was a man of practice, a practically skilled man, as it was also deemed appropriate at the time for a man of business. He was a "practical man of affairs".[202] Luetkens was also a pragmatic man, who had learned and incorporated his skills from practice and experience rather than from theory. For this type of learning, the contemporaries also had a particular name. Luetkens was a man of what was known as practical eloquence during that time, "Beredtsamkeit" in German, rather than of theoretical sophistication.[203] He knew how to talk to people, what needed to be done and used the means necessary to get these things done. As I will show in my analyses, this eloquence in practical matters as a skill of persuasion was also what enabled him to advance his career as a wholesale merchant. In the end, Luetkens possessed the necessary powers of persuasion to become a merchant in the 18th century.

Chapter Summaries

The book continues with a chapter on the life and letters of the Hamburg merchant Nicolaus Gottlieb Luetkens. This chapter on the *Making of a Merchant* gives an introduction of the study's main protagonist and his travels through France. I will outline his early years, his educational path based on the sparse information still retrievable from historical sources and from the information given in the court records of the High Court of Admiralty. I also describe in detail the requirements and motives underlying a mercantile establishment phase. Moreover, this chapter provides information about contemporary postal conditions, travel conditions, mercantile education and about the concept of practical eloquence as the very essence of a merchant's skills during the 18th century.

This introductory part is followed by the main part of the book presenting Luetkens' establishment phase. The Early Modern mercantile establishment phase is presented in five case studies representing the five crucial steps and business fields of a merchant during this stage of his career: shipping business, commission trade, high-risk trade, the founding of a merchant house, marriage preparations. All the analyses in this part are based on one or two letter episodes reconstructed from the Luetkens archive.

In the chapter on the *Shipping Business,* the reader will learn how Luetkens navigated legal grey areas to restructure his entire shipping business. Together with his brother,

202 Hancock, *Citizens of the World*, 32. See in this regard also, with a reference to Defoe's *Complete Tradesman* emphasising the importance of practical training, Shinagel, Michael. *Daniel Defoe and Middle-Class Gentility*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1968, 201–245. See Defoe, Daniel. *The Complete English Tradesman*. London: Charles Rivington, 1726.

203 More on practical eloquence in the next chapter on the "Making of a Merchant". As an introduction to "Beredtsamkeit", eloquence, and rhetorics during the Enlightenment see Ueding/Steinbrink, *Grundriß der Rhetorik*, 102–135.

whom Luetkens persuaded into helping him in several letters, the merchant was able to procure a neutral flag for his ships allowing his business to flourish. The chapter provides detailed information on the complexities of the 18th-century shipping business. Furthermore, the reader will learn about family letters and the principle of demanding loyalty in mercantile business.

The chapter on *Commission Trade* presents the crucial second cornerstone of Luetkens' career besides shipping business, which was commission trade. Commission trade allowed Luetkens indirect access to the French colonial markets and represented a lucrative loophole for many foreign merchants of the time to participate in French trade during the 18th century. On the basis of writing business letters and by mobilising the language register of business and trade, the merchants were able to develop and show the principle of efficiency, which was crucial for all men of trade.

The chapter on *High-Risk Trade* provides insight into trade on the Mediterranean Sea. The main question of this chapter is how Luetkens, in the hope of quick returns through Mediterranean rich trades, was able to convince his captains and their crews to take on the risk of sailing these dangerous seas that were patrolled by Ottoman privateers. The merchant did so by mobilising the language register of patronage and by making promises as material speech acts and by material assurances in his letters.

With a chapter on *Finding a Business Partner and a Merchant Clerk to Open up a Merchant House*, I enter the home stretch of the book just like Luetkens entered the end of his establishment phase when accomplishing these tasks. This chapter informs about the new importance of the private merchant firm and partnership as a lucrative basis of business in the 18th century besides the family firm. Founding a merchant house was at the same time the first important step in order to finalise the mercantile establishment phase. After months of letter negotiations, Luetkens found a suitable business partner in the Hamburg merchant Ehrenfried Engelhard, who fulfilled the contemporary standards demanded of merchant partners. Ehrenfried showed a corresponding humour, which meant in the contemporary sense of the word that the two men's characters and business acumen were compatible, and he brought more necessary capital into the partnership. This man, as was still typical during this time, was also the brother of his future wife.

Marriage was the second important step to finalise the mercantile establishment phase, as we will learn in the chapter on *Marriage Preparations*. In order to achieve his goal of finding a wife, Luetkens wrote letters because he was not able to meet his future wife in person while he was travelling. By means of the principles of preferential treatment and mollification, not least by sending precious furniture and jewellery, the merchant was able to convince his wife of his qualities.

The book ends with a conclusion in which I will summarise my findings, reflect on my approach, and provide the reader with remarks and an outlook on the research stimuli I hope to provide regarding methodological discussions as well as regarding research on Early Modern merchants, Atlantic business culture, business practices, letter practices and the power of persuasion.

2 Making of a Merchant

2.1 In Memoriam Luetkens

On one of the grey walls of the magnificent *Kleines Zimmer* of the Hamburg city hall hangs a painting, a large three-quarter portrait of a man wearing a robe, a wig and a white ruff, gallantly dangling one of his hands over a chair. This portrait depicts the merchant Nicolaus Gottlieb Luetkens in his official attire as a senator and as a member of the *Commerz-Deputation* of the free imperial city of Hamburg in 1776.

The *Commerz-Deputation* was the advocacy group of the local merchants on the Hamburg city council and thus the predecessor of today's Hamburg chamber of commerce.[1] The sad truth about this portrait is, though, that hardly anyone visiting the city hall today will stop to look at it when walking through the *Kleine Zimmer* because hardly anyone still recognises this man. This fact reflects the level of knowledge that we have today about Nicolaus Gottlieb Luetkens. As a telling side note in this regard, in 2015 another portrait of Luetkens, an original copperplate engraving of the painting on display in the town hall, was on offer at an antiquarian bookshop for only 140 Euros. This portrait now hangs in the entrance area of my family home.[2] As a merchant and senator, Nicolaus Gottlieb Luetkens was therefore certainly no John Doe of history, especially not with regard to the history of Hamburg, yet still he fell into almost complete obscurity over the last centuries.[3]

1 See Handelskammer Hamburg, *Handelskammer Hamburg*, 21-24, and 42-65. See Baasch, Ernst. *Die Handelskammer zu Hamburg. Band 1, 1665-1915*. Hamburg: Gräfe & Sillem, 1915. See Handelskammer Hamburg, ed. *Wir handeln für Hamburg. 350 Jahre Handelskammer Hamburg*. Kiel/ Hamburg: Wachholtz Verlag, 2015, 28-65, chapters "1665-1712" and "1712-1792." See Reißmann, *Die hamburgische Kaufmannschaft*.

2 The same portrait can be found in Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek Hamburg (SUB), Sondersammlungen, Portrait 22: L 94. A third version of this portrait hangs in the Kleine Zimmer of the historical town hall of Hamburg.

3 See for a short introduction "Luetkens (Nicolaus Gottlieb), 601-602." In *Lexikon der Hamburgischen Schriftsteller*, 598-602. See ibid. for biographies of other merchants and senators with the same name, however, coming from different families, such as Johann Heinrich Lütkens, Peter I. Lütkens, Hendrich (Heinrich) Luetkens. For information on these merchants see Weber, *Deutsche Kaufleute*, 211, 249, 260. See Voss, Peter. "Hendrich Luetkens, marchand allemand à Bordeaux (1691-

Figure 5: Portrait of Nicolaus Gottlieb Luetkens (1716-1788), engraved by Charles Townley, painted after a model by Rudolf Christian Schade, 1790.

Source: privately owned.

1722)." In *Présence de l'Allemagne à Bordeaux du siècle de Montaigne à la veille de la Seconde Guerre mondiale*, edited by. Alain Ruiz, 31-45. Bordeaux : Presses Universitaires de Bordeaux, 1997.

Nicolaus Gottlieb Luetkens' daughter Cäcilia Ilsabe married the reputable merchant Johann Jakob Böhl. Their son was the famous merchant and consul Johann Nikolas Böhl von Faber. Luetkens' daughter Henriette married Heinrich Wilhelm von Schwartz. See Moldenhauer, Dirk. "Böhl von Faber, Johann Nikolas." In *Hamburgische Biografie*, vol. 5, edited by Franklin Kopitzsch and Dirk Brietzke, 56-57. Göttingen: Wallstein, 2010.

This book on the merchant Luetkens' establishment phase, his archive and his letters, will remedy this deficiency. It will free him from his shadowy existence, so that maybe in future some people will again stop at his portrait and recognise him or at least recognise in him a person from whose example we can learn a lot about Hamburg and its people in the past. Such a result would certainly be desirable because his example is telling especially about the group of people that once made Hamburg into the economic and cultural centre that it still is today: the merchants. These merchants that today's Hamburg still refers to with great pride as its forefathers did not only live during the time of the Hanseatic League but also and especially during the 18th century, and the fame and fortune that these merchants once brought to the city was not only the achievement of renowned merchants and large firms like the famous Voght, Sieveking, Godeffroy, Jenisch, Boué, Louis, Jencquel or Luis families, but it was also the accomplishment of the many other merchants whose names and stories have been swallowed by the tides of history.[4] This book therefore also opens up a new chapter in the history of Hamburg and its mercantile people. As must be clear though, this new chapter will of course not have the ability to rewrite the long history of Hamburg, but it adds a new story and component to it. It is a book about the establishment phase of a Hamburg merchant, about his letters, and about the ways and means of Hamburg's trade participation in the Atlantic market during the 18th century, a time when Hamburg merchants were often forced to find mercantile strategies and pursue practices that pushed the boundaries of what was legally permissible at the time.[5] The significance of this new story is in the end comparable to the significance of the Luetkens' portrait in the city hall. Of course, there are dozens of other portraits of other people hanging in the city hall, mostly men, unfortunately. Yet, only if we allow ourselves to know about the stories behind each and every person depicted in these portraits and therefore also allow us to get to know the manifold facets of mercantile life in the past, not only the ones we already know, including both the good and the bad, the clearly illuminated and

4 See Schramm, Percy Ernst. "Hamburger Kaufleute in der 2. Hälfte des 18. Jahrhunderts." *Zeitschrift für Firmengeschichte und Unternehmerbiographie* 4 (1957): 307-332. See Schramm, Percy Ernst. *Gewinn und Verlust. Die Geschichte der Hamburger Senatorenfamilien Jencquel und Luis (16. bis 19. Jahrhundert). Zwei Beispiele für den wirtschaftlichen und sozialen Wandel in Norddeutschland* Hamburg: Christians, 1969. See Schramm, Percy Ernst. *Neun Generationen*. See Ressel, Magnus. "Von der Hanse zur Hanseatischen Gemeinschaft. Die Entstehung der Konsulatsgemeinschaft von Bremen, Hamburg und Lübeck." *Hansische Geschichtsblätter* 130 (2012): 127-174. See Woelk, Susanne. *Der Fremde unter den Freunden. Biographische Studien zu Caspar von Vogth*. Hamburg: Weidmann, 2000. See Czech, Hans-Jörg, Kerstin Petermann, and Nicole Tiedemann-Bischop, eds. *Caspar Voght (1752–1839). Weltbürger vor den Toren Hamburgs*. Petersberg: Imhof, 2014. See Brietzke, Dirk. "Sieveking, Georg Heinrich." *Neue Deutsche Biographie* 24 (2010): 387-389. See in general Brietzke, Dirk, and Franklin Kopitzsch. eds. *Hamburgische Biografie. Personenlexikon*. 6 volumes. Göttingen: Wallstein, 2001-2012.

5 Regarding the history of Hamburg during the Early Modern Period see Kopitzsch, Franklin. *Grundzüge einer Sozialgeschichte der Aufklärung in Hamburg und Altona*. 2 vol. Hamburg: Hans Christians Verlag, 1982 (2. edition, 1990). See Steiger, Johann Anselm, and Sandra Richter, eds. *Hamburg. Eine Metropolregion zwischen Früher Neuzeit und Aufklärung*. Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2012. See Kopitzsch, Franklin, and Daniel Tilgner, eds. *Hamburg-Lexikon*. Hamburg: Zeise, 1998 (4. edition 2010). See Handelskammer, *Handelskammer Hamburg*, 28-65, chapters "1665-1712" and "1712-1792." See Herzig, Arno. *Das alte Hamburg: 1500-1848/49. Vergleiche, Beziehungen*. Berlin: Reimer, 1989.

the hidden, we eventually arrive at the bigger picture, which Hamburg today refers to as its mercantile history.[6] Each and every person portrayed in the town hall and everyone else who once lived and worked in Hamburg but who did not have the honour of being portrayed, once had his or her share in the long history of this city, and that also means that each and every one of these people would deserve to have a book written about them. The Luetkens archive provides the unique opportunity to learn in detail about a merchant and his early career during the 18th century as a representative example of an Early Modern merchant's life. This example is accompanied by an abundance of further stories and voices of dozens of other merchants living in Hamburg, France, Spain, England, the Netherlands and in other parts of Europe, known and unknown, whose letters have also survived in the archive. Since these unique "sources offer us the possibility of reconstructing not only indistinct masses but also individual personalities, it would be absurd to ignore it", to borrow the words of pioneer microhistorian Carlo Ginzburg.[7]

In the first part of this chapter, I will compile all the information from other types of sources that I found relating to the merchant Luetkens, apart from those found within the Luetkens archive. There are several other traces and puzzle pieces that this man has left behind apart from his portrait in the town hall and his archive. However, these traces today mostly appear without any obvious reference to one another. They have survived in a rather dispersed manner and therefore have attracted only little attention. Furthermore, these traces almost exclusively refer to Luetkens' later life as a well-established merchant and senator and thus as an already highly-respected member of the Hamburg community and senate. These traces present us with his later legacy and the achievements of his later years in life. Little, however, do we learn from these sources about the long and stony path that had led him there. Nonetheless, these sources at least provide us with the certainty, which is crucial for this book, that Luetkens' early life eventually led him to a successful career and life afterwards. In the second part of this chapter, I will hence complete and refine the picture of him, his person and career, filling in the missing gaps in his biography by drawing on the valuable information from the Luetkens archive and from the court records of the High Court of Admiralty relating to the case of the captured ships Hope and Post van Hamburg. During these court hearings, a lot of information was requested in writing from the Hamburg authorities about Luetkens and his trade and gathered by the court in London. These records are a gold mine with regard to their informative value about the Hamburg merchant. The information from these records represents mostly first-hand knowledge from testimonies, attestations and written statements. As must be clear, though, each and every one of

6 See Handelskammer Hamburg, *Handelskammer Hamburg*, 208-242. This history must also include Hamburg's involvement in slave trade and colonialism. See Zimmerer, Jürgen, and Kim Sebastian Todzi, eds. *Hamburg: Tor zur kolonialen Welt. Erinnerungsorte der (post-)kolonialen Globalisierung*. Göttingen: Wallstein 2021. See Husen, Sebastian. "Schimmelmann, Carl Heinrich." In *Hamburgische Biografie* 2, edited by Franklin Kopitzsch and Dirk Brietzke, 370-372. Göttingen: Wallstein, 2003. See Brahm, Felix and Eve Rosenhaft, eds. *Slavery Hinterland. Transatlantic Slavery and Continental Europe, 1680-1850*. Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2016. See https://lehre.dsm.museum/heinrich-carl-von-schimmelmann-von-sozialem-aufstieg-und-menschlichen-schicksalen, accessed September 3, 2020.

7 Ginzburg, *The Cheese and the Worms*, 17.

the court statements once also served the purpose of having a positive impact on the outcome of the court case and was therefore biased. Bias notwithstanding, some of the information from the court records will still pass the test of providing reliable information about the Hamburg merchant. Following this section, in the third part of the chapter I will outline the requirements and demands of an 18th century mercantile establishment phase and Luetkens' specific situation when leaving Hamburg for France.

Figure 6: Nicolaus Gottlieb Luetkens' later Bel Etage in his merchant house in the Katharinenstraße Hamburg as displayed today in the Hamburg Museum of Arts and Crafts, Period Room "Louis-Seize-Room."

Source: By courtesy of the Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe Hamburg, photo: Roman Raacke.

The impressive second trace that Nicolaus Gottlieb Luetkens left in today's Hamburg apart from his portrait can be found in the *Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe* near Hamburg's main train station. There we can find on the second floor, and advertised as a historical "Period Room", the *Bel Etage*, Luetkens' splendid reception and display room of his merchant house in the Katharinenstraße, Huxter Fleet, in Hamburg.[8] This Bel Etage, which was completed in the French *Louis Seize Style* that was popular and very expensive at the time, was so well-known and prominent in Hamburg in the 18th and also the 19th century that later even the young composer Johannes Brahms gave a private

8 Period Room "Louis Seize Room", *Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe*, Hamburg, ca. 1775, Hamburg, Louis Seize style room with boiserie (Bordeaux) once installed in of the house at Katharinenstraße 17. See the chapter on Luetkens' marriage preparations. See "Louis Seize Raum": https://www.mkg-hamburg.de/de/sammlung/sammlungen/period-rooms/louis-seize-raum.html, accessed February 06, 2019.

concert in this hall. This happened after the time Luetkens had owned it, presumably while the house was inhabited by the Jencquel family, who had bought the house from Luetkens.[9]

The period room as it is displayed in Hamburg today still provides a fairly precise image of the Bel Etage as Luetkens must have used it at the time when he was a Hamburg senator, as original architectural drawings from 1778 prove, which can be found in reproductions of the original MK&G images in the holdings of the Hamburg state archive.[10] As we know from the Luetkens archive, however, and as will be discussed in detail in the last two chapters of the book, Luetkens moved into this house already in 1745 on his return from France. In fact, his trading partners Hertzer & von Bobartt had already rented this residence in the "Huxter Fleet" area for him nine months prior to Luetkens' return. The boiserie for the Bel Etage was bought later, in the 1770s. However, even the furnishing of his first merchant house in Hamburg was already very precious and splendid as we will learn from the letters exchanged between him and his brother which deal with the orders that his future wife, Ilsabe Engelhard, had placed beforehand, including furniture, mirrors, candles, tableware. Many of these items Luetkens would keep until the time when the Bel Etage, too, arrived at his house in the Katharinenstraße.

The next items that we can find regarding Nicolaus Gottlieb Luetkens are smaller in size but nonetheless very valuable. Still being offered by auctioneers today at the price of 12,500 euros, we find one silver and one golden Portugaleser medal, showing Luetkens' profile or mentioning Luetkens' name or initials and showing his family coat of arms. Such commemorative medals were coined and donated in the past on special occasions like jubilees or senator consecrations. In Luetkens' case, the first medal was coined and donated by himself in 1763 on the occasion of the peace agreements of Versailles and Hubertusburg. The other medal was coined after his death to honour his memory and his achievements and the merits he brought to Hamburg. These commemorative medals again show us the high appreciation of his person in Hamburg especially during his later life.[11]

In order to clarify the question of what these merits that the medals refer to consisted of exactly, however, we have to consult further sources other than the medals and here we can make a find if we also extend our search to other printed sources.

9 Ibid.

10 *Katharinenstraße 17 Festsaal von 1778*, *Staatsarchiv Hamburg*, Hbg.-Altstadt 102, Stich, MK&G Repro C13, DA 3504.
Wohnhaus Catharinenstraße 17 Jenisch-Haus, Giebelansicht [...] 1738, *Staatsarchiv Hamburg*, Hbg.-Altstadt 102 Katharinenstr. 17, Jenischhaus, Aufriß von 1738, MK&G Repro C10, DA 3544 P 1232 DA.

11 *No. 10 Denkmünze auf den Senator Nic. Gottlieb Lütkens*. This commemorative medal is listed in *Hamburgische Münzen und Medaillen*, edited by Ausschusse des Vereins für Hamburgische Geschichte and redacted by O.C. Gaedechens, vol. 1, Hamburg: Meissner, 1850, 245-246. 417 *Goldener Bankportugaleser zu 10 Dukaten 1763*, von Oexlein, Gaedechens 1904. Geschichte in Gold 210, PiN 606 (Ag), Slg. 1660 (ag), Slg. Julis 2466, Fr.u.S. 4464. 49mm, 34, 77. Prachtexemplar. Fast Stempelglanz, 12.500,-, WAG, Westfälische Auktionsgesellschaft für Münzen und Medaillen, Auktion 79, September 2017.

With regard to Luetkens, we can find three types of such printed sources in which his name appears. First, there is a printed article written by him and Johann Schuback in conjunction with a bank reform for which they together were substantially responsible in 1768. While Schuback, however, is mentioned and appreciated today as the author of this important article, as for instance in an anniversary book on 350 years of the *Handelskammer Hamburg*, Luetkens on the other hand has simply been forgotten and does not get mentioned even though he was the co-author of the article.[12] After its first edition of 1768, this article was reprinted again in 1791 after his death due the article's importance for the Hamburg bank, or, as a respective contemporary statement put it, printed in the "Allgemeine Literatur-Zeitung, Numero 322" from 1791, due to its "right and plausible arguments" with regard to the bank reform.[13] Secondly, there still exists a print of the contemporary speech that was delivered in Hamburg on the occasion of Luetkens' inauguration as a Hamburg senator on the 11th of January 1771. Alongside the dedication to Luetkens, however, the text of this 32-page-long speech given by Christian Ziegra mainly deals with the history of Hamburg and general character traits of Hamburg senators, "Die Eigenschaften Hamburger Ratsherren: in vier Abhandlungen erkläret".[14] More informative is the third kind of printed source material: four contemporary short biographies and obituaries of Luetkens in contemporary biographical dictionaries, and these sources again mainly refer to the article mentioned above and the corresponding reform as his main achievement.[15]

All four kinds of source material – the medals, the article, the inauguration speech and the biographies and obituaries – can be combined to illustrate his merits from a

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12 See Handelskammer Hamburg, *Handelskammer Hamburg*, 62.

13 Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, and Johann Schuback. "An die sämtliche Herren Kaufleute, welche die gemäßigte Vorstellung und Bitte wegen Abänderung der bey der hiesigen Lehnbanco eingerissenen Missbräuche an die löbl. Deputation des Commercii unterschrieben haben." In *Drey Schriften über Geld und Banken, besonders über die Hamburgische Bank. Zweyte Auflage*; edited by Hamburgischen Commerzdeputation. Hamburg: Treder, 1791. "Dieser Aufsatz war bereits im Jahr 1768 geschrieben, und im Druck erschienen, und wurde durch seine richtigen und einleuchtend dargestellten Gründe damals, nebst dem folgenden dritten Aufsatz [Schuback] die Hauptveranlassung zu der schon oben unter No. 39 erwähnten Zurückführung der Hamb. Bank auf feste und unabweichliche Grundsätze. Als Vf. ist der im Jahr 1788 verstorbene Hamburgische Senator Lütkens bekannt, ein Kaufmann von tiefer Handlungseinsicht, und von unvergesslichen Verdiensten um seine Vaterstadt." *Allgemeine Literatur-Zeitung*, Numero 322, Dienstags, den 6. December 1791, 463-464.

14 See Ziegra, M. Christian. *Die Eigenschaften Hamburgischer Rathsherren: in vier kleinen Abhandlungen erkläret, als der Hochedelgeborenen und Wolweise Herr Nicolaus Gottlieb Lütkens den 11 Januar 1771, zu solcher Würder erkohren ward*. Hamburg: Schröders Schriften, 1771.

15 "2374 Lütkens (Nicolaus), 598-601; 2375. Lütkens (Nicolaus Gottlieb), 601-602." In *Lexikon der Hamburgischen Schriftsteller bis zur Gegenwart*. edited by Hans Schröder, 598-602. Hamburg: Perthes-Besser u. Mauke 1870 (vol. 4, 1866). "Lütkens (Nikolaus Gottlieb)." In *Lexikon der vom Jahre 1750 bis 1800 verstorbenen teutschen Schriftsteller*, vol. 8, edited by Johann Georg Meusel, 413. Leipzig: Gerhard Fleischer, 1808. "Nicolaus Gottlieb Lütkens." In *Denkwürdigkeiten aus dem Leben ausgezeichneter Teutschern des achtzehnten Jahrhunderts*, edited by Christian Gotthilf Salzmann, 721-722. Schnepfenthal: Verlag der Erziehungsanstalt, 1802. "Nicolaus Gottlieb Lütkens." In *Hanseatisches Magazin* 5, no. 1. V. Proben einer Bildergallerie Hamburgischer Männer des achtzehnten Jahrhunderts, edited by Johann Smidt, 148-149. Bremen: Friedrich Wilmans, 1801.

contemporary perspective. As the text of the *Denkwürdigkeiten aus dem Leben ausgezeichneter Teutschen des achtzehnten Jahrhunderts* from 1802 went, Luetkens' main merit lay in the fact that Hamburg "owes to him, together with Johannes Schuback, the salvage of the Hamburg bank during the time of its most severe crisis in 1786 and the restoring of this bank on the basis of solid and ineluctable principles [....] [which he had set out] in his essay 'An die Kaufleute, welche die gemäßigte Vorstellung und Bitte wegen Abänderung der bey der hiesigen Lehnbanco eingerissenen Missbräuche an die Deputation des Commercii unterschrieben haben'".[16] This is the article referred to above, which is also still available in the Staatsbibliothek Berlin in the original.[17] It mainly addresses the issue and benefits of free markets.[18] All other short biographies and obituaries mention the exact same article and reform as Luetkens' main achievement in life, consequently calling him a noble Hamburg patriot or the "restorer of the Hamburg bank which made him immortal".[19] It is therefore reasonable to state that this act and the bank reform had created the fame and reputation on which his memory was to rest in the future.[20] It also represents the main reason why his face went on to adorn a gold Portugaleser coin worth 12,500 euros and why his portrait hangs in the *Kleines Zimmer* of Hamburg's town hall.

In addition to the information about his main printed work and the reform that emanated from it, the short biographies and obituaries also provide us with the main data regarding his life. Furthermore, as is typical and characteristic of this kind of source, the biographical entries and obituaries in the contemporary biographical dictionaries also provide us with a depiction of his character. Since the short biographies and obituaries serve as a kind of blueprint for my analysis, I will cite large parts of them in their entirety, nonetheless double checking the information against the information from the letters and court records stored in London. Before coming to that, however, this first section of the chapter can be concluded by putting together the last five traces and references to Luetkens that I found apart from his archive in London.

The first of the last five hints on Luetkens are entries that I found about Luetkens' merchant house, "Luetkens & Engelhardt", in the Hamburg Admiralty customs books, the *Entry Books of the Hamburg Admiralty and Convoy Duties*, *Admiralitaets Zoll und Convoy Einnahme Bücher* stored in the Hamburg state archive [21] The tables in these books im-

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16 "Ihm und Johannes Schuback verdankt die Hamburgische Bank vorzüglich die Rettung aus der misslichsten Lage im Jahr 1768 und die Zurückführung der Bank auf feste und unabweichliche Grundsätze [...]." *Denkwürdigkeiten*, 722.

17 Schuback/Luetkens, *Drey Schriften über Geld und Banken*. SBB-PK Berlin, 46 MA 1537, Berlin: Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin – Preußischer Kulturbesitz, 2011. Online-Ausg., 2011, VD18 digital, https://digital.staatsbibliothek-berlin.de/werkansicht/?PPN=PPN66702932X, accessed December 11, 2019.

18 *Proben einer Bildergallerie*, 149. See also Lindemann, Mary. *Patriots and Paupers. Hamburg, 1712-1830*. New York/Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990, 36.

19 "unsterblicher Restaurator der Bank [...]." *Proben einer Bildergallerie*, 149.

20 Regarding this bank reform see in detail Von Heß, Jonas Ludwig. *Was darf und was darf nicht in Hamburg geschehen?* Hamburg: auf Kosten des Verfassers, 1799, 34-73.

21 *Admiralty records of the Staatsarchiv Hamburg, Entry Books of the Hamburg Admiralty and Convoy Duties, Admiralitaets Zoll und Convoy Einnahme. Staatsarchiv Hamburg, Admiralitätskollegium, 371-2, F6*, vol. 18 (De Anno 1753) and vol. 25 (De Anno 1769).

pressively show that Luetkens and his firm quickly rose to become one of the largest and most successful merchant houses trading in French sugar after his establishment phase due to the strong trading connections he established during his early career. We can find his name occurring at regular intervals in several of these entry books for several years. Just as frequently as in the Hamburg Admiralty books, we also find his name in later court records and books of the High Court of Admiralty from later stages in his life. As a senator and member of the *Commerz-Deputation*, with considerable experience and knowledge of maritime law, particularly regarding the dealings with the court in London, we often find Luetkens as the Hamburg representative and senator signing official documents from Hamburg addressed to the Admiralty Court in London. We therefore also find him in his role as deputy of the Commerz-Deputation in the minutes and protocols of the *Commerz-Deputation* stored in the Hanseatic Business Archive, *Hanseatisches Wirtschaftsarchiv*.[22]

The third trace of Luetkens can be found in the form of contemporary book dedications to him that again stem from his time as a senator, representing signs of honour. Moreover, these dedications provide us with further information about his later role and significance in Hamburg during the second half of the 18th century. The first of these dedications can be found in the book *Betrachtungen über den gegenwärtigen Zustand der französischen Colonie zu San Domingo* by Michel René Hilliard d'Auberteuil from 1779. The German translation, by Johann Andreas Engelbrecht, of this originally French book mentions Luetkens in its foreword and dedicates the book to him for the reason that he is "very familiar with the situation and the condition of the colony, since his lines of business were directly tied to it."[23] During his establishment phase, Luetkens started to trade in French sugar from St. Domingue. Since foreign merchants were forbidden to trade directly with the French colonies, he was active in commission trade and as a re-exporter and redistributor of French sugar from France to Hamburg and its hinterland. Naturally, this business segment still provided him with extensive knowledge of the French colonial system and its products. Luetkens later continued this trade very successfully during his career as an established merchant, basing the activities of his merchant house in Hamburg on his long-standing contacts in France. The second dedication can be found in Johann Melchior Goeze's "Verzeichnis seiner Samlung seltener Bibeln und merkwürdiger Bibeln" from 1777. Goeze was minister of St. Catharine's Church in Hamburg. From this dedication we can learn that, living next door to the church, Luetkens had later on been one of the main supporters and representatives of the parish of St. Catherine (St. Katharinen).[24] This assumption can be confirmed by the

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22 Protokolle der Commerzdeputation nebst Anlagen. *Hanseatisches Wirtschaftsarchiv*, S/599. I would like to express my gratitude to Kathrin Enzel for her support.

23 "mit dem Zustand der Colonie gewiß sehr bekannt, indem einige Dero größten Handelszweige mittelbar dahin gehen." Hilliard d'Auberteuil, Michel René. *Betrachtungen über den gegenwärtigen Zustand der französischen Colonie zu San Domingo*, translated by Johann Andreas Engelbrecht. Leipzig: J.F. Junius, 1779, 3-4.

24 This book is dedicated to Heinrich Rücker and "Nicolaus Gottlieb Luetkens beyderseits hochverdienten Senatoren […] und hochansehnlichen Kirchspiel-Herren der Hauptkirche zu St. Catharinen daselbst." Goeze, Johann Melchior. *Johann Melchior Goezens Hauptpastors zu St. Catharinen in*

only records in the catalogue of the Hamburg state archive mentioning Luetkens' actual name and his "testament", although this document only related to legal steps taken in the 20th century regarding his charity work, the "mildtätigen Stiftungen".[25] A third book in which his name can be found is a small, contemporary edition of Luetkens' letters and merchant records as part of a submission to the Hamburg senate, published by himself and featuring a preface. This book dealt with a big trade deal in weapons and the peace negotiations with Morocco, Salé and Mogador, and was called "Pro Memoria an E. Hochlöbliches Collegium der Herren Sechziger abseiten meiner Nicolaus Gottlieb Lütkens" from 1770.[26] The deal failed in the end, yet still Luetkens' letters related to it were printed with the approval of the senate to show his significant efforts in this regard for the sake of Hamburg.[27]

A further trace of him, or rather of his family, can be found in the Hamburg Ohlsdorf cemetery, where we can locate a family grave of the families Luetkens and Kaehler. Joachim Kaehler, also spelt Kähler, had been one of Nicolaus Gottlieb Luetkens' maternal uncles.[28] This grave was bought after Nicolaus Gottlieb's death, so it is unfortunately still unclear whether he was reburied there in the family grave. A safe and more reliable hint to the actual reverberation effects after his death can be found, however, in another document, the last trace of him. In the already mentioned list of all the *charitable donors* of Hamburg, the "Mildtätigen Stiftungen", he appears with a generous donation in his testament to "twelve poor humans living in Billwärder" together with financing a scholarship for a clergyman in Billwärder for four years.[29] His father before him, as we can learn from one of the obituaries about him, was highly active in poor

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Hamburg Verzeichnis seiner Samlung seltener Bibel und merkwürdiger Bibeln in verschiedenen Sprachen mit kritischen und literarischen Anmerkungen. Halle: Johann Jacob Gebauer, 1777, 2.

25 The file "Nicolaus Gottlieb Lütkens-Testament, 1957-1970" today stored in the Staatsarchiv Hamburg, unfortunately does not include Luetkens' original testament.

26 Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb. *Pro Memoria an E. Hochlöbliches Collegium der Herren Sechziger abseiten meiner Nicolaus Gottlieb Lütkens*. Hamburg: (no publisher given), 1770.

27 Regarding this deal see Baasch, Ernst. *Die Hansestädte und die Barbaresken*. Kassel: Brunnemann, 1897, chapter "Der Lütkens'sche Auftrag für Marokko", 80-88. See Baasch, Ernst. *Die Hansestädte Hamburg, Bremen und Lübeck und ihre Beziehungen zu Algier und Marokko*. Kassel: Brunnemann, 1897.

28 Grabmal Luetkens/Kähler. Friedhof Ohlsdorf, im und beim Heckengarten. For further information regarding this tombstone see https://fredriks.de/ohlsdorf/h28.php, accessed February 17, 2018.

29 Testament of "Nicolaus Gottlieb Lütkens. Geb. zu Billwärder am 10. Mai 1716, Senator 1771 Jan. 11 [...] [gestorben] 1788 Jan. 10. Das Testament ist vom 20. Jan. 1781, cum additamento de 10. Dec. 1785, 15. Dec. 1785, 2. Mai 1786, und publicirt 16. Jan. 1788. Zweck: Gleiche Vertheilung der Zinsen von Bco. Mark 3000. an zwölf arme Leute in Billwärder an der Bille. Der Prediger erhält für die Vertheilung 6 Mark, die beiden Kirchgeschwornen jeder 3 Mark. Ferner ein Stipendium von 150 Mark auf 4 Jahre. Verwaltung: Der Prediger und die beiden ältesten Kirchgeschwornen zu Billwärder an der Bille." In *Die milden Privatstiftungen zu Hamburg*, edited by the Verein für Hamburgische Geschichte, no. 112. Hamburg: Perthes-Besser u. Mauke, 1845. The file "Nicolaus Gottlieb Lütkens-Testament, 1957-1970" today stored in the Staatsarchiv Hamburg, unfortunately does not include Luetkens' original testament, but only deals with legal steps taken in the 20th century regarding the abovementioned "mildtätigen Stiftungen", his charity work. See "Nicolaus Gottlieb Lütkens-Testament, 1957-1970." *Staatsarchiv Hamburg*, Stiftungen. Buchstabe L (1918-1988), 131-1 II_5452 Nicolaus Gottlieb Lütkens-Testament, 1957-1970, Aktenzeichen, 922.31-43.

relief and had worked as a catechist at the "Zuchthaus", the poorhouse, in Hamburg.[30] Nicolaus Gottlieb Luetkens followed in his father's footsteps in this regard, although in a more mercantile way, namely by donating money through his testament.

2.2 Biography

There are several biographical entries in biographical dictionaries of the 18th century and obituaries relating to the merchant and senator Nicolaus Gottlieb Luetkens. These entries serve as a kind of basic framework and grid to which we can subsequently add the information provided by the Luetkens archive and the court records in London in order to arrive in the end at biographical information about Luetkens that is as complete and accurate as possible. For this purpose, I will however not list and repeat all the information that we have already gained through the previous explanations of Luetkens' historical legacy, and I will also bundle together all the numerous overlaps between the biographical entries and the obituaries into one continuous text for the sake of conciseness. The aim of this part of the chapter is to lay the groundwork and put together the relevant information about Luetkens, his childhood, youth and education, to which we can subsequently connect the explanations about Luetkens' establishment phase. Linking the information of the biographical entries with the records in London will in this regard help not only to arrive at a more nuanced picture of Luetkens and his life, but it also helps to correct certain impressions and hasty reductions created in the biographical entries and obituaries. Although the general biographical data as regards the dates given is correct, the following biography therefore still has to be understood as not representing the whole picture. It will be supplemented and further enriched in the later explanations in this chapter.

Nicolaus Gottlieb Luetkens "was born in Billwärder at the river Bille on the 10th of May 1716".[31] He was the "son of a country parson", but "committed himself to the mercantile profession".[32] "In the year 1754 he was elected a Commerz-Deputierter [member of the Commerz Deputation], in 1761 he became Bank-Bürger [member of the Hamburg Bank] and at the 11th of January 1771 he was elected and ennobled as a senator. From 1776 to 1778 he was also Praetor of the senate […]."[33] The exact same information is given in the legend under his portrait. Regarding his private life we learn that "he married his first wife Ilsabe Engelhardt on the 22nd of November 1745, who bore him four daughters. After this woman died on the 1st of May 1770, he married his second wife Cornelia Overmann and had 5 more children with her. He died on the 10th of January 1788."[34] Of all his children, only a miniature portrait of his daughter Cornelia has survived, which today is in the *Museum für Hamburgische Geschichte* and a later portrait

30 See "2374 Lütkens (Nicolaus)." In *Lexikon der Hamburgischen Schriftsteller bis zur Gegenwart*. edited by Hans Schröder, 598-601. Hamburg: Perthes-Besser u. Mauke 1870 (vol. 4, 1866).

31 *Lexikon der Hamburgischen Schriftsteller*, 601-602.

32 *Proben einer Bildergallerie*, 148-149.

33 *Lexikon der Hamburgischen Schriftsteller*, 601-602. *Denkwürdigkeiten*, 721-722.

34 *Lexikon der Hamburgischen Schriftsteller*, 601-602.

of his daughter Henriette von Schwartz, born Luetkens.[35] With regard to Luetkens' personal character it is said that "his life was a perfect example of patriotic aspiration and blessed efficacy."[36] "He was an independent thinker and an independent actor, as it can be said about only a few; a patriot in the most noble sense of the word."[37] In this regard it is remarkable that "although he was without any scientific culture, and without knowing it, he was in his verbal explanations the most shrewd and a practical teacher of pure political science."[38] "Just as the famous proverb by Goethe goes, one can say about him that when a person is blessed by nature, it should not come as a surprise if he is successful. Because by nature alone he was equipped with the wonderful dispositions of his astuteness and his power of judgement, which enabled him, despite the fact that he had not enjoyed any academic or scientific education, to arrive nonetheless at deep and thorough insights into political science and commerce, and therefore, through his practical activities and his writings, he was able to obtain merits for his hometown."[39]

The image created in these biographies, biographical entries in biographical dictionaries and in the obituaries, as becomes obvious in these compiled statements, is apparently the image of a self-made man. The narrative structure that the authors, who all unfortunately remain anonymous, chose to draw on for this purpose to structure their words of honour is mainly the classical rhetorical element of antithesis or comparison. The message conveyed is that despite the fact that Luetkens faced many obstacles he was still able to succeed in his life.[40] Such a narrative structure is typical for biographies and obituaries because it served the purpose of demonstrating by means of the obituary the exceptionality and the successfulness of the social advancement of the person in question.[41] This is also the impression created by the biographical entries and obituaries of Luetkens. They evoke admiration on the part of the reader. At the same

35 Portrait of Cornelia Poppe, born Lütkens (daughter of N.G. Luetkens). *Museum für Hamburgische Geschichte*. Portraitminiaturen, Inv. Nr. 1914, 92. Cornelia Lütkens was born on April 2 1760, married to David Christian Böhl in 1778, after his death, she married Daniel Poppe in 1781. See Roberts, Richard. *Schroders, Merchants & Bankers*. Basingstoke, UK: Macmillan Press, 1992.

36 "patriotischen Strebens und segensreicher Wirksamkeit." *Denkwürdigkeiten*, 721.

37 "Selbstdenker und Selbsthandler, wie wenige; Patriot im edelsten Sinne des Worts." *Proben einer Bildergallerie*, 148.

38 „[...] ohne alle wissenschaftliche Cultur, und ohne es selbst zu wissen, in seinen mündlichen Darstellungen der scharfsinnigste und practischte Lehrer reiner Staatswissenschaft; ohne das Wort Theorie zu kennen, der scharfsinnigste Theoretiker der bis dahin im Dunkel liegenden Bank= und Geld=Lehre." Ibid., 149.

39 "Von ihm galt, was Göthe sagt: Wenn einen Menschen die Natur erhoben, ist es kein Wunder, wenn ihm viel gelingt! Denn mit den herrlichsten Anlagen des Scharfsinnes und der Urtheilskraft von der Natur begabt, gelangte er, ohne alle gelehrte und wissenschaftliche Ausbildung, zu den tiefsten und gründlichsten Einsichten in die Staats-Wissenschaft und das Handlungswesen, und erwarb sich durch seine praktische Wirksamkeit und durch seine treffenden und meisterhaften Schriften, in welchen aber nur die Ideen sein Eigenthum, die Einkleidung von einer in der Schriftstellerey geübten Feder war, unvergeßliche Verdienste um seine Vaterstadt." *Denkwürdigkeiten*, 721-722.

40 See Ueding, Gert, and Bernd Steinbrink. *Grundriß der Rhetorik: Geschichte – Technik – Methode*. Stuttgart/Weimar: J.B. Metzler, 2011, 309, 314. See also Knape, Joachim. *Was ist Rhetorik?* Stuttgart: Reclam, 2000.

41 See Etzemüller, Thomas.*Biographien*. Frankfurt/New York: Campus, 2012, 102-131.

time, this admiration oscillates in the special case of Luetkens with a kind of actual amazement: How could this man have come so far? How did he succeed as a merchant although he did not have an extensive school education and although his father was a priest and no merchant?

Another characteristic feature of biographies and obituaries but also of funeral sermons or occasional poems is that the descriptions given most of the time do not necessarily completely coincide with the actual career path that had taken place, in other words they sometimes omit information for the sake of a coherent narrative.[42] This is also a feature that can be observed with regard to the Luetkens biographies and obituaries. Interestingly though, no general corrections need to be made in the biography. However, the perspective of this book brings about significant changes in the evaluation and the concrete explanation for Luetkens' successful career. By including his establishment phase into the picture, in this book Luetkens' career will no longer appear as surprising and unexpected as it is depicted in the contemporary biographical entries and obituaries. Quite on the contrary, his course of education and career development will be revealed as rather typical of a young man from a middle class family who became a wholesale merchant in the 18th century.[43] This correction should, however, by no means lead to be misunderstood as intended to diminish his achievements in any way as his career path was still remarkable, but it should serve the purpose of correcting the story and image of the self-made man or rather putting it in an adequate contemporary context. Of course, Luetkens owed his success to his commitment and ambition, but in order to achieve his goals he nonetheless primarily made use of and benefitted from the social and cultural conditions and benevolent circumstances that he found himself embedded in during his childhood, during his education and apprenticeship in Hamburg and during his travels in England, the Netherlands and during his establishment phase in France. His constant coping with these different life stages and conditions ultimately paved the way for his successful career as wholesale merchant and later as a senator in Hamburg. His career was therefore certainly neither a coincidence nor a surprise, but can ultimately be ascribed first and foremost to his perseverance. The story and the image that will be created in this book of the person Nicolaus Gottlieb Luetkens is the story and image of a person who became a string-puller rather than the story of

42 See Bogner, Ralf Georg. *Der Autor im Nachruf: Formen und Funktionen der literarischen Memorialkultur von der Reformation bis zum Vormärz*. Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 2006, particularly 1-41 as well as chapter 9-12. See Drux. Rudolf. "Art. Gelegenheitsgedicht." *Historisches Wörterbuch der Rhetorik* 3, edited by Gert Ueding, 653-667. Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1996. See Lenz, Rudolf (vol. 1-4), and Eva-Maria Dickhaut (vol. 5). *Leichenpredigten als Quelle historischer Wissenschaften*. Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1975-2014.

43 See Earle, *Making of the English Middle Class*, 107-157; Ruppert, *Bürgerlicher Wandel*. See Jeannin, "Distinction des compétences", Kansikas, "Career Paths". For comparable examples see Henniger, *Bethmann*, 69-94; Hancock, *Citizens of the World*; Doerflinger, *A Vigorous Spirit of Enterprise*, 45-59. See as another very comparable example the biography of Hinrich Christoph Lienau, with whom Luetkens was also acquainted, http://www.hamburgerpersoenlichkeiten.de/hamburgerpersoenlichkeiten, accessed July 8, 2017. See "Memoriam viri amplissimi Danielis Lienau, Hamburgensis Reipublicae magnifici nuper consulis." Obituary of Daniel Lienau by Carolus Fridericus Hipp. Hamburg: Johanneum, Friedrich Schniebes, 1817. Lienau's career reads very similar to the career of N.G. Luetkens, and he was also awarded a medal of honor, a Portugaleser.

a self-made man. In essence this also amounts to a much more accurate version of the self-making of an 18th century merchant and of a life story of a merchant that was typical of the 18th century.

In adding the complementary pieces of information to the contemporary biographies and obituaries as provided by the Luetkens archive and its related court records about Luetkens' life in the next part of this chapter, it will become apparent that many of the factors mentioned in the biographies and obituaries that initially appear as hindrances or hurdles were exactly the opposite as these factors and conditions did in fact foster and support his career. One can even say that the conditions represented in a way a rather typical initial situation for contemporary middle-class men who were coming of age in the 18th century. What the story of this book therefore will change with regard to the presented narrative of Luetkens' life in contrast to the contemporary biographies and obituaries is that I will omit the element of the antithesis when speaking about his life and his establishment phase and instead insert the element of continuity and contemporary typicality, which will explain much better why and how this man could come so far in life. The Luetkens archive and the court papers stored in the National Archives in London provide the necessary information for this change in perspective and help to create a much more detailed, as well as more accurate, complementary picture of this person's life than the contemporary biographies and obituaries.

2.3 Parental Home and Early Education

Nicolaus Luetkens (1675-1736), Nicolaus Gottlieb's father, was indeed more than merely a simple village priest living in a suburb of Hamburg as two of the biographies and obituaries indicated. Just like his son later, Nicolaus Luetkens was a well-travelled man. During his own youth and establishment phase and before settling down in Hamburg Billwärder, he had visited and even lived for several years in Berlin, Frankfurt and Leipzig, which were the booming intellectual cities of the 17th and 18th century. Later he also visited Halle and Jena, amongst others. He was also a highly educated man and a renowned scholar, a master of philosophy and an orientalist, who would later work as a teacher, catechist and scholar in ecclesiastical history and Hebrew philosophy and at the Hamburg *Zuchthaus*, the poorhouse. During his own studies at the *Akademische Gymnasium Hamburg*, Nicolaus Luetkens was supported by the renowned scholar Vincent Placcius. This notwithstanding, Nicolaus Luetkens was also a man with far-reaching contacts in Hamburg and beyond, who was deeply involved in the cultural and social life of Hamburg's academic and scholarly elite and whose contacts were not limited to his congregation but rather extended to the highest circles of Hamburg.[44]

44 See "2374 Lütkens (Nicolaus)." In *Lexikon der Hamburgischen Schriftsteller bis zur Gegenwart*, edited by Hans Schröder, 598-601. Hamburg: Perthes-Besser u. Mauke 1870 (vol. 4, 1866). As for his work see for instance Nicolaus Luetkens' works Luetkens, Nicolaus. *Zôhar, Antiquum Iudaeorum monumentum : dissertatione philologica [...] submittet [...] M. Nicolaus Lutkens [...] respondente Petro Westhusen*. Leipzig: Titius, 1706. Luetkens, Nicolaus. *Yāḥîd mešîḥā ben Dāwid solus Davidis filius Messias*. Rostock: Schwiegerovius, 1701. See the portrait of Nicolaus Lütkens, M. Nicolaus Lütkens, Pastor an der Nicolai Kirche in Billwärder vor Hamburg: Portrait of Nicolaus Luetkens, engraved by Christian Fritsch,

Nicolaus Luetkens was a prime example of a scholar who did not just live during the early Enlightenment in the Elbe city but actively fostered the early Enlightenment there and accordingly he was not merely a simple village priest.[45] Highly revealing in this regard is who Nicolaus senior appointed as two of his estate executors for the case of his death. The first executor was Nicolaus Jante, at the time the renowned deacon of St. Petri church in Hamburg and member of the *Council of Sixty* (Sechziger), which formed an important part of the Hamburg senate. The other one was the famous philosopher of the early Hamburg Enlightenment Barthold Heinrich Brockes, who is primarily known for his philosophical and ecclesiastical works.

None of this is mentioned in any way in the contemporary biographies or obituaries, but evidence and proof for it can be found in the Luetkens archive in letters regarding Nicolaus Gottlieb's inheritance from his father and in the form of probate records, on the basis of which Nicolaus Gottlieb Luetkens requested payouts for the sake of his shipping activities.[46] The other three estate executors that Nicolaus senior appointed were likewise appointed the legal guardians for his sons in the case of his death, who later actually ended up having to take on this role after Nicolaus' death in 1736. The first guardian was Christoph Seydeler, a reputable merchant in Hamburg, who was also one of the Hamburg witnesses examined during the court case of the captured ships Hope and the Post van Hamburg. The second guardian was the brother of Nicolaus' first wife Catharina Elisabeth, Joachim Kaehler, who had once been a ship's captain before becoming a ship-owner and merchant in Hamburg, with whom Nicolaus Gottlieb continued to keep close contact even after his mother had died and his father had married his second wife.[47] As the third legal guardian Nicolaus senior ap-

1739. Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek – Sondersammlungen, Portrait 22: L 93. Legend: "M. Nicolaus Lütkens, Pastor an der Nicolai Kirche in Billwärder vor Hamburg Gebohren an: 1675 d. 17. April: Gestorben an: 1736 d. 1 Mai. Gegründte Wissenschaft durch Gottes-Furcht erhöht, Der Wörter Starcke Kraft, so an das Hertze feht, Die laßen uns allhier den rechten Abriß lesen von dem, was Lüttckens Mund und Feder ist gewesen. Dieses setzte unter das Bildnis seines alten Freundes M. Jo. Christoph Krüsike, Prediger an der Haupt Kirche St. Petri."

45 Regarding the Enlightenment in Hamburg see in general Kopitzsch, *Grundzüge einer Sozialgeschichte.* See Stephan, Inge, and Hans-Gerd Winter, eds. *Hamburg im Zeitalter der Aufklärung*. Berlin/Hamburg: Dietrich Reimer Verlag, 1989. See Handelskammer Hamburg, *Handelskammer Hamburg*, 44-48. Regarding merchants and the Enlightenment see Schrader, Fred. E. "Handel und Aufklärungs-soziabilität in Hamburg und Bordeaux. 1750-1820." In *Lumières et commerce. L' exemple bordelais*, edited by Jean Mondot and Catherine Jean, 67-87. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2000.

46 "3/m Mark in Janten und 2/m Mark in Herrn Brocksen Erbe werde gebrauchen können." Letter from Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb to Luetkens, Anton, July 7, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/232, Letter Book I, No. 219. See also letter from Luetkens, Joachim to Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, May 25, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/235. Regarding Jante see Suhr, Jürgen. *Beschreibung der Sanct Petri Kirche zu Hamburg [...] nebst einem chrono-logischen Verzeichnis des hochlöblichen Kirchen-Kollegiums und der Herren Prediger*. Hamburg: Perthes-Besser u. Mauke, 1842. Regarding Brockes see Loose, Hans-Dieter, ed. *Berthold Heinrich Brockes. Dichter und Ratsherr in Hamburg. Neue Forschungen zu Persönlichkeit und Wirkung*. Hamburg: Christians, 1980. Braun-Egidius, Erich, eds. *Barthold Hinrich Brockes, Brockes-Tage 1997 in Hamburg. Eine Dokumentation*. Hamburg: Kultur in Hamburg Verlagsges. mbH, 2000.

47 See letter from Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb to Kähler, Joachim, June 16, 1743, TNA, HCA 30/232, individual letter copy including *Copia von zwey obligation an Herr Kahler gesandt unter dato 16 Juny 1743*.

pointed his brother Anthony Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb's paternal uncle. Anthony was living in London as a renowned wholesale merchant. In the court records regarding the Post van Hamburg, Anthony Luetkens was referred to as "Anthony Luetkens of the parish of All Hallows the Great London Merchant". Anthony usually took up the role as his nephews' legal representative in London before the High Court of Admiralty. The latter two, Anthony Luetkens and Joachim Kaehler, would furthermore not only appear as the legal guardians for Nicolaus' sons but had also obviously been the namesakes for Nicolaus' second son, Joachim, and his third son, Anton. His first son he had named after himself, complemented by the religiously inspired middle name "Gottlieb": Nicolaus Gottlieb Luetkens. More relevant to Nicolaus Gottlieb's career is, however, the profession that both of Nicolaus Gottlieb's uncles practised, namely the mercantile profession, which in turn makes Nicolaus Gottlieb Luetkens' decision to become a wholesale merchant a much clearer, logical and more obvious option instead of the surprising and unexpected choice it had appeared in the obituaries.

In general, it was a rather typical custom in bourgeois families of the 18th century that the different sons of a family choose different professions, though remaining in the realms of typical professions of the Early Modern middle class by becoming merchants, public administrators, lawyers, notaries or priests.[48] As such, it is also not surprising that Joachim, the middle son, would become a catechist and then a priest just like his father. At the time when Joachim Luetkens was appointed pastor in Hamburg Steinbeck in 1754, after he himself had been on travels in London and Cambridge during the same years as his older brother, it was none other than the famous composer Georg Philipp Telemann who had composed a cantata and played at his ceremony.[49] In the case of Nicolaus Gottlieb himself, it had, however, been predictable and appropriate that he would instead become a merchant, considering the profession of his uncles.

His father a renowned priest, scholar and private lecturer; his mother a daughter from a wealthy bourgeois family; both his uncles respectable merchants in international trade: the main illusion from the contemporary short biographies and obituaries that we are able to contradict through this new information and the Luetkens archive, is the illusion that Nicolaus Gottlieb Luetkens had been in any way an uneducated and unschooled man. It is indeed true that we cannot find Nicolaus Gottlieb amongst the pupils, amongst the matriculation record of students enrolled at Hamburg schools of

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48 See Habermas, Rebekka. *Frauen und Männer des Bürgertums: Eine Familiengeschichte (1750-1850)*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 2002, 3-5. See Van Dülmen, Richard. *Kultur und Alltag in der Frühen Neuzeit. Erster Band. Das Haus und seine Menschen 16.-18. Jahrhundert*. Munich: C.H. Beck, 2005, 114-122. See Hunt, *The Middling Sort*, 22-72. See Roeck, Bernd. *Lebenswelt und Kultur des Bürgertums in der Frühen Neuzeit*. Munich: Oldenbourg, 1991, 31-33, 60-61.

49 See "Text zur Music als der wohlerwürdige und hochgelahrte Herr Joachim Lütkens m 8 October 1754 zum Prediger der Gemeine [sic] zu Steinbeck in der Marien Magdalenen Kirche in Hamburg eingesegnet ward, aufgeführet von Georg Philipp Telemann, Chori Musici Directore." Hamburg: Piscator, 1754. Berlin: Staats-bibliothek zu Berlin – Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Germany, 2010, Historische Drucke, 47 in: Mus. T 2408, online http://resolver.staatsbibliothek-berlin.de/SBB000054E600000000, accessed March 5, 2017. See Reipsch, Ralf-Jürgen. "Mein Hertz ist voll." In *Klangfarben. 25. Telemann Festtage Programmheft* (2020): 111-117.

the time.[50] That fact, however, still does not mean or provide us with enough evidence for the assumption that he was uneducated. Instead, it ultimately shows us that Nicolaus Gottlieb Luetkens must have followed a different educational pathway to, for instance, his brother Joachim, whom we can in fact find listed on the roll of both the Johanneum grammar school and the Hamburg Gymnasium.[51] Nicolaus Gottlieb instead went down an educational path that was far more common for the mercantile profession to follow during that century as well as the centuries before.[52] Yet, he still received an extensive education as can be reasonably assumed, for instance, by comparing his example with the typical educational path of other Hamburg merchants. Using our knowledge about his parental home we can also assume that he was first privately educated in his early days by his father, who also taught other children during that time as a private teacher and catechist.[53] Furthermore, we can find evidence from the Luetkens archive that he had additionally also been educated by a private tutor, which was also common practice during that time with regard to a typical mercantile upbringing.[54] In an address list, a list of contacts and correspondents, that has survived in the Luetkens archive we can find at least one name of a well-known tutor of the time living in Hamburg, who taught French and whose name also reappears in a register of addresses of all "Standes-Personen", all persons of rank, living in Hamburg in 1722: Jean Ferri.[55]

Secondly, as complies with the typical educational programme and standard practice for young men aiming to become merchants, the next important stage during his educational path was that he entered directly into an apprenticeship in the house of a respectable merchant at the age of 12 or 14 at the latest.[56] Nicolaus Gottlieb served his apprenticeship in the compting house of the Hamburg merchant David Speelmeyer, where he later also served as a merchant clerk.[57] In none of the biographical entries or

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50 Sillem, Karl Hieronymus Wilhelm. *Die Matrikel des Akademischen Gymnasiums in Hamburg, 1613-1883*. Hamburg: Lucas Gräfe und Sillem, 1891.

51 "2381. Joach. Lütkens, Billwerdea Hamburg., Th. st. Pastor Steenbeck. Jenam abier. 1740 Apr., ex Johanneo." ibid., 110.

52 As it was also popularized in Early Modern merchant manuals such as Defoe, Daniel. *The Complete English Tradesman*.

53 See Henninger, *Bethmann*, 69-83.

54 See Grassby, *Business Community*, 189. See Van Dülmen, *Kultur und Alltag*, 79-120.

55 This *list of correspondents* can be found in TNA, HCA 30/232. The address register of Hamburg: Beuthner, Arnold Christian. *Jetzt-lebendes Hamburg: worin von den Namen, Charakteren und Wohnungen aller […] Standes-Personen […] Nachricht ertheilet wird*. Hamburg: (no publisher given), 1722 (1723, 1725). See "Sprachmeister nach alphabetischer Reihenfolge, Mr. Jean Ferri Französischer Sprachmeister, hinter dem neuen Wall," ibid., 103. Regarding private language tutors in the French language, see Kuhfuss, Walter. *Eine Kulturgeschichte des Französischunterrichts in der frühen Neuzeit: Französischlernen am Fürstenhof, auf dem Marktplatz und in der Schule in Deutschland*. Göttingen, V&R unipress GmbH, 2014, chapter 7 "Französisch für Berufe des Kaufmanns, des Handels und des Gewerbes", "Galanter Französischunterricht für Bürgersöhne", "Lehrwerke für Kaufleute in galanter Zeit.", 349-467.

56 See Ruppert, "Bürgerlicher Wandel," 76-86. See Hancock, *Citizens of the World*, 43. See Earle, *Making of the English Middle Class*, 85-105, on "Apprenticeship".

57 See several of the testimonies and attestations of Hamburg citizens at the hearings regarding additional interrogatories of the case of the ship Hope, which took place in Hamburg, January 03, 1748. See in detail in the following footnotes.

obituaries though, this time and his apprenticeship was mentioned in any way. However, the one fact that still appears in some way related to his mercantile education in the biographies and obituaries is that Luetkens was primarily known to be a practically skilled man. In the light of a typical commercial education this appears to be rather symptomatic of a mercantile path of life. Up until far into the second half of the 18th century, when the Hamburg *Handelsschule* was founded, and even beyond that, young merchants learned their skills and mercantile business primarily in practice in the houses of other already well-established merchants in their hometown or even in other cities or countries, primarily in the form of a learning-by-doing process.[58] Nicolaus Gottlieb Luetkens represented a textbook example of a practically trained man of trade. He was a "practical man of affairs", as David Hancock put it, as was typical for Early Modern merchants.[59]

2.4 Apprenticeship and Business Travels

As regards Nicolaus Gottlieb Luetkens' time of apprenticeship, we can consult the information that the British court records provide us with, in order to complete our picture about Luetkens' education. The reason that these records contain personal information about Luetkens is due to the British authorities of the High Court of Admiralty making extensive enquiries into the backgrounds of all the persons involved in the captured ships in order to prove associations with the French enemy and thereby also to prove the rightfulness of the captures. Especially Nicolaus Gottlieb Luetkens therefore became the main target of the investigation in the cases of both ships because the Admiralty suspected and, as we already know, later revealed him to be the real ship-owner of the Hope and also of the Post van Hamburg, who had lived and traded for several years in enemy land. The most compelling and informative record in this regard is a 100-page collection of witness testimonies and attestations relating to the ship the Hope that were commissioned by the British High Court of Admiralty from the Hamburg Senate for the purpose of verifying the identities of the persons involved, their origin and their status of citizenship, in the case of the Hope.[60] Similar but shorter examinations had been conducted in the case of the Post van Hamburg, which are almost identical in content and as regards the included witnesses. The cases relating to the Hope and the Post van Hamburg were conducted together in London.

58 Regarding the founding of the Hamburg Handelsschule see Kuhfuss, *Kulturgeschichte des Französisch-unterrichts*, 468-472.

59 Hancock, *Citizens of the World*, 32. See in this regard also, with a reference to Defoe's *Complete Tradesman* emphasizing the importance of practical training, Shinagel, *Daniel Defoe*, 201-245.

60 Additional Hearings and Attestations of Hamburg Witnesses and Deponents based on additional interrogatories of the English High Court of Admiralty regarding the case of the *Hope*, taken place in Hamburg, January 1748. The court file comprises of two books (one in translation) of notarised attestations and affidavits taken before the authorities in Hamburg, with exhibits attached, and brought into court on 26 February 1747, with a translation dated May 1747 as well as 4 sets of eight attestations, affidavits and translations taken and sealed by the ruling authorities of Hamburg (as well as Rotterdam), brought into court in March 1748, TNA, HCA 32/115/14.

The large collection of witness statements, as part of the additional hearings in the case of the Hope, originally drawn up in High German but then translated, comprises a total of sixteen examinations of respectable Hamburg citizens, who were examined in order to contribute to the clarification of the situation behind the ship *Hoffnung*, otherweise Hope. The records therefore contain primarily questions about the life and background of Nicolaus Gottlieb Luetkens, who had already been identified as the actual owner of the hidden chest containing a merchant archive with many French letters found onboard the ship, which had cast suspicion on him. From a Hamburg point of view, these examinations should naturally prove and provide the evidence for Luetkens' close bond and association with the free and imperial, but most of all neutral city of Hamburg and not with France, which should of course lead to the release of the ship. The same held true for the additional hearings in the case of the Post van Hamburg. All witness statements are far from unbiased, but nonetheless contain valuable information about Luetkens because the witness statements on the whole must have withstood an examination. The fact that these examinations based on additional interrogatories from the High Court of Admiralty took place in January 1748, which was more than two and a half years after the capture of the ship Hope in August 1745, is further proof of the eventful history of this ship and it shows how intensively and painstakingly the Admiralty conducted their research. Since this collection also provides further information about Luetkens' life after his apprenticeship, I will also elaborate on this later part of his life in greater detail in the following explanations.

The examinations of the people in question took place in Hamburg, were presided over by the praetor of the Hamburg senate at that time, Johann Joachim Boetefeuer, and were furthermore attended by two public notaries acting as interpreters and by a minute writer. Individuals from a variety of professions and backgrounds appeared as witnesses in this case. They were interrogated and were asked a set of standardized questions provided by the High Court of Admiralty and sent to Hamburg. They could then answer these questions in a more or less extensive way depending on their relationship with Luetkens and their profession. Among the sixteen deponents we can find persons from the Hamburg chancery, in order to verify the passport of the ship Hope. We also find ships' husbands of the ship in order to verify the hiring contract of the ship, and last but not least we find merchants and clerks associated or known to the accused persons, who were familiar with the merchant Nicolaus Gottlieb Luetkens, his partners Hertzer & von Bobartt and Anton Luetkens. The deponents called before the Hamburg court were all defence witnesses.

The most informative witness statements regarding Nicolaus Gottlieb's biography are those of the merchants and the interrogated merchant clerks. Although almost all witnesses claimed that they "know very well that Nicholaus Gottlieb Lutckens some years ago, had been a travelling, but […] [they] did not know that this Lutckens has had his habituation in France or had been in possession there in one place or other of compting houses of trade or warehouses […] [and] that the said Nicholas Gottlieb Lutckens has learned his trade not in France but here in Hamburg", the merchants and clerks can be regarded as the most reliable sources in this regard, because they could provide detailed information about Luetkens' prior history, since they were familiar to him.[61] In their answers regarding the questions "Do you know Nicholas Gottlieb Lutkens? For how long have you known and been acquainted with him? And where hath he lived and resided during your knowledge of him? [...] And was he not notoriously known to carry on a Business or Trade as a Merchant in France? Speak the truth as You are upon your Oath", we can find information about Nicolaus Gottlieb's apprenticeship and his further development as a merchant.[62]

In the witness statement of Christopher Seydeler for instance, one of Luetkens' legal guardians, we can read "that Luetkens had learned his trade in the house of David Speelmeier, [...] with whom he served his full time out, where & during the time that Nicolaus Gottlieb Lutckens was in the service of the said Speelmeier, this deponent [Seydeler] has often times spoken with him." Later he repeated that Nicolaus Gottlieb Luetkens had "entirely served out his apprenticeship here in Hamburg [and adds that he] has served the said David Speelmeier here in Hamburg 6 or 7 years."[63] Such a long period of an apprenticeship was nothing particularly unusual or exceptional during the Early Modern Period. Rather, it was due to the custom that young men first received a decent level of initial education and basic training, only to be subsequently quickly integrated into the daily businesses of the respective merchant house, taking on more and more responsibilities and responsible tasks within and for the smooth running of the merchant house, such as bookkeeping.[64] Again this shows the highly practical nature of mercantile education in the 18th century. As a second stop the young apprentices were then promoted and took on the role of merchant servants or merchant clerks, in German "Handelsbedienter" or "Handelsdiener" in the merchant houses, being for instance mainly responsible for the correspondence activities of the trading house.[65] This typical path can also be assumed for Luetkens for the time that he spent in the house of David Speelmeyer, for which we can find further proof in the statements which give references to him not only as an "apprentice" but also as a "clerk". In the additional hearings regarding the Post van Hamburg, John Martin Lambrecht stated for the records that he "has known the said Nicolaus Gottlieb Lutkens above already six years and already at

61 Examination and attestation of Andreas Fischer, "a sworn Ships Husband in the Trade of this City", as part of the *Additional Hearings and Attestations*, TNA, HCA 32/115/14. See also examination and attestation of Andreas Fischer Diederich Glashoff, "ships husband", as well as Alexander Arnold Lambrecht, "an Inhabitant & merchant" and Daniel Richter Junior, ibid.

62 "Interrogatorys administered and to be administered on the part and behalf of Nicholas Craven," TNA, HCA 32/115/14: "5 ... Item let each witness be asked, Do you know Nicholas Gottlieb Lutkens? For how long have you known and been acquainted with him? And where hath he lived and resided during your knowledge of him? And for how long at each particular place? Let auch witness be asked jointly and severally and of everything? 6 ... Item Had er had not the said Nicholas Gotlieb Lutkens while he lived and resided in France a Compting House or Compting Houses and one or more Warehouse or Warehouses at Brest St. Malos or Nants or one or other and which of them or at some other and what [...] Port or Place in France? And was he not notoriously known to carry on a Business or Trade as a Merchant in France? Speak the truth as You are upon your Oath."

63 Examination and attestation of Christoph Seideler, "a telmonger", as part of the *Additional Hearings and Attestations*, TNA, HCA 32/115/14.

64 See Earle, *Making of the English Middle Class*, 100-111.

65 See Deges, "Handelsdiener," XV-LXI; see Ruppert, *Bürgerlicher Wandel*, 66. See as a contemporary source Marperger, *Getreuer und geschickter Handelsdiener.*

that very time when he was apprentice to a merchant here at Hamburg named David Speelmeyer". According to the statement of Andreas Fisher, a Hamburg ship's husband, "the said Nicholas Gottlieb Lutckens has learned his trade not in France but here in Hamburg in the house of the later merchant David Speelman newly deceased, in whose Compting house he had often seen & spoken to with him the said Lutckens as Clerck."[66] Albert von Bobartt, himself a clerk in the merchant house of Mess. Hertzer & von Bobartt in 1748, confirmed both other statements in almost the same words through his witness statement.[67]

Unfortunately, the concrete information about Nicolaus Gottlieb Luetkens' apprenticeship from these witness statements stops at this point. David Speelmeyer unfortunately represents another example of a person who has sunk completely into oblivion. However, we can at least still conclude what the further course of Nicolaus Gottlieb's time in the compting house of David Speelmeyer was on the basis of another statement given in the witness testimonies regarding his further course of education after his apprenticeship. Again referring to Seydeler, the further knowledge that we can get from his statements is that "afterwards he [Nicolaus Gottlieb] sett out on is travells at his own expenses & has been in several places as a travelling merchant, to gett himself some correspondence", which is again backed up by the other witness statements.[68] In the case of the Hope, in his attestation before court, Anthony Luetkens specified the stations of Luetkens' travels as "England, Holland, France and Spain at which places he had bought up cargos of goods to be sent to Hamburgh as occasion offered, either for his own account or for the joint account of himself and other merchants in Hamburg". As becomes clear from his attestation, Anthony's aim already at this stage was to proclaim his nephew's innocence as regards trading with the enemy.

The information about Luetkens' travels at the same time point us at the fact that Luetkens had finished his apprenticeship with a certain stock of capital of his own, which in turn points us to another usual practice with regard to an Early Modern apprenticeship. Towards the end of their apprenticeship or often already right from the moment when the young men took up the role of clerks in the merchant houses, aspiring wholesale merchants would for the first time also be given the opportunity to obtain shares in the business affairs of the respective merchant houses. This served the purpose, apart from naturally also yielding benefits for the merchant houses, that the young merchants would accumulate capital of their own that provided them with a solid first basis for their future career as a merchant.[69] Naturally, this custom simultaneously also further fostered their practical skills and competences in business practices, because

66 Examination and attestation of Andreas Fischer, "a sworn Ships Husband in the Trade of this City", as part of the *Additional Hearings and Attestations*, TNA, HCA 32/115/14.

67 Examination and attestation of Albert von Bobartt, "Clerck in the Compting House of Mess. Hertzer & von Bobartt", as part of the *Additional Hearings and Attestations*, TNA, HCA 32/115/14.

68 Examination and attestation of Christoph Seideler, "a telmonger", as part of the *Additional Hearings and Attestations*, TNA, HCA 32/115/14. See also attestations by Albert von Bobartt or Hinrich Stöver, "a clerck of chancery", ibid.

69 Regarding the conditions for the creation of "an inital stake" see Hancock, *Citizens of the World*, 241. See Grassby, *Business Community*, 82-84, 401. See Earle, *Making of the English Middle Class*, 100-111. See Deges, "Handelsdiener," LIV-LXII.

through taking on responsibilities the men learned directly about the consequences of their actions and trading activities. It trained them in internal accounting, trade execution, sales procedures and last but not least fostered their competences and knowledge in the dealings and interrelationships amongst the merchant community, including learning from their own experience about typical trading customs, written and unwritten rules of conduct, typical language use, international mercantile habits but also about the culture of conversing and dealing with each other.[70] Consequently, they also learned how to write appropriate letters. This happened, however, not by means of being thrown in at the deep end and instead within the relatively sheltered environment of the life and status as a clerk in an already established merchant house, which is yet another remarkable feature of the Early Modern mercantile educational system.

Most often, the capital stock they accumulated during their time in the merchant houses would then be used by the young men to go on a journey through Europe's booming trading cities to further enhance their skills and knowledge and to build up and extend their networks.[71] This is the pathway that Nicolaus Gottlieb, too, chose as his next challenge to foster his career. As several witness statements confirm, Nicolaus Gottlieb went on several long business trips or merchant trips after he had finished his apprenticeship although, as the statements also emphasise, without the intention of establishing himself or keeping a warehouse in any foreign country. Any other statement in this regard in these court testimonies would have carried the risk that the English Admiralty would have had concrete reason to contest Nicolaus Gottlieb Luetkens' neutral status as a Hamburg merchant. In the statement of Daniel Richter junior for instance we read about Nicolaus Gottlieb's last journey to France which ended in 1745, of which Richter knew "very well that the said Lutckens stayed in France as a stranger & a Hamburg merchant, who ordered goods to be bought for him, & payd commission for the same."[72] Quoting Alexander Arnold Lambrecht again, he put it on record that Nicolaus Gottlieb had been "on his travells in France to see his ffriends & correspondents there on account of his trading affairs in one or other towns of trade, but was never established there in one place or other."[73] Last but not least, in the statement of Seydeler, too, we can read of Luetkens' travels, and he added that he also knew "very well […] [that Luetkens] has made a tour to Spain."[74] Surprisingly none of the attestations in the case of the ship Hope mention Luetkens' first journey to England. In the case of the Post van Hamburg it is Anthony Luetkens only who refers to this journey. I know about it for sure due to a detailed pocketbook of expenses that Luetkens kept during the years 1739-1742, in which he recorded all the private running costs of his travels.[75]

70 See ibid. See Savary, *Der vollkommene Kauff- und Handelsmann*, 3-38. See Defoe, *Complete English Tradesman*, 5-6.

71 Regarding mercantile business trips as an important career step for young merchants see Ruppert, "Bürgerlicher Wandel," 86-94. See also Deges, "Handelsdiener," XLVIII-LIV.

72 Examination and attestation of Daniel Richter Junior, "an inhabitant & subject of this city", as part of the *Additional Hearings and Attestations*, TNA, HCA 32/115/14.

73 Examination and attestation of Alexander Arnold Lambrecht, "an Inhabitant & merchant", as part of the *Additional Hearings and Attestations*, TNA, HCA 32/115/14.

74 Examination and attestation of Christopher Seideler.

75 Pocketbook of expenses in TNA, HCA 30/232.

Either the other witnesses in Hamburg deliberately concealed this information, which is however rather unlikely because this information might potentially even have propitiated the British Admiralty members when looking into this case. Or, the omission of this fact is ultimately revealing with regard to the actual state of knowledge that the deponents actually had about the life and business of Nicolaus Gottlieb Luetkens and thus also about the partiality and the bias of the witnesses. How much did these deponents actually know?

One thing at least is certain: that these men tried everything in their power to help to make this case end with an acquittal. For this purpose, they knew exactly what they had to testify before court, and they naturally limited their statements exactly to the kind of information that they could confirm all together with a clear conscience.[76] It is therefore highly doubtful that each and every witness, maybe apart from the merchant Seydeler, actually knew Luetkens very personally or in depth, but they still knew very well what they had to testify about him before court in order to support the defence. The missing information about his stay in England in the testimonies regarding the Hope is a telling and conducive piece of evidence. This information was known only to actual insiders, which the majority of the deponents no longer appear to be. The nature and character of their statements subsequently took on the form of an interweaving of exactly that part of their own personal story and background that they were able to link in any way with the kind of common knowledge that we can assume the Hamburg elite had about the merchant Luetkens and his career. They also knew that the defence council would build the defence strategy upon their statements because these were the only established facts that the defence could draw upon at all. As such common knowledge about Luetkens can be considered those aspects that each witness referred to, namely that Luetkens served his apprenticeship in Hamburg in the house of David Speelmeyer, where some people met him and some others "had very often and frequent conversations with" him.[77]

It served as common knowledge that Luetkens went on travels, in very general terms, after his apprenticeship. And even if it might be just the smallest straw of proof and substantiation for this general narrative, the deponents referred to it in their statements, hoping that their statement would underpin the defence strategy, and at the same time satisfying and assuring themselves that they did not commit perjury.

What these additional hearings and attestations therefore mainly inform us about and provide relatively solid and reliable information about is the kind of common knowledge and information that prevailed in Hamburg about the merchant Luetkens as a person and about his career, and that is also exactly the point where the court records are most significant. Although the personal overlapping areas and presented stories with regard to Luetkens' person and career may indeed only be sparse and not

76 See in this regard in general Zemon Davis, Natalie. *Fiction in the Archives: Pardon Tales and Their Tellers in Sixteenth-Century France*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1987. See Blauert, Andreas, and Gerd Schwerhoff, eds. *Kriminalitätsgeschichte. Beiträge zur Sozial- und Kulturgeschichte der Vormoderne*. Konstanz: UVK, 2000, "Einleitung," 11-20.

77 Translation of the examination and attestation of Christoph Seydeler, as part of the Additional Hearings and Attestations of Hamburg Witnesses and Deponents based on additional interrogatories of the English High Court of Admiralty regarding the case of the Post van Hamburg, taken place in Hamburg, brought into court 24 February 1747, TNA, HCA 32/143/17.

always entirely verifiable, still all deponents could at least refer in one way or another to the general narrative and story used by the defence and the representatives of the Hamburg senate, thus substantiating it. In the light of this, it is maybe even better that we find for the most part only relatively sparse general information about Luetkens' apprenticeship and his subsequent journeys through Europe in the witness statements because at least this basic information that reappears in every single witness statement can be considered the most reliable. Any information going beyond that point, that is, exceeding the more general state of knowledge about Luetkens, however, can then only really be regarded as reliable information if the deponents could also produce hard evidence for their respective statements. Statements of this kind can in fact also be found in the witness testimonies, which at the same time also represent the sections in the court records in which the personal narratives made the most sense and actually helped to support the defence. This is for instance the case when the deponents could explicitly refer to specific other documents and records, which I regard as further fragments of an assured knowledge prevailing about Luetkens that can be found in the court records. On the other hand, all those statements that seem to refer only to hearsay must be regarded as mostly unreliable. The latter fact refers particularly to all the information given about Luetkens' intention not to establish himself in France or to keep a warehouse there, as was the third kind of information provided in the statements of the deponents, which surely must be seen as rather vague evidence in comparison to the other information. The reason for this is that having such information would have required intensive contact with Luetkens, which in turn would have also left a trace in the merchant archive found on board of the ship Hope. Of the sixteen witnesses examined in the case of the Hope, however, only one, Seydeler, kept regular correspondence with Luetkens, and this fact was also known to the Admiralty. As we will learn in the book, as a matter of fact, Luetkens did have the strong intention to establish himself and settle down in business in France. But this information, whether it was known or not known to the deponents, had of course no place at all in hearings that were intended to prove the exact opposite.

Returning to Luetkens' biography, the most reliable and concrete source of information with regard to Luetkens' travel activities after his apprenticeship and in connection with the hearings in Hamburg, is the statement of a bookkeeper who worked in Hamburg for several compting houses during that time and as such was also entrusted with reviewing Luetkens' merchant books. This witness provides us with extensive and concrete information about Luetkens' travel activities, even though this bookkeeper's statement surely was also biased not at least because he himself had been on Luetkens' payroll. His case nevertheless constitutes one of the more reliable kinds of witness statement in comparison to the other sources because he was able to provide hard evidence for his statements. This man could meticulously prove and list all the different travel destinations that Luetkens had visited during the years 1741 to 1745 because he could find this information in his own records and his first-hand knowledge of Luetkens' merchant books, which he would also be able to produce in court if necessary. This was, however, not even necessary due to the fact that regarding the information provided by him the court personnel would also be able to perform a kind of litmus test for themselves by looking at Luetkens' books in the Luetkens archive.

I am not sure if the court in the end went to this effort, but I did. The only thing one has to do to double-check the bookkeeper's witness statement is to compare the information given by him with the information in Luetkens' letter copy books and the letter address lines on all the letters that were stored in the Luetkens archive because they mention the respective cities where Luetkens was reachable for his correspondents at the different stages during his travels. This matching process also provides the opportunity to add the merchant houses where Luetkens stayed and worked during the time he spent in these cities to the respective travel destinations because these houses were often mentioned on the letters as part of the postal addresses. A typical postal address would for instance read "Monsieur N.G. Lutkens / Negotiant à Hambourg / chez Mons. d'Egmunth à L'orient."[78] This form of an address allowed both Luetkens himself and Monsieur d'Egmont in Lorient to pick up the letters at the local post office, which was the typical way of collecting one's letters in the Early Modern Period.

Whether this litmus test was performed by the court or not, it would have proved that none of the bookkeeper's explanations lacked substance. It is therefore the witness statement by the bookkeeper "Ludolph Jochim Köster, a Bookkeeper in several Compting houses of this City [Hamburg] & Burgher. 32 year old" from which we can compile, in a very comprehensive manner, all the travel destinations and locations that Luetkens visited during the years 1741 to 1745. I will cite large parts of his testimony and will furthermore add, in square brackets within the quote, the information about the respective houses where Luetkens stayed during the relevant time periods based on the information provided in the address lines of the incoming letters. This information will become significant in the chapter on commission trade, too, where I will explain in detail Luetkens' reasons for visiting these different merchant houses. In that chapter, we will also find a map of Luetkens' actual travel route.

Regarding the 5th interrogatory with the questions "Do you know Nicholas Gotlieb Lutkens? For how long have you known and been acquainted with him?", Köster "answered, that he has been employed & engaged in the Compting House of Nicholas Gottlieb Lutckens as Bookkeeper since September 1746. However that he had known him already some time before." Regarding the 6th interrogatory with the questions "Had or had not the said Nicholas Gotlieb Lutkens while he lived and resided in France a Compting House or Compting Houses and one or more Warehouse or Warehouses at Brest St. Malos or Nantes or one or other and which of them or at some other and what […] Port or Place in France? And was he not notoriously known to carry on a Business or Trade as a Merchant in France? Speak the truth as You are upon your Oath", Köster answered

> "that the Merchant Books of Nicholas Gottlieb Lutckens showd, that he had been in the year 1741 at Nantes [Pieter Luttman & Elart von Bobartt], 1742 in the month January at St. Sebastian [Nicolas and Jean Daragorry] in the month of March of the same year at Bilbao [Jean Baptiste Lacoste], in the Month of April of that year at Bayonne [Jean-Pierre Lichigaray Jeune] & in August at Bourdeaux [Johann Jakob Bethmann &

78 Letter from Bethmann, Johann Jakob to Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, August 10, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/234. A typical German address line reads "Herrn N.G Lutkens, Bey d. Herren Hertzer & Van Bobartt, Geg[enwärtig] in Hamburg." Letter from De Meyere & Zoonen, to Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, November 09, 1743, TNA, HCA 30/234.

> Jacques Imbert]; In the year 1743 in the Month February again at Bayonne, in June of the same year at Bordeaux, in the Month 7ber at London [Anthony Luetkens], in the Month of October at Amsterdam [Albertus de Meyere] & that from thence he arrived again here in Hamburg. That the said Nicholas Gottlieb Lutckens, set out again from Hamburg in the year 1744. That he was in the Months of May & June at Bordeaux, in the month of July at L'Orient, in the month of December at Brest [François Jourdain]; In the year 1745 in the month of July at L'Orient [Jean Jacques d'Egmont] in the month of December at Brest; In the year 1745. In the month of May at St. Malo [Jacques Du Buat] & in the Months of July & August in Brest, on the 28the of August at Paris. From which last mentioned city the said Nicolas Gottlieb Lutcken, as it appears by his Books of Correspondence, sett out the 3d of September, & arrived here in Hamburg on the 19th of the said month of September."[79]

Probably the only person who could have given an even more precise and accurate version of his travels than this list presented by Köster would have been the accused merchant Luetkens himself. Unfortunately, though, this opportunity was denied to him in the case of the Hope. Therefore, Luetkens simply had to put his trust in the credibility and reliability of his bookkeeper. Fortunately for us though, the situation in the case of the ship Post van Hamburg was different. In the court records relating to this ship, we find an original attestation given by the merchant Luetkens himself from the time when he had already returned to Hamburg. Though this attestation does not add more detail to the presented story and travel destination, it offers a concise summary in Luetkens' own words of all the essential points presented in the above explanation. This special record stated that

> "Appeared [before court in Hamburg] Mr. Nicolas Gottlieb Lutkens a Burgher and merchant of this place … is the son of one Nicolas Luetkens who was minister att the Billwarder which is under the jurisdiction of Hambro and consequently by his birth is a subject of this place and further that he dwelt with and served during the space of 7 years one David Speelmeyer a burgher and a merchant here as a servant in his business ["Handlungsbedienter"] but after the expiration of this time of service in order to prove himself in trade ["sich in der Handlung habilitiren"] he travelled into foreign countries to wit Holland England, France and Spain and so forth and after finishing his travels he returned back again to this place further that he having thereupon resolved once more to take a voyage into foreign countries in order to make friends and settle a correspondence in foreign parts ["sich Correspondenten und Freunde in auswärtigen Örtern zu erwerben"]. He did, before he went away pass a full power before a Notary here dated the thirty first January one thousand seven hundred fourty four to messieurs Hertzer & van Bobartt Burghers and merchants of this city to take care of and manage his affairs and thereupon in the month of February of the said year […] he sett out again from hence on his journey in pursuit of the affairs of his trade and went as well in Germany and Flanders as into France but for the most part of the time of his absence he remained in the French cities on the sea coast to witt Bayonne, Bordeux, S. Lorient, Vannes, Brest,

79 Examination and attestation of Ludolph Jochim Köster, "a Bookkeeper in several Compting houses of this City", as part of the *Additional Hearings and Attestations*, TNA, HCA 32/115/14.

> Morlaix, and Saint Malo, as a travelling merchant, but he never settled himself in any place whatsoever either in France or in Spain, and never had any intention of settling himself there on the contrary he caused, above nine months ago, a house to be hired and taken for him in this city of Hamburg by the said merchants Hertzer & van Bobartt in order to inhabit the same at his return, and afterwards appeared Messieurs Jobst Henning Hertzer and Christoph von Bobartt […] and confirmed the same."[80]

The Admiralty did not buy into all the details presented in his attestation, particularly not with regard to the purpose of his stay in France. Their version of events given by both the proctors for the captor in the case of the ship Hope and the Post van Hamburg, in almost exactly the same wording stated that

> "in fact and reality he the said Nicholas Gotlieb Lutkens did on the breaking out of the present war between England and France to wit in or about the months of April or May 1744 got to Brest and other parts in France not on his travels to visit any friends or correspondents but with a premeditated design to trade and traffick there in ships and goods taken from the English by the French and brought into their Ports and condemned there as Prize and he the said Nicholas Gotlieb Lutkens did accordingly continue to live and reside in France and carried on such Trade and Commerce there to the mutual Profit and advantage of himself and of the subjects of the french king and to the great encouragement of their privateers untill in or about the month of September 1745 and this was and is true and well known to the said Nicholas Gotlieb Lutkens and Anthony Lutkens of Hamburgh and so much doth and will most fully and manifestly appear from the preparatory examinations had and taken in this cause and from the severeal ships papers found on board the said ship L'Esperance otherwise Hoffnung."[81]

The truth surely lay somewhere in between both statements. It was a fact that Luetkens traded actively in France. However, he did that ultimately for the sake of his own business, which was a Hamburg business, and furthermore in both the cases he, as a matter of fact, involved neutral Hamburg merchants as shipowners. Interestingly, the court in the end came to see this, too, and decided in a rather similar, divided manner. Both ships were restored as neutral by the court. Most of the cargo however was condemned as legitimate prize.[82]

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80 Original translation by the court of the attestation of Nicolaus Gottlieb Luetkens and Hertzer & von Bobartt, "Summarische Deposition des erbaren Nicolaus Gottlieb Lutkens und der erbaren Hertzer & von Bobartt", as part of the as part of the *Additional Hearing and Attestations*, TNA, HCA 32/143/17, CP 9a/b.

81 It even continues "Item that in or about the month of August 1744 the said ship *L'Esperance otherwise Hoffnung* then called *the L'Upton* being an English Ship taken and condemned as Prize by the French was sold in the court of the admiralty of the Bishoprick of Vannes to Mr. Peron of Port Louis in France and was bought by him for the account of the said Nicholas Gotlieb Lutkens." Allegation given by Stevens brought in 21st Nov. 1747, referred to in the catalogue as allegation of the captor Nicholas Craven, 30 May 1747, TNA, HCA 32/115/14. The allegation in the case of the *Post van Hamburg* in the same wording was brought into court 16 March 1748, allegation, *Post van Hamburg*, brought into court 16 March 1748, HCA 32/143/17.

82 See Perl-Rosenthal, "Reading Cargoes."

2.5 A Travelling Merchant

Another specific record within the Luetkens archive allows us to add in the next step to the general life data and the information on Luetkens' travel route, as well as concrete information about his lifestyle and the typical costs and activities of a merchant on travel apart from his business activities. The information provided, however, does not relate to his business trip through France, but to one of his earlier trips to England. This information on his earlier travels already starting in 1738 thus expands the knowledge we gained about Luetkens travels between 1741-1745 given in the statement by bookkeeper Köhler. It can be assumed that his personal travel expenses during his voyage through France were, however, comparable in terms of what would have been listed, yet higher in terms of the amounts, due to longer travel distances and the increased cost of living not with relatives but in other merchant houses.

Within the Luetkens archive we can find a pocketbook of expenses that lists all the private expenses that Nicolaus Gottlieb Luetkens incurred between the years 1738 and 1742, strictly separated from his business expenses.[83] This book provides us with a profound insight into the life of a merchant on travel. If we only take the total amount of his expenses, which is given at the end of the book after he had listed, down to the last Pound Sterling, each and every one of his expenses of the preceding years in an ongoing order and counting, this book is impressive. In total, his first voyage cost him 7,900 Pound Sterling, which is a good indicator why it was such a necessity for young merchant apprentices first to acquire a certain capital stock before they went on travels. However, the merchants on travel would naturally also have earnings during their travels and were furthermore supported by their peers.[84] For comparison please note that this amount is approximately equivalent to three quarters of the price of a regular three-masted vessel at that time, of which Luetkens also bought several during that period as reflected in several sales contracts and advertisements that can be found in the archive.[85]

This shows the immense significance that was attributed to travel activities during that time and also to adhering to a specific lifestyle while travelling. The expenses book enables us to further complete our existing picture of the merchant Nicolaus Gottlieb Luetkens, and in the following explanations, I will compile all the information about Luetkens' travel activities gathered from it. The informative value and content of the book can be divided into three kinds of expenditures and therefore three fields of knowledge. Firstly, it provides further information regarding accommodation and sightseeing excursions. Secondly, it contains information regarding the cultivation of a bourgeois lifestyle, particularly as regards expenditure on clothing, food and leisure

83 Pocketbook of expenses in TNA, HCA 30/232.

84 Ibid.

85 See for instance the sales contract, Factura, for the ship Margretha Elisabeth, bought in Bilbao in July 1743, which costed 12,641 Pound Sterling. See *Printed advertisements* for the purchase of the prize ship L'Upton of London (later the *Hope*) and its cargo, at Port Louis 5 August 1744 [bought by Luetkens], TNA, HCA 30/232. See *Printed advertisements* for the purchase of prize ships and cargo in Spain and France, e.g. *La Plaisance, L'Aigle Volant*, TNA, HCA 30/232.

activities during a merchant tour that will also reflect the influence of the early Enlightenment on a burghers' life.[86] Last but not least, we are provided with information about the daily running costs a merchant had during his travels. All three fields of knowledge taken together lead over to the last part of this chapter, which deals with the concrete demands of a mercantile establishment phase.

First of all, the pocketbook contains a variety of information that help us to further pin down the stations of his travels. The very first entry reveals to us that he arrived in London, as the very first station of his travels, in October 1738, because he noted that "A[nno] 1738 October 8, the hard cash" that he brought with him to London amounted to 197 Reichstaler and 15 Pound Sterling.[87] In addition to that he received from his uncle Anthony Luetkens and from Christopher Seydeler, a name that rings a bell with us, a total of 254:6 Reichstaler, 30 Pound Sterling for his conto current, his current account. This amount, in turn, was topped up by further cash remittances by the same two people over the following months. These two merchants thus reveal themselves to be important sponsors and supporters of Luetkens' travels, which once again undermines the illusion of Nicolaus Gottlieb Luetkens being an entirely self-made man. In fact, without the financial support and general assistance of his uncles and other kin, his travel activities would simply not have been possible. This represents another typical characteristic of a mercantile upbringing.[88] Apart from this information about his account status, the information that Luetkens arrived in London in 1738 also enables us to exactly work out at what age and in what year Luetkens apprenticeship ultimately must have once started. Since we know from the court records that his time in the house of Speelmeyer had lasted seven years, we can conclude that his apprenticeship and his service as a clerk in the merchant house of Speelmeyer must have lasted from around 1731 to 1738. And this information in turn reveals that he must have started his apprenticeship, as was rather typical, at the age of 14.[89] Regarding the end of his first business trip through Europe, we are likewise able to designate the exact date and year. At the very end of his pocketbook Nicolaus Gottlieb Luetkens gave as the date of his last entry on his travels "today the 21st of August 1742".[90] At this date, he arrived back in Hamburg from the last station of his first journey, which was Bilbao in Spain, of which we know, apart from the entries in the court records, since he had also recorded the costs for this last trip in the previous entry. "On the 24th of August [he noted as the] expenses for a round trip to Spain since February 1742, 3200 Pound Sterling."[91] With the help of the costs given for passages, coaches, horses, and even drinking money he had given to seamen listed in

86 See in this regard Leibetseder, "Educational Journey." Regarding the bourgeois lifestyle see North, Michael. *Material Delight and the Joy of Living: Cultural Consumption in Germany in the Age of Enlightenment*. Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2008. See Van Dülmen, Richard. *The Society of the Enlightenment. The Rise of the Middle Class and Enlightenment Culture in Germany*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 1992.

87 Pocketbook of expenses in TNA, HCA 30/232.

88 See Grassby, *Business Community*, 82-84, 92, 195. See Hancock, *Citizens of the World*, 43.

89 See Earle, *Making of the English Middle Class*, 43-44. See also Ruppert, *Bürgerlicher Wandel*, 76-82. See Van Dülmen, *Kultur und Alltag*, 121-122.

90 Pocketbook of expenses in TNA, HCA 30/232.

91 Ibid.

the book, we can furthermore exactly establish the intermediate stops of his travels. His stay in London lasted from October 1738 till April 18th, 1740. We know this because he noted that he bequeathed at the time of his departure a certain amount of "Reichstaler to the children of his uncle, the maidservants of his uncle as well as to the maidservants in the house of the merchant Well and his boy servants as well as to a certain Crullenberg and several others as well as to the churches of London". He then travelled by ship to Caen, France, arriving on the 10th of June, where he and then continued by horse and coach to Nantes in France, which we all can account for through respective entries in his pocketbook. In October 1741, he continued his journey by travelling to L'Orient, where he spent money on accommodation in the house of the merchant Gloye but also for instance on visits to the local coffee house. From L'Orient he travelled to Bordeaux, from where he then took the coach to Bilbao at the beginning of February 1742, where he would stay another 6 months until returning to Hamburg.[92] This character of his travels was typical for Early Modern travel. Combining this information with the other information that we already gained regarding his business trip to France and the information about his childhood and apprenticeship, we are now able to compile a concise biography that comprehensively and significantly extends our picture of Luetkens and his early life beyond the picture offered in the contemporary biographical entries and obituaries. This concise version of his educational path therefore serves in the following as the fundamental basis and background to my analyses.

Born in 1717 in Hamburg Billwärder, Nicolaus Gottlieb Luetkens was first homeschooled by his father and was furthermore educated by a private tutor. He entered into an apprenticeship at the age of 14 in the house of the Hamburg merchant David Speelmeyer, where he served seven years during which he was also appointed a merchant clerk in the same house. After his apprenticeship, Luetkens went on his first business trip through Europe, supported by his legal guardians and uncles, after his father had died in 1736. This business trip started in 1738 in London, where his uncle Anthony Luetkens ran a merchant house, continued in France from 1741 onwards (Nantes, Bordeaux) and finally ended in Spain in 1742 (Bilbao). His second business trip eventually took him to France. It started in autumn 1743 and lasted two years, during which he visited several important trading cities as a travelling merchant until finally returning to Hamburg by land in September 1745 for his marriage to Ilsabe Engelhardt, which took place in November 1745. Ilsabe was the sister of Ehrenfried Engelhardt, with whom Luetkens entered into a partnership and opened up his merchant house in Hamburg. The further course of his life is presented in detail in the contemporary biographies and obituaries on Luetkens.

The information about the general course and route of his travels, is, however, not the only information that we can gain from the pocketbook about Luetkens' first trip through Europe. Rather, we have arrived at the point where we are slowly but steadily shifting our perspective from the level of dates and travel stations to the more private and personal sites of Luetkens' stay abroad and his experiences during his travels. The

92 See ibid.

pocketbook of expenses allows us, for instance, to learn about sightseeing trips that Luetkens undertook in England and France. Unfortunately, no similar information is given with regard to Spain. Furthermore, the pocketbook reveals the accommodation he chose and paid for during his travels. In London for instance he lived in the house of a certain "Sam[ue]l Highmore in Mortlake", Surrey, who was a priest, a "minister of a dissenting congregation" as we find in a description of this man in the Gentleman's Magazine of 1790, who also accommodated travellers in his house, and to whom Luetkens paid a monthly rate.[93] A rather funny side note to this is that if we compare the location of Luetkens' lodgings in London with a map of London today, we realise that during his stay in England Luetkens actually lived quite near to the place where his letters are stored today. Samuel Highmore's house would have been in walking distance to the current location of the National Archives in Kew. The small excursions that Luetkens undertook during his stay in England took him, as the pocketbook shows, inter alia to Windsor ["Winsor"], to Kingston ["Kingsen"], to Hampton Court ["Hemtenkort"], to Saint Tabborn ["St. Tabborn"] and of course to the city centre of London.[94] Later in France, during his first trip, he lived, as we already heard, in the house of the merchant Gloye, whose children received some money later and some "confecturen", jam, as gifts in 1740.[95] In Bordeaux he probably stayed at the house of a certain Madame Sabenyoll, to whom he also paid rent, according to his pocketbook. He undertook smaller excursions in France, too, which took him for example to Bourgneuf, which was an important place for buying ships during that time. We learn three things through this information which are significant and meaningful with regard to the more personal demands and the general characteristics of a mercantile business trip during that time.

First, we learn that apart from the strategy Luetkens chose with regard to accommodation for his second trip through France, which was to work and live in the houses of established merchants in France, it was also common practice to look for accommodation in local inns, lodges or taverns. Staying in the houses of already established merchants in foreign countries always harboured a later risk of being accused of collaborating with the enemy in any prize case, which was, of course, an impression that the merchants tried to avoid if at all possible. This is the reason why many of the deponents in the case of the Hope and the Post van Hamburg referred to Luetkens in their witness statements as a merchant on travel, "as a Traveller", who would "sett out on is travells at his own expenses & has been in several places as a travelling merchant, to gett himself some correspondence“, because this meant that Luetkens could refer to himself as and maintain the image of a free and independent traveller between the worlds of the belligerent parties of that time.[96] Naturally, this image most of the time was an illusion in view of the merchants' everyday life on travel, even when they chose neutral

93 Pocketbook of expenses in TNA, HCA 30/232. Samual Highmore is mentioned in "Obituary of considerable persons." *Gentleman's Magazine* 67 (1790): 274-282, here 280.

94 Pocketbook of expenses in TNA, HCA 30/232.

95 Ibid.

96 Examination and attestation of Christopher Seydeler. See also Examination and attestation of Georg Christian Geerts, "a merchant", as part of the *Additional Hearings and Attestations*, TNA, HCA 32/115/14.

places to live during their stays abroad. For example, even though Luetkens stayed in the house of Samuel Highmore during his first trip to London, he spent most of his time in the merchant house of his uncle Anthony Luetkens and Anthony's business partner Hinrich Well. This fact becomes obvious through the many gifts and donations to the maids and servants at the merchant house that we find among Luetkens' expenditures. In a way, this can however also be even seen as a rather self-evident fact. Taking part in their business introduced him to the customs and mercantile practices of London-based trade, which was highly important to further enhance his skills in business.

During his establishment phase in France, Luetkens still mostly lived and traded in the houses of already established merchants, both French and from other countries such as the Netherlands, Switzerland and Germany. The particular reason for the latter will be presented in detail in the chapter on commission trade. As the example of the time that he had spent in the house of Madame Sabenyoll shows, he on occasion also made use of neutral accommodation. In a way, this latter custom can be regarded as almost a kind of compromise settlement prevailing among all the parties involved that ensures that, at least, the young merchants kept up the appearance and fulfilled the formal requirements were that they ought to act and live separately and independently from the local trading markets. Nonetheless, at the same time it was common currency that they simply could not avoid being involved in the local trade and working together with the local merchants. How would they otherwise have got the chance to learn about the rules and customs of international trade? Using the example of the choice of accommodation, it thus becomes vividly clear how the young men found peculiar and appropriate ways and means to find a kind of a middle course between personal independence and active engagement and involvement as merchants that would suit their situation. This constant tightrope walking was a characteristic feature of almost all areas of Luetkens' life during this time and, as one of the main challenges he had to cope with, it eventually lasted for the whole duration of his stay abroad.

The second noteworthy fact that we learn from the information on his travels is the fact that Luetkens chose the house of his uncle Anthony Luetkens in London as the very first address to turn to after his apprenticeship. Once more we see that young merchants were meant to be provided, as far as possible, with the opportunity of a kind sheltered environment for growing up and for getting a smooth introduction into the hazardous world of trade. By turning to his uncle as his first point of contact for his stay abroad and by working in his house and the houses of Anthony's business partners in London, he enjoyed once again the benefit of what was in essence a secure training ground which put him in a stronger position to set out on his way into self-employment.[97] It is therefore surely also no surprise that this period in London ended up lasting almost two years, but this was rather symptomatic, too. His stay in London could be seen ultimately as an extended version of his employment phase in the house of Speelmeyer, only that he would now have been given even more responsibilities in order to further pave his way into his own establishment. This in theory clear requirement to act on one's own

97 See also Grassby, *Business Community*, 195, 293. Hancock, *Citizens of the World*, 124. See furthermore Häberlein, "Trading Companies." See also Ditz, "Shipwrecked," 63. As a comparable example see also Müller, *The Merchant Houses of Stockholm*, 24-27.

during one's mercantile travels was thus once again thwarted or circumvented because naturally the young men would seek to profit from their existing contacts in foreign lands and equally naturally visit and work for their contacts. This was especially true if it was family, no matter whether these contacts had affiliations with foreign countries and their economic markets. To a certain extent, this sheltered dipping into foreign markets can surely be seen as another unwritten law of an Early Modern establishment phase.

The third characteristic feature of mercantile years of travel visible in Luetkens' expenditures with regard to his general travel activities is that we learn of Luetkens' manifold small excursions. These excursions show us that it was not only regarded as important to visit foreign lands and their cities in general but also to get to know these cities and their cultural and historical sights. This trained and fostered the young merchants' urbanity and their experiences in the ways of the world. Contrary to the aristocratic or bourgeois Grand Tours, however, these small excursions did not serve merely the purpose of joyrides but most of the time they also had very concrete practical purposes. Apart from visiting Hampton Court or Windsor castle, which are still very popular sights for visitors to London today, the small trips for instance to Kingston or central London, or to Bourgneuf in France always also served the purpose of visiting and meeting other local merchants there in order to establish further contacts and to get to know to local usances. Even the trips to places such as Hampton Court can be seen as a kind of networking and bonding activity because Luetkens visited these places together with fellow travellers or members of the Luetkens family. In London, for instance, he undertook other entertainment activities with his aunt, like participating in the local lottery.[98]

The reason for the fact that we cannot find a comparable book of expenses for the time between 1743 and 1745 in France is simply that Luetkens must have kept this most current book of expenses with him as part of his most personal belongings together with his most current Letter Book and presumably also most personal letters, which he would carry with him and not store it in his mercantile archive. As we know of the witness testimony and attestation of the bookkeeper Köster, Luetkens did not accompany his archive on its way to Hamburg by ship in August 1745 as he still had to settle some last business matters in France with another stop-over in Paris before returning home.[99] It can therefore be assumed that he had also taken his most current pocketbook of expenses and other most personal items with him personally during this last trip, maybe in a travel bag, which was an item that we can also find among the expenses between 1738 and 1742.

98 See Ruppert, *Bürgerlicher Wandel*, 86-90. See Leibetseder, "Educational Journey." See also Grosser, "Kavalierstour – Patrizierreise – bürgerliche Bildungsreise," 135-176.

99 Examination and attestation of Ludolph Jochim Köster, "a Bookkeeper in several Compting houses of this City", as part of the *Additional Hearings and Attestations*, TNA, HCA 32/115/14.

2.6 A Bourgeois Lifestyle

Another field of insights that we can gain from Luetkens' pocketbook of expenses is the detailed information about Luetkens' clothing habits and leisure activities as these expenses represent the effort he went to in order to uphold a bourgeois mercantile lifestyle during his travels. From this we can also draw first conclusions about the demands of an Early Modern mercantile establishment phase. Such a lifestyle, reflected in expenditure not only on clothing, but also on books, gifts or leisure activities, represented a major asset and cultural capital as well as a clear requirement for a mercantile establishment phase. It fostered and underpinned the aspiring merchants' self-perception as a merchant and his claim to becoming acknowledged as a respected member of the merchant community at home and abroad because he could demonstrate through his expenditures that he knew how to behave, how to dress and what to consume as a merchant in an appropriate and socially approved manner. The pocketbook of expenses shows us a young man who knew exactly how he had to present himself in public and private in order to be deemed a respected representative of his métier and his craftsmanship. For us, he represents an appealing textbook example of a commercial man living during the early Enlightenment.[100]

It can be assumed that Nicolaus Gottlieb had in essence learned and internalised this bourgeois lifestyle ever since his childhood days in a parish priest's house, but especially also during his youth and apprenticeship in Hamburg. During the end of the 17th and the beginning of the 18th, Hamburg was one of the booming cities of the early Enlightenment and, importantly, also famous for its bourgeois civil life shaped by a very strong middle class and merchant elite.[101] Growing up in this city, especially between the 1720s and 1730s, therefore meant quite literally that Nicolaus Gottlieb enjoyed the

100 A good comparable example regarding mercantile lifestyle can be found in Spalding/Spalding. *The Account Books of the Reimarus.* See also Fulda, Daniel. *Galanterie und Frühaufklärung*. Halle (Saale): Mitteldeutscher Verlag, 2009. Regarding European Fashion in general during the Early Modern Period see the introduction by Mentges, Gabriele. "European Fashion (1450–1950)." *Europäische Geschichte Online (EGO)*, edited by the Leibniz-Institut für Europäische Geschichte (IEG), Mayence 2011. http://www.ieg-ego.eu/mentgesg-2011-en, accessed June 4, 2019. Regarding 18th-century bourgeois lifestyle in general see North, *Joy of Living;* Van Dülmen, *Society of the Enlightenment.* See also Ilmakunnas, Johanna, and Jon Stobart, eds. *A Taste for Luxury in Early Modern Europe: Display, Acquisition and Boundaries*. London: Bloomsbury, 2017. For France, see also Roche, Daniel. *The Culture of Clothing: Dress and Fashion in the Ancien Regime*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996.

101 Kopitzsch, *Grundzüge einer Sozialgeschichte*, vol. 1, 247-451. See for a good overview Kopitzsch, Franklin. "*Zwischen Hauptrezeß und Franzosenzeit 1712-1806. Geistiger Aufbruch. Die Aufklärung*." In *Hamburg. Die Geschichte der Stadt und ihrer Bewohner*, edited by Werner Jochmann and Hans-Dieter Loose, 351-414. Hamburg: Hoffmann und Campe, 1982. Regarding the role of the mercantile elite in Hamburg see Hohendahl, Peter Uwe. *Patriotism, Cosmopolitanism, and National Culture: Public Culture in Hamburg 1700-1933*. Amsterdam/New York: Rodopi, 2003. See Kopitzsch, Franklin. "Sozietäten und Literatur in der Hamburger Aufklärung." In *Hamburg im Zeitalter der Aufklärung*, edited by Inge Stephan and Hans-Gerd Winter, 124-136. Berlin/Hamburg: Dietrich Reimer Verlag, 1989. See in general ibid.; see Steiger/Richter, *Hamburg*. See Trepp, *Sanfte Männlichkeit und selbständige Weiblichkeit.* See Lindemann, Mary. *Patriots and Paupers. Hamburg, 1712-1830*. New York/Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990.

full privilege of being socialised in a city in which the bourgeois lifestyle was representing the status quo. In Hamburg, the first coffee houses opened in the late 17th century and then spread all over the city to become important meeting places for the burghers of the city. Here the first German moral weekly, the *Patriot*, was published, when Nicolaus Gottlieb was eight years old.[102] The Hamburg printing press and literature market in general was one booming during the time. Hamburg also had a very lively academic life and was one of the leading parts of the early "republic of scholars" and the corresponding republic of letters, of which his father and his acquaintances were important members. The Hamburg schools and universities were well known far beyond regional borders.[103] Last but not least, the Hamburg merchant houses enjoyed the highest international reputation.[104] It was amidst this impressive bourgeois public sphere and society that the young Nicolaus Gottlieb grew up.

When Nicolaus Gottlieb took to the road for his travels to England, the Netherlands, Spain and France, he was already carrying quite a bit in his luggage, not only with regard to his actual travel baggage, but also with regard to his manners of bourgeois appearance and his habitual skills. These skills would subsequently be enhanced further during his travels.[105] In addition, he would also familiarise himself with the customs and civil life of other cities and countries, and he should of course improve his language skills in the foreign lands. On all these aspects, the pocketbook provides valuable insights and hints and likewise also provides us with the evidence for how crucial this habitual knowledge apparently was for a mercantile establishment phase.

In the pocketbook, we therefore find, amongst others, the following items that Luetkens purchased during his travels. First, we find entries about visits to the local coffeehouses, every time he first arrived in a city or on special occasions such as Christmas. Apart from that, he purchased, as the entries show tea and sugar, coffee, tobacco, snuff tobacco, for which he also bought a small box, green tea, sugar, brandy and even milk. This shows us that he bought goods that were consumed in the coffee houses also for his personal use.[106] As a merchant, who traded as a commission agent in these commodities and goods, he naturally also had to present himself as an expert and connoisseur of these goods. Apart from that, these items were natural parts of a bourgeois

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102 *Der Patriot* nach der Originalausgabe Hamburg 1724-1726, 4 volumes, edited by Wolfgang Martens, Band IV: Kommentarband. Berlin/New York: De Gruyter, 1984.

103 See Brietzke, Dirk, and Franklin Kopitzsch and Rainer Nicolaysen, eds. *Das Akademische Gymnasium. Bildung und Wissenschaft in Hamburg 1613-1883*. Berlin: Reimer, 2013. See Rathje, Jürgen. "Gelehrtenschulen. Gelehrte, Gelehrtenzirkel und Hamburgs geistiges Leben im frühen 18 Jahrhundert." In *Hamburg im Zeitalter der Aufklärung*, edited by Inge Stephan and Hans-Gerd Winter, 93-123. Berlin/Hamburg: Dietrich Reimer Verlag, 1989.

104 See already Baasch, Ernst. *Der Einfluß des Handels auf das Geistesleben Hamburg*. Leipzig: Duncker & Humblot, 1909.

105 Regarding the French lifestyle see Roche, *The Culture of Clothing*, Part II "The Economy of Wardrobes", particularly 184-258. See also Viala, Alain. *La France galante. Essai historique sur une catégorie culturelle, de ses origines jusqu'à la Révolution*. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 2008. Regarding language learning see Kuhfuss, *Kulturgeschichte des Französischunterrichts*, 349-476.

106 Book of expenses in TNA, HCA 30/232.

lifestyle during the age of Enlightenment.[107] Secondly, we find entries regarding visits not only to the cultural sights of the cities but also to other cultural offerings and events. As such could be considered for instance masquerades that Nicolaus Gottlieb had visited. This becomes apparent from his expenditures on these occasions as well as from his preparations for these events. He for instance borrowed a costume and bought a mask. We can also consider as parts of such habitual training the dancing lessons that he took at a local dancing school and with a master, which presumably was intended to prepare him to fit in on occasions such as the masquerade.[108] Dancing was furthermore not limited to public occasions but was also quite usual in more private settings and contexts, such as the typical tête-à-têtes, which bourgeois families often shared with each other, and of which we can also read in the Luetkens letters.[109] Developing and showing skills and knowledge of such cultural activities formed an important asset that a young man had to incorporate during his education and his establishment phase. Thirdly, we find lots of entries about gift and presents. During the entire Early Modern Period, gift-giving was one of the most crucial practices of social life representing an important tool of mutual recognition and esteem within the hierarchical social structure of the era.[110] It not only represented good form and manners but literally belonged to the standard repertoire of sociability, which especially young people had to comply with, who would have been dependent on the goodwill of others, such as supporters and patrons. Finding a lot of gifts and presents among the entries in the pocketbook shows that Nicolaus Gottlieb Luetkens also knew what befitted him in this regard and also what would suit his needs. He would often bestow gifts and presents, such as financial donations, jam ["confecturen"], chestnuts ["castanien"] or valuable "drinking glasses", upon his uncles and aunts, his first trading partners, as well as his landlords, their family, servants and maids, to ensure their benevolence and affection for him. But he also sent his two brothers several gifts such as silver buckles for their shoes or silver buttons.[111]

107 See North, *Joy of Living*. See the HERA project Intoxicating Spaces: https://www.intoxicatingspaces.org, accessed October 19, 2020. See Withington, Phil. "Intoxicants and the Invention of 'Consumption'." *The Economic History Review* 73 (2020): 384-408.

108 Regarding *Masquerades*, particularly in France, see Wahrman, *Making of the Modern Self*, "The Eighteenth-Century Masquerade," 157-311. See in general Stollberg-Rilinger, Barbara. *Europa im Jahrhundert der Aufklärung*. Stuttgart: Reclam 2000, 114-144.

109 See letter from De Meyere, Albertus to Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, August 20, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/234. "Am Don[n]erstag morgen war ich bey Kähler u. des nachmittags muste ich mit ihm [...] [und seiner] Tochter nach den Garten fahren, allwo H. von Schwechelsen u. [die] Muhme Heusch u. die Krauses nebst ihren Töchtern [waren]." Letter from Luetkens, Joachim to Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, May 25, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/235.

110 See as an introduction Kettering, Sharon. "Gift-Giving and Patronage in Early Modern France." *French History* 2, no. 2 (1988): 131-151. See also Krausman Ben-Amos, Ilana. *The Culture of Giving: Informal Support and Gift-Exchange in Early Modern England*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011, "The Economy of Giving," 143-306. See in general Mauss, Marcel. *The Gift. Form and Reason for Exchange in Archaic Societies*. London: Routledge Classics, 2002 (first edition, in French, *Essay sur le don*, 1950).

111 Pocketbook of expenses in TNA, HCA 30/232.

A fourth category of expenses is books. We find amongst his expenditures for instance a history book ["Historienbuch"], an English bible, an English letter manual ["Engl. Br:Buch"], and three French books, among them the famous Robinson Crusoe ["R. Crusoe"]. Reading and erudition were among the prime cultural assets and cultural capital during the Enlightenment, especially for the middle class.[112] Luetkens' choice of books, however, obviously also served more practical reasons. Arriving in England, he needed to get more familiar with English letters and get used to writing and reading them, so he bought an English letter manual. The same reason applied to his purchase of an English bible. Arriving in France, he needed further literacy skills in French, so he bought Robinson Crusoe and the two other books, presumably also a letter-writing manual, which would, however, also serve his recreational pleasure.

Dressing like a Merchant

The last area of expenses with regard to his habitual advancement and skills, which is also the one group of items that accounts for the major share of expenses in the book, regards his expenditure on clothing. With the help of all these entries regarding clothing, we are able to reconstruct and gain a very detailed and vivid picture of Luetkens' well-groomed outward appearance.[113] The pocketbook even provides us with the opportunity to undertake the experiment of fitting out a mannequin today as if we were facing Luetkens himself in the clothing that he was wearing during his travels.

Starting at the top, the mannequin would need a typical 18th-century wig ["Parucke"], of which Luetkens purchased six between the years 1738 and 1742, of which one is more specified as a "round" wig. The book furthermore shows that each year one or two wigs would be purchased to replace the older ones. For the cold nights in England and France, Luetkens also bought nightcaps, but our mannequin still keeps its wig on as that was the typical headdress worn in public. Under the wig, Luetkens would wear a "hear-bonet" ["Haarbeutel"] in order to tame his hair. Sometimes he would also wear a hat ["Hutt"]. The next items that can be found in the book are scarves and neckerchiefs, of which he bought several. As underwear, Luetkens would wear "white skivvies" and "silk stockings" or alternatively "cotton stockings" ["weiß unterzeug, Seiden Strümpfe, Baumwollstrümpfe"]. Over this, he would then wear white shirts or shirt blouses, of which he bought "six new" ones. We also find a reference in the book to "red sheets", which could have been used for revamping his shirts. As the next item on the list, and this time one of the more flamboyant pieces of his outer appearance, we find a "golden waistcoat" ["goldene Weste"] which he combined with a camelot ["chamelot", Kamelott, Schamlott in German] skirt, a dark red satin "camisol" jacket garnished with damast ["Camelot zum Rock, Seiden Camisol […], Damask

112 See Cavallo, Guglielmo, and Roger Chartier, eds. *A History of Reading in the West*. Cambridge: Polity, 1999. See Chartier, Roger. *Lesewelten. Buch und Lektüre in der frühen Neuzeit*. Frankfurt a.M./New York, Campus, 1990.

113 See Welch, Evelyn. *Fashioning the Early Modern. Dress, Textiles, and Innovation in Europe, 1500-1800*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017.

Figure 7: Dressing like a merchant. Reconstruction of Luetkens' outward appearance based on the items listed in his pocketbook of expenses.

Source: Illustration by Anne van Stormbroek.

zum Camisol"] and a red frock coat ["ein rothen Mantellrock"].[114] In winter, he would equip his frock coat and jacket with further lining. More representative items of his expenditure list were valuable silver buttons and a knife ["vor silberne Knöpfe und Meßer"], handkerchiefs ["Schnupftücher"], a silver rapier ["silberne Degen"] and last but not least, as the most expensive item we can find in his pocketbook, Luetkens wore a "golden pocket watch" worth 14 Pound, which he would tie to his clothes with a chain [a particular "Pinschbecken Uhrkette"].[115] Completing our mannequin, Luetkens would wear buckled shoes, of which he owned several pairs and which he would replace more or less on a monthly basis. He stored all his clothing during his travels in a

114 Tailor's bill, Gottfried Walter, 1743, HCA 30/232.

115 All items mentioned in his pocketbook of expenses in TNA, HCA 30/232.

"chest", his travel chest. In fact, as the court records in the case of the Hope reveal, some of these cloths, some "wearing apparrol" were still stored in his travel chest at the time the English officers found the hidden archive in the after-hold of the ship.[116] Unfortunately, Luetkens' clothes, have not survived in the National Archives in London. Most probably, they were thrown away or sold by the English authorities in 1745.

All in all, looking at our mannequin, we realise that Luetkens must have cut quite a stately figure in terms of his appearance during his travels. His dress and appearance matched other portraits of merchants of the time as well as actual miniature mannequins of merchants.[117] Not least these similarities show that by wearing such clothes Luetkens clearly underpinned and demonstrated his claim to become or even already to be a respectable member of the merchant community. This appears to have been another important asset for a young merchant on travel. On the other hand, we can also find entries in his pocketbook with regard to his clothing habits that point us once again to the special hybrid status of a merchant during his establishment phase. These entries show that, even though he surely needed to present himself as a well-dressed man, he was required not to exceed reasonable limits with regard to his outward appearance. It is thus very telling that apart from the listings for a golden waist coast or clocks we find numerous entries in his pocketbook that underpin that Luetkens was very committed to ensuring that his dress style would not seem excessive or lavish. Multiple times he noted for instance that a tailor named "Feldman" had patched his old clothes or he simply noted that his "shirts had been patched". In France, he had his clock beaten out. As a merchant on travel, he had to show that he was also able to reasonably budget for himself. In the end, he was therefore also complying adequately with a more general contemporary demand of young men, which was that they had to be thrifty and frugal in their lifestyle.[118]

Again, as we look at both sides together, we see the difficult starting situation that the young men had to face during their travels, even with regard to how they dressed. Again, we find the fine line between exaggeration and understatement that the young men had to master for the purpose of their career advancement. Thus, the search for an appropriate middle way obviously was the order of the day and will also reappear repeatedly with regard to the business requirements and needs of an establishment phase

116 "[...] the deponent found a [---] large Trunk almost full of papers in the after Hold of the said ship and saith that the same trunk was so blockt in with Barrolles that they were forced to work near half a day to get at the same and there were some wearing apparroll as well as papers in the said trunk." Examination of James Doran, September 10, 1745. *Instance and Prize Courts: Examinations and Answers*, Examinations 1744-1747, TNA, HCA 13/90.

117 Miniature mannequins, clay statuettes, produced of merchants from the same period, like the famous portrait figure, a miniature of Joseph Collet, which was once a present to his daughter, today displayed in the National Portrait Gallery of London. *Joseph Collet*, by Amoy Chinqua, painted unfired clay statuette, 1716, 33 in. (838 mm) high. Given by the sitter's descendant, W.P.G. Collet, 1956, National Portrait Gallery, London, Primary Collection, NPG 4005. On display in Room 14 at the National Portrait Gallery. As an example of a portrait see portrait of "Johann Hinrich Gossler (1738-1790)." *Heritage* 2 (2004): 32.

118 See Münch, Paul. *Lebensformen in der frühen Neuzeit: 1500 bis 1800*. Berlin: Ullstein, 1998, 233-272. See in general Münch, Paul. *Ordnung, Fleiß und Sparsamkeit. Texte und Dokumente zur Entstehung der bürgerlichen Tugenden*. Munich: DTV, 1984. See Levi/Schmitt, *A History of Young People*.

in the next part of this chapter. Even the requirement for a proper outward appearance will once again reappear in the following explanations, this time in connection with an appropriate contact to partners and customers. Before coming to that, however, I will also take a look at the third field of knowledge for which we can gain insights through the pocketbook because this will provide a direct and smooth transition to the next part. The third field of knowledge regards the typical daily or monthly running costs of a merchant on travel, which shows the link between the personal and the business demands of an establishment phase by demonstrating that these two spheres in the end always have to be seen as permanently interlinked with each other.

Running Costs

In the pocketbook of expenses, we find regular expenditure for the tailor and for shoes, of which Luetkens bought 19 pairs in total during the years of his first stay abroad. Reasons for the former have already been given. The reasons for the latter were, maybe contrary to the first impression, not only that Luetkens had a particular liking or weakness for shoes, but also that shoes during the Early Modern Period generally had a short lifespan if worn and used intensively. The increased demand for shoes by Luetkens literally tells us that Luetkens had been carrying out a lot of his mercantile errands on foot. Yet, the high number of shoes and in particular the high cost per pair surely also tells us without question that he put considerable emphasis on the importance of a good and cultivated appearance. This fact is furthermore confirmed by entries that list costs for shoe cleaning. The third and fourth regular expenses also fit in with this picture: he regularly spent money on having his clothes washed and on visiting the barber.[119] The fifth common regular expenses are on medicine. Even though we only find one concrete entry regarding medicine in the pocketbook, actually mentioning medicine ["medicin"], it can nevertheless be assumed that he had actually purchased more, or that he simply made use of medicine he found for instance in his uncle's house. As we know from other contemporary sources such as merchant manuals or travel instructions, it was vital for merchants to stay healthy, especially during their travels, because anything else would have meant losses in business.[120] The last and at the same time most striking item that we can find in the pocketbook showing regular expenses is postage for letters. At first sight, the costs for postage ["Briefporto"] appear hardly noticeable or worth mentioning, especially because they are often mentioned together with other "smaller expenditures" ["kleine Ausgaben"]. As soon as one notices, however, the frequency of the occurrence and the total cost of postage per year [1739: 13,67 £ in total], it becomes highly apparent how important conducting a regular correspondence was for young merchants. Postage was paid during the entire Early Modern Period by the receiver when collecting letters

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119 Regarding the demand for keeping an orderly appearance while travelling see also Marperger, Paul Jakob. *Mentor oder des Reisenden Telemachi kluger Hofmeister* […]. Dresden: Autoris, 1725, 34.

120 See Defoe, *Complete English Tradesman*, 282. See Marperger, *Hofmeister*, 4. Regarding the 18th century discourse on the importance of "health" and on bodily practices see Piller, Gudrun. *Private Körper: Spuren des Leibes in Selbstzeugnissen des 18. Jahrhunderts.* Cologne/Weimar/Vienna: Böhlau, 2007, 47-69, 174-185. See Raapke, Annika. *Dieses verfluchte Land. Europäische Körper in Brieferzählungen aus der Karibik, 1744-1826*. Bielefeld: transcript, 2019.

in the local post office, at the harbour or when they were brought directly to the merchant house. Luetkens must have had expenses for postage every single week of his stay abroad and the overall costs in the end amounted to a sum comparable to the cost of 6 weeks rent in a lodging house ["3 Wochen Logie at Saml. Highmore in Mortlake": 7,18 £].[121] The sheer number of letters that we find in the actual mercantile business and letter archive of Luetkens 1743-1745 provides us with further hard evidence in this regard.

The cost of postage furthermore ultimately represents the one special item in the pocketbook that exceeds most clearly the scope of personal or private expenditures, as it needs to be regarded as a crucial part of his expenditure for business purposes, which leads over perfectly to the next part of this chapter. It becomes apparent how interwoven the costs for personal and business expenditure ultimately were. Of course, also all his other expenses surely will have had their repercussions with his business activities, but with regard to postage this interconnectedness becomes tangible. "Tending to correspondence was a pressing demand and an ordinary fact of life for every merchant", and therefore also most certainly one of the most pressing demands of an Early Modern mercantile establishment phase.[122] Therefore Luetkens will surely more or less willingly have paid the cost of postage from his private expenses during his travels because it signified and fostered his personal advancement in the world of trade. This tells us therefore that all the listed expenditure on postage actually refers to the cost of paying for his incoming letters, which would certainly have increased his willingness to pay because the more letters he received the more he could rest assured that his efforts were bearing fruit.[123] Each trip he took to the local post offices or trading houses to pick up his letters ultimately stood for nothing other than another step forward towards his establishment as a merchant, which surely made it reasonable for him to risk wearing out another pair of shoes. In the next part of this chapter, I will continue my explanations on the requirements and demands of an 18th-century mercantile establishment phase with regard to business enterprises, but just as with regard to postage costs these explanations will often also refer back to private expenses listed in the preceding chapter.

2.7 The Demands and Requirements of a Mercantile Establishment Phase

What were the main contemporary demands and requirements for a merchant during his establishment phase? In order to answer this question, there exists an extensive

121 Regarding these costs see *Detailed bill for a post chaise*, May 1744, in TNA, HCA 30/232. Regarding the typical costs for postage see furthermore Marperger, *Der allzeitfertige Handels-Correspondent*, 498. See also Whyman, *Pen and the People*, 46-71. See Behringer, Wolfgang. *Im Zeichen des Merkur. Reichspost und Kommunikationsrevolutionen in der Frühen Neuzeit*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2003. See O'Neill, *The Opened Letter*, 19-46.

122 Trivellato, *Familiarity of Strangers*, 170.

123 See Whyman, Susan. "'Paper Visits': The Post-Restoration Letter as seen Through the Verney Archive." In *Epistolary Selves: Letters and Letter Writers 1600-1945*, edited by Rebecca Earle, 15-36. Aldershot: Ashgate, 1999, here 22. See also Whyman, *Pen and the People*, 61-64.

body of contemporary literature from the 17th and 18th century dealing with this matter. Unfortunately, we cannot find any concrete document dealing with this matter in the Luetkens archive itself that helps us to directly answer this question. Even though it had been quite common during the entire Early Modern Period to equip young men with mercantile advice literature, merchant manuals on mercantile business and concrete written instructions during their travels and coming of age or, we search in vain for such a record in the Luetkens archive.[124] We find no merchant handbooks or instructions, no travel literature or similar documents among the surviving records in London. Therefore, in this book, I will derive and reconstruct the concrete activities and steps necessary for an Early Modern establishment phase directly from the analyses of the letters and business records, the letter conversations and the business enterprises found in the Luetkens archive. As a basis for these analyses, however, I will prepend these chapters and analyses with a chapter on the most crucial demands and requirements for an 18th century mercantile establishment phase as they are presented to us in contemporary mercantile advice literature, in merchant manuals or guidebooks. This chapter serves as the basic foundation for the analytical chapters providing us with the fundamental knowledge about the necessary skills, competences and character traits paving the way into establishment as seen from the perspective of contemporary advice writers and merchants. The combination of the present chapter with the analytical chapters focussing on Luetkens' business and letter practices provides a comprehensive picture of the making of a merchant in the 18th century.

On Advice Literature

The Early Modern Period, particularly the 18th century, experienced a true boom in publications of advice literature. Such books included a variety of guidebooks: letter-writing manuals for learning how to write letters appropriately; gallant conversation manuals for how to converse gallantly; and merchant manuals for how to conduct trade. In this present book, all three kinds of advice literature will be used as intertextual resources. I have read over 40 books of advice literature in order to be able to analyse the letters and business enterprises in the book. In this current chapter, I have based my explanation, on the most prominent literature on mercantile education of the age. These works allow us to reconstruct a catalogue of challenges that Luetkens had to pass during establishment, and they help to compile a catalogue of virtues of a merchant that the merchant had to show and incorporate during this crucial time of his life.

It can be assumed that Nicolaus Gottlieb Luetkens was familiar with these books or at least with comparable literature. An indication for this is that he had purchased an English letter-writing manual during his travels, as we have learned above. Secondly, these books were generally widely read, known, popular and in wide circulation among

124 See for instance Hörmann, Georg. *Memorial und Recorda für mein Eniklen Antoni Christof Hörmann*, 1588, edited by Luitpold, "Aus dem Bildungsgange eines Augsburger Kaufmannssohne vom Schlusse des 16. Jahrhunderts." *Zeitschrift des Historischen Vereins für Schwaben und Neuburg* 1 (1874): 137-182. See Meder, Lorenz. *Ein Büchlein von der Kauffmannsschaft*, 1511, HAB 18.4 Aug. 4°, fol 2r.

merchants.[125] The third, most telling and valuable hint for the fact that Luetkens must have known these books is, however, that the wordings and expressions he used in his letters are often similar or often follow the wording in advice literature. This will be a major finding of my analyses in the chapters.[126] All these reasons certainly justify listing the major statements and pieces of advice that these books offered for young merchants, who tried their luck in the field of trade, in the following explanations.

The first book that I am citing in this regard is Jacques Savary's *Le Parfait Négociant* [The Perfect Merchant] from 1675, which went through three reprints until 1752, with more to follow, and which was translated into Dutch, English, Italian and German, increasing the number of editions to over thirty between the years 1676 and 1800.[127] This book can surely be called the most important and famous merchant manual of the Early Modern Period. It was the "quintessential merchant manual against which all others were measured".[128] The second merchant manual that I am referring to and the contents of which match most closely the mode and ways of expressions in the Luetkens letters, is Paul Jacob Marperger's *Der getreue und geschickte Handelsdiener* [The faithful and skilled merchant clerk] which ranks as one of the most prominent German merchant manuals of the 18th century. This is often referred to as the German counterpart to Savary, not least because of the fact that Marperger explicitly refers to, cites and puts himself into the line of tradition of Savary.[129] In order to complete the picture with an English merchant manual, thus covering the three main places of residence of Luetkens' establishment phase, I will also cite from Daniel Defoe's *The Complete Tradesman*, which enjoyed a similar reputation during the 18th century as the other two manuals.[130] The three manuals under investigation in fact represent merely the tip of the iceberg of over 3,200 merchant manuals that were written and printed in total during the 18th century.[131] The 18th century can therefore not only be called the age of the letter, it was surely also an age of merchant manuals.

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125 See in general and very detailed the three volumes of Hoock/Jeannin/Kaiser, *Ars Mercatoria*.

126 See also Van der Wal/Rutten,"The Practice of Letter Writing," 18-32. See Van der Wal(Rutten. *Letters as Loot*. See Van der Wal, Marijke, and Gijsbert Rutten. "Ego-documents in a historical-sociolinguistic perspective." In *Touching the Past. Studies in the Historical Sociolinguistics of Ego-Documents*, edited by Marijke van der Wal, and Gijsbert Rutten, 1-18. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 2013.

127 Savary, *Der vollkommene Kauff- und Handelsmann*, in the French original: Savary, Jacques. *Le Parfait Négociant*. Paris: Billaine, 1675.

128 Harreld, Donald J. "An Education in Commerce: Transmitting Business Information in Early Modern Europe." Paper given at the *XIV International Economic History Congress*, Helsinki 2006, Session 1, 8.

129 See Marperger, *Getreuer und geschickter Handelsdiener*. See Deges, "Zusammenfassende Übersicht."

130 Defoe, *Complete English Tradesman*. See as a good introduction Di Renzo, Anthony. "The Complete English Tradesman: Daniel Defoe and the Emergence of Business Writing." *Journal of Technical Writing and Communication* (JTWC) 28 (1998): 325-334.

131 See all the merchant manuals listed in the impressive volumes edited by Hoock, Jochen, Pierre Jeannin, and Wolfgang Kaiser, eds. *Ars Mercatoria: Handbücher und Traktate für den Gebrauch des Kaufmanns: 1470-1820: Eine analytische Bibliographie* (= Manuels et traités à l'usage des marchands), 6 volumes. Paderborn: Schöningh, 1991-2001. See as an introduction Kaiser, Wolfgang. "Ars Mercatoria – Möglichkeiten und Grenzen einer analytischen Bibliographie und Datenbank." In *Ars Mercatoria: Handbücher und Traktate für den Gebrauch des Kaufmanns*, 1470-1820, edited by Jochen Hoock, Pierre Jeannin, and Wolfgang Kaiser, vol. 3, 1-26. Paderborn: Schöningh, 2001, here 2-3.

The main target group and the purchasers of these books were young merchants, as is often even explicitly mentioned on the title page, in the introductory words or depicted in the frontispiece as in the case of Savary. They were targeted by these books to be provided with useful information, tips and tricks for their career advancement in trade. The books therefore served as helpful guidebooks that the young men could draw on and learn from for their business activities. The books provided information on "everything that a merchant needed to know for his profession", as historian Jochen Hook phrased it, or in the words of the contemporaries, they compiled "all things necessary to be known by all those who would thrive in the world; and in the whole art and mystery of Trade and Traffick."[132] Consequently, these books also entail and explicitly list the concrete demands and tasks for young merchants and the qualities that these men had to acquire and exhibit in order to establish themselves and comport themselves in the world of trade.

Business Skills and Qualifications

As the general competences, skills and necessary qualifications, but first and foremost the virtues that a young man had to bring with him after having completed his apprenticeship, Savary lists, firstly, "piousness", the "love and fear of God, for if he is without those, God will not bless his work, and he will never succeed in his endeavours".[133] Secondly, he lists loyalty to his patrons, later also including his trading partners and the servants, and "obedience" and "respect" towards higher-ranking persons, such as later on his creditors.[134] As the "primary quality that a merchant should have with regard to the sale of his goods is to [be] an honest man. This will ensure his salvation and his reputation, and without a good reputation, a merchant will never make his fortune. Being an honest man means being of good faith and cheating no one."[135] As crucial for a merchant's advancement after his apprenticeship Savary then advises the young man to gain deep knowledge and deep expertise ["vollkommene Wissenschaft […] große Erfahrung […] und alle darzu benötighte Vollkommenheit"] in the wares and goods that he is going to trade with, for if he plans to trade in foreign goods while staying in foreign lands." For this, Savary urges the young men to further enhance their skills in the house of a long-distance wholesale merchant, who deals with these wares and goods, which would also have entailed visiting the foreign lands.[136] Only this prerequisite would then

132 "Was ein Kaufmann von Berufswegen eigentlich wissen musste." Hoock, Jochen, and Pierre Jeannin. "Einleitung." In *Ars Mercatoria: Handbücher und Traktate für den Gebrauch des Kaufmanns*, 1470-1820, edited by Jochen Hoock and Pierre Jeannin, vol. 1, I-XIII. Paderborn: Schöningh, 1991. Second quote: H.N. (anon.) Merchant in the City of London. *The compleat tradesman: or, the exact dealer's daily companion*. London: T. Norris, 1721, title page. See also Hoock, Jochen, and Wilfried Reininghaus, eds. *Kaufleute in Europa. Handelshäuser und ihre Überlieferung in vor- und frühindustrieller Zeit*, Dortmund: Ardey-Verlag GmbH, 1997.

133 Savary, *Der vollkommene Kauff- und Handelsmann [Le Parfait Négociant]*, 64. See also ibid., 56.

134 Ibid.

135 "Zum ersten muß er ein ehrlicher Mann seyn dann dieses ist das Mittel durch welches er seinen Wolstand schmieden und Reputation […] erlangen kann." Ibid., 70.

136 Ibid., 22.

allow a young man to gain the necessary skills and knowledge to start his career as a wholesale merchant. As the most crucial competence in this regard Savary lists "prudence".[137]

All the aforementioned qualities will then also remain valid and inevitable with regard to the merchant who seeks to establish himself on his own footing, which becomes apparent when we compare these qualities with the qualities that Savary lists for the "complete merchant". As crucial for the "happiness and welfare" ["Glück und Wohlfahrt"] of established merchants Savary notes that they would need to possess this kind of perfect knowledge in all areas crucial for a merchant's occupational advancement and day-to-day business.[138] *Le Parfait Négociant* had to show perfect knowledge of his businesses, for which he needed "extensive experiences, which he had gained through working for other merchants".[139] He needed to demonstrate "good order in his books", had to show and exercise caution and prudence with regard to his trading activities, his purchases and loans. He had to show "diligence" with regard to collecting debts.[140] As the last qualities Savary lists industriousness, willingness to work and thrift ["fleißig, hurtig, arbeitsam, emsig"].[141] When we compare these qualities with other merchant manuals as they circulated already in the centuries before, of which one of the most famous instructions is the *Handel-Buch* by Lorenz Meder, we see that these demands and catalogue of virtues for merchants had stayed relatively stable during the whole Early Modern Period.[142] Through Savary's guidebook, however, these qualities now became the official standard for every merchant seeking establishment in the 18th century, and as such Nicolaus Gottlieb Luetkens' career path, too, was measured against it. As we know from the previous explanations, at least with regard to the suggested educational path, Luetkens completely met and complied with the criteria. As we will learn in the analytical chapters, he furthermore also complied with the more behavioural provisions that Savary proposed, or least Luetkens would refer to them with regard to his self-image and for the purpose of delineating his career aspirations.

The last two pieces of information that we can extract from Savary's merchant manual regard the concrete challenges for and tasks of life in the foreign lands and the career steps that would, according to Savary, appropriately conclude an establishment phase. In this regard, too, Luetkens appropriately fulfilled his obligations. First, Luetkens displayed a high level of commitment during his travels to learn at the several place that he visited about "1. the wares that were traded in these foreign lands, […] but also about the commodities that would grow there and were manufactered there", "2. […] about the tradings usances and the trading routes […] in the foreign lands", 3. […] about licenses and custom duties", "4. […] about the weights and measurements […] and cur-

137 Ibid., 57.

138 Ibid., 43.

139 Ibid.

140 Ibid.

141 Ibid., 56. "Sparsamkeit", ibid., 43. See also „Sorgfalt und Emsigkeit" as well as „Vorsichtigkeit", ibid., 352.

142 See Meder, Lorenz. *Handel-Buch* […] Nuremberg: Johann vom Berg, 1558.

rencies" in foreign lands.[143] Secondly, as we know from Luetkens' biography, he also complied with the proposed finishing steps of his establishment phase as Savary specified it. In 1745, Luetkens returned to Hamburg "in order to enter into a partnership and company with an already established merchant", as was Savary's suggestion. Luetkens' future business partner was Ehrenfried Engelhardt, who in contrast to Savary's suggestion was not much older than him.[144] Luetkens would also return to Hamburg to marry the daughter of the Engelhardt family, which was the second proposed step that Savary listed. The only thing that Luetkens did not comply with completely concerning Savary's recommendations was the "appropriate age" for establishing himself. In this regard, Luetkens was running a little bit late. He married Ilsabe Engelhard in 1745 in the age of 29, whereas Savary had suggested the age of 25 as the most suitable age for a man to marry and settle down.[145]

Paul Jacob Marperger's merchant manual is mainly intended for young merchants going travelling while still in the service of a merchant patron as a commission agent or factor, which is also the reason why its title is *Der getreue und geschickte Handelsdiener* [The faithful and skilled merchant clerk].[146] However, as the author emphasises on the title page and preface of his book, his book is also intended as a practical instruction for young merchants "3) off duty and 4) [for young merchants] who plan to start their own business soon."[147] Therefore, it represents a perfect source of information regarding the requirements that Nicolaus Gottlieb Luetkens had to face during his years of establishment.

The book by Marperger obviously shows many parallels to the work by Savary, which is no coincidence since the author himself points to Savary as his intellectual mentor.[148] His own work therefore serves as confirmation for the aforementioned catalogue of virtues and requirements but furthermore also provides us with additional information. This enables us to get the complete picture especially with regard to concrete actions as prerequisites for an establishment phase. His explanations regarding the basic main knowledge of young men after their apprenticeship still largely coincides with Savary's statements. With regard to the travel activities of young men, however, he adds the elements of physical strength ["volle Leibeskräfte"], as a crucial quality that young men had to have to "bear the exertions of travelling", which, however, would only be a sufficient basis for a successful career when combined with the "development of a sharp mind and good comprehension" ["so kan es nicht fehlen der Verstand und das Justicium müssen sich bei ihm auch äussern"].[149] He also emphasised that the young men had to be in-

143 Savary, *Der vollkommene Kauff- und Handelsmann [Le Parfait Négociant]*, "anderer Theil" [second part of the same book], 57.

144 "die bequemene Gelegenheit [nutzen] […] indem sie entweder sich mit erfahrnen alten Kaufleuten sich vergemeindern oder mit derer Töchter verheurathen können." Savary, *Der vollkommene Kauff- und Handelsmann [Le Parfait Négociant]*, 276.

145 Ibid., 276.

146 Marperger, *Getreuer und geschickter Handelsdiener*.

147 "(3) ausser Dienst lebenden und (4) ihre eigne Handlung bald anzufangenden Handelsdiener." Marperger, *Getreuer und geschickter Handelsdiener*, 2.

148 Ibid., 448.

149 Ibid., 244.

dustrious and act skilfully. His explanations furthermore show great parallels with, and can be supplemented by, his explanations in another book of his, which dealt more generally with the challenges of travelling, the *Hofmeister*.[150] In this latter book, Marperger elaborates in greater detail especially on the necessary robustness travellers had to have and he also adds an age he considers appropriate for taking to the road. The perfect age to travel is therefore "between the age of 20 and 30" because during that time young man would be "robust enough in their physical strength to brave the elements of heat and cold, hunger and thirst, snow and rain".[151] In this book, he also provides a detailed list of all the travel requisites that a young man had to take with him, which again corresponds in great parts with those we find listed in Luetkens' pocketbook of expenses.[152] "A sturdy and clean travel coat [...] along with clean linen undergarments, a good rapier and some pistols, a pocket watch, a compass, a writing tablet, a circle, a lighter, and also some useful books, could make out the whole equipage".[153] Another item that Luetkens carried with him during this travels was his toothbrush and toothpaste, which we however cannot find in his pocketbook of expenses, but about which we can learn because of the fact that Luetkens once forgot it at Johann Jakob Bethmann's house.[154]

Returning to the book *Der getreue und geschickte Handelsdiener*, the next two important paragraphs again concern the question of the qualities that a young man had to demonstrate if he "seeks to start his own business", in chapter VII. This adds to the previous picture in particular with regard to the important aspect of the demand to maintain human relationships. This aspect also includes the catalogue of virtues because having and showing such virtues ultimately constitutes the necessary condition for upholding relationships. As important assets of a young man's establishment phase Marperger here lists, apart from piousness and industriousness, which Savary also emphasised, as well as physical strength, especially the "cultivation and maintenance of the relationships with your blood relatives".[155] He furthermore advises the young men to "pay attention to and take good care of the relationships to [...] Patrons, which they had developed during their years of apprenticeship and youth. [...] One also has to pay special attention to the help, the abetment and credit that one already enjoys from good friends and benefactors, but that one also hopes to keep or gain anew in the future, the place one has chosen as the place to establish oneself and settle down [...] and if one

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150 Marperger, *Hofmeister*.

151 "Da hingegen ein Alter von den 20sten bis ins 30ste Jahre die bequemste Reiß-Zeit, eines der die Welt besehen will, seyn kan. An solchen seynd die Jugend-Kräffte Hitz und Kälte, Hunger und Durst, Schnee und Regen auszustehen [...] am besten." Ibid., 4.

152 Pocketbook of expenses in TNA, HCA 30/232.

153 "Ein starckes und sauberes Reiß-Kleid, [...] samt sauberen Leinen Zeug, einen guten Degen und paar Pistolen, eine Sack-Uhr, Compaß, Schreib-Tafel, Circul und Feuerzeug, samt ein paar nützlichen Büchern, können bei manchen die ganz Equipage ausmachen." Ibid., 5.

154 "anlagende dero Zahnsalbe, so ist solche in der Comode, wozu E.E. die Schlüßel haben, verschloßen, demnach sich E.E. solcher entbähren müßen, ich könte wohl bey dem hießigen zahnartzt andere kauffen wüste ich nur zum vorauß dero gedancken damit zu treffen." Letter from Meinicken to Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, October 24, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/234.

155 Marperger, Getreuer und geschickter Handelsdiener, 427.

is ready and prepared to start one's own business independently or together in a joint partner company with another associate".[156]

The latter propositions once again correspond with the suggestions by Savary. At the same time, Marperger's suggestions far more take the shape of concrete milestones a young man had to reach in contrast to Savary's instructions, which mainly refer to and generally take the form of instructions with regard to the moral way of life of a merchant. This becomes clearer still with respect to the probably most accurate and concise paragraph regarding the requirements of a merchant establishment phase that we can find in contemporary literature. In chapter XIV titled and dealing with "The merchant clerks who started their own business with small capital but then profited that much that they would become rich and noble persons afterwards", he writes:

> "Let us now examine and turn to the appropriate ways and means and reasons that lead a qualified merchant clerk into his Establishment ["Etablissement"]. These are (1.) that he is candid, loyal and zealous and that he had earned a good reputation through his obeisances, his affability, his civility and politeness, (2.) that he had righteously learned his business und as a part of this the art of how to support yourself and your family through your business and how one accumulates a capital that will once inure to the benefit of your heirs, (3.) that he would also have conducted his business honestly, even when his own fortune was still small, (4.) that he would look out in a timely manner for suitable patrons, who will assist him with his undertakings, and furthermore look out for good customers, good commissions and these kinds of good wares that will promptly attract new customers and promise good profits, whereupon one needs to look out for a business partner, which brings in his own fortune to the company, or marry a decent wife, through which one comes into more ready money or more credit, the latter being most often better than ready money."[157]

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156 "Acht geben auf […] Patronos, bey denen er seine Lehr- und Jungen-Jahre erstanden […] Nicht weniger hat er auch acht zu geben auf die Hülffe / Vorschub und Credit welche er bereits bei guten Freunden und Gönnern schon hat / und noch künftig zu haben und zu erlangen / Hoffnung hätte / auf den Ort / wo er sich zu etabliren entschlossen [auch ob er] die neue und intendirte Handlung zu unternehmen besugt sey auch ob er solche vor sich allein /oder mit Zuziehung eines Handels-Gesellschafters / anfangen wollte." Ibid., 427-428.

157 "Cap. XIV Von denen Kauffmanns-Diener / die ihren eigenen Handel / mit geringem Capital angefangen / durch Gottes Seegen aber / mit der Zeit so viel haben profitiret / daß sie reiche und vornehme Leut hernach geworden […]: Laßt uns aber auch jetzt die ordentliche Wege untersuchen / welche einen qualifizierten Kaufmanns-Diener / zu seinem künffftigen Etablissement führen können / solche seynd (1.) daß er sich redlich / getreu und dienstfertig halte / und sich durch Ehrerbietigkeit / Leutseelig= und Höflichkeit einen guten Ruhm zu wege bringe. (2.) Daß er was Rechtschaffenes lerne / und unter solchen / die Kunst / wie man durch Handlung / sich und die Seinigen ehrlich ernehren / und ein Capital künfftig seinen Erben zu hinterlassen / sammeln soll. (3.) Daß er auch die Gelegenheiten, sein Stück ehrlicher Weiß zu machen / verabsäume/ voraus / wann sein eigenen Vermögen nur schlecht ist. (4.) Daß er sich bey Zeiten nach Patronis, welche ihm unter die Arme greiffen können / nach gutter Kundschafft / einträglichen Commissionibus und solche Waaren umsehe / welche ihn auf einmal in gute Kundtschafft setzen / und einen guten Profit abwerfen können / worzu man hernach auch / entweder einen guten Handels-Consorten / der sein Vermögen in der Handlung wollte rouliren lassen / oder gar eine anständige Heyrath /

This paragraph can be seen as the blueprint for Nicolaus Gottlieb Luetkens' establishment phase, which will also be reflected in the analytical chapters, as this quote condenses all that was previously said into a clear agenda and directive for Luetkens' personal advancement in business as a wholesale merchant during his "Etablissement".

The third author within the triumvirate, Daniel Defoe, too, states the "general maxims of trade as are fit for […] instruction" of young men.[158] His instructions in *The Complete Tradesman* aggregate into just three crucial pieces of advice. Of these, especially the last one has not yet been discussed in this chapter because it was not listed in such a degree of clarity and precision in the aforementioned quotations as Defoe presents it. As a matter of fact, however, this crucial skill and competence nevertheless represented a key element and important core issue in the books of Savary and Marperger. I will therefore take Defoe's quotation as the starting point to which I will then also add the respective statements by Savary and Marperger.

Correspondence

As the crucial "degrees by which the complete tradesman is brought up, and by which he is instructed in the principles and methods of his commerce, by which he is made acquainted with business, and is capable of carrying it on with success […]" Defoe lists as the "qualifications […] that renders him [the young tradesman] a finish'd or complete man in his business. 1. That he has a general knowledge of not his own particular trade and business only, […] but […] ought to understand all the inland trade, growth and product of his own country. […] 2. That he not only has a knowledge of the species or kinds of goods but of the places and peculiar countries where those goods, whether product or manufacture, are to be found […]."[159] These requirements apparently resemble the statements by Savary and Marperger. Defoe then adds as an important asset for a young man of trade, however, "3. That [he] understands perfectly well all the methods of correspondence, returning money or goods for goods, to and from every country; in what manner to be done, and in what manner most to advantage; […] what for present money, and what for time; what are sold by commission from the makers, what bought by factors, […]."[160] In this regard, he adds in the further course of his book that "a merchant's letters [should] never come in and are unanswer'd" and he stresses the importance of language skills: "a merchant should understand all languages, at least, the languages of those countries which he trades to, or corresponds with".[161] As we already know, Luetkens did his best to meet the latter demand by learning to speak, read and write not only German, but also French, Dutch and English. As the last point of advice regarding correspondence practice, Defoe recommends the benefits of mingling and socialising with like-minded people. He states that young men "should take all occasions

durch welche man entweder ein Stück Geld in die Hand oder doch Credit bekäme / der offtmal besser als baares Geld ist / sich ausersehen könte." Ibid., 481-482.

158 Defoe, *Complete English Tradesman*, 6. See also ibid., Preface, iii. "The Title of this Work is an Index of the Performance. It is a collection of useful instructions for a young Tradesman."

159 Defoe, *Complete English Tradesman*, 5-7.

160 Ibid., 6.

161 Ibid., 152, 41.

to converse within the circuit of his own sphere […] and converse among tradesmen as much as he can; as writing teaches to write, scribendo discis scribere, so conversing among tradesmen will make him a tradesman."[162]

What therefore ultimately makes a merchant a merchant is, as Defoe puts is, the skill and ability of conversing with other merchants, in person or, as he explicitly highlights, by means of correspondence. A merchant's capital consisted not only of his money or credit, not only of his virtues or bodily dispositions, but very concretely also of his network of correspondents, which Defoe defines accordingly, in one of this other works, as persons "with whom one had regular business relations, which were marked by extensive letter-writing and long-distance exchange."[163]

Keeping a good and extensive correspondence is emphasised as a crucial element and prerequisite of mercantile advancement not only in the book by Defoe, but also in those by Savary and Marperger. From Savary we learn that it was also indispensable for a merchant to keep Letter Books ["Brief=Kopier=Buch"] and to keep and store all your correspondence, incoming and outgoing, in order to keep track and to keep order in your businesses.[164] We learn of the importance of the practice of bundling letters for the same reason, and we learn as a further example that letters were used to collect or recover your debt because letters had been attributed powers of attorney.[165] Also Marperger dedicated many pages of his book to letters and the necessity of accuracy in letter practice for young merchants. From him, we learn how apprentices learned to write letters, namely by copying the letters of their masters or by being dictated letters by the master, and by the same practice he also learned how to write bills of exchange or other "scripturen".[166]

As an accurate style for merchant letters Marperger advises that business letters need to be "short, which is made necessary because of the manifold businesses and the great correspondence that merchants conduct in general, which would not allow for sweeping letters, which is also the reason why mercantile letters must not be ambiguous or unclear, but short and showing a delicate distinctness."[167] Such a style is also suggested by Daniel Defoe, who writes that "a tradesman's letters should be plain, concise, and to the purpose; no quaint expressions, no book-phrases, no flourishes, and yet they must be full and sufficient to express what he means, so as not to be doubtful,

162 Ibid., 47.

163 Defoe, Daniel. *Colonel Jack*. London: Roberts, 1722, 13. See Hancock, David. "The Trouble with Networks: Managing the Scots' Early-Modern Madeira Trade." *Business History Review* 79, no. 3 (2005): 467-491, here 472. See also Trivellato, *The Familiarity of Strangers*, 168.

164 Savary, Savary, *Der vollkommene Kauff- und Handelsmann [Le Parfait Négociant]*, "anderer Theil" [second part of the same book], 8, 13.

165 Ibid. 14, 52.

166 Marperger, *Getreuer und geschickter Handelsdiener*, 228. See in general Bruchhäuser, Hanns-Peter. *Kaufmannsbildung im Mittelalter: Determinanten des Curriculums deutscher Kaufleute im Spiegel der Formalisierung von Qualifizierungsprozessen*, Cologne/Weimar/Vienna: Böhlau, 1989.

167 "als wann Kauffleute vor allen im Brief=Schreiben kurtz seyn müssen / solches wird zwar erfordert / wie es dann auch ihre vielfältige Geschäfften und grosse Correspondenz nicht anderst leiden wollen / darum aber müssen sie nicht unvernehmlich [undurchdrinlich, undeutlich] und dunckel seyn / […] sondern man behalte bey der beliebten Kürtze auch eine zierliche Deutlichkeit / und vermeide so viel als möglich zweydeutige Redens=Arten […]" Ibid., 194.

much less unintelligible."[168] On the other, hand, as Marperger again notes in his central letter manual, it still seemed legitimate to take inspiration for your letter style from other literature "through reading good books, spiritual or secular in nature as well as through historical or moral books, […] because these provide a good source of inspiration and teach how to use and concatenate for instance typical expressions or proverbs or how one skilfully finds appropriate answers regarding certain matters".[169] What this meant in practice and consequence and how this idea was actually implemented concretely in the letters will be presented and analysed in detail in the analyses of the letter episodes presented in the five analytical chapters.

All three writers, Savary, Marperger and Defoe, in their manuals finally also supply numerous example letters, which further illustrated the appropriate letter style to the aspiring merchants. These letters served the concrete purpose of providing the merchants with examples and thus the opportunity to learn the letter style by imitation or to use and employ the respective sentences and phrases, the typical letter formulae, in their correspondence, if wished. Merchant manuals, therefore, as the authors emphasise, were meant to serve as reference works, guides and encyclopaedias for both mercantile business practices and mercantile letter practices, including the appropriate form and style of accurate business letters. Yet until today it represents a research desideratum to show to what extent Early Modern letter writers actually used these manuals in practice. In this respect, in this book I am offering at least some first indications with regard to the letter practice of the merchant Luetkens and his merchant correspondents.[170] The practice of offering example letters, as seen in the three authors mentioned here, was not an exception. It is fair to say that almost every merchant manual of the period entailed such example letters. Furthermore, the young merchant could draw on an extensive pool of literature which was solely dedicated to dealing with appropriate letter styles and the practice of letter writing. These letter-writing manuals also provided a multitude of further examples for an appropriate letter style, including example letters for almost every occasion and addressee imaginable.[171] These letter-writing manuals were, as Georg Steinhausen, a pioneer in the research on letter writing, already noted, "almost encyclopedias of everything knowledgeable. For every imaginable life situation, they provided example letters" and a veritable "arsenal of formulaic expressions".[172] Paul Jacob Marperger himself had also published such a letter manual in addition to his merchant manuals, which had an equally large readership than his other books. This letter-writing manual called *Der allzeitfertige Handels=Correspondent* [The ever-ready merchant correspondent] will be reviewed and consulted further in the

168 Defoe, *Complete English Tradesman*, 25. See also example "Letter III of the trading style" in which Defoe writes that "in my last I gave you my thoughts for the instruction of young tradesmen in writing letters with orders, and answering orders, and especially about the proper stile of a tradesman's letters, which I hinted should be plain and easy, free in language, and direct to the purpose intended." Ibid., 32.

169 Marperger, *Der allzeitfertige Handels-Correspondent*, 7.

170 See as the pioneer works in this this regard Van der Wal/Rutten, *Letters as Loot*, Furger, *Briefsteller.* Gurkin Altman, *Epistolarity*, Nickisch, *Stilprinzipien*, See Furger, *Briefsteller*, 209-212.

171 See Furger, *Briefsteller*, 145-146; Nickisch, *Stilprinzipien*, 204-223, Gurkin Altman, *Epistolarity*, 3-12.

172 Steinhausen, *Geschichte des deutschen Briefes*, 302. See Vellusig, *Schriftliche Gespräche*, 43, 53.

analytical chapters, since it will become obvious that Luetkens was strongly influenced and shaped in his writing and his letter style by such kinds of manuals – whether this happened consciously or unconsciously.[173]

Postal Conditions

A last important aspect and condition crucial for a mercantile establishment phase covered by the merchant manuals, but one which was also crucial for mercantile activity beyond the early career, was knowledge of postal conditions and the working of postal services, both national and international, and of regularities such as post times. In fact, the surviving letters of the Luetkens archive constitute an example of a very effective postal system. As was typical during the times, business letters usually started with a reference to preceding letters, sent and received, in order to both continue the conversation at a particular point but also to make sure that the respective letter interaction was in fact unbroken and without gaps. Reading these letters alternatingly, one is captivated by the impression that the actual time gaps between sending and receiving the letters, which resulted from the postal dispatch, almost disappear as regards the letter content and also that the contemporaries were very used to this particular time delay in letter exchanges. They even deliberately planned in these time gaps when making predictions or referring to ongoing enquiries. It is another strong hint at the fact that letters were regarded as their own sphere of communication, of conversation and interaction.

A typical phrase at the beginning of business letters was for instance that Luetkens "received your pleasant letter on the 25 passato with a lot of pleasure".[174] The dates were then usually added as notes on the top page of the unfolded stored letters after the letters had been answered, as mentioned above. Comparing these lines in the letters during the reconstruction of the letter episodes with the surviving material letters in the archive, it becomes astonishingly clear that most of the letters sent by the contemporary letter writers actually reached their destination and addressee. In fact, to express this in figures, of all the business letters that I read it seems that only approximately 5% went missing along the way. All the other letters arrived, which is a find quite contrary to the impression that the Prize Papers collection with over 160,000 intercepted letters creates. The Luetkens archive shows that the postal services used by Luetkens and his correspondents were for the most part effective.

This can be attributed to the very sophisticated postal system of mounted mail in France that was based on a fixed system of relay stations regularly served by post rid-

173 The question of whether Luetkens had or had not concretely used such kind of manuals during his letter writing process cannot be clarified beyond doubt. However, as the letter formulae he used suggests, which show parallels to the manuals, he might have read or learned from these books during his apprenticeship or later on. He also bought an English letter-writing manual during his first business trip as his pocketbook of expenses reveals. Another explanation for finding these parallels could be that both the manuals and the letters in the end represented common vocabulary used by merchants in practice.

174 "dein angenehmes schreiben von 25 passato habe mit viellen vergnügen empf[angen]", Letter from Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb to Luetkens, Joachim, June 6, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/232, Letter Book I, No. 179.

ers; a system which provided a largely reliable service.[175] "The mounted or equestrian mail, 'la Poste au chevaux,' consisted of a group of relay stations managed by postmasters who kept a certain number of horses groomed for use by the postal system. Letter mail ("la Poste aux lettres") referred to the group of post offices where customers sent or received their mail which had been routed there from the nearest relay station."[176] But also in transnational, sea-borne mail sent over short sea distances and particularly during peace times, the postal dispatch was relatively reliable.

Whether sent via land or sea, mail was sent and received during the Early Modern Period on fixed days, so called post days, "Posttage" in German, on which mail could be picked up or sent off from the local post offices spread around the city, from other dedicated stores in the different city quarters or at the harbour. Postage was paid by the receiver of a letter on arrival or pickup.[177] The week of a merchant was structured around the post days. These days literally served as fixed days in the lives of the merchants. As Marperger noted in his manual, "merchants wrote 20-30 letters per post day".[178] They picked up letters or had them picked up for them by merchant clerks, usually three times a week. The respective weekdays on which post days took place depended on the location and were announced by the respective national postal service and the stations. Today, we still find original postal plates, some of them showing the respective post days, in museums or even on house fronts.[179] These post days could also be found in printed advertisements or in merchant manuals. In these sources, we also find international routes and costs for international postage. To give an example of international post days, in the case of London, where Nicolaus Gottlieb's uncle Anthony lived, in 1731 mail from London to France was dispatched on Mondays and Thursdays while mail to the German cities in the North left on Mondays, Tuesdays and Fridays. The postage costs for letters that crossed several borders can also be found in merchant manuals.[180] As an international merchant, Nicolaus Gottlieb Luetkens was always well-informed about the postal services and how to use them for his business purposes and for private matters. He knew the local post days in all the cities he visited and the quickest or the safest routes for his letters in national and international mail. He knew when it was better to trust in hand-to-hand delivery of letters, particularly as regards long-distance communications, for instance with ships' captain, which was a common practice about which we will hear more in the chapters. Luetkens even knew, and concocted

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175 See Nicolas Verdier, and Anne Bretagnolle. "Expanding the Network of Postal Routes in France 1708-1833." In *Histoire des réseaux postaux en Europe du XVIIIe au XXIe siècle*, 159- 175. Paris: HAL, 2007. See Arbellot, Guy. "Le réseau des routes de poste, objet des premières cartesthématiques de la France moderne." *104e Congrès national des Sociétés savantes, Bordeaux 1979, Section Histoire Moderne*, 97-115, Paris: Imprimerie nationale, 1982.

176 Verdier/Bretagnolle, "Postal Routes in France," 159.

177 See Whyman, "'Paper Visits", 22. See Whyman, *Pen and the People*, 61-64.

178 Marperger, *Getreuer und geschickter Handelsdiener*, 185.

179 See Haasis, "Materialität." See Haasis, Lucas. "'Noch bleibt mir ein Augenblick Zeit um mich mit Euch zu unterhalten'. Praxeologische Einsichten zu kaufmännischen Briefschaften des 18. Jahrhunderts." In *Diskurse – Körper – Artefakte. Historische Praxeologie in der Frühneuzeitforschung*, edited by Dagmar Freist, 87-113. Bielefeld: transcript, 2015.

180 See Marperger, *Getreuer und geschickter Handelsdiener*, 489.

plans with his correspondents, as to which were the best routes to choose when sending secret letters or letters with precious hidden contents. In short, post days structured his daily routine, and postal routes provided his existential nourishment. The most interesting postal route to be found in the Luetkens archive is that taken by a letter packet that enclosed Luetkens' marriage jewellery hidden in cotton and wrapped in corduroy. In order to make sure that this letter reached its destination safely, the letter was first sent from London to Amsterdam, from where it was sent to Hamburg, because as his brother Joachim advised Nicolaus Gottlieb, sending the letter via "Holland […] was the best way to send such precious items".[181] The letter with its precious content did in fact reach Hamburg safely.

All the different elements and characteristic features of 18th century correspondence, taken together, show that letter writing was attributed an immensely high significance and an important role for the daily activities but also the career development of a merchant, especially for a merchant during his establishment phase, when he had to prove and demonstrate his skills. The information extracted from the merchant manuals and the letters in the Luetkens archive in this regard completely coincide with the most current historical research on business letters. As Francesca Trivellato put it aptly and highly accurately, during the 18th century at the latest letters had become "the primary tool for weaving webs of commercial relations across space and social groups." Correspondence was the "cement that enabled distant agents to create solid webs across distant localities and wide cultural gulfs, […] the backbone of European long-distance trade long past that time. […] Business correspondence was a crucial instrument […] in forging and maintaining […] informal cross-cultural networks".[182] Or, as already Max Weber had stated, in "the eighteenth century, business depended on the organised exchange of letters". It again becomes clear that business practices and letter practices of merchants of the 18th century cannot be considered separately from each other when analysing mercantile culture in the 18th century. Instead, letter practices and business practices always need to be considered as intertwined processes. There is simply no way to think of mercantile wholesale business in the 18th century as separate from letter practice as Defoe, too, demonstrated when he wrote about "extensive letter-writing and long-distance exchange" in the exact same breath.[183]

Accordingly, we cannot find a single letter in the Luetkens archive that does not also refer to a particular business practice or that was at least interlinked with one. Almost all the letters that we can find in the Luetkens archive, as Trivellato stressed, "fulfilled […] purposes for which merchants could not rely on other printed [or oral] sources: they [the letters] responded to specific questions and concerns that a merchant might have about market conditions; they informed about the aptitude and reliability of

181 "der beste Weg sie über zu machen und die Weise hier solche Kostbarkeiten weg zu senden ist daß man sie auf Holland schickt. Dahero will ich sie an die Herrn de Meyer zuerst senden und sie ersuchen von da an Hertzer u. von Bobart zu schicken." Letter from Luetkens, Joachim to Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, March 12, 1745, TNA, HCA, 30/235.

182 Trivellato, "Merchants' letters," 81-82 and 84, as well as Trivellato, *Discourse and Practice*, 19.

183 Defoe, *Colonel Jack*, 13.

associates, commissioners and suppliers; when necessary, they also assured secrecy."[184] As Toby L. Ditz highlights, almost all letters had "immediate pragmatic goals" tied to, and representing, commercial practices, for instance "appeals to others for practical assistance – for example, to transport and sell cargoes, to obtain loans or to extend the time for their repayment". This fact even applies and holds true with regard to Luetkens' more personal letters written for the purpose of his marriage initiation.[185] When Defoe therefore concluded in his merchant manual regarding letter writing that ultimately it was conversing "among tradesmen [that] will make him a tradesman" Defoe in essence put into contemporary words the major statement of this book.[186]

Analysing the Luetkens letters we will gain an impressive and comprehensive insight into how letters and correspondence worked and how they shaped and forged a life in trade, the life as a wholesale merchant during the 18th century. The book also shows us explicitly a merchant's efforts to be convincing in his words and actions to promote his career by means of business and letters. Of course, although we can read his letters, we will still not be able to meet Luetkens in person or observe him during his travels and neither will we get an insight into all his daily activities and the daily business he conducted at the local sites. However, we are still able to illustrate, demonstrate, investigate, explain and cover large parts of his mercantile and personal activities and enterprises during that time because many of these activities actually happened on the basis of letters.

Completely in line with Daniel Defoe, the firm conviction of this book is that Luetkens was made a merchant by correspondence, which provided him with the ways and means, the tool and medium, to tackle important mercantile and private undertakings and enterprises. Correspondence provided him with the opportunity to convince the people surrounding him of his quality and his entitlement as a merchant, and it provided him with the opportunity to win over his fellow men for his business enterprises and plans. How he succeeded in this regard, what concrete ways and means he found to master his challenges in life and business, how he performed his business by means of letter writing, and how he concretely used letters to win people over for his plans and aspirations – in short, how he used the powers of persuasion provided by letters to turn himself into a successful wholesale merchant – is the subject of the five analytical chapters.

2.8 On the Powers of Persuasion and Practical Eloquence

As a last important piece of information regarding an Early Modern mercantile establishment, the merchant manuals even provide us with clear assessments and propositions regarding the most crucial and quintessential of all requirements and demands that aspiring merchants had to meet during this decisive phase of their life. The authors of the merchant manuals make concrete recommendations and suggestions as to how

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184 Trivellato, *Familiary of Strangers*, 172.

185 Ditz, "Formative Ventures," 62.

186 Defoe, *Complete English Tradesman*, 47.

they envisage the most advisable and most effective way for young merchants to learn how to become convincing as merchants. All three authors share a definite view on how they thought wholesale merchants should behave and learn their profession and what factors decide whether or not a young man would stand the test of becoming a reputable merchant, how the powers of persuasions would work best for a merchant during the 18th century. These recommendations encapsulate a particular contemporary idea and understanding of rhetoric during the 18th century that was also essential, inspirational and in fact helpful for the idea and concept developed in and underlying the present book.

The science of persuasion most probably belongs to the oldest sciences of mankind. Under the name of rhetoric, the analysis of how people influence each other on the basis of the spoken or written word has fascinated and moved people, philosophers and scientists alike, since antiquity. In this book, however, I do not focus on rhetorical traditions, linguistic forms or theories of rhetoric, although the letter-writing manuals often include theoretical thinking and concepts, for which Janet Gurkin Altman has coined the apt term of *epistolarity*. Instead, this present book is primarily focused on a very specific form of historical rhetoric. It deals with *practical* powers of persuasion as they were used and are recognizable in letter practices and business practices of the 18th century. The book is therefore less about sophisticated learned ways and means and theorized forms of rhetoric, but about a rhetoric practically performed, learned and materialized in practice. In the book, we will therefore learn about incorporated forms of the powers of persuasion. This form of persuasion is indeed by no means an artificial concept, but it was already known and even conceptualized among thinkers and philosophers of the 18th century. It was also popularized among practical professions such as the mercantile profession, which fact helped to develop the particular focus of the book. That means, the rhetorical concept behind the book in the truest sense of the word corresponds with a historical idea and concept. This idea is the concept of *practical eloquence*, “Beredsamkeit” in German, “l’eloquence” in France, as a typical variant of the power of persuasion in the daily lives of the people of the 18th century.[187]

Having said that, authors and philosophers particularly of the first half of the 18th century distinguished between rhetorics as theory and rhetorics as practice, or rhetorics as seen in a theoretical sense and rhetorics as learned and performed in practice. For the latter they used and coined the term of practical eloquence, or volubility. With this they delineated a form of rhetoric in which the powers of persuasion were seen as a practical skill rather than a theory to adhere to. The former, on the other hand, the pure theory, was usually referred to as “oratory”, “Oratorie” in German, in the 18th century. Famous philosophers of this idea were the German Enlightenment authors Christian Friedrich Hunold (Menantes), who in 1709 published his Teutsche *Oratorie* [German Oratory] and Johann Christoph Gottsched, who in 1736 published his *Ausführliche Redekunst* [Complete Rhetoric] and only two years later in 1738 his *Proben der Beredtsamkeit* [Samples of Eloquence], and who was also the publisher of the famous German moral weekly

187 Rapin, René. *Réflexion sur l’Usage de l’Eloquence de ce temps*. Paris: Barbin & Muguet, 1671.

Die vernünftigen Tadlerinnen.[188] Both authors also published letter-writing manuals cited in this book.

Practical Eloquence, "Beredsamkeit", represented a form of practical knowledge and understanding of how to be convincing in one's words and actions that was learned by experience and not primarily from books.[189] Oratory, on the other hand, was learned from books and based on theory. As Gottsched wrote "there is a difference between oratory ["Redekunst"] and practical eloquence ["Beredsamkeit"]. The former is theoretical in nature, the latter is practical in nature. The former provides the fundamental doctrine and rules of rhetorics; by means of the latter, however, one actually carries out ["übt aus", performs] the power of persuasion. It is possible to understand the former without ever having worked on a speech or without having given a speech; it is however, not possible to perform the latter [Beredsamkeit] without a great deal of practice and plenty of exercise in writing and speaking."[190] The mentioned theory of rhetorics which Gottsched refers to was taught in the schools and universities of the time, and particularly the Hamburg schools were renowned for their rhetorical classes with prominent teachers such as Johann Albert Fabricius.[191] As Dirk Rose concludes in his book *Conduite und Text*, "rhetoric was a basic subject of Early Modern academic education".[192] Thus, already since the Middle Ages, rhetorics in the classical sense was taught as one of basic subjects taught in the elementary and the grammar schools of the period during the trivium, and later in life it was also taught as a subject in the universities of the period.[193] It was especially also a subject taught by private tutors – a way of education that was sometimes chosen for children of bourgeois and elite families. I am mentioning this because we have learned that Luetkens was first homeschooled by his father and later by a private tutor.

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188 Hunold, *Teutsche Oratorie und Brief-Verfassung*. Gottsched, Johann Christoph. *Proben der Beredsamkeit* [...]. Leipzig: Bernhard Christoph Breitkopf, 1738. Gottsched, Johann Christoph. *Die Vernünftigen Tadlerinnen*. Halle 1725, Leipzig 1727, Leipzig und Hamburg 1738 und Hamburg 1748, reprint, 2 volumes, edited by Helga Brandes. Hildesheim/Zurich/New York: Olms-Weidmann, 1993.

189 Regarding 18th-century eloquence, "Beredsamkeit" see in particular Ueding/Steinbrink, *Grundriß der Rhetorik*, 102-135. See in particular also Rose, Dirk. *Conduite und Text. Paradigmen eines galanten Literaturmodells im Werk von Christian Friedrich Hunold (Menantes)*. Berlin/Boston: De Gruyter, 2012, 221-238. See Barner, Wilfried. *Barockrhetorik. Untersuchungen zu ihren geschichtlichen Grundlagen*. Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 2002, 167-175, 190-192. As contemporary sources see furthermore Hunold, *Teutsche Oratorie und Brief-Verfassung*; Gottsched, *Proben der Beredsamkeit* and *Ausführliche Redekunst*.

190 "Aus diesem allen wird man sattsam erkennen, daß die Redekunst mit der Beredsamkeit nicht für einerley zu halten, und wie eines von dem andern unterschieden sey. Jene ist theoretisch, diese ist praktisch. Jene gibt die Grundlehren und Regeln der Beredsamkeit; diese hergegen übt selbige aus: jene kann man verstehen, ohne jemands eine einzige Rede ausgearbeitet oder gehalten zu haben; diese aber kann man nicht anders, als durch eine lange Uebung im Schreiben und Reden erlangen." Gottsched, *Ausführliche Redekunst*, 75.

191 Häfner, Ralph. "Die Vorlesungsskripte des Hamburger Philologen Johann Albert Fabricius." In *Die Pluralisierung des Paratextes in der Frühen Neuzeit: Theorie, Formen, Funktionen*, edited by Frieder von Ammon and Herfried Vögel, 283-299. Münster: LIT Verlag, 2008, here 283.

192 Rose, *Conduite und Text*, 221.

193 See ibid., 221-238. See the detailed study by Barner, *Barockrhetorik*.

The fact that Dirk Rose refers to 18th-century rhetorics in his book dealing with gallant literature of the 18th century furthermore points us to the decisive fact that rhetorics was also an important and intrinsic part of the contemporary behaviour model of *Gallantry* and the discourse on gallantry still prevailing during the 18th century.[194] This behaviour model, which promoted a gallant way of life as the regulative ideal of social conduct, was decisively influenced by rhetorics and particularly by the practice of eloquence, "Beredsamkeit". The practical side of rhetorics, the eloquence ["Beredsamkeit"], however, to which Gottsched refers, was primarily regarded by contemporary philosophers as a matter of practice, a matter of exercise and practical experience. Thus, "Beredsamkeit" was nothing that could be learned solely on the basis of book knowledge, although books were written about it. Rather, it was a habitual skill learned in practice and by means of a learning-by-doing process. As Gottsched highlights, eloquence was a practical "skill, to persuade your audience to act and to think as you want them to act and to think. This should be your ultimate goal; this is what you need to be capable of." And it was precisely this form of practical learning and experience that the authors of the merchant manuals, too, had in mind and regarded as advisable for young merchants when speaking of the best form of mercantile education and the appropriate form of powers of persuasion for a merchant, which they first and foremost regarded as a practical profession rather than a theoretical profession.[195]

Savary expresses his view in the most drastic manner. In his work *Le Parfait Négociant*, he strictly advises parents who wish their sons to become merchants to explicitly not send them to schools or universities because school subjects such as philosophy or rhetoric would be detrimental and would only have negative effects on the young men's capabilities of becoming good merchants. He instead praised practical training as the most beneficial form of education for aspiring merchants. A school or university environment would not be beneficial for young merchants because the only "science" in which they should gain proficiency in is the mercantile science, and this science can only be learned in practical training and actual practice.[196] Marperger and Defoe concurred with this opinion. The merchant's art of being convincing in their words and actions, in person and in business, was learned by doing and practical training and by adopting the mercantile rules of conduct and interaction by practice and by imitation. This would then turn them into complete, competent and capable representatives of their profession: into eloquent merchants. This approach in particular applied to the process of learning how to write and correspond by letters. The authors had good reason to advise the young men to stick to a learning-by-doing approach by means of either imitating letter examples or by copying the letters of their masters because these good examples would show them the most accurate style of mercantile letter writing. This style featured

194 As for the consequences see in particular Rose, *Conduite und Text*, 221-238.

195 See in particular Defoe, *Complete English Tradesman*, 41-48. See in this regard Shinagel, *Daniel Defoe and Middle-Class Gentility*.

196 See Savary, *Der vollkommene Kauff- und Handelsmann* [*Le Parfait Négociant*], chapter 4, "Daß Die Kinder einigen Beruff zu erlernen | nicht sollen genöthiget werden | und welches die Eigenschaften | so wohl des Leibes als des Verstandes sind | die zur Kauffmannschafft erfordert werden," 44-49, here particularly 47-48.

"no quaint expressions, no book-phrases, no flourishes", but instead teaches them the "knowing how to write their letters of correspondence in a free, plain, and trades-man like stile".[197] Such a tradesman like style therefore stood for a practical, pragmatic style of letter writing different to rhetorically sophisticated or philosophical letters, as the latter would only be detrimental to the purpose and goal of business letters, namely to do business. With a suggestion of sarcasm and also a hint of condescension, Defoe notes in this regard that "[he] that affects a rumbling and bombastic stile, and fills his letters with long harangues, compliments and flourishes should turn poet and not tradesman, and set up for a wit, and not a shopkeeper."[198] In their opinion, not visiting a university or enjoying academic schooling would therefore not be to the detriment of a merchant like Luetkens. In fact, it was not seen as disadvantageous in any way by the authors. Quite on the contrary, practical training, learning by practice, was regarded as the most appropriate and advisable educational path for a young man who wanted to become a merchant. It is therefore certainly also no surprise to find in the Luetkens letters somewhat disparaging statements made by the merchants regarding university education. The merchants Hertzer & von Bobartt for instance wrote in March 1745 that during their youth they "haven't been able to learn and get any legal knowledge ["die Jura"] or Latin into our heads, which is, however, what the advocates need to learn."[199]

Practical training and experience was what turned these young men into eloquent men of trade. A young merchant was advised to learn his business from scratch. He learned by experience and in practice what it meant to be convincing in his words and deeds as a merchant and as a merchant letter writer. He learned by means of practical experiences and thus learnt by himself the skills and strategies for being convincing in his words and actions by means of practical incorporation. This is exactly what we find represented in Luetkens' educational path and later in his letter and business practice.

Of course, the recommendations regarding writing appropriate letters as a merchant do not automatically mean that we will not find any flourishes, compliments, or rambling speeches in Luetkens' letters – we will find those. After all, Luetkens was also a child of the early Enlightenment and of the polite and often still gallant bourgeois culture prevailing in Hamburg as well as in the cities he visited in France.[200] This fact also impacted on his typical ways of conversing and dealing with other people while at the same time, however, he still in many ways adhered to a typical tradesman like letter-writing style. Of course we will also find in his letters the "rhetoric of candour" and the virtues of "fidelity and honesty", polite compliments, tittle-tattle, gallant babbling,

197 Defoe, *Complete English Tradesman*, 25 and 12.

198 Ibid., 23.

199 "Wir haben die Jura und das lateinische nicht in der Jugend im Kopf bekommen können, welches denen advocaten zu wißen nötig sein soll." Letter from Hertzer & von Bobartt to Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, March 5, 1745, TNA, HCA 30/234.

