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Willem-Jan van Grondelle and Els Vermij

From immigrant to rich merchant, the lives and adventures of four Gotlanders in Amsterdam

Willem-Jan van Grondelle and Els Vermij, both experienced genealogists, as members of the marine archaeological excavation project #Rooswijk1740 conducted research into the crew of the Dutch East-Indiaman Rooswijk, which foundered in 1740. In addition to a research report, they published various articles on the origins and the adventures of individual crew members of the Rooswijk. They are now focusing their research on Swedish immigrants in Amsterdam, mainly from the Baltic Sea island of Gotland.

In 1775, the Swedish immigrant Jacobus Swarth (1727-1787) and his family in Amsterdam had themselves portrayed in full regalia by the well-known painter Hendrik Pothoven (fig. 1). We see a wealthy businessman with his family in a stately house on the Keizersgracht, with in the background a telling glimpse through the open window to a seascape with sailing ships. In this article Willem-Jan van Grondelle and Els Vermij describe how Swarth and his half-brother Hans Nicolaas Lunge developed into wealthy Amsterdam merchants after a fast career with the Dutch East India Company (VOC). Their Gotlandish relatives Johannes Fåhraeus and Johan Joachim Laurin joined them, forming a small but successful Swedish trade network. They belonged to the notable merchants, lived on the Keizers- and Herengracht and took part in social life in all kinds of ways. Some of their descendants also became active in business. This 'success story' raises the question to what extent this Gotland trading family was representative of Swedish immigrants in Amsterdam in the second half of the eighteenth century.

SWEDISH IMMIGRANTS IN AMSTERDAM

Since the end of the sixteenth century Amsterdam has attracted large numbers of immigrants. Initially these were mainly religious refugees from France and the Southern Netherlands, but the emphasis soon shifted to economic migration. People from all over the world moved to Amsterdam in search of work and a better future. The population increased explosively as a result of immigration, especially in the seventeenth century, but the eighteenth century also shows a continuous influx of immigrants. Amsterdam thus became a real migrant city.

The places of origin of these immigrants are not always known, because there was no general population registration at that time. However, on the basis of the Amsterdam marriage bann register, the places of origin of brides and grooms between 1600 and 1800 can be traced. It turns out that in the first half of the seventeenth century, 66 percent of the marriage partners came from outside the city. This share later declined, but in the second half of the eighteenth century about fifty percent of the newlyweds still came from outside the city. In that period about half of them came from the Republic (excluding Amsterdam) and almost half from abroad (mainly the southern Netherlands, the German interior, the German coastal areas and

Scandinavia). The proportion of Scandinavians in the total of foreign immigrants was 8.2 percent in those years. About one fifth of these came from Sweden. Most came from Stockholm and from larger towns on the Swedish west coast. However, they also came - in smaller numbers - from places along the Baltic Sea, including the Baltic Sea island of Gotland.

JACOBUS SWARTH AND HANS NICOLAAS LUNGE IN THE SERVICE OF THE DUTCH EAST INDIA COMPANY (VOC)

Jacobus Swarth was born on 31 May 1727 in Visby on Gotland as Jacob Swart, son of Jacob Swart and Metta Dorothea Sternberg. His grandfather Jacob Swart was a magistrate in Visby, his maternal grandfather was a wig maker. His father made two trips to India as an experienced sailor in the service of the Dutch East India Company and then returned to Gotland to become a brewer there. He apparently did not like life as a brewer, because soon after the birth of his son Jacob he left for sea again. In 1729 he signed up again as an experienced sailor at the VOC. He sailed with the ship Gaasperdam to the Indies, where he died in 1734. His wife Metta remarried in 1738 to Hans Jacob Lynge, a wine cooper from Copenhagen, with whom she continued the brewery and with whom she had four children, two daughters and two sons. Only the two sons, Hans Nicolas and Hendrik Adolf, reached adulthood.

Jacob Swarth junior went to sea around the age of sixteen. He sailed via Stockholm to Amsterdam, from where he first made a trip to Lisbon as a sailor. Then between 1744 and 1759 he made six voyages to the Indies, rising from experienced sailor to skipper (fig. 2). After returning from his fourth voyage, which he made as first mate, Swarth married Anna Maria Tekelenburg in October 1754, daughter of Gerrit Wilhelm Tekelenburg and Aaltje Lub (fig. 3). Gerrit Tekelenburg was a tailor and a burgher of the city of Amsterdam. Through his marriage to this burgher's daughter Swarth also obtained citizenship. Jacobus Swarth and Anna Maria Tekelenburg initially lived on the north side of the Anjeliersgracht. Shortly after their marriage the family moved to the Singel. In 1761 they moved into a stately canal house on the west side of Keizersgracht, 'the sixth house north of Prinsenstraat' (now no. 76). They were to have a total of fifteen children, six of whom reached adulthood, viz. their two sons Gerrit and Hans Jacob, and four daughters, including Anna Maria and Dorothea Hester.

On his last two voyages, Swarth took his half-brother Hans Nicolaas Lunge - who had now come over from Gotland - on board as a junior seaman and quartermaster, respectively. Lunge, born in 1740 in Visby, had come to Amsterdam in 1756 after the death of his mother in 1753 and the bankruptcy of the brewery, together with his father and his five years younger brother Hendrik Adolf. Hans Nicolaas first sailed to France as a sailor and then made two voyages with the VOC under the watchful eye of his thirteen years older half-brother Jacobus Swarth. After that he sailed four more times to the Indies, the last time in 1769 as first mate (fig. 4). After his fifth journey, in August 1766, he married Hester Tekelenburg, the half-sister of Jacobus' wife Anna Maria. Hans Nicolaas and Hester went to live on the Rozengracht, not far from the Keizersgracht. The two families were in close contact. Besides the business collaboration between Jacobus and Hans Nicolaas (see below), Hans Nicolaas and Hester were also witnesses at the baptisms of six children of Jacobus and Anna Maria.

JACOBUS SWARTH, MERCHANT IN AMSTERDAM (1760-1770)

Immediately after his marriage, Jacobus Swarth undertook all kinds of trading activities. That is why, prior to his trip in 1755, he authorized his father-in-law, Gerrit Wilhelm Tekelenburg, and before his last trip - in 1757 - also his wife Anna Maria, to handle all his affairs, including

the buying and selling of goods, during his 'outlandishness', collecting bills of exchange, et cetera. After returning from his last journey in 1759, he continued his activities as a merchant in Amsterdam. During his VOC travels he had probably already saved a considerable sum of money, not only with his wages as first mate and skipper, but especially also with private trade. VOC employees - especially in the higher ranks - could earn a lot of money by taking all kinds of goods on the outward journey and selling them in Asia. Then they brought precious Indian goods with them on the journey home to sell them at a profit in the Netherlands. Officially, there were strict restrictions on the amount of private goods on the return journey, because the cargo space of the ship was primarily intended for the trade of goods of the VOC itself. In practice, however, these rules were regularly ignored. In addition, the smuggling of silver to the Indies also provided many with an interesting extra income due to exchange differences. Many skippers borrowed considerable sums of money before departure in order to make money one way or another. In 1755, Swarth also took out a loan of thousand guilders from the Rotterdam merchant Augustinus van der Crap for his journey with the *Amstelveen*. In addition, his wife Anna Maria was not without private means either. In 1757, after her father's death, she inherited an amount of 4,099 guilders. Be that as it may, the fact that Swarth and his family moved to a prestigious and expensive building on the Keizersgracht as early as 1761, indicates that he already had a substantial starting capital at the start of his trading business. The choice of a house on the Keizersgracht also suited the desired image of a reliable merchant. His commercial acumen was also evident from the fact that he changed his name from Swart to Swarth early on because – he later told his children – ‘there were many people here who wrote Sward or Swart, who were not related’.

Not much is known about Swarth's business activities in the early years. It is clear that - like many Amsterdam merchants - he had all kinds of international trade contacts and that he also acted as a representative of merchants elsewhere (fig. 5). Many of his contacts were connected with his former employer, the VOC. From 1765 onwards, he mainly supplied goods to high-ranking VOC servants on the Cape of Good Hope, as evidenced by the many authorizations and so-called ‘exchange protests’ in the archives of notary Gerardus Wijthoff.

In addition to his business activities, Swarth occasionally also served family interests. Thus, in 1765, he acted on behalf of his aunt Helena Christina Swart, widow of Jan Bähr, to ensure that the earned wages of her son Jacob Bähr, who had died while travelling as a sailor to Curaçao, were collected. That was not new for Swarth, by the way. Ten years earlier his help had also been called in by his cousin Maria Elisabeth in Visby to claim the estate of her father Johan Swart, who had died at Gale in Ceylon.

SWARTH & LUNGE, MERCHANTS IN AMSTERDAM (1770-1790)

In 1769 Swarth expanded his trading activities. He entered into a partnership with his half-brother Hans Nicolaas Lunge, who had just returned from his sixth and final voyage to East-India. From that moment on they formed the firm named Swarth & Lunge. As a trading house they developed all kinds of activities. Thus, they supplied goods to high VOC officials in Batavia and at the Cape of Good Hope. Payments were made via ‘bills of exchange’. Swarth and Lunge had regular trade representatives in many cities, which they always authorized by notarial deeds to look after their interests there.

Besides the fact that Swarth and Lunge sold goods all over the world, the company was also sometimes authorized by VOC employees to collect their earned wages from the wage offices in the other VOC cities of Delft, Enkhuizen, Hoorn, Middelburg or Rotterdam. If necessary, Swarth and Lunge authorized an intermediary in the city in question, who would then collect the money for them. They also acted as representatives of fellow countrymen in the service of the VOC. For example, in 1774 they arranged the settlement of the estate of the

skipper Cornelis Klingwall (fig. 6). And in 1779 they received the estate of the second mate Martinus Kolmodin, who had died on his homebound journey with the *Venus* (fig. 7). They did this on behalf of his parents, who lived on Gotland.

In the meantime, the house on Keizersgracht apparently became too small, as the family now included six children. In 1777 the Swarth family moved to larger premises on the Keizersgracht, nine houses down the road (now no. 58) (Fig. 8).

In the 1780s Swarth & Lunge also acted as ship owners, sending several ships to Suriname to get cotton, sugar and coffee. They were also active in the field of money lending and maritime insurance. In 1781, for instance, they took part for 17,225 guilders in a broader package of so-called 'bottomry loans' - a loan with ship and/or cargo as collateral, whereby the lender bore the 'risk of the sea' - of a total of 139,880 guilders to two Portuguese merchants. The security of the Portuguese was the ship *Nossa Senhora d' Ajada e Sao Pedro Principe da Beira*, which was to sail from Canton to Lisbon.

In 1787 the collaboration between the half-brothers Swarth and Lunge ended with the death of Jacobus Swarth on 23 February. Swarth was buried in style, 'with carriages' in the New Lutheran Church. Lunge initially continued the business with Jacobus' widow, but he also died a year and a half later. The death of both partners meant the end of the Swarth & Lunge company. The firm was renamed the 'Widow Jacobus Swarth & Son', managed by Swarth's widow and her eldest son Gerrit, who had for about eight years working as a merchant in partnership with Johannes Fåhraeus.

JOHANNES FÅHRAEUS AND GERRIT SWARTH (1780-1790)

Merchant Johannes Fåhraeus was a descendant of the prominent Fåhraeus family in Visby, the capital of Gotland. Grandfather Olof Fåhraeus had been the head of a Gotland trading company. Father Lars Fåhraeus and brother Olof were also merchants and owners of several ships with which they traded around the Baltic Sea. The Fåhraeus and Swarth families were closely linked through marriage and business relations. Presumably, the favourable trading prospects in Amsterdam and the financial success of Jacobus Swarth and Hans Nicolaas Lunge had become known within the family circle in Visby. This must have played a role in the decision of the Fåhraeus firm to strengthen its ties with Amsterdam and send one of its relatives there to try his luck. Whatever the reasons, Johannes Fåhraeus, born in 1745, came to Amsterdam in 1767 and later started the trading house Fåhraeus & Swarth together with Gerrit Swarth, the eldest son of Jacobus Swarth.

Bills of exchange show that they initially did business with merchants in Hamburg and Livorno (Italy) among other European cities. What goods they traded in is not mentioned in these deeds. In addition to European trade, they also became involved in trade with the West Indies. Thus, in 1788, Fåhraeus and Swarth bought coffee and cotton from the Swaanenschuts plantation in the Demerara colony (now Guyana).

Like many merchants at the time, Fåhraeus and Swarth also invested in ships, taking part in shipping companies. They regularly acted as 'correspondent' when signing for a ship's crew or as accountant for a shipping company. As part-owners they signed for several ships leaving Amsterdam harbour for voyages to Suriname. Also, in 1784 the firm of Fåhraeus & Swarth, as the representative of the joint owners of the ship *Anna Maria*, requested an arrangement for the damage which the ship had sustained on a stormy voyage from Suriname to Amsterdam.

Another line of business was lending. In 1786 Fåhraeus & Swarth arranged a loan of 40,000 guilders for Jan Gerard Wichers, Governor-General of Suriname. Fåhraeus & Swarth financed this loan by issuing 40 shares of 1,000 guilders each, with an interest rate of 6 percent per year. Wichers gave the plantations Stolkwijk and Zeewijk as collateral for this

loan. A year later they arranged another loan, this time of 15,000 guilders for Mr. Cornelis Wilhelm Jacob Meurs, Second Tax Council of the colony of Suriname, and his wife Maria Helena Geertruijd van Liesvelt, the owners of half of the Zeezicht plantation. This loan was also financed by the issue of shares of 1,000 guilders, with an interest of 4.5 percent per year, with the plantation as collateral. These loans marked the beginning of an intensive involvement of Johannes Fåhraeus in particular in the financing of plantations, after 1790 with his new partner Johan Joachim Laurin.

As mentioned above, Johannes Fåhraeus initially worked in partnership with Gerrit Swarth, but this changed after 1787. In that year a new Gotlander joined the firm of Fåhraeus & Swarth: Johan Joachim Laurin, a cousin of Johannes Fåhraeus, who came to Amsterdam in 1783 with his brother Gustaf. Gustaf went sailing for the VOC and Johan Joachim initially worked as an accountant at Fåhraeus & Swarth (fig. 9), who apparently had a lot of faith in him, as at the end of 1788 he was sent to Sweden with a general authorization to handle affairs there on behalf of the firm. Apparently this trip was a success, as Laurin soon became a business partner of his uncle Fåhraeus. Around 1790, after the death of both Swarth and Lunge, the company name was changed to Fåhraeus & Laurin.

TRADING HOUSE FÅHRAEUS & LAURIN (1790-1820)

In 1790 the business activities within the family were divided between two new trading companies: the Widow Jacobus Swarth & Son and Fåhraeus & Laurin (fig. 10). The former, run by Anna Maria Tekelenburg and her son Gerrit, continued to focus on trade with the Cape of Good Hope and the East Indies. Fåhraeus & Laurin would become increasingly involved in trade with the West Indian colonies. They also worked closely with a younger brother of Johannes Joachim, Olof Laurin, who initially settled in Hamburg and then in Suriname and Demerara (now Guyana) respectively (fig. 11).

One year after the death of Hans Nicolaas Lunge, Fåhraeus married Hester Tekelenburg, Lunge's widow. They first continued to live on the Rozengracht in the house where Hans Nicolaas Lunge and Hester Tekelenburg had lived. A year later they moved to Herengracht 530 (now 420) (fig. 12) and the house on the Rozengracht was sold.

Fåhraeus & Laurin's affairs went well. They had international contacts and traded in all kinds of goods. For example, they offered for sale a batch of Swedish iron plates, stored in the basement of the house on the Rozengracht. They also traded with merchants in Bordeaux, presumably they bought wine and perhaps salt from that area. And in the 1790s they also traded with plantation owners in the West Indies, such as with the aforementioned plantation Swaanenschuts in the colony of Demerara.

Fåhraeus and Laurin also combined their trade with activities in the shipping business. As important joint-owners of shipping companies, they regularly acted as the company's representative at the signing up of ships' crews. Their ships had various destinations such as Alicante, Cádiz, Lisbon, Gothenburg and places on the Baltic Sea, as well as Suriname. During the war between France and England (1793-1815) their ships sailed under Swedish flag. As the Netherlands were occupied by the French, and the French were at war with England, Dutch ships were considered hostile and therefore ran a great risk of being taken by the English. Ships sailing under the neutral Swedish flag, on the other hand, could according to maritime law not be taken. In order to register his ships in Sweden, Laurin settled temporarily in Gothenburg in 1795 and successfully applied for citizenship there. There he entered into a partnership with the Gothenburg merchant Johan Sahlsteen and acted on behalf of the Sahlsteen & Laurin firm. Incidentally, their ship *Gustaf Adolph* was captured by the English in 1796 on its way from Suriname to Gothenburg and taken to Portsmouth.

PLANTATION LOANS AND SLAVE SHIPS

In addition to the trading of goods and the ownership of shipping companies, Fåhraeus and Laurin also focused on financial services, especially in relation to the West Indian colonies. Thus, the company was actively involved in so-called plantation loans or negotiations. Plantation loans had been the financial basis for many plantations in the colonies of Suriname, Demerara, Essequibo and Berbice since 1750. A negotiation was a stock fund of a trading house, where investors put in money by buying shares and from which plantation owners could borrow money with the plantations (including the enslaved people) as collateral. In 1791, Fåhraeus & Laurin arranged a negotiation for Arend Ludolph Sichterman, second Fiscal Counsel of the colony of Suriname, when he bought, jointly with Willem Six, the plantation Voorburg from the Directorate of the colony of Suriname for 70,000 guilders. In 1791 they also organized a negotiation of 40,000 guilders for the plantation Swaanenschuts in the colony of Demerara. This plantation was owned by Stephanus Swen and his wife Maria Margaretha Fabre. Fåhraeus was the director of the negotiation in Amsterdam. Every year he published advertisements in leading newspapers, calling on inviting the shareholders to collect the annual interest and - after ten years - sometimes also part of the repayment.

In 1793 Fåhraeus & Laurin arranged another negotiation, this time for the plantations Alsimo and Edinburg in the colony of Suriname. These coffee plantations were owned by the heirs of the late Mr. A. L. Sichterman. In the following years, Fåhraeus announced annually in advertisements that interest could be collected at his office on the bonds of this plantation loan. In some years after 1803, ten percent of investors' deposits were also repaid.

Fåhraeus and Laurin were not only involved in the financing of plantations and trade in plantation products, but also in the purchase and transportation of enslaved Africans to the West Indian colonies. They were the owners of at least two slave ships sailing under Swedish flag, the *D'Elmina Pacquet*, Captain Marten Dreewes, and the *Sweriges Wapen*, Captain Abraham Brink. The *D'Elmina Pacquet* left Amsterdam in September 1794 for the coast of Guinea and then sailed to Suriname with 228 captured Africans. These enslaved people were branded as soon as they came on board. 82 of them were branded with the letters FL, the rest with other letter codes representing other owners. The *Sweriges Wapen* sailed from Texel to the African coast in February 1796, and from there with 176 enslaved Africans to the West Indies. The latter journey became a difficult one, as the *Sweriges Wapen* was seized by the English off the island of Grenada and the cargo was confiscated. Captain Brink's attempts to obtain compensation from the British government in London proved in vain.

TWO NOTABLE MERCHANTS

With all these contacts, it was not surprising that Johannes Fåhraeus was appointed director of the Society of Suriname in 1793. This Society was set up in 1680 with the permission of the States-General by the West India Company, the city of Amsterdam and the Zeeland entrepreneur Cornelis van Aerssen van Sommelsdijck. As a private company, the Society was responsible for the management and defence of the colony of Suriname. In the 1790s, there was a call to end this special position and to manage the colonies directly by the central government. As a result, Fåhraeus' main task, as newly appointed director, was organising the dissolution of the Society, which was completed after lengthy negotiations on October 19, 1795. His appointment was therefore short-lived.

After the Society's dissolution, most of the plantations continued to exist. It still happened that a plantation had to be sold publicly due to bankruptcy. In 1807, for example, an announcement in the *Amsterdamsche Courant* was published that the coffee plantation De Uitkomst in the colony of Demerara would be auctioned by order of the Court of Justice in

response to a lawsuit by O.J. Laurin and W.C. Bertling. The inventory of this plantation could be viewed daily at the office of Johannes Fåhraeus in Amsterdam and at J.J. Kotwijk and Senn van Babel in Demerara. Anyone who assumed to be entitled to (part of) the proceeds was requested to register.

In these years, Fåhraeus also acted as a representative and confidant of influential West Indian relations. Thus, in 1808, he was one of the executors of the estate of the aforementioned Jan Gerhard Wichers, former Governor-General of Suriname.

The Swedish immigrants Johannes Fåhraeus and Johan Joachim Laurin now belonged to the circle of 'notable' merchants within Amsterdam. From 1787 till 1798 Fåhraeus was a member of Felix Meritis, a cultural and scientific society dedicated to promoting the ideals of the Enlightenment (fig. 13). And when elections were held in Amsterdam in 1812 for members and deputies of the newly established Commercial Court, both were on the list of important merchants called to cast their votes.

A BEAUTIFUL COUNTRY ESTATE AND A HOUSE ON THE HERENGRACHT

All these activities were very profitable for Fåhraeus and Laurin. In December 1800 Fåhraeus and his wife Hester Tekelenburg bought the country estate Vechtenstein near Maarssen. Vechtenstein was one of the many residences along the river Vecht that were very popular with wealthy Amsterdammers (fig. 14). Nine years later, Hester Tekelenburg died there on November 22, 1809. She was buried in Amsterdam. Johannes continued to live at this estate until 1819, when he sold Vechtenstein and bought the Bolenstein country estate - also in Maarssen - instead (fig. 15). Two years later he died there on January 7, 1821, aged 75. His nephew Johan Joachim Laurin placed an obituary in the newspaper and settled the estate. Bolenstein was sold on June 23, 1821. Three days later, 'furniture and other movable goods' were also auctioned.

Johan Joachim Laurin also became a prosperous man through all the trading activities. In 1803 he married Johanna Dorothea Luijken, who was six years his senior, a plantation daughter from Suriname and the widow of the wine merchant Philippus Taddel. Uncle Johannes Fåhraeus and aunt Hester Tekelenburg acted as witnesses. Laurin and Johanna Dorothea Luijken went to live at Keizersgracht 661 (now 568). In 1810 they moved to Herengracht 505 (now 370) (fig. 16). Johanna Dorothea Luijken already had four children, three daughters and a son, from her first marriage. In 1806 she and Laurin had another son, named Johan. After Fåhraeus had retired to his country estate in Maarssen permanently, Laurin continued the firm under the name Laurin & Co. He died in 1822, his wife Dorothea died twelve years later.

NEXT-GENERATION TRADING ACTIVITIES

Laurin's stepson Hendrik Gerrit Taddel continued the business after Laurin's death, presumably together with his half-brother Johan. Johan died in Suriname in 1840. In 1845 Hendrik Gerrit Taddel 'merchant, calling himself and writing Taddel Laurin' went bankrupt.

Jacobus Swarth's eldest daughter, Anna Maria Swarth, married Herman Albrecht Insinger in 1787, founder of the Insinger and Prins bank, later Insinger & Co, now the InsingerGilissen Bank (fig. 17). He mainly did business with planters in the West Indies and provided them with plantation loans. After Herman Albrecht's sudden death in 1805, Anna Maria continued the business with the help of her brother Hans Jacob Swarth, who had already become a partner of Insinger in 1801. The second daughter of Jacobus Swarth, Dorothea Hester, married in 1792 with Jacobus Boelen. Jacob Boelen was a wine merchant and owner of

plantations in the West Indies. This company, famous for its 'exclusive wine brand' named 'Jacobus Boelen' also still exists in Amsterdam .

Gerrit Swarth, the eldest son of Jacobus Swarth, continued his business activities together with his mother after his departure from the firm of Fåhraeus & Swarth under the name of the Widow Jacobus Swarth & Son - as noted above. Gerrit was also active in social life as Regent of the Almshouse, director of the Department of Art of the Felix Meritis Society and elder in the Lutheran Church. He remained single all his life and lived and died in his parental home at 421 Keizersgracht (now 58).

A SWEDISH 'SUCCESS STORY': RULE OR EXCEPTION?

At the beginning of this article, we raised the question to what extent the success of this Gotland trading family is representative of Swedish immigrants in the second half of the eighteenth century. It is difficult to give a firm answer to this question. Various migration studies have paid attention to Swedish immigrants in the Republic, but in such studies the emphasis is mainly on the quantitative aspects. Publications on the fate of specific groups among Scandinavian immigrants are scarce and do not lend themselves easily to comparison.

For an assessment of the success of Swedish immigrants, we therefore use our own (ongoing) research into Gotland immigrants in Amsterdam. We found a total of 103 immigrants from Gotland in the Amsterdam marriage bann registers between 1642 and 1803, 35 of whom in the second half of the eighteenth century. After a detailed examination of their lives, we can conclude that the four Swedes described in this article show a much stronger rise up the social ladder than the other Gotland immigrants.

What was the secret of the success of the Swarth family? Lucassen and Lucassen, in their 2018 broad study on the history of migration, cite two important factors for the success of immigrants in social life: the attitude of government and civil society towards migration, and the characteristics and organizational capacity of the migrants themselves. Government and organizations in Amsterdam had an open mind to enterprising migrants. The story of the four Gotlanders fits in well in this respect. The VOC offered enterprising sailors such as Swarth and Lunge plenty of opportunities for a smooth career, partly due to the high mortality rate, which accelerated throughput. The possibility for VOC officers to earn a lot of extra money through private trade during their travels subsequently gave them a good starting position. Their marriages to burghers daughter's gave them easy access to networks important to merchants. Fåhraeus and Laurin, on the other hand, came to Amsterdam as merchants, with the necessary experience and background in trading activities. In Amsterdam they could fall back on their family relation with Swarth and Lunge and therefore quickly develop an extensive business network. These were favourable conditions that helped them to gain a valued place within the well-to-do bourgeoisie, including a beautiful country estate for Fåhraeus. The fact that Fåhraeus and Laurin, as financiers of plantation loans, traders of plantation products and owners of slave ships, gained part of their wealth from slavery, was certainly no exception in Amsterdam at the time. All in all, we can speak of a successful integration of this trading family in the Amsterdam society.