Seventeenth Century Baltic Merchants

The Baltic Sea is one of the most frequented waters in the world - if not the most frequented – and has been so for the last thousand years. Shipping and trade routes over the Baltic Sea have a long tradition. During the Middle Ages the Hanseatic League dominated trade in the Baltic region. When the German Hansa definitely lost its position in the sixteenth century, other actors started struggling for the control of the Baltic Sea and, above all, its port towns. Among those countries were, for example, Russia, Poland, Denmark and Sweden.

Since Finland was a part of the Swedish realm, ”the eastern half of the realm”, Sweden held positions on both the east and west coasts. From 1561, when the town of Reval and adjacent areas sought protection under the Swedish Crown, expansion began along the southeastern and southern coasts of the Baltic. By the end of the Thirty Years War in 1648, Sweden had gained control and was the dominating great power of the Baltic Sea region. When the Danish areas in the southern part of the Scandinavian Peninsula were taken in 1660, Sweden’s policies were fulfilled. Until the fall of Sweden’s Great Power status in 1718, the realm kept, if not the objective ”Dominium Maris Baltici” so at least ”Mare Clausum”.¹

The strong military and political position did not, however, correspond with an economic dominance. Michael Roberts has declared that Sweden’s control of the Baltic after 1681 was ultimately dependent on the good will of the maritime powers, whose interests Sweden could not afford to ignore.² In financing the wars, the Swedish government frequently used loans from Dutch and German merchants.³ Moreover, the strong expansion of the Swedish mining industries

¹ Rystad, Göran: Dominium Maris Baltici – dröm och verklighet /Mare nostrum. Om Westfaliska freden och Östersjön som ett svenskt maktcentrum, Stockholm 1999/
² Roberts, Michael: The Swedish Imperial Experience 1560-1718, Cambridge 1979 pp 133 ff
was dependant on foreign entrepreneurs. The Swedish burghers suffered from a lack of means to compete with the Dutch and the Germans. Sweden experienced imperial power in the Baltic area, but it was not an economic Great Power in the region. Sweden never controlled trade on the Baltic Sea.

Many merchants in Stockholm, Turku (Åbo) and other seaports were, in spite of that, successful in the Baltic trade, and Swedish and Finnish trade expanded during the seventeenth century.

In this essay some preliminary results of a study of Swedish and Finnish merchants will be presented. The aim is to discern some characteristic traits of the successful merchants engaged in the Baltic Sea trade. By examining four merchants, two in Finland and two in Sweden, we will look at some preconditions for their businesses and their strategies.

**Four merchants in the Baltic trade**

*Peter Grönberg*

Peter Grönberg was one of the merchants active in the Baltic region trade in the end of the sixteenth and the beginning of the seventeenth century. His establishment was set up very early and the business was purposefully developed and eventually crowned with success. Peter Grönberg was born into the business of trade; his father was a tradesman in Söderköping, a small port town on the Swedish east coast. After basic trade training by his father, he was sent by his parents to a business contact in Danzig, Wilhelm Braun. His mission was threefold; he was to improve his knowledge in commerce generally and the Danzig market especially; he was to learn the language of Baltic trade, German, but also basic knowledge of Polish; and thirdly he was to establish contacts within the Danzig business community. After three years of apprenticeship with Wilhelm Braun the young Peter Grönberg advanced to become trader and was given the responsibility for Braun’s trade with Sweden.

Soon after the turn of the century, 1600, the training period was over and Peter Grönberg established himself as an iron-exporting trader in Stockholm. Very soon thereafter he married his first wife, Margareta Mårtensdotter, from the

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5 Sandström, Åke: *Mellan Torneå och Amsterdam. En undersökning av Stockholms roll som förmedlare av varor i regional- och utrikeshandel 1600-1650*, Stockholm 1990 p 331
6 The information about Grönberg is from Zebrasynthous, Jacob: *Een Christelig Lijkpredikan hållen uthi Stockholms stadslyrrka*, Stockholm 1633
same city. In Stockholm he became a respected merchant and in the year 1616 he was elected city councillor of the Swedish capital.\textsuperscript{7} Success continued and at the beginning of the 1630s he was given King Gustav II Adolph’s order to be commissioner in Hamburg. He was also one of the great tradesmen who with ready money and his own business contacts contributed to financing the expansionist wars. During the period 1628–1631, he was enfeoffed with large lands and then ennobled in 1631 for his services to the crown.

