5 High-Risk Trade

Figure 13: Wooden figurines of begging sailors. Holzfiguren der Opferstöcke für die Hamburger Sklavenkasse.

Source: Historische Museen Hamburg / Museum für Hamburgische Geschichte, 18. Jahrhundert, Ständige Ausstellung (CC BY NC SA 4.0). By courtesy of the Museum für Hamburgische Geschichte.

Their eyes and praying hands beseech you, begging you for help and for mercy. Their posture is crouched, so full of humility. The whole scene is very touching. Displayed in a glass cabinet on the first floor of the *Museum für Hamburgische Geschichte* are twenty wooden figurines, arranged in two rows, taken from 18th-century Hamburg churches.[1] The figurines depict men with iron chains around their bellies, and all are cut from the same cloth, quite literally, with them all wearing sailor's clothing. These figurines represent seamen from 18th-century Hamburg whose ships were captured and who were

1 Holzfiguren der Opferstöcke für die Hamburger Sklavenkasse. *Historische Museen Hamburg / Museum für Hamburgische Geschichte*, 18. Jahrhundert, Ständige Ausstellung.

taken hostage by Ottoman privateers, or, as the Europeans called them during the 18th century, "Barbary Corsairs" on the North African coast whilst they were working on the ships of their hometown.[2] With these figurines, the families of the sailors were asking the Hamburgers for alms in order to be able to pay ransom for their relatives in captivity. Every coin the donators put into the collection basins that accompanied the figurines supported and filled the Hamburger "Sklavenkasse", the "slave fund", a cooperative municipal fund that was created to serve the sole purpose of rescuing prisoners from the North African Barbary States.[3] Generally, the Sklavenkasse, entrusted to and under the control of the Hamburg Admiralty, who also dealt with the handling of the payments, was maintained by regular small contributions from all active seamen serving on Hamburg ships. Nevertheless, the fund was also notoriously short of cash. It sorely needed the additional funding by way of donation. The figurines were supposed to and, in fact, actually did help. [4]

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2 See Ressel, Magnus. *Zwischen Sklavenkassen und Türkenpässen. Nordeuropa und die Barbaresken in der Frühen Neuzeit*. Berlin/New York: De Gruyter, 2012, 17-31. See Kaiser, Wolfgang, and Guillaume Calafat. "The Economy of Ransoming in the Early Modern Mediterranean: A Form of Cross-Cultural Trade between Southern Europe and the Maghreb (Sixteenth to Eighteenth Century)." In *Religion and Trade: Cross-Cultural Exchanges in World History, 1000-1900*, edited by Francesca Trivellato, Leor Halevi and Catia Antunes, 108-130. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2014. Regarding the problematic term "Barbary pirates", see ibid., 112. Regarding the difference or differentiation between pirates, corsairs and privateers, see Gounaris, Basil C. "Unwanted Heroes? British Privateering, Commerce, and Diplomacy in the Mid-Eighteenth-Century Eastern Mediterranean." *A Journal of Scholarship on the Mediterranean Region and Its Influence* 2, no. 2 (2014): 135-165, here 135-136. Regarding the Mediterranean Sea and the Ottoman privateers, see Talbot, Michael. "Protecting the Mediterranean: Ottoman Responses to Maritime Violence, 1718-1770." *Journal of Early Modern History* 21, no. 4 (2017): 283-317. See Talbot, Michael. *British-Ottoman Relations, 1661-1807: Commerce and Diplomatic Practice in Eighteenth-century Istanbul*. Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2017. Klarer, Mario, ed. *Piracy and Captivity in the Mediterranean. 1550-1810*. London: Routledge, 2018. See Harlaftis, Gelina, Dimitri Dimitropoulos and David J. Starkey, eds. *Corsairs and Pirates in the Eastern Mediterranean, Fifteenth-Nineteenth Centuries*. Athens: AD Aventure, 2016. See also Davis, Robert C. *Christian Slaves, Muslim Masters: White Slavery in the Mediterranean, The Barbary Coast, and Italy, 1500–1800*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003.

3 See Ressel, Magnus, and Cornel Zwierlein. "The Ransoming of North European Captives from North-Africa. A Comparison of Dutch, Hanseatic and English institutionalization of Redemption from 1610-1645." *In Seeraub im Mittelmeerraum. Piraterie, Korsarentum und maritime Gewalt von der Antike bis zur Neuzeit*, edited by Nikolas Jaspert and Sebastian Kolditz, 377-406. Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 2013. See Fuchs, Michael. *Die Frage der Versicherbarkeit von Lösegeld bei Pirateriefällen*. Karlsruhe: Verl. Versich-erungswirtschaft, 2014, here 9-11.

4 With regard to the institution of the "Sklavenkasse", see Ressel, *Sklavenkassen*, here 657. See Bohn, Robert. "Von Sklavenkassen und Konvoifahrten. Die arabischen Seeräuber und die deutsche Seefahrt im 17. und 18. Jahrhundert." In *Geschichtsbilder. Festschrift für Michael Salewski zum 65. Geburtstag*, edited by Thomas Stamm-Kuhlmann et al., 25-37. Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2003. See Kaiser, Wolfgang. *Le commerce des captifs: les intermédiaires dans l'échange et le rachat des prisonniers en Méditerranée, XVe-XVIIIe siècle*. Rome: École française de Rome, 2008. With regard to the figurines, see Rheinheimer, Martin. "Identität und Kulturkonflikt, Selbstzeugnisse schleswig-holsteinischer Sklaven in den Barbareskenstaaten." *Historische Zeitschrift* 269 (1999): 317-369. See Dawletschin-Linder, Camilla, and Amke Dietert. *Begegnungen-Iliskiler. Hamburg und die Türkei in Geschichte und Gegenwart*. Hamburg: Schüthedruck, 2010, here 38.

For the visitors of the museum in Hamburg, the wooden supplicants are one of the most exotic and, therefore, fascinating pieces of the museum. Most visitors, myself included, have never seen such figurines before. For the visitors of the Hamburg churches in the 18th century, however, the situation was different. The figurines gained a sad notoriety. They were widely known to the public, the offertory boxes of the *Sklavenkasse* being a common sight in many churches in Hamburg. The reason for this is simple: for the people of the time the threat of the Ottoman privateers was real and it was a direct threat to the Hamburgers. With every church visit, Hamburgers were reminded of the hundreds of mariners who were at that time eking out their existence in captivity in Africa. Looking at numbers, in the region of Algiers alone 104 Hamburgers were in custody in 1749.[5] The "Turkish Threat" or "Turkish Menace", "Türkengefahr" in German, a contemporary term, was one of the era's hot issues, a "nemesis" for European shipping of the century, and the ensuing fears reverberated throughout the city of Hamburg and beyond.[6] It was omnipresent in the public's awareness and in people's minds – strikingly epitomised in the very existence of the little wooden figurines of the sailors in peril.[7]

For this chapter, the *Turkish Threat* or *Menace* represents the necessary background knowledge framing the story at hand. The fear of the 'Barbary corsairs' served as the basis of argumentation and the vantage point of justification of the letters between ships' captains and merchants that is at the centre of the following explanations. The merchant Nicolaus Gottlieb Luetkens must have known these little wooden sailors, too. If not from the church his father preached in, then from any other church in Hamburg he had visited since his youth there. However, even without the material reminder, in 1744, the merchant as reported in a letter was, in his own words, aware of the deeds of the Turkish "hounds" ["Hunde"].[8] It was one of the burning questions within the correspondence Luetkens conducted with his ships' captains during this period. As he was highly interested in trade in the Mediterranean, the problem of the Ottoman privateers, in Spanish called "corsarios" and in French "corsaires", was something the mer-

5 Baasch, *Die Hansestädte und die Barbaresken*, 202-221. Between 1719 and 1742 a total of 682 Hamburg seamen were taken captive by North African privateers. See Kresse, Walter. *Von armen Seefahrern und den Schifferalten zu Hamburg*. Hamburg: Christians, 1981, 40-42. See ibid., 237-238. See also Rheinheimer, Martin. *Der Fremde Sohn. Hark Olufs' Wiederkehr aus der Sklaverei*. Neumünster: Wachholtz Verlag, 2007, 22.

6 Klarer, Piracy and Captivity, 1. Regarding the "Turkish Threat", "Turkish Menace", "Türkengefahr", see Konrad, Felix. "From the "Turkish Menace" to Exoticism and Orientalism: Islam as Antithesis of Europe (1453–1914)?" Europäische Geschichte Online (EGO), edited by the Leibniz-Institut für Europäische Geschichte (IEG), Mayence 2011, http://www.ieg-ego.eu/konradf-2010-en, accessed April 14, 2019. See Ginio, Eyal. "Piracy and Redemption in the Aegean Sea during the first half of the Eighteenth century." Turcica 33 (2001): 135-147. In general, and for the Dutch case, see Lunsford, Virginia W. *Piracy and Privateering in the Golden Age Netherlands*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005. Since I will be dealing with the concrete threat of being captured by Ottoman privateers, I am using the term "Turkish Threat" throughout this chapter. This is synonymous to "Turkish Menace".

7 See Panzac, Daniel. "Européens et Barbaresques aux XVIIIe siècle." In *Seeraub im Mittelmeerraum. Piraterie, Korsarentum und maritime Gewalt von der Antike bis zur Neuzeit*, edited by Nikolas Jaspert and Sebastian Kolditz, 327-348. Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 2013.

8 Letter from Hertzer & von Bobartt to Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, October 2, 1744, TNA, 30/234.

chant had to deal with.[9] Indeed, it needed to be resolved. This chapter shows how the merchant accomplished this and how the language register of patronage assisted him with it. Since the first analytical chapter has shown the importance of stepping into the shipping industry as an ambitious young merchant, this chapter shows what was crucial when being successful. The decisive factor was to choose reliable and good ships' captains and to keep a good, but clearly defined professional relationship with them, especially when the ships' captains were bound to voyages and set their sails to waters in which the Hamburg status of neutrality was basically not effective and, indeed, where especially Hamburg ships were in direct danger of being captured.[10]

Before coming to the question of how the *Turkish Threat* or *Turkish Menace*, a contemporary European concept, played a role, was negotiated and dealt with, as well as how it was used as an argument in the letter conversations of the merchant Nicolaus Gottlieb Luetkens, we first have to clarify by means of thick contextualisation what this 'threat' actually consisted of and what had caused the deep-rooted fears in people's minds. For this purpose, I will take a closer look also at the longer-term history of the phenomenon. Furthermore, I will outline the discursive dimensions of the phenomenon and I will elaborate on the concrete situation prevailing in the southern part of the Mediterranean Sea, which was the area where the people in this chapter were confronted with this 'threat' and the area mainly associated with it from a European perspective. Only this thick contextualisation will then provide us with the necessary understanding of how this trope could become such a central, shaping element and an issue of discussion in Luetkens' letter conversations and, equally importantly, it will explain to us the ways in which the letter writers talked about it and found appropriate ways to write about and negotiate the matter. The contextualisation will provide us with the necessary thick framework to understand and give meaning to the letter actions and decisions of the protagonists involved in the letter episode analysed in this chapter. Equipped with such a thick contextualisation we will then also be able to understand the persuasive strategies and letter practices that Luetkens and his correspondents used and put into effect for the concrete purpose of coping with the phenomenon. As it will turn out in the end, the reason that the *Turkish Threat* became such a powerful and effective object of negotiation in the letters was not only because it posed the risk of people being taken hostage. This was a risk that seamen also faced with regard to the European theatres of war. But the main reason that this phenomenon provided such an effective basis for negotiation lay in the visions and the horror scenarios that were evoked in people's minds as soon as the word 'Turkish Threat' crossed their lips, a scenario that was furthermore unambiguously, immediately and generally understood by all the Europeans involved.[11] And

9 See Gounaris, "Unwanted Heroes," 135-136.

10 See Ressel, *Sklavenkassen*, 446. See Bohn, "Von Sklavenkassen und Konvoifahrten." See Graßmann, Antjekathrin. "Nordafrikanische Piraten: ein Dorn im Fleische der Hanseaten vom 16. bis 19. Jahrhundert." In *Mythen der Vergangenheit Realität und Fiktion in der Geschichte*. Jörgen Bracker zum 75. Geburtstag, edited by Ortwin Pelc, 159-178. Göttingen: V&R unipress, 2012.

11 See Policante, Amedeo. "Barbary Legends on the Mediterranean Frontiers: Corsairs, Pirates and the Shifting Bounds of The International Community." In *Corsairs and Pirates in the Eastern Mediterranean, Fifteenth-Nineteenth Centuries*, edited by Gelina Harlaftis, Dimitri Dimitropoulos and David

this was the main thing that people who were forced to deal with it primarily had to confront.

Notwithstanding this, or precisely because of this, the moment of surprise or rather astonishment serving as the starting point that led to this chapter was ultimately not just the fact that I encountered and then found out in detail about the importance of such a topos as the *Turkish Threat* in the Luetkens correspondence, but also that I was especially intrigued by how relatively unfazed and pragmatic the people whom it directly affected actually were in dealing and coping with this matter. This made me realise that actually the whole situation regarding the Ottoman privateers was no impasse nor unmanageable, but that it was something that people were able to deal with in certain ways. This realisation, in turn, actually did become my point of entry into the cosmology of wholesale merchants and ships' captains of the 18th century in this regard. It formed the thematic anchor to which I could tie up my explanations about meaningful contemporary ways of acting and thinking with regard to how to influence and win over other people for the implementation of one's plans, which in turn will once again provide us with valuable insights into the world of the 18th century. With the help of his letter-writing practice and the negotiation skills in his correspondence practice, Nicolaus Gottlieb Luetkens was once again able to find certain solutions and to overcome the difficulties of a typical contemporary problem and predicament in sea trade. This was, in purely practical terms, the presence of Ottoman privateers in the waters of the Mediterranean Sea and the fear that the people of the age associated with these ships. He found a way to deal with the actual fears of his seamen and he found a way to cope with the threat of the Ottoman privateers in business and legal terms and to therefore trade with the Mediterranean. This high-risk trade represented another important step and cornerstone for his career development as this trade provided him with high capital returns. How he succeeded in this regard is the general topic of this chapter.

5.1 A Threat Scenario

Since the conquest of Constantinople by the army of Sultan Mehmed II The Conqueror in 1453, the Ottoman Empire had been a threatening shadow in the heads of the people of the Early Modern Christian occident. Constantinople had once been the centre of the Byzantine Empire, the centre of late Middle Ages Christianity. Now, it was literally razed to the ground and in the hands of Ottoman Muslims. It was a catastrophe for the Europeans, a historical turning point, a once-in-a-century event. From the 15th century onwards, the citizens of Europe then experienced the rise and triumph of the

J. Starkey, 141-150. Athens: AD Aventure, 2016. See Kaiser/Calafat, "The Economy of Ransoming." See Höfert, Almut. "Die ‚Türkengefahr' in der Frühen Neuzeit: Apokalyptischer Feind und Objekt des ethnographischen Blicks." In *Islamfeindlichkeit: Wenn die Grenzen der Kritik verschwimmen*, edited by Thorsten Gerald Schneiders, 61-70. Wiesbaden: Springer VS, 2010. See as a comprehensive overview Konrad, "Turkish Menace." Focussing on the 15th and 16th century, see Höfert, Almut. *Den Feind beschreiben: "Türkengefahr" und europäisches Wissen über das Osmanische Reich 1450–1600*. Frankfurt a.M.: Campus, 2003.

Ottoman Empire. They suffered from, or, even if they were not themselves affected by the wars, at least heard about the great *Ottoman Wars*, the *Turkish Wars*, and they finally trembled during the first and second siege of Vienna, which eventually also marked the end of Ottoman expansion into Europe. During the entire 15th up to the 17th century, the European people therefore actually lived with the certainty of the very real possibility that a Turkish attack might well be just around the corner. They lived in constant fear and the very real danger of hostile and violent attacks by the powerful Ottoman Empire.[12] This is what the term "Turkish Threat" originally stood for from a contemporary European perspective and where it originated from. This constant state of fear and anxiety, furthermore, did not leave people untouched. It evoked their imagination and fantasies. A threat is always accompanied by sense making. The *Turkish Threat*, therefore, was always accompanied by fear, the "Turkish Fear".[13] Thus, right from the beginning, the Ottoman Empire was marked as the "hereditary enemy" of Christianity, supported already by the Reformation and the printing press as major driving forces.[14] Simultaneously, the 'Turk' was stereotyped. The people of the Early Modern Period construed him as the reincarnation of the Anti-Christ, a motif generally very popular during religious conflicts in the Early Modern Period.[15] This was something that people could understand. Now the phenomenon literally made sense to them – even if that meant being in a state of fear. Henceforth, the image of the "Turk", which at the same time stood for and was equated with the "Muslim" or "Moor", was associated with the concept of the brute barbarian.[16]

The Turk became the personification of the ungodly desire to kill and the joy of torturing Christians. He became the Other, his reputation always preceding him.[17] Especially the contemporary pamphlets, which were even given a name of their own, *Turcica*, did not tire of disseminating the nightmare visions.[18] Through images like the "Türckischen Chronica" by Vasco Díaz Tanco from 1577 or the "Schau-Platz barbarischer Sclaverey", to also name one very famous example printed in Hamburg in 1694, which depicts the process and importance of ransoming slaves from the Ottomans by Christian clergymen, in German called "kirchliche Freikauf", people were presented with

12 See Konrad, "Turkish Menace." See Höfert, "Türkengefahr."

13 Regarding these horror visions and the Ottomans seen as an "apocalyptic enemy" ["Apokalyptischer Feind"] see Höfert, "Türkengefahr." See Ruhe, Ernstpeter. "Christensklaven als Beute nordafrikanischer Piraten. Das Bild des Maghreb im Europa des 16.-19. Jahrhunderts." In *Europas islamische Nachbarn. Studien zur Literatur und Geschichte des Maghreb*, vol. 1, edited by Ernstpeter Ruhe. 159-186, Würzburg: Königshausen & Neu-mann, 1993.

14 See Ursinus, Michael. "Turkish Menace." *Religion Past and Present* (RPP), http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1877-5888_rpp_SIM_125197, accessed April 14, 2019.

15 See Konrad, "Turkish Menace."

16 See ibid. See Matar, Nabil. *Turks, Moors, and Englishmen in the Age of Discovery*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1999, 43-82.

17 See Brons, Lajos. "Othering, an Analysis." *Transcience* 6, no. 1 (2015): 69-90. See Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty. "The Rani of Sirmur: An Essay in Reading the Archives." *History and Theory* 24, no. 3 (1985): 247-272.

18 See Ursinus, "Turkish Menace." See in detail Barbarics-Hermanik, Zsuzsa. "Art. Türkengefahr (Spätmittelalter/Frühe Neuzeit)." *Historisches Lexikon Bayerns*, http://www.historisches-lexikon-bayerns.de/Lexikon/Türkengefahr_(Spätmittelalter/Frühe Neuzeit), accessed August 9, 2019.

clear depictions of what would happen to all of those who had to experience the misery of being taken hostage by the "Turks".[19] From a contemporary viewpoint, they unavoidably faced a future in chains, in dungeons, in slavery, a life that consisted of starvation, torture, physical abuse and finally death.[20] The latter in particular also represents the visions which the wooden sailors in the Hamburg churches of the time referred to and, in fact, had to evoke in order to be effective. The 'Turks', as the contemporaries depicted them, were known to have committed horrible massacres and atrocities against civilians. They murdered, raped or kidnapped Christians, they plundered, pillaged or destroyed their cities and burned down their churches.

Without a doubt, this reputation did not always or generally lack validity because the Ottoman armies in fact did burn villages, murdered and committed atrocities during their campaigns.[21] But it is important to note that their Christian counterparts were in the end not better than their enemies because, as a matter of fact, they themselves also committed murder, burnt villages or bombarded port cities like Algiers. However, the Europeans would regard these crimes as necessary and therefore legitimate counteractions against the *hereditary enemy* for the sake of the future of Christianity, and therefore their actions were simply assessed as different. In the end, therefore, stoking the *Turkish Fear* was above all a call to arms against the enemy of the one true faith, Christianity.[22] It was a call to arms, however, that became very effective, successful and all-powerful. The enemy was given a face and a name.

Scaremongering was, and unfortunately often still is today, a very assertive basis for shaping public opinion. As a result, the *Turkish Fear* left its mark on people's souls and imprinted itself in people's minds. This was the moment the stereotype of the Ottoman barbarian actually became a contemporary matter of course, eternally anchored and universally retrievable in the minds of the people. The very same moment, the *Turkish Threat*, too, burnt itself into the mind of the people as an unquestionable threat scenario. It was transformed into a dictum and a cipher. From then on, the *Turkish Threat* stood for the encounter between Christians and Muslims, between Occident and Orient, between the supposedly civilized and the 'barbarians', a battle that had to be fought, together with the consequences inevitably following from this encounter: facing death and horror, but in the end hopefully victory.

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19 Díaz Tanco, Vasco. *Türckische Chronica: Warhaffte eigentliche vnd kurtze Beschreibung, der Türcken Ankunfft, Regierung […]. Endtlich ist mitangehenckt von Vrsachen der Christen verderben*. Frankfurt a.M.: Feyrabend, 1577. See frontispiece of Frisch, Johann. *Schau-Platz Barbarischer Sclaverey worauff unter Beschreibung der 4 vornehmsten Raub-Städte/ als: Algiers, Thunis, Tripoli und Salee*. Hamburg: Wiering, 1694. See Ressel, Magnus. "Zwischen Sklavenkassen und Türkenpässen. Die nordeuropäische Seefahrt im Zeichen der Barbareskengefahr. "In *Perspectivia. Discussions 5. Raumkonzepte – Raumwahrnehmungen – Raumnutzungen*, edited by Susanne Rau. Paris: Deutsches Historisches Institut Paris, 2010, http://www.perspectivia.net/publikationen/discussions/5-2010/ressel_sklavenkassen, accessed November 11, 2015.

20 See Konrad, "Turkish Menace."

21 See ibid. See Höfert, "Türkengefahr."

22 See ibid. See also Kühnel, Florian. "Berichte und Kritik. Westeuropa und das Osmanische Reich in der Frühen Neuzeit. Ansätze und Perspektiven aktueller Forschungen." *Zeitschrift für Historische Forschung* 42 (2015): 251-283.

The period that we are looking at in the book came after the last *Great Turkish War* and the *Peace Treaty of Carlowitz* in 1699 between the Ottoman Empire and their European counterparts, namely the *Holy League* of Austria, Poland, Venice, and Russia, mediated by the English, and was followed later by the *Treaty of Belgrade* in 1739 that ultimately ended the Ottoman wars. Thus, during the era in which the merchant Luetkens lived, namely the 18th century, the danger of a direct large-scale attack by the Ottoman Empire had in fact already been largely averted. By then, the times of large territorial expansion of the Ottoman Empire in the direction of Europe had ended and therefore also the Ottoman claim to world supremacy was basically more or less over.[23] The Empire still remained a major world power and a powerful state, but its area was now limited to parts of Africa and great sections of the Middle East, where, as is to be noted, new wars still broke out during the 18th century and again in the 19th century. These were fought particularly between the Ottoman Empire and the Russian Empire, the *Russo-Turkish wars*, that were fought for the predominance in the area to the detriment of the Ottoman Empire.[24]

In today's research, this phase of the Ottoman Empire is described as a phase of "crisis and adaptation" and no longer as a phase of "decline" as was the conventional narrative prevailing in the last century.[25] Still unchallenged, however, is the fact that during these times the Ottoman Empire lost its former military supremacy, and a direct attack on the cities of Europe was henceforward unlikely. As a matter of fact, the Ottoman Empire and the different maritime powers of Europe even began to negotiate and enter into individual peace treaties during the end of the 17th and the course of the 18th century, which confirmed each other's sovereignty and territorial claims on the waters of the Mediterranean Sea, further consolidating the process of adaptation of the superpowers.[26]

As a result of this, the *Turkish Threat* was therefore no longer a direct threat that was necessarily immediately acute for the majority of the European population because the Ottomans were pushed back and were now kept at a distance on the European border in the Middle East. As a consequence, also the *Turkish Fear* diminished more and more and

23 See Talbot, "Protecting the Mediterranean."

24 See Talbot, *British-Ottoman Relations*. See Talbot, Michael: "British-Ottoman Relations, 1713-1779: Commerce, Diplomacy, and Violence." *State Papers Online, Eighteenth Century 1714-1782 (Part IV)*, Cengage Learning (EMEA) Ltd, 2018.

25 Hathaway, Jane, and Karl K. Barbir. *The Arab Lands under Ottoman Rule. 1516-1800*. Abingdon/New York: Routledge, 2013, 8. See also Tezcan, Baki. *The Second Ottoman Empire. Political and Social Transformation in the Early Modern Period*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010, 9. See Woodhead, Christine. "Introduction." In *The Ottoman World*, edited by Christine Woodhead, 1-10. Abingdon/New York: Routledge, 2011, here 5.

26 See Gøbel, Erik. "The Danish-Algerian sea passes, 1747-1838: an example of extraterritorial production of human security." *Historical Social Research* 35 (2010): 164-189, 175-177. See Talbot, Michael. "Ottoman Seas and British Privateers: Defining Maritime Territoriality in the Eighteenth-Century Levant." In *Well-Connected Domains: Towards an Entangled Ottoman History*, edited by Pascal W. Firges et al., 54-70. Leiden: Brill, 2014. See López, Gonçal. "Mediterranean Privateering between the Treaties of Utrecht and Paris, 1715-1856: First Reflections." In *Pirates and Privateers. New Perspectives on the War on Trade in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries*, edited by David J. Starkey, Els van Eijck van Heslinga and Jan de Moor, 107-125. Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1997.

increasingly disappeared from the picture. Since the beginning of the Enlightenment, it can furthermore be observed that the fear even shifted, in some population groups but especially in the middle class, to a certain kind of fascination for the exotic Other with an inclination and interest in the alien Ottoman lifestyle, also accompanied by an increased interest in travelling the region and writing travel journals about it.[27]

However, notwithstanding these general macro historical developments, there was still one particular area of the 18th–century world where time in a way seemed to stand still. In this particular area, the probability of a direct attack by Ottoman forces was in fact still a given. Here, the military confrontation between Europe and the Ottoman Empire continued to smoulder, even though the tide of time had already created new military trouble spots and major centres of world conflicts for the Europeans, namely the colonial wars, in which the Europeans military forces mainly concentrated on fighting each other. Speaking of this one spot at which Europe and the Ottoman Empire still faced and confronted each other, the situation was, however, still as directly threatening for the Europeans as it had been in the centuries before. From an Ottoman perspective, in turn, this area represented somehow the last bastion, in which the Empire was able to uphold its threat of force towards the European powers.[28] Accordingly, therefore, the horror scenario that the Europeans associated with this area also remained exactly the same as it had been in the centuries before. It is almost as if these horror visions and the entire area were stuck in a time warp, impervious to outside events and the course of history, which had moved on everywhere else. Thus, this confrontation area indeed still stoked exactly the same fears in people as it had in the centuries before. The cipher of the *Turkish Threat* therefore also continued to keep its effectiveness, even after centuries, with the limitation that it ultimately concentrated largely on or even culminated at this one particular area of the world.

This concrete area was the south-western and south-eastern part of the Mediterranean Sea, which the Hanseatic merchants and captains of the 18th century called the "mittländische" Sea and the Ottomans called *al-baḥr al-abyaḍ*, the White Sea.[29] This area of conflict stretched from the Strait of Gibraltar all the way along the North African coast, from the independent sultanate of Morocco to the Ottoman provinces of Algeria, Tunisia and Tripolitania up to the location of the Ottoman territorial wars between the Morea peninsula and Libya, and ended at today's Turkish coast, where since the 1690s due to maritime regulations (şurut-u derya) "armed European ships […] [were] forbade" to enter without risking military conflict.[30] In this particular area, the conflict between

27 See Thomson, Ann. *Barbary and Enlightenment. European Attitudes towards the Maghreb in the 18th Century*, Leiden: Brill, 1987. See Konrad, "Turkish Menace."

