

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

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 Hertzner & 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.

segnet ward, aufgeführt 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/SBBo00054E60000000>, 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”, “Bummelker”] 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 [“Billanten”] 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 “Sejn 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

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

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 initiation, 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 Hertzler & 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. Hertzler & 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, "Gewünscht"] 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 Hertzler & 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-

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

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

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. Er-schriebene 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 Klopstock – 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-

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 Hertzner & 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 persöhnlicher 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 *galantry*, 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.

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 Haupttrezeß 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: Verlegs 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 freywillingen 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 Beyer 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 [Gefühlkultur] during the 18th century, see Aurnhammer, Achim, Dieter Martin and Robert Seidel, ed. *Gefühlkultur 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 Stauff/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, Hertzner & 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 Persecution 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 nobilization, 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 Hertz & 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 Capital”] for later times, on which Hertz & 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 Hertz & von Bobartt, October 12, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/232, Letter Book I, no. 357.

89 Letter from Hertz & 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 zukünftigen 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

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” [“charmanties 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?

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 to 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 Bobart, 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 alzeitfertige Briefsteller*, 171. "schönes und vollkommen tugendhaftes Frauenzimmer". Hunold, *Die Allerneueste Art Höflich und Galant zu Schreiben*, 148. "von guten Mitteln, honetter Freundschafft, läblicher 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 Hertzner & 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 tugendhaftes 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 gemietet." 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 Hertz & 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, Hertz & 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 Hertz & 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 Hertz & 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 Hertzner & von Bobartt on the 12th of October 1744. Informing Hertzner & 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 Hertzner & 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 Hertzner & 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, Hertzner & 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 Hertzner & 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 Hertzner & 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 Hertzner & 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 Hertzner & 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 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

118 See Rose, *Conduite und Text*, 181-190. As contemporary sources see See Neukirch, *Anweisung zu deutschen 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 [“partique 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 Briefe”: 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 Schreiber” 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 Freyheit”] 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 zukünftigen Glück”], furthermore in particular since I am resting assured that E.E. wishes me only the best and appreciates our true friendship [“aufrichtige Freundschaft”], 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 [“schriftliches 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 [“Elieschen 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 costly [in Hamburg] knows about this affair [“weiß niemand a costly 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 Hertzner & 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 Hertzner & 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 Hertzner & 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 Hertzner & 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 Hertzner & 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 Hertzner & 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 epistolality, 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 Hertzner & 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 contempor-

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 "partique" 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 geschäftlichen 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 ["partique 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 Hertzner & 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 Hertzner & 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, Hertzner & 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 rasoniren”]. 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.

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 erwähllet" 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 formulae 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 specificity 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, *Rhetic*, 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 and 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 copper-plate 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.

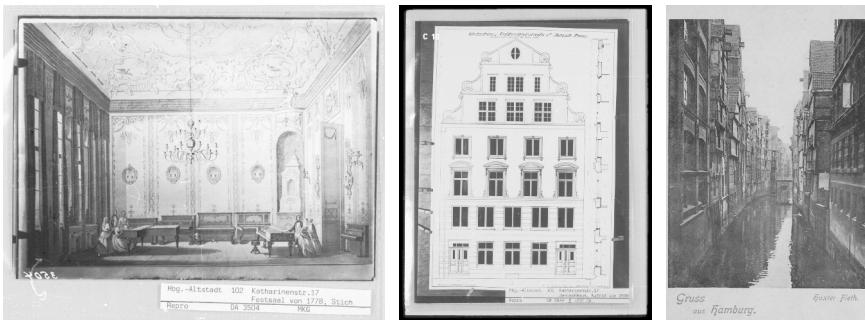
See also information regarding the Louis-Seize room in Klemm, David, Wilhelm Hornbostel, ed. *Das Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe in Hamburg. Von den Anfängen bis 1945* (vol. 1). Hamburg: Museum für Kunst u. Gewerbe, 2004, 151.

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 Kunsts geschichte*. 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 Fletch, "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 größte 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 Zuschrift 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 belief 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 vergänglichen Feuer ähnlich seyn.” Letter from Luetkens, Joachim to Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, October 5, 1744, TNA, HCA, 30/235.

145 See Yliuori, 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 deutschen 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 Cavigioli, 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.

Isabe 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

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, Patricia 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, 2018, 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 lubelier bekant"]. I also ask you to purchase for me and to send to Hertzner & 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 [“carrant”, barchent], 2 pieces preferably similar to the enclosed sample

In order to cover the expenditures, you can draw a bill on Hertzer & von Bobart 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 [“carrant”, 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 Hertz & 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 Hertz & 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 Hertz & 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 Hertz & 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 Heurathspartey"] 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 Hertzner & von Bobartt and transported to one of their storage 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 Hertzner & 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 [ditto] 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 Stübggen ["von 2 Ossel à/2 Stübggen", 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 depicted 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/jf2kwbv>, 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. *Spiel-tische 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 Lombre 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 Lombre 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 verändert woll seine Hare aber nicht das Fell, und dieser gute Allte wird woll seine wunderliche Prinsipia und Einfelle mit nach derander Welt 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 Ohringen"]. 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 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 Hä默le, 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 Hä默le. "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 Hä默le, 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 *galantry* 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.

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 ["Nebenfreier"] 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 Nebenfreier 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

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 Glaubensbekennnisse 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

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. Daglian, 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 time²¹⁷. 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 Correspondence"; 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 formality 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 formality 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 sonst 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 Argumente 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 Hertenzen kommt. 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 erlangt. [...] 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

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 kulturrell 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 costly [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 Conste 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 betrübe | 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 costly werde sein können, unterdeßen gelieben meine aufrichtige Treue und warhaftige Liebe versichert zu sein, wie mich dan [bei] aller Liebste auf diejehnige verläße, 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 unsre Liebe Mama bitte an selbe mein kindligen | und untertenigst | Gehorßbam 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 had 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 accompli*, 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 Ehrenfries' 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

²⁴² See Hunold, *Die Allerneueste Art Höflich und Galant zu Schreiben*. "Sechzehenden Abtheilung. Haus- und Geschäftsschreiben 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.: Talandier). *Talanders neuerläuterte Teutsche Rede-Kunst und Briefverfassung*. Leipzig: Gleditsch, 1700, 82 ["Neu=Jahrs=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 mouth-piece 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 [“kindlichen 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 warhaftige 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 weyls 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 vermählét 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 verzweifelt 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

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 Oxenzunge, da dieses nun seider Weihnachten 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 Ehrenfries' 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 costly”] 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 Conjunctionen 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 Verwegenheit 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 Wahrheit”] 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 persöhnlicher Zusammenkunft”]. 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 Hertzner & 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 Gelegenheit haben, [...] E.E. werden durch dero Fehler dero liebe Jungfer Brauth schon daß nötige deßwegen vorstellen können." Letter from Hertzner & 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 Hertz & 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 Hertzner & 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 Hertzner & 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 Hertzner & von Bobartt to Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, March 5, 1755, TNA, HCA 30/234.