\textit{Jochim Schultz}\textsuperscript{8}

Jochim Schultz belonged to a German merchant family which was already established in the Baltic trade. His father Jochim Schultz the elder is described as a distinguished merchant and tradesman in Lübeck at the beginning of the seventeenth century. For a brief period around the turn of the century the father had visited Turku and then returned to Lübeck. Jochim Schultz the younger not only received his training from his parents, but he was also an apprentice with a relative in the same city, Eggert von Dyck. The Schultz family, which wanted to increase its trade with the Realm of Sweden, sent Jochim the younger to Turku in 1624 where he worked for an old business acquaintance of the family, the merchant Reggert von Münster.

Jochim was to become familiar with the Turku market and also to learn the Swedish and Finnish languages. Thus he had to work as a simple shop assistant for one year learning the languages before he was taken on as trader. In 1625 he had a position with one of the Turku mayors, Erik Andersson Knape, whose trade he managed for six years.

Besides the tasks for Knape, Jochim Schultz also set up in a small way his own trade. Sources are unclear as to whether he then kept contact or not with his relatives in Lübeck, but there is some evidence that suggests he did. What is known is that he started trade with Kurland, a trade that he maintained until 1634. This particular year he was established as a Turku burgher and merchant, and traded with several towns around the Baltic Sea, but also with burghers of Wasa and other domestic towns. He also carried on a cloth and silk shop in Turku.

In the 1630s yet another member of the Schultz family had arrived in Turku,

\textsuperscript{7} Ericsson, Lars: \textit{Borgare och byråkrater. Omvandlingen av Stockholms stadsförvaltning 1599-1637}, Stockholm 1988 s 44

\textsuperscript{8} The information about Schultz is, when nothing else is noted, from Alano, Georgio: \textit{Nädiga Bijstånd i högsta nödhen}, Åbo 1662
namely a brother, Jost Schultz. The two brothers were both very successful businessmen. Despite the loss of several wrecked ships, Jochim Schultz was at his death in 1662 one of the most distinguished Baltic Sea merchants settled in Turku.  

Barthold Festing was born in 1634, son of a burgher and artisan of German origin in a small Finnish town. After school and thanks to his mathematical talents he was sent to Turku to “learn trade” from the prominent merchant and tradesman Jochim Schultz. The first seven years were devoted to retail business. Festing was then an attendant in Schultz’s silk and cloth warehouse. It was not until after these seven years that he received an insight into the wholesale business and training, and was from then on directed towards the Baltic trade.  

At the age of 28, after more than 13 years of training and service, he set himself up as a merchant and devoted himself to international trade as well as trade with Stockholm and within Finland. He was established as burgher in the city in 1662, the year when his patron and employer, Jochim Schultz, died. When he was made a burgher he married Schultz’s daughter Elin. It is worth mentioning that his wife was not the only child of Jochim Schultz; Schultz had several children from two marriages. In 1662 the sons Johan and Niklas, with the aid of their father, were already established as merchants in the city. ”The Schultz” were then a well established merchant family in Turku. Festing, who lacked a name and reputation, could act as the successor of Schultz and thus not only take over business contacts and all goods of his employer, the co-operation with the young brothers-in-law, but also gain greater confidence amongst deliverers, trading partners and customers.  

Barthold Festing, who had once started as a shop assistant, after his establishment and marriage made a fast and successful career, and already in 1665, at the age of 31, he was one of the most wealthy men in Turku.  

9 Ranta, Raimo: Åbo stads historia 1600–1721, Åbo 1977 s 160, 218, 253  
10 Flachsenius, Jacob: En Kraftig Tröst i lijf och Dödh, Åbo 1692  
11 Ranta 1977 s 176, 225, 268, 358, 507
Hindrich Barckhusen was born in Lübeck in 1607. He came to Sweden for the very first time in 1628 when he visited his older brother Hans. During the previous year the brother had become a burgher and merchant in Stockholm. Hindrich, who in 1628 still had a position as trader, visited his brother and established his first contacts with the Swedish iron export business.

