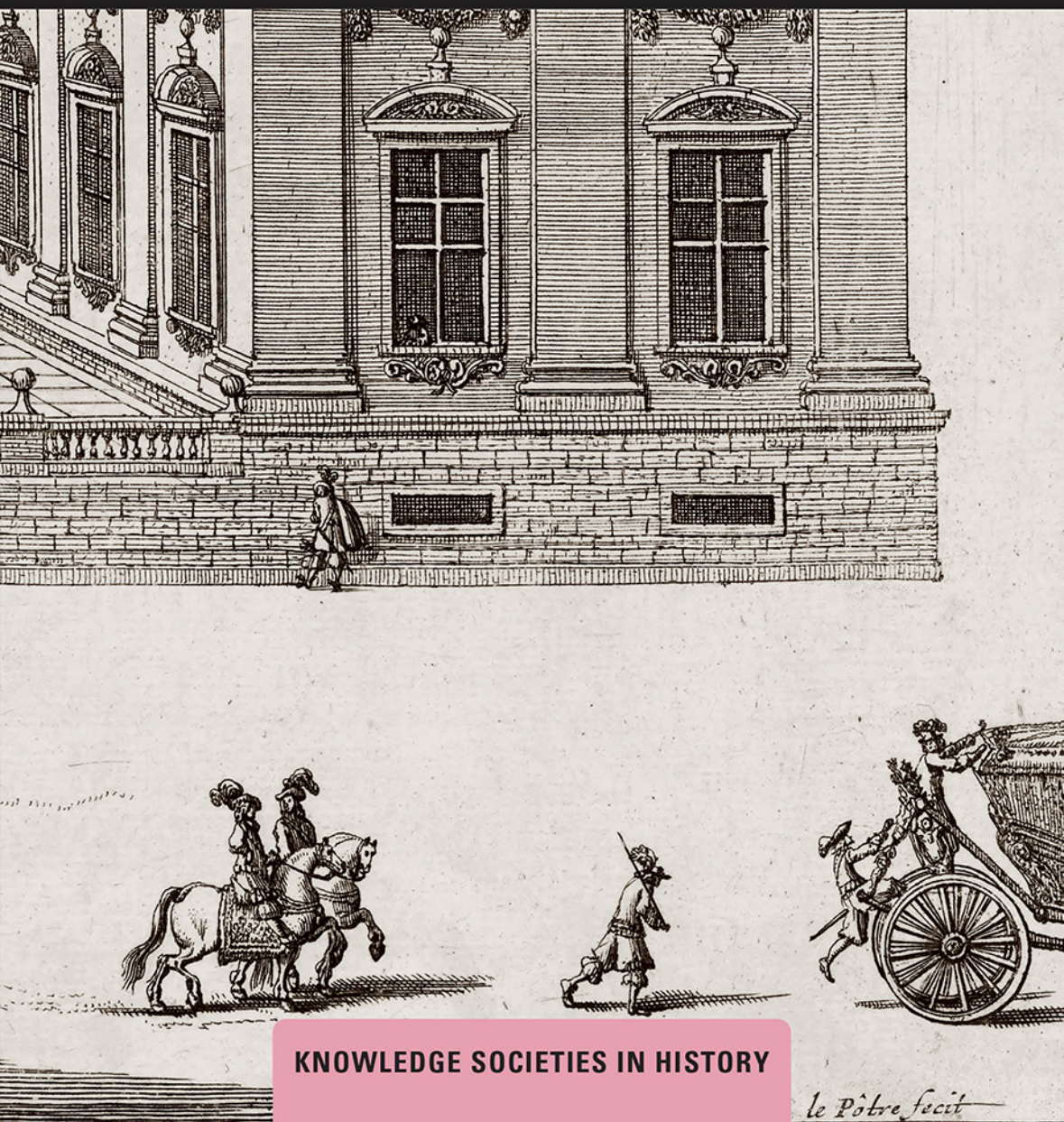
Anna Nilsson Hammar
and Svante Norrhem

ROUTLEDGE

Serving Aristocracy

Negotiation, Learning, and Mobility in an Early Modern Knowledge Community



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This is the ideal resource for students and scholars interested in knowledge, mobility, and agency in an early modern aristocratic work sphere.

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Sources: Ulväng, Herrgårdsdatabasen database (for Sweden), Karsvall, TORA database (historical maps), and modern maps (for Finland and Estonia). Annelieke Vries, Cartographic Studio 2024

TABLE

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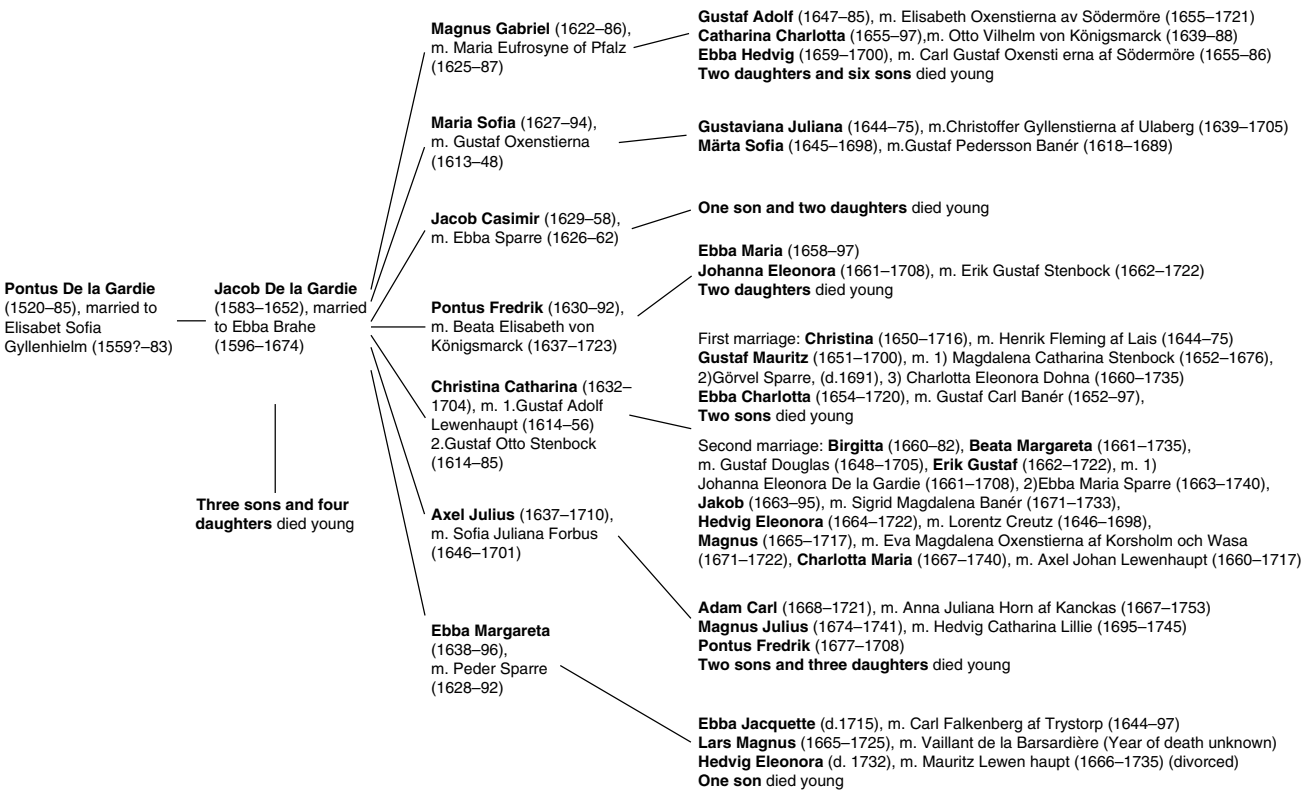
FAMILY TREE


Pontus De la Gardie (1520–85), married to Elisabet Sofia Gyllenhielm (1559?–83)
Jacob De la Gardie (1583–1652), married to Ebba Brahe (1596–1674)
Three sons and four daughters died young
Magnus Gabriel (1622–86), m. Maria Eufrosyne of Pfalz (1625–87)
Gustaf Adolf (1647–85), m. Elisabeth Oxenstierna av Södermöre (1655–1721)
Catharina Charlotta (1655–97),m. Otto Vilhelm von Königsmarck (1639–88)
Ebba Hedvig (1659–1700), m. Carl Gustaf Oxensti erna af Södermöre (1655–86)
Two daughters and six sons died young
Maria Sofia (1627–94), m. Gustaf Oxenstierna (1613–48)
Gustaviana Juliana (1644–75), m.Christoffer Gyllenstierna af Ulaberg (1639–1705)
Märta Sofia (1645–1698), m.Gustaf Pedersson Banér (1618–1689)
Jacob Casimir (1629–58), m. Ebba Sparre (1626–62)
One son and two daughters died young
Pontus Fredrik (1630–92), m. Beata Elisabeth von Königsmarck (1637–1723)
Ebba Maria (1658–97)
Johanna Eleonora (1661–1708), m. Erik Gustaf Stenbock (1662–1722)
Two daughters died young
Christina Catharina (1632–1704), m. 1.Gustaf Adolf Lewenhaupt (1614–56) 2.Gustaf Otto Stenbock (1614–85)
First marriage: **Christina** (1650–1716), m. Henrik Fleming af Lais (1644–75)
Gustaf Mauritz (1651–1700), m. 1) Magdalena Catharina Stenbock (1652–1676), 2)Görvel Sparre, (d.1691), 3) Charlotta Eleonora Dohna (1660–1735)
Ebba Charlotta (1654–1720), m. Gustaf Carl Banér (1652–97),
Two sons died young
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Jakob (1663–95), m. Sigrid Magdalena Banér (1671–1733),
Hedvig Eleonora (1664–1722), m. Lorentz Creutz (1646–1698),
Magnus (1665–1717), m. Eva Magdalena Oxenstierna af Korsholm och Wasa (1671–1722), **Charlotta Maria** (1667–1740), m. Axel Johan Lewenhaupt (1660–1717)
Axel Julius (1637–1710), m. Sofia Juliana Forbus (1646–1701)
Adam Carl (1668–1721), m. Anna Juliana Horn af Kanckas (1667–1753)
Magnus Julius (1674–1741), m. Hedvig Catharina Lillie (1695–1745)
Pontus Fredrik (1677–1708)
Two sons and three daughters died young
Ebba Margareta (1638–96), m. Peder Sparre (1628–92)
Ebba Jacquette (d.1715), m. Carl Falkenberg af Trystorp (1644–97)
Lars Magnus (1665–1725), m. Vaillant de la Barsardière (Year of death unknown)
Hedvig Eleonora (d. 1732), m. Mauritz Lewen haupt (1666–1735) (divorced)
One son died young

INTRODUCTION

When he arrived in Stockholm in early October 1671, the Danish traveller Corfitz Braem took the opportunity to take a close look at the rapidly growing Swedish capital. Churches, bridges, palaces, and other noteworthy buildings were part of his itinerary, as were dinners and socializing with assorted nobles. On 17 December, Braem made his way to one of the more lavish buildings in the city, on the waterfront opposite the royal palace of Tre Kronor. It was more palace than mansion, once built by the leading military figure Jacob Pontusson De la Gardie and now in the possession of his equally influential son, the Chancellor of the Realm Magnus Gabriel, and it struck Braem as 'a delightful building with well-furnished chambers', with spacious halls for entertaining, audiences, and meetings, all in the service of the expanding Swedish realm.[1] The De la Gardie palace in Stockholm, popularly called Makalös (unequalled), was a conspicuous manifestation of political power.

In Braem's account, the palace with its portraits, mirrors, chandeliers, and furniture seems impressive, silent, and starchy. The count was not there to greet him, and while Braem was generally impressed, his quick tour failed to yield any further detailed observations. He said nothing about what went on behind the scenes of the great hall, what lay behind the luxurious tapestries, and the ebony and ivory cabinets. Makalös's function in the grand De la Gardie scheme of things, with its estates, farms, mines, and ships, was not recognized by the traveller looking round their Stockholm palace that winter's day. Yet, the palace hummed with De la Gardie business.

1 Braem, *Dagbok*, 37–38.

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With its five storeys, magnificent portals and colonnades, and flanking towers, the Main House as the family called it, had everything from ballrooms to wine cellars, an armoury, and a gazebo on top. The stables, sensibly off to one side, housed nearly fifty horses and the stable staff. There was also a separate building for the kitchen, and here too there were rooms for staff. Makalös was also home to the De la Gardies' central administration, making it the place to keep the all-important account books, household registers, and inventories, the receipts and reports from the many transactions that connected different parts of the family's sphere, tying them all together into one large conglomerate of operations, and, last but not least, to register petitions. Employing well over a hundred people in various capacities, Makalös was the lively hub of the De la Gardie business empire across Sweden.[2]

From the massive account books and collections of receipts, we can glean a myriad insights into everyday routines and tasks. Brief but informative, they tell us of the cupboard that Master Lukas made for the office; about the money paid out to Burcko the secretary to buy paper; about Anders Börjesson's purchase of paper, ink, and pens, also for the office. They tell us about the *fatburshustru* (housekeeper) who had bought candlewick, about Bartold the baker who had withdrawn cash to buy yeast, and about the *fågelvaktare* (bird-keeper) Johan Jacobsson who collected hempseed to feed the birds Magnus Gabriel kept in his chamber. They show that the *svanvaktare* (swan-keeper) at the Jakobsdal estate had received a barrel of oats and that the violinist Pawul was given money to buy strings. Everything was noted down: logs and planks from Södermalm, beer from Wismar, sugar, lemons, bitter oranges, oysters, and French wine. Other deliveries came from Magnus Gabriel's own estates—grain and flour from Ekholmen and Jakobsdal along with 'some fish' and hay from Venngarn. Allowances were issued to travellers in the count's service: Lars the sailor needed to pay customs; the costs of shipping a pinewood ship to the Hapsal (Haapsalu) estate in Estonia had to be covered; Olof the rider was going to Uppsala, Venngarn, and Ekholmen; Måns Jönsson had to deliver various things from Läckö Castle. The tile maker Jacob Mårtensson was moving his entire household to Läckö. A *klädedräng* (upholsterer) had to get to Venngarn and Jonas the *livknekt* (halberdier) was making a round trip to Ekholmen with three teams of horses. There were preparations for parties: the *munskänk* (cupbearer) had bought four dozen wine glasses and four dozen beer glasses to be used at the wedding of Hasselgren the secretary. The same amounts were bought for a banquet in the 'cave' at Jakobsdal, newly erected in the garden. Money and goods changed hands, all noted down diligently by the clerks in the office in Stockholm.[3]

2 When we talk about Sweden in the seventeenth century we include present-day Finland and, after 1658, the former Danish provinces of Skåne, Halland, and Blekinge.

3 Lunds Universitetsbibliotek (Lund University Library) (LUB), De la Gardieska samlingen (DLG) Släktarkiven (Släkt), vol. 117, Journal för hovboken anno 1666.

Petitions and work orders bring the well-decorated interiors to life. The *källarmästare* (butler) was cautioned not to let 'småro tare', small scavengers, or other 'unnecessary' people into the kitchen or the cellars. His cooks were not to serve guests or unknowns in the kitchen or bakery, or generally misbehave by, for example, leaving the kitchen for weeks on end without warning. The butler should keep an eye on his peers, especially the brewer at the manor of Ladugårdslandet, who took the best beer, watered it down, and sold it on the side, and delivered only small beer to Magnus Gabriel's court.[4] As the petitions show, some people made the effort to travel to Stockholm to deliver their plea for help in person, hovering in and around the palace. The artillery lieutenant Carl Hårdh was said to have been in the city 'daily, for over a year' waiting for his unpaid salary, but then he died and his landlady, Margareta Andersdotter, was left to manage his rotting corpse. She herself petitioned Magnus Gabriel, asking for help to buy a coffin for the destitute lieutenant. Catharina Andersdotter, the widow of a *tullnär* (senior customs officer), said she had been in Stockholm 'the entire winter' burning through her savings in order to petition Magnus Gabriel in person to keep her home now her husband had died.[5] Petitions also revealed the interconnectedness of the De la Gardie sphere, reaching across vast areas of Sweden and into all levels of society. The Sami boy Oluf Matsson, who had attended school in the northern village of Tornio, wrote to Magnus Gabriel asking for his help in getting a place to study theology at Uppsala University. A few months before Corfitz Braem's visit, Magnus Gabriel had granted the boy's wishes, writing in early October 1671 to the vice-chancellor and dean of the university of which he had long been chancellor to command them to educate the 'poor boy' so he could preach the gospel in his native language. This was, as Magnus Gabriel put it, an inexpensive way of seeing to the continued education of the 'ignorant people' of the north.[6]

By the late 1670s, Magnus Gabriel De la Gardie had roughly a thousand people on his payroll in different parts of Sweden, including Finland and the Baltics. They worked on his estates and in his mines, in his central office in Stockholm, on his ships, in his forests and fields, on his building sites. De la Gardie was the head of a large sphere of operations, consisting of a multitude of workplaces and professional relations, all intricately connected and ultimately tied to him and to his wife Maria Euphrosyne. He held an exclusive and unusual position, belonging, as he did, to the top tier not only of society, but also of the nobility. Yet he was not entirely alone—up to fifteen

4 Riksarkivet (Swedish National Archives), Stockholm (RA), Magnus Gabriel De la Gardies samling (MGDLG) E1309, Instruktion för kök- och källarmästare.

5 RA, MGDLG E1622, Margareta Andersdotter to MG De la Gardie, n.d., and Catharina Andersdotter to MG De la Gardie, n.d.

6 LUB, DLG Släkt, vol. 94:2. Brev och koncept av och från MG De la Gardie 1671–1686: 'enfaldiga folket'.

aristocratic families in early modern Sweden operated under similar circumstances. While it is impossible to estimate with any precision how many people worked for aristocratic concerns such as De la Gardie's, it is safe to conclude that it was a significant number.[7]

With their carefully kept records, the great aristocratic estates offer a rare opportunity to study the knowledge practices, working conditions, and everyday lives of the large, diverse group of people who served the early modern Swedish aristocracy. To an unprecedented extent, the primary sources allow us to juxtapose the view from above with the actions, arguments, and perceptions from below. In any estate organization the interaction between owners and employees formed an ecosystem, and integral to it were all the formal instructions, bookkeeping, written reports, petitions, and, crucially, expertise built on tacit or socially acquired knowledge. Employees, irrespective of rank and gender, were drawn into these practices, demonstrating substantial knowledge and skill not only in their specific line of work, but also generally in how to navigate the estate organization ecosystem. This situated knowledge, rooted in the relations, limitations, and conditions of the workplace and in the more abstract networks of the De la Gardie sphere, was a key feature of being employed by the De la Gardies.

In his lifetime, Magnus Gabriel De la Gardie (1622–1686) together with his wife controlled 49 estates in Sweden and present-day Finland, together with the substantial central administration at Makalös.[8] He also had several estates in the Baltic region. However, his position was not exceptional. He may have been Chancellor of the Realm, Seneschal of the Realm, President of the Supreme Court, and a Councillor of the Realm, but he embodied the role of the aristocratic elite in an expansive early modern kingdom. A small group of noble families, much like the De la Gardie family, had accumulated vast wealth and now jostled for power by politicking, industrial entrepreneurship, trade, luxury consumption, building projects, territorial expansion, and property acquisitions.[9] The financial, cultural, and political influence of the Swedish aristocracy had never been greater. Nor would it ever be again.

Growth had accelerated in the early seventeenth century, coinciding with Sweden's rise to great power status, but it came to an abrupt halt when King Karl XI launched his legal commission and subsequent reduction of noble estates to the Crown in 1680, an intervention that hit the already indebted De la Gardie family hard. Of their many estates and farms, Magnus Gabriel and his wife were left with only four: Venngarn, Höjentorp, Ringaby, and Kägleholm. Theirs was now an empire in decline. Magnus Gabriel's younger

7 Harnesk, *Legofolk*, 181–186.

8 Ulvang, Herrgårdsdatabasen, s.v. 'Magnus Gabriel De la Gardie', 'Maria Eufrosyne'.

9 The families were Brahe, Oxenstierna, Bielke, Wrangel, Banér, Leijonhufvud, von Königsmarck, Sparre, Stenbock, and Tott.

sister, Maria Sofia De la Gardie (1627–1694), a prominent industrialist and estate owner, raged at the news of the king's attempts to claw back Crown property from the nobility. Lashing out at what she called the 'ungrateful people' and 'bitches of the Diet', she accused politicians of taking the bread from the mouths of those who had built Sweden. Her resistance was forceful—'To take our estates, they must take our lives!'—but ultimately fruitless.[10] Neither Magnus Gabriel nor his sister lost their lives, but they did find themselves in a strikingly different situation.

The total number of De la Gardie estates and properties had fluctuated throughout the seventeenth century, because purchases, acquisitions, and shifts in ownership were a standard feature of ordinary aristocratic business. A more permanent feature of this changing and expanding world, though, was its relative size and the accumulation of estates under one master or mistress—a structure resembling a business conglomerate with several units with their separate workforces, gathered under one owner. Yet the amassed estates, mansions, farms, and farmland were not the only component parts of the larger De la Gardie sphere. The power positions of the De la Gardie family members, their public offices, the status and influence they had gained through marriage and inheritance, and the relations and networks between assorted family members, spouses, and, not least, employees also formed a vital part.

The employees in this sphere—the house servants, the rural workers, the sailors, cooks, lodging-house keepers, fowlers, timbermen, innkeepers, and washerwomen—were many, and did many kinds of work under wildly varying circumstances. Some were temporary labourers, others were loyal to the De la Gardies their entire lives; some only ever worked in one place, others moved between estates and functions in the organization. For the aristocrats, access to workers was crucial. The lengths masters went to in order to retain the staff they appreciated—and manage the ones they did not, and yet still needed for their service—speaks to the general lack of human resources to do all the work, ordinary or extravagant, of the usual repertoire of aristocratic activities and projects. So diversified an estate organization was not only densely populated, it demanded quality of its large workforce, and individuals with specific competences and skills for not just one but several positions. Employees were part of an intricate web consisting of relations, material manifestations, and, not least, of knowledge of how to perform particular tasks and of the sphere as such—how to navigate it and best capitalize on the opportunities it provided.

Another aspect of being employed by the De la Gardies was the prospect of gaining access to an education. While the De la Gardies may have had the financial means and connections to grant individuals access to formal education, the estate organization was in essence an informal training provider,

10 Björkman, *Maria Sophia De la Gardie*, 219.

offering work positions that resembled apprenticeships and the strategic placement of staff in positions where they would have the chance to improve their skills. Such investment in human capital was universal across the entire De la Gardie sphere and should be seen in the light of the aristocracy's financial, cultural, and political influence, which created a demand for expertise and specific skills. Among the De la Gardies, this demand was met by recruiting experts, usually from abroad, and attention to regeneration within their own organization.

Characterized by patriarchal, hierarchical relations, the De la Gardie estate organization like others took on the task of disciplining its employees and subordinates. This entailed far-reaching opportunities to control and punish estate workers through direct violence and various forms of socialization to secure the existing order. In that sense, there were distinct similarities between the early modern household and the aristocratic workplace, which was larger and more complex, yet adhered to the same ideas about authority, obedience, and responsibility.

The role of traditional knowledge institutions such as schools, universities, and guilds has been highlighted as central in securing competence for the growing state. Against that, early modern households have received attention for their role as academies by extension, and the production of intellectual and practical knowledge owed more to them than previously recognized.[11] In their capacity as large workplaces replete with power relations, dependencies, and opportunities, Sweden's aristocratic estates have been overlooked as arenas for knowledge circulation. Yet the size of the estate organizations, their influence, and the number of people they encompassed speaks to their significance. An aristocratic mansion in Stockholm could have up to a hundred employees, and although the family estates and farms were smaller in size, they too maintained a permanent workforce. By making the employees, servants, and subordinates of the estate organization and the wider De la Gardie sphere the centre of attention, this book charts the knowledge practices and processes of circulation, socialization, and learning in an authoritative environment.

The aristocratic estate organization as a knowledge community

The first Swedish edition of a widely circulated Latin text by Gilbert Cousin (1506–1572) about servants and their duties appeared in 1617. Translated by

11 Walsham, 'Holy Families'; Morrall, 'Domestic Decoration'; Morse, 'Creating Sacred Space'; Boyle, 'Skills Proper to their Sex'; Pleijel, *Hustavlans värld*; Aronsson, 'Mentalitet, norm, verklighet'; Hansson, *Salongsretorik*; Lindmark, 'Läs- och skrivkunnigheten'; Bertilsson, *Frihetstida policyskapande*; Edlund, *Diskussionen om begåvningsurvalet*; Gaunt, *Utbildning till statens tjänst*; Lundahl, *Viljan att veta vad andra vet*; Niléhn, *Peregrinatio academica*; Elmroth, *Nyrekryteringen*; Edgren, *Lärling, gesäll, mästare*; Engström, *Lärande i skråväsendet*; Hauffman, *Hattmakarnas låda*; Norrhem, *Uppkomlingarna*.

the future *translator regius* Ericus Benedicti Schroderus (c. 1575–1647), the book provided not only advise how to choose the right servants, but also presented a broader discussion about what servants themselves may gain from being part of a good household. The reader, it was suggested, would already be acquainted with the hardships that come from having servants, including their ignorance, malice, and disloyalty, and would therefore benefit from the advice offered. For servants, however, the book would provide a better understanding of their position and the expectations placed on them. The household was portrayed as a place full of opportunities for the servants: not only were they fed and clothed, but their service brought them into contact with honest masters and a diversity of distinguished people. Even more important, the household offered them the chance to shed their brutish, unsophisticated manners, to learn and 'come into knowledge', as Schroderus phrased it. Sadly, the text lamented, few people recognized, let alone seized, the opportunities of a good household.[12]

Schroderus' book detailed the ideals of service in larger households and the anticipated benefits of knowledge and learning for the presumably uneducated, ill-mannered group of individuals who sought positions as servants. The paternalistic expectation that masters would guide their subordinates in the right direction heavily influenced his account. Yet this early testimony also raises questions about the actual role of knowledge and learning in the grand aristocratic households. In what ways were learning and knowledge circulation part of the day-to-day life and routines of servants of different kinds? To get by or to advance, what did they need to know about the community or larger system in which they worked? What was valued or demanded by their superiors and masters?

In this book, we scrutinize the complex relationships between servants and masters in the De la Gardie sphere, concentrating on knowledge and learning, both formal and informal, and on the conditions and power relations which shaped them. We chart the negotiations between employees and masters and the uses of knowledge in these processes, and highlight the intricate networks of knowledge circulation, learning, and personal mobility. This perspective implies a shift in focus from knowledge *about* something specific—a topic, say, or a certain practical skill—to the more elusive category of everyday knowledge, the ability to navigate a system, society, or community bound by specific rules and limitations. This shift means looking at, first, how knowledge was used and valued in negotiations, networks, and daily life; and, second, the conditions for formal and informal learning in the organization. We would argue that both individual workplaces and the larger De la Gardie sphere were communities or social systems that shared practices, knowledge, and conditions for learning alongside certain ideas about common resources, boundaries, and legitimacy. It was this system which servants were compelled

12 Cousin, *Hwszdräng*, quote at 36.

to navigate, and which saw them turn to petitions and correspondence. In the interactions between servants and their masters, practices, knowledge, and ideas were negotiated, questioned, and reinforced.

Aristocratic households, estates, farms, and mansions were workplaces with a large variety of work settings and required all kinds of responsibilities and qualifications. They can be studied as sites of everyday interaction, knowledge transfer and circulation, learning, and the use of knowledge as a form of capital in negotiations and personal advancement, potentially conditioning people's access to opportunities. In the words of Peter Burke, this may be described as a social approach to the history of knowledge; a perspective focusing on the everyday and on knowledge 'from below'. For Burke, it holds true not only for crafts, but also—in line with the tenets of new cultural history—to many sites of everyday, routinized interaction.[13]

The assessment of everyday knowledge should take into account the interconnectedness of different forms of knowledge. As Gardiner says, everyday knowledge is the 'shared and embodied norms, techniques, and interpretive frameworks' necessary for social interaction and practice, as well as for people's ordinary engagement with materiality and objects.[14] The centrality of the life-world and the experiences which constitute the foundation for knowledge are highlighted, as is the everyday as the setting where certain skills and competencies are acquired.[15] Yet, everyday knowledge is elusive, both in content, in form, and in the conditions for its circulation and transfer. The knowledge that circulated among servants in early modern aristocratic spheres fell back on the routines, experiences, and everyday actions of a changing group of people, all of whom shared a hierarchical relationship with their aristocratic master and employer. The processes of knowledge circulation and learning thus incorporated several kinds of knowledge, running from practical skills in for example bookkeeping and writing, to knowledge about what could be expected in terms of reciprocity in the master–servant relationship or how to pick one's way through the legal system of the time.

The need to re-evaluate practical knowledge has been emphasized in recent years, especially by Pamela Smith, who suggests we question the dichotomy of hand and mind and recognize the production of crafts as the equivalent of producing epistemic or scientific knowledge. Coining the term 'artisanal epistemology', Smith argues that the skills and competencies for producing crafts were firmly rooted in a body of knowledge, and they could 'be employed rigorously and methodically to extend, categorize, innovate, and accumulate new knowledge'.[16] Sven Dupré and Christoph Lüthy have similarly

13 Burke, *History of Knowledge*, 6–14, 102–105; Dupré & Somsen, 'History of knowledge', 186–188.

14 Gardiner, 'Everyday Knowledge'.

15 Gardiner, 'Everyday Knowledge'; Nilsson Hammar, 'Theoria, praxis, and poiesis'.

16 Smith, 'Epistemology, Artisanal'.

emphasized how a focus on the craftsmen competencies 'undoes the old dichotomy between the scholar and the craftsman'.[17] Here Aristotelian *episteme*, or epistemic knowledge, merges with *technê*, the productive knowledge involved in crafts, underlining the similarities between the two forms. Yet, there is a third form of knowledge, *phronetic knowledge*, which has yet to gain momentum in histories of knowledge and which centres on the quotidian, and perhaps universal, aspects of knowledge as a capacity to act.[18]

In making the case for an artisanal epistemology, Smith stresses the phenomenological roots of this approach. Emphasizing the primacy of the body and the lived world of everyday activity, she highlights the artisan's engagement with the world as one of sensory experience and meaning making, in the tradition of Edmund Husserl (1859–1938), Martin Heidegger (1889–1976), and Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1908–1961).[19] However, phenomenological perspectives also serve to elucidate the knowledge or ability to navigate specific circumstances and thus to accurately assess practice in its specific context. As Jonna Bornemark has argued, phronetic knowledge is context-bound and derives from experience in the field in which it is applied, and she concludes that it differs from the 'general and abstract language of episteme or the manualized knowledge of techne'.[20] As we have maintained elsewhere, phronetic knowledge may thus be understood as the ability to integrate knowledge about something—a theoretical or technical knowledge—with practical judgement, showing a capacity to adapt one's response to the situation or to make use of knowledge in one's daily life and work.[21]

We would argue it is fundamental to any understanding of how life and work shaped early modern experience and agency to acknowledge the difference between theoretical or intellectual knowledge on the one hand, and more practical knowledge forms, such as know-how, interaction, and technical skill, on the other. Taking inspiration from the material turn, scholars have addressed long-forgotten aspects of ordinary knowledge production and transmission. Research on medical notebooks, literary manuscripts, handicrafts, and ordinary household objects has shed new light on everyday life, on how objects create meaning, and on knowledge practices in early modern homes. Visual culture studies have shown the opportunities for

17 Dupré & Lüthy, *Silent messengers*, 8.

18 Nilsson Hammar, 'Theoria, praxis, and poiesis'; Nilsson Hammar & Norrhem, 'Capacity to act'.

19 Smith, 'Epistemology, Artisanal'.

20 Bornemark, 'Neutrality or phronetic skills', 55 for whom phronetic knowledge spans practical knowledge, phronetic knowledge, and even phronetic skills as variations (and synonyms) of the original term *phronesis*.

21 Petersén & Olsson, 'Calling evidence-based practice into question', 1584; Gardiner, 'Everyday Knowledge', highlights its commonsense nature as a form of doxa and, despite common traits over time, the fact it is opinion rather than scientific 'certainty'.

investigating the relationship between objects and an understanding of society. Detailed analyses of the occupational doings and makings of people in early modern Sweden mean we can now appreciate how everyday actions contributed to shaping society, gender, and power relations and to the growth of the early modern state.[22] By shifting the focus away from text-based knowledge practices, scholars have developed methodologies that offer new insights not only into the conditions of the advantaged few, but also into the realities of less privileged groups.[23] Discussions of how material culture shaped identity and everyday life thus form an important part of this perspective.[24] Looking beyond formal educational establishments at new sites of knowledge production and circulation—and the conditions, opportunities, and obstacles there—promises new insights.[25]

Several dynamics in aristocratic organizations indicate that knowledge circulation and learning was key. It was expected of aristocratic households that they would provide a framework of paternalistic care and discipline, in line with the New Testament household codes and ideas about the reciprocity between masters and their subordinates.[26] Socialization and discipline were actively instigated through everyday work settings. The Household codes—instructions for behaviour and the hierarchical relationships materially manifested in clothing, food, and seating arrangements at meals—were fused with the early modern ideology of hierarchical society. Yet, this feature of large aristocratic organizations remains unexplored. Research on education in early modern Sweden has concentrated on formal institutions such as schools, universities, or the military, which in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries existed to meet the need of the state for educated men.[27] Some studies of the educational processes in trades guilds are an exception, although

22 Lennersand et al., 'Gender, Work'; for the findings of the Gender and Work research programme, see Ågren, *Making a Living*; Ahrland, *Den osynliga handen*.

23 Leong, 'Collecting knowledge'; Hamlin & Richardson, *Everyday Objects*; Smith & Schmidt, *Making Knowledge*; Evangelista, 'Learning from home'; Parker, *Subversive stitch*; Vickery, *Behind closed doors*; Ilmakunnas, 'Embroidering women'; Sennefelt, 'Discerning Eye'; Alm, *Performing Herself*; Bushnell, *Culture of Teaching*; Ödman, *Kontrasternas spel*; Dowd, *Women's Work*; O'Day, *Women's Agency*; Whitehead, *Women's Education*.

24 Hamlin & Richardson, *Everyday Objects*.

25 Wiesner Hanks, *Women and Gender*; Jacob, 'Lieux de savoir'; McIsaac Cooper, 'Servants as Educators'.

26 Morrall, 'Domestic Decoration'; Morse, 'Creating Sacred Space'; Boyle, 'Skills Proper to their Sex'; Pleijel, *Hustavlans värld*; Aronsson, 'Mentalitet, norm, verklighet'; Hansson, *Salongsretorik*; for Egil Johansson's important study of general literacy, see Lindmark, *Läs- och skrivkunnigheten*.

27 Bertilsson, *Frihetstida policyskapande*; Edlund, *Diskussionen om begåvningsurvalet*; Gaunt, *Utbildning till statens tjänst*; Lundahl, *Viljan att veta*; Niléhn, *Peregrinatio academica*; Elmroth, *Nyrekryteringen*.

they address the eighteenth century or later.[28] Aristocratic work organizations served a different purpose, yet like the state they too needed staff, preferably with specific sets of skills and competencies.

The question of how aristocratic masters sought to recruit and train workers is a central one, and leads straight to the question of the conflation of service and apprenticeship in aristocratic work organizations. Patrick Wallis stresses that we still know relatively little about early modern apprentices and how they acquired skills. Beyond the formal framework of apprenticeships, Wallis concludes that individual agency was the driving force, and less so institutional structures. 'Apprentices came to embody skills by participating in situated production, surrounded by exemplars and committed to repetitive practice'.[29] Although the aristocratic work organizations had no formalized apprenticeships (they were exclusive to guilds), they still employed apprentices and masters, as well as people whose job titles suggest they were learning a trade. In aristocratic work organizations, apprentice-like positions seem to have been occupied exclusively by men. This was not necessarily the case across the board. However, as Humfrey has stressed, female apprenticeships were usually limited to domestic duties and were seen as training in housewifery; women were 'rarely full apprentices to a trade or craft'.[30]

The other side to apprenticeship was the issue of expertise and its impact on knowledge transfer. Expertise as a concept is fluid and varies according to time and place, challenging us to make sense of its meaning in a historical context, as Eric Ash argues. Citing Harald Mieg, Ash points out that 'expertise is always rooted in an interaction, an exchange of information' which thus constitutes the expert and their authority.[31] Considering expertise, then, the question of knowledge transfer is brought to the fore. Although the records of the aristocratic work organizations tell us little about how knowledge was transferred, we still know what the expectations were of individuals hired for their specialized competencies, hoping they would teach other employees the trade, and transfer knowledge and skill. Fokko Jan Dijksterhuis has drawn our attention to what he terms a social and cultural infrastructure, including the role of media, objects, and encounters as conditions for the transfer and circulation of knowledge.[32] Ash agrees, concluding that scholars, instead of dwelling on intellectual currents and entrepreneurial achievements, should focus more on working conditions, power relations, and the

28 Edgren, *Lärling, gesäll, mästare*; Engström, *Lärande i skråväsendet*; Hauffman, *Hattmakarnas låda*.

29 Wallis, 'Between Apprenticeship and Skill', 157, quote at 167.

30 Humfrey, *Experience of Domestic Service*, 5.

31 Ash, 'By any other name', 20.

32 Dijksterhuis, *Regulating Knowledge*, 3. For mutability when in circulation, see Keim, 'Conceptualizing circulation'; Raj, *Relocating modern science*, 225–226, 20–21.

exploitation of people and resources in the development of 'useful knowledge' and economic growth in early modern Europe.[33]

Several studies have noted the correlation between increased state demand for educated subjects and increased social and geographical mobility.[34] While the needs of aristocratic employers were different from those of the state, they still needed workers for many different tasks, requiring recruitment from a wider area, including from abroad. The question of the growing importance of expertise, apprenticeship, learning and specialised competence and skills may therefore apply not only to the formation of the state but also to a wider labour market. The proliferation of knowledge and skill must furthermore be analysed in relation to networks and interpersonal relationships. Networks existed on many levels, the aristocratic sphere being one, which incorporated several aristocratic families and all their castles, estates, and farms, and which, through the positions of its aristocratic members, also extended to public office and the military. Employees form a different yet intersecting network, providing a link to the aristocratic sphere (and its opportunities) not only for individual workers, but also for their families, sometimes stretching over multiple generations. The links and connections which manifest themselves in correspondence and petitions are important in assessing the interdependencies between access to and uses of knowledge and learning, the negotiations based on knowledge, competencies, and ideas of reciprocity, and, finally, the networks which knowledge and negotiations depended on, but also helped to create through everyday interaction.

Employees in the aristocratic sphere

The aristocracy's lavish consumption and extensive projects led inexorably to a high demand for various kinds of staff, from master builders and gardeners to cooks and farmhands. An aristocratic court comprised a large workforce and the estates in the organization all needed managers and rural workers essential to their everyday running. In this book, we have used the terms employee and servant interchangeably to denote the large variety of people who were employed, under various circumstances, in the De la Gardie sphere. All terms have their shortcomings, of course, particularly so in translation. Employee is an anachronistic term, an early-nineteenth-century loanword from the French, yet it captures the essence of the relationship between master and servant as one based on employment. Servant has a similarly wide set of connotations and is sometimes associated with domestic chores. It too is an anachronism and does not align with its usage in the seventeenth century.

33 Ash, 'By any other name'.
34 Elmroth, *Nyrekryteringen*; Gaunt, *Utbildning till statens tjänst*; Norrhem, *Uppkomlingarna*.

Employees were servants. They served under a master and/or mistress and they always described themselves as *tjänare* (male servants) or *tjänarinna* (female servants), an umbrella term that hinted at their subordinate position. 'Servant' was also widely used in letter writing, not only to suggest a contractual bond between two parties, but as a sign of humility and courtesy, used by anyone who wished to bow to the person they were addressing. The social category of servants was narrower than the literary one, yet still incorporated a wide variety of tasks in the seventeenth-century Swedish realm. Cissie Fairchilds sees the same variation in her seminal work on servants in ancien régime France, and argues that servant as a term covered a multitude of titles and social circumstances. 'Servants included teamsters, musicians, gardeners, silk weavers, shop clerks, and even lawyers as well as people who cooked, cleaned, raised the children, and carried the messages of their employers', Fairchild concludes, highlighting the significant disparities in income and opportunity.[35] The category of servants gradually shrank to become associated with menial household chores, but this was a later development that does not affect how we understand service here. Furthermore, the literature often distinguishes between domestic and rural servants. Yet Jane Whittle has pointed out that in rural households both men and women worked on the farm and in the house, without distinguishing between domestic and agricultural tasks.[36] In the large, diversified organizations of aristocratic estates, this boundary was also porous, with employees moving between different positions that did not necessarily fall into the categories of domestic or rural.

The hierarchical relationship between master and servant lay at the heart of early modern employment, shaping the conditions for servants' knowledge practices. As argued by Sara Maza in a study of early modern France, the normative idea of this relationship was omnipresent despite variations in practice. She highlights reciprocity as essential, stressing that while masters had a duty to their servants in terms of compassion and responsibility, the servants' loyalty and obedience were more valued than the work they did. Maza notes the 'aristocratic paternalism' characterizing the master–servant relationship, while Fairchild concludes that in France domestic service was 'considered an *état* rather than a *métier*', and a *domestique* was defined 'not by the sort of work he did but instead by the fact that he lived in a household' that was not his own.[37] The normative idea of service was also regulated in law. In Sweden, the 1664 Servant Act was the first of its kind to regulate employment, although some of the issues it addressed were covered by

35 Fairchilds, *Domestic Enemies*, 3.

36 Whittle, *Servants in Rural Europe*, 8–11.

37 Maza, *Servants and Masters*, 12–14; Fairchilds, *Domestic Enemies*, 3. For the servant being defined by their relationship with their master and not their duties, see Horrox, 'Service', 63, who notes it for late medieval England.

medieval provincial law.[38] The law was revised in 1686 and again in 1723 and 1739. As Börje Harnesk explains, successive eighteenth-century revisions made the Servant Act harsher towards servants, restricting their rights and trying to force down wages.[39] In its original form, it consolidated the one-year contracts which bound servants and masters, but its central function was to prohibit vagrancy and enforce the obligation to work. The first paragraph stated that all men and women who did not have a means of support were punishable under law if they could not produce proof of employment. Any servant who absconded could be apprehended and brought back by their master. It also confirmed the master's right to admit 'a reasonable amount of corporal punishment', and stipulated that servants should be paid for their services—in clothes and money or the equivalent—while allowing regional variations in wages and payment practices.[40] Carolina Uppenberg has rightly described the system as one of contractual freedom in a framework of coercion, highlighting the balance between the obligation to become a servant if you did not have the financial means to support yourself and the freedom for servants to terminate and change jobs once a year.[41] Similar conditions applied across Europe.[42]

The question of how to interpret the influence and reach of the law has been debated. Uppenberg argues that the revision of 1686, when it was decreed that the Servant Act should be read aloud in the churches, served to educate parishioners about the legal obligations associated with service. Judging by the number of legal cases involving masters and servants, researchers have concluded that many were familiar with the contents of the law, or at least with some of its possibilities.[43] Yet the application of the law and what it meant to make one's case in court are hard to gauge. Börje Harnesk has drawn attention to servants' difficulties in pursuing their claims, the general unfamiliarity with the details of the law, and the widespread practice of ignoring its contents.[44] The question of what servants knew about their legal rights is pertinent to our study, and we have assessed it not only from court cases, but also from the demands made in servants' petitions to their masters. Such appeals survive in great numbers in the archives of the estate organizations, allowing us to follow the process of servants claiming their rights long before it went to court, and to ask how knowledgeable servants really were about their own working conditions.

38 *Kongl. May:tz Stadga*.
39 Harnesk, *Legofolk*, 32–39.
40 *Kongl. May:tz Stadga*.
41 Uppenberg, *Husbondens bröd och arbete*, 33.
42 Harnesk, *Legofolk*, 36–37.
43 Andersson, *Tingets kvinnor och män*, 284–291.
44 Harnesk, *Legofolk*, 37–38.

Questions concerning the longevity of employment are also central. Were employees in the De la Gardie estate organization temporary workers who stayed on for a year or two before forming their own households, or did they behave differently? The studies by Peter Laslett and John Hajnal about European marriage patterns and life-cycle servants have often served as a departure for discussions of regional differences and nuances. Hajnal's contention that young people worked to accumulate resources before they married, explaining why men and women married relatively late, is still an important cornerstone in understanding early modern service.[45] According to recent studies, this life-cycle pattern among rural servants was evident in Britain, the Netherlands, Germany, France, Norway, and Sweden.[46] Christina Prytz concludes that being a servant was never anyone's first choice in early modern Sweden, even if it was considered an honest way to make a living.[47] Harnesk has pointed out that not only was service just one part of life, but people in service tended to move on, some every year; in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, servant churn was seen as a major problem for small landowners, who constantly had to introduce newcomers. The same problem existed in England in the eighteenth century.[48] Yet, while this is a large-scale demographic explanation, local variations should also be taken into account.[49] Humfrey argues that female servants were 'surprisingly independent', being able to live by working longer than has earlier been presumed. Contrary to what has been assumed, waged work was not necessarily terminated on a change in marital status.[50] The role of servants in the agrarian economy needs to be addressed, writes Whittle, as people on annual contracts did a significant proportion of the waged work there, in contrast to day labourers who were only temporarily employed, for example for the harvest. This produced a different relationship with the employers and variations in the patterns of wages between servants and day labourers have been shown.[51] Furthermore, Jonas Lindström argues that a more comprehensive analysis is needed to fully understand the unlanded population's means of subsistence and reliance on the landed estates and ironworks for work, and their dynamics with other sections of the peasantry. Using the networks and interactions of this group of smallholders and crofters as his example, Lindström argues that it differs

45 Hajnal, 'European marriage patterns'; Laslett & Wall, *Household and Family*; see also Whittle, *Servants in Rural Europe*; Fertig 'Rural servants', 141–147; Kussmaul, *Servants in Husbandry*, 31.

46 Hayhoe, 'Rural servants', 156–57; Sogner, 'Legal Status of Servants', 180–81; for examples, see Whittle, *Servants in Rural Europe*.

47 Prytz, 'Life-Cycle Servant', 103.

48 Harnesk, *Legofolk*, 161–68; see also Richardson, *Household servants*, 227.

49 Hayhoe, 'Rural Servants'.

50 Humfrey, *Experience of domestic service*, 28.

51 Whittle, *Servants in Rural Europe*, 3.

considerably from earlier conceptions of a self-sufficient peasant economy, and that this calls for investigation.[52]

While women formed a significant proportion of servants generally, the servants in the aristocratic sphere were predominantly male. The De la Gardie estate payrolls show that women made up about 10–15 per cent of employees. They were typically lumped together in the payrolls in a category of their own, which obscured differences in occupation. The role specifically of wives in the aristocratic sphere calls for consideration. As shown by Jonas Lindström and Jan Mispelaere, who have investigated the household finances of wage labourers in the mines of early modern Sweden, the question of gender can be seen from an economic perspective. The households connected to the Swedish mining industry did waged work, yet they were not necessarily paid in cash; instead, the entitlements and networks provided by the mining industry offered an interdependent livelihood, according to Lindström and Mispelaere. 'Being part of different networks of reciprocal, but not necessarily equal, relationships with other units, the labouring family made use of resources in the form of land, labour, and credit beyond its own assets', they conclude.[53] This raises questions about the role of families in aristocratic work organizations. Were they similarly part of everyday business?

The primary sources

The archival material from the De la Gardie sphere is substantial, ranging from the personal archives of several family members to collections from the various estates and businesses. Together it amounts to one of the richest records of the seventeenth century, spanning sources of all kinds. Although it varied according to the individual or property, and it was the larger estates and the family's Stockholm headquarters which generally produced most records, there are usually at least four categories of primary sources available.

The first category of records is petitions and decisions. Although not kept together, we have been able to match some petitions with the decisions made. The bulk of the petitions, about 700 in all, were addressed to Magnus Gabriel De la Gardie, though smaller numbers survive in the archives of his wife Maria Euphrosyne, his parents Jacob De la Gardie and Ebba Brahe, and his parents-in-law Count Palatine Johan Casimir and Princess Katarina of Sweden.[54] The some 1,500 decisions are found exclusively in the archives of Magnus Gabriel and include the name of the petitioner, a summary of the case, and the count's decision. They are all held in the National Archives of Sweden, which at some point categorized them, separating employees'

52 Lindström, 'Labouring poor', 420–421.

53 Lindström & Mispeleare, 'Interdependent Living', 148.

54 The Count Palatine and Katarina of Sweden left 219 petitions, of which 99 were from subordinates.

petitions from petitions by other people. Petitions from women have been put in separate boxes, whether the women were employees or not. For female petitioners, it was not straightforward to single out the servants, the widows, and family members of male servants who are of interest here. The number of petitions from female servants and from female relatives of low-ranking male servants was significantly lower than from men, reflecting the distribution of men and women on the payroll.

A second category of records is the business correspondence between people in managerial positions on the family estates—the *hauptman* (estate manager), the *fogde* (bailiff), and so on—and their master. These letters portray day-to-day business, with insights into the practicalities, relations, and interactions and, of course, the endless problems the estates faced. They included reports in to the family's central office and decisions and orders out to the estate managers. There were also letters of recommendation, with information about an individual's personal characteristics (loyalty, fidelity, competence) along with their networks and the places they had connections with.

Third, financial records survive in quantity, with account books, receipts, and not least payrolls. The payrolls reveal how many servants were employed at a specific time. They detail the salaries of individual men over longer periods of time, making it possible to study social mobility and potential careers; women, however, were usually hidden under the heading 'Fruntimret', and without name, job, or individual salary, making it more difficult to track and analyse social mobility. From the account books we can also establish who was paid what, from cash to food, drink, clothes, and wood, and that sometimes the De la Gardies paid for the education, shoes, clothes, weddings, christenings, and rent for their servants. They detailed the kinds of material objects the servants may have encountered working in the aristocratic sphere, the journeys they took, and the variety of jobs they did.

A fourth category of sources comprises normative yet highly site-specific instructions and rules. Work instructions were written for some positions, for example the chief steward or the housekeeper, detailing their duties, whether they could delegate, and moral expectations placed on other employees. For example, instructions for the *hovmästare* (chief steward) states he should monitor the *lakejer* (lackeys) and make sure that they stayed in their rooms all night; if they did not he should take them to the stables and punish them. Such instructions detail the intended household hierarchy, relating it to the specific estates. Servants' behaviour in the household was also regulated in *bordsartiklar* (household ordinances), which laid down what was expected by way of table manners, language, obedience, complaints, and worship. A collection of household ordinances from 1669 tells us that no one should be allowed to sit down for a meal unless they had been to church and said grace. Swearing at the table was punishable with a fine and arriving late meant going without food. These sources thus provide an insight into the expected order of the servants' lives.

The role of the aristocratic estate organization in early modern knowledge society

Viewing the estate organization of one of Sweden's most influential aristocratic families as a knowledge community brings a new perspective to the conditions, actions, and interconnections of early modern workplaces. It draws attention to the role of knowledge and learning, to the situated, materialized, and embodied nature of knowledge in this particular environment. Yet such an approach raises questions about the wider implications of these communities, in the broader Swedish realm and in what we might call early modern knowledge society. In what ways were the estate organizations, and their employees, part of a larger development? How did these knowledge communities shape the world of which they were part? Interpreting the role of the estate organizations means bringing together different strands of research to assess the wider ramifications of the case studies in this book.

The early modern period saw significant changes in the way knowledge was organized, disseminated, and valued. As noted by Inger Leemans and Anne Goldgar, 'the invention of the printing press, the growth of state bureaucracies, the founding of academies and of knowledge-hungry trading companies, the production and distribution of knowledge evolved into an international, even global, interactive process', prompting questions about the commodification of knowledge, knowledge markets, and the economic interests in knowledge production.[55] While Leemans and Goldgar have highlighted the economic side of knowledge related activities, other accounts have emphasized factors such as the establishment of scholarly networks, technological advancements, the expansion of libraries and collections, religious reform, and colonization—which had a decisive impact on the production and circulation of knowledge. Yet historical perspectives on developments that have proven crucial to the understanding of present-day society face the challenge of going beyond teleological explanations. As Sven Dupré and Wijnand Mijnhardt argue, while questions about knowledge societies stem from present-day issues, an effort should be made to look for 'different manifestations of knowledge societies'. Emphasizing the emergence of diverse literacies as a distinctive feature of early modern knowledge societies, Dupré and Mijnhardt have brought attention to the alterations in what they term material, visual, textual, and mathematical literacies. The adoption of different forms of literacy among professionals and laymen alike, reaching beyond their subject-specific domains or areas of skill, along with flexibility in professional roles and a lack of well-defined training and educational standards, contributed to changing the interaction between individuals and groups in society.[56] In their edited volume *Early Modern Knowledge Societies as*

55 Leemans & Goldgar, *Early Modern Knowledge Societies*, 3.
56 Dupré & Mijnhardt, 'Creating a knowledge society'.

Affective Economies, Leemans and Goldgar draw attention to the different forms of literacy that grew out of the Netherlands, helping shape a knowledge economy. A significant part of the population, they contend, participated in knowledge-making processes, and knowledge became 'an essential motor for economic development', because of a higher degree of literacies.[57]

Reading and writing skills in early modern Sweden have been charted and analysed in several groundbreaking initiatives, primarily using church visitation records. Studies by Egil Johansson, mapping the gradual development of reading skills from the end of the seventeenth century on, remain highly influential. As Daniel Lindmark remarks, the literacy campaigns by the church had a decisive impact, yet they depended on the educational activities of the households, where family and servants were included. Reading rates increased from the seventeenth century and by the beginning of the nineteenth century the majority of Swedes could read. Only in the oldest age groups was there still some illiteracy. Lindmark finds that different skills were promoted in church-run educational initiatives, including reading, memorizing, and comprehension. People learnt to read using alphabet books, while memory and comprehension were developed using Luther's Small Catechism and others under the Church Law of 1686. Looking beyond the higher social strata, writing literacy was found among merchants and craftsmen, making urban environments more likely to have more individuals with such skills. In rural areas, it remained low until the introduction of the elementary school system in 1842.[58]

The question of reading and writing has also been approached from the perspective of political interaction. Scholars have shown how written culture gradually changed political arenas in the eighteenth century, with handwritten and printed texts circulating to a growing number of people.[59] Even in the seventeenth century, though, the written medium was increasingly important, for example in the system of petitioning. The role of clerks and scribes in the political process and the interaction between subjects and the authorities has been highlighted. Nils Erik Villstrand has discussed the opportunities for political participation among the peasantry, asking how they could assert their positions in a world which increasingly relied on writing. Since not even a majority of members of the Estate of the Peasants in the Diet could write (according to their own testimony), they relied heavily on intermediaries with the necessary skills to write for them. Intermediaries could not always be trusted to answer to the peasants' representatives, but they did least make it possible to navigate the political landscape. As shown by Villstrand and Kasper Kepsu for both halves of the Swedish kingdom (Sweden in the

57 Leemans & Goldgar, *Early Modern Knowledge Societies*, 5.
58 Lindmark, 'Church examination records', 224–225.
59 Villstrand, 'Memorialets makt', 193–194; Sennefelt, *Den politiska sjukan*.

eighteenth century, Finland in the seventeenth century), scribes had a crucial function, being the foundation for what Villstrand calls 'accessive literacy' (rather than possessive literacy).[60] We find it reasonable to assume scribes were key in writing the petitions addressed to aristocratic masters, yet we have no actual evidence to support this. Scribes are never mentioned in petitions, nor in any other correspondence we have studied, yet they surely existed—and helped petitioners formulate their requests. It is also surprising this group of workers is as invisible as it is, given the visibility of similarly middle-ranking people such as bookkeepers, bailiffs, and others. Villstrand distinguishes between possessive and accessive writing ability to nuance the view of literacy in early modern Sweden. Few people may have been able to write themselves, but they usually had access to someone who could help them, be it a parish priest, a scribe, or someone else who had acquired the necessary skill.[61]

The Swedish literature on reading and writing, from basic skills to the arenas of political interaction, is almost exclusively concerned with the period from the late seventeenth century to the school reforms of 1842. On good grounds, since the evidence has been taken from church visitations, which started in 1686 and only became common in the eighteenth century. Before then, how literate were people outside the nobility and clergy or which literacies did they have access to, and how to research the question? While we would not claim to have answers for the entire population, a qualitative examination of an aristocratic family's estate organization and employees offers valuable insights on literacy. In the interaction between masters and servants, literacies of various kinds are revealed, and the prevalence of written interaction is a testament to practices where different literacies were necessary, even for the lowest-ranking servants.

There is also a need to speak of mathematical or numerical literacy. The question is not new. In 1986, Keith Thomas proclaimed the necessity of taking numeracy into account, and not assuming that skills in reading and writing were the only way to access 'the mental life and cognitive apparatus of the past'. Thomas discussed the transformation of the early modern period because of the replacement of roman numerals, the promotion of arithmetical calculation on paper, and the production of textbooks about commercial arithmetic and double-entry bookkeeping, as well as the rise of political arithmetic and statistics. 'Numerical analysis established itself as one of the dominant forms of intellectual enquiry', Thomas concluded.[62]

For Europe, Franziska Tollnek and Joerg Baten have established there was a general increase in numeracy levels in the early modern period.

60 Villstrand, 'Memorialets makt', 221–222; Kepsu, *Den besvärliga provinsen*, 243–247.
61 Lindmark, 'Church examination records', 227.
62 Thomas, 'Numeracy', quotes at 103–104.

Verifying that the increase was primarily seen in urban environments, they have also been able to show increasing levels of numeracy among farmers, leading them to conclude that farmers were significant contributors to the building of human capital and thus to economic growth.[63] Research on numeracy in early modern Sweden is scant. Jelle van Lottum and Bo Poulsen have investigated numeracy and literacy among North Atlantic seafarers in the late eighteenth century, noting the 'much shorter historiography' for numerical skills than for reading and writing. Even so, they can conclude that the 'levels of numeracy and literacy among ship masters and Scandinavian sailors are among the highest found anywhere, while Dutch, French, and Spanish sailors were at par with the common labour force'. One explanation they offer is that the Scandinavian labour market offered greater opportunities to work abroad that were not restricted to people's country of birth, and for Scandinavians the Dutch maritime labour market would have been attractive. This labour market opened for skilled sailors and Scandinavians could thus capitalize on their previous training.[64]

What do we know about the numeracy or mathematical literacy of servants in estate organizations? Petitions are the key source, and while scribes probably wrote them, providing the necessary information would have required a degree of numeracy. Thomas spoke of the 'pressures' which led people to acquire new numerical skills, while acknowledging he saw no prospect of ever mapping the forms and degrees of numeracy, whether regionally or socially. Yet the imperatives to possess such skills were apparent in the petitions dealt with in this book, highlighting the pressures on employees to manage all the details of credit and debt, household accounts, and wages. While acknowledging that women often kept household accounts, Thomas suggested that numbers were a male affair: 'Arithmetic, however, was not a normal part of the education of a lady. Women lagged behind in numeracy, perhaps even more than they did in literacy'. Petitions in aristocratic households and estate organizations reopen the question, challenging us not to settle for sweeping accounts of women's education. 'What encouraged precision in measurement was scarcity', Thomas asserted.[65] On that note, we may observe that women were often left to deal with shaky household finances because their husbands' back pay was still outstanding. They dealt with inheritance, outstanding debts, and educating children, all of which demanded numerical skills. It is also worth noting that a study of numeracy among the upper classes in the early modern Low Countries shows that women's numeracy was often higher than that of men.[66]

63 Tollnek & Baten, 'Farmers at the heart'. For a method of estimating numeracy from household registers, see Baten & Sohn, 'Numeracy'.
64 Van Lottum & Poulsen, 'Estimating levels', quotes at 67, 69, 78.
65 Thomas, 'Numeracy', quotes at 105, 113, 129.
66 De Moor & Zuijderduijn, 'Art of Counting'.

With the growth of state and private bureaucracies, the general importance of written documentation grew; a process that, as we will show in this book, was palpable in the estate organizations with their centralized administrations. Dealing in numbers and words became an increasingly routinized feature of life and work in these environments. Yet, the development/expansion of estate bureaucracies, under aristocratic masters often involved in the state administration, needs to be viewed in the light of the organizational developments of the state. Scholars, pointing to its organization in functional 'collegia' and the employment of a growing number of educated and paid officials, have highlighted the efficiency of the early modern Swedish state bureaucracy.[67] As argued by Melissa Lee and Nan Zhang, the Swedish state was also proficient in collecting taxes, despite the marginal monetization of the economy and the low level of commercial activities within the towns. The ambition of the Swedish government to make society and its inhabitants 'legible' and with that information remain in control of its initiatives (such as tax collection) was a success. Sweden's cadastral mapping, which dated to 1628 and was probably the first in the Western world, provided the government with detailed information about 'boundaries of villages, freeholds, and farms, as well as details on landownership, tenure, cultivation, and valuation'.[68] Lee and Zhang set out the incentives for keeping information flowing steadily into the state bureaucracy. We will argue this logic was true of estate organizations too, mirroring the state's administrational arrangements and resulting in an increasingly written culture, and which required developed literacies of various kinds from its employees.

The administration of the early modern Swedish state benefits from being analysed in the context of political culture, dialogue, and interaction. Many have noted that the ideals of dialogue, reciprocity, and peaceful interaction were central to the political culture of early modern Sweden.[69] Mats Hallenberg has furthermore identified the bargaining over taxes as 'the most important social ritual connecting local society with the exercise of public power at the national level'. This was not a top-down process: rulers were forced to negotiate out of economic necessity. In the long run, this interaction 'served to empower the peasantry, as well as fostering new demands on the agents representing royal authority'.[70] The expansion of the state and the more centralized organs of government with 'strong representative institutions' relied on its subjects' participation for its legitimacy, thus

67 Torstendahl, 'Bureaucratization and Bureaucracy'.

68 Lee & Zhang, 'Legibility', quotes at 120; Hallenberg, 'Wealth of the Realm'; Kain & Baigent, *Cadastral Map*; see also Brambor et al., 'Lay of the land'.

69 See, for example, Österberg, 'Bönder och centralmakt'; Aronsson, *Bönder gör politik*; Collstedt, *Duellanten och rättvisan*. For a critical perspective, see Harnesk, 'Den svenska modellens tidigmoderna rötter?'.

70 Hallenberg 'Wealth of the Realm', 558.

incorporating a necessary dynamic between centre and locality.[71] Martin Almbjär concludes that petitions served an important purpose for the interaction between subjects and the authorities at the state level.[72] Allowing as it did for the interaction not only of certain groups, but of all people, rich or poor, petitioning was the foremost way of interacting with the authorities. To this day, however, few studies have looked at petitioning practices in other types of relations, such as between aristocratic masters and their many employees.[73]

71 Hallenberg et al., 'Organization, Legitimation, Participation', 262.
72 Almbjär, *Voice of the People*? 19.
73 For an exception, see Sundberg, 'Work and Social Relationships'.

1

THE DE LA GARDIE SPHERE IN CONTEXT

Workplaces, palaces, and estates

This book focuses on the employees of the Swedish De la Gardie family. The people who served in the mansions and on the estates owned or otherwise controlled by the De la Gardies were their administrators, managers, clergy, tutors, pages, domestic servants, stable staff, security staff, craftsmen, construction workers, gardeners, and farmers and foresters. They served Count Jacob De la Gardie (1583–1652) and his wife Countess Ebba Brahe (1596–1674) and their children Magnus Gabriel (1622–1686), Maria Sofia (1627–1694), Jacob Casimir (1629–1658), Pontus Fredrik (1630–1692), and Axel Julius (1637–1710) and their spouses and children.[1]

Ebba Brahe and her eldest son Magnus Gabriel De la Gardie belonged to an aristocratic elite that controlled a large number of estates in what are today Sweden and Finland. There were others in this exclusive group, including members of the Stenbock, Oxenstierna, Bielke, and Tott families. The most influential were the Brahe family and particularly Ebba's cousin Per Brahe, who owned more land than any of the others.[2] In all aristocratic families there was a constant inflow of estates by inheritance or marriage, donations or purchase, but also a loss through Crown fiefs that were reclaimed, land exchanged with other landowners, or land that was sold, thus making it difficult to give a

1 There were two further children, Christina Catharina (1632–1704) and Ebba Margareta (1638–1696), who were less involved in landowning than their older siblings.

2 According to Ulväng, Herrgårdsdatabasen, Per Brahe controlled 36 estates, Magnus Gabriel 25, and his mother Ebba Brahe 23. Other major landowners were Johan Gabriel Stenbock (22), Margareta Brahe (19), Nils Bielke (19), Axel and Johan Oxenstierna (both 18). Jacob De la Gardie controlled 15 estates and Magnus Gabriel's siblings between 3 and 7. The database covers properties in Sweden and Finland that had an estate with subordinate farms and a hierarchy of employees.

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full account on the number of estates owned by the De la Gardie family. Some palaces and estates were more important than others, either financially or symbolically. The Main House in Stockholm, Makalös, built for Jacob and Ebba in the 1640s and later owned by their eldest son Magnus Gabriel, was the workplace for many servants.[3] A few were live-in servants, some lived nearby, but the majority lodged in town. Further out, on the outskirts of the capital, were the country residences of Jakobsdal and Karlberg. The former had also been built by Jacob and Ebba and eventually passed to their son, while Magnus Gabriel bought the latter from a fellow aristocrat in 1669.

The oldest of the main De la Gardie estates was Ekholmen, a barony given to the first member of the family to move to Sweden, Pontus De la Gardie (1520–1585) in 1571. Ekholmen, about 45 km north-west of Stockholm, passed to his son Jacob De la Gardie, and then in 1652 to his eldest son Magnus Gabriel. In 1615, Jacob De la Gardie was made count of Läckö, a title and a fiefdom also passed on to his son in 1652. The county of Läckö, with its powerful castle on a cliff by Lake Vänern, in the province of Västergötland about 300 kilometres south-west of Stockholm, was for a long time the most important of the De la Gardie estates. In the same region, there were also Sundholmen (which came through Ebba Brahe's family and was passed on to Maria Sofia), Höjentorp (which was a wedding gift to Magnus Gabriel's wife Countess Palatine Maria Euphrosyne from her cousin Queen Christina) and Mariedal (bought by Magnus Gabriel in 1665 and named for his wife). In the eastern part of the country, members of the family had many estates in today's Estonia and Latvia, the most impressive castle being Haapsalu, which belonged to Magnus Gabriel.

The family also owned Kägleholm Castle in Närke west of Stockholm, along with mills and mines in the mining district of Bergslagen, many of which came from Ebba Brahe's parents. They were passed on to her children on her death in 1674. Finally, not far from Stockholm, there was Venngarn, acquired by Magnus Gabriel. In the former Danish province of Skåne, in the far south, there were several estates acquired by other family members, such as Krapperup and Skarhult.[4]

Organizationally, each employee belonged to either to the family's *hovstat* (household or court) or an estate, and each estate was its own financial unit. The grandest households were those of Jacob De la Gardie and his son Magnus Gabriel: at their height, more than 100 people were listed as servants, from clergy, tutors, pages, and administrators to domestic servants, stable staff, and security. Other members of the family had less flamboyant

3 For a brief period in the 1650s the Main House was owned by Queen Dowager Maria Eleonora before it was returned to Magnus Gabriel De la Gardie.

4 Maria Sofia bought Krapperup and Pontus Fredrik and his wife Beata Elisabeth von Königsmarck bought Skarhult. Ebba Brahe also acquired estates in the same region.

households, but even a widow like Ebba Brahe had over 50 servants working in or around her Stockholm palace.

The number of employees on the estates varied considerably. Many places were building sites and required a large number of construction workers and craftsmen. To give an idea of the numbers, in 1678–1679 there were 37 people listed as working at Karlberg Palace, including a preacher, a constable of the palace, craftsmen, gardeners, and herders. In 1675, there were 49 employees at Läckö Castle, while the smaller estate of Höjentorp had a staff of around 20. In Magnus Gabriel De la Gardie's household and on his estates at Kägleholm, Venngarn, and Karlberg there were 278 employees in 1679. Include Läckö, Ekholmen, and Höjentorp and the rough total would be 400 employees by the late 1670s, and with his Baltic estates and many smaller farms dotted around Sweden, approaching 1,000 employees. Then there were the over 1,000 *hemman* or cadastral units which belonged to the count, whose tenant farmers paid taxes and did *corvée* on the estates, and all the crofters, day labourers, tenants, mineworkers, and others, who in one way or another depended on their relationship with the De la Gardies.

The De la Gardies were relative newcomers to Sweden. Count Jacob De la Gardie was the son of a former French mercenary, Ponce d'Escoperier, who had taken the name De la Gardie from a farm owned by his family. Claiming descent from an ancient noble family, d'Escoperier entered Swedish military service in 1565 having first fought in the Danish army. Known in Sweden as Pontus De la Gardie, d'Escoperier made an astonishing and rapid social and military career. His marriage to Sofia Gyllenhielm, King Johan III's illegitimate daughter, secured him an aristocratic title.[5] His son, Jacob De la Gardie, married Countess Ebba Brahe, the only child of the leading aristocrat Count Magnus Brahe.[6] Their children married into high-ranking families such as Oxenstierna, Stenbock, Königsmarck, Lewenhaupt, and Sparre. The grandest of the alliances was made by Jacob and Ebba's eldest son, Magnus Gabriel, who, with Queen Christina as marriage broker, married the queen's first cousin, Countess Palatine Maria Euphrosyne.

Generally, the De la Gardies and their fellow Swedish aristocrats fell into a Western European pattern of how aristocrats lived in the seventeenth century. They were landowners and patrons of the arts, and the men were military commanders and political leaders. Using their position, they promoted knowledge, growth, and their employees and clients, while attracting the attention of anyone who sought advancement. And like their European counterparts, they provided opportunities for newcomers to rise socially.[7]

5 Persson, 'To Give to Airy', 179.

6 Jacob's older brother and sister, Johan and Brita De la Gardie, both married into the Oxenstierna family, one of the leading aristocratic families.

7 Powis, *Aristocracy*, 58.

Like all European aristocracy, the Swedish aristocracy based their economic, political, and cultural power on their landed estates.[8] The male members of the De la Gardie family acquired huge tracts of land as hereditary fiefs, such as the important barony of Ekholmen (1571) given to Pontus De la Gardie, and the county of Läckö (1615) given to his son Jacob. In the seventeenth century, members of the family had several generous gifts of land from the Crown; a foundation that ensured their castles and manor houses would reflect the wealth and prestige of the family in accordance with the dominant pan-European ideal of nobility.[9] The properties controlled by the female members of the De la Gardie family were theirs by inheritance, purchase or as morning gifts. A distinct feature of the De la Gardie lands, which mirrors that of other Swedish aristocratic families, was that their estates were scattered over a large geographical area, crossing the border from Sweden proper into occupied areas. For example, Ebba Brahe inherited estates in southern and central Sweden from her father, but as a widow she expanded her landholdings into recently occupied former Danish regions. So did her daughter Maria Sofia, daughter-in-law Beata Elisabeth von Königsmarck, and other members of the family. All the De la Gardies were large landowners, but in time, Magnus Gabriel De la Gardie emerged as the foremost, owning or controlling land in all regions of a rapidly expanding Sweden. In continental Europe, the trend among aristocrats towards urbanization in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries meant aristocrats were often more absent from their rural estates, since their central administration was often placed in a city.[10] This was also true in Sweden, where estate managers to an increasing degree represented landowners in local life. In the case of the De la Gardies, the fact their estates were widely scattered and the distances were enormous complicated matters further, and the dependence on correspondence and written instructions became significant.

Politically, aristocrats across Europe had unrivalled power within the boundaries of their estates and as officeholders in the state's civil administration or at the royal court. For aristocrats, landowning, in the words of William Doyle, had 'never been simply a source of income. Land also implied lordship … Substantial landowners dominated the society of their districts, and exercised residual feudal rights as lords of manors, with their own courts to enforce them'.[11] Some had judicial power over those living on their estates with the right to punish and regulate employees' lives.[12] In the seventeenth century, the Swedish nobility actively sought to strengthen its judicial powers

8 Doyle, *Aristocracy*, 40; Dewald, *European Nobility*, 65; Banac & Bushkovitch, *Nobility in Russia*, 2.
9 Doyle, *Aristocracy*, 40–41.
10 Astarita, *Continuity of Feudal Power*, 212; Doyle, *Aristocracy*, 42.
11 Doyle, *Aristocracy*, 43.
12 Dewald, *European Nobility*, 66.

over its estates and employees. Although unsuccessful when trying to establish the *gårdsrätt*, which was comparable to the court leet in England and the *justice seigneuriale* in France, many aristocratic households still had extensive privileges by dint of their counties or baronies, where they served as courts of first instance. A Swedish count or baron thus exerted influence over the penalties for crimes committed in his county or barony and was responsible for incarcerating the guilty in his dungeon. It should be borne in mind, however, that the relationship between written law and legal practice within the boundaries of the aristocratic estates was not set in stone, making it difficult to assess the arbitrariness in the exercise of power. However, it is safe to say Swedish aristocrats never achieved the same control over their subjects on estates in Sweden and Finland as their peers in neighbouring Denmark or in Germany, Poland, Bohemia, or Spain.[13] In the Swedish provinces in the Baltics, however, where many Swedish aristocrats owned land or held fiefs, the circumstances were different and the variant of serfdom that existed there has been identified as one of the harshest in Central and Eastern Europe.[14]

The royal statutes regulating master–servant relationships emphasized the contractual dimensions, in particular the obligation on servants (and masters) to honour their one-year contracts. As an employer, a master had the right to demand that his servants stayed on for the full period of their contract and any who absconded were captured and brought back. For those who left for other employment, the master was responsible for a passport certifying that the servant had legitimately left their position. For all servants, male or female, the vagrancy ban made such passports essential, because they could not support themselves by owning land.[15]

One aspect of an estate owner's dominance in the locality, as Jonathan Dewald reminds us, is that 'ambitious young villagers looked at the aristocratic household for it could help them come out of farming and enter the world of soldiers or officials'.[16] This was definitely the case among people connected with the De la Gardies, as seen in a petition from the soldier Mårten Olofsson. When Mårten turned to Magnus Gabriel De la Gardie for a job as a *ryttare* (rider), it was his way of getting out of the army. Like many others seeking De la Gardie's protection, he made a point of his father having worked for De la Gardie as a carpenter for 23 years.[17]

The aristocracy could and did pave the way for individuals climbing the social ladder locally and nationally. In many countries, the state's civil administration and princely courts grew in importance as centres for political power

13 Cf. Dewald, *European Nobility*, 69.
14 Tammisto, 'Runaway Serfs', 1, 3–4; Seppel, 'The Semiotics', 49–50.
15 Uppenberg, *I husbondens bröd*, 89–100, 104; Harnesk, *Legofolk*, 32–40.
16 Dewald, *European Nobility*, 67.
17 RA, MGDLG E1642, Mårten Olofsson to MG De la Gardie, n.d.

and influence in the early modern period.[18] The seventeenth century saw several court favourites who had acquired positions of power through their relationships with monarchs.[19] Among the De la Gardies, Magnus Gabriel and his sister-in-law, Ebba Sparre, became favourites of Queen Christina and were seen as influential courtiers. As Hillay Zmora has argued, magnates at court acted as brokers of protection, privilege, and opportunity.[20]

All the male members of the De la Gardie family were also civil servants. Jacob De la Gardie was Lord High Constable, Magnus Gabriel was the Lord High Treasurer before advancing to be Chancellor of the Realm—the most powerful office in the country—and he ended his career as the Lord High Steward, an office with the highest social status but less political influence. Jacob De la Gardie and all his sons—Magnus Gabriel, Pontus Fredrik, Jacob Casimir, and Axel Julius—were members of the politically important Council of the Realm, and they were occasionally appointed provincial governors. Being an administrator not only offered political influence, but also gave opportunity to act as patron. Dewald argues that state office became increasingly important financially for noblemen in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.[21] The Swedish aristocracy was especially powerful in two long regencies under Axel Oxenstierna (1632–1644) and Magnus Gabriel De la Gardie (1660–1672), the latter for the minority of King Charles XI.

Landowning aristocrats involved in state business linked the local and national levels.[22] This was the case with the De la Gardies, but they were also the connecting link between the many estates they controlled. While landholding was always considered an honourable resource, aristocracy, as Jonathan Powis has remarked, 'implied no necessary hostility to new and sometimes spectacular sources of wealth'.[23] The De la Gardies were neither strangers to investing in mines and mills, nor participating in exporting goods. Ebba Brahe's 10-year contract with the city of Amsterdam for the sale of bar iron was only one example.[24]

18 Dewald, *European Nobility*, 123; Zmora, *Monarchy*, 79–81; Girouard, *Life in the French*, 250.

19 This included the likes of the duke of Buckingham at the court of James VI & I, the marquise de Montespan and madame de Maintenon at the court of Versailles, and the duke of Lerma at Philip III's court in Spain. See Lockyer, *Buckingham*; Williams, *Great Favourite*; Maral, *Madame de Maintenon*; Adams, 'Belle comme le jour'; Bryant, *Queen of Versailles*.

20 Zmora, *Monarchy*, 79–80; Barker, *Army, Aristocracy, Monarchy*, 120–122.

21 Dewald, *European Nobility*, 98.

22 Astarita, *Continuity of Feudal Power*, 234.

23 Powis, *Aristocracy*, 36–37. Whether it was right for an aristocrat to be involved in business or trade was a controversial issue. Commerce was thought improper in some parts of Europe; elsewhere (Britain, the Low Countries) attitudes were more relaxed. In Brittany a nobleman could temporarily relinquish his noble status to engage in overseas trade. The common factor seems to be proximity to sea trade. Yet even in France, Savoy, and the Spanish Low Countries, where the tradition was strongly against noblemen engaging in commerce, states tried to encourage a change in attitude. See Clark, *State and Status*, 221–222.

24 RA, MGDLG E1382, Ebba Brahe to MG De la Gardie, n.d. (1657?).

Liesbeth Geevers and Mirella Marini write that the 'great houses of the early modern period are often hard to capture in a national framework'. Aristocratic dynasties operated across borders.[25] Some of the more prominent Swedish aristocratic families in the seventeenth century were first- or second-generation immigrants: Wrangel, Von Königsmarck, and the De la Gardie's themselves were among the many who took service with the Swedish army and the few who found advancement. Sweden's borders, like many other nations, were in near constant motion. Across the Baltic Sea, ever larger areas of present-day Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania became part of Sweden; in northern Germany, Pomerania, Wismar, and Bremen–Verden; in Scandinavia, eastern Denmark, and eastern Norway. Because of war and expansion, Jacob De la Gardie, his sons and sons-in-law, were all at periods stationed in either newly occupied territories or abroad commanding troops, administrating provinces, or negotiating diplomatic agreements. Jacob De la Gardie led Swedish troops against Russia on Russian soil in the 1610s, Magnus Gabriel commanded troops in Germany in the late 1640s, and his younger brother Jacob Casimir fought in Poland in the 1650s and died in action outside Copenhagen in 1658. Magnus Gabriel and his brother-in-law Per Sparre were ambassadors to France at the head of large delegations, which included civil servants and their own domestic servants. The De la Gardies were known as Francophiles and Per Sparre, married to Magnus Gabriel's sister Ebba Margareta, eventually became a French count in 1675. Their transnationalism also extended to their employees. Sometimes only a small group of domestic servants accompanied their master, but at other times there were more than a hundred employees of various ranks, all encountering unaccustomed languages and traditions. Joen Persson, one of Magnus Gabriel's lackeys, saw going abroad as an opportunity to learn and be a more useful servant to his master, and therefore asked Magnus Gabriel for permission to accompany Count Tott on a diplomatic mission to Paris.[26]

It was generally expected of European aristocrats that they would spend generously and live extravagantly. They also shared the corollary that many became encumbered with debt.[27] The Spanish duke of Sessa, the French duke of Elbeuf, and the English earl of Arundel were all heavily indebted, and it was not from lack of income but from lavish spending.[28] Some debts were the inevitable outcome of monarchs expecting aristocrats to raise money for troops or other government spending. Some debts were self-inflicted. Early modern aristocrats were patrons of the arts and spent enormous sums on city

25 Geevers & Marini, *Dynastic Identity*, 4–5.
26 RA, MGDLG E1641, Joen Person to MG De la Gardie, n.d.
27 Powis, *Aristocracy*, 28.
28 Dewald, *European Nobility*, 98–99.

palaces, country houses, and gardens.[29] In this, sense too, the De la Gardies proved that they were aristocrats of an international calibre. They built and rebuilt city palaces, country houses, and churches, laid out gardens, bought art and book collections and incurred immense debts. While their cultural enterprises offered plenty of opportunities for foreign craftsmen and experts to come to Sweden and work, their growing indebtedness was evident in their intricate relations with employees.

29 Doyle, *Aristocracy*, 76; Powis, *Aristocracy*, 25–26; Revera, 'En barock historia', 121.

2

NEGOTIATING WORTH

Petitions, back pay, and benefits

In an undated petition written in Riga in 1655 or 1656, Magnus Gabriel De la Gardie's *beridare* (horse-trainer) Bengt Jonsson—a diligent and obedient servant by his own account—described the dire situation he was in, lacking the means to support himself.[1] Without going into detail, he mentioned that illness had prevented him from fulfilling his duties and he begged his master to support him with 'great clemency'.[2] We possess no documents detailing the decision of Bengt's situation. He remained in De la Gardie's service for a substantial period. Recruited in 1653, he was first sent from Dalarö outside Stockholm to Riga, where he stayed until at least 1658, before being moved to Stockholm.[3] According to documents dated 1664, he was the horse-trainer in Stockholm, but a comment in the margins of that year's accounts stated he was to be *slottsloven* (castellan) and *stallmästare* (stablemaster) of Läckö Castle, 350 kilometres south-west of the capital. The job titles implied he would be in a managerial position in charge of Läckö while running the castle stables. He was to have the same wages as his predecessor, meaning his pay would rise.[4] The fact that he stayed in this position from 1664 to at least 1679—and was in De la Gardie's service for over 25 years—suggests he was considered a trustworthy servant. On the face of it, he had a successful career in the De la Gardie sphere.

1 Some of the general arguments in this chapter have previously been published as Nilsson Hammar & Norrhem, 'Servants as Creditors', but our focus here is knowledge and knowledge communities rather than the moral economy.
2 RA, MGDLG E1642, Bengt Jonsson to MG De la Gardie, n.d.: 'Högh Clemens och mildheet'.
3 RA, MGDLG E1642, Bengt Jonsson to MG De la Gardie, n.d.
4 RA, MGDLG E1660, Hovstatsräkenskaper 1664.

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Yet as Bengt's petition from Riga showed, all was not well. Although he did not spell out why he could not support himself, the De la Gardie accounts reveal he had not been paid as promised. In fact, for his entire working life in the service of the De la Gardies he had never had his full wages. An audit in 1679 revealed that not once had Bengt been paid in full since 1653. In 1655 and 1656, when he was in Riga and in desperate need of support, he was paid a record low of 30 daler silvermynt (dr sm), a fraction of the 300 dr sm he should have received for the two years. The debt owed him by Magnus Gabriel De la Gardie after 26 years of service came to an eye-watering 2,032 daler kopparmynt (dr km).[5]

Bengt Jonsson was by no means an exception. We know from Germany, Italy, and Sweden that aristocrats were often indebted to their servants.[6] Sebastian Kühn has found that masters in Germany were far more in debt to their servants than was previously assumed, often for back pay and minor expenses. Many masters borrowed significant sums of money from their servants, though such debts were often translated into bequests in the noble debtor's will. To settle their debts, Kühn argues, transactions were not resolved as loans, but instead were given as gifts to the servants, obscuring the original context of the transaction.[7]

A previous study of the De la Gardie sphere argues that the deferred payment of wages made servants de facto creditors to their master, and that this was a key element of this economic system. Negotiations between master and servants could transform payments into other forms of compensation, such as having the right to live at a property, support for children's education, or costs for christenings, weddings, and funerals.[8] Where an employee was his master's creditor it had implications for their relationship. Withholding wages, whatever the reason, created problems for the servant, as the example of Bengt Jonsson proves. It was so well known the Household Codes (*hustavlan*, part of Luther's Small Catechism) pointed out that masters should recognize how hard it hit servants to go unpaid, and thus should avoid using it as a punishment.[9] There were times employees felt the need to ask parents or relatives to help them with clothes or cash so they could remain in service to De la Gardie. Olof Jonsson, a lackey turned *källarsven* (cellarer), had been ill

5 RA, MGDLG E1660, 'Avlöningsräkning med slottsloven Bengt Jonsson' and 'Summa inalles att fordra på löhn för 26 åhrs giorde tiänster.' In Sweden the currencies in use were riksdaler (rdr), daler silvermynt (dr sm), and daler kopparmynt (dr km). Broadly speaking, 1 riksdaler was worth 1.75 dr sm until about 1675 and 2 dr sm in 1681–1719, and 1 dr sm was worth 3 dr km.

6 Kühn, 'Masters as Debtors'; Nilsson Hammar & Norrhem, 'Servants as Creditors'. For the eighteenth century, see also Ilmakunnas, *Ett ståndsmässigt liv*, 377.

7 Kühn, 'Masters as Debtors'.

8 Nilsson Hammar & Norrhem, 'Servants as Creditors'.

9 *Huus-Taflan*, 160–161, 164.

and had not received his wages for a long time. He had complained to the chief steward and asked for new clothes so he could continue to work, but he met with a no. Ashamed of his appearance, he had turned to his relatives for help.[10] Petitions reveal there were times when servants intervened to help their peers. Albricht Falknär, who may have been a falconer, repeatedly helped his two under-falconers who had received no pay for two years. Magnus Gabriel De la Gardie's reluctance—or inability—to pay his workers reverberated in the social and economic dynamics of those in his employ. When servants who were not paid could not pay their rent, lodging-house keepers approached De la Gardie instead.[11]

The majority of servants who openly complained they had not been paid their wages for months or years were men. Even though they described how destitute they were and how they could not provide for their families, they still managed to survive. How was it possible? The sources do not offer a simple explanation, but obviously many servants had additional means of support. Apart from help from parents or fellow servants, some may have had an additional income—certainly that was implied by regulations intended to stop cooks serving food to people outside the household.[12] The role of wives must also be considered. While our sources reveal little about their responsibility in providing for their families, research on gender and work in early modern Sweden has suggested that a 'two-supporter model was the dominant model in societies with scarce resources'. Only 'the select few could support a family on a single income'.[13] One example was Anders Carlson, the new *arklimästare* (armourer) at Läckö. In a long petition, dated 16 January 1667, he complained that he could not support himself and his family on his meagre salary, nor had he ever thought to do so. Before his move to Läckö, his wife had been promised the post as housekeeper with not only salary and food for herself, but also for a maid. The commitment was not honoured, so instead of the much-needed double income the couple had to get by on just one, which explained their penury.[14]

The two-income household is the model of choice here partly because so few men claimed they were providing for their wives.[15] In our sources, however, there are frequent examples of men who said they could *not* provide for their wives and children. This did not exclude women supporting their families or living as what Heide Wunder has termed an *Arbeitspaar*

10 RA, MGDLG E1641, Olof Jonsson to MG De la Gardie, n.d.
11 RA, MGDLG E1622, Carin Perssdotter to MG De la Gardie, n.d.; RA, MGDLG E1621, Elisabeth Hoohman to MG De la Gardie, n.d.
12 RA, MGDLG E1309, Instruktion för kök- och källarmästare.
13 Ågren, *Making a Living*, 216.
14 RA, MGDLG E1654, Sammandrag av brev och suppliker till MG De la Gardie med resolutionspåteckningar, Huvudsakligen 1667–1669.
15 Ågren, *Making a Living*, 204.

(working couple).[16] Sofia Ling et al. argue that workers at ironworks and mines had to be married: husbands worked in the forges while the wives did the farming. 'With the two spouses working, the household was not solely dependent on one source of income'.[17] A telling example was the gardener Olof Swänsson, who was careful to mention his wife when he wrote to Magnus Gabriel to complain they had had to pawn their clothes because they had received neither salary nor food from the bailiff. The two—and Olof again spelled out he meant himself and his wife—did not know what to do, but they would be diligent and loyal if they received help.[18] Even though there were few examples of women being mentioned as breadwinners, the literature about gender and work gives us reason to believe they were key to the functioning of the aristocratic system of debt.

A system that did not follow through on its obligations to pay people for their work or repay their costs related to work inevitably forced servants to act. To do so they needed to understand how to navigate the system, whom to approach to get help, how to approach the relevant authorities, and how to negotiate. In a study examining the salaries of servants, day labourers, and workers in seventeenth-century Sweden, Jonas Lindström and Jan Mispelaere highlight the practice of continually bargaining about wages according to people's social status. Due in part to a shortage of cash, nominal wages did not align with actual sums of money, resulting in varying forms of payment.[19] The negotiations which inevitably followed when a servant, perhaps with a family, had not been paid according to his contract and was left penniless need more careful examination. Back pay was not the only reason to negotiate worth; there were other kinds of recompense to ask for. Either way, it implies servants knew how to argue their case, but also what was up for negotiation. Knowing how to argue is our theme in this chapter, and what servants' petitions tell us was on the table.

Communicating up

A servant's right to complain was central to the servant–master relationship. The right to petition their master in writing or in person was well known, and with it the right to argue their case. One couple who complained in person were Tomas the head cook at Ekholmen and his wife. Tomas had already written to complain about not being paid in 1660 or 1661, but decided in 1664 that he and his wife should travel to Stockholm to ask for 'something'.

16 Wunder, *'Er ist die Sonn'*.
17 Ling et al., 'Marriage and Work', 83; for the role of married women, see also Lindström et al., 'Mistress or maid', 244.
18 RA, MGDLG E1642, Olof Swänsson to MG De la Gardie, n.d.
19 Lindström & Mispelaere, 'Vad fick 1600-talets arbetare?' 435–437, 442–447, 458–460.

They succeeded. In a decision dated 10 October, the count gave them cloth to a value of 50 dr km.[20]

From the surviving petitions and their answers, it seems there was considerable tolerance of complaints. There is no trace of the kinds of punitive measures towards petitioners that Kepsu has found in the province of Swedish Ingria, where law courts tried to establish who had written petitions to hold them accountable.[21] When it came to the actual writing, we do not know who held the pen—the claimant perhaps, a friendly helper, or a paid clerk—but evidently people in the De la Gardie sphere knew how to draft petitions. One of the few studies to identify who wrote petitions offers a possible answer: Kepsu has shown how a vicar, a rider, and a peasant all had a hand in writing the same petition for a group of peasants, while in another case it was Narva's *stadsfiskal* (fiscal).[22] For early modern England, Faramerz Dabhoiwala claims that many who helped write petitions were amateurs, from lords of the manor, vicars, churchwardens, or clerks to schoolmasters, shopkeepers, and others with sufficient writing skills and knowledge of the genre.[23]

Once a petition had been delivered to the count's office it was filed and a précis was noted in a ledger, purged of all salutations and references to the count's great goodness. This was in turn presented to the count who usually decided between 4 and 6 petitions, and on rare occasions up to 30 at a time. The date and place for the decision could be noted, but just as often not. Magnus Gabriel De la Gardie wrote in the margins what his decision was—sometimes a brief 'aff.' (yes) or 'negatur' (no), often with a comment. How this was communicated to the petitioner is not known, but as the example of Tomas and his wife suggests, at least some stayed on in Stockholm, or at some other place where the count was, to argue their case and await his decision.[24]

The way the petitions were handled and archived show the great interest in a kind of document that Harald Gustafsson has labelled a ritualized meeting between subject and superior.[25] Almbjär, for example, argues that petitions played three roles in the interaction between subjects and the Diet: they gave the Diet legitimacy, they provided it with the chance to act out its patriarchal responsibilities, and they helped it audit the functioning of the civil administration.[26] Petitions existed all over Europe in the early modern period,

20 RA, MGDLG E1641, Tomas Ericksson to MG De la Gardie, n.d.; RA, MGDLG E1652, resolution 10 Oct. 1664: 'med något'.

21 Kepsu, *Den besvärliga provinsen*, 243–247.

22 Kepsu, *Den besvärliga provinsen*, 243–247. In Sweden, a fiscal was both a police officer and a law officer with the functions of a public prosecutor.

23 Dabhoiwala, 'Writing Petitions', 127–130.

24 For example, RA, MGDLG E1622, Catharina Andersdotter to MG De la Gardie, n.d.; RA, MGDLG E1641, Tomas Ericksson to MG De la Gardie, n.d.

25 Gustafsson, 'Att draga till Malmö', 78–115.

26 Almbjär, *The voice of the people?* 241.

and as the role of central administration grew they were an increasingly important communication channel between ruler and subject.[27] Their intended role in De la Gardie sphere is unclear, but it seems possible that they brought legitimacy to Magnus Gabriel De la Gardie's position and affirmed him in his role as patriarch. He was no stranger to checking his administrative staff, so when petitioners pointed out mismanagement or named administrators who had not fulfilled the count's promises, it was in effect an audit of his own administrative structure.[28]

Making a case

There was no lack of people in the De la Gardies' service who had reason to discuss their situation with their master. On 1 January 1652, according to the financial records, Magnus Gabriel owed back pay to the vast majority of 150 employees—including servants and seamen in Stockholm—some back to 1647. No distinction was made between those at the top or bottom of the hierarchy: those who had not been paid were men and women from the washerwoman Rachell and the *kockpojke* (kitchen boy) Johan to the highest-ranking servants such as the chief steward, secretary, and comptroller. Of the male domestic servants, many had not received their *logementspengar* (lodging allowance), which meant if they had no other means they would be in debt to the lodging-house keepers, seen in lackeys' petitions asking for support so they could pay their rent and in lodging-house keepers' complaints that they not been paid.[29] In 1652, the total the count owed his employees was 14,888 riksdaler (rdr), or more than half the value of the Stockholm mansion his mother bought two years later.[30]

Intriguingly, the 1652 accounts stated they were finalized 'i follketss Praesentia Examinerat', meaning the contents were reviewed in the presence of the servants. Taken literally, one would assume that all servants were present when the details of the list were discussed, but exactly how is unclear. Their exact role—whether they were interviewed or were expected to bring in their own accounts or receipts to support their claims—is lost to us, as is whether they could protest if they were unhappy with the outcome. Nor do we know the reason why the accounts were audited in that way, although it cannot be a coincidence that it was when the De la Gardie court in Stockholm was in the grips of the plague: Magnus Gabriel himself was dangerously ill and many of his servants died. Aristocrats' wills from the time show that the custom was for debts to be settled on the death of the head of the household,

27 Almbjär, *The voice of the people?* 56–57, 60.
28 For audits, see 58–59.
29 RA, MGDLG E1641, all lackeys petitioning MG De la Gardie, n.d.
30 RA, MGDLG E1661; see also LUB, DLG Släkt, vol. 81:1, Utkast till Ebba Brahes testamente.

so perhaps the outbreak meant the De la Gardie servants moved quickly to secure their money.[31] It was not the only list of its kind—other admittedly less detailed accounts were compiled in 1661, 1663, 1666, and 1679—but we also know it was not typical for Magnus Gabriel.[32] And of course, as with Bengt Jonsson, there were times when debts to individual servants were settled on a case-by-case basis.[33]

The many petitions in the De la Gardie archives testify not only to the fact that servants felt they had reason to complain, but also that they had the right to do so and that this kind of negotiation was a routine part of life and work. Not that they all succeeded, though. In a petition from the 1660s, a group of soldiers told De la Gardie about their impoverishment and miserable living conditions. They claimed their requests to be paid for their service to him in 1661 had been dismissed. They finished on a forceful, challenging note, however, declaring that 'he who requests our labour should also ensure our payment'. The count's response, written at the bottom of the letter, was to flatly refuse: 'When they do not work, they shall get nothing'.[34]

Merely asking for back pay was not enough, it seems; servants had to give additional reasons why their request should be granted. Six men and boys working in De la Gardie's stables took a different approach to the soldiers, for example. They petitioned the count about clothing that was more than three years overdue. Left with nothing to wear, they not only risked illness, but might also be unable to work. Unlike the soldiers, they used a standard argument.[35] Their inability to work carried significant weight, as work was considered a moral and legal duty in Sweden, where any adult who could not make a living from their land was forced to take work or be convicted of vagrancy.[36] Failing to meet the moral and legal obligations of the day and being unable to do their work for the count were stronger arguments than simply asserting their rights.

When asking for back pay, whether in cash or kind, in only two instances did petitioners not provide De la Gardie with supporting arguments, against

31 Jacob De la Gardie and Ebba Brahe both specifically said their debts should be paid before the estate was passed to the heirs. LUB, DLG Släkt, vol. 81:1 Ebba Brahe's will; LUB, DLG Släkt, vol. 5:1 Jacob De la Gardie's will.

32 For Magnus Gabriel De la Gardie, see RA, MGDLG E1661; for Jacob De la Gardie, see LUB, DLG Släkt, vol. 11:2; see also RA, Bielkesamlingen, Riksskattmästaren Sten Bielkes arkiv E2025, Biografiska och ekonomiska handlingar. Accounts for 21 servants employed by Nils Bielke dated 24 Apr. 1678 show he owed wages to half (10) of them.

33 See, for example, RA, MGDLG E1660, Unge Grefwarnes i Upsala requis: från den 25 Augusti 1662 till den 18 Maj 1663.

34 RA, MGDLG E1642, Soldiers to MG De la Gardie, n.d. (1661?): 'den som fordrar oss till arbette, måtte ock fordra wår Löön för oss'; 'När dee intedt arbeta så få dee intet'.

35 RA, MGDLG E1642, Johan Nilsson, Olof Månsson, Olof Carlsson (coachmen), Lars Erichsson, Lars, and Pelle (stableboys) to MG De la Gardie, n.d.

36 Harnesk, *Legofolk*, 32–34.

the hundreds of petitioners who did. A common method involved presenting the situation as urgent or life-changing. In January 1683, the *källardräng* (cellarer) Gustaf Larsson appealed to De la Gardie for clothing, as there was a harsh winter ahead. He claimed that he was owed 120 rdr, having in the previous four years received clothes worth at most 28 rdr. He was the kind of servant who would normally turn to his parents to make ends meet, but they had died and his situation was dire. Larsson turned to the count hoping for 'mercy', and more specifically, the clothing he was entitled to.[37] In a different vein, a despairing Simon Andersson, a *fågelfängare* (fowler), asked for cash and food because he and his family were ashamed to show themselves, as they were almost naked.[38] Servants who petitioned De la Gardie for back pay wrote of their immediate concerns with acute poverty, including hunger, social exclusion, and homelessness.

These arguments appealed to the all-important aristocratic paternalism to which most people subscribed at the time. There were endlessly florid acknowledgements of the count's benevolence and social concerns in the petitions, and while they were part of the expected epistolary genre they nevertheless played on his duty to help the less fortunate.[39]

In her study of early modern France, Maza writes of the clear norms of the servant–master relationship, even though practices varied widely: the bonds were reciprocal, and while the master's duty towards his servants was cast in terms of compassion and responsibility, a servant's loyalty and obedience were more important than his work. And it is Maza who elaborates on the 'aristocratic paternalism' which she sees as fundamental to a wide range of prescriptive literature published in the ancien régime.[40] From another perspective, aristocratic paternalism may have prompted a certain set of behaviours and activities. Laurence Fontaine has claimed that the ancien régime aristocracy as a group showed great generosity to the poor, extending credit, but also showing understanding in their dealings with debtors. 'Their attitude retained something of the contracts of an earlier age in which the weak would place themselves under the protection of the mighty', Fontaine concludes.[41] When it came to worth and social status in early modern England, Alexandra Shepard shows that men and women were skilled at calculating the cash equivalents of movables. Not only did they know how to determine the exchange value and worth of such property, 'there was far less distinction between goods and currency than is assumed in teleological accounts of an emergent cash nexus'.[42]

37 RA, MGDLG E1641, Gustaf Larsson to Magnus Gabriel De la Gardie, n.d.
38 RA, MGDLG E1641, Simon Andersson to Magnus Gabriel De la Gardie, n.d.
39 Hansson, *Svensk brevskrivning*, 36; Blom, *Tiggare, tidstjuvar*, 192–194.
40 Maza, *Servants and Masters*, 12–14.
41 Fontaine, *Moral Economy*, 34–35.
42 Shepard, *Accounting for Oneself*, 36–37, 305.

Servants displayed a striking precision in their petitions about how long they had gone without pay or how much the count owed them. Jacob Markusson said he had been employed in September (most likely 1647) and since then only received 10 dr km, 400 grammes of salt meat, and 400 grammes of salt cod, but he had been promised 20 dr a month and 8 ells of cloth annually. It is impossible to say how long a time had elapsed, but to Jacob's mind it was too long. Erik Jacobsson, possibly the former's son, was equally specific. When in the navy he received 30 dr km a month, but working for De la Gardie he got only 25 dr km; he said he was happy with that, but he calculated that the 1 kilo of dried meat, 1 kilo of salt meat, 5 litres of peas, 5 litres of grain, and 10 dr km he had actually been paid was worth a mere 18 dr km.[43] Karin Nilsdotter, widow of the *skaffare* (manciple) and kitchen clerk Johan Eriksson, detailed in her petition how her late husband had worked for over three years—'anno 1653 654 och 655'—but only received a fraction of the 150 dr km per annum he had been promised. The count, she said, owed her 318 dr km, and she had attached a document proving it; however, Karin continued, she was not demanding the full amount. It seems she left it to Magnus Gabriel to decide how much she and her two fatherless children would be given.[44]

Similar but less detailed examples were the *vaktmästare* (doorkeeper) Swen Hansson, who claimed to have received only 13 rdr in three years; the *fodermarsk* (horse marshal) Anders Larsson, who only received 46 rdr in six years; and the *kökshustru* (cook) Karin Andersdotter, who demanded the 90 rdr the count owed her—60 rdr from a previous period and 30 rdr for her final year working for him.[45] The many similar examples revealed that servants kept track of their finances and could muster hard facts to make their case. Theirs was a capacity to act built on experience and knowledge of how the system worked.

All the examples thus far were petitioners demanding back pay. Other petitioners had to find other ways to argue their case because it did not relate to wages. Here arguments could rely on other attributes or values, which petitioners used to manifest their relationship with De la Gardie. Geographical belonging was one such relationship. Not only Magnus Gabriel De la Gardie and his wife, but also other members of the dynasty such as Jacob De la

43 RA, MGDLG E1642, Erik Jacobsson and Jacob Markusson to MG De la Gardie, n.d. Measurements are given in modern equivalents. In the original Jacob and Erik wrote of *skålpund* (*c.*400 grammes) when discussing salt meat and cod, and *kannor* (1 *kanna* was *c.*2.6 litres) for grain and pea.

44 RA, MGDLG E1622, Karin Nilsdotter to MG De la Gardie, n.d.

45 RA, MGDLG E1642, Anders Larsson to MG De la Gardie and Swen Hansson to MG De la Gardie, n.d.; RA, MGDLG E1622, Karin Andersdotter to Magnus Gabriel De la Gardie, n.d. RA, E1622 has several other examples of women keeping track of what was owed them or family members.

Gardie, Ebba Brahe, and Maria Sofia De la Gardie often recruited servants from the areas where their estates were, a common pattern among Swedish aristocratic families.[46] With that in mind, it is no surprise that petitioners played on their geographical origins as well as personal relations and a history of loyalty. Hence when Oloff Månsson, a resident of a *hemman* (homestead or cadastral unit) in Bolum in Västergötland, asked for a job and for his taxes to be waived because of his straitened circumstances at home, he explained he had been an *uppbördsman* (tax collector) in the service of De la Gardie's mother, and, second, he had been born on the De la Gardie estate of Höjentorp in Västergötland.[47] His petition thus underlined the twofold generational relationship: he had served two generations of the same family and his was the second generation in his family to have ties with his master's family.

The province of Västergötland played a significant role for servants negotiating with De la Gardie. As count of Läckö, which lay in Västergötland, De la Gardie often visited the area, as petitions and his letterbooks show.[48] Petitioners used having been born there or having family in the province to add weight to their case and to show that their relationship went beyond simply working for the count. Oloff Månsson was not alone in stressing his Västergötland or Läckö origins as an argument for being hired by the De la Gardies. Bengt Oloffsson, who wished to become a lackey, pointed out that De la Gardie was known for his generosity to the fatherless, especially those who were born in Läckö.[49] Another telling example was Bengt Assarsson, a former lackey to Count Bengt Oxenstierna, who asked to work for De la Gardie, referring not only to his past career, but also that he was born on one of De la Gardie's estates: 'Being born on your Excellency's estate', he wrote, he promised to be an obedient servant and do whatever the Count wanted.[50]

From time to time employees acted as recruiters, and then Västergötland connections could help, as with the gardener Swen Nilsson Rölin at Kägleholm, himself from the province, who wrote in April 1680 that his only help was a young boy and it was not enough. His request denied, Rölin contacted his parents in Västergötland for help finding suitable men who would

46 See Prytz, 'Life-Cycle Servant', 104; Ferm, *De högadliga godsen*, 299; for De la Gardie, see 149–150.

47 RA, MGDLG E1641, Oloff Månsson to MG De la Gardie, n.d.

48 RA, MGDLG E1622, Christin Matzdotter to MG De la Gardie; LUB, DLG, vol. 97:1, Brevregister Inkomna brev 1675–1683.

49 RA, MGDLG E1641, Bengt Oloffsson to MG De la Gardie, n.d.

50 RA, MGDLG E1641, Bengt Assarsson to MG De la Gardie: 'som jag uppå eders excellens gods är födder lender för den skull till eders grevl excellens min underdåniga begäran der Eders grevl excellens min underdåniga tjänst behöva kan, skall jag finnas alltid underdånig, till vad mig anbetrott warda antingen till lakej eller till vad eders excellens nådigst behagar'.

be willing to work at Kägleholm. When this too failed, he turned to Magnus Gabriel for support, underlining his contacts and interactions in the province to make his case.[51] Judging by how the De la Gardies recruited staff, anyone who approached Jacob or Magnus Gabriel for help or a job who could claim to come from Västergötland, or better yet the county of Läckö, would be well received. Yet connections alone were not necessarily enough, as the bailiff Erich Johansson found out. He wrote to ask for a post as a bailiff at Uppsala University, referring to his earlier job with Ebba Brahe at Runsa from 1670 until her death in 1674. In the margins of the decision Magnus Gabriel scribbled 'I never recommend any bailiff to the university'.[52] In this instance one principle trumped another.

It was a promising tactic to cite one's long service, devotion, and loyalty, since they all were things aristocrats emphasized when praising a servant.[53] Work-related loyalties could be demonstrated by pointing to services provided. However, the perceived value of loyalty and devotion may have implied a different form of expectation, namely that those already employed would continue to work in the household or wider sphere. It was illustrated by the *taffeltäckare* (table-decker) Petter Stoor. Petter had served as Maria Euphrosyne's table-decker but had been replaced and now petitioned to become *spismästare* (master of the kitchen) at Uppsala University where Magnus Gabriel was chancellor. Apparently he had done his duties well enough to get the support of his former mistress, since he claimed that she had promised to intervene on his behalf.[54] The expectation of continuing in service (and not necessarily in the same position) was standard for petitioners.[55] Statements that people would do whatever they could to be 'useful' to De la Gardie were a feature of the petitions. The lackey Joen Person, for example, who according to himself was innocent and poor, wished to leave De la Gardie's service to learn more by joining Count Tott's embassy to Paris. What was at first glance a bold, insulting statement made sense once he continued that he hoped learn more in the service of Count Tott and later return and be more useful to De la Gardie.[56] Other examples also indicate that service not only implied being paid to do a certain kind of work, but also

51 RA, MGDLG E1642, Swen Nilsson Rölin to MG De la Gardie, n.d.

52 RA, MGDLG E1655, Resolutioner på suppliker, 1670s: 'Jagh recommenderar aldrig någh fogde till Acad.'.

53 For example, Jacob De la Gardie's will in LUB, DLG Släkt, vol. 5:1; LUB, DLG Släkt, vol. 88, Handlingar rörande rikskanslern Magnus Gabriel De la Gardie, MG De la Gardie, Kägleholm 12 July 1674; see also MG De la Gardie, Kägleholm, 11 June 1674.

54 RA, MGDLG E1641, Petter Stoor to MG De la Gardie, n.d.

55 RA, MGDLG E1642, Johan Andersson; and RA, MGDLG E1642, Giöran Matsson and Jonas Esbiörnsson to MG De la Gardie, n.d.

56 RA, MGDLG E1641, Joen Person to MG De la Gardie; see also RA, MGDLG E1641, Erich Erichsson to MG De la Gardie, n.d.

general compliance, loyalty, and an interest in 'serving'.[57] It may have been part of the genre to emphasize eternal loyalty, but it was also a way for petitioners to position themselves by instilling trust: loyalty and devotion secured the 'right' to work, petitioners who offered lifelong service stressed another dimension of the economy of which they had become a part.

Rangella Larsdotter was an example of how it was not necessarily one's own service which was leveraged in a petition: it could be a father's loyalty, a husband's, or in Rangell's example, arguing her case to pay less for the leasehold of the *skattegård* (tax farm) she inhabited she referred to her son, who had worked for De la Gardie's mother, Ebba Brahe.[58] A similar argument was used by Axel Andersson, whose homestead suffered a terrible harvest. He asked for his taxes to be waived and help running his farm, and mentioned his son Lars's service as a *kammartjänare* (valet) to Magnus Gabriel.[59] Servants in the De la Gardie sphere regarded not only themselves and the values they produced as part of it, but also their families and parents, and even grandparents. Petitioners expected support not only for themselves, but also for a wider circle of people. Dependents and expectations could thus stretch far beyond the person then in work.

Another feature was the time elapsed before a petition was submitted to the master, suggesting either a patient or a subservient attitude among servants. The long wait was often spelled out and may have been used to stress a servant's loyalty. Reinholt Ersson, Simon the fowler's boy, pointed out that he had worked hard for 18 months without receiving pay of any kind.[60] The fowler Johan Andersson lamented in his petition how he had gone without pay for eight years and even without food or drink for the previous five weeks.[61] Some, like the *fatburspiga* (housekeeper's maid) Karin Jönsdotter, petitioned the count because she had only received a portion of what was owed them. Karin was ill and needed her pay so she could travel back to her 'fädernesland' (home of her fathers).[62] Others wrote group petitions to ask for their promised salaries—hence eight carpenters in Västergötland who together asked for two years back pay and complained they had not received the food they were entitled to.[63] Most of the collective petitions came from servants with jobs, such as the carpenters, but there were also examples

57 RA, MGDLG E1641, Oloff Månsson to Magnus Gabriel De la Gardie, n.d.
58 RA, MGDLG E1622, Rangela Larsdotter to Magnus Gabriel De la Gardie, n.d.
59 RA, MGDLG E1642, Axel Andersson to MG De la Gardie, 1662.
60 RA, MGDLG E1641, Reinholt Ersson to Magnus Gabriel De la Gardie, n.d.
61 RA, MGDLG E1641, Johan Andersson to Magnus Gabriel De la Gardie, n.d.
62 RA, MGDLG E1622, Karin Jönsdotter to Magnus Gabriel De la Gardie, n.d.; RA, MGDLG E1641, Nils Månsson to Magnus Gabriel De la Gardie, 1665; RA, MGDLG E1641, Petter Bark to Magnus Gabriel De la Gardie, n.d.; RA, MGDLG E1641, Johan Giöss to Magnus Gabriel De la Gardie, n.d.
63 RA, MGDLG E1642, Carpenters to Magnus Gabriel De la Gardie, n.d.

where servants of different rank joined forces. In 1679 a petition from 21 people at Läckö Castle, including the housekeeper, manciple, the *organist* (organist), two *djurvaktare* (herdsmen), and several *snickare* (joiners), told a story of utter despair. Times were tough, they said with one voice, and they could not source enough food because they were not allowed to leave the castle. They humbly asked for help in the form of food and materials for shoes, while also asking for the past six months pay.[64]

Having been treated differently to other servants was an argument explicitly used by some petitioners. The stable lads Oluff and Anders complained that they had been away when the other stable lads at Kägleholm received clothes, which prompted them to petition De la Gardie to ask for the same.[65] The former lackey Jonas Mörk, who had worked for Magnus Gabriel's son Count Gustaf Adolf, asked to be paid like his fellow lackeys, as the only one left out in the group of workers to which he belonged.[66] Several similar petitions suggest servants differentiated between wages in cash and in kind—clothes, shoes, and food—and kept track of when they had been promised one or the other.

The values to which petitioners referred when asking to receive the back pay owed to them merit further discussion. Claims that they had no clothes, were unable to feed a family, or had to pawn belongings suggest it was seen as crucial to use poverty-related arguments to succeed. Poverty did indeed attract attention among elite groups in Sweden. Recurring wars and an unusually cold climate with later bad harvests put pressure on the population, and begging became a political issue. Previous attempts to legislate away the problems had failed, and now the regency government of 1660–1672 was going to try, this time led by Magnus Gabriel himself. Contemporary regulations distinguished between 'rätta och orätta fattiga', the 'deserving and undeserving poor', where the deserving were poor out of force of circumstance and the undeserving because of their laziness or ill-advised actions.[67] For servants on the brink of poverty it was important to establish their vulnerability while demonstrating their devotion, loyalty, and diligence, in order to demonstrate they were among the deserving poor, who were to be helped, while the undeserving poor should be identified and punished by the law. Further, it was thought crucial to prevent children falling into poverty and becoming beggars.[68]

64 RA, MGDLG E1641, 21 servants to MG De la Gardie, 11 Feb. 1679; see also petitions from a group of lackeys, RA, MGDLG E1641, n.d.; and from a group of stable grooms and four groups of carpenters, RA, MGDLG E1642, n.d.

65 RA, MGDLG E1642, Oluff to Magnus Gabriel De la Gardie, n.d.

66 RA, MGDLG E1641, Jonas Mörk to Magnus Gabriel De la Gardie, n.d.

67 Unger, *Makten och fattigdomen*, 19.

68 Blom, *Tiggare, tidstjuvar*, 143, 198–204.

The literature on poverty confirms that belonging to a household, village, or parish was crucial in early modern Sweden, and enabled people to share in the community safety net, be it poor relief, housing, or work.[69] Being part of the De la Gardie sphere served a similar purpose. With one foot in Västergötland and the other in Stockholm, De la Gardie linked the province to the capital. Servants with obvious loyalties to the province—birth, family, or work—may have been at an advantage when negotiating for positions and support in Västergötland, but also in other parts of Sweden. Servants must have hoped to ensure their place in a community where help would be given in times of need, whether by geographical or social allegiance or by demonstratively making themselves useful to the count.

Knowing what to ask for

It seems many servants used their general awareness of paternalism—the result of their loyalty or earlier connectedness to the De la Gardie—to frame arguments that could conceivably be well received. Many petitioners also kept track of how much they were owed, what they had been promised (sometimes over generations), and which documents proved their rights. This meant they knew the value of what was at stake. Yet to be a successful petitioner one also needed to know what it was that could be negotiated.

Wages were paid in cash, clothes, cloth, shoes, lodging, *kommiss* (commission)—the right to buy in supplies from a merchant—and food. Some servants only had the right to cash, clothes, and shoes, while others also had commission and money to pay for accommodation. Food could be the right to have meals or supplies. The exact workings of the wage system are obscure: for example which supplies a servant could take out on commission or how rates of pay were determined. There were patterns though. It was generally domestic servants who got their meals while outdoor or rural servants received foodstuffs, though this was not a hard-and-fast rule. The proportion of servants paid in cash was higher for those high in the hierarchy and lower for those at the bottom. Some of the boys were paid only in clothes and food, no cash. The difference in wages between the highest- and lowest-paid men was far greater than the difference among the female staff; no woman was paid as much as the highest-paid man, but no woman had as low a wage as the lowest-paid man.[70]

Cash was in short supply all over Europe, Sweden included, which explained why servants were so often paid in kind instead.[71] Sofia Juliana

69 Sandén, 'I livets skuggdalar', 50; Holmlund & Sandén, *Usla, elända och arma*, 366–367.

70 See RA, MGDLG E1660 & E1661, Hovstatsräkenskaper.

71 Muldrew, 'Debt, Credit, and Poverty', 12–13; Gerber, 'Role of rural indebtedness', 730; Spang, *Stuff and Money*, 13.

Forbus wrote to her husband Axel Julius De la Gardie that she had been trying to get rid of a sick cook, Erik, but since she had no cash to pay his outstanding wages he refused to leave. In the end she 'once again' had to go to the bank to get the cash to pay him off. How she was to find the cash to redeposit it in the bank she did not know.[72] Servants also testified to being prevented from working because of a lack of cash. The *proviantskrivare* (victualler's clerk) Lars Larsson, apparently defending himself against accusations of negligence, told Countess Palatine Maria Euphrosyne how difficult it was to negotiate deals with people selling salmon, herring, and the like without being able to pay cash. Those with cash had first pick.[73] A similar example involved the kitchen clerk Johan Pedersson, who wrote of his 'chagrin' at having to bargain with 'brazen hawkers' and finding it difficult to get credit when it was impossible to get cash from the comptroller.[74] As Craig Muldrew says, this 'was a credit economy in which everything was measured by monetary prices, but where money was not the primary means of exchange'.[75]

Instead of asking for cash, servants had to find other ways to negotiate worth. When using specific requests in petitions to obtain positions and support for themselves and their families, they indicated they wanted to take charge of their situation—petitions were more than a cry for help. This seems especially clear in the negotiations over back pay and the count's debts to his servants, since much was made of the debts in the negotiations. A frequent request concerned converting back pay into access to a cadastral unit.[76]

Much of the De la Gardie family wealth was income from their properties. For Magnus Gabriel, control of over a thousand cadastral units (or homesteads) across Sweden helped fund his political career, his luxury consumption, and his charity.[77] Petitions often refer to farms or villages near his estates around the country, but the province of Västergötland stood out, and especially Läckö Castle and its surrounding county. In the county of Läckö alone, which covered an area of some 1,000 square kilometres, De la Gardie controlled 592 cadastral units, with more clustered around his other estates in Västergötland such as Höjentorp and Mariedal.[78] His account

72 LUB, DLG Släkt, vol. 123:1, Sofia Juliana Forbus to Axel Julius De la Gardie, 29 Aug. 1690.

73 RA, MGDLG E1643, Lars Larsson to Maria Eufrosyne De la Gardie, n.d.

74 RA, MGDLG E1643, Johan Pedersson to MG De la Gardie, n.d.: 'blygd och nesa, 'oförskämda månglerskor'.

75 Muldrew, 'Debt, Credit, and Poverty', 14. For a similar perspective and comparison with Scotland, see Spence, *Women, Credit, and Debt*, 5.

76 For De la Gardie offering cadastral units to provide for people in need, see Peter Ullgren, *En makalös historia*, 278.

77 LUB, DLG Släkt, vol. 112, Räkenskaper.

78 Fåhræus, *Magnus Gabriel De la Gardie*, 236. The estates (by parish) were Höjentorp with Varnhem monastery, Mariedal (Ova), Traneberg (Kållandsö), Katrineberg (Fredsberg), Synnerby hospital (Synnerby), Slädene farm (Slädene), Magnusberg (Särestad), Råda barn (Råda), and Jönslunda.

books for 1664 and 1665 show he controlled 777 cadastral units in the province.[79] In 1664 and 1665, the accounts for the Swedish estates (excluding Finland and the Baltics) record that 53 people held cadastral units instead of wages—21 in the county of Läckö alone—and 47 people had been granted them for life. Further, De la Gardie had exempted 17¼ cadastral units at Läckö from taxes because of the holder's poverty.[80]

The reason was that one way to solve the problem of unpaid wages was for servants to secure an income by asking for a cadastral unit to live off. In late October 1669, the *huggekarl* (woodman) Lars Erson petitioned De la Gardie for a cadastral unit 'just like the other woodmen' from which to take his pay.[81] A similar request was made a few years earlier by Erich Erichsson, who looked after the gardens near the Höjentorp estate; he requested a cadastral unit where his family could keep some cattle and in return he would be a faithful servant until death.[82] If the financial accounts were anything to go by, the chances of a request for a cadastral unit being granted were good. Often it was a win–win, because the count needed people to live and work his land to generate income, and it cleared his debts with his employees.[83] The account books list people by name and job title, whether they were given a whole, half, or quarter of a cadastral unit, and sometimes why. Examples include Jörgen Jörgensson, a trumpeter, awarded a cadastral unit for life for his long and diligent service in 1647, and one Jöran Sax, given half a unit for his faithful service in 1639.[84]

Sometimes a cadastral unit given for life meant not only a comfortable old age, but also the opportunity to leave a source of income to the next generation. Kirstin Andersdotter, widow of a servant at Läckö Castle, reminded the count of a promise once made to her late husband that they could live at the Sånnebo cadastral unit if they paid the appropriate fees. In her mind, this extended to her as a widow and her son.[85] It seems hers was a verbal promise, but sometimes they were set down in writing, perhaps because the petitioner had explicitly asked for written confirmation.[86] One such case concerns Lars Andersson Barck, who for 28 years had served as the *gevaldiger* (warden) of Läckö. Lars already held half a cadastral unit as part of his income, but asked

79 LUB, DLG Släkt, vol. 112: Räkenskaper, Journalen A 1664, av landsbokhållaren för svenska räntan.

80 LUB, DLG Släkt, vol. 112. The accounts for the years 1665–1667 are not as detailed, but a comparison of how much revenue De la Gardie gave up by using cadastral units instead of cash suggests the number of cadastral units did not vary in these particular years.

81 RA, MGDLG E1641, Lars Erson to MG De la Gardie, n.d.

82 RA, MGDLG E1642, Erich Erichsson to Magnus Gabriel De la Gardie, n.d.

83 For the importance of revenue from cadastral units, see Lindström, 'En gårdsfogdes vedermödor', 80.

84 LUB, DLG, Topographica, Läckö, vol. 48 (1651).

85 RA, MGDLG E1622, Kirstin Andersdotter to MG De la Gardie, n.d.

86 RA, MGDLG E1622, Kirstin Andersdotter to MG De la Gardie, n.d.

for assurances that should he live longer than he was able to serve he could keep half a cadastral unit for the rest of his life.[87] Another Kirstin Andersdotter, widow of Nils Jonsson, the *befallningsman* (overseer) of Kägleholm, had written confirmation of the cadastral unit where she and her husband had lived and where she now lived alone. The document, she wrote, showed he had been given it by Ebba Brahe for life on condition his widow could live out her life there. What Kirstin petitioned Magnus Gabriel about was simply confirmation of this.[88]

In addition to granting cadastral units to servants rather than pay their wages, either for life or temporarily, De la Gardie had also the possibility to grant holders tax exemptions or *corvée*. There seems to have been a difference between receiving a cadastral unit in lieu of wages and for life, but the distinction was not always clear. According to Bengt Larsson, who worked in the stables at Läckö, Magnus Gabriel had given him a verbal promise he would have a cadastral unit near the town of Lidköping in the county of Läckö, once granted for life to Bengt's grandmother. Before he had received written confirmation, Bengt had been sent to Stockholm and the matter was dropped. Bengt petitioned the count to hold him to his promise and suggested that the cadastral unit be given to him as part of his wages.[89]

A cadastral unit was not only a secure income: it could also be a way of avoiding being in a long queue of creditors, and it guaranteed the servant remained in the De la Gardie sphere. However, it was not all positive. There was a certain amount of risk, as the case of Malin Madsdotter illustrates. Malin and her husband lived on one of De la Gardie's cadastral units and in her petition she wrote of her fear about what would happen if her husband were enlisted as a soldier, to the detriment and, ultimately, the destruction of the property, which in turn would harm the count himself. She asked De la Gardie, who had the right to exempt his subjects from military service, to take the decision that would help save his own property.[90] Seemingly, while a cadastral unit did involve some risk—bad harvests, the death of a spouse, or a husband being enlisted, which could put the holder in a vulnerable position—the link to De la Gardies still left open the possibility of asking for tax relief or other help.

The account books and decisions about petitions reveal it was fairly common for the De la Gardies to support events of social and religious importance, such as christenings, weddings, and funerals. It often consisted of nothing more than giving the petitioner their back pay. When the *kockdräng*

87 RA, MGDLG E1641, Lars Andersson Barck to MG De la Gardie, n.d.
88 RA, MGDLG E1622, Kirstin Andersdotter to MG De la Gardie, n.d.
89 RA, MGDLG E1642, Bengt Larsson to MG De la Gardie, n.d.
90 RA, MGDLG E1622, Malin Madsdotter to MG De la Gardie, n.d. See also the petitions from a group of carpenters, RA, MGDLG E1642.

(under-cook) Greger Davidsson was to marry he asked for his unpaid wages to help pay for the wedding. The response in this case was a payment of 50 daler.[91] It was common for petitions to suggest De la Gardie, rather than paying off a debt, would be seen as meeting his paternal obligations, as Kühn has shown.[92] The *kökspiga* (kitchen maid) Carin Andersdotter, who had served in Magnus Gabriel's kitchens for six months without being paid, exemplified this in her humble petition for the 25 dr km her master owed her so she could bury her father.[93] The cook Andreas Ericksson made a similar request, explaining that his family were poor because he had received no wages for several years. Now that their child had died, he asked for the money needed for the funeral.[94] Other examples included a washerwoman whose children had died, a cook who wished to baptize his newborn son, and a *drabant* (halberdier) who was getting married.[95] They all requested to turn back pay into a different kind of reimbursement—one that could help them in the situation in which they found themselves. In a sense they offered a way in which wages owing actually 'heightened the employer's position of patronage', as Shepard suggests, while not bolstering the employee's credit.[96]

The point of some petitions was education. Magnus Gabriel and his parents sometimes helped boys to get Crown scholarships, or even paid out of their own pocket so promising young candidates could study at university. As Chancellor of Uppsala University (1654–1682), Magnus Gabriel was in the position to help if he wished. There were opportunities to get an education in the De la Gardie sphere by being apprenticed to one of its many experts. There were also other opportunities for young boys to receive further training. A widow of a *skattdragare* (tax collector) and *länsman* (reeve) at Läckö asked if De la Gardie in his kindness would help her son, who had become a barber.[97]

Petitions about educational opportunities tended not to have past service in mind, but rather the future. Not that the count always kept his promises of educational support. Maria Josephzdåtter, whose husband the organ

91 RA, MGDLG E1653, Resolutioner på suppliker 1660-tal, n.d.; a similar example is found in Magnus Gabriel's accounts for 1669 where the carpenter Hans at Ekholmen estate was given grain for his wedding festivities.

92 Kühn, 'Masters as Debtors'.

93 RA, MGDLG E1622, Carin Andersdotter to MG De la Gardie, n.d.

94 RA, MGDLG E1641, Andreas Ericksson to MG De la Gardie, n.d.

95 RA, MGDLG E1641, Oluff Ericksson to MG De la Gardie, n.d.; RA, MGDLG E1641, Nils Andersson Dallman to MG De la Gardie; RA, MGDLG E1622, Marina Tommasdotter to MG De la Gardie; see also petitions from Erik Larsson, Peder Bengtsson (RA, MGDLG E1642) and Margetta Simonsdotter and Maria Persdotter (RA, MGDLG E1622).

96 Shepard, *Accounting for Oneself*, 203.

97 RA, MGDLG E1622, Margaretha Larsdotter to MG De la Gardie; see also petitions from Anna Andersdotter, Barbro Mårtensdotter, Getska Clasdotter, and Marina Schmeltzers, RA, MGDLG E1621.

builder Hindrich Syrach was in Livonia, leaving her penniless and alone with six small children, begged De la Gardie for help so the family would not starve. She also reminded him that he had promised a stipend so her boys could learn to read. None of the promised three barrels of grain over four years had been delivered and she thus could not clothe or school the children.[98] This complex educational economy of promises, favours, and credit was apparent in several petitions. In a similar case, Cherstin Gudmundsdotter, lamented how she had not been given the opportunity to take over as postmaster from her late husband. Instead of supporting her three sons, who were in Stockholm and wanted to become bookkeepers, she had to ask for support with their education from Magnus Gabriel.[99] And there was Catharina Linnarsdotter, who, wishing to educate her five sons, claimed her husband Johan Larsson Sidenius had been promised a position with De la Gardie without receiving it. In order nonetheless to earn money and educate her sons, she asked for the right to brew beer, and urged De la Gardie to recommend her and her enterprise to the King in Council.[100]

Petitions suggest that having been in the service of De la Gardie was linked to expectations of aid or benefits in old age. A place to live when no longer able to work was a standard request from employees who claimed that with advancing years they were weaker and needed support. Apparently there was reason for servants to believe that obtaining support was possible, something which documents give evidence of: one example was the estate bailiff Håkan Andersson, once in the service of Ebba Brahe, who had in 1669 been granted the right to *hemmansränta* (yields from cadastral unit) for himself and his wife for life.[101] There was some reason for Erick Ericksson, a fisherman at Ekholmen, to be hopeful. After 32 years working for them he was old and in pain and wished to retire. If he only could find somewhere to live, he wrote, he would still be willing to take on chores, if less so than before.[102] Negotiating one's financial circumstances was also a way of handling old age. Christiern Falkendaal, who worked in a garden (likely Varnhem in Höjentorp), could no longer work on his own and asked for lodgers who could help him.[103] Some petitions were more general in approach. Anders Olofsson had by his own account sacrificed his health while working for almost thirty years at several De la Gardie estates, including Mariedal, Katrineberg, and Höjentorp. Now he was 70 years old he wanted to retire, and asked for an income for

98 RA, MGDLG E1622, Maria Josephzdåtter to MG De la Gardie, n.d.
99 RA, MGDLG E1622, Cherstin Gudmussdoter to MG De la Gardie, n.d.
100 RA, MGDLG E1622, Catharina Linnarssdotter to MG De la Gardie, n.d.
101 LUB, DLG Släkt, vol. 81:2, Handlingar rörande Ebba Brahes räkenskaper.
102 RA, MGDLG E1641, Erick Ericksson to MG De la Gardie, n.d.; see also RA, MGDLG E1641, Casper Johansson to MG De la Gardie, n.d.
103 RA, MGDLG E1642, Christiern Falkendaal to MG De la Gardie, n.d.

him and his wife for the years they had left.[104] Some had smaller requests, such as Anders Biörsson, a former *hovryttare* (groom), who since he left De la Gardie's service had been unable to work because of ill health, and had to 'live in great despair' on handouts from other people. In his petition, he asked for grain so he and his wife had something to live on for the remainder of his life.[105]

Our results show that people in service with the De la Gardies acted as though their links to the sphere and household transcended the temporary work relationship to form part of a lifelong commitment of reciprocity between master and servant. Their lives did not tally with the notion of life cycle work in rural areas of Western Europe, as proposed by John Hajnal in the 1960s, as back pay most likely forced them to pursue a longer relationship.[106] Even though some servants may have worked for De la Gardie for a limited amount of time, the negotiations and arrangements many petitioners pursued suggest the relationship was based on more than just temporary waged work as part of the life cycle.

Getting paid for their work was not an easy process, at least not for the petitioners in question here. While there were regulations and agreements which supported employees in their claims for wages, and that masters were supposed to adhere to, the system in practice could be arbitrary. It was against the background of this potential arbitrariness that servants had to bargain with their masters. Negotiating one's job and pay to get the promised wages, food, clothing, or shoes must have taken considerable time and effort for the servants involved. Still, these negotiations took place, and they reveal that many servants were knowledgeable about the workings of the paternalistic world they had to navigate. Although petitioners suggested that De la Gardie was a generous man, having promised them relief, they were still sent round the people in charge and were invariably turned away. A curious but illuminating case concerned Chierstin Perssdotter, a widow, who according to her petition had been granted 50 rdr for the burial of her son, who had been a *båtsman* (bosun) in De la Gardie's service. Three months before submitting her petition, her son had been executed for manslaughter, but shortly thereafter, a De la Gardie manager Jacob Sneckenskiöld directed her to the reeve at Venngarn, whom she approached twice. Weeping, she had pleaded with the reeve to pay the 50 rdr she had been promised, but he flatly refused,

104 RA, MGDLG E1642, Anders Olofsson to MG De la Gardie, n.d.

105 RA, MGDLG E1641, Anders Biörsson to MG De la Gardie, n.d.

106 Hajnal, 'European marriage pattern'; Whittle, *Servants in Rural Europe*, 1, 7; Kussmaul, *Servants in Husbandry*, 31. Hajnal's idea of a European marriage pattern has been further developed in studies of several rural regions. For Britain and the Netherlands, see Whittle, *Servants in Rural Europe*, 6; for France, see Hayhoe, 'Rural Servants', 156–157; for Germany, see Fertig, 'Rural Servants', 141–147; for Norway, see Sogner, 'Legal status of servants', 180–181; for Sweden, see Harnesk, *Legofolk*, 161–168; Prytz, 'Life-Cycle Servant', 103.

claiming he did not have the money. She then approached the chief steward, but he too refused to help, so she returned to source of the decision, once again asking De la Gardie to provide the means for her to bury her son.

The case turned out to have layers of complications. The 50 rdr was her son's back pay, earned while working on one of De la Gardie's boats between Venngarn and Stockholm. On the back of her petition were two more messages from Sneckenskiöld to the reeve at Venngarn, Christopher Sellman. The first, dated 1 December 1671, said that De la Gardie had indeed promised the widow that she would get her son's outstanding pay, telling the reeve to pay it instantly. In a second message dated 10 March 1672, Sneckenskiöld renewed his orders, reminding the overseer to pay Chierstin Persdotter the 50 rdr. 'You better watch yourself and indulge the widow, or this shall be on your head', Sneckenskiöld wrote.[107] While the mother and her executed son were an unusual case, it was an indication of the wider circumstances: an unclear division of responsibility, which encroached on the servants' chances of being properly remunerated.[108]

How petitioners negotiated and the arrangements they suggested reveal a degree of insight on their part. They were not just begging for whatever they could get; on the contrary, they took charge of the situation, proposing solutions to their problems. We would argue such suggestions were considered necessary—few tried to simply claim exactly what was owed to them. Appealing to aristocratic paternalism, offering additional arguments as to why it was essential they should be singled out to be paid, was a shared factor in these negotiations. Arrangements in relation to Christian rites of passage were portrayed as acts of Christian mercy and compassion. Paternalistic concern for a servant's social reputation and respectability was evoked in situations where the question was access to clothes and work; a sense of righteousness and reciprocity was appealed to when loyal petitioners asked to secure their future with cadastral units, tax exemptions, or education. Arguments that did not appeal to the master's paternalistic self-image—accusations of injustice or unfairness, for example—were probably a dead end.

The De la Gardie petitions show their servants expected to be part of a system of favours and non-monetary compensation. Some petitioners used this system to negotiate more specific advantages, while others simply depended on it for survival. The vulnerability of employees in an economy where cash was a scarce commodity and work was seen as a credit to the master was extreme. The system exposed what, in Fontaine's words, was 'a

107 RA, MGDLG E1622, Chierstin Persdotter to MG De la Gardie, n.d. and accompanying letters.

108 Albreht Falknär request for help (RA, MGDLG E1641) points in this direction, as does the *hökare* (falconer) Bengt Olofsson, the gardeners Oluff Swänsson and Antonie Hampe (RA, MGDLG E1642) and the *fatburspiga* (pantry maid) Christin Bengtzsson (RA, MGDLG E1622).

protective element in a network of solidarities', but also the destructive forces of impoverishment. Debt may thus have 'created ties in society every bit as much as it destroyed them'.[109]

Known knowns

What, then, should employees know in order to navigate the knowledge community that was the De la Gardie sphere? In line with earlier research, our focus is the indebtedness of the aristocracy to its servants and the examination of how this configuration of forced credit created a space for negotiations between servant and master.[110] Indebtedness affected lives and relations across the social spectrum, and the aristocracy, which staged its social position through a lavish lifestyle, was in some areas more indebted than any other group, not only in terms of monetary value, but also regarding the nature of indebtedness.[111] Knowledge of the De la Gardie organization and its complexities was created in the interconnections in a patriarchal and bureaucratic system between individual employees, fellow servants, and various levels of its hierarchy. It was a system that demanded that those who tried to navigate its sphere knew whom to communicate with, how to communicate, which arguments would hit home, how arguments needed to be substantiated, and what was up for negotiation.

The servants working in the De la Gardie sphere thus needed skill and perseverance to get either what they were owed or something considered equivalent of it. But, what competencies do their negotiations through the medium of petitioning reveal to us? How can we know what they knew? As suggested by Dupré and Mijnhardt, it is essential to engage with different forms of literacy, connecting the broader question of an early modern knowledge society to individuals' everyday practices. For servants in the aristocratic sphere, we may draw several conclusions if we view their efforts from this angle. We may thus agree that even if they themselves knew how to write, they needed to elaborate on the issues at stake in their petitions, thus developing a sense of how to present an argument and how to collect the evidence to support their cases. The substantial numbers of petitions we have investigated show that the absolute majority of petitions elaborated and added reasons beside mercy to achieve a favourable outcome. This suggests that servants had at least some basic skills, if not necessarily in reading and writing, then certainly in the epistolary genre of petitioning, enabling them to present their cases with varying degrees of sophistication. From the frequency

109 Fontaine, *Moral Economy*, 16.

110 Kühn, 'Masters as Debtors'.

111 For the indebtedness of the German aristocracy, see Ogilvie et al., 'Household Debt', 150–151; for Sweden, see Fåhræus, *Magnus Gabriel De la Gardie*, 255, 299.

and ordinariness of petitioning, we may also conclude that if they did not know beforehand, the systematic use of back pay and the ordinariness of negotiating one's worth in the aristocratic workplace would more than likely have raised awareness and skill in such matters. Some petitioners, it must be added, also likely knew how to read and write, since their positions made such skills necessary. However, while the written medium had a strong position in the De la Gardie administration, we cannot say with any certainty who wrote the petitions which servants sent to their masters. Later we will consider the repertoire of servant literacies, given the highly organized bureaucracy and administration of the De la Gardie sphere, bearing in mind the conscious efforts to socialize and discipline servants into specific roles in the organization.

Reading and writing may not have been entirely necessary, but numeracy was crucial. To negotiate worth, petitioners had to keep track of what they were owed and how to value outstanding debts. Keeping track of arrangements, back pay, and taxes often proved to be an important skill. It demanded experience and skill to calculate the worth of supplies or objects and deduct or add them to previous debts. To this, we may add the ability to keep records of how long one had been in service and under what circumstances. Past benefits and problems had to be noted to serve as evidence in negotiations to come, suggesting that there must have been personal accounting of some sort. And we can only agree that some degree of legal literacy must have been accessible to petitioners.[112]

It is worth noting that while navigating the De la Gardie sphere and negotiating with their master, petitioners—intentionally or not—gave their master inside information on how his larger sphere and even particular operations worked. The stories they told to improve their situation were everyday matters: financial and social relations, work, family, birth, sickness, hunger, vulnerability, and death, but also the action or inaction of bailiffs, bookkeepers, or other middlemen. The De la Gardie petitions are thus a gauge of how well the business was run. From a management perspective, petitions would have been a source of information. They also allowed a master such as Magnus Gabriel to take centre stage in the larger web of estates and operations. The act of petitioning created him as a patriarch.

112 See Korpiola, *Legal Literacy*, 1–16.

3

COGS IN THE WHEEL

Bureaucracy, administration, and the organization of knowledge

Having considered what knowledge was necessary for employees to make a case to their superiors, we now turn to how information was collected, organized, and subsequently put to work in the De la Gardie estate organization's bureaucratic system. In one of the few studies of a similar aristocratic sphere, Mikołaj Turzyński concludes that large conglomerate estates needed a functioning central administration. In the Polish context, such 'estates consisted of several manor farms, villages, and even towns'.[1] Clerks handled managerial, administrative, and judicial functions, and among the most important elements were 'supervision over the resources, reliable registration of quantity and price values for agricultural and animal produce; examining the accountabilities of the property administrators'. One set of instructions required a 'senior servant supervised and kept a record of daily and weekly product consumption and registered the weekly expenses' while an equerry or stablemaster kept records of daily and weekly spending on horse feed and a treasurer supervised the money and valuables management. A steward supervised the expenses of the servants, a clerk kept the records of estate movables, and an 'overseer prepared inventories, including the serfs, livestock, fixed and movable properties'.[2]

Such a complex system, which sometimes stretched over a large geographical area, was dependent on there being a developed administrative structure. In the De la Gardie sphere, the administrative shortcomings were raised in the mid-1660s by Magnus Gabriel's secretary Erik Månsson Hasselgren, who

1 Turzyński, 'Bookkeeping in Manor Farms', 72.
2 Turzyński, 'Bookkeeping in Manor Farms', 83–84.

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tutted at 'insolent petitioners' taking up all the administrators' time.[3] Keeping track of accounts was important to avoid conflict, Hasselgren underlined. Those doing the paperwork needed peace and quiet so they could work properly and avoid muddle.[4] It was implied that the administrative organization was inefficient and lacked the means to muster the knowledge needed to handle incoming cases.

By delving deeper into the circulation of knowledge in the De la Gardie estate organization, we argue that bureaucratic practices produced knowledgeable employees and an organization that had to redouble its efforts if it was to keep track of its staff and the financial transactions, agreements, and other relationships that were central to its operations. By looking at its bureaucratic procedures and the perceived need for knowledge from a bureaucratic viewpoint, we thus seek to further a discussion of the estate organization as a knowledge community. Financial accounts, instructions for bookkeepers and other administrators, internal memos, and correspondence can all help chart the ordinary details and routines of estate management.

Stockholm was the administrative centre for the De la Gardie sphere, and Magnus Gabriel and Maria Euphrosyne's conglomerate of estates were handled by the Main House. Apart from being a luxurious home and a place for dazzling entertainments, the Main House was also a centre for information gathering and knowledge production—the count and countess's central administration. In the 1660s, newly redecorated administrative offices in the house enabled the count's chancellery—secretaries, clerks, registrars, scribes, and the counting house's accountants, cashiers, bookkeepers, copyists, and clerks—to work together in close proximity. This central administration dealt with general accounts, legal matters, and staff relations for all the estates owned by Magnus Gabriel De la Gardie and Maria Euphrosyne. Opposite the Main House, the other side of the water, was the palace of Tre Kronor with its apartments for the royal family and government offices. At the height of his power, the count's private and public roles overlapped.[5]

Across Sweden, the many De la Gardie estates, mills, and mines all reported back to the administrative centre in Stockholm, though each enterprise had

3 LUB, DLG Släkt, vol. 99:2, Erik Månsson Hasselgren, 30 Oct. 1666: 'otidiga och ovettiga sollicitanter'.

4 LUB, DLG Släkt, vol. 99:2, Erik Månsson Hasselgren, 30 Oct. 1666.

5 This is seen in how administrative staff moved from public office to the De la Gardie sphere. For example Johan Johansson was one of several De la Gardie administrators who had experience of government administration. The secretary Olof Austrel and the clerk Nikolaus Biörk were mentioned in Hasselgren's memorandum of 1666 as having been paid for by the Crown (LUB, DLG Släkt, vol. 99:2 Erik Månsson Hasselgren, 30 Oct. 1666). Others moved in the other direction, such as Börje Olofsson, Jacob Snäck and Olof Austrel. Austrel became a Chancellery Boad clerk in Kanslikollegium in 1669 (Wieselgren, *Kungl: Maj:ts kanslis historia*, 109–111). Ebba Brahe recruited the bookkeepers Erland Pedersson Törnroos and Barthold Ruth from royal Chamber Board (Hedar, *Enskilda arkiv*, 53, 62).

its own, albeit smaller, administration. There were estate managers, bailiffs, head gardeners, and kitchen clerks, all of whom kept their own accounts that had to be submitted, checked, and shipped off to the counting house in Stockholm. At Ebba Brahe's palace in Stockholm, less than a kilometre away from her son's, there was a similar, if pared-down, administration which was the centre for her conglomerate of estates. Being a widow, Ebba Brahe kept a smaller household than her more flamboyant son and daughter-in-law, but the general administrative structure was much the same. She had a secretary, a bookkeeper, and a clerk and on her estates there were estate managers, bailiffs, housekeepers, and gardeners. Her smaller administration resembled that of her daughter Maria Sofia De la Gardie and her younger sons.

Administration, bureaucracy, and estate management

The importance of studying the administration of aristocratic households is apparent on many levels. First, the vast quantity of sources available for this book results from said administration and its functions. That there are almost 700 petitions to Magnus Gabriel De la Gardie and his wife from employees alone, and considerably more overall, is a direct consequence of decisions made at the time to archive such papers. The remains of the organization—the papers, books, accounts, correspondence, and petitions—are vital to our investigation, giving glimpses of the realities of those who worked for the De la Gardies. However, the paper records and the fact that they were generated in the first place also tell the story of how an aristocratic household was organized and what information was deemed necessary within the organization, while revealing the motives and intentions of the administrative infrastructure—why procedures were made to function in a certain way and what problems they were meant to respond to.

As noted by administrative historians, being 'acquainted with what happened and could happen in the ordinary running of affairs' is a key component in the understanding of political and social history.[6] In estate organizations, the administrative procedures and accounting practices are central to our understanding of how the employees interacted not only with their masters, but also with bailiffs, bookkeepers, scribes, and others in the estate administration. The administrative processes and the ordinary routines of the people employed there allow us to take a closer look at the conditions for the circulation of information and knowledge.

The task of administrating the De la Gardie sphere may have had various rationales, but the overall aim would have been to make visible—or legible—all the activities on the estates. As argued by Peter Miller and Michael Power, accounting may be viewed as 'territorializing, the recursive construction of

6 Geoffrey Elton quoted in McGovern, *Tudor Sheriff*, 4.

the calculable spaces that actors inhabit in organizations and society'.[7] In dialogue with Miller and Power's suggestion, Valerio Antonelli et al. have shown how Prince Giuseppe Domenico Sambiase, who owned estates in southern Italy far from his home in Naples, used accounting as a means of territorialization. In his account books, his estates became visible and calculable economic spaces.[8] Accounting was thus 'essential to the 'creation' and 'visualization' of the estates as an economic domain, providing a holistic view of its performance, mediating relationships with stakeholders, and promoting stricter control over workers in the interest of the landowner'.[9] Accounting was a social, institutional practice. So attention needs to be 'directed to the ways in which accounting exerts an influence on, and in turn, is influenced by, a multiplicity of agents, agencies, institutions, and processes'.[10]

Historians have suggested that the interest in accounting was not only a matter of financial control. In a study of English accounting textbooks from the late seventeenth century on, Pierre Gervais concludes that accounting 'was an exercise in self-control and self-knowledge, which could be practised by all classes of society, yet it was not necessarily associated with profit making'.[11] As Antonelli points out, the literature shows that accounting was a mechanism designed to improve profitability and discipline employees.[12] In a study of seventeenth-century England, Tom McNeal argues that financial records were not used 'for the calculation of financial performance or financial position' but to keep track of personal and business dealings with other people.[13] Indeed, at an early stage De la Gardie—encouraged by his administrator Erik Månsson Hasselgren—saw the need to audit and reorganize his financial administration. To do so, Magnus Gabriel hired people who had experience of working in the government's financial administration, which he later led (1652–1660). When the audit was over in the late 1660s, De la Gardie concluded that he needed to create a special branch in his own financial administration, which would concentrate on auditing accounts. He hired Johan Johansson in 1673, a former public official, along with a clerk and a

7 Miller & Power, 'Accounting, Organizing, and Economizing'.
8 Antonelli et al., 'Roles of Accounting', 13.
9 Antonelli et al., 'Roles of Accounting'. Hopwood, 'Accounting', 8–9 also suggests that it made 'things visible that otherwise would not be', had an objectifying role by 'making appear real and seemingly precise those things that would otherwise reside in the realm of the abstract', and gave shape to a sphere of economic action so 'the abstractions and objectifications in the accounting area are created in the name of the economic'. See Oldroyd, 'Through a glass clearly', 192 for Michel Foucault, who also argued that accounting is 'a "disciplinary technology" that controls the lives of people in organizations through detailed surveillance. Accounting becomes a source of power through its ability to "articulate" their performance'.
10 Antonelli et al., 'Roles of Accounting', 4.
11 Gervais, 'From "pure Satisfaction and Curiosity"', 282.
12 Antonelli et al., 'Roles of Accounting', 3–4.
13 McNeal, 'Measurement and management'.

copyist to help him. Johansson's job was to review all the account books from the various estates, and especially from the county of Läckö where he lived from then on.[14]

Greater efficiency

Because of the growing number of enterprises connected with De la Gardie households—in particular that of Magnus Gabriel—the family needed a more efficient central administration. Research has shown that the introduction of a range of control functions by estate organizations was driven by aristocratic families owning many estates, making management complex.[15] David Oldroyd notes the necessity of having a centralized organizational structure if a distanced owner wanted to be part of the day-to-day operations of several estates. 'This was achieved through a united reporting network which ensured that management and accounting practices were highly integrated over different activities', Oldroyd concludes.[16] Joining the debate about 'the emergence of accounting as a tool for controlling complex activities', Orelli et al. argue that new accounting practices 'encouraged greater organizational complexity' and helped with coordination of the various branches.[17] Magnus Gabriel, like his parents before him, had his chancellery and counting house in the Main House. At first, in the mid-1650s, his financial administration was based in a room near the entrance, where the *kamrer* (comptroller) and *bokhållare* (bookkeeper) could work closely together. Junior administrators lived and worked in a wooden building in the palace precincts.[18] In the mid-1660s it seems the count's chancellery and counting house moved into new or refurbished offices, still in the Main House.[19]

Magnus Gabriel's management system seems to have been copied from that of the political and financial administration of the Swedish state. The procedure was that once documents had been checked and processed in separate offices—the chancellery or the counting house—they were archived in likewise separate archives.[20] The chancellery was, like the state's chancellery, divided into a Swedish and German division headed by a Swedish and German secretary. While the counting house was stationed in Stockholm, the chancellery staff were often on the move and went with De la Gardie when he was stationed abroad.[21] It is difficult to say what links it had with

14 Hedar, *Enskilda arkiv*, 98–99.
15 Miley & Farley Read, 'Spies, debt', 84.
16 Oldroyd, 'Through a glass clearly', 181.
17 Orelli et al., 'Credit and accounting', 289.
18 Hedar, *Enskilda arkiv*, 104–105.
19 LUB, DLG Släkt, vol. 99:2, Erik Månsson Hasselgren, 30 Oct. 1666.
20 Hedar, *Enskilda arkiv*, 66–67.
21 Hedar, *Enskilda arkiv*, 68.

developments in neighbouring regions, but the trend towards greater control could also be seen in, say, German interest in cameralism.[22] Veit Ludwig von Seckendorff's groundbreaking work *Teutsche Fürsten-Staat*, which was first published in 1656 with additions in 1665, had an important impact on how to organize and administer small German principalities.[23] The book was part of a tradition of country surveys and emphasized the importance of visitations and detailed descriptions of districts.[24] It also covered which servants to hire and what their tasks should be. From the manservants to the scribes and bookkeepers, everyone was carefully mentioned.[25]

We cannot say with any certainty that *Teutsche Fürsten-Staat*, written by the son of an officer in Swedish service, inspired changes in the De la Gardie administration, but plainly bureaucratic change was overdue. The huge amount of documents to be handled by administrators in Stockholm included all kinds of financial accounts and records of employees, but also contracts, title deeds, bills of exchange, land registers, and an extensive correspondence. The financial accounts alone were massive. As a count, an aristocrat had the right to the annual revenue from taxpayers in the county, the tithes of part or all of the county, and the fines and fees ordinarily paid to the Crown. Except for newly founded towns after 1651, which were free of fees for the first ten years, the count was also entitled to *lilla tullen* (lit. little toll) or inland customs duty, and one-third of *accisen* (local excise duty) in the towns in the county. In 1644 the financial benefits of holding a county was further strengthened as most taxes paid by people in a county fell to its count. Other advantages that came from holding a county included the right to appoint district judges. Those who were also barons—in Jacob and Magnus Gabriel De la Gardie's case, the barony of Ekholmen—had the same right to rents, tithes, fees, and fines within the borders of their barony.[26]

An interesting element in the account books that testified to the administrative burden is the hundreds of receipts bound at the back. All costs were accounted for by the signature of the servant who had taken receipt of the money from the counting house. Some signed by name; many added a sentence confirming they had received compensation in the form of cash or materials.[27] When in 1630 the horse-trainer Jost Qvanten asked for his outstanding salary, Jacob De la Gardie ordered his overseer at Läckö, Måns Börjesson, to meet Jost's request. However, De la Gardie stressed that Börjesson must remember to get a receipt. He did not forget: in a receipt

22 Reinert, 'Cameralism and Commercial Rivalry', 271–272.
23 Klinger, 'Seckendorff's "Fursten Stat"', 251.
24 Klinger, 'Seckendorff's "Fursten Stat"', 258; Reinert, 'Brief Introduction', 225–226.
25 Seckendorff, *Teutscher Fürsten-Stat*.
26 *Förvaltningshistorisk Ordbok*, s.v. 'grevskap'.
27 For example, LUB, DLG, Topographica, Läckö, vol. 1–2 (1619); LUB, DLG Släkt, vol. 111 (1660) and 120 (1669).

dated 21 December 1630, Jost Qvanten signed to confirm he had received the salary he was owed.[28] In this way, servants' expenses were duly accounted for and all the receipts saved and bound into the annual account book. When shirts, woollen socks, shoes, and shoelaces were bought for four kitchen boys, they were put on the expense account and signed receipts saved. And when a *kassör* (cashier) and Jacob the *kammarskrivare* (clerk of the counting house) received cash for the rent for their lodgings they went through the same procedure.[29]

The level of detail can also be seen in how property belonging to the count's household was checked. When the lackey Håkan Nilsson in 1669 delivered a pot of potted lobster to Stockholm it demanded two receipts: one from a *kammarhustru* (chamber woman) at Kålland documenting that the pot had been taken out at Jenslunda, and another from Håkan to say it had been delivered.[30] It was a matter of keeping tabs not only on resources, but also on servants' actions.

While this system was already in place in the first half of the century, in the 1650s it was apparent what a poorly organized archive Magnus Gabriel De la Gardie's father had left behind. Magnus Gabriel's trusted administrator Erik Månsson Hasselgren suggested that all original documents from Jacob De la Gardie's day should be placed in a vault and only attested copies be used in their daily work. These in turn should be kept in separate cabinets so not to be mixed up with the documents relating to Magnus Gabriel and his wife. There should also be a register of all documents.[31] It was essential to have properly maintained records, Hasselgren explained, since it could determine the family's continued rise or fall. Further, the family should know what their income was, how much they spent, and on what.

In the mid-1660s Hasselgren completely redesigned the central administration. In 1666, it seems Hasselgren had suggested that the count was at the mercy of badly informed administrators and risked making financial decisions based on unfounded or poorly drafted proposals. One example of what was seen as problematic was the local bailiffs' and estate managers' slow handling of accounts. Many were extremely late sending in documents to Stockholm. Sven Andersson, the chief accountant in the mid-1660s, wrote to De la Gardie to complain that the accounts from the estates were so delayed it risked causing confusion in the general accounts for 1666 and 1667. To speed up the process Sven asked for permission to take a clerk and visit the estates concerned and 'in loco liquidera', or settle their accounts on site.[32]

28 LUB, DLG, Topographica, Läckö, vol. 17–19 (1630).
29 LUB, DLG Släkt, vol. 111, vol. 120.
30 LUB, DLG Släkt, vol. 120 (1669).
31 LUB, DLG Släkt, vol. 99:2: Erik Månsson Hasselgren, 30 Oct. 1666.
32 RA, MGDLG E1643, Sven Andersson to MG De la Gardie, n.d.

In the 1660s, Hasselgren created a system that distinguished between 'private' and 'public' documents. The former included all documents about the count's estates in various parts of the country, his employees, but also correspondence with members of his family; the latter had all correspondence with members of royal or princely families, civil servants and petitioners who were not part of the De la Gardie sphere. The public letters were archived according to which country they were sent from.[33] The need to separate public from private points to the fact that De la Gardie, like his peers, conducted at least some public business through his own private administration. At times, some of those working in his chancellery were paid by the Crown and were there to support his public work.[34]

One central issue for administrative staff in the De la Gardie household was to keep track of the huge quantities of accounts and correspondence produced by its bureaucracy, including an increasing number of bailiffs, estate managers, housekeepers, clerks of the works, and manciples' clerks whose work and accounts had to be scrutinized. Knowing what was in these texts was the concern of Magnus Gabriel De la Gardie's administrators. There was a constant flow of letters in and out, as well as instructions, legal documents, reports, receipts, notes, and accounts back and forth between estates. Order was crucial, wrote Hasselgren, so that documents were not mixed up, since that caused confusion and led to many of the petitioners' angry complaints.[35] Indirectly, it showed that the administration could be at a disadvantage in terms of knowledge in relation to the petitioners, who we know could have documents proving their rights. A note in the accounts from 1668 to 1669 mentioned that an armed guard of *hakeskytt* (arquebusiers) was stationed in the office, suggesting that petitioners' feelings could run high.[36]

Better procedures for archiving were part of this new, more efficient way of handling the bureaucracy. In his vision for efficient administration, Hasselgren spent nine pages arguing for the importance of a well-kept archive to the count's household; however, he foresaw complications. Staff being kept away from their main task of reading and filing by the throng of petitioners was only one problem. Another was how to recruit and keep people who knew the organization and those working in it. It was not just a matter of finding experts in administration or accounting, but also having insiders who knew the organization and its people. Hasselgren argued for internal recruitment: a newcomer would have to know which 'Petter, Påwel, Jon or Hans' a

33 Hedar, *Enskilda arkiv*, 72–73.

34 The secretary Austrelius and the clerk Nikolaus Biörk were noted as being paid for by the Crown in Hasselgren's memorandum of 1666 (LUB, DLG Släkt, vol. 99:2 Erik Månsson Hasselgren, 30 Oct. 1666.

35 LUB, DLG Släkt, vol. 99:2, Erik Månsson Hasselgren, 30 Oct. 1666.

36 RA, MGDLG E1660, 1668–1669 års lönestat.

document referred to and what task that person had done (a difficulty shared by twenty-first-century historians). Hasselgren commented that documents were often only signed with a given name—Petter, Påwel, or Jon to use his own examples—a name likely to be shared with several other employees, and it was up to the administrator to know who that person was and what their duties were.[37] Without such inside knowledge a secretary, bookkeeper, or accountant could easily make mistakes. It is interesting to note that in Magnus Gabriel's account books increasingly more servants came to be referred to by nicknames which might have been a way to make individuals less anonymous. Some were called by animal names such as lark, falcon, eagle, lynx, cat, otter, salmon, perch, hawk, swan, wolverine, grouse, moosefoot, wolf, or bird. Others were called after their place of origin or places they were associated with, such as Upplander (from the province of Uppland), Wästgöte (the province of Västergötland), Dalkarl (the province of Dalarna), Helsing (the province of Hälsingland), Skåning (the province of Skåne), Hollander (Holland), Kurlander (Courland), Skotte (Scotland), Finne (Finland), Pålack (Poland), Lapp (Sami), or Turk (the Ottoman Empire), while others were named for physical attributes such as tall, short, beautiful, big, one-handed, or dwarf.[38]

Yet another problem that had to be solved was the lack of annual payrolls which spelled out who had been overpaid and who had not been paid the wages they were promised. The importance of such payrolls, Hasselgren writes, was shown by the fact that when settling accounts the De la Gardie administration relied on the information supplied by petitioners. The list of debts was, as Hasselgren put it, the essence of one's prosperity. If a petitioner made an error in their own workings, it might mean the head of the aristocratic household's finances would be weaker than they otherwise would have had. It might however also be the other way around: unsettled accounts were a problem when an employee died or became old. If an employee turned out to owe the count money and had forgotten about it, the employee's savings could be lost. Hasselgren suggested that a more detailed account of finances must be made where it more clearly was revealed what the exact income was, how resources were spent, where it would be possible to save on expenses, and who was responsible for the waste.[39]

An important step towards solving the many issues with a disorganized office was to hire more administrators. Accounts reveal how the central administration of the De la Gardie sphere grew from a handful of people in 1648—three secretaries, a clerk, and a cashier—to 20 staff at its height by the

37 LUB, DLG Släkt, 99:2, Erik Månsson Hasselgren, 30 Oct. 1666.

38 See, for example, RA, MGDLG E1660, Hovstaten 1672, Hovstaten 1679, and Avräkningsextrakt till år 1681.

39 LUB, DLG Släkt, 99:2, Erik Månsson Hasselgren, 30 Oct. 1666.

end of the 1670s.[40] The change was not sudden, but there were new jobs and more people added every year from the early 1650s until 1678. Before 1660 administrators were mentioned among other employees, but in 1660 a new heading, 'Cammarcontoret' (the counting house), was introduced in the accounts, and from 1668 another heading, 'Cantzelie Betiänte' (chancellery servants), was added. Thus what could be described as two central administrative units had been created, each with its own staff. In 1678 twelve people were listed in the counting house and eight in the chancellery. Among those working in the counting house there were a chief accountant, two bookkeepers each with their own area of responsibility and each with their own copyist. Furthermore there was a clerk, a cashier, a *husgerådsmästare* (superintendent), and a *kontorsdräng* (under-clerk). The 1678 chancellery included a German and a Swedish secretary, a German and a Swedish clerk, a registrar, a clerk, and an under-clerk.[41]

The rising number of administrators and how they were organized into new categories suggested a new and more professional way of thinking. In what seemed a logical next step, Hasselgren suggested that the counting house and chancellery staff's daily work should be more closely regulated. Administrators, he suggested in his memo of 1666, should no longer be allowed to work from home, but made to work four hours in the morning and the afternoon in the newly redecorated offices in the Main House. The refurbished premises, Hasselgren wrote, were no longer as cold as they had been, so everyone could be in the same place and keep all the paperwork together. The gains would be twofold: first, people could work more efficiently if they had easy access to all the documents, and, second, newly appointed staff could more easily communicate with colleagues and so find information, which they otherwise might not obtain. After all, it was common for administrative staff to keep documents at home. It was only after the death of Ebba Brahe's secretary Mauritz Gietrop it became possible for Magnus Gabriel De la Gardie to acquire papers relating to her business—papers that Gietrop had kept as his own. When the secretary Johan Bengtsson died in 1648, the count had letters, copies, and drafts fetched from Bengtsson's widow. Even Hasselgren himself kept documents at home, something that was revealed after his death.[42] Working in the same office and preventing staff from taking documents home made for an environment which promoted professionalization on a general level and what might be called 'further education' on an individual level.

40 RA, MGDLG E1660 & E1661.

41 RA, MGDLG E1660.

42 Hedar, *Enskilda arkiv*, 91–92. It was beyond them to overhaul the system completely, as the petition RA, MGDLG E1643, Anders Börjesson to MG De la Gardie, n.d., shows, because Börjesson asked if he could take over the rooms used by his predecessor Frankel, they being large enough for him to both live and work there.

These developments mirrored recent changes to government administration, if on a smaller scale. At Tre Kronor, opposite the De la Gardie palace, a new wing with functional administrative offices had been built in the 1640s. Here, administrators worked four hours in the morning and three in the afternoon, all in the same offices. Petitioners were received in the afternoons.[43] New regulations for the royal exchequer and royal chancellery had been introduced in ordinances of 1618 and 1626 respectively. The latter overturned an earlier system, which was built on the individual civil servant's competence. From 1626 the office defined the tasks and the holder had to adjust, in a move towards what Weber described as a depersonalized bureaucracy.[44] As head of the Chancellery, Axel Oxenstierna emphasized the importance of the ability to learn as a merit over social background.[45] The resemblance between the state administration and De la Gardie's was striking and was part of the professionalization process that resulted in growth and a demand for efficiency. As Sweden steadily grew by adding conquered territories outside Sweden proper, the De la Gardie's sphere of estates increased. This chimed with a European process of central governments built on regulated administration, rules of procedure, a division of functions, and a stronger emphasis on educated officeholders.[46]

As part of it, three consecutive chancellors of Uppsala University in the seventeenth century—Johan Skytte, Axel Oxenstierna, and Magnus Gabriel De la Gardie—aimed to create a university education answering to the need for professional administrators.[47] In 1626 the university adopted a new constitution, which stated the professors of mathematics must take into account the practical application of their teaching, for example for bookkeeping.[48] Still, we know little about how bookkeepers in Swedish aristocratic households obtained their education. In the early modern British Isles, accounting skills could be obtained by watching and learning on the job by reading instructional texts or by being educated at a university or similar institution.[49] This was also the case in the De la Gardie household. The recurring mentioning of men in the De la Gardie administration to learn indicate there was a procedure for training and recruiting staff in the own system.[50] This also resembled the newly introduced routine of taking on trainees in the state's administration.[51] But bookkeepers who were trained elsewhere were also

43 Norrhem, *Uppkomlingarna*, 9–12.
44 Gaunt, *Utbildning till statens tjänst*, 13.
45 Norrhem, *Uppkomlingarna*, 13–14, 56.
46 Kamenka, *Bureaucracy*, 93–94.
47 Gaunt, *Utbildning till statens tjänst*, 31.
48 Annersted, *Uppsala universitets historia*, 222.
49 Edwards, 'Accounting education', 38.
50 For example, RA, MGDLG E1643, Johan Jönsson to MG De la Gardie, 3 Feb. 1683, thanking him for the opportunity to train in the chancellery.
51 Gaunt, *Utbildning till statens tjänst*, 31–70. For similar ideas about the education of young men and boys, though in a different milieu, see Jardine, *Erasmus*, 11–14.

recruited. One of them was the bookkeeper David Kohl, trained in Italian bookkeeping in Hamburg and Amsterdam, something that was appropriate since Magnus Gabriel De la Gardie's counting house, like the Swedish state, used a form of double-entry bookkeeping.[52]

The materialities of administration

The financial accounts produced by Magnus Gabriel's central administration in the 1670s seem more elaborate and detailed than those that his father's and his own administration produced in the 1640s and 1650s. This may have been as much the result of things surviving for us to see as of changes in administrative standards. The bookkeeping techniques used did not seem to change from 1619 when Jacob De la Gardie was in charge of Läckö and Ekholmen until when his son Magnus Gabriel took over. So it is important to consider the material conditions for collecting and archiving information.

In 1664, a young man named Jonas Lorin was hired as a copyist to work alongside Hasselgren. He would be an important person in the De la Gardie administration in coming years, and after Hasselgren's sudden death in 1667 Lorin continued with the reorganization.[53] Lorin worked for De la Gardie until the count's death in 1686, and then continued to serve the family off and on as administrator until his own death in 1706. When Magnus Gabriel De la Gardie created a new post of registrar to manage the growing number of documents which needed to be registered, processed, and archived, he chose Lorin because of his diligence, perseverance, and ability to keep secrets.[54] Lorin's mission was to follow in Hasselgren's footsteps and keep all the paperwork in such good order that it would be easy to find what was needed and it would be preserved for the future.

Documents from the time reveal that Lorin was an eager administrator with a focus on the material aspects of bureaucracy: new shelves were built and boxes of wood and metal and envelopes and large quantities of paper were ordered. In a chancellery, according to Lorin, documents were to be categorized as *allehanda brev* (general correspondence), *utkast* (drafts), *originalia* (originals), *räkningar* (accounts), *suppliker* (petitions), *extrakter av brev och suppliker* (extracts from correspondence and petitions), *kopior* (copies), *adviser* (news reports), manuscripts, and miscellanea.[55]

In his vision of how everything should be dealt with Lorin described how letters should be kept in 24 binders, each marked with a letter of the alphabet—A, B, C etc.—so correspondents with a name starting with A

52 Hedar, *Enskilda arkiv*, 61.
53 Hedar, *Enskilda arkiv*, 68.
54 Hedar, *Enskilda arkiv*, 76.
55 LUB, DLG Släkt, vol. 99:2, Jonas Lorin.

would go into binder A. Drafts should be placed in twelve binders, one for each month. For each category, the number of binders and how they should be marked and used was detailed. Regardless of category, he stressed that each binder should be marked with the year, should be as large as the documents it contained, and held shut with twine.[56] Further, Lorin decided to sort out the confusion over keys to different lockers or being lost by employees, suggesting all keys be kept by the count.[57]

Lorin suggested building new vaults for storing documents elsewhere in Stockholm since the basement at the Main House was not only damp, but also rapidly becoming too small to house the archive. It had been suggested that the family archive be placed at Läckö Castle, but Lorin argued that having the archive in Stockholm was preferable since it would provide easy access for staff, but also for younger generations of the family who could then consult old documents and learn from the praiseworthy actions of their ancestors.[58]

In time, Lorin suggested that the archive should not only cover Magnus Gabriel's and his father's documents, but also the records of Magnus Gabriel's mother and younger brothers—a complete *Archivum delagardianum*. Even though Lorin seems to succeed in organizing a working administrative system, bringing together old documents from other members of the family proved difficult. Ebba Brahe's papers had been distributed among several of her children after her death. Some of Magnus Gabriel's own old documents had been scattered among various estates. Jonas Lorin argued it was important to keep all the documents relating to the De la Gardie family together, to be handed down from generation to generation by the head of the family. Axel Oxenstierna was a role model, according to Lorin, since he had decided that all his original documents should be kept together and never dispersed.[59] What Lorin suggested was that De la Gardie would proceed in a similar way in order to preserve the family's reputation, but also more narrowly for the benefit of the count himself. To be used, not only did information have to be collected and written down, but it also needed to be documented, organized, and archived.[60]

Papers in Magnus Gabriel's own hand show he was closely involved in the restructuring of his administration and its materialities. The offices, the vaults for a new archive, and the filing system of binders, shelves, and boxes played a crucial part in administrative developments from the 1640s on.

56 LUB, DLG Släkt, vol. 99:2, Jonas Lorin.
57 Hedar, *Enskilda arkiv*, 80.
58 Hedar, *Enskilda arkiv*, 79; LUB, DLG Släkt, 99:2, Jonas Lorin.
59 LUB, DLG Släkt, 99:2, Jonas Lorin.
60 For a similar discussion, see Hunt, *Middling sort*, 61 who envisages the keeping of good accounts—'a symbol of rationality, honesty, and control'—as central to the proper ordering of society by the end of the seventeenth century in both the public and private spheres.

Magnus Gabriel was an enthusiastic amateur architect whose drawings of houses, floor plans, and gardens reveal his keen interest in the planning and building of servants' quarters and administrative offices. A drawing of the new offices in the Main House—most likely those mentioned by Hasselgren—show how the count wanted his counting house staff sitting near one another with a separate room for the chief accountant, one for his scribes, and one for bookkeepers and clerks. Next to the bookkeepers, there was an office for the kitchen clerk and the superintendent's clerk. Nearby, on the same floor, he wanted the secretary to have his own office with his clerks next door.[61] In a similar drawing of the same premises, De la Gardie added a dining room, showing he toyed with different ideas of how to organize the best possible workplace.

Collecting and controlling information

The interest in knowing how the De la Gardie sphere functioned inevitably resulted in detailed instructions for those tasked with collecting information. One such person was Hindrich Broberg, employed as a bookkeeper by Maria Sofia De la Gardie in the winter of 1674. Stationed in Riga, he was responsible for Maria Sofia's farms and estates in Livonia. Letters show that after his short career as a bookkeeper he may have moved on to become the manager at Vogelsang, one of her Livonian estates, alongside Tarwast (Tarvastu), Udenkühl, and some smaller farms (an inheritance from her father, given to her when her mother, Ebba Brahe, died in 1674).[62] In Maria Sofia's correspondence we can follow Broberg's career and see what was expected of him as a bookkeeper. We also have information on how he responded to these expectations and in what ways he found it hard to obey by them. The paper trail left by Broberg gives us a glimpse of a profession where the countess's ambitions—and the control she exerted over her employees—can be studied in greater detail. While Lorin and Hasselgren actively sought to improve the De la Gardie family's bureaucratic procedures, taking on the role as visionaries in the organization, Broberg was an example of a reluctant employee, working with the ordinary problems of a bookkeeper at the nexus where high expectation met personal and professional failure.

Maria Sofia, like her older brother, paid attention to detail when it came to managing her employees and she showed an interest in the archiving procedures of her organization.[63] The instructions given to Broberg support this claim.

61 RA, MGDLG E1617 & E1618, Egenhändiga anteckningar och planritningar till Byggnadsförslag samt om MG De la Gardies gods och förläningar.

62 LUB, DLG, Topographica, Balticum, vol. 30, Hindrich Broberg to Lars Eldstierna, *c*.1676–; Fries, *Märkvärdiga kvinnor*, 292–293; her father had been given Udenküll by the king in 1615, see *SBL*, s.v. 'Jakob P De la Gardie' by Bertil Boëthius.

63 *SBL*, s.v. 'Marie Sophie De la Gardie' by Bertil Boëthius.

Her first set of instructions was signed in December 1674. Judging from the first paragraph, Broberg was preceded by one Johan Bohm at the same location, because it said Broberg should begin by making an inventory of all the files and documents that his predecessor had 'put his hand to' that remained in the 'contoret' (office), and submit this list with a signature. One standard formulation was that he should note everything 'large and small', ranging from how to process receipts and letters to conversations with farmers and bailiffs.[64] This was also expected of his initial inventory—nothing should go unnoticed when he surveyed his workplace, as all details were important. The demands on Broberg were in line with ideals of control set out by David Oldroyd, who has argued that an estate's financial accounts were generally designed to monitor rights and obligations, and of course compliance. This increased their effectiveness as a control mechanism and served as an internal 'audit check'.[65]

Among the first things for Broberg to set up, was a 'Generaljordebok' (master rent roll) for all the De la Gardie estates. This *jordebok* (rent roll) was to include all tax-paying properties on every estate, which suggests that in 1674, when Maria Sofia had taken charge of the estates in Livonia, she wanted better oversight of her sources of income there. According to Broberg's instructions, there was also geographical information that needed clarification, as she required him to note where each cadastral unit lay in relation to the *sätesgård* (main estate), the bailiffs having gathered the information. This division of labour was a key element in her plan for the bookkeeper.

Another task for Broberg was to go through the bills, making sure all explanations provided by the bailiffs were made at the same time as the purchases, thus ensuring the orders were properly accounted for. The task of 'probing' claims was a recurring one, showing the need to check the estates' finances in detail and secure them from illegitimate claims. The same need for control was visible in a set of instructions written by Magnus Gabriel for the clerk Måns Jonsson, who had to keep track of employees and ensure they did not steal goods they were handling.[66] The risk of internal theft was an obvious concern for the De la Gardie officials, who had to work to keep track of resources.

In her instructions for Broberg, Maria Sofia also specified that all payments should go through 'the bank' and that he was responsible for handling all the *assignationer* (bank assignments), marking each bank assignment with the word 'annoterat' (noted) when they had been checked into the bank account. In its attention to detail, the instructions for Broberg reveal an

64 LUB, DLG, Topographica, Balticum, vol. 39: 'under hender hafft'; 'det mindsta och det största'.

65 Oldroyd, 'Through a glass clearly', 197.

66 RA, MGDLG E1309, Magnus Gabriel De la Gardies instruktion till Måns Jonsson.

auditable cash system. Every month a *kassaräkning* (cash account) should be delivered to Maria Sofia to be countersigned and was simultaneously carried over into the general ledger for the whole year, making sure the entries were the same. Nothing should be paid without written orders from the mistress, especially not if it totalled more than 10 riksdaler kopparmynt (rdr km). Verbal orders should be disregarded.[67]

Johanna Thorelli and Sari Naumann have argued that abandoning verbal decision-making was part of a trend towards a more formalized written culture in Swedish early modern society.[68] It went hand in hand with more structured bureaucracies and archives. For the De la Gardies, the procedures for keeping accounts seemed rigorous, involving various signatures and checks on the consistencies between written and verbal narratives, indicating that Maria Sofia went to lengths to secure her financial situation and the daily business which affected it. The fear of being cheated was articulated in the instructions about cash transactions, but also in the practical handling of goods of various kinds. Broberg was instructed to be alert to what the manciple reported in (making sure he did not cream anything off the top) and to keep an eye on prices and possible deals, checking the list of purchases against the *månadstaxa* ('monthly rate'), the fixed prices of certain goods determined by the town council. Broberg was also expected to know the prices of basic goods and bear them in mind when putting purchases through the books.

Another and perhaps more unexpected part of the Broberg's routine was his gathering of information from all the various estates and farms, collecting in the accounts from bailiffs and leaseholders and tenant farms, and interviewing them to assess their compliance. His instructions ordered him to check on the bailiffs' performance and how well they managed the peasantry; to hold meetings with local peasants and keep minutes of what was said; to comment on the state of the houses, pastures, land, etc. and suggest improvements; and to write down any deals as they were made so there was no wriggle room later.[69] Control was exerted through the written word, demanding a detailed logging of events, reasons for action, relations, and judgement calls. This shows the impact of accounting, which was not only a financial procedure, but a social practice which influenced behaviour and social relationships.[70] To the modern eye, the lack of trust is unmistakable, for Broberg was not trusted with any decisions to speak of and had to report back on nearly everything. All reports and checks were to be written down and verbal agreements were explicitly banned, leaving no room for interpretation about what had been decided.

67 LUB, DLG, Topographica, Balticum, vol. 55, Instruction.
68 Thorelli, *De tjänstvilliga vännernas samhälle*, 30; Nauman, *Ordens kraft*, 77.
69 LUB, DLG, Topographica, Balticum, vol. 55, Instruction.
70 Carnegie et al., 'Accounting history', 2.

The closely managed relationship between bookkeeper and bailiff was a notable feature of the instructions, and laid the foundations for a culture of rigorous control—in writing—that ran all the way from the mistress and owner of the estates to the peasants on her farms. The bookkeeper, the instructions state, was responsible for forwarding detailed instructions to the bailiffs and seeing they were acted on. It is possible they were directed not at a particular individual, but at the entire group of employees who rated as bailiffs (in Livonia). If so, it was an attempt to streamline the organization, making sure they all obeyed by the same rules, regardless of local conditions and geographical responsibility, presuming not all areas were equal in size. However, the instructions also suggest the differences were taken into account and were the basis for the demands on each bailiff, who was to know all the specific conditions of his locality.[71] The bailiffs had a considerable responsibility, keeping track of the harvest, keeping it locked away, and carefully documenting all the quantities bought and sold and all the accounting transactions. The instructions set down that the *drengefogde* (farm bailiff) and *rättare* (overseer) should be present when the accounts were drawn up. Their function was not spelled out, but they were presumably expected to testify to the correctness of the calculations and that the bailiff had not sold produce or altered the records for his own benefit. The farm bailiffs were responsible for the farmhands on the estates, as were the overseers, although they were (presumably) below the bailiffs in rank.[72] The bailiffs were expected to keep track of even the smallest details to a striking degree, accounting for every single penny in earnings and costs.[73]

The bailiffs were also required to make sure that farmers recorded their harvests accurately and that the figures tallied with the bailiffs' books. They were ordered 'to give the farmers a small paper book' to record their financial accounts.[74] This suggests there was a relatively high level of expected numerical literacy, though whether that was warranted we do not know. What we see happening in the De la Gardie sphere, however, may be compared to how the Swedish state had made 'legible the economic activities of peasants and labourers, such that it could collect taxes from a broad population base'.[75] Just as the De la Gardies wanted to map their subordinates accurately, the state collected large amounts of information about landownership, for example a widespread

71 LUB, DLG, Topographica, Balticum, vol. 55, Instruction.

72 *Ordbok över Finlands svenska folkmål*, s.v. 'dräng-fogde'.

73 LUB, DLG, Topographica, Balticum, vol. 55, Instruction. '25. Att det som till byggningar och reparationer av en och annan slag sort åtgår skole fogdarene af Rättaren och drängefogden låta anteckna och verificera, ehuru litet det helst vara må, och det sedan bifoga räkningen. 26. Allt annat som utgives och levereras till den minsta penning tillholla fogdarna med vederbörliga attester och qvittenser att verificera, och dess utan besväres allt det som avföres.'.

74 LUB, DLG, Topographica, Balticum, vol. 55, Instruction: 'Att fogdarne allvarligen tillhollas att giva var bonde en liten pappersbok, der uti på den ena sidan skrivas det bonden bör utgöra, och på den andra specialitor det han levererar, vilket alltid måste svara emot fogdarnas uppbördsbok.'.

75 Lee & Zhang, 'Legibility', 20; see also Tilly, *Coercion*, 136.

mapping of the cadastre in order to 'increase legibility'.[76] The consequences were that stricter controls and monitoring forced peasants and other commoners to learn how to comply, thus potentially increasing literacy and numeracy.

Maria Sofia gave Broberg an annual salary of 700 rd kmt, together with food and drink, a chamber and a bed, and a boy to help him. It seems as if his instructions—dated 4 December 1674—also served as a contract, specifying the terms of his employment. In March the following year, Broberg wrote to Maria Sofia that he was having trouble implementing some elements in the instructions. Asking peasants about leaseholders' behaviour was tricky, he said, because he did not speak Estonian, so he asked for a boy who knew the language to help him on his peregrinations, not having been sent the boy he was initially promised. Maria Sofia and Broberg continued their correspondence, with Maria Sofia expressing her dissatisfaction with Broberg's work. More instructions followed, detailing his tasks—and his failures to live up to expectations. The audits he was responsible for were too challenging for him under the circumstances, putting a strain on his relations with the countess.

The exchanges between Broberg and De la Gardie survive in a rare letter book of Broberg's for the years 1675–1676, which he used for correspondence about court cases, related petitions, and letters to and from Maria Sofia. In a document about local conditions Broberg defended his actions, denying accusations that rather than work he had occupied himself with 'spending and dominating'—wasting money and roistering—as Maria Sofia claimed. She also raised concerns that her money had been used for illicit purposes, claiming the only funds he had access to were hers.[77] Broberg flatly denied it, saying he had been ill and could not have done the things she accused him of. It was plain to him it was that 'damned man Lowensteen', spreading lies. Yet many honest, trustworthy people would be able to testify to his loyalty.[78] He finished by hoping he would not be summarily dismissed, but would be let go with references so he could keep his honest name, thus indicating the clear difference between leaving service and being sacked, which would label him a dishonest employee and likely make future employment difficult.[79]

76 Lee and Zhang, 'Legibility', 120; D'Arcy & Nistotskaya, 'State First', 199–200; Kain, 'Maps and Rural Land Management', 710–712.

77 LUB, DLG, Topographica, Balticum, vol. 39, Copybook: 'Jag hafwer och iblandh annat förnummit att Brobergh skull hafwa der uthe .. allenast spenderat och dominerat, och kan hända någon af mine medhell angrijpit uthan och för andra caverat, hwilket mig ey ringa efftertankar gifwer, wetandes wähl att han inge andre medel der uthe hafwer att tillgåå än mina.'

78 LUB, DLG, Topographica, Balticum, vol. 39, Copybook: 'Att iag hafwer spenderat eller dominerat, är mycket främmande för mig, der på och tillbörligit söke föllia kunde, Men min Nådige Fru Grefwinna förutinnan Ödmiukeligen at bemöta gifwa sig desse rationes, huru een swag och siuklig persohn dricka, dominera och swälgia kan? Det ses klarligen, att denn förbannade karlen Lowensteen har detta på mig igenom andra liugit: af hwilka iag någon wedh nampn wäl nämpna kan: Men iag will wijse dess Contrarium medh många, ährl. och redelige Menniskior.'

79 LUB, DLG, Topographica, Balticum, vol. 39, Copybook.

The complications of administration

The difficulty of pursuing elaborate plans for improving the estate organization—seen in the tension between its ideals and its practical implementation—was not limited to Broberg's correspondence with Maria Sofia or to Lorin's and Hasselgren's work. The obstacles were many, ranging from pure practicalities to managerial issues and power struggles. The correspondence and petitions revealed the vulnerabilities of the system. One significant bureaucratic headache was the minimal delegation of responsibility—the head of the aristocratic household decided almost everything. As spelled out in Broberg's instructions, every single order should be issued in writing and signed. Magnus Gabriel's many renovations and building projects, especially at Läckö Castle, show the consequences of centralized management. A frustrated Olof Bråms, in charge of building work at Läckö, had overheard the estate manager trying to get a clerk to accept a payment order, which the clerk flatly refused, calling the order 'uncertain'. Their failure to agree meant all building work had stopped until further notice. Bråms wrote begging the count to intervene.[80] Something similar happened to Bengt Jonsson, also in charge of construction at Läckö, whose project had come to a halt because there was no money to pay for building materials. The accountant at Läckö had referred him on to the estate manager, who said he dared not use the means he had at his disposal, leaving Bengt no other option than to write to the count for written confirmation for the purchase.[81]

The obstacles that the administrators of a seventeenth-century aristocratic household could encounter were many, ranging from practical issues to do with resources to the complexities of managing staff. Sometimes it came down to the simple lack of paper and the authority to buy more caused, as when the bookkeeper Anders Börjesson realized that he could not finish his work on the annual accounts because he did not have the paper. In his petition to Magnus Gabriel, Anders said the count had promised him that Lindberg the cashier would deliver two kinds of writing paper and money for binding the finished book. Now Lindberg was denying ever had such an order, so Anders had to resort to a petition to resolve things.[82]

Other employees explicitly noted the disadvantages of the centralized system, claiming they caused delays and a state of paralysis in the estate organization. In the correspondence between the estate manager Adolph Lönn at Skarhult Castle and his mistress Beata von Königsmarck, Magnus Gabriel's sister-in-law, her lack of trust and inability to delegate is palpable. In Lönn's

80 RA, MGDLG E1358, Skrivelser till M. G. De la Gardie, Oloff Bråms to MG De la Gardie, 20 Apr. 1670.

81 RA, MGDLG E1658, Sammandrag av bref och suppliker till MG De la Gardie med resolutionsanteckningar. Extract of petition from Bengt Jonsson to MG De la Gardie (n.d.).

82 RA, MGDLG E1643, Anders Börjesson to MG De la Gardie; Anders Börjesson asked for paper to finalize the work on the accounts in RA, MGDLG E1658, Sammandrag av bref och suppliker till MG De la Gardie med resolutionsanteckningar.

view, the estate desperately needed attention, having suffered badly in the wars in the 1670s, and he asked to be exempt from the usual decision-making process so he could forge ahead as necessary, without explicit orders in every instance.[83] We do not know how Beata responded, but evidently the question of how to exercise power was a real concern and had everyday consequences.

Whether it was routines for decision-making or for accountability, the question of responsibility was closely linked to the administration per se. The procedures by which information was gathered, stored, and made accessible, like the sustainability of the archive, were all pertinent issues. One case that resulted in several petitions and a range of correspondence highlighted the challenges. One Oloff Oloffsson, who had been assigned to work on the financial accounts, detailed the problems he encountered. When he arrived at Venngarn, where he was supposed to be based, not all the bills had been delivered from Ebba Brahe's house in Stockholm. Oloff thus made his way to Stockholm and had the accounts from Venngarn sent after. Once in the capital, new trouble awaited. Måns Pedersson, De la Gardie's comptroller at the Main House, was seriously ill, delaying the process of gaining access further. Moreover, people were afraid to touch the things that Måns had touched—the chests and cupboards where documents were kept under lock and key—though their reaction as described might have been nothing to do with Måns's illness, but rather they had been instructed not to interfere with a colleague's work. Other cases from this period also suggest administrators were used to keeping documents at home, treating them as their own, and this may explain such notions among the staff.[84] Whatever the reason, their unwillingness to handle the documents was an obstacle, and Oloff Oloffsson thus urged Magnus Gabriel to command staff to deliver the documents he needed to do his job properly.[85]

Accusations of incompetence were common. In January 1663 there were complaints about a local clerk who had not delivered his accounts on time, and, further, when the taxes were collected it turned out much of the documentation he provided was substandard, so the tax collectors' work had been based on the wrong foundations. The conclusion was that the clerk would have to be replaced by someone who could do the job properly.[86] Administrators at the family estates and those working at the Main House were just as likely to be accused. In 1678 the bookkeeper Hans Claesson was criticized for incompetence, and only a few years before Count De la Gardie had called another bookkeeper 'as useful as a fifth wheel'.[87] The case of

83 RA, Rydboholmssamlingen, E7680, Adolph Lönn to Beata Elisabeth von Königsmarck, 1 Aug. 1695.

84 RA, MGDLG E1641, Oloff Oloffsson to MG De la Gardie, 23 Aug. 1654.

85 RA, MGDLG E1641, Oloff Oloffsson to MG De la Gardie, 23 Aug. 1654.

86 RA, MGDLG E1421, Per Larsson to MG De la Gardie, 15 Jan. 1663.

87 Hedar, *Enskilda arkiv*, 99–100 claiming that Claesson was dismissed in 1678, but it seems that he was kept on until 1681 since he was on the payroll in both 1680 and 1681.

Spaak, Sofia Juliana Forbus's comptroller, was typical. He was heavily criticized for not doing what he had promised, for his 'nachläsighet' or negligence, but also for trying to line his own pockets while aggressively defending his position. He showed no mercy and no conscience, Sofia Juliana wrote.[88] As her comptroller, Spaak knew about her difficulties with creditors, but he did nothing about it, causing her great distress, especially when 'exeskousions karlar' showed up at her house to collect on her unpaid debts.[89] To know all that but to lack the will or ability to act was to betray her. She asked God to have mercy on him because of what he had put her through, elucidating how dependent she perceived herself to be upon his qualifications and expertise.[90] She also noted that the De la Gardies paid high wages to their servants, but according to her they received nothing in return.[91]

A centralized system and minimal delegation demanded a reliable communication infrastructure. Orders, assignments, reports, and explanations had to be delivered from managers to the count or countess and vice versa. Such infrastructure existed, but had been identified as the weak link in the chain of command and was at risk of sabotage. In 1670, the estate manager at Läckö, Olof Bråms, asked for mercy from Magnus Gabriel, claiming that his reports did not seem to reach the count. He had sent one letter with the rider Olof Borre, a second in a package destined for the Main House, a third with a trumpeter with letters from other people, and finally two letters in packages addressed to the Main House, and all had gone missing. 'I do not know how to send them', he warned, adding it was not necessarily a new problem: he knew it had happened before, usually when the builders had not received their subsistence money.[92] If nothing else, the incident showed there were different options for communication, but it also revealed the inevitable vulnerability of the system. The continual flow of people, goods, and correspondence between Stockholm and the family estates and the dependence on the count for decisions were well known among employees. Sabotaging communications may thus have been a way to postpone or thwart the process, perhaps to avoid punishment or retaliation.

88 LUB, DLG Släkt, vol. 123.1, Axel Julius De la Gardie och hans hustru Sofia Juliana Forbus, Sofia Juliana to Axel Julius, Stockholm 5 Aug. 1690: 'slet ingen barmhertighet og samwette'.

89 LUB, DLG Släkt, vol. 123.1, Axel Julius De la Gardie och hans hustru Sofia Juliana Forbus, Sofia Juliana to Axel Julius, Stockholm 21 Oct. 1690: 'som mig exqvera skulle'.

90 LUB, DLG Släkt, vol. 123.1, Axel Julius De la Gardie och hans hustru Sofia Juliana Forbus, Sofia Juliana to Axel Julius, Stockholm 25 Nov. 1695: 'gudh förbarma den ilacka spaacken, som har lemnat mig uti en so stor hiertans sorg, so at denna lere draga mig i min graff inom kort, minna hiertans sorger, och plogor äre so monga at mina ögon aff tårar förtäres'.

91 LUB, DLG Släkt, vol. 123.1, Axel Julius De la Gardie och hans hustru Sofia Juliana Forbus, Sofia Juliana to Axel Julius, Stockholm 21 Oct. 1694: 'Jagh tror aldrig nogra herrar har giwit store lönningar åt sina betienta än de La gardirna, har giwit, och mindre gagn hafft, aff dem, än de, der iagh olÿckeliga nogsamt moste rönna at thet enna öwerwolt effter thet andra öwer öwer mig, och kommer och thet så hopetals so at iagh inte mechtar lengre der meth uthärda.'

92 RA, MGDLG E1358, Oloff Bråms to MG De la Gardie, 1 June 1670.

The administrative procedures also reveal the ever-present threat of violence, not only towards employees who did not obey orders, as will be seen, but also towards those who were responsible for or communicated unpopular decisions. Olof Bråms illustrated this in his account of how wages were paid at Läckö Castle. In 1675 he reported the growing complaints about the delay in paying wages. Bråms had received the cash from Stockholm, but the actual payments were made by the castle bailiffs and their clerk. Since there was only enough cash for the previous year's wages people had become violent and Bråms described being descended on by employees complaining that they had not been paid enough. His response was to calm the situation by incarcerating them, as was his right.[93]

There were eyewitness accounts of the complicated business of paying of salaries and collecting information for accounting purposes. The administrative staff risked being caught between the count and the other employees, criticized from both sides. At the same time, the administrators as a group often found themselves in the same position as many other employees, left without wages for months on end. This happened to Anders Börjesson, who had begun as a copyist at a young age in 1663, and who ended his career in the De la Gardie household as an accountant, employed by Magnus Gabriel until the death of the count in 1686. Anders followed a well-established pattern, as he had family roots in Västergötland where his mother still lived.[94] In 1675, he wrote to complain about not having received his salary as a bookkeeper for the previous two years. A few years later he complained again that he had only received 23 rdr pay since his previous letter, and his clerk had received nothing, and he thus asked for monthly food for the both of them.[95] In his petitions he mentioned his large household who were in dire need of help: they had been given help with their housing, he admitted, but the situation was still very difficult for his wife and children.[96] There were other similar examples detailing the situation of scribes, bookkeepers, and accountants. Administrators were by no means excluded from the general practice of deferring wages. Even Jonas Lorin himself had to do without the salary he was entitled to: when Magnus Gabriel died, Lorin's claim on his employer was 7,000 rdr km, a huge sum, which he had little chance of ever collecting.[97]

There was surprising comment in Magnus Gabriel De la Gardie's account book for 1660 that the position of accountant or bookkeeper was 'odieuse',

93 RA, MGDLG E1358, Oloff Bråms to MG De la Gardie, 1 Nov. 1675.

94 RA, De la Gardieska samlingen E1658, Sammandrag av brev och resolutioner till MG De la Gardie med resolutionspåteckningar, decision on Anders Börjesson's request to travel to his mother in Västergötland, approved Karlberg 8 Jan. 1683.

95 RA, De la Gardieska samlingen E1656, Sammandrag av brev och resolutioner till MG De la Gardie med resolutionspåteckningar (huvudsakl. 1670-talet), n.d.

96 RA, De la Gardieska samlingen E1656, Sammandrag av brev och resolutioner till MG De la Gardie med resolutionspåteckningar (huvudsakl. 1670-talet), n.d.

97 Hedar, *Enskilda arkiv*, 125.

detestable, because it provided no extra income; surprising because it was written in an account book by one of the bookkeepers.[98] It also invites questions. State administrators are known to have been given cash, wine, furs, watches, and furniture or simply promises of future loyalty in return for their services. There were offers of small gifts to administrators' wives, and the practice of accepting 'sportler' or additional income was a well-established part of the bureaucracy, despite it encouraging corruption. Such extra income was seen as a way to supplement low wages.[99] The 1660 comment made two assumptions. First, that the position of bookkeeper was a detested one, perhaps because of the role controlling and auditing employees. Second, seen from the bookkeeper's perspective, the position offered little possibility of a greater income. These circumstances provide a glimpse into the realities faced by the De la Gardie administrators.

Another difficulty was keeping track of salaries. In 1679, an anonymous administrator, possibly a bookkeeper, complained about the failings of the system at Läckö Castle, including how to gauge the value of the employee's income from their cadastral units relative to their wages. The writer noted there was a risk that employees would be paid too much if the income from the cadastral unit was higher than had been estimated. He also referred to the system allowing employees to receive food under the *kostordning* (bouche), as food rations were known, while still having extra *kostpenningar* (subsistence money) when they were working elsewhere. However, they were not the only issues. He said it was far from clear which craftsmen were on the payroll, as some who were not were being paid, while those who were had received nothing.[100]

This was not a unique situation. There seems to have been general confusion among De la Gardie's bookkeepers, and it only got worse. In the 1680s, the government found itself in need of experienced accountants and bookkeepers to help with the Great Reduction, just at the moment when the shakeup forced the De la Gardie household into decline: not only were there the direct challenges, but the De la Gardies now had to compete with the state when recruiting staff.[101] In the end, all the efforts to reorganize, control, and audit were in vain. In October 1685, Lorin fretted there was 'great disorder in the counting house' because there was no one in charge and the financial accounts were not being sent in from the family estates. By that time, much of the De la Gardie sphere was disintegrating. The count's mountain of debt forced him to give up his estates and the Great Reduction

98 RA, MGDLG E1660, Personalförteckningar och avlöningslistor 1661–1686: 'Ähre Odieúse tienster och inga accidentier der hoos'.
99 Norrhem, *Uppkomlingarna*, 116–118.
100 RA, MGDLG E1660, Personalförteckningar och avlöningslistor 1661–1686.
101 Hedar, *Enskilda arkiv*, 101.

dispossessed him of his counties in the early 1680s. The decline was rapid and irreversible, and the year after his death in 1686, his estate was declared bankrupt. All that was left was a well-organized, well-kept archive.

Bureaucracy and the individual

We have approached the administration of De la Gardie estate organizations from different angles to look at its bureaucratic procedures and the visionaries and troublemakers among the administrators who conformed (or refused to conform) to the ideals, revealing the ordinary practices of the many bookkeepers, cashiers, clerks, and others who served in the bureaucracy of the estate organizations.

Erik Månsson Hasselgren, probably the most important instigator of a more efficient estate organization, noticed that the many petitioners who sought contact with the administrators not only disrupted their work, but also often had a knowledge advantage. He called for the creation of what we would call a knowledge community, which would give the organization the upper hand in how information was collected, organized, and stored—all for the benefit of the De la Gardies. This was driven by hope of glory for the family and its legacy, but also to meet the ordinary challenges for the administration that Hasselgren had recognized.

The estate organization's exercise of authority was, as far as we can tell, primarily based on written documentation and sets of instructions. The emphasis on accurate detail in the auditing, accounting, and archiving which Hasselgren implemented also suggests that writing was increasingly important in the seventeenth century. Such a development inevitably led to the need to pay attention to material conditions, as noted by Jonas Lorin. The more written reports which the administration had to handle, the more they needed an efficient way to sort and categorize the documents and make them easy to find. Storage was another important aspect, so larger and better-adapted archive spaces were also required.

The De la Gardie bureaucracy came to have three important functions: to create efficiency, to control, and to discipline. Each function had consequences for the whole organization and each demanded knowledge from its subordinates. Petitions, accounts, and audits were all ways to discipline and control employees and subordinates as they went about their work, but the interaction through these channels also meant requiring them to respond to new knowledge requirements and to contribute knowledge.

Hasselgren's aim was an estate organization that was more efficient than what he thought of as the lax routines under Jacob De la Gardie. He wished to professionalize the administration of information and knowledge, not only creating transparency and accessibility, but also securing the control of

work and finances alike. As in the government administration, employees should be interchangeable and archives should be kept in a designated place, not in staff's homes. Lorin's preoccupation with cabinets, boxes, envelopes, and labelling was one aspect of his pursuit of efficiency.

Increased efficiency was matched by increased control of subordinates. Hasselgren suggested how to achieve it, but an example of actual practice was the detailed instructions issued to Hindrich Broberg and his correspondence with Maria Sofia De la Gardie. The increased control resulting from bureaucratization was also related to discipline. Maria Sofia disciplined not only her employees by streamlining their duties and practices, but also the peasants by auditing her properties and their work, and expecting them to take an active part. Demanding that administrators be at work at specified times, which Hasselgren introduced, was another way of keeping order and disciplining employees.

What were the challenges to this hoped-for knowledge community when sharing and acting on information? What were the practical obstacles to the carefully crafted ideal of a centrally administered organization? As the De la Gardie bureaucracy actually operated—it not only existed on paper—we can see how its procedures were perceived in life and work of the estate organization. The most conspicuous feature of the system was the almost complete absence of delegation, impacting relationships on all levels. Employees were either afraid to make decisions or unable, because they controlled none of the resources. Paperwork could not be done; buildings could not be built, because they were waiting on further orders from the top of the hierarchy, the master himself. The centralization of power became an administrative problem too, posing obstacles to the gathering, use, and storing of information.

The refusal to delegate and the limited possibilities for employees to act according to their own judgement were combined with high expectations of the administrators. As the case of Hindrich Broberg showed, bookkeepers needed skill and rigour when collecting and processing knowledge about daily operations, and an ability to control others (here, bailiffs) so they delivered the information. For Broberg, language was also a hindrance, making him reliant on the help of a local boy—which was not forthcoming.

Administrative visions also foundered on a lack of competence, and even the outright unreliability of some employees, at least according to their masters. The grievances of Sofia Juliana, Magnus Gabriel's sister-in-law, were a telling example of the dire consequences of administrative staff who could not be trusted, and how central such employees were, being trusted with their master's or mistress's finances and credit relations. Even in less dramatic cases, plain incompetence could start a chain reaction, causing faults in the bookkeeping and the accounts that were difficult to adjust afterwards.

As important as the communication infrastructure was to the efficient administration of the De la Gardie sphere, it was also vulnerable to everything from the general unreliability of transportation to deliberate attempts to sabotage it by stealing letters. There is every indication that employees were familiar with the organization's power structures—the reliance on written orders, the lack of delegation—and were able to use their knowledge to complicate matters for their managers.

4

KNOW YOUR PLACE

Rules, resistance, and the materiality of hierarchies

Interaction, whether between employee and master or between employees, involved a socializing process that showed the individual what was considered the correct way to behave. Some of it was intentional and aimed at influencing behaviours through formal or informal rules. In Erik Schroderus' 1617 handbook *Hwszdräng*, which included the Swedish translation of the French theologian Gilbert Cousin's widely circulated *Oiketes siue de officio famulorum*, service was portrayed as sacred. 'Your calling is better founded in the word of God than is the estate and order of all monks', the text declared with reference to Luther.[1] It was a virtue to accept one's calling as a servant, for 'if Fortune makes you a donkey, you should remain a donkey and meekly honour your estate'.[2] Service was also characterized as an opportunity to be more civilized and gain knowledge, mirroring a patriarchal discourse where household socialization and education was considered a benefit, as long as it did not result in presumption—or deviation from the instructions provided. 'A servant is troublesome to me, who is wiser than a servant', *Hwszdräng* concluded, marking the limits of such an education.[3] The confessionalized, hierarchical discourse of this early-seventeenth-century publication thus engaged with the relations between service and knowledge, particularly highlighting the commanding role a good master was thought to play for his servants.

1 Cousin, *Hwszdräng*, 49: 'Ty ijn Kallelse är bättre grundat uthi Gudz Ord, än alla Munckars Ståndoch Orden. *D. Lutherus* säger på många åthskillige rum, särdeles uthi 4. Lat. Tomo, fol. 69.'

2 Cousin, *Hwszdräng*, 49: 'Een Åsne blijff, om Lyckan tigh Til Åsne monde achta. Then man bör prijsas högeligh Som sitt Ståndd rager sachta.'

3 Cousin, *Hwszdräng*, 52: 'Molestus mihi servus est, qui altius famulo sapit'.

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Any workplace in an aristocratic sphere, with its estates, farms, forests, gardens, mills, mines, and ships, would in some respects have resembled a household. The aristocrat who owned the many businesses was the master to whom service was done, the patriarch who ruled over his subjects and employees—and held responsible for them. Yet the organization of the aristocratic sphere was more complex than that of most early modern households, as the master and owner was generally absent from its physical places, or between them, and left daily operations to his managers, foremen, and bailiffs. He used bureaucracy, instructions, and correspondence to control his organization, while servants upheld their end of the relationship by writing letters and petitioning. An ideal of reciprocity was channelled through written media, creating a space for interaction and negotiations. Control also meant punishment, however, and access to castle prisons and even instruments of torture to force recalcitrant employees into compliance was another side of this reciprocity. As detailed in *Hwszdräng*, the servant should embrace their position, show respect for their master, and accept any corporal punishment. The servant was to serve his master in small things, but the master's service to his servants was far greater: not only did he house, clothe, and feed his servants, but he also kept them from evil company, guided them through life, and corrected their behaviour through chastisement.[4]

The doctrine of duty with its hierarchical and patriarchal credo was integrated into the household, providing a reason for how learning and education could be perceived. However, as Theresa Earenfight has pointed out, while the household was 'deeply political', mirroring and reinforcing these values, it was nevertheless the case that 'patriarchal values collided with circumstances' in practice.[5] Here we will consider the aristocracy's attempts to discipline and educate their servants on the societal level of rules and regulations, and through the specific, normative records from the De la Gardie estates. Written rules and instructions were central, but we also highlight the situated materiality of these hierarchical values evident at meals and in work attire such as liveries. While the consequences of material conditions in aristocratic workplaces are hard to evaluate, they were a visible part of the complex landscape navigated by servants on a daily basis. Material goods, whether clothes and shoes or food and drink, were part of the transactions between employer and worker, and need to be considered for their role in this system of values, opportunities, and demands.[6] Although seemingly scarce, the material resources and objects integral to their lives and work play an

4 Cousin, *Hwszdräng*, 33–34.

5 Earenfight, 'Personal Relations', 1.

6 Broomhall, 'Materializing women', quote at 326–327. Hamlin & Richardson, *Everyday Objects*, discuss how material culture shaped identity and daily life, and the methodological challenges of working with material culture; see also Hamlin & Richardson, *A Day at Home*; Vickery, *Behind Closed Doors*; Rublack, 'Matter', 46.

important role in the historical record: the many petitions, letters, lists of wages, and other transactional records illustrate the significance of objects and things in structuring ordinary business, and, in the more symbolic sense, as a value which could be offered, negotiated, demanded, pleaded for, or withheld. The materiality of the workplace thus formed a vital part of the knowledge community, permeating its hierarchies, rules, and disciplinary measures. The materiality and spatiality of such an organization was an important part of the ambition to gather, use, and store information and of the administrative process, as we have seen; here we will explore how it played into the socializing processes of an aristocratic sphere.

While normative sources from the De la Gardie archives capture its situated ambitions, they are still not enough to say what the everyday realities of the workplace were. As petitions, legal documents, and correspondence reveal, rules and regulations—and attempts to discipline servants into specific kinds of behaviour—must be contrasted to servants' failure to know their place, whether their attempts to negotiate and challenge this order, to defy 'cultivation', to break house rules, or to question the material hierarchies of the household. We would argue it is also vital to understand knowledge circulation and learning—readily associated with the positive processes of development, ambition, and opportunity—in the context of regulation. The conditions for learning and socialization require an understanding of regulatory practices and transgressions, as well as outright protests against aristocratic control and discipline.

Rules, regulations, and enforcement

Although the patriarchal ideology of the seventeenth century was evident in the rules and regulations that structured the lives of servants in aristocratic households, different levels of regulations affected working conditions for employees. We can distinguish between the judicial privileges of the aristocracy in relation to their servants, the attempts by the king to regulate service, the religious ideology as described in the Household Codes, and the various, more specific sets of rules and regulations in different aristocratic households and organizations. All shared an interest in a well-ordered, patriarchal society, with loyal, diligent servants and strict yet merciful masters.[7] Nevertheless, these normative sources outline the boundaries of aristocratic power in different ways and thus ought to be assessed separately.

The judicial power of the Swedish aristocracy was rooted in privilege, a feature of the seventeenth-century social order, which granted rights based on membership of one of four Estates: peasantry, burghers, clergy, or nobility.

7 See Desmarais-Tremblay, 'Paternalism', 11, 13; Fairchilds, *Domestic Enemies*, 5–6; Englund, *Det hotade huset*, 91–94; Lyndal Roper, *Holy Household*, 22–23, 27, 165, 191.

In 1617, the privileges of the nobility were extended, granting them the right to control their subordinates through their jurisdiction over counties and baronies.[8] As an example, a servant at the Läckö estate, which was part of the county of Läckö, was effectively under the De la Gardie family's jurisdiction as court of first instance until the early 1680s. Throughout the century, the Swedish aristocracy sought to strengthen their judicial powers over their landed estates and employees.[9] While a few select aristocratic and crown estates had far-reaching rights, including the death sentence, most were under the control of the king, who could reprieve convicts and was the final instance in serious cases such as murder, adultery, or heresy. While the establishment of courts of appeal in the seventeenth century has been taken as contributing to uniformity in legal use, the aristocracy's ability in particular to control their subordinates and employees remains relatively unexplored.[10]

A case from the province of Västergötland in the 1670s shows that even the most basic practical arrangements were open to negotiation, highlighting the dire position of convicted employees. Found guilty by the Göta Court of Appeal of the murder of a royal forester, Carl Carlsson, the gunner Niels Joensson's death sentence was commuted to a heavy fine. Although the crime had been committed on Magnus Gabriel De la Gardie's land, another nobleman from an adjacent estate, Baron Erick Stake at Frösslunda, had offered to pay the fine and take on the convict. De la Gardie's estate manager Per Larsson wrote that he was convinced Stake intended to take the crown's share of the fine and keep Nils Joensson in *livegen* (serfdom).[11] The estate manager considered this to be unfair, as Magnus Gabriel had arranged to track down the murderer, having employed him before the incident. Larsson also considered it hazardous to have the gunner working for someone else, and concluded that De la Gardie needed the prisoner's skills in the hunt for lynx on his estates, a task he had undertaken more than well before his conviction.[12] The case prompts many questions, not least about the possibility of serfdom, which is generally considered non-existent in medieval and early modern Sweden. As Mats Olsson shows, a temporary exception was established for the Bjersgård estate in Skåne between 1690 and 1740 to make up for a lack of labour, but no other examples are known.[13] Yet, this story

8 RA, SE/RA/6103/17, Drottning Kristinas förklaring och förbättring på grevarnas privilegier, Stockholm 26 Jan. 1651, https://sok.riksarkivet.se/bildvisning/R0001952_00002; Johansson, 'Herrar och bönder', 162–163.

9 *Förvaltningshistorisk Ordbok*, s.v. 'gårdsrätt'.

10 Johansson, 'Herrar och bönder'.

11 It was an interesting statement since serfdom was banned in Sweden in the early Middle Ages. There is one known example, from the Bjersgård estate in southern Sweden, which was allowed by a royal decision to keep serfs between 1690 and 1740, because of the lack of labourers (Olsson, *Storgodsdrift*, 88–90).

12 RA, MGDLG E1421, Per Larsson to MG De la Gardie, 17 Nov. 1670.

13 Olsson, *Storgodsdrift*, 88–90.

indicates that the possibilities for the nobility to control their employees as assets in their estate organization may have been an incentive in other cases.

While privileges determined some of the legal framework for early modern aristocrats, the relations between masters and servants were also regulated in the *legojonsstadga* of 1664, a royal statute introduced by the Diet in response to a situation that they thought disorderly. It clarified what wages, chastisement, and mobility were acceptable, according to the will of the Estates of the Realm.[14] The statutes of 1664 emphasized the compulsory nature of labour: the duty of every capable person to work and for servants to have one-year contracts starting at Michaelmas. Only in certain towns, Stockholm being one, were shorter contracts of six months accepted.[15] Leaving a position before one's contract had expired meant the employer could either use force to make sure the obligations of the contract were fulfilled, or demand compensation from the servant until a replacement had been found. As a further constraint on workers, it was forbidden to employ anyone still under contract to another master. Notice had to be given two months in advance of Michaelmas—this applied to masters and servants alike—otherwise the contract was to be automatically prolonged for another year. Contracts between master and servant could be confirmed by paying a fee, which was agreed with the servant on their employment. Contracts with more than one master at a time were explicitly forbidden, and could result in one year's wages being withheld.[16] Masters, meanwhile, were obliged to keep to the one-year contract and had to pay wages. Should a master dismiss a servant without good reason, the servant had the right to their outstanding wages and to an *avskedspass* (discharge papers), which they needed in order to take a new position. If a master refused to pay a servant's wages, they could be forced to pay not only the wages, but also another six months' wages as compensation.

The statute of 1644 also regulated behaviour between master and servant and possible punishments. The first time it occurred, negligence on the part of the employee was to be met with forgiveness and a gentle reprimand. Should the servant persist in wrongdoing, the next step was a stern reprimand. On the third occasion, the employer could either use their right to physical punishment or complain to the town council, who would then send the servant away to work in the army or navy. The statute furthermore declared that failure to do one's job properly would result in dismissal; however, if the servant could produce two witnesses who certified the dismissal was groundless this would be acknowledged in the ruling.[17] These rules drew attention not only to the apparent hierarchies and the patriarchal system of chastisement, but also to the threat of pressganging male employees into

14 *Kongl. May:tz Stadga*: 'samptligen Rijkzsens Ständers underdånige ansökiande'.
15 *Kongl. May:tz Stadga*.
16 *Kongl. May:tz Stadga*.
17 *Kongl. May:tz Stadga*.

the military.[18] Servants' willingness to abide by the rules and accept the sometimes harsh conditions of an aristocratic organization may thus have come from a legitimate fear of going to war.

It was not only royal statutes which regulated the relationship between servant and master. Researchers have also pointed to the importance of the Household Codes printed with Luther's Small Catechism, which prescribed patterns of conduct on various levels in the household and in society.[19] In the Swedish constitution of 1634, Luther's Small Catechism was adopted as a foundational text that the king and all officials in Sweden had to abide by. In the Household Codes, masters were comparable to parents, shouldering the responsibility to provide for, take care of, and ultimately, foster their subordinates. Servants should show obedience and loyalty, even if their masters were 'evil'. The ideal servants were diligent and industrious, clever enough to make their own decisions when their masters were not about, never speaking ill of their superiors, nor viewing themselves as their equal.[20] Masters, on the other hand, should care for their servants in sickness and health, not punish them harshly, nor give them too great a workload. Servants' rights to rest on Sundays and religious holidays must be respected, according to the Household Codes.[21]

Regulation in practice

When looking at instructions and rules of specific aristocratic households, the general principles of the Household Codes seem to hold true. An undated set of instructions drafted for a chief steward in the service of Magnus Gabriel De la Gardie followed the expected pattern, showing how the codes were translated into everyday practice. The chief steward was to make sure that servants were godly, idle, orderly, willing, and obedient, and he should reconcile enmity between servants and punish fraud and lesser crimes, while reporting graver offences to the head of the household. It also fell to him to report recruitment to the count's office, make inventories to ensure nothing was stolen, and account for staff and their needs in terms of food (making sure they did not receive double rations).[22] He was responsible for the servants' behaviour and for reporting on them to the administration. Socialization and financial control coincided.

The job descriptions that have survived from estates in the De la Gardie sphere speak of the level of knowledge and skill expected of employees.

18 Anyone who did not own land or work as a servant was obliged to join the army or navy. These rules had been introduced by the end of the sixteenth century, see Andersson, *Från trälar till tjänstefolk*, 302–303.

19 Pleijel, *Hustavlans värld*; Lindmark, 'Läs- och skrivkunnigheten'.

20 *Huus-Taflan*, 150–154, 155, 157.

21 *Huus-Taflan*, 160–161, 164.

22 RA, MGDLG E1309, Kort extract oppå vars och ens instruction, n.d.

The instructions were often personalized—written for a specific employee and not only for a position—although general descriptions also existed. One Bartold Pederson, possibly a De la Gardie bookkeeper or superintendent's clerk in the 1660s, drafted the job descriptions for the chief steward, *köksmästare* (head cooks), stablemasters, and comptrollers. He outlined their responsibilities and the level of decision-making appropriate to each position. A striking feature in all his instructions was the required skills in writing and accounting, making them part of a bureaucratic machinery where the control and regulation of employees was central to business. The production of receipts, inventories, accounting verifications, and reports was an integral part of the job descriptions for heads of the house, kitchen, stables, and offices. Safeguarding the counts' finances was centre stage, closely tied to the bureaucratic procedures of reporting and accounting. Head cooks were to make sure any leftovers were not simply handed out to the kitchen staff, but that they were accounted for as an 'Augement' on the payroll. Stablemasters were to make sure that bills were not paid without being carefully inspected and should keep an eye on the cloth for wagons and carriages, making sure no one used, wore, or sold it.[23]

Who, then, was the driving force behind the demands for efficiency and economizing? In what was labelled a 'short extract', likely a copy of a letter written to Magnus Gabriel De la Gardie, an employee, who seems to have been the above-mentioned Pedersen (although we cannot be sure), made a bold request. Apologizing for his audacity, he wrote that in the absence of a clear sense of his responsibilities he would like instructions for his office to make sure that one employee's work was not countermanded by another, and he outlined a plan for how to organize the kitchen, stable, and house, including the payment of salaries and administrators' responsibilities.[24] He also suggested the establishment of a *consilium* (household board) where he and the masters of the house, kitchen, and stable could meet weekly and contribute according to their different responsibilities, making sure they were all held responsible for their actions.[25] There should be no suspicion between the servants, and this process of making decisions and responsibilities transparent would be to the benefit of the count and his authority. In this case, the initiative to change the day-to-day operations, to integrate everyday practice into bureaucratic procedures and to get a grip on business seems to have come from below.[26]

23 RA, MGDLG E1309, Kort extract oppå vars och ens instruction, n.d.

24 RA, MGDLG E1309, Kort extract oppå vars och ens instruction, n.d.: 'uppå det att den eena icke stiger i den Andres kall'.

25 RA, MGDLG E1309, Kort extract oppå vars och ens instruction, n.d.: 'och hwar sin egen befallningh att gifua förslagh uppå'.

26 Of course, occasionally instructions came straight from the count and it is thus hard to know whose initiative the organizational changes were. It is striking, though, that it employees suggested the stricter regulation of jobs and responsibilities.

It is reasonable to believe that regulatory practices were important to the socialization of employees. By structuring the content and demands of servants' employment, responsibilities, and role in the bureaucratic machinery, the instructions contributed to a framework that must have affected many servants in the workplace. Making inventories, receipts, verifications, and reports part of their day-to-day business, De la Gardie estate employees likely felt controlled and had to adapt to it. Not that all did, of course, and the exceptions cast what was expected of them by way of learning and behaviour in a different light.

Conflict, resistance, rebellion

In practice, the De la Gardie knowledge community was one of transgressions, misunderstandings, conflicts of interest, and protests against attempts to discipline and educate servants into their specific roles. In the correspondence between members of the De la Gardie family and employees in managerial positions there are several examples of servants who did not abide by the rules, thus disrupting daily business. The surviving letters were primarily written by managers of various kinds who had to deal with the consequences of perceived transgressions in the workplace. The misdemeanours varied in severity, as did the responses, but they all defined the contours of the community to which they belonged. Some servants simply ran away and were either lost or hunted down by their employer.[27] The estate manager at Läckö, Oloff Bråms, reported in 1675 that some *murdrängar* (hod carriers) who had escaped from Kägleholm had been captured and were now kept in 'the tower' at Läckö. In his report he asked what to use them for.[28] The runaways were now a potential resource, and it seems he had kept them; it also indicates that though had been working at Kägleholm, their duty was towards their master, and they could thus be moved from one estate to another at their master's convenience. Another case from Sundholmen, an estate Maria Sofia De la Gardie had inherited from her mother, showed similar problems, that time handled by an estate manager named Sven Mörk. When Mörk was asked to send three lads, he mentioned problems finding suitable candidates but eventually hired three young men who could be expected to serve the countess honestly and faithfully. Mörk had gone to great lengths to ensure they were suitable, asking their fathers to sign an undertaking to vouch for their sons: in the unlikely event any of them did the countess harm, the fathers promised to take responsibility. To prove the three young men's sincerity, the fathers

27 See, for example, RA, MGDLG E 1664, Lönestater 1667–1668, 1678–1679 for the chamber lackey Johan Slaggman, who decided to run away after he was accused of a 'faut' (mistake), though it is unclear what he had done or what punishment awaited.

28 RA, MGDLG E1358, Oloff Bråms to MG De la Gardie, 23 June 1675.

had asked the local vicar and Sven Mörk himself to countersign the letter.[29] It all seemed watertight when the letter was signed on 4 September 1674, but it did not work out as planned. In a letter of 10 January 1675, Mörk informed his mistress that two of the lads he had sent from Sundholmen to Stockholm had run away and one of them had returned to his parents' home; he asked the countess for instructions on how to handle the situation. The situation was awkward with no fewer than five trusted men, including Mörk himself, having vouched for the runaways.[30]

It is hard to gauge the magnitude of the problem of absconding employees. There were recurring incidents which have left traces in the archives, but it is difficult to say whether they were common. By contrast, some problematic servants and workers were constantly redeployed. In a conflict involving the estate manager Sven Mörk and the gardener Anders Larsson at Sundholmen, the problem of bad behaviour came to a head. Anders had been hired in 1664 and seemed a promising newcomer. In a report to his then mistress Ebba Brahe he described his work on the garden in terms that indicated he was satisfied with his job. Years later in the middle of the conflict, a vicar testified that Anders initially worked well with people at the estate. When Anders had invited a niece to come and live with him, trouble ensued and he started to misbehave. Not only did he sleep with his niece, he also brought her daughter into his house and had a child with her. By 1674 there was an open rift between Sven Mörk and Anders, which continued to escalate as accusations flew between them: neglect, elopement, unlawful marriage, theft, and insult. Anders accused Mörk of trying to force him out of his job, something that Mörk denied in a letter to Maria Sofia De la Gardie. In fact, Mörk noted, the gardener had actually been paid to hire a *lärdräng* (apprentice), but instead had involved himself with two 'evil women', to which the local vicar would testify. Eventually Anders was brought to trial, but the charges were dismissed and his case was dropped. He ultimately had to leave his position as a gardener at Sundholmen, only to be reemployed at Skarpnäck, another of Maria Sofia's estates.[31]

While 'evil' servants were to be expelled from the household, lesser offences and misdemeanours were not to be punished too harshly, according to the Household Codes, a stance mirrored in the statute of 1664. Salary deductions for example, it was argued, heavily affected the poor and must

29 LUB, DLG, Topographica, Sundholmen, Cautionsskrift till Maria Sofia De la Gardie, Sundholmen 4 Sept. 1674.

30 LUB, DLG Topographica, Sundholmen, Sven Mörk to Maria Sofia De la Gardie, Sundholmen 10 Jan. 1675. Mörk did not mention his own signature on the 'Cautionsskrift', only the father vouching for the son (who had now returned home), implying that the father was partly guilty.

31 LUB, DLG Topographica, Sundholmen, Sven Mörk to Maria Sofia De la Gardie, Sundholmen 16 Jan., 23 Apr., 5 June, 16 July 1675, and n.d.

therefore be used with moderation.[32] A letter by the bailiff Erik Larsson to Countess Ebba Brahe in June 1662 provides further insight into the assessment of misbehaviour. Larsson revealed to the countess that some of her subordinates had been stealing birch-bark, logs, and charcoal from her forest, naming six people whom he accused of theft. Larsson's contention was that the situation demanded a strict hearing *examination* to reveal the other participants of the theft, and thereafter a stern warning to make it stop.[33] While we cannot know exactly what was implied by strict, other correspondence provides possible nuances. In instructions for a housekeeper in Sofia Juliana Forbus' service, the housekeeper was warned that she must conduct business according to the will of her mistress, not based on her own judgement. One of her duties was to be in charge of the female staff and see that they conducted their work cleanly and neatly. If she disobeyed, she would pay a high price, her mistress warned.[34] In a letter from count Abraham Brahe, Ebba Brahe's uncle, to his employee Lasse Jute, who had been hostile but seemingly not violent towards a fellow servant, the count 'strictly forbade' such behaviour, concluding that if he did not better himself, he would be chastised.[35] Correspondence thus reveals the hierarchy of responses towards transgressions, showing several steps from warnings and strict notice, to chastisement or other sorts of punishments.

By looking at letters to Magnus Gabriel from the bailiffs and overseers at various estates, we can chart ordinary transgressions and their consequences. A letter of 20 April 1670 from the estate manager at Läckö Castle, Olof Bråms, revealed he was struggling to convince a group of soldiers contracted to complete a building project for the count to finish their work. Bråms reported to his master that his efforts were in vain. Food, lodging: nothing could convince them to abandon their 'malevolent course'.[36] Having consulted with Magnus Gabriel on how to proceed, Bråms later reported that the most troublesome soldiers had been sent to the castle dungeon on bread and water.[37]

Later, in November 1675, Bråms reported a disturbance about wages. The cash had been transported to Läckö, and after receiving it Bråms had gathered the servants, along with the bailiffs and their clerks, in order to pay them. However, so much was owed them for their 'old salaries' that there was not enough left to pay their current wages. When the servants realized

32 *Huus-Taflan*, 161, 164.

33 RA, Ericsbergsarkivet Ebba Brahes godshandlingar, vol. 5: Axholm (Skrivelser till Ebba Brahe och sekreteraren Getrop), Erik Larsson to Ebba Brahe, June 1662.

34 LUB, DLG Släkt, vol. 155:2, Handlingar rörande Sofia Juliana Forbus, Instruktioner för tjänstefolk.

35 RA, Rydboholmsarkivet E8134, Abraham Brahe to Lasse Jute, 5 Feb. 1600.

36 RA, MGDLG E1358, Oloff Bråms to MG De la Gardie, 20 Apr. 1670.

37 RA, MGDLG E1358, Oloff Bråms to MG De la Gardie, 1 June1670.

this, Bråms wrote, they became rebellious and walked away, saying they would not work. Having sent the *profoss* (provost) to round them up, he locked them in the tower for a day. When Bråms asked them what they were going to do, they said they were happy where they were.[38]

Several incidents reported to De la Gardie concerned servants refusing to work.[39] As detailed in a lengthy exchange with an estate manager at Skålltorp, reports about employees' behaviour was meant to bring the count's attention to matters that could cause him 'harm or disadvantage'.[40] The estate manager made it clear he had rather not bother the count, but since none of his warnings had had an effect on the workers he felt obliged to speak up. Surviving correspondence thus shows that servants' protests were discussed with the count, and that managers explicitly requested and awaited his verdict before punishing anyone. For runaways the process may have been swifter, as the bailiffs and estate managers seem to have written to the count only once they had been caught.

In the Skålltorp estate manager's examples there was a fine line between an inability to work and outright refusal, although the warnings and punishments meted out indicated the perceived gravity of the situation. For example, one herdsman was said to be 'completely unfit', incapable of protecting the wild animals in the count's menagerie and constantly harming them by his negligence. Having once been employed as a shoemaker, the estate manager concluded that it would be better if he returned to that position, and that the count sought for a more competent animal keeper.[41] Another servant, a *hejdridare* or *skogvaktare* (forester), ignored his duties in order to tend his own farm. Warnings had been issued, but since none had been acknowledged, the estate manager suggested he be dismissed in favour of someone more diligent.[42]

There was a difference between incompetence and defiance, then, where the former resulted in the sack (or being returned to a previous job) but the latter had more severe implications. Where the use of force and violence was considered necessary, punishment was usually, though not always, preceded by deliberations with the count. In a letter dated 5 April 1671, Bråms inquired about the fate of a stable boy who had stolen a silver platter, writing that he awaited orders from Magnus Gabriel as how to proceed.[43] An estate manager at Läckö, however, noted that builders who refused to work had already been

38 RA, MGDLG E1358, Oloff Bråms to MG De la Gardie, 1 Nov. 1675: 'när de finge det höra blev de alla rebelliska, och ginge sin väg och sade sig därpå intet kunna arbeta', 'så gåve de goda ord och vore tillfreds med det som gjort var'.
39 RA, MGDLG E1421, Per Larsson to MG De la Gardie, 15 Jan. 1663.
40 RA, MGDLG E1421, Per Larsson to MG De la Gardie, 15 Jan. 1663.
41 RA, MGDLG E1421, Per Larsson to MG De la Gardie, 15 Jan. 1663: 'helt otjänelig'.
42 RA, MGDLG E1421, Per Larsson to MG De la Gardie, 15 Jan. 1663.
43 RA, MGDLG E1358, Oloff Bråms to MG De la Gardie, 5 Apr. 1671.

punished 'in the tower' with the 'wooden horse', an instrument of torture that risked permanent harm to the victim; it was only now the estate manager went to the count for further instructions for how to treat the builders, who had claimed they could not work, since they were given neither food nor their wages.[44] A separate case revealed similar cruelty on the part of another estate manager, who detailed how a rider suspected of delaying a delivery to Läckö had been imprisoned in the dungeon for at least a fortnight as punishment for his insubordination.[45]

The tower and dungeon at Läckö Castle referred to in the letters appear from plans of the castle to have been one and the same. The dungeon was in the north-eastern tower, close to the bathhouse and sauna and the main kitchen.[46] Prisoners were thus held in a busy area of the castle. However, as archaeological excavations have revealed, the dungeon was on the ground floor of the tower, surrounded by thick walls and accessible only through a narrow passage from the kitchen with a small window and massive door. A neck iron with a chain, deeply fastened into the wall, was found, along with other remains indicating the room's use.[47] Surviving letters in the De la Gardie archives also reveal some of the conditions of these temporary incarcerations. A letter from the Court of Appeal about the crimes of a doorkeeper and a castle guard who had failed to guard someone at Läckö properly, shows they had sat down to drink with their prisoner, one Per Olofsson, who had been locked up for raping his wife's niece. As the evening progressed, the doorkeeper and guard had got so drunk they had not only left the cell door open and the prisoner's chains undone, but they had also failed to guard the castle gate. Per Olofsson had seized the opportunity to flee into the night. The doorkeeper had admitted in court that he had been reminded on several occasions by the estate manager and the castle bailiff to keep an eye on this particular prisoner. The doorkeeper was sentenced to pay a fine of 40 marks and was sacked. The castle guard, who was in the cell with the prisoner but too drunk to notice when he escaped, was sentenced to 14 days on bread and water in the tower.[48]

One observation is that employees' resistance often took the form of withholding their labour, with servants consciously delaying or refusing to work despite warnings and punishment. A more tangible protest was the presumed theft of the letters from the estate manager Olof Bråms to Magnus Gabriel De la Gardie, which pointed to a weakness in the system: the extended chain of command and the communications between the count and his estate

44 RA, MGDLG E1573, Anders Stålhandske to MG De la Gardie, 22 Nov. n.a.
45 RA, MGDLG E1421, Per Larsson to MG De la Gardie, 19 Mar. 1672.
46 Menander, *Byggnadsarkeologisk undersökning*, 46.
47 Noreen, 'Fläskgraven', who confirms the dungeon was in continual use in the seventeenth century.
48 RA, MGDLG E1358, Hovrätten to MG De la Gardie, 9 Nov. 1664.

managers when disciplinary measures were to be taken.[49] Where the count had ultimate responsibility for the disciplining of servants, his estate managers had to consult him before they could proceed.

Much remains to be said about the practicalities of seventeenth-century aristocratic legal jurisdictions in Sweden. Yet the De la Gardies' various solutions provide a glimpse into a reality where arrangements could be made, at least when the right people were involved. Take the conflict at Stegeborg Castle that involved the parents of Magnus Gabriel De la Gardie's wife Maria Euphrosyne, Count Palatine Johan Casimir, and Princess Katarina. An unmarried clerk named Oluff Larsson slept with the wife of his superior, the secretary Hans Casparsson, and had been imprisoned for it. Having successfully petitioned the count palatine and his wife for mercy, he was released from prison and instead sentenced to pay a substantial fine on the order of the count. Following his release, he wrote to Johan Casimir to thank him, not only for freeing him, but also for paying his fines totalling 120 rdr. He was allowed to stay on in Johan Casimir's household, but, according to the sources, was made to promise in writing to keep out of the count's sight.[50]

The materialities of hierarchy

Although government laws based on religious documents were one part of the framework for the estate organization, another part was local hierarchies, many of them manifested in material objects connected to the payment of wages in cash and kind: meals and material objects such as cloth, clothing, and shoes. The materialities thus served to visualize the hierarchies, contributing to the process of socialization in the aristocratic sphere. While the sources—account books, lists of staff, instructions—cannot describe exactly how the system worked, they still reveal the differences between households, between estates owned by the same person, and sometimes between individual employees with the same position, in how wages were paid.[51] There were shared features, too. Costs for employees in the household of Jacob De la Gardie and his wife Ebba Brahe reveal that 9,089 rdr (silver) was paid in wages in 1652, of which 57 per cent (5,173 rdr) was paid in cash and 43 per cent (3,908 rdr) in kind. The vast majority (3,344 rdr) of what was paid in kind was given as *kommiss* (commission), the right to goods such as food to that value. A little more than 76 rdr was paid for cloth, 306 rdr for 51 pair of boots, and 189 rdr for 126 pairs of shoes.[52] From the viewpoint of the employer, the proportion

49 Lindström, 'En gårdsfogdes vedermödor', 75–76, 83.

50 RA, Stegeborgssamlingen E73, Skrivelser till Johan Kasimir från underlydande, Oluff Larsson to Johan Casimir of Pfalz 14 Nov. 1629, 4 Apr. 1630 and to Katarina of Pfalz (n.d.).

51 The same pattern is seen in other studies, for example, Lindström & Mispelaere, 'Vad fick 1600-talets arbetare', 438–440, 442–447.

52 LUB, DLG Släkt, vol. 11:2, Handlingar rörande Jakob Pontusson De la Gardie.

of the money spent on cloth, boots, or shoes was small—almost insignificant—compared to what was paid in cash or as commission.

For the servants, however, it was a different matter. For some the proportion of their wages paid in kind was larger than the proportion paid in cash, which was something seen in other countries too.[53] It was noticeable that pages, lackeys, postilions, and stable boys had a relatively high proportion of their pay in cloth and footwear. In the case of lackeys, for example, only 9 per cent was paid in cash and slightly more than 10 per cent in cloth or footwear, while the remainder—80 per cent—was paid as commission.[54] At Arnö in 1650 those at the bottom of the payroll—the stable boy, the herdsman, and the two *trädgårdspojkar* (garden boys)—received cloth, shoes, and wool and no cash at all.[55] That lower servants were given a large proportion of their wages in kind was typical of the De la Gardie household, as it was of others. When Anders the kitchen boy at Stegeborg Castle asked for the shoes he had been promised but not given, he argued that since he was paid nothing in cash he could not buy shoes himself.[56] Higher-ranking employees, on the other hand, such as the chief steward, the chaplain, and administrators of different kinds, received the majority of their wages in cash (between 75 and 100 per cent) and only a small part as commission. In 1652, for example, none was paid in cloth or footwear. Clearly, holding a more prestigious position in the household meant not only a higher salary, but also cash wages.[57] However, it is impossible to say anything about the proportions of cash and kind in women's wages, for while the men's wages were broken down into cash, commission, cloth, or footwear, only the total value was noted for women's wages. Some insight is provided by a document, also from 1652, stating that a group of female employees were to get linen clothing and shoes. The clothing, it said, would be given by the countess herself, which may imply they were hand-me-downs.[58]

For the vast majority of servants who petitioned the De la Gardies for their outstanding wages, cash was only a minor proportion of what they earned. Getting the cloth or goods they were owed was thus key. Besides the obvious importance of work clothing in order to do their jobs and as protection from the elements, it was also a tradeable commodity, for as Beverly Lemire has pointed out 'cloth and clothing represented among the most important and costly purchases for generations of families'.[59] In seventeenth-century Western

53 For the German case, see Kühn, 'Masters as Debtors'.
54 LUB, DLG Släkt, vol. 11:2, Handlingar rörande Jakob Pontusson De la Gardie.
55 LUB, DLG, Topographica, Uppland, Arnö 3a (Räkenskaper); for similar examples from 1665–1666, 1677, 1679, 1682 and 1691 at Häringe, see LUB, DLG, Topographica, Södermanland, Häringe 6.
56 RA, Stegeborgssamlingen E73, Anders Kiökedräng to Johan Casimir of Pfalz, n.d.
57 LUB, DLG Släkt, vol. 11:2, Handlingar rörande Jakob Pontusson De la Gardie.
58 LUB, DLG Släkt, vol. 11:2, Handlingar rörande Jakob Pontusson De la Gardie.
59 Lemire, 'Secondhand Clothing Trade', 144–163, 146.

Europe, clothing was frequently pawned or sold in the flourishing second-hand market.[60] In England between 1600 and 1850, fabric goods were between 60 and 80 per cent of all pawned items. Cloth and clothing, Lemire argues, functioned as alternate currencies at a time when ordinary people had limited access to cash.[61] One example from the De la Gardie household was the stable lad Michel Sahlknecht, who wrote to his master about his outstanding wages, and how poverty had forced him to pawn his clothes, leaving him scarce able to clothe his 'sinful body'.[62] Four masons working at the Ekholmen estate sent in a joint petition because they had not received their food allowance, which had forced them to sell their clothes in order to survive. Now without means, they begged De la Gardie for money to travel back home.[63] For those lucky enough to actually receive their cloth or clothing, it may have served as savings which could be exchanged for other goods. Fabric, after all, was 'at the heart of commodity exchange and at the heart of social representation'.[64]

Wages were also paid in meals or in grain, meat and fish, salt fish, peas and grain, butter, hops, and salt. There was no discrimination in terms of the raw ingredients, but there were differences in quantity depending on the status of the employee. At Ekholmen and Höjentorp in the 1650s, staff were divided into three categories: fogdeordningen (bailiff rank), medelordningen (middle rank), and ringare ordningen (lesser rank), the latter falling into two subgroups. Those of bailiff rank—the estate manager, the housekeeper (the top-ranking woman at the estate), and a number of other high-ranking employees—had more of everything, roughly 50 per cent more than those of lesser rank (such as the cook).[65] Payment in the form of food allowances was also an option. These may have been used to purchase food for preparation at home, or as payment to, for example, lodging-house keepers who cooked for their residents. One complained to Magnus Gabriel De la Gardie that she had lodged and fed one of his servants without being paid.[66]

Historians have pointed to the importance of meals and the commonly accepted idea that keeping servants properly fed would keep them from

60 Ago, 'Using Things', 45; Deceulaer, 'Second-hand Dealers', 30–33.

61 Lemire, 'Secondhand Clothing Trade', 147–148; see also Fontaine, *Alternative Exchanges*; Stobart & Damme, *Modernity and the Second-Hand Trade*.

62 RA, MGDLG E1642, Michel Sahlknecht to MG De la Gardie, 2 Mar. 1676.

63 RA, MGDLG E1642, Four murmästare to MG De la Gardie, n.d.

64 Lemire, 'Secondhand Clothing Trade', 147.

65 LUB, DLG, Topographica, Ekholmen 6; LUB, DLG, Topographica, Höjentorp, vol. 2a. A similar system was in place at Jacobsdal in 1644, see LUB, DLG, Topographica, Jacobsdal. At Läckö in 1641 there were only two categories but also a very small group of people, see LUB, DLG, Topographica, Allmänt 3: Lön, förtäring och utfordring vid Läckö slott 1641.

66 See RA, MGDLG E1641, all lackeys petitioning MG De la Gardie, n.d. an example of employees who complained they could not pay their lodging-house keepers for bed and food, while lodging-house keepers petitioned De la Gardie for money owed to them by his servants.

complaining and even rebelling against their masters.[67] We would argue that meals in aristocratic households, just like shoes and clothing, defined status and served as an arena for socialization and discipline. They were arranged according to rank, so that servants such as the bailiff and the physician received a greater number of dishes than the cupbearer or the milkmaid. In Jacob De la Gardie and Ebba Brahe's household, 53 individuals were listed for meals, divided into five categories. The top category, who were served were served 24 dishes each, included the count and countess, their daughter Ebba Margareta, and the steward, the chaplain, four *kammarjunkare* (chamber gentlemen), two *jungfrur* (chamber women), the physician, and two men without job titles. The largest group, including lackeys, pages, the tutor, and servants or assistants to higher-ranking employees, were served 6 dishes, as were the secretary, the bookkeeper, the copyist, the kitchen clerk, the *skräddare* (tailor), the assistant stablemaster, and the comptroller.[68] The cupbearer, a page, and a *silverkammardräng* (silver under-butler), received only 2 each.[69] Neither in their household nor Magnus Gabriel De la Gardie's were there explicitly gendered differences, although they were not unknown: in a list of meals from the 1690s for Sofia Juliana Forbus's household, it was noted that men should have double portions of herring, and men should have a quart stoup of beer a day while women had only half as much.[70]

Of the petitions to Magnus Gabriel De la Gardie some 10 per cent were about food. Most petitioners claimed they had not received the correct amount of food; others that local estate managers or bailiffs had withheld their food allowance.[71] The garden boy Anders Bärsson complained he had lost his food 'privileges' because he had talked back to the gardener's wife.[72] Being paid in food sometimes meant you were handed dried or salt meat or fish and grain to take home.[73] This could require the recipient to do

67 Richardson, *Household servants*, 96, 101–102. Early modern French manuals said a good master should provide his servants with clothes, food, and healthcare; see Maza, *Servants and Masters*, 9.

68 LUB, DLG Släkt, vol. 11:2, Handlingar rörande Jakob Pontusson De la Gardie, Jacob De la Gardies hovfolk; for similar examples, see RA, MGDLG, E1660, lists from Magnus Gabriel's Main House in Stockholm (1672, 1679 and 1681), Venngarn (1679), Karlberg (1679).

69 Broadly the rank theory held true, but of the individual categories it is noticeable the pages were found both among those who were served six dishes and those who got only two. On what grounds those in charge distinguished between employees in the same line of work we do not know.

70 LUB, DLG Släkt, 55:2, Kostlängd för Sofia Julianas hushåll, 1 Jan. 1693.

71 RA, MGDLG E1642, 22 July 1683 the caretaker Lars Axelsson and his unnamed wife the housekeeper thus complained that when the count and countess had left the estate where they worked they stopped receiving food, and since they were both employed by the De la Gardies they believed themselves entitled to food as part of their salary.

72 RA, MGDLG E1642, Anders Bärsson to MG De la Gardie, n.d.

73 This did not only apply to the De la Gardie household. See, for example, Bengt Oxenstierna's household, LUB, DLG, Oxenstierna 36 (kostordning).

complicated calculations to be certain of the value of the items.[74] The risk of being given less than you were owed may help to explain why 21 workers at Läckö asked to get their meals served at the castle, rather than in kind.[75]

Written codes of conduct for meals, *bordsartiklar* (dining rules), survive for Magnus Gabriel De la Gardie's household at Läckö Castle in 1669. They set down the proper behaviour expected of diners and the punishments for those who broke the rules. It is not known whether they were actually followed, although there are indications they may have been. The requirement to be on time for dinner was reinforced in various ways and the rules stipulated those who were late could not dine, nor were they to be given food by anyone else.[76] Well ahead of dinner, a trumpeter should signal for all to hear, and the chief steward should check that meals were eaten communally and that employees did not take their food elsewhere.[77] A letter from a gardener at Svanå shows this may have been an issue for some servants: in winter, meals were served when it was dark outside and the gardener was worried for his safety, having to cross a narrow bridge that in his opinion was hazardous. His main problem, however, was the risk of theft. Having his meals up at the house at specific times meant his garden was an easy target for thieves. Someone had recently broken into his house when he was at a meal and stolen his profits from the sale of currants and gooseberries. He therefore hoped he could be paid in produce rather than in meals.[78]

The dining rules said the privilege of communal meals was granted only those who attended church and said grace at the table. Swearing or annoying others was punished with a fine; poor or rowdy behaviour, such as standing up and yelling, resulted in either a whipping or fees, depending on the age of the transgressor. It was forbidden to complain about the food to the kitchen or waiting staff, or to enter the kitchen and pester the cooks.[79] Rules of behaviour were integral to material conditions, and transgressions could result in fines, corporal punishment, or losing the right to meals.

74 RA, MGDLG E1642, Erich Jacobsson objected in 1648 that what he had been handed was of less value than his salary. The same went for Erik Thomsson at Ekholmen who said De la Gardie owed him food for part of the preceding seven months (RA, MGDLG E1641, n.d.).

75 RA, MGDLG E1642, 21 workers at Läckö to MG De la Gardie, n.d.

76 LUB, DLG Släkt, vol. 88:1, 'Bordsartiklar', Läckö 26 Sept. 1669, and Memorial (Instruction), 1672.

77 LUB, DLG Släkt, vol. 88:1, 'Bordsartiklar', Läckö 26 Sept. 1669, and Memorial (Instruction), 1672; LUB, DLG 139:2, Ekonomiska handlingar, Instruktioner och antagningsbevis för Axel Julius De la Gardies betjening, Instructions for a steward, Reval 11 July 1690.

78 RA, Ericsbergsarkivet Ebba Brahes godshandlingar, vol. 5. Axholm (Skrivelser till Ebba Brahe och sekreteraren Getrop), Anders Nilsson to Mauritz Getrop, 24 Sept. 1665.

79 LUB, DLG Släkt, vol. 88:1, 'Bordsartiklar', Läckö 26 Sept. 1669, and Memorial (Instruction), 1672.

The household played a central, ideological role as the basis for social order.[80] The male head of the household not only had the right, he was expected to exercise authority over his wife, children, and servants. This was also a violent period, with murder rates far higher in the early and mid-seventeenth century than they would be just a century later.[81] Men were responsible for most fatal violence, which more often than not involved personal honour.[82] Insults or provocations that were thought dishonouring could—and were expected to—spark a forceful response from the other party if the offender was the same or below them in rank.[83] Karin Hassan Jansson argues that violent reactions to insults were not because of a lack of emotional control, but rational responses in this societal context. For the authorities, however, as seen in court decisions, self-control was to be encouraged: not responding to affronts with violence was the desired behaviour.[84] Even so, there were examples of violent behaviour among De la Gardie servants. Nils Andersson, a former employee dismissed after being in a fight with Magnus Gabriel's valet, asked to be forgiven claiming that it was the valet who had started it. He asked to have his job back, and failing that to have his outstanding wages paid.[85] An example that might create problems for Magnus Gabriel personally was when his trumpeter Möllerdorf in the early 1670s ended up in a conflict with a trumpeter at the royal court. Möllerdorf begged Magnus Gabriel De la Gardie to be sent away with Count Tott on an embassy to Paris to get away from Stockholm, and it seems De la Gardie did indeed recommend Möllerdorf to Tott.[86]

Household ordinances regulating behaviour seemed formulated to prevent aggressive outbursts. Bans on insulting speech, aggressive body language (standing up at table), and actions that could easily evoke strong emotions in others seemed designed to lower tensions between employees and promote submissiveness to superiors. Complaints should be made in an orderly manner through the proper channels to spare the honour of lackeys, pages, and cooks. Being on time, sitting down together to eat, and being respectful to one's fellow servants, superiors, and God were central to a disciplining process that aimed at keeping the household in order.

80 Liliequist, 'Changing Discourses', 1; Jansson & Koefoed, 'Mapping the Household State', 39.
81 Kaspersson, 'Dödligt våld', 119; Lindström, 'Homicide in Scandinavia', 44.
82 Kaspersson, 'Dödligt våld', 121; Lerbom, 'Våldets regionala realiteter', 278–282. Not only were there honour killings, but a number of other conflicts were sparked by personal dishonour, see Österberg, 'Våld och våldsmentalitet', 23–24.
83 Liliequist, 'Violence', 187–190.
84 Jansson, 'Våld som aggression', 448–451.
85 RA, MGDLG E1618, Skrivelser till MG De la Gardie, Studerande, rättssökande och fångar, Nils Andersson to MG De la Gardie, 30 Apr. 1668.
86 RA, MGDLG E1656, Sammandrag av brev och resolutioner till MG De la Gardie med resolutionspåteckningar.

Demonstrating rank

'I have dressed my people in yellow, but hope, if I get back home, to bring a new livery for everyone', Magnus Gabriel's nephew Magnus Stenbock wrote to his wife from Leipzig on 13 October 1706.[87] The context was interesting because only a few weeks before he had written about the many textiles in various colours he had bought and was going to send home to Stockholm to decorate their home. Now the turn had come to discuss how to dress their servants, some of whom he was going to recruit in Germany.[88] With their new livery, the servants would be decorative elements in the Stenbock household.

At its most straightforward, dress signalled social order. Poor or rich, servant or master, man or woman, married, widowed or unmarried: the social order was worn next to the skin and communicated clearly. To maintain this system, people were discouraged from dressing above their position. Sumptuary laws designed to prevent luxury consumption and reinforce social hierarchies existed in Sweden throughout the early modern period as in many other European countries. As Astrid Pajur has shown, local sumptuary laws in then Swedish Tallinn (Reval) were aimed specifically at distinguishing between categories of servants. Maidservants were thought especially prone to dressing above their station.[89] Even if those in power in the early modern period worked to prevent people from lower social classes from imitating those more fortunate, the existence of sumptuary laws also indicated it was difficult to maintain order. Despite these efforts to regulate, Ulinka Rublack has argued that early modern clothing was a visual tool that allowed for more individuality than has been acknowledged. By studying individuals' emotional relationships with clothing, she shows early modern women and men increasingly articulated their identity through dress—not only to cover the body, but also to make statements. By doing so an individual could enhance their individuality, but at the same time show their affinity with what Rublack calls 'taste communities'.[90]

Dress could be used to display a desire for social mobility or to be seen as part of a certain community—hence Rublack argues that German peasants developed their individuality through the second-hand market, but since this was not thought proper by the authorities, measures were taken to diminish the opportunities for such potential transgressions.[91] Astrid Pajur has claimed that the reason maidservants and *ammor* (wet nurses) were paid most or all of their wages in clothes, was to give them less choice in how to dress

87 Stenbock, *Magnus Stenbock*, 102. 'Mitt folk har jag klätt gula, män hoppas om jag kommer hem att föra nytt liberie för altt vårt folk medh mig.'
88 Stenbock, *Magnus Stenbock*, 99–102.
89 Pajur, *Dress Matters*, 79.
90 Rublack, 'Befeathering the European', 24.
91 Rublack, *Dressing Up*; see also Pointon, *Strategies*, 33.

themselves.[92] This can explain why, as seen in an earlier example, the lower servants of the De la Gardies received only a little cash and sometimes none as payment for their services. Karin Sennefelt has shown that it was not necessarily only those in power that acted to restrain the habit of displaying individuality—ordinary people were also on the lookout for those who wore overly elaborate marks on their clothes. Yet a similar yearning to display individuality within the constraints of society seems to have existed in early modern Stockholm just as in Germany.[93] There were concerns that the difference between master and servant had become indistinct, an argument seen in several parts of Europe, Sweden included.[94]

Some servants played a role in the aristocracy's interest in fashion, whether they wanted to or not. Those who wore elaborate liveries displayed the grandeur of their master rather than their own individuality. A livery—usually worn by pages, lackeys, and postilions—was a visual symbol of service. For this group of servants, clothing therefore had a specific meaning and played a role as representing the employer and their family. Chandra Mukerji suggests that when 'we fashion, use, view, trade, and move material objects, we communicate'.[95] Clothing can thus be seen as a language of a kind.[96] Servants knew their place and everyone knew it was expressed in their dress, a constant reminder of a social, gendered hierarchy.[97] Those who wore a livery—often an elaborate outfit in bright colours—stood out in the sense that they displayed their belonging to an aristocratic household, rather than their original social class. A livery can thus be said to have articulated somebody else's identity rather than the servant's own, or, in the words of Cissie Fairchilds, as 'living status symbols, as representatives of the wealth and might of their households in the eyes of society at large'.[98] Because of the reciprocal relationship between body and dress, liveried servants were the embodiment of 'servant' or 'subordinate'. Servants were not only there to serve, but also to display the wealth and power of the household. Ancien régime servants, as Sarah Maza has pointed out, were chosen, trained, and dressed to show off a wealthy household in public.[99] Sometimes the outfit came first and servants were chosen to fit existing liveries.[100] This, combined with their

92 Pajur, *Dress Matters*, 79.
93 Sennefelt, 'Discerning Eye', 184–186.
94 Richardson, *Household servants*, 104–105; Cousin, *Hwszdräng*; see also Pajur, *Dress Matters*, 79–81.
95 Mukerji, 'Landscape garden', 550.
96 Roche, *Culture of Clothing*, 43; see also Pointon, *Strategies*, 7 who considers paintings as language.
97 For the ideological and practical importance of appearance, see Sennefelt, 'Discerning Eye', 179–195, 179–180.
98 Fairchilds, *Domestic Enemies*, 32.
99 Maza, *Servants and Masters*, 199.
100 Fairchilds, *Domestic Enemies*, 31.

anonymity—having to give up using their own names, for example—reduced servants to sandwich boards, their livery being the message.[101]

A livery depersonalized the servant, but at the same time also added social value because of the richness of the fabrics and details.[102] Wearing a livery included—apart from the dress itself—socks, gloves, a hat and a sword belt. A livery also had buttons, lace, and ribbons of various colours. The account books from Magnus Gabriel De la Gardie's household expenses chart the cost of liveries, including whalebone, silk, woollen cloth in various colours, and white buttons. In July 1664 seven rapiers were bought for the *pager* (pages) to wear as part of their liveries. Those who were paid to make liveries were the tailor, a lace maker, a fringe maker, a button maker, and a hat maker.[103] De la Gardie lackeys, pages, and postilions had liveries trimmed in red, white, black, and 'aurore'.[104] Such details were, with Daniel Roche's words, distinctive marks of rank and wealth and 'bolstered competing aristocratic vanities'.[105] Such competition could catch the attention of authorities so that in Reval in Swedish Estonia the town council in 1706 found it necessary to introduce penalties for aristocrats whose servants dressed above their position.[106]

Lackeys, pages, and postilions were among the more public aristocratic servants, with lackeys often moving around delivering messages, running errands, or accompanying members of the aristocratic family. The fact that lackeys, pages, and postilions had a relatively higher proportion of their wages as clothes and footwear may have had to do with a higher importance of appearance in this specific group of servants.[107] They were also treated differently in other ways, as instructions for Axel Julius De la Gardie's household suggests. In draft orders for his chief steward, Axel Julius said he had to keep an eye on the lackeys and stable boys, and if any of them were caught out at night their wages should be docked; in another set of orders the steward was instructed to take them to the stables and whip them for being out at night. The steward was also told to see to it that lackeys were always on hand to support the count at home or to follow him out. As for the freedom to express their individuality or their community belonging through their clothing, it seems it was limited to their linen (underwear) and shoes, which they had to buy themselves and were told to always keep clean. They were given their liveries, but were responsible for keeping them clean and tidy too.[108]

101 Fairchilds, *Domestic Enemies*, 102–103.
102 Roche, *The Culture of Clothing*, 99–100.
103 LUB, DLG Släkt, vol. 113, Journal för hovboken 1664; LUB, DLG Släkt, vol. 117, Journal för hovboken 1666.
104 LUB, DLG Släkt, vol. 113, Journal för hovboken 1664.
105 Roche, *Culture of Clothing*, 99–100.
106 Pajur, *Dress Matters*, 204.
107 LUB, DLG Släkt, vol. 11:2, Handlingar rörande Jakob Pontusson De la Gardie.
108 LUB, DLG Släkt, vol. 139:2, Ekonomiska handlingar, Instruktioner och antagningsbevis för Axel Julius De la Gardies betjening. Linen clothes most likely referred to underwear or underclothes. See also Andersson, *Från trälar till tjänstefolk*, 175.

While the livery with the marks of his master's family showed which household he belonged to, in eighteenth-century France a lackey's role was not only to symbolize his master, but also to keep him safe and to protect his name.[109] This may be the reason lackeys more than other servants were under scrutiny: by wearing livery and being often in the public eye, they were more visible than most other servants, and so were expected to be dignified and sober and to refrain from indecent behaviour.[110] Servants in French aristocratic households sometimes picked up habits by imitating their masters' behaviour, dress, and speech, to the resentment of ordinary people. Further, servants often believed themselves to be better than others, even if they came from the same social background—a haughtiness fuelled by their association with the aristocratic family they served.[111] Their visibility, according to Fairchilds, could earn them a reputation for idleness, since much of the job consisted of waiting for their master. For people watching them it cannot have seemed hard work to be a lackey.[112] It is difficult to say what reputation liveried servants had in seventeenth-century Sweden, but being at their master's or mistress's disposal was an important task, which involved them literally waiting on and for them.[113]

Of the employees who petitioned Magnus Gabriel De la Gardie, none articulated a preoccupation with keeping up appearances for their master's sake. When all the *stalldrängar* (stable lads) asked for the underwear they needed, they said that without it they could not do their work. The issue was a practical one, having to do more with remuneration and compensation than with their master's respectability: their point, after all, was that they had not been given underwear for over two years.[114] When another group of men working in the stables asked for clothes, not having had any new ones for more than three years, the issue again was a practical one, although it cannot be ruled out that it may also have tarnished their master's reputation. They went nearly naked in torn clothes, they wrote, and in winter they could not keep warm enough to work.[115]

109 Fairchilds, *Domestic Enemies*, 34–35.
110 LUB, DLG Släkt, vol. 139:2, Ekonomiska handlingar, Instruktioner och antagningsbevis för Axel Julius De la Gardies betjening.
111 Fairchilds, *Domestic Enemies*, 45.
112 Fairchilds, *Domestic Enemies*, 24, 34.
113 For household servants' instructions that spelled out that a lackey always had to be at his master's or mistress's disposal, see LUB, DLG Släkt, vol. 139:2, Ekonomiska handlingar, Instruktioner och antagningsbevis för Axel Julius De la Gardies betjening.
114 RA, MGDLG E1641, all stable lads to MG De la Gardie, n.d.
115 RA, MGDLG E1642, six employees in the stables to MG De la Gardie, n.d.

Asserting rights

An important feature of early modern Swedish society was the practice of asserting one's rights. As Maria Ågren argues, this was particularly true of landownership, but it was also a culturally significant practice that could be transferred to other areas of society.[116] While the servants of the aristocracy were generally in the hands of their masters, who had far-reaching rights when it came to punishment and the like, servants still had some rights and could use the legal system to their advantage. To do this they needed to know how the legal system worked and which boundaries to push. A curious court case involving another aristocratic family's former lackey presents us with the conditions of early modern employment and the opportunities for otherwise disadvantaged servants to challenge their more powerful masters in court.

On 14 February 1706, the Lower City Court in Stockholm officially summoned Countess Magdalena Stenbock to appear over an outstanding payment of wages allegedly owed to her former lackey Daniel Feldt. The court found no other option than to command she be present at a hearing following a suit filed by Feldt for the 44 rdr km he said she owed him. The case soon escalated from legitimate concerns about withholding of pay to theft, coercion of witnesses, and character assassination. It transpired that all the parties involved were skilled at navigating the system, capitalizing on their position to assert what they believed were their rights—in an indication of the limits of action in an aristocratic workplace, the means of protest available to servants and masters, and above all the necessity of knowing how to assert one's rights in an aristocratic household in the face of its rules and regulations, discipline, and violence.

The lackey Daniel Feldt seems to have taken the usual steps to assert his rights as an employee. Having been hired in the autumn of 1704, he had been dismissed in the spring of 1705, before the agreed year was up. He thus wrote a petition, which survives, in which he asked to be paid his outstanding salary for the months up to Michaelmas 1705, when his contract expired. The letter showed all the recognizable features of humble submission, with Feldt expressing his gratitude for the opportunity to serve in the Stenbock household and hoping his service had been appreciated. He also mentioned in passing that he had been the victim of malicious slander.[117]

It was a far from ordinary case, however. Countess Stenbock was not at all pleased with Feldt's service. Having been married to Bengt Oxenstierna, one of Sweden's most prominent politicians of the time, the widowed countess was considered an influential political actor in her own right. Her response to Feldt's request was to dismiss it out of hand, and he later stated that she had

116 Ågren, *Att hävda sin rätt*, 101, 179, 191–192.
117 LUB, DLG Släkt, Oxenstierna vol. 36, Daniel Feldt to Magdalena Stenbock.

disgracefully rejected his petition. Despite her leading position in society, Feldt, who was now employed as a sexton at Stockholm Cathedral, took her to court for the money he was owed.

In her response to the accusations, the countess stated that Feldt had been treated like any other lackey. When he first joined her service he was given 36 rdr kmt and a brand new black livery. She soon realized that Feldt was neglecting his duties, and she felt obliged to warn him she might sack him and take back the livery. According to the countess, Feldt asked for forgiveness and promised to do better, and since others had spoken in his favour, she gave him a second chance. Not only did he continue to neglect his duties, he also ended up in fights with his fellow lackeys and was caught swearing and cursing. He was disobedient and refused to show the respect due to his superiors from a servant in his position. To back her case, Stenbock called on the family's chaplain, who could testify to Feldt's flawed character, having once had to intervene in a violent quarrel at the Rosersberg estate outside Stockholm in which Feldt was involved. Armed with these arguments and eyewitness accounts, the countess felt secure in claiming her former lackey had no right to money or to the livery that he had unlawfully taken with him on his departure.[118]

Although Feldt produced two signed witness statements at the trial, the ruling of the court was not a surprise. In April 1706 it found Feldt's bad behaviour was sufficient grounds for his dismissal, which effectively denied him his request. However, with regard to the livery, the court concluded that since Countess Stenbock had not demanded it back until Feldt had taken her to court, he had the right to keep it.[119] This was possibly a way to placate both parties, but it may also be viewed as an expression of the importance of asserting one's rights—a judicial culture which accentuated the plaintiff's obligation to communicate their demands in a timely manner.[120] This culture likely influenced servants too, who evidently made sure to claim their pay by petitioning their masters and mistresses. Feldt's insistence on the fact he had petitioned the countess before taking her to court was entirely consistent with this.

One curious detail was those two supporting statements. Although the court did not mention them in its decision, the supposed eyewitnesses seemed later to claim they had never signed the documents. Whether Feldt had forged them or the witnesses were forced to retract we will never know. Either way, the Feldt case illustrates a possible course of action for servants in aristocratic households—reciprocal expectations, potential causes of conflict, and legal rights. It raises questions about the rules and regulations in aristocratic

118 LUB, DLG Släkt, Oxenstierna vol. 36.
119 LUB, DLG Släkt, Oxenstierna vol. 36.
120 Ågren, *Att hävda sin rätt*.

households and specifically about the employment contracts which bound masters and servants, always with a certain degree of contractual reciprocity. It also begs the question of the role of materiality and objects in relation to servants' strategies of protest and resistance, whether consciously orchestrated or haphazard, driven by dire circumstances or a standard strategy.

The materialization of hierarchies in aristocratic households brings the question of resistance to the fore. Social history has a tradition of drawing attention to the role of social crime—poaching, smuggling, workplace pilfering—as an expression of protest, suggesting that they may even have been considered partly legitimate.[121] Did aristocratic household servants comply, subordinating themselves to the existing hierarchy? What scope did they have for resistance? How could they direct their dissatisfaction and to whom? There are no simple answers, just as everyday opposition to mistreatment and injustice is unlikely to be available to us, but there are sources that provide a glimpse into mundane conflict, where servants asserted their rights, navigated a feudal economy, and monitored what they believed was owed them.

In disputes over landownership in early modern Sweden, writes Maria Ågren, a failure to assert one's rights was to waive them, underscoring the importance of individual action and knowledge in a practice where the entrenched notion was that silence implied consent.[122] In the example of Feldt and Countess Stenbock, the court's ruling on the livery Feldt was accused of stealing implied the countess had made a mistake by not asserting her rights to the livery immediately. Feldt could thus keep it since it was only after the countess received the summons that she put in her claim. Servants' petitions to the heads of aristocratic households should also be viewed in the light of this judicial practice: they asserted their rights, claiming what they believed was rightfully owed them. Feldt, after all, referred to his petitions to show that he had rightly articulated his claim in writing, before going to court. It is hard to overestimate the role of the written petition as an integral part of the running of an aristocratic household, but also as a site of interaction between servant and master. In terms of protest and resistance, it was perhaps the only legitimate way of presenting demands, highlighting injustice, and making one's voice heard.

Judging by the petitions to Magnus Gabriel De la Gardie, workplace conflicts were a common reason his servants approached him—often to report injustices done to them by others in the organization, for example bailiffs or overseers responsible for day-to-day business. He seems to have served as a final arbiter, being thought generally impartial, or at least someone whom the

121 McMullan, 'Crime, law and order', 252–274; Langbein, 'Albion's fatal flaws', 96–120; Brewer & Styles, *Ungovernable People*; Thompson, *Whigs and Hunters*.

122 Ågren, *Att hävda sin rätt*, 101, 179, 191–192.

servants felt confident to turn to when they had been mistreated. A couple of examples concerned people who had crossed the bailiff Sven Höök, who seemingly moved between different positions in the De la Gardie organization. Found guilty of embezzlement when serving as an estate manager at Höjentorp, his fate might seem to have been sealed when his property was confiscated and he was imprisoned in Läckö Castle in 1662.[123] However, letters from people who had later come into contact with him suggest otherwise. In one petition, Karin Bengtsdotter, explained that she and her late husband had received hardly any wages after working for Höök for years at Hushagen on the Höjentorp estate and abroad in Denmark (they had followed Höök on a military operation there). Now destitute, Karin appealed to Magnus Gabriel to help her and her small children and to compensate them for her husband's lost income.[124] Her case showed the complicated organizational relations in an aristocratic household, where bailiffs, although they were not masters, still had their own subordinates. For Karin and her husband, Höök was ostensibly their immediate superior to whom they owed their loyalty. Magnus Gabriel, however, was the superior of Höök and all the rest, so employees of all ranks took their complaints straight to him as the final instance. Other petitions detailing Höök's misdeeds reached the count. After his imprisonment, Höök had apparently struck deals regarding the taxation rights for a farm, but the occupants protested in 1669: they had concluded that Höök, having been sacked as bailiff, was now their equal, and so they neither could nor should put up with his demands, but as they said in their petition to Magnus Gabriel, they were afraid they needed protection from Höök even so.[125]

It was even more apparent that petitions could be vehicles of protest considering the ordinary business they were used to negotiate. Material objects—clothing, skins and furs, cloth, and shoes—were a recurring issue for De la Gardie servants, thanks in no small part to lower servants' and workers' wages being primarily paid in kind rather than cash. Wage arrangements were not necessarily transparent and we cannot know for certain how material objects were valued, but what we do know is that negotiations about their worth, and protests about delayed payments in kind and a lack of clothing and shoes, were common.

Individual protests, such as one delivered by the cook Petter Andersson, say much about servants' willingness to dispute their master's decisions. Having been given four small roebuck skins which De la Gardie's office claimed to be worth 40 rdr, instead of a cash salary, Andersson assertively

123 Hahr, 'Magnus Gabriel De la Gardie', 161–162.

124 RA, MGDLG E1622, Karin Bengtsdotter to MG De la Gardie, n.d.

125 RA, MGDLG E1642, Jon Andersson and Erik Månsson to MG De la Gardie, n.d. but endorsed 28 Feb. 1669. For Swen Höök and this purchase, see Wienberg, 'Karriärer' 2021, 7, 43, 96–97.

pointed out that they could be valued at no more than 7 rdr and that he had thus not been paid what was owed.[126] Other petitioners indicated they had missed the opportunity to receive clothes and were worried about their ability to do their work. One such example was the brickmaker Marcus Marcusson, who had not been present when clothes were distributed to his peers. He wrote to the count to ensure that he could continue to work and let him know there were people who could testify to his diligence. His absence that day would have left him at a serious disadvantage, as the lack of clothing might tell of his absence from work. The petition thus functioned as a way of reassuring the count of his loyalty.

Among the petitions to Magnus Gabriel De la Gardie there were several from three or more people. Some were signed; others were anonymous but defined the group—'all lackeys', for example, or 'all stable boys'. Taking collective action to ensure certain rights seems to have been a way of organizing resistance towards perceived injustice or malpractice, frequently perpetrated by the local managers. Some were about them being paid late for work they had already done, others about their ability to work being compromised by a lack of the correct clothing, shoes, or equipment. An unsigned letter from 'all stable boys' concluded they needed underwear to wear under their livery coats if they were to be able to perform their duties.[127] Another group of six men working in the stable made a similar request, pointing out that their colleagues had been given clothing a couple of days before. They assumed, they said, that the count wanted them to enjoy the same rights as the others.[128]

Wage arrangements and the intricate interdependencies in the workplace had an impact on servants, who were caught between the demands of different parties. An undated petition from 'the lackeys' announced they had not received the expected money for their lodging and body linen.[129] Unable to buy these things themselves, they wrote to protest at their treatment by their lodging-house keepers, who had reprimanded them and issued shameful commands. It seems that while the count covered their lodging and clothing, the lackeys were still responsible for making the actual payments to the lodging-house keepers, and thus were forced to bear the consequences of their master's failure to pay what he had promised. They used their petition to protest at their circumstances and the injustice of the demands, to detail their predicament, and to draw attention to the malpractice. Whether they were happy with the response is more difficult to say.

Servants' petitions show how food, clothing, cloth, skins and furs, and shoes were everyday concerns and an important factor when protesting about

126 RA, MGDLG E1641, Petter Andersson to MG De la Gardie, n.d.
127 RA, MGDLG E1641, all stable lads to MG De la Gardie, n.d.
128 RA, MGDLG E1642, Erick Pålack, Joen Smedreng, Per Olsson, Johan Andersson, Anders Ersson, Joen Lunde/Lunne (Mattias Värnegarn) to MG De la Gardie, n.d.
129 RA, MGDLG E1641, all lackeys to MG De la Gardie, n.d.

the workplace. The responsibility for providing employees with the proper clothing seems to have fallen to the De la Gardies' managers, bailiffs, and estate managers, and any failures were reported by the workers to the count himself. The use of petitions to regulate protest thus seems to have produced subordinates who kept track of what was owed them, and who were willing to complain about their superiors when they failed to live up to their responsibilities to pay wages in cash and kind alike. What consequences the petitioners may have had to face is unknown, though it seems reasonable to assume it was an uncontroversial, established practice, similar to other forms of petitioning in the early modern state.

Knowing their place

In viewing the estate organization of the De la Gardie sphere as a knowledge community, we concentrate on the contemporary attempts to organize the use of information and knowledge, and with it the enthusiasm for incorporating such information into the everyday business of the aristocratic administration—an ambition pursued by the De la Gardies and their administrators in, for example, detailed instructions. We would argue that such ambitions had consequences for employees because of the greater demands placed on them, and because the system as such fostered servants who had to learn how to navigate it, most tangibly in the petitions used by servants to negotiate their worth, rights, and advantages in the De la Gardie sphere. We have taken the knowledge community argument a step further by incorporating the importance of learning and socialization into the workplace. A patriarchal ideology and the legal jurisdiction of the aristocracy, and its infringements, must be borne in mind when considering the material manifestations of the hierarchical relationship at the heart of this community. Knowledge was neither gathered nor circulated in a vacuum, but shaped by the material conditions, relations, and violence of the workplace. Employees were presumably taught to know their place, yet not everyone lived as they learnt.

Servants employed in the De la Gardie sphere were part of a structure that was upheld by judicial, religious, and local regulations and practices. The examples of protest and resistance show us how their masters and managers handled disciplinary problems. Those who failed to do their job properly may have been sacked, but they were not necessarily removed from the workplace. A shoemaker could go back to being a shoemaker if he was a poor menagerie keeper. Some employees even seem to have been redeployed despite committing grave offences. Resistance in the form of insubordination was punished more harshly. Delays, arrogance, or a failure to comply might well result in being sentenced to up to a fortnight in the count's prison. Refusing to work was considered a serious offence and resulted in time in the dungeon on bread and water and even torture. Law enforcement officers were brought

in to track down runaway servants, and if caught they were returned to their masters for punishment.

How salaries were paid—the proportion of cash and kind—further emphasized the hierarchical relationships in a material manifestation of the social order in the workplace. By giving low-ranking servants the vast proportion or all of their wages in kind was a way of limiting their personal freedom that higher-ranking employees escaped because they were paid in cash. This too may be interpreted as a way of controlling and disciplining subordinates into complying with the roles assigned to them, preventing them from using clothes or other material items to rise above their positions. Withholding payments of clothing or food was an injustice, yes, but also a powerful tool in the hands of a chief steward, whose actions could shame servants, make them ill, or obstruct their work.

Material objects played a prominent role in marking the servants' place in the work organization and wider society. It was especially evident in the case of lackeys and postilions, whose expensively decorated liveries turned them into living symbols of service rather than individuals. At the same time they were also part of an aristocratic servant community who publicly displayed the wealth, power, and social position of their master or mistress.

Servants did not always know their place, though, not in the way the estate organization hoped. Servants' petitions were an accepted way to protest against injustices by their superiors or to assert their rights. There were also protests that were considered illegitimate, such as delaying, refusing, or absconding from work. The exact reasons must have varied from individual to individual, but may also reveal either a lack of knowledge about the accepted rules or an unwillingness to follow them.

Someone who seems to have combined a reluctance to follow the rules with skill in orientating himself in informal and formal systems of power was the former lackey Daniel Feldt. What his example tells us is that he knew the steps to be taken to be compensated for his work. He took his livery with him when he was sacked, showing he knew the value of such an expensive and symbolically charged item. He then began the process of negotiation by petitioning his former employer twice, and when that proved futile he took the case to court, demonstrating his knowledge of both the petition system and the formal judicial system. The showdown between the countess and the lackey was a battle for prestige between superior and subordinate in which the livery had great significance for both parties. Worn out of context a livery would be a parody, ridiculing the aristocrat whose symbol of power it was. And of course, possession being nine-tenths of the law, the scales of justice and the balance of power alike could occasionally come down on the side of the servant.

5

FOR FUTURE BETTERMENT

Learning, expertise, and the art of planning

On 14 May 1672, while he was staying at Karlberg, his country retreat on the outskirts of Stockholm, Magnus Gabriel was presented with two written petitions. One was from the *silverkammarpojke* (silver butler's boy) Christian Hansson, who had an idea he said would benefit him and his master. He asked Magnus Gabriel to pay for him to train as a *sockerbagare* (pastry cook), as it would not cost much, it was a good way to make a living, and he would be Magnus Gabriel's loyal and diligent pastry cook for all eternity.[1] Christian's request went down well with his master, who signed off on the decision with a firm 'aff:'.

Though Christian's conduct was not mentioned in the decision, we can only assume that the favourable response meant he had done something to earn Magnus Gabriel's favour. The petition shows how a servant might think about the future, and how Christian imagined that the relationship between himself and Magnus Gabriel De la Gardie might work to his advantage. It was one thing for a servant to ask for help with essentials such as his wages or help in a crisis, but here Christian was asking for a chance to move from his current position to another, creating a cost for the count he was not obliged to meet. Christian asked the count to invest in him with the prospect of a better future for Christian, but the long-term plan also benefited the count who, as Christian promised, would have a loyal pastry cook.

Whether becoming a pastry cook and asking his master to pay for his training was something he had come up with himself, we do not know. What was remarkable was that the decision book, which was presented to Magnus Gabriel as the basis for his decision, gave more details about Christian than

1 RA, MGDLG E1641, Christian [Hansson] to MG De la Gardie, n.d.

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Christian had revealed in his petition. Someone apparently knew he was already in training and had shown he could 'to some extent' fold napkins—things that Christian failed to mention but which likely spoke in his favour. The point that it would not be expensive to pay for Christian's training was repeated in the decision book, adding that what might be lacking he could be taught by Petter the table-decker.[2] It seems someone in the household made an effort to speak on the lad's behalf.

Crucially, Christian saw training in the De la Gardie sphere as a route to a better future. It was not long before he was offered the chance to accompany Per Sparre—Magnus Gabriel's brother-in-law—to France in 1674 to be the Swedish king's ambassador to the court of Louis XIV. Christian was the table-decker for the trip and when Countess Palatine Maria Euphrosyne many years later wrote a letter of recommendation for him, she claimed she and her husband had trained him at the French court and several other foreign courts. He was someone the De la Gardies chose to invest in.

The 1672 petition may have been Christian's first, but it would not be his last. Like many of his fellow servants, he knew how the petitioning system worked and he used it several times to better his position. On his return to Sweden after his travels in Europe, he petitioned for a position in Magnus Gabriel and Maria Euphrosyne's household and was immediately accepted, replacing the existing table-decker.[3] In another petition, he asked for the right to run the inn in Lidköping, the town Magnus Gabriel had founded in the county of Läckö and where Christian's parents lived.[4] On that occasion it seems he was turned down. In yet another petition he, like many of his fellow servants, complained about not having received his wages and that his clothes were tattered.[5]

Magnus Gabriel and Maria Euphrosyne employed Christian Hansson until Magnus Gabriel's death in the spring of 1686. When Maria Euphrosyne then had to disband much of her household she did what she could for Christian by recommending him to the court of the queen dowager. She praised him as sober, faithful, steadfast, and skilful, but seemingly in vain, as there was no further record of him after 1686.[6] Nevertheless, the case of Christian Hansson indicates how training and recruitment might have worked in the De la Gardie sphere. Like many other servants, he came from

2 RA, MGDLG E1658, Sammandrag av brev och resolutioner till MG De la Gardie med resolutionspåteckningar: 'till en deehl'.

3 RA, MGDLG E1655, Sammandrag av brev och resolutioner till MG De la Gardie med resolutionspåteckningar.

4 RA, MGDLG E1641, Christian [Hansson] to MG De la Gardie, n.d.

5 RA, MGDLG E1658, Sammandrag av brev och resolutioner till MG De la Gardie med resolutionspåteckningar.

6 LUB, DLG, vol. 100, Handlingar rörande Maria Euphrosyne De la Gardie, koncept 13 July 1686: 'nykter, trogen, oförtruten, skicklig'.

the county of Läckö—his parents were in Lidköping—and, again like many others, he saw his master as a possible sponsor of his education. He was obviously correct in his assumption.

The way in which the education of the young Börje Månsson was planned to meet the needs of the De la Gardie family shows how such an educational process could work. In 1642, when Magnus Gabriel was in Holland on his grand tour of Europe, he was approached by Börje Månsson, who had been sent by Magnus Gabriel's father Jacob. In a letter of recommendation, Jacob De la Gardie stated that Börje's late father had been a faithful servant to him for many years and that, at the request of Börje's family, Jacob had decided to take charge of the young man's education. What Jacob asked Magnus Gabriel to do was to take care of Börje and help him to 'learn and practise'. In the first instance, Jacob suggested that Börje be given a position in the prince's guard, but if that was not possible, Magnus Gabriel would have to decide for himself what was appropriate. Once Magnus Gabriel had travelled from Holland to France, he would send for Börje and also work there to promote Börje's development. It is not clear exactly what kind of training Börje was to receive, except that it was specifically stated that he was to learn French, but otherwise just generally practise and learn things. The point, according to Jacob, was that this would make Börje employable and useful to the family. 'I have no doubt that he will behave in such a way that in time he will be useful to you', Jacob De la Gardie concludes his letter.[7] Unfortunately, we do not know exactly how Börje would be useful and why he needed to know French. Most of the correspondence in and out of the De la Gardie sphere was in Swedish or German, very little in French, and German speakers dominated among the foreign staff. In the De la Gardie sphere there were several types of learning relationships. It seems the female members of the De la Gardie family—Ebba Brahe, her daughter Maria Sofia De la Gardie, her daughters-in-law—were expected to have a hand in the training of younger servants. Instructions and correspondence indicate they were supposed to teach the staff the household routines, monitor their work, and correct wrongdoing.[8] Then there were masters, journeymen, and apprentices, or the head cooks, master bakers, head gardeners, master tailors, master farriers, master masons, master carpenters, master painters and master barber-surgeons—all with journeymen and some also with apprentices—who were part of a training relationship. The foreign experts brought in to build and decorate De la Gardie houses had their own

7 RA, MGDLG E1382, Jacob De la Gardie to Magnus Gabriel De la Gardie, Stockholm 31 March 1642.

8 For instructions and decisions by Ebba Brahe, her daughter, and daughters-in-law, see LUB, DLG, Topographica, Ekholmen, vol. 1–5 (Ebba Brahe); LUB, DLG Släkt, Oxenstierna, vol. 1 (Maria Sofia De la Gardie); LUB, DLG Släkt, vol. 123:1 & 155 (Sofia Juliana Forbus); LUB, DLG, Topographica, Venngarn, vol. 1b and Höjentorp, vol. 1 (Countess Palatine Maria Euphrosyne); see also, Erici, *Speculum Domesticum*; Brahe, *Oeconomia*, 8.

journeymen, some whom they brought with them while others they recruited in Sweden.[9] In the absence of masters or journeymen, it was still possible for individuals to take on apprentices, as was the case among administrators, musicians, and staff such as hunters and fowlers.[10]

The Swedish aristocracy had the right to employ craftsmen, but this privilege was continually contested by the guilds. A master craftsman who took a job with a noble family had to leave his guild—though he kept the right to re-enter it later—and lost his right to keep journeymen or apprentices.[11] And yet many of the men who were titled masters in De la Gardie employ had their own journeymen and apprentices. The precise nature of the relationship between masters, journeymen, and apprentices in aristocratic spheres and guilds remains unclear. One example of how the De la Gardie organization deviated from the guild system was that of Per Bengtsson. Per, who in an undated petition called himself a *trädgårdsmästargesäll* (journeyman gardener), had once been Countess Palatine Maria Euphrosyne's head gardener, but after three years someone else replaced him. He was later rehired as a 'journeyman' and given assurances he would be offered a new post of 'master' at the first opportunity. When the moment came, Per petitioned his superiors to remind them of their promise.[12] In this case the titles of master and journeyman were not necessarily related to degrees of proven expertise, but rather were job titles indicating their place in the hierarchy of gardeners.

It is rarely possible to say in individual cases whether a request for training or education was approved. The financial sources indicate that at any given moment a number of boys were listed as receiving training in Magnus Gabriel's household. One of those mentioned in 1672, the year Christian asked for help upskilling, was a kitchen boy called Pelle Båtspik. Much like Christian, Pelle made a career within the estate organization, having progressed from being a kitchen boy in 1670 to *riddarkock* (personal cook) in 1677. It also appears he had multiple qualifications, for at one stage he asked for his back pay so he could bury his mother, and as well as being in training as cook he was said to be a butcher.[13] Another example of a boy in training was Bengt, who worked in De la Gardie's buttery. In his petition, he said he had had heard that one Hans was about to leave his position in the administration to become a lackey, and Bengt hoped he might replace him,

9 For example, RA, MGDLG E1660, Hovstatsräkenskaper, listed a master carpenter Hans from Danzig with his two journeymen Börje and Erich and a 'poike i lähran' (lit. boy learning) in 1662.

10 RA, MGDLG E1660, Hovstatsräkenskaper.

11 Lindberg, *Hantverk och skråväsen*, 212–215.

12 RA, MGDLG E1642, Per Bengtsson to Magnus Gabriel De la Gardie, n.d.

13 RA, MGDLG E1655, Sammandrag av brev och resolutioner till MG De la Gardie med resolutionspåteckningar.

claiming that he wished to develop and improve his writing skills.[14] Evidently, Bengt saw a job in the administration as a job progression—one that could equip him for higher positions. Similar examples included the fowler's apprentice Reinhålt Ersson; Anders and Johan who received kitchen training; Lamacque, training to become a horse-trainer; Arvid, training to be a *konduktör* (foreman) at a castle; and the former clerk and lackey, Hans Hansson Falck, who was training to be a *jägare* (huntsman).[15] In 1680, there were two anonymous apprentices in the counting house and a third among the musicians.[16] In the 1660s some of the staff needed to practise their riding skills and for unclear reasons were sent to Uppsala to stay with the stablemaster there.[17]

A striking feature of financial sources from the 1650s and to the 1680s was the large number of *pojkar* (boys) and *drängar* (lads) in the De la Gardie sphere. In 1663, 30 (30 per cent) of the 99 people in Magnus Gabriel and Maria Euphrosyne's household were listed as boys. In 1672, 34 (18 per cent) of the total 188 people entitled to eat at the De la Gardie court were boys or lads, and 8 years later the numbers were 25 out of 136 (again 18 per cent).[18] Boys and lads thus outnumbered women. The meaning of the terms needs careful consideration, because *pojke* described not only a male child, but could also be the job title of a teenage boy in vocational training. Sometimes lad was used synonymously with boy, sometimes it marked a difference with the lad being in training and the boy not.[19] For example, in 1680 there were two *kökspojkar* (kitchen boys) and one *köksdräng* (under-cook, lit. kitchen lad), all three with the same salary and none of them mentioned by name. In the same year there were two *stallpojkar* (stable boys) and two *stalldrängar* (stable lads), again unnamed, but the lads earned 50 rdr per annum and boys only 30 rdr.[20] Sometimes, though, the difference was in age, lads being older than boys. That there was a distinction, whatever the kind, was confirmed by the administrator who compiled the list of employees for 1681, who first noted the manciple would have a *dräng* to help him but then corrected it to *pojke*.[21] To complicate matters further, there were occasional references to *lärpojke* (lit. boy apprentice) and *lärdräng* (lit. lad apprentice), which specifically state the person was in training. Since neither Christian Hansson nor several others clearly in training were called *lärpojke*, it is possible there was

14 RA, MGDLG E1641, Bengt (Silverkammarpojke) to Magnus Gabriel De la Gardie, n.d.; see also RA, MGDLG E1641 for petitions from Anders Larsson and Joen Person.
15 RA, MGDLG E1660, Hovstatsräkenskaper.
16 RA, MGDLG E1660, Hovstatsräkenskaper.
17 RA, MGDLG E1660, Hovstatsräkenskaper.
18 RA, MGDLG E1660, Hovstatsräkenskaper.
19 The word *dräng* survives in the Scots dreng or dring, meaning a poor or lowly man.
20 RA, MGDLG E1660, Hovstatsräkenskaper.
21 RA, MGDLG E1660, Hovstatsräkenskaper, Projekt för 1681 års hovstat.

no difference between *pojke* and *lärpojke* or *dräng* and *lärdräng*, and they all were receiving vocational training.[22]

A great many children and adolescents were in service in the De la Gardie sphere, assisting senior, experienced servants. They were assigned to a specific person, and they ate the same food and sat at the same table as the person they were assigned to. It is well known that children worked as domestic servants in the early modern period. In his seminal work on the history of childhood, Philippe Ariès highlights the medieval custom of sending children to work in other households as a form of apprenticeship. The practice provided children of all social classes with an education and continued into the early modern period.[23] Besides ordinary servants, aristocratic households in Europe often had pages, and so did the De la Gardies. Pages worked closely with the aristocratic families, occupying a position similar to that of domestic servants and carrying out household tasks. Unlike most servants, though, they were from elite families, often the lower nobility. They had their own tutors, but in no household was it said how much time they spent being schooled or what that schooling might have been. Apart from what passed for a formal education with a tutor, all pages were in aristocratic households to watch, learn, and gain experience—and, since they wore a livery, to represent the family they were working for.[24]

According to *Hwszdräng*, lower-class servants had much to gain from being in service. Much to learn too, of course, according to the author of the handbook, but nevertheless it could be an escape from crude, provincial behaviour, and the servant might even become wise and kind.[25] Fairchilds suggests that being a servant in early modern France was a first job for boys as young as 12 or 13 and girls between 12 and 15.[26] It is likely the boys in the De la Gardie household were young teenagers, since that was also the age when apprentices were admitted to a guild.[27] For many it was simply part of being a child or young adult.[28] Jenny Dyer has pointed out that even though scholars have noted the presence of large numbers of boys in service, they have been largely invisible in the historiography of domestic service.[29] In the De la Gardie estate organization, boys must have been visible, working alongside their seniors; they are definitely visible in the sources, as their

22 *Svenska Akademiens Ordbok* argues that *pojke* in the early modern period often referred to a boy in training.

23 Ariès, *Barndomens historia* 227–230; see also Sarti, 'Dangerous Liaisons', 568–569; Ben-Amos, *Adoloescence*.

24 RA, MGDLG E1660, Hovstatsräkenskaper. The payrolls in, for example, 1672 mention a 'praeceptor' for the pages.

25 Cousin, *Hwszdräng*, 34–37.

26 Fairchilds, *Domestic Enemies*, 66–67.

27 Hauffman, *Hattmakarnas låda*, 62, quoted in Sennefelt 'Young man', 314.

28 Hajnal, 'Two Kinds', 96–97.

29 Dyer, 'The Role', 632.

existence was carefully noted in account books (if not by name), in lists of who got what to eat, and, less often, in petitions and in household regulations. Boys who broke the rules were subjected to physical punishment, while senior staff got away with paying fines.[30]

In her study of English household boys in the late eighteenth century, Jenny Dyer speaks of their 'multi-tasking role', which could include 'errand running and delivering, helping in the dairy or kitchen garden'.[31] The boys and lads in the De la Gardie household were generally assigned to senior members of staff—the chief steward, the chaplain, the bookkeeper—but there were exceptions. In 1680 the two valets shared a boy and the four pages had one boy attending on them.[32] There were boys and lads in the kitchen and the stables, and the household's manciple had a boy to help him. Some like Lars Christoffersson, who had been in service at Traneberg since childhood, stayed on and moved up the hierarchy, so that when as an adult he asked to leave Traneberg he was working as a cook.[33]

Ambitious young men and hopeful parents

Christian Hansson was not alone in wishing to move on from his position in the De la Gardie sphere to something more rewarding. The manciple's assistant, Anders Larsson, son of Magnus Gabriel's huntsman, wanted to get away from his current position which he 'did not enjoy' and petitioned instead to be his father's apprentice. He had practised his shooting but wished to learn more about the profession, with a view to taking over from his father in future.[34] Similarly, Jöns Månsson, who had been admitted to the service of Mattis the *fältskär* (barber surgeon), wished to follow in his master's footsteps, and Magnus Olsson—who called himself a 'child'—hoped to be an apprentice to the newly hired clerk of the works.[35]

Others hoped for a more secure future. Arved, lackey to Magnus Gabriel and Maria Euphrosyne's dead son and presumably out of work, wondered if he might learn to be a trumpeter by being apprenticed to their trumpeter Möllerdorf.[36] Mikael Svensson was in the same position, having worked for

30 LUB, DLG Släkt, vol. 88:1, 'Bordsartiklar', Läckö 26 Sept. 1669.
31 Dyer, 'Role of Boys', 635, 638.
32 RA, MGDLG E1660, Hovstatsräkenskaper.
33 RA, MGDLG E1641, Lars Christoffersson to MG De la Gardie, n.d.
34 RA, MGDLG E1641, Anders Larsson to MG De la Gardie, n.d.: 'till vilken tjänst jag icke haver någon lust'.
35 RA, MGDLG E1658, Sammandrag av brev och resolutioner till MG De la Gardie med resolutionspåteckningar, Jöns Månsson to MG De la Gardie; RA, MGDLG E1618, Skrivelser till MG De la Gardie, Studerande, rättssökande och fångar, Magnus Olofsson to MG De la Gardie, n.d.
36 RA, MGDLG E1656, Sammandrag av brev och resolutioner till MG De la Gardie med resolutionspåteckningar, Karlberg 22 Aug. 1672.

Daniel Otter the bookkeeper. When Otter died in the early 1670s Mikael needed to find a new job and heard the count was looking to hire someone to train as his *pukslagare* (drummer).[37] Another interesting case was Esbjörn Johansson, who Magnus Gabriel had excused from military service to train as a gardener. Esbjörn later asked to continue training until he was knowledgeable enough to work for the count, adding he would 'pre-oblige' himself to work diligently for him—while mentioning in passing he would like to have the food he had been promised for his current services.[38] Aristocrats had the right to protect their employees from military service, and there were several examples of petitioners asking for De la Gardie's protection.[39] In the mid- and late seventeenth century the Swedish political elite worried that the growing number of young people who enrolled in school had done so to avoid being conscripted.[40] Whether or not Esbjörn was as keen to become a gardener as he claimed, or if he simply had found a way out of military service is impossible to say. We only have his word to go on. It is worth bearing in mind, though, that some of the aspiring young men may have had hidden motives for joining the De la Gardie sphere.

Place of birth mattered in all this. Hans Johansson the would-be trumpeter made a point of coming from Läckö and wrote in his petition that the count 'usually looked favourably on applicants from his county'.[41] Johan Andersson said the same, having been born in the county of Läckö to poor parents who had been unable to support his studies, but a royal stipend had made it possible for him attend school in Skara and then move on to Uppsala where he had studied to become a clergyman. Ever since childhood, he wrote, he had hoped that because of his place of birth he could enter the count's service.[42]

The same was true of Frantz Hansson, whose father was a master mason in the county of Läckö.[43] Frantz was a repeat petitioner who over the years tried different ways to get Magnus Gabriel's support. He first appeared in 1679–1680 as an apprentice in the count's administration. In a petition from

37 RA, MGDLG E1618, Skrivelser till MG De la Gardie, Studerande, rättssökande och fångar, Mikael Svensson to MG De la Gardie, n.d.

38 RA, MGDLG E1642, Esbjörn Johansson to MG De la Gardie, n.d.: 'preobligerar'.

39 RA, MGDLG E1642, carpenters at Höjentorp to MG De la Gardie, and the brickmaker Anders Persson to Magnus Gabriel De la Gardie. For women asking on behalf of sons or husbands, see RA, MGDLG E1622, Margareta Bengtzdotter to MG De la Gardie, n.d.; RA, MGDLG E1622, Malin Madsdotter to MG De la Gardie, n.d.

40 Edlund, *Diskussionen om begåvningsurvalet*, 162–165.

41 RA, MGDLG E1618, Skrivelser till MG De la Gardie, Studerande, rättssökande och fångar, Hans Johansson to MG De la Gardie, n.d.: 'den stora froomheet och nåd som jöres emot dess Höggreffl. Grefueskaphs så frelse som egne landboo barn'.

42 RA, MGDLG E1618, Skrivelser till MG De la Gardie, Studerande, rättssökande och fångar, Hans Johansson to MG De la Gardie, n.d.

43 The master mason 'mäster Hans' was paid at Läckö, RA, MGDLG E1660, Hovstatsräkenskaper (1662).

Stockholm in early December 1682, he said that although he had learned things that could be useful to the family—meaning the De la Gardie family—he wanted to go further and study *lantväsendet* (land economy). Only one of his superiors in the administration in Stockholm knew anything about it, he claimed, so therefore he asked to be sent to Mariestad to be taught by Björkman the *landsbokhållaren* (county comptroller) to equip him to take on new tasks in the count's service.[44] Yet only a fortnight later, on 21 December 1682, Frantz submitted another petition. His request to go to Mariestad had been denied; his new request concerned financial support. Since he had to remain in Stockholm, he would have to pay those who provided him with food and clothes, as he had run out of credit.[45] It begs the question of Frantz's real reason for going to Mariestad. Was it to learn or to get away from his creditors? In July 1683, now styling himself a *kontorsskrivare* (clerk) he again complained about his dire situation. The chief steward had rejected his request for financial support, so Frantz had turned directly to his master.[46] The last time he appeared in the De la Gardie archives was in September 1685, in a letter in which he described his desperate need of help to provide for himself and his son and what he admitted were his failings at work—he had been given the task of inventorying the archive, but he did not register the German and Livonian documents himself, which he now realized would be a problem—and which ended with him asking to be released from the count's service altogether. He concluded that he simply needed to find a job where he could earn a living.[47]

Frantz Hansson followed the standard pattern. He was a young man, perhaps a boy, when he first came into the De la Gardies' service. He had connections with their sphere through his father, who was employed by them and had had journeymen, and was thus part of the system of learning relationships in the De la Gardie sphere.[48] There was also his connection to Läckö where his father worked. Frantz was sent to Stockholm where he was educated, found himself in difficult circumstances, and, as was customary, petitioned his master. What he was offered in terms of training was not enough for him—he hoped for more—but for reasons we do not know it was denied. Like others, he had planned for a future in the De la Gardie sphere, yet his final petition had a certain bitterness to it, acknowledging he had hoped to serve Magnus Gabriel for the rest of his life, but that circumstances had

44 RA, MGDLG E1618, Skrivelser till MG De la Gardie, Studerande, rättssökande och fångar, Frantz Hansson to MG De la Gardie, 8 Dec. 1682.

45 RA, MGDLG E1618, Skrivelser till MG De la Gardie, Studerande, rättssökande och fångar, Frantz Hansson to MG De la Gardie, 8 Dec. 1682.

46 RA, MGDLG E1643, Frantz Hansson to MG De la Gardie, Stockholm 15 July 1683.

47 LUB, DLG Släkt, vol. 89:2, Brev till Magnus Gabriel De la Gardie. Frantz Hansson till MG De la Gardie 15 Sept. 1685.

48 RA, MGDLG E1660, Hovstatsräkenskaper (1662).

conspired against him. Nevertheless, he expressed his hope that Magnus Gabriel would not let him 'leave his service naked'.[49]

We do not know what role Frantz Hansson's father played in his son joining the De la Gardie administration, but there were plenty of examples of hopeful parents approaching Magnus Gabriel or other members of the family about access to various kinds of training. The brickmaker Erik Mikaelsson asked in an undated petition not only for the clothing he had been promised, but that his son could be apprenticed to one of the gardeners. Although he did not mention the gardener by name, Erik had in mind a specific gardener at the estate where he was working himself.[50]

On that occasion the petitioner was successful on both counts: Erik Mikaelsson got his clothes and his son would be the gardener's apprentice. That was not always the case, as shown by the example of Jon Swensson the *kockgesäll* (journeyman cook). The 40 dr km he was supposed to receive annually was not enough for him to 'get out or to travel'—possibly referring to the custom of the journeyman's *Wanderjahre*—and even though the head cooks could testify to his eight years of faithful service, putting food on the count's table every day, he had not been paid his salary in full. Jon was obviously disappointed that lack of money was holding him back, and he concluded he would have to continue to endure his daily work.[51]

There was no evidence of girls or women petitioning to access training or an education for themselves. Where they did play a role, whether as current or former servants in the De la Gardie sphere or as widows of De la Gardie servants, was in securing educational opportunities on behalf of sons or other male relatives. Anna Andersdotter, a housekeeper at the Main House in Stockholm, asked for Magnus Gabriel's support for her son, who wished to train as a *bildhuggare* (sculptor). She already paid for the education of two sons and explained she could not afford to pay for her youngest.[52] Whether she meant someone in the De la Gardie sphere would train her son she did not say, but occasionally there were such opportunities—in 1662, for example, Magnus Gabriel's sculptor, Master Markus, had a journeyman and two apprentices.[53] A request which involved not only an education, but also hopes of a career in the De la Gardie sphere came from Getska Clasdotter, the widow

49 LUB, DLG Släkt, vol. 89:2, Brev till Magnus Gabriel De la Gardie. Frantz Hansson till MG De la Gardie 15 Sept. 1685: 'gå naken ifrån sig'.

50 RA, MGDLG E1658, Sammandrag av brev och resolutioner till MG De la Gardie med resolutionspåteckningar, Erik Mikaelsson to MG De la Gardie, n.d.: 'komma uth eller på reesa'.

51 RA, MGDLG E1641, Jon Swensson to MG De la Gardie, n.d.

52 RA, MGDLG E1621, Anna Andersdotter to MG De la Gardie, n.d. A similar example is the housekeeper at Läckö who asked for her son to learn to read and write so that he could be employed by someone. RA, MGDLG E1656 Sammandrag av brev och resolutioner till MG De la Gardie med resolutionspåteckningar (huvudsakligen 1670-tal).

53 RA, MGDLG E1660, Hovstatsräkenskaper.

of the cook Magnus Blomberg and mother-in-law of the late Lennart Venting, an overseer. Her 9-year-old grandson Magnus Venting was at school and Getska asked Magnus Gabriel to pay for the boy's education and then offer him a job.[54] Similarly, the widow Brita Knutsdotter asked that her son Magnus 'who is learning bookkeeping' be granted food from the De la Gardie household so he eventually would be ready to serve his master. Her request was granted on the proviso that her son proved diligent and was not debauched.[55]

There were multiple reasons why only men sought an education or vocational training in the De la Gardie sphere. One was that the household and the whole conglomerate of estates were highly gendered. Research about large elite households in seventeenth-century England has concluded they were initially male dominated, but eventually went through a feminizing process, so that by the end of the eighteenth century male-dominated households were rare.[56] Tim Meldrum points out that while women worked in small- or medium-sized households, and did so for short periods, men worked in the larger households and stayed on longer.[57] Christopher Pihl in his study of life and work on sixteenth-century royal demesnes shows that for Sweden the larger the workforce, the greater the proportion of men.[58] The De la Gardie workplaces were not outliers by being male dominated.

Take Magnus Gabriel and Maria Euphrosyne's household in 1680 as an example, a year that did not stand out as unusual in any way. There were 13 categories of employee—household officials, pages, lackeys, soldiers, pantry staff, kitchen staff, stable staff, guards and arquebusiers, musicians, the chancellery, the counting house, skippers and bosuns, and the staff at the Main House in Stockholm—nearly all of them men except for the housekeeper, housekeeper's maid, kitchen maids, and the odd kitchen cleaner. The majority of women were bundled together under the heading 'Fruntimret', a collective noun for women, which obscured their names, jobs, and individual salaries. From other sources from 1680, however, we know there were several positions for women, such as the countess's lady-in-waiting and their maids, general maids not assigned to one person or task, washerwomen, and the washerwomen's maid. Taken together they numbered no more than 10, compared to 65 for men. There were simply more positions for men to aim and train for. The total staff at the De la Gardie household in 1680 was 136, of whom 16 were women, 95 men, and 25 boys. Women were thus barely 15

54 RA, MGDLG E1621, Getska Clasdotter to MG De la Gardie.

55 RA, MGDLG E1656 Sammandrag av brev och resolutioner till MG De la Gardie med resolutionspåteckningar (huvudsakligen 1670-tal). Yet a similar case is that of Karin Eriksdotter who wants Magnus Gabriel to allow her niece to come to his office and practice his writing skills [skrivande föröva], see RA, MGDLG E1622, n.d.

56 Richardson, *Household Servants*, 222, Meldrum, *Domestic Service*, 16.

57 Meldrum, *Domestic Service*, 32–33.

58 Pihl, *Arbete*, 70–72, 76.

per cent of the adult servants and 12 per cent of the whole household.[59] The number of positions was further limited by social requirements that an ordinary girl could never meet, being reserved for elite women; the best an aspiring maid could hope for was to be the housekeeper or a cook. The male dominance was not limited to Magnus Gabriel and Maria Euphrosyne's household; the widowed Ebba Brahe's household was the same. Of her 53 known employees in 1669, 40 were men and 13 were women.[60]

Another group of female servants we know little about in terms of learning were estate workers. The number of women visible in the estate accounts was far fewer than the number of men, but it did not necessarily mean there were few women working there, since employees' working wives might not have been recorded; after all, research has shown that millworkers' wives could have supervisory roles or help with sales, while boys and girls moved ore and water or worked below ground in the mines.[61] It is true that women in rural areas were as silent about their hopes for their own betterment as women in Stockholm were. The widow Lisbetha Nielsdotter who wrote to Maria Euphrosyne to ask for help in her misery seems to have been representative of many women in the De la Gardie sphere. Lisbetha had been a maidservant at Sundholmen for 15 years from the age of 5, but she was now a sickly 'old woman' with two small children and in need of support. By all accounts, she was not promoted before she left for unknown reasons.[62]

Another explanation for the silence about female education in the De la Gardie sphere was that the more formal training a master gave his journeymen and apprentices did not exist for women. If girls were placed in the household to gain experience it was something that happened without comment. There were only few mentions of *flickor* (girls) in the sources, and unlike the boys they were not recorded as assigned to anyone, so it is not known why they were there or what their role was.[63] Research on the Swedish sixteenth century tells the same story. While men in various positions had lads and boys to help them, women did not.[64] In the De la Gardie sphere, young women—possibly children—were the maids who served more senior women such as the lady-in-waiting's maid or the washerwoman's maid. The job titles suggest they entered into learning relationships with senior female

59 To compare: in 1661 there were 108 servants at the court, 14 women (13 per cent) and 94 men (87 per cent).

60 LUB, DLG, släkt., vol. 81:2 Handlingar rörande Ebba Brahe.

61 Florén, *Genus och producentroll*, 34–35; Sjöberg, *När bergsmannen blev bonde*, 20–21; Norberg, *Sala gruvas historia*, 358.

62 RA, MGDLG E1640, Pfalzgrevinnan Maria Eufrosynas papper, Strödda handlingar och brev, Liesbetha Nielsdotter to Countess Palatine Maria Eufrosyne, n.d.: 'gumma'.

63 The *flickor* (girls) Wilhelmina, Agneta, and Maria are mentioned among the female staff in 1672, see RA, MGDLG E1660.

64 Pihl, *Arbete*, 78.

employees, at least to the extent of being part of a hierarchical workplace structure. Yet if they moved upwards, or articulated a desire to do so, it is not something that has left any trace in the archives.

The De la Gardie springboard

Of those who petitioned Magnus Gabriel De la Gardie to be relieved of their duties, the majority did so in order to move to another position in the De la Gardie sphere. A minority, however, wished to seek their fortune elsewhere.[65] For some, aristocratic households functioned as training grounds. Households such as the De la Gardies and the Wrangels were known to supply the royal court with musicians, for example, and other categories of servants made the same move.[66] Some servants were open about their ambition to move on. When the valet Adam Livländer asked for a favourable dismissal, he said he wanted to join the royal court to 'exkolera' (*auskultera)*, to develop his profession. The count's response was that he would receive an honourable discharge, a recommendation to the Lord High Constable, and his outstanding wages.[67] We know the lackeys Mats and Johan were recommended by Magnus Gabriel too, because in February 1672 they thanked him for helping them enrol at the royal court, but it was in a petition for further support, the tradition at court being that newcomers 'spend' on their comrades, which they did not have. Interestingly, they received 20 dr km from their former employer.[68] Why such generosity shown to former servants when so many still in De la Gardie service got nothing? One explanation may have been seventeenth-century aristocrats' eagerness to place their servants at court, strengthening the ties between their family and the royal family.[69] The De la Gardies had a long-standing relationship with the royal family, which they carefully cultivated. Placing servants at court could be seen as a gesture of loyalty to the royal family, and as a way of having loyal subjects in the corridors of power.

Someone who was outspoken about using the De la Gardie sphere for his own advancement was a young man called Liliewalk who aspired to be a secretary in Magnus Gabriel's administration. Liliewalk had studied under his uncle Professor Olof Verelius, and was knowledgeable in antiquities,

65 Of 65 petitioners who asked to leave their present job, 39 (60 per cent) asked to stay in the sphere, 7 (11 per cent) wanted to take a job outside of the sphere, and 19 (29 per cent) asked to be excused because of old age, sickness or a 'move back home'.

66 Kjellberg, *Kungliga musiker*, 30–33.

67 RA, MGDLG E1658, Sammandrag av brev och resolutioner till MG De la Gardie med resolutionspåteckningar.

68 RA, MGDLG E1656, Sammandrag av brev och resolutioner till MG De la Gardie med resolutionspåteckningar, the lackeys Mats and Johan to MG De la Gardie, Karlberg 18 Feb. 1672: 'spendera'.

69 Persson, *Servants of fortune*, 82–83.

fortifications, and artillery, according to Eneman the bookkeeper. He had asked Eneman what the salary was and if he could get an advance, but he also expressed his hopes that later De la Gardie would recommend him to Field Marshal Otto Wilhelm von Königsmarck. Obviously Liliewalk had little interest in being a secretary and only wished to use the position to get into the army.[70] There was no trace of Liliewalk being appointed or recommended, so even though there was strong evidence that the De la Gardie sphere could be a springboard and that Magnus Gabriel knew it, there were limits.

The conclusion to be drawn from the petitions by various hopefuls and their parents is there was a strong belief that the De la Gardie sphere could offer opportunities for learning and mobility that were integral to its activities. In that sense, the De la Gardie sphere played a similar role to schools or guilds. In a study of seventeenth-century schools in Germany, Alan Ross argues that education played an important role for social mobility, and that boys and their parents from uneducated families learned how to navigate a complex, costly system to their own benefit.[71] Moreover, the many De la Gardie petitions suggest there was a belief that a desire to learn, to get ahead in life, would be received positively. It is interesting, because as Karin Sennefelt has pointed out, shifting in the early modern period 'from one social position to another was heavily laden with ideological implications'; the ideal was that of 'deference, obedience, and contentment' with one's lot.[72] However, looking at seventeenth-century guilds, Sennefelt concludes that even though society preferred stability, there was room for 'movement, ambition, and individual choice' as long as people followed a specific path such as being an apprentice and later a journeyman.[73]

The De la Gardie sphere seems to have held to a similarly contradictory line. In 1655, when he had been appointed chancellor of Uppsala University, Magnus Gabriel De la Gardie launched a programme that imposed restrictions on access to education and prevent social mobility. What future career a student could choose would be determined by his father's occupation or which of the four official Estates of the Realm—nobles, clergy, peasants, and burghers—the father belonged to. Those who depended on financial support to complete their schooling would be stopped. Further, De la Gardie suggested founding an academy for only aristocratic students in Stockholm.[74] In light of this antipathy to social mobility, it seems strange that the De la Gardies so often supported young men (and possibly women) who wished to get an education and move up the ranks. Here two contrary ideals met: the

70 LUB, DLG, vol. 89:2, Brev till MG De la Gardie, Johan Eneman to MG De la Gardie, Stockholm 29 Dec. 1685.
71 Ross, 'Pupils' Choices', 314–315.
72 Sennefelt, 'Young man', 310.
73 Sennefelt, 'Young man', 324.
74 Edlund, *Diskussionen om begåvningsurvalet*, 203–206; Gaunt, *Utbildning*, 32–33.

aspiring boys (or their parents) who wished to make a career on the back of their training or education on the one hand, and the aristocrats who needed trained staff but wished to stop upward class mobility on the other. It seems reasonable to agree with Sennefelt: to rise in the De la Gardie sphere was to take a path hedged about with expectations of loyalty, gratitude, and submission. Christian Hansson the would-be pastry cook framed his advancement as anything but subversive—indeed, as positively beneficial for the count. Petitioners' declarations of previous, current, and future loyalty were important reassurance for the count that they did not threaten the social order. The De la Gardie sphere thus offered opportunities to rise under controlled circumstances, while ensuring it had a source of competent employees.

In a position to learn

In a petition by the cook Jonas Svensson asking for shoes and clothes for his newly hired kitchen boy, there is a hint of the working relationship between them. Taking matters into his own hands, Svensson suggested that some skins in the barn could be used to make shoes for the boy. A note on the petition indicated that Jonas got what he wanted.[75] Evidently there were at least two layers of paternalism: between the count and his servants, and between the cook and his new assistant, with the cook taking the lead.[76]

None of the surviving sources tell us how the learning process was organized. When those who had been in training mentioned their master—which was rare—it was only in general terms. Cases in point were the gardeners Nils Gudmundsson and Johan Mårtensson. Nils mentioned he had learned his craft at Ekholmen and then moved to Höjentorp where he worked as gardener for 15 years until 1666.[77] Johan was a little more informative, having been a gardener at Venngarn, but replaced by another gardener who had now been sent on to Ekholmen, prompting Johan to ask for his old job back with the argument that he had been taught gardening by his instructor, Master Rasmus (most likely Rasmus Dietz at Venngarn), and had learnt as well as anyone.[78]

Some learning was apparently structured as a formal master–apprentice relationship; in other instances it was more informal. The *humlegårdsmästare* (head kitchen gardener) at Sunträlje and Nolebo, Nils Andersson, underwent

75 RA, MGDLG E1641, Jonas Svensson to MG De la Gardie, n.d.

76 For a similar example, see RA, MGDLG E1641, Ahlbreht Falknär to Magnus Gabriel De la Gardie, n.d. Albricht Falknär (possibly a falconer) had repeatedly intervened on behalf of his two assistants who had gone unpaid so long Albricht himself had had to support them.

77 RA, MGDLG E1642, Nils Gudmundsson to MG De la Gardie, 1666.

78 RA, MGDLG E1642, Nils Gudmundsson to MG De la Gardie, 1666: 'läromästare', 'så väl som en annar lärt och begripit haver'.

an impressively long period of formal training, for example, having been at Läckö no fewer than twelve years under Lars Trädgårdsmästare, six as a boy apprentice and six as assistant head gardener.[79]

For many of the boys, learning may have been an informal process through everyday interaction, yet presumably resembled an apprenticeship. For an apprentice to observe and acquire knowledge, it was crucial he could follow his master's work, business, and skills.[80] Boys who worked closely with their master had the key element of observation and exposure to knowledge.[81] Studies of early modern apprenticeship emphasize this type of learning process, with the apprentice exposed to know-how and experience by watching and interacting. Patrick Wallis makes the point that learning 'equated to being and doing in the trade'.[82] Equally, practical knowledge 'exists in concomitance with practical activities, their social regulations, and their organizations', as Matteo Valleriani says.[83] Its codification and the workflows associated with particular bodies of knowledge must therefore be studied in their social context.[84] Studies of knowledge circulation in early modern households have explored a range of topics, from the role of recipe books for household medicine and the nature of academic households to the role of tutors and chaplains for education in the household.[85] Studying boys or other lower servants in aristocratic households, and assessing what they learned, has its methodological challenges, which may explain why such sites of knowledge circulation have received so little attention. What we are left with is the sense that some were there to learn—the apprentices, in other words—while all boys, even those who were not formally in training, operated in an environment which offered the potential to learn. A rare practical example of how seeing and imitating was supposed to work survives in a set of instructions for a new bookkeeper in the service of Axel Julius De la Gardie and Sofia Forbus. The bookkeeper was to use the old rent rolls as templates for the new rent rolls he was supposed to draw up. The instructions added he should do his duty to the best of his ability, and if there was anything he did not understand he should consult others to avoid oversights that affected the count and countess.[86]

79 RA, MGDLG E1641, Nils Andersson to Magnus Gabriel De la Gardie, n.d.
80 Wallis, 'Between Apprenticeship and Skill', 158, 160.
81 Bandura, *Social Learning Theory*; Browder et al., 'Learning to learn', 447–461; Fryling et al., 'Understanding Observational Learning', 191–203.
82 Wallis, 'Between Apprenticeship and Skill', 155–170.
83 Valleriani, *Structures of Practical Knowledge*, 3.
84 See further, Leong, 'Brewing Ale', 55–75; Dupré, 'Doing It Wrong', 167–188.
85 Leong, 'Collecting Knowledge'; Walsham, 'Holy Families'; McIsaac Cooper, 'Servants as Educators'; Van Ittersum, 'Production in the Dutch Republic'.
86 LUB, DLG Släkt, vol. 139:2, Instruktioner och antagningsbevis för Axel Julius De la Gardies betjening.

The role of experts

Another aspect of learning in De la Gardie sphere was the role of foreign experts as knowledge producers and brokers. The question of how competence and skill were valued problematizes the role of experts and expertise, whatever the context. Using the term 'experts' for those who 'control a body of specialized practical or productive knowledge, not readily available to everyone', we ask how experts influenced work, knowledge circulation, and professionalization in aristocratic households.[87]

In sociopolitical terms, expertise was a vital part of the political and cultural expansion that seventeenth-century aristocratic households initiated throughout the century. It was essential to their growth to signal their wealth and cultural capital. At first the aristocratic lifestyle was heavily dependent on the recruitment of foreign master builders, architects, landscapers, and gardeners who knew the latest European trends, and with them the sculptors, plasterers, painters, paper marblers, artists, and other trained specialists who could create the necessary interiors. Adding some flair by hiring a French cook also seems to have been fashionable.[88] At a later stage these experts were the catalysts for the knowledge transfer and knowledge-building processes promoted by the richest aristocrats.

Some of the most costly mansions in Stockholm were built by members of the Oxenstierna, Wrangel, Stenbock, Bonde, Bååth, and De la Gardie families. Jacob De la Gardie and Ebba Brahe built their Main House (Makalös) in Stockholm and then Jakobsdal, with its extensive gardens, on the northern outskirts of the city. As a widow, Ebba Brahe constructed a new main building at Runsa. Magnus Gabriel built or remodelled palaces, castles, and mansions, including Läckö, Venngarn, Mariedal, Ekholmen, Höjentorp, and Karlberg, and all had gardens. His sister Maria Sofia rebuilt Krapperup in southern Sweden as a modern baroque castle and their brother Pontus Fredrik and his wife spent large sums on enlarging their mansion in Stockholm. Besides houses and gardens—and churches—the De la Gardies also invested in infrastructure at their estates, such as mills, barns, and staff accommodation.

There was an impressive list of foreign experts who worked in the De la Gardie sphere over the years. There was the Flemish sculptor Jean Baptiste Dieussart and his French stepson Abraham-César Lammoreux who worked at Jakobsdal (1666–*c.*1668) and another Flemish sculptor Nicolaes Millich who was employed at Karlberg (1670–1671).[89] There was the stucco artist Carlo Carove who worked for Magnus Gabriel and his brother Pontus Fredrik at Jakobsdal and Karlberg (1670–1671) and at Pontus Fredrik's palace in Stockholm. The sculptor Georg Baselaque worked for Magnus Gabriel

87 Ash, 'Introduction', 5.
88 Mennel, *All Manners*, 70–71.
89 Hahr, *Konst och konstnärer*, 94.

from 1665 until the 1670s, as did Nicolas Cordier and Georg Rausch.[90] There were the painters Nicolas Vallari, Johan Hammer, Johan Werner, Anders Lingh, and Henrik Köpke. Vallari arrived in Sweden from his native France in 1646 to work on and off for Magnus Gabriel De la Gardie; in 1654 he was employed full time and until 1673 worked at Drottningholm, Karlberg, Arnö, Jakobsdal, and Läckö.[91]

The literature about the artists at Magnus Gabriel's court has established that foreign experts were required to take on apprentices so that their expertise could be passed on and integrated into the De la Gardie sphere.[92] The sculptor Nicolaes Millich was mostly employed by the royal court to work on Drottningholm Palace, but Magnus Gabriel De la Gardie tapped into Millich's expertise too, hiring him to do work at Karlberg (1670–1671) and to teach another sculptor in his service, Abraham Lammoreux.[93] In 1678 Lammoreux was in turn required to train an apprentice to produce lead statuary, expressly to have that expertise secured for the De la Gardie workforce, for which he would be paid 100 rdr, half in advance and half once the apprentice had finished his training.[94] The sculptor Baselaque, the master carver Markus, and the painter Carlinus were others who passed on their expertise to journeymen or apprentices according to the De la Gardie records.[95] When a 1654 contract with Vallari stated that he was to work with his journeymen and *underhavande målare* (junior painters), it was Magnus Gabriel arranging for a younger generation of his own subordinates to benefit from the skills and knowledge of experts, as was borne out in the renewed contract signed 1662, which said Vallari was to monitor—and thus directly or indirectly train—painters of lower rank.[96] One of them was the apprentice painter Petter. Apparently inspired by working for Vallari, Petter petitioned Magnus Gabriel for support to further his skills in painting.[97] How the count reacted to this particular request is unknown, but he was evidently willing to encourage the sharing of knowledge by experts.

90 Hahr, *Konst och konstnärer*, 70.

91 *Svenskt konstnärslexikon*, s.v. 'Nicolas Vallari'; Hahr, *Konst och konstnärer*, 88; *SBL*, s.v. 'Magnus Gabriel De la Gardie' by Georg Wittrock.

92 Ljungström, *Magnus Gabriel*, 58–59.

93 Alm & Millhagen, *Drottningsholms slott*, 189, 192, 195–7, 199; Hahr, *Konst och konstnärter*, 99; *Svenskt konstnärslexikon*, s.v. 'Nicolaes Millich'.

94 Hahr, *Konst och konstnärer*, 97.

95 For Baselaque and a journeyman, see RA, MGDLG E1656, Sammandrag av brev och resolutioner till MG De la Gardie med resolutionspåteckningar. The same source mentioned Mäster Hammers målarpojke Johan (Läckö 4 July 1671). Further examples are found in RA, MGDLG E1660 accounts for 1662, the master sculptor Markus with one journeyman and two apprentices, and the master painter Carlinus with one apprentice; Hahr, *Konst och konstnärer*, 93–94, 97, 115; Rosell, 'Georg Baselaque'.

96 *Svenskt konstnärslexikon*, s.v. 'Nicholas Vallari'.

97 RA, MGDLG E1658, Sammandrag av brev och resolutioner till MG De la Gardie med resolutionspåteckningar, Petter to MG De la Gardie, n.d.

Expert migration and knowledge circulation

The archives of the De la Gardie family reveal their passion for gardens, with many servants being involved in their construction. The petitions trace the fortunes of gardeners, some of them concerned with the questions of knowledge, skill, and the need for expertise. Gardens were vital to the newly built or renovated stately homes and the seventeenth century saw the rise of botanic gardens and pleasure gardens. The new garden designs demanded experts who were not readily available in Sweden.[98]

Of the experts brought in from abroad, Hans Georg Kraus was recruited from Augsburg when Jacob De la Gardie and Ebba Brahe wanted a garden at their newly erected country house, Jakobsdal. To prepare, *trädgårdsdrängar* (under-gardeners) brought in from Runsa worked the ground the year before Kraus' arrival, and in spring 1648 Kraus arrived bringing with him 6,000 flowers and rare plants, as well as three gardeners and the necessary tools.[99] Kraus stayed at Jakobsdal until at least 1652, by which time one building had been turned into an orangery with bitter oranges, lemons, figs, grapes, carnations, roses, and myrtle.[100] The following year Jakobsdal was temporarily transferred to the Crown, and responsibility for the gardens was given to the French garden designer André Mollet, another expert recruited by Magnus Gabriel while in Paris in 1647. Mollet, the son of the French royal gardener Claude Mollet, had previously worked at the French and English courts. Mollet collaborated with and inspired the architect Jean de la Vallée, another expert of French origin, who in the early 1650s had worked on De la Gardie's garden at Ekholmen.[101] In 1654 Jakobsdal was returned to De la Gardie, who continued to develop it according to French ideals. In what seemed a common collaboration between various experts working at De la Gardie estates, La Vallée and the German landscape architect Mattias Holl, who had been employed at Höjentorp, worked with Olof Rudbeck in the early 1660s. The trio were typical in other ways too: La Vallée had arrived in Sweden as a teenager in the late 1630s with his father and teacher, the architect Simon de la Vallée; Holl, possibly from Augsburg, arrived in Sweden in 1648 to work with Hans Georg Kraus on the garden at Jakobsdal and later on several of the De la Gardie family's building projects; and Rudbeck, who was Swedish, was professor of medicine at Uppsala University and in the early 1650s had founded the botanical gardens at Uppsala University, though at Jakobsdal he contributed by cataloguing the rare plants and giving advice on their

98 The gardeners who were brought in included Melcher Stöcher (Ekholmen), Hans Georg Kraus (Jacobsdal), André Mollet (Jacobsdal), Jean De la Vallée (Ekholmen/Jacobsdal), Sigismund Hennek (Ladugårdslandet/Läckö), and Pantaleone Mey (Ekholmen).

99 Karling, *Trädgårdskonstens*, 317–318.

100 Karling, *Trädgårdskonstens*, 320.

101 Karling, *Trädgårdskonstens*, 309.

cultivation.[102] They were experienced landscape architects and experts from France, Germany, and Sweden who came together to provide the newly erected stately homes with modern European gardens.

Arlette Fleischer suggests that 'students of nature collected botanical knowledge and plants to make them solid, mobile, reproducible, and combinable, in order to understand nature's workings'. By learning how to label, wrap, and transport seeds and bulbs, exotic plants could become mobile—and ultimately domesticated in new environments to be admired and examined.[103] For Rudbeck, gardens and gardening were part of a wider knowledge project and it seems he involved the De la Gardie gardens. His connection with Magnus Gabriel was already close because De la Gardie was the chancellor of Uppsala University, but it seems to have gone beyond that, as Rudbeck was involved in placing gardeners under his protection in the De la Gardie sphere.[104] Their shared interest was further emphasized by Countess Palatine Maria Euphrosyne, who kept a copy of Johann Coler's widely read *Oeconomia ruralis et domestica* in her cabinet at Kägleholm.[105]

In his catalogues covering over 1,000 plants in his botanical garden, Rudbeck distinguished between medical plants, fruit and vegetables, decorative plants, and plants native to Sweden. Claire Hickman has charted the early modern nexus of medical, scientific, and gardening knowledge of which Rudbeck was an example, being a professor of medicine and a botanical expert who interacted with gardeners and landscape architects in Uppsala and beyond.[106] He was not only interested in the plants themselves, but also in how to protect exotic species by building heated greenhouses.[107] The climate forced experts to adjust the cultivation of imported plants to Swedish conditions, something that André Mollet discussed in his book *Lustgård* (1651), which covers his wealth of experience with a special focus on gardening in a cold climate, from timings to cover and planting. He also suggested exchanging European standards for hardy native plants, such as replacing box with heather.[108] An interest in exotic plants for medicinal use, food, or pleasure helped drive innovation.

102 Karling, *Trädgårdskonstens*, 326–328, 332, 340.

103 Fleischer, 'Gardening', 289–305.

104 RA, MGDLG E1642, Johan Mårtensson to MG De la Gardie, n.d.; see also Johan Olofsson who labelled himself as someone sent by professors in Uppsala ('à professoribus Upsaliensibus missus'), RA, MGDLG E1641, Johan Olofsson to Magnus Gabriel De la Gardie, n.d. (1663). Olof Rudbeck was the son of bishop Johannes Rudbeckius who we will meet in the next chapter. The family had previous ties to the De la Gardie family.

105 RA, MGDLG E1940, Pfalzgrevinnan Maria Euphrosynas papper, Strödda handlingar och brev.

106 Hickman, 'The want of a proper Gardiner', 544, 549, 564, 567.

107 *SBL*, s.v. 'Olof (Olaus) Rudbeck' by Gunnar Eriksson.

108 Mollet, *Lustgård*.

Research has emphasized the role of expert mobility for the spread of new techniques.[109] An important feature relating to experts is the circulation of people in the De la Gardie sphere. Like sculptors, painters, stonemasons working with construction and decoration of houses, garden designers, gardeners, and artists, moved between different parts of the De la Gardie sphere, creating meetings between individuals and their work, making evident the interconnectedness of the different estates and properties. Mapping the movement of 32 gardeners or garden designers working for Jacob De la Gardie or his son Magnus Gabriel 1640 to 1681 we discover that movement in the De la Gardie sphere was extensive. Jean de Vallée worked at Ekholmen, Jakobsdal, and Venngarn; Hans Rotenhusen moved between Ekholmen and Höjentorp; Mattias Holl was at Höjentorp and Jakobsdal, and later moved to De la Gardie estates in Estonia.[110] At Ekholmen, the German gardener Melcher Stöcher contributed with water features and a bower, and by planting hundreds of trees from Holland, among them almond, medlar trees, plum trees, and cherries. Because of the rotation of experts he would at different times work alongside Daniel Valdon and Pantaleone Mey, with Olof Rudbeck as a special adviser on rare and difficult plants.

This mobility in the De la Gardie sphere was not limited to foreign experts. There was Nils Andersson the head kitchen gardener who had worked 12 years at Läckö, first as apprentice then *mästarsven* (head gardener), before moving to Sunträlje and Nolebo to run the hop gardens there.[111] Similar careers were described by others, highlighting their training in the De la Gardie sphere, mentioning their masters, and often saying how long they had been in training.[112] Once they had finished their training, an almost peripatetic existence awaited gardeners in the De la Gardies' service. Erik Eriksson ran several gardens—Höjentorp, Söderbo (later Mariedal), and Skålltorp—and before that had worked at Venngarn.[113] Mattis Eriksson served for three years at Ladugårdslandet and then a year at Ekholmen. And it was not just the head gardeners who moved around: all categories of garden staff did so.[114] One petition set out a whole sequence of changes in a single yea, with

109 Kussmaul, *Servants in Husbandry*, 68–69; Hilaire-Pérez & Verna, 'Dissemination of Technical Knowledge', 560–564.

110 Karling, *Trädgårdskonstens*, 31, 345, Daniel Valdon worked at Läckö and Ekholmen; Sigismund Hennek at Ladugårdslandet in Stockholm and at Läckö.

111 RA, MGDLG E1641, Nils Andersson to MG De la Gardie, n.d.

112 For Erich Joensson, journeyman gardener at Kungsträdgården, in training for 17 years, see RA MGDLG E1642; for Esbiöörn Johansson, ex-soldier, in training for 2 years, see RA MGDLG E1642; for Johan Mårtensson, formerly at Venngarn under one Rasmus (probably Rasmus Dietz), see RA MGDLG E1642; and Nillss Gudmundzon, trained at Ekholmen and a gardener at Höjentorp for 15 years, see RA MGDLG E1642.

113 RA, MGDLG E1642, Erich Erichsson to MG De la Gardie, Höjentorp 11 Oct. 1666.

114 RA, MGDLG E1642, Pär Olofsson to MG De la Gardie, Stockholm 3 Nov. 1671. He was one of four gardeners who had arrived from Västergötland four years earlier.

the estate manager Hans Mörk suggesting that Berendt the head gardener be sent to Karlberg while Master Anders at Magnusberg should be employed at Läckö and Swen at Mariedal should go to Magnusberg, leaving Master Daniel Valdon in charge of the garden at Läckö 'this year'.[115] Plainly, the rotation of garden experts was systemized and intentional.

That said, many Swedish-born gardeners remained in the one place for years at a time. Why some stayed put while others were moved is not known, but some were obviously reluctant to move due to a perceived lack of experienced workers or the knowledge to take care of rare plants. This further underscores the importance of experts, suggesting they were not always available and that lack of knowledge considered a problem for the workers. In a letter dated in March of 1680, Anders Bryngelsson at Magnusberg—one of De la Gardie's lesser estates—asked not to be sent to Läckö because he felt being gardener there would be too difficult for him. In his petition he lamented his inability to read and to acquire the necessary information from written sources, and he continued that he did not know how to handle foreign flowers or trees, or how to care for the flower beds he would be expected to tend. To accept the move might be damaging for his masters, Anders concluded, adding that he feared getting into trouble because of his limited skills.[116]

Anders Bryngelsson's petition was a sign that innovative garden designs and imported plants had increased the demands on the garden staff, which at least the more mainstream gardeners found problematic. Further training was needed, which we would argue is why the rotation of staff mattered, because it ensured gardeners were acquainted with one another's work, learning from one another in different parts of the De la Gardie sphere. It has been said of La Vallée that he was reluctant to share his drawings and ideas with others, which must have hampered others who wished to learn from him. However, it would have been impossible for him—and other experts—to hide everything from their fellow gardeners, journeymen, and apprentices once the work had started, and even less so once it was finished. The design of the garden, water features, grottos, choice of trees and flowers, composition of colours and materials, hard landscaping, and solutions to ensure sensitive plants survived in the Swedish climate were apparent for all to see and be inspired by.

115 RA, MGDLG E1658, Sammandrag av brev och resolutioner till MG De la Gardie med resolutionspåteckningar.

116 RA, MGDLG E1642, Anders Bryngelsson to MG De la Gardie, Magnusberg 14 Mar. 1680: 'emedan jag icke det ringaste skriva kan, ej heller förstår mig på varken så främmande blomverk utländska trän, eller sådana ritningar som där sammastädes anlagde äre, och än ytterligare anläggas böre', 'ty att taga emot en tjänst som jag intet förstår'.

For a similar example, see RA, MGDLG E1642, Sven Rölin to MG De la Gardie, 12 Apr. 1680 for one Sven Nilsson Rölin who wrote that Lucas Faber (a local De la Gardie official) had told him to take on the new kitchen garden, but Sven protested he 'nästan intet stort bekant och tillförde med humlegårdsarbete intet mycket omgått' ('had little to no acquaintance with kitchen gardening') and asked for assistance.

Staging an aristocratic lifestyle

Of all the elements that went into staging an aristocratic lifestyle, few were as important as the ability to throw a lavish party with food prepared by expert cooks, wine imported from Germany or France, and an impressively laid table supervised by a trained table-decker. The example of Christian Hansson showed the lengths to which the De la Gardies were prepared to go to train a table-decker. In a Francophile setting such as the De la Gardie's it is no surprise to find cooks recruited from France, which will have signalled a certain level of sophistication. There was the head cook Picard (1678–1679), and before him Lambert (1666–1672) and his 'French kitchen boys' working in what was sometimes called the French Kitchen.[117] Whether or not the French Kitchen was a specific place, or if the boys were in fact French or just called French because they worked alongside the French cook, cannot be deduced from the sources. Magnus Gabriel's parents, Jacob De la Gardie and Ebba Brahe, had also employed French cooks, noted in the account books as such—'fransötzske kocken'.[118] The influential position of French cuisine and its advances in the mid-seventeenth century meant French cooks were sought-after across Europe, including Sweden. One of the first cookbooks to be printed in Sweden, *Then frantzöske kocken och pasteybakaren* (1664), was written by a French cook. The author, Romble Salé, had been employed by a member of the Council of the Realm, Gustav Soop, and the book is a typical early modern mix, reusing and translating parts of other works. Salé's book is said to have drawn heavily on the influential work of François Pierre la Varenne, but it was also modelled on a German translation of a French work by the chamber valet to Louis XIV, Nicolas de Bonnefons.[119] These publications represented new culinary trends and the evolution of French cuisine in the seventeenth century, and they circulated in Sweden because of the professional interest and a French bookbinder who was supported by Queen Kristina and aristocrats such as Magnus Gabriel De la Gardie.[120]

Although the De la Gardie household employed several French cooks over the years, most positions were occupied by local cooks, or cooks who judging by their names were possibly of other nationalities. The lack of good cooks haunted some of the leading families and the competence of the ones they did employ was often questioned. Plenty of head cooks were employed in the kitchens throughout the period, however.[121] We know little about them as individuals, for although they appeared in petitions they seldom concerned

117 RA, MGDLG E1660. For example, French kitchen boys and the French kitchen are mentioned in Oct. 1666.
118 RA, MGDLG E1660.
119 Bonnefons & Greflinger, *Der Frantzösische Becker*.
120 *SBL*, s.v. 'Jacques Morel' by Per S. Ridderstad: 'then frantzöske bookbindaren'.
121 RA, MGDLG E1660 & E1661, Hovstatsräkenskaper.

their role as experts or the competence they were expected to possess. The cook Picard asked to be let go when he realized he would not get what he thought he was owed; in turn, De la Gardie's administrators accused Picard of being 'wasteful'.[122] Judging by the petitions, the De la Gardie cooks were as tormented by the lack of back pay and poor living conditions as many other servants.

Even though the De la Gardie sphere was by no means perfect as a training environment, it seems Magnus Gabriel intended in the long run to assemble his own group of experts thanks to in-house training. The *legostadga*, the official regulations for hiring and training servants, worked in his favour, since there was a striking exception to the rule that a servant had the right to leave someone's service after a year: if the head of the household offered the servant training in crafts, bookkeeping or similar skilled professions, servants were not allowed to quit until their master was content, according to the statutes.[123] What did it mean for someone like Magnus Gabriel De la Gardie, himself the Chancellor of the Realm, one of the signatories to the *legostadga*, and a leading employer? Were his employees bound to him for longer periods than the yearly contract admitted, owing to his commitment to teach them a trade in his sphere? Was it possible employees *expected* to receive training in such households, and that this was one of the conditions and perhaps even advantages of taking such a job?

The way servants were trained echoed Magnus Gabriel's ideas of how education and training would benefit the Swedish state. He has been described as someone who was no friend of the guild system's closed shop, and who wished the number of craftsmen would increase. To achieve it, De la Gardie suggested that craftsmen train at least one of their sons in their trade and that people who did that would receive special benefits.[124] De la Gardie's own version of a guild took on the training of young men to make them useful for his own organization. Apprentices trained by experts, like the circulation of experts such as gardeners in the De la Gardie sphere, created the conditions for internal recruitment and knowledge transfer. The official regulations played into Magnus Gabriel's hands, because having trained a servant at his own expense he could indefinitely prevent him from leaving his employment.[125] This did not preclude servants moving away from the De la Gardie sphere, but even then, as the example of the lackeys who wanted to join the royal court showed, it might be to the count's advantage.

122 RA, MGDLG E1660, Hovstatsräkenskaper: 'vidlyftig'.

123 *Kongl. May:tz Stadga*, par. 6, 'Doch så, at om een Huusbonde eller Mathmoder på egen bekostnadt hafwer hollit någon til lähra, Handwärck, Bookhållerij, eller annar slijckt, då må een sådan icke affträda, för än Huusbonden är skiähligen förnögder, uthan holles heller, at tiäna then same än een annan.'

124 Edlund, *M. G. De la Gardies inrikespolitiska*, 66–67.

125 *Kongl. May:tz Stadga*.

An education

Sweden's aristocratic city mansions were significant employers, sometimes comprising over a hundred employees. A conservative estimate has 1,500 people working in such households in Stockholm alone in 1650, exceeding the number of students at Swedish universities (some 1,130).[126] Whatever else, the aristocratic knowledge community brought together large numbers of people and, as we have seen, involved them in various forms of learning relationship and made them part of the more systematic attempts to educate the workforce. Each aristocratic sphere, with all its connections and relationships, was potentially a site of practical education and learning in early modern Swedish society, and, perhaps more important, for previously unrecognized groups.

The connections and transactions in the De la Gardie sphere were not only financial, but also clearly formed an educational system of sorts. From the petitions, we can see how boys and adolescents and their parents and relatives—especially those with personal or geographical ties to the De la Gardies—regarded the estate organization as a place of learning and training, and thus as a springboard to a better future. The large numbers of young men and boys in apprenticeships and other learning relationships indicated that they were correct in their assumption. The De la Gardie archives also reveal the concern with training people for a variety of positions, all deemed necessary to support the lavish aristocratic lifestyle of the time. We would argue there was an intention to create a sustainable, self-supporting sphere in which people had specialist training not necessarily found elsewhere in early modern Sweden. The De la Gardies and their employees achieved it by forming learning relationships at the individual level, while systematizing their efforts, creating an educational system similar to that of the guilds, with masters, journeymen, and apprentices. They also employed large numbers of boys who were supposedly the apprentices' juniors.

When there were insufficient numbers of specialists or when their skills did not meet the high expectations of the aristocratic families, experts were imported from abroad. They were not only tasked with realizing the aristocracy's lavish lifestyle, but also with transferring their knowledge and skills to a new generation. Yet we must be careful not to think in terms of a structured, well-functioning system for training and education. There were many disruptions such as masters or apprentices not being paid, a lack of much-needed materials, and experts walking out or refusing to fulfil their obligations: the

126 Our estimate is based on an average of 50 employees in an aristocratic household and 30 aristocratic households among the various members of the De la Gardie, Oxenstierna, Stenbock, Bonde, Ryning, Sparre, Banér, Horn, Torstensson, Brahe, Soop, Posse, Kagg, Båth, and Tott families; for the number of students, see Bertilsson, *Fribetstida policyskapande*, 110–111.

shortcomings of an estate organization, in other words. Magnus Gabriel De la Gardie, like other Swedish aristocrats, seemed keen to employ foreign experts to help create an aristocratic environment in the latest European fashion. However, it is surprising to find that these important participants in the cultural, social, and political developments of the day were treated like any other servants when being paid—or not being paid—what had been promised.

The work done by gardeners, landscape architects, sculptors, painters, and the like suggests there was an integrated system of masters, journeymen, and apprentices, and that boys played a vital role, providing their masters with new talent and help, and of course the option of training them. The boys' presence also stood in stark contrast to the almost total absence of girls, showing that whatever the educational system it was highly gendered. Even though the De la Gardie family were petitioned by numerous women, there was no evidence of girls or women asking for an education themselves, or any other form for betterment, neither did any of them ask for support for other women. Women used their petitions to ask for help for men.

6

THE MOBILITY OF SERVANTS

Networks and knowledge

'There is no doubt His Grace will always remember your diligence and loyalty in this in some good advancement'.[1] These were the words of Bishop Johannes Rudbeck in November 1632 to his protégé Mattias Björnklou (1607–1671). The son of a miller, a profession that gave him his nickname Mylonius, he was about to be hired to tutor 10-year-old Magnus Gabriel De la Gardie, and according to the bishop it could well be the first step in a successful career. Rudbeck was right. Supported by the De la Gardie family, and later the Chancellor of the Realm Axel Oxenstierna, Mylonius had a remarkable career in diplomacy, was appointed to the Council of the Realm, and took the surname Björnklou when he was ennobled in 1646.

In his letter to Mylonius, Rudbeck assumed there was a chance of advancement and that Mylonius' path to success was to be diligent and loyal to the count—that he should know his place. From what we have seen of the De la Gardie sphere it is clear Rudbeck knew what he was talking about, as the research on other Swedish aristocratic households bears out.[2] While Mylonius was perhaps the most striking example, there were other De la Gardie servants who made successful careers. Per Larsson Höök, the son of a local administrator in Uppland, learned bookkeeping and worked for Ebba Brahe, later leasing one of her younger son's ironworks and making such a success of it he went up in the world and was ultimately ennobled.[3] Several members

1 RA, Mattias Björnklous saml. E3269, Johannes Rudbeckius to Mattias Mylonius Björnklou, Stockholm 24 Nov. 1632: 'är ock ingen twiffuwlsmål at ther i edher flÿt och trooheet i thetta HGN woorde bewÿsande någhon god promotion altÿd ihugkommande'.
2 Norrhem, *Uppkomlingarna*.
3 Norrhem, *Ebba Brahe*, 144–145.

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of the same families worked their way up the social ladder thanks to their connections with the De la Gardie family. Take the Quensels, for example: Wilhelm Johan Quensel (1648–1727), who started off as a clerk and was later a secretary, was on Magnus Gabriel's recommendation appointed a district judge on Åland in 1683, ending up as a judge in the Court of Appeal in Åbo (Turku) in 1719; and Conrad Quensel worked for Jacob De la Gardie as a clerk and a secretary and later served Magnus Gabriel.[4] Of the Breitholtzes, Claes Breitholtz (1620–1706) arrived in Stockholm from Reval in 1637 and worked for Jacob and Magnus Gabriel De la Gardie until at least 1651, and his son Carl was Magnus Gabriel's page in 1678 and was promoted to chamber gentleman the following year. Both father and son went on to successful military careers, and when Magnus Gabriel led the defence of Bohuslän, Dalsland, and Västergötland in the war against Denmark (1676–1677), Claes Breitholtz was one of his commanding officers.[5]

A multitude of examples show how aristocrats across Europe helped their clients and promoted their careers in various ways and by various means.[6] Swedish families such as the Oxenstiernas, Brahes, Gyllenstiernas, and, yes, the De la Gardies were no different. Magnus Gabriel funded the education of peasants' sons who could later be hired as tutors, and used personal recommendations to help people advance in other parts of society, for example in the legal system.[7] While these individuals were rarely the dregs of the workforce, they still showed how careers could develop by working their way up an aristocratic household with their master's support. Sometimes they were examples of what Fairchilds calls 'the well-born but penniless young man who entered the household of a great lord in expectation of protection and advancement'.[8] Some were not born into privilege, having been chosen at an early age because of some skill or talent, and helped to an education and career opportunities.[9] Fairchilds notes that in early modern France 'domestic service had always been a pathway of social mobility' for those kinds of servants. In the sixteenth century, such success had been limited to servants of good birth, while the vast majority 'did not dream of having anything more'. That was to change by the eighteenth century, when ancien régime servants were more socially ambitious. 'Many higher servants—secretaries, tutors, and cooks, for

4 *SBL*, s.v. 'Quensel, släkt' by Lars-Olof Skoglund & Andreas Tjerneld.

5 *SBL*, s.v. 'Breitholtz, släkt'; Norrhem, *Ebba Brahe*, 78.

6 Norrhem, *Uppkomlingarna*, 51–57, 72–77; Hakanen, 'Career opportunities', 107–112; Rystad, 'Clientage', 132; Mousnier, *Institutions of France*, 106; Ranum, *Richelieu*, 32; Questier, *Catholicism and Community*, 473–498; Sarasohn, "I am my lords scholar', 289–295; Jackson, *Courtier, Scholar*, 201; Thiessen, 'Patronagekultur'; Press, 'Patronat und Klientel', 22–23, 30–31.

7 *SBL*, s.v. 'Eric Benzelius d.ä.'; LUB, Dlg vol. 89:2 Eneman b408–413.

8 Fairchilds, *Domestic Enemies*, 59–60.

9 Norrhem, *Uppkomlingarna*, 36–40, 44–45.

example—even hoped for social recognition as respectable members of the bourgeoisie', according to Fairchilds, who at the same time concludes that domestic service as a pathway to social mobility was at best a gamble.[10]

In what follows we examine the De la Gardie sphere in the light of Fairchild's claim, asking whether advancement through the intricate structures of an aristocratic household was possible, and, if so, whether the potential for promotion existed on more than one level of the household hierarchy. We discuss the conditions of mobility, but also what mobility and advancement may have meant. The question of terminology is significant, and calls for us to be alert to the differences between groups of servants in what they considered advancement. Bishop Rudbeck did not mention 'knowledge', 'competence', or 'skill' as a route to success, only the personal approach. How should that be interpreted? We know the value placed on competence was a factor in recruitment and employment, and we know the same was true of mobility. So what part did the De la Gardie sphere, with its organizational hierarchy, play in learning, knowledge circulation, and skills development, and which servants could advance owing to such knowledge and skill? Covering a large geographical area, the De la Gardie sphere also calls for an analysis that extends beyond social mobility to geographical movement and the joint impact on employees.

What was a career?

Analysing the records of the Stockholm households of Jakob and Magnus Gabriel De la Gardie (1635–1686), we have identified 124 employees who remained in service for more than five years and how their careers progressed.[11] A job change is here defined as changing one job title for another, while promotion involves improved material circumstances in the form of a pay rise and better clothing, food, or living arrangements, though one weakness with this definition is that other possible benefits, such as better working conditions, perks, or higher status, are not accounted for.[12]

10 Fairchilds, *Domestic Enemies*, 61.

11 We have not included 31 masters and craftsmen who worked more than 5 years, because they were specialists who had already reached the top of their profession. Arguably they should be included as having advanced from apprentice to journeyman to master, but since we do not know if they trained in the De la Gardie sphere we have decided to exclude them.

12 When assessing careers we have limited ourselves to the records for Jacob and Magnus Gabriel De la Gardie's households in Stockholm alone from 1635 to 1686, resulting in a total of 1,289 names (1,227 male and 62 female), though we do not know how many were unique individuals, especially as most people were known by their first name only. By combining sources—recommendations, petitions, financial accounts—we can identify 124 servants and follow them over several years, and thus analyse advancement in the De la Gardie household in Stockholm. Those whose careers took them to other parts of the De la Gardie sphere or who left it altogether are thus not included in this book.

TABLE 6.1 Servants in the households of Jacob De la Gardie and Magnus Gabriel De la Gardie, 1635–1686

Employer	*Employed >5 years*	*Changed job*	*Changed job & pay rise*
J De la Gardie	39	8 (21%)	7 (18%)
MG De la Gardie	85	31 (36%)	26 (31%)
Total	124	39 (31%)	33 (27%)

Another drawback is that it does not include servants who advanced by moving from the household to another part of the De la Gardie sphere, or who left the De la Gardie sphere altogether to seek their fortune elsewhere (Table 6.1).

Compared to Jacob De la Gardie's household, far more servants known to have changed job in Magnus Gabriel's household saw their salaries increase (31 per cent as opposed to 18 per cent). Of the possible explanations, it seems likely the greater number of positions in Magnus Gabriel's household was the key factor. Of the 124 servants who changed jobs, the vast majority did so only once, though this was the bare minimum who managed to better themselves by changing jobs.[13] We know that many servants moved from the household to other parts of the De la Gardie sphere, for example the lackey Stefan Staffansson who in March 1666 became *husvaktare* (keeper) of Jakobsdal.[14] There were also those who moved to take up positions outside the De la Gardie sphere, such as the lackeys Hans Hansson and Gustaf Olsson who joined the royal guard.[15] However, many in this group remain invisible, even though judging by sources such as petitions and financial accounts we know that such movement was common and the advancement rate was likely greater than recorded here. Moreover, it is important to note that these numbers only relate to the De la Gardie household, where most employees were domestic servants, and not the family estates, which was where the majority of employees in the De la Gardie sphere worked. What the findings would be from a similar analysis of estate workers is impossible to say. We know there was movement between De la Gardie estates and it sometimes involved promotion, but there were fewer positions to advance to at the family estates compared to the household in Stockholm.

13 Of Magnus Gabriel's servants, 7 (8 per cent) changed title at least twice, of whom one did so three times and another four times. Some may have been asked to leave and ended up destitute; others may have worked elsewhere in the De la Gardie sphere or left it for other households. Nothing is known of those who worked fewer than four years.

14 RA, MGDLG E1663, Lönestater 1662–1666. Other examples are the *tennknekt* (pewterer) Johan Andersson who became the manciple at Jakobsdal and the groom Olof Rakus who became an overseer at Jakobsdal (RA, MGDLG E1662, Avlöningsböcker 1654–1658).

15 RA, MGDLG E1662, Avlöningsböcker 1654–1658.

Assessing to what extent an early modern servant actually advanced is tricky given the many methodological pitfalls. When in 1664 Håkan the lackey became a copyist in the counting house 'ex gratia', did that count as a career move? The 'ex gratia' implied it was done as a kindness, so it may have been something Håkan had asked for and in his eyes was a positive move. However, in the years following 1664 there was no trace of Håkan and we do not know why. Was he a failure as a copyist? Did he move on to other work? If so, did his circumstances improve? Håkan's case is typical of the problems of trying to measure the career possibilities for servants in the De la Gardie sphere. Many people, like Håkan, entered service, worked for a couple of years, and then vanished.

Another methodological issue is what specific job titles actually meant. A case in point was Johan Roman, who first appeared in the De la Gardie sphere in 1670 as a 'sjungarepojke', a boy who sings. From there he went on to be 'musicantpage' in 1672, implying that he was still very young, and then a 'musicant' in 1673.[16] So far, so straightforward: he was a musician working his way up the hierarchy. However, between 1677 and 1680 his job title changed to valet.[17] At least so it seems, but in a scribbled note from 1679 he was also mentioned as a 'musicant'.[18] The confusion continued when he petitioned the count as 'a valet', but complained that he saw no future as a musician and asked to become a clerk.[19] The job title of valet may not suggest he actually was a musician, especially since he had switched job title from musician to valet at one stage. Johan Roman's example is a reminder not to assume that a change in job title necessarily meant a change in job.[20]

Despite the challenges in assessing the nature of promotion, it is possible to draw some conclusions. First, it was not just the well-born young men Fairchilds speaks of who advanced; the not so well-born did too. A clear majority of those whose changed job title came with a pay rise were lower-status male servants: rider, lackeys, stable lads, *kuskar* (postilions), and stable boys. Second, most of the pay rises were modest, despite being high in percentage terms. A lackey who became a rider increased his annual salary from 20 rdr annually to 30 rdr, while a postilion could double his salary from 30 rdr to 60 rdr if he was made the horse marshal, which was a supervisory position in the stables. Third, professional mobility was commonest among administrators and stable staff, but the group who changed profession most often was the lackeys.

16 RA, MGDLG E1661, Hovstatsräkenskaper.
17 RA, MGDLG E1661 Hovstatsräkenskaper.
18 RA, MGDLG E1661, Hovstatsräkenskaper.
19 RA, De la Gardieska samlingen E1656, Sammandrag av brev och suppliker till M. G. De la Gardie med resolutionspåteckningar, Huvudsakligen 1670-talet.
20 In 1683 Johan Roman left De la Gardie to join the royal Swedish orchestra. He married in 1693 and died in 1720. He was the father of the composer Johan Helmich Roman, often referred to as the father of Swedish music. See Kjellberg, *Kungliga musiker*, 475.

While administrators tended to stay in the administration and most of the stable staff had careers in the stables, lackeys could move in many directions. In the 50 years between 1635 and 1686, lackeys went on to work in the administration or the stables, others became cupbearers or *jägardräng* (hunters), and at least two became personal valets to the count. The latter saw one of the largest increases in annual salary: from 50 rdr to 450 rdr. Another servant who enjoyed a significant jump in salary was Pelle Båtspik who began as a kitchen boy in 1670, and by 1677 was a personal cook (though not a head cook). His annual salary rose from 30 rdr in 1670 to 150 rdr in 1677.

The payrolls cannot tell us how the servants themselves understood advancement, however. For some, any job in an aristocratic household might have been a career peak and the height of their ambition. It might not have been a failure to stay put, not advancing through the ranks of the household. Similarly, we cannot know if some ostensibly lowly positions were in fact desirable, perhaps because they offered sought-after perks that are not reflected in the sources.[21]

Advancement and social mobility

Using career as a concept, we highlight changes in employment over a longer period, using the De la Gardie payrolls to identify individuals who seem to have bettered themselves. Yet, a career itself is an anachronism and does not appear in the sources to describe how servant experienced their situation; the word of choice then was *avancera*, to advance. Just as De la Gardie servants knew it was possible to ask for and receive an education, they knew that servants could and did advance. Hence Brÿniel Torbiörnsson's promotion from lackey to groom in 1665, or Mats Matsson, a man of humble origins and former servant to someone in the De la Gardie circle, who applied for the vacant position of Magnus Gabriel's comptroller, because he wished to advance to a higher position than the one he then held.[22] Some thought advancement between aristocratic households, even those with tenuous family connections, perfectly feasible. Similar promotions were also evident in the De la Gardie financial accounts of 1665–1666, in which several people were marked for advancement: two valets, two grooms, a personal cook, a German copyist, and a chamber gentleman. By 1668, all but the German copyist were gone, but where they went and whether it was a promotion is not known.[23]

21 Examples from English households included cast-off clothes, leftovers from the kitchen, and vails (tips). Richardson, *Household servants*, 86–89; Ben-Amos, 'Gifts and Favors', 310–312. We have no such examples, but cannot rule them out.

22 RA, MGDLG E1663, Lönestater 1662–1666: 'Avanceradt till hoffrÿttare'; RA, MGDLG E1643, Mats Matsson to MG De la Gardie, n.d.: 'bliva avancerat'. Mats Matsson had been in the service of Kerstin Kurck, a *kammarpiga* (chambermaid) to Princess Katarina and the stepdaughter of Sofia De la Gardie, Magnus Gabriel's first cousin.

23 RA, MGDLG E1660, Hovstatsräkenskaper.

Turning to the question of gender, we can draw on the example of English elite households, where men were more likely to be promoted in large households and women—who more often worked in smaller households—had fewer opportunities, as Tim Meldrum has established.[24] In the De la Gardie households, men had more chances of advancement than women; in fact, the sources give little indication that women could have careers. One explanation was there were far more jobs for men in the aristocratic sphere. Not only was there a greater variety of jobs, but there were more multiples: there were between six and eight lackeys at any given time in Magnus Gabriel and Maria Euphrosyne's household and a similar number of pages and postilions. Many other jobs such as riders, halberdiers, and cooks usually required several at a time. In contrast, the female side had only few positions and the majority were one woman per position. The job market and job transfers were far more limited for women than for men. Further, not only was Maria Euphrosyne's household small, it was highly hierarchical. The top positions were only open to women of noble birth, but even among the lower-ranking positions there are no examples of any movement, although the sources do not allow a conclusive answer. It is difficult to follow women over time since they are mentioned by name so rarely, and, like the lower-ranking men, more often than not only by their given names.

While the De la Gardie sphere offered fewer job opportunities for women, there were other gender-specific differences. Having children may have been one gender-related issue in the early modern society, as was illustrated by the woman who wished to be Ebba Brahe's maid, and who offered to give up her children to get the job.[25] Sofia Juliana Forbus remarked of a woman she recommended for a job at the royal court—and who was handsome and 'snel' (quick-witted)—that she had only one child, who was in the East Indies.[26] Children were not always an obstacle, though. For some jobs, housekeeper being one, being married and having children was something of a requirement.[27] Anna Andersdotter who worked at the Main House was not only married but had three sons.[28] Marina Schmeltzer, a former chamber woman to Maria Euphrosyne, also had children; in an undated petition from the

24 Meldrum, *Domestic Service*, 206.

25 RA, Ericsbergsarkivet: Ebba Brahes godshandlingar, vol. 9, Skrivelser till Ebba Brahe och sekreteraren Getrop.

26 LUB, DLG Släkt, vol. 123:1, Axel Julius De la Gardie and Sofia Juliana Forbus, Sofia Juliana Forbus to Axel Julius De la Gardie, 16 Mar. 1697.

27 For example, Anna who was married to 'husvaktaren' or keeper Bengt Biörsson (RA, MGDLG E1661); Kerstin Jonsdotter was widowed (RA, MGDLG E1622); the anonymous wife of Lars Axelsson, *vaktmästare* (doorkeeper) at the Main House in 1682–1683 was a housekeeper (RA, MGDLG E1642); and the wife of Tomas Ericksson who was in charge of Ekholmen was also a housekeeper (RA, MGDLG E1661, draft MG De la Gardie 20 May 1651).

28 RA, MGDLG E1621, Anna Andersdotter to MG De la Gardie, n.d.

1650s when Magnus Gabriel was still Lord High Treasurer, Marina asked for a vacant position as a copyist in the royal exchequer for her son.[29]

Advancement was often connected to geography. Nils Rase, who began as a rider and in 1665 was made a halberdier, was stationed seven years later at Karlberg Palace on the outskirts of Stockholm as its commandant.[30] It was only a short distance from Main House as the crow flew, but a long way from where Nils started less than a decade earlier. Studies of servants' mobility have observed that people were prepared to move from one position to the next, sometimes frequently, but not between different estates owned by the same employer.[31] Clearly, for some, the geographical movement was due to them getting a new job.[32] In a draft letter of 20 May 1651, Magnus Gabriel announced he needed a trustworthy person to be the new overseer at his barony of Ekholmen. Surprisingly, he chose to appoint Tomas Eriksson, his head cook in Stockholm, to a job that included overseeing the harvest and building work—as well as cooking for Magnus Gabriel whenever he visited. His reason was that Tomas was honest and sensible, and so it proved because in 1653 Tomas was combining all his different duties, and at the same time his wife had been appointed housekeeper at Ekholmen. Husband and wife were thus high-ranking officials at the estate, paid by the count and with a farmstead to call home.[33] It might seem a success story, but in the early 1660s Tomas Eriksson was one of the many employees who wrote to complain that he had received no pay for 1660 or 1661, even though he was supposed to get 100 rdr.[34] He was in straitened circumstances and needed the count to intervene so he could be paid, as he had been in service a long time.[35] His case exemplified how advancement was not necessarily the long-term improvement it first seemed.

Somebody who had worked at least five family estates in the De la Gardie sphere was Jonas Svensson Röding. When he like many others was dismissed after Magnus Gabriel's death, Maria Euphrosyne wrote in her letter of recommendation that Jonas had been 'notably loyal', diligent, untiring, and careful. Most recently he had worked as an accountant, keeping track of

29 RA, MGDLG E1621, Marina Schmeltzer to MG De la Gardie, n.d.

30 RA, MGDLG E1660, Hovstatsräkenskaper (1665).

31 See, for example, Richardson, *Household servants*, 74–77; Fairchilds, *Domestic enemies*, 68–69.

32 This sort of mobility was not unique for people in Magnus Gabriel and Maria Euphrosyne's service, and among Jacob De la Gardie's servants we see a similar pattern, see LUB, DLG Släkt, vol. 11:2, Handlingar rörande Jakob Pontusson De la Gardie. Thus Anders Oluffsson was hired as a clerk in 1643, advanced to bookkeeper six years later, and was sent as a bookkeeper to Livonia in Apr. 1652. The rider Bengt Skånsboo was hired in 1644 and served until 1651, but at one point was a bailiff at Jacobsdal. The carpenter Nils Arvidsson worked at Runsa from 1638 but was then moved to Jacobsdal in 1641.

33 RA, MGDLG E1661, draft MG De la Gardie 20 May 1651: 'ärlig och förståndig'.

34 RA, MGDLG E1660, Hovstatsräkenskaper (1660).

35 RA, MGDLG E1641, Tomas Ericksson to MG De la Gardie, n.d.

foodstuffs and building materials at Kägleholm, and before that as a halberdier and commandant at Jakobsdal, Ekholmen, Venngarn, and Karlberg, and, having achieved much in his 15 years' service. Someone added in the margin that Jonas had actually had been in the family's service for 31 years.[36] Either way, what these recommendation letters and others highlighted were qualities such as honesty and faithfulness, not competence.

It is impossible to say with any certainty whether the mobility described above was voluntary. Among the De la Gardie petitions, a few indicated that not all employees were thrilled to have to move. The gardener Mattias Eriksson, on being informed by one of Magnus Gabriel's administrators he would be transferred to Venngarn from his then workplace in Stockholm, asked to have the move postponed at least a year, though he did not give a reason.[37] By contrast, some employees asked to move within the De la Gardie sphere. Seeing a possibility for advancement, Per Bengtsson asked to be considered for a job as a gardener in Livonia he had heard about.[38] The postilion (and former stable boy) Bengt Jonsson and his parents shared a farm in Härene near De la Gardie's town of Lidköping, in the county of Läckö, and now Bengt wished to get married, so he asked for a job as a rider in the area.[39]

The petitions from one Lars Christoffersson reveal a good deal about a servant's fortunes in good times and bad. Born at Traneberg, an estate then owned by Ture Turesson Natt och Dag (1626–1660) and his wife Karin Stake (1641–1709), Lars had been in their service since childhood. After 19 years, lately as a cook, and without learning much in the process, he asked to be dismissed to seek his fortune elsewhere. Since Traneberg, which bordered to the county of Läckö, was bought by Magnus Gabriel in 1666 he decided to try his luck with the De la Gardies. In one petition he offered his services as a cook, having heard the current one was old and unfit.[40] He must have been successful, since in a later petition he thanked Magnus Gabriel for his kindness in taking him on (presumably as a cook since that was the job title he used when signing the petition) and providing him with a cadastral unit. Yet a third petition in the 1670s found him as cook at Läckö Castle, but also involved in the tavern, possibly running it. He got the count to forbid the sale of beer at the castle, presumably so that Lars would have no competition. He was given the use of

36 LUB, DLG Släkt, vol. 100, Handlingar rörande Maria Euphrosyne De la Gardie: 'synnerligen trogen'.

37 RA, MGDLG E1642, Mattias Eriksson to MG De la Gardie, n.d.

38 RA, MGDLG E1642, Per Bengtsson to MG De la Gardie, n.d.

39 RA, MGDLG E1642, Bengt Jonsson to MG De la Gardie, n.d. Many noble estates, Magnus Gabriel De la Gardie among them, had 'ryttarhemman' (cadastral units which paid for a rider), hence Bengt's request.

40 RA, MGDLG E1641, Lars Christophersson to MG De la Gardie, n.d.: 'mig för en kock låtit bruka', 'emedan såsom jag har sett mig till min tid erhållande icke stort har kunna förkovra'.

a meadow where guests could turn out their horses to graze.[41] Things seemed to be going reasonably well for him, combining cooking for his master when he visited and running the tavern otherwise. The parish sources for Otterstad on Kållandsö record a Master Lars Christopherson, cook, having given 3 dr sm to the church in 1676, confirming his higher position.[42] At some point after 1680, when Magnus Gabriel had lost control of Läckö and was in a weaker position, Lars wrote again, this time for a recommendation to an assistant judge, Polykarpus Cronhielm, who was in charge of the Great Reduction process in the county. Magnus Gabriel could only act as a go-between so we do not know the outcome of Lars's request to be the Läckö Castle doorkeeper, which would allow him to continue to take care of the houses at 'Krogen' (the tavern), which he claimed would otherwise succumb to rot and damage.[43]

Some employees changed their jobs more than once over their working lives in the De la Gardie sphere, as was the case for Sven Mörk. Sven was first hired as a lackey in 1678 and according to Maria Euphrosyne, who wrote a letter of recommendation for him in January 1687, he had gone on from lackey to *hovfurir* (harbinger) and then halberdier, a position that he held until 1687.[44] Some like Peter Pålack were in service for years but had only modest careers. Pålack (his surname implied he was Polish) went from riding lad to stable lad—low-ranking positions—before being promoted to horse marshal. Seniority and more than 30 years in De la Gardie's service did not protect him from ending up poor and homeless, as described in a letter from another of De la Gardie's employees; however, he did have some support from Maria Euphrosyne, who wrote a letter of recommendation for him after Magnus Gabriel's death.[45]

Among the petitions to Magnus Gabriel were examples where servants tried to navigate their way to different positions. Nearly a hundred petitions concerned professional mobility, including applications for a new job, either from an unemployed individual with connections to the De la Gardie household, or from an existing employee who wished to change job. On a general level, the petitions confirm that change and mobility was considered possible

41 RA, MGDLG E1618, Skrivelser till MG De la Gardie, Studerande, rättssökande och fångar, Lars Christophersson to MG De la Gardie, n.d.

42 RA, Otterstads kyrkoarkiv, Födelse- och dopböcker, SE/GLA/13420/C/1 (1684–1716).

43 RA, MGDLG E1641, Lars Christophersson to MG De la Gardie, n.d.

44 LUB, DLG Släkt, vol. 100, Handlingar rörande Maria Euphrosyne De la Gardie.

45 LUB, DLG Släkt, vol. 89:3, Brev till MG De la Gardie, Henrich Herzog to MG De la Gardie 9 July 1684; ArkivDigital, www.arkivdigital.se Boupptecknings, s.v. 'Peter Pålack', according to his probate inventory Peter Pålack died 1692 leaving a widow, Brita Nilsdotter, and two sons, Anders and Lars. The probate inventory was dated 1704 but Pålack was still referred to as Magnus Gabriel De la Gardie's former horse marshal. His property consisted of a small house in Stockholm, which had already been sold, and after his debts were paid his family was left with 133 rdr.

and sometimes necessary. No one was guaranteed a job, as was apparent to those 'not on the list' even though they had previously worked for the De la Gardies.[46] Many of the petitions were from unemployed individuals or servants who had heard about vacancies, giving the impression that such positions were advertised in some manner, if only by word of mouth among people who moved in the De la Gardie sphere.[47] The wealth of examples suggests there was a very real sense of a De la Gardie sphere among its employees, and that they were not averse to moving to secure work. The examples are also evidence of the De la Gardie sphere's infrastructure for information and knowledge circulation, and that employees had access to it, negotiating life in this particular knowledge community.

Recruitment in context

Inextricably linked to the question of careers and advancement was that of recruitment. The process of recruiting servants for the estate organization can be examined from various angles. One was access to labour—not easy to determine for the period but still worth considering. Another was the concerns articulated by the heads of households in their correspondence, both about a general lack of suitable recruits and a more specific lack of competence in specific groups of servants, which can speak to the aristocracy's experience of staff recruitment in a limited market. A third is geographical mobility and its part in the recruitment process, especially in different areas of the wider De la Gardie sphere that extended overseas to the Swedish territories in the Baltic region. Specific requirements (skill, dedication, reliability, nimbleness, self-sufficiency, and the like) and the practical circumstances were key—in identifying and recruiting the people they needed, the aristocracy relied on recommendations and internal recruitment, along with personal initiatives from existing servants who asked to change job, while for the Baltic estates there was the habit of 'sending over' good servants, as we will see.

The literature on early modern Sweden shows that unmarried servants moved more often than the general population, but that most servants moved only short distances to find work.[48] While there is some agreement that the reason for servant mobility was the one-year contracts which made life less stable, there is less consensus about the mobility patterns of the Swedish population as a whole. Some have claimed that 'remaining in the village of birth was no general feature of early modern Swedish society', while others point to a more general stability except for marriage or servants with

46 RA, MGDLG E1641, Jonas Esbjörnsson to MG De la Gardie, n.d.

47 For example RA, MGDLG E1641, Jonas Hansson, Arvid Oluffsson, Oluff Eriksson, Mikael Swänsson, Bengt [Silverkammarpojke], and Swen Oluffsson.

48 Andersson, *Migration*, 117–119, 148.

one-year contracts.[49] Jan Mispelaere and Jonas Lindström make the point that geographical mobility varied according to social status—people forced to work to make a living were more likely to be mobile—and while one consequence could be expanded social networks, as in aristocratic peregrinations and the servant migration, it may also have resulted in the loss of social connections and community, impacting directly on servants and poorer groups in society.[50]

Another aspect was how long servants stayed in service with the same employer. For England, Ann Kussmaul and Ilana Krausman Ben-Amos have found that servants moved often, usually every year.[51] The simple explanation, says Kussmaul, was that contracts hardly ever ran for longer than a year and servants could move easily because they rarely had many possessions.[52] A study of the Tynnelsö estate in Sweden between 1581 and 1600 bears this out, as few employees remained there longer than a year.[53] In the De la Gardie sphere, though, many employees seem to have stayed on for longer. Judging by Jacob De la Gardie's household (1635–1652), at least 46 per cent of his male servants stayed longer than three years; a similar estimate of Magnus Gabriel's household (1645–1686) shows a significantly lower proportion, but even so 22.5 per cent of his servants are known to have stayed on at least three years. Specialists such as cordwainers, farriers, barbers, and high-ranking officials such as the chief steward often remained with De la Gardies for years, but the same was also true of administrative staff in the Main House office or counting house, and for cooks, categories of staff where many remained for more than five years. Strikingly, servants who joined the household as lackeys often stayed on for many years, whether they advanced through the ranks or not.

Looking at the correspondence and deliberations about recruitment, the main worry was not only the perceived lack of possible servants, but of competent and reliable candidates. According to the manuals of the time, the ideal servant was humble, obedient, diligent, honest, loyal, and pious, but complaints about the difficulty of finding good servants echo down the ages.[54] The Swedish *legostadga* of 1664 summed it up, opening with a list of grievances about the high wages, unwillingness, and general lack of adherence to rules and regulations that characterized service.[55] Sweden's aristocrats and their household managers were little different in their response to the 'servant problem'.[56]

49 Gaunt quoted in Andersson, *Migration*, 26; see also Andersson, *Migration*, 25–26.
50 Mispeleare & Lindström, 'En plats att leva på', 91–92.
51 Ben-Amos, *Adoloescence*, 152–153, 69–70; Kussmaul, *Servants in Husbandry*, 55.
52 Kussmaul, *Servants in Husbandry*, 55.
53 Pihl, *Arbete*, 183–185.
54 Richardson, *Household Servants*, 129; Cousin, *Hwszdräng*, 2, 13–16; Harnesk, *Legofolk*, 187.
55 *Kongl. May:tz Stadga*.
56 Richardson, *Household Servants*, 175–180; Fairchilds, *Domestic enemies*, 144–147.

The correspondence between Sofia Juliana Forbus (in Stockholm) and her husband Count Axel Julius De la Gardie (stationed in Reval in Estonia) about recruiting a new cook for him gives a detailed view of their daily business, and particularly their relations with their servants and their opinions on staff recruitment and desirable qualities, or lack thereof. The main issue seems to have been Josef the head cook, who according to Axel Julius was incompetent. Trying her best to accommodate his wishes, Sofia Juliana answered Axel Julius in September 1691 about filling various positions and concluded that she would try to find a new cook, but there were few competent ones to be had.[57] The passage offers insights into Sofia Juliana's understanding of the situation. In the absence of a decent alternative, she urged her husband to hang on to his current cook while they searched for a new one. She also gave her opinion on the job market, explaining that failing all else the good cooks would work for *gårkök* (cookshops), street stalls which sold cooked food.[58] She had identified some candidates, but she called them 'trollen' (trolls), considering them less than reliable and, worse, likely to smoke tobacco. We can see the contours of a recruitment process where there was a pool of general staff but competition for knowledgeable employees. People who were good at what they did had options, at least in the case of cooks.[59]

In May 1692 Sofia Juliana wrote again, irritated at how difficult it was to find a decent gardener but relieved to have found in 'mester Petter' a potential candidate to be Axel Julius' cook. Petter was married to their blacksmith's widow and had previously worked for the aristocrat Lars Fleming (1621–1699). He was based in Stockholm but could be sent to Reval if Axel Julius so desired.[60] The details indicate the weight they gave to known connections: by his marriage and past employment, Petter was associated with people Sofia Juliana and Axel Julius knew and trusted. It was not the end of the matter, however, because though Petter seems to have been hired it can only have been for a brief period. The hunt continued, with complaints about how hard it was to find someone prepared to move to Estonia. Axel Julius expressed his extreme displeasure with the whole business, claiming that his cook was odd and obstinate and could not cook fish. A cook named Anders was discussed as a possibility because he was willing to move, but he

57 LUB, DLG Släkt, vol. 123:1, Axel Julius De la Gardie och hans hustru Sofia Juliana Forbus, Sofia Juliana Forbus to Axel Julius De la Gardie, 11 Sept. 1691: iagh skal och giöra min största flit at höra effter en kock, men här är öwer alla mottan ont effter den som godh är, ty äre de nogon godh kock har han ingen tienst, so setter han sey ner till at bli gårkok alt so beer iagh min hiertans herre inte sleper mester Josep fören han får nogon annan, ty gudh weth hwilcken utaff die trollen icke dricker toback'.

58 *SAOB*, 'gårkök'; Jönsson & Tellström, *Från krog till krog*.

59 LUB, DLG Släkt, vol. 123:1, Axel Julius De la Gardie och hans hustru Sofia Juliana Forbus, Sofia Juliana Forbus to Axel Julius De la Gardie, Stockholm 15 Nov. 1691.

60 LUB, DLG Släkt, vol. 123:1, Axel Julius De la Gardie och hans hustru Sofia Juliana Forbus, Sofia Juliana Forbus to Axel Julius De la Gardie, Stockholm 10 May 1692.

was later ruled out when it was found he was a negligent drunk who always had to be told what to do. Another potential candidate was found and praised for his work for the noble landowner Mauritz Posse, but before long they were grinding their teeth again. A letter in June 1701 suggests that a decade on they were still trying and failing to find a good cook, and that the job market was by then even more hopeless for employers. Every good man had gone off to war and there were a hundred vacant positions and no one who wanted them, Sofia Juliana wrote to her husband.[61]

Axel Julius and Sofia Juliana may have been especially demanding, but their difficulties were still a sign that there were other more attractive forms of employment for staff. Their frequent allusions to the impossibility of finding someone prepared to move to Estonia show they limited their search to familiar places in Sweden, ignoring the Baltic or elsewhere. Other examples suggest employers actively competed for qualified staff. A case from 1665 involved one Margareta Hoof in Ösby and complications over *pigor* (maids) and female servants for Ebba Brahe's household, competing in the same sphere for the same servants.[62] It suggests aristocratic heads of households were faced with an employees' market and found suitably qualified staff hard to come by.

The geographical aspect of recruitment, as suggested in the examples above, warrants further consideration. Correspondence shows that employees were sent overseas to the Baltic estates, implying that the search for qualified staff was limited to mainland Sweden. Sending servants between different parts of the far-flung De la Gardie sphere was another known practice.[63] Ebba Brahe, for example, seems to have recruited staff for her Stockholm residence and other estates from the mining district of Bergslagen, where she had estates.[64] Margareta Hoof in Ösby in Västmanland was just one example, having been told by Ebba Brahe to find female servants for employment in Stockholm—a difficult business, which she described vividly in a letter in 1665. The goal was to find a 'snel' woman, an adjective that meant not only quick as in speedy, but also quick-witted and even the modern meaning of kind or benevolent. Margareta started with a handful of candidates, but one decided to get married and another, having been employed for a fortnight, was indeed 'snel' but also very forgetful and unable to remember what she had been told to do. The third was a good match, 'snel'

61 LUB, DLG Släkt, vol. 123:1, Axel Julius De la Gardie och hans hustru Sofia Juliana Forbus, Sofia Juliana Forbus to Axel Julius De la Gardie, Stockholm 12 June 1701.

62 RA, Ericsbergsarkivet, Ebba Brahes godshandlingar, vol. 5. Axholm (Skrivelser till Ebba Brahe och sekreteraren Getrop).

63 This pattern was not limited to the De la Gardie family, see Prytz, ' Life-Cycle servant', 104; Ferm, *De högadliga godsen*, 299.

64 In addition to the Ösby example, see RA, MGDLG E1382, Ebba Brahe to MG De la Gardie, Axholm 1 Aug. 1663.

and with a good memory, and although she had two children she was willing to outplace them so she could move to work in Stockholm. It would all have been much easier, Margareta concluded, if the countess had not demanded that the candidate had to be 'snel'.[65]

Ebba Brahe recruited from Bergslagen where she had ironworks and mines, and of her children Maria Sofia recruited from Sundholmen and Magnus Gabriel we know often recruited from his county of Läckö. Västergötland generally seems to have supplied other De la Gardie estates across the country with servants. The stable boy Lars, for example, originated from Västergötland but had been recruited to work for De la Gardie elsewhere. In a petition he asked permission to leave his work and move back home to collect his parental inheritance.[66] A gardener at Venngarn north of Stockholm complained he had little help now that the garden boys had gone back to Västergötland, suggesting that servants temporarily worked at De la Gardie estates in other regions.[67] The garden boy Pär Olofson wrote in 1671 to ask for new clothes, saying he was one of four garden boys sent from Västergötland to Stockholm four years before.[68] Origins mattered, as the schoolboy Bengt Swensson found out. When he asked for funding for his studies, Magnus Gabriel noted, 'It is impossible to help everyone', adding he needed information about who the boy was, who his father was, and where the boy had been born before he could decide.[69] Clearly the boy's background weighed heavily in the decision—and not being known to the count was a disadvantage.

Recruiting from regions well known to an employer, and perhaps even controlled by them, made it easier for them to ensure recruits lived up to their expectations of loyalty and obedience. Existing estate staff could vouch for people, as when Sven Mörk, the manager at Sundholmen, forwarded a request from a widow who wanted her daughter to enter Maria Sofia De la Gardie's service: the girl would most likely be to the countess's liking because she was 'snäll' and had a good reputation, Mörk wrote, adding that she struck him as biddable.[70]

Recruiting experts from further afield required more sophisticated contacts. In 1669, when Pontus Fredrik De la Gardie, as commandant of Malmö, was looking for an experienced chef, he turned to Gustaf Lilliecrona

65 RA, Ericsbergsarkivet: Ebba Brahes godshandlingar, vol. 9 Axholm, Skrivelser till Ebba Brahe och sekreteraren Getrop.
66 RA, MGDLG E1642, Lars Ryttare to MG De la Gardie, n.d.
67 RA, MGDLG E1642, Johan Bahrlin to MG De la Gardie, n.d.
68 RA, MGDLG E1642, Pär Olofsson to MG De la Gardie, n.d.
69 RA, MGDLG E1658, Sammandrag av bref och suppliker till M.G De la Gardie med resolutionspåteckningar.
70 LUB, DLG Släkt, Oxenstierna 1:1, Sven Mörk to Maria Sofia De la Gardie, Sundholmen 5 Sept. 1674: 'nådigt nöye', 'en snäl pÿga'.

who was Swedish envoy in nearby Copenhagen. Lilliecrona in turn contacted the restaurateur Crespie, who had extensive knowledge of the city's chefs. Crespie noted that virtually all good chefs were employed by the royal family, but that there was one who might be considered. This was a French chef who was already in employment, and who could not leave as long as his master paid his salary on time. He is, however, a very able and sober chef, Lilliecrona wrote to De la Gardie, and if his master could be persuaded to release him, the chef will agree to whatever terms De la Gardie can offer.[71]

Another way to check potential employees reliability was to ask for a *kaution* (surety)—written references. When one Johan Casimir applied for a vacant cashier's position in Magnus Gabriel De la Gardie's administration, he said he could supply a 'caution' if required.[72] Likewise, when Axel Julius De la Gardie's valet died in 1699, and recruiting a suitable replacement in Estonia proved difficult because of local drinking habits, he wrote to his wife telling her to look for someone sober who could provide a *kaution*.[73]

The matter of a gardener at Runsa revealed another issue. Anyone farming land within the *rå och rör* (metes and bounds) of a nobleman's estate had special obligations towards the estate's owner. Maria Sofia De la Gardie's manager at Sundholmen, Sven Mörk, suggested she should make use of her privileges by removing the gardener from Runsa and placing him at Sundholmen, which she could do because the gardener had been born within 'the metes and bounds' of Sundholmen and was 'thus in your grace's power, and bound to serve wherever your grace most graciously pleases'.[74] While petitioners could use being born on an employer's estate as a supporting argument, the same could be used by employers to coerce their employees. The power of the Swedish nobility to control their employees has not been sufficiently researched for us to know whether this was an exception or, as it indeed sounded in the letters, a manifest opportunity for anyone in Maria Sofia's position. As highlighted by Kenneth Johansson, early modern legal practice remains to be investigated.[75] This is also true for the question of de facto serfdom in early modern Sweden.

Although the De la Gardies preferred recruiting from within their own sphere, the brief mention of 'morianer' (Morians or Moors) in Magnus

71 RA, Skoklostersamlingen E8171a, Gustaf Lilliecrona to Pontus Fredrik De la Gardie, Copenhagen 8 Feb. 1669.

72 RA, MGDLG E1643, Johan Casimir to MG De la Gardie, n.d.: 'att caution ställa': see also LUB, DLG Släkt, Oxenstierna 1:1, Sven Mörk till Maria Sofia De la Gardie, Sundholmen 10 Jan. 1675.

73 LUB, DLG Släkt, vol. 123.2, Axel Julius De la Gardie to Sofia Juliana Forbus, 1 June 1699.

74 LUB, DLG Släkt, Oxenstierna 1:1, Sven Mörk till Maria Sofia De la Gardie, Sundholmen 1 Aug. 1674: 'rå och röö', 'altså under eders nådes höga macht och skyldigh at tiäna hvar eders nåde honom nådigst behagar'.

75 Johansson, 'Herrar och bönder'.

Gabriel's household draws attention to another aspect of the family's activities. Magnus Gabriel, his mother, and his sister Maria Sofia were all investors in the Swedish Africa Company (1649–1663), a short-lived venture that existed to capitalize on the transatlantic slave trade. Although enslaved non-European servants were common in many parts of Europe, and perhaps more so in the eighteenth century than the seventeenth, the direct evidence of the slave trade in the De la Gardie sphere was limited to two people, one of whom was employed as lackey between 1650 and 1655.[76]

When assessing somebody's competence, employers sometimes used probationary periods, as Margareta Hoof's search for a suitable maid showed. A similar example was that of Beniamin Larsson, who had approached Jacob De la Gardie, seemingly in person, to ask if he could be a rider based at Läckö. De la Gardie, unsure whether Beniamin was 'qualified', had used him as a *brevvisare* (postman) until the other riders at Läckö could judge whether he was capable of the job, and specifically whether he had the skills to be a rider.[77]

Sometimes, servants actively sought new positions in the household, showing an ambition to relocate. Hence the former lackey, cellarer, and halberdier, Jonas Hansson, who took the liberty to ask for yet another position, this time as a *stadsvaktmästare* (city constable) in Malmö, which he had heard was available.[78] Another former servant, Oluff Ericksson, contacted Magnus Gabriel about the vacant position of rider at one of the Höjentorp estate farms.[79] The example of Erik Mikaelsson at Ekholmen shows that movement was sometimes a necessity, not a choice. Erik had worked as a brickmaker for 30 years, but when the brickyard at Ekholmen was closed he had to find something else to do. Arguing that he had spent six years training to be a miller, he petitioned Magnus Gabriel for a job at Venngarn or another De la Gardie estate. He was duly made the miller at Venngarn, but with the

76 The anonymous 'morian' was employed as lackey and paid the same wages as the other lackeys. We do not know any of the circumstances around his presence in Sweden, where he came from, his age, or how he came to be a lackey. For the Swedish Africa Company and the slave trade, see Nováky, *Handelskompanier*, 174, 184–186; for non-European servants, see Richardson, *Household Servants*, 67–69; Fairchilds, *Domestic enemies*, 158–159; Díaz, 'Trade in Domestic Servants', 196, 200–204; Østhus, 'Slaver og ikke-europeiske tjenestefolk'.

77 LUB, DLG, Topographica, Läckö, vol. 48 (1651), Jacob De la Gardie, Jacobsdal 14 Nov. 1648: 'duglig', 'oansett vi inte veta om han är qualificerat att han som andre våra ryttare kan föreståå vår rusttjänst hava vi honom, likaväl i vår tjänst att bruka neder i vårt grevskap, och at resa våra ärender, antaget'; see also RA, MGDLG E1656, Sammandrag av brev och resolutioner till MG De la Gardie med resolutionspåteckningar, huvudsakligen 1670-tal, where the joiner Bengt Gunnarsson asked for tower work and was granted this on condition he was a capable person, 'finnes där til Capabel'.

78 RA, MGDLG E1641, Jonas Hansson to MG De la Gardie, n.d.

79 RA, MGDLG E1641, Oluff Eriksson to MG De la Gardie, n.d.

ominous proviso 'if he is capable'.[80] These and other examples reveal a system of recruitment where servants expected at least some mobility in the De la Gardie sphere.[81]

Judging by the petitions to Magnus Gabriel, servants repeatedly took the initiative to change their situation and kept track of vacant positions, either because they offered certain benefits or because they were simply a way out of unemployment. For it was not only servants already in employment who applied for work; some came from outside the organization, although those who had ties to the family made sure to mention them. Petitioning for the position of valet, the brother of a former De la Gardie estate employee detailed his brother's service, and added that he, like his brother, was skilled in wig care. He also noted that he had registered his application with the chief steward, suggesting there may have been certain routines for recruitment.[82] One Bengt Olofsson was not employed when he wrote his petition, but somehow it had still come to his attention that Erich the lackey had asked to leave his position; he had also heard that Magnus Gabriel showed kindness to the fatherless, especially those from the Västergötland region.[83] Another applicant who cited his experience, knowledge, and personal and geographical ties to convince Magnus Gabriel of his qualities was Mårten Olofsson, who wanted to be a rider at Läckö. He wrote about his father's 23 years as a *timmerman* (carpenter) at Läckö Castle, his own time as a soldier on campaign in Poland, Germany, and Norway, and that it was in the army he had learned all he needed to be a good rider.[84]

There was also evidence of the vulnerabilities in the system. One Oluf Torstensson wrote that he had been told he would be admitted into Magnus Gabriel's service, for which he was grateful, but he was concerned that now his former master (a field marshal) who had arranged it had died he, Oluf, might be forgotten and left without the promised position.[85] Anyone in service was susceptible to this. Future undertakings and assurances given by their master or mistress were personal, and could die with them. In Oluf's case, the servant seemingly tried to transfer responsibility onto his master-to-be. Whether he succeeded we do not know.

80 RA, MGDLG E1642, Erik Mickelsson to MG De la Gardie, n.d.: 'om han dett förstår'.

81 For more examples, see RA, MGDLG E1643, Anders Börjesson to MG De la Gardie, n.d.; and Oluff Eriksson to MG De la Gardie, n.d.

82 RA, MGDLG E1641, Sven Runggren to MG De la Gardie, n.d.

83 RA, MGDLG E1641, Bengt Olofsson to MG De la Gardie, n.d.

84 RA, MGDLG E1642, Mårten Oluffsson to MG De la Gardie; for similar example, see RA, MGDLG E1641, Per Person, Anders Bengtson Lundh, and Jon Jönsson to MG De la Gardie, n.d. but a.1660.

85 RA, MGDLG E1641, Oluf Torstensson to MG De la Gardie, n.d. He is mentioned in the 1672 accounts, but only for that single year.

Mobility and travel

Research from Sweden and Britain has shown that servants were not limited to the domestic sphere in their work or their social interactions.[86] Charmian Mansell adds that links to the wider community offered female servants a limited yet significant agency in their dealings with their employers.[87] Advice manuals encouraged servants to think that a certain degree of agency, as in a capacity for independent action, was something employers wished for.[88] The significance of geographical movement to Swedish servants was clear: it gave them the opportunity to meet employees at workplaces other than their own, to compare working conditions, and to network. They had to know how to make their own way around their district, region, or country, again in proof of their agency. While on the move they were largely free of the scrutiny of their superiors. Often they were entrusted with delivering important messages or valuable goods and had to act independently of their masters. When Bengt Jonsson was sent to deliver De la Gardie horses to Livonia and then on to Stockholm he was in charge of feeding them and looking after them on the sea crossing, but he also had to find his way over long distances and to communicate, and possibly negotiate, with the authorities, skippers, fodder merchants, and innkeepers and the estate staff at his final destination.[89]

Every employee belonged to either a De la Gardie household or one of the family estates, but that did not mean they were permanently stationed at a specific location. We have established that many male servants continued to move after having been recruited. Some moved frequently, others over long distances. From this continual mobility, servants gained experience in navigating the vast Swedish realm and sometimes abroad, interacting with people of other traditions and confessions, speaking foreign languages, and having to adjust to new circumstances. Household servants followed the count and his family whenever they changed residence, which they did regularly. Some employees were on the move delivering goods, packages, or letters as part of their job. Others moved from one De la Gardie workplace to the next because their job required it or, in the longer term, because they were promoted. In some cases they moved because they wished to; sometimes it seems it was non-negotiable.

A servant to Magnus Gabriel De la Gardie—or any other aristocrat—had to be ready to move, sometimes long distances and for long periods. Between 1640 and 1644 was he in Europe on his grand tour, and in 1646, he was sent on an embassy to Paris from which he returned in January 1647. He spent 1648 and part of 1649 commanding troops in Germany and for the remainder of 1649 and early 1650 he was governor general of Livonia, accompanied

86 Borenberg, *Tjänstefolk*, 182–186; Mansell 'Beyond the Home'.
87 Mansell, 'Beyond the Home'.
88 Cousin, *Hwszdräