Silk and Tea in the North

Scandinavian Trade and the Market for Asian Goods in Eighteenth-Century Europe

Hanna Hodacs

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palgrave
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Europe's Asian Centuries

ISBN 978-1-349-68733-6 ISBN 978-1-137-45544-4 (eBook)
DOI 10.1007/978-1-137-45544-4

Softcover reprint of the hardcover 1st edition 2016 978-1-137-45543-7

This Palgrave Macmillan imprint is published by SpringerNature
The registered company is Macmillan Publishers Ltd. London.

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Acknowledgements

The questions we ask about the past reflect on our present, and sometimes on our individual situation. My interests in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Anglo-Swedish contacts developed as I, with increasing regularity, crossed the North Sea and eventually settled in Birmingham. Out of this experience evolved a growing awareness of how transnational and global processes shape local developments and individual lives, both now and in the past. It was at the University of Warwick, however, and in the Centre for Global History and Culture (CGHC), that I was given an opportunity to become a global historian, intellectually and professionally.

This book is the result of work I undertook as a Research Fellow working within the project *Europe's Asian Centuries: Trading Eurasia 1600–1830*, funded by the European Research Council and devised and led by Professor Maxine Berg. The History Department and CGHC offered an immensely rich scholarly environment. While working within a big project can be challenging it is also very rewarding. Without the intellectual framework provided by Maxine Berg, as well as her advice and encouragement, this book would not have come into existence. My first thanks go to Maxine for giving me the opportunity and for supporting me throughout, and in many different ways.

I had great project colleagues. Researching the French, Dutch and British East India trade Felicia Gottmann and Chris Nierstraz were fellow Research Fellows; we shared many ideas on how to study and teach early-modern global history. Meike von Bresicus, working on her PhD within the project, was another good companion together with whom I explored Minneapolis and the vast archives of Charles Irvine. Helen Clifford, the project's museum consultant, played multiple and very important roles. She has also been very helpful editing the manuscript that became this book. Collaborating with her is always a pleasure. A similarly delightful partner was Anna Boneham, our project administrator, who cleverly arranged most things. Anna Guszcza, Jiao Liu and Sheilagh Holmes provided essential and reliable administrative and research support. Thank you! With Tim Davies, who also worked on the project in different capacities, *Europe's Asian Centuries* engaged eleven people in Warwick over the course of almost four years. Many more contributed by participating in the project's workshops and conferences

taking place in Warwick 2012 (*Comparing Companies: New Questions for Historians*), Oxford 2012 (*Material Encounters of the East India Trade 1600–1850*) and Venice 2014 (*Goods from the East: Trading Eurasia 1600–1830*). Without the input and advice from curators, archivists and historians attending these and other events writing this book would have been very much harder.

In the process of writing up results from research, and turning notes and ideas into a book, Leos Müller played a very central role. He generously shared his global perspectives and in-depth knowledge of eighteenth-century Scandinavian trade with me, he also read and commented on numerous chapter drafts. Thank you! I am indebted to several others. Erik Gøbel at the National Archive (Rigarkivet) in Copenhagen provided early advice on sources and literature on the Danish trade. The staff at the James Ford Bell Library in Minneapolis, Margaret Franzen Borg and Marguerite Ragnow, were of great help assisting my exploration of Charles Irvine's large archive. I would also like to mention Paul Van Dyke, who on numerous occasions generously shared sources and helped answer questions relating to the eighteenth-century trade in Canton. Lisa Hellman, who read the whole of the manuscript, had many insightful comments and gave much valuable advice on how to organize the text, as did the anonymous external reader Palgrave consulted. Mathias Person, Jon Stobart and Marie Ulväng read drafts of different chapters, and all helped me to address different issues and aspects of early-modern textiles, tea and political economy. I also received detailed advice on textiles and sumptuary legislation from Eva Andersson, who generously shared her notes with me. I am most grateful to Ann Grönhammar, Vibe Maria Martens, Tove Engelhardt Mathiassen and Annika Windahl Ponten for their suggestions, advice and directions to relevant source material. I am also obliged to Letterstedtska föreningen for providing funding to cover the costs for the reproduction of the colour images used in this book.

Results presented in this book draw on comments I have received on papers presented at numerous conferences, workshops and seminars. They include *Global Colours: Theories, Materials and Colouring Agents in Global History* (Warwick, April 2012); *Innovation before the Modern: Cloth and Clothing in the Early Modern World* (Nordiska Museet, Stockholm, October 2012); *Comparative Histories of Asia Seminar* (Institute of Historical Research, London, November 2012); *Goods from the East* (Venice, January 2013); *Global Perspectives on Colours* (Royal College of Art, London, February 2013); *Political Economy and Empire in the Early Modern World* (Yale University, May 2013); *The Companies: Continuity,*

Transition or Disjuncture? (Yale University, May 2013); *Asian Goods and Eighteenth-Century Scandinavia: Trade, Material Culture and Changing Consumer Patterns* (Statens maritima museer, Stockholm, May 2014) and *Visualising Difference: Objects, Space and Practice in Early Modern Europe* (Nordiska museet, Stockholm, October 2014), as well as sessions on tea, silk and auctions at the *24th International Congress History of Science, Technology and Medicine* (Manchester, July 2013); *The Economic History Society Conference* (University of Warwick, April 2014); *Svenska historikermötet* (Stockholm, May 2014) and the *14th International Congress for Eighteenth-Century Studies* (Rotterdam, July 2015).

In parallel with the Warwick project I also worked part-time on my own project, *Westward Science between 1760–1810: on Social Mobility and the Mobility of Science*, funded by the Swedish Research Council (Vetenskapsrådet), 2011–2015. Again Warwick provided me with excellent opportunities to develop ideas to do with global scholarship in the eighteenth century, some of which have crept into this book. Negotiating two jobs *and* two tax systems was not always easy, however. I would particularly like to thank Professor Karl Grandin at the Centre for the History of Science, Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences, who hosted my Swedish project for being so accommodating.

At times researching this book provided an escape from life's turbulence. Friendship though helped me deal with life in all its complexities. I dedicate this book to those who gently kept me afloat as I navigated troubled waters: to Charlotte, Cristina, Felicia, Hera, Jo, Rowena, Shazia, Shelley, Signild, Silke and Sonja.

List of Abbreviations

AKA	Asiatisk Kompagni arkiv
DCK	Danske Cancelli Kommissionen
IC	Irvine Collection
JFL	James Ford Bell Library
K.E. bog	Kinesiske Ekspeditioners kopibog
KA	Kommerskollegiums arkiv
Kas. bog	Kasse- og hovedbøger fra kinaskibene
MUL	Minneapolis University Library
NAN	National Archive of the Netherland
Neg. prot.	Negotieprotokoller
RAC	Rigsarkivet Copenhagen
RAS	Riksarkivet Stockholm

Introduction: Global, European and Scandinavian Histories and the East India Trade

Following tea and silk to the North

Nearly all tea consumed in early modern Europe came from China. Most of it was black tea, made from the tea leaves which had been withered, rolled, aired and roasted before being packed into lead-lined chests and loaded onto East India company ships. Together with textiles, tea was the most significant good in the eighteenth-century Eurasian trade. In the case of the China trade, glossy silk textiles regularly travelled on top of the tea in the East Indiamen. Sometimes it was woven or embroidered, but what really characterized the silk cargo was its many colours; it was tinted from sky blue, to crimson red and pearl grey.

It is the Scandinavian trade with China, the near annual expedition arriving in Gothenburg and Copenhagen from Canton that stands at the forefront of this study. Following the trade in tea and silk from the 1730s to the 1760s this book will explore several histories, some of which have connections to natural philosophy and political economy. The great size and value of the tea trade inspired Swedish naturalist Carolus Linnaeus (1707–1778) to try to break the Chinese monopoly. He wanted to move tea production to Sweden, a project which involved both sourcing seeds and plants from Asia, and advice on how to nurse them from naturalists across Europe.[1] Swedish naturalists were also engaged in searching for domestic plants to use as dyestuff in order to create colours that mimicked those of the vivid and bright textiles from Asia. Blue sourced from blueberries was one proposal, in an attempt to make the import of indigo redundant.[2] In these and other projects the naturalists operated within a typical political economy common in early-modern European states, one where the central objective was to find domestic alternatives to expensive imports.

The transfer and substitute schemes indicate the impact of the expanding eighteenth-century Asian trade on Europe. It would be a mistake, however, to interpret Linnaeus's plans as indicative of a strong market for tea in Sweden. Tea was never consumed in any great quantity in Scandinavia, neither in the eighteenth century nor later. Domestic demand does not therefore explain the exceptional growth of either the Swedish or Danish trade with China in tea from the 1730s onwards. The eighteenth-century European market in tea was one of the fastest growing in exotic products; between 1718 and 1784 the import from China increased in weight from 1.6 million pounds annually to 20 million pounds. Swelling almost thirteen times in less than seven decades the trade in tea expanded faster than the trade in other popular tropical goods such as sugar, coffee and cocoa. During the same period the price of the cheapest black tea fell more than ninety per cent.[3] Up to a third of the tea imported from China to Europe in the eighteenth century arrived on ships belonging to the Danish Asiatic Company (DAC) and the Swedish East India Company (SEIC).[4] Once sold at the Company auctions most of this tea was re-exported. The end consumers were largely British although a large proportion of this tea travelled to markets in the Low Countries before it became part of an illicit trade.[5] Due to the high taxes on the legal British tea trade, over which the English East India Company (EIC) had monopoly, the clandestine good ended up much cheaper. The mass market for tea in Britain was however complex not only due to the smuggled traffic, but also because 'tea' leaves were regularly fabricated from roasted leaves and buds from domestic scrubs such as sloe and elderflower. There was also a large market for recycled tea leaves, something which reflects not only on the fraudulent behaviours of some retailers but also on the limited means of those who made up the majority of British tea consumers.[6] This diverse tea market will form the backdrop to an exploration of how the Scandinavians helped shape the taste for cheap black tea by blending and packing it in a way that corresponded to different demands. Some, like those in Scotland, for example, developed a taste for 'Gothenburg Congo' while others, like those in the Dutch Republic, preferred the black dusty tea which resulted from the Scandinavian way of packing tea chests to the brim in Canton.[7]

The purpose of this book is to place the history of the Scandinavian trade with China within the histories of the eighteenth-century global and transnational trade and rising consumption of tea in Britain. The book will also explore the responses to the Asian trade from a local and northerly point of view, in geographical areas not usually associated

with the mass consumption of exotic goods. It will study the cargoes of Chinese wrought silk arriving into Copenhagen and Gothenburg in the middle third of the eighteenth century. In contrast to tea, silk had a long history in the North, not only as a consumer good associated with elite consumption of French fashion but also as a domestically manufactured good. The Chinese silk cargoes reaching the Atlantic world and Europe have largely been left unexplored, perhaps due to the fascination with another Asian textile, Indian cotton.[8] By mapping the quantities, qualities, dimensions and colour assortments of the Danish and Swedish silk cargoes this study will outline the contours of the large domestic consumption of Chinese silk in northern Europe. Drawing on colour terminology and colour trends the study will explore the extent to which the Chinese imported silk turned Scandinavians into a multi-coloured 'motley' people and shaped notions of consumerism in the North.

This study will not only follow the goods, the tea and the silk, moving from China to Scandinavia and beyond, it will also map Scandinavian efforts to substitute and imitate these popular Asian goods. In this respect the study will trace how the ideas of Asian goods, refreshing tea and colourful textiles, inspired explorations of both nature and *œconomica* – applied economic thinking – in the very north of Europe. Against the backdrop of the colourful Chinese silk import the book will investigate the link between domestic dye substitutes and the development of colour nomenclatures before the arrival of synthetic dyes on a large scale in the nineteenth century. Linking Linnaeus's tea-transfer plans to developments in late eighteenth-century British botany, and the establishment of tea gardens in India, this study will take into account the expansion of the second British Empire. Tea and silk will in other words help us zoom in and out, looking at both shorter and longer chronologies, and smaller and larger geographies.

The Eurasian trade and the chartered companies engaged in it, foremost perhaps the English Company, have been studied in a wide range of works focusing on early-modern globalization, consumption, production and intellectual history. While this research can illuminate Scandinavian history the opposite is also true: there are aspects of the Scandinavian trade that can shed new light on the broader European, Asian and global contexts. A cross reading of economic history, history of science, political economy *and* sources and literature on the Scandinavian trade has generated three starting points that have shaped the design of this study.

Global history and the Scandinavian Eurasian trade

Long-distance trade in Asian goods extends far back in time. Silk textiles arrived in the Roman Empire, some from China, others from the Middle East, where the art of sericulture had developed early.[9] Porcelain was another Chinese product that travelled in all directions; it reached the Middle East in the ninth century and soon spread across the Mediterranean area.[10] The South China Sea saw a large traffic in Chinese porcelain well before the maritime trade with Europe started.[11] Archaeological finds also illustrate the extension of the trade in printed cotton textiles from India; identical or near identical patterned pieces dating back to the fourteenth century have been found as far apart as Egypt and Sulawesi in Indonesia.[12] Records show that there was regular maritime trade between Gujarat and the Swahili coast, promoting the diffusion of Indian cotton to East Africa.[13] Goods travelled over land too; the Silk Road, only named in the late nineteenth century by European explorers, is the most famous trade route between Asia and Europe. Archaeological remains suggest a complex set of paths, allowing for a slow but steady trickle of trade across thousands of kilometres. More northerly land-based routes connected China with Russia, providing a channel for tea from the seventeenth century on.[14]

The arrival of Vasco Da Gama in India in 1498 spelt the beginning of direct maritime trade between Asia and Europe, and more precisely Portugal. By the 1580s and 1590s Dutch and English traders made their way to Asia via the Cape route too. They tapped into the existing extensive trade networks that had evolved across the Indian Ocean and the Far East and which continued to work in tandem with the maritime Eurasian trade up until the start of the nineteenth century.[15] The beginning of the seventeenth century saw the arrival of European chartered companies to Asia. The Vereenigde Oostindische Compagnie (VOC) and the English East India Company established in 1602 and 1600 respectively dominated from the start. They were later joined by the Danish Company, in 1616, and the French, in 1664. The Danish and French Asian trade was reshaped several times, but only expanded substantially at the beginning of the eighteenth century. Around the same time, in 1731, the Swedish Company was founded. Another more short-lived, but for our story important, venture operated out of Ostend, and there were others based in Emden and Leghorn.

Competition between European states and their companies fuelled Europe's expanding political influence over Asia in the early-modern period. How the British fought the French in South Asia in the

eighteenth century, and the connection between the rise of the second British Empire and the growing influence of the EIC in India from 1760s, is the most well-known example of how the East India trade was converted into colonial endeavours with global implications. The Battle of Plassey in 1757, the victory of which gave the EIC the right to collect tax and revenues in Bengal, also marked an institutional shift, as the EIC started state building.[16] As British administrative and fiscal power over South Asia increased in the eighteenth century, the commercial capacities of India were harnessed, which helped shaped the EIC and ultimately Britain's future role in global politics. Meanwhile the French, Dutch and Danish trade with India, conducted via a series of trading stations scattered across the Malabar and Coromandel coasts declined, a development not solely the outcome of the EIC's rise to power. One substantial problem was an inability to lower transaction costs, or costs associated with shipping and administrating the trade.[17]

The shaping of Eurasian trade was also dependent on domestic developments in Asia, especially in China. The stabilization of China under the Manchu by the late seventeenth century was crucial for the rise of the European trade with the Far East. Up until the beginning of the nineteenth century European colonial ambitions did not affect greatly the trade with China, the main focus in this book. The Chinese wanted silver; by the eighteenth century the main object for the Europeans was tea, and the only place to get it in large quantities was in China. Japanese tea production was almost exclusively for a domestic market, and the tea plants indigenous to South Asia had escaped the attention of the Europeans. The highly regulated 'Canton System' reflected the Chinese state's aim to control contacts with Europeans. Over time all maritime trade with China became concentrated in Canton, today's Guangzhou. A limited number of Chinese merchants, the 'Hong', worked as middle men, providing the European companies with the goods they ordered during the half year or so they were anchored in the Pearl River Delta. The Canton System meant that all Europeans traded on relatively even ground; company size and influence in other parts of Asia did not influence the trade to any high degree.[18]

The Chinese monopoly on tea was only broken when the Dutch, but primarily the British, introduced tea production to different parts of their Asian colonies. This new tea production took place in India, in Assam and Darjeeling, in Ceylon (today's Sri Lanka), and eventually in East Africa. By the end of the nineteenth century the quantities of tea produced in the British colonies had overtaken the output of China.[19] Other plants and crops had moved across large distances before then too.

Tea cultivation spread from China to Japan in the ninth century. The eighteenth century saw the diffusion of coffee production, originating from Ethiopia, both to Java and the West Indies, and later to Latin America. How sugar cane was brought to the West Indies and how its cultivation became a cornerstone in the slave-based plantation economy is another well-known example. Sugar became a central addition to the new hot beverages consumed in Europe.[20] Indian cotton textile pieces were frequently used as a means of payment in the slave trade on the West Coast of Africa. The maritime Eurasian and intra-Asian trades were in other words linked to the Atlantic trade in ways that helped create a global system. Perhaps the most famous link in this global system had already been forged in the early sixteenth century, as Latin American silver, extracted under the regime of Spanish colonial authorities, became instrumental in providing means of payment, particularly in the ever-increasing trade with China.[21] Silver extracted under Spanish rule moved across the Pacific too; loaded onto the Manila galleons sailing from Acapulco and other ports on the Pacific coast of New Spain the silver was exchanged for Asian goods in the present day Philippines.[22]

How does the early-modern Scandinavian long-distance trade with Asia and other parts of the world fit into this global story? First of all, Swedish and Danish interactions with the wider world represent two quite different histories, reflecting their different geopolitical positions and abilities to negotiate alliances.[23] Sweden's attempt at colonizing outside Europe in the seventeenth century was restricted to North America (present Delaware) and Africa, and ended in 1655. The same period also saw an increase in control over the indigenous Sami people local to northerly parts of Sweden, as well as Norway and Finland.[24] In spite of repeated efforts the lucrative slave trade largely escaped the Swedes, mainly due to Danish and Dutch competition. The Danish held slave-trading forts on the Guinea Coast from the mid-seventeenth century.[25] The slave trade strengthened the Danish connections to the West Indies, to the islands of St. Thomas, St. John and St. Croix, where sugar cultivation formed the backbone of the economy.[26] The successful role the Danish played in the Atlantic trade triangle forms a contrast to the protracted Swedish entrance. Only in 1784, in exchange for trading rights in Gothenburg, did Sweden gain a foothold in the West Indies in the form of the island of Saint-Barthélemy, granted to them by France. Swedish products had long been an integrated part of the Atlantic trade, however; 'voyage iron' manufactured at iron works across central Sweden was regularly used as currency in the British slave trade and for tools in plantation economies; and salted herring from the West

coast of Sweden fed the slaves as they were put to work on the Atlantic plantations.[27]

The establishment of direct trade between Asia and Sweden is again another example of a delayed entry into an early and well-established trade system. The lucrative business of the Dutch and other companies lured several individuals to approach the Swedish state with elaborate plans to establish direct trade between Asia and Sweden over the course of the seventeenth century. Wars and lack of money put a premature end to these plans.[28] The eventual foundation of the Swedish East India Company in 1731 was to a large extent the result of the closure of the General India Company operating from Ostend in the Austrian Netherlands. Denmark, in contrast, started trading with South Asia early; in 1618 the first fleet sailed south- and eastwards. After the first few decades, however, the contact ceased, although the links with India were reactivated in 1670. It was only after 1732, when the Danish Asiatic Company was instituted, that the trade became regular. The 1730s also marked the beginning of direct trade between China and Copenhagen.

Compared with the Swedish case early-modern Danish colonial and trade activities were more closely related to those of Europe's great powers, although smaller in scale and evolving in a slightly different way. Denmark's north Atlantic colonies, the Faroe Islands and Greenland, are still within the Danish realm, while Iceland became independent in 1944. The connection to the West Indies only ended in 1916 when what are now the Virgin Islands were sold to the US; four decades earlier the Swedish island of Saint-Barthélemy had been returned to France. Danish trading posts and colonies in India and Africa had been sold to Britain in 1845 and 1850, before the second wave of European expansion and colonization gained momentum. By then the development in global trade and industrialization had made the monopolized chartered company redundant as a business model.

It is perhaps this somewhat discrete exit from the history of European imperialism in Asia and Africa in the nineteenth century which helps explain why there has been so little research drawing on Scandinavian material in the literature on early-modern global history.[29] Global history has instead been dominated by works that draw on British, Dutch, French and, increasingly, Iberian material. The fact that the Eurasian trade has largely been understood in the light of the history of specific companies, and consequently ultimately from the point of view of the histories of the nations in which they were based, has helped to reinforce this tendency. The history of the EIC has for example been chiefly

understood as part of the history of the British colonization of India, as a prelude to the history of the British Empire.[30] The Scandinavian companies were relatively small and so have naturally been perceived as less significant. The Dutch dwarfed the other companies, sending out 4,720 ships between the beginning of the seventeenth century and 1795. The same period saw 2,676 English, 1,485 French, and 736 Portuguese ships depart for Asia. The total number of DAC ships leaving Copenhagen for Asia between 1618 and 1795 numbered 380, while only 110 Swedish ships had departed from Gothenburg before the end of 1795.[31]

The issue here is not about size, however, but rather, as this book will show, how the story of the eighteenth-century Scandinavian trade with Asia is relevant to the *whole* Eurasian trade and vice versa. In order to make this apparent a broader global context is necessary. As the work of Ole Feldbæk has shown, the Danish trade with India and China in the second half of the eighteenth century depended heavily on the changing distribution of wealth not only among Anglo-Indians, but also among other Europeans working for the Dutch and the French East India companies. Large private fortunes were made, often in dubious or illegal ways, by Europeans working in India. The growing administrative and fiscal duties of the EIC in Bengal offered perhaps the most lucrative means to generate private fortunes. The problem for the European nabobs was how to remit their fortunes home, and escape bans or heavy fines for their parent companies. The answer was to use the infrastructures of the Scandinavian companies, either in the form of credit which could be cashed in in Europe, or in the form of Asian goods to sell on the European market.[32] The tea and textile trades of the Scandinavian East India companies were in other words fuelled by fortunes made within the realm of the other European companies that drew on the products and labour of Asian communities.

The remittance trade is one example of the interdependence that existed between the different East India companies and their staff; while the companies were operating as separate units they were also creating and closing opportunities for one another. From the creditors and private investors' point of view the Scandinavian companies had a further advantage in that they sailed under neutral flags. During the frequent conflicts between the Great Powers of Europe the Scandinavian option for bringing goods and capital home became an attractive one. The effects of the War of the Austrian Succession, the Seven Years' War, the American War of Independence, and the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars can be traced in the ups and downs of the Scandinavian trade-statistics from the long eighteenth century.[33]

But the Scandinavian trade was also sensitive to other events taking place outside the realms of the states in which they were based. The greatest blow to the trade between Scandinavia and China was the British fiscal reform of 1784, the Commutation Act. The Act reduced import tax on Chinese tea from 119 per cent to 12.5 per cent, spelling an end to the extensive traffic in smuggled tea that had evolved over the course of the eighteenth century. The large volumes of tea involved reflected on the exponential growth of tea consumption in the eighteenth century, particularly in Britain. However, import duties and excise regularly doubled the price of tea as it was retailed.[34]

It is in the light of the research referred to above that the histories of the Scandinavian East India companies have been approached. The starting point for this study is the need to take into account the broader European context of politics, conflicts, economic policy and fiscal interest, which together with circumstances local to Asia, such as the Canton System, as well as competition and credit flows, shaped the Eurasian trade. Only taken as a whole can we understand the opportunities the Scandinavians took advantage of, and consequently the role they played more generally. These points have been made before but have never formed the starting point for a study concerned with both the Swedish and the Danish trade.

Questions about the formation of the European, and particularly British, taste for tea and the Scandinavian trade have also largely been unexplored. Importing as they did a third of all tea consumed in Europe, on behalf of consumers largely located outside their domestic markets, the assumption here is that the Scandinavian companies had a huge impact on the shaping of a European taste and particularly a British taste for tea in the eighteenth century. In order to understand this process as well as others we need to take into account changes in consumption patterns in Europe.

Early-modern consumption in Europe and Scandinavia

The dynamics triggering the movement of goods between Europe and Asia were largely determined by changes in European consumption. The craving for Asian goods in the early-modern period was not exclusive to the Europeans; the African market for Indian textiles demonstrates that local fashion and taste played a crucial role in the trade in Indian cottons up until the end of the eighteenth century.[35] Porcelain and textiles from Asia also had a long tradition of being traded within Latin America, and arrived from across the Pacific from the late

sixteenth century onwards.[36] By the eighteenth century the largest export market for Asian goods was, however, found in Europe and specifically in its northwestern corner; in Great Britain, the Low Countries and France, as well as in the Atlantic coastal areas of North America.[37]

The importing of Asian goods in the eighteenth century has traditionally been understood against the backdrop of an early-modern European Consumer Revolution. Launched in the 1980s the notion of a significant and rapid change to particularly British consumption, taking place in the second half of the eighteenth century, has generated a wide range of work on different aspects of eating, dressing and furnishing. Historians have studied early-modern British retail and shopping, mapped ownership of goods in inventories and probate records, and connected these results to social formations.[38] But the concept of an early-modern Consumer Revolution has also generated critical discussions. Drawing on studies of contemporary consumption, which indicate the existence of multiple patterns and complex rationales directing modern consumers, questions have been raised about the extent to which we can talk about *one* Consumer Revolution. Is it meaningful to generalize about consumption by referring to whole societies and extensive periods in time, often drawing on only a limited number of transactions, individuals, social groups and types of objects?[39]

Work on the trials and errors of selling East India goods in Europe helps highlight the complexities of early-modern trade and the introduction of new goods to consumers. The unsuccessful attempts by the EIC to launch ready-made cotton clothes made in India on the London market in the 1680s and 1690s is one example. In spite of a business plan which involved targeting the low end of the market the scheme failed. One explanation for this failure had to do with the established role of linen in the making of undergarments; it was more durable and washed better than cotton.[40] Consumer education in the form of advice literature on the diverse range of qualities and types of textiles to use for quilts, bed hangings and curtains, was one way around the problem. In addition informal knowledge exchange within and between households helped introduce Indian cotton textiles to European consumers.[41] There was not necessarily always a competition between new and old, Asian and European materials. It has also been argued that linen helped popularize Indian cotton; the consumption of European-made linen or mixed linen and cotton textiles rose as Indian cotton textiles started to arrive on a large scale. The 'chameleon-like' ability of cotton to take on roles played by linen, as well as types of wool and silk textiles, also helps to explain the adoption of pure cotton textiles by European

consumers.[42] Once accepted, cotton was a versatile fibre; it could be made into light and white pieces for lining and undergarments, or heavy curtains around beds and windows. Equally important, it could be printed and painted in vivid colourfast colours. In other words it was a material the look of which could easily and quickly be adjusted to changing trends and differentiated markets.[43] Material and cultural aspects can in other words provide important and overlapping explanations for changes in consumption.

Another strand of criticism has highlighted the extent to which research about consumption in early-modern Europe has focused predominantly on developments in England. The Consumer Revolution has in many respects replaced the Industrial Revolution, explaining the rise of the West without critically discussing underpinning assumptions about progress and Western superiority. While the focus has shifted from cotton production to cotton consumption the focus still centres on England. As Craig Clunas has argued, more comparative histories across geographical areas, including for example China, help to problematize this tendency.[44] Larger comparative studies that include other parts of Europe have also helped generate a more complex picture of how Asian goods, like for example Indian cotton, were retailed and consumed across Europe.[45]

The growth in consumption has been seen not only as a revolution but also as part of a more general social and economic shift specific to the northwest of Europe. Jan de Vries's notion of an Industrious Revolution suggests that seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Europeans worked harder to obtain more goods; the ability of early-modern households to negotiate work and consumption has consequently become one focal point. In combination with an existence of urban networks and a prevalence of market institutions the Industrious Revolution also provides a backdrop for the Industrial Revolution. Linking the two revolutions to one another delivers an alternative chronology of change which explains the economic growth that occurred *before* the technological advances associated with the late eighteenth century, focusing particularly on the demand side of the economy. What becomes obsolete as part of the historical explanation is the notion of a Consumer Revolution as 'an exploding volume of purchased goods that jump started the growth of production'.[46] Consumption, according to de Vries, is instead seen as a symptom of changes emanating from negotiations taking place within the household, and its interaction with the wider world.

Widespread tea consumption among the poorer segments of British and Dutch society represents a change in industriousness, in combination

with changes in preference due to cultural and social influences, as well as a growth in long-distance trade. Expenditures and inventories listing teaware in plebeian families in England, North America and the Low Countries, as well as growing imports of cheap black tea, help trace the outlines of this development; as can the general shift away from ale and beer towards caffeinated and sweetened drinks in northwest Europe.[47] As we will explore in this book, this thirst for Chinese tea in the Atlantic world requires us to look at the role of the Scandinavian companies to make sense. But to what extent can a study of the Scandinavian China trade further our understanding of consumption patterns *in* the northerly parts of Europe?

Existing investigation of tea consumption in eighteenth-century Scandinavia has revealed little evidence of strong demand, with the possible exception of Denmark proper and Copenhagen. Danish newspapers reported on the arrival of tea, coffee and chocolate to Copenhagen in the 1660s, and a public tea house was in operation in 1689. Judging by the plays of Danish play writer Ludvig Holberg in the 1720s Bohea tea, a cheap black tea, and coffee, were familiar goods, regularly in demand in Copenhagen. Over the course of the eighteenth century there is also ample anecdotal evidence of tea and coffee being consumed, particularly in urban settings.[48] As Klas Rönnbäck has discussed, the Danish consumption of sugar, often used to sweeten caffeinated drinks, was also higher than the European average by the mid-eighteenth century. By the end of the century it was almost on a par with the average British consumption of nine kilograms per capita per year. The Danish of course had access to sugar from their colonies in the West Indies, but more importantly perhaps is the fact that real wages for unskilled workers were higher in Denmark, allowing them to purchase a wider range of 'new luxuries', including sugar. In this respect the wage economy of Denmark proper in the first half of the eighteenth century was more similar to that of the Dutch and the British than the rest of Europe. Rönnbäck also discusses the relatively high degree of urbanization in Denmark proper; twenty-one per cent of the Danish population lived in urban settings by the end of the eighteenth century. In Sweden the development looked distinctly different. The consumption of sugar increased from an average of a quarter of a kilogram per capita per year, in the first half of the century, to a level of one kilogram by the 1780s. The equivalent number for Swedes living in urban environments by the end of the eighteenth century was ten per cent.[49]

The existence of a North-South divide in the Baltic world, reflected by different levels of urbanisation and consumption of exotic groceries, is

indicated by other studies. Ragnhild Hutchison has demonstrated that Norway's eighteenth-century economy was largely shaped by a relative high degree of self-subsistence. When members of a household supplemented their living off the land with work in export sectors, such as fishing or forestry, they were foremost driven by the need to reduce risks associated with being too dependent on only one sector of the economy. In this respect there was no Industrious Revolution in eighteenth-century Norway; survival rather than luxury consumption was the *locus motive* for the majority.[50] Hutchison's results from mapping the consumption of exotic groceries corresponds with results from other works on eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Swedish consumption of tea as well as coffee. Tea consumption was, for example, marginal in the whole of northern Scandinavia with some exceptions, notably on the west coast of Sweden, close to Gothenburg where the large tea shipments from China were transferred to ships engaged in the inter-European trade routes. Tea drinking was otherwise largely confined to a social elite in both Norway and Sweden.[51] Coffee consumption was more common than tea but still quite negligible in the eighteenth century. Danish-Norwegian sumptuary laws suggest an uptake in the last two decades of the century. While Swedish consumption might have been higher, judging by the frequency of the publication of sumptuary laws, the real boom in both Norway and Sweden only took place in the early nineteenth century.[52] This shift in consumption corresponds to an established understanding that domestic demand for consumer goods in Sweden accelerated only from the 1820s onwards.[53]

But what about the other goods that came on the ships from China? As well as tea large investments were also made in porcelain and wrought silk. Recent work by Rikke Søndergaard Kristensen has helped illuminate a strong preference in Copenhagen for Chinese porcelain. Excavations of a city refuse dump reveal a ratio of one Chinese porcelain chard for every faience shard. Ninety per cent of the Chinese remains originated from the period of direct trade between Copenhagen and Canton.[54] With Danish society displaying consumer patterns somewhat similar to those of the Dutch Republic and England a high level of Chinese porcelain consumption in Copenhagen might not be surprising. Porcelain, tea, coffee, chocolate and sugar formed consumption 'bundles'; they received different characteristics when consumed in combination with one another rather than separately.[55]

But tea and porcelain also formed a logistical bundle. In the maritime trade between Europe and China chests with porcelain protected the damp sensitive tea at the bottom of the ships. It did not pollute the tea

with scents and smells, and it was heavy, well suited for ballast on the large East Indiamen. Since the Scandinavian companies imported vast amounts of tea for markets outside their domestic realm they were also, like the other European companies, importing large amounts of porcelain.[56] Once in Europe the markets for tea and porcelain were formed by different dynamics. Tea stocks needed to be replenished regularly in order to keep up with the growing demand; as a perishable good tea could not be stored too long without going stale, necessitating a regular traffic with China. Porcelain objects in contrast have a very different life span. Delicate, yet rarely showing signs of age, cups, saucers, plates, jugs and pots could survive for generations, if not centuries, if carefully handled. Moreover, in contrast to the tea trade, where China alone provided the European markets with caffeinated leaves, there was ample competition from European ceramic manufacturers.

Not surprisingly the re-export of Scandinavian imported porcelain with profit was not always possible. While wholesalers in tea in the Low Countries wanted Swedish imported Bohea they sometimes rejected porcelain. In 1748, for example, the Amsterdam-based wholesalers Pye & Cruikshank, advising a Scottish merchant trading with Swedish imported China goods on investments, wrote that porcelain 'for some years past been daily in declining [sic] & the quantity yearly brought home exceed by much the demand'.[57] It is also worth noticing that by the mid-eighteenth century French brandy, another common contraband, had replaced at least some of the porcelain as ballast in ships engaged in the intra-European smuggling trade. Brought from France to Copenhagen and Gothenburg, it now came to form the bottom leer in ships loaded with illicit tea destined for the British market.[58]

Where did the Swedish imported porcelain end up? Archaeological work in Gothenburg suggests that the consumption of blue and white porcelain was widespread socially.[59] Research on inventories also suggests a surprisingly high level of porcelain ownership among the lower social groups in Gothenburg compared to other areas of Sweden between 1750 and 1850.[60] But Gothenburg alone, a town of roughly 10,000 in the mid-eighteenth century, was not able to absorb all of the thirty to fifty million porcelain pieces the SEIC imported in the eighteenth century.[61] While the wider circulation and consumption of Chinese porcelain in the relatively low-caffeine consuming Sweden needs further work, it is likely that results will reflect as much on the logistical challenges of long-distance maritime trade as on domestic consumer preference. This is less the case with another category of good: travelling on top of the Scandinavian imported porcelain and tea were also large quantities of Chinese silk textiles.

In contrast to tea from China the consumption of imported textiles had a long legacy in Scandinavia. The historian Lili-Annè Aldman has recently argued that the Swedish textile market evolved broadly along the lines of other European markets in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. There was an increase in the types of textiles imported up until the middle of the eighteenth century, when the impact of stricter Swedish import regulations provided an impetus for domestic textile production.[62] Work on early-modern Danish and Norwegian textile trades suggests that subjects in the composite Danish state had access to a wide variety of textiles too. Camilla Luise Dahl and Piia Lempiäinen's study of probate records and inventories from urban retailers in seventeenth-century Denmark and Norway reveal a wide range of goods reflecting both on the traders' network and the clientele they catered for; the higher the social rank the more exotic goods they owned. Everyone seemed to have craved cotton; by the end of the century cotton textiles were regularly traded goods, most of them labelled 'East India'. Another notable change was the increasing level of ready-made goods, including 'dressing gowns of red and white "East-India" chintz and children's jackets of cotton'.[63] Citizens of Copenhagen were of course at the heart of the Asian textile trade: newspapers advertised the public sale of Indian and Chinese textiles brought in by the DAC. Studies of textile advertising and consumption in Denmark and Norway also suggest a wide circulation of goods although there are few quantitative studies that actually measure the extent of consumption.[64]

To sum up, different goods and sources tell us different and not always compatible stories about consumption. The Scandinavia history of colonial groceries suggests a North-South divide. Eighteenth-century Denmark proper seems in tune with developments closer to the 'North Sea epicentre' identified by de Vries.[65] The story of the caffeinated and sweetened drinks in northerly Scandinavia also suggests that fundamental changes only took place in the early nineteenth century, a date which also corresponds to a general understanding of when the domestic demand for consumer goods accelerated. Textile trade and consumption in the North tells a more complex history spanning a longer period; there are examples of a large variation of textiles, both imported and domestically produced, in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. It is in the light of these circumstances that we should turn to the import of Chinese silk textiles to Scandinavia.

The second starting point for this study is that Chinese silk, in contrast to tea and possibly also porcelain, is the most promising material culture that can help illuminate consumption in eighteenth-century Scandinavia. Concentrating on Chinese silk textiles means diverging

from the traditional account, which has used colourful cotton textiles from Asia to tell stories of how consumption patterns and production lines changed in Europe. It has recently been claimed that the distribution of cotton textiles in Sweden after 1790 provided a visual 'democratization' process, a change which can also be detected in changing meanings of the word 'motley' ('brokig'). Earlier associations linked the term to an aristocratic consumption of multiple coloured silk textiles; by the turn of the new century it evoked notions of unruly behaviour and social disorder.[66] How does the import of Chinese silk textiles fit into this story of colour and social change? A study of the quantities, qualities and colour compositions of the silk cargoes brought home by the SEIC and the DAC will help us trace markets, fashions, trends and demands local to northern Europe.

Embedded here is also a history of the interplay between Asian goods, European fashion and domestic production that brings us to the heart of another debate about the role of Asian goods in Europe, explaining historical change within a different chronological and geographical setting.

Useful knowledge, material culture and change

Early-modern European trade, consumption and production form part of a discussion concerned with changes on a global scale. The historian Kenneth Pomeranz's notion of the 'Great Divergence', his discussion of why Asia and Europe developed differently from the late eighteenth-century onwards, has shaped much of the recent debate.[67] A wide range of different issues have been studied but the role of technology, scholarship and skills, and what determines the transfer and development of 'useful knowledge', have been areas which have received particular attention.[68]

Maxine Berg's contribution to this discussion takes Eurasian trade and material culture as a starting point. Berg places early-modern Asian products, such as porcelain and Indian cotton next to European goods, thereby providing a framework for understanding the historical change that generated new consumer habits *and* production systems in Europe. Early-modern Asian textile and ceramic production had long been adapted to supplying large overseas export markets with a wide range of diversified goods. European consumers were in this respect only an additional group to cater for. The latter were, however, mesmerized by the goods from Asia, their exotic designs, the materials and the unfamiliar methods used to make them. The desire these goods evoked was not

restricted to consumers: European manufacturers and scholars were busy copying, substituting and investigating these Asian goods. The aesthetic of imitation was regarded as a hallmark of creativity in eighteenth-century Europe. It also involved using new and different raw materials to those used by Asian craftsmen. Imitation and substitution was central to institutions such as The Royal Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce in London, as well as the more informal setting of the Birmingham-based Lunar Society.[69]

The tradition of imitation and borrowing is of course part of a much longer history of Eurasian exchange. Techniques of using tin oxide to create a soft matted white glaze on European earthenware evolved in response to exposure to Chinese porcelain in the Middle East in the ninth century. From here it spread to Europe where it laid the foundation for Maiolica production in the south and Delftware in the north. Meissen, in mineral rich Saxony, became the first place in Europe where hard-paste porcelain of similar quality to the Chinese was successfully produced in the first decade of the eighteenth century. Porcelain manufacturing evolved across the continent of Europe, particularly in German-speaking areas where heads of principalities granted patronage to manufacturers, and in return were provided with porcelain objects with which to fill their palaces. The most dynamic market for European manufactured ceramics was, however, Britain, where hard-paste porcelain production became much less central. The British market and those connected with it developed a taste for a range of new pottery products using alternative materials and methods to the Chinese. These products were designed and produced in the Midlands, by manufacturers such as Wedgwood. As markets for these English goods expanded, the blue and white porcelain from China started to lose ground; not only in Britain but also across Atlantic and European markets.[70]

A somewhat similar history can be told about the shift of cotton production from Asia to Europe. Cotton was not an alien material to Europeans: together with linen, cotton had long been used in the manufacture of fustian textiles. The novelty of the goods from South Asia was that some were made exclusively from cotton; moreover some had colours and patterns that could be washed without losing their lustre and vividness. The growing popularity of cotton did not escape those engaged in producing textiles using traditional materials; the craze for printed and painted cotton generated different responses across Europe. In France all printing on textiles was banned, creating a huge contraband market for domestically produced as well as imported calicoes or 'Indies'.[71] Britain allowed for the consumption of plain

cotton textiles decorated with domestic print. New technologies, like the use of copper plates, which had long been used in the book printing trade, were applied to the transfer of patterns onto fabrics. New mordants and dyes that produced waterproof colours were developed. Some of these technologies were invented while others reached Europe from the Ottoman Empire, via Armenian trade networks long engaged with the production and export of cotton textiles. The cotton industry also tapped into existing global trade networks which brought dyewoods from Latin America and indigo from across the globe to Europe. Competition between European states, in combination with legislation that promoted domestic production over imports, meant that cotton industries evolved across Europe.[72] The greatest progress was however made in Britain. The cotton mills that were built in the northwest of England, fuelled with steam power, provide an iconic image of the beginning of the industrial era, the rise of the second empire and new forms of mass consumption.

Compared to the eighteenth-century developments in Britain and France, Scandinavian attempts at imitating Asian products are small in scale and somewhat insignificant.[73] There is no immediate link between the manufacturing of textiles and pottery in the eighteenth century and Scandinavian industrialization in the nineteenth century. There was also no eighteenth-century Scandinavian group equivalent to British middle-class consumers generating demand for the 'new luxuries', which also shaped fashion and trends internationally.[74] While the material history of Scandinavian production and consumption offers a somewhat less rich canvas compared to the British, the intellectual history and the history of political economy provides an alternative avenue through which to explore change. The study of early-modern political economy has a particularly strong tradition in Sweden; historical circumstances, including a higher degree of freedom of speech, created more debate than in Denmark.[75] Another reason why the subject is particularly strong in Sweden is its connection to prominent members of the scholarly community, centred on the naturalist Carolus Linnaeus.

Linnaeus was one of the founders of the Swedish Royal Academy of Sciences, who with his many students dominated the work of the academy, which was frequently consulted on domestic manufacturing and substituting projects.[76] The political economy dimension of Linnaeus's work has lately been discussed in more detail by Lisbeth Koerner, who has used the context of cameralism as a starting point to investigate Linnaeus's understanding of nature and œconomia.[77] The case of cameralism, a school of political economy which evolved out of

the experiences of land-locked continental states, is particularly illustrative of how ideas of import substitution developed. With little access to overseas colonies an interest evolved in the sixteenth century in the exploration of natural wealth at home, finding domestic substitutes for exotic goods. Natural history, incorporating mineralogy, zoology and botany, was a key discipline to cameralism; it promoted the exploration of continental landscapes, their geologies, habitats and biotopes, and how they could be exploited.[78]

Andre Wakefield, in the context of eighteenth-century German political economy, has suggested that cameralism should also be understood as a discourse which created legitimacy. Drawing on a knowledge of native natural history, cameralists, who were state bureaucrats, produced descriptions of the state's resources and manuals on how to exploit them. This resulted in a genre which helped to legitimate ultimately the government, the state and its ruler.[79] Koerner's discussion of Linnaeus follows a similar critical reading as Wakefield's. The focus is not on Linnaeus as the great reformer of scientific nomenclature, but instead Koerner uses Linnaeus's economic projects as a point of departure for exploring how he perceived the future, a vision which involved a minimum of transnational trade, and a maximum of self-sufficiency. Aside from Linnaeus's attempt to reform the relationship between climate and living organisms, as he insisted in trying to tame the latter to conform to the former, little in this Linnaean world ever changed. In Koerner's writing Linnaeus is portrayed as a somewhat aloof individual, unable to perceive his own or nature's limits.

Recent German and Swedish research on natural history and cameralism, and the discussion of imitation and technological developments in Britain, provide two very different accounts of material and intellectual circumstances generating an impetus for change.[80] Cameralism is made to represent the historical experiences of being landlocked, it is presented as inward looking in that it legitimates state power, and the state's task to exploit domestic resources; the focus is on failed projects. The discussion of British development in contrast focuses on knowledge in the hands of the entrepreneur and global merchant, and the resources and opportunities provided by access to colonies and exploitation of global trade. It is a history which points forward in time to the rise of Britain as an industrial power in the nineteenth century.

Lost in the accounts is the extent to which both of these 'knowledge traditions' stemmed from a common root, deriving from a European scholarly tradition, a Republic of Letters where natural history was a central feature. The third starting point for this study is this shared

scholarly culture, particularly concerning natural history, which provides us with an alternative chronology and geography of materiality and change to those discussed above. As the examples of Swedish naturalists scanning domestic flora and fauna for material with which to substitute and replicate the taste and look of Asian goods suggest, natural history can provide a framework by which we can explore the encounter between local and global material cultures. Moreover, taking a broader geographical and chronological approach, it is also possible to link the scholarly developments in north Europe to a different point of change, to the second scientific revolution and the expansion of European colonial influence in the nineteenth century. The latter involves thinking about the role of scholars engaged in transferring tea from China to India, as well as linking eighteenth-century natural dyes to nineteenth-century synthetic ones.

Outline of the book

As suggested above, today's Denmark and Sweden only partially resemble the early-modern versions of these kingdoms. Sweden in the eighteenth century referred not only to Sweden proper, but also to what today is Finland, as well Pomerania on the southern shores of the Baltic Sea. Eighteenth-century Denmark was an even more complex realm; it included Denmark proper, Norway, the Duchies of Schleswig and Holstein, Iceland, Greenland and the Faroe Islands in the North Atlantic; what are today the Virgin Islands in the West Indies; and smaller trading stations and areas on the Indian Coromandel coast and on the west coast of Africa, in present-day Guinea. With a few exceptions when Sweden and Denmark are referred to in this book they denote the northern European part of these realms, what today constitutes four countries: Denmark, Sweden, Norway and Finland.

While eighteenth-century Denmark and Sweden were very different geographical entities not only compared with today but also with one another, they did have a lot in common. In Chapter 1 these similarities will be explored to enable the writing of *one* history of the Scandinavian trade with China. My focus will be on how the Scandinavian trade was organized in Asia, the extent to which Scandinavian imported Asian goods were re-exported to other markets in Europe, and issues to do with neutrality and long-distance trade. Chapter 1 will also provide a background to the opening of direct trade between Scandinavia and China in the early 1730s, drawing on not only domestic developments but also the broader European context, foremost the folding of

the Ostend Company. An overview of literature on the Scandinavian companies and the sources used in this study is also be provided.

Britain was the largest market for tea in eighteenth-century Europe. It was supplied by the English East India Company and tea smugglers, as well as dealers in second-hand tea and fake tea. The relationship between this very diverse and dynamic British tea market and the Scandinavian trade forms the starting point of Chapter 2. European competition over cheap black tea in Canton and Scandinavian strategies of purchasing, blending and packing tea are discussed in the first half of the chapter. Competition was rife in Europe too, as tea from all the continental East India companies was put up for sale on the return of the East Indiamen from Canton. The second part of the chapter discusses the wholesale market for tea and the role of merchants located in the Low Countries and will deal with Danish and Swedish as well as Dutch and French imported tea. Providing for the large clandestine British tea market it was here in the Low Countries that the British mass-market taste for tea was defined in the middle third of the eighteenth century.

The Scandinavian companies did not only supply consumers outside their own borders, and the case of the Chinese wrought silk imported by the SEIC and DAC tells a different story. Chapter 3 starts off with a careful examination of the types of textiles that made up Scandinavian silk imports, concluding that more than half of the piece goods reaching Scandinavia were made up of low-budget silk textiles used mainly in clothing. Drawing on contemporary debates, regulations and implementations of sumptuary legislation the next two sections discuss the extent to which the wrought silk imported from China was consumed in Scandinavia and how this large influx of Chinese silk was perceived. A closer study of the colour nomenclature and the assortment of colours of the silk situates the Chinese silk trade within the context of European fashion and Scandinavian preferences. Taken together the results from this chapter suggest that the Scandinavian people had begun to turn 'motley' long before the arrival of cotton textiles on a large scale.

Chapter 4 traces the effects of the Asian trade on natural philosophy and political economy in eighteenth-century Scandinavia on the wider context of European scholarship, colonial expansion and rising consumption. Linnaeus's attempts to grow tea in Sweden and to substitute Chinese tea with domestic herbs form the first theme. By following the links between the work of Linnaeus, developments in late eighteenth-century British botany and the establishment of tea gardens in India the study of the business of substituting and transferring tea

is extended forward in time to the first half of the nineteenth century. Import substitution in the form of domestic sources for dyes which could create colours similarly vivid to those on imported textiles from other parts of Europe, as well as from Asia, forms the second theme of the chapter. By focusing on colour nomenclature the chapter not only traces a disintegration of the early-modern connection between dyes and colours but also the rise of a more fashion-conscious public before the arrival of synthetic dyes on a large scale in the middle of the nineteenth century.

In Chapter 5 we will return to the different historical contexts discussed above and how the results from this book can influence future research on Chinese tea and silk production for export markets, consumption of Asian textiles in the very north of Europe, and the connection between consumption, production, exploration and exploitation.