28 See Talbot, "British-Ottoman Relations", "Protecting the Mediterranean", "Maritime Territoriality." See Klarer, *Piracy and Captivity;* Ginio, "Piracy and Redemption"; Panzac, "Européens et Barbaresques." See also Panzac, Daniel. *La caravane maritime. Marins européens et marchands ottomans en Méditerranée, 1680-1830*. Paris: CNRS, 2004, p. 178-183.

29 See ibid.

30 Talbot, "Protecting the Mediterranean," 1. See also Earle, Peter. *Sailors. English Merchant Seamen 1650-1775*. London: Methuen, 1998, 115, referring to the "semi-piratical Barbary corsairs who sailed from bases in Algiers, Tunis, Tripoli and Morocco, especially Sallée (Salé), to prey on Christian shipping. These Moslem corsairs were the most feared of all since they enslaved those they captu-

Orient and Occident continued, on a much smaller scale, but still in a significant way. This clash did not take the form of an open military conflict and sea battles but rather that of military incursions, which the contemporaries, and surprisingly also parts of today's research, called piracy, but which rather represented Ottoman privateering activities, which was posing a "constant threat to maritime traffic" in the region.[31]

Regarding the character and significance of the *Turkish Threat* or *Turkish Menace* during the 18th century, therefore, we must consider it a direct threat to the Europeans. The only limitation that we have to make is that the actual threat was now mostly limited to this specific area. The whole conflict was in a way condensed into the situation prevailing in the Mediterranean Sea. The important thing to note is, however, that the horror scenarios that had been forged for so long and maintained for centuries in people's minds, also still remained the same now with regard to the Mediterranean Sea. These horror scenarios had lost none of their long-standing terror, which had prevailed ever since the great Ottoman wars had raged in the centuries before.[32] For the contemporaries, it was clear that all those who were going to these areas or passing these areas in the Mediterranean Sea during that time still had to prepare for the worst, and this feeling was simply irrespective of the fact that the Ottoman Empire had at that time technically already long passed the peak of its power in the Early Modern world.

The reason that both these pieces of information are relevant for this chapter becomes apparent when we take a closer look at the context in which the subject of the *Turkish Threat* turns up in the Luetkens correspondence. In consideration of the preceding explanations, it is now not surprising but highly characteristic for the century under investigation that in the letters on which this chapter is based the issue was raised at precisely the moment when the wholesale merchant Nicolaus Gottlieb Luetkens decided to enter into the trade with the Mediterranean. Around the time between May and July 1744, the merchant Luetkens decided to send ships to Malaga, to Livorno and particularly to Venice. At the very same time, he unavoidably was confronted with the subject of the 'Turkish Threat' because his ships had to pass the African coastline and sail the territorial waters of the Ottoman Empire. Thus, he risked the consequences, which he was then forced to deal with. The main challenge that he was subsequently confronted with is hardly surprising in view of the considerations. It was first and foremost that he had to find a way to ease the fears of the people he planned to send to this area, namely the captains and seamen on board his ships. Both of these problems, the Mediterranean risk and the worries of the seamen, become understandable for us against the backdrop of the historical context and characteristics of the phenomenon of the *Turkish Threat*. The subject of the following explanations will be how Luetkens found a solution to this situation. Analysing his solution, because once again he actually found a practicable way of handling the situation, will by implication also provide us with revealing insights about how people in the 18th century coped with such an intangible matter as

red and, although ransom was possible for the fortunate or wealthy, the fate of most poor sailors was enslavement for life."

31 Ginio, "Piracy and Redemption," 136.

32 See Policante, "Barbary Legends." The analysis of the letter episode in this chapter will provide insights into these prevailing horror scenarios.

the emotion of fear. This, in turn, will also give us more general insights about ways of acting, of negotiating and ways of thinking that were typical for the 18th century, to a certain extent even covering both the European and the Ottoman perspective. We will thus be analysing negotiation practices, letter-writing and correspondence practices, the prevailing principles of persuasion, which Luetkens once again used for his negotiation tactics, and the reaching of agreements between several parties in view of the prevailing contemporary situation.

In order to understand his solution, however, we once have to take a closer look at the actual situation on the ground. We also have to take a more detailed look at the concrete situation in the Mediterranean Sea during the 18th century and particularly the situation during the *War of the Austrian Succession* because only this will explain to us and illustrate the particular loophole that Luetkens found for his undertakings and enterprises. This will also include taking into consideration the Ottoman perspective on the circumstances and the events happening in the Mediterranean Sea because their perspective was also what Luetkens, in purely practical terms, in the end directly reacted to in order to implement his plans and to ensure that he once again got his will.

5.2 The Mediterranean Sea as a War Zone

The Mediterranean Sea was without question one of the important theatres of war during the 18th century. Speaking of the *War of the Austrian Succession* (1740-1748), this war zone is today particularly known and became notorious through one of the famous naval battles of the war which was fought in the waters off Toulon in February 1744. The Battle of Toulon was in fact the largest naval battle of the war, in which the Mediterranean fleet of the English and the Mediterranean fleet of an alliance between the French and the Spanish fought for regional predominance, particularly with regard to the upper parts of the Mediterranean Sea between the coast of Spain and Italy. The sea battle ended inconclusively but still had a lasting effect on the *War of the Austrian Succession* because the battle directly led to and marked the entry of the French into the war, who had been involved before as an ally of the Spanish but had not yet officially declared war to England, which fact now changed. This sea battle happened only shortly before the merchant Luetkens sent his ship to the region.[33]

Apart from the naval battle off the coast of Toulon and the confrontation between the Franco-Spanish alliance and the English in the area, the southern part of the Mediterranean and therefore the contact zone of the European powers with the Ottoman Empire at the North African coast and the waters between Tunisia and the modern Turkish

33 Regarding the battle of Toulon see Browning, *War of the Austrian Succession*, 149-161. "Toulon." *Encyclopædia Britannica* 27, edited by Hugh Chisholm. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1911, 98-99. See McLynn, Francis James. "France and Spanish American War of the Austrian Succession." *Jahrbuch für Geschichte von Staat, Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft Lateinamerikas* 17 (1980): 187-198. Regarding the Anglo-French Sea Wars in the Mediterranean see also Grainger, John D. *The British Navy in the Mediterranean*. Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2017, 101-123.

coast, has attracted less attention in research.[34] The latter is also the reason why this part of the war zone is today far less present in our collective awareness, and its characteristics are far less known to us than the characteristics of the colonial wars. The reason for this relative negligence is, however, easily explainable. It is that the Ottoman Empire and the North African states, which as princely states were relatively autonomous but still subject to the Empire, simply did not officially participate in the *War of the Austrian Succession*. Thus, during the years 1740-1748, no war had been declared by either the European superpowers or the Ottoman Empire and not a single big naval battle took place between these powers in the area.[35] Therefore, the waters off the North African coast or the territorial waters of the Ottoman Empire were not officially part of *War of the Austrian Succession*.[36]

Yet, this area was still not free from military conflicts, as research has convincingly shown particularly in the last decade and as is also depicted vividly in contemporary sources, which provide us with an eloquent testimony. These military conflicts definitely had their decisive share in and an impact on the activities of the direct war opponents in the *War of the Austrian Succession*. The danger for the European powers that emanated from these areas came from Ottoman privateers, or rather privateers acting with the approval of the Ottoman Sultan, that preyed upon European commercial ships. From a contemporary European perspective, these ships were called *pirates* or *corsairs* because, since there was no official declaration of war, the Europeans saw no justification or legitimacy for these raids. Yet, surprisingly these terms are still widely used in research today.[37] From a contemporary Ottoman perspective, however, these ships were no "stateless sea robbers". Instead, they regarded their actions as completely legitimate and decidedly also state-supported.[38] Their justification, however, came from Islamic law according to which they were fighting the "eternal war going on against the Christians" and thus their actions were justified.[39] Therefore these ships and their crews, as Erik Gøbel emphasized, "considered themselves, as did their rulers, as participants in […] [the] holy war against the infidels – and thereby qualified as privateers."[40] In this chapter, I am therefore also referring to these ships as privateers, not least because of the fact that this official status was also the fact which the merchant Luetkens referred to in his actions. In his words, however, he left no doubt about the fact that he himself nonetheless saw these ships as pirates. In sum, it becomes clear that although the Ottoman Empire was not directly involved in the *War of the Austrian Succession* and no direct

34 Ressel also points to this negligence in Ressel, Magnus. "The Dutch-Algerian War and the Rise of British Shipping to Southern Europe (1715-1726)." *Cahiers de la Méditerranée* 90 (2015): 237-255, here 237.

35 Gøbel, "Algerian sea passes," 173. In fact, there "would be no direct conflict between Britain and the Ottomans until the first Ottoman-British War of 1807-09." Talbot, "British-Ottoman Relations."

36 See Gøbel, "Algerian sea passes." See Talbot, "Maritime Territoriality." See Talbot, *British-Ottoman Relations*. See López, "Mediterranean Privateering."

37 Regarding the difference between privateers and corsairs (and pirates) see ibid. See also Gounaris, "Unwanted Heroes," 135-136.

38 Gounaris, "Unwanted Heroes," 135. See Kaiser/Calafat, "The Economy of Ransoming," 112.

39 Gøbel, "Algerian sea passes," 175.

40 Gøbel, "Algerian sea passes," 167.

naval battles were fought in the south-western and south-eastern parts of the Mediterranean Sea, this area was nonetheless a part, or at least an important side stage, of the war zone of the Mediterranean Sea during this time, to which the European powers had to react and which posed a risk to their military and particularly to their commercial activities in the area.[41]

Once more as seen from the contemporary European perspective, the European powers were exposed and confronted with the threat of a kind of guerrilla war that emanated from single warships or smaller naval units of privateers coming from the North African and Turkish coast. In contrast to the wars that raged in other parts of the world, the main victims of these particular military conflicts, however, were not the major colonial superpowers but precisely those European powers that were otherwise often spared from suffering during the colonial wars. The main victims were the neutral powers within the *War of the Austrian Succession* because their status of neutrality unfortunately did not mean a thing in the Ottoman-controlled waters.[42]

Before coming to that, however, we will take an even closer look at the particular nature of Ottoman privateering and the particular region that posed the greatest threat to European commercial vessels, namely the North African coastline. The greatest danger to European commercial shipping during the *War of the Austrian Succession* was posed by the privateers that departed from the North African Maghreb states, from the ports of Algiers, Tunis, Tripoli, Morocco. When trading with and sending ships to the Mediterranean, for instance to Malaga, Livorno or particularly Venice, which were the ports that Luetkens' ships called at, the ships inevitably had to pass the North African coastline. Ottoman privateers were also active in other parts of the Mediterranean Sea, but at the North African coast the European ships were confronted with a kind of bottleneck that was hard to bypass or to circumnavigate when trading with the area, comparable with the English Channel in European waters.[43]

With the exception of Morocco, which was a sultanate, these territories on the African coast were African princely states, ruled by the Bashaw of Tripoli, the Bey of Tunis and the Dey of Algiers.[44] These states and their rulers had already gained during that time a relatively high and striking degree of autonomy and political independence. Nevertheless, they officially still belonged to the Ottoman Empire and were regarded

41 Braudel, Fernand. *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II*, 2 vols. Berkeley/Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1995, vol 2., 865-891. See Kaiser/Calafat, "The Economy of Ransoming," 110. For the south-eastern part of the Mediterranean Sea, see in particular Harlaftis/Dimitropoulos/ Starkey, *Corsairs and Pirates*, as well as Ginio, "Piracy and Redemption." For the French maritime perspective, see in particular Hennessy-Picard, Michael. "La piraterie atlantique au fondement de la construction des souverainetés coloniales européennes." *Champ pénal/Penal field* XIII (2016), http://champpenal.revues.org/9275, accessed June 8, 2019. See Kaiser, *Le commerce des captifs*.

42 See Bohn, "Von Sklavenkassen und Konvoifahrten," 25-37. See in general Ressel, *Sklavenkassen*, 446. See Ressel/Zwierlein. "The Ransoming of North European Captives." See already Baasch, *Die Hansestädte und die Barbaresken*.

43 See Graßmann, "Nordafrikanische Piraten," 161. See Ressel, *Sklavenkassen*, 19. See Bohn, "Von Sklavenkassen und Konvoifahrten," 27-28. For the Aegean Sea see Ginio, "Piracy and Redemption."

44 See Bohn, "Von Sklavenkassen und Konvoifahrten," 28.

as parts and subject of the Ottoman Empire and the Sultan, which bore quite a practical advantage for these ships with regard to the raids. Through the political support and backing of the Ottoman Sultan, the Maghreb regions declared their raids to be official Ottoman warfare and combat operations. This, in turn, found its clearest material manifestation in the fact that the warships were equipped with official letters of Marque legitimizing their raids, meaning that the captains were endorsed, just as we know it from the European powers.[45] The Maghreb states therefore decidedly were not disadvantaged through the 'yoke' of the Ottoman Empire. On the contrary, they gained clear benefits from it, which also explains why they did not oppose the governance of the Sultan but used it in a kind of inverse logic to even foster their autonomy tendencies. It allowed them to launch their own attacks and prey on all the ships that passed their coastline, which strengthened their power in the area and their claim on the maritime territorial authority in the waters between Europe and Africa. If we therefore once more take the stance and perspective of the Ottomans, the war that waged in this part of the Mediterranean Sea was by no means regarded in any way as a guerrilla war. Instead, they regarded it, with exactly the same justification that the Europeans used for this practice in their home waters, as official and legitimate tactical warfare conducted against a military opponent. They conducted an Ottoman privateering war, a "secondary form of war", as Fernard Braudel called it.[46]

When we will later analyse the concrete solution that the merchant Nicolaus Gottlieb Luetkens found for implementing his undertakings in the area, we will see in detail why it matters to understand both the European and the Ottoman perspective and attitude towards the situation of war in the Mediterranean Sea. The reason is that, as a matter of fact, Luetkens once again found a solution that explicitly manoeuvred right between the two extremes. Also, Luetkens remained firmly committed to the European attitude towards the Ottomans, which becomes apparent through his own clear designation of the privateering ships as pirates or using such terms as "hounds", which identified the Ottoman privateers primarily as a disagreeable thorn in the flesh of European supremacy in the world. Notwithstanding this, the legal solution or loophole that he found nonetheless worked and particularly also aligned itself to the Ottoman perspective, insofar as the formal legal action that he pursued to solve his problems clearly referred to and appealed to the official martial law that the Ottomans referred to as well and claimed for themselves as the justification for their actions. For the moment, however, and at this stage of the chapter, what is more important with regard to the general situation prevailing in the Mediterranean Sea is the fact that no matter from which perspective we look at this war zone, it becomes apparent that, although this conflict was locally limited and its effects on the general world situation relatively small for instance compared to the consequences of the colonial wars. Yet, this trouble

45 See ibid. See Kaiser/Calafat, "The Economy of Ransoming," 2. See also Talbot, "Protecting the Mediterranean", "Maritime Territoriality."

46 See Bohn, "Von Sklavenkassen und Konvoifahrten," 27. See Kaiser, Wolfgang. "Sprechende Ware. Gefangenenfreikauf und Sklavenhandel im frühneuzeitlichen Mittelmeerraum." *Zeitschrift für Ideengeschichte* III/2 (2009): 29-39. See also Kaiser, *Le commerce des Captifs.*

spot nonetheless had a concrete bearing on the power struggles shaping the period.[47] Although the military conflicts raging in this area of the Mediterranean Sea were no longer primarily about supremacy in the world or about gaining ascendancy over the war opponent, this area still represented an important hotspot of the fight between two major world powers, the Ottoman Empire and the superpowers of Europe. From the Ottoman perspective, the Maghreb warships basically represented the last bastion in the fight against the Christian counterpart in the region, effectively securing the north-western border of the Empire and at the same time continuing to sabotage the European archenemy. From the European perspective, the ultimate goal concerning the conflicts in the Mediterranean Sea essentially became the idea of a best possible limitation of the damages and losses caused by the Ottoman warships. In fact, compared to the colonial wars, which were waged in different parts of the world as full-scale wars for supremacy and world hegemony between the European superpowers, the privateering war in the Mediterranean Sea during the *War of the Austrian Succession* undoubtedly represented only a relatively minor skirmish or a side stage of the conflicts of the age and it bore comparatively less relevance for the further course of history. It is for this reason in particular that this area has attracted less research interest than the other war zones of the period. On the other hand, however, this part of the Mediterranean war zone should still not be neglected in research nor be forgotten; it deserves attention because it clearly represented an important part of the theatres of war shaping the era and particularly the lives of the people living, sailing or trading in the area, on both sides. If we take a macrohistorical approach and compare the effects and especially the long-term consequences of this war zone to other war zones with regard of the further course of history, this war zone did indeed play a rather minor role in world history. However, if we take a more actor-centred approach and look at the effects and consequences of this war for the people of the era, who were affected or suffered from this war directly, the situation looks completely different. If we take a microhistorical perspective on this area, which means that we ask how the macrohistorical circumstances were mirrored in the everyday perspective of the actors living during the era, who were also shaping the structures that were shaping them, we will see that this war zone must be credited with much more relevance than the long-term perspective suggests. The reason why this war zone clearly deserves more attention is that ultimately for the contemporaries themselves, who were living in or travelling to this area, there was not the slightest doubt about the fact that the events that they were facing in the Mediterranean Sea were crucial events of the highest importance because these events directly threatened their personal worlds and their lives. So, the aim of this chapter is to devote myself to these people and their worldviews and to getting these people to speak, who were affected by the war zone, and therefore I also want to stimulate or contribute to the research discussion regarding the war in the Mediterranean. This contribution is admittedly modest, but from these explanations it should already become clear why it is worth taking a closer look at this war zone. The people of the time did not only create

47 See Hennessy-Picard, Michael. "La piraterie atlantique au fondement de la construction des souverainetés coloniales européennes." *Champ pénal/Penal field* XIII (2016), http://champpenal.revues.org/9275, accessed June 8, 2019.

their own discourses regarding this area, they also created their own specific practices, the Ottomans as well as the European actors, to cope with the situation on the ground. These practices reveal a great deal about the characteristics and the challenges of living one's life in Europe, the Ottoman Empire and the Mediterranean Sea during that time, and into the bargain, or rather particularly in this way, they reveal to us a great deal about the ways and means that people during the 18th century employed to cope with the worlds they were living in.

5.3 Four Perspectives

Four groups of people are of particular interest for this chapter because they were shaping the situation in the Mediterranean Sea. These groups are the Ottoman privateers, the European merchants, the European seamen and last but not least, European insurance companies. For all these groups the impact of the privateering war in the area was direct and considerable because they were directly involved in it or had to deal with its consequences. In this part of the chapter, I will therefore present the situation of all four groups in relation to the situation in the war zone one after another and outline their special interests in the area, which will represent the final element of my thick contextualisation. This part will at the same time also represent a rather fluid transition between the contextualisation part of this chapter and the letter episode, which will be at the centre of the next part, because the groups which were involved in this episode, directly and indirectly, were actors from the groups described next: the Ottoman privateers, the European merchants, seamen and insurance companies.

The Perspective of the Ottoman Privateers

The interest of the Ottoman or Maghreb privateers regarding the war zone in the southern Mediterranean Sea was twofold, and in this respect their interest was rather congruent with the interest that the European powers held with regard to their own privateering activities.[48] On the one hand, the interest of the Ottoman privateers was of a political, military-strategic nature. In general, the raids against the Europeans were intended to cause harm and economic damage to the enemy. For this purpose, the ships were equipped with letters of marque by the Ottoman Sultan, who gave them official permission to seize ships and therefore conduct official legitimate warfare.[49] On the other hand, for the ships and their crews that were actually conducting these raids, the interest lay on a far more pragmatic and personal level. The main interest of the Ottoman privateers was to prey and to capture a lot of booty because this was a source of revenue, for which they gladly took the official endorsement. Also in this context, the Ottoman privateers did not differ much from the European privateers, who ultimately

48 See Talbot, "Protecting the Mediterranean," 283. See also Talbot, "Maritime Territoriality," 54-70. See Gounaris, "Unwanted Heroes."

49 See Bohn, "Von Sklavenkassen und Konvoifahrten," 27. See also already Braudel, *The Mediterranean World*.

shared the same goal. Furthermore, it becomes obvious that the more general political and the more personal goals and intentions behind the raids were generally not mutually exclusive, but quite on the contrary they merely represented the two sides of the same coin. In fact, if one examines it closely, then it can be ascertained that there was basically only one single difference between the Ottoman privateering activities and the European privateers. This difference, however, was very substantial. This difference is sufficient to attribute a very specific quality of its own to the privateering war in the Mediterranean Sea in contrast to the privateering war fought between the European powers. It was this difference that marks the peculiar character of this part of the war zone, with its own rules and dangers, to which the European powers had to find customised solutions.

The fundamental difference between the Ottoman and the European privateers was thus that the Ottoman ships and crews did not only make profits from the capture and seizing of the European commercial ships and their goods. Rather, a major share of their spoils derived from taking the European ships' crews, the captains and sailors, as prisoners of war, as captives, "captifs" in French and "asir" in Ottoman Turkish, and demanding ransom money for their release from the European powers.[50] The Europeans, once again preferred to call them 'hostages' of the Ottoman Empire instead of prisoners of war since they did not acknowledge the conflict with the Ottoman Empire as an official war but rather as a guerrilla war because no war had been declared between the powers.[51] For the Ottomans, this practice therefore also led to a revenue stream in the aftermath of the capture.

As Wolfgang Kaiser and Guillaume Calafat have emphasized, the "ransoming of captives was an important economic sector of the Early Modern Mediterranean."[52] This was in contrast to European privateering and the raids on commercial ships, during which prisoners of war were most often only taken into custody for a rather short period of time, until after they had testified before court or at the latest until the court case was settled, and for whom the European powers also most of the time did not pay ransom money. Prisoners of war taken by Ottoman privateers, however, were held for an indefinite period of time until they were ransomed, if indeed they were ransomed at all. Demanding ransom money was therefore an obligatory part of the privateering activities of the Ottoman privateers. The consequences of this fact for the European people who were living in, trading with or sailing to this area were obvious. The situation of danger caused by the Ottoman privateers was proportionately higher than with regard to the privateers in the European waters, and that was the distinctive feature of the war zone in the Mediterranean. In purely practical terms this meant that for merchants trading with Mediterranean cities the presence of the Ottoman privateers in the region bore the risk and danger of essentially suffering a double loss. Losing a ship to the Ottomans would not only mean losing your ship and its goods. It also meant losing

50 See Kaiser/Calafat, "The Economy of Ransoming," 113.

51 See Ginio, "Piracy and Redemption," 140. See Ressel, *Sklavenkassen*, 27-30 and in general. See Bohn, "Von Sklavenkassen und Konvoifahrten," 27. See Ressel/Zwierlein, "The Ransoming of North European Captives." See Graßmann, "Nordafrikanische Piraten." See Gøbel, "Algerian sea passes."

52 Kaiser/Calafat, "The Economy of Ransoming," 108.

your crew and being asked to pay ransom money for freeing the crew. For the mariners, consequently, the danger was also significantly higher. Sailing to the Mediterranean Sea meant nothing less than putting your life at risk.[53] They faced a danger to life and limb. And this is the ultimate reason why we have to define the raging conflict between Europe and the Ottoman Empire in the Mediterranean Sea as a war zone in its own right because, although no actual battles were fought between the war opponents, the area definitely still caused casualties.[54]

Before coming to the perspective of the merchants, including the question of why they would still send ships to the region, we therefore first have to assess the situation of the mariners, because they were without a doubt the main sufferers and actual victims of this larger conflict. Subsequently, I will present the perspective and interest of the merchants in the area, which will also include the reason why they nonetheless accepted the risk for their mariners, but which will also demonstrate that the merchants at least made some efforts and sought solutions to safeguard their crews. The merchants did not stand by idly and took the risk but rather tried to find solutions to prevent or at least improve the situation for their mariners. In order to understand their solutions, however, we first have to clarify the actual situation for the mariners in the Mediterranean Sea. Amazingly, we will then see that the European merchants in the end in fact drew on and referred to the state of war that the Ottomans had claimed for themselves, because it was literally the only straw that they could pick up to find a feasible and practicable solution to continue their trade in the area.

The Perspective of the European Mariners

For the European mariners the threat posed by the Ottoman warships was without a doubt an immediate and serious threat. They faced the actual risk of becoming captives and having to live in captivity when travelling the Mediterranean Sea and passing the North African coast or the Aegean.[55] The infamous reputation of the Ottoman privateers was well known to them. In fact, they certainly were one of the groups that decisively shaped and perpetuated this discourse during the age because their life and limbs were directly threatened by the situation, and they literally spread the discourse around the world through their profession. The Ottomans' reputation therefore preceded their warships and caused serious fears on the part of the European mariners. For most of the sailors, especially those who had not travelled the region before, the region thus evoked exactly the horror scenarios outlined above. As Daniel Defoe noted in 1725 "not a sailor goes to sea in a merchant ship but he feels some secret tremor that it may one time or other be his lot to be taken by the Turks".[56] It was clear to the sailors going to the

53 See as a good case study Rheinheimer, *Hark Olufs' Wiederkehr.*

54 Regarding concrete numbers of enslaved European sailors see Ressel, *Sklavenkassen*, 465, and the episode and further references in this chapter below.

55 See Earle, *Sailors*, 115. See Ressel, *Sklavenkassen*, 30 and in general. See Kaiser, *Le commerce des captifs*. See Davis, *Christian Slaves, Muslim Masters.*

56 Defoe, Daniel. *A General History of Discoveries and Improvements*. London: Roberts, 1726, 148.

Mediterranean Sea that they had to prepare themselves for the worst, facing "unreasonable barbarians", who would do everything in their power to enslave them and force them to spend a life in dungeons, a life that would consist of starvation, torture and physical abuse by the hereditary enemy that would finally lead to death if they were not ransomed before.[57] This was the reason why the mariners of the age felt fear and reluctance with regard to the Mediterranean Sea, and why the area in the south and the news that they would to be sent to this area might have sent shivers down the spines of the sailors.[58]

The actual situation that we have to assume for the vast majority of the mariners who actually were taken captive by the ships of the Maghreb states, however, in the end looked different, as it is rather typical for the nature, extent and character of horror scenarios. This does not change the fact that there were severe fears, because fears often outstrip the factual situation, and there were certainly also cases in which the fears proved correct and thus got reinforced. However, the actual situation that many of the Ottoman captives faced was in fact far less dire and life-threatening than the discourse made the mariners believe.[59] This does not, however, mean that we should downplay the fears of the people in any way, but it does demonstrate that the actual situation on the ground gave the mariners at least far more reason to hope for rescue and to survive the imprisonment unscathed than we had so far been led to believe. Nonetheless, this still did not mean that they would not wish to avoid being captured and arrested in the first place because living in war captivity still always constitutes being deprived of one's liberty, it was hard, disagreeable and in many ways always still dangerous. Starvation and torture could not be ruled out, and the climatic conditions were extreme.

Notwithstanding this, if we take a closer look at the actual situation in the Mediterranean Sea it was ultimately neither completely desperate nor as hopeless as it appeared. Instead, it was something people actually were able to cope with or, rather, found certain ways and solutions to deal with it and to react to it. Particularly merchants of the period found ways to come up with solutions to this hazardous situation and ways and means for continuing their trade in the area despite the threat posed by the Ottoman warships.