200 See Rose, *Conduite und Text*; see Viala, *La France galante*; see Fulda, *Galanterie und Frühaufklärung*. See also Duchêne, Roger. *Madame de Sévigné et la lettre d'amour. Réalité vécue et art épistolaire*. Paris: Bordas, 1970. See particularly Rollin, Charles. *De la Manière d'Enseigneur et d'Etudier le Belles Lettres*. Paris: Estienne, 1726. For England see also Bryson, Anna. *From Courtesy to Civility: Changing Codes of Conduct in Early Modern England*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998. See Langford, Paul. *A Polite and Commercial People: England 1727-1783*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989.

all serving the purpose and premises of winning people over for his plans.[201] However, there are also classical rhetorical elements in his letters, such as the Aristotelian elements of ethos, logos and pathos, as the fundamental cornerstones of persuasive speech in classical rhetoric. According to Aristotle's *Rhetoric*, the art of persuasion is based on three fundamental principles, the three modes of persuasion of ethos, pathos and logos (delighting/delectare, moving/movere, teaching/docere). Aristotle wrote that of "the modes of persuasion furnished by the spoken word there are three kinds. The first kind depends on the personal character of the speaker [ethos]; the second on putting the audience into a certain frame of mind [pathos]; the third on the proof, or apparent proof, provided by the words of the speech itself [logos]."[202] The first mode, *ethos*, relates to the personal character and credibility of the speaker, who should be able to convince other people on the basis of his competence, his good intention and his empathy. The second mode, *pathos*, aims at exerting an emotional influence on the audience. Often, the speaker would use the rhetorical devices of metaphors, analogies, similes and passionate delivery to persuade the audience by means of sparking emotions. The merchant Luetkens also made use of such analogies, similes and metaphors particularly in the letters to his youngest brother, from whom he demanded loyalty in order to put a plan into practice, calling on his brother's emotions and his sense of honour. The third and last mode of persuasion, *logos*, is based on and draws on the appeal to logical reason. To quote Aristotle, this mode represents the situation "when we have proved a truth or an apparent truth by means of the persuasive arguments suitable to the case in question."[203]

Despite the focus on practical powers of persuasion, these classical elements can nonetheless also be found and reappear in the Luetkens letters. This is because the reason for their usage was not necessarily due to rhetorical or theoretical training or intention and these elements were not necessarily deliberately applied as rhetoric devices by the letter writers. Rather, these elements appear as natural parts of the practical principles of persuasion performed in letter exchanges, which are governed by multiple elements and contexts. The elements furthermore also naturally appear in the letter-writing manuals of the time. Gottsched himself, for instance, admitted after citing Aristotle's definition of rhetorics as "the capability to do everything that is necessary for the purpose of persuasion" that "this description is not contrary to our definition [of rhetorics]" ["diese Beschreibung ist der unsrigen nicht zuwider"].[204] However, he understood this idea of rhetorics and Aristotle's work more as a "general doctrine" ["als eine Lehre

201 See Ditz, "Secret Selves, Credible Personas," 223. See Klein, Lawrence E. "Politeness and the Interpretation of the British Eighteenth Century." *The Historical Journal* 45, no. 4 (2002): 869-898. See Beetz, Manfred. *Frühmoderne Höflichkeit. Komplimentierkunst und Gesellschaftsrituale im altdeutschen Sprachraum*. Stuttgart: Metzler, 1990.

202 Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, 1356a. I am quoting the English translation and edition of Edward P.J. Corbett.

203 Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, 1356a. Regarding Aristotle see Ueding/Steinbrink, *Grundriß der Rhetorik*, 23-27. See furthermore Oksenberg Rorty, Amélie, ed. *Essays on Aristotle's Rhetoric*. Berkeley/Los Angeles/London: University of California Press, 1996. See also Knape, Joachim. *Was ist Rhetorik?* Stuttgart: Reclam, 2000.

204 "ein Vermögen in jeder vollkommenden Sache wahrzunehmen, was zur Überredung dienlich seyn kann" cited in Gottsched, *Ausführliche Redekunst*, 73.

angesehen"] than a practical instruction.[205] Therefore in his books, representing the general tenor and discourse on rhetorics during the 18th century, he introduced and presented a second level, a second form of rhetorics. This second form focuses more on the practical side and elements of the art of persuasion, the practical eloquence. In short, the classical rhetorical elements will play a part in the analyses, but will reveal themselves primarily as evolving in practice and from necessity. Thus, they appear as tied to and reacting to practical purposes in the Luetkens letters and in the contemporary fashion of the said practice of eloquence, "Beredsamkeit".

Many of the letter-writing manuals themselves drew on long-established rhetorical traditions dating back to antiquity, for instance by referring to the classical scheme of antique rhetoric called the ars dictaminis, the art of prose composition, and more specifically also to the classical art of writing letters, "ars dictamen".[206] The crucial question in this regard is, however, how much of the actual theory behind these elements had a concrete bearing on Luetkens' letters and how much knowledge about the antique origins of persuasive speech can be assumed on the part of Luetkens, or put more bluntly, had interested him. This connection is only poorly verifiable. Rather it must be assumed that Luetkens must have to a large extent either simply accepted or copied the respective offerings from the 18th-century letter-writing manuals, or as is more likely and probable, he had learned and formed his letter-writing styles in practice and by experience and used his elements of letter practice as a natural skill. In support of this assumption, even the ars dictaminis can be regarded in a more general perspective as a kind of standard already – a common standard and scheme of the epoch at least until the second half of the 18th century – that was sometimes more or less routinely applied and performed in the practice of letter writing, without the need to know about its origins. Luetkens would therefore encounter this scheme in many or even most of the letters that he received during his education and travels. What matters most for Luetkens with regard to rhetorics was ultimately the efficacy of the rhetorical elements and at least in this regard we are also decidedly able to investigate them, because we have access to the product of his efforts: his letters.

Coming back to the typical form of learning how to be convincing in life and letters as a merchant and the clear message of the three authors of the merchant manuals in this regard, as a researcher I will have to not only consult advice literature, books and other contemporary forms of literature to understand and explain Luetkens' powers of persuasion, but I have to investigate and put a special focus on Luetkens' practical skills and knowledge. My focus has to be to try to understand and recreate from his letters directly – from their material and text – how Luetkens' power of persuasion worked. I further must be aware of the fact that this practical knowledge was practically learned and incorporated and as such was also first and foremost also practically effective and not scrutinized by the writers themselves, just as the authors of the advice literature had

205 Ibid., 73.

206 See Camargo, Martin. "Art. Ars dictandi, dictaminis." *Historisches Wörterbuch der Rhetorik* 1, edited by Gert Ueding, 1040-1046. Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1992. See Furger, *Briefsteller*, 149. Regarding the origins of the ars dictaminis see Patt, William D. "The Early Ars dictaminis as Response to a Changing Society." *Viator* 9 (1978): 133-55.

intended and stipulated it. What I will primarily focus on in this regard in this book is Luetkens' practical eloquence in his letter practice. This eloquence was borne from practice and shaped by experiences and as such it promises, as is my firm conviction, direct and revealing insights into the typical ways of letter writing and correspondence and typical practical principles of exerting influence on each other through letters as they prevailed during the 18th century. This is how I will not only tell the story of Luetkens and his letters in this book, as "ethnographic miniatures" but also as a microhistorical cut-out of the "wall-sized culturescapes", as Clifford Geertz put it, of the 18th century during which this young man grew up and made himself into a successful merchant.[207]

With this assumption and goal in mind, I can conclude this chapter. We are well equipped to start the analyses of the business and letter episodes during Luetkens' establishment phase because we are provided with all the necessary background information about Luetkens' life, his education, his life situation on his travels and the demands and requirements he faced during his establishment phase. Thus, we can now delve deeply into the analysis of the concrete steps of his establishment phase and into the letter conversations shaping and promoting it.

As the final remark of this chapter, I will quote another merchant manual that helps to aptly announce and summarize the content of the following chapters. We will see that "young men prosper best, when they have either served as journey-men […] [or] have the happiness to be taken in as partners unto such, whereby, as bears by their grown cubs they are taught to catch their prey with the greatest cleverness and certainty."[208] Luetkens enjoyed the privilege of experiencing and benefitting from both being a journeyman and being a business partner. The former will mark the beginning of the following analytical part, the latter will mark its end and in between we will read the story how the young merchant Nicolaus Gottlieb Luetkens became a reputable man of trade.

207 Geertz, "Thick Description," 21.

208 H.N. (anon.) Merchant in the City of London, *The exact dealer's daily companion*, 9.

An Early Modern Mercantile Establishment Phase in Five Case Studies

3 Shipping Business

3.1. Hamburg

Reasons for Settling down for Business in Hamburg

In the 18th century Hamburg was one of the most vibrant and thriving trading cities and commercial centres of Europe and ranked as one of the leading trade entrepots and transshipment ports of the era. As Mary Lindemann aptly put it, "Hamburg served as a commercial nerve centre for half the continent".[1] Speaking of the German territory alone, as Klaus Weber emphasized, the city on the river Elbe can surely be regarded as "the most important German seaport" of the 18th century, which even "outstripped the previously leading port of Amsterdam in its relevance [...] as a major hub in the trade and further distribution of colonial goods".[2] A contemporary traveller, whose name unfortunately remains unknown to us, but who visited Hamburg in the mid-18th century for the purpose of assessing the city's economic situation for a foreign bank, noted that the "importance of business in Hamburg and the variety of things connected with it are so great that one could profitably spend an entire year here and learn something new each day. There are few European seaports which Hamburg's ships do not enter, and there is no seafaring people in this part of the world which does not traffic with Hamburg. Its superb location makes the city the emporium of all Germany. [...] The Elbe and the canals [...] are almost blanketed over with ships. The assembly on the Stock Exchange is one of the largest [in Europe] and the place teems with negociants. In a word, one finds here a perpetual motion of all nations and peoples caught up in the business of money-making."[3]

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1 Lindemann, *Patriots and Paupers*, 3. See Lindemann, Mary. *The Merchant Republics: Amsterdam, Antwerp, and Hamburg, 1648-1790*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015, 27-30.

2 Weber, *Deutsche Kaufleute*, 15. See ibid., 16. See also Jeannin, Pierre. "Die Hansestädte im europäischen Handel des 18. Jahrhunderts." *Hansische Geschichtsblätter* 89 (1971): 41-73. See Lindberg, Erik. "The Rise of Hamburg as a Global Marketplace in the Seventeenth Century: A Comparative Political Economy Perspective." *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 50, no. 3 (2008): 641-662.

3 "Bericht über eine im Auftrag der Mährischen Lehensbank durchgeführten Kommerzialreise – Eine zeitgenös-sische Bestandsaufnahme zur Wirtschaftslage mitteleuropäischer Städte um die Mit-

The reasons for this great commercial significance and the important role that Hamburg played on the world market were manifold. Surely also some fortunate strokes of luck during the long and eventful history of this city had had their share in this development, such as for instance that Hamburg had been largely spared during the Thirty Years War. Mary Lindemanns' work, but also and especially the standard work regarding Hamburg and its *Social History* by Franklin Kopitzsch, give an eloquent testimony of this.[4] Five reasons, however, can be highlighted as ultimately the main promoting and favouring factors that turned Hamburg into a commercial centre of the 18th century, all of which were hinted at in the words of the abovementioned contemporary traveller.

The first reason is the superb location. Situated in the centre of Europe, Hamburg served as a perfect hub and nodal point to connect the markets in the north, including the Scandinavian and Baltic areas, the south, including the Mediterranean region, the east, including Russia and Poland, and the west, with England, France, the Netherlands and Spain as the main trading countries. In contrast to the commercial cities in the south of Germany such as Augsburg or Nuremberg, which had been the most important cities during the 15th and 16th century, regarding the 18th century and its markets, Hamburg enjoyed the crucial advantage of having a direct connection to the sea, which was highly important for its interconnection with the Atlantic trading markets. At the same time, Hamburg was protected against naval attacks through its inland location. This inland location in turn provided the basis for intensive trading exchanges between Hamburg and the European domestic markets and close cooperation between the merchants and the manufacturing industry. Hamburg's own manufacturing sector in fact can be regarded as the second most important pillar of the commercial significance of the Elbe city. For instance, the agricultural sugar processing industry with over 350 sugar refineries in the Hamburg region enabled the merchants of the city to conduct the typical Hamburg trade of buying raw, unrefined sugar and then selling the more expensive processed product, which is important to know since the merchant Luetkens, too, traded in sugar.[5] All of this turned Hamburg into a very attractive place for merchants, which was a fact that would furthermore be fostered through the political situation prevailing in Hamburg during that time, which is the second main reason why Hamburg experienced a commercial peak in the 18th century.[6]

Apart from the favourable location, Hamburg also provided favourable political conditions for merchants to settle down and to start their business. The second reason for Hamburg's blossoming in the 18th century was thus that as a free imperial city placed

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te des 18. Jahrhunderts (Teil III) (edited by Gustav Otruba)." *Jahrbuch für Wirtschaftsgeschichte* 16 (JFW), no. 4 (1976): 231-252, here 258.

4 See Kopitzsch, *Grundzüge einer Sozialgeschichte*, vol.1, 135-246. See also Pantel, *Hamburgische Neutralität*, 1.

5 See Weber, *Deutsche Kaufleute*, 232. See also Weber, *German Merchants*. See also Prange, Carsten. "Handel und Schiffahrt im 18. Jahrhundert." In *Hamburg im Zeitalter der Aufklärung*, edited by Inge Stephan and Hans Gerd Winter, 42-56. Berlin/Hamburg: Reimer 1998, i.a. 48. See Newman, "Hamburg in the European Economy," 57-93. Regarding the Hamburg sugar refineries see Petersson, *Zuckersiedergewerbe und Zuckerhandel*, 41-59.

6 See also already Schramm, "Hamburger Kaufleute." See Schramm, Percy Ernst. "Die deutschen Überseekaufleute im Rahmen der Sozialgeschichte." *Bremisches Jahrbuch* 49 (1964): 31-54.

within the Holy Roman Empire it was acting almost autonomously and independently from external political powers. That means that during the entire Early Modern Period Hamburg was self-governed, although it was nominally under the authority of the Holy Roman Emperor. The city's own local elite exercised political control and governed the political destiny of Hamburg. Since this elite recruited itself from its own leading parties and the most influential members of its society, and since these most influential members were for the most part merchants, the political agenda and political orientation of the city was mainly commercially shaped. The merchant class dominated Hamburg and as such they put great efforts into the commercial prosperity of their hometown, and only secondly, if at all, would they act also for the good of the Holy Roman Empire. The direct impact of this political power of the merchant elite and its consequences for the daily and especially the commercial life of Hamburg can be illustrated by means of the third and fourth reason for Hamburg's rise to economic power.[7]

The third main reason for Hamburg's commercial wealth and prosperity was the institutionalisation of the mercantile agenda of the city, which already started in the 16th and 17th century. In 1558, the Hamburg Exchange opened its doors. The Hamburg bank was established in 1619, the Hamburg Admiralty in 1623, and in 1663 the Commerz-Deputation (todays Chamber of Commerce) followed, of which, as we know, Luetkens later in his life became an important member.[8] In the 18th century, these institutions went on to enjoy worldwide fame, as even our unknown traveller reverently acknowledged.[9] In almost the same breath our traveller noticed and stressed the many nationalities and people from all over the world that he met in Hamburg, who lined the streets and teemed at the meeting places, merchant houses and coffeehouses of the city. This observation, too, ultimately refers back to the autonomy and power of the merchant elite of the free imperial city and represents at the same time the fourth reason for Hamburg's prosperity in the 18th century.

During almost all of the 18th century, Hamburg advocated a religious tolerance policy. This means that Hamburg generally was open to people from many other countries, or nations as the traveller called it, regardless of their religious backgrounds.[10] This tolerance policy subsequently attracted not only merchants from other countries in general, but particularly it provided a place of shelter and a place of refuge for all of those who were experiencing and fleeing from expulsion, persecution and displacement in other countries. In Hamburg for instance Huguenots, meaning French Protestants, as well as Calvinist refugees from the Spanish Netherlands and Jews from Portugal found a new home. The latter fact, however, did not mean that these groups did not also

7 See Lindemann, *Patriots and Paupers*, 36. See Pantel, *Hamburgische Neutralität*, 30. See Reißmann, *Die hamburgische Kaufmannschaft*, 22. See also Kellenbenz, Hermann. *Unternehmerkräfte im Hamburger Portugal- und Spanienhandel. 1590-1625*. Hamburg: Verlag der Hamburgischen Bücherei, 1954.

8 See Handelskammer, *Handelskammer*, 21-24, and 42-65. See Baasch, *Handelskammer*.

9 See Lindemann, "Doing Business in 18th century Hamburg," 162.

10 See Lindberg, "The Rise of Hamburg," 641-662. See Weber, *Deutsche Kaufleute*, 239-240. See Whaley, Joachim. *Religious Toleration and Social Change in Hamburg 1529-1819*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985.

face and suffer from prejudices and social exclusion in Hamburg.[11] The immigration further boosted Hamburg's economy since the new arrivals were, although they may have lost their homes, often still in possession of their capital, their networks and their knowledge, which they brought with them to Hamburg and from which Hamburg in turn benefitted. The tolerance policy regarding foreign merchants therefore was thus no purely altruistic gesture by the Hamburg authorities and it did not serve entirely selfless motivations, but quite on the contrary, even this measure served the purpose of expanding the role and economic power of the city on the international trading floor. At the same time, however, it was also the main reason for the cosmopolitan nature of Hamburg's inhabitants that the cited traveller encountered, and it provided highly favourable conditions for internationally trading merchants, for which the last main reason for Hamburg's rise ultimately provided the perfect complement to the said foreign policy, further stimulating economic growth.[12]

This fifth reason can be regarded as in essence forming the background for all other reasons for Hamburg's unique commercial status in 18th-century Germany, providing the key and general legal framework which Hamburg drew from for the purpose of developing and asserting its commercial authority and independence on the world market. The fifth reason was that during the entire Early Modern Period, the free and imperial city of Hamburg claimed and maintained a policy and status of neutrality with regard to the power struggles and wars led by the colonial superpowers of the period.[13] As a free imperial city, Hamburg was granted this right by the Holy Roman Emperor, since as a self-governed city it was also given the right to enter independently, but nonetheless lawfully, into peace treaties and bilateral trade treaties with other countries, detached from the political alliances of the Holy Roman Empire. In 1744 and 1745, the period covered by the Luetkens archive, Hamburg held such treaties with France, Spain and England, that is, with the main belligerent parties of the period. Furthermore, it had also set up trade alliances with the Netherlands, Denmark and Sweden, and therefore could successfully establish and maintain itself as a free port in the midst of a war-torn Europe.[14] To a certain extent, Hamburg, as well as the other Hanseatic cities and

11 Ibid. See Kopitzsch, *Grundzüge einer Sozialgeschichte* and "Zwischen Hauptrezeß und Franzosenzeit."

12 Prange, *Hamburgische Neutralität*, 28-29; Newman, "Hamburg in the European Economy," 77. See Liebel, Helen. "Laissez-faire vs. Mercantilism: The Rise of Hamburg & the Hamburg Bourgeoisie vs. Frederick the Great in the Crisis of 1763." *Vierteljahrschrift für Sozial- und Wirtschaftsgeschichte* 52, no. 2 (1965): 207-238.

13 See Weber, *Deutsche Kaufleute*, 162-166, 229. See Weber, "German Merchant." See in general Pantel, *Hamburgische Neutralität*, particularly 1-2, 29, 39. See Lindberg, Erik. "The Rise of Hamburg"; Newman, Karen. "Hamburg in the European Economy."

14 See Huhn, *Handelsverträge*, 6,7,13, 21-28. The peace and trade treaties between Hamburg and France can be found ibid. 87-88, stating that "Hambourg est le magazin du Nord et de presque tout l'Empire." Ibid. See Weber, *Deutsche Kaufleute*, 166, 229. See Alimento, Antonella, and Koen Stapelbroek, eds. *The Politics of Commercial Treaties in the Eighteenth Century: Balance of Power, Balance of Trade*. Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017. Regarding the trade with England see Newman, Karen. *Anglo-Hamburg Trade in the Late Seventeenth and Early 18th Century.* Unpublished PhD-thesis. London: London School of Economics and Political Science, 1979. See also Schulte Beerbühl, *German Merchants.* Regarding the navigational acts see Morgan, "British Empire." Regarding Spain see Kellenbenz, *Unternehmerkräfte*. See also Poettering, *Handel, Nation und Religion*.

also some of the free ports in France, represented the exact opposite to the generally protectionist and mercantilist trade policies and trading systems of the superpowers and therefore provided a clear impetus for merchants even from these superpowers to trade with Hamburg, who hoped for profits and trading opportunities across national boundaries or even for actively undermining the national borders. The opportunity of free trade was consequently also the reason why our anonymous traveller encountered so many ships from different nations blanketing the Elbe and the Hamburg port and why he concluded that there seemed to be "no seafaring people in this part of the world which does not traffic with Hamburg".[15] The Hamburg port was basically a port of call for every trading nation of the 18th century and therefore was also called upon by all the superpowers of the era, thus elevating Hamburg to the rank of a commercial heavyweight. The maritime neutrality, on the other hand, also led and contributed to the fact that Hamburg ships travelled relatively freely in the international waters of the time, manoeuvring their way through and in-between the different territories and seas controlled by the naval powers, in peace as well as during wartime. Their main role and remit in this regard was to become intermediaries, re-exporters, and therefore international distributors of all the goods of the superpowers that had swamped these countries' own domestic markets. And with this latter condition, in turn, we have arrived at the main topic of this chapter.[16]

This chapter deals with the shipping business as an important mainstay for Hamburg merchants in the 18th century and as an important business field and proving ground for an aspiring wholesale merchant who tried to establish himself in 18th century trade. Ralph Davis even concluded that "on the whole […] it was trade that gave its assistance to shipowning rather than vice versa; the merchant entered the potentially profitable business of shipowning because he had connections which were likely to enhance these potentialities, not because he needed a ship to carry his goods." [17] The business field of the shipping business includes the buying of ships, the procurement of passports and flags and insurances and the necessary tackle, apparel and furniture for these ships, the hiring of ships' captains, the maintenance of the ship, the procurement and subsequently the transshipments of goods and the setting of the routes for these ships.[18] In this chapter we will primarily learn about the first part of the tasks of an 18th century ship-owner. I will show how Luetkens bought ships and how he took care of the necessary formalities. In the chapter on high-risk trade and on the ships' captains' letters in the Luetkens archive, we will also learn in detail about the second part of the mentioned tasks. In the present chapter, Hamburg's neutrality, and the economic advantages accompanying it, will be presented as the general prerequisite for all trading activity in

15 Otruba, "Kommerzialreise," 258.

16 See furthermore Baasch, "Hamburgs Handel und Schiffahrt." Regarding French-Hamburg trade see also Pourchasse, *Le commerce du Nord*; "French Trade" and "Dynamism and Integration". See Pourchasse, "L'immigration négociante." On maritime neutrality and its benefits see also Müller, "Maritime Neutrality." See Anderson, "Privateering."

17 Davis, Ralph. *The Rise of the English Shipping Industry in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries.* London: Macmillan, 1962, 99.

18 See Hancock, *Citizens of the World*, 115-142; see Davis, *English Shipping Industry*, 81.

this business field and as a crucial characteristic and asset for Hamburg's wholesale merchants.[19] For us, in turn, it represents the key topic about which we need extensive background knowledge, apart from knowing about the shipping business, in order to explain and understand Luetkens' business practices and, subsequently, to understand the events within the letter conversations regarding this business field in the Luetkens archive. That is the reason why I have prepended this chapter with an introduction on the reasons for Hamburg's special role in international business relations because it provides us with the first part of the necessary intelligible framework and the historical backdrop against which the subtleties and specific characteristics of Luetkens' activities in this business field will become understandable for us. To a certain extent, as a matter of fact, all the mentioned reasons for Hamburg's commercial success had their concrete bearing on Luetkens' establishment phase since they all shaped and fostered his career and career advancement in the first place, and therefore they will resonate continually during all the analytical chapters of this book. As we know, furthermore, Luetkens did not spend only one year in Hamburg, as the traveller suggested it as advisable and favourable for merchants, but he spent his childhood, youth and apprenticeship in this city. He therefore learned from his own personal experience what it meant to live and trade in Hamburg. He knew about the commercial advantages and features that Hamburg offered its citizens and merchants, the reasons why Hamburg represented such a favourable place to establish oneself. That is, he knew of the significance of Hamburg's favourable geographic location, the benefits of the opportunities for contact with many different trading nations, and he got to know the authority and strong reputation of the mercantile institutions of Hamburg as well as the good reputation that Hamburg merchants enjoyed in the world. After his return, establishment and settlement in Hamburg, he consequently also became an active part of these institutions.[20] For the time of his establishment phase, however, the most important characteristic and feature of Hamburg trade from which he directly profited was Hamburg's maritime neutrality. This phenomenon enabled him to enter into and to act successfully within the field of shipping, which, in turn, made a perfect foothold for his establishment phase.

In the next part of this chapter, I will elaborate on the subtleties of both the shipping business and maritime neutrality in 18th century trade and seafaring, which further fleshes out our picture around Luetkens' first important mercantile field of activity. On the basis of this thick contextualisation we are well prepared to analyse in detail the episode of the letter conversation that stands at the centre of the chapter, which

19 On the shipping business see Davis, *English Shipping Industry*. See also the comprehensive bibliography by Morgan, Kenneth. *Ships and Shipping. Oxford Bibliographies online research guides*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010. See Veluwenkamp, Jan Willem, and Werner Scheltjens, eds. *Early Modern Shipping and Trade: Novel Approaches Using Sound Toll Registers Online*. Boston/Leiden: Brill, 2018. For the French-Hamburg shipping business see Treutlein, Gerhardt. *Schiffahrt*; Prange, "Handel und Schiffahrt"; Baasch, "Hamburgs Handel und Schiffahrt." See Baasch, Ernst. *Quellen zur Geschichte von Hamburgs Handel und Schiffahrt im 17., 18. und 19. Jahrhundert*. 5 vol. Hamburg: Gräfe & Sillem, 1908-1910. See Baasch, Ernst. "Hamburgs Handel und Schiffahrt am Ende des 18. Jahrhunderts." In *Hamburg um die Jahrhundertwende 1800*, edited by Neue Börsen-Halle, 155-173. Hamburg: Neue Börsen-Halle, 1900.

20 See the chapter on the "Making of a Merchant."

will give us crucial insights into the concrete mercantile operations within the 18th-century shipping business as well as insights into how letters were effectively used to implement and keep this business running. As regards insights into the powers of persuasion applied in business and letter practices during the 18th century, we will learn in this chapter about the first and one of the most fundamental practical principles of persuasion governing letter practice. This was the principle of demanding loyalty from correspondents in order to be able to put plans into practice. Luetkens demanded loyalty from his two natural brothers, whom he successfully recruited for his plans in his shipping business. On the basis of the persuasive principle of demanding loyalty and by drawing on fraternal bonds, Luetkens was able in the year 1744 to restructure and reorganize his entire shipping business, adapting it optimally to the conditions prevailing in this business field and in French-Hamburg trade during the 18th century. By means of his letters, as the letter episode will show, he was able to transfer the ownership of all his ships pro forma to his youngest brother Anton. For this purpose, Anton became a Hamburg citizen, a Large Burgher of the city of Hamburg. This means he applied for and paid for a so-called large citizenship in Hamburg, in German "großes Bürgerrecht", which allowed Luetkens to declare his ships neutral ships and provide them with a neutral Hamburg flag and passport, which were necessary for free passage, while at the same time staying highly active in French trade.[21] Nicolaus Gottlieb Luetkens, in turn, became the official hirer of these ships from his brother, which allowed the merchant still to dispose of these ships freely, even though his brother was the official ship-owner. In order to convince his brother, and in order to pull off that trick in his shipping business, Luetkens made used of three very formative letter practices of the period, which will be demonstrated in the chapter as part of the principle of persuasion. First, he bundled several letters to different people in one letter packet that he sent to Hamburg. The enclosed letters were inserted into one another, meaning that he folded letters into letters. This practice represented a very typical pattern and material arrangement of letters during the Early Modern Period.[22]

The second letter practice he used was to deliberately not seal the inserted letters, but to leave them open, or – as the contemporaries called this practice – to produce unfinished letters, in German "ohnbeschwerte Briefe".[23] This practice allowed the respective addressees of the outer letter to decide for themselves whether or not they would forward these letters and how they should proceed further in this undertaking. By means of this practice, Luetkens was in essence able to materially convene a family

21 Regarding the different forms of citizenship, the "große und kleine Bürgerrecht" in Hamburg (how to become a Small or Large Burgher) see the following explanations as well as Lindemann, *Patriots and Paupers*, 60-63 as well as Pantel, *Hamburgische Neutralität*, 26. See also Kopitzsch, "Zwischen Hauptrezeß und Franzosenzeit," 367.

22 We can find thousands upon thousands of such letter packets enclosing letters in letters in the Prize Papers. See Dagmar Freist, "Uncurated Histories." There exists, however, no article or book dealing with this material practice in detail so far. See in general Daybell, *The Material Letter*, 85-108. Regarding the tuck-and-seal method of letterlocking see ibid., 53-54. See Wiggins, *Bess of Hardwick's Letters*, 173-193. With a special focus on letter materiality see Daybell, James. *Women Letter-Writers*, here 10-11 and 32-60. See Haasis, "Materialität."

23 Letter from Schulte, Jeronimus to Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, April 6, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/236.

council using only this letter packet. The outer letter was sent to his middle brother, Joachim; the first inserted letter was addressed to his youngest brother, Anton; and the last inserted letter was addressed to his youngest brother's master Luer Luers. Using the practice of not sealing enclosed letters, Luetkens provided his brothers with certain decision-making powers. They were able to decide how they wanted to proceed in the respective undertaking and using this material gesture he ultimately managed to convince his brother and Luer Luers to help and support him in this matter. The last letter practice I will present in this chapter is the practice of rhetorically skilful argumentation in letters which was used to react to criticism and to steal an addressee's thunder.[24] All of these letter practices were part and results of the practical principle of persuasion of demanding loyalty.

The crucial question to answer before dedicating our attention to the letter practices is, however, why they were necessary at all. Why did Luetkens have to reorganize his shipping business in the first place? In order to answer this question, I will first continue my thick contextualisation and further specify the conditions that prevailed for merchants during that time in the shipping business and the conditions that particularly prevailed for young wholesale merchants travelling and trading in foreign lands, in France in particular, during their establishment phase. This second part of my contextualisation will provide us with the necessary plausible framework that helps us to understand the particular material events in the letter episode that will be presented. As a matter of fact, Nicolaus Gottlieb Luetkens did not decide right away after his apprenticeship to settle down in Hamburg, but he stayed unbound and free (and did not apply for citizenship in Hamburg) for the time that he spent in France. For this decision he had very good reasons, which will be presented in the next part of this chapter.

3.2 A Hamburg Merchant in France

Reasons for not Settling down for Business in Hamburg

The shipping business of a Hamburg merchant is an insightful topic relating to international trade relations and maritime neutrality because it demonstrates, on a general level, the opportunities, practices and typical ways of the Hanseatic trade participation on the international trading floor in the 18th century and it shows the challenges that accompanied this process.[25] Luetkens' case furthermore represents a significant example in this regard because his efforts and activities clearly demonstrate the challenges and demands, the constraints and problems, not just the incentives that the merchants faced in this situation. A most telling fact in this regard is that the merchant Luetkens

24 See Redford, *The Converse of the Pen*, 1-15. See Fitzmaurice, *The Familiar Letter*, 35-54, 87-128. See Fitzmaurice, "Like talking on paper?"

25 See Davis, *English Shipping Industry*. Regarding Hamburg shipping, see Treutlein, *Schiffahrt*; Prange, "Handel und Schiffahrt"; Baasch, "Hamburgs Handel und Schiffahrt." Regarding the importance of the Hamburg shipping business and Hamburg merchants for France, see Pourchasse, *Le commerce du Nord*, 267-290.

did not decide right away to settle down in Hamburg despite the presumably unequivocally beneficial situation prevailing there. Instead, when he hit the road after his service in the house of David Speelmeyer, the merchant instead deliberately left open all options as to when or where to establish himself. We will learn more about this in the chapter on how he found a business partner, but it seems that he was not averse to or even desirous to settle down and open a merchant house in France. In the end, however, he decided to settle down in Hamburg, but it took him a whole six years to make this decision, which raises the legitimate question: What took him so long to decide this matter? Why did he not come to this decision earlier? Why would he even have considered not establishing himself in Hamburg even though he would find such favourable conditions there? This fact reveals to us that there must have also been clear and severe reservations and reasons against the decision to settle down in Hamburg because otherwise Luetkens presumably would have decided more automatically and naturally to establish himself in the Elbe city. He must therefore have found some clear incentives to delay his decisions, and these incentives must have even rendered it possible or advisable to decide against a neutral status as a merchant in 18th-century Europe.

These incentives, and the said reasons that generally spoke against the decision to settle in Hamburg, are the topic in this part of the chapter. However, we must avoid creating a false impression. The explanations are not going to render the first part of the chapter obsolete. Quite on the contrary, the additional information that will be given represents a necessary complement to the first part. It represents the necessary opposite side to the benefits. If you like, it represents the cons to becoming a part of Hamburg's trade, or rather the pros of not staying neutral in the maritime field of the 18th century. But these factors nevertheless also notably shaped Hamburg's trade. As it will become obvious, it must be assumed that the trading operations of Hamburg merchants most often must have run precisely at the conjuncture between the two sides, because this was the place where trade was ultimately the most profitable.

On the basis of a deeper look into the enterprises Nicolaus Gottlieb Luetkens undertook in the mercantile field of the shipping business and the challenges he faced and overcame business field, this exploration of a middle way, leeway, or in other words, of a legal and commercial grey area, can be vividly and appropriately illustrated. Within his shipping business, Luetkens successfully managed to combine and utilize for his purposes both the benefits of a neutral status while at the same time still remaining capable of acting and trading relatively freely within the French Atlantic markets regardless of the restrictions of neutrality, and this even without having obtained an official status and large citizenship as a Hamburger. How he succeeded in this regard and what ways and means he found to overcome, or rather circumvent, the hurdles that stood in his way will be subsequently shown and analysed on the basis of the letter episode at the centre of this chapter.

Through his example we will gain a better understanding of how we have to assess the actual situation and concrete practice of Hamburg merchants regarding their trade participation in the international markets of the 18th century. On the one hand, we will learn from his activities that, speaking in strictly practical terms, the shipping business provided the basic foundation for many of the other trading activities of a wholesale merchant, such as commission trade. On the other hand, his example is indicative of the common strategy used by Hamburg merchants to react to international trade policies, in terms of how they reacted to trade restrictions and to privileges offered. The way Luetkens handled his shipping business is representative of the way he basically handled all his affairs. He searched for a middle course, found leeway and was therefore able to literally manoeuvre through or, put more colloquially, muddle his way through the field of 18th century international trade. In all of his businesses presented in this book, the merchant chose the strategy of the middle way. All of these strategies helped him fight his way through the turmoils of his lifetime and the stage of life he was at. The example of the shipping business in essence is representative of the general way that Hanseatic merchants of the 18th century found ways and loopholes within the international trading system. With this part of the chapter, I will therefore also provide esential preparatory information for all the following chapters.

As will be shown, not only in this chapter but the entire book, the ways and means of doing business for Hamburg wholesale merchants were almost never only a question of being neutral or not neutral. Instead, it far more often took the form of manoeuvring right between the two poles, just as the Hamburg ships manoeuvred their way through the sea areas of the colonial superpowers. Especially for a merchant during his establishment phase, it was essential to find an appropriate course and to learn the rules of the game, including developing a certain intuition and instinct for what was legitimate, where to push the boundaries, and what was possible and lucrative but still feasible. If he had failed early on in the business field of the shipping business, it would in fact have been immensely difficult still to develop a good footing in business in general.

The reason for the latter is that most often the shipping business represented the first step on the career ladder, the foundation that provided the basic capital and starting point for a successful career in mercantile business.[26] Nicolaus Gottlieb Luetkens found this middle course and masterfully used the grey areas at least until the year 1745 when the capture of the *Hope* and the *Post van Hamburg* brought to light his wheelings and dealings in this strand of mercantile business. However, in August 1745 this unmasking of his activities could actually no longer do him great harm, except for the loss of his business archive and the goods on the ships. After all, at this point in his career, he was already on the verge of establishing himself in Hamburg and did not necessarily need to draw on the grey areas and strategies he had successfully applied in the two years before because from then on he would officially take on the status of a Hamburg merchant and act as such also in his shipping business. He became a Hamburg citizen, a *burgher*, three days after his return from France, signing his oath, the "Bürger=Eyd",

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26 See Hancock, *Citizens of the World*, 83, 132. Regarding the necessity of choosing a middle course as young merchants, see Grassby, *Business Community*, 293. As a good comparative example to Luetkens's shipping business, see Hancock, *Citizens of the World*, chapter "Shipping and Trading in an Empire of the Seas," 115-142. As another comparative example with a focus on the 19th century see Vogt, Annette-Christine. *Ein Hamburger Beitrag zur Entwicklung des Welthandels im 19. Jahrhundert: Die Kaufmannsreederei Wappäus im inter-nationalen Handel Venezuelas und der dänischen sowie niederländischen Antillen.* Stuttgart: Steiner, 2003. See Henninger, *Bethmann*, 316-344. See Morgan, *The Bright-Meyler papers*, particularly "Introduction," 80-84.

on the 22 of September.[27] For the time between 1744 and 1745, however, he did use existing grey areas and he found a working strategy of his own to circumvent the problems that he faced through his unclear status, which in the end performed well and did him good service. The letter episode analysed in this chapter will pay an eloquent testimony to this. First of all, however, we will have to describe in detail the exact requirements for trading as a neutral party and the restrictions and problems that came with it before we can show how Luetkens found a solution to circumvent and therefore solve the problems. Bound to these requirements, we will also discover the reasons that spoke against the decision, or at least too hasty a decision, to settle down in Hamburg.

3.3 Maritime Neutrality

Benefits for a Neutral Merchant

As a man and merchant born and raised in Hamburg and having enjoyed a mercantile education there, one was still not automatically and officially deemed a Hamburg citizen and therefore did also not automatically obtain a neutral status. In order to obtain this status, one had to officially apply for and purchase a Hamburg citizenship. This would grant the applicant the right to call himself a Hamburg citizen, and therefore being a Hamburg merchant meant that as a merchant one would enjoy a neutral status in international trade. This citizenship would also entail the right to participate in Hamburg politics. The official Hamburg regulations distinguished between a large and a small citizenship, *Small Burghers* and *Large Burghers*. Consequently, for the purpose of obtaining neutrality, wholesale merchants needed to purchase the large citizenship, whereas the small citizenship was intended for smaller, mainly locally active businessmen and craftsmen, who also had ambitions to participate in the political sphere of the city.[28] As we learn from a letter by Nicolaus Gottlieb's brother Joachim, the large citizenship subsequently cost the applicants around 12-14 Reichsthaler (but could also cost up to 50 Reichsthaler depending on the family status). As a further requirement, as Joachim highlighted with regard to the case of a friend whose family history he compared to their own family history, one needed to verify that one was descended from a respectable Hamburg family, in which, ideally, the father had already possessed a Hamburg citizenship. Since their father Nicolaus Luetkens (1675-1736) was a respectable priest and large burgher in Hamburg Billwärder, and their uncle Joachim Kaehler was a respectable merchant and large burgher in Hamburg, the Luetkens brothers would not have run into problems in applying for the same large citizenship. Yet, as we know, Nicolaus Gottlieb hesitated and waited until the end of the year 1745 before he applied for it.[29] The important information in this respect, and with regard to the nature of

27 His printed burgher oath, Bürger=Eyd, signed the 22 September 1745, can be found among the court records in the case of the ship *Post van Hamburg*, HCA 32/143/17. Thanks to Oliver Finnegan.

28 See Lindemann, *Patriots and Paupers*, 60-63. See Pantel, *Hamburgische Neutralität*, 26. See Kopitzsch, "Zwischen Hauptrezeß und Franzosenzeit," 367.

29 See letter from Luetkens, Joachim to Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, May 25, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/235.

Hamburg's commercial and maritime neutrality in general, is that becoming a Hamburg merchant and becoming neutral was definitely a deliberate decision. That fact, in turn, leads us by implication directly to the first and basically the main reason that spoke against becoming a settled merchant in Hamburg. The question arises why it was optional at all for Hamburg inhabitants to decide whether or not to become a Hamburg citizen, burgher, "Bürger" in German, in the first place. The answer to this question can be found in the peace and commercial treaties that Hamburg held with its European neighbours. Therein, for instance in the important commercial and peace treaty of 1716 with France and its ally Spain, it is stated that Hamburg merchants as approved neutral trading partners of France were "allowed freedom of trade and shipping [...] in France" and Spain ["derselben Freyheit in der Handlung und Schiffarth geniessen"].[30] On the other hand, however, this paragraph also stipulated that with regard to all trading with the French colonies, meaning all the trade happening "outside Europe" [not "in Europa belegen"] was prohibited to all Hanseatic merchants. This was the crux of a neutral trade association with the colonial superpowers.[31] Hamburg merchants were not allowed direct trade with the French colonies or in colonial goods.

The only accepted way to gain direct access to the lucrative Atlantic French market was by applying for naturalisation in France, thus becoming a permanent resident of France. It was not sufficient merely to hold a status of neutrality to directly access and partake in the Atlantic market. The latter, however, represented, the main business area and the real gold mine of French trade during that time.[32] By means of this regulation, France tried to ensure the best advantage, growth and efficiency for their own markets and merchants, which was representative of the general protectionist, mercantilist economic policy that the French state pursued during this time and ever since the reign of Louis Quatorze and his finance minister Jean Baptist Colbert. Yet the regulation nonetheless also created opportunities for the neutrals. It did not generally exclude neutral merchants from participating in French trade. Instead, it reserved for them special sectors, from which, in turn, the French Crown and economy would also profit, namely the commission trade and the provision of logistic services. The latter of these stands at the centre of this chapter, followed by a chapter on the former.[33] Re-

30 *Kommerz- und Seetraktat zwischen Ludwig XV. und den Hansestädten Bremen, Hamburg und Lübeck, 1716*. Staatsarchiv Hamburg, Senat Cl. VI Nr. 5 Vol. 1 Fasc1a2, Art. I und Art II, Art. XXII. See Huhn, *Handelsverträge*, 87-88. See Weber, *Deutsche Kaufleute*, 56, 166. See Weber, "German Merchants."

31 See also *Kommerz- und Seetraktat*, III (on the regulations regarding and the exempt from Capitation/"Kopfsteuer" and the Dixième /Zehnte), IV (on the exemption from the so called Droit de tonneau/"Faßgeld"), V (regarding the elimination of customs duties and the reduction of duties on import to 3 % to be paid to the Fermier Du Domaine d'Occident) and in general on the specificities of the privileges but also the constraints for Hamburg commercial activity in France.

32 See Weber, *Deutsche Kaufleute*, 167, 193. See also Weber, "The Atlantic Coast of German Trade."

33 See Weber, *Deutsche Kaufleute*, 14-15, 56, regarding the French *Droit d'Exclusif* that forbid the foreigners the direct trade with the colonies, ibid. 277. See also Tarrade, *Le commerce colonial de la France*, 83-112. See Thompson, Gillian and Pierre Boulle. "France overseas." In *Old Regime France 1648-1788*, edited by William Doyle, 105-138. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001. See Butel, *L'Économie française.* For an introduction see Butel, Paul. "France, the Antilles, and Europe in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries: renewals of foreign trade." In *The Rise of Merchant Empires. Long-Distance Trade in the Early Modern World*, edited by James D. Tracy, 102-152. Cambridge: Cambridge Universi-

turning to the Hamburg merchants and the question of the disadvantages of a neutral status, we now understand why it was not an easy decision to decide for a neutral status. The main reason against settling down and establishing oneself in Hamburg was ultimately that the decision for commercial and maritime neutrality at the same time amounted to a decision against active participation in direct trade with colonial goods, and this was why merchants carefully assessed their decision.

For a long time, historians have therefore also assumed that, since Hanseatic merchants were in a strictly legal sense excluded from the direct trade, they were also naturally destined to play only a minor role, or put figuratively, the second fiddle in the Atlantic markets. In current research though, this hypothesis is often rejected and with the present book I also want to contribute to this reappraisal. The criticism of the thesis relates, however, not to the aspect of the typical activities and business fields of Hanseatic merchant in foreign countries, which were in fact intermediary activities, but it relates to the ultimate relevance of these activities for both the host economies and the careers and fortunes of these men. As examples like Nicolaus Gottlieb Luetkens, but also the case of the merchants Johann Jakob Bethmann or Friedrich Romberg show, the foreign economies still provided enough opportunities for building a successful career and business as a wholesale merchant abroad and for attaining wealth and a good reputation. These neutral merchants' success kept pace with the success of the local merchant houses. Research has also stressed the important role that the merchants' intermediary activities played for their host countries as logistic scaffolding for the success of the superpowers.[34] Neutral merchants were indispensable for the superpowers, especially the kingdom of France. Nicolaus Gottlieb Luetkens was one of these merchants who acted as lubricants for the French economy. His example will show that, although direct trade was forbidden to him, Luetkens found several ways and fields of business which helped his career to prosper in France and which were decidedly granted to him as a merchant from Hamburg by the French Crown.

These fields of business represented the re-export of colonial goods from the French ports. Hamburg merchants were allowed to purchase and trade in the goods that had already been shipped to the European mainland and were in stock and available in France. The merchants were also highly active in the export of domestic products from France, first and foremost French wine, to central Europe and the Baltic. Hamburg merchants served as providers of logistics and partners for the further commercial re-marketing of colonial and domestic goods and products. In other words, Hamburg merchants provided shipping infrastructure. They were also highly active in auctions of French and Spanish prize goods and bought prize ships. Last but not least, and presented in greater detail in the next chapter, Hamburg merchants often acted as commission agents in France. This means that they traded as intermediaries and middlemen by order and on the account of French-based but also Hamburg-based merchants and other foreign merchants in France. All these fields of business were approved sectors and loopholes of Hanseatic trade activity officially recognised and supported by the French Crown and

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ty Press, 1990. See Pourchasse, Pierrick. "Dynamism and Integration". The same applies to England, see Schulte Beerbühl, *German Merchants*, 14.

34 See Jeannin, "Distinction des compétences," 316-318.

legislation.[35] So, if a Hamburg-born merchant did not plan to become naturalised in France – which actually exceedingly few did because in the end it was not necessary for being successful in France – there were nonetheless several lucrative trading opportunities in France. Many Hamburg merchants did follow this path because, though they did not always reach the level of profits of their French hosts, partners or competitors, these indirect routes of participation in Atlantic trade still provided very good profits. Moreover, many of them, including Nicolaus Gottlieb Luetkens, found and established even more loopholes in addition to the officially acknowledged fields of activity, which further increased their profits.

The chapter on founding a merchant house will deal in this regard with the phenomenon of mixed merchant houses, that is, partnership between local and foreign merchants that even allowed easier access to colonial goods. In the commission trade, too, there were strategies allowing for alternative access routes to the Atlantic honey pot, which will be discussed in the next chapter.[36] However, in the context of the 18th-century shipping business and the subtleties of neutral status as a merchant, it suffices to stick to the official, regular opportunities and legal stipulations regarding Hanseatic trade activity in France to further outline the advantages and disadvantages of becoming Hamburg merchants. These prerequisites point us again to a second major argument against settling in Hamburg.

As things stood – substantially encouraged and in a way even required by the legal framework – all the mentioned business fields from re-export to commission trade more or less made it necessary or advisable to locate yourself close to the direct sales markets and therefore locate yourself directly in the French ports and not in Hamburg. Only in the French ports did the merchants have the direct contact and opportunity to get hold of the different Atlantic goods and also to inspect and select the goods suitable for re-export.[37] Consequently, we find big foreign communities in the major trading cities of France such as Bordeaux or Nantes, as well as in Spain The "German colonies", "Les Colonies Germaniques" as they were called by the contemporaries, often represented one of the largest groups, because these French cities, as main hubs for Atlantic goods, functioned as their approved entrance gate to the respective market.[38] As re-

35 See particularly Weber, *Deutsche Kaufleute*, 190, but also 14-15, 55-56, 154-165, 178. See Weber, "German Merchants," 104-114. See Weber, "Atlantic Coast of German Trade," 106. See Pourchasse, "French Trade," 17-20. See Pourchasse, *Le commerce du Nord*. A concise English book review of Pourchasse's work in English offers Marzagalli, Silvia. "Book Review: Le commerce du Nord: les échanges commerciaux entre la France et l'Europe septentrionale au XVIIIe siècle." *Economic History Review* (60), no. 4 (2007): 851-853. See Huhn, *Handelsverträge*, 34-35. See also Butel, Paul "Le trafic européen de Bordeaux de la guerre d'Amérique à la Révolution." *Annales du Midi* 78 (1966): 37-82, here 72.

36 Regarding these mixed merchant houses, "gemischt-nationale Gesellschaften", see Weber, *Deutsche Kaufleute*, 190.

37 See Weber, *Deutsche Kaufleute*, 14.

38 Regarding these German colonies or *nations* in Bordeaux and Cádiz see in detail Weber, *Deutsche Kaufleute*. See Weber, "Atlantic Coast of German Trade." See also Butel, Paul. "Les négociants allemands de Bordeaux." See in great detail already Leroux, Alfred. *La Colonie Germanique de Bordeaux: Étude Historique, Juridique, Statistique, Économique, d'après les sources allemandes et françaises, Tome 1, De 1462 à 1870*. Bordeaux: E. Feret, 1918, chapter "Prépondérance des allemands (1697-1870)," 45-

search has shown, almost all shipping and trade between France and Hamburg, and also more generally the *Commerce du Nord* including the Baltic trade, was controlled, driven and executed by these communities of foreigners serving as the distribution centres for French goods to the rest of Europe.[39] And even if a Hamburg merchant still traded and acted from his merchant house in Hamburg, he would nevertheless be highly dependent on these communities. He would need to draw on his own factors or commission agents in the foreign ports because only these middlemen, "their agent compatriots", held the right and could process, settle and close his deals in the foreign ports, serving therefore as an extension of himself and his trade activity.[40] The role as middlemen was often gladly accepted especially by aspiring merchants on the eve of establishment because in doing so these men gained experiences in foreign goods and markets. At the same time, they developed a firm standing and reputation in the field of trade for themselves and accumulated capital.[41] Therefore, if we search for another reason why Nicolaus Gottlieb Luetkens' decision to establish himself and settle down in Hamburg took him so long, we find the answer in this unique business opportunity in France. As a travelling merchant, Luetkens took on this role of a local agent, a commission agent and ship-owner. He thus acted as an intermediary, and agent compatriot for several merchants established in Hamburg, but also and especially for merchants from France and Spain, settling their business in the French ports. For himself, in turn, this opportunity served as the perfect way to fill his coffers before returning to his hometown.

The next supportive factor, which Luetkens took full advantage of and exploited to the maximum, was a logical consequence of the French efforts in attracting Hamburg merchants to become involved in the said re-export and re-distribution of their goods and to establish communities in the French ports: French incentives. This factor also represents a third major reason why a settlement in Hamburg might have occurred as a secondary choice for a young wholesale merchant. France, as well as its political and military Bourbon ally Spain, not only allowed the neutrals to take on the role of redistributors of their goods. They also created clear incentives that actively stimulated the targeted settlement and influx of Hamburg merchants to France, which also served the purpose of binding the neutral partners to the French homeland. The main incentives were that the powers allowed the foreign merchants to rent premises and warehouses in the French ports easily and freely.[42] Furthermore, the Hanseatic merchants had to pay neither the *Dixiéme* (the tithe) nor the general taxes which applied for French citizens,

149. Such nations could also be found in other countries see in this regard also Ressel. Magnus. *Ein privilegiertes Händlernetz an der Lagune: Die ,Nazione Alemana' in Venedig und der deutsch-italienische Handel von 1648-1806*. Frankfurt (unver. Habil), 2017.

39 See Pourchasse, "French Trade," 19-23. See the articles in Augeron, Mickael, and Pascal Even, eds. *Les Étrangers dans les villes-ports atlantiques. Expériences françaises et allemandes XVe-XIXe siècle*. Paris: Les Indes savantes, 2010, particularly Pourchasse, "L'immigration négociante," 317-332. See Pourchasse, *Le commerce du Nord*. See also Marzagalli, "Book Review: Le commerce du Nord." See Kikuchi, Yuta. *Hamburgs Ostsee- und Mitteleuropahandel 1600–1800: Warenaustausch und Hinterlandnetzwerke*. Cologne: Böhlau, 2018, 256-298.

40 Pourchasse, "French Trade," 20.

41 See also Hancock, *Citizens of the World*, 81.

42 "Niederlassungsfreiheit" in German: "Ein Hamburger Kaufmann, der in eigener Sache oder für eine Firma nach Frankreich reiste, konnte sich dort ohne besondere Formalitäten in einer Stadt nieder-

the *capitation*, up until one year of staying and trading in France. They also enjoyed privileges of low duties on imports, 3-3.5% instead of the usual 6.5 % which other foreigners, for instance English or Prussian merchants had to pay. They were also exempted from special taxes such as the so-called *droit de tonneau*, which was a tax on casks loaded onto or offloaded from their ships.[43] In the commercial and peace treaty of 1716, the *droit d'Aubaine*, too, was suspended in the 18th century, the right of the French crown to confiscate all property when a citizen died. The treaty stipulated that the goods and warehouses of a foreign merchant did not automatically get impounded in the case of a merchant's death, but would instead be dealt with in line with his last will.[44]

All these privileges were clear incentives for Hamburg merchants to start a business or to conduct business in France. For aspiring wholesale merchants, however, the first point was crucial and conducive since this legal provision provided the basic means to successfully start one's own business in France as a merchant. All Hamburg merchants could simply rent premises or a warehouse in the French ports. This explains why the deponents in the additional interrogatories regarding case of the *Hope* of the British High Court of Admiralty were asked in 1747: "Had not the said Nicholas Gotlieb Lutkens while he lived and resided in France a Compting House or Compting Houses and one or more Warehouse or Warehouses at Brest St. Malos or Nants or one or other."[45] In his particular case, however, the situation and his handling of the situation had been devised even more cleverly. Luetkens decided not even to rent a merchant house or warehouses in France directly. Instead, he simply drew on his German, French or Swiss contacts and used their warehouses and storage facilities while most of the time also living and working in their merchant houses during his business trip. By doing so, he was not only highly flexible with regard to his enterprises and travels and his ports of call as a touring commission agent, but he was also playing it safe. He was thus immune to protests or legal claims from the outside, as for instance from the English or the French authorities. As is worth stressing again, all of this happened even without him being in possession of the official legal status as a neutral Hamburg merchant at that time. In his case, the legal framework undeniably provided him with a highly favourable situation for his trading and shipping activities.

This relative openness of French trade to foreigners, whether seen as a lax or liberal approach, appears on a whole rather astonishing. The extent of Hanseatic trade participation and particularly the concrete privileges conveyed to the Hanseatic merchants in France are particularly surprising in view of the general, protectionist mercantilist policy and the political approach that the Bourbon powers pursued during that time.[46] However, upon closer consideration, this favourable situation and the incentives for the

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lassen und ein Zimmer nehmen oder für längere Zeit ein Haus mieten." Huhn, *Handelsverträge*, 34. Regarding the "Zehnt", "Kopfsteuer", "Faß-Geld" see ibid. See Weber, *Deutsche Kaufleute*, 166.

43 See also Huhn, *Handelsverträge*, 87-88. *Kommerz- und Seetraktat*, Art. III, Art. IV, Art. V. See Weber, *Deutsche Kaufleute*, 159-165. See already Wurm, *Von der Neutralität des deutschen Seehandels*, 11- 21.

44 Pourchasse, "Dynamism and Integration," 46.

45 "Interrogatorys administred and to be administred on the part and behalfe of Nicholas Craven," TNA, HCA 32/115/14.

46 See Weber, *Deutsche Kaufleute*, 14-15, 304. See Butel, *L'Économie française*, 83-88 ("Le royaume et le commerce extérieur"), 89-97 ("Les marchés de l'Europe du nord et d'Allemagne"). See Huhn,

foreign merchants did not directly contradict the mercantilist strategy in general. They even represented, if you will, in essence a good idea. Since the lucrative direct trade with the colonial goods was limited to French merchants and therefore was safeguarded as a secure and stable source of revenue for the French economy but still produced a high surplus, the involvement and integration of neutral trading partners in the French economy was an uncomplicated way of utilising this surplus. In other words, France found a welcomed trading partner, and easily accessible re-distributor and customer in the Hamburg or Bremen merchants. The activities of these merchants, in turn, promised additional profits, and thus extra revenue for the French economy with little to no effort required from the French Crown or French merchants.[47] They just had to grant the foreign merchants access to their markets, allocate them a specific trading sector and cooperate with them. This process is vividly demonstrated in the Luetkens archive. In addition, the French economy in return naturally also profited from the imports of Hanseatic goods to their ports, which most of the time consisted of goods that were highly needed in the French economy, such as linen, for instance for accoutrement of the colonies, as well as timber or wood for the French ships.[48]

In sum, the legal foundation and provisions for Hanseatic merchants, and particularly Hamburg merchants in France, provided a win-win-situation.[49] This led to the result that the French merchants held the neutral merchants in high regard for their services and vice versa. From a contemporary point of view, among Bordeaux merchants, this esteem went so far that the locals even "preferred on the whole to leave trade management to the foreign colonies based in Bordeaux [already] since the XVIIth."[50] Or, to quote the Nantes merchant Descazaux du Hallay, the majority of French merchants, although naturally not all of them, agreed on "how important it was to allow foreigners to bring their goods into France for their own benefit and in their own ships without us having to go to fetch such goods from their country in our ships. Idem for allowing them to pick up and transport our goods in their country for their benefit and in their ships rather than to send these to them in our vessels".[51]

Handelsverträge, 6. See Tarrade, *Le commerce colonial de la France*, 83-112. See in general Doyle, *Old Regime France*.

47 See Weber, *Deutsche Kaufleute*, 158. See Pourchasse, *Le commerce du Nord*, 285-290, and in general 195-201, 267-290. See Pourchasse, "French Trade," See Butel, *L'Économie française*, 77-82. See Pourchasse, "L'immigration négociante," 317-332.

48 Weber, "Atlantic Coast of German Trade," 101. Regarding the role of linen in transatlantic slave trade see Steffen, Anka. "Schlesische Leinwand als Handelsgut im atlantischen Sklavenhandel der frühen Neuzeit. Das Beispiel der Hirschberger Kaufmanns-Societät." Themenportal Europäische Geschichte 2017, www.europa.clio-online.de/essay/id/fdae-1696, accessed September 20, 2020. See Weber, *Deutsche Kaufleute*, 229. See also Lindberg, "Rise of Hamburg," 657. See Ressel, "Das Alte Reich und transatlantische Sklavenhandel."

49 See also Augeron/Even, *Les Étrangers*. Particularly Marzagalli, Silvia. "Négoce et politique des étrangers en France à l'époque moderne: discours et pratiques de rejet et d'intégration." In *Les Étrangers dans les villes-ports atlantiques Expériences françaises et allemandes XVe-XIXe siècle*, edited by Mickael Augeron and Pascal Even, 45-62. Paris: Les Indes savantes, 2010.

50 Butel, "Les négociants allemands de Bordeaux," 593 (translation by Pourchasse, "French Trade," 19).

51 Archives Départementales Loire Atlantique C 754, quoted after Pourchasse, "French Trade," 16.

This situation accurately demonstrates the specific role, the importance and the general way of Hanseatic merchants' participation within the French trading system. The Hamburg merchants constituted the largest group of Hanseatic merchants active in France, followed by Bremen merchants. Through their presence in the major trading hubs and their taking on the important re-export and redistribution of French goods, the Hamburg merchants were successfully able to partake and be capable of trading and having their share in French Atlantic trade, even though they faced mercantilist trade barriers and were excluded from direct trade with the colonies.[52] Yet by integrating themselves in the market by means of occupying the approved niches that the French economy granted them, they were able to effectually overcome, or to put it more accurately, to essentially dismantle the French legal trading barriers from within and conduct a profitable business. On the other hand, the benefits on the side of the French trading partners were clear, too. France and its economy benefitted hugely from neutral partners because they fulfilled the tasks assigned to them diligently and with great success: The Hamburgers redistributed great amounts of French goods to central Europe, including the landlocked area stretching from Hamburg to Italy, and Northern Europe, including the Baltic, thus turning Hamburg into the major outlet for French colonial and domestic goods. In doing so, the Hamburg merchants significantly shaped and supported the net balance and overall positive balance of the French economy.[53] The plans seemed to pay off for both sides.[54]

In a long-term perspective, however, as the French historian Pierrick Pourchasse convincingly argued in his book *Le commerce du Nord*, it was precisely this openness and liberal handling of the question of integrating neutral trading partners into the French economy that unfortunately turned out to be detrimental to French economic power and the French role on the word market, especially in comparison with their British counterpart. By admitting and approving the neutral powers to handle large parts of the northbound and eastbound trade, France forewent having direct influence on these important markets in the North and East. This, in turn, allowed their biggest rival, Britain, to occupy large parts of this lucrative segment instead. As a matter of fact, as

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52 Weber, *Deutsche Kaufleute*, 14-15, 277, 304. See the new project by Magnus Ressel. As an introduction see Ressel, Magnus. "Hamburg und die Niederelbe im atlantischen Sklavenhandel der Frühen Neuzeit." *WerkstattGeschichte* 66/67 (2014): 75-96.

53 See the ANR project TOFLIT: Transformations of the French Economy through the Lens of International Trade, 1716-1821. For more information see https://toflit18.hypotheses.org, accessed September 12, 2018. See Charles, Loïc, and Guillaume Daudin. "Cross-checking STRO with the French Balance du Commerce data." In *Early Modern Shipping and Trade: Novel Approaches Using Sound Toll Registers Online*, edited by Jan Willem Veluwenkamp and Werner Scheltjens, 133-150. Boston/Leiden: Brill, 2018. See Charles, Loïc, and Guillaume Daudin, 2015. "Eighteenth-Century International Trade Statistics. Sources and Methods." *Revue de l'OFCE, Presses de Sciences-Po* 4 (2015): 7-36.

54 Regarding the consequences for Hamburg imports from France see Pfister, Ulrich. "Great divergence, consumer revolution and the reorganization of textile markets: Evidence from Hamburg's import trade, eight-teenth century." *Economic History Working Papers* 266 (2017): 1-73, regarding sugar particularly 40-44. See already Baasch, Ernst. "Zur Statistik des Ein- und Ausfuhrhandels Hamburgs Anfang des 18. Jahrhunderts." *Hansische Geschichtsblätter* 54 (1929): 89-144.

a consequence of the French policy regarding neutral partners, almost all French exchanges with the North and the East, especially with the Baltic, rested in the hands of foreigners, particularly Hamburg merchants. Instead of being advantageous and only conducive for the French economy, therefore, this situation, in a macro-economic perspective, weakened French economic development, as Pourchasse was able to prove. This led to the effect that the British attained and maintained the leading position in this market segment, which became one of the major factors, apart from misfortunes in war events and battles, why France forfeited their supremacy in the world and on the world market during the 18th century.[55]

In general, the English case represents a counterexample of how to deal with foreigners and foreign merchants in terms of their commercial policy. In contrast to France and Spain, in England foreign merchants did not find such favourable conditions and access opportunities as they found on the continent. As laid down in the Navigation Acts, beginning with the Navigation Act of 1651, England pursued a stricter protectionist policy than their Bourbon neighbours. Hanseatic merchants were strictly excluded from direct access to the British colonial market, unless they decided for naturalisation.[56] Without naturalisation, however, they did not enjoy any privileges or opportunities to participate in British trade, particularly during war.[57] This was also the reason why many Hamburg merchants generally decided to move to France instead of Britain to try their luck in trade because there they would find better and more lucrative conditions. As one of these merchants, Nicolaus Gottlieb Luetkens, too, took this decision even though one of his first travel destinations had been London where he visited his uncle Anthony, who was established and naturalised in London. France, however, provided him with much more lucrative opportunities to develop a firm standing, a good

55 See Pourchasse, *Le commerce du Nord*, particularly "Quatrième partie. La stratégie du négoce étranger," 267-328. See also Pourchasse, "Dynamism and Integration"; "French Trade." English quote: Marzagalli, "Book Review: Le commerce du Nord," 852.

56 See in general Newman, *Anglo-Hamburg Trade*, here particularly 149-159, but also 7-11. Regarding the navigation acts see Morgan, Kenneth. "Mercantilism and the British Empire, 1688-1815." In *The Political Economy of British Historical Experience, 1688-1914*, edited by Donald Winch and Patrick K. O'Brien, 165-91. Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press, 2002. See Andrews, Charles M. "The Acts of Trade." In *The Cambridge History of the British Empire Vol 1. The Old Empire: From the Beginnings to 1783*, edited by John Holland Rose, Arthur P. Newton, and Ernest A. Benians, 268-99. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1929. See Pincus, Steve. "Rethinking Mercantilism: Political Economy, the British Empire, and the Atlantic World in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries." *The William and Mary Quarterly* 69, no. 1 (2012): 3-34. See already Harper, Lawrence A. *The English Navigation Laws. A Seventeenth-Century Experiment in Social Engineering*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1939. See also Huhn, *Handelsverträge*, 7.

57 See Schulte Beerbühl, *German Merchants*, 13-24. Yet still Hamburg merchants traded heavily with and in Britain in the 17h century and still in the 1740s, as Schulte Beerbühl and Newman are able to vividly demonstrate and show. However, the ties of Hamburg merchants with France were yet many times stronger. For British merchants, in turn, "Hamburg ranked in the forefront of destinations for England' export trade as a whole, for this free Imperial city on the Elbe was the point of entry to a vast north-European hinterland reached by a network of waterways extending deep into Silesia, Saxony, Bohemia, Austria and southern Germany." Roseveare, *Markets and Merchants*, 51. See for the 19th century Krawehl, Otto-Ernst. *Hamburgs Schiffs- und Warenverkehr mit England und den englischen Kolonien, 1814–1860*. Cologne: Böhlau, 1977.

reputation and gains in capital and to establish himself as a wholesale merchant. He ended up operating all of his shipping business mainly from France and on the shipping route between France, Spain and Hamburg.[58]

For the Hamburg merchants, the macroeconomic conditions did not discriminate against them in the end. Quite on the contrary, the conditions even decidedly strengthened the merchants' role and significance on the world market in the long run and helped them through the turmoils of war. The quarrels between the superpowers also did not generally perturb the main protagonist of this book, and the long-term developments had no influence on his success during his establishment phase. As a Hamburg merchant traveling France during the mid-18th century, still with close contacts in England, Holland, Spain, and in several other countries, as a cosmopolitan, he emerged from the contemporary situation as the beneficiary third party, as in the proverb that when two dogs fight for a bone, the third runs away with it.

Nonetheless, there is a further limitation with regard to the relative freedom of trade prevailing for Hanseatic merchants in France. This limitation largely correlates with the said English influence on the international maritime transport sector. It also represents the main factor why every status of neutrality was ultimately always fragile and negotiable.[59] The one thing that proved to have considerably corrosive effects on the status of neutrality in the 18th century was again the human factor. First, what corroded the status of neutrality was the general human propensity to refuse to allow others a place in the sun unless one got to enjoy the exact same privilege oneself. Secondly, what corroded the status of neutrality was also the human propensity to also always seize these opportunities which serve one's own best interests.[60]

The final problem that arose for Hamburg merchants trading between France and Hamburg was simply that their ships, during their passage from France to Hamburg, were still captured by British privateer ships. From the English standpoint, Hamburg merchants trading in France were allying themselves with the enemy.[61] The supposedly safe and free passage thus in practice did not run completely smoothly and was often inhibited. This problem generally applied to all neutral shipping. The situation was that, although Hamburg held peace treaties and had commercial treaties with the different belligerent parties of the time separately and therefore their shipping activities generally were classified and recognised as neutral, they nevertheless were not immune to captures by the respective conflicting parties.[62]

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58 On Spanish-Hamburg trade, see Pohl, *Die Beziehungen Hamburgs zu Spanien*.

59 See Marzagalli/Müller, "Forum: Negotiating neutrality," 108-192.

60 See ibid. See Müller, "Maritime Neutrality," 53-58. See also Salvemini, Biagio. "The 'intervention practices of the late ancien régime: Notes on the institutional and mercantile spheres of eighteenth-century Europe." In *War, Trade and Neutrality. Europe and the Mediterranean in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries*, edited by Antonella Alimento, 160-170. Milano: FrancoAngeli Storia, 2011.

61 Regarding British privateering see Starkey, *British Privateering*.

62 "Every power at war is naturally attentive to prevent its enemies from carrying on a free trade under the protection of neutral colors," asserted a Mémoire Instructif in the summer of 1756. *London Magazine*, May 1756, quoted in Truxes, "Commerce Raiding," 13. Consequently, neutrality could not protect Hamburg and its ships "from hostile pressure by land and by sea". Roseveare, *Markets and Merchants*, 171.

Although the status of neutrality applied to Hamburg ships and goods, it did not, in fact, apply to those goods carried on Hamburg ships that belonged to a respective enemy in the sea war. In purely practical terms, this means that during the War of the Austrian Succession and its sea wars, which were waged between inter alia England and the alliance of France and Spain during the time under investigation in this book, the British authorities of course did not approve of Hamburg's supposedly neutral trading activities with the French and Spanish enemy. This was because they did not regard this trading activity as neutral, and the exact same held true for the French and Spanish side as regards Hamburg's trade with England.[63] Whenever an English ship therefore found French or Spanish cargo on a Hamburg ship, it regarded these goods as enemy goods and the act of transporting these goods would be regarded as associating with the enemy. As a result, the ships were captured and the goods confiscated and resold by the English. The status and benefits of neutrality therefore ultimately amounted to a game of chance, depending on the circumstances and events during the voyages of the ships. With regard to the situation prevailing in the English Channel in 1744 and 1745, the result of this was basically that lots of Hamburg ships were captured by the English because the English suspected behind every ship coming from France, or having passed the coastline of France, a French ally. As the previous explanations have shown, these suspicions were in fact not completely unsubstantiated because, since France supported and approved of the particular ways of Hamburg's participation in their transshipment of goods, the Hamburg merchants would of course take on these opportunities and the English found French cargo on the ships. This again points us to the general crux of neutrality. The general situation prevailing during the sea wars of the time led to the fact that neutrality always meant quite literally that the neutrals were unavoidably caught between the fronts. This meant by implication that the neutral powers were in effect always forced to choose a side and allegiance. The temptation for profits often was simply too great to not only trade in indubitably neutral goods such as timber, wood or linen, but also to invest on a large scale in the trade and re-export of colonial goods owned by French merchants, and therefore accept and risk the consequences that these goods were in the end contestable by the respective rival powers. Neutrality therefore always took the form of running the gauntlet and was highly dependent on personal decisions and also on luck. With regard to the latter, however, there were some ways and means to at least tip the odds in one's favour.[64]

With this last point, we return to the specific case of Nicolaus Gottlieb Luetkens, his shipping business in France and the ultimate reason why he did not decide right away to settle down in Hamburg. In the years 1744 and 1745, Luetkens already owned and maintained nine merchant ships in total, as a ship-owner or part-owner. He had

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63 See in this regard, regarding France, also the *Kommerz- und Seetraktat* between France and Hamburg from 1716, which states that "allein die Seiner Königl. Majest. Feinden zuständige Güther und die Contrabande Wahren weggenommen werden." See Huhn, *Handelsverträge*, 87-88.

64 See Schnakenbourg, Éric, ed. *Neutres et neutralité dans l'espace atlantique durant le long XVIIIe siècle (1700-1820): une approche globale*. Bécherel: Les Perséides, 2015. See Schnakenbourg, *Entre la guerre et la paix*. See Pantel, *Hamburgische Neutralität*, 1. See Newman, "Hamburg in the European Economy," 57-93.

bought the ships not just in Hamburg but mainly in French and Spanish ports, often with the help of French merchants. Frequently, such ships were Prize ships captured by French privateers, offered at auctions which foreign merchants were allowed to attend with the right to bid in France.[65] Several of his ships had been originally English ships. For his ships, however, he often chose German names.[66] He used the ships for trading in Hamburg goods, but mainly he traded and shipped French goods on these ships for which he had taken commissions. Luetkens provided logistic services or infrastructure on a large scale, that is, transhipment services and storage space within his ships, for French merchants. He also offered this opportunity to Dutch merchants, who used his service for the transshipment of their goods to other French ports or to Hamburg. Although Luetkens also carried out business with English merchants, mainly through the connection with his London-based uncle, he had taken the decision, for the purpose of establishing himself in the world of trade, to trust and collaborate mainly with French merchants and he accepted and risked the consequences. The promise of profits outweighed the risks and presumably made the risks appear worth taking. The latter fact explains why it took him so long to return to Hamburg and to settle down there because of the many business opportunities in France which helped him "to increase his fortune" ["Glück zu pusiren"], as he himself explained it in a letter to his future brother-in-law.[67] However, eventually he returned to Hamburg at the end of the year 1745, as a reputable merchant, and later in life furthermore became the third largest Hamburg importer of one of the most important colonial commodities. It appears that history proved him and his decision right.[68] He must have therefore chosen the right path and the right ways and means to make his fortune in France and to develop a solid standing, not least through his shipping business, despite facing the obstacles.

Two of the strategies to overcome the difficulties were rather common. First of all, Luetkens made use of an institution that was just in the ascendant during the 18th century and became one of the most important institutions for all merchants doing business in Atlantic trade during the era, which was the insurance industry.[69] Particularly

65 See letter from Bethmann, Johann Jakob to Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, November 12, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/234.

66 The ship were called *Die Hamburger Börse, Die Freyheit, Commercium, Gutte Harmonie, Post von Hamburg, Die Hoffnung, but he also owned the Bretagne, Minerva, La Domenienne.* See letter from Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, to Hertzer & von Bobartt, July 15, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/232, Letter Book I, no. 220. See letter from Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb to Luetkens, Anton, May 5, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/232, Letter Book I, no. 1.

67 Letter from Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb to Engelhardt, Erenfried, August 3,1745, TNA, HCA 30/232, Letter Book 1, no. 583.

68 See Introduction. See Weber, *Deutsche Kaufleute*, 250.

69 On maritime insurance business Barbour, Violet. "Marine Risk and Insurance in the Seventeenth Century." *Journal of Economic and Business History* 1, no. 4 (1929): 561-596. See Koch, Peter. *Geschichte der Versicherungswirtschaft in Deutschland*. Karlsruhe: Verlag Versicherungswirtschaft GmbH, 2012, particularly 29-60 (regarding private insurances). See also Denzel, Markus A. "Hamburg-Swedish connections: exchange rates and maritime insurance from the late seventeenth to the mid-nineteenth century." In *Preindustrial commercial history: flows and contacts between cities in Scandinavia and North-Western Europe*, edited by Markus A. Denzel and Christina Dalhede, 199-230. Stuttgart: Steiner, 2014.

private insurances began to flourish during the 18th century. Such private insurances on ships and crews had only become possible for Hamburg merchants since the year 1731, when the Hamburg *Assecuranz- und Havareiordnung* was revised, legally allowing this opportunity for the first time. In the following decades the private insurance sector grew considerably and became an essential prerequisite for Hamburg trade.[70] By securing his business against external attacks, not only against capture but also against the dangers of bad weather or even shipwreck, through taking on insurances, mainly through an Amsterdam private insurance company, on both his ships and his goods, the merchant Luetkens was able to at least curtail possible losses or damages to his ships and his goods. Later in his life, the merchant and then Hamburg senator Luetkens became one of the initiators and founding fathers of the first Hamburg *Assecuranz-Compagnie für See-Risico and Feuers-Gefahr* in 1765, which was the first ever Hamburg insurance joint-stock company, "Versicherungs-Aktiengesellschaft" in German.[71]

The second strategy for financial and legal protection he used in his shipping business was the practice of splitting potential risks to his business enterprises through splitting the shares of his ships and goods. This strategy was very common among merchants already during the preceding centuries. Luetkens offered or awarded part shares in his ships and the goods loaded on his ship to other merchants or offered other, French, Hamburg, Spanish, Swiss, or Dutch merchants to load their cargo on his ships. He also split insurances on the cargo, "Partenreederei" in German. Most usually in Luetkens' enterprises, three or four merchant shareholders shared the risk and subsequently also potential profits of a shipping enterprise. Luetkens therefore was able to at least minimise the risk of total losses, as best as possible, because if one ship and its cargo went missing or was damaged or seized, he still owned several other shares in his other ships, which would, at best, compensate for the loss of a ship or its cargo, or the delay to profits that could arise through captures.[72]

The third and most crucial practical strategy, however, that Luetkens used and which his success in the shipping business was built on, was far less common. It was also far less self-evident than the first two strategies because it represented not an officially acknowledged and regular way of proceeding but a grey area practice. This strategy in essence was shrewd trickery, with which Luetkens was, however, able to solve or circumvent most of the existing obstacles and problems that prevailed in Atlantic shipping business for Hanseatic merchants with regard to neutral trading and shipping. By means of this strategy he was able to perform the feat and balancing act of actually gaining lucrative access to the French market and its goods with the discretionary power of representing a free trader without a Hamburg neutral status and passport

70 See Ressel, *Sklavenkassen*, 657. See "Hamburger Assekuranz- und Havarie-Ordnung von 1731." In *Sammlung der hamburgischen Gesetze und Verfassungen*, edited by Johannes Klefeker. Hamburg: Piscator, 1769, Tit. X *Von Assekuranz für Türkengefahr und auf der Menschen Leben*, 97.

71 See Koch, *Versicherungswirtschaft*, 45.

72 See Davis, *English Shipping Industry*, 82-87. See Hancock, *Citizens of the World*, 132. See Witt, Jann Markus. *Master next God? Der nordeuropäische Handelsschiffskapitän vom 17. bis zum 19. Jahrhundert*. Hamburg: Convent, 2001, 255. See Mathias, Peter. "Risk, Credit and Kinship in Early Modern Enterprise." In *The Early Modern Atlantic Economy*, edited by John J. McCusker and Kenneth Morgan, 15-35. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000.

while at the same time still attaining and maintaining neutral status for all his ships and his goods. Once again, the secret of his success lay in his skill for finding a middle way and exploiting a grey area. For this purpose, he used every single opportunity in existence for Hamburg merchants that I have outlined above. The fundamentally important skill and practice that enabled him to perform this trick and that allowed him to walk the tightrope, was to write letters. Furthermore, his negotiation skills were highly important for his correspondence and last but not least, what did become immensely important to put his business to work, was his power of persuasion. His persuasive skills and competences allowed him to recruit and integrate other people into his plans, which represented the decisive key and determining factor for his strategy for finding solutions and his success.

In the following episodes of letter conversations among Nicolaus Gottlieb Luetkens, his brother Anton in Hamburg, Anton's Hamburg merchant master Luer Luers, his brother Joachim in Hamburg, his uncle Anthony in London and his letter conversations with some of his main trading partners in Hamburg, France, and Spain, we will learn about the strategy and the shrewd trick behind Luetkens' shipping business and he concocted this plan and put the strategy into practice. With the help and on the basis of the previous explanations we are sufficiently well-equipped to analyse and directly understand the episode, its subtleties, its general background and the conditions for the material events happening before our eyes because the explanations have provided us with the necessary thick contextualisation.

In his book *Deutsche Kaufleute im Atlantikhandel 1680-1830* (German Merchants in Atlantic Trade 1680-1830), Klaus Weber stated critically that the German participation and integration in Atlantic trade during this period is unfortunately still a highly under-researched topic. He observed that "hitherto it had hardly been sufficiently scientifically researched how closely the German economy worked together and was interconnected with the colonial economies of its western neighbours and to what great extent the German economy profited from [and participated in] the colonial empires of the time."[73]

Luetkens' case provides us with the opportunity to further expand our knowledge on this topic and to find a further remedy to this general research desideratum. In addition and as a complement to Weber's works, this book offers a concrete microhistorical study of the role and the practices of German merchants in Atlantic trade, with a particular focus on letter and business practices. Through this microhistory, we gain a striking and impressive insight into the characteristics of the Hanseatic trade participation in the 18th century and the tricks it employed. At the same time, we read the impressive story of a young man who later became one of the most important economic actors and players in 18th century Hamburg, but who apparently already knew how to manage his affairs during his establishment phase, which therefore set the right course for his future career.

73 "Es wurde bisher kaum untersucht, wie eng die Wirtschaft der deutschen Lander mit den Kolonialwirtschaft westlicher Nachbarn verflochten war und wie sehr sie von diesen Kolonialimperien profitierte." Weber, *Deutsche Kaufleute*, 27. See also Weber, "German Merchants."

The practical principle of persuasion applied in 18th-century correspondence that will become apparent from the letter episode and that shows its characteristics and powers in the analysis as an important mainstay for putting plans into practice by means of letters is the practical principle of persuasion through demanding loyalty. Practising loyalty in this regard exceeded the level of mere trust between merchant partners as a basis for business, as was already extensively researched in the last decades. But apart from trusting in each other's capabilities and trustworthiness, loyalty as a concept included a person's willingness and readiness to act for the sake and on behalf of someone else, even if these actions were not mandatory.[74]

Therefore, practising loyalty included a certain altruistic attitude. Luetkens asked this loyalty in the following letter episode from his two brothers by drawing on and referring to their fraternal bond. Both eventually helped him in this undertaking.[75] In order to put his plans into practice, Luetkens used particular letter-writing practices, a combination of both material practices as well as textual practices in letter writing, which will be presented in detail in the following part of this chapter, woven into the episode. Through these practices and the practical principle of persuasion underpinning them, Luetkens was able to win his brothers over to his plans, which again facilitated his success in the shipping business. I will start the episode, however, with a prehistory to the actual story of how Luetkens managed to convince his brothers to help him with the reorganisation of his shipping business, because this first story prompted his decision to concoct his shrewd plan in the first place.

74 On the importance of trust in merchant communities, see Haggerty, *Merely for Money*, 66-96. See also Lamikiz, *Trade and Trust*, 141-181. See Muldrew, Craig. *The Economy of Obligation: The Culture of Credit and Social Relations in Early Modern England*. London: Palgrave MacMillan, 1998. See Winter, Mabel. "The collapse of Thompson and Company: credit, reputation and risk in early modern England." *Social History* 45, no. 2 (2020): 145-166, DOI: 10.1080/03071022.2020.1732125. See Aslanian, Sebouh. "Social Capital, 'Trust' and the Role of Networks in Julfan Trade: Informal and Semi-Formal Institutions at Work." *Journal of Global History* 1, no. 3 (2006): 383-402. Regarding the process of building trust in letters, see Dossena, Marina. "Building trust through (self-)appraisal in nineteenth-century business correspondence." In *Social Roles and Language Practices in Late Modern English*, edited by Päivi Pahta et al., 191-209. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 2010. Regarding the concept of loyalty during the 18th century, see the important article McCormack, Matthew. "Rethinking 'Loyalty' in Eighteenth-Century Britain." *Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies* 35, no. 3 (2012): 407-421, stressing the importance of differentiating between the practice of loyalty and loyalism (focusing, however, on political actors.) The article "argues that 'loyalism' was not a current term in the eighteenth century, and that 'loyalty' had specific meanings for different political groups [in this book I am focussing on the mercantile group]. It could connote a religious, a legal or an emotional tie." Ibid., 407. In this chapter the focus is on the latter meaning. McCormack emphasizes and "suggest[s] that historians need to refocus on the language and concept of 'loyalty' on which much of it rests." Ibid.

75 See Capp, Bernard. *The Ties That Bind: Siblings, Family, and Society in Early Modern England*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018, chapter 3, "Fraternal bonds" on the concept of family solidarity and support. Regarding family relationships and letter-writing practice, see Pearsall, *Atlantic Families*.

3.4 The Episodes: How Luetkens Reorganized His Shipping Business

A Bitter Lesson

In the spring of 1744, Nicolaus Gottlieb Luetkens' business trip through France took him to Bordeaux, where he lived and traded in the French-German merchant house of Bethmann & Imbert.[76] During the months he spent there, he dealt in various goods, primarily in sugar. As one of the several business ventures he undertook during that time, in April 1744 he invested in the re-export of sixty casks, in the usual contemporary measure called sixty "hogsheads" or in German "Oxhoft", of French Martinique sugar from Bilbao to Hamburg. This sugar had been bought for him, that is, in his name and for his account, several months earlier, in December 1743, in the Spanish port of Bilbao by the French merchant Jean Baptiste Lacoste. In him, Luetkens had found the necessary French middleman, who allowed him direct access to the precious goods. The goods were subsequently stored in Lacoste's warehouse in Bilbao.[77] Almost half a year later, the goods were then to be shipped to Hamburg, where the demand for sugar at that time seemed favourable and promised high revenues. The fact, however, that Luetkens was living in Bordeaux at that time, while the sugars were stored in Bilbao, made it necessary to handle this entire enterprise by means and on the basis of letter correspondence. This fact allows us today to reconstruct the whole implementation, management and the processing of this business affair because all letters exchanged in this undertaking, both incoming and outgoing, can still be found amongst the papers of the Luetkens archive.

However, the actual main story of this chapter only starts at the point at which it became clear that the transshipment of these 60 casks of sugar turned into a nightmare for Luetkens, even though in the end it still resulted in a relatively positive outcome considering the initial situation. Yet, the initial situation induced Luetkens to take certain measures and steps to prevent similar problems in the future. These measures are the actual object of interest in this chapter because they were to become formative and characteristic for Luetkens' entire handling of his shipping business and were the key to his success in this field of business, thus providing us with important insights into the pitfalls and opportunities of Hanseatic shipping in this era. Furthermore, since these steps were primarily put into practice by writing, sending and receiving letters, they reveal the major role and significance that the practice of letter-writing played for the occupational advancement of merchants during their establishment phase. First, however, we will have to clarify what went wrong during the shipment of the sixty casks of

76 The following explanations are based on letters sent from and to Nicolaus Gottlieb Luetkens written in May and June 1744, TNA, PRO, HCA 32/232-234. Quotations from individual letters are further specified in the footnotes.

77 The sugar was offered at a public sale in Bilbao and therefore fell into the category of goods traded in France directly (and therefore these goods did not fall into the category of Spanish or French colonial goods coming from the colonies). The good therefore met with the conditions for neutral trade as defined in the peace and commercial treaty of 1716.

sugar in order to understand what triggered the subsequent measures and steps in the first place and why they became necessary at all.

After the purchase of the 60 hogsheads of French Martinique sugar, Luetkens offered and resold parts of the cargo to other merchants, in order to split the cargo and therefore minimise his own risk, which was usual practice during that time. He kept a 1/6 share in the goods himself; another 1/6 was assigned to the Hamburg merchant house Hertzer & von Bobartt, for whom he worked as a commission agent in several enterprises during that time. The two merchants in Hamburg, in turn, safeguarded his interests in Hamburg during his absence as his "true and undoubted agents and attorneys".[78] The other parts were assigned to and divided between the French merchants Lichigaray Jeune from Bayonne, Aché & Aché and the French-German merchant house of Bethmann & Imbert, whose shares in this enterprise came as no surprise since Luetkens was living in their house during that time. Notwithstanding this allocation of shares, Luetkens took responsibility and was in charge of the loading and transshipment of the entire cargo of 60 casks of sugar while the other shareholders' task was simply to note their interest in their accounts. Luetkens also looked for a suitable ship for the re-export and he applied for insurance for the cargo, which was effected by the Amsterdam merchant and insurance house of Cornelis de Meyere & Sons. This acceptance of an insurance on the cargo was very important for Luetkens because it was to be feared that the ship could encounter problems during its journey to Hamburg. This risk was further heightened by the fact that Luetkens decided to use a French ship, with a French flag, and a French ship's captain, captain Plaisance, for the transport of his cargo to Hamburg, even though France was in a state of war with England at that time. The reasons why Luetkens decided to choose a French ship for the transshipment of the goods anyway are not entirely clear, especially because he himself, as he wrote in a letter to the French merchant Lichigaray in Dutch, had "always been of the opinion to prefer to spend 2 or 3 Florins more on a Dutch ship than to load on a French ship". This was because Dutch ships, just like Hamburg ships, enjoyed neutral status in international waters during that time.[79]

Maybe, in this letter to his middleman Lacoste, we already find the answer to that question. As possible reasons for the choice of a French ship, it can be assumed that Lacoste himself had suggested this solution because he himself held shares in the French ship in question and the goods on the ship, or simply that the insurance premie (insurance rate) was better. Proof for this assumption can also be found in a later letter from the Hamburg merchants Hertzer & von Bobartt, in which they wrote that "they

78 Attestation of Nicolaus Gottlieb Luetkens as part of the as part of the *Additional Hearings and Attestations*, TNA, HCA 32/143/17.

79 "[...] weet dat ik jyder Tydts van opinie ben lyffers in een hollander 2 à 3 F. meer te geeven alls in een frans Schip te laaden." Letter from Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb to Lichigaray Jeune, Timothée, (presumably) March-May 1744 (date unreadable), TNA, HCA 30/232, Letter Book III, no. 1. Regarding the merchants' fear that the Dutch also declare war, see letter from Hertzer & von Bobartt to Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, May 29, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/234.

guess that Mr. Lacoste is interested in this enterprise and other Spaniards".[80] Furthermore, the involvement of the other French merchants could have been a determining factor because through their participation in the ship, it would in any case be deemed a French ship. Or, as the simplest answer to the question, maybe during that time there simply was no other ship than a French or Spanish one at anchor in the port of Bilbao, which left Luetkens with no other option. In any case, it was very advisable to apply for insurance on his goods on this ship, even though Luetkens surely must have hoped not to be forced to need it.

Unfortunately though, his hopes would be dashed, and in turn, his fears came true, when a mere few weeks later the ship *La Domenienne* was captured by a British privateer in the English channel and taken to London. There, a Prize case was initiated and filed against the ship and its ship-owners, in the course of which also Luetkens' goods became the subject of judicial proceedings at the High Court of Admiralty. During these court proceedings, the insurance company of de Meyere became active by submitting an application to the English court for the reclamation of the 60 casks of sugar. Instead of simply reimbursing and compensating Luetkens and his partners for the damage, they therefore tried to protest the confiscation of the goods on the basis of the fact that these goods had been purchased on the account of a neutral Hamburg merchant, therefore must be deemed "Hamburger goods" ["Hamburger effecten"], which meant that the confiscation had happened without justification.[81] Anthony Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb's uncle was appointed as the legal representative on-site in London for Nicolaus Gottlieb Luetkens, Hertzer & von Bobartt as well as De Meyere. He therefore appeared before the court there to try to enforce the reclamation of the goods. Right at the beginning, however, Anthony gave his nephew, his partners and the insurance company little hope that the reclamation would turn out successful. In a letter from April 16th 1744 he wrote to Nicolaus Gottlieb Luetkens "that one must not think such a thing can be reclaimed since it is a French ship & a French Cap[tain], which makes it a rightful prize" and he added that he was "sorry that E.E. would therefore loose the profit from the goods but that he is glad that he [his nephew] had insured them."[82] Nicolaus

80 "Uns ahndet aber daß Mr Lacoste wohl wird darbey intressiret sein gehöret ihm und denen andern Spaniern zu." Letter from Hertzer & von Bobartt to Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, April 24, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/234.

81 See the letter from Luetkens, Anthony to Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, April 16, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/233, court bundles, bundle B, no. 1.

82 "daran ist auch nicht zu gedencken dan ein fransch Schiff & fransch Capt. macht es Preis und mir leidt das E.E. den proffiet daran verlieren, und guth das versichern laßen." Ibid. In the translation of the British Court noted on the original letter: "But as it is a french Ship & a french Capt. he must not think such a thing can be obtaind. He is sorry that you will lose the profit of them but is glad that you have insured them". Ibid.

The abbreviation E.E. or V.L. in the letters quoted in this book stands for "Euer Edlen", "Euer Ehren" viz. "Viver Liebden", which was typically used as an abbreviation in many German, Dutch, but also in many French letters of the 18th century as a form of address. In English letters, we often simply find the wording "Gentlemen" or "Dear Gentleman" or "Honored Sir", which, however, stands for the same. In my translations, I have nevertheless stuck to the original common form of abbreviation instead of changing it to Gentleman or to "you", since it better represents the original letter text. Furthermore, it is important to be able to distinguish between letters using E.E. or the

Gottlieb's main trading partners in Hamburg, Hertzer & von Bobartt, also shared this view, writing to him that whenever one of Luetkens' ships, for which he was acting as the ship-owner, was stopped by a British privateer, "the English are right in confiscating the ship, since you are staying and trading as a resident of France", which was an enemy of England.[83]

However, only days later, after Anthony had visited the Doctors' Common, which was the first central place to go to in such matters, where he had also consulted the respective advocate entrusted with these matters, of which he wrote in a letter two weeks later, Anthony Luetkens had gained "great hope" that there might, after all, still be a slight chance that the reclamation could turn out to be successful.[84] However, this chance was attached to a certain condition, regarding which he had to raise some further queries and needed some more precise information from Nicolaus Gottlieb and Hertzer & von Bobartt, which he explained in detail in this said letter from the 3rd of May. This letter apparently, although somewhat surprisingly, must have been overlooked by the court in the case of the ship Hope, even though it was revealing. Thus, it is not to be found in the court bundles; instead, I discovered it in Luetkens' other letter bundles in the pile of all letters written by Anthony Luetkens. This letter marked the beginning of Luetkens' future strategy, the starting point for his idea, and shows the trick that he later employed in his shipping business, which is the reason why I will cite large parts of it from the original. Anthony wrote that "I wished that everything [the whole 60 casks of sugar] had been bought on the account of E.E. & H[ertzer] & von Bobartt, and that E.E. by now has become a burgher of Hamburg ["Bürger von Hamburg"], of which, however, I am not completely sure ["nicht gewiß] at the moment. [...] [In this case] then the Proctor and Advocate in the Doctors Commons gives me great hope [...] when E.E. could prove ["außmachen kan"] that all the goods were bought for his account under such conditions that they were bought to be send to Hamburg, as the connoissement [bill of lading] appears to show, since it shows that Nicolaus Gottlieb had taken care of and procured the insurance ["Assecuranz besorget"] for the entire cargo, that would help a lot. [...] The advocate requires from him is a sworn attestation ["beeydigtes Attestaten"] sent to him that proves that E.E. is a burgher of Hamburg or that E.E. is a Hamburg burgher and a Protestant, and that the whole sugar was bought for him by Jean Bapt. Lacoste on his account and risk, as the connoissement of the 60 casks shows [...] including [apart from the 20 casks of sugar concretely labelled as his and Hertzer & von Bobartt's goods] also the 40 other casks loaded on the ship [and he asked Nicolaus Gottlieb] if Lacoste could attest this."[85]

Apart from this letter to Nicolaus Gottlieb, which was followed by three other letters with the same urgent request, Anthony had also already sent a letter beforehand with

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pronoun "you" as a form of address, because it allows conclusions regarding the relationship between the correspondents. Regarding this typical practice, see the contemporary merchant manual Marperger, *Getreuer und geschickter Handelsdiener*, 217.

83 "wen [...] E.E. als Rehder im Schiff seinde und in Frankreich sich befinde und Handlung treibende, recht zu haben solches aufzubringen." Letter from Hertzer & von Bobartt to Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, May 8, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/234.

84 Letter from Luetkens, Anthony to Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, May 3, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/235.

85 Ibid.

the same wording to Hertzer & von Bobartt. The answer from the latter, however, must have been rather disenchanting for Anthony Luetkens. As a letter from the Hamburg merchant house to Nicolaus Gottlieb Luetkens shows, they must have answered Anthony Luetkens that the goods, "Partey" in German, had indeed originally been bought in total on the account of Luetkens, however, he himself had "only kept a 1/6 share in it afterwards, while we have taken another 1/6 share in it, the rest of the goods belonged to French merchants from France."[86] The reaction of Nicolaus Gottlieb to his uncle's letter, however, turned out rather different, and, to a certain extent, must have been much more to the fancy of the old London merchant with German roots. Nicolaus Gottlieb Luetkens apparently must have got the rather obvious hint from his uncle.

As we learn from several letters from his Letter Book written during the months of April and May 1744, Nicolaus Gottlieb Luetkens' reaction and the result of receiving the letter from Anthony had been that he wrote letters to Lacoste and Lichigaray, asking the latter to contact Aché & Aché for him. Furthermore, he cleared things up with Bethmann & Imbert in person. By means of the letters, he subsequently initiated and implemented the necessary steps that would allow him to comply with the wish and request of his uncle. On the 30th of May 1744, he had sent a letter to Lichigaray, which enclosed the letter to Lacoste in the letter packet, asking Lichigaray to pass it on to Lacoste. By means of this material rhetoric, namely inserting the letter to Lacoste into the letter to Lichigaray, Nicolaus Gottlieb was able to first approach Lichigaray in the matter, on which basis of negotiation and common ground he then also approached Lacoste, referring to the already settled business with Lichigaray. The request he had for the latter was that Lichigaray would now "resell the interest that he shared with M. A[ché] & A [ché] in the goods in a certain way ["auf gewiße Arth"] to me so that I will be able to attest with a clear conscience ["mit gutten Gewiße"] that these goods officially belong to me. There is no other possible way than doing it that way".[87] To Lacoste he subsequently wrote that "the Admiralty in London requested a sworn attestation that certifies that E.E. [Lacoste] had bought and loaded the sugar in my name and on my account. Since this is the truth ["solches nun die Wahrheit"], I see no problem, but that E.E. can obtain such a sworn attestation with a clear conscience from the Admiralty or Justice Department, a notarial certificate alone would not be sufficient. This attestation should show and verify that E.E. [Lacoste] on the 29th of November 1743 had been given order from Hamburg to purchase various goods in the name of *Nicolaes G. Lutkens neegotian von selbige staed* [original sentence written in Dutch instead of German] [...] inter alia to purchase sugar [...], which order had been confirmed by the said Lutkens on the 30th of December 1744. [He should furthermore verify that] He had taken note of the said order and had therefore bought 60 casks of sugar on the ... from Mr .... [three dots in the original letter] for the said N.G.L. *neegotiant de Ham.* On the same's account [...] and that he had loaded this sugar in the name and on the account and on the risk of the same Nicolaes Gottlieb Lutkens, as it is also stated in the connoissement, onto the French ship La domienne captain Pierre Plaesance for which he had himself taken 2 per

86 Letter from Hertzer & von Bobartt to Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, April 24, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/234.

87 Letter from Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb to Lichigaray Jeune, Timothée, May 30, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/232, Letter Book III, no. 3.

cent commission. The same Mr. Lutkens had settled the purchase as well as had taken the necessary precautions regarding the unloading of the ship, and he was also the one who had signed the factura ["Factura mit E.E. conforma notirt"]."[88]

Both, Lichigaray, who furthermore acted on behalf and in the name of Aché & Aché, and Lacoste subsequently agreed and complied with the requests, as did Bethmann & Imbert, which was not surprising since they would all in this way regain a prospect of profiting from goods that they must have largely written off already. As we can learn from later letters, the peculiar sentence and apposition to "sell the goods in a certain way" ["auf gewisse Art"] had been very crucial, because it must have meant nothing other, and needs to be understood as nothing other, than that the offer to transfer back the shares in these goods to their original respective accounts later on, if the protest turned out successful, and therefore it constituted a promise profit. The typical letter formulae in merchant letters to do something "in a certain way" or "on certain conditions" was not only a signifier that an enterprise was generally solvable under certain conditions, but it also stood for certain agreements and concrete practices known to those involved or even collectively known in mercantile circles as problem-solving strategies which those involved would now draw on. These strategies, in turn, did not necessarily always refer to legal practices, but just as frequently they involved grey area practices.

For this moment, however, most crucial for further progress in this endeavour was that all trading partners agreed on the deal, which they did. Hertzer & von Bobartt therefore, almost jubilantly, took note and congratulated Luetkens in a letter from the 26th of June on the fact "that E.E. had taken over the interest in the sugar loaded on the ship of Pierre Plaisance for Lichigaray Jeune, Aché & Aché Bethmann & Imbert on certain conditions ["auf gewiße Conditiones"] [...] and wish that the attestattion that E.E. had [then] sent to London shows the desired effect ["von guthen Effect"]."[89]

As we learn from a letter sent to Luetkens from Hertzer & von Bobartt on the 17th of July 1744, only one month later, the "whole 60 casks of sugar were released by the English" court and subsequently shipped to Hamburg on another ship.[90] Anthony Luetkens therefore had been able to successfully reclaim the goods on the basis of the attestations. Notwithstanding this positive outcome, the old merchant did not refrain from sending his nephew some complaints and admonitory words in hindsight. In a letter from the 21st of June, he wrote or rather lamented that even though he hoped to reclaim "all 60 casks of sugar, the ship is nevertheless lost ["verlohren"], [...] and we still have to pay for all legal expenses for both sides [...] [which is why] I give the advice [to his nephew] to cut down his activities a bit ["piano zu gehen"], because right now they [the English] capture each and every ship coming from or going to Hamburg from France or Spain and even though one would be able to reclaim the goods, it would

88 Letter from Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb to Lacoste, Jean Baptiste, May 30, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/232, Letter Book III, no. 2.

89 Letter from Hertzer & von Bobartt to Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, June 26, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/234.

90 Letter from Hertzer & von Bobartt to Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, July 17, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/234.

nevertheless bring many expenses ["große Unkösten"] and it costs a lot of time."[91] In another letter from the 5th of July, Anthony further specified these problems, writing that the English privateers would capture all ships coming from France because the assumed "a lot of Lurrendreyerey" behind these ships passing their coast, which means that they suspected the ships of sailing under wrong flags and with false passports. Even though the capture of goods or even ships from Hamburg could be protested, it would nevertheless remain a game of chance, "a mystery" ["ein Rätzel"] whether or not the protest would actually also turn out successfully, but in the end it would still always take "2 à 3 month and 50 à 60 Pound legal expenses."[92] Anthony's words did not remain without effect as, from then onwards, Luetkens in fact exercised more caution in his shipping business. Regarding the wish and request of his uncle's to cut down his activities, he would, however, not be compliant but did quite the opposite. As a matter of fact, following this incident, he even intensified his activities in the shipping business. However, this does not mean that he had not learned his lessons from the troubles in the case of these sugars. Instead, it means that, as a direct consequence of the troubles, he simply set about finding his own peculiar way of handling his shipping business afterwards. He found a way of how to comply with the specific conditions and problems within this business fieldy, which represented a solution that did not necessarily completely comply with his uncle's plans, but which still helped him to make his business successful. From then on, he would only rarely place cargo on a French ship but invested instead in buying and furnishing his own ships. For these ships, in turn, he found an appropriate solution of how to procure a Hamburg flag and neutral status for them even though he still refrained from obtaining a Hamburg citizenship himself. This plan was developed and its necessary precautions were taken already right after the first letter of Luetkens' uncle had reached him, as a result of and happening simultaneously with the capture and the emergence of the initial difficulties regarding the 60 casks of sugar. This story represents the main story of this chapter.

A Story of Fraternal Endorsement
Pulling Strings by Means of Paper: Bundling Letters and Leaving Letters Unsealed

It can be assumed that, in the letter from Anthony Luetkens of the 3rd of May, not only the old merchant's indications regarding the 60 casks of sugar need to be understood as direct hints and suggestions to take action, but also that his words regarding the application for a Hamburg citizenship of his nephew can be read in the same way, as an instruction and the concrete request to finally create facts. Anthony certainly would have appreciated it if Nicolaus Gottlieb Luetkens had already taken the decision to become a Hamburg burgher beforehand because this would have made his job in London before the High Court of Admiralty a lot easier. A clear indication in this regard is the real

91 Letter from Luetkens, Anthony to Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, June 21, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/233, court bundles, bundle B, no. 6.

92 Letter from Luetkens, Anthony an Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, July 5, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/233, court bundles, bundle B, no. 8. Regarding *Lurrendreyerey* see the explanations in the last part of this chapter.

disappointment we notice in his letter after learning that Nicolaus Gottlieb had still not become a Hamburg large burgher, an official citizen at this moment in time, which, as he wrote in the letter from 31st of May, had "made me sad".[93] The whole case of the 60 casks of sugars therefore against this background reveals itself as a charade performed before the court, because Luetkens had not been an official Hamburger at that moment in time. But the risk connected with trying one's luck in this regard must have still been bearable and worth taking, as Nicolaus Gottlieb Luetkens' actions demonstrate. The reason for this must have been that in exchange for that risk he would be able to keep all the freedom and benefits of a status as a non-neutral merchant travelling, living and trading in France. Access to trading Atlantic goods and to French networks was far easier and more open as a non-neutral merchant. Furthermore, by not yet deciding for a Hamburg citizenship, Luetkens even kept open for himself the opportunity to make the decision to settle down in France.

With regard to ensuring the necessary maritime neutrality in the field of trade or more concretely in order to be able to procure a Hamburg flag and neutral ship papers for his ships to turn them into neutral ships, as he learnt from the case of *La Domenienne*, Luetkens had to find an alternative solution to the tricky situation, since he had decided not to become a Hamburg burgher. As we learn from further letters of his written during the months of May and June 1744, however, an appropriate solution was not long in coming. Only hours after having received his uncle's letter, he must have "come up with an idea", "bin auf den Gedanken gekommen" in German, that would provide the necessary remedy to the tricky situation. We are able to confirm this assumption with a certain degree of certainty because already on the 5th of May, only two days after his uncle had written his letter, he presented this idea in detail in letters to his two brothers in Hamburg and to Luer Luers, a merchant residing in Hamburg, master of his youngest brother Anton in Hamburg. These three letters were sent as a letter packet, bundled together. The outer letter served as a letter wrapper for the other two letters, while each of these other letters was again inserted one into the other. With this letter packet we are therefore dealing in a way with a kind of a letter matryoshka. This bundling and folding technique, inserting letters into other letters, was very typical of the 18th century, as we can see in thousands upon thousands of cases and letters in the Prize Papers collection.[94] This practice shows the material possibilities that the people of the 18th century were provided with and that they used constantly when writing and sending letters during the time. As will be shown in the following explanations, this practice furthermore explicitly provided the people of the age with certain opportunities to settle matters with one another and to exert influence on each other in particular ways.[95]

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93 "es thut mir leydt E.E. die Bürgerschafft nicht angenommen." Letter from Luetkens, Anthony to Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, May 31, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/235.

94 See the Materiality Homepage of the Prize Papers project; prizepapers.net, accessed September 14, 2020.

95 Today, these letters can be found in Luetkens' main Letter Book and a smaller Letter Book. Interesting and revealing is that Luetkens deliberately separated the three letters from each other, copying them into two different Letter Books, even though they were all sent together in the same letter packet. His plan was obviously to cover up or at least conceal the plan he devised in these letters

The letters in their material arrangement and their content are highly revealing with regard to the powers of persuasion applied during correspondence by means of material rhetoric and text. In order to demonstrate this, I will, once again, cite large parts of these letters in the following, which I will combine with further elaborations in the form of a praxeological thick description on the material properties and the performative actions that were performed on the basis of these letters. Subsequently, I will talk about the effects that these letters produced, that is, I will discuss and present the further course of the letter conversation resulting from these three letters.

The main outer letter of this letter packet sent to Hamburg to solve his problems, representing the first addressee that Nicolaus Gottlieb wanted to approach in this matter, was a letter to his brother Joachim. In this letter Nicolaus Gottlieb explained his plans to his oldest brother, including the plea or rather request not only to hand over the enclosed letter to his youngest brother but to also to do everything in his power to encourage Anton to consent to the propositions given in this second letter. The interesting thing about both the other letters enclosed in the letter to Joachim is that these letters had deliberately not been sealed and closed by Nicolaus Gottlieb. Instead, he left them open, unsealed, so that Joachim could also read the content of the other letters. Luetkens produced an unfinished letter, "ohnbeschwerter Brief" in German, as the contemporaries called this practice.[96] In his letter to Joachim, Nicolaus Gottlieb wrote accordingly that Joachim could "see from the letter [to Anton] which proposition I am making to him with regard to the shares I hold in these ships. I do not doubt ["zweyffelle nicht"] that he will be willing and compliant in this regard in case his conscience will allow him to swear on the passport ["Passen beschwöhren"] […] [He also referred to] the nice profit ["schön Profitt"] that this brings him [Anton]. […] [Furthermore, he wrote to his] dear brother [Joachim], if you are convinced that this could be done with good conscience, which I do not doubt, then I ask you gently as a brother to impel him [Anton] to promptly initiate the matter ["wie ein Bruder ihm zu presieren die Sache […] ans Werk gericht wird"]. […] [Last but not least, he emphasized that] the goods everywhere are very nice ["extra schön"] at the moment, but I cannot ship them due to the turmoils of war ["Krigesstrubbeln"] because of the many privateers ["capers"] on sea. If an English ship would stop my ships and they would find out that I was staying in enemy land […] they would under this pretext confiscate my ships due this situation and therefore bring great misfortune to my heirs ["Erbenleister"]."[97]

Joachim would then be able to complete his knowledge about the plan by reading the letter addressed to Anton in detail afterwards, since it was enclosed unsealed. He was thus able to inform himself in detail about the said propositions and form his own opinion about the matter before handing over the letter to Anton and, consequently, discussing the matter with his younger brother. What we can learn from this, and what

for any outside viewer who might get a hold of these books in a court trial. Letter from Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, to Luetkens, Joachim, and Luetkens, Anton, May 5, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/232, Letter Book I, no. 1; Letter from Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb to Luers, Luer, May 5, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/232, Letter Book II, unnumbered.

96 Letter from Schulte, Jeronimus to Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, April 6, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/236.

97 Letter from Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb to Luetkens, Joachim, May 5, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/232, Letter Book I, no. 1.

the letters therefore very vividly demonstrate, is how people of the 18th century used their paper and the material of their letters to shape and anticipate courses of action and negotiation conducted through letter writing. Approaching his oldest brother first was not coincidental, but a clever move, because in doing so, Nicolaus Gottlieb Luetkens ensured that his propositions were presented to his youngest brother with more emphasis, that is, not only in the form of his own written words, but also in person by Joachim himself. It was Joachim who acted as the deliverer of the said letter and its message and whom Nicolaus Gottlieb Luetkens had assigned with the task of not only handing over the letter but also talking to his brother. Therefore, we see an active way of exerting influence on an addressee through letter-writing practice by means of putting together and bundling together letters in a letter packet in a particular way. The same practice was then also used for the third enclosed letter.

Before coming to that letter, however, we will first make use of the opportunity that was also open to Joachim, which is to read the letter to Anton. This letter is available to us, as are all the other letters from Nicolaus Gottlieb Luetkens, through the Letter Books that have survived in the Luetkens archive in London. This particular letter to Anton, however, stands out as holding a very special position amongst the many letters that Nicolaus Gottlieb Luetkens wrote during his establishment phase. It was on the basis and by means of this pivotal letter the merchant ended up changing the whole course and strategy underlying his shipping business, thus laying the basis for his success in this field. The reasons for this become immediately obvious to us when we read the letter that he wrote to his younger brother. Anton at this time was still an apprentice in the house of the merchant Luer Luers in Hamburg and was thus at a very early stage of his career when he received the propositions of his brother. After the usual salutations at the beginning of the letter, Nicolaus Gottlieb wrote that

> "Since I am not yet a burgher of Hamburg ["kein Bürger in Hamb."] and I am on travel and because of the turmoil of war [using the same words as in his letter to Joachim, "Krigestrubelln"], which all leads to the consequence that people might have reservations ["Bedencken"] against loading in our ships, and under these circumstance might prefer other ships, I came up with an idea ["bin auf die Gedanken gekommen"]. How about, if you would become a burgher à costy [in Hamburg] ["Bürger möchtes werden"] and I would then sell you all of the ships and the shares in the ships that I am holding at the moment in a certain way ["auf gewiße Arth"], so that you could, with good conscience, swear on the ships' passport and attest that they officially belong to you ["dier eigenthumlig zu gehöret"] and your name appears in the passports. [This regulation would apply for the following ships] [...] The ship Die Freyheit captain Hoogtop 1/2 share, [...] the ship Die Hamb. Börse, captain Nagell ½ share, the ship Commercium captain Claes Nordtstern 3/8, the ship bought by the name La Minerva [...] 3/8 [and] the ship Die Post von Hamb, captain Paatz 1/2 share [...]."[98]

Nicolaus Gottlieb Luetkens then continued his letter by specifying that the merchants Hertzer & von Bobartt would procure and sell these shares to Anton in his name. As

98 Letter from Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb to Luetkens, Anton, May 5, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/232, Letter Book I, no. 1.

regards the necessary financial resources for this plan and the purchase, he asked his youngest brother to settle the respective obligation through drawing and advancing on his inheritance that was administered by his other uncle – the merchant Kaehler – and the two Hamburg citizens Jante and Brockes, who I have introduced in the previous chapter. He then went on to explain the subtleties of this transfer.

> "This sale must be duly conducted ["ordentlig geschehen"], if necessary by drafting a notarial contract with Hertzer & von Bobartt, who have the order and the power of attorney ["Follmacht"] to sell these parts to you in my name, you pay them in the way as outlined above and they confirm and receive the payment and then you are the real holder ["würklig Eigner"] of these ships. […] After the sale, Hertzer & von Bobartt have my order and the power of attorney to conclude in my name a contract of affreightment ["Contract vor Befrachtung"] with you for your ships for a period of two years. […] And I in return am obligated to care for the maintenance of the ships, equipage, insurance etc. on my account. All profit or losses that these ships bring are for me. […] Besides, I am also free to sell these ships. […] After these two years we come to the agreement that you will sell the ships back to me. […] In this way and manner, your capital stock would account to Bco. Mark 10923:2 S., which comes to a profit of Cour. [Mark] Bco. 2100:-, with 9 1/2 per cent profit each year, and there is not the slightest risk for yourself ["nicht den minsten Ricico"]. […] The cost of applying for the Hamburg citizenship you have to bear yourself. […] I do not doubt, my dear brother, that you will comply with my proposition ["hierin zustimmen"] and will become a Hamburg burgher at the first opportunity so that the matter can be settled [using once more the letter formulae "Sache ins Werk mach komme"]. In my opinion, when you have become a Hamburg burgher and purchased my shares in the ships, there is no reason why you should not with a good conscience be able to swear on the passports. Should there be, however, any scruples ["Scrupell"] on your side, I won't force you to comply with my request. Apart from that, I hope and ask you as a brother ["alls sein Bruder"] that nothing prevents you from this plan because this matter is of consequence ["Sache von Consequance"]. Enclosed you will find another letter to your patron, which you can hand over to him after having read it yourself ["nach Übersehung"]. I hope that he will not object to you becoming a burgher. Should you agree with my proposition, you can hand this letter to Hertzer & von Bobartt so that they can settle the sale and contract of affreightment with you the way that I have outlined above. I will inform them due to the lack of time only very briefly about the idea. In the case, however, that you don't want to accept my proposal /: which I do not hope /: it is not necessary to show them this letter."[99]

The proposition that Nicolaus Gottlieb made to his brother was therefore that he would sign over all his ships and the part shares in his ships to Anton, while at the same time he himself hired these ships and part shares back from him in the form of a contract of affreightment. Thus, the two of them would enter into a hiring contract, but Anton would become the official ship owner. This is particularly highlighted by the fact that

99 Letter from Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb to Luetkens, Anton, May 5, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/232, Letter Book I, no. 1.

Nicolaus Gottlieb used a letter phrase in the letter that was very common in contemporary maritime law defining the role of a ship-owner, the "real holder" of the ship, as the person to whom "a ship properly belonged" ["derjenige, welchem ein Schiff eigenthumlig zu gehöret"].[100] Nicolaus Gottlieb had therefore used the German words *eigenthumlig* and *würklig Eigner* deliberately in his letter, to send a signal to his brother, to convince him that this plan was, in fact, a *matter of consequence*. The benefit of this agreement for Nicolaus Gottlieb was that he could officially declare his ships neutral Hamburg ships and his goods neutral goods without the need to apply for a Hamburg citizenship at that moment in time. For Anton, in turn, accepting this proposition would at a moment's notice lead to the result that he would obtain an immense capital stock, which he could, however, not access directly. Nonetheless, this proposition came with a great gain in prestige for the young merchant and surely contributed to his reputation as a merchant. The actual financial incentive, however, was the 9 1/2 per cent interest rate that he obtained in these ships and would keep during the period of the two years, for which he had to do nothing other than basically to lend his name to his brother. This promised Anton a continual inflow of capital without taking any risks or being at all obliged to care for any businesses related to the ships, apart from being asked to procure and sign the passports and all other contracts. This financial incentive, the promise of easy money, however, was not the only means that his older brother used for winning his youngest brother over for his idea, and for convincing him of the expediency and lucrativeness of this plan. Just as important was Luetkens' strategy of calling upon the good conscience of his brother, which he combined and bound together with the call upon family loyalty, both represented in the content and text of the letter as well as in the material arrangement of the letter packet. Last but not least, this obvious will to create a greater closeness to his brother by means of this letter is even mirrored in the personal form of address, the pronoun that he used for approaching and writing to his brother, using "you" instead of the typical form of address "E.E.", which corresponded to the typical "Honoured Sir" in English letters.[101]

3.5 Letters Exchanged between Brothers

As reflected in these letters' text and material, Nicolaus Gottlieb expected his brother to trust him in the matter and he referred in this respect to the family commitment of helping each other out. At the same time, however, he still allowed, or at least pretended to allow Anton relatively free reign to decline the offer. Both becomes tangible in the letter content and the material arrangements of the letters. It is interesting to see how Nicolaus Gottlieb Luetkens' words balanced and manoeuvred between these two sets of considerations, which is part of his chosen way of persuasion. Surely during the 18th century there still prevailed traditional family structures even or especially in

100 "Kauffahrdey." *Oekonomische Encyklopädie*, edited by Johann Georg Krünitz. 242 volumes. Berlin, 1773-1858, vol. 36, 470-478.

101 Regarding the typical usage of E.E. "Euer Edlen" as a form of address in merchant letters, see Marperger, *Getreuer und geschickter Handelsdiener*, 217.

bourgeois families, which were shaped by the fundamental patriarchal system that underlay and shaped the whole social system during the era. With regard to relationships between brothers, this provided the first-born son in the family with a certain power of disposition over his younger brothers, especially if the father had already died as was the case in the Luetkens family.[102] These structures, however, as the letters show, were apparently not as rigid as one might assume. Accordingly, they did not automatically rule out the need to reach out to try to establish reciprocal understanding, mutual coordination, room for manoeuvre, and especially the need for negotiation and for consent.

All of this is reflected in the text and in the material arrangement of the letter packet under investigation. The letter from Nicolaus Gottlieb to Anton forms a very revealing and vivid example of a crucial medium and platform that allowed this family negotiation to take place. The letter shows that the oldest brother, Nicolaus Gottlieb, by no means simply ran the family business alone and therefore decided or determined the destiny and course of the family businesses single-handedly. Instead, he was to all intents and purposes still dependent on the goodwill or at least the consent of his brothers. Nicolaus Gottlieb's usage of the word "brother" and his usage of the phrase that he would approach Anton "as a brother" is telling. Of course, he referred to family obligations with this phrase, but the way in which he employed it and weaved it into his letter text was directly bound to the appeal to his brother's personal conscience. However, it much more took on the form of an attempt to meet and approach his brothers as equals. If we furthermore take into consideration the material form and the packing and bundling together of the letters, we can characterise this social encounter, which was performed in letter writing and particularly by means of corresponding with each other, as essentially calling together a family council rather than as an event that confronted the actors involved with a fait accompli. This fact, however, does not mean that Nicolaus Gottlieb did not try everything in his power to get his way. It only means that we need to acknowledge that it obviously needed more factors to negotiate with your brothers than only bringing in your natural authority as the firstborn son and to create financial incentives.[103] It also needed a certain power of persuasion to convince and win over your brothers for your plans. This power of persuasion, subsequently, did not only include finding the right and appropriate words when approaching your brothers, but it also included providing them with the possibility of some leeway for action and the freedom of choice. Certainly, Nicolaus Gottlieb still sent out clear messages in this regard, and

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102 Regarding the rights and responsibilities of an elder brother towards his younger brothers, see *Ties That Bind*, chapter "Introduction," 1-12, see also chapter "Fraternal Bonds," 32-50.
See Miller, Naomi J., and Naomi Yavneh. "Introduction: Thicker than Water. Evaluating Sibling Relations in the Early Modern Period." In *Sibling Relations and Gender in the Early Modern World: Sisters, Brothers and Others*, edited by Naomi J. Miller and Naomi Yavneh, 1-14. Abingdon/New York: Routledge, 2017.
As based on another Hamburg example, see Spalding, Almut. "Siblings, Publications, and the Transmission of Memory: Johann Albert Hinrich and Elise Reimarus." In *Sibling Relations and Gender in the Early Modern World: Sisters, Brothers and Others*, edited by Naomi J. Miller and Naomi Yavneh, 216-227. Abingdon/New York: Routledge, 2017. See also Finch, Janet. *Family Obligation and Social Change*. Oxford: Polity Press, 1989.

103 See Capp, *Ties that Bind*, 32-50.

for precisely the purpose of showing his youngest brother how he expected him to act in this undertaking. Repeating his comment or argument that he did "not hope" that Anton would decline the proposition and his repeated reference to their mutual benefit can certainly be read as a clear means of trying to reinforce his power. Yet, in the end, Anton was at least in theory granted the opportunity to say no.

Apart from the respective reaffirmations of this opportunity in the letter, the most intriguing proof of this fact is provided by the existence of the third letter within this letter packet from the 5th of May 1744, the letter to Anton's master Luer Luers. This letter was not sent to this merchant directly but was inserted unsealed into the letter addressed to Anton. This practice, as a material rhetoric, provided Anton with the most concrete opportunity to decline his brother's offer.[104] Anton basically simply had to refrain from sealing this third letter himself and handing it over to his master. At the same time, the possibility of reading this letter must have also had a certain effect and impact on the young merchant apprentice Anton. This was a fact that Nicolaus Gottlieb Luetkens surely must have anticipated and intended when inclosing the said letter unsealed, because when reading this letter Anton must have realized the "severe consequences" that Nicolaus Gottlieb had already described to him.

In the end, Anton did hand over the letter to his master. As a merchant apprentice and later as a clerk, he was used to approaching his master in such matters. It was a typical situation that both merchant and apprentice together went through the correspondence of a merchant house and answered the letters. As such, we can imagine the situation in May 1744 as similar in character to a painting that can be found in the *Deutsche Historische Museum* in Berlin depicting "The Merchant" during his daily activities. On this painting we see a merchant clerk or merchant apprentice showing a letter to his master, just as Anton Luetkens might have shown the letter from his brother to his master Luer Luers. On the table we can see a letter wrapper, on the left-hand side, and many opened letters resembling the material arrangement of the letter packet Nicolaus Gottlieb Luetkens had sent from France. The seated merchant is ready to answer the incoming letter on the spot, holding a quill pen in his hand, which was also a typical practice of merchants trying to keep up and manage their correspondence during the 18th century. Luer Luers must have received the news from France with pleasure. Certainly, his response letter did not take long because Luetkens' offer was lucrative and the letter was furthermore oozing with obeisance and praising words.

The letter Nicolaus Gottlieb Luetkens wrote to Anton's master Luer Luers differed very much from those to his brothers: in its tone, style and voice, and especially with regard to the chosen form of address, sticking to the common form of "E.E." instead of "you". This letter to Luers explained in the most respectful and reverential words and tone the benefits and far-reaching implications of Nicolaus Gottlieb's plan and left very little doubt that this idea was advisable; implying vice versa, that the decision to not take the opportunity would be rather inadvisable or, in other words, stupid. The letter went as follows:

104 See Spoerhase, *Das Format der Literatur.*

Figure 8: A typical situation in a merchant house. Detail of the painting "Mercator/Kaufmann" by Johann Jakob Haid, painted in 1760.

Source: Deutsches Historisches Museum, Berlin, Inv. Nr. 1987/153 © bpk / Deutsches Historisches Museum, Arne Psille.

"In the hope that E.E. permits me ["ponderieren"] to take the freedom ["Freyheit so mir nehmen"] to write this letter to E.E., in which I wanted to humbly ask E.E. if E.E. would have the courtesy ["Gütigkeit gelieben zu haben"] to permit my brother Anthon, who is in your service to become a [Hamburg] burgher. This shall happen because I want to consign him several part shares in my ships ["Schiffsparten"] [and for this purpose he must attain the citizenship] because otherwise [...] he would not be able to swear on the ships' passports. My brother will inform E.E. comprehensively about all the details. It happens because since I am staying in ~~enemy~~ foreign land at the moment, which is currently at war, it could easily happen that some of my ships | in which I have shares | are stopped and seized. If they were to find only my name in the ship's papers and find out that I am a traveller in foreign lands at the moment, they might cause problems ["Chiquane machen"]. For that reason, I have come to the decision ["geresolvirt bin"] to sell my brother several of my shares in these ships in a certain manner ["auf gewise Arth"]. Therefore, I very much hope that E.E. will have the courtesy to do me the favour ["Gefelligkeit"] to permit my brother to become a burgher. I do not doubt and

> am sure that this will not lead to any change in his behaviour ["Aufführung"]. Furthermore, there will not occur any disadvantages ["Molestie"] for E.E. Therefore, I would like to once more kindly repeat my request to grant me this favour. I am also of the opinion that Monsieur will not refuse this request ["abschlagen"], who, as is known, had always shown much love and affection ["Liebe und Gewogenheitt"] for my brother and I do not doubt that he [my brother] will do all in his power to return this favour. If my humble self ["meiner Wenigkeit"] could be of any service for E.E. you could tell me freely at any time ["frey zu befehlen"]."[105]

The difference in style and tone between this letter in comparison to the two other letters of the letter packet is striking. Particularly when reading the letters directly one after another, it becomes obvious that Luetkens used a completely different language register for this letter to Luer Luers than he had used for the letters to his brothers. The spirit of compromise or the openness to a frank discussion that characterised and shaped the tone in the letters to his brothers, which now becomes all the more tangible, changed here to a spirit and tone of a polite matter-of-factness that must have been a clear signal to Anton that as soon as he handed over this letter to his master, the matter would be no longer negotiable but the plan would then be unmistakably implemented, "put into practice" ["ins Werk gesetzt"] as Luetkens called it himself, clearly supposing that Luer Luers would of course agree to the propositions. The gesture that Luetkens performed in the first two letters, namely leaving the decision open to Anton whether or not he was going to hand over this letter, is therefore to be read as a gesture of confidence that he trusted his brother to make the right decision, which was, as this letter to Luers all the more reinforced, to agree to the proposition. Describing and interpreting the letter to Luers itself, we once more encounter certain visible strategies of exerting influence on an addressee by means of letters, this time directed at Luer Luers. The simple reason for this was that Luetkens was dependent on Luers' goodwill in this case as he had to allow his apprentice and employee to become a Hamburg large burgher in order to put the whole plan into practice. This latter fact, in turn, explains the character, style and language register of the letter, all aspects of which were geared towards winning Luer Luers over for Luetkens' plan, this time in a professional manner. Tellingly, the language register resembled the gallant language register of flattery, "Aufwartung" in German, which will be presented in detail in the chapter on Luetkens' marriage initation, In order to find proof for this form of flattery, we can consult the contemporary letter-writing manuals, in which we find letters similar in tone and style as letter examples under such categories as "letters to a patron" or "letters to higher ranked persons" or "letters of requests or of thanks".[106] These example letters therefore provide the necessary basis for comparison and the context that help us to understand the intention and logic behind the letter to Luer Luers and also what formal criteria Luetkens had to meet in order to ensure that the letter was to be understood in the right way by Luer

105 Letter from Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb to Luers, Luer, May 5,1744, TNA, HCA 30/232, Letter Book II, unnumbered.

106 See Hunold, *Die Allerneueste Art Höflich und Galant zu Schreiben*, particularly "Dancksagungs=Schreiben an einen Patron," 236-237; "Anerbiethungs=Schreiben an einen Patron," 286-288, 25, regarding "pardonieren" see ibid. 114.

Luers. In other words, these reference letters provide us with the intertextual framework and context that show us how the contemporaries would have understood such a letter when receiving it. From letter examples provided in letter-writing manuals such as those by Christian Friedrich Hunold (Menantes), August Bohse (Talander) or Benjamin Neukirch, we learn that for instance the obviously strong and emphatic rhetoric of respect and humbleness that seems exuberant to us was simply an integral part of such letter types and belonged mandatorily to the language register and presentation of such letters.[107] We find it as essentially the basic pattern of all such letters in the letter-writing manuals. Conversely, it would have been a breach of convention and an affront against the receiver of such a letter if this style and tone were not chosen. The hyperbolic style was therefore not hyperbolic at all but quite on the contrary it represented a normal, appropriate social interaction with regard to making a request or expressing a wish to another person who did not belong to the immediate circle of acquaintances or family. Choosing such a letter style was therefore considered merely good form and courtesy. Furthermore, the contemporaries understood and directly inferred from such a form the intention that the writer pursued with the letter. This letter to Luer Luers therefore draws its significance not only from the mere expression of a request or plea, but it actually performs this request in all its characteristics, in its style, form, material and its expressions, as a performative action in order to have an impact on the addressee. As a further means of persuasion Luetkens also offered Luer Luers financial incentives. Again, this letter therefore not only presents words to an addressee, but it represents a material gesture that was performed by means of the practice of letter writing. When Luer Luers therefore received this letter, he received not only ink on paper, but he received a loyal address, a courtesy call from another merchant, who asked him for his support.

When we return at this point once more to the two letters Nicolaus Gottlieb sent to his brothers and compare their style and tone with the letter to Luers against the backdrop of our knowledge of the importance of choosing the right tone for letters, we now realise the relative soberness of the style and tone that Luetkens had chosen for the letters to his brothers. Of course, the interaction amongst brothers had its own rules and formularies, too, represented for instance in the references regarding brotherly obligations and the recurrent and similar formulae regarding appeals to and the trust in their brotherly conscience and loyalty. Nevertheless, compared to the letter to Luer Luers, the letters to Anton and Joachim strikingly waive exuberant, humble set phrases and stilted formulations and instead show a plain style and sober language. Knowing about the meaning of the other more formal language register, however, we now realise that this soberness by no means represents coldness or distance prevailing in the relationship between the brothers. Quite on the contrary, especially since these

107 See ibid. See Bohse, *Der allzeitfertige Briefsteller,* "Anerbietungsschreiben," 425. See Bohse, August (pseud.: Talander). *Des kurieuß bequemen Handbuchs allerhand auserlesener Sendschreiben und mündlicher Complimenten* […] Leipzig: Moritz Georg Weidmann, 1721 [first published 1696], regarding the typical letter formulae of "werden pardonieren," 29 or "Vermögen zu ihrem Glück beizutragen," 149. See Neukirch, Benjamin. *Anweisung zu teutschen Briefen*. Leipzig: Thomas Fritsch, 1727, letter examples "Dancksagung" and "Insinuation," 381.

letters waive formalities, and therefore allow a somewhat freer tone, this soberness reveals to us the exact opposite of distance. This style and tone instead show us an at the time normal, typical and symptomatic way of dealing with each other "as brothers". Therefore, it represents the clearest sign of personal closeness between the brothers, which once more fits into the picture and supports the assumption that these letters represent a family council performed on the basis of letters that served the purpose to strike a business deal.

Seen as a whole, these letters therefore once more show us how Luetkens successfully found leeway and a certain middle course of how to approach things in a pragmatic and constructive manner. Not only with regard to the content of his letters but also in the way he used these letters' materiality and the way he chose the tone and style of his letters, these letters present us therefore with a prime example of how the power of persuasion was applied on the basis and with the help of letter practice. In all its elements, the letters display how Luetkens did everything in his power to pull the necessary strings to solve his problems with regard to his shipping business. Luetkens' negotiation strategy in this regard was to allow or rather purport freedom of choice, while at the same time applying every possible means and pressure to make the decision to agree to his proposition an easy one for Anton, or rather an inevitable one. For this, he used every possibility that the practice of letter writing provided him with in terms of content, style and letter material. The principle of persuasion governing this process is therefore not primarily that Luetkens simply brought his authority to bear, which would presumably not been a sufficient means in its own right because if it had been then his letter would have looked different. Instead he used a far more powerful means especially within family business: he demanded loyalty. In the end, Luetkens could not simply apply and assert authority since he was dependent on the goodwill and concessions from his brother Anton and Anton's master Luers, who both had to consent to this trickery and to become an active part in it. Choosing to demand loyalty is very auspicious because ultimately it transformed the alleged freedom of choice into a matter of conscience, which made it very hard for Anton to say no. This essentially represents the icing on the cake of the practical principle of persuasion becoming apparent in this letter conversation, which is the principle of demanding loyalty.[108]

As a matter of fact, this practical principle of persuasion was subsequently crowned with success. All three could be convinced of both the feasibility and the lucrativeness of the plan: Joachim, who responded that "as brothers we will of course comply with our duty before our brother ["als Brüder dir als einem Bruder"], who only wants the best for us ["mit uns aufrichtig meint"] this is a matter that can be done"; Anton, who agreed to the proposition and thanked his brother for showing "so much love to me" and for the generous offer; and Luer Luers, who allowed Anton to become a Hamburg large burgher.[109] As we furthermore learn from Anton's response letter to his brother, even the concrete course of further events following Nicolaus Gottlieb's letter went precisely the way it was devised, planned and anticipated by his eldest brother. Anton wrote on

108 See Capp, *Ties that Bind*, 1-13 on family and fraternal loyalty. See also ibid., 32-50.

109 Letter from Luetkens, Joachim to Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, May 25, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/235. Letter from Luetkens, Anton to Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, May 24, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/235.

the 24th of May to his "Dear Brother", in an obviously still rather inexperienced spidery hand and furthermore using phonetic spelling, in the Hamburg dialect, that as requested he had "handed over the letter to my master ["Patron"], who has allowed me to become a burgher ["das ich man Bürger werden könnte"], so that I will become a burgher tomorrow. I have also presented ["gäbben"] your letter to Hertzer & von Bobartt, who will at the first opportunity sell to me […]".[110] He would for this purpose also draw on the said reserves in the inheritance overseen by Kaehler, Jante and Brockes to be able to issue the obligation necessary for the purchase, just as Nicolaus Gottlieb suggested it. The respective obligation has also survived among the papers of the Luetkens archive; it was issued on the 26th of May.[111] In his letter, Anton then went on to affirm that he could "with good conscience ["mit gutten Gewissen"] swear on the passports [issued in his name] and I will sell the same ships back to you" in two years and for the same price. The money therefore worked as only as a loan.[112] A letter by Hertzer & von Bobartt to Luetkens, dating already from three days earlier, further confirms this course of events, reporting that Nicolaus Gottlieb's "brother has visited us yesterday, showing us your letter ["Schreiben gecommuniciert"]. He will become a burgher next Monday. Shortly after, we will put into effect the sale of the shares in the ships and procure the contract of affreightment", which all was to be furthermore officially authenticated through "a notarized certification" ["Notariel Acte"], which has also survived among the Luetkens papers.[113] They furthermore promised that it would then take only another week until the ships of the ships' captains Nagel, Hoogtop and Noordstern obtain their respective Hamburg passports. Finally, they complimented Nicolaus Gottlieb on this idea and stated that "all difficulties should now be resolved ["alle Schwürigkeiten gehoben"]."[114]

This latter message, this breakthrough, then also served only several weeks later as the basis for several letters that Nicolaus Gottlieb himself sent to all of his main trading partners in his shipping business in France, Germany, and the United Provinces of the Netherlands. As a kind of circular, he wrote to his partners on the 29th of June 1744, in almost the same words but in different languages. To quote from a letter to his partners in Nantes, Luttman & von Bobartt, he wrote that "for the sake of more security I have signed over in a certain manner ["auf gewiße Conditie"] his interests […] [in the sugars on the ship of Nagel] to my brother Anth. Lutkens in Hamburg, who

110 Ibid.

111 "Ich Uhrkunder und bekenne hiemit vor mich und meine Erben, und Erbnehmer, auch sonsten Jedermänniglich, daß ich am heutigen dato von Herrn Joachim Lutkens empfangen habe drey Tausend neunhundert achtzehn Mark sechs S. Banco wovon sich die Intrese anfanget am negstkommenden Ostern à vier pCt. Mark Courant Interese per anno [signed by Nicolaus Gottlieb Luetkens] […] Ich unterschriebenen transportire diese Obligation an Herrn Anthon Lütkens von welchem deswenigen völlig bin befriediget worden Hamburg d[en] 26 May 1744, Joachim Lütkens." Obligation formely enclosed in a letter from Luetkens, Anton to Luetkens Nicolaus Gottlieb, May 16, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/235.

112 Letter from Luetkens, Anton to Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, May 24, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/235.

113 Exhibit A. Copy and translation of the agreement by which Anthony Luetkens let out his share in several ships for two years to Nicholas Gottlieb Luetkens, TNA, HCA 32/115/14.

114 Letter from Luetkens, Anton to Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, May 24, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/235.

is burgher and inhabitant there […], which happened in accordance with the friends in Hamburg [Hertzer & von Bobartt], so that all the difficulties are now resolved ["diese Schwirigkeit gehoben"].[115] Or, in other words, to quote from a Dutch letter to Cornelis de Meyere & Soonen in Amsterdam, using the very same sentences already familiar to us, he wrote that "since the English could expose me to problems ["chiquan"] in the reclamation of my goods since I am in France, so I have transported my interest in […] [my ships] in a certain manner ["op gewisse Conditio"] to my brother Anton burgher and inhabitant ["Boorger en Inwooner"] of Hamburg, so that all my shares in the goods now run on the account of him and Hertzer & von Bobartt."[116] Anton himself confirmed the successful implementation of all necessary steps actually already on the very same day, in his letter dated the 29th of June. This means, that Nicolaus Gottlieb would have received this letter some days later. However, it seems that he must have already received the goods news earlier from Hertzer & von Bobartt. This following letter by Anton is still worth quoting in length because in this letter the youngest Luetkens brother for the first time expressed at least a whiff of criticism. However, he did not criticise the plan in general, but only the said "conditions" and the ways and means of how the plan was implemented. This criticism, however, was subsequently met with a rebuffal by Nicolaus Gottlieb, using the principle of the sledgehammer method in his letter, which will be explained in further detail in the chapter on commission trade. For this purpose, the merchant pulled out all the rhetorical stops available to him, as the primarily tool of persuasion. He nevertheless remained true to his chosen path and used these rhetorical moves to once more remind his brother of the significance and meaning of loyalty.

3.6 Stealing Someone's Thunder

Anton's response letter to his brother reads as follows. First, he confirmed that with regard to the ships

> "all the necessary precautions have been taken care of ["alles in Richtigkeit"] and you must have received by now the 4 passports for these ships, and they [Hertzer & von Bobartt] have also drafted the sales contract at a notary, and I have signed it. I believe, however, that this would not have been necessary ["nicht nochtich war"] since as soon as you are back [in Hamburg] I will also in any case of course sell these ships back to you for the same price that you have sold them to me. Because I cannot say with good conscience ["nicht mit gutten Gewißen"] that these ships actually belong to me, since I have hired ["verheyret"] them back to you. You will not take it amiss ["solges nicht übel nemmen"] that I am writing this to you."[117]

115 Letter from Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb to Luttman & von Bobartt, June 27, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/232, Letter Book I, no. 201.

116 Letter from Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb to Cornelis de Meyere & Soonen, June 27, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/232, Letter Book I, no. 200.

117 Letter from Luetkens, Anton to Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, June 29, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/235.

Anton's letter, at this point of the written conversation, is remarkable. Since already all the precautions regarding the whole undertaking had been taken care of at that stage, with his lines he surely did not have the intention to jeopardize the plan in general. Nevertheless, he still had the guts and it was obviously important for him to at least voice certain reservations regarding the "certain conditions" of the deal. Therefore, he must have presumably at least tried to preserve his own integrity and actually is emphatic about the right to have his say in this matter that his brother had granted him. For this purpose, he took up or even quoted precisely the lines of his brother's letter regarding the appeal to his conscience, using the same language register, and expressed subsequently his attitude towards them. His lines can be interpreted in two different ways, both of which, however, must be regarded as concrete performative actions in direct reaction to his brother's explanations, also still functioning within the realm of an appropriate way of conversation as it was allowable among brothers. Important to note in this regard is that despite his reservations, Anton nevertheless fulfilled and satisfied his brother's request and therefore confirmed the efficiency of the practical principle of persuasion applied in this episode: he pledged loyalty to his brother and did as he was told.

Interpreting his letter, we can nevertheless draw certain conclusions with regard to his attitude towards this deal. The first interpretation of his words would be, in a more positive connotation, that he wanted to intimate to his brother that, especially since they were brothers, such a cumbersome method of winning him over would not have been at all necessary, but rather that it went without saying that he as his brother would naturally and gladly help his brother. A second explanation and interpretation of his words would be that he was not completely satisfied with the conditions of the deal, in which he would in the end act only as a marionette, albeit still gaining profit from this deal. Maybe he even hoped for additional concessions from his brother. Or maybe this whole letter represents a mixture of both these interpretations. In any case, it becomes obvious that the realm of negotiation as prevailing within this letter conversation between the brothers allowed for such criticism, which once again confirms my general interpretation of this letter conversation as a family council. Unlike Anton's ambiguous lines, however, the response letter from his older brother was very unambiguous indeed. Apparently, Nicolaus Gottlieb Luetkens did not like the late intervention and the relativization regarding the regularities of the arrangement. Notwithstanding this, he stuck to his letter style and language register, although the tone of his letter voice became more strict and severe. Therefore, he did not per se deprive his brother of the right to voice criticism, but he nonetheless disapproved of the attack against his own integrity, as which he obviously saw the letter written by Anton. Nicolaus Gottlieb Luetkens' letter from the 15th of July 1744 in response to his brother's criticism reads as follows:

> "I have well received your pleasant last from the 29th as well as the signed obligation and the contract of affreightment issued by Hertzer & von Bobartt for the first four ships. You write that it would not have been necessary that we have proceeded in that way and that since you have rented these ships [to me] you are of the opinion that these ships do not really belong to you ["nicht recht zugehören"]. Think about it for yourself,

> if someone buys a house and then rents this house to another person, who is the real owner of the house ["jemand der ein Hauß kauft und hernachen verheuert"]? You own these ships for real and far more than I do [---] it is not a shame ["thutt kein Schande"] neither for me nor for you to have things sorted out and to keep order in things at any time. And I have written [asked] you about all that beforehand. Maybe someone has talked you into it who has no clue ["kein Verstantt"] about all that, which hurts me deep in my heart ["ins Hertze schmertzet"]. If you had not rented these ships to me, I would not be able to find any cargo ["nicht die Fracht empf."] […] You now own 5 ships worth 32/m [32 000] Mark Bco. And I for my part have only approximately 9900 Mark Bco und your two obligations worth 1/m Mark and 6800 Mark as an assurance; which I can, however, not even sell ["verneegotiren"] or turn into cash, which is why I cannot, even if I wished to do so, include you more or give you more shares in my businesses ["unmöglich dier beteiligen kann"]. If you had not mentioned it to anyone no one would know about it and even Hertzer & von Bobartt and the notary public have promised to keep it a secret that you have rented these ships to me and it is not necessary that you tell anybody about it now. […] I don't know who has given you the idea that, since you have sent me the obligations, you won't be able to access the money later when you need it. I can give you no more assurance than the fact that I have always kept my promises ["mein Paroll nachgekommen"] and you can believe me that I will always have your money ready whenever you need it and that you won't find my cash till empty ["kein Pech in meiner Cassa"]."[118]

In this letter, in a most straightforward manner, Nicolaus Gottlieb Luetkens pulled out all the stops to convince his brother of the rightfulness and necessity of this undertaking. Remarkable in this regard is that Nicolaus Gottlieb did not decide to simply block, rebuke or simply pass over the criticism of his brother, but obviously he had an interest in placating his brother. Demanding loyalty implied that the letter-writer himself would also be bound to stick to this loyalty. Luetkens did, however, use a rather drastic tone for this letter. In the end, since all precautions had already been taken care of, his letter probably could have also turned out shorter, because the dispute in the end bore no more direct effects to the implementation of the actual plan. Due to the family setting of the letter conversation, however, in order to prevent a family row, but certainly also primarily to once more insist on the orderliness of his business, which was an important part and valuable asset of a merchant's self-perception, he answered his brother's criticism at some length. As a reader there is no way one could deny or ignore the abundantly obvious resentfulness of his words. Nevertheless, we recognize Nicolaus Gottlieb Luetkens' will to cope with the situation by means of arguments instead of only berating Anton. The merchant therefore must have had an interest in settling this matter for good. For his arguments he then drew on several rhetorical strategies to convince his brother, all of which were a clear reaction as they directly cited and referred back to the arguments that Anton had produced but rebutting or weakening

118 Letter from Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb to Luetkens, Anton, July 15, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/232, Letter Book I, no. 219.

them. Reading the letters alternatingly, the reading impression one gains is of a conversational exchange of blows. One argument is therefore that Nicolaus Gottlieb pointed out that Anton himself had had the chance to say no, by means of which he criticized the point in time that Anton had chosen for his criticism which had essentially rendered the criticism not just obsolete but also superfluous. At this point, his persuasive strategy, the practical principle he had mobilised before, which was to demand loyalty while at the same time offering or pretending freedom of choice for his brother, paid off because Luetkens could now easily steal the thunder of his brother's criticism.

Using this argument again, he therefore passed the buck back to Anton. The same applies, on a more general level, to Nicolaus Gottlieb's recalling the fact that Anton would ultimately not lose anything through this arrangement but would only stand to profit from it. This sentence can be directly understood as a performative act signalling that at this point of the conversation Anton should stop whining. Highly conclusive in this regard is the fact that Nicolaus Gottlieb omitted to recapitulate in detail the conditions of the arrangement, which means that for him these conditions are now settled, fixed and justified and no modifications can now be made. Since these conditions, as we know, already included revenues for Anton from the hiring of the ships, Nicolaus Gottlieb must have, by implication, regarded these revenues as sufficient for his brother. As the only return service and agreed consideration that his brother had to render, Nicolaus Gottlieb and his partners Hertzer & von Bobartt requested the said obligation from Anton, which, however, could not be reutilised or as he wrote "turn[ed] into cash" by Nicolaus Gottlieb. The latter, in turn, used this in his letter as the argument why he could not offer further shares or a more extensive involvement of his brother in the ships' concrete businesses. In pure financial and objective terms, the reason for the conditions of Anton's role in this matter was therefore that Anton would not invest in the ships himself, and thus not bring in a real equity share himself in the ships, because he lacked the financial resources for it, but he would still make a profit from the ships' rent. In this way, Nicolaus Gottlieb was once more able to steal Anton's argumentative thunder because he was able to show that they still would both make a profit from the ships: in different ways, but nonetheless lucrative for both sides. He described this with the words that the deal "is not a shame neither for me nor for you". The latter, in turn, fairly well describes the means of persuasion that Nicolaus Gottlieb used in this letter. It is not only factual reasons which he put forward in his letter to persuade his brother, but it is again and even more vehemently than before also the reference to their relationship as brothers and their brotherly obligations, which he used to react to Anton's criticism. Instead of using this reference, however, in an admonishing manner, we again notice a rather placatory, conciliatory tone that at the same time strongly underpinned his own integrity, in mercantile as well as family business. In this regard, Nicolaus Gottlieb's offer and proposition to his brother that Anton did not have "to tell anyone about their deal", which would mean that Anton himself gained all the prestige of being in possession of the ships, reads almost as a resigned groan. In any case, it represented at least another concession of Nicolaus Gottlieb to his youngest brother for the sake of settling the matter amicably. In the same line we read Nicolaus Gottlieb's assurances regarding his own brotherly obligations and his part in the deal, which shows clearly in the words that he had so far kept all his promises in the past ["parol nachkommen"]. This sentence, furthermore, also reflected a definite sense of disgruntlement of Nicolaus Gottlieb because it quite frankly also sent the message to Anton that he should have known better than to criticise his reliable brother. The last and strongest rhetorical strategy that we can find in the letter by Nicolaus Gottlieb is, however, the application of the rhetorical device of the analogy in order to disabuse his youngest brother. This rhetorical technique is one of the oldest traditional means of rhetoric, and we will also encounter this technique again in other letter episodes presented in the book. It represented a basic means of persuasion that yielded and promised, without beating about the bush, direct and rapid success and as such was naturally very conducive for a practice such as letter-writing, which was highly dependent on brevity and concreteness.[119] Also in this example of the letter by Nicolaus Gottlieb Luetkens it becomes apparent why this rhetorical technique was so efficient. In essence, Nicolaus Gottlieb Luetkens' analogy was very striking because it is ultimately very simple – and it once more referred to the common definition of a ship-owner in contemporary maritime law.[120] In response to Anton's complaint and objection that he would not feel like the real owner of the ships because he had hired them back to his brother, Nicolaus Gottlieb answered: "Think about it for yourself, if someone buys a house and then rents this house to another person, who is the real owner of the house?"[121]

This analogy nipped all of Anton's criticism in the bud. In essence, it cut Anton off and robbed him of all reason for further criticism. How could Anton respond to this explanation other than to agree and consent to it? At the same time, however, this analogy also illustrates to us once again the legal grey area that Nicolaus Gottlieb Luetkens occupied with his deal and strategy in his shipping business. Of course, the analogy makes sense regarding the general agreement between the brothers. However, there is still a notable, distinct difference between a rental agreement regarding accommodation and the rental agreement Nicolaus Gottlieb proposed for his shipping business. The difference is simply that when letting a house, the revenues and income only accrue from the rent and thus only benefit the landlord, whereas in the case of Nicolaus Gottlieb's ships, the main revenues and income accrued in particular from the loading and the transshipment of goods on his ships and thus constituted proceeds that Anton would be excluded from. Yet, as Nicolaus Gottlieb Luetkens himself wrote, in the end they would both profit from the agreement. Consequently, there was no further reason left for Anton to criticise the agreement.

It is not clear, or provable, which of the various means and which rhetorical strategy of persuasion outlined above actually worked and led to the intended effect, which

119 Regarding the rhetorical device of the analogy see Hoenen, Maarten J.F.M. "Art. Analogie." *Historisches Wörterbuch der Rhetorik* 1, edited by Gert Ueding, 498-514. Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1992.
See also Bartha, Paul. "Art. Analogy and Analogical Reasoning." *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Spring 2019 Edition), edited by Edward N. Zalta, https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2019/entries/reasoning-analogy, accessed November 17, 2019.

120 See "Kauffahrdey." *Oekonomische Encyklopädie*, edited by Johann Georg Krünitz. 242 volumes. Berlin, 1773-1858, vol. 36, 470-478.

121 See once more the letter from Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb to Luetkens, Anton, July 15, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/232, Letter Book I, no. 219.

was to convince or pacify Anton regarding the feasibility and lucrativeness of the whole enterprise. We can, however, say that the principle of demanding loyalty underpinning this letter exchange worked in the end. There are no further letters to be found written by Anton in the archive than those discussed above. However, we do know that from this moment onwards each and every one of the ships that Nicolaus Gottlieb Luetkens bought or hired over the course of the following year – nine ships in total at the end of 1745 – was immediately signed over to his brother in Hamburg and, as if that was not enough, the merchant even started to sign over certain goods to his brother. So, obviously, the plan that Nicolaus Gottlieb developed in the months of May and June 1744, shaped by his bad experience with regard to the ship La Domenienne, worked out completely and turned out to be successful. Although some of his ships were still captured even afterwards, the prospects of getting these ships and the goods back were much better than before. Considering this, it is actually not important which argument or strategy exactly prompted Anton to agree with the proposition, as long as we know that the whole process turned out to be successful for Nicolaus Gottlieb Luetkens, and as long as we realize and acknowledge that many different ways of persuasion had been applied, and had been necessary, in this episode in order to set the ball rolling. This shows that each and every one of the different arguments and strategies individually was not regarded as sufficient to have the desired effect. Rather, for the purpose of winning someone over for certain plans, the various strategies and resources of persuasion available were mobilised, in the hope that at least one of them, or all them taken together, would lead to success. And this is forms the crucial insight on which we are able to base our investigation of the powers of persuasion in letters because by investigating, thickly describing and therefore acquiring knowledge and an understanding about these various resources, ways and practices of persuasion, we ultimately gain a comprehensive insight into the different opportunities that were available to the people of the age to exert influence on each other and therefore to successfully manage their affairs in the past by means of letters.

As we have learned from this letter episode, the power of persuasion of these letters was by no means a sure-fire success but rather took the form of constant negotiation, which only worked out with the help and by means of applying and mobilizing different forms and resources of exerting influence. This entailed employing material practices, rhetorical practices, providing and creating financial or honour-related incentives, creating hard facts, or mobilising and instrumentalising contemporary norms and values that were used as arguments and as justification of interpersonal or moral obligations, all as part and under the general framework of the practical principle of persuasion of demanding loyalty.

All of these practical resources, in turn, could only take effect because they found a medium and space that also allowed for their practical utilisation. This medium was the letter and the space was to be found in the practice of correspondence. Only through the practice of letter writing, its properties and effects, this episode of brotherly endorsement was at all feasible, realisable, imaginable and of course practicable. It was the basis for his business practice in the field of the shipping business. This is what we should have learned and what I wanted to show in this chapter. Only through the help of letter practices, Nicolaus Gottlieb Luetkens found a solution to the complicated, tricky situation in his shipping business, which shows us in an exemplary manner the immense significance and weight that letters held for the people of the age. His letters made the merchant capable of acting even though he was spatially separated from his correspondents and negotiation partners, in this episode, from his two brothers. For us, these letters, in turn, allow us today to reconstruct these ways of acting through letters, and this fact holds true despite the fact that we are now spatially and temporally separated from the actual events in these letters.

After his return to Hamburg, Nicolaus Gottlieb Luetkens eventually did become a large burgher of the Free and Imperial City of Hamburg. Among the papers required by the High Court of Admiralty in the case of the ship Post van Hamburg, we find as a piece of evidence Luetkens' original printed burger oath, *Bürger-Eyd*. The document was signed in person on the 22nd of September 1745, right after his return to the Elbe city.

3.7 Conclusion: On Lurrendreyerey

In the German language, there exists a word whose meaning is nowadays only known to a few and which is basically no longer in use today. During the 18th century, however, this word was on everyone's lips and very common in common parlance, especially in sea business and particularly in Northern Germany and Hamburg. This word was the so called "Lurrendreyerey" or "Lurrendreier". In its literal sense, it referred to the word "Lurrd" and thus to the twisting of old ropes around new ropes in order to better preserve the new ropes.[122] In the actual way people used it during the 18th century, however, it was "a word common in seaborne trade, which meant that someone sailed with false, counterfeit passports, under a false flag, with a false connoissement, false papers or with prohibited goods [contrabande]", as it is defined in the contemporary dictionary and glossary by Michael Richey "Idioticon Hamburgensis".[123] The famous merchant manual of Carl Günther Ludovici, *Eroeffnete Akademie der Kaufleute*, defined that a skipper is called a "lorrendreyer" when he conducted "illicit trade in an unlawful manner to the detriment of a country or its inhabitants."[124] Still in the 19th century, a lexicon of East Frisian dialect defined it in the same way as "illicit trade" ["Schleichhandel"], a fraud with ships' papers, conducted by ship-owners or "shippers, who forged

122 "Lurrendreier." *Deutsches Sprichwörter-Lexicon von Karl Friedrich Wilhelm Wander*. 5 volumes. Leipzig: F.A. Brockhaus, 1867-1880, vol 3., 1873. http://www.woerterbuchnetz.de/Wander/lemma=lurrendreier, accessed March 24, 2017.

123 Lurrendreyer: "als Wort beim Seehandel gebraeulich, und bedeutet, was einer mit falschen Paessen, falschen Flaggen, falschen Conoissementen, falscher Fustage verbotener Waare u.d.gl. faehret." "Lurrendreyerey." *Idioticon Hambvrgense oder Woerter-Buch, zur Erklaerung der eigenen, in und uem Hamburg gebraeuchlichen, Nieder-Saechsischen Mund-Art* [...], edited by Michael Richey, 157. Hamburg: Koenig, 1755.

124 Lorrendreyer: "diejenigen schiffer lorrendreyer genannt, welche unrechtmaeßiger weise [...] zum schaden eines landes und seiner einwohner, [...] heimliche handlung treiben [...]." In *Eroeffnete Akademie der Kaufleute: oder vollstaendiges Kaufmanns-Lexicon, woraus saemmtliche Handlungen und Gewerbe, mit allen ihren Vortheilen, und der Art, sie zu treiben, erlernet werden koennen*, edited by Carl Günther Ludovici, vol. 3, 1569. Leipzig: Breitkopf, 1767.

ships' passports and other ships' papers", which papers were once called "Lurden".[125] If translated as a kind of twisting or distortion of facts, it becomes rather obvious how the more literal, more idiomatic and the actual meaning of the word as it was used by the people of the age fit together. The reason that this word is therefore no longer in use today and not very common nowadays is simply that this practice is for the most part no longer very common, or in other words, has been mostly successfully eradicated. In the 18th century, however, this "Lurrendreyerey" was apparently still a very common and widespread phenomenon, which can be understood in the end as one of the direct consequences and reactions of the maritime trading sector during that time to the conflict-laden and unstable situation of war. Furthermore, this found its clearest expression in the very fact that High Courts of Admiralty existed in all European countries, whose main task consisted inter alia in uncovering and fighting these frauds. Against this backdrop, it comes at little or no surprise that this peculiar word also resurfaces over and over again in the letter correspondences of Nicolaus Gottlieb Luetkens. Furthermore, it is hardly surprising that we can also find it in the letter conversation analysed in this chapter, in the most exemplary fashion, at least twice referring to exactly the practice of providing false ships' papers. Notwithstanding this, the word and the usage of this word in our letter conversation still holds ready a special twist in its appearance in the letters that maybe deviates from the first impression regarding the correlation of the term and the letter episode that might have occurred to the reader so far. The word can be found in the letters, but the particular usage or the situation in which it was used might surprise us and is therefore all the more revealing.

So, for instance, we can find the word in a letter from the 29th of May 1744, in the very same month that Nicolaus Gottlieb Luetkens' shrewd plan was concocted. The merchants Hertzer & von Bobartt used it in a letter to Nicolaus Gottlieb Luetkens, reporting and discussing the capture of a ship bound to Dunkirk owned by an Englishman, which, however, sailed under Danish colours and with a Hamburg captain, which caused the merchants to note that "behind this enterprise there stands Lurrendreyerey".[126] Also the London merchant Anthony Luetkens wrote about the said practice in a later letter from the 5th of July, reporting to Nicolaus Gottlieb that "the warships of the King capture all ships that fall into their clutches, because they hope that they find a lot of Lurrendreyerey with regard to false signatures" behind these ships.[127] The merchants therefore were quite aware of this practice and they discussed it. However, the only thing they would refrain from, or rather the idea that would not cross their minds, was to associate their own practices and undertakings with this illegal practice.

Neither Hertzer & von Bobartt nor Anthony Luetkens attributed or saw their own actions and the plan to sign over Nicolaus Gottlieb's ships to Anton in any way as a form

125 "Luur(an)dreien = anführen, täuschen, betrügen; eigentlich Schleichhandel treiben, vom Schiffer, der die Pässe fälscht, oder falsche Briefe, [...] früher Lurden genannt, ausstellt." "Luur(an)dreier." *Ostfriesisches Wörterbuch*, edited by Stürenburg, Cirk Heinrich, 142. Aurich: Seyde, 1857.

126 "Es steckt aber Lurrendreyerey darunter." Letter from Hertzer & von Bobartt to Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, May 29, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/234.

127 "als die Kriegsschiff vom König weilen in Hoffnung das viel Lurrendreyery mit Unterschrifft, deshalb alles auffbringen was für kompt." Letter from Luetkens, Anthony to Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, July 5, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/233, court bundles, Bundle B, no. 8.

of Lurrendreyerey and therefore as illegal behaviour. This, in turn, was in the end exactly the fact that struck me most when reading and reconstructing this letter conversation between Luetkens, his family and his trading partners conducted in the summer of 1744. It represented the special moment of surprise that prompted me to write this chapter because it reveals to us so much about the self-perception of these Hamburg merchants that consequently underlay and facilitated their activities in the trading sector during the 18th century. Thus, it also reveals a lot about how these merchants remained capable of acting in the hazardous and highly contested field of trade and the market of Early Modern wholesale trade because, by means of these ways of justification that they used, they also show us what role and position they attributed to themselves. They saw themselves in the role of the free riders, or in more positive words, the in-betweeners in these fields that allowed them to do whatever was needed to be able to conduct their trade.

As their letters reveal to us, Luetkens as well as his trading partners and family must have shared the conviction that with their actions, with developing and implementing the plan of basically using Anton to whitewash their business, with his consent, they did not do anything wrong or fraudulent but simply did what was necessary. Of course, the whole undertaking ultimately was trickery, which must have been clear right from the start to everyone involved. Also, all the actions taken with regard to the sixty casks of sugar in the case of La Domenienne, ultimately have to be regarded as just as artful and shrewdly planned. But from the merchants' point of view, this trick and all the actions accompanying it did not represent fraud or fraudulent, illegal practice in any way. At least they would not admit it. Thus, the presented cases were decidedly not regarded as Lurrendreyerey by the involved actors. Quite on the contrary, for them they only represented a legitimate utilisation or exploitation of a legal claim, right and status that was officially and by maritime law given and granted to them in France. The latter fact, in turn, is particularly and strikingly reflected in the constantly repeated, mantra-like letter formulae used in almost all of the letters analysed, namely that Luetkens transfered the ships to Anton "in a certain manner", "auf gewise Arth" in German, or "op gewisse Conditio" in Dutch. This insinuated and underlined that Luetkens knew what he was doing and that his trading partners and family members could rely on the fact that he would ensure that the legal safeguarding of this undertaking was waterproof, on paper and notarially certified. At the same time, we can assume that his correspondents, reading this line and letter formulae, at least might have been aware of the fact that they were acting in a grey area. Nonetheless, since the merchants could in the end relate all their actions to the legal framework of maritime neutrality, they must have regarded their actions as nothing other than a necessity and an appropriate usage of the prevailing legitimate opportunities, the existing loopholes and grey areas available to them, which they would then of course still be required to adapt to their particular situation. This was also the reason why Nicolaus Gottlieb insisted in his letters so strongly on ensuring the orderliness and the legal safeguarding of all the actions carried out. It was this legal safeguarding that represented the basic foundation and reinsurance of his plans and the justification that he could always draw on and refer to. Since all the actions happened in accordance with existing legal regulations, these actions, and thus his shipping business, could not be regarded in any way as improper means. As must be clear to the reader and the contemporaries though, these actions of course always sailed rather close to the wind and were at the edges of legality or even beyond because, speaking in purely practical terms, Nicolaus Gottlieb Luetkens only used the benefits of maritime neutrality to be able to advance and promote his trade and businesses in France. What we are dealing with in this episode is therefore ultimately a legal grey area that Luetkens and his trading partners and correspondents occupied with these actions and that Luetkens masterly devised and used to implement his plans. And with this depiction of a grey area, in turn, we are ultimately arriving at precisely the operational framework that we have to assume was applied for most of the Hamburg or Hanseatic trading activities during that time in general.

As a matter of fact, maritime neutrality was rather difficult to sustain during a time when all trade and all the transport routes were unavoidably linked or directly connected to the different colonial powers and when most of the trade goods were coming from or transported to the markets of the colonial powers. Therefore, merchants, even from neutral powers, always had to choose sides in one way or another and take risks in order to take part in the Atlantic trading markets. The only thing they could do was therefore to try everything in their power and within the realms of the possibilities to remain capable of acting and trading in this hazardous situation. This approach, in turn, represented precisely what Luetkens and his associates did in the analysed episode. Nicolaus Gottlieb unmistakably took the side of the French, though not without trying everything in his power and using every means available to him to try to ensure that this partisanship would not straightaway be to his detriment because after all he possessed certain opportunities and resources to cover up this partisanship. And this is how we have to understand the whole underlying situation and his actions concerning his way of running his shipping business.

There are, however, no moral scruples to be found on his side. These would also have been in a way inappropriate from his contemporary point of view because, first of all, he did in principle stick to the rules, at least on paper. Secondly, his actions in the end only served the purpose of trying to make a living and to keep up with the times even though, or precisely because the times were harsh and inconvenient. It is important to note in this regard, however, that all his actions in this episode did not serve the ultimate goal of getting rich or maximising profits, in a modern capitalistic sense. Instead, as has become obvious, the measures primarily served the purpose of staying capable to act at all, of making a living as a Hamburg wholesale merchant in France as best possible, and for this purpose all measures were in the end reasonable and not morally reprehensible to him and from his perspective.

In fact, the only moral element that we can find and notice in this letter episode points exactly in the opposite direction rather than showing us any scruple or doubt as to the righteousness of the whole enterprise. In the demand for loyalty that Nicolaus Gottlieb claimed from his brother Anton, we actually find the ultimate proof that Nicolaus Gottlieb was convinced of the legitimacy and appropriateness of his juridical trick. In this regard, the whole enterprise was not to be seen as morally reprehensible or corrupt, but quite on the contrary, it would have been a blunder and breach of morality if Anton had repelled the idea. The moral compass or cudgel effective in this episode therefore works exactly the other way round than having a hindering effect. It is Early

Modern family moral and values and the obligations of fraternal bonds that form the background to the persuasive strategies effective in this letter conversation and these make it unmistakably clear by implication that any other scruple at the same time was out of place.

Notwithstanding this, the interesting thing about this episode is that Nicolaus Gottlieb nevertheless left the ultimate power of decision regarding the question of whether or not his sibling would jump on the bandwagon, ultimately to his brother. Anton basically could still have said no and rejected the offer. In practice all he had to do was simply not to hand over the third enclosed letter to his master. By doing that, he would have surely refused a very lucrative offer and furthermore it must be assumed that this refusal would have also caused discontent on the part of his eldest brother. Yet, Anton did in fact have the opportunity to say no. That, in turn, shows us in the end the personal closeness and familiarity, the strong bond that prevailed among the brothers and, concomitant to that, it reveals to us the importance of the powers of persuasion in this fraternal relationship. After all, if it had been sufficient to convince Anton simply by means of exercising his natural brotherly authority, then the strategy of leaving his brother with the power to make his own decision would not have been at all necessary. Nicolaus Gottlieb simply could have also instructed or even commanded his brother to act in a certain way, but he did not.[128]

The letter conversation therefore shows us the subtleties and complexities of 18th century family relations and family communication in a commercial family in the pursuit of the maintenance of family cohesion. In addition, it also shows how this familial environment was actively used and mobilized to successfully pursue one's affairs in mercantile business. Nicolaus Gottlieb therefore surely accepted certain grounds for refusal of his offer. Against the background of my explanations, however, these grounds would not include general scruples against the legitimacy of the enterprise, as especially his harsh letter from the 15th of July 1744 shows. As these grounds, he would only have accepted more personal family reasons, as for instance when Anton feared that he would not be able to cope with the immense responsibility, or, of course, if the master had not agreed to the proposition. Unfortunately though, we will never know whether such an answer would have caused a different result or outcome to the whole enterprise, because in the end Anton accepted the offer. Therefore, I understand the gesture of inserting the letter to Anton's master unsealed in the letter packet as primarily a gesture of good will because Nicolaus Gottlieb expected the same good will from his correspondent.

At the same time, we are clearly presented with a very powerful way of how people were able to exert influence on others during the 18th century with the help of letters. Nicolaus Gottlieb Luetkens was able to convince his brother in this case to agree to his offer and to initiate the necessary steps to implement his idea by means of the practical principle of persuasion through demanding loyalty. He did so by creating a situation in which he seemingly provided his brother with discretionary powers while he at the same time anticipated or rather created a guilty conscience on the part of his brother in case Anton did not consent to the offer. All this, in turn, happened primarily on a

128 See Capp, *Ties that Bind*, 1-13.

performative level rather than finding concrete expression in the letter text itself, as for instance through words that would expressly force his brother to say yes. Instead, it is written between the lines. Luetkens used the full potential of the performative powers, practical means and resources offered by the communication medium of the letter in order to win his two brothers over for his plan. He used the material in the form of a material rhetoric by leaving the letters open; he used certain arguments, which appealed to his brother's conscience; he used rhetorical devices, such as the analogy, in order to convince his brother on a logical level; he created financial and honour-related incentives; and he used the assistance of his middle brother, whom he skilfully included into the conversation, and made his accomplice, by also inserting a letter to him in the letter packet. All these elements in the end made it rather difficult for Anton to refuse the offer.

As becomes obvious from this episode, the practice of letter writing was a highly effective and crucial tool for implementing plans and successfully managing a shipping business in the 18th century. Under the condition of spatial separation, it was basically the only tool that helped and allowed the people to accomplish their business enterprises. Letter practices held ready particular ways and means of being able to exert influence on the addressee. The practice therefore explicitly empowered people to implement their plans and aspirations. In the case of the analysed letter conversation regarding Luetkens' shipping business, the analysis has shown how the merchant, through his letter-writing and negotiation skills and business acumen, was able to react appropriately and to cope with the difficult circumstances prevailing for wholesale merchants coming from neutral countries during that time, which I outlined at the beginning of the chapter. In particular, the chapter has shown how the merchant solved the problems that occurred to him due to his special status as a travelling merchant during his establishment phase and his decision not to decide to trade as a neutral, but to trade with the French. Despite this, his ships sailed under neutral Hamburg colours, thanks to his shrewd strategy. In the end, even the ship *Hope*, captured in August 1745 by the English, was eventually decreed to be restored as neutral on the 15th of March 1746.[129] Even in this case, Luetkens' strategy paid off, at least with regard to his ship, though not his laden goods. Thus, although the Admiralty did find out about the trickery behind this ship Hope and its particular hiring arrangements, stored as exhibit A in the court records, they were nevertheless not able to legally refute the general lawfulness and veracity of the said arrangements.[130] The same held true for the court case regarding the ship Post van Hamburg. On the basis of this letter conversation, Nicolaus Gottlieb Luetkens was therefore able to restructure his whole shipping business during the time that he spent in France and this, in turn, helped him in great parts to press ahead and to set the course for his career and the success of his mercantile establishment phase because it kept him capable of acting. This was all that I wanted to show in this chapter.

129 Decision: the ship and part of the cargo restored on 15 March 1746; the rest of the cargo condemned on 18 January 1748, TNA, HCA 30/232, HCA 32/115/14, HCA 13/90 and HCA 42/36.

130 Exhibit A. Copy and translation of the agreement by which Anthony Luetkens let out his share in several ships for two years to Nicholas Gottlieb Luetkens, TNA, HCA 32/115/14.

4 Commission Trade

4.1 Why Commission Trade Mattered

A key business area, apart from the shipping business, which aspiring wholesale merchants often became involved in during their establishment phase was the commission trade.[1] Engaging in commission trade – in French conducting "commerce par commission" – meant that a merchant professionally bought and sold goods on the account of other merchants, on commission. Such business was conducted regularly by wholesale merchants in long-distance trade. Most often, it was conducted by either a factor, who was permanently employed by a merchant firm to conduct commission trade on their behalf in another city, or by a commission agent, who was acting on his own behalf and in his own name while offering his commission services to and conducting business for a greater number of different customers. The latter role was gladly taken on by merchants during their establishment phase because it provided a very suitable springboard and basis both in terms of establishing a merchant network and of gaining profound knowledge in the trade with various goods in preparation for a prospering career as a settled wholesale merchant. However, even after they settled down, merchants often continued in this business field because it was lucrative and relatively stable, and it provided the opportunity to be involved in manifold international enterprises.

The individual commission agent acted under his own name and vouched with his own reputation for the success of the respective business enterprise while conducting business for and on the account of other merchants and companies.[2] Referring to the French terms and designations, a "commissionaire" [commission agent] was "a *négociant* [merchant], who undertook commercial operations on account of a third party known as

1 See Hancock, *Citizens of the World*, 81. See Trivellato, *The Familiarity of Strangers*, 153-176. See Henninger, *Bethmann*, 102-134. On commission trade in general, see Davies, Kenneth G. "The Origins of the Commission System in the West India Trade (The Alexander Prize Essay)." *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 2 (1952): 89-107. Regarding the legal aspect of commission trading, see Landwehr, Torsten. *Das Kommissionsgeschäft in Rechtswissenschaft, Gesetzgebung und Rechtspraxis vom 16. bis zum Ende des 18. Jahrhunderts*. Frankfurt a.M.: Peter Lang, 2003.

2 On the role of commission agents and the difference between commission agents and merchant factors, see Häberlein, "Trading Companies."

le commettant [the customer or client] receiving thereby a commission that represented his remuneration."[3] Since this chapter deals with Luetkens' French trading partners and the French letters within the Luetkens archive, the knowledge of the French terms is not only helpful but indispensable. As the most simple and direct illustration of this fact we can refer to the forms of address that many of Luetkens' correspondents chose for the address fields of their letters to Luetkens. As was typical during that time, we do not find street names as part of these address lines, but instead we often find the profession of the addressee mentioned on the address wrapper. In Luetkens case, he was referred to as a "négociant" or "negotiant" by his correspondents, supplemented by the information in whose house he was staying and therefore where he was reachable by mail at that time and in which city he was residing, for instance "chez Mons. Egmunth à L'orient".[4] Thus, from the address line of the letter itself the people derived not only the merchant's place of residence but to some extent also the form of business that this merchant was undertaking at that time. As the address fields therefore indicated to the contemporaries, Luetkens was introduced as a merchant, a négociant, who conducted his own trade while residing in the houses of other merchants. This means he was not employed as a factor by one particular firm but worked as a commission agent on travel for various firms. One of his main customers and partners in Hamburg were the merchants Hertzer & van Bobartt. They in turn acted as "his true and undoubted agents and attorneys [in the city and whom he had therefore granted] […] full power and authority during such time [i.e. the time of his travels] to manage his affairs in general both active and passive of what denominations whatsoever they may be, as occasion requires, and in particular to accept and pay bills of exchange, promising and binding himself to both their acceptance for good and approve the same and also to fulfil and actually and really to pay the same when due as if he himself has done the same."[5] This is a perfect description of the operational framework of a commission agent.

As the address lines indicate and as this whole chapter will inform us in detail, Nicolaus Gottlieb Luetkens fell in the category of the commissionaires during his establishment phase. He was a commission agent who acted on his own behalf but primarily traded on the account of other merchants while staying in the merchant houses of already established French, Dutch, Swiss, and French-German merchant firms in France,

3 See Lamarchand, Yannik, Cheryl McWatters, and Laure Pineau-Defois. "The Current Account as Cognitive Artefact: Stories and Accounts of La Maison Chaurand." In *Merchants and Profit in the Age of Commerce, 1680-1830*, edited by Pierre Gervais, Yannick Lemarchand, and Dominique Margairaz, 13-32. London: Picking & Chatto, 2014, here 16 (italics in the original). See also from a contemporary perspective "Commissionär." *Oekonomische Encyklopädie*, edited by Johann Georg Krünitz. 242 volumes. Berlin, 1773-1858, vol. 8, 251; "Factor." *Oekonomische Encyklopädie*, edited by Johann Georg Krünitz. 242 volumes. Berlin, 1773-1858, vol. 12, 21-22. See also "Commissions=Handlung." *Oekonomische Encyklopädie*, edited by Johann Georg Krünitz. 242 volumes. Berlin, 1773-1858, vol. 8, 253.

4 The complete address reads for instance: "Monsieur N.G. Lutkens / Negotiant à Hambourg / chez Mons. Egmunth à L'orient." Letter from Bethmann, Johann Jakob to Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, August 10, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/234.

5 Attestation issued by the ruling authorities of Hamburg with translation, letter of attorney with translation, brought into court 23 October 1745, as part of the as part of the *Additional Hearings and Attestations*, TNA, HCA 32/143/17.

for which he took commissions. The houses he traded with had been established in Bayonne, Bordeaux, La Rochelle, Nantes, Brest, Morlaix, Saint Malo and Paris. During his travels through France, he visited these cities one after another, covering the entire French Atlantic coast from south to north with his business trip. In these houses, he was primarily responsible for both "buying and selling of commission goods and acted as a consignor for trade goods" for other merchants.[6] His client base, however, was not limited to France only, but as a commission agent active in France he also offered his services to several merchants and merchant firms outside France, mainly the Hanseatic cities, Hamburg and Bremen, but also Amsterdam, London, San Sebastian, Bilbao, Basel or Gdansk. He therefore traded with France, the Netherlands, Great Britain, Spain, Switzerland and Poland simultaneously.

Furthermore, regarding France, Luetkens did not limit his trading activities to only one single city, but as a travelling merchant he visited several trading cities and spent time in several merchant houses during the time he spent in France. Apart from the fact that this helped him to expand his network of trading partners and clients further, it also provided him with access to and trading opportunities in a wide range of different products of the French market. In short, as a travelling commission agent, Nicolaus Gottlieb Luetkens offered his services from many different places in France, in different kinds of goods, and for a wide range of different customers and trading partners. The latter factors turned him into a very attractive trading partner not only for foreign merchants investing in French trade but also for the French merchants themselves. They could draw on him for the purpose of boosting their own domestic and international circulation of goods, but also found a suitable partner in him as a purchaser and distribution agent for the re-export of French colonial goods and the export of local French Goods to the north-western European and Baltic trading markets.

All of these factors were crucial for Luetkens' establishment phase. For the merchant himself, commission trade represented a promising business for two more reasons. First, in commission trade in contrast to high-risk trade, which will be presented in the next chapter, the risks were comparably moderate. It was a solid business field. Income and revenues in commission trade were also moderate but relatively stable, which provided Luetkens with a certain basic capital and provision and therefore a solid foundation for his business activities in France and subsequently for his future career.[7] The reason for the latter was that although a commission agent bought and sold goods for other merchants or firms, he was not generally liable for losing bargain that might eventually occur through the sale of the respective merchandise, for instance if the sale did not turn out as profitable as the customers expected. The consequence that a commission agent had to bear from a potentially loss-making business, if he was not himself a shareholder in these goods, was that the amount of his commission fee turned out to be lower. The same applied in the opposite case, where his commission increased if his clients made large profits from the respective enterprises, On the downside, however,

6 Lamarchand/McWatters/Pineau-Defois. "The Current Account," 16.

7 Hancock concludes that "commission merchandizing was a middling business." Hancock, *Citizens of the World*, 81. See also ibid., 124-125. See also Henninger, *Bethmann*, 102-134. See also Roseveare, *Markets and Merchants*, 20-21.

the commission merchant was liable and carried legal responsibility for the smooth handling of the whole business enterprise and the shipping of the goods. This meant that he had to ensure that the goods he bought were of good quality and not damaged and that they would also survive shipping without damage.[8]

This latter liability was fairly important because not only did the sale of the merchandize depend on it, but he in fact was forced to pay the incurred costs for any damage. In maritime legal terms, this was referred to in English as average, or as the contemporaries called it in other languages, the merchant had to pay for any occurring "havarie" in German or "avarie" in French with regard to the goods.[9] It was therefore not unusual for commission agents to procure insurances for the ship and also for the goods transported on these ships.[10] The latter fact was also the reason why the combination of being both a commission agent and a shipowner was a lucrative as well as reasonable decision. From the letter episodes analysed in this chapter, we will get a good impression and an insight into the work and the many rights and obligations of a commission agent. We will also be presented with the particular problems and challenges that could occur with regard to the problem of average. In the final analyses, we will learn about how the merchants still were able to cash in on their businesses.

In general, in must be stressed that because of their intermediary role as middlemen, commission agents would understandably enough always have a strong interest in procuring lucrative businesses for their clients, not only because of their liabilities but particularly because of the fact that with every commission business the agent's own reputation was at stake, too, and he wanted to continue business with his clients. Furthermore, if everything went well, the agent was rewarded with a respectable amount of commission fee.[11]

The typical commission rate for commission agents during the 18th century was 2 to 2.5 %, which might appear rather low to the modern reader at first sight.[12] Considering the stability and regularity that commission trade offered for merchants, however, the appeal of this business field especially for aspiring, not yet established merchants was nevertheless very high. Commission trade allowed Nicolaus Gottlieb Luetkens and many other merchants during the time to gradually increase and top up their capital stock to lay the foundation for a successful career.[13] In fact, in the year 1745, and already starting

8 See Trivellato, *Familiarity of Strangers*, 153-154. See Henninger, *Bethmann*, 113.

9 In the definition of the Krünitz encyclopedia: "Eigentlich versteht man unter Haferey nur denjenigen Schaden, welcher einem Schiffe und den darauf geladenen Waaren durch außerordentliche Zu= und Unglücksfälle, von ihrer Einladung und Abfahrt an, bis zu ihrer Rückkunft und Ausladung, zustößt, und durch eine allgemeine Contribution nach Proportion des Preises sowohl aller im Schiffe eingeladener Güter." "Haferey." *Oekonomische Encyklopädie*, edited by Johann Georg Krünitz. 242 volumes. Berlin, 1773-1858, vol. 21, 99-100. Regarding the different other contemporary meanings of average, "Havarie" or "Haferey" in German, "Avarie" in French, see ibid.

10 See Denzel, *Handbook of World Exchange Rates*, 198-206. See Kiesselbach, *Seeversicherung in Hamburg*.

11 See Weber, *Deutsche Kaufleute*, 181-191. See Weber, "German Merchants." See also Roseveare, *Markets and Merchants*, 21-21.

12 Weber, *Deutsche Kaufleute*, 186; Grassby, *Business Community*, 234; Hancock, *Citizens of the World*, 125.

13 See Henninger, *Bethmann*, 112-115. See Jeannin, "Distinction des compétences."

during his travels through Europe, as his capital gains and conto currents reveal, which are the current book accounts he underheld together with other merchants, Luetkens' own capital stock had already grown to such a great extent that he was also able to start expanding his business from commission trade to trading on his own account, or rather he started to combine both, which was to become his main practice after opening up his own trading house in Hamburg at the end of the year 1745. As we learn from a later quote about the merchant Luetkens in a contemporary book dealing with the French colonies, it can even be assumed that later in his life he underheld direct connections to the French colony in Saint Domingue, about which he "was informed very well due to the fact that some his main trading branches of trade were tied to it".[14]

At that time in 1745, as the starting point to this flourishing trade in later years, he had already begun to draw on his own factor in France, whom he had employed at the time of his departure from France and who had taken over his businesses for him in France.[15] Before that time, he himself was the mainstay of his commission trade. So, at the end of his establishment phase, he already underheld a strong, close and direct connection to France, from which he would benefit tremendously in later years. As a kind of transitional solution and approach, combining both commission trade and own-account trading, is the practice of conducting joint enterprises. We can already observe this in the Luetkens archive with regard to Luetkens' business activities in France in 1743-1745. It basically meant that his clients not only placed a commission order with him but at the same time offered him shares in the procured goods. Encountering this practice in the Luetkens archive is another explicit hint at the fact that Luetkens was already approaching the end of his establishment phase. In the letter episode analysed in this chapter, we will be dealing with precisely such an example of a business enterprise where Luetkens as a commission agent in the beginning only took care of the procurement and purchase of a cargo of sugar on the account of four customers. At the end of the episodes, however, the two final owners and shareholders engaged in this enterprise, namely the merchants on whose account the goods were later finally sold, were his partners Hertzer & von Bobartt and himself, both being assigned a 1/2 share in the goods. This enterprise is a perfect example for illustrating Luetkens' activities on the eve of his establishment. It is important to understand in this regard that even though Luetkens finally held a certain share of his own in these goods, he was nevertheless

14 Hilliard d'Auberteuil, Michel René. *Betrachtungen über den gegenwärtigen Zustand der französischen Colonie zu San Domingo*, translated by Johann Andreas Engelbrecht. Leipzig: J.F. Junius, 1779, dedicated to Nicolaus Gottlieb Luetkens, 3-4.