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1
The Scandinavian Trade with China

Excitement, speculations and rumours

Excitement, speculations and rumours swirled around the world of the East India trade in the early 1730s. The supercargoes of the Ostend Company worked their last season in Canton in 1730, although the closure of the trade route between Asia and the southern parts of the Low Countries had been on the agenda since 1727. This was not due to its unprofitability, but rather the opposite: together with the English the Ostenders had managed to capture eighty per cent of the growing European market in tea.[1] Trading mainly with China the Ostenders were able to run a low-budget operation; in contrast to the Dutch and the English they did not need to fund an extensive system of factories and forts across Asia. Moreover, the Ostend Company focused on tea at a time when the European craving for caffeinated drinks seemed to have no limits. The game changer was diplomatic pressure: the Dutch and the British demanded that Charles VI, the Habsburg emperor who since the Peace of Utrecht in 1713 had ruled the southern Low Countries, close down the General India Company as it was formally known. In return they agreed to recognize his daughter, Maria Theresa, as the legal heir to his throne.[2]

Beyond the world of diplomacy the big question was: where would the former investors in the Ostend trade now turn? In addition to the vast amounts of capital that had been freed many mariners with the knowledge of how to conduct direct trade with China were looking for new positions. In a draft to his memorandum 'Most respectful and humble thoughts on the condition and origin of trade' the Danish author Otto Thott (1703–1785) speculated on the possibilities of luring the Ostend money and men northwards, to Copenhagen. Thott

was aware of the connections already established between the Ostend people and Sweden; the Swedish East India Company was founded in 1731, but it was only one among several different projects that in one way or another involved Ostend know-how and capital. In 1730 the former Ostender Pieter van Hurck had been employed as supercargo on the first Danish direct expedition to China, ahead of the rebirth of the Danish East India Company under its new name the Danish Asiatic Company in 1732. Several plans had also been made involving the Danish Company and Ostend capital, turning Danish Altona and Hamburg into new emporia for Asian goods in northern Europe. Meanwhile the Ostenders had tried to pursue their business with secret expeditions under foreign flags.[3]

Realpolitik mattered too of course; Dutch warning shots fired in the Straits of Sunda met the first SEIC ship returning from Canton, causing a diplomatic row between Sweden and the Dutch Republic. An even greater commotion was provoked by the second expedition of the newcomers; a joint British-French military attack on the first Swedish expedition on the Coromandel Coast, in Porto-Novo, had profound effects on the relations between Sweden and Britain. The former complained loudly and sought compensation for the loss of property. While France soon obliged, Great Britain hesitated; the number of British born men who had invested in, and manned the Swedish expedition caused resentment. It also represented a breach with the monopoly of the English East India Company. Only in 1740, when the Swedish Company agreed not employ any more British subjects in its service, allowing for those already in service to remain so, could an agreement be reached regarding the 'Porto-Novo affair'.[4]

Several processes help explain the open-endedness of the East India trade in the 1730s that is reflected in Thott's comments. Most important was the start of direct trade with China, from where tea soon became the most important good. Beginning in the late 1690s French and English ships arrived at Chinese ports such as Amoy, Chusan and Canton. In 1715 the Ostenders moved in, setting an example for the others. The low-key role played by the Dutch reflected the strategy taken by the VOC to encourage the so called 'junk trade' between China and Batavia, the Indonesian centre for the VOC's Asian enterprise. Junks from Canton and other ports had long brought goods, including tea, to Batavia, where they were exchanged for pepper from India and other goods in demand in China. This trade route reduced the need for silver as a means of payment, something the Dutch were desperately short of. However, disagreements with the Chinese traders on what price to pay

for tea in the late 1710s brought a halt to the trade, meaning that just when the consumption of tea was taking off in Europe the Dutch were left behind their main competitor.[5] Dutch experiments with direct trade between Europe and China did however take place: Ostend supercargoes were employed to man the first ships from the Republic to China in 1728. But in 1734 the trade was re-organized again, and it was now up to Batavia to send ships to Canton, some of which went directly to Europe while others sailed back to Batavia.[6]

With French trade also irregular it is perhaps not surprising that the English and the Ostend companies dominated the supply of tea to Europe at the beginning of the century.[7] There were attempts at direct trade with China by other Europeans too; in 1704 the Danish ship *Prins Wilhelm* arrived in Tranquebar with the power of attorney to sale onwards to China. Without means of payment, or goods suitable to trade with, the plans were never realized. The Great Northern War (1700–1721) disrupted further attempts, although the English rented Danish ships to use in the country trade with China.[8] We do not know whether the buccaneers operating around Madagascar wanted to specialize in the tea trade. In the 1710s a group of them approached Charles XII (1682–1718), the Swedish King, promising half a million pounds sterling and twenty-five armed vessels in return for protection. Failing to receive a quick response the Madagascar pirates tried their luck in Denmark, only to return to Sweden in 1718. This time the proposal involved running an East India Company on behalf of Sweden, with Gothenburg as the base. The death of the King and the general uncertainties following the end of the war among other things ensured these plans were never realized.[9]

The new trade with China, and particularly that in tea, thus attracted a wide range of interests, and different proposals and approaches were discussed and tested during the first decades of the eighteenth century. Charted companies continued to provide the form for the trade; the early-modern states in Europe offered institutional settings which lent stability and legality to the businesses. But as the closure of the Ostend Company demonstrated, competition between the companies could spill over into the world of diplomacy. Chartered companies could be sacrificed in return for other objectives.

Competition between the different European powers and their East India companies was also acted out in markets across the Eurasian continent. In the early 1720s English supercargoes were instructed to buy as much tea as they could if they arrived in Canton before the Ostenders: 'Cost what it will we must try to make these Interlopers

sick of their voyages for tea'. They were even instructed to buy 'not so good tea' although they had to leave the 'really bad' behind.[10] Similar strategies were employed by the Dutch Company in order to oust their neighbours from the tea trade: 'The motto was the greatest possible purchases to the detriment of the Ostend Company'.[11] The Ostenders retaliated with similar tactics: in 1720 Chinese merchants told the staff of the EIC how the Low Country traders had bought more tea than they could carry home.[12]

Cutting tea prices at home was another strategy employed by the English in 1721; it was a means by which to combat the large amount of tea that had started to arrive in Britain as contraband.[13] The porousness of the British market reflected the failure of the monopolies granted to the different East India companies. Coastguards and other control institutions were unable to prevent goods moving across borders, between realms of the different companies, and onwards to consumers via wholesalers and retailers engaged in both the 'fair' or regulated, and the 'free' or clandestine trade.[14] Different import duties provided the economic rationale for the movement of goods. Before 1784 the British tax on tea was high: 'rarely below 80 and frequently over 100 per cent of the original cost'.[15] With duties of one per cent in Denmark, or two and a half per cent if the tea was consumed inside Denmark, the profits that could be made by re-exporting and smuggling the goods were potentially very high.[16] Sudden changes to taxes and tea prices in Britain, or on the Continent, could however easily change the trade or disturb the established clandestine routes. The high prices sought for its tea in 1728 worried for example the Ostend Company as it could potentially allow the English Company to appropriate its domestic market, hitherto largely supplied by continental tea.[17]

Other events created turbulence, which influenced the early-eighteenth-century Eurasian trade too. Low profit levels for the VOC in the beginning of the 1720s were explained by reference to the South Sea Bubble in England, the Mississippi Bubble in France and problems for the Dutch West India Company; orders from abroad ceased to arrive in the Dutch Republic.[18] Escaping debtors and a possible prison sentence for debts generated in the South Sea Bubble, Colin Campbell (1686–1757) left London for Ostend, where he came to serve as a supercargo for seven years before he moved to Gothenburg to help set up the Swedish Company. Originally from Scotland, Campbell was one of several Scots engaged in the Ostend and the Swedish trade. Some, like Campbell's good friend Charles Irvine (1693–1771), had connections with the Jacobite circles supporting the Stuarts as the rightful pretenders

to the English throne. Irvine left Scotland for France in the 1710s, when he became engaged in the French East India trade. From there he went to Gothenburg to join Campbell; both of them invested heavily in the expeditions of the SEIC. They also acted as supercargoes in several of the expeditions to Asia.[19]

Campbell and Irvine were also, as the following chapters will detail, deeply involved in the re-exportation of the goods that started to arrive in Gothenburg from Asia from 1733 onwards. It is well known that Scottish merchant networks traded across the Asian and Atlantic worlds, inside and outside the British sphere of influence.[20] In the Eurasian world of trade it was not a unique phenomenon, and Dutch merchants had been instrumental in setting up and running the Danish East India trade more than a hundred years earlier.[21] There were movements in other directions too: the VOC was manned by Scandinavian sailors, with the great majority being subjects under the Danish crown.[22]

Histories of the Scandinavian East India companies

The broader context of the early eighteenth century, the trial and error of the early China trade, the movement of investments and know-how, the porous European market and the general economic and political situation in Europe and Asia is sometimes lost in the chronicles of the European and Scandinavian East India companies. One notable exception is Kristof Glamann's work on the Dutch Asiatic trade between 1620 and 1740, which draws on a wide range of sources contextualizing the business of the VOC. In this respect Glamann is following in the footstep of Louis Dermigny and his classic study of the European China trade.[23] More recent studies focusing on Canton by, for example, Paul Van Dyke are also the result of a similarly broad reading of sources located across Europe, including Copenhagen and Stockholm.[24] Among works by scholars who have studied the Scandinavian companies more specifically those by Ole Feldbæk stand out; particularly his monograph *India Trade under the Danish Flag*, which illuminates the interconnectedness between the Danish Company and the remittance trade of the Anglo-Indians and other Europeans who made their fortunes in late eighteenth-century India.[25] Leos Müller has provided similarly contextual, albeit shorter, accounts of the operations of the SEIC during the same period.[26] Edited volumes have also helped deliver a broader picture, as have larger meta-studies such as Jan de Vries calculations of the total East Indian trade, although the latter only takes into account half of the Swedish expeditions to Asia.[27]

In much other research, however, the main focus has been on the European companies in their national setting, and on internal changes to organizations and regulations. Such an approach has of course many advantages too. By providing overviews and chronologies of the companies such studies help illuminate organizational changes from within and changing relationships between states and companies. The history of the Swedish Company has typically been divided into periods that correspond to the royal charters which regulated the company. The first three charters, covering the periods 1731–1746, 1746–1766, and 1766–1786, are the most significant. All in all twenty-five expeditions were sent during the first charter, thirty-five during the second and thirty-eight in the third.[28] During the fourth and the fifth charters, 1786–1806 and 1806–1821, there was a decline in the number of voyages. Thirty-one more expeditions set out from Gothenburg, but none after 1804.[29] Asides from charters another important shift in the history of the company took place in 1753 when a permanent fund was created, meaning that the company was transformed into a joint-stock company with transferable shares. Before then each voyage had been an independent endeavour.[30]

There are some Swedish accounts of the whole history of the Swedish Company, most significant of which is Sven Kjellberg's rich study.[31] The most in-depth academic study in English, the work of Christian Koninckx, focuses almost exclusively on the first and second charter of the SEIC. It takes into account an impressively wide range of aspects including social and maritime dimensions, as well as the economic context.[32] More recent writings by Müller are mainly concerned with the second half of the eighteenth century.[33]

Studies of the Danish East India trade typically starts 1616, the first year of the first charter, or 1620 when Tranquebar (today Tharangambadi), a trading station on the Coromandel Coast, was acquired. Eighteen ships set out from Copenhagen between 1618 and 1639. Some were intended to be engaged in the shipping of goods between ports in Asia. The return of Asian goods was meagre, however, and only seven ships made it back before the end of 1637; after that little was heard from the trading station in India. Reflecting the decline in trade the company was officially abolished in 1650, but in 1670 a new charter was set up. Between then and 1727 approximately forty-five Asian cargoes were put up for sale in Copenhagen. The next significant year in the history of the Danish trade is 1732 when the Asiatic Company was founded and the direct trade with China started in earnest. The first charter of the DAC lasted until 1772 and saw the sale of 98 cargoes in Copenhagen.

1772 marks not only the beginning of a new charter but also the year the DAC lost its monopoly over the trade with India (but not China), which lead to a boom in the Asian trade. 1777 is another significant year, as it is when the Danish state took over the administration of the trading stations in India. The profits of the trade with Asia increased significantly after 1732, but even more so in the three decades predating 1807, a period traditionally referred to as the *florissante periode* or the flourishing period. All 124 Indian and Chinese cargoes brought to Europe by the DAC were put up for sale between 1772 and 1807. If we add the private trade with India after 1772 and other trade with Java and Mauritius, all in all 350 Asian cargoes made it to Copenhagen between 1772 and 1807.[34]

As in the case of the Swedish Company there are only a few studies that cover the whole history of the Danish trade with Asia. A short but comprehensive account of the trade of the different chartered companies operating in Asia between 1620 and 1807 was published by Feldbæk in 1991.[35] It summarizes much of the research undertaken on the company up until the early 1990s; much less work on the Danish trade with Asia has been done since then. The most important exception is Diller's monograph, which covers a similarly long time span, 1616 to 1845, and synthesizes and summarizes much of the previous work on the history of the activities of the Danes in this part of the world.[36] Accounts which concentrate on shorter periods of the history of the Danish trade have been written by Glamann, Erik Gøbel, Aage Rasch and Poul Sveistrup.[37] Rasch, Kamma Struwe and Gunnar Olsen have also each authored a volume on the history of Danish activities in India, which form part of a series focusing on the colonial history of Denmark.[38]

The histories of the Scandinavian companies form an integrated part of many other histories stretching beyond trade and colonial history. Although, as my Introduction indicated, the link between the Scandinavian companies and European mass consumption has not been explored there are several studies focusing on elite consumption and particularly Chinoiserie in the North. In Tove Clemmens and Mogens Mackesprang's work the story of the Danish Eurasian trade forms the narrative backdrop to a study of Chinese influences and artefacts in Denmark.[39] Similarly the SEIC is given significant attention in accounts of Swedish Chinoiserie in Swedish royal settings.[40] Material remains of the Swedish Company among other aspects are also at the forefront in a volume edited by Kristina Söderpalm, which also contains valuable contributions to the history of the company auctions in Gothenburg.[41] Another context in which the histories of the Scandinavian companies

have been discussed is within intellectual history and the history of sciences. The role of the SEIC in providing an infrastructure for the exploration of nature outside Europe and the generation of images of China inside Sweden has also been discussed in several studies.[42] In the case of the Danish Company it is particularly the work of missionaries in the Tranquebar area that has been explored by historians interested in early-modern scholarship.[43]

The same but different

Many of the works listed above and in the Introduction have been pivotal for framing and writing this book. But this study marks a new direction; namely a bifocal approach where the histories of the Danish *and* the Swedish companies are combined and compared, allowing for conclusions to be drawn about the Scandinavian trade in a global context, consumption in a European context, and northerly responses to the Eurasian trade.

Two limitations in terms of the scope of this study enable us to write a joint history of the Danish and the Swedish East-India trade. First the study will focus exclusively on the trade with China. As the discussion above indicates, the early eighteenth century saw a great Pan-European excitement about the prospect of establishing direct maritime trade links with China. The China trade had been the most prosperous part of the Ostend trade; not surprisingly it became the main centre of attention in the new Swedish Company. Only six of the sixty-one expeditions sent out by the Swedish Company touched on India during the first two charters (1731–1766).[44] Likewise, the prospect of opening a direct trade route with China invigorated the Danish trade ahead of the launch of the Danish Asiatic Company. This was rightly so, as seventy-five per cent of the profit made between 1732 and 1771 originated from the China trade route.[45] The organization of Danish trade with Asia makes it possible to separate out the China trade from the rest of the business. Only seven out of sixty-eight Danish ships destined for Canton made stopovers in South Asia between 1732 and 1772. The long term Danish presence in India, its control over factories on the Coromandel Coast and in Bengal was therefore of limited importance to the Danish China trade, which was also much more profitable.[46]

Secondly the focus will be on the first four decades of the trade, from the 1730s until the 1760s. The effects of the opening up of private trade and the growth in the remittance trade, which in the second half of eighteenth century came to influence much of the trade

with both China and India, particularly for the Danish Company, will consequently not distort the investigation. Neither will the growth in the smuggling of opium into China by the European companies, and its implications in terms of shifting the power in favour of the Europeans.[47]

It is important to underline that this is not foremost a comparative study; differences between the Danish and Swedish histories will be highlighted but the principal aim is not to investigate their dissimilarities and similarities. Rather, the starting point is that a joint study of the companies can help illuminate both the significance of the Scandinavian trade in wider contexts, and its Nordic uniqueness. Circumstances specific to the Scandinavian companies make such a bifocal approach possible; foremost among these is that the Danish and the Swedish companies had more in common with each other than with the other companies engaged in the Eurasian trade. Compared to the main European competitors the SEIC and DAC were small players. More importantly Sweden and Denmark were neutral in many of the conflicts that came to shape the eighteenth century, both in Europe and in the rest of the world. This allowed the Scandinavian companies to carry on trade without interruption during the many wars that raged in the period, as well as enabled them to take advantage of the reduction in competition in the markets in Asia and Europe.[48]

Moreover, the Scandinavian trade with Asia was largely about re-exporting. Although the discussion in the Introduction suggests that South Scandinavia, and Denmark proper, might have had levels of consumption and industriousness closer to that in the Dutch Republic and England than the more northerly regions, the DAC still re-exported the great majority of the goods it brought to Copenhagen: seventy-seven per cent between 1734 and 1752, and as much as eighty-one per cent between 1753 and 1770.[49] From the mid-1750s and onwards the equivalent figure for Sweden was ninety per cent or more.[50] When the tea trade boomed, as in 1782, the value of the re-export of SEIC goods equalled seventy-seven per cent of the total Swedish export or 4.1 million out of 5.3 million rix-dollar. This was up from between twenty and thirty per cent of the total re-export in the late 1730s.[51] The combined value of the Asian cargo put up for sale in Copenhagen in 1782 was 5.8 million Danish rix-dollars. Only after 1800 did the total Danish public revenue surpass such sums.[52]

Gothenburg and Copenhagen, the two locations for this enormous import and re-export business, were however very different cities, occupying different places in the political, administrative and economic

spaces of Denmark and Sweden. Copenhagen was the hub of a conglomerate state stretching across the North Atlantic, the West Indies, the West Coast of Africa and Asia. With a population of 83,000 in 1769 it was by far the largest city in the Danish state. It also ranked high in the Baltic region; only the rapidly expanding St Petersburg was bigger, although Stockholm, with a population of 69,000 was not that much smaller.[53] Copenhagen was not only a capital city but also an administrative centre; Danish chartered companies engaged with long distance trade in the North Atlantic, Africa and the West Indies had their headquarters there. Colonial goods had to be brought to Copenhagen before being shipped onwards to, for example, Norway or the Duchies. Directing the movement of goods was the idea of the conglomerate state as self-providing system. From 1735 onwards Norway was for example only allowed to import grain from within the Danish realm, which meant from Denmark proper, Schleswig and Holstein, who generally but not always produced a surplus.[54] But Copenhagen was also promoted as a market providing other parts of Europe with exotic goods, something the history of the Asian trade demonstrates. From the start the emphasis was on creating a regular trade with the East. Although different patterns of shipping evolved over time, with Danish flagged expeditions setting out eastwards from, for example, Ostend, as well as westwards from Bengal, one condition was not negotiable: the official policy was that Copenhagen was to remain the only European market place for Asian goods arriving on Danish flagged ships.[55]

Although a centre of a diocese and a main port on the West coast Gothenburg was in comparison with Copenhagen a small city; its population by the middle of the eighteenth century was only 10,000. Swedish iron, timber and tar were the traditional export goods shipped out from Gothenburg. From the middle of the eighteenth century the export of herring and cod liver oil ('tran') increased. Returning ships brought goods from the Mediterranean and southern Europe, salt and wine; grain and textiles arrived from northern Europe and England. In terms of value, however, the East India goods dominated the Gothenburg trade from the 1730s and onwards.[56] Gothenburg merchants together with Ostend people were central in initiating and running the SEIC during the first charter. The growing influence of Stockholm merchants is visible, however, from the period of the second charter, although one should not over emphasize the divide since many Swedish merchant houses were represented in both cities aside from being connected via family links and personal networks. From the start the SEIC was controversial; the large imports of Chinese silk before

the mid-1750s caused an uproar among dealers and manufacturers of textiles, many of whom operated from and in Stockholm. The opening of the company office in the capital and more governmental scrutiny during the period of the third charter marked the growing influence of Stockholm.[57] Before the Great Northern War (1700–1721) severely diminished Sweden's influence over the Baltic area, the latter had been promoted as an area which should sustain itself, with Stockholm playing a role similar to that of Copenhagen discussed above as the hub of trade and traffic. Eighteenth-century Stockholm was still important; all exports from the area north of the capital were for example gathered up in staple towns, before being shipped to Stockholm from where they were exported.[58] Gothenburg, south of Stockholm, was allowed both to export and import goods. In the political geography of eighteenth-century Sweden, however, Gothenburg, the first headquarters of the SEIC, played only a minor role.

While the competition between Gothenburg and Stockholm in domestic developments constitutes one geography in which the Swedish Company formed a reference point, other geographies with a southwestern orientation mattered too. Foreign investors in the SEIC expeditions and shares, and in the goods the company brought back, were very important. Secrecy surrounded those who invested in the Swedish Company but fragmented pieces of information that survive suggest a high level of investment from abroad. Forty per cent of the capital needed to finance *Drottningen af Swerige* and *Stockholm*, which set out in 1745, came from the Low Countries, and most of this from the Southern Netherlands.[59] Studies of the tea trade indicate strong connections between traders in the Dutch Republic and the Austrian Netherlands up until the second half of the eighteenth century.[60] A list of shareholders from the third charter does, however, suggest a shift in ownership had taken place. By then a small group of merchant and merchant houses in Stockholm and Gothenburg owned seventy-seven per cent of the shares.[61]

In Denmark a reverse development took place, with an increase in non-domestic shareholding over the course of the century. When the DAC was set up in 1732 the great majority of shareowners belonged to the wealthy Danish elite; the royal family invested in the business, as did courtiers, the nobility and civil servants. Fifteen years later seven per cent of the investors, or thirteen people, were non-Danish subjects; all in all they owed less than five per cent of the shares. By 1773 this group had increased both in number and influence, now owning thirty per cent of the shares in the DAC. Many of the investors came from the

Dutch Republic and the Southern Netherlands, and some owned shares in the Swedish Company too.[62]

Danish merchants dominated the Copenhagen wholesale trade in Asian goods; only they were allowed to bid on the goods at the East India auctions. Their trade was, however, heavily dictated by the orders placed on them by their commercial contacts across Europe.[63] Tellingly, the DAC sales catalogues were printed in German as well as Danish.[64] The first surviving SEIC sales catalogue printed in Swedish is from 1747, earlier ones were also in German. In contrast to the Danish public sales the Swedish sales were open to anyone. Handbills in German summarizing the goods put up for sale in Gothenburg were dispersed across northern Europe with the aim of attracting buyers. Foreign merchants and traders also received half a per cent reduction on their winning bids at auction, in order to cover their travelling costs.[65]

The first SEIC auction in 1733 attracted a record 115 buyers; subsequent auctions drew smaller crowds, for example below forty in 1760.[66] From the start a few merchants dominated; half of the goods put up for sale 1733 were bought by four merchants although they were probably representing conglomerates of buyers. This pattern of a few traders buying up the great majority of the SEIC cargo continued, although to a less extreme degree. Eighteen buyers out of fifty-six participating bought up eighty-one per cent of the tea cargo in 1756.[67] The public sales of East India goods in Copenhagen were similarly dominated by a few merchants. The cargo of the first expedition returning from China fetched 544,000 rix-dollars; 230 traders took part in the sale but three quarters of the money spent originated from forty-three traders. In the 1750s less than a quarter of all buyers purchased nearly three quarters of the tea.[68]

So although Gothenburg and Copenhagen were very different places in terms of their location, in global and national trade networks, as well as in national politics, they were also similar in that both places functioned as an *entrepôt* for Asian goods largely although not, as we shall see in Chapter 3, exclusively destined for other parts of Europe. Moreover, overlapping networks of traders and investors dominated the Scandinavian wholesale trade in Asian goods. Selling exotic goods in bulk and at auctions was of course not something unique to Gothenburg and Copenhagen. Perishable goods were often traded with the help of public sales; this helped keep transaction costs down and ensured against the goods deteriorating while being stored. Typically auctions helped make the market more transparent as the prices the different goods made became known not only to those participating in the auction but also to a wider public, who kept track of price developments

at public sales in different cities. But information could also be abused by those engaged in brokering deals and estimating the quality of the goods put up for sale, thereby giving wholesale markets in different places a bad reputation.[69]

In the following chapters we shall discuss the implication of this for the formation of tastes in tea and silk in Europe as well as in northern Europe more generally. The most important conclusion for now is that these similarities, together with the circumstances surrounding the trade with Canton in the middle third of the eighteenth century and the Scandinavian neutral trade more generally, allows us to a talk about *one* Scandinavian China trade.

Overlapping sources

The Danish and the Swedish trade with China shared many common denominators, enabling us to write a Scandinavian history of the China trade. One advantage of such an approach is that it allows us the liberty of making statements that are valid for both companies although sometimes only source material from one company survives. A need for such an approach is generated by the uneven distribution of source material covering different aspects of the trade. While archive material, such as company records, reflecting the trade in Asia is well preserved in the case of the Danish East India Company, very little material reflecting re-exporting once the goods had reached Copenhagen has survived. In the Swedish case the situation is reversed: very little material remains of the company records which illustrate the trade in Asia, but a range of sources illustrating the wholesale market for Asian goods imported to Gothenburg has, however, survived.

One of the most significant sources in this study has been the negotiation protocols ('negotieprotocoller') from the Danish trade in Canton. The National Archive in Copenhagen holds an almost complete collection of these protocols covering the period from the 1730s and onwards. The protocols contain instructions from the board of the DAC to the supercargoes. They include more or less generic orders relating to the conduct of the trade, and summaries of the goods the headquarters of the DAC requested the supercargoes purchase, with added instructions on aspects connected with quality and quantity. In Canton the negotiation protocols functioned as diaries; here the supercargoes documented deals made and decisions taken on what to purchase. A comparison with Dutch material suggests that these types of records were standard.[70]

Much of the material produced by the SEIC was destroyed once the accounting for expeditions and charters had been completed, a precaution stipulated in the company's privilege to guarantee the anonymity of individuals involved in trading and financing the business. Among the relatively few surviving company records, however, one stands out, namely a series of sales catalogues listing the goods put up for sale in Gothenburg between 1733 and 1759. Although not complete the series is unique; few sales catalogues produced by the other East India companies have been kept. From the first charter of the DAC only a few catalogues from the 1750s have survived.[71] While the physical copies are kept at the Swedish National Archive (Riksarkivet), scanned versions are available to the public from the Warwick Digital Collection at the University of Warwick.[72]

Records from merchants engaged in the Swedish trade have survived to a greater degree in Sweden, compared to Denmark.[73] This study has drawn heavily on the correspondence of Charles Irvine, a Scottish supercargo involved in the East India goods trade between China and Gothenburg. Located in the James Ford Bell Library in Minneapolis this archive has largely been overlooked in previous studies of the Swedish East India Company. This, as well as other material more or less frequently used in the discussion of the trade between Asia and Scandinavia, and Scandinavia and Europe will used in the following chapters.

The negotiation protocols, together with Irvine's correspondence, provide the main material for Chapter 2, which will focus on the tea trade. These sources have also been used in Chapter 3, but here the Swedish sales catalogues play a major part. Chapter 4 in contrast draws heavily on material concerned with import substitution and natural history in Sweden. The history this chapter explores was not unique to Sweden, however; as a form of scholarship it was closely connected to both a northern European tradition of scholarship *and* to biotypes common in the Baltic area at large.

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64. For German versions see no, 89, 90, 91, 95, 96, for Danish versions see 84, 88, 93, 97 in Vol. 232, *Den Esmarckske arkivaflevering, 1727–1757*, A. G. Moltkes protocol, solgte ladninger i Asiatiske Kompagni, DCK, RAC.
65. Söderpalm, Kristina. 'Auktionen på den första lasten från Kina', in *Ostindiska Compagniet: affärer och föremål*, ed. Kristina Söderpalm 2nd ed. (Göteborg: Göteborgs stadsmuseum, 2003), pp. 88–105 (89).
66. In August 1748 sixty-eight buyers attended the sale of two cargoes; in September 1750 fifty-two sellers turned up while the sales in 1760 attracted thirty-seven and thirty buyers (Söderpalm, 'Auktionen', pp. 91, 104).
67. Söderpalm, 'Auktionen', p. 91; Hodacs and Müller, 'Chests', p. 286.
68. Glamann, 'The Danish Asiatic', pp. 138, 141.

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70. See *The Canton-Macao dagregisters* 1762–1764, edited, annotated and revised by Paul Van Dyke and Cynthia Viallé (Macao: Instituto Cultural do Governo da R.A.E. de Macau, 2006, 2008, 2009). One known negotiation protocol has survived for the SEIC (Rådplägningsbok for skeppet *Götha Leijon*, 1750–1753); this document is however concerned with trade in Surat (http://www.ub.gu.se/samlingar/handskrift/ostindie/dokument/document.xml?id=40 accessed 27 May 2015).
71. No. 82–97, Vol. 232, Den Esmarckske arkivaflevering, 1727–1757, A. G. Moltkes protocol, solgte ladninger i Asiatiske Kompagni, DCK, RAC. Note however that nr. 82, 83, 85, 86, 87, 92, and 94 are handwritten.
72. See Enskilda arkiv inom Kommerskollegium, Ostindiska kompaniet, Försäljningskataloger, 1–21 Vols. RAS. These catalogues are also available to the general public via the Warwick University Library, Warwick Digital Collection: http://contentdm.warwick.ac.uk/cdm/landingpage/collection/swedish
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2
Dusty, Ready-Blended Tea from the North

Scandinavian smuggled goods and the British tea market

'Gothenburg Congo' was one of the categories used by Scottish tea dealers trading in clandestine tea.[1] The increase in the consumption of Chinese tea in Scotland illustrates, as Andrew Mackillop has recently discussed, the importance of trade routes and merchant networks in explaining the diffusion of new consumer habits. Mackillop outlines the contours of a 'North Europe world of tea' where tea drinking habits evolved away from the official monopoly of the English East India Company and cosmopolitan centres such as London. The consumption of tea in eighteenth-century Scotland was instead shaped by its close proximity to Gothenburg, where the SEIC offloaded its Asian cargoes, and the Scottish networks heavily engaged in the Swedish East India trade. These links, Mackillop argues, not only gave Scottish consumers access to cheaper, albeit clandestine tea, but also influenced the Scottish taste for the more refined black tea types such as Congou.[2] Bohea, another black tea but of lower quality, was otherwise the most common tea consumed in Europe and constituted the main cargo of the East India ships engaged in the Canton trade.

Selling goods with the help of references to continental geography and exotic products was not unique. British shopkeepers regularly sold 'Spanish tobacco and Portuguese snuff'.[3] As Jon Stobart has argued, such names reflected on the consumers' understanding of how exotic goods 'were linked to European centres of processing', or in the case of 'Gothenburg Congo', to a transit place for large amounts of tea.[4] Both Gothenburg and Copenhagen saw a lot of traffic in tea. If one could have stacked all the Bohea tea chests, imported to Scandinavia in 1754, on top of one another the pile of 10,339 chests would have been nearly

seven kilometres high. The total amount of tea imported constituted nearly 2,000 tons that year.[5]

While the European trade in tea was part of a global movement of goods and capital the consumption of the Chinese tea in Europe was concentrated in very specific areas. The Low Countries was one stronghold for European tea consumption, but estimations from 1772 to 1782 suggest that a little bit less than three quarters of all tea imported to Europe was consumed in Britain.[6] The large quantities of clandestine tea in Britain reflected the high taxes imposed on it. Before 1784 the tax was rarely below eighty per cent and often exceeded one hundred; with growing demands the tax contributed significantly to the everyday living costs of consumers, as well as to the fiscal incomes of the British state.[7] Smuggling is of course a notoriously hard phenomenon to trace but according to a report from 1745 the amount of smuggled tea consumed in Britain was three times higher than that sold legally; that is three million pounds in weight versus one million.[8] In the late 1770s and early 1780s seven and a half million pounds of tea was believed to have been smuggled into Britain.[9]

Various analyses of how tea imported by the continental companies, including those from Scandinavia, were smuggled into Britain exist. Mui and Mui have suggested the Seven Years' War (1756–1763), as a watershed. Smuggling was rife before the war but those involved largely supplied local and geographically restricted markets. After the war both the quantities of tea and expansion of the trade increased: 'wealthy British merchants with far-flung interests largely replaced the mainly relatively small-scale local smugglers'.[10] The smuggling trade had begun to pose a serious threat to the legal trade.[11] Others have questioned the extent to which the early trade was small scale and have highlighted the number of minor players and local people involved across the eighteenth century; their investments generated support for and protection of the smugglers, enabling the latter to continue their business.[12] While the second half of the eighteenth century saw stronger smuggling links develop between Gothenburg and Scotland, Scandinavian tea also had outlets in the Low Countries. From here goods were smuggled into other parts of Britain, together with a wide range of other contraband.[13]

The success of Scandinavian imported tea on the British market reflected the simple fact that it was cheaper. However, we also need to understand the British market for tea more generally. As the case with Scotland demonstrates, a closer look at trade networks and types of goods available can provide clues to help us understand how consumption evolved. We also need to consider the materiality of tea itself more closely.

The adulteration of tea was rife in eighteenth-century Britain; used dried leaves were regularly re-packaged and sold on. Leaves from ash, sloe, elder, 'liquorish leaves', husks of wheat, and elder buds were also used to produce fake tea.[14] Dried in the sun, the leaves were roasted and compressed, before being mixed with substances such as copperas, sugar, molasses, clay, logwood, sheep dung, and 'terra japonica'.[15] According to Richard Twining, whose grandfather had started retailing tea and coffee to Londoners in 1706, an unnamed village close to the capital produced twenty tons of fake tea annually.[16] Estimations from 1773–1782 suggest that out of the eighteen million pounds consumed annually in Britain and Ireland, 'several million' were 'fictitious tea manufactured in Britain'; another two to three million pounds of fake tea was smuggled in from abroad.[17]

The manufacture of fake tea was banned via a string of legislations; in 1777 anyone caught with more than six pounds of green, dried or manufactured leaves had twenty-four hours to come up with a satisfying explanation for possessing it, before being fined.[18] It was hard to tell the difference between real from fake tea, although manuals such as *The tea purchaser's guide* (1785) advised consumers on how to decide.[19] When hot water was poured over feigned tea it often looked like the Chinese product, a light green, amber or dark brown liquid. The crumbled black, green and grey leaves of domestic plants were also visually similar to the types of Chinese green and black tea imported from China.

All Chinese tea was made from leaves harvested from the plant *Camelia sinensis*. The leaves destined to become green tea were roasted immediately after harvest; black tea was made from leaves that had undergone an oxidation process before they too were roasted.[20] The choice of plants to harvest from, what part of the plant the leaves were taken from, and when in the season or day the harvesting took place, created further distinctions. Souchong, one of the finest types of black tea consumed in eighteenth-century Europe was made up of large leaves, harvested from selected shrubs in bright weather and at the hottest time of the day. The number of times tea leaves were roasted and rolled generated tea of different types, as the now withered and roasted leaves were separated into different categories depending on coarseness. Unsorted roasted green tea leaves could be used to produce gunpowder tea, as well as several Hyson types: 'Superior', 'Finest', 'Fine' and 'Young', and Hyson Skin types described as 'middling' and 'small'.[21] Hyson tea, named after an East India merchant, was one of the most expensive types of tea imported to Europe. It was not just high quality tea that was subject to different classifications; the cheapest type of tea,

black Bohea, was also divided into subcategories.[22] By the beginning of the nineteenth century the English East India Company imported Bohea of four different kinds: 'Low (Canton variety)', 'Superior (Folkien)', 'Best Bohea', and 'Congou Kind of Leaf'.[23] Although differentiation evolved over time, the original names used in Canton for green tea types, like Singlo, Hyson Skin and Hyson, and black types including Bohea, Congou, Ziou Ziong, Souchong and Pekoe, travelled with the goods as they crossed the sea, to European wholesale markets and onward to retailers.

In Britain tea became a national drink competing with ale; its popularity grew exponentially over the eighteenth century. The new brew was initially very popular among those frequenting coffee houses; before 1689 tea was taxed by the gallon and for fiscal purposes it was brewed in advance and stored cold before being reheated and served to the customer.[24] Dry loose tea for domestic consumption soon made an entrance into a wide range of shops: 'milliners, china dealers, booksellers and even drapers' sold tea.[25] Tea was easy to brew at home; the domestic environment lent tea a specific status associated with consumption within families and by women. Tea paraphernalia soon followed; cups, spoons, pots, sugar and slop basins, strainers, canisters, urns and tea chests framed domestic consumption within middle class and elite homes. Poor people were not excluded from tea drinking either; the great variety of types and prices allowed a wide range of social groups to take up the habit of tea drinking, although some had theirs in cracked and odd pots and cups.[26]

Meanwhile tea trading became big business. Specialist tea shops appeared on a large scale from the middle of the eighteenth century. Trade cards reveal the extent to which tea dealers utilized idealized and stereotyped images depicting Chinese merchants in order to communicate the authenticity of the product, and the long distance that it had travelled. Typically set against a backdrop of tea crates, barrels and chests the merchants are dressed in a 'coolie hat' and traditional Chinese clothes, baggy trousers and a long gown; a thin and long moustache and a pigtail were other attributes.[27] Various types of non-specialist shop keepers offered tea in one-ounce and quarter-ounce packages throughout Britain. Falling tea prices were probably the main driver for an ever-growing range of retailers to incorporate tea into their stocks. By 1765 around thirty per cent of all shops, the equivalent of more than 32,000 shops in England and Wales, were licenced to sell tea; by the 1830s there were more than 90,000 licensed tea dealers. Another factor stimulating growth was the rising competition among the big

dealers of tea on the London market. Published price lists of tea sold by dealers in the capital, as well as from the public sales of the East India Company, helped create a transparent and competitive market.[28]

The many smaller provincial tea vendors traditionally relied on those dealing in large quantities, often in London, to assess the tea types available and to provide smaller parcels fitting the taste and pockets of their customers. The practice of blending was associated with early elite consumption when, in the shop, tea was taken from 'open chests' and blended and brewed in front of a customer until a combination that suited the palette of the particular purchaser was found.[29] As tea consumption expanded, this method of selling tea vanished but tea traders continued to promote their business on the basis of their ability to offer uniform blends of tea suiting different customer groups.[30] The 'similarity of Tea' could, as Richard Twining explained, be preserved by the tea merchant mixing the contents of different chests:

> Whoever understands Tea, and clears home, for example twenty Chests of Hyson, will find, upon tasting them separately and accurately, that some have rather too much flavour, and are therefore coarse, some have too little, and are therefore weak; and that others have – perhaps like those who are to drink them – some little peculiarity, which a proper union will totally remove. By making a judicious mixture out of these Chests, a better Tea may be got, than any of the Chests, taken singly, could afford.[31]

Over time dealers developed their own packaging, including for example sealed and branded tea canisters, as a way to promote and protect their names and their different blends of tea, and playing upon a public fear of product adulteration.[32]

Knowledge and experience were essential when trading tea in bulk; at the East India Company's tea auctions in London those buying tea wholesale or acting as brokers often had years of experience in the business. Moreover, they had capital and credit to invest in large quantities of tea which they could blend, re-pack and sell on to traders across the country.[33] English East India Company staff became increasingly well versed in the tea trade too. Towards the end of the eighteenth century the company made it a requirement that new employees going to Canton had to spend a year in the tea warehouses in London to learn about different types of tea. Vast amounts of tea were stored in the London warehouses; the EIC was obliged to keep a year's worth of supply in stock as part of its monopoly since the British state relied on

the fiscal income generated by the ever growing tea trade. If the EIC ran out of tea then the revenue income of the British state would be jeopardized.

By the late eighteenth century the EIC also sent special tea inspectors to Canton, to test the tea and advise the supercargoes on the tea tastes of the British public.[34] Chinese tea could also contain leaves of other shrubs. According to the author of *The Tea Purchaser's Guide* fraudsters dyed damaged black tea with 'green vitriol' in order to pass it on as green tea; likewise green tea could be mixed with 'Japan earth' to make it appear like Bohea tea.[35] The notion of Chinese tea dealing as riven by fraud became much more dominant in the nineteenth century, reflecting a general turn towards more negative images of the Chinese as 'dirty and deceitful'.[36]

The legal domestic tea business at home was not always held in high regard either. The anonymous author to *The Tea Purchaser's Guide*, who claimed to be a 'Friend of the Public' with many years of experience working for the tea department in the EIC, revealed that the government had accommodated the sale of great amounts of bad quality tea. This tea, taken as prize, meaning it was part of a cargo confiscated by the British navy or privateers operating on behalf of the British state, was 'little better than dirt'. A process of 'fumigation, greying, drying' had helped recover the appearance of the tea; however, a closer inspection, by rubbing, smelling and tasting the tea, revealed it was very bad and only suitable to mix with low quality black tea types.[37] Accounts of tea smuggling often suggest goods were roughly handled; the clandestine trade involved travel on open boats, goods being deposited on shorelines and the use of oil skin bags for transport.[38] Representatives of the EIC, who of course had a vested interest in discrediting smuggled tea claimed, it gained 'a bad taste and smell' from the use of the oil skin bags, and 'lying in damp places'.[39] In other words, issues to do with quality were perceived as closely connected to the physical organization of the trade, clandestine or not.

The tea market in eighteenth-century Britain was in other words not only very large and rapidly expanding, it was also very complex. Tea could be Chinese or fake, damaged and improved goods, or it could be contraband. With this in mind we will return to the Scandinavian trade, exploring the Danish and Swedish trade in tea in Canton and the movement of tea chests from China to Gothenburg and Copenhagen and onwards starting in the 1730s. The complex British tea market, the role of tea blending at wholesale and retail levels, and the trade in faked, improved and damaged tea goods will guide our exploration

of the Scandinavian tea trade. But what will a focus on quality, taste, packing and assessments of qualities and types of tea add to our understanding of the Scandinavian trade? Conversely, what can a fuller understanding of the Scandinavian trade add to our understanding of the growth in the British consumption of tea? The first part of this chapter is concerned with the market for Chinese tea in Canton and the conditions that shaped the competition between the different East India companies. Tea blending and packing become the focal points in the second and third parts. In the final two parts we move from China to Europe to discuss the wholesale market for tea and trace the formation of a pan-European taste for tea in the Low Countries.

Swift dealings greased by silver

European ships arrived in Canton in growing numbers over the course of the eighteenth century; it was the tea that drew the crowds. Tea was the fourth largest crop in China; it was cultivated on family farms in several parts of the country.[40] Tea peddlers, operating independently or as intermediaries for tea wholesalers, travelled between villages collecting up tea. The wholesalers mixed and then blended the tea before packing it and selling it on. Black tea for the European market was largely harvested in Fujian province, on the southeast coast of China, from where it was sold on to merchants with contacts in Canton. Most tea had travelled a long way, on rivers and across mountains before it reached Canton.[41]

Competition over contracts was intense as the trading season for the East India companies began in Canton. As Figure 2.1 demonstrates, Bohea tea constituted the single most important component of the Scandinavian tea cargo. The DAC and SEIC were not unique in this respect; all the European companies wanted large quantities of this low quality black tea. Not only did it have a mass market in Europe, but also the disproportionately heavy tax on Bohea made it particularly profitable to smuggle into Britain during the first half of the eighteenth century.[42] Not surprisingly the main attention of the supercargoes was hence directed towards the price of Bohea tea and how it would develop. A recurrent theme in the Danish sources are discussions of the correlations between the expected arrivals of East Indiamen and other ships participating in the country trade, and the fluctuation of the Bohea price. News of ships being sighted or expected or lists of who had arrived and were to be found at the Whampoa anchorage, downriver from Canton, were carefully noted down in the Danish protocols.[43]

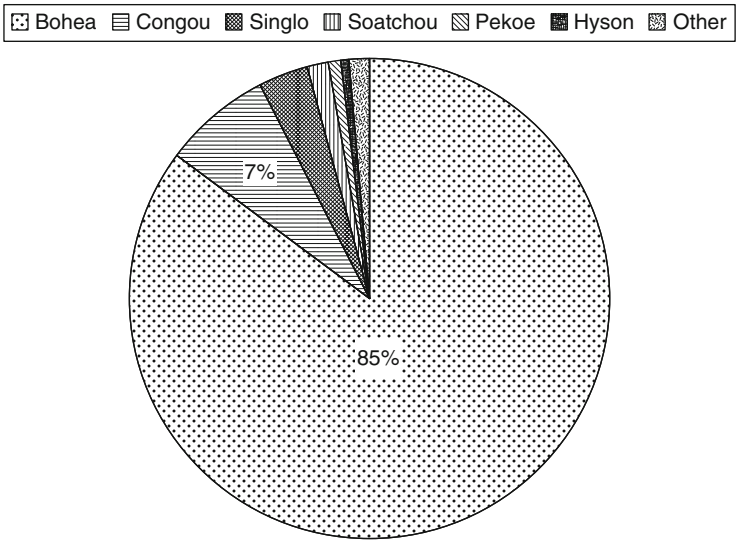

Figure 2.1 Tea types imported by DAC and SEIC, percentage, selected years
Source: Appendix 1, 1740, 1743, 1745, 1748–1754, 1757–1759, 1762–1765, 1767. Other includes Bing, Hyson Skin, Tonkay, Ziou Ziong and diverse teas.