The reason for hope and the reason why the situation was ultimately not desperate for the mariners is ultimately easily explicable. We just have to take into consideration again the Ottoman perspective to the privateering war in the Mediterranean Sea. Treating the Mediterranean Sea as a war zone, torturing or killing your captives, or leaving

57 Regarding the stereotype of the Turks as "unreasonable barbarians", see also Rediker, Marcus. *Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea: Merchant Seamen, Pirates and the Anglo-American Maritime World, 1700-1750*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987, 37. Regarding the "myths" regarding the African coast that were known among seamen and the sailors' expectations, shaped by travel narratives, see Rheinheimer, *Hark Olufs' Wiederkehr*, 32. See Rheinheimer, "Sklaven in den Barbareskenstaaten," 329-360.

58 See Earle, *Sailors*, 115. See Konrad, "Turkish Menace." See Ressel, "Zwischen Sklavenkassen und Türkenpässen," 11-13.

59 See Beutin, Ludwig. *Der deutsche Seehandel im Mittelmeergebiet bis zu den Napoleonischen Kriegen*. Neumünster: Wachholtz, 1933.

them to rot, would simply not have been as expedient and particularly not as lucrative as declaring their captive prisoners of war. However, this meant that therefore they also had to treat them as prisoners of war.[60] Consequently, they would keep them in at least a minimum of good shape, which is meant exactly as it sounds: the captives served as goods to trade. In other words, a prisoner of war was far more profitable and lucrative for the Ottomans than an emaciated enslaved person because for prisoners of war they could demand good ransom money. In the end, the Ottoman privateers, as we have learned, pursued a commercial agenda with their raids, as did the European privateers, aimed not only at harming the enemy but also at receiving their own economic benefits from the raids and this also had consequences with regard to the handling of their captives, which meant, by implication, also hope for the European mariners.

The result of this fact was that at least during the 18th century exceedingly few mariners were actually left to rot in dungeons or sold to the galleys after being taken prisoners, and they were often also not tortured.[61] Instead, the majority of the captive seamen were kept in especially built "bagnos", prison cities with several thousands of inmates in the Maghreb states. In Algiers alone 35,000 Christian prisoners lived in such a bagno.[62] In these cities, the captives were allowed to move around relatively freely and even to work. They could thus lead a relatively 'normal' life, inasfar as one can speak of a normal life under the circumstances of imprisonment and the harsh living conditions in a country with a totally different climate and in a culture that was completely alien to them. The important thing in this respect was, however, that the mariners' imprisonment and stay was not generally meant to last long but rather as short as possible, in the interest of both the captives and the Ottomans. The prisoners' stay was intended to only last as long as the time it took the European powers to pay the ransom money for their liberation.[63] And herein lies also the reason why some prisoners, namely the lower-ranking mariners, were still forced to wait longer than the ships' captains to be released because it took longer to raise the money in their home countries for their liberation.[64] For some prisoners, tragically, that rule precondition even meant that they would never again leave the Maghreb states. Many of the prisoners, however, were in the end ransomed and freed. The responsibility for whether or not a mariner would be released from his imprisonment in the Maghreb states therefore rested in the hands of the authorities, merchants, families and institutions like the Sklavenkasse at home in

60 See Bohn, "Von Sklavenkassen und Konvoifahrten," 28.

61 Regarding the situation of the "Christensklaven", see Rheinheimer, *Hark Olufs' Wiederkehr*, 25. See Ressel, *Sklavenkassen*, 442. See Beutin, *Seehandel im Mittelmeergebiet*, 131-132.

62 See Graßmann, "Nordafrikanische Piraten," 176. See Prange, Carsten "Hamburg und die Barbaresken. Herausforderungen der Hamburger Kauffahrer." In *Gottes Freund – aller Welt Feind. Von Seeraub und Konvoifahrt. Störtebeker und die Folgen*, edited by Jörgen Bracker, 152-173. Hamburg: Zertani, 2001, here 169.

63 As regards numbers, by 1747 Hamburg had for instance "already paid at total of 1.8 million Mark Banco ransom money to Algiers." Ebel, Wilhelm. *Probleme der deutschen Rechtsgeschichte*. Göttingen: Schwartz, 1978, 141 ("Über Sklavenversicherung und Sklavereiversicherung").

64 See Graßmann, "Nordafrikanische Piraten," 163. See Earle, *Sailors*, 115. See already Voigt, Johann Friedrich. "Deutsche Seeleute als Gefangene in der Barbarei." *Mitteilungen des Vereins für Hamburgische Geschichte* 2 (1882): 26-31.

Europe, and was not solely at the discretion of the Ottoman and Maghreb authorities. And this is presumably, in turn, also one of the reasons why the mariners after all agreed to set sail to the Mediterranean Sea because they trusted in the help, the promises and integrity of their ship-owners and the state or city authorities at home. Another reason why the mariners boarded or stayed on a ship bound for the Mediterranean Sea was simply the need for work because a voyage to the area lasted months, which promised several monthly salaries, often paid in advance and then transferred for instance to the mariners' families. Or they were simply forced to make the journey because they had been hired and had signed on for a ship that was going to undertake such a journey during its various travels. Still, the sailor's profession was a profession based on an employment relationship, on an employment contract and therefore on a relation of dependence. This meant that sometimes the only way to avoid a trip to Mediterranean Sea was mutiny, which in itself also meant severe dangers to life and limb because mutiny was deemed a felony during the age punished by imprisonment or even death.[65] The fact that mutiny was, in spite of this, a very common occurrence with regard to voyages bound for the Mediterranean Sea once again shows the reluctance of the mariners of the age to travel to the area.[66] On the other hand, it also shows that the mariners in fact had certain ways and means and a basis for negotiation to circumvent or to take action against the order to sail to the Mediterranean Sea. They simply could either reject the order or flee from the ship. Most remarkable in this regard is the former of these two solutions and in particular those cases in which entire crews collectively refused the order, though without committing direct mutiny and remaining loyal to the captain and the ship they were hired on. If you will, in all these cases they committed a kind of a 'soft' mutiny.[67]

By means of pulling together and therefore making it impossible for individual crew members to be singled out, who otherwise could have been accused of committing mutiny, the sailors found a way to create a basis for negotiations enabling them to make further demands. This meant that the ship-owners ultimately had no choice but to listen to their employees if they wanted to continue their trade with the ports in the Mediterranean Sea. The example of the case and letter conversation analysed in this chapter will bear impressive witness to precisely such a form of fraternisation and the resulting basis for negotiation. It therefore shows again the crucial importance and extent of negotiation practice taking place in the maritime sector of the 18th century, even with regard to settlements and reconciliations in employment relationships with a supposedly strict hierarchy and a supposedly clear chain of command as in the sea business.

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65 Witt, Jann Markus. "Mutiny and Piracy in Northern Europe Merchant Shipping. Forms of insurrection on board British and German merchant ships in the late 17th and 18th centuries." *Northern Mariner* 18 (2008): 1-27, here 3. See Witt, Jann Markus. *Master next God? Der nordeuropäische Handelsschiffskapitän vom 17. bis zum 19. Jahrhundert*. Hamburg: Convent, 2001, 63-74.

66 See Earle, *Sailors*, 168.

67 See Witt, *Master next God*, 151-153. See Earle, *Sailors*, 177-178. See Rediker, *Devil and the Deep Blue Sea*, 109. See Blakemore, Richard. "Orality and Mutiny. Authority and Speech amongst the Seafarers of Early Modern London." In *Spoken Word and Social Practice. Orality in Europe (1400–1700)*, edited by Thomas Cohen and Lesley Twomey, 253-279. Leiden: Brill, 2015, here 263-265.

The main point that must have become clear by now is that we know why this scope for negotiation existed at all. It existed because people of the age had strong reservations against sailing to the Mediterranean Sea. Virtually nobody from Europe took the decision to sail to this area free of concerns, no matter whether this was caused through the widespread fears of the time or even through some knowledge of the actual situation on the ground. Sailing the Mediterranean Sea just posed a very high risk and involved great uncertainty and many imponderables. This risk and uncertainty applied to all parties involved, sailors, ships' captains and in the end also the merchants investing in the journey of their ships to the area and risking a doubling of their losses, which meant that they were not just at risk of losing their ship, the goods and the crew, but that they also risked being forced to take care of organising and paying ransom money for their crews. The crucial last question that we have to answer, a question that virtually begs to be asked, is therefore: Why did the Europeans, despite all this, still send ships to the area? This question, in turn, directly leads us to the third group and their perspective that we have to take a closer look at before entering into the analytical part of this chapter, namely the perspective of the merchants. The answer to this last question is without a doubt ultimately rather predictable. The European merchants sent ships to the Mediterranean Sea because it still promised high profits and returns, despite all the risks.

The Perspective of the European Merchants

In the 18th century, trade with the Mediterranean was still very lucrative.[68] Livorno was the main entrepot to the South European trading markets. Malaga, Geneva, Naples and Venice aroused the interest of North European merchants.[69] The unique attraction of these ports derived from the fact that they promised high profits through the so-called "rich-trades".[70] That is to say, that the local markets offered commodities, from their own markets or imported goods from the Ottoman territory, such as silk and other high-quality textiles like velvet or damask, jewellery like pearls or ivory, as well as spices and rubber. All of these were very light goods that, however, achieved high sales prices, whereas in the regions of Southern Europe there was a need for commodities such as grain, sugar, timber or fur, which were heavy goods, but cheaper during purchase.[71] Considering the concept of bringing in heavy goods and then shipping out large amounts of light but very valuable goods, the rich-trades back to north-western Europe, one can immediately imagine the high profit margins that arose from this trading sector. It was these high profits margins that were therefore the main reason why European commercial shipping continued in the Mediterranean Sea even though there was the danger of Ottoman privateers, severely interfering with the traders' business.

68 See in general Beutin, *Seehandel im Mittelmeergebiet*. See in general Braudel, *The Mediterranean World*.

69 Earle, *Sailors*, 33.

70 See Ressel, *Sklavenkassen*, 8-9. See Davis, *English Shipping Industry*, 177. See as regards the concept of *rich-trades* also Israel, Jonathan I. *The Dutch Republic: Its Rise, Greatness and Fall, 1477-1806*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995, 307-321.

71 See Ressel, *Sklavenkassen*, 9.

The promise of high revenues was too tempting and attractive for the Europeans to refrain completely from sending ships to the area. Therefore, instead of ceasing sending ships and crews to the area, the European merchants, and the political and juridical institutions and authorities of their home countries tried their best to find alternative solutions to overcome the problem of the Ottoman raids in ways that aimed to eliminate or at least minimise the risk or to compensate them in the case of their ships and crews being taken. In a way, they tried to come to terms, in a pragmatic way, with the situation existing in the area and found solution strategies that adapted to the situation instead of merely accepting or avoiding it. This adaptation process, in turn, was implemented primarily in two different main ways, which were both astonishing because they both encompassed considerable concessions to the Ottoman Empire on the one hand and to the European ships' crews on the other hand, which once again shows the big interest that the wholesale merchants had in the trade in the Mediterranean Sea. Only through these concessions were the European merchants able to continue their trade in the area at all. This makes their dealings so astonishing and revealing in terms of international and intergovernmental relations and power structures during the 18th century, but also with regard to interpersonal relations and hierarchies and decision-making processes within the field of European seaborne trade. This aspect also demonstrates, once again, the significance and power of negotiation practices primarily shaping these relations. There had in fact been further ways of reacting to the dangers of the Ottoman privateers, namely to equip the ships with cannons or to sail in convoys, thus trusting in a deterrent effect.[72] However, the two most effective strategies for dealing with the situation in the area were strategies drawing on and building upon conducting negotiations and not deterrence, either in a diplomatic way by means of negotiating peace treaties, which represents the first effective solution strategy or, as a second effective solution strategy, by means of institutional safeguarding of the commercial activities in Europe: that is, by making use of insurances on the ships and the crews of the ships.[73] The usefulness of the policy of deterrence simply reached its limits when the number of enemy ships equalled or exceeded the number of ships in the convoy, and furthermore, the Ottoman ships had cannons, too. To put it in figures, passing Algiers for example meant passing "a power of nine big ships […] as well as fourteen smaller ones", as a contemporary traveller observed in 1732, which was a number that was seldom reached by most of the commercial European convoys of the time, maybe except for some of the

72 See Ressel, *Sklavenkassen*, 16, 56, 223, 226-507. See in detail Baasch, Ernst. *Hamburgs Convoyschiffahrt und Convoywesen. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Schiffahrt und Schiffahrtseinrichtungen im 17. und 18. Jahrhundert*. Hamburg: Friederichsen, 1896. See Bohn, "Von Sklavenkassen und Konvoifahrten."

73 Regarding peace treaties, see Ressel, *Sklavenkassen*, 252-274, 444-486; Gøbel, "Algerian sea passes," 177. Regarding maritime insurances, see Ressel, *Sklavenkassen*, 254, 657, 673. Regarding both, see Bohn, "Von Sklavenkassen und Konvoifahrten," 25, 29-37. See Ebel, Wilhelm "Über Sklavenversicherung und Sklavereiversicherung." *Zeitschrift für die gesamte Versicherungswissenschaft 52 (1963): 207-230*. See Dreyer, Thomas. *Die "Assekuranz- und Havarey-Ordnung" der Freien und Hansestadt Hamburg von 1731*. Frankfurt a.M.: Lang, 1990. See Kiesselbach, Georg A. *Die wirtschafts- und rechtsgeschichtliche Entwicklung der Seeversicherung in Hamburg*. Hamburg: Gräfe & Sillem, 1901. In general, see Koch, *Versicherungswirtschaft*; Barbour, "Marine Risk and Insurance."

convoys of the large companies such as the VOC or the WIC.[74] Yet even if the European ships happened to only meet single ships or smaller Ottoman units, these ships still had cannons, too, and they would use it. Therefore, the more effective solutions that the merchants sought were not necessarily built on luck in military confrontations but on diplomacy or on obtaining insurance coverage.

For this chapter, both of these strategies are of vital importance because the merchant Nicolaus Gottlieb Luetkens made use of the diplomatic insurance-based solution, precisely because of the fact that the military solution was not possible in his case. This is also the reason why we have to have knowledge about both solution strategies because it will point us to a last major characteristic shaping the historical events and political circumstances in the Mediterranean Sea during that time. This characteristic was that even with regard to inner-European power constellations, a different situation with different conditions and rules prevailed in this area compared to almost anywhere else in the world. One could even say that the inner-European world and power structures were in some ways turned upside down in the Mediterranean Sea. That is, the European powers that suffered most from this warzone, as seen from a European perspective, were not the main belligerents of the *War of the Austrian Succession*, namely the English or the French, but those powers that were otherwise spared from the wars raging during the time: in fact, it was particularly the Hanseatic ships that faced risks in the Mediterranean Sea.

The reason for this fact was that whereas in all other parts of the world, as accepted by the colonial superpowers of the time, Hanseatic ships, and in particular Hamburg ships, enjoyed a neutral status, this was not the case in the Mediterranean Sea because the Ottoman Empire did not acknowledge this neutrality.[75] As a result, Hamburg ships and the ships of the Hanseatic cities in general became a major target of Ottoman raids, whereas ships from several other countries and even from some of the great European belligerent parties were spared being raided thanks to the diplomatic relations that their governments maintained with the Ottoman Empire.[76] In the end, the European powers thus in a way did in fact acknowledge the Ottoman legal justification for the privateering attacks by the backdoor. They even acknowledged the Ottoman sovereignty over these sea areas, although without ever expressly stating it. Yet, at the same time they followed the pragmatic approach of seeking to come to certain agreements with the enemy with regard to the free passage of their commercial vessels through the territory, which was the first solution strategy.[77] The same implicit acceptance also applied to the second

74 "bestehet ihre Macht aus neun großen Schiffen, […] und in 14 kleinen." Ludwig, Christian Gottlieb. *Tagebuch einer Reise durch Nordafrika von 1731-1733. Annotationes Rerum ad Historiam naturalem in Itinere Africanum Factae.* Handschriften der Universitätsbibliothek Leipzig, Ms. 0662, entry 9th of April 1732.

75 See Ressel, *Sklavenkassen*, 444-447. See Graßmann, "Nordafrikanische Piraten." See in particular Bohn, "Von Sklavenkassen und Konvoifahrten." See already Baasch, *Hansestädte und die Barbaresken*. See Baasch, *Beziehungen zu Algier und Marokko.* In general, Panzac, "Européens et Barbaresques"; *La caravane maritime.*

76 Ressel, *Sklavenkassen*, 482. See Bohn, "Von Sklavenkassen und Konvoifahrten," 34, 37. See also Prange, "Hamburg und die Barbaresken."

77 See Gøbel, "Algerian sea passes," 175.

solution strategy, which was to take out insurances. In essence, if they procured insurances for possible captures of their ships or for the case that ransom money would be needed to free their crews, they at the same time confirmed, again by the backdoor, the actual rightfulness or at least the unavoidability of these Ottoman privateering events from a juridical point of view and therefore also confirmed an actual state of war between Europe and the Ottoman Empire prevailing in the Mediterranean Sea. In the end, however, the merchants and state authorities simply had no other option than to adapt their policies to the situation in the area because otherwise their trade activities would simply have come to an end. In essence, the special situation in the Mediterranean Sea called for special measures. I find that fact particularly intriguing because the Mediterranean case therefore provides us with a fascinating example of how already during the Early Modern Period – which was a period strongly shaped by protectionist policies on the one hand and by imperialistic politics fortifying one's own state on the other hand – it was possible that trading interests outweighed political and in a way in this case also religious interests to such an extent. The latter situation led to the fact that, for the sake of trade, compromises and concessions were made both with the crews and, more astonishingly, even with the 'hereditary enemy', the Ottoman Empire.

The compromise and concessions the merchant Nicolaus Gottlieb had to make in order to be able to carry out trade in the region primarily related to his ships' crews because no other options were available to him. He simply had no other choice than to turn to his ships' captains and their crews for finding the necessary support for his plans. Before coming to that, however, we will once again take a closer look at the first, treaty-based solution strategy that was used by other European powers because this will show us how tricky and complicated the situation actually was for the Hamburgers with regard to the Mediterranean Sea. The Hamburgers were excluded from this option. This will also show why Luetkens' plans represented basically the greatest conceivable risk that a merchant could take during that time with respect to the Mediterranean region. He nevertheless took that risk, which shows his high risk tolerance, which can certainly also be attributed to his stage of life, namely his establishment phase.[78] Furthermore, however, he at least found one solid reason and argument for justifying his actions, which freed his plans from ultimately representing a suicide mission. This was that the merchant could at least draw on insurances for his undertakings, namely insurances for ships and crews, which was the second solution strategy, which I will discuss subsequently.

Peace Treaties and Passports

The first solution strategy European powers used to eliminate the risk of falling victim to Ottoman raids was bilateral peace treaties between the European powers and the

78 See Hancock, *Citizens of the World*, 14-17. See Grassby, *Business Community*, 172. See in general Lütge/Strosetzki, *The Honorable Merchant.* On risk within mercantile business in general, see Zahedieh, "Credit, Risk and Reputation," 53-74. See Mathias, "Risk, Credit and Kinship," 15-35. See Haggerty, *Merely for Money*, 34-65. As a comparable example, see Morgan, *Bright-Meyler papers*, "Introduction," 90-99. See Ebert, *Brazilian Sugar*, 109-130.

Maghreb states regarding commercial rights, known as *Capitulations*, "ahdname-i hümayun" in Ottoman Turkish, determining that the Ottoman raids spared ships from the respective European powers.[79] This was the most direct way of risk reduction. However, such bilateral contracts always entailed concessions on the side of the European powers. Thus, in exchange for peace and reconciliation with the Ottoman Empire, or rather with the princely states subject to the Ottoman Empire, the European powers were obliged to pay high tributes to the leaders of the Maghreb region, to the Bashaw of Tripoli, the Bey of Tunis, the Sultan of Morocco and particularly to the Dey of Algiers.[80] In return they were granted safe passage in the southern part of the Mediterranean area and the guarantee that no sailors would be "taken, sold, or made a slave" from their ships, as paragraph 12 of the Danish peace treaty stated.[81] The word 'bilateral' is therefore not completely accurate for describing the situation at hand because we are dealing essentially with bribe payments to the Maghreb states and charters for the European states.[82]

Nonetheless, this option of entering into these "Treaties of Peace, Alliance, and Commerce" as they were still called in 1785, was chosen by several European powers because of the prospect of eliminating the risk of capture by the Ottomans. The prospects for trading opportunities promised to compensate for the tributes paid.[83] Furthermore, as another positive side effect of this, through entering into contracts with the Maghreb states of the Ottoman Empire, these powers would also be able to restrain or oust other European powers from the trading markets in the region. The situation on the sea routes in Mediterranean Sea therefore looked as follows during the 18th century, and during the times of the *War of the Austrian Succession* in particular: The Dutch, the English, the Danes and the Swedes had chosen the path of paying tributes to the Ottoman Empire and were therefore able to travel the sea routes in the region.[84] Taking the peace treaties with Algiers as an example, the Dutch entered into such peace treaties in 1712 and 1726, reviving peace treaties with the Barbary States dating back to the 17th century, e.g. with Constantinople in 1660. Sweden signed a peace treaty in 1729, Denmark in 1747, and the emperor of the Holy Roman Empire signed a peace treaty in 1727, but up until that point the Ottoman privateers had captured their ships. The English King Charles II had already signed the first treaty with Algiers, Tripoli and Tunis in 1662,

79 For France, see Ludovicus XV. rex Franciae. *Kitabi-i ahdname-i hümayun-u saadet-makrun (Buch des allerhochsten Vertrages d.i. Text des Handels- und Freundschafts-Traktats zwischen der Türkei und Frankreich, 30th of May 1740) 1153 h./1740.* Istanbul, ca. 1835, *Bayerische StaatsBibliothek digital (BSB)*, Signatur: 2 A.or. 350, http://mdz-nbn-resolving.de/urn:nbn:de:bvb:12-bsb10211060-0, accessed November 17, 2019. See Weiss, Gillian. *Captives and Corsairs: France and Slavery in the Early Modern Mediterranean*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2011. See Goffman, Daniel. *The Ottoman Empire and Early Modern Europe*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002, 187.

80 See Ressel, *Sklavenkassen*, 19, 24-28, 440-486. Bohn, "Von Sklavenkassen und Konvoifahrten," 28. See Bono, Salvatore. *I corsari barbareschi*. Torino: ERI, 1964. See Bono, Salvatore. *Lumi e corsari. Europa e Maghreb nel Settecento*. Perugia: Morlacchi, 2005. See also Ressel, "Dutch-Algerian War."

81 Gøbel, "Algerian sea passes," 177.

82 Ressel, *Sklavenkassen*, 16. See Ressel, "Sklavenkassen und Türkenpässen."

83 See Jenkinson, Charles, Earl of Liverpool. *A Collection of All the Treaties of Peace, Alliance, and Commerce, Between Great-Britain and Other Powers*. London: J. Debrett, 1785.

84 See Ressel, *Slavenkassen*, 444-446.

which was reiterated in the following decades and centuries.[85] Through the presence of lots of English ships in the region, in turn, the Spaniards, who furthermore did not hold contracts with the Ottomans were mostly deterred from engaging in the Mediterranean Sea. The French King signed a treaty with Algeria for the first time in 1619. The French, however, especially during the *War of the Austrian Succession*, were confronted with the military superiority of their English enemy in the region, which deterred them from engaging in the southern part of the Mediterranean Sea.[86] The peace treaties had to be negotiated and concluded with every princely state separately, in order to ensure free passage along the entire North African coast.

Taking the example of Denmark in this regard, as Erik Gøbel's work has shown, the treaties with the different Barbary States showed strong similarities. The treaty with Algiers of 1747, for example, was "reiterated almost unchanged in the other treaties which were signed by Denmark and the Barbary States: namely Tunisia on 8 December 1751, Tripoli on 22 January 1752, Morocco on 18 June 1753, the Sublime Porte in Constantinople on 14 October 1756, Morocco again on 25 July 1767, Algeria on 16 May 1772, and Tripoli in 1816, 1824 and 1826 – until the last Danish obligation to pay tribute was repealed by the treaty with Morocco dated 5 April 1845."[87] Through the first solution strategy, the peace treaties, the Dutch, English, and later the Swedes and the Danes were able to gain a monopoly in the region and traded and moved relatively freely there, which directly compensated them for their tribute payments. The strategy therefore seemed to pay off.

For the practical implementation of the peace treaties on the sea routes and in order to ensure that the agreements would be put into practice during the direct encounters between the ships of the different powers, the Europeans relied on a proven tool, with the approval and consent of the Ottoman Empire. Even this tool, however, had to be adapted to the special conditions prevailing in the Mediterranean Sea. In order to ensure the free passage and conduct of their ships, the respective European powers provided their ships with special passports that would be shown to the Ottoman privateers if they stopped the European commercial vessels. Therefore, in Mediterranean Sea it was customary that the flag alone was no sufficient means to guarantee free passage as they also needed the complementary passports showing that they belonged to one of the powers which were in amity with the Ottoman Empire. These passports were called "Turkish Passports" or "Turkish Sea Passes", "Türkenpässe" in German, or with reference to the princely states in particular, giving a more specific denomination, they were also called for instance Algerian Passports. These did not, as the term might seem to suggest, provide identification for Turkish or Ottoman or Algerian citizens but were issued to European citizens who ran the risk of being taken prisoner by the Ottoman Empire.[88] The term therefore holds a rather negative connotation, by which it not only perpetuated but primarily also in way shaped the bogeyman image of the 'hereditary'

85 See Gøbel, "Algerian sea passes," 175-178.

86 See Ressel, *Sklavenkassen*, 462-510, particularly 482.

87 Gøbel, "Algerian sea passes," 177.

88 See Gøbel, "Algerian sea passes," 164, 171, 176-179. See Ressel, *Sklavenkassen*, 254-258 and in general. For France, see Panzac, *La caravane maritime.* See also Weiss, *Captives and Corsairs.*

enemy. The term is therefore highly problematic today.[89] But as a historical source term it can unfortunately not be avoided. For the contemporary European sailors these pieces of paper were literally regarded as nothing less than a life insurance, so, for them, at least the consequences evolving from their *Turkish passports* were in the end positive.

In practice, these passports worked in a relatively similar fashion to comparable passports issued for European ships in European waters. They guaranteed that whenever a captain of an Ottoman privateer entered a ship that belonged to one of the powers and these ships' captains could produce a valid Turkish passport, the Ottoman captain was obliged to release the ships again and allow them to freely continue their voyage. The decisive difference between such encounters as they took place in European waters in comparison to the encounters taking place in the Mediterranean Sea, however, was that in the latter case, the likelihood that the master and the crew of the Ottoman ship would actually be able to understand the language of the provided passports and the language of the respective crews was rather unlikely. This very fact led to the customisation of the practice of issuing passport that took place with regard to this area. The authorities, on both sides of the agreement, eventually used and accomplished a rather practical solution to this situation.[90] They added a special material feature to the passports, which ensured mutual understanding in a non-verbal way. For this purpose, Turkish passports, issued by the home authorities of the European powers, for each and every voyage one of their ships undertook, were divided, in fact split, into two parts, an upper part showing in most cases a kind of graphical drawing (e.g. a ship), and a lower part containing all the relevant information regarding the voyage in writing. Before each voyage, in the words of Erik Gøbel, who aptly summarised the further course of the proceedings, the sea passports were then "cut into two pieces, of which the upper part was sent to the Barbary states while the large lower part with the text, which was in a European language, was to be carried by the shipmaster. As neither the privateers nor European seamen were able to read or understand the spoken language of their counterparts they simply produced their own part of the passport – and if the parts fitted together the European ship was allowed to pass on without any hindrance."[91] In order to prevent fraud or counterfeiting but also to further enhance the safety level of the passports, each Turkish passport had an individual perforation or wave line, which ensured that only the two original parts would later make a perfect match. As Gøbel has shown on the basis of Danish cases, an absolute 100 per cent certainty that the ships were not captured was, nevertheless, still not guaranteed. In some cases, the Ottoman captains simply did not trust or even ignored the Turkish passports. For the vast majority of the encounters between the Ottoman privateers and the European powers with peace treaties, however, it can generally be assumed that the system worked. On the basis of these customised passports, the European powers and the Ottoman Empire were able to implement and uphold their peace agreements in practice. That is, by means of this

89 See the comments and discussions regarding a public lecture in Hamburg in 2010 given by Magnus Ressel and Ressel's reply to the criticism on https://blog.sub.uni-hamburg.de/?p=1665, accessed March 13, 2018.

90 See Gøbel, "Algerian sea passes," 170-179. See Ressel, *Sklavenkassen*, 254-264.

91 Gøbel, "Algerian sea passes," 176.

tool the English, Dutch, Swedes, Danes and the French were able to continue travelling and trading in the Mediterranean Sea. This was solution strategy number one.

In order to demonstrate the second solution strategy, we have to take a look at the last big player in European commercial shipping during that time that is still missing from the picture. These were the northern German Hanseatic cities and their fleets. The merchants and ship owners from Hanseatic cities constituted the group that felt and suffered from the consequences of the presence and maritime predominance of English and Dutch shipping in the region most strongly. This was not so much because the predominance posed a direct threat to them but because this situation essentially turned them into a fifth wheel and an outsider, which had severe consequences. The Hanseatic cities did not hold commercial and peace treaties with the Ottoman Empire during that time, which meant that they could not to draw on the possibility of Turkish passports. They could therefore not create the necessary foundation for benefitting from free passage in the area, which then led to a completely different situation for them in the region. This, in turn, forced them to find a different solution approach to tackle this problem and serve as a basis for their undertakings: solution strategy number two.[92]

In the first instance, the situation for Hanseatic shipping did not necessarily look quite as bad. First of all, generally ships from the Hanseatic cities had nothing to fear from the other European fleets, as for instance from the Danes, who were also neutral, and not even from the French and English, who also accepted their neutrality. Furthermore, the Hanseatic cities, and above all, Hamburg, had very good access to heavy goods such as grain, timber and coal because they constituted the major hubs for these goods in the Northern European market.[93] Therefore, for them, the *rich-trades* were an especially promising source of trade income. However, the problem with these supposed advantages was that they could not utilise them in the Mediterranean Sea because they were confronted with the danger and the risk of Ottoman raids attacking their ships. Although the European powers accepted their neutrality, unfortunately this status was the first thing to vanish as soon as Hamburg ships entered the Strait of Gibraltar.[94]

All efforts in this regard failed, as for instance the negotiations that took place with Algiers and Morocco in the 1740s.[95] Even later in the century, when in fact also a certain Nicolaus Gottlieb Luetkens was part of the negotiations with Morocco as a Hamburg senator, the negotiations unfortunately still failed.[96] To cut a long story short, without peace treaties there was no chance of free passage and in fact the exact opposite was the case. The direct result of this was that the Hanseatic cities and especially Hamburg instead met with a very unfortunate fate during that time with regard

92 See Bohn, "Von Sklavenkassen und Konvoifahrten." See Graßmann, "Nordafrikanische Piraten." See Baasch,*Hansestädte und die Barbaresken*; *Beziehungen zu Algier und Marokko.* See Prange, "Hamburg und die Barbaresken."

93 Ressel, *Sklavenkassen*, 2-9, 87. See also Van Tielhof, Milja. *The 'Mother of All Trades': The Baltic Grain Trade in Amsterdam from the Late Sixteenth to the Early Nineteenth Century*. Leiden: Brill, 2002.

94 See Ressel, *Sklavenkassen*, 482. See Bohn, "Von Sklavenkassen und Konvoifahrten."

95 See Ressel, *Sklavenkassen*, 444-445, 470-474. See Baasch, *Hansestädte und die Barbaresken*; *Beziehungen zu Algier und Marokko.* See Prange, "Hamburg und die Barbaresken."

96 Luetkens, *Pro Memoria* (1770). See in detail Baasch, *Hansestädte und die Barbaresken*, chapter "Der Lütkens'sche Auftrag für Marokko", 80-88.

to the Mediterranean Sea. From the list of European powers, basically Hamburg and the other Hanseatic cities were the only sea powers that were left in direct danger of legitimate raids by the Ottoman privateers. This ultimately led to the result that the Hanseatic cities became the main target and victim of the military political situation in the southern part of the Mediterranean Sea, leading to devastating consequences for the Hanseatic trade and shipping industry in the region.[97]

As we find in contemporary reports, which are highly revealing in this regard and provide us with an accurate account of the extent of Ottoman raids, the privateers started to systematically and purposefully prey upon the Hamburg merchant ships in particular, exposing the Hamburg ships, crews and captains "to more and more danger" as for instance a "report concerning the Algiers buccaneers" from Hamburg 1751 stated.[98] Any help from the other European sea powers, as this report continues, in this respect was not to be expected. The Spanish cruisers, which where natural enemies of the Ottoman privateers and whose owners often were trading partners of the Hanseatic cities, were mostly kept away from these waters by the English ships.[99] The neutral powers, like the Danes during the *War of the Austrian Succession*, on the other hand, also abstained from any support for the Hamburgers because they did not want to put the advantages of their own free trade in the region on the line, but rather would take the chance to weaken their competitors. In the revealing words of 18th century commercial writer Pieter De la Court: "It is highly appreciated to have left the Hamburgers with the thorn of the Turkish pirates in their foot" ["Dorn der türkischen Seeräuber"].[100] The Hamburg report thus noted that accordingly "the loaders of merchant commodities preferred English and Dutch ships instead of the Hamburgers because of the protection against the Turkish Threat", which made matters worse for the Hamburgers.[101] The result of this situation for the Hamburg shipping industry was rather conceivable, logical and dramatic. As the report finally concluded, "since Algiers was withdrawing so many ships from the Hamburgers each year since 1735, the Hamburg ship owners got tired of sending their ships to the area."[102]

As statistical data has shown, the report of 1751 was absolutely right in describing and evaluating the situation for Hamburg shipping with regard to the Mediterranean Sea, not only concerning the years 1735 to 1751 but actually the entire 18th century. It is accepted today in research that the years 1730 to 1775 represented therefore "a catastrophic time", "Katastrophenzeit" in German, and one of the "darkest hours of Hanseatic seafaring" ["schwärzesten Jahre"] regarding the trade with the Mediterranean region, which is in the end easy to comprehend and hardly surprising in view of the foregoing

97 See Ressel, *Sklavenkassen*, 445-470. See Bohn, "Von Sklavenkassen und Konvoifahrten," 37. See Graßmann, "Nordafrikanische Piraten." See Prange, "Hamburg und die Barbaresken."

98 All citations from "Bericht wegen der algierischen Seeräuber nach Febr. 1751." *Commerzbibliothek Hamburg*, Handschriftenbestand, S-422, H 516-4 2° Nr. 78. Translation by the author.

99 Ibid.

100 Baasch, Ernst. "Hamburg und Holland." See Bohn, "Von Sklavenkassen und Konvoifahrten," 43.

101 "Bericht wegen der algierischen Seeräuber nach Febr. 1751." *Commerzbibliothek Hamburg (CBH)*, *Handschriftenbestand*, S-422, H 516-4 2° Nr. 78.

102 Ibid.

explanations.[103] During that time, the Hanseatic merchants simply had good reason not to participate in the trade in this region because there were so many risks and obstacles put in their way hindering them from conducting lucrative business.[104]

Having said that, however, another thing that the data also shows today is that, regardless of the situation, Hanseatic seafaring nevertheless never completely stagnated. That means that some Hamburg merchants must still have continued to send their ships to the region.[105] This fact, in turn, is actually astonishing in view of the above explanations. Therefore, obviously, there must have been always some daring merchants who took the risk of sending their ships to the region in the hope for profit, which is a remarkable finding. As a matter of fact therefore, if we take another look at data from the year 1740 to 1750 and especially the years 1744-1747, compiled on the basis of the deposits of the Hamburger Sklavenkasse, one can even clearly notice a slight rise in the activities of Hamburg merchants in the region.[106] And this period, not completely by chance, coincides with the mercantile establishment phase of the Hamburg merchant Nicolaus Gottlieb Luetkens.

Luetkens was one of these daring merchants. He took the risk and sent ships to the region for the sake of his establishment phase and despite the obvious risks. As part of a small group of German merchants based in Hamburg, Spain and France, Luetkens was one of the pivotal figures in the continuing trade of Hamburg merchants with the Mediterranean Sea, which trade he conducted from France. He and his partners traded with European trading houses in Venice, Livorno, Genoa, Naples or Malaga – even during times like these when basically all the odds were stacked against them. But against all odds, and as surprising as it may seem at this point, this group of merchants was actually able in the end to establish quite well-functioning merchant shipping to the area and eventually became successful in this undertaking, which explains the slight rise in activities of Hamburgers during these years between 1744 and 1747. Obviously, these merchants must have found an alternative solution to using *Turkish passports* for their undertakings, which must have allowed them and provided them with the justification and means to continue trade in the region. This was the actual reason and catalyst why I wanted to write this chapter because these merchants' own approach to this tricky situation once again made me realise that, despite all the obstacles they might be confronted with, the merchants of the time found their particular ways to make the best out of their situation. With regard to the Hamburg merchants, this meant that, since they were not able to draw on Turkish passports, they simply found an alternative form of safeguarding, even including their own material form for the document ensuring the safeguarding of their ships and crews. Instead of moaning about the failure of the peace negotiations, they tried their best to employ compensatory measures to actively counteract the disadvantage. The solution that the Hamburg merchants found for tackling

103 Ressel, *Sklavenkassen*, 657 and 446.

104 See ibid., 444-470. See Baasch, *Hamburgs Convoyschiffahrt und Convoywesen*, 49-52.

105 See Ressel, *Sklavenkassen*, 468.

106 See the graph in Ressel, *Sklavenkassen*, 481. See for further comments and explanations on this rise also ibid., 468, 479.

their situation in an appropriate manner was to make use of the possibility to privately insure their ships and their crews, including providing the crew with notarised certificates of these insurance policies, and therefore at least to protect themselves in the best possible way against the eventualities that their ships and crews might face.[107]

It is important to note in this regard that, although this solution strategy might appear self-evident and natural to the modern reader, for the contemporaries during the Early Modern Period it was not self-evident but an extraordinary strategy. In fact, for the contemporaries this practice represented an new phenomenon in sea business that had only become possible a few years earlier through changes in the relevant contemporary maritime laws. As a matter of fact, the first ever recorded case of a private insurance for a ship's crew in Hamburg dates back to 1741 and therefore only three years before the time of Luetkens' endeavours in the Mediterranean Sea.[108] This provides us with some ratio and context as regards the actual stark news value of these changes. The slight rise we have observed with regard to Hamburg shipping to the Mediterranean Sea was thus surely no coincidence but rather coincided directly with the change in the maritime insurance law and policies. When we dedicate ourselves in final part of this subsection to the fourth group of people or rather the institution having a decisive influence on the local occurrences in Mediterranean Sea, we will see what this change consisted of, how relatively small yet ground-breaking this slight change in the maritime law was and why it had such a sustainable impact on Hamburg sea business. The last group which had a bearing on the situation around the trade with the Mediterranean See were private insurance companies or merchant houses which acted in the insurance business. This group basically only started to come into existence during the first half of the century and became an important part of the sea trade because of the change in the maritime law. Without the insurance companies, none of Luetkens' business undertakings in the Mediterranean Sea and in all other parts of the world would actually have been possible at all. Therefore, to a certain extent even time was on his side, or put in other words, the merchant was surely able to read the signs of his time.

The Perspective of the European Insurance Companies

There are in fact many indications, and it is tempting to say, that the Hamburg merchants' success was to a great extent also due to the entrepreneurial audacity of these men, which surely cannot be totally dismissed. The letter episode will be informative in this regard, too. However, there was also another factor, which promoted, supported and facilitated their success during that time, which was far more objective and also far more verifiable. This factor was a revision of the Hamburg maritime law that took place during that time. In 1731, the maritime law in Hamburg, quickly followed by other cities, underwent a significant change, which for the first time allowed and authorised merchants to insure their ships and crews privately and self-reliantly.[109] This new legal

107 See Ressel, *Sklavenkassen*, 300-301, 657-658.

108 See ibid., 657.

109 See Ressel, *Sklavenkassen*, 300-301, 657-658. See Kiesselbach, *Seeversicherung in Hamburg*, i.a. 139. See Koch, *Versicherungswirtschaft*, 45. Dreyer, *Assekuranz- und Havarey-Ordnung*, 117. See also Den-

situation provided the merchants with new flexibility and room for manoeuvre, which in turn provided them with the opportunity and encouraged them to try their luck with more high-risk trades, e.g. in the Mediterranean Sea. The most substantial part of this revision of Hamburg's own maritime law, called the *Assecuranz- und Havareiordnung*, related to *Part X* of the legal text. In this part the new insurance policies regarding private insurances for Hamburg ships and crews against the "Turkish Threat", "Von Assekuranz für Türkengefahr und auf der Menschen Leben", was added and therefore newly regulated.[110] From this moment onwards, merchants were authorised to ensure their enterprises and their crews no longer only by means of drawing on the administrative authorities, the Hamburg Admiralty, or, as a part of it, the monetary fund of the *Sklavenkasse*.

Instead, they could also draw on private insurers and other merchant firms active in this business field for procuring private insurances as an additional insurance opportunity to safeguard their enterprises. These private insurances worked by simply supplementing the existing state insurances through an additional insurance fund of their own, which was raised from the private sector. This fund served as the actuarial reserve that would subsequently always be requested by the Hamburg Admiralty whenever these funds were needed, that is, whenever a ship was captured by the Ottomans that was privately insured beforehand.[111] Therefore, the private insurances functioned as a kind of reinforcement of the disposable credit limit of the *Sklavenkasse*, as an additional financial asset and hedge reserve for the ransoming of Hamburg mariners, whether they be sailors or ships' captains, and consequently they also increased the level of safety and protection that the Admiralty could provide. For the merchants, the private insurance business provided the opportunity to provide their ships' crews and captains with new and advanced security guarantees, which offered them an entirely new, solid basis for justifying their business in the Mediterranean Sea as well as a good basis for negotiation to continue their shipping industry in the region. Naturally, the private insurance business of course also offered opportunities and opened the door for taking on private insurances for voyages to other parts of the world and generally also included private insurances on goods.

As a result of the changes, private insurance companies experienced a boom and mushroomed all over Europe during the 18th century, which, in turn, basically constituted the basis for a whole new trading sector: the maritime private insurance business.[112] The most important consequence of this new regulation for Hamburg mer-

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zel, Markus A. "Die Seeversicherung als kommerzielle Innovation im Mittelmeerraum und in Nordwesteuropa vom Mittelalter bis zum 18. Jahrhundert." In *Ricchezza del mare, Ricchezza dal mare, secc XIII XVII*, edited by Simonetta Cavaciocchi, 574-609. Prato: Le Monnier, 2006.

110 See the original "Hamburger Assekuranz- und Havarie-Ordnung von 1731." In *Sammlung der hamburgischen Gesetze und Verfassungen*, edited by Johannes Klefeker. Hamburg: Piscator, 1769, Tit. X *Von Assekuranz für Türkengefahr und auf der Menschen Leben*, 97. In the Hamburg city hall, Klefeker's portrait hands right beside the portrait of Nicolaus Gottlieb Luetkens. See Koch, Peter. *Geschichte der Versicherungswissenschaft*, 22-25. See Ressel, *Sklavenkassen*, 656-657.

111 See Ressel, *Sklavenkassen*, 673.

112 See "Hamburger Assekuranz- und Havarie-Ordnung von 1731." See Koch, *Geschichte der Versicherungswissenschaft*, 22-25. See Koch, *Versicherungswirtschaft*, 45. See Kiesselbach, *Seeversicherung in*

chants such as Luetkens and his trading partners was that they were now able and allowed to charter, load, insure and finally to send ships to the region at their own risk and responsibility. This opportunity, or rather this fact, was the crucial loophole that they needed to conduct their trade with the ports in the Mediterranean Sea. The new opportunity represented the solution needed to cope with their unfavourable situation in this trading sector. It was the second main solution to the presence of Ottoman privateers patrolling the seas between Europe and Africa that was available to all those merchants that did not enjoy the privilege of being able to receive *Turkish passports*.

During the presumably *darkest hour* of Hamburg seafaring, this second solution was therefore key to participating in the trading sector of high-risk trade with the trade Mediterranean Sea even. The private insurances formed the indispensable basis and prerequisite for hiring ships and crews for the trade with the Mediterranean Sea. Without these insurances, next to no-one would have unresistingly entered a Hamburg-flagged ship to the area. The Hamburg *Sklavenkasse*, the municipal fund that was maintained to redeem prisoners from the Ottomans and used the wooden figurines in the Hamburg churches of the time, already offered some certainty and a reason for hope for the sailors of the age that they were going to be ransomed after being taken hostage. In fact, the *Sklavenkasse* remained the institution responsible for the whole settlement process of the ransoming.[113] However, it was supplemented by the private insurers. Since the Sklavenkasse fund was usually and notoriously short of cash, it was often only sufficient for paying ransom money for higher-ranking crewmembers, namely the helmsmen and captains. Through the additional insurances, the merchants and shipowners were now able to issue concrete guarantees for each and every crewmember on their ships that they would be ransomed. The private insurances therefore constituted the crucial condition and lubricant that helped merchants to convince sailors to board a Hamburg ship bound for the Mediterranean Sea. Supportive in this regard was last but not least that this whole regulation and insurance process was in practice implemented in an uncomplicated but very effective way. With regard to the private insurances take out by the merchants, the sailors were provided with concrete material pieces of paper that promised them their safety.

5.4 Insurance Certificates

The practical functioning of private insurances for the crew was equally simple and just as remarkably practical as in the case of the *Turkish passports*. In fact, both processes in practice ultimately functioned in a rather similar way. The only differences that existed between the two processes were the institution which provided and was in charge of the implementation of the safety, namely private firms instead of the Admiralty, the respective parties involved, with the Ottoman Empire missing from the negotiation table, and the place and situation in which this safety promise would be required. The

Hamburg. Regarding risk-taking in mercantile enterprises in general, see also Mathias, "Risk, Credit and Kinship."

113 See Ressel, *Sklavenkassen*, 673.

general way of how the insurance functioned was, however, similar to the passport. Also with regard to private insurances, the people of the age entrusted their destiny, their health and life to the credibility and liability of a concrete piece of paper, in this case an *insurance certificate* that promised them hope to survive any encounter with the Ottomans unscathed. The actual procedure of how to get and implement a private "insurance against the Turkish Threat", as it was called in the legal jargon of the time, was as follows: Whereas in the case of the Turkish passports the governmental authorities made the safety promise and guaranteed the implementation of the promise by building upon the *peace treaties*, in the case of the private insurance only a single or merchant firm assumed and shouldered the entire responsibility for the safety promise by appointing an insurance company with the task of financially covering the cost of possible raids and hostage-takings.[114]

Whenever a merchant planned a voyage of a ship to the Mediterranean Sea, the first thing he did was to offer his ship's captain and this man's crew such a private insurance.[115] If the captain agreed to the proposal, the merchant approached an insurance company and procured the necessary insurance. At the same time, the ship's captain and his crew visited or rather were required to visit the local consulate or the local representative of the Hamburg nation at the respective port city where they lay at anchor, which might in some cases have simply been a merchant house. At the consulate or local representative, the ship's captain and his crew – the latter most often being represented by one or two spokesmen chosen by the crew – had to present the case to the local authorities, to the consul or his substitutes, who then put the promise into writing, issuing a notarial certificate of the existing agreement. As laid down in this notarial certificate, the merchant was then bound to assume responsibility for the insurance and procure the necessary money, that is, draw on the insurance company to procure the money for the ransoming of his crew if they were taken hostage by the Ottomans.[116] In the case of the *Turkish passport*, too, the issuing authorities had been the consulates or the home authorities. The English, Dutch, Danish, Swedish or French authorities would then send a signed copy of these passports to the Ottoman authorities, hand over a copy to the ship's captain, send a copy to the ship-owners and keep the original document in their own registry.

However, in the case of the notarial certificates of private insurance policies, the insurance companies held a copy, the ships' captains were delivered a signed copy, another copy was sent to the ship-owners and the original document was kept in the

114 See "Hamburger Assekuranz- und Havarie-Ordnung von 1731." Part X. *Von Assekuranz für Türkengefahr und auf der Menschen Leben.*

115 This paragraph is primarily based on the findings from the Luetkens archive and the procedure of procuring insurances that Luetkens adhered to with regard to his ships. Apart from the letters analysed in the episode and as further proof for this procedure see inter alia also the letters by the ships' captains Tegeler (March 19, 1745), Nagell (May 19, 1745), Paatz (May 21, 1745), Giessel (October 13, 1744) or the letters from Luetkens to Cornelissen (June 28, 1744) in TNA, HCA 30/233.

116 See *Insurance Certificate and Report*, issued by "Jacob Roeks Vice Consul van de Hamborger Natio in deeze Stadt Lissabon", enclosed in a letter from Hertzer & von Bobartt to Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, October 12, 1744, TNA, PRO, HCA 30/234.

registry of the consulate.[117] Therefore, the Ottoman authorities were in these cases not approached but in fact omitted and did not receive a copy, which in the end points us to the most crucial difference between the two options of legal safeguarding with regard to the Mediterranean Sea. In the case of the private insurances, the Ottoman authorities were generally no integral part of the respective agreements. Therefore, they were also exempted from any liabilities regarding their capture actions and were also not entrusted with any legal obligations regarding the rightful fulfilment of the agreement, except of course of the fact that they still needed to agree to receiving ransom money for their captives and to generally agree to release them. In effect that meant that Hamburg ships were still captured by Ottoman privateers and Hamburg seaman were still taken hostage and made prisoners of war, and the only form of security that the insurances then offered was that the seaman could demand from their ship-owners to be ransomed in due time.

In practice therefore, all liabilities in connection with Hamburg shipping to the Mediterranean region and all responsibilities as regards the well-being of the sailors – that is, all responsibilities to make sure that the adopted measures met their objectives, namely to guarantee that the sailors would return home safely after the voyage or in the worst case after captivity – rested in the hands of the ship-owners and the insurance companies. The Ottomans were not involved in the process.

The situation and the risks to Hamburg shipping in the region were therefore still fundamentally different to the situation of the English, Dutch, Swedish or Danish ships. Because in contrast to the agreements that the Ottoman held with these powers, which limited the Ottomans' scope of action with regard to raiding these powers' ships, the solution that the Hamburg merchants found did not have any direct consequences for the Ottoman raids and did not lead to any restrictions for or reduction of their privateering activities. Rather, the Maghreb privateers simply continued to prey upon the Hamburg and other Hanseatic ships and even, in a way, benefitted from the insurance policies of the Hamburgers because this practice in certain ways actually ensured them a stable and reliable source of income. Having said that, this latter fact becomes unequivocally clear and is furthermore aptly illustrated when we take a look at the course of events that came into effect when a Hamburg ship actually fell into the hands of an Ottoman privateer.

In that case, the Ottoman authorities raised a claim with the Hamburg Admiralty, via local intermediaries, to demand ransom money for the crew of the ship. At the same time, the crew of the ship now made use of their insurance certificate, showing it either to the Ottomans authorities or rather to the middle men that would then forward the claim to Hamburg or by directly addressing their ship-owners and the Hamburg *Sklavenkasse* through letters asserting their claim and enforcing their given right to demand the payment of the ransom money. The Hamburg *Sklavenkasse*, as part of the Hamburg Admiralty, then, upon being presented with the notarial certificate of the private insurance, ransomed the ship's crew from Ottoman captivity, while at the same time requesting from the private insurers and merchants the reimbursement of the expenses. The insurance company then had two months to pay these costs, during which

117 See Ressel, *Sklavenkassen*, 254-256. See Gøbel, "Algerian sea passes," 170-176.

time the sailors had already begun their return journey or were taken to the nearest European port, for instance to Lisbon. In fact, the actual claim for reimbursement only became effective for the insurance company at the moment that the former captives actually arrived at a European port, or as the contemporaries called it, reached the safety of the "Christian shore" ["an Christen Seite"].[118] Until then, basically the European commission agents responsible for the redemption of the captives in the Maghreb ports were responsible and liable for the captives. The whole procedure as expressed in the contemporary wording of the law, in the end read as follows. An "insurance against the Turkish Threat" stipulated that

> "when the insured person was taken hostage by Turkish pirates, Moors, Barbaric or other unchristian corsairs and brought to their ports to become slaves, [...] [the insurers, or "assekuradeurs", as was their contemporary name, committed themselves] to pay the subscribed sum for their ransoming of these persons, after receiving the news of their capture, in the course of two months – without the usual deduction of 2%, however, under the condition, that this sum was only used for the ransoming including all incidental expenses occurring in the course of the ransoming process."[119]

In the case that the insurance company would or could hereafter not pay and compensate for the expenses, the merchant, who had procured the insurance, was personally liable and had to pay for the costs himself, while at the same time filing a protest against the insurance company. The latter case could arise for instance when the insurance company was convinced and claimed that the ship-owners had not done everything in their power to prevent a capture. This could for instance be if they had not equipped their ships with cannons for deterrence, which was another important reason why the ship-owners, as a precaution, put cannons on their ships. In the letter episode presented, it will therefore not surprise us to read of 10 cannons on board of the ship that went to the Mediterranean Sea. The risk that the individual merchant was exposed to through the capture of one his ships can be aptly illustrated on the basis of figures available to us from historical data compiled by Ernst Baasch already in 1897, with concrete ransom sums for different seamen.

Thus, in the mid-eighteenth century, the redemption sum for the ship itself amounted to approximately 9,000 Mark. The redemption sum for a helmsman was 5,400 Mark, and a simple sailor cost between 2,175 and 2,900 Mark.[120] Figures from

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118 *Nachricht von der Sclaven oder Sclaven Bootsmanns Casse*. HStA, 111 - 1 Cl. VII Lit. Ca Nr. 2 Vol. 3 fasc.1, Dok. 23 & 24, reprint cited after Ressel, *Sklavenkassen*, 757-771. Translation by the author.

119 The insurance guaranteed the insured person's freedom whenever, in the German original, "dieselbe von Türkischen Seeräubern, Mohrischen, Barbarischen oder anderen unchristlichen See-Corsaren genommen, gefangen und in deren Hafen zur Sklaverei aufgebracht werden sollte [die Versicherer] die gezeichnete Summe zur Lösung und Ranzion, nach erhaltener Nachricht der Aufbringung, innerhalb zween Monaten – ohne Abzug der bei anderen Versicherungen gewöhlichen 2 %, jedoch mit der Bedingung zu zahlen hätten, daß diese Summe zu nichts anderem als zur gedachten Ranzionierung und zu dem, was von Erhaltung der Freiheit dependiret, angewandt werden solle." Quoted after Ebel, *Rechtsgeschichte*, 137. See also Ebel, Wilhelm "Über Sklavenversicherung und Sklavereiversicherung," 207-230. See also Ressel, *Sklavenkassen*, 673.

120 See Baasch, *Beziehungen zu Algier und Marokko*, 220.

later in the century, when the processing of ransoming Ottoman captives was further institutionalised through the founding of the *Assekuranz-Company* in Hamburg, although private insurances were also still used, allow us to gain an even more accurate impression of the immense expenses in relation to the ransoming process, now including the costs for the whole crew. Here we find that a skipper cost 8,000 Mark ransom money, a helmsman 4,000, a carpenter 3,000, a boatswain 2,400, a cook 2,400, a sailor 2,400, a cook's mate 1,600 and a boy 1,600 Mark.[121] This list of individuals on board a ship represented the typical manning of a small commercial vessel of the 18th century setting sail to the Mediterranean Sea.[122] The overall sum for ransoming an entire crew therefore easily amounted to approximately 23.000 Mark.[123]

Hence, it is easily understandable that the reimbursement of such costs would have brought a single merchant or merchant house close to bankruptcy if they were forced to pay it out of their own account. In most cases, however, the insurance companies did in fact settle the debts and shoulder the financial losses. Notwithstanding this, falling victim and losing a ship to an Ottoman raid nevertheless was always a losing deal for the merchants. Merchants most of the time lost their ship and goods, that is, they also lost the revenues from that ship and its goods. Although the insurers would compensate them for their loss, most of the time the amount of compensation did not come to the same value as the sales prize of the loaded goods. Furthermore, even when they had insured their crew against the *Turkish Threat* and the insurance company met the demands, most often additional costs were incurred, for instance when the demanded ransom money exceeded the insurance pay-out and the merchants had to pay the difference, or when the insurance companies demanded an insurance rate despite the statutory rules. In any case, the merchants had to expect an increase in the insurance rates and interest rates from the insurances companies for their further enterprises whenever a capture had taken place.[124]

But even if we put aside all these factors, or if we assume that the insurance company compensated for all losses and further costs, the main problem with regard to using private insurances as a solution strategy for the situation in the Mediterranean Sea still remains: the major deficiency and disadvantage of this solution strategy was that it did not eradicate the problem but only provided compensatory measures. The existence of insurances did not lead to Hamburg ships not being captured any more. Therefore, the source of the problem was not eliminated, but quite on the contrary the insurances even exacerbated the situation further by offering the Ottomans yet another incentive to capture Hamburg ships. This was ultimately the main reason why the endeavour of

121 "Bco. Mark 8000 auf einen Schiffer, Bco. Mark 4.000 auf einen Steuermann, Bco. Mark 3.000 auf einen Zimmermann, Bco. Mark 2.400 auf einen Bootsmann und Koch, Bco. Mark 2.400 auf einen Matrosen, Bco. Mark 1.600 auf einen Kochsmaat, Bco. Mark 1.600 auf einen Jungen". Baasch, *Hansestädte und die Barba-resken*, 233. See also Graßmann, "Nordafrikanische Piraten," 163.

122 See Rediker, *Devil and the Deep Blue Sea*, 83.

123 By way of illustration regarding the cost ratio of this sum, we can point to the fact that the regular annual salary of a sailor during that time was 100 Mark. See Rheinheimer,*Hark Olufs' Wiederkehr*, 29.

124 See Ebel, *Rechtsgeschichte*, 137-138.

sending ships to the Mediterranean Sea ultimately represented high-risk business that entailed the greatest conceivable risks for a merchant from Hamburg.

The fact that Luetkens and his trading partners still sent ships to the Mediterranean Sea and that the sailors agreed to that endeavour will never cease to amaze me. Despite all the obstacles put in their way, they decided to take their chances. How exactly the merchants proceeded in this matter, how they got the persuasion and implementation of the enterprise done in actual practice and how they were actually able to turn their undertakings into successes, will now be the subject of the next part of this chapter, in which I will finally present and analyse an exemplary letter episode encapsulating and providing us with an insight into all the presented conditions, details and subtleties regarding Hamburg shipping to the Mediterranean Sea outlined above. We are sufficiently equipped with all the relevant background information to understand the events occurring in the letter conversation. The crucial element, however, that will be added and will complete the existing picture is that we will also learn from the episode about the one crucial practice and the communication tool that was fundamentally responsible for the functioning of the trade with the Mediterranean Sea and in particular for finding a practical solution for the described scenario in this area. This practice was once more letter practice. Therefore, as if under a magnifying glass, all the previously explained historical conditions will now reverberate and slot together in the analysis, showing at the same time that all the conditions were primarily shaped and fostered – in fact they were in many ways borne – by the historical practice of writing and exchanging letters.

Without the powers of persuasion offered by letter writing, without the material opportunities it provided, and without the functionality of letter practice to regulate things, none of the above-mentioned solutions would have been possible at all. Without them, hardly anyone would presumably have agreed to take the trip to the Mediterranean Sea.

In the following explanations I will once more investigate all crucial factors and elements of letter practice and business practice shaping the trade with the Mediterranean Sea. I will also present ship's captain letters as letter types and the language register of patronage that shaped this business field. On the basis of the analysis we will learn how Luetkens and his partners ran their enterprises in this business field of high-risk trade and thus took an active part in shaping the conditions and events in the Mediterranean region.

As regards the course of Nicolaus Gottlieb Luetkens' establishment phase, we will at the same time gain a unique insight into one of the several business ventures that the merchant undertook that once more actively paved the way into his establishment because this enterprise turned out to be successful in the end. In concrete terms, we will follow the planning phase as well the implementation phase of sending the ship *Commercium* to Venice, documented in letters between Luetkens, several of his trading partners, with the insurance company and merchant house of Cornelis de Meyere & Soonen in Amsterdam and last but not least with one of his most valuable employees: the ship's captain Claes Noordstern. These letters will tell us a story of stout-hearted men, the crew of this ship, of loyal and capable men, the ships' captain Noordstern, and of

pragmatic men, the merchants.[125] It is a story about the subtleties of risk-taking in the Early Modern world and about the fact that a well-functioning patronage relationship could help a lot in dealing with these risks.[126]

Letters by ships' captains have unfortunately only rarely survived in today's archives because they were often either destroyed or wasted due to the original contexts in which they were once used or due to the fact that they were not regarded as memorable and therefore thrown away.[127] The big loss that this fact represents becomes apparent when we take a look at the many captains' letter that can be still found in the Luetkens archive today, and in fact, fortunately, in many other boxes of the Prize Papers Collection in the National Archives London.[128] These letters contain a wealth of information about seafaring and about the people working in this field of maritime trade and shipping. The letters provide us with insights into their lives, their knowledge and skills, their adventures and attitudes towards the world they were living in. In a nutshell, reading these letters always led me to one central insight: these kinds of letters are far from representing expendable historical sources, but quite the opposite. The letters ultimately represented nothing less than the major nerve centres and finetuning tools on which the whole shipping industry of the Early Modern Period rested. From the episode, we will learn how these letters were practically used as tools for placing orders as well as for implementing orders in the seafaring and shipping business. We will furthermore learn how letter writers, ship-owners and captains used concrete performative utterances, historical *speech acts*, as I will describe them, in their letters to perform, regulate and structure their activities, and how the language register of patronage governing the letters created a basis for trust and loyalty in the sea business.[129] With regard to the

125 Regarding sailors in general, see the edited volume Royen, Paul C. van, and Jaap R. Bruijn and Jan Lucassen, eds. *"Those Emblems of Hell"? European Sailors and The Maritime Labour Market, 1570-1870*. St. John's, Nfld.: International Maritime Economic History Association, 1997. See Fusaro, Maria, Richard Blakemore, Bernard Allaire, Tijl Vanneste, eds. *Law, Labour, and Empire. Comparative Perspectives on Seafarers, c. 1500-1800*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015.

126 Regarding Maritime Risk Management, see Hellwege, Phillip, and Guido Rossi, eds. *Maritime Risk Management Essays on the History of Marine Insurance, General Average and Sea Loan*. Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 2021. See in particular Hope, Mallory. "Commercial Networks, Maritime Law, and Translation in a Spanish Insurance Claim on Trial in France, 1783-1791:" In *Maritime Risk Management Essays on the History of Marine Insurance, General Average and Sea Loan*, edited by Phillip Hellwege and Guido Rossi, 210-247. Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 2021. See Ebert, *Brazilian Sugar*, 109-130.

127 See Rheinheimer, "Sklaven in den Barbareskenstaaten," 317-319. See also Watt, Helen, and Anne Hawkins, *Letters of Seamen in the Wars with France, 1793-1815*. Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2016, 1-29. See Haasis, Lucas. "The Writing Seamen: Learning to Write and Dictating Letters on Board the Bremen Ship "Concordia." In *The Sea: Maritime Worlds in the Early Modern Period*, edited by Peter Burschel and Sünne Juterczenka, 297-310. Cologne/Weimar/Vienna: Böhlau, 2021.

128 See Lamikiz, Xabier. "Basque Ship Captains as Mariners and Traders in the Eighteenth Century." *International Journal of Maritime History* 20, no. 2 (2008): 81-109.

129 Regarding the concept of *speech acts*, see Austin, John Langshaw. *How to Do Things with Words: The William James Lectures delivered at Harvard University in 1955*, edited by James Opie Urmson and Marina Sbisà. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1962. See Searle, John. *Speech Acts. An Essay in the Philosophy of Language.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969. See also Skinner, Quentin. "Interpretation and the Understanding of Speech Acts." In *Visions of Politics: Volume I: Regarding Method*, edited by

powers of persuasion in letters, we will learn last but not least how people in the past could be convinced to accept and to follow orders by help of the practical principle of making firm promises and providing material assurances.

In the presented episode, Luetkens was able to convince the crew of one of his ships to sail to the Mediterranean Sea on the basis of his written promise that he would free his men from captivity if they were taken hostage by an Ottoman privateer. This promise sent to his ship's captain in a letter was first read aloud to the crew by the captain and subsequently, after the crew had agreed to it, it was materialised in the form of a notarial insurance certificate in the Hamburg consulate in Lisbon. The legal means and measures Luetkens used to keep and substantiate his promise was that he procured a private insurance against the *Turkish Threat* for his ship's captain Noordstern and his crew in Amsterdam at the house of Cornelis de Meyere, which guaranteed that the seamen would be ransomed in the case of their falling victim to an Ottoman privateering raid. On the basis of these steps, which were all planned and executed on the basis and by means of letters, Luetkens was once more able to put a plan into practice that was important for his success during his establishment phase, which was to engage in the risk trade with the Mediterranean rich trades.

5.5 The Episode: A Material Promise to Noordstern

With the help of his old trading partner Lacoste and the financial support of his trading partners in Hamburg Hertzer & von Bobartt, Nicolas Gottlieb Luetkens bought his fifth ship in Bilbao in March 1744. The ship was a medium-sized vessel, in good shape, timbered in London, originally English but taken by the Spanish about three months earlier. Luetkens purchased it right after it was declared a lawful prize and put up for auction by the Spanish Admiralty. It was a good catch. Luetkens christened the ship *Commercium*. Nomen est omen, the ship was to bring him a good fortune.

The person who was to lead the ship to its fortune, set foot on board three weeks later. Luetkens first had to spend some time looking for a suitable match for his new ship, a man worthy of becoming the captain of one of his promising ships. His selection criteria for choosing captains, as we learn from his and Hertzer & von Bobartts' letters, were: "good courage" ["guthe Courage"], honesty and a reputation for being a "skilled navigator and not a drunkard" ["ein gutter Zeeman und kein Trinker"].[130] The easiest way of finding and appointing a captain would have been to promote one of his chartered helmsmen to ship's captain.[131] In fact, he would go on to take this very

Quentin Skinner, 103-127. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002. Skinner, Quentin. "Motives, Intentions, and the Interpretation of Text." In *Meaning and Context: Quentin Skinner and his Critics*, edited by James Tully, 68-78. Princeton / New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1988. See Skinner, Quentin. "Lectures. Part Two: Is it still possible to interpret texts?" *The International Journal of Psychoanalysis* 89, no. 3 (2008): 647-654.

130 Letter from Hertzer & von Bobartt to Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, June 8, 1744, TNA, PRO, HCA 30/234. Letter from Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb to Hertzer & von Bobartt, August 31, 1744, TNA, PRO, HCA 30/232, Letter Book I, no. 290.

131 See Witt, *Master next God*, 97. See also ibid., 243-246. See Davis, *English Shipping Industry*, 126.

common option for the manning of the next three ships he bought.[132] However, this time, he decided on an already experienced skipper. He appointed Claes Noordstern, an older skipper known to his partners Hertzer & von Bobartt for years and "with a future wife" in Hamburg.[133] Maybe Luetkens already planned major undertakings with this ship, meaning voyages that would need experience. We will never know. What we do know is that skipper Noordstern arrived in Bilbao with his crew on another ship in April and the first assignment he was given was the evaluation of another ship lying in the harbour of the Spanish town for sale. Next, Noordstern was handed his Hamburg passports. They were issued in Hamburg in German and Latin and sent by Hertzer & von Bobartt enclosed in one of their letters.[134] The Hamburg merchants also officially assumed the role of the ship-owners of this ship, which is why they signed the passports, as the partners arranged and finally confirmed in their letter from the 24th of April. Despite this, the ship was bought by and belonged to Luetkens, for reasons that I have outlined in the chapter on Luetkens' shipping industry, namely that Luetkens' residence in France at that time could have led to problems with regard to the neutrality of this ship in European waters.[135]

Nevertheless, Luetkens continued to be not only well informed about all the affairs regarding this ship, but in fact he actually also continued, in constant consultation with Hertzer & von Bobartt, to care for and settle all the businesses of this ship. Consequently, although all official correspondence and communication ran through the information channel of the Hamburg merchant house and they were also participating in the ship's business, Luetkens was the one in charge and his own letters set the course for all the actions taken with regard to this ship. Thus, it was Luetkens who had advised Hertzer & von Bobartt to procure the Hamburg passport because it was important for his further planning that the ship was declared neutral in European waters. As a Spanish prize ship bought by a resident of France, however, this condition for neutrality was not met, so he needed the help, assistance and the passports from his Hamburg partners, who were notarially certified "burghers and citizens of Hamburg".[136] With this Hamburg passport, the ship *Commercium* lying in the harbour of Bilbao was then free to go on its first trip.

The first voyage of the *Commercium* was to Nantes, as the partners had arranged in consultation with Lacoste, who had procured the loading of the ship. Noordstern reported the departure of the ship on the 20th of May. He wrote, originally in Dutch and using typical letter phrases for ship's captain letters that "this letter serves to inform

132 See for instance the case of Carsten Giessel, who was the helmsman of skipper Nagell before being appointed ship's captain by Hertzer & van Bobartt in July 1744: "der Steurrman von Nagell genandt Carsten Giessel so wir zum Schiffer für unsere Fleute gemacht, ist heuthe Bürger geworden." Letter from Hertzer & von Bobartt to Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, July 20, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/234.

133 Letter from Hertzer & von Bobartt to Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, July 31, 1744, TNA, PRO, HCA 30/234.

134 Letter from Hertzer & von Bobartt to Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, April 24, 1744, TNA, PRO, HCA 30/234.

135 Ibid.

136 Letter from Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb to Von Bobartt, Elart, June 5, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/232, Letter Book I, no. 174.

["dient om bekend te maken"] E.E. that the departure of my ship has taken place [...] at 11 o'clock". He further reported that Lacoste had "equipped the ship with 4 more on pounders [cannons], adding to the 6 six that I had already on board".[137] The ship was perfectly equipped against any hostile encounters that might await it on its journey, making a deterrent and stately impression. Better to be safe than sorry, Luetkens had advised his trading partner Lacoste regarding the armament of his ship, which the Bilbao merchant conscientiously took care of. Despite having all confidence in the powers of neutrality, Luetkens nevertheless still played safe. Or again, maybe he already had other plans for this ship. On the first of June, Noordstern arrived in Nantes. He stayed there for over a month, causing Luetkens, in turn, to address a slight complaint to him emphasizing that he had not expected his stay to last that long.[138] During the voyage the merchant had already arranged the next journey for Noordstern in consultation with Hertzer & von Bobartt and the Nantes merchant house of Luttman & von Bobartt. The *Commercium* was to move on to Lisbon. Thus, he wrote simultaneously to all three of his correspondents to reaffirm the plans. The letter to Noordstern was inserted into the letter to Luttman & von Bobartt in Nantes, which was a common material letter practice and typical procedure in the sea business because it ensured that the ships' captains would receive the owners' letters, and therefore also their orders safe and sound and personally, that is, directly from the merchant houses in the respective cities that their ship-owners had chosen beforehand as the ships' captains first port of call. Consequently, as soon as a ship's captain arrived at a port, he approached and visited a specific merchant or merchant house in the city that was in contact with the ship-owners and who handed the captain his letters. As a positive side effect of this arrangement, the captain got in contact with the respective merchant house and, from the perspective of the ship-owners, the latter could rest assured that their orders and instructions were transmitted with the necessary emphasis. The practice therefore served as a security mechanism.[139] For his other letter to Hamburg, to Hertzer & von Bobartt, he used another typical material letter practice, which was to add copies of the two other letters to the actual letter, which was how Luetkens ensured and performed a very dense information policy.[140]

The material arrangement of the first letter to Luttman & von Bobartt, who were furthermore allowed to read the letter to Noordstern ["nach Überlesung"], must have given the addressees a certain broad hint.[141] They allow us to draw the conclusion that the complaint regarding the delay was not solely addressed to Noordstern but also to the Nantes merchant house, which was apparently too slow with the acquisition and the

137 Letter from Noordstern, Claes to Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, May 20, 1744, TNA, PRO, HCA 30/233.

138 "Ik hoope hie naest Goed eyndelyk soll gespeedert sein ik haed nogt gedackt hett soo lange à costy soude gesukelt hebben." Letter from Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb to Noordstern, Claes, July 10, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/232, Letter Book I, no. 213.

139 See also the chapter on shipping business for a detailed analysis of this practice of inserting letters into letters.

140 See the chapters on the merchant house and marriage for detailed analyses of this practice.

141 "Einliegend ein Brief an S. Noordstern welchen ihm nach Überlesung gelieben einzuhendigen." Letter from Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb to Luttman & von Bobartt, June 10, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/232, Letter Book I, no. 214.

loading of goods for Lisbon. However, more important than the complaint in the letter, which had already been taken care of by the Nantes merchants at that time, who had already found a cargo of grain for Lisbon, is the presented idea regarding the further course and plans for the *Commercium* that stood at centre of all three letters. As we can find in almost the same wording also in the letters to the Nantes merchants and the Hamburg merchants, Luetkens wrote to his captain Noordstern: If he, the skipper, should not find a return cargo in Lisbon for Hamburg, but instead "if he can find cargo for the Mediterranean ["midlansche Zee"], that is, for Marseille, Livorno, Genoa or other places there, which I do not doubt, you can accept it. […] If this […] works out ["gluken"], your ship-owners will procure the insurance ["verseekering"] for you as the captain and for your crew ["Volck"] against the Turkish Threat, on which you can count ["hie stadt kann maken"] and you can give the crew the assurance that the ship-owners will keep their word" ["woord ock content sein"].[142] In the letter to his trading partners in Nantes, furthermore, he asked them "to be so kind" ["die Güttigkeit wollen haben"] to contact for this purpose the partners in Lisbon, the merchant house Voight, Walther & Sieveking, to ask them for their assistance.[143]

Noordstern, obliged to send a report to his ship-owners at every occasion necessary, mostly when he reached a new port, as was a common rule in sea business, answered the letter from Luetkens by sending his apologies regarding the delay. He justified it with bad weather conditions. He also reported a worm infestation of the ship. Again, more important, however, is his reply regarding the plans to sail to the Mediterranean Sea. He reported that he had already had "a dispute with my crew" in Nantes who complained about the planned extension of their chartering, which would mean that they would be on sea for "longer than 14 days", exceeding their hiring period.[144] Written between the lines was that Noordstern had so far not even told them anything about the proposition and plan of Luetkens to possibly send the ship to the Mediterranean Sea after its voyage to Lisbon because the latter most probably would have caused even bigger disputes on the part of the crew. Such a strategy of maintaining silence about the further course a voyage was not uncommon. Actually, as it appears, it was a rather customary strategy pursued by captains to prevent unnecessary tensions between them and their crew. In a great number of cases in the Luetkens archive, in fact, this strategy was even given out as specific instructions by the ship-owners to their captains before their travels or the captains received letters with respective orders during their travels referring to the purpose of this strategy not to scare off the crew. Exemplary and revealing in this regard are letters that we can find in the Luetkens archive from during that time, sent by Luetkens to several of his other captains. In these letters he included the explicit request or hint that it is rather "unnecessary that the crew knows where they were bound to next" or, in a rather similar wording, that it was "unnecessary to reveal to them your next destination, but you can only tell them that you are going to Lisbon". The fact that

142 Letter from Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb to Noordstern, Claes, July 10, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/232, Letter Book I, no. 213.

143 Letter from Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb to Luttman & von Bobartt, July 10, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/232, Letter Book I, no. 214.

144 Letter from Noordstern, Claes to Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, July 16, 1744, TNA, PRO, HCA 30/233.

this information and request was, however, considered by Luetkens as a rather self-evident fact and that it therefore represented a kind of unwritten law becomes obvious when we take a look at the half sentence that Luetkens added to the latter request, which was that he hoped that this "precaution is unnecessary".[145]

As regards Noordsterns' actions in the case of the ship *Commercium*, the fulfilment of this provision becomes rather obvious, too. As we learn from his next letter, as a matter of fact, he only informed the crew about their employer's plans after they had already arrived in Lisbon. However, even regardless of this fact, Noordstern was nevertheless still not spared a dispute with his crew when he was still in Nantes. For the crew of the ship, just the prospect of going to Lisbon was reason enough to raise objections because it exceeded their agreed hire period. Such protests by the crew were not uncommon during that time. In fact, as we have learned, it was a very common form of protest, often particularly relating to the payment of wages, which, however, would not necessarily lead to or was regarded as mutiny. Rather, it was considered a form of soft mutiny through fraternisation, which was used by the crew to make complaints and improve their situation instead of aiming at irregularly leaving the ship.[146] The latter would have been mutiny. For this purpose, the crew most often even appointed a spokesperson amongst them who led the dispute and who took care that everything took place in an orderly manner.[147]

As an overall result, consequently, the actual word and the phenomenon of *disputes* ["despuet" in the Dutch letters] between ships' captains and their crews can be found frequently in captains' letters. For the ship-owners, in turn, the reports about disputes in the captains' letters meant one thing above all, which was that they had to take further actions with regard to ensuring the continuance of the journey of the ship or else they would be forced to abandon their plans. Both kinds of information, the captains' concerns and the necessity for further action on the part of the ship-owners, also featured in Luetkens' correspondence with his captain Noordstern. The letter quoted above indicated that the captain was forced to take further steps to convince the crew even just to agree to sail to Lisbon. From a later letter of his, we learn that in Nantes they were persuaded by providing them with a double wage.[148] Yet furthermore, with this letter the captain also already indicated that the prospects of convincing his crew to sail with him to the Mediterranean Sea were rather poor or even bleak. The fact that this was indeed the general message transmitted via this letter, which eventually did not fail to have the intended effect, becomes clearly obvious from Luetkens' response letter

145 "en onnodig syn volck hett wett waer naer toe moet." Letter from Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb to Tegeler, Johann, October 5, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/232, Letter Book I, no. 342. "is onnodig to hunnen te seegen waer op hie gedestineerd kan maer seegen op Lissabon, maer ik hoope deese prequantie unnodig." Letter from Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb to Cornelissen, Andreas, July 23, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/232, Letter Book I, no. 217.

146 See Rediker, *Devil and the Deep Blue Sea*, who points out that the "most effective work stoppages were collective" (98) and that crews often refused "'all as one' [...] to go any further once their captain had changed the destination stipulated in their original agreement" (109). See Witt, *Master next God*, 158.

147 See Witt, *Master next God*, 153. See also Earle, *Sailors*, 177-178.

148 Letter from Noordstern, Claes to Luttman & von Bobartt, July 21, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/233.

because the merchant was apparently able to take this hint. In Luetkens' next letter he backed down a bit and indicated to Noordstern instead, in an almost paternal voice, that since the skipper had "already had so much dispute with the crew in Nantes, it will most likely not go any better in Lisbon".[149] He offered him the option to only take ballast in Lisbon and return to Hamburg. Noordstern would get the chance to prove himself worthy later. As chance would have it, or rather as made possible by Noordstern's courage and determined commitment, however, matters should take a different turn.

After having arrived in Lisbon, Noordstern himself wrote a letter to Luetkens, announcing good news. In an almost cheerful, triumphant tone, he reported to Luetkens and his ship-owners Hertzer & von Bobartt in another letter to Hamburg that in Lisbon the merchant "Voogt and the receiver of my cargo have offered me a cargo to Venice, wherefore I have done my best to convince my crew to sail with me, in which I succeeded except for two or three mariners who have left the ship, but this should not break the game ["Spel niet sal breeken"]. I have read out aloud to them ["hebe voor geleesen"] the conditions that E.E. had sent me regarding the insurance on our lives against the Turkish threat ["Versekering voor Turkengevaar"] and I do not doubt that it is safe enough ["cikür genoeg"] on which the Almighty God should give us his favour."[150] Inserted into this letter that later reached Luetkens is a letter by the said merchants Voight & Walther who congratulated him on his intuition. The procurement therefore had worked out perfectly. The Lisbon merchant house Voight, Walther & Sieveking, again with Hamburg roots, praised the sugar as "extra nice cargo" ["eene extra schoone Vraght"], with which the ship-owners would make a good fortune.[151] Luetkens himself also knew very well and later wrote to Hertzer & von Bobartt that also the "return cargo will in all probability be considerable" ["alle Aparentie considerabbel"].[152] Several weeks later, when Noordstern had already arrived at his planned destination, Luetkens also received a copy of a letter by Noordstern, which was inserted in a letter to him from the ship-owners Hertzer & von Bobartt, as we can see from the folding technique of the letter, an *Accordion Fold*. In this copied letter he found that it was not only the words and the promise of insurance that convinced Noordstern's sailors to sail with him. He had also promised them double their normal monthly wage for 70 days, "Maandgeld voor

149 Letter from Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb to Noordstern, Claes, August 3, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/232, Letter Book I, no. 241.

150 Letter from Noordstern, Claes to Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, August 3, 1744, TNA, PRO, HCA 30/233.

151 "Copia van een brief van d. Heeren Voight Walther uyt Lissabon in dato 4 Aug. 1744." Copia enclosed in letter from Hertzer & von Bobartt to Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, 14th of September 1744, TNA, HCA 30/234.

152 Letter from Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb to Luttman & von Bobartt, 27th of July 1744, TNA, PRO, HCA 30/232, Letter Book I, no. 237.

70 Daegen", which was a measure that he as a captain was in fact entitled to take.[153] As Ralph Davis has pointed out, crews "could usually be persuaded to accept this extension of the voyage by a payment of wages on account."[154]

In the letter from Noordstern, quoted above, from the time when he was in Lisbon, however, Luetkens was only informed about the persuasiveness and helpfulness of his promise to insure the crew against the *Turkish Threat* in order to convince the crew to accompany Noordstern on his trip to the Mediterranean Sea. As the direct consequence of this, representing at the same time the main message that Noordstern wanted to convey to his patron with his letter, the merchant was now bound to suit his action to the word, keep his promise and procure the insurance. Luetkens subsequently kept his promise, or rather it must be said he once again pulled the necessary strings to ensure his promise was taken care of by others. Since Hertzer & von Bobartt were the official owners of the ship, they also had to procure the relevant insurance. Having received the good news from Noordstern, Luetkens therefore wrote a letter to the Hamburg merchant house in order to "ask E.E. to procure the necessary insurance for Noordstern and his crew against the Turkish Threat for the outward and return journey because I have promised it to him."[155] In this letter he also repeated and highlighted the assessment of Voight, Walter & Sieveking regarding the *nice cargo* and furthermore offered to assign the Hamburgers a one half share in the cargo. Hertzer & von Bobartt subsequently gladly accepted the offer and fulfilled the request to procure the insurance. On the 11th of September, they reported to Luetkens that they had authorised and "ordered" ["ordoniren"] the Amsterdam firm of "De Meyere to insure Noordstern for 4/m F[lorin] and his equipage for 6/m Fl. Against the Turkish Threat".[156] At that time, however, the *Commercium* and her captain and crew had in fact already set sail to the Mediterranean Sea and had been heading towards Venice for 10 days with "groot hondert kisten Suyker voor Venecien".[157] The confirmation that Luetkens and Hertzer & von Bobartt would take care of the insurance, which Luetkens had given Noordstern in the quoted response letter, had obviously been sufficient for Noordstern to pay a visit to the Hamburg consulate in Lisbon in order to request the issuing of an notarial certificate setting out in writing the arranged agreement between the ship-owners and the crew of the ship *Commercium*.