15 On the important transition from commission trading to own-account trading for young merchants, see Hancock, *Citizens of the World*, 81. See also Gervais, "Early Modern Merchant Strategies," 10. Regarding Luetkens' capital gains and his shared conto currents with other merchants, see his account memorials in TNA, HCA 30/232 (255 in total, including conto currents, sales contracts and other account documents). See for instance a book of his capital gains and his conto current with his uncle Anthony: "Capitall Conto von N.G.L & Anth. Luetkens", 1743-1744, in TNA, HCA 30/232. The same conto current, listing debit & credit, was also kept by his uncle, who, as was common practice, would send this account to his nephew after each year (or after several months) to compare and settle their accounts. See in this regard in detail "Herrn Nicolaus Gottlieb Lutkens in Lorient suo Conto Courrent, London d. 31. December 1744." TNA, HCA 30/232.

also granted the commission fee by his partner Hertzer & von Bobartt for their share in their goods, illustrating the general benefits of commission trade. All things considered, such an enterprise was therefore a very lucrative business if everything went according to plan.

Although the typical commission rate only amounted to 2 or 2.5%, we furthermore should not underestimate the capital gains that could be won through commission businesses, and in this regard, too, the letter episode presented will be conclusive. Just the commission fee for a commission transaction could easily amount to large revenues, if the amount of actual goods that a merchant took the commission for on the account of another merchant or company was correspondingly high. In the letter episode analysed, Luetkens took the commission for the purchase of 348 hogsheads, "barrique" in French, large wooden casks of sugar, which were worth 379,936 Mark and for which he therefore expected a commission fee of 2,164 Pound Sterling, as the invoice of the purchase bill, the Factura, to his brother reveals.[16]

As these figures at the same time vividly demonstrate, moreover, another great challenge for commission agents was that they had to take care to ensure sufficient funds and financing for their commission transactions on behalf of their clients and on their own behalf, for which they heavily relied on the finance and credit sector and financial bill transactions through the exchange of bills of exchange. To quote Markus Denzel, merchants relied on a "system of cashless payment", which made it possible to buy and sell goods on credit.[17] Bill transactions were the only way that commission agents with limited capital stocks could engage in such large-scale business operations at all.[18] Such financial transactions are to be seen as the linchpin and the supporting scaffold of commission trade, while for other merchants, namely merchant bankers, such banking business could of course represent the main business area they engaged in. For merchants during establishment and beyond, finance and credit business was therefore a necessary concomitant element of commission trade, which is why the cashless payment system will also be analysed in the following explanations of Luetkens' business activities. For these financial transactions Luetkens drew on particular merchant houses and private banks within his merchant network, relying mainly on merchants and merchant bankers in Bordeaux, Paris, Amsterdam and Hamburg. While conducting his commission trade, he was therefore not only dependent on the cooperation of other merchants with regard to finding trustworthy partners for procuring goods, but he was also dependent on finding trustworthy partners to finance his businesses. Taken

16 The "Factura Verk[aufs]. Rechn[ung]. über 348 Oxh[oft]. braune Zucker" was inserted into the letter from Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb to Luetkens, Anton, June 26, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/232, Letter Book I, no. 197.

17 See Denzel, Markus. *A Handbook of World Exchange Rates, 1590-1914*. London/New York: Routledge, 2017, xxii-lvii, particularly xlii-xlv. See also the comprehensive study by Denzel, Markus A. *Das System des bargeldlosen Zahlungsverkehrs europäischer Prägung vom Mittelalter bis 1914*. Stuttgart: Steiner, 2008.

18 See Weber, *Deutsche Kaufleute*, 181-186. See Henninger, *Bethmann*, 112-115. See Grassby, *Business Community*, 82. See Morgan, "Introduction," 89-90. See also Gelderbloom, Oscar. "The Governance of Early Modern Trade: The Case of Hans Thijs, 1556-1611." *Enterprise & Society* 4, no. 4 (2003): 606-39.

together, these two aspects directly lead us to the another main reason why commission trade represented such an important mainstay of Luetkens' establishment phase.

Another reason for partaking in commission trade was that through these trading activities Luetkens was not only increasing his financial resources, but he was also extending and strengthening his network. He filled his pocketbook of correspondents – which has survived in his archive – during this travels, which helped him to establish a firm foothold in the Atlantic trading sector.[19] By getting in touch, staying in contact and trading with some of the leading merchant houses of 18th century trade, commission trade allowed Luetkens to get a foot in the door of Atlantic trading markets. This was not only a market that was highly competitive but was also shaped by many restrictions while at the same time holding ready certain privileges for foreign merchants. As we learnt in the previous chapter about the shipping industry, one major restriction was that foreign merchants were not allowed direct trade with the colonies.[20] Due to the mercantilist policies of France, they had been excluded from colonial trade since 1671, which was the time when the exclusive system started.[21] By means of commission trade, however, they were provided with yet another commercial practice apart from investing in the shipping business, which allowed them to skilfully counterbalance this restriction and circumvent legislative hurdles and therefore to gain access to this trading sector, the trade in colonial goods, essentially by the backdoor. The concrete way of how this commercial practice worked in this regard will be analysed in detail in this chapter. I am going to show how Luetkens and his trading partners coped with and took advantage of the particular regional, juridical and commercial conditions prevailing in France and northern Europe with regard to regional and trade customs. Furthermore, we will find out how these men developed their own strategies and approaches to exploit and capitalise on these conditions by means of the commission trade.[22] For this purpose they made extensive use of letters, which is not only why we are still able today to reconstruct their trading activities today in great detail, but which also points us to another irrefutable fact, which is in turn highly significant with regard to this chapter and to the general subject of this book. It shows us the immense significance that letter-writing practice played for these merchants' business activities and their personal advancement.

4.2 Commission Trade and Letters

In order to conduct a lucrative commission trade as well as to be able to procure the financing for their endeavours, the merchants needed to conduct an effective and convincing letter-writing and correspondence practice. The way they achieved this goal will

19 *Pocketbook of correspondents*, TNA, HCA 30/232.

20 See Weber, *Deutsche Kaufleute*, 167, 193. See also Weber, "The Atlantic Coast of German Trade." See also Huhn, *Handelsverträge*, 34.

21 See Marzagalli, "Trade across religious boundaries in Early Modern France," 183-184.

22 Regarding French commercial law, codes and customs of trade and the legal framework, see in general Stanziani, Alessandro. *Rules of Exchange: French Capitalism in Comparative Perspective, Eighteenth to Early Twentieth Centuries*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012, 38-58.

be the third point discussed and analysed in the chapter. In essence, business practice and letter practice have to be seen as interdependent when dealing with 18th-century trade customs. They were literally the two sides of the same coin. Letters were used to conduct business, and business in turn relied heavily on the warranties and negotiation opportunities provided by letters.

The significance and actual power of letters went so far that business letters in many ways served as material substitutes for the merchants that had sent them. This characteristic, as recent research has shown, was not limited only to business letters but applied to many other letter types, too, such as family or love letters.[23] For merchants, this embodiment meant concretely that they conducted business and financial transactions on the basis of their representation in the letters, as a material manifestation of the actions performed, whereby the written word had binding character. This means that the letters were not only instructions to conduct certain actions but that in many ways the material artefact actually performed many of these actions. As the Kruenitz encyclopaedia aptly put it, crucial was that in the business letter "the written word alone authorised business", which means that the letter was a sufficient tool to conduct business based on it. The letter was effective "paratam executionem", "ermächtigt zur Ausführung" in German.[24] If a merchant therefore authorised a payment in his letter, the letter at the same time represented the medium and means by which this payment was conducted and to which the receiver would at the same time refer as the payment instrument. Often but not exclusively the letters for this purpose also enclosed a letter of exchange. In this regard, the letter served as a material substitute, an extension of the merchant sender, who used the letter as an empowering instrument and tool to conduct his trade with the receiver of the letter. Both merchants, the sender and the receiver of the letter, naturally regarded the letter as a medium bearing concrete powers and the ability to directly authorise and perform certain trading activities, a medium they relied on and in which they trusted. In this way, business letters often literally equalled money, and correspondence at the same time became a crucial trading floor in its own right for the parties involved. The ability to act via letters was in this regard not something that only modern-day research ascribes to these letters and to the merchant's action performed on the basis of them as in fact this view was clearly shared by merchants of the 18th century. As the contemporary mercantile writer Johann Carl May wrote in his mercantile letter manual *Versuch in Handlungsbriefen und großen kaufmännischen Aufsätzen* from 1765, it was widely accepted among merchants of the time that letters themselves had the power "to buy for us, to speak for us and to sell for us", "für uns kaufen, reden und verkaufen" in German, which aptly captures and reveals the special significance that letters held for the merchants of the age.[25]

23 See Pearsall, *Atlantic Families*. See the project: Material Identities, Social Bodies: Embodiment in British Letters c.1680-1820, a Leverhulme Trust funded project based in the School of History and Cultures at the University of Birmingham, https://socialbodies.bham.ac.uk, accessed 20 October 2020.

24 "Die bloße Handschrift eines Kaufmannes zieht paratam executionem nach sich." "Handels=Mann, Kaufmann, Negociant, L. Mercator, Fr. Marchand, Négociant." *Oekonomische Encyklopädie*, edited by Johann Georg Krünitz. 242 volumes. Berlin, 1773-1858, vol. 21, 747-754, here 753.

25 May, *Versuch in Handlungs-Briefen*, 1. See Faulstich, *Die bürgerliche Mediengesellschaft*, 85.

It is important to understand this fact not only in order to understand the form and character of 18th century business letters, but also in order to understand why we need to regard letter writing as a distinct form and communication layer of conducting business in the 18th century. Business letters were a concrete trading floor, being not only a necessary supplement to trading on spot but a general driving force and a coordination tool underpinning it. At the same time, the letters represented a communication medium, which was used for additional trading operations enabling and processing further the trade activities that these merchants undertook in the harbours, marketplaces, bourses or counting houses of the trading cities. Such further trading operations included banking, financing and exchange operations, sales negotiations, accounting operations, namely debiting or crediting, and speculative transactions. Correspondence needs to be regarded as a pivotal site of conducting trade in the Early Modern Period. Especially with regard to the business field of the commission trade this fact will become especially apparent in this chapter. It will become obvious how closely intertwined both processes, business practice and letter practice, were in actual mercantile practice.

As the explanations will show, commission trading was ultimately only possible and implementable through the skilful interplay and combination of both the mercantile activities on location, such as buying and selling of goods in French ports, and an effective letter-writing practice, which was responsible for all the coordination and negotiation tasks involved in the respective commission enterprise. Thus, with the help of letter practice the merchants gave instructions to each other with regard to the respective businesses on location; they supervised, controlled and monitored the purchasing, storing, the transport and the selling of these goods; and they also gave guidance and took decisions with regard to how to proceed further in the respective businesses, for instance with regard to settling the partners' accounts after the enterprise. As the letter episode will show in an exemplary fashion, it was therefore not uncommon but a typical business procedure in commission trade that several merchants were fulfilling several different tasks in several different cities at the same time as part of the business at hand, with the commission agent acting as the nerve centre, the string puller and coordinator of the whole business enterprise. In the letter episode we will encounter different merchants fulfilling different tasks and roles. We will encounter merchants as clients, as commission agents, as financiers, as advisers and consultants, and as the actual buyers in the French port. In fact, the buyer did not necessarily even have to be the commission agent himself, as he may have commissioned another merchant to buy on his behalf. We will furthermore encounter merchants as loaders and unloaders of the goods, as the ship-owners, as insurers and finally as the re-sellers of the goods.

In order to understand the significance of letter practice for commission trade and business in general, we simply have to imagine for once the sheer number of people who were involved in commission enterprises and imagine the efforts that were needed and necessary to coordinate and communicate among each other regarding the different actions involved in the enterprise that different people needed to perform. All this coordination, which was important for the successful implementation of the commission enterprise, was conducted primarily on the basis and by means of correspondence. Letters were therefore ultimately nothing less than the finetuning tools, the linchpin and mainstay of commission trade. For Luetkens, it was the primary tool on which he based his business in France and this fact applies not only to commission trade but also to many other mercantile fields of activity in which he was active during that time.[26]

For Luetkens' commission trade activities in France, however, as will be shown, writing letters was of particular importance because on the one hand it allowed him to work together and to establish contacts with many well-established merchant houses of the time in Europe, while on the other hand freeing him from the general need to meet all his trading partners personally for every trading transaction or joint enterprise they were conducting together. It was even not uncommon for him to approach and correspond with merchants or merchant houses or banking houses that he had never personally met before, but to which he still established contacts, often supported by and on the basis of letters of recommendation that were issued to him by other merchants, as a kind of seal of quality underpinning his trustworthiness.[27]

The advantage of not having to rely on face-to-face interaction, but on face-to-letter-interactions, clearly helped him to get a foot in the door of Atlantic merchant networks of the time. Luetkens nonetheless tried his best eventually to visit as many of his trading partners as possible at least once during his travels, which was in essence also one of the motivations behind his travels. Correspondingly, he tried to introduce himself and thus strengthen the relationship with his trading partners and correspondents by means of a personal visit. For his concrete trading activities, however, he relied heavily on his face-to-letter interactions, which represented the written continuation of the oral conversations the merchants conducted during their meetings in person. As the contemporaries called it, letters were used for the continuation of their conversations in the form of a "distant conversation" ["weit entfernten Gespräche"] in order to also ensure the "continuance of [...] friendship".[28] The latter point at the same time leads us to the next benefit of commission trade in combination with letter practice. Apart from allowing him to expand his network, letter practice was furthermore important for Luetkens' commission activities because it allowed him to stay mobile when conducting his businesses, while at the same time he was still able to pursue and conduct several concrete business ventures in various goods together with his merchant partners in different cities in France and beyond at the same time.[29] His letter practice served him as the command centre for his commission activities, with which he was able to establish a lucrative business in France and beyond, which in turn served him as his foothold for his establishment phase.

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26 See also Trivellato, "Merchants' letters," 81-84. See Trivellato, *The Familiarity of Strangers*, 153-176.

27 See inter alia *letters of recommendation*, TNA, HCA 30/232.

28 Letter from Bethmann, Simon Moritz to Luetkens Nicolaus Gottlieb, April 17, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/234. Letter from Bethmann, Simon Moritz to Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, March 3, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/234. See also Hunold, *Die Allerneueste Art Höflich und Galant zu Schreiben*, 53: "[D]en Mangel der mündlichen Unterredung durch schriftliche Correspondence ersetzen."

29 Regarding the importance of business trips for young merchants, see Ruppert, *Bürgerlicher Wandel*, 86-90. See also Weber, *Deutsche Kaufleute*, 187. Johann Jakob Bethmann's business journey (1744-1745) represents a good comparative example to Luetkens' travels, see Henninger, *Bethmann*, 129-134. See Butel, "La maison Schröder et Schyler." See also Weber, *Deutsche Kaufleute*, 187. Regarding the importance of mobility for Hamburg merchants, see Weber, *Deutsche Kaufleute*, 17, 21. See Butel, "La maison Schröder et Schyler."

Commission trade, on the basis and by the help of letter practice, laid the foundation for Luetkens' goal to become actively involved in the trading sector of France and also its Bourbon ally Spain, which formed the basis for his mercantile success in France. It also promoted and strengthened international cooperation and networking, allowing Luetkens to establish and uphold strong ties to France and Spain, but also to the Netherlands, England, Poland, Switzerland and of course to Hamburg, which served as the basis for his success. His activities as a commission agent subsequently laid the foundation for his future career and trading activities as an established merchant. Commission trade had allowed him to make a name for himself, to establish a good reputation within his business circle and, last but not least, to increase his capital stock, which once more served as a major building block for his career as a wholesale merchant, paving the way for his establishment. In short, commission trade was the crucial foundation on which he based and built his career as a wholesale merchant. Therefore, it was also a major means of enforcing his claim to become an established, respectable merchant of the Atlantic trade community, which is why dedicating a whole chapter to the business practice of commission trade is mandatory for this book.

There is, however, yet another overarching reason why writing a chapter on commission trade is not only necessary for this book, but also very helpful for understanding Luetkens' business portfolio during his establishment phase. This reason is that commission trade, as an umbrella category, encompassed, encapsulated and required various further different business operations as concomitant operations. These business operations can be regarded as crucial independent parts and skills of Luetkens' general business portfolio coming together in his commission trade. These included the general trade in commodities, but also commodity speculation. In the episode, for instance, we will see that Luetkens invested in Spanish Prize goods. Furthermore it included finance and insurance businesses, exchange businesses, the shipping industry and accounting procedures, which all came together and ran like clockwork to make the commission trade work. In short, by analysing Luetkens' commission trade activities, I am provided with a special focus and a workable analytical solution that allows me to demonstrate and subsume in a nutshell many of the business activities that Luetkens and his partners were engaged in during the time of Luetkens' establishment phase. In this way I am able to provide a representative cross-section of Luetkens' and his partners' business portfolios without the need to elaborate on each of these activities and analyse each of his numerous business endeavours individually, which would by far exceed the scope of this chapter and the book in general.[30] Last but not least, we have to direct our special focus and attention on commission trading because this commercial practice served as the ultimate core of his business activities during his establishment phase.[31]

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30 This assessment at the same time should imply that further in-depth analyses of his several business activities are most certainly not only possible but worthwhile and would be highly welcomed by the author. In the *Final Remarks* of this book, I am commenting on such further research opportunities that the Luetkens archive offers for further research e.g. for Economic History.

31 See also Hancock, *Citizens of the World*, 81. See Trivellato, *The Familiarity of Strangers*, 153-176. See as another good comparative example to Luetkens' case also Henninger, *Bethmann*, 102-134. See Butel, "La maison Schröder et Schyler."

The Entry Books of the Hamburg Admiralty and Convoy Duties, *Admiralitäts- und Convoygeld-Einnahmebüchern* of the Hamburg *Admiralitätskollegium*, stored at the *Staatsarchiv Hamburg*, the Hamburg State Archive, list all duties on imports to Hamburg from foreign ports during the 18th century, beginning in 1733. The name of the Hamburg merchant house "Luetkens & Engelhardt" is ubiquitous in these large leather-bound books speaking of the second half of the 18th century. These entries are not restricted to a short time span but appear over and over again in these books starting after the founding of the merchant house till the time when Luetkens became senator of the Free and Imperial city of Hamburg. The books provide a vivid and in fact impressive testimony of the role and influence that the Hamburg merchant house of Luetkens & Engelhardt had in the Hamburg sugar trade during the 18th century. In his renowned pioneering study on German Merchants in Atlantic trade, Klaus Weber listed the merchant house of Luetkens & Engelhardt already for the year 1753 as the third-largest sugar merchant in Hamburg, after the renowned Huguenot merchant firms of Pierre His and Pierre Boué in Hamburg, with a total turnover worth 272,900 Mark Banco.[32] Weber, however, nonetheless concluded that the Hamburg sugar trade was dominated and controlled by Huguenot merchants only, overlooking in his book the important role of Hamburg-born Nicolaus Gottlieb Luetkens for the Hamburg sugar trade during that time. In general, the merchant Luetkens remains a blank sheet in current research. The Entry Books of the Hamburg Admiralty and Convoy Duties provide us today, however, with hard evidence that the accomplishments of Luetkens' establishment phase, the network he built during that time and the business practices he had established during the 1740s laid the foundation for his prospering career and his later commercial success in Hamburg. The numbers show that the assiduous efforts the merchant undertook in 1744 and 1745 in order to make a name for himself and to establish a strong foothold in Atlantic trade bore fruit and paid off quickly after his settling down in Hamburg. His remarkable commercial success as an established merchant in Hamburg later in life, still primarily due to and based on the trade in colonial goods, especially French sugar, can be directly attributed and traced back to his early successes during his establishment phase when he prepared the ground, from which he got off to a flying start as soon as he opened the doors of his own merchant house in Hamburg together with his business partner Ehrenfried Engelhardt.

In the first part of this chapter, after this introduction, I will elaborate in detail on the characteristics, the trade structures and customs as well as the specific regional, social, juridical and religious conditions that Luetkens, as a foreign merchant residing and travelling in France, found in French trade. Luetkens and his trading partners in

32 Admiralty records of the Staatsarchiv Hamburg, Entry Books of the Hamburg Admiralty and Convoy Duties, *Admiralitaets Zoll und Convoy Einnahme. Staatsarchiv Hamburg*, Admiralitätskollegium, 371-2, F6, vol. 18 (De Anno 1753) and vol. 25 (De Anno 1769). See Weber, *Deutsche Kaufleute*, 248-250. Ulrich Pfister and Markus Denzel (among others) have worked intensively on these Admiralty records. See Pfister, "Hamburg's import trade." See Denzel, Markus A. "Der seewärtige Einfuhrhandel Hamburgs nach den Admiralitäts- und Convoygeld-Einnahmebüchern (1733–1798)." *Vierteljahrschrift für Sozial- und Wirtschaftsgeschichte* 102, no. 2 (2015): 131-160.

France and the rest of 18th-century Europe utilised these conditions for their trade activities and in many ways, though certainly not in all ways, they profited from them; structures and conditions, which these men at the same time also decisively created, shaped and sometimes altered through their own actions, but which they in any case perpetuated through their presence in France or through becoming actively involved in French trade.[33] The latter fact is also the reason why I will not only describe and contextualise these structures and conditions in general, but I will always try to link these conditions to Luetkens' concrete activities in France, including both his business and his travel activities, with which he reacted to and therefore also shaped the economic and social circumstances in France. Therefore, in this chapter, we will also get a more accurate picture of Luetkens' travels in France and of the goals he pursued with his travels and his business. Through this we will also learn about his and his trading partners' concrete approach and strategies to overcome the legislative hurdles and difficulties prevailing for foreign merchants in France.

It will become most apparent what significant role letters played within this process and for the performance of mercantile trading activities in general. As the historian Toby L. Ditz once aptly put it, every trading custom was primarily a product of practice, which was particularly shaped and maintained through "mercantile correspondence […] as a dynamic site where ongoing negotiations and arguments which produced and altered a remarkably labile 'custom'."[34] Correspondence was the fuel that kept the whole system running. The way the practice worked, how letters became effective tools of trading activity, will be presented in the chapter, followed by an exemplary illustration of this way of working on the basis of a concrete polyphonic letter conversation reconstructed from the Luetkens archive. Thus, in the second part I will present a letter episode that revolved around the purchase of a cargo of sugar that Luetkens purchased as commission agent with the help of several of his trading partners and correspondents. He then offered this sugar as commission goods to several of his trading partners, primarily to his Hamburg trading partners, the merchants Hertzer & von Bobartt. From this episode, the practices, structures and conditions of 18th-century French trade, shaping the trading activities of foreign merchants will become obvious, and furthermore we will learn about the subtleties of commission trade. We will learn about the loopholes that Luetkens and his partners used for their businesses, about the different trading operations and activities necessary for this undertaking, such as commission purchases, financial transactions, the consignment of merchandise, the chartering and re-exporting, and about the people involved in this kind of trade.[35] Last but not least, we will learn about the language register of business and trade during the 18th century and about common ways and means of negotiation and persuasion practices the historical protagonists used in the course of the trading procedures, which were mediated through and for which they used their letters.

After having learned about the typical ways and means of mercantile corresponding in business, that is, how business letters were typically written during that time, in

33 Regarding this interrelation, see also Ditz, "Formative Ventures," 64.

34 Ibid.

35 See furthermore Lamarchand/McWatters/Pineau-Defois. "The Current Account," 16.

the third part of the chapter we will be presented with an exemplary practical example of this letter style and practice from actual business practice in the form of a reconstructed letter conversation. This letter exchange will point us to the effectiveness of the letter style in practice. At the same time, both the general introduction to the mercantile business letter style but particularly the practical example will finally also present us with the first practical principle of persuasion that we encounter as a shaping element of 18th-century letter practice and business practice from the Luetkens archive. In this chapter, I present as the practical principal of persuasion governing the letters the principle of persuading through showing efficiency. Since the episode will also be informative about potential problems and setbacks that occurred during the course of such business transactions and the whole procedure of commission trade, however, I will also be able to present a second practical principle of persuasion that becomes apparent from the Luetkens letters. This practical principle came into force whenever the first principle was disturbed, that is, if any events occur that endangered the original plan or if something unexpected happened. In all of these instances Luetkens resorted to using drastic measures. Whenever problems occurred, the merchant wrote letters of complaint, indignation, warnings and rebuke. These letters allow us to derive the second practical principle of persuasion that becomes apparent from the Luetkens letters: the principle of the sledgehammer method.

Both the language of efficiency and the drastic language of complaint and indignation in these letters highly are what intrigued me in the first place while sorting and reading in the archive. The languages of pragmatic efficiency and of complaint represented my moment of surprise crucial for this chapter, in all their particular historical specificity and with regard to the systematic force standing behind them and to their effectiveness and significance for people's trading actions and strategies. These factors aroused my interest in these letters and subsequently served as my starting point for the thick description in this chapter.

4.3 A Commission Agent in France

In 1743, exactly during the time when Nicolaus Gottlieb Luetkens gained his first experiences in France and only one year before his second long business trip through France began, the French intendant Louis-Urbain-Aubert de Tourny, Intendant de Guyenne, was asked by the French Secretary of State of the Navy, Jean-Frédéric Phélypeaux, 1st Count of Maurepas, to produce a report about the Hanseatic trading community and the activities of Hanseatic merchants residing in Bordeaux, "au sujet des négociants hanséates de Bordeaux". In his letter to "le comte de Maurepas", Tourny reported the following observations:

> "Regarding their trade, faculties, character and behaviour ["facultés caractère et facon de se conduire"], I will have the honour of telling you on the first object that it consists, on the one hand, in sending to foreign countries both the aliments of the kingdom, such as wines, spirits, dried plums, syrups, salt, and the products of the French colonies such as sugar, indigo, coffee, cacao, cotton; on the other hand, in importing

> from foreign ports the goods or aliments which the kingdom might require, such as wood for construction or for casks, copper, iron etc. They all seem to be pursuing this trade […] only in commission; although there may be some who pursue it on their own account […] I have not had, according to the various intelligences which I have sought to collect […], but favourable testimonies to give you. They are considered people of probity, intelligent, and enjoy the confidence of the public ["gens de probité, intelligens, et ont la confiance du public"] which makes the credit of a merchant. As far as taxes are concerned, they are not treated differently from the French, and comparing the profit of their trade […] with their capitation and the tenth part duty of industry […] you will easily recognise that they are not overloaded with coin, their profit is often even a fourth or a third part smaller [than the profits of the French merchants]."[36]

Tourny's report provides us with an accurate description and summary of the status and the role that Hanseatic merchants played in French trade. It also presents us with the ways of commerce these merchants were mainly engaged in, actually not only speaking of Bordeaux in 1743, but speaking of the whole of France during mid-18th century. Among the Hanseatic merchants, Hamburg merchants occupied the leading position ahead of Bremen and Lübeck merchants. The report aptly depicts the three main pillars of Hanseatic trading activity in France during the 18th century. The three pillars at the same time present the three main reasons explaining the successful integration of these foreign merchants into the French economy, the Atlantic merchant community and market.[37] The latter is the reason why Tourny's report offers a valuable starting point for the following explanations of the factors having an impact on the Hanseatic trading activities in France. He provides the basic foundation for starting the thick description.

As Tourny described it, the basic features and characteristics of Hanseatic trade in France were, firstly, that Hanseatic merchants acted as commercial intermediaries in the trade with French colonial goods, which they re-exported, and French domestic goods they exported to their home ports or other crucial ports of North-European sales markets. In return, the merchants mainly imported construction goods to France.[38]

Secondly, in order to act as intermediaries they made use of commission trade, which, thirdly, earned them the respect of the French merchants, who held them in high regard and who allowed them access to their mercantile circles, which again facilitated

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36 Lettre de Tourny, intendant de la Généralité de Guienne, à M. le comte de Maurepas, ministre d´État, au sujet des négociants hanséates de Bordeaux. Arch. dép. de la Gironde, C. 4438. – Minute pap. s. date [fin 1743], de la main de Tourny, as found in: Leroux, Alfred. "Documents historiques concernant la colonie austro-allemande de Bordeaux." *Archives historiques du département de la Gironde* 51 (1916-1917): 258-257, here: No. XXX 1743, 270-271. In parts also quoted in Henninger, *Bethmann*, 112.

37 See Weber, *Deutsche Kaufleute*, 154-224. See Weber, "German Merchants." See Augeron/Even, *Les Étrangers*. See also Kellenbenz, Hermann. "Der deutsche Außenhandel gegen Ende des 18. Jahrhunderts." In *Die wirtschaftliche Situation in Deutschland und Österreich um die Wende vom 18. zum 19. Jahrhundert*, edited by Friedrich Lütge, 4-60. Stuttgart: Fischer, 1964.

38 See also Höfer, *Deutsch-französische Handelsbeziehungen*. See also Huhn, *Handelsverträge*.

their actions as intermediaries.[39] The three factors cannot be considered independently from each other but they worked together like clockwork. In the following explanations, I will present all three basic elements of Hanseatic trade activity and integration in more detail, focussing on the case of Hamburg merchants and particularly basing my explanations on Luetkens' activities and his commercial agenda. I will supplement Tourny's report with further information about the major strategies that Hamburg merchants used to successfully implement their basic trading approach. That is, as regards their intermediary role, I will highlight the importance of mobility for Hamburg merchants.

I will furthermore add and highlight the crucial strategy of Hamburg merchants to become involved in and integrated into Protestant merchant networks in France and Europe. These networks are today known in research under the term and concept of the Protestant International in research.[40] The Hamburg merchants under investigation in this book primarily addressed Huguenot merchants as trading partners in France. This followed a common pattern among merchant groups of the 18th century that has already often been observed by historians and that has been highlighted for several coreligionist networks. Apart from Protestants it has also been prominently researched for Jewish and Armenian merchants. The main argument as to the reason for such coreligionist networks has been put forward by Bosher, who concluded in his pioneer works that only "in a network of relatives and [...] fellow Protestants [...] did a merchant normally feel that his contracts and funds, ships and merchandise, were in good hands".[41] During the Early Modern Period, a shared religious affiliation between French Huguenots in France and in the diaspora, and the Reformist, mostly Calvinist merchants, and the Lutheran merchants from other parts of Europe served as a binding force and element that engendered mutual solidarity and created a foundation of trust, or rather a leap of faith that facilitated trade among them.[42] The Huguenot minority in France on the other hand also profited from the outside help of foreign Protestants for their own trading activities, which is why they opened their doors most often without hesitation

39 See Butel, "Les négociants allemands de Bordeaux." See Marzagalli, "Négoce et politique des étrangers." See Weber, *Deutsche Kaufleute*, 16, 21-22, 176-178, 190. See Weber, "German Merchants." See Leroux, Alfred. *La Colonie Germanique.*

40 Regarding the "Protestant International" in France, see Marzagalli, "Trade across religious boundaries". See Marzagalli, Silvia. "Commercer au-delà des frontières confessionnelles dans la France de l'époque moderne." In *L'économie des dévotions. Commerce, pratiques et objets de piété à l'époque moderne*, edited by Albrecht Burkardt, 347-373. Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2016. See the pioneer work by Lüthy, Herbert. *La Banque protestante en France et la révocation de l'édit de Nantes à la Révolution*, 2 vol. Paris: S.E.V.P.E.N., 1961. Regarding German merchants profiting from the Protestant International, see Weber, *Deutsche Kaufleute*, 304.

41 Bosher, John F. *Business and Religion in the Age of New France, 1600-1760*. Toronto: Canadian Scholar's Press 1994, 143. See Marzagalli, "Trade across religious boundaries," 172.

42 See Weber, Klaus. "La migration huguenote dans le contexte de l'économique atlantique: l'exemple de Hambourg." In *Hugenotten und deutsche Territorialstaaten. Immigrationspolitik und Integrationsprozesse / Les États allemands et les huguenots. Politique d'immigration et processus d'intégration*, edited by Guido Braun and Susanne Lachenicht. 125-136, Munich: Oldenbourg, 2007. See Bosher, "Huguenot Merchants."

to the Hamburg merchants and employed them as intermediaries.[43] As has to be noted in this regard, however, shared religious practice or worship played a rather marginal role in the establishment of these Protestant networks. The networking rather followed the pragmatic approach of forming partnerships of like-minded entrepreneurs with a common goal. The crucial building block of the networks was that "members of these networks had ampler possibilities of sanctioning opportunistic behaviour of kin and coreligionists."[44]

As regards the commission trade, I will elaborate further on the importance of a broad product portfolio and the importance of sufficient liquidity for commission agents, the latter of which was ensured through financing and banking businesses, which were both points that Tourny had already observed in his report, but which he did not describe in detail.[45] As a third element crucial for commission trade, added to Tourny's explanation, I will present letter practice as the ultimate linchpin and nerve centre of this entire business sector, which furthermore also leads over to the last point on Tourny's list. Last but not least, with regard to promoting mutual appreciation, I will highlight the importance of certain letter practices that were performed to win over and to ensure mutual respect among the merchants in the international community. These furthermore greatly helped to support and underpin the impression that Hamburg merchants were welcomed guests in France, or even more, why a Hamburg merchant like Luetkens residing in France for two years was in many ways already regarded as one of their own. As Tourny described it, merchants such as Luetkens enjoyed the "confidence of the public" and were therefore not much different to the French merchants.[46]

Consequently, I will present the importance of a shared European language register of business and trade as well as, on the other hand, the importance of the practice of choosing and writing in different languages (German, French, Dutch) in mercantile correspondence. Most often the French language was used by these men for writing standard business letters, that is, writing about general business purposes and for dispute resolution. German or Dutch were used for writing letters dealing with more personal matters, but also for business purposes depending on the respective correspondent.[47] Having identified and presented all these crucial factors and building blocks

43 See Mondot, Jean, Jean-Marie Valentin, and Jürgen Voss, eds. *Deutsche in Frankreich, Franzosen in Deutschland 1715–1789. Institutionelle Verbindungen, soziale Gruppen, Stätten des Austausches / Allemands en France, Français en Allemagne 1715–1789. Contacts institutionnels, groupes sociaux, lieux d'échanges* (Bei-hefte der Francia, 25). Sigmaringen: Thorbecke: 1992. Weber, Klaus. "Making Frenchmen Loyal Germans: Huguenots in Hamburg, 1685-1985." In *Enlarging European Memory: Migration Movements in Historical Perspective*, edited by Mareike König and Rainer Ohligers. 59-69. Stuttgart: Thorbecke, 2006.

44 See Marzagalli, "Trade across religious boundaries," 173.

45 See Doerflinger, Thomas M. "Commercial Specialization in Philadelphia's merchant Community, 1750–1791." *Business History Review* 57 (1983): 20-49. Regarding the benefits of a broad product portfolio as a commission agent, see Weber, *Deutsche Kaufleute*, 249. Regarding the "necessary funds to engage in foreign trade" and the importance of creating an "initial stake", see Hancock, *Citizens of the World*, 240-241. See also ibid., 124-125.

46 See *Lettre de Tourny* quoted above.

47 The same practice can be found, though in reverse order, in the case of the letters of Johann Jakob Bethmann analysed in Henninger, *Bethmann*, 81-82.

of Hamburg commercial activity and integration in France, we will have gained sufficient knowledge, the necessary thick contextual framework, to be able to understand the events happening in the letter episode. One final note regarding Tourny's observations, however, still needs to be made at this point. Naturally, Tourny concluded at the end of his report that the overall share that Hanseatic merchants held in the overall trading volume of Bordeaux was rather low. Any other information would have diametrically opposed the purpose of his report to his superior, which was to show that the Hanseatic merchants were no threat to the mercantilist policy of the French king and monarchy, which certainly was the most important piece of information that Maurepas wanted to hear. Undoubtedly, it is true that the overall share that Hanseatic merchants had in the French market during that time was comparably low in comparison to the trading activities of their Bourbon trading partners. This fact, however, does not imply or exclude the possibility that the foreign merchants still earned a great reputation and large sums of capital and profits through their businesses in France. Quite on the contrary, many Hanseatic merchants in fact made their fortunes in France during that time and used the trade opportunities in France as the foundation and the springboard for their careers as wholesale merchants.[48] One of these merchants was Nicolaus Gottlieb Luetkens.

Seizing Opportunities

The reasons why Hamburg merchants acted as commercial intermediaries within the French economy were twofold. First, foreign merchants were excluded from direct trade in colonial goods due to the *droit d' exclusive* or *l'exclusive*, the French mercantilist law that limited all trading activities with the colonies to French merchants only.[49] As pointedly summarized by Silvia Marzagalli, the core aspect of this crucial regulation and new law was that "foreign ships were excluded from colonial ports, and French exports to the colonies were exempted from all duties. Duties on French colonial imports were reduced from 5 percent to 3 percent. These decisions laid the basis of what was later labelled as the "exclusive system," a policy excluding foreigners from colonial trade and obliging colonies to trade exclusively with the ports and merchants of the mother country."[50] The *droit d' exclusive* was introduced in 1671 under Jean-Baptiste Colbert as chief minister of finance between 1665 and 1683 during the reign of Louis XIV and as part of the French mercantilist agenda.[51] In 1685, the *droit noir* followed, even banning all non-Catholics from the French colonies, which lead to expulsion.

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48 See Butel, "Les négociants allemands de Bordeaux." Many examples can also be found in Weber, *Deutsche Kaufleute*, 154-224.

49 See Weber, *Deutsche Kaufleute*, 56. Regarding the *Droit d'Exclusif* in detail, see Tarrade, *Le commerce colonial de la France*, 83-112. See Marzagalli, Silvia. "The French Atlantic World in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries." In *The Oxford Handbook of the Atlantic World, c. 1450-c1820*, 235-251. Oxford; Oxford University Press, 2011. See also Fontaine, Laurence. *L'économie morale: Pauvreté, crédit et confiance dans l'Europe préindustrielle*. Paris: Gallimard, 2008.

50 Marzagalli, Silvia. "The French Atlantic World," 184-185.

51 See ibid., 243.

These legal restrictions forced all foreign merchants to focus their trade on the re-export of colonial goods to the north-eastern markets and, as Tourny put on record, on the export of French domestic goods, particularly wine, to foreign countries as well as on the import of construction materials like timber or iron to France. The demand for the heavy materials was very high in France during that time due to the ongoing expansion of the French fleet and shipbuilding sector and also through the continual need for maintenance and repair work on the French fleet.[52] The latter, in turn, points us to the second reason why and how Hamburg merchants acted as intermediaries within the French trading sector. Thus, secondly, the Hanseatic merchants occupied the business sector of commission trade in the role of commercial intermediaries also because they were openly admitted to this role and welcomed with open arms by the French merchants and economy. The reason for this, however, goes beyond the mere fact that France was dependent on the import of construction goods. Rather, it was mainly due to the fact that with regard to French products in particular the French merchants found suitable and highly welcomed trading partners, customers and buyers of their goods in the Hamburg and foreign merchants. Thus helped them to balance the economic surplus in France and generate even more capital from a market that was already heavily saturated. As trading partners French und foreign merchants could generate capital in commission trade and the shipping industry that would have otherwise been forfeited. Consequently, the French state and economy allowed the foreign merchants to participate in the trade with French surplus and enabled the re-export to the north-eastern ports of Europe, the Baltic and to the hinterland and the inner European market.

Foreign merchants in France, with the Hamburg merchants at the forefront, in the end took care of more or less all the surplus in domestic and colonial goods that flooded the French markets during that time. The continuous very high demand for colonial consumer goods such as sugar, coffee or tobacco in the domestic markets of France during the Enlightenment was easily met by French merchants. Allowing foreign merchants to furthermore help with the re-distribution of their surplus goods to foreign markets therefore created even more trade opportunities and profits. In the end, France supplied large parts of all of Europe's consumer societies with the sought-after consumer goods during the age of Enlightenment. "Half of the sugar and most of the coffee shipped to Europe was produced in the French Caribbean and was redistributed to European and Mediterranean consumers through French ports."[53]

Foreign merchants in France helped to manage and profit from that saturation of the French market, held a decisive share in the continuing good economy of France and therefore strengthened France as one of the leading economic heavyweights of the 18th century.[54] The business sector of commission trade combined with the shipping industry, which provided the necessary logistic infrastructure for the re-export, turned

52 See Weber, *Deutsche Kaufleute*, 229.

53 Marzagalli, "Trade across religious boundaries," 169.

54 Regarding this surplus see Pourchasse, "French Trade," 19. See Pourchasse, *Le Commerce de Nord*, 267-289, 291-327. See Pourchasse, "L'immigration négociante," 317-332. See Butel, *L'Économie française*, 77-82. See Weber, *Deutsche Kaufleute*, 158.

the French surplus into good profit for all participants.[55] As another contemporary of Tourny and Luetkens, whose name is unfortunately unknown, aptly concluded, by taking this particular role and occupying this business sector, foreign merchants became indispensable parts of the French economy and likewise earned the respect of the French merchants. This fact prompted the unknown writer to the very accurate assessment that the foreign merchants in France were in the end "of immense value for our economy ["d'une utilité infinite pour le commerce"], it is certain that the economy would shrink without them, and who among our merchants could do the kinds of business that they are doing ["les memes affaires qu'ils fond"]?"[56] The latter assessment, in turn, aptly depicts the second reason and motivation behind the readiness of Hamburg merchants to become actively involved as intermediaries in French trade. Hamburg merchants definitely did not only occupy this business sector simply due to a lack of alternatives, but they engaged in it because they were called and they were needed and there was a clear demand for their involvement, which always serves as a good basis for success in business.

Privileges

A clear indication of the fact that the foreign merchants enjoyed this special status as welcomed guest in France was that the merchants found, apart from the exclusion from direct trade, often very favourable conditions for conducting business in France. They enjoyed certain privileges, which not only applied to Hanseatic merchants, but also to merchants from Switzerland, from the United Provinces of the Netherlands and the Holy Roman Empire. I concentrate on Hamburg merchants. By French commercial law and regulated through special peace and commercial treaties between the powers, foreign merchants from Hamburg were allowed to rent their own business facilities and warehouses in the French cities ["Niederlassungsfreiheit"].[57] Hamburg merchants were exempted from paying the Dixiéme ["Zehnt"]. For one year of residence, the merchants were furthermore exempted from paying further general taxes, like the capitation tax ["Kopfsteuer"], which they, however, had to start paying for the following years.[58] The Hamburg merchants in French ports were exempted from many customs duties or only had to pay very low duties on certain imports ranging between 3-3.5%. They also were exempted from special taxes such as the *Droit de tonneau*, "Faß-Geld" in German. The fact that the word "exempted" is omnipresent in the preceding paragraph underlines that the French economy and trade policies, against all premature expectations about mercantilist economy systems, put forward clear incentives for foreign merchants to trade in the ports of French Atlantic trade. "The need to boost the re-export of colonial goods made authorities [...] lenient toward the constant immigration from Protestants

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55 See ibid.

56 *Remarques sur l'état des Hanséates de Bordeaux, en 1711*, ADG, C 4473, quoted in Butel, Paul. "Le négoce international en France au XVIII siècle." In *Le négoce international: XIIIe-XXe siècle*, edited by François M. Crouzet, M., 140-152, Paris: Economica, 1989, here 140.

57 See Weber, *Deutsche Kaufleute*, 159-165; see Huhn, *Handelsverträge*, 34.

58 See Weber, *Deutsche Kaufleute*, 159-165; see Huhn, *Handelsverträge*, 34; see Wurm, *Neutralität*, 11-21. See also Stanziani, *Rules of Exchange*, 38-58.

from northern Europe to Bordeaux [and other French ports of Atlantic trade], where, by all counts, they integrated well into the local merchant community."[59] Even by law, the merchants therefore often became an integral and indispensable part of the French economy.

Another legal right and possibility to become actively involved in the French economy, granted to foreign merchants in France in general, was that they were allowed to open joint merchant houses, that is, establish private partnership firms in France together with a French merchant or with merchants from other neutral states, merchant "nations" as the contemporaries called it, who were already established in France.[60] Thus, foreign merchants were allowed to find a French, Swiss, German, Spanish or Dutch business partner in France and to establish a nationally mixed merchant house together, "gemischt-nationale Gesellschaft" in German. Since this practice was a clear incentive especially for merchants during their establishment phase, we will hear more about it in the chapter on Luetkens' search for a business partner for his merchant house. Particularly the latter opportunity of joint merchant houses was gladly taken up by foreign merchants who tried to get a foothold in French trade and to establish their business there. In the episode analysed in this chapter, we will find several such mixed merchant houses involved in the respective business enterprise, such as for instance the banking house Tourton, Baur & Comp. in Paris, the merchant house of Luttman & von Bobartt in Nantes, and the merchant house Bethmann & Imbert in Bordeaux. All of these were renowned merchant houses within French trade during that time, even though one of the partners was a foreign merchant now established in France.[61] The advantage of such merchant partnerships for both partners becomes apparent in view of the previous explanations. Both partners joined forces, shared capital and gained access to each other's trading networks, which allowed the French merchant to include re-export activities in his portfolio while the foreign trading partner found a solid basis for commission trade. Today, it would be called a win-win situation, which is also why this business model became very popular in the 18th century. Another characteristic that all of the mixed partner firms presented above shared, apart from their binational nature, and a characteristic that furthermore constituted a defining feature for all commercial networking activities that Hanseatic merchants conducted in France, leads us to the question of how the foreign merchants themselves reacted to the prevailing conditions in France and what concrete ways of their own they found to approach the particular situation in France: All merchants mentioned were of the Protestant denomination.

59 Marzagalli, "Trade across religious boundaries," 187.

60 The latter included merchants from other parts of the Holy Roman Empire, from the United Provinces, Spain or Switzerland. See Weber, *Deutsche Kaufleute*, 190. Regarding the general characteristics of such private partnership firms during the 18th century, see Hancock, *Citizens of the World*, 106.

61 Read more on these merchant houses in the further explanations.

4.4 The Protestant International

The most apparent pattern pursued by foreign merchants in France was that they deliberately joined forces, traded and associated particularly with merchants that shared their religious affiliation. This strategy is also represented in the step to establish nationally mixed, but mono-confessional partnership firms with French Huguenot merchants. In more general terms, too, networking with coreligionists was formative for many of the trading activities of foreign merchants in France. A shared religious affiliation served as a fundamental bond and connection between the foreign merchants and the merchants living in France and in many other parts of Europe. This meant for Hamburg merchants that as Protestants they traded, associated, and networked mainly with French, Dutch, Swiss or other German Protestants in France. They also traded with merchants from other religions, across cultures and confessions, where opportunity arose.[62] However, regarding the merchants represented in the Luetkens archive, almost their entire network consisted of Protestants in Europe.

The focus of the trade conducted by Luetkens in France rested on cooperation with coreligionists. The reason for this preference for a Protestant network "as most scholars insist [...] [was] that trust was generally greater within kindship and religious networks not [only] because of any inherent moral value attached to given ethnic or religious criteria, but because members of these networks had ampler possibilities of sanctioning opportunistic behavior of kin and coreligionists," as pointedly summarized by Silvia Marzagalli.[63] The author at the same time emphasizes her view that the main reason behind this mono-confessional networking in practice was that these "networks were largely shaped by kindship, and that for this reason, they were also largely composed of coreligionists."[64] The network was thus particularly based on pragmatic rather than only on religious grounds. The religious practice in fact often has to be seen as a rather subordinate cause. More important was the fact that the merchants all belonged to a shared and established community which led to a leap of faith towards each other. The faith, however, also had to be proved in practice. The same applied to family networks.

The Luetkens archive supports Marzagalli's standpoint as regards the actual purpose behind the Protestant networks. Although almost all merchants in the Luetkens network were Protestants, religious practice, religious topics or worship play only a marginal role in their letters and also within the reports of their daily businesses in the letters. This does not mean that they had no religious persuasion at all; it only means that it did not play a major role in their letters and it was not a topic that had a place in business conversations.[65] In fact, the only times religion plays role relates to as-

62 In her works, Silvia Marzagalli emphasizes the importance of a focus that allows it to include cross-religious cooperation of merchants of the time. Protestant Merchants did in fact also trade with Catholic trading partners. However, for the most part, Luetkens' activities and the activities of his network constituted virtually a textbook example of the functioning and the effects of the Protestant International.

63 Marzagalli, "Trade across religious boundaries," 172-173.

64 Ibid., 174.

65 "Religion did matter, but not equally in all circumstances of life or in different kinds of business." Ibid., 180.

sessing other merchants' reliability and trustability, which however again referred less to religion per se but to the religious networks the merchants were a part of. At the same time however the effects and consequences of the networking among the Protestant merchants in the Luetkens archive are undeniable and are clearly reflected in both letter and business practices. All previously mentioned merchant houses featuring in the Luetkens archive were without exception partnerships between Protestants. To be more precise, they represent merchant houses of Lutheran merchants, Swiss or Dutch Calvinist merchants, associating with French Huguenot merchants, who were members of the Reformed Church of France, Église Réformée de France.[66] Looking at many of Luetkens' correspondents and trading partners, as they are represented in his letter bundles and listed in his pocketbook of correspondents, we can confirm that Nicolaus Gottlieb Luetkens' business primarily rested on the collaboration with Protestant merchants not only in France but also in the rest of Europe. We find, apart from the French Huguenots, also exiled French Huguenots living in Switzerland, Swiss Calvinists and Dutch Calvinists, Lutherans in Hamburg, Bremen and Frankfurt, his uncle in London, and in one case even a Quaker, namely the house of John Furly in Amsterdam.[67] Since Luetkens' correspondents participated in similar networks, which they extended through their own trading partners and correspondents, it can be generally stated that this pattern had a huge influence and was a shaping element of the trading activities of the foreign merchants in France.

This particular pattern is today commonly known as a concept called the *Protestant International*, describing the supranational diaspora community of European Protestants during the Early Modern Period. The Protestant International refers to the networks, association and the solidarity community of Protestants across national borders, residing in and coming from different Protestant countries, Protestant cities or living as minorities in Catholic-ruled countries such as France.[68]

These merchants interacted in a kind of "imagined community", a "cosmopolite diaspora" of Protestants.[69] As Marianne Wokeck put it "the Huguenot diaspora needs to

66 See Lachenicht, *Hugenotten in Europa und Nordamerika*, 14. Regarding the etymology of this term see ibid.

67 On Furly, see Bailyn, Bernard. "The Challenge of Modern Historiography." *American Historical Review* 87 (1982): 1-24, here 16-17. For Quakers, see Sahle, Esther. *Quakers in the British Atlantic World, c.1660-1800*. Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2021.

68 The term and concept were first introduced by Bosher and Lüthy. See Lüthy, *La Banque protestante*, vii-ix, 32. See Bosher, "Huguenot Merchants," 77-102, 77. See Lambert, David E. *The Protestant International and the Huguenot Migration to Virginia*. Bruxelles: Peter Lang, 2010, 9-10. For a good introduction regarding the Protestant International concerning France and its merchants, see Marzagalli, "Trade across religious boundaries." See also Marzagalli, "Commercer au-delà des frontières confessionnelles." For a good introduction to the Huguenot diaspora in a comparative perspective, see Lachenicht, *Hugenotten in Europa und Nordamerika*, "Einleitung," 11-44. For Huguenots in Britain, see Gwynn, Robin. "The Huguenots in Britain, the ›Protestant International‹ and the defeat of Louis XIV." In *From Strangers to Citizens. The Integration of Immigrant Communities in Britain, Ireland and Colonial America 1550-1750*, edited by Randolph Vigne, Charles Littleton, 412-424. Portland, Ore.: Sussex Academic Press and The Huguenot Society of Great Britain and Ireland, 2001.

69 Onnekink, David. "Models of an imagined community. Huguenot Discourse on Identity and Foreign Policy." In *The Huguenots: History and Memory in Transnational Context: Essays in Honour and Me-*

be conceptualized – not as a mere dispersion – but as layers of superimposed networks that cut across local and national boundaries."[70] For the Protestants living in France during the 18th century and the Huguenots in exile, that is, the "France protestante à l'Étranger", the Protestant International was vital not only for their trading activities, but in fact often even for survival and, speaking of the Protestants in France, it was vital with regard to their residency status.[71] The Huguenots, or "Français réformés" as the French Calvinists called themselves, represented a small minority in France during the 18th century. Catholicism was prevailing as the state religion.[72] The latter was the reason why Huguenots had been suffering from mass expulsion, persecution and exclusion since the 17th century. As the reason and legal justification for this persecution served the revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685, which formerly had allowed Protestants in France freedom of worship, but whose revocation forced hundreds of thousands of French Calvinists, approximately more than 400,000 in total, to flee and emigrate from France to avoid having to convert to Catholicism.[73] Protestants staying in

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mory of Walter C. Utt, edited by David J.B. Trim, 193-216. Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2011, here 198. The concept of "Imagined Communities" was first introduced by Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. London/New York: Verso, 2006 [first published by Verso 1983]. See as regards most current research approaches on diasporas also Freist, Dagmar, and Susanne Lachenicht, eds., *Connecting Worlds and People: Early Modern Diasporas*. London/New York: Taylor & Francis, 2016. See also Lachenicht, *Hugenotten in Europa und Nordamerika*.

70 Wokeck, Marianne S. *Trade in Strangers: The Beginnings of Mass Migration to North America*. University Park, Pa.: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1999, xxii.

71 François, Étienne. "La mémoire huguenote dans le pays du Refuge." In *Die Hugenotten und das Refuge. Deutschland und Europa*, edited by Frédéric Hartweg and Stefi Jersch-Wenzel, 233-239. Berlin: Colloquium Verlag, 1990, here 235. See Lachenicht, Susanne. "Huguenot Immigrants and the Formation of National Identities." *The Historical Journal* 50, no. 2 (2007): 309-331. See Marzagalli, "Trade across religious boundaries"; see Weber, "La migration huguenote."

72 The term Huguenots was originally introduced and used until the 19th century with a pejorative connotation by the Catholics. See Lachenicht, *Hugenotten in Europa und Nordamerika*, 14. See Grey, Janet G. "The origin of the word Huguenot." *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 14, no. 3 (1983): 249-359. Today the term has a positive connotation and is commonly used in research.

73 See for a good general overview Lotz-Heumann, Ute. "Confessional Migration of the Reformed: The Huguenots." *Europäische Geschichte Online (EGO)*, edited by the Leibniz-Institut für Europäische Geschichte (IEG), Mayence 2012. http://www.ieg-ego.eu/lotzheumannu-2012-en, accessed June 04, 2019. See also Lachenicht, Susanne. "The Huguenots' maritime networks, sixteenth-eighteenth centuries." In *Connecting Worlds and People: Early Modern Diasporas*, edited by Dagmar Freist and Susanne Lachenicht, 31-44. London/New York: Taylor & Francis, 2016, here particularly 32-34. See already Scoville, Warren C. *The Persecution of Huguenots and French Economic development 1680-1720*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1960. See also Van Ruymbeke, Bertrand. "Minority Survival. The Huguenot Paradigm in France and the Diaspora." in *Memory and Identity: The Huguenots in France and the Atlantic Diaspora*, edited by Bertrand van Ruymbeke and Randy J. Sparks, 1-25. Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2003. See Nash, R. C. "Huguenot Merchants and the Development of South Carolina's Slave-Plantation and Atlantic Trading Economy, 1680–1775." In *Memory and Identity: The Huguenots in France and the Atlantic Diaspora*, edited by Bertrand van Ruymbeke and Randy J. Sparks, 208-241. Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2003, here 217-218. See Mentzer, Raymond A., and Bertrand Van Ruymbeke, "Introduction." In *A Companion to the Huguenots*, edited by Raymond A. Mentzer and Bertrand Van Ruymbeke, 1-16. Leiden/Boston: Brill 2016.

France became "nouveaux catholiques", which, however, did not prevent many French Protestants from continuing to practise their Protestant belief in secret.[74] The most common practice among French merchants from Protestant families emigrating from France was that "in most instances, at least one family member converted to Catholicism (if only nominally) and remained in France, thus protecting his family estate and business' interests."[75] The Protestant International in the rest of Europe on the other hand "lent cohesion to the Refuge".[76] Yet, the highly remarkable fact remains that a hard core of Huguenots still decided to stay in France despite the circumstances. Many others returned to France after the conditions started to improve again slightly at the beginning of the 18th century, inter alia due to the effects of the Enlightenment.[77]

In the Luetkens archive, the group of remaining Huguenots in France is omnipresent. In general, however, it is more difficult to give precise figures for the total number of Huguenots living in France during the first half of the 18th century. Marzagalli noted that "there are no good sources to estimate their numbers in the century following the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, but by the 1780s there were as many Protestants in Nantes as a century earlier, and they were predominantly involved in trade."[78]

A third group of Protestants that we find living, trading or travelling France in the 18th century, who immigrated even after the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, are the foreign merchants with Protestant backgrounds, whose influx to France continued unabated during the beginning of the 18th century and despite the adverse circumstances.[79] All three groups ensured the survival of Protestantism in Catholic France during the 17th and 18th century.[80] Until the year 1787, when Huguenots were officially given back the right of religious worship in France by an edict of toleration by Louis XVI and therefore also regained official status and civil rights as residents of France, the Protestants in France experienced, as Wolfgang Henniger aptly put it, a "time of simple survival without an organisational juridical framework".[81] They were strictly forbidden

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74 As "crypto-Huguenots, who, until the Toleration Act of 1787, had to hide their religious persuasion". Marzagalli, "Trade across religious boundaries," 188.

75 Marzagalli, "Trade across religious boundaries," 186.

76 Wokeck, *Trade in Strangers*, xxii.

77 See Horn, Jeff. *Economic Development in Early Modern France: The Privilege of Liberty, 1650–1820*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015, 185-186. See Henninger, *Bethmann*, 158-160. See already Leroux, Alfred. *Les Religionnaires de Bordeaux de 1685 à 1802*. Bordeaux: Feret & Fils, 1920, 21, 116, 121-125, 234.

78 See Krumenacker, Yves. "Les minorités protestantes dans le grandes villes francaises de l'epoque moderne." *Analele Universitatii Bucuresti* (2008): 101-114. See Marzagalli, "Trade across religious boundaries,"186.

79 See Weber, "German Merchants"; "Atlantic Coast of German Trade."; Butel, "Le négoce international"; "Les négociants allemands de Bordeaux."; Marzagalli, "Négoce et politique des étrangers." See in general Augeron/Even, *Les Étrangers*.

80 See also Krumenacker, Yves. "Des Négociants Protestants dans la France Catholique." In *Commerce, Voyage et Experiénce Religieuse XVIe-XVIIIe Siècle*, edited by Albrecht Burkardt, Gilles Bertrand, Yves Krumenacker, 303-312. Rennes: Presses universaires de Rennes, 2007.

81 Henninger, *Bethmann*, 158-160. Johann Jakob Bethmann and his Protestant identity furthermore serve as a good comparative example to the case of Luetkens. See ibid.

to practice their religion, to have their own church services, to hold baptisms, funerals or weddings. In fact, all Protestant marriages conducted in France were deemed irregular and therefore not recognized as legitimate by French officials, which will become relevant in the chapter on Luetkens' marriage.[82] In the end, the Huguenots and all other Protestants living in France during that time were forced to live a life of religious abstinence and, if at all, sufferance in France. This was why the Protestant International and its networks were ultimately the last stronghold and resource for cohesion for Protestants merchants in France but also the general reason why Protestantism persisted in France during the first half of the 18th century.

The justified question why the remaining Protestants were nonetheless tolerated in France during that time reveals how the Protestant International in the end worked for the merchants and why it enabled them to ensure their survival in France. The reason they were tolerated was that the Protestant merchant houses still represented a very strong economic power in France.[83] They "were tolerated as sources of financial capital and foreign ships" and because of their links with "relatives and partners in Holland and England", and in the Hanseatic cities.[84] Consequently, their residence was tolerated because they formed important pillars of the French economy contributing to the French fiscal system. The latter fact also explains the heavy financial loss that had resulted beforehand from the revocation of the Edict of Nantes for the French state, which led to the expulsion of hundreds of thousands of Huguenots, many of whom had been important economic actors.[85] The remaining or returning Huguenots of France of the 18th century represented only a small fraction of the overall Protestant financial power that had shaped France beforehand, but at least this small group of remaining and returning Protestants was deemed as worthy of sufferance by the French crown because of their economic power.

It is an astonishing fact that ultimately the revocation of the Edict of Nantes and the massive expulsion of Huguenots from France in the long run actually increased the economic strength of the remaining or returning Protestants in France, including the foreign merchants, during the first half of the 18th century, because due to the expulsion the Protestants subsequently formed the strong diaspora network that drove the success of their international trading activities. The French Huguenot merchants who emigrated found shelter and lived their lives dispersed throughout many different countries and cities in Europe and overseas. These merchants, however, did not break off or give up their contacts in France or Europe and they also continued trading by drawing on a huge network of their fellow countrymen in many other countries, thus gaining access to many different sales markets.[86] Both the merchants in France as well as the Huguenot merchants abroad formed a diaspora that allowed them rich and extensive

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82 See Weber, *Deutsche Kaufleute*, 177.

83 See Horn, Jeff. *Economic Development in Early Modern France*, 185-186. See Scoville, *The Persecution of Huguenots*.

84 Bosher, *Business and Religion*, 133.

85 See Marzagalli, "Trade across religious boundaries," 185.

86 See Henninger, *Bethmann*, 158-160. See Marzagalli, "Trade across religious boundaries," 170. See Bosher, "Huguenot Merchants," 93-94. See Lotz-Heumann, "Confessional Migration." See Lachenicht, "The Huguenots' maritime networks." See in general also Truxes, Thomas M. "Trading Dia-

trading opportunities in Europe and overseas, which served as the basis and reason for the commercial success of both groups.[87] In short, since the French Protestants were left to their own devices and often got no support from the French state, instead suffering expulsion or marginalisation, the Protestants made a virtue of necessity and helped each other out, worked together and formed an imagined community across borders in order to survive and make a living in France as well as abroad. The foundation of their trading activities therefore lay in their putting religious affiliation before nationality, and this was the reason why this group not only survived in France but also regained economic strength and went on to become one of the most powerful economic powers of the 18th century.[88]

"For the average Huguenot merchant of that time, religion was stronger than nationality, and he was usually ready to link his fate with American, Dutch, English, or any other Protestant merchant" – this was how the Protestant International worked and how it shaped the economic activities of both domestic French merchants as well as the activities of the Protestant merchants from other countries immigrating, living, travelling or working in France during the first half of the 18th century.[89] It is therefore no surprise that we find references to religious affiliations of certain merchants in mercantile letters, in court records or in letters of recommendation exchanged among Protestant merchants during that time. The Nantes merchant house of Ochs & Schweighauser, originally from Switzerland, were for instance referred to in a letter and in the same breath as "Protestants and one of the best merchant houses", merchants are introduced as "Hamburgers and Protestants" or it is reasoned that "no one will take offence that the merchant is a Calvinist".[90]

The reference to the Protestant faith served as a marker and at the same time as the badge of membership within the Protestant International. Of course, the merchants themselves did not use the analytical term themselves, yet they stuck to the principle behind it, referring to each other and expressing their confidence in each other by recommending each other and identifying each other as "Protestants" ["Protestanten"], "Lutherans" ["Lutheran"] or "Calvinists" ["Calvines"].[91] It thus becomes apparent that in-

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sporas." In *Princeton Companion to Atlantic History*, edited by Joseph C. Miller, 456–62. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2015.

87 See Cullen, Louis M. "The Huguenots from the Perspective of the Merchant Networks of Western Europe (1680–1720): The Example of the Brandy Trade." In *The Huguenots and Ireland Anatomy of an Emigration*, edited by C. Edric. J. Caldicott, Hugh Gough and Jean-Paul Pittion, 129-150. Dun Laoghaire: Glendale Press, 1987.

88 See Krumenacker, Yves. "Des Négociants Protestants."

89 Bosher, "Huguenot Merchants," 93. As regards the importance of Protestant banking firms, see also Lüthy, *La Banque protestante.*

90 "Ochs & Schweighauser à Nantes So Protestanten und eines der besten Contoren." Letter from Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb to Engelhardt, Ehrenfried, March 8 1745, TNA, HCA 30/232, Letter Book I, no. 584. "ein Hamburger und Protestant." Letter from Luetkens, Anthony to Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, May 3, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/235. "das er ein Calvines solches wird E.E. wohl so wenig als uns anstößig sein." Letter from Hertzer & von Bobartt to Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, September 14, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/234. "he is of the Lutheran Religion" Examinations of Rieweert Frerecks, captain of the *Hope*, taken at Deal, 24 and 26 August 1745, TNA, HCA 32/115/14.

91 Ibid.

terreligious differences between the different Protestant denominations played a rather subordinate role in comparison to the general precondition of the collaboration of sharing the same Protestant persuasion. References to Catholics or "Jesuits" on the other hand served exactly the opposite purpose in the letters, which was to set boundaries and to set oneself apart from Catholic merchants.[92] The Protestant International, thus, fostered solidarity among the merchant and therefore became highly important for the merchants' livelihoods.[93]

A rather practical effect and manifestation of the Protestant International highly relevant for Luetkens and his travels was that any foreign Protestant merchant travelling in France was welcomed in the houses of the French Huguenot community or mixed merchant houses. These houses represented the first points of call in a city for a merchant during his travels. At these houses, the travelling merchant found shelter and was offered a place to stay or to work during his travels. The local merchant houses often even allowed their guests to use their warehouses for conducting their own businesses or they conducted certain commission businesses together.[94] Last but not least, a typical custom prevailing within the Protestant International was to send each other's sons as apprentices or as merchant clerks to other Protestant merchant houses abroad.[95] By all these means, the Protestant merchants in France and abroad were able to form an exclusive and effective enclave, which allowed them to conduct a lucrative business that at the same time secured their future and subsistence in France. The consequences and advantages for both groups, for the local Huguenots as well as for the foreign Protestant merchants in France, were obvious and ingeniously simple. For the French Huguenot merchants, the Protestant International ensured their survival because it was the basis providing them with economic and financial powers. For the foreign merchants travelling France, the Protestant International allowed them to set foot into the French market and to establish firm contacts with French companies and it provided them with manifold trading opportunities. Put in a nutshell, the shared religious affiliation among the merchants represented in this book was the necessary cement that helped these merchants to conduct and maintain their business activities in France and beyond. It was the backbone of their trading activities.[96]

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92 Luetkens for instance emphasized to the merchant Ochs that he will never "become a Jesuit", Bethmann even used the word "Jesuit" in an insulting manner, referring to a "dubious Jesuitical spirit", "niemahl ein Jesuite gewesen werde auch keiner werden." Letter from Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb to Ochs & Schweighauser, December 8, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/232, Letter Book I, no. 419. "denn ich mit Jesuitischen & zweydeutigen Menschen nicht liebe zu thun haben." Letter from Bethmann, Johann Jakob to Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, November 12, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/234.

93 See also Cullen, "Merchant Networks."

94 This common practice will become obvious from the case of Nicolaus Gottlieb Luetkens. See also Ruppert, *Bürgerlicher Wandel*, 86-94. See Butel, "La maison Schröder et Schyler."

95 This custom was typical for the entire Early Modern Period and furthermore not limited to France. See Ditz, "Shipwrecked," 63.
See Schulte Beerbühl, *German Merchants*, 88. See Häberlein/Künast/ Schwanke, *Endorfer*.

96 See Weber, *Deutsche Kaufleute*, 304.

The case of the merchant Nicolaus Gottlieb Luetkens confirms all elements and characteristics of the Protestant International. In fact, his example is an impressive testimony of the Protestant International. We learn from his list of correspondents and respective background searches that his network of correspondents in France as well as in many other European countries, in cities such as Hamburg, Bremen, Frankfurt, Gdansk, Basel, Strasbourg, Amsterdam, London, St. Sebastian or Bilbao, mainly consisted of Protestant merchants. He traded with French Huguenot merchants in France and within the European Huguenot diaspora, as well as with Lutheran, Calvinist or Zwinglian merchants. These merchants established strong ties with him, as Mark S. Granovetter described it, on which he could build his network and success upon.[97] The shared network notwithstanding, it still needs to be stressed that the networks naturally were not immune to conflicts from the outside nor from within themselves. Yet, for such situations they found certain coping mechanisms and effective strategies within their community which will be shown and demonstrated in the analysis. Certain disputes and conflicts amongst these men in fact only occurred because the suspicion was raised that a merchant would break with the shared set of values of the Protestant community, which therefore led the others to question his entitlement to be a part of the group.

If we now take a concrete look at Luetkens' travel stations in France, the characteristics of the Protestant International will become very tangible. We will learn about Luetkens' actual travel itinerary and the purposes underpinning his travels. This part introduces us at the same time to yet another crucial feature and precondition of Hanseatic trade participation in France, which was mobility.

4.5 The Travel Route

Luetkens was highly mobile in France. He visited many cities and met more than a hundred trading partners and correspondents during the two years of his business trip. His route and itinerary notably reflect the effects of the Protestant International and they show a very clear mercantile plan and agenda behind it. In order to recreate his route, I drew on two kinds of sources and information. First, I consulted the letters, or more precisely the address lines written on the outside of the folded letters, letter packets or letter wrappers in the archive. As was common practice during the Early Modern Period, the address lines of business letters often mentioned the respective places and the merchant houses where Luetkens was staying at that particular moment in time. During that time, mail was usually collected paid for by the recipients at the local post offices at regular intervals. Merchants would at the same time use these occasions on

97 Regarding the analysis of strong and weak ties, see Granovetter, Mark S. "The Strength of Weak Ties." *American Journal of Sociology* 78, no. 4 (1973): 1360-1380, here 1378. See Granovetter, Mark S. "Economic Action and Social Structure: The Problem of Embeddedness." *American Journal of Sociology* 91, no. 3 (1985): 481–510. See Freist, Dagmar. "Uneasy Trust Relations and Cross-Cultural Encounters on Trial – Migrants in Early Modern Europe." In *Agents of Transculturation: Border-Crossers, Mediators, Go-Betweens*, edited by Sebastian Jobs and Gesa Mackenthun, 63-84. Münster: Waxmann, 2013, here 70-72. See Greif, *Path to the Modern Economy.*

the regular postal days for sending off correspondence. All incoming mail of a respective merchant house was stored together and picked up together at the post offices, which underlines the importance of mentioning merchant houses as part of the addresses of the letters, particularly those addressed to travelling merchants. The efficiency of the postal services in France and beyond is demonstrated in the Luetkens archive by the simple fact that large proportions of the business letters actually sent actually reached Luetkens at his destinations. By combining the address lines with the dates mentioned in the letter, the dates of dispatch and arrival of these letters – usually mentioned in the upper right-hand corner of the letter text of 18th-century letters – and Luetkens' little despatch notes on the outer side of the folded letter, it is possible to reconstruct every travel station of Luetkens business trip between 1743-1745. The other source of information subsequently helped to confirm this detailed travel route. The second source I consulted was a report of one of Luetkens' later bookkeeper, Ludolph Jochim Köster, who testified before court in the case of the ship *Hope*.[98] Both sources of information for the most part are congruent, which is why the following map represents a rather accurate image of Luetkens travels in France. Taking a look at his route, at the cities and merchant houses he visited provides us with a precise picture of how Luetkens organised his travels, but in particular it also gives us clear hints as to what agenda the Hamburg merchant pursued with his travels.[99]

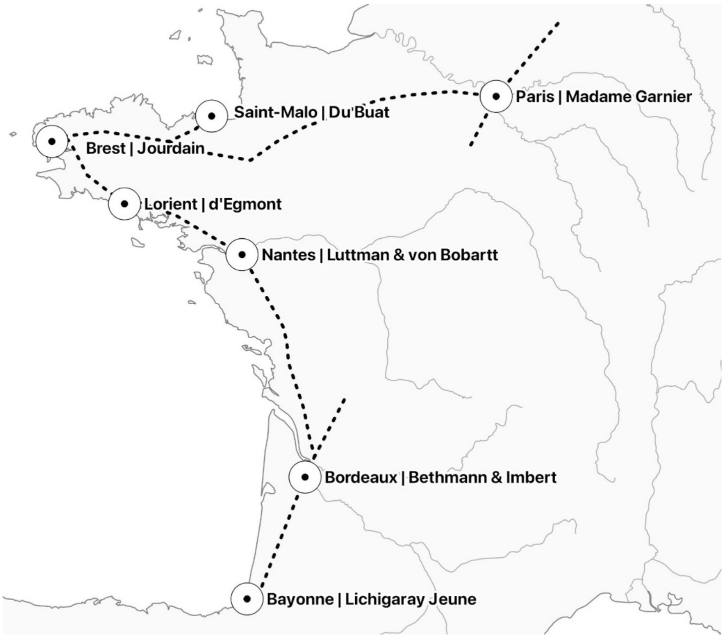
Luetkens apparently pursued a very thought-out plan with his travels. Particularly through the visual representation, the logic behind his travelling unfolds. During the two years that he stayed in France from the end of 1743 until the end of 1745, he travelled all the way along the French Atlantic coastline from South to North and along the way visited all the major ports of French Atlantic trade: Bordeaux, Bayonne, Nantes, Lorient, Brest, St. Malo, and Brest, before finally returning to Hamburg by land, with a last intermediate stop in Paris, the banking metropolis. In each of the cities, he visited one particular established merchant house, where he found a place to stay and to work for several weeks or months. As my enquiries revealed, all of these merchant houses were without exception Huguenot or Protestant merchant houses. The house of Bethmann & Imbert was a mixed company of a Huguenot and Lutheran merchant. Thimothée Lichigaray Jeune was a Huguenot, as were François Jourdain and Jean Du Buat. Pieter Luttman & Elart von Bobartt were a mixed company of a Lutheran and a Calvinist merchant. Elart's brother Christopher, in turn, lived in Hamburg and formed, together with Jobst Henning Hertzer, the Hamburg merchant house Hertzer & von Bobartt. Jean Jacques d'Egmont was a "natif d'Ostende en Flandre", which means he was also a Calvinist.[100]

98 Examination and attestation of Ludolph Jochim Köster, "a Bookkeeper in several Compting houses of this City", as part of *Additional Hearings and Attestations*, TNA, HCA 32/115/14.

99 For comparison, see Van der Wal, *Heusch Letters*, 23-27.

100 Regarding Bethmann & Imbert, see Henninger, *Bethmann*, 155-164. See also Klemenčič, Matjaž, and Mary N. Harris, eds. *European Migrants, Diasporas and Indigenous Ethnic Minorities*. Pisa: Plus-University Press, 2009, 24. See Zellfelder, Friedrich. *Das Kundennetz des Bankhauses Gebrüder Bethmann (1738–1816)*. Stuttgart: Steiner, 1994. Regarding d'Egmont, Jourdain and Jean Du Buat, see Department de Finistére. *Inventaire-sommaire des Archives départementales antérieures à 1790. Morbihan:*

Figure 9: The travel route of Nicolaus Gottlieb Luetkens in France reconstructed on the basis of Luetkens' letters and the attestation of Ludolph Jochim Köster.



Source: Map created with QGIS, made with Natural Earth.

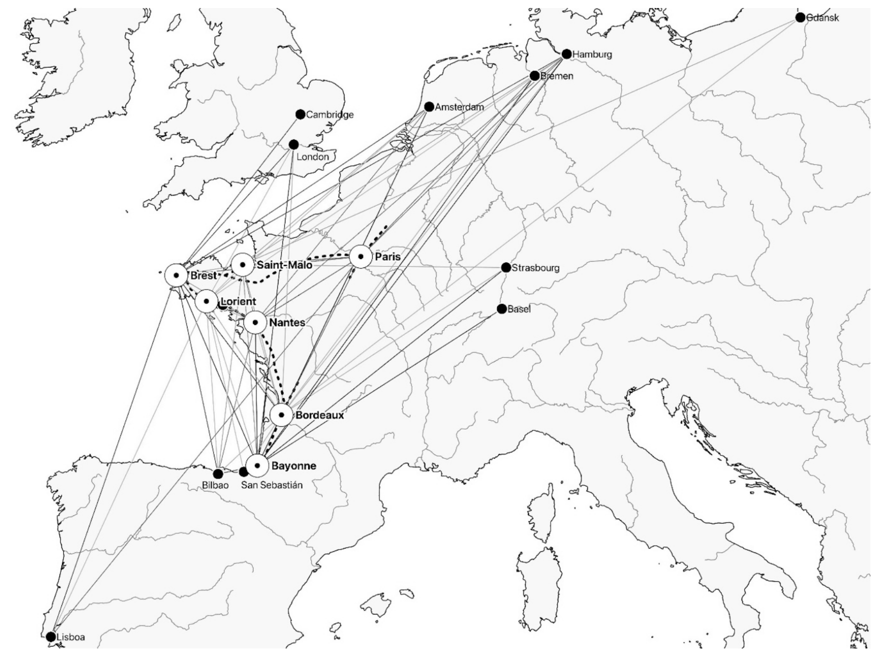
Luetkens' choice of places to address himself to therefore perfectly complies with the pattern of the Protestant International. In all these merchant houses, Luetkens worked as a commission agent, meaning that he conducted trade in his own name, but he particularly also traded in the name of the respective merchant houses where he stayed during that time. That way, his stay in these merchant houses did not only serve his own good, but was also advantageous for his merchant hosts, who would win a capable co-worker for their own business. It must also be stressed that during the time that he lived and worked in these houses he still kept in contact with all his other trading partners and correspondents, whom he actively involved in his commission trading activities and whom he brought into contact with his current hosts. He stayed flexible. Whenever he left the respective merchant houses after a certain period and travelled on to the next destination, he furthermore did not cut off his contact and trading activities with these merchant houses but kept them involved in all his future activities.

This way, Luetkens was able to gradually, little by little, intensify and solidify his business, expand and strengthen his network and expand his partner and customer basis. In short, he was able to expand his circle of correspondents and trading partners and expand his catchment area for his business while at the same time consolidating

Série E. Paris: Dupont, 1881. Regarding Hertzer & von Bobartt see Baasch, *Geschichte von Hamburgs Handel*, 76. See also Lüthy, *La Banque protestante*, and Garrioch, *The Huguenots of Paris*.

his existing contacts and tightening his relationships with them, to establish close contacts and strong ties with them. This was the ultimate purpose behind his travel route and itinerary. Finally adding the respective correspondence networks to the map, covering his main correspondents out of more than 60 merchant houses represented in the Luetkens archive, we eventually arrive not only at a very comprehensive picture of Luetkens travels and communication channels, but also of his networking strategy and how it paid off in the end.[101] During and by means of his travels the merchant was able to build up a dense network of trading partners and correspondents in France and Europe that was furthermore closely interlinked with his hometown of Hamburg and many other important trading towns and cities of Europe.

Figure 10: Nicolaus Gottlieb Luetkens' network of main correspondents and trading partners.



Source: Map created with QGIS, made with Natural Earth

When asked about the ultimate reason behind Nicolaus Gottlieb Luetkens' travels in France, the court witnesses questioned in the case of the captured ship the *Hope* later stated for the record that Luetkens travelled "on account of his trade [...] into France, from one place to another, to pay a visit to his friends & correspondents there", as was testified by Alexander Arnold Lambrecht, an inhabitant and merchant of Hamburg,

101 Find Nicolaus Gottlieb Luetkens' entire network of merchant correspondents and family members as represented in the letters of the Luetkens archive in the detailed catalogue entry in TNA Discovery, which I have compiled together with Amanda Bevan in 2017: https://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/details/r/C4249188-C4249192.

who was questioned for the reason that he "was likewise at this time in France".[102] Another witness, Daniel Richter Junior, who was questioned because he was "engaged in a compting house in Nantes" during the same time, which qualified him as a witness, stated in rather similar wording that Luetkens was "on his travells in France to see his ffriends & correspondents there on account of his trading affairs in one or other towns of trade".[103] These testimonies served the purpose of giving the High Court of Admiralty the impression that Luetkens' business trip in France in some ways had only been a flying visit. In any case, they play down Luetkens' strong interconnectedness and integration into the French market as best possible. As the illustration reveals, the testimonies only represented half the truth. Looking at the map, we understand that Luetkens' trip through France was surely not a mere flying visit but rather served the concrete purpose of establishing strong connections with France and its merchants and to establish a firm footing in the French market. By means of his travels and through his mobility as a travelling merchant and a commission merchant, he was able to integrate himself fully into the French market and its networks. He was able to gain a reputation in France and to establish a strong basis of contacts and trading opportunities there. This way, his travels created the most crucial foundation and foothold for promoting and finally for concluding his establishment phase after his stay in France.

As a matter of fact, he did know many of the persons he met, traded and corresponded with in France in the years 1743-1745 already beforehand. He had met some of them during his previous travels or had known them for months or years by corresponding with them, even dating back to his service as a clerk in the house of David Speelmeyer. Yet some others he met for the first time during his travels, like Ochs & Schweighauser, a Protestant, Swiss-German merchant house, with whom Luetkens established a long and lucrative trading partnership.[104] The merchant Ochs, originally from Basel, who is known in Switzerland till today, in fact became one of Luetkens' frequent travel companions in France and the two of them kept in intensive contact even after Luetkens' return to Hamburg, which once more shows the way of working and the importance of the Protestant International. Surely quite characteristic in this regard is Ochs' response letter to Luetkens after the latter had informed him about the upcoming opening of his own merchant house in Hamburg. Ochs wrote that he was "glad to hear about your ultimate decision to settle down in Hamburg ["de vous finer à Hambourg"]. We wish you good luck with your house. We will be delighted to conduct a continuing correspondence with you ["cultive avec vous une correspondance suivie"]."[105]

No matter whether it was a new connection that he established or a long lasting relationship that was revived, the approach that Luetkens chose to cement the trading partnership and friendship with his partners in France in the end was the same. He

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102 Examination and attestation of Alexander Arnold Lambrecht, "an Inhabitant & merchant", as part of the *Additional Hearings and Attestations*, TNA, HCA 32/115/14.

103 Examination and attestation of Daniel Richter Junior, "in inhabitant & subject of this city", as part of the *Additional Hearings and Attestations*, TNA, HCA 32/115/14.

104 See Burghartz, Susanna, and Madeleine Herren. *Building Paradise. A Basel Manor House and its Residents in a Global Perspective*. Basel: Christoph Merian Verlag, 2021, i.a. 51, 134.

105 Letter from Ochs & Schweighauser to Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, January 28, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/235.

used his travels in France to at least once pay his partners a personal visit in order to apply to them personally and to put a face to the name. Either, as was common practice, he went there for an evening dinner, including conversation and drinking with each other, or he spent several weeks in their houses to work with them. Both activities served the same purpose. He went there to consolidate the contact, to pledge allegiance to each other, and to create and foster lasting ties of business cooperation or even friendship. After the personal meeting, the partners returned to corresponding, in order to, as the contemporaries framed it, "compensate for the lack of the possibility of oral conversations by means of the written conversation".[106] It becomes apparent how Luetkens' travel activities and his letter exchanges formed a well-functioning system that brought him and ensured him the favour and benevolence of his trading partners and correspondents, which was crucial for all his trading activities during his establishment phase and still for the time later.

The fact that Luetkens apparently limited his contacts and his main trading partners per city to only one or two trading houses was last but not least also no coincidence but served exactly the same purpose. First, of course, as seen from a pragmatic point of view, this approach improved the clarity of his business transactions. Secondly and more importantly, however, it also followed a clear agenda. By limiting his business contacts and relationships in France to one or two merchant houses per city, he at the same granted these merchant houses a monopoly position within his own commercial network for his trade in this city, which was a strong display of trust. That is, for almost all trade that he for instance conducted in Bordeaux or for all enterprises involving Bordeaux goods, he worked together with the merchant house of Bethmann & Imbert, and the same applies for all the other merchant houses mentioned above in their respective places of residence. In this manner, he once more gained the favour of these merchant houses, who themselves returned the favour by serving him as loyal partners, involving him in many enterprises and regarding him as a firm and reliable trading partner. We are once more presented with a win-win situation for both parties, which fostered the relationship and further strengthened their sense of community.

The benefits for his partners resulting from Luetkens' presence in France were that they profited from additional manpower in their business during the time that he was living in their houses, while afterwards Luetkens still continued to be a reliable partner, procuring them with many further trading opportunities. As a commission agent, and particularly as a travelling commission agent, Luetkens furthermore represented, for the entire period of his travels and still after his return to Hamburg, a valuable contact person as a commercial intermediary for the further distribution, the re-export of their own goods to other French ports or, particularly importantly, to the Northern German and the Baltic trading markets.

For Luetkens himself, the benefits of this approach were equally obvious. He was given the opportunity and was welcomed to live and work in the French Huguenot and Protestant merchant houses established in France. Furthermore, he became actively integrated into their business and networks by means of joint trading activities and correspondence. Through these arrangements he gained indirect or sometimes even

106 Hunold, *Die Allerneueste Art Höflich und Galant zu Schreiben*, 53.

direct access to the French market and was thus able to establish a firm foothold for his trade in France.

As Klaus Weber aptly summarised this point, himself focusing on Bordeaux merchants, Luetkens' nationality, as a representative of Hamburg merchants, was in this regard "no obstacle. Quite on the contrary, the international broadening of his personal and family relationships [led to and] was a necessity for overcoming the mercantilist trade barriers that otherwise would have completely excluded [him] [...] from the trade with the colonies [i.e. the direct trade in colonial goods]. The Huguenots in [France] [...] facilitated the social integration of the mostly Protestant German merchants."[107] Also with regard to Luetkens' travels, it therefore becomes obvious how important the Protestant International was for him, for his travels and for his career. At the same time, it becomes clear how crucial the aspect of mobility was for his personal advancement in France and vice versa for fulfilling his role as an intermediary for his French partners. His mobility as a commission agent on travel turned him into a very attractive trading partner for the French and the other European partners, and this became a crucial asset for Luetkens' establishment phase.

A last clear benefit of his travel activity in France was that his travels helped him to establish a broad product portfolio for his business. This benefit is directly interlinked with the concrete practice of commission trade, which is why I can use it as a perfect anchor point to explain in more detail the peculiarities of this field of trade in the next section of this chapter.

4.6 A Broad Product Range and Specialization in Sugar

During the years 1744 and 1745, the merchant Nicolaus Gottlieb Luetkens traded in a great variety of different goods, domestic French goods such as wine as well as colonial goods like sugar, coffee or tobacco and even including colonial goods from the other colonial powers, for instance found on prize ships. Luetkens met with a lot of different people and called at a lot of different ports and cities during his travels, which all presented him with manifold business opportunities in various goods. The longer he travelled the longer the list of his product portfolio got.[108] It stands out that he nonetheless had certain preferences with regard to the main commodity groups he traded per port and city. Consequently, when visiting or trading with Bordeaux or Nantes he mainly traded in sugar and wine, whereas in St. Malo he traded in Indigo, and in the southern ports he mainly wound up the purchases of his ships. More generally though, it can be stated that Luetkens did not limit his business activities in a city or with a certain

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107 "Im Gegenteil, die internationale Ausweitung persönlicher und familiärer Beziehungen war eine Notwendigkeit zur Überwindung der merkantilistischen Handelsbarrieren, die deutsche Kaufleute andernfalls vom Handel mit den Kolonien ausgeschlossen hätten. Hugenotten in Bordeaux erleichterten die soziale Integration der größtenteils protestantischen Deutschen." Weber, *Deutsche Kaufleute*, 304. See also Pourchasse, "L'immigration négociante."

108 Regarding the benefits of a broad product portfolio as a commission agent, see ibid., 249. See Henninger, *Bethmann*, 112-134.
See Butel, "La maison Schröder et Schyler."

business house to just one commodity. On the other hand, and this went hand in hand with the aforementioned fact, his broad product portfolio was also a result and an intrinsic characteristic of the main branch of trade apart from shipping industry that he conducted in France, which was commission trade.

As a commission agent he was as per his job assignment not bound to one customer in particular and not limited to one main group of commission goods in particular. Instead, he could decide on the basis of supply and demand and according to the order situation, which enterprise he wanted to invest in.[109] This freedom of choice, in turn, had the direct advantage that he could react immediately and thus take the chance whenever a trading opportunity showed up or when he was pointed to a particular trading opportunity by his trading partners. Trading as a commission agent also entailed that, whenever the workload allowed it, he could conduct and take care of several commission enterprises at the same time. The only fundamental condition and requirement that Luetkens had to fulfil was to make sure that he executed his orders properly and correctly and procured lucrative business enterprises for his customers. In short, he was bound to acting in the interest of his customers, which, if done right, furthermore strengthened his good reputation in the field. As Francesca Trivellato, who has worked extensively on the Early Modern Jewish merchant diasporas and particularly their commission trade activities, aptly summarised the tasks of a commission agent as follows: "a reputable agent was one who seized the best available market opportunities for his commissioner and served him loyally; he knew when and what to buy and sell, what ships to freight in order to minimize the risks of war and piracy, and what exchange rates were most favourable at any given moment."[110]

A commission agent's main goal and basically his raison d'être in business was therefore to procure good deals and enterprises for his customers and, since he was not limited to one product group in particular, he could offer his service with regard to any kind of goods or enterprise and with regard to every market opportunity that occurred and that he or his customers considered worthy of an investment. Furthermore, since he received orders from several different customers at the same time, Luetkens' product portfolio grew substantially and showed considerable variety and size. The range of different goods that Nicolaus Gottlieb Luetkens traded in during his time in France is in this regard exemplary and at the same time still intriguing. He traded in all different kinds of sugar, white, brown, Martinique, Saint-Domingue, or Prize sugars, as well as in coffee, tobacco, tea, rice, indigo, cochenille, cotton, furs, and even in ivory, all of which represent the commodity group of colonial goods.[111] As regards French domestic products, he traded in and thus took commission orders for all kinds of wine, brandy, and cognac, but he also traded in honey, wax and doeskin. The goods that he imported to France were those for which there was a high demand there, such as staple goods like wheat or building materials. This included wood for ships as well as "flustersteine",

109 See Hancock, *Citizens of the World*, 81. See Trivellato, *The Familiarity of Strangers*, 153-176. See from a contemporary perspective Savary, *Der vollkommene Kauff- und Handelsmann [Le Parfait Négociant]*, "anderer Theil" [second part of the same book], 184-190.

110 Trivellato, *The Familiarity of Strangers*, 153.

111 Regarding these goods, see also Weber, *Deutsche Kaufleute*, 21.

paving stones. Importing heavy goods and re-exporting colonial goods, we can imagine the high margin of profit that resulted from these enterprises. For the sake of completeness, we should also add the Mediterranean goods in his product portfolio, about which we will hear in greater detail in the next chapter. The Mediterranean goods for which he took commission included for instance spices and valuable fabrics.

In view of this broad product range which Luetkens traded in during his stay in France, the relevance of the business branch of commission trade for making a living in France as a foreign merchant becomes apparent. By means of commission trade Nicolaus Gottlieb Luetkens was able to pick up and grasp any business opportunity, which he regarded as potentially lucrative and that came his way or was offered to him during his travels. The latter did not only ensure his subsistence in France but also served as another cornerstone for his career advancement. At the same time, he got to know and became familiar with the peculiarities of trade in a lot of different goods and could therefore literally test and find out which category of goods best suited him and his needs, which competence the contemporaries, too, regarded as highly important. As for instance Defoe emphasized, it was necessary for commission agents to "gain a good judgment in [many] wares and goods." [112] In the course of his travels through France, while trading in different goods, the trade in and re-distribution of sugars eventually became Luetkens' main field of activity. Towards the end of his travels in France and his establishment phase in 1745, we can clearly notice that the commission trade in French sugars represented his prime field of activity. This professional specialisation created the basis for his rise to the position of one of the city's leading sugar merchants back in Hamburg during the time after his establishment phase.

The episode analysed in this chapter will present one of the many enterprises in Luetkens' sugar trade that paved the way into this specialisation. The example will also show, apart from the insights into the functioning of commission trade, the reason why particularly the trade in sugar represented a profitable business field for Hanseatic merchants in this business sector. As a third point, concomitant to that, it will demonstrate yet another loophole for German traders to participate in French trade. They also invested in Prize goods and Prize ships, which had been captured by French privateers. This was a business that particularly young aspiring merchants often became heavily engaged in during the early stages of their career because it provided a "substantial source of business profit".[113] On the whole, the episode will give us a good, detailed impression and at the same time an overview of how merchants like Luetkens became beneficiaries of the market opportunities of wholesale trade during the 18th century.

Sugars and Prize Goods

Luetkens mainly traded in sugar. To explain and expand on the lucrativeness of the sugar trade, it helps if we take a closer look at the particular kinds of sugar that he traded in. Not only in the episode analysed but speaking of Luetkens' activities in general, it becomes evident that Luetkens often, though not exclusively, re-exported raw,

112 See Defoe, *Complete English Tradesman*, 9.

113 Hancock, *Citizens of the World*, 244.

unrefined or partly processed sugars coming from the French colonies in the Caribbean or from the British colonies overseas once they had arrived on French mainland. He mainly traded in French brown sugars, which were called by the contemporaries and in price currents of the time *St. Domingue* or *Martinique* sugars or British *Jamaican* or *Barbados*.[114] The transport of unrefined sugars was much easier to handle for the merchants, because the filling of unrefined sugars into wooden casks was easier, more practicable and space saving, and therefore also more lucrative. Since the refining process of these sugars then took place in the sugar refineries in Hamburg, which processed the raw sugars into the finished goods of white sugar, the merchant simultaneously supported and boosted the domestic home economy and home industry.[115] So, Luetkens' trade was also highly beneficial for Hamburg and its industry. Luetkens, however, also traded in already refined French sugars, white sugars or "powdered sugar", which he re-exported to Hamburg. In the episode analysed, however, Luetkens traded in "Muscovado" sugars, called "sucre muscovado" in French and "Moscovies" in Dutch, sometimes also referred to as "English Barbados" sugars, because they came from Barbados. Muscovado sugar was unrefined or partly processed cane sugar with a strong molasses content, in French called *sucre de canne complet, non raffiné*. It had a moist texture and a rich dark brown colour, which is why it was often also simply referred to as brown sugar by the contemporaries, although it differs from our modern definition of brown sugar as this term today often refers to rock candy.[116]

The sugars were shipped and imported to Europe where, in the local sugar refineries, "further processing would produce pure white sugar. The muscovado sugar was first boiled with water and refined to remove the impurities. This hot sugar syrup was then poured into moulds and left to drain and crystallise. The moulds were cone-shaped, and the pure white sugar that came out was known as a loaf".[117] It was common practice, nationally subsidized and legally secured, that only French merchants imported French sugars coming from the French colonies. These sugars should then be processed in French refineries. The same procedure was used by merchants of the other colonial powers.[118] In practice, however, re-exports of raw sugars to Hamburg were also a frequent occurrence. Furthermore, by means of privateering, merchants also came into possession of sugars originating from the other colonial powers, as in the present

114 See Stein, *French Sugar Business*, 107. See Weber, *Deutsche Kaufleute*, 55-56, 160.

115 See Petersson, *Zuckersiedergewerbe und Zuckerhandel*, 41-59. See Weber, *Deutsche Kaufleute*, 227. See in particular Weber, "Atlantic Coast of German Trade."

116 See Fraginals, Manuel M. *The Sugarmill. The Socioeconomic Complex of Sugar in Cuba 1760-1860*. New York/London: Monthly Review Press, 2008, 119-122. See Galloway, Jock H. *The Sugar Cane Industry: An Historical Geography from Its Origins to 1914*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005, 108. See Ebert, *Brazilian Sugar*, 39-60.

117 Discovering Bristol. An online history of the port and its people. "Bristol and Transatlantic Slavery-Luxuries from abroad – Plantation sugar", http://www.discoveringbristol.org.uk/slavery/routes/america-to-bristol/luxuries-from-abroad/plantation-sugar, accessed June 16, 2019. Regarding sugar plantations, see Dunn, Richard S. *Sugar and Slaves. The Rise of the Planter Class in the English West Indies, 1624-1713*. New York: The Norton Library, 1973. See in general Mintz, *Sweetness and Power*.

118 See inter alia Jones, Donald. *Bristol's Sugar Trade and Refining Industry*. Bristol: Bristol Branch of the Historical Association, 1996. See also Morgan, *Bright-Meyler papers*, "Introduction," 110-151.

case of the episode analysed. The Muscovado sugars Luetkens traded in as a commission agent in this episode was formerly English-owned, coming from a British colony, but they changed over into Spanish and French hands. Eventually, they ended up in Luetkens' hands after the ship on which it was loaded was captured by a Spanish privateer during its voyage and brought into the French harbour of Brest. Luetkens bought these sugars at the Spanish Prize Court in St. Sebastian, repacked and loaded them onto one of his own Hamburg ships in Brest, and then re-exported them to Hamburg, which shows how allegedly neutral merchants got access to and profited from the contemporary circumstances.[119]

Sending this unrefined brown sugar to Hamburg, the underlying trade strategy was to outsource the further processing of this sugar from France to Hamburg, which generated further profits for Luetkens. Not only was it cheaper to draw on Hamburg refineries but in doing so the Hamburg merchants also actively strengthened the Hamburg's own domestic proto-industry, which yearned for the imported sugars from France.[120] The demand for refined sugars in the Hamburg consumer market and its surrounding areas was very high, which serves as the reason why we find a lot of sugar refineries on the banks of the river Elbe during the 18th and still in the 19th century. The refined sugar was then furthermore also exported to the German inland. As research has shown in this regard, the cooperation and mutual support between the Hamburg wholesale merchants and the sugar refineries, the "Zuckerbäckers", the sugar confectioners, as they were called in the 18th century Hamburg, was one of the important foundation stones for the success of the proto-industrialisation in Hamburg and beyond, which furthermore brought the merchants in France and Hamburg great profits.[121]

At the same time, this trading approach and practice ultimately also represented in certain ways a clear infiltration of the mercantilist policies of the French state, whose general politics and policies in fact aimed at the exact opposite. Originally, the French state and mercantilist system strived to limit all exports to manufactured goods. Due to the economic surplus in France and the saturation of the market, particularly with regard to colonial goods, the re-exporting activities of Hanseatic merchants were, however, explicitly approved by the French authorities because they resulted in additional revenues for the French state. The latter fact particularly held true for all those kinds of goods that represented in an actual sense a bonus as regards the total of French imports during that time. This brings us to the second point and particularity of Hanseatic trade participation in the re-distribution sector of colonial goods.[122]

As becomes apparent from Luetkens' trading activities in general, and also in the episode presented, one of the significant resources and opportunities for gaining access to sugars, and many other colonial goods in fact, was purchasing and trading in French Prize goods. Like Britain, France and Spain operated a fleet of privateers during the Early Modern Period, which seized enemy ships. After condemnation of these

119 See Weber, *Deutsche Kaufleute*, 227, 277, 302.

120 See ibid. See Petersson, *Zuckersiedergewerbe und Zuckerhandel*, 41-59.

121 See ibid, in particular Weber, *Deutsche Kaufleute*, 277.

122 See Pourchasse, "French Trade," 19; see Pourchasse, *Le Commerce de Nord*, 267-289, 291-327. See Butel, *L'Économie française*, 77-82; see Weber, *Deutsche Kaufleute*, 158.

ships as legitimate Prizes in France, at the French Admiralty Court in Vannes for instance or in Spain at the Spanish Admiralty Court in St. Sebastian, the ships as well as goods were put for auction.[123] Foreign merchants trading in France and Spain were admitted at these auctions, which is why they often became heavily involved. In order to avoid customs duties, particularly the *ferme generale*, which could arise with regard to Prize goods, the foreign merchants still stuck to commission trade when investing and speculating in these goods. Luetkens bought Prize ships and he invested in Prize goods coming from Spanish and French privateering. When the British officials investigating the case of the allegedly neutral Hamburg ship the *Hope* later found out about this fact, they were not only not amused, but it also provided them with further proof of Luetkens' deep involvement in the French economy. Particularly revealing must have been the fact that the ship *Hope* itself had once sailed under British colours and had originally been an English ship, the *L'Upton*, which had been captured by a Spanish privateer and purchased by one of Luetkens' middlemen at an auction in Vannes. We still find the advert announcing the sale of this ship in the Luetkens archive.[124] Apart from such setbacks as the capture of the *Hope*, the investment and speculation in Prize goods represented a good source of income for Luetkens. Such enterprises promised relatively easy access to colonial goods and good profits at the same time, which is why in general, as David Hancock pointed out, it was for good reason a popular field of activity especially among ambitious younger merchants, who would also not shy away from the risks involved in it.[125] In essence, every auction and every speculation in such Prize goods in the end always represented a game of chance, which fact will also become obvious from the episode analysed. Put figuratively, conducting these enterprises, bidding and investing in Prize goods, the merchants always in many respects bought a pig in a poke, which meant they could not be sure that the goods they purchased actually met their expectations.

The challenges and risks prevailing with regard to investing in Prize goods were in this regard rather similar and comparable to the challenges and the overall risks generally prevailing in the commission trade. Luetkens in the end had to trust in the word of the seller or of his advisors and consultants in the respective ports, whenever he decided not to travel to the ports himself. In general it can be said that apart from the clear benefits of having a wide product portfolio as a commission agent, this portfolio at the same time presented the merchants with the challenge that they had to be experts and have good product knowledge about a lot of different goods in order to conduct a

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123 Regarding French privateering, see Marzagalli, Silvia. "French Privateering," 41-65. See also Buti/Hrodej, *Histoire des pirates et des corsaires;* see Barazzutti, "La guerre de course." See Aumont, Michel. *Destins et aventures corsaires. En mer! Sus à l'ennemi.* Nonant: Orep, 2012. See Hillmann, Henning. *The Corsairs of Saint-Malo. Network Organization of a Merchant Elite Under the Ancien Régime.* New York : Columbia University Press, 2021. See Villiers, *Marine royale.*

124 See the printed advertisements for the sale of the prize ship L'Upton of London and its cargo, at Port Louis 5 August 1744 [bought by Luetkens in Vannes] in TNA, HCA 20/232. See in general chapter 1 and the court papers in TNA, HCA 32/115/14. "Captured ship: *Die Hoffnung* of Hamburg, otherwise *L'Ésperance*, *De Hoop*, or *The Hope* (previously the English *L'Upton* or *Upton*, taken as prize and sold in France)."

125 See Hancock, *Citizens of the World*, 244.

lucrative business. With regard to many product groups within his portfolio, especially with regard to colonial goods, Luetkens developed the necessary skills and acquired the necessary product knowledge in the course of time. Yet, he often needed to draw and rely on further advisors or local merchants of his acquaintance when purchasing goods. This could be either due to physical distance, when he was not able to assess goods himself, or due to the fact that other merchants had greater knowledge about these goods. In the episode analysed, both reasons apply. In the episode, Luetkens invested in English Prize sugars offered at an auction in St. Sebastian, which was loaded on a ship lying at anchor in of Brest after it had been captured by a Spanish privateer in the waters off the coast of Brest.

Sugar represented one of Luetkens' core competence areas. However, he was neither able to travel to St. Sebastian nor to Brest during that time in order to assess these goods himself, since he was residing in Bordeaux at that time. He therefore approached and drew on his trading partners in St. Sebastian, the merchants and brothers Darragory, who assisted him with the purchase of the sugars at the auction. He also drew on Elart von Bobartt, his Nantes trading partner from the merchant house of Luttman & von Bobartt, whom he asked to travel to Brest to act as his consultant and to examine and assess the goods for him. Elart was well trained in the evaluation of English and French sugars since his own merchant house often invested in such goods. So, Elart was presumably a good choice as an advisor and Luetkens trusted in his word and assessments. As the episode will show, even Elart was, however, not immune to the risks of evaluating Prize goods. In his assessment of the goods, Elart was not entirely correct, which led to certain problems. But in the end the whole enterprise still brought the involved parties good profit.

Apart from the promising market opportunities in the sugar trade and in Prize goods and apart from the benefits of a wide product range covered with commission activities in general, commission trade held ready two more advantages especially for merchants during their establishment phase, which I will once more explain in detail in the next part, because they are fundamentally important for the understanding of the letter episode under investigation. These benefits of commission trade can be pointed out and summarized by help of two contemporary quotes from popular merchant encyclopaedias and manuals. The first quote relates to the benefits of the cashless payment system forming the backbone of commission trade and enabling young merchants to do extensive business. The second quote relates to the fact that commission trade allowed merchants to conduct their trade without the need to be physically present at the respective trading place. Instead, they could delegate the necessary operations to their respective partners on site. In practice, in turn, both benefits went hand in hand because both were based on, underpinned by and facilitated through the same fundamental communication tool: letters, which is why the next part represents at the same time the preliminary canter to the third and last part of this chapter's contextualisation. In the last section of my contextualisation I will present the details of the practice of writing business letters as a means of ensuring and promoting mutual appreciation among the Protestant merchants of France.

4.7 Financing in Commission Enterprises

The first quote is taken from the Krünitz encyclopaedia. In the article on commission trade in this encyclopaedia, commission trade was highlighted as an attractive business field for young merchants with the following words: "Commission business is of great advantage for young and aspiring merchants, particularly for those who only have sparse capital. Apart from the advantage that such business creates a good reputation, it also provides a solid basis for credit, which a merchant needs to have: So, a young merchant fills his newly opened business house, his store rooms and depots with commission goods as if they were his own. He must not [is not allowed to] invest his own capital in these goods, but earns his money through a provision fee of 2 or more per cent, and he pays his principal the sales proceeds from these goods bit by bit."[126]

The second quote stems from the most popular merchant manual of the Early Modern Period, Jacques Savary's *Le parfait negociant*, which stated that through the help and "by means of commission trade, merchants and bankers are enabled to trade with the whole world, with regard to purchasing as well as selling goods, with regard to drafting, accepting or remitting bills of exchange, and they could trade with one place or the other without ever leaving their compting houses."[127]

Both quotes give us a clear account of the important role that commission agents played during the Early Modern Period in general. They also reveal to us the concrete form in which the agent conducted his trade. A commission agent was commissioned by his customers to act and trade in goods in their name, for which the latter at the same time provided the necessary funds in the form of a credit, making use of the finance instruments of the cashless payment system. For the customer this held the benefit that he was not forced to travel to the respective ports to do the purchase and procurement himself, but he acted and traded from his desk at home in his trading house. For the commission agent, in turn, to a certain extent the same benefit applied. Most of the time he visited the ports and merchant houses where he inspected and bought the goods. However, not even he was forced to travel to all trading places himself, instead drawing on his middlemen and contact persons on site.

The benefits for the commission agent with regard to the financing and funding of his enterprises were furthermore that he was not reliant only on his own funds to conduct his trade, but he could rely on the provision of funds and financing resources from external sources. For the procurement of the necessary funds, he was not even limited to relying and drawing on his customer as the lender of capital, but he also approached and involved other merchant houses or private banking houses, private banks, from his business network in his financing activities to back up his enterprises. This means that in order to take care of the necessary liquidity for conducting the respective commission

126 "Commissions=Handlung." *Oekonomische Encyklopädie*, edited by Johann Georg Krünitz. 242 volumes. Berlin, 1773-1858, vol. 8, 253. Translation by the author.

127 "Dann vermittelst [der] Kommissionäre können die Kauffleute und Banquierer durch die gantze Welt so wohl in Ein- und Verkauff der Wahren als in Tratten und Remessen von einem Ort zum anderen handeln und dürffen nicht einmahl aus ihren Gewölbern oder Schreibstuben gehen." Savary, *Der vollkommene Kauff- und Handelsmann* [*Le Parfait Négociant*], 162, see also 175.

enterprises he could draw on various contacts. In fact, the latter was common practice and an essential component of the system of cashless payments by means of bills of exchange.[128] In most financing operations of the period, several participants were involved, who interacted with each other by means of mutually allocating sufficient resources to each other in order to provide and ensure each other's financial security and ensure the continuation of their businesses.[129]

Both factors – the benefits of acting independently of your current location and the benefit of being provided with the necessary funds by means of the contemporary credit system and the cashless payment system – represented indispensable preconditions and major building blocks of a successful career as a commission agent and were particularly helpful for aspiring young commission agents building their career as wholesale merchants. Taken together with the important aspect of mobility during one's years of establishment, it becomes obvious how very flexible, versatile and adaptable the room for manoeuvre and the entrepreneurial scope of a commission agent was during that time. This flexibility was indeed necessary in order to accurately react to the special circumstances prevailing in trade, in France and during a merchant's establishment phase. For Luetkens, it was precisely these elements that characterised his commercial actions in France and that made him capable of acting during his establishment phase.

In order to understand his financial transactions with regard to his commission enterprise later in the episode, I will explain in greater detail the fundamental characteristics and functionality of the cashless payment system during the 18th century, not least because the mechanisms involved in the course of these transactions are reflected in the business letters exchanged between the involved parties, in the form of certain fixed sets of vocabulary, common terms and other structural elements. In fact, the cashless payment system, as will become obvious, served as a kind of trigger and basic framework that significantly contributed to and shaped the particular nature, the certain formality of 18th century business letters as well as surely also representing their typical content, which means that we will once more realise how deeply intertwined business practice and letter-writing and correspondence practices were during that time.

The question we have to answer first, however, is how the cashless payment system worked in practice and how it facilitated Luetkens' commission trade. In order to answer this question, I will illustrate the way Luetkens performed his financing operations in the most concise way possible, focussing on the basic principles that shaped his

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128 See Denzel, *Handbook of World Exchange Rates*, xxii-xlvii. See Trivellato, Francesca. "Credit, Honor, and the Early Modern French Legend of the Jewish Invention of Bills of Exchange." *The Journal of Modern History* 84, no. 2 (2012): 289-334. See as a comparative example to Luetkens also Gelderbloom, "Hans Thijs." See in general Gervais/Lemarchand/Margairaz, *Merchants and Profit*. Regarding French bills of exchange see also already De Roover, Raymond. *L'evolution de la lettre de change, XIVe–XVIIIe siècles*. Paris: A. Colin, 1953.

129 See Trivellato, "Bills of Exchance." See Denzel, *Handbook of World Exchange Rates*, xxviii-xxxii. See Neu, Tim. "Geld gebrauchen. Frühneuzeitliche Finanz-, Kredit- und Geldgeschichte in praxeologischer Perspektive." *Historische Anthropologie* 27, no. 1 (2019): 75-103.

transactions, serving at the same time as an illustration of the typical ways of conducting financing operations in 18th century business and trade. Often the different finance transactions conducted during a commission enterprise took on a highly complex form, involving many different actors and consisting of many different parallel actions and negotiations conducted by these different actors. This sometimes admittedly makes it hard to reproduce the transactions in detail. For instance, bills of exchange as negotiable instruments during the 18th century could pass through up to nine pairs of hands until they were finally paid and devalued.[130] Most generally though, all of these transactions were shaped, characterised and held together by a certain limited set of basic financing principles and methods, which I will try to illustrate. In the episode analysed, we will then get an impression of the concrete forms that these financing actions took during a commission enterprise.

In order to finance his commission enterprises, Nicolaus Gottlieb Luetkens made use of basically two financing options. In order to obtain the necessary funds, he either drew on the support of one or two merchants or merchant houses in his merchant network, who acted as capital lenders and financiers of the undertakings, or he drew on private banking houses, which provided him with the necessary credit for his enterprises.[131] For both options, the merchants and bankers drew on the cashless payment system. This system of cashless payment had been a significant driving force and indispensable component of trade since at least the end of the Middle Ages. During the 18th century, the system of cashless payment experienced a significant rise, due to demand and new innovations in the field. By then, the banking and finance business had already become a distinct branch of industry of its own, including inter alia stock exchange trading, currency trading and financial speculations.[132] With regard to commodity trade, although the parties involved also engaged individually in the activities, the principal purpose of making use of the cashless payment system was primarily to obtain financing and to ensure the necessary liquidity for one's undertakings. Particularly in the wholesale business, for the import and export of one's goods, and in commission trade, it became not only a driving force but in fact the catalyst for all trading activity.[133]

The fundamental principle of the cashless payment system was "transferring funds by dealing in bills of exchange".[134] A bill of exchange, called "Wechsel" in German and "lettre de change" in French, is a "document, used especially in international trade, that orders a person or organization to pay a particular amount of money at a particular time for goods or services."[135] In a more precise definition, it was a "short-term negotiable financial instrument consisting of an order in writing addressed by one person (the

130 See Denzel, *Handbook of World Exchange Rates*, xxxviii.

131 For more details these private banking houses in Paris, see Lüthy, *La Banque protestante.* See also Körner, Martin. "Protestant Banking." In *The World of Private Banking*, edited by Youssef Cassis and Cottrell Philip L., 231-246. Farnham/Burlingtion: Ashgate, 2013, here 239-240.

132 See Denzel, *Handbook of World Exchange Rates*, xlii. See also Trivellato, "Bills of Exchance," 293-300.

133 See also Davies, "Commission System."

134 Hancock, *Citizens of the World*, 281.

135 "Bill of exchange." *Cambridge Business English Dictionary*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011, 625.

drawer) to another (the drawee) requiring the latter to pay on demand (a sight draft) or at a fixed or determinable future time (a time draft) a certain sum of money to a specified person or to the bearer of the bill."[136] On the basis of bills of exchange, a commission agent like Luetkens obtained the necessary liquidity and credit range and last but not least he was provided with the time needed to conduct his commission enterprises.[137] Bills of exchange represented the nerve centre of commission trade, the most important means of payment, and they also formed the supply source for cash, enabling the merchant to conduct business.

The precise way of how the exchange in bills of exchange and generally the cashless payment system worked is presented in a very understandable way in the *Handbook of World Exchange Rates 1590-1914* by Markus Denzel. Denzel also illustrates the system in his book on the basis of several schemes, which I will borrow for my explanations and adapt them to the case of Nicolaus Gottlieb Luetkens' financial transactions as a commission agent. I will present my scheme of Luetkens' financial transaction on the basis of two of Denzel's schemes.[138] The scheme subsequently show how Luetkens' entire business as a commission agent ultimately rested on the transferring of funds through the help of bills of exchange and how the different people involved in these transactions not only mutually supported each other, but by doing so also mutually reinforced each other and depended on each other. Last but not least, the scheme will point once again to the significance of letter-writing because letters were the medium by which all the transactions were carried out. Not only were letters the actual material carrier medium which was used to send bills of exchange from one merchant to another, for instance by inserting the bills of exchange between the letter pages as it was typical, but also the letter content and certain letter phrases and formulae themselves played a part in the execution of the respective financial transactions. Particularly in the finance sector, a lot of the actual actions performed happened on paper, by means of "quill pen fencing", "fehder fechten", as the contemporaries called it (see fig. 11).[139]

The first and most fundamental action within the cashless payment system was the *drawing* of a bill of exchange. This meant that Luetkens as the first very step in the process of securing the financing for his enterprise drew a bill of exchange on his customer or client, in our example, the merchants Hertzer & von Bobartt in Hamburg. By means of drawing the bill Luetkens at the same time obliged his customers to settle the bill for the purchase of the respective goods with Luetkens at a later stage. The payment was meant to take place after they received the goods that Luetkens had purchased on their account and after they had sold them in Hamburg. In Denzel's example the issuer of

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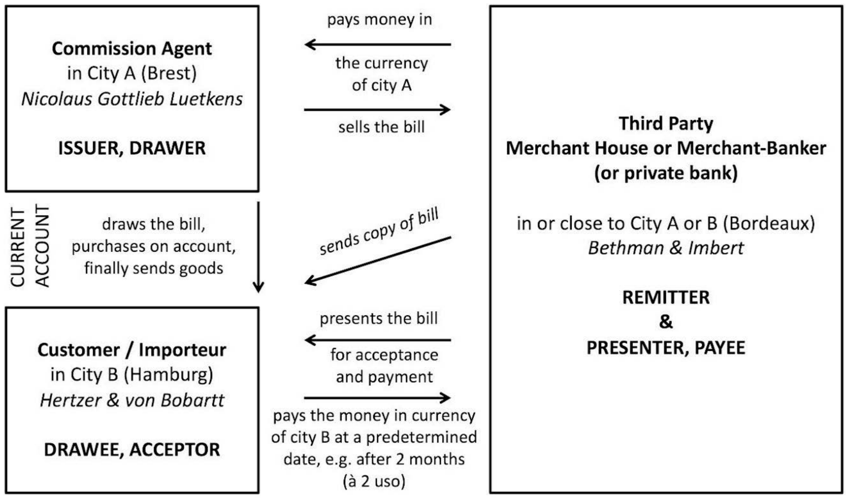
136 "Bill of exchange, also called draft or draught." *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, https://www.britannica.com/topic/ bill-of-exchange, accessed July 18, 2019. I preferred these definitions to the definitions in Denzel and Trivellato because they are more concise.
See also Denzel, *Handbook of World Exchange Rates*, xxii- xxxii.

137 See Hancock, *Citizens of the World*, 281.

138 See Denzel, *Handbook of World Exchange Rates*, xxviii and xxix.
See also the schemes in Trivellato, "Bills of Exchance," 293-300.
The following explanations are primarily based on the information given by Denzel and Trivellato.

139 Letter from Hertzer & von Bobartt to Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, February 17, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/234.

Figure 11: Basic transactions in financing business in commission trade.



Source: Based on a model by Markus Denzel from his *Handbook of World Exchange Rates*. By courtesy of Markus Denzel.

the bill of exchange, who is the *drawer* of a bill, is a seller of goods, an exporter, who sells goods to a *purchaser*, an importer, whom the drawer obliges, by means of the bill, to pay for these goods, but only after a certain amount of time. Instead of an immediately due and direct cash transaction, the drawing of a bill of exchange as a payment obligation, as a "credit contract" as Francesca Trivellato called it, offered the decisive advantage that it allowed the customer himself to sell the received goods first in order to have enough liquidity to pay the bill.[140] The same logic applies to Luetkens' case, with the difference that in his case, drawing the bill of exchange served the initial purpose to enable him to conduct purchases on the account of his customers in the first place. It was an advance credit. This means that through drawing a bill of exchange he obtained the necessary credit line from his customers, which was necessary to put him into the position to buy goods as a commission agent on their account.

Another typical method applied in such transactions by Luetkens and his trading partners was that for the purpose of such financial transactions in bills of exchanges the partners would often not directly raise actual funds for every transaction, but for coordinating their transactions and the flows of funds they simply drew on a shared account, a conto current. This means that both partners kept an account of their mutual enterprises and cash flows, a current account or open account in which they entered credits and debits of their respective partners, which sums were balanced and amortized at regular intervals, that is, for instance when a business enterprise had come to

140 Trivellato, "Bills of Exchange," 294.

an end.[141] A conto current, however, was continuously kept among the partners, which meant that it included funds, credits and debits with regard to several enterprises at the same time, and some credits or debits remained unredeemed even beyond the duration of a certain enterprise. This practice of credit-debit accounting was very typical for the financial businesses and financial management of merchants of the 17th century.[142] It was also a sign for a good and successful partnership among merchants if they kept current accounts together. Only merchants who knew each other well and who trusted each other shared a current account.

Nicolaus Gottlieb kept such a conto current and even joint conto currents, that is, where the partners shared their debts, with many of his main trading partners. We find current accounts for his cooperation with Hertzer & von Bobartt, Bethmann & Imbert, his French partner Lichigaray Jeune, his uncle in London, Luttman & von Bobartt, and several of his other close allies, all carefully sorted and kept among his bundles of merchant memorials. These memorials served as his general accounting archive during his travels as an alternative to keeping an account book.[143] As regards Luetkens' concrete exchange business, sharing a conto current with Hertzer & von Bobartt meant that whenever he drew a bill of exchange on them, they simply debited his conto current on their side, which sum would later be balanced as soon as they sold the goods. In principle, this idea and approach seems remarkably simple. However, as it is often the case, in practice the final procedure of how the bill was eventually settled at the end of the enterprise often turned out to be a bit more complicated. That means both Luetkens and Hertzer & von Bobartt would in fact, in this case and in many of their enterprises, balance their accounts through a third intermediary, a third party, an actual intermediate *financier* of the whole enterprise who was involved in the finance transactions. This had to do with another intermediate step during the transaction that was often chosen by the merchants for their transactions in bills of exchange and often in fact necessary during the respective businesses. This regards the right-hand area in the graph above, which I have not yet explained, but which will play a role in my further explanations and in the episode.

Important to note in this regard is already at this point that although this third party, in our example the merchant house of Bethmann & Imbert, would get involved, the respective sums still appeared and were listed in the respective conto currents of the drawer and the drawee, only that now another payee of the proceeds was added. The latter becomes clearly obvious from the account memorials and business letters, in which we find typical formulae referring at the same time to both the *creditor* and the *beneficiary* or *presenter* of the bill of exchange, as the third party was called in contemporary terms. The most typical entry in this regard reads "Tratta of 2000 guilders à 2 uso

141 Once "an account was opened, the account holder routinely both granted and was granted free credit in the form of unsettled transactions." Gervais, "Merchant Strategies," 9.

142 See also Gervais, Pierre. "Mercantile Credit and Trading Rings in the Eighteenth Century." *Annales. Histoire, Sciences Sociales* 67, no. 4 (2012): 731-763.

143 Bundles of all of Luetkens' merchant memorials in TNA, HCA 30/232. Regarding merchant memorials, which primarily "acted as a memory aid" but on travels also as a substitute for a book of accounts, see Walker, Stephen P., and John Richard Edwards. *The Routledge Companion to Accounting History*. London/New York: Routledge, 2009, 105.

on my account à ordre Bethmann & Imbert", which meant, that the bill eventually was to be paid to Bethmann & Imbert.[144] Before coming to the role of that intermediate financier in detail, however, I will first wrap up my explanations about the left-hand side of the graph, the basic procedure of exchanging a bill of exchange, also because this procedure will explain to us why the involvement of a third part was at all necessary.

Returning to the basic transactions in bills of exchanges, after the respective bill of exchange had been drawn by the drawer to the drawee of the bill, the necessary precondition for the conclusion of the pay agreement was of course first of all that Luetkens' customers would at all be agreeable with receiving the bill of exchange for the respective sums and under the terms of payment. Thus, his customers needed to approve of the payment request and therefore needed to *accept* the bill of exchange drawn on them in writing, by which they would then become the *acceptor* of the bill. If this was the case, in the next steps, Luetkens would then purchase the relevant goods, send them to his customers, who would themselves sell these goods, which put them in the position to settle the bill. For this whole procedure, the merchants of the time usually scheduled and allowed for a certain time frame, an agreed-upon period of time known as a "usance", most often amounting to two or three months until the payment of the bill of exchange was finally due. Expressed in the actual contemporary words, as they were also entered into the respective bills of exchange as set terms and furthermore confirmed in writing in the accompanying letters, a bill of exchange was usually issued "a 2 uso" or "a 3 uso", which meant that the payment was due after two or three months.[145] Using and drawing on Latin terms in this regard served a very specific, practical purpose. It allowed the merchants to use this terminology in a uniform manner and to the same effect in many different languages. If we take all the letters in the Luetkens archive as a basis of comparison, we can find this expression in French, Dutch, English and German letters and bills of exchanges. It can also be found in the merchant manuals, handbooks and letter-writing manuals of the time.[146] A similar pattern can be observed for many other basic terms and formulations used in financial operations, about which we will hear more in the next part of this chapter, but which already at this stage point us to the transnational character of mercantile business practices and the commercial language register of business and trade prevailing during that time.

Although it was helpful to grant his customers a two- or three-months period before the bill needed to be paid, in order to allow for the logistical handling and processing of the whole undertaking on credit, this practice was actually less helpful on the part of Luetkens with regard to conducting actual purchases of goods. The crux of the matter was that although Luetkens was allowed a certain credit line for his commission enterprises by his customers through drawing a bill of exchange on them, he nonetheless did not receive any actual financial means at this point of time. He therefore did not obtain

144 "dero Tratta von Ꝟ 2000 a 2/uso […] à ordre Bethmann & Imbert geacceptirt haben und E.E. dafür Conto Nostro in £ 6000:- debitiren." Letter from Hertzer & von Bobartt to Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, May 15, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/234.

145 See also Savary, *Der vollkommene Kauff- und Handelsmann* [*Le Parfait Négociant*], 436. See Marperger, *Der allzeitfertige Handels-Correspondent*, 25.

146 Ibid.

direct liquid funds such as ready money or other assets from these previous transactions, which was, however, necessary to purchase certain goods on commission. This means he was still not liquid enough to actually pay for any goods when drawing a bill of exchange. Yet even with regard to this perceived problem, the sophisticated cashless paying system offered the necessary solution. This solution, in turn, represents not just another innovation, but surely one of the pivotal elements and driving forces behind the whole cashless payment system in general because it created the actual basis for the mutual financial safeguarding mechanism for financial transactions between several merchants that accounted for the system's effectiveness.

In order to obtain the liquid funds for his commission purchases instantly after he had drawn a bill of exchange on his customers, Luetkens sold the very same bill of exchange to a third party, the *remitter* of a bill of exchange [in French "remittent",], which in our example is the merchant house Bethmann & Imbert. By selling the bill to them, the merchant obtained at the very same moment the funds needed to conduct his commission enterprise.[147] Consequently, Bethmann & Imbert would pay him, *remit* him liquid funds ["remittieren" in German and "remise"/"remittance" in French] in the form of ready money or again in the form of receiving bills of exchange. The commission agent himself, in turn could resell ["verneegotieren" in German] these bills of exchange. In Denzel's example, the exporter is being paid the bill for his exported goods by the remitter, which helped the exporter to instantly settle his accounts and carry out new businesses. In Luetkens' example this step was the precondition for conducting his businesses in the first place. In Denzel's example, the remitter then sold the bill to a fourth party, another merchant, often residing in the same city as the drawee of the bill, with whom he kept a current account and trading relationship, and who in the end became the beneficiary or presenter of the bill of exchange. That is, after the said 2- or 3-months waiting period, the drawee was, in turn, bound to pay the bill to the beneficiary of the bill of exchange. In Luetkens' case, in many of his enterprises, the remitter and the beneficiary ore presenter of the bill of exchange were often the very same person or merchant house, which makes the graph layout above and the understanding of the operations a bit easier. In concrete terms and with regard to his businesses, this meant that Luetkens received money or liquid funds from Bethmann & Imbert, which allowed him to conduct his commission trade, in return for selling the bill of exchange to them, the material payment obligation of Hertzer & von Bobartt. Bethmann & Imbert, in turn, later presented the bill to Hertzer & von Bobartt, who then settled the bill with them, at the same time clearing the respective entry in Luetkens' conto current. All of these arrangements were furthermore made transparent also in writing to all participating parties by means of a very simple but effective material practice. As soon as the remitter had purchased the bill of exchange from Luetkens, he would draft several copies of the respective bill, which were sent to all the involved parties in this financial transaction. The remitter kept the original bill of exchange, a copy of the bill, the *prima* (the first copy) was sent to the drawer of the bill (Hertzer & von Bobartt), whereas

147 Apart from Denzel and Trivellato, see also Neu, "Geld gebrauchen." See Morgan, Kenneth. "Remittance Procedures in the Eighteenth-Century British Slave Trade." *The Business History Review* 79, no. 4 (2005): 715-749.

Luetkens and all further parties who had become involved received a *secunda* or *tertia* (a second or third copy) of the bill of exchange. The latter therefore also explains why we find bundles of bills of exchanges in Luetkens archive marked as "secunda". These documents were the material evidence of his transactions with his remitters.[148]

The benefits for Bethmann & Imbert in the role of the remitter were fourfold, which also explains why merchants would become involved in this kind of transactions. First, merchants profited from differences and changes in exchange rates prevailing in the respective cities they traded with when purchasing or selling, presenting or paying a bill of exchange. It was often the case that a remitter bought a bill of exchange in another currency from the drawer (in city A) of the bill than the currency in which he would later be paid for the bill by the drawee (in city B).[149] Through making use of a favourable exchange rate in the respective currencies he made a profit merely by means of observing the changing rates in the respective cities and acting on them at the right time.[150] The latter is also one of the reasons why merchants added in almost all of their letters several exchange rates of the main financial trading places such as London, Amsterdam, Hamburg, at the bottom of the letters as additional information, and why they were keen to keep up to date and be well informed with regard to the respective rate movements. It was also the reason why they regularly purchased and sent each other newspapers or price currents, in French called "cours des marchandises" and in German "Preis-Courant". The price currents were printed lists of the exchange rates and the price movements and developments with regard to a great variety of goods.[151] Since Luetkens during his time in France not only drew bills of exchange but himself also acted as a remitter in many enterprises, it will not surprise us that we find many printed price currents and newspapers, in German, French and Dutch, including price currents of the VOC, but particularly the *Hamburg Preis-Courrant*, in his business archive.[152]

His Hamburg correspondents regularly sent him these price currents and newspapers in order to keep him informed about the market in Hamburg. The changing exchange rates and the changes in price movements for certain goods were of course also highly relevant for the merchant, who sold commission goods in another city. Even in the goods exchange and particularly with regard to selling opportunities, the merchants often deliberately waited for the most favourable conditions and selling opportunity, a day on which the market prices were favourable, before they sold the goods. We find detailed reports about this in the letters. Secondly, an incentive for acting as remitter was that often the remitter was also offered a share in the respective goods he financed. Thirdly, as already addressed above, a remitter could expect from his partners

148 See bundles of secunda bills of exchange in TNA, HCA 30/232. See again Denzel, *Handbook of World Exchange Rates*, xxxv.

149 See Pourchasse, "French Trade," 17. See Verley, Patrick. *L'Échelle du Monde. Essai sur l'Industrialisation de l'Occident*. Paris: Gallimard, 1997, 235.

150 See Denzel, *Handbook of World Exchange Rates*, xxviii- xxxi.

151 Regarding *Price Currents* see McCusker, John J., and Cora Gravesteijn. *The Beginnings of Commercial and Financial Journalism. The Commodity Price Currents, Exchange Rate Currents, and Money Currents of Early Modern Europe*. Amsterdam: Nederlandsch Economisch-Historisch Archief, 1991.

152 See the printed French and Dutch price currents and in particular the *Hamburg Preis-Courants* in TNA, HCA 30/232.

that whenever he himself needed a remitter for his finance transaction he could count on their support. It was therefore not only Bethmann & Imbert, who remitted funds to Luetkens, but in other enterprises exactly the same practice was performed vice versa. In this way, a dense network and system of mutual obligation was created that sustained itself from within itself.[153] Last but not least, fourthly, a remitter would charge a small amount of interest for his active loan to the drawee, most often 2%.

The list of benefits of this financial practice for Luetkens is shorter but still very meaningful. By means of drawing on a remitter for his bills of exchange he found an actual funder or financier for his commission enterprises. The remitters Bethmann & Imbert took on the crucial role of being the actual financiers of the respective commission enterprise, as was the case with every remitter within a cashless payment transaction. Together with the drawee of a bill of exchange, the remitter was the main pillar and mainstay of the cashless payment system.

With regard to Luetkens' second way of obtaining the necessary funds and financing for his enterprises and business, the respective procedures basically remain the same. The only difference is that in these other cases, the merchant did not draw on other merchant houses in his network but on private banks. The procedure of the respective transaction operations, however, was similar. In contrast to merchant houses, banking houses offered to their clients that they would assume the full responsibilities and provide their service for all above-mentioned financial operations at the same time. This means that banking houses served as the drawee and the remitter of a bill of exchange all at once, if wished, which was an opportunity that already the contemporaries highlighted as highly valuable in some respects, for instance when a certain promptness in reacting to financial matters was required in some transactions. Private banks could of course also act as the remitter and presenter of a bill of exchange.[154] A further advantage and characteristic of private banks was that as part of their specialisation in the financing business and their available funds they also granted their customers on request proportionately high credits, big credit lines and short-term credits. The fact that banking houses nonetheless did not grant their loans light-heartedly will become obvious in the episode analysed. Merchants needed to prove their liability and trustworthiness in order to be granted a loan by a bank. This was not least one of the reasons why Nicolaus Gottlieb Luetkens travelled home to Hamburg by land in 1745, because he had planned in a last stop-over in Paris where he met with the Paris merchant bankers that financed many of his enterprises. In the episode analysed, we will see how Luetkens pulled the necessary strings to be granted a credit by the Paris private bank of Antoine Guldiman, on the basis of a recommendation by his friend Johann Jakob Bethmann.[155] Yet, even a recommendation from such a respected, reputable merchant as Bethmann

153 See in general Muldrew, *Economy of Obligation*.

154 See Denzel, *Handbook of World Exchange Rates*, xlii- xliv. See Lüthy, *La Banque protestante*.

155 Antoine Léonard Guldiman was a reputable merchant banker in Paris, who was descended from a Huguenot family that had once fled to Solothurn in Switzerland, but his father had returned to France to establish one of the most reputable private banks in Paris. See Lüthy, *La Banque protestante*, 358-360. See also Du Pasquier, Jean Thierry. *Généalogies huguenotes*. Paris: Edition Christian: 1985, 245.

was still no guarantee that everything went smoothly and frictionlessly with regard to the subsequent transaction, as the episode will also show.

Comparing the enterprises that Luetkens conducted with the help of regular merchant houses as drawees, remitters and presenters of his bills of exchange with the enterprises that the merchant conducted primarily with the help of private banks, it becomes noticeable that Luetkens surely had certain preferences as to what kind of businesses he conducted with which partner or institution. He drew on banking houses for purely financial matters, money transactions and operations, particularly whenever he needed short-term credit or whenever he suffered a shortage in his financial resources due to large capital outlay, when buying a ship for instance or when conducting several large enterprises at the same time; or if he needed to balance his account due to other merchants drawing bills of exchange on him, especially if that happened without asking. The latter will play a big part in the episode analysed.[156] On the other hand, he drew on his regular merchant trading partners primarily for all trading activities in connection with his actual commodity trade. For both purposes, bills of exchange provided the necessary means.[157] For the sake of completeness, it must be added, however, that certain merchant houses, such as Bethmann & Imbert, also offered banking services as part of their business portfolio. This decision, the deliberate choice of different transaction routes and funding opportunities for different activities and enterprises depending on the nature of the respective activity or enterprise, was surely typical for the trading approach of international wholesale merchants during that time.[158]

Due to the necessity of close cooperation and a certain necessary flexibility and a high level of trust during the implementation of commission trade activity and commodity trade in general, in this sector the merchants preferably drew on long-standing, close and trusted trading partners as the supporters of the activities.[159] On the other hand, in purely financial matters, that is, in all those kinds of transactions that mainly related to personal and current liabilities with regard to money lending, they drew on private banks.

In contrast to the interaction and communication between long-standing trading partners, the interaction and communication of merchants with private banks was accordingly often more formal in nature because the actual purpose behind these interactions, the purpose of the relationship, was less about cooperation than about the smooth allocation of funds, which rendered it unnecessary to say much about the respective transactions; in the end, what counted most for the contact with a private bank were

156 Bills of exchanges were in this regard "mere source[s] of credit". Denzel, *Handbook of World Exchange Rates*, xlvi.

157 That is, bills of exchange in the end fulfilled several "functions: first, it was a safe way to send money; second it was a means of payment in trade; third, it functioned as a source of credit in lending money by issuing a bill of exchange […] and when selling a bill of exchange in foreign currencies on credit […]; fourth, one could benefit from the differences in exchange rates in different places […]." Ibid., xxxii.

158 See Gervais, "Merchant Strategies"; see Gervais, "Mercantile Credit."

159 See furthermore Muldrew,*Economy of Obligation*.

punctual payments.[160] The latter fact, however, does not mean that merchants did not also establish close bonds with bankers. Finding reliable partners was pivotal in all areas of trading activities. The latter fact, furthermore, should not lead us to the assumption that merchants therefore chose the private banks they traded with randomly, meaning that they would draw on just any banking house that offered good conditions. Quite on the contrary, even with regard to private banks as partners and financiers of Luetkens' businesses, we find exactly the same pattern that we have already encountered above. Luetkens once more exclusively chose to work with Protestant private banks established in France. This provided him and the banks with the necessary leap of faith that created the necessary bond on which the business relationship was based.[161] Even in this regard, Luetkens' approach therefore represented a typical way of doing business as a merchant, particularly as a foreign Protestant merchant in France of the 18th century.

As important parts and pillars of the *Protestant International* within France, the main private banks that we encounter in the Luetkens archive were very renowned banking houses established in the financial metropolis of Paris. In total, one could find fifty-six Reformed Protestant bankers residing in Paris during that time, which once more underlines and provides a good account and impression of the obvious economic power emanating from the group of Protestants in the French financing and trading sector. Most of these merchants and merchant bankers were descendents of French Huguenots that fled to Switzerland after the revocation of the Edict of Nantes and later returned to France as financially sound bankers. Luetkens held contact with and was a client of several of the most reputable merchant bankers and private banks. The names that we find in his archive are the banking firm Tourton, Baur & Comp., the banking merchant Guldiman and Pellet, and the banking merchants Cottin and Rilliet. Tourton was a descendent of Huguenot refugees who had fled to Geneva. Guldiman's family originally returned from Solothurn, and the bankers Cottin and Rilliet both hailed from Geneva.[162] Having established contact with these bankers and belonging to their clientele was another important steppingstone for Luetkens' career.

Last but not least, not only typical but indicative for the functioning of the whole cashless payment system was that Luetkens and his partners used letters as the crucial communication medium and trading tool. For each and every one of his financial operations letters were needed. On the one hand, letters were necessary due to the spatial separation of the different parties involved in the undertakings and due to the simple fact that the goods were purchased at a different location than where they were later sold. This made it inevitable for merchants in long-distance trade to communicate via letters in order to communicate over great distances. On the other hand, however, this fact was also due to the special nature and the necessities of the particular business practices prevailing in the finance sector. Not one of the finance transactions presented, not one of the above-mentioned steps during the procurement of the necessary funds

160 See the letter style of the letters exchanged between merchants and merchant bankers analysed and discussed in the episode.

161 See also Körner, "Protestant Banking."

162 See Garrioch, David. *The Huguenots of Paris and the Coming of Religious Freedom, 1685–1789*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014, 75-93.

for the enterprises, was imaginable or practically implementable without letters, that is, without laying down and mutually confirming the financial operations in writing. Letter writing and correspondence were the essential prerequisite serving as the formal and material verification of the respective actions. It was ultimately the performative carrier medium and the nerve centre of the cashless payment system and therefore also of commission trade. With this information, we are approaching the last section in this part of the chapter, in which I will explain the practical implementation of the cashless payment system and of commission trade through letter practice.[163] This section will also form a smooth transition to the last part of my contextualisation, in which I will present the commercial language register of business and trade.

The cashless payment system during the 18th century was a crucial precondition for conducting trading activities as a wholesale merchant during that time, particularly if you were a commission agent, and even more particularly if you were a commission agent who was on the eve of establishment as a wholesale merchant. The cashless payment system allowed merchants to act as intermediaries for other merchants, it allowed for the necessary freedom of movement and trade and thus a certain mobility and flexibility in their undertakings because it enabled the merchants to manage their business from their writing tables and from wherever they were residing at the time. More could be written about several other innovations in financing business of the 18th century, for instance including instruments such as the endorsement, called *Indossament* in German. In order to understand the business presented in the episode, however, it is sufficient to understand the basic features of the cashless payment system and how these transactions allowed Luetkens to prosper in his trade. The cashless payment system provided merchants like him, who only had limited capital to obtain the necessary liquidity to conduct their trade, which was a "great advantage for young and aspiring merchants" as was noted already in the Kruenitz encyclopaedia.[164] Basically the only requirement these young merchants and merchants in general had to observe was to adhere to the common customs and practices prevailing within the cashless payment system. In order to do so, they wrote letters and they learned to write them in particular ways. Writing appropriate business letters was the essential precondition for keeping the whole cashless payment system running. The said customs and practices the merchants had to adhere to while doing business are not only reflected in these letters, but in the end it was the letters themselves which in fact produced these very customs and practices.

Financial Transactions in Letters

Without letter-writing practice, none of the benefits of the cashless payment system would have prevailed during the 18th century. The system would in fact not even have existed. Speaking of long-distance trade and commission trade in particular, almost

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163 Trivellato's argument runs the same way, see Trivellato, "Bills of Exchange," 293.

164 "Commissions=Handlung." *Oekonomische Encyklopädie*, edited by Johann Georg Krünitz. 242 volumes. Berlin, 1773-1858, vol. 8, 253, quoted above.

every financing activity was performed on the basis of letters. When bills of exchange represented "the backbone of commodity trade", as Trivellato put it, we must say that letter writing served as the backbone of the whole cashless payment system.[165] In fact, as Trivellato also pointed out in her book *The Familiarity of Strangers*, letter writing basically represented and "remained the backbone of European long-distance trade" in almost all areas of trading activities during that time.[166] With regard to the cashless payment system and the exchange of bills of exchange, letters played a crucial role particularly in two ways.

First of all, letters were the transportation medium for bills of exchange. In long-distance trade, bills of exchange were usually not handed over personally to the other party, but they were mainly sent to each other as inlays in letters. This applies to all kinds of bills of exchange, not just the main bill of exchange but also the *prima, secunda* and *tertia* copy. The typical way of inserting bills of exchange into letters was to place the piece of paper often folded in half either in the innermost part of the letter, the core part of the letter fold, or in-between the folded second and third page of the letter. This served the purpose of preventing outsiders from being able to see that a letter contained a bill of exchange because otherwise, if the paper was too thin, the contours of a bill would shine through the cover letter.

Secondly, apart from serving as a transportation medium, letters and letter text also fulfilled their own purpose within the cashless payment system as necessary complements of the exchanged bills of exchange. The prime function of letters in this regard was to not only comment but in fact to concretely name and designate the respective kinds of financial transaction that were to be conducted by means of sending the respective bill of exchange. In some cases, letter writers did not even have to send a bill of exchange with each letter in order to perform the financial transactions because it could also be sufficient to give notice or to take note ["nota nehmen"] of a respective financial transaction, meaning not just to inform or being informed about a transaction but in fact to recognize them and add them to the books. It was therefore ultimately also the letter content that revealed to an addressee if a sender had drafted a bill on him, wanted to use him as a remitter or urged him to pay his debts. The letter was therefore the actual executive organ within the cashless payment system. In letters and by means of letters the merchants got their orders and sent out their orders to other merchants.

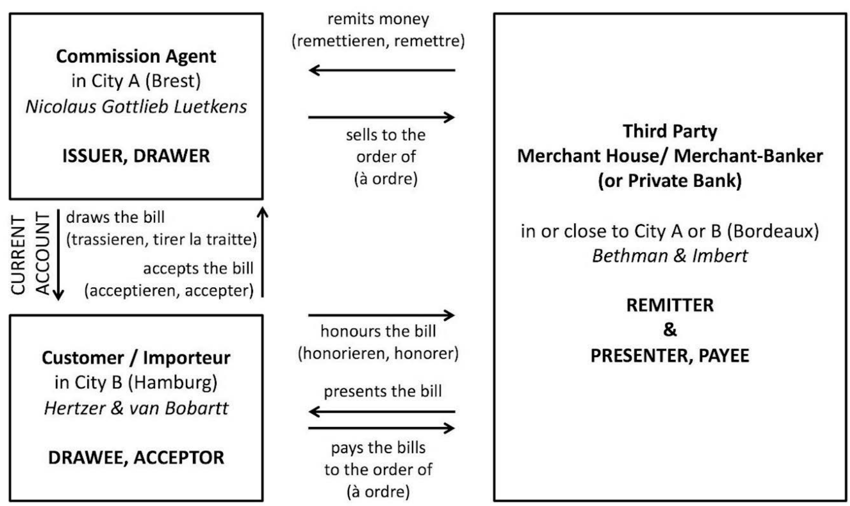
In order to allow for this system to work, the cashless payment system required a very fundamental precondition crucial for the smooth handling and processing of all the respective financial operations by means of letters. The letters and their statements needed to be unequivocally clear in terms of their message and orders. This precondition shaped the entire structure of the cashless payment system and therefore also shaped and formalised the business letter exchanges in this business sector. It led to a high degree of uniformity and formalisation in the letter form and content of the business letters exchanged among merchants in financial matters. The letter content and the statements needed to be as clear, plain and explicit as possible because in mercantile

165 "[B]ills of exchange remained the backbone of commodity trading." Trivellato, "Bills of Exchange," 293.

166 Trivellato, *The Familiarity of Strangers*, 170.

business, as Daniel Defoe had already noted in 1726, all “orders ought to be plain and explicit”.[167] Only this fact ensured the smooth running of the whole system.

Figure 12: Common shared international terminologies in 18th-century financing business.



Source: Based on a model by Markus Denzel from his *Handbook of World Exchange Rates*. By courtesy of Markus Denzel.

It was indispensable in mercantile correspondence to use clearly defined terms and expressions, which unquestionably designated the respective finance operations performed by means of the letters. All letter phrases had to be understandable to all involved parties. For this it was essential that the terms and expressions used were generally valid and recognised as such within the entire mercantile community, and therefore across languages and cultural boundaries. The merchants’ response to this necessity or rather the common linguistic practice that enabled them to fulfil this need was that they all jointly used and applied the same language register with the same terminologies and a fixed vocabulary of business terms when conducting business. This fact did not only apply to merchants from the same city, country or merchant community, but in fact it applied to almost all merchants, including merchants from non-European countries.[168] For each of the financial operations mentioned above, the merchants used particular words or sentences or a set of regulated expressions, often letter formulae, to designate and clearly identify the respective financial operations performed by means of the letters containing them. These shared terminologies and vocabularies resembled one another in many different languages of the time, thus allowing the merchants to interact and trade across borders. Apart from that, or rather concomitant to that, the most intriguing fact and facet of this shared language register is, however, the unambiguously

167 Defoe, *Complete English Tradesman*, 27.

168 See also Marzagalli, “Trade across religious boundaries.”

binding character of the shared terminologies and expressions, which were accepted by all merchants of the time, and therefore the power that emanated from these performative words. It is surely an intriguing phenomenon how the whole system of the cashless payment system ultimately rested on the usage of a handful of words and sentences used in letter-writing practice. This fact, however, just underlines once more the importance of letter practice for the business life and it underlines the importance of letter writing as the major driving force and the catalyst of the cashless payment system and trade in general.[169]

Demonstrating this practice on the basis of the example of Luetkens and his correspondents, I will once more draw on the graphic representation which I have already used to outline and demonstrate the cashless payment system in general. I will at this point, however, add the terms and terminologies that the letter writers used to designate their respective actions with regard to their concrete financial operations. Since Luetkens used different languages, I will list the terms in different language variations – the language resemblance will become immediately striking.

By means of these specific words in their letters, Luetkens and his trading partners, as representatives of the European merchant communities of the 18th century, concretely performed their financial actions in practice in their letters. A typical letter sentence and formula in this regard, which we can now understand in its full complexity and operating principle, therefore reads for instance:

> "With this letter we inform E.E. that Bethmann & Imbert have drafted a bill on us for E.E. on the 11th of this month for Ꝟ 3180:- à 3 uso à 27 3/4, which we have accepted and therefore have debited E.E.'s account respectively in Mark Banco 5515:5:-."[170]

Another typical letter sentence reads

> "So today I remit him [Darragory] 15/m £ [15,000] and I will remit him another 20 à 30/m [30,000] next week. I write today to Mr. Luttman: that he can draft a bill on these friends for me on the account of Hertzer & von Bobartt: 5000 Ꝟ and 1/m Ꝟ on my account for which he should remit me in bills of exchange on Paris 15 à 20 or 30/d [days] dato. I have to remit these in 8/d [one week] to Bayonne [to Lichigaray Jeune]."[171]

Both quotes and financial transactions will play a crucial role in the episode analysed in this chapter. By means of the first quote, Hertzer & von Bobartt accepted Bethmann & Imbert as the remitters and presenters of one of Luetkens' bills of exchange that he had drawn on them for the purchase of a cargo of sugar. By means of the second quote, Luetkens ordered his contact person in St. Sebastian and Bayonne, who granted him a loan, to purchase the relevant goods for him by order of the merchants Luttman &

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169 See Trivellato, "Bills of Exchange"; see Trivellato, "Merchant's letters." The concrete *language register of business and trade*, however, has not yet been studied in detail or extensively by previous research, which is why I will derive my findings and explanations primarily from the letters in the Luetkens archive.

170 Letter from Hertzer & von Bobartt to Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, August 24, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/234.

171 Letter from Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb to Von Bobartt, Elart, June 5, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/232, Letter Book I, no. 174.

von Bobartt, the latter of which was the consultant on site in the whole undertaking. We will be able to follow each of these transactions and its effects in the letter episode analysed. It will become apparent from the episode how the system worked with clockwork precision and how this enabled the merchants to conduct their business. This latter impression moreover did not only become clear to me and was limited to this one episode in particular, but it was a general insight. Reading hundreds of Luetkens' and his trading partners' business letters and following many enterprises over time, thus encountering the many different actors involved in such business endeavours, I became more and more intrigued by the effectiveness and functionality of the whole system. It is striking how every cog intermeshed perfectly with the next one, and how closely and skilfully the partners cooperated with each other. If all participating parties pulled in the same direction and met their obligations, that is, if their actions were true to their words, the system worked like a well-oiled machine. Sometimes the whole procedure went so quickly that the modern reader even struggles to keep pace, but since every step in these transactions followed a clearly structured principle and procedure, in the end it is possible to trace every action taken in this procedure.

4.8 Showing Efficiency

The efficiency of the whole system, performed on the basis of and buoyed by letters, in this context becomes clearly recognizable and it is impressive. Luetkens and his partners and correspondents were permanently engaged in several commission enterprises accompanied by several financial activities at the same time. They all acted as drawers, drawees, remitters or presenters of several different bills of exchange in circulation. The entire procedure furthermore worked both ways, that is, when buying or selling goods on the account of other merchants. Last but not least, the Luetkens mercantile business and letter archive presents us with a prime example of the internationality of the cashless payment system since Luetkens corresponded and transacted his business in several different languages with merchants from several different countries and with different backgrounds, while always sticking to exactly the same principles of the cashless payment system. In commission trade, he corresponded in French, Dutch and German. In sum, the Luetkens letters provide us with an accurate account of how the cashless payment system served as an engine of the Early Modern economy and how letters and bills of exchange were the crucial instrument that kept this system running.

At the very same time the requirements and challenges for the individual merchant active in this field and engaging in this system, profiting from and perpetuating the system at the same time with his actions, clearly becomes evident. As an active part, a small cog in the system, merchants had to make sure by all means that they did not bog down the smooth implementation of the cashless payment system and endanger the respective business enterprises. One of their key requirements was therefore, especially speaking of aspiring merchants, to prove that they were capable of keeping up with the challenges and master the different practices and customs prevailing in the cashless payment system. With every action, they needed to demonstrate that they were reliable partners and that they were skilled in the respective operations. In short, the basic practical principle underlying all their actions and the precondition for success in this field was the practical principle of showing efficiency at all times. In order to convince others of his own merit and his capability of keeping up with the efficiency or generally the common practices and customs of the system, a merchant had to prove his own efficiency and his proficiency in these practices and the rules of the system. In essence, he needed to play by the rules of the shared system while at the same time suiting his actions to his words. This principle is the fundamental principle underlying all mercantile activities within the 18th-century trading field and commercial culture.[172] In our example it applies first and foremost to the activities of commission trade and the accompanying financial operations, but the same preconditions also prevailed of course with regard to all other commodity trade, the shipping industry, the banking business and stock exchange transactions. A merchant's reputation rested on the condition of being able to constantly prove and show his efficiency and professionalism in his undertakings and practices, which last but not least also primarily rested and was highly dependent on his professional skills in writing letters. At the same time, however, a merchant's correspondence was also the key indicator of how successful a merchant was in performing the principle and whether or not his partners trusted and believed in his words and abilities.

This practical principle of persuasion, the principle of showing efficiency, was relevant in many areas of commercial activity. It was also a kind of umbrella category entailing and demanding several tasks of a merchant simultaneously, which all held a share in the adequate representation and performance of efficiency. Apart from the general need to show skills in the practices performed in business, a merchant also needed to constantly reassure his partners of his credibility and trustworthiness by means of these practices.[173] Last but not least, he also needed to make sure that he had the general means, that is, he possessed the necessary funds or credit lines to keep his promises. All of this was vital to appropriately perform the practical principle of showing efficiency in mercantile business.

The merchant Nicolaus Gottlieb Luetkens mastered this principle with flying colours, which was highly significant for his personal advancement as a merchant during his establishment phase. In his business, in his financial matters and in his business letters he was effective and acted very punctually, which turned him into a reliable partner for his correspondents and which brought him much praise from his partners. As encapsulated in a quote by his brother Joachim, the merchant was "always very accurate in all of your letters and in many other things". In another quote, Hertzer & von Bobartt congratulated Luetkens on a good sale with the words that they "very

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172 See also in general Haggerty, *Merely for Money*, 66-197; Price, "*What Did Merchants Do?*" See Trivellato, "Merchants' letters"; *Discourse and Practice*.

173 See Muldrew, *Economy of Obligation*. Lamikiz, *Trade and Trust*; Aslanian, "Social Capital"; Ditz, "Secret Selves, Credible Personas." See also Aslanian, Sebouh. "'The Salt in a Merchant's Letter': The Culture of Julfan Correspondence in the Indian Ocean and the Mediterranean." *Journal of World History* 19, no. 2 (2008): 127–88. See Aslanian, Sebouh, *From the Indian Ocean to the Mediterranean. The Global Trade Networks of Armenian Merchants from New Julfa*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012. See Smail, John. "The Culture of Credit in Eighteenth-Century Commerce: The English Textile Industry." *Enterprise & Society* 4, no. 2 (2003): 299–325.

much hoped that E.E. will more often send such sales invoices" as these were always happily received.[174]

Even Luetkens, however, naturally was not able to run his businesses completely without problems and frictions. Even he had not been shielded from financial difficulties and constraints. The main sources of friction, at least as far as his letter correspondence suggests, were however his trading partners. It is astonishing that we find rather few complaints by his partners relating to Luetkens' and his activities, but far more often the merchant was in fact running into problems caused by the actions of his partners, which, in turn, forced Luetkens to react in certain ways. In the episode analysed in this chapter, we will learn about three of these problematic cases and their solutions. We will firstly learn about problems arising from misleading communication and false hopes with regard to the provision of credit, secondly, we will encounter problems occurring through poor advice and thirdly, we will learn about the concrete conflict resulting from both other problems. In order to deal with all of these problems in an appropriate manner, Luetkens subsequently used a rather similar coping strategy and pattern. He furthermore did not only use this pattern of problem solution in this particular letter episode only, but it was a pattern he applied regularly in his business. I found it in several other letter episodes and enterprises represented in the Luetkens archive. We will encounter it again in two other chapters of the book. Only in this present chapter, however, will I analyse and present it in detail because it represented the complement to the principle of showing efficiency, the second side to the coin. That means, we will learn that even as regards problem-solving solutions merchants showed a certain degree of efficiency, which is particularly informative about the merchants' business culture and their dealings with each other. The corresponding practical principle of persuasion was the principle of the sledgehammer method.

Apart from learning about the merchants' effective operational proficiency, the episode will therefore also provide an insight into the usual approach and way of dealing with problems and frictions occurring during their collaborations. Persuasion, that is, influencing and convincing other people to react in a particular manner, was crucial to problem solving because the ultimate goal behind any action in this regard was to move the partners to correct their behaviour and to get the respective transactions and joint businesses back on track. The resolution strategy that Luetkens chose whenever frictions occurred in business and correspondence was to send his partners letters of complaint, indignation, warning or even rebuke. In all three cases presented in the letter episode, this strategy was in the end successful. The practical principle of the sledgehammer method worked. Thus, the episode will not only demonstrate how Luetkens reacted to potential problems but also how he solved them, which serves as another crucial insight into 18th-century business culture and the way trade was conducted.

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174 "In deinen Briefen so wie inandere Stücken viel zu accurat." Letter from Luetkens, Joachim to Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, April 3, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/235. "wünschen von Hertzen das offters E.E. dergleichen Rechnungen einsenden mögen." Letter from Hertzer & von Bobartt to Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, May 29, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/234.

The practical principle of the sledgehammer method was closely interlinked with the principle of efficiency in business. Whenever the efficiency of business operations was jeopardised or had come to a halt, it needed an effective antidote, an appropriate countermeasure that put the stalled project back on track. The merchants in the Luetkens archive found this antidote, this solution, in the practice of writing letters of complaint, indignation, warning or rebuke to their correspondents, by which means they tried to restore the order of their businesses and relationships. Interestingly, as we learn from the letters, Luetkens was known among his partners as very skilled in this principle of the sledgehammer method. He was known for being very assertive and convincing, which was the reason why he was often called in as a conciliator or even literally as a debt collector, as for instance letter copies of Hertzer & von Bobartt reveal. In these, the latter asked a third merchant, Georg Brommer, to "hand out all his papers, letters and bills" to Luetkens.[175] Another fact that shows the clear interconnectedness of both principles is that all the merchants in fact used the same commercial language register for both principles and in regular business. Both principles were therefore an intrinsic part of the language register of business and trade. Both invoked the same values and motives, and drew on the same words, which, depending on the case, were either in support or in negation.

Mastering the language register of business and trade as well as the usual style and tone of business letters and adhering to the common rules and code of conduct prevailing for merchant letters, enabled merchants in the end to write both kinds of letters: typical regular business letters as well as business letters of complaint or rebuke. The language register provided the framework on the basis of which a merchant was able to directly appeal to another merchant's honour, integrity and uprightness.

As the last part of my contextualisation in this chapter, I will expand on this language register in detail in the following. This next part at the same time represents the last building block of my explanations on why and how Hamburg merchants managed to become valued and well-respected trade participants and welcomed guests in France. As the French intendant Tourny had described it at the beginning of the chapter, the Hanseatic merchants were generally held in high regard by the local French merchants due to their companionable qualities. Tourny wrote that these merchants had earned and enjoyed the respect of the locals, that they were "considered people of probity, intelligent, and enjoy the confidence of the public" and were sometimes even regarded as one of their own. This led to the result that the social consideration and appreciation that French society adopted towards them was, not exclusively, but most often very high. Apart from their business activities and their effective and competent actions, earning this appreciation in my opinion was closely intertwined and connected with their skills in letter-writing and with the mastery of the language register of business and trade, mobilised in similar ways in several national languages, which served as a means to

175 "Nous ne pouvons que vous demander, de vouloir remettre au Monsieur Lutkens toutes les papiers, comptes & lettres que nous vous avons acrite touchant cette affaire & deluy vouloir donnes instruction de ce qui s'est passée entre vous & led Guerry jusque'ny." Letter from Hertzer & von Bobartt to Brommer, Georg, inserted as letter copy in a letter to Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, May 1, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/234.

promote mutual appreciation and to perform acts of adaption and integration. In the next part we will learn how this worked in practice and what concrete letter-writing practices the merchants used to actively foster this goal.

4.9 Business Letters

Materiality and Form

> "For as every artist has a set of words and ways of speaking, which they have a liberty and a right to use, as being peculiar to the art they profess; so merchants have theirs, and they speak and write as themselves, by using them."[176]

Unlike John Mair, who was the author of these words, which can be found in his work *Book-keeping methodiz'd* from 1736, and who, as an 18th century world traveller and a merchant, drew on his own experiences and observations of other 18th-century merchants when writing these lines, today we are deprived of the opportunity of listening to 18th-century merchants speak to one another. Therefore, we are unfortunately not able to confirm the accuracy of his words as regards the first part of the quote. However, with regard to Mair's second point, we are definitely able to substantiate his statement. Drawing on the experience of reading and analysing several hundreds of business letters in the Luetkens archive, in four different languages and written by more than 30 different merchants, I can definitely confirm his statement. Merchants had a distinctive way of writing letters.

With a little practice, we are today able to quickly identify letters that were written by 18th-century merchants when searching archival collections of letters because these letters show particular features and characteristics that facilitate the allocation of the letter to the class of business letters. This identification can be achieved on two levels of analysis: First, by taking a look at the material form of the letters, relating both to the materiality of the letter but also to structural elements of the letter text, which provide us with valuable first hints and indications. Secondly, this assumption subsequently needs to be tested on the basis of the actual text and content of the letters. Thus, on the one hand, business letters show certain material features and structural characteristics that mark them as business letters. On the other hand, looking at the content of the letters and textual characteristics is decisive for definitely determining that a letter in the end also primarily served business purposes.

In fact, many business letters also often entailed more private or personal information on non-commercial matters. Many letters can eventually be defined as kind of hybrid forms, mixed forms of letter types dealing with both business and private matters at the same time.[177] Notwithstanding this, even in these mixed letters we can clearly

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176 Mair, John. *Book-keeping methodiz'd* […]. Edinburgh: T. and W. Ruddimans, 1772 (first edition 1736), 6.

177 Merchants also often wrote about "business affairs and family matters" in the same letters. Ditz, "Formative Ventures," 66. Ditz also argues that commercial letters showed "no own genre conventions", which argument, however, I would object to, as the following explanations will show. See

extrapolate on the basis of the chosen letter style the respective parts of a letter ascribed to handling business and the parts that served the purpose of exchanging information on private matters. The difference in this regard becomes most evident and tangible when the merchants themselves went as far as to decide to send their correspondent two separate letters but as part of one letter packet;: the first letter dealing solely with business matters showing the typical business letter style; the second letter marked as "a particular letter", "ein particulair Schreiben" in German or "correspondence particular-iere" in French, which meant that a letter was intended for the eyes of one receiver only and subsequently dealt with more private matters, therefore showing a more personal letter-writing style.[178] The significance of this practice of writing "particular letters" will be presented in the chapters on Luetkens' search for a business partner. No matter whether an entire letter was written for business purposes or if we are dealing with a hybrid form of letters, the letter content and form of the letter nevertheless provides us with clear indications to identify business letters. I will start by presenting the characteristic material features, followed by typical textual features.[179]

The first material and structural element which the business letters in the Luetkens archive share is that to a very large extent they all show the same, very popular letter-folding and letter-locking technique. With a few exceptions, most of the letters are folded in the 'tuck-and-seal' method or variations of this technique.[180] This method entailed that the letter writer first folded the letter pages twice vertically and then twice horizontally, resulting in a tri-fold, followed by the important technique of tucking both ends of the folded page into one another, which was followed by the step to seal the letter, once or several times. This method allowed the letter writer for instance to insert bills of exchange into this letter fold, but the merchants also enclosed for instance certain product samples in this inner, inside part of the letter fold. This could be samples of textiles, seeds or even samples of wood or sugar, as in the episode analysed in the chapter, which was an opportunity that merchants often used to consult with their partners about the quality of a particular product. For their daily letter-writing activities, furthermore, this method was attractive because it was simple in practice, yet effective. It was a timesaver, which in turn was certainly a reason why Luetkens and many other merchants of the time preferred this letter-locking technique.[181]

also, as a short introduction to the characteristics of business letters, Trivellato, "Merchants' letters." For 19th-century business letters, see Dossena, "Business Correspondence" showing strong resemblances with the letters of the previous century.

178 All the given denominations (and translations) of these kinds of letters have been taken from letters and letter wrappers of the Luetkens archive. See for instance "Engelhard en particulie" Letter from Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb to Engelhardt, Ehrenfried, October 5 1744, TNA, HCA 30/232, Letter Book I, no. 339. "deine 2 Particulair Brieffe habe wohl empfangen." Letter from Bethmann, Johann Jakob to Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, December 3, 1743, TNA, HCA 30/234.

179 My explanations in this part are primarily based on my work on the Luetkens archive and the Luetkens letters since these aspects have not yet been studied in detail in previous research.

180 For the tuck-and-seal method of letterlocking, see Dambrogio, Jana. "Tuck and Seal', Italy (1580s)." *Letterlocking Instructional Videos.* Filmed: Jun 2014. Posted: Jun 2014, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pje3bxJ_9QY, see letterlocking.org.

181 Within the Prize Papers collection of TNA, as our research has shown, this letter-folding technique is surely by far the most often used letter-folding technique employed during the 18th century. See

A second very characteristic and indicative feature and structural element of business letters was that business letters most often omitted forms of material politeness gestures. In contrast to other letter types, merchants did not use any gaps on the letter page, for instance gaps between the salutation and the letter text, to express their humbleness and politeness, as it was practiced in other official correspondences, in love letters or even in family letters.[182] A business letter started at the top of the page and its text then continued as running text until the end of the letter. In general, merchant letters often show a very compact layout. Business letters thirdly omitted long and overly flowery formal addresses, salutations and introduction phrases.[183] Instead, it was common practice to simply address each other as “Dearest friend” or “Esteemed Friend” [in German e.g. “Sehr wehrter Freund”, “Hertzensfreund, werthester Bruder”, “Monsieur & cher amy”], “Dear cousin” [“Hochgeehrter Herr Cousien” “Waerde Neef”] or simply “Dear Sir” [“Hochgeehrtester Herr”, “Myn Heer”, “Monsieur”] or “Dear Gentlemen” [“Sirs”] or combinations of it. In French letters “Monsieur” was the most common form of address, and in Dutch business letters “Myn Heer” is predominant. This practice expressed social equity within the merchant communities and was a sign of mutual respect and solidarity.[184]

Thus, this practice followed an egalitarian principle for the purpose of facilitating trading activities with each other. Of course, notwithstanding this, there were still hierarchies that prevailed amongst merchants of different kinds of business and with different reputations. Nevertheless, the one-liner practice of addressing each other directly catches the eye when one reads a letter for the first time, giving a first hint that these letters might be business letters. A last structural element that is admittedly rather obvious but nonetheless very indicative and therefore helpful with regard to identifying business letters in a letter collection is that business letters almost always contain numbers, tables or figures.

All of these features serve as helpful first indications for identifying business letters within letter collections. Notwithstanding this, detecting these features alone is not always sufficient proof to conclude that a letter was used for business purposes only. Yet ultimately, it needs the letter content to confirm the assumption. We need to read the letter in detail in order to find out about the purpose and background of respective numbers and figures. If the numbers show debts, credits, or lists of commodity prices for certain goods for instance, the identification is rather simple. Lists of exchange rates written down at the bottom of a letter, on the other hand, are no clear indication that

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also Dambrogio, Jana, Daniel Starza Smith, and the Unlocking History Research Group. *Dictionary of Letterlocking* (DoLL), 2019, http://letterlocking.org/dictionary, accessed March 23, 2019.

182 “Merchant letters lacked hierarchical salutations so important in the ars dictaminis, because merchants were writing to other merchants, their approximate equals.” Couchman/Crabb, “Form and Persuasion,” 7. See Gibson, Jonathan. “Significant Space in Manuscript Letters.” *The Seventeenth Century* 12 (1997): 1-10: See also Crabb, Ann. “How to Influence Your Children. Persuasion and Form in Alessandra Macigni Strozzi’s letters to Her Sons.” In *Women’s Letter across Europe, 1400-1700: Form and Persuasion*, edited by Jane Couchman and Ann Crabb, 21-42. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005.

183 See Roseveare, *Markets and Merchants*, who concludes with regard to the *Maresco-David Letters* that these letters “have been shorn of their flowery salutations.” Ibid., 208.

184 See Couchman/Crabb, “Form and Persuasion,” 7.

we are unequivocally dealing with a business letter because such kinds of information were regularly added by letter-writers to any kind of letter, using every opportunity to keep correspondents up to date about the rates.

Language and Content

The typical content and language of business letters also showed particular characteristics and features, a certain style and especially its own terminologies, its own vocabulary and language register, all of which help us to identify and assign certain letters to the class of business letters. In this regard, John Mair once more provides us with an apt description of this language form, style and vocabulary of typical business letters in his merchant manual, continuing his previous report, cited above, with the following words:

> "In all merchants' writings [...] when written by a person of skill and experience, there is a concise, emphatic diction, a certain peculiar use of words and phrases, [...] and the style should be suited to the nature of a narrative that is, easy, simple, plain, and perspicuous; and the more it is so, the more it is like what it should be."[185]

With this assessment, in turn, Mair did not stand alone among his contemporaries. Quite on the contrary, in many merchant manuals and other merchant literature of the time, we can find similar or even exactly the same wordings, the same postulations and claims with regard to the practice of writing business letters. To give just one, though very famous, comparative example, we can read for instance in Daniel Defoe's *Complete English Tradesman*, highly inspired by the French mercantile author Jacques Savary, that a necessary precondition for a merchant for not failing in business was that he "was knowing how to write their letters of correspondence in a free, plain, and tradesman-like stile, and to give or receive orders in terms suitable to the nature of the thing they write about."[186] He furthermore continued that "a tradesman's letters should be plain, concise, and to the purpose; no quaint expressions, no book-phrases, no flourishes, and yet they must be full and sufficient to express what he means, so as not to be doubtful, much less unintelligible."[187]

The reason for the necessity of such a particular letter style becomes clear at the very same moment. A merchant's letters needed to be unambiguously clear because business depended on clear statements and unambiguously clear orders. This was the basic condition for all trading activities, all negotiation processes and all trade implementation. For this purpose, merchants should, as was Defoe's' advice and directive, omit quaint expressions, book-phrases and flourishes, which meant that their letters should be as concise as possible and that they should omit unnecessary rhetorical flourish in their letters and instead stick to the facts and to the most essential information. On the other hand, however, although they omitted book-phrases, the merchants' letters did not forgo a certain uniformity and formularity in their letters but were instead strongly

185 Mair, *Book-keeping methodiz'd*, 6-7.

186 Defoe, *Complete English Tradesman*, 22.

187 Ibid., 25.

characterised by a high degree of formalisation. In this way, although they avoided using quaint expressions from other sources and language registers, merchants instead developed and mobilised in their letters their very own typical, formulaic expressions, set phrases and terms, and their own vocabulary. In short, they drew on their own language register for their letters, in order to write in a "tradesman-like stile", as Daniel Defoe put it.[188] The language used in this register was highly standardized and uniform. In a certain way therefore one could say that while merchants indeed omitted writing in a flowery and rambling manner, "weitläuffig" as the contemporaries would call it in German, and avoided using book-phrases from other external sources and literary influences, they still used their very own books of phrases for writing their letters, which, in turn, is not only meant in a figurative sense, but also quite literally.

Many contemporary merchant manuals served as sources of inspirations and as compendiums of the typical merchant language of the time.[189] Even without the merchant manuals, however, we are able to clearly identify and define the contemporary commercial language register of business and trade simply by reading several hundreds of merchant letters, which all used the same vocabulary, which again showed striking parallels also with the language of the merchant manuals. In these letters, we find the concise, emphatic diction and the simple, plain, and perspicuous style that the contemporary author Mair highlighted above as characteristic and necessary for business letters.

Furthermore, we quickly realize that all of the words and phrases, the letter formulae used in these letters, served very concrete pragmatic purposes and that the letters are marked by "a certain peculiar use of words and phrases", as Mair called it, which apparently served the purpose of structuring one's letters and the activities performed by means and on the basis of these letters. In short, we come to realise that this formularity seemed to have been mandatory for these letters in order to fulfil the crucial requirement of trade of being as clear and concise as possible. It was necessary because it ensured the smooth running of one's businesses and it advocated for the clarity of one's actions before the eyes of one's partners. As Defoe put it, this ensured that the letters were not "doubtful, much less unintelligible".[190] For that purpose, as Mark Häberlein described it, "commercial correspondence in the 18th century largely adhered to uniform rhetorical conventions and was guided by cross-cultural norms of politeness, friendly engagement and reciprocity."[191]

The formulaic nature of the letters was therefore only a logical and natural consequence of the necessity of clarity in business transactions and communication. It was an indispensable part of the practical principle of showing efficiency in one's letters, which was at the same time the basic foundation and catalyst for a merchant's business, particularly in commission trade. Typical examples of formulaic language in financing have already been presented in the previous section of this chapter. In their financial

188 Defoe, *Complete English Tradesman*, 22.

189 For a compendium of all merchant manuals of the time see Hoock/Jeannin/Kaiser, *Ars Mercatoria*, with a good introduction by Wolfgang Kaiser.

190 Defoe, *Complete English Tradesman*, 25.

191 Häberlein, "Trading companies," 22.

transactions, merchants used standard terms and vocabulary for all basic operations: they *drew, accepted, honoured, accepted, remitted, negotiated* and *paid* bills of exchange. Such fixed and standardised terminologies and vocabularies, however, did not only prevail in financing business but were actually employed in each and every field of activity a merchant was engaged in.

A concise overview over many of such terms and phrases used in the Luetkens letters can be found in Paul Jacob Marperger's mercantile letter manual *Der allzeitfertige Handels-Correspondent* from 1717. Examples of words and phrases frequently occurring in this manual are for instance to "honor"/agree ["honoriren", e.g. a bill], to "occur"/happen ["occurriren", e.g. a business opportunity], "satisfaction"/agreeable ["agreable", e.g. with regard to a deal or finance transaction], to "take note" or "notice"/take to record ["nota nehmen", e.g. in accounting], "precaution" ["praecaution", e.g. with regard to the trustability of a customer], "good advantage" ["guter Avantage", e.g. with regard to the quality of goods], "accommodate"/come to an agreement/consent ["accommodiret", e.g. with regard to a deal], "Affairen" [a common word that was used to describe an enterprise without actually mentioning it for disguise purposes], "anticipate" ["anticipiret", e.g. with regard to planning ahead], "as it appears"/promising ["alle apparence", e.g. with regard to a promising deal], "Cargason" [cargo], "employ"/implement ["employren", e.g. a transaction], to "effectuate"/pay ["effetuiren"], to "inspect" goods ["inspecie"], "abandon"/reject goods ["abandoniren"].[192]

There were furthermore fixed sets of expressions or sentences used in commodity trading and in particularly in the commission trade, which represented certain negotiation practices, agreements or transactions, such as "I came up with an idea", "bin auf den Gedancken gekommen" in German, which Luetkens not only used very frequently, but which was also his standard entrance into a negotiation regarding a possible trading opportunity. Many of his enterprises can be identified in the flow of correspondences represented in the Luetkens archive simply by searching for the letter phrase in his letters. It usually started a conversation that would subsequently turn into a negotiation that ended in the conclusion of a trade deal. This sentence is therefore clearly to be seen as a marker in his letter archive, used by Luetkens as well as by his correspondents in regular practice. The same fact applies to "E.E. can count on" ["kan staat machen"], "In answer to your last" ["referire mich auf dero angenehmes"], "with last post we had the honour to receive yours" ["vorige Post hatten wir die Ehre"], I find it "rather good" ["recht gut"], or the typical closing formulae like "your most humble servant" ["votre très humble servant"].[193] There were typical phrases for letters of recommendations, for legal documents, for facturas (sales invoices), connoissements (bills of lading), employment contracts and for simple letters of gratitude for the successful procurement of goods. In

192 Marperger, *Der allzeitfertige Handels-Correspondent*, 763-769.

193 The letter formula "Vorige Post hatten wir die Ehre" alone appears more than 60 times in letters from several correspondents. The other letter formulae can be found and will reappear in the chapters as separate references. Typical closing formulae are "Your most humble Servant", "wormit ohne mehres freundtl. salut. Gott Empfohlen, verbl.", "en verbleife naer friendeleicke Grottenisse","grüßen E.E. von Hertzen und verbleiben nach Empfehlung gottlichen Schutzes jederzeit mit allen Estim", "nous avons l'honneur d'etre toujours avec le plus parfait attachment Monsieur & tres cher ami votre très humble servant".

all business fields, including the shipping business and high-risk trade, such common vocabulary prevailed, in many different languages. The unifying element of all the letters and documents written and exchanged in these different fields of activity was that the merchant adhered to the same shared common commercial language style. Thus, all of the terms and expressions used in these fields and documents together formed and marked the language register of business and trade.

The relevance and ultimate reason behind this practice has been brilliantly summarised by Toby L. Ditz, who observed that the special character, the form and narrative of business letters was due to the fact that all business letters were in the end "yoked to practical claims on others – for example, for more time to repay a debt or for letters of recommendation".[194] As concrete means and tools of conducting concrete trading activities, all business letters "had immediate pragmatic goals; […] [because they] were associated with appeals to others for practical assistance – for example, to transport and sell cargoes, to obtain loans or to extend the time for their repayment."[195] That is, the letters served very practical and direct purposes. For this reason in particular, the letters needed to draw on shared and fixed vocabularies and terminologies that clearly denoted the respective actions performed by letters, intelligible to all participating parties. Only this condition offered and ensured the possibility of trading and acting on the basis of letters, which was crucial for the trading activities of literally every wholesale merchant of the Early Modern Period. For historians, in turn, the terminologies allow to clearly identify business letters in archival letter collections and to gain insights into Early Modern business operations and the letters' functionality and effectiveness within Early Modern commercial culture.

As for the letter content, Francesca Trivellato has aptly summarised a canon of typical topics of business letters, which once more facilitates the identification of business letters. Trivellato "schematically group[s] […] [the kinds of] information transmitted via private business correspondence […] under three headings. Commodity prices, local units of weight and measures, insurance premia, exchange rates, descriptions of the quantity and quality of products available in specific towns or regions, and similar matters are paramount. News concerning political, military and diplomatic events also abound. Both types of information helped the letters' recipients to assess short- and medium-term market fluctuations, and thus facilitated their decision-making process. But merchant letters also contained a third type of information: about merchants themselves. This knowledge could be either direct (when, for example, the success or failure of a certain agent was communicated to correspondents) or indirect (in the sense that letter exchange was itself a form of recognition of reciprocal trust and esteem or at least tested the possibility of future collaboration)."[196]

Trivellato's list also corresponds with the view of historical writer Mair who summarized all things a merchant "ought to know" as including "what Goods he has purchased; what he has disposed of, with the Gain or Loss upon the Sale, and what he has yet on

194 Ditz, "Shipwrecked," 53.

195 Ditz, "Formative Ventures," 62.

196 Trivellato, "Merchants' letters," 87-88.

hand; what Goods or Money he has in the Hands of Factors; what ready Money he has by him; what his Stock was at first; what Alterations and Changes it has suffered since."[197]

As becomes obvious from both quotes, from changes in commodity prices to the effects of political events to changing behaviour of merchant partners, writing about and providing information about these matters served the practical purpose of improving the predictability of trading activities and future events which directly affected the business enterprises. In order to ensure clarity and to ensure that the messages the writer sent were understood correctly by the respective addressees, the letter writers again often drew on uniform formulations. In addition to the common vocabulary used with regard to prices or exchange rates, which have been discussed above, such vocabularies also prevailed with regard to the estimations of quality of certain goods. Whenever goods were described as "rather good" or "rather nice" ["recht guth" or "recht schöner Wahr"] for instance this was a clear signal for a trading partner that an investment in these goods was in fact very promising, contrary to our modern, initial expectation.[198] With regard to political events, the merchants often quoted or provided information and reports that matched the news in the newspapers of the time, which we can also find in the Luetkens archive.[199] Even with regard to assessments of the trustworthiness of certain merchants or merchant houses, which represents Trivellato's third point, the merchants used similar terms and expressions to express their opinions on their fellow men. This followed the aim of being on the same page as their correspondents with regard to the qualifications and reputation of these other merchants and to give them clear instructions as to how to further proceed with these men. In the Luetkens archive, we are therefore able to detect in the letters exchanged among the merchants certain clear signal words and phrases that commented on the character and trustworthiness of certain merchants, and these signal words and phrases furthermore worked in both directions. This means that the merchant used certain set phrases and expressions for positive as well as for negative assessments of other merchants' professional abilities or trustworthiness. Typical positive assessments in the Luetkens letters were for instance that merchants were "honest and decent people" ["honnette und suffisante Leuthe"], "decent people" ["brave Leuthe"], "reliable and trustworthy ["suffisant"] and apart from that very faithful ["brav"] and honest people". They furthermore described a merchant as "une galant homme", "un honnete homme", or as "good & honest man & with good credit" ["braver & ehrl. Man & in guten Credit"]".[200] As research has shown

197 Mair, *Book-keeping methodiz'd*, 2. Regarding the formulae in merchant accounting, see also in particular Gervais, Pierre. "Why Profit and Loss Didn't Matter," 39.

198 See for instance regarding nice goods, "recht schöner Wahr", Letter from Luetkens, Anthony to Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, October 28, 1743, TNA, HCA 30/235. The sugars are rather good, "recht guth", Letter from Hertzer & von Bobartt to Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, April 20, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/234.

199 See newspapers and price currents as for instance the *Hamburg Preis-Courant* in TNA, HCA 30/232.

200 See for instance, as the examples quoted, letter from De Meyere, Albertus to Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, August 20, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/234; Letter from Bethmann, Johann Jakob to Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, July 14, 1745, TNA, HCA 30/234; Letter from Bethmann, Johann Jakob to Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, July 25, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/234; Letter from Hertzer & von Bobartt to Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, May 29, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/234. As a good comparative example with regard to

in this regard, particularly referring to a merchant as a "honnete homme" was a clear contemporary sign of the fact that a merchant was trustable and reputable.[201]

As regards negative or unfavourable assessments of other merchants' characters or abilities, the merchants also used similar phrases or words. We could in some instances even speak in this regard of certain labels that they used to literally stigmatise or malign other merchants. The language that they used appears rather drastic from our modern point of view. However, as part of the commercial language register of business and trade of the 18th century, these terms and phrases were not only typical, but it appears that the usage of these words was generally deemed to be socially acceptable and appropriate by the contemporary letter writers, because they all used them. These phrases fulfilled the purpose of providing necessary evaluation criteria helping them to assess other people, certain situations and mercantile collaboration potentials.

Drastic Language

Using such drastic or even rude language was not uncommon in the field of trade and within the business culture of the 18th century because it served a concrete purpose. As Ditz had emphasized, this practice served the purpose of creating a sense of community and of fraternisation between merchants by means of establishing boundaries and differentiating between the trusted and the not-trusted.[202] The practice was in this regard not limited to the group of Hanseatic merchants or Luetkens' correspondence network in particular but rather was common practice in many merchant circles of the period. It can even be described as a common phenomenon and characteristic of the international merchant community and the general culture of the Early Modern Period.[203] Typical, drastic, negative descriptions of other merchants that I have found in the Luetkens letters were for instance "rogue" ["Schelm", "fripon" in French], "villain" ["Schurke"], scoundrel ["hundsvott"], "burglar" ["Dieb", "voleur"], or, as one of my favourite insults, merchants were called a "cowardly hat" ["feige Mütze"].[204] It needs to

letter formulae such as referring to someone as a "galant homme", see also Henninger, *Bethmann*, 80-81.

201 Strosetzky, Christoph. "The Merchant from Patristics to the Honnete Homme in the Writings of Savary." In *The Honorable Merchant – Between Modesty and Risk-Taking: Intercultural and Literary Aspects*, edited by Christoph Lütge and Christoph Strosetzki, 3-18. Cham: Springer, 2019, here 16.

202 See Ditz, "Shipwrecked."

203 On insults and abusive words in the Early Modern Period, see Cressy, David. *Dangerous Talk: Scandalous, Seditious, and Treasonable Speech in Pre-modern England*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010. See Münch, Paul. *Lebensformen in der frühen Neuzeit: 1500 bis 1800*. Berlin: Ullstein, 1998, 286-293. See Backmann, Sibylle, ed. *Ehrkonzepte in der Frühen Neuzeit. Identitäten und Abgrenzungen*, Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1998. See Spurr, John. "A Profane History of Early Modern Oaths." *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 11 (2001): 37-63. See also Mohr, Melissa. "HOLY SH*T: A Brief History of Swearing." Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press, 2013. Regarding the often used term 'rogue' ["Schelm"] but also the other insults, see in particular Lobenstein-Reichmann, Anja. *Sprachliche Ausgrenzung im späten Mittelalter und der frühen Neuzeit*. Berlin/Boston: de Gruyter, 2013.

204 Examples are for instance "Monsieur Paerr at agie comme un fripon." Letter from Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb to Darragory, Nicolas and Jean, August 28, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/232, Letter Book I, no. 287. "was ist allso mit solchen Schurken anzufangen". Letter from Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb to

be stressed that as harmless as some of these words might seem to us today, the Early Modern contemporaries regarded these words as heavy artillery. In the context of 18th-century language, these words were abusive indeed and ranked among a high level of insults possible.[205] That means that these words had clear defamatory powers, which means that being referred to in such a way by another merchant clearly had defamatory effects and caused damage to reputation.[206]

In the letter episode presented in the next part of the chapter, such drastic language, including the insults, will also play an important role. Interesting and indicative of the letter practice of merchants with regard to their language use is that we will, however, not only encounter such rough language in letters between persons relatively unfamiliar with one another or in letters condemning the behaviour of strangers, but we will encounter it even in letters exchanged between close trading partners, of course in varying degrees of severity, which is another crucial feature of the language register of business and trade. This demonstrates that the merchants used harsh language not only to show their aversion to other merchants or foreign merchants, but they also used a somewhat diluted form of harsh language whenever they saw the need to rebuke one of their own or dealt with conflicts among trading partners. That is, they used it in situations of any breaches of agreements or contracts, breaches of trust or confidentiality or when they rebuked each other for breaches of good practice. The latter relates for instance to breaking an engagement or promise or with regard to neglecting the need to inform each other about financial transactions or generally with regard to any action taken that contradicted their sense of honour and solidarity. In the episode presented, particularly the latter points will play an important role within the letter conversation, towards the end of the episode. The most striking feature of these concrete letters in which we find such language in the presented episode is that in contrast to letters that merely served the purpose of passing a bad judgement on unfamiliar merchants, e.g. by simply referring to these merchants and stigmatizing them as "rogues", in letters exchanged among trading partners the rule seemed to be to choose a well thought-out rough tone and vocabulary for the letters to teach the addressee a lesson, to rebuke them in order to guide them back to the path of virtue.

For this purpose, the practice was to mobilise exactly the same language register as it was used in regular business correspondence but to use it in a kind of reverse logic. In these letters, the language register of business and trade served essentially as a foil or blueprint that made it clear to the addressee that he should have actually known better. Thus, the merchants used the same vocabularies and arguments that they used in their regular business correspondence but put a question mark behind

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Luttman & von Bobartt, September 14, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/232, Letter Book I, no. 308. "denn von dießem Hundsvott will loß seyn." Letter from Bethmann, Johann Jakob to Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, May 16, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/234. "Bobart scheint auch eine rechte feige Mütze zu seyn." Letter from Bethmann, Johann Jakob to Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, June 17, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/234. More examples are quoted hereafter.

205 See the extensive list of contemporary insults in "Schimpfwörter." *Oekonomische Encyklopädie*, edited by Johann Georg Krünitz. 242 volumes. Berlin, 1773-1858, vol. 144, 574-575. See also Grose, Francis. *A classical dictionary of the vulgar tongue*. London: London: Printed for S. Hooper, 1788.

206 See Cressy, *Dangerous Talk*, 17-38. See Lobenstein-Reichmann, *Sprachliche Ausgrenzung*, 56-70.

the presented capabilities and competences and even questioned the character of their correspondents and trading partners. The goal behind the letters using such language is revealed to us at the very same moment: these letters were not intended to be purely defamatory, but they rather constituted letters of complaint, of indignation, of warning or rebuke, written with the intention and in the hope of convincing the addressee to rethink and correct his behaviour and to change tack. If the addressee, in turn, did not give in to the voiced demands, the letters served the purpose to indicate that the addressee would eventually have to bear the consequences of his behaviour, which could mean for instance that a business relationship was terminated. For this purpose, to send this kind of a message, the letter writers used a method, which I call the *sledgehammer method* as a governing practical principle of persuasion, which was intended to lead to the desired effect and success.

The practical principle of the sledgehammer method and the letters featuring it highly intrigued me because they show that even if the otherwise highly effective normal routine within business was disturbed or came to a halt, the merchants found an equally effective way to counteract these disturbances and to find an answer to the problems. In two of three cases in the following letter episode this method turned out to be successful. The respective trading partners gave in to the demands and admitted their mistakes or rather they confessed that there had been misunderstandings. As soon as that happened, the tone of the respective letter conversation softened and business was continued as usual. The usage of the same language register, the language register of business and trade, shows that this principle of the sledgehammer method was an intrinsic part of the practice of writing business letters. It was the reverse side to the principle of exhibiting effectiveness, the other side of the coin of persuading each other in the field of trade, representing at the same time a common and accepted way of dealing with each other within the merchant community of the time. The personal relationships and business ties between these merchants apparently allowed it that such a way of dealing with each other was regarded as appropriate – which does not mean or rule out the possibility that such letters could also, of course, lead to a negative outcome, e.g. to the said termination of a business relationship. Regardless of the outcome of sending each other letters of complaint, rebuke or warning, however, it must be noted that generally it seemed to have been the rule that writing such letters and sending harsh rebukes to trading partners was deemed to be appropriate and was considered necessary behaviour by the contemporaries. This marks these letters as pivotal tools of social interaction within the business culture of the 18th century.

Early Modern business letters are often described as very formulaic and prosaic, which is why they are often neglected or treated as subordinate with regard to their relevance for learning about Early Modern letter-writing practices and Early Modern life in general and have attracted far less research interest in comparison to other Early Modern letters types, such as love letters or familiar letters.[207] As my explanations have shown,

207 See Trivellato, "Merchants' letters," 84. See Ditz, "Formative Ventures," 61. See Ditz, "Shipwrecked," 51. In the introduction to Rebecca Earle's *Epistolary Selves*, business letter are in this regard referred to as "correspondence of the most 'impersonal' sort" and "ostensibly the least literary of objects".

this represents a wasted opportunity because these letter reveal a great deal about the effectiveness and power of letter-writing and correspondence practice for people, particularly when speaking of the field of business and trade, which highly "depended on the organized exchange of letters", as already Max Weber stated.[208] For Early Modern business culture, a certain formularity and thus a repetitive, stereotypic nature of letters, following clear practical rules, was highly relevant, necessary and indispensable for the smooth running of business and business correspondence. As Francesca Trivellato brilliantly summed it up, "the oft-lamented formulaic prose and repetitive content of business letters account for their effectiveness, because rhetorical standardisation rendered contracts and obligations [and letters] intelligible and enforceable across geographical and social boundaries."[209] Both the practical principle of showing efficiency in letter writing and business dealings and the principle of the sledgehammer method, which helped to cope with problems and stagnations in business operations, depended on this letter style and the clearly defined language register of business and trade governing and underlying it. These letters empowered merchants and made them capable of acting and of conducting business. The typical, common form and language of these letters was the precondition for this empowerment and for mutual understanding and comprehension.[210]

Languages

In order to turn himself into a respected wholesale merchant, a merchant had to prove and constantly demonstrate that he was well-versed and practically skilled in the practice of writing appropriate business letters. He had to master the language register of business and trade and he had to know about its particularities and how to approach different correspondents in different matters in the appropriate form. That is, a merchant also learned by practice to embody and internalise the practical principles of persuasion leading to success in business and correspondence. Being able to master this skill, a merchant made a claim to becoming a part of the merchant community. He demonstrated that he possessed the necessary practical capabilities of acting as a legitimate member of the mercantile group.[211] At the same time, in purely practical terms, the knowledge and mastery of the typical letter style and language of business letters assured the merchants that he and his actions were understood by his fellow men.

Earle, Rebecca. "Introduction: letters, writers, and the historian." In *Epistolary Selves: Letters and Letter-writers, 1600-1945*, edited by Rebecca Earle, 1-14. Aldershot: Ashgate, 1999. The exact opposite is proved by Ditz's article, the Luetkens correspondence, and furthermore, as a good comparative example, by Origo, *Datini*. See also Stuber, Martin, Stefan Hächler, and Luc Lienhard, ed. *Hallers Netz. Ein europäischer Gelehrtenbriefwechsel zur Zeit der Aufklärung*. Basel: Schwabe Verlag, 2005, 12.

208 Weber, Max. *General Economic History*, 295.

209 See Trivellato, "Merchants' letters," 84.

210 See also Trivellato, *Discourse and Practice of Trust*, 19.

211 See Smith, "Merchants."

As the French historian Pierre Gervais concluded, in his case focussing on the language of accounting still also applicable for letters, that in the end both

> "the graphic form and the vocabulary utilized would render it immediately intelligible to anyone who possessed the knowledge shared by merchants [...] [of how to take and how to deal with the respective contents of a business letter]. In effect, [...] [the language register of business and trade with its formularity] served as an international language understood and shared within merchant networks extending across Europe and the Atlantic world".[212]

Therefore, this language register made it possible to trade, negotiate, work and correspond with each other as merchants across borders, beyond different nationalities and in different languages, which surely has to be seen as one of the major driving forces behind the globalisation of international trade during that time. At the same time, it laid the foundation for the success of a global world market thenceforward, although the same process was also accompanied by the dramatic negative side of the same coin, including expansion, colonialism, flight and expulsion.[213]

For the contemporary merchants, the shared language register of business and trade represented the basis of mutual understanding and mutual comprehension.[214] At the same time, it would also become a means that was used to promote mutual appreciation. It was simultaneously both a kind of access authorisation and a proving ground. As David Hancock put it, "letters of trade, with judgement, and language suit[ed] to the subject, kept respect and confidence."[215] For merchants residing and trading outside their home country, and particularly for young merchants residing in foreign lands during their establishment phase, the significance of mastering this typical style and language in their letters is clear. It was their entry ticket to the local merchant community, a basic precondition and necessity for their professional advancement in the foreign countries. Proficiency in the language register of business and trade earned them the respect of others, which subsequently had to be substantiated by conducting successful enterprises.

This finally represents also the basic condition and fact which the intendant Tourny referred to in the third point of his report assessing the role and the raison d'être of Hanseatic merchants living and trading in France in the mid-18th century. Speaking of the group of foreign merchants represented in the Luetkens archive, an active group and network of over 60 merchants, however, as only a sub-group of an even larger network, it can be noted that all these merchants showed the necessary competencies in

212 Gervais, "Historicized Rationality," 29.

213 Jacob/Secretan, "Introduction," 1-16. Crouzet, "Economic Change" and "Le négoce international." See Dierks, *In my Power*, 1-8. See Reinert/Fredona. "Merchants and the Origins of Capitalism," 171-181. Regarding the "world economy in-the-making", see also Lindemann, "Doing Business in 18th century Hamburg," 163.

214 Jeannin, "Distinction des compétences," 325: "Pour les hommes qui l`exercaient, il importait de savoir dire juste ce qu´ils voulaient dire, comme de comprendre exactement la parole ou l`écrit des autres."

215 Hancock, *Citizens of the World*, 103. See also Jacob M. Price. "Directions for the Conduct of a Merchant's Counting House, 1766." *Business History* 28 (1986): 134-50.

the practice of writing business letters.[216] The merchants possessed great proficiency in writing business letters in several languages, drawing on the same shared international vocabulary of business letters.[217] Whenever this proficiency was lacking to a certain extent, as can be observed, the merchants helped each other and provided each other with assistance and helpful tips and even suitable formulations. A prime example is a letter by the merchant Johann Jakob Bethmann, who enclosed in one of his letters to his correspondent Luetkens a style sheet with typical French phrases for bills of exchanges. He writes that "enclosed you will find a formulair of letters of exchange which you can use when drawing or remitting bills in Paris per nostro conto, which happens because you are not so very well familiar with the French orthography, my heart only wants the best for you till death."[218] Apart from these cases in which such assistance was offered and necessary, in general Luetkens and his partners were very proficient and practiced in handling their business correspondence. They mastered the rules and practical requirements of using the language register of business and trade and showed a high level of professionalism in both the material handling and writing of their business letters. The latter, in turn, was necessary because their business often required them to write several or even several dozens of letters per day.[219] Most importantly though, they were also able to suit their actions to their words, that is they conducted lucrative business with the help of their letters. Both taken together, the proficiency in the practice of writing business letters and the subsequent realisation and implementation of their business enterprises, earned them the respect and the appreciation of their French trading partners and even, as Tourny's report reveals, the appreciation of the French state, which fostered their right of residence in France.

Apart from sharing the same language register as a common ground of mutual understanding in order to achieve the overarching goal of winning each others' appreciation, it was equally important to also use different national languages in the business letters when addressing different correspondents. Thus, although the merchants would all generally draw on the same business vocabulary, terminologies and shared expressions, we should still not underestimate the particular significance and value that the merchants attached to the usage of national languages for their correspondence. In fact, deciding to use a particular national language for your letters while at the same time mobilizing the language register of business and trade in the end represented the two sides of the same coin as the Luetkens archive shows. It was both part of the proficiency in writing business letters not only to adhere to the common business vocabulary but also to decide in which national language a letter writer wanted to deliver messages

216 Regarding the larger network of Hanseatic and German merchants in France during that time, see inter alia Weber, *Deutsche Kaufleute*, Weber, "German Merchants"; Butel, "Les négociants allemands de Bordeaux"; Leroux, *La Colonie Germanique*.

217 See Marzagalli, "Négoce et politique des étrangers en France," 21: "L'apprentissage des langues est certes primordial pour le grand commerce international."

218 "Einliegend folgt ein Formulair von Wexsßelbrieffen wenn du pr n[ost]ro Conto auf Paris trassiren & remittiren wirst, es geschiehet, weil du die frantzöische Ortographie nicht zum besten weißt, und mein Hertz meinet es redlich biß in den Todt." Letter from Bethmann, Johann Jakob to Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, July 25, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/234.

219 See the list of outgoing mail kept by Luetkens in TNA, HCA 30/232.

to an addressee. The latter practice in particular represented a deliberate choice. Depending on the addressee and the language chosen, a letter sent a particular signal and message to an addressee.

Both elements, writing in a particular language register and in a particular national language ultimately served the same purpose, which was to win the respect and appreciation of the merchant addressees. The former in this regard laid the foundation for mutual comprehension and solidarity while the latter served the purpose of directly expressing mutual respect, closeness and a commitment to cooperation. Last but not least, the act of choosing the French language while travelling France showed Luetkens' will to integrate. Using a particular national language should leave no doubt about the fact that these men made every effort to demonstrate their readiness to integration, to come to understandings and to cooperate as equals with their French, Dutch, Swiss or German hosts in France. The choice of a particular national language for letters therefore is to be regarded as a fundamental part of the strategy to promote and ensure mutual appreciation among the merchants, which served as a precondition for the fact that, as Tourny, too, had observed, these men enjoyed the status of welcomed guests in France.

In the Luetkens letters, both of these crucial elements with regard to the language use within the practice of writing business letters become clearly evident. On the one hand, the letters show a great uniformity and many similarities with regard to similar contents, formalities, letter formulae, shared terminologies and expressions. On the other hand, however, the letters also feature a variety of languages. We find letters written in French, German, Dutch and English in the Luetkens archive, which thus provides a vivid example of the multilingualism prevailing in merchant correspondence of the time. Concretely this means that with regard to Luetkens' incoming letters from both French merchants and foreigners residing in France, it is striking that a majority of these letters are written in French. By using French in the letters, these men underpinned their rightful status and their self-perception as crucial parts of and participants in the merchant community of France, and it naturally increased comprehensibility and clarity. Other languages used in the incoming letters are Dutch and German and very occasionally English. There are furthermore clear preferences detectable.

The merchants in the Luetkens archive often turned to German for instance when their letters also included more personal or private matters in addition to business matters.[220] This approach becomes most evident in all those letters that were apparently deliberately written in two different languages right from the start. Thus, we can find among Luetkens' incoming letters several letters that started in French or Dutch, primarily dealing with business matters, but then changed to German when the letter writer added more personal information to the letter (e.g. in the form of a postscript). It was also not uncommon that a business letter had several authors, e.g. when both partners of a partner firm wrote different parts of the respective letter. In these cases, often one partner wrote the main business letter while the other partner added information on more personal matters in his own handwriting at the end of the letter. In these cases, too, the language could change. Notwithstanding this practice though, it

220 The same practice applies to the letters analysed in Henninger, *Bethmann*, 81-82.

is important to note that we are still able to also find more than one hundred regular business letters written completely in German in the Luetkens archive. This means that by mobilizing the same language register of business and trade it was generally also possible for merchants in France to write and exchange regular business letters in German or Dutch while staying in France. In sum, already the incoming letters reveal to us that the choice of a national language for one's letters apparently not only depended on the nationality of a correspondent, but it also followed further rules, motivations and practical reasons, which was clearly another important intrinsic part of the practical principle of writing effective business letters. The patterns and motivations behind the respective choice of language become even more tangible when we take a look at Luetkens' own large Letter Book in the second step.

In Nicolaus Gottlieb Luetkens' large Letter Book, into which he personally copied all his outgoing letters, we find three different languages used for his letters.[221] Luetkens wrote in German, French and Dutch, whereby for his French letters, as becomes obvious from comments and corrections added to his copies or from letters written in another hand, he sometimes sought assistance from his hosts or other merchants when writing these letters. Later his merchant clerk corrected his French letters and also took over the correspondence in French. As regards Luetkens' choice of language for his letters, when reading through all 700 letters of Luetkens' main Letter Book, furthermore complemented by smaller Letter Books and letter rolls, certain preferences and patterns become clearly evident. These preferences and patterns relate mainly to three aspects. First, it becomes apparent that Luetkens chose different national languages for different fields of business. For his shipping industry, particularly for his letter exchanges with his ships' captains for instance he predominantly used Dutch, mainly because the Dutch language was still a kind of lingua franca within the shipping business during the 18th century.[222] For his commission trade activity, he mainly used German and French, the latter of which was mainly due to the fact that many of his trading partners were of French origin or were business partners in bilingual partner firms. Secondly, his language choice apparently depended on his personal relationships with the addressee and it depended on the matters discussed in the letters.

With his uncle Anthony in London for instance Luetkens exclusively corresponded in German, and the same fact applies to his closest trading partners in Hamburg. On the other hand, using German was also a way of separating business and private matters in one's letters. So, for instance, Luetkens' friend Johann Jakob Bethmann used the German language for all his personal letters to his friend Nicolaus Gottlieb, while he and his partner Jacques Imbert used almost exclusively the French language for their business letters. The correspondence of the house Bethmann & Imbert was conducted by the French business partner Imbert, who wrote in a very buoyant French hand. Thirdly, the

221 Only at the very end of the book did he pass this responsibility on to his new merchant clerk Schuetz.

222 See chapter 6. See also Schotte, Margaret. *Sailing School: Navigating Science and Skill, 1550-1800*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2019.

most decisive criterion for deciding which national language Luetkens chose was naturally also the origin and nationality of his correspondents. That is, Luetkens apparently choose between different languages for his letters depending on the mother tongue of his correspondents. He wrote to his trading partner Cornelis de Meyere & Soonen in Amsterdam in Dutch, to the merchant banks in Paris mainly in French, and to his French partners in the Spanish cities of St. Sebastian or Bilbao in French. With regard to bilingual merchant houses, he wrote in French when he directly corresponded with the respective French or Swiss partners in these business houses. Whenever he corresponded with the German or Dutch partner of a merchant house he wrote in German or in Dutch. Whenever he approached and addressed letters to these business houses for business purposes in general, addressing his letter to both partners at the same time, to Bethmann & Imbert or Luttman & von Bobartt for instance, rather than writing to the partners individually, his choice depended on his knowledge about which of the two partners handled the correspondence of the respective firm. Consequently, he would write to Luttman & von Bobartt in Dutch since he knew that it was the Dutch Calvinist Elart von Bobartt who was mainly responsible for the correspondence activities of this firm. Whenever he approached a merchant or business house in France for the first time, he introduced himself in French or, if he knew that these merchants were of German origin or had a German merchant clerk, he used German. The reason behind this particular usage of national languages becomes obvious and explainable at the very same moment. The reason why he approached his correspondents in their mother tongue was to express his solidarity with the addressee, to show his skills and particularly his commitment to the trading partner, to demonstrate his goodwill for a close association with the addressee, and to adapt to and integrate himself into the respective merchant community. In this regard, it was a matter of course that the merchant chose the mother tongue of his correspondents for this purpose. The practice of writing in different languages was therefore a result and concrete manifestation of the efforts that the foreign merchants undertook to gain or maintain the appreciation of their trading partners and hosts in France.

Most generally though, it can be observed in Luetkens' Letter Book that contrary to his incoming letters, in his outgoing correspondence, the German language still outweighed all other languages in usage. This was to a certain extent certainly due to the simple fact that Luetkens was still in the process of developing his language skills. Through his apprenticeship with David Speelmeyer his Dutch was advanced, but he still had to practice his French. The fact that he wrote so many German letters, however, also gives us a clear indication of how many merchants of German origin and merchants able to speak German or lower German actually lived in France and Spain during that time. His letters therefore provide meaningful insights into the extensive network of German and Hanseatic merchants living and trading in France in mid-18th century, without which Luetkens' activities in France and his career aspirations would not have been imaginable or achievable at all. It once more shows us the importance of his dense network in France. The fact that these merchants, however, responded to Luetkens' letters in French provides clear evidence of the acculturation process that these merchants underwent and it shows the cosmopolitan nature of these men's lives, their business and correspondence activities. When reading the letters of the Luetkens archive, both incoming and outgoing, I became highly intrigued by the language diversity and the varieties of language use and tone in the merchants' correspondences, the polyglot nature of these correspondences, particularly with regard to corresponding with the same correspondents in changing languages.[223] It was apparently not only possible but a typical phenomenon of the time that letter conversations were conducted in a bilingual or even trilingual manner. This ultimately showed me the flexibility and the high performance capability, in short, the importance of the international language register of business and trade for these merchants enabling them to understand each other across national or language boundaries.

With regard to Luetkens' language use what becomes most apparent is how crucially important it was for him, and for wholesale merchants in general, to be able to understand, speak and write in several different national languages. Being polyglot, that is speaking or at least understanding several languages, was a basic precondition of mercantile socialisation and success because it provided the basis for international understanding and collaboration.[224] "Linguistic comprehension was the prerequisite for communication" and therefore also for an effective letter-writing practice and consequently also for the implementation of many business enterprises.[225] Especially in the commission trade, involving many different actors at the same time in many different spots and countries, it was indispensable for wholesale merchants to be able to correspond in and understand several languages. This fact explains why Luetkens would later be very keen and made every effort to find a merchant clerk, later becoming his merchant factor in France, who was fluent in the French language. The fact furthermore underlines another crucial reason for Luetkens' long stay in France. He wanted to improve his language skills in French, which then facilitated his own acculturation process in France and strengthened his strong ties with the French Atlantic merchant community after his return to Hamburg.

Understanding and writing letters not only in his mother tongue, but also in Dutch and French was another crucial skill and competence required from a wholesale merchant during his establishment phase. Acquiring the proficiency in language usage, both with regard to using different national languages and with regard to being able to write in the language register of business and trade, was another milestone in Luetkens' career advancement. In complete accordance with Tourny's assessment, this proficiency apart from his commercial success earned Luetkens the respect and appreciation of his partners in France, which turned him into a welcomed guest during his time in France and which created the basis for his strong attachment and strong trade relations and partnerships with France for the time later on when he was already an established wholesale merchant in Hamburg. In 1770, his strong connections to France allowed him to import an entire golden ceiling in the famous French Louis Seize style for his Bel Etage in Hamburg, the only one of its kind in Germany that still exists today.[226]

223 See Gestrich, Andreas, and Margrit Schulte Beerbühl, eds. *Cosmopolitan Networks in Commerce and Society 1660-1914*. London: GHI, 2011.

224 Häberlein/Kuhn, *Fremde Sprachen*; Gallagher, *Learning Languages*.

225 See Trivellato, *Discourse and Practice of Trust*, 19.

226 See Bel Etage, MK&G.

With this assessment and outlook, I have finally arrived at the end of my contextualisation in this chapter. We are equipped with all necessary background information and knowledge to understand the story and the events that unfold themselves in the letter conversation conducted by Luetkens and several of his correspondents in 1744.

The episode will present us with one of the many business enterprises that Nicolaus Gottlieb Luetkens conducted in the business field of commission trade during his establishment phase. The goods in which he traded and invested in this episode were 348 hogsheads, large casks, of brown, unrefined, Moscovian sugars, representing the commodity group in which he specialized already during his establishment phase and which later went on to become his main commodity group after he had settled down in Hamburg. Luetkens bought these goods with the help of his trading partners in Brest and St. Sebastian, where it was sold as Prize goods coming from a Spanish privateering raid on an English merchant ship at the beginning of the year 1744. Since Spain and France were forming a political alliance during this time, the formerly British sugars were declared French sugars and relabelled as such in the harbour of Brest after the official condemnation and the proclamation of the lawfulness of the capture by the Spanish Admiralty Court in St. Sebastian, where the case was brought before court. Since it represented a trade surplus for the French economy, foreign merchants were allowed to invest and re-export such Prize goods. In the end, Luetkens shipped these sugars, on his own account and on the account of his Hamburg partners Hertzer & von Bobartt, to Hamburg, where the latter sold it. During the implementation of this enterprise, eight merchants, and the ship's captain Nagel, were involved, residing in seven different cities: St. Sebastian, Brest, Bordeaux, Nantes, Bayonne, Paris and Hamburg. These men acted as the actual purchasers, consultants, financiers or sellers of the goods. Consequently, this episode will also show us the different trading activities and financing transactions explained above, which were conducted during the enterprise. All of the persons involved were Protestants and therefore part of the networks of the Protestant International in France. In the beginning, in the first part of the episode, everything went smoothly and according to plan and without significant problems, which provides us with a good illustration of the effectiveness of conducting 18th-century trade. Since almost all activities and coordination was taking place on the level and by means of letters, this furthermore provides us with a prime example of the practical principle of showing efficiency in business correspondence. In the second part of the episode, however, after the goods had arrived in Hamburg and were about to be sold, problems occurred, both in practical and financial terms. These problems forced Luetkens to take drastic measures. He wrote letters of warning, of complaint and of rebuke, which will show us the practical principle of the sledgehammer method in action. The measures were crowned with success. In the end, the enterprise turned out to be profitable, although not as profitable as the partners first expected, which will show us at the same time the pitfalls of commission trade. Still, the investment was lucrative enough to represent an important contribution to Luetkens' career advancement in France. The letters exchanged were written in French, Dutch and German. The episode will demonstrate each and every ingredient of 18th-century mercantile business and communication culture presented above.

4.10 The Episode: A Game of Chance

Auspicious Sugar

In February 1744, a Spanish privateer, commanded by the Spanish ship's captain Perre, also spelled as Paire or Paerr, captured an English merchant vessel, which was on its way from the British colonies in America to its mother country, in the waters off the coast of Brest at the western end of the English Channel.[227] Since France and Spain formed a political alliance during that time, it was not uncommon that Spanish privateers sailed the French coast. Likewise, it was also not unusual but rather customary that a ship captured by a Spanish privateer was not escorted to Spain but brought into the nearest port in France, which was Brest in the present case. Lying at anchor in Brest, the ship's captain then informed, that is, sent a message about the capture and the corresponding documents, the pieces of evidence taken from the captured ship as well as the first examinations of the ship's crew, to the Spanish Admiralty Court in St. Sebastian, where subsequently a suit was filed. Throughout the court proceedings, which took place in St. Sebastian, the Spanish privateer's captain stayed in Brest and awaited the outcome of the court case. During that time, the English vessel was not unloaded because it had not yet been declared a legitimate Prize, that is, not yet condemned as official war loot. The crew of the English ship was first interrogated in Brest and then held as prisoners of war while the court proceedings took place. Afterwards, they were released. Before any unloading of the ship could take place, furthermore, in case the ship was declared official war loot, new owners, that is, buyers of the respective ship and its goods, had to be found, which process also lay in the responsibility of the Admiralty Court in St. Sebastian. Subsequently, after the court had passed its judgement and the verdict was announced, which turned out to be unequivocally clear in the present case – the ship was declared a legitimate price since it belonged to the enemy – both the ship and the goods were put up for sale at a public auction in St. Sebastian. The buyers then decided the future of the ship and the goods. After the official condemnation of the captured ship as a Prize ship, the privateer's captain finally also received his remuneration. He and his crew received a small proportion of the proceeds of the sale when the ship and the goods changed owners. This was the moment when the ship got unloaded and the cargo was sold on the spot or repacked and loaded onto another ship as it happened in this case. The cargo on board the English ship captured by Perre mainly consisted of English sugars; in concrete terms a great part of the main cargo of this ship were "224 Bouc[cand] and 113 Oxh[oft]" of English sugars which, when summed up and counted only in hogshead amounted to 348 hogsheads of sugars in total.[228] Hogsheads, "Oxhoft" in German, "Oxhoofd" in Dutch, "Barrique" in French, as well as Bouccand were common volume measures for sugar and liquids during the Early Modern Period: one

227 All the following explanations and reconstructions are based on letters found in HCA, TNA, 30/232-235.

228 Letter from Hertzer & von Bobartt, to Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, April 6, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/234.

hogshead was approximately tantamount to one large cask of sugar, wine or other liquids. Converted into litres, one Hamburg hogshead held about 217-238 litres of sugar.[229]

The buyer and new owner of these sugars was the merchant Nicolaus Gottlieb Luetkens. Luetkens had been informed beforehand about this present business opportunity by Johann Jakob Bethmann and by one of his trading partners in Brest, François Jourdain, a French Huguenot merchant residing in Brest, who had sent him samples of these sugars enclosed in his letters. Parts of these samples were later also forwarded packed in letter packets to his trading partners in Nantes and Hamburg.[230] Since the quality of these samples appeared very promising, Luetkens decided to grasp the opportunity and to invest in the 348 hogsheads of sugar. Since he himself, however, was residing in Bordeaux in the French-German house of Bethmann & Imbert and was not able to either travel to St. Sebastian or to Brest, he asked and employed his trading partners Nicolas and Jean Darragory, French Huguenot merchants from a very reputable French merchant family, residing in St. Sebastian during that time, to buy the sugars for him at the auction. This also had the advantage that the Admiralty Court in St. Sebastian would ask no unnecessary questions about the residency status of the buyers of these goods since the Darragory family was a long-established French merchant family. Foreign merchants were generally allowed to invest in Prize goods. However, getting the Darragory brothers to buy the goods spared Luetkens a lot of bureaucratic effort with regard to providing evidence that he possessed the right to buy these goods; also, he did not have to travel to St. Sebastian. For the unloading process and the repacking of the goods he again engaged François Jourdain in Brest, who was furthermore joined by Elart von Bobartt from the Nantes merchant firm of Luttman & von Bobartt. Elart von Bobbartt acted as the consultant in this enterprise and also took on the responsibility of overseeing the examination of the goods and the loading of the sugars onto the ship that was to take them to Hamburg, namely the ship *Hamburger Börse*, Hamburg Bourse, with its captain Johann Nagel. All three merchants were set to receive a provision for their services of 1% of the total revenues of this enterprise. Luttman & von Bobartt furthermore became 1/4 shareholders in the entire enterprise. Since the value of the sugars ranged between £61,000 ["61/m £"] and "100/m £" in total, this provision, which might initially appear rather low to us, was still lucrative enough for the merchants to agree to assist their partner Luetkens.[231]

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229 See Krüger, Johann Friedrich. *Vollständiges Handbuch der Münzen, Maße und Gewichte aller Länder der Erde für Kaufleute, Banquiers, Geldwechsler* [...]. Quedlinburg/Leipzig: Verlag von Gottfr. Basse, 1830, 221.

230 "Einligen haben E.E. 5 Musters van den Party zuckern in Brest so von ein freundt von da welcher die affere in geringsten nicht regardirt." Letter from Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, to Luttman & von Bobartt, March 25, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/232, Letter Book III, no. 18. "die fünff Proben so empfangen sind schön". Letter from Hertzer & von Bobartt, to Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, April 6, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/234.

231 Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, to Hertzer & von Bobartt, June 9, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/232, Letter Book I, no. 181. See letter from Hertzer & von Bobartt, to Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, June 22, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/234. See letter from Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, to Luttman & von Bobartt, March 25, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/232, Letter Book III, no. 18.

Since the sugars were unloaded and changed their owner in Brest, Luetkens laid down that Brest was also to be stated as the place where the actual trade deal was done, erasing all traces of St. Sebastian or Spanish privateering. Therefore, he also wrote to his insurance company in Amsterdam that it was not "necessary that the insurance policy states that it was Prize goods ["niet nodig te expliquert datt Prys goedern"], but it should "simply state that the ship had been captured in the waters before Brest and afterwards brought to Brest and the goods had been bought and loaded there on the account of Hamburg friends."[232] In the Factura, the official sales invoice, the merchants later entered the city of Brest, not St. Sebastian, as the sales location. The latter naturally had the advantage that the merchants could label these sugars in the end as regular French goods and not as Prize goods originally coming from an English ship. In the more or less unlikely event that these sugars later once more fell victim to a privateering raid during the re-export, this time by a British privateer, this labelling should prevent the English from immediately learning about the actual origin of these sugars. Another crucial fact that helped and provided Luetkens with even more room for manoeuvre and security and that conceiled the origin even more, was the fact that Luetkens once more re-labelled these good as neutral Hamburg goods. In fact, in the final step, in order to be completely on the safe side, he even went as far as to once more use exactly the same strategy that he had already used in his shipping business: he inserted his younger brother Anton Luetkens, a citizen of Hamburg, as the original owner of the sugars as a placeholder for himself, together with the other shareholders in these goods, Hertzer & von Bobartt. Since, therefore, on paper, all these sugars were owned by merchants of the neutral, free imperial city of Hamburg, the merchants basically should have nothing to fear from an English privateering raid. As another positive side effect of exporting neutral goods, and the same effect prevailed for Luetkens' French trading partners, the merchant would not have to pay customs charges. All these steps entirely concealed the actual origin of these goods. The factura therefore simply stated: "Factura sales invoice for 348 Hogshead brown sugars bought on the account of Hertzer & von B. à [= from] Hamburg à 1/2 [one half] Anth: Lutkens à Hamburg 1/2 [one half] unloaded by Monsieur von Bobartt à Nantes in Brest according to the connoissement [bill of lading] [to be sent to] per Hamburg to the above mentioned address loaded unto the ship the *Hamburger Börse* Shipper J: Nagell, may God be with him ["so Gott geleiten wolle"]."[233]

232 "maer deese Party Sukern rennen in Brest geloost en moeten daer onfangen woorden. [...] in de Police maer simpell konde opgemakt woorden, en niet nodig te expliquert datt Prys goedern. [...] von Een Spanse. Caper van St. Sebastien genoomen en in Breest op gebrocht en aldaer an Landt geloost [...] gecocht engeladen voor Reekning fryndе in Hamb en van Hamburg." Letter from Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, to Cornelis de Meyere & Soonen, March 24, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/232, Letter Book III, no. 17.

233 "Factura Verk. Rechn. über 348 Oxh. braune Zucker so gekaufft vor Rechn. Hertzer & von B. a Hamburg à 1/2te dHH Anth: Lutkens à Hamburg 1/2te und durch Herr von Bobartt à Nantes in Brest abladen laßen laut Conosemt. per Hamb. an ersten Adrese in das Hamb[urger] Schiff die Hamb Börse Schiff: J: Nagell so Gott geleiten wolle." The Factura was inserted into the letter from Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb to Luetkens, Anton, June 26, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/232, Letter Book I, no. 197. Another copy was filed in Luetkens' account memorials, as "memoriale no. 379."

In the said connoissement, the bill of lading and freight list, of the Hamburg ship, we can find exactly the same information. As regards Luetkens' own role and his share in this undertaking, the merchant entered in the factura the simple note that his own commission fee in this enterprise would amount to "2 pCt", 2 %, which as we have learned was a standard tariff for a commission agent during that time.[234] From our own knowledge about this case, based on the first-hand knowledge gained directly from the Luetkens archive, however, we are aware of the fact that in this enterprise Luetkens himself was actually not merely the commission agent responsible for the purchase. In fact, Luetkens was the central figure and mastermind in this entire episode, who had engineered the whole undertaking and who was furthermore one of the actual owners of these goods. This case once more vividly demonstrates how Luetkens skilfully used and exploited existing grey areas in mercantile as well as legal practice in order to create the optimum conditions for his business enterprise. With the help of his many trading partners, he was able to arrange in the most effective way, through his correspondence, the whole settlement process and fast handling of this commission enterprise, whereby he was at the same time able to create the most favourable conditions and best prospects for himself to make a profit from this undertaking.

Apart from the factura and the bill of lading, we learn about all these events and agreements presented above and about all of Luetkens' efforts in this matter from several letters exchanged between Luetkens and his partners in the first half of the year 1744. Particularly one letter, letter no. 18 in a smaller Letter Book he kept apart from his main Letter Book, encapsulates and helps us to summarise all the actions taken in this undertaking. This letter furthermore reveals to us several of the further measures and necessary steps that Luetkens now concretely got underway after the general procurement and purchase of the sugars. One of the most important steps and measures was to find further shareholders and supporters of this enterprise and, as a part of this, he planned and intended to convince some of his trading partners by means of his letters to act as the necessary helping hands during the implementation of this enterprise. Precisely against this background, the following letter addressed to the Nantes merchant house of Luttman & von Bobartt is to be understood as a concrete manifestation of the power of persuasion applied in letters. In this particular letter, Luetkens asked the Nantes merchants to assist him as consultants, administrators and loaders on location in Brest. It is furthermore the first letter in which Luetkens approached Luttman & von Bobartt with regard to introducing them to his plans in the trade in these sugars and to make them a pivotal part of this undertaking. The letter was therefore written even before the unloading of goods took place. This letter was most important for the further strategic course-setting within this letter episode.

Highly revealing but also indicative for the letter practice and the power of persuasion applied in letters during that time is the fact that this letter consisted of two parts. It actually contained two letters within one letter. In the first part of the letter, which formed the actual letter addressed directly to the Nantes merchant house, Luetkens presented the basic ideas and his plans behind the enterprise to Luttman & von Bobartt, while the second part subsequently consisted of a copy of a letter that Luetkens

234 "Meine Comisie 2 pCt," ibid.

had written the day before to his Hamburg partners Hertzer & von Bobartt enclosed in the letter to Luttman & von Bobartt. Ultimately, we are therefore actually dealing with two letters when speaking about this letter no. 18 in the Letter Book. Luetkens himself, however, counts both letters in his Letter Book as only one outgoing letter, as a letter packet. Copying letters into other letters, either as part of the original letter text (as in the present case) or as an actual material copy letter (additional paper) added as a layer to the other letters, e.g. inserted into the fold of a letter, was a typical practice during that time within correspondence practice. It served the purpose of informing a correspondent about arrangements or agreements with other merchants and correspondents or bringing the addressee up to date with regard to upcoming events or outstanding sums. Furthermore, the practice often served clear persuasive purposes. By means of disclosing relevant information about agreements with other merchants by adding copies of the letters that had been exchanged, thus allowing them insights and first-hand knowledge about another affair, a merchant deliberately provided his addressee with certain advance information, which was intended to serve as a clear incentive to impel the addressee to enter into and to take part in a respective enterprise. In the present case, these incentives transmitted to the addressee by means of the included letter copy, Luttman & von Bobartt, were twofold. First, the Nantes merchant house learned from the copied-in letter that the Hamburg merchants Hertzer & von Bobartt, in which Elart von Bobartt's own brother Christopher von Bobartt was one of the two business partners, were taking part in this enterprise, too. Secondly, they learned how Luetkens actively pushed his idea with Hertzer & von Bobartt and praised the benefits of including the Nantes merchant house as a shareholder in this enterprise to Hertzer & von Bobartt, who would certainly also be supportive of the idea that Luttman & von Bobartt would act as the consultants in this enterprise and travel to Brest – which was finally also a clear gesture of trust and a sign of confidence. The addressee could read all this information at once. On the 25th of March 1744, Luetkens wrote to Luttman & von Bobartt:

> "We have received E.E.'s last from the 18th of the present month. In what follows is the copy of the letter ["vorstehendes ist Copia"] which I have sent to Hertzer & von Bobartt with regard to the purchase of the cargo of sugars ["Partey Zuckern"]. E.E. will get all the necessary information needed from this letter ["das nötige ersehen"]. With this present letter I wanted to ask, if E.E. would desire ["inclinieren"] to take a 1/4 or 1/8 share interest in these sugars under the same conditions as I have purchased them. If so, I would ask E.E. to remit me ["remittiren"] the money for your part share in the goods, which I have to pay in advance for the entire cargo ["Gelder so vorauß zahlen muß"], which are 33/m £. As soon as the sugars had been received and unloaded in Brest, it would be the best if someone would take a look at them. I myself cannot travel there which is why I wanted to hear from E.E. if you would be willing ["resolviren"] to send someone there from Nantes. This party of sugar is presumably at least worth 100/m £, I would pay E.E a commission of 1 per cent ["1 pCt. Comisie"]."[235]

235 Letter from Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, to Luttman & von Bobartt, March 25, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/232, Letter Book III, no. 18, outer letter.

The copied-in letter of the letter to Hertzer & von Bobartt then reads:

> "Finally and after a lot of letters were sent back and forth the deal in Brest regarding the party of sugars consisting of 224 Bouccand and 113 Hogsheads of sugars is settled ["zum Stande gekommen"]. M. N. & J. Darragory have done the purchase for me in St. Sebastian at the auction. I need to pay 33/m £ as advance payment ["an avantz"] in one week time ["8/d"] and the rest of the money upon delivery of the goods. [---] In order to settle the deal, I had to promise the interested party a gratification of 100 P. It is specified that the sugar shall be delivered in Brest at the earliest convenience, in the condition in which they are now, free from average ["frey von Havarye", free from damage]. The sellers are exempted from all customs ["frey sind von allen Zoll"] for incoming and outgoing vessels, all risk lies with the purchasers from the moment the goods have been weighed. I hope that no customs need to be paid or that they are rather low. I am writing to Paris in this matter next Saturday in order to procure the permission for free export ["Permision vor freyen Ausfuhr"]. With regard to the advance payment with this letter I wanted to assure that E.E. can be totally secure ["gantz secur"] because 25/m £ will be paid by the proprietor for which I have furthermore found two decent ["suffisant"] people in Bayonne who will pay the deposit ["Kaution"]. For the remaining 8/m £ I have come to an agreement under hand with one of the interested parties, Messrs. Darragory. This money will be paid under the condition that in case any dispute or the like arises ["in Gefall von Disput"], the money will be refunded without any difficulties by our partners in Bayonne. For the deposit I am in possession of the necessary bills of exchange […] for the remaining 8/m £ I also see no risks, in case that the sugars won't be delivered in Brest, I approach the proprietor, which is the house of Mess. Darragory, which are, however, to the best of my belief, decent and apart from that very faithful and honest people ["suffisant und sonste brave erlige Leute"]. Enclosed E.E. will find 5 samples of the sugars, which I have received from a friend who has absolutely nothing to do with the affair ["welcher die Affere in geringsten nicht regardirt"]. In case the whole sugars à costy are of that good quality, the whole party will be worth, considering the prizes on sugars of the last two months, 7 1/2 per pound, and in case we don't have to pay high customs in Brest, and unless the aggravating premium on the insurance ["unleydlige Premia von Assurantie"], and with God's help, we will gain no less than 30% profit in this enterprise. These sugars will now in due course arrive at E.E.'s address [in Hamburg], with you having a 1/4 share in the cargo, Beth: & Imbert also have a 1/4 share, and I have a 1/4 share, and since the house of Luttman & v.B. in Nantes had kindly asked me to give them an interest in one or the other enterprise in ~~St. Sebastian~~ Spain, I have also offered them a 1/8 or the remaining 1/4 share in this cargo, also because this party is so strong and bears more risks and difficulties […] There had been plenty of admirers ["Liebhabers"] for these sugars, but I was able to win the bid by means ["durch forse", by the force] of offering an advance payment and the gratification for the buyer. In case there is damage on the sugars we will get reimbursement […] As soon as the sugars have arrived [in Brest] it would be best if someone from Nantes would travel to Brest to inspect them ["wird am besten sein jemand van

> Nantes darnach zuzusenden"] and I am gladly paying 1 per cent Commission for that favour."[236]

Reading this letter, we come to realize that by inserting the letter copy of a letter from Hertzer & von Bobartt into the letter to Luttman & von Bobartt, Luetkens once more killed two birds with one stone. By sending this copy, Luetkens not only brought Luttman & von Bobartt up to date with regard to his plans and efforts to include both merchant houses in this business enterprise, but at the same time he provided the Nantes merchants with all relevant and necessary information and details about this enterprise in general. In order to get an overview of all actions taken in this case so far, the only thing Luttman & von Bobartt had to do was basically to read the second letter originally sent to Hertzer & von Bobartt from which they would "get all the necessary information" regarding this enterprise, as Luetkens put it, which phrase was a very common phrase in mercantile letters of the time because it was a very common practice to insert copies of letters into new letters. Copying in the letter saved Luetkens both time and ink because he did not have to repeat all this information in his letter to Luttman & von Bobartt. Furthermore, we learn from this letter how Luetkens got the whole undertaking underway and at which points the merchant had to give fate a little boost and a helping hand both with regard to winning over the Nantes and the Hamburg merchant houses for his plans but also with regard to his earlier efforts in the course of the procurement of the goods. With regard to the latter, we learn that Luetkens, represented by the Darragory brothers, won out against a number of other parties interested in this sugar during the auction because he promised an advance payment and a premium to the vendor, which was basically also the reason why he was in need of further shareholders in this undertaking. For both Luttman & von Bobartt and Hertzer & von Bobartt, these actions taken by Luetkens were also a clear indication of how lucrative and promising this enterprise must have appeared to Luetkens.

In order to underpin his assessment and the promising prospects of this enterprise, Luetkens applied three more strategies in his letters to influence the opinion of his correspondents in Hamburg and Nantes. First, as we learn from the letters above, he had decided to forward five samples of the sugar in his original letter to Hertzer & von Bobartt, which were meant to make it easier for them to decide whether or not they regarded this enterprise lucrative. Secondly, he assured his trading partners in Nantes and Hamburg that Nicolas and Jean Darragory, the buyers of the goods were "reliable and trustworthy and apart from that very faithful and honest people". By means of expressing his confidence in his trading partners in St. Sebastian, he at the same time guaranteed to his trading partners in Nantes and Hamburg that the further handling and process would run smoothly, which should once more increase their willingness to invest in the undertaking. Thirdly, and presumably most importantly, Luetkens gave concrete numbers in his letters with regard to the profit he expected from the undertaking. In his opinion, the profit from the sale of these sugar could easily amount to "no less than 30%", and he expected a selling price of up to "100/m £", which meant a great profit.

236 Letter from Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, to Luttman & von Bobartt, March 25, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/232, Letter Book III, no. 18, copied letter.

All three strategies typical for business letters did not miss the intended effect. Both merchant houses, Hertzer & von Bobartt as well as Luttman & von Bobartt, decided to act as shareholders.

In their next letter, Hertzer & von Bobartt responded accordingly that they wanted to congratulate Luetkens on this enterprise, confirming that "the five samples we have received are very nice ["fünff Proben so empfangen sind schön"] and we expect to make a good profit from these goods, if God shall bring them here safely".[237] Luttman & von Bobartt responded that they would also take on the role as shareholders and consultants in this enterprise and would be willing to fulfil their responsibility to assess the goods, oversee the repacking in Brest and take care of the loading of the casks of sugar on a ship to Hamburg. In their letter from the 30th of March, they wrote that "our own von Bobartt together with his kuipper servant ["kuipper knegt", his cooper] will travel to Brest" because just like Luetkens they regarded it as highly "necessary that somebody keeps a watchful eye ["wachen Auge"] on the loading process from morning to evening to ensure that it was conducted properly."[238] Shortly after sending this letter, Elart von Bobartt left for Nantes. As a fourth shareholder Luetkens furthermore won over Bethmann & Imbert in Bordeaux, in which merchant house he resided during that time. Having won these three big merchant firms as shareholders in the goods, in addition to himself, Luetkens had gained enough financial coverage and financial power to implement this enterprise. With the help and by means of writing letters, he was able to manage his business and to arrange and take every necessary step to get this business enterprise underway. Reading all these letters in this episode one after another, we are presented with a most effective way of handling one's business by means of letters. The power and significance of letter writing in this process becomes directly perceptible.

Apart from the step of winning over additional shareholders and helping hands for his enterprise, the same level of efficiency also becomes obvious and prevailed with regard to the four other important concomitant measures that Luetkens initiated with the letter cited above and then implemented in the further course of the episode. These concomitant measures were, firstly, to concretely implement the respective financing operations necessary for this enterprise, including taking care of the advance payment. Secondly, he took care of clearing and complying with the necessary formalities primarily with regard to getting the export authorisation, dealing with customs matters and securing insurance on the goods. Thirdly, he also made sure that the quality of the sugars was once more tested on location and last but not least, in the further course of this correspondence, he also took care of the shipment of the sugars to Hamburg, where they were delivered to Hertzer & von Bobartt, who took care of the selling of the goods. All these measures were once more implemented on the basis of letter exchanges.

With regard to financing, the funding for this whole commission enterprise was accomplished in the following way: Having agreed to act as shareholders in this enterprise, the shareholders at the same time bindingly agreed to cover the funding for their part share in the enterprise by means of providing the necessary credit. Through winning

237 Letter from Hertzer & von Bobartt, to Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, April 6, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/234.

238 Letter from Luttman & von Bobartt, to Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, March 30, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/235.

three other shareholders in this undertaking, Luetkens was able to split the investment risk in this undertaking and the credit line necessary to finance the purchase of the 348 hogsheads of sugar among four parties, himself as the commission agent and the forth shareholder in this enterprise included. In concrete terms, that meant that apart from assuming the responsibility for covering the funding for his own share and interest in these goods, he could draw bills of exchange on the other shareholders in order to obtain the necessary liquidity for the smooth handling of his commission enterprise. The payment of these bills was normally due after the selling of the goods. However, already at this earlier point in time, the respective financial transactions, as part and consequence of the contemporary cashless payment system in the form of the drawn bills of exchange, already provided him at this moment in time with the necessary finances he needed. It provided him with the credit line necessary to settle the bill for the purchase of the goods with the Darragory brothers, who acted and appeared in this episode as the concrete buyers of these goods at the auction of the Spanish Admiralty court. Thus, the particular situation prevailing in this enterprise was that Luetkens appeared and acted in two roles within this whole undertaking. On the one hand, he was the commission agent responsible for the complete handling of the procurement of these goods with his own 1/4 share and interest in this enterprise. On the other hand, since he himself had commissioned his trading partners Nicolas and Jean Darragory to make the actual purchase in St. Sebastian for him, he was also acting as a remittent in the episode, who provided the Darragory brothers with the necessary funds to settle the bill with the Spanish Admiralty. In the sales invoice, however, the latter transactions and the involvement of the Darragory brothers were not mentioned with a single word, for reasons that have been outlined above, namely to conceal the origin of these goods.

For the financial transactions conducted in this whole undertaking, however, as we learn from the letters, Luetkens' dual role in the undertaking was a key and determining factor during the concrete implementation of the enterprise and for the success of the enterprise. The latter fact becomes particularly clear and obvious with regard to the procurement of the necessary funds for the advance payment for these goods, £ "33/m" (£ 33,000). Luetkens had promised this advance to the vendors of the goods and, as we have learned from the Luetkens letters, this was the crucial reason why Luetkens was able to prevail over all the other bidders during the auction. As things developed in this episode, however, this dual role ultimately remained significant and necessary during the entire course of the enterprise. This was because in the end due to unforeseen circumstances Luetkens was forced to apply a similar approach to the one that he had chosen for taking care of the advance payment also with regard to paying the total costs for his purchase. When the payment of the 61/m £ was finally due, the sugars had not yet been sold in Hamburg and in fact had not even been shipped there yet, which meant that the drawn bills of exchange could not be balanced and settled by means of the revenues of the sales as would have been usual. Instead, Luetkens needed to find alternative ways to cover the costs for the purchase. He had to ask his trading partners to bear a concrete share already in the costs of the purchase. In certain ways, as we can assume from his letters, he had even already anticipated this backup plan when taking care of the advance payment, working with a kind of belt-and-braces approach, which is why his handling of the advance payment already provides us with a good foretaste of the financial procedures following next.

In order to raise the necessary funds for the advancement payment, Luetkens adopted the following strategy in which he skilfully took advantage of his dual role within this enterprise: In the first step, in his role as the commission agent in this undertaking and in order to obtain to necessary funds for covering the costs of the advance payment, he asked a particular favour from one of the shareholders, Luttman & von Bobartt. This favour was basically that he asked them to allow him to use their share and interest in this enterprise as the financial resource, the credit range and security to already cover the costs for the advance payment. On the basis of this guarantee provided by Luttman & von Bobartt, he subsequently, in the second step and in his role as a remittent, entered into further agreements of his own with the brothers Darragory and another merchant firm in Bayonne, the firm of Lichigaray Jeune, in order regulate the allocation of funds for the advance payment. The concrete payment of the 33/m £ was once more regulated by means of bills of exchange, in more specific terms by means of a deposit provided by Lichigaray Jeune, which meant that the actual date when Luetkens was finally expected to pay the 33/m £ advance payment was postponed once more.[239] In the end, Luetkens ultimately remitted the funds to actually settle the bill of the advance payment only two months later, at exactly the same time when he was also required to pay the total costs of 61/m £ for the purchase of the sugars. The latter, in turn, did not happen by accident but ultimately represented the final step and the masterstroke of his strategic economic calculations, which as we realize he must have planned well in advance all along. When the payment of £ 61/m for the entire cargo of 348 casks of sugar was finally due and demanded by the Admiralty in St. Sebastian in June 1744, who "no longer grant Darragory any more extension" ["wollen sich nicht mehr trösten laßen"], he drew on all his shareholders to cover the funds for their part shares in the goods.[240] This was the time when he also asked Luttman & von Bobartt to remit him the money for their part share, which he then used, as arranged before, to balance the bill for the advance payment. During the entire preceding period, as becomes obvious from this, Luetkens therefore solely acted and conducted his finance transactions on credit. Only in June 1744, when remitting the total amount of £ 61/m to Darragory, which the latter also used to pay off the deposit granted by Lichigaray Jeune for the advance payment, Luetkens for the first time ever in this enterprise actually spent his own money and debited his own account in this enterprise. This shows us in a forceful way the room for manoeuvre prevailing in the financing business for commission merchants. It furthermore vividly demonstrates

239 See letter from Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb to Lichigaray Jeune, Timothée, March 25, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/232, Letter Book III, no. 26.

240 Letter from Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, to Von Bobart, Elart, June 5, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/232, Letter Book I, no. 174. "Habe woll empf. E.E. angenehmes von 9t von St. Sebastien und Bayonne woraus ersehe E.E. mir creditiren werden vor die 12/m £ Rimessa auf Mess. B & Imbert und 33/m £ auf Lichigaray". Letter from Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, to Darragory, Nicolas and Jean, June 13, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/232, Letter Book I, no. 13. "E.E. in alles gezahlt und ordre gestellet in derselben Wahr an Daragory zu zahlen auf dti Zuckern 61/m £ welches alles in so weit richtig." Letter from Hertzer & von Bobartt, to Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, June 22, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/234.

the concrete benefits of the cashless payment system in the finance business of the 18th century and how the merchants of the time skilfully used and exploited it for their own advantage, however, of course, always accompanied by certain risks.

At the centre of the whole arrangement with regard to the advance payment in this case stood the favour Luetkens had asked from the Nantes merchant house of Luttman & von Bobartt, which once more shows the importance of maintaining close relationships and business contacts in France. Noteworthy is that all of the partners involved in this enterprise were Protestants and therefore part of the Protestant International in France, which forged the strong bonds and mutual appreciation between them. Luetkens and Luttman & von Bobartt furthermore had a close personal relationship due to their long-standing friendship and business collaboration, which in the end provides a possible explanation for the rather striking fact that Luetkens directly and outright asked his trading partners for money in exactly the same letter in which he also sent them his proposal and offer to become a shareholder in this enterprise. This shows that the relationship between the merchants allowed him not to need to make a secret of the fact that he needed their money and would further use and invest this money for his purposes, namely for the advance payment, while his own account was not debited. Thus, the concrete favour he asked from Luttman & von Bobartt was that they would not only act as shareholder, meaning creditors, in this undertaking, but that they would also act as remitters beforehand by providing him with the necessary sums to pay the outstanding amount for the advance payment. Put in Luetkens' own words, he asked them, right after offering them an interest in this undertaking, "to remit me the money for your part share in the goods", which, as he did not hide from them, served the purpose of enabling him to make the advance payment ["welche zahlen muss"] of 33/m £.[241]

This request in particular represented a favour asked from them because in order to be able to do these remittances, in order to provide Luetkens with this sum, Luttman & von Bobartt themselves also had to take certain precautions to obtain the necessary liquidity. Namely, they needed to draw their own bill of exchange including Hertzer & von Bobartt as drawees, since they were the sellers of the goods, but they also included another third party. As the financiers of their remittances to Luetkens acted in the end the Paris banking house of Tourton, Baur & Comp., whose bills of exchange were sent to Luetkens as the necessary capital means to cover the costs for the advance payment.[242] As things developed further in this enterprise, the banking house of Tourton, Baur & Comp. later became one of the key players in the entire financing procedure of this enterprise. This was a result of Luetkens, who had been familiar with the Paris banking house at the latest since his last visit to Paris, as well as Bethmann & Imbert and Hertzer & von Bobartt including them in their finance operations. As regards Luttman & von Bobartt's remittances, what should have already become clear by now is that the Nantes

241 Letter from Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, to Luttman & von Bobartt, March 25, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/232, Letter Book III, no. 18.

242 See the bills of exchange and the corresponding letters as copied into Luetkens' Letter Book III. Bills of exchanges and letters from Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, to Tourton, Baur & Comp, March 25 to April 14, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/232, Letter Book III, no. 26, 27 33, 63.

merchant house did Luetkens the favour and agreed to remit him the necessary funds despite the circumstances and the additional efforts needed. As we have learned from the letter copy cited above, this fact was certainly also linked to the fact that they themselves had explicitly asked Luetkens in their previous letters to involve them in one of his enterprises in Spain, which meant that they could now literally hardly reject this request with regard to such an enterprise. The latter also points us to another advantage of the practice of copying letters into other letters with regard to persuasive efforts, namely reminding the addressee of certain previous letter conversations. The latter, in turn, provides us with even more proof of the fact that and how copied letters were used to concretely influence decision-making processes in letter correspondences.

From Luttman & von Bobartt's following letters, supplemented by Luetkens' letters, the letters from Hertzer & von Bobartt and the letters of all other parties involved in Bordeaux, St. Sebastian, Paris and Bayonne, we are subsequently able to reconstruct the further course of events and the concrete financial transactions and payment flows involved in the enterprise.

Only five days after Luetkens' initial letter from the 25th of March, Luttman & von Bobartt responded that they would "accept with gratitude his offer to take 1/4 in the party of sugar in Brest" ["mit Dank acceptieren"] and also confirmed that they would also comply with his request to remit him the necessary funds when they were due, asking or rather instructing Luetkens to already "take out the necessary funds", which meant to debit "F 2000 on de Meyere and the rest on the account of Hertzer & von Bobartt".[243] On the basis of this agreement and financial guarantee, Luetkens was able to enter into further agreements with the Darragory brothers to arrange the payment arrangements regarding the advance payment. Even for this financial transaction, however, Luetkens did not execute a direct payment to the Darragory brothers, but he once more made use of letters of exchange, including the Paris banking house Tourton & Baur and the Bayonne merchant house of Lichigaray Jeune. Thus, complying with Luttman & von Bobartt's request, beginning at the end of March but continuing till June 1744, he himself drew bills of exchange on the Paris banking house of Tourton, Baur & Comp on the account of Hertzer & von Bobartt and on de Meyere and finally also on himself, since he chose the same way for financing his own part share in the enterprise. From a letter to Luttman & von Bobartt dated the 2nd of June 1744, copied this time into Luetkens' large Letter Book, in which Luetkens listed all the respective drawn bills of exchange on Paris, the "tretten" in German or "traittes" in French addressed to "Tourton & Baur Comp", we learn that, spread over a period of three months, the common à 3 uso, the merchant had drawn five bills of exchange on Paris in total, amounting to 25/m £, which represented the necessary sum to cover the costs for the advance payment.[244] The remaining costs of 8/m £, as we have already learned from the letter cited above, were advanced "under

243 Letter from Luttman & von Bobartt, to Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, March 30, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/235.

244 "4000 £ in dato 25 & 28 Marty à 60. d., 4500 £ in dato à 60/d dito, 4600 in dato 10 Aprill à 60/d dato, 6000 £ in dato 28 dito auf 18 Juny zahlbar, 6000 £ in dato 28 dito à 75/d dato." Letter from Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb to Luttman & von Bobartt, June 2, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/232, Letter Book I, no. 173. Copying this letter with this important list into his main large Letter Book instead of copying it into his smaller Letter Book III, where all the other bills of exchange had been copied into, surely once

hand" ["unter der Handt"] directly by the Darragory brothers themselves. Then there was the third party involved in this financial transaction to take care of the advance payment, the party on whose "ordre" the above mentioned "traittes" to Tourton, Baur & Comp. were noted down. This was the French merchant house of Timothée Lichigaray Jeune, which therefore acted as the necessary remitter and payee in this financing operation. Lichigaray had offered Luetkens to act as guarantor for the advance payment beforehand, about which we have already learned in Luetkens' letter to Hertzer & von Bobartt from the 25th of March. In this letter, he wrote to his Hamburg partners in order to inform them about all the upcoming transactions on their account and in order to assure them that he had everything under control and that everything was regulated and "totally secure" even with regard to the "advance payment" ["Vorschisung der Geldern"] because he had won "decent people in Bayonne", who accepted to pay a "deposit". That is, as the remitter in this transaction, it was in the end Lichigaray on whose credit Darragory authorised the advance payment, so a French merchant provided the credit for another French merchant in a Spanish harbour, but everything on commission and under the control of the Hamburg merchant Nicolaus Gottlieb Luetkens.[245] As we read in Luetkens' letter of the 13th of June, Darragory had confirmed to him that he had "credited E.E. [Luetkens] [...] 33/m £ on the order of Lichigaray ["33/m £ auf Lichigaray"]".[246] In the same letter, Darragory also confirmed remittances of 12/m £ from Bethmann & Imbert, which represented their part share in the enterprise and with whom Luetkens had made similar arrangements. The fact that Lichigaray Jeune would, however, only act as guarantors and borrowers in this transaction, at the same time points us to the very concrete and special twist prevailing in this whole arrangement with regard to the special financing scheme for the advance payment. This twist was that in June 1744, when the final bill for the purchase of the sugars was finally due, Luetkens not only had to pay the rest, the remaining part of the purchase costs to Darragory, but in fact he had to remit the total costs of 61/m £ to St. Sebastian and Bayonne, reimbursing at the very same time the short-term loan that was granted to him for "77/d", for 77 days by Lichigaray Jeune. This explains the large transactions Luetkens conducted in June, which we find in Luetkens' letters dating from June.

From these letters we first learn that the final payment was due at the beginning of June when, as he wrote to Elart von Bobartt, "the outfitters and vendors of the sugars in St. Sebastian would no longer grant Darragory any more extension for his payment and forced him to pay".[247] In a letter from the 13th of June, Luetkens put it even more drastically: "the privateer rabble ["caper pack"] in St. Sebastian want their money, with might and main ["mit aller Gewallt"], which causes me a lot of peevishness" ["Ver-

more served the purpose to cover up or even entirely obscure his financial transactions for outside viewers.

245 Letter from Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, to Luttman & von Bobartt, March 25, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/232, Letter Book III, no. 18.

246 Letter from Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, to Darragory, Nicolas and Jean, June 13, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/232, Letter Book I, no. 13.

247 Letter from Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, to Von Bobart, Elart, June 5, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/232, Letter Book I, no. 174.

drießligkeit"].[248] Four days later, Luetkens reported to Hertzer & von Bobartt that the unloading (and handover) of the sugars in Brest was just about to begin, which meant that at the very same time also "the bail, the security deposit [granted to him by Lichigaray] of 25/m £ expired". In this letter he also reported that he had already repaid the loan in total ["in alles bezahlt"] and had "authorised the payment of 61/m £ for the said sugars to Darragory happening this week per E.E.'s Governo" on the account of Hertzer & von Bobartt.[249] In their response letter, Hertzer & von Bobartt confirmed and gave their approval for the transactions, writing that "everything was fine" ["alles in so weit richtig"].[250] From the letter to Elart from Bobartt, we learn how these payment transactions were conducted in practice: Already on that very same day, the 5th of June, as he wrote in his letter, he had "remitted 15/m £" to Darragory and announced that he would "remit him 20 to 30/m £ in the following week".[251]

From another letter from the 14th of July, we learn that another 10/m £ was remitted to him shortly after. Still, the remittances did not amount to the total costs of 61/m £, which was due to certain reasons, about which we will hear more in the upcoming second part of the episode. More important at this point of the chapter is, however, to take a look at how Luetkens in the end practically organised and financed the remittances to Darragory in the beginning of June, with which he first settled his debts with regard to the deposit for the advance payment and then subsequently also regulated and met, by means of a similar way of financing, the rest of his payment obligations. After all, this was precisely the moment when his previous arrangements with the Nantes merchant house of Luttman & von Bobartt at long last took effect and all the parts of his well-thought-out plan finally fell into place.

Thanks to Luetkens' advance planning, paying the outstanding sum of the advance payment did not pose him difficulties because he could now simply draw on the financial commitments that Luttman & von Bobartt have given him beforehand. From his letter from the 5th of June, we can reconstruct in detail the subsequent financial transactions that Luetkens then ordered and demanded from his trading partners. He wrote to Elart from Bobartt that he would now write "to Luttman: [to give him the order] that he can now draw a bill ["trasiren"] on Hertzer & von Bobartt in Hamburg for 5000 ¥ [Guilders] on their account and 1/m ¥ in his own account for which I ask him to remit me in return bills of exchange ["Wexsells zu remitiren"] on Paris à 15:20 or 30/d [days]. I have to remit these [bills] to Bayonne in 8/d".[252] This means Luttman & von Bobartt now remitted Luetkens, as arranged before, the necessary funds to settle the bill for the advance payment in the form of remittances on Paris, which they sent him in the form of bills of exchange on Paris, or more precisely on the Paris banking house of Tourton,

248 Letter from Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, to Hertzer & von Bobartt, June 14, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/232, Letter Book I, no. 188.

249 Letter from Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, to Hertzer & von Bobartt, June 9, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/232, Letter Book I, no. 181.

250 Letter from Hertzer & von Bobartt, to Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, June 22, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/234.

251 Letter from Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb to Von Bobartt, Elart June 5, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/232, Letter Book I, no. 174.

252 Letter from Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb to Von Bobartt, Elart, June 5, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/232, Letter Book I, no. 174.

Baur & Comp. Luttman & von Bobartt subsequently sent him these bills, which Luetkens once more forwarded to Lichigaray Jeune in Bayonne, who used these bills of exchange to square up Luetkens' account with regard to their remittances for the deposit. Thus, Luetkens in the end simply used the remittances on Tourton, Baur & Comp., sent to him by Luttman & von Bobartt, to pay for the already existing drawn bill of exchange on Tourton, Baur & Comp., for which Lichigaray had taken over the role of the payee and remitter beforehand. This was how Luetkens and his trading partners skilfully managed to handle the financing for the advance payment by benefitting from the possibilities of the cashless payment system of 18th-century trade. In the end, the core transaction in this whole financing operation was dead simple: It simply represented a balancing of bank accounts. As the last step with regard to this financial transaction Hertzer & von Bobartt, too, being ultimately the drawees in this financing operation, confirmed and agreed to the respective transactions in their letter from the 22nd of June, writing that "when Mr. Luttman & von Bobartt from Nantes remit E.E. [Luetkens] 15/m £ on our account and 3/m £ [representing the conversion value of the sums mentioned above] on E.E.'s own account on Paris and draw on us for this purpose ["auf uns prevalieren"], their drawn bills of exchange ["trattas"] will receive full honours ["alle Ehre genießen"]."[253] With this confirmation, the respective financial operation was finally cut and dried and Luetkens' plan had been successfully put into practice.

We do not know why Luetkens had made the respective arrangements with Luttman & von Bobartt in the first place nor why he needed and chose this belt-and-braces approach to finance the advance payment. Maybe he just wanted to play it safe, or maybe his other investments during that time – among other undertakings, he invested in buying a ship – forced him to play it safe. Maybe he already feared and anticipated right from the start that the sale of the sugar would in the end be delayed to such an extent that taking a bank credit was the only secure way to ensure the smooth handling and financing of this enterprise. The only thing we know for sure is that when it became clear that in fact the sale was going to be delayed, Luetkens chose the same way of financing his expenses also with regard to the remaining part of the costs of 61/m £ for the purchase of the sugar with his other shareholders. With the difference, however, that the partners now approached three more Paris banking houses in addition to Tourton & Baur,: Cottin, Naschold, both drawn on by Hertzer & von Bobartt, and Guldiman, drawn on by Luetkens and Bethmann, all three of which were Protestant banking houses.[254] The recommendation to approach the merchant banker Antoine Léonard Guldiman in this matter, with whom Luetkens was not familiar before, had come from Bethmann. He had assured Luetkens in a letter from July 1744 that apart from Tourton, Baur & Comp., which would give him a credit of "20/m £", he could also always draw on Guldiman, who could give him credit for "30 à 40/m £ in return for remittances on London, Hamb.

253 Letter from Hertzer & van Bobartt to Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, June 22, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/234.

254 Regarding these banking houses, see most prominently Lüthy, *La Banque protestante*. Regarding the historical and biographical background to these banking houses as for instance regards Tourton, Baur & Comp. "as descendants of Huguenot refugees", see particularly Garrioch, *The Huguenots of Paris*, 83-84. See furthermore Du Pasquier, *Généalogies huguenotes*.

Or Amsterdam" on their account. Bethmann furthermore assured Luetkens in his letter that Guldiman was a "good ["brav"] & honest man & with good credit" ["braver & ehrl. Man & in guten Credit"] and that he had talked to him and been given the confirmation and "all honour" to proceed in this way.[255] The recommendation by Bethmann was apparently worth a mint for Luetkens at that time. However, later, the unfamiliarity with Guldiman would lead to certain problems, about which we will hear in the second part of the episode.

A fact that made the necessary financial transactions with regard to paying the total amount of 61/m £ a little bit easier for Luetkens and his partners was that in June the four shareholders and trading partners decided and arranged that both Luttman & von Bobartt as well as Bethmann & Imbert would sell all their part shares in this enterprise to Hertzer & von Bobartt and Luetkens. That is, in the end all the final bills in this undertaking had to be paid only by the remaining two shareholders Hertzer & von Bobartt and Luetkens, which also explains why we only find their names registered in the financial transactions with the Paris banks.[256] This idea of pooling the shares was first put forward by Luttman & von Bobartt, as we learn from the letter by Hertzer & von Bobartt to Luetkens from the 5th of June, to whom the Nantes merchant house had written before that they were worried "that their part in the goods could be confiscated […] in case the same were captured" by the English.[257] Therefore Luttman & von Bobartt had proposed to Hertzer & von Bobartt to sell them their part pro forma, which meant that the latter would later resell, if wished, these parts back to Luttman & von Bobartt when the ship and goods had arrived in Hamburg. Hertzer & von Bobartt agreed to this proposal. At the same time, Luetkens made the exact same arrangement with Bethmann & Imbert. He himself wrote to Luttman & von Bobartt in this regard already on the 29th of May, that he "had taken over the 1/4 interest of Bethmann & Imbert in the sugars and it is well that you will allocate your 1/4 to Hertzer & von Bobartt."[258] In this way, the merchants were able to relabel all the sugars sent to Hamburg as neutral goods and lowered the risk of losing them to an enemy. The latter, in turn, as Hertzer & von Bobartt emphasised also improved the conditions for the insurances on these goods. The only request that Hertzer & von Bobartt voiced in their letter to both Luetkens and Luttman & von Bobartt was that the latter would sell their part in the sugars for a new price, which meant that Luttman & von Bobartt no longer held a share in the potential "profit or loss" ["Gewin oder Verlust"] coming from the original purchase of the goods in St. Sebastian, but thenceforward Hertzer & von Bobartt kept an "actual and real 1/2 interest in this party ["würklich und reel"]." They also suggested to Luetkens to further transfer his share to his brother Anton pro forma, which the latter subsequently did.[259] In their

255 Letter from Bethmann, Johann Jakob to Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, July 25, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/234. See also Strosetzky, "Honnete Homme," 16.

256 Bills of exchanges and letters from Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, to Tourton, Baur & Comp, March 25 to April 14, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/232, Letter Book III, no. 26, 27 33, 63.

257 Letter from Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb to Von Bobartt, Elart, June 5, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/232, Letter Book I, no. 174.

258 Letter from Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb to Luttman & von Bobartt, May 29, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/232, Letter Book I, no. 168.

259 Letter from Hertzer & van Bobartt to Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, June 5, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/234.

following letter to Luetkens, the Hamburg merchants even made the offer or rather the proposal to take over the entirety of the shares, which, the latter, however, did not agree to. His rejection was firstly due to the fact that the existing arrangements and financing scheme already provided enough security, and secondly, and concomitant to the latter, put in colloquial terms, it can be assumed that Luetkens also certainly wanted to remain at the wheel of this undertaking, now that he had already put so much effort into this enterprise.[260] From his perspective, taking over the 1/4 share of Bethmann & Imbert was ultimately the final step of his financing strategy applied in this undertaking. With this step the financing activities were finally successfully implemented. From a financial point of view, everything was set and nothing more stood in the way of beginning the loading of the sugars and shipping them to Hamburg.

What becomes ultimately clear from these explanations on the financing of this enterprise is how sophisticated and elaborate the whole system of the cashless payment system worked and how the merchants of the time skilfully and effectively made use of it during the implementation of their concrete business enterprises, yet still following their own personal agendas, by which they, in turn, at the same time both shaped and perpetuated the system. The system apparently could become very complex, which without question sometimes makes it rather difficult for us to follow all the different steps and transactions. For the contemporary merchants, however, these financing practices represented their day-to-day business and thus normal routine. For a merchant during his establishment phase, especially if he acted as a commission agent, it became all the more indispensable to show the necessary skills and familiarity with the system.

Luetkens as well as his trading partners showed a very high degree of skill, efficiency and effectiveness in their financial dealings. On the one hand, they knew the standard procedures of financing transactions back to front and were able to perform these actions virtually blindfolded. On the other hand, they knew all the tips and tricks to use to best capitalise on the financing practices for their own purposes and for their own good. They knew how to use existing grey areas and how to choose the options that best suited their interests and helped them to put their plans into practice. It becomes furthermore clearly apparent what significant role letters played for their business and financing practice because letters were in the end the decisive tool for performing all these actions. Almost every transaction presented in the previous part was performed on the basis of letters. Most of the transactions were in fact executed, authenticated and accredited on the basis of letters only, that is, by means of writing them down on paper and sending them off to the recipient. The bills of exchange at the centre of the cashless payment system were also sent back and forth enclosed in the same letters. The trading partners last but not least kept their current accounts on the basis of the direct information, the notifications, orders and confirmations sent to them via letters in order to debit or credit their accounts. In the end, it can be said that literally the entire field of commission trade rested on the regulated exchange of letters, with regard to financing, negotiation, trading, selling or buying practices within the commission

260 Letter from Hertzer & van Bobartt to Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, June 8, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/234.

business. Commission trade on the other hand represented the basis and foothold for these merchants' general success in foreign trade.[261]

Accordingly, it comes as no surprise that Luetkens and his partners also settled and clarified all the remaining formalities with regard to the clearance and shipment of the 348 hogsheads of sugar to Hamburg on the basis of letters. The merchant and his partners used the same pragmatic approach and showed the same efficiency as with regard to the settlement of their financing business, that is, they literally did whatever had to be done to implement their plan. I will summarise these next points, since in the end the letter conversations in all these matters followed the same practical principle of persuasion as in the financing business. Luetkens showed his efficiency and showed his practical skills to his partners when dealing with all these matters and, as a part of this, he approached the right people at the right time, who would help him regulate the respective matters.

Export permit: First of all, already in April 1744 Luetkens obtained the necessary permission for the export of the goods to Hamburg. For this purpose, he approached the French Admiralty Court in Paris, which was responsible for all maritime affairs concerning French ports, which explains why he did not approach the court in St. Sebastian in this matter. Since the Spanish, as political allies of the French during that time, had deployed ambassadors to the court in Paris, the merchants always also had to deal with Spanish officials as assessors in all cases relating to Spanish privateering raids in French waters.[262] As his representative in Paris and before the court in Paris, Luetkens chose the French advocate Duprat, with whom he exchanged letters via Guldiman, under the "couvert de Monsieur Guldemann", the Protestant banker also involved in his financing transactions.[263] Thus, Luetkens did not approach the court in Paris personally but he was represented before court by Duprat. Duprat was recommended to him, just like Guldimann, by Bethmann, who already enjoyed a good reputation in Paris. With the help of Duprat and Guldiman, Luetkens was able to receive the export permit for the sugars, for which Luetkens together with the other shareholder Hertzer & von Bobartt later thanked them by sending "some pieces of cured meat […] and some ox tongues […] as recompens".[264] Sending small gifts as recompense was common practice among merchants during that time, being an important part of their strategy to obtain and maintain the benevolence of their partners. Duprat and Guldiman did, however, not only earn this gift for their service with regard to the export permit alone, but they also helped Luetkens with regard to the payment of customs duty.

Customs duty: Even though Luetkens himself had hoped that he would not have to pay customs duties or had at least expected the tariff on the export of the sugar to be

261 See also Trivellato, *The Familiarity of Strangers*, 170.

262 See Marzagalli, Silvia. "French Privateering," 41-65. See Barazzutti, "La guerre de course." See in general Buti/Hrodej, *Histoire des pirates et des corsaires.*

263 Letter from Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb to Von Bobartt, Elart, June 5, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/232, Letter Book I, no. 174. Letters from Duprat in TNA, HCA 30/235.

264 Letter from Hertzer & von Bobartt to Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, July 31, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/234.

"rather low" ["gar nicht oder wenig wird sein"], as he expressed in a letter from the 25th of March, unfortunately everything seemed to indicate that his hopes would not be fulfilled.[265] It was the French tax farmers-general in Paris, called "fermie generalles" or "fermiers généraux" in French, who seemed to try to put a spoke in his wheel.[266] These were independent, basically freelance major tax collectors in Ancien Régime France, who since 1680 had been collecting ("farmed") duties on behalf of the King, including the gabelles, aides, taille and douane. In Luetkens own words, these tax farmers-general "put every imaginable obstacles ["obstaquell"] in the way to cause troubles".[267] The customs duties could easily amount to "30 à 35/m £" if one did not go about it carefully.[268] In a letter from the 21st of April to Hertzer & von Bobartt, he reported in this respect that "he had received news from Paris that the export of the goods was granted, however, the fermie generalls demanded ["pretendiren"] the payment of £ 7:13 customs duty for the brown sugars and £ 15 for the powder [white sugars] per 100 gram".[269] Already in the very same letter, Luetkens reassured his partners that in his opinion the tax collectors would not be successful with their claim in the long run. As the reasons for this he mentioned that "fermies are not allowed to impose duty on export goods, but only the king".[270]

Furthermore, since the goods were condemned as official loot from a privateering raid and therefore free for re-export, meaning that he had every right to unload and reship these goods, Luetkens was also confident that he could object and therefore avoid paying customs duty. The merchant furthermore wrote that he would, if necessary, approach and "call in the Spanish minister" in this case. Hertzer & von Bobartt also endorsed this option in their response letter, emphasizing that they found the claim by the tax collectors "rather unacceptable" ["sehr unbillig"].[271] Last but not least, Luetkens reassured his Hamburg partners that the fermies did in fact "play tricks" ["tagteglig

265 Letter from Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, to Luttman & von Bobartt, March 25, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/232, Letter Book III, no. 18.

266 Regarding the institution of the*Ferme Généraux*, the General Tax-Farmers and its civil cervants, called the *fermiers généraux*, see as a good introduction White, Eugene N. "From Privatized to Government-Administered Tax Collection: Tax Farming in Eighteenth-Century France." *The Economic History Review* 57, no. 4 (2004): 636-663. See also Yves, Durand. *Les Fermiers généraux au xviiie siècle*. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1971. See Vida, Azimi. *Un modèle administratif de l'Ancien Régime: les commis de la Ferme générale et de la régie générale des aides*, Paris: Éditions du CNRS, 1987. See also Dictionnaire de la Ferme générale (1640-1794). La Ferme générale dans l'espace français et européen: un objet d'histoire totale, https://dicofg.hypotheses.org, accessed June 6, 2019.

267 Letter from Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb to Luttman & von Bobartt, May 29, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/232, Letter Book I, no. 168.

268 Letter from Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb to Von Bobartt, Elart, June 5, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/232, Letter Book I, no. 174.

269 Letter from Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, to Hertzer & von Bobartt, April 21, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/232, Letter Book III, no. 41. It was not untypical during that time to give amounts in Pound Sterling despite trading in France, even though Pound Sterling was a foreign currency. This was because it was a stable currency.

270 Ibid.

271 Ibid. Letter from Hertzer & von Bobartt to Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, May 4, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/234.

Streiche von die Fermies siehet"] on everyone all the time, but "most of the time in the end one receives justice". For good measure, however, he reported that he had also written to his "friend in Paris" [Duprat] telling him, in order not to unnecessarily complicate the matter, that if this matter can be solved with money, please take the necessary actions."[272] The latter can be understood in two ways. Either Luetkens agreed to pay the customs if necessary, or, he gave his advocate a broad hint to solve the matter by making cash gifts to the respective persons. We do not know for sure which of these two was the decisive factor that helped Duprat to solve the matter, but the indications are that he chose the second way. We know that with Duprat's help, Luetkens was able to obtain the authorisation to export the sugars without paying any money to the tax farmer-general.

From a letter from Hertzer & von Bobartt we learn that already at the beginning of May they were "given more and more hope that there won't accrue customs duties for the sugars in Brest" because of the regulation that particularly prize goods did not have to be cleared through customs.[273] In the end, the matter was regulated by a transit bond, in German "Zollbegleitschein". The sugars were loaded and shipped per "acquit-à-caution", which meant that Luetkens and Hertzer & von Bobartt only had to pay customs duties in Hamburg after the cargo had arrived there.[274] In a letter from the 12th of June by Hertzer & von Bobartt we therefore read that "from Nantes the friends have written that they have received the order to load the sugars per acquit a caution, which shows us that the fermies have cancelled ["pretensien"] their claim."[275] In the same letter they report that von Bobartt in Brest would start the loading of the cargo onto a ship to Hamburg as soon as he received the confirmation from Luetkens, which he received only a short time later.

Shipment and insurance: The next important step to take, the next "difficulty" ["difficultat"] to overcome, in Hertzer & von Bobartt's words, was to find a suitable ship, "a Hamburg ship or a ship from another free power", for the shipment and to procure insurance on both the ship and the cargo. Since there was no such ship lying at anchor in Brest or Nantes, and since Hertzer & von Bobartt advised "against choosing a Dutch shop since it was likely that the Dutch soon get involved in the war", the ship-owners decided to send one of their own ships to Brest commanded by one of their most reputable ship's masters, Johann Nagel.[276] Nagel arrived in Brest at the end of May 1744.

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272 Letter from Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, to Hertzer & von Bobartt, April 21, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/232, Letter Book III, no. 41.

273 Letter from Hertzer & von Bobartt to Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, May 8, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/234.

274 In *Le Dico du Commerce International* the Acquit-à-caution is defined as a "Déclaration douanière de marchandises placées sous un régime suspensif de droits et taxes: Admission temporaire, transit. Avec l'acquit il y a un engagement cautionné par une banque, validé par les douanes. La marchandise est soumise à un régime suspensif de transit. L'acquit-à-caution comporte, outre la déclaration détaillée des marchandises, la constitution d'une caution bonne et solvable à l'égard des marchandises non prohibées, la garantie de la caution peut être remplacée par la consignation des droits et taxes." "Acquit-à-caution." *Le Dico du Commerce International*, accessed December 21, 2019.

275 Letter from Hertzer & von Bobartt to Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, June 6, 1744, TNA, HCA 234.

276 Letter from Hertzer & von Bobartt to Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, April 6, 1744, TNA, HCA 234.

His first official act was, however, to protest the loading of the cargo onto his ship until the customs matters were clarified. The reason for this was that the ship-owners wished and were only able to procure the necessary insurance on ship and cargo after this matter was solved, because the costs for the insurances differed depending on whether or not customs duties applied for the goods. After the ship-owners had clarified and solved this matter, they procured the respective insurance and the loading of the sugars, monitored by Elart von Bobartt, began at the beginning of June 1744. In the insurance policy ["assecurantz police"] on the cargo ["casco"], the following stipulations were entered: Insurance "policy of 8/m and another of 12/m F in which it is entered the insurance against all risks for … ["Assurantie van allen Ricico of …"] [348] Hogshead of Sugars […] loaded on Hamburg account in Brest onto the Hamburg ship de Hamburger Borse skipper Johan Nagell sailing from Brest to Hamburg. These sugars are coming from an English ship that had been captured by a Spanish privateer from St. Sebastian ["prys gemakt van de Englese"]. After the capture had taken place in the waters off the coast of Brest and the ship had been declared and condemned as a good prize by the Admiralty in St. Sebastian, the sugars were bought in St. Sebastian on Hamburg account to be received in Brest and after it had been received the sugars were weighed on the kings button scale and loaded onto the ship on the account ["voor Hamb. Reekning"] of these Hamburg friends."[277] This particular formulation was suggested by Cornelis de Meyere himself already in March 1744 and we can also find it in another letter from Hertzer & von Bobartt from later on.[278] As becomes furthermore obvious, the Amsterdam insurance company of De Meyere had not agreed to Luetkens' suggestion to enter Brest as the sales location in the insurance certificate.

Leaving blank some important points, actually only writing three dots instead of actual numbers in this copy of the insurance policy into his Letter Book and by omitting to mention the actual name of his Hamburg friends, Hertzer & von Bobartt, Luetkens obviously tried to conceal as best as possible the facts behind their enterprise, making it hard for any outsider to understand for which enterprise this policy was actually issued. In the original insurance certificate this information, however, was given. The same fact applied to the insurance on the ship itself, which was also procured by Luetkens at the same time.

The loading of the vessel began after the 12th of June 1744. Completely contrary to the insurance certificate, which was not handed over to Nagel, but which was sent solely by letter and was only known to de Meyere and the ship-owners, in the connoissement, the bill of lading, a document which was customarily compiled when a ship was loaded and which the ship's captain took with him during his voyage, we can find neither a reference to the fact that the sugars were prize goods nor that the ship that the sugars had originally come from was an English ship that had been captured by a Spanish privateer. In fact, the bill of lading simply stated that it was "barique goods for re-

277 Letter from Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, to Cornelis de Meyere & Soonen, June 9, 1744, TNA, HCA 20/232, Letter Book I, no. 181

278 Letter from Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, to Cornelis de Meyere & Soonen, March 24, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/232, Letter Book III, no. 17. Letter from Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb to Von Bobartt, Elart, June 5, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/232, Letter Book I, no. 174.

export and loaded on the account and risk of H: & v.B. citizens and inhabitants of Hamburg".[279] This was again no coincidence as Luetkens had explicitly ordered von Bobartt in Brest to make sure that the bill of lading did not mention "anything about prize goods" and he even advised his trading partner basically to drum into Nagel that he should "not mention anything about this to anyone in case that he was captured" ["nichts von Preyß gutt darin gedacht wird"] during his voyage. The reason for this was obvious. Luetkens wanted to minimise the risk that Nagel's ship was legitimately captured by the English, for which he once more made use of a legal grey area to cover up the actual truth.[280]

Final inspection: The task of the final inspection of the sugars before they were sent to Hamburg was incumbent on Elart von Bobartt. The importance of this task becomes evident from the letter by Luetkens sent to von Bobartt in Brest on the 5th of June, in which he asked his trading partner to check and "to make sure that the sugars show no average ["kein Havarya", damage], because if so we would need to down-regulate ["weniger reguliren"] the price of these Oxh[oft] casks accordingly".[281] Elart accepted this task as it was arranged before and confirmed to Luetkens in his two next letters from the 10th and the 17th of June from Brest that at least the sugars that were presented to him in Brest upon request showed no damage. In his first letter, he wrote that he had visited the packing house where the sugars were stored, where he could take a look at 4 of the casks of sugar, "one was white sugar, the other one was brown sugar, one was quite good [which as we have learned meant excellent quality in contemporary terms], one was average quality [common quality]."[282] In the same letter, however, he indicated that "hopefully, God willing, they will soon start to load" the sugar, because in this packing house they had to be "in a miserable state" ["in miserable Zustande"].[283] In his next letter, he sounded a bit more enthusiastic, writing that "the refiner ["refineur"] should be able to distil a lot of syrup from these sugars, I think the refiner will produce a syrup ["Syrop"] from these sugars so dry as he had never seen it before, and the casks are full to the brim."[284] This assessment must have given Luetkens the desired assurance and also a bit of tranquillity to look forward to the arrival of these sugars in Hamburg.

On the 26th of June, the ship *Hamburger Börse*, under the command of Johann Nagel, set sail and left the harbour of Brest with 348 casks of sugar. 10 days later, "with God's blessing shipper Nagel had arrived on the river Elbe", and only shortly afterwards Hertzer & von Bobartt welcomed the shipper and his cargo in the harbour of Hamburg. The journey had gone smoothly and without any further incidents. Hertzer & von Bobartt accordingly rejoiced in their next letter, writing that they were "sure that

279 Enclosed ibid.
280 Ibid.
281 Ibid.
282 Letter from Luttman & von Bobartt, to Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, June 10, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/232.
283 Ibid.
284 Letter from Luttman & von Bobartt, to Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, June 17, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/232.

this news makes you as happy as us, and we only hope that you will drink a good glass of wine to celebrate it."[285]

We are presented in this first part of the episode with the two major skills required from wholesale merchants in the business field of Early Modern commission trade. These skills are flexibility and a high level of operational efficiency in both business practice and letter practice. I would subsume these skills under the heading of the practical principle of showing efficiency. The powers of persuasion prevailing in this episode and in the letters analysed primarily stem from these skills and the practical know-how facilitating them. Luetkens and his trading partners were well-versed in these skills and in applying the practical principle in their daily business. For Luetkens it was highly significant, crucial even, to keep pace with the respective typical practices prevailing in the field, from the practices within the financing business to coping practices with regard to legal procedures and to negotiating practices in order to put your plans into practice. They were crucial for him because he was in his establishment phase as a merchant. As the episode has shown, he was able to show the necessary efficiency and prove himself worthy to be a part of the merchant community. He managed to do so on the basis of two strategies. First, he chose a highly pragmatic approach in handling his business. He used existing grey areas and approached the right people at the right time and he found ways to convince them to help him. He adapted his actions to the dynamics of the course of events during this enterprise and to the course that the letter negotiations took in the episode, and last but not least he did not shy away from using improper means and dissimilatory tactics to achieve his goals, which, however, still took place within an at least semi-legal framework. All of this provided him with the necessary flexibility to put his plans into practice. Secondly, he conducted a highly effective letter-writing practice, which was structured and designed for maximum functionality and which helped him to manage and control this enterprise and to pull the necessary strings to put his plans into practice. At the same time, one has to be aware that during the entire time, Luetkens did not see or personally assess the sugars and their quality in any way, nor had he met any of the decisive persons handling the actual trading processes on site during that time. This shows the range of possibilities and the practical opportunities that the practice of letter-writing offered the merchants of the time to handle their business, and it shows the effectiveness of the whole system of commission trade and financing.

Unfortunately though, precisely this fact, namely that Luetkens had refrained from travelling to Brest himself to inspect the cargo in person, turned on him in the end and led to serious problems after the cargo had finally reached Hamburg and was unloaded. The latter situation vividly demonstrates the high risks always present in commission trade. Maybe Luetkens should have gone to the effort and trouble of making the journey to Brest because this might have spared him the troubles that should await him in the further course of the episode, beginning at the time he received the next letter from Hertzer & von Bobartt. On the other hand, not even Elart von Bobartt can in the end be held responsible for the further course of events, and he cannot be blamed for the

285 Letter from Hertzer & von Bobartt to Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, July 7, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/234.

slightly negative turn that the enterprise took. After all, the Nantes merchant had surely acted in good conscience and did his best as the consultant in this enterprise. The four casks which he had inspected must have appeared promising to him, as we have learned from his letters. Unfortunately though, this assessment did not necessarily hold true for the rest of the cargo. In their letter from the 10th of July Hertzer & von Bobartt reported about the unexpected, devastating discovery they made when opening and trying to sell the sugars in Hamburg, which rings in the second part of the episode.

Solving Disputes

On the 10th of July 1744, Hertzer & von Bobartt wrote in their letter that from their last letter

> "E.E. will have learned the safe arrival of shipper Nagell. Since then we have been occupied unloading the ship […] A great part of the cargo is already stored in our house, unfortunately we find several casks among it that have been filled with damaged sugars in Brest ["beschädigten Zucker in Brest vollgeschlagen"]. God willing ["G.G."], the sales revenues will probably still be good, however, the profits will not be as high as E.E. hoped and expected them to be ["flattiret"]. We do not find any white sugars among the cargo and my brother hadn't written anything about white sugars as well in his report. We think that Monsieur Jourdain and the captain of the privateer must have been playing games with us ["ihr Spiel darunter gemacht"/pull a fast on us], and have removed the white sugars and instead must have repacked the Bouccand sugars into smaller casks in order to get the right number of casks. We suspect that there have been white sugars among the original cargo since the fermies [generale] have originally demanded 15 Mark customs duty for these white sugars. In case that E.E. has not yet paid the total sum for the sugars, our advice is to first carry out a detailed investigation ["genauern inquisition"] in this matter."[286]

For all the involved parties, but particularly of course for Hertzer & von Bobartt and Luetkens himself, this revelation must have been a very bitter pill to swallow. The blessing in disguise was, as the letter reveals, that Hertzer & von Bobartt still expected reasonable revenues and profit from the undertaking. These were, however, expected to turn out much lower than they had hoped for and expected beforehand. From then onwards, Luetkens' and Hertzer & von Bobartt's main task was damage limitation. For this purpose, Luetkens and his partners, particularly including Johann Jakob Bethmann as a central figure, applied a second practical principle of persuasion in their correspondence practice and business negotiation in order to at least keep the damage to a minimum if possible. Luetkens, for his part, started to write letters of complaint, of warning and of rebuke to several of his partners. Another factor that rendered the situation even more complicated for him at this particular stage was, however, that the bad news regarding the quality of the goods in general was not the only bad news reaching Luetkens during that time. Apart from the problems with regard to the Brest sugars, problems

286 Letter from Hertzer & von Bobartt to Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, July 10, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/234.

also occurred in his financing business. The first thing to happen was that Jacques Imbert drew a bill of exchange on Luetkens without informing him beforehand, which caused distress and financial problems for Luetkens, especially because apart from the investment in the Brest sugars Luetkens had bought another ship during that time – which meant that any unexpected financial transaction now threatened Luetkens' credit standing and credit worthiness. Secondly, making the situation even worse, in the following weeks the Paris merchant banker Guldiman unexpectedly refused to give him the credit for the full 30/m à 40/m Mark, even though Bethmann had previously assured him that Guldiman had definitely agreed to give him credit. The latter problem caused Bethmann to once more join in the respective letter conversation and to support Luetkens by means of applying exactly the same practical principle of persuasion as Luetkens himself applied. In close consultation with Luetkens, Bethmann also started to write letters of complaint to try to change this misery for the better. Luetkens, with the help of Bethmann, in the end tried to solve these problems in his financing business in the exact same way as he did it with regard to the Brest sugars, meaning he once more wrote several letters of complaint.

All in all, the month of August 1744, when all of this happened, definitely would not go down in the annals of Luetkens' establishment phase as a very positive, successful month. Yet, Luetkens was ultimately able to cope with these challenges and he was able to handle the difficulties and lead them to a still relatively positive outcome. He was also able to bring his trading partners back into line. For the researcher this means that the negative turn that the events took, however, represents a stroke of luck because I am able not only to demonstrate the most effective way of doing business, but I am also able to demonstrate how the people of the past were able to effectively cope with the challenges and potential disturbances happening during business enterprises. Based on that, I am able to outline in the final analysis the efficiency of counteracting inefficiency in commission trade through letter-writing and negotiation practice. In the end, the setback in this episode did not lead to great losses for Luetkens, Hertzer & von Bobartt and the other shareholders involved in the background, namely Bethmann & Imbert and Luttman & von Bobartt. The profit from this enterprise was still considerable. With regard to his general business and his networking activities in France, one might even be inclined to assume that the problems occurring and the measures that Luetkens chose to solve them ultimately led to a strengthening of the bond with his trading partners because his partners would thenceforward think twice before they tested Luetkens' loyalty.

Although the letter conversations and disputes regarding the problems in Luetkens' financing business only started two weeks after the problems regarding the Brest enterprise first occurred, I shall begin with the troubles in his financing business because they provide us with a good basis for comparison for the solution strategy applied in the case of the Brest sugars. The merchants used the same problem-solving strategy in both cases. In the end, all the events – the problems occurring in his financing business and the problems with the French sugars – were ultimately interwoven with each other because the financing problems became the aftermath of his financing problems.

The first expression of resentment against Imbert, Bethmann's business partner, appeared in a letter to Hertzer & von Bobartt from the 24th of August, where we can read that “Mr Imbert takes himself too much liberties” [“allzuviell Freyheitt”], which he was, in Luetkens opinion, not entitled to and which Luetkens was no longer willing to tolerate.[287] The phrase “to take the liberty” was a very common letter phrase in 18th-century mercantile correspondence. It appears several times in different letters for different occasions in the Luetkens archive and was also used as a common phrase in the contemporary mercantile letter-writing manuals.[288] Usually, however, the merchants used the positive form of it, voicing humble requests to trading partners for instance with regard to asking for allowance or their approval to do something.

Furthermore, as can be observed, this common phrase and letter formula was usually used in letters between close trading partners or relatives or it was used whenever a merchant was highly dependent on the goodwill of the addressee. It was used in letters whose writers could in fact take the liberty to allow themselves to ask for favours. Using the negative form of this phrase, but still remaining in the same language register of business and trade, therefore signalled to the addressee the exact opposite. It was a severe offense against the integrity, the righteousness and probity of the respective person and questioned the close bond between the people involved. What Luetkens therefore did in his letter was to mobilise the same commercial language register of business and trade as in his regular business correspondence but he reversed the meaning of the respective utterances in order to rebuke the respective person. This practice was a crucial element of the mercantile letter practice with regard to applying the practical principle of using the sledgehammer method to restore the effectiveness of business. This practice will consequently reappear and shape all the other letters of complaint, of indignation, warning or rebuke in this episode.

In a letter from the following week to Johann Jakob Bethmann, who was the business partner of Jacques Imbert but travelling and residing in another city during that time, we learn about the concrete reason for Luetkens’ resentment. Luetkens wrote that “Imbert has drafted a bill of 4000 V̶ on Hertzer & v.B. on our account à 3 uso without giving me any notice of it and wrote to them that it is for my account [“sonder mir die geringste Anfrage zu thun”].”[289] Luetkens’ reaction to this was that he was “a bit chagrinned [“verdrossen”]” about this Imbert “taking this liberty” and therefore he wrote to Imbert “as he regarded it appropriate” [“der Billigkeit gemeß”] asking him to “spare him” next time from such things – by which he means, drawing bills of exchange on him – “because it was exceeding his powers” [“in mein Kreften nicht”]. To Bethmann he wrote by way of justification that Imbert must have known about his many “engagements” [“Engaschementen”] during that time and that it was therefore not in his, Luetkens’, powers to grant a credit without being asked beforehand. He feared that his bills of exchange could get protested.[290] Still, Luetkens did not refuse to accept the said

287 Letter from Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb to Hertzer & von Bobartt, August, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/232, Letter Book I, no. 276.

288 See for instance Marperger, *Der allzeitfertige Handels-Correspondent*, 302, 13, 743.

289 Letter from Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb to Bethmann, Johann Jakob, August 31, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/232, Letter Book I, no. 282.

290 Letter from Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb to Bethmann, Johann Jakob, August 31, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/232, Letter Book I, no. 282.

drawn bill of exchange and with this signalled a measure of goodwill. Bethmann in his response letter, in which, as a sign of their friendship, did not use the typical form of address E.E. but he approached Luetkens in the second person singular, showed understanding and agreed with him, reacting with “amazement [“Verwunderung”] about the fact that “Imbert had drawn 4000 ₣ on your account on H. & v.B. without informing you about it. You have done right to wash his fur [give him a piece of your mind, “Pelz ein wenig zu waschen”] and to write the truth to him”.[291] Later, as we learn from a letter from the 19th of October, Bethmann himself must have once more given his business partner Imbert a wigging, promising to Luetkens that he would write to Imbert to once more “sweep his fur”.[292] Bethmann was obviously uncomfortable with the situation that Imbert made this faux pas when he himself was not in Bordeaux.

This drastic language and the harsh tone were part of the game, and it represented and was regarded as precisely the appropriate way of behaviour that Luetkens had emphasised in his letter as being necessary for his letter to Imbert. The harsh tone in these letters was also an intrinsic and important element of all the letters of complaint that we find in the Luetkens correspondence, and it represented the core component of the practical principle of the sledgehammer method applied in these letters.

Imbert’s response letter shows that the respective measure had shown the desired effect. Although Imbert nonetheless allowed himself a little side blow against Luetkens by telling him not to overreact – which he would only do because their relationship was in fact rather solid. Imbert apologised for his behaviour and promised to be more careful next time.

He wrote on the 29th of August 1744:

> “Monsieur & very dear friend [“tres cher Amy”],
>
> I have only a brief moment to reply to the particular letter [“lettre particuliere”] with which you have honoured me on the 21st of this month and to tell you that I am in despair [“je suis au desespoir”] at having annoyed you so strongly with the draft of the £4,000 of the 18th of the month à 3 Uso on Hertzer & von Bobart, which you have nevertheless equipped with your orders for acceptation, for which I in particular am very grateful [“tres reconoissant”] & you can rest assured for good measure that we will never again take the same liberty, but for this time you have to please forgive me for it [“pour cette fois il faut me la pardoner”]. The enumeration which you make, dear brother, of the benefactions which you have lavished on us could not engrave deeper into my heart than they already have [“ne scauroit les graver plus profondement dans mon Coeur”] & rely upon it that you do not oblige an ingrate. Also, dear brother, it was never my intention to make demands on you beyond those services which one can reasonably expect from one’s good friends [“bons amis”] & if I had thought I would annoy you this much with this draft, I would have chosen someone else, but at present, where I have arranged myself accordingly, you will oblige me infinitely by leaving things on

291 Letter from Bethmann, Johann Jakob to Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, September 17, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/234.

292 Letter from Bethmann, Johann Jakob to Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, October 19, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/234.

> the foot on which they now stand, and when the due date approaches I will make the provision to the gentlemen Hertzer & von Bobart on paper to complete satisfaction, and we will arrange together for the loss incurred in this operation ["nous arrangerons ensemble pour la perte qu'il y aura sur cette operation"]. [...] I have the honour of being, with as much consideration as attachment, Monsieur & good friend, your very humble & very obliging servant Imbert."[293]

In order to compensate for the bill of exchange drawn on him by Imbert, Luetkens was forced to take another credit for himself, for which he drew on the Paris banking house of Antoine Léonard Guldiman. Due to his investments in the Brest sugars and particularly due to his investments in the purchase of more ships for his merchant fleet during that time Luetkens was not able to simply meet this new payment obligation without a further loan, which was the reason why such unforeseeable financial obligations must have annoyed him. The ship he bought during that time was the English ship *L'Upton*, captured by the Spanish, which was later renamed the *Hope* and subsequently gained a certain notoriety. Guldiman in Paris seemed to be the right person and address for his credit request, since the latter was already a bit familiar with Luetkens' name and businesses due to his help with the customs formalities regarding the Brest sugars and particularly because Bethmann had promised to Luetkens beforehand that Guldiman was surely available on demand. In Bethmann's letter from the 25th of July 1744 we read that Luetkens could easily obtain a credit "of 30 à 40/m drawing on Guldiman [...] in return for remittances on London, Hamb[urg] or Amst[erdam] on the account of him [Bethmann], I have talked to them and they have assured me to honour your bills. [...] Guldiman is a good & honest man & with good credit and he has offered me his service, so you can approach and trade with him at any time and you can rely on his rectitude with regard to the payment of your bills ["Tretten"]."[294] Luetkens consequently took Bethmann at his word and wrote a lengthy letter to Guldiman on the 31st of August thanking him for his help "in the dispute with the customs", announcing that he would send some cured meat in return for that favour, and finally asking him in the most humble tone to grant him the respective credit range of 30 à 40/m, while explicitly referring to Bethmann's announcement, who had "recommended E.E.'s house". He wrote to Guldiman that "since I will probably make some substantial purchases next month in Brest, I wanted to ask E.E., if, in case I would need it, I could take the liberty to draw a bill of exchange on E.E. for 30 à 40/m on my account à 8:10: 12/d [days] dato" in "return for remittances". Once again, he apparently mobilised the exact same language register and common phrases for asking for help, for instance represented in the phrase of taking the liberty. He furthermore added that in total his capital outlay amounted to "circa 80/m" during that time, which shows us that he also planned to use the credit to settle his accounts with regard to the Brest sugars. Last but not least, Luetkens assured

293 Letter from Imbert, Jacques, to Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, August 29, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/234.

294 Letter from Bethmann, Johann Jakob to Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, July 25, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/234.

Guldiman that "since the current times are critical ["critique"] I would not take it amiss if E.E. took precautions ["prequaution"] and gather information about me".[295]

Unfortunately though, his sense of security and the hope that he had placed in Guldiman was dashed by Guldiman's response letter from the 5th of September, which represented the second major setback for Luetkens during a short time. Guldiman refused the request writing that he was not able to "enter into this engagement ["angaschement"] regarding the sum of 30 à 40/m £", but he agreed to grant Luetkens a "credit of 3 à 4/m Guilders", which represented a more common, typical amount of a financial transaction during that time represented in many of Luetkens' bills of exchange, but which still was not enough.[296] At least, this amount was sufficient to cover the costs necessary for Imbert's drawn bill of exchange, but Luetkens could not conceal his great disillusionment about this news when writing his following letters. These letters once more provide us with a vivid example of how people used business letters to try to turn the tide on a respective enterprise which was under the threat of failure.

First, in his response letter to Guldiman, we can only recognise a very subtle hint at his disappointment and resentment. He responded to him, once more in a humble manner, that he had only approached Guldiman because he was given the assurance by "Bethmann in dato 25 July who had written to me that I could easily and without problems draw on E.E.'s house for this credit of 30 à 40/m £". He also once more underlined that he was "truthfully not suffering from a general shortage of money" ["kein manquemt. Von Gelde"], but that he only needed to approach Guldiman due to the fact that the "times were critical ["cretiquese Zeitten"], which is the reason why I was not able not draw bills on Bord[eaux] oder Nantes", but that he needed money for his large expenditures in the last "3 à 4 months which amount to 60 à 70/m £ in total on his own account and in the interest of his friends".[297] This was meant to point out his financial strength, but particularly his integrity and probity, which he obviously felt was under attack. Most generally, he tried to express his utmost understanding for Guldiman's decision because Luetkens was obviously still relying on Guldiman's offer with regard to the 4/m £ credit. In this regard, it is very telling and helpful to also take a look at the material appearance of this letter as it can be found in Luetkens' Letter Book. The letter as it was copied in the Letter Book shows numerous corrections, strikethrough text, modifications and additions, which prove that Luetkens obviously struggled, or rather that he made every effort, to find the right words for this letter to Guldiman in order to gain or retain the banker's favour. At the same time, the many corrections show that the bad news was in fact a great blow to him – in his choosing his sentences wisely, we can at least surmise the unease in which the merchant Luetkens must have been. Instead of writing that he would not "in the least take it amiss", which he crossed out,

295 Letter from Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb to Guldiman, Antoine Léonard, August 31, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/232, Letter Book I, no. 291.

296 Letter from Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb to Guldiman, Antoine Léonard, August [no date given], 1744, TNA, HCA 30/232, Letter Book I, no. 299. See the financial transactions in Hancock, *Citizens of the World*; Roseveare, *Markets and Merchants*; Morgan, *Bright-Meyler papers*; Henninger, *Bethmann*.

297 Letter from Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb to Guldiman, Antoine Léonard, August [no date given], 1744, TNA, HCA 30/232, Letter Book I, no. 299.

he wrote for instance that it "would be unreasonable for him to take it amiss". Instead of writing that it would be "much to my regret" that his bills might be protested in the end, he wrote that it "would have pained" him ["den ~~mir leydt wen~~ mir geschmetzt]. In the end, he concluded that he was "glad that he had asked before [drawing any bills]".[298] In the same letter, he accepted the offer by Guldiman and asked him for a "credit of 3 à 4000 Guilders" and enclosed a bill of exchange, by means of which he "remitted E.E. on my account 4000 Mark on Cornelis de Meyere & fils à Amsterdam à 2 uso, which I ask you to sell in my best interest."[299] More noticeably and tangibly than in his letter to Guldiman, however, he expresses his disappointment, sullenness and disgruntlement, in the letters he wrote to Luttman & von Bobartt and particularly once more in the letters to Bethmann at the same time. To Luttman he reported that he had received news from Guldiman, who had written to him "very polite and with many excuses ["excuses"], in short, after beating about the bushes it turns out that he grants me a credit of 4/m Guilders, even though M. Bethmann had written to me and promised me otherwise on the 25th of July that I can easily draw on him 30 à 40/m £."[300] In the letter exchanges between Luetkens and Bethmann, we can even notice a certain frustration and, on the part of Bethmann, we can furthermore notice an awakening of a certain remorse and a feeling of responsibility for this misery. Bethmann did not stand idle in this situation, but, just as in the case of Imbert, he once more took concrete actions. His reaction to Luetkens' letters was that he wrote a letter of complaint to Guldiman. Furthermore, as a further concrete measure, Bethmann & Imbert remitted to Luetkens 35/m £ from their own account, drawing themselves on the Paris banking houses of Tourton Baur & Comp. and the banking house of Pietet, in order to provide Luetkens with the necessary liquidity for his enterprises – and presumably also in order to undo, in a way, the unexpectedly false promise he had given to Luetkens. Bethmann emphasized in this regard that, unlike in the case of Guldiman, Luetkens could rely and "count on" him ["kanstu Statt machen"] and on his merchant house's support. This represented the common mercantile letter formulae in business letters to give a reassurance, which will once more reappear in the chapter on Luetkens' high-risk trade. We learn about both these concrete measures from the letter Bethmann wrote to Luetkens on the 2nd of October, in which he wrote that "he had had noted with amazement ["Verwunderung"] that Guldiman has refused to keep his promise, which he had given me both verbally and in writing, to accept to grant you a credit of 30 à 40/m £, I am therefore pleased that my house directly remitted you 35/m £ and you can count on that payment. [...] I am not sure what to say about Guldiman. I will write to him today speak my mind as a good German ["aves Teutscher"]. And I will tell him know how wrong he is, and that thank God I can also turn to other friends for help whenever I want to."[301]

298 Ibid.

299 Ibid.

300 Letter from Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb to Luttman & von Bobartt, September 4, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/232, Letter Book I, no. 297.

301 Letter from Bethmann, Johann Jakob to Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, October 2, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/234.

In order to show contrast to Guldiman, Bethmann presented himself in the letter as a paragon of virtuousness, drawing on the common language of mercantile self-presentation. This rhetorical strategy helps him to justify and confirm in front of Luetkens the need to reproach Guldiman for his behaviour. At the same time, Bethmann's own share in this misery faded into the background – and yet a bit of his guilty conscience can be read between the lines and is particularly mirrored in his actions, in granting the necessary credit to Luetkens from his own company's account and with regard to his promptness in writing a letter of complaint to Guldiman. The phrase to "speak one's mind" ["schreibe Ihme heute [...] meine Meynung"] was a very common letter formula used during that time, reappearing in many letters of the Luetkens archive. Adding the element to speak one's mind "as a good German" is furthermore particularly interesting because it conveys the meaning to the addressee of mutual loyalty and cohesion as Germans, which was intended to signal to Luetkens that he could trust in the fact that Bethmann was going to take action in this matter. At the same time the phrase of course also held a nationalistic connotation referring to the alleged assertiveness of Germans.

This letter to Guldiman, and the respective warnings and reproaches it included, did not fail to have the desired effect. Thus, once again such a letter of complaint turns out to have been a powerful tool to influence the behaviour of its receiver and to change the situation for the better. It is another vivid example of the effectiveness of the practical principle of persuasion, which I have called the sledgehammer method based on the usage of drastic words.

After receiving Bethmann's letter, Guldiman rowed back and he even apologised for his behaviour. He furthermore promised to accept and to honour Luetkens' bills of exchange in the future. From Bethmann's letter from the 19th of October we learn that it all simply had been "a misunderstanding, with his last letter he [Guldiman] asked me for forgiveness, and writes to me that you [Luetkens] did not mention us [our involvement] with a single word [which was not entirely true]. And in order to convince you that this is not made up out of thin air [this is the truth] I have enclosed Guldiman's original letter ["sende dir inliegend seinen Originalbrieff"] which I ask you to also forward to my house in Bordeaux."[302] The enclosed original letter reads:

> "I have also noted that, if Monsieur N. G. Luetkens draws 10 to 12000 G[uilders] on me, to honour it by means of the provision which he will pass on to me, with regard to which I can surely be at ease, Messieurs, seeing as it is you. I also hope he will not draw these drafts on short notice [...] [since] [t]oday there is nothing left on my account ["dans ma caisse"] because of the many advances and the payments for the negotiations with foreign countries [...]. It is the fate of foreign merchants' trade that so much is forbidden for them ["le destain de negociations pour l'étranger tout estant interdit"]."[303]

In Guldiman's next direct letter he added the comment that he understood and it is alright that "Monsieur is angry with me ["vous estés faché Monsieur contre moy"] and you

302 Letter from Bethmann, Johann Jakob to Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, October 19, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/234.

303 Letter from Guldiman, Antoine Léonard, to Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, August 8, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/236.

have every right to be, there is a misunderstanding which has caused it and I am very innocent ["je suis très innocent"] because of the reasons which I have written to Bethmann & Imbert."[304] In order to restore the confidence in each other, to send a token of trust, and to try to turn the tide on an enterprise that threatened to fail, one could hardly find or imagine a more direct and significant material practice for underlining the seriousness of your intentions than the practice of enclosing a correspondent's original letter in a letter packet, as Bethmann did with Guldiman's letter in this episode. This gesture in the end led to the desired effect. It helped Luetkens to establish a good commercial relationship with Guldiman in the future. The language and tone of their letters softened. Guldiman even began to write his response letters to Luetkens from then on no longer only in French but also in German, which can also be seen as a gesture of goodwill. The effectiveness of their trade relationship and practice was restored through the help of the principle of the sledgehammer method applied in correspondence practice. Still, Bethmann did not abstain from once more going after Guldiman some weeks later, in a letter to Luetkens from the 12th of November, calling Guldiman "a scoundrel" ["Hundsvott"] and a "Jesuitical and dubious human being". As Guldiman was Huguenot, his letter was a harsh insult. The letters show Bethmann's lingering bitterness about this whole affair even though it had taken a turn for the better.[305]

Finding the Culprit

The problems occurring in Luetkens' financing activities resemble the problems occurring with regard to the Brest sugars. Both cases serve as good comparative examples. The solution strategy applied in the main episode of this chapter now appears to be exemplary and symptomatic. Luetkens applied the same method to solve the problems in this "affaire en question" as was evident in both cases. He followed the same practical pattern to exert a certain influence on his trading partners that he and Bethmann used with regard to rebuking Imbert and Guldiman. He wrote letters of complaint and rebuke. Those guilty and responsible for this miserable situation were quickly identified. In the case of the sugars, it was above all the Spanish ship's captain Perre, but also Jourdain and in part also the Darragory brothers, who were confronted with accusations because they all seemed to "have been playing games with us".[306] In the end, however, it was only Perre on whom the entire anger of the partners was unloaded while Jourdain and the Darragory brothers got away with it, presumably due to the importance of the business relationship. They were to receive only relatively harmless words of displeasure such as "now the joke is on me" ["je suy la dupe a present"].[307] Consequently, Luetkens

304 Letter from Guldiman, Antoine Léonard, to Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, October 3, 1744, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/236.

305 Letter from Bethmann, Johann Jakob to Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, November 12, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/234.

306 Letter from Hertzer & von Bobartt to Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, July 10, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/234.

307 [...] Je say [sais] bien que M: von Bobartt a été trop faille en recavent le party de sucre. Il faut bien que je suy [suis] la dupe a present. Je vous assure que je ne un grand coque de demande queque chose si la fait ne pas roll. [...]." Letter from Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb to Darragory, Nicolas and Jean, August 21, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/232, Letter Book I, no. 271.

and his partners primarily alleged that the Spanish ship's captain had committed fraud, which was why the latter instantly received harsh letters of complaints and rebuke by Luetkens. In these letters, Luetkens once more applied the same method to structure his letters as he and Bethmann had chosen for their letters to Imbert and Guldiman. He contrasted the behaviour of the accused with rules of good and honourable practice that usually prevailed in sea business. He also chose once more a very sharp tone for his letters, which particularly becomes obvious in his accusation regarding his suspicion that Perre had acted wilfully and knowingly. Since Perre and Luetkens were, however, not familiar with each other as it was only a one-off business relationship, the tone and style of the letter is more severe and definitely harsher – as were the consequences for the involved parties.

Apart from his accusatory letters, Luetkens furthermore took the measures of postponing all further payments to Darragory and announced that he would file a suit of indemnification against Perre, for which he even presented an anonymous witness who confirmed Perre's misbehaviour. All of this becomes obvious from the letter conversation and exchange of blows that unfolded between the involved parties in the following weeks until October 1744, at the end of which neither of the parties emerged as the clear winner or loser, although the matter was still settled in a relatively reasonable manner for Luetkens.

One of the first letters that Luetkens wrote after receiving the sobering news from Hertzer & von Bobartt was addressed to Perre.[308] This letter is not written in French or German but in Dutch, due to the fact that Dutch often still served as a lingua franca in the sea business. Adopting an accusatory positions, Luetkens reported, in words that already sound familiar to us from Hertzer & von Bobartt's letter, that "my friends in Hamburg have reported the unloading of the party of sugar from captain Nagell's ship" and that they found that a "majority of the Oxhoft were crammed with damaged sugar. I have expected to find some average ["havarya"] on the sugars, however, I wouldn't have thought that the damage was so severe. I must say that I am astonished ["ben verwondert"] that E.E. has sold us this sugar with good conscience as undamaged goods ["gesonde suker"]. Now I am forced to file a suit against the armateurs à costy [in Brest] because I want refactie from them."[309] A refactie, "refache" in French, was an allowance for breakage, an allowance on the price of damaged or defective goods, in German called "Rückvergütung".[310] It was and actually still is a commonly used term and financial instrument in commercial and financing business particularly with regard to logistic services. Luetkens furthermore continued that he would "now suspend the payment to Darragory ["niets meerder te betallen"] due to the fact that the sugars were obviously damaged". At that time, 10/m £ were still left to pay. So, this was the ultimate result and consequence that the Darragory brothers were confronted with due to the unexpected problems that had occurred. At the end of his letter, Luetkens confronted Perre with

308 See the chapter on High-Risk trade for further explanations on ships' captains' letters.

309 Letter from Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb to Perre, July 20, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/232, Letter Book I, no. 23.

310 "Refache, Refactie, Refaction" *Oekonomische Encyklopädie*, edited by Johann Georg Krünitz. 242 volumes. Berlin, 1773-1858, vol. 121, 415.

the most serious of his accusations, namely alleging that Perre had wilfully committed fraud, for which he even presented an anonymous witness. The witness had told him – and he quotes the witness in the letter – that Perre "himself had mentioned to this person: I was aware ["ik weet"] of the fact that I would lose weight with regard to some of the Oxhofts during the re-packing of the sugars and I have added some of the damaged sugars, which was not worth 14 à 16 £, in order to ship them as undamaged goods ["voor gesond maken passeren"]."[311]

The actual extent of the damage that Perre had caused through his supposed actions became clear to Luetkens only one week later when he received the next letter from Hertzer & von Bobartt, The news contained in this letter caused Luetkens directly to write another letter to Perre, once more sharpening his tone. In their letter, Hertzer & von Bobartt reported to Luetkens the ultimate consequence of the devastating discovery of the damage to the sugars. The result of this was that they were not able to sell the sugar, at least not in their usual way, as an offer for one of their regular customers. But no one was interested, so they had to make use of an option that Luetkens had actually proposed to them before, in case they were desperate: they put the sugars up for public auction in Hamburg. On the 27th of July the Hamburg merchants wrote that they were

> "not able to find a buyer for the English sugars although we have presented them to several customers. [...] We cannot gauge if the bad quality comes from the pulping ["einstampen"] of the sugars. E.E. has advised us not to rule out the possibility of selling to the bank for 8 à 8 1/4 S. and the assessment of my brother [Elart von Bobartt] has been that among friends the sugar ["unter Brüdern wehrt sein"] might be worth 8 à 8 1/2 S. My brother must have estimated the value of these sugars completely different than we do, because we for our part find nothing good to say about it ["nichts schönes daran"], in fact we find a lot of it is damaged, everything is like honey [that is, showing a kind of a caramel consistence] when we tap the casks at their bottoms. In fact, many casks which seemed good at first sight when we first opened them, now turn out to be bad quality when tapping the casks ["in stechen"]. We think therefore that the damaged sugar was deliberately mixed with the dry good sugars during repacking [...] We don't think that the damage was caused during the shipment ["keine Avarie daran gekommen"] [...] and we fear that we shall have many discussions about that in the future. [...] [Due to these reasons] we have decided ["resolvirt"] to open and put up for auction some of the sugars. [...] We are reluctant to do that [but there is no other way]. [...] We think that the respective persons in Brest have dealt with this matter very roguishly ["recht schelmisch ümbgegangen"], they must have removed the white sugars and have repacked the damaged sugars. Enfin, it is neither our fault nor the fault of my brother [Elart], now we simply have to make the best out of it ["sehen so guth als möglich"]. We wish that next time that E.E. does such a purchase, E.E. will take a closer look at the goods himself. The enterprise will, if it is God's will ["G.G."], still be profitable for us, however not as profitable as E.E. has hoped for ["sich flattiret"]."[312]

311 Letter from Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb to Perre, July 20, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/232, Letter Book I, no. 23.

312 Letter from Hertzer & von Bobartt to Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, July 27, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/234.

In their next letter, from the 7th of August, Hertzer & von Bobartt finally reported the successful sale of "312 Oxh[offt] English sugar to the banque."[313] The rest was sold to Luer Luers. Luetkens' reaction to the letter from Hertzer & von Bobartt, in turn, was one of disappointment, as we would expect. In the end, the sales price of the sugar once again turned out even lower than expected. On the other hand, he could be glad that at least the matter was resolved with a relatively moderate outcome in view of the prevailing unfavourable conditions. He still made a profit, albeit with some losses. In his letter, Luetkens confirmed that the sale "pleases me ["in so weitt lieb"], however, my profit which should have been 30 per cent now turns out to be only 15 à 18 per cent", which was why he still planned to ask for compensation also in on behalf of all other shareholders. To get this refactie, later in time, he furthermore asked Hertzer & von Bobartt for an official attestation regarding the sugars from Hamburg brokers, which favour the latter did for him.[314] In his earlier letter to Hertzer & von Bobartt, he at the same time assured them that he would have "acted in the very same way" ["hette das selbige gethan"]. Nevertheless, he did not completely agree with Hertzer & von Bobartt with regard to the question of guilt. In his opinion, Elart von Bobartt was at least partially responsible for their misery because "Monsieur von B. had assured me before that the sugars were of good quality and without average ["Avarya", damage]".[315] After having finally visited Brest himself in August to gain an impression of the storage facilities, where Luetkens had noticed that one could "hardly walk" in these facilities "without getting your feet wet", he concluded that Elart von Bobartt was to blame, too. In Luetkens' opinion, Elart von Bobartt should have known better, so "in the end it was Bobartt's fault" ["allso die Schuldt von Herr von Bobartt"], who should have taken the necessary precautions and who should have looked more closely at the sugars. So, he rejected the notion of any guilt resting on his own shoulders. For the good of the relationship with the Nantes merchant house Luttman & von Bobartt, however, he asked Hertzer & von Bobartt, to "keep this to ourselves ["unter unß"] and to write nothing about it to Nantes because it would not change anything or help anyone."[316]

While Luetkens was forgiving and complaisant with Elart von Bobartt, by being forbearing with him and by turning a blind eye, he was however implacable with regard to Perre's behaviour and his role in this misery. In the end, his entire anger was unloaded on Perre, the Spanish privateer captain, who was made accountable and was seen as the root of all evils. Luetkens' letter to Perre accordingly turned out as a prime example of a letter of complaint, and it is a vivid example of the practical principle of using the sledgehammer method in order to rebuke the addressee.

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313 Letter from Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb to Hertzer & von Bobartt, August, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/232, Letter Book I, no. 276.

314 Letter from Hertzer & von Bobartt to Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, September 4, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/234.

315 Ibid.

316 Letter from Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb to Hertzer & von Bobartt, August 24, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/232, Letter Book I, no. 276.

On the 21th of August, Luetkens wrote to Perre that

> "by all appearances ["alle aparentie near"] E.E. had caused us at least a loss ["schade hebben verorsackt"] of over 6/m £ through his decanting and repacking of the sugars. I would like to believe ["ik will glooven"] that E.E. had not mixed the damaged sugars under the good sugars, but at the moment it very much looks like as this was the case, since my friends wrote to me that they have sold a great part of the sugars by means of public auction and they had to sell it as damaged sugars ["voor beschadigt vercoopen"]. Some casks which seemed undamaged and dry in the beginning now bring to light that even they contain damaged sugar [...] Everything is syrup ["in Sirop loopt"]."

Reacting to Perre's last letter, in which the latter had protested his innocence and emphasized that the damaged must have occurred during the voyage to Hamburg, Luetkens insisted that "the damage could not have been caused during the transport from Brest to Hamburg" because everything was packed expertly and carefully. "The fact that E.E. had told to another person himself that there are some sugars worth only 14 à 15 £ among the cargo, also must be nothing but the truth, because this person, whose name I don't want to mention ["dito person wellke niet noomen will"], has confirmed it to me [....]". Luetkens continued by saying that it is "truly a bad excuse ["sleegte excuse"] that E.E. wrote that he had repacked the sugars before the eyes of Monsieur von Bobartt", because the latter, unlike Perre, could certainly not have known that so many of the sugars were damaged right from the beginning.[317]

All of Luetkens' reproaches against Perre in his letter are serious allegations. Drawing on the commercial language register of business and trade to particularly highlight Perre's breach of the common rules and code of conduct prevailing in mercantile culture and sea business, this letter represented a direct attack on the honour, honesty and integrity of Perre. With the full force of a business letter of complaint, as a tool not only to warn but actually to destroy Perre's credibility, Luetkens accused Perre of having committed fraud, for which he would now have to bear the consequences. In Perre's response letter, the latter was forced to take a defensive stance, for which he applied exactly the same epistolary strategy that Luetkens had chosen beforehand, once more proving it was a common pattern of letter practice during the 18th century. He mobilised the language register of business and trade to defend his integrity and righteousness. At the beginning of September, Perre responded to Luetkens that he was quite

> "astonished about the lamentations of E.E.'s friends in Hamburg [groetelicke klaegen [...] groetelicke verwondert] [...], and what I have written in my previous letter was the absolute truth. [...] I am also surprised ["wel verwondert"] that E.E. won't give me the name of the person to whom I have allegedly mentioned that the sugars are only worth less than 14 à 15 £." Responding to Luetkens' observation that he had found the storage facilities in Brest full of water and syrup on the ground, giving an indication

317 Letter from Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb to Perre, August 21, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/232, Letter Book I, no. 272.

> that the damage was caused during repacking, Perre wrote that "there was no water in the warehouse ["Maegesin"] of Monsieur Jourdain as I assure E.E. as an honest man when we have refilled several of the casks in the presence and under the commission of M. von Bobartt ["Bonbaert"]. [...] I can confirm with a clear conscience and as an honest man ["eerliek Man"] that this is the truth."[318]

All of Perre's protestations and affirmations that he was an "honest man" were in vain and they died away unheard in the letter conversation. As Luetkens' letters show, the merchant had already formed his opinion. In a letter to Darragory already from the end of August, we read for the first time that Luetkens described the Spanish ship's captain as a "rogue", a "fripon" in the original French and "Schelm" in German, emphasizing that he would "more and more come to the conclusion that Perre had acted as a rogue" ["come je trouve plus en plus que Mr. Paerre at agie comme un fripon"] With this, he picked up and agreed with the judgment that Hertzer & von Bobartt had already reached beforehand, having accused Perre of roguish behaviour.[319] The moment he used this word for the first time was also the moment he must have passed his final judgment on whom all the blame for the misery was to be put. He put it on Perre, whose "infamous actions as a burglar come more and more to the fore ["Schellm und Diebesgriffe"]", as he continued his lamentations in a later letter to Luttman & von Bobartt.[320] It therefore did not help that Perre declared his innocence – no matter if he mobilised the language register of business and trade or not, so the practice did not always show the intended effect. Quite on the contrary, it was now overshadowed by another practice, which was that Perre was now overrun by libel and slander. Once uttered, the attack on his reputation stuck to Perre and was no longer easily eliminated. Particularly since all other trading partners joined in the defamatory mechanisms from this moment onwards. Especially Bethmann stood out and played an important role, whose opinion weighed heavily due to his own reputation within the French mercantile community during that time. On the 10th of September, Bethmann wrote that he was "sorry to hear that captain Perre had betrayed you & all of us with the sugars."[321] One week later, he once more repeated that "Perre had miserably betrayed us" ["jämmerlich betrogen"].[322] One month later, on the 19th of October, the reputable merchant raised the bid even higher: "I hope that God will punish the roguish Perre, so that he will give us satisfaction because he had acted as a villain" ["Schurcke"].[323]

Being accused of such behaviour, especially if it was voiced by such reputable men as Bethmann, Hertzer & von Bobartt or even Luetkens, was a serious blow for Perre.

318 Letter from Perre to Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, September 4, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/236.

319 Letter from Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb to Darragory, Nicolas and Jean, August 28, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/232, Letter Book I, no. 287.

320 Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb to Darragory, Nicolas and Jean, September 14, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/232, Letter Book I, no. 308.

321 Letter from Bethmann, Johann Jakob to Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, September 10, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/234.

322 Letter from Bethmann, Johann Jakob to Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, September 17, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/234.

323 Letter from Bethmann, Johann Jakob to Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, October 19, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/234.

Even if he was not addressed directly as a rogue, he nevertheless felt the effects of it. His reputation was damaged. He was exposed to hostilities from all involved parties and last but not least he also had to bear direct legal consequences. Calling someone a "rogue" therefore served as the preliminary stage and at the same time as the discourse marker of a transition: from goodwill, understanding and the willingness to cooperate to conflict and exclusion. The word shows itself in its full historical significance and historicity. It did not literally only represent a simple accusation, but in its specific context it actually served as an active means of exercising influence on the other parties and of exerting powers and was thus a tool for actually doing reputational damage to the accused. Using such drastic language and insults, by using these particular words, was an intrinsic part of the epistolary powers emanating from these letters of complaint and rebuke, paving the way for further concrete measures that were now taken by the accusing parties to punish Perre for his behaviour and to try to achieve a certain compensation. As a consequence of the fact that they had found the culprit, Luetkens, Hertzer & von Bobartt took legal steps. They demanded financial compensation for their loss in the form of the said refactie, "refache", the official document drawn up by Hamburg officials, brokers and state officials describing the case and claiming a refund from Perre on the basis of their appraisal.

This document reached Perre in October 1744. It marks the end of this episode since it also marked the end of the enterprise regarding the Brest sugars, forcing Perre to compensate Luetkens and his partners for their loss. The document once more recapitulates in a vivid manner the problems that occurred in this episode and the consequences resulting from it. At the same time, it represents the material instrument with which the problems were in the end solved or at least were brought to a conciliatory ending for Luetkens. The "refactie attestatum", for which the Hamburg Admiralty in the person of Johann Martin Lambrecht, notary public, and the two courtiers Hans Hinrich Schröder and Peter Nootnagell customarily used the French language reads as follows:

> "On this day Monday 7th day of the month of Septemb: of the year 1744, at the request of the Gentlemen ["Messieurs"] Hertzer & Von Bobart merchants of this city of Hamburg appeared before me, Jean Martin Lambrecht, Notary public and scrivener ["tabellion"] by his imperial majesty's authority, & swore in the Gentlemen Hans Hinrich Schröder & Peter Nootnagel, sworn courtiers in sugar who have told me and declared in favour of the truth and under oath of their offices ["declaré en faveur dela verité & sur le serment"] that they have visited & inspected for the Gentlemen Hertzer & von Bobart a load of 340 futailles [=casks/Hogsheads] of Moscovados sugar both Bouccands and Barriques, which were all opened & caved in ["toutes ouvertes & de foncées"], they had found in the said load 312 futailles in which the sugar had effectively been destroyed by the water of the sea, and that several of them were not in the futailles, like these sugars were coming from the British colonies in the Americas but that they had been repacked ["repacté"] in futailles of French sugar, in futailles with iron bands & others, which had been filled with dry & rotten sugar ["les quelles avoit eté remplie de Sucre seche & avarié l`un parmie l`autre"], the one between the other [have been mixed], & that for this reason the Gentlemen Hertzer & von Bobart could not sell the said 312 Boucands & Barriques of sugar as dry out of hand because none of

the refiners would have accepted them as dry ["de la main car aucun des raffineurs les auroit accepté"], the said gentlemen were forced to decide to sell them in a public sale, which has been done on the seventh of last August by the said sworn gentlemen after having made the usual notification at the exchange, having sold them at the Thare of 17 per cent for the futailles over a thousand livres, 19 per cent for those under a thousand livres, 1 per cent commission & one per cent for prompt payment as ordinary conditions for spoiled sugars ["sucres avariés] to the highest bidder & last tenderer at the specific prices [detailed in] the following of the present [document], the said gentlemen add that if the said 312 futailles of sugar had been dry & uncorrupted they had estimated for the sale out of hand 7 5/8 ["sept cinq huitiemes"] Livre bank price ["gros de banque la Livre", the fixed price that was determined by the bank] with the ordinary thare of 15 per cent, the Barrique above a thousand livres, 17per cent for those below a thousand livres and $\frac{3}{4}$ pCt de trait or bon poids, of which the specification of the obtained prices in the said sale is below, to wit 1 5 B[arrique]s a 7 11/16 C&E Jenckel, 2 a 5 d[itt]o 7 1/4 H. Bremen [list continues mentioning names of reputable Hamburg merchant houses] [...] Jenckel [...] Schröder [...] Burmester, [...] Boye, [...] [what follows next is an extensive list of all the purchasers of the barriques, the hogshead of sugars] [...] In total: 312 Barriques, which is hereby attested & after having read & interpreted the content for the said gentlemen they have signed with me by their own hands Hans Hinrich Schröder Peter Nootnagell in the following the said Courtier Nootnagel has again declared to me on the oath of his office that he had bought from the Gentlemen Hertzer & von Bobart some days after the above sale 36 futailles of Moscovado sugar, constituting the rest of the load of 340 Barriques mentioned above, for the price of 8 Livre bank price ["eight gros de banque le livre"] with the ordinary thare, the said 36 futailles being altogether dry & without damage, which is hereby documented and signed by the said Courtier's own hand, the reading & interpretation having been made.

After this, the said gentlemen Hertzer & von Bobart have declared to me having received the said 340 futailles of sugar from Brest by means of the ship *La Bourse d'Hambourg*, Cap[tain] Johan Nagel, which they had been sent as good & dry, but having found them in the condition described above, they interrogated the said Captain Nagel & his crew on this subject but they having declared not to have had on their voyage from Brest any storm nor seawater in their ship ["aucun tempete ni d`eaeu dela Mer dans leur vaisseau"] & that his ship had suffered no other influx of water & his said ship was in so good a condition as to allow it to depart from there without requiring any repairing, of the sort that if the sugars were damaged they had to have been so before & had not incurred any damage on his ship; thus the Gentlemen Hertzer & von Bobart protest according to the best practice of the law all damages ["protestent en la meilleure forme de Droite de tout domage"], fees and costs suffered with these sugars regarding their damage, preserving their recourse ["preservant leur recours"] to all which this implies. Which is hereby attested to use & estimate for this reason signed by my said gentlemen in their own hands, made & passed in Hamburg, as below Hertzer

> & von Bobartt. In witness whereoff ["En foy de quoi"] Jean Martin Lambrecht Not. Ces. Publ. & juré[324]

4.11 Conclusion: Letters as Nerve Centres

Commission trade represented a relatively low-risk field of wholesale business in the 18th century. As the letter episode analysed in this chapter has shown, however, even this business field was not immune to risks, losses or setbacks. Nevertheless, not least because the merchants of the time knew and incorporated certain mechanisms to minimise the risks or found ways of compensation or of counteracting setbacks, this business field was very lucrative and promising for Early Modern Merchants. Particularly for merchants during their establishment phase or for merchants living and trading in foreign lands, commission trade offered a solid basis, a foothold and source of income for their trade because trading on the account of other merchants allowed them entrepreneurial scope and access to goods that were otherwise denied or prohibited to them due to mercantilist policies. Nicolaus Gottlieb Luetkens was both a merchant during establishment and someone who had chosen to travel and to trade in France to try to make his fortune. The latter was the reason why commission trade became his major field of activity. He engaged in this strand of business because it allowed him to get a foothold in the French economy, markets and networks and to establish strong commercial bonds and contacts with French or French-based foreign merchants.

For this purpose, he mainly drew on contacts and trading partners who shared the same religious affiliation. Thus, he mainly drew on Protestants in France, participating in the Protestant International. These Protestant merchant houses of France, run by Huguenots, other Calvinists, and Lutherans, in turn, welcomed him with open arms. This support by local French wholesale merchants became an important mainstay for his career. At the same time, Luetkens himself became an important and active part of this Protestant International in France, representing an important and highly valued trading partner for his French-based trading partners, for whom he provided logistic services or took on the responsibility for the re-export of French goods, including French or Spanish Prize goods, to the north-western European markets. It was a win-win situation. For young merchants, commission trade represented a profitable business because it was based on two particular features conducive to their business during this stage of their life: mobility and flexibility.

Commission trade allowed merchants to invest, to test themselves and to gather experience in the trade with various goods, without the need of having or investing very high amounts of their own equity capital. It also allowed them to conduct several enterprises at the same time and in several locations without the need to be physically present in the respective trading cities. The main and most important tool and instrument in commission trade therefore was the letter. "Business letters were more than just a means of communication; they served as sinews holding together the entire organic

324 *Refactie Attestatum*, signed and sealed September 7, 1744, by Hertzer & von Bobartt, Jean Martin Lambrecht TNA, HCA 30/232.

structure of […] long distance trade", as Avner Greif aptly put it in his works on medieval Islamic long-distance trade.[325] The same conclusion can be drawn with regard to the role and significance of business letters for 18th-century merchants. From the analysis of the letter episode and the letter conversations in this chapter, we have learned about the effectiveness of commission trade and letter writing and how this field of business in fact heavily relied and was based on the regular exchange of letters. We have seen how the merchants, Luetkens and his trading partners, used particular letter practices relating to language use or material practices with regard to folding and sending letters in particular ways in order to guarantee the smooth running of their businesses and to gain the appreciation of the merchant community in France and beyond.

Furthermore, a shared commercial language register of business and trade was crucial for the international wholesale merchants of the time. This language register, as has been shown, was effective and mobilised in several languages – in this chapter in French, German and Dutch – in a uniform manner, and drawing on identical or similar expressions and letter formulae, phrases, terminologies and concepts in the respective different national languages. Mobilizing this language register, which was learned and incorporated in practice and often ultimately performed unconsciously and by experience, was crucial for mutual understanding and comprehension, and therefore it was key to business cooperation and success. Particularly in the financing business, the shared professional language and clear expressions all denominating certain concrete financial actions conducted and undertaken by means of letters was indispensable for the smooth running and maintenance of the cashless payment system of the period.

At the same time, we have learned about the significance of the practice of deliberately choosing different national languages for business letters during the 18th century, depending on the respective addressee, in order to show goodwill and obligingness. This practice was an important cornerstone of the integration and adaption of foreign merchants, in our case Hamburg merchants, into foreign markets and the networks in France. In order to raise a claim, to show and exhibit your rightful place in the mercantile community, young merchants during their establishment phase had to constantly prove and exhibit their skills and competences in business and in the practice of writing business letters. Subsequently, they had to suit their actions to the words and vice versa in their trading practice. Luetkens was able to master these challenges in the presented episode and also during his establishment phase in general, which represented an important, if not the most important, basis for his successful career as a wholesale merchant in 18th century Europe. From the episode, we have also learned about the mechanisms and strategies which merchants applied whenever the efficiency of their business and correspondence activities were under the threat of failure, and how they coped with problems that occurred and threatened the efficiency of their business. Once more they used letters to manage their affairs and wrote letters of complaint, of warning or of rebuke, followed by legal steps.

Encapsulating both these features and modes of action of 18th-century business letters, that is, showing their efficiency and the opportunities they provided for solving problems, I have identified two formative practical principles of powers of persuasion

325 Greif, *Institutions and the Path to the Modern Economy*, 21.

prevailing in 18th-century business correspondence. The merchants under investigation used their business letters to practically show their efficiency, which was the basis for their successful and efficient trade, and they used letters as an effective tool to restore efficiency whenever the normal routine was threatened. In order to get an enterprise that was exposed to failure back on track and to reprimand the merchant troublemakers in the enterprise, merchants applied a method that I have called the sledgehammer method, which involved the accepted and recognized contemporary practice of using drastic language, insults and a harsh tone in letters in order to convince the accused addressees to correct their behaviour. In the episode analysed, this practice led to the desired effects.

On the basis of both these principles, which have become tangible and apparent in the letter episode analysed, Luetkens was able to lead his enterprise, the commission trade in the Brest sugars, conducted with several of his closest trading partners, to a conciliatory ending. This led his friend Johann Jakob Bethmann to conclude in a letter from the 10th of September 1744 with a palpable sense of relief and satisfaction: "Thank God, we are not losing, but we can still expect a reasonable profit!"[326] In the end this enterprise turned out to achieve a profit of 18% for the involved parties, plus the money that Luetkens received from his claim for indemnification from Perre. The enterprise therefore turned out to be a success in the end.

326 Letter from Bethmann, Johann Jakob to Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, September 10, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/234.

5 High-Risk Trade

Figure 13: Wooden figurines of begging sailors. Holzfiguren der Opferstöcke für die Hamburger Sklavenkasse.

Source: Historische Museen Hamburg / Museum für Hamburgische Geschichte, 18. Jahrhundert, Ständige Ausstellung (CC BY NC SA 4.0). By courtesy of the Museum für Hamburgische Geschichte.

Their eyes and praying hands beseech you, begging you for help and for mercy. Their posture is crouched, so full of humility. The whole scene is very touching. Displayed in a glass cabinet on the first floor of the *Museum für Hamburgische Geschichte* are twenty wooden figurines, arranged in two rows, taken from 18th-century Hamburg churches.[1] The figurines depict men with iron chains around their bellies, and all are cut from the same cloth, quite literally, with them all wearing sailor's clothing. These figurines represent seamen from 18th-century Hamburg whose ships were captured and who were

1 Holzfiguren der Opferstöcke für die Hamburger Sklavenkasse. *Historische Museen Hamburg / Museum für Hamburgische Geschichte*, 18. Jahrhundert, Ständige Ausstellung.

taken hostage by Ottoman privateers, or, as the Europeans called them during the 18th century, "Barbary Corsairs" on the North African coast whilst they were working on the ships of their hometown.[2] With these figurines, the families of the sailors were asking the Hamburgers for alms in order to be able to pay ransom for their relatives in captivity. Every coin the donators put into the collection basins that accompanied the figurines supported and filled the Hamburger "Sklavenkasse", the "slave fund", a cooperative municipal fund that was created to serve the sole purpose of rescuing prisoners from the North African Barbary States.[3] Generally, the Sklavenkasse, entrusted to and under the control of the Hamburg Admiralty, who also dealt with the handling of the payments, was maintained by regular small contributions from all active seamen serving on Hamburg ships. Nevertheless, the fund was also notoriously short of cash. It sorely needed the additional funding by way of donation. The figurines were supposed to and, in fact, actually did help. [4]

2 See Ressel, Magnus. *Zwischen Sklavenkassen und Türkenpässen. Nordeuropa und die Barbaresken in der Frühen Neuzeit*. Berlin/New York: De Gruyter, 2012, 17-31. See Kaiser, Wolfgang, and Guillaume Calafat. "The Economy of Ransoming in the Early Modern Mediterranean: A Form of Cross-Cultural Trade between Southern Europe and the Maghreb (Sixteenth to Eighteenth Century)." In *Religion and Trade: Cross-Cultural Exchanges in World History, 1000-1900*, edited by Francesca Trivellato, Leor Halevi and Catia Antunes, 108-130. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2014. Regarding the problematic term "Barbary pirates", see ibid., 112. Regarding the difference or differentiation between pirates, corsairs and privateers, see Gounaris, Basil C. "Unwanted Heroes? British Privateering, Commerce, and Diplomacy in the Mid-Eighteenth-Century Eastern Mediterranean." *A Journal of Scholarship on the Mediterranean Region and Its Influence* 2, no. 2 (2014): 135-165, here 135-136. Regarding the Mediterranean Sea and the Ottoman privateers, see Talbot, Michael. "Protecting the Mediterranean: Ottoman Responses to Maritime Violence, 1718-1770." *Journal of Early Modern History* 21, no. 4 (2017): 283-317. See Talbot, Michael. *British-Ottoman Relations, 1661-1807: Commerce and Diplomatic Practice in Eighteenth-century Istanbul*. Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2017. Klarer, Mario, ed. *Piracy and Captivity in the Mediterranean. 1550-1810*. London: Routledge, 2018. See Harlaftis, Gelina, Dimitri Dimitropoulos and David J. Starkey, eds. *Corsairs and Pirates in the Eastern Mediterranean, Fifteenth-Nineteenth Centuries*. Athens: AD Aventure, 2016. See also Davis, Robert C. *Christian Slaves, Muslim Masters: White Slavery in the Mediterranean, The Barbary Coast, and Italy, 1500–1800*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003.

3 See Ressel, Magnus, and Cornel Zwierlein. "The Ransoming of North European Captives from North-Africa. A Comparison of Dutch, Hanseatic and English institutionalization of Redemption from 1610-1645." *In Seeraub im Mittelmeerraum. Piraterie, Korsarentum und maritime Gewalt von der Antike bis zur Neuzeit*, edited by Nikolas Jaspert and Sebastian Kolditz, 377-406. Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 2013. See Fuchs, Michael. *Die Frage der Versicherbarkeit von Lösegeld bei Pirateriefällen*. Karlsruhe: Verl. Versich-erungswirtschaft, 2014, here 9-11.

4 With regard to the institution of the "Sklavenkasse", see Ressel, *Sklavenkassen*, here 657. See Bohn, Robert. "Von Sklavenkassen und Konvoifahrten. Die arabischen Seeräuber und die deutsche Seefahrt im 17. und 18. Jahrhundert." In *Geschichtsbilder. Festschrift für Michael Salewski zum 65. Geburtstag*, edited by Thomas Stamm-Kuhlmann et al., 25-37. Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2003. See Kaiser, Wolfgang. *Le commerce des captifs: les intermédiaires dans l'échange et le rachat des prisonniers en Méditerranée, XVe-XVIIIe siècle*. Rome: École française de Rome, 2008. With regard to the figurines, see Rheinheimer, Martin. "Identität und Kulturkonflikt, Selbstzeugnisse schleswig-holsteinischer Sklaven in den Barbareskenstaaten." *Historische Zeitschrift* 269 (1999): 317-369. See Dawletschin-Linder, Camilla, and Amke Dietert. *Begegnungen-Iliskiler. Hamburg und die Türkei in Geschichte und Gegenwart*. Hamburg: Schüthedruck, 2010, here 38.

For the visitors of the museum in Hamburg, the wooden supplicants are one of the most exotic and, therefore, fascinating pieces of the museum. Most visitors, myself included, have never seen such figurines before. For the visitors of the Hamburg churches in the 18th century, however, the situation was different. The figurines gained a sad notoriety. They were widely known to the public, the offertory boxes of the *Sklavenkasse* being a common sight in many churches in Hamburg. The reason for this is simple: for the people of the time the threat of the Ottoman privateers was real and it was a direct threat to the Hamburgers. With every church visit, Hamburgers were reminded of the hundreds of mariners who were at that time eking out their existence in captivity in Africa. Looking at numbers, in the region of Algiers alone 104 Hamburgers were in custody in 1749.[5] The "Turkish Threat" or "Turkish Menace", "Türkengefahr" in German, a contemporary term, was one of the era's hot issues, a "nemesis" for European shipping of the century, and the ensuing fears reverberated throughout the city of Hamburg and beyond.[6] It was omnipresent in the public's awareness and in people's minds – strikingly epitomised in the very existence of the little wooden figurines of the sailors in peril.[7]

For this chapter, the *Turkish Threat* or *Menace* represents the necessary background knowledge framing the story at hand. The fear of the 'Barbary corsairs' served as the basis of argumentation and the vantage point of justification of the letters between ships' captains and merchants that is at the centre of the following explanations. The merchant Nicolaus Gottlieb Luetkens must have known these little wooden sailors, too. If not from the church his father preached in, then from any other church in Hamburg he had visited since his youth there. However, even without the material reminder, in 1744, the merchant as reported in a letter was, in his own words, aware of the deeds of the Turkish "hounds" ["Hunde"].[8] It was one of the burning questions within the correspondence Luetkens conducted with his ships' captains during this period. As he was highly interested in trade in the Mediterranean, the problem of the Ottoman privateers, in Spanish called "corsarios" and in French "corsaires", was something the mer-

5 Baasch, *Die Hansestädte und die Barbaresken*, 202-221. Between 1719 and 1742 a total of 682 Hamburg seamen were taken captive by North African privateers. See Kresse, Walter. *Von armen Seefahrern und den Schifferalten zu Hamburg*. Hamburg: Christians, 1981, 40-42. See ibid., 237-238. See also Rheinheimer, Martin. *Der Fremde Sohn. Hark Olufs' Wiederkehr aus der Sklaverei*. Neumünster: Wachholtz Verlag, 2007, 22.

6 Klarer, Piracy and Captivity, 1. Regarding the "Turkish Threat", "Turkish Menace", "Türkengefahr", see Konrad, Felix. "From the "Turkish Menace" to Exoticism and Orientalism: Islam as Antithesis of Europe (1453–1914)?" Europäische Geschichte Online (EGO), edited by the Leibniz-Institut für Europäische Geschichte (IEG), Mayence 2011, http://www.ieg-ego.eu/konradf-2010-en, accessed April 14, 2019. See Ginio, Eyal. "Piracy and Redemption in the Aegean Sea during the first half of the Eighteenth century." Turcica 33 (2001): 135-147. In general, and for the Dutch case, see Lunsford, Virginia W. *Piracy and Privateering in the Golden Age Netherlands*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005. Since I will be dealing with the concrete threat of being captured by Ottoman privateers, I am using the term "Turkish Threat" throughout this chapter. This is synonymous to "Turkish Menace".

7 See Panzac, Daniel. "Européens et Barbaresques aux XVIIIe siècle." In *Seeraub im Mittelmeerraum. Piraterie, Korsarentum und maritime Gewalt von der Antike bis zur Neuzeit*, edited by Nikolas Jaspert and Sebastian Kolditz, 327-348. Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 2013.

8 Letter from Hertzer & von Bobartt to Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, October 2, 1744, TNA, 30/234.

chant had to deal with.[9] Indeed, it needed to be resolved. This chapter shows how the merchant accomplished this and how the language register of patronage assisted him with it. Since the first analytical chapter has shown the importance of stepping into the shipping industry as an ambitious young merchant, this chapter shows what was crucial when being successful. The decisive factor was to choose reliable and good ships' captains and to keep a good, but clearly defined professional relationship with them, especially when the ships' captains were bound to voyages and set their sails to waters in which the Hamburg status of neutrality was basically not effective and, indeed, where especially Hamburg ships were in direct danger of being captured.[10]

Before coming to the question of how the *Turkish Threat* or *Turkish Menace*, a contemporary European concept, played a role, was negotiated and dealt with, as well as how it was used as an argument in the letter conversations of the merchant Nicolaus Gottlieb Luetkens, we first have to clarify by means of thick contextualisation what this 'threat' actually consisted of and what had caused the deep-rooted fears in people's minds. For this purpose, I will take a closer look also at the longer-term history of the phenomenon. Furthermore, I will outline the discursive dimensions of the phenomenon and I will elaborate on the concrete situation prevailing in the southern part of the Mediterranean Sea, which was the area where the people in this chapter were confronted with this 'threat' and the area mainly associated with it from a European perspective. Only this thick contextualisation will then provide us with the necessary understanding of how this trope could become such a central, shaping element and an issue of discussion in Luetkens' letter conversations and, equally importantly, it will explain to us the ways in which the letter writers talked about it and found appropriate ways to write about and negotiate the matter. The contextualisation will provide us with the necessary thick framework to understand and give meaning to the letter actions and decisions of the protagonists involved in the letter episode analysed in this chapter. Equipped with such a thick contextualisation we will then also be able to understand the persuasive strategies and letter practices that Luetkens and his correspondents used and put into effect for the concrete purpose of coping with the phenomenon. As it will turn out in the end, the reason that the *Turkish Threat* became such a powerful and effective object of negotiation in the letters was not only because it posed the risk of people being taken hostage. This was a risk that seamen also faced with regard to the European theatres of war. But the main reason that this phenomenon provided such an effective basis for negotiation lay in the visions and the horror scenarios that were evoked in people's minds as soon as the word 'Turkish Threat' crossed their lips, a scenario that was furthermore unambiguously, immediately and generally understood by all the Europeans involved.[11] And

9 See Gounaris, "Unwanted Heroes," 135-136.

10 See Ressel, *Sklavenkassen*, 446. See Bohn, "Von Sklavenkassen und Konvoifahrten." See Graßmann, Antjekathrin. "Nordafrikanische Piraten: ein Dorn im Fleische der Hanseaten vom 16. bis 19. Jahrhundert." In *Mythen der Vergangenheit Realität und Fiktion in der Geschichte*. Jörgen Bracker zum 75. Geburtstag, edited by Ortwin Pelc, 159-178. Göttingen: V&R unipress, 2012.

11 See Policante, Amedeo. "Barbary Legends on the Mediterranean Frontiers: Corsairs, Pirates and the Shifting Bounds of The International Community." In *Corsairs and Pirates in the Eastern Mediterranean, Fifteenth-Nineteenth Centuries*, edited by Gelina Harlaftis, Dimitri Dimitropoulos and David

this was the main thing that people who were forced to deal with it primarily had to confront.

Notwithstanding this, or precisely because of this, the moment of surprise or rather astonishment serving as the starting point that led to this chapter was ultimately not just the fact that I encountered and then found out in detail about the importance of such a topos as the *Turkish Threat* in the Luetkens correspondence, but also that I was especially intrigued by how relatively unfazed and pragmatic the people whom it directly affected actually were in dealing and coping with this matter. This made me realise that actually the whole situation regarding the Ottoman privateers was no impasse nor unmanageable, but that it was something that people were able to deal with in certain ways. This realisation, in turn, actually did become my point of entry into the cosmology of wholesale merchants and ships' captains of the 18th century in this regard. It formed the thematic anchor to which I could tie up my explanations about meaningful contemporary ways of acting and thinking with regard to how to influence and win over other people for the implementation of one's plans, which in turn will once again provide us with valuable insights into the world of the 18th century. With the help of his letter-writing practice and the negotiation skills in his correspondence practice, Nicolaus Gottlieb Luetkens was once again able to find certain solutions and to overcome the difficulties of a typical contemporary problem and predicament in sea trade. This was, in purely practical terms, the presence of Ottoman privateers in the waters of the Mediterranean Sea and the fear that the people of the age associated with these ships. He found a way to deal with the actual fears of his seamen and he found a way to cope with the threat of the Ottoman privateers in business and legal terms and to therefore trade with the Mediterranean. This high-risk trade represented another important step and cornerstone for his career development as this trade provided him with high capital returns. How he succeeded in this regard is the general topic of this chapter.

5.1 A Threat Scenario

Since the conquest of Constantinople by the army of Sultan Mehmed II The Conqueror in 1453, the Ottoman Empire had been a threatening shadow in the heads of the people of the Early Modern Christian occident. Constantinople had once been the centre of the Byzantine Empire, the centre of late Middle Ages Christianity. Now, it was literally razed to the ground and in the hands of Ottoman Muslims. It was a catastrophe for the Europeans, a historical turning point, a once-in-a-century event. From the 15th century onwards, the citizens of Europe then experienced the rise and triumph of the

J. Starkey, 141-150. Athens: AD Aventure, 2016. See Kaiser/Calafat, "The Economy of Ransoming." See Höfert, Almut. "Die ‚Türkengefahr' in der Frühen Neuzeit: Apokalyptischer Feind und Objekt des ethnographischen Blicks." In *Islamfeindlichkeit: Wenn die Grenzen der Kritik verschwimmen*, edited by Thorsten Gerald Schneiders, 61-70. Wiesbaden: Springer VS, 2010. See as a comprehensive overview Konrad, "Turkish Menace." Focussing on the 15th and 16th century, see Höfert, Almut. *Den Feind beschreiben: "Türkengefahr" und europäisches Wissen über das Osmanische Reich 1450–1600*. Frankfurt a.M.: Campus, 2003.

Ottoman Empire. They suffered from, or, even if they were not themselves affected by the wars, at least heard about the great *Ottoman Wars*, the *Turkish Wars*, and they finally trembled during the first and second siege of Vienna, which eventually also marked the end of Ottoman expansion into Europe. During the entire 15th up to the 17th century, the European people therefore actually lived with the certainty of the very real possibility that a Turkish attack might well be just around the corner. They lived in constant fear and the very real danger of hostile and violent attacks by the powerful Ottoman Empire.[12] This is what the term "Turkish Threat" originally stood for from a contemporary European perspective and where it originated from. This constant state of fear and anxiety, furthermore, did not leave people untouched. It evoked their imagination and fantasies. A threat is always accompanied by sense making. The *Turkish Threat*, therefore, was always accompanied by fear, the "Turkish Fear".[13] Thus, right from the beginning, the Ottoman Empire was marked as the "hereditary enemy" of Christianity, supported already by the Reformation and the printing press as major driving forces.[14] Simultaneously, the 'Turk' was stereotyped. The people of the Early Modern Period construed him as the reincarnation of the Anti-Christ, a motif generally very popular during religious conflicts in the Early Modern Period.[15] This was something that people could understand. Now the phenomenon literally made sense to them – even if that meant being in a state of fear. Henceforth, the image of the "Turk", which at the same time stood for and was equated with the "Muslim" or "Moor", was associated with the concept of the brute barbarian.[16]

The Turk became the personification of the ungodly desire to kill and the joy of torturing Christians. He became the Other, his reputation always preceding him.[17] Especially the contemporary pamphlets, which were even given a name of their own, *Turcica*, did not tire of disseminating the nightmare visions.[18] Through images like the "Türckischen Chronica" by Vasco Díaz Tanco from 1577 or the "Schau-Platz barbarischer Sclaverey", to also name one very famous example printed in Hamburg in 1694, which depicts the process and importance of ransoming slaves from the Ottomans by Christian clergymen, in German called "kirchliche Freikauf", people were presented with

12 See Konrad, "Turkish Menace." See Höfert, "Türkengefahr."

13 Regarding these horror visions and the Ottomans seen as an "apocalyptic enemy" ["Apokalyptischer Feind"] see Höfert, "Türkengefahr." See Ruhe, Ernstpeter. "Christensklaven als Beute nordafrikanischer Piraten. Das Bild des Maghreb im Europa des 16.-19. Jahrhunderts." In *Europas islamische Nachbarn. Studien zur Literatur und Geschichte des Maghreb*, vol. 1, edited by Ernstpeter Ruhe. 159-186, Würzburg: Königshausen & Neu-mann, 1993.

14 See Ursinus, Michael. "Turkish Menace." *Religion Past and Present* (RPP), http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1877-5888_rpp_SIM_125197, accessed April 14, 2019.

15 See Konrad, "Turkish Menace."

16 See ibid. See Matar, Nabil. *Turks, Moors, and Englishmen in the Age of Discovery*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1999, 43-82.

17 See Brons, Lajos. "Othering, an Analysis." *Transcience* 6, no. 1 (2015): 69-90. See Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty. "The Rani of Sirmur: An Essay in Reading the Archives." *History and Theory* 24, no. 3 (1985): 247-272.

18 See Ursinus, "Turkish Menace." See in detail Barbarics-Hermanik, Zsuzsa. "Art. Türkengefahr (Spätmittelalter/Frühe Neuzeit)." *Historisches Lexikon Bayerns*, http://www.historisches-lexikon-bayerns.de/Lexikon/Türkengefahr_(Spätmittelalter/Frühe Neuzeit), accessed August 9, 2019.

clear depictions of what would happen to all of those who had to experience the misery of being taken hostage by the "Turks".[19] From a contemporary viewpoint, they unavoidably faced a future in chains, in dungeons, in slavery, a life that consisted of starvation, torture, physical abuse and finally death.[20] The latter in particular also represents the visions which the wooden sailors in the Hamburg churches of the time referred to and, in fact, had to evoke in order to be effective. The 'Turks', as the contemporaries depicted them, were known to have committed horrible massacres and atrocities against civilians. They murdered, raped or kidnapped Christians, they plundered, pillaged or destroyed their cities and burned down their churches.

Without a doubt, this reputation did not always or generally lack validity because the Ottoman armies in fact did burn villages, murdered and committed atrocities during their campaigns.[21] But it is important to note that their Christian counterparts were in the end not better than their enemies because, as a matter of fact, they themselves also committed murder, burnt villages or bombarded port cities like Algiers. However, the Europeans would regard these crimes as necessary and therefore legitimate counteractions against the *hereditary enemy* for the sake of the future of Christianity, and therefore their actions were simply assessed as different. In the end, therefore, stoking the *Turkish Fear* was above all a call to arms against the enemy of the one true faith, Christianity.[22] It was a call to arms, however, that became very effective, successful and all-powerful. The enemy was given a face and a name.

Scaremongering was, and unfortunately often still is today, a very assertive basis for shaping public opinion. As a result, the *Turkish Fear* left its mark on people's souls and imprinted itself in people's minds. This was the moment the stereotype of the Ottoman barbarian actually became a contemporary matter of course, eternally anchored and universally retrievable in the minds of the people. The very same moment, the *Turkish Threat*, too, burnt itself into the mind of the people as an unquestionable threat scenario. It was transformed into a dictum and a cipher. From then on, the *Turkish Threat* stood for the encounter between Christians and Muslims, between Occident and Orient, between the supposedly civilized and the 'barbarians', a battle that had to be fought, together with the consequences inevitably following from this encounter: facing death and horror, but in the end hopefully victory.

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19 Díaz Tanco, Vasco. *Türckische Chronica: Warhaffte eigentliche vnd kurtze Beschreibung, der Türcken Ankunfft, Regierung […]. Endtlich ist mitangehenckt von Vrsachen der Christen verderben.* Frankfurt a.M.: Feyrabend, 1577. See frontispiece of Frisch, Johann. *Schau-Platz Barbarischer Sclaverey worauff unter Beschreibung der 4 vornehmsten Raub-Städte/ als: Algiers, Thunis, Tripoli und Salee*. Hamburg: Wiering, 1694. See Ressel, Magnus. "Zwischen Sklavenkassen und Türkenpässen. Die nordeuropäische Seefahrt im Zeichen der Barbareskengefahr. "In *Perspectivia. Discussions 5. Raumkonzepte – Raumwahrnehmungen – Raumnutzungen*, edited by Susanne Rau. Paris: Deutsches Historisches Institut Paris, 2010, http://www.perspectivia.net/publikationen/discussions/5-2010/ressel_sklavenkassen, accessed November 11, 2015.

20 See Konrad, "Turkish Menace."

21 See ibid. See Höfert, "Türkengefahr."

22 See ibid. See also Kühnel, Florian. "Berichte und Kritik. Westeuropa und das Osmanische Reich in der Frühen Neuzeit. Ansätze und Perspektiven aktueller Forschungen." *Zeitschrift für Historische Forschung* 42 (2015): 251-283.

The period that we are looking at in the book came after the last *Great Turkish War* and the *Peace Treaty of Carlowitz* in 1699 between the Ottoman Empire and their European counterparts, namely the *Holy League* of Austria, Poland, Venice, and Russia, mediated by the English, and was followed later by the *Treaty of Belgrade* in 1739 that ultimately ended the Ottoman wars. Thus, during the era in which the merchant Luetkens lived, namely the 18th century, the danger of a direct large-scale attack by the Ottoman Empire had in fact already been largely averted. By then, the times of large territorial expansion of the Ottoman Empire in the direction of Europe had ended and therefore also the Ottoman claim to world supremacy was basically more or less over.[23] The Empire still remained a major world power and a powerful state, but its area was now limited to parts of Africa and great sections of the Middle East, where, as is to be noted, new wars still broke out during the 18th century and again in the 19th century. These were fought particularly between the Ottoman Empire and the Russian Empire, the *Russo-Turkish wars*, that were fought for the predominance in the area to the detriment of the Ottoman Empire.[24]

In today's research, this phase of the Ottoman Empire is described as a phase of "crisis and adaptation" and no longer as a phase of "decline" as was the conventional narrative prevailing in the last century.[25] Still unchallenged, however, is the fact that during these times the Ottoman Empire lost its former military supremacy, and a direct attack on the cities of Europe was henceforward unlikely. As a matter of fact, the Ottoman Empire and the different maritime powers of Europe even began to negotiate and enter into individual peace treaties during the end of the 17th and the course of the 18th century, which confirmed each other's sovereignty and territorial claims on the waters of the Mediterranean Sea, further consolidating the process of adaptation of the superpowers.[26]

As a result of this, the *Turkish Threat* was therefore no longer a direct threat that was necessarily immediately acute for the majority of the European population because the Ottomans were pushed back and were now kept at a distance on the European border in the Middle East. As a consequence, also the *Turkish Fear* diminished more and more and

23 See Talbot, "Protecting the Mediterranean."

24 See Talbot, *British-Ottoman Relations*. See Talbot, Michael: "British-Ottoman Relations, 1713-1779: Commerce, Diplomacy, and Violence." *State Papers Online, Eighteenth Century 1714-1782 (Part IV)*, Cengage Learning (EMEA) Ltd, 2018.

25 Hathaway, Jane, and Karl K. Barbir. *The Arab Lands under Ottoman Rule. 1516-1800*. Abingdon/New York: Routledge, 2013, 8. See also Tezcan, Baki. *The Second Ottoman Empire. Political and Social Transformation in the Early Modern Period*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010, 9. See Woodhead, Christine. "Introduction." In *The Ottoman World*, edited by Christine Woodhead, 1-10. Abingdon/New York: Routledge, 2011, here 5.

26 See Gøbel, Erik. "The Danish-Algerian sea passes, 1747-1838: an example of extraterritorial production of human security." *Historical Social Research* 35 (2010): 164-189, 175-177. See Talbot, Michael. "Ottoman Seas and British Privateers: Defining Maritime Territoriality in the Eighteenth-Century Levant." In *Well-Connected Domains: Towards an Entangled Ottoman History*, edited by Pascal W. Firges et al., 54-70. Leiden: Brill, 2014. See López, Gonçal. "Mediterranean Privateering between the Treaties of Utrecht and Paris, 1715-1856: First Reflections." In *Pirates and Privateers. New Perspectives on the War on Trade in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries*, edited by David J. Starkey, Els van Eijck van Heslinga and Jan de Moor, 107-125. Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1997.

increasingly disappeared from the picture. Since the beginning of the Enlightenment, it can furthermore be observed that the fear even shifted, in some population groups but especially in the middle class, to a certain kind of fascination for the exotic Other with an inclination and interest in the alien Ottoman lifestyle, also accompanied by an increased interest in travelling the region and writing travel journals about it.[27]

However, notwithstanding these general macro historical developments, there was still one particular area of the 18th–century world where time in a way seemed to stand still. In this particular area, the probability of a direct attack by Ottoman forces was in fact still a given. Here, the military confrontation between Europe and the Ottoman Empire continued to smoulder, even though the tide of time had already created new military trouble spots and major centres of world conflicts for the Europeans, namely the colonial wars, in which the Europeans military forces mainly concentrated on fighting each other. Speaking of this one spot at which Europe and the Ottoman Empire still faced and confronted each other, the situation was, however, still as directly threatening for the Europeans as it had been in the centuries before. From an Ottoman perspective, in turn, this area represented somehow the last bastion, in which the Empire was able to uphold its threat of force towards the European powers.[28] Accordingly, therefore, the horror scenario that the Europeans associated with this area also remained exactly the same as it had been in the centuries before. It is almost as if these horror visions and the entire area were stuck in a time warp, impervious to outside events and the course of history, which had moved on everywhere else. Thus, this confrontation area indeed still stoked exactly the same fears in people as it had in the centuries before. The cipher of the *Turkish Threat* therefore also continued to keep its effectiveness, even after centuries, with the limitation that it ultimately concentrated largely on or even culminated at this one particular area of the world.

This concrete area was the south-western and south-eastern part of the Mediterranean Sea, which the Hanseatic merchants and captains of the 18th century called the "mittländische" Sea and the Ottomans called *al-baḥr al-abyaḍ*, the White Sea.[29] This area of conflict stretched from the Strait of Gibraltar all the way along the North African coast, from the independent sultanate of Morocco to the Ottoman provinces of Algeria, Tunisia and Tripolitania up to the location of the Ottoman territorial wars between the Morea peninsula and Libya, and ended at today's Turkish coast, where since the 1690s due to maritime regulations (şurut-u derya) "armed European ships […] [were] forbade" to enter without risking military conflict.[30] In this particular area, the conflict between

27 See Thomson, Ann. *Barbary and Enlightenment. European Attitudes towards the Maghreb in the 18th Century*, Leiden: Brill, 1987. See Konrad, "Turkish Menace."

28 See Talbot, "British-Ottoman Relations", "Protecting the Mediterranean", "Maritime Territoriality." See Klarer, *Piracy and Captivity*; Ginio, "Piracy and Redemption"; Panzac, "Européens et Barbaresques." See also Panzac, Daniel. *La caravane maritime. Marins européens et marchands ottomans en Méditerranée, 1680-1830*. Paris: CNRS, 2004, p. 178-183.

29 See ibid.

30 Talbot, "Protecting the Mediterranean," 1. See also Earle, Peter. *Sailors. English Merchant Seamen 1650-1775*. London: Methuen, 1998, 115, referring to the "semi-piratical Barbary corsairs who sailed from bases in Algiers, Tunis, Tripoli and Morocco, especially Sallée (Salé), to prey on Christian shipping. These Moslem corsairs were the most feared of all since they enslaved those they captu-

Orient and Occident continued, on a much smaller scale, but still in a significant way. This clash did not take the form of an open military conflict and sea battles but rather that of military incursions, which the contemporaries, and surprisingly also parts of today's research, called piracy, but which rather represented Ottoman privateering activities, which was posing a "constant threat to maritime traffic" in the region.[31]

Regarding the character and significance of the *Turkish Threat* or *Turkish Menace* during the 18th century, therefore, we must consider it a direct threat to the Europeans. The only limitation that we have to make is that the actual threat was now mostly limited to this specific area. The whole conflict was in a way condensed into the situation prevailing in the Mediterranean Sea. The important thing to note is, however, that the horror scenarios that had been forged for so long and maintained for centuries in people's minds, also still remained the same now with regard to the Mediterranean Sea. These horror scenarios had lost none of their long-standing terror, which had prevailed ever since the great Ottoman wars had raged in the centuries before.[32] For the contemporaries, it was clear that all those who were going to these areas or passing these areas in the Mediterranean Sea during that time still had to prepare for the worst, and this feeling was simply irrespective of the fact that the Ottoman Empire had at that time technically already long passed the peak of its power in the Early Modern world.

The reason that both these pieces of information are relevant for this chapter becomes apparent when we take a closer look at the context in which the subject of the *Turkish Threat* turns up in the Luetkens correspondence. In consideration of the preceding explanations, it is now not surprising but highly characteristic for the century under investigation that in the letters on which this chapter is based the issue was raised at precisely the moment when the wholesale merchant Nicolaus Gottlieb Luetkens decided to enter into the trade with the Mediterranean. Around the time between May and July 1744, the merchant Luetkens decided to send ships to Malaga, to Livorno and particularly to Venice. At the very same time, he unavoidably was confronted with the subject of the 'Turkish Threat' because his ships had to pass the African coastline and sail the territorial waters of the Ottoman Empire. Thus, he risked the consequences, which he was then forced to deal with. The main challenge that he was subsequently confronted with is hardly surprising in view of the considerations. It was first and foremost that he had to find a way to ease the fears of the people he planned to send to this area, namely the captains and seamen on board his ships. Both of these problems, the Mediterranean risk and the worries of the seamen, become understandable for us against the backdrop of the historical context and characteristics of the phenomenon of the *Turkish Threat*. The subject of the following explanations will be how Luetkens found a solution to this situation. Analysing his solution, because once again he actually found a practicable way of handling the situation, will by implication also provide us with revealing insights about how people in the 18th century coped with such an intangible matter as

red and, although ransom was possible for the fortunate or wealthy, the fate of most poor sailors was enslavement for life."

31 Ginio, "Piracy and Redemption," 136.

32 See Policante, "Barbary Legends." The analysis of the letter episode in this chapter will provide insights into these prevailing horror scenarios.

the emotion of fear. This, in turn, will also give us more general insights about ways of acting, of negotiating and ways of thinking that were typical for the 18th century, to a certain extent even covering both the European and the Ottoman perspective. We will thus be analysing negotiation practices, letter-writing and correspondence practices, the prevailing principles of persuasion, which Luetkens once again used for his negotiation tactics, and the reaching of agreements between several parties in view of the prevailing contemporary situation.

In order to understand his solution, however, we once have to take a closer look at the actual situation on the ground. We also have to take a more detailed look at the concrete situation in the Mediterranean Sea during the 18th century and particularly the situation during the *War of the Austrian Succession* because only this will explain to us and illustrate the particular loophole that Luetkens found for his undertakings and enterprises. This will also include taking into consideration the Ottoman perspective on the circumstances and the events happening in the Mediterranean Sea because their perspective was also what Luetkens, in purely practical terms, in the end directly reacted to in order to implement his plans and to ensure that he once again got his will.

5.2 The Mediterranean Sea as a War Zone

The Mediterranean Sea was without question one of the important theatres of war during the 18th century. Speaking of the *War of the Austrian Succession* (1740-1748), this war zone is today particularly known and became notorious through one of the famous naval battles of the war which was fought in the waters off Toulon in February 1744. The Battle of Toulon was in fact the largest naval battle of the war, in which the Mediterranean fleet of the English and the Mediterranean fleet of an alliance between the French and the Spanish fought for regional predominance, particularly with regard to the upper parts of the Mediterranean Sea between the coast of Spain and Italy. The sea battle ended inconclusively but still had a lasting effect on the *War of the Austrian Succession* because the battle directly led to and marked the entry of the French into the war, who had been involved before as an ally of the Spanish but had not yet officially declared war to England, which fact now changed. This sea battle happened only shortly before the merchant Luetkens sent his ship to the region.[33]

Apart from the naval battle off the coast of Toulon and the confrontation between the Franco-Spanish alliance and the English in the area, the southern part of the Mediterranean and therefore the contact zone of the European powers with the Ottoman Empire at the North African coast and the waters between Tunisia and the modern Turkish

33 Regarding the battle of Toulon see Browning, *War of the Austrian Succession*, 149-161. "Toulon." *Encyclopædia Britannica* 27, edited by Hugh Chisholm. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1911, 98-99. See McLynn, Francis James. "France and Spanish American War of the Austrian Succession." *Jahrbuch für Geschichte von Staat, Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft Lateinamerikas* 17 (1980): 187-198. Regarding the Anglo-French Sea Wars in the Mediterranean see also Grainger, John D. *The British Navy in the Mediterranean*. Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2017, 101-123.

coast, has attracted less attention in research.[34] The latter is also the reason why this part of the war zone is today far less present in our collective awareness, and its characteristics are far less known to us than the characteristics of the colonial wars. The reason for this relative negligence is, however, easily explainable. It is that the Ottoman Empire and the North African states, which as princely states were relatively autonomous but still subject to the Empire, simply did not officially participate in the *War of the Austrian Succession*. Thus, during the years 1740-1748, no war had been declared by either the European superpowers or the Ottoman Empire and not a single big naval battle took place between these powers in the area.[35] Therefore, the waters off the North African coast or the territorial waters of the Ottoman Empire were not officially part of *War of the Austrian Succession*.[36]

Yet, this area was still not free from military conflicts, as research has convincingly shown particularly in the last decade and as is also depicted vividly in contemporary sources, which provide us with an eloquent testimony. These military conflicts definitely had their decisive share in and an impact on the activities of the direct war opponents in the *War of the Austrian Succession*. The danger for the European powers that emanated from these areas came from Ottoman privateers, or rather privateers acting with the approval of the Ottoman Sultan, that preyed upon European commercial ships. From a contemporary European perspective, these ships were called *pirates* or *corsairs* because, since there was no official declaration of war, the Europeans saw no justification or legitimacy for these raids. Yet, surprisingly these terms are still widely used in research today.[37] From a contemporary Ottoman perspective, however, these ships were no "stateless sea robbers". Instead, they regarded their actions as completely legitimate and decidedly also state-supported.[38] Their justification, however, came from Islamic law according to which they were fighting the "eternal war going on against the Christians" and thus their actions were justified.[39] Therefore these ships and their crews, as Erik Gøbel emphasized, "considered themselves, as did their rulers, as participants in […] [the] holy war against the infidels – and thereby qualified as privateers."[40] In this chapter, I am therefore also referring to these ships as privateers, not least because of the fact that this official status was also the fact which the merchant Luetkens referred to in his actions. In his words, however, he left no doubt about the fact that he himself nonetheless saw these ships as pirates. In sum, it becomes clear that although the Ottoman Empire was not directly involved in the *War of the Austrian Succession* and no direct

34 Ressel also points to this negligence in Ressel, Magnus. "The Dutch-Algerian War and the Rise of British Shipping to Southern Europe (1715-1726)." *Cahiers de la Méditerranée* 90 (2015): 237-255, here 237.

35 Gøbel, "Algerian sea passes," 173. In fact, there "would be no direct conflict between Britain and the Ottomans until the first Ottoman-British War of 1807-09." Talbot, "British-Ottoman Relations."

36 See Gøbel, "Algerian sea passes." See Talbot, "Maritime Territoriality." See Talbot, *British-Ottoman Relations*. See López, "Mediterranean Privateering."

37 Regarding the difference between privateers and corsairs (and pirates) see ibid. See also Gounaris, "Unwanted Heroes," 135-136.