Instructions from Copenhagen underlined the importance of such observations.[44]

The general consensus was that prices rose and supply declined as the season progressed, the earlier a ship arrived the more advantageous it was.[45] But not always. In December 1754, writing the instructions for the Danish expedition, *Juliana Maria*, the director of the DAC claimed to have good grounds to believe that fewer ships than usual were setting out to Canton that winter. Consequently they instructed the supercargoes to wait with their Bohea orders, anticipating the prices would fall to thirteen or twelve taels per picule in Canton once the Chinese merchants caught on.[46] One picule equalled 60.5 kg; taels and mas were used for measuring the payment in silver. The conversion rate differed depending on the alloy of the silver coins the Europeans brought with them; the Danes typically exchanged one piaster for 0.72 tael or 7.2 mas.[47]

Arriving in China in mid-August 1755 the Danes found twelve ships already anchored on the Pearl River and another eleven expected. Moreover, the price for Bohea was already high, at 18.5 taels per picule on 14 August.[48] Three days later the price had gone down but the Bohea

tea the English had contracted to pay for, priced between 17.5 and 16.5 taels, was only 'moderate goods'.[49] While still obeying their orders the Danish supercargoes got increasingly anxious about continuing to delay, and close deals with the Chinese merchants for Bohea tea. With the arrival of three more ships on 28 August they started debating on contracting enough Bohea to leave them with at least one layer of tea chests, ready to place on top of the porcelain cargo. With no decrease in price in sight and with the daunting prospect of having large contracts unfulfilled until possibly November the Danes started to fret. Not only might they have to pay more for worse tea, but they might also not be able to set sail at the end of December with a full cargo.[50] Finally, on the 23 of September, with twenty ships destined for Europe in the Whampoa anchorage and with no change to the Bohea prices, with the highest quality selling at 17.5 taels, the Danish supercargoes decided to contract for 500 whole chests of Bohea the following day.[51]

The first supercargo, Jacob Lindberg, was careful to explain his rational for departing from the express orders of the DAC directors in the negotiation protocol. Referring to previous experiences Lindberg claimed only to recall one successful attempt to buy large quantities of tea late in a season: in 1751 two Swedish supercargoes had managed to order a few hundred chests of Bohea tea. The reason they succeeded was because two 'large' European ships that had been expected failed to turn up. However, since the tea they received was of bad quality it had not yielded a good return.[52] Whether Lindberg was right or wrong is hard to tell. What we do know is that the tea trade was growing rapidly and the fastest increase took place in the 1740s when it expanded seventy-eight per cent. At the same time the traffic from Europe was highly irregular; in 1745 only two thirds or nine out of fourteen anticipated European ships arrived in Canton.[53] In other words, while the Danish argued that the best tea deals could be had early in the season nothing was a certain.[54]

The Danish trade with China was also organized in a way that reflected the challenges of early-modern long-distance trade. Instructions from Copenhagen on what types of tea to purchase were rarely exact due to a lack of information regarding prices and quantities available in Canton for the coming season. The orders contained lists of what to buy, calculations that were based on information dating at least two years back. This generated orders based on multiple calculations; in the winter of 1751 for example the Danish supercargoes were told to buy more Congou tea than specified if the price did not exceed the Bohea prices by more than thirty to forty per cent.[55]

It was not only the long distances that posed a challenge; the Canton tea trade was also a highly complex business. At first glance lists of Bohea prices suggest quite a simple trade; typically the price would vary, increasing or occasionally decreasing by between two to four taels per picule in one season.[56] However, as Paul Van Dyke has shown, an intricate set of factors *not* reflected in the price statistics determined what the supercargoes paid per picule of tea. Large tea orders were for example regularly made during the off-season, between January and March. Burdened with tea the East Indiamen were by then ready to leave for Europe, if they had not left already. Ahead of the coming season the Europeans started to issue advances to the Hong merchants, who in turn used the capital to secure deliveries from inland producers. The amounts advanced in the off-season, including promises of further instalments made once next years' expeditions started to arrive, would be reflected in the prices agreed in the contracts agreed in the off-season. Higher advances and large instalments meant a lower price per picule of Bohea, a correlation that also reflected on the highly developed credit market in Macau.[57]

'Armenians, Muslims, Parsees, Jews, Portuguese, Spanish, English, French, Scots, Dutch, Danes, Norwegians, Swedes, Flemings, Austrians, Italians and others' with capital and connections came to Macau in ever-growing numbers over the course of the eighteenth century.[58] They invested in the profitable credit market, which offered loans with interest rates of up to twenty per cent to those engaged in intra-Asian trade, as well as to the Chinese merchants under pressure to expand their business in the wake of the growing tea trade.[59] In 1753 the SEIC established a capital fund in Canton which could be used to advance and lend money to Chinese merchants.[60] The Danish did likewise in 1760, but both companies from the 1740s onwards had to occasionally let their supercargoes stay behind in Macau so that they could close advanced contracts.[61]

Another circumstance which determined the price of tea was the extent to which the Hong merchant had agreed to buy goods brought by the East India companies to Canton. In a typical deal the merchant, who had been contracted to supply large amounts of tea to a company, would also agree to buy a proportion of the goods it brought to China. Chinese state policy determined that the Europeans needed to bring some imports. The import duty on the European goods generated revenues for the Chinese state, and European ships without any goods to sell were not allowed up river.[62] The Chinese merchants preferred silver, however, and if they knew the Europeans were well supplied they could

refuse to barter. In 1763 the French arriving at Canton 'made a large display with their cash', bringing the silver up on boats heavily manned by soldiers. Consequently the local merchants refused to buy the French 'ginseng, sea coral, ebony wood, drapery, and other wares'.[63]

The proportion of goods versus silver the European companies brought to China varied. Between 1710 and 1759 the silver bullion export of the EIC represented nearly ninety per cent of the total value on average, although the period did see a relative rise in merchandise goods arriving in China on British ships in the 1740s and 1750s. Before the end of the 1750s it rarely surpassed fifteen per cent. However, the Seven Years' War brought change; in 1759 the British export to China of goods other than silver constituted almost thirty per cent of the total value.[64] It is also worth noting that some goods were harder to bargain with. In 1763 the English had been 'burdened with a large quantity of drapery' and the Dutch, who reported on it, claimed it took two years before this cloth could be turned into cash.[65] In the 1760s, as the EIC's new powers of exerting fiscal income in Bengal became established, silver from India and opium could be channelled into the China trade.[66] The Dutch Herren XVII had fewer resources to draw on, although from early on they were well aware that the Chinese wanted silver.[67] A shortage of silver was one reason why they had tried to conserve the Chinese junk trade with Batavia which had been based on the exchange of pepper for tea. Pepper was also an important part of the cargo the Dutch exported to China between 1734 and 1756. Dutch ships which passed by Batavia en route to Canton picked up half a million pounds' weight at the end of the 1730s; by the 1750s three million pounds of pepper reached Canton annually on VOC ships.[68]

Compared with the Dutch the Scandinavian East India companies exported fewer goods and more silver. Glamann has calculated that on average silver constituted ninety-three per cent of the value of the total export during the first forty years of the DAC (1732–1772). Danish cloth was one component of the remaining seven per cent of the export cargo, up until 1753 when a large amount of English and French cloth clogged the Canton market and made the Danish goods hard to offload. Danish and Jewish merchants from Copenhagen provided the silver for the Danish Asian trade during the first three decades. In the late 1750s the DAC started to buy silver from Spain.[69]

The Swedish export of goods and silver to China before 1772 has not been possible to map. Information on some of the silver cargoes taken on board in Cadiz has been collected by Koninckx. A comparison of the value of the silver cargoes between 1740 and 1765 suggests that

there was an 800 per cent increase; however, this rise reflects more on the increase of the trade than on the relative value of silver versus other export goods.[70] We also know that the Swedish East Indiamen from Gothenburg stocked up on iron, wood and cloth, including both European and Swedish fabrics, before setting out. Some of the Swedish goods were sold in Cadiz, making it even harder to calculate the proportion of silver in relation to other goods in the Swedish cargo that reached China.[71]

What we do know is that significant shares of the Spanish silver picked up in Cadiz were financed by subscribers to the Swedish expeditions, many with strong links to the Southern Netherlands and the Ostend Company. In the 1740s the ship *Riddarhuset* even stopped by Ostend en route to China to pick up forty-four chests of silver.[72] One could even claim that the Swedish Company inherited some of the connections between the Southern Netherlands and the Spanish Empire dating back to the sixteenth century. Swedish figures from the period 1772 to 1786 show that the share of the silver cargo varied from ninety-six to seventy nine per cent; tin, cloths and raisins made up the rest of the export cargo.[73] However, by this time the SEIC was funding a large share of its trade, up to sixty per cent, with bills of exchange obtained on the credit market in China.[74] Around the same time somewhat smaller amounts, constituting between a quarter and a third of what the Danish spent in Canton, were borrowed by the DAC via bills of exchange.[75]

The trade during the first four decades of the eighteenth century was not, however, as heavily influenced by access to credit in Canton. There are good grounds to believe that both the SEIC and the DAC stood out in that they relied more heavily than the Dutch, but also the EIC, on silver to finance their trade. One telling example is from 1747 when the Chinese merchants rejected Danish cloth on the basis of its dull colours. In response the Danish supercargoes argued that the Chinese 'ought' to buy the cloth because 'the Danish Company in contrast to other European nations who bring so many different assortments of goods' generally offered cash aside from the occasional and including the aforementioned 'solitary parcel of cloth'.[76] Dutch plans concerning the possibility of a joint European action, putting all trade on hold to protest against the trading conditions in Canton in 1764, confirm that the Scandinavians could take advantage of their ready access to silver. In the end the Dutch decided to refrain from interference because they feared such actions would ultimately have benefitted the Scandinavians most, as soon as an embargo was over '… the Swedes and the Danes would start packing, load their empty ships and sail. But we, and also the

English and the French (but to much lesser degree than we), who first have to sell our cargoes and deliver them, would find it difficult to leave that year and in all cases would run into insurmountable obstacles'.[77]

The Scandinavian supercargoes seemed to have been cash-kings in Canton. Without having to barter prices on large amounts of imported goods they could contract tea more quickly, taking advantage of the great need for cash among the Chinese merchants who year after year had to increase their tea stocks in order to meet the ever-growing demand of European consumers. To trade tea for silver acquired in Cadiz like the Swedes, or domestically like the Danish, was no doubt more expensive than using goods obtained in the intra-Asian trade; if not, all the companies would have followed suit. However, while silver was expensive it came with advantages. Not only did it speed up the transactions, but it also helped to secure high quality Bohea tea.

Discussions about the tea market appearing in the protocols from the Danish trade in Canton in 1755 indicate that the best Bohea tea, what the Danish called 'Thea Toucon', tended to go first.[78] Toucon or 'Touchon' refers to tea from the first harvest of the tea shrubs that produced Bohea tea.[79] What was left after the Chinese merchants had run out of Touchon might be cheaper, but was often, the Danish claimed, 'mediocre' Bohea.[80] Comments by the Swedish supercargo Charles Irvine, who spent two years in Canton and Macau between 1744 and 1746, suggest this was a widespread belief. In Canton, writing to his European contacts, Irvine was very keen to promote the quality of the tea he had been instrumental in purchasing for the Swedish Company. 'Our teas are at least so good, nay I flatter myself, they will be found better than those of the other ships', Irvine wrote to a business associate in Cadiz.[81] 'I played my game most dextrously & favourably', he wrote to another contact in London.[82] While these statements might reflect on Irvine's inability to promote himself and the cargo personally, since he stayed behind in China, it is also likely that Irvine wanted to combat any rumours that the Swedish ships were returning with a cargo of bad tea due to their late arrival in Canton in 1744. In a long letter addressed to the Swedish directors Colin Campbell and Hindrich König, Irvine explained how the Swedish procured tea had 'recovered'; it had become more 'fresh' as it was packed into lead-lined chests. The end result, Irvine insisted, was that 'upon the whole we dare affirm that our two cargoes will prove inferior to none'.[83]

To sum up, competition over Bohea tea, a cheap black tea destined for European mass markets, formed the *modus operandi* of the Canton trade in the long term. In order to secure low priced high quality

Bohea speed was of the essence. The ability to close an early deal did not only depend on when one arrived in Canton; access to silver helped secure good deals, especially during the first half of the eighteenth century when credit markets in Macau were less developed. Since the Scandinavians, as far as it is possible to tell, brought relatively more silver to Canton in the decades before the Seven Years' War, they had an advantage. Irvine's letters from the mid-1740s, while having a self-aggrandising function, also point us in two other directions: how was tea 'improved' in Canton, and how was it packed? As we shall see below these aspects can also help explain the successes and failures among those participating in the Canton tea trade.

Assessing, negotiating and blending tea like the Swedes

With quality determining prices it was necessary for the Scandinavian supercargoes to know their tea. Material from the Danish sources indicates a growing understanding of the different types and varieties of tea on offer in Canton. It is telling that the instructions for the DAC's first expedition to Canton, leaving Copenhagen in 1733, included requests for 100 picules of 'Green tea'.[84] The often formulaic descriptions of tea ordered and tea bought, such as 'first and best sort', tell us little of how qualities and types were perceived.[85] Warnings from Copenhagen provide us with some further insights. Typical for example were orders not to buy Bohea tea with 'rough' and 'wood-like' leaves, or contaminated with any 'oil' that would give it a 'sharp' and 'rank' taste.[86] Records of complaints and contested tea contracts written in the negotiation protocols are other sources of information. Occasionally whole categories of tea were rejected due to low quality. In 1752, for example, all Bing tea on offer in Canton was regarded as so bad that none was bought.[87]

In 1755, a season marked by high prices and confusion on the Danish part, the supercargoes complained to the Chinese merchant they were dealing with about the quality of the goods they received. Checking a cargo of Bohea tea they had contracted for seventeen taels a picule they found the tea leaves 'rough' and tried consequently to lower the price. The merchant in question, Consentia, defended himself, claiming that the tea was 'passable' and that other 'Nations' had packed more 'mediocre' tea labelled first sort and at a higher price. Threatening to exclude Consentia from further contracts the Danish managed to lower the price to 16.5 taels.[88] A similar argument met the Danes from the merchant Swetia, who also defended himself by referring to how the English had agreed to pack the same tea without complaints *and* for

a higher price, 16.5 taels per picule, which was 8 mas more than the price agreed with the Danes.[89]

To claim to be the best at bargaining with the Chinese merchants was by all accounts a common trope among the Europeans working in Canton. The Dutch regularly commented on how little the Danes knew, how careless the English were or how over-cautiously the French behaved.[90] Such statements helped the supercargoes to underline their own diligent and competent work, procuring high quality goods on behalf of their companies. With ample rumours swirling around about fraud amongst both European and Chinese traders one could never have too good a reputation.[91]

Nonetheless the issues of tea quality *and* which Chinese merchant to turn to for the best goods were important and frequently visited topics. Debating whether to close contracts with two Hong merchants exclusively in return for a promise of better priced tea the Danish supercargoes asked themselves if it left them more vulnerable, and perhaps forced them to receive 'mediocre' tea which 'could ruin the market at home'.[92] Giving the company's cargoes a bad reputation in Europe was a worry expressed by the Dutch and the English companies too.[93] Reversing the argument of the Danes, the Dutch regularly refused to deal with smaller merchants because it could leave them with a more uneven tea cargo. The larger merchants were better at delivering uniform goods which had also been selected and packed by the Hong merchants' staff. Smaller merchants in contrast, the Dutch argued, had to depend on goods brought to Canton by their countrymen.[94]

Tasting the tea was an obvious way to determine quality. The Danish supercargoes were ordered to sample the tea on offer; judging by the negotiation protocols tea tastings took place regularly.[95] There were business advantages to be had: if the tea tasted bad, prices could be negotiated down or tea parcels could be replaced after contracts been signed.[96] Through negotiations with the Chinese merchants the Danes seemed to have learnt more about the shifting tea harvests in China. Negotiating, if only marginally successfully, with merchant Swetia on the price for his Bohea tea, supposedly of the type called Touchon or first class, the Danes seemed to have accepted Swetia's explanation: that the rough leaves were due to an unusually rainy season preceding the harvest. The claimed similarities between Swetia's and other Canton merchants' tea stocks was however large enough to produce a discount, which they also received.[97]

Haggling helped to bring down the price, but in order to improve the tea other measures were necessary, such as blending tea from different deliveries to create a uniform and better tasting consignment.

Paul Van Dyke refers to Danish tea blending from 1755 and 1764 in his study of the Canton merchants.[98] The art of blending tea in Canton seems to have been a somewhat controversial strategy that evolved over time. Danish supercargoes were for example regularly instructed by Copenhagen to make sure that the tea they bought contained no remains from the previous year's harvest; in other words the tea needed to be fresh. Moreover, they were to look out for any of the 'so called Wild Cantonean tea' or other 'plain' types making their way into the Danish chests.[99] The Danish contracts also routinely stated that their Bohea tea should have no 'addition of mediocre types'.[100] However, blending with the aim of improving the tea, even if it disturbed the integrity of the different Chinese tea qualities, seemed to have been, or at least to have become, legitimate over time.

What is more interesting is that the Scandinavian companies were very proactive in this development. The first mention of blending in the Danish sources dates to 1752. That year the supercargoes found that the 150 chests of Bohea tea packed for them also contained Ankay tea. Ankay refers to today's Anxi County in Fujian Province. Anxi County is located south of the Wuyi mountains, which also belong to Fujian Province. These mountains are where the original Bohea tea was produced; the name Bohea comes from the local pronunciation of Wuyi. Confusingly we find references to both 'Bohea' and 'Ankay Bohea' in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century sources; the first refers to Black tea of the lowest quality from the Wuyi Mountains, the second to the lowest quality black tea from the Anxi County.[101] A general feature of Ankay tea was that it did not keep as well as Wuyi mountain tea; in that sense it was an inferior product.[102] Moreover it was weaker; this meant, for example, that Souchon, a relative high quality type of black tea, from the Anxi region, so called Ankay-Souchon, could pass as 'weak but still very good Bohea tea' according to Dutch sources.[103]

In spite of the bad reputation of Ankay tea the Danish supercargoes accepted the mix of Ankay and Bohea tea in 1752 after finding out that it produced 'a rather good type of Bohea tea'.[104] In the Danish sources we can also see how the Danish started to blend greater parts of their Bohea cargo. Instructing the supercargoes going to Canton for the 1755 season the Directors of the DAC for example encouraged their staff to buy Bohea that was mixed with 'ordinary good Congo' since it would improve the sales.[105] The negotiation protocol from the same season also contains several discussions concerned with blends of Bohea and Congou tea. Blending allowed the Danes to fill their cargo with 'mediocre' but cheaper Bohea tea, which largely seemed to have been what

remained on the market once the Danes started contracting.[106] Starting in mid-October 1755 two contracts were written stipulating that the chests should be filled with a blend of Bohea and second-rate Congou.[107] On 21 October these contracts were followed by two others for one hundred chests each, containing one half 'a reasonable Bohea tea' and the other half '2nd rate Congo'. At a price of 15.5 taels per picule this was two taels lower than that contracted by the Danes for first-rate Bohea, earlier in the season.[108] The Danish were careful, however, arguing that smaller amounts of blended tea could produce a reasonably good yield, while larger quantities could flood the market in Europe and lower the prices too much.[109]

The habit of mixing tea was by all accounts not uncontroversial for the Chinese merchants either. In 1755, having discovered that a previously contracted batch of pure Bohea tea contained rough leaves the Danish asked the merchant Swetia if he could compensate them by mixing some Congou tea into the batch. Swetia responded by saying that neither he nor his father had ever allowed for mixing to take place in 'their house' and that they always sold the tea in the same state that it arrived.[110] To what extent the Chinese merchant community was divided between those who allowed for mixing tea and those who did not is hard to say on the basis of only the Danish material; Swetia did, as we shall see below, agree to blend tea at other times.

However, it is possible to establish that different companies blended different teas. In 1755, again responding to a batch of Bohea tea containing leaves which were 'too rough', the Danes convinced the merchant Poankeequa to improve it by mixing it with one third second-rate Congou tea, a type described as 'not as strong as the first' but one that had 'a good pleasant scent' and produced a tea with a 'green colour'.[111] By negotiating this mix the Danish supercargoes were admitting they were following in the footsteps of their 'neighbours, the Swedes' who for the last few years had mixed their Bohea with this quality and proportion of Congou, at a ratio of between one third to one quarter Congou and two thirds to three quarters Bohea. Again, the Danes expressed some reservations about this approach. Not wanting to take too big risk they declined ordering large amounts of the blend.[112] A few weeks later, however, they tried to contract for another order of mixed Bohea and Congou to fill around 200 whole chests. As the first merchant refused to comply, they turned to Swetia and Awue for a blend made up of half Bohea, one quarter first Congou and one quarter second rate Congou. The latter agreed to sell the Danes this mix for 15.5 taels per picule, 1.5 taels cheaper than Swetia.[113]

Judging by the Danish material from 1755, what appeared to be different 'national' blends of Bohea tea concocted in Canton developed in response to the growing competition in Canton. With a limited amount of the best type of Bohea available at prices promising a profit in Europe the second best thing to do was to mix second-rate tea of different types, such as Congou and Bohea, with one another, producing uniform and better tasting blends without significantly increasing the price. However, the Chinese tea names were not modified to reflect this change; in the Danish catalogue listing the tea chests containing a mix of second rate Bohea and Congou the chests are still only labelled Bohea when they were put up for sale in Copenhagen in 1756.[114]

Tea mixing was not only the result of limited supplies of high quality Bohea in Canton. Dutch sources throw further light on how the Scandinavians also responded to demands by European consumers. In December 1762 the Dutch were packing a mix containing one third Congou; the remaining two-thirds were made up of seventy-five per cent Bohea and twenty-five per cent Ankay tea. However, the Ankay tea was bad and the Dutch wanted it replaced, something Swetia refused to do. Although disagreeing over how to proceed the Chinese merchant and the Dutch agreed that the trade in Ankay tea was regrettable due to its uneven quality. The three Chinese merchants catering for most of the Dutch tea orders would have preferred not to deal with Ankay tea at all. Moreover 'they [Swetia and his companions] saw and maintain (we think with good reason) that this tea spoils the Bohea tea'.[115] The problem was that tea drinkers in the 'fatherland' wanted Ankay and 'if one wanted to equal the Swedes, one should mix it with Ankay because this insipid and weak tea mellows the harshness of the Touchon and makes it more pleasant in one's mouth'.[116]

While critical towards the Ankay tea for being weaker and for 'for its insipid flavour, bad pouring, and brown leaves mixed in' the Dutch confessed that it gave the Bohea 'a solid taste'.[117] Blind tests among the Dutch Canton staff 'who had grown up with tea' showed they preferred tea with Ankay mixed in: 'Thus we have to keep on accepting this Ankay till we have found a better means of satisfying the tea connoisseurs in the fatherland'.[118] This conclusion left them with the problem of how to secure uniformly high quality Ankay tea. It was, the Dutch concluded, 'simply impossible' to believe that Poankeequa, who supplied the Swedes with large quantities of tea, 'alone knows the secret to always obtain the best kind of Ankay. It is truly just a prejudice if one maintains that the Swede's Bohea tea is exceptional and preferable to ours'.[119]

With little surviving Swedish material it is hard to illuminate how the SEIC operated from inside and to establish more precisely how the Swedes managed to get hold of large quantities of uniform Ankay tea. A memorandum written by Michael Grubb (1728–1808), who spent the first half of the 1760s in Macau and Canton, and who returned to become a director of the SEIC in 1766, throws some light on the Swedish trade. Grubb wrote that the Ankay tea to mix with Bohea tea should be 'Ankay Congo of the best sort, which is twice dried, properly roasted, with a scent'.[120] Such tea produced a 'light' liquid which complemented the 'strong colour' of the Bohea tea. By the time Grubb wrote his memorandum, however, probably in 1767, the trade seemed to have moved on. Looking at the sales prices in Europe Grubb suggested steering the Swedish import towards Congou tea, buying as much as possible of the 9,000 to 10,000 picule of 'Best Bohea Congo' that reached the Canton market, preferably trading with Ang Thequa and Tan Anqua.[121] Grubb's advice corresponds to a change in the tax on Bohea tea in Britain, making it more profitable to import higher quality black tea types, such as Congou and Souchong.[122]

The emphasis on quality and the art of mixing different types of tea to compensate for bad goods and to achieve not only uniformity but also blends popular on the European markets have direct consequences for how we can understand the status of smuggled tea. As we have learnt above, tea imported by the English East India Company was sold to wholesalers who blended the tea before they passed it on to their retailing agents across the country. As contraband the Scandinavian tea must have bypassed this blending process. This would explain why it needed to be blended in China as it was in this Canton composition that it arrived to retailers dealing in illicit goods, and sometimes possibly also to end consumers.

Packing and tracking the cargo

Next to paying attention to the quality of the tea the Danish supercargoes were ordered to carefully monitor its packing. This involved for example making sure the goods were dry, in order to avoid them going stale and mouldy.[123] Rain frequently stopped packing, as did warm weather, as the sweat of the workers who packed the tea could contaminate it.[124] There are incidents of original Chinese packaging being kept intact as lots of tea changed hands in Canton.[125] In general though the tea was re-packed; not only to promote the smooth running of the business, but also in order to protect the tea from pollution on the long journey ahead.

Porcelain was the perfect scent-free companion to tea. Other goods, such as Chinese star anise, had to be kept away from the tea.[126] The supercargoes had to employ their noses when planning the packing; for example on receiving a batch of Ziou Ziong tea in caddies rather than boxes and finding they smelled strongly, the Danish supercargoes decided to re-pack the tea into bigger chests that could be sealed.[127]

A considerable amount of care was spent dictating the chest sizes for different tea types. The largest tea chests were used to contain Bohea tea usually had the following dimensions: 25 English inches high, 29 wide, and 33 long.[128] Each regularly held a weight of between 275 and 280 catties, which equals 166–169 kg of tea.[129] It is however worth noticing that the chests could vary in size, reflecting the needs dictated by the different dimensions of the East Indiamen.[130] Made in Canton the chests had to be lined with lead; instructions to the Danish supercargoes stipulated that the weight of the chest material and the lead, the tara, should be between 48 and 52 catties or 29.04 and 31.46 kg.[131] Smaller chests were ordered for the more exclusive tea types, although Congou tea typically travelled in both large 'Bohea chests' as well as in smaller ones taking between half and a quarter picule, or between thirty and fifteen kilograms, each. The most expensive tea, Hyson, was packed in tubs, carrying fifty taels or just less than two kilograms.[132]

The attention to size and weight of chests make sense if we consider the vast number of chests moving from Canton to Copenhagen and Gothenburg. However, it was not only a matter of standardizing the packing for the benefit of company, to increase logistical efficiency and cut costs on transport. How the tea was packed impacted on the competition between the different companies' tea too. The Dutch observed that the Scandinavian companies packed their Bohea chests to the rim. Danish negotiation protocols show that this was a strategy from the start; already in 1737 there are orders to avoid two-third-full chests.[133] Maximising the weight of the tea chests involved 'coolies' compacting the tea by treading on it. Packing tea in this manner demanded a great number of workers: 1,200 were simultaneously employed to pack for the Hong merchants in the season of 1764.[134] It was hard and badly paid labour; the 'coolies' were regularly abused. In the Dutch sources they were referred to as the 'worst scum of common people'. One source of conflict had to do with the packing: 'Each nation that is packing screams a thousand times a day "Do not grind the tea to dust but stamp it straight up and down"'.[135]

Dust was, however, an unavoidable by-product of packing the chests to the brim, as the Scandinavians did. Their addition of Ankay tea

also increased the amount of dust; the latter was very 'friable' and could not 'be packed without badly pulverizing'.[136] However, according to Dutch sources, before the late 1750s the dusty Scandinavian tea had been complementing the VOC tea once it arrived in Europe. The Scandinavian tea dust had been sifted out of the chests, and added to the VOC tea, which was traditionally packed 'very coarsely' and 'lightly'. The European wholesalers and retailers even argued that 'the dustiness of the Swedish tea was proof that it was better than the Company's [VOC] tea'.[137] Things changed when the Dutch started their direct trade in 1757. As the now started to pack their chests to the brim loud complaints were raised at home by traders who demanded less dusty tea from the VOC, as they required coarse tea which they could continue to mix with Scandinavian tea dust. Such demand could not be met without a loss for the company; the Dutch supercargoes calculated that lighter chests, with less dust, would mean a ten per cent loss in profit. If four ships carried 300,000 pounds less tea than they optimally could it would mean losing 150,000 guilders.[138]

With thousands of tons of Bohea tea needing to be blended, packed and stamped it is no surprise that the European supercargoes monitored each other's progress and turns in the packing houses.[139] As the chests were received at the factories in Canton their identity numbers were recoreded before they were loaded onto the sampans that trafficked along the Pearl River down to where the European ships were moored. Sometimes Copenhagen would give instructions on where in the ship the chests should be stored. The standard practice was of course to put the porcelain in chests in the bottom and top these with layers of Bohea chests. More specific requests were sometimes made; the instructions to the ships leaving Copenhagen in the winter of 1750–1751 stated, for example, that the small chests in which the Ziou Ziong was to be packed were to be left 'mid-ship'.[140] Which ship to load what cargo on also mattered; with only a small batch of Bing tea to bring back the Danish supercargo thought it best to use the newest of their ships, the *Princess Lovisa*, since it could be best 'conserved' there.[141] The little Hysan Skin the Danes were planning to buy the same year was to be packed onto the ship first leaving China.[142]

The identity number provided in Canton helped the companies to keep track of the tea as it moved from the Canton factory, to the ship, across the seas to Europe, and onwards to the warehouses in Copenhagen and Stockholm. Number sequences matched different deliveries, and could be used to indicate what the chests contained, and which Hong

merchants had delivered the tea. Numbers could hence be used to detect fraud; in 1752 the Danish brought a case against the merchant Emanuel Quiqua for tea bought in 1747. The chests sold by Quiqua contained Bohea instead of the Hyson they had contracted for.[143]

Once in Europe the numbers on the chests were used to sequence the lots put up for sale at the company auctions; each lot typically contained between two and four chests. The chests' identity numbers were printed in the catalogues next to the lot number, with the sequences of chest identity numbers kept intact within and between lots, as they appeared in the Swedish catalogues. Quality was also registered using the chest numbers. A Swedish catalogue from 1748 contains handwritten notes on the quality of the tea and how much each lot sold for. The quality of the Bohea tea was summarized for different sequences of chests and lots; each sequence contained between 4 and 150 chests. The highest price, 46.81 ore silver-money per Swedish pound (skålpund), was paid for tea in the chests numbered 1,446 to 1,545. According to the description this sequence contained 'Rather good Bohea with mostly thorn leaves'. The lowest price, 40.33 ore silver-money per pound was paid for chests 1,575 to 1,584, and was described as 'Totally ordinary, Bohea worse than all previous'. The average prices for the other sequences of chests matched the quality assessments, which described the tea as either 'good', 'ordinary', or 'plain' containing 'open' or 'closed' leaves. The difference between the highest and the lowest price was just above thirteen per cent.[144]

Evidence that the contents of *individual* chests were known to potential bidders can be found elsewhere. Several surviving Swedish catalogues contain handwritten notes in the form of single letters above each chest. Two surviving catalogues contain keys which explain what the letters referred to, for example: 'P best sort; M second; O common; R a little windy; C windy; N musty'.[145] In the case of one of these catalogues, the quality of only certain chests was indicated in this way, on the first ten pages; the majority of these chests were bought by two merchants named Bagge and Hising.[146]

The use of letters as keys to indicate the quality of the tea put up at public sales was not unique to the SEIC. In an annotated catalogue from the Ostend Company 'B', 'b', 'c' and 'd' seem to have been used for the same purpose.[147] The few remaining printed Danish catalogues that survive also have handwritten letters in the margin, for example 'aa', 'a', 'ab', which presumably indicated quality.[148] From Anne Wegener Sleeswijk's work we know that key systems were used in the

early-modern Dutch wholesale trade in wine. Wholesalers invited brokers to taste their supplies before a sale; the latter summarized the content of different lots of wine casks and kept track of the prices of lots independently of whether they took part in the bidding or not. Such information was used in correspondence with wholesalers and producers.[149] To what extent information on the quality of the Scandinavian tea cargoes was widely distributed is hard to say, but some sharing of information definitely took place. Two copies of a catalogue from the public sale of the cargoes of the *Cron-Printzen Adolph Friedrich* and *Calmare* in Gothenburg in 1748 contained identical annotations in the form of letters (la, b, Lm) seemingly written by the same hand.[150]

We also know that insiders, such as the supercargoes and some purchasers of large quantities, who also had close links to the companies, were very well informed about the content of specific chests and sequences of chests.[151] However, the identification numbers also helped the European companies to keep track of each other's cargoes and business plans. In 1762 the Danes packed 900 whole chests of tea after their ship had left. Thinking there might be profit in storing tea in Canton in advance of the next season the Dutch supercargoes asked their Directors 'to investigate' how the 'chests numbered 1–900', predicted to arrive in Europe on the *Koninginne Sophia Magdalena*, were going to fare on the European market the following year.[152]

The identification numbers were also used in private accounts. Correspondence between Charles Irvine and his partners in Amsterdam, Rotterdam and Hamburg show that the chest numbers were used in communications about the status of Irvine's accounts, as well in discussion about the trade more generally. Sometimes information about which specific East Indiaman had brought the chests to Europe and in what year were added.[153] It is worth noting that the integrity of the tea chests by all accounts was kept intact as they moved from Canton to Gothenburg and onwards to the continent. Irvine's wholesalers in Amsterdam drilled a hole in the side of a selected chest to take out a sample rather than opening the chest up, to taste the tea they had received from Sweden.[154]

In other words, tea chests were not only vessels for loose tea, they also provided a means to quantify, organize and compress the tea cargo. Handbills outlining what the different East India companies put up for sale listed numbers of chests and tubs; sale catalogues organized the sales in lots of different sized chests. Chests were used to keep qualities and types apart, and to track purchases and sales as the tea moved down the chain, linking Canton merchants to Company auctions

and European wholesalers. Moreover, as the discussion of the Dutch supercargoes illustrates, the effects of different ways of packing the tea in Canton produced slightly different products, and both business advantages *and* disadvantages.

Competition and transparency on the European tea market

In many ways the competition that marked the Canton tea trade was re-enacted in Europe. Correspondence between Charles Irvine, the above mentioned supercargo working for the SEIC, and the merchants he collaborated with on the Continent and in Britain, reveal the extent to which the tea cargoes of the different East India companies served the same European market.

After returning from Canton in 1747, Irvine spent the rest of his life in Sweden and Scotland dealing with East India wholesale goods for much of his time. Operating from Gothenburg he received regular updates on how many ships were expected to arrive in Europe from China each year, and the number of tea chests they contained. He was also informed of the number of unsold chests in the EIC's warehouses in London and unsold chests of French and Danish tea on the Amsterdam market.[155] The worried remarks from one of Irvine's Amsterdam contacts, the tea merchants and wholesalers Pye & Cruikshank, clearly indicate the extent to which the tea cargoes imported by the different companies were competing with one another. In July 1755 they wrote to Irvine: '… now we shall soon have 12 million [lb?] of new Tea in Europe'. This was '… 12 million too much for we wanted a whole year's consumption to take off part of the old stock & to recover that trade'.[156] The predictions of the prices the tea would fetch, particularly in the 1750s, were often quite gloomy.[157] George Ouchterlony, Charles Irvine's long-term contact in London, thought the purchasing strategies of the EIC, importing 'a vast quantity of tea, much more than enough for our own consumption', was indicative of an ambition to drive 'all others out of that Trade'.[158]

All in all these comments suggest a pretty simple calculation: the more tea that arrived from China the lower the prices the tea would fetch in Europe. But, as the previous discussion has revealed, the market was not only ruled by prices and volumes, but also quality. This conclusion is further reinforced by the traces found of different key systems for tracking the contents of chests put up for sale in Ostend, Gothenburg and Copenhagen. Irvine's correspondence reveals how much information

was diffused through the tea trading networks. Staying over in Canton, Irvine provided information about the trade of the different companies, including statements about the overall quality of the different European tea cargoes to his business partners.[159] It is in this light that we can understand the many references to the 'nationalities' of the tea cargoes arriving in Europe. Tea was referred to not only as of high or low quality tea of different types, but also typically as Swedish, Danish, Dutch, French or Emden; it was part of a branding process which we recognize from other aspects of the early-modern trade in perishable goods sold in bulk.[160]

Some of the tea cargoes had a generically bad reputation, of which the tea imported from China via Batavia by the Dutch is the best example. Some of this was tea that had failed to find a buyer in Canton and was hence of low quality even before it left on Chinese junks destined for Batavia. Moreover, this detour meant that the tea had to endure longer periods at sea, and had an extra turn of being off- and on-loaded. Such tea was also, according to Clifford & Sons, Amsterdam merchant bankers and agents to the EIC, not packed in ways which kept types and qualities intact. As they explained to Irvine it was as a result unable to compete with the tea imported directly from China.[161] Irvine knew this already. In a letter written a few years earlier to Thomas Wilkieson, another tea trader in Amsterdam, Irvine had defended the quality of the Swedish tea by suggesting that taste in the Dutch Republic had been spoiled by the 'Batavia wretched stuff'.[162]

Next to the quantities, qualities and reputation of different tea cargoes, the price of tea was also influenced by how the European tea season unfolded. The wholesale tea market was pan-European; anticipation of prices at forthcoming sales in Amsterdam, Middelburg, Rotterdam, Delft, L'Orient, Copenhagen, Gothenburg and Emden influenced the actions of the wholesalers dealing with tea on Irvine's account. Sometimes everybody was uncertain about what would happen to the tea prices. John Forbes, dealing with tea in Rotterdam, wrote to Irvine in 1753 that it was 'the Danish Sale which is believed will regulate the Tea market this year, then ours I fancy will follow, after that yours'.[163] The pan-European or continental character of the wholesale market is also reflected in the geographical movement of tea traders. Wholesale traders migrated between the different companies' sales, often on such a scale they left the day-to-day wholesale trade, run by merchants such as Forbes in Rotterdam, Pye & Cruikshank in Amsterdam, and Metcalf in Hamburg, at a standstill.[164] In other words, the European tea market had a chronology and geography of its own, shaped by when different continental companies put up their tea for sale.

Statistics relating to the Scandinavian trade in Chinese tea show that the DAC and SEIC imported similar amounts of tea. Appendix 1 provides an overview of this importation and its different components between 1733 and 1767. Not all years are accounted for because some of the Danish, and even more of the Swedish import figures are unknown. However, in the case of eighteen of the years covered in the appendix, it is possible to establish the total volume of Scandinavian imports. A comparison of the total amount of tea imported by the SEIC (13,660 tons) and the DAC (12,930 tons) confirms previous studies that have suggested that the two Scandinavian companies imported similar amounts. The Danish and the Swedish tea cargoes also shared a similarity in composition, the great bulk being Bohea tea. The SEIC imported a third more Congou however, 1,418 tons compared to 861 tons in the Danish case; the Swedish Congou cargo was particularly large compared to the Danish in 1754, 1756, 1761 and 1767.

It becomes obvious by studying changes over time that the total size of the Scandinavian tea import varied greatly; as Figure 2.2 illustrates, in 1754 it was nearly 2,000 tons but in 1757 it was less than 1,000 tons. Not only did the total Scandinavian tea cargo vary, but also the amounts brought home by the two companies respectively fluctuated; in some years the DAC brought back much larger cargoes than the SEIC

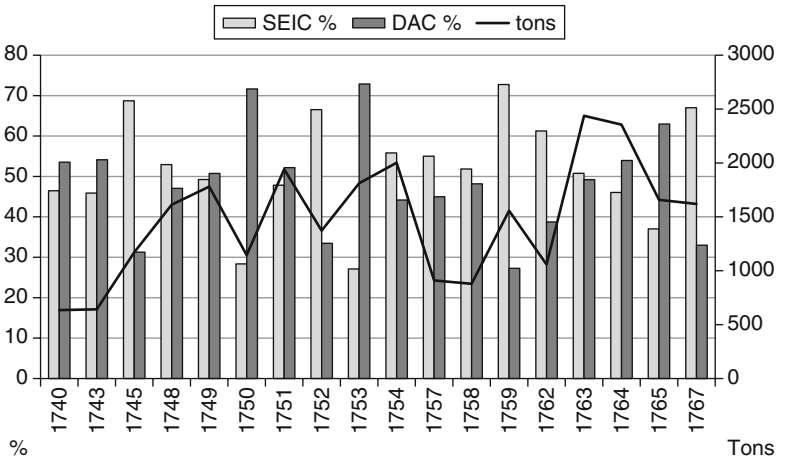

Figure 2.2 Import of tea by DAC and SEIC, percentage of total Scandinavian cargo, and total Scandinavian import of tea in tons, selected years
Source: Appendix 1, years 1740, 1743, 1745, 1748–1754, 1757–1759, 1762–1765, 1767.

did. The big variations reflect the number of ships the Danes and the Swedes each sent out, usually between one and three. The geography and chronology of the continental tea market and the migration of tea wholesalers make even more sense in the light of these variations in the quantities of tea put up for sale only within Scandinavia. The tea market was also transparent. Prices for tea were circulated widely. Information regarding which prices different types and qualities of tea fetched was no doubt promoted by *how* a lot of the tea was sold on, to a large extent at public sales orchestrated by the companies or wholesalers.

Sometimes the practice of public sales or auctions was regarded as an undesirable way to do business. According to Charles Metcalf, operating in Hamburg, the 'continual & frequent public sales' in combination with the expectations of the tea quantities on the way to Europe had brought prices 'to very low ebb'.[165] The advantages and disadvantages of public versus private sales were in fact often discussed. Irvine expressed doubts regarding the benefits of public sales of his tea parcels sent to the Dutch Republic several times. One of the reasons for doubt was that if the tea did not sell, it risked acquiring a bad reputation.[166] Pye & Cruikshank seemed in general less inclined to sell tea publicly, preferring to 'creep out' the tea stored, particularly if they were anticipating a downturn in the price.[167] This strategy might also have been informed by their clientele; in their letter to Irvine the partners mentioned providing 'for the town supply at our shop'.[168] They did, however, appreciate the role of the public sales in testing the market. After 'a trial of some Danish Chests of last sale' had been put up for sale but failed to fetch a good price they recommended that Irvine should not to follow suit with his consignment of last year's Bohea tea of a similar quality.[169]

John Forbes, by contrast, seemed more enthusiastic about dispersing the tea he was in charge of at public sales. As he explained to Irvine in a letter written in 1752, if there were enough quantities offered at the auctions they produced just as high prices as private sales, which were 'always tedious'.[170] In a follow-up letter, in which Forbes responded to reservations expressed by Irvine against such a categorical approval of public sales, Forbes expressed some reservations: other circumstances, such as demand and quantity should also be taken into consideration when deciding on how to sell. However, Forbes also argued, even if a parcel did not sell, the public sale helped advertise the available stock to purchasers, who might then enter into a private sale.[171] Both Pye & Cruikshank and Irvine agreed that the big advantage of public sales or auctions was that they enabled them to get rid of old stocks more quickly.[172]

As Wegner Sleeswijk has shown in relation to early-modern wine auctions in the Dutch Republic, public sales were ripe with potential conflicts between sellers and buyers. Brokers were not only intimate with the quality of the goods put up for sale, they were also in a good position to appreciate the supply and demand and could consequently advise on potentially profitable deals. Abuse could mean certain markets, like the Rotterdam wine market in the 1730s, could even fall into disrepute, leaving producers to go to Amsterdam instead to sell their wine.[173] Nonetheless public sales helped to make the market more transparent as quantities put up for sale were advertised in handbills, catalogues and posters, and prices were reported in printed lists and in merchant correspondence. As Clé Lesger has argued information flow made the Dutch Republic, and particularly Amsterdam, a central market for so many different types of goods in the early-modern trade.[174]

The market for smuggled tea in Britain is hard to research due to the very nature of clandestine trade. Although it is hard to prove it is likely that the transparency of the Dutch market stimulated the tea trade in the same way that the increased publicity of the EIC tea prices sold at the London auctions influenced the trade in Britain. European wholesalers drew on imports from across Europe in order to supply the clandestine British market and the transparency probably compensated for the irregular size of the tea cargo arriving in Copenhagen and Gothenburg. Although wholesalers and brokers were unsure about the amounts of tea arriving in Scandinavia on an annual basis, at least they knew the price the goods fetched at the SEIC and DAC auctions soon enough.

A European taste convergence

We now need to turn to how the Pan-European market for tea worked more generally. No import of tea would of course have happened without a demand from end-consumers. But did the same types and qualities of tea sell on all markets? The correspondence of Charles Irvine reveals some differences in demand amongst the places to which he provided tea. Charles Metcalf in Hamburg bemoaned the fact that the tea traders there, and ultimately the consumers they bought tea on behalf of, were not 'competent judges' of the Linchisin tea that Irvine placed with him.[175] Neither did the type of Pekoe that Irvine left with Metcalf go down well with tea traders in Hamburg. Metcalf complained that 'They are too fine for this market, our dealers are more accustomed to the high … Brown Peckoes, & it's difficult to make sensible of the

difference in goodness'.[176] Interestingly enough Irvine appears not to have sent these types of tea to Hamburg by chance. This is revealed in a letter from him to his nephew John Irvine, who was about to go out to China as a supercargo. Advising him on what to buy as part of his pacotille, that is goods bought on private account, Irvine senior claimed that 'superfine Pecko & a little best Linchisin' were good investments, which together with 'superfine Souchong' were 'wanted at present in Holland and Hamburg'.[177]

Pye & Cruikshank considered the quantities of Hysan, a very fine and expensive green tea, brought to Europe by the Swedish Company were 'more than sufficient for the demand from England' and that it was 'nowhere else called for'.[178] In general though consumer preferences on different markets are generally not mentioned, and there are even fewer references to different tastes relating to cheaper types of tea. At one time Pye & Cruikshank discussed the ability of the British market to absorb more Bohea tea, but that was an exception.[179] Does this reflect an unspoken assumption that the Bohea tea imported by the Swedish and other companies was largely destined for Britain? There is no doubt that the British market was significant; as Abercromby stated in 1752 commenting on plans to significantly lower the tea duty in Britain and its possible effects on the tea trade, 'In that case Holland & Germany will be the only market for tea, imported by your company or the Danish, French & for the future'.[180]

If we make the assumption that the agents knew the largest part of the black tea crop was for the British market, can we infer anything about British consumer preferences in discussions concerning the Scandinavian Bohea import? In a letter from Charles Irvine to Thomas Wilkieson in Amsterdam, Irvine discussed the price and quality of the Bohea he had placed with Wilkieson. He argued that his tea, being 'coarser and cheaper', would sell better than the tea of Mr Abercromby and Mr Duff, who also employed Wilkieson to sell their Swedish tea.[181] However, in the majority of other instances when Bohea is discussed the emphasis is on the better quality. In 1751 Abercromby in London, who regularly invested in Swedish tea, wrote to Irvine regarding Bohea tea: 'I am very much of your opinion with regard to the quality of the goods that in stable commodities the best is always preferable provided they do not exceed in price'.[182] In 1752 Forbes in Amsterdam wrote 'the good boheas are wanted & I am hopeful yours are of the best quality'.[183] In the reports Irvine received on the sale of Bohea tea in Europe quality is frequently touched on. Terms such as 'common' and 'good, sound' were used when describing and comparing the Swedish cargo to others.[184]

In line with the observations from the discussion above this suggests that the *even* quality of Bohea was central in the competition between the European companies. As we know, such evenness was the result of careful purchasing, attention to the size and roughness of leaves, and increasingly over time the blending of higher and lower qualities of black tea in Canton.

Although it is hard to find evidence that the supercargoes and directors of the Scandinavian companies had specific customer groups in mind when trading tea in China this does not mean that the Scandinavian trade lacked a check-and-balance on its trade from experts. Just as in the British system, wholesalers operating on the European market provided expert advice, even final judgements, on the cargoes brought home.

Irvine's correspondence reveals that the expertise of these traders was drawn upon frequently and at several different points in the process of buying and selling the tea. Pye & Cruikshank were for example asked to evaluate samples of the tea that had arrived in Gothenburg prior to the start of public sales. Such exchange of tea samples and information seem to have been quite hard to organize for several reasons. One problem was the short time between arrival of the ship and the sale. Another problem was that the samples could get damaged and were as a result hard to evaluate.[185] A third problem was that the samples of different tea could contaminate one another. This was an issue in 1756 when Pye & Cruikshank's assessments of the qualities of some of the Swedish tea contradicted those of Charles Irvine's nephew John Irvine, one of the supercargoes on the expedition returning that year. Pye & Cruikshank suggested that contamination might explain the divergent views. Unfortunately Pye & Cruikshank sent most the results of their tests to Irvine's business associate Colin Campbell, making it hard to estimate the number of tests they conducted.

John Irvine seems to have been regarded as quite competent at evaluating the tea, at least in performing the first estimation of its quality.[186] Given the active part played by supercargoes in purchasing tea in Canton this is not surprising.[187] Inside information was also generated which could be drawn upon when the tea was sold in Europe. In 1751 Abercromby wrote to Irvine about plans to invest in tea put up for sale in Gothenburg, indicating that he preferred to buy tea from the cargo of the *Adolph Friedrich* and in this purchase would 'take George Kitchin's character and remarks preferably to any aboard the two ships'.[188] The supercargoes also had an intimate knowledge of the tea that went into their share of the pacotille. Staying behind in Canton in 1744, Irvine wrote to Campbell advising him, in case he was planning to buy tea,

'I have not an ounce of any goods but best Bohea Tea in my privilege & very good fine tea in my Cabin all cheap bought'.[189]

But even if the supercargoes' experience and inside knowledge played a role it was the wholesalers, such as Pye & Cruikshank, that had the last word on quality.[190] Since we can assume that Charles Irvine was well placed to buy tea of what he thought was good quality, either by drawing on insider information or relying on his own expertise, it is particularly interesting that Pye & Cruikshank were sometimes less than impressed with the qualities of the tea Irvine sent them. In 1749 they wrote: 'We have examined the whole chests & we find them good Bohea but nothing more'.[191] In 1753 they reported that they had examined 'several of your low priced & found them but very ordinary'.[192] Of course sometimes Irvine got it right; in 1753 Pye & Cruikshank concluded: 'We have tasted the different packings of your tea & we find them very good fine Cargoes'.[193] High quality did not always render high prices for the goods though: 'Excellent' tea was sometimes sold 'scandalously cheap'.[194] Next to Pye & Cruikshank, John Forbes seems also to have been regarded competent enough to evaluate the tea placed with him, while Metcalf trusted dealers local to Hamburg, although he did a first assessment of the cargo sold for Irvine.[195] Among Irvine's tea contacts it is, however, Pye & Cruikshank who comes across as the most careful assessors of goods. They seemed to have taken a pride in this, condemning merchants who traded in tea without taking care to investigate the quality of individual chests.

To conclude this suggests that it was the taste and expertise of the wholesalers, who in turn provided smugglers and the next level of retailers and consumers in Britain, that defined the qualities of the Scandinavian tea cargo. Merchants like Pye & Cruikshank, who were trading in bulk with tea imported by all the different East India companies (except probably the English), were also very well placed to assess the qualities of specific chests and parcels. It is even possible to say that a *taste convergence* took place in the Low Countries, which helped to standardize the European tea market in a way that was reminiscent of the British market, where wholesalers too provided a link between retailers and the English Company.

On what basis a tea consignment was regarded as of high or low quality is curiously often left unsaid. Adjectives such as those referred to in the key systems discussed above, like 'murky' and 'windy' or descriptions of the leaves such as 'open', 'closed' or 'thorn' are not generally used in the correspondence between Irvine and the tea wholesalers who conducted their own tests. One exception can be found in an

exchange between Irvine and Thomas Wilkieson, when Irvine argued that if the tea was not 'well-toasted' it would 'be apt to turn musty in the voyage'.[196] The tea Irvine was selling might have been 'over toasted'; 'a medium here is best upon whole' he admitted. However Irvine continued: 'age will infallibly cure them for that of greenness of the water'. With that he meant that tea would be improved by being stored for two or three years: 'if well-kept [it] will drink mellower & pleasanter & really be wholesome'.[197] The reason why buyers on the Dutch market failed to understand this was, Irvine believed, because 'your tastes are trained from your own Tea, which from China directly are the worst any Europeans bring & that from Batavia wretched stuff'.[198] Judging by Irvine's next response to Wilkieson the latter had disagreed with Irvine about storing as a means to improve the over-toasted tea as well as bad tasting Dutch tea. Irvine seems to have been at least partially convinced by Wilkieson's arguments since he wrote back: 'Keeping tea two or three years may indeed be too long', although Irvine still maintained that if stored for half that time the tea could be 'cured' and acquired a 'higher colour' without losing 'flavour'. However Irvine was not willing to 'experiment' with it so he gave his approval to Wilkieson to sell his tea at a public sale.[199]

How to store and transport the tea in order to preserve the quality was also something that was touched on regularly in correspondence. One delivery of tea to Pye & Cruikshank had been damaged en route and the two merchants reported back to Irvine about how they proceeded examining the content of each chest. They also gave advice on the units used to store tea, recommending Irvine to avoid chests treated with 'painter's oil'.[200] Knowledge regarding the best way to store and transport tea was by all accounts important since the tea from China had to travel far before it was consumed. Yet in spite of Irvine's belief that storing could improve the quality of the tea, all evidence points towards the opposite. Tea, even cheap black tea, had a 'best before' date; it was best consumed within a certain time period, something that gave the trade between Europe and China its very own rhythm, and the companies with the fastest turnover an advantage.

Conclusion

The Canton market for Bohea tea was highly competitive, reflecting the ever growing European, and particularly British, demands. Early deals were often the most advantageous; they allowed for a good share of the limited amount of high quality Bohea available. The relatively large

silver cargoes of the Scandinavian companies probably gave the Danish and the Swedish supercargoes an advantage over the Dutch and English negotiating tea contracts with the Hong merchants. High quality Bohea was, however, only one component of the Scandinavian success. European consumers wanted their tea to taste 'mellow'; the first picking of Bohea needed Ankay tea, a brittle, weaker tea type, to achieve the right balance. The Swedes took a lead in promoting such blends, drawing on the supply among their contacts in the Hong merchant group. Carefully blending tea in Canton could have enabled the Swedes, as well as the other continental companies, to supply the clandestine British market with a product more similar to the fair-traded tea coming out of London. Tea imported by the English East India Company was sold on to wholesalers who blended the tea before they passed it on to their agents who retailed it across the country. Smuggled Scandinavian tea could in theory bypass this blending process; tea could instead arrive at British retailers, and sometimes end-consumers, in the composition dictated by the supercargoes of the DAC and SEIC.

Bohea and Ankay tea filled the Swedish chests to the brim. Packing the tea densely cut down on transportation costs but also generated a dustier tea. Once in Europe the dust was shifted out and added to the coarser but less compactly packed Dutch tea. While there was a complementarity between different continental companies' tea cargoes there was also competition; information about prices and qualities circulated between places and people taking part in the European wholesale market circuit, often conducted with the help of public sales. A qualified guess is that the transparency of the European wholesale market was greatly beneficial to the clandestine trade in tea in Britain.