153 "Copia van een Brief van Cap. Claes Noordstern uyt Mallamocka [Mallamocco, Venedig] d. 13 Jan. 1745". Copia formerly enclosed in a letter from Hertzer & von Bobartt to Luetkens (folded in an Accordion Fold), but having been removed by Luetkens and filed together with a copy of the response letter to Herter & von Bobartt from September 20, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/234. Regarding the payment of further wages, see Witt, *Master next God*, 45, 89.

154 Davis, *English Shipping Industry*, 140.

155 "auf Schiff und Volcks Brieff vor Turkengefahr aus und zu Haus die nöttige Assurantie laßen besorgen den es ihm versprochen." Letter from Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb to Hertzer & von Bobartt, August 31, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/232, Letter Book I, no. 290. See also letters from Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb to Cornelis de Meyere & Soonen, August 31, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/232, Letter Book I, no. 293, with a confirmation.

156 "Wir ordoniren heute an H. de Meyere F 4/m auf Sr. Noordstern & F 6/m auf seine Equipage für Türkengefahr versichern zu laßen." Letter from Hertzer & von Bobartt to Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, September 11, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/234.

157 Letter from Noordstern, Claes to Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, August 18, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/233.

The sailor Albert Rohde, who was the spokesman appointed by the crew, accompanied Noordstern during this visit. A copy of this official certificate, which was issued by the vice-consul of Hamburg in Lisbon, Jacob Roeks, was first sent to Hertzer & von Bobartt but finally also reached Luetkens inserted in a letter by the Hamburg merchants on the 12th of October. From this copy we learn that this visit to the consulate had actually already taken place the 30th of August.[158] Only one day later, on the 1st of September 1744 Noordstern had set sail for the Mediterranean Sea. The original wording of this report and certificate went as follows, summing up once more the entire enterprise and the arrangements that had been made in order to put it in practice, all phrased in the typical officialese of the time. In this certificate, the Hamburg vice consul in Lisbon Jacob Roeks attested and stated for the record that

> "on request of Cap. Claes Noordstern I have gone aboard his ship called *Commercium* lying at anchor in our estuary, which arrived from Nantes with a cargo of grain, whereas this skipper has declared to me that he was offered a cargo to Venice, which he could, however, not accept because of the fact that the ship's crew did not agree to voluntarily accompany him during this voyage because according to their hiring contract which was set out in France they were not obliged to sail any further than here or farther north. Hereupon, the captain has declared that he had orders from his ship-owners that in case a good cargo would present itself, his officers and sailors should get insured [by the ship-owners] against the risk of the Turkish Threat. [...] From this it follows that I [Roeks] have presented the same insurance in his presence to the following persons helmsman Jannssen, boatswain Slaterman, cook Doornboom, and the sailors Rhode, Becker, Matheisen and Jürgen as well as the boy of the ship, who then have resolved agreed to go on the journey with the said captain under the condition that should the disaster occur / what the Almighty God should prevent / that one or the other of these persons will be caught by the Turks during the outward or home journey, then the ship-owners commit themselves at their own expense to ransom them from slavery [captivity] [....] signed the 30th of August 1744, Louis Lambert [notary public] Rhode Matroos, Claes Noordstern, Jacob Roeks."[159]

The next day, Noordstern and his crew on the ship *Commercium* left the port of Lisbon for Venice. They were to survive the voyage unscathed. In January 1745, Noordstern reported the safe arrival of the ship in *Mallamocco*, Venice, where he quickly found a promising return cargo of rich trade to Hamburg, provided by one of the most renowned Venetian merchants, Algarotti.[160]

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158 On the Hamburg consulate in Lisbon see Poettering, *Handel, Nation und Religion*, 99-100.

159 *Insurance Certificate and Report*, issued by "Jacob Roeks Vice Consul van de Hamborger Natio in deeze Stadt Lissabon", enclosed in a letter from Hertzer & von Bobartt to Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, October 12, 1744, TNA, PRO, HCA 30/234.

160 "Copia van een Brief van Cap. Claes Noordstern uyt Mallamocka [Mallamocco, Venedig] d. 13 Jan. 1745". Copia formerly enclosed in a letter from Hertzer & von Bobartt to Luetkens, but having been removed by Luetkens and filed together with a copy of the response letter to Herter & von Bobartt from September 20, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/234. On his return journey Noordstern also stopped in Napels. "Copia van Schipp. Claes Nordstern syn Brieff geschreven Napels d. 4 May 1745". Copia enclosed in a letter from the ships' captain Takes, Taake to Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, June

5.6 Ships' Captains Letters

In total, the Luetkens archive holds 68 letters written by eleven different captains, of whom nine were in the service of Nicolaus Gottlieb Luetkens during the years 1744-1745. In 1744, Luetkens started with four captains in his service, but by the end of 1745 he already owned nine ships, which required him to increase his workforce, by promoting helmsmen to the rank of captain or by hiring new captains recommended to him. The remarkable thing about all these letters is that they look rather similar and closely resemble each other in form and style.[161] With a little practice, it is thus possible to identify these kinds of letters, this particular letter type of the ship's captain's letter, quickly from the hundreds of letters and among the various letter bundles and piles of letters of the Luetkens archive. One only has to look out for the strikingly similar features of these letters. The well-trained eye is then even able to apply this expertise and skill to other boxes and sources of the Prize Papers collection. These features that characterise and mark these kinds of letters as a specific and particular contemporary letter type relate to four aspects in general: the materiality of the letters, the language used, the typical content, and last but not least particularly the letter style and language register used, including the tone and prose of the letters.

Referring to the first feature, the materiality of these letters, the paper of ships' captains' letters is very often rougher and thicker compared to other letter types. One can therefore sometimes feel solely from the material and surface of a letter that one holds in one's hand, that it must be a captain's letter. The reason for this is mainly twofold. First, this kind of paper was cheaper and therefore more affordable for captains.[162] Secondly, such paper was also more robust and therefore more suitable for using it and transporting it on board ships travelling the Early Modern Seas.[163] Therefore, in order to explain the choice of paper, I prefer and would give more emphasis to the second reason because it takes into account the captain's knowledge of his circumstances and his competence in dealing with it rather than merely explaining this letter practice based on a perspective that takes as its starting point a captain's limited opportunities – although it is, of course, safe to assume that a captain would always have an interest in saving money. Sometimes, a captain's choice of paper was surely also simply an act of necessity. If no adequate letter paper was available, for instance, he simply took whatever paper he could find on the ship to send his messages to the ship-owners.

This practice can be evidenced by several ships' captains' letters showing cracks, torn-off edges, or letters written on wastepaper or even paper shavings. The most common folding techniques of the ships' captains' letters in the Luetkens archive is once

17, 1745, TNA, HCA 30/233. Regarding *Bonhomme Algarotti* see "Algarotti, die Grafen von." In *Neues preußisches Adelslexicon*, edited by Leopold von Zedlitz-Neukirch, 96. Leipzig: Reichenbach, 1836.

161 All ships' captains' letters are today stored in TNA, HCA 30/233, Bundle 18. *Letters from Luetkens' captains.* See our detailed catalogue entry in Discovery: https://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/browse/r/h/C4249189.

162 High-quality paper was seldomly needed and expensive, most decisive was the paper's robustness. See Daybell, *The Material Letter*, 97-101. See also Daybell, "Material Meanings," 658.

163 See Hunter, Dard. *Papermaking: The History and Technique of an Ancient Craft*. New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 1947, 229.

more the tuck-and-seal method. For letter inlays they sometimes used the *accordion fold*, allowing the captains to insert further documents or material into the letters.[164] After these most basic material features, the next feature that immediately strikes the eye when finding and reading ships' captains' letters regards the language in which the letters were written, referring not yet to the style in general, the tone or prose of the letters but for the time being only to the national language chosen to write the letters.

The choice of language can essentially be seen as a material feature of these letters as well because the language becomes apparent and recognisable even without reading the letters in detail but just from a cursory glance. The language in which most of the letters of ships' captains in the Luetkens archive were written was rather Dutch or Low German or a hybrid form of Dutch and Low German. The Dutch language in the letters seldom took the form of the contemporary native Dutch unless the captains were of Dutch origin. Instead, the language in the letters appears as a hybrid form, in which the individual captain's mother tongue was moulded into a Dutch version. So, for instance, the captains used Dutch words but German syntax and grammar for their letters. Or it could even mean that they used German words in a Dutch or Low German version, such as for instance "verblyve" [verbleibe], "offarreert" [offeriert], "siek weegern" [sich weigern], "atmaraaltet" [Admiralität]. Often, the captains also used phonetic language, which shows in these cases that they must have used or were familiar with these words in their spoken form but were not always sure how to spell them.[165] A prime example of this is Noordstern's spelling of the word "cikuer" in the episode, which derives from the English word secure, but represented a phonetic spelling of it. The latter also shows that this mingling of languages also involved other languages apart from Dutch, High German and Low German. Rather, the ships' captains, depending on their experience and their educational background, were often familiar with or even spoke several other languages such as English, French or Spanish. Ship's captains were in essence on a basic level multi-linguists depending on and relating to the specific language use and the necessary language skills required in their field of activity, the sea business, which is once again a better evaluation of the findings in the letters than only seeing limited writing capabilities behind it.[166] The reason for the fact that Low German and hybrid Dutch nonetheless dominated in the Luetkens letters is again twofold.

First, since most of Luetkens' ships were insured by Dutch firms, or to be more precise, most of Luetkens' businesses were insured by one Dutch firm, Cornelis de Meyere & Soonen in Amsterdam, it was advisable to choose the Dutch language. Using Dutch first choice because it meant, for example regarding the procurement of the insurance, that all business operations could be followed easily and if necessary be quickly reproduced.

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164 For a detailed description of the tuck-and-seal method see Daybell, "Material Meanings", 659. For further information see Dambrogio, Jana, Daniel Starza Smith, et al. *Dictionary of Letterlocking* (DoLL), "Tuck-and-Seal Method", "Accordion Fold", last updated: 30 December 2017, accessed June 7, 2019.

165 See also Witt, *Master next God*, 219.

166 See also Lamikiz, *Trade and Trust*, 51-70. See Lamikiz, "Basque Ship Captains." See Witt, *Master next God*, 219. See regarding multilingualism during the Early Modern Period in general Burke, Peter. *Languages and Communities in Early Modern Europe*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004.

Secondly, more importantly and surely the main reason for this practice was that the Dutch language was still a kind of a *lingua franca* of seafaring, especially in the North Western part of Europe but also beyond that, with the exception of the English territories.[167] On board the ships, in the ports, but also in educational literature on seafaring or navigation, or in the first nautical schools of the time, Dutch was the predominant language, also creating and shaping many technical terms widely used in European seafaring during that time.[168] So, even though most of Luetkens' captains were of German and particularly of Hanseatic origin, they nevertheless mostly wrote in Dutch or in Low German, and Luetkens responded to them in Dutch or Low German because this was common practice during that time.

The level of proficiency in writing in a foreign language varied significantly between Luetkens' captains: some were already very skilled in writing in Dutch, while others limited their translation work or writing to the necessary minimum. The level of language proficiency in certain cases also corresponded to the level of writing skills in general that the ship's captain possessed. Amongst the nine ships' captains, there were at least three captains with rather unskilled handwriting skills. Deducing or attempting to derive from this finding that ships' captains in general possessed rather limited writing abilities, as it is sometimes argued in research today, for instance by Jann Markus Witt, clearly misses the mark.[169] Rather, handwriting had always been and will always be a very individual personal ability. Secondly, more importantly, the examples in the Luetkens archive indicate that the different writing abilities in fact rather correlated with the duration that the captain had already been in the position of ship's captain and therefore in the highest rank in sea business, where he was required to writing letters regularly. Thus, the captains with the poorest handwriting in the Luetkens archive were also, unsurprisingly, those who had just recently been appointed ships' captains by Luetkens and so still had to become used to writing more regularly, although it is known that also the helmsmen and even lower ranks on the ship were already trained in writing to some extent. So, as it was customary in many areas in the sea business, writing was a skill that was learned more through a learning-by-doing approach and over time than a skill the seamen simply already possessed.[170] Poor handwriting therefore

167 See Poettering, *Handel, Nation und Religion*, 168. See Mitzka, Walther. "Das Niederländische in Deutschland." In *Niederdeutsche Studien. Festschrift für Conrad Borchling*, 207-228. Neumünster: Wachholtz, 1932. See Van der Wal, Marijke. "Early Modern Migrants," here 261-263. For the English context, see Joby, Christopher. *The Dutch Language in Britain (1550–1702): A social history of the use of Dutch in Early Modern Britain*. Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2015.

168 See Schotte, Margaret. *Sailing School: Navigating Science and Skill, 1550-1800*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2019, 115-148. The language of instruction in nautical as well as navigational textbooks and the most spoken language in contemporary German schools for helmsmen and on board German ships was either Dutch or Low Dutch. See Mitzka, "Niederländische in Deutschland," 212.

169 See Witt, *Master next God*, 219.

170 See Watt, Helen, and Anne Hawkins. "Introduction." In *Letters of Seamen in the Wars with France, 1793-1815*, edited by Helen Watt and Anne Hawkins, 1-28. Woodbridge: Boydell, 2016, here 26-28. See Haasis, "The Writing Seamen."

does not necessarily represent a general, distinctive feature or attribute of ships' captains' letters. The distinctive Dutch hybrid language most of the Luetkens letters show, however, surely was. Notwithstanding this, there were of course also exceptions from the rule. Some captains also wrote some of their letters to Luetkens in German.[171] These letters, however, still shared the third distinctive feature with the other letters, which was that they all showed similar contents.

Typical contents of the ships' captains' letters were the weather and particularly the wind conditions because wind directions and wind forces had a direct influence on the route and mobility of the ships. Finding any wind direction in a letter is therefore often a good indication that the letter was written by a ship's captain or helmsman. Furthermore, captains reported on the recruitment, the costs, the general behaviour and all incidents happening with regard to his crew, for which he was responsible.[172] Moreover, the condition of the ship and especially necessary repairs and general costs of the voyages were reported. Another point of their reports relates to detailed accounts of respective voyages and of special occurrences that had happened during the voyage, changes to the route due to special occurrences, and suggested, alternative or planned further destinations of the ships. Last but not least, the captains gave accounts of all the trading activities and loading procedures with regard to the ship at the ports and asked for confirmation, or they reported for instance goods that were offered to them personally, which impelled them to ask for further specifications or recommendations for merchant houses that they should address themselves to at the ports. All these different subjects in the letters shaped and characterised every captain's letter in the Luetkens archive, in a more or less detailed manner, being meticulously reported to the addressees of the letters. The reason for that reporting practice becomes rather clear, too. All these subjects ultimately reflected the major tasks and responsibilities, the rights, obligations and duties of captains for which they were held responsible and had to give account to the ship-owners during that time.[173]

These obligations include as contemporary maritime laws and regulations such as for instance the *Hamburg maritime ordinances*, "Der Stadt Hamburg Schiff= und See=Recht" in 1740 stated choosing the crew as well as caring for them "like a good housefather" ["gutter Hauß=Vater"], and it also included catering for them, hiring them, being their legal representative, and paying their wages. Furthermore, the captain was held responsible for the proper maintenance of the ship and its equipment, at the merchant's expense, including the care for and maintenance of the ropes and cables. He was also responsible, as the contemporary maritime laws and rules furthermore stipulated, for the selection and the examination of the most profitable cargo in accordance with the ship-owners' wishes, had to monitor the loading of the vessel, and do everything in his power for the rapid clearance of the ship in accordance with

171 See for instance the German letters by the experienced captain Johann Nagell in TNA, HCA 30/233, bundle 18.

172 See Witt, *Master next God*, 44-48.

173 See ibid., 38-48.

the wind conditions.[174] Put in a nutshell, the profession of a ship's captain came with great responsibilities. At the same time, he was under enormous pressure because as the skipper ["Schiffer"], which was a common term used in the Luetkens letters, he was always "obliged to act to the best of his abilities for the good and the advantage of the ship-owners" as stated in another contemporary source, Johann Andreas Engelbrecht's 1792 handbook *The Well-versed Skipper* (Der wohl unterwiesene Schiffer).[175]

This pressure is subsequently also reflected in the letters that have survived in the Luetkens archive, in which the ships' captains strikingly meticulously, almost painstakingly, list every matter or incident relating to the ship, its crew, its goods, and its directions because they had to justify each of these matters to the ship-owners. All these topics, information and fields of knowledge can be found in the captains' letters. The reason for the identical content of the letters therefore lay in the very nature of these letters and the purpose that they served. Ships' captains' letters in the end were *notification and report letters*, which were demanded and required from them by their employers, their superiors. It is therefore surely not surprising that we are today able to reconstruct and follow each step a ship's captain undertook with regard to his ship on the basis of these letters because this was precisely the intention underlying them, mirroring the interests that the ship-owners had in receiving these letters in the past. As stated for instance in Prussian maritime law in 1727, "A skipper is obliged to report to the ship-owners promptly and truly about all the important affairs regarding his voyage" and he was furthermore also obliged to explain and answer ["Rede und Antwort zu geben"] about any incident happening contrary to his orders or "to the detriment of his ship-owners", as the maritime law continued.[176] Therefore, in every harbour the ship's captain entered with his ship, a report was due: every new good loaded on the ship, every repair, every new rope bought for the ship, any complaints made by the crew, disputes, strikes or riots by the crew required a report to be sent, and the captain obliged. This is why we are today able to draw a worldwide temporal map on the basis of the letters, with comprehensive information about all the locations and the peculiarities of the shipping industry and trade happening along the way, which is just another indication and proof that ships' captains' letters are a very rich source for research.[177] Regarding the reliabil-

174 *Der Stadt Hamburg Schiff= und See=Recht.* Partis Secundae Statutorum. Tit. XIV Von Schiffern und Schiff-Volck, edited by Hermann Langenbeck in *Anmerckungen über das Hamburgische Schiff- und See-Recht*, 22-102. Hamburg: König, 1740, here *Ad Rubrum*, 23. See also "Schiffer, [...] Fr. Maître d'un Vaisseau; Holl. Schipper." *Oekonomische Encyklopädie*, edited by Johann Georg Krünitz. 242 volumes. Berlin, 1773-1858, vol. 143, 458-485. See Witt, *Master next God*, 37.

175 "Ein Schiffer ist schuldig seiner Rheder Bestes und Vortheil nach Vermögen zu befördern." Engelbrecht, Johann Andreas. *Der wohl unterwiesene Schiffer* [...]. Lübeck: Donatius, 1792, 5.

176 "Der Schiffer ist schuldig, auf der Reise von allen hauptsächlichen Vorfällen, so ihm in Ansehung des Schiffes begegnen [...] seinen Rhedern bey Zeiten behörige Nahricht zu ertheilen."*Königlich-Preußisches See-Recht (Prussian Maritime Law)*. Chapter IV, § 2 ("Vom Amt des Schiffers"), Königsberg: Hartung, 1727, edited by Reinhold Friderich von Sahme in *Einleitung zum See-Recht des Königreich Preußen, worinnen das Königliche Preußische See-Recht in einer richtigen Ordnung vorgestellet und erleutert wird*. Königsberg: Hartung, 1747, 14-15. See also "Schiffer." *Eroeffnete Akademie der Kaufleute*, edited by Carl Günther Ludovici, vol. 4, 1680-1702. Leipzig: Breitkopf, 1768.

177 Creating such a map using the project's metadata is one of goals of the Prize Papers Dataportal.

ity of the information given, the letters shared another remarkable feature. This feature was that the reports were in most cases double or even triple-checked.

First, the captains were bound to keep extensive logbooks and journals of their travels, which at the end of their travels or at the time that they arrived back at the home port of the ship-owners had to be presented to their employers, their patrons, as they were called by the contemporaries.[178] In the best-case scenario, the reports and statements in the letters corresponded with the information given in the logbooks and journals. Secondly, apart from the letters received and sent to their ship's captain, the merchants and ship-owners naturally also corresponded with the local merchants in the respective ports. From these they gathered further information about their ships, its goods, and last but not least of course also about the actions and the reliability of their captain and his word. The merchants established a very dense information and safety net around their enterprises and their employees, which, by implication, forced the captains to be precise in their reports, stick to the facts and speak the truth about their voyages. Extensive reports about stubborn worm infestations of the ship planks, about superb or bad qualities of ropes, reports about adventurous escapes from enemy attacks or reports about incidents actually had a very concrete and serious background. All these reports served the purpose of informing the ship-owners about the events surrounding the journeys of their ships, and justified delays or additional costs incurred for the ship. To give just one example of this, in summer 1745 an anchor fell on captain Johann Nagel's foot. The doctor's bill for the treatment of Nagel's foot reached the merchant Luetkens, who had to pay for it, in one of the captain's letters as an enclosed inlay, with comments about it in the letter.[179] Each and every piece of information in the letters therefore was important and not arbitrarily chosen. It was all very consciously selected and put on paper – and the same fact also applied to the ways and means that these items of information were transmitted to their addressees in particular ways. The letters were written in a particular style and tone, which also did not happen randomly. Again, the letter writers adhered to certain rules and patterns of procedure following a clear order and system with a clearly definable practical functionality, a concrete way of functioning of ship's captain's letters to their patrons.

For the purpose of clarity and conciseness, the ships' captains' letters as well as the response letters from the ship-owners are characterised by a unique language register mobilised during the letter exchanges. This contemporary language register turned these letters into very effective tools of agreement procedures, order processing and trade execution. By means of the letters' specific language, the letter became the key site of the practice of placing, receiving and implementing orders in the sea business. The register was characterised by very concrete and simple language and prose that in many cases furthermore drew on a clearly defined repertoire of phrases, terminologies

178 "Derjenige, welchem ein Schiff eigenthümlich zugehört, oder welcher dasselbe auch nur gemiethet, und alle Einkünfte davon zu genießen hat, heißt der Herr oder Patron des Schiffes." "Kauffahrdey." *Oekonomische Encyklopädie*, edited by Johann Georg Krünitz. 242 volumes. Berlin, 1773-1858, vol. 36, 470-478. See chapter in shipping business.

179 Nagel's *doctor's bill* can be found still enclosed in his letter in TNA, HCA 30/233, bundle 18.

and modes of expression. We find specific letter formulae used to transmit the respective information.

In contrast to other letter types, these formulae, as becomes obvious in the letters, were not primarily determined by written rules but ultimately by well-practiced common rules of practice in sea business. That is, as regards many of the aforementioned topics of ships' captains' letters, the skipper always used the same or similar phrases, letter formulae, language and terminologies, and this happened to such a great and noticeable extent that we can surely derive from it another major identifying characteristic feature of ships' captains' letters during the 18th century. Thus, the fourth and last distinguishing feature of captains' letters was a strong similarity in terms of style, prose, expressions, terminologies and phrases, in short, in the letter formulae used.[180] These strong resemblances sometimes make reading these letters rather monotonous. However, the decisive fact in this regard is that it was precisely this consistent, uniform language style that made these letters effective. In fact, the monotony ultimately was a necessary, integral part of the letters and showed that everything was in order and going according to plan.

To a certain extent, the language style of captain's letters represented nothing less than an extension or a transmission of the typical language prevailing on board the ships of the era to the medium letter. This language was a "language of technical necessity, a language remarkable for its terseness and accuracy", as a contemporary observer noted, which served a very practical purpose.[181] As Marcus Rediker brilliantly put it, the benefit of the maritime language was its "lack of ambiguity. Each object and action had a word or phrase – short, clear, and unmistakable – to designate it."[182] Therefore, misunderstandings were prevented and the smooth running of the workflow and processes on board were best ensured. Exactly the same lack of ambiguity was subsequently also indispensable for the letters exchanged by the ship's captain with his ship-owners, which also had the aim to be as unambiguous and unequivocal as possible. The reason for the fourth distinctive feature of ships' captains' letters was therefore once again clear: The common usage of a similar style, prose and letter formulae for similar purposes, used and naturally mobilised by all persons involved and active in the field of the shipping industry, as part of a clearly defined and mutually intelligible language register, served the purpose of providing and ensuring unambiguous conditions and clarification in order to guarantee clear order implementation. It ensured that all parties involved understood correctly the meaning of the respective words and letter sentences. It ensured that all the orders, confirmations, questions, problems evolving, and solutions offered, were understood by all parties, and it enabled people to react appropriately and act accordingly. These sentences were widely known in the field of seafaring for representing

180 Regarding the usage of letter formulae in Early Modern letters in general, based on research on the Prize Papers, see the fascinating project represented in the book Van der Wal/Rutten. *Letters as Loot.* Regarding letter formulae in merchant letters and in parts also in ships' captains' letters, see Van der Wal. "Early Modern Migrants." See Lamikiz, "Basque Ship Captains." See Rediker, *Devil and the Deep Blue Sea*, 163-164.

181 Parry, John H. "Sailors' English." *The Cambridge Journal* 2 (1948/9): 660-70, here 662.

182 Rediker, *Devil and the Deep Blue Sea*, 163.

certain commitments, which people could rely on or refer to. Therefore, in a nutshell, the "the oft-lamented formulaic prose and repetitive content of [such] business letters account for their effectiveness", as Francesca Trivellato aptly described it, or as Rediker put it, this "efficiency of seafaring language" was crucial in the field of the sea business in which "maritime speech ordered social relations."[183]

This formality, at the same time, must not be mistaken for or confused with distance or a lack of personal closeness or appreciation in the relationship between the letter writers.[184] Quite on the contrary, the letters often show an immense degree of personal closeness, connection and trust between the ship's captain and the ship-owners, also mirrored in the tone and the form of addressing each other in the letters. Therefore, the "formularity is by no means an argument against the honesty and righteousness" of these letters and their words, as Heiko Droste noted for letters of diplomats, too.[185] On the contrary, the fact that people trusted in each other's words and formulae is proof of the sincerity of these letters. This fact becomes especially clear when we compare the ships' captains' letters, as *notification and report letters*, with similar kinds of letters examples in the contemporary letter-writing manuals. The prevailing logic and style of writing shown in these example letters, as for instance apparent in respective examples in the merchant letter manual *Der allzeitfertige Handels-Correspondent* by Paul Jakob Marperger, Hamburg 1717, or Jean Puget de la Serre's *Fatsoenlicke Zendbrief-Schrijver* ["Decent letter writer"], demonstrating appropriate ways of communication between superiors or patrons and their subordinates, was that the subordinates had to prove and demonstrate their humbleness, their subordination, submissiveness and loyalty to their superiors by using clearly defined letter-writing strategies, signs and methods underpinning their subordinate position. These include for instance the choice of good paper and well-placed blank spaces on the paper. The spacing mattered because in Early Modern letters the degree of subservience was expressed by means of blank spaces ranging from two-fingers up to two-hands wide left between the salutation and the text because "space denoted deference".[186]

The strategies also included the choice of an appropriate style of writing to showing their submissive and deferential attitude through expressions of humbleness and gratitude, which becomes most apparent in the appropriate choice of the salutation form and the valediction of a letter.[187] A typical example of such a salutation form was for

183 Trivellato, "Merchants' letters," 84. Rediker, *Devil and the Deep Blue Sea*, 164.

184 See also with a focus on comparable letters in a comparable field of activity, namely the field of diplomacy, Droste, Heiko. "Briefe als Medium symbolischer Kommunikation." In *Ordnung und Distinktion. Praktiken sozialer Repräsentation in der ständischen Gesellschaft*, edited by Marian Füssel und Thomas Weller, 239-256. Münster: Rhema, 2005, here 242. See also Droste, Heiko. *Im Dienst der Krone. Schwedische Diplomaten im 17. Jahrhundert*. Münster: LIT, 2006.

185 "Formelhaftigkeit [muss] kein Argument gegen deren Aufrichtigkeit sein, denn daß sie in topischen Ausdrücken geschrieben wurden, besagt ja nicht, dass sie individuell empfunden wurden." Droste, "Briefe als Medium," 242.

186 See Daybell, "Material Meanings", 655-659, quote 655

187 See also Daybell, "Material Meanings", 655-659, quote 655. See in general Daybell, *The Material Letter*. See Furger, *Briefsteller*, 101, 116.

instance "Honoured, well-decent, very highly regarded and very willing Patron, obediently owing you this letter I report […]."[188] Turning to the real ships' captains' letters in the Luetkens archive, however, the examples show that in day-to-day common practice the interaction and letter-writing practice largely omitted these regularities but rather adhered to its own rules of conduct. The paper chosen ultimately depended on the situation which a ship's captain found himself in and the sources of supply he could use. The blank spaces as signs of respect were omitted completely; instead, the captains used every inch of space available on the paper to make their reports. The form of address ranges from "Myn heer", which stands for "Sir", to "Ehrsame Herr Priensepahl" or "Patron", to "Geerde werte Patron: Salut" or "Myn hoog estimeerde heer", which Noordstern used and which stood for "My esteemed Sir".[189] The ending phrase is reduced to the bare essentials, a two or single-line declaration of deference. The remarkable thing is that, subsequently, in none of Luetkens' responses are any complaints about the writing habits of his captains to be found. This is tantamount to an approval of this type of correspondence. Moreover, the merchant's letters even resemble the ships' captains' letters in style. Luetkens himself chose, in his responses, the salutation form my "Esteemed Skipper" ["Ehrsame Schiper"].[190] He deliberately wrote in an egalitarian manner. His usage of ending phrases went even further in this manner, saying "with friendly salutations I remain your good friend" ["dat naer vryndelyke salutatie verblyffe zyn goede vryndt"] or "after wishing you good travels I remain" ["naer anwensching van een behouden Reyse soo verblyffe"].[191] Respecting the seamen's language, he also responded in High Dutch or Low German. The tone in both the ships' captains' letters and Luetkens' letters is furthermore often very complaisant, cooperative and respectful. The letters reflect a certain degree of familiarity between the correspondents. The writers knew each other well, they maintained regular contact with each other's families, they worried about each other's health, which was of course generally a very valuable asset and important to ships' captains.

188 "Edler, Wohl-Ehrenvester, insonders hochzuehrender Herr, und sehr geneigter Patron, demselben füge hiemiet gehorsamst zu wissen […]." Marperger, *Der allzeitfertige Handels-Correspondent*, 706. Similar letter formulae can be found in Dutch letter writing manuals such as Serre, Jean Puget de la. *Fatsoenlicke Zend-brief-Schrijver*. Amsterdam: Jacob Benjamin, 1654. Anonymous. *Materi-boecxken, oft voorschriften / seer bequaem voor die Joncheyt / om wel te leeren lesen / schryven / ende een aenporringhe tot alle deuchden*. Utrecht: Harman Hendricks van Borculo, 1614. Jacobi, H. *Ghemeyne zeyndt-brieven* […]. Hoorn: Isaac Willemsz, 1645. For a detailed analysis of these manuals see Van der Wal, Marijke, and Rutten, Gijsbert. "The Practice of Letter Writing: Skills, Models, and Early Modern Dutch Manuals." *Language and History* 56, no. 1 (2013): 18-32. See also Van Gelder, Roelof. *Zeepost: Nooit bezorgde brieven uit de 17de en 18de eeuw*. Amsterdam: Olympus, 2010, 13, 27.

189 See ship's captain letters in TNA, HCA 30/233, Bundle 18.

190 See for instance letter from Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb to Nagell, Johan, September 20, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/232, Letter Book I, no. 315.

191 Quote from Luetkens' original letters found among captain Rieweert Frereck's, captain of the *Hope*, personal belongings and therefore used as pieces of evidence in court: Letter from Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb to Frerecks, Rieweert, December 16, 1744, TNA, HCA 32/115/14. Quote from original letter sent back to Luetkens by his captain Cornelissen enclosed in a letter: Letter from Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb to Cornelissen, Andreas, June 28, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/233.

In letters exchanged amongst merchants themselves, the ships' captains were furthermore always referred to as "our captains" and statements in which the captains were praised for their actions can frequently be found, such as for instance referring to "our Nagell, who is the most honest among all our captains" or skipper Paatz, a trusted man "with good courage" ["guthe Courage"].[192] We can also find letters exchanged amongst merchants in which the merchants strongly defended and made a stand for their ships' captains against insults from the outside, using sometimes very drastic language as was also common in regular business correspondence as we have learned in the chapter on commission trade. So, Luetkens would for instance write to Luttman & von Bobartt defending his own skipper Giessel against another skipper, who had voiced certain complaints about Giessel, that this other skipper would be a fob ["allter Geck"] and a fool ["alte Narren"] and a "chicken" ["Hosenscheyser"], who "only talks rubbish" ["weiß nicht was er babelt"].[193] Such harsh words were furthermore, similarly to the language register of business and trade in general, a typical occurrence in correspondences between captains and merchants and therefore an integral part of the language register in the sea business. The latter was primarily due to the simple fact that a crucial part of the "unmistakable way of talking" of Early Modern seamen, apart from the usage of "technical terms, unusual syntax, distinctive pronunciation", was made up by a "generous portion of swearing and cursing."[194]

All these striking features demonstrate that the relationship between ships' captains and their ship-owners was far more than a mere employment relationship because we notice the important role of mutual appreciation as a sign of mutual dependency and trust. These features therefore do not bear witness to a lack of respect but very much the opposite. They show that for these kinds of letters common gestures of humbleness and usual, customary forms of subservience in letters were not necessary. This was because the letters were obviously already part of and representative of a social relationship structure or rather a system in which respect, humbleness, hierarchy, dependency and deference were simply obvious, integral, already certain and obligatory, so that there was no need to further underpin it. Quite on the contrary, it would have been rather odd and suspicious if suddenly blank spaces had occurred in the letters. So, the presumed lack of humble gestures was in fact precisely a sign of strong mutual respect because all parties concerned were agreeable with abstaining from such material gestures because their mutual respect was simply a fixed and established fact and beyond question for these parties concerned right from the start.

5.7 Patronage in the Sea Business

The particular relationship between ship's captain and ship-owner, the relational structure in which the captains' letters become understandable to us and for which their

192 Letter from Hertzer & von Bobartt to Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, June 29, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/234.

193 Letter from Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb to Luttman & von Bobartt, March 12, 1745, TNA, HCA 30/232, Letter Book I, no. 525.

194 Rediker, *Devil and the Deep Blue Sea*, 11.

form and style was representative, was no mere "employment relationship, it was far more a trust relationship" as stated in the contemporary *Gemeinfaßliche Darstellung des europäischen Seerechts*. In other words, it took the form of a *patronage relationship*.[195] This form of relationship was quite common during the entire Early Modern Period.[196] Interestingly, it traversed the estate-based society of the period, providing the opportunity for a dependency relationship amongst different societal groups that were different in their social status, their rights and opportunities but that were nonetheless directly and mutually dependent on each other for the purpose of professional cooperation for instance in business or academia.[197] Thus, the superiors were just as dependent on the help and goodwill of their subordinates as their subordinates were on them, and patronage was still a very accepted and socially acknowledged form of social interaction during that time. In fact, this "rather natural form of social interaction" during the Early Modern Period provided an appropriate way to react and answer to the challenges of an increasing professionalisation of society during the era.[198] Patronage in the end was a practice based on a "dynamic interpersonal mesh of mutual recognition, of mutual validity claims, that could be ascertained, acknowledged or [even] rejected" and therefore it sustained the societal hierarchy that shaped the order of the time.[199] The latter also explains and serves as the reason why patronage relationships during the period often produced and were shaped by their own ways of communication and were characterised by a language of their own, in short, why particular language registers evolved specifically for patronage relationships.[200]

Precisely such a dynamic interpersonal mesh of mutual recognition is represented in the ships' captains' letters of the Luetkens correspondence. The mutual apprecia-

195 "Ueberhaupt ist das Verhältnis zwischen Capitaen und Rheder weniger ein Dienstverhältnis, als vielmehr ein Verhältnis des Vertrauens." *Gemeinfaßliche Darstellung des Europäischen Seerechts, insond. der Havarie, Assekuranz und Bodmerei*, edited "von einem praktischen Juristen". Hamburg: Perthes-Besser, 1853, here 18. See Witt, *Master next God*, 42. "Diese Art von Netzwerken läßt sich am ehesten mit dem Begriff Patronage umschreiben. Sie stellte ein grundlegendes Charakteristikum [der Beziehung dar] […] und beruhte auf dem Geflechte von gegenseitigen Beziehungen und der persönlichen Verbindung zu höhergestellten Persönlichkeiten, die sich für treue Dienste und Loyalität durch Gunsterweisungen und Belohnungen erkenntlich zeigten." Ibid., 243.

196 See Kettering, Sharon. "Patronage in Early Modern France." *French Historical Studies* 17, no. 4 (1992): 839-863. See Jancke, Gabrielle. "Patronagebeziehungen in autobiographischen Schriften des 16. Jahrhunderts – Individualisierungsweisen?" In *Selbstzeugnisse in der Frühen Neuzeit. Individualisierungsweisen in interdisziplinärer Perspektive*, edited by Kaspar von Greyerz and Elisabeth Müller-Luckner, 13-31. Munich: Oldenbourg 2007. See in particular Droste, Heiko. "Patronage in der Frühen Neuzeit: Institution und Kulturform." *Zeitschrift für Historische Forschung* 30, no. 4 (2003): 555-590. See Droste, *Im Dienst der Krone*, 249-286. See Fitzmaurice, *The Familiar Letter*, 129-174.

197 See ibid., however, particularly Droste, "Patronage," 555-590.

198 See Jancke, "Patronagebeziehungen," 24.

199 See Füssel, Marian, and Thomas Weller. "Einleitung." In *Ordnung und Distinktion. Praktiken sozialer Repräsentation in der ständischen Gesellschaft*, edited by Marian Füssel und Thomas Weller, 9-22. Münster: Rhema, 2005, 11. Translation by the author.

200 See Saller, Richard P. *Personal Patronage Under the Early Empire*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1982 [2009], chapter 1, "The language and ideology of patronage," 7-39. See Droste, "Patronage," particularly 558-560. See also Ditz, "Shipwrecked," 72. See also Fitzmaurice, *The Familiar Letter*, chapter "Epistolary acts of seeking and dispensing patronage," 129- 174.

tion was in this regard not static, but always anew mutually agreed on, requested, put to a test, confirmed or rejected. Further key elements of patronage relationships, as Gabrielle Jancke has convincingly shown, were the personal character of the relationship and the exchange of resources despite the general social inequality. In the case of the ships' captains, this becomes revealingly obvious with regard to the rights and remedies of the captains outlined above. In return, people in patronage relationship received the benefits of "care, protection, encouragement and support, social appreciation, guidance, [and sometimes even] love", which were, except for the latter, all benefits that the ships' captains, too, enjoyed through their relationship with the ship-owner.[201]

Basically, the only difference between patronage in the sea business and patronage in other social contexts, such as Early Modern academia or diplomacy, is that in the latter fields the often long-term relationships, as a fourth characteristic of patronage, forgo and worked without any forms of legal obligations. In the sea business, however, the patronage relationship was bound to legal obligations on both sides of the relationship.[202] Consequently, the ship-owners had to pay their ships' captains for their services and the ships' captains had to provide good service.[203] Otherwise, the captains could get fired instantaneously and without further ado.[204] Therefore, the power balance in patronage relationships within the sea business was very unequal and the ship-owners definitely remained in control at all times. This is why we can in the end only talk of a special form of patronage in the sea business and not of a patronage relationship in its more general sense. However, the importance and significance of such patronage relationships in the sea business was still given because, no matter how clear the hierarchy and power imbalance was, the ship-owners still highly depended on their ships' captains' skills and capabilities. As Simon P. Ville put it, the "shipmaster's contribution to the success of a venture was of critical importance. His responsibilities form an exception to the normal concentration of ownership and control", and therefore Ville speaks of the 18th and 19th century ship's captain as an "early development of a form of salaried managerial class, albeit heterogenous."[205]

It is certain that the ships' captains were granted an immense leap of faith by their employers as they were equipped with an immense power of disposition and trust and given plenty of room for manoeuvre. To give another quote from the *Prussian Maritime Law* of 1747, in the sea business' hierarchy at least the ship's captain and his significance ranked directly below the ship-owner as the person who was appointed by the ship-owner to be in charge of the ship, the "navigation, loading" as well as the "custody

201 "Fürsorge, Versorgung, Schutz, Förderung und Unterstützung, Würdigung, Gesellschaft, Beratung, Liebe." Jancke, "Patronagebeziehungen," 22.

202 Ibid., 21. See also Saller, *Personal Patronage*, 1.

203 For the legal obligations, see Witt, *Master next God*, 36-40. *Der Stadt Hamburg Schiff= und See=Recht*. 22-102, particularly 23. See also "Schiffer," *Oekonomische Encyklopädie*, 458-485.

204 Witt, *Master next God*, 37.

205 Ville, *English Shipowning*, 68.

["reign"] of the mariners".[206] He was therefore a mediator, a "middleman"[207] between his crew and the ship-owner, between purchaser and seller, and ultimately the executive organ of the merchant's business, and if he had proven himself worthy and capable of his tasks, there was a high probability that he would stay in this position for many years. As we know from many cases, including Luetkens' and his ships' captains', the relationships between ship-owning merchants and captains sometimes represented the most durable of relationships in this otherwise often unstable field of business.[208] The key element and core property of patronage relationships, the personal component, therefore was valid and effective also in the sea business. The people sharing such a relationship cultivated a culture of "mutual solidarity, appreciation and mutual recognition of authority" and professional qualifications, which was "realized through social practices", such as letter-writing practice, and based on trust, respect and qualification.[209] The relationship between both parties created a form of relational practice "on the basis of mutual recognition", which again made it necessary and therefore included certain "different, ritualized forms and patterns of action" stabilising the relationship.[210]

We can ultimately also consider the usage of the typified, routinely used expressions, words and phrases, namely the letter formulae, that the ships' captains and their addressees used and drew on in their letters as precisely such ritualised or, rather, routinised forms of actions, that is, as concrete practices. This brings us back to the fourth characteristic feature of the ships' captains' letters in the Luetkens archive and of the language register in sea business, which can now be furthermore described as a language register of patronage. The similar phrases in the letters therefore must be regarded as important carriers and vehicles of the stabilisation and ongoing confirmation of the patronage relationship in the sea business because both parties, ships' captains and merchants, that is, the ship-owners, knew and relied on the effectiveness of these common sets of phrases and words and also relied on the mutual comprehension of these written utterances. The important thing was therefore that the letter writers also suited their actions to the words, which decided the future of the respective enterprise and the relationship. When we direct our focus to these letter formulae and their usage in the next part and analyse their meaning and effect as part of the language register of patronage in the sea business, we will recognise the actual power of these written utterances and their far-reaching consequences for the people writing or receiving them. In the end, as will become obvious, the language register of patronage in the sea business and its typical phrases, terminologies and formulations represented the grid on which the actual functional capability of the whole system rested. It will become apparent that these letter phrases or even single words were far from being only hollow forms

206 "Wissenschaft haben, ein Schiff zu führen und zu steuern, zu laden […] und das Volck anzuführen und zu regieren." *Königlich-Preußisches See-Recht (Prussian Maritime Law)*. Chapter IV, § 2 ("Vom Amt des Schiffers"), 14.

207 Lamikiz, "Basque Ship Captains," 105.

208 See Witt, *Master next God*, 256.

209 Jancke, "Patronage-beziehungen," 27. Translation by the author.

210 Ibid., 26.

or empty phrases, as they might appear at first glance, but that they were basically the actual lubricant keeping the whole seafaring business running.

All four typical major characteristic features of ships' captains' letters are present in the letters discussed in the letter episode of this chapter. The letters were written on rough paper, reaching the addressee separately or as parts of letter packets sealed in the tuck-and-seal method. They were written in Dutch or Low German because the insurance company was Dutch and because Noordstern wrote all of his letters in the seafarers' language, even though he had a wife in Bremen. The letters also report, reproduce and include several of the typical contents of captains' letters. And last but not least they heavily drew on a typical repertoire of letter formulae, common phrases used in ships' captains' letters representing the language register of patronage in sea business. In order to further explain the practical functioning of these letters, the way these letters were used for negotiation and persuasion, and finally to be able to explain how business matters were managed and got done in this episode on the basis and with the help of these letters, particularly the last feature is highly helpful and significant. This is why I will analyse it in further detail in the next part, providing the explanation and an analysis of how these letters not only helped but stipulated and made it possible that the plan to send a ship to the Mediterranean Sea in the end turned out to be successful for all involved parties against all odds and despite the fears that stood in the way of such an endeavour.

5.8 Letters as Material Affirmations

In the letters exchanged between captain Noordstern, the merchant and ship-owner Nicolaus Gottlieb Luetkens and his trading partners in Hamburg and Lisbon, we encounter numerous words and expressions, which can be identified as set phrases and letter formulae, that were rather typical for the correspondence of ships' captains, appearing in many captains' letters during the time. This statement is based not only on references to the many letters in the Luetkens archive but goes beyond that by including examples in letter-writing manuals or letters in other languages. When comparing the Luetkens letters for instance with letters of Basque ships' captains that Xabier Lamikiz has examined we encounter strinking parallels.[211] These typical phrases, translated from Dutch, are "I am writing to inform you that", you can "count on", "I hereby promise that", "would you be so kind", I have "done my best" and I "do not doubt that [this will help]".[212]

In the first instance, the reader might be inclined to assume behind these phrases and formulations certain structural elements that served the purpose of framing the

211 Lamikiz, "Basque Ship Captains"; *Trade and Trust*. As another very comparable source collection see also Gaspar, Renaat J.G.A.A. *De Doesburgse Brievencollectie 1777-1821*. Depot – Museum van Communicatie te 's-Gravenhage. Digital Collection P.J. Meertens Instituut te Amsterdam, Transcriptions by R. Gaspar, http://www.diachronie.nl/corpora/pdf/doesburg/de_doesburgse_brievencollectie.pdf, accessed August 24, 2018.

212 See letters quoted in the episode.

actually important content of the letters. It might appear to the reader as if this formulae served as a kind of template, a specified grid, which the ships' captains simply used to structure their reports, since the phrases can be found very often, obviously shaping many of the ships' captains' letters. This assessment in many ways definitely holds true. However, the significance of these phrases in fact goes far beyond the mere value of representing structural elements, which becomes apparent when we take into consideration the effects of these phrases and words in the course of the respective letter conversation and within the negotiation process presented in the previous part of the chapter. Furthermore, this assumption hardens when we look at how the respective receivers and the other letter writers reacted to these phrases. Looking at the whole letter episode regarding the ship *Commercium* from a bird's eye perspective, it quickly becomes clear that in fact these phrases themselves must be seen as the crucial carriers and milestones shaping the respective course of the conversation, of course in combination with the further content of these letter. The latter fact can be subsumed in this regard under a term which again was rather typical in ships' captains' letters: *dispute*.

To a certain extent it is even possible to claim that looking at these phrases alone allows us to relatively accurately reconstruct and retrace the course of the negotiations taking place in the episode. Reading only the phrases one after another, it is almost as if we are reading a kind of pattern and action script, providing us with insights into the events accompanying the planning of the journey of the ship *Commercium* to the Mediterranean Sea in 1744 and the events surrounding the dispute the captain was confronted with by his crew regarding this voyage. With this observation, in turn, we have arrived at the point of the actual significance of these phrases within the practice of letter writing and correspondence performed by the ships' captains and their addressees. The phrases, the letter formulae, represent far more than a template or embellishment. In fact, they actually must have represented an important integral part of the information transmitted via the letters because they decidedly not only structured but also gave meaning to the respective statements and contents transmitted via the letters. Strictly speaking, these phrases represented the parts through which the letter writers became actively involved in what was happening within the correspondence circle, that is, they used them as the main tools to take direct influence on their addressees, to encourage or approve, try to correct or reject the actions of the opposite side.

Making promises, making concessions, making compliments, or accepting offers, which were the actions represented by the word phrases, was never only about exchanging information, it was always also about sending out unequivocal messages with regard to this information and also about taking concrete actions with regard to this information. In fact, putting these phrases on paper did not even only delineate these actions, but in fact, to a certain extent, the letter writers actually performed these actions by the sheer act of writing them. They basically took action the moment the ink was applied to the paper because those were the moments the respective actions were unambiguously solidified and materialised in the letter and materially attested. At the same time, it becomes clear how the letter writers became actually capable of acting on the basis of their letters. In modern sociology, there is an apt term and concept describing such forms of utterances that were performative, these moments of taking action only by means of linguistic utterances. It is the sociolinguistic concept of *speech acts* by Austin

and Searle, which, speaking of historiography, was successfully tested and applied in historical research already by Quentin Skinner and Susan Fitzmaurice.[213]

Speech acts are defined as performative utterances that perform an action at the moment they are spoken or, as in our case with regard to historical letters, as they were written down.[214] Thus, this term precisely reflects the processes happening in the episode with regard to the letter phrases. Relating to the ships' captains' letters analysed and especially to the letter formulae used in the correspondence between the captain and the ship-owners and merchant, there is no more apt description to describe the processes taking place in the letters. Such kinds of speech acts in the form of common patterns and letter phrases used in one's correspondence most certainly formed the basis, influenced and shaped nearly every letter and negotiation process taking place in the correspondences between merchants and ships' captains. By performing actions on the basis of the letter phrases, which in turn resulted in follow-up actions, which again led to and were followed up by other letter phrases, the actual negotiation practice in the letter episode took place. These phrases clearly facilitated the actions taken in the letters and as part of the course of the negotiation.

How this practice worked in concrete terms, that is, how the phrases and letter formulae were used in practice by the contemporaries as directives or handling instructions, becomes directly apparent and understandable when we follow the events surrounding the ship *Commercium* and its way to the Mediterranean Sea, which can be recaptured in a nutshell simply by listing certain phrases from selected letters of the negotiation process in consecutive order. Since the whole episode consists of more than 20 letters in total, I have limited the selection to the most significant letters during the negotiation process. In a second step we then add to the table the respective speech acts these phrases stood for and the responses and effects that these performative acts led to during the course of the letter conversation. The following table provides an overview in this regard. From this table, it becomes apparent how the phrases and letter formulae, and the respective meanings and effects of the performed speech acts, not only structured the events of this episode but apparently created and shaped the course of action in the letter conversation in the first place.

213 See Austin, *How to Do Things with Words*; Searle, *Speech Acts*. See Skinner, "Interpretation." See Fitzmaurice, *The Familiar Letter.* See Skinner, Quentin. "Hermeneutics and the Role of History." *New Literary History* 7, no. 1, (Critical Challenges: The Bellagio Symposium) (1975): 209-232. See Skinner, Quentin. "Conventions and the Understanding of Speech Acts." *The Philosophical Quarterly* 20 (1979): 118-38.

214 See Austin, *How to Do Things with Words*, 4-6. See Skinner, "Lectures," 647-654, particularly 650. See Skinner, "Hermeneutics," 210-212, 221. See Fitzmaurice, *The Familiar Letter*, 11, 28-29, 31, 57.

Historical speech acts in letters between ships' captains and merchant ship-owners.

Letter writer **Letter exchange**	**Letter phrase** **Letter formulae in bold**	**Speech act**	**Context & Effects**
Noordstern – Luetkens	"**Dese dient** om E.E. […] **bekend te maken**" *I am writing to inform you that*	reporting (the status quo)	attending to one's duty: giving a report
Luetkens – Noordstern	"waer an **niet twyffelle**" *which I do not doubt*	hinting (at a given opportunity)	call for action
	"waer op hie **stadt kann maken**" *you can count on* "de **verseekering geeven […] woord ock conten sein**" *promise / trust in the words*	giving assurance; pledging help and support; providing securities	pledging support and security
Luetkens – Luttman & von Bobartt – Voight, Walter & Sieveking	"wen die **Güttigkeit wollen haben**" *be so kind*	making a binding request	call for action
Noordstern – Luetkens	"Waer ordre ick met myn Volk **despuet heb gehad**" *had a dispute*	offering an excuse; giving a broad hint	Signal word: "dispute"; justifying actions
Luetkens – Noordstern	"daer hie nuen in nantes reets soo vell **disput mett syn volck gehad** soo **soll hett well in Lissabon niet beetern** in Spetie alls sie sien hett naer de midlanse Zee toe mosten." *It will most likely not go any better*	showing understanding making a concession	proposing an alternative
	"also **dient deesen** alls de fracht noch niet op daer is angenoomen. Datt hie maer op allerspedigst mett Ballast kan op hier coomen." *This serves the purpose*		

Historical speech acts in letters between ships' captains and merchant ship-owners, part 2.

Letter writer **Letter exchange**	**Letter phrase** **Letter formulae in bold**	**Speech act**	**Context & Effects**
Noordstern – Luetkens	"haer **myn vermogen daer toe** heb doen" *done my best*	showing initiative; indicating success; confirmation of a breakthrough	performance of duty; attending to one's duty; expressing one's gratitude
	"**niet twyfle** of hett is ciküer genoeg" *I do not doubt*		
Voight, Walther & Sieveking – Hertzer & von Bobartt – Luetkens	"wy gratuleeren aen E.E. daerto" *we congratulate*	Complimenting; confirming assistance	confirmation (of a successful deal); provide help & assistance for the further handling
	"in all assisteeren" *we will assist*		
	"eene **extra schoone Vraght** gevonden" *extra nice cargo*		

5.9 The Practice of Reading Letters out Loud

The true effectiveness of the speech acts in the analysed correspondence and their importance relating to dealing with the challenges of the shipping industry becomes visible particularly at one specific point in the correspondence, which obviously was also the defining moment and turning point of the whole episode. This key moment was when captain Noordstern reported in his letter that he had "read aloud" the written promise of the merchant Luetkens to his crew, in which the ship-owner assured his captain that he and his crew would be ransomed from the Ottomans if they were to fall victim to an Ottoman privateering raid. According to Noordstern's report and his opinion, this approach, namely this practice of reading aloud the material promise, had finally given the decisive impetus for him to be able to convince his crew to sail with him. It was therefore the key to the conviction process. At this point of the conversation, we can observe how a single letter materialised a promise turned into a letter of attorney for the ship-owner and thus represented a powerful instrument and means of persuasion. To be precise, considering the way Noordstern made use of this letter in the harbour of Lisbon by reading it out to his crew, it can be said that we can legitimately speak of the letter as serving as an actual material substitute of the ship-owner, which in this way formed the basis of negotiation and justification of the ship's captain for winning over his crew for the plan of sailing to the Mediterranean Sea. This situation very vividly demonstrates the efficacy and practical way of how concrete speech acts functioned within the practice of letter writing and within correspondence, becoming all the more effective through the combination of the practice with a second similarly

popular practice of the Early Modern Period, which was reading letters aloud to others.[215]

By means of this combination, the letter and its message reached those people who were not able to read, which shows how the effectiveness of using speech acts in letters actually had a far wider reach than just the group of people who were able to read and write as it even included illiterate groups. The episode shows how speech acts were actually used in captains' letters and it shows us at the same time how important and far-reaching the opportunities and effects provided by the letters and their historical speech acts ultimately were for the people who used them, as they provided the historical actors with wide-ranging powers of attorney or, speaking more generally, with the actual power to act.

Concomitant to this, the case demonstrates the far-reaching powers and the scope of action to react to certain local circumstances, with a certain necessary room for manoeuvre, with which the captains were provided in the sea business during that time. From the merchant's perspective, on the other hand, it becomes apparent how crucial the captain was for his ship-owner in his role as a mediator between him and the crews on his ships and how crucial a certain degree of making concessions was in order to get plans implemented. Notwithstanding this, most generally, the letters still show that the merchants never completely handed over or gave up control over the overall operation to their ship's captain.[216] As becomes obvious, during the whole negotiation, Luetkens basically kept things firmly under his control, only allowing such a degree of goodwill as was necessary and conducive for implementing his plans. The hierarchy prevailing in the patronage relationship between him and Noordstern was therefore not undermined. Quite on the contrary, the episode demonstrates how the patronage relationship prevailing in this relationship was in fact skilfully used for the purpose of implementing and putting into practice his plans and the whole enterprise.

The power and rules of a patronage represented the necessary and crucial framework which provided Luetkens with the absolute certainty that Noordstern would comply with his orders and tasks. The idea was that the more room and freedom Noordstern was given to exercise his personal responsibilities, the more pressure Noordstern was then ultimately under to be successful in his undertakings. The power of persuasion as it was applied and performed in these letters therefore becomes apparent in this episode not only with regard to Noordstern convincing his crew but furthermore with regard to Luetkens, who had in fact planned and arranged for this moment to happen well in advance. In order to give evidence for this assumption, we simply have to take another look at the concrete words of Noordstern and relate them to the words and actions, and various negotiation strategies, pursued by Luetkens in the run-up to the situation, with which we will enter the final stage and finishing straight of this chapter.

215 See Earle, "Introduction," (in *Epistolary Selves*), 7. See Whyman, *Pen and the People*, 72. See Ditz, "Formative Ventures," 70. Furger, *Briefsteller*, 137.

216 See Witt, *Master next God*, 37-38.

5.10 Making Firm Promises

Captain Noordstern's original lines read as follows: "I offered a cargo to Venice, wherefore I have done my best to convince my crew to sail with me in which I succeeded except for two or three mariners who have left the ship, but this should not break the game ["Spel niet sal breeken"]. I have read out [aloud] to them the conditions that E.E. had sent me regarding the insurance on our life against the Turkish Threat and I do not doubt that it is safe enough ["cikür genoeg"] on which the Almighty God should give us his favour."[217] The promise that Noordstern refers to can be found in Luetkens' preceding letter, in which he wrote that "if this [...] works out ["gluken"], your ship-owners will procure the insurance for you as the captain and for your crew ["Volck"] against the Turkish Threat, on which you can count ["hie stadt kann maken"] and you can give the crew the assurance that the ship-owners will keep their word" ["woord ock content sein"].[218]

The crew subsequently agreed to sail to Mediterranean Sea on the basis of this material promise and assurance in the letter. Consequently, the promise was materialised in the notarial certificate issued by the Hamburg vice-consul in Lisbon, and all problems were solved in the end. From this quote and situation, it becomes unambiguously clear how much weight, power and authority the Early Modern people, the ship-owners, the maritime authorities but even and especially the sailors attributed to the written word in the material medium of the letter. This one particular letter, or we can even say Luetkens' one particular sentence in this letter, with his firm promise that he would ensure the crew was sufficient for the crew to agree to his orders. Thus, this one sentence in the letter was literally accepted as their life assurance.

A promise in a letter was therefore no meaningless phrase, and the assertion and affirmation that people could "count on" that promise and put their trust in the written word was not empty words or careless talk or action, but these phrases were material liabilities in the context of the practical principle of persuasion applied in this letter episode, namely the principle of making firm promises and of providing material assurances. These words and phrases represented important carriers and signal words for the reassurance of mutual trust and reciprocal commitment, which once again underlines the importance of these speech acts during the letter negotiations. Furthermore, it becomes clear how important Noordstern's role as a mediator was for the negotiation process. A "crew was nearly always signed on for a specific voyage to and from a certain region. Naturally there were disputes."[219]

It was largely due to Noordstern and his sensibility that his crew settled the dispute and sailed to the Mediterranean Sea with him, helped not just by a lot of effective coaxing but also by the letter from his patron Luetkens. This fact leads us to the last insight from these letters: The letters show that Noordstern's success was not only due to

217 Letter from Noordstern, Claes to Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb, August 3, 1744, TNA, PRO, HCA 30/233.

218 Letter from Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb to Noordstern, Claes, July 10, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/232, Letter Book I, no. 213.

219 Davis, *English Shipping Industry*, 140.

himself and his own actions and that he is not the only one who should be credited for this success. Instead, it becomes abundantly clear that for the sake of complying with and completing his tasks and orders he ultimately mainly made use of the opportunities that his ship-owner had provided him with beforehand. In this regard, it becomes unequivocally clear that the whole situation was at all times controlled by the merchant ship-owner Luetkens. In my opinion, there are even many indications that allow the assumption that the merchant had already planned the respective solution to the problem elaborately beforehand. Luetkens had anticipated the solution to this problem and pulled the necessary strings to implement it with his letters already long before the actual moment took place. He provided tacit guidance. And this provision of a certain guidance, which came in the shape of well-meaning handling instructions, in turn, provides us with the best example and clearest indication of how patronage relationships worked in the sea business.

As is exemplary for Early Modern patronage relationships, Noordstern acted in the good faith of achieving his goals through his own efforts, and to complete his professional engagement conscientiously for his employer, but he acted on his own initiative, which is mirrored in the almost exalted joy that his words in the quoted letter exude. However, in the end all the measures he took and the achievements he made had already been envisaged and well-prepared for him beforehand by his employer Luetkens and Hertzer & von Bobartt as helping hands. The only thing the merchants therefore had to do was to slowly steer this endeavour towards the intended outcome and to gradually lead the ship's captain to acting in their interest by means of providing him with the necessary assurances. This is in my opinion the actual insight with regard to how patronage functioned in letter practice that we gain from the letter conversation in this case. The actual strength and powers of Luetkens' offer and promise (to ensure the crew of his ship against the *Turkish Threat*), performed as a concrete speech act in the letter, ultimately rested on the fact that Luetkens ostensibly left open the decision whether or not Noordstern would accept his offer and left its implementation to Noordstern's own discretion. At the same time, however, he provided clear incentives for Noordstern to comply with the offer, which Noordstern could hardly reject. This practice in turn once more shows strong resemblances to the *practical principle of persuasion through demanding loyalty* as it was presented in the first analytical chapter, showing once more that we are not dealing with single or isolated practices of persuasion in this book, but that these practices were applied in many situations. The incentives that Luetkens provided his ship's captain Noordstern with in this episode furthermore not only applied to the procurement of the insurance, but in fact he offered incentives, guidance and the necessary assurances relating to every single remit and field of duty in which Noordstern was active. In every one of these fields of activity, Luetkens and his trading partners pulled the necessary strings and took the necessary precautions. Thus, Luetkens left no doubt about the question which of the options that he offered to Noordstern was the option that he prefered and which option would particularly represent "the interest of the shipowners". The latter was another phrase that he, as the actual ship-owner, relentlessly stressed in his letters, "gelyfft hett beste van hett schip en zyne reders waer te neemen", and which we can also find as a demand for skippers in the contemporary maritime

laws.[220] In simple terms, Luetkens made it rather easy for Noordstern to come to the right conclusion and to find the right solution, which from Luetkens' point of view was to comply with Luetkens' orders. This fact can be illustrated by looking at the whole letter conversation and the letter negotiations taking place in the months between June 1744 and January 1745. Reading the whole episode, we come to realise that in the end Luetkens had a hand in relation to nearly every action that the ship's captain Noordstern was about to undertake. This becomes particularly visible in four areas of action.

First, it was no coincidence that Noordstern was offered a cargo in Lisbon by the merchants Voight, Walter & Sieveking to Venice because this was the merchant house that he was recommended to seek out by the merchants Luttman & von Bobartt, residents of Nantes, where Noordstern had departed from earlier, and whom Luetkens had consulted beforehand and to whom he had given the directive to make the respective contact. In the letter, cited in the episode, that Luetkens had sent to Nantes on the 10th of June, we read about and become witness to this close collaboration when Luetkens asks Luttman & von Bobartt "to be so kind" ["die Güttigkeit wollen haben"] to contact the partners in Lisbon.[221] As in the case of the other letter formulae used, this very typical letter phrase, too, must not be regarded merely as asking for a favour but as a concrete request, as which the addressees will also have understood the respective speech act because they responded to it and acted accordingly. It was also completely intentional that the letter to Noordstern, from the exact same date, reached the ship's captain enclosed in the letters to the Nantes merchants. Thus, Luetkens ensured materially that his letter and orders came to Noordstern with the necessary emphasis. Luetkens furthermore anticipated in this way that the ship's captain received his orders and commands not only by means of his own letter but also again by means of the personal consultation with the merchants in Nantes.

Secondly, it was surely also no coincidence that Noordstern subsequently attended to his orders with increased eagerness and enthusiasm because even in this regard Luetkens had made the necessary provisions, or put in other words, he had once more created additional incentives for Noordstern. The way he dealt with and reacted to Noordstern's report of a dispute amongst his crew regarding the length of the journey can be considered a clever strategy. In this situation, the merchant refrained from voicing sharp criticism, but instead he indulged and demonstrated an understanding for the situation. In his response letter he subsequently supposedly generously offered Noordstern to refrain from the plan of sailing to the Mediterranean Sea and instead he offered that Noordstern was free to sail back to Hamburg with just ballast if things got worse with his crew, or in his own words because "it will most likely not go better in Lisbon". However, the crucial point here, the crux of the matter, and thus Luetkens' snag, was that of course a trip to the Mediterranean Sea, the veritable gold mine of southern European trade, would have been a much more lucrative undertaking for all parties involved, including the captain, than only taking ballast back to Hamburg or a port of

220 See Engelbrecht, *Der wohl unterwiesene Schiffer*, 5. Letter from Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb to Noordstern, Claes, July 10, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/232, Letter Book I, no. 213.

221 Letter from Luetkens, Nicolaus Gottlieb to Luttman & von Bobartt, June 10, 1744, TNA, HCA 30/232, Letter Book I, no. 214.

France, which basically meant sailing without cargo but merely with weight and therefore without any prospect of profit. This was much less appealing for the ship's captain than the other plan. Therefore, it comes as no surprise that Noordstern did everything in his power, or as he himself called it he would "do my best" – another typical letter phrase of the period – to find a way to persuade his crew to sail with him.[222] For this purpose, Noordstern presumably gladly took the opportunity provided and used the offered insurance against the *Turkish Threat* as the basis for negotiation. Using a kind of hidden agenda, Luetkens therefore speculated, in my opinion, on awakening the zeal and the sense of duty of his ship's captain to satisfy the expectations of his ship-owners, to fulfil his duty in the patronage relationship in the best possible way and to win their approval and respect, which in the end proved itself to be a suitable and beneficial strategy. The almost triumphant words of Noordstern reporting the successful achievement of having convinced his crew to sail with him, might have sounded just as triumphant in the ears of Luetkens himself.

Thirdly, it was, to a certain extent, not even a coincidence that the dispute amongst the crew erupted because this, too, had been anticipated in a way by Luetkens, or to be more precise, he expected disputes in his sea business and therefore the dispute was condoned by Luetkens. It was with good reason that Luetkens had advised his ship's captain to trust in the unwritten law and to comply with the order definitely not to not inform his crew about the plan to extend and continue their journeys to the Mediterranean until they had completed their previous voyage and had arrived at the port of Lisbon. The customary rule that a crew was only signed on for one specific voyage, therefore in this case the route from Nantes to Lisbon, which, as we know, already led to complaints on the part of the crew, constituted a crucial advantage. In this way the crew was left in the dark about the plan for as long as possible, leading to the result that at the time when they finally heard about the plan they were already in Lisbon and confronted with the immediate choice of either remaining part of the crew and accompanying the ship also on its next trip, which was a risky endeavour, or leaving the ship in Portugal, which was just as much of a risky endeavour because they needed find a new ship and captain who would hire them. As the maritime saying went, they were confronted with a difficult choice and caught between "the devil and the deep blue sea."[223] Not informing the crew of the *Commercium* in Nantes about the planned further destinations of the ship was therefore once again a helpful strategy because it increased the probability that they would agree to remain faithful to the ship and its captain. However, in the case that this was not enough and the crew was not persuaded to remain on the ship for such a reason, the ship's captain nevertheless still had the opportunity to offer them a higher wage or even double pay. This was an option that Noordstern used on both occasions when he needed to convince his crew to sail with him, in Nantes and in Lisbon, and which was not sanctioned by Luetkens or Hertzer & von Bobartt. In the end, however, they tolerated it for the sake of the success of the enterprise.

Speaking of the negotiation process in Lisbon, however, it becomes clearly apparent that both persuasion strategies, namely using the promise of insurance and the double

222 See Dierks, *In my Power*.

223 Rediker, *Devil and the Deep Blue Sea*, 5.

wage, did not fail to have a positive effect on the outcome of the process of convincing the crew. Whereas probably only a handful of sailors would have agreed to take a trip to the Mediterranean Sea if they had been asked in Nantes, in Lisbon, however, only two or three seamen, as Noordstern reported, in the end left the ship, which was acceptable and which therefore did not "break the game" ["Spel niet sal breeken"], as Noordstern concluded. Showing forbearance, responding to the wishes of the crew in a certain way already while still in Nantes, in this case only relating to the paying of double wages and settling this first dispute with the crew amicably, was already part of this *game* and represented just a necessary evil to lay a sound foundation for any further disputes yet to come in Lisbon. Since the crew then knew that the captain and the ship-owners were trustable men who stuck to their word, the dispute and opposition in Lisbon actually turned out to be proportionately modest. This was not least, of course, because of the written material promise with the offer to insure the men against the *Turkish Threat* that the captain, in the truest sense of the word, pulled out of his pocket, like an ace up his sleeve, precisely at the very moment that the choice was due.

Against this backdrop, in turn, it was in the end, fourthly and lastly, also in some ways no coincidence that the crew ultimately agreed to the proposal of their captain and the merchants Luetkens and Hertzer & von Bobartt because it was after all no bad choice considering their status quo: the revenue of double pay as a further material assurance, and the securities that they were provided with. Therefore, as becomes obvious, it was the merchant Luetkens who had equipped his captain with all the necessary means and measures to be able to achieve his goals and to fulfil his duties and tasks. The ship's captain only had to grasp the opportunity.

The special feature and clearest characteristic of the patronage relationship that the merchants and the ship's captain maintained in this case was that the captain was offered alternatives. He could always, or at least in most cases, also decide against a respective proposal and choose to take a different route, in the truest sense of the word, if reasonable in view of the ship owner. Just as typical for the patronage relationship was, however, that the ships' captains in most cases in the Luetkens archive decided for the proposals of their superiors and strived to achieve and implement those options that were in the *best interest* of their ship-owners. The latter of course happened also in order to convince their ship-owners of their skills, their value as employees and their capabilities. This clear correlation in the end represents the whole secret behind the system of patronage in the sea business, which was at work in this episode, and behind the power of persuasion being deployed within this episode and by means of the practice of letter writing as it was presented in the episode. As the historian Sharon Kettering aptly put it, in this letter conversation we can observe the practice of negotiation as performed in a patronage relationship as an "art of persuasion, […] [which induced] men to cooperate and do what is demanded voluntarily."[224]

224 Kettering, Sharon. *Patrons, Brokers and Clients in Seventeenth-Century France*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986, 3.

5.11 Conclusion: How to Cope with Sailors' Fears

Figure 14: A drawing of an Ottoman privateer showing a flag with the Turkish Crescent in Rieweert Frerecks' large bound ship's journal. Frerecks was master of the captured ship Hope. This book came from his personal archive of papers on that ship.

Source: The National Archives, ref. HCA 30/660 © Prize Papers Project. Images reproduced by permission of The National Archives, London, England, Photo: Maria Cardamone.

We are now able to answer the main question of this chapter, which was how 18th-century people in the sea business coped and dealt with the factor of fear in their businesses. How did merchant ship-owners and ships' captains cope and deal with such a concrete fear as the fear of being taken hostage by Ottoman privateers in the Mediterranean Sea, a fear that was so formative, shaping and tangible that the contemporaries put little wooden figurines of beseeching sailors in the churches of their hometowns? This fear was so immediate for the people directly involved in seafaring in this region that we find numerous examples in contemporary sources, in which these people personally expressed their fears by putting them on paper, whether in the form of letters, reports, memoirs or even as drawings. One of the most impressive examples that I am aware of are and that I found thanks to the help of Amanda Bevan in the confiscated books and ship's logs of the captain who was once in charge of the ship *Hope*, Rieweert Frerecks, who obviously not only feared English privateers but also Ottoman ships. This fear or rather his awareness of the threat becomes materially attested in various drawings of Turkish galleys and Ottoman privateers showing a flag with the Turkish Crescent in Frerecks' main ship's log, a large bound volume of several of his journals, also stored in the National Archives.[225] How did ships' captains, their ship-owners and the crews

225 A bound volume kept and illustrated by Rieweert Frerecks, of ships' journals of European and Greenland voyages 1733-1745 on which he was mate or master, with multiple images of the ships, and

therefore cope with such a very concrete and tangible threat? In this chapter we have been presented with two possible solutions to this question. On the basis and analysis of the presented letter conversation, I have been able to show that one way to mitigate these fears was that the people of the age would *count on* the practice of being provided with material assurances in the form of insurance certificates against the *Turkish Threat*. These insurances were first promised in writing, namely in letters, and were then issued to them notarially certificated on paper, guaranteeing them that they would be ransomed if their ships were captured. That means, however, that these people still ran the risk of being taken hostage. The second opportunity that I have presented in this chapter, were so called *Turkish passports*, which were passports that ensured free passage for European ships in the Mediterranean Sea based on peace treaties with the Maghreb States. The latter option, however, was not available to Hamburg merchants and sailors on Hamburg ships because Hamburg did not hold a peace treaty with the Ottoman Empire. Both ways of coping with the problems that were caused by Ottoman privateers in the Mediterranean Sea for European seafaring and merchant shipping highly intrigued me. However, whereas the second opportunity, the *Turkish passports*, was relatively well understandable for me because they essentially represented a diplomatic solution to the problem, primarily based on paying tributes, the other solution surprised me even more when I learned about it in the letters. It showed me that even though no diplomatic solution had been found for Hamburg ships, the merchants still did not desist from trading with the region but instead found a rather pragmatic solution to the problem. They simply chose to insure their undertakings. What I found most fascinating in this regard was that the sailors actually approved of this solution and agreed to sail to the Mediterranean Sea, thus accepting the consequences and exertions that came with it. The sailors on the ship *Commercium* could in fact be persuaded to agree to sail to the region with their captain merely on the basis of firm promises and certain material assurances. What I found most intriguing in this regard was how pragmatically the people therefore in the end coped with the fears. This applied not only the merchants and ship-owners, who simply procured an insurance to cope with their risks, but especially the captains and the crew, who coped with their severe fears simply by trusting in the power of a promise given to them by their ship-owners and a piece of paper that materialised this promise, which was handed to them by the authorities and which they took with them on their journey towards an uncertain future. That is, we have to realise that these men voluntarily exposed themselves to the concrete danger of being taken hostage by the Ottomans, which was the unavoidable result of an encounter between a Hamburg ship and an Ottoman privateer, simply on the basis of the assurance that they would at least be ransomed in due time. This surely comes close to self-sacrifice.

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seals applied throughout. Frerecks was master of the *Hope* [otherwise Hoffnung, otherwise L'Esperance, a Hamburg merchant ship belonging to Nicolas Gottlieb Luetkens, taken on 23 August 1745 by the privateer *Charming Molly*, and brought into Deal], and this book came from his personal archive of papers on that ship, TNA, HCA 30/660. See pages 305-308 for various drawings of Turkish galleys, ships with different rigs, and a calligraphic design of the letter R incorporating R F 1742 30 Maij, a crown, a garland and a standing cup. See also TNA, HCA 30/659, *A notebook belonging to Rieweert Frerecks with cargo manifests and an inventory of the Hope.*

Furthermore, in my opinion, this fact reveals two important things and main characteristics of the 18th century in general, which are significant in order to understand the period but also to understand the letter episode and the way in which the power of persuasion worked within the medium and practice of letter writing and correspondence in the episode. First, the episode reveals and demonstrates the significance and the actual impact of the common contemporary practice for social interaction and cohesion during the Early Modern Period, namely the practice of putting great confidence, trust and reliance in each other's words and promises, especially within relationships that depended on hierarchies, such as patronage relationships. The second insight from this episode was that people also put the same amount of confidence, trust and reliance in the written word. This not only related to the content of the letters, which in a way represented the spoken word, but in particular to the general trust in the power of the material, the paper with the written text on it, which was read aloud.

In the episode, an immense amount of trust and confidence was placed in the material letter of Luetkens, in which he made the promise to procure an insurance, and the same amount of trust and confidence was placed in the power of a notarial certificate that Noordstern carried with him on his journey while a second version was kept by the consulate in Lisbon. Especially for those who were not able to read, like some of the sailors in the episode, this material letter that the ship's captain presented and read aloud to them represented nothing less than a substitute of the merchant, entailing powers of attorney, and therefore it constituted a concrete material liability and authority.

This confidence and trust in the powers of the written form, namely the letter and the certificate, however, even went far beyond and transcended the scope of the negotiations amongst ship's captains and their crew, and the ship's captain and his patrons. Rather, this trust was especially based on the fact that all parties involved would later, if the occasion arose, keep their promises with regard to these pieces of paper. In a way, this even included the Ottoman privateers and the authorities of the Maghreb states of the Ottoman Empire, who would in the end also need to formally agree to the deal that they would take ransom money, enter into negotiations with the local European commissioners of the Hamburg authorities and the *Sklavenkasse* and finally release their captives. As we have learned, however, chances were good that they would enter into these negotiations. The sailors therefore in a way trusted in a system of supranational material paper warranties, which they took for granted, even though they were dealing with the supposedly *hereditary enemy*. This represents just another intriguing insight from the episode, particularly against the backdrop of the described horror scenarios and discourses and the scaremongering prevailing in Europe regarding the Mediterranean Sea and the Ottoman Empire. It shows that there was another side to these horror scenarios, which was that, in concrete practice, things were ultimately still handled in a rather reasonable or at least pragmatic way because this was the only way that business could be done.

In practice, the Europeans found their own ways and means for coping with the situation, which, as needs to be noted in this regard, did not necessarily contradict the horror scenarios but made them manageable. These ways and means built far more on finding common ground with the enemy and making certain deals with them instead

of risking a direct conflict, although the latter would presumably have fitted far more with the consequences of the discourses and the iconographic agenda of the printing press of the time. The European merchants still equipped their ships with canons, as we learnt with regard to Noordstern's ship, which was armed with 10 pounders. However, the most effective way to minimise risks and to be able to continue trade with the Mediterranean Sea was to enter into peace treaties and pay high tributes or at least to take certain precautions against any risks in the form of private insurances issued for the ship and its crews, which ensured the compensation for damages and losses and most importantly ensured the safety and survival of the people sent to the area. The latter, in turn, also included negotiations with the Maghreb states in the form of ransoming proceedings that would also most often have been carried out on a juridical basis.

In practice, therefore, people's actions in the end conformed far more with the actual situation prevailing in the Mediterranean Sea, as I have outlined it in the beginning of the chapter. This situation was no lawless, godless anarchy, as the contemporary discourses preached, but it was more or less an actual state of war, a privateering war. And the latter, in turn, was something that the merchants of the time were used to already. Therefore, instead of fighting the Ottomans or cutting themselves off from the trading markets in the Mediterranean Sea, the merchants under investigation and their home authorities decided to make concessions to the enemy. This was how they ultimately found a way to cope with the situation in the southern part of the Mediterranean Sea.

Regarding the Hamburg seamen on board the ship *Commercium*, Claes Noordstern, Arnold Rohde and the other crew members mentioned in the certificate, what helped them to cope with the fears or at least what might have mitigated their fears, which were genuine and serious for them, was their faith and confidence in the fact that in the end money would flow in order to bail them out and save them. This fact was the foundation on the basis of which they could be persuaded to sail to the Mediterranean Sea. Subsequently, the remarkable thing about this was that, at least if we speak about the period under investigation, the 1740s, the sailors' hopes and their confidence would actually for the most part not be dashed or disappointed. This means that the system actually worked during that time, which can be evidenced by the already cited figurines of the Hamburg *Sklavenkasse*. As we know from the Hamburg case therefore, sailors were regularly ransomed after being taken hostage, not solely through the funds of the *Sklavenkasse* but also and especially through the additional money coming from the private sector, through private insurance companies, which increased the sailors' willingness to sail on Hamburg ships to the area during that time. This, by implication, also offers a conclusive and logical explanation for the slight increase in Hamburg shipping activities in that region during the time span, which I have presented.

Through the new possibility of insuring ships and crews privately, the Hamburg merchants, at least speaking of the venturesome merchants in Luetkens' correspondence circle and the merchant himself, found the necessary foundation and loophole to carry on their trade with the Mediterranean Sea. It provided them with an effective means of encouraging their ships' captains and crews to remain loyal to them. Nicolaus Gottlieb Luetkens knew perfectly how to make use and take advantage of these new possibilities. He used them as a sufficient means to persuade his employees to under-

take the journey to the Mediterranean Sea, which helped him to establish a profitable, successful business in this business area, which helped him further pave the way for his establishment phase. The crucial practice that he used during his negotiations and persuasion processes with his captains, which provided the necessary means for being convincing, was letter writing. In letters he used certain letter phrases and letter formulae as speech acts, the language register of patronage and skilfully drew on the full potential of rights and duties within a patronage relationship. Without letter-writing practice none of the aforementioned events would have been possible at all. Letters were the tool and medium on which the whole undertaking rested, not only because of the large distances that the practice helped to bridge but also and especially because of the fact that it provided a material foundation for the persuasion processes and for the whole concrete handling of the affair.

In order to finally demonstrate that still another crucial factor in these high-risk enterprises was pure luck or fortunate coincidence, it helps to once again take a look at further statistical data from archival records that is available to us with regard to Hamburg Mediterranean trade. I consult a detailed list of all ships captured between 1719 and the 1740s called "a list of all ships' crews captured and taken hostage by Algiers privateers between 1719-1747", which the historian Magnus Ressel has supplemented with more data from other sources and set out in tabular form in his book on the *Hamburg Sklavenkasse*.[226] If we are to believe these contemporary figures, looking at and taking into account the entire time span of Luetkens activities, in fact only one of Luetkens' ships in the end actually fell victim to an Ottoman raid. In 1747, a ship under the command of Luetkens' captain Andreas Cornelissen coming from Gallipoli in Italy was captured by an Algiers privateer.[227] All the efforts taken in the case of the *Commercium* and the other ships that followed her example, were thus not needed in the end as they all managed to stay safe and out of trouble, but it was still good to have these protections in place just in case. Luetkens therefore in the final analysis was simply also just fortunate with his undertakings. Other merchants, however, as the figures also show, were less favoured by fate in this regard.[228]

226 "Verzeichnis der Schiffer, welche mit ihren Schiffen, und bey sich habenden Schiffs Volck von Anno 1719 bis Anno 1747 zu Algier aufgebracht sind." *Staatsarchiv Hamburg*, 111–1 Cl. VII Lit. Ca Nr. 2 Vol. 3 Fasc. 3, Nr. 2. See Ressel, *Sklavenkassen*, 465-478.

227 Cornelissen "von Gallipoli anhero". See Ressel, *Sklavenkassen*, 468.

228 See Ressel, *Sklavenkassen*, 465-478.