The two brothers grew up in a merchant family in Lübeck with ramifications to Frankfurt am Main and other German towns. They did not go to the city-school but had a private tutor in their home. When the brothers still were in their youth, their father died and the responsibility for their further education and career was handed over to their mother, Elisabet Mossebeck. After having gone through basic trade-training in their home-town, the young boys were sent by their mother to merchants in different countries to complete their education as traders. Hindrich was fifteen years of age when he had his first training abroad. He held positions, for example, in Antwerp, Danzig and with the famous mayor in Malmö, Jost Leidebur.

Hindrich Barckhusen did not stay in Stockholm in 1628, but continued his travels and served in many places in Europe. His brother Hans enlarged his business as an iron trader in Stockholm, and by leasing ”stora tullen” (the port trade customs), he minimised the inconvenience of raised tolls. In parallel with his work for different employers Hindrich acted as contact for Hans in respect of the Lübeck and Dutch markets.

Hindrich visited Sweden several times and was introduced to the ironwork proprietors and other representatives of the Swedish iron trade. After ten years, in 1638, he set himself up in Stockholm and took the oath as burgher of trade in the Swedish capital. That same year he married Kristina Leffler, a daughter of the owner of the cloth factories in Östuna, Strömsholm, and Arboga and the tenant of Dylta sulphur works. When his father-in-law Hans Leffler died the following year, Hindrich Barckhusen took over the tenancy of the Dylta works and settled down in Arboga where he also leased ”Lilla tullen”, the domestic customs and excise. He was still a burgher of Stockholm and not of Arboga, and therefore had the right to continue direct export trade of bar iron from Bergslagen, and vitriol and sulphur from the Dylta works. If he had been a burgher of Arboga he would have

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12 The information about Schultz is, when nothing else is noted, from Wintrosius, Georg: En christelig Lijkpredikan... Henrich Barckhusen, Västerås 1673 and Lohmann, Benjamin: Arboga kännning, Stockholm 1737
had no right to export his wares himself, but would have had to sell his goods to a wholesaler in Stockholm.

Hindrich Barckhusen exporting iron bars and other products to Danzig, Lübeck and Holland. He expanded his business in Arboga and in the 1650s he became a burgher of that town. Apart from his foundry business and the iron trade, he set up himself as a shipowner for one of the town’s privileged iron vessels, which brought iron from Arboga to Stockholm.\textsuperscript{13} His brother Hans in Stockholm then had the responsibility to export the goods, which Hindrich brought to the capital. Business could to a large extent be kept within the family, from production to buyers in German towns. By then Hindrich Barckhusen was well established and held a strong position in local society. His career peaked in 1664 when he was appointed mayor of Arboga. Six years later, being a wealthy and very mighty man, he passed away.

\textbf{Baltic Merchants – some characteristic features}

These four men were in business within Swedish Baltic trade in the period 1600 to 1670. They were selected from a sample of seventeen to represent merchants in the Swedish Baltic trade. They all became distinguished men, but their backgrounds and careers were different. What do these short descriptions tell us about the merchants engaged in this trade? The aim is to sketch from these four examples some features characterising the successful merchants trading in the seventeenth century.

\textbf{Background – merchant’s son and a good education}

When reading biographies on merchants within the Swedish Baltic trade, it is obvious that at least one of two criteria must be fulfilled for the boy who wished to be a trade apprentice: he should be a merchant’s son and/or he should have a predisposition for studies, especially mathematics.

Three out of four had fathers engaged within the Baltic trade. None of them did directly take over the established business of the father after his death, but their business could even be seen as a continuation or rather as a partition from the father’s business. Out of seventeen studied merchants, only one took over his father’s business directly.\textsuperscript{14} Even if they were born into the trade, most of them

\textsuperscript{13} Stadin, Kekke: \textit{Maktkamp på Arboga redd. Sjöfart inom skrå och aktiebolag}, Uppsala 1993

\textsuperscript{14} Bothniensis, Nicolaus: \textit{En kort Lijkpredikan hvilken haffd år i Örebro stadz kyrkia}, Västerås 1623: Jacobi,
had to build their own trade. This was done within the framework of the family business though, within which they were given economic support as well as personal references and contacts. Jochim Schultz had sons who very well could have inherited his life’s achievement. This did not happen. Instead the Schults’s trading house in Turku was developed by the two sons setting up their own companies during their father’s lifetime, all in close co-operation with each other, with their father and the family in Lübeck. The direct heir was instead his faithful trader Barthold Festing, who married one of his daughters.

For Jochim Schultz and to an even greater extent Hindrich Barckhusen, the situation was complicated by their fathers’ passing away when they still were children. In both cases their mothers took over the whole responsibility for their education. These women used their trading contacts to obtain for their sons positions with respectable and distinguished merchants. Being fatherless did not have to be a catastrophe for a merchant’s son. In many merchant families the mothers were able to arrange the careers for their sons.

Barthold Festing had another background. His father, Matthaeus Festing, was an artisan. Like other merchants who had not been born into trade, his ability to write and his mathematical talent were obvious; he had ”a particular inclination towards writing and counting”.

15 Elementary school was a necessary demand for all merchants-to-be. Before anyone was taken on as apprentice he must first have had a basic education. Most children went to elementary school in their home town, but some sent their sons away to neighbouring towns. For instance, a burgher’s son from Örebro went to school in his home town and thereafter in the more reputable school in Västerås before being a traders apprentice in Arboga and lastly joining up as a trader for a Stockholm merchant.16 A burgher of the small town of Eksjö, where there were no schools, sent his son to Växjö School be-

15 Flachsenius 1992
16 Jacobi 1629
fore going to Gothenburg to learn the trade. If the parents were wealthy, such as the Barckhusens in Lübeck, a private tutor was arranged for the children. Parents who planned a future in commerce and trade for their sons were anxious to give them the best education they could afford. In order to further the education of young burghers, counting schools were established in a lot of towns around the country in the seventeenth century. If Swedish trade was to be promoted all children of the burghers had to be masters of the art of writing as well as counting, so stated the ”Charter for the towns’ administration in 1619”.

Training to be a merchant was performed within an apprentice system. For those born into a merchant family, training started at home, but everyone also continued their education with another tradesman. The parents themselves, however distinguished they were, were never considered to be sufficient tutors. After at least three years as an apprentice, they advanced to traders; this meant they could travel on their own and manage all tasks within the trade of their patron. A few served as traders for only three or four years, but most of them stayed on much longer in that position. Throughout the century the education tended to take longer. This is clearly illustrated by the difference between Peter Grönberg and Hindrich Backhusen. While the former, who set himself up around the turn of the century 1600 after having been a trader for three years, Hindrich Barckhusen had been a trader for eighteen years when he started his own business.

There was a change over time, but the difference in education could also be connected to the fact that Grönberg was a native Swede, while Barckhusen was German. The Swedish merchants were generally considered unsatisfactorily educated. Their failure to correspond with the Dutch and German merchants has often been explained by their incompetence. ”They usually set up for Masters before they be half thought” the English diplomat John Robinson commented in the 1680s. Those merchants who, like Barckhusen, were born and educated in German towns, generally had a longer education than the native Swedes. From the 1660s merchants’ education was discussed in Sweden, and the native merchants were recommended to extend the education of their sons, apprentices and traders.

17 Mellin 1676
18 Bothniensis 1623, Jacobi 16629, Alano 1662, Mellin 1676, Melander 1690
19 Robinson, John: John Robinson’s account of Sweden, 1688. The original 1688 manuscript, edited and collected with the 1693 manuscript and the published editions from 1694, with an introduction by Hattendorff, John /Karolinska förbundets årsbok 1996/, Stockholm 1998 p 56
20 Novaky 1993 p 222 f; Robinson 1998 pp 20 f
Barthold Festing had been an errand-boy for a whole seven years, before he was allowed to start with wholesale training. Perhaps his education in the lower levels was extraordinarily long just because he was not born into trade. When Schultz took him on, he had to learn the merchant’s profession from the very beginning.

What did the up-and-coming merchants learn during their time as apprentices and traders? They had to know not only the market, the products and bookkeeping, but also customs duties, taxes, ordinations and law of commerce in all the areas where they were trading, but also currency, measurements, communications, freight and several other aspects of trade. Concomitantly, they had to know the languages of their markets.

The language above all in the Baltic trade was German. The old hanseatic language kept its position in this area for a long time. In the ports of the new provinces of Livonia, Estonia and Latvia, the burghers were of German origin and all spoke German. In the most important Polish port, Danzig, it was the same. Thus, the merchants in Sweden and Finland trading in the Baltic Sea had to know this language. Peter Grönberg had already in the end of the sixteenth century expressed his intention to learn German during his formative years. Wealthier merchants in Sweden-Finland even engaged German tutors to make their young children acquainted with the language. There are also examples of Swedish merchants’ sons who were sent to Lübeck schools, before they became apprentices in order to thoroughly learn German, the language all merchants had to speak.

But it was not enough to master German; the successful merchants also tried to learn the languages spoken in the towns in which they were active. As the century was proceeding Dutch was spoken by a growing number of merchants. Some also tried to learn Polish or Finnish, i.e. languages that were not spoken at the distinguished merchant levels, but by large proportions of the inhabitants. The already well-educated Jochim Schultz took on work as a shop assistant in Turku because it forced him to learn the local languages, Swedish and Finnish. A tradesman must always be able to speak to his customers and deliverers.

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21 Novaky 1993 pp 220 f
22 Rosendalius 1682; Ranta 1977 s 212
23 Prytz 1642
Great mobility between the towns

A merchant involved in the Baltic Sea trade had to be mobile. The remarkable geographical mobility of merchants in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries has been connected to religious conflict, but also the dynamic economic opportunities in countries such as the Dutch Republic, England and Sweden. But other factors also contributed to the merchants’ great mobility.

During the training years the merchants-to-be were travelling all the time. More important than the journeys they performed in the trade is perhaps that they moved and were in the service of different patrons in different towns. Of the four men in this study, none stayed in his town of birth, one moved once and then stayed where he began his training, whereas the others moved several times. For the young traders this was an important part of their education. Once they were established as burghers in a town, they were more reluctant to move. Only one of the four, Hindrich Barckhusen, altered his burghership from one town to another.

From a Swedish and Finnish horizon the contacts with Lübeck and Danzig were the foundation of Baltic trade. These are the two towns appearing most frequently in the material about the four studied merchants. This is where they had their training and this is where they had frequent business contacts. As Åke Sandberg has shown, those towns are also the two most important trading partners for Stockholm, for export as well as for import, during the first part of the seventeenth century. By mid-century it was only trade with Holland that had a greater size and value. From the Lübeck and Danzig point of view the volume of commerce with Swedish ports was relatively small. Nevertheless, the interest in personal contacts between Swedish merchants and the merchants of Lübeck and Danzig was and remained strong and mutual.

On the part of the Swedish merchants it was important to learn how these main markets functioned and to establish business contacts. This was best done during training. Many Swedish merchants, both of Swedish and German origin,
tried to place at least a part of their training period in one of these towns. They were seen as trade metropolises where it was possible to learn all they needed to know about commerce. So, for instance, a young merchant’s son from the small coastal town of Hudiksvall went to Lübeck in 1616 for a year to learn double bookkeeping. Lübeck and to some extent Danzig were seen as the foremost learning institutions for those setting up a business in Baltic trade.

Some merchants of the Swedish realm also tried to set themselves up in the Baltic provinces. Efforts were made to create new business contacts. Jochim Schultz set up trade in Kurland during his trader years. In a similar manner the Gothenburg merchant Jürgen von Lengeren (Lengercke) had formed a contact in Reval during his years as a trader for his uncle and namesake in Lübeck. There was an advantage for those who could link to well established German trading firms with the contacts and good reputation they could offer.

For those who, like Barthold Festing, lacked contacts in the German trading towns, the best alternative was to go into service with a burgher in Sweden or Finland of German origin. For those employed in domestic business it was all right to be a trader with a domestic merchant, but everyone of those engaged in the Baltic trade had worked for a merchant in a German town or a German merchant in a Swedish or Finnish town.

Apart from training, mobility was also based on the merchant’s wish for better conditions for his activities. Every town of the Swedish realm had its own privileges laid down by the Crown. In regard of administration and other details, the privileges were all the same, but in respect of trading rights they could differ substantially. The Stockholm merchants had the most far-reaching privileges. On the east side of the Baltic, Turku held the prime position. This was clearly expressed when the new trade ordinances and sailing regulations were issued in the second decade of 1600. Many merchants from the small towns went to Stockholm – or Turku – in order to improve their conditions and to expand their business. For Peter Grönberg the move from Söderköping to Stockholm was an important aspect of his career. The merchants were one of the most mobile groups of society.