In terms of standards of taste a conversion seems to have taken place in the Low Countries, among dealers tasting and trading with tea imported by all the continental East India companies. Geographically this was also a centre for the smuggled traffic that provided Britain with illegal tea as well as other goods such as brandy. It is only in the second half of the eighteenth century that direct smuggling out of Gothenburg, for example, increased significantly, a development that explains references such as 'Gothenburg Congo'. In either case the Scandinavian tea trade relied on the role of the Dutch Republic as a central market for tea in eighteenth-century Europe. As Lesger argues this role was not associated with physically storing the goods in question. Samples evaluated by brokers were sufficient in establishing value and calculating demands.[201]

Was Scandinavian tea understood as a distinct sub-category of the contraband tea *before* the mid-eighteenth century? The Dutch comments

on the dustiness of Scandinavian tea suggest this was the case, although the integrity of the Danish and the Swedish tea would have been lost once it was mixed with tea arriving on VOC ships. To what extent such a mixture was requested by Dutch traders and consumers only, or if this combination was also desired by consumers in Britain, is hard to tell. Tea smuggling accounts, often produced by those with vested interests in the legal trade, do regularly suggest that the goods were roughly handled, including journeys on open boats, deposits on shore lines and the use of oilskin bags to transport the tea.[202] The emphasis on blending, avoiding scent pollution and the care taken to pack and load even the cheapest black tea cargo in Canton which emerge from the Scandinavian sources provide an alternative account. Supposing the Scandinavian companies were ruled by economic rationales we can only assume that this care corresponded to British demands, and that hence at least some of the Scandinavian goods kept their integrity, foremost perhaps their packaging, as they moved across the North Sea.

The way to accommodate the Scandinavian account with that of smuggling is to take the diversity of the eighteenth-century British tea market seriously. The Scandinavian Canton blended tea arrived to a market where the bulk of the tea, perhaps seventy-five per cent, was smuggled goods. Aside from the contraband and the EIC import of Chinese leaves there were also the leaves made from ash, sloe, elder and so on manufactured to look like the Chinese product, and the second-hand and the 'improved tea'. It is easy to imagine that this generated a wide range of different preferences based on everyday consumption among many different social groups. Bohea and Congou and the other Chinese tea names might in this respect be misleading, suggesting unchanging categories in what was a much more diversified supply and stock. What is beyond doubt is that the Scandinavian companies were central in the development of blends, and consequently also tastes for tea in Britain, although only rarely were the goods as clearly labelled, as in the case of 'Gothenburg Congo'.

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44. §15:3 (Instructions), signed 20 Dec. 1754, Copibog, Vol. 187, AKA, RAC.
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50. 28 Aug. 1755, Neg. prot. Vol. 1135, AKA, RAC.

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62. Van Dyke, *Merchants*, p. 22.
63. *The Canton-Macao dagregisters 1763*, translation and annotations by Paul Van Dyke, revisions by Cynthia Viallé (Macao: Instituto Cultural do Governo da R.A.E. de Macau, 2008), p. 120. Conspicuous French silver deliveries in 1749 also constrained Danish tea contracting (4 Aug. 1749, Neg. prot. Vol. 1127, DAC, RAC).
64. Tsai, Simon Yang-Chien. 'Trading for tea: A study of the English East India Company's tea trade with China and the related financial issues, 1760–1833' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Leicester 2003), p. 117.
65. *The Canton-Macao dagregisters 1763*, pp. 44–45.
66. Bowen, Huw V. *The business of empire: The East India Company and imperial Britain, 1756–1833* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp. 222–234.
67. Glamann, *Dutch-Asiatic*, p. 241.
68. Glamann, *Dutch-Asiatic*, p. 243.
69. Glamann, 'The Danish Asiatic', pp. 115–121.
70. Koninckx, Christian. *The first and second charters of the Swedish East India Company (1731–1766): A contribution to the maritime, economic and social history of North-Western Europe in its relationships with the Far East* (Kortrijk: Van Ghemmert, 1980), p. 192.
71. Koninckx, *The first*, pp. 183–189.
72. Koninckx, *The first*, pp. 193–198.
73. Between 1772 and 1774 the silver cargo constituted 94–96 per cent of the SEIC export cargo; 1775–1777: 90–87 per cent; 1778–1783: 86–79 per cent; 1785–1786: 89 per cent. Balansräkningar för kontoret i Kanton 1772–1783, 1785–1786, Ostindiska Kompaniet, GUB. (http://www.ub.gu.se/samlingar/handskrift/ostindie/dokument/document.xml?id=71 accessed 27 May 2015).
74. Müller, Leos. 'The Swedish East India Company: Strategies and functions of an interloper', in *Small is beautiful? Interlopers and smaller trading nations in the pre-industrial period*, ed. Markus A. Denzel, Jan de Vries and Philipp Robinson Rössner (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2011), pp. 73–93 (91).

75. Lauring, Kåre. 'Kinahandelen – et spørsmål om finansiering', in *Søfart, politik, identitet, tilegnet Ole Feldbæk*, ed. Hans Jeppesen (Copenhagen: Falcon, 1996), pp. 215–226 (222).
76. 19 Aug. 1749, Neg. prot. Vol. 1126, AKA, RAC.
77. *The Canton-Macao dagregisters 1764*, translation and annotations by Paul Van Dyke and Cynthia Viallé (Macao: Instituto Cultural do Governo da R.A.E. de Macau, 2009), p. 114.
78. See for example 14 and 28 Aug. 1755, Neg. prot. Vol. 1135, AKA, RAC.
79. *The Canton-Macao dagregisters 1763*, p. 91.
80. 4 Nov. 1755, Neg. prot. Vol. 1135, AKA, RAC.
81. C. Irvine to J. Gough & Comp., 31/12/1744, C. Irvine's Letter book December 1744 to January 1748, IC, JFB Library, MUL.
82. C. Irvine to G. Ouchterlony, 31/12/1744, C. Irvine's Letter book December 1744 to January 1748, IC, JFB Library, MUL.
83. C. Irvine to Koning, Campbell & Comp., 31/12/1744, C. Irvine's Letter book December 1744 to January 1748, IC, JFB Library, MUL.
84. §15:4 (Instructions), signed 28 Dec. 1735, Neg. prot. Vol. 1116, AKA, RAC. Note that neither Hyson nor Bing tea were included under this category of tea, they formed separate posts in the ordering list.
85. §16 (Instructions), signed 1 Dec. 1750, Neg. prot. Vol. 1129, AKA, RAC.
86. §35 (Instructions), signed 24 Mar. 1751, Neg. prot. Vol. 1130, AKA, RAC.
87. 21 Nov. 1752, Neg. prot. Vol. 1131, AKA, RAC.
88. 17 Oct. 1755, Neg. prot. Vol. 1135, AKA, RAC.
89. 8 Nov. 1755, Neg. prot. Vol. 1135, AKA, RAC. Swetia's name is not spelled consistently, here I have used the spelling used by Paul Van Dyke in *Merchants*, see plate 03:07.
90. *The Canton-Macao dagregisters 1763*, p. 121; *The Canton-Macao dagregisters 1764*, pp. 25, 228. On nationalities and reputations in Canton see also Hellman, Lisa. 'Men you can trust? Intercultural trust and masculinity in the eyes of Swedes in eighteenth century Canton', in *Encountering the other: Ethnic diversity, culture and travel in early modern Sweden*, ed. Fredrik Ekengren and Magdalena Naum (Suffolk: Boydell & Brewer, forthcoming).
91. Glamann, 'The Danish Asiatic', pp. 234–235.
92. 20 Oct. 1755, Neg. prot. Vol. 1135, AKA, RAC.
93. *The Canton-Macao dagregisters 1764*, p. 232, and Mui and Mui, *The management*, pp. 47–48.
94. *The Canton-Macao dagregisters 1763*, pp. 96–97.
95. §16 (Instructions), signed 23 Dec. 1751, Vol. 1131, AKA, RAC.
96. 30 Oct. 1755, Neg. prot. Vol. 1135, AKA, RAC.
97. 4 Nov. 1755, Neg. prot. Vol. 1135, AKA, RAC.
98. Van Dyke, *Merchants*, p. 38, and plate 11.08 and 11.14.
99. §16 (Instructions), signed 1 Dec. 1750, Neg. prot. Vol. 1129, AKA, RAC.
100. 21 Oct. 1755, Neg. prot. Vol. 1135, AKA, RAC.
101. Pope, Charles. *The merchant, ship-owner, and ship-master's import and export guide; comprising every species of authentic information relative to shipping, navigation and commerce*, 15th ed. (London: The Compiler, 1831), p. 309.
102. *The Canton-Macao dagregisters 1763*, p. 28.
103. *The Canton-Macao dagregisters 1764*, pp. 64–65.
104. 3 Nov. 1752, Neg. prot. Vol. 1131, AKA, RAC.

105. §16 (Instructions), Copibog, Vol. 187, AKA, RAC.
106. 23 Sept. 1755, Neg. prot. Vol. 1135, AKA, RAC.
107. 13 Oct. 1755, Neg. prot. Vol. 1135, AKA, RAC.
108. 21 Oct. 1755, Neg. prot. Vol. 1135, AKA, RAC.
109. 21 Oct. 1755, Neg. prot. Vol. 1135, AKA, RAC.
110. 4 Nov. 1755, Neg. prot. Vol. 1135, AKA, RAC.
111. 4 Nov. 1755, Neg. prot. Vol. 1135, AKA, RAC.
112. 4 Nov. 1755, Neg. prot. Vol. 1135, AKA, RAC.
113. 19 Nov. 1755, Neg. prot. Vol. 1135, AKA, RAC.
114. No. 95, Auction protocoll 22 Sept. 1756, Vol. 232, Den Esmarckske arkivaflevering, 1727–1757, A. G. Moltkes protocol, solgte ladninger i Asiatiske Kompagni, DCK, RAC.
115. *The Canton-Macao dagregisters 1762*, translation and annotations by Paul van Dyke, revisions by Cynthia Viallé (Macao: Instituto Cultural do Governo da R.A.E. de Macau, 2006), pp. 69–70.
116. *The Canton-Macao dagregisters 1762*, p. 70.
117. *The Canton-Macao dagregisters 1762*, p. 70.
118. *The Canton-Macao dagregisters 1762*, p. 70.
119. *The Canton-Macao dagregisters 1762*, p. 71.
120. Skeppspredikanten C. C. Ströms papper, nr 1152: Promemoria, uppsatt af Michael Grubb, för någon till Canton afgående Ostindiska Compagniets agent, Ostindiska kompaniet, GUB (http://www.ub.gu.se/samlingar/handskrift/ostindie/dokument/document.xml?id=101 accessed 27 May 2015).
121. Skeppspredikanten C. C. Ströms papper, nr 1152: Promemoria, uppsatt af Michael Grubb, för någon till Canton afgående Ostindiska Compagniets agent, Ostindiska kompaniet, GUB (http://www.ub.gu.se/samlingar/handskrift/ostindie/dokument/document.xml?id=101 accessed 27 May 2015).
122. Muskett, 'English', p. 81.
123. §16 (Instructions), signed 24 Mar. 1751, Neg. prot. Vol. 1130, AKA, RAC.
124. The Dutch referred frequently to this problem, see for example *The Canton-Macao dagregisters 1763*, p. 146.
125. 19 Sept. 1752, Neg. prot. Vol. 1131, AKA, RAC.
126. *The Canton-Macao dagregisters 1762*, pp. 53, 69.
127. 15 Nov. 1752, Neg. prot. Vol. 1131, AKA, RAC.
128. 30 Aug. 1752, Neg. prot. Vol. 1131, AKA, RAC; 11 Aug. 1755, Neg. prot. Vol. 1135, AKA, RAC.
129. §16 (Instructions), signed 1 Dec. 1750, Neg. prot. Vol. 1129, AKA, RAC; §16 (Instructions), signed the 23 Dec. 1751, Neg. prot. Vol. 1131, AKA, RAC.
130. See for example *The Canton-Macao dagregisters 1762*, pp. 34, 73.
131. 29 July 1752, Neg. prot. Vol. 1131, AKA, RAC.
132. §16, (Instructions), signed 24 Mar. 1751, Neg. prot. Vol. 1130.
133. 3 Nov. 1737, Neg. prot. Vol. 1117, AKA, RAC.
134. *The Canton-Macao dagregisters 1764*, p. 243; see also Ibid., 'Introduction' by Paul Van Dyke, pp. XIX, XX.
135. *The Canton-Macao dagregisters 1764*, p. 243.
136. *The Canton-Macao dagregisters 1764*, p. 240.
137. *The Canton-Macao dagregisters 1764*, p. 241.
138. *The Canton-Macao dagregisters 1764*, p. 244.
139. *The Canton-Macao dagregisters 1762*, pp. 43, 45, 61.

140. §16 (Instructions), signed 24 Mar. 1751, Neg. prot. Vol. 1130, AKA, RAC.
141. 21 Nov. 1752, Neg. prot. Vol. 1131, AKA, RAC.
142. 27 July 1752, Neg. prot. Vol. 1131, AKA, RAC.
143. 25 Oct. 1752, Neg. prot. Vol. 1131, AKA, RAC. See also Mui and Mui, *The management*, pp. 41–42 for similar British examples.
144. See lot 1–440; Sales catalogue from the sale of the cargo of the ship *Calmare*, http://www.ub.gu.se/samlingar/handskrift/ostindie/dokument/document.xml?id=168 (accessed 14 May 2013).
145. Sales catalogues from the sale of *Adolph Friedrichs* (undated), *Götha Leyon* (undated) and *Götha Leyon* and *Prins Carl* (1752), F25:11, Övriga ämnesordnade handlingar, Magistrat och rådhusrätten 1626–1849, Stockholms stadsarkiv. Quoted from *Adolph Friedrichs* (undated). I want to thank Ulf Andersson for sharing this information with me.
146. Sales catalogues from sale of the cargo of *Adolph Friedrichs* (undated), F25:11, Övriga ämnesordnade handlingar, Magistrat och rådhusrätten 1626–1849, Stockholms stadsarkiv.
147. Sales catalogue from the sale of the cargoes of the ships *Concodia* and *Marquis De Prie*, Vol. 51, A 152, Östads arkivet, Landsarkivet i Göteborg.
148. See for example No. 95, Auction protocoll 22 Sept. 1756, Vol. 232, Den Esmarckske arkivaflevering, 1727–1757, A. G. Moltkes protocol, solgte ladninger i Asiatiske Kompagni, DCK, RAC. Note however that while the individual chest number is listed in the catalogue, sequences of chests numbers are broken up seemingly to reflect the quality of the contents of the chest.
149. Wegener Sleeswijk, Anne. 'Hearing, seeing, tasting and bidding: Information at the Dutch auction of commodities in the eighteenth century', in *Information flows: New approaches in the historical study of business information*, ed. Leos Müller and Jari Ojala (Helsinki: Finnish Literature Society, 2007), pp. 169–192 (182–185).
150. Compare the catalogue from the sales in 1748 (available online http://www.ub.gu.se/samlingar/handskrift/ostindie/dokument/document.xml?id=168 (accessed 14 May 2013) with Vol. 10, 1748, in enskilda arkiv inom kommerskollegium, Ostindiska kompaniet, KA, RAS.
151. C. Irvine to C. Campbell, 31/12/1744 C. Irvine's Letter book December 1744 to January 1748, IC, JFB Library, MUL.
152. *The Canton-Macao dagregisters 1762*, p. 45. See also *The Canton-Macao dagregisters 1763*, p. 28 where the Dutch refers to chests number 301–450, which contained more than a third Ankay tea.
153. Pye & Cruikshank to C. Irvine, 11/3/1752, IC, JFB Library, MUL.
154. Pye & Cruikshank to C. Irvine, 19/5/1753, IC, JFB Library, MUL.
155. A. Abercromby to C. Irvine, 25/6/1751; Pye & Cruikshank to C. Irvine, 6/6 /1752, IC, JFB Library, MUL.
156. Pye & Cruikshank to C. Irvine, 5/7/1755, IC, JFB Library, MUL.
157. Pye & Cruikshank to C. Irvine, 19/1/1751, 3/7/1751, 15/7/1752, 28/10/1752, 9/1/1753, 17/3/1753, 9/11/1756; J. More to C. Irvine, 11/8/1750; J. Forbes to C. Irvine, 22/8 /1753; G. Ouchterlony to C. Irvine 19/6 /1752, IC, JFB Library, MUL.
158. G. Ouchterlony to C. Irvine, 11/6/1754, IC, JFB Library, MUL.
159. C. Irvine to C. Campbell, 16/1/1746, C. Irvine's Letter book December 1744 to January 1748, IC, JFB.

160. Wegener Sleeswijk, 'Hearing', p. 181.
161. Clifford & Sons to C. Irvine, 3/10/1747, IC, JFB Library, MUL.
162. C. Irvine to T. Wilkieson, 21/5/1743, C. Irvine's Letter book November 1742 to July 1743, IC, JFB Library, MUL.
163. J. Forbes to C. Irvine, 19/7/1753, IC, JFB Library, MUL. See also J. Forbes to C. Irvine, 20/11/1752 and 25/10/1753, IC, JFB Library.
164. J. Forbes to C. Irvine, 20/11/1752; Pye & Cruikshank to C. Irvine, 28/11/1752, 18/8/1753, 27/11/1756, IC, JFB Library, MUL. See also Muskett, 'English', p. 80.
165. C. Metcalf to C. Irvine, 22/6/1753, IC, JFB Library, MUL.
166. C. Irvine to T. Wilkieson, 4/5/1743, C. Irvine's Letter book November 1742 to July 1743, IC, JFB Library, MUL.
167. Pye & Cruikshank to C. Irvine, 3/7/1751, IC, JFB Library, MUL.
168. Pye & Cruikshank to C. Irvine, 23/3/1750, IC, JFB Library, MUL.
169. Pye & Cruikshank to C. Irvine, 16/3/1754, IC, JFB Library, MUL.
170. J. Forbes to C. Irvine, 27/6/1752, IC, JFB Library, MUL.
171. J. Forbes to C. Irvine, 1/8/1752, IC, JFB Library, MUL.
172. Pye & Cruikshank to C. Irvine, 19/1/1751; 19/8/1752; C. Irvine to T. Wilkieson 4/5/1743, C. Irvine's Letter book November 1742 to July 1743, IC, JFB Library, MUL.
173. Wegener Sleeswijk, 'Hearing', pp. 188–192.
174. Lesger Clé, Maria. *The rise of the Amsterdam market and information exchange: Merchants, commercial expansion and change in spatial economy of the Low Countries, c. 1550–1630* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005).
175. C. Metcalf to C. Irvine, 18/11/1749, IC, JFB Library, MUL. See also C. Metcalf to C. Irvine 21/11/1749, IC, JFB Library, MUL.
176. C. Metcalf to C. Irvine, 8/2/1752, IC, JFB Library, MUL.
177. C. Irvine to J. Irvine, 7/10/1747, Irvine's Letter book December 1744 to January 1748, IC, JFB, MUL.
178. Pye & Cruikshank 28/11/1752, IC, JFB Library, MUL. See also Muskett, 'English', p. 81 for similar comments.
179. Pye & Cruikshank to C. Irvine, 21/10/1749, IC, JFB, MUL.
180. A. Abercromby to C. Irvine, 10/11/1752, IC, JFB Library, MUL.
181. C. Irvine to T. Wilkieson, 30/4/1743, C. Irvine's Letter book November 1742 to July 1743, IC, JFB Library, MUL.
182. A. Abercromby to C. Irvine, 3/12/1751, JFB Library, MUL.
183. J. Forbes to C. Irvine, 20/10/1752, IC, JFB Library, MUL.
184. Pye & Cruikshank to C. Irvine, 17/11/1753; Pye & Cruikshank 23/11/1753, IC, JFB Library.
185. Pye & Cruikshank to C. Irvine, 12/10/1751, IC, JFB Library, MUL.
186. Pye & Cruikshank to C. Irvine, 4/9/1756, IC, JFB Library, MUL.
187. There is no room to discuss this here, but in Canton some of the western trader seemed to be regarded as particularly knowledgeable about tea, see C. Irvine to König, Campbell & Comp. 31/12 /1744, C. Irvine's Letter book December 1744 to January 1748, IC, JFB. Library, MUL.
188. A. Abercromby to C. Irvine, 25/8/1751 IC, JFB Library, MUL. See also J. Utfall's letter to C. Irvine 22/7/1756, IC, JFB Library, MUL.
189. C. Irvine to C. Campbell, 31/12/1744 C. Irvine's Letter book December 1744 to January 1748, IC, JFB. Library, MUL.

190. Pye & Cruikshank to C. Irvine, 31/7/1756, IC, JFB Library, MUL.
191. Pye & Cruikshank to C. Irvine, 21/10/1749, IC, JFB Library, MUL.
192. Pye & Cruikshank to C. Irvine, 23/10/1753, IC, JFB Library, MUL.
193. Pye & Cruikshank to C. Irvine, 19/8/1752, IC, JFB Library, MUL.
194. Pye & Cruikshank to C. Irvine, 11/11/1749, IC, JFB Library, MUL. See also Pye & Cruikshank to C. Irvine 11/11/1749, IC, JFB Library, MUL.
195. J. Forbes to C. Irvine, 21/10/1752; C. Metcalf to C. Irvine, 2/1/1750, IC, JFB Library, MUL.
196. C. Irvine to T. Wilkieson, 21/5/1743, C. Irvine's Letter book November 1742 to July 1743, IC, JFB Library, MUL.
197. C. Irvine to T. Wilkieson, 21/5/1743, C. Irvine's Letter book November 1742 to July 1743, IC, JFB Library, MUL.
198. C. Irvine to T. Wilkieson, 21/5/1743, C. Irvine's Letter book November 1742 to July 1743, IC, JFB Library, MUL.
199. C. Irvine to T. Wilkieson, 27/7/1743 C. Irvine's Letter book November. 1742 to July 1743, IC, JFB Library, MUL. See also C. Irvine to T. Wilkieson, 4/5/1743, C. Irvine's Letter book November 1742 to July 1743, IC, JFB Library, MUL. Compare also Pye & Cruikshank to C. Irvine, 20/9/1754, IC, JFB Library, MUL.
200. Pye & Cruikshank to C. Irvine, 19/8/1752 IC, JFB Library, MUL.
201. Lesger, *The rise*, pp. 252–253.
202. Muskett, 'English', pp. 77, 147, 168, 212, 301.

3
A Colourful Cargo for a Motley People

Silk and European fashion

Christian Jensen Lintrup (1703–1772) made five journeys to Canton, rising through the ranks of the Danish Asiatic Company to become a head supercargo. We shall encounter him later in this chapter as he contracted for thousands of silk pieces in Canton. Lintrup also traded extensively on his private account, a business which earnt him the nickname the 'Chinese Merchant' in Copenhagen. When Lintrup was ennobled as Lindencrone in 1756 he was a wealthy man. Fittingly his daughter-in-law, the eighteen-year-old Bolette Maria Haboe, was married in an ivory coloured satin woven silk dress embellished with horizontal and vertical embroideries of flowers and garlands. Most (although possibly not all) of the satin fabric was of Chinese origin. Today the dress belongs to the collection of the Design Museum in Copenhagen, but it has a well-travelled history. The outfit moved back and forth between China and Denmark before the wedding in 1768; the skills and prices of embroidery work in Canton made it worthwhile to have the dress embellished by Chinese craftsmen. Judging by the thread, some of stitches are made from silk thread, the dress was partially sewn in Canton too.[1]

Sericulture originated in China but travelled westward to the Byzantine Empire and onward to Italy and southern France from the eleventh century. The new fibre was incorporated into a wide range of products by textile manufacturers across Europe. Meanwhile Chinese silks made to fit European taste kept arriving, and increasingly so as the direct maritime trade between Europe and China was established in the late seventeenth century. These historical connections make it hard to determine the origin of surviving early-modern silk pieces in Europe. There are clues,

however; regular holes in the selvedges and selvedges in contrasting colours indicate Chinese origin, as do the bright glossy lustre and the 'soft clinging feel' of Chinese silk. The width of the cloth can also sometimes be used to distinguish between European and Chinese products. Eighteenth-century Chinese textiles were typically broader, seventy-two to seventy-nine centimetres wide, while European looms at the time tended to produce silk with a width of between fifty-three and fifty-nine centimetres. But, as we shall see below, there are many examples of narrower Chinese silk pieces too.[2]

In terms of fashion it is, however, easy to establish the influences that shaped the design of Bolette Maria Haboe's wedding outfit; the sack dress is a 'robe à la française' with a matching petticoat. While the rococo style might have been slightly out-of-date in 1768, the neo-classical-inspired embroideries were the height of fashion.[3] The dress reflects the extent to which trends dictated changes to outfits in the eighteenth century. This applied not just to the elite, and a growing production of accessories and readymade clothes helped expand the market, democratizating fashion as consumer behaviour changed.[4] These changes corresponded with an increase in cotton consumption. However, silk textiles 'led' fashion for most of the century. It was only in the 1770s that designs primarily applied to cotton moved to the forefront, while another source of design innovation came from embroidery work. Such a chronology does not of course take into account how climate, socio-cultural preferences and specific needs shaped consumption and trade both regionally and locally.[5]

The manufacture of the most fashionable silk textiles for clothes in eighteenth-century Europe was dominated by French and English producers. The rhythm of change was partially set by the manufacturers themselves; by regularly introducing new patterns and colour schemes leading-edge producers kept abreast of the competition from smaller manufacturers who copied their designs.[6] As well as annual and seasonal changes, damask and brocade patterns used in high-fashion silk design also changed over the longer term. The import of Asian textiles by the East India companies in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries influenced European designs, generating what is known as 'the bizarre style', with its Chinoiserie and Japonaiserie influences, 'elongated patterns' and blending of 'strange and familiar motifs'. By the 1720s this style was replaced by naturalism, or the rococo style, with patterns often including images of flowers replicated with botanical precision. Neo-classical designs, incorporating stripes and spots, became more prominent in the last third of the century.[7]

The most fashionable designs for patterned silk were produced in limited quantities, sometimes of only four pieces per design. Clothes made from these pieces were exclusive.[8] The case of Bolette Maria Haboe's wedding dress illustrates that Chinese wrought silk was used in exclusive top-end garments, although here perhaps the embroideries rather than the woven patterns marked out its refinement, something that we will return to below. There are other examples of how eighteenth-century Chinese silk was used in luxurious bed hangings, blankets and dresses, held by museums across the Western world, many with elaborate embroideries and woven and painted patterns. However, as researchers on both early-modern Dutch and the late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century American trade with China have pointed out, the few surviving artefacts do not represent the great bulk of silk imported to the Atlantic world. The thirty-five or so surviving examples of elaborately designed clothes and furniture incorporating Chinese silk held in Dutch museums, for example, tell us little about the bulk of the Chinese silk cargo of the VOC. Christian Jörg has calculated that all in all 184,027 Chinese silk pieces, measuring sixteen meters by seventy centimetres, were sold at the auctions of the Dutch Company between 1729 and 1795. Surviving samples of the textiles the VOC traded add a visual dimension to this cargo, as it came in a wide assortment of vivid colours.[9]

As we shall see below, in terms of size and colour assortment the Scandinavian silk cargo in the middle third of the eighteenth century was not too different from that of the Dutch. Yet, as is the case for Dutch history, little attention has been paid to the influx of Chinese silk on the Scandinavian markets. Aside from what single items like Bolette Maria Haboe's wedding dress, occasional banners and surviving quilts can tell us, we know very little about the trade in and consumption of Chinese silk in Scandinavia, as well as elsewhere in Europe and America.[10]

There might be several explanations for this oversight. Silk has been foremost associated with traditional elite consumption, while cotton in an early-modern European context is often made to represent new consumer habits and markets, and ultimately the coming of industrialization.[11] Cotton is also associated with new and colourfast colours and patterns, something which created disorder in the social and political world of early-modern Europe.[12] In the Swedish case it has recently been argued that the wider diffusion of cotton textiles, particularly after 1790, provided a visual 'democratization' process. The extent to which this process challenged the social order is detectable in the changing

meaning of the word 'motley' ('brokig'). From being associated with aristocratic consumption of multiple coloured silk textiles it became a pejorative word associated with unruly behaviour and social disorder.[13] In other words, not only is silk foremost associated with an older elite consumption and cotton with new mass markets, but also the visual dimension has been used to reinforce this dichotomy.

An alternative way to approach the history of silk consumption in the eighteenth century is to consider the materials more carefully. As Jan de Vries and others have argued, what distinguished many of the new consumer goods was their cheapness as well as the brittleness of the material from which they were made. Products made of clay, such as Chinese porcelain and European pottery, typically replaced tableware made from silver (and pewter) in the eighteenth century. The use of these cheaper materials, with little intrinsic or recyclable value, enabled manufacturers to increase the rate of change and reduce the durability of their goods. Real costs now lay in the workmanship.[14] As a raw material silk was of course more expensive than cotton, however its cost could be reduced. A general trend in European clothing was the movement from heavy to lighter fabrics, irrespective of what fibre they were made from.[15] 'Populuxe' is a term Cissie Fairchilds has used to define the cheaper versions of luxury items, such as gold watches, umbrellas and silk stockings, that made their way into the hands of many of the poorer inhabitants of Paris during the eighteenth century.[16]

By employing this notion of 'populuxe' goods we can ask questions about the status of Chinese export silk in eighteenth-century Scandinavia, enabling us to draw on the broader context of European mass market consumption and fashion. The main object here is not to write a rival history to cotton, but to introduce the less well known story of silk, examining how colourful Chinese silk paved the way for colourful cotton products. This material-orientated chapter will begin by exploring the Scandinavian trade in Chinese silk, concentrating on the physical characteristics of the silk pieces, and the mundane but also complex world of the origins of the raw silk, its widths, lengths, weights, types of weaves, patterns and price variations. This survey of the Scandinavian import of silk will provide a framework for characterizing and quantifying the cargo. Only when we know the approximate dimensions of silk pieces is it meaningful to count the number of pieces brought from China to Scandinavia, *and* analyse how the numbers changed over time. The latter aspect forms the focal point in the second part of the chapter, which will deal with the Canton-end of the silk trade and the circumstances that determined what was bought.

Having established the quantities and variations of the Scandinavian silk imports we will turn our attention to the reception of and demand for Chinese silk in Sweden and Denmark. The third part of the chapter will trace Chinese silk in the debates on political economy and in Scandinavian sumptuary legislation. The fourth and fifth parts will discuss the extent to which we can trace fashion and trends in the Scandinavian silk cargo focusing on the colour assortment and changes over time.

Chinese silk close up

Chinese raw silk usually came from two areas, from around Canton in the Guangdong province in South China, and from the around the city of Nanking (Nanjing) in Jiangsu province, close to the Yangtze River in eastern China. Raw silk from the Canton area was considered to be of lower quality and hence was sold more cheaply compared with the Nanking variety. Canton silk however did have one advantage in that it could be processed with less loss, something which gave it a six per cent advantage in production over that from Nanking. Sourced close to European factories it was also cheaper to transport. As a result Canton raw silk was a popular choice for the East India companies.[17]

The Scandinavian material rarely details whether the wrought silk was purchased from Nanking or Canton. Two Danish exceptions are from 1737 and 1742 when the contracts for silk ordered by the royal house specified that the pieces should be of 'the best' Nanking type.[18] The large silk orders made by the DAC in 1756 also stipulated that the raw material should be Nanking silk, this time of an 'acceptable' quality.[19] In 1736 the Swedish Company brought home large amounts of textiles they referred to as 'Nankins', including 59 pieces of 'Meuble stoffen' but also 291 other textiles, most of them referred to as 'Nankins Stoffen'.[20] With the exception of 1736 there are only occasional references to Nanking in the Swedish sources.[21] It is worth noting that the Danes used the term 'Nanqvins' to refer both to very expensive and very cheap piece goods. In 1757 for example they bought twenty pieces of 'Nanqvins Sattyn' (satin) for 16 taels a piece, as well as 5,480 'Nanqvins Estoffer' which cost a fraction of the price they paid for the satin (between 2.8 and 4.5 mas a piece).[22] In the latter case 'Nanqvins' probably refer to Nankeen piece goods, traditionally a pale yellow cotton fabric the name of which derived from the city of Nanking. In the following all cheap goods referred to as Nanqvins have been ignored under the assumption that what is referred to is cotton textiles. More

expensive piece goods referred to as 'Nankins' or 'Nanqvins' have, however, been included under the assumption that they were made from Nanking silk. More importantly, though, since references to Nanking, Nankins or Nanqvins are generally rare, we can assume most wrought silk traded by the Scandinavian East India companies was made from the cheaper and less fine Canton-variety of raw silk.

Determining aspects of materiality on the basis of written sources is, as the above discussion illustrates, complicated. This problem also relates to determining the dimensions of East India company-traded silk. Silk pieces came in different lengths and widths, thread or yarn sizes (determining weight difference) and with a multiplicity of embellishments, such as patterns created in the weave or with paint, or later embroidered.[23] Exactly what the different textile names referred to is also a problem. As discussed in more detail later in this chapter, the popular poisee damask remains an elusive type of fabric, although this study sheds some new light on it. By combining bits of information, like jigsaw pieces, some general inferences can, however, be made.

Discussed below and listed in Appendix 2 are the most common types of silk textile bought in Canton and sold in Scandinavia from the early 1730s to the late 1750s. The Swedish trade is relatively easy to track in documents from the middle third of the eighteenth century; it is also a period characterized by relatively low prices of both raw silk and wrought pieces in China. In response to an increase in domestic silk prices an export ban was put in place in 1759 restricting the amounts of both raw and wrought silk allowed to leave the country on the European East India companies' ships. Most of the silk trade discussed in this chapter, however, took place during a period when the trade in Canton was relatively unconstrained; the only restriction was an official ban on the trade in red and yellow coloured silk pieces, colours reserved for the emperor and his court, although in fact there was extensive smuggling in these colours of wrought silk.[24]

Table 3.1 summarizes the dimensions of representative larger consignments of different types of silks bought by the Scandinavian companies. Prices for what the Danish paid per piece in Canton have been added. The Danes typically exchanged one piaster for 0.72 tael or 7.2 mas silver.[25] As was the case with the trade in tea a variety of factors, including credit arrangements and multiple contracts, influenced the piece price. Comparisons across companies and over time are hence not straightforward. The smaller quantities of silk listed with Canton prices reflect on how the trade was organized. Typically the Danes, and very likely the Swedes also, ordered consignments of between fifty and

Table 3.1 Parcels and lots of Chinese silk textiles bought and sold by the DAC and the SEIC

Example lots/dimensions					Price per piece/year	
Number of pieces	Name	Length (m)	Width (cm)	Weight (kg)	DAC Canton (tael)	SEIC Gothenburg (silver dollar)
250	Bed damask	13.54	71	1.587	10 (1755)	
495	Bed damask	16.60				54.24–60 (1736)
500	Poisee damask	16.04	71	1.662	10.2 (1755)	
4,310	Poisee damask	16.31				44.75–58 (1748)
703	Satins	16.46				45–46.16 (1736)
150	Satins	16.04	71	1.139	10.1 (1755)	
158	Lining-satin	7.86				14.22–14.33 (1752)
1,356	Peeling	6.37				6.1–6.15 (1757)
250	Peeling	7.66	36	0.260	1.55 (1755)	
2,950	Taffeta	13.94				38.24–40 (1745)
200	Pekin	13.54	78	1.039	5.6 (1745)	
250	Paduasoy	22.10	53	2.078	13.2 (1757)	
750	Paduasoy	16.31	59			57.75–63.25 (1748)
140	Gorgoroon	16.04		1.587	6.5 (1739)	
1,195	Gorgoroon	16.60				34.16–42 (1733)
250	Lustring	16.40	71	1.436	9.3 (1755)	

Source: Lot. 44–87, Försäljningskatalog Vol. 1, 1733; Lot 78–102, 103–137, Försäljningskatalog Vol. 2. 1736, KA, RAS; Lot 266/1729–330/1793, Försäljningskatalog Vol. 7, 1745, Lot 1/884–143/1026, 170/1053–207/1090, Försäljningskatalog Vol. 10, 1748, Lot 184/1524–187/1527, Försäljningskatalog Vol. 13, 1752, Lot 124/2574–169/2116, Försäljningskatalog Vol. 19, 1757, KA, RAS; p. 6, 5 (General reigning) Kas. bog 2195; pp. 62, 65, 66, 69, 75, Kas. bog 2209b; p. 67, Kas. bog 2210, DAC, RAS. The prices damaged goods caught in Gothenburg have been omitted.

a hundred but sometimes even several thousand pieces with the same dimensions from the Hong merchants. When sold in Europe parcels were divided up into auction lots which typically held between ten and fifty pieces. What price the silk pieces were selling for in Gothenburg has also been added to the table; equivalent information is not available in the Danish case. In addition to purchase prices different Swedish taxes were added on to the price. A stamp fee, 3 öre silver, had to be paid per piece. In 1741 a tax of fifteen per cent was introduced on silk pieces intended for domestic consumption; in 1747 the tax was raised to twenty per cent but these levies are not included in the prices listed in furthest right column in Table 3.1.[26] In Denmark the tax on Chinese silk was initially very low: 2.5 per cent on goods destined for the domestic market, and one per cent on goods which were re-exported. After 1772 rates increased dramatically and within a few years a ban on all domestic consumption of Chinese silk was introduced.[27]

Bed damask

Damask usually refers to a textile with a reversible figured fabric created in the weaving process; it is often heavy. Some silk pieces in the Scandinavian China trade are referred to simply as damask; there are also a few pieces labelled 'Dutch Façon' and 'French Façon' damask but they are very rare.[28] As the name suggests bed damask ('meuble damask') was used for furnishing purposes, in bed hangings, on walls and in upholstery. Table 3.1 lists the biggest separate Danish consignments of bed damask traded during the middle third of the eighteenth century; the parcel was made up of 250 pieces. Bought in Canton in 1755 the pieces were described as having a dimension of thirty-eight by two 'cobidos'. An eighteenth-century Canton cobido equalled 35.64 cm, which made every piece 13.54 m long and 71 cm wide.[29] The weight was also specified at forty-two taels or 1.587 kg. While these measurements were standard in the bed damask trade there are many variations. The same cargo from 1755 for example also contained fifty pieces of bed damask which were of an equal width but longer, 16.03 m, and heavier, 1.7 kg. The DAC paid 12.5 taels per piece for the longer and heavier version and 10 taels for the shorter and lighter.[30] When put up for sale in Copenhagen only the length of these bed damask pieces was specified. As in the Danish case width-information was also regularly lacking in the Swedish sales catalogues. Instead the width is often described as 'ordinary', which in this case has been taken to mean two cobidos or 71 cm. Some damasks are described as 'narrow' but what this referred to is also frequently left unspecified.[31]

The pieces in the largest single parcel of bed damask, 495 pieces, put up for sale by the Swedish Company in 1736, were described as 'of ordinary width' while the length was 16.60 m. Most lots contained twenty pieces, each piece selling for between 54.24 and 60 silver dollars.[32] What marks out this big Swedish parcel is the fact that pattern numbers are provided in the lot descriptions in the printed sales catalogue, all in all twenty-eight numbers, suggesting a large variation of different woven designs. Pattern numbers referring to bed damask pieces were, however, frequently absent, both in the sales catalogues advertising the goods in Scandinavia, and in material documenting the trade in Canton. There is also a marked reduction in the variety of patterns in the Swedish sales catalogues. For example, in 1748 there were only six different pattern numbers listed when 400 bed damask pieces, of standard width and 16.31 cm long, were put up for sale.[33] The rare references to patterns in the Danish material give us few clues to what the designs actually looked like. Some exceptions can be found in the early material: in 1735, 1737, and 1738 the Danish supercargoes were requested to bring home patterned 'Poisee Meubel'. Moreover, no designs with 'figures' were wanted; instead the supercargoes were to choose flowers, the larger the better.[34] A royal order of forty bed damask pieces contracted in August 1737 refers to four 'large' patterns.[35] It is possible, even likely, that all bed damask had patterns but that these patterns were so nondescript and static that they failed to register in the trade. One is left with the impression that the bed damask was relatively, and increasingly perhaps, uniform.

Poisee damask

What poisee damask refers to is, as discussed in more detail below, not clear. What we do know is that it was one of the most common types of silk fabric imported by the Scandinavian companies; the SEIC regularly imported thousands of pieces. The largest single Swedish consignment was brought to Gothenburg by the *Calmare* and put up for sale in 1748; it consisted of 4,310 pieces selling for an average of 54.69 silver dollars per piece. Each piece was of 'ordinary width' and 16.31 m long.[36] These were standard measurements for Swedish poisee damask pieces.[37] The largest single delivery of poisee damask to the Danish factory in Canton was made in 1755; it contained 500 pieces 16.04 m long and 71 cm wide, each piece weighing 1.662 kg and costing 10.2 taels. Another three smaller parcels, containing 240, 150 and 9 pieces respectively, and with near identical specifications were also received in 1755, although the batch of 150 pieces contained slightly lighter fabric, 19 g, and was

2 mas cheaper per piece.[38] Once in Copenhagen these three different consignments were grouped together, and sold under the same heading, in lots with ten pieces of different colours in each. In the catalogue all the 399 the pieces are described as being between 26 and 26.5 ells long and of ordinary width.[39] Which pieces were slightly lighter is not indicated in the Danish catalogue; neither is the fact that the silk textiles were provided by three different Chinese merchants.[40] As in the case of the tea trade, intimate knowledge of the quality of different deliveries and auction lots must have been a great advantage to those who traded wholesale. In Gothenburg local merchants complained that the directors of the SEIC knew which lot contained the most attractive pieces of silk textiles, and that they made sure to secure them even in advance of the auctions.[41]

Leanne Lee-Whitman has suggested that the term poisee damask could denote a type of painted or printed satin weave since the weight and dimensions are very similar to satins imported by the EIC. According to this hypothesis 'poisee' is the significant component of the name, possibly indicating silk textiles decorated with flowers; poisee is an old English word for posy or nosegay.[42] The interpretation makes sense if we consider that damask and satin were used as generic terms for silk textiles in Sweden.[43] Some early DAC lists, where poisee damask is used as a synonym for 'ordinary damask', do suggest a similar terminological broadness existed in Denmark.[44] In the instructions to supercargoes on the ship *Sleswig* leaving Copenhagen in early 1739 orders were also made for 'Poisee Satin' and 'Poisee meüble' indicating that the term poisee was used for describing designs more broadly in the China trade.[45]

Poisee damask might in other words have been referring to wrought silk more generally, possibly with a satin weave and with flower decorations. It is worth noticing that the Danes and the Swedes also used words such as 'bouquets' or 'flowering' to describe patterns on the silk they traded, although more often when dealing with more exclusive textiles.[46] There are, however, few references to flowers, never mind designs, in the case of the large Scandinavian poisee damask trade. In this respect the DAC and SEIC differ from the English Company, the ordering lists of which contain many specific requests. EIC's long history of ordering large quantities of textiles from Asia, and their well-established routines, might explain this difference. More importantly, the English orders clearly indicate that poisee damask could be used as a label for a wide range of differently embellished textiles. Aside from 'plain' they could be multi-coloured, patterned, flowered,

striped, striped and flowered, and even, although very rarely, painted.[47] Multiple embellishments seem to have been common generally and they are hence not always a very helpful means by which to differentiate textiles. Worth noticing is that poisee damask pieces were generally not embroidered. As we shall discuss in more detail below, embroidered embellishment tended to raise the price of the piece goods significantly.

The poisee damask cargo was colourful; assortments of twelve or more colours were standard. There are some examples of striped and multicoloured parcels sold by the Swedish Company, although from 1743 onwards duo-tone goods had to be re-exported as they were not allowed onto the Swedish market.[48] The general preference in the Swedish trade, even before and most definitely after 1743, was for poisee damask with a monochrome ground. The same is also true of the Danish trade, although again there are exceptions. The Danish material can give us some more clues about the patterns. One example is from 1754 when the Danish supercargoes were requested to purchase poisee damask with 'small designs which currently are much wanted' as well as two-striped examples of the same, each strip approximately the width of a hand; and for the next season Copenhagen wanted three-striped poisee damask.[49] At other times, such as in 1755, when the Danes ordered large amount of silks while biding their time and hoping the Bohea prices would come down, they seemed to have been offered designs to choose from including ones for poisee damask.[50] The same thing happened in 1756; summarizing a large order of silk pieces including a parcel of poisee damask, the Danish supercargoes stated they had selected designs of the 'best and newest fashion'.[51]

From whose point of view these designs were 'new' is hard to tell; the Danish sources contain no references to trends originating in Canton. Since references to fashion, never mind new ones, are generally rare it seems likely that the designs on the Chinese export silk reflected fashion changes originating from Europe. In this respect Canton's position, as a supplier of wrought silk for the European market, was similar to those European producers who predominantly copied designs from Paris and London rather than created new ones of their own. It is likely that the supercargoes choosing patterns for the Danish Company's silk cargo wanted just such designs. In other words, 'new' is likely to mean designs different from last year, but not novel in relation to the European world of fashion in silk. Patterns were also made to order. When the Dutch ordered wrought silk during the low season in the 1760s they even requested samples to be woven of the designs they had in mind before signing the contracts.[52] However, there are no indications that Canton

silk designers were leading developments in European fashion, at least not by the mid-third of the eighteenth century. Since the European wheel of fashion spun fast and since it took eighteenth months for a European expedition to China to return, this is not surprising.

To sum up, there is no conclusive evidence to explain exactly what poisee damask referred to. The general absence of references to designs suggests that while it is likely the poisee damask textiles were embellished with some patterns, woven or applied in other ways, these were probably of a standardized and discreet character. They are also likely to have been copies of European designs. Design descriptions or pattern numbers were strictly speaking not necessary since buyers in Gothenburg and Copenhagen could inspect the goods prior to the auctions. While illusive, one is left with the impression that the poisee damask cargoes were quite standardized, and that the textile was traded in large quantities and rarely embellished with expensive embroideries. Perhaps the best clue regarding the nature of poisee damask can be had from a summary of a royal order from 1737 where 'clothes damask' is used as a synonym.[53] This suggests that while bed damask was used predominantly for furnishing, in bed hangings, for covering wall space and upholstery, poisee damask referred to textiles mainly used for clothing, a hypothesis the large assortment of colours on the poisee damask cargo also supports. It even seems likely that colours were even more important than designs in the case of poisee damask cargoes.

Satin

The numerous museum collections that include dresses made from printed and painted Chinese silk woven in satin weave are one reason why Lee-Whitman finds it plausible that poisee damask referred to a satin weave, particularly since the EIC only imported a plain satin.[54] The Scandinavian import of satin was also very small; one of the largest Danish batch dates back to 1739 when 120 pieces in various colours were received by the DAC supercargoes in Canton. They were 16.04 m long, with a weight of 1.587 kg, costing 7.4 taels per piece. Another thirty crimson coloured satin pieces of identical dimension were listed separately costing 8.6 taels, indicating that colour assortments determined the price too.[55] Another large parcel of satin from 1755 had the same length and here the width is specified as 71 cm; the weight is however much lighter (1.139 kg).[56]

Somewhat larger quantities of satin arrived to Gothenburg during the first decade of the company's existence. In 1736, 703 pieces, each measuring 16.46 m were put up for sale, fetching between 45 and

46.16 silver dollars each. After that the Swedish satin-imports declined. When satin returned on a bigger scale in the beginning of the 1750s it had different dimensions, and possibly also use. In 1752 a number of batches of shorter pieces labelled 'lining satin' were put up for sale. Between 6.52 and 7.86 m long they sold for 12.10 and 15.8 silver dollars each; some were plain, others decorated with flowers.[57] What was labelled satin in the summary of the contents of the cargoes put up for sale in the years to follow was listed as 'pelings' inside the catalogue. This is likely to be a version of the term 'peeling', or 'peelon' referring to a satin weave.[58] The largest single batch was made up of 1,356 pieces, in ten colours and with flower designs. Each piece sold for between 6.1 and 6.15 silver dollars; in other words significantly cheaper than any other longer piece goods.[59] Lengths and prices varied though, the second largest batch in 1757, 873 plain peelings, were almost twice as long, 12.60 m.[60]

The Danes also imported peelings, or what they call 'pillangs'. In 1755 they bought 250 pieces, 7.66 m long, 35 cm wide, and each piece costing 1.55 taels, again a significantly cheaper price than any other listed piece goods.[61] The price of the peelings suggests that they were perhaps used for lining, maybe for clothes made of poisee damask, whether damask or satin woven. On the other end of the satin spectrum we occasional find embroidered satin pieces fetching very high prices. In 1742, under the heading '11 pc. Embroidery' ('11 st. Broderien'), five embellished satin pieces were listed in the Swedish sales catalogue. Each piece was 16.16 m long, sold on average for 240 silver dollars per piece.[62] In 1736 eleven pieces of embroidered satin and one lustring were listed together in the Swedish sale catalogue fetching an average price of 267 silver dollars per piece, in this case the dimensions are not specified in the catalogue.[63] It is not unlikely that Bolette Maria Haboe's wedding dress was made from this narrow range of exclusive satin piece goods.

One way to sum up the satin cargo is that it was small and very diverse. Longer and wider pieces, not too different from poisee damask pieces in terms of weight and length, were relatively more common in the early trade with China. By the end of the period most textile pieces described as satin were small and cheap, and probably used mainly for lining. The overall picture gives weight to Lee-Whitman's suggestion that the relatively large number of surviving dresses made from Chinese silk with a satin weave arrived in Europe under the name poisee damask. Distinct from these relatively standardized goods were the odd pieces of very expensive embroidered satin.

Taffeta and pekin

Poisee damask was not the only type of fabric used in making clothes. Taffeta is commonly understood as a simple silk type with a plain weave. The EIC sources highlight the importance attached to the gloss or lustre of the fabric, which was ordered in a range of different patterns, some of which were woven, others painted or printed. Lee-Whitman lists several dresses made from Chinese taffeta in her exploration of the EIC China trade.[64]

In the Scandinavian case the Swedish Company imported large amounts of taffeta while the Danish focused on pekin, a fabric similar to taffeta.[65] How these two terms overlapped can be illustrated with examples from the early Swedish trade; in 1733 the SEIC put up 812 pieces described as 'Tafften oder Pequins'. The pieces are described as being of 'ordinary width' and 13.94 m long. Selling in lots of thirty, each piece fetched a price of between 25.4 and 31 silver dollars.[66] After 1733 the term pekin more or less disappears from the Swedish sale catalogues; however, large quantities of taffeta continued to be traded, particularly before the 1750s. The largest single consignment was put up for sale in 1745; 2,950 pieces were sold for an average price of between 38.24 and 40 silver dollars per piece. Each piece, 13.94 m long and of 'ordinary width', were sold in lots of fifty. No patterns are mentioned but the colour assortment was wide: fourteen different colours are listed but up to a third of many lots were made up of black pieces.[67]

In the Danish case the picture is almost reversed; in only four years, in 1739, 1753, 1754 and 1757, did the DAC order and receive a textile they labelled taffeta in Canton. All other years they only traded with what they call 'penquin'. The Danish taffeta and pekin had, however, very similar dimensions. For example the 707 pekin bought in 1745 were all of the same length, 13.54 cm, and within the same weight range, between 1.020 and 1.058 kg per piece, as the taffeta from 1739, a year when no pekin was bought. Most importantly, large amounts of the Danish pekin and taffeta pieces had the same width, 78 cm, which was also standard for English taffeta cargo.[68] According to Lee-Whitman, in the case of the EIC only the taffeta textiles had this width.[69]

The best indication that taffeta and pekin referred to comparable and possibly identical goods is that they were priced very similarly. Per pekin piece the Danes paid 4.8 taels in 1739 and between 5 and 5.6 taels in 1745, while the royal taffeta cargo from 1739 was priced between 6.5 taels and 7.5 taels. The latter lot included painted pieces, while the DAC cargo was plain undecorated textiles.[70] Similar price differences between plain pekin on the one hand and painted and striped pekin

on the other can be found for the whole period investigated. Pekin seemed to have differed from taffeta most clearly in how it was embellished; around a quarter of the pekin pieces were painted, less than a tenth were striped, and the rest were plain. All DAC traded taffeta goods in contrast were striped, with the exception of one load of seventeen pieces with embroidery purchased in 1754.[71] More precise information about how the taffeta or pekin pieces were decorated is largely missing. The Swedish catalogues provide some clues. In 1749 one hundred pieces of painted taffeta were put up for sale. Some of the white goods are described as embellished with 'ink painting' while others had 'coloured painting'.[72] And in 1742 taffeta decorated with a 'landscape pattern' and with 'flower pattern' with different coloured backgrounds (white, jonquille, sky blue and straw) were put up for sale.[73]

To sum up, while some taffeta and pekin pieces were embellished with patterns, most were monochrome. Like poisee damask it arrived in Scandinavia in a wide assortment of colours, underlining the connection between colour variety and textiles that were destined to become clothes. Aside from differences in width and length what separated taffeta and pekin from poisee damask pieces was the price; they were cheaper types of textiles.

Lustring, paduasoy and gorgoroon

While poisee damask and bed damask textiles were generally more expensive than the taffeta and pekin pieces traded in Canton and in Gothenburg, they were not the most expensive goods imported in larger quantities. Lustring refers to a 'light crisp silk'; it was a standard eighteenth-century silk-dress material in Europe but it was also used for banners. Some of the most fashionable silks produced in England were sold as lustring. The name derives from the 'process of lustriating' the warp, which was coated, heated and stretched before the weaving started. The finished weave might have been treated in a similar manner too.[74] Some of the most expensive textiles purchased by the DAC were lustring; in 1755 the company bought twenty pieces of painted lustring 'for clothes' at a price of seventeen taels per piece. They were 15.68 m long and 71 cm wide. The largest batch, 250 pieces of plain lustring, 16.4 m by 71 cm, came in an assortment of eleven colours; each piece cost 9.3 taels, while lustring with embroidery, two designs, and in the same dimension cost the company 12.7 taels in 1755.[75]

Lustring only appears sporadically in the Swedish trade. One exception is from 1736 when forty-nine plain lustring pieces, 23.13 m long, were sold at a price of between 121 and 122 silver dollars in Gothenburg.[76]

Lustring with embroidery fetched even higher prices; in 1733 a white lustring with white embroidery was sold for 241 silver dollars. No specification of the sizes of these exclusive pieces are provided in the catalogues.[77] Perhaps the embroidery changed the value of the textile so radically that the dimensions of the fabric, its width and length, became somewhat subordinated?

Paduasoy was a type of satin weave, which had 'fine cross-ridges' and which sometimes sold for a very high price.[78] The standard length of the Danish traded paduasoy pieces was 22.1 m, although there are exceptions with pieces measuring 16.04 m; standard widths were 53 and 57 cm.[79] Many paduasoy batches came in a variety of colours, and some were embroidered; prices varied depending on embellishment. In 1757 the Danes paid 17.2 taels for fifty pieces of standard-sized paduasoy with embroidery, and 13.2 taels for the plain coloured ones.[80] The largest batch of paduasoy traded by the Swedish Company included 750 pieces put up for sale in Gothenburg in 1748. They were significantly shorter, 16.31 m, and a bit wider than the standard Danish cargo, and sold for an average of 60.55 silver dollars per piece.[81] Another large Swedish parcel put up for sale in 1745 did, however, have similar lengths to the Danish: 23.13 m by 59 cm and sold for between 75.21 and 69.24 silver dollars. The colour assortment was limited, and significantly more than half of the pieces in every lot of thirty were black, which according to Lee-Withman was a standard colour in the EIC paduasoy cargo.[82] Singular pieces of richly embellished paduasoy could also sell for very high prices; in 1733 Colin Campbell bought a white paduasoy with white embroidery work for 260 silver dollars, the single highest price paid for any one piece of textile sold in Gothenburg that year.[83] In 1742, we find six embellished paduasoy pieces, selling at an average of 290 silver dollars. This time the dimensions of the singular pieces were specified to between 18.53 and 18.98 m.[84] As in the case of the embroidered satin and lustring pieces discussed above, it is clear that embroidered embellishments increased the price of the goods by several hundred per cent.

Gorgoroon, from which the textile term grogram, derives was a coarse silk which was sometimes combined with other fibres, such as wool, in Asia. Hosea Ballou Morse, an early twentieth-century chronicler of the EIC, described it as a 'stout, corded silk stuff, not very lustrous, and one of the more durable of silk fabrics'.[85] The Danes imported small quantities of gorgoroon. The largest parcel was from 1739 and contained 140 pieces in various colours; the pieces were 16.04 m long and were bought at a price of 6.5 taels per piece. A smaller parcel of forty pieces,

with identical dimensions but crimson coloured, was bought for 8.6 taels a piece.[86] No width measurements are provided in the sources but in 1745 another 100 gorgoroon pieces were bought of the same length and here the width is specified as 71 cm.[87] Gorgoroon was far more popular with the Swedish Company; the largest parcel was imported by the first expedition, 1,195 pieces, measuring 16.60 m and with an assortment of between seven and eight colours per lot. Each piece sold for between 34.16 and 42 silver dollars.[88] Later parcels suggest Swedish-imported gorgoroon could be both longer, 23.42 m, and shorter, 13.79 m, and had different widths, for example 59 cm and 74 cm.[89]

The cases of lustring and paduasoy in particular help to underline how diverse the Chinese silk imports were: embroidered pieces of these qualities fetched the highest prices both in Canton and in Scandinavia. The workmanship needed to embellish these pieces cost money, hence the higher prices. In the case of the most expensive pieces the dimensions of the textiles seem almost to have ceased to matter; rather it is as if the finished product spoke for itself.

Summarizing a diverse cargo, profits and prices

The Scandinavian silk cargo is, as the discussion above indicates, a somewhat problematic label given the diversity of the goods referred to. It is however worth underlining that it was a diversity sanctioned by those engaged in the trade. The DAC silk contracts with the Hong merchants regularly and clearly specified widths, lengths, weights and colour assortments, specifications that largely seem to have been met by those sub-contracted to produce the goods. How the Scandinavian trade was organized suggests that large parcels contained uniform goods. Take for example the big consignment of poisee damask, 4,310 pieces, sold in Gothenburg in 1748. In the sales catalogue these pieces were listed under the same sub-heading as pieces having identical dimensions. Drawing on what we have learned from the Danish material it is very likely that several different Chinese silk manufacturers and merchants were involved in delivering goods to the Swedes. If the separate outputs of the Chinese weavers did not conform to more or less the same standards it would not have been possible to list the 4,310 pieces under the same heading once the goods were put for sale.

The extent to which wrought Chinese silk was perceived as a standardized type of good is also illustrated by the Danish royal orders. King Christian VI (1699–1746) received, for example, several exclusive sets of porcelain from China but also pieces of furniture made from rose wood decorated with lacquer and mother of pearl. These orders were

executed by individual supercargoes who billed the king separately and privately.[90] Such arrangements were common in the China trade, where supercargoes regularly traded in more exclusive goods for a private clientele.[91] Trade in two types of goods were, however, left to the staff of the DAC collectively to purchase on behalf of the royal household. On an almost annual basis the company brought home a selection of tea types, ranging from the cheapest Bohea to the most expensive Hyson, and, somewhat less regularly but more important here, a substantial amount of silk textiles. The annual royal silk cargoes typically contained around thirty pieces of bed damasks, one hundred pieces of poisee damask, and sixty pieces of pekin in a wide assortment of colours. The account books of the DAC suggest the royal household received 3,458 pieces of bed damasks, poisee damask, and pekin between 1734 and 1760, not counting the more irregular shipments of other qualities.[92] Given that the Danish royal house had the option to order this silk privately, via the supercargoes, we can assume that the textiles they did receive, via the company channel, conformed to expectations. In other words, how the Chinese silk textiles were traded suggests they conformed to standards, and that with the exception of perhaps the embroidered pieces, they were a quite uniform type of good.

If the Scandinavians were able to receive goods which conformed to their specific requirements, how come there was so much variation? Albeit slowly, early-modern long-distance trade did generally promote the establishment of trade standards, as it helped reduce both risks and costs. Standardization meant buyers could more easily secure the goods they knew there was a market for, and packing and transport became cheaper.[93] Without studying the Chinese manufacture of export silk it is hard to draw any conclusions about the variations listed in the previous section and the reasons for them. One possibility is that they reflected on how the trade was organized in Canton. As we shall discuss below sometimes the Scandinavian companies ordered their pieces long in advance from the Chinese merchants, sometimes they bought ready-made pieces 'off the shelves', produced by Chinese silk manufacturers with, presumably, other European companies in mind. The variations in dimensions of the goods brought back to Europe might in other words reflect the diversity of the market for Chinese silk in Europe. In the Swedish case variations can also be explained by the fact that some of the silk goods listed above had been bought on the private accounts of those working for the company.

Any meaningful attempt to quantify the silk textiles imported by the Scandinavian companies is of course somewhat impeded by the

variety of widths, lengths, weights and prices. Figure 3.1 is based on the number of pieces traded by the two Scandinavian companies listed in Appendix 2. Smaller piece goods, most notably peeling, have been excluded, as have silk handkerchiefs and any silk clothes.[94] Among the larger piece goods no concessions have been made to variations in length, width and weight registered above. Since we do not have complete records of the Scandinavian trade (although more on this below), the numbers of pieces indicated in the diagram are of limited value. However, the diagram should reflect relatively accurately the overall composition of the Scandinavian silk cargo in the middle third of the eighteenth century; that is, the proportion of textiles of different types the Scandinavian companies traded.

We can hence conclude that little more than half – fifty-six per cent – of the Scandinavian imported pieces were made up of two categories of textiles, both used mainly for clothing. A little more than one quarter was made up of the relatively cheap types either called taffeta or pekin; the second quarter consisted of the somewhat pricier poisee damask

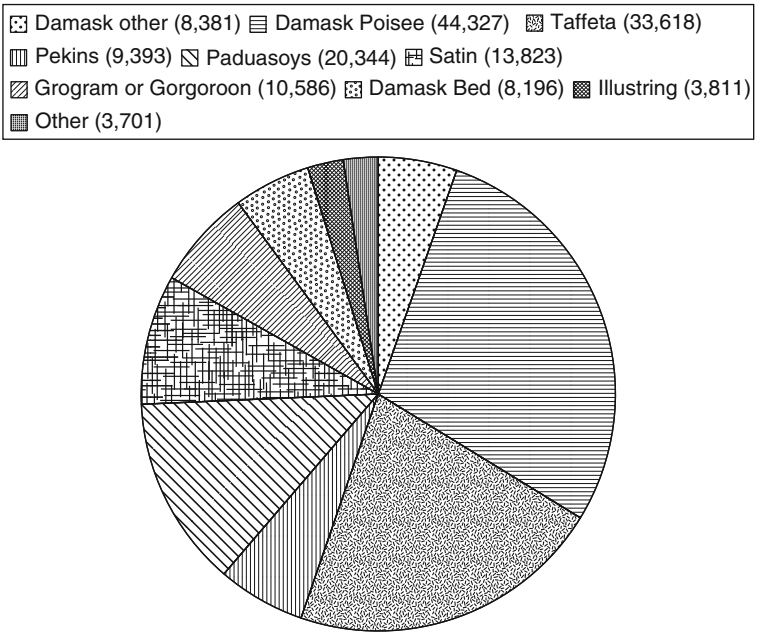

Figure 3.1 Types of silk textile in the Scandinavian China trade, 1733–1760
Source: Appendix 2.

type. With a standard width of between 71 and 78 cm the combined length of these textile types would have been enough to make 306,251 skirts, four meters per skirt, or twice as many long waistcoats, two meters per waistcoat, a garment typical for the early eighteenth century.[95]

Some textiles types were more uniform; there seems to have been little variation between pieces of bed damask. The reduction in the variety of patterns even suggests that this textile type became more homogenous over time. Other textile types offered more variations, particularly in their colour assortment; once again the poisee damask, taffeta and pekin part of the cargo stands out. They regularly come in more than ten colours. In other words, what the Scandinavian companies brought home was a cargo of silk textiles destined to become colourful clothes. Pricewise large differences existed between the textile types; several thousand per cent separated the expensive embroidered lustring, paduasoy and satin from the cheap 'lining satin'. The Chinese silk which has survived until today, like Bolette Maria Haboe's embroidered wedding dress, represents only a very small part of the silk cargo, however. Instead populuxe silk, that is silk in monochrome colours with discrete woven or painted designs, made from the cheaper raw silk local to Canton, made up the large bulk of the Scandinavian cargo.

With little information on what the Swedes paid for their silk in Canton and what the Danes received for their silk cargo in Copenhagen it is hard to calculate the DAC and SEIC's profit margins on the silk trade. If we combine Danish purchase prices and Swedish selling prices it is possible to get a very rough estimation. Two comparable lots of 250 poisee damask purchased in Canton by the Danes in 1753, and 327 poisee damask sold in Gothenburg in 1754 can serve as one example. The textiles were of similar lengths (between 16.04 m and 16.31 m) and probably also width (71 cm). Both parcels included pieces in a variety of between six to twelve colours. The Danes paid 9.2 taels per piece in Canton. Using Koninckx's conversion rate of 4.5 ('minimum') silver dollars per tael, the piece of silk would have cost the equivalent of 36.8 Swedish silver dollars per piece in Canton. The similar pieces sold in Gothenburg the following year fetched a price of on average 91.8 silver dollars per piece, a profit of 150 per cent. While transportation and transactions costs have not been subtracted it is clear the profit level this year was significantly higher than the average 7.5 per cent the VOC made on their silk cargo.[96]

While potentially very profitable for the DAC and the SEIC, how pricy was the Chinese silk to a Scandinavian consumer? Using the wholesale prices in Gothenburg, without adding on the stamp fee and taxes, we can calculate that it would have taken an unskilled labourer in Sweden

four and half months to earn enough pay for a standard size piece of poisee damask in 1754; a little bit more than two weeks would have been sufficient to earn enough to pay for the material of a waistcoat.[97] It is worth pointing out, however, that the Gothenburg prices in 1754 were exceptionally high; six years earlier the average price for a similar size poisee damask piece was 54.69 silver dollars or the equivalent of two months and three weeks of work for an unskilled labourer.[98] It is not unlikely the pending Swedish import ban on all Chinese silk raised the price in 1754, suggesting we should be careful with any general inference regarding the 150 per cent profit level noted above.

The extent to which the calculated profit level from 1754 reflects accurately on the Scandinavian silk is perhaps less important. More significant is that the silk trade could be profitable, even very profitable, and that the goods traded were within economic reach of a broad group of Scandinavian consumers. This of course raises the question we shall address in the next section: to what extent was the Chinese silk imported by the DAC and SEIC consumed in Scandinavia?

Irregular and diverging

While the diversity of the silk goods is easily lost in any table or diagram aiming to quantify it, a count of the number of silk pieces not only helps us to outline the proportions of different fabrics imported, but also allow us to compare the Danish and the Swedish trade *and* to study how the silk trade changed over time. The more complete Danish material summarized in Appendix 2 suggests that all in all around 27,000 pieces were bought in Canton between 1733 and 1759; this figure includes only larger silk piece goods such as those types discussed above, excluding peeling. Royal orders and privately traded goods are not included; regarding the latter there is little information in the DAC account books. Other sources do however suggest that the size of the supercargoes' pacotille could be considerable. For example, in 1747 George Clifford & Sons, agents of the EIC and merchant bankers based in Amsterdam, but with extensive contacts across the European East India companies, estimated that the Danish pacotille arriving in Europe contained 12,000 pieces, more than twice the amount of the DAC cargo that year![99] Other accounts are less specific: a Danish source from 1737 lists many chests of silk textiles bought separately by captains and supercargoes in Canton.[100] In this light the 120 poisee damask, 58 gorgoroon and 120 pekin pieces Lintrup, the 'Chinese merchant', sold in Copenhagen in August 1742 seem almost modest; he did however also trade in tea and porcelain in large quantities.[101]

The Swedish Company sources are patchier than the Danish. Figures from the incomplete sales records, however, show that the Swedish imports between 1733 and 1759 amounted to more than 129,000 pieces of silk. As with the Danish figures, smaller piece goods and clothes, such as handkerchiefs or stockings are excluded. However, included in the Swedish numbers are the privately traded wrought silk. The listings in the sales catalogues often make it hard to separate company goods from private cargo. Kristina Söderpalm has, however, calculated that at the auction in 1733 privately traded textile goods sold for a sum of 132,026 silver dollars, the equivalent to almost a third of the income from the company textile trade, although in both cases these figures include proceeds from the sale of stockings, handkerchiefs and some items not made from silk.[102] A ban on private trade was put in place in 1749; figures from before then suggest that the value of the pacotille trade represented between 21.5 and 42.2 per cent of the value of every cargo imported by the SEIC.[103] Not all of this was made up by silk textiles, of course; as in the case of Lintrup's pacotille, tea and porcelain were other types of goods frequently traded privately.

Aside from highlighting the differences between the size of the Danish and the Swedish silk trade, the figures in Appendix 2, which form the basis for Figure 3.2, indicate how much the Scandinavian import of Chinese silk textiles shifted; there was no even supply of

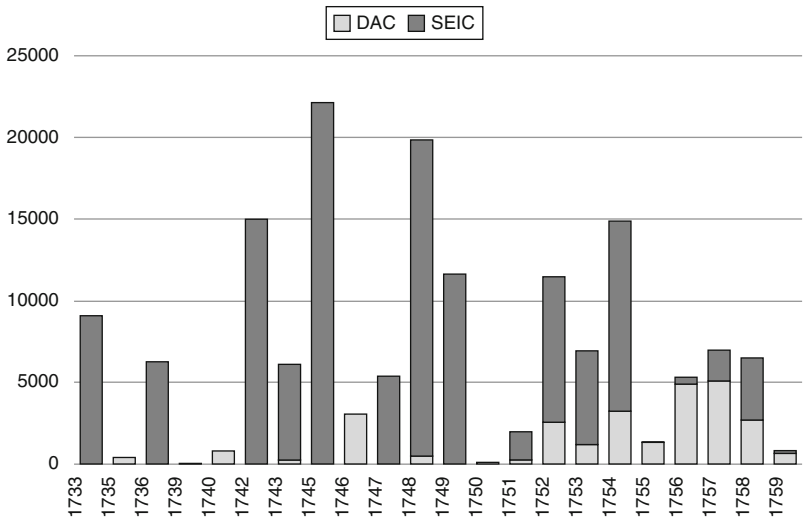

Figure 3.2 Import of Chinese silks to Scandinavia, 1733–1759
Source: Appendix 2.

Chinese textiles reaching Scandinavia on an annual basis. The changes in the size of the Scandinavian silk cargoes varied much more than was the case in the tea trade (see Figure 2.2).

Some of these irregularities can be accounted for by what we learnt in the previous chapter, that the Canton market was highly competitive. The number of ships that arrived from Europe determined prices and quantities of goods bought. When the supercargoes arrived in China their first priority was Bohea tea, which accounted for the largest quantities of goods bought. Bohea tea prices determined the size of the remaining funds that could be used to purchase other goods. The porcelain trade, which was in terms of volume the second most important component of the cargo, was relatively unproblematic. There were usually large quantities of cups, plates and tableware awaiting the supercargoes in Canton, which once purchased were packed and loaded to form the protective bottom layer in the ships.[104]

By contrast, silk textiles needed to be ordered in advance if the supercargoes wanted to stock up on those with specific dimensions, colours and patterns. The Chinese merchants who received the order forwarded it to local manufacturers. A piece of silk passed through many hands before it was delivered to the European supercargoes. Weavers were concerned with making textiles with simple designs; more elaborate embellishments were applied by painters and embroiderers.[105] As was the case with the tea cargo the Danish supercargoes were ordered to be careful contracting and selecting wrought silk, since low quality goods could ruin the reputation of the company in Europe.[106]

Judging by the Danish protocols what hindered the Danish silk trade in Canton up until the 1750s was rarely a want of silk textiles or their price.[107] Rather it was the available funds after the purchase of Bohea.[108] Another factor was the time it took to receive the silk deliveries the supercargoes ordered.[109] Eighty to ninety days was the standard stipulated time between contract and delivery. Depending on the arrival time of the Danish ships this could be extended or shortened. Some silk goods were bought late from existing stocks with only ten days or twenty days allocated for delivery.[110] Less time meant that requests for designs from Copenhagen could not be followed.[111] The supercargoes were often left to make the decisions on whether to order in advance, or wait and buy pre-made goods. In either case the DAC instructed them to pay careful attention to qualities and dimensions, although when buying off-the-shelf the choice was more limited.[112]

The silk cargo was usually the last to be loaded onto the ships, and the possibility of delay was something that worried the Danish

supercargoes.[113] Late returns to Europe were costly: in the worst case scenario the ship would miss the favourable monsoon winds and had to wait another year to return. With only small silk orders the risks with delays were limited; larger quantities however must have changed the game. The single largest Danish silk parcel which came to Copenhagen in 1757 included 5,000 pieces. It had cost the DAC nearly 53,000 taels, or thirty-two per cent of the total investment made in Canton in 1756. Only the tea cargo cost more, 94,000 taels or fifty-five per cent of the total sum for trading, while the porcelain cargo amounted to seven per cent, which was similar to the share of the average Dutch porcelain cargo departing from Canton in the eighteenth century, which was six per cent.[114] Similar Swedish numbers are hard to come by but we know that in 1742 the Swedish porcelain cargo represented nine per cent of the total investment in Canton, while tea and silk made up sixty and twenty-one per cent, respectively.[115]

The logistics of cargo loading in other words help explain the stable share of the total investment in porcelain. Silk was much less bulky and consequently the size of the silk cargo was *not* determined by available cargo space. Although a significant share of the investment, the *low-volume* character of the silk trade can, as Paul Van Dyke argues, explain why it has received relatively little attention by those engaged in mapping the maritime Eurasian trade.[116]

In general, the silk trade does not seem to have generated as many conflicts as the tea trade, possibly because competition was less severe, at least for the Danish supercargoes who bought relatively small amounts of wrought silk on behalf of the DAC. There are exceptions, however. In November 1751 the Danish supercargoes recorded several faulty deliveries; their order for lustring was short of crimson, blue and black pieces. Moreover some paduasoy and damask pieces were substandard. These problems made the Danes change their strategy; rather than ordering more silk pieces on short contract and risking the receipt of more bad goods, the Danes opted for some last-minute tea purchases.[117] More complaints about quality were raised in 1755, a year when the DAC also bought large quantities of silk.[118] By the mid-1750s the Danish supercargoes also complained about a general rise in the prices of wrought silk; to no avail, as since silk prices increased in the second half of the eighteenth century.[119] Prices shifted earlier too; in a rare Swedish report from Canton in 1744 Charles Irvine noted to one of his business partners: 'Silks are dearer this year than I ever knew'.[120]

However, aside from the price rise in the 1750s, the main impetus shaping the Scandinavian silk trade seems to have originated from

changes taking place on the European market. This was of course also true of the Scandinavian tea trade, where the Commutation Act of 1784 lowered the British tax so significantly it came to undermine the SEIC, which almost exclusively traded with Chinese goods, and especially tea. With a somewhat more diverse trade the DAC survived until the Revolutionary wars in Europe created further obstacles. Changes to conditions that determined the Scandinavian silk trade happened earlier; moreover these changes resulted in very different outcomes depending on whether one looks at the Danish or the Swedish trade.

A total ban on the domestic consumption of Chinese silk was introduced in Sweden in 1754. This was the second attempt at banning Chinese silk from the domestic market; the first lasted between 1745 and 1747. The effect of the 1754 legislation is clearly visible in Figure 3.2: ninety-five per cent, or 122,832 pieces of the total SEIC import between 1733 and 1759 arrived in Gothenburg *before* 1755. The development in Denmark followed a reverse pattern; a royal decree from 1753 declared that the only imported silk allowed on the Danish markets was that imported by the DAC.[121] This should explain at least some of the increase in the Danish trade. Seventy-one per cent, 19,071 pieces, of the known DAC cargo imported between 1734 and 1759 arrived in 1753 and after. The 1753 resolution was the second concerned with DAC imported silk. In 1736 a two year-respite was declared before all consumption of imported brocaded silk in Denmark, as well as silk which was multi-coloured and flowered, was banned *except* such goods brought from China by the DAC.[122]

It is possible that the sharp decline in the Swedish trade promoted a greater Danish trade in Canton. In the 1756 negotiation protocol the Danish supercargoes thought the SEIC would buy no wrought silk; with little French and possibly no Prussian competition that year they speculated that a large Danish silk cargo might sell well in Europe, although the Canton prices were high.[123] Without price figures from the public sales in Copenhagen we cannot tell if the textile prices went up in Denmark as the supply from Gothenburg dried up in the longer term. As it happened the Swedes *did* buy silk in Canton in 1756, although not in the same quantities as they had traded in the 1740s. The extent to which the DAC and the SEIC supplied the same Scandinavian market, something which would have entailed the use of smugglers, is in other words hard to determine. It is also worth noting that the DAC imported substantial numbers of pieces before 1753 too, particularly in 1746, and, vice versa, the SEIC continued to import silk after 1754. The prospect of having, officially at least, to re-export the goods did not deter all trade.

In the latter case it is worth keeping in mind that the conditions of the Canton trade in the late 1750s were shaped by the Seven Years' War (1756–1763), and it is possible that the increase in available credit in Canton explains the growth in the Scandinavian silk trade.

The changing trends in the Scandinavian silk trade provide important clues as to *where* the silk was consumed. Domestic consumption of Chinese silk in Denmark is compatible with Glamann's calculations that goods representing thirty-three per cent of the value of DAC imported China cargo were consumed within the Danish realm between 1734 and 1752, and nineteen per cent between 1753 and 1770.[124] The value of the Swedish re-export of East India goods is, however, only known from 1756 onwards; by then goods worth ten per cent of the total value or less stayed in Sweden, the rest was re-exported.[125] Since the Swedish ban on the consumption of Chinese silk was put in place before 1756 the existing statistics tells us nothing about the extent to which SEIC imported silk stayed in Sweden prior to 1754.

Some patchy figures can help us at least partially reconstruct the relation between import/domestic consumption and re-export for a few years of the first charter of the Swedish Company. According to Kjellberg the proceedings of the SEIC public sale in 1744, of the cargo of the *Drottningen af Swerige*, amounted to 2,228,710 silver dollars.[126] For the same year it is reported that Swedish East India goods with a value 1,663,787 was re-exported, suggesting that goods equivalent to 564,023 silver dollars, or a quarter of the total value of the cargo, stayed in Sweden.[127] Since there could be delays between the end of the public sales and the date of re-export, one needs to be cautious with such calculations, however; also they do not tell us anything about how many textiles stayed behind. We know somewhat more about what happened to the first silk cargo that reached Sweden. Drawing on Kjellberg's excerpts Kristina Söderpalm has calculated that seventy-five per cent of all textiles imported in 1733 stayed in Sweden.[128] Since the cargo of the *Fredericus Rex Sueciæ* was the first to reach Sweden we can assume that there was a great interest in its contents at home. But even if the novelty of the goods might have meant a larger proportion stayed in Sweden in 1733 than later on, the figures do suggest that the Swedish market was able to absorb large amounts of silk.

From 1742 onwards we can trace the impact of regulations on the domestic consumption of multi-coloured silk in the Swedish sales catalogues. The silk cargo is listed under two separate headings, one including textiles permitted in Sweden and one with goods that had to be re-exported. Under the latter heading we find striped pieces or textiles

with two colours. While the latter goods indicate there was a market for SEIC imported silk outside Sweden, it is noticeable that the proportion of silk destined to be re-exported never constituted any significant amount.

The correspondence of Charles Irvine, supercargo and later wholesaler in East India goods in Gothenburg, suggests that there was a sizable Swedish market for Chinese silk. Irvine's ongoing trade with SEIC imported silk pieces shows that there was a market outside Sweden, particularly in the Dutch Republic.[129] However, Irvine's letters also confirm that the bulk of it was destined for the domestic market. Particularly revealing is a letter Irvine wrote early in September 1747. Passing by Dover en route from his very last Canton voyage, Irvine addressed one of his prime business contacts, George Clifford & Sons in Amsterdam. Irvine was obviously oblivious to the fact that the 1745-ban on domestic consumption of Chinese silk in Sweden had been lifted some three weeks earlier. Anticipating the large SEIC silk cargo would end up abroad Irvine informed Clifford & Sons what goods the ship *Freden* was carrying back. He also asked for advice on how to divide the distribution of silk pieces into lots, suggesting he could influence this in such a way that would suit Dutch wholesalers. Questions about quality were also raised; among other things Irvine wanted to know about preferences relating to the ridged structures on the Paduasoy textiles: 'Do your Buyers love Paduasoy with a large or small Wale' he asked.[130] Arriving in Gothenburg and discovering his mistake Irvine quickly wrote back to his silk-dealing contacts: 'the sale will begin within 40 days and as all the silks are permitted in the country, they'll rise too high for foreigners'.[131] In response George Clifford & Sons were inclined to agree: 'we think people are usually bewitched when they get to the Goth. [Gothenburg] Sale, for either through envy, or resolution to trade, at any rate, prices are generally drove too high for foreign markets'. However this year, Clifford & Sons continued, might be different since 'quantities come in your ship, & expected in the other, will be by far too much for the consumption of Sweden'. If good trading opportunities arose Irvine was encouraged to invest in silk for the Dutch market, including in 'large wale'-paduasoy which was 'most esteemed' in the Republic.[132] No action was taken by Irvine though, something Clifford & Sons regretted in a letter from the 25 of November 1747: 'its pity you did not resolve to do something, as a proper assortment would have done well'.[133]

The exchange between Clifford & Sons and Irvine suggests that, as in the case with tea, the market for silk textiles in Europe was porous.

However, while the Swedes rejected Chinese tea the correspondence suggests that they had a strong thirst for Chinese silk. Only if imported quantities were large enough would the wrought silk spill over the Swedish borders. It is worthwhile noticing how much silk the Swedish market was able to absorb. The magnitude of the Swedish import is best illuminated with the help of a comparison with orders of Chinese silk textiles made by London: all in all 193,000 pieces were ordered for the European season 1733 to 1753.[134] During the same period more than 111,000 pieces, or fifty-seven per cent of the EIC orders, arrived in Sweden. Figures for the VOC suggest that around 139,000 silk pieces were put up for sale in the Dutch Republic between 1733 and 1759.[135] During the same period 129,000 pieces, only 10,000 pieces less, arrived in Gothenburg. Although a comparison with VOC and EIC figures is distorted by the fact that the Swedish silk cargo included privately traded goods, one can still conclude that the market for Chinese silk in Sweden was large.

It is notable that the period of the largest Swedish imports corresponded with a period when both raw and wrought silk were relatively cheap in Canton; prices increased in the second half of the eighteenth century.[136] As well as reflecting on the effects of the import ban in the mid-1750s the decline in the Swedish import might also indicate the first signs of these longer term changes. In the Danish case the privileged status of the Chinese silk on the Danish market seemed to have overridden the higher prices in Canton. The notable differences between the Danish and Swedish imports do, however, stand out. One plausible explanation for the smaller DAC import is that Danish consumers already had ready access to a wider variety of East India textiles, including not only cotton but also silk textiles from India.[137] Another possibility is that the Danish market was supplied by a large silk pacotille. Private silk cargoes must have suited the supercargoes, who could often draw on large funds but had limited private ship space. Not only did the SEIC trade almost exclusively with China, but also the Swedish population was larger than the Danish. In 1770 the population within the Swedish realm, which included Finland, amounted to around 3 million; by the beginning of the nineteenth century, from when reliable census figures exist, the population of Denmark, Norway and the duchies of Sleswig-Holstein still only amounted to 2.2 million.[138]

In other words, different import policies in Denmark and Sweden, the unknown size of the pacotille trade, and differences in terms of the size of the domestic market might explain the discrepancy between the Swedish and Danish imports of Chinese wrought silk. Most importantly

though, the trends identified in Figure 3.2 – the decline in the SEIC imports, and the increase in the Danish trade – suggest large amounts of Chinese silk imported by the DAC and SEIC were consumed in Scandinavia and perhaps particularly in Sweden. Merchant correspondence verifies that this was the case, at least for Sweden. With this in mind it is time to turn to the reception and consumption of Chinese silk in northern Europe.

Controversial populuxe

The letter from Clifford & Son to Irvine quoted above suggests a Swedish market bewitched by silk textiles from China, at least to the extent that the prices they fetched eliminated any profitable re-export to the Dutch Republic. Unfortunately few sources have survived to help us trace the reception and forward movement of the silk pieces that arrived in Copenhagen and Stockholm. One exception is the debate surrounding the Swedish East India Company and the regulations of its trade during its first few decades. Paired with a closer look at Scandinavian sumptuary legislation, and some anecdotal evidence from how this legislation was implemented, we can outline some of the ways that Chinese silk made inroads into northern Europe and explain its progress.

The 'Age of Liberty', the period between 1719 and 1772, is associated with a new and relatively high level of freedom of speech in Sweden. The end to absolutism and the Great Northern War (1700–1721) saw a new political economy. The opening of direct trade between China and Sweden, largely driven by the prosperous market for contraband tea in Britain, began around the same time as the Swedish state started to support its domestic textile industry. The aim of the latter, typically mercantilist policy was to replace imports from abroad with domestically produced textiles, thereby encouraging a positive balance of trade. With cheap loans to manufacturers, support for purchases, monopolies, and privileges the state encouraged the making of woollen, linen, cotton and silk textiles. Judging by import levels of raw silk in the years preceding the reforms, silk manufacturing had reached a low point in Sweden. By the middle of the eighteenth century it had expanded sharply, particularly in Stockholm.[139] Swedish silk looms now employed 790 individuals working 183 looms, most of them located in the capital.[140]

A heated contemporary debate arose around the Swedish government's decision to provide the SEIC with a monopoly of trade with Asia, and the rights to sell Asian goods, particularly textiles, on the Swedish

market. This debate has recently been analysed by Thomas Magnusson. Several different standpoints are represented within a framework of early-modern political economy. By the mid-1750s those favouring the Swedish textile industries won, as the import ban on Chinese silk discussed above illustrates. Together with descriptions of the Chinese silk textiles, and what distinguished these from Swedish and European manufactured equivalents, an understanding of the debate leading up to this change can help us not only map the political response to the Chinese import, but also show how it was perceived more generally.

Emanating out of the discussion is a representation of Chinese silk as mainly low quality, and more importantly, cheap.[141] While this view was widely shared, antagonists held different opinions about the implications. Opponents of the SEIC argued that the cheapness of the Chinese silk generated waste, as it encouraged people, and particularly women, to change their outfits more frequently. Defenders of the SEIC argued that the company-traded silk filled a gap in the domestic market which the Swedish manufacturers could not fill.[142] According to Carl Carleson, the foremost proponent of the SEIC, the Swedish market was segmented; common people bought cheap Chinese silk while wealthy people bought Swedish manufactured silk.[143] Moreover, the same author claimed that imported French-produced silk textiles, not Chinese, posed the real threat to Swedish manufacturers but that mattered less to 'ordinary and less well off people' who bought the Asian goods.[144] Carleson was not alone in his views: responding to a questionnaire from the Board of Commerce Malmö city officials argued that Chinese goods were no longer regarded as a 'luxury'.[145]

The Danish state, like the Swedish state, supported the domestic silk industry heavily at the beginning of the eighteenth century; by the middle of the eighteenth century 463 workers were engaged operating 124 Danish looms.[146] Censorship, however, prevented discussion of the status and rights of the DAC. By the mid-eighteenth century a liberalization had taken place and publications concerned with political economy were allowed. In 1757 the first issue of *Denmark's and Norway's Economic Magazine* was published.[147] The first editor was Erik Pontoppidian (1698–1764), a political economist, theologian, and pro-chancellor for Copenhagen University. Pontoppidian openly questioned the future of domestic silk manufacturing, highlighting the advantages of the Chinese imports. In 1759, writing about the 'good share' of wrought silk brought home annually by the DAC, Pontoppidian underlined not only its somewhat weak 'strength and reputation' but also the fact that its price was 'somewhat lighter'.[148]

In other words, an agreement seemed to have existed about the status of the Chinese silk in Scandinavia, which very much corresponds with the characteristics of populuxe goods. Although some bemoaned the consumerism that access to Chinese silk generated they agreed that it was cheap, and some even suggested that it was no longer a luxury for those outside the elite. Chinese silk was also understood and evaluated in the light of the segmentation of the domestic market and the quality of European silk products; Chinese silk was seen as light and less durable.[149] However, while the produce of the domestic silk industries and the Chinese silk pieces were juxtaposed by those opposing the SEIC imports, it also seems to have been the case that the former legitimized the latter.

In Sweden the support of the domestic silk industry was followed by a softening of the regulations of who was allowed to wear silk. In 1736, a new decree stated that a wide range of domestically produced silk textiles, 'plain, stripy or faconnerade' were legal to wear for women of all social classes, except for the lowest-level maid. Only hats and shawls of silk were permitted for the latter and lowlier placed women.[150] Permissions and minor restrictions were added and withdrawn in successive decrees; young women and children under thirteen were for example excluded from wearing silk in 1746.[151]

No Swedish decree mentions any exceptions of silk textiles imported by the SEIC. In fact, anyone unaware of the rights of the SEIC to sell Chinese silk on the Swedish market before 1755 could, reading the Swedish decrees, easily make the mistake of thinking that all Chinese silk were banned for domestic use. Evidence from the implementation of the sumptuary legislation does, however, prove that not only was Chinese silk accepted in the eyes of the authorities, but also widely circulated. One particularly telling example is from the documentation connected with adherence to sumptuary legislation in Helsinki in the 1740s. Clothes made from silk and other material, the use of which was restricted, needed to be inspected, registered and stamped by local authorities. Providing a snapshot of the wardrobes of around three hundred individuals (approximately twenty per cent of the population of Helsinki), the resulting documents contain ample references to damask textiles from the 'East Indies' among private possessions and shop inventories.[152] The ownership of colourful silk clothes from China, as well as perhaps India, was however largely restricted to the wealthiest of the Helsinki burghers, while grey and black wool clothes dominated among the lower classes.[153] A list of clothes stamped in Uppsala in 1740 contains a similar mix of colourful silk clothes, with several materials referred to as 'East India' in origin.[154]

This official acceptance of silk as part of everyday dressing ended after a few decades. In 1766 a new Swedish decree stated that maids in general, as well as wives, widows and children of soldiers and other low-level military personnel were only allowed silk in their caps. A total ban was declared for 'loose women' and maids under forty years of age without employment. They were barred from using silk in all their clothing, including in their hats. Silk and velvet in men's clothing, including lining but excluding accessories, were also banned.[155] We can read these changes made in the 1760s as reflecting the shift of political power. In 1766 the political party the Hats were replaced by another party, the Caps, and the political economy of Sweden changed. Adopting a longer perspective it is possible to trace the influence of Physiocratism, which promoted a change of focus from manufacturing and trade to agricultural production. By 1766 the new regulations of course mattered less in the case of the Chinse silk on the Swedish market since it had been banned in 1755 anyway.

More importantly there is the window of opportunity that opened up for Chinese silk on the Scandinavian market during the middle third of the eighteenth century. The argument here relates to how state support for domestic silk manufacturing in Sweden de facto helped to legitimize Chinese silk. The general acceptance of silk in the everyday clothing of broader segments of the population, reflecting an ambition to support the domestic textile industry, allowed wrought Chinese silk to enter the market. While Chinese silk is not mentioned in the Swedish sumptuary legislation, the regulations of the SEIC clearly sanctioned domestic trade and consumption. The legal status of 'East India' textiles is also indicated by how the sumptuary regulations were implemented.

The situation in Denmark was somewhat different; as mentioned in the previous section Danish sumptuary laws from 1736 and 1753 gave DAC imported Chinese silk a privileged position on the domestic market. Silk, particularly the cheaper sort, like taffeta, was even explicitly allowed for common people in the Danish decree from 1736, although artisans and people of lower social standing were banned from wearing both silk and silk textiles mixed with other fibres.[156] The more privileged status of the DAC compared with the SEIC might reflect the higher rate of domestic investment in the company, including that of the Danish Royal family discussed in Chapter 1. Danish silk manufacturers did protest; the discussion became heated in the latter part of the 1760s and the following decades. By the middle of the 1760s the import of Chinese silk rose again after a few quiet years caused by Chinese restrictions on export. More importantly the DAC charter

was up for renewal in 1772. In the new charter the King reserved the right to raise the customs on silk and coffee. In 1773 a custom charge of twenty-four per cent was introduced, and in 1774 Chinese silk for domestic consumption was banned from the market; a change of policy which reflected the ambition to safeguard the domestic silk industry.[157] A tightening of the rules for domestic of consumption also took place, although somewhat later; in 1783 peasants in the Danish realm were ordered to use only home-made fabrics in their clothing. Silk was only allowed in women's headdress.[158]

To sum up, the Swedish and Danish debate on the East India trade, and the status of the domestic silk industries suggest an understanding of Chinese silk that corresponds with the notion of populuxe goods. It was cheap and light and less durable than wrought silk manufactured in Europe; to some extent it was not even perceived as a luxury good. Although the diffusion and consumption of Chinese silk across Scandinavia needs to be further explored evidence from the implementation of sumptuary legislation support the findings from the previous section, that large quantities of textiles were absorbed by the Scandinavian market. Two independent but simultaneous processes helped bring Chinese silk populuxe within the reach of consumers in the North; the opening of direct trade between Scandinavia and China, largely driven by the prosperous trade with tea on behalf of British consumers, and a more inclusive sumptuary regulation, reflecting the Scandinavian states' support for the expansion of domestic silk industries within their respective realms. In the light of this let us shift the focus from the supply to the demand side and return to the material dimension, to the silk textiles that were arriving in Copenhagen and Gothenburg in a great variety of widths, lengths, weights and weaves, but most importantly perhaps, in different colours. What do these characteristics tell us about fashion, trends and what Scandinavian consumers wanted?

Colours by name

Silk is not only a fibre with a specific tactile quality, a smoothness, but also one that has a lustre that gives it a special shine. The visual dimension is also a central, albeit largely under-researched, aspect of the trade in Chinese silk. The description of the silk cargo of the first SEIC ship, *Fredericus Rex*, returning in 1733, included thirty-eight different colour terms. Although the variation diminished somewhat over time, the colour assortment of the large silk cargo of the *Cronprintzen* from

1748, included twenty-eight specified tints, and the colour palettes were generally very rich.

Anders Berch's textile collection, held by the Nordic Museum in Stockholm, contains sixty-one small pieces of taffeta, gorgoroon, satin and damasks and other 'East-Indian' textiles, all dating to the eighteenth century.[159] A few of these samples are reproduced as plates 2–5 in this book, and these images help communicate some of the visual impact made by these silk cargoes. A unique collection of textile samples from the eighteenth-century China trade has been saved in the VOC archive. Two sheets reproduced in an article by Christian Jörg give us some guidance to matching tint to colour name.[160]

As Table 3.2 illustrates, a comparison of the colour references used in the SEIC sales catalogues, which for the first decades of the Swedish trade were published in German, with material generated by the Danish, English and Dutch companies, demonstrates that the colour nomenclature used in the European trade with Chinese silk was both well-established and shared. Compared to colour references used in the trade with Indian cotton, which often only separated tints into basic primary colours, the nomenclature of the China silk trade employed a high level of specification, and many different shades can be distinguished.[161]

As the list of names in Table 3.2 also suggests, this pan-European colour terminology was to no small extent French in origin. The French term 'ponceau' or poppy was standard when trading in bright red silk textiles. 'Couleur de rose' and 'couleur de chair', or 'incarnat' in Swedish, were also used to describe different tones of red and pink. 'Paille' was another French term the continental and Scandinavian companies used, while the EIC used 'straw'. Another colour term with a strong French connection that was used across the companies was 'turqvin', which probably refers to a bluish-grey, or slate colour, similar to the Turqvin marble mined in Italy and France, and used in exquisite early-modern and eighteenth-century ornamental work.[162] 'Mazarine' was a shade of dark blue which is likely to have received its name from Nortense Mancini, Duchesse de Mazarin (1646–1699). The first records of the appearance of mazarine blue in the English language are from the 1680s and include a reference to a mazarine coloured blue velvet.[163] The first mention of 'mazareen' in the EIC order lists is from 1726, in connection with an order of 200 taffeta pieces. Seven years later the SEIC brought home pekin pieces, some of which were 'Mazarin oder Dunckelblau'.[164] Maybe the clarification was necessary as there seems to have been some confusion about what mazarine referred to. In 1747, hoping that at least some of the Swedish cargo would go cheap enough

Table 3.2 Colour nomenclature used in the East India trade with China

English (EIC)	German (SEIC)	Swedish (SEIC)	Danish (DAC)	Dutch (VOC)
Ash	Asch	Askfärgad	Aske Graa	
Cherry	Kirschen	Körsbär		
Crimson	Carmoisin Coul. de chair	Carmoise Coul. de chair or Incarnat	Carmoisin Inkarnat	Carmosyn
Junquille	Jonquille	Jonqville	Jonquille	Jonquille
Citron	Citron	Citrongohlt	Citron	Citroen
Mazarine	Mazarin blau	Mazarinblå		
	Bleumourant	Blomerant	Bleumerant	Bleumorant
Pearl	Perle	Perlfärg	Perle	Perl (or Paarl)
	Ponso	Ponceau	Ponceau	Poncon
Purple	Purpur	Purpur		
Pink	Coul. de rose	Coul. de rose	Roesa	Rose
Scarlet	Scharlaken	Skarl.färg		
Sky blue	Himmel blau	Himmelsblå		Himelsblauw
Straw	Paille	Paille	Pallie	Paila
Turqvin	Turquin Blau	Turqvinblått	Turkin	Türkŭn or Donker blauw

Sources: For colour terms used by the EIC see excel sheet 'China' available from http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/arts/history/ghcc/eac/databases/english/ (accessed 3 July 2015). For German, Swedish and Danish colour terms see sources listed in Appendix 2. For terms used by the VOC, see Canton 187, Nationaal Archief, The Hague, NAN.

to make it worthwhile to re-export, Clifford & Sons wrote to Charles Irvine detailing the assortment they wanted, adding: 'by mazarine blue, we mean what we call here Turkish Blue'. In addition Irvine was told that what the Swedes called 'ponceau' was called scarlet in Amsterdam.[165]

Since France represented the centre for European fashion it is not surprising that many colour terms derived from French. The French dominance over colour terminology is in no respect unique to the China trade; rather it was standard across Europe, including Sweden.[166] Did the Chinese silk trade introduce French colour names that had not previously been used in Sweden? One of the most diversified colour categories in the China trade was blue: silk pieces in the Swedish catalogues were described as sky blue, bleumerant, dark blue, mazarine blue, middle blue, light blue, millan blue and turqvin. The latter colour could of course also be labelled grey and be grouped together with silks dyed pearl grey, ash grey, lead grey, silver and simply grey. Back to blue, however, there is some overlap with colour references used by Swedish dyers. Sky blue and bluemerant are listed in Eva Bergström's study of Stockholm dyers in the early-modern period. Mazarine blue and

millan blue are not mentioned; however, these colours might have had other names. In addition to bluemerant and sky blue, Swedish dyers offered 'lazur blue', 'sapphire blue', 'porcelain blue' 'faience blue' and 'indigo blue'.[167] With samples being hard to come by it is impossible to establish if only the terminology was new, or if the Chinese cargo also brought new blue shades to Sweden.

Since most Chinese silk arriving in Europe came from Canton, it seems reasonable to assume that names were fixed to colours pretty rigidly. With the exception of one or two discrepancies, such as those indicated by Clifford & Sons, it might even have been the case that the Chinese silk trade harmonized and standardized colour perceptions in the Western world, or at least in areas with a large influx of Chinese silk on the domestic market, such as Scandinavia and the Dutch Republic, but also perhaps in North America where large amounts of EIC traded silk ended up.[168]

The variation in the colour nomenclature provides more clues. While the terminology in some cases, as with shades of blue and grey, allowed for a careful distinction between different tints, other frequently used colour names are surprisingly unspecific. For example there is a strong absence of names denoting different shades of brown. 'Brown' or 'Brown various' was a standard reference in the ordering, contracting or selling of brown silk in the Swedish and Danish material.[169] In the English order lists for Canton we find requests for 'Brown dark, Brown, Brown light, Brown very light, Brown very, very light' as well as for 'various Brown'.[170] That the Chinese silk cargo contained a selection of different shades of brown can be verified by samples in Anders Berch's collection, some of which are reproduced in this volume.[171]

It is of course possible that a more precise nomenclature for distinguishing different shades of brown was missing due to an absence of attractive references. In his article 'Weaving the rainbow: Visions of colour in world history', Robert Finlay lists some early-modern English and French colour terms including 'Horse flesh', 'Goose turd', 'Rat's colour', 'Peas porridge', 'Puke', 'Flea's belly' and 'Paris mud', which were used referring to washed-out browns, blues and greys.[172] None of these older terms were however used in the China silk trade, which favoured the more neutral but unspecific term 'brown'.

A change to a more exact nomenclature separating and selling brown textiles can however be detected. The first sale catalogue of the SEIC listed two pieces of velvet described as 'chocolate' and 'cinnamon'; the latter selling for 117 silver dollars, a very high price for a piece without embroidery.[173] Both pieces, listed in the extensive handwritten section

of the sales catalogue, are likely to have been privately traded goods. These are not the only examples; less exclusive goods referred to in a similar way kept arriving. The silk cargo put up for sale in Gothenburg in 1742 contained cinnamon coloured poisee damask pieces, and in 1745 and 1751 there are chocolate and coffee coloured paduasoy pieces put up for sale.[174] The Danish material contains fewer references to specific brown shades but even here we can find requests for cinnamon brown ('Caneel brun') pieces in 1755.[175]

While this terminology for the colour brown was not unique to the China trade, it indicates how Asia provided Europeans with more than just textiles. Other goods with a distinct Asian origin, such as cinnamon and coffee (although its cultivation was rapidly spreading to the Atlantic world), were also drawn on to colour code the silk pieces from China.[176] Together with chocolate, another global good, they were used to help distinguish different types of brown.

It is worth noticing that cinnamon, coffee and chocolate brown were terms used in the sales catalogues of the SEIC, where the goods were advertised to the wholesalers. It is notable that material relating to silk orders in the DAC archives, from both the Canton and Copenhagen ends of the trade, contain relatively few colour references. The latter is surprising since at the auctions potential purchasers were exposed to hundreds of lots of silk textiles. One would think a more specific nomenclature for describing and listing the colours would have been called for in Copenhagen even if not in Canton. Maybe the larger size of the Swedish cargo generated a richer language, or maybe it reflected a specific Swedish strategy?

As the case of the cinnamon and chocolate coloured velvet pieces put up for sale in Gothenburg in 1733 suggests, privately-traded silk was described with a slightly different and more specific nomenclature. In a summary of a private silk order made in Canton in 1745, including four chests 'packed for Doctor Duff' under Charles Irvine's supervision, we find references to paduasoy pieces coloured 'dark sky', 'light sky', 'light cherry' and 'dark cherry'. On another account Irvine bought poisee damask pieces coloured 'French green'.[177] None of these colours are used in the Swedish Company trade.

Danish supercargoes were regularly encouraged to take into considerations the 'costumes' at home and in other European countries when ordering silk and to exercise 'all possible care' in this business.[178] In other words, the discretion of supercargoes mattered when selections of what to order and purchase were made. It is likely that the supercargoes, when shopping around, used colour as well as pattern samples they

brought with them, or were provided with by the Chinese merchants. When the supercargo Lintrup, whose daughter was married in an ivory coloured 'robe à la française' made of Chinese silk, stayed over in Canton and Macau in 1741 while seeing to the business of DAC after one of its ships had been delayed, he ordered silk textiles for the DAC at low-season prices. This included amongst others sixty pieces of green damask, half of which followed the colour sample given by Lintrup to the merchant.[179]

Maybe this 'wordless' communication can explain why the colour nomenclature of the China trade came to incorporate so few terms referring to Chinese culture or society. It is only among the different shades of green that we can find one such colour reference. As in the case of brown, the Swedish catalogues offer only a few examples of more specific green shade-names, aside from green, light green or dark green. Among the unusual ones, to which 'grass green', 'olive green', 'may green', 'sea green' and 'celadon' belong, we find a shade called 'mandarin green', which might allude to China's class of scholar-officials.[180]

Another example, although not used in the Scandinavian trade, is the term 'tea colour'. The colour reference 'tea brown' was used in seventeenth-century handbooks for dying silk in China.[181] Paul van Dyke has also found references to 'tea colour' in material relating to smuggling in Canton. The use of yellow and red were exclusive to the emperor and his court, something that necessitated an elaborate system of bribing the Chinese inspectors employed to monitor the European companies' trade activities. By labelling the colour of the silk cargo 'tea' the traders, Van Dyke suggests, were hoping to get away with providing the companies with silk coloured in forbidden tints.[182] With the exception of the late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century American trade with China there is no other evidence for the term being used elsewhere in the East India trade.[183]

So while the Chinese terms for different types of tea followed the goods to Europe, Chinese colour references did not penetrate the silk trade, not even if the colour referred to tea. More importantly, perhaps, this might tell us something about the status of Chinese silk in the Eurasian trade, and on the European market. As we discussed in the section on poisee damask there are no signs that Canton took a lead in introducing novel silk designs. In the case of poisee damask, taffeta and pekin the focus seems in fact to have been on the colour of the wrought silk, often monochrome pieces, rather than on patterns and other embellishments. It is in the light of this that I suggest that we should view the wide assortment of colours available in Canton. The most

efficient way to respond to changing European demands was perhaps to offer colour variety, rather than to try to follow or initiate trends. This raises the question: out of the many colours on offer in Canton, what did the Scandinavian market prefer?

Fluctuating colours and fixed assortments

The colour assortment of the wrought Chinese silk varies depending on which type one looks at; not surprisingly the most 'colour static' textile was the bed damask. The first two SEIC sales catalogues, from 1733 and 1736, list bed damask pieces in seven and nine different colours, but within the next few years three or four colours became standard. Yellow, crimson, green and sky blue *or* bluemerant were the clear favourites.[184] Such a narrow selection is not surprising if we consider the somewhat limited use of bed damask although, as David Mitchell has shown, colour schemes in interior designs could change quite quickly by the early eighteenth century, at least in cosmopolitan environments.[185]

What about the types of textiles which were likely to be turned into clothes, like poisee damask? Poisee damask pieces arrived in Scandinavia in a wide assortment of colours. Figure 3.3 shows both the total number of pieces imported by the Swedish Company (37,878) and the number of colours their largest parcels contained. If we break down the biggest parcels by colour the following top-ten list emerges for the period 1733 to 1761: number one was crimson, decorating fourteen per cent of all pieces; followed by white, eleven per cent; jonquille, eight per cent; sky blue, seven per cent. Green, black and brown coloured pieces made up six per cent each, while five per cent were described as yellow, and four per cent ash grey and dark blue, respectively.

To what extent did the colour proportions change over time? By grouping the colours into seven categories, bringing together different shades of red (crimson, poppy, scarlet, incarnat and cherry); blue (dark, middle, light, mazarine, millan, bluemerant and sky); yellow (jonquille, citron, paille and yellow); green (light, dark and celadon), and grey (pearl, lead and silver) as well as black and white it is possible to visualize some changes in one graph.

Figure 3.4 illustrates the relative distribution of poisee damask pieces between the seven broad colour categories. Notable is the strong occurrence of black poisee damask pieces in the 1740s. We find a corresponding and even stronger black trend in the trade in other textiles around the same time. More than half, 1,014 pieces, of the largest batch of

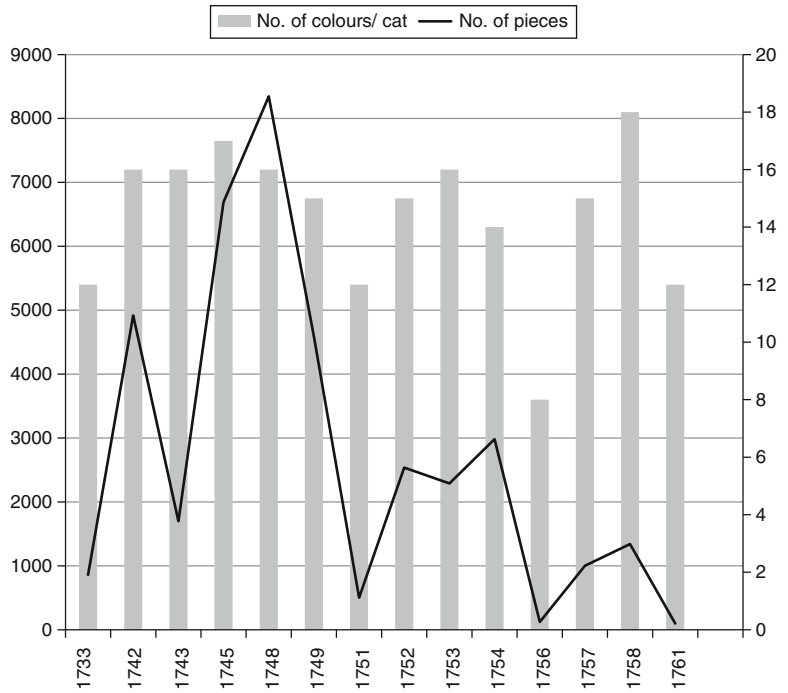

Figure 3.3 Number of poisee damask pieces imported by SEIC and colour assortment, 1733–1761
Source: Appendix 2 (Swedish sales catalogues) and Försäljningskatalog for *Stockholms Slott* (1761), Öijareds arkivet, A 406 FIII, 4, 1759–1761, Landsarkivet Göteborg.

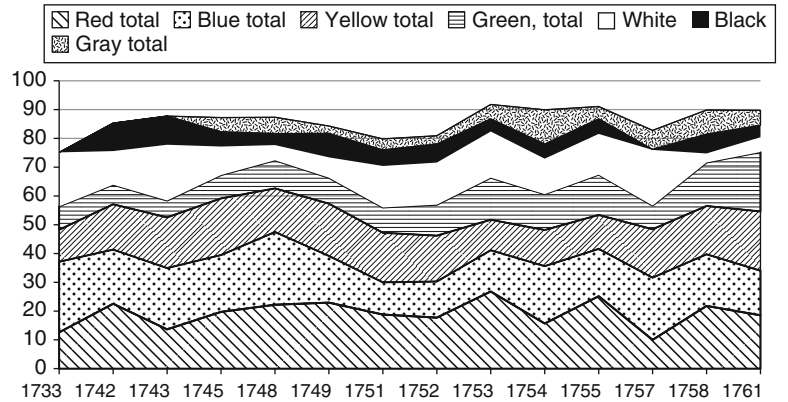

Figure 3.4 Colour schemes on poisee damask imported by SEIC, relative numbers
Source: Appendix 2 (Swedish sales catalogues) and Försäljningskatalog for *Stockholms Slott* (1761), Öijareds arkivet, A 406 FIII, 4, 1759–1761, Landsarkivet Göteborg.

taffeta pieces comprising 1,896 pieces listed in the sales catalogue of 1742, were black.[186] Similar proportions of black can be found in several of the paduasoy and gorgoroon silk parcels put up for sale in the same year. This marked a change with the past. For example, the pieces ordered in 1733 were not as 'dark'; less than twelve per cent of a collection of 812 pieces described as 'Taffeta or Pekin' were black.[187]

The general strong black presence in the silk cargo of the Swedish Company is hard to explain. Maybe Lintrup was right when in 1741, outlining the reasons behind his selection of colours for the silk orders he placed on behalf of the DAC for the forthcoming season, he pointed out that 'black … rarely goes out of fashion'.[188] Lintrup was probably alluding to the use of black textiles during periods of official mourning. Reducing the demand for almost anything but black clothes during periods of public mourning could seriously impact upon the European silk manufacturers who depended on a regular change of fashion to keep the production going.[189] In Sweden restrictions on the use of black textiles in clothes and furnishing and as decorations at funerals were introduced in 1735, but the colour was not completely banned.[190] It is possible that the large increase in black piece goods in 1742 and 1743 was in response to the demand for mourning clothes in Sweden following the death of Ulrika Elenora. Born 1688 she was the last member of the Pfalz dynasty and the Swedish queen consort by the time of her death in November 1741, after which a two-year period of official mourning was declared.[191]

The rich colour nomenclature used in the silk trade reflected of course a need to distinguish between different shades of one colour. In this respect Figure 3.4 only tells us that people regularly wore more red, blue and yellow clothes than green, white, black or grey. In order to identify more specific trends we need to study changes over time *within* the broader colour categories, rather than between them. Such an approach reveals for example a sharp reduction in the diversity of red colours. Crimson dominated the red colour spectrum between 1752 and 1761: between two thirds and nine tenths of all red pieces were crimson, and the only other red colour traded in the previous nine years was poppy red. Crimson was popular earlier in the period too, but less dominant. Crimson pieces constituted only a quarter of all red pieces in the largest batch of poisee damasks sold in 1733, while poppy red and incarnat account for around a third each. Crimson coloured pieces were sometimes ordered separately and for a higher price by the Danish in Canton.[192] Assuming the Swedes needed to pay for such hike-ups too it is reasonable to assume the strong crimson presence in the Swedish cargo reflected domestic demand.[193]

Among the blue colours we find almost a reversed development. Sky blue was by far the most dominant shade at the beginning of the period; in 1733 nearly four fifths of all blue pieces were sky blue. Then a decline took place, although half the blue pieces by 1748 were still were sky blue. The next year, however, there were no sky blue poisee damasks at all in the largest parcel. The new blue on the block, making up more than two thirds of the blue pieces in 1749, and more than half of them in 1751, was bleumerant, a pale shade of blue.[194] Although sky blue returned, making up more than half of all blue pieces in 1757, there are several years, between 1752 and 1755, and in 1758 and 1761, when there were no sky blue or bleumerant coloured pieces in the largest parcels. Instead the blue poisee damask cargo was made up of light blue, millan blue and dark blue in approximately equal proportions.

It could of course be the case that the colours remained the same while the names changed. Maybe the elusive millan blue was the same as sky blue? No single batch of poisee damask containing pieces in both these two colours has been found. Although yellow and jonquille yellow made two joint appearances, in 1749 and 1751, in all other years either one or the other dominated the yellow group, sometimes making up nine tenths of all the yellow pieces. Straw yellow was only strong in one year, 1757, while citron yellow had several strong years, in 1742, 1748 and 1758, when it made up for around two fifths of the yellow cargo. Among the grey shades pearl grey was the dominant one: twelve per cent of *all* the pieces in the largest poisee damask parcel in 1754 were labelled pearl grey. Only towards the end of the 1750s did lead grey and silver grey move onto the scene.

So the proportion of different colours changed, probably in response to shifting European demands, although we have only scattered evidence for how trends were communicated. The letter Clifford & Son wrote to Irvine in 1747 stating that 'the Best Colours in all sorts of East India Silk are white, Bleumourant & Crimson' is one example, which also quite accurately reflects some of wider trends in the colour assortment of the Swedish poisee damask cargo. However, while proportions changed few new colours were added to the repertoire.

Popularity was not the only factor determining what the companies stocked-up on in Canton. A Danish Chinese silk contract from 1755 stipulated that the ordered goods were to be made from 'as good and clean colours which here in the land of China can be had'.[195] The quality of the dyes and the results of dyeing mattered. In 1747 the colour ash grey seemed for example to have caused problems: forty-nine pieces of ash grey damask, gorgoroon, paduasoy and taffeta pieces were sold

separately under the heading 'damaged'.[196] Discussing the colour selection of five silk orders in 1752 the Danish supercargoes argued that they could have included poppy coloured pieces since they were 'sellable in Europe'. However, the colour was hard to 'conserve' and poppy coloured pieces were more expensive than the others, hence they opted not to buy any.[197] Lintrup also listed colours he hesitated to order in 1741, as he was signing an advanced contract on behalf of the DAC. Poppy was not the only risky option; incarnat and jonquille risked spotting.[198]

A final factor determining the distribution of colours and the extent to which the Scandinavian trade responded to changing demands relates to *how* the silk goods were sold in Europe, namely in lots containing pieces of several colours packed together. In a letter quoted earlier from Irvine to Clifford & Sons, written from Dover in 1747, Irvine suggested that if his Amsterdam contacts could provide him with information on Dutch preferences he could try to influence the lot composition, to fit the Dutch market.[199] We find evidence from elsewhere that such a strategy could pay off.

Take for example the 4,310 pieces of poisee damask brought to Gothenburg on the ship *Calmare* arriving in 1748.[200] They were sold in lots containing between twenty-nine and thirty-seven pieces each. The highest price was paid for the sequence 934 to 964; each of these lots contained thirty-one pieces, a record number of sixteen different colours, and sold for an average price of 55.89 silver dollars per piece. The lowest price, 44.75 silver dollars per piece, was paid for the last lot, which contained thirty-seven pieces in six different colours. In other words 'more was more' in the sense that lots with the largest variation of colour attracted the highest bids. Instructions from Copenhagen regularly underlined the importance of sticking to the *proportions* of different colours when buying silk. Orders were often more specific about the colour assortment than the total number of pieces bought; the latter depended more on available funds and ultimately on the Bohea tea prices anyway. To get the right colour assortment of the silk was, however, essential and something the directors of the DAC in Copenhagen regularly tried to control.[201]

How the textiles were going to be used, quality of dyes and tints, prices and lot composition influenced the colour assortments of the silk cargo from China, as did funerals and changing fashions in Scandinavia. A careful study of the colour composition of one of the most common types of silk textiles, poisee damask, reveals shifts that suggest changes in demand and fashion. The middle third of the eighteenth century saw a growing demand for crimson red coloured silk clothes, while

fewer wanted sky blue coloured ones. Jonquille yellow and pearl grey should, according to their popularity, have been other common colours of Swedish people's clothes, as also were black and white. While the colour ranges of Chinese silk seemed to have been uniform across the European companies' cargo, the somewhat static, possibly even conservative colour assortments of the Scandinavian trade might have suited segments of the domestic consumer market particularly well – that is if they were as resistance to new fashions and trends as have been suggested.[202] Whatever the demands and resistance to change, one is left with a strong impression that the Swedish people were quite a motley crew, as early as the mid-eighteenth century.

Conclusion

Against the backdrop of the great variety of silk textiles put up for sale in Canton it is easy to overlook the extent to which wrought Chinese silk conformed to standards. Smaller batches of contracted silk textiles of identical or near identical dimensions formed large parcels in Canton. However, once they reached Europe they were yet again divided up, this time into lots with colour assortments matching the demands of the market that they were destined for. Exact numbers for silk pieces brought to Europe by the Scandinavian companies are impossible to calculate. Aside from patchy sources in the Swedish case we know very little about the size of the Danish private trade. The 156,000 pieces reaching Gothenburg and Copenhagen between 1733 and 1759 accounted for in this chapter and in Appendix 2 do not represent the whole trade. The numbers do, however, provide enough material for us to trace the effects of changing trade conditions. The privileged status of Chinese silk on the Danish market and the ban on it in the Swedish market created two trends, which converged in the 1750s; namely a decline in the large Swedish imports after 1754, and an increase in the previously smaller imports to Denmark after 1753.

Most silk arriving from China was made from the cheap variety of raw silk produced and manufactured around Canton, and not from the more expensive, finer Nanking variety. Matching import regulations with trade statistics, merchant correspondence, sentiments expressed in heated debates, and the wording *and* praxis of sumptuary legislation enable us to deduce that Chinese silk was also perceived as a cheaper type of silk, a populuxe good, in Scandinavia. This cheap Chinese silk probably served market segments that the more expensive and exclusive French and Scandinavian silk never reached. Domestic silk

was important, though; large amounts of the Chinese silk arrived in northern Europe just as the Danish and the Swedish states began to invest in their own silk manufactures. As the state sanctioned domestic silk manufacturing, Asian silk seems to have gained a legitimacy in Scandinavia, at least for a few decades.

The colour nomenclature of the silk goods provides clues to the role of cheap Chinese silk on the Scandinavian market. Arriving in vast quantities this cargo gave new customers visual and material references to colours and fashions traditionally associated with France and aristocratic consumption. While varied and rich, at least in the blue and grey shades, the colour nomenclature was, however, remarkable static. Few new terms were introduced. In contrast to tea the Chinese origin of the goods was rarely alluded to in references to colours and names, something which reflects Canton's role as a provider of a wide assortment of coloured silk pieces, rather than as a generator of novel trends in eighteenth-century Europe.

We can assume that the colour assortments of goods that arrived from Canton matched demands. Swedish consumers of populuxe silk wanted crimson and sometimes sky blue coloured clothes, albeit in changing proportions. Prices for lots of poisee damask pieces, the elusive but popular type of textile the Swedish Company favoured rose in correspondence with the colour diversity. 'More was more' in the sense that lots with large variation rendered higher price at the public sales. Diffused in their thousands across Sweden in the first half of the eighteenth century these relatively cheap and colourful silks are likely to have paved the way for some of the inroads cotton made half a century later. While monochrome as single pieces, when combined in waistcoats, dresses and hats they were also likely to have influenced contemporary notions of an emerging 'motley' people before cotton arrived. As populuxe articles these clothes were very different to Bolette Maria Haboe's embroidered wedding outfit, or other heavily embellished and exclusive silk creations that have survived until today. The regular, if not everyday, use of Chinese populuxe silk is the likely explanation as to why so few traces of this large colourful silk import have survived. Although it is scattered, the evidence from inventories of local adherence to sumptuary legislations in Helsinki and Uppsala suggests a widespread diffusion of Chinese silk by the 1740s.

The cargo of Chinese silks imported by the SEIC was not very different to that of the Dutch and the English, neither in terms of types and colours of textiles, nor quantities. The size of the Swedish silk import can also help us to reconcile different research traditions concerned

with the SEIC. Those studying the trade with 'perishable' tea have placed the company within a transnational and even global history. In a Scandinavian context the domestic consumption of 'durable' Chinese goods has been at the forefront, but concentrated mainly on the most expensive types, such as exclusive sets of furniture, reversed-painted mirrors, armorial porcelain or the occasional dress. This chapter suggests that aside from elite consumption of durable goods, the SEIC also catered for a broader segment of the population, providing it with relatively cheap silk goods up until the 1750s. Although we do not have much information on the proportions of investments spent on tea versus silk in Canton, the large Swedish silk shipments in the 1740s must have cost at least as much as the tea cargo, if not more. In other words, for some years before 1754, tea and silk in sometimes near equal measure provided the *modus operandi* for the SEIC. If we consider the two cargoes together it might even be possible to say that if the British had not been so fond of tea drinking the logistical gap would have been too wide, for the Swedish at least, to cross and start importing cheap silk from China.

Notes

1. Toftegaard, Kirsten. 'Bolette Marie Harboe's bridal dress: Fashionable encounters told in an 18th-century dress', in *Fashionable encounters: Perspectives and trends in textile and dress in the early modern Nordic world*, ed. Tove Engelhardt Mathiassen and others (Oxford: Oxbow Books, 2014), pp. 173–182. On Lintrup see also Clemmensen, Tove and Mogens B. Mackeprang. *Kina og Danmark, 1600–1950: Kinafart og Kinamode* (Copenhagen: Nationalmuseet, 1980), pp. 148–158.
2. Lee-Whitman, Leanna. 'The silk trade: Chinese silks and the British East India Company', *Winterthur Portfolio* 17 (1982): 21–41 (pp. 23–25). On exceptions and other problems identifying Chinese silk from the eighteenth century see also Toftegaard, 'Bolette', p. 178; Shaw, Madelyn. '"Shipped in good order" Rhode Island's China trade silks', in *Global trade and visual arts in federal New England*, ed. Patricia Johnston and Caroline Frank (Lebanon: University of New Hampshire Press, 2014), pp. 119–133 (129–130).
3. See for example Toftegaard, 'Bolette', pp. 177, 181. While fashion influenced the type of textiles used in early-modern dresses, they often had multiple lives as they were recycled and changed into different garments (Rasmussen, Pernilla. *Skräddaren, sömmerskan och modet: arbetsmetoder och arbetsdelning i tillverkningen av kvinnlig dräkt 1770–1830* (Stockholm: Nordiska museets förlag, 2010), p. 55).
4. Styles, John. *The dress of the people. Everyday fashion in eighteenth-century England* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007); Roche, Daniel. *The culture of clothing: Dress and fashion in the ancient regime* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

5. Rothstein, Natalie. *Silk designs of the eighteenth century: In the collection of the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, with a complete catalogue* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1990), p. 37.
6. Poni, Carlo. 'Fashion as flexible production: The strategies of the Lyons silk merchants in the eighteenth century', in *World of possibilities. Flexibility and mass production in western industrialization*, ed. Charles F. Sabel and Jonathan Zeitlin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. 37–74.
7. Rothstein, *Silk designs*, p. 47.
8. Rothstein, *Silk designs*, p. 22.
9. Jörg, Christiaan J. A. 'Chinese export silks for the Dutch in the 18th Century', *Transactions of the Oriental Ceramic Society* 73 (2010): 1–23 (p. 14). See also Shaw, '"Shipped"', p. 119.
10. Andersson, Gunilla. 'Broderad sidenlyx', in *Ostindiska Compagniet: affärer och föremål*, ed. Kristina Söderpalm, 2nd ed. (Göteborg: Göteborgs stadsmuseum, 2003), pp. 193–202; Sjöberg, Lars and Ursula Sjöberg. *Ostindiskt: kinesiskt porslin och Kinaintresset i Sverige under 1700-talet* (Stockholm: Norstedt, 2011), pp. 194–203.
11. Several global histories on the production and consumption have recently helped problematize the history of cotton, see for example *The spinning world, a global history of cotton textiles, 1200–1850*, ed. Giorgio Riello and Prasannan Parthasarathi (Oxford: OUP, 2011), and Riello, Giorgio. *Cotton: The fabric that made the modern world* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013).
12. Riello, Giorgio. 'Asian knowledge and the development of calico printing in Europe in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries', *Journal of Global History* 5.1 (2010): 1–28; Smith, Chloe Wigston. '"Callico Madams": Servants, consumption, and the calico crisis', *Eighteenth-Century Life* 31.2 (2007): 29–55.
13. Runefelt, Leif. *Att hasta mot undergången: anspråk, flyktighet, förställning i debatten om konsumtion i Sverige 1730–1830* (Lund: Nordic Academic Press, 2015), pp. 227–239 (227, 234).
14. de Vries, Jan. *The industrious revolution: Consumer behavior and the household economy, 1650 to the Present* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), pp. 144–149.
15. Sewell, William H. 'The empire of fashion and the rise of capitalism in eighteenth-century France', *Past & Present* 206.1 (2010): 81–120; Elizabeth, Currie. 'Diversity and design in the Florentine tailoring trade, 1560–1620', in *The material renaissance*, ed. Michelle O'Malley and Evelyn Welch (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2008), pp. 154–173 (160).
16. Fairchilds, Cissie. 'The production and marketing of populuxe goods in eighteenth-century Paris', in *Consumption and the world of goods*, ed. John Brewer and Roy Porter (London, New York: Routledge, 1993), pp. 228–248.
17. Van Dyke, Paul A. 'Weaver Suckin and the Canton silk trade 1750–1781', *Review of Culture*, International Edition No. 29 (2009): 105–119 (p. 107).
18. 28 Aug. 1737, Neg. prot. Vol. 1117, and 12 Sept. 1742, Neg. prot. Vol. 1121, DAC, RAC.
19. 24 Sept. 1756, Neg. prot. Vol. 1136, DAC, RAC.
20. 'Nankins Meuble Stoffen' (lot 205–210); Nankins Stoffen (lot 211–224, 234, 280–286, 295,370); 'Nankins Sounkin' (lot 287, 430) in Försäljningskatalog Vol. 2, 1736, KA, RAS. The same catalogue also contains some 'Nankin

Pelong' (lot 311). Due to the variety of prices and dimensions I have excluded 'pelong' or 'peeling' in the calculations of the size of the Scandinavian silk cargo presented in Appendix 2.

21. See for example the piece of 'Nankins Paduasoy' put up for sale in 1753 (Lot 196/1536, Försäljningskatalog Vol. 13, 1753, KA, RAS).
22. pp. 70–71, Kas. bog 2210, DAC, RAC.
23. In the Scandinavian material the number of threads are frequently specified, however because it has been impossible to explain more precisely what the numbers refer to, this information has not been included. See also Lee-Whitman, 'The silk trade', pp. 24–25.
24. Van Dyke, 'Weaver'.
25. Van Dyke Paul A. *Merchants of Canton and Macao: Politics and strategies in eighteenth-century Chinese trade* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2011), p. 43.
26. Koninckx, Christian. *The first and second charters of the Swedish East India Company (1731–1766): A contribution to the maritime, economic and social history of north-western Europe in its relationships with the Far East* (Kortrijk: Van Ghemmert, 1980), pp. 227–228; Söderpalm, Kristina. 'Svenska Ost-Indiska Compagniet och den kinesiska vågen', in *Kina slott*, ed. Göran Alm (Stockholm: Byggförlaget/Kultur, 2002), pp. 264–284 (275).
27. Nyrop, C. *Niels Lunde Reiersen. Et mindeskrift* (Copenhagen, 1896), pp. 198–200.
28. Lots 31/455–48/472, Försäljningskatalog Vol. 7, 1745, KA, RAS (these goods were part of the rescued cargo from the ship *Göteborg*).
29. Jörg, 'Chinese', p. 14, n. 24.
30. p. 65, Kas. bog 2209b, DAC, RAC.
31. For example in 1745, 101 pieces (lot 159/1622–162/1625) of bed damask of ordinary width were put up for sale; following these were 99 'narrow' bed damask (lot 163/1626–166/1629). Försäljningskatalog Vol. 7, 1745, KA, RAS. When the narrowness is defined it varies; for example a lot of 100 poisee damask sold in Gothenburg 1742 is specified as one ell, or 59.3 cm; another 'narrow' damask put up for sale in 1745 had a width specified as 13/16 of an ell or 48 cm (Lot 19–24, Försäljningskatalog Vol. 3, 1742, KA, RAS, and lot 410/1873–411/1874, Försäljningskatalog Vol. 7, 1745, KA, RAS).
32. Lot 78–102, Försäljningskatalog Vol. 2. 1736, KA, RAS.
33. Lot. 144/1027–165/1048, Försäljningskatalog Vol. 10, 1748, KA, RAS. The eleven pattern numbers listed for the 300 bed damask pieces listed in the same catalogue (lot 93/3368–108/3383) are more of an anomaly. The trend is for a more limited pattern range. For example six pattern numbers are listed when 378 pieces of bed damask were sold in 1742 (lot 104/2429–116/2442; Försäljningskatalog Vol. 4, 1742, KA, RAS). One pattern is referred to when 200 bed damask pieces were put up for sale in 1745 (section selling goods from *Göteborg*, lot 24/1172–33/1181, Försäljningskatalog Vol. 7, 1745, KA, RAS), and when 140 bed damasks are sold in 1749 (lot 1/1191–5/1195, Försäljningskatalog Vol. 11, 1749, KA, RAS).
34. §16 (Instructions), signed 28 Dec. 1735, Neg. prot. Vol. 1116; § 17 (Instructions), signed 9 Jan. 1737, Neg. prot. Vol. 1117; § 16 (Instructions), signed 11 Jan. 1738, Neg. prot. Vol. 1118, AKA, RAC.
35. 28 Aug. 1737, Neg. prot. Vol. 1117, AKA, RAC.
36. Lot 1/884–143/1026, Försäljningskatalog Vol. 10, 1748, KA, RAS.

37. See for example lot 1/3276–92/3367, Försäljningskatalog Vol. 10, 1748, KA, RAS.
38. pp. 62–64, Kas. bog 2209b, DAC, RAC.
39. Lot 61–149, pp. Kkk2-Lll2, No. 95, Auction protocoll 22 Sept. 1756, Vol. 232, Den Esmarckske arkivaflevering, 1727–1757, A. G. Moltkes protocol, solgte ladninger i Asiatiske Kompagni, DCK, RAC.
40. pp. 32–35, Kas. bog 2209b, DAC, RAC.
41. Magnusson, Thomas. *'… till rikets oboteliga skada och deras winning …': konflikten om Ostindiska kompaniet 1730–1747* (Göteborg: Historiska institutionen, Göteborgs universitet, 2008), pp. 129–130.
42. Lee-Whitman, 'The silk trade', pp. 31–32.
43. Ulväng, Marie. *Klädekonomi och klädkultur: böndernas kläder i Härjedalen under 1800-talet* (Möklinta: Gidlund, 2012), p. 99. See also Aldman, Lili-Annè. *En merkantilistisk början: Stockholms textila import 1720–1738* (Uppsala: Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis, 2008), pp. 206–207. Aldman has found 'East Indian' damask made from linen, wool and silk. In the case of the SEIC and DAC China trade I have found no references to other materials than silk in references to damask. Note also that 'damask' sometimes was used as a shorthand for poisee damask. The sales catalogue from 1747 (Försäljningskatalog Vol. 8, KA, RAS) lists 2 869 damask pieces in the lot descriptions but no poisee damask. In the summary at the beginning of the catalogue 2,400 poisee damask pieces are listed, however. In this case I have chosen to categorize the 2,869 damask pieces as 'Damask other' (see Appendix 2).
44. p. 38, Kas. bog 2193, DAC, RAC.
45. §17 (Instructions), signed 3 Jan. 1739, in K.E. bog Vol. 184, DAC, RAC. See also 'Poisee Sattiner' Lot 51/1241–54/1244, Försäljningskatalog 10, 1749, KA, RAS.
46. §16 (Instructions), signed 20 Dec. 1754, K.E. bog Vol. 187; p. 61, Kas. bog 2209b, DAC, RAC; lot 56/792–58/793, Försäljningskatalog Vol. 9, 1748, KA, RAS.
47. A summary of these orders, made between 1707 and 1750, can be found under 'China' http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/arts/history/ghcc/eac/databases/english/ (accessed 3 July 2015).
48. Lot 157–158, under the heading 'Exportations Wahren', in Försäljningskatalog Vol. 3, 1742, KA, RAS. Lot 499/2824–504/2829, Försäljningskatalog Vol. 4, 1742, KA, RAS.
49. §16 (Instructions), signed 11 Jan. 1754, Neg. prot. Vol. 1134; §16 (Instructions), signed 20 Dec. 1754, Copibog Vol. 187, AKA, RAC.
50. 18–19 Aug. 1755, Neg. prot. Vol. 1135, DAC, RAC.
51. 24 Sept. 1756, Neg. prot. Vol. 1136, DAC, RAC.
52. *The Canton-Macao dagregisters 1763*, translation and annotations by Paul Van Dyke, revisions by Cynthia Viallé (Macao: Instituto Cultural do Governo da R.A.E. de Macau, 2008), p. 37.
53. §30 (Instructions), signed 9 Jan. 1737, Neg. prot. Vol. 1117, DAC, RAC.
54. Lee-Whitman, 'The silk trade', pp. 31–32.
55. p. 38, Kas. bog 2193, DAC, RAC.
56. p. 69, Kas. bog 2209b, DAC, RAC.
57. Lot. 173/1513–195/1535, Försäljningskatalog Vol. 13, 1752, KA, RAS. There are also occasional references to taffeta for lining ('Foder-Tafter'); see, for example, 164/3150, Försäljningskatalog 10, 1749, KA, RAS.

58. Cumming, V., C.W. Cunnington, and P. E. Cunnington, ed. *The dictionary of fashion history* (Oxford: Berg, 2010), p. 263. Compare however with Aldman, *En merkantilistisk,* p. 220.
59. Lot 124/2574–169/2116, Försäljningskatalog Vol. 19, 1757, KA, RAS.
60. Lot 95/2545–123/2573, Försäljningskatalog Vol. 19, 1757, KA, RAS.
61. p. 75, Kas. bog 2209b, DAC, RAC.
62. Lot 274/2595–275/2600, Försäljningskatalog 4, 1742, KA, RAS.
63. Lot A-M (no J), Försäljningskatalog Vol. 2, 1736, KA, RAS.
64. Lee-Whitman, 'The silk trade', pp. 33–37. Note taffeta could sometimes be used as wallpaper, in 1759 for example four pieces of painted and cut taffeta 'for wall paper' were put up for sale (Lot 5/2220, Försäljningskatalog 21, 1759, KA, RAS).
65. *The dictionary of fashion history*, p. 263.
66. Lot. 103–130, Försäljningskatalog Vol. 1, 1733, KA, RAS. See also lot 30–41 in the handwritten section of the same catalogue, which refers to '338 Taften oder Pequins'.
67. Lot 266/1729–330/1793, Försäljningskatalog Vol. 7, 1745, KA, RAS. The second biggest taffeta consignments, 1,896 pieces sold in 1742, had similar dimensions, colour assortments and selling prices (Lot 204/2528–241/2566, Försäljningskatalog Vol. 4, 1742, KA, RAS). In the sale catalogue description of the latter references to number of threads are also included; in this case the taffeta pieces had six threads. The number of threads are frequently referred to in the posts listing taffeta textiles; differences in number of threads did have an impact on price. In 1736 taffeta with eight threads sold for ten per cent higher price than the batch with six, although in all other respects the goods was identical, according to the sales catalogue (Compare lot 144–148 with lot 149–153 in Försäljningskatalog Vol. 3, 1736, KA, RAS).
68. Compare pp. 38, 40, Kas. bog 2193, with p. 6 'General reigning' in Kas. bog 2196, DAC, RAC. While taffeta and pekin pieces measuring 13.54 m by 78 cm continued to be common in the Danish trade up until the end of the 1750s both longer *and* less wide pieces called pekin and taffeta were traded too. In a large consignment of pekin bought by the DAC in 1755, the 550 pieces were for example 16.04 m long, 71 cm wide, and had a weight of 1.058 kg, the same dimensions and weights as 100 pieces of narrow striped taffeta bought in 1757, see p. 70, Kas. bog 2209b, and p. 68, Kas. bog 2210, DAC, RAC.
69. For information on the EIC taffeta cargo see Lee-Whitman, 'The silk trade', pp. 34–35. Note also that Dutch silk weavers imitated Chinese silk weaving pieces with this width. When exported abroad they were sized by French customs who thought that they were illegal Chinese goods. Colenbrander, Sjoukje. *Zolang de weefkunst bloeit: zijdeweverijen in Amsterdam en Haarlem, 1585–1750,* Academisch proefschrift (Amsterstam: Gw: Instituut voor Cultuur en Geschiedenis, 2010), pp. 163–173.
70. Compare pp. 38, 40, Kas. bog 2193, with p. 6 'General reigning' in Kas. bog 2196, DAC, RAC. For the EIC imported taffeta cargo see Lee-Whitman, 'The silk trade', pp. 34–35.
71. p. 80, Kas. bog 2209a, DAC, RAC.
72. Lot 28/3574–30/3576, Försäljningskatalog Vol. 10, 1749, KA, RAS.
73. Lot 254/2579–263/3588, Försäljningskatalog Vol. 4, 1742, KA, RAS.

74. Rothstein, *Silk designs,* p. 291; Söderpalm, Kristina. 'Auktionen på den första lasten från Kina', in *Ostindiska Compagniet: affärer och föremål*, ed. Kristina Söderpalm, 2nd ed. (Göteborg: Göteborgs stadsmuseum, 2003), pp. 88–105 (97).
75. pp. 66, 67. 69, Kas. bog 2209b, DAC, RAC.
76. Lot 236–240, Försäljningskatalog Vol. 2, 1736, KA, RAS. Very occasionally taffeta and lustring pieces are presented as identical or near identical. In 1754 50 pieces put up for sale in Gothenburg are referred to as 'taffeta or lustring' (lot 143/1572–144/1574, Försäljningskatalog Vol. 15, 1754, KA, RAS). Below these have been listed as taffeta pieces.
77. Lot 20, end of Försäljningskatalog Vol. 1, 1733, KA, RAS.
78. Lee-Whitman, 'The silk trade', p. 30.
79. The pieces in the more expensive lot were also eight per cent heavier, maybe because of the embroidery work but probably due to the higher number of threads – twelve compared to ten in the cheaper version. See p. 5 (General reigning), Kas. bog 2195, KA, RAS; p. 67, Kas. bog 2210, DAC, RAS. There is an odd piece of 71 cm wide paduasoy listed in p. 39 Kas. bog 2208, DAC, RAC.
80. p. 67, Kas. bog 2210, DAC, RAS.
81. Lot 170/1053–207/1090, Försäljningskatalog Vol. 10, 1748, KA, RAS.
82. Lot 197/1660–215/1678, Försäljningskatalog Vol. 7, 1745, KA, RAS.
83. Lot 24, end of Försäljningskatalog Vol. 1, 1733, KA, RAS.
84. Lot 270/2595–275/2600, Försäljningskatalog 4, 1742, KA, RAS.
85. Morse quoted in Lee-Whitman, 'The silk trade', p. 28.
86. p. 38, Kas. bog 2193, DAC, RAC.
87. p. 5 (General reigning), Kas. bog 2195, KA, RAS.
88. Lot. 44–87, Försäljningskatalog Vol. 1, 1733, KA, RAS.
89. Lot 104/2121–116/2133, Försälningskatalog Vol. 13, 1752, KA, RAS.
90. Clemmensen and Mackeprang, *Kina,* pp. 129, 136–137, 142, 144.
91. Bresicus, Meike von. 'Worlds apart? Merchant, mariners, and the organization of the private trade in Chinese export wares in eighteenth-century Europe', in *Goods from the East. Trading Eurasia*, ed. Maxine Berg (Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan: Palgrave, 2015), pp. 168–182.
92. Kas. bog 2190, 2192–2195, 2197–2211, 2213–2214, 2216, DAC, RAC. On the Swedish royal silk cargo see Söderpalm, 'Svenska Ost-Indiska Compagniet och den kinesiska vågen', pp. 275–277.
93. Zahedieh, Nuala. *The capital and the colonies: London and the Atlantic economy, 1660–1700* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), pp. 177, 277.
94. Note that all goods referred to as satin have been included, although this sometimes referred to shorter and cheaper piece goods, similar to pelongs; see, for example, the satin cargo listed under lot 190/1530–194/1534, Försäljningskatalog 13, 1753, KA, RAS. Another type of good not included is textiles referred to as 'Gazes' (see for example lot 594, handwritten section of Försäljningskatalog Vol. 1, 1733, KA, RAS).
95. See Appendix 2 for exact numbers of pieces. This calculation is based on an average taffeta-pekin dimension of 12 m x 78 cm and the same for the poisee damask dimension of 16 m x 71 cm per piece. I would like to thank Annika Windahl-Ponten for providing me with estimations for amounts of fabric needed.

96. p. 39, Kas. bog 2208; 21 Aug. 1753, Neg. prot. Vol. 1132, DAC, RAC; Lot 1/1713–17/1729, Försäljningskatalog Vol. 15 1754, KA, RAS. Currency conversion rates from Koincksx, *The first,* p. 442.
97. Söderberg, Johan. 'Daily Wages of Unskilled Labourers 1540–1850', internet resource, http://www.riksbank.se/sv/Riksbanken/Forskning/Historisk-monetar-statistik/Loner/Dagsloner-for-hantlangare-i-Stockholm-15011850/2007 (accessed 5 July 2015).
98. Lot 1/884–143/1026, Försäljningskatalog Vol. 10, 1748, KA, RAS; Söderberg, 'Daily'.
99. Clifford & Sons to C. Irvine, 30/9/1747, IC, JFB Library, MUL.
100. See for example 26 Dec. 1737, 3, 8, 10 Dec. 1738, Neg. prot. Vol. 1117, DAC, RAC.
101. 'Special beregning of forkearing' dated 1 Dec. 1742, in Brevkopiebog 1738–1743, 1746, 1751, 1753–1758, Christen Jensen Lindencrone arkiv, RAC.
102. Söderpalm, 'Auction', p. 100. The company goods brought in 320,189 silver dollars.
103. Koincksx, *The first,* p. 326. Note however there were still silk pacotille goods being put up for sale in 1756, albeit in small quantities; see 26/2049–29/2052, Försäljningskatalog Vol. 18, 1756, KA, RAS.
104. Some years the Danish supercargoes struggled to purchase porcelain with 'new' patterns; see, for example, 14 Sept. 1752, Neg. prot. Vol. 1130, DAC, RAC.
105. Van Dyke, 'Weaver'.
106. §18:2 (Instructions), signed 28 Dec. 1735, Neg. prot. Vol. 1116, DAC, RAC.
107. Although price changes between seasons are noted down see for example 11 Jan. 1738, Neg. prot. Vol. 117, DAC RAC.
108. §28 (Instructions), signed 9 Jan. 1737, Neg. prot. Vol. 1117; §17 (Instructions), signed 30 Dec. 1741, Neg. prot. Vol. 1121; 28 Aug. 1751, Neg. prot. Vol. 1129, DAC, RAC.
109. 18 Oct. 1740, Neg. prot. Vol. 1119, DAC, RAC.
110. 28 Aug. 1737, Neg. prot. Vol. 1117; 27 Aug. 1751, Neg. prot. Vol. 1129; 28 July, Neg. prot. Vol. 1130, 27 Nov. 1753, Neg. prot. Vol. 1132, DAC. RAC. See also Van Dyke, 'Weaver', p. 111 for contracts and delivery times.
111. 29 Oct. 1754, Neg. prot. Vol. 1134, DAC, RAC.
112. 16 Nov. 1751, Neg. prot. Vol. 1129; §18.2 (Instructions), signed 7 Dec. 1748, Neg. prot. Vol. 1127, DAC, RAC.
113. 16 Sept. 1753, Neg. prot. Vol. 1132, DAC, RAC.
114. Jörg, 'Chinese', p. 12.
115. The total investment equalled 1,064,494 silver dollars, of which 218,270 were spent on silk, 640,165 on tea and 100,786 on porcelain (Kjellberg, Sven, T. *Svenska ostindiska compagnierna 1731–1813: kryddor, te, porslin, siden* (Malmö: Allhem, 1975), p. 64.
116. Van Dyke, 'Weaver', p. 109.
117. 21 Nov. 1751, Neg. prot. Vol. 1129. See also 19 Dec. 1753, Neg. prot. Vol. 1132, DAC, RAC.
118. 20, 21, 23, 24 Dec. 1755, Neg. prot. Vol. 1135, DAC, RAC.
119. 15 Aug. 1755, Neg. prot. Vol. 1135; 23 Sept. 1756, Neg. prot. Vol. 1136, DAC, RAC; Van Dyke, 'Weaver', pp. 107–108.

120. C. Irvine to T. Wilkieson, 31/12/1744, C. Irvine's Letter book December 1744 to 13 January 1748, IC, JFB, MUL.
121. Schou, Jacob Henric. *Chronologisk register over de kongelige forordninger og aabne breve, som fra aar 1670 af ere udkomne, tillige med et nøiagtigt udtog af de endnu gieldene, for saavidt samme i almindelighet angaae undersaatterne i Danmark og Norge*, Vol. IV (Copenhagen: Sebastian Popp, 1795) p. 310 (19 Feb. 1753). See also Engelhardt Mathiassen, Tove. 'Tekstil-import til Danmark cirka 1750–1850', *Den gamle By, Danmarks Købstadsmuseum* (1996), pp. 80–104 (94), and Idem. 'Luxurious textiles in Danish Christening garments: Fashionable encounters across social and geographical borders', in *Fashionable encounters: Perspectives and trends in textile and dress in the early modern Nordic world*, ed. Tove Engelhardt Mathiassen and others (Oxford: Oxbow Books, 2014), pp. 183–200.
122. Schou, *Chronologisk*, Vol. IV, p. 259. This also explains why the Danish supercargoes were instructed to make sure wrought silk bought by the DAC was stamped in Canton with their company mark. On the use of stamps provided by the DACs, see for example §29 (Instructions), signed 28 Dec. 1735, Neg. prot. Vol. 1116, DAC, RAC.
123. 23 Sept. 1756, Neg. prot. Vol. 1136, DAC, RAC.
124. Glamann, Kristof. 'The Danish Asiatic Company, 1732–1772', *Scandinavian Economic History Review* 8.2 (1960): 109–149 (pp. 141–142).
125. Müller, Leos. 'The Swedish East India trade and international markets: Re-exports of teas, 1731–1813', *Scandinavian Economic History Review* 51.3 (2003): 28–44 (pp. 35–37).
126. Kjellberg, Sven T. *Svenska ostindiska compagnierna 1731–1813: kryddor, te, porslin, siden* (Malmö: Allhem, 1975), p. 66.
127. Nyström, Johan Fredrik. *De svenska ostindiska kompanierna: historisk-statistisk framställning* (Göteborg: D.F. Bonniers boktryckeri, 1883).
128. Söderpalm, 'Auktionen', p. 100.
129. See Charles Irvine's correspondence with George Clifford & Sons; Jean Cossart & Isaac Bouwer; Thomas Wilkieson; Pye & Cruikshank, George Ouchterlony, and Edmond Roth. On the European market for silk and European silk smuggling see Farrell, William. 'Silk and globalisation in eighteenth-century London: Commodities, people and connections c.1720–1800' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of London, Birkbeck College, 2014), pp. 147–194.
130. C. Irvine to Clifford & Sons, 1 (?)/9/1747 ('off Dover') C. Irvine's Letter book December 1744 to 13 January 1748, IC, JFB, MUL.
131. C. Irvine to Cossart & Bouwer, 9/9/1747 C. Irvine's Letter book Dec. 1744 to 13 January 1748, IC, JFB. See also Irvine to Pye & Cruikshank, 9/9/1747 and C. Irvine to Clifford & Sons 9/9/1747, C. Irvine's Letter book December 1744 to 13 January 1748, IC, JFB, MUL.
132. Clifford & Sons to C. Irvine, 30/9/1747, IC, JFB Library, MUL.
133. Clifford & Sons to C. Irvine, 25/11/1747, IC, JFB Library, MUL.
134. This number excludes handkerchiefs and nankeens, which could refer to both cotton and silk textiles. A summary of the EIC orders made between 1707 and 1750 can be found under 'China' http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/arts/history/ghcc/eac/databases/english/ (accessed 3 July 2015).
135. Jörg, 'Chinese', p. 19.

136. Van Dyke, 'Weaver', p. 108.
137. I would like to thank Vibe Maria Martens for making this suggestion.
138. Rasmussen, Jens Rahbek. 'The Danish monarchy as a composite state', in *European identities, cultural diversity and integration in Europe since 1700*, ed. Nils Arne Sørensen (Odense: Odense University Press, 1995), pp. 23–36.
139. Magnusson, Lars. 'Merkantilismens teori och praktik: utrikeshandel och manufakturpolitik i sitt idéhistoriska sammanhang', in *Till salu: Stockholms textila handel och manufaktur 1722–1846*, ed. Klas Nyberg (Stockholm: Stads- och kommunhistoriska institutet, 2010), pp. 27–45; Nyberg, Klas. 'Stockholms handlande borgerskap och manufakturister', in *Till salu: Stockholms textila handel och manufaktur 1722–1846*, ed. Klas Nyberg (Stockholm: Stads- och kommunhistoriska institutet, 2010), pp. 47–62; Aldman, *En merkantilistisk*, pp. 284–286.
140. Hechscher Eli, F. 'De svenska manufakturerena under 1700-talet', *Ekonomisk Tidskrift* 39 (1937): 152–221 (p. 156).
141. Magnusson, '*… till rikets*', pp. 75, 113, 120.
142. Magnusson, '*… till rikets*', pp. 71, 113.
143. Magnusson, '*… till rikets*', pp. 69, 119, see also 78.
144. Magnusson, '*… till rikets*', pp. 74, 119.
145. Magnusson, '*… till rikets*', p. 133.
146. Jørgensen, J. B. Bro. *Industriens historie i Danmark*. 2, *Tiden 1730–1820* (Copenhagen: Selskabet for udgivelse af kilder til dansk historie, 1975), pp. 115, 185–186; Becker-Christensen, Henrik. *Dansk toldhistorie. 2, Protektionisme og reformer: 1660–1814* (Copenhagen: Toldhistorisk selskab, 1988), pp. 337–448.
147. Jørgensen, *Industriens,* pp. 160–120; Kærgård, Niels, Bo Sandelin and Arild Sæther. 'Scandinavia, Economics', in *The new Palgrave dictionary of economics*, ed. Steven N. Durlauf and Lawrence E. Blume, 2nd ed. (The New Palgrave Dictionary of Economics Online: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008). http://www.dictionaryofeconomics.com/article?id=pde2008_S000520> doi:10.1057/9780230226203.1479 (accessed 12 July 2015).
148. Pontoppidan, Erik. *Oeconomiske balance eller uforgribelige overslag paa Dannemarks naturlige og borgerlige formue til at giöre sine inbyggere lyksalige, saavidt som de selb ville skiönne derpaa og benytte sig deraf* (Copenhagen: printed by Andreas Hartwig Godiche, 1759), p. 267.
149. A less ideologically driven reflection on the segmentation of the Swedish silk market can be found in Charles Irvine's correspondence. In 1754 Arthur Abercomby wrote on the pending ban of Chinese silk: 'I am sorry there is such a torrent against the Comp. I dare say that any Silks that are made in the Country must come dear, & since a great deal of French Silks that will be smuggled in, for its impossible that they can be supplied by their own manufactories or they must be a really improved since I left the country'. (A. Abercromby to C. Irvine, 8/3/1754, IC, JFB Library, MU). The provision of French silk on the Swedish market, and English on the Danish and Norwegian, have been registered elsewhere by historians working on early-modern textiles; see Rothstein, *Silk designs*, p. 24 and Kjellberg, Anne. 'English 18th-century silks in Norway', in *18th-century silks: The industries of England and Northern Europe*, ed. Regula Schorta (Riggisberg: Abegg-Stiftung Riggisberg, 2000), pp. 135–145.

150. 'Den 28. Sept. Angående inrikes tillwärkade siden-warors friare bruk, än de förre förordningar mot yppighet innehålla'. (from 28/9/1736) in *Utdrag utur alle ifrån 1729. års slut utkomne publique handlingar, placater, förordningar, resolutioner ock publicationer som riksens styrsel samt inwärtes hushållning och författningar i gemen, jämwäl ock Stockholms stad i synnerhet, angå med nödige citationer af alle paralel-stellen, som utwisa hwad ändringar tid efter annan i ett eller annat mål kunnat wara giorde. Hwarförutan de uti desse handlingar åberopade äldre acters innehåll korteligen anföres, så ofta nödigt warit. Följande efterst wid hwar del ett fullkomligt orda-register öfwer des innehåll D. 2, Til år 1740* (Stockholm: printed by Lorentz Ludewig Grefings, 1746), pp. 1302–1303.
151. 'Förnyad förordning emot en och annan yppighet' (from 20/1/1746) in *Utdrag utur alle ifrån 1729. års slut utkomne publique handlingar, placater, förordningar, resolutioner ock publicationer som riksens styrsel samt inwärtes hushållning och författningar i gemen, jämwäl ock Stockholms stad i synnerhet, angå med nödige citationer af alle paralel-stellen, som utwisa hwad ändringar tid efter annan i ett eller annat mål kunnat wara giorde. Hwarförutan de uti desse handlingar åberopade äldre acters innehåll korteligen anföres, så ofta nödigt warit. Följande efterst wid hwar del ett fullkomligt orda-register öfwer des innehåll D. 3, Til 1747 års slut* (Stockholm: printed by Lorentz Ludewig Grefings, 1749), pp. 2274–2282.
152. Lönnqvist, Bo. 'Siden, sammet, trasa, lump … Klädestilar i Helsingfors på 1740-talet', in *Narika 1981*, ed. L. Arkio and M.-L. Lampinen (Helsinki: Helsingin kaupunginmuseo, 1982), pp. 98–122 (99–100, 105, 107, 110, 112, 113).
153. Lönnqvist, 'Siden', p. 120.
154. 'Förteckning på siden kläder af klara couleurer som i följe af kongl. förordningen, blifwit hos följande af academie staten stämplade', upprättad 14–16 april 1740, in E IIIa Vol. 39, 1740, pp. 1505–1515, Uppsala universitets arkiv. I would like to thank Annika Windahl Ponten for sharing the content of this list with me.
155. 'Kongl. Maj:ts förordning emot yppighet och överflöd' (26/6/1766) in *Utdrag utur alle ifrån 1729. års slut utkomne publique handlingar, placater, förordningar, resolutioner ock publicationer som riksens styrsel samt inwärtes hushållning och författningar i gemen, jämwäl ock Stockholms stad i synnerhet, angå med nödige citationer af alle paralel-stellen, som utwisa hwad ändringar tid efter annan i ett eller annat mål kunnat wara giorde. Hwarförutan de uti desse handlingar åberopade äldre acters innehåll korteligen anföres, så ofta nödigt warit. Följande efterst wid hwar del ett fullkomligt orda-register öfwer des innehåll* D. 8, Til 1767 års slut (Stockholm: Kongl. Tryckeriet, 1795), pp. 131–137. For a longer and more recent discussion of Swedish sumptuary legislation see Runefelt, *Att hasta,* pp. 187–202.
156. Engelhardt Mathiassen, 'Luxurious', pp. 196–197.
157. Nyrop, *Niels*, pp. 125, 198–200. Compare §14 in the DAC 1732 charter with §14 in the DAC 1772 charter in Feldbæk, Ole, ed. *Danske handelskompagnier 1616–1843: oktrojer og interne ledelsesregler* (Copenhagen: Selskabet for Udgivelser af Kilder til Dansk Historie, 1986), pp. 98–99, 140–141.
158. Kjellberg, 'English', p. 144. Note these similarities in policies are not representative of the divide between Danish and Swedish economic thinking and practice which took place toward the end of the eighteenth-century. (Becker-Christensen, *Dansk*, p. 470).

159. Nordiska museet. *1700-tals textil: Anders Berchs samling i Nordiska museet* (Stockholm: Nordiska museet, 1990) pp. 178–185.
160. Jörg, 'Chinese', pp. 15–16, fig. 13–14.
161. See, for example, transcribed EIC order lists going to Bengal, Bombay and Madras for colour terms used in the trade with India, see under 'English' http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/arts/history/ghcc/eac/databases/ (accessed 3 July 2015).
162. 'Turchin' and 'Thurchino' were used in German-Italian silk trade in the late seventeenth century referring to blue shades. Jones, William Jervis. *German colour terms: A study in their historical evolution from earliest times to the present* (Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing, 2013), p. 122.
163. 'mazarine, adj. and n.2'. Oxford English Dictionary Online (accessed 17 November 2013).
164. See E/3/103/08, excel sheet 'China' available from http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/arts/history/ghcc/eac/databases/english/(accessed 3 July 2015); Lot 160, Försäljnings-katalog Vol. 1, 1733, KA, RAS.
165. Clifford & Sons to C. Irvine, 30/9/1747, IC, JFB Library, MUL.
166. Jones, *German,* pp. 121–124; Bergström, Eva. *Den blå handen: om Stockholms färgare 1650–1900* (Stockholm: Nordiska museets förlag, 2013), pp. 46–47.
167. Bergström, *Den blå,* p. 32.
168. Lee-Whitman, 'The silk trade'; Shaw, '"Shipped"'.
169. See for example Lot 1/736, Försäljningskatalog 9, 1748, Lot 160, Försäljnings-katalog Vol. 1, 1733, KA, RAS.
170. See transcribed records of the EIC orders from between 1707 and 1750, under the label 'China' http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/arts/history/ghcc/eac/databases/english/ (accessed 3 July 2015).
171. Nordiska museet, *1700-tals*, p. 179.
172. Finlay, Robert. 'Weaving the rainbow: Visions of color in world history', *Journal of World History* 18.4 (2007): 383–431 (p. 399).
173. Lot 17, hand written section, Försäljningskatalog Vol. 1 1733, KA, RAS.
174. Lot 117/2242 Försäljningskatalog Vol. 4, 1742; lot 95/560, Försäljnings-katalog 1745, Vol. 7; lot 222/4819 Försäljningskatalog Vol. 11, 1749, KA, RAS.
175. §16 (Instructions), signed 20 Dec. 1754, Copibog Vol. 187, AKA, RAC.
176. Bergström, *Den blå,* p. 40.
177. 44-3d, 45-3dl, Invoice for goods, *Calmar*, Canton, 18 and 20 Jan. 1745, C. Irvine's shipping documents, 1733–1759, IC, JFB Library, MUL.
178. §18:2 (Instructions), signed 28 Dec. 1735, Neg. prot. Vol. 1116 and §18:1 (Instructions), signed 3 Jan. 1743, Neg. prot. Vol. 1121, DAC, RAC.
179. 2 March 1741, Neg. prot. Vol. 1120, DAC, RAC.
180. Lot 169/3115 and lot 218/4815 Försäljningskatalog Vol. 11, 1749; lot 160, Försäljningskatalog Vol. 1, 1733; lot 3/1672 Försäljningskatalog Vol. 12, 1751; lot 76/811, Försäljningskatalog Vol. 9, 1748; Lot 400, Försäljnings-katalog Vol. 2, 1736, KA, RAS.
181. Ying-Hsing, Sung. *Chinese technology in the seventeenth century*, translated by E-tu Zen Sun & Shiou-chuan Sun (Minneapolis: Dover publications, 1966), p. 74.
182. Van Dyke, 'Weaver', p. 110.
183. Shaw, '"Shipped"', p. 124.

184. 100 bed damask pieces in yellow, ash grey, sky blue, light green, grass green, dark blue and crimson (Lot 1–5, Försäljningskatalog Vol. 1, 1733, KA, RAS); 495 bed damask pieces in crimson, scarlet, jonquil, light green, dark green, yellow, sky blue, light blue and green (Lot 78–102, Försäljningskatalog Vol. 2. 1736, KA, RAS).
185. Mitchell, David M. '"My purple will be too sad for that melancholy room": Furnishings for interiors in London and Paris, 1660–1735', *Textile History* 40.1 (2009): 3–28.
186. Lot 204/2528–241/2566, Försäljningskatalog Vol. 4, 1742, KA, RAS.
187. Lot. 103–130, Försäljningskatalog Vol. 1, 1733, KA, RAS.
188. 26 February 1741, Neg. prot. Vol. 1120, DAC, RAC.
189. Rothstein, *Silk designs,* p. 24.
190. Aldman, *En merkantilistisk*, pp. 151–152.
191. I would like to thank Ann Grönhammar, curator at Livrustkammaren, Stockholm, for suggesting this to me.
192. p. 38, Kas. bog 2193, DAC, RAC.
193. Van Dyke, 'Weaver', pp. 107, 109. On red trends in earlier imports of Swedish textiles, see Aldman, *En merkantilistisk*, pp. 113–114.
194. Bergström, *Den blå*, p. 32.
195. 19 Aug. 1766, Neg. prot. Vol. 1135, DAC, RAC.
196. Lot 2133–2138, Försäljningskatalog 8, 1747, KA, RAS.
197. 27 July 1752 Neg. prot. Vol. 1130, DAC, RAC.
198. 26 Feb. 1741, Neg. prot. Vol. 1120, DAC, RAC.
199. Irvine to Clifford & Sons, 1(?)/9/1747 ('off Dover'), C. Irvine's Letter book December 1744 to 13 January 1748, IC, JFB, MUL.
200. Lot 1/884–143/1026, Försäljningskatalog Vol. 10, 1748, KA, RAS.
201. §16 (Instructions), signed 28 Dec. 1735, Neg. prot. Vol. 1116, DAC, RAC.
202. Aldman, Lili-Annè. 'Customers and markets for "new" textiles in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Sweden', in *Selling textiles in the long eighteenth century: Comparative perspectives from Western Europe*, ed. Jon Stobart and Bruno Blondé (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), pp. 46–66 (61).

4
Transferring and Substituting Tea and Colours

Inventing Canton

Late seventeenth-century accounts originating from the Philippines describe the province of Kuang-tung, (today's Guangdong) as having a population of four million people and 60,000 looms producing wrought silk exported across the world.[1] What the Europeans called Canton (today Guangzhou) is estimated to have had a population of 600,000; this large city was feeding off the regional (Guangdong) economy of sericulture and silk weaving as well as sugar, tea and tobacco production.[2] As maritime trade between China and Europe came to converge in Canton in the first half of the eighteenth century its port became the staple place gathering all tea, silk and porcelain destined for export via European ships. Goods arrived at the tea and porcelain warehouses from East Central China, carried by human caravans across mountains, and along rivers on boats.[3] Located in the harbour the warehouses were one of only a few places the Europeans were allowed to visit. The walled-in area, foreign quarters, within which Europeans were supposed to stay, contained the East India companies' factories. Aside from shops and houses kept by the Chinese merchants, who also had dwellings in the city, there were workshops where silk, wallpaper, furniture, porcelain and other goods were embellished with paint, needle work, mother of pearl and lacquer.[4]

Canton became an important reference point in eighteenth-century Swedish perceptions of China's economic geography. A 'model-village' named Kanton was established near Stockholm on the east coast of Sweden. At its height in 1766 its handful of workshops, specializing in white-smithery, silk, socks, ribbon and lace manufacturing, employed forty people. Experiments in sericulture had started in the 1750s,

assisted by a French specialist employed to care for the mulberry plantations. While some raw silk was produced *in situ* the Kanton manufacturers of wrought silk also needed to import material from China and France.[5]

Next to Chinese Canton Swedish Kanton shrinks into insignificance. However, when considered in a north European context the Swedish model-village becomes more prominent. Kanton reflects the widespread early eighteenth-century fascination with China in Europe. Chinoiserie was the creation of a European imagination, based on idealized and invented notions of life on the other side of the Eurasian continent. Like many other–large scale forms of Chinoiserie Kanton had strong connections with a royal house. Kanton was created next to a Chinese pavilion pleasure palace which the queen, Louisa Ulrika (1720–1782), had received as a birthday gift in 1753. Both Kanton and 'Kina slott' were located on the royal estate of Drottningholm, also the site of Drottningholm's palace, a royal palace originally built in the late sixteenth century. Chinese luxury products, particularly silk, were of great interest to the queen Louisa Ulrika and her husband Adolf Frederick (1710–1771). The same year the queen received her Chinese pleasure palace she presented samples of raw silk to the Swedish Royal Academy of Sciences, produced by worms she had personally nursed.[6]

To Louisa Ulrika, the sister of the Prussian king Fredrik I, notions of Chinese luxury production were also closely connected with silk and porcelain manufacturing in German lands, often established within micro-economies on estates owned by the many principalities that governed the area.[7] But, as Arnold Barton has pointed out, Kanton was also a typical mid-eighteenth-century Swedish economic project, similarly organized and funded as many other workshops dedicated to producing goods, which otherwise would have needed to be imported from abroad. These workshops, often run with the help of expertise from abroad, operated outside the control of guilds but received grants, privileges and monopolies from the state, which also regulated them. Not all workshops were concerned with textiles. Tobacco, paper, marble, porcelain and glass production were also protected and supported. While the weaving capacity of Kanton, which operated eight looms, was minuscule compared with the region within which its namesake in China was situated, it was the same size as Turku (Åbo), the biggest town in Finland, situated in the eastern part of the Swedish realm.[8]

Due to both royal patronage and governmental support Kanton flourished for a few years. Its downturn corresponded with a general shift in

political power and political economic thinking, which came to affect state-subsidised production across Sweden, including the more famous Alingsås workshop. Established in western Sweden by 1724, this became one of the first centres for early eighteenth century cotton-printing, as well as many other lines of production. Jonas Alströmer (1685–1761), the founder of the works, was well connected to the political elite of the time and received substantial financial support for the business, in spite of consistently poor results.[9] Sweden was run by either of two semi-political parties, the Caps and the Hats, during much of the period between 1719 and 1772. The latter were keen supporters of state subsidized industries. After they gained power in 1738 Alingsås and other workshops expanded greatly. But just as production capacity in Kanton peaked, in 1766, Sweden experienced an economic crisis. A diet was also meeting in Stockholm, as it was ending a new party came to govern Sweden, the Caps, and with it came a radical shift in economic politics.[10]

While Alingsås and Kanton rapidly declined after 1766, other early-modern European industries producing textiles made to substitute Asian goods were more successful. The ban on the import of printed and painted cotton textiles from India in early-eighteenth-century Britain is perhaps the most famous example of this type of successful import substitution. Technologies instrumental in establishing a British cotton production evolved out of it, paving the way for the industry to take a centre place in the global economy of the nineteenth century.

The British calico-ban, as well as the 1754 ban on Chinese silk consumption in Sweden discussed in the previous chapter, both rested on early-modern economic theory that argued for surplus in foreign trade and self-reliance. The goal of a state was therefore to export as much as possible, and to provide for the population with domestic resources. Inter-state trade was regarded as a zero-sum game; a national economy could only grow by taking over other states' markets or by colonizing new areas. In Sweden these ideas, often collectively referred to as mercantilism, replaced earlier economic policies which encouraged import and discouraged export; the aim was to secure the provision of goods essential to the state and its subjects.[11]

The history of 'mercantilism', a late eighteenth-century label for early-modern ideas used by Adam Smith and other critically-minded economic thinkers, is full of examples drawn from British and French experience. It also reflects an historical reality, the English political economy and how it was expressed in institutions and legislation, providing one prototype on which Scandinavian policies were modelled.

The English Navigation Acts, dating back to the second half of the seventeenth century, restructured the Atlantic maritime trade by stipulating among other things that only ships and crew that were English, including subjects living in America, were allowed to engage in trade bringing goods between, and to, parts of the English realm. The Acts, which hit the Dutch Atlantic trade particularly badly, were copied in Denmark and Sweden, most notably in the Swedish 'Produktplakatet' from 1724.[12]

The experiences of other continental states and economies also influenced the Scandinavian political economy. Cameralism, while part of the broad school of mercantilism, also incorporated viewpoints coloured by the experience of landlocked states and became an important reference point. One backdrop to cameralism was the struggle of small German speaking states to compete with expansive seaborne ones, such as the Dutch Republic, France and Great Britain. Cameralism, a name deriving from 'camera' as in treasure chamber, indicating its connections to German fiscal theory, was central in the promotion of domestic inventories with the aim of exploring natural wealth at home. One early impetus was the notion of the great silver resources of Latin America and the idea that divine providence would not have allowed for an asymmetrical global distribution of wealth. Out of this evolved a more acute interest in mining and mineralogy in Central Europe. The latter subject was only one of the branches of natural history employed in cameralist projects. Early-modern European medicine suggested, for example, that domestically sourced medicinal ingredients, rather than exotic ones imported from abroad, provided the best cures. It only needed botanists to find them.[13]

Early-modern natural historians from Europe did not restrict their search for useful and lucrative plants to domestic territories, however; the same knowhow could be used for exploring resources abroad and overseas, as European influence expanded. Such exploration could of course also be legitimized from the point of view of the home state, as plants or animals could be brought back to Europe, or to overseas colonies, and in different ways be used to enrich the economy of the motherland. The early-modern period is full of examples of plant transfers, some of which came to have significant global effects.[14] Both coffee and sugar originated in Asia but did not stay there; plants of both species made their way to the Atlantic world where together with tobacco they provided the backbone of the slave economies in the Caribbean and American colonies. While the early-modern diffusion of some

plants and crops reflects on unintentional, or only partly intended, ecological exchanges, other relocations, especially in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, mirrored articulated political plans and projects. As relocation and acclimatization experts, natural historians came to engage both in the practical work of transporting and nursing plants, and the economic discourse surrounding it.[15]

The focal points in this chapter are political economy and natural history, import substitution and plant transfer. We shall return to hot drinks and the visual impact of Asian textiles, which provide a parallel history to the Scandinavian import, re-export and domestic consumption of tea and silk. The histories of tea drinking and textile dyeing will not only provide an alternative history about the effect of the trade between China and Scandinavia, but also allow us to move outside the framework of the middle third of the eighteenth century, enabling us to follow different chronologies and geographies than have hitherto been explored. In the same way the comparison of eighteenth-century Guangzhou in China with Kanton in Sweden has helped us measure the differences in scale across the globe; these histories will help us see global change across time.

The first section of this chapter is not only focused on how the Asian trade impacted upon natural history, through attempts to transfer tea bushes from China to Sweden, but also on its legacy: how this project linked up with scholarly developments in Europe and worldwide. The second part is concerned with the sourcing of dye material in the northerly Scandinavian landscape, dyes which helped replicate the colours on imported textiles from Asia and elsewhere. In both cases the main focus of attention is on developments in Sweden, which was a hot house for natural history in the eighteenth century. The scholarly culture to which natural history belonged was, however, geographically dispersed around the Baltic Sea. In this respect some of the conclusions made below are relevant for northern Europe more generally.[16]

Kings tea and Cape tea

The thousands of tons of tea imported by the Danish and the Swedish East India companies reflect a fundamental change in European consumption. Chinese tea, originally thought of as medicinal, became an everyday beverage to millions of Europeans in the eighteenth century. Tea was of course only one among several new exotic drinks; hot chocolate and coffee were the two other major additions to the early-modern

non-alcoholic range of refreshing drinks. What singled out tea and coffee particularly was the high caffeine content; to those celebrating the enlightenment ideal of rational discussion tea and coffee became the preferred choice. But this was not the only appeal; served together with sugar from the West Indies, the new hot drinks came to replace traditional beverages, such as ale, among large sections of the European population, particularly in the Low Countries and in Britain.[17]

In terms of trade, the main distinction between coffee and tea was how they were sourced. The tea the Europeans drank came exclusively from China. Cultivated coffee bushes in contrast had, by the seventeenth century, made their way away from North Africa and the Middle East. Production spread both eastwards and westwards to Java, the West Indies and elsewhere in the eighteenth century. The success of the transfer of coffee plants and production was an important reference point for the Swedish naturalist Carolus Linnaeus as he schemed to bring the Chinese tea plant to Sweden with the aim of starting domestic cultivation. It was the experiments of the mayor of Amsterdam, Witzen, that had been instrumental in transferring the coffee plant from the East to the West Indies, Linnaeus argued. Thus the previously 'happy' people of 'Arabia Felix' had lost their monopoly. Something similar could happen with tea, Linnaeus proposed: China could 'follow in the footsteps of Arabia' and 'leave Sweden not a small amount of its fortune and luck'.[18]

Before we look at the schemes directed at tea, Linnaeus needs a short introduction. Today he is best known for his taxonomic innovations, foremost of which was his modernization of scientific nomenclature. Linnaeus's *Species plantarum*, published in 1753, is often referred to as marking the birth of modern botany. With it he launched his new two-part name system to an international audience. The nomenclature, which is still in use, is comprised of names consisting of two parts: a *generic name*, indicating a species' genus, and a s*pecific epithet* separating it from other members of the same genus. *Thea* was for example a generic name and *bohea* a specific epithet; together they made up the scientific name for one of what Linnaeus, among others, believed were two species used by the Chinese to produce tea: *Thea bohea* and *Thea viridis*.[19]

Linnaeus' new name system was relatively stable and easy to remember; it was successful because it facilitated communication between naturalists engaged in mapping and moving flora and fauna across the globe.[20] The system was, however, not static. For example, when European naturalists at the beginning of the nineteenth century became convinced that black and green tea originated from the same plant, what had been formerly

known as two species became one. Its new scientific name, *Camelia sinensis*, reflected the position of the tea plant within the *Camelia* genus and its Chinese connections, *sinensis* being Latin for Chinese.

That Linnaeus assumed green and black tea were the product of two different species, and the fact that he used the specific epithet *bohea*, which of course referred to the most popular of the black tea types, are indicative of the extent to which natural history followed trade in the early-modern period. It is a link Harold Cook has studied, focusing particularly on the Dutch Republic in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Exploring the connection between empiricism and growing commerce Cook discusses how the overseas trade promoted exact descriptions of objects, a language that left imprints in early-modern scholarship, particularly within the all-encompassing field of natural history. In addition, overlapping notions of taste, of knowing or 'kennen' in a connoisseur sense of the word, connected the world of scholarship and the world of trade.[21] Linnaeus's exact taxonomic language, which like his nomenclature became a standard, represents a perfection of this tradition, and although Linnaeus was wrong in distinguishing two species of tea, his reasons for doing so were based on very specific, albeit incorrect, observations of shapes and numbers of leaves and petals.[22]

But natural history was also connected to political economy. In one of the more recent studies of Linnaeus, Lisbet Koerner has classified the Swedish naturalist as a cameralist.[23] One of the projects Koerner focuses on is Linnaeus's plans to cultivate tea in Sweden. Linnaeus's many attempts to get his hands on a living tea plant from China are quite well known; they involved a long series of misfortunes, including tea plants falling overboard en route back from China, being eaten by rats, perishing on the very last lap of the journey, or surviving only to be identified as another member of the *Camelia* genus. In 1763, after more than two decades of trying, Linnaeus was finally able to welcome live tea plants to his botanical garden in Uppsala. However, within two years all but two had died. Only one plant outlived Linnaeus; the last reference to it dates back to 1781, three years after Linnaeus had passed away himself.[24]

That tea plants need tropical and subtropical climates, substantial rainfall and, preferably, to be planted at high altitudes was not clear to Linnaeus or his contemporaries; it only slowly dawned on European naturalists as plant geography evolved in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century in the wake of Alexander von Humboldt's work. Linnaeus did not, however, rely on Chinese tea alone, as he also tried

to substitute Chinese tea with home-grown herbs. For example he suggested that oregano (*Origanum vulgare*) and twinflower (*Linnaea borealis*) could be used for this purpose. Linnaeus, who claimed to have tasted 'a lot of tea made imitating the Chinese', was particularly impressed by the former, which Dean Walborg had prepared for him by rolling up the leaves in such a way as to imitate the finished Chinese product. This tea was so similar to Bohea in terms of 'size, scent and taste' argued Linnaeus, that all, except those 'particularly knowledgeable about tea', would 'not easily notice any difference, not at least as soon he got used to it, after which he would happily drink it like the Chinese'. To honour Walborg Linnaeus gave *Origanum vulgare* a synonym name, *Theæ suceedaneum Wahlborgii*.[25]

The Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences and Linnaeus were frequently engaged in investigating samples of surrogate tea proposed by the broader public. It is also easy to imagine that Linnaeus had a hand in *The Royal Collegium Medici's Announcement on the Abuse and Abundance Tea and Coffee Drinking Are Subjected To, and Instructions on Swedish Herbs To Use Instead of Tea*, published anonymously in 1746. One of its starting points was the argument that 'domestic spices' best agreed with 'Swedish bowels', and domestic herbs best cured 'Nordic' illnesses. But it was not only the subjects' health but also the land's œconomia that the author argued would benefit from a shift in consumption towards domestic produce. Admittedly the taste of Chinese tea was hard to replicate, since it was argued God had given every plant their unique taste. A moderate consumption of imported tea and coffee was also not necessarily detrimental to the health of either the person or the economy. What encouraged both abusive and prodigal consumption was fashion. Consequently the author of the pamphlet concludes that only new trends could drive the old one away: 'That was the case with clothes and likewise with beverages drunk by habit and for peace'.

While coffee was regarded as too much of a challenge to try to replace with nuts, grains and berries, the pamphlet did propose making tea by infusing some thirty-three wild domestic plants and five garden herbs, in addition to a number of blends that it saw as particularly suitable for people suffering from scurvy, gout, and colic, among other things. Authority is lent to the list with references to how it had been assembled, with the help of provincial physicians who had answered the call from the Collegium medicum; and the use of both vernacular and scientific names in the composition of the plant list.[26]

Linnaeus and other naturalists had a keen interest in vernacular names for domestic herbs which could be used to substitute tea from China. The second edition of *Flora Svecica* published in 1755 contains no fewer than seven regional names by which twinflower was known in eighteenth-century Sweden, aside from the one most reminiscent of its modern Swedish name, 'Linnæi ört' or Linnaeus's herb.[27] Neither scientific nor vernacular names seemed however sufficient in order to successfully promote new hot domestic infusions. Even Linneaus's use of alternative names alluding to the exotic origin of tea consumption, such as 'Kings tea' or 'Cape tea' for a brew of oregano and twinflower failed to tempt the Swedish consumers. The latter Linnaeus had hoped would become a popular alternative to Chinese 'Emperor's tea', while reference to the Cape of Good Hope, which all East Indiamen rounded, gave the home-grown alternative a more exotic aura.[28]

The discussion above illustrates the extent to which Linnaeus and other naturalists linked taste to taxonomic knowledge in the search for alternatives to Chinese tea. The emphasis was, seemingly at least, on the legitimate business of replacing Chinese tea by appealing to Swedish consumers' taste for novelty. It was not just the taste that was important; any visual resemblance between the domestic product and Chinese tea was a bonus, as Dean Walborg's tea illustrates. The pamphlet from the Collegium medicum also suggested a preparation process involving carefully selecting the leaves and roasting them at different intervals in the drying process, not only to take the edge off the grass taste but also to make the product look 'less green'.[29]

The advice does suggest a level of innocence; perhaps the absence of a fraudulent dimension to the process of preparing domestic produce to look like Chinese goods tells us something about how relatively little tea was consumed in Sweden. As we learnt from Chapter 2 the cheap black tea served up in Britain was not always, perhaps not even most of the time, a pure Bohea, Wuyi Mountain, product. Not only was Bohea tea regularly mixed with tea of other origins and types in Canton, dried, roasted and even painted leaves from plants domestic to Europe were regularly mixed into the Chinese cargo as well as recycled tea leaves, before the end consumer received the goods. Exactly where the line between fraud and more legitimate tea blending was is not always easy to tell. It is possible that British consumers developed a taste for tea that made them prefer blends offered at the *end* of the wholesale, clandestine and retail chain rather than the pure product that perhaps could be had at the beginning, in Canton or on the Wuyi Mountains.

Innocent or not, tea fraud did take place in Sweden. In a letter to his closest friend Abraham Bäck (1713–1795), president of the Collegium medicum, Linnaeus describes how a merchant had presented him with a sample of tea from a larger batch he had purchased for a good price. Wrapped in a 'large Chinese paper with necromancy letters all around' Linnaeus discovered that it contained a blend of proper tea and leaves from sloe bushes.[30] In other words, the business of tea offered the naturalists many opportunities to apply their knowledge.

Linnaeus's tea import substitution plans might at first instance appear somewhat naïve, or at least detached from everyday tea consumption. However, it is worth underlining that although the physical effects of tea and coffee consumption were registered from the very beginning by the medical corpus of Europe – Linnaeus himself listed tea as a remedy against sleepiness – it was only at the beginning of the nineteenth century that caffeine was identified as an active ingredient exclusive only to a few plants. It is also worth noticing that Linnaeus was well aware of other European and Atlantic substitutes for tea, although he acknowledged that no one yet had managed to outperform tea from China. 'Whether one wants it or not, one has to acknowledge, that of all hitherto discovered substitute plants no one exceeds tea'.[31] In other words, to search for domestic substitutes was neither irrational nor unique to Linnaeus. In the light of Linnaeus's failed attempts to substitute tea from China with rebranded domestic produce it is somewhat ironic that Linnaeus ordered porcelain from China, decorated with images of twinflower, the species he made into his signature plant. Although the public at large rejected his Cape tea, at least Linnaeus drank from vessels decorated with it!

From China to India, via Sweden

To Lisbeth Koerner, Linnaeus's tea projects represent a failed attempt to create a 'local modernity' in order 'to short circuit the economic improvements achieved by Holland and England through their international trade'.[32] Koerner's emphasis on the failure of Linnaeus's cameralist project in a Swedish setting does however mean that the European context in which Linnaeus's project evolved is somewhat lost. It is also the latter that is at the forefront in this section because although Linnaeus failed to grow tea in Sweden, he did contribute to a more long-term project that ultimately was successful although it came to fruition later on and in a different economic system than the one Linnaeus had in mind.

The European framework within which Linnaeus operated can be traced in several different contexts. It is, for example, the European East India trade more generally that Linnaeus referred to when he wrote in 1765 that: 'It is amusing to note that the Europeans, the wisest of all, conquer the most distant regions of America, and there with the greatest difficulty excavates precious silver, and with greatest danger repatriates it to Europe, in order to, with no less danger, carry it to another part of earth, to the East Indies, only to exchange it for the leaves of a certain shrub'.[33]

Since Sweden was only a small consumer of tea it is in fact only in a European context that Linnaeus's thoughts on tea make sense. Linnaeus might of course not have been up to date about the extent to which Copenhagen and Gothenburg were only the first landing points for tea largely destined for the more prolific tea drinking nations of Europe. But it is worthwhile pointing out that Linnaeus worked in Hartekamp in the Dutch Republic, as the in-house naturalist to George Clifford III (1685–1760), between 1736 and 1738. Clifford, also mentioned in Chapters 2 and 3, was heavily involved in the European East India trade as a merchant banker and agent to the EIC. As Clifford's correspondence with Charles Irvine reveals, he was well informed about the European market for tea and other Asian goods.

What the Irvine correspondence does not reveal is that Clifford was keen on exotic gardens and natural history. His private garden at the Hartekamp where Linnaeus worked was greatly expanded; by 1737 it had a menagerie, an orangery and four tropical houses. In addition the estate hosted a large collection of specimens, some of which dated back to the 1720s, even possibly to the 1710s, and were assembled by Clifford himself.[34]

Although Linnaeus might not have learnt about the inner workings of the East India trade from his patron, it should be noted that his work for Clifford coincided with the first turbulent period of the SEIC. Moreover, it was as an employee of Clifford that Linnaeus first started planning for the cultivation of tea in Europe. In his *Hortus Cliffordianus* published in 1737 Linnaeus wrote that 'Seven times within a few years have seeds been brought to this garden'. Although, judging by the writing, Linnaeus might have been absent when these deliveries arrived, he clearly knew from other accounts that tea seed germination was a risky business; the amount of oil in the seeds made it prone to go rancid. Linnaeus thought he had a solution, however; his suggestion was to encapsulate the seeds in saltpetre for the duration of the journey from China to Europe.[35]

While Clifford enlarged his fortune via the European trade in Chinese tea, his in-house naturalist was busy scheming to cultivate tea in Europe. We know this because Linnaeus published his plans, albeit in Latin, and only to the exclusive group that could get their hands on *Hortus Cliffordianus*, the first copies which were given away rather than sold.[36] We will return to the public nature of Linnaeus's plans and the problem of rancid tea seeds. The conclusion for now is that the birth of Linnaeus's tea transplant plans took place in a European rather than Swedish context and in a setting created by fortunes made, at least in parts, from the European East India trade in tea.

The European context was also an important reference point for Linnaeus in his writing on health and tea. It was the wider continental consumption of tea that he drew on when he wrote about the hazards of over-indulgence. He observed that well-off women in larger cities, like Hamburg and Amsterdam, drank tea all day, leaving them 'white' and 'bloated'.[37] He contrasted these descriptions of the 'white flesh' of idle tea and coffee drinking Dutch and German women found in his work on diets with the healthy cold water drinking working wives of Swedish peasants.[38]

However, not all SEIC tea was re-exported; Swedish men and women were also prey to the ill-effects Linnaeus wrote of. The Collegium medicum pamphlet, printed in 1746, stated that while tea had been consumed in Europe for one hundred years, over the last 'twenty years' it had also started to make its way into 'more humble houses across Sweden'.[39] However, as discussed in the Introduction, there is in fact little evidence of widespread tea consumption in eighteenth-century Sweden, although the elite, to which Linnaeus belonged, did drink tea. In the light of this, we should perhaps understand Linnaeus's tea projects as being built on an anticipation of a much larger consumption of tea in Sweden in the future, similar in scope to the Dutch. Or perhaps Linnaeus hoped that Sweden could continue to provide the European market with tea, although with home grown rather than that re-exported by the SEIC, thereby gaining some of the silver, or as Linnaeus put it 'fortune' and 'luck', that had been previously enjoyed by China alone.[40]

Linnaeus was not alone in highlighting the effect the China trade had on draining the European silver reserve. This was a common trope in many early-modern economic debates. Like others Linnaeus hoped that this trade would soon end, and noted signs of progress. Not only can we trace Linnaeus's pan-European perspective on the

tea trade in this optimistic discourse, but also a chronology or historiography of how the trade with China was promoting European developments:

> in recent years the planting of mulberry trees and the production of silk in southern Europe have made so much progress that a time will come when we no longer need to fetch silk from China. The art of making porcelain vessels has recently been perfected in Saxony, Prussia, France, and our motherland, these vessels in form and colour outperform the Chinese. Only tea remains the sole province of the Chinese.[41]

Like any prominent European scholar Linnaeus corresponded extensively with naturalists across Europe. As Bettina Dietz has shown Linnaeus's publications were in many respects co-productions, often involving naturalists from across Sweden and Europe. Linnaeus's many books, most prominently his *Systema natura* and *Species plantarum*, incorporated the results of other naturalists who communicated additions and corrections to Linnaeus, which he in turn included in the new editions he regularly put together.[42] The issue of tea was similarly approached collectively, although in this case it became more of an Anglo-Swedish pact than a pan-European collaboration. The main British correspondent with whom Linnaeus exchanged thoughts on tea was John Ellis (1710–1776), who had been made wealthy by his involvement in the Irish textile trade and was therefore able to pursue the study of natural history, before he fell on harder times. He wrote several scholarly texts and was made a Fellow of the Royal Society in 1754. Following his bankruptcy Ellis worked as a gardener in Surrey, and also held several positions relating to colonial affairs in both America and in London.[43]

Ellis and Linnaeus' correspondence dates back to the mid-1750s.[44] Over the course of a decade and a half they touched on many subjects; one of the re-occurring themes, however, was tea, and particularly how to transfer tea seeds and seedlings from China to Europe. While Ellis called Linnaeus 'the great ornament of science', acknowledging his scholarly superiority, their relationship became more equal, not least after Ellis's method of embedding tea seeds in wax proved successful in spite of Linnaeus's initial scepticism.[45] Linnaeus claimed that the 'best method of procuring plants from China' was by sowing them in pots 'the day the ships leave Canton', with germination happening on

route.[46] Although Linnaeus was the taxonomic authority of Europe, in terms of hands-on experience of relocating plants and seeds, he had many equals, including Ellis, who could draw on his experiences as a gardener as well as from colonial contexts. Linnaeus also respected the abilities of the English, telling Ellis in his characteristically flattering style that: 'Surely if your countrymen, who can accomplish anything within the bounds of possibility, are not able to bring the Tea alive to Europe, it will never be done'.[47]

The focus on the logistics of plant transfer is one of the dominating themes in the correspondence between Ellis and Linnaeus, for multiple reasons including personal profit. For example, on Linnaeus's request Ellis probed interest among his country's 'Nobility' and 'Magnates' to find a buyer for the tea plants, which Linnaeus, after so much trouble, had managed to procure.[48] The question was how much would they pay for them? Since Linnaeus claimed he was the first to own a tea plant in Europe we can assume they would not be cheap. The sale of exotic plants was big business in eighteenth-century London.[49] For whatever reason no transaction seems to have taken place; maybe Linnaeus was too slow to respond to what by all accounts were fast-changing market conditions? In 1770, five years after the tea-plant business idea was floated, Ellis reported that there were nearly a hundred tea plants in England.[50] Nonetheless, it is an illustrative example of the different economies at play. While Linnaeus understood the tea trade from the point of view of early-modern political economy, according to which the mass consumption of tea leaves from China triggered a silver drain in Europe, he and Ellis were also prospectors who could trade in tea plants in order to profit personally.

The focus on personal profit and plant transfer by seed germination did not mean that Ellis or Linnaeus were unaware of the implications of their project, *had* it succeeded. A few years into their correspondence Linnaeus predicted that '… we may, before long, see Tea growing in Europe', convincing Ellis that tea bushes were 'hardy' enough to 'bear the cold even of Sweden'.[51] Ellis too saw further ahead as he, in conjunction with the Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Sciences and Commerce in London, distributed tea seeds enclosed in wax 'to each of our governors of provinces, from New England to Georgia' with the aim of 'establish[ing] Tea in America'.[52] The regular comments on rumours of successful attempts to grow tea in America and Europe in their correspondence also suggests that they were very aware, even wary, of developments elsewhere. 'I learn from the newspapers that Tea is already planted in Carolina. Is this true?' wrote Linnaeus to Ellis, and

continued by reassuring him that rumours of tea plants flowering and bearing seeds in Denmark were false. A friend of Linnaeus had 'proved' the plant was 'nothing but *Veronica maritime*'.[53] Ellis likewise confirmed that the news from America was 'false'.[54]

A parallel and complex topic was the health and progress of their individual tea experiments. 'Tell me whether your Tea seeds have vegetated' wrote Linnaeus to Ellis in April 1761.[55] 'My tea plant is still in health, but has not yet flowered' Linnaeus reported four years later.[56] Six months on he wrote again: 'Thriving but still without flowers'. As if it might explain the lack of blossom Ellis reassured Linnaeus that he was 'much in the right to protect it from severe weather'.[57] When Ellis succeeded in raising tea plants of his own their progress was a topic regularly touched upon in letters to and from Linnaeus.[58] Although somewhat comical, the great concern for each other's potted plants does make sense if we take into account the grander scheme of breaking the Chinese monopoly on tea.

To Linnaeus and Ellis success depended on the viability of the delicate individual seeds and seedlings in their care. They were sourced with the help of the East India companies operating from Britain and Sweden. The connection between Linnaeus, the Swedish Royal Academy of Sciences and the Swedish East India Company is visible in several different contexts. Supercargoes and captains working for the SEIC were regularly made fellows of the Academy, and published on different aspects of Chinese culture and technology. Linnaeus frequently drew on this connection to find positions for his students as chaplains and ships' surgeons on the East Indiamen departing from Gothenburg; the students in return reported back to their teacher, providing him with information and material. To some, like Pehr Osbeck (1723–1805), who departed from Gothenburg in 1750 on the *Prins Carl*, their time on board ship became the starting point an exploration of Asian and Swedish nature, under the tutelage of Linnaeus, who incorporated many of Osbeck's findings in the first edition of the *Species plantarum*. Osbeck had collected more than 900 different plant species on this trip.[59]

In his correspondence with Ellis, Linnaeus refers to Osbeck and his SEIC contacts who attempted and frequently failed, to bring him tea seedlings.[60] Ellis likewise refers to his EIC network, which included 'Mr Fitzhugh', who had years of experiences working in Canton. It was the latter who enabled Ellis to 'minutely' study a 'Tea-tree' in London for the first time in 1768, accompanied by Daniel Solander (1733–1782), a student of Linnaeus who had been resident in London since 1760.[61] Another 'friend', just returned from China, brought tea flowers to Ellis

so that they could be examined by him in London and then forwarded to Linnaeus. Linnaean taxonomy, the Sexual System, implied that particular attention should be paid to the flower and the reproductive organs of plants.[62]

The openness with which Linnaeus and Ellis shared material and information, as well as the relative willingness of the Swedish Company to accommodate Linnaeus's students is noteworthy. Their work, at least in theory, threatened to undermine the whole business idea of the company. As Koen Vermeir has discussed, the relationship between secret and public knowledge in early-modern European scholarship was often complex, with no absolute divisions. By writing in Latin readers could both be included and excluded; using correspondence and other handwritten material rather than print meant that information could be contained within a small circle. Strategies could change. A shift from handwritten to published format could mean a critical point in the dissemination of information had been reached. As handwritten manuscripts and letters were copied and diffused beyond the small network of a single author, the latter could regain control over some of the content of his or her work by printing it.[63] Perhaps the pan-European nature of the tea trade, and the openness with which news of the prices and quantities of tea imported and sold was circulated, had rubbed off on Linnaeus and Ellis? Their letters communicate no sense of secrecy; but an urgency and an ambition to be the first to cultivate tea in Europe or the Atlantic world. The sharing of information was of course also a strong ideal in the Republic of Letters; even if the scholars were citizens or subjects of states at war with one another.[64]

To sum up, there are several frameworks within which Linnaeus's plans for tea cultivation evolved. In addition to a Swedish and local context there was a European and transnational setting. While the local context led to futile attempts by Linnaeus to replace Chinese tea with home grown substitutes, the transnational European project followed a different trajectory.

Shifting the focus to a transnational European, and specifically an Anglo-Swedish context, enables us to connect Linnaeus's failed project with another British attempt to restructure the tea trade. In 1788, ten years after Linnaeus had died, Joseph Banks (1743–1820), President of the Royal Society and a keen naturalist, turned to the English East India Company with a modified version of Linnaeus's original idea, proposing to transplant tea from China to north-east India.[65]

Banks was heavily indebted to Linnaeus in several respects. Like Linnaeus, Banks understood natural history in an economic sense,

one purpose of which was to aid mankind in its exploitation of nature.[66] Early on Banks had recognized the significance of Linnaeus's modernization of European taxonomy and nomenclature, and how it helped natural history aid European exploration. Banks employed several of Linnaeus's former students, including the above-mentioned Solander, in different capacities in London and across the globe to assist in the building and reforming of natural history collections.[67] In his report to the EIC outlying his plan to grow tea in India, Banks used Osbeck's travel account, which had been translated and published in English in 1771.[68] However, in contrast to Linnaeus, who had carefully guarded his only surviving tea plant, Banks was able to draw on botanical gardens across Asia and the Atlantic world in his schemes to move plants and production. Banks corresponded regularly with Robert Kyd (1746–1793), who was instrumental in setting up the Botanical Gardens in Calcutta, and later on with William Roxburgh (1751–1815), who preceded Kyd, on the possibilities of growing tea in India.[69]

One issue was where to start; like Linnaeus, Banks discussed extensively the latitudes at which tea could be successfully cultivated. Although Banks suggested black tea was best produced from plants grown between the 25th and the 30th latitude, and green tea between the 30th and 34th latitude, like Linnaeus he expressed doubts that green and black tea originated from different species.[70] Where the two naturalists differed was in relation to how to proceed. A central feature of the plan Banks presented to the board of the EIC was to contract Chinese people with experience of growing tea to assist in establishing tea cultivation *and* manufacturing in India. Banks laid out a plan that involved the migration of plants, tools and knowhow, in the form of Chinese individuals, from the Canton area to the Botanical garden in Calcutta. Banks promised twenty acres to use for experimenting with tea cultivation and production.[71]

The need for Chinese knowhow is further underlined elsewhere in Banks's correspondence with other people. Writing to Charles Jenkinson (1729–1808), 1st Baron Hawkesbury and 1st Earl of Liverpool, a key political figure in late eighteenth-century Britain and one of Banks's most prominent allies, Banks described how no one in England had succeeded in producing anything but a 'harsh & very disagreeable' tasting liquor from home grown tea bushes that now 'few Curious Gardens are without'.[72] In a letter to George Macartney (1737–1806), who headed the embassy visiting China in the 1790s, Banks wrote about the chemical process used in Chinese tea manufacturing, which 'we are unable to

imitate' but which produced a beverage with a flavour 'agreeable to all Palates', and 'the most Exhilarating medicine we possess'.[73]

Banks's plans differed from those of Linnaeus in other respects too; in contrast to the Swede Banks took into account how the European and particularly the British market for tea was segmented. We learn from his correspondence that Banks and his wife had an elaborate taste in tea, preferring exclusive sorts such as 'Chulan' and 'Pouchong'.[74] Such preferences did not however influence Banks's thoughts on the most profitable way to proceed. In his plans to the EIC from 1788 Banks argued that,

> All undertakings of new manufacture should commence with articles of inferior quality; they being less difficult in preparation, and more certain (as they fall into the hands of the lower orders of people) of being admitted into the immediate use than higher prized commodities intended for the consumption of those who have more distinguishing palates, & fewer reasons for being economical in their purchases.[75]

In other words, Banks wanted to cater for a mass market of black tea drinkers used to low quality Bohea tea. According to Banks, this type of tea was frequently landed in Britain due to the lack of diligence among the British supercargoes and the fraudulent Chinese tea dealers. This view probably reflected Banks's discontent with the poor assistance he had had from employees of the EIC stationed in Canton who feared they would lose out if Indian tea began to compete with that from China.[76]

Banks differed from Linnaeus not only in terms of his access to tea plants and his understanding of how the tea market and the EIC worked, but also and more significantly in his thoughts on who was going to harvest and manufacture the tea. The Indian workforce, comprised of 'frugal industrious & intelligent natives, accustomed to labour for lower wages possibly than any other set of men', would be an optimal source of labour he wrote in his report to the EIC.[77] This argument can be traced back to correspondence which predated the report. Responding to a letter by Charles Jenkinson, Banks expanded on 'the mode of Preparing the Tea leaves', something which involved 'considerable labour' not least in green tea production, which was 'Tedious & expensive' as every leaf needed to be rolled 'by hand into the Form in which we receive it'. Affordable workers could be found neither in the 'Colonies' (and here Banks presumably refers to Britain's Atlantic holdings), nor in England. It was in the light of this that India stood out; here 'Labour appears to be as cheap as in China', Banks argued.[78] Similar arguments were made by

others, like the cartographer James Rennell (1742–1830), active in mapping the Indian continent. He wrote to Banks that tea production 'would suit the Hindoos most perfectly. Their patient industry, & pliable fingers, would manage the whole business to great advantage'.[79]

So while Linnaeus with his early-modern economic framework took the movement of silver from the Atlantic world to the Asian as his cue, attempting to replace Chinese tea with Swedish cultivated substitutes, Banks looked at price and access to labour within the realms of the expanding British Empire. There was also a political dimension to Banks's argument. With sugar, coffee and tobacco forming the cornerstone of the Atlantic trade, tea production in India offered the EIC the opportunity to create closer links between the 'Motherland' and her colony, without intruding on the trade of other parts of the empire.[80]

For all the ways in which Banks and Linnaeus perceived tea cultivation and consumption differently, they also held much in common. As Albritton Jonsson has pointed out, Linnaeus and Banks shared a distinctive approach to how to govern nature that continued to represent an alternative to a liberal understanding of nature, which lasted into the nineteenth century and beyond. While Adam Smith ultimately thought the market would help resolve ecological imbalances, Linnaeus and Banks both ascribed greater weight to the intervention of naturalists operating either within a state-centred cameralist framework, *or* an imperial economy.[81]

The reasons Banks's plans were delayed in being realized is part of a different history from the one told here, but it took another half a century before tea production outside China and Japan started. While India lost its cotton textile trade to the north-west of England it gained tea cultivation. Infamous for its harsh and slave-like working conditions it came to employ millions of people in Assam, Darjeeling and Sri Lanka (then known as Ceylon). In the twentieth century tea production moved into Kenya in Africa. China lost its near global monopoly, although Chinese tea continued to be produced, both for domestic consumption and for export. In other words, and ironically perhaps, only a few decades after *Camelia sinensis* replaced Linnaeus's species names *Thea bohea* and *Thea viridis*, a reform which reflected a more comprehensive European understanding of the origin and manufacturing of tea in China, tea production took off outside China. This was a shift that also corresponded with the end of the chartered companies working along mercantilist lines, and the beginning of an imperial economy, in which the British drew on cheap labour, taking control over tea production in Asia and later on in Africa.

Global dyes and local colours

Next to tea textiles were the single most important type of goods imported from Asia on East India ships. From the late seventeenth century on Asian textiles generated fundamental changes to European fashion and interior design. The most well-known example is the importation of cotton textiles from India. Chintz and calicoes, printed or painted with attractive colourfast dyes, became everyday objects in some parts of Europe. One conclusion from this study is that Chinese silks, populuxe poisee damask, taffeta and pekin, which arrived in a great variety of colours, also played an important role, particularly during the first half of the eighteenth century, and in places like Sweden, which had little access to the Indian market.

The production of colours and dyes was not of course exclusive to Asia. The rich French nomenclature applied in the Chinese silk trade, is in itself indicative of what a dynamic field colours were in eighteenth-century Europe. Colours went in and out of fashion; new shades and combinations of tints created new trends, some of which have been described in the previous chapters on the study of the colour assortment of the SEIC silk cargoes. There were several other processes at work too. One relates to the provision of different dye matter. As Alexander Engel has shown in the case of Britain, the market share of non-European dyestuff, including indigo, cochineal, logwood and other dyewoods, made up between sixty-five and ninety per cent of the value of all dyestuff used in eighteenth-century Britain. Drawing on early-modern dye recipe books, Engel also estimates how effective the different dye materials were, calculating that between eighty and ninety per cent of all dyed textiles in eighteenth-century Britain received their colour from non-European dyestuff.[82]

The changing use of different fibres and the prices of different dyestuffs also influenced colour schemes. Engel links the drop in cochineal consumption, a dyestuff used to produce red, to the increase in consumption of cotton. Cochineal did not perform well on cotton, hence its decline. What did work was a dye originating from Asia and based on madder, which, at the end of a complex dyeing process, produced a high quality red called 'Turkey red'.Only by the mid-eighteenth century were Europeans able to replicate this dyeing process and produce red of a good quality on cotton textiles.[83] The growing popularity of black in the beginning of the nineteenth-century follows the discovery that solid black colours could be produced with the help of logwood, a much cheaper dye material than the blend of dark indigo blue and intense

madder used before. Darker colours on textiles were generally more expensive to produce than lighter ones in the early-modern period.[84]

Traditionally European dyers were divided into different groups. Early-modern German tradesmen usually belonged to one of the two branches 'Schwartzfärber' (or 'Schlechtfärber', the prefix *schlecht* here meaning simple rather than alluding to the negative modern meaning of the word) and 'Schönfärber'. The former produced black, brown and dark blue colours on linen and wool textiles, while the latter experimented with a wider range of colours on lighter material. Neither category was absolute; in fact regional changes and changes over time reflect the diversification of material, the development of new products and changing consumer patterns.[85] French dyers were similarly divided between 'teinturiers en grand et bon teint', who worked with more colour-fast dyes on more traditional material, and 'teinturiers en petit teint', whose products tended to be more vivid although not as durable. The French division was in part a result of the legislation initiated by Jean Baptise Colbert, Louis XIV's minister. The regulation of dyeing practices in France also led to a temporary decline in experimentation and variation. In 1667 the number of officially sanctioned colours allowed was fixed at 120, although another 100 were permitted in 1730; the aim was to reduce imports of expensive dyestuffs, thereby contributing towards the all-important positive balance of trade.[86]

Eighteenth-century Swedish regulations were different in the sense that dyers were divided up in accordance with the textile fibres they were colouring. Wool, silk, linen and cotton dyers in Stockholm could use any of the available dyes, although they had to use and follow prescribed ingredients and methods. Dyers who mislabelled their tints, falsely claiming they were made with dyes associated with durable and colour-fast colours, could be punished. The shades produced also had to conform to set colour standards. Evenness and lustre were other qualities considered when judging the output of the Stockholm dyers.[87] Dyeing was also a household activity in the eighteenth century. Yarn and smaller pieces of textiles were usually dyed at home while dyers in towns were employed to colour larger piece goods in blue, red and green. The latter colours often required imported dyestuff; it was also hard to achieve a uniform shade on larger pieces, a process which demanded large vessels or vats.[88]

Although tradesmen were restricted to the production of colours; they contributed to colour ideas. The early-modern period, and particularly the eighteenth century, saw an expansion of both colour theories and dye matters used. As Sara Lowengard has discussed, colour was an

area in which science and craft met. Natural philosophers such as Isaac Newton used prisms to explore the nature and number of colours while more philosophically-minded tradesmen tried to establish colour orders by separating tints into different primary and secondary categories, pinning them to different dyestuffs or their combinations. Chemistry, which evolved out of mineralogy, provided a framework within which new synthetic pigments, such as Prussian blue, evolved in the early eighteenth century.[89] These changes also generated new supply systems involving specialist traders who could offer new and different shades.[90] We can see this as part of a broader structural change over the course of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. As Engel explains: 'When the power to define dyestuffs changed from the demand side to the supply side of the market, their character as trade goods altered: they turned from commodities into specialities'.[91]

This defining power also rested, however, with those involved in substituting imported dyes for domestic ones. The value of non-European dye material constituted a significant share of the total value of exotic goods imported into Sweden. Surviving statistics from 1769–1771 suggest that only sugar (its value was roughly a third of the total) was more important. The value of indigo, cochineal and other non-European dyestuffs represented more than a fifth of the total, with tobacco accounting for sixteen per cent, and coffee for fourteen per cent.[92] In the light of this, it is not surprising that the cameralist-minded Swedish naturalists turned to the domestic landscape in order to find substitutes with which to imitate colours made from expensive imported dyes.

These naturalists conformed to a broader movement; the eighteenth century saw a range of new technologies designed to manipulate surfaces to look more exclusive, by staining, varnishing, plastering and gilding them.[93] Colours, as Newton established in 1671, depended on different wavelengths of light, and are in a sense immaterial, enabling imitation in many different ways. One of the most significant early Swedish contributions to the art of imitating colours and substituting dyes was the work of Johan Linder (1678–1724), who was later ennobled (Lindestolpe). Linder was a physician with a keen interest in natural history and dyes, as is demonstrated in his *Swedish Art of Dyeing. With Domestic Herbs, Gras, Flower, Leaves, Barks, Rots, Plants, and Minerals*, the first edition of which was published in 1720.[94] Although he was writing in Swedish, Linder's approach was global. After discussing the historical use of colours by drawing on ancient writers and the Bible, genres with a distinct European and Christian scope, Linder moved on to trade and manufacturing in a discussion that spans the

globe. Under the subheading 'On Blue Colour' we learn the vernacular Philippine, Indian, Chinese and Mexican names for indigo, as well the six different types of indigo from the East Indies, and high and low quality indigo from the West Indies.[95]

From globally sourced raw material to Parisian dye works Linder links plants, insects and minerals to a rich colour nomenclature that reflects his personal intimacy with the material culture of cosmopolitan Europe; Linder had spent a considerable amount of time studying on the Continent. Some names we recognize from the East India trade, such as crimson, incarnat, ponceau, sky blue, turquin blue and bleumerant, but there are many more that by all accounts never entered the China trade.[96] This rich colour backdrop forms the starting point for what is the main purpose of Linder's book, to promote the use of dyes made of domestic material. Following his historical and global introduction to the colour red, which includes a section on where to source the best Brazilwood, in the region of Fernambuco, Brazil, and how it was processed in dye works in Amsterdam, Linder concludes: 'This said on foreign red colours. Let us now see if also in our country there is something to be used to the same effect'.[97]

Blueberries, juniper berries, elderberries, cherries and plums, as well as moss, nettles and black alder were some of the ingredients listed as alternatives to the goods from Asia and the Atlantic world.[98] Linder displays a familiarity with the North European landscape, including bio-topical information; the source of 'high red' could be found 'under hassle trees, in the shadow' where True Lover's Knot ('Trollbär') or 'Herba Paris' grew.[99] Drawing on his knowledge of natural history, a core subject in an early-modern medical education, Linder identifies materials with both a scientific and a vernacular nomenclature. He also outlines methods and recipes for producing dyes suitable for different mediums; however, here he becomes much more general. Linder's Swedish recipes produced shades of colour that are commonly referred to as simply blue, yellow and red, sometimes 'high red' and 'pale red'.[100]

The anonymized colours in Linder's account do not necessarily mean that there were no variations, intended or unintended. What was lacking was a language connecting the local resources and knowledge that Linder drew on to the world of eighteenth-century cosmopolitan consumption, fashion and science. There are some exceptions, and they are telling. For example, among the red colours that domestic dyestuff could generate Linder lists 'Couleur de Chair' and 'Couleur de Rose'.[101] As we learned in the last chapter both references were frequently used to describe silk textiles imported from China to Europe in the eighteenth

century. If we consider that these colours were the results of using Safflower, *Carthamus tinctorius* or 'safflor' in Swedish, as the active ingredient it becomes less of an anomaly. Safflower has a long history as a raw material in dyeing red and yellow on the Eurasian continent. The link to a well-known active dye ingredient did in other words help identify the shade of red in question, something that also explains Linder's colour vagueness when discussing dye ingredients *not* used in cosmopolitan Europe.

Another striking aspect in Linder's account is the limited media used; the fibres Linder advises on how to dye are almost exclusively made from wool and flax in the form of piece goods and yarn. If we include Linder's section on how to remove stains there are only two references to silk in the whole book.[102] In other words, the globally produced, and continentally fashioned colour scheme Linder sought to replicate with home sourced products in the 1720s did not only lack in variation and differentiation, but also the media onto which they were to be applied was limited to the most common fibres known in early eighteenth-century Swedish households.

Linder was aware of the shortcomings of his project in terms of providing colour variation, but he suggests his colours would do 'for those who live on the countryside'.[103] He also envisioned improved results, a more complete world of colour with time and *if* enough interest was redirected from 'foreign things' to 'Swedish grass and herbs'. His neglect of materials other than those 'made by Swedish wool and Swedish linen, spun by our women' was by all accounts more deliberate. They represented materials he preferred to those 'spun by silk worms' originating in 'India, Persia, Turkey, Spain, France, Germany, England, Holland'.[104] Linder's message was economic: his colours were perhaps not perfect, but they were good enough for a European periphery, who could ill afford either exotic dyestuffs or exotic fibre.

Most other books on dyeing published in Sweden throughout the eighteenth century were geographically and politically more vague. To an extent this was determined by the market for this type of literature: advice books on dyeing were regularly translated from English or French into Swedish.[105] Many of the same ingredients, like for example pot ash and fortified water, were used across Europe. Likewise the habitats of many plants and insects used to produce dye crossed national boundaries. For these reasons and the more general access to globally sourced dye goods brought to Amsterdam and London, and then re-exported across the Continent, it is not surprising that the advice literature on dyeing was partly a transnational discourse.

Linder's distinct Swedish approach, emanating from an inventory of Nordic flora and fauna, was, however, and not surprisingly, replicated in the writings of Linnaeus and his students. Linnaeus took a keen interest in the source of colours; on his journeys across Sweden he noted down the use of domestic plants for colour production, as did many of his students, including for example Pehr Kalm, (1716–1779), more famous for his journey to North America in the late 1740s. Linnaeus and Kalm both published extracts from their observations in the periodical of the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences (*'Handlingar'*). In 1745, two years before he set out west, Kalm published a list of methods and plants used in dyeing, including the use of blueberries to dye socks violet, which he encountered on a domestic journey.[106] Introducing the topic Kalm refers to both Linder and Linnaeus. The latter had only a few years earlier published his own inventory of plants used on the Baltic islands Gotland and Öland with the aim of improving the methods of 'the uneducated peasantry'.[107] Notable in both Kalm and Linnaeus's accounts is the continued exclusive focus on dyes for yarn and piece goods made from linen and wool. Another similarity with Linder's work is the colour vagueness; the shades the different dyes created are described in an undifferentiated manner, as red, blue, green – although there are exceptions. For example, the bark of apple trees grown on Öland produced 'a rather beautiful Citron yellow' Linnaeus concluded in 1742.[108]

The Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences continued to publish work on colours, dyes and pigments in the second half the eighteenth century. Notable is a growing interest in the chemical approach to colour making, following in the wake of the discovery of Prussian, or Berlin blue, the first synthetic pigment. There are also articles advising on agricultural methods for producing Madder, *Rubia tinctorium*, written by Eric Lidbeck (1724–1803), another student of Linnaeus.[109] It is only towards the end of the century, in the work by Johan Peter Westring (1753–1833), a provincial physician in Norrköping, that a significant change takes place.

Like several other naturalists who belonged to Linnaeus's last generation of students, Westring paid particular attention to lichen, a group of species notoriously hard to classify using Linnaeus's Sexual System. Together with fungi and algae they made up the main content of the miscellaneous class twenty-four. The most prominent lichen naturalist, Eric Archarius (1757–1819), a district physician in the neighbouring town of Vadstena, was a close collaborator with Westring. Drawing on his work Westring discussed the taxonomy of different lichen species, their habitats and use as medicines, a food source and, his main focus of attention, dyes.

An article published by the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences in seven sections between 1791 and 1798 outlined the results of hundreds of experiments dyeing with lichen.[110] Westring also produced a series of eight booklets with the joint title *The Colour History of Swedish Lichen, Or How to Use Them for Colouring and in Other Useful Ways for the Household*, in the first decade of the nineteenth century.[111] Judging by the response to Westring's second series of publications his audience was in part made up of critical chemists.[112] However, next to the scientific community it is clear from Westring's writing that he had two other extra-scientific audiences in mind: those working in the dyeing trade and 'curious Swedish Ladies'.[113]

His work offered many colour variations. Take, for example, the shades belonging to the category of brown. Compared to the vague and poor nomenclature used in the sales catalogues of the Swedish East India Company, where silk textiles were frequently described as being simply 'brown' or 'brown varied', Westring offered browns galore. In addition to 'Noisette', 'Chestnut' and 'Oak bark brown' we find a wide range of more exotic colour references.[114] Not only chocolate browns, but also 'dim Choclade au lait' and 'Choclad de Santa', two types of tobacco brown: Tabac de Vénise and Tabac d'Espagne.[115] Next to 'Cinnamon brown', we find references to 'Nutmeg' and 'Rhubarb brown'.[116] Westring's recipes could also be used to produce colours such as 'Terre d' Egypte', described as a 'grey brown beautiful shade', and 'Mumie' (mummy), a 'dark grey brown'.[117] As the examples above illustrate, the nomenclature was largely French in origin, to the extent that we seem to be able to trace the recent French invasion of Egypt in Westring's colour nomenclature. Westring also used 'Poil de veaus' as a synonym for 'Golden brown' and 'Garance foncé' for 'Dark yellow brown'.[118] There were many colours that could be applied to silk fibres using Mountain saffron, today known as *Solorina crocea*, as the active ingredient, including a grey brown labelled 'Thé au lait'.[119]

As we have learnt in the previous chapter, tea was a colour reference that appeared in seventeenth-century Chinese dyeing instructions, and it can also be traced in material relating to smuggling in Canton. It did not however penetrate the Eurasian silk trade beyond Canton in the first half of the eighteenth century. When tea was adopted in the European colour nomenclature in the form of 'Thé au lait' it refers to a shade reminiscent of milky black tea, a popular way of taking this beverage in Europe. Moreover, although Britain was the number one tea drinking nation in Europe this colour term is not English in origin but French, the dominant language of fashion.

While Westring's perception of 'tea' colour was distinctly European, his understanding of the medium, silk, and how it took the dye, was influenced by his experience of Chinese silk. Comparing his results with colours on silk dyed elsewhere, Westring singled out this product particularly, claiming his colours 'achieved the same firmness and shine as the Chinese'.[120] Together with numerous references to cotton, Westring's book also reflects on the broadening use of different textiles in Sweden. Wool and linen were no longer the only fibres discussed as mediums for colours, as silk and cotton are also frequently listed in the recipes. Lichen by all accounts was a dye matter that could be used on both new and old fibres, made from both animal and plant material.

Even if Westring's recipe for producing milky tea coloured silk was never made use of, the example serves to illustrate how dyes had been disconnected from colours. Even though Westring's colour nomenclature emanated from the centre of European fashion, even incorporating references to the French occupation of Egypt, the material source in this case had a very different origin. Westring's Thé au lait was made from lichen growing above the polar circle, in the Swedish 'Lappmarken' and Finnish 'Österbotten'.

Universal colours and synthetic dyes

The focus on silk and colour nomenclature, largely French in origin with Swedish terms used as synonyms, might seem at first glance to suggest that by the turn of the century Sweden had been incorporated into a North Western world of consumption. There is a sense in which the colours reflect change; for example, Westring frequently refers to specific shades as 'modern'.[121] It is clear from his writing that Westring envisioned women being particularly 'entertained' by the availability of so many different shades, something that reflects an understanding of the market for colours. As we learnt in the last chapter, colour variation was an important aspect, perhaps more than colour innovation, in the trade in Chinese silk.[122] The late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries also saw a more general shift in the production and consumption of dyes in Europe, a development which led to a decline in the import of non-European dyestuffs, and an increase in domestic dye production.[123] In this respect Westring was a product of his time.

However, Westring did not approach his imagined audience of matrons in rural peasant households only, or even mainly as consumers. They were just as much producers of colours, made from easily accessible and cheap dyestuffs.[124] In this respect Westring represents an

outlook identical to that of Linder and Linnaeus. Linder, for example, started his account by remembering the time when 'hunger was the best spice' and he bemoaned the import of 'East Indian pepper, ginger, cinnamon, nutmeg' and 'silk' from 'India, Persia and Turkey' paid for by 'Copper, Iron, brass thread, Steel, Boards, Beams, Masts and Tar, manufactured and generated with so much toil and sweat' at home. 'The country is impoverished; foreigners take the core and leave us the shell to bite at. A beautiful trade', Linder concluded in 1720, a sentiment we recognize from Linnaeus's understanding of the trade with China, albeit situated in global context.[125]

Metal, timber and naval stores were Swedish goods made by Swedish people in Linder's world and to Westring the emphasis is on mosses and lichen growing in a resources-rich northerly landscape. Although useful these were raw materials rather than consumer goods to which national identities had become associated in the late eighteenth century. In this respect the framework in which Linder and Westring operated was different from, for example the British one, where toys, trinkets, ceramic creamware and cotton textiles manufactured in Birmingham, the Potteries and Manchester became central assets in the construction of a British middle-class identity.[126] Only later on, in the nineteenth century, were pine forests written into a story of Swedish national identity, as part of a romantic tradition focusing on nature, and turning away from modernization and manufacturing.

Westring's lichen project refers to the shift from import and consumption to export and labour. Westring envisioned great potential in Swedish sourced lichen for providing markets on the Continent, in France and Britain with dye materials. It is possible that Westring's extended use of a French colour nomenclature reflects his intention to promote such an export as well. In his vision of lichen harvesting as a livelihood for 'the poor', Westring estimated how much lichen could be gathered and for what it could be sold for. In this respect Westring thought in a similar way to Joseph Banks, highlighting the link between product and labour rather than focusing exclusively on consumption and revenue streams.

Big changes took place both elsewhere and nearby as dyeing evolved along new chemical lines in north-western Europe. Prussian blue was just the first in a series of new synthetic pigments to come into circulation. Less than fifty years year after Westring published his accounts on Swedish moss and lichen, synthetic dyes, which produced–bright and uniform coloured products, democratized western fashion, with 'Mauveine' blazing the trail.[127] Synthetic dyes were picked up by Swedish consumers, who quickly learnt to appreciate the new bright colours and

even results. The leap from synthetic dyes to universal colours, named with numbers rather than in French, was not far away. The story of how organic dyes made a comeback – as Swedes learnt that colours made from synthetic dyes faded more rapidly, leaving textiles grey and lacklustre, while shades produced by organic dyes became milder and lighter as time passed – is another story.[128]

Conclusion

Asian goods affected Europe in many ways that were *not* reflected in the distribution of East India companies' goods and trade statistics. The history of Linnaeus's parallel and failed attempts to grow Chinese tea in Sweden, and to substitute tea with home-grown produce, illustrate how developments in the rest of Europe were projected onto a Swedish landscape. To reduce the tea story to a Swedish history only takes into account that part of the project that failed. The attempts to break the Chinese monopoly on tea were also a pan-European, long-term project, as the connection to George Clifford's Hartekamp and collaboration between Carolus Linnaeus in Uppsala and John Ellis in London illustrate. With an even longer timeframe and an emphasis on the British contribution we can link Linnaeus to Joseph Banks and a project that finally succeeded in India in the 1840s. Banks's understanding of both the mass market for tea, and the labours involved in producing tea can, together with Linnaeus's taxonomic reforms and the link between natural history and political economy he continued to forge, be traced to the tea gardens of Assam, Darjeeling and Sri Lanka. By then the framework of eighteenth-century chartered company trade had been replaced by full-scale nineteenth-century British imperialism.

It was the caffeine content of tea from China that made the plant impossible to replace with infused home-grown European alternatives. Colour pigments are somewhat different. Those extracted from domestic Swedish plants might not have been as colourfast as those used in India to decorate cotton textiles for the European market; however, if one was content with more temporary results and indistinct colours, local nature could offer alternatives. Eighteenth-century dye books present a way to trace the impact of the global trade in textiles and dye matter in Sweden. As in the case of the trade in Chinese silk, French fashion continued to mediate, offering names by which some colours and shades could be distinguished, but not all.

Johan Westring's lichen project represented the peak of this eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century exchange between the global and local.

Westring stands with one foot in a cameralist tradition with a strong natural history dimension, applying taxonomic knowledge in the search for import substitution. The other foot rests in a more integrated European fashion economy, where colour nomenclature and dyestuffs have become disconnected. Bridging two centuries allows us to link early-modern material culture to chemical and industrial developments. The arrival, in the late nineteenth century, of synthetic dyes on a large scale offered consumers an even greater variation of standardized, and soon to become universally-coded, colours. These outcomes are only visible if we study the chronology and geography of change in a global context and with a longer perspective. An appreciation of distance can help provide a scale to the phenomenon we are studying.

Notes

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38. Linné, *Linnés avhandling*, p. 13, n. 40, see also *Kongl. Collegii medici kundgiörelse om thet miszbruk och öfwerflöd.*

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Plate 1 The painting portrays how large chests, numbered and lined with lead, are being prepared in a packing house in Canton. More than thousand workers could be employed simultaneously packing tea for the European East India companies. On the right-hand side, in white hats, European supercargoes are busy inspecting the mounds of loose tea, probably cheap black Bohea tea. Water colour 'A tea warehouse in Canton', unknown artist, c. 1790, (Add.Or.4665) British Library.

Plate 1

Plate 2–5 Anders Berch (1711–1774) was a professor in political economy in Uppsala. Berch used his textile collections to teach his students different aspects of textile manufacturing; the idea was to encourage domestic production and discourage import. Plates 2–5 depict some of 1,662 samples in Berch collection; they are all labelled 'East Indian'. We can assume most of them originated from Asia, probably China. Sheet 94–97, Anders Berch's textile collection (Nordiska Museet), Photo: Mats Landin © Nordiska Museet.

Plate 2

Plate 3

Plate 4

Plate 5

Plate 6 Johan Peter Westring (1753–1833) studied under Linnaeus in Uppsala before graduating and becoming a provincial physician in Norrköping. Westring is most famous for his work on lichen growing in Sweden and how they could be used in the dyeing of textiles. The image depicts *Solorina crocea* which could produce some thirty tints, including 'Thé au lait', if prepared in different ways and applied on wool and silk textiles. Johan P. Westring, *Svenska lafvarnas färghistoria, eller Sättet att använda dem till färgning och annan hushållsnytta*, parts 1–8 (Stockholm, tryckt hos Carl Delén, 1805–1809), part 3 (1806). Saffrans-lafven, pp. 92–93.

Plate 6

5
Conclusion – New Chronologies and Geographies

The history of silk and tea in the North is a global history formed by many different processes, spanning different geographies and chronologies.

At the centre for the exchange in Canton was silver originating from Latin America. The mining for silver in the south-western part of the Atlantic world dates back to the Spanish conquest of America in the sixteenth century. As the maritime East India trade expanded in the following centuries silver became a central means of payment, particularly in the growing trade with China. The Danish and Swedish companies arrived relatively late to the direct trade with China. In an early eighteenth-century context they were small operators. Their neutral flags and their relative independence from other colonial ventures in Asia gave them an advantage however. They could continue trade when the superpowers of Europe were at war, and in contrast for example with the Dutch Company they did not need to bring vast amounts of pepper to Canton to exchange for tea. Paying for Chinese goods in Latin American silver, purchased in Cadiz or sourced from markets across Europe, was more expensive but it had advantages. Contracts on high quality 'Bohea Touchon', the first picking of leaves destined to become cheap black tea, could be closed without time-consuming haggling over the price of goods brought to Canton. Like a modern-day budget airline the Swedish and Danish companies benefitted from existing trade infrastructure, foremost the 'Canton system', which provided similar conditions to all traders arriving up the Pearl River to do their trade with the Hong merchants. In terms of knowhow and credit the Scandinavian companies drew on what had been generated outside the states in which they were based. The folded Ostend Company provided an organizational prototype. More importantly perhaps the

Scandinavian companies could draw on investors and personnel from the Ostend venture to finance and organize the expeditions to Canton. Once back in Copenhagen and Gothenburg, merchant networks from the Low Countries were central to channelling the Chinese goods to markets in Europe.

Approaching the history of the Scandinavian East India trade as part of a global history means moving beyond many traditional accounts of the companies, accounts that have previously been written as national histories, chronologies punctuated by institutional changes stipulated by charters or reflecting domestic conditions and politics. As this book demonstrates, while they are important jigsaw pieces these stories can only provide limited explanations for how the Scandinavian trade with Asia developed. This study can also provide important new perspectives for future histories concerned with Chinese tea cultivation and manufacturing for foreign markets, or the sericulture, spinning, weaving and dyeing of silk destined for Europe, it will hopefully become a part of the continued exploration of early-modern global trade.

The trade in Chinese silk has a much older history than that of the global movement of Latin American silver. Sericulture and silk goods moved across the Eurasian continent for almost two millennia before wrought silk became incorporated in the maritime trade organized by the European chartered companies. By then silk was a 'fashion leader' in Europe; with the help of the medium of silk new trends were set and diffused across Europe from centres such as Paris and London. While we can trace an earlier influence of Asian silk on European fashion, foremost in the form of the bizarre style, by the mid-third of the eighteenth-century Chinese silk designs did not set trends that reverberated across the Eurasian continent. Rather Chinese wrought silk conformed to European fashion and demands. This is particularly notable in the colour assortment of the silk; a pan-European, largely French nomenclature helped integrate Chinese silk into the existing market in Europe. Chinese piece goods were generally wider than European wrought goods. More importantly they were perceived as cheaper, a populuxe version of a type of good long associated with elite consumption and luxury. In Scandinavia Chinese silk soon carved a new niche, providing consumers who could not afford French or domestic silk products with a budget luxury version. Colourful silk textiles were distributed across Scandinavia, particularly to areas which had little previous experience of consuming Asian textiles. The very large importation of Chinese

silk pieces to Sweden, and the evidence of consumption we can find in sumptuary law implementation from Uppsala and Helsinki, suggest a particular craving for colourful silk dresses in the northern part of Scandinavia. The Danish realm, and foremost perhaps Denmark proper, had traded in Asian textiles for a longer period; perhaps access to colourful Indian cotton dampened the desire for cheap Chinese silk in the southern part of Scandinavia? The monopolies of the DAC and SEIC helped protect the trade in Chinese silk on the domestic markets for a few decades in the middle third of the eighteenth century. The parallel developments in Denmark and Sweden of state support for domestic silk industries promoted a relaxation of sumptuary regulations in relation to silk textiles, which also opened a window for an influx of Asian goods, at least until the middle of the eighteenth century.

The arrival of Indian cotton textiles to Europe is a standard trope in histories of consumption and change in the early-modern period. The history of silk in the North suggests a somewhat different process of change to that in the dominant accounts, which are usually concerned with consumption in England. The proposal here has been that colourful populuxe silk from China paved the way for cotton textiles in the north of Scandinavian, providing consumers with references to cosmopolitan fashion, colours and materials. The history of the Scandinavian import of Chinese silk does in this respect add an extra piece to the jigsaw that makes up the complicated history of how early-modern European consumption changed in response to the Asian import. But we need further studies that address how the silk was sold at the auctions in Gothenburg and Copenhagen, and of how they were divided into smaller parcels and moved down the wholesale and retail chains to consumers in the North.

Compared to silver and silk, tea was a new arrival to the long-distance trade. Chinese tea consumption and production spread early to Japan, and it had also travelled on Asian land routes westwards before the maritime trade with Europe began. The large, and growing, quantities of black tea that started to arrive once the direct trade with China was established signalled a shift in European consumer habits, however. The growing consumption of caffeinated drinks in Europe, the mass market for tea and coffee, and consequently also of sugar and ceramics, reflects on socio-economic processes embedded in the early-modern period. The 'epi-centre' for the Industrious Revolution was the Dutch Republic and, particularly, England. Three quarters of all tea arriving in Europe was drunk by British consumers. The expanding mass market for tea

opened up fiscal opportunities, high taxes on tea spelt high revenues for the British state. The craving for tea also attracted the attention of those manufacturing fake or recycled tea, and those dealing in smuggled tea. The Scandinavian East India companies provided for the latter; the care the Danes and the Swedes took in blending and packing their tea cargo in Canton reflects on the competition from the legal trade and the trade in 'mislabelled' goods. Since most tea consumed in Britain in the first half of the eighteenth century is likely to have been smuggled we can infer that it was the supercargoes of the continental East India companies, and wholesalers dealing in clandestine goods, who came to form and even define the British taste for tea.

The relative meaning of black tea categories such as Bohea and Congou to end consumers, and how they incorporated a wide range of different blends and leaves of different origins, is a hitherto unexplored factor in the history of how tea became popular in parts of Europe, and among consumers with small means. This material history of tea needs to be further explored and compared with other histories of recycling, substituting and eking out exotic and expensive goods.

The Commutation Act of 1784, which lowered the British tax on tea from 119 per cent to 12.5, spelt the beginning of the end of the clandestine tea trade; consequently the business rationale of the Scandinavian companies' trade with China disappeared. The trade in and consumption of tea in Britain changed even more radically in the nineteenth century, as tea production for European markets started to move out of China and into India and other parts of the British empire. The history of tea and silk in the North bridges the eighteenth-century trade in Chinese tea and the nineteenth-century rise in tea production in the British Empire. By focusing on European scholarly history we can explore this connections between them. Carolus Linnaeus and Swedish natural history provided a forum for scientific exchange in eighteenth-century Europe. At the forefront was the ambition to utilize nature for economic purposes; the breaking of the Chinese monopoly on tea by plant transfer and a relocation of the cultivation of tea shrubs was the Holy Grail. As early as the 1730s Linnaeus had begun his quest to transfer tea to Europe; at the time he was employed as the in-house naturalist of George Clifford III, a merchant banker based in the Dutch Republic but with close connections to the European East India trade, including the Swedish Company. While Linnaeus's tea plans failed, the pan-European project which he was instrumental in setting up continued. Its progress can be traced to Britain and the attempts to move tea cultivation out of China to India

orchestrated by Joseph Banks at the end of the eighteenth century. Natural history and its connections to early-modern political economy were incorporated into a colonial scientific enterprise, which a few decades later was successful in transferring tea and tea production from China to India.

The history of colour, so prominent in the silk trade, can also be connected to a history which moves beyond the eighteenth century if we focus on natural history and political economy. Like the early-modern trade in coffee and tea, the import of exotic dyes to Europe generated many substitution schemes. Over the course of the eighteenth-century scholars in the north of Europe turned to Baltic landscapes to find sources for bright tints. The early attempts reveal the challenges of exchanging exotic dyes and cosmopolitan colour schemes with home-grown materials and media; the results were undifferentiated colours described in simple terms as blue, red and yellow. By the end of eighteenth century the colour vocabularies labelling the results of the home-produced dyes had expanded greatly, suggesting not only an expansion of fashion and trends to the very north of Europe but also an ontological disconnection between colour names and colour sources, or dyes. Traditional dyes were no longer needed to produce colours that corresponded with cosmopolitan fashion. Big changes took place far and near as dyeing evolved along new chemical lines in Europe. The history of synthetic dyes and eventually universal colours, named with numbers rather than in French, belongs to the nineteenth and even twentieth centuries.

By pairing pan-European scholarly developments with discussions that centre on political economy that usually took place within national realms, we can study the effects of the Eurasian trade over a longer time frame and across wider geographies. The history of the failure or success of plant transfers or import substitutions becomes less important, and what stands out instead is the continuous search for caffeine and colours, and the subsequent effects on consumption, production, exploration and exploitation.

To sum up, the history of Chinese tea and silk in northern Europe is a history that spans the globe, connecting Canton with Copenhagen and Gothenburg, as well as Ostend, Amsterdam and London. Moreover, it interlinks with the more well-known European histories of tea consumption in Britain and less well-known stories of silk populuxe consumption in Scandinavia. By moving from material history to political economy and the history of science the perspective can be extended into the early nineteenth century, the rise of the second

British Empire in Asia and the creation of synthetic dyes in Europe. The history of tea and silk in the North is in other words a history relevant not only to Scandinavia but also to histories that extend geographically and chronologically far beyond Sweden and Denmark in the middle third of the eighteenth century.

Appendix 1

Tea imported by DAC and SEIC 1733–1767 (kg)

Sale Year Europe	Company	Number of known cargo contents	Bohea	Bing	Congou	Soatchou	Singlo	Hyson	Hyson Skin	Pekoe	Ziou Ziong	Tonkay	Diverse	Total cargo kg
1733	SEIC	0 out of 1												
1735	DAC	1 out of 1	280,712	4,183	15,910	726		1,595		7,152			28,480	338,759
1736	SEIC	0 out of 1												
1737	DAC	1 out of 1	242,270	7,458	13,908		14,235	793		9,973	806			289,442
1737	SEIC	0 out of 1												
1738	DAC	1 out of 1	288,649	3,495	9,787		8,574			3,237				313,742
1738	SEIC	0 out of 1												
1739	DAC	1 out of 1	258,599	3,582	1,610		48,795	1,288		1,212				315,087
1739	SEIC	1 out of 2	112,745	3,209	7,365	9,984	20,560			4,697			130	160,690
1739	Scan. total		371,344	6,791	8,975	9,984	69,355	1,288		5,909			130	475,777
1740	DAC	1 out of 1	270,989	7,007	3,310		55,279			3,353				339,937
1740	SEIC	1 out of 1	271,460	3,479	2,221	2,027	13,305						2,556	295,048
1740	Scan. total		542,449	10,486	5,531	2,027	68,584			3,353			2,556	634,985
1741	DAC	2 out of 2	635,106	8,078	5,902		100,921	1,898		6,057	1,936			759,900
1742	SEIC	3 out of 3	721,216	12,228	14,992	14,672	53,266	63		12,367			1,807	830,611

(*continued*)

Appendix 1 Continued

Sale Year Europe	Company	Number of known cargo contents	Bohea	Bing	Congou	Soatchou	Singlo	Hyson	Hyson Skin	Pekoe	Ziou Ziong	Tonkay	Diverse	Total cargo kg
1743	DAC	1 out of 1	307,038	3,449	3,812		264,99	2,360		3,509	726			347,391
1743	SEIC	1 out of 1	257,852	3,493		5,058	24,421			3,221			457	294,502
1743	Scan. total		564,890	6,942	3,812	5,058	50,920	2,360		6,730	726		457	641,893
1744	DAC	1 out of 1	332,750		3,025		36,300	908		3,630	1,210			377,823
1745	DAC	1 out of 1	311,109	968	3,630		45,369	1,573		1,513	2,113			366,274
1745	SEIC	3 out of 3	740,779	4,593	24,056	14,519	8,633			10,256			2,133	804,969
1745	Scan. total		1,051,888	5,561	27,686	14,519	54,002	1,573		11,769	2,113		2,133	1,171,243
1746	DAC	1 out of 1	157,408	1,198	3,025		25,209	834		3,660	1,210			192,544
1747	DAC	2 out of 2	680,211	1,842	8,175		46,652	1,569		6,449	3,378			748,277
1747	SEIC	1 out of 2	214,785		15,595	31,448								261,828
1747	Scan. total		894,996	1,842	23,770	31,448	46,652	1,569		6,449	3,378			1,010,105
1748	DAC	2 out of 2	583,962	5,039	51,147		91,049	4,366		14,823	7,293		1,320	758,999
1748	SEIC	3 out of 3	797,993		26,288	23,688				5,239			542	853,750
1748	Scan. total		1,381,955	5,039	77,435	23,688	91,049	4,366		20,062	7,293		1,862	1,612,749
1749	DAC	2 out of 2	763,390	2,228	13,720		99,146	2,837	6,187	12,208	3,972		432	904,120
1749	SEIC	3 out of 3	760,488	3,329	36,766	48,084	6,162	14,757		7,208			143	876,937
1749	Scan. total		1,523,878	5,557	50,486	48,084	105,308	17,594	6,187	19,416	3,972		575	1,781,057
1750	DAC	2 out of 2	679,641	4,550	26,434		85,074	1,892		15,524	6,814		457	820,386
1750	SEIC	1 out of 1	277,079	2,349	10,186	14,546	13,885	2,505		3,340			827	324,717
1750	Scan. total		956,720	6,899	36,620	14,546	98,959	4,397		18,864	6,814		1,284	1,145,103
1751	DAC	2 out of 2	919,672	1,815	21,432		51,584	3,052	11,790	1,838	1,815			1,012,998
1751	SEIC	2 out of 2	801,592	4,771	35,768	33,963	16,251	16,983		16,550			2,864	928,742
1751	Scan. total		1,721,264	6,586	57,200	33,963	67,835	20,035	11,790	18,388	1,815		2,864	1,941,740
1752	DAC	1 out of 1	403,838	1,815	29,766		12,826	1,392	5,324	1,392	2,662			459,014

1752	SEIC	2 out of 2	774,676	3,552	68,848	46,096		1,596	3,370	12,379			2,329	912,846
1752	Scan. total		1,178,514	5,367	98,614	46,096	12,826	2,988	8,694	13,771	2,662		2,329	1,371,860
1753	DAC	3 out of 3	1,169,163	2,481	91,476		26,499	4,598	12,645	4,477	2,723			1,320,413
1753	SEIC	1 out of 1	397,963	1,535	58,349	8,370	12,182	2,808		8,154			1,785	491,146
1753	Scan. total		1567,126	4,016	149,825	8,370	38,681	7,406	12,645	12,631	2,723		1,785	1,811,559
1754	DAC	2 out of 2	783,774	5,052	48,948		30,163	1,908	3,351	8,580	2,390			884,167
1754	SEIC	3 out of 3	861,985	5,746	176,591	22,741	17,598	15,657		12,318			5,022	1,117,658
1754	Scan. total		1,645,759	10,798	225,539	22,741	47,761	17,565	3,351	20,898	2,390		5,022	2,001,825
1755	DAC	1 out of 1	382,723	1,210	40,838		8,349	2,541	5,445	2,420	1,452			444,978
1756	SEIC	3 out of 4	1,245,133	3,607	300,155	41,579	1,606	5,870	4,497	9,816			2,914	1,615,177
1757	DAC	1 out of 1	356,712	1,210	18,953		19,874	5,279	574	4,719	1,863		303	409,488
1757	SEIC	1 out of 1	382,291	6,828	56,154	28,494	10,200	7,468		9,065			439	500,939
1757	Scan. total		739,003	8,038	75,107	28,494	30,074	12,747	574	13,784	1,863		742	910,427
1758	DAC	1 out of 1	329,415	1,158	37,659		40,126	2,957	6,573	3,119	1,755		385	423,147
1758	SEIC	1 out of 1	334,551	2,446	81,794	18,731	6,267	5,006		6,010			519	455,324
1758	Scan. total		663,966	3,604	119,453	18,731	46,393	7,963	6,573	9,129	1,755		904	878,471
1759	DAC	1 out of 1	355,251	1,181	47,951		6,679	1,627	6,090	3,025	1,513		1,189	424,506
1759	SEIC	2 out of 2	929,927	3,910	128,776	44,886	10,016	4,312		10,288			606	1,132,721
1759	Scan. total		1,285,178	5,091	176,727	44,886	16,695	5,939	6,090	13,313	1,513		1,795	1,557,227
1760	DAC	3 out of 3	1,059,570	1,427	113,484		14,686	2,166	5,507	11,180	6,665		1,187	1,215,871
1761	DAC	2 out of 2	599,071	2,360	46,767		38,539	5,808		5,687	1,452	23,474	121	723,278
1761	SEIC	2 out of 4	934,680	2,580	106,552	22,781	13,991	4,583	4,808	6,712		18,340	655	1,115,722
1761	Scan. total		1,533,751	4,940	153,319	22,781	52,530	10,391	4,808	12,399	1,452	41,814	776	1,839,000
1762	DAC	1 out of 1	346,847	1,392	34,122		10,890	1,694	3,267	3,570	2,965	5,264	61	410,069
1762	SEIC	1 out of 1	551,401		78,432	7,175	6,123	1,598	1,358	1,993			212	648,292
1762	Scan. total		898,248	1,392	112,554	7,175	17,013	3,292	4,625	5,563	2,965	5,264	273	1,058,361
1763	DAC	2 out of 2	1,060,928	2,783	75,020		25,047	4,719	11,677	8,289	4,417	7,018		1,199,897
1763	SEIC	2 out of 2	1,059,141	3,039	133,795	20,176	10,113	4,648	3,131	3,954			394	1,238,391

(*continued*)

Appendix 1 Continued

Sale Year Europe	Company	Number of known cargo contents	Bohea	Bing	Congou	Soatchou	Singlo	Hyson	Hyson Skin	Pekoe	Ziou Ziong	Tonkay	Diverse	Total cargo kg
1763	Scan. total		2,120,069	5,822	208,815	20,176	35,160	9,367	14,808	12,243	4,417	7,018	394	2,438,288
1764	DAC	3 out of 3	1,110,720	1,573	95,832		31,218	3,933	6,716	6,413	7,805	5,990	847	1,271,105
1764	SEIC	2 out of 2	921,658	2,279	131,318	10,373	7,178	3,173	6,113	2,163			595	1,084,850
1764	Scan. total		2,032,378	3,852	227,150	10,373	38,396	7,106	12,829	8,576	7,805	5,990	1,442	2,355,955
1765	DAC	2 out of 2	900,119	2,965	84,156		15,912	5,385	7,865	8,107	3,146	16,517		1,044,291
1765	SEIC	1 out of 1	505,083	1,172	81,978	12,485		5,746	1,551	1,230		4,341	339	613,925
1765	Scan. total		1,405,202	4,137	166,134	12,485	15,912	11,131	9,416	9,337	3,146	20,858	339	1,658,216
1766	DAC	2 out of 2	758,610	1,755	55,116		18,090	6,413	6,837	5,143	5,445	7,381	61	864,848
1766	SEIC	1 out of 2	499,214	694	33,360	6,435	5,272	2,694	862	3,299			178	552,008
1766	Scan. total		1,257,824	2,449	88,476	6,435	23,362	9,107	7,699	8,442	5,445	7,381	239	1,416,856
1767	DAC	1 out of 1	429,369	1,150	60,682		12,342	4,780	5,566	5,869	3,328	11,072	61	534,215
1767	SEIC	2 out of 2	912,200	1,627	131,593	15,396	8,582	7,625	1,881	5,778			605	1,085,287
1767	Scan. total		1,341,569	2,777	192,275	15,396	20,924	12,405	7,447	11,647	3,328	11,072	666	1,619,502

Sources: Negotiation protocol 1116–1154; Kasse- og hovedbog fra Kinaskibe 2190–2231, DAC, RAC; 'Tea cargoes (in kg)' in Koninckx, Christian. *The first and second charters of the Swedish East India Company, 1731–1766: A contribution to the maritime, economic and social history of North-Western Europe in its relationships with the Far East* (Kortrijk: Van Ghemmert, 1980), pp. 451–452; Andersen-Juul, John. 'Asiatisk Kompagnis Kinahandel 1732–1772', unpublished essay (special historie), Department of History, University of Copenhagen, 1978.

Appendix 2

Silk import by DAC and SEIC 1733–1759 (pieces)

Year of arrival in Europe	Company	Total number of silk pieces*	Damask bed (Meuble)	Damask poisee	Damask other	Paduasoys	Pekins	Grogram or Gorgoroon	Satin	Taffeta	Illustring	Other
1733	SEIC	9,087	358	859	654	164	2,142	2,391	691	1,345	120	363
1735	DAC	401			200	100	100	1				
1736	SEIC	6,267	601		2,538	270		27	1,424	885	89	433
1739	DAC	34			34							6
1740	DAC	800	200	170				180	150	100		
1742	SEIC	15,004	582	4,917	206	1,367		1,021	1,407	4,704	6	794
1743	DAC	238					238					
1743	SEIC	5,871	310	1,699	100	657		702	629	1,668		106
1745	SEIC	22,148	802	6,692	817	4,694	6	1,989	819	5,502	63	764
1746	DAC	3,057	240	1,080		522	707	100	70		338	
1747	SEIC	5,380	244		2,869	451		433	91	1,262	15	15
1748	DAC	480		200		100	180					
1748	SEIC	19,385	1,124	8,346	260	1,793		920	405	6,293	7	237
1749	SEIC	11,641	740	4,592	82	1,991		582	683	2,838	72	61
1750	DAC	100				100						
1751	DAC	250	150								100	
1751	SEIC	1,725	90	502	1	538		80	52	454		8
1752	DAC	2,555	200	650		550	715				440	
1752	SEIC	8,921	260	2,537	115	1,177		341	1,417	3,043		31

(*continued*)

Appendix 2 Continued

Year of arrival in Europe	Company	Total number of silk pieces*	Damask bed (Meuble)	Damask poisee	Damask other	Paduasoys	Pekins	Grogram or Gorgoroon	Satin	Taffeta	Illustring	Other
1753	DAC	1,190	100	500		280	310					
1753	SEIC	5,746	300	2,290	2	616		313	427	1,793		5
1754	DAC	3,234	100	800		410	1,030		195	150	478	71
1754	SEIC	11,657	355	2,982	7	1,591		1,376	4,516	762	3	65
1755	DAC	1,324	120	450		30	400			147	116	61
1755	SEIC	16				8			3	5		
1756	DAC	4,897	400	899	235	710	1,535		306		680	132
1756	SEIC	419	30	122		118				149		
1757	DAC	5,090	500	850	200	800	1,300		370	200	750	120
1757	SEIC	1,886	120	1,000	60	50				286		370
1758	DAC	2,692	100	600		644	600		50	200	498	20
1758	SEIC	3,810	140	1,340		406		130	50	1,700	36	8
1759	DAC	644	30	250		200	100		60			4
1759	SEIC	175			1	7			8	132		27
SEIC total		129,138	6,056	37,878	7,712	15,898	2,148	10,305	12,622	32,821	411	3,287
DAC total		26,986	2,140	6,449	669	4,446	7,215	281	1,201	797	3,400	414
Scandinavian total		156,124	8,196	44,327	8,381	20,344	9,363	10,586	13,823	33,618	3,811	3,701

*These figures include large piece goods in silk. Pieces called peelings and handkerchiefs have been excluded, as have readymade clothes or material prepared to become clothes. No pieces bought on behalf of the Danish royal house or to use as gifts on St. Helena have been included.

Sources: Kasse-Hovedbøger: 2190; 2192–2193; 2195–2196; 2199; 2204–2205; 2207–2208; 2209b; 2211. Negotie-Protocoler: 1120–1121; 1127; 1129–1131; 1134; 1136–1137, DAC, RAC.

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