38 Gounaris, "Unwanted Heroes," 135. See Kaiser/Calafat, "The Economy of Ransoming," 112.

39 Gøbel, "Algerian sea passes," 175.

40 Gøbel, "Algerian sea passes," 167.

naval battles were fought in the south-western and south-eastern parts of the Mediterranean Sea, this area was nonetheless a part, or at least an important side stage, of the war zone of the Mediterranean Sea during this time, to which the European powers had to react and which posed a risk to their military and particularly to their commercial activities in the area.[41]

Once more as seen from the contemporary European perspective, the European powers were exposed and confronted with the threat of a kind of guerrilla war that emanated from single warships or smaller naval units of privateers coming from the North African and Turkish coast. In contrast to the wars that raged in other parts of the world, the main victims of these particular military conflicts, however, were not the major colonial superpowers but precisely those European powers that were otherwise often spared from suffering during the colonial wars. The main victims were the neutral powers within the *War of the Austrian Succession* because their status of neutrality unfortunately did not mean a thing in the Ottoman-controlled waters.[42]

Before coming to that, however, we will take an even closer look at the particular nature of Ottoman privateering and the particular region that posed the greatest threat to European commercial vessels, namely the North African coastline. The greatest danger to European commercial shipping during the *War of the Austrian Succession* was posed by the privateers that departed from the North African Maghreb states, from the ports of Algiers, Tunis, Tripoli, Morocco. When trading with and sending ships to the Mediterranean, for instance to Malaga, Livorno or particularly Venice, which were the ports that Luetkens' ships called at, the ships inevitably had to pass the North African coastline. Ottoman privateers were also active in other parts of the Mediterranean Sea, but at the North African coast the European ships were confronted with a kind of bottleneck that was hard to bypass or to circumnavigate when trading with the area, comparable with the English Channel in European waters.[43]

With the exception of Morocco, which was a sultanate, these territories on the African coast were African princely states, ruled by the Bashaw of Tripoli, the Bey of Tunis and the Dey of Algiers.[44] These states and their rulers had already gained during that time a relatively high and striking degree of autonomy and political independence. Nevertheless, they officially still belonged to the Ottoman Empire and were regarded

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41 Braudel, Fernand. *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II*, 2 vols. Berkeley/Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1995, vol 2., 865-891. See Kaiser/Calafat, "The Economy of Ransoming," 110. For the south-eastern part of the Mediterranean Sea, see in particular Harlaftis/Dimitropoulos/ Starkey, *Corsairs and Pirates*, as well as Ginio, "Piracy and Redemption." For the French maritime perspective, see in particular Hennessy-Picard, Michael. "La piraterie atlantique au fondement de la construction des souverainetés coloniales européennes." *Champ pénal/Penal field* XIII (2016), http://champpenal.revues.org/9275, accessed June 8, 2019. See Kaiser, *Le commerce des captifs*.

42 See Bohn, "Von Sklavenkassen und Konvoifahrten," 25-37. See in general Ressel, *Sklavenkassen*, 446. See Ressel/Zwierlein. "The Ransoming of North European Captives." See already Baasch, *Die Hansestädte und die Barbaresken*.

43 See Graßmann, "Nordafrikanische Piraten," 161. See Ressel, *Sklavenkassen*, 19. See Bohn, "Von Sklavenkassen und Konvoifahrten," 27-28. For the Aegean Sea see Ginio, "Piracy and Redemption."

44 See Bohn, "Von Sklavenkassen und Konvoifahrten," 28.

as parts and subject of the Ottoman Empire and the Sultan, which bore quite a practical advantage for these ships with regard to the raids. Through the political support and backing of the Ottoman Sultan, the Maghreb regions declared their raids to be official Ottoman warfare and combat operations. This, in turn, found its clearest material manifestation in the fact that the warships were equipped with official letters of Marque legitimizing their raids, meaning that the captains were endorsed, just as we know it from the European powers.[45] The Maghreb states therefore decidedly were not disadvantaged through the 'yoke' of the Ottoman Empire. On the contrary, they gained clear benefits from it, which also explains why they did not oppose the governance of the Sultan but used it in a kind of inverse logic to even foster their autonomy tendencies. It allowed them to launch their own attacks and prey on all the ships that passed their coastline, which strengthened their power in the area and their claim on the maritime territorial authority in the waters between Europe and Africa. If we therefore once more take the stance and perspective of the Ottomans, the war that waged in this part of the Mediterranean Sea was by no means regarded in any way as a guerrilla war. Instead, they regarded it, with exactly the same justification that the Europeans used for this practice in their home waters, as official and legitimate tactical warfare conducted against a military opponent. They conducted an Ottoman privateering war, a "secondary form of war", as Fernard Braudel called it.[46]

When we will later analyse the concrete solution that the merchant Nicolaus Gottlieb Luetkens found for implementing his undertakings in the area, we will see in detail why it matters to understand both the European and the Ottoman perspective and attitude towards the situation of war in the Mediterranean Sea. The reason is that, as a matter of fact, Luetkens once again found a solution that explicitly manoeuvred right between the two extremes. Also, Luetkens remained firmly committed to the European attitude towards the Ottomans, which becomes apparent through his own clear designation of the privateering ships as pirates or using such terms as "hounds", which identified the Ottoman privateers primarily as a disagreeable thorn in the flesh of European supremacy in the world. Notwithstanding this, the legal solution or loophole that he found nonetheless worked and particularly also aligned itself to the Ottoman perspective, insofar as the formal legal action that he pursued to solve his problems clearly referred to and appealed to the official martial law that the Ottomans referred to as well and claimed for themselves as the justification for their actions. For the moment, however, and at this stage of the chapter, what is more important with regard to the general situation prevailing in the Mediterranean Sea is the fact that no matter from which perspective we look at this war zone, it becomes apparent that, although this conflict was locally limited and its effects on the general world situation relatively small for instance compared to the consequences of the colonial wars. Yet, this trouble

45 See ibid. See Kaiser/Calafat, "The Economy of Ransoming," 2. See also Talbot, "Protecting the Mediterranean", "Maritime Territoriality."

46 See Bohn, "Von Sklavenkassen und Konvoifahrten," 27. See Kaiser, Wolfgang. "Sprechende Ware. Gefangenenfreikauf und Sklavenhandel im frühneuzeitlichen Mittelmeerraum." *Zeitschrift für Ideengeschichte* III/2 (2009): 29-39. See also Kaiser, *Le commerce des Captifs.*

spot nonetheless had a concrete bearing on the power struggles shaping the period.[47] Although the military conflicts raging in this area of the Mediterranean Sea were no longer primarily about supremacy in the world or about gaining ascendancy over the war opponent, this area still represented an important hotspot of the fight between two major world powers, the Ottoman Empire and the superpowers of Europe. From the Ottoman perspective, the Maghreb warships basically represented the last bastion in the fight against the Christian counterpart in the region, effectively securing the north-western border of the Empire and at the same time continuing to sabotage the European archenemy. From the European perspective, the ultimate goal concerning the conflicts in the Mediterranean Sea essentially became the idea of a best possible limitation of the damages and losses caused by the Ottoman warships. In fact, compared to the colonial wars, which were waged in different parts of the world as full-scale wars for supremacy and world hegemony between the European superpowers, the privateering war in the Mediterranean Sea during the *War of the Austrian Succession* undoubtedly represented only a relatively minor skirmish or a side stage of the conflicts of the age and it bore comparatively less relevance for the further course of history. It is for this reason in particular that this area has attracted less research interest than the other war zones of the period. On the other hand, however, this part of the Mediterranean war zone should still not be neglected in research nor be forgotten; it deserves attention because it clearly represented an important part of the theatres of war shaping the era and particularly the lives of the people living, sailing or trading in the area, on both sides. If we take a macrohistorical approach and compare the effects and especially the long-term consequences of this war zone to other war zones with regard of the further course of history, this war zone did indeed play a rather minor role in world history. However, if we take a more actor-centred approach and look at the effects and consequences of this war for the people of the era, who were affected or suffered from this war directly, the situation looks completely different. If we take a microhistorical perspective on this area, which means that we ask how the macrohistorical circumstances were mirrored in the everyday perspective of the actors living during the era, who were also shaping the structures that were shaping them, we will see that this war zone must be credited with much more relevance than the long-term perspective suggests. The reason why this war zone clearly deserves more attention is that ultimately for the contemporaries themselves, who were living in or travelling to this area, there was not the slightest doubt about the fact that the events that they were facing in the Mediterranean Sea were crucial events of the highest importance because these events directly threatened their personal worlds and their lives. So, the aim of this chapter is to devote myself to these people and their worldviews and to getting these people to speak, who were affected by the war zone, and therefore I also want to stimulate or contribute to the research discussion regarding the war in the Mediterranean. This contribution is admittedly modest, but from these explanations it should already become clear why it is worth taking a closer look at this war zone. The people of the time did not only create

47 See Hennessy-Picard, Michael. "La piraterie atlantique au fondement de la construction des souverainetés coloniales européennes." *Champ pénal/Penal field* XIII (2016), http://champpenal.revues.org/9275, accessed June 8, 2019.

their own discourses regarding this area, they also created their own specific practices, the Ottomans as well as the European actors, to cope with the situation on the ground. These practices reveal a great deal about the characteristics and the challenges of living one's life in Europe, the Ottoman Empire and the Mediterranean Sea during that time, and into the bargain, or rather particularly in this way, they reveal to us a great deal about the ways and means that people during the 18th century employed to cope with the worlds they were living in.

5.3 Four Perspectives

Four groups of people are of particular interest for this chapter because they were shaping the situation in the Mediterranean Sea. These groups are the Ottoman privateers, the European merchants, the European seamen and last but not least, European insurance companies. For all these groups the impact of the privateering war in the area was direct and considerable because they were directly involved in it or had to deal with its consequences. In this part of the chapter, I will therefore present the situation of all four groups in relation to the situation in the war zone one after another and outline their special interests in the area, which will represent the final element of my thick contextualisation. This part will at the same time also represent a rather fluid transition between the contextualisation part of this chapter and the letter episode, which will be at the centre of the next part, because the groups which were involved in this episode, directly and indirectly, were actors from the groups described next: the Ottoman privateers, the European merchants, seamen and insurance companies.

The Perspective of the Ottoman Privateers

The interest of the Ottoman or Maghreb privateers regarding the war zone in the southern Mediterranean Sea was twofold, and in this respect their interest was rather congruent with the interest that the European powers held with regard to their own privateering activities.[48] On the one hand, the interest of the Ottoman privateers was of a political, military-strategic nature. In general, the raids against the Europeans were intended to cause harm and economic damage to the enemy. For this purpose, the ships were equipped with letters of marque by the Ottoman Sultan, who gave them official permission to seize ships and therefore conduct official legitimate warfare.[49] On the other hand, for the ships and their crews that were actually conducting these raids, the interest lay on a far more pragmatic and personal level. The main interest of the Ottoman privateers was to prey and to capture a lot of booty because this was a source of revenue, for which they gladly took the official endorsement. Also in this context, the Ottoman privateers did not differ much from the European privateers, who ultimately

48 See Talbot, "Protecting the Mediterranean," 283. See also Talbot, "Maritime Territoriality," 54-70. See Gounaris, "Unwanted Heroes."

49 See Bohn, "Von Sklavenkassen und Konvoifahrten," 27. See also already Braudel, *The Mediterranean World*.

shared the same goal. Furthermore, it becomes obvious that the more general political and the more personal goals and intentions behind the raids were generally not mutually exclusive, but quite on the contrary they merely represented the two sides of the same coin. In fact, if one examines it closely, then it can be ascertained that there was basically only one single difference between the Ottoman privateering activities and the European privateers. This difference, however, was very substantial. This difference is sufficient to attribute a very specific quality of its own to the privateering war in the Mediterranean Sea in contrast to the privateering war fought between the European powers. It was this difference that marks the peculiar character of this part of the war zone, with its own rules and dangers, to which the European powers had to find customised solutions.

The fundamental difference between the Ottoman and the European privateers was thus that the Ottoman ships and crews did not only make profits from the capture and seizing of the European commercial ships and their goods. Rather, a major share of their spoils derived from taking the European ships' crews, the captains and sailors, as prisoners of war, as captives, "captifs" in French and "asir" in Ottoman Turkish, and demanding ransom money for their release from the European powers.[50] The Europeans, once again preferred to call them 'hostages' of the Ottoman Empire instead of prisoners of war since they did not acknowledge the conflict with the Ottoman Empire as an official war but rather as a guerrilla war because no war had been declared between the powers.[51] For the Ottomans, this practice therefore also led to a revenue stream in the aftermath of the capture.

As Wolfgang Kaiser and Guillaume Calafat have emphasized, the "ransoming of captives was an important economic sector of the Early Modern Mediterranean."[52] This was in contrast to European privateering and the raids on commercial ships, during which prisoners of war were most often only taken into custody for a rather short period of time, until after they had testified before court or at the latest until the court case was settled, and for whom the European powers also most of the time did not pay ransom money. Prisoners of war taken by Ottoman privateers, however, were held for an indefinite period of time until they were ransomed, if indeed they were ransomed at all. Demanding ransom money was therefore an obligatory part of the privateering activities of the Ottoman privateers. The consequences of this fact for the European people who were living in, trading with or sailing to this area were obvious. The situation of danger caused by the Ottoman privateers was proportionately higher than with regard to the privateers in the European waters, and that was the distinctive feature of the war zone in the Mediterranean. In purely practical terms this meant that for merchants trading with Mediterranean cities the presence of the Ottoman privateers in the region bore the risk and danger of essentially suffering a double loss. Losing a ship to the Ottomans would not only mean losing your ship and its goods. It also meant losing

50 See Kaiser/Calafat, "The Economy of Ransoming," 113.

51 See Ginio, "Piracy and Redemption," 140. See Ressel, *Sklavenkassen*, 27-30 and in general. See Bohn, "Von Sklavenkassen und Konvoifahrten," 27. See Ressel/Zwierlein, "The Ransoming of North European Captives." See Graßmann, "Nordafrikanische Piraten." See Gøbel, "Algerian sea passes."

52 Kaiser/Calafat, "The Economy of Ransoming," 108.

your crew and being asked to pay ransom money for freeing the crew. For the mariners, consequently, the danger was also significantly higher. Sailing to the Mediterranean Sea meant nothing less than putting your life at risk.[53] They faced a danger to life and limb. And this is the ultimate reason why we have to define the raging conflict between Europe and the Ottoman Empire in the Mediterranean Sea as a war zone in its own right because, although no actual battles were fought between the war opponents, the area definitely still caused casualties.[54]

Before coming to the perspective of the merchants, including the question of why they would still send ships to the region, we therefore first have to assess the situation of the mariners, because they were without a doubt the main sufferers and actual victims of this larger conflict. Subsequently, I will present the perspective and interest of the merchants in the area, which will also include the reason why they nonetheless accepted the risk for their mariners, but which will also demonstrate that the merchants at least made some efforts and sought solutions to safeguard their crews. The merchants did not stand by idly and took the risk but rather tried to find solutions to prevent or at least improve the situation for their mariners. In order to understand their solutions, however, we first have to clarify the actual situation for the mariners in the Mediterranean Sea. Amazingly, we will then see that the European merchants in the end in fact drew on and referred to the state of war that the Ottomans had claimed for themselves, because it was literally the only straw that they could pick up to find a feasible and practicable solution to continue their trade in the area.

The Perspective of the European Mariners

For the European mariners the threat posed by the Ottoman warships was without a doubt an immediate and serious threat. They faced the actual risk of becoming captives and having to live in captivity when travelling the Mediterranean Sea and passing the North African coast or the Aegean.[55] The infamous reputation of the Ottoman privateers was well known to them. In fact, they certainly were one of the groups that decisively shaped and perpetuated this discourse during the age because their life and limbs were directly threatened by the situation, and they literally spread the discourse around the world through their profession. The Ottomans' reputation therefore preceded their warships and caused serious fears on the part of the European mariners. For most of the sailors, especially those who had not travelled the region before, the region thus evoked exactly the horror scenarios outlined above. As Daniel Defoe noted in 1725 "not a sailor goes to sea in a merchant ship but he feels some secret tremor that it may one time or other be his lot to be taken by the Turks".[56] It was clear to the sailors going to the

53 See as a good case study Rheinheimer, *Hark Olufs' Wiederkehr.*

54 Regarding concrete numbers of enslaved European sailors see Ressel, *Sklavenkassen*, 465, and the episode and further references in this chapter below.

55 See Earle, *Sailors*, 115. See Ressel, *Sklavenkassen*, 30 and in general. See Kaiser, *Le commerce des captifs*. See Davis, *Christian Slaves, Muslim Masters.*

56 Defoe, Daniel. *A General History of Discoveries and Improvements*. London: Roberts, 1726, 148.

Mediterranean Sea that they had to prepare themselves for the worst, facing "unreasonable barbarians", who would do everything in their power to enslave them and force them to spend a life in dungeons, a life that would consist of starvation, torture and physical abuse by the hereditary enemy that would finally lead to death if they were not ransomed before.[57] This was the reason why the mariners of the age felt fear and reluctance with regard to the Mediterranean Sea, and why the area in the south and the news that they would to be sent to this area might have sent shivers down the spines of the sailors.[58]

The actual situation that we have to assume for the vast majority of the mariners who actually were taken captive by the ships of the Maghreb states, however, in the end looked different, as it is rather typical for the nature, extent and character of horror scenarios. This does not change the fact that there were severe fears, because fears often outstrip the factual situation, and there were certainly also cases in which the fears proved correct and thus got reinforced. However, the actual situation that many of the Ottoman captives faced was in fact far less dire and life-threatening than the discourse made the mariners believe.[59] This does not, however, mean that we should downplay the fears of the people in any way, but it does demonstrate that the actual situation on the ground gave the mariners at least far more reason to hope for rescue and to survive the imprisonment unscathed than we had so far been led to believe. Nonetheless, this still did not mean that they would not wish to avoid being captured and arrested in the first place because living in war captivity still always constitutes being deprived of one's liberty, it was hard, disagreeable and in many ways always still dangerous. Starvation and torture could not be ruled out, and the climatic conditions were extreme.

Notwithstanding this, if we take a closer look at the actual situation in the Mediterranean Sea it was ultimately neither completely desperate nor as hopeless as it appeared. Instead, it was something people actually were able to cope with or, rather, found certain ways and solutions to deal with it and to react to it. Particularly merchants of the period found ways to come up with solutions to this hazardous situation and ways and means for continuing their trade in the area despite the threat posed by the Ottoman warships.

The reason for hope and the reason why the situation was ultimately not desperate for the mariners is ultimately easily explicable. We just have to take into consideration again the Ottoman perspective to the privateering war in the Mediterranean Sea. Treating the Mediterranean Sea as a war zone, torturing or killing your captives, or leaving

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57 Regarding the stereotype of the Turks as "unreasonable barbarians", see also Rediker, Marcus. *Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea: Merchant Seamen, Pirates and the Anglo-American Maritime World, 1700-1750*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987, 37. Regarding the "myths" regarding the African coast that were known among seamen and the sailors' expectations, shaped by travel narratives, see Rheinheimer, *Hark Olufs' Wiederkehr*, 32. See Rheinheimer, "Sklaven in den Barbareskenstaaten," 329-360.

58 See Earle, *Sailors*, 115. See Konrad, "Turkish Menace." See Ressel, "Zwischen Sklavenkassen und Türkenpässen," 11-13.

59 See Beutin, Ludwig. *Der deutsche Seehandel im Mittelmeergebiet bis zu den Napoleonischen Kriegen*. Neumünster: Wachholtz, 1933.

them to rot, would simply not have been as expedient and particularly not as lucrative as declaring their captive prisoners of war. However, this meant that therefore they also had to treat them as prisoners of war.[60] Consequently, they would keep them in at least a minimum of good shape, which is meant exactly as it sounds: the captives served as goods to trade. In other words, a prisoner of war was far more profitable and lucrative for the Ottomans than an emaciated enslaved person because for prisoners of war they could demand good ransom money. In the end, the Ottoman privateers, as we have learned, pursued a commercial agenda with their raids, as did the European privateers, aimed not only at harming the enemy but also at receiving their own economic benefits from the raids and this also had consequences with regard to the handling of their captives, which meant, by implication, also hope for the European mariners.

The result of this fact was that at least during the 18th century exceedingly few mariners were actually left to rot in dungeons or sold to the galleys after being taken prisoners, and they were often also not tortured.[61] Instead, the majority of the captive seamen were kept in especially built "bagnos", prison cities with several thousands of inmates in the Maghreb states. In Algiers alone 35,000 Christian prisoners lived in such a bagno.[62] In these cities, the captives were allowed to move around relatively freely and even to work. They could thus lead a relatively 'normal' life, inasfar as one can speak of a normal life under the circumstances of imprisonment and the harsh living conditions in a country with a totally different climate and in a culture that was completely alien to them. The important thing in this respect was, however, that the mariners' imprisonment and stay was not generally meant to last long but rather as short as possible, in the interest of both the captives and the Ottomans. The prisoners' stay was intended to only last as long as the time it took the European powers to pay the ransom money for their liberation.[63] And herein lies also the reason why some prisoners, namely the lower-ranking mariners, were still forced to wait longer than the ships' captains to be released because it took longer to raise the money in their home countries for their liberation.[64] For some prisoners, tragically, that rule precondition even meant that they would never again leave the Maghreb states. Many of the prisoners, however, were in the end ransomed and freed. The responsibility for whether or not a mariner would be released from his imprisonment in the Maghreb states therefore rested in the hands of the authorities, merchants, families and institutions like the Sklavenkasse at home in

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60 See Bohn, "Von Sklavenkassen und Konvoifahrten," 28.

61 Regarding the situation of the "Christensklaven", see Rheinheimer, *Hark Olufs' Wiederkehr*, 25. See Ressel, *Sklavenkassen*, 442. See Beutin, *Seehandel im Mittelmeergebiet*, 131-132.

62 See Graßmann, "Nordafrikanische Piraten," 176. See Prange, Carsten "Hamburg und die Barbaresken. Herausforderungen der Hamburger Kauffahrer." In *Gottes Freund – aller Welt Feind. Von Seeraub und Konvoifahrt. Störtebeker und die Folgen*, edited by Jörgen Bracker, 152-173. Hamburg: Zertani, 2001, here 169.

63 As regards numbers, by 1747 Hamburg had for instance "already paid at total of 1.8 million Mark Banco ransom money to Algiers." Ebel, Wilhelm. *Probleme der deutschen Rechtsgeschichte*. Göttingen: Schwartz, 1978, 141 ("Über Sklavenversicherung und Sklavereiversicherung").

64 See Graßmann, "Nordafrikanische Piraten," 163. See Earle, *Sailors*, 115. See already Voigt, Johann Friedrich. "Deutsche Seeleute als Gefangene in der Barbarei." *Mitteilungen des Vereins für Hamburgische Geschichte* 2 (1882): 26-31.

Europe, and was not solely at the discretion of the Ottoman and Maghreb authorities. And this is presumably, in turn, also one of the reasons why the mariners after all agreed to set sail to the Mediterranean Sea because they trusted in the help, the promises and integrity of their ship-owners and the state or city authorities at home. Another reason why the mariners boarded or stayed on a ship bound for the Mediterranean Sea was simply the need for work because a voyage to the area lasted months, which promised several monthly salaries, often paid in advance and then transferred for instance to the mariners' families. Or they were simply forced to make the journey because they had been hired and had signed on for a ship that was going to undertake such a journey during its various travels. Still, the sailor's profession was a profession based on an employment relationship, on an employment contract and therefore on a relation of dependence. This meant that sometimes the only way to avoid a trip to Mediterranean Sea was mutiny, which in itself also meant severe dangers to life and limb because mutiny was deemed a felony during the age punished by imprisonment or even death.[65] The fact that mutiny was, in spite of this, a very common occurrence with regard to voyages bound for the Mediterranean Sea once again shows the reluctance of the mariners of the age to travel to the area.[66] On the other hand, it also shows that the mariners in fact had certain ways and means and a basis for negotiation to circumvent or to take action against the order to sail to the Mediterranean Sea. They simply could either reject the order or flee from the ship. Most remarkable in this regard is the former of these two solutions and in particular those cases in which entire crews collectively refused the order, though without committing direct mutiny and remaining loyal to the captain and the ship they were hired on. If you will, in all these cases they committed a kind of a 'soft' mutiny.[67]

By means of pulling together and therefore making it impossible for individual crew members to be singled out, who otherwise could have been accused of committing mutiny, the sailors found a way to create a basis for negotiations enabling them to make further demands. This meant that the ship-owners ultimately had no choice but to listen to their employees if they wanted to continue their trade with the ports in the Mediterranean Sea. The example of the case and letter conversation analysed in this chapter will bear impressive witness to precisely such a form of fraternisation and the resulting basis for negotiation. It therefore shows again the crucial importance and extent of negotiation practice taking place in the maritime sector of the 18th century, even with regard to settlements and reconciliations in employment relationships with a supposedly strict hierarchy and a supposedly clear chain of command as in the sea business.

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65 Witt, Jann Markus. "Mutiny and Piracy in Northern Europe Merchant Shipping. Forms of insurrection on board British and German merchant ships in the late 17th and 18th centuries." *Northern Mariner* 18 (2008): 1-27, here 3. See Witt, Jann Markus. *Master next God? Der nordeuropäische Handelsschiffskapitän vom 17. bis zum 19. Jahrhundert*. Hamburg: Convent, 2001, 63-74.

66 See Earle, *Sailors*, 168.

67 See Witt, *Master next God*, 151-153. See Earle, *Sailors*, 177-178. See Rediker, *Devil and the Deep Blue Sea*, 109. See Blakemore, Richard. "Orality and Mutiny. Authority and Speech amongst the Seafarers of Early Modern London." In *Spoken Word and Social Practice. Orality in Europe (1400–1700)*, edited by Thomas Cohen and Lesley Twomey, 253-279. Leiden: Brill, 2015, here 263-265.

The main point that must have become clear by now is that we know why this scope for negotiation existed at all. It existed because people of the age had strong reservations against sailing to the Mediterranean Sea. Virtually nobody from Europe took the decision to sail to this area free of concerns, no matter whether this was caused through the widespread fears of the time or even through some knowledge of the actual situation on the ground. Sailing the Mediterranean Sea just posed a very high risk and involved great uncertainty and many imponderables. This risk and uncertainty applied to all parties involved, sailors, ships' captains and in the end also the merchants investing in the journey of their ships to the area and risking a doubling of their losses, which meant that they were not just at risk of losing their ship, the goods and the crew, but that they also risked being forced to take care of organising and paying ransom money for their crews. The crucial last question that we have to answer, a question that virtually begs to be asked, is therefore: Why did the Europeans, despite all this, still send ships to the area? This question, in turn, directly leads us to the third group and their perspective that we have to take a closer look at before entering into the analytical part of this chapter, namely the perspective of the merchants. The answer to this last question is without a doubt ultimately rather predictable. The European merchants sent ships to the Mediterranean Sea because it still promised high profits and returns, despite all the risks.

The Perspective of the European Merchants

In the 18th century, trade with the Mediterranean was still very lucrative.[68] Livorno was the main entrepot to the South European trading markets. Malaga, Geneva, Naples and Venice aroused the interest of North European merchants.[69] The unique attraction of these ports derived from the fact that they promised high profits through the so-called "rich-trades".[70] That is to say, that the local markets offered commodities, from their own markets or imported goods from the Ottoman territory, such as silk and other high-quality textiles like velvet or damask, jewellery like pearls or ivory, as well as spices and rubber. All of these were very light goods that, however, achieved high sales prices, whereas in the regions of Southern Europe there was a need for commodities such as grain, sugar, timber or fur, which were heavy goods, but cheaper during purchase.[71] Considering the concept of bringing in heavy goods and then shipping out large amounts of light but very valuable goods, the rich-trades back to north-western Europe, one can immediately imagine the high profit margins that arose from this trading sector. It was these high profits margins that were therefore the main reason why European commercial shipping continued in the Mediterranean Sea even though there was the danger of Ottoman privateers, severely interfering with the traders' business.

68 See in general Beutin, *Seehandel im Mittelmeergebiet*. See in general Braudel, *The Mediterranean World*.

69 Earle, *Sailors*, 33.

70 See Ressel, *Sklavenkassen*, 8-9. See Davis, *English Shipping Industry*, 177. See as regards the concept of *rich-trades* also Israel, Jonathan I. *The Dutch Republic: Its Rise, Greatness and Fall, 1477-1806*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995, 307-321.

71 See Ressel, *Sklavenkassen*, 9.

The promise of high revenues was too tempting and attractive for the Europeans to refrain completely from sending ships to the area. Therefore, instead of ceasing sending ships and crews to the area, the European merchants, and the political and juridical institutions and authorities of their home countries tried their best to find alternative solutions to overcome the problem of the Ottoman raids in ways that aimed to eliminate or at least minimise the risk or to compensate them in the case of their ships and crews being taken. In a way, they tried to come to terms, in a pragmatic way, with the situation existing in the area and found solution strategies that adapted to the situation instead of merely accepting or avoiding it. This adaptation process, in turn, was implemented primarily in two different main ways, which were both astonishing because they both encompassed considerable concessions to the Ottoman Empire on the one hand and to the European ships' crews on the other hand, which once again shows the big interest that the wholesale merchants had in the trade in the Mediterranean Sea. Only through these concessions were the European merchants able to continue their trade in the area at all. This makes their dealings so astonishing and revealing in terms of international and intergovernmental relations and power structures during the 18th century, but also with regard to interpersonal relations and hierarchies and decision-making processes within the field of European seaborne trade. This aspect also demonstrates, once again, the significance and power of negotiation practices primarily shaping these relations. There had in fact been further ways of reacting to the dangers of the Ottoman privateers, namely to equip the ships with cannons or to sail in convoys, thus trusting in a deterrent effect.[72] However, the two most effective strategies for dealing with the situation in the area were strategies drawing on and building upon conducting negotiations and not deterrence, either in a diplomatic way by means of negotiating peace treaties, which represents the first effective solution strategy or, as a second effective solution strategy, by means of institutional safeguarding of the commercial activities in Europe: that is, by making use of insurances on the ships and the crews of the ships.[73] The usefulness of the policy of deterrence simply reached its limits when the number of enemy ships equalled or exceeded the number of ships in the convoy, and furthermore, the Ottoman ships had cannons, too. To put it in figures, passing Algiers for example meant passing "a power of nine big ships [...] as well as fourteen smaller ones", as a contemporary traveller observed in 1732, which was a number that was seldom reached by most of the commercial European convoys of the time, maybe except for some of the

72 See Ressel, *Sklavenkassen*, 16, 56, 223, 226-507. See in detail Baasch, Ernst. *Hamburgs Convoyschiffahrt und Convoywesen. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Schiffahrt und Schiffahrtseinrichtungen im 17. und 18. Jahrhundert*. Hamburg: Friederichsen, 1896. See Bohn, "Von Sklavenkassen und Konvoifahrten."

73 Regarding peace treaties, see Ressel, *Sklavenkassen*, 252-274, 444-486; Gøbel, "Algerian sea passes," 177. Regarding maritime insurances, see Ressel, *Sklavenkassen*, 254, 657, 673. Regarding both, see Bohn, "Von Sklavenkassen und Konvoifahrten," 25, 29-37. See Ebel, Wilhelm "Über Sklavenversicherung und Sklavereiversicherung." *Zeitschrift für die gesamte Versicherungswissenschaft 52 (1963): 207-230*. See Dreyer, Thomas. *Die "Assekuranz- und Havarey-Ordnung" der Freien und Hansestadt Hamburg von 1731*. Frankfurt a.M.: Lang, 1990. See Kiesselbach, Georg A. *Die wirtschafts- und rechtsgeschichtliche Entwicklung der Seeversicherung in Hamburg*. Hamburg: Gräfe & Sillem, 1901. In general, see Koch, *Versicherungswirtschaft*; Barbour, "Marine Risk and Insurance."

convoys of the large companies such as the VOC or the WIC.[74] Yet even if the European ships happened to only meet single ships or smaller Ottoman units, these ships still had cannons, too, and they would use it. Therefore, the more effective solutions that the merchants sought were not necessarily built on luck in military confrontations but on diplomacy or on obtaining insurance coverage.

For this chapter, both of these strategies are of vital importance because the merchant Nicolaus Gottlieb Luetkens made use of the diplomatic insurance-based solution, precisely because of the fact that the military solution was not possible in his case. This is also the reason why we have to have knowledge about both solution strategies because it will point us to a last major characteristic shaping the historical events and political circumstances in the Mediterranean Sea during that time. This characteristic was that even with regard to inner-European power constellations, a different situation with different conditions and rules prevailed in this area compared to almost anywhere else in the world. One could even say that the inner-European world and power structures were in some ways turned upside down in the Mediterranean Sea. That is, the European powers that suffered most from this warzone, as seen from a European perspective, were not the main belligerents of the *War of the Austrian Succession*, namely the English or the French, but those powers that were otherwise spared from the wars raging during the time: in fact, it was particularly the Hanseatic ships that faced risks in the Mediterranean Sea.

The reason for this fact was that whereas in all other parts of the world, as accepted by the colonial superpowers of the time, Hanseatic ships, and in particular Hamburg ships, enjoyed a neutral status, this was not the case in the Mediterranean Sea because the Ottoman Empire did not acknowledge this neutrality.[75] As a result, Hamburg ships and the ships of the Hanseatic cities in general became a major target of Ottoman raids, whereas ships from several other countries and even from some of the great European belligerent parties were spared being raided thanks to the diplomatic relations that their governments maintained with the Ottoman Empire.[76] In the end, the European powers thus in a way did in fact acknowledge the Ottoman legal justification for the privateering attacks by the backdoor. They even acknowledged the Ottoman sovereignty over these sea areas, although without ever expressly stating it. Yet, at the same time they followed the pragmatic approach of seeking to come to certain agreements with the enemy with regard to the free passage of their commercial vessels through the territory, which was the first solution strategy.[77] The same implicit acceptance also applied to the second

74 “bestehet ihre Macht aus neun großen Schiffen, […] und in 14 kleinen.” Ludwig, Christian Gottlieb. *Tagebuch einer Reise durch Nordafrika von 1731-1733. Annotationes Rerum ad Historiam naturalem in Itinere Africanum Factae*. Handschriften der Universitätsbibliothek Leipzig, Ms. 0662, entry 9th of April 1732.

75 See Ressel, *Sklavenkassen*, 444-447. See Graßmann, “Nordafrikanische Piraten.” See in particular Bohn, “Von Sklavenkassen und Konvoifahrten.” See already Baasch, *Hansestädte und die Barbaresken*. See Baasch, *Beziehungen zu Algier und Marokko*. In general, Panzac, “Européens et Barbaresques”; *La caravane maritime*.

76 Ressel, *Sklavenkassen*, 482. See Bohn, “Von Sklavenkassen und Konvoifahrten,” 34, 37. See also Prange, “Hamburg und die Barbaresken.”

77 See Gøbel, “Algerian sea passes,” 175.

solution strategy, which was to take out insurances. In essence, if they procured insurances for possible captures of their ships or for the case that ransom money would be needed to free their crews, they at the same time confirmed, again by the backdoor, the actual rightfulness or at least the unavoidability of these Ottoman privateering events from a juridical point of view and therefore also confirmed an actual state of war between Europe and the Ottoman Empire prevailing in the Mediterranean Sea. In the end, however, the merchants and state authorities simply had no other option than to adapt their policies to the situation in the area because otherwise their trade activities would simply have come to an end. In essence, the special situation in the Mediterranean Sea called for special measures. I find that fact particularly intriguing because the Mediterranean case therefore provides us with a fascinating example of how already during the Early Modern Period – which was a period strongly shaped by protectionist policies on the one hand and by imperialistic politics fortifying one's own state on the other hand – it was possible that trading interests outweighed political and in a way in this case also religious interests to such an extent. The latter situation led to the fact that, for the sake of trade, compromises and concessions were made both with the crews and, more astonishingly, even with the 'hereditary enemy', the Ottoman Empire.

The compromise and concessions the merchant Nicolaus Gottlieb had to make in order to be able to carry out trade in the region primarily related to his ships' crews because no other options were available to him. He simply had no other choice than to turn to his ships' captains and their crews for finding the necessary support for his plans. Before coming to that, however, we will once again take a closer look at the first, treaty-based solution strategy that was used by other European powers because this will show us how tricky and complicated the situation actually was for the Hamburgers with regard to the Mediterranean Sea. The Hamburgers were excluded from this option. This will also show why Luetkens' plans represented basically the greatest conceivable risk that a merchant could take during that time with respect to the Mediterranean region. He nevertheless took that risk, which shows his high risk tolerance, which can certainly also be attributed to his stage of life, namely his establishment phase.[78] Furthermore, however, he at least found one solid reason and argument for justifying his actions, which freed his plans from ultimately representing a suicide mission. This was that the merchant could at least draw on insurances for his undertakings, namely insurances for ships and crews, which was the second solution strategy, which I will discuss subsequently.

Peace Treaties and Passports

The first solution strategy European powers used to eliminate the risk of falling victim to Ottoman raids was bilateral peace treaties between the European powers and the

78 See Hancock, *Citizens of the World*, 14-17. See Grassby, *Business Community*, 172. See in general Lütge/Strosetzki, *The Honorable Merchant.* On risk within mercantile business in general, see Zahedieh, "Credit, Risk and Reputation," 53-74. See Mathias, "Risk, Credit and Kinship," 15-35. See Haggerty, *Merely for Money*, 34-65. As a comparable example, see Morgan, *Bright-Meyler papers*, "Introduction," 90-99. See Ebert, *Brazilian Sugar*, 109-130.

Maghreb states regarding commercial rights, known as *Capitulations*, "ahdname-i hümayun" in Ottoman Turkish, determining that the Ottoman raids spared ships from the respective European powers.[79] This was the most direct way of risk reduction. However, such bilateral contracts always entailed concessions on the side of the European powers. Thus, in exchange for peace and reconciliation with the Ottoman Empire, or rather with the princely states subject to the Ottoman Empire, the European powers were obliged to pay high tributes to the leaders of the Maghreb region, to the Bashaw of Tripoli, the Bey of Tunis, the Sultan of Morocco and particularly to the Dey of Algiers.[80] In return they were granted safe passage in the southern part of the Mediterranean area and the guarantee that no sailors would be "taken, sold, or made a slave" from their ships, as paragraph 12 of the Danish peace treaty stated.[81] The word 'bilateral' is therefore not completely accurate for describing the situation at hand because we are dealing essentially with bribe payments to the Maghreb states and charters for the European states.[82]

Nonetheless, this option of entering into these "Treaties of Peace, Alliance, and Commerce" as they were still called in 1785, was chosen by several European powers because of the prospect of eliminating the risk of capture by the Ottomans. The prospects for trading opportunities promised to compensate for the tributes paid.[83] Furthermore, as another positive side effect of this, through entering into contracts with the Maghreb states of the Ottoman Empire, these powers would also be able to restrain or oust other European powers from the trading markets in the region. The situation on the sea routes in Mediterranean Sea therefore looked as follows during the 18th century, and during the times of the *War of the Austrian Succession* in particular: The Dutch, the English, the Danes and the Swedes had chosen the path of paying tributes to the Ottoman Empire and were therefore able to travel the sea routes in the region.[84] Taking the peace treaties with Algiers as an example, the Dutch entered into such peace treaties in 1712 and 1726, reviving peace treaties with the Barbary States dating back to the 17th century, e.g. with Constantinople in 1660. Sweden signed a peace treaty in 1729, Denmark in 1747, and the emperor of the Holy Roman Empire signed a peace treaty in 1727, but up until that point the Ottoman privateers had captured their ships. The English King Charles II had already signed the first treaty with Algiers, Tripoli and Tunis in 1662,

79 For France, see Ludovicus XV. rex Franciae. *Kitabi-i ahdname-i hümayun-u saadet-makrun (Buch des allerhochsten Vertrages d.i. Text des Handels- und Freundschafts-Traktats zwischen der Türkei und Frankreich, 30th of May 1740) 1153 h./1740.* Istanbul, ca. 1835, *Bayerische StaatsBibliothek digital (BSB)*, Signatur: 2 A.or. 350, http://mdz-nbn-resolving.de/urn:nbn:de:bvb:12-bsb10211060-0, accessed November 17, 2019. See Weiss, Gillian. *Captives and Corsairs: France and Slavery in the Early Modern Mediterranean*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2011. See Goffman, Daniel. *The Ottoman Empire and Early Modern Euro*pe. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002, 187.

80 See Ressel, *Sklavenkassen*, 19, 24-28, 440-486. Bohn, "Von Sklavenkassen und Konvoifahrten," 28. See Bono, Salvatore. *I corsari barbareschi*. Torino: ERI, 1964. See Bono, Salvatore. *Lumi e corsari. Europa e Maghreb nel Settecento*. Perugia: Morlacchi, 2005. See also Ressel, "Dutch-Algerian War."

81 Gøbel, "Algerian sea passes," 177.

82 Ressel, *Sklavenkassen*, 16. See Ressel, "Sklavenkassen und Türkenpässen."

83 See Jenkinson, Charles, Earl of Liverpool. *A Collection of All the Treaties of Peace, Alliance, and Commerce, Between Great-Britain and Other Powers*. London: J. Debrett, 1785.

84 See Ressel, *Slavenkassen*, 444-446.

which was reiterated in the following decades and centuries.[85] Through the presence of lots of English ships in the region, in turn, the Spaniards, who furthermore did not hold contracts with the Ottomans were mostly deterred from engaging in the Mediterranean Sea. The French King signed a treaty with Algeria for the first time in 1619. The French, however, especially during the *War of the Austrian Succession*, were confronted with the military superiority of their English enemy in the region, which deterred them from engaging in the southern part of the Mediterranean Sea.[86] The peace treaties had to be negotiated and concluded with every princely state separately, in order to ensure free passage along the entire North African coast.

Taking the example of Denmark in this regard, as Erik Gøbel's work has shown, the treaties with the different Barbary States showed strong similarities. The treaty with Algiers of 1747, for example, was "reiterated almost unchanged in the other treaties which were signed by Denmark and the Barbary States: namely Tunisia on 8 December 1751, Tripoli on 22 January 1752, Morocco on 18 June 1753, the Sublime Porte in Constantinople on 14 October 1756, Morocco again on 25 July 1767, Algeria on 16 May 1772, and Tripoli in 1816, 1824 and 1826 – until the last Danish obligation to pay tribute was repealed by the treaty with Morocco dated 5 April 1845."[87] Through the first solution strategy, the peace treaties, the Dutch, English, and later the Swedes and the Danes were able to gain a monopoly in the region and traded and moved relatively freely there, which directly compensated them for their tribute payments. The strategy therefore seemed to pay off.

For the practical implementation of the peace treaties on the sea routes and in order to ensure that the agreements would be put into practice during the direct encounters between the ships of the different powers, the Europeans relied on a proven tool, with the approval and consent of the Ottoman Empire. Even this tool, however, had to be adapted to the special conditions prevailing in the Mediterranean Sea. In order to ensure the free passage and conduct of their ships, the respective European powers provided their ships with special passports that would be shown to the Ottoman privateers if they stopped the European commercial vessels. Therefore, in Mediterranean Sea it was customary that the flag alone was no sufficient means to guarantee free passage as they also needed the complementary passports showing that they belonged to one of the powers which were in amity with the Ottoman Empire. These passports were called "Turkish Passports" or "Turkish Sea Passes", "Türkenpässe" in German, or with reference to the princely states in particular, giving a more specific denomination, they were also called for instance Algerian Passports. These did not, as the term might seem to suggest, provide identification for Turkish or Ottoman or Algerian citizens but were issued to European citizens who ran the risk of being taken prisoner by the Ottoman Empire.[88] The term therefore holds a rather negative connotation, by which it not only perpetuated but primarily also in way shaped the bogeyman image of the 'hereditary'

85 See Gøbel, "Algerian sea passes," 175-178.

86 See Ressel, *Sklavenkassen*, 462-510, particularly 482.

87 Gøbel, "Algerian sea passes," 177.

88 See Gøbel, "Algerian sea passes," 164, 171, 176-179. See Ressel, *Sklavenkassen*, 254-258 and in general. For France, see Panzac, *La caravane maritime*. See also Weiss, *Captives and Corsairs*.

enemy. The term is therefore highly problematic today.[89] But as a historical source term it can unfortunately not be avoided. For the contemporary European sailors these pieces of paper were literally regarded as nothing less than a life insurance, so, for them, at least the consequences evolving from their *Turkish passports* were in the end positive.

In practice, these passports worked in a relatively similar fashion to comparable passports issued for European ships in European waters. They guaranteed that whenever a captain of an Ottoman privateer entered a ship that belonged to one of the powers and these ships' captains could produce a valid Turkish passport, the Ottoman captain was obliged to release the ships again and allow them to freely continue their voyage. The decisive difference between such encounters as they took place in European waters in comparison to the encounters taking place in the Mediterranean Sea, however, was that in the latter case, the likelihood that the master and the crew of the Ottoman ship would actually be able to understand the language of the provided passports and the language of the respective crews was rather unlikely. This very fact led to the customisation of the practice of issuing passport that took place with regard to this area. The authorities, on both sides of the agreement, eventually used and accomplished a rather practical solution to this situation.[90] They added a special material feature to the passports, which ensured mutual understanding in a non-verbal way. For this purpose, Turkish passports, issued by the home authorities of the European powers, for each and every voyage one of their ships undertook, were divided, in fact split, into two parts, an upper part showing in most cases a kind of graphical drawing (e.g. a ship), and a lower part containing all the relevant information regarding the voyage in writing. Before each voyage, in the words of Erik Gøbel, who aptly summarised the further course of the proceedings, the sea passports were then "cut into two pieces, of which the upper part was sent to the Barbary states while the large lower part with the text, which was in a European language, was to be carried by the shipmaster. As neither the privateers nor European seamen were able to read or understand the spoken language of their counterparts they simply produced their own part of the passport – and if the parts fitted together the European ship was allowed to pass on without any hindrance."[91] In order to prevent fraud or counterfeiting but also to further enhance the safety level of the passports, each Turkish passport had an individual perforation or wave line, which ensured that only the two original parts would later make a perfect match. As Gøbel has shown on the basis of Danish cases, an absolute 100 per cent certainty that the ships were not captured was, nevertheless, still not guaranteed. In some cases, the Ottoman captains simply did not trust or even ignored the Turkish passports. For the vast majority of the encounters between the Ottoman privateers and the European powers with peace treaties, however, it can generally be assumed that the system worked. On the basis of these customised passports, the European powers and the Ottoman Empire were able to implement and uphold their peace agreements in practice. That is, by means of this

89 See the comments and discussions regarding a public lecture in Hamburg in 2010 given by Magnus Ressel and Ressel's reply to the criticism on https://blog.sub.uni-hamburg.de/?p=1665, accessed March 13, 2018.

90 See Gøbel, "Algerian sea passes," 170-179. See Ressel, *Sklavenkassen*, 254-264.

91 Gøbel, "Algerian sea passes," 176.

tool the English, Dutch, Swedes, Danes and the French were able to continue travelling and trading in the Mediterranean Sea. This was solution strategy number one.

In order to demonstrate the second solution strategy, we have to take a look at the last big player in European commercial shipping during that time that is still missing from the picture. These were the northern German Hanseatic cities and their fleets. The merchants and ship owners from Hanseatic cities constituted the group that felt and suffered from the consequences of the presence and maritime predominance of English and Dutch shipping in the region most strongly. This was not so much because the predominance posed a direct threat to them but because this situation essentially turned them into a fifth wheel and an outsider, which had severe consequences. The Hanseatic cities did not hold commercial and peace treaties with the Ottoman Empire during that time, which meant that they could not to draw on the possibility of Turkish passports. They could therefore not create the necessary foundation for benefitting from free passage in the area, which then led to a completely different situation for them in the region. This, in turn, forced them to find a different solution approach to tackle this problem and serve as a basis for their undertakings: solution strategy number two.[92]

In the first instance, the situation for Hanseatic shipping did not necessarily look quite as bad. First of all, generally ships from the Hanseatic cities had nothing to fear from the other European fleets, as for instance from the Danes, who were also neutral, and not even from the French and English, who also accepted their neutrality. Furthermore, the Hanseatic cities, and above all, Hamburg, had very good access to heavy goods such as grain, timber and coal because they constituted the major hubs for these goods in the Northern European market.[93] Therefore, for them, the *rich-trades* were an especially promising source of trade income. However, the problem with these supposed advantages was that they could not utilise them in the Mediterranean Sea because they were confronted with the danger and the risk of Ottoman raids attacking their ships. Although the European powers accepted their neutrality, unfortunately this status was the first thing to vanish as soon as Hamburg ships entered the Strait of Gibraltar.[94]

All efforts in this regard failed, as for instance the negotiations that took place with Algiers and Morocco in the 1740s.[95] Even later in the century, when in fact also a certain Nicolaus Gottlieb Luetkens was part of the negotiations with Morocco as a Hamburg senator, the negotiations unfortunately still failed.[96] To cut a long story short, without peace treaties there was no chance of free passage and in fact the exact opposite was the case. The direct result of this was that the Hanseatic cities and especially Hamburg instead met with a very unfortunate fate during that time with regard

92 See Bohn, "Von Sklavenkassen und Konvoifahrten." See Graßmann, "Nordafrikanische Piraten." See Baasch,*Hansestädte und die Barbaresken*; *Beziehungen zu Algier und Marokko.* See Prange, "Hamburg und die Barbaresken."

93 Ressel, *Sklavenkassen*, 2-9, 87. See also Van Tielhof, Milja. *The 'Mother of All Trades': The Baltic Grain Trade in Amsterdam from the Late Sixteenth to the Early Nineteenth Century*. Leiden: Brill, 2002.

94 See Ressel, *Sklavenkassen*, 482. See Bohn, "Von Sklavenkassen und Konvoifahrten."

95 See Ressel, *Sklavenkassen*, 444-445, 470-474. See Baasch, *Hansestädte und die Barbaresken*; *Beziehungen zu Algier und Marokko.* See Prange, "Hamburg und die Barbaresken."

96 Luetkens, *Pro Memoria* (1770). See in detail Baasch, *Hansestädte und die Barbaresken*, chapter "Der Lütkens'sche Auftrag für Marokko", 80-88.

to the Mediterranean Sea. From the list of European powers, basically Hamburg and the other Hanseatic cities were the only sea powers that were left in direct danger of legitimate raids by the Ottoman privateers. This ultimately led to the result that the Hanseatic cities became the main target and victim of the military political situation in the southern part of the Mediterranean Sea, leading to devastating consequences for the Hanseatic trade and shipping industry in the region.[97]

As we find in contemporary reports, which are highly revealing in this regard and provide us with an accurate account of the extent of Ottoman raids, the privateers started to systematically and purposefully prey upon the Hamburg merchant ships in particular, exposing the Hamburg ships, crews and captains "to more and more danger" as for instance a "report concerning the Algiers buccaneers" from Hamburg 1751 stated.[98] Any help from the other European sea powers, as this report continues, in this respect was not to be expected. The Spanish cruisers, which where natural enemies of the Ottoman privateers and whose owners often were trading partners of the Hanseatic cities, were mostly kept away from these waters by the English ships.[99] The neutral powers, like the Danes during the *War of the Austrian Succession*, on the other hand, also abstained from any support for the Hamburgers because they did not want to put the advantages of their own free trade in the region on the line, but rather would take the chance to weaken their competitors. In the revealing words of 18th century commercial writer Pieter De la Court: "It is highly appreciated to have left the Hamburgers with the thorn of the Turkish pirates in their foot" ["Dorn der türkischen Seeräuber"].[100] The Hamburg report thus noted that accordingly "the loaders of merchant commodities preferred English and Dutch ships instead of the Hamburgers because of the protection against the Turkish Threat", which made matters worse for the Hamburgers.[101] The result of this situation for the Hamburg shipping industry was rather conceivable, logical and dramatic. As the report finally concluded, "since Algiers was withdrawing so many ships from the Hamburgers each year since 1735, the Hamburg ship owners got tired of sending their ships to the area."[102]

As statistical data has shown, the report of 1751 was absolutely right in describing and evaluating the situation for Hamburg shipping with regard to the Mediterranean Sea, not only concerning the years 1735 to 1751 but actually the entire 18th century. It is accepted today in research that the years 1730 to 1775 represented therefore "a catastrophic time", "Katastrophenzeit" in German, and one of the "darkest hours of Hanseatic seafaring" ["schwärzesten Jahre"] regarding the trade with the Mediterranean region, which is in the end easy to comprehend and hardly surprising in view of the foregoing

97 See Ressel, *Sklavenkassen*, 445-470. See Bohn, "Von Sklavenkassen und Konvoifahrten," 37. See Graßmann, "Nordafrikanische Piraten." See Prange, "Hamburg und die Barbaresken."

98 All citations from "Bericht wegen der algierischen Seeräuber nach Febr. 1751." *Commerzbibliothek Hamburg*, Handschriftenbestand, S-422, H 516-4 2° Nr. 78. Translation by the author.

99 Ibid.

100 Baasch, Ernst. "Hamburg und Holland." See Bohn, "Von Sklavenkassen und Konvoifahrten," 43.

101 "Bericht wegen der algierischen Seeräuber nach Febr. 1751." *Commerzbibliothek Hamburg (CBH), Handschriftenbestand*, S-422, H 516-4 2° Nr. 78.

102 Ibid.

explanations.[103] During that time, the Hanseatic merchants simply had good reason not to participate in the trade in this region because there were so many risks and obstacles put in their way hindering them from conducting lucrative business.[104]

Having said that, however, another thing that the data also shows today is that, regardless of the situation, Hanseatic seafaring nevertheless never completely stagnated. That means that some Hamburg merchants must still have continued to send their ships to the region.[105] This fact, in turn, is actually astonishing in view of the above explanations. Therefore, obviously, there must have been always some daring merchants who took the risk of sending their ships to the region in the hope for profit, which is a remarkable finding. As a matter of fact therefore, if we take another look at data from the year 1740 to 1750 and especially the years 1744-1747, compiled on the basis of the deposits of the Hamburger Sklavenkasse, one can even clearly notice a slight rise in the activities of Hamburg merchants in the region.[106] And this period, not completely by chance, coincides with the mercantile establishment phase of the Hamburg merchant Nicolaus Gottlieb Luetkens.

Luetkens was one of these daring merchants. He took the risk and sent ships to the region for the sake of his establishment phase and despite the obvious risks. As part of a small group of German merchants based in Hamburg, Spain and France, Luetkens was one of the pivotal figures in the continuing trade of Hamburg merchants with the Mediterranean Sea, which trade he conducted from France. He and his partners traded with European trading houses in Venice, Livorno, Genoa, Naples or Malaga – even during times like these when basically all the odds were stacked against them. But against all odds, and as surprising as it may seem at this point, this group of merchants was actually able in the end to establish quite well-functioning merchant shipping to the area and eventually became successful in this undertaking, which explains the slight rise in activities of Hamburgers during these years between 1744 and 1747. Obviously, these merchants must have found an alternative solution to using *Turkish passports* for their undertakings, which must have allowed them and provided them with the justification and means to continue trade in the region. This was the actual reason and catalyst why I wanted to write this chapter because these merchants' own approach to this tricky situation once again made me realise that, despite all the obstacles they might be confronted with, the merchants of the time found their particular ways to make the best out of their situation. With regard to the Hamburg merchants, this meant that, since they were not able to draw on Turkish passports, they simply found an alternative form of safeguarding, even including their own material form for the document ensuring the safeguarding of their ships and crews. Instead of moaning about the failure of the peace negotiations, they tried their best to employ compensatory measures to actively counteract the disadvantage. The solution that the Hamburg merchants found for tackling

103 Ressel, *Sklavenkassen*, 657 and 446.

104 See ibid., 444-470. See Baasch, *Hamburgs Convoyschiffahrt und Convoywesen*, 49-52.

105 See Ressel, *Sklavenkassen*, 468.

106 See the graph in Ressel, *Sklavenkassen*, 481. See for further comments and explanations on this rise also ibid., 468, 479.

their situation in an appropriate manner was to make use of the possibility to privately insure their ships and their crews, including providing the crew with notarised certificates of these insurance policies, and therefore at least to protect themselves in the best possible way against the eventualities that their ships and crews might face.[107]

It is important to note in this regard that, although this solution strategy might appear self-evident and natural to the modern reader, for the contemporaries during the Early Modern Period it was not self-evident but an extraordinary strategy. In fact, for the contemporaries this practice represented an new phenomenon in sea business that had only become possible a few years earlier through changes in the relevant contemporary maritime laws. As a matter of fact, the first ever recorded case of a private insurance for a ship's crew in Hamburg dates back to 1741 and therefore only three years before the time of Luetkens' endeavours in the Mediterranean Sea.[108] This provides us with some ratio and context as regards the actual stark news value of these changes. The slight rise we have observed with regard to Hamburg shipping to the Mediterranean Sea was thus surely no coincidence but rather coincided directly with the change in the maritime insurance law and policies. When we dedicate ourselves in final part of this subsection to the fourth group of people or rather the institution having a decisive influence on the local occurrences in Mediterranean Sea, we will see what this change consisted of, how relatively small yet ground-breaking this slight change in the maritime law was and why it had such a sustainable impact on Hamburg sea business. The last group which had a bearing on the situation around the trade with the Mediterranean See were private insurance companies or merchant houses which acted in the insurance business. This group basically only started to come into existence during the first half of the century and became an important part of the sea trade because of the change in the maritime law. Without the insurance companies, none of Luetkens' business undertakings in the Mediterranean Sea and in all other parts of the world would actually have been possible at all. Therefore, to a certain extent even time was on his side, or put in other words, the merchant was surely able to read the signs of his time.

The Perspective of the European Insurance Companies

There are in fact many indications, and it is tempting to say, that the Hamburg merchants' success was to a great extent also due to the entrepreneurial audacity of these men, which surely cannot be totally dismissed. The letter episode will be informative in this regard, too. However, there was also another factor, which promoted, supported and facilitated their success during that time, which was far more objective and also far more verifiable. This factor was a revision of the Hamburg maritime law that took place during that time. In 1731, the maritime law in Hamburg, quickly followed by other cities, underwent a significant change, which for the first time allowed and authorised merchants to insure their ships and crews privately and self-reliantly.[109] This new legal

107 See Ressel, *Sklavenkassen*, 300-301, 657-658.

108 See ibid., 657.

109 See Ressel, *Sklavenkassen*, 300-301, 657-658. See Kiesselbach, *Seeversicherung in Hamburg*, i.a. 139. See Koch, *Versicherungswirtschaft*, 45. Dreyer, *Assekuranz- und Havarey-Ordnung*, 117. See also Den-

situation provided the merchants with new flexibility and room for manoeuvre, which in turn provided them with the opportunity and encouraged them to try their luck with more high-risk trades, e.g. in the Mediterranean Sea. The most substantial part of this revision of Hamburg's own maritime law, called the *Assecuranz- und Havareiordnung*, related to *Part X* of the legal text. In this part the new insurance policies regarding private insurances for Hamburg ships and crews against the "Turkish Threat", "Von Assekuranz für Türkengefahr und auf der Menschen Leben", was added and therefore newly regulated.[110] From this moment onwards, merchants were authorised to ensure their enterprises and their crews no longer only by means of drawing on the administrative authorities, the Hamburg Admiralty, or, as a part of it, the monetary fund of the *Sklavenkasse*.

Instead, they could also draw on private insurers and other merchant firms active in this business field for procuring private insurances as an additional insurance opportunity to safeguard their enterprises. These private insurances worked by simply supplementing the existing state insurances through an additional insurance fund of their own, which was raised from the private sector. This fund served as the actuarial reserve that would subsequently always be requested by the Hamburg Admiralty whenever these funds were needed, that is, whenever a ship was captured by the Ottomans that was privately insured beforehand.[111] Therefore, the private insurances functioned as a kind of reinforcement of the disposable credit limit of the *Sklavenkasse*, as an additional financial asset and hedge reserve for the ransoming of Hamburg mariners, whether they be sailors or ships' captains, and consequently they also increased the level of safety and protection that the Admiralty could provide. For the merchants, the private insurance business provided the opportunity to provide their ships' crews and captains with new and advanced security guarantees, which offered them an entirely new, solid basis for justifying their business in the Mediterranean Sea as well as a good basis for negotiation to continue their shipping industry in the region. Naturally, the private insurance business of course also offered opportunities and opened the door for taking on private insurances for voyages to other parts of the world and generally also included private insurances on goods.

As a result of the changes, private insurance companies experienced a boom and mushroomed all over Europe during the 18th century, which, in turn, basically constituted the basis for a whole new trading sector: the maritime private insurance business.[112] The most important consequence of this new regulation for Hamburg mer-

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zel, Markus A. "Die Seeversicherung als kommerzielle Innovation im Mittelmeerraum und in Nordwesteuropa vom Mittelalter bis zum 18. Jahrhundert." In *Ricchezza del mare, Ricchezza dal mare, secc XIII XVII*, edited by Simonetta Cavaciocchi, 574-609. Prato: Le Monnier, 2006.

110 See the original "Hamburger Assekuranz- und Havarie-Ordnung von 1731." In *Sammlung der hamburgischen Gesetze und Verfassungen*, edited by Johannes Klefeker. Hamburg: Piscator, 1769, Tit. X *Von Assekuranz für Türkengefahr und auf der Menschen Leben*, 97. In the Hamburg city hall, Klefeker's portrait hands right beside the portrait of Nicolaus Gottlieb Luetkens. See Koch, Peter. *Geschichte der Versicherungswissenschaft*, 22-25. See Ressel, *Sklavenkassen*, 656-657.

111 See Ressel, *Sklavenkassen*, 673.

112 See "Hamburger Assekuranz- und Havarie-Ordnung von 1731." See Koch, *Geschichte der Versicherungswissenschaft*, 22-25. See Koch, *Versicherungswirtschaft*, 45. See Kiesselbach, *Seeversicherung in*

chants such as Luetkens and his trading partners was that they were now able and allowed to charter, load, insure and finally to send ships to the region at their own risk and responsibility. This opportunity, or rather this fact, was the crucial loophole that they needed to conduct their trade with the ports in the Mediterranean Sea. The new opportunity represented the solution needed to cope with their unfavourable situation in this trading sector. It was the second main solution to the presence of Ottoman privateers patrolling the seas between Europe and Africa that was available to all those merchants that did not enjoy the privilege of being able to receive *Turkish passports*.

During the presumably *darkest hour* of Hamburg seafaring, this second solution was therefore key to participating in the trading sector of high-risk trade with the trade Mediterranean Sea even. The private insurances formed the indispensable basis and prerequisite for hiring ships and crews for the trade with the Mediterranean Sea. Without these insurances, next to no-one would have unresistingly entered a Hamburg-flagged ship to the area. The Hamburg *Sklavenkasse*, the municipal fund that was maintained to redeem prisoners from the Ottomans and used the wooden figurines in the Hamburg churches of the time, already offered some certainty and a reason for hope for the sailors of the age that they were going to be ransomed after being taken hostage. In fact, the *Sklavenkasse* remained the institution responsible for the whole settlement process of the ransoming.[113] However, it was supplemented by the private insurers. Since the Sklavenkasse fund was usually and notoriously short of cash, it was often only sufficient for paying ransom money for higher-ranking crewmembers, namely the helmsmen and captains. Through the additional insurances, the merchants and shipowners were now able to issue concrete guarantees for each and every crewmember on their ships that they would be ransomed. The private insurances therefore constituted the crucial condition and lubricant that helped merchants to convince sailors to board a Hamburg ship bound for the Mediterranean Sea. Supportive in this regard was last but not least that this whole regulation and insurance process was in practice implemented in an uncomplicated but very effective way. With regard to the private insurances take out by the merchants, the sailors were provided with concrete material pieces of paper that promised them their safety.

5.4 Insurance Certificates

The practical functioning of private insurances for the crew was equally simple and just as remarkably practical as in the case of the *Turkish passports*. In fact, both processes in practice ultimately functioned in a rather similar way. The only differences that existed between the two processes were the institution which provided and was in charge of the implementation of the safety, namely private firms instead of the Admiralty, the respective parties involved, with the Ottoman Empire missing from the negotiation table, and the place and situation in which this safety promise would be required. The

Hamburg. Regarding risk-taking in mercantile enterprises in general, see also Mathias, "Risk, Credit and Kinship."

113 See Ressel, *Sklavenkassen*, 673.

general way of how the insurance functioned was, however, similar to the passport. Also with regard to private insurances, the people of the age entrusted their destiny, their health and life to the credibility and liability of a concrete piece of paper, in this case an *insurance certificate* that promised them hope to survive any encounter with the Ottomans unscathed. The actual procedure of how to get and implement a private "insurance against the Turkish Threat", as it was called in the legal jargon of the time, was as follows: Whereas in the case of the Turkish passports the governmental authorities made the safety promise and guaranteed the implementation of the promise by building upon the *peace treaties*, in the case of the private insurance only a single or merchant firm assumed and shouldered the entire responsibility for the safety promise by appointing an insurance company with the task of financially covering the cost of possible raids and hostage-takings.[114]

Whenever a merchant planned a voyage of a ship to the Mediterranean Sea, the first thing he did was to offer his ship's captain and this man's crew such a private insurance.[115] If the captain agreed to the proposal, the merchant approached an insurance company and procured the necessary insurance. At the same time, the ship's captain and his crew visited or rather were required to visit the local consulate or the local representative of the Hamburg nation at the respective port city where they lay at anchor, which might in some cases have simply been a merchant house. At the consulate or local representative, the ship's captain and his crew – the latter most often being represented by one or two spokesmen chosen by the crew – had to present the case to the local authorities, to the consul or his substitutes, who then put the promise into writing, issuing a notarial certificate of the existing agreement. As laid down in this notarial certificate, the merchant was then bound to assume responsibility for the insurance and procure the necessary money, that is, draw on the insurance company to procure the money for the ransoming of his crew if they were taken hostage by the Ottomans.[116] In the case of the *Turkish passport*, too, the issuing authorities had been the consulates or the home authorities. The English, Dutch, Danish, Swedish or French authorities would then send a signed copy of these passports to the Ottoman authorities, hand over a copy to the ship's captain, send a copy to the ship-owners and keep the original document in their own registry.

However, in the case of the notarial certificates of private insurance policies, the insurance companies held a copy, the ships' captains were delivered a signed copy, another copy was sent to the ship-owners and the original document was kept in the

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114 See "Hamburger Assekuranz- und Havarie-Ordnung von 1731." Part X. *Von Assekuranz für Türkengefahr und auf der Menschen Leben.*

115 This paragraph is primarily based on the findings from the Luetkens archive and the procedure of procuring insurances that Luetkens adhered to with regard to his ships. Apart from the letters analysed in the episode and as further proof for this procedure see inter alia also the letters by the ships' captains Tegeler (March 19, 1745), Nagell (May 19, 1745), Paatz (May 21, 1745), Giessel (October 13, 1744) or the letters from Luetkens to Cornelissen (June 28, 1744) in TNA, HCA 30/233.

116 See*Insurance Certificate and Report*, issued by "Jacob Roeks Vice Consul van de Hamborger Natio in deeze Stadt Lissabon", enclosed in a letter from Hertzer & von Bobartt to Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, October 12, 1744, TNA, PRO, HCA 30/234.

registry of the consulate.[117] Therefore, the Ottoman authorities were in these cases not approached but in fact omitted and did not receive a copy, which in the end points us to the most crucial difference between the two options of legal safeguarding with regard to the Mediterranean Sea. In the case of the private insurances, the Ottoman authorities were generally no integral part of the respective agreements. Therefore, they were also exempted from any liabilities regarding their capture actions and were also not entrusted with any legal obligations regarding the rightful fulfilment of the agreement, except of course of the fact that they still needed to agree to receiving ransom money for their captives and to generally agree to release them. In effect that meant that Hamburg ships were still captured by Ottoman privateers and Hamburg seaman were still taken hostage and made prisoners of war, and the only form of security that the insurances then offered was that the seaman could demand from their ship-owners to be ransomed in due time.

In practice therefore, all liabilities in connection with Hamburg shipping to the Mediterranean region and all responsibilities as regards the well-being of the sailors – that is, all responsibilities to make sure that the adopted measures met their objectives, namely to guarantee that the sailors would return home safely after the voyage or in the worst case after captivity – rested in the hands of the ship-owners and the insurance companies. The Ottomans were not involved in the process.

The situation and the risks to Hamburg shipping in the region were therefore still fundamentally different to the situation of the English, Dutch, Swedish or Danish ships. Because in contrast to the agreements that the Ottoman held with these powers, which limited the Ottomans' scope of action with regard to raiding these powers' ships, the solution that the Hamburg merchants found did not have any direct consequences for the Ottoman raids and did not lead to any restrictions for or reduction of their privateering activities. Rather, the Maghreb privateers simply continued to prey upon the Hamburg and other Hanseatic ships and even, in a way, benefitted from the insurance policies of the Hamburgers because this practice in certain ways actually ensured them a stable and reliable source of income. Having said that, this latter fact becomes unequivocally clear and is furthermore aptly illustrated when we take a look at the course of events that came into effect when a Hamburg ship actually fell into the hands of an Ottoman privateer.

In that case, the Ottoman authorities raised a claim with the Hamburg Admiralty, via local intermediaries, to demand ransom money for the crew of the ship. At the same time, the crew of the ship now made use of their insurance certificate, showing it either to the Ottomans authorities or rather to the middle men that would then forward the claim to Hamburg or by directly addressing their ship-owners and the Hamburg *Sklavenkasse* through letters asserting their claim and enforcing their given right to demand the payment of the ransom money. The Hamburg *Sklavenkasse*, as part of the Hamburg Admiralty, then, upon being presented with the notarial certificate of the private insurance, ransomed the ship's crew from Ottoman captivity, while at the same time requesting from the private insurers and merchants the reimbursement of the expenses. The insurance company then had two months to pay these costs, during which

117 See Ressel, *Sklavenkassen*, 254-256. See Gøbel, "Algerian sea passes," 170-176.

time the sailors had already begun their return journey or were taken to the nearest European port, for instance to Lisbon. In fact, the actual claim for reimbursement only became effective for the insurance company at the moment that the former captives actually arrived at a European port, or as the contemporaries called it, reached the safety of the "Christian shore" ["an Christen Seite"].[118] Until then, basically the European commission agents responsible for the redemption of the captives in the Maghreb ports were responsible and liable for the captives. The whole procedure as expressed in the contemporary wording of the law, in the end read as follows. An "insurance against the Turkish Threat" stipulated that

> "when the insured person was taken hostage by Turkish pirates, Moors, Barbaric or other unchristian corsairs and brought to their ports to become slaves, [...] [the insurers, or "assekuradeurs", as was their contemporary name, committed themselves] to pay the subscribed sum for their ransoming of these persons, after receiving the news of their capture, in the course of two months – without the usual deduction of 2%, however, under the condition, that this sum was only used for the ransoming including all incidental expenses occurring in the course of the ransoming process."[119]

In the case that the insurance company would or could hereafter not pay and compensate for the expenses, the merchant, who had procured the insurance, was personally liable and had to pay for the costs himself, while at the same time filing a protest against the insurance company. The latter case could arise for instance when the insurance company was convinced and claimed that the ship-owners had not done everything in their power to prevent a capture. This could for instance be if they had not equipped their ships with cannons for deterrence, which was another important reason why the ship-owners, as a precaution, put cannons on their ships. In the letter episode presented, it will therefore not surprise us to read of 10 cannons on board of the ship that went to the Mediterranean Sea. The risk that the individual merchant was exposed to through the capture of one his ships can be aptly illustrated on the basis of figures available to us from historical data compiled by Ernst Baasch already in 1897, with concrete ransom sums for different seamen.

Thus, in the mid-eighteenth century, the redemption sum for the ship itself amounted to approximately 9,000 Mark. The redemption sum for a helmsman was 5,400 Mark, and a simple sailor cost between 2,175 and 2,900 Mark.[120] Figures from

118 *Nachricht von der Sclaven oder Sclaven Bootsmanns Casse*. HStA, 111 - 1 Cl. VII Lit. Ca Nr. 2 Vol. 3 fasc.1, Dok. 23 & 24, reprint cited after Ressel, *Sklavenkassen*, 757-771. Translation by the author.

119 The insurance guaranteed the insured person's freedom whenever, in the German original, "dieselbe von Türkischen Seeräubern, Mohrischen, Barbarischen oder anderen unchristlichen See-Corsaren genommen, gefangen und in deren Hafen zur Sklaverei aufgebracht werden sollte [die Versicherer] die gezeichnete Summe zur Lösung und Ranzion, nach erhaltener Nachricht der Aufbringung, innerhalb zween Monaten – ohne Abzug der bei anderen Versicherungen gewöhlichen 2 %, jedoch mit der Bedingung zu zahlen hätten, daß diese Summe zu nichts anderem als zur gedachten Ranzionierung und zu dem, was von Erhaltung der Freiheit dependiret, angewandt werden solle." Quoted after Ebel, *Rechtsgeschichte*, 137. See also Ebel, Wilhelm "Über Sklavenversicherung und Sklavereiversicherung," 207-230. See also Ressel, *Sklavenkassen*, 673.

120 See Baasch, *Beziehungen zu Algier und Marokko*, 220.

later in the century, when the processing of ransoming Ottoman captives was further institutionalised through the founding of the *Assekuranz-Company* in Hamburg, although private insurances were also still used, allow us to gain an even more accurate impression of the immense expenses in relation to the ransoming process, now including the costs for the whole crew. Here we find that a skipper cost 8,000 Mark ransom money, a helmsman 4,000, a carpenter 3,000, a boatswain 2,400, a cook 2,400, a sailor 2,400, a cook's mate 1,600 and a boy 1,600 Mark.[121] This list of individuals on board a ship represented the typical manning of a small commercial vessel of the 18th century setting sail to the Mediterranean Sea.[122] The overall sum for ransoming an entire crew therefore easily amounted to approximately 23.000 Mark.[123]

Hence, it is easily understandable that the reimbursement of such costs would have brought a single merchant or merchant house close to bankruptcy if they were forced to pay it out of their own account. In most cases, however, the insurance companies did in fact settle the debts and shoulder the financial losses. Notwithstanding this, falling victim and losing a ship to an Ottoman raid nevertheless was always a losing deal for the merchants. Merchants most of the time lost their ship and goods, that is, they also lost the revenues from that ship and its goods. Although the insurers would compensate them for their loss, most of the time the amount of compensation did not come to the same value as the sales prize of the loaded goods. Furthermore, even when they had insured their crew against the *Turkish Threat* and the insurance company met the demands, most often additional costs were incurred, for instance when the demanded ransom money exceeded the insurance pay-out and the merchants had to pay the difference, or when the insurance companies demanded an insurance rate despite the statutory rules. In any case, the merchants had to expect an increase in the insurance rates and interest rates from the insurances companies for their further enterprises whenever a capture had taken place.[124]

But even if we put aside all these factors, or if we assume that the insurance company compensated for all losses and further costs, the main problem with regard to using private insurances as a solution strategy for the situation in the Mediterranean Sea still remains: the major deficiency and disadvantage of this solution strategy was that it did not eradicate the problem but only provided compensatory measures. The existence of insurances did not lead to Hamburg ships not being captured any more. Therefore, the source of the problem was not eliminated, but quite on the contrary the insurances even exacerbated the situation further by offering the Ottomans yet another incentive to capture Hamburg ships. This was ultimately the main reason why the endeavour of

121 "Bco. Mark 8000 auf einen Schiffer, Bco. Mark 4.000 auf einen Steuermann, Bco. Mark 3.000 auf einen Zimmermann, Bco. Mark 2.400 auf einen Bootsmann und Koch, Bco. Mark 2.400 auf einen Matrosen, Bco. Mark 1.600 auf einen Kochsmaat, Bco. Mark 1.600 auf einen Jungen". Baasch, *Hansestädte und die Barba-resken*, 233. See also Graßmann, "Nordafrikanische Piraten," 163.

122 See Rediker, *Devil and the Deep Blue Sea*, 83.

123 By way of illustration regarding the cost ratio of this sum, we can point to the fact that the regular annual salary of a sailor during that time was 100 Mark. See Rheinheimer,*Hark Olufs' Wiederkehr*, 29.

124 See Ebel, *Rechtsgeschichte*, 137-138.

sending ships to the Mediterranean Sea ultimately represented high-risk business that entailed the greatest conceivable risks for a merchant from Hamburg.

The fact that Luetkens and his trading partners still sent ships to the Mediterranean Sea and that the sailors agreed to that endeavour will never cease to amaze me. Despite all the obstacles put in their way, they decided to take their chances. How exactly the merchants proceeded in this matter, how they got the persuasion and implementation of the enterprise done in actual practice and how they were actually able to turn their undertakings into successes, will now be the subject of the next part of this chapter, in which I will finally present and analyse an exemplary letter episode encapsulating and providing us with an insight into all the presented conditions, details and subtleties regarding Hamburg shipping to the Mediterranean Sea outlined above. We are sufficiently equipped with all the relevant background information to understand the events occurring in the letter conversation. The crucial element, however, that will be added and will complete the existing picture is that we will also learn from the episode about the one crucial practice and the communication tool that was fundamentally responsible for the functioning of the trade with the Mediterranean Sea and in particular for finding a practical solution for the described scenario in this area. This practice was once more letter practice. Therefore, as if under a magnifying glass, all the previously explained historical conditions will now reverberate and slot together in the analysis, showing at the same time that all the conditions were primarily shaped and fostered – in fact they were in many ways borne – by the historical practice of writing and exchanging letters.

Without the powers of persuasion offered by letter writing, without the material opportunities it provided, and without the functionality of letter practice to regulate things, none of the above-mentioned solutions would have been possible at all. Without them, hardly anyone would presumably have agreed to take the trip to the Mediterranean Sea.

In the following explanations I will once more investigate all crucial factors and elements of letter practice and business practice shaping the trade with the Mediterranean Sea. I will also present ship's captain letters as letter types and the language register of patronage that shaped this business field. On the basis of the analysis we will learn how Luetkens and his partners ran their enterprises in this business field of high-risk trade and thus took an active part in shaping the conditions and events in the Mediterranean region.

As regards the course of Nicolaus Gottlieb Luetkens' establishment phase, we will at the same time gain a unique insight into one of the several business ventures that the merchant undertook that once more actively paved the way into his establishment because this enterprise turned out to be successful in the end. In concrete terms, we will follow the planning phase as well the implementation phase of sending the ship *Commercium* to Venice, documented in letters between Luetkens, several of his trading partners, with the insurance company and merchant house of Cornelis de Meyere & Soonen in Amsterdam and last but not least with one of his most valuable employees: the ship's captain Claes Noordstern. These letters will tell us a story of stout-hearted men, the crew of this ship, of loyal and capable men, the ships' captain Noordstern, and of pragmatic men, the merchants.[125] It is a story about the subtleties of risk-taking in the Early Modern world and about the fact that a well-functioning patronage relationship could help a lot in dealing with these risks.[126]

Letters by ships' captains have unfortunately only rarely survived in today's archives because they were often either destroyed or wasted due to the original contexts in which they were once used or due to the fact that they were not regarded as memorable and therefore thrown away.[127] The big loss that this fact represents becomes apparent when we take a look at the many captains' letter that can be still found in the Luetkens archive today, and in fact, fortunately, in many other boxes of the Prize Papers Collection in the National Archives London.[128] These letters contain a wealth of information about seafaring and about the people working in this field of maritime trade and shipping. The letters provide us with insights into their lives, their knowledge and skills, their adventures and attitudes towards the world they were living in. In a nutshell, reading these letters always led me to one central insight: these kinds of letters are far from representing expendable historical sources, but quite the opposite. The letters ultimately represented nothing less than the major nerve centres and finetuning tools on which the whole shipping industry of the Early Modern Period rested. From the episode, we will learn how these letters were practically used as tools for placing orders as well as for implementing orders in the seafaring and shipping business. We will furthermore learn how letter writers, ship-owners and captains used concrete performative utterances, historical *speech acts*, as I will describe them, in their letters to perform, regulate and structure their activities, and how the language register of patronage governing the letters created a basis for trust and loyalty in the sea business.[129] With regard to the

125 Regarding sailors in general, see the edited volume Royen, Paul C. van, and Jaap R. Bruijn and Jan Lucassen, eds. *"Those Emblems of Hell"? European Sailors and The Maritime Labour Market, 1570-1870*. St. John's, Nfld.: International Maritime Economic History Association, 1997. See Fusaro, Maria, Richard Blakemore, Bernard Allaire, Tijl Vanneste, eds. *Law, Labour, and Empire. Comparative Perspectives on Seafarers, c. 1500-1800*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015.

126 Regarding Maritime Risk Management, see Hellwege, Phillip, and Guido Rossi, eds. *Maritime Risk Management Essays on the History of Marine Insurance, General Average and Sea Loan*. Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 2021. See in particular Hope, Mallory. "Commercial Networks, Maritime Law, and Translation in a Spanish Insurance Claim on Trial in France, 1783-1791:" In *Maritime Risk Management Essays on the History of Marine Insurance, General Average and Sea Loan*, edited by Phillip Hellwege and Guido Rossi, 210-247. Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 2021. See Ebert, *Brazilian Sugar*, 109-130.

127 See Rheinheimer, "Sklaven in den Barbareskenstaaten," 317-319. See also Watt, Helen, and Anne Hawkins, *Letters of Seamen in the Wars with France, 1793-1815*. Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2016, 1-29. See Haasis, Lucas. "The Writing Seamen: Learning to Write and Dictating Letters on Board the Bremen Ship "Concordia." In *The Sea: Maritime Worlds in the Early Modern Period*, edited by Peter Burschel and Sünne Juterczenka, 297-310. Cologne/Weimar/Vienna: Böhlau, 2021.

128 See Lamikiz, Xabier. "Basque Ship Captains as Mariners and Traders in the Eighteenth Century." *International Journal of Maritime History* 20, no. 2 (2008): 81-109.

129 Regarding the concept of *speech acts*, see Austin, John Langshaw. *How to Do Things with Words: The William James Lectures delivered at Harvard University in 1955*, edited by James Opie Urmson and Marina Sbisà. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1962. See Searle, John. *Speech Acts. An Essay in the Philosophy of Language.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969. See also Skinner, Quentin. "Interpretation and the Understanding of Speech Acts." In *Visions of Politics: Volume I: Regarding Method*, edited by

powers of persuasion in letters, we will learn last but not least how people in the past could be convinced to accept and to follow orders by help of the practical principle of making firm promises and providing material assurances.

In the presented episode, Luetkens was able to convince the crew of one of his ships to sail to the Mediterranean Sea on the basis of his written promise that he would free his men from captivity if they were taken hostage by an Ottoman privateer. This promise sent to his ship's captain in a letter was first read aloud to the crew by the captain and subsequently, after the crew had agreed to it, it was materialised in the form of a notarial insurance certificate in the Hamburg consulate in Lisbon. The legal means and measures Luetkens used to keep and substantiate his promise was that he procured a private insurance against the *Turkish Threat* for his ship's captain Noordstern and his crew in Amsterdam at the house of Cornelis de Meyere, which guaranteed that the seamen would be ransomed in the case of their falling victim to an Ottoman privateering raid. On the basis of these steps, which were all planned and executed on the basis and by means of letters, Luetkens was once more able to put a plan into practice that was important for his success during his establishment phase, which was to engage in the risk trade with the Mediterranean rich trades.

5.5 The Episode: A Material Promise to Noordstern

With the help of his old trading partner Lacoste and the financial support of his trading partners in Hamburg Hertzer & von Bobartt, Nicolas Gottlieb Luetkens bought his fifth ship in Bilbao in March 1744. The ship was a medium-sized vessel, in good shape, timbered in London, originally English but taken by the Spanish about three months earlier. Luetkens purchased it right after it was declared a lawful prize and put up for auction by the Spanish Admiralty. It was a good catch. Luetkens christened the ship *Commercium*. Nomen est omen, the ship was to bring him a good fortune.

The person who was to lead the ship to its fortune, set foot on board three weeks later. Luetkens first had to spend some time looking for a suitable match for his new ship, a man worthy of becoming the captain of one of his promising ships. His selection criteria for choosing captains, as we learn from his and Hertzer & von Bobartts' letters, were: "good courage" ["guthe Courage"], honesty and a reputation for being a "skilled navigator and not a drunkard" ["ein gutter Zeeman und kein Trinker"].[130] The easiest way of finding and appointing a captain would have been to promote one of his chartered helmsmen to ship's captain.[131] In fact, he would go on to take this very

Quentin Skinner, 103-127. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002. Skinner, Quentin. "Motives, Intentions, and the Interpretation of Text." In *Meaning and Context: Quentin Skinner and his Critics*, edited by James Tully, 68-78. Princeton / New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1988. See Skinner, Quentin. "Lectures. Part Two: Is it still possible to interpret texts?" *The International Journal of Psychoanalysis* 89, no. 3 (2008): 647-654.

130 Letter from Hertzer & von Bobartt to Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, June 8, 1744, TNA, PRO, HCA 30/234. Letter from Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb to Hertzer & von Bobartt, August 31, 1744, TNA, PRO, HCA 30/232, Letter Book I, no. 290.

131 See Witt, *Master next God*, 97. See also ibid., 243-246. See Davis, *English Shipping Industry*, 126.

common option for the manning of the next three ships he bought.[132] However, this time, he decided on an already experienced skipper. He appointed Claes Noordstern, an older skipper known to his partners Hertzer & von Bobartt for years and "with a future wife" in Hamburg.[133] Maybe Luetkens already planned major undertakings with this ship, meaning voyages that would need experience. We will never know. What we do know is that skipper Noordstern arrived in Bilbao with his crew on another ship in April and the first assignment he was given was the evaluation of another ship lying in the harbour of the Spanish town for sale. Next, Noordstern was handed his Hamburg passports. They were issued in Hamburg in German and Latin and sent by Hertzer & von Bobartt enclosed in one of their letters.[134] The Hamburg merchants also officially assumed the role of the ship-owners of this ship, which is why they signed the passports, as the partners arranged and finally confirmed in their letter from the 24th of April. Despite this, the ship was bought by and belonged to Luetkens, for reasons that I have outlined in the chapter on Luetkens' shipping industry, namely that Luetkens' residence in France at that time could have led to problems with regard to the neutrality of this ship in European waters.[135]

Nevertheless, Luetkens continued to be not only well informed about all the affairs regarding this ship, but in fact he actually also continued, in constant consultation with Hertzer & von Bobartt, to care for and settle all the businesses of this ship. Consequently, although all official correspondence and communication ran through the information channel of the Hamburg merchant house and they were also participating in the ship's business, Luetkens was the one in charge and his own letters set the course for all the actions taken with regard to this ship. Thus, it was Luetkens who had advised Hertzer & von Bobartt to procure the Hamburg passport because it was important for his further planning that the ship was declared neutral in European waters. As a Spanish prize ship bought by a resident of France, however, this condition for neutrality was not met, so he needed the help, assistance and the passports from his Hamburg partners, who were notarially certified "burghers and citizens of Hamburg".[136] With this Hamburg passport, the ship *Commercium* lying in the harbour of Bilbao was then free to go on its first trip.

The first voyage of the *Commercium* was to Nantes, as the partners had arranged in consultation with Lacoste, who had procured the loading of the ship. Noordstern reported the departure of the ship on the 20th of May. He wrote, originally in Dutch and using typical letter phrases for ship's captain letters that "this letter serves to inform

132 See for instance the case of Carsten Giessel, who was the helmsman of skipper Nagell before being appointed ship's captain by Hertzer & van Bobartt in July 1744: "der Steurrman von Nagell genandt Carsten Giessel so wir zum Schiffer für unsere Fleute gemacht, ist heuthe Bürger geworden." Letter from Hertzer & von Bobartt to Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, July 20, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/234.

133 Letter from Hertzer & von Bobartt to Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, July 31, 1744, TNA, PRO, HCA 30/234.

134 Letter from Hertzer & von Bobartt to Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, April 24, 1744, TNA, PRO, HCA 30/234.

135 Ibid.

136 Letter from Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb to Von Bobartt, Elart, June 5, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/232, Letter Book I, no. 174.

["dient om bekend te maken"] E.E. that the departure of my ship has taken place [...] at 11 o'clock". He further reported that Lacoste had "equipped the ship with 4 more on pounders [cannons], adding to the 6 six that I had already on board".[137] The ship was perfectly equipped against any hostile encounters that might await it on its journey, making a deterrent and stately impression. Better to be safe than sorry, Luetkens had advised his trading partner Lacoste regarding the armament of his ship, which the Bilbao merchant conscientiously took care of. Despite having all confidence in the powers of neutrality, Luetkens nevertheless still played safe. Or again, maybe he already had other plans for this ship. On the first of June, Noordstern arrived in Nantes. He stayed there for over a month, causing Luetkens, in turn, to address a slight complaint to him emphasizing that he had not expected his stay to last that long.[138] During the voyage the merchant had already arranged the next journey for Noordstern in consultation with Hertzer & von Bobartt and the Nantes merchant house of Luttman & von Bobartt. The *Commercium* was to move on to Lisbon. Thus, he wrote simultaneously to all three of his correspondents to reaffirm the plans. The letter to Noordstern was inserted into the letter to Luttman & von Bobartt in Nantes, which was a common material letter practice and typical procedure in the sea business because it ensured that the ships' captains would receive the owners' letters, and therefore also their orders safe and sound and personally, that is, directly from the merchant houses in the respective cities that their ship-owners had chosen beforehand as the ships' captains first port of call. Consequently, as soon as a ship's captain arrived at a port, he approached and visited a specific merchant or merchant house in the city that was in contact with the ship-owners and who handed the captain his letters. As a positive side effect of this arrangement, the captain got in contact with the respective merchant house and, from the perspective of the ship-owners, the latter could rest assured that their orders and instructions were transmitted with the necessary emphasis. The practice therefore served as a security mechanism.[139] For his other letter to Hamburg, to Hertzer & von Bobartt, he used another typical material letter practice, which was to add copies of the two other letters to the actual letter, which was how Luetkens ensured and performed a very dense information policy.[140]

The material arrangement of the first letter to Luttman & von Bobartt, who were furthermore allowed to read the letter to Noordstern ["nach Überlesung"], must have given the addressees a certain broad hint.[141] They allow us to draw the conclusion that the complaint regarding the delay was not solely addressed to Noordstern but also to the Nantes merchant house, which was apparently too slow with the acquisition and the

137 Letter from Noordstern, Claes to Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, May 20, 1744, TNA, PRO, HCA 30/233.

138 "Ik hoope hie naest Goed eyndelyk soll gespeedert sein ik haed nogt gedackt hett soo lange à costy soude gesukelt hebben." Letter from Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb to Noordstern, Claes, July 10, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/232, Letter Book I, no. 213.

139 See also the chapter on shipping business for a detailed analysis of this practice of inserting letters into letters.

140 See the chapters on the merchant house and marriage for detailed analyses of this practice.

141 "Einliegend ein Brief an S. Noordstern welchen ihm nach Überlesung gelieben einzuhendigen." Letter from Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb to Luttman & von Bobartt, June 10, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/232, Letter Book I, no. 214.

loading of goods for Lisbon. However, more important than the complaint in the letter, which had already been taken care of by the Nantes merchants at that time, who had already found a cargo of grain for Lisbon, is the presented idea regarding the further course and plans for the *Commercium* that stood at centre of all three letters. As we can find in almost the same wording also in the letters to the Nantes merchants and the Hamburg merchants, Luetkens wrote to his captain Noordstern: If he, the skipper, should not find a return cargo in Lisbon for Hamburg, but instead "if he can find cargo for the Mediterranean ["midlansche Zee"], that is, for Marseille, Livorno, Genoa or other places there, which I do not doubt, you can accept it. [...] If this [...] works out ["gluken"], your ship-owners will procure the insurance ["verseekering"] for you as the captain and for your crew ["Volck"] against the Turkish Threat, on which you can count ["hie stadt kann maken"] and you can give the crew the assurance that the ship-owners will keep their word" ["woord ock content sein"].[142] In the letter to his trading partners in Nantes, furthermore, he asked them "to be so kind" ["die Güttigkeit wollen haben"] to contact for this purpose the partners in Lisbon, the merchant house Voight, Walther & Sieveking, to ask them for their assistance.[143]

Noordstern, obliged to send a report to his ship-owners at every occasion necessary, mostly when he reached a new port, as was a common rule in sea business, answered the letter from Luetkens by sending his apologies regarding the delay. He justified it with bad weather conditions. He also reported a worm infestation of the ship. Again, more important, however, is his reply regarding the plans to sail to the Mediterranean Sea. He reported that he had already had "a dispute with my crew" in Nantes who complained about the planned extension of their chartering, which would mean that they would be on sea for "longer than 14 days", exceeding their hiring period.[144] Written between the lines was that Noordstern had so far not even told them anything about the proposition and plan of Luetkens to possibly send the ship to the Mediterranean Sea after its voyage to Lisbon because the latter most probably would have caused even bigger disputes on the part of the crew. Such a strategy of maintaining silence about the further course a voyage was not uncommon. Actually, as it appears, it was a rather customary strategy pursued by captains to prevent unnecessary tensions between them and their crew. In a great number of cases in the Luetkens archive, in fact, this strategy was even given out as specific instructions by the ship-owners to their captains before their travels or the captains received letters with respective orders during their travels referring to the purpose of this strategy not to scare off the crew. Exemplary and revealing in this regard are letters that we can find in the Luetkens archive from during that time, sent by Luetkens to several of his other captains. In these letters he included the explicit request or hint that it is rather "unnecessary that the crew knows where they were bound to next" or, in a rather similar wording, that it was "unnecessary to reveal to them your next destination, but you can only tell them that you are going to Lisbon". The fact that

142 Letter from Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb to Noordstern, Claes, July 10, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/232, Letter Book I, no. 213.

143 Letter from Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb to Luttman & von Bobartt, July 10, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/232, Letter Book I, no. 214.

144 Letter from Noordstern, Claes to Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, July 16, 1744, TNA, PRO, HCA 30/233.

this information and request was, however, considered by Luetkens as a rather self-evident fact and that it therefore represented a kind of unwritten law becomes obvious when we take a look at the half sentence that Luetkens added to the latter request, which was that he hoped that this "precaution is unnecessary".[145]

As regards Noordsterns' actions in the case of the ship *Commercium*, the fulfilment of this provision becomes rather obvious, too. As we learn from his next letter, as a matter of fact, he only informed the crew about their employer's plans after they had already arrived in Lisbon. However, even regardless of this fact, Noordstern was nevertheless still not spared a dispute with his crew when he was still in Nantes. For the crew of the ship, just the prospect of going to Lisbon was reason enough to raise objections because it exceeded their agreed hire period. Such protests by the crew were not uncommon during that time. In fact, as we have learned, it was a very common form of protest, often particularly relating to the payment of wages, which, however, would not necessarily lead to or was regarded as mutiny. Rather, it was considered a form of soft mutiny through fraternisation, which was used by the crew to make complaints and improve their situation instead of aiming at irregularly leaving the ship.[146] The latter would have been mutiny. For this purpose, the crew most often even appointed a spokesperson amongst them who led the dispute and who took care that everything took place in an orderly manner.[147]

As an overall result, consequently, the actual word and the phenomenon of *disputes* ["despuet" in the Dutch letters] between ships' captains and their crews can be found frequently in captains' letters. For the ship-owners, in turn, the reports about disputes in the captains' letters meant one thing above all, which was that they had to take further actions with regard to ensuring the continuance of the journey of the ship or else they would be forced to abandon their plans. Both kinds of information, the captains' concerns and the necessity for further action on the part of the ship-owners, also featured in Luetkens' correspondence with his captain Noordstern. The letter quoted above indicated that the captain was forced to take further steps to convince the crew even just to agree to sail to Lisbon. From a later letter of his, we learn that in Nantes they were persuaded by providing them with a double wage.[148] Yet furthermore, with this letter the captain also already indicated that the prospects of convincing his crew to sail with him to the Mediterranean Sea were rather poor or even bleak. The fact that this was indeed the general message transmitted via this letter, which eventually did not fail to have the intended effect, becomes clearly obvious from Luetkens' response letter

145 "en onnodig syn volck hett wett waer naer toe moet." Letter from Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb to Tegeler, Johann, October 5, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/232, Letter Book I, no. 342. "is onnodig to hunnen te seegen waer op hie gedestineerd kan maer seegen op Lissabon, maer ik hoope deese prequantie unnodig." Letter from Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb to Cornelissen, Andreas, July 23, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/232, Letter Book I, no. 217.

146 See Rediker, *Devil and the Deep Blue Sea*, who points out that the "most effective work stoppages were collective" (98) and that crews often refused "'all as one' [...] to go any further once their captain had changed the destination stipulated in their original agreement" (109). See Witt, *Master next God*, 158.

147 See Witt, *Master next God*, 153. See also Earle, *Sailors*, 177–178.

148 Letter from Noordstern, Claes to Luttman & von Bobartt, July 21, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/233.

because the merchant was apparently able to take this hint. In Luetkens' next letter he backed down a bit and indicated to Noordstern instead, in an almost paternal voice, that since the skipper had "already had so much dispute with the crew in Nantes, it will most likely not go any better in Lisbon".[149] He offered him the option to only take ballast in Lisbon and return to Hamburg. Noordstern would get the chance to prove himself worthy later. As chance would have it, or rather as made possible by Noordstern's courage and determined commitment, however, matters should take a different turn.

After having arrived in Lisbon, Noordstern himself wrote a letter to Luetkens, announcing good news. In an almost cheerful, triumphant tone, he reported to Luetkens and his ship-owners Hertzer & von Bobartt in another letter to Hamburg that in Lisbon the merchant "Voogt and the receiver of my cargo have offered me a cargo to Venice, wherefore I have done my best to convince my crew to sail with me, in which I succeeded except for two or three mariners who have left the ship, but this should not break the game ["Spel niet sal breeken"]. I have read out aloud to them ["hebe voor geleesen"] the conditions that E.E. had sent me regarding the insurance on our lives against the Turkish threat ["Versekering voor Turkengevaar"] and I do not doubt that it is safe enough ["ciküer genoeg"] on which the Almighty God should give us his favour."[150] Inserted into this letter that later reached Luetkens is a letter by the said merchants Voight & Walther who congratulated him on his intuition. The procurement therefore had worked out perfectly. The Lisbon merchant house Voight, Walther & Sieveking, again with Hamburg roots, praised the sugar as "extra nice cargo" ["eene extra schoone Vraght"], with which the ship-owners would make a good fortune.[151] Luetkens himself also knew very well and later wrote to Hertzer & von Bobartt that also the "return cargo will in all probability be considerable" ["alle Aparentie considerabbel"].[152] Several weeks later, when Noordstern had already arrived at his planned destination, Luetkens also received a copy of a letter by Noordstern, which was inserted in a letter to him from the ship-owners Hertzer & von Bobartt, as we can see from the folding technique of the letter, an *Accordion Fold*. In this copied letter he found that it was not only the words and the promise of insurance that convinced Noordstern's sailors to sail with him. He had also promised them double their normal monthly wage for 70 days, "Maandgeld voor

149 Letter from Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb to Noordstern, Claes, August 3, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/232, Letter Book I, no. 241.

150 Letter from Noordstern, Claes to Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, August 3, 1744, TNA, PRO, HCA 30/233.

151 "Copia van een brief van d. Heeren Voight Walther uyt Lissabon in dato 4 Aug. 1744." Copia enclosed in letter from Hertzer & von Bobartt to Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, 14th of September 1744, TNA, HCA 30/234.

152 Letter from Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb to Luttman & von Bobartt, 27th of July 1744, TNA, PRO, HCA 30/232, Letter Book I, no. 237.

70 Daegen", which was a measure that he as a captain was in fact entitled to take.[153] As Ralph Davis has pointed out, crews "could usually be persuaded to accept this extension of the voyage by a payment of wages on account."[154]

In the letter from Noordstern, quoted above, from the time when he was in Lisbon, however, Luetkens was only informed about the persuasiveness and helpfulness of his promise to insure the crew against the *Turkish Threat* in order to convince the crew to accompany Noordstern on his trip to the Mediterranean Sea. As the direct consequence of this, representing at the same time the main message that Noordstern wanted to convey to his patron with his letter, the merchant was now bound to suit his action to the word, keep his promise and procure the insurance. Luetkens subsequently kept his promise, or rather it must be said he once again pulled the necessary strings to ensure his promise was taken care of by others. Since Hertzer & von Bobartt were the official owners of the ship, they also had to procure the relevant insurance. Having received the good news from Noordstern, Luetkens therefore wrote a letter to the Hamburg merchant house in order to "ask E.E. to procure the necessary insurance for Noordstern and his crew against the Turkish Threat for the outward and return journey because I have promised it to him."[155] In this letter he also repeated and highlighted the assessment of Voight, Walter & Sieveking regarding the *nice cargo* and furthermore offered to assign the Hamburgers a one half share in the cargo. Hertzer & von Bobartt subsequently gladly accepted the offer and fulfilled the request to procure the insurance. On the 11th of September, they reported to Luetkens that they had authorised and "ordered" ["ordoniren"] the Amsterdam firm of "De Meyere to insure Noordstern for 4/m F[lorin] and his equipage for 6/m Fl. Against the Turkish Threat".[156] At that time, however, the *Commercium* and her captain and crew had in fact already set sail to the Mediterranean Sea and had been heading towards Venice for 10 days with "groot hondert kisten Suyker voor Venecien".[157] The confirmation that Luetkens and Hertzer & von Bobartt would take care of the insurance, which Luetkens had given Noordstern in the quoted response letter, had obviously been sufficient for Noordstern to pay a visit to the Hamburg consulate in Lisbon in order to request the issuing of an notarial certificate setting out in writing the arranged agreement between the ship-owners and the crew of the ship *Commercium*.

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153 "Copia van een Brief van Cap. Claes Noordstern uyt Mallamocka [Mallamocco, Venedig] d. 13 Jan. 1745". Copia formerly enclosed in a letter from Hertzer & von Bobartt to Luetkens (folded in an Accordion Fold), but having been removed by Luetkens and filed together with a copy of the response letter to Herter & von Bobartt from September 20, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/234. Regarding the payment of further wages, see Witt, *Master next God*, 45, 89.

154 Davis, *English Shipping Industry*, 140.

155 "auf Schiff und Volcks Brieff vor Turkengefahr aus und zu Haus die nöttige Assurantie laßen besorgen den es ihm versprochen." Letter from Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb to Hertzer & von Bobartt, August 31, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/232, Letter Book I, no. 290. See also letters from Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb to Cornelis de Meyere & Soonen, August 31, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/232, Letter Book I, no. 293, with a confirmation.

156 "Wir ordoniren heute an H. de Meyere F 4/m auf Sr. Noordstern & F 6/m auf seine Equipage für Türkengefahr versichern zu laßen." Letter from Hertzer & von Bobartt to Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, September 11, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/234.

157 Letter from Noordstern, Claes to Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, August 18, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/233.

The sailor Albert Rohde, who was the spokesman appointed by the crew, accompanied Noordstern during this visit. A copy of this official certificate, which was issued by the vice-consul of Hamburg in Lisbon, Jacob Roeks, was first sent to Hertzer & von Bobartt but finally also reached Luetkens inserted in a letter by the Hamburg merchants on the 12th of October. From this copy we learn that this visit to the consulate had actually already taken place the 30th of August.[158] Only one day later, on the 1st of September 1744 Noordstern had set sail for the Mediterranean Sea. The original wording of this report and certificate went as follows, summing up once more the entire enterprise and the arrangements that had been made in order to put it in practice, all phrased in the typical officialese of the time. In this certificate, the Hamburg vice consul in Lisbon Jacob Roeks attested and stated for the record that

> "on request of Cap. Claes Noordstern I have gone aboard his ship called *Commercium* lying at anchor in our estuary, which arrived from Nantes with a cargo of grain, whereas this skipper has declared to me that he was offered a cargo to Venice, which he could, however, not accept because of the fact that the ship's crew did not agree to voluntarily accompany him during this voyage because according to their hiring contract which was set out in France they were not obliged to sail any further than here or farther north. Hereupon, the captain has declared that he had orders from his ship-owners that in case a good cargo would present itself, his officers and sailors should get insured [by the ship-owners] against the risk of the Turkish Threat. [...] From this it follows that I [Roeks] have presented the same insurance in his presence to the following persons helmsman Jannssen, boatswain Slaterman, cook Doornboom, and the sailors Rhode, Becker, Matheisen and Jürgen as well as the boy of the ship, who then have resolved agreed to go on the journey with the said captain under the condition that should the disaster occur / what the Almighty God should prevent / that one or the other of these persons will be caught by the Turks during the outward or home journey, then the ship-owners commit themselves at their own expense to ransom them from slavery [captivity] [....] signed the 30th of August 1744, Louis Lambert [notary public] Rhode Matroos, Claes Noordstern, Jacob Roeks."[159]

The next day, Noordstern and his crew on the ship *Commercium* left the port of Lisbon for Venice. They were to survive the voyage unscathed. In January 1745, Noordstern reported the safe arrival of the ship in *Mallamocco*, Venice, where he quickly found a promising return cargo of rich trade to Hamburg, provided by one of the most renowned Venetian merchants, Algarotti.[160]

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158 On the Hamburg consulate in Lisbon see Poettering, *Handel, Nation und Religion*, 99-100.

159 *Insurance Certificate and Report*, issued by "Jacob Roeks Vice Consul van de Hamborger Natio in deeze Stadt Lissabon", enclosed in a letter from Hertzer & von Bobartt to Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, October 12, 1744, TNA, PRO, HCA 30/234.

160 "Copia van een Brief van Cap. Claes Noordstern uyt Mallamocka [Mallamocco, Venedig] d. 13 Jan. 1745". Copia formerly enclosed in a letter from Hertzer & von Bobartt to Luetkens, but having been removed by Luetkens and filed together with a copy of the response letter to Herter & von Bobartt from September 20, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/234. On his return journey Noordstern also stopped in Napels. "Copia van Schipp. Claes Nordstern syn Brieff geschreven Napels d. 4 May 1745". Copia enclosed in a letter from the ships' captain Takes, Taake to Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, June

5.6 Ships' Captains Letters

In total, the Luetkens archive holds 68 letters written by eleven different captains, of whom nine were in the service of Nicolaus Gottlieb Luetkens during the years 1744-1745. In 1744, Luetkens started with four captains in his service, but by the end of 1745 he already owned nine ships, which required him to increase his workforce, by promoting helmsmen to the rank of captain or by hiring new captains recommended to him. The remarkable thing about all these letters is that they look rather similar and closely resemble each other in form and style.[161] With a little practice, it is thus possible to identify these kinds of letters, this particular letter type of the ship's captain's letter, quickly from the hundreds of letters and among the various letter bundles and piles of letters of the Luetkens archive. One only has to look out for the strikingly similar features of these letters. The well-trained eye is then even able to apply this expertise and skill to other boxes and sources of the Prize Papers collection. These features that characterise and mark these kinds of letters as a specific and particular contemporary letter type relate to four aspects in general: the materiality of the letters, the language used, the typical content, and last but not least particularly the letter style and language register used, including the tone and prose of the letters.

Referring to the first feature, the materiality of these letters, the paper of ships' captains' letters is very often rougher and thicker compared to other letter types. One can therefore sometimes feel solely from the material and surface of a letter that one holds in one's hand, that it must be a captain's letter. The reason for this is mainly twofold. First, this kind of paper was cheaper and therefore more affordable for captains.[162] Secondly, such paper was also more robust and therefore more suitable for using it and transporting it on board ships travelling the Early Modern Seas.[163] Therefore, in order to explain the choice of paper, I prefer and would give more emphasis to the second reason because it takes into account the captain's knowledge of his circumstances and his competence in dealing with it rather than merely explaining this letter practice based on a perspective that takes as its starting point a captain's limited opportunities – although it is, of course, safe to assume that a captain would always have an interest in saving money. Sometimes, a captain's choice of paper was surely also simply an act of necessity. If no adequate letter paper was available, for instance, he simply took whatever paper he could find on the ship to send his messages to the ship-owners.

This practice can be evidenced by several ships' captains' letters showing cracks, torn-off edges, or letters written on wastepaper or even paper shavings. The most common folding techniques of the ships' captains' letters in the Luetkens archive is once

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17, 1745, TNA, HCA 30/233. Regarding *Bonhomme Algarotti* see "Algarotti, die Grafen von." In *Neues preußisches Adelslexicon*, edited by Leopold von Zedlitz-Neukirch, 96. Leipzig: Reichenbach, 1836.

161 All ships' captains' letters are today stored in TNA, HCA 30/233, Bundle 18. *Letters from Luetkens' captains*. See our detailed catalogue entry in Discovery: https://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/browse/r/h/C4249189.

162 High-quality paper was seldomly needed and expensive, most decisive was the paper's robustness. See Daybell, *The Material Letter*, 97-101. See also Daybell, "Material Meanings," 658.

163 See Hunter, Dard. *Papermaking: The History and Technique of an Ancient Craft*. New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 1947, 229.

more the tuck-and-seal method. For letter inlays they sometimes used the *accordion fold*, allowing the captains to insert further documents or material into the letters.[164] After these most basic material features, the next feature that immediately strikes the eye when finding and reading ships' captains' letters regards the language in which the letters were written, referring not yet to the style in general, the tone or prose of the letters but for the time being only to the national language chosen to write the letters.

The choice of language can essentially be seen as a material feature of these letters as well because the language becomes apparent and recognisable even without reading the letters in detail but just from a cursory glance. The language in which most of the letters of ships' captains in the Luetkens archive were written was rather Dutch or Low German or a hybrid form of Dutch and Low German. The Dutch language in the letters seldom took the form of the contemporary native Dutch unless the captains were of Dutch origin. Instead, the language in the letters appears as a hybrid form, in which the individual captain's mother tongue was moulded into a Dutch version. So, for instance, the captains used Dutch words but German syntax and grammar for their letters. Or it could even mean that they used German words in a Dutch or Low German version, such as for instance "verblyve" [verbleibe], "offarreert" [offeriert], "siek weegern" [sich weigern], "atmaraaltet" [Admiralität]. Often, the captains also used phonetic language, which shows in these cases that they must have used or were familiar with these words in their spoken form but were not always sure how to spell them.[165] A prime example of this is Noordstern's spelling of the word "cikuer" in the episode, which derives from the English word secure, but represented a phonetic spelling of it. The latter also shows that this mingling of languages also involved other languages apart from Dutch, High German and Low German. Rather, the ships' captains, depending on their experience and their educational background, were often familiar with or even spoke several other languages such as English, French or Spanish. Ship's captains were in essence on a basic level multi-linguists depending on and relating to the specific language use and the necessary language skills required in their field of activity, the sea business, which is once again a better evaluation of the findings in the letters than only seeing limited writing capabilities behind it.[166] The reason for the fact that Low German and hybrid Dutch nonetheless dominated in the Luetkens letters is again twofold.

First, since most of Luetkens' ships were insured by Dutch firms, or to be more precise, most of Luetkens' businesses were insured by one Dutch firm, Cornelis de Meyere & Soonen in Amsterdam, it was advisable to choose the Dutch language. Using Dutch first choice because it meant, for example regarding the procurement of the insurance, that all business operations could be followed easily and if necessary be quickly reproduced.

164 For a detailed description of the tuck-and-seal method see Daybell, "Material Meanings", 659. For further information see Dambrogio, Jana, Daniel Starza Smith, et al. *Dictionary of Letterlocking* (DoLL), "Tuck-and-Seal Method", "Accordion Fold", last updated: 30 December 2017, accessed June 7, 2019.

165 See also Witt, *Master next God*, 219.

166 See also Lamikiz, *Trade and Trust*, 51-70. See Lamikiz, "Basque Ship Captains." See Witt, *Master next God*, 219. See regarding multilingualism during the Early Modern Period in general Burke, Peter. *Languages and Communities in Early Modern Europe*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004.

Secondly, more importantly and surely the main reason for this practice was that the Dutch language was still a kind of a *lingua franca* of seafaring, especially in the North Western part of Europe but also beyond that, with the exception of the English territories.[167] On board the ships, in the ports, but also in educational literature on seafaring or navigation, or in the first nautical schools of the time, Dutch was the predominant language, also creating and shaping many technical terms widely used in European seafaring during that time.[168] So, even though most of Luetkens' captains were of German and particularly of Hanseatic origin, they nevertheless mostly wrote in Dutch or in Low German, and Luetkens responded to them in Dutch or Low German because this was common practice during that time.

The level of proficiency in writing in a foreign language varied significantly between Luetkens' captains: some were already very skilled in writing in Dutch, while others limited their translation work or writing to the necessary minimum. The level of language proficiency in certain cases also corresponded to the level of writing skills in general that the ship's captain possessed. Amongst the nine ships' captains, there were at least three captains with rather unskilled handwriting skills. Deducing or attempting to derive from this finding that ships' captains in general possessed rather limited writing abilities, as it is sometimes argued in research today, for instance by Jann Markus Witt, clearly misses the mark.[169] Rather, handwriting had always been and will always be a very individual personal ability. Secondly, more importantly, the examples in the Luetkens archive indicate that the different writing abilities in fact rather correlated with the duration that the captain had already been in the position of ship's captain and therefore in the highest rank in sea business, where he was required to writing letters regularly. Thus, the captains with the poorest handwriting in the Luetkens archive were also, unsurprisingly, those who had just recently been appointed ships' captains by Luetkens and so still had to become used to writing more regularly, although it is known that also the helmsmen and even lower ranks on the ship were already trained in writing to some extent. So, as it was customary in many areas in the sea business, writing was a skill that was learned more through a learning-by-doing approach and over time than a skill the seamen simply already possessed.[170] Poor handwriting therefore

167 See Poettering, *Handel, Nation und Religion*, 168. See Mitzka, Walther. "Das Niederländische in Deutschland." In *Niederdeutsche Studien. Festschrift für Conrad Borchling*, 207-228. Neumünster: Wachholtz, 1932. See Van der Wal, Marijke. "Early Modern Migrants," here 261-263. For the English context, see Joby, Christopher. *The Dutch Language in Britain (1550–1702): A social history of the use of Dutch in Early Modern Britain*. Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2015.

168 See Schotte, Margaret. *Sailing School: Navigating Science and Skill, 1550-1800*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2019, 115-148. The language of instruction in nautical as well as navigational textbooks and the most spoken language in contemporary German schools for helmsmen and on board German ships was either Dutch or Low Dutch. See Mitzka, "Niederländische in Deutschland," 212.

169 See Witt, *Master next God*, 219.

170 See Watt, Helen, and Anne Hawkins. "Introduction." In *Letters of Seamen in the Wars with France, 1793-1815*, edited by Helen Watt and Anne Hawkins, 1-28. Woodbridge: Boydell, 2016, here 26-28. See Haasis, "The Writing Seamen."

does not necessarily represent a general, distinctive feature or attribute of ships' captains' letters. The distinctive Dutch hybrid language most of the Luetkens letters show, however, surely was. Notwithstanding this, there were of course also exceptions from the rule. Some captains also wrote some of their letters to Luetkens in German.[171] These letters, however, still shared the third distinctive feature with the other letters, which was that they all showed similar contents.

Typical contents of the ships' captains' letters were the weather and particularly the wind conditions because wind directions and wind forces had a direct influence on the route and mobility of the ships. Finding any wind direction in a letter is therefore often a good indication that the letter was written by a ship's captain or helmsman. Furthermore, captains reported on the recruitment, the costs, the general behaviour and all incidents happening with regard to his crew, for which he was responsible.[172] Moreover, the condition of the ship and especially necessary repairs and general costs of the voyages were reported. Another point of their reports relates to detailed accounts of respective voyages and of special occurrences that had happened during the voyage, changes to the route due to special occurrences, and suggested, alternative or planned further destinations of the ships. Last but not least, the captains gave accounts of all the trading activities and loading procedures with regard to the ship at the ports and asked for confirmation, or they reported for instance goods that were offered to them personally, which impelled them to ask for further specifications or recommendations for merchant houses that they should address themselves to at the ports. All these different subjects in the letters shaped and characterised every captain's letter in the Luetkens archive, in a more or less detailed manner, being meticulously reported to the addressees of the letters. The reason for that reporting practice becomes rather clear, too. All these subjects ultimately reflected the major tasks and responsibilities, the rights, obligations and duties of captains for which they were held responsible and had to give account to the ship-owners during that time.[173]

These obligations include as contemporary maritime laws and regulations such as for instance the *Hamburg maritime ordinances*, "Der Stadt Hamburg Schiff= und See=Recht" in 1740 stated choosing the crew as well as caring for them "like a good housefather" ["gutter Hauß=Vater"], and it also included catering for them, hiring them, being their legal representative, and paying their wages. Furthermore, the captain was held responsible for the proper maintenance of the ship and its equipment, at the merchant's expense, including the care for and maintenance of the ropes and cables. He was also responsible, as the contemporary maritime laws and rules furthermore stipulated, for the selection and the examination of the most profitable cargo in accordance with the ship-owners' wishes, had to monitor the loading of the vessel, and do everything in his power for the rapid clearance of the ship in accordance with

171 See for instance the German letters by the experienced captain Johann Nagell in TNA, HCA 30/233, bundle 18.

172 See Witt, *Master next God*, 44-48.

173 See ibid., 38-48.

the wind conditions.[174] Put in a nutshell, the profession of a ship's captain came with great responsibilities. At the same time, he was under enormous pressure because as the skipper ["Schiffer"], which was a common term used in the Luetkens letters, he was always "obliged to act to the best of his abilities for the good and the advantage of the ship-owners" as stated in another contemporary source, Johann Andreas Engelbrecht's 1792 handbook *The Well-versed Skipper* (Der wohl unterwiesene Schiffer).[175]

This pressure is subsequently also reflected in the letters that have survived in the Luetkens archive, in which the ships' captains strikingly meticulously, almost painstakingly, list every matter or incident relating to the ship, its crew, its goods, and its directions because they had to justify each of these matters to the ship-owners. All these topics, information and fields of knowledge can be found in the captains' letters. The reason for the identical content of the letters therefore lay in the very nature of these letters and the purpose that they served. Ships' captains' letters in the end were *notification and report letters*, which were demanded and required from them by their employers, their superiors. It is therefore surely not surprising that we are today able to reconstruct and follow each step a ship's captain undertook with regard to his ship on the basis of these letters because this was precisely the intention underlying them, mirroring the interests that the ship-owners had in receiving these letters in the past. As stated for instance in Prussian maritime law in 1727, "A skipper is obliged to report to the ship-owners promptly and truly about all the important affairs regarding his voyage" and he was furthermore also obliged to explain and answer ["Rede und Antwort zu geben"] about any incident happening contrary to his orders or "to the detriment of his ship-owners", as the maritime law continued.[176] Therefore, in every harbour the ship's captain entered with his ship, a report was due: every new good loaded on the ship, every repair, every new rope bought for the ship, any complaints made by the crew, disputes, strikes or riots by the crew required a report to be sent, and the captain obliged. This is why we are today able to draw a worldwide temporal map on the basis of the letters, with comprehensive information about all the locations and the peculiarities of the shipping industry and trade happening along the way, which is just another indication and proof that ships' captains' letters are a very rich source for research.[177] Regarding the reliabil-

174 *Der Stadt Hamburg Schiff= und See=Recht.* Partis Secundae Statutorum. Tit. XIV Von Schiffern und Schiff-Volck, edited by Hermann Langenbeck in *Anmerckungen über das Hamburgische Schiff- und See-Recht*, 22-102. Hamburg: König, 1740, here *Ad Rubrum*, 23. See also "Schiffer, [...] Fr. Maître d'un Vaisseau; Holl. Schipper." *Oekonomische Encyklopädie*, edited by Johann Georg Krünitz. 242 volumes. Berlin, 1773-1858, vol. 143, 458-485. See Witt, *Master next God*, 37.

175 "Ein Schiffer ist schuldig seiner Rheder Bestes und Vortheil nach Vermögen zu befördern." Engelbrecht, Johann Andreas. *Der wohl unterwiesene Schiffer* [...]. Lübeck: Donatius, 1792, 5.

176 "Der Schiffer ist schuldig, auf der Reise von allen hauptsächlichen Vorfällen, so ihm in Ansehung des Schiffes begegnen [...] seinen Rhedern bey Zeiten behörige Nahricht zu ertheilen."*Königlich-Preußisches See-Recht (Prussian Maritime Law)*. Chapter IV, § 2 ("Vom Amt des Schiffers"), Königsberg: Hartung, 1727, edited by Reinhold Friderich von Sahme in *Einleitung zum See-Recht des Königreich Preußen, worinnen das Königliche Preußische See-Recht in einer richtigen Ordnung vorgestellet und erleutert wird*. Königsberg: Hartung, 1747, 14-15. See also "Schiffer." *Eroeffnete Akademie der Kaufleute*, edited by Carl Günther Ludovici, vol. 4, 1680-1702. Leipzig: Breitkopf, 1768.

177 Creating such a map using the project's metadata is one of goals of the Prize Papers Dataportal.

ity of the information given, the letters shared another remarkable feature. This feature was that the reports were in most cases double or even triple-checked.

First, the captains were bound to keep extensive logbooks and journals of their travels, which at the end of their travels or at the time that they arrived back at the home port of the ship-owners had to be presented to their employers, their patrons, as they were called by the contemporaries.[178] In the best-case scenario, the reports and statements in the letters corresponded with the information given in the logbooks and journals. Secondly, apart from the letters received and sent to their ship's captain, the merchants and ship-owners naturally also corresponded with the local merchants in the respective ports. From these they gathered further information about their ships, its goods, and last but not least of course also about the actions and the reliability of their captain and his word. The merchants established a very dense information and safety net around their enterprises and their employees, which, by implication, forced the captains to be precise in their reports, stick to the facts and speak the truth about their voyages. Extensive reports about stubborn worm infestations of the ship planks, about superb or bad qualities of ropes, reports about adventurous escapes from enemy attacks or reports about incidents actually had a very concrete and serious background. All these reports served the purpose of informing the ship-owners about the events surrounding the journeys of their ships, and justified delays or additional costs incurred for the ship. To give just one example of this, in summer 1745 an anchor fell on captain Johann Nagel's foot. The doctor's bill for the treatment of Nagel's foot reached the merchant Luetkens, who had to pay for it, in one of the captain's letters as an enclosed inlay, with comments about it in the letter.[179] Each and every piece of information in the letters therefore was important and not arbitrarily chosen. It was all very consciously selected and put on paper – and the same fact also applied to the ways and means that these items of information were transmitted to their addressees in particular ways. The letters were written in a particular style and tone, which also did not happen randomly. Again, the letter writers adhered to certain rules and patterns of procedure following a clear order and system with a clearly definable practical functionality, a concrete way of functioning of ship's captain's letters to their patrons.

For the purpose of clarity and conciseness, the ships' captains' letters as well as the response letters from the ship-owners are characterised by a unique language register mobilised during the letter exchanges. This contemporary language register turned these letters into very effective tools of agreement procedures, order processing and trade execution. By means of the letters' specific language, the letter became the key site of the practice of placing, receiving and implementing orders in the sea business. The register was characterised by very concrete and simple language and prose that in many cases furthermore drew on a clearly defined repertoire of phrases, terminologies

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178 "Derjenige, welchem ein Schiff eigenthümlich zugehört, oder welcher dasselbe auch nur gemiethet, und alle Einkünfte davon zu genießen hat, heißt der Herr oder Patron des Schiffes." "Kauffahrdey." *Oekonomische Encyklopädie*, edited by Johann Georg Krünitz. 242 volumes. Berlin, 1773-1858, vol. 36, 470-478. See chapter in shipping business.

179 Nagel's *doctor's bill* can be found still enclosed in his letter in TNA, HCA 30/233, bundle 18.

and modes of expression. We find specific letter formulae used to transmit the respective information.

In contrast to other letter types, these formulae, as becomes obvious in the letters, were not primarily determined by written rules but ultimately by well-practiced common rules of practice in sea business. That is, as regards many of the aforementioned topics of ships' captains' letters, the skipper always used the same or similar phrases, letter formulae, language and terminologies, and this happened to such a great and noticeable extent that we can surely derive from it another major identifying characteristic feature of ships' captains' letters during the 18th century. Thus, the fourth and last distinguishing feature of captains' letters was a strong similarity in terms of style, prose, expressions, terminologies and phrases, in short, in the letter formulae used.[180] These strong resemblances sometimes make reading these letters rather monotonous. However, the decisive fact in this regard is that it was precisely this consistent, uniform language style that made these letters effective. In fact, the monotony ultimately was a necessary, integral part of the letters and showed that everything was in order and going according to plan.

To a certain extent, the language style of captain's letters represented nothing less than an extension or a transmission of the typical language prevailing on board the ships of the era to the medium letter. This language was a "language of technical necessity, a language remarkable for its terseness and accuracy", as a contemporary observer noted, which served a very practical purpose.[181] As Marcus Rediker brilliantly put it, the benefit of the maritime language was its "lack of ambiguity. Each object and action had a word or phrase – short, clear, and unmistakable – to designate it."[182] Therefore, misunderstandings were prevented and the smooth running of the workflow and processes on board were best ensured. Exactly the same lack of ambiguity was subsequently also indispensable for the letters exchanged by the ship's captain with his ship-owners, which also had the aim to be as unambiguous and unequivocal as possible. The reason for the fourth distinctive feature of ships' captains' letters was therefore once again clear: The common usage of a similar style, prose and letter formulae for similar purposes, used and naturally mobilised by all persons involved and active in the field of the shipping industry, as part of a clearly defined and mutually intelligible language register, served the purpose of providing and ensuring unambiguous conditions and clarification in order to guarantee clear order implementation. It ensured that all parties involved understood correctly the meaning of the respective words and letter sentences. It ensured that all the orders, confirmations, questions, problems evolving, and solutions offered, were understood by all parties, and it enabled people to react appropriately and act accordingly. These sentences were widely known in the field of seafaring for representing

180 Regarding the usage of letter formulae in Early Modern letters in general, based on research on the Prize Papers, see the fascinating project represented in the book Van der Wal/Rutten. *Letters as Loot.* Regarding letter formulae in merchant letters and in parts also in ships' captains' letters, see Van der Wal. "Early Modern Migrants." See Lamikiz, "Basque Ship Captains." See Rediker, *Devil and the Deep Blue Sea*, 163-164.

181 Parry, John H. "Sailors' English." *The Cambridge Journal* 2 (1948/9): 660-70, here 662.

182 Rediker, *Devil and the Deep Blue Sea*, 163.

certain commitments, which people could rely on or refer to. Therefore, in a nutshell, the "the oft-lamented formulaic prose and repetitive content of [such] business letters account for their effectiveness", as Francesca Trivellato aptly described it, or as Rediker put it, this "efficiency of seafaring language" was crucial in the field of the sea business in which "maritime speech ordered social relations."[183]

This formality, at the same time, must not be mistaken for or confused with distance or a lack of personal closeness or appreciation in the relationship between the letter writers.[184] Quite on the contrary, the letters often show an immense degree of personal closeness, connection and trust between the ship's captain and the ship-owners, also mirrored in the tone and the form of addressing each other in the letters. Therefore, the "formularity is by no means an argument against the honesty and righteousness" of these letters and their words, as Heiko Droste noted for letters of diplomats, too.[185] On the contrary, the fact that people trusted in each other's words and formulae is proof of the sincerity of these letters. This fact becomes especially clear when we compare the ships' captains' letters, as *notification and report letters*, with similar kinds of letters examples in the contemporary letter-writing manuals. The prevailing logic and style of writing shown in these example letters, as for instance apparent in respective examples in the merchant letter manual *Der allzeitfertige Handels-Correspondent* by Paul Jakob Marperger, Hamburg 1717, or Jean Puget de la Serre's *Fatsoenlicke Zendbrief-Schrijver* ["Decent letter writer"], demonstrating appropriate ways of communication between superiors or patrons and their subordinates, was that the subordinates had to prove and demonstrate their humbleness, their subordination, submissiveness and loyalty to their superiors by using clearly defined letter-writing strategies, signs and methods underpinning their subordinate position. These include for instance the choice of good paper and well-placed blank spaces on the paper. The spacing mattered because in Early Modern letters the degree of subservience was expressed by means of blank spaces ranging from two-fingers up to two-hands wide left between the salutation and the text because "space denoted deference".[186]

The strategies also included the choice of an appropriate style of writing to showing their submissive and deferential attitude through expressions of humbleness and gratitude, which becomes most apparent in the appropriate choice of the salutation form and the valediction of a letter.[187] A typical example of such a salutation form was for

183 Trivellato, "Merchants' letters," 84. Rediker, *Devil and the Deep Blue Sea*, 164.

184 See also with a focus on comparable letters in a comparable field of activity, namely the field of diplomacy, Droste, Heiko. "Briefe als Medium symbolischer Kommunikation." In *Ordnung und Distinktion. Praktiken sozialer Repräsentation in der ständischen Gesellschaft*, edited by Marian Füssel und Thomas Weller, 239-256. Münster: Rhema, 2005, here 242. See also Droste, Heiko. *Im Dienst der Krone. Schwedische Diplomaten im 17. Jahrhundert*. Münster: LIT, 2006.

185 "Formelhaftigkeit [muss] kein Argument gegen deren Aufrichtigkeit sein, denn daß sie in topischen Ausdrücken geschrieben wurden, besagt ja nicht, dass sie individuell empfunden wurden." Droste, "Briefe als Medium," 242.

186 See Daybell, "Material Meanings", 655-659, quote 655

187 See also Daybell, "Material Meanings", 655-659, quote 655. See in general Daybell, *The Material Letter.* See Furger, *Briefsteller*, 101, 116.

instance “Honoured, well-decent, very highly regarded and very willing Patron, obediently owing you this letter I report […].”[188] Turning to the real ships’ captains’ letters in the Luetkens archive, however, the examples show that in day-to-day common practice the interaction and letter-writing practice largely omitted these regularities but rather adhered to its own rules of conduct. The paper chosen ultimately depended on the situation which a ship’s captain found himself in and the sources of supply he could use. The blank spaces as signs of respect were omitted completely; instead, the captains used every inch of space available on the paper to make their reports. The form of address ranges from “Myn heer”, which stands for “Sir”, to “Ehrsame Herr Priensepahl” or “Patron”, to “Geerde werte Patron: Salut” or “Myn hoog estimeerde heer”, which Noordstern used and which stood for “My esteemed Sir”.[189] The ending phrase is reduced to the bare essentials, a two or single-line declaration of deference. The remarkable thing is that, subsequently, in none of Luetkens’ responses are any complaints about the writing habits of his captains to be found. This is tantamount to an approval of this type of correspondence. Moreover, the merchant’s letters even resemble the ships’ captains’ letters in style. Luetkens himself chose, in his responses, the salutation form my “Esteemed Skipper” [“Ehrsame Schiper”].[190] He deliberately wrote in an egalitarian manner. His usage of ending phrases went even further in this manner, saying “with friendly salutations I remain your good friend” [“dat naer vryndelyke salutatie verblyffe zyn goede vryndt”] or “after wishing you good travels I remain” [“naer anwensching van een behouden Reyse soo verblyffe”].[191] Respecting the seamen’s language, he also responded in High Dutch or Low German. The tone in both the ships’ captains’ letters and Luetkens’ letters is furthermore often very complaisant, cooperative and respectful. The letters reflect a certain degree of familiarity between the correspondents. The writers knew each other well, they maintained regular contact with each other’s families, they worried about each other’s health, which was of course generally a very valuable asset and important to ships’ captains.

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188 “Edler, Wohl-Ehrenvester, insonders hochzuehrender Herr, und sehr geneigter Patron, demselben füge hiemiet gehorsamst zu wissen […].” Marperger, *Der allzeitfertige Handels-Correspondent*, 706. Similar letter formulae can be found in Dutch letter writing manuals such as Serre, Jean Puget de la. *Fatsoenlicke Zend-brief-Schrijver*. Amsterdam: Jacob Benjamin, 1654. Anonymous. *Materi-boecxken, oft voorschriften / seer bequaem voor die Joncheyt / om wel te leeren lesen / schryven / ende een aenporringhe tot alle deuchden*. Utrecht: Harman Hendricks van Borculo, 1614. Jacobi, H. *Ghemeyne zeyndt-brieven* […]. Hoorn: Isaac Willemsz, 1645. For a detailed analysis of these manuals see Van der Wal, Marijke, and Rutten, Gijsbert. “The Practice of Letter Writing: Skills, Models, and Early Modern Dutch Manuals.” *Language and History* 56, no. 1 (2013): 18-32. See also Van Gelder, Roelof. *Zeepost: Nooit bezorgde brieven uit de 17de en 18de eeuw*. Amsterdam: Olympus, 2010, 13, 27.

189 See ship’s captain letters in TNA, HCA 30/233, Bundle 18.

190 See for instance letter from Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb to Nagell, Johan, September 20, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/232, Letter Book I, no. 315.

191 Quote from Luetkens’ original letters found among captain Rieweert Frereck’s, captain of the *Hope*, personal belongings and therefore used as pieces of evidence in court: Letter from Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb to Frerecks, Rieweert, December 16, 1744, TNA, HCA 32/115/14. Quote from original letter sent back to Luetkens by his captain Cornelissen enclosed in a letter: Letter from Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb to Cornelissen, Andreas, June 28, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/233.

In letters exchanged amongst merchants themselves, the ships' captains were furthermore always referred to as "our captains" and statements in which the captains were praised for their actions can frequently be found, such as for instance referring to "our Nagell, who is the most honest among all our captains" or skipper Paatz, a trusted man "with good courage" ["guthe Courage"].[192] We can also find letters exchanged amongst merchants in which the merchants strongly defended and made a stand for their ships' captains against insults from the outside, using sometimes very drastic language as was also common in regular business correspondence as we have learned in the chapter on commission trade. So, Luetkens would for instance write to Luttman & von Bobartt defending his own skipper Giessel against another skipper, who had voiced certain complaints about Giessel, that this other skipper would be a fob ["allter Geck"] and a fool ["alte Narren"] and a "chicken" ["Hosenscheyser"], who "only talks rubbish" ["weiß nicht was er babelt"].[193] Such harsh words were furthermore, similarly to the language register of business and trade in general, a typical occurrence in correspondences between captains and merchants and therefore an integral part of the language register in the sea business. The latter was primarily due to the simple fact that a crucial part of the "unmistakable way of talking" of Early Modern seamen, apart from the usage of "technical terms, unusual syntax, distinctive pronunciation", was made up by a "generous portion of swearing and cursing."[194]

All these striking features demonstrate that the relationship between ships' captains and their ship-owners was far more than a mere employment relationship because we notice the important role of mutual appreciation as a sign of mutual dependency and trust. These features therefore do not bear witness to a lack of respect but very much the opposite. They show that for these kinds of letters common gestures of humbleness and usual, customary forms of subservience in letters were not necessary. This was because the letters were obviously already part of and representative of a social relationship structure or rather a system in which respect, humbleness, hierarchy, dependency and deference were simply obvious, integral, already certain and obligatory, so that there was no need to further underpin it. Quite on the contrary, it would have been rather odd and suspicious if suddenly blank spaces had occurred in the letters. So, the presumed lack of humble gestures was in fact precisely a sign of strong mutual respect because all parties concerned were agreeable with abstaining from such material gestures because their mutual respect was simply a fixed and established fact and beyond question for these parties concerned right from the start.

5.7 Patronage in the Sea Business

The particular relationship between ship's captain and ship-owner, the relational structure in which the captains' letters become understandable to us and for which their

192 Letter from Hertzer & von Bobartt to Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, June 29, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/234.

193 Letter from Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb to Luttman & von Bobartt, March 12, 1745, TNA, HCA 30/232, Letter Book I, no. 525.

194 Rediker, *Devil and the Deep Blue Sea*, 11.

form and style was representative, was no mere "employment relationship, it was far more a trust relationship" as stated in the contemporary *Gemeinfaßliche Darstellung des europäischen Seerechts*. In other words, it took the form of a *patronage relationship*.[195] This form of relationship was quite common during the entire Early Modern Period.[196] Interestingly, it traversed the estate-based society of the period, providing the opportunity for a dependency relationship amongst different societal groups that were different in their social status, their rights and opportunities but that were nonetheless directly and mutually dependent on each other for the purpose of professional cooperation for instance in business or academia.[197] Thus, the superiors were just as dependent on the help and goodwill of their subordinates as their subordinates were on them, and patronage was still a very accepted and socially acknowledged form of social interaction during that time. In fact, this "rather natural form of social interaction" during the Early Modern Period provided an appropriate way to react and answer to the challenges of an increasing professionalisation of society during the era.[198] Patronage in the end was a practice based on a "dynamic interpersonal mesh of mutual recognition, of mutual validity claims, that could be ascertained, acknowledged or [even] rejected" and therefore it sustained the societal hierarchy that shaped the order of the time.[199] The latter also explains and serves as the reason why patronage relationships during the period often produced and were shaped by their own ways of communication and were characterised by a language of their own, in short, why particular language registers evolved specifically for patronage relationships.[200]

Precisely such a dynamic interpersonal mesh of mutual recognition is represented in the ships' captains' letters of the Luetkens correspondence. The mutual apprecia-

195 "Ueberhaupt ist das Verhältnis zwischen Capitaen und Rheder weniger ein Dienstverhältnis, als vielmehr ein Verhältnis des Vertrauens." *Gemeinfaßliche Darstellung des Europäischen Seerechts, insond. der Havarie, Assekuranz und Bodmerei*, edited "von einem praktischen Juristen". Hamburg: Perthes-Besser, 1853, here 18. See Witt, *Master next God*, 42. "Diese Art von Netzwerken läßt sich am ehesten mit dem Begriff Patronage umschreiben. Sie stellte ein grundlegendes Charakteristikum [der Beziehung dar] [...] und beruhte auf dem Geflechte von gegenseitigen Beziehungen und der persönlichen Verbindung zu höhergestellten Persönlichkeiten, die sich für treue Dienste und Loyalität durch Gunsterweisungen und Belohnungen erkenntlich zeigten." Ibid., 243.

196 See Kettering, Sharon. "Patronage in Early Modern France." *French Historical Studies* 17, no. 4 (1992): 839-863. See Jancke, Gabrielle. "Patronagebeziehungen in autobiographischen Schriften des 16. Jahrhunderts – Individualisierungsweisen?" In *Selbstzeugnisse in der Frühen Neuzeit. Individualisierungsweisen in interdisziplinärer Perspektive*, edited by Kaspar von Greyerz and Elisabeth Müller-Luckner, 13-31. Munich: Oldenbourg 2007. See in particular Droste, Heiko. "Patronage in der Frühen Neuzeit: Institution und Kulturform." *Zeitschrift für Historische Forschung* 30, no. 4 (2003): 555-590. See Droste, *Im Dienst der Krone*, 249-286. See Fitzmaurice, *The Familiar Letter*, 129-174.

197 See ibid., however, particularly Droste, "Patronage," 555-590.

198 See Jancke, "Patronagebeziehungen," 24.

199 See Füssel, Marian, and Thomas Weller. "Einleitung." In *Ordnung und Distinktion. Praktiken sozialer Repräsentation in der ständischen Gesellschaft*, edited by Marian Füssel und Thomas Weller, 9-22. Münster: Rhema, 2005, 11. Translation by the author.

200 See Saller, Richard P. *Personal Patronage Under the Early Empire*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1982 [2009], chapter 1, "The language and ideology of patronage," 7-39. See Droste, "Patronage," particularly 558-560. See also Ditz, "Shipwrecked," 72. See also Fitzmaurice, *The Familiar Letter*, chapter "Epistolary acts of seeking and dispensing patronage," 129- 174.

tion was in this regard not static, but always anew mutually agreed on, requested, put to a test, confirmed or rejected. Further key elements of patronage relationships, as Gabrielle Jancke has convincingly shown, were the personal character of the relationship and the exchange of resources despite the general social inequality. In the case of the ships' captains, this becomes revealingly obvious with regard to the rights and remedies of the captains outlined above. In return, people in patronage relationship received the benefits of "care, protection, encouragement and support, social appreciation, guidance, [and sometimes even] love", which were, except for the latter, all benefits that the ships' captains, too, enjoyed through their relationship with the ship-owner.[201]

Basically, the only difference between patronage in the sea business and patronage in other social contexts, such as Early Modern academia or diplomacy, is that in the latter fields the often long-term relationships, as a fourth characteristic of patronage, forgo and worked without any forms of legal obligations. In the sea business, however, the patronage relationship was bound to legal obligations on both sides of the relationship.[202] Consequently, the ship-owners had to pay their ships' captains for their services and the ships' captains had to provide good service.[203] Otherwise, the captains could get fired instantaneously and without further ado.[204] Therefore, the power balance in patronage relationships within the sea business was very unequal and the ship-owners definitely remained in control at all times. This is why we can in the end only talk of a special form of patronage in the sea business and not of a patronage relationship in its more general sense. However, the importance and significance of such patronage relationships in the sea business was still given because, no matter how clear the hierarchy and power imbalance was, the ship-owners still highly depended on their ships' captains' skills and capabilities. As Simon P. Ville put it, the "shipmaster's contribution to the success of a venture was of critical importance. His responsibilities form an exception to the normal concentration of ownership and control", and therefore Ville speaks of the 18th and 19th century ship's captain as an "early development of a form of salaried managerial class, albeit heterogenous."[205]

It is certain that the ships' captains were granted an immense leap of faith by their employers as they were equipped with an immense power of disposition and trust and given plenty of room for manoeuvre. To give another quote from the *Prussian Maritime Law* of 1747, in the sea business' hierarchy at least the ship's captain and his significance ranked directly below the ship-owner as the person who was appointed by the ship-owner to be in charge of the ship, the "navigation, loading" as well as the "custody

201 "Fürsorge, Versorgung, Schutz, Förderung und Unterstützung, Würdigung, Gesellschaft, Beratung, Liebe." Jancke, "Patronagebeziehungen," 22.

202 Ibid., 21. See also Saller, *Personal Patronage*, 1.

203 For the legal obligations, see Witt, *Master next God*, 36-40. *Der Stadt Hamburg Schiff= und See=Recht.* 22-102, particularly 23. See also "Schiffer," *Oekonomische Encyklopädie*, 458-485.

204 Witt, *Master next God*, 37.

205 Ville, *English Shipowning*, 68.

[“reign”] of the mariners”.[206] He was therefore a mediator, a “middleman”[207] between his crew and the ship-owner, between purchaser and seller, and ultimately the executive organ of the merchant’s business, and if he had proven himself worthy and capable of his tasks, there was a high probability that he would stay in this position for many years. As we know from many cases, including Luetkens’ and his ships’ captains’, the relationships between ship-owning merchants and captains sometimes represented the most durable of relationships in this otherwise often unstable field of business.[208] The key element and core property of patronage relationships, the personal component, therefore was valid and effective also in the sea business. The people sharing such a relationship cultivated a culture of “mutual solidarity, appreciation and mutual recognition of authority” and professional qualifications, which was “realized through social practices”, such as letter-writing practice, and based on trust, respect and qualification.[209] The relationship between both parties created a form of relational practice “on the basis of mutual recognition”, which again made it necessary and therefore included certain “different, ritualized forms and patterns of action” stabilising the relationship.[210]

We can ultimately also consider the usage of the typified, routinely used expressions, words and phrases, namely the letter formulae, that the ships’ captains and their addressees used and drew on in their letters as precisely such ritualised or, rather, routinised forms of actions, that is, as concrete practices. This brings us back to the fourth characteristic feature of the ships’ captains’ letters in the Luetkens archive and of the language register in sea business, which can now be furthermore described as a language register of patronage. The similar phrases in the letters therefore must be regarded as important carriers and vehicles of the stabilisation and ongoing confirmation of the patronage relationship in the sea business because both parties, ships’ captains and merchants, that is, the ship-owners, knew and relied on the effectiveness of these common sets of phrases and words and also relied on the mutual comprehension of these written utterances. The important thing was therefore that the letter writers also suited their actions to the words, which decided the future of the respective enterprise and the relationship. When we direct our focus to these letter formulae and their usage in the next part and analyse their meaning and effect as part of the language register of patronage in the sea business, we will recognise the actual power of these written utterances and their far-reaching consequences for the people writing or receiving them. In the end, as will become obvious, the language register of patronage in the sea business and its typical phrases, terminologies and formulations represented the grid on which the actual functional capability of the whole system rested. It will become apparent that these letter phrases or even single words were far from being only hollow forms

206 “Wissenschaft haben, ein Schiff zu führen und zu steuern, zu laden […] und das Volck anzuführen und zu regieren.” *Königlich-Preußisches See-Recht (Prussian Maritime Law)*. Chapter IV, § 2 (“Vom Amt des Schiffers”), 14.

207 Lamikiz, “Basque Ship Captains,” 105.

208 See Witt, *Master next God*, 256.

209 Jancke, “Patronage-beziehungen,” 27. Translation by the author.

210 Ibid., 26.

or empty phrases, as they might appear at first glance, but that they were basically the actual lubricant keeping the whole seafaring business running.

All four typical major characteristic features of ships' captains' letters are present in the letters discussed in the letter episode of this chapter. The letters were written on rough paper, reaching the addressee separately or as parts of letter packets sealed in the tuck-and-seal method. They were written in Dutch or Low German because the insurance company was Dutch and because Noordstern wrote all of his letters in the seafarers' language, even though he had a wife in Bremen. The letters also report, reproduce and include several of the typical contents of captains' letters. And last but not least they heavily drew on a typical repertoire of letter formulae, common phrases used in ships' captains' letters representing the language register of patronage in sea business. In order to further explain the practical functioning of these letters, the way these letters were used for negotiation and persuasion, and finally to be able to explain how business matters were managed and got done in this episode on the basis and with the help of these letters, particularly the last feature is highly helpful and significant. This is why I will analyse it in further detail in the next part, providing the explanation and an analysis of how these letters not only helped but stipulated and made it possible that the plan to send a ship to the Mediterranean Sea in the end turned out to be successful for all involved parties against all odds and despite the fears that stood in the way of such an endeavour.

5.8 Letters as Material Affirmations

In the letters exchanged between captain Noordstern, the merchant and ship-owner Nicolaus Gottlieb Luetkens and his trading partners in Hamburg and Lisbon, we encounter numerous words and expressions, which can be identified as set phrases and letter formulae, that were rather typical for the correspondence of ships' captains, appearing in many captains' letters during the time. This statement is based not only on references to the many letters in the Luetkens archive but goes beyond that by including examples in letter-writing manuals or letters in other languages. When comparing the Luetkens letters for instance with letters of Basque ships' captains that Xabier Lamikiz has examined we encounter strinking parallels.[211] These typical phrases, translated from Dutch, are "I am writing to inform you that", you can "count on", "I hereby promise that", "would you be so kind", I have "done my best" and I "do not doubt that [this will help]".[212]

In the first instance, the reader might be inclined to assume behind these phrases and formulations certain structural elements that served the purpose of framing the

211 Lamikiz, "Basque Ship Captains"; *Trade and Trust*. As another very comparable source collection see also Gaspar, Renaat J.G.A.A. *De Doesburgse Brievencollectie 1777-1821*. Depot – Museum van Communicatie te 's-Gravenhage. Digital Collection P.J. Meertens Instituut te Amsterdam, Transcriptions by R. Gaspar, http://www.diachronie.nl/corpora/pdf/doesburg/de_doesburgse_brievencollectie.pdf, accessed August 24, 2018.

212 See letters quoted in the episode.

actually important content of the letters. It might appear to the reader as if this formulae served as a kind of template, a specified grid, which the ships' captains simply used to structure their reports, since the phrases can be found very often, obviously shaping many of the ships' captains' letters. This assessment in many ways definitely holds true. However, the significance of these phrases in fact goes far beyond the mere value of representing structural elements, which becomes apparent when we take into consideration the effects of these phrases and words in the course of the respective letter conversation and within the negotiation process presented in the previous part of the chapter. Furthermore, this assumption hardens when we look at how the respective receivers and the other letter writers reacted to these phrases. Looking at the whole letter episode regarding the ship *Commercium* from a bird's eye perspective, it quickly becomes clear that in fact these phrases themselves must be seen as the crucial carriers and milestones shaping the respective course of the conversation, of course in combination with the further content of these letter. The latter fact can be subsumed in this regard under a term which again was rather typical in ships' captains' letters: *dispute*.

To a certain extent it is even possible to claim that looking at these phrases alone allows us to relatively accurately reconstruct and retrace the course of the negotiations taking place in the episode. Reading only the phrases one after another, it is almost as if we are reading a kind of pattern and action script, providing us with insights into the events accompanying the planning of the journey of the ship *Commercium* to the Mediterranean Sea in 1744 and the events surrounding the dispute the captain was confronted with by his crew regarding this voyage. With this observation, in turn, we have arrived at the point of the actual significance of these phrases within the practice of letter writing and correspondence performed by the ships' captains and their addressees. The phrases, the letter formulae, represent far more than a template or embellishment. In fact, they actually must have represented an important integral part of the information transmitted via the letters because they decidedly not only structured but also gave meaning to the respective statements and contents transmitted via the letters. Strictly speaking, these phrases represented the parts through which the letter writers became actively involved in what was happening within the correspondence circle, that is, they used them as the main tools to take direct influence on their addressees, to encourage or approve, try to correct or reject the actions of the opposite side.

Making promises, making concessions, making compliments, or accepting offers, which were the actions represented by the word phrases, was never only about exchanging information, it was always also about sending out unequivocal messages with regard to this information and also about taking concrete actions with regard to this information. In fact, putting these phrases on paper did not even only delineate these actions, but in fact, to a certain extent, the letter writers actually performed these actions by the sheer act of writing them. They basically took action the moment the ink was applied to the paper because those were the moments the respective actions were unambiguously solidified and materialised in the letter and materially attested. At the same time, it becomes clear how the letter writers became actually capable of acting on the basis of their letters. In modern sociology, there is an apt term and concept describing such forms of utterances that were performative, these moments of taking action only by means of linguistic utterances. It is the sociolinguistic concept of *speech acts* by Austin and Searle, which, speaking of historiography, was successfully tested and applied in historical research already by Quentin Skinner and Susan Fitzmaurice.[213]

Speech acts are defined as performative utterances that perform an action at the moment they are spoken or, as in our case with regard to historical letters, as they were written down.[214] Thus, this term precisely reflects the processes happening in the episode with regard to the letter phrases. Relating to the ships' captains' letters analysed and especially to the letter formulae used in the correspondence between the captain and the ship-owners and merchant, there is no more apt description to describe the processes taking place in the letters. Such kinds of speech acts in the form of common patterns and letter phrases used in one's correspondence most certainly formed the basis, influenced and shaped nearly every letter and negotiation process taking place in the correspondences between merchants and ships' captains. By performing actions on the basis of the letter phrases, which in turn resulted in follow-up actions, which again led to and were followed up by other letter phrases, the actual negotiation practice in the letter episode took place. These phrases clearly facilitated the actions taken in the letters and as part of the course of the negotiation.

How this practice worked in concrete terms, that is, how the phrases and letter formulae were used in practice by the contemporaries as directives or handling instructions, becomes directly apparent and understandable when we follow the events surrounding the ship *Commercium* and its way to the Mediterranean Sea, which can be recaptured in a nutshell simply by listing certain phrases from selected letters of the negotiation process in consecutive order. Since the whole episode consists of more than 20 letters in total, I have limited the selection to the most significant letters during the negotiation process. In a second step we then add to the table the respective speech acts these phrases stood for and the responses and effects that these performative acts led to during the course of the letter conversation. The following table provides an overview in this regard. From this table, it becomes apparent how the phrases and letter formulae, and the respective meanings and effects of the performed speech acts, not only structured the events of this episode but apparently created and shaped the course of action in the letter conversation in the first place.

213 See Austin, *How to Do Things with Words*; Searle, *Speech Acts*. See Skinner, "Interpretation." See Fitzmaurice, *The Familiar Letter.* See Skinner, Quentin. "Hermeneutics and the Role of History." *New Literary History* 7, no. 1, (Critical Challenges: The Bellagio Symposium) (1975): 209-232. See Skinner, Quentin. "Conventions and the Understanding of Speech Acts." *The Philosophical Quarterly* 20 (1979): 118-38.

214 See Austin, *How to Do Things with Words*, 4-6. See Skinner, "Lectures," 647-654, particularly 650. See Skinner, "Hermeneutics," 210-212, 221. See Fitzmaurice, *The Familiar Letter*, 11, 28-29, 31, 57.

Historical speech acts in letters between ships' captains and merchant ship-owners.

Letter writer **Letter exchange**	**Letter phrase** **Letter formulae in bold**	**Speech act**	**Context & Effects**
Noordstern – Luetkens	"**Dese dient** om E.E. [...] **bekend te maken**" *I am writing to inform you that*	reporting (the status quo)	attending to one's duty: giving a report
Luetkens – Noordstern	"waer an **niet twyffelle**" *which I do not doubt*	hinting (at a given opportunity)	call for action
	"waer op hie **stadt kann maken**" *you can count on* "de **verseekering geeven [...] woord ock conten sein**" *promise / trust in the words*	giving assurance; pledging help and support; providing securities	pledging support and security
Luetkens – Luttman & von Bobartt – Voight, Walter & Sieveking	"wen die **Güttigkeit wollen haben**" *be so kind*	making a binding request	call for action
Noordstern – Luetkens	"Waer ordre ick met myn Volk **despuet heb gehad**" *had a dispute*	offering an excuse; giving a broad hint	Signal word: "dispute"; justifying actions
Luetkens – Noordstern	"daer hie nuen in nantes reets soo vell **disput mett syn volck gehad** soo **soll hett well in Lissabon niet beetern** in Spetie alls sie sien hett naer de midlanse Zee toe mosten." *It will most likely not go any better*	showing understanding making a concession	proposing an alternative
	"also **dient deesen** alls de fracht noch niet op daer is angenoomen. Datt hie maer op allerspedigst mett Ballast kan op hier coomen." *This serves the purpose*		

Historical speech acts in letters between ships' captains and merchant ship-owners, part 2.

<table>
<tr><th>Letter writer
Letter exchange</th><th>Letter phrase
Letter formulae in bold</th><th>Speech act</th><th>Context & Effects</th></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">Noordstern – Luetkens</td><td>"haer myn vermogen daer toe heb doen"
done my best</td><td rowspan="2">showing initiative; indicating success; confirmation of a breakthrough</td><td rowspan="2">performance of duty; attending to one's duty; expressing one's gratitude</td></tr>
<tr><td>"niet twyfle of hett is ciküer genoeg"
I do not doubt</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="3">Voight, Walther & Sieveking – Hertzer & von Bobartt – Luetkens</td><td>"wy gratuleeren aen E.E. daerto"
we congratulate</td><td rowspan="3">Complimenting; confirming assistance</td><td rowspan="3">confirmation (of a successful deal); provide help & assistance for the further handling</td></tr>
<tr><td>"in all assisteeren"
we will assist</td></tr>
<tr><td>"eene extra schoone Vraght gevonden"
extra nice cargo</td></tr>
</table>

5.9 The Practice of Reading Letters out Loud

The true effectiveness of the speech acts in the analysed correspondence and their importance relating to dealing with the challenges of the shipping industry becomes visible particularly at one specific point in the correspondence, which obviously was also the defining moment and turning point of the whole episode. This key moment was when captain Noordstern reported in his letter that he had "read aloud" the written promise of the merchant Luetkens to his crew, in which the ship-owner assured his captain that he and his crew would be ransomed from the Ottomans if they were to fall victim to an Ottoman privateering raid. According to Noordstern's report and his opinion, this approach, namely this practice of reading aloud the material promise, had finally given the decisive impetus for him to be able to convince his crew to sail with him. It was therefore the key to the conviction process. At this point of the conversation, we can observe how a single letter materialised a promise turned into a letter of attorney for the ship-owner and thus represented a powerful instrument and means of persuasion. To be precise, considering the way Noordstern made use of this letter in the harbour of Lisbon by reading it out to his crew, it can be said that we can legitimately speak of the letter as serving as an actual material substitute of the ship-owner, which in this way formed the basis of negotiation and justification of the ship's captain for winning over his crew for the plan of sailing to the Mediterranean Sea. This situation very vividly demonstrates the efficacy and practical way of how concrete speech acts functioned within the practice of letter writing and within correspondence, becoming all the more effective through the combination of the practice with a second similarly popular practice of the Early Modern Period, which was reading letters aloud to others.[215]

By means of this combination, the letter and its message reached those people who were not able to read, which shows how the effectiveness of using speech acts in letters actually had a far wider reach than just the group of people who were able to read and write as it even included illiterate groups. The episode shows how speech acts were actually used in captains' letters and it shows us at the same time how important and far-reaching the opportunities and effects provided by the letters and their historical speech acts ultimately were for the people who used them, as they provided the historical actors with wide-ranging powers of attorney or, speaking more generally, with the actual power to act.

Concomitant to this, the case demonstrates the far-reaching powers and the scope of action to react to certain local circumstances, with a certain necessary room for manoeuvre, with which the captains were provided in the sea business during that time. From the merchant's perspective, on the other hand, it becomes apparent how crucial the captain was for his ship-owner in his role as a mediator between him and the crews on his ships and how crucial a certain degree of making concessions was in order to get plans implemented. Notwithstanding this, most generally, the letters still show that the merchants never completely handed over or gave up control over the overall operation to their ship's captain.[216] As becomes obvious, during the whole negotiation, Luetkens basically kept things firmly under his control, only allowing such a degree of goodwill as was necessary and conducive for implementing his plans. The hierarchy prevailing in the patronage relationship between him and Noordstern was therefore not undermined. Quite on the contrary, the episode demonstrates how the patronage relationship prevailing in this relationship was in fact skilfully used for the purpose of implementing and putting into practice his plans and the whole enterprise.

The power and rules of a patronage represented the necessary and crucial framework which provided Luetkens with the absolute certainty that Noordstern would comply with his orders and tasks. The idea was that the more room and freedom Noordstern was given to exercise his personal responsibilities, the more pressure Noordstern was then ultimately under to be successful in his undertakings. The power of persuasion as it was applied and performed in these letters therefore becomes apparent in this episode not only with regard to Noordstern convincing his crew but furthermore with regard to Luetkens, who had in fact planned and arranged for this moment to happen well in advance. In order to give evidence for this assumption, we simply have to take another look at the concrete words of Noordstern and relate them to the words and actions, and various negotiation strategies, pursued by Luetkens in the run-up to the situation, with which we will enter the final stage and finishing straight of this chapter.

215 See Earle, "Introduction," (in *Epistolary Selves*), 7. See Whyman, *Pen and the People*, 72. See Ditz, "Formative Ventures," 70. Furger, *Briefsteller*, 137.

216 See Witt, *Master next God*, 37-38.

5.10 Making Firm Promises

Captain Noordstern's original lines read as follows: "I offered a cargo to Venice, wherefore I have done my best to convince my crew to sail with me in which I succeeded except for two or three mariners who have left the ship, but this should not break the game ["Spel niet sal breeken"]. I have read out [aloud] to them the conditions that E.E. had sent me regarding the insurance on our life against the Turkish Threat and I do not doubt that it is safe enough ["ciküer genoeg"] on which the Almighty God should give us his favour."[217] The promise that Noordstern refers to can be found in Luetkens' preceding letter, in which he wrote that "if this […] works out ["gluken"], your ship-owners will procure the insurance for you as the captain and for your crew ["Volck"] against the Turkish Threat, on which you can count ["hie stadt kann maken"] and you can give the crew the assurance that the ship-owners will keep their word" ["woord ock content sein"].[218]

The crew subsequently agreed to sail to Mediterranean Sea on the basis of this material promise and assurance in the letter. Consequently, the promise was materialised in the notarial certificate issued by the Hamburg vice-consul in Lisbon, and all problems were solved in the end. From this quote and situation, it becomes unambiguously clear how much weight, power and authority the Early Modern people, the ship-owners, the maritime authorities but even and especially the sailors attributed to the written word in the material medium of the letter. This one particular letter, or we can even say Luetkens' one particular sentence in this letter, with his firm promise that he would ensure the crew was sufficient for the crew to agree to his orders. Thus, this one sentence in the letter was literally accepted as their life assurance.

A promise in a letter was therefore no meaningless phrase, and the assertion and affirmation that people could "count on" that promise and put their trust in the written word was not empty words or careless talk or action, but these phrases were material liabilities in the context of the practical principle of persuasion applied in this letter episode, namely the principle of making firm promises and of providing material assurances. These words and phrases represented important carriers and signal words for the reassurance of mutual trust and reciprocal commitment, which once again underlines the importance of these speech acts during the letter negotiations. Furthermore, it becomes clear how important Noordstern's role as a mediator was for the negotiation process. A "crew was nearly always signed on for a specific voyage to and from a certain region. Naturally there were disputes."[219]

It was largely due to Noordstern and his sensibility that his crew settled the dispute and sailed to the Mediterranean Sea with him, helped not just by a lot of effective coaxing but also by the letter from his patron Luetkens. This fact leads us to the last insight from these letters: The letters show that Noordstern's success was not only due to

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217 Letter from Noordstern, Claes to Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, August 3, 1744, TNA, PRO, HCA 30/233.

218 Letter from Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb to Noordstern, Claes, July 10, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/232, Letter Book I, no. 213.

219 Davis, *English Shipping Industry*, 140.

himself and his own actions and that he is not the only one who should be credited for this success. Instead, it becomes abundantly clear that for the sake of complying with and completing his tasks and orders he ultimately mainly made use of the opportunities that his ship-owner had provided him with beforehand. In this regard, it becomes unequivocally clear that the whole situation was at all times controlled by the merchant ship-owner Luetkens. In my opinion, there are even many indications that allow the assumption that the merchant had already planned the respective solution to the problem elaborately beforehand. Luetkens had anticipated the solution to this problem and pulled the necessary strings to implement it with his letters already long before the actual moment took place. He provided tacit guidance. And this provision of a certain guidance, which came in the shape of well-meaning handling instructions, in turn, provides us with the best example and clearest indication of how patronage relationships worked in the sea business.

As is exemplary for Early Modern patronage relationships, Noordstern acted in the good faith of achieving his goals through his own efforts, and to complete his professional engagement conscientiously for his employer, but he acted on his own initiative, which is mirrored in the almost exalted joy that his words in the quoted letter exude. However, in the end all the measures he took and the achievements he made had already been envisaged and well-prepared for him beforehand by his employer Luetkens and Hertzer & von Bobartt as helping hands. The only thing the merchants therefore had to do was to slowly steer this endeavour towards the intended outcome and to gradually lead the ship's captain to acting in their interest by means of providing him with the necessary assurances. This is in my opinion the actual insight with regard to how patronage functioned in letter practice that we gain from the letter conversation in this case. The actual strength and powers of Luetkens' offer and promise (to ensure the crew of his ship against the *Turkish Threat*), performed as a concrete speech act in the letter, ultimately rested on the fact that Luetkens ostensibly left open the decision whether or not Noordstern would accept his offer and left its implementation to Noordstern's own discretion. At the same time, however, he provided clear incentives for Noordstern to comply with the offer, which Noordstern could hardly reject. This practice in turn once more shows strong resemblances to the *practical principle of persuasion through demanding loyalty* as it was presented in the first analytical chapter, showing once more that we are not dealing with single or isolated practices of persuasion in this book, but that these practices were applied in many situations. The incentives that Luetkens provided his ship's captain Noordstern with in this episode furthermore not only applied to the procurement of the insurance, but in fact he offered incentives, guidance and the necessary assurances relating to every single remit and field of duty in which Noordstern was active. In every one of these fields of activity, Luetkens and his trading partners pulled the necessary strings and took the necessary precautions. Thus, Luetkens left no doubt about the question which of the options that he offered to Noordstern was the option that he prefered and which option would particularly represent "the interest of the ship-owners". The latter was another phrase that he, as the actual ship-owner, relentlessly stressed in his letters, "gelyfft hett beste van hett schip en zyne reders waer te neemen", and which we can also find as a demand for skippers in the contemporary maritime laws.[220] In simple terms, Luetkens made it rather easy for Noordstern to come to the right conclusion and to find the right solution, which from Luetkens' point of view was to comply with Luetkens' orders. This fact can be illustrated by looking at the whole letter conversation and the letter negotiations taking place in the months between June 1744 and January 1745. Reading the whole episode, we come to realise that in the end Luetkens had a hand in relation to nearly every action that the ship's captain Noordstern was about to undertake. This becomes particularly visible in four areas of action.

First, it was no coincidence that Noordstern was offered a cargo in Lisbon by the merchants Voight, Walter & Sieveking to Venice because this was the merchant house that he was recommended to seek out by the merchants Luttman & von Bobartt, residents of Nantes, where Noordstern had departed from earlier, and whom Luetkens had consulted beforehand and to whom he had given the directive to make the respective contact. In the letter, cited in the episode, that Luetkens had sent to Nantes on the 10th of June, we read about and become witness to this close collaboration when Luetkens asks Luttman & von Bobartt "to be so kind" ["die Güttigkeit wollen haben"] to contact the partners in Lisbon.[221] As in the case of the other letter formulae used, this very typical letter phrase, too, must not be regarded merely as asking for a favour but as a concrete request, as which the addressees will also have understood the respective speech act because they responded to it and acted accordingly. It was also completely intentional that the letter to Noordstern, from the exact same date, reached the ship's captain enclosed in the letters to the Nantes merchants. Thus, Luetkens ensured materially that his letter and orders came to Noordstern with the necessary emphasis. Luetkens furthermore anticipated in this way that the ship's captain received his orders and commands not only by means of his own letter but also again by means of the personal consultation with the merchants in Nantes.

Secondly, it was surely also no coincidence that Noordstern subsequently attended to his orders with increased eagerness and enthusiasm because even in this regard Luetkens had made the necessary provisions, or put in other words, he had once more created additional incentives for Noordstern. The way he dealt with and reacted to Noordstern's report of a dispute amongst his crew regarding the length of the journey can be considered a clever strategy. In this situation, the merchant refrained from voicing sharp criticism, but instead he indulged and demonstrated an understanding for the situation. In his response letter he subsequently supposedly generously offered Noordstern to refrain from the plan of sailing to the Mediterranean Sea and instead he offered that Noordstern was free to sail back to Hamburg with just ballast if things got worse with his crew, or in his own words because "it will most likely not go better in Lisbon". However, the crucial point here, the crux of the matter, and thus Luetkens' snag, was that of course a trip to the Mediterranean Sea, the veritable gold mine of southern European trade, would have been a much more lucrative undertaking for all parties involved, including the captain, than only taking ballast back to Hamburg or a port of

220 See Engelbrecht, *Der wohl unterwiesene Schiffer*, 5. Letter from Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb to Noordstern, Claes, July 10, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/232, Letter Book I, no. 213.

221 Letter from Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb to Luttman & von Bobartt, June 10, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/232, Letter Book I, no. 214.

France, which basically meant sailing without cargo but merely with weight and therefore without any prospect of profit. This was much less appealing for the ship's captain than the other plan. Therefore, it comes as no surprise that Noordstern did everything in his power, or as he himself called it he would "do my best" – another typical letter phrase of the period – to find a way to persuade his crew to sail with him.[222] For this purpose, Noordstern presumably gladly took the opportunity provided and used the offered insurance against the *Turkish Threat* as the basis for negotiation. Using a kind of hidden agenda, Luetkens therefore speculated, in my opinion, on awakening the zeal and the sense of duty of his ship's captain to satisfy the expectations of his ship-owners, to fulfil his duty in the patronage relationship in the best possible way and to win their approval and respect, which in the end proved itself to be a suitable and beneficial strategy. The almost triumphant words of Noordstern reporting the successful achievement of having convinced his crew to sail with him, might have sounded just as triumphant in the ears of Luetkens himself.

Thirdly, it was, to a certain extent, not even a coincidence that the dispute amongst the crew erupted because this, too, had been anticipated in a way by Luetkens, or to be more precise, he expected disputes in his sea business and therefore the dispute was condoned by Luetkens. It was with good reason that Luetkens had advised his ship's captain to trust in the unwritten law and to comply with the order definitely not to not inform his crew about the plan to extend and continue their journeys to the Mediterranean until they had completed their previous voyage and had arrived at the port of Lisbon. The customary rule that a crew was only signed on for one specific voyage, therefore in this case the route from Nantes to Lisbon, which, as we know, already led to complaints on the part of the crew, constituted a crucial advantage. In this way the crew was left in the dark about the plan for as long as possible, leading to the result that at the time when they finally heard about the plan they were already in Lisbon and confronted with the immediate choice of either remaining part of the crew and accompanying the ship also on its next trip, which was a risky endeavour, or leaving the ship in Portugal, which was just as much of a risky endeavour because they needed find a new ship and captain who would hire them. As the maritime saying went, they were confronted with a difficult choice and caught between "the devil and the deep blue sea."[223] Not informing the crew of the *Commercium* in Nantes about the planned further destinations of the ship was therefore once again a helpful strategy because it increased the probability that they would agree to remain faithful to the ship and its captain. However, in the case that this was not enough and the crew was not persuaded to remain on the ship for such a reason, the ship's captain nevertheless still had the opportunity to offer them a higher wage or even double pay. This was an option that Noordstern used on both occasions when he needed to convince his crew to sail with him, in Nantes and in Lisbon, and which was not sanctioned by Luetkens or Hertzer & von Bobartt. In the end, however, they tolerated it for the sake of the success of the enterprise.

Speaking of the negotiation process in Lisbon, however, it becomes clearly apparent that both persuasion strategies, namely using the promise of insurance and the double

222 See Dierks, *In my Power*.

223 Rediker, *Devil and the Deep Blue Sea*, 5.

wage, did not fail to have a positive effect on the outcome of the process of convincing the crew. Whereas probably only a handful of sailors would have agreed to take a trip to the Mediterranean Sea if they had been asked in Nantes, in Lisbon, however, only two or three seamen, as Noordstern reported, in the end left the ship, which was acceptable and which therefore did not "break the game" ["Spel niet sal breeken"], as Noordstern concluded. Showing forbearance, responding to the wishes of the crew in a certain way already while still in Nantes, in this case only relating to the paying of double wages and settling this first dispute with the crew amicably, was already part of this *game* and represented just a necessary evil to lay a sound foundation for any further disputes yet to come in Lisbon. Since the crew then knew that the captain and the ship-owners were trustable men who stuck to their word, the dispute and opposition in Lisbon actually turned out to be proportionately modest. This was not least, of course, because of the written material promise with the offer to insure the men against the *Turkish Threat* that the captain, in the truest sense of the word, pulled out of his pocket, like an ace up his sleeve, precisely at the very moment that the choice was due.

Against this backdrop, in turn, it was in the end, fourthly and lastly, also in some ways no coincidence that the crew ultimately agreed to the proposal of their captain and the merchants Luetkens and Hertzer & von Bobartt because it was after all no bad choice considering their status quo: the revenue of double pay as a further material assurance, and the securities that they were provided with. Therefore, as becomes obvious, it was the merchant Luetkens who had equipped his captain with all the necessary means and measures to be able to achieve his goals and to fulfil his duties and tasks. The ship's captain only had to grasp the opportunity.

The special feature and clearest characteristic of the patronage relationship that the merchants and the ship's captain maintained in this case was that the captain was offered alternatives. He could always, or at least in most cases, also decide against a respective proposal and choose to take a different route, in the truest sense of the word, if reasonable in view of the ship owner. Just as typical for the patronage relationship was, however, that the ships' captains in most cases in the Luetkens archive decided for the proposals of their superiors and strived to achieve and implement those options that were in the *best interest* of their ship-owners. The latter of course happened also in order to convince their ship-owners of their skills, their value as employees and their capabilities. This clear correlation in the end represents the whole secret behind the system of patronage in the sea business, which was at work in this episode, and behind the power of persuasion being deployed within this episode and by means of the practice of letter writing as it was presented in the episode. As the historian Sharon Kettering aptly put it, in this letter conversation we can observe the practice of negotiation as performed in a patronage relationship as an "art of persuasion, [...] [which induced] men to cooperate and do what is demanded voluntarily."[224]

224 Kettering, Sharon. *Patrons, Brokers and Clients in Seventeenth-Century France*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986, 3.

5.11 Conclusion: How to Cope with Sailors' Fears

Figure 14: A drawing of an Ottoman privateer showing a flag with the Turkish Crescent in Rieweert Frerecks' large bound ship's journal. Frerecks was master of the captured ship Hope. This book came from his personal archive of papers on that ship.

Source: The National Archives, ref. HCA 30/660 © Prize Papers Project. Images reproduced by permission of The National Archives, London, England, Photo: Maria Cardamone.

We are now able to answer the main question of this chapter, which was how 18th-century people in the sea business coped and dealt with the factor of fear in their businesses. How did merchant ship-owners and ships' captains cope and deal with such a concrete fear as the fear of being taken hostage by Ottoman privateers in the Mediterranean Sea, a fear that was so formative, shaping and tangible that the contemporaries put little wooden figurines of beseeching sailors in the churches of their hometowns? This fear was so immediate for the people directly involved in seafaring in this region that we find numerous examples in contemporary sources, in which these people personally expressed their fears by putting them on paper, whether in the form of letters, reports, memoirs or even as drawings. One of the most impressive examples that I am aware of are and that I found thanks to the help of Amanda Bevan in the confiscated books and ship's logs of the captain who was once in charge of the ship *Hope*, Rieweert Frerecks, who obviously not only feared English privateers but also Ottoman ships. This fear or rather his awareness of the threat becomes materially attested in various drawings of Turkish galleys and Ottoman privateers showing a flag with the Turkish Crescent in Frerecks' main ship's log, a large bound volume of several of his journals, also stored in the National Archives.[225] How did ships' captains, their ship-owners and the crews

225 A bound volume kept and illustrated by Rieweert Frerecks, of ships' journals of European and Greenland voyages 1733-1745 on which he was mate or master, with multiple images of the ships, and

therefore cope with such a very concrete and tangible threat? In this chapter we have been presented with two possible solutions to this question. On the basis and analysis of the presented letter conversation, I have been able to show that one way to mitigate these fears was that the people of the age would *count on* the practice of being provided with material assurances in the form of insurance certificates against the *Turkish Threat*. These insurances were first promised in writing, namely in letters, and were then issued to them notarially certificated on paper, guaranteeing them that they would be ransomed if their ships were captured. That means, however, that these people still ran the risk of being taken hostage. The second opportunity that I have presented in this chapter, were so called *Turkish passports*, which were passports that ensured free passage for European ships in the Mediterranean Sea based on peace treaties with the Maghreb States. The latter option, however, was not available to Hamburg merchants and sailors on Hamburg ships because Hamburg did not hold a peace treaty with the Ottoman Empire. Both ways of coping with the problems that were caused by Ottoman privateers in the Mediterranean Sea for European seafaring and merchant shipping highly intrigued me. However, whereas the second opportunity, the *Turkish passports*, was relatively well understandable for me because they essentially represented a diplomatic solution to the problem, primarily based on paying tributes, the other solution surprised me even more when I learned about it in the letters. It showed me that even though no diplomatic solution had been found for Hamburg ships, the merchants still did not desist from trading with the region but instead found a rather pragmatic solution to the problem. They simply chose to insure their undertakings. What I found most fascinating in this regard was that the sailors actually approved of this solution and agreed to sail to the Mediterranean Sea, thus accepting the consequences and exertions that came with it. The sailors on the ship *Commercium* could in fact be persuaded to agree to sail to the region with their captain merely on the basis of firm promises and certain material assurances. What I found most intriguing in this regard was how pragmatically the people therefore in the end coped with the fears. This applied not only the merchants and ship-owners, who simply procured an insurance to cope with their risks, but especially the captains and the crew, who coped with their severe fears simply by trusting in the power of a promise given to them by their ship-owners and a piece of paper that materialised this promise, which was handed to them by the authorities and which they took with them on their journey towards an uncertain future. That is, we have to realise that these men voluntarily exposed themselves to the concrete danger of being taken hostage by the Ottomans, which was the unavoidable result of an encounter between a Hamburg ship and an Ottoman privateer, simply on the basis of the assurance that they would at least be ransomed in due time. This surely comes close to self-sacrifice.

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seals applied throughout. Frerecks was master of the *Hope* [otherwise Hoffnung, otherwise L'Esperance, a Hamburg merchant ship belonging to Nicolas Gottlieb Luetkens, taken on 23 August 1745 by the privateer *Charming Molly*, and brought into Deal], and this book came from his personal archive of papers on that ship, TNA, HCA 30/660. See pages 305-308 for various drawings of Turkish galleys, ships with different rigs, and a calligraphic design of the letter R incorporating R F 1742 30 Maij, a crown, a garland and a standing cup. See also TNA, HCA 30/659, *A notebook belonging to Rieweert Frerecks with cargo manifests and an inventory of the Hope.*

Furthermore, in my opinion, this fact reveals two important things and main characteristics of the 18th century in general, which are significant in order to understand the period but also to understand the letter episode and the way in which the power of persuasion worked within the medium and practice of letter writing and correspondence in the episode. First, the episode reveals and demonstrates the significance and the actual impact of the common contemporary practice for social interaction and cohesion during the Early Modern Period, namely the practice of putting great confidence, trust and reliance in each other's words and promises, especially within relationships that depended on hierarchies, such as patronage relationships. The second insight from this episode was that people also put the same amount of confidence, trust and reliance in the written word. This not only related to the content of the letters, which in a way represented the spoken word, but in particular to the general trust in the power of the material, the paper with the written text on it, which was read aloud.

In the episode, an immense amount of trust and confidence was placed in the material letter of Luetkens, in which he made the promise to procure an insurance, and the same amount of trust and confidence was placed in the power of a notarial certificate that Noordstern carried with him on his journey while a second version was kept by the consulate in Lisbon. Especially for those who were not able to read, like some of the sailors in the episode, this material letter that the ship's captain presented and read aloud to them represented nothing less than a substitute of the merchant, entailing powers of attorney, and therefore it constituted a concrete material liability and authority.

This confidence and trust in the powers of the written form, namely the letter and the certificate, however, even went far beyond and transcended the scope of the negotiations amongst ship's captains and their crew, and the ship's captain and his patrons. Rather, this trust was especially based on the fact that all parties involved would later, if the occasion arose, keep their promises with regard to these pieces of paper. In a way, this even included the Ottoman privateers and the authorities of the Maghreb states of the Ottoman Empire, who would in the end also need to formally agree to the deal that they would take ransom money, enter into negotiations with the local European commissioners of the Hamburg authorities and the *Sklavenkasse* and finally release their captives. As we have learned, however, chances were good that they would enter into these negotiations. The sailors therefore in a way trusted in a system of supranational material paper warranties, which they took for granted, even though they were dealing with the supposedly *hereditary enemy*. This represents just another intriguing insight from the episode, particularly against the backdrop of the described horror scenarios and discourses and the scaremongering prevailing in Europe regarding the Mediterranean Sea and the Ottoman Empire. It shows that there was another side to these horror scenarios, which was that, in concrete practice, things were ultimately still handled in a rather reasonable or at least pragmatic way because this was the only way that business could be done.

In practice, the Europeans found their own ways and means for coping with the situation, which, as needs to be noted in this regard, did not necessarily contradict the horror scenarios but made them manageable. These ways and means built far more on finding common ground with the enemy and making certain deals with them instead of risking a direct conflict, although the latter would presumably have fitted far more with the consequences of the discourses and the iconographic agenda of the printing press of the time. The European merchants still equipped their ships with canons, as we learnt with regard to Noordstern's ship, which was armed with 10 pounders. However, the most effective way to minimise risks and to be able to continue trade with the Mediterranean Sea was to enter into peace treaties and pay high tributes or at least to take certain precautions against any risks in the form of private insurances issued for the ship and its crews, which ensured the compensation for damages and losses and most importantly ensured the safety and survival of the people sent to the area. The latter, in turn, also included negotiations with the Maghreb states in the form of ransoming proceedings that would also most often have been carried out on a juridical basis.

In practice, therefore, people's actions in the end conformed far more with the actual situation prevailing in the Mediterranean Sea, as I have outlined it in the beginning of the chapter. This situation was no lawless, godless anarchy, as the contemporary discourses preached, but it was more or less an actual state of war, a privateering war. And the latter, in turn, was something that the merchants of the time were used to already. Therefore, instead of fighting the Ottomans or cutting themselves off from the trading markets in the Mediterranean Sea, the merchants under investigation and their home authorities decided to make concessions to the enemy. This was how they ultimately found a way to cope with the situation in the southern part of the Mediterranean Sea.

Regarding the Hamburg seamen on board the ship *Commercium*, Claes Noordstern, Arnold Rohde and the other crew members mentioned in the certificate, what helped them to cope with the fears or at least what might have mitigated their fears, which were genuine and serious for them, was their faith and confidence in the fact that in the end money would flow in order to bail them out and save them. This fact was the foundation on the basis of which they could be persuaded to sail to the Mediterranean Sea. Subsequently, the remarkable thing about this was that, at least if we speak about the period under investigation, the 1740s, the sailors' hopes and their confidence would actually for the most part not be dashed or disappointed. This means that the system actually worked during that time, which can be evidenced by the already cited figurines of the Hamburg *Sklavenkasse*. As we know from the Hamburg case therefore, sailors were regularly ransomed after being taken hostage, not solely through the funds of the *Sklavenkasse* but also and especially through the additional money coming from the private sector, through private insurance companies, which increased the sailors' willingness to sail on Hamburg ships to the area during that time. This, by implication, also offers a conclusive and logical explanation for the slight increase in Hamburg shipping activities in that region during the time span, which I have presented.

Through the new possibility of insuring ships and crews privately, the Hamburg merchants, at least speaking of the venturesome merchants in Luetkens' correspondence circle and the merchant himself, found the necessary foundation and loophole to carry on their trade with the Mediterranean Sea. It provided them with an effective means of encouraging their ships' captains and crews to remain loyal to them. Nicolaus Gottlieb Luetkens knew perfectly how to make use and take advantage of these new possibilities. He used them as a sufficient means to persuade his employees to undertake the journey to the Mediterranean Sea, which helped him to establish a profitable, successful business in this business area, which helped him further pave the way for his establishment phase. The crucial practice that he used during his negotiations and persuasion processes with his captains, which provided the necessary means for being convincing, was letter writing. In letters he used certain letter phrases and letter formulae as speech acts, the language register of patronage and skilfully drew on the full potential of rights and duties within a patronage relationship. Without letter-writing practice none of the aforementioned events would have been possible at all. Letters were the tool and medium on which the whole undertaking rested, not only because of the large distances that the practice helped to bridge but also and especially because of the fact that it provided a material foundation for the persuasion processes and for the whole concrete handling of the affair.

In order to finally demonstrate that still another crucial factor in these high-risk enterprises was pure luck or fortunate coincidence, it helps to once again take a look at further statistical data from archival records that is available to us with regard to Hamburg Mediterranean trade. I consult a detailed list of all ships captured between 1719 and the 1740s called "a list of all ships' crews captured and taken hostage by Algiers privateers between 1719-1747", which the historian Magnus Ressel has supplemented with more data from other sources and set out in tabular form in his book on the *Hamburg Sklavenkasse*.[226] If we are to believe these contemporary figures, looking at and taking into account the entire time span of Luetkens activities, in fact only one of Luetkens' ships in the end actually fell victim to an Ottoman raid. In 1747, a ship under the command of Luetkens' captain Andreas Cornelissen coming from Gallipoli in Italy was captured by an Algiers privateer.[227] All the efforts taken in the case of the *Commercium* and the other ships that followed her example, were thus not needed in the end as they all managed to stay safe and out of trouble, but it was still good to have these protections in place just in case. Luetkens therefore in the final analysis was simply also just fortunate with his undertakings. Other merchants, however, as the figures also show, were less favoured by fate in this regard.[228]

226 "Verzeichnis der Schiffer, welche mit ihren Schiffen, und bey sich habenden Schiffs Volck von Anno 1719 bis Anno 1747 zu Algier aufgebracht sind." *Staatsarchiv Hamburg*, 111–1 Cl. VII Lit. Ca Nr. 2 Vol. 3 Fasc. 3, Nr. 2. See Ressel, *Sklavenkassen*, 465-478.

227 Cornelissen "von Gallipoli anhero". See Ressel, *Sklavenkassen*, 468.

228 See Ressel, *Sklavenkassen*, 465-478.

6 Finding a Business Partner and a Merchant Clerk to Open up a Merchant House

On the 12th of November 1743, at a time when Nicolaus Gottlieb Luetkens' preparations for his second business trip to France were already in full swing, the merchant received a letter from his old friend and former legal guardian Seewaldt from Nantes.[1] In this letter, Seewaldt reported that he himself had received a letter from his brother in Strasbourg. His brother had passed on to him a letter of application from a young Strasbourg merchant, a certain Kunz, who, as he was told, was looking for new employment as a merchant clerk or business partner in one of Europe's leading merchant houses of the time after having served four years in the renowned merchant house Blitzhaupt in Strasbourg. The Nantes merchant Seewaldt himself, however, had no need for a new employee. However, he knew about Luetkens' upcoming trip and also knew very well that for a young merchant like Luetkens such business travels would not only serve the purpose of getting to know foreign cities but also of looking out for a suitable place to settle down and to establish a merchant house and of finding suitable personnel or even a business partner, as it was common practice during that time. This gave him an idea. Without further ado, he forwarded the letter from his brother with the application from Kunz to Luetkens, with the idea that Kunz might be of use to Luetkens. Maybe Luetkens would be interested in hiring or even associating with Kunz. For this purpose, Seewaldt copied the letter from his brother with Kunz's application into his own letter, putting it in quotation marks, and furthermore added some remarks of his own on the quality of his brother's words and the formalities accompanying the proposal. The letter from Seewaldt, which reached Luetkens in November 1743, therefore read as follows:

> "Highly esteemed and very dear friend,
> [...] the day before yesterday I received a long overdue letter from my brother in Strasbourg [...]. To cut things short, in his letter my brother enclosed a letter of application ["Handschrift"] by a young man with the following words: "Hereby enclosed is a letter of application by a brave young ["wackeren braven jungen"] man of 22 years named

1 On the Seewaldt family, see Terrier, Claude, ed. *Mélanges d'histoire économique et sociale en Hommage auf professeur Antony Babel*, vol. 2. Geneva: Droz, 1963, 42.

> Kunz, whose parents are solvent enough to give any necessary guarantees, he was employed during the last 4 years, speaks and writes well in both German and French, but he is no wizard in well-stylised letter writing ["kein Hexenmeister in allzuwohl stilisirten Brieffschreiben"]. However, through practice, he will soon be deployable ["zu gebrauchen sein"], his further way of life is decent ["honet"] and I can't fault it [...]." At this point further formalities were added before Seewaldt once more added a personal note to this copied-in letter, asking "whether E.E. already is equipped with a suitable subject ["tichtigen Subjectum"] or if he would be willing to consent to this offer, I would be [...] glad to hear." He also emphasized that Luetkens could trust in the report and words of his brother.[2]

It would take Luetkens only one week, one post day, the contemporary mail delivery days, to answer this letter. His decision was therefore obviously made quickly. Already 10 days later, Seewaldt received Luetkens' response to his proposal. In a letter from the 9th of November 1743 Luetkens thanked Seewaldt for his letter, but he nevertheless declined the offer. He wrote that "he had already found a suitable subjectum ["gutes Subjectum"] in Holland", which put a quick end to the discussion.[3]

Another, maybe the actual reason why he was so quick in declining the offer, however, is not given. Seewaldt himself most probably will also have attributed it to Luetkens being very busy at the time. Yet my privileged situation of being able to study these letters also in view of the other correspondences that Luetkens conducted during that time enables me to gain a somewhat clearer picture of the surrounding circumstances that might have contributed to Luetkens' decision-making process. I can give a probable further reason why the merchant declined the offer by the Seewaldt brothers. As things stood during that time, in fact, Luetkens had not yet been able to find a *suitable subjectum* in Holland. However, he was right in the middle of negotiations with his favoured candidate, residing in Holland at that time, and with this man's family, negotiating the conditions for a partnership and a joint establishment for founding a merchant house in France. This candidate was Simon Moritz Bethmann, son of a very renowned Frankfurt merchant family that still exists today, who was, however, already employed permanently during that time as a merchant clerk in the house of the English Rotterdam merchant John Furly, son of the renowned English Quaker merchant and religious writer Benjamin Furly, who was, as a sidenote, a friend of the philosopher John Locke.[4]

Luetkens' main occupation and challenge during that time was therefore to find a way to entice Simon Moritz Bethmann away from his current employer. The probable reason why Luetkens was so quick in declining Seewaldt's proposal was therefore

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2 Letter from Seewaldt, W.B. to Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, October 29, 1743, TNA, HCA 30/236.

3 Letter from Seewaldt, W.B. to Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, November 15, 1743, TNA, HCA 30/236.

4 Regarding the Bethmann family see the detailed study by Henninger, *Bethmann*.
See (with a critical eye) Bethmann, Johann Philipp von, ed. *Bankiers sind auch Menschen. 225 Jahre Bankhaus Gebrüder Bethmann*. Frankfurt a.M.: Societäts-Verlag, 1973.
Regarding Furly, see Bailyn, "The Challenge," 16-17.
See also Greaves, Richard L. "Furly, Benjamin 1636-1714." *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, online edition, https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/10248, accessed February 2, 2018.

that he had other things to do. A further reason for declining to even consider Kunz as a potential candidate for becoming his employee can be found in a revealing letter to his desired candidate Simon Moritz Bethmann at the very same time, on the 19th of November. In this letter, Luetkens wrote to Bethmann, and at the same praised the Frankfurt merchant's skills, that his "sole aim was to find someone who had learned something and who was skilled and able to manage his correspondence" ["einzig zu thun umb jemand der was gelernet und die Correspondentie führen kan"].[5] Hence, if we compare this sentence with the information given in the letter of the application of Kunz, it becomes immediately clear why Luetkens did not put any effort into the negotiations with Kunz: the fact that the Strasbourg merchant had rather bad writing skills and was an inexperienced letter writer, "no wizard" in letter writing, represented a clear exclusion criterion. Maybe Kunz's letter was even the reason why Luetkens emphasised this important skill so concretely in his letter to Bethmann.

In this chapter, the letter conversation and tough negotiations with regard to the attempted enticement of Simon Moritz Bethmann away from Furly will be at the centre of my explanations. This episode will furthermore be supplemented by a second letter episode, which was the direct consequence of the Bethmann negotiations, and which is thus so important for this chapter because only this second episode finally represented the long sought-after breakthrough in terms of finding an appropriate employee, a merchant clerk and later his agent and factor, for his business in France. Furthermore, the merchant also found his later business partner in their joint partner company during that time, a socius for his merchant house, a *Compagnie-Handlung* in German, which was one of the most crucial last steps and breakthroughs of his establishment phase.[6] This second episode will furthermore show how severe setbacks sometimes still ultimately led to a positive outcome and could be turned into a success because setbacks forced the historical actors to strive for new solutions and make adjustments to their original plans, and these solutions sometimes were even better than the original plan. The crucial and interesting thing about the Bethmann negotiations was that they eventually failed, much to Luetkens' disappointment. However, as a result of this, Luetkens was forced to adjust his plans and find another solution, which in the end led to the fortunate outcome that he did not only find a merchant clerk, but that the same person would later also become his agent in France, continuing his French business. Furthermore, Luetkens also found the much-wanted business partner for his merchant house in a second merchant living in Hamburg. Therefore, as the saying goes: When one door closes, another one opens.

The Seewaldt intermezzo will not be analysed any further in this chapter. Just as Luetkens himself did, we will put it aside, since everything that needed to be said in this matter has been said. Notwithstanding this, this short episode represented a good entrance point into this chapter and I chose it deliberately as the peg on which to hang

5 See for instance letter from Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb to Bethmann, Simon Moritz, November 19, 1743, TNA, HCA 30/232, Letter Book II, unnumbered.

6 For a contemporary definition of a merchant partnership and for contemporary information on joint partner companies, see "Compagnie=Handlung." *Oekonomische Encyklopädie*, edited by Johann Georg Krünitz. 242 volumes. Berlin, 1773-1858, vol. 8, 276-279.

the explanations of this chapter because this letter exchange encapsulates in a nutshell what the main topic of this chapter is and what I want to show in the following explanations.

The letter exchange between Seewaldt and Luetkens made me aware of the simple fact that letter writing was used by these merchants to seriously negotiate and come to agreements with each other with regard to the most crucial qualities and abilities that a young man had to show in business in order to prove himself worthy and suitable as a merchant. This fact in particular applies to the situation in which a merchant was confronted with the question of whom he should choose as his business partner for his merchant house or his employee. As the Seewaldt episode made clear, in this situation there was obviously a clear catalogue of criteria which a young man had to adhere to in order to show his capabilities. Therefore, there must have also been a general contemporary idea of which skills and personal dispositions or even character traits were important for representing a respected wholesale merchant. However, as the episode also clearly demonstrated, these skills and personal dispositions were in the first place always negotiable and placed at the correspondents' disposal, and they were apparently weighed up differently.

What tipped the scales and counted most was what the particular merchants regarded as important and as conducive for their specific business, that is, what they regarded as indispensable skills and character traits important for actual mercantile practice. It is therefore not sufficient only to take a look at merchant handbooks, manuals and contemporary catalogues of virtues to learn about the main competences that a merchant had to have. I will, however, still heavily consult these books in this chapter as the most important intertextual references. Yet, we also have to take into consideration actual mercantile practice and literally have to compare it with the rulebook. Furthermore, as we have learned, additional external factors played their part in the negotiations and had a decisive share in the outcome of the negotiations. The most fundamental skill, ability and competence, however, that became apparent in the episode and showed itself as indispensable for the professional advancement of a merchant was good skills in letter writing practice, a skill and competence that Kunz unfortunately lacked. Without this skill, the way to becoming a successful merchant lead him down a rather stony path. The latter insight served as the inspiration for this chapter and in many ways it was also formative for this entire book. Seewaldt's letter was one of the first letters that I read from the Luetkens archive and it revealed to me already during a very early stage of my work what was later to become the main statement of my book, which is that letters were the pivotal tool and the linchpin for success for commercial people of the 18th century. In this chapter, we will now be provided with another clear piece of evidence for this fact, relating to the important role that letter-writing and correspondence practice and its powers of persuasion played in the search for a suitable business partner and for merchant employees.

In this chapter we will take a look at what skills, "qualities and competences" a young man had to have to be considered a suitable "Subjectum", as the contemporaries called it, relating to both a merchant employee and particularly to a merchant socius who represented a good catch for establishing a private partnership firm as the basis for a merchant house.[7] We will furthermore take a look at the further conditions and requirements that had to be met in order to put this plan into practice. The overall thematic topic of this chapter therefore consists of the plans and measures necessary to establish a merchant house with a partner in the form of a joint partner company with its own employees at home and abroad, as a crucial step for an establishment phase of a wholesale merchant during the 18th century. I will analyse this on the basis of the two letter episodes. Before coming to that, however, we will once again start by weaving a thick web of information around this phenomenon and its practices, providing a thick contextualisation and therefore an intelligible framework on the basis of which we are able to understand all the events taking place in the letter episode. This will enable us to answer the crucial thematic question at the centre of this chapter, which is why and how a young merchant man bound other persons to his own business, at the same time tying his own success to them and why he would strive to establish a joint merchant company at all.

6.1 Characteristics of a Private Firm

Whereas in the previous centuries, particularly during the 15th and 16th century, the family firm was the predominant business model for merchant firms, during the 18th century this predominance gradually shifted towards the private firm as the most common and widespread form of business organisation.[8] The most common business model of the 18th century was however the merchant partnership and the joint partner company, the "Compagnie-Handlung" as it was called in 18th-century Germany, "société" in France, between two or more individual merchants joining together to establish a merchant house and private firm.[9] This development corresponded with,

7 "Im gemeinen Leben pflegt man einen Menschen in Ansehung seiner Fähigkeit und Tüchtigkeit zu etwas, häufig ein Subject zu nennen." "Subject [...] *Subjectum*." *Oekonomische Encyklopädie*, edited by Johann Georg Krünitz. 242 volumes. Berlin, 1773-1858, vol. 177, 649-652, here 652. See also "Subject." *Deutsches Wörterbuch von Jacob und Wilhelm Grimm*, 813 ("sodann von Personen, die in einem Abhängigkeitsverhältnis stehen wie Diener"). For "subject" in letters, see Marperger, *Der allzeitfertige Handels-Correspondent*, 724.

8 This development "reflected the growing demand for capital and manpower". Häberlein, "Trading Companies," 1. See as basic reading Rose, Mary B. *Firms, Networks, and Business Values. British and American Cotton Industries since 1750*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000, especially 60. See Casson, Mark C. "An Economic Approach to Regional Business Networks." In *Industrial Clusters and Regional Networks in England 1750-1970*, edited by John F. Wilson and Andrew Popp, 19-43. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003. See Grassby, *Business Community*, 82-83, 401-404; Grassby, Richard. *Kinship and Capitalism;* Mathias, "Risk, Credit and Kinship." See Hancock, *Citizens of the World*, 104-109. Regarding partnerships of London merchants, Hancock concludes that "kinship appears to have been less important in this case than shared commercial interests and the idea of spreading risk to multiple shoulders." Häberlein, "Trading Companies."

9 See Häberlein, "Trading Companies." See in detail also Braudel, Fernand. *Civilization and Capitalism, 15th-18th Century*, vol 2. *The Wheels of Commerce*. Berkely/Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1992, 433-455. See Denzel, Markus A., and Ulrich Pfister. "Handelsgesellschaft." *Enzyklopädie der Neuzeit* 5 (2007): 97-101. See Kellenbenz, Hermann. "Art. Handelsgesellschaft." *Handwörterbuch zur deutschen Rechtsgeschichte* 1 (1971): 1936-1942. For France and the French business model of the

or rather formed an integral part of, the shift from early forms of capitalism, which had taken root since late medieval times and in the beginning of the Early Modern Period, towards the emergence of a global economic system over the course of the Early Modern Period, which moved increasingly and inexorably towards taking the shape of a free market economy which was furthermore boosted through the growing importance of financial market capitalism.[10]

During the 18th century, at the latest, we can talk about a "world economy in-the-making", as Mary Lindemann put it, or at least we are dealing with the "Atlantic stage of European economic development", in the words of François Crouzet.[11] This meant that by that time many parts of the known world were in certain ways connected to worldwide flows of commodities, transactions and capital, and had become integrated into worldwide logistic chains. The fact that this 'achievement' was, however, only conceivable and was achieved only on the basis of colonialism and colonial exploitation, at the same time points to the highly problematic side of any modernistic narrative and perspective with regard to this development and it also points to the highly ambivalent nature of the epoch of the Early Modern Period in general. Although during the period certain foundations were definitely laid for today's global economic system, this happened on the basis of human exploitation, slavery, bloodshed and the suffering of millions of people, which rules out glorifying this development as an unqualified achievement for mankind.[12] Instead, we have to perceive this development ultimately as a structural transformation taking place during the 18th century and emerging from certain contemporary circumstances that entailed, without a doubt, consequences for later times, which should, however, never be misinterpreted as representing in any ways a "sample book for modernity" ["Musterbuch der Moderne"].[13] For analytical purposes,

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"société", see Kessler, Amalia D. *A Revolution in Commerce: The Parisian Merchant Court and the Rise of Commercial Society in Eighteenth-Century France.* New Haven/London: Yale University Press, 2007, 141-187. For the family firm as a business model, see Adams, Julia. *The Family State: Ruling Families and Merchant Capitalism in Early Modern Europe*. Ithaca/London: Cornell University Press, 2005. See Prior, Ann, and Maurice Kirby. "The Society of Friends and the Family Firm." *Business History* 35 (1993): 66-85. For France see Bamford, Paul Walden. *Privilege and Profit. A Business Family in Eighteenth-Century France*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1988.

10 See Häberlein, "Trading Companies," 1. See Grassby, *Business Community*, 401. See also Morgan, Kenneth. "Sugar Refining in Bristol." In *From Family Firms to Corporate Capitalism. Essays in Business and Industrial History in Honour of Peter Mathias*, edited by Kristine Bruland and Patrick K. O'Brien, 138-169. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998. Reinert/Fredona. "Merchants and the Origins of Capitalism." See also Jacob/Secretan. "Introduction," 1-16.

11 Lindemann, "Doing Business in 18th century Hamburg," 163. Crouzet, "Economic Change," 192. See also Subrahmanyam, *Merchant Networks*, xiii.

12 See Mintz, *Sweetness and Power*, 35-73, here 59. See Beckert, Sven, and Seth Rockman. "Introduction. Slavery's Capitalism." In *Slavery's Capitalism. A New History of American Economic Development*, edited by Sven Beckert and Seth Rockman, 1-28. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016. See Freist, "Expansion, space and people," 268-276. Contrary to Reinert/Fredona. "Merchants and the Origins of Capitalism." See also the 1619 project by the *New York Times Magazine*, https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2019/08/ 14/magazine/1619-america-slavery.html, accessed November 23, 2019.

13 The term "Musterbuch der Moderne" was first coined by Schulze, Winfried. "Von den großen Anfängen des neuen Welttheaters. Entwicklung, neuere Ansätze und Aufgaben der Frühneuzeitfor-

the economic global developments of the time should primarily be explained in their own right, which leads us back to the issue of the changes in mercantile business organisation during that time. In the end, the merchants of the time did not primarily aim at creating a capitalistic order for world economy with their actions.[14] But speaking of the day-to-day business of these merchants, their central mission and direct objective was to find appropriate means for coping with the challenges of their times and with the economic situation that they were living in and were involved in, but which they simultaneously also shaped and created through their actions.[15]

For the merchants of the time, therefore, the *world economy in-the-making* concretely and primarily meant two things: on the one hand, it meant access and an increased availability of a wide range of goods from all over the world. It meant wide trading opportunities, contact opportunities and the possibility of logistic participation in many parts of the world. It meant high increases in both supply and demand because of course through the increased availability of goods worldwide also the demand for these products increased in the home markets, which led to high profit margins.[16] In sum, the events and changes in circumstances of the world market led to the prospect of economic prosperity for the merchants of the time. On the other hand, and as the negative side to it, at the same time the merchants were also confronted with great challenges due to the world situation. These were a greater complexity of the market and a growing anonymisation of the market, and of course they also suffered from trade barriers or wars. All of these factors led to increased uncertainties, lower predictability and therefore higher risks for the merchants.[17]

In order to react and deal appropriately with both these circumstances and therefore to cope with the conditions of the time, the merchants subsequently necessarily needed to restructure their business practices and their ways of doing business in certain ways to adapt to the new challenges. These adjustment processes included for instance the

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schung." *Geschichte in Wissenschaft und Unterricht* 44 (1993): 3-18, here 9; and again in Schulze, Winfried. "Einladung in die Frühe Neuzeit." In *Frühe Neuzeit*, edited by Anette Völker-Rasor, 9-11. Munich: Oldenbourg Verlag, 2000, here 10. The concept of the "Musterbuch der Moderne" implies that our modern world, or more generally "Modernity", has its origins in the developments of the Early Modern Period.

14 The exception to this is perhaps political writers such as Adam Smith, who, however, primarily tried to find answers to contemporary questions and challenges.

15 As David Hancock argued with regard to the morality of the merchants under investigation in his book, we "cannot justify their participation in the slave trade; and it would be repulsive to admire someone who acted as they did in our century – an age that is more self-conscious about race and social and economic freedom. We can, however, recognize that these merchants' failure to comprehend the immorality of slavery stems from the same habits of minds that led to their achievements elsewhere." Hancock, *Citizens of the World*, 17. The merchant Luetkens was not involved in the slave trade although by trading in French sugar (coming from the colonies) he nevertheless supported the underlying colonial system with his actions. See already Stein, Robert Louis. *The French Sugar Business in the Eighteenth Century.* Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1988.

16 See Kriedtke, Peter. "Vom Großhändler zum Detaillisten. Der Handel mit "Kolonialwaren" im 17. und 18. Jahrhundert." *Jahrbuch für Wirtschaftsgeschichte* 35, no. 1 (1994): 11-36, here 19-20. See Weber, *Deutsche Kaufleute*, 14, 21. See Mintz, *Sweetness and Power*, 74-150.

17 See Ditz, "Formative Ventures," 61. See Weber, *Deutsche Kaufleute*, 304. See Schulte-Beerbühl, *German Merchants*, 107-108.

rise of commission trade, which grew into a major field of commercial activity in the 18th century, because it enabled the merchants to deal with the increased range of goods available, about which we have already heard in the chapter on commission trade. These processes also included the expansion and safeguarding of the mercantile communication infrastructure, which meant, accompanied by expansions in the postal services, an increase or even a peak in the immense and pressing demand for merchants to keep regular correspondences.[18] Last but not least and in a way also the major precondition for the two other adjustments, it necessarily entailed a restructuring of the operational organisational structure of mercantile business or rather an enhancement of certain already existing practices and structures in the operational business of the merchants for the purpose of adapting to the world situation. This should in the end leverage the success of the private firm to becoming one of the most predominant business models of the time, which is the topic of this chapter. This restructuring or adaption process in the organisational structure of mercantile business in the end related to three segments of mercantile operating procedures, which will all be further discussed in this chapter because they were also negotiated in the Luetkens letters, providing the starting point for the thick contextualisation in this chapter.

1) As part or rather as the precondition of the triumph of commission trade, the role and the importance of the commission agent or the factor as a central operating hub and coordinating point of long-distance trade was further enhanced and appreciated in value. No longer were the commission agents or factors only branch offices or outlets of the parent company, but they rather acted as subsidiary companies of the parent companies or clients, with their own powers of disposition coming with their own areas of responsibility, such as for instance being responsible for the re-export of goods from their location to the homeland. During the 18th century at the latest, therefore, the net of commission agents and factors worldwide became the actual nerve centre of international trade because these networks allowed the merchants to cope and to deal with the spaciousness and vastness of the global trading floor.[19]

The agent and factor system kept the global economy running and also manageable. Whereas in previous centuries the respective factors or agents had most often originated from the merchant's own family or kin, in the 18th century what counted most for the qualification was knowledge, personal skills and reputation. This included knowledge about local trading peculiarities but first and foremost about how the respective ports were integrated into the global logistic chains and commodity flows, what range of goods were available on site and how to gain access to them. The family background or family affiliation became less important and receded into the background,

18 Trivellato, *The Familiarity of Strangers*, 170. Regarding the developments in the postal services, see Behringer, *Zeichen des Merkur*. See also Behringer, Wolfgang. "Communications Revolutions: A Historiographical Concept." *German History* 24, no. 3 (2006): 333-374. See O'Neill, *The Opened Letter*, 19-46. See Whyman, *Pen and the People*, 46-74.

19 On the role and importance of commission trade and commission agents and the difference between commission agents and merchant factors, see Häberlein, "Trading Companies." See also Davies, "Commission System," 89-107. See Trivellato, *The Familiarity of Strangers*, 153-176. See Hancock, *Citizens of the World*, 81. See Henninger, *Bethmann*, 102-134.

while the major selection criteria for choosing a factor or commission agent or even a business partner were now formed by individual qualification and professional capability, which again led to the fact that business partners or employees were now also recruited from a wider circle of acquaintances.[20] That is, for the purpose of finding suitable commission agents, business partners, associates or employees for their business, merchant houses now frequently also drew on merchants from other families, or chose merchants who earned their reputation merely by independent activities, or they even drew on foreign merchant houses already well-established and renowned in the respective cities. The system of recruitment thus became more open and flexible than it had been in previous centuries. However, as a side effect, which can be seen as either a negative or positive development depending on one's perspective. Thus, it can either be seen as detrimental to stability in comparison to the previous centuries or as an advantageous development with regard to expansion of the contemporary employment market and with regard to creating the basis for a freer market. The fundamental basic constant and prerequisite of Early Modern trade, namely mutual trust between trading partners, was now, however, placed on a new foundation. The basic trust that supposedly prevailed among family members and that had represented the foundation for the family firm, would now, in the case of primarily inter-professional cooperation, evolve and yield to a form a trust that was not predetermined or presupposed, but that first needed to be established, earned and then also maintained.[21] The latter, in turn, led to a more individually based evaluation system for employment that paved the way into a capitalistic economic system.[22] Speaking for the merchants of the time, however, the most crucial consequence of this development was that such a form of a personal evaluation system made it indispensable to communicate and to mutually assure each other about personal qualities, and especially to agree on mutual expectations, responsibilities and obligations. This process often took place in letters, about which the analytical part of this chapter will bear a significant testimony.[23] As Francesca Trivellato put it, quoting a contemporary source, the factor as an important figure in the international trade of the time was in fact actually "created by Merchant letters".[24]

2) A second important pillar of business organisation of the 18th century that had a decisive share in the *world economy in-the-making* related to the segment of the commercial staff employed in merchant houses, not least because some of the employees later

20 See Hancock, *Citizens of the World*, 104-109. See Häberlein, "Trading Companies." From a contemporary perspective see "Commissionär" and "Commissions=Handlung." *Oekonomische Encyklopädie*, vol. 8, 251 and 253.

21 See Hancock, *Citizens of the World*, 106-107. See Grassby, *Business Community*, 401-404. See Häberlein, "Trading Companies."

22 See Rose, *Firms, Networks, and Business Values*. See Casson, "An Economic Approach."

23 "[B]usiness correspondence offers the best evidence of how trust in mercantile affairs was the result of a dynamic process of interaction as well as shared discursive practices." Trivellato, "A Republic of Merchants," 145.

24 Malynes, Gerard. *Consuetudo, vel, Lex Mercatoria, or, The Ancient Law-Merchant.* London: Adam Islip, 1622, 111. See Trivellato, "Merchants' letters," 80. See also Muldrew, *Economy of Obligation*.

were promoted to merchant factors if they had proved themselves capable of responsibility. Merchant clerks had the task of overseeing or keeping the merchant books, of copying outgoing letters, or in some cases they were even assigned to writing letters in the name of the merchant houses, or they were for instance also involved in customer support. Last but not least, they were responsible for keeping order in the merchant house.[25] Thus, they were important for the merchant house because their work contributed to the formalisation of trading processes and execution in the merchant house, which enabled the merchants to ensure a certain controllability and verifiability. This increased predictability for their businesses during an age in which such predictabilities were threatened with getting lost. In this respect again, the business organisation of the 18th century built upon business structures that were already existent during the previous centuries. Already in the centuries before, merchants clerks played an important role in the operational procedures of merchant houses. However, due to the growing challenges of the globalisation of trade, leading to a steadily growing demand for formalisation, even in this business segment the merchants were bound to reconsider their selection process for merchant clerks and widening their search radius for suitable *subjects*. The latter was, as we have already learned from the Seewaldt episode, a typical contemporary term used for merchant staff or business partners. Once again personal qualification, which fostered a good reputation, became the major selection criterion for being appointed the merchant clerk in a merchant house. Once again, the merchants of the time were on the lookout in all directions when searching for suitable employees.[26]

3) The most important restructuring and transformation in business organisation during the 18th century, however, were the changes happening with regard to the basic nature of the structure of the merchant houses in general. This transformation was surely also the catalyst for the two other developments and the root cause for the breakthrough of the private firm as one of the prime business models of the time. During the 18th century it became custom that even the main business partners in joint merchant houses were no longer primarily, solely and exclusively, recruited from the own family circle or kin as it was typical in the centuries before. Instead, the recruitment practice opened up and strongly supported associations and companionships between single independent merchants.[27] Due to this custom, the private firm rose immensely in popularity and became the most preferred business model of the age. As in the case of the other two developments, the merchant partnership was also a practice that had already been known in the centuries before, but now it became the most popular business form because it promised and provided the most compelling answers to the challenges of the

25 See Ruppert, “Bürgerlicher Wandel,” 66. See in detail Deges, “Zusammenfassende Übersicht,” XV-LXV. See “Factor.” *Oekonomische Encyklopädie*, vol. 12, 21-22. See Häberlein, “Trading Companies.”

26 See Hancock, *Citizens of the World*, 11, 124-125. See Davis, *English Shipping Industry*, 81.

27 See Hancock, *Citizens of the World*, 106-107. See Denzel/Pfister. “Handelsgesellschaft,” 97-101. See Kellenbenz, “Handelsgesellschaft,” 1936-1942. See in particular also “Compagnie=Handlung.” *Oekonomische Encyklopädie*, vol. 8, 276-279. See as an introduction to the foundations of business organisation of earlier centuries e.g. Greif, *Path to the Modern Economy.*

time.[28] Naturally, the private firm still also allowed the possibility that merchants from the same family opened up a firm together. The reasons for the transformations in business organisation are to be found in the challenges and changes in the contemporary trading circumstances, forcing the merchants to react accordingly and find certain ways for coping with the new global situation. The advantages and benefits of establishing joint companies between independent merchants as a promising attempt to deal adequately with the new challenges, is aptly summarised in an encyclopaedia entry from the time, from the famous *Kruenitz encyclopaedia*. Its content also reveals to us that the contemporaries themselves were already aware of this structural change in business organisation and implementation. The entry in the *Kruenitz encyclopaedia* reads as follows:

> "A joint partner company, trading company, trade association, [...] ["Compagnie=Handlung , Gesellschafts=Handlung, Association, Zusammengesellung"] is a private firm of several, mostly two or three, rarely more, affiliated merchants, who share their cash funds as well as their goods, debts or receivables, in equal or unequal terms, in order to conduct their business more successfully with joint forces, joint diligence and joint capital ["mit vereinigten Kräften, Fleiß und Capital"] at home and abroad, and to enhance their mutual benefits. Joint partner companies [private partnership firms] are of great benefit for each individual but also for the common good. Great enterprises require great capital, lots of effort and a good overview, which are conditions that a single person can rarely meet alone. Through founding a company of 2 or 3 persons, however, who share their knowledge and their capital so that the mutual benefit is fostered, everyone profits; and these persons are then enabled to conduct businesses with joint forces that a single person alone would not be able to conduct. Another advantage is that two persons, who each look at a certain matter from their own perspective, would then take a decision together that is much more deliberate than if a single person alone had taken it. In particular, joint partner companies have the advantage that different kinds of persons also can profit from these companies in different kinds of ways. Dexterity and wealth only rarely come together in one single person ["Geschicklichkeit und Reichthum finden sich selten bey einander"]. Therefore, when two persons join together in a company, one of them having skills, the other one having wealth, they will mutually benefit from each other. The money of the latter will be complemented by the sharp mind and the advice ["Verstand und die Rathschläge"] of the former [...] as if both qualities had come together in a single person. Notwithstanding all these advantages of a private firm, there also arise difficulties and problems. As long as a merchant trades alone and only in his own name, one does not have to justify or give an account to anybody other than oneself and freedom is vital for life. Such freedom is not always excluded from joint partner companies, which is why it is crucial that the partners in a joint company have corresponding humours ["Uebereinstimmung der Gemüther"]."[29]

28 See ibid.

29 "Compagnie=Handlung." *Oekonomische Encyklopädie*, edited by Johann Georg Krünitz. 242 volumes. Berlin, 1773-1858, vol. 8, 276-279.

The reason therefore why a joint partner company, a private partnership firm, was regarded a beneficial business model of economic value in view of the *Kruenitz encyclopaedia* was that such a business form helped and encouraged the merchants of the time to join forces with regard to *manpower, knowledge*, *competence* and *capital*, which then enabled them to react appropriately to the growing challenges in business and trade. In current historical research we find that this assessment is still deemed valid up until today to describe the contemporary trading situation and organisational structure. In fact, the research opinion today directly mirrors the assessment given in the *Kruenitz encyclopaedia*. In addition to the assessment, however, research today furthermore allows us to further delineate and substantiate the concrete business measures and procedures that went along with these basic characteristics of a joint partner company and private firm. It helps us to further specify the benefits of this business model for the concrete business practices of 18th-century wholesale merchants.

With regard to sharing *manpower*, the major benefit of a joint partner company was that this business form provided single merchants with the opportunity to expand their international clientele and customer base through the merger, exceeding their individual catchment area, but also exceeding the catchment area of their mercantile family networks. This formed the basis for being able to participate in international networks even if one was not born into a long-standing and well-established merchant family. Basically, through this business model individual merchants were able to establish their own businesses and to stand on their own feet merely on the basis of their own skills and efforts and without needing the right family background, just by help of bonding with other skilled individual merchants. Family networks of course still played an important role in the networking and especially during the establishing process of these merchants, as we have already heard in the chapter on the shipping industry, but it was no longer a prerequisite for doing business.[30]

A prime example in this regard was the merchant Nicolaus Gottlieb Luetkens, whose father was a priest and who was therefore born into a clerical family but still managed to establish himself as a wholesale merchant in the world of trade of the 18th century. He achieved this on the basis of his own abilities, his enterprises and his own networking, by which he earned a good reputation on his own. This, in turn, paved the way into finding and establishing a partnership with another merchant, through which he gained access to an even wider network representing a solid ground for a career as a wholesale merchant. Notwithstanding this, as we have already learned, both of Luetkens' uncles, who were merchants, also had a decisive share in promoting his career. So family still played an important role in a merchant's career. However, the reason that Luetkens represented a good catch for other merchants for establishing a joint partner company together during his establishment phase was not primarily due to the fact that he originated from the Luetkens family, but it was based on his own reputation as an individual, who had made a name for himself through his successful business enterprises and through demonstrating great skills and competences. Consequently, his unique selling point was his individual professional qualifications and his

30 See Hancock, *Citizens of the World*, 106-107. See Rose, *Firms, Networks, and Business Values*; see Casson, "An Economic Approach."

network. This marks the decisive difference between the character of the family firm and of the private firm in terms of business organisation and structure. In the end, within the private business sector, the role of his uncles was not only to testify to a long family tradition in trade, which would essentially serve as a reassurance of Luetkens' qualification for trade. Rather, in a way they themselves only represented individual merchants from their own firms in the field of trade doing their businesses and pursuing their own interest, in the course of which they were also supporting the enterprises of their nephew. At the same time they also drew on Nicolaus Gottlieb's skills and networks for conducting their own enterprises. The latter, in turn, directly leads us to the second point with regard to the benefits of the private firm, the benefits of joining forces with regard to knowledge and competences.

In terms of *sharing knowledge and of joining competences*, the major advantage of the business model of the private firm as a joint partner company was that it offered the opportunity of a very versatile business portfolio for the firm, by which the merchants were able to react to the growing range of goods and products available during the 18th century.[31] Thus, when two or more merchants joined together in a firm, they not only brought together their networks, but of course they also combined their competences in different strands of business in which they were skilled. Thus, the merchants were able to improve and expand the reach of their respective businesses through their association and affiliation by covering and combining different trading sectors in their firm at the same time. This sharing of competences also included and held ready the opportunity to complement each other in terms of different fields of expertise and work experience, as was also emphasised in the *Kruenitz encyclopaedia*.

While one partner brought in his wealth, the other partner brought in important skills, zeal and diligence, and by that the business partners further enhanced their productivity. In practice for instance that could mean that one partner was responsible for the financial backing and assets and for overseeing the bookkeeping of the firm, while the other partner was responsible for the customer contact.[32] This opportunity provided the merchants with the necessary flexibility that was needed to appropriately align their business to the growing challenges of international trade during the age. This growing importance of a division of labour within the merchant firm also included and increased the importance of the employees in the merchant firm and the factors of the merchant firm, who would themselves also be responsible for taking on and covering certain work areas crucial for the smooth functioning of the business. This shows the

31 See the chapter on commission trade. Regarding the benefits of a broad product portfolio as a commission agent, see Weber, *Deutsche Kaufleute*, 249. See also Doerflinger, "Commercial Specialization."

32 As a good comparative and a typical example of the time, such a form of business organisation can be found as prevailing for the firm of *Bethmann & Imbert* and *Schröder & Schyler*. See Weber, *Deutsche Kaufleute*, 190-191. See Henninger, *Bethmann*, 112-128. See also, with regard to the "Bright-Meyler partnerships", Morgan, *Bright-Meyler papers*, "Introduction," 38-43. See also as a good comparative example Butel, "La maison Schröder et Schyler."

great intersection and dependency between the changes taking place in the merchant firm itself and the changes in employment practice of factors and merchant staff.[33]

The third and last benefit of joint partner companies for the merchants of the time, as was emphasised in the *Kruenitz encyclopaedia*, namely joining forces with regard to capital, ultimately relates to the previous point. In terms of concrete measures and procedures, sharing capital meant that the single merchants entering into a partnership did not only share contacts and networks, competences and their labour force, but each of the merchants also brought in a certain capital stock to the shared capital stock of the newly established merchant house. The amount of the respective provision differed and conformed with the possibilities that each merchant had. That meant that different merchants simply brought in different amounts of capital. This practice was accepted by the merchants of the time because it came with the benefit and condition that the merchant with the lower contribution of capital at the same time committed himself to compensating for this misbalance through other skills, effort and competences. As the *Kruenitz encyclopaedia* pointed out, these could include for instance showing a lot of diligence e.g. with regard to taking over the laborious work of travelling and visiting other merchant houses. The socius with lesser capital often also accepted an unequal treatment in terms of the income, if not agreed otherwise. For young merchants, this practice represented a great opportunity to build up a career as a merchant because it enabled them to enter into partnerships even though their financial resources were still limited. But through the merger, the overall capital stock that they drew on would rise to such an amount that they could then engage in manifold larger businesses.[34] But also speaking of the wholesale merchants of the time in general, the sharing of capital, or, in more colloquial terms, the pooling of money was a widespread, conducive practice because it provided them with the opportunity of quickly accumulating capital necessary for their trade without the need for family savings or reserves. At the same, by means of this practice, they automatically split risks with regard to potential financial losses because if such losses occurred they were distributed between several people. The benefit of distributing the risks was in the end, however, a factor that was not limited to the aspect of capital but that equally applied for other measures and procedures as well.[35] The merchant partnership was thus an appropriate tool for reacting and coping with the growing challenges and complexity of the *world economy in-the-making* because it ultimately accommodated the one pivotal factor that remained constant during the whole transformation process. This constant factor was that in the end all merchants of the time had to cope with the same challenges, faced the same fate, and ultimately had the same goal: to remain capable of acting and trading during challenging times. Joining forces was therefore in a way not only a necessary step, but it was a logical step in view of the merchants' situation. This fact represented in my opinion the overall

33 See also "Compagnon, Handelscompagnon, Handelsgesellschafter, L. Socius, Fr. Associeé." *Oekonomische Encyklopädie*, vol. 8, 280; "Commissions=Handlung." *Oekonomische Encyklopädie*, vol. 8, 253.

34 See Weber, *Deutsche Kaufleute*, 181-182. See Hancock, *Citizens of the World*, 106-107, 125, 241 ("Creating an Inital Stake"). See Häberlein, "Trading Companies."

35 See Grassby, *Business Community*, 82, 401-404. See Hancock, *Citizens of the World*, 106. See Haggerty, *Merely for Money*, 34-65. See Mathias, "Risk, Credit and Kinship."

main reason why the private firm and the joint partner company grew immensely in significance and popularity during the 18th century.

In sum, there was a reason why the private firm and the merchant partnership became the major business model of the 18th century, why the factor system with individual commission agents became the nerve centre of wholesale trade, and why the rules and customs of recruitment practices for merchant personal, factors, agents and business partners became more liberal and oriented towards personal qualifications outweighing family reputation: this reason was that all these processes offered the merchants of the time appropriate means, the necessary operational flexibility, manageable risk management, and a certain predictability for their trading activities that they needed to stay capable of acting in the hazardous field of trade in the 18th century. This in the end led to a more individualistic and therefore, if you will, a capitalistic alignment of trade operations, but more important was, in terms of the contemporary significance of these developments, that these processes created the general basis for maintaining and ensuring the continuation of trade activities during an age that was in a state of upheaval.

The reason why all of this matters for this chapter is that the merchant Luetkens made use of all three options to promote his establishment phase. At the end of 1745, when returning to Hamburg, he had an employee, a merchant clerk, who became his agent and factor in France, and he entered into a joint partner company with another merchant in Hamburg. Later he would also have further clerks in his Hamburg merchant house. The path leading him to this achievement, however, was not as easy and straightforward as we might initially expect because, although the merchants of the time definitely shared similar interests and were most often interested in cooperating, these interests still had to be matched and coordinated and the economic viability and feasibility of the respective cooperation and the joined enterprises had to be assessed before a partnership was established. The merchants therefore first had to find common ground. For this purpose, they had to enter into negotiations with each other, for which purpose they wrote letters. These letters and the negotiations that took place on the basis of these letters stand at the core of this chapter.

6.2 Corresponding Humours

The main object of negotiation within the letter correspondences in the Luetkens archive regarding the founding of a merchant house between the merchants participating in the letter episode was represented by an aspect that also played a crucial role in the assessments in the *Kruenitz encyclopaedia*. In their letter correspondences dealing with potential partnerships or suitable employees, the merchants primarily wrote and communicated about and also assessed each other's personal and business qualities, evaluated their personalities and professional competences and they negotiated about the question whether or not the partners showed the necessary compatibility of skills and personality which was indispensable for the management of a business house. It becomes apparent that the merchants were therefore not only aware of the transformations taking place in business culture, but that they were also aware of the changes that these transformation processes entailed for the qualification criteria, the demands and profiles, and the qualities and skills that a merchant had to possess. Looking at the entry in the *Kruenitz encyclopaedia* this becomes clear through the strong emphasis on the importance of certain character traits such as diligence. In particular, however, the importance of the *personal compatibility* of the future business partners becomes clear in the very last paragraph.

Here the *Kruenitz encyclopaedia* emphasises the crucial importance of "corresponding humours", or *resembling humours* (in German called "humores, "humeurs" or "Gemüther", and in French "humeur") as a prerequisite and basis for the functioning of a merchant partnership.[36] In the contemporary sense of the word, this *humeur* of a person represented not merely a person's mental state but rather their personality, particular character traits and not least their temper and temperament.[37] The latter was in the 18th century still associated with the contemporary *Humoral Theory* or *Humorism* dividing a person's temperament into different categories: phlegmatic, choleric, sanguine and melancholic. This idea was based on the *Theory of the Four Humours* – blood, phlegm, yellow bile and black bile – which dates back to and had prevailed since Antiquity. It was highly influential during the Middle Ages and during the first half of the Early Modern Period, but it actually also remained a shaping influence on medical practice and theory until well into the 19th century.[38] In the 18th century, however, the original meaning of the word *humores,* originally denominating and referring to the bodily fluids had already undergone a transformation and diversification and receded more and more into the background, with the term shifting towards being used in a more general sense in common parlance.[39] That is, the term *humours, humores* or *humeurs* had turned into a more commonplace word and chiffre and was now used as an overall category relating to a person's personality and particularly his or her virtues.

36 See also Buchnea, Emily. "Strategies for longevity: the success and failings of merchant partnerships in the Liverpool-New York trading community, 1763-1833." *Economic History Society Working Papers*, Issue 12026 (2013): no page numbers.

37 "Die Gleichheit der Gemüther. Personen von einerley Wesen und Natur, welche einander nicht natürlich unterworfen sind, befinden sich in einer äußern Gleichheit." "Gleichheit." *Oekonomische Encyklopädie*, edited by Johann Georg Krünitz. 242 volumes. Berlin, 1773-1858, vol. 19, 49.

38 For a concise overview regarding *Humoral Theory* and its concepts during the 18th century (and generally a brilliant book), see Raapke, Annika. *»Dieses verfluchte Land«. Europäische Körper in Brieferzählungen aus der Karibik, 1744-1826*. Bielefeld: transcript, 2019, 72-73. See also Stolberg, Michael. *Homo Patiens. Krankheits- und Körpererfahrung in der Frühen Neuzeit*. Cologne/Weimar/Vienna: Böhlau, 2003, 117. See Nutton, Vivian. "Humoralism." In *Companion Encyclopedia of the History of Medicine*, edited by William F. Bynum, Roy Porter, vol. 1, 281-291. London: Routledge, 1993. Regarding medical theory, see also, for instance, Huppmann, Gernot. "Anatomie eines Bestseller. Johann Unzers Wochenschrift „Der Arzt" (1759–1764) – ein nachgereichter Rezensionsessay." *Würzburger medizinhistorische Mitteilungen 23* (2004): 539-555.

39 On humours, "humeurs", "humores" or "Gemüther" during the 18th century, see Van Dülmen, Richard. *Kultur und Alltag in der Frühen Neuzeit. Erster Band. Das Haus und seine Menschen 16.-18. Jahrhundert*. Munich: C.H. Beck, 2005, 163.

Yet still we can also find references to, for instance, *melancholic moods* in the Luetkens correspondence, often expressing mutual esteem.[40]

In the letters under investigation in the episode, however, the term *humours* was primarily used as an overall category referring to a merchant's professional qualification.[41] In this regard, conforming to and fulfilling a certain catalogue of virtues as a merchant, for instance being diligent, had already been a crucial selection criterion for merchants and merchant partnerships in the previous centuries.[42] However, now that family lineage was no longer regarded as the only kind of assurance of such virtues and was no longer the most crucial asset a merchant had to yield, the importance of a good character, of personal integrity in particular, and the demand for constantly demonstrating and proving this good character in person and in business gained immensely in significance. In the 18th century, therefore, a good 'humeur', referring most generally to having a good personality, literally became one of the most important, if not the major precondition for a successful merchant partnership, but also for a functioning company structure in general, including the staff.[43] As merchant writer Defoe put it in 1726, it was indispensable for a good merchant house that the business partners in a partnership acted "like two oxen yoked together".[44] Similar statements can be found in several other merchant and letter-writing manuals.[45] Consequently, the condition of *corresponding humours*, sometimes in German also referred to as "gleiche Art", was now acknowledged and served as a kind of new foundation for merchant collaboration.[46]

It is therefore not surprising but rather typical for the age that the topos of *corresponding humours* also resurfaces again and again in the letters of Luetkens and his correspondents. As will become apparent from my analysis, people had a very clear idea about what characterised these corresponding humours and what was necessary to fulfil the condition of resembling, complementary or matching personalities in a joint merchant partnership. Consequently, in the letters the topos of *corresponding*

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40 "Schreibe mir doch offt, denn sonsten werde melancolisch." Letter from Bethmann, Johann Jakob to Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, July 21, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/234. „bin ich gantz melancolisch & kan fast nicht leben auch ist niemand in der Welt der dich mehr kan lieben wie ich." Letter from Bethmann, Johann Jakob to Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, September 10, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/234. The word "melancolisch", however, never appears in the Luetkens letters with regard to the professional qualifications of a merchant.

41 See letters quoted in the episode. The same fact applies to the usage of the word in contemporary merchant and letter-writing manuals. See Savary, *Der vollkommene Kauff- und Handelsmann* [*Le Parfait Négociant*], 282. See Bohse, *Der allzeitfertige Briefsteller*, 135, 428 ["Gemüther einig", "Gemüther verbunden"]. See Rohr, Julius Bernhard von. *Unterricht von der Kunst der Menschen Gemüther zu erforschen* [...] Leipzig: Johann Christian Martini, 1732, 37.

42 See Ruppert, "Der Bürger als Kaufmann: Erziehung und Lebensformen." See Münch, Paul. *Ordnung, Fleiß und Sparsamkeit. Texte und Dokumente zur Entstehung der bürgerlichen Tugenden*. Munich: DTV, 1984. See Hörmann, *Memorial und Recorda* (1588); Meder, *Büchlein von der Kauffmannsschaft* (1511).

43 See Marperger, *Der allzeitfertige Handels-Correspondent*, 444. See Savary, *Der vollkommene Kauff- und Handelsmann [Le Parfait Négociant]*, 405.

44 Defoe, *Complete English Tradesman*, 262.

45 Ibid., 282. See Bohse,*Der allzeitfertige Briefsteller*, 135, 428. See Rohr, *Kunst der Menschen Gemüther*, 37.

46 Savary, *Der vollkommene Kauff- und Handelsmann [Le Parfait Négociant]*, 282.

humours or personalities never featured in isolation, but it always came up in relation to certain other expectations or enquiries into the qualifications of the respective partners, certain abilities or character traits that the respective merchants deemed necessary and crucial for their cooperation and their mutual consent. Expressed in contemporary terms, referring to another typical topos and letter formula, it always occurred with regard to the "concept" of oneself that a merchant presented to another merchant in letters praising his skills and personality or the "good concept", "gutes Concept" in German, that a merchant had about another merchant.[47]

It appears always interconnected with specific interests pursued by the respective letter writers, following the principle and including the question to what end and in what respect the *corresponding humours* would be concretely conducive for the business of the envisaged partnership. The category of "corresponding humours" is therefore most often not a self-explaining fixed category but it was in fact a root category, cipher and discourse marker, under which umbrella manifold competences and character traits were gathered. It furthermore directly links to the category of the subject, in the contemporary sense of the word, describing the social and professional status of a person, or an employment relationship of a person with another person.[48] Analysing both categories in this chapter will therefore directly reveal to us the concrete elements and personal skills that the merchants of the time deemed necessary, appropriate, and suitable for a partnership or employment and therefore suitable for the trade business in the 18th century, and we will thus gain a clear picture of what characterised a suitable merchant *subject* of the 18th century.[49]

The fact that we will encounter and analyse this mercantile requirement profile and the basic features of a mercantile subject of the 18th century on the basis of letter correspondences and as part of negotiation processes points us to the last crucial aspect and observation with regard to this mercantile *subjectivation*, which was that in actual practice, all these features and requirements were still objects of negotiation and therefore variables. That means, that each quality and merit of the persons involved first had to undergo an assessment procedure and even a voting process performed on the basis of letters among the circle of correspondents over a certain period of time before they were accepted as valid and significant. During the course of the letter negotiation, it also emerges that different qualities were weighted differently and that further external factors also had an influence on the respective negotiation processes. Once again it

47 "Ich muß zu meinen beßonderen Vergnügen wahrnehmen was für ein gutes Concept E.E. in dero Hierßein von meiner geringen Perßon sich formiret." Letter from Bethmann, Simon Moritz to Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, November 25, 1743, TNA, HCA 30/234. Regarding the good concept ["gutes Concept"] as typical letter formulae, see Hunold, *Die Allerneueste Art Höflich und Galant zu Schreiben*, 138. See in this regard the letters written by Simon Moritz Bethmann in the first episode of this chapter.

48 See "Subject [...] *Subjectum*." *Oekonomische Encyklopädie*, vol. 177, 652. See "Subject." *Deutsches Wörterbuch von Jacob und Wilhelm Grimm*. vol. 20, 813. For a definition of subject and subjectivation in today's practice theory, see Alkemeyer/Freist/Budde. "Einleitung" (in *Selbst-Bildungen*), 9-32.

49 Interestingly in this regard, the merchant and letter-writing manuals of the time in fact also linked their definition of "subject" with the reference to good humours. See Bohse, *Sendschreiben*, 307 ["capables Subject"]. See Marperger, *Der allzeitfertige Handels-Correspondent*, 444.

becomes clear that the features that accounted for a merchant's capability were not predetermined or fixed categories but that each of these features was actually individually negotiated, assessed and evaluated against the backdrop of the specific situation prevailing for the persons involved. The merchants carefully considered if it was the right time for each of the partners to enter into a partnership, in view of their career plans and their current social status. They considered if it was the right time to establish a merchant house at a particular location, in view of the economic situation prevailing at this spot. And they considered how and when their respective individual qualities could be best matched and utilized to promote their own businesses and careers. The negotiation process was therefore often situation-dependent, which leads us to the fact that analysing these negotiations and situations provides us with an even clearer picture of what was required from a young wholesale merchant building up his career in wholesale trade. The latter fact was for a very simple reason: in the end, all the qualities that passed the test of such a negotiation process and were accepted among the correspondents as appropriate and accurate qualifications of a merchant can be demonstrated to be indispensable pillars of the merchant subject of the 18th century.

As regards the external factors having an influence on the establishing of a joint partner company between merchants, these factors mainly relate to the formal provisions that such a private partnership firm had to meet. In order to start a joint business, the merchants not only had to find common ground on a personal level, they also had to comply with certain structural conditions as a prerequisite for their business. These included for instance that the foundation of a firm did not happen in a legal vacuum, but that the merchants had to meet certain legal requirements with regard to the envisaged location and country of their planned merchant house, but also relating to the question with whom they planned to join forces. In the chapters on commission trade and the shipping industry we have already heard about the particular requirements that, for instance, mixed national merchant houses had to fulfil in order to be lawfully protected.[50] At the same time such mixed merchant houses enjoyed legal privileges that promoted their trading activities.[51] Similar legal requirements also had to be met when two merchant of the same origin or home country joined together in foreign lands, for instance, when merchants from Hamburg planned to establish themselves abroad. In England for instance the prerequisite and requirement for settling down and establishing a merchant house as a foreign merchant was naturalization, which meant becoming a citizen of England. Only "naturalization originally awarded the newcomer the full rights of a 'natural-born subject' and therefore complete and direct access to British trade."[52] France, however, allowed foreign merchants to establish their business without

50 See in detail also chapter 5. See also Weber, *Deutsche Kaufleute*, 190. See Weber, "The Atlantic Coast of German Trade."

51 See the respective chapters in this book. See Weber, *Deutsche Kaufleute*, 159-165; see Wurm, *Neutralität*, 11- 21; see also Stanziani, *Rules of Exchange*, 38-58; see Huhn, *Handelsverträge*, 34.

52 Schulte Beerbühl, *German Merchants*, 15. On *Denization* as a "limited form of subjecthood that [...] restricted business activities" in England, see ibid. See in general Schulte Beerbühl, *German Merchants*, 15-24. See also Newman, *Anglo-Hamburg Trade*, here particularly 149-159, but also 7-11. Regarding the legal framework of the navigation acts, see Morgan, "British Empire"; Andrews, "Acts of Trade"; Pincus, "Rethinking Mercantilism."

naturalization, and the foreign merchants established there were even exempted from paying customs.[53] Formal provisions for establishing a private partnership company also prevailed in terms of contractual laws and regulations. One was, for instance, not allowed to enter into a partnership with another merchant while one was still in an already existing, ongoing employment relationship. The merchants had to be unattached and not employed elsewhere for the time being, which was a fact that becomes highly relevant in the first episode of this chapter.[54] Last but not least, a very important provision, which was essentially self-explanatory, was that the merchants entering into a partnership also had to prove they had sufficient financial capital for their joint undertaking, that is, that their promises during the negotiations did not lack substance. The same also applied for the promises that merchant clerks, agents and factors made during their negotiations and application process.[55]

With regard to all these important external factors having a concrete bearing on the plan to establish a joint merchant house, the families of the merchants often also got their say and eventually became involved in the negotiation processes. They were ascribed their own specific role during the negotiations. The closest trading partners of the respective merchants also played a role. Both groups, family members and close trading partners, became particularly important in relation to these formal provisions, as the episodes will show, because they acted as the important supervisory body for the planned merger. The family for instance often made sure and monitored that all negotiations and agreements were conducted in accordance with the contemporary rules and ensured that the future partners adhered to the regulations. Furthermore, both the family and the closest trading partners were often specifically asked by the respective merchants to comment on the planned merger and in the end to also give their formal approval for the opening of a new merchant house. By giving their approval and consent to a joint partnership of a family member or a close business partner, the respective groups of people also approved of introducing and institutionally embedding a new firm and often new merchant families into their own circle of acquaintances. The decisive difference between the family firm and the private firm with regard to the role of the family was that the actual matter being negotiated was a merger of two individual and most often formerly separated independent merchants and not an internal coordination of family matters. Therefore, relating to the founding of a private firm, the family primarily acted and negotiated in these negotiations in the role of consultants and arbitrators. The actual responsibility for the implementation and success of the merger and the success of the new merchant house still primarily lay in the hands of the individual merchants planning to join forces. This fact, had, once again, already become unequivocally clear to us from the entry in the *Kruenitz encyclopaedia*. Therein, it is

53 See Huhn, *Handelsverträge*, 34, 87-88; see Weber, *Deutsche Kaufleute*, 166. See *Kommerz- und Seetraktat*, Art. III, Art. IV, Art. V.

54 See in particular the *rules and conditions* of partnership firms ["Societäten", "Kommanditgesellschaften"] mentioned and listed in Savary, *Der vollkommene Kauff- und Handelsmann* [*Le Parfait Négociant*], 386, 392. See "Of tradesmen entering into partnerships" in Defoe, *Complete English Tradesman*, 258. A detailed partnership contract can be found in Marperger, *Der allzeitfertige Handels-Correspondent*, 412.

55 See ibid. See also "Compagnie=Handlung." *Oekonomische Encyklopädie*, vol. 8, 276-279.

stated as a feature and benefit of a joint company that the risks of doing business were being divided amongst parties. Yet, this entailed that a single merchant subsequently always had to account for his actions and justify his business to his business partner. There was thus both a boon and a bane in the business model of the private partnership firm in that the main liability and the responsibility for the success or failure of the firm pertained solely to the partners. This provided young individual merchants with good opportunities to build their career and business relatively independently from their family background.[56] It allowed them to find and choose their future partner on their own behalf and account, based on their own risk and initiative. At the same time, it shows the immense importance of finding a suitable and trustworthy partner because the career depended on this choice

As a last, important note, before entering into the episodes, I need to emphasise that all the described historical developments did not lead to family firms going extinct. In many cases, we can even observe that merchant houses also took the form of mixed business models. After all, the possibility of founding a private firm was not limited just to merchants coming from different families, but it was of course also possible to join forces and establish a private merchant firm as family members or kin. This was precisely what happened in the case of the Frankfurt Bethmann family, who will play an important role in the first letter episode presented in the following part of this chapter. The Bethmann Bank, which still exists today, was founded in 1748 as a private merchant firm ("Gebrüder Bethmann"), resulting from the takeover of the merchant house of Jakob Adami, the foster father of the Bethmann brothers, by the oldest Bethmann son Johann Philipp Bethmann already in 1746, who merged with his brother Simon Moritz Bethmann in 1748.[57] At the end of 1743, however, so three to four years before the Bethmann brothers took this decision, their plans still looked quite different and actually also included the Hamburg merchant Nicolaus Gottlieb Luetkens. In fact, had the merchant Luetkens been successful in his negotiations with the Bethmann brothers from late 1743 until early 1744, the founding history of this firm would now read completely differently.

The part with the letter episodes and their analyses in this chapter is somewhat longer than the episodes in the other chapters because I will tell two episodes in a row. The reason for this is twofold. First, both episodes are interconnected and relate to each other in a chronological way. Since Luetkens' initial plan for establishing and opening up a merchant house with Simon Moritz Bethmann failed, which is covered in the first episode, the merchant had to find a plan B, which is presented in the second episode analysed.

Together the two episodes demonstrate Luetkens' long path to finding a suitable solution to the question of what institutional foundation he should choose for his business, namely the merchant house he wanted to open, which was one of the most important achievements of his establishment phase. Therefore, in order to tell the whole

56 See Hancock, *Citizens of the World*, 106-107. See Grassby, *Business Community*, 82, 401-403. See Häberlein, "Trading Companies." See "Compagnie=Handlung." *Oekonomische Encyklopädie*, vol. 8, 276-279.

57 See Weber, *Deutsche Kaufleute*, 191. See Henninger, *Bethmann*, 90, 101.

story, we have to take a look at both episodes. Secondly, by analysing the two letter episodes I am also killing two birds with one stone because by including both episodes in one chapter I am able to demonstrate two important steps of a young merchants' establishment phase and the business strategies accompanying it, which are strongly interconnected. These important steps for becoming a respectable wholesale merchant with a firm footing were: 1) finding a business partner for your merchant house and 2) finding a suitable merchant clerk, employee, agent and factor, for your business. Both episodes are only understandable when analysed in conjunction with each other. I will also embed my explanations about the letter style and language register of the letters analysed in this chapter – namely, that of showing a *gallant language register of flattery*, in German "Aufwartung" – directly into my analysis because it helps to structure the episodes and to explain the dynamics of the negotiations taking place in the interrelated episodes.[58]

So, after the above thick contextualisation of the personal, structural and formal conditions of a merger between two merchants to establish a joint partner company and to open up a merchant house together, I will continue my thick description also in the analytical parts of this chapter. The insights into the three practical principles of persuasion applied in letter practice that these episodes will reveal to us, in conjunction or rather as the consequence of the textual and material practices constituting these principles, will also be demonstrated on the basis of and derived directly from the material events and the letter negotiations happening in the course of the episodes. These principles are the practical principle of meeting as equals and the practical principle of keeping a low profile in the first episode, which functioned as a contrasting pair within negotiation practice, whereby only the latter principle was crowned with success in the episode. The reasons for the latter fact will be given in my analysis. The practical principle of persuasion applied in the second episode is the principle of insider dealings, which primarily rested on the material letter practice of deliberately inserting single, separate sheets of letter pages, extra pages entailing important but negotiable letter content, into the original letter. The addressee could then either keep these letter pages and continue to use them for certain purposes or he could equally simply destroy them. The latter would mean that the recipient simply removed the extra page from the letter or even burned it, as was typical. Removing it, in turn, meant that the presented idea on this extra sheet of paper literally disappeared into thin air.

This practice shows strong resemblances to the practice of inserting unsealed letters into your letter packets, as presented in the chapter regarding Luetkens' shipping industry. The extra sheet of paper in the episode contained the offer to send a merchant clerk to France. Another crucial practice, which will reveal itself as a significant

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58 Regarding the courtly language of gallantry and courtesy, apart from Rose, *Conduite und Text*, see also Cohen, Michèle. "'Manners' Make the Man: Politeness, Chivalry, and the Construction of Masculinity, 1750–1830." *Journal of British Studies* 44, no. 2 (2005): 312-329, here 319-328. Contemporary examples of gallant letters, of the "galante stylo", as comparative examples can be found in the letter-writing manuals by Neukirch, *Anweisung zu teutschen Briefen*, 209-268. Weise, *Curiöse Gedancken*, 292, 341. See also Rost, Leonhard. *Allerneueste Art Höffliche und manierliche Teutsche Briefe zu schrei*ben [...] Nürnberg: Johann Albrecht, 1736.

asset for merchants in the second episode, is a practice that in the proper sense of the word was contradictory to usual correspondence practice because it waived one of the main characteristics of correspondence practice, which was that letters were sent by mail. In the episode, however, the letter writers decided to hand over certain precious pieces of paper to a private messenger, Luetkens' future clerk, instead of sending these pieces of paper by post, which represented at the same time an important feature and cornerstone of their insider dealing. Since the respective documents still reached their addressee and due to the fact that this practice was not uncommon during that time – quite on the contrary over a long period of time before the 18th century, messengers or couriers were in fact the main means of transportation for letters in the Early Modern Period – this practice surely also needs to be regarded as an integral part of letter practice, or at least as an offshoot of it, during the 18th century even though the letters were not sent by post.[59]

All these practical principles governing letter-writing and correspondence practices decidedly shaped the course of the letter negotiations and written conversations in the presented episodes, and they held a decisive share in the fact that, in the end, Luetkens found a business partner and a merchant clerk, although in the beginning it all seemed as if this undertaking was anything but certain.

6.3 The First Episode: Headhunting

Towards the end of his first long business trip, which had led him to England, the Netherlands, Spain and France, and shortly before his return to Hamburg, during his journey from Bordeaux to Amsterdam in October 1743, Nicolaus Gottlieb Luetkens made a short stop in Rotterdam, where he visited Simon Moritz Bethmann. Bethmann was a son of a renowned Frankfurt merchant family, who was serving as a merchant clerk *ten huyze van John Furly*, an English merchant based in Rotterdam during that time.[60] Being a merchant clerk was a rather typical occupation for a mercantile man at 22 years of age. The meeting went very "pleasantly" ["erquickungsvoll"] – surely not least because of the fact that Simon Moritz's older brother, Johann Jakob Bethmann, renowned merchant, merchant banker and ship-owner in Bordeaux and a close friend of Nicolaus Gottlieb Luetkens for several years already, had arranged the meeting beforehand. In fact, the meeting went so well and harmoniously that Simon Moritz felt the need to send a letter to Nicolaus Gottlieb right after Luetkens' departure, in which he expressed his gratitude to him for his sojourn. In a letter sent to Amsterdam, he wrote that he "remained grateful for the good and pleasant company that his new loyal friend had kept with him" ["treugesinte[n] neue[n] Freund [...] dankende für der geleistete liebreiche

59 Regarding postal services in earlier centuries, messenger and courier services, see Körber, Esther-Beate. "Der soziale Ort des Briefs im 16. Jahrhundert." In *Gespräche, Boten, Briefe. Körpergedächtnis und Schriftgedächtnis im Mittelalter*, edited by Horst Wenzel, 244-258. Berlin: Erich Schmidt, 1997, here 244, 249. See Wenzel, Horst, ed. *Gespräche, Boten, Briefe. Körpergedächtnis und Schriftgedächtnis im Mittelalter*. Berlin: Erich Schmidt, 1997.

60 Regarding the biographical background of both Furly and Simon Moritz Bethmann, see previous explanations in this chapter and in general Henninger, *Bethmann*.

und erquickungsvolle Gesellschaft".]. He furthermore assured him of his "enhanced esteem" ["vergrößerende [...] Hochachtung"] and that he would keep their conversations and all the information that they had shared confidential, "in a deep sea of discretion" ["einem tiefen Meere der Verschwiegenheit"].[61]

Arriving in Amsterdam, Luetkens directly replied to this letter, returning the compliments and also expressing his gratitude to Simon Moritz. Returning to Hamburg in mid-November, a second letter from the Bethmann family already awaited him, this time written by his friend Johann Jakob Bethmann. This letter informed Luetkens that Simon Moritz, Johann Jakob's "brother in Rotterdam, [...] had written a lot of good things about him [Luetkens] and [Johann Jakob adds that his youngest brother will be Luetkens'] [...] faithful friend until death does you apart & that he [Simon Moritz] had thanked him a thousand times for procuring the contact and acquaintance".[62] Johann Jakob added to his report in his letter to Luetkens a short note, which would, however, be of consequence for all the involved parties. Johann Jakob wrote, in a tone already familiar to us from the chapter on commission trade, that the Englishman Furly is nothing but "a scaredy cat and a fool" ["ein Haaßenfuß & Narr"].[63] Not least because of this downright assessment, but surely also as a result of the long personal conversations the two merchants had in Rotterdam, Luetkens "came up with an idea" ["bin auf den Gedancken gekommen"]. This was a typical sentence in the Luetkens correspondence that often marked the beginning of a letter conversation and often also marked the beginning of a joint business venture.

Luetkens' idea, which would be set in motion only a week after, was to entice away or rather poach Simon Moritz from Furly. The goal and result of this enticement, or as we would call it today, of this headhunting, as it was planned, was to establish his own merchant house together with Simon Moritz Bethmann as a business partner in France. This means that Luetkens planned to establish a joint partner company, a "Sosietet" as the merchant himself called it in the typical contemporary wording. The planned location for this trade establishment was Nantes, one of the main hubs of colonial trade and the gateway to the Atlantic market.[64] On the 19th of November 1743 he therefore wrote to Simon Moritz Bethmann that he had already "almost half decided to go to Nantes to establish myself there" and furthermore ventured, "since in case that I put this plan into practice and establish myself ["all da zu etablieren"] in Nantes I would

61 Letter from Bethmann, Simon Moritz to Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, November, 25, 1743, TNA, HCA 30/234.

62 "Bruder in Rotterdam [...] viel gutes von [ihm] geschrieben [habe] und [er versichert zudem, sein jüngerer Bruder sei] [...] euer biß in den Todt getreuer Freund & saget mir 1000fachen Dank vor die ihm procuirte Bekantschafft". Bethmann, Johann Jakob to Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, November 9, 1743, TNA, HCA 30/234.

63 Ibid.

64 Nantes was also the main entrepot of the French slave trade, see Weber, *Deutsche Kaufleute*, 156. Luetkens' own trade, however, rested on the trade in, inter alia, sugar and tobacco, see the chapter on commission trade. He was not involved directly in slave trade. But his trading partners, such as Bethmann, were active parts. Regarding Nantes see also Treutlein, *Schiffahrt*; see Höfer, *Deutsch-französische Handelsbeziehungen*.

like to have a business partner", to "propose [to Simon Moritz] whether E.E. would be interested ["ob Lust"] to associate with me, for circa seven years."[65]

Following this letter, a letter conversation ensued between Nicolaus Gottlieb, Simon Moritz, Johann Jakob, furthermore the oldest brother of the Bethmann family, Johann Philipp, and last but not least with Jakob Adami, the foster father of the Bethmann brothers. This conversation had as its object of negotiation the feasibility and practicability of this suggested enticement.[66] This letter negotiation lasted more than two months, during which not only the subtleties of Early Modern headhunting become apparent to us when reading the correspondents' letters, but also we are presented with the subtleties of the rules and events accompanying the plan to establish a joint partner company and to open a merchant house during the 18th century. Unfortunately, and by mentioning it I have already let the cat out of the bag, Luetkens' plan failed as a result of Johann Philipp's opposition to the plan. The oldest brother, who shared the same point of view as Jakob Adami, simply referred to the existing contractual rules and obligations that Simon Moritz had to meet in the house of Furly, namely that he still had to serve his full, arranged employment time, which put an end to the discussion.

This fact shows once more the importance of the family council during the negotiation process, in which the family acted as consultants, especially with regard to the procedural legality and rightfulness of any endeavour aiming at self-employment. As a decision-making authority, however, it is to be emphasised, in accordance with my aforementioned explanations, that the family did not generally oppose the plan of one of their family members to enter into and establish a private firm, which meant at the same time refraining from entering into the family-run business. The family's role in this negotiation process instead was only to advise, safeguard and observe that everything was carried out in a lawful manner. The fact that the undertaking of Simon Moritz's possible enticement from Furly, was, however, seriously and intensively discussed among the correspondents over several weeks before the final decision was made, without including Furly in the conversation at any time, reveals to us at the same time that this option had still been imaginable and had not been dismissed as a possibility by the parties and correspondents involved right from the beginning. Therefore, enticement was definitely still at least a conceivable opportunity. In the end, however, there probably were too many counterarguments against the considerable efforts that such an enticement would have entailed. Referring to the contractual obligations was therefore also an appropriate and welcome knockout argument used by Johann Philipp to put an end to the negotiation.

The main and true motives behind the rejection of Simon Moritz's enticement will, however, remain mostly in the dark, since we will never know what really went on in past people's minds. There are some hints as to assume that certain personal interests and obligations of other family members collided with the plan, to which I will return again at a later stage of this chapter, including the danger of defamation of the family's

65 Letter from Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb to Bethmann, Simon Moritz, November 19, 1743, TNA, HCA 30/232, Letter Book II, unnumbered.

66 For an analysis of this letter episode using and demonstrating the potentials of the methodological tool and concept of "communities of practice", see Haasis, "Augenblick."

reputation resulting from the breach of a contract. However, these hints still do not provide us with absolute certainty about what was the decisive point that in the end caused the failure of the negotiations. Notwithstanding this, reading and analysing the letters exchanged amongst the correspondents in the form of the conference circuit, as a polyphonic letter conversation, during the two months of negotiation nevertheless provides us with valuable insights into the words, actions and justifications of these merchants of the 18th century. The letter conversation reveals to us the full panoply of ways of negotiation, ways of exerting influence on each other by means of letter writing and corresponding, by means of typical ways of reasoning and of self-representation, which included letter tactics, rhetorics and practices of manoeuvring in negotiation, ways of evaluation, strategic positioning and individual profiling in the course of the negotiation.

We will be presented with two practical principles of persuasion applied in letter practice of the 18th century. We will learn about the practical principle of trying to meet as equals in letters and about the principle of keeping a low profile in letters in order to keep all options open during the further course of a negotiations. The first principle will become obvious from Luetkens' letters, while the second principle represented the negotiation strategy used by Simon Moritz Bethmann. Both practical principles of persuasion presented will be revealing with regard to the merchants' self-perceptions, their strategies for winning each other's favour and their negotiation skills. Only the second practical principle of keeping a low profile was crowned with success or paid off in the end because it allowed Simon Moritz Bethmann to find an appropriate exit strategy from Luetkens' offer. Therefore, what we gain from the analysis of these letters is once again the materialised and direct evidence of the processes and functions, the resources and effects of letter practice. After the failure of the enticement, Luetkens was forced to look for other options and eventually found a suitable solution, which he once again put into practice by means of writing letters and on the basis of another practical principle of persuasion, the principle of arranging insider dealings. By looking at these letters we will learn about how the practical problems and matters behind the letter negotiations were solved and how concrete plans and actions regarding the establishment of a merchant house were put into practice on the basis of letters. Thus, also at the content level, the letters will be revealing because they will demonstrate how Luetkens found ways to set the course for his career, promoting his establishment phase through letter practice.

Stages of an "affaire en question". The Practical Principle of Trying to Meet as Equals

It was with good reason that the negotiations regarding Simon Moritz Bethmann's enticement from Furly in Rotterdam happened behind closed doors, or to be more precise, within sealed letters. An enticement was a difficult undertaking. Existing contractual agreements had to be examined and potential opportunities or gaps in the agreements had to be found. The consequences of such a step and the advantages or disadvantages for the parties involved had to be carefully considered. During the whole negotiation phase, furthermore, all parties had to keep the negotiations, the information and their letters confidential. Luetkens' wish and Simon Moritz's written approval that their letter conversation was kept in a *deep sea of discretion* therefore was not just empty talk or meaningless letter formulae but was meant literally.

Highly revealing and indicative is the fact that the English merchant Furly does not appear and was not included in the letter conversation of the correspondents at any point in this episode. Although we know that Jakob Adami maintained close contacts with Furly, we do not find any letters or copies of letters in the Luetkens correspondence from Furly himself. The latter was instead kept entirely in the dark about Luetkens' plans.[67] This fact also underlines the often tense situation in which young merchants found themselves during their establishment phase. They had to carefully consider whom to trust and whom to fill in on their plans because these decisions could have direct consequences for their career. Luetkens decided to first directly approach Simon Moritz himself and then to also win over Johann Jakob for his plans. The latter two then approached their oldest brother, who informed Adami. In a kind of conference circuit, the five merchants subsequently regulated the matter among themselves, and given the outcome they eventually arrived at, it proved beneficial that they had kept Furly out of the negotiation. Notwithstanding this, analysing this negotiation process provides us with crucial insights into mercantile self-perceptions, negotiation practices, mentalities and into the subtleties of finding a suitable business partner for a joint partner company.

The beginning of the negotiations was marked by the letter from Nicolaus Gottlieb Luetkens to Simon Moritz Bethmann on the 19th of November, sent from Hamburg. In this letter to Simon Moritz, Nicolaus Gottlieb explained, from his point of view and in great detail, the benefits of a joint establishment in Nantes and the reasons why he was interested in joining forces with the young Frankfurt merchant. He wrote that his "sole aim was to find someone who had learned something and who was skilled and able to manage his correspondence and since I am convinced that E.E. is capable of this task and furthermore I do not doubt ["nicht zweyfelle"] that our humours will correspond ["Humores miteinander übereinkommen"] with each other, I have cast an eye on E.E. Nantes is a place where business will still be profitable."[68] Luetkens did not doubt that they would within a short time build a lucrative business there because of the fact that "in foreign lands young merchants can earn their daily bread with little effort", that is, the prospect of making a living and doing profitable business was good.[69] In order to facilitate the decision, he furthermore offered to contribute the lion's share of the shared starting capital of their joint company. With this proposition and his envisioned approach for the joint partner company, Luetkens therefore apparently completely complied with the common practice of a business merger, about which we have learned from the entry in the *Kruenitz encyclopaedia* in the previous part of this chapter. The merchant proposed to join forces with Simon Moritz on the basis of suggesting complementing

67 See Henninger, *Bethmann*, 116.

68 Letter from Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb to Bethmann, Simon Moritz, November 19, 1743, TNA, HCA 30/232, Letter Book II, unnumbered.

69 Ibid.

each other in different ways and with regard to different competences, but also with regard to sharing capital.

In view of the information provided in the encyclopaedia, Simon Moritz's part in the company would therefore be the part of the diligent worker, while Luetkens himself would take over the role of the major capital- and shareholder. For Simon Moritz this proposition was nonetheless apparently a very attractive offer because he would no longer merely be a merchant clerk but a wholesale merchant in a merchant house. The most intriguing aspect of this letter in this respect and especially with regard to means of persuasion in letters clearly is Luetkens' concrete reference to the benefits of an establishment abroad as they would present themselves particularly to young merchants. With this reference, Luetkens did not only refer to Simon Moritz's status but also referred to and included himself and his own status, by means of which he once more underlined the two men's commonality and the importance of corresponding humours. In order to establish a merchant house and a firm footing in Nantes, they needed to act in concert and pull together. So, although Luetkens would be the one who would bring in most of the capital, he still needed Simon Moritz to put his plans into practice. With this sentence, he therefore expressed his appreciation for Simon Moritz and at the same time he indicated that both men shared the same fate and faced similar challenges, which was that they needed to prove themselves worthy and had to demonstrate success during this phase of their career development and needed to manage to stand on their own feet. This latter fact once more hinted quite clearly to Simon Moritz that it was indispensable that their letter conversation should be kept confidential and that Simon Moritz should "not mention his name to anyone" outside their letter circle.[70]

This expression of appreciation and the offer in general was received with enthusiasm by Simon Moritz. Already one mail delivery day, one post-day, later, he replied that his "mind and senses were all churned up inside". He subsequently dedicated an entire letter page to expressing, in a typical, contemporary *gallant tone* of exuberant joy, his gratitude over the "candid declaration, the affection and trust" that Luetkens put in him, and he particularly thanked Luetkens for the "good concept" and opinion that Luetkens had "formed about such a simple person as him". He furthermore affirmed and admitted "with truth" that he was so stirred that he "cannot find words to describe [...] my fortune, which drives me from wave to wave", even though he had already "read the letter several times".[71] Still, as part of the so called *confirmatio* of the letter – the main part of a letter, which was typically the section that served the purpose to make

70 Ibid.

71 "Wenn ich indeßen dero liebwerthe letztern Zeilen zu verschiedenen Mahlen überleßen, so muß ich warlich gestehen, daß mein Gemüth und Sinnen gäntzlich entrüstet und ich selbsten nicht alsobald mich darin faßen können, unterfindende, wie das Schicksal mich von einer Welle zu der andern treibet, und mit mir sehr artigzu Werke gehet. Ich muß zu meinen beßonderen Vergnügen wahrnehmen was für ein gutes Concept E.E. in dero Hierßein von meiner geringen Perßon sich formiret nun ich kann dann auch mit der Warheit betheuern, daß ich in meinem Gemüthe: auch etwas apertes [aufgewühlt] verspühret, welches ich mit Worten nicht außdrücken kann, welches sich dann nun in der That thut äußern, in Ansehung dero gegen mich so freymüthig gethanen Diclaration, von dero genommene Entschließung, um sich unter Gottes Seegen in Nantes niederzulaßen, und die Zuneigung & Vertrauens, welches E.E. auf mich geworfen haben, unter beyfügender

statements and to react to questions from the addressees – he confirmed and provided evidence for this good *concept* that had been attributed to him by Luetkens.[72] Without the aim of "reasoning" ["raisonieren"], meaning, from his perspective, without boasting about his qualifications, but rather merely by means of recalling reports and testimonies of others ["rapportieren"], he underlined that since the age of 14 he had "gained plenty of experience". Furthermore, he emphasizes with regard to his way of life that he conducted himself as a respectable man, as "it is appropriate for decent people". Last but not least, he directly reiterated and reacted to one of Luetkens' main statements stating that he is capable of "earning his bread with diligence and through the sweat of my brow". In direct response to Luetkens' letter he also emphasised that "in case, as God will allow it, they reach an agreement", he was certain that their "humours would resemble unanimously". However, if they did not reach an agreement, he promised that this would not mean that Luetkens had to expect in any way a "freezing or rejection of love" amongst the two of them. The most important sentence in his letter was, however, yet to follow. At the end of his reply he pointed out that he still had to ask his brothers for advice, for which he needed to write letters to them, "presenting the case to them" and asking them in a "ocean of decency" for their "opinion from the heart" on the matter and "if there is an easy way to get away from his patron without fuss ["facilement"]".[73]

I am quoting these two letters at length and provide the entire quote in the original in the footnote because they represent the foundation for the whole negotiation process and Simon Moritz' negotiation strategy. At the same time, they already entail major characteristics of negotiation that should in the end shape the whole episode. In this first letter exchange, the cautious approach that both letter writers chose for entering

Proposta, ob ich resolviret wäre, mit E.E. unßer gemeinschaftliches Glück zu bauen". Letter from Bethmann, Simon Moritz to Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, November 25, 1743, TNA, HCA 30/234.

72 Regarding the typical letter structure (following the *ars dictaminis*) in letters of the Early Modern Period (1. Salutatio 2. Exordium 3. Narratio 4. Confirmatio 5. Refutatio 6. Petitio 7. Conclusio 8. Subscriptio 9. Inscriptio), which still prevailed during the 18th century, although already undergoing a transformation towards freer forms of letter structures (which became the standard during the second half of the 18th century), see Furger, *Briefsteller*, 149. See also Anton, Annette C. *Authentizität als Fiktion. Briefkultur im 18. und 19. Jahrhundert.* Stuttgart: J.B. Metzler, 1995, 9-10.

73 "Angehende meine wenige Capacitat, will ich nicht vieles raisoniren, sondern rapportire mich lediglich auf das Zeugnüß wildfremder Menschen, [...] indeme ich mich lebenslang befließen, um etwas rechtes zu erlernen, und mich dardurch in Stand zusetzen, um heute oder morgen mein Stückgen Brod mit Mühe und im Schweiße meines Angeßichtes zu verdienen. [...] Auch ist mit Gott bey mir beschloßen, um mich lebenslang, so zu betragen gleich es einem der Ehre ergebenen Menschen anständig ist. Seit meinem 14ten Jahre habe ich bey frembden Menschen mit Comptoir Sachen umgegangen, daß ich hoffte, so viel thunliche Experienz erlanget zu haben,jedoch auch wohl wissende, daß es nicht allzeit auf die Jahre eines Jünglingsthut ankommen, sondern ob Ihn Gott mit guten Gaben geßegnet hat. Ich bin überzeugt, meine Brüder werden mir ihres Hertzens Meinung eröffnen und mein bestes prüfen, nicht minder, ob es möglich ist, von meinem Patrons facilement weg zu kommen [...] Istes bey denselben beschloßen, daß dieße Sache zum Stande komt, Fiat [Schicksal] denn bin ich verßichert, unßere Gemüther werden einmüthig gepaaret einhergehen. Ist es aber, daß es nicht sein solte, dann spreche ich nochmahls fiat unterwerfende mich gantz tranquill [unbesorgt] der weißen Führung, und wird es darum an meiner Seite keine Erkaltung oder Verwiederung der Liebe gegen E.E. erwecken." Letter from Bethmann, Simon Moritz to Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, November 25, 1743, TNA, HCA 30/234.

into the negotiations becomes unmistakably obvious. We notice a reciprocal balancing and a sounding out of potential opportunities. Luetkens obviously made every effort to meet as an equal with Simon Moritz Bethmann. For this purpose, he used a letter style and diction that was typical for *letters of flattery* exchanged among merchant correspondents, that is among equals. This becomes obvious not only from comparing this letter to other letters written by Luetkens to his other trading partners, but also from comparing this letter to example letters in contemporary letter-writing manuals.

In these manuals, such as for instance the famous manual by Hunold's *Allerneueste Art Höflich und Galant zu schreiben* from 1702, we can in fact find such mercantile letter examples in chapters specifically dedicated to this form of letter writing.[74] In these chapters, the mercantile letter "stylo" was described as being shaped by brevity, plainness, clarity and a certain directness, promoting mutual esteem and respect.[75] This is precisely what characterised Luetkens' letter. The Hamburg merchant limited his statements and concentrated his request to Simon Moritz on the essentials, he stuck to the facts and pointed out the advantages of the planned undertaking. His major line of argument is that both their *humours* would correspond, resemble each other, which would form a good basis for a joint partner company. Thus, Luetkens mobilised and pointed to the one major aspect that was also emphasised in the *Kruenitz encyclopaedia* as the basic prerequisite for establishing a joint merchant house. This reference, however, also had another concrete reason, which was that by means of pointing to it especially, Luetkens once more tried to meet Simon Moritz on common ground and on equal terms. The practical principle of persuasion behind this was the principle of trying to meet as equals, by refering to commonality and "corresponding humours" as the basis for a joint partner company.[76] This becomes particularly clear when we consult other merchant manuals of the time in addition to the *Kruenitz Encyclopaedia* because *corresponding humours* was not an argument that was used merely sporadically. Rather, it actually appears in almost every merchant manual and letter-writing manual of the period.

So, for instance in Paul Jacob Marperger's *Der getreue und geschickte Handelsdiener* ["The faithful and skilled merchant clerk", 1715], Daniel Defoe's *The Complete English Tradesman* (1726) or in the most famous mercantile manual of the time, Jacques Savary's *Le Parfait Négociant* ["Der vollkommene Kauff- und Handelsmann" in German, "The Perfect Tradesman" in English, first edition 1675], we can find exactly the same argument. It is stated there, for instance, that for finding a merchant partner it was crucial "to choose someone who is skilled, honourable and of equal humour ["humors"] because being of

74 Hunold, *Die Allerneueste Art Höflich und Galant zu Schreiben*, "Funffzehenden Abtheilung: Kauffmanns= Briefe", 561-590.

75 Regarding the style of business letters and their language register, see chapter 5 in detail. See Defoe, *Complete English Tradesman*, 22-25. Other manuals state the same characteristics for merchant letters, which should be "easy, simple, plain, and perspicuous." Mair, *Book-keeping methodiz'd*, 6-7. See also Marperger, *Der allzeitfertige Handels-Correspondent*, 230.

76 See also Trivellato, "A Republic of Merchants," 144, who also refers to the fact that "friendship (amitié) was the bond of business association" during the 18th century.

the same kind ["gleiche Art"] is a necessity amongst like-minded people."[77] A merchant should regard and treat his business partner "like a brother" ["wie ein Bruder"].[78] At the same time, these characteristics of persons also marked the difference between the status of an apprentice, a merchant clerk and a business partner. The crucial characteristics and personal skills that were regarded as important during these earlier stages of a career, such as for instance cleanliness or obedience, no longer appear in the profile of requirement for a business partner because by that stage they were regarded as being self-evident.[79] A person regarded as qualified and worthy of being considered a business partner for a merchant partnership ("Sosietet") had to show skills, experience, an honourable reputation and *corresponding humours* and these are precisely the character traits that Luetkens highlighted in his letter.[80] Based on these characteristics the two of them, whose common feature was that they were both "young merchants", would have no problems to manage the challenges of this stage of life together and "earn their daily bread with little effort", as Luetkens wrote. Put in a nutshell, Luetkens' persuasive strategy for winning over Simon Moritz for his plans in his letters was to approach him not as an inferior but as an equal. He approached him by means of the form and content of his letter not as a merchant clerk, which Simon Moritz was at that time, but already as future business partners, whom he treated with the due respect and courtesy, which surely did not fail to flatter the addressee. This represents at the same time the clearest expression of the practical principle of meeting as equals being effective in this episode. Unfortunately though, Luetkens' efforts in this regard should not pay off.

Simon Moritz's response letter did not take Luetkens up on this flattery and the flat hierarchy, but quite on the contrary. He replied with a letter of great humbleness, which presents us literally with exactly the opposite of the principle of persuasion that Luetkens had employed. Instead of being willing to meet as an equal with Luetkens, Simon Moritz tried everything in his power to keep a low profile, using all the contemporary resources and opportunities available to him to formulate a letter of gallant humbleness as a way to mark his own position in this negotiation process.

The Practical Principle of Keeping a Low Profile

Writing such a letter of humbleness in an appropriate way was typical at the time and complied with the contemporary rules and etiquette of social conduct as we find them once again also in the letter-writing manuals of the time. The noticeably effusive way of expression and the flowery tone of the letter mirrored the typical and socially accepted contemporary ways of so called *gallant conversation* and *gallantry* or *gallant conduct*, "conduite" in French and German, which had been popular since the end of the 17th century

77 Savary, *Der vollkommene Kauff- und Handelsmann* [*Le Parfait Négociant*], 282. See Marperger, *Getreuer und geschickter Handelsdiener*, 427-428.

78 Marperger, *Der allzeitfertige Handels-Correspondent*, 238. See also Defoe, *Complete English Tradesman*, 262.

79 See Marperger, *Getreuer und Geschickter Handelsdiener*, "Caput XII. Was ein Kauffmanns=Diener/der seinen eigenen Handel/entweder vor sich selbst allein/oder in Compagnie mit einem andern anzufangen gedencket/dabey zu observiren habe", 427-429.

80 See also "Compagnie=Handlung." *Oekonomische Encyklopädie*, vol. 8, 276-279.

and was still popular in the 1740s.[81] Another contemporary source, Johann Christian Barth's *Die galante Ethica* from 1728, aptly summarised this contemporary *mode of behaviour*, referring to both a person's actions and words. As regards a person's actions, a gallant way of behaviour stipulated that a person would "recommend himself by means of compliant behaviour and conduct and decent gestures, which had become grand mode in the gallant world". With regard to a person's words, gallantry entailed and stipulated that a person should carefully observe his "own devoir", that is, carry out his social duties, by means of expressing "polite and mannerly compliments" to his fellow men and women, and "furthermore conduct himself skilfully in his way of talking".[82]

This gallant ideal and way of behaviour strongly shaped and governed the letter by Simon Moritz, allowing him or rather providing him with the means to send a gesture of humbleness to Luetkens, which his addressee clearly also unmistakably understood as such. The concrete reason for Simon Moritz choosing this letter style, however, far exceeded the sole fact of complying with a typical contemporary language style. He also used it skilfully to formulate his answer in a relatively non-committal and innocuous way, putting himself into a starting position for the negotiation process that allowed him to keep all his options open. Furthermore, concomitant to that, it also allowed him to pass on certain responsibilities and decision-making powers to other people, namely his brothers. The decision to use this way of answering Luetkens' letters and putting himself in an inferior position therefore did not stem only from the motivation to comply with contemporary rules of conduct and courtoisie, but it also provided him with a certain room for manoeuvre and made him capable of acting and of reacting. This way he was able to enter into a negotiation setting that would postpone the actual decision, but instead asked or even urged the addressee for patience.

Simon Moritz was obviously unsure and undecided if he wanted to take the risk and also if this undertaking was at all feasible. He first had to ask his brothers for help. Nevertheless, he tried to keep Luetkens interested. This is the reason why he ultimately exaggerated both the form and the style of his letter. That is, he naturally drew on the typical style and language register of gallant writing and a typical hierarchal structural principle for his response letter, but he literally carried it to the extreme. He pulled out all the stops of his chosen language register, the gallant register of flattery, and used all available means in order to stay non-committal and showcase that he was dependent on the help of his brothers, by which ploy he avoided taking responsibility himself.

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81 See Rose, *Conduite und Text*, in general, as an introduction 1-32 ("Einleitung: Galante Conduite und galante Texte"), 51-65 ("Die galante Welt"). See Steigerwald, Jörn. "Galanterie als kulturelle Identitätsbildung: Französisch-deutscher Kulturtransfer im Zeichen der Querelles." In *German Literature, History and the Nation*, edited by Christian Emden and David Midgley, 119-141. Oxford: Lang, 2004. See Anton, Annette C. *Authentizität als Fiktion. Briefkultur im 18. und 19. Jahrhundert*. Stuttgart: J.B. Metzler, 1995, 27. See Vellusig, *Schriftliche Gespräche*, 77; Furger, *Briefsteller*, 26, 165, 181; see also Beetz, *Frühmoderne Höflichkeit*. Regarding Gallantry in Hamburg, see Fulda, *Galanterie und Frühaufklärung*. For gallant France, see in particular Viala, *La France galante*. For contemporary examples, see Lamy, Bernard. *L'Art de parler*. Paris: André Pralard, 1670. Regarding the shift from courtesy to civility in England, see Bryson, *From Courtesy to Civility*, 1-42.

82 Barth, Johann Christian. *Die Galante Ethica Oder nach der neuesten Art eingerichtete Sitten-Lehre*. Dresden/Leipzig: Harpenter, 1728. Translation by the author.

As a matter of fact though, considering his actual status, career level and situation, he could just as well have answered Luetkens' letter in a more assertive way and just the way as Luetkens had offered it to him: that is, as an equal. The reason for this is that, as things stood, the two young merchants were in fact basically at exactly the same career level and more or less in the same situation, one serving as a merchant clerk, the other being a travelling commission agent. The only catch to the matter and the problem that needed to be solved was to find a way to terminate the contract with Furly. To point out this catch the exaggerated rhetoric was not necessarily needed, but it was definitely necessary to keep the backdoor open in order to be able to reject Luetkens' offer at any time in the future. In any case, Simon Moritz could at least have put more emphasis on the fact that he would do everything in his own power to try to make sure that the idea was put into practice, but he did not. Instead, he chose to use many expressions that pointed to the complexity and difficulties of his situation, which therefore presented it not as a situation that was easy to solve but as a catch-22. For instance, he used the typical, contemporary expression and letter formula that he could not find suitable words to describe his emotional state.[83] He also referred to the turbulent "waves of fate" in which he would find himself following the offer, pointing out that he was torn between concern and confidence in the matter. He therefore had no other choice than entrusting the whole matter to God and *God's will* which was a very common motif and topos of the period, but which once more stressed the fact that he himself was supposedly far more powerless than Luetkens expected him to be.

6.4 Breadwinning and Letter Citation

The strategy that Simon Moritz Bethmann therefore chose for his letter to Luetkens was in a way a reversal or weakening of the general tenor of Luetkens' own letter, which had been that the situation and the prospect for establishing a merchant house in Nantes would be a simple matter. But Simon Moritz considered it rather a challenge, which becomes especially clear and apparent in the way that he used and replied to the central biblical topos of breadwinning quoted in the letters, referring to the Bible passage from Genesis/1. Moses 3/19: "By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread". Whereas Luetkens referred to this topos and motif by means of praising the *little* effort ["leuchten Mühe sein Brodt haben kan"] necessary to establish themselves in Nantes, Simon Moritz instead emphasised and insinuated the necessary *diligence work* that needed to be done for this purpose, which he would, however, be capable of doing with the "sweat of his brow" ["mein Stückgen Brod mit Mühe und im Schweiße meines Angeßichtes zu verdienen"].[84] This underpins both his capability of being a suitable business partner, but

83 "Der Feder mangelt das Vermögen" was the most typical letter formulae in this regard, Hunold, *Die Allerneueste Art Höflich und Galant zu Schreiben*, 138. Regarding this dilemma of expression, "Ausdrucksdilemma" as it is called in German today, see Rose, *Conduite und Text*, 163-169, 181-190, 210-215.

84 Letter from Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb to Bethmann, Simon Moritz, November 19, 1743, TNA, HCA 30/232, Letter Book II, unnumbered; Letter from Bethmann, Simon Moritz to Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, November 25, 1743, TNA, HCA 30/234.

it also shows his own assessment of the situation as being more complex and laborious than presented by Luetkens.

This whole line of argument is thus very clever because in this way Simon Moritz was able to send the message to Luetkens that things were not generally hopeless, but that reaching a positive outcome would be tougher and more difficult than Luetkens had expected and depicted it in his letter. In this way, Simon Moritz was in the end skilfully able to mark his own standpoint and starting position for the upcoming negotiation process and simultaneously shaped and determined the further course of negotiation in a way that he considered advisable and preferable. Namely, he provided the justification for expanding the correspondence circle and calling in his brothers. This justification did, in the further course of events following from this letter, not only present itself as being necessary in terms of asking them for their assistance and their assessment regarding the contractual solution with Furly, but also, on the more personal note, it was necessary to free him from his hesitancy and indecisiveness – and this was in the end the basic message, the double layered message that he conveyed to Luetkens by means of his letter.

The response letter by Luetkens turned out as expected. Even though Simon Moritz's letter must have fallen short of Luetkens' initial expectations, the latter agreed to call in the other Bethmann brothers. In his letter from the 5th of December, he consented that Simon Moritz should consult and "seek your brothers' advice".[85] At the same time, he already had taken precautions himself, since he himself must have been definitely aware of the specific circumstances and the bureaucratic hurdles but also the more personal hurdles that they had to overcome in order to put the plan into practice. Therefore, he had written a letter to Johann Jakob Bethmann, in which he directly asked him for his opinion on the matter. The response of the second oldest son of the Bethmann family, addressing Luetkens by his first name instead of the usual E.E., as a sign of their friendship, reached him only a short time later and gave him a glimmer of hope. Johann Jakob wrote that he had received Luetkens' message "with lots of pleasure [...] ["viel Plaisir"] and should the matter turn out successfully ["reussirt die Sache"], I would be very delighted." He also approved of Nantes as a place for establishment and of the fact that Luetkens offered to bear the lion's share of the capital in the company. He furthermore confirmed and once more reaffirmed the qualities of his brother – in quite familiar words. "That you will find a righteous, prudent and neat man and associate" ["rechtschaffenen braven, verständigen & hübschen Jungen & Associe finden wirst"] was beyond question because Simon Moritz was known for not "having learned to laze around, but he loves to work and to earn his bread with honour". He himself would furthermore "contribute in whatever ways necessary" to contribute to the success of the "Societeet". In this regard, he even suggested and asked Luetkens for his opinion on also building a partnership and bond between their merchant house, Bethmann & Imbert, in Bordeaux, and the future company of his brother and Luetkens in Nantes. Thus, he even proposed to join together in a larger joint company "namely with you, my brother, Imbert and myself, in order to have a merchant house in Nantes and here" in

85 "bey seine Brüder Ratts erhollet". Letter from Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb to Bethmann, Simon Moritz, December 5, 1743, TNA, HCA 30/232, Letter Book II, unnumbered.

Bordeaux".[86] In this regard, he emphasised that his own merchant house was already capable of earning their living, "earning their bread", and it enjoyed a great reputation.[87] This message must have been received with nothing but joy by Luetkens because it must have given him reason to believe that the whole undertaking and situation was in the end not hopeless. The whole letter exchange between the correspondents literally unfolds before our eyes as an impressive polyphonic written letter conversation, which I have reconstructed in the following figure and illustration.

Figure 15: Reconstruction of all the letter exchanges regarding the attempted enticement of Simon Moritz Bethmann away from the Amsterdam merchant Furly based on the letters in TNA, HCA 30/234.

	Nicolaus Gottlieb Luetkens *Hamburg*	Simon Moritz Bethmann *Rotterdam*	Johann Jakob Bethmann *Bordeaux*	Johann Philipp Bethmann *Frankfurt*	Jakob Adami *Frankfurt*
21/10/1743	NGL ←	SMB			
09/11/1743	NGL ←	———	JJB		
19/11/1743	NGL →	SMB			
25/11/1743	NGL ←	SMB - - - -	- - - -		
03/12/1743	NGL ←	———	JJB ←		
05/12/1743	NGL →	SMB - - - -	- - - -	- - - -	
09/12/1743	NGL ←	SMB ←	———	JPB ←	
17/12/1743	NGL →	SMB			
20/12/1743	NGL ———	——— →	JJB →	JPB - - - -	- - - -
23/12/1743	NGL ←	SMB ←	JJP		
03/01/1744	NGL ←	SMB ←	———	———	JA ←
	← → Letters	← Letter copies	- - - ←	Letters (not preserved)	

In essence, reading the transcript of the conversation is akin to witnessing a conference call, to put it in modern terms, in which mutual recognition and cross-referencing obviously ranked as an important and valuable asset. Johann Jakob confirmed and highlighted exactly the same qualities for a merchant during establishment that had already been discussed before. In fact, just as in the case of Simon Moritz, he once more specifically picked up on these points with direct responses and even concrete citations of the preceding letters. Today, we would say that they literally fed each other lines. The most common thread in the letter exchanges appears to be based on the topos of breadwinning, which is not only presented as the prerequisite for cooperation, but which is also used by the letter writers to distinctively mark their own standpoint on the matter and their position within the negotiation process. In Johann Jakob's case, the motif symbolised his role as a benefactor and backer of the undertaking, which at the same time marks his own reputation. As a member of the Bethmann family who has already managed to make a name for himself, he for his part was already successfully *earning his bread* ["unßer Brodt haben"], from which perspective he also reaffirmed that

86 Letter from Bethmann, Johann Jakob to Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, December 3, 1743, TNA, HCA 30/234.

87 "wir, wie du weißt, bereits große Sachen thun, und unßer Brodt haben." Ibid.

also his brother was also going to be capable of perpetuating the family tradition and honour.

By means of this letter-writing practice of mutual letter citation, within the letter conversation, therefore a foundation for negotiation was created, which entailed or was based on a clear basic tenor regarding the characteristic features of a suitable subjectum in merchant business. However, coming back to the concrete course of negotiation, there was nevertheless a crucial snag to Johann Jakob's response letter that also had severe consequences for the following letter negotiations. This major snag was that although Johann Jakob backed the whole undertaking and even proposed an extension to the original plan, he nevertheless did not make any concrete proposal as to how the actual crux of the matter could be solved. The one thing that his letter lacked was a solution strategy to the real problem, which was how Simon Moritz could be released from his employment contract in the house of Furly. Therefore, Johann Jakob presented himself and understood his role as being a supporter and consultant of Luetkens' plan, but regarding the concrete course of negotiation he reduced himself to the role of a bystander. The actual and final decision in the matter therefore depended on the opinion of the oldest brother in the family, Johann Philipp Bethmann.

How far-reaching and significant the demonstrated restraint by Johann Jakob and his avoidance of a clear statement regarding the contract dissolution was, which also provides us with an explanation for both Simon Moritz's and Johann Jakob's negotiation tactics, becomes apparent when we read the response letter by this oldest brother of the Bethmann family in the next step. In this regard, the way in which this letter and its message in the end materially reached Luetkens is highly revealing. It reached Luetkens enclosed in the next letter from Simon Moritz as a "true and faithful copy" of the original French letter that Simon Moritz had received from his brother.[88] This letter by Johann Philipp ultimately represented nothing less than an impressive prime example and masterpiece of negotiation practice and the powers of persuasion applied in letter practice in the Early Modern Period. It included all ingredients, all properties that letters offered the writers of the period to exert certain influence and to shape negotiation processes by means of letters.

Therefore, in the next letter that reached Luetkens from the Bethmann family, the third brother Johann Philipp, as represented in the genuine copy of his original letter, entered the stage and voiced his opinion about the "affair in question". Simon Moritz himself justified his approach of simply copying in the letter from his brother into his own letter by emphasising that he thus wanted to eliminate misunderstandings. This was why he would "take the liberty to reproduce the letter by my brother taliter qualiter", in the original wording.[89] With this material gesture, however, he also carried to the extreme his submissive approach and way of communication and his self-positioning in a devoted role, showing his limited opportunities within the negotiation process. He basically materialised his non-committal self-presentation by way of letting his brother,

88 Letter from Bethmann, Simon Moritz to Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, December 9, 1743, TNA, HCA 30/234.

89 Ibid. The typical letter formulae of *taking the liberty* was used in all other chapters in this book at least once.

or more concretely, his brother's letter speak for him, and thus he completely shirked his responsibilities. Speaking for the course and logic of the entire letter conversation, however, one has to say, that his calculation, the strategy that he pursued right from the start of the negotiations, ultimately paid off. Having remained non-committal in his letters beforehand, he now could claim for himself that he had not made any false promises to Luetkens but merely found himself in the thankless position of being dependent on his brother's will and consent.

Johann Philipp's response letter to his brother, as it was copied in Simon Moritz letter to Nicolaus Gottlieb Luetkens, read as follows. The Frankfurt merchant wrote in a tone that he himself described as the "usual candour", which would be common and expected in gallant letter conversations during that time, but that rather came across as an abrasive tone conveying the message of a wagging finger. He emphasised that he "sees only few signs for him accepting the offer". He told his brother that he should make himself aware of "the plenty of new merchant houses that have established themselves in the ports of France in the last few years" and made him understand that the enterprises and all the "commissions are already sufficiently divided among them, the coups are already made" ["les meilleurs coups sont faits"]. Furthermore, as one of these German merchant houses in France, their brother Johann Jakob Bethmann, as he stressed, was already established there, which means there was definitely no need for two brothers of the Bethmann family to establish themselves in France. Last but not least, he emphasized that Simon Moritz was not yet experienced enough with the "local business" ["des afaires de la place"] in France, and, as the final stroke, the overall snag to the story, he pointed out that "apart from all these reasons you must be aware and know very well ["vous savés bien"] that you are engaged in the house of Furly for 4 to 5 years and as a rule ["la convention"] you need to spent at least 2 to 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ years there."[90]

6.5 A Fatal Blow in a Letter Conversation

Johann Philipp's response letter meant a fatal blow to Luetkens' idea and plan. It came as the figurative sledgehammer, which was a principle of persuasion in its own right, about which we have already learned in detail in the chapter on commission trade. The sledgehammer method put the power constellation in the family and within the letter conversation straight and left no doubt about the opinion of the oldest brother. His response also in a way provides a belated explanation for the hesitant approach of the two other brothers. They must have guessed that such a response was likely to happen. The crucial point, however, and the interesting thing about the negotiation process is that, beforehand, letters had been exchanged dealing with the advantages and disadvantages of such an undertaking. This means that the correspondents, Simon Moritz and Johann Jakob, had not categorically excluded the possibility of a possible enticement right from the beginning and that there was at least a hope that their oldest brother

90 Letter from Bethmann, Johann Philipp to Bethmann, Simon Moritz, December 8, 1743, copied in the letter from Bethmann, Simon Moritz to Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, December 9, 1743, TNA, HCA 30/234.

would reply positively and therefore differently than he did in the end. Consequently, the matter must have generally been seen as negotiable, otherwise there would have been no need to exchange letters at all.

The fact that the negotiations resulted in a rather foreseeable end does not outweigh the fact that at least negotiations were still conducted. Obviously, the correspondents must have had reason to believe that there was hope and good reasons for breaking with Furly. These reasons, however, were simply not regarded as sufficient by Johann Philipp. As evidence of this fact serves the fact that prior to his rebuffal Johann Philipp did not actually limit his considerations to merely the absolute hard facts, that is, the simple fact that it was neither possible nor advisable to break with contractual obligations, which basically would have been argument enough. Instead, even he accepted and reacted to the fact that there had been more aspects and conditions to consider before such a decision could be made. It was a pity for both Nicolaus Gottlieb Luetkens and Simon Moritz Bethmann, as well as Johann Jakob, though, that the aim of Johann Philipp's letter was to rebuke and weaken each and every argument that had been made beforehand. Still, he confirmed the same qualities and catalogue of criteria and crucial character traits for a merchant during establishment as the other participants in the conversation. Contrary to Nicolaus Gottlieb, Simon Moritz and Johann Jakob though, he implied that he was not completely sure that Simon Moritz already showed these qualifications. Once again in direct reference to the other letters, he emphasised Simon Moritz's lack of experience instead of confirming the "Experienz" of his youngest brother. The point of the supposed advantage of corresponding humours, which he surely accepted as a prerequisite and benefit for a joint partner company, was undermined in his letter as a reason for a merger between Simon Moritz and Nicolaus Gottlieb. Johann Philipp pointed out in his letter that the quality of corresponding humours was no unique selling point for the planned merchant house in Nantes since at that time France was oversupplied with German merchants and merchant houses. Pointing at the glut of German merchant houses established in French ports, Johann Philipp furthermore placed a large question mark over the supposed "little effort" necessary to build a successful merchant house in France that Nicolaus Gottlieb had emphasised in his first letter. No hard work and diligence could compensate for the fact that *les meilleurs coups sont faits* and all commissions were already divided among the existing merchant houses. The knockout argument at the end of the letter that once more denied the convenience of the merger, by denying that a termination of the contract with Furly was in any way easy, that is, it could not happen "facilement", was therefore only the icing on the cake of the complete rejection of Luetkens' idea.

The reason why Johann Philipp's letter is in fact such a prime example for demonstrating the actual powers and the role that letters played in shaping human relations in the 18th century is that the Frankfurt merchant decidedly did not leave his opinion and assessment of the entire "affaire en question" at only one simple knockout argument, the contractual obligations, which would have been sufficient, but that he also directly picked up and reacted to the preceding letter negotiations, the sensitivities accompanying it and the arguments previously raised and exchanged by the other participants in the letter conversation. Thus, Johann Philipp's letter shows both the importance of negotiation and the contemporary rules for conducting negotiations. He showed respect for the previous course of the negotiation and integrated it skilfully into his written rejection.

The power of persuasion that his particular letter exhibits therefore does not just stem from his natural authority in the family, which was still an important element of it, by which he would have been able to simply reject the idea and put his foot down, but it derived primarily from the fact that he used rational reasoning to actually convince the correspondents of the impossibility of the undertaking.[91] In his letter, Johann Philipp was able to weaken all the arguments that had shaped the letter negotiations beforehand through which he stole the other correspondents' thunder and enthusiasm. On the basis of this, he was able to mark his standpoint, bring the persons involved down to earth and still remain respectful with regard to the previous discussions. Therefore, he played by the rules of the practice of negotiation by giving consideration to the other participants instead of simply imposing his will on the others. At the same time, his response letter certainly left no doubt about the fact that, apart from personal qualities, it was indispensable to adhere to legal requirements and to meet the expectations of one's family and that these two aspects formed two major contemporary preconditions for establishing a partner firm – even though Luetkens and Simon Moritz Bethmann planned to establish a private partnership firm that was not a family firm.

Actually, the negotiation between the correspondents still did not stop after this letter, although Johann Philipp had been rather clear in his statements and his opinion. After the letter, we can even notice a kind of a last rearing up of Simon Moritz and Nicolaus Gottlieb, who still tried to alter the course of the negotiations. With regard to Simon Moritz, this shows that he must, after all, have had an interest in the plan succeeding. As will become obvious, though, the decision presented in Johann Philipp's letter constituted a point of no return.

In Simon Moritz Bethmann's next letter to Luetkens, the young merchant wrote that he still "thinks that things would not be hopeless" ["nicht unmüglich"]. They only needed to allow some time to pass. Maybe, "after he had fiddled away another year or something […], who knows if heaven dictates it in its miraculous ways that the undertaking can still be successful."[92] Luetkens' response, in turn, once more clutched at this last straw. He wrote that he "understands that things are lying kind of out in the open ["in weittem Felde"], but at the end of E.E.'s letter E.E. still gives me hope that we can reach an agreement". He asked for a "final resolution" if it was possible to get away from Furly in the next 4 months. At the same time, he even picked up on the criticism by Johann Philipp and once more expressed his own view that there were still excellent trading opportunities in Nantes. To this end, he boasted that he had already conducted lucrative "afferes" and "great enterprises" in France and that he knew "the trade there very well". Taking a dig not only at Simon Moritz but surely also at Johann Philipp, whose letter he might have interpreted as a kind of affront against his own power of judgement, he added that he "would be able to find another associate with little effort" but that

91 Regarding the natural authority of the firstborn son in a family, see Capp, *Ties that Bind*, 1-13, 32-50.

92 Letter from Bethmann, Simon Moritz to Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, December 9, 1743, TNA, HCA 30/234.

he still preferred Simon Moritz because of their corresponding "humeures".[93] Luetkens therefore mobilised the same expressions, resources and arguments that had already been used in the negotiation before, but this time they served as an underpinning of his own goodwill towards the Bethmanns by which he tried to regain credibility, but also to put pressure on Simon Moritz to encourage him to stand his ground. Nicolaus Gottlieb also continued the discussion with Johann Jakob, writing him another letter expressing his regret that "your brother in Frankfurt obviously had no real interest" ["nicht groß Lust darzu"] in putting his plan into practice, by which he also sounded out Johann Jakob's willingness to intervene.[94] Unfortunately, both strategies did not have the desired effect. Johann Jakob refrained from commenting further on this matter, which means that he also did not want to make an open stand against his older brother. Simon Moritz once more chose a workaround. In his response letter, Simon Moritz promised to "once more ask his oldest brother for his opinion" and confirmed the merits that Luetkens had presented. He agreed that with regard to the challenge of finding a suitable business partner it was a "reasonable approach to go about it carefully". Notwithstanding this, he did not change his basic approach and remained true to himself, closing his letter by recalling that he must still always "consult his brothers, because I am not yet my own master".[95] He therefore did not comply with Luetkens' request essentially to break with convention, but stuck with the opinion of his oldest brother. The latter presumably happened because at this stage of the conversation he basically no longer had any other option if he did not wish to risk a family conflict.

In the end, the whole episode resulted in a foreseeable end; an end that shows that in fact the letter by Johann Philipp had already marked the decisive turning point of the whole negotiation. With the last letter that Simon Moritz wrote to Nicolaus Gottlieb, he therefore only wanted to "confirm what I have written before". He added that "furthermore, now that my uncle Jakob Adami is dying, who had made all arrangements with my current patron, we will not be able to denounce ["degagieren"] the contract" and therefore, "my hands are tied."[96] This argument, now even referring to the highest instance of the Bethmann family, put an irrevocable end to the negotiation. Luetkens subsequently had no other option than withdrawing from the negotiation with "decent generosity" ["sittsamer Generositat"] as he wrote in his letter from the 10th of January 1745, two months after he had written the first letter to Simon Moritz Bethmann.[97]

93 Letter from Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb to Bethmann, Simon Moritz, December 17, 1743, TNA, HCA 30/232, Letter Book II, unnumbered.

94 Letter from Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb to Bethmann, Johann Jakob, December 20, 1743, TNA, HCA 30/232, Letter Book II, unnumbered.

95 Letter from Bethmann, Simon Moritz to Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, December 23, 1743, TNA, HCA 30/234.

96 Letter from Bethmann, Simon Moritz to Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, January 3, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/234.

97 Quoted in Bethmann, Simon Moritz to Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, February 2, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/234.

6.6 Gallant Merchant Letters

From our modern point of view, gallant letters of the 18th century often seem stilted, artificial, exaggerated and ultimately superficial. The many compliments seem affected, the language and rhetoric overly florid and flamboyant.[98] For a modern reader, the whole scene of the represented letter episode might appear somewhat as a charade. In order to understand the events of the first large letter episode of this chapter, however, we have to realise a simple fact. We have to become aware of the fact that this modern impression is a fallacy. By getting this impression, we are falling into the trap of historical antagonism and forgetting about the most important task of historiography, which is to analyse historical documents and artefacts from within their own historical context and historicity. In order to understand the events of this letter episode, we have to realise that the gallant way of conversation was at that time simply the normal, appropriate and understandable way of communicating with each other, and that it encompassed its own rules and practices, which shaped the way of human interactions.

We have to understand that we have to take a step back from our romanticised viewpoint and that the reason for this is the seriousness and the practical significance that this way of talking, writing and conversing with each other had for the contemporaries in their daily encounters and as a means of managing their affairs. The letters of this episode decisively helped to achieve a concrete goal. They were used and deliberately created in their particular style and language by the letter writers for the purpose of mutually sussing out each other and to court and schmooze each other in a historically typical and appropriate way. The letters show us how seriously the gallant way of writing was used and for what serious purposes it was used. In this episode, the contemporary gallant way of dealing and corresponding with each other – as also represented in the manifold intertextual references to merchant manuals and letter-writing manuals – represented the crucial shared language register and style on the basis of which the concrete action of a targeted enticement was negotiated: the headhunting of a possible business partner from an established merchant for the purpose of establishing a merchant firm of one's own. There is no better illustration to point to the seriousness of this language register than presenting this special case.

There is certainly no doubt that Simon Moritz exaggerated his rhetoric in his letters. However, choosing such a way of writing was no gimmick or frippery and did not happen accidentally, but it served a concrete purpose for him in the course of the negotiation. In doing so, the young merchant was able to mark his position and role within the negotiation and to shape the course of the negotiation. The same fact in the end applies to all the participants in the letter conversation and the epistolary conference circle presented in this chapter.

All letter writers used the given gallant language register, in which they were practiced and experienced and which they had internalized. Yet, they employed this register in their own particular ways to shape and foster the course of the letter negotiation.

98 See apart from the letter examples in the episode also Rose, *Conduite und Text*, 191-215 and 181-190. For typical French gallant letters, see Rollin, Charles. *De la Manière d'Enseigneur et d'Etudier le Belles Lettres*. Paris: Estienne, 1726.

Each of them used the opportunities, the properties and effects, provided by the language register, but without deliberately choosing to do so. It was normal routine. The fact that they often also combined their letter style with a language best described as a business style, about which we have learned in the chapter on commission trade, furthermore underpins the fact that gallantry must not necessarily have meant that a certain commitment of the written words and seriousness was lacking. Quite on the contrary, the letters of this episode have shown that it was possible to use a gallant way of writing, complimenting and schmoozing each other and at the same time combine it with a business-writing style in order to conduct serious business. Nicolaus Gottlieb Luetkens' own letter style tended more in the direction of a sober style of commercial writing, using a very direct, plain and unadorned way of writing. However, even he used polite phrases, gallant letter formulae and gallant gestures in his letters. More importantly though, he obviously clearly understood the particular gallant gestures that were sent to him in the letters by the Bethmann brothers because Luetkens clearly aligned his own actions and words to these letter phrases and gestures sent to him. He dealt with them and reacted to them in the course of the negotiation. Therefore, obviously, there was once more a shared language game that all of the participant shared, were actively involved in and understood as such, which structured the negotiations around the question of the enticement of Simon Moritz.[99] Within this game, the gallant letters were an effective and powerful tool that helped to directly influence the course of the respective negotiation.

A Suitable Subject

During the conversation the letter writers used both the *gallant language register* and the *commercial language register of business and trade*. In the analysis of the episode, we have learned how the different writers mobilized these registers in different ways, what letter practices were performed and to what purpose or for what personal interests the letter strategies were chosen. Most importantly, though, we have learned that letter writing was always primarily a negotiation and coordination process with its own dynamic, in the course of which the letter writers came to an understanding with each other about the respective object of negotiation. Only in mutual agreement, achieved during practice, the merchants defined what it meant to conduct good business and what it meant to be or to become a merchant. This represents the reason why deriving conclusions directly from the analysis of historical practice is a promising undertaking. It provides results about arguments that have already gone through the wringer of an 18th century letter negotiation among merchants. In other words, each argument used

99 A language-game, "Sprachspiel" in German, as defined by Ludwig Wittgenstein. See Wittgenstein, Ludwig. *Philosophische Untersuchungen. Kritisch-genetische Edition*, edited by Joachim Schulte. Frankfurt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2001 (first published 1953), see particularly § 23. "The concept of language-games points at the rule-governed character of language. This does not entail strict and definite systems of rules for each and every language-game, but points to the conventional nature of this sort of human activity." Biletzki, Anat, and Anat Matar. "Ludwig Wittgenstein." *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Spring 2019 Edition), edited by Edward N. Zalta, https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2018/entries/wittgenstein, accessed November 17, 2019.

in a letter episode that passed the test of surviving a letter discussion unscathed and was still regarded as valid at the end of the letter episodes, can certainly be regarded as a very reliable source of information about the respective object of negotiation.

In this chapter the main question so far has been what qualified a young merchant to be regarded a suitable business partner, a suitable *subject*, for establishing and opening up a merchant house with another merchant in a joint partner company and therefore what the basic conditions for such an undertaking were for the merchants. On the basis of my analysis of the letter episode, I was able to show that within the letter circle there was a general consensus and agreement regarding the most basic personal characteristics future business partners had to demonstrate. The presented characteristics match the respective provisions given in contemporary commercial encyclopaedia, merchant manuals and literature on the preconditions for founding private firms.

During the 18th century, the family and family firm was no longer the only warrantor of trust relations. Instead, individual merchants, too, established merchant houses together based on individual selection processes, individual criteria and trust relations. I therefore pointed out that consequently new or, rather, newly valued personal qualities and character traits of persons also gained in significance. The basic preconditions of mercantile socialisation and at the same time also crucial selection criteria for finding suitable business partners during the 18th century consisted of individual liability and reputation based on one's own successful businesses and enterprises instead of, or as a supplement to, only relying on family reputation. Furthermore, it was deemed highly important and inevitable that a person also showed a good, reasonable, trustable, cautious and gentle character or personality, in modern terms, that was compatible with others because this element basically and unavoidably became and represented the necessary common ground and connecting factor of individual actors.

On the basis of "corresponding humours" bonds were established and professional ties could be forged. This element and topos of the *corresponding humours* therefore also became the anchor point for the argumentation in the letter episode. Put in a nutshell, the order of the day for establishing commercial connections was mutual liking, so the persons establishing a company together were required in modern terms to be a good fit in terms of their personalities. This idea also stood for and advocated trust and confidence in the personal aptitude of one another, which therefore served as the decisive and necessary foundation and putty for trust relationships in merchant partnerships in an age that increasingly strived towards a capitalistic individualisation of trading activities.[100] Thus, *corresponding humours* was so very important because it provided the merchants with another basis for justifying the business model of the private firm.

Also with regard to the potential benefits of such private firms and partnerships for doing business, the correspondents in the letter circle negotiated and shared an un-

100 On the importance of trust in Early Modern commercial relations, see Haggerty, *Merely for Money*, 66-96. See Lamikiz, *Trade and Trust*, 141-181. See in general Muldrew, *Economy of Obligation*; see Aslanian, "Social Capital." Regarding the process of building trust in letters with a similar approach, see Dossena, "Building trust." See as basic reading on trust also Fiedler, Martin. "Vertrauen ist gut, Kontrolle ist teuer: Vertrauen als Schlüsselkategorie wirtschaftlichen Handelns." *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 4 (2001): 576-592.

derstanding, which once more also corresponded with contemporary provisions and advice in merchant literature. The main advantage of the private firms as joint partner companies between individual merchants was that by means of establishing a firm together the individual partners joined forces with regard to manpower, knowledge, competence, capital and networks in order to be able to keep pace and cope with the challenges of international trade during that time. By means of joining forces the merchants were provided with the necessary operational flexibility that helped them to react appropriately to the "world economy in-the-making", which was evolving during that time, and to accomplish a certain reliability and predictability for their business enterprises and transactions during an age in which these factors were jeopardised and threatened to disappear through the vastness and new complexity of the international markets.[101] The business model that was envisaged by Luetkens for his partnership with Simon Moritz Bethmann reflected precisely these benefits of the private firm. His idea and vision were to establish a joint partner company in which he would take the part of the investor and capital provider while Simon Moritz would take on the role of the workhorse, and this was a highly accepted practice during that time.[102]

The two major personal skills which the correspondents referred to as fundamentally important with regard to the feasibility of the undertaking and for the success of the firm were experience in business and local usances and habits on the one hand and diligence on the other hand. The fact that the different correspondents in the episode were divided about whether or not the two associates actually showed these skills makes it clear that in most cases the significance and mandatory nature of these personal abilities were ultimately unquestionable. In order to be recognised as a suitable merchant subject for establishing a merchant house, the young men had to show experience, diligence, a good reputation, a certain amount of capital in the form of contacts or actual funds, and they needed a personality that was conformable and adaptable to others as well as good humours that created the means and facilitated cooperation in joint companies. These were the crucial elements and qualifications that enabled young men to become recognised by other merchants as a suitable subject for the merchant business. This became obvious from the letter negotiations in my analysis, in which the participants clearly drew on and mobilised these contemporary arguments during the negotiations as a certain underlying canon of expectations.

The exciting point about this canon of expectations, seen in the context of letter practice, is that not even the canon occurs as a pre-determined and fixed requirement catalogue that simply had to be met by the letter writers in order to take effect. Rather, it also occurred as an object of actual negotiation for which letters were needed. That means that although the correspondents shared a general understanding about the crucial qualifications a young man had to have, they nevertheless used these qualifications in different ways as arguments in their personal reasoning. As my analysis has shown,

101 Lindemann, "Doing Business in 18th century Hamburg," 163. See Crouzet, "Economic Change," 192. See Crouzet, "Le négoce international."; see Reinert/Fredona. "Merchants and the Origins of Capitalism," 171-181; see also Subrahmanyam, *Merchant Networks*, xiii.

102 See the explanations above as well as Marperger, *Der allzeitfertige Handels-Correspondent*, 412 ["der eine Geld einleget, der andere seinen Verstand und Leibarbeiten"].

the letter writers in the end used this canon as a resource to present and underpin their own respective standpoints and positions with regard to the planned undertaking of disengaging Simon Moritz. This means that in the course of letter negotiations the letter writers always linked the shared elements of mercantile subjectivation to their own standpoint in order to also exert influence on the further course of the negotiation. This fact becomes most recognisable in the example of how the different letter writers mobilised the very same topos of breadwinning as a traditional Protestant topos and cipher representing the virtues of diligence and zeal. All letter writers used it differently and for various purposes. The original passage from the Bible reads "By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread, till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken" (1. Moses 3:19).[103] Each and every one of the letter writers in the episode now tailored the topos to their specific needs. Nicolaus Gottlieb Luetkens referred to the topos of breadwinning to emphasise and claim the feasibility and lucrativeness of the undertaking. Simon Moritz used it to point to the challenges connected to the undertaking. However, in the same breath he nevertheless also indicated by alluding to the topos that he considered himself capable of mastering these challenges "through the sweat of my brow".[104] Johann Jakob used the topos to confirm the aptitude of his younger brother, but he also employed it to refer to his good and reputable standing in the merchant community. Johann Philipp used it to doubt the feasibility of the undertaking. In the final analysis, it becomes clearly obvious that and how each letter writer masterly moulded their language to their own motives. Thus, I was able to also show how these letter writers "mold language to influence the reader, expressing themselves in such a way that what they say will have an impact, given their knowledge of the reader", as Couchman and Crabb put it. This directly leads us the second field of insights and results that my analysis has yielded, which are insights about the power of persuasion present and mirrored in this letter episode.[105]

6.7 First Conclusion: The Benefits of Keeping a Low Profile in Letters

With regard to learning about the power of persuasion in letters, the analysis has shown how the historical actors used different discursive resources, arguments and canons of expectations, in a number of different ways, each tailored to their specific needs and demands, in order to put forward, substantiate and justify their own standpoint and approach to the matter of negotiation in the letter conversations. We observed a certain appropriation of discursive resources for the sake of one's own progress and reasoning. This served as the basis for the persuasion processes taking place in the letter episode. The prevailing mercantile catalogue of virtues, duties and expectations from discourse served as the necessary specified grid and matrix which the letter writers used to be

103 "Im Schweiße deines Angesichts sollst Du Dein Brot essen, bis das Du wieder zu Erde werdest davon Du genommen bist."

104 "Im Schweiße meines Angeßichtes." Letter from Bethmann, Simon Moritz to Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, November 25, 1743, TNA, HCA 30/234.

105 Couchman/Crabb, "Form and Persuasion," 11.

able to formulate their specific interests and opinions in the matter, and on the basis of this, the letter writers were also able to highlight their personal ability and opinions. The gallant way of speaking and writing served as the crucial language register which structured the conversation, which provided the authentic language and rules for the conversation and which added meaning to the written words in terms of how the statements in the letters were to be understood by the addressees. The language register added the rhetorical element to the conversation. That is, each argument that was put forward during the negotiation never appeared detached from the motivations of each of the letter writers, but quite on the contrary each argument was always combined with a certain motivation of the letter writer. This is reflected in the fact that the letter writers all chose specific ways and means of how to transmit their messages in special ways to the addressees in a rhetorically trained way, which again were understood by the addressees and reflected back in their response letters.[106] By means of the arguments presented and the specific ways in which these arguments were presented, the letters exchanged between the correspondents gained their significance as a source and powerful tool of negotiation and of persuasion.

The concrete effects and opportunities that the gallant language register offered becomes most apparent in the letters of Simon Moritz Bethmann. Yet, also in Luetkens' letters the practice of moulding one's language to the requirements of a situation, namely to the headhunting of Simon Moritz, already became clearly obvious. In the previous part, we have learned in detail how Luetkens mobilised elements from language registers available to him and certain resources of persuasion, like the topos of *corresponding humours*, in order to court and try to cast a spell on Simon Moritz in his letters in order to put forward his plan to establish a joint partner company. For this purpose, he drew on the practical principle of meeting on as equals, with his correspondent. Even more intriguing in this letter episode, however, is Simon Moritz's tactical manoeuvring in terms of his self-positioning and his ways of influencing the course of the negotiation, particularly with regard to initiating and ensuring that his brothers were integrated into the letter negotiation. His letter practice in this respect is not just very insightful because of the fact that the young man was obviously able to put himself into a position that allowed him various options for action. But it is also particularly insightful in relation to the central topic of this book because his strategy represented one of the strategies, apart from the sledgehammer method, that showed the clearest effects on the course of the negotiation. In other words, the practical principle Simon Moritz adhered to during the conversation, in the end paid off for him; it proved to be highly useful and helpful means for his subjectivation, and therefore it presents us with a verifiably promising or successful contemporary way of persuasion practice.

In the end, all participants of the present letter conversation ultimately conformed to the described pattern of negotiation practice, which becomes immediately clear from the fact that they all literally quoted each other's arguments in their letters only to add their respective opinions with regard to the matter afterwards. The example of Simon

106 This perspective and viewpoint was furthermore influenced by Wright Mills, Charles. "Situated Actions and Vocabularies of Motive." *American Sociological Review* 5, no. 6 (1940): 904-913. Thanks to Robert Mitchell.

Moritz, however, still provides the best opportunity to present the existing practical possibilities offered by letter-writing practice with regard to efforts of persuasion and the question of how to convince others of one's own standpoint because he was, after all, the person in question in this whole matter and his situation was the tricky issue for which the participants had to find a solution. Simon Moritz therefore was the person who was most required and under pressure to find convincing arguments. His tactical manoeuvring therefore provides a prime example to exemplify possible and typical contemporary ways of exerting influence in contemporary letter practice and business practice.

Strictly speaking, Simon Moritz's actions provide us with a kind of reverse logic of the power of persuasion because the strategy he pursued was to try to act as non-committedly und unaccountably as possible, passing on the responsibility and powers of decision to others. He effectively tried to position himself in his letters as merely a bystander, which helped him in the end to get himself out of the 'questionierte affair' without running the risk of losing face. This practice in itself, however, can definitely be described and seen as a way of persuasion in its own right, as a concrete way of exerting influence on others, and as a tool of the powers of persuasion provided by letters because this manoeuvring helped him to decidedly shape the entire course of the letter negotiation. I would describe and best define the persuasive principle underlying this approach, as mentioned before, as him applying the principle of keeping a low profile. This was the means by which he was able to keep all his options open – which was ultimately the reason why the negotiation took so long and why a solution in this case was delayed for months. The reason was that Simon Moritz always tried to look for loopholes in his negotiation practice, which gave Luetkens the hope that in the end the undertaking could still be brought to a positive conclusion.

As the analysis has shown the material and practice of letter writing and correspondence provides concrete, appropriate means for this approach of keeping a low profile while at the same time pressing ahead with the negotiation process, which Simon Moritz masterly applied. From the beginning, Simon Moritz Bethmann pursued a strategy with regard to his self-presentation and self-positioning that deliberately put him in a submissive position relating to Luetkens but also relating to his brothers. At the same time, however, he constantly signalled that he himself would in general be agreeable to the idea of being enticed away from Furly and establishing a merchant house together with Luetkens – because as a matter of fact, Luetkens' offer was very tempting for him. By means of this two-pronged approach, he therefore handed over the responsibility to his brothers but still presented himself in the best possible light. For this purpose, the gallant language register of flattery presented itself as a perfectly suitable tool and framework to perform such a pirouette because it allowed him to put himself in a humble position, executing a kind of devoted bow before Luetkens through his choice of words, letter formulae and rhetorics while at the same time sending compliments to Luetkens and making a courtesy call on him by reaffirming the benefits that Luetkens had outlined in his letter. Thus, also with regard to the argumentative strategy of his negotiation practice, he walked the tightrope and chose the same approach as with regard to the mobilisation of the language register. In his letters, he took up and strongly confirmed the arguments presented by Luetkens with regard to his plans, only to then mould them from their original meaning to a meaning that was more suitable for his own situation. He thus used the arguments not to point to the easy efforts to put this plan into practice but to point to the challenges that he would face with regard to the plan but that he was hoping to master. By that, he simultaneously emphasised his aptitude for this job but also justified why he still needed to consult his brothers.

The way Simon Moritz then literally copied-in his brothers into the negotiation to shape the conversation, by means of adding a genuine copy of the letter of his oldest brother, is highly significant with regard to the opportunities that letter practice offered. We are presented with a practice that was omnipresent in Early Modern letters but that now impressively shows and demonstrates its significance in terms of how negotiation practice was conducted on the basis of letters. The significance of the material practice of attaching copies of letters to a letter or letter packet goes far beyond the mere purpose of providing additional information for the addressee, and it also did not only follow practical purposes such as saving postage.[107] Rather, as the analysis has shown it also clearly served persuasive purposes and motives. We can already state at this point that this fact is applicable to many other copied-in letters in other contemporary contexts and in the other letter episodes in this book.[108] In the present case, for Simon Moritz the practice of copying in the letter of his brother Johann Philipp served the purpose of absolving himself from responsibility, which only confirmed the logic of his previous self-positioning. With regard to learning about the character of letter practice in general from this material event and evidence, we can observe how, through the material and physical means of the letter as material artefacts, literally polyphonic conversations unfold before our eyes. In these letter conversations, reciprocal reference, quoting each other and copying in each other were considered and valued as a precious asset for the purpose of generally being able to conduct negotiations on the basis of letters.

We have also learned that these practices were furthermore always also intertwined and connected to the personal motives and motivations of the persons involved, who tried to exert influence on the other participants and the further course of the negotiation. In his first response letter, Simon Moritz enthusiastically wrote that after Luetkens had left Rotterdam, "his heart and soul would still revel in the memory of E.E.'s amiable person, with whom I am still, so to say, maintaining a distant conversation". His brother Johann Jakob used a similar expression in his letter, writing that there "is still some time to converse with you".[109] During the 18th century, such sentences were very common letter phrases, omnipresent in letters and letter-writing manuals, which strangely often leads modern researchers to the assumption that we have to regard these phrases

107 Whyman, *Pen and People*, 46-71. See Behringer, *Im Zeichen des Merkur*.

108 In this book, the practice is not only relevant in the present chapter but particularly also in the chapters on the shipping business and Luetkens' marriage.

109 Letter from Bethmann, Simon Moritz to Luetkens Nicolaus Gottlieb, April 17, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/234. Letter from Bethmann, Simon Moritz an Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, March 3, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/234. See in this regard in further detail also Haasis, "Augenblick."

essentially as mere platitudes or temporary fads.[110] This assumption is not sustainable because it misses the mark. In my opinion, we have to take these phrases quite literally. From a contemporary point of view, letter correspondence often certainly served as precisely its own sphere of conversation, which was necessary and which the letter writers accepted as such, which becomes clearly obvious in the presented episode. On the basis of letters, negotiations took place, solutions were found and goals were reached that could not have been negotiated in any way other than by letter because of the simple fact of the spatial separation between the actors. Therefore, letter writing was a tool of empowerment and an extension option of their communication possibilities and channels rather than a limitation. It was a communication asset which the letter writers used to compensate for spatial separation and to remain capable of acting in certain fields of action for which they would not have found any other way of communication. This fact, in turn, was clearly known and appreciated already also by the contemporaries themselves. As only one of many examples, the *Zedler Encyclopaedia* for instance defined a letter in 1733 as a "short, well-arranged speech, dealing with all kinds of things, which you send to each other in writing and under a seal, if you cannot or do not want to speak orally with one another."[111]

As is my deep conviction, it can therefore surely be assumed that they regarded their letter exchanges not only symbolically but in fact quite literally as an actual continuation and extension of their typical ways of conversing with each other, on the basis of which they were able to deal with each other and manage their affairs.[112] These written conversations naturally had their own rules, and the contemporaries developed specific letter practices to essentially transpose certain ways and means of conversation, particularly with regard to the rules of gallantry, to the medium of the letter. Nonetheless, "conversing with the pen", as Bruce Redford put it,[113] was regarded a regular way of conversing with each other. One of these practices of transposing conversations to paper was copying-in letters in other letters in order to concretely comment on each other's arguments, perform gallant gestures, interrupt each other or bring a new player to the negotiation table during letter conversations.

Nicolaus Gottlieb Luetkens definitely knew how he had to understand the material gestures by Simon Moritz when receiving the copies of the letters of his brother. He

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110 Vellusig, *Schriftliche Gespräche*, 28-66, particularly 51-53; see Stuber/Hächler/Lienhard, *Hallers Netz*, 10. See also Anton, *Authentizität als Fiktion*, 5-12, 134; see Furger, *Briefsteller*, 145-146; Nickisch, *Stilprinzipien*, 204-223, Gurkin Altman, *Epistolarity*, 3-12. Regarding the "arsenal of formulaic expressions" ["Arsenal formelhafter Argumente"] see already Steinhausen, *Geschichte des deutschen Briefes*, vol. 2, 302. For a more differentiated and sophisticated perspective on letter formuale, see Droste, "Briefe als Medium". See also Van der Wal/Rutten, "The Practice of Letter Writing."

111 "eine kurze, wohlgesetzte, von allerley Sachen handelnde Rede, die man einander unter einem Siegel schriftlich zuschicket, wenn man sonst nicht miteinander mündlich sprechen kann oder will." "Brief." *Großes vollständiges Universal-Lexikon aller Wissenschaften und Künste*, edited by Johann Heinrich Zedler, Bd. 4, Halle/Leipzig, 1733, 1359. See also Hunold, *Die Allerneueste Art Höflich und Galant zu Schreiben oder auserlesene Briefe*, 53 ["den Mangel der mündlichen Unterredung durch schriftliche Correspondence ersetzen."]

112 See with a slightly different view even Fitzmaurice, "Like talking on paper."

113 Redford, *Converse with the Pen*.

responded to them accordingly. Simon Moritz indicated by this practice, as part of the principle of keeping a low profile, that his hands were tied in this matter, and Luetkens in the end had no other option than agreeing on that. Copying-in the letter of his oldest brother was therefore a far more powerful way of sending and transmitting this message than if Simon Moritz had only expressed this fact in his own words. This once more shows the powers of persuasion provided by the practice of letter writing for the practical principle of keeping a low profile in correspondence. As Toby L. Ditz once put it, "when merchants articulated intentions and defined situations, they did so within the matrix of possibilities and constraints posed by the genre and narrative conventions, symbolic repertoires, discourses, and vocabularies that they mobilized and reworked in their letters."[114] Simon Moritz's actions and letters provided us with a prime example of this, mobilizing the gallant language register in particular, purposeful ways, and they furthermore showed us the practical consequences evolving from it with regard to the actor's self-representations. At the end of the letter episode, Simon Moritz left the negotiation table with his reputation still intact and having saved face. The result of the episode for Luetkens, on the other hand, was quite pragmatically that he unfortunately still had to continue his search for a suitable business partner for his future merchant house.

The third point that we had to learn from the episode is that, although the negotiations in the beginning seemed promising, in the end the formal conditions spoiled Luetkens' plans. In the course of the negotiation, the argument put forward by Johann Philipp that Simon Moritz Bethmann had to serve at least the minimal possible duration of his employment contract according to contemporary standards, which was 2 to 2.5 years, appears to have been the knockout argument putting an end to Luetkens' initial plans. As a matter of fact, this argument must indeed be regarded as a legitimate and valid contemporary reason for ending the negotiation. However, before Johann Philipp's intervention, negotiations had been in full swing even though this condition must have already been known to all other participants. Thus, and especially also in the light of continuing negotiations after the letter by Johann Philipp had reached Luetkens, we must assume that even this argument left a certain degree of leeway in interpretation and therefore was negotiable. The actual problem with regard to the enticement of Simon Moritz from Furly therefore particularly came down to one particular circumstance. All the arrangements regarding the employment of Simon Moritz in the house of Furly had been made by the foster father and mentor of the Bethmann brothers, Jakob Adami, who, as we know from other sources, had been a loyal trading partner of Furly's for ages.[115] Since Adami, however, was actually on his deathbed at that precise moment in time, as we learn from the letters, the Bethmann brothers refrained from seeking confrontation with Furly. Apart from legal reasons, this is another probable explanation why the family council rejected Luetkens' proposal in the final stages of the negotiation. This also once more shows the significance and role of the family as consultants and as a decision-making body during a time in which business culture was gradually developing more and more individualistic structures. The argument of

114 Ditz, "Formative Ventures," 62.

115 See Henninger, *Bethmann*, 116. See also Haasis, *Augenblick*, 112.

Adami lying on his deathbed in the end, which did not allow for a continuation of the negotiation, as valid as it may be, however also represented, if you will, an immense persuasive undercurrent and clearly served as a persuasive tool for Simon Moritz as well. As macabre as it might sound, the crucial question that this argument raised and the question that literally blighted the negotiation was in the end, who would dare to voice objections to a dying man? One year after this letter episode and after the death of Jakob Adami the Bethmann brothers founded the Bethmann bank, which is still in existence today.

6.8 The Second Episode: Insider Dealings

Finding a merchant clerk was much less challenging than finding a business partner. The reason for this was that the requirements and formal barriers for employing a merchant clerk had a far lower threshold than with regard to finding a business partner. The reason for this was that the responsibilities associated with the position of a clerk were far lower and relatively limited.[116] The task of a merchant clerk was basically to help with and take on parts of the daily work of a wholesale merchant, while a business partner and merchant associate, as we have learned, was directly responsible and liable for carrying out and procuring trading activities for the shared company. Regarding Luetkens' specific situation, however, there was yet another reason why things in this matter were resolved very quickly. The reason was that his future merchant clerk was recommended to him by his longest and closest trading partners in Hamburg, the merchants Jobst Henning Hertzer and Christopher von Bobartt. In order to support Luetkens in making his business more competitive and to advance his work and career, the Hamburg merchants proposed to Luetkens in March 1744 to send him one of their own most experienced, valued and trusted employees, Hinrich Schuetz or Schütz, to France to support him in his business. Luetkens gladly accepted this generous offer. The fact that this matter was resolved in such an uncomplicated way, however, should not obscure just how crucial this step was for Luetkens' establishment phase. Having an employee was an important step towards gaining a firm standing in business. It brought his business to a new level, formalising and accelerating his trading activities and processes, which helped him to further enhance his business and reputation. In order to illustrate this fact, we can simply once more draw on very concrete material evidence from the Luetkens archive, which clearly points us to the significance of this change in Luetkens' business life and how the employment of Schuetz in some respects even immediately affected his business practice.

When reading Nicolaus Gottlieb's main large Letter Book, we can notice that almost all letter copies in this book were written in the same handwriting. It was Luetkens'

116 See Deges, "Zusammenfassende Übersicht," commenting on the book *Der getreue und geschickte Handels-Diener* by Paul Jacob Marperger, XV-LXV. See "Factor." *Oekonomische Encyklopädie*, edited by Johann Georg Krünitz. 242 volumes. Berlin, 1773-1858, vol. 12, 21-22. See Häberlein, "Trading Companies."

own handwriting, as we can conclude from comparing the letter copies with other letters that he had sent out during that time. His handwriting style was furthermore very individual, very neat, but somewhat compressed and small. In a sample of 100 letters I could easily spot those by Luetkens. Many of the hands of his correspondents were in fact very buoyant. I know no other hand that is comparable to his in the Prize Papers collection. At the very end of the Letter Book, however, after 685 letters in the same handwriting and 15 letters before the Letter Book ended at number 700, we clearly and immediately recognise a stark caesura in the handwriting. The handwriting changes from compressed to a typical French hand. The copied-in letters were now much more zestfully written. This material caesura reflects the start of Hinrich Schuetz's employment as Luetkens' merchant clerk. From this moment onwards, his clerk took on the task of copying into the Letter Book and also started correcting the letters that Luetkens sent out to his correspondents.[117] It is not hard to imagine the considerable relief that this change must have meant for Luetkens.

This task was not the only task that Schuetz would take on in Luetkens' business, which is why, when the court proceedings took place in the case of the ship the *Hope* in London later on, the British authorities had reason to ask the defendants in the *further additional hearings and interrogatories* that were send to Hamburg in January 1747 "in forma diplomatis", the very revealing question: "Do you know Mr. Henry Schutz? Did not the said Mr. Henry Schutz go to France and to what part in or about April 1745? To whom and in whose Service did he go thither? Did he not go as a contracted Clerk Apprentice or Servant to someone and whom? And did he not arrive in France and serve such Person there and in what Post or Capacity? Where does he now live and reside? Is he now a servant Agent or Factor for anyone and whom or what Business or Employment does he follow?"[118] Albert von Bobartt, who was at that time "Clerck in the Compting House of Mess. Hertzer & von Bobart 20 years old", who succeeded Schuetz as a clerk in the said Hamburg merchant house and who was one of the additional witnesses that the British court had asked the Hamburg authorities for, answered this question in a similarly revealing manner. He stated that "Hinrich Schutze as a citizen's son here [in Hamburg], […] has served 8 years in the compting house of Messrs. Hertzer /& von Bobart & that he knew that he sett out about a year & a half […] for Brest & other places in France to pick up some correspondence, as a traveller, & that this Hinrich Schutze, as far as this d[eponent] knows was in no service, but lived at his own expense […]."[119] As we already know, this witness statement was obviously nothing less than a downright lie and came about neither by chance nor coincidence. Albert von Bobartt's statement in the end mirrored a strategy and plan that the Hamburg merchants Hertzer & von Bobartt, together with Nicolaus Gottlieb Luetkens, had concocted right from the beginning with regard to the impression that the connection between Luetkens and

117 Letter Book I, TNA, HCA 30/232, no. 685-700.

118 Additional Hearings and Attestations of Hamburg Witnesses and Deponents based on additional interrogatories of the English High Court of Admiralty regarding the case of the *Hope*, taken place in Hamburg, January 1748, TNA, HCA 32/115/14.

119 Examination and attestation of Albert von Bobart, "Clerck in the Compting House of Mess. Hertzer & von Bobart", as part of the *Additional Hearings and Attestations*, TNA, HCA 32/115/14.

Schuetz might create in the eyes of any outside party. The plan was that no one should know about the employment of Schuetz in Luetkens' service, because in March 1745 Hertzer & von Bobartt had already made other, more far-reaching plans with regard Schuetz's role in their future business endeavours. They planned to employ him later as a factor and agent for their and Luetkens' business in France, for the time after Luetkens had returned to Hamburg. Since this, however, might have awakened suspicions on the side of their other trading partners and would have made it necessary to also acquaint several other trading partners with the plan, they instead decided to treat this whole matter confidentially. This is why all negotiations took place in sealed letters.

In this part of the chapter, I will analyse this confidential letter correspondence between Hertzer & von Bobartt and Luetkens, and in the end also including Schuetz himself, in order to generally demonstrate the subtleties and processes accompanying the employment of a merchant clerk as a crucial step of a mercantile establishment phase. On a more detailed level, however, I will also analyse the powers of persuasion effective in the episode, which relate primarily to the question of what the correspondents contemplated, planned and concocted with regard to Schuetz's future role in their business. I will therefore once more take a look at the properties of the practices and their effects on the lives of the people involved in my analysis because in the end, speaking of the actual events taking place on the basis of letter practice in March and April 1745, both of these areas of interest form two sides of the same coin. Before coming to that and the actual analysis of this second part, however, we once more have to take a look at the background and past history of the events that had led to this episode and in fact that had made it necessary that such an approach was needed in the first place, which does, however, not mean that the ultimate solution was only a compromise and a less-than-ideal solution. Quite on the contrary, the solution that Luetkens found in the end with the help of his trading partners in Hamburg was extremely favourable for him and was in some ways even a better solution than his original plan, which had been to join forces with Simon Moritz Bethmann. In short, we can say that all his efforts paid off. The background to this second episode of this chapter connects directly with the episode analysed in the following last part of this chapter, and it also already in some ways anticipates the next and last chapter of this book, which will deal with Luetkens' marriage. Before finding his merchant clerk, Luetkens actually had found a business partner for his future merchant house. Contrary to his initial plans, however, in the end Luetkens decided to open up a merchant house together with his business partner in his hometown of Hamburg.

His chosen future business partner, Ehrenfried Engelhardt, however, had neither contact to France, nor had he visited France beforehand, nor did he visit Luetkens during the time Luetkens was still trading there. Engelhardt simply waited in Hamburg until Luetkens' return. In order to guarantee, however, that his French businesses could continue without interruption after his return to Hamburg, and since he was desperately in need of help already during the last months of his stay in France, Luetkens needed a helping hand for his business. He found this help in Hinrich Schuetz, who would later also become agent and merchant factor in France for Luetkens and Hertzer & von Bobartt. Once again, Luetkens therefore killed two birds with one stone during the last months of his establishment phase.

Finding a Business Partner

The initial situation that made it necessary for Luetkens to rethink his future plans for his business was the failure of the negotiations with the Bethmanns. This had forced him to find a new solution and a new idea for where and how to establish his own merchant house. As a matter of fact, he found this solution very soon after he had withdrawn from the negotiations with Simon Moritz Bethmann. Notwithstanding this, the negotiations in this case must have been similarly complex as the negotiations with the Bethmanns and even after a general agreement was found in this matter, the negotiations still continued and required effort before the matter was brought to an end. The latter, in turn, is the story that I will mostly tell in the next chapter. But generally, it can still be said already at this point that these negotiations finally brought the breakthrough for Luetkens' plans to establish a merchant house in one of the booming trading towns of northern Europe, which happened to also be his hometown.

About half a year after the Bethmann negotiations, Luetkens found a business partner in the person of Ehrenfried Engelhardt, a merchant from Hamburg, who until this time had lived and worked in the house of Luetkens' old employer, David Speelmeyer. Engelhardt entered into the joint partner company and opened up a merchant house together with Luetkens in November 1745, but before that, the two merchants still had to go through and settle manifold challenges. This time, however, in contrast to the episode with Simon Moritz, the negotiations came to a conciliatory ending. This conciliatory ending also included the employment of Hinrich Schuetz as another helpful hand needed to implement their plans. The explanations about the merger with Ehrenfried Engelhardt conclude my remarks and explanations about the challenges of finding a suitable business partner, also called socius, as an important step for a merchant's establishment phase. The last chapter of this book will then be devoted ultimately to the results and consequences of this merger. In November 1745, Luetkens in fact did not only open his merchant house in Hamburg together with Ehrenfried, but he also married Ehrenfried's sister, Ilsabe Engelhardt. This step finalised his establishment phase as a wholesale merchant in 18th century Europe.

Unfortunately, the most important early letters that were exchanged in this whole matter between Luetkens, Ehrenfried Engelhardt, David Speelmeyer and, in some ways most unfortunately, also the private letters from Ilsabe have not survived in the Luetkens archive but are lost. This is also the reason why I can unfortunately not analyse this early letter negotiation in detail. We can neither find letters by Luetkens himself dealing with this matter in his Letter Books nor do we find letters by his future business partner of this early time as parts of his letter bundles. We only find later letters from both writers, Luetkens and Engelhardt, starting in October 1744, at a time when things were already been settled between them, at least as regarded the plan to enter into a partnership. The possible reason for this was that Luetkens still carried these particular letters with him as part of his most personal belongings during the last days of his stay in France. Notwithstanding the absence of these early letters, the later letters still allow me to present the subtleties of the joint future and particularly the question of how they should handle the interim period until the opening of their merchant house.

The surviving letters show that after the negotiations with Simon Moritz had failed, the merchant Luetkens quickly turned his focus and interest to the Engelhardt family, a family that is, unfortunately, no longer well-known today.[120] This time, he furthermore played it safer than in the case of the Bethmanns by approaching a merchant that was closely associated with Luetkens' own former employee and close confidant, David Speelmeyer. This way, he stood a good chance that this time matters were to be resolved more easily. However, in this case, too, the challenge and precondition were the same as before: the correspondents needed to first pitch their plan to the current employer of Engelhardt's, Speelmeyer, and they needed to convince him and make it palatable to him to allow Engelhardt to leave his service in his house to join forces with Luetkens. Additionally, even before that, Luetkens' plan was to invite and convince Engelhardt to visit him in France to introduce him to his businesses there. But since Speelmeyer had already allowed Luetkens, too, to take such business trips years ago, during the times that he himself was a clerk in the house of Speelmeyer,

Luetkens must have hoped and trusted that Speelmeyer would once more not be generally opposed to such an idea with regard to Ehrenfried.[121] The important thing was, however, that the merchants needed to find suitable ways and reasonable arguments to sell the idea to the "old man", "seinen Alten" as the correspondents called Speelmeyer.[122] Last but not least, Luetkens also slightly changed and adapted his general approach of how to best tackle the issue of founding a merchant house, either deliberately or simply by means of grasping an opportunity that was provided to him. The result was the same. His new approach was one that had essentially already been practiced successfully in mercantile business for centuries: Luetkens' ultimate solution was to marry into another merchant family. By doing so, he won a business partner, the brother of his future wife, he found a place for establishing his business, Hamburg, and he furthermore gained additional financial and personal resources on which he could build his future career, all at the same time.[123] Engelhardt, as a person, was neither family nor kin to Luetkens beforehand. But in their private firm, they would now build up a new family linkage as a basis for a prospering business. The merger helped both families. For Luetkens, it definitely came at the right time. Still in the 18th century, there was no more direct or promising way to build a strong business than to marry the

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120 Regarding the Engelhardt family, see "Engelhard." *Genealogisches Handbuch bürgerlicher Familien (Deutsches Geschlechterbuch)*, edited by Bernard Koerner. 221 volumes, Görlitz: C.A. Starke, 1912, vol 20, 70-92.

121 This fact is revealed to us in a letter from Luetkens to Simon Moritz Bethmann. "habe da [in Frankreich] alle Afferes von mein gewisene Patron [Speelmeyer] meist alle getriben und zwey Jahr in Lorient auf dem Verk[auf] gewesen." Letter from Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb to Bethmann, Simon Moritz, December 17, 1743, TNA, HCA 30/232, Letter Book II, unnumbered.

122 Letter from Hertzer & von Bobartt to Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, March 5, 1745, TNA, HCA 30/234.

123 On the importance of the dowry, see Earle, *Making of the English Middle Class*, 190.

daughter of a reputable merchant family and therefore establish an alliance with this family on the basis of which one could start one's own business.[124]

In late November 1745, Luetkens married Ilsabe Engelhardt. Her brother Ehrenfried Engelhardt became his future business partner, the *compagnion* or *socius* for his merchant house, as the contemporaries called it. Together with him Luetkens established and opened up the merchant house Luetkens & Engelhardt in Hamburg. This step therefore represented the completion of his establishment process. The merchants later became Hamburg's third largest sugar merchants.

During the planning and preparation phase of this association and merger with Ehrenfried Engelhard, which in the end was put into practice and entered into force in November 1745, things, however, once more did not completely go according to the plan that Luetkens had devised and envisaged beforehand. This led to the result that once more an alternative solution to an original plan was needed. This solution is what I will direct my attention to next because it called into action the merchants Hertzer & von Bobartt, who provided the solution to this problem by sending Hinrich Schuetz to France. The general agreement regarding the merger and the establishing of a joint merchant house in Hamburg had been reached between Luetkens and Engelhardt in some form in the second half of 1744. We unfortunately have no further evidence of the date or the details in the Luetkens archive due to the missing letters apart from the reassurance that it had been adopted and was taken for granted by both the future partners in their later letters and that it later entered into force. Following this agreement, Luetkens' actual plan was, however, to also impel Engelhardt to travel to France to support him with his business there. The idea behind it was that Luetkens would thus ensure a smooth transition from his business activities in France to a relocation of his businesses to Hamburg. For Engelhardt, in turn, visiting Luetkens in France should already make him familiar with the businesses and the networks that Luetkens had in France, and, as Luetkens also did not conceal from his future socius, Engelhardt was also offered to extend his stay in France to continue their business there for the time when Luetkens would already begin his return voyage to Hamburg.

The negotiations in this matter provide us with the necessary background for also understanding the actions and measures taken with regard to employing Schuetz because this initial plan, too, failed, which once more forced Luetkens towards a strategic rethink. The reason why we should still take a detailed look at the previous events is that Luetkens pursued a rather similar way of approaching his correspondents in both episodes. In both episodes, he tried to exercise the utmost care to keep the original plan underlying the idea concealed and confidential as best as possible and only let it be known to the parties directly involved. That meant specifically that in the first part of the episode basically only Engelhard was privy to his plans, and in the second part only Hertzer & von Bobartt and Schuetz knew about his motivations. His letter-writing practice and particularly the letters by Hertzer & von Bobartt in this episode there-

124 See Hancock, *Citizens of the World*, 43, 245. See Weber, *Deutsche Kaufleute*, 272-273, 287. See Earle, *Making of the English Middle Class*, 189-194. See Grassby, *Business Community*, 303. See Roseveare, *Markets and Merchants*.

fore strictly followed the principle of confidentiality or, to put it more accurately, the practical principle of arranging insider dealings, which I will present in this chapter.

This principle is similar to the practical principle of giving correspondents preferential treatment that is going to be presented in the next chapter on Luetkens' marriage initiation. In contrast to the principle of special treatment, however, the principle of insider dealings was different with regard to its initial conditions. While the principle of special treatment, as I will show in the next chapter, was used to create a feeling of exclusivity on the part of the addressees in order to convince them to help Luetkens, the principle of insider dealing, as it is presented in this chapter, was primarily based on an already done deal, a fait accompli, which, however, needed to be put into practice appropriately by means of letter. In order to do so, the letter writers used certain practices that are presented in the following explanations. In this episode, Luetkens was offered help by his trading partners. They presented him with a tailor-made solution in the end. But we will start at the beginning.

The original idea behind his plan to lure Engelhardt to France is revealed to us in two letters that we can find in Luetkens' large Letter Book, both addressed to his correspondent Ehrenfried Engelhard and a certain "E.E.", which was a diction that already in itself held a very revealing connotation. In the contemporary common parlance, "E.E." often was used and simply stood for "Honored Sir" or "Esteemed Gentleman". And this fact is interesting because as it will turn out the second letter sent, although it was addressed to Ehrenfried Engelhard, whose initials were also "E.E.", it was actually and primarily addressed and meant for the eyes of Engelhardt's employer, David Speelmeyer.[125] This fact was also the reason why the content of the second letter slightly differed to the content of the first letter. It was an alternative version of the first letter, to be chosen in case it was needed. The first thing we have to acknowledge with regard to both letters, however, before devoting us to these different contents of the letters, was that we learn from the letter that the merger during that time was already a done deal. The correspondents did not in any way address the fact that they would in due course of time enter into a partnership. However, what the correspondents did discuss in these letters were the particularities of the provisions that would apply for the interim period, which apparently still needed to be negotiated, and this object of negotiation provides us with enough material to learn about the status quo of both future partners and their room for manoeuvre.

The strategy that Luetkens noticeably pursued in these letters and the way that he tackled the matter of enforcing Engelhardt's journey to France was to deliberately use two letters for delivering his message to Hamburg. He thus split up his proposition into two separate written statements, one personal version for Engelhardt, one alternative version for external parties. The two letters were, however, both sent to Engelhardt as one postal item, one letter packet, with the second letter having been inserted in the first, just as in the case of the letter packet sent to Luetkens' brother Anton in the chapter

125 The abbreviation E.E. or V.L. in Early Modern letters stands for "Euer Edlen", "Euer Ehren" viz. "Viver Liebden", which was typically used as an abbreviation in many German, Dutch, but also in many French letters of the 18th century as a form of address. See the merchant manual Marperger, *Getreuer und geschickter Handelsdiener*, 217.

on Luetkens' shipping business. In the present case, the first, outer letter was intended and addressed to Engelhardt "for personal uses only", "in eigen Händen" as it was called in the Letter Book, which corresponds with the practice of writing "particulair letters" about which we have already learned in the chapter on commission trade and about which we will once more learn in detail in the chapter on Luetkens' marriage preparations. The second letter was inserted "proforma" as he called it, that is, if needed for a wider audience, but was actually intended for Speelmeyer.[126] If, therefore, Engelhardt was willing to agree to Luetkens' proposal, he could use this second letter, in the same way as Luetkens had already used this strategy in the case of the arrangements with his brother Anton, to present the idea to his patron Speelmeyer. Luetkens thus provided his future business partner with a kind of power to act and power of attorney, which enabled him to take the necessary steps to get the plan underway. For this purpose, this second letter was deliberately inserted folded into the first letter so that Engelhardt could simply use this letter provided by Luetkens if he needed material proof, a bargaining chip and a powerful lever for the undertaking, namely the journey to France. Speelmeyer would never know about the first letter.

In his first letter Luetkens chose a rather attentive and tender tone for presenting his idea to Engelhardt, keeping the ultimate outcome open, while in his second letter the presented idea already assumed the shape of a very concrete request and a lucrative offer for all involved. Sending two letters and splitting up the proposal between these two letters, however, did not only pay tribute to two different addressees and target groups, whom one would address in different ways, but it also, first and foremost, followed a strategic calculation. This becomes apparent in the simple fact that the message and statements sent in the respective letters differed slightly from one another. It becomes apparent from looking at the entire letter packet that the first letter served the purpose of acquainting Engelhardt with an idea that would, however, need a certain adaption, an alternative framing in the letter to Speelmeyer in order to increase the probability that Speelmeyer would agree to the proposal that Engelhardt should travel to France. The reason why the contents of both letters differ from one another was ultimately to increase their persuasiveness. Consequently, the actual plan behind the proposal, which was that Luetkens in essence wanted to introduce Engelhardt to his business, was left out of the second letter, and instead the second letter presented a slightly different version of the proposal that Luetkens made to Engelhardt. In this second letter he simply suggested that Engelhardt should go on a trip to France, on his own account. Reading the two letters one after the other will be highly informative with regard to how Luetkens once more tried to pull the strings to get his initial idea put into practice by means of his letters, their text and material. In the first letter, no. 583 in his Letter Book, Luetkens wrote to Ehrenfried Engelhardt that if

> "E.E. would travel to France, this would certainly accelerate my return ["Retur beschleunigen"]. It would also be advantageous for E.E., since I can introduce E.E. to my businesses here, so that E.E. becomes familiar with everything and I could introduce E.E.

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126 See letter from Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb to Engelhardt, Ehrenfried, March 8, 1745, TNA, HCA 30/232, Letter Book I, no. 583 ["in eigen Händen"] and no. 584.

> to many people ["mit Leute bekant zu machen"]. E.E could also act as a substitute for me here ["meine Stelle hier vertretten"]. E.E. will certainly not regret it. And when E.E. is here, it is very likely that E.E. as well as I will gain a lot of profit ["viell Geldt"] from it. [...] If E.E. doesn't like it here or if E.E. doesn't find it advantageous ["avantageus"], E.E. can return with me or I arrange for a free lodging at my friends' German merchant houses in Nantes or Bordeaux [...]. And if E.E. wished E.E. can work at their compting houses ["auf derro Contoer arbeyten"] and enjoy every freedom of trade there. E.E. would therefore find an amicable way ["mit Gütte"] to leave Monsieur S[peelmeyer]. As soon as I am back in Hamburg, he would most certainly not easily and amicably disengage you."[127]

The general tenor and aim of his proposal to Engelhardt was to convince Engelhardt to follow in his footsteps in France and to take on his role and responsibilities in France as an acclimatisation process and adaption period in the run-up to their future joint company. In this regard, Luetkens emphasised that such a training period would also provide a far better basis for the upcoming negotiations with Engelhardt's current employer, Speelmeyer, who still had to consent to the plan that Engelhardt would leave him and enter into a new merchant house. As the second letter will reveal, unlike the employment relationship in which Simon Moritz Bethmann served in the house of Furly, Engelhardt was already approaching the end of his employment time in the house of Speelmeyer. However, despite or maybe precisely because of this, the letters that were sent to Hamburg and the proposal presented in them did not in any way create the impression that Engelhardt would immediately enter into the service of another merchant, namely Luetkens, in France but rather that he would just pay a visit to France. A message that would signal the opposite could under no circumstances be presented to Speelmeyer, even despite the fact that this merchant had been amicable to Luetkens, who was Speelmeyer's former employee. The old merchant would not have agreed to that. This was finally also the reason why writing a second letter, with a slightly adapted version of the proposal, was indispensable. This second letter needed to present valid grounds and reasons for sending Engelhardt out to France that were reasonable, understandable and justifiable before Speelmeyer, which was why Luetkens choose a different line of argument. This line of argument completely omitted the fact that Engelhardt would work with Luetkens in France, but it presented the journey to France as an individual travel activity for Engelhardt, which only served his own individual purposes and benefits. Providing his employee with an opportunity for personal advancement that would furthermore also come with certain benefits for Speelmeyer, such as French commissions, was a basis for negotiation and an argumentation that Speelmeyer would more probably agree to than being presented with the actual plan behind it, which was introducing and integrating Engelhardt into Luetkens' business. Just as in the case of his brother Anton, Nicolaus Gottlieb Luetkens once more left the decision to Engelhardt whether or not he would make use of the letter and forward it

127 Letter from Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb to Engelhardt, Ehrenfried, March 8, 1745, TNA, HCA 30/232, Letter Book I, no. 583.

to Speelmeyer. Engelhardt could accept the material gesture or destroy all material evidence of it. In his letter, Luetkens added the statement that "I am sending this enclosed letter to E.E. proforma ["einliegenden Brief proforma"], so that if wished E.E. can show it [to Speelmeyer]. In case it meets with approval, I wish that it shows the intended effect and E.E. will get free through it ["frey kommen"]. In case that E.E. does not find this advisable, do not forward to the letter".[128]

Luetkens' second letter with the alternative version of his plans subsequently reads:

> "Since E.E. had told me some time ago that he would like to travel to France at his earliest convenience, it appears to me that now is the best opportunity in the world ["schönste Occasion von der Weldt"]. Since E.E. had written to me that, since his skills in French are not yet perfect, E.E. would first like to stay for one or two years in a German merchant house ["Teutsch contor"] in Bordeaux or Nantes, I have presented this idea to my intimate friends ["intime Freunde"] Ochs & Schweighauser at Nantes, who are Protestants and whose house is one of the best in France and who are currently in need of a clerk to look after their German correspondence, and they have agreed to welcome E.E. in their house. I have told them E.E. could be in Nantes directly after Easter. [...] They have left me master ["meister gelassen"] of the terms and conditions of the employment, so I have arranged with them that E.E. would get no salary in case he would leave their house before the expiry of one year, if he stays another year, he receives 400 £, after the second year 500 £, after the third 600 £. You can trade freely in their house but only à costy [in Nantes]. Furthermore, E.E. should know that he would not be treated as an employee ["nicht wie ein Bedienten"] but as a friend. There could not be a better opportunity than this opportunity and I wish E.E. all best luck with it. I hope that M. Sp[eelmeyer] will not be that fussed about the two or three weeks [left of his employment in Speelmeyer's house], so that E.E. will be able to leave at the first opportunity, that is, before Easter, which I will gladly hear from E.E.'s response letter."[129]

The second letter in the end took the form of a recommendation letter as they circulated widely and in manifold ways during the era, which is also they reason why the authors of the letter-writing manuals of the time even devoted whole chapters just to letters of recommendation.[130] The letter in this respect stuck to a certain standard repertoire with regard to the arguments provided. Luetkens praised the *good occasion* that presented itself precisely at this moment in time for a trip to France, which served the purpose to underline that the opportunity should not be missed. He, however, left out the fact that it was a particularly opportune moment for Engelhardt to come to France because during this time Luetkens, too, was present in the house of Ochs & Schweighauser. In this regard, however, he secondly made Engelhardt a very concrete offer for a lucrative and lasting way of employment at a reputable German house in Nantes, which had to be seen as beneficial for a young merchant. This would also stand to reason

128 Ibid.

129 Letter from Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb to Engelhardt, Ehrenfried, March 8, 1745, TNA, HCA 30/232, Letter Book I, no. 584, originally part of a letter packet together with letter no. 583.

130 See as a prime example Marperger, *Der allzeitfertige Handels-Correspondent*, 686.

for Speelmeyer, who would at the same time gain a lucrative new trading opportunity. As typical for letters of recommendation, Luetkens provides a concrete address as to where Engelhardt could address himself in France. However, what he omitted from the letter was the fact that Engelhardt would in this way not only enter into the service of the Nantes Swiss-Protestant merchant house of Ochs & Schweighausen but at the very same time in certain ways also into the service of Luetkens, who maintained and conducted manifold commission businesses with the said merchant house while living and trading in Nantes himself. The merchant Ochs was furthermore one of Luetkens' frequent travel companions, and thus definitely an *intimate friend*, during the times that he spent in France.

Therefore, the two of them, Luetkens and Engelhardt, in the actual arrangement Luetkens envisioned, would work closely together and both act as commission agents in the house of Ochs & Schweighauser, conducting not only business in the name of the said merchants but first and foremost in their own name and therefore in the name of their future merchant house. In certain ways, Luetkens still at least implied the latter, pointing to the fact that Engelhardt would not be regarded as an *employee* in this house but as a *friend* – and as a friend he would also be given the right to conduct his own business. Last but not least, as usual in letters of recommendation, Luetkens' letters provided a concrete date as to when a trip to France would be most advisable.[131] This date, however, was not only advisable because of, for instance, good travel conditions during the Easter period. Rather, it would be particularly favourable for the two young merchants because it would give them enough time to get to know each other and for Engelhardt to get familiar with the businesses the two of them would conduct together, before they were to start their official business partnership together in November 1745. The latter fact would, however, understandably remain unmentioned in the letter.

In sum, on the surface and to outside viewers, the letter from Luetkens seemed to be a perfect letter of recommendation, providing convincing arguments why Engelhardt should take to the road and travel to France, on his own behalf and with the consent of his employer. At the same time, all of the arguments raised were also always directly tied to and in support of Luetkens' original plan, about which we know due to the first letter and which Engelhardt was therefore aware of, too. Quite on the contrary, the intriguing thing about this letter and the reason why it is such a prime example of the practical principle of persuasion through arranging insider dealings is that Luetkens was able to sell his idea without revealing the original, underlying plan to all participants. He achieved this by serving parts of his plan in well-considered doses of information to the respective addressees, in this case selling the idea to Speelmeyer. His letter can therefore not generally be regarded as selling a lie, but rather it concealed the actual motivation behind the plan, for the purpose of getting Speelmeyer's approval, which would in the end also be beneficial for Speelmeyer, at least in Luetkens' opinion.

Unfortunately for Luetkens though, his letters failed to have the desired effect. We do not know what the decisive reason for the failure was: whether Speelmeyer smelt a rat or simply did not agree to the idea, or whether Engelhardt did not want to risk a quarrel with Speelmeyer or backpedalled because, as we know at least from Luetkens'

131 See ibid., 684–686. See also Bohse, *Der allzeitfertige Briefsteller*, 157.

letter, in the beginning he was generally not disinclined to the idea. The only thing we know for sure is that the failure did not have a detrimental impact on the overall plan of both young merchants to enter into a partnership. At the end of the year 1745, after the time when Engelhardt had fully served his contract in the house of Speelmeyer, Engelhardt and Luetkens established their merchant house together in Hamburg. Knowing about this episode and the persuasive strategy behind it nevertheless is most crucial for us because it serves as a blueprint for the events that took place in the following and as a direct result of it.

The failure of this plan prompted the merchants Hertzer & von Bobartt to jump into action, who in a way provided the compensatory solution for Luetkens, which, in turn, was surely also an important reason for the partnership between Engelhardt and Luetkens not being jeopardised in the end. As a positive side effect of this contingency plan that was subsequently implemented by Luetkens and Hertzer & von Bobartt, the Hamburg merchant in France was provided with a skilled merchant clerk, who would continue to work for him and Engelhardt and for Hertzer & von Bobartt as a loyal employee and agent in France even after Luetkens was already back in Hamburg. So, Luetkens in the end not only gained a merchant clerk but also a future agent and factor in France. So, once more the saying proves true that *when one door closes another one opens,* and this new solution even represented a more conducive one for Luetkens' establishment phase. The negotiation strategy applied in the following letter episode was basically exactly the same as in the case of the Engelhardt letters, only that the circle of insiders was even more limited. Most striking is that Hertzer & von Bobartt and Luetkens even decided not to inform Engelhardt about their concrete plans in the first place.

Finding a Merchant Clerk

After being informed by Luetkens about the bad progress regarding his plan to lure Engelhardt to France and after a having had a short personal conversation with Engelhardt themselves, maybe at the Hamburg stock exchange, where they had also met before, the Hamburg merchants Hertzer & von Bobartt saw themselves no longer able to stand back and only watch from the sideline. Instead, they obviously saw the need for direct intervention and support.[132] Their resulting letter to Luetkens turned out to be longer than usual. First of all, they decided to write and send two letters to Luetkens in one letter packet, one dealing with only commercial matters, the other one being destined for negotiating more private business. The second letter was again marked with "in eigen Händen", for personal use only, which was synonymous with "particular letters". In this case, the purpose of this additional note next to the address line was again to limit the pairs of eyes that would be privy to the matter and therefore to emphasise and to best ensure the confidentiality of the respective letter. As is at least my impression from all the letters that I have read in the Luetkens archive marked with this note and also knowing these letters' contents and their consequences, I can state with reasonable certainty that most of the time the recipients of the letters seem to have

132 Hertzer & von Bobartt report the meeting with Engelhardt in their letter quoted below.

adhered to this material request for confidentiality. This practice, therefore, as simple as it might appear, actually worked and was effective. This is a fact that is often forgotten or at least underrepresented in current research, which instead tends to stress another very common letter-reading habit of the time, namely that letters were read aloud publicly as a "quasi-public form of communication".[133] The letters with the mark "in eigen Händen", "particular letter", or in French "en mains propres" or "particulaire lettre", however, were definitely meant to be read in private.

In their letter marked with this note, the merchants Hertzer & von Bobartt therefore not surprisingly touched upon the topic of the planned joint partner company of Luetkens and Engelhard and the necessary planning beforehand because this was something that they wanted to and needed to discuss in private. Secondly, this letter exceeded the usual number of letter pages used for their letters to Luetkens. Usually, concluding from their letter pile in the archive, Hertzer & von Bobartt used three to 5 pages for their letters to Luetkens, which equates to one or two large sheets of paper, which were folded in the middle to write on the front and inner side of the paper, but not on the last page which was reserved for the address. The letter sent to Luetkens on the 5th of March 1745, however, marked with the privacy note, consisted of a total of seven complete pages, which shows the great importance that the Hamburg merchants attached to this matter.

Another striking feature of this letter is also that noticeably a single page was deliberately added as an extra contribution, an extra sheet to this letter. Not entirely coincidental in this regard furthermore appears the fact that, written on this single sheet of paper, we find the concrete proposal Hertzer & von Bobartt made to Luetkens to solve his tricky situation. On this inserted letter page, we find Hertzer & von Bobartt's proposal to send over their merchant clerk Schuetz to France. Assuming that this is no coincidence, we can draw the conclusion that in this way the merchants once more offered Luetkens a rather simple way and material opportunity to drop the idea if he did not agree with it. The only thing Luetkens had to do was to remove this single sheet of paper, the extra page from the letter, throw it away or even burn it, as was common practice during that time, before filing the rest of the original letter by Hertzer & von Bobartt in their respective letter bundle in the archive.[134] Having removed the letter sheet would subsequently have created the appearance for any outside viewer that no offer had ever been made. Providing a letter writer and letter recipient with such a material opportunity surely represents just another practical benefit provided by the letter practice: It allowed them to simply let certain plans, ideas, and arrangements disappear or slip away by deliberately but discreetly destroying letters or single letter pages, if needed. As we know from Luetkens' response to this letter, however, the

133 Ditz, "Formative Ventures," 59. See also Körber, "Der soziale Ort des Briefs," 258, who wrote that letters were "often personal yet not private" ["Ein Brief enthält eine Nachricht, die persönlich ist, ohne privat zu sein."]. See Earle, "Introduction," (in *Epistolary Selves*), 7. See Whyman, *Pen and the People*, 72; see Furger, *Briefsteller*, 137.

134 Regarding the practice of burning letters (as it was most prominently celebrated by Rahel Varnhagen) see French, Lorely. *German Women as Letter Writers: 1750-1850*. London: Associated University Press, 1996, 157.

merchant did not decide to remove this extra page but gladly accepted the offer. For him, this offer came at exactly the right moment in time. It provided him with a good compensation for Engelhardt's absence in France.

So, after their report about their meeting with Engelhardt, which filled nearly one and a half pages of their letter and which gave them little hope and the clear impression that "Engelhardt will not travel to France in the near future in order to bring himself to do some considerable business there",[135] they submitted the following proposal on the extra page, starting their explanations with a formative letter phrase and letter formula that is already very familiar to us.

> "After reading E.E.'s letter and after careful consideration, we came up with the idea ["auf die Gedancken kommen"] to propose to E.E. to send E.E. our own clerk ["Diener"] whose name is Schutz who could assist E.E. and who would receive the necessary instructions from E.E., so that when E.E. arrives back here [in Hamburg], he [Schutz] could render us both good services [in France], and so that we have someone there whom we can trust ["einen Menschen haben auf welchen unß beyderseits … verlassen"]. This Schutz has been serving us for 8 years and his contract is expiring next May. As far as we know, he is willing to make a tour to France, he has served us loyally ["treulich gedienet"] and we can confirm he has best knowledge in the trade in sugars, which is our most fundamental trading field ["principahlste Handlung"]. He is not in the slightest addicted to drink or to any other of the human vices. The only flaw that we sometimes notice on him is that he is a smart aleck sometimes ["klug hath dünken laßen"][…] which will, however, go away as soon as he is in foreign lands and mingles with more people. He is a bit scant ["kargh"] on money, which means that travel expenses will hit him hard. For this reason, we think that he will certainly be convenient with entering into E.E.'s and our service in order to visit France without paying any money. […] As soon as we receive E.E.'s approval, we are willing to send him over with one of our ships at the first opportunity and to release him from his contract. We will tell him that he is obliged ["sich verpflichten muß"] to follow E.E.'s orders and instructions, while in return we will offer him a certain interest in our enterprises, and we ask E.E. to do the same and allow him, if he is inclined to do so, a small interest in your enterprises. This interest, however, should be small. Furthermore, when E.E. leaves France and comes here, he [Schutz] is obliged to doing business only on E.E.'s and on our behalf, however, he will be allowed to keep a small interest in these enterprises, and furthermore we will give him a 1% provision on all the purchases he does on our behalf."[136]

Precisely through this latter regulation, Schuetz was to become their agent and factor in France. On the left hand side of the letter page, as a later addition to their letter, written diagonally on the page, the merchants also added the important information that they would now "set out and confirm all of this in writing together with him ["schrifftlich mit Ihm abfaßen"] and we will draft the contract in such a way that E.E. will be content with it, and we will send E.E. a copy of it for the records."[137] This information was

135 Letter from Hertzer & von Bobartt to Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, March 5, 1745, TNA, HCA 30/234.

136 Ibid., written on a separately enclosed sheet of paper, an extra letter page.

137 Ibid.

simply too important to forget and miss it in their letter, which was the reason why they added this *postscript* to their letter. The latter practice of adding certain information to free spaces on the letter pages can often be observed in the letters within the Luetkens archive. We will hear in greater detail about the practice of writing a P.S. in the next chapter. As becomes obvious from this letter in particular, as only one typical example, this practice was not always due to negligence or carelessness on the part of the letter writers. Quite on the contrary, it far more often served the purpose of keeping the letter and its information up to date. Another piece of information they added to this letter page was that since Schuetz was already "acquainted with M. Engelhard, whenever the same would make a tour to France, the two of them would certainly get along with each other."[138] This information points us to the fact that Engelhardt was not meant to be privy to this matter. It was the conviction of Hertzer & von Bobartt that Luetkens' future partner would surely in the end benefit from this deal. However, there was no need to tell him about their arrangements at this stage.

In general, it must be assumed that this offer must have presented a sheet anchor for everyone involved and particularly for Luetkens. For Hinrich Schuetz, too, this offer presented a good opportunity because he got the chance to gain experience abroad instead of only serving his duty as a merchant clerk in Hamburg. Even the Hamburg merchant house would get a certain benefit from this agreement. First, doing Luetkens this favour further strengthened their ties with Luetkens and his dependency on them. Secondly, with regard to their business cooperation in the future, as they already anticipated in the letter, they as well as Luetkens would later be able to draw on their own factor in France due to the stipulated regulations. Their proposal therefore was not only a generous offer, but it also served their own interest in the future. Last but not least, for Nicolaus Gottlieb Luetkens it was an offer that he simply could not reject because it was very helpful for him. After it must have become apparent to him that his plan to get Engelhardt to travel to France would fail, which happened at the very same time as the letter exchanges regarding Schuetz with Hertzer & von Bobartt, he therefore expressed his consent and his appreciation of this presented idea most tellingly. His words are so remarkable because they completely omitted to beating about the bush and instead addressed the matter as directly and plainly as it could be. It is precisely this brevity and succinctness that conveys to us the gratitude and great relief that Luetkens must have felt when he received the letter by Hertzer & von Bobartt or, looking at it the other way around, we at least get a glimpse of the weariness that the previous efforts in the negotiations must have left him with.

On the 29th of March 1745, representing letter copy no. 613 in his Letter Book, Luetkens wrote to Hertzer & von Bobartt that "if the matter could be resolved with M. Schutz, I ask E.E. to not waste any time ["nicht zu manquiren"] and send him over at the earliest convenience because I am in great need of him [....]", whereby the word "great" ["groß nöttig"] is added in this letter to give his words further emphasis.[139] After this approval by Luetkens, things were handled with astounding speed. Already in their next

138 Ibid.

139 Letter from Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb to Hertzer & von Bobartt, March 29, 1745, TNA, HCA 30/232, Letter Book I, no. 613.

letter, from the 9th of April, Hertzer & von Bobartt announced that "our clerk Schütz agrees with everything, to confirm everything in writing ["eine Schrifft verbürglich zu machen"] and to travel to France and enter into E.E.'s service at the first opportunity. We are willing to send him over after the [Easter] feast, and he will soon be with E.E. We will send E.E. a copy of the contract."[140] They also once more added that Schuetz would certainly be of help to both parties in future. In the end, however, the contract was not sent directly to Luetkens by regular post, but Hertzer & von Bobartt instead decided to give this letter enclosing the contract to Schuetz personally before his departure, so that he could hand it over to Luetkens directly upon arrival. On the 26th of April, Schuetz entered the ship of captain Paatz in Hamburg as a passenger. Four days later, the ship departed.

6.10 Second Conclusion: On Hand-to-Hand Delivery

The fact that Hertzer & von Bobartt decided to hand over the respective letter enclosing all the requisite documents regarding the future employment in France to Schuetz himself before his departure and not send these documents via mail as announced in their letter, points us to two crucial facts and conditions underlying this letter episode and the whole undertaking. First, the material gesture of not sending this letter by mail but handing it over to a messenger, Schuetz, who was also directly involved in the respective undertaking, was a clear indication of the absolute confidentiality that the Hamburg merchant house wished to exercise in this matter. It was a result and an intrinsic part of the practical principle of insider dealings applied in this episode.

Apparently, the merchants Hertzer & von Bobartt preferred a hand-to-hand delivery in this case because the matter and agreements that had been made between them were only meant to be known to the persons directly involved, to them, Luetkens and Schuetz. By means of choosing this way of transportation, the merchants prevented in the best way possible that other people got the chance to read this letter or to hear of the plans. Furthermore, hand-to-hand delivery was also a more secure way of transportation relating to letters going missing or being confiscated on the way.[141] The reason, however, for the above argument that the way of transportation was chosen for ensuring the highest confidentiality can be found in Hertzer & von Bobartt's next letter, which was sent to Luetkens in the usual way. In this letter, Hertzer & von Bobartt first reported to Luetkens that they amended the "copia of the contract conditions that they have set out with Schuetz" to a letter which they gave to Schuetz personally. At the end of the letter, they also presented certain reasons and justifications for this approach, referring, however, in this case not to their particular decision to provide Schuetz with the letter and the contract but referring to the general approach that they liked to choose in this

140 Letter from Hertzer & von Bobartt to Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, April 4, 1745, "In eigen Handen", TNA, HCA 30/234.

141 Regarding the reliability of postal services and routes, see Whyman, *Pen and the People*, 46-74. See O'Neill, *The Opened Letter*, 19-46. See also Behringer, "Communications Revolutions." In general Behringer, *Zeichen des Merkur*.

matter. The latter was not presented to Luetkens as a wish, but quite on the contrary, it far more took the form of a clear request to him, which becomes obvious when we look at their words. The merchants wrote that they "would write to their friends in L & v. B. [Luttman & von Bobartt] at Nantes that captain Paatz has sailed off and that our former clerk M. Schuetz is travelling with him and the same will make a tour through Nantes, so we ask them to assist him in everything. However, we don't want them to know about the arrangement we have settled with him, and E.E. would do well to also maintain silence about this before them ["nichts gegen detti Freunde merken zu laßen"], and if it comes to light, we would prefer it if E.E. would tell our mutual friends that E.E. has settled the deal with Schuetz ["Engagement gemacht"], because otherwise our friends might be a bit displeased ["was unmuthen sein"] about the fact that both E.E. and we saw no need to inform them beforehand despite our family ties [Elart von Bobartt in Nantes was Christopher von Bobartt's brother] and the long friendship we share with them. The news that E.E. had made an arrangement with M. Schuetz will lead to worries not only on their side [in Nantes], but also on the part of the merchants here [in Hamburg], but they will have to content themselves ["begnügen"] with the response that E.E. sends to them."[142]

The reason why this level of confidentiality was therefore chosen or regarded as advisable by the merchants was to prevent suspicions, discord and even rumours relating to Schuetz' future position and role in France on the part of their other trading partners; suspicions and rumours that would have, however, not completely lacked substance because the merchants did in fact have ambitious plans for Schuetz. Mainly, however, this way of dealing with the matter was chosen because the merchants wanted to avoid objections from these other merchants, who would have demanded to have their say in the matter had they known about it. So, instead Hertzer & von Bobartt wanted to create the impression that Schuetz's trip to France was happening of Schuetz's own accord and with the approval of his employer in Hamburg, and in case any questions were raised later, it should appear as if Luetkens had made the respective arrangements with Schuetz in France. Otherwise, the other trading partners would have felt left out and ignored, which might have caused disgruntlement or at least resentment on their side and, furthermore, might have raised further questions. All of this would have unnecessarily delayed the whole process, which would have been unfavourable and problematic for Luetkens, which is why they instead decided to keep it all confidential and a secret. This approach therefore literally represents the pinnacle and ultimate prime example of the persuasive practical principle of arranging insider dealings.

In order to get their venture done, the partners hammered out a deal and compiled a contract, which only they would know about. Considered as a whole, the decision to hand over a copy of the contract and the letter to Schuetz personally, as part of the strategy to keep things confidential, made things a lot easier for the people involved and it helped them to accelerate the process and the implementation of the plan. This was convenient for everyone involved, but especially for Luetkens because he urgently needed help. Therefore, the historical actors once more found a pragmatic solution to a

142 Letter from Hertzer & von Bobartt to Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, April [further date not readable], 1745, TNA, HCA 30/234.

problem, which they were able to implement on the basis of the opportunities provided by letter writing and correspondence. Consequently, Luetkens himself completely adhered to the provision made by Hertzer & von Bobartt and he did not in any way criticise or oppose the approach suggested.

The second remarkable insight that we gain from the material gesture of handing over the letter with the contract to Schuetz is that it provides a proper explanation of why the whole matter of employing Schuetz was generally solved so easily and quickly: In this present case, Luetkens was simply presented by Hertzer & von Bobartt with a fait accompli. Represented in the gesture of handing over and providing Schuetz with an already completed written contract, prepared exclusively by the Hamburg merchants themselves, we find the proof that both Luetkens and Schuetz from this moment onwards essentially had no further say and no other option than to agree with all the formal conditions that Hertzer & von Bobartt intended for their mutual collaboration. This represents a crucial formative element of the practical principle of arranging insider dealings in this episode, shaping and determining the course of events in this episode. From the moment Luetkens agreed to the plan of being provided with a merchant clerk by Hertzer & von Bobartt in his letter, no further discussions were needed or necessary, and consequently no further negotiations took place. The reason for this, as it appears, was that all participants now simply accepted to leave the leadership, "Meister laßen" in the contemporary wording, to Hertzer & von Bobartt.[143] In the end, for both Luetkens and Schuetz the arrangements now being made were favourable, so there was no need for any opposition or interference from their side. And this was ultimately the reason why things were resolved so quickly.

In this case the powers of persuasion, as they were prevailing in and governing the letter and business practices of the 18th century, mainly become noticeable in the letters by the merchants Hertzer & von Bobartt. By means and on the basis of their letters and by means of the way they chose to send them, they were apparently pulling the necessary strings to create facts necessary for helping Luetkens with his establishment phase, but by doing so they were also skilfully setting up a plan that was in the end beneficial to all the involved parties. As the final piece of evidence being cited in this chapter, in which all the planning in the end culminated, I will quote the original copy of the employment contract that Schuetz was handed by Hertzer & von Bobartt before leaving for France, which still exists today and has survived amongst the Luetkens papers because it did finally reach Luetkens. Therefore, the contract was also stored amongst the document in his business archive. This document, as we will see, represents a masterpiece of contractual arrangements and a masterpiece of forward planning, bringing all the arduous negotiations and planning of the previous weeks to a conciliatory ending.

Two things in particular will become obvious from the document. First, it will show us the room for manoeuvre, the tasks and the responsibilities of a merchant clerk during that time, which provides us with a further explanation why matters and formalities were quickly and easily completed in this case. The entrepreneurial scope of action of a merchant clerk, during that time but also basically during the entire Early Modern Period, was clearly defined and most of the time also deliberately limited in order to

143 See for instance letter from Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb to Engelhardt, Ehrenfried, March 8, 1745.

ensure a smooth workflow and a clear chain of command and hierarchy in the merchant house.[144] More or less the only relatively flexible object of negotiation with regard to the contractual provisions set out for the employment of a clerk was whether the merchant clerk was given the right for financial participation in the firm and its businesses, which, if it was granted to him, furthermore differed in the extent of this participation. Most of the time, merchant clerks were granted a 1 to 5 per cent commission fee for the businesses they conducted and/or a share in the investments and businesses of the firm. In the case of Schuetz, he was granted a 1/8 share in the investments and enterprises of the firm.[145] Secondly, it will become apparent how skilfully Hertzer & von Bobartt engineered and succeeded in pre-planning and contractually paving the way for their future plans with Schuetz, presenting the icing of the cake of the practical principle of arranging insider dealings that was demonstrated in this chapter. In this contract, it is not only Schuetz's employment as a clerk that was stipulated, but the contract also anticipated his future employment as an agent and merchant factor in their and Luetkens' service.[146] Therefore, this document is a prime example of how merchants even or especially with regard to legal formalities were able to predefine and shape the future course of events by means of putting ink on paper. This is the complete contract of employment for the merchant clerk Hinrich Schuetz entering into the service of Nicolaus Gottlieb Luetkens under supervision of the merchants Hertzer & von Bobartt:

> "After Monsieur Hinrich Schutz has fully served his agreed upon period of service in the house of Hertzer & von Bobartt and the same has now decided to travel to foreign lands ["Reise nach der Frembde"], Hertzer & von Bobartt are willing to support him in his wish and give him all their amicable assistance and they are also willing to employ him in their affairs abroad ["Affairen zu employren"], so both parties set out and enter into the following contract with each other. First, Mon. Hinrich Schutz travels at his own request [at his own responsibility] and at his own expenses, as concerns his livelihood, for the whole duration of his travels. He travels from here directly to France and particularly to the place where Nicolaus Gottlieb Lutkens is staying in order to learn from him all thorough skills and knowledge ["gründliche Wißenschafft"] that is necessary to carry out his future tasks, and undertakes to comply to stay with him and also to assist him in his business as long as Mon. Lutkens resides in this place, and he will neither demand any gratification for his service nor will he receive any interests in any purchases [of the said Luetkens], even more he will not trade on his own or for the account of any other merchants [apart from Hertzer & von Bobartt and Luetkens]. Secondly, for after and since the said Nicolaes Gottlieb Lutkens will leave France at the end of the year to return home, Mons. Hinrich Schutz undertakes to comply with the task to take over and carry out the businesses of Hertzer & von Bobartt and Nicolaes

144 See furthermore Ruppert, "Bürgerlicher Wandel," 66. See in detail Deges, "Zusammenfassende Übersicht," XV-LXV. See Häberlein, "Trading Companies." As a contemporary source, see Marperger, *Getreuer und geschickter Handelsdiener.* See also "Factor." *Oekonomische Encyklopädie*, vol. 12, 21-22.

145 See Hancock, *Citizens of the World*, 124-125.

146 Regarding business contracts between merchants in general, see Weber, Klaus. "Au nom de la Sainte Trinité: Kompanieverträge deutscher Kaufleute in Bordeaux (ca. 1740-1780)." *Hamburger Wirtschafts-Chronik* (HWC) 8 (2010): 37-61.

Gottlieb Lütkens in France ["die Geschäffte in Frankreich wahrzunehmen, an dem Orte zu bleiben], commits himself to stay in the respective city or travel to other cities on his own expenses, wherever there is the best advantage ["der beste Vortheil"] to gain and to refrain from doing any business on his own or on the account of any other merchant [other than Hertzer & von Bobartt and Luetkens], neither direct nor indirect, until December 1747 ultimo. In case Hertzer & von Bobartt and Nicolaes Gottlieb Lütkens consider it conducive ["dienlich erachten"] they will keep him in their service for this whole time. Thirdly, the said Hertzer & von Bobartt advocating and acting at the same time in the name of Nicolaes Gottlieb Lutkens undertake to declare their willingness to grant the said Mons. Hinrich Schutz for after the time when the said Luetkens has left France, a commission provision of 1 per Cto. on all purchases of goods that the said Schutz does on both their behalfs. Furthermore, the said Schutz is free to take a 1/8 share in their purchases, if he wished, and Hertzer & von Bobartt will advance the costs for the purchases at a 4 per Cto. interest rate on his account ["suo conto"] for their avantzo [their advanced money]. Moreover, we will not charge him any provision for the sale of his share in the goods, but only 1 per Cto Decredere [a guarentee liability] for his own safety. And since he himself will not receive any provision or interest for any purchases during the time that M. Lütkens is still in France and is not allowed to trade in his own name or in the name of others [except for Luetkens & Hertzer & von Bobartt], considering that, Hertzer & von Bobartt as well as M. Lutkens agree to pay him a monthly wage [which, if we remember, was no part of their first suggestions] of 100 Livres if he behaves well ["wann er sich dabey wol verhal,"], which, however, ends as soon as M. Lütkens begins his return journey [to Hamburg]. In order to ensure that Mons. Schütz follows the stipulations of this contract, he commits himself to pay two thousand Livres Francais to Hertzer & von Bobartt and to Nicolaes Gottlieb Lütkens in the case of a breach of this contract or if he wished to withdraw – for whatever reason – from this contract. In case that Hertzer & von Bobartt, however, wish and agree to cancel the above conditions, Mons. Schütz is free to go. This accord [contract] stays in force until it is dissolved from both sides with goodwill and consent ["guten Willen und Consens"], and this is certified by the signature of both parties in Hamburg, April 1745."[147]

This was how Hertzer & von Bobartt provided Luetkens with a merchant clerk. The first personal letter by Hinrich Schuetz himself, addressed to Luetkens, that we find in the Luetkens archive is dated the 21st of May 1745, and more letters were to follow.[148] At about the same time, actually only two days later, also the change in the handwriting used in Luetkens' Letter Book set in. This shows us that Schuetz quickly assumed his duty and began his activities in the service of Nicolaus Gottlieb Luetkens. The tasks and functions he assumed in this regard not only show that he immediately and appropriately fulfilled his role but also what a great help and support his work must have been

147 As a sidenote: It was typical during that times that names were written in different spellings. Contract with his clerk Schuetz, April 1745, once enclosed in a letter Luetkens personally received in April 1745, TNA, HCA 30/232.

148 Letters from Hinrich Schuetz (otherwise *Schutz*) in TNA, HCA 30/236.

for Luetkens. Basically, Schuetz already and right from the beginning acted and was deployed as a coordinator and intermediary of Luetkens' shipping business. This means that he ultimately already became a kind of agent and merchant factor right from the moment he arrived in France, which was precisely what Hertzer & von Bobartt must have had in mind when they forged their plan to send their old hand and most experienced employee to France. Just as Luetkens expressly demanded it from his partners and employees in his merchant firm, Schuetz also skilfully mastered and complied with the most important stipulation and requirement that was set out by Luetkens during his search for suitable subjects: Schuetz's letters show us a very skilled writer, who was fluent in French. This was how in the end everything was brought to a conclusion satisfying to all of the parties involved and how Luetkens with the help and huge support of Hertzer & von Bobartt, after many setbacks in his negotiations, found an appropriate solution to this most important challenge and crucial step during a mercantile establishment phase during the 18th century. He had now found a business partner for his future merchant house in the person of Ehrenfried Engelhardt and a merchant clerk and employee in the person of Hinrich Schuetz.

After Luetkens finally left France to marry Ilsabe Engelhardt in Hamburg and to open his merchant house with Ehrenfried Engelhardt in November, his merchant clerk Schuetz stayed in France and became his and Hertzer & von Bobartt's agent in France.

7 Marriage Preparations

The merchant Nicolaus Gottlieb Luetkens had not only established many contacts to merchants in France, but he also maintained excellent relations with merchants in London. In the English capital lived his uncle Anthony Luetkens "of the parish of All Hallows the Great London Merchant", Nicolaus Gottlieb's "Oheim" or "old man" as he was fondly called by the Luetkens brothers.[1] Anthony was of German descent, but in order to trade in Great Britain the merchant had become a British citizen by naturalization.[2] Together with his business partner Well he formed the reputable merchant house *Well & Luetjens* in London. The English merchant Well specialised in luxury goods, furniture, fabrics, but particularly in jewellery. "He knows many jewellers", was the short but succinct description of Well's competence by Luetkens.[3] Maybe this was the reason why in February 1745 the merchant Nicolaus Gottlieb Luetkens ordered his wedding jewellery in London rather than in France, where he had stayed for the last two years.

Another reason might have been that, as luck would have it, his younger brother Joachim Luetkens stayed in London during that time as part of his clerical educational journey through Britain. Joachim Luetkens wanted to become a priest following in his father's footsteps. Most of 1744 he had spent in Cambridge. Nicolaus Luetkens senior would have been proud to learn that 10 years later, in October 1754, Joachim was consecrated as the priest of the Hamburg parish of Steinbeck in the church of *Marien Magdalenen*. The renowned composer Georg Philipp Telemann composed and played a cantata for this special occasion.[4]

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1 "Insonders hochgeehrter Oheim", Letter from, Nicolaus Gottlieb to Luetkens, Anthony, September 04, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/232, Letter Book I, No. 165; "der alte Mann", Letter from Luetkens, Joachim to Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, March 12, 1745, TNA, HCA 30/233. "der alte Luetkens ist ein grundehrlicher Mann." Letter from Luetkens, Joachim, to Luetkens Nicolaus Gottlieb, October 05, 1745, TNA, HCA 30/233.

2 Only "naturalization originally awarded the newcomer the full rights of a 'natural-born subject' and therefore complete and direct access to British trade". Schulte-Beerbühl, *Forgotten Majority*, 15.

3 Letter from Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb to Luetkens, Joachim, February 01, 1745, TNA, HCA 30/232, Letter Book I, no. 508.

4 See "Text zur Music als der wohlerwürdige und hochgelahrte Herr Joachim Lütkens m 8 October 1754 zum Prediger der Gemeine zu Steinbeck in der Marien Magdalenen Kirche in Hamburg einge-

In 1745, however, Joachim was still a student and as such he had taken the same decision as his older brother, and the same as his father in his youth, namely to travel foreign lands. In February 1745, Joachim was visiting his uncle in London on his return journey to Hamburg. Maybe Luetkens was therefore just grasping a good opportunity when he decided that he would not buy the wedding jewellery for his wife himself, but to commission this task to his brother. A third reason might have also been that his future wife preferred the English fashion to the French, as many women and men of the mercantile and bourgeois middle-class did during that time. The English fashion was particularly popular, "à la mode" as we read in the Luetkens letters, among German merchants of the Hanseatic cities and the Baltic, as Michael North and Ulla Iljäs have shown.[5] His future wife Ilsabe Engelhardt might simply have asked Nicolaus Gottlieb to buy the items in London. Maybe it was therefore also a simple question of taste in the end.

Last but not least, other reasons might have been the wider range available on the London market, cheaper prices or that it was safer and quicker to send the items from London to Hamburg instead from France due to the state of war between France and England in 1745.

We do not know the actual reason why Luetkens ordered his wedding jewellery in London, and we will never know because Luetkens himself did not comment on his choice and the letters by his future wife are missing. Most probably, the answer can be found somewhere among all the given suggestions. We do know for sure, however, that Nicolaus Gottlieb asked his brother Joachim for this favour in his letters and that his brother complied. We also know that in April 1745 a golden ring and diamond earrings were sent to Hamburg hidden in cotton in a sealed letter packet dispatched first from London to an address in Amsterdam and from there to the Hamburg merchant house of Hertzer & van Bobartt, who accepted the parcel on behalf of Luetkens. How exciting the visit to the local postal office or port must have been for the Hamburg merchants. This story will never cease to amaze me. It was the main reason which prompted me to write this chapter.

On the 1st of February 1745, Nicolaus Gottlieb Luetkens wrote to his brother: "Please be so kind ["sey so gutt"] as to purchase in London before your departure from there or at the first opportunity a pair of diamond earrings and a diamond ring for women.

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segnet ward, aufgeführet von Georg Philipp Telemann, Chori Musici Directore." Hamburg: Piscator, 1754. Berlin: Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin – Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Germany, 2010, Historische Drucke, 47 in: Mus. T 2408, online http://resolver.staatsbibliothek-berlin.de/SBB000054E6000000 00, accessed March 05, 2017. Telemann composed the cantata TVWV 3:61 for this occasion. TVWV 3:61b "Wie lieblich sind auf den Bergen" will be performed for the first time at a concert in Bern on 2nd of December 2021 by the ensembles *Les Passions de l'Ame*, led by Meret Lüthi and *Solomon's Knot*, led by Jonathan Sells. See Reipsch, "Mein Herz ist voll."

5 See Iljäs, Ulla. "English Luxuries in Nineteenth-Century Vyborg." In *A Taste for Luxury in Early Modern Europe: Display, Acquisition and Boundaries*, edited by Johanna Ilmakunnas and Jon Stobart, 265-282. London: Bloomsbury, 2017, here 270. See North, Michael. "Fashion and Luxury in Eighteenth-Century Germany." In *A Taste for Luxury in Early Modern Europe: Display, Acquisition and Boundaries*, edited by Johanna Ilmakunnas and Jon Stobart, 99-116. London: Bloomsbury, 2017. See North, *Material Delight.* See letter from Luetkens, Joachim, to Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, March 12, 1745, TNA, HCA 30/233.

The diamonds shall be white, brilliant-cut diamonds ["weyse Billanten Steine"]. […] I strongly recommend "recomandiren"] that it must be cut diamonds ["Billanten"] and not raw diamonds".[6]

On March 12th, 1745, Joachim reported that "with regard to the rings I can report that Mr Well has paid a visit to one of the jewellers ["Jubielirer"] he knows and whom he trusts. […] I dare to take the role of the husband here for a moment, but only with regard to the purchase of the rings, take the good advice of others and decide to buy the earring for 80 à 90 £ Stl. And the ring for 26-30 £. Since the price for the earrings will be higher than expected, for the pendants ["Drops", "Bummelken"] he will probably not use pearls or other gemstones, but diamonds. And I think there will be two pendants on each earring. I will take a look at it today or tomorrow. […] With regard to the ring I unfortunately don't have any measurements, but as far as I remember she has very delicate hands ["zarte Hände"]."[7]

On March 19th, 1745, the "brilliants ["Billianten"] are safely packed, they will be wrapped in cotton and enclosed in a piece of corduroy which will be cut in the form of a letter ["in Kord so wie ein Brief geschnitten"] which will be enclosed and sent in a letter packet ["unter ein Päkgen Briefe abgehen"]. Admittedly this is still hazardous, but we cannot change it and simply have to take chances. […] I myself will be there and control when they insert it into the letter packet and will go to the post office myself together with Mr. Well."[8] The letter packet did subsequently arrive in Hamburg safely. The jewellery would "give honour to a marriage ["einer Heyrath ein Ansehen geben"]", as Joachim concluded at the end of his letter.[9]

Rings and earrings were important parts of the "material culture of marriage" during the entire Early Modern Period.[10] As Sally Holloway has shown in her book the *Game of Love in Georgian England*, such tokens of love and the exchange of gifts were "a key way for courting couples to negotiate the path to matrimony" still in the 18th century.[11] "Material objects from letters to locks of hair held a central place in rituals of courtship, and were used to negotiate, cement, and publicize a match", argues Diana O'Hara.[12] Already during the 18th century, the ring held a special role among the gifts chosen by courting men.[13] The different gift and items exchanged between couples and their families even allows us to observe and follow the different stages of marriage initiation

6 The letter phrase "Sey so gutt" was a typical letter formulae used in letters of request. We also find it in letter-writing manuals or other letter collections, like the letters presented by Iljäs, were it appears in the form of "Seÿn Sie so gefällig", Iljäs, "English Luxuries." Letter from Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb to Luetkens, Joachim, February 01, 1745, TNA, HCA 30/232, Letter Book I, no. 508.

7 Letter from Luetkens, Joachim to Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, March 12, 1745, TNA, HCA, 30/235.

8 Letter from Luetkens, Joachim to Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, March 19, 1745, TNA, HCA, 30/235.

9 Letter from Luetkens, Joachim to Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, March 12, 1745, TNA, HCA, 30/235.

10 Holloway, Sally. *The Game of Love in Georgian England. Courtship, Emotions, and Material Culture*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019, 4.

11 Ibid., 69.

12 O'Hara, Diana. *Courtship and Constraint: Rethinking the Making of Marriage in Tudor England*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000, 57-98. See Holloway, *Game of Love*, 14.

13 Ibid., 17.

and planning. As Richard van Dülmen has pointed out, it was typical that "while during marriage initiation gifts played a major role, during the subsequent courting phase, it was often concrete material goods that were exchanged on a large scale."[14] And indeed, the jewellery was not the only items that Nicolaus Gottlieb ordered from his brother in London in February 1745, but we also find larger items on his order list for his brother. The orders therefore did not stop at the jewellery.

Nicolaus Gottlieb also ordered a mahogany card playing table, a large, gilded mirror, valuable kitchenware, a commode and several other items. In sum, the Hamburg merchant in France ordered a "stately interior for a house", "eine zimliche Hausausrüstung" from London, as Joachim concluded.[15] Later, his youngest brother Anton compiled a list of the considerable number of items that arrived in Hamburg. We will hear about these items, the house they moved into, and the objects' meaning as well as their contexts in this chapter.

Still the most intriguing object and find during my research was the letter secretly enclosing Luetkens wedding jewellery sent from London to Hamburg without him inspecting it himself. This finding showed me the highly pragmatic approach with which the merchant pursued his goals in life and business, and it made me realise the immense power that this man attributed to and handed over to his letters in order to help him in this undertaking. Both aspects were key to developing the idea behind this entire book. The relevance of this finding increased when I also learned from other cases, namely the letters of the Jeake family investigated by Anne L. Murphy or those of the Hackman family analysed by Ulla Iljäs, that the practice of sending jewellery enclosed in letters was a common letter practice among letter writers of the time.[16] The same applied to the practice of commissioning close family members or business friends with the task of buying these items on one's behalf. In Murphy's study even the order lists in the letters show the same wording: Her Frances Hartridge asked for gloves and "a ring with a diamond in it" from her future husband.[17] It therefore did not surprise me when I found out that even Luetkens himself bought a wedding ring for someone else, one of his closest associates in France, Johann Jakob Bethmann, who had asked him to deal with this task on his behalf. Luetkens sent the Bordeaux merchant this ring by letter.[18] In the Prize Papers collection, we today find several original letter packets that still enclose jewellery. These material artefacts enclosed in letters in combination with

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14 Van Dülmen, *Kultur und Alltag* (vol. 1), 145.

15 Letter from Luetkens, Joachim to Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, May 12, 1745, TNA, HCA, 30/235.

16 See Iljäs, "English Luxuries." Iljäs, Ulla. "German Families and Their Family Strategies: Marriage and Education in Eighteenth- and Nineteenth-Century Provincial Towns in the Northern Baltic." In Families, Values, and the Transfer of Knowledge in Northern Societies, 1500–2000, edited by Ulla Aatsinki, Johanna Annola, Mervi Kaarninen, 79-101, London/New York: Routledge, 2019. See Murphy, Anne L. The Worlds of the Jeake Family of Rye, 1640-1736. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018. See Murphy, Anne L. "You do manage it so well that I cannot do better': the working life of Elizabeth Jeake of Rye (1667–1736)." Women's History Review, 27/7 (2018): 1190-1208.

17 Murphy, *Jeake Family*, 20.

18 Letter from Bethmann, Johann Jakob to Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, September 10, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/234. "wegen meinem Ring so laße euch davon Meister". Letter from Bethmann, Johann Jakob to Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, October 22, 1743, TNA, HCA 30/234.

the letter text and the intentions underlying it show us the power people assigned to their letter to conduct their affairs and take care of their life and business. This went as so far as that letters were used for sending such precious artefacts such as wedding jewellery.

In marriage initiation and preparations, letters generally represented "an important stage of courtship in its own right" during the 18th century, as Holloway pointed out.[19] The Luetkens archive bears eloquent witness to this. For Luetkens, the important role of the letter was further increased by the fact that he spent the entire time before his marriage in foreign lands, returning to Hamburg only weeks before the wedding. Letters were therefore not only an important supplementary stage for him. They were actually the main stage on which his marriage initiation and preparation took place. He had to settle all matters and take all precautions with regard to his marriage by means of letters, which is why this process is meticulously documented today in the letters of the Luetkens archive. Analysing these letters opened up a whole new world for me, the world of marriage initiation and preparation in the 18th century, characterised by various contemporary rituals and practices, and once more shaped by the need for negotiation and the demand for correspondence. The various steps of marriage preparation are the topic of this chapter.[20]

Apart from the material culture of marriage, we will hear about the best information policy conducted during marriage initiation, namely maintaining confidentiality. Marriage was a "thing of consequence", as the contemporaries called it, because it produced waves of speculations amongst the other merchants, having direct consequences for the trading activities of the merchant communities in a city.[21] Therefore, all preparations, including the rental of the future home and merchant house, had to happen in secret. In the episodes presented, we will learn about the practical principle of preferential treatment through creating the feeling of exclusivity on the part of his correspondents, which ensured confidentiality among the correspondents. Secondly, we will hear about the major catch-22 that existed between being a merchant planning a wedding and being a merchant in establishment at the same time. The situation is aptly described in a

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19 Holloway, *Game of Love*, 44.

20 See Earle, *Making of the English Middle Class*, 185-194; see Grassby, *Business Community*, 303-305. See Hancock, *Citizens of the World*, 245. Regarding marriage during the Early Modern Period in general, see Van Dülmen, *Kultur und Alltag* (vol. 1, *Das Haus und seine Menschen*), 133-198. See Van Dülmen, Richard. "Fest der Liebe. Heirat und Ehe in der frühen Neuzeit." In *Armut, Liebe, Ehe. Studien zur historischen Kulturforschung*, edited by Richard van Dülmen, 67-106. Frankfurt a.M.: Fischer, 1988. See Van Dülmen, Richard. "Heirat und Eheleben in der Frühen Neuzeit. Autobiographische Zeugnisse." *Archiv für Kulturgeschichte* 72 (1990): 153-171. Regarding marriage initiation, see Baumann, Anette. "Eheanbahnung und Partnerwahl." In *Venus und Vulcanus. Ehen und ihre Konflikte in der Frühen Neuzeit*, edited by Siegrid Westphal, Inken Schmidt-Voges, and Anette Baumann, 25-86. Munich: Oldenbourg Verlag, 2011. See Goodman, Dena. "Marriage Calculations in the Eighteenth Century. Deconstructing the Love vs. Duty Binary." *Journal of the Western Society für French History* 33 (2005): 146-162. Regarding marriage in bourgeois (Hamburg) families, see Trepp, *Sanfte Männlichkeit*, 38-172. Regarding bourgeois marriage initation, see ibid., 160-167.

21 "es ist von Consequente". Letter from Bethmann, Johann Jakob to Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, TNA, HCA 30/234; "Sache von Consequance" Letter from Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb to Luetkens, Anton, May 5, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/232, Letter Book I, no. 1.

letter by the Hertzer & von Bobartt to Nicolaus Gottlieb from the 5th of March 1745, in which they expressed their understanding and also their sympathy for Luetkens' difficult position. So, in this chapter we are dealing with a rather representative challenge that Early Modern merchants had to deal with not only during their early career but during their entire lifetime, namely the conflict between business interests and private matters. Hertzer & von Bobartt wrote that they "see from your letter, dear friend, that love on the one hand and the pursuit of profit [or in more negative terms avarice, "Gewinsucht"] on the other fight a battle in your heart ["in dero Gemüthe"]. We cannot condemn either of both these affects when we put ourselves in your position because they are natural impulses. Nevertheless, we can well imagine that your dear future bride has a hard time waiting for you that long."[22]

As we will learn from the episodes in the chapter, Luetkens most of the time gave in to the mercantile interest, which becomes most apparent in his decision to postpone his wedding several times. Ilsabe Engelhardt had to wait for months until her future husband deemed it appropriate to return to Hamburg. In Luetkens' letters to his future wife, his future business partner and his mother-in-law, we will encounter many justifications that were apparently necessary and demanded by his future family to substantiate why he decided to actually extend his stay in France up to the very last moment. These justifications, combined with the gifts and furniture bought for Ilsabe, represent the second practical principle of persuasion in the chapter, the principle of mollification. As part of both principles, we will learn about the letter practice of writing "particular letters", the practice of letter citation, the practice of using indirect speech in letters, of writing a P.S., of the deliberate usage of coaxing letter formulae and we will also find out about the language register of love in letters. Last but not least, as part of the analyses of Luetkens' justifications and protestations, we will learn about the self-perception of a wholesale merchant. The self-image that he presented and created in these letters provides us with a concrete image of a man who already considered himself a respectable man of trade, by which he presents us with a kind of paragon of a merchant standing on the eve of establishment. The latter provides the perfect opportunity to lead this book to an end.

7.1 A Merchant's Marriage during the 18th Century

During the 18th century, mercantile marriages were still a "highly commercial business".[23] In general, arranged marriages were one of the core characteristics of the Early Modern Period, an "important part of the signature of premodern Europe".[24] In mer-

22 Letter from Hertzer & van Bobartt to Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, March 5, 1745, TNA, HCA 30/234.

23 Hancock, *Citizens of the World*, 245.

24 "einen eminent wichtigen Teil der Signatur des vormodernen Europa." Duchhardt, Heinz. "Schwerpunktthema: Dynastizismus und dynastische Heiratspolitik als Faktoren europäischer Verflechtung." *Jahrbuch für Europäische Geschichte* 8 (2007): 1-2, here 1. See Schmidt-Voges, Inken. "Weil der Ehe-Stand ein ungestümmes Meer ist ...". Bestands- und Krisenphasen in ehelichen Beziehungen in der Frühen Neuzeit." In *Venus und Vulcanus. Ehen und ihre Konflikte in der Frühen Neuzeit*, edited by Siegrid Westphal, Inken Schmidt-Voges, and Anette Baumann, 89-162. Munich: Oldenbourg

cantile circles, marriage often served the purpose of providing the basis for the merger of two merchant families and resulted in the opening of a new merchant house. "Marriage among the offspring of commercial partners thus became a proven method for strengthening, expanding, and sustaining the business" as Margrit Schulte Beerbühl pointed out.[25] The merger between the families was primarily a strategic alliance to raise capital and to expand networks and the business portfolio of a merchant house in order to provide material security for both families and ensure the continuity of business and family. This fact, however, decidedly did not rule out the possibility of an affectionate relationship between the spouses. Quite on the contrary, particularly during the 18th century and especially among the bourgeois elite, there was also the clear intention and attempts breaking ground to deliberately demarcate themselves from the aristocratic practice of forced arranged marriages by propagating instead free will as the basis for marriage settlements.[26]

In practice, we have to assume a "broad grey area in which both sentiment and prudence interplayed", as Naomi Tadmor has highlighted.[27] This is important to know, since it allows us to still assume a certain affection between the future spouses in Luetkens' and Ilsabe's case although the purpose of their marriage was in the first place primarily the merger of two families. When it came to the ultimate decision whether or not a marriage was deemed beneficial, during most of the Early Modern Period economic considerations, "material interest, character, social position and often religion" outweighed affection.[28] Even in cases in which the "ultimate choice was made by the young people [...] this choice was normally very much affected by parents and friends".[29] The typical way of matchmaking in merchant families of the 18th century therefore was that the parents, or rather the male members of the families, negotiated or influenced the marriage proposals and made the arrangements to which their children would then, however, give their approval. Another way was that the candidates proposed a marriage to their families and friends and awaited their judgment.[30] As Anne L. Murphy concluded, the "interference of friends and family in a match was typ-

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Verlag, 2011. See in general Westphal/Schmidt-Voges/Baumann, *Venus und Vulcanus.* See Wunder, Heide. *He is the Sun, She is the Moon. Women in Early Modern Germany* (translated by Thomas Dunlap). Cambridge, Mass./London: Harvard University Press, 1998, 56-62.

25 Schulte Beerbühl, *German Merchants*, 116.

26 See Stollberg-Rilinger, *Aufklärung*, 148-160. See Trepp, *Sanfte Männlichkeit*, 38-172. See Habermas, Rebekka. *Frauen und Männer des Bürgertums: Eine Familiengeschichte (1750-1850)*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 2002, 259-314. See Hunt, *The Middling Sort*, 43-44, 158, 212-213, 274.

27 Tadmor, Naomi. *Family and Friends in Eighteenth-Century England: Household, Kinship, and Patronage*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004, 193. See Holloway, *Game of Love*, 10.

28 Earle, *Making of the English Middle Class*, 189. See Darrow, Margaret H. "Popular Concepts of Marital Choice in Eighteenth Century France." *Journal of Social History* 19, no. 2 (1985): 261-272. See Goodman, "Marriage Calculations," 147.

29 Earle, *Making of the English Middle Class*, 185.

30 See ibid. See Westphal, Siegrid. "Venus und Vulcanus. Einleitende Überlegungen." In *Venus und Vulcanus. Ehen und ihre Konflikte in der Frühen Neuzeit*, edited by Siegrid Westphal, Inken Schmidt-Voges, and Anette Baumann, 9-24. Munich: Oldenbourg Verlag, 2011, here 19-20. See Van Dülmen, *Kultur und Alltag* (vol. 1), 135-140. See Van Dülmen, "Heirat und Eheleben."

ical of an Early Modern society in which couples were generally free to make their own choices but at the same time subject to the approval of these closest to them."[31]

Marriage initiation and negotiations particularly in merchant families primarily served the purpose of balancing and negotiating mutual interests.[32] For a long time therefore and still during the 18th century, the goal of a marriage was to maintain or enhance the family honour, family property and capital, and to ensure the continued existence of the families through their progeny.[33] As the contemporary *Zedler encyclopaedia* put it in 1735, marriage was deemed a "natural relationship, in which two persons of different sexes entered in order to unite themselves and their love for the purpose of begetting children to save the future of humankind and to hopefully raise their children [...] for the benefit of mankind."[34]

The fact that economic interest played such an important role in the marriage negotiations therefore had an ultimately pragmatic goal. Only sufficient economic funds provided a good and sufficient basis for a functional and sheltered family life, which was also the reason why the average age of future spouses was rather high in the Early Modern Period, particularly during the 18th century.[35] Men represented a good match when they were already in an exalted position and financially secure.[36] Luetkens was 29 years old when he married Ilsabe Engelhardt, which was a typical age for men to get married during the 18th century, and he referred in his letters to precisely this argument to justify his ongoing business activities in France. Women, on the other hand, were usually between 23 and 25 when they married.[37] The economic status of the candidates therefore needed to be clarified, proved and negotiated during marriage negotiations, settlements and courtship because this was ultimately the *condition sine qua non* of a marriage during that time, representing both a strategic as well as pragmatic background and motivation underlying a marriage. Naturally for the Early Modern Period, marriage negotiations had a religious component to it, too. Both the Luetkens and

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31 Murphy, *Jeake Family*, 20.

32 See ibid. See Van Dülmen, *Kultur und Alltag* (vol. 1), 1135-137, 164. "Die eheliche Liebe hatte an sich mit der modernen Liebe im Sinne einer erotisch-empfindsamen Intimbeziehung nichts gemein." Ibid, 170. See also Stollberg-Rilinger, *Aufklärung*, 152. ("Auch im Bürgertum war die Eheschließung daran gebunden, dass die wirtschaftliche Lebensgrundlage gesichert war."). See Mitterauer, Michael, and Reinhard Sieder. *Vom Patriarchat zur Partnerschaft. Zum Strukturwandel der Familie*. Munich: Beck, 1977, 146.

33 See Earle, *Making of the English Middle Class*, 189.

34 "ein natürlicher Stand, in welchen zwey Personen von unterschiedlichem Geschlechte miteinander treten, um sich zu verbinden, ihre Liebe zu Vermehrung des menschlichen Geschlechts einander alleine zu widmen, damit sie die aus solcher Verbindung zu hoffenden Kinder, gewiß vor die ihren mögen erkennen, und sie so dann zum nutzen der menschlichen Gesellschaft wohl erziehen können." "Ehestand, Ehe." *Großes vollständiges Universal-Lexikon aller Wissenschaften und Künste*, edited by Johann Heinrich Zedler, Bd. 1, Halle/Leipzig, 1735, 360-401, here 360. See Van Dülmen, *Kultur und Alltag* (vol. 1), 164. See Van Dülmen, "Fest der Liebe."

35 See Van Dülmen, *Kultur und Alltag* (vol. 1), 135-138, 158. Earle, *Making of the English Middle Class*, 189-190. See Baumann, "Eheanbahnung," 32-49.

36 See Van Dülmen, *Kultur und Alltag* (vol. 1), 134. See Grassby, *Business Community*, 303, 331. See Earle, *Making of the English Middle Class*, 177-184.

37 See Murphy, *Jeake Family*, 134.

the Engelhardt family had the same Lutheran background, which is the reason why the topic of religion is only discussed sparsely in the letters. In the case of Johann Jakob Bethmann, which will also be presented in the chapter, religion played a more crucial role because Bethmann married into a French Huguenot family.

In all the episodes, however, the economic considerations will play the central role, particularly in Luetkens' justifications. At the same time, the merchant Luetkens also refers multiple times to his love for Ilsabe, which means that even for him, the affectional bond was significant. The spouses' relationship, although still on a basic level, can be described as a kind of love relationship.[38] We just have to apply a different interpretation and understanding of this love relationship in contrast to our modern definition of love.[39] It was absolutely possible and surely held true for many marriages of the time that the spouses developed a certain affection and liking for each other, which many of the contemporaries also regarded as a necessity and a high good.[40] Other qualities of an Early Modern marriage were, from a contemporary point of view, trust in one another and particularly loyalty and faithfulness, which will also be emphasized in the Luetkens letters. However, the difference to today's marriage ideals and customs is that affection was not the general precondition and requirement for a marriage, and affection alone did not provide reason enough and sufficient grounds for getting married.[41] Material security was the main purpose.

Our modern understanding of a love relationship is that it is based on being enamoured of someone, which in many cases also depends on the attractiveness of a person. Furthermore, our understanding of romantic love and intimacy as the precondition for a marriage is also inseparably linked to sexuality, passion and eroticism. This modern understanding of love is, however, something that only became popular and acceptable as a social norm and aspiration during the age of Romanticism.[42]

At that time the bourgeois ideal of the family and with it the public opinion regarding the role of the family as a social unit in society had already undergone such a

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38 See Trepp, *Sanfte Männlichkeit*, 40 and 400. "When describing a happy engaged couple, contemporaries sometimes said that they were 'in love', but words like 'kindness' and 'affection' were much commoner." Earle, *Making of the English Middle Class*, 189. See also Trepp, Anne-Charlott. "Gefühl oder kulturelle Konstruktion? Überlegungen zur Geschichte der Emotionen." In *Querelles: Jahrbuch für Frauenforschung. Kulturen der Gefühle in Mittelalter und Früher Neuzeit* (vol. 7), edited by Ingrid Kasten, Gesa Stedman, Margarete Zimmermann, 86-103. Stuttgart: J.B. Metzler, 2002, here 92-97.

39 See Trepp, *Sanfte Männlichkeit*, 40 and 400. See Schmidt-Voges, "Bestands- und Krisenphasen in ehelichen Beziehungen," 107-108. See Van Dülmen, *Kultur und Alltag* (vol. 1), 170-172. See Stollberg-Rilinger, *Aufklärung*, 152-154. See Darrow, "Marital Choice", particularly speaking of France. Regarding the contemporary ideal of love in France, see Traer, James F. *Marriage and Family in Eighteenth-Century France*. Ithaca/London: Cornell University Press, 1980.

40 See Schmidt-Voges, "Bestands- und Krisenphasen in ehelichen Beziehungen," 107.

41 Earle, *Making of the English Middle Class*, 189. See Darrow, "Marital Choice", 261-272. See Goodman, "Marriage Calculations," 147.

42 See Van Dülmen, *Kultur und Alltag* (vol. 1), 137, 172. See Stollberg-Rilinger, *Aufklärung*, 152-154. See Goodman, "Marriage Calculations." For love letters during German Romanticism see Augart, Julia. *Eine romantische Liebe in Briefen. Zur Liebeskonzeption im Briefwechsel von Sophie Mereau und Clemens Brentano*. Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2006.

comprehensive transformation and change that for the first time ever it became imaginable and also desirable to regard love, in the meaning of mutual affection and emotional bond, as sufficient grounds to enter into marriage.[43] This shift towards a more emotional basis of marriage had already started taking place during the 18th century, during which "love between partners has gained a new significance [...] [and] conjugal love was no longer only a means to an end, but matrimony was supposed to be in the service of love."[44] This transformation had already set in during the time when Nicolaus Gottlieb married, but it particularly worked up to a climax during the second half and the end of the 18th century, especially during the *Age of Sentiment*, "Empfindsamkeit" in German, and the *Storm and Stress Period*, the "Sturm und Drang".[45] During the age of Enlightenment in the 18th century, the family ideal gradually shifted from the family as a working unit to the family as an intimate space of private life.[46] This change was due to structural changes not just in work cultures but also in mentality, in conjunction with the separation of the living spheres into a working sphere and a more private sphere.[47] The latter also led to a change in the role of the women of the house, who no longer took an active part in the working sphere in or outside the household but became explicitly responsible for the private working sphere, namely making a home and bringing up the children. At the same time, her emotional role and significance as the caretaker for husband and children increased.[48] Through the triumph of the *bourgeois nuclear family* as the centre of society also the role of the husband and wife changed, through which it became possible that also the preconditions and reasons for getting married changed.[49] During the Age of Sentiment, and finally at the dawn of Ro-

43 See Westphal, "Venus und Vulcanus," 18-19. See Schmidt-Voges, "Bestands- und Krisenphasen in ehelichen Beziehungen," 108. See Earle, *Making of the English Middle Class*, 189.

44 "Die Liebe zwischen den Partnern erlangte im Laufe des 18. Jahrhunderts einen ganz neuen Stellenwert und wurde [...] auf neue Weise kultiviert. War die eheliche Liebe traditionell als Mittel zum Zweck – nämlich der Fortpflanzung und Kinderaufzucht – angesehen worden, so wurde nun das Verhältnis tendenziell umgekehrt und die Ehe in den Dienst der Liebe gestellt." Stollberg-Rilinger, *Aufklärung*, 152.

45 See Reinlein, *Empfindsamkeit*, particularly 93-165. See the comprehensive work by Sauder, Gerhard. *Empfindsamkeit*, 3 volumes. Stuttgart: Metzler, 1973/1980. See in particular volume 1, "Voraussetzungen und Elemente". See Trepp, *Sanfte Männlichkeit*, 24-25. See Helgason, Jon. *Schriften des Herzens: Briefkultur des 18. Jahrhunderts im Briefwechsel zwischen Anna Louisa Karsch und Johann Ludwig Gleim*. Göttingen: Wallstein, 2012, 141-143.

46 This working unit had the working couple at the centre, the "Arbeitspaar" as Heide Wunder defined it, as a correction to Otto Brunner's concept of the "Ganze Haus." See Wunder, *He is the Sun, She is the Moon*, 185-201. See Brunner, Otto. "Das "ganze Haus" und die alteuropäische "Ökonomik." In *Neue Wege der Verfassungs- und Sozialgeschichte*, edited by Otto Brunner, 103-127. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1980 [first published 1956].

47 See Stollberg-Rilinger, *Aufklärung*, 152-160. "Die Ehe aus Liebe wurde geradezu zum Sinnbild eines selbstgestalteten und erfüllten Lebens." Trepp, *Sanfte Männlichkeit*, 400. See Piller, *Private Körper*, 78. See also Habermas, *Frauen und Männer*.

48 See Stollberg-Rilinger, *Aufklärung*, 152-160.

49 See Westphal, "Venus und Vulcanus," 18. See Trepp, Anne Charlott, and Hans Medick, ed. *Geschlechtergeschichte und allgemeine Geschichte. Herausforderungen und Perspektiven*. Göttingen: Wallstein, 1998. See Trepp, *Sanfte Männlichkeit*, 17.

manticism, emotional attachment and affection between spouses became much more regarded as crucial for a marriage than it had been in any of the centuries before.

Luetkens' marriage to Ilsabe Engelhardt in 1745 still was strongly shaped by the old ideal and regulatory framework and adhered in many ways to traditional patterns of courtship and marriage, which, as Anne-Charlott Trepp has shown was also typical for bourgeois mercantile families of the 18th century.[50] In Luetkens' case we find, in a rather exemplary fashion, many typical steps and characteristics that the traditional marriage initiation and courtship of the previous centuries had entailed.[51] However, excitingly, we also already see the first signs of a new mentality gaining ground during that time, in both his letters and with regard to the concessions he made to his future wife and her mother, for instance with regard to taking care of the furnishing of the future home of the Luetkens family or in his letters. The intriguing thing about his case is that it provides us with a vivid example of precisely the transition period between the old marriage patterns and the new marriage and family ideal taking shape and gaining ground during the 18th century, and we can see how both paths crossed or even hybridized.

During this transition time, courtship and marriage included both borrowings from the traditional rites of marriage initiation and planning as well as more contemporary elements and discourses from the early Enlightenment, which called for emotional involvement of the future spouses.[52] In Luetkens' case, furthermore, the situation was even more complex because his letters and his way of approaching the matter was not only shaped by this special contemporary constellation, the transition period, but it was also decisively shaped and defined by his personal situation, his own transition period. As a merchant in establishment, his interest in his marriage was of course to ensure economic benefit, financial advancement and safeguarding, for the purpose of which he drew on long established and proven ways to settle and manage his marriage initiation and the preparations. On the other hand, however, he and his future wife were also children of the early Enlightenment, which was reflected in the fact that the letters they exchanged contained many phrases typical of a more emotional way of writing. This fact alone does not necessarily mean that we also have to assume a close relationship between the correspondents.[53] Evidence for the latter can rather be found in the

50 Trepp, *Sanfte Männlichkeit*, 83-102, 125-172. See Westphal, "Venus und Vulcanus," 20.

51 See Baumann, "Eheanbahnung." See Dülmen, *Kultur und Alltag* (vol. 1), 134-148. See Darrow, "Marital Choice." 261-272. See Wunder, *He is the Sun, She is the Moon*, 37-62.

52 See Reinlein, Tanja. "Verlangende Frauen, zögernde Männer. Strategien des Liebeswerbens in Briefen der Empfindsamkeit (Meta Moller und Klopstock, Caroline Flachsland und Herder)." In *SchreibLust. Der Liebesbrief im 18. und 19. Jahrhundert*, edited by Renate Stauf and Jörg Paulus, 33-48. Berlin/Boston: de Gruyter, 2013. See also Reinlein, Tanja. *Der Brief als Medium der Empfindsamkeit. Erschriebene Identitäten und Inszenierungspotentiale*. Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2003. See Goodman, Dena. "Marriage Calculations." See Stollberg-Rilinger, *Aufklärung*, 152-160.

53 For examples of a similar love letter style with similar letter formulae as used in Luetkens' love letter see Reinlein, "Strategien des Liebeswerbens"; Helgason, *Schriften des Herzens*. See Jacob, Joachim. "Hergestellte Nähe Friedrich Gottlieb Kloppstock – Meta Moller." In *Briefkultur. Texte und Interpretationen – von Martin Luther bis Thomas Bernard*, edited by Jörg Schuster and Jochen Strobel, 37-46. Berlin/Boston: De Gruyter, 2013, with letters written and exchanged between Anna Louisa Karsch and Johann Ludwig Gleim or Meta Moller and Friedrich Gottlieb Klopstock, among others,

fact that Luetkens made concessions to his future wife relating to her decision-making powers with regard to their future home. As Vickery has shown, making a home, furnishing a home was by no means a "degraded female hobby" in the 18th century, but it was a means of agency, typical for women of the upper ranks of society to uphold their agency and their right to have a say during marriage initiation and also within their marriage in the 18th century. Ilsabe and her mother clearly demanded this agency.[54] Giving in to this demand can also be seen as a way in which Luetkens tried to soothe Ilsabe in reaction to his plans to remain in France until August 1745.

In Luetkens' entire behaviour preceding his marriage we can observe a certain prioritization of interest, and we see a clear strategy as to how and when to use which tradition. While he adhered to more traditional ways of approaching the matter with regard to all issues generally relating to the arranging his marriage, he drew on more enlightened ways of negotiation with regard to convincing his future family of the benefits of his late return to Hamburg, yet still giving preference to and justifying his mercantile interests. He therefore deliberately separated both points of negotiation. In sum, Luetkens' case is not only a prime example of how marriage was arranged during mid-18th century, but also of how a merchant during this time approached this matter, whereby the means of persuasion he applied provide us with meaningful insights into mercantile self-perceptions.[55]

The more traditional elements reflected in the Luetkens marriage were, firstly, that the marriage negotiations and conversations were conducted mainly between Luetkens and Ehrenfried Engelhardt but also with Ehrenfried and Ilsabe's mother.[56] Since on both sides, the fathers of the family had already died, this approach was typical. The general custom that a marriage was negotiated only between a potential candidate and the respective heads of his future family, in this case mother Engelhardt and her son Ehrenfried, was upheld. However, Luetkens also wrote letters and conversed with Ilsabe directly. Of these latter letters to her, unfortunately, only one has survived in its entirety. In this love letter to Ilsabe Engelhardt we do not find any concrete arrangements being made regarding the general formalities of their future marriage. We do, however, encounter discussions about plans to furnish their future house. The discussion regard-

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which show many parallels to Luetkens' letters. Regarding these letters see also Van Dülmen, *Kultur und Alltag* (vol. 1), 169. See also Sträter, Karin. *Frauenbriefe als Medium bürgerlicher Öffentlichkeit. Eine Untersuchung anhand von Quellen aus dem Hamburger Raum in der zweiten Hälfte des 18. Jahrhunderts*. Frankfurt a.M.: Peter Lang, 1991. Regarding love letters, see also Brant, Clare. *Eighteenth-Century Letters and British Culture*. Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2006, chapter "Writing as a lover," 93-124.

54 See Vickery, Amanda. "A Woman and the World of Goods. A Lancashire Consumer and her possessions, 1751-81." In *Consumption and the World of Goods*, edited by John Brewer and Roy Porter, 274-301. London: Routledge, 1993, 281. See Vickery, Amanda. *The Gentleman's Daughter. Women's Lives in Georgian England*. New Haven/London: Yale University Press, 1998, 39-86. See Vickery, Amanda. *Behind Closed Doors: At Home in Georgian England*. New Haven/London: Yale University Press, 2009, 83-128, 166-183.

55 For other comparable cases, see Truxes, Thomas M. "Mid-eighteenth-century Irish Marriage as portrayed in The Bordeaux-Dublin Letters." In *Marriage and the Irish: a Miscellany*, edited by Salvador Ryan, 76–80. Dublin: Wordwell Books, 2019.

56 See Dülmen, *Kultur und Alltag* (vol. 1), 134.

ing the general arrangements and formalities of their marriage was solely conducted between Nicolaus Gottlieb and Ehrenfried and his mother.

A second rather typical characteristic of mercantile marriage was that it must be assumed that the familiarity between the two future spouses was still at a basic level during that time. It must also be assumed that Ilsabe Engelhardt and Nicolaus Gottlieb Luetkens had not known each other personally before his travels, but only started to get to know each other through letters. Due to Luetkens' long travels from 1739 onwards and the fact that we do not find any information or hint regarding a shared past in the letters, as well as the fact that not even Hertzer & von Bobartt knew Ilsabe, as they wrote in one of their letter, and that Luetkens himself wrote to Ehrenfried in one of his letters that he would soon "meet him in person for the first time" ["bey erster persöhnliger Zusammenkunft"] we must assume that Ilsabe and Nicolaus Gottlieb had never seen each other before Luetkens' return to Hamburg in 1745.[57] This fact, however, as we know, was not at all reprehensible during that time, as it was certainly a very common phenomenon.[58] It did not exclude that Nicolaus Gottlieb and Ilsabe in the end felt a certain affection for each other, mirrored in the view on corresponding humeurs. But economic reasons were regarded as more crucial and as indispensable for their shared future.

Therefore, thirdly, one of the main objects of negotiation that we find within the letter conversation was the economic status of Nicolaus Gottlieb Luetkens, which he needed to prove constantly, as was typical for a contemporary marriage initiation of the first half of the 18th century. This proving of economic status also represented an important and necessary step within the traditional pattern of marriage initiation and courtship.[59] For Luetkens and his future family the economic element was particularly important due to the fact that his marriage would not only result in the founding of a new family but also the founding of a new merchant house in Hamburg, the house of *Luetkens & Engelhardt*. Especially for merchants, securing or often increasing one's capital stock by means of marriage was an important incentive and reason for a marriage.[60] The fourth and last point where Luetkens chose a procedure in his marriage planning that followed a traditional pattern was his gift-giving. As part of the material culture of marriage, the jewellery and all the other items, such as the furniture and even the kitchenware played a fundamental role during the marriage preparation. The gifts had a very concrete and well-known function and meaning as courtesy gifts and as mate-

57 Letter from Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb to Engelhardt, Ehrenfried, March 8, 1745, TNA, HCA 30/232, Letter Book I, no. 583.

58 See Baumann, "Eheanbahnung," 25-29, 32-33. See Darrow, "Marital Choice." 261-272. See Weber, *Deutsche Kaufleute*, 272. See Redlich, Fritz. "Kaufmännische Selbstbiographien. Eine Sammlung des 18. Jahrhunderts." In *Festschrift Hermann Aubin zum 80. Geburtstag*, vol. 1, edited by Otto Brunner, Hermann Kellenbenz, Erich Maschke and Wolfgang Zorn, 320-335. Wiesbaden: Steiner, 1965, 320-335.

59 See Earle, *Making of the English Middle Class*, 189-190. See Schulte Beerbühl, *German Merchants*, 116. See Baumann, "Eheanbahnung"; see Darrow, "Marital Choice."

60 See Weber, *Deutsche Kaufleute*, 272. See Hancock, *Citizens of the World*, 245.

rial promises and guarantees, which represented a binding commitment to the planned marriage.[61]

The most important gifts sent to Hamburg were the gold ring and the diamond earrings that Luetkens had ordered. Today we would naturally call the ring a kind of engagement ring, but in the Early Modern marriage culture this gift was called, more generally, a "marriage pledge", in German "Ehepfand", because the earrings or a necklace had the very same meaning as the ring. The jewellery represented Ilsabe's wedding jewellery in November 1745.

As becomes clear from the last point, all of these marriage customs did not just vanish into thin air after the 18th century. However, in this special form and character of a certain ritualised procedure that people adhered to during their marriage initiation, they were representative for the Early Modern Period.[62] In the next step we will devote our attention to the steps of Luetkens' marriage negotiations which were more influenced by the early Enlightenment and new attitudes towards conjugal love, which attitudes were also strongly shaped by a third cultural ideal of the time, the *gallantry*, a gallant way of life. At that point it is important to keep in mind that all these other developments did not generally replace the old habits. Instead, the whole process must be seen as an additive process during which the approach of marriage initiation, courtship and marriage underwent an adaption process which put forward a shift in the premises shaping the marriage negotiations. This fact can be easily illustrated through the fact that Luetkens, although their marriage was arranged, still tried his best to address Ilsabe as a lover in his letter and to win her affection as a lover. He was "at least throwing around love letters" ["werffe mindestens mit Liebesbriefe herum"], to quote Luetkens' own comment on the matter.[63]

The most significant and apparent sign of the fact that their letter exchange was shaped by early Enlightenment thinking and by gallantry as a popular way of social conduct, however, can be found in the letter style that Luetkens chose for his letters to Ilsabe. Interestingly, however, he also chose a similar letter style for the personal letters to his future brother-in-law and business partner Ehrenfried and to his mother-in-law. In these letters he chose the letter style of "love letters", mixed with the letter style of "personal letters" in the letters to Ehrenfried and his mother, as which such letters were described in the letter-writing manuals of the time.[64] As the analyses will show, his letters represented also a prime example of the transition period between the gallant and the more natural letter style of the later Enlightenment, allowing for a new and more emotional way of writing about love during this particular moment in time.

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61 See Van Dülmen, *Kultur und Alltag* (vol. 1), 140-145.

62 See Bonfield, Lloyd. *Marriage Settlements 1601-1740. The Adoption of the Strict Settlement*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983.

63 Letter from Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb to Luetkens, Joachim, February 01, 1745, TNA, HCA 30/232, Letter Book I, no. 508.

64 See for instance Neukirch, *Anweisung zu teutschen Briefen*. "Von verliebten Briefen," 193-208, 398-400. See ibid., "Von galanten Liebes-Briefen," 215-242. See Marperger, *Der allzeitfertige Handels-Correspondent*, 1003: "Besonder Formuln von Heyraths-Briefen [auch] [...] Gratulationen und Complimenten." See Bohse, *Der allzeitfertige Briefsteller*, 85.

The Language Register of Love

Luetkens grew up during a time in which, on the one hand, gallantry was still a predominant cultural ideal for social conduct of the time, while, on the other hand or rather concomitantly, the Enlightenment, and new forms of social interaction were gaining ground in Hamburg. As a son of a middle-class family with strong connections to the intellectual elite of the city, including important Hamburg poets and writers, he underwent his whole socialization right in the middle of this cultural transitional period.[65] Thus, his letter will show us both. On the one hand it will demonstrate the rules of social conduct of the gallant way of interaction, which was shaped by clear provisions of how to conduct the appropriate way of dealing and conversing with each other, based on making compliments and drawing on polite gestures. On the other hand, it will show us new forms of expressing affection and emotions which became highly popular during the heyday of the Enlightenment. Often the gallant way of life and enlightened ways of life simply went hand in hand during the mid-eighteenth century.[66] Of particular importance for developing his competences and skills in the typical ways of conduct and of conversation of his time were surely also his voyages through England and France. On these he got to know and practised appropriate ways of social conduct by visiting and living in the houses of the international bourgeois elite of the time.[67] In his love letter and the personal letters to his future family, this familiarity with typical forms of gallant ways of conduct and conversation culture will become apparent.

Relating to the aspect of the wife's role in a household and in a marriage during the Enlightenment, which also led to a greater emphasis on the importance of love in a relationship, we will find many typical letter phrases in Luetkens' letters that show his attempt to express love to his future wife and to express his affection for her family. These expressions were shaped both by gallant modes of expression as well as by enlightened ways of thinking, already pointing to a more natural way of letter writing.[68] These letter phrases, which I will analyse in detail in the last part of this chapter, for instance refer to his "restless heart", to his hopes to "embrace his future wife" soon, "to hug her" and he refers to his "sadness" about their separation.[69] The letters containing

65 See Rose, *Conduite und Text*, 1-32 ("Einleitung: Galante Conduite und galante Texte"), 51-65 ("Die galante Welt"). See Steigerwald, Jörn. "Galanterie als kulturelle Identitätsbildung." See Stephan/Winter, *Hamburg im Zeitalter der Aufklärung*. For France see Viala, *La France galante*. See in general Kopitzsch, "*Zwischen Hauptrezeß und Franzosenzeit*"; Kopitzsch, "Sozietäten und Literatur in der Hamburger Aufklärung."

66 See Schmidt-Voges, "Bestands- und Krisenphasen in ehelichen Beziehungen," 107-108. Trepp, *Sanfte Männlichkeit*, 125-167.

67 See Steigerwald, Jörn. "Galanterie als kulturelle Identitätsbildung." See Viala, *La France galante*. See also Espagne/Greiling, *Frankreichfreunde*.

68 Regarding this transition, see also Furger, *Briefsteller*, 22.

69 See for instance Neukirch, *Anweisung zu teutschen Briefen*. "Von verliebten Briefen," 193-208, which letter-writing manual I will furthermore consult in more detail in the analysis. See as comparable sources also the letters by Klopstock referring to embracing, missing, and his restless, longing heart, in Van Dülmen, *Kultur und Alltag* (vol. 1), 169 (which will be quoted in the further course of the chapter). See also Reinlein, "Strategien des Liebeswerbens." Regarding embracing ["umbarmen"] and emotional outburst such as "Ach!", see for instance letters by Clemens Brentano in Augart,

these phrases clearly stand out and differ from many other letters that Luetkens wrote during that time because the modes of expression were very different from his other letters. Notwithstanding this, this letter style should still not be mistaken as a kind of deeper, inner, more immediate self-presentation or even self-revelation. Quite on the contrary, these letters and their style simply present us with other language registers serving other purposes in addition to the registers we already encountered. In the letters, we find the language register of love, shaped by gallantry and the Enlightenment, and we have to understand the subtleties of this language register in order to understand the letter conversations analysed and the motives behind employing it.

It is highly important to acknowledge the fact that this language register underwent a significant change during the mid-18th century. In 1742, the famous philosopher and writer of the Enlightenment, Christian Fürchtegott Gellert, published his groundbreaking essay "Gedanken von einem guten deutschen Briefe". He later transformed the ideas featured in this essay into his famous letter-writing manual *Briefe, nebst einer praktischen Abhandlung von dem guten Geschmacke in Briefen*. In both his essay and the manual he proposed the freeing and emancipation of letter texts and their modes of expression, especially regarding love letters, from strict rules and from the "phrasemongering" of the previous centuries, as Gellert called it.[70] Therefore, research today often refers to Gellert's manual as the moment the modern letter was born.[71]

In 1745, when Luetkens wrote his letters to Ilsabe, her mother and brother, this freeing of tone was already gaining ground. However, in his own letters, Luetkens mainly leaned towards the old style, namely the gallant letter style, in which it was still very common to use certain set phrases to express emotions.[72] The expressions and tone that he used for his letters, however, already showed characteristic traits of a more emotional way of expressing affection, which were then to become highly popular in the second half of the 18th century. Therefore, his letters serve as a vivid example of

Eine romantische Liebe, 67-68 and 125. See "Umarmen." *Deutsches Wörterbuch von Jacob und Wilhelm Grimm*. 16 volumes. Leipzig, 1854-1961, vol. 23, 807, defined as "Ausdruck verschiedenartiger inniger Verbundenheit zwischen Menschen durch Liebe, Verwandtschaft, Freundschaft oder des Dankes, der überquellenden Freude, der Versöhnung."

70 Gellert, Christian Fürchtegott. "Gedanken von einem guten deutschen Briefe, an den Herrn F. H. v. W." In *Belustigungen des Verstandes und des Witzes*, Johann Joachim Schwabe, 177-189. Leipzig: Verlegts Bernhard Christoph Breitkopf, 1742 (second edition 1744). Gellert, Christian Fürchtegott. *Briefe, nebst einer praktischen Abhandlung von dem guten Geschmacke in Briefen*. Leipzig: Johann Wendler, 1751: "Er [der Brief] ist eine freie Nachahmung des guten Gesprächs. [...] So vergesse man die Exempel, um sie nicht knechtisch nachzuahmen, und folge seinem eigenen Naturell. Ein jeder hat eine gewisse Art zu denken und sich auszudrücken, die ihn von anderen unterscheidet. [...] Man bediene sich also keiner künstlichen Ordnung, keiner mühsamen Einrichtungen, sondern man überlasse sich der freywilligen Folge seiner Gedanken, und setze sie nacheinander hin, wie sie in uns entstehen: so wird der Bau, die Einrichtung, oder die Form eines Briefs natürlich seyn." Regarding Gellert and his letter manual see Vellusig, *Schriftliche Gespräche*, 83. See Furger, *Briefsteller*, 65, 165.

71 "Geburt des modernen Privatbriefs". Schlaffer, Hannelore. "Glück und Ende des Privatbriefes." In *Der Brief. Eine Kulturgeschichte der schriftlichen Kommunikation*, edited by Klaus Beyrer and Hans-Christian Täubrich, 34-45. Heidelberg: Edition Braus, 1996, here 34-36.

72 Regarding the gallant letter style in detail, see Rose, *Conduite und Text*, 191-220. See also Vellusig, *Schriftliche Gespräche*, 77. See Anton, *Authentizität als Fiktion*, 27.

the transition period between the two different cultures of emotions and sentiments regarding love relationships and marriage and how these cultures found expression in letters of the time.[73]

Taking a look at Luetkens' letters in detail, this fact leads to a rather intriguing situation. Knowing his typical letter style, the love phrases he used in his letters appear to us odd and misplaced. They seem stilted, artificial, literally crammed into Luetkens' usual way of writing letters in a mercantile style. The important thing to note is that this impression, however, falls short. The fact that therefore became the starting point for my thick description in this chapter, the thing that intrigued me most, was that Luetkens not only used these phrases as a decorative attachment or out of sheer politeness, but that he in fact deliberately used these phrases of affection to exert influence on Ilsabe, her mother and her brother in terms of appeasing and mollifying them with regard to Ilsabe's lamentable situation. Her situation was that she was forced to wait for him.

Luetkens' letters show a well-considered self-image of himself, built around well-considered phrases of affection, which all aimed to demonstrate to Ilsabe his good will and which served the purpose of winning her affection. As soon as we realise this fact, the respective phrases no longer appear odd or misplaced, but instead they reveal themselves as powerful tools and as means of the powers of persuasion in his love letters. This raises at the very same time the necessary question of what the phrases actually meant, how they worked and how they were applied in practice in order to have the intended effect. The latter consequently became one of the crucial general questions of this chapter. Since such phrases were furthermore not only used by Luetkens himself but also by his correspondents in their response letters, answering this question will not only provide us with insights about Luetkens' personal way of dealing with the matter, but at the same time it also provides us with more general insights into the practice of writing love letters and the understanding of love in the 18th century.

Luetkens' letters relating to his marriage show us that the merchant obviously tried his best and endeavoured to demonstrate and prove to Ilsabe and her family his competencies not only in mercantile matters but also in love matters, and in order to do so he primarily drew on the language register of love, shaped by gallantry and the early Enlightenment.[74] The goal that he pursued through writing in this particular style is aptly encapsulated in another quote by the philosopher Gellert, who previous to his later influential works had already pointed out that a crucial prerequisite of a marriage should be "a corresponding of humours, a certain equality in terms of opinions and attitudes, an inner desire to please the other, to strive for the possession of the whole heart and respect." This is how Gellert defined the ideal of conjugal love that should eventually

73 Regarding the culture of emotions [Gefühlskultur] during the 18th century, see Aurnhammer, Achim, Dieter Martin and Robert Seidel, ed. *Gefühlskultur in der bürgerlichen Aufklärung*. Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 2004. See Steigerwald, "Galanterie als kulturelle Identitätsbildung." See Stephan/Winter, *Hamburg im Zeitalter der Aufklärung*. Regarding emotions in love letters, see furthermore Clauss, Elke. *Liebeskunst. Der Liebesbrief im 18. Jahrhundert*. Stuttgart: Metzler, 1993. See Stauf/Simonis/Paulus, *Liebesbrief.*

74 Regarding the "language of love" during the 18th century in general, see also Holloway, *Game of Love*, chapter "The Language of Love," 20-44.

prevail from then onwards, the ideal that started to take hold in mid-18th century, as we observe in Luetkens' letters.[75] Luetkens' aim was to establish a trusting bond with Ilsabe on the basis of the letters and on the basis of conversing like lovers. The fact that the term of *corresponding humours* as a prerequisite for a functioning partnership at this stage of the book, however, already sounds familiar to us – because it was the same prerequisite that the contemporaries deemed necessary for merchant partnerships – points us to another, presumably even the more crucial incentive that Luetkens pursued with this practice. Even in his love letters and personal letters to his future family he did everything in his power to make sure that his mercantile establishment phase was brought to a successful end. Using phrases of love was in this regard a very helpful resource for putting his plans into action.

In the following part of this chapter, after this contextualisation, we are now sufficiently prepared to enter into the analysis of the letter episodes in this chapter and we will address in detail the concrete steps that Luetkens undertook to initiate his marriage and prepare his marriage arrangements. This next section will be divided into three parts, which will deal with three different, important areas of marriage initiation. First, I will address Luetkens' information policy with regard to informing his closest business friends and partners, his inner circle, about his marriage plans. In this part, we will learn about the practical principle of persuasion through giving correspondents preferential treatment, and thus how to create the feeling of exclusivity on the part of the correspondents in order to win them over for the plans. Secondly, we will take a closer look at all of Luetkens' material planning and precautions for his marriage. We will learn from a letter conversation conducted between him, Hertzer & von Bobartt and Joachim Luetkens, how Luetkens was able to arrange that a house was secretly rented for him in Hamburg and that some exquisite furnishings for this house were shipped to Hamburg. As far as possible, I will reconstruct Luetkens' future residence based on the letters. In this part of the chapter, we will also take another look at Luetkens' practice of gift giving, which will lead over to the last part of this chapter, where I will finally analyse in detail one of Luetkens' love letters to Ilsabe Engelhardt and his personal letters and letter conversations with his future family members. The analysis of these letters will present us with the last practical principle of persuasion presented in the book used in letter practice of the 18th century: the principle of mollification.

7.2 The First Episode: How to Ask for Help in Letters

An Effective Information Policy

When he initiated the necessary steps for his own marriage, Nicolaus Gottlieb Luetkens was already familiar with the difficulties that could occur during marriage initiation

75 "eine Übereinstimmung der Gemütsart, eine gewisse Gleichheit in unseren Meinungen und Neigungen, ein innerlicher Trieb, dem anderen zu gefallen, sein ganzes Herz, seine Hochachtung zu besitzen. Erst dann könne man von 'ehelicher Liebe' sprechen." Quoted in Van Dülmen, *Kultur und Alltag* (vol. 1), 163.

from the case of his old friend Johann Jakob Bethmann. Bethmann had started his marriage initiation shortly before Luetkens and he had kept his friend updated at all times in his letters.[76] Bethmann often lamented the slowness of the whole process, which only made "progress at a snail's pace ["Schneckengang"]".[77] His letters sometimes even adopt a tough tone when he complains "that he can still not thread the string into the hole ["das Ding kan noch nicht ins Loch kriegen"]", which had an equivocal meaning referring to both the fact that he was still not able to settle the matter, but which also had a sexual connotation.[78]

Bethmann's situation was complicated. The Frankfurt-Bordeaux merchant planned to marry into the renowned French Desclaux family. This, however, was not only fraught with many legal hurdles but it also entailed suspicions and envy on the side of his mercantile partners, both aspects which were addressed in his letters. The step of marrying Elisabeth Desclaux would bring Bethmann enormous benefits because he would marry into and thus become part of the French mercantile elite, entailing direct access to the French colonial market without the need for naturalization. In fact, Bethmann would even keep his official status as a citizen of the Holy Roman Empire while also holding a Swiss citizenship, even though he married into a French family. Later, he even went on to become the imperial consul of the Holy Roman Empire in Bordeaux.[79] The expected envy on the part of other merchants, which was the reason to keep all his planning a secret, was therefore not entirely unfounded. For Luetkens being informed by Bethmann about his marriage and all the challenges it entailed, and learning about Bethmann's progress, had more than just a purely informative value. It also showed a very practical benefit. From Bethmann's case he learned the most important virtues to uphold and the necessary precautions to stick to in the course of marriage initiation and preparations. He learned that it was indispensable to perform and ensure a well-considered and effective information policy and stick to secrecy during the process of arranging a marriage.[80] It was of vital importance for Bethmann to keep his plans as confidential as possible until things were settled – and the same applied to Luetkens. The two friends therefore ultimately tackled the matter in a rather comparable way, which is an observation that not only holds true for only their information policy but also for many other parts of their marriage initiations.

Bethmann's case therefore provides a good basis for comparison as it shows us that at that time and during that stage of his life Luetkens was not the only one facing such challenges and that his way of marriage initiation was not exceptional. Rather, Luetkens' situation offers us in an exemplary fashion a typical case of marriage initiation conducted by merchants during that time. The fact that I am in the fortunate situation to

76 Apart from the analysis of Johann Jakob Bethmann's letters, in which he wrote about his marriage, stored in the Luetkens archive, the following explanations also owe a lot to the detailed works by Henninger, *Bethmann*, and Weber, *Deutsche Kaufleute*.

77 Letter from Bethmann, Johann Jakob to Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, December 3, 1743, TNA, HCA 30/234.

78 Letter from Bethmann, Johann Jakob to Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, November 9, 1743, TNA, HCA 30/234.

79 See Henninger, *Bethmann*, 198-207. See Weber, *Deutsche Kaufleute*, 191-194.

80 See Van Dülmen, *Kultur und Alltag* (vol. 1), 139. See Baumann, "Eheanbahnung," 32-34.

find such an example in the Luetkens archive itself, as must be noted, is not as surprising as it might initially seem. The situation was simply that, speaking of this phase of his life, in fact many of Luetkens' correspondents were of a similar age and, in line with the contemporary custom during that time, this age was reserved and intended for getting married, or as Bethmann called it to enter into the "status of patched trousers" ["meinem künfftigen geflickten Hoßen Standt"].[81] It was to be expected that there appear many other cases of marriage initiation in the Luetkens archive. Bethmann's case provides a most welcome comparable example, especially because we notice that the two friends in many cases shared the same opinion and often were essentially on the same page.

As two typical representatives of their profession, the approaches that the two merchants chose for their marriage initiation resembled each other in several ways. Luetkens was 29, Bethmann 28 years old when they got married. They both invested or rather were forced to invest a great deal of time, initiative and effort into their marriage initiation. When they finally got married, Bethmann in August 1745, Luetkens in November 1745, they both looked back on more than a year of time and negotiations that had preceded the marriages. The fact that the ultimate reason for these lengthy preparation periods nonetheless slightly differed from one another, allows us to take a look at different variables resulting in such long leading times. While for Bethmann it was not through any real fault of his own that it took him so long, Luetkens deliberately chose to delay the date of his marriage for as long as possible, for business reasons. Bethmann needed two attempts until he was finally able to marry Elisabeth Desclaux. The hurdles he had to overcome were on the one hand of a legal nature. Protestants in Catholic France, foreign Protestants as well as French Huguenots, were denied the right to marry, their marriages were annulled and they were forbidden to practice their religion, to have their own church services or to have baptism. As Bethmann himself described it, it was rather "impious that the Protestants in France find so many hurdles to overcome" with regard to marrying and that many merchants were even "attacked by the priests" and "marriages were annulled" due to the state policies of Catholic France.[82] On the other hand, it took him a while until he got the approval by his own family, since he would do "nothing without the consent of my dear mother and uncle".[83]

Luetkens, too, depended on the approval of other people. In his case it was first and foremost the approval of his future family that he was dependent on. However, since he got this approval rather quickly, his greatest challenge was to subsequently explain to and convince his future family that he would not return to Hamburg until late 1745 because he still wanted to continue business in France until then. In sum, the

81 Letter from Bethmann, Johann Jakob to Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, March 10, 1745, TNA, HCA 30/234. See Earle, *Making of the English Middle Class*, 177-184. See Grassby, *Business Community*, 303, 331.

82 Letter from Bethmann, Johann Jakob to Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, November 9, 1743, TNA, HCA 30/234. See Weber, *Deutsche Kaufleute*, 17. See Krumenacker, "Des Négociants Protestants". See Henninger, *Bethmann*, 158-160. See Scoville, *The Persection of Huguenots.*

83 Letter from Bethmann, Johann Jakob to Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, October 19, 1743, TNA, HCA 30/234.

example of both merchants provides us with three main reasons for a rather long period of initiation and preparation of marriages during that time: legal reasons, the need for family support, and personal reasons which sometimes conflicted with business interests or were actively shaped by these business interests.

A second area of overlap between both cases can be found in the concrete choices the merchants made to find their future wife. In general, it was typical practice amongst the bourgeois elite to stay amongst themselves when choosing a partner. As Margaret Schulte Beerbühl has pointed out, merchants continued to adhere to the practice of "social exclusivity of the circle of potential partners" almost during the entire Early Modern Period.[84] Thus, most mercantile communities continued to be endogamous and stick to close marriage circles.[85] This practice, however, decidedly did not exclude the opportunity to marry well and to deliberately enhance one's social status through marriage, which was a strategy that both Luetkens and Bethmann chose. For the purpose of establishing themselves with a merchant house, as Luetkens planned it, or to enhance the prestige and financial strength of an already existing merchant house, as in the case of Bethmann, *Bethmann & Imbert*, it was common practice and widely accepted that young men planned in the dowry that their future wife would bring into the marriage.[86] For Bethmann's case, we have concrete numbers to illustrate the amount of money that his marriage was to bring in his business coffers. The dowry that the parents of Elisabeth Desclaux provided for their daughter's marriage was 22,000 Livres tournois, which was a sum that even paved the way for Bethmann's ambitions for nobilitation, which was an aim that he should also achieve later.[87] The dowry that Luetkens was set to receive from Ilsabe's mother was equally considerable. In a later letter to Hertzer & von Bobartt, he reported of "40/m Mark" (40,000 Mark) that he expected to receive from mother Engelhardt thanks to the considerable estate her late husband had bequeathed to her, which sum was furthermore topped up by another 30,000 Mark, which Ilsabe's brother Ehrenfried brought into their joint merchant house.[88] So, not only would Luetkens' marriage bring him a "nice sum of money from the dowry" ["schönen Brautschatz"], but generally this union provided him with "significant capital" ["ansehnliches Capitall"] for later times, on which Hertzer & von Bobartt congratulated him in one of their letters.[89] This money as an addition to his own capital provided the perfect financial basis for a prospering future as a wholesale merchant, husband and citizen of the city of Hamburg in the mid-eighteenth century.

Thirdly, Bethmann's and Luetkens' approach to their marriage initiation also showed similarities in their handling of purchasing wedding jewellery and their gift-giving. Both men purchased several items for their future brides and families. Both Luetkens

84 Schulte Beerbühl, *German Merchants*, 116.

85 See ibid. Regarding this practice of endogamous marriages, see also Van Dülmen, Kultur und Alltag (vol. 1), 138. See Grassby, *Business Community*, 303, 331. See Hancock, *Citizens of the World*, 245.

86 Earle, *Making of the English Middle Class*, 190.

87 Weber, *Deutsche Kaufleute*, 191.

88 Letter from Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb to Hertzer & von Bobartt, October 12, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/232, Letter Book I, no. 357.

89 Letter from Hertzer & van Bobartt to Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, November 6, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/234.

and Bethmann ordered precious jewellery. Bethmann also sent different garments to his future wife, Elisabeth Desclaux. Luetkens sent precious furniture. The interesting fact about these orders was that Bethmann called on Luetkens to help him with these purchases and vice versa. To pick out just two of the most significant and telling wedding gifts that the men purchased with each other's help, we learn about a precious "neckerchief and shoes for your future love" ["Halstuch & die Schuhe […] [für] deinen zukünfftigen Schatz"] that Luetkens ordered via Bethmann, while the latter in fact asked Luetkens to order nothing less than his actual wedding ring for him.[90] Bethmann did also not buy his wedding jewellery himself, instead he asked Luetkens to buy the ring. This similarity provides us with another indication for the fact that this practice was common and that it was typical that the merchants mutually supported each other with regard to such orders.

The fourth and most important factor and crucial step during marriage initiation and courtship was an effective information policy including the need for secrecy and confidentiality, which both merchants strongly adhered to. Both merchants, Luetkens and Bethmann, set a certain standard and yardstick for one another, which was the same standard that they also expected of all their other correspondents whom they acquainted with their plans in the further course of their marriage initiation and preparations. This standard was that they promised each other to tell nobody about their upcoming marriages because there was too much at stake. Many things still had to be settled before the news could be spread – which meant, that there was the danger that people could still put a spoke in the wheel of their plans.[91] In the words of Bethmann "I ask you as a sign of our friendship ["bitte dich sehr freundschaftlich"] to tell nobody about it, but to say at any time that you know nothing about it, because here in France such things must be kept a secret as best possible ["Seine Sachen nicht geheim genug halten"]."[92] In return, he promised to "tell nobody in the world anything about your marriage".[93] Bethmann, in all his letters to Luetkens, in fact used the direct personal form of address in his letter, namely the second person singular, "deine Heurath". The seriousness and severity with which this request for secrecy was demanded becomes apparent in those instances when doubts were raised by the correspondents about the status of confidentiality. In a letter from the 12th of November 1744 we find a telling justification by Bethmann to a complaint that was voiced by Luetkens in a letter from the 2nd of November accusing Bethmann of having divulged the secret to their mutual friend Albertus de Meyere in Amsterdam. Bethmann in his letter responded that he "I cannot believe ["begreiffen"] that you accuse me of not being confidential, I have talked to no one about your marriage, except for that one time when I jokingly said in jest to

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90 Letter from Bethmann, Johann Jakob to Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, September 10, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/234. "wegen meinem Ring so laße euch davon Meister". Letter from Bethmann, Johann Jakob to Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, October 22, 1743, TNA, HCA 30/234. See also Letter from Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb to Bethmann, Johann Jakob, December 20, 1743, TNA, HCA 30/232, Letter Book II, unnumbered.

91 See Van Dülmen, *Kultur und Alltag* (vol. 1), 139. See also Goodman, "Marriage Calculations."

92 Letter from Bethmann, Johann Jakob to Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, December 3, 1743, TNA, HCA 30/234.

93 Ibid.

Albertus de M. that I assume that you must have a sweetheart ["Liebste"] in Hamburg because you are so often deep in thought ["in Gedancken sitzest"], and that's it. I am your friend, honest, loyal, confidential and sincere till death."[94]

The reason for the reproach by Luetkens had been that he had heard from both Bethmann as well as de Meyere about an evening meeting, a social gathering between the two of them in Albertus' house where they had, as was a rather common practice, "raised our glasses" to Luetkens and where also the subject of Luetkens' marriage plans must have been brought up.[95] As far as Luetkens was concerned, during this evening Bethmann must have revealed too much information to Albertus. He then learned about this from letters by Albertus himself, which led to him reproaching, "reproches" in German, his friend. In Bethmann's response letter, the Bordeaux merchant now found himself forced to make excuses. Although he did not completely deny that he may have made certain insinuations, he still insisted that he had not given away any concrete secret. He ultimately essentially blames it on the heat of the moment, which is even amusing since Albertus suffered a fever during that time. So, Bethmann emphasised that he still had a clear conscience. For Luetkens, however, even insinuations had consequences. He now was no longer able to keep his actual plans a guarded secret. Whether it was true or not, whether Bethmann "could not keep his mouth shut" ["eine lange Zungen hätte"] or was mostly innocent, as he still insisted in a later letter to Albertus, now it was hardly possible for Luetkens not to reveal the whole truth about his marriage to Albertus, especially because during that time he had already given the old man the run-around for several months regarding disclosing his marriage secrets.[96]

Albertus himself, and this is the crucial part and the final element of this letter episode that helps us to understand the actual relevance and consequences of the meeting between Bethmann and him, had in fact known about Luetkens marriage plans already before the meeting with Bethmann. He had been privy to the plans since at least August 1744, when Luetkens had first informed him about his plans. So far, however, Luetkens had only provided him with general information about his marriage initiation. Thus, Albertus had been informed in a letter from August that Luetkens had found a bride "some time ago […] who is from Hamburg and who has a bag full of speciethaler" and that Luetkens had "found it hard to come to the decision ["resolviren] to sell his freedom."[97] Albertus was even told that not even Luetkens' "family so far knows nothing about it and that even my brother, who pushes me ["fexiret"] all the time with it, is left in uncertainty", which Albertus regarded as a good decision since he knew "that as soon as it is public and in case it then did not happen, the people would gossip about it". Luetkens in fact used a typical Hamburg dialect in his letter, writing that "darüber viel Snack solte haben".[98] The most crucial information, however, had still not been revealed

94 Letter from Bethmann, Johann Jakob to Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, November 12, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/234.

95 Letter from Bethmann, Johann Jakob to Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, October 8 and October 19, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/234.

96 Letter from De Meyere, Albertus to Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, December 14, 1744, TNA, HCA, 30/234.

97 Letter from De Meyere, Albertus to Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, August 6, 1744, TNA, HCA, 30/234.

98 Ibid.

to Albertus, or in other words, Luetkens had so far deliberately omitted to give Albertus the last and most important jigsaw piece with regard to his marriage, which was the actual name of his future wife. So, Albertus, in turn, had kindly asked Luetkens in his letter in August "if in case I might already have the honour to know the mademoiselle ["zu kennen die Ehre habe"], would E.E. be so kind to tell me her name"? He even made speculations and hoped that it would be the woman "who I wished it to be from the bottom of my heart."[99]

The P.S.

Albertus deliberately put this latter request in a postscript, P.S., to his letter at the outermost edge of the letter, in which he furthermore continued that he hoped that it was a certain "Madame H.", presumably Madame Heusch from the Hamburg Heusch family.[100] This practice of adding more private, personal or up-to-date information in the form of a post scriptum to a letter and furthermore adding this postscript vertically at the margins of the letter, at the bottom of the letter or even adding it on already half-folded or folded-in parts of a letter was fairly common in letters of the 18th century. It was typical letter-writing practice to reserve and allocate the postscript for any most personal information or any up-to-date information.[101] Especially when using the tuck-and-seal method of letterlocking where one side of a half-folded letter was tucked into the other, this practice was helpful for the writers, because they could write on the folded tucked-in part of the letter, too. In the case of Albertus de Meyere, this form of postscript was furthermore also a gesture and demonstration of personal closeness between the two correspondents, which was also a characteristic that can be assumed for many other postscripts in Early Modern letters. This fact, in turn, directly leads us back to the evening meeting between Albertus and Johann Jakob Bethmann, because this personal closeness was precisely what would become doubtful after this evening meeting.

From the fact that Albertus had already known about Luetkens' plans in general, but now met with another man, who obviously seemed to have more information, we can derive and assume that meeting Bethmann put the old Amsterdam merchant in an awkward situation. Back in his August letters, Albertus had promised Luetkens that he would not tell or even "let any soul ["keine Seele"] know about it" and he for his part stuck to that promise, in contrast to Bethmann, even during the meeting with the German Bordeaux merchant.[102] Nevertheless, maybe precisely because of this reason, the meeting had left him with a bitter aftertaste. In his next letter to Luetkens after the meeting, written in December, he wrote with a certain undertone and once more relocating this letter text to the postscript of his letter that he now assumed that Bethmann "must be an intimate friend of E.E. ["intima Freund"], which becomes obvious from the

99 Ibid.

100 Ibid.

101 See Haasis, *Materialität*. See O'Neill, *The Opened Letter*, 130-131. See Daybell, *Women Letter-Writers*, 45. See in general Wiggins, *Bess of Hardwick's Letters*, 173-193.

102 Letter from De Meyere, Albertus to Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, August 6, 1744, TNA, HCA, 30/234.

fact that he [Bethmann] apparently must have read the particular letters [“particuliere Briefe”, confidential letters] which I have sent to you and from the fact that he knew about Mad. H.”[103] How could he otherwise know about these things? He also pointed out that Bethmann had mentioned that Luetkens' “marriage plans must have been cut and dried in Hamburg”, and finally Albertus asked Luetkens “if that is actually the case, I would be glad to hear”.[104]

The reason for the bitter aftertaste of the meeting was obviously that Albertus must have had the feeling that Bethmann knew more about the matter than he himself did, and this led to a certain resentment on his part. From his letters we learn that Albertus was obviously disgruntled about the fact that he was not told the whole truth and that Luetkens obviously had privileged someone else before him with regard to learning and being updated about his marriage plans. The confidence in their strong bond of trust and maybe even the pride that Albertus must have felt when Luetkens had told him before that he was told the news about his upcoming marriage even before his own family, was damaged or even destroyed the moment he met with Bethmann. This was the ultimate reason why the evening meeting between the two merchants in Amsterdam also led to an uncomfortable situation for Luetkens. It forced him to act immediately. He had to restore Albertus' confidence in their mutual relationship of trust, and he had to appease him, which was why he unveiled the whole secret and all his concrete plans to Albertus de Meyere in his next letter. This was the only way that he could ensure that Albertus would continue to feel convinced that he still belonged to the group of Luetkens' closest confidants. This in turn represented the basic principle of persuasion that Luetkens used in all his actions and letters with regard to his information policy concerning his marriage, about which we will learn more in the upcoming explanations.

Concluding this shorter letter episode first, it can be reported that Luetkens' quick action made an impact and his strategy worked out. His letter not only soothed Albertus, but the Amsterdam merchant even joyfully congratulated him, maybe a bit exuberantly, on his “charming Lieschen” [“charmantes Lieschen”], his “dear sweetheart“ [“lieber Schatz“] and the “dear child“ [“liebes Kind”].[105] What also needs to be taken into consideration is the fact that Luetkens sooner or later would have had to reveal the complete truth to Albertus anyway. Maybe he had only been deterred from telling him earlier because his future wife was not Albertus' first choice and preferred candidate, Madame H. The result of Albertus' meeting with Bethmann was ultimately a reaffirming of mutual trust and eventually an acceleration of the whole process of telling Albertus the truth. Maybe this was also the reason why Luetkens forgave Bethmann his faux pas. Yet, Bethmann's careless tittle-tattle was still worth a rebuke because, after all, it had put Luetkens in an awkward predicament.

From Bethmann's case, Luetkens learned about the importance of an effective information policy in two ways. First, he witnessed the importance of maintaining confiden-

103 Letter from De Meyere, Albertus to Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, December 12, 1744, TNA, HCA, 30/234.

104 Ibid.

105 Letter from De Meyere, Albertus to Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, December 14, 1744, TNA, HCA, 30/234.

tiality and discretion as best possible because he witnessed from Bethmann's marriage initiation the many hurdles that first had to be overcome before things were cut and dried and before the news about a marriage should make the rounds. However, secondly, he also learned that at a certain point in time, when his plans had already progressed far, were at full speed and certain obvious steps needed to be taken care of, it was somewhat difficult to maintain absolute confidentiality towards third parties. This was because rumours would in any case begin to spread and circulate, the more people become involved in the process. The challenge was eventually to still try and do his best to retain the upper hand and control the flow of information to third parties. It was indispensable to keep track on the information presented to third parties and to control who would at what point in time learn about the plans, in other words, who would at what time be allowed access to the well-informed circle of Luetkens' acquaintances. Luetkens did that based on letters and the practical principle of exerting influence by means of creating a feeling of exclusivity on the part of his correspondents, by giving correspondents preferential treatment. Based on this principle, he was able to control the flow of information and he was even able to actively win over and engage other people to help him practically with his undertakings because they would subsequently do these actions out of loyalty and good will to him, which he had earned through his trust in them. This was how he structured and was able to perform a very conducive information policy with regard to his marriage initiation, which paved the way for his successfully taking the last steps of his establishment phase.

This practical principle of persuasion of creating a feeling of exclusivity had already become noticeable in the episode of the meeting between Albertus and Johann Jakob because the exclusivity was precisely what was called into question during the written conversations between the parties and which Luetkens had to restore through making amends. This feeling of exclusivity, of an exclusive friendship between two merchants, an "intimate network" of the merchant, was also what held together the friendship between Luetkens and Bethmann, who passed many things on to each other in the course of their relationship, not only secrets but also business affairs, money or even, as we have learned, shoes, rings and necklaces.[106] In the end, the principle of giving correspondents preferential treatment through creating the feeling of exclusivity through letters and actions in order to win over his correspondents and trading partners to his plans shaped Luetkens entire business strategy. But it was particularly crucial and indispensable with regard to his marriage planning because the preparations heavily relied on the trustworthiness, reliability, and the confidentiality of the partners. The practical approach he chose in this matter inevitably had to ensure that he was able to keep his correspondents well-disposed towards him, just as he had to ensure with the same emphasis and urgency that his wife and her family remained loyal to him. The main question and challenge with regard to both groups was ultimately the same: How could Luetkens make sure that his correspondents, his friends, his family and his future wife would end up doing his bidding?

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106 See Romney, Susanah Shaw. *New Netherland Connections: Intimate Networks and Atlantic Ties in Seventeenth-Century America*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2014, 110.

With regard to his wife, the detailed answer to that question will be given in detail in the later course of the chapter. It suffices to say it included concessions, assurances, promises and material gratuity, tokens of love and wedding jewellery. With regard to his business friends, trading partners and his brothers, however, the answer is that Luetkens convinced all of them, his brothers included, on the basis of the practical principle of giving preferential treatment and creating a feeling of exclusiveness, which he performed in his letter-writing practice. The pattern which he used remained constant, and it is also the same pattern that we have already observed with regard to de Meyere and Bethmann.

Preferential Treatment

First, Luetkens provided the respective correspondents with exclusive information and emphasised the exclusiveness of the respective information. He, however, provided his correspondents at this stage, as far as the situation allowed it, only with well-controlled doses of information. He then asked his correspondents and trading partners to keep this information confident. In return, as a barter, Luetkens admitted them to his closest circle of narrowest confidants or reaffirmed their access to it, which represented both a display and proof of confidence. The letters served as actual material pledges for this gesture. As a token of mutual friendship and trust, the letters were the material evidence of the status and the privilege of intimate friendship and a close relationship.

By means and on the basis of issuing these tokens of friendship, Luetkens subsequently ensured that the rumours would not spread further because his friends regarded it as a matter of course and as their duty and obligation as intimate friends not to pass on any information to outsiders, and the contemporary word they used for addressing each other in this relationship was "intima" friend. This way Luetkens was able keep control of the information presented to the outside world. Since he himself also stuck to his own principles and duties as an intimate friend of his correspondents, that is, that he also adhered to the pattern himself and acted upon the unspoken code of honour it entailed, the entire practice not only represented a one-sided regulation and agreement for only his benefit, but all persons involved profited from it. The practice representing the practical principle of creating exclusiveness amongst peers is to be regarded not only as a single strategy that Luetkens used or invented, but it far more represented a general common pattern within intimate economic networks of the Early Modern Period.[107] Thus, it does not surprise us that we can encounter this practice also in many other instances and letter conversations within the Luetkens archive.[108] However, with regard to Luetkens' marriage initiation and courtship, the practice most clearly showed its effective way of functioning. During his marriage initiation and preparations, his letters and the practical principle governing them worked like clockwork. It becomes clear what profound effects the principle entailed and what possibilities it held ready for the people of the age. For Luetkens, his letter practices

107 Romney, *New Netherland Connections.*

108 See as further proof and examples also the letter episodes in the chapters on the founding of the merchant house and commission trade.

to keep his preparations confidential were his anchor point from which he was able to impel his partners and his family not only to trust him in his undertakings but also to assist him concretely in manifold ways during his marriage preparations. This means that his information policy not only served informative purposes, but it also brought about practical results leading to practical benefits for his personal advancement.

In the next part we, will analyse two more letter conversations governed by the principle of giving preferential treatment. In these episodes, Luetkens revealed his marriage plans to Hertzer & von Bobartt and his brother Joachim, using exactly the same pattern as outlined above. The analysis will show the practical benefits of this principle. Based on the principle of giving preferential treatment through creating the feeling of exclusivity, Luetkens was able to convince his correspondents to not only keep confidentiality, but it also enabled him to convince them to help him to secretly rent a house in Hamburg and to buy and order furniture for this house on the order of Luetkens' future wife Ilsabe. The letters analysed next will be informative on several levels. They will once more show us how skilfully Luetkens was able to provide his correspondents with a feeling of exclusivity by means of conveying to them the message that they would enjoy a head start before others with regard to receiving the news about his marriage plans. Secondly, the letters will show how Luetkens impelled them to help him with important organisational matters and concrete material precautions for his upcoming marriage. Thirdly, these letters will provide us with an accurate picture of what the contemporaries regarded as crucial qualities and character traits that a merchant's wife had to bring into a marriage. In this regard, it must have been a relief for Luetkens that his correspondents' reactions were without fail positive, and presumably he must also have felt that he was now reaping the rewards of his negotiation efforts. Everyone in his circle of closest confidants congratulated him, most often presumably honestly, on his good choice, which was certainly another important factor that his establishment phase found a conciliatory ending.

7.3 Letting Others Do the Work: Renting a House in Hamburg

Apart from Bethmann and Albertus de Meyere, there were two or to be more precise three other correspondents to whom Nicolaus Gottlieb presented his plans and his secret relatively early on in the preparation phase of his marriage. These other correspondents were his brother Joachim Luetkens, who was spending several months in London in 1745 as part of his clerical educational journey through England, and the two merchants of the merchant house Hertzer & von Bobartt in Hamburg. The respective places of residence of both Joachim and Hertzer & von Bobartt during that time were in fact significant, as these locations will become directly important in the further course of the chapter. These correspondents, together with Bethmann and de Meyere and of course his future business partner and brother of his future wife Ehrenfried Engelhardt, unequivocally represented Luetkens' innermost circle of close confidants, family members and associates. He did not reveal the secret to his uncle Anthony Luetkens at first, although Joachim filled him in later on, or to his other uncle Joachim Kähler. He did not even reveal it to his guardian and long-standing supporter Christopher Seydeler even though the same had already tormented him with question about his marriage plans, asking him and suggesting to him already in May 1744 that "if cupid's dart had not hit E.E. so far, although I am sure that it will happen in due time that a handsome, dignified, beautiful, virtuous Mademoiselle will rob your virginity ["Jungfrauschafft zum Raube"], I would wish that it is woman from Hamburg who will take this role."[109] And later, Seydeler also was the one who fuelled the rumour mill around Luetkens' marriage in Hamburg to such an extent that Luetkens had to actively stop him from uttering further speculations. Yet, he still did not reveal the whole secret to Seydeler but instead curbed his speculations and denied many of them. The reason for the latter was presumably that Luetkens feared that Seydeler would have preferred a different choice for his nephew.

We learn from Seydeler's letter, apart from the apparent, vehement emphasis with which a legal guardian put pressure on his former ward, what character traits the contemporary men and merchants regarded as necessary and advisable regarding the choice of a wife. Seydeler's letter in fact represents a good illustration and example from the Luetkens archive to summarize the contemporary discourse and male attitude regarding commendable female character traits that a women should show to constitute a good catch for a marriage. The four character traits he mentioned condense the statements and information that we can also find in many other letters from the Luetkens archive and in the contemporary merchant literature and letter-writing manuals. The assessment that a women should be "handsome, dignified, beautiful, virtuous" ["hüpsche, feine, schöne, tugendtsame Mademoiselle"] to qualify as a potential good choice for a wife reverberate in almost all other letters that were exchanged between Luetkens and his correspondents in one form or the other.[110] The latter means that if the letter writer did in some cases not use exactly the same words, then they at least found words with a similar meaning to describe Luetkens' future bride. This can be best illustrated with the letters written by Luetkens' brother Joachim. Apart from praising Ilsabe's dignity, her virtues and her temper, Luetkens' brother for instance wrote to him that he had noticed "a lot of good things about her outward appearance" ["äusserlichen Ansehen nach welches schon viel artiges entdeckt"], which represents a paraphrasing of the word *handsome*.[111]

Apart from the letters in the Luetkens archive, we can find the same or similar character traits as letter phrases mentioned in the merchant and letter-writing manuals of the time. Bohse for instance wrote that a bride should be "beautiful, nice and sensible"; Hunold wrote she should be "beautiful and virtuous"; Marperger wrote that she should have "good capital, show a honourable friendship and a laudable conduite, and she should be calm [...] [that is] not show juvenile desire, but a mature and virtuous behaviour."[112] The latter in particular refers to the influence of Enlightenment thinking

109 Letter from Seydeler, Christopher to Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, May 15, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/236.

110 See letters quoted above by Hertzer & von Bobartt, Albertus de Meyere and Joachim Luetkens.

111 Letter from Luetkens, Joachim to Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, October 5, 1744, TNA, HCA, 30/235

112 "schönes, freundliches, verständiges Kind". Bohse, *Der allzeitfertige Briefsteller*, 171. "schönes und vollkommen tugendhafftes Frauenzimmer". Hunold, *Die Allerneueste Art Höflich und Galant zu Schreiben*, 148. "von guten Mitteln, honetter Freundschafft, löblicher Conduite und stillen Wandel

that was to have a decisive influence on the changing ideal of love during the 18th century, about which we will hear more in the following explanations. In sum, reason and virtue, the hallmarks of the age of Enlightenment, as well as a certain beauty were the qualities and expectations against which Luetkens' choice of a wife, Ilsabe, was measured.[113] As far as we learn from Luetkens' incoming letters, his correspondents shared the opinion that Ilsabe showed these traits. Tellingly though, more often than the merchants wrote about Ilsabe herself they commented on the dowry the Hamburg burgher's daughter brought into the marriage, which raises the legitimate question, if the references to the character traits in the letter were in the end more than merely hollow words and platitudes. Unfortunately though, there exist no records of Ilsabe Engelhardt anymore to prove the opposite.

Most certainly, Nicolaus Gottlieb's mother, Catharina Elisabeth Luetkens, born Kähler, and his youngest brother Anton would have come to a similar conclusion as Seydeler and Joachim, if they had been informed by Luetkens about his planned marriage already at this point in time. But at that early stage of the planning and moment in time, Luetkens still held the opinion that it was not yet necessary to inform them about Ilsabe. Thus, not even his own mother and his youngest brother Anton were privy to his plans until shortly before his return to Hamburg. Instead, Luetkens deliberately chose to reveal his secret only to Johann Jakob Bethmann, Albertus de Meyere, Joachim Luetkens and Hertzer & von Bobartt. Ehrenfried Engelhardt, his future business partner and brother-in-law, was involved in the preparations right from the start. This fact allows us to draw reliable conclusions about the strong trust relationships that Luetkens maintained with these correspondents.

The personal closeness between these men and Luetkens also becomes noticeable in the familiar or even loving tone that Luetkens chose for his letters to them compared with his other letters. Taken together with the fact, however, that Luetkens provided them with intimate details about his life, we can now assume with relative certainty that the bond between these men was strong and intimate. Their letters furthermore allow us to draw even more conclusions about the question why he had chosen precisely these five correspondents to reveal his secret to. As his letters show, another thing that all these correspondents had in common was that he actively used or, in more positive terms, asked for help from them for implementing concrete practical steps that were needed for his marriage initiation and preparations.

For all these steps he needed loyal helping hands. So, the reason why he approached these correspondents was not only the duties and obligations linked to their trust relationship, but it was also a pragmatic decision. He needed their help in purely practical matters. The latter fact, however, still does not curtail the close relationship that the correspondents kept with each other. The best example and illustration of this correlation can be found once more in the episode presented above of Luetkens ordering his wedding jewellery from London. The episode aptly illustrates how Luetkens harnessed his friends for his own plans and purposes, but also for their benefit. Without

[…] nicht die ungezähmte Begierde der Jugend, sondern ein reiffes und tugendhafftes Absehen". Marperger, *Der allzeitfertige Handels-Correspondent*, 1004.

113 See Westphal, "Venus und Vulcanus," 19. See Trepp, *Sanfte Männlichkeit*, 41.

his correspondents and the power of letters, however, none of the orders could have been placed in the first place and the entire undertaking would have been impossible. Maintaining a trust relationship and helping each other out in concrete undertakings to the mutual benefits were the two sides of the same coin, a give-and-take situation. This fact will once more become clear when we take a look at two further undertakings that Luetkens carried out on the basis of letters together with Joachim, Hertzer & von Bobartt and Ehrenfried Engelhardt, or rather we should say, undertakings that he successfully delegated to his partners and correspondents by means of letters.

With Hertzer & von Bobartt and his future business partner Ehrenfried, Luetkens arranged the rental of his future merchant house, which also became the Luetkens family residence in Hamburg. The Hamburg merchants Hertzer & von Bobartt helped him and Ehrenfried to find and rent a house suitable for both the new merchant firm and for Luetkens to move into with his future wife Ilsabe. The choice fell on an imposing house in one of Hamburg's most famous merchant quarters. The merchants rented a "house in the Huxter" fleet, in the Katharinenstraße.[114] Ehrenfried and Nicolaus Gottlieb needed the help of the merchant house of Hertzer & von Bobartt not only for financial support but also because the renting of these premises needed to happen covertly so as not to raise any suspicions in Hamburg regarding the merger of the two families, which was still a secret. Hertzer & von Bobartt officially rented the premises pro forma in their own name, but secretly they rented it for their friend Luetkens. With his brother Joachim Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb arranged the purchase of some furnishings for these future premises while the largest part of furniture was bought by his future wife and her mother.[115]

The letters that he had written and received in both these matters are most certainly among to the most vivid examples of the powers of persuasion applied in letter and business practice of the 18th century that have survived in the Luetkens archive. These letters not only help to sum up all that has been said so far, but they also show the very concrete benefits and consequences of the practical persuasive efforts performed on the basis of letters for the actual lives of the letter writers. For Luetkens these very letters helped him to arrange not only his marriage from a distance but also to take care of renting his future home and merchant house in Hamburg while he was still in France and without lifting a finger himself. He let others do the work for him. As regards consequences, by moving into this house and opening his own merchant house in Hamburg, Luetkens officially completed his establishment phase. There are very few

114 "ein Hauß auf den Huxter gemiethet." Letter from Hertzer & van Bobartt to Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, November 6, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/234. Luetkens' later *Bel Etage* of this house in the Katharinenstraße is today displayed in a *Period Room*, the "Louis-Seize-Room" in the Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe Hamburg. See the detailed explanations in the second part of this chapter. The house was later owned by the famous Hamburg Jenisch family, see *Katharinenstraße 17 Festsaal von 1778*, Hbg.-Altstadt 102, Stich, MK&G Repro C13, DA 3504. See *Wohnhaus Catharinenstraße 17 Jenisch-Haus, Giebelansicht [...] 1938*, Hbg.-Altstadt 102 Katharinenstr. 17, Jenischhaus, Aufriß von 1938, MK&G Repro C10, DA 3544 P 1232 DA.

115 See letter from Hertzer & van Bobartt to Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, November 6, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/234.

other examples imaginable that better illustrate the actual and far-reaching powers of Early Modern letters.

Most important and revealing with regard to the way that the power of persuasion actually worked in these letters is that Luetkens did not simply approach Hertzer & von Bobartt and Joachim directly with the request to help him, but he once more skilfully combined his requests in the letters with the gesture of expressing his trust and confidence in his correspondents by first revealing to them the secret of his planned marriage. He once more applied the practical principle of creating the feeling of exclusivity on the part of his correspondents in order to be able to implement his plans. It is all the more indicative that he again used exactly the same concrete pattern, argument and persuasion strategy as in the case of Bethmann and de Meyere before, to tell them explicitly that he had deliberately not informed other people about his plans at this stage – only to then ask them for their help and approach them with the requests. This is how the practicable principle of persuasion in letters, the principle of giving preferential treatment, and the plan to implement certain concrete steps came together to form the basis to organise and manage one's affairs as a merchant during the 18th century.

Although the letters exchanged between Luetkens, Hertzer & von Bobartt and Ehrenfried Engelhardt were exchanged at a later time than the letters between Nicolaus Gottlieb and his brother, I will start my explanations with the former letters, for purely illustrative and pragmatic reasons. It is easier to imagine or rather to envisage the furnishing of a house when we first know about the type of building in which these furnishings were placed in the end.

Finding a Home

Monday, the 12th of October 1744, had not only been a very busy post-day for Nicolaus Gottlieb Luetkens – as usual, he wrote several letters on this day – but it was also one of the most important post-days of the year 1744 with regard to his marriage initiation. On this day, he wrote a letter to his long-standing trading partners and friends in Hamburg, Jobst Henning Hertzer and Christopher von Bobartt. In this letter, he revealed his marriage plans to them. A second letter that left his desk on this day, also sent to Hamburg, was a letter to his future business partner Ehrenfried Engelhardt, and although this second letter had a close relation to the letter to Hertzer & von Bobartt, Luetkens nevertheless deliberately decided to send these two letters separately, not as part of a letter packet. The reasons for this were once more pragmatic and strategic. Nothing was left to chance in letter practice of the 18th century. With these letters and their deliberate spatial separation, as a kind of material precaution, Luetkens planned to arrange that the three correspondents, after having received the individual letters, would come to the idea that they wanted to meet each other. The different letters should motivate the correspondents to approach each other in person, allegedly on their own initiative, and ask for each other's help. Luetkens was following the motto of helping people to help themselves. However, as Luetkens envisaged it, this should of course still happen under his guidance. The concrete undertaking for which he wanted to win over the correspondents and convince them to help each other was then ultimately also the actual reason behind his letter to Hertzer & von Bobartt on the 12th of October 1744. Informing Hertzer & von Bobartt about his marriage in the same letter was, however, no mere pretext because as we have learned he used this information to give his correspondents the feeling of having a privileged head start.

In his letter to the Hamburg merchant house, Luetkens therefore not only informed them about his marriage, but he also used the very same opportunity to tell them, or to put it more accurately, to suggest to them how they could help and support him during this undertaking, his marriage preparations. This was completely in line with the practical principle of creating a feeling of exclusiveness first, only to ask for help later. The main subject matter of both the letters to Ehrenfried Engelhardt and to Hertzer & von Bobartt was that Luetkens asked the concrete request from them to help him to rent a merchant house for him in Hamburg for the future merchant house of Luetkens & Engelhardt.

Sending the letters separately from each other was the first step to get the ball rolling. The second step was to create once more the feeling of exclusiveness on the part of his correspondents and to give them preferential treatment, also by means of the content of the letters. As is very revealing, Luetkens even provided the correspondents with different information tailored to the specific nature and needs of his requests. In the letter to Hertzer & von Bobartt, he asked the Hamburg merchants for their help in assisting Engelhardt in renting suitable premises for him and he did so by making use of the persuasive pattern presented above. First, he revealed his marriage plans to the Hamburg merchants only to then be able to appeal to their friendship and sense of honour in order to make them feel obliged to help. He also asked them not to reveal to Engelhardt that they were already privy to his marriage plans but to make Engelhardt believe that they had no knowledge of it at all, which represents the icing on the cake of creating the feeling of exclusivity and being given preferential treatment. He admitted them an information advantage even over his future business partner Engelhardt. As a result, Hertzer & von Bobartt should regard their help as a good deed to their close friend Luetkens. On the other hand, in his letter to Engelhardt, he advised his future business partner first to look out for a suitable house and then to approach Hertzer & von Bobartt to ask them for their assistance. In his letter, however, he deliberately omitted the crucial information that he had already revealed his marriage plans to Hertzer & von Bobartt and instead emphasised that he had told no one of his plans to buy or rent a house in Hamburg. Engelhardt was led to believe that Hertzer & von Bobartt were not privy to their plans to establish a joint partner company together but that he only appeared as a messenger and helping hand for Luetkens in this matter.[116] This way, Luetkens made sure that he could later not be accused of having told a lie, but in fact the only thing that he could be accused of later, in the case that Engelhardt was to find out about his letter to Hertzer & von Bobartt, is that he had not made himself clear enough in his letter to Ehrenfried. It is more important though that Luetkens maintained the impression in his letter to Ehrenfried that his future business partner continued to have all decision-making powers in this undertaking, although he himself,

116 The respective letters will be quoted at length in the further course of the chapter.

Luetkens, had already prepared the ground for the active involvement of Hertzer & von Bobartt.

While this approach surely and obviously lacked any moral scruple on the part of Luetkens with regard to the trust relationship between him and his future merchant socius and therefore seems rather dubious from a modern point of view, from the contemporary viewpoint this approach must have been regarded by Luetkens as a kind of necessary evil, which resulted from to the necessity of keeping both his correspondents well-disposed to him. In the end, both Luetkens and Engelhardt were highly dependent on the goodwill and help of Hertzer & von Bobartt, who had to take a risk and would go out on a limb if they agreed to this request. Luetkens must have surely accepted the possible consequences of his persuasive trick and instead must have trusted in the fact that Engelhardt would surely understand his approach in this matter if his trick were to come to light. As the saying goes, he must have been convinced that ultimately the end justified the means.

In the original wording of his letters, his persuasive practices become once more tangible and clearly recognisable. Essentially, the letters unfold themselves as a cross section and melting pot of many of the ways and means of the powers of persuasion practiced in letter-writing practice which I have already presented in the previous chapters. This furthermore provides us with clear insights into the effects and consequences of these practices for the personal advancement and personal life of the persons involved.

It is not clear which of the two letters Luetkens wrote first, but the approach described above and the intention which I think he pursued with his letters becomes clearest when we start with the letter to Hertzer & von Bobartt. Furthermore, the letter to Engelhardt entailed information about their future merchant house, which forms a good basis for concluding this part of the chapter and leading over to the next part, which will deal with parts of the furniture ordered for the house. Starting with the letter to Hertzer & von Bobartt, we will also return to the practical principle of how to create a feeling of exclusivity in order to give his correspondents preferential treatment through letters.

7.4 The Practice of Writing Particular Letters

As was usual for regular business letters, this letter started with reports, information and news on commercial matters. For this purpose, Luetkens used the typical language register of business and trade, which we have already become acquainted with in the chapters on Luetkens' commission trade and his shipping industry. This register is characterised by linguistic simplicity, clarity, brevity and concision, the language style being structured and shaped by the usage of plain language drawing mostly on certain set expressions and a certain repertoire of fixed and widely accepted common phrases representing typical mercantile actions.[117] This commercial language register served

117 See chapter 5. See Defoe, *Complete English Tradesman*, 22, 25, 32. See Marperger, *Getreuer und geschickter Handelsdiener*, 194, 230. See Mair, *Book-keeping methodiz'd*, 6-7.

the purpose of being as unambiguous and clear as possible for the good of business. From the second page onwards, however, Luetkens' register changed to a more personal tone. The general purpose of remaining as unambiguous as possible in his letter stayed the same, yet the language register that now becomes apparent obviously allowed for a more ample tone, even allowing for a gallant embellishment of his chosen words. This language register therefore apart from merely informing someone about something also served the purpose of making compliments and therefore gaining the affection of his correspondents.[118]

Direct proof for the fact that this change of the language register was certainly a deliberate act that the letter writer had chosen to signal a change in the nature of the following information can be found in the use of the specific term "particular letter", which Luetkens used right at the beginning of this second part of the letter. These distinctive words, this label, was used on many occasions in the letters of the Luetkens archive. It appears in different languages, "ein particulair Schreiben" or "partiquel" letter as well as "in eigen Händen" in German or "en mains propres", "en particulie" or "correspondence particulariere" in French. This was either written on the outside of a letter or letter packet, mostly as part of the address line of an enclosed letter in a letter packet, signalling to the receiver that he or she had to hand it over personally to the respective addressee, or the term was mentioned in the letter text itself. Whenever a letter was a particular letter, this was also noted in the Letter Books, indicating that a letter had been confidential. In the Letter Books, these kinds of letters were then often either shortened, paraphrased or the copy was simply left blank. In Luetkens' large Letter Book, it is therefore not uncommon to find several entries or lists of entries only mentioning a date, an addressee and the reference to the fact that a particular letter had been sent to the respective correspondent. In whichever way they were used, the words "particular letters" always served as a kind of demarcation or signal word in its contemporary usage pointing to the personal nature of the content of the respective letter.[119]

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118 See Rose, *Conduite und Text*, 181-190. As contemporary sources see See Neukirch, *Anweisung zu teutschen Briefen*. "Von galanten Liebes-Briefen," 215-242; see Marperger, *Der allzeitfertige Handels-Correspondent*, 1003: "Gratulationen und Complimenten." See Hunold, *Die Allerneueste Art Höflich und Galant zu Schreiben*, 138. Regarding the "galante Rhetorica" in general see Weise, Christian. *Politische Nachricht von Sorgfältigen Briefen [...] Nebenst einem Vorbericht vom Galanten Hoff=Redner* [...], Dresden/Leipzig: Johann Christoph Mieth and Johann Christoph Zimmermann, 1698. See also Fulda, *Galanterie und Frühaufklärung*.

119 For "in eigen Händen" see letter from Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb to Engelhardt, Ehrenfried, March 8, 1745, TNA, HCA 30/232, Letter Book I, no. 583 ["in eigen Händen"] and no. 584. For "particulair letter", which was very often used as a term, see for instance letter from Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb to Engelhardt, Ehrenfried, August 12 and October 5, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/232, Letter Book I, no. 355 ["partiqule No."] no. 339 ["en particulie"] or to Hertzer & von Bobartt on the 15th of Jul 1744, no. 220 ["particulen Schreiben"]. "pour ma correspondence particulariere". Letter from Bethmann, Simon Moritz, to Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, December 23, 1743, TNA, HCA 30/234. Regarding the common usage of this term also by his correspondents see for instance "particulair Brieff": Letter from Bethmann, Johann Jakob to Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, October 22, 1743, TNA, HCA 30/234. "en main propre" written in the address wrapper: Letter from Bethmann, Johann Jakob to Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, May 23, 1743, TNA, HCA 30/234. "Wir haben E.E. particulier Schreiben von

Against this backdrop, it therefore comes as no surprise that Luetkens used this second part of his letter particularly to reveal to Hertzer & von Bobartt his marriage plans. This information was something that highly depended on confidentiality and professional secrecy on the part of his addressees, which Luetkens tried to ensure and concretely marked in his letter by making use of every possible means available to him within the practice of letter writing, in this case through the practice of referring to this part of the letter as a "particular letter". This practice reoccurs in many of his other letters in his mercantile archive, where comparable confidential matters were discussed, both private and business. It was a common practice during the time and since I have not read any complaints relating to the confidentiality of the particular letters in the entire Luetkens archive, it can at least be assumed that the correspondents usually maintained the secrecy. The "particular Schreiben" dealt with the subject of his marriage plans and his future home in Hamburg, and we are now sufficiently prepared to read this letter in detail.

> "Since I am about to send E.E. a particular letter, I use this opportunity to take the liberty ["nehme mir die Freyheitt"] to reveal to E.E. that I am in good faith to having good news about my prosperous future for you ["von die gutten Esperance meines zukünfftigen Glück"], furthermore in particular since I am resting assured that E.E. wishes me only the best and appreciates our true friendship ["aufrichtige Freundtschafft"], which is the same feeling that rules ["regiert"] on my side, and E.E. can believe me that it is always my great pleasure when E.E. makes some profit through my help ["durch mein Canall"]. [...] But to turn to the important matters now ["Schwenk zu kommen"], I am not sure whether E.E. had been suspicious about the many letters that had been exchanged between me and E.E. [Ehrenfried Engelhardt] lately. I have to confess to E.E. that I have been promised to his youngest sister for a few weeks, and I have received not only from her but also from her mother ["Frau Mutter"] a yes and their written approval ["schriftliges Ja und consentment"], if it is God's will that I actually get my | dear | Lieschen into bed ["Lischen ins Bette"], I can only say that I have got a wife in the most miraculous way. Methinks that I have to thank God for this good fortune, since I have a bride that loves me with all her heart ["hertzlig liebet"], for which I will repay her with the same. Her temper ["Gemütt"] corresponds with mine, and in case I were greedy for money, also this hunger would be satisfied ["Geldthunger gesetiget"]. I am familiar with the family's financial situation since they are close relatives of my former master ["nahe Verwandt mit meinem gewesenen Patron"]. When the old E[ngelhardt], may God rest his soul, died 7 years ago, he bequeathed to his wife a fortune of 120/m Mark and the same had needed 7:8 to 10/m Mark per year ever since her late husband had died. The mother of Madame E. is still alive, who will leave for each of her children another 40/m Mark when she makes her last journey to the Elysian Fields ["Eliesschen Felldern"]. I will become a member of only a small family with very few family members. There is only one son and a daughter, and since I seek to share my bed with the latter in the future, I might make the former my business partner in a partner company

17. Feb. wohl erhalten". Letter from Hertzer & van Bobartt to Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, March 5, 1745, TNA, HCA 30/234.

> ["ersteren in Sosiete mit mir nehmen"]. The mother provides her son with assets worth 30/m Mark as a start, and since I maintain a good relationship with the mother, I do not doubt that I will receive the same amount of money through the marriage with her daughter, and since the mother does not need the money, she will not hesitate to give a part of it to her children. No one à costy [in Hamburg] knows about this affair ["weiß niemant a costy wegen diese Affere"] that I am promised to Madame E., not even my youngest brother, and Madame E. has promised me faithfully that she will keep it a secret until my return. I therefore urge you to keep it to yourselves as well and I trust in our friendship in this regard. I will not return to Hamburg before next summer, since I am expecting E.E. [Ehrenfried Engelhardt] here in France and the same will not be able to travel to France before Easter. I have asked him to look out for a suitable house ["nach ein Haus umbzusehen]"] for me available from next Ascension Day onwards, or alternatively from next Martiny [St. Martin's Day] onwards, and that he asks E.E. to rent this house for me in E.E.'s name [to indicate Hertzer & von Bobartt as the tenants] in order to ensure that there will be no gossip about it ["kein Argwohn"]. So, if Engelhardt approaches you in this regard, I ask you faithfully to serve him in this matter. However, please do not let him know that you already know about my marriage."[120]

This letter is a masterpiece, a gem and in a way a tour de force through manifold ways of persuasion in letter practice already demonstrated in this book and of typical arguments used in contemporary justification processes regarding business and personal matters. All of these ways of persuasion merge together to create a letter that had the greatest conceivable performative powers to influence the addressee's reaction and to anticipate the correspondent's future actions. In concrete terms that meant that this letter served the purpose not only to encourage Hertzer & von Bobartt to help Luetkens in his search for a suitable merchant house, but it created the feeling of being obliged to do so. For this purpose, Luetkens pieced together one rhetorically polished argument after another, covering every crucial aspect of marriage initiation outlined above, until it all fell into place by the end of the letter in his request for help. His ways of justification and approaching the matter in this respect left no room for doubt on the part of the addressees to regard this requested service as anything less than a friendly turn and a matter of honour.

Luetkens' arguments and information read like a synopsis of all the ingredients of a successful marriage while simultaneously the way these arguments were presented to the reader and phased in the letter demonstrate to us the typical rhetorical devices of Early Modern ways of exerting influence in letters.

First, Luetkens emphasised the deep friendship that the three of them, in his view, shared with each other, based on mutual appreciation both in private and business matters. Based on this reason, he derived his argument and logical conclusion that it was about time to reveal his marriage plans to them. Subsequently, he specified the details of his plans while at the same time explaining and justifying the reasons for his decision to enter into this marriage with Ilsabe Engelhardt. The reason why it had

120 Letter from Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb to Hertzer & von Bobartt ["h. & v. B:"], October 12, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/232, Letter Book I, no. 357.

taken him so long before he finally made the decision to announce the good news to Hertzer & von Bobartt is also given. It is with good reason that Luetkens in this regard referred to the fact that he had already been given the approval and confirmation, a "yes and their written approval", by his future family, represented by his mother-in-law, because this approval meant and symbolised that his plans had already taken on a concrete form, which allowed him to present the Hamburg merchants with already accomplished facts. The reason he presented as underlying his long silence was that he first wanted to achieve a breakthrough in this matter before informing Hertzer & von Bobartt about it. Now that everything was ripe for decision and settled, he proudly presented his marriage plans. In order to substantiate and underpin the rightfulness of his decision to marry Ilsabe, he continued accordingly by outlining the benefits and the basic conditions of this marriage. In this respect, he drew on every argument presented in the first part of this chapter, mobilising every feature and quality of a marriage that the contemporaries regarded as necessary preconditions for a good marriage, both in terms of business as well as love. He first pointed to the financial benefits and underlined the financial security and assurances that this marriage would bring him, which was still deemed the fundamental cornerstone for a good marriage. He even provided concrete numbers and figures for this fact. Apart from the financial aspects, Luetkens highlighted the emotional and personal bond that he shared with Ilsabe as the precondition for a functioning love relationship between the two of them. In this regard he not only assured them that Ilsabe loved him, but as the crucial, characteristic qualities of this 18th-century love relationship he referred to her faithfulness and her good temper, which would match with his temper, mobilising the contemporary argument of the importance of corresponding humours as a prerequisite for any merger between two persons. This argument subsequently gained further significance and is highly revealing in terms of contemporary justification narratives and existing orders of justification with regard to the fact that Luetkens then continued in the same breath with providing a detailed and reasoned justification for his merger with Ehrenfried Engelhardt as his future partner and socius in their joint partner company, which reads as merely the logical consequence of the preceding argumentation. As the reason for his marriage, he therefore was able to show that both Ilsabe and Ehrenfried constituted a good match. In order to appease his friends with regard to the fact that Hertzer & von Bobartt were not yet familiar or acquainted with the Engelhardt family, he finally assured his correspondents of the good reputation and honour of this Hamburg family by pointing to the relationship that this family had with his own former master and patron David Speelmeyer, which served as a seal of quality for the Engelhardts.

Speaking in terms of the contemporary epistolarity, the theory of letter writing as it was formulated in the letter-writing manuals of the time, after these typical letter parts of the "narratio" and "confirmatio" or after the so called "antecedens", the part of the "petitio" or "consequenz", the actual cause for the letter, came across as rather conclusive and also inevitable.[121] In the final part of the letter, Luetkens asked Hertzer & von Bobartt for their help in renting a house for him in their name, which step he

121 Regarding this typical rhetorical structure of a letter during that time, and the epistolary background to it, see Vellusig, *Schriftliche Gespräche*, 44. See Furger, *Briefsteller*, 149-169. As contempora-

justified by referring to his hope that this way of leasing of the house would not lead to any rumours. Key to this was also that the Hamburg merchants would keep this whole undertaking secret and confidential, which was a request that Luetkens also demanded from his future wife and family. The special condition and actual twist of this request for confidentiality awaited the reader at the very end of the letter, where Luetkens indicated to his business friends in Hamburg that he had not yet revealed the secret to his youngest brother and that he had not deemed it necessary to notify his future business partner Engelhardt about the fact that Hertzer & von Bobartt were now already privy and fully aware of his plans. This served as a clear gesture of trust and as a leap of faith towards his friends in Hamburg, on the basis of which he must have hoped to strengthen their cooperativeness and readiness to help.

In Luetkens' second letter to Ehrenfried Engelhardt, subsequently, we find no indication of these revelations to Hertzer & von Bobartt at all, but we do find a clear instruction on how to approach Hertzer & von Bobartt in this matter serving the purpose of keeping Engelhardt in the firm belief that the Hamburg merchant house knew nothing about Luetkens' and his own secret agreements and their future association. In this letter, we also find clear instructions about the type of building, the type of house that Luetkens preferred as a future place of business and about his preference to rent a house rather than buying one, which had been Ehrenfried's initial intent. In this "partiqule" letter to Ehrenfried from the 12th of October Luetkens wrote:

> For "what concerns the idea to buy a house I would be agreeable with it but I would do that rather reluctantly, I would rather prefer it ["sehe Lieber"] if E.E. rented a house for 4 to 5 years, optimally as of next Ascension, or, if that is not possible, I would be patient ["muß Gedult nehmen"] and wait till Martiny [St. Martin's Day], however, this would present a terribly long waiting period for me. In case we buy a house, I would prefer Leeron's house to Neukerk's house [which were the two potential houses that Engelhardt had in mind], since I fear that the latter house requires a lot of renovation work and furthermore what speaks against it is that it has too few rooms. In case that E.E. however wants to rent a house, E.E. can go, if E.E. wished ["nach Guttfinden"], to Hertzer & von Bobartt at any time and ask them to rent this house in their name, I have written to no one about the plan to buy a house. I have only written to my youngest brother that I think and expect to return to Hamburg next year. My dear friend ["Werther Freund"], please try your best to start your journey to France as soon as possible, so that I can embrace ["umbhallßen"] you soon."[122]

At that time, Luetkens still expected and hoped that Engelhardt would come to see him in France even before his return, so that they would not only get to know each other more closely but also in order to introduce him to his French trade and partners. This hope, unfortunately, was not fulfilled. Ehrenhardt stayed in Hamburg until Luetkens' return, due to Speelmeyer's reluctance to this plan. Ehrenfried was still working in the

ry sources, see Neukirch, *Anweisung zu teutschen Briefen*, 409. ["Von der Einteilung in geschäfftlichen Briefen"] See Hunold, *Die Allerneueste Art Höflich und Galant zu Schreiben*, 62.

122 Letter from Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, to Engelhardt, Ehrenfried, October 12, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/232, Letter Book I, no. 357 ["partiqule No. 355"].

service of Speelmeyer during that time. Luetkens' wishes regarding renting his future business house, however, were fulfilled. Ehrenfried Engelhardt found a suitable building that "neither needed renovation work nor was too small" for their future plans but was in fact a stately house in the most prestigious merchant district in Hamburg, which he was able to hire through the middlemen Hertzer & von Bobartt in their name, but actually for Luetkens, just as the merchant had intended it.[123] Unfortunately, the letters that followed after this letter written by Ehrenfried dealing with this matter are lost to us because Luetkens must have kept them with him until his return to Hamburg by land. To make matters worse, in Luetkens' own large Letter Book, representing his response letters, in turn, he only left a very short note, as indicated above, stating that he had written "a particulair letter to Ehrenfried" [letter no. 601] but without any further content. This material gesture indicated that these response letters were nobody else's business than his own and therefore such letters were not copied but kept private. However, at least the response letter by the merchants Hertzer & von Bobartt after they had hired the place is still existent and it proves that the implementation of Luetkens' plans went successfully. Luetkens' strategy once more paid off. In their letter from the 6th of November 1744, Hertzer & von Bobartt notified Luetkens of the hiring of his future merchant house and congratulated him.

> "Highly esteemed Gentleman and very dear Friend!
> We find ourselves honoured with E.E.'s last letter from the 16th of October ["8bris"], from which we see with pleasure that E.E. has been promised for some time past to the sister of Mr. E[ngelhardt], from whom as well as from her mother ["Frau Mama"] E.E. has already received a yes and a written approval ["schriftliches Ja und Consentement"], and that Mr. E. will possibly enter into a partnership ["Societat"] with E.E. We have not had the honour yet to know Madame E. Through what E.E. writes, however, we have every reason to assume that E.E. can count himself lucky ["glücklich zu schätzen"] and we assure E.E. that we very much share your happiness now and in future and congratulate E.E. with all our hearts ["von gantzen Hertzen"]. Knowing about all circumstances, we find that E.E. is very fortunate to be loved by your future bride with all her heart ["hertzlich geliebet"] and that her temper ["Gemüth"] corresponds with E.E., furthermore that she is the only daughter of her mother and that you will not only receive a tidy sum of money from the dowry ["schönen Brautschatz"] but that E.E. can also expect to receive from her mother and her grandmother later in time significant capital ["ansehnliches Capitall"]" and that E.E. will become a member of only a small family with very few family members, so we could wish no better for E.E. and we are sure to believe that such a good match is very scarce and hard to find here. Enfin dearest friend ["herzlieber freund"] we are truthfully very jolly ["recht vergnügt"] about this good news, may God give E.E. health and E.E. to witness the joyful day when E.E. will embrace your dear Lieschen in bed ["im Bette umbarmen"] and that this day will be only the beginning of many more jolly days and years until the day you will celebrate your golden wedding. We find it rather well ["recht guth", which letter formula, as we know, was expressing their full support] that E.E. will enter into a partnership

123 Letter quoted below.

> ["Societat"] with Mr. E. and we do not doubt that E.E. will find a good business partner in him. E.E. will know for sure from Mr. E.'s report that Mr. E. has rented a house at the Huxter fleet ["Haus auf den Huxter"] and has approached us in this matter. Of course, since he had asked us not to write to E.E. about it until E.E. has written about this to us [which he had already], we could not express to him our pleasure although we wanted to, since we did not want to break the promise ["Versprechen nicht brechen wollen"] we have given E.E. Nonetheless, Mr. E. has caused us some difficulties with regard to our plan [to hire the house in your name] since he told us that such conditions might cause some tongues to wag ["Leute davon raisoniren"]. This got us thinking and we replied to him that if we were to do it differently the people might be led to think that he would enter into a partnership with E.E. [of which they, however, knew that this was actually exactly the case] or if he by chance had a sister which we did not know by then, the people might think that a marriage between her and E.E. might happen. Mr. E. however has denied both of it ["keines von beiden an sich kommen laßen"], however, he will have thought for himself as the saying goes: that we hit the nail on the head ["Nagell auf den Kopf"]. With regard to your house everything is now arranged ["dirigiret"] in such a manner that no one will think or assume that it is for E.E. We wish E.E. that E.E. will live in this house for many happy years together with his future dear wife and that God will bless your merchant house and your marriage bed. [...] We will keep all of what E.E. has written to us a secret ["mögten bey unß behalten"] and will not let it know to either Mr. E. or to anyone else that we know about all this, on which E.E. can count ["versichert leben können"]. We very much hope that E.E.'s return will be sooner now that the ropes of love ["Liebesseile"] will drag E.E. home."[124]

Comparing this letter with the many other letters that we know from Hertzer & von Bobartt and particularly if we compare it to their usual letter style in their business letters such as in commission trade, the shipping business or with regard to the search for suitable merchant partners, we come to notice that this letter from the 6th of November 1744 was different and deviated from their standard procedure, tone, style and way of corresponding. The Hamburg merchants deliberately shifted their tone towards a less commercial, but more familiar tone, using themselves a completely different language register than in their other letters. The purpose of this approach and the characteristics of the style chosen for this letter can be explained not only by means of the letter content in itself but also and especially if we compare this letter and its phrases with the letter-writing manuals of the period. It is in this case immensely striking how the tone and the letter phrases and formulae that we find in this letter match the letter examples given in these letter-writing manuals. We are able to directly deduce the purpose of this letter as well as its intended effect, how the contemporaries must have understood it, by comparing the manuals with the letter. In this regard, it is rather less important to clarify the question whether Hertzer & von Bobartt actually used a letter manual for writing their letter, which is a question that is rather difficult to answer. More important is the fact that the Hamburg merchants used a letter practice and language register that

124 Letter from Hertzer & van Bobartt to Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, November 6, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/234.

was generally known and common during that time, which is represented through its appearance in the manuals, and which was therefore understandable to the addressee in its general message, in this case to Nicolaus Gottlieb Luetkens. For us, it is therefore possible to determine through the letter's intertextual context its meaning and its intended effects.[125] So, in three of the most famous letter-writing manuals of the first half of the eighteenth century – which, however, only constitute the tip of the iceberg of the number of contemporary letter-writing manuals – we find the decisive hints to determine the purpose of this letter and language register. In Hunold's (Menantes) 1707 letter manual *Die Allerneueste Art Höflich und Galant zu Schreiben*, in Marperger's *Der allzeitfertige Handels-Correspondent* from 1717, in Bohse's (Talander) *Der allzeitfertige Briefsteller* and last but not least in Neukirch's 1727 letter manual *Anweisung zu teutschen Briefen*, we find corresponding letter phrases and letter formulae of congratulations, which show almost identical sentences and wordings.[126]

The respective concrete titles given in the manuals for these example letters, which each mark the purpose of the letters, are also almost identical. Summed up in the example of Hunold's letter-writing manuals, these given letter examples served the purpose of providing examples of how to write appropriate "letters of congratulation to a friend who has found a lover" or "sweetheart".[127] The insights that we can gain from these similarities and concordances is twofold. The first is rather obviously that for reasons of politeness and common courtesy it was deemed necessary to extend congratulations on such an occasion. The second insight, however, goes beyond this most general level of insight that we can gain from this letter. Mobilising and making use of this specific letter type and the contemporary register of love, which must have been known as such to Luetkens, Hertzer & von Bobartt not only aimed to pay their respect to their friend and perform a gesture of courtesy, but they were also, first and foremost, sending him the message and letting him know, by means of this piece of paper, that they fully approved of his plans and his choice for a wife. This means, the basic message that the Hamburg merchants conveyed to their friend and trading partner by means of this letter, this letter type and the letter formulae was that they were agreeable with his marriage and that they would comply with his request to assist him. This was exactly what Luetkens must have hoped for and strived for when approaching them in the first place.

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125 See also Roulston, Chris. *Narrating Marriage in Eighteenth-Century England and France*. London/New York: Routledge, 2010, chapter 1 "Advice Literature and the Meaning of Marriage," 15-56.

126 See letter formulae regarding "Braut", "verständiges Kind", "tugendsame Jungfer" "Liebe erwählet" and regarding letters of congratulation in general Bohse, *Der allzeitfertige Briefsteller*, 96 290, 233. See letter formulae regarding the qualities ["Qualitäten"] of a wife and letters of congratulation in Marperger, *Der allzeitfertige Handels-Correspondent*, 1004, 1034. See letter formuale regarding "tugendhaftes Frauenzimmer" in Hunold, *Die Allerneueste Art Höflich und Galant zu Schreiben*, 148. The letter-writing manual by Neukirch will be analysed in detail in the following explanations. See in this regard also Trepp, *Sanfte Männlichkeit*, 41.

127 "Ein ander Gratulations- und Beglückwünschungs=Schreiben an einen Freund / der eine Liebste bekommen", Hunold, *Die Allerneueste Art Höflich und Galant zu Schreiben*, 140, referring to letter formulae such as "gratuliere von Herzen zu der glücklich getroffenen Verbindung mit einem so artigen frauenzimmer […] Kenner der Schönheit […] [who was looking forward to] umarmen [his future wife] […] [and who was hit by] Amor."

This letter by Hertzer & von Bobartt was therefore not only a letter of congratulation, but it was also a letter of confirmation and approval, which is an impression that gets reinforced when we also take a look at the content of the letter and especially the letter's narrative structure. This structure makes it quite clear that the Hamburg merchants' approval of Luetkens' plans did not only relate to his general plans but in fact referred to every single argument that Luetkens had brought up in his own letter. Thus, almost taking the form of a checklist that is ticked off in their letter Hertzer & von Bobartt recapitulate all points made by Luetkens, often quoting Luetkens' exact wording, only to then add a comment to it, a phrase of their own, expressing their consent. This practice is no coincidence and the approach surely no exception to the other letters from Hertzer & von Bobartt found in the Luetkens archive and from many other correspondents of Luetkens. In fact, we come across this practice of direct mutual citation in many letters of the Luetkens archive in general, which points us to the fact that we are once more dealing with a typical pattern of letter-writing practice used by the contemporaries which also structured their correspondence.

How to Answer Letters Properly

This pattern within letter practice worked as follows: Whenever the contemporaries answered a letter from their correspondents they laid down the incoming letter alongside their outgoing letter in order to then systematically work their way through the letter they had received so that in their outgoing letter they could answer the questions raised one after another. Proof of this fact can be found if the researcher essentially recreates this writing situation by putting selected letters side by side in order to verify this assumption, just to be presented immediately with its accuracy as the points made in the letters do indeed align beautifully.

Further proof for this practice can be found by looking at the material arrangement of some letter bundles within the Luetkens archive where the merchant had inserted copies of his own response letters directly into the archived incoming letters as this arrangement for storing the letters clearly demonstrate this pattern to us. We also find material hints on the letter page itself such as auxiliary lines or inverted commas on the response letter referring to certain paragraphs of the letters the writer had received. Last but not least, this practice is also mentioned in the letter-writing manuals of the time, as for instance in Friedrich Andreas Hallbauer's *Von teutschen Briefen*, in which the author wrote that "whenever one answers a letter, one should lay this letter right in front of you and go through it piece by piece ["ein Stück nach den andern durchgehen"]".[128] The same practice is mentioned in August Bohse's *Der allzeitfertige Briefsteller*, who wrote that a letter is properly answered by "laying the letter in front of me and responding to each part of the letter one after another."[129]

128 Hallbauer, Friedrich Andreas. *Anweisung zur verbesserten Teutschen Oratorie nebst einer Vorrede von den Mängeln der Schul-Oratorie*, Jena: Hartung, 1725, chapter "*Von teutschen Briefen*," 710.

129 "in der Antwort aber lege ich den Brief / darauf selbige [Antwort] soll / vor mir und ertheile darauf von einer Theil nach den andern Bescheid." Bohse, *Der allzeitfertige Briefsteller*, 298.

Coming back to Hertzer & von Bobartt's letter, the narrative and material structure of this letter strikingly evinces this letter practice, complemented by the further insight that the merchants not only answered Luetkens' questions in accordance with this practice but also expressed consent in each paragraph regarding certain general points mentioned in Luetkens' letters. The purpose and the benefits of this practice, which is simultaneously both a textual and a material practice, are threefold. First, based on this practice the letter writers basically ensured the ongoing continuity of the written conversation or dialogue in which the last letter always represented the last status quo of the conversation, whereby they compensated for the interruptions and delays caused by the necessary postal dispatch of letters. This means that, on the level of the letter conversation, the correspondents tried their best to cope with this fact and tried to find ways to compensate for the time lapse in-between sending and receiving letters as best possible by means of this practice. They tried to maintain the letter conversation as an ongoing conversation between them, which becomes particularly clear from the direct citations from Luetkens' letter in Hertzer & von Bobartt's letter, which were used to keep the conversation going, for instance with regard to quoting, and thus in essence resuming, the conversation with phrases like "a yes and a written approval". By means of this practice, the letter writers also ensured that they kept an overview over the relevant talking points being discussed in the respective letter conversations. Last but not least, this practice allowed them to easily react separately to each point raised during the conversation and negotiation and to subsequently add their own opinion and comment to the point in question, in each new paragraph. For this purpose, as becomes obvious from their letter, Hertzer & von Bobartt used specific phrases in each paragraph to show and underpin their respective opinion.

Reading the letter for the first time, these phrases appear only as polite phrases and letter formulae. Against the background of the presented practice of how to structure your letter as a proper response letter, these phrases, however, obtain and carry a greater significance. It now becomes clear that these phrases must have also had a clear signal effect with regard to the level of acceptance and degree of approval that the correspondents wanted to convey to their addressee, a signal effect that must have been understandable as such by the addressee. In our modern world, the usage and significance of these phrases is roughly comparable to modern ways and practices of writing for instance a job reference, letters of recommendation or certain certificates after an internship, vocational training or a traineeship. In these references or certificates, it is common practice today that no grades are given but that the assessment of a persons' performance is described in continuous free text. For this free text, however, certain set phrases are used which clearly mark and display the qualifications and abilities of a person. These phrases function as evaluation criteria and benchmarks for the letters of recommendation or certificates. The level of performance can still be evaluated.[130]

The phrases in Hertzer & von Bobartt's letter worked in the same way, with the provision that the connection between our initial impression of the meaning and significance of the phrases and letter formulae and their actual underlying meaning and

130 Huber, Günter, and Beatrix Grossblotekamp. *Das Arbeitszeugnis in Recht und Praxis: rechtliche Grundlagen, Musterzeugnisse, Textbausteine, Zeugnisanalyse*. Planegg: Haufe-Lexware, 2006, 50-80, here 54.

significance worked exactly the other way around as in today's job references and certificates. Thus, sentences such as "we find it rather well", "finden recht guth" in German, which seem to us quite succinct, puny and noncommittal from a modern-day perspective, or sentences like "E.E. can count yourself lucky", which appears to be a rather empty phrase today, in fact represented the highest standard and level of approval for an 18th-century letter as seen from a contemporary point of view. We not only find such sentences as set phrases in the letter-writing manuals of the time, representing therefore typical ways of expressing consent and approval, but we also find these phrases in many dozens of the letters within the Luetkens archive.[131] In the letter pile of Hertzer & von Bobartt alone for instance, the phrase that they found something "rather well" appears in nearly every fifth letter, when they comment on successful business enterprises or approve of certain business plans of Luetkens. These formulaic phrases represented familiarity and closeness between the correspondents rather than artificiality. It is very telling and indicative that the wording "dear Lieschen" ["liebes Lieschen"], to refer to and to describe Ilsabe, from then onwards was to become a kind of dictum, too, a set phrase in its own right, in many of Luetkens' and his correspondents' further letters whenever they wrote about Luetkens' future wife.

Against this backdrop, the whole letter from Hertzer & von Bobartt provided Luetkens with approval of and excellent testimony for his marriage plans. Only with regard to Luetkens' idea to hide the truth from Engelhardt about Hertzer & von Bobartt's actual state of knowledge about his marriage plans, the Hamburg merchants allow themselves a slightly mocking comment by saying that Engelhardt must have surely smelled a rat. With regard to Luetkens' marriage plans in general, however, they gave him their full approval, which must have been highly satisfactory for Luetkens. It meant that his strategy had paid off. His strategy had in essence, whether deliberately or not, come close to the classical rhetorical strategy of convincing other persons by sound arguments, just wrapped in an mercantile Early Modern format.[132] As a result of this strategy Hertzer & von Bobartt supported Luetkens with his plans and did their share in the preparations for his marriage. The latter was precisely what Luetkens strived for with his persuasive letter. In their letter therefore, which now seems rather logical and skilful in view of the above explanations, they reported the successful rental of a merchant house for Nicolaus Gottlieb's future firm and residence in the quarter of the *Huxter Fleet* on the Huxter canal in the Katharinenstraße.

131 See Marperger, *Der allzeitfertige Handels-Correspondent*, 11, 16, 287, 305, 767. See also Savary, *Der vollkommene Kauff- und Handelsmann* [*Le Parfait Négociant*], 160, 244. As other paradigmatic letter examples from the Luetkens archive showing this linguistic specifity see for instance: "nice goods"["recht schöner Wahr"], Letter from Luetkens, Anthony to Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, October, 1743, TNA, HCA 30/235. The sugars of best quality are "rather good" ["recht guth"], Letter from Hertzer & von Bobartt to Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, April 20, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/234.

132 See Ueding/Steinbrink. *Grundriß der Rhetorik*, 102–135.
See Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, 1356a.

7.5 The Merchant House in the Katharinenstraße

Unfortunately, this house, where Luetkens and his wife lived and where he and his future business partner Ehrenfried Engelhardt conducted their daily business together after November 1745, no longer exists today. Surprisingly, it did survive the great fire of Hamburg in 1845 but was then bombed und burned to the ground during the Second World War, which destroyed great parts of Hamburg.[133] Fortunately, however, reproductions of architectural drawings still exist that show the frontal view of this house, "Giebelansicht", in 1938. These date from the time when the house was undergoing renovation work and was already owned by another family, the Jenisch family, which was one of the most reputable merchant families and firms of Hamburg during the 18th, 19th and 20th century.[134] Furthermore, there is also still a reproduction of a copperplate engraving of the ceremonial hall of this house, the *Bel Etage*, from 1778, which was a time when Luetkens was already a senator of the city of Hamburg.[135] However, the engraving still shows the *Bel Etage* but as can be seen, at this time the ceremonial hall was used as a display room for pianos. Both images can be found as reproductions of the original images in the stocks of the *Staatsarchiv Hamburg* and the *Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe* in Hamburg. They give us a fairly good impression of this merchant house, with which Luetkens laid a claim to becoming a respectable, established merchant in the city of Hamburg.

Luetkens' house was a stately building and an imposing merchant house with several floors and its own storage areas, of which the ground floor was a spacious hall, which was used as the salesroom. At the back, the house furthermore had direct access to the Hamburg canal system of the Elbe river, the Fleet, which allowed for the loading and unloading of the goods on riverboats. These then took the goods directly to the merchant ships waiting in the harbour of Hamburg. The private rooms were located on the upper floors of the house in the Katharinenstraße, presumably on the first floor as was common during that time. This architecture style, of the *Old Hamburg burgher or merchant houses*, "Althamburger Bürgerhaus", as it is called today, which were situated directly at the canals was typical of Hamburg during that time.[136] It subsequently also continued to shape and influence the architecture of Hamburg during the following

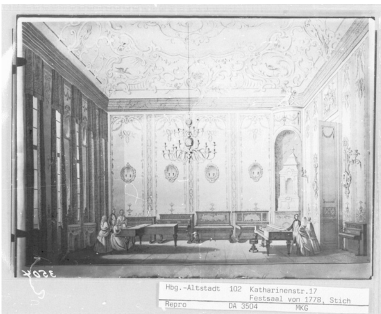
133 Information provided by Christine Kitzlinger of the *Hamburg Museum of Arts and Crafts* (Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe, MK&G), to whom I would like to express my gratitude. The original Louis-Seize-style panelling was bought by the museum in 1877 from the former owner of the house in the Katharinenstraße 17, F.I.A. Peters.
See also information regarding the Louis-Seize room in Klemm, David, Wilhelm Hornbostel, ed. *Das Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe in Hamburg. Von den Anfängen bis 1945* (vol. 1). Hamburg: Museum für Kunst u. Gewerbe, 2004, 151.

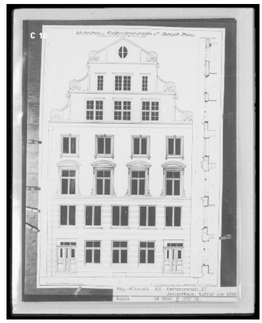
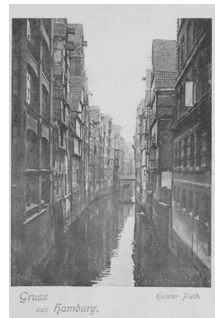
134 Staatsarchiv Hamburg, *Wohnhaus Catharinenstraße 17 Jenisch-Haus, Giebelansicht, Hbg.-Altstadt 102, Aufriß von 1938, MK&G Repro, DA 3544 P 1232 DA.*

135 Staatsarchiv Hamburg, Hbg.-Altstadt 102, *Katharinenstraße 17 Festsaal von 1778*, Stich, MK&G Repro, DA 3504.

136 See "Althamburgisches Bürgerhaus." *Hamburg Lexikon*, edited by Franklin Kopitzsch and Daniel Tilgner, Hamburg: Ellert & Richter, 2010, 36-38. See also Erbe, Albert, and Christian Ranck, ed. *Das Hamburger Bürgerhaus. Seine Bau- und Kunstgeschichte*. Hamburg: Boysen & Masch, 1911.

Figure 16: Repro of an engraving of the ceremonial hall of Luetkens' house, the Bel Etage, from 1778; Figure 17: Repro of an architectural drawing of the frontal view of Luetkens' house from 1938; Figure 18: Huxter Fleth, "Gruss aus Hamburg", postcard.



Source: Staatsarchiv Hamburg, Hbg.-Altstadt 102, *Katharinenstraße 17 Festsaal von 1778*, Stich, MK&G Repro, DA 3504; Staatsarchiv Hamburg, *Wohnhaus Catharinenstraße 17 Jenisch-Haus, Giebelansicht,* Hbg.-Altstadt 102, Aufriß von 1938, MK&G Repro, DA 3544 P 1232 DA. By courtesy of the Staatsarchiv Hamburg; postcard: privately owned.

centuries, for instance as an inspiration when the famous warehouse district of the *Hamburg Speicherstadt* was built, which still exists today. Moving into this domicile in the Katharinenstraße in the quarter at the Huxter, Luetkens became part one of the most prestigious merchant neighbourhoods of the time, speaking of Hamburg or even the whole of North-western Germany, which furthermore paved his way to becoming a reputable wholesale Hamburg merchant of the 18th century.[137]

Up until the present day, due to very fortunate circumstances, the exact *Bel Etage*, which can be seen on the image, with its magnificent Louis Seize style panelling, boiserie, is still actually originally preserved and displayed in a *Period Room* of the MK&G today. After the museum had bought it in 1877, the room was renovated in 1938, which was the reason why the wood panelling was stored outside the museum when the bombings of the Second World War raged.[138] As a result, visitors of the museum can still view

137 Pay a visit to Hamburg and its quarters in the 17th century here https://hiddencities.eu, accessed December 12, 2021. See Bellingradt, Daniel, and Claudia Heise. *Eine Stadttour durch Hamburg im Jahr 1686. Die App „Hidden Hamburg" als erlebbare Geschichte und Digital-Public-History-Experiment*. Bremen: edition lumière, 2022.

138 *Louis Seize Room*, ca. 1775, Hamburg Louis Seize style room with boiserie (Bordeaux) once installed in the house at Katharinenstraße 17.. "Originally, this decorative Louis Seize style boiserie, imported from France, adorned the piano nobile (Bel Etage) of the merchant and alderman Nicolaus Gottlieb Lütkens' (1716-1788) house at Katharinenstraße 17 in Hamburg. The spirit of enlightenment is clearly displayed: The formal language that was initially associated with the absolutist ideals of the reign of King Louis XVI has been transferred to into [sic] an article used by the upper class of the 1750's. At a youthful 17 years of age, the musician Johannes Brahms (1833-1897) performed his second public concert in this room, which was intermittently used as a concert hall by the Hamburg pianoforte manufacturer Schröder." https://www.MK&G-hamburg.de/en/collection/permanent-collection/period-rooms/louis-seize-room.html, accessed March 8, 2019. For an image of the Bel Etage, see the Introduction of this book.

and marvel at Luetkens' *Bel Etage* today. The gilded wood panelling, which Luetkens bought in France in 1775, represents the only surviving Louis-Seize-style panelling that has survived in any German museum today. Apart from the most general information about Luetkens' life, his biographical data, which is also presented in the collection of Hamburg personalities, *Hamburger Persönlichkeiten*, the museum unfortunately holds no further records on Nicolaus Gottlieb Luetkens today.[139] In the future, more information can be added to the existing picture through this present book. Apart from the fact that Luetkens' mercantile business and letter archive has survived in London, the survival of this *Bel Etage* in the MK&G in Hamburg is most certainly the second most intriguing discovery that I made during my research.

Based on the records and letters found in the Luetkens archive and the detailed information on all the items bought by Joachim Luetkens in London, it is today possible to breathe life into some of the rooms in the Luetkens house. Nicolaus Gottlieb and Ilsabe moved into their home in the Katharinenstraße 17 right after Luetkens' return in 1745. He was handed the keys by the merchants Hertzer & von Bobartt. The Bel Etage was added only later, as did the French style. In 1745, the Luetkens residence was still strongly shaped by the English style, as was typical during that time among the bourgeois elite.[140] His first merchant house showed typical English furnishing as one could find it in many Hamburg Burgher houses of the time. Many of these items were bought by his brother Joachim in London.

7.6 The Second Episode: Anglomania and the Price of Patience

Luetkens' brother Joachim received the good news of his brother's upcoming marriage in October 1744. His reaction turned out to be equally positive and favourable as the reaction by Hertzer & von Bobartt. He was delighted about his brother's marriage plans and responded to Nicolaus Gottlieb's letter with the words that "although your letters always give me a sense of pleasure, I have to admit that out of all your letters your last letter in particular has given me the greatest conceivable pleasure."[141] This phrase was just another typical example of a common, contemporary letter formula used to express genuine delight on special occasions, which can be found in this exact wording in the letter-writing manuals of the time and in many other letter in the Luetkens archive.[142] This genuine delight was subsequently substantiated by several other common phrases, which Joachim used, in the same manner as Hertzer & von Bobartt before, to react

139 Much to the regret of Christine Kitzlinger of the *Hamburg Museum of Arts and Crafts* (Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe, MK&G). See "Lütkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb." *Hamburger Persönlichkeiten*, http://www.hamburgerpersoenlichkeiten.de/hamburgerpersoenlichkeiten, accessed April 4, 2018.

140 See North, *Material Delight*, 45-60.

141 "Ob mir gleich deine Briefe jederzeit von Hertzen angenehm gewesen sind, so mus ich doch gestehen, daß dieser letzt empfangene mir unter allen das gröste Vergnügen verursacht hat." Letter from Luetkens, Joachim to Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, October 5, 1744, TNA, HCA, 30/235.

142 See and compare with the previous footnote for instance Bohse, *Der allzeitfertige Briefsteller*, 241: "Wie wohl mir jedesmal dessen geehrte Zuschrifft von Hertzen angenehm gewesen, so muss ich doch gestehen, daß es absonderlich dieses Mahl ist."

individually to every argument that his brother had presented him with beforehand in his own letter with regard to the benefits of the future marriage. Joachim expressed his firm believe that both Ehrenfried and Ilsabe made a good match for the Luetkens family, by which he gave his blessing to the merger with the Engelhardt family. He also highlighted all the qualities of a wife, which he believed Ilsabe met perfectly, referring to all typical character traits a wife had to bring into a marriage according to the contemporary discourse, mentioned above, which as must be stressed only represented the men's perspective.

Joachim praised her faithfulness and her endurance ["Treue und Beständigkeit deiner dir Liebsten"], her temper, her *humour*, which he assumed to be honest and candid ["Gemüth muß aufrichtig und ungemein redlich seye"], and he assured Luetkens that he was certain that the two them would make a good and loving couple ["ich an euch ein liebwehrtes und vergnügtes Par stets sehen werde"]. In this regard, however, he not merely listed all these qualities but combined all his statements with concrete references to Ilsabe's current situation, which was that she would have to wait for her future husband for several months. Thus, Joachim also used his letter to try to persuade his brother not to delay his return to Hamburg for far too long. As Nicolaus Gottlieb Luetkens' brother, he was entitled to make such comments. For this purpose in particular, he mobilised typical, contemporary phrases and built up a classical rhetorical strategy. He was familiar with and skilled in them as he was the only son from the Luetkens family, who in contrast to Nicolaus Gottlieb had enjoyed the privilege of attending the *Johanneum* grammar school in Hamburg and who had studied in Hamburg, Jena and Cambridge in order to become a priest, just like his father.[143] He used the classical rhetorical device of antithesis and comparison to highlight the qualities of Ilsabe. In his actual words that means he points out that despite the saying "out of sight out of mind" and although it is known that "a women's temper changes like the wind" and that a women's temper is usually shaped through "uncontrolled heat and fading fire", he assumed that Ilsabe's behaviour and temper were different and therefore praiseworthy.[144] His words at the same time reflect, from a modern perspective, a rather negative image of a woman's character, which in great parts still prevailed in the 18th century.[145]

Praising Ilsabe's patience and at the same time arguing for and facilitating an earlier return of his brother to Hamburg was also the subject of Joachim's two following letters.

143 "2381. Joach. Lütkens, Billwerdea Hamburg., Th. st. Pastor Steenbeck. Jenam abier 1740 Apr., ex Johanneo." In *Die Matrikel des Akademischen Gymnasiums in Hamburg, 1613–1883*, edited by Karl H. W. Sillem. Hamburg: Lucas Gräfe und Sillem, 1891, 110.

144 "da es sonst heißt wohl aus den Augen wohl aus dem Sinn, und Frauenzimmer Beständigkeit größtenteils dem Wechsel des windes gleichet [...] muß keiner fliegenden Hitze oder bald vergänglichem Feuer ähnlich seyn"." Letter from Luetkens, Joachim to Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, October 5, 1744, TNA, HCA, 30/235.

145 See Ylivuori, Soile. *Women and Politeness in Eighteenth-Century England: Bodies, Identities, and Power*. New York: Routledge, 2019, 210–213. See in general Hunt, Margaret. *Women in 18th century Europe. Women in Eighteenth Century Europe*. New York: Routledge, 2014. As a contemporary source see Marperger, *Der allzeitfertige Handels-Correspondent*, 1004. See Neukirch, *Anweisung zu teutschen Briefen*, 236.

He also pointed out and raised his concerns that the longer Nicolaus Gottlieb delayed his return the more inevitable it would become that rumours spread in Hamburg. The latter argument, in turn, he used to underline that he regarded it as necessary that Nicolaus Gottlieb would finally also inform their mother and youngest brother about his plans, which was a matter, however, that his older brother deliberately still postponed until a later date. At this moment in time, however, in October and November 1744, he still had other plans, not only with regard to his return to Hamburg, but also with regard to how he planned to include his family in his marriage planning. Thus, now that he had gained the general approval of his brother Joachim, he proceeded to the next step in his persuasion process, which was to reveal to Joachim how he could actually help Nicolaus Gottlieb with this whole undertaking.

Whether it happened out of courtesy, whether it derived from the intention not to go like a bull at a gate, or whether it was just a spontaneous decision, in any case Luetkens waited three whole letters before he disclosed to his brother how he imagined the same could help and support him with his undertakings in the following weeks. With his third letter, however, Luetkens then literally went the whole nine yards and asked from his brother a task that was to fully occupy the same over the next weeks.

In this letter he asked Joachim for nothing less than to purchase for him jewellery that was to be Nicolaus Gottlieb's marriage gifts to Ilsabe, her wedding jewellery. As if that was not enough, he also asked Joachim to purchase for him several items of furniture for his future home, for which he also had to arrange the shipment from London to Hamburg. This means that Nicolaus Gottlieb needed his brother as a helpmate to purchase all the precious goods that he himself needed in order to please and mollify his future wife and family in Hamburg. This task was surely a very honourable task for his brother, and a testimony of the trust Nicolaus Gottlieb put in him. At the same time, however, this task also came with great responsibilities and demanded a lot from him. As a brother and out of brotherly loyalty, however, Joachim would not be able to refuse his brother's request, and this is also the reason why in this letter of Luetkens the well-known sentence, which he had used in many of his other letters, that he "came up with the idea" he wanted to discuss, is conspicuously missing. Instead, he used another common letter formulae of the time, "please be so kind" ["sey so gutt"], which was not really a question, but a request in the contemporary sense of the word. In this letter, Nicolaus Gottlieb got to the point immediately because the task at hand tolerated no delay and maybe also because he himself was under pressure to deliver.[146]

Ilsabe's Orders

In Luetkens' love letter to Ilsabe, we find two striking sentences right at the beginning. The letter reads "I will order what you require from London ["das verlangte werde von London ordiniren"]. With everything else my dearest love I allow you every freedom to do whatever you want with regard to the furnishing of the house ["Moblirung des

146 Regarding brotherly loyalty and obligations see also Capp, *Ties That Bind*, 32-50. See in general Miller/Yavneh, *Sibling Relations*.

Haußes"] and please feel free to furnish it after your fancy and how you like it."[147] From this sentence, we learn to two things. First, Ilsabe demanded that Luetkens buy certain items for their future house, which he was to order in London. Secondly, apart from these items, the merchant allowed her complete freedom over the furnishing of their future house. Reading both sentences in combination allows us to draw the conclusion that Ilsabe had asked her future husband to order pieces of furniture for her. My assumption is she did not ask for the jewellery herself since she would not have to because the jewellery was a typical courting gift during that time. Yet, we will never know since her letters are missing. We know for sure, however, that in order to make a good impression on her and on Ilsabe's family and because he wanted to show his good taste, and because he had to mollify Ilsabe for his long absence, Nicolaus Gottlieb Luetkens complied with her wishes and ordered furniture in London.

The fact that they ordered these items in London was no coincidence but rather represented a typical pattern of bourgeois consumption of the time, even for a merchant travelling in France. Apart from grasping a good opportunity, good contacts in London and safer transport, which were all reasons mentioned in the introduction, one of the main reasons for Luetkens' choice was that the English style and fashion was very popular among the middle-class and particularly the mercantile elite of the time. As authors such as Michael North and Ulla Iljäs have shown, there existed a veritable mania for English fashion and furniture on the continent that even the contemporaries perceived and described as such. The "English culture of commodities or consumption [...] became increasingly attractive to the continent", which led to the fact that even from Paris people reported a "current Anglomania".[148] Ulla Iljäs showed for German merchants in the Baltic that they "found the English lifestyle and material culture more appealing than aristocratic French luxuries".[149] Michael North observed exactly the same pattern particularly for the "(North German) educated middle classes [who] developed a yearning for the English way of life" while "Paris continued to be the model for aristocratic elegance."[150] Adhering to an English style therefore also represented an element of social distinction for the middle-classes, who preferred "Cool Britannia" to "French Fancy" as Maxime Berg called it.[151] The preference was furthermore, as Berg also described in her work, particularly on new luxuries, such as mahogany or walnut furniture, fabrics, gilded mirrors, which we will all find on Luetkens' order list.[152]

147 Letter from Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb to Engelhardt, Ilsabe, December 16, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/232, Letter Book I, no. 434.

148 North, Material Delights, 49.

149 Iljäs, "English Luxuries," 271.

150 North, "Fashion and Luxury," 102.

151 Berg, Maxine. "French Fancy and Cool Britannia: The Fashion Markets of Early Modern Europe." In Fiere e mercati nella integrazione delle economie Europe secc. XIII-XVIII, edited by Simonetta Cavaciocchi, 519-556. Prato: Le Monnier, 2001, here 540-546. See also Berg, Maxine, Clifford, Helen, eds. *Consumers and Luxury. Consumer Culture in Europe 1650-1850*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999.

152 See also Berg, Maxine. *Luxury & Pleasure in Eighteenth-Century Britain*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005, 85-110.

The Anglomania was furthermore popularized in fashion magazines and advertisements.[153] In the famous *Journal des Luxus und der Moden*, we can therefore read an apt description of the 18th century fashion and interior trend and its effect on the people: "The tasteful simplicity and solidity that England succeeded in bestowing upon all her manufactured goods so recommends itself to and attracts us Germans that at present the word English or English goods already has such an irresistibly magical allure for us, and has become nearly synonymous with perfection and beauty in works of craft."[154] This allure must have been particularly appealing to Hanseatic merchants. A clear sign for this was the mantra-like reference to the words and phrases "à la mode", "latest fashion" ("neueste mode") with regard to furniture or jewellery in the merchants' letters.[155] An explanation for this special allure and preference for English fashion and furniture has been given by Ulla Iljäs.

By means of this practice, the merchants "clearly communicated their status, networks and even wealth through their consumption choices. [...] By commissioning fashionable goods, the German merchant elite showed that they not only knew and had access to the latest fashion and taste, but that they were connected with [...] the English commercial elite. [...] By acquiring fashionable, high-quality goods directly from England, often with the help of their English partners, [...] the German merchant elite made clear their need for cultural, social and economic capital."[156] Iljäs makes this argument with regard to German merchants in Vyborg, but the explanation also holds perfectly true for the Hanseatic merchants described by North and it explains perfectly the order list Nicolaus Gottlieb Luetkens sent to London in February 1745.

Ilsabe Engelhardt might have known the English style and have become acquainted with it through fashion magazines or maybe she had admired it in the houses of friends in Hamburg. Nicolaus Gottlieb Luetkens himself had come in contact with the English style when he travelled to England during his first long business travel through Europe starting in 1739. While he was there, he lived in a guesthouse in the district of London Mortlake and regularly visited the merchant house of his uncle Anthony Luetkens.[157] During this time, he got to know the *Georgian style* of furniture and interior design, which was typical in England at that time.[158] He encountered this furniture style in his uncle's house, to which Joachim referred in his letters, and in the other merchant

153 See Iljäs, "English Luxuries," 274.

154 *Journal des Luxus und der Moden*, August 1793, 410, quoted after North, *Material Delight*, 49-50.

155 Iljäs, "English Luxuries," 270. In the Luetkens letters analysed below these words are frequently used.

156 Iljäs, "English Luxuries," 276-277.

157 In London he lived, for instance, in the house of a certain "Sam[ue]l Highmore in Mortlake", Pocketbook of expenses in TNA, HCA 30/232.

158 See Cornforth, John. *Early Georgian Interiors*. New Haven/London: Yale University Press, 2004. See Bowett, Adam. *Early Georgian Furniture 1715-1740*. Woodbridge: Antique Collectors Club, 2009. See also Beard, Geoffrey W. *Craftsmen and Interior Decoration in England, 1660-1820*. New York: Holmes and Meier, 1981.

houses he visited.[159] In the 1740s this style of furnishing, in its early form, was just about at the threshold of assuming the characteristic form that it later became famous for when the British *Chippendale style* set in, which was to have a lasting impact and would shape the British interior designs of the houses of the middling sort for decades. Thomas Chippendale was just setting up his business in London in the 1740s.[160] The developments within the Georgian style of furniture did in this regard not take place separately from the developments in furniture-making happening in the rest of Europe. Quite on the contrary, many elements of the French *Louis XV style* for instance were in fact incorporated into the English furniture style and vice versa.[161] The English style was, however, more clear-cut and unpretentious in its specific form and shape and it was cheaper.[162] This style was the exact opposite of the style that would later move into the Katharinenstraße in the 1770s as Luetkens' Bel Etage, imported from France, with its golden wood panelling in the famous French *Louis Seize* style, which was explicitly designed to represent splendour and grandeur. It is a pity that the merchant's later records are missing, because particularly for the history of taste, luxury and furniture it would have been highly interesting to learn when and why Luetkens decided to finally prefer the French style to the English style, prefer Paris before London as the style for the interior of his house in Hamburg.

London

For all the orders placed in February 1745, London was the place to be as the "capital of fashion" for English fashion and furniture.[163] So, what luck it was that just at this moment in time his brother Joachim visited the English capital. The market in London was known for the kinds of items mentioned in his letters, that is for this kind of furniture but also and especially for the other goods on his purchase list, like the kitchenware and the jewellery.[164] London was known for its booming domestic and export market

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159 A good impression of this interior style can be gained from the Period Room "A 1745 parlour" at *The Geffrye Museum*, London, https://www.museumofthehome.org.uk/whats-on/galleries-and-gardens/rooms-through-time, accessed February 6, 2018.

160 Kirkham, Particia Anne. *Furniture-Making in London c. 1700-1870: Craft, Design, Business and Labour*. Unpublished PhD thesis. London: Westfield College, 1982, 115, http://qmro.qmul.ac.uk/xmlui/handle/123456789/1472, accessed January 6, 2019. See also Cornforth, *Early Georgian Interiors*.

161 See Edwards, Clive D. *Eighteenth-Century Furniture*. Manchester/New York, Manchester University Press, 1996, 136-164, particularly 156-164. See Beard, *Interior Decoration*. See Fowler, John, and John Cornforth, eds. *English Decoration in the 18th Century*. London: Barrie & Jenkins, 1974.

162 See Droguet, Anne. *Les Styles Transition et Louis XVI*. Paris: Les Editions de l'Amateur, 2004. Anon. *The Furniture of the Georgian Period – From 1715 through Chippendale, Hepplewhite, Sheraton and the Regency With Notes on the French Epoch*. Vancouver: Read Books, 2011. "Louis-quinze." *Lexikon der Kunst*, edited by Wolf Stadler and Peter Wiench. 12. volumes. Erlangen: Karl Müller Verlag, 1994, vol. 7, 326-27.

163 North, *Material Delights*, 48.

164 "London." *The Grove Encyclopedia of Decorative Arts*, edited by Gordon Campbell, 49-54. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006. See Heal, Ambrose. *The London Furniture Makers. From the Restoration to the Victorian Era*, 1660-1840. Newton Abbot, Devon: David & Charles, 1989. See particularly Kirkham, *Furniture-Making in London*.

in furniture as well as luxury goods, particularly new luxury like mahogany furniture, and even for everyday items such as kitchenware.[165] With regard to furniture, especially since by "the mid-eighteenth century, when cabinet-making was considered to have reached standards of great perfection in England", London experienced a lasting boom in the manufacturing of and the trade in mahogany and walnut furniture such as cabinets, chests, and tables, and the same applied to the manufacturing of mirrors, candleholders, and other decorative items and ornaments.[166] The increasing demand for mahogany furniture was directly linked to the later breakthrough of the *Chippendale style* in furniture. With regard to luxury goods, London was just a good address and a shopper's paradise. It provided access to luxury goods from all over the world, such as valuable textiles and fabrics.[167] London had also risen to being one of the four "leading commercial diamond centres in the Eighteenth century", together with Lisbon, Antwerp and Amsterdam, making use of the new opportunity to import diamonds from Brazil. For the jewellery makers of London, the manufacturing of jewellery with precious diamonds therefore became one of their prime sources of revenue.[168]

All these characteristic features of the London market are clearly recognisable and are reflected in the shopping list that Luetkens sent to his brother, and they become even more apparent, or rather their consequences become more apparent, when we take a look at the specific items that Joachim actually purchased for his brother. Joachim made use of precisely the opportunities that the London market provided, that is, he bought mahogany furniture and diamond jewellery.

We will read the letter Luetkens sent to Joachim and the response letters by Joachim in almost their entirety, because they provide an impressive testimony of the material culture of marriage and the Anglomania of Hamburg merchants prevailing in the 1740s. The items ordered and purchased will also give us an impression and a glimpse into how the spouses envisaged parts of their future home's interior and decoration, and we will also be able to see with which items and how Nicolaus Gottlieb wanted to make an impression on Ilsabe and her mother, who were responsible for buying most of the other items of the furniture for the house. All the items were intended to represent and underline Nicolaus Gottlieb Luetkens' good intentions and his good taste. Last but not least, I will also compare the items mentioned in Joachim's letters with the information that I found in a list of furniture, a registry of stored items, "Nota von Mobilien" in

165 See ibid. See Berg/Clifford, *Consumers and Luxury;* North, "Fashion and Luxury." Regarding jewellery see particularly "London." *The Grove Encyclopedia of Decorative Arts*, 54. Regarding mahogany furniture see Bowett, Adam. *English Mahogany Trade 1700 -1793*. Unpublished PhD thesis. High Wycombe: Buckinghamshire College/Brunel University, 1996. See Bowett, Adam. *Early Georgian Furniture.*

166 Kirkam, *Furniture-Making in London*, 22. See Edwards, *Eighteenth-Century Furniture*, 1-15, 33-38, here 77. See Edwards, Ralph, and Margaret Jourdain. *Georgian Cabinet-Makers*. London: Country Life Limited, 1946.

167 See "London." *The Grove Encyclopedia of Decorative Arts*, 49-54.

168 Vanneste, Tijl. "The Eurasian Diamond Trade in the Eighteenth Century. A Balanced Model of Complementary Markets." In *Goods from the East, 1600-180: Trading Eurasia*, edited by Maxine Berg, Felicia Gottmann, Hanna Hodacs, and Chris Nierstrasz, 139-153. Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2015, here 146. See also Ogden, Jack. *Diamonds. An Early History of the King of Gems*. New Haven/London: Yale University Press, 20181, 183-202.

the original, listing all the goods that arrived in Hamburg. This list was compiled by their youngest brother Anton presumably during the summer of 1745, after he, too, had been informed about Nicolaus Gottlieb's marriage plans.[169] This list will show us that all these items arrived and survived shipping to Hamburg without damage. Joachim was obviously not only able to purchase the respective goods his brother asked him for, but he was also able to organise the safe shipment of these goods to Hamburg. What this list will therefore show us is not only that Joachim was generally able to purchase all the goods, but also that he fulfilled his task with flying colours. As a last step, I will pick out two items from the order list and I will show how and why these items in particular constituted pleasurable gifts for Ilsabe. This will represent the transition to the next and final part of this chapter on Luetkens' love letters.

7.7 Buying Furniture and Jewellery by Letters

On the 1st of February 1745, several weeks after Joachim had been informed about his brother's marriage plans, Nicolaus Gottlieb Luetkens wrote to Joachim:

> "You have asked me how things are going with regard to the said matter in question ["mit meine bewußte Sachen stehett"], thank God quite well I can say. I am at least throwing around love letters ["werffe mindestens mit Liebesbriefe herum"], but I don't think that I will return to Hamburg before St. John's Day ["Johanni", 24th of June], my dear Lieschen must be patient ["liebe Lischen mach sich gedulden"]. Please be so good ["sey so gutt"] as to purchase in London before your departure from there or at the first opportunity a pair of diamond earrings and a diamond ring for women. The diamonds shall be white, brilliant-cut diamonds ["weyse Billanten Steine"]. Together it should cost in the end no more than one hundred Pound Sterling. I imagine the earrings can be worth circa 50:60 £ St. and the ring 40 à 50 £ St. and the earrings should be finely crafted and if the costs for the ring turns out higher it is also no problem ["nicht ungelegen"]. In the end I will only benefit from it. I strongly recommend ["recomandiren"] that it must be cut diamonds ["Billanten"] and not raw diamonds. Mr Well can help you with that because he knows many jewellers ["mit vielle Iubelier bekant"]. I also ask you to purchase for me and to send to Hertzer & von Bobartt in Hamburg under the name of Well or of our uncle ["Oheim"] at your earliest convenience the following items:
> a nice big mirror circa 2 cubits high and proportionally wide with 6 corresponding sconces ["Lampeten so darbey accordieren"]
> a Lombre table which is collapsible ["so zusahmen geklapet kann werden"]
> 6 dozen tin plates
> 24 bowls large and small, fitting into one another ["ein ander follgen"]
> 2 ditto [tin] flat soup plates
> 6 metallic candleholders with snuffers ["Leuchters mit Lichtschehren"]
> 2 dozen good knives and forks for men
> 2 dozen small knives and forks for women

169 *List of furniture*, "Nota von Mobilien" in TNA, HCA 30/232

> 1 piece of real fustian ["carchant", barchent], 2 pieces preferably similar to the enclosed sample
>
> In order to cover the expenditures, you can draw a bill on Hertzer & von Bobartt à 2 uso to the order of Mr. Well or our uncle. You don't necessarily need to tell them [that is, do not tell them] that this is all for me. Please purchase these items only yourself when you are in London."[170]

In his response letters to Luetkens from February 18th, still written in Cambridge, Joachim first of all thanked his brother for the trust he put in him and confirmed that he would "make every effort to take care of the purchase of the requested items with the available ships".[171] After his arrival in London two weeks later, in letter from the 12th of March, he then described how he had approached the matter and coped with his task. It would subsequently take him several weeks and two more letters, from the 19th of March and finally from 16th of April, until he had selected, purchased and sent all the items Nicolaus Gottlieb and his wife had ordered I will once more quote large parts of these letters in their original wording, one after the other, because they provide us with a detailed impression of the purchased items and give us a comprehensive account of Joachim's efforts, starting with the letter from the 12th of March. Joachim's emphasis on the virtues of the English style and fashion is unmissable in this letter.

> "I hope that everything will be sent with the next convoy leaving on Saturday or on Monday. Almost every item that I will send to you has been newly manufactured ["neu gemacht"], otherwise it would have been already on its way on a ship. We couldn't manage, however, to have it all together sooner because on the one hand we needed to follow the latest fashion ["neuen Mode"] or on the other hand, for other reasons such as that we simply did not like some of the items. [...] The plates and bowls and knives and the Lombre table [a table to play the old card game Lombre] will definitely leave town [...], the mirror will be made completely new after the newest fashion ["neuer facon verfertiget"] and I really liked what I have seen so far, I do not doubt that it will also leave town [...] as certainly will the fustian ["carchant", barchent, a weaving that consisted of a linen warp and cotton] which is in the colour that Well is also trading in. It would have been good if you or your beloved had described some of the items you wish in more detail ["etwas umständlicher geschrieben"]. I had to choose many of it after my own fancy and where Mr. Well also agreed ["H. Well mit mir einig gewesen"]. Regarding the mirror you did not mention how the frame should be made and how high I should go with the price [...] I was also not sure if you meant that only the mirror glass should be 2 cubits ["Ellen"] high or if you were speaking of the whole mirror with its frame [...]. I assumed you meant the latter, and I have chosen the mirror accordingly. I have chosen a mirror with a wooden and carved frame in a blue and gold colour ["höltzernen aus geschnitzten mit blauem und vergüldeten Ram"] as it is the newest fashion in mirrors. You have seen such mirrors in the house of our cousin Well and as I think and don't

170 Letter from Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb to Luetkens, Joachim, February 01, 1745, TNA, HCA 30/232, Letter Book I, no. 508.

171 "dahero ich mich bemühen werde so viel als möglich das verlangte mit itzigen Schiffen zu senden." Letter from Luetkens, Joachim to Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, February 18, 1745, TNA, HCA, 30/235.

> doubt also in the house of our uncle Lütjens [...] You write that it should be a nice and large mirror, so I have decided on this mirror which represents the newest and most elegant style ["schönste Art"]. I first thought that you meant a mirror with a glass frame because you wrote that the sconces ["Lampetten"] should match it ["sollten dazu accordiren"] [...] although I could not get such Lampeten or *Sconces* as they call them here without them being newly made directly on site ["sie express neu gemacht"] or by ordering them. And as you know here [in England] they have sconces hanging at the chimney ["Schornsteinen"] and usually they have 2 hanging at mirrors and some hanging on the wall which look like a bent arm ["krummen Arm"] or are similar to the chandeliers in the churches and made of chromed brass. [...] At least I know that they need to be yellow in order to match with the mirror which I will look after. Please be so kind as to write to me if you want the latter ones or the ones made of glass and if you want them to hang on the wall separately. [...] The table will be made of mahogany ["Mahoggiholtz"] [...] You can also have them in walnut. As regards the knives I have mainly chosen knives with ivory handles. [...] As regards the rings that give honour to a marriage ["die einer Heyrath ein Ansehen geben"], which you demanded to receive as soon as possible, I will do my best to send them to Hertzer & von Bobartt, either this Friday or within a week. The best way to transport and the usual way to send such precious items ["Kostbarkeiten"] as they choose it here is to first send them to Holland. That is why I will send them to the merchant house of De Meyere first and ask them to forward them to Hertzer & von Bobartt and to pay the postage ["in deren Rechnung bringen"] because here I don't have to pay anything when I send it off. I will enclose a letter to Hertzer & von Bobartt in the letter to them."[172]

In his next letter from the 19th of March 1745 Joachim reported that he was gladly

> "bound to report to you" ["ich kann nicht umhin"], which was Joachim's typical letter formula to begin his letters with, that with this letter the earrings and ring "were sent to Mr. De Meyere, enclosed in a letter from Well to Amsterdam, from where they will send them to Hertzer & von Bobartt [...]. I must say that both pieces of jewellery please me greatly ["über die Massen wohl gefallen"], in particular the earrings which look magnificent ["ein prächtiges Ansehen geben"] and which will surely have all eyes on them ["vieler Augen auf sich ziehen"]. He charged a price of 90 £ for the earrings, and 20 for the ring, together we got it for 113 £. Therefore, I am only a few pounds above your price limit. The earrings have 4 diamond pendants ["Bummelken in deren jeden ein Diamant ist"] which makes them look very beautiful ["schönste Ansehen"]. The ring looks equally beautiful and fits perfectly with the earrings, it was newly made ["gantz neu gemacht"]. The ring is golden and made a bit thinner, on the man's suggestion, so in case, which I do not hope, the ring needs to be widened it can be filed out. The mirror and the table will be loaded on a convoy ship, which does not have enough cargo, which will leave in two weeks [...] Still I want to know from you which sconces ["Lampetten] your wife does fancy ["wenn deiner Liebsten das gefallen sollte"], the sconces with the

172 Letter from Luetkens, Joachim to Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, March 12, 1745, TNA, HCA, 30/235.

arms looking like crowns, which are very fashionable here, or the sconces made of glass which went out of fashion?"[173]

In the third letter, he wrote that

"I do not doubt that you will like the earrings, if you don't like the pendants ["Props"] you can just remove them [...] however, I am sure that the beauty of these pieces will convince you and match your taste and they won't look too large on the ears. The jewellery is finely crafted, the diamonds fine and clean ["fein und sauber"], the oldest of Well's daughters has tried them on ["eingehängt in die Ohren"] so that we can see how it looks and they did not seem oversized."[174]

These letters and the list of purchased items are remarkable and impressive. The list is in fact so remarkable that it even caused Joachim himself to add a certain comment and furthermore a well-founded concern to it. Before he even started his report in his first letter, he pointed out that such an order in London and especially its transport to Hamburg would not pass unnoticed by other people and would raise certain suspicions on the part of their friends, trading partners and family. Referring to his helping hand, the merchant Well, he indicated that "the multitude of things alone, [...] but especially the rings [...] had given him [Well] the suspicion of an upcoming wedding ["Verdacht einer Heurathsparthey"] and that: *it is very likely that it is for your brother*." [175] The latter sentence was originally written in English, reproducing Well's grinning oral utterance.

Speaking of Hamburg and Amsterdam, where the jewellery first arrived, these suspicions would become even worse. And in fact, Joachim should later be proved right. In a letter from Amsterdam, for instance, Luetkens later learned from Albertus de Meyere that Luetkens' aunt and her travelling companion, a certain Miss Betty, visiting Albertus and Cornelis de Meyere, had already tittle-tattled about Nicolaus Gottlieb's orders and that the word had made the rounds that Nicolaus Gottlieb "surely must have a sweetheart at his side" ["schon was liebes in Hand"].[176] In letters from Hamburg, he got reports that similar rumours had been going round, which Joachim commented on with the words that "this is not surprising ["zu verwundern"], as I have always believed, considering your Hamburg circumstances, the house you bought although it is was not in your name and all your purchases and preparations ["Zurüstungen"] [...], it is impossible that there remains complete silence about this."[177] As we learn from Joachim's letters, Nicolaus Gottlieb's had got annoyed about this. However, in the end, he could hardly do anything about it. This effect was simply unavoidable. Even a cloak-and-dagger operation could not have prevented that at least some people would take notice of shiploads of furniture arriving in Hamburg. At least, Luetkens counted him-

173 Letter from Luetkens, Joachim to Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, March 19, 1745, TNA, HCA, 30/235.

174 Letter from Luetkens, Joachim to Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, April 16, 1745, TNA, HCA, 30/235.

175 Letter from Luetkens, Joachim to Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, May 12, 1745, TNA, HCA, 30/235.

176 Letter from de Meyere, Albertus to Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, May [date unreadable], 1745, TNA, HCA 30/234.

177 Letter from Luetkens, Joachim to Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, February 2, 1745, TNA, HCA, 30/235.

self lucky that all the ships Joachim had chosen for transporting the goods arrived safely in Hamburg. This will presumably have placated him a bit.

After the items had been delivered to Hamburg, the various goods were subsequently accepted by the merchants Hertzer & von Bobartt and transported to one of their storages facilities, where they stored them for Luetkens. On the basis of a list, which was compiled by the youngest Luetkens son, Anton, we can finally determine in detail which items later awaited Luetkens ready for collection after his return, or, as is also possible, which his future wife and mother-in-law had picked up for their future home already prior to his return. The interesting fact about this list is furthermore that we find items on it with which we are already familiar, but we also find more items that Luetkens must have ordered later, but for which we unfortunately find no indication in the surviving letters. Through this list, however, we are able to complete the inventory of furniture that Luetkens bought for Ilsabe and for his and Ilsabe's future home. Furthermore, there are some items which were mentioned in Joachim's letters, but which do not feature on Anton's list. These were the items that were not stored in warehouses but were instead kept safe in the house of Hertzer & von Bobartt or were even handed over to the Engelhardt family already. The pieces missing from the list were the pieces of jewellery that Joachim had bought for his brother. Anton instead listed the following items:

List of furniture ["Nota von Mobilien"]

6 dozen tin plates ["6 dosin Zinnen tellers"] [178]
8 small ditto tin bowls ["8 St. dito schüsseln von kleiner Sorte"]
4 larger bowls fitting into one another ["auf einander folgend dito"]
4 ditto
4 ditto
4 ditto
2 dozen tin spoons
6 tin candleholders & 3 ditto tin snuffers ["6 zinerne leuchters & 3 do [dito] Lichtscheren"]
2 tin teapots ["2 zinerne Thee Töpffe"]
1 ditto tin flat soup plates approximately ["1 dito flachen suppen kummen ohngefehr"]
of 2 Ossel à 2 Stübgen ["von 2 Ossel à/2 Stübgen", contemporary units of volume]
1 ditto tin wash bowl ["dito Handfaß zum waschen"]
6 metallic candleholders for the [dining] table ["6 metallene Leuchter auf den Tisch"]
with 6 snuffers ["mit 6 Lichtscheren"]
1 dozen knives and forks for men ["1 dosin messer und gabel vor Mans"]
1 dozen knives and forks for women ["1 dosin messer und gabel vor Dames"]
1 mirror 2 cubits high and proportionally wide ["1 Spiegel von 2 Ellen und Breite nach proportion"]
with the corresponding 6 sconces ["mit 6 lampeten so darbey accordieren"]

178 Dosin was a typical measurement for Hanseatic and Flemish merchants. See Goosens, Jan. *Niederdeutsch. Sprache und Literatur. Eine Einführung*. Neumünster: Karl Wachholtz Verlag, 1983, 109.

1 walnut commode to be placed under the mirror without gold ["1 nußbaum comode so unters Spiegel gebracht wirdt aber nicht mit Gold"]
One collapsible table of walnut and rectangular which can be either placed under the mirror or used to play the game L`Hombre ["Ein tisch so zusammen geklapet kan werden und vierkantig von Nußbaum wohl untern Spiegel als zum Lomber spiel dienlig"]
1 tea commode to put the tea kettle on ["1 Thee Comode so zum thee kessel gebraucht wirdt"]
of walnut and with a metallic inner lining ["von nuß baum inwendig metallen Futter"]
2 dozen wine glasses ["2 dosin Weingläßer"]
1 piece of red fustian [barchent] same condition as the enclosed sample ["1 Stück rothen Carchant nach einliegender Probe"]
2 pieces of green ditto ["2 stück grün dito"][179]

The three items that were not part of Joachim's first purchases in London are the wine glasses, the washbowl and the walnut tea commode. All other items are precisely what Luetkens had ordered from his brother and which Joachim had successfully purchased in London. On the basis of the two lists, the list in the letter from Joachim and Anton's list, we get a vivid picture of some concrete parts of Luetkens' interior and home decoration in the Katharinenstraße in Hamburg in 1745. We are even provided with information of how the pieces of furniture were arranged for instance with regard to the arrangement of the mirror and the commode. This allows us in fact to envisage what parts of his future home must have later looked like. We are in certain ways able to breathe life into the rooms of his future home, which we have so far only known from the outside, from the architectural drawings. Now we are, however, able to enter, as a thought experiment, several rooms of this house and zoom in on certain corners of it. We can for instance envisage people, maybe Ilsabe, Nicolaus Gottlieb and a friend, sitting and playing cards at a typical triangular Lombre table, as it is for instance depictured in contemporary drawings like *Drinkers of tea, coffee, chocolate*.[180] We can envisage people taking tableware out of a kitchen cabinet, which might have looked similar to the tableware that also can still be found in contemporary engravings held by the MKK today, the *Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe*.[181] We can envisage people standing in front of a large mirror while pouring tea into a cup placed on a commode. We can envisage people walking through the rooms of the house and lighting or extinguishing candles with the snuffers Luetkens bought. We can even envisage people making the bed, shaking a bed sheet made of red and green fustian ["barchent"], because this was for what this precious textile, a mixture of linen and cotton, was mainly used for during that

179 *List of furniture*, "Nota von Mobilien" in TNA, HCA 30/232.

180 "Drinkers of tea, coffee, chocolate – group of women sat at a table." Undated. Wellcome Collection. CC BY, http://wellcomecollection.org/works/jf2kwbvu, accessed November 8, 2019.

181 "Kücheneinrichtung." Ornamentstich von Martin Engelbrecht und Jeremias Wachsmuth, 1740-1750. MK&G Sammlung, Grafische Sammlung O1899.9, Blatt 11 (fortlaufende Nummer 2511) aus einer Folge von Zimmer- und Kücheneinrichtungen, Verlagsnummer 514.

time.[182] In our imagination, it is then also not difficult to envisage how later in time the *Bel Etage* was installed in this house, as it was a room which also featured mirrors with "Lampeten", sconces, and a commode with a large mirror behind it.[183]

The only question that arises from our imaginary walk through the halls of the building in the Katharinenstraße is ultimately the simple question of what happened in terms of all the other parts and furnishings of the house and who organised them? This question also immediately strikes the imaginative visitor's mind when we zoom in precisely on those corners of the house about which the lists are informative and provide some details. Compared to the entirety of furniture that was needed to furnish a whole house in order to make it a home, the ordered items in fact appear rather special and represent essentially only the tip of the iceberg. He took care of ordering fustian for the bed sheets, but not the bed itself. He ordered a mirror and a commode, but not a dining table. All of these basic pieces of furniture are missing in his ordering lists, and instead Luetkens sent rather special items and jewellery to Hamburg.[184] This fact leads us to another follow-up question, which is why Luetkens in the end did not take care of all the pieces of furniture needed for his house, but instead only organised the purchasing of such special items? The answer to this question is twofold.

Appeasing Ilsabe

The lion's share of purchases of furniture for the house in the Katharinenstraße was taken care of by Ilsabe herself and by Ilsabe's mother, as it was typical for marriage preparations of a merchant family in mid-18th century.[185] The task was neither easy nor irrelevant. It was also not just a pastime but in fact came with great responsibility, as the works by Amanda Vickery have shown. Vickery points out a "gender division of domestic purchases" during that time.[186] The task of furnishing a home was therefore relevant because of the fact that "houses and household products became an important status symbol during the [...] eighteenth and early nineteenth century."[187] As such the houses became "key sites for luxury consumption" as Jon Stobart and Mark Rothery have emphasized.[188] Furnishing the house was a laborious process and it must have kept the Engelhardt family very occupied. Unfortunately, we have no further information of what the women bought, but we know that they did a very good job, at least if we once

182 See "Barchent, Parchent, [...] Fr Futaine." *Oekonomische Encyklopädie*, edited by Johann Georg Krünitz. 242 volumes. Berlin, 1773-1858, vol. 3, 539-541.

183 As displayed in the *Period Room* in the MK&G today.

184 Regarding furniture in merchant houses, see Grassby, *Business Community*, 335-339.

185 Regarding the "gender division of domestic purchases" see Vickery, Amanda. "A Woman and the World of Goods." 281. See Vickery, *The Gentleman's Daughter*, 17-23. See also Edwards, *Eighteenth-Century Furniture*, 52-55. Regarding a bride's task to *make a home* and to furnish a house during the 18th century, see Van Dülmen, *Kultur und Alltag* (vol. 1), 163.

186 Vickery, Amanda. "A Woman and the World of Goods," 281.

187 Sturm-Lind, Lisa. *Actors of Globalization: New York Merchants in Global Trade, 1784-1812*. Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2018, 143-160, here 155.

188 Stobart, Jon, and Mark Rothery. *Consumption and the Country House*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016, 24. See also Berg, Maxine. "In Pursuit of Luxury: Global History and British Consumer Goods in the Eighteenth Century." *Past & Present* 182 (2004): 85-142.

more trust in the words of Joachim Luetkens. In the usual tone of his letters, Joachim found the highest words of praise for the commitment of the Engelhardt women. He congratulated his brother on his new "home where you will find everything arranged, I can only conclude from this, from all the good deeds and provisions she made, the great affection ["redliche Neygung"] that your mother-in-law has for you, she wants to make your new home comfortable for you ["alles bequem zu machen"]."[189]

By offering Ilsabe and her mother that they take care of the furnishing of the house, Luetkens therefore adhered to norms prevailing in the 18th century. Yet giving them full control and power of disposition over the house was nonetheless also a concession by Luetkens. A concession, however, that must have been an easy one since it saved the merchant time and efforts and allowed him to continue his business in France. At least he had to pay for the bills. Due to the importance of the task of furnishing the merchant house, Luetkens' concession ultimately also must be seen not as occupational therapy but as a display of trust that once more served the purpose of mollification.

The question why Luetkens himself nonetheless also ordered and bought selected pieces of furniture himself for the house, even though he did not have to, can be answered in two ways. First, these orders happened because Ilsabe might have asked him to. Maybe she demanded a form of compensation for the time that she had had to wait for her husband. Maybe she just could not get the items somewhere else, or she preferred the English style of furniture or even kitchenware. I also assume that Ilsabe challenged Nicolaus Gottlieb in a subtle and gentle way by showing him that she would not take care of all the preparations on her own, but that he also had to do his part. Luetkens complied with everything. The second explanation why he bought the special items was that with these pieces of precious furniture or kitchenware including cutlery "for dames" made of ivory, or fabrics, and particularly by means of the jewellery, Luetkens clearly wanted to show his good intentions, appease Ilsabe, maintain her affection and demonstrate his good taste.[190]

Material gifts were a natural part and a courteous gesture during marriage preparations. Yet, Luetkens' gifts also showed a particular sensitivity. Luetkens was mindful because he searched and chose items which he knew Ilsabe would like. Unfortunately, I am not able to substantiate this assumption in relation to each and every item listed on Nicolaus Gottlieb's order list or Anton's list. But at least I am able to clarify and prove this point on the basis and with regard to the Lombre table and once more the jewellery. For both special items, I can demonstrate and concretely determine from where Luetkens got the information about Ilsabe' preferences and what message the purchase of these items conveyed to the Engelhardt family, which is why I have decided to pick out these two examples to prove my argument. The reasons why we have knowledge about Luetkens' motivations in this regard is because of the two letters mentioned above which give clear indications in this respect. They show that Luetkens had in fact received hints and was given advice by his correspondents about what kind of items

189 Letter from Luetkens, Joachim to Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, November 16, 1744, TNA, HCA, 30/235.

190 See also Holloway, *Game of Love*, chapter "Love Tokens," 69-92.

Ilsabe fancied. Luetkens gratefully received these hints because they offered him the possibility to show goodwill and affection, which was badly needed because of his decision to postpone his return to Hamburg up until the end of 1745, shortly before his marriage.

This decision to delay his return met with a certain feeling of unease on the part of the Engelhardt family, which is why he had to convince them of his good intentions and had to find some means of pacifying his future wife and her family. For the latter purpose, he used all necessary means of the practical principle of persuasion through mollification, that is, by means of finding good words and doing good deeds, which at the same time became clearly obvious from his words and actions. He fulfilled all their wishes except for returning earlier to Hamburg. In his letters from that time, we furthermore find many justifications for why he postponed his return, which I will analyse in detail in the last part of this chapter. In order to conclude this part first, however, we will take a look at the two special items that show his attentiveness and I will present the letters that presumably triggered the decision to buy these items. We will take a further look at the Lombre table and, one last time, at the ring and the earrings.

7.8 Tokens of Love

Lombre, "Ombre/L'Hombre" in French, "Lomber" or "Lombre" in German, was a popular game and pastime during the 18th century. It was mostly played amongst the middle and elite classes because, as research claims, it was a rather complicated and time-consuming game and therefore also a symbol of social distinction.[191] A second research assumption regarding this game is that this game was especially popular amongst the women of the middling sort.[192] The fact that Ilsabe Engelhardt was not only familiar with this game but that she was in fact a very good player can be derived from a letter that Luetkens received from his Bremen friend Jeronimus Schulte in April 1744. In this letter Jeronimus commented on and praised Ilsabe's gambling skills, which bears a certain undertone because often the players of this game also played for small amounts of money. Jeronimus wrote that Ilsabe's brother Ehrenfried had warned him with a twinkle in his eye that he, Jeronimus, had to "prepare for several games of L'ombre" and since his "sister was so well-versed in it she would rob my pockets ["Tasche fegen"]", but he still wrote that he had responded that "it would be an honour for me to lose my silver and gold to her".[193] Having knowledge about Ilsabe's fondness of this game

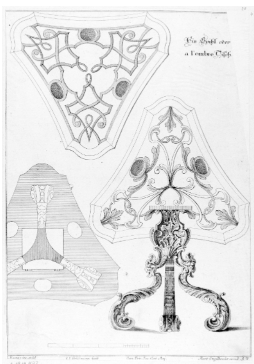
191 Regarding Lombre (L'Hombre) see Seidel, *Das l'Hombre-Cabinet* (1785). See Kastner/Folkvord. *Humboldt-Enzyklopädie der Kartenspiele*, 120-123. See "Lomber, Lombre, eingedeutsche Form von span./franz. L'Hombre, daneben die Mischform L'Homber." *Goethe-Wörterbuch*, edited by Berlin-Brandenburgische Akademie der Wissenschaften et al., vol. 5, 1284. Kohlhammer, Stuttgart 2011 ["als elegant u. anspruchsvoll geltendes) Kartenspiel für drei Personen."]

192 See Kastner/Folkvord, *Humboldt-Enzyklopädie der Kartenspiele*, 120-123. See Granados, Mayari. *Spieltische in England, Frankreich und dem deutschsprachigen Raum*. Unpublished PhD thesis. Frankfurt a.M.: Johann Wolfgang Goethe-Universität, 2004, 36-38.

193 Letter from Schulte, Jeronimus to Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, April 6, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/236.

must have simplified his decision to order the Lombre table. It can be assumed that Ilsabe received this gift with pleasure. The *Grafische Sammlung* of the *Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe* Hamburg provides us with a copperplate image of a Lombre table, which gives a good impression of the visual appearance of this prestigious object.[194]

Figure 19: Drawing of a contemporary Lombre table. "Ein Spiel oder a L'ombre Tisch." Ornamentstich von Martin Engelbrecht, Johann Jacob Grässman, Johann Rumpp, 1740-1750; Figure 20: Girandole shaped diamond earrings with three drops. Detail of "Her Most Excellent Majesty Charlotte, Queen of Great Britain", painted by Thomas Frye, London 1762.



Source: Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe, Sammlung, Grafische Sammlung O1912.473, Blatt (wohl 28) aus der Folge "Unterschiedliche neue sehr nutzliche Tischler oder Schreiner Risse Inventirt u gezeichnet von Johannes Rumpp von Kircheimb unter Teckh", herausgegeben von M. Engelbrecht, Verlagsnummer 5. By Courtesy of the Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe Hamburg; The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, The Elisha Whittelsey Collection, The Elisha Whittelsey Fund, by exchange, 1969, www.metmuseum.org.

With regard the ring and earrings, representing the "latest fashion" in London, with "brillianten [...] bummelken", diamond pendants, it was a similar situation. In this case Luetkens had also received a hint beforehand, this time from Ehrenfried himself. In September 1744, Ehrenfried had reported to him that his master and relative Speelmeyer, who was also the former master of Luetkens, recommended that Luetkens should buy a diamond ring for Ilsabe to show his good intentions. Reporting this news to Luetkens, Ehrenfried, in turn, tacitly conveyed his own message, which was that he would not object to this suggestion. Nicolaus Gottlieb's response letter to Engelhardt is indeed priceless. At the same time, since we know of the further story, his letter is very telling with regard to his later approach. Nicolaus Gottlieb wrote in response that the suggestion regarding "the diamond ring had made me laugh a lot", and he added a

194 "Ein Spiel oder a L'ombre Tisch." Ornamentstich von Martin Engelbrecht, Johann Jacob Grässman, Johann Rumpp, 1740-1750. MK&G Sammlung, Grafische Sammlung O1912.473, Blatt (wohl 28) aus der Folge "Unterschiedliche neue sehr nutzliche Tischler oder Schreiner Risse Inventirt u gezeichnet von Johannes Rumpp von Kircheimb unter Teckh", herausgegeben von M. Engelbrecht, Verlagsnummer 5. See also "Lombertisch." *Oekonomische Encyklopädie*, edited by Johann Georg Krünitz. 242 volumes. Berlin, 1773-1858, vol. 80, 295.

contemporary proverb saying, "but what can I say, during the course of his life the fox changes his hair colour, but he doesn't change his coat, the good old man is going to take his odd principles and ideas with him into his grave."[195] Half a year later, Nicolaus Gottlieb ordered a ring and earrings with diamonds from his brother for Ilsabe. Therefore, as becomes obvious, it was not only Nicolaus Gottlieb Luetkens who influenced other people by means of his letters and made his correspondents dance to his tune, but sometimes the process of exerting influence also worked the other way around.

In order to imagine the visual appearance of the earrings, we can rely on contemporary portraits of 18th-century women, who wore similar earrings. For illustrative purposes, I have chosen one of the most famous portraits of the time, which demonstrates clearly that such earrings complied perfectly with contemporary fashion, as Joachim did not tire to emphasise with regard to all of his purchases. Encountering this kind of earrings with three pendants for instance in a portrait of Charlotte of Mecklenburg-Strelitz, Queen consort of George III, also points to the prestige that was attributed to this piece of jewellery.[196] It must, however, be stressed that the earrings that Charlotte of Mecklenburg-Strelitz wore, were probably much more expensive. However, the style of the earrings was similar to those that Ilsabe would wear during her wedding, beautiful diamond pendent girandole earrings.

In order to be able to envision the ring, too, we can draw on contemporary sources. Similar rings are today for instance displayed at the V&A Museum in London.[197] Both of these contemporary examples demonstrate that Nicolaus Gottlieb certainly did well with his decision to choose such items for Ilsabe. With these gifts he conveyed the message to her that through their marriage she would lay a claim to and be welcomed with open arms into the highest echelons of society. It can be assumed that Ilsabe received the gifts with pleasure. With regard to their marriage plans and the planning process, the ring and the earrings furthermore served as concrete material pledges. The purchase of the gold ring and earrings materialised the promise of marriage and ultimately these items would also represent the materialisation of the marriage vow when the spouses entered into their marriage.[198] It is not clear nor does it become obvious from the letters whether Ilsabe received or was handed the jewellery right after it arrived in Hamburg and thus already before Luetkens' return to Hamburg or if Hertzer & von Bobartt

195 "der Diamanten Ring hatt mir recht schaffen lachen gemacht, aber was soll ich sagen der Fux verandert woll seine Hare aber nicht das Fell, und dieser gutte Allte wird woll seine wunderliche Prinsipia und Einfelle mit nach derander Wellt transportiren." Letter from Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb to Engelhardt, Ehrenfried, August 3,1745, TNA, HCA 30/232, Letter Book 1, no. 339.

196 Portrait of "Her Most Excellent Majesty Charlotte, Queen of Great Britain", painted by Thomas Frye, London 1762, Mezzotint; first state, before letters. *Metropolitan Museum of Arts*, Drawings and Prints, 69.669.1. See "Bummel." *Rheinisches Wörterbuch*, edited by Josef Müller, vol. 1, 1119-1121. Bonn: Fritz Klopp, 1928 ["etwas unbestimmt baumelndes; auch dat Gebommels, in bes. [...] an den Ohrringen"]. See Redington Dawes/Collings. *Georgian Jewellery*, 17.

197 See as examples Gold ring, mounted with diamonds set in silver, ca. 1750. *Victoria and Albert Museum*, Metalwork Collection, M.20-1996. Gold set with an amethyst, mid 18th century (made), possibly made in England, *Victoria and Albert Museum*, Metalwork Collection, M.205-1962. See in this regard Redington Dawes/Collings. *Georgian Jewellery*, i.a. 65, 75.

198 See Van Dülmen, *Kultur und Alltag* (vol. 1), 143.

kept the jewellery safe until his return. It is clear, however, that Ilsabe and her family knew about the jewellery before her wedding. Once more a letter written by Albertus de Meyere in May is very telling, in which he reported that the group of people privy to the upcoming wedding, and this included them as well as the Engelhardt family, had severe problems in keeping the marriage a secret any longer precisely because of the arrival of certain jewellery in Hamburg, which did not go unnoticed in the city. The latter was particularly due to some careless talk by a traveller from London, who had tittle-tattled about some "jewellery which was sent to Hamburg", which forced the said people to find more and more excuses and prevarications to keep it a secret. The latter traveller had been none other than "H. Lutjens s[eine] Frau", Anthony Luetkens' wife and Nicolaus Gottlieb Luetkens' aunt, who in fact should have known better.[199] But even if Ilsabe was not already in possession of the wedding presents from her future husband when he returned, at least she had enough reason to look forward to her wedding day excitedly. In the end, she was, in any case, only allowed to wear these ornaments after her wedding.

Concluding this part about Luetkens' second strategy of winning the affection of Ilsabe Engelhardt and her family, it must be added at this point that by using this principle of mollification by making gifts to the family and his future wife, Luetkens surely drew on what is presumably one of the oldest ways and means of the powers of persuasion, the practice of gift-giving. This practice had been known at least sine antiquity, and it had always been regarded by the contemporaries as a very effective and proven tool for winning over someone else's affection.[200] In Luetkens' case, however, gifts alone were not the only means, and not sufficient means, to completely satisfy the expectations on the part of the Engelhardt family. In fact, gifts only represented one side of the coin of his persuasive strategy in this episode. Apart from the gifts, the merchant also needed to literally suit his words to his actions. That is, he also needed to ensure his future wife's and her family's affections by means of finding the right words in his letters to his future family, which forms the last element of the practical principle of persuasion by mollification presented in this chapter. The latter, in turn, especially became necessary for him because of his wish to stay in France for much longer than the Engelhardts regarded appropriate for a prospective husband, which necessitated a lot of effective coaxing to ensure that his marriage plans turned out successfully in the end. As becomes obvious, the latter persuasive efforts again served two different purposes: the purpose of appeasing Ilsabe and her family and the purpose of maintaining his business interests.

In the last part of this chapter, I will take a look at one of Luetkens' love letters, unfortunately the only love letter that has survived in the archive, and at the letter conversations and personal letters to his future family members, in which he had to master one of the biggest challenges of his establishment phase. This challenge was to convince Ilsabe and her family of the fact that he was a good catch and at the same time he had

199 Letter from de Meyere, Albertus to Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, May [date unreadable], 1745, TNA, HCA 30/234.

200 See Kettering, "Gift-Giving," 131-151. See also Krausman Ben-Amos, *The Culture of Giving*, 143-306. See in general Mauss, *The Gift*.

to convince her to wait for him and convince the whole family of the necessity of his staying in France up until the last possible moment before their marriage day in order to finish his businesses there. This represented most certainly one of the most formative catch-22 situations a merchant had to cope with during his establishment phase.

Finding the Right Words

The last part of this chapter and the finishing straight of this book will deal with Luetkens' love letters and the personal letters he wrote to his future family members during his marriage preparation. These letters represent only a very small portion within the total number of letters stored in the Luetkens archive; in fact they can be counted on one hand. In this part of this chapter, we will take a look at one love letter in particular that Luetkens wrote to his future wife Ilsabe. We will furthermore analyse one letter he wrote to his future mother-in-law, his future "mama" as he called her, and we will take a look at three letters Luetkens wrote to or received from his future brother-in-law and soon-to-be business partner Ehrenfried Engelhardt.

This selection results from the simple fact that only these five letters have survived in their entirety in the archive. It does, therefore, not mean that Luetkens did not write more love and personal letters to his future wife and family. As he himself had emphasized in his letter to his brother Joachim, he was "throwing around" with letters".[201] It merely means that the analysed letters were the only letters whose complete content is still existent because Luetkens had decided to completely copy these letters into his Letter Book or to keep the said letters from Ehrenfried preserved in his archived letter bundles.

With regard to the missing letters, however, we are still able to find the respective entries in his Letter Books. However, in all these other cases, in contrast to the letters under investigation, he had deliberately decided to abbreviate the respective information given for these letters in his Letter Book to only short notes, like dispatch confirmations merely stating for instance "Mad. E." (instead of Madame Engelhardt) or "a particular letter to Engelhardt" ("An Engelhard ein particulair Schreiben").[202] The reason for his decision to abbreviate can be directly derived from the latter entry. As we have already learned, writing "particulair Schreiben", "particular letters" meant and materially signified for the contemporaries that the content of these letters was private. Abbreviating the content of these letters to his future wife and business companion to a simple dispatch confirmation in his Letter Book was entirely consistent with this practice. Using abbreviations makes no bones about the fact that for any outsiders these letters were none of their business, me included.[203] Therefore, we are lucky to have at least access to the five letters analysed in the chapter.

201 Letter from Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb to Luetkens, Joachim, February 01, 1745, TNA, HCA 30/232, Letter Book I, no. 508.

202 Letter from Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb to Engelhardt, Ilsabe, no date given, TNA, HCA 30/232, Letter Book I, no. 862.

203 Since it was common practice during the Early Modern Period that merchants sometimes had to present their Letter Books to partners or in court, this statement was actually meant literally. Letter Books were "accepted proof in court". Trivellato, "Merchants' letters," 84.

As it can be furthermore assumed, without the special situation surrounding the survival of the Luetkens archive, we would in fact not even have got the chance to look at these kinds of letters at all because they would have been sorted out by Luetkens, destroyed or blackened if he had known that someone would inspect his personal archive. The great opportunity that arises from the fact that we still have access to these letters will become apparent in the following explanations. So, although these letters represent only such a small fraction of the total number of letters in the Luetkens archive, they nevertheless bear an immense significance with regard to one of the most crucial steps during Luetkens' establishment phase. They will present us with Luetkens' way of handling and negotiating his marriage preparations with his future wife and family, which provided the fundamental basis for finishing his establishment phase.

The Definition of Love in 1745

Before analysing the letters in detail, I present the contemporary characteristics of the letter types of love letters and personal family letters, in order to gain a better understanding of the form and content of the letters and in order be able to understand the performative actions performed on the basis of these letters. Most generally, the fundamental purposes and intentions behind these letters were rather obvious. Particularly starting during the 18th century, love letters in the most general sense served the purpose of mutually affirming affection for each other, but also of praising your own character and the character of your lover, and furthermore sharing experiences and enjoying a certain privacy as well as, of course, planning your shared future.[204] Similar characteristics shaped the letter type of the personal family letters, which were primarily written to win and maintain the affection of your future family.[205]

These characteristics also characterised the love and family letters written by Luetkens in 1745. As will become obvious from the letters though, Luetkens also used these kinds of letters for another additional purpose, a rather pragmatic purpose. He used these kinds of letters and the opportunities they provided to appease and mollify his future wife and family with regard to his deliberately delayed return to Hamburg. He therefore essentially used and instrumentalised these letters in order to bring his mercantile and personal interests in compliance with each other. This fact will reveal to us a lot about Luetkens' self-perception both as a lover and a merchant on the eve

204 See Goodman, *Woman in the Age of Letters*, 274-331. Stauf, Renate, Annette Simonis, Jörg Paulus. "Liebesbriefkultur als Phänomen." In *Der Liebesbrief. Schriftkultur und Medienwechsel vom 18. Jahrhundert bis zur Gegenwart*, edited by Renate Stauf, Annette Simonis, and Jörg Paulus, 1-22. Berlin/New York: De Gruyter, 2008. See Stauf, Renate, and Jörg Paulus, eds. *SchreibLust. Der Liebesbrief im 18. und 19. Jahrhundert*. Berlin/Boston: de Gruyter, 2013. See Clauss, *Liebeskunst.* For the 19th century in particular, see Bauer, Ingrid, and Christa Hämmerle, eds. *Liebe schreiben. Paarkorrespondenzen im Kontext des 19. und 20. Jahrhunderts*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2017. See, with a similar research approach as pursued in this book, Bauer, Ingrid, and Christa Hämmerle. "Liebe und Paarbeziehungen im ›Zeitalter der Briefe‹ – ein Forschungsprojekt im Kontext." In *Liebe schreiben. Paarkorrespondenzen im Kontext des 19. und 20. Jahrhunderts*, edited by Ingrid Bauer and Christa Hämmerle, 9-56. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2017.

205 See Earle, "Introduction" (in *Epistolary Selves*).

of establishment and about the contemporary ideals and understanding of love and professional success.

The general definition and understanding of love and affection in this regard should not be confused with our modern definition of romantic love.[206] Luetkens' love letters have in fact nothing in common with the sentimentalism or even eroticism of our modern love letters. In fact, they even differ much from the love letters known from the end of the 18th century when, on the eve of the romantic period, the *Age of Sentiment* ["Empfindsamkeit"] first created the basis for the romantic ideal of later periods.[207] However, as I have shown above, the Luetkens letters already showed first signs of a general change in the language register of love, which was typical for the age of *gallantry* and the Enlightenment.[208] Notwithstanding this, or even precisely because of this reason, the Luetkens letter will present us with a concrete ideal and understanding of contemporary love and with the letter writers' own way of writing about love. This will reveal to us a lot about the historicity of the concept of love during the 18th century.

This third part of this chapter will now mainly deal with the perspectives and self-perceptions of the lovers themselves and their families and with their attitudes towards marriage. What did the spouses themselves associate with their union and what was relevant to them? In this regard it is highly unfortunate that the letters from Ilsabe herself are missing from the Luetkens archive. As it unfortunately happens too often in historical research, I am therefore depending merely on the letters and statements of the male parts of the family, Nicolaus Gottlieb and Ehrenfried, in order to learn about the values and norms that prevailed in the respective relationships. However, this fact cannot be helped. At least, the letters from Ehrenfried Engelhard, which have survived and in which he reports in detail about his sister's and his mother's reaction to Luetkens' letters, provide me with the opportunity, although with the necessary amount of source criticism, to add the women's perspective to the picture. Since Ehrenfried and their mother had a large share in the marriage negotiations, this analytical limitation at least in a way also mirrors and is oddly in keeping with the past times.

The absence of Ilsabe's letters is particularly unfortunate for two more reasons, which already catapult us right into the middle of the actual letter conversations under investigation. The first reason is that it would have been highly interesting to read and learn about her own direct responses and views regarding Luetkens' presented, (presumably) reasonable arguments in his letters. As we have already encountered it in the other episodes in this book, Luetkens' letter style was, even in his love and personal letters, decisively shaped and characterised by a strong pragmatic approach and a pragmatic undertone.

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206 See Westphal, "Venus und Vulcanus," 18-20. Van Dülmen, *Kultur und Alltag* (vol. 1), 137, 172. See Stollberg-Rilinger, *Aufklärung*, 152-154. See Goodman, "Marriage Calculations."

207 For love letters during the German Age of Sentiment, see Reinlein, *Empfindsamkeit*. For love letters during German Romanticism, see Augart, *Eine romantische Liebe.* See also Trepp, *Sanfte Männlichkeit*, 131-159. For love letters in general, see Holloway, *Game of Love*, chapter "Love Letters," 45-68.

208 See for comparable letters and letter styles also Helgason, *Schriften des Herzens*. See Jacob, "Hergestellte Nähe."

In the present episode, this pragmatism related to the fact that Luetkens showed the strong conviction that it was indispensable for him to stay in France for a further six-month period after the general marriage agreement had been settled. In the end, he returned to Hamburg at the last possible moment before his actual marriage. In this regard, he confronted Ilsabe and her family in his letters with this as a fact and left no doubt about it that his business interests were obviously of equal value or even outweighed his family obligations. This general pragmatism will be softened and becomes more understandable in the analysis through the fact that – at least in his view and justification – this decision to prolong his stay in France for business purposes was meant to serve the good of the marriage and therefore the good of the family. It brought him more money.

Furthermore, I will be able to show on the basis and by means of an analysis of the typical contemporary way of writing in the language register of love that our first impression of a certain sobriety in his words to Ilsabe, her mother and brother to a certain extent falls short and is mostly due to our modern, misty-eyed perspective on these letters. Most definitely, the tone he chose for his letter should not be taken as necessarily being indicative of a cold heart. Quite on the contrary, to a great extent Luetkens' letter, the tone and the letter phrases he used corresponded instead with typical contemporary ways of writing about love. Once more it becomes apparent that we simply have to apply a different standard of love to the letters of the past and have to acknowledge the typical way of how love was transmitted in such letters at that time. In the end, we will be able to see and encounter a certain affection for Ilsabe on the part of Luetkens, or at least we can see the clear intention to show her his affection, particularly because we know about contemporary letter formulae typically used to express affection being reflected in his letters.

However, notwithstanding this, the general impression emanating from his letters cannot be denied: Ilsabe was put in the unfortunate situation of a waiting game due to Luetkens' business interests, during which she had to rely on promises and gifts only and during which she simply had to swallow the bitter pill that she had to wait for Nicolaus Gottlieb. This fact coincides with the second reason why it is unfortunate that Ilsabe's letters are missing. Through this situation, we are deprived of the chance to actually see and determine how Ilsabe and her mother responded to and actually felt about Luetkens' decision and whether they accepted his justifications, reassurances and appeasing strategies. All we know is that in the end Ilsabe did in fact wait for Luetkens and did not marry someone else. The latter, in turn, as we learn from one of Joachim's letters in which he wrote about a rival ["Nebenfreyer"] of Luetkens was not as far-fetched an option as it might appear initially.[209] I will present at least some indications about Ilsabe's and her mother's reactions and attitudes towards Luetkens' plans, as found in the letters written by Ehrenfried. But for the purpose of having clear proof it would have been indispensable to be able to also read the women's original response letters.

209 "dein Nebenfreyer Sp. wird freylich Angst und Schrecken sein Herz durch ein gute Medicin an seinem gehörigen Orte befestigen müssen, wenn er dieses erfährt." Letter from Luetkens, Joachim to Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, October 5, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/235.

As a consequence, this part of the chapter will primarily deal with the letter practices and rhetorical strategies that Nicolaus Gottlieb Luetkens applied and used to convince his future wife and her family that he was a good catch despite or precisely because of the fact that he decided to stay in France to finish his businesses there. The practical principle of persuasion which we are going to encounter is still the principle of mollification, this time however not relating to buying gifts but to finding the right words and reasonable arguments to show and underline one's good intentions.

In this following part, therefore, I will focus on the letter-writing practices and rhetorical devices with which Luetkens tried to convince Ilsabe and her family, her mother and brother in his letters, about his qualities as a husband and son-in-law, and last but not least, about his reasonable grounds to postpone his return to Hamburg up to the very last minute. I will start with the love letters, followed by the analysis of his personal family letters to complete the picture. With regard to his establishment phase, considering the bigger picture, the letters exchanged between Luetkens and Ilsabe and her family surely represent the final corner stone but also decidedly the acid test for his career and family plans. It is certain that if Ilsabe or her family had changed their minds at the last minute, Luetkens' establishment phase would surely have taken another turn and would most probably have floundered, and his career and future might have turned out completely different. Most fortunately for Luetkens though, we know that Ilsabe did marry him, after and despite the long waiting period, on the 22th of November 1745.[210]

7.9 Mercantile Love Letters and Personal Family Letters

If I collected and compiled all books that have been published on the topic of 18th-century letters and especially about love letters written during the "century of letters", I would be able to easily fill several library shelves.[211] Looking for works about letter writing and letter styles of the 1740s, and particularly with regard to the German letter style of the 1740s, however, I would only need a very small compartment in this library to file these books, and the reader would later have to look hard and search long before finding them.[212] The reader would quickly find out that literature on these 1740s letters is, in relation to the general literature and state of research on letters, rather sparse. The reason for this can be easily found: During the 1740s the German letter style was odd. It was experiencing a transitional period, a floating stage between two or even three different letter styles typical for this era, which makes the analysis of such letters

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210 See *Lexikon der Hamburgischen Schriftsteller*, 601-602.

211 Steinhausen, *Geschichte des deutschen Briefes*, vol. 2, 302. See Vellusig, *Schriftliche Gespräche*, 8. A different view on this matter is presented by Bauer/Hämmerle. "Zeitalter der Briefe."

212 A similar letter style as the Luetkens letter can be found in Jacob, "Hergestellte Nähe" or Helgason, *Schriften des Herzens.* See also Paulus, Jörg. "Confessio und Sinceritas. Liebes- und Glaubensbekenntnisse in Briefen (1750–1780), 79-98." In *SchreibLust. Der Liebesbrief im 18. und 19. Jahrhundert*, edited by Renate Stauf and Jörg Paulus, 79-98. Berlin/Boston: de Gruyter, 2013. However, even the letters Jacob, Helgason and Paulus use and analyse mostly stem from a later period, beginning in the 1750s.

complicated. The style of the letters was far more elusive than the very clear letter styles of previous centuries and even more elusive than the freer letter styles of later periods.

During the 17th century, the letter writers primarily used the *chancery style*, "Kanzleistil" in German, which was superseded by the *gallant style*, "Galanter Stil", of letter writing that remained prevalent and highly popular during the first half of the 18th century. Beginning with end of the 1740s, however, and particularly during the 1750s the *natural letter style*, "Natürlicher Stil", gained ground in Germany, while the gallant way of letter writing was also still present. This natural style of the 1750 was already foreshadowed in many ways during 1740s, for instance by allowing a more emotional way of expressing affection in letters. The natural style, in turn, would later merge into the *emphatic style*, "Emphatischer Stil", of letters of the *Age of Sentiment*, which letter type, as is assumed in research, in the end created the basis for our modern way of letter writing.[213]

Put in a nutshell, when dealing with German letters of the mid-eighteenth century we are presented with a kind of nebulous limbo of letter styles, which might be assumed to be the ultimate reason why researchers have so far been deterred from taking a closer look at this period. Only in Anglophone research in fact do we find a suggestion of how to describe the letters of that time, however, referring to the characteristics of English letters, which differed in style. In Anglophone research the concept of "familiar letters", as these letters were also called by English contemporaries, has become widely accepted and discussed.[214] Familiar letters are described as a "mode of letter writing devoted to the expression of affection and duty among kin, family and friends".[215] This definition generally surely matched the characteristics of the Luetkens letters. There are two problems with the concept of the English familiar letter when comparing it to the Luetkens letters analysed in this chapter: Firstly, Anglophone research uses this term and concept not only to describe letters of the 1740s, but it is instead mostly used to describe the nature of English letters during almost the entire 18th century. Secondly, a great emphasis is put on the general tendency of letter writers during that time to turn to a more familiar tone and style in their letter-writing practice. The latter assessment is surely also applicable to the Luetkens letters and the German letter style of the period. However, in order to determine the concrete way of functioning and the performative functions and elements of these letters written during the 1740s, I need a perspective that is more

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213 For these different letter styles see Vellusig, *Schriftliche Gespräche*, 53-93.See Anton, *Authentizität als Fiktion*, 24-27. See Furger, *Briefsteller*, 22, 160-181. A good overview is still provided by Nickisch, *Stilprinzipien*.

214 See Fitzmaurice, *The Familiar Letter.* See Redford, *Converse of the Pen.* See also Anderson, Howard, Philip B. Daghlian, and Irvin Ehrenpreis, ed. *The Familiar Letter in the Eighteenth Century*. Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1966.

215 Dierks, Konstantin. "The Familiar Letter and Social Refinement in America, 1750–1800." In *Letter Writing as a Social Practice*, edited by David Barton and Nigel Hall, 31-42. Philadelphia: Benjamins, 1999, here 31. See Richardson, Samuel. *Letters written to and for particular friends, on the most important occasions. Directing not only the requisite style and forms to be observed in writing familiar letters but how to think and act justly and prudently, in the common concerns of human life*. London: Rivington, 1741, which was therefore published and read during the times of Luetkens' establishment phase.

focused on the precise characteristics and peculiarities of letter-writing practices precisely during that very moment in time. Tied up with this analytical requirement, the concept of the *familiar letter* is unfortunately of relatively little help when it comes to describing the specific German forms and performative elements and features of the letter styles prevailing during that time, although, as mentioned above, even in the German letter styles we encounter the said general tendency towards a tone of friendship and affection as the basis for letter interaction.

In sum, in order to determine and understand the concrete ways and means of how Luetkens' letter style of love letters and personal letters worked in practice and how such a style was used in order to make an impact on the addressees, it is necessary to find a more tailor-made perspective for analysing the letters in this chapter. Notwithstanding this, it must be said that particularly the Anglophone sociolinguistic research approaches dealing with the familiar letters, and particularly the approaches of linguistic *Historical Pragmatics*, have been highly influential for my understanding of letter writing as a historical practice.[216] Only these approaches taught me and demonstrated to me how letter writing can be regarded and analysed as pragmatic acts of letter writers. I would not have got the idea of the necessity of finding a tailor-made perspective for describing the German letter style of the period as a shaping element of letter practice if I had not been persuaded by the works of *Historical Pragmatics*. In the following I will try to outline the characteristic elements of the letter style that was prevalent in Luetkens' love letters and in his personal letters, which elements were the crucial factors for turning simple sheets of paper into effective tools of exerting influence on close relatives by means of letter-writing and correspondence practice.

In order to describe the letter style, I will once more consult the German letter-writing manuals of the time. This step is necessary due to the lack of information regarding the love letter style of the 1740s in previous research. Therefore, I derive the characteristics of the letter style in this part directly from the contemporary sources themselves. This decision, as it turned out, however, represented a particularly fruitful approach because these contemporary sources themselves had to deal with exactly the similar problem of being forced to define and present the letter style of the time, which, as we have learned, must have been no easy task during the 1740s. That is, the explanations and examples in the letter-writing manuals of the time will themselves demonstrate precisely the limbo of letter styles that was hence so characteristic for the letter style of the time and therefore also characteristic for the Luetkens letters.

I will base my explanations primarily on one very popular letter manual, Benjamin Neukirch's *Anweisung zu teutschen Briefen* from 1727, supplemented by references to other well-known manuals of the time[217]. The letter-writing manual by Neukirch represents a very suitable basis of comparison to the Luetkens letters, for two simple facts. First, the explanations given by Neukirch and his example letters show striking parallels to the actual letter style used in Luetkens' love and personal family letters, and secondly, the manual also strikingly encapsulates the basic and most characteristic feature of the

216 Such as Fitzmaurice, *The Familiar Letter*; Nevalainen/Tanskanen, *Letter-Writing*; Dossena, "Business Cor-respondence"; Nevalainen/Tanskanen. "Letter Writing": Newsome, "Diplomatic memorial".

217 Neukirch, *Anweisung zu teutschen Briefen*.

typical contemporary letter style, in theory and practice. Thus, Neukirch's manual is the perfect example for illustrating the said limbo between formularity in style on the one hand and a tendency towards a freer tone in writing about love and family matters on the other hand, which was due to the transition period between the gallant and the natural letter style. In this regard, this letter manual provides the perfect starting point for learning to understand how the love and personal family letter actually worked in mid-eighteenth-century letter practice.

7.10 The Language Register of Love

A chapter on "love letters" represents an almost indispensable or, in any case, a very important part of almost every letter manual published during the 18th century. It is, however, sufficient only to take a look at one manual in particular in order to outline the general thrust that all of the manuals pursued. Analysing Luetkens' actual letters, I will supplement my explanations through further references to other manuals. The letter manual on which I will base my general explanations about the contemporary letter style is that by Benjamin Neukirch, first published in 1708, which underwent several reprints. I will be quoting from the 1727 edition. As the publication dates indicate, this book was published, read and used during the time when Luetkens grew up and during which he was apprenticed and it was still read and published during the time of his travels through Europe, which means that this book circulated exactly during the period when Luetkens developed his own letter style. This fact, however, does not mean that Luetkens owned or used Neukirch's letter manual, but it still explains why the content of the manual and his letters show similarities. In Luetkens' book of private expenses, we at least find costs for an English letter-writing manual and for several French books.

The abovementioned struggle of how to appropriately grasp the characteristics of the German letter style for love and personal letters used during that time, during the first half of the 18th century, becomes apparent in Neukirch's manual particularly in two ways. One indication is quite obvious, the other one is more hidden. The first indication is that Neukirch himself had certain problems to commit himself to one clear definition of the letter style for love letters, and the same applies to personal letters in general. He himself was forced to make a distinction between two types of love letters – and this distinction vividly illustrates the character and constraints of the transition period that the letter style underwent during that time. He distinguished between the 'gallant' love letters ["von galanten Liebes=briefen"] and the 'personal' or 'real' love letters ["von verliebten Briefen"].[218] The former was intended to be used only in a non-committal way. It was intended for gallant letter conversations between women and men without serious intentions, that is, without the intention to marry.

Gallantry in this way was understood in its original meaning, still stemming from the court culture of the 17th century, as a way to casually philander, we would say flirt,

218 Neukirch, *Anweisung zu teutschen Briefen*, chapter IX (gallant love letter), 215-242, chapter VII (love letter), 193-208.

with each other.[219] The second letter style, however, should be used whenever the correspondents in fact had serious intentions, that is, whenever letter writers had the ambition to marry, were already engaged or already married. In these kinds of letters, candour and honesty in writing were regarded as pivotal features.[220] Comparing Luetkens' original letters to Neukirch's categorization, we are dealing in his letters with the second category. As will become obvious from Neukirch's further explanations with regard to this second type of letter style, however, even these letters in the end did not forgo one of the most crucial gallant elements and features of letter-writing practice as it had been performed for decades. The latter fact represents the more concealed indication of the transition period because Neukirch himself would have certainly objected to this statement, emphasizing instead the detachment of his 'real' love letters from the gallant style and model.[221] The fact that his letter manual was surely still shaped by this style, however, becomes clearly obvious from the example letters in his book. That is, even though these letters were called 'real' love letters and not gallant letters, they still recalled a very common letter practice typical of gallant letter writing which had shaped the letter style since the 17th century: the letters were highly formulaic in character. Gallantry in this regard refers less to gallant tittle-tattle but rather to a common standard and ideal of gallant interaction as it was performed and as it had shaped social encounters at least until the 17th century. It refers to gallantry as a form of lifestyle that was shaped and characterised by a polite and concrete, candid way of interacting and conversing with each other, which was still practiced and deemed appropriate social behaviour in day-to-day business during the first half of the 18th century.[222]

As another contemporary writer summed up the way of gallant living, "the virtuous and gallant Conduite [deportment] expresses itself through words and deeds: In deeds: when one sees and abides to what is grand Mode in the gallant world at the moment, through complaisant acting, decent gestures, in order to recommend yourself ["seine Person recommandiret", to mark your mark]; In words: when we stick to a good devoir [the rules of courtesy] through making polite and mannerly [appropriate] compliments and also furthermore are skilful in our use of words."[223] With regard to letter writing and correspondence, this meant that even in his 'real' love letters, Neukirch was not able to abandon the idea that a certain formal structure for his letters and a certain letter courtesy was necessary and that it was inevitable for the letter writers to stick to this formularity and to the corresponding letter ceremonial in order to comply with societal

219 See Vellusig, *Schriftliche Gespräche*, 77-83. See Anton, *Authentizität als Fiktion*, 27.

220 See Neukirch, *Anweisung zu teutschen Briefen*, chapter IX (gallant love letter), 215-242, chapter VII (love letter), 193-208.

221 See Neukirch, *Anweisung zu teutschen Briefen*, 192.

222 See Rose, *Conduite und Text*, 1-32 ("Einleitung: Galante Conduite und galante Texte"), 51-65. See Steigerwald, Jörn. "Galanterie als kulturelle Identitätsbildung," 119-141.

223 "Die tugendhaffte und galante Conduite äusert sich nun auf zweyerley Weise: Erstlich in Wercken und anders in Worten. In Wercken: Wenn man siehet, was bey der galanten Welt grand Mode worden, und also durch complaisante Verrichtungen, und sittsame Geberden, seine Person recommandiret; In Worten: Wenn wir durch ein höffliches und manierliches Compliment unser Devoir beobachten, oder uns auch sonsten im Reden geschickt aufzuführen." Barth, *Die Galante Ethica* (1728).

standards and expectations of interaction and conversation. Therefore, in the manual he did not give in to allowing for a completely free way of parlance even in 'real' love letters because this would have been impolite and unmannerly. Quite on the contrary, Neukirch clearly advised the writer instead to stick to a certain general structure and to use specific letter formulae to bestow the letters with the necessary form and meaning which the contemporaries deemed appropriate. The latter particularly becomes evident from his explanations about the necessity of making compliments to correspondents as a basic prerequisite for displaying your good devoir, which, in turn, was deemed necessary for upholding and adhering to the common rules of social conduct: the gallant rules of courtesy. The reason why I am mentioning this and why it is particularly important to understand and point to this contemporary interdependency between the gallant lifestyle and the letter manual in order to understand the letter style of the time, is that Neukirch himself claimed the exact opposite for his 'real' love letters. In his view, his letter examples represented the ultimate benchmark of free and emotional parlance in love letters of the period.

With regard to the general purpose of love letters, Neukirch stated that the ultimate goal of these letters was "to move the reader" and to "write from the heart" ["wie sein Herz redet so redet auch seine Feder"].[224] The obvious discrepancy between this intention and the form and character that his actual letter examples provide demonstrates in the most vivid manner the general conflict or rather the conflict line along which the letter style of the time constantly went. The letter style of the 1740s was still highly shaped by the gallant letter style and the gallant way of living while at the same time it explicitly already laid a claim to offering the reader a more open and a freer way of love letter conversations. By this, in turn, it to a certain extent foreshadowed the natural letter style that was to become popular from the 1750s. Only beginning in the 1750s, the typical practice of using a general formulaic scaffolding and formulaic forms of expression slightly changed, when, as already outlined above, through Gellert's work it now became imaginable and the main premise for love letters in particular not to adhere to but to "abandon" any such rules.[225] Reading the lines by Neukirch from 1708 and 1727, however, the reader could get the impression that Neukirch's striking explanations virtually anticipate the claims and exact requests for a new letter style that Gellert formulated two decades later. Neukirch propagated a letter style that should evolve directly "from the heart" instead of being dictated by rules. As Gellert would write in the 1750s, letters which had the ability to move their recipients should be "free and natural, in a word, that they should come from the heart" and that consequently there "cannot be given any rules" limiting the letters' creation – in contrast to gallant letters.[226]

224 "Der Endzweck solcher Briefe ist, daß sie die lesende Person bewegen sollen [...] Der Brunn aus welchem wir die Argument nehmen, ist unser Herz [...] wie sein Herz redet so redet auch seine Feder." Neukirch, *Anweisung zu teutschen Briefen*, 192.

225 The natural letter style, as is generally accepted in research, started with the letter manual by Gellert,*Von dem guten Geschmacke in Briefen*, from 1751 ["so vergesse man die Exempel, um sie nicht knechtisch nachzuahmen." Ibid., 69]. See Furger, *Briefsteller*, 65; see Anton, *Authentizität als Fiktion*, 24. See Schlaffer, "Glück und Ende des Privatbriefes."

226 "Darum kan man auch von ihrer Erfindung keine Regeln geben. Summa: ein rechter Liebes-brief muß frey sein, natürlich, und mit einem Worte, so seyn wie von Hertzen kommet. Denn in galanten

In his own explanations about the appropriate letter style for love letters, Neukirch, however, could not keep up with this promise and with his sophisticated, or sublime, claims. Instead, it becomes obvious how strongly he was still committed to the gallant model and ideal, offering the reader of his manual the exact opposite of his own provisions: he offered the letter writer certain concrete rules and examples with certain set phrases and letter formulae which they could use to write appropriate love letters.[227]

Highly intriguing are the pages of Neukirch's letter manual following his explanations on the 'real' love letters. It actually took the author only two pages, after his statement on the unbound nature of love letters, before he subsequently essentially contradicted his own statement. At least, this is the impression that today's readers get when reading his letters. In his defence, we might also conclude that from his own point of view, the following pages, may well have been unproblematic and appropriate. After all, as I mentioned above, he subsequently only reproduced what he regarded as indispensable and advisable for achieving the goal of writing 'straight from the heart', and this was necessarily bound to reproduce certain common phrases that the contemporaries deemed suitable for this purpose.

In the following, Neukirch made concrete suggestions as to how lovers could achieve the goal of writing appropriate love letters, which served the said purpose of moving the recipient, by drawing on certain set phrases, letter formulae and typical contents of appropriate 'real' love letters. He provided the reader of his manual with concrete guidelines and specifications, a kind of template of what a love letter should look like and what content it had to include in order to allow the writer the *right words* to make the right compliments to a lover and to put these arguments in a suitable order, as it was expected from a letter writer of the time. By doing so, he adhered to the gallant way of writing shaped by social courtesy and social necessity. Yet at the same time or in the same breath, he diverged from the premise of completely free expression in love letters, even though this had been the dictum that he had given before by stating that there should not be any rules for love letters. This represents literally the printed proof of the discrepancy and limbo that the letter style was going through during the 1740s.

Some of Neukirch's main suggestions in his letter-writing manual regarding an appropriate love letter read as follows: In order to move a correspondent and to have influence on the receiver of the letter, namely the lover, the writer was advised to use for instance the following letter phrases and the corresponding letter formulae: A writer should write that "4) one is delighted to receive every letter from her no matter how short it is. […]; 8) one praises her beauty and her temper ["Gemüthe"] […]; 15) one describes how deeply it hurts to be away from her 16) one complains about the many obstacles which stand in the way of their mutual love […]; 20) one admonishes her to be faithful and show her enduring love; 21) one expresses joy about seeing her soon."[228]

Schreiben hat der Verstand, hier aber das Hertz die Oberhand." Neukirch, *Anweisung zu teutschen Briefen*, 192.

227 For comparable gallant love letters from the 1750s, see Paulus, "Liebes- und Glaubensbekenntnisse," 93-97. See also Sträter, *Frauenbriefe*.

228 "4) Erfreuet man sich, wenn man die geringste Antwort von ihr erlanget. […] 8) Lobet man ihre Schönheit, ihr Gemüthe […] 15) Beschreibet man den Schmertz, welchen man ihrer Abwesenheit fühlt. 16) Beklaget man sich über die Hinderniss, welche unsrer Liebe etwan im Wege stehen. […]

All of these letter statements bound to concrete letter formulae clearly show the intention to make a courtesy call to the addressee by means of compliments and common phrases to express affection. The statements could easily be described in performative ways as equating to taking a bow, a gesture of obeisance, in front of the recipient of the letter, just as it was typical and common for the gallant way of social interaction.[229] They provided the perfect template to write an appropriate (gallant) love letter to your lover. At the same time, there can be no doubt about the fact that even these phrases undoubtedly clearly presented certain unambiguous love messages, and as such they definitely show and transported a certain degree of emotionality.[230] However, these phrases definitely did not represent direct outbursts from the heart but came in the shape of prefabricated formulae that the letter writers could adhere to whenever they intended to draw up a letter. This connection and the interplay between formularity, the usage of formulaic expressions and the intention to express emotions, in practice reflects precisely the basic momentum that notably characterised the letters of the 1740s and that turned these letters into effective tools of exerting influence on other people.

As might be expected at this point, the selection of the above-listed common set phrases and the letter formulae from Neukirch's manual did not happen without reason. Rather, I deliberately selected and picked the sentences where the manual showed clear parallels with the actual love letter that the merchant Nicolaus Gottlieb Luetkens wrote to his future wife Ilsabe in March 1745. These quoted phrases provide us with the most suitable linkage point to bring together theory and practice of the 1740s letter style. The reason for this is very simple. Luetkens used exactly these kinds of phrases and letter formulae when expressing his affection to Ilsabe. He also stuck to a certain form and structure for his letter, which also resembles the examples in Neukirch's manual. In a nutshell, Luetkens' letter precisely reflects and encapsulates all the above-mentioned characteristics and features of the 1740s letter style. In the end, his letter perfectly illustrates the explained letter style as it was put into practice during the 1740s. Luetkens' love letter is the perfect example of the kind of formulaic emotionality which I have presented as typical for the letter practice of the 1740s.

The decisive point is that the formality that clearly shaped his letters decidedly does not amount to a general lack of honesty, sincerity or reasonableness in what he wrote to Ilsabe. On the contrary, what I wanted to stress with my explanations is that the letter style that he used and the letter formulae that he included simply complied with the contemporary standard of writing love letters, by which he explicitly also complied with the expectations that a receiver of his letters would have during that time. As Kristen Neuschel put it, it is simply "impossible to distinguish style and substance in

20) Ermahnet man sie zur Beständigkeit 21) Erfreuet man sich, wenn ihr was gutes begegnet 22) Erfreuet man sich, wenn man sie bald wieder sehen soll." Neukirch, *Anweisung zu teutschen Briefen*, 194-200.

229 Regarding gallant compliments, see Rose, *Conduite und Text*, 181-184, 192-200. See also Barth, Die Galante Ethica.

230 See Holloway, *Game of Love*, 20-44.

[…] letters; formulaic expressions operated to convey meaning."[231] Or, put in the apt words of Heiko Droste, "formularity is by no means an argument against the honesty and righteousness" of these letters, because it was precisely these letter formulae that conveyed the emotions understandable to the recipient.[232] Thus, the form and features and the particular letter formulae that Luetkens chose for his letter were exactly what accounted for the letter's effectiveness to transmit affection to Ilsabe. The form was used to convey meaning. In other words, the letter phrases and formulae must have most certainly been understood as clear gestures of affection by Ilsabe, and Luetkens had surely also intended them as such. In short, with his letter to Ilsabe, Luetkens showed her that he was serious about their marriage. For this purpose, he complied with the kind of protocol for a social encounter between lovers that prevailed during that time.

Looking at Luetkens' actual letter practice in comparison to Neukirch's letter theory, however, we are nevertheless presented with another special feature and contemporary particularity that goes even beyond Neukirch's suggestions. This special feature, however, does not contradict Neukirch's letter provisions in general but can ultimately be perfectly combined with his suggestions. In fact, to a certain extent, it even fulfilled certain expectations that Neukirch had raised with his manual, but which he was not able to uphold himself. This special feature was that in Luetkens' letter we find certain phrases that clearly already exceed and surpass the framework of the gallant style and instead took up and can already be assigned to the more natural style of letter writing. In Luetkens' letter we do not only find letter formulae he had borrowed, consciously or unconsciously, from gallant discourse, but we also find more emphatic expressions, linguistic utterances stemming from more current contemporary debates and discourses of the Enlightenment of the 1740s. These popularised a more emotional way of expressing affection in daily practice and particularly within love and marriage relationships, in discourses on sentiment, authenticity, morals and first and foremost naturalness as guiding principles of social behaviour. As such phrases can be regarded expressions of emotional release or outbursts such as "Ach!", meaning "Alas" or "Oh dear", phrases referring to physical yearnings and sensations, such as the wish to hug one's love, "embrace each other soon", and the mention of his "restless heart". As a side note, his reference to embracing Ilsabe also indicates French influences in Luetkens' letter style, since in French letter writing the term *embrace* was one of the most frequently used terms during that time, and last but not least,.[233] All of these linguistic utterances later became

231 Neuschel, Kristen B. *Word of Honor. Interpreting Noble Culture in Sixteenth-Century France.* Ithaca/New York: Cornell University Press, 1989, chapter 4, "The Power of Words," 103. Her assessment does not just hold true for letters of the 16th century but certainly also for letters of later centuries.

232 "Formelhaftigkeit [muss] kein Argument gegen deren Aufrichtigkeit sein, denn daß sie in topischen Ausdrücken geschrieben wurden, besagt ja nicht, dass sie individuell empfunden wurden." Droste, "Briefe als Medium," 242.

233 In France, where the letter styles in general became freer in style, tone and formularity already during the end of the 17th century, such terms were common in letters much earlier than in the rest of Europe. During the 18th century, these phrases were taken up and became the standard repertoire also in German letter styles. See Chartier, "Secrétaires for the People," 59-111. See Hausmann, Frank Rutger, "Seufzer, Tränen, und Erbleichen/nicht-verbale Aspekte der Liebessprache in der französischen Literatur des 16. und 17. Jahrhundert." In *Die Sprache der Zeichen und Bilder. Rhetorik und nonver-*

part of the standard repertoire for natural letters and were used in the letters written during the *Age of Sentiment*. The love letters exchanged between the Hamburg philosopher Klopstock and Meta Moller, or between Caroline Flachsland and Herder represent the most suitable intertextual references in this regard.[234] For the 1740s, however, we can already draw on other intertextual references for these phrases. Such ways and modes of expression can for instance be found and were cultivated in contemporary literature in epistolary novels such as Samuel Richardson's *Pamela* or Daniel Defoe's *Roxana*, and they can also be encountered in the moral weeklies of the time, which all mirrored the ideal and idea of contributing to a moral enhancement of society, which included the revaluation of love relationships.[235] Applying this knowledge to the analysis of Luetkens' concrete letters, and also checking it against Neukirch's letter-writing manual, we can conclude that in certain ways by including these phrases in his letter Luetkens complied with the claim that Neukirch had formulated and demanded in his manual for the character and purpose of love letters. While Neukirch, however, in theory failed his own expectations, Luetkens for his part in practice pulled out all the stops and used every means available to him to fill his letter with as much emotional significance as possible. Luetkens tried his best to appear as emotional as possible to Ilsabe in order to win or rather maintain her affection – just as it was expected from lovers of the time.

What is telling about these emotional letter phrases is that it becomes clearly obvious from his letter that Luetkens used these phrases in precisely the same manner as he had also used the gallant phrases before: in a pragmatic way. Therefore, we cannot and should not assume that with these lines Luetkens necessarily unburdened his heart and expressed his deepest feelings to Ilsabe, thus presenting us with his innermost self and emotions, as the contemporary scholars on epistolarity such as Neukirch argued. Quite on the contrary, we are presented with a calculated self-representation, a self-image of a man, who knew what was needed and knew what it would take to make an impression and an appropriate appearance in front of his future wife Ilsabe. For this purpose, Luetkens mobilised these phrases and letter formulae in exactly the same way as he would also use the gallant phrases and letter formulae. He used them as a certain letter text repertoire, which he obviously must have regarded as being suitable for his goals and as appropriate to show his good manners. In the end, these lines simply

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bale Kommunikation in der frühen Neuzeit, edited by Volker Kapp, 102-117, Marburg: Hitzeroth, 1990. Regarding these phrases of love and friendship see also Helgason, *Schriften des Herzens*, 182-196, analysing letter exchanges between Anna Louisa Karsch und Johann Ludwig Gleim. Regarding the usage of "Ach" and other expressions of emotional release particularly during the second half and end of the 18th century, see Augart, *Eine romantische Liebe*, 125-129.

234 See Reinlein, *Empfindsamkeit*; Reinlein, "Strategien des Liebeswerbens," 33-48. See Trepp, *Sanfte Männlichkeit*, 41, 131-159.

235 Richardson, Samuel. *Pamela, or Virtue Rewarded*. London: Rivington, 1740. German edition *Pamela oder die belohnte Tugend*. Leipzig: Schuster, 1750. "I would die for you if I were put to it". Defoe, Daniel. *Roxana. The Fortunate Mistress (Roxana, oder eine vom Glück begünstigte Buhlerin)*. London: T. Warner, 1724, 62. Benedict, Barbara M. "The Sentimental Servant. The Dangers of Dependence in Defoe's Roxana." In *Reflections on Sentiment: Essays in Honor of George Starr*, edited by Alessa Johns, 85-104. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2016, here 100. See Stollberg-Rilinger, *Aufklärung*, 114-144.

appear as another building block of his rhetorical strategy to make an impression on Ilsabe. The latter, in turn, shows why even these phrases were perfectly combinable with Neukirch's instructions in his letter manual. Luetkens only supplemented Neukirch's suggestions for appropriate love phrases by adding more letter formulae coming from other contemporary linguistic resources. The added letter formulae fulfilled the expectations raised in Neukirch's manual actually more concretely than the original as they allowed for a more subjective mode of love expressions. Nonetheless, the general approach that Luetkens chose for his letter and its rhetorical character is rather similar to Neukirch's approach. Luetkens' letter is no example of a freely formulated, uncontrolled outburst of love and affection but instead it was a well-considered, well-constructed and well-structured prime example of a mixture of a gallant and a natural letter written for the purpose of making the right impression on a future lover by means of finding and choosing the right words to flatter her. And as such, this letter finally provides us with a prime example and the illustration of the second side of the coin of the practical principle of mollification. The way this letter was written precisely represented the way a letter had to be written during that time in order to exert influence on an addressee – in this case, to send your future wife, as it was expected, a love letter in the run-up to marriage.

Put in a nutshell, the situation with which we are dealing in Luetkens' love letter can be summed up as follows: In his love letter Luetkens stuck to a formal protocol of courtesy which was due to contemporary gallant ideas of appropriate love letters representing acceptable norms of social encounters between lovers. At the same time, his letters already show first clear signs of a more emotional way of expressing affection, which should later become the emotional standard of the second half of the 18th century but which was already gaining ground during that time.[236] In the 1740s, these emotional ways of expression still took the form of certain formulae used and moulded into the contemporary letter style. This is what differentiates these letters from those written later in time in the natural or emphatic letter style, which would for the first time discard any formal restrictions and limitations and instead propagated a free way of expressing emotions in letters. The letter style of the 1740s, which is represented in Luetkens' letter, however, was still strongly shaped by the contemporary prevailing gallant way of thinking, which made it necessary to structure his letter around certain set phrases, signalling gestures of affection and of politeness. In the end, Luetkens' letter is therefore also a prime example of the transition period between the gallant and the natural letter style. The result was that Luetkens used emotional phrases for his letters, but he used them in a formulaic way.

236 Regarding the analysis of contemporary emotional standards as "cultural grammars", "einer kulturell bestimmten emotionalen Grammatik", see Medick, Hans, and David Sabean. "Einleitung." In *Emotionen und materielle Interessen: sozialanthropologische und historische Beiträge zur Familienforschung*, edited by Hans Medick and David Sabean, 11-24. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1984, here 17.

For the modern reader, the phrases of love appear misplaced, his words and sentences appear drafted and artificial. Especially comparing this letter to all of Luetkens' other letters we have read and analysed in the book, the letter appears lost in reverie. However, what needs to be realised and what I wanted to highlight with my contextualisation is that this sense of oddness, or rather, this obvious difference to the other letters, was mandatory because this letter also must have been different to the other letters in Luetkens' archive because it was a love letter to his future wife. As I showed, this letter had to take on this precise form to convey the right meaning to Ilsabe to prevent the possibility of this letter being misunderstood or even being regarded as impolite. The way this letter was written simply complied with the standard of how love letters were written in the 1740s. The second thing we must realise is that Luetkens did not use this form or any of his formulae cluelessly and without reason. Quite on the contrary, all of the elements of the letter were necessary and indispensable means of the practical principle of persuasion applied in this letter, the principle of mollification. In this respect, all of the elements were ultimately used for a very concrete goal, which was to find the right words and make the right impression on Ilsabe and to meet her expectations.

Surely it cannot be ruled out that writing such a letter may have also been somewhat annoying for the merchant Luetkens. There are certainly comments in his letters to Joachim, such as "my dear Lieschen must be patient", that suggest that this might have been the case.[237] In other letters, however, he praised his future wife in glowing terms. Either way, the fact remains that Luetkens put every best effort into writing an appropriate love letter to Ilsabe, which we are now that we have all the necessary background information and knowledge sufficiently prepared to finally read.

7.11 The Love Letter and the Principle of Mollification

On the 16th of December 1744, Nicolaus Gottlieb Luetkens sent the following love letter to his future wife Ilsabe. The many corrections, modifications, strikethroughs and insertions of words, marked in the original letter through inserted lines, show his great efforts and maybe also his struggle to find the right words for this important letter.[238] For the purpose of matching the letter with my previous explanations, I have deliberately highlighted the respective letter phrases that represent shaping elements of the contemporary letter style, which we are able to find in the gallant letter-writing manual of Neukirch, marked as underlined, as well as those which represent common emphatic phrases stemming from early Enlightenment discourse, marked in italics, foreshadowing the natural letter style.

237 Letter from Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb to Luetkens, Joachim, February 1, 1745, TNA, HCA 30/232, Letter Book I, no. 508.

238 See the original transcription of the letter quoted in the next footnote.

"I have to answer your most delightful letter from the 29th of last month which I am doing with the greatest pleasure. [...] I will order what you require from London. With everything else, my dearest love, I allow you every freedom to do whatever you want with regard to the furnishing of the house and please feel free to furnish it after your fancy and how you like it. *Your heart is what I am aiming at and want to win my dear*. Every day *I send sighs to you* and yearn for your presence and being robbed of the latter gives me a lot of restless | and sad | hours. But the Lord has not yet decided to bring us together because every time new obstacles come in my way and hinder me from returning home earlier. I don't see that I will be à costy [in Hamburg] before next spring. In the meantime, you can rest assured of my sincere faithfulness and true love ["aufrichtige Treue und warhaftige Liebe"] and I expect the same from you. Let us trust in God and | sincerely | ask him that he will bring us together soon in health and pleasure. *Alas! I wish nothing more than that the time had already come to embrace you*. Your dear brother will hand you over some small gifts from me for you when skipper Frerks arrives, I ask you please to accept these gifts and to not see their value but my good intentions behind them. I am in a [foreign] land where it is sometimes hard to get what one wishes. With all my heart I congratulate you on your Christmas holidays, if it is God's will we will spend these holidays together next year. I am subserviently indebted to our dear mama and please assure her of my filial and | most humble | obedience and that I will always strive to do that with the greatest of pleasure."[239]

The general message behind this letter is obvious. In today's parlance, it would be: I promise you that I will return home as soon as possible, but it will still take me several more months before I will be able to leave France. However, as conciliatory proposal, I entrust you with the full responsibility to take care of our future home and I pledge you my loyalty and faithfulness and assure you that I will remain loyal and faithful to you till my return, as long as you remain loyal to me.

239 "habe zu beantw[orten] derro mir hertzlig angenehmes von 29 passato wormit mir belieben zu vergnügen. [...] Übrigens | mein | aller Liebste laße ihnen vor die Moblirung des Haußes schallten und wollte nach deren Gonste und wie es vor gutt finden. der aller Liebsten [---] Hertz. derro will der meinige. ~~es gehen~~ ich laße schicke Tag Täglig ~~Sch~~ Seufzer nach ihnen und derro Gegenwart, umbd und letzteres so lange beraubet zu sein machet mir mange unruige | und betrübte | Stunde, aber des Högsten Wille hatt es noch nicht beschloßen uns zusammen zu bringen. denn mir aller Zeitt neue Verhinderung in wegen kommen umb meine Reyse zu beschleunigen und sehe nicht vor negst Frühjahr à costy werde sein können, unterdeßen gelieben meine aufrichtige Treue und warhaftige Liebe versichert zu sein, wie mich dan [bei] aller Liebste auf diejehnige verlaße, laßet uns das übrige den aller Hogsten anbefehlen und ihn | inbrunstig | bitten er uns baldt in Gesundtheitt und Vergnügen möge zusahmen bringen. ach ich wünsche nicht mehr alls das die Zeitt schon da wehre ihnen zu können umbarmen. derro lieber Bruder wird ihnen in meinet wegen bey Arrivemt von S[chiffer] Frerks einige Bagatellen presentiren bitte doch selbes zu acceptiren, und nicht den Wehrt sondern mein gutten Willen ansehen, ich bin hier in ein ~~Landt~~ Orth wo nicht nach Willen habe erhallten können was woll gewünscht, zu die Weinachtferien gratuliere ihnen von Hertzen, der aller Hogste wird wen es es sein guedigen Wille geben selbe negst Jahr werden zusahmen hallten. ich bin untertenigst verbunden vor das Andenken von unsere Liebe Mama bitte an selbe mein kindligen | und untertenigst | Gehorßahm zu versichern und in übrigens zu glauben das strebens verbleiben werde mein aller werteste Vergnügen." Letter from Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb to Engelhardt, Ilsabe, December 16, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/232, Letter Book I, no. 434.

This message in many ways sounds like a business proposal that Luetkens suggested to Ilsabe, a quid-pro-quo transaction in mercantile terms. Ilsabe received something in return for something. Admittedly, it is most certainly not possible to simply dismiss the impression that Luetkens' business acumen, as well as his usual mercantile style of writing, have had a certain bearing on Luetkens' love letters. Furthermore, as we have learned before, marriage initiation during the mid-18th century often took the form of business-like marriage negotiations.[240] However, in this particular letter, the assumption that we are dealing merely with a business agreement falls too short. The reason for this is that this letter was not about marriage negotiation and the marriage settlement was already made. The latter was something that Luetkens ha negotiated with the other family members of the Engelhardt family, Ehrenfried and mother Engelhardt. Instead of negotiation, the intention behind this letter was far more to present Ilsabe with a fait acompli, which, however, had to be broken to her gently. For this purpose, Luetkens used all means and resources of mollifying gestures available to him. Whether it was his conciliatory proposals, his concessions with regard to the furnishing of their future home or his words of endearment as part of his chosen letter style: he took all measures which must have seemed necessary to him to try to maintain Ilsabe's affection and benevolence.

The intention and situation behind this letter was therefore not negotiation, but it was mollification and charming her. By means of this letter, Luetkens tried to convince her in glowing terms, which are especially noticeable with regard to the added words and sentences as text insertions visible in the copied letter in his Letter Book, that Ilsabe could trust in his words and promises. Instead of ascribing the form and content of this letter only to Luetkens' business sense, I would therefore rather count it as evidence of the practical principle of persuasion through mollification governing this letter for the purpose of maintaining her benevolence. If we interpret this letter as a practical example of this principle, the formulae used reveal their logic and purpose.

Instead of only providing the letter writer with a kind of template for his love letter, the formulae provided Luetkens with appropriate ways and means, a toolbox, to formulate and to convey certain specific meanings to the receiver of the letter. Since the recipient of the letter, Ilsabe, was also familiar with the meaning of these set phrases and letter formulae from her own experience, she therefore understood what they stood for and represented. The phrases and formulae therefore represent and served as crucial carriers and communication aids for the letter interaction. They were not signs of superficiality but an important mainstay of the practical principle of persuasion applied in this letter conversation and an important pillar of the practice of letter writing in the mid-18th century. It is my deep conviction that this assessment holds true for most of the formulaic language used in past letters.[241] Just as in the case of using specific folding and bundling techniques, choosing different languages for different letter types with different purposes, using a P.S. or marking letters as *particular letters*, also the

240 Regarding marriage as "a highly commercial business", see also Hancock, *Citizens of the World*, 245. See also Grassby, *Business Community*, 303. See Weber, *Deutsche Kaufleute*, 272. See also Schulte Beerbühl, *German Merchants*, 116.

241 See also Van der Wal/Rutten, "The Practice of Letter Writing"; Van der Wal/Rutten. "Letters as Loot."

deliberate usage and choice of certain letter phrases and formulae was a practical act serving a concrete purpose within the practice of letter writing. Nothing in letter practice of the past was happening cluelessly or randomly. By means of using well-chosen formulae for his love letter, Luetkens tried to impact positively on the further course of the letter conversation as well as the spouses' future together. For this purpose, he mobilised concrete resources, arguments and phrases from both the gallant style and the more natural style, he showed his good manners and his respect for Ilsabe by choosing an appropriate letter style and he mobilised the contemporary language register of love referring to trust and affection, by which he also aimed at highlighting and underlining both his own and her suitability, their corresponding humours, and their qualities as future spouses. All these served the ultimate goal of expressing his good intentions and meeting her expectations, which he also, again, used to appease her for his long absence.

Both his gallant and his more natural phrases for expressing his affection to Ilsabe did not in any way represent empty or meaningless phrases. Quite on the contrary, just like his gifts to his future wife, these letter sentences and the entire letter in general represented no less than another clear marriage pledge, which was why he put so much effort into finding the right words. With this letter, Luetkens committed himself to his future wife. At the same time, since this marriage pledge relied on reciprocity, he also required her to commit to her obligations. This is why in his letter he also reminded her of her obligation to remain faithful to him, which was regarded, as we have learned, as one of the most crucial preconditions for a successful marriage. The social significance of this letter therefore went far beyond the representation of merely loving banter. Instead, this letter presents us with one of the building blocks of Luetkens' marriage preparations, which is why having access to at least one of Luetkens' love letters was such an important find for this book. It presents us with another important milestone of the merchant's establishment phase.

It would have been preferable, in fact fantastic, to also read Ilsabe's response letter to Luetkens, but we will never get this opportunity. However, as luck would have it, we are still able to get at least a glimpse of her reaction to Luetkens' letters from a letter written by Ilsabe's brother Ehrenfried. In Ehrenfried Engelhardt's letters, we also learn about the reaction of his future mother-in-law, who herself had received a letter from her future son-in-law. In the last part of this chapter, I will take a look at these letters, not only because they show us the reaction of Ilsabe but also because they reveal to us the attitude of his future mother-in-law and his future brother-in-law and soon-to-be business partner regarding the upcoming marriage. Furthermore, these letters also provide us with a fairly accurate image of Luetkens' self-perception. The reason for the latter is that in contrast to the letter to Ilsabe, we will find in the letter exchanges with his future business partner and brother-in-law and his future mother-in-law concrete justifications and reasons for his late return to Hamburg, for which he mainly drew on mercantile reasoning referring to his mercantile obligations and his mercantile self-perception. Learning about these justifications, we will gain an impression of how Luetkens at the end of his establishment phase saw himself as a man and merchant ready for the next steps in his career.

7.12 Mercantile Self-Perception

Most basically, the following letters that Luetkens wrote to and received from Ehrenfried Engelhardt and Ehrenfrieds' and Ilsabe's mother can be described as family letters, or "Hausbriefe" in German. These letters served the purpose of discussing family matters, therefore limiting the circle of addressees and readers of these letters to only those who were directly involved in the family affairs.[242] Since the group of correspondents involved in this case, however, are future family members, the character of these letters and the logic underpinning them reveal them as a special form of family letters: these letters decidedly served the purpose of gaining the affection and paying respect to the future family members, or in other words, they once more represent epistolary courtesy calls.

In this respect, these letters will show particular characteristics, which seemed to be necessary and appropriate to achieve this goal. Comparing the style of these letters with the letter-writing manuals of the time, the style chosen for these letters seems to not only represent the letter type of family letters, but it also represents as a kind of second layer of these letters the letter type of "letters of compliments" and of "letters of insinuation", which basically directly points to the fact that these letters served the purpose of giving an appropriate image and account of yourself and your plans.[243] With regard to the letter Luetkens wrote to his future "mama" we are furthermore dealing with yet another, third peculiarity with regard to the letter type. This particular letter furthermore represented a "New Year's greetings letter", which first and foremost served the purpose of sending good wishes to reassure your beloved ones of your affection.[244] Considering these many layers of different letter types being combined in the actual letters, we could easily be inclined to call these letter a kind of "mixed letters", "vermischte" or "gemischte Schreiben".[245] The problem with this term is however, that the contemporaries themselves used and reserved this term for yet another letter type, one that is actually represented in this episode through Ehrenfried's letters. Ehrenfried's letters would be called "mixed letters" by the contemporaries, because apart from family matters Ehrenfried also discussed business matters in these letters, which demarcated them as mixed letters.

Furthermore, the ultimate reason why we should not lump together the different letter types simply as "mixed letters" in our perspective is because the contemporaries themselves would not have used and defined these letter types as separate categories

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242 See Hunold, *Die Allerneueste Art Höflich und Galant zu Schreiben*. "Sechzehenden Abtheilung. Haus= und Geschäfftsschreiben gemeiner und anverwandter Personen", e.g. letters between father and son, mother and son, between brothers, 591-644.

243 See Neukirch, *Anweisung zu teutschen Briefen*, chapter X "Von galanten Complimenten", chapter XI "Von galanten insinuations Briefen", 243-261.

244 "bey Antretung des neuen Jahres." See Neukirch, *Anweisung zu teutschen Briefen*, 150. See Bohse, August (pseud.: Talander). *Talanders neuerläuterte Teutsche Rede-Kunst und Briefverfassung*. Leipzig: Gleditsch, 1700, 82 ["Neu=]ahrs=Compliment].

245 See Hunold, *Die Allerneueste Art Höflich und Galant zu Schreiben*, chapter "Von gemischten Schreiben." 389-479. See Neukirch, *Anweisung zu teutschen Briefen*, chapter XXIII "Von vermischten Briefen", 336.

if it had not been for a good reason. This reason was that they associated with each letter type a concrete purpose and for these purposes, there once more prevailed different formal guidelines and provisions, whose observance served as the foundation and yardstick for socially appropriate letter interaction. The detailed segmentation of the letter style chosen for these letters once more shows the complexity of the contemporary letter style and the sophisticated way in which the contemporaries used it. At the same time, this complex interplay and combination of different letter types shows us that we are dealing with a similar situation as with regard to the love letters. In this case, however, we are not only dealing with an illustration of the said transition period with regard to the contemporary change in letter style in general. For the latter fact it is once more highly indicative that Luetkens used and decided on similar letter phrases for his letters to Ehrenfried and his mother-in-law as he had used in his letter to Ilsabe. Furthermore, these letters show that we are also dealing with a more personal transition period, the transmission period of a family's status.

All the correspondents would soon become actual family members, which required a high degree of sensitivity and dexterity, calling for a careful and conscious selection of an appropriate letter style. The latter fact applied to both sides of the letter exchange, Luetkens on the one side, Ehrenfried and the Engelhardt women on the other side. Ultimately, despite all subtleties and the complexity, the general goal of all these letters was again the same: to win and maintain the favour of the correspondents. For this purpose, the letter writers used all necessary means to achieve this goal. These elements once more can be ascribed as belonging to the practical principle of persuasion of mollification, of appeasing someone through mollifying gestures, words of endearment and promises. Furthermore, or rather as an intrinsic part of this, they served the purpose of presenting yourself in the best possible light. Ehrenfried's letters served as the mouthpiece for Ilsabe and her mother, and himself of course, to show their good intentions. Luetkens' own letters served the purpose of giving the best impression of himself.

Highly interesting in this regard is another differentiation that we can find in the contemporary letter-writing manuals, which points us this time, however, to a characteristic feature that we should not generally assume to be an indispensable precondition for the letter analysed in this part of the chapter. This differentiation is that Neukirch, for instance, being exemplary for many other letter-writing manuals, clearly separated letters of compliment and insinuation from private letters.[246] The contemporaries themselves made a distinction between personal letters serving the purpose of winning someone's affection, by compliments for instance, and private letters in which letter writers exchanged their most private thoughts and shared their secrets. The Engelhardt letters fell in the first category. This differentiation is so interesting with regard to the letters analysed because also in these letters the main goal of the letter writers was not to reveal and unfold their most inner self to the addressees, even though their words in some ways transported this message.

Instead, these letters aimed at making a good impression on another person by means of presenting a well-thought-out self-image or in the case of the Ehrenfried's let-

246 See Neukirch, *Anweisung zu teutschen Briefen*, chapter X "Von galanten Complimenten", chapter XI "Von galanten insinuations Briefen", 243-261.

ter to present a well-thought-out image of his sister and their mother. This is why these letters took their specific form. Encapsulating the ongoing large research discussion about privacy in the Early Modern Period, and as a part of this especially the discussion about different forms of intimacy in letter-writing practice, we can conclude that, if we regard only the content of the letters, surely Luetkens' love letter to Ilsabe could deserve to be called a private letter, but even this letter was strongly shaped by gallant compliments and the requirement of presenting a well-considered self-presentation as a lover, and no self-revelation. On the other hand, however, the letters to Luetkens' future brother and mother-in-law should definitely be called personal letters and not private letters.[247]

Thus, while the letter to Ilsabe at least had the goal to create an affectionate relationship between the lovers and therefore to establish a certain form of privacy, the letters to Ehrenfried and his mother primarily served the purpose of giving a profound account of himself, of his personality and character that could withstand the eyes of the whole family and even the wider kin. Such letters needed to be presentable, even to a wider audience. Nonetheless, the letters were dealing with family business and therefore were in the first instance only meant for the eyes of the direct addressees, which is why they can still be called personal letters.

Based on these two examples, the distinction that is made by Neukirch between private and personal letters becomes clear and understandable, which is why it will also not surprise us that this distinction is often still seen as valid by historians today. It is important to understand that these letters were "often personal yet not private", as Beate Körber put it for letters of the 16th century, but which still held true for many letters of the 18th century.[248] There were simply different requirements and expectations prevailing for these two kinds of letters. The concrete requirements and expectations for the letters to Ehrenfried and his future mother-in-law were obvious. These personal letters were written in order to demonstrate and underline that the respective letter writer was able to meet the family's expectations. This serves subsequently also as the reason why we find justifications about Luetkens' person, personality and his plans primarily in his letters to his mother-in-law and especially in the letters to his future brother-in-law and business partner but not in the letter to his future wife. In his letter to Ilsabe, the fact that they would make a good couple simply was not negotiable because this would have meant that the whole undertaking stood on shaky legs. Therefore, we find only sparse written justifications in Luetkens' letter to Ilsabe, but instead in his love letter the transmission of feelings and the creation of an emotional bond through certain mollifying words stood in the foreground. In sum, the self-image of Luetkens, and likewise the self-images of Ilsabe, her brother and mother that we are going to be presented with in the letters analysed will not necessarily present us with their innermost self, but instead they present us with the image that the letter writers deemed appropriate and reasonable to be presented to their future family members and to underline their future aspirations and role in the family. This means,

247 See also Körber, "Der soziale Ort des Briefs." See Earle, "Introduction," (in *Epistolary Selves*), 7. See Whyman, *Pen and the People*, 72; see Furger, *Briefsteller*, 137.

248 Körber, "Der soziale Ort des Briefs," 258.

to borrow the apt words of Robert Vellusig, that we have to be aware of the fact that although the historical actors and their inner selves “are not fully represented in their self-representations, these representations nevertheless reveal to us a vivid impression of what these people were like”, of how they understood themselves.[249] The self-image of Ilsabe reveals to us against this backdrop how she interpreted her role as a future wife. The self-image of Nicolaus Gottlieb reveals to us how he wanted to be seen as a man and a merchant at the end of his establishment phase. This is why these letters are so telling about the self-perception of a merchant during establishment.

In the following, I will first cite the letter by Luetkens to his future mother-in-law because this letter reveals the particular role and function of such letters in a telling way. Subsequently, I will give an account of the reactions of the Engelhardt women to Luetkens' letters extracted from the letters of Ehrenfried Engelhardt, which will at the same time also give us an insight into Ehrenfried's view of the matter. All these letters will give us a concrete account of how such letters were used as tools to forge family alliances.

To “Madame E.”, mother Engelhardt, Luetkens wrote the following lines on the 28th of December 1744:

> “At this occasion of the turn of the year, I take the liberty to pay you my respect with this letter [“mit meine Schreiben zu oncomodiren”] and kindly ask you, by the virtue of my filial obedience [“kindligen Pflicht”], to honour me with a part of your motherly care and affection [“derro mütterlige Gruß und Gewogenheit”] also in the next and all the following years. I wish that our dear God grants you a long life to our joy and to give us your assistance in the world, which I truly wish from the bottom of my heart [“auß warhafftige Hertzen”], I hope that it will be God's will that the next year it will be my most jolly and blessed [“vergnügte und glückseligste] pleasure to show my dear Mama my commitment with actions that I seek to do my filial duty as a son and show you my obedience in the same way as does my dear friend, your dear son [“derro lieben Sohn, in kindlige Flight und Gehorsahm gleich zu thun”]. My [---] daughter efforts endeavour is tireless to show everyone that I am doing all I can [“beflissen”] to be a worthy husband to your dear daughter and my dear love [“mein aller Liebste würdig zu sein”], and with every new day I am more and more encouraged to do so by God's blessing and guiding, who will also help me, and I trust in his power to rule that I will have the | cordial | pleasure to thank you for your accorded favours [“vor erzeugte Gunst”] and to clear my debt through my humble obedience, I send you my warmest regards and remain with all humble respect.”[250]

Luetkens' letter to his mother-in-law, which was enclosed in a letter to Ehrenfried, fully complied with the contemporary requirements of a *New Year's letter*. Luetkens extended

249 “Zwar gehen wir in unserer jeweiligen Selbstdarstellung nicht auf, diese vermittelt aber dennoch ein anschauliches Bild von dem, was wir sind.” Vellusig, *Schriftliche Gespräche*, 156-157.

250 This letter was once enclosed in a letter sent to Ehrenfried Engelhard. Letter from Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb to Engelhardt, Ehrenfried, December 28, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/232, Letter Book I, no. 454.

his respect and transmitted warm and familial greetings to his future mama on the occasion of the turn of the year, which he combined with the obvious aim to win and maintain her favour in view of the upcoming event of the merger of the two families. For this purpose, he once more utilised common contemporary phrases and certain signal words, which were deemed appropriate and necessary for such letters. These include for instance that he "takes the liberty to pay his respect" or that he emphasised that he would observe his "filial obedience" ["kindliche Gehorsam"] in the coming year and would do his best by good deeds to emulate her own son in obedience and duties.[251] Once more, form was used to convey meaning, with a special emphasis on the fact that Luetkens strived to become a full member of his new family. His letter formulae strikingly corresponded with respective letter examples in contemporary letter-writing manuals for family letters with regard to his future role in the family. Neukirch for instance advised the letter writer to express joy about the fact that one would "increase your love […] more and more each day".[252]

In Hunold's letter manual from 1707, we even find an equivalent to Luetkens' wish to become Mama Engelhardt's "new son". In this letter-writing manual, we can find the wording that a letter writer asked from his future mother-in-law to give him her blessing for "calling himself her son for the rest of his life".[253] Such a sentence can be regarded as a common phrase of discourse in 18th-century Germany regarding the relationship between future son and mother-in-law. The most important key sentence of this letter, however, which at the same time corresponded closely with all of Luetkens' other assertions, was Luetkens' promise that he would assiduously do his best to prove himself worthy as a husband to Ilsabe, "das mich beflissen derro liebe Tochter, und mein aller Liebste würdig zu sein". This particular utterance and assertion represented the core message that this letter was intended to convey to Ilsabe's mother. It is another pledge of loyalty that Luetkens sent to his future family, demonstrating the ultimate motive behind this letter, which simultaneously explains its form and content and which is also indicative of the logic behind the formularity of the letter.

In a nutshell, Luetkens chose precisely the form and words that a future mother-in-law expected from him and wanted to hear from her future son-in-law during that time. The logic underlying this letter is therefore far less to give his mother-in-law a detailed account of his emotional state but rather to cement the relationship and family alliance that was going to shape both his and his future family's further life. The logic of this letter, representing a vivid example of the powers of persuasion applied in letters and using the practical principle of persuasion by mollification, can be brilliantly summarised with a quote by Christina Antenhover. She pointed out for Early Modern letters in general that "if these letters are read only on their surface, they could be misinterpreted as notably intimate correspondence between people who knew and

251 "Kühnheit nehme meine Aufwartung abzulegen." Bohse, *Sendschreiben*, 85. Bohse, *Der allzeitfertige Briefsteller*, 440.

252 "von Tag zu Tag […] liebe sich vermehren." Neukirch, *Anweisung zu teutschen Briefen*, 148.

253 "daß ich mich lebenslang Ihren ergebensten Sohn nennen darff." Hunold, *Die Allerneueste Art Höflich und Galant zu Schreiben*, 82.

loved each other well. By considering the context in which these [....] letters were written, it becomes evident that the emotional bond between mother and son-in-law was a construction, a fundamental element in a strategy aimed at building up and maintaining the kinship alliance. Though these standardized emotions may not have been individually felt, they had a strong resonance in real life because of customary kinship expectations: Emotions may not have been the sentimental sensations of modern understanding, yet they were powerful elements in kinship discourse, founding and maintaining political and social alliance among noble kin."[254]

This assessment perfectly describes and is applicable also to Luetkens' *New Year's letter* to mother Engelhardt. The letter served the purpose of forging the bonds of the upcoming family allegiance. As further evidence of the practical principle of persuasion effective in this episode, serves the fact that Luetkens did not miss the opportunity to also send his future mother-in-law some presents to underline his good will. From a letter to Ehrenfried, we learn that he had sent her "some bagatelles", namely "4 pounds of finest tea", which Ehrenfried had to pass on to her.[255] We learn that he basically used the same strategy that he already had applied for Ilsabe to win his mother-in-law's affection. He sent her gentle words and some well-intentioned gifts in order to meet her expectations and to win her approval. In the postal package to mother Engelhardt, of course, Nicolaus Gottlieb had also once more included some gifts for Ilsabe, too. She received "two pieces of silk and taffeta fabric to make summer dresses from it".[256]

The last and most urgent question left to answer is how the two Engelhardt women, both mother Engelhardt and Ilsabe, reacted to Luetkens' promises and gifts. This is the moment when we will finally learn about Ilsabe's reaction to Luetkens' letter. We can derive this from two more letters of Ehrenfried Engelhardt, which means we again have to make do with the male perspective on the matter and thus unfortunately only with a second-hand impression. Since Ehrenfried used his letters to put in a good word for both women, however, these letters at least give us a glimpse of the viewpoint and reaction of both women, leaving it very clear, however that Ehrenfried would of course also use these reports as a means of conveying, between the lines, his own standpoint on the matter.

7.13 The Women's Point of View? Indirect Speech

If we are to believe the words of Ehrenfried Engelhardt, the reaction of both his mother and his sister turned out as expected relating to the situation. As seen from a contemporary perspective, but also from a researcher's perspective, against the backdrop of all

254 Antenhofer, Christina. "Letters Across the Borders: Strategies of Communication in an Italian-German Renaissance Correspondence." In *Women's Letter across Europe, 1400-1700: Form and Persuasion*, edited by Jane Couchman and Ann Crabb, 103-121. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005, here 121.

255 "4 Pfund feiner Thee [...] solche an derro Mama." Letter from Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb to Engelhardt, Ehrenfried, December 16, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/232, Letter Book I, no. 431.

256 "zwey stück weyß Seidenzeug oder Taft jedes vor ein Somerkleydt." Ibid.

that has been said before, both women's reaction complied perfectly with the role patterns that were assigned to them by the contemporaries and by contemporary discourse. Ilsabe acted as the devoted future wife, her mother acted as a caring grandmother. On the one hand, this predictable fact is surely due to the expectations that were placed on them with regard to meeting the necessary demands of their part of the marriage agreement with Luetkens. Engelhardt needed to confirm by means of his letters that the Engelhard family, too, was upholding their part of the bargain, which he did by finding the right words to convey to Luetkens. On the other hand, apart from this obvious formal requirement, which might lead more critical voices to assume a certain embellishment behind Engelhardt's words, we can at least conclude from his letters that the women generally welcomed Luetkens' efforts, which does, however, not mean that they agreed with all aspects. The latter is at least a hint at the fact that we do not only find whitewashing in his letters, but that his words might also have carried a certain element of truth. Especially with regard to mother Engelhardt's worries and concerns this fact becomes obvious, even though these worries were also an intrinsic part of her role as the female head of the family. Last but not least, Ehrenfried's own motives behind these letters become directly obvious from the written words with which he himself chose to begin his own *New Year's letter* to Luetkens. He wrote to Luetkens that he was looking forward to the upcoming year, in which he would "have the pleasure to see his only and most adorable sister being wedded in a dignified way", which also entailed the message that he was looking forward to becoming Luetkens' brother-in-law, at which time he would also become his business partner.[257]

Two whole pages later, he then reported to Luetkens Ilsabe's joyful reaction to his letters and gifts. He assured him that Luetkens would only find "a true and genuine love in this [Ilsabe's] heart for him, the other day she told me, believe it or not, that 'right from the beginning I was adoring and valued my beloved man ["Liebsten"] much more than any other man in the entire world, indeed methinks I would give my life for him', and she has not changed her mind till now, especially since she had to wait so long for the arrival of skipper Frercks, which made her fear and worry that something bad had happened to you in this winter period."[258]

As this letter indicated to Luetkens, his efforts had borne fruit. He had maintained the affection of Ilsabe. At the same time, this letter once more gave him the confirmation and made him understand that any fears regarding rivals were unfounded. Even from Ilsabe's perspective, nothing stood in the way of a successful marriage between the two of them – this was at least the message that Ehrenfried wanted to send to Luetkens.

257 "da ich das Vergnügen werde geniessen, meine eintzige und allerliebste Schwester würdig vermählet zu sehen." Letter from Engelhardt, Ehrenfried an Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, January 4, 1745, TNA, HCA 30/236.

258 "ich kann E.E. versichern das eine wahre und aufrichtige Liebe in diesem Hertzen herschet, einmahl sagte Sie zu mir, du magst es glauben oder nicht, ich habe meinen Liebsten von Anfank her höher gehalten als alle Manspersohnen auf der gantzen Welt, ja mir deucht ich wollte jetzundt wohl mein Leben vor ihne lassen, sie hat mein Tage nicht von weider Unterscheidung gewust, aber seider Schiffer Frerks unterweges gewesehen verstehet sie sich perfect darauf, den ihr wahr verzweiffelt bange, das ihnen einiges Unglück bey dieser Winterszeit betreffen möchte." Ibid.

In order to convey this good news, Ehrenfried used a very popular letter-writing practice, as it was commonly used in letter practice during that time:[259] He used indirect speech in order to create the impression that the words were coming directly from Ilsabe. The reported speech was often set in quotation marks in the letter text or was deliberately written in another hand or in a form of italics. Thus, indirect speech in letters can even be seen and derived from the material appearance of the respective letter. As regards its purpose, indirect speech was often used in letter-writing practice on all those occasions in which the letter writer was trying to or was required to give a most accurate and objective report of events, happenings or oral conversations outside of the actual letter conversation. It certainly comes as no surprise that we can find the element of indirect speech also for instance in the reports of the ships' captains as analysed in the chapter on the shipping business, who had to give reports in the form of indirect speech about unexpected events or problems occurring during their voyage, events that forced them to change course or to react in certain ways to these problems deviating from their original order. The latter shows also that this practical element was not used randomly, but that it served a certain purpose within the letter conversation and with regard to certain underlying expectations and demands relating to the respective conversation.

We do not know and will never find out whether or not Ilsabe had actually said these things to her brother. However, we do know instead that Ehrenfried wrote these lines to Luetkens in order show and confirm her affection to him and also to show her compliance with the particular expectations that were required from her as Luetkens' future wife as seen from his contemporary male perspective. Since we know about the fact, from Ehrenfrieds letter, that his own letter was originally accompanied by another letter from Ilsabe herself, as part of the letter packet, we can assume that Ilsabe was fully aware of the lines that her brother sent to Luetkens. Maybe she even got the chance to read Ehrenfried's letter before he sealed it, which was another common practice of the time presented in detail in the chapter on the shipping business.

By means of extending the range of participants involved in this letter conversation through the use of indirect speech, Ehrenfried in the end was able to transmit the most important message regarding their joint future in his letter to Luetkens. He confirmed to him Ilsabe's loyalty and faithfulness, which was exactly what Luetkens not only must have hoped for but what he decidedly expected from her as we have learned from his letter.

Ilsabe perfectly complied with the role pattern that was destined for her from the point of view of contemporary discourse. She showed devotedness, loyalty, faithfulness, and furthermore she ensured Luetkens of her love and affection. As Ehrenfried reported, her love for him was even so strong that she would "die for him", which was a common phrase during that time, in love letters but also once more showing strong resemblances with the contemporary novels of the time, written during the age of Enlightenment. Famous for this topos today is Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's *The Sorrows of Young Werther*, die *Leiden des jungen Werthers*, in which the main protagonist committed

259 See Palander-Collin/Nevala. "Reporting and social role construction in eighteenth-century personal correspondence," 111-133, particularly 114.

suicide out of love sickness.[260] This topos of the "love death", "Liebestod" in German, however, is much older, dating back to Ancient times.[261] In the mid-eighteenth century, however, it was particularly known among the middling sort again from the letter novels like Daniel Defoe's *Roxana* from 1724, where we can find rather similar words to those that Ehrenfried had used in his report about Ilsabe's reaction.[262] We cannot conclude from this that Ehrenfried, Ilsabe or Nicolaus Gottlieb had read these books, but we can still conclude that this phrase of expressing emotions was typical for the period, and that this fact was known by the letter writers together with the intended effect of these words to the addressee.

In sum, in this letter Ilsabe, at least as reported by Ehrenfried, gave a perfect example of being precisely the kind of wife that Luetkens and all of Luetkens' male correspondents had envisaged for him. We do not know and will never find out whether Ilsabe actually met these expectations, or even if she actually had any feelings of love for Luetkens. We only know that the two of them married in November 1745. At least we can secretly hope that Ehrenfried had actually spoken the truth, maybe he even reported the exact words of Ilsabe's about her future husband, but we will never know.

The reaction from mother Engelhardt turned out equally positive. As we learn from a later letter by Ehrenfried, in order to show gratitude for the gifts, she returned the favour by sending Luetkens a parcel with "three pieces of cured meat and an ox tongue, and, [...] a gingerbread which she had prepared and wanted to send to him since Christmas."[263]

In Engelhardt's report of his mother's reaction, however, notwithstanding this and in contrast to Ilsabe's reaction, we can also observe at least a slight sign of concern and sadness on her part. This concern did not relate to Luetkens' general efforts and actions with regard to winning her affection. Luetkens could rely on her general support. The concern did, however, relate to Luetkens' decision to postpone his return to Hamburg for such a long time. She tried to impel him to return earlier. The purpose of this letter to Luetkens was therefore not to question Luetkens as a future husband for her daughter in general, but rather "mama" Engelhardt fulfilled her role as the female head of the family and the caring mother of Ilsabe, who worried about the well-being of her daughter. The way that Ehrenfried Engelhardt conveyed this message to Luetkens by means of his own letter's text and form once more fits well with this general objective underlying the

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260 See Goethe, Johann Wolfgang von. *Die Leiden des jungen Werthers*. Leipzig: Weygand, 1774. See Andree, Martin. *Wenn Texte töten. Über Werther, Medienwirkung und Mediengewalt*. Paderborn: Fink, 2006. See Vorjans, Gerrit. *Von der Torheit, wählerisch zu sterben. Suizid in der deutschsprachigen Literatur um 1900*. Bielefeld: transcript, 2016.

261 Thyen, Hartwig. *Das Johannes Evangelium. Handbuch zum Neuen Testament 6*. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2015, 646.

262 "I would die for you if I were put to it". Defoe, Daniel. *Roxana. The Fortunate Mistress (Roxana, oder eine vom Glück begünstigte Buhlerin)*. London: T. Warner, 1724, 62.

263 "1 kestgen gesandt, worin 3 Stück gereuchert Fleisch und 1 Oxsenzunge, da dieses nun seider Weinachten schon parat gestanden hätte sie auch eine Blechendose mit Zuckerkuchen zurecht gemacht:" Letter from Engelhardt, Ehrenfried an Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, April 5, 1745, TNA, HCA 30/236. This sentence can also be seen as another broad hint to Luetkens that they had expected him earlier.

letter. This time, however, he did not use indirect speech, but he nevertheless reported the words and fears of his mother as objectively as possible and as if they were coming directly from his mother by paraphrasing mother Engelhardt's words. The rhetorical strategy that he used this time was essentially to put the ball in Luetkens' court, by asking him how he should deal with the matter in order to appease his mother's fears. He acted as the impartial mediator although it was obvious that he must have shared his mother's opinion and wish. Once more, Ehrenfried used the means of reporting his mother's words, acting as her mouthpiece, in order to send Luetkens a message, which he tried, by means of paraphrasing, to break to Luetkens gently. In two letters, Ehrenfried wrote:

> "We have acknowledged the news and the intention of your late return with astonishment. Let us hope that this will not lead us to any troubles with regard to the [rented] house. […]."[264] "I hope that you will reveal to me your heart's opinion upfront ["dero hertzens Meinung offenhertzig endtdecken"] and that you will provide me with good advice regarding the fact that my mother's heart is full of fears ["in Ängsten"] that our relatives will find out about our secret because she does not know what she should tell them when being asked, we already thought that our troubles are over, but now we learn that our saviour is still far away from us ["müssen unsere Hülffe noch weit entfernet sehen"], but God will help us. If E.E. returns home in August, this will still be fine ["gehet es noch zimlich"], but if it should last longer, till September ["9br. Mt."] or next year, we will be badly off ["schlechter daran seyn"], in this case I would like to hear from E.E. if we should let the house to someone else because leaving a house vacant for such a long time is not advisable because people will laugh about it."[265]

This message did not show the intended effect. In fact, it missed its effect. In his response, Luetkens remained true to the course that he had already chosen during the entire phase of marriage initiation and courtship. He once more underlined the mandatory nature of prolonging his stay in France due to business necessities, leaving no doubt about the fact that this was also a precondition for the success of the marriage and their future business plans. His written lines, however, this time as a direct reaction to Ehrenfrieds' soupçon of opposition show a somewhat acrimonious tone. He vehemently defended his decision and the motivations behind it, this time literally bringing out the heavy artillery, which was intended to show Ehrenfried and his family that he, as a man of reputation, definitely knew what he was doing and that it was necessary. The latter left no room for any objections. The arguments that he put forward took the form of rational reasoning, but the way he presented them showed his intention to end this discussion once and for all. His litany provides us with vivid insights into this man's self-image as a man, a merchant and a lover, on the eve of establishment.

264 "die Intention dero retour haben wier mit Verwunderung vernommen, wen uns das Haus nur nicht allerhandt Ungelegenheit macht!" Ibid.

265 Letter from Engelhardt, Ehrenfried an Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, April 16, 1745, TNA, HCA 30/236.

> "My highly esteemed friend, hitherto I have not concealed anything from you and have always unburdened my heart to you ["verhellet umb ihnen mein Hertz auszuschütten"] and I will continue to do so. I have to admit to E.E. that I don't believe that I will return to Hamburg ["à costy"] sooner than next St. John's Day ["Johany", 24th of June], probably not sooner than the month of July or August. Since my departure from Hamburg I have, with God's help, increased my fortune by 35,000 Mark ["fünff und dreytzig Tausen Marck Banco], with good conscience. Furthermore, there is a very good economic situation in France ["besten Conjuncturen und Umbstenden"] at the moment which provides me with the best business opportunities to continue my luck here ["Glück pusieren"]. In all probability ["Aparantie] and with God's blessing I will be able to further increase my capital in the next 5 à 6 months that I will stay here by several 20,000 Mark. Furthermore, I am sitting amidst and I am fully engaged with several affairs ["sitze in Afferes biß um die Ohren"]. In my warehouses I have stored goods worth more than 180/m £ [£ 180,000 Sterling], most of it already paid. From these goods, alone 80/m £ belong to me and were bought on my account. There will not be a single month during the following months during which I will not have to deal with further goods worth 8/m £, furthermore I expect to send off 3 à 4 of my ships soon ["stündlich"]. Therefore, it would be the greatest temerity in the world ["die große Verwegenheitt von der Weldt"] if I would now simply let go of everything and leave this all behind ["alles liegen zu laßen wie Gott will"] only to return home [earlier]. All of this is the truth ["alles die Wahrheitt"] and I don`t have to corroborate it because this will be the first thing you will learn from my books which I will show you at our first personal meeting ["erster persöhnliger Zusammenkunnft"]. I can truthfully assure E.E. that my sincere love for my dear love is reason enough for me to return home as soon as possible and there is nothing I would desire more than that this day had already come. But you have to admit that it is advisable and necessary that one conducts his business reasonably ["ist doch billig man mit Ressong seine Sachen ein wenig treibet"]. I rest assured that my dear love is wise enough to not order me home too hastily. If this shall be the case then I will return instantly."[266]

Luetkens' letter presents us with a man and merchant, who was convinced of his mission and his business and who showed a high level of self-confidence. He emphasized and demonstrated his qualities as a merchant who was heavily occupied and successful in his business, who was wealthy and who would even multiply his capital in the following months, for which he even provided concrete numbers. The latter served the purpose of giving Ehrenfried an impression of the actual dimensions of his businesses. This was meant to silence any critical voices regarding his reasons for prolonging his stay. The latter did nonetheless not only serve the purpose of presenting himself in a good light, but it also served the very concrete purpose of demonstrating to Ehrenfried the direct benefits that his prolonged stay in France would bring about for the future well-being of both their families. The numbers he provided showed Engelhardt how much money would be wasted if he were to return to Hamburg earlier. His letter served the

266 Letter from Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb to Engelhardt, Ehrenfried, August 3,1745, TNA, HCA 30/232, Letter Book 1, no. 583.

overarching goal to underline that with all his actions and decisions Luetkens merely did everything in his power to create the basis for a successful marriage and for their future business collaboration. By doing so, he perfectly complied with the expectations that his own future role entailed – as a merchant, a son-in-law, a brother-in-law and last but least also as a lover, who was demonstrating the sincerity of his love to Ilsabe precisely by means of demonstrating why and how he was able to provide for their future family. Put in a nutshell, by means of his letter Luetkens literally tried to steal Ehrenfried's thunder by pointing out in great detail why in the end everything he did only happened for the good of their merchant house and for the sake of his marriage. He in this respect presented himself as the perfect match for Ilsabe and her family. Luetkens added in his letter that Ilsabe herself would be "wise enough" to understand, which in the direction of Ehrenfried was no broad hint, but it came close to a slap in the face transmitted via letter.

The sharpness of his entire letter as a reaction to the Engelhardt letters is reflected in two more pointed remarks in the letter, which he skilfully interlaced in his reasoning. First, he pointed to the fact that it would be *the greatest temerity*, in other words, a great stupidity to drop all his businesses in France in an instant. The second remark is that especially for a merchant it would be his duty and an indispensable necessity to perform the mercantile tasks reasonably, with a certain *reason*, "raisong", meaning reasonable thinking, which means with the necessary diligence and seriousness in order to be respected by other merchants. In the very same breath that he voiced these remarks, he at the same time questioned the fact that Ehrenfried himself showed these skills. Thus, in his letters he once more turned the tables and punted the ball back to Ehrenfried, defeating him in the end with his own arguments. Luetkens asked him between the lines but quite frankly the rhetorical question: Don't you think so?

At the very same moment, Luetkens destroyed any basis for further criticism. This rhetorical strategy made any further storm of protest impossible. All things considered, after receiving this letter, Engelhard and his family had no other choice but to wait for him – or, as Luetkens himself wrote to his brother Joachim, his "lovely Lieschen simply has to be patient".[267] Consulting furthermore the words of Luetkens' business friends Hertzer & von Bobartt on this matter, which words at the same time show us that Luetkens did not stand alone with this attitude and that he therefore also complied with his other trading partners' expectations, the fact was simply imperative that "for E.E., and for our interests, […] the dear child will grant E.E. a bit more time to fill the bag with ducats, for which E.E. has the best opportunity at the moment. […] E.E. will certainly be able to explain this fact and situation to your dear bride through the quill pen."[268]

267 "meine Liebe Lischen mach sich gedulden." Letter from Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb to Luetkens, Joachim, February 1, 1745, TNA, HCA 30/232, Letter Book I, No. 508.

268 "Unterdeßen wünschen umb E.E. und unsere Intresse willen, daß daß liebe Kind, E.E. noch etwas Zeit gönnen möge umbd den Beutel mit Ducaten recht voll zu sammeln, worzu E.E. anitzo die schönste Gelegentheit haben, […] E.E. werden durch dero Fehder dero liebe Jungfer Brauth schon daß nötige deßwegen vorstellen können." Letter from Hertzer & von Bobartt to Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, March 5, 1755, TNA, HCA 30/234.

Indeed Luetkens was able to convince Ilsabe and her brother of this fact. Luetkens' letter, in contrast to Ehrenfried's, showed the desired effect. The queries regarding his return abated. In the end, the Engelhardt family must have accepted the fact that Luetkens would return to Hamburg not before autumn of the year 1745. Maybe they were satisfied with the fact that Luetkens promised to return at least before winter, in August or September. Maybe, they were also satisfied or at least were getting appeased by the fact that in the very same month of this letter, in April 1745, the first merchant ship with Luetkens' furniture arrived in Hamburg from London. As we learn from a letter from Joachim, the first furniture must have arrived in Hamburg by the beginning of the month of April.[269] Only a short time later, the jewellery, too, arrived in Hamburg.

The reason why the jewellery arrived later than the furniture was that these gifts, the ring and the earrings, had undergone a somewhat longer journey than the furniture. As we learn from Joachim's letter, the precious jewellery, "safely packed" and hidden in a letter packet as planned, was first sent from London to Amsterdam, where the respective letter packet with the letter with the precious content was "happily received by H. de Meyere" on the 16th of April. It was then forwarded, sent in another letter packet to Hertzer & von Bobartt, who finally received the jewellery on behalf of their trading partner and friend Luetkens.[270] The arrival of the jewellery must have also contributed to Ilsabe's and her mothers' relief, because it unequivocally sealed the deal. Just as Luetkens had intended it, Ilsabe would have one more reason to look forward to the upcoming wedding with confidence.

Just as I intended it, on the other hand, having now arrived back at the story of how Luetkens had once arranged a way to have his wedding jewellery sent to Hamburg wrapped in cotton and secretly enclosed in a letter, I have also arrived back at the point and the story with which I started this chapter. Since I have now told this story to the end, I am finally also able to bring this book to an end.

7.14 Conclusion: Arriving in a Well-Feathered Nest

Ilsabe's future husband returned to Hamburg on the 19th of September 1745. His arrival heralded the end of his establishment phase. Two months later, in November 1745, he entered into the state of matrimony and opened his business house in Hamburg in the Katharinenstraße. However, already in September, upon his arrival, everything had been set in place for this big event. All necessary precautions had been taken care of and nothing more stood in the way of entering the next stage of his successful career, which was to start to earn his living as a settled wholesale businessman with his own merchant

269 "die übrigen Sachen außer d. Spiegel u. der Tisch sind schon in Hamburg wie die H. Hertz. u von Bobart an H. Well heute geschrieben." Letter from Luetkens, Joachim to Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, April 16, 1745, TNA, HCA 30/235.

270 "die Brillanten sind wohl verwahrt, und werden in Kord so wie ein Brief geschnitten eingelegt in welche Baumwolle gemacht und unter ein Päkgen briefe abgehen." Letter from Luetkens, Joachim to Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, March 19, 1745, TNA, HCA 30/235. "von den H. de Meyer glücklich empfangen worden." Letter from Luetkens, Joachim to Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, April 16, 1745, TNA, HCA 30/235.

house in Hamburg. Arriving in Hamburg in September, as his brother emphasised in one of his letters, he arrived to a well-feathered nest.[271]

Nicolaus Gottlieb Luetkens was awaited by his future family, his future wife and the future business partner of his future merchant house. His old friends and trading partners Hertzer & von Bobartt handed him the keys to his house, which they had rented for him. Before finally moving into this house, his new home, the Hamburg merchants furthermore offered him "logis", meaning that they offered him to stay in their house until his own house in the Katharinenstraße was ready for occupancy.[272] He would find the furniture his brother had bought in London, awaiting him in one of Hertzer & von Bobartt's storerooms. Ultimately, the only thing missing when he arrived in Hamburg, was unfortunately also the item that must have meant much more to him than any pieces of furniture or jewellery. It was an item whose loss most certainly put him in shock, clouded his mood and was a serious jolt to his anticipation for the upcoming wedding. For the creation process of this present book, however, the loss of this item was a stroke of luck because without this incident this book would have never been written.

Of all the things sent to Hamburg in 1745, the one thing that never arrived in the Elbe city was Nicolaus Gottlieb Luetkens' mercantile business and letter archive, which was loaded on a ship that was captured by an English privateer during its voyage to Hamburg, which led to the fact that Luetkens' archive was confiscated by the English. This is the reason why this archive is still stored today in the National Archives London among the Prize Papers Collection at the National Archives UK, which is why I could use it as the basis for writing this book.

271 "Es sollte mir selbst gefallen einen solchen geruhigen Einzug zu halten in eine Wohnung wo man alles vorsich findet." Letter from Luetkens, Joachim to Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, November 16, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/235.

272 "E.E. bey dero Herkunfft nicht so gleich dero Hauß einziehen können, so flattiren unß E.E. so lange dan Logis bey unß nehmen werden, und mit unserer Taffell vorlieb nehmen." Letter from Hertzer & von Bobartt to Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, March 5, 1755, TNA, HCA 30/234.

8 Conclusion

In August 1745, the Hamburg merchant Nicolaus Gottlieb Luetkens loaded his business archive in the French harbour of Brest onto one of his ships bound for his hometown Hamburg. The ship never reached its destination, but was captured during its voyage by an English privateer. The business archive subsequently became a piece of evidence in a lawsuit at the British High Court of Admiralty. Following the court case, the archive was not sent to Hamburg, but was transferred to the Court archives. In the last centuries, it was transferred again, first to the Tower of London and then to the National Archives in Kew, London, where I found it in 2012. It was the discovery of this archive that prompted me to write this book.

For the original owner, the merchant Luetkens, losing his mercantile archive was a tragic loss. However, for historians today, the incident has been a stroke of luck. Due to the fortuitous event of its falling victim to an English privateering raid, combined with the special situation leading to its preservation, the archive survived until today as an unspoiled time capsule. When opened, it allows us a unique and deep view, through the activities and correspondence of the merchant Luetkens, into the world of 18th-century trade. Before returning to Hamburg, Luetkens had travelled from 1743 to 1745 in France to establish his business. Thus his archive is a first-hand account of a crucial phase for any merchant: the mercantile establishment phase.

When I first opened the Luetkens archive, it was in fact a kind of raw diamond. It had slumbered untouched and unaltered for 264 years, still with all of its original contents and in its original state of preservation. During my research, the archive's singular state of preservation allowed me to enter the world of this 18th-century merchant in a way that can perhaps only be compared to how ethnographers encounter foreign cultures. Of course, the major difference between my work and an ethnographic study was that I was not observing people in their natural environment, but was reading and analysing letters from the past. These letters, however, produced striking findings about a culture just as foreign to me as those studied by ethnographers. Indeed, the present work is historiography, not ethnography. It is based on historiographic methodologies. Nonetheless, it has been inspired by the ethnographic work of approaching and analysing highly unknown cultural territory.

Based on the Luetkens archive, in this book I have presented a microhistory of the mercantile establishment phase of a wholesale merchant in the mid-18th century, with a special focus on letter practices and business practices. Microhistory is a research approach that deliberately limits its focus to a specific concrete and limited field of observation. [1] While shining a spotlight on a particular part of a past culture, however, it can also provide valuable insights into a bigger picture of the past. Chosen here as my concrete field of observation were the three boxes of the Luetkens archive, especially the information contained therein regarding mercantile correspondence and business practices. The bigger picture to which I contribute is the history of 18th-century merchants and trade in the Atlantic region, including wholesale commerce, and letter and business practices as driving forces of international trade and transnational communication. Since Luetkens was from Hamburg, but travelled France, the book moreover throws light onto the general activities of wholesale merchants from Hamburg and their important economic role in France during the 18th century.

The method chosen for this microhistory and its analyses was praxeological thick descriptions.[2] Thick description, the detailed account of events, practices, cultural and social relationship patterns and their context, is used in ethnographic research as well. For this book, I developed my own version of the method for analysing past practices tailored to the special needs posed by the Luetkens archive. My focus on past practices stems, in turn, from my strong interest in Historical Praxeology, the study of past practices. A great deal can be learned about the past and how people lived by examining people's practices, practices being defined as patterns of action collectively shared and performed by several people or groups of people, shaping thereby their daily encounters, communication and dealings with one another.[3]

Practices can be seen as decisive carriers of social life and interaction, which is why they can offer such valuable information about the past. Historical praxeological research is possible because past practices are still identifiable in historical source materials. The practices have perpetuated and imprinted themselves in the material. As I have demonstrated in this book, past practices can be analysed today by examining the crucial elements that created patterns of actions: the materiality, processuality, performativity and historicity of past practices. In my analysis I have approached the Luetkens archive ethnographically, paying tribute to and respecting the special character of the source material – this historical time capsule – whereby I have integrated the praxeological perspective into the microhistorical approach by applying thick description.

To better understand the letter practices and business practices represented in the Luetkens archive, I have contextualised these practices by reconstructing plausible and intelligible frameworks and offering probable explanations for them. This in turn helped

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1 See Medick, "Mikro-Historie"; Medick, "Missionaries in the Row Boat?"; Levi, "On Microhistory"; Brewer, "Microhistory"; Magnússon/Szijártó, *What is Microhistory?*

2 See Geertz, "Thick Description"; Darnton, "On Clifford Geertz"; Darnton, *The Great Cat Massacre*.

3 See Freist, *Diskurse – Körper – Artefakte*; Haasis/Rieske, *Historische Praxeologie*; Brendecke, *Praktiken*; Füssel, "Praxeologische Perspektiven"; Reichardt, "Praxeologische Geschichtswissenschaft"; Mergel/Reichardt, "Praxeologie in der Geschichtswissenschaft."

me to demonstrate the significance of these practices for people's lives in the 18th century. The Luetkens archive enables this because it contains such an abundance of unaltered, first-hand source material, allowing us to retrace past practices in great detail. The archive still contains nearly all the letters the merchant Nicolaus Gottlieb Luetkens kept from 1743 to 1745, since after the archive was confiscated, he had no chance to alter it in any way. Luetkens had more than forty active correspondents, who are represented in individual letter bundles stored in the archive. Moreover, the archive holds both the incoming and outgoing mail of Luetkens, in chronological order. I thus was able to reconstruct and analyse this 18th-century correspondence not only from one perspective, but often from two-sided or even four-sided perspectives between several merchants. These letters are the most formative feature of the archive; they shape the character of the investigations in my book as well.

By analysing these letters as polyphonic written conversations conducted between several correspondents over longer periods of time, I was able to reconstruct various practices.[4] These include not only material practices and textual letter-writing practices, but also performative and negotiation practices, the driving forces behind setting up business: coordination, references, assistance or obstruction. I explicitly include the worldviews, responses and reactions of Luetkens' many correspondents, thus presenting the business activities of a concrete group of people "informally bound together by a shared expertise and passion for a joint enterprise."[5] This joint enterprise was trade in the Atlantic region. On the basis of their letters it is possible to see how they managed and regulated this enterprise through particular practices and networks within their community.

This book is therefore not only about the letter-writing skills of Nicolaus Gottlieb Luetkens and the steps he took to establish his business, but ultimately it is about international business practices in north-western Europe in the mid-18th century between a large group of people: wholesale merchants, merchant bankers, ship owners, insurance companies, ship captains and their crew members, loaders, clerks, senators and lawyers. Luetkens' network also includes members of his own family and future family. Consequently, we also hear about his future wife and future mother-in-law. Apart from references to his aunt, who played in the lottery with him, and to women living in the house of his uncle, his future wife and her mother are unfortunately the only women featured in Luetkens' letters and thus also in this book.[6]

In total, 2,286 letters have survived in the Luetkens archive. They were not only written by the merchant Nicolaus Gottlieb Luetkens, but also by more than forty correspondents. While I have used these letters as the basis for this book, I have supplemented them with other mercantile records contained in the archive, such as bills of exchange and accounting books. I have also examined the court records regarding the captured

4 See Trivellato, "Merchants' letters." See Fitzmaurice, "Talking on paper"; Fitzmaurice, *The Familiar Letter*.

5 Wenger/Snyder, "Communities of Practice," 139. Regarding the concept of *communities of practice* see Wenger, *Communities of Practice*. See also Haasis, "Augenblick."

6 See letter from Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb to Luetkens, Anthony, October 9, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/232, Letter book I, no. 350. See*Details of lottery purchases*, i.a. Elbinger Lotterie, TNA, HCA 30/232.

ship, and other contemporary sources from the period under investigation: merchant manuals, letter-writing manuals, novels, contemporary encyclopaedias, contemporary biographical dictionaries, maritime legislative texts, peace treaties, trade contracts and agreements, school registers, newspapers, portraits, commemorative medals, and other pieces of material culture, such as pieces of jewellery, furniture and wooden figurines.

The foreign culture I encountered through the Luetkens archive, the culture that was ultimately the focus of my investigations, was the world of 18th-century business correspondence. For the merchants described in this study, correspondence was a major field of activity that significantly shaped their lives. In fact, performing the manifold steps of letter-writing – writing, folding, sealing, sending, receiving and reading letters – made up a considerable part of a wholesale merchant's life during the period under investigation. The Luetkens archive provides an eloquent testimony of this, not only with respect to the sheer quantity of the letters still contained in the archive, but also with respect to the contents of these letters. Almost all areas of business or private undertakings were accompanied by letters. Indeed, most undertakings were strongly dependant or even rested primarily on letter writing. Thus, in many ways 18th-century business practices and even personal affairs can be considered as inseparable from letter-writing practices. In some cases, letters even represented concrete mercantile actions, in commission trade or in business financing, whereby the letter itself was literally equivalent to money.

The various business activities Luetkens undertook through letters represented major proving grounds for him. It was here that he had to show himself worthy and capable of his profession during his establishment phase. Indeed, the interdependence between people's lives and their letters represents a major characteristic and historical specificity of the period under investigation. This was the main feature I capitalised on when analysing the unknown territory presented to me by the Luetkens archive.

Business and letter-writing must thus be seen as two intertwined, interlacing processes, two sides of the same coin, concurrent mainstays of the activities of wholesale merchants in the 18th century. For the merchant Luetkens, letters were used as pivotal tools to pursue his mercantile and personal goals, and to put his plans and enterprises into practice.

Luetkens' life when establishing his business as a wholesale merchant in France was characterised by mobility, commission trade and networking activities. He took many concrete steps to promote his career and move his business plans forward, steps that are clearly visible in the Luetkens archive. Indeed, the archive allows us to reconstruct Luetkens' undertakings in great detail. Through the performative tool of letter-writing, it was above all the power of persuasion that Luetkens used to establish himself as a reputable wholesale merchant. And it was this power of persuasion that became the central storyline of this volume.

A major point in my investigations was how Luetkens and his correspondents used letters to develop their plans and enterprises. What concrete material, textual, rhetorical and performative means did they find to turn letters into effective tools for negotiation and persuasion? How did they use letters to implement business plans and personal undertakings? And how did letter practices and business practices intersect?

As I discovered, the power of persuasion was based on few concrete and practical means of exerting influence, means that were commonly used by 18th-century merchants and letter writers. The fact that persuasion and concrete attempts to exert influence plays such an important role in the correspondence I have analysed can be attributed to two main factors.

On one hand, on a more general level, the phase of establishing a business during a young man's life can be seen as shaped by the clear requirement to be convincing, both in words and actions. Without this, his business was doomed to failure. As a result, when promoting his career and attempting to win over trading partners to his business plans, a young merchant's letters simply had to be credible and persuasive. Otherwise it would have been impossible to put these ideas and plans into practice.

On the other hand – an insight I gained directly from reading the letters in the Luetkens archive – not a single enterprise or personal undertaking initiated or pursued by Luetkens or his correspondents was conducted without the help of others and without recourse to concrete persuasive efforts. Due to this, not only was I able to document various letter practices, I was also able to extrapolate the pragmatic purposes underlying the use of certain practices in certain situations. Thus, I was able to identify several concrete practical principles that shaped and governed the use of certain letter practices and business practices, principles I call practical principles of persuasion. Identifying these principles allowed me to demonstrate the function, logic and significance of certain 18th-century letter practices and business practices, and to reconstruct how these practices specifically helped Luetkens and his correspondents to implement their plans.

I identified nine practical principles of persuasion in total. This is one of the major research outcomes presented in this book. The others are a catalogue of typical letter practices used by wholesale merchants of the 18th century, a detailed case study of the important role played by Hamburg merchants as economic intermediaries and enablers of French trade in the 18th century, and, last but not least, insights into the requirements and events of establishing an mercantile business in the Early Modern Period, an aspect that hitherto has attracted little scholarly attention.[7]

All four outcomes must ultimately be seen as complementary and intertwined with each other, thus forming the general outcome of this book.

The book provides insights into how 18th-century wholesale merchants established their businesses. I have demonstrated above all how this process was decisively shaped by the power of persuasion through letters. To better understand the requirements and challenges of establishing a mercantile business at that time, as well as the concrete situation in 1743–1745 of the merchant Luetkens, I have furthermore provided information

7 There is no comprehensive study, only articles or book chapters, focusing on the establishment phase of an 18th-century wholesale merchant. Initial approaches are for example the chapter "Der Bürger als Kaufmann" in Ruppert, *Bürgerlicher Wandel*, 57-103; in parts Hancock, *Citizens of the World*; the chapter "Starting a Business" in Earle, *Making of the English Middle Class*, 85-111; Jeannin, "Distinction des compétences"; Kansikas, "Career Paths"; in parts Henninger, *Bethmann*; Smith, *Merchants*; Ebert, *Brazilian Sugers*. See Overkamp, Anne Sophie. *Fleiß, Glaube, Bildung. Kaufleute als gebildete Stände im Wuppertal 1760-1840*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2020, 207-270.

about mercantile education during this period, as well as detailed information about mercantile travel, the characteristics of and reasons for 18th-century business trips, as well as the specificities of travelling in France in the 18th century. The case of Luetkens also offers a typical biography of an 18th-century wholesale merchant: Nicolaus Gottlieb Luetkens was the eldest son of a Hamburg minister. He was raised and apprenticed in Hamburg during the Early Enlightenment. Already early in life, he or his family must have decided that he would embark on a career as a merchant, not untypical for a son from a bourgeois family. This decision was also certainly influenced by his two uncles, who were merchants as well.[8]

The various career steps taken by Luetkens before leaving for France are presented in Chapter 2, "Making of a Merchant", which also includes descriptions of the main requirements for the mercantile establishment phase.

The following main part of the book offers five case studies in five analytical chapters on the concrete steps taken by Luetkens to establish his business. Each chapter describes a major field of activity he undertook while in France from 1743 to 1745, activities that in the 18th century represented the cornerstones of establishing a business as a wholesale merchant. More generally, they represent the major fields of activity of wholesale merchants of that period who were involved in Atlantic trade.

Chapter 3 deals with the shipping business, Chapter 4 with the commission trade. Both represent typical business fields utilized by wholesale merchants when establishing their businesses, since they promised relatively stable and secure sources of income, and also served as a good basis for building a good reputation. Later in his life, Luetkens profited from his reputation and contacts, and was able to rest his business on importing goods from the colonies to Hamburg, particularly French sugar.[9] Chapter 5 discusses high-risk trade, which represented an equally important cornerstone for developing a career, albeit one that presented great uncertainties. Nonetheless, high-risk trade promised additional income, which was helpful or even invaluable in a young merchant's career. Here, Luetkens' investments in hazardous trade routes across the Mediterranean are examined. Chapter 6 and 7 then present the crucial final steps of an Early Modern merchant's career.[10]

Chapter 6 describes how Luetkens found a business partner for the merchant house he later opened in Hamburg, and how he found a merchant clerk who would become his agent and merchant factor in France. And finally, chapter 7 deals with Luetkens' marriage preparations, which went hand in hand with his plans to open up a merchant house, since he married the sister of his future business partner. Without exception, all of these career steps rested on the organised exchange of letters.

Methodologically, the special form of my case studies is that of praxeological thick description and praxeological analysis of practices and letter conversations represented

8 See Van Dülmen, *Kultur und Alltag* (vol. 1), 114-122. See Ruppert, *Bürgerlicher Wandel*, 76-86.

9 Regarding commission trade see Hancock, *Citizens of the World*, 81. Regarding the shipping business, see Davis, *English Shipping Industry*, 99.

10 Regarding the importance of these two steps for a mercantile career see Ruppert, *Bürgerlicher Wandel*, 57-103; Hancock, *Citizens of the World*, 43; Earle, *The Making of the English Middle Class*, 184-194; Grassby, *Business Community*, 303.

in the Luetkens archive. For my analyses, I deliberately chose letter episodes that represented important milestones for Luetkens in his business or his private life. I have also attempted to find episodes representative of Luetkens' general business portfolio, his career planning and his self-making during the years 1743–1745. On the basis of my analytical work, I was able to reconstruct in detail how Luetkens successfully managed to put certain business enterprises and personal endeavours into practice. At the same time, by taking Luetkens and his activities as an example and placing his case into a much broader context, a step typical for microhistorical work, namely, the Atlantic merchant community and its networks, we gain general insights into the world of Atlantic trade in the 18th century.

With regard to 18th-century communication and business practices, it can be shown that Luetkens and his correspondents – trading partners, friends and family members – used various concrete practices in their letter conversations to conduct trade and settle personal matters. In performing these practices, the letter writers deliberately used the properties of the artefact and communication medium of the letter as a basis of negotiation to put their plans into practice.[11]

This was often done by exerting concrete influence on the course of a letter conversation or negotiation. It was on the basis of such practices that Luetkens planned and implemented his business enterprises and personal undertakings to advance his career as a wholesale merchant. They were his toolkit for positively influencing the outcome of his various enterprises. Since Luetkens used the same practices as his correspondents, my microhistorical analyses are not merely brief snapshots of unrelated events, but offer general insights into the typical practices of merchants in the 18th century.

I present several typical letter practices used in the 18th century in this book. These include the practice of bundling and folding several letters into letter packets in order to approach several correspondents at the same time, the practice of deliberately not sealing certain letters in letter packets but leaving them open to give the correspondents a sense of choice, the practice of writing in different national languages to demonstrate language skills and ensure the benevolence of international correspondents, and the practice of rhetorically skilful argumentation to counter the opinions of other correspondents. When giving orders or making material promises, Luetkens and his correspondents also used formulaic language, fixed terminology and a shared vocabulary in their letters. This shared vocabulary often also involved the practice of using historical speech or performative utterances to serve as concrete orders, confirmations or requests, understood as such by their contemporaries. Moreover, I have analysed the significance of the practice of adding extra sheets of paper to letters. Such inlays in bifolium letters often had texts serving particular purposes, such as special orders or offers. The logic behind this practice was that, if wished, these sheets of paper could easily be removed from the folded letters or destroyed, whereby the orders or offers would vanish into thin air. I have also explained the significance and logic behind the practice of writing personal postscripts, and of adding copies of letters to letter packets, either copied directly into the text of other letters or enclosed as extra sheets in letter packets.

11 Regarding the "properties and effects" of historical artefacts see Hicks, "Material-Cultural Turn," 74.

Moreover, I have analysed the practices of using indirect speech and of mutual letter citation, which was used to refer to similar arguments. For example, references to the biblical trope of bread-winning were used in mercantile letters in various ways. These practices all served the purpose of involving and integrating more participants into a letter conversation, often making a decisive impact on the course of that conversation. Last but not least, I present the significance of the practice of writing "particular" letters, letters meant solely for the eyes of a single direct correspondent, as well as the practice of hand-to-hand delivery of letters. These both served a purpose quite the opposite of the practices mentioned above: They ensured secrecy and the maintenance of a close circle of acquaintances and insiders while doing business.

As a decisive element in its own right, but also as a discursive practice influencing several of the practices presented above, I have also reconstructed how Luetkens and his correspondents mobilised various contemporary language registers in their letters when approaching different correspondents for different purposes, in different situations, and at different times.[12] I present the language register of family affairs related to the conversations shaping family correspondence, the language register of business and trade in business letters, the language register of patronage in sea business, which created a basis for trust and loyalty in the shipping business, the gallant language register of flattery used in recruitment negotiations for mercantile staff, and the language register of love mobilised during Luetkens' marriage preparations.

Analysing these registers also included identifying and presenting different letter types and styles typical for 18th-century correspondence: business letters, family and personal letters, love letters, letters of friendship, ship captain letters, as well as letters of complaint, indignation or warnings, used to lead correspondents who had caused problems back on the right track. As part of the praxeological thick descriptions of these practices, language registers and letter types, I have also examined the historical events and phenomena that shaped them, as well as how they, in turn, shaped these events. Of course, historical events and contexts also had a concrete bearing on the life, letters and career of the merchant Nicolaus Gottlieb Luetkens. Examples include maritime neutrality, the rise of the private merchant firm and the joint partner company as business models, the Protestant International, the "Turkish threat", the Early Modern patronage system, Early Modern marriage patterns, and the new ideal of love that gained ground during the 18th century. All of these had tangible effects on mercantile self-perception in general, and the self-making of the merchant Nicolaus Gottlieb Luetkens in particular.[13]

To conclude, various business practices have been presented: the shipping business, commission trade, banking and insurance businesses, financing practices, including bill transactions and credit business, high-risk trade, insider dealings, and negotiation practices in marriage preparations.

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12 Regarding the analysis of language registers see the *Introduction*. See in general Biber/Conrad, *Register, Genre and Style*, 4, 6.

13 "Turkish Threat", "Türkengefahr" in German, was a historical source term. See the chapter on*High-Risk Trade* for a critical assessment and comments on the usage of this term. See Ressel, *Sklavenkassen*, 17-31.

As these lists show, this book not only presents the career steps of 18th-century mercantile business or various letter practices, but demonstrates how these elements came together to form a complex interplay of concrete letters, contexts, material and social events, and practical principles of persuasion. These mechanisms were used over the course of individual letter episodes, contributing either to the amicable resolution of particular enterprises or private affairs, or to their termination.

Presented are not only findings about how certain letter practices were used in particular letter episodes, but also the concrete ways they functioned, their effect in individual situations, the contemporary resources mobilised during their performance, and the practical logic and purpose behind their usage. These aspects enabled particular mechanisms and unwritten principles to be extrapolated, also supporting the idea that letters were used as effective tools of mercantile self-making during the 18th century. These mechanisms were generally practical in nature, not merely rhetorical, which is why I call them the practical principles of persuasion. Discussions of these nine principles are distributed over five analytical chapters, in which letters written by Luetkens as well as letters from his correspondents are analysed. The principles are the following: demands for loyalty, the sledgehammer method, persuasion by showing efficiency, making firm promises and providing material assurances, meeting as equals, keeping a low profile, insider dealings, which is connected to the principle of giving correspondents preferential treatment by creating the feeling of exclusivity, and, finally, the practical principle of mollification.

On the basis of these practical principles of persuasion in the performance of letter practices, Luetkens and his correspondents – his trading partners and his family members – were able to put their plans and enterprises into practice. This helped pave the way for Luetkens establishing himself as a wholesale merchant in the Atlantic trading community, as well as his later career as one of the most successful Hamburg merchants of the 18th century. And for me, identifying these practical principles of persuasion as the cornerstones of Luetkens success gave me the inspiration for the title of this book. It was the Power of Persuasion that was the key to becoming a merchant in the 18th century.

Final Remarks

To conclude, I would like to comment on the three quotes found at the beginning of this book. There is a simple and quite practical reason for discussing these quotes here at the end. I chose them because they aptly encapsulate the three major points I wanted to make with this book, and thus, this is the best place to explain why.

While only one of the quotes stems from a letter of Luetkens, nevertheless, when I encountered the other two while studying the Luetkens archive, they also seemed pertinent for illustrating the archival work I was doing, as well as the ideas being generated thereby. Connecting the beginning of this book to its end gives it a frame. And furthermore, here at the end I can best comment on several additional questions that arose during the process of writing this book. These final remarks therefore offer a wrap-up, present a few unanswered questions, and introduce some further ideas that I hoped to trigger with the book.

> "What is a letter? If not simply a piece of paper that one can tear into pieces or crumple together, but that one can also keep as a treasure and make it yellow and weather."[14]

Studying past practices

The first quote was written by the poet Ludwig Heinrich Christoph Hölty (1748–1776), a contemporary of the merchant Nicolaus Gottlieb Luetkens. Both men lived during the period that the famous historian Georg Steinhausen, a pioneer of letter research, called "the age of letters".[15] Hölty knew well the special quality and importance of letters for the lives of people in the 18th century.[16] He must also have known that, in the end, it is people themselves who ultimately confer significance, power and meaning to their letters, whereby they turn simple pieces of paper into objects of value. In its essence, the Luetkens archive encapsulates this characteristic feature of early modern letters. It also represents both ways of dealing with letters described by Hölty. The Luetkens archive represents without a doubt a weathered treasure trove. At the same time, the archive's contents also show how people once treated paper in more ordinary ways: crumpling it, folding it, tucking it, filing it, storing it. In this regard, Hölty's statement aptly points to the importance we must give to the material nature, the materiality, of historical sources.

The informative value of the materiality of letters has played a crucial role in this book. It represents my entry point as well as my basis for analysing the letter practices and business practices of the past. With the historical time capsule of the Luetkens archive, I was able to reconstruct how wholesale merchants of the past handled correspondence and business. The special material nature of this archive in its pristine con-

14 "Was ist ein Brief – ein Stück Papier, das man zerreißt, zerknittert, aber auch als Schatz bewahrt, vergilbt schon und verwittert." Ludwig Christoph Heinrich Hölty. *Sämtlich hinterlaßne Gedichte: nebst einiger Nachricht aus des Dichters Leben*, edited by Adam Friedrich Geisler, vol. 1, Halle: Hendel, 1782.

15 Steinhausen, *Geschichte des deutschen Briefes* (vol. 2, 1891), 302.

16 On Hölty see Elschenbroich, Adalbert. "Art. Hölty, Ludwig." *Neue Deutsche Biographie* 9 (1972): 336-337.

dition gave a special quality to my reconstructions of the letter conversations between correspondents using letters to discuss, negotiate, argue, cope with and influence each other. The praxeological approach as part of microhistory and the method of praxeological thick descriptions of the material events in the Luetkens archive allowed me from a methodological point of view to make sense of the archival observations and findings I got from working on the Luetkens archive.[17] Through the praxeological perspective of my historiographic work, I hope to stimulate further historical praxeological studies, or at least hope I was able to demonstrate the potential of this approach for historical research. My praxeological work was based on the conviction that it is possible to learn about human action and conduct from the immediacy of material and textual traces left in archival records, indeed, precisely the kinds of traces referred to by Hölty. In combination with microhistory, praxeological work in archives can bring deep historical insights.

This approach depends strongly on archival practices that ensure the preservation and conservation of the original materiality of source materials. For example, it needs archival policies ensuring that paper does not undergo conservation measures that exceed what is necessary to prevent damage, such as flattening or cleaning processes. This is the approach we are following in *The Prize Papers Project*.[18] In the course of this project, the Luetkens archive has been digitised. My focus on practices necessitated making choices: which practices, which episodes, which letters. As a microhistory, the aim was to provide a compressed yet comprehensive picture of the life and letters of Nicolaus Gottlieb Luetkens. A part of this was examining his and his correspondents' culture of correspondence. Nonetheless, I was clearly not able to cover all aspects of Luetkens' life and letters, all his fields of business and activities, or all his ways of conducting business and writing letters. My work has been unavoidably but legitimately "intrinsically incomplete", as Clifford Geertz once aptly put it.[19] This is inherent to the method of thick description. Deciding to focus on a particular letter episode or aspect in the archive forced me to neglect many other episodes and aspects that could have been investigated.

Thus, the Luetkens archive surely still holds many more things to discover. In this book, the focus has been on the letters that constitute the majority of the archive's surviving documents. But other research opportunities exist, most notably with regard to the many business records in the archive, such as bills of exchanges, lists of commodity prices, newspapers and bills of lading. While I have used some of these as complementary source material in my analyses, they surely invite further research, particularly in the area of economic history. I sincerely hope my study will stimulate more study of the treasure trove of crumpled papers in the Luetkens archive.

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17 See Haasis/Rieske, "Historische Praxeologie," 7-54, particularly 27-32. See Freist, "Historische Praxeologie als Mikro-Historie." See Daybell, *The Material Letter*; Wiggins, *Bess of Hardwick's Letters.*

18 See Bevan/Cock, "Prize Papers"; Freist, "Prize Papers." See www.prizepapers.de, accessed December 2, 2021.

19 Geertz, "Thick Description," 29.

"But letter writing is now a mere tossing of omelettes to me."[20]

Studying practical principles of persuasion

The second quote on the first page of this book is from the 20th-century writer and feminist Virginia Woolf (1882–1941), whom I highly admire. Her statement refers to a rather mundane, everyday experience. It also surely represents a quite marginal note within her overall oeuvre of literary works. Nevertheless, for this book and the research focus behind it, the statement provides an apt metaphor and thematic anchor. Written in 1934, in one of her own letters, Woolf's "tossing of omelettes" means that a letter writer can never know the effect her or his letter will have.[21] A letter always represents a step into the unknown.

The attempt behind writing a letter is to have a certain effect or impact on the addressee, and therefore on the future. But regardless of the effort put into writing a letter, its author will never know which side the figurative omelette will land. In the worst case, it might not land in the pan at all, but on the floor. The unique opportunity that the Luetkens archive provides is the insight it allows into both sides: the persuasive efforts of the letter writer on one hand, and the results and consequences of those letters on the other. This is because the archive contains both incoming and outgoing mail written over a relatively long period of time. Thus we are able to see how certain types of practices were crowned with success or failure, as well as how the letter writers adapted their approaches to new situations.

On the basis of this, I was able to reconstruct various practical persuasive mechanisms shaping and governing these letter conversations of the past from the perspective of both the writers and receivers, as well as their respective responses or courses of action. In other words, I was able to see how the omelettes of Virginia Woolf turned out in the end. Described in analytical terms, from these letter conversations I was able to extrapolate practical principles that shaped the letter practices and business practices of the 18th century.

The inspiration to search for principles of this kind as an analytical tool came from the book *Influence: The Psychology of Persuasion* by Robert Cialdini.[22] In his book, which deals primarily with modern day sales negotiations, Cialdini identifies six principles of persuasion, six ways that people today try to exert influence on others to prompt them to say "yes". These principles are consistency, reciprocation, social proof, authority, liking, and scarcity.[23] While I did not search for Cialdini's particular principles, I did use his general idea as a starting point for identifying principles used in the 18th century for exerting influence. The principles I found thus differ from those of Cialdini.

The 18th-century practical principles of persuasion included demanding loyalty, the sledgehammer method, persuading through efficiency, making firm promises and providing material assurances, meeting as equals, keeping a low profile, insider dealings, preferential treatment to create feelings of exclusivity, and mollification. The differences

20 Letter from Woolf, Virginia to Brenan, Gerald, December 1, 1923. In *Virginia Woolf: The Complete Collection*. Eugene: Oregan Publishing, 2017, Letter 1433.

21 Ibid.

22 Cialdini, *Influence*.

23 Ibid., xiii and 1-16.

between my list and Cialdini's are due primarily to three reasons. First, I was not dealing with modern-day selling strategies, but with early modern business practices serving, above all, the purpose of winning other people's support for one's ideas and plans, and for implementing them together in enterprises. The aim was to work together, rather than convincing someone to buy something. Secondly, I was not investigating an oral culture, such as verbal advertising, but historical artefacts, letters used as a medium for written conversations. Since these letter conversations followed their own contemporary rules and procedures, this called for historiographic research methods. Thirdly, and most importantly, my aim was not to compare modern procedures to past procedures and phenomena, but rather to find and highlight historical specificities, the ways in the past that influence was exerted in letter and business practices. Indeed, Cialdini's research was helpful for developing an understanding of the otherness of that past, for focussing on its foreignness. The culture of correspondence in that world had its own explicit and implicit rules of conduct. It was a world with different life challenges and situations, it was shaped by historical phenomena that no longer exist, it had its own forms of knowledge and mentalities, and last but not least, the people living then had their own practical ways of dealing with each other. Their relationships rested heavily on concepts of loyalty, trust, codes of conduct, and mutual understandings of appropriate social behaviour. Some of this was based on definitions of friendship, gallant courtesy, love and mutual appreciation that were particular to that world. All of these aspects are reflected in the above principles of persuasion.

Researching practices is therefore helpful to gain insight into the worldviews and everyday skills of people living in the past. Nevertheless, Cialdini's principles contain certain similarities to the principles I present. For instance, his principle of reciprocation surely shows parallels to the principle of demanding loyalty. His concept of authority can be seen as mirroring the principle of providing material assurances; mutual liking shows similarities to persuasion through mollification; and the motivation behind creating scarcity is similar to the principle of creating feelings of exclusivity. However, I have identified more principles than those of Cialdini, and have added the adjective 'practical', since these principles rested on practices. There are other reasons why I have refrained from drawing comparisons and have developed my own terminology. The general nature and characteristics of these principles of the past, their historical context, their properties and effects, the actual performances they required differ decidedly from those of Cialdini. And so I focussed on these historical specificities rather than trying to force them into a predefined mould. My intention was not to write a genealogy of principles of persuasion, but to understand how a merchant of the 18th century turned his plans into practice and established an international mercantile enterprise. This book is thus not about philosophical traditions or concepts of persuasion, but rather about the practical ways people convinced each other in the 18th century to follow their lead. It is not only about rhetoric, but what 18th-century contemporaries defined as practical eloquence, practical concepts of action.

It would certainly be a worthwhile undertaking to investigate principles of persuasion both past and present from a genealogic point of view. Research of this kind is already being conducted at the Oldenburg Research Centre "Genealogy of Today".[24] But to return to Woolf's quote, the aim of this study has been to show how Luetkens became a competent maker of omelettes, or in other words, how he shaped his own destiny by becoming a string puller through the writing of letters.

> "We see from your letter, dear friend, that love on the one hand and the pursuit of profit on the other fight a battle in your heart. [...]
> But we very much wished for E.E., and for our interests,
> that the dear child will grant E.E. a bit more time to fill the bag with ducats,
> for which E.E. has the best opportunity at the moment."[25]

Studying an Early Modern mercantile establishment phase

The final quote on the first page is from a letter dated March 1745 written by Luetkens' closest trading partners and friends, Jobst Henning Hertzer and Christopher von Bobartt. The context of these lines is described in detail in the chapter on Luetkens' marriage preparations. It relates directly to Luetkens' plan, which he later turned into a decision, to postpone his marriage until the end of 1745 and to prolong his stay in France for several more months in order to continue his business matters. Hertzer & van Bobartt's opinion regarding this matter is clearly apparent from their letter. As members of a Hamburg merchant house that was undertaking a number of projects together with Luetkens, they endorsed his decision fully. Moreover, in their letter they refer to one of the most crucial requirements of an early modern mercantile establishment phase: filling bags with ducats. Only so was it possible to stand on one's own two feet as a wholesale merchant.

In the chapters of this book, I have tried my best to refrain from passing moral judgement on Luetkens' behaviour. Not only were his times different than ours, the moral standards of his day were different.[26] It would thus be modernistic and hostile to judge him based on today's concepts of morality. At most, I have expressly distanced myself from his actions. In this book I have thus chosen a style of narrative that documents his behaviour embedded in contemporary historical contexts, to show how Luetkens, in his historically specific situation, coped with the challenges of his day and

24 https://uol.de/wizegg, accessed December 3, 2019. See Alkemeyer, Thomas, Nikolaus Buschmann, and Thomas Etzemüller, eds. *Gegenwartsdiagnosen. Kulturelle Formen gesellschaftlicher Selbstproblematisierung in der Moderne*. Bielefeld: transcript, 2019.

25 "Wir ersehen ferner lieb wehrter Freund außdero Schreiben, daß die Liebe und Gewinsucht in dero Gemüthe einen Streit erwegen[...] Unterdeßen wünschen umb E.E. undunsere Intresse willen, daß daß liebe Kind, E.E. noch etwas Zeit gönnen möge umb den Beutel mit Ducaten rechtvoll zu sammeln, worzu E.E. anitzo die schönste Gelegenheit haben." Letter from Hertzer & von Bobartt to Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, March 5, 1745, TNA, HCA 30/234.

26 See Grassby, *Business Community*, 293. See Jacob, Margaret C., and Catherine Secretan. "Introduction." In *The Self-Perception of Early Modern Capitalists*, edited by Margaret C. Jacob and Catherine Secretan, 1-16. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008. See also Hoock, Jochen. "Professional Ethics and Commercial Rationality at the Beginning of the Modern Era." In *The Self-Perception of Early Modern Capitalists*, edited by Margaret C. Jacob and Catherine Secretan, 147-160. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008. For France see Fontaine, *L'économie morale*. Regarding the changing concepts of bourgeois virtues in the course of time, written in a rather essayistic style, see McCloskey, Deirdre N. *The Bourgeois Virtues, Ethics for an Age of Commerce*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006.

age. With regard to this third quote, I have shown how he was able to convince his future wife, Ilsabe Engelhardt, and her family that prolonging his stay in France was necessary.

Here, in this conclusion, however, I might be allowed to at least mention my standpoint on these matters. This will also help justify the narrative I chose for this book. Luetkens' decision to prolong his stay in France offers a good opportunity for this. His step can be considered from two angles, depending on how his behaviour is explained. Either we see it, as a part of a historical case study, as the reaction to contemporary circumstances, as what was needed for Luetkens to finalise the establishment phase of his business. Or we can see Luetkens' behaviour as illustrating an early form of capitalistic spirit, an entrepreneurial attitude that put the pursuit and maximisation of profit above all else. Indeed, the truth possibly lies somewhere in between. As is the nature of historiography, we will never know Luetkens' precise motivation. We can only offer probable explanations for his decision based on his letters.

Choosing the second explanation for this situation would mean opening the door to famous *grand narratives* regarding capitalistic behaviour in the past, narratives suggesting that this was the type of behaviour that led to modern capitalism. They range from Max Weber's *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* to works of classical economics, works that created the basis for the concept of the so-called *homo economicus*, the "economic man" as a rational, self-interested subject driven by the desire to maximise profits. This concept is often seen as leading to neoclassical economics and even current works on capitalism, as for instance *The New Spirit of Capitalism* by Ève Chiapello and Luc Boltanski.[27] Drawing on Weber, Luetkens' behaviour could be explained by the idea that, in the end, "man is dominated by the making of money, by acquisition as the ultimate purpose of his life. Economic acquisition is no longer subordinated to man

27 Weber, Max. *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (translated by Talcott Parsons and with an introduction by Anthony Giddens). London/New York: Routledge, 2001 (first published in Germany in 1904/1905), 18. For a German version with a good introduction see Weber, Max. *Die protestantische Ethik und der Geist des Kapitalismus. Vollständige Ausgabe*, edited by Dirk Kaesler. Munich: Beck, 2010. For a good overview and concise introduction to classical and neoclassical economics with a comprehensive bibliography see Hausman, Daniel M. "Philosophy of Economics." *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Fall 2018 Edition), edited by Edward N. Zalta, Online-Edition: https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2018/entries/economics, accessed December 6, 2019. See also Morgan, Jamie, ed. *What is Neoclassical Economics? Debating the Origins, Meaning and Significance*. London: Routledge, 2016. Regarding the *homo economicus* with its strong emphasis on rationality and self-interest relating to the Early Modern Period see Engel, Alexander. "Homo oeconomicus trifft ehrbaren Kaufmann. Theoretische Dimensionen und historische Spezifität kaufmännischen Handelns." In *Praktiken des Handels. Geschäfte und soziale Beziehungen europäischer Kaufleute in Mittelalter und Neuzeit*, edited by Mark Häberlein and Christof Jeggle, 145-172. Konstanz: UVK, 2010. See Witthaus, Jan-Henrik. "The Homo Oeconomicus, Merchant Ethos, and Liberalism in Spain under Enlightened Absolutism." In *The Honorable Merchant – Between Modesty and Risk-Taking: Intercultural and Literary Aspects*, edited by Christoph Lütge and Christoph Strosetzki, 143-162. Cham: Springer, 2019. In general, see Kirchgässner, Gebhard. *Homo Oeconomicus: Das ökonomische Modell individuellen Verhaltens und seine Anwendung in den Wirtschafts- und Sozialwissenschaften*. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2013. See Boltanski, Luc, and Ève Chiapello: *The New Spirit of Capitalism*. London/New York: Verso, 2007. For a good example of such an approach see Greif, *Path to the Modern Economy.*

as the means for the satisfaction of his material needs."[28] If I had based my study on the concept of *homo economicus*, I might have been misled by Luetkens' activities into assuming that behind his behaviour stood a merchant capitalist acting only in his self-interests, greedy and unscrupulous in his words and actions, and whose aim was nothing more than accumulating capital.[29] This could have also served as an explanation for the fact that, in addition to postponing his marriage, when conducting his business affairs, Luetkens, as has been shown in various chapters of this book, often acted in grey areas, areas governed by a kind of legal limbo. He undertook insider dealings, employed dissimulating tactics, and withheld information from his correspondents, often walking a tightrope with regard to justifying his actions. We could attribute this to a desire to accumulate wealth, come what may. Taking this perspective and using the above explanatory models is one way to approach the Luetkens case and archive. And without a doubt it might be a worthwhile undertaking to elaborate further on these considerations. Nevertheless, in this book I decided to follow another road and narrative. I refrained from drawing on grand narratives as the basis for my research, because they did not strike me as particularly accurate or beneficial.

It is true that many of Luetkens' undertakings were done out of a certain self-interest, and it is beyond question that his actions were often close to the borderline of what was legal at the time. Nevertheless, in this book I have held a different view of his behaviour, not attributing it merely to greed, capitalistic self-interest or a capitalistic spirit. In my opinion, seeing his actions and enterprises only as the pursuit of profit would fall short as an explanation for his efforts, the practical and pragmatic ways he handled his affairs during this particular stage of his life. This is particularly apparent in his having prolonged his stay in France. Assuredly, the merchant Luetkens wanted to make more money during several additional months spent in France, to *fill his bags with ducats*. In my opinion, however, the central motivation behind his behaviour and his interest to raise capital was to create better conditions for the two important challenges awaiting him back in Hamburg: opening a merchant house of his own, and marrying a daughter from another merchant family, both important steppingstones for completing the mercantile establishment phase. Both required him to have settled his undertakings in France before returning to Hamburg. The self-interest obvious in Luetkens' behaviour with regard to all his undertakings is primarily related to efforts to do whatever was needed to obtain a reasonable livelihood. This, in fact, presents us with a man who sought pragmatic solutions for the challenges in his life, not a man who was driven by mere desire for profit and wealth.

In this book I have chosen a narrative that gives preference to this explanation for Luetkens' behaviour: the pragmatic self-interest of gaining a livelihood. I see no reason to relate his behaviour to long-term historical developments, or to search for parallels in

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28 Weber, *Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, 18.

29 See Engel, "Homo oeconomicus," 145-148. See Witthaus, "Homo Oeconomicus." Regarding this discussion, see also Jacob/Secretan, "Introduction." See Reinert, Sophus A., and Robert Fredona. "Merchants and the Origins of Capitalism." In *The Routledge Companion to the Makers of Global Business*, edited by Teresa da Silva Lopes, Christina Lubinski, and Heidi J.S. Tworek, 171-188. Abingdon/New York, 2020.

modern forms of capitalism. My perspective emphasises the historical specificities and distinctive features of the the hazardous field of trade in the 18th century, and the prevailing conditions, circumstances and practices that shaped people's lives at that time. My narrative refrains from following grand narratives. It searches rather for an answer to the question: What were the particular challenges that Luetkens and his correspondents faced and how did they cope with them? It pays tribute to the situations Luetkens actually faced and experienced. It puts, as it is referred to today, the "veto of the sources" first, not theory.[30] Today, this type of narrative is usually associated with the microhistorical approach. In contrast to grand narratives, the microhistorical approach is often seen as a means for gaining detailed, differentiated or contrasting views of the past. This holds true also with regard to the present book.[31]

The main reason for not relying on narratives about capitalism was that in my research I rarely had the impression that Luetkens was in fact an incarnation of the *homo economicus*.[32] To the contrary, Luetkens lived precisely at the moment in time "before the triumph of [the] homo economicus: seen as selfish, materialistic, and always imagined in modern and classical economic theory as governed by self-interest."[33] Rather, he was a typical Early Modern merchant, as postulated for instance by Margaret C. Jacob and Catherine Secretan, a merchant whose self-perception and actions rested primarily on the "human disposition to cooperate with others and to punish those who fail[ed] to promote that societal goal", an attitude linked to "self-discipline, politeness, and respectability."[34] This assessment also explains why this book does not present the story of a self-made man, but rather of a person who depended greatly on the goodwill, help and support of others.

Looking at Luetkens' case from a modernistic perspective and assessing him as greedy, only self-interested or unscrupulous would thus be a premature conclusion. Indeed, the grey area practices of Luetkens rarely harmed anyone directly; he did not cause the ruin of another firm. They more often served the purpose of overcoming and dealing with structural obstacles. If anything, he only undermined the contemporary

30 Koselleck, Reinhart. "Standortbindung und Zeitlichkeit. Ein Beitrag zur historiographischen Erschließung der geschichtlichen Welt." In *Objektivität und Parteilichkeit*, edited by Wolfgang J. Mommsen and Jörn Rüsen, 17-46. Munich: dtv, 1977, 45. See Jordan, Stefan. "Vetorecht der Quellen" (Version: 1.0)." *Docupedia-Zeitgeschichte* (11.02.2010), http://docupedia.de/zg/jordan_vetorecht_quellen_v1_de_2010, accessed March 14, 2019.

31 "The unifying principle of all microhistorical research is the belief that microscopic observation will reveal factors previously unobserved [...] phenomena previously considered to be sufficiently described and understood assume completely new meanings by altering the scale of observation. It is then possible to use these results to draw far wider generalizations although the initial observations were made within relatively narrow dimensions and as experiments rather than examples". Levi, "On Microhistory," 97-98. See Brewer, "Microhistory," 8. See Freist, "Historische Praxeologie als Mikro-Historie."

32 The concept was introduced after Luetkens' lifetime. See Tietz, Manfred. "The Honest Merchant Before Adam Smith. The Genesis and Rise of a Literary Prototype in Britain." In *The Honorable Merchant – Between Modesty and Risk-Taking: Intercultural and Literary Aspects*, edited by Christoph Lütge and Christoph Strosetzki, 77-94. Cham: Springer, 2019.

33 Jacob/Secretan. "Introduction," 2.

34 Ibid.

mercantilist economic policies of France. When solving challenges, as my analyses have shown, Luetkens never acted alone, but pursued the strategy of joining forces with others, cooperating, partnering up, fraternising or even conspiring with other merchants or family members. This should be seen as a basic characteristic of Early Modern trading systems, and standard practice in 18th-century trading communities.

When asked today about Luetkens' behaviour, I thus try to characterise him not as a capitalist, but as an early modern string-puller overcoming challenges and obstacles. Luetkens ultimately did, as it has been expressed by Konstantin Dierks, whatever was "in his power" to get things done.[35] Decidedly, this should not excuse his behaviour from a modern-day perspective. Indeed, through his undertakings, particularly the import of colonial goods such as sugar, he actively supported the colonial system of France. Nonetheless, this is an explanation for why he used grey area practices, in both business and private matters. As David Hancock argues when commenting on the morality of the merchants he has investigated, including slave traders, today we "cannot justify the [merchants'] participation in the slave trade; and it would be repulsive to admire someone who acted as they did in our century – an age that is more self-conscious about race and social and economic freedom. We can, however, recognise that these merchants' failure to comprehend the immorality of slavery stems from the same habits of minds that led to their achievements elsewhere."[36]

Every major step Luetkens took to establish his business involved challenges, difficulties and risks. His activities and efforts often represented a constant fight against obstacles. In many ways it was also a game of chance. Through letters, this 18th-century negotiator convinced people to help him and work together with him. He dealt with the obstacles and found coping mechanisms and solutions with the help of his correspondents and trading partners. This assessment, in my opinion, is a more accurate version of 18th-century self-making than concepts such as *homo economicus* or the self-made man.

The microhistorical descriptions in this book also provide information on large scale developments. Luetkens lived in a period when trade, trading practices, flows of goods, information and communication were becoming internationalised and even globalised. Commission trade and the business model of the private firm were becoming more important, the banking and financing sectors were growing. International laws of the sea were introduced, as were economically driven policies such as French mercantilism and the neutral politics of Hamburg. Shared commercial languages and networks gained in significance. Today all of these phenomena and developments are seen as having paved the way for modern day capitalism.[37] In this book, however, these topics have primarily served the purpose of better understanding the activities of Luetkens, above all by

35 See Dierks, *In my Power*.

36 Hancock, *Citizens of the World*, 17. The merchant Luetkens was not involved in the slave trade, although by trading in French sugar coming from the colonies, he nevertheless supported the colonial system behind it with his actions. See already Stein, *French Sugar Business.*

37 See Jacob/Secretan. "Introduction." See Reinert/Fredona. "Merchants and the Origins of Capitalism".

providing the necessary framework for reconstructing and making sense of his correspondence.

Letters were a major tool for Luetkens. He used them to react to challenges, handle business matters, overcome obstacles and take advantage of favourable circumstances. He used letters to draw on middlemen, letters helped him profit from his status, such as to gain privileges as a foreign merchant. His letter-writing enabled him to make a living, to establish his business, to put his plans and enterprises into action. As a string puller he used practical letter-writing and correspondence skills to win over other people to support and assist him in his undertakings. The nearly gapless Luetkens archive allows a clear view of the many ways he exerted influence on others by means of letters.

Some of his dealings might appear to us today as quite dubious, from his plan to transfer his ships to his youngest brother, his plan to entice a merchant away from another firm, to his habit of sending gifts to his future wife to mollify her about his long absence. From a contemporary perspective, however, Luetkens' actions usually remained within the realm of what was legally permissible. As I hope to have shown, not only were these plans and undertakings – as well as the principles of persuasion accompanying them – typical of merchants of the time, they fulfilled particular practical purposes.

Above all, they were the means for Luetkens to reach his ultimate goal: to establish himself as a wholesale merchant in the merchant community. Luetkens' particular way of handling his businesses and private affairs proved rewarding and, in the end, they were highly beneficial. When he returned to Hamburg in September 1745, he was a man of note, merit and reputation, well respected in the merchant community and appreciated by his future wife and her family. Thus, despite or rather precisely because of how he had handled things and gotten things done, his establishment phase had the desired effect. At the end of the year 1745, when settling down in Hamburg, he was set for a life as an established man of trade.

A portrait of Luetkens hangs today in the *Kleines Zimmer* of the City Hall of Hamburg. Hamburg is proud of its mercantile tradition and history, as well as of the city's merchant forefathers, who in the past made Hamburg a wealthy city. The special role and position held by Hamburg today on the world markets, as well as the good reputation Hamburg merchants enjoyed in the past and still enjoy today, is mainly attributed to a guiding principle, a "*Leitbild*", a code of economic conduct that Hamburg merchants have been associated with, according to tradition, ever since 1517: the ideal of the *Ehrbarer Kaufmann*, the Honourable Merchant.[38]

It was in 1517 that the business association of the "Gemeene Kopman" was founded in Hamburg, an institutionalised representation of the merchants of the city. During the 18th century the association was renamed: it became the association of "Ehrbarer Kaufmann".[39] It was founded to ensure mercantile self-governance in Hamburg and to maintain Hamburg free trade. The members of the *Ehrbare Kaufmann* association complied with its general mission and code of conduct for economic behaviour. The intention was to create a basis for the good reputation around the world of the city

38 See Handelskammer Hamburg, *Handelskammer Hamburg*, in general 208-242, here 215-217.

39 See ibid., 21-24.

of Hamburg and its merchants. As the name suggests, the Hamburg merchants nailed their colours to the mast: they followed the principle of respectability and the values of integrity, cooperation, honesty, reliability, loyalty, trustworthiness and durability.

In certain ways, this represents a counter-project to the concept of *homo economicus*, which is why the guiding model of the honourable merchant, the *Ehrbare Kaufmann*, is today still widely discussed, even in mainstream economics well beyond the dominion of Hamburg. When facing today's challenges of international cooperation, it is seen a concept for responsible conduct and management in international trade.[40] This represents another reason why Hamburg merchants today are proud of their tradition.

The association of Hamburg merchants still exists, today under the name "Versammlung eines Ehrbaren Kaufmanns zu Hamburg e.V.". The association's charter still refers to the guiding model of the Hamburg tradition of the honourable merchant.[41] In 2017, the association celebrated its 500-year jubilee, during which its code of conduct was reconfirmed and presented as the unique selling point of Hamburg trade today. The association's self-description still mentions the characteristics of loyalty, cooperativeness, reliability, fairness and trustworthiness. A cosmopolitan attitude is often also added, and moreover, we encounter a strong sense of community.[42] As is often emphasized by Hamburg merchants, even today the spoken word alone of a Hamburg merchant is binding and regarded as an obligation; in the same breath they still refer to the practice of settling trade deals with a handshake.[43] These practices and the special values of Hamburg merchants evolved historically. They can be traced back to men like Luetkens, who once represented Hamburg in the world and contributed through his actions and enterprises to the success of Hamburg trade.

It is fitting that Luetkens' portrait today hangs in the City Hall of Hamburg. Indeed, I believe that in many ways Luetkens fits the guiding model of the Hamburg merchant

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40 Regarding the significance of the concept of the *Ehrbare Kaufmann* for concepts of *Corporate Social Responsibility* today see Klink, Daniel. "Der Ehrbare Kaufmann – Das ursprüngliche Leitbild der Betriebswirtschaftslehre und individuelle Grundlage für die CSR-Forschung." In *Corporate Social Responsibility (Zeitschrift für Betriebswirtschaft / Journal of Business Economics Special Issue 3)*, edited by Joachim Schwalbach, 57-79. Wiesbaden: Gabler, 2008. See Lütge, Christoph. "The Honorable Merchant and the Corporate Social Responsibility Movement." In *The Honorable Merchant. Between Modesty and Risk-Taking: Intercultural and Literary Aspects*, edited by Christoph Lütge and Christoph Strosetzki, 19-28. Cham: Springer, 2019. See also Graf, Christian, and Rolf Stober, eds. *Der Ehrbare Kaufmann und Compliance. Zur Aktivierung eines klassischen Leitbilds für die Compliancediskussion*. Hamburg: Kovač, 2010. Regarding the significance of this guiding model or *Leitbild* for entrepreneurial behaviour today see also Engel, "Homo oeconomicus," 156.

41 Versammlung Eines Ehrbaren Kaufmanns zu Hamburg e.V. (VEEK). *Satzung*. https://veek-hamburg.de/wp-content/uploads/2011/08/Neue-Satzung-2017.pdf, accessed December 6, 2019.

42 See https://veek-hamburg.de, accessed December 6, 2019. See Versammlung Eines Ehrbaren Kaufmanns zu Hamburg e.V. (VEEK). *Vision und Mission der Versammlung Eines Ehrbaren Kaufmanns*. Hamburg: VEEK, 2017. See Versammlung Eines Ehrbaren Kaufmanns zu Hamburg e.V. (VEEK). *Leitbild des Ehrbaren Kaufmanns im Verständnis der Versammlung Eines Ehrbaren Kaufmanns zu Hamburg e.V.* Hamburg: VEEK, 2014.

43 See https://veek-hamburg.de/veek500, accessed December 6, 2019. Versammlung Eines Ehrbaren Kaufmanns zu Hamburg e.V. "Hier sind die 'ehrbaren' Werte zu Hause!". Imagefilm VEEK zum 500. Jubiläum, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RGPsXtJBwps, accessed December 6, 2019.

that has been upheld since his time. I hope to have shown that, above all, he was loyal to his trading partners, he promoted and relied on cooperation, he was a cosmopolite. His kept his word and he paid his debts. Whether his handshake was strong, we will never know. However, we have seen that his letters carried weight and that he used them, in the same way as a handshake, to settle his deals. Luetkens is therefore without a doubt an exemplary representative of the Hamburg merchant of the past. Nevertheless, as I have also shown in this book, Luetkens did not always have a clean slate. He had rough edges and sometimes had to use grey areas and interpret margins of legality and discretion broadly. As the historian Richard Grassby once brilliantly summarised the situation of Early Modern merchants in this regard, in the "competitive and often merciless world [of Early Modern trade], businessmen had to look out for themselves and could not afford to be too squeamish or forthright."[44]

I have, in this book, added four more crucial character traits of 18th-century merchants to the catalogue of virtues presented above. In order to bring his establishment phase to a satisfactory end, drawing on the words of 18th-century merchant writer Christian Garve, Luetkens needed business "acumen and organisational talent".[45] While this certainly did not mean ruthlessness, he nonetheless did use a certain amount of pragmatic determination to achieve his goals, elements that his contemporaries also regarded as crucial for success. Last but not least, I hope to have shown in this book that to establish his business in the hazardous world of trade of the 18th century, Luetkens had to assert himself in his enterprises and undertakings, and thus made heavy use of the power of persuasion through letters. It was this power of persuasion that was certainly the foundation upon which Nicolaus Gottlieb Luetkens built his career as a Hamburg wholesale merchant of the 18th century.

When considering the achievements and codes of conduct of the merchants of the past as the basis for Hamburg's reputation today, this second side of the coin of mercantile success in the past should not be forgotten or, to put it more figuratively, not be swept under the carpet. To have an accurate picture of these men's history, we need the whole story of mercantile life in the past. That is why microhistorical work such as that undertaken in this book constitutes such an important contribution to the historical reappraisal of the past, not only of Hamburg's history but also the history of merchants in general. This was another justification for studying the merchant Nicolaus Gottlieb Luetkens; it was also my final goal. Thus, I am not only convinced that Luetkens deserves to have his portrait hanging in the City Hall of Hamburg, I believe it is equally appropriate that another original portrait of this man hangs in the entrance hall of my family home in Bad Zwischenahn today.

44 Grassby, *Business Community*, 293.

45 Quoted in Ruppert, *Bürgerlicher Wandel*, 69.

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u. gezeichnet von Johannes Rumpp von Kircheimb unter Teckh", herausgegeben von M. Engelbrecht, Verlagsnummer 5. By courtesy of the Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe Hamburg.

Figure 20: Girandole shaped diamond earrings with three drops. Detail of "Her Most Excellent Majesty Charlotte, Queen of Great Britain", painted by Thomas Frye, London 1762. Source: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, The Elisha Whittelsey Collection, The Elisha Whittelsey Fund, by exchange, 1969, part of The Met's Open Access program, www.metmuseum.org.

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Portrait of Nicolaus Luetkens, engraved by Christian Fritsch, 1739. Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek – Sondersammlungen, Portrait 22: L 93. Legend: M. Nicolaus Lütkens, Pastor an der Nicolai Kirche in Billwärder vor Hamburg. Gebohren an: 1675 d. 17. April: Gestorben an: 1736 d. 1 Mai

Gegründte Wissenschaft durch Gottes-Furcht erhöht, Der Wörter Starcke Kraft, so an das Hertze feht, Die laßen uns allhier den rechten Abriß lesen von dem, was Lüttckens Mund und Feder ist gewesen. Dieses setzte unter das Bildnis seines alten Freundes M. Jo. Christoph Krüsike, Prediger an der Haupt Kirche St. Petri.

Portrait of Nicolaus Gottlieb Luetkens, engraved by Charles Townley, painted after a model by Rudolf Christian Schade, 1790. Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek Hamburg (SUB) – Sondersammlungen, Portrait 22: L 94. Legend: gebohren 1716, Commerz Deputirter 1754, Bankbürger 1761, Senator 1771, gestorben 1788 – Zum Andenken seiner Verdienste um Hamburgs Bank, Handlung und Staat. von seinen dankbaren Mitbürgern.

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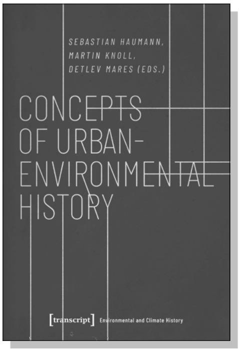

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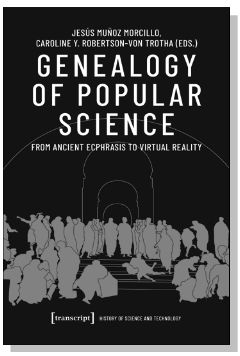

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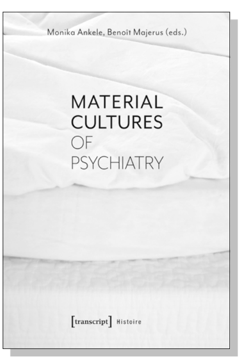

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