27 Westenius 1662
28 Brunnio 1665
29 See Robert Sandbergs article in this volyme.
**German domination**

Three out of four presented merchants were of German origin. This was hardly by chance; still in the seventeenth century the Germans held a strong position in Baltic trade. Among those trading in the Swedish realm many were of German or Dutch origin, but most were naturalised Swedish subjects. Maria Bogucka, who has studied the mutual trade between Stockholm and Danzig notes that Swedish merchants dominated this trade. ³⁰ Christina Dalhede on the other hand has stated that it was foreign-born merchants residing in Sweden. ³¹ There is much to be said in favour of that interpretation. The large ports of Stockholm and Turku attracted many merchants of foreign origin. ³²

In particular, German trading firms with the intention of setting themselves up within the new expanding great power sent one or two of their sons to Sweden. These became burghers in Swedish or Finnish towns and thus Swedish subjects, but they can only, after the first or second generation, be seen as part of a larger German trading firm with branches on several sides of the Baltic Sea. The two Lübeck merchant families Schultz and Barckhusen set up business in Sweden by sending two young family members to Stockholm and Turku respectively. Contacts with the family or rather the relatives in Lübeck and other German towns remained strong. Furthermore, they tried to enlarge their areas of interest in the new country as well as in other parts of the Baltic area. Swedes went to German towns to be educated and to learn the market; Germans went to Sweden and Finland to establish themselves as merchants and burghers and to enlarge the family business.

The German merchants setting up themselves within Sweden were primarily representatives of German trading families penetrating new markets. Two brothers or sometimes cousins were sent to the town in question as traders to get contacts and knowledge about the market. There are cases where young traders represented their family on their own, but the most common scenario seems to be that two brothers, with a few years in between, were sent to the same town. The Germans moving to Sweden and Finland were an expression of the German trad-

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³¹ Dalhede, Christina: Handelsfamiljer på stormaktstidens Europamarknad., Partille 2001 p. 450
³² Ranta 1977 s 213 ff
ing firms’ efforts to expand and establish themselves in new parts of the Baltic region. It was a strategy to maintain a strong German position in Baltic Sea trade.

**Networks**

Baltic trade was built around networks, especially German family networks. Early modern trade has been described as so risky that personal bonds were an essential precondition for any trade. Relations between merchants were very social, combining economic interest with kinship, friendship and other bonding. The merchants strove for stable personal and mutual relations. Through networks they could safeguard this and secure trust and a reputation. Credits, references, new markets and influences were all related to the network. The stronger network, the better position for the trader.

Trading was an adventure, as there was always a risk of losing money, ships, goods and life in trading. Operating in networks, and in the ocean-trade, the possibilities for trading companies to manage these risks were increased. Jochim Schultz lost at least three ships, including cargo, in the Baltic Sea. For many merchants that would have been their ruin, but with the help of his family network Schultz could manage to handle these losses. Before marine insurance was established, working in networks was one way to reduce the effects of the risky trade.

By working in networks the German trading firms could also circumvent many of the regulations and ordinances that were given by the Swedish state at the beginning of the seventeenth century in order to further domestic trade, particularly the trade of the Stockholm merchants. When a member of a German – or Dutch – trading firm set up as merchant and burgher in Stockholm or Turku, he became a Swedish citizen and thus took part of all privileges given to Swedish and Finnish merchants. At the same time the connection to the original part of the merchant family offered advantages on the European market. The Schultz and Barckhusen families in the examples here used this strategy.

Another manner in which family bonds could be used to avoid the inconveniences that Swedish trade and shipping legislation could apply is illustrated by the co-operation of Hans and Hindrich Barckhusen. By one of them being a burgher in Stockholm, and thus having the right to exportation, the prohibition for merchants in the Lake Mälaren towns to engage in foreign trade could be evaded.

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33 Müller 1998 p 35
Domestic merchants who set themselves up in the Baltic trade tried in different ways to connect to these German networks. Swedish merchants already established within the Baltic trade discovered strategies to improve their connections to the German trading firms. One way was to arrange for a young man from one of these German firms to take up a job as a trader for him. This was unusual, but some were happy to succeed. Thus Carsten Nilsson of Gothenburg, for example, managed to persuade his trading partner in Lübeck to let him have his trader and relative. By this arrangement the Swedish as well as the German merchant safeguarded good contacts at least for the eight years the trader was in service in Gothenburg.

More important and more frequent however, were the contacts built up during the training years. By apprenticeship or by employment within a German merchant family, the future Swedish merchants not only trained in the profession, but also got to know those who would be their trading partners. Peter Grönberg, as well as Jochim Schultz and Hindrich Barckhusen, devoted much time and hard work during their years as traders to link themselves to existing networks and to build new ones up on the eve of their own establishments as trading merchants.

Women played an important role in this network building; marriage was the most common but also the most secure way to connect to the networks, and to strengthen them. Barthold Festing was incorporated into the Schultz’ family network when he married a daughter of his patron, Jochim Schultz. Typically, Festing married the daughter of a member of a German merchant family living in Finland, in one of the outer branches of that family. Marriages to women belonging to the central branches of a trading firm in Lübeck or any other German town were more unusual. For this the Swedish or Finnish merchants were too insignificant.

For merchants of foreign origin it was the other way around: contacts with local merchants, native or immigrated, was more important. Jochim Schultz exemplifies those who set themselves up by marrying daughters of the local merchant elite. This was a well-tried strategy for anyone establishing himself in a new country. This was seen as the best way to be involved in the local mercantile and political elite. For the relatives of the young woman this was also seen as an op-

34 Brunnio 1656
portunity; it offered new connections, new influences and new possibilities for credits and loans. Native merchants moving from one town to another usually used the same strategy to promote their career. Peter Grönberg married a woman from Stockholm the same year as he established himself as a burgher in this town.

For merchants desiring closer contacts with or influence over production a suitable marriage was also the foremost strategy. By marrying Kristina Leffler, Hindrich Barckhusen created close connections to a network of producers in the Swedish mining districts. To be a successful merchant in the Baltic trade, a suitable marriage was imperative.

**A growing interest in production**

Finally I want to point out a new tendency among the merchants engaged in Baltic trade: a growing interest in the production of the wares in which they traded. For example, in Danzig a large crafts centre for the Baltic region was developed, where the export of artisan goods became important.\(^{36}\) In the exports from Danzig to Sweden, 32% was furniture, glass, instruments, books, children’s toys and other industrial goods produced in Danzig.\(^{37}\) A notable amount of this production was controlled by merchants.

In Sweden as well, merchants showed an increasing interest in the production of export goods. In western Sweden, in Västervik, and in Viborg in the east, there was great interest in tar, but most important was mining. Best known among merchants engaged in the iron trade were Louis de Geer other Dutchmen. They arrived in Sweden in the 1620s and went into production on a large scale. More common, however, was the extent to which Hindrich Barckhusen involved himself. He leased Dylta works, and by his own marriages and those of his children he had close connections to a large number of iron bar factories. In addition, he owned a vessel to carry the goods over Lake Mälaren to Stockholm, where it was re-shipped. Hindrich Barckhusen surrendered the advantages that came with burghership in Stockholm, and especially the right to export the goods, in order to set himself up in the inland town of Arboga. These disadvantages he could evade by using his brother in Stockholm as exporter. His gain was a greater control over production and over transportation. Through this the Barckhusen family had control over all activities, from production in the Swedish inland, trans-

\(^{36}\) Bogucka 1983 pp 162 f

portation to Stockholm, further transportation over the Baltic Sea, and sales in different German and Dutch towns.

Among those merchants who established themselves in Swedish iron ore exports and who had interests in production, there were not only Dutchmen. Many of them were representatives of the trading firms of the old Hanseatic towns, starting to set themselves up as this new type of merchant; the entrepreneur.

**Concluding remarks**

When Sweden in the first part of the 1600s became a Great Baltic power, the economy and especially trade were weak points. Sweden was dependant on resources from abroad in the form of capital, knowledge and contacts to the market. In the Baltic Sea trade, these resources mainly came from the old hanseatic towns with Danzig and Lübeck as leaders. Even for trade with the newly conquered areas east of the Baltic, connections with the German trading firms were important. In terms of trade, the Swedish striving for *Dominium Maris Baltici* was never realised. In the trade between the Baltic ports and the rest of the world, the Dutch held the strongest position; within the Baltic Sea, German trading families from the old hanseatic towns maintained a dominant position.

Among the merchants who settled in Swedish and Finnish towns active in the Baltic trade, many were of German origin and involved in German family networks. Native Swedes who wanted to succeed tried to connect to these networks in one way or the other. For them, German trade and German traders established the patterns of business they tried to imitate. Indeed, strategies for success in the Baltic trade had everything to do with establishing links with the industrious Germans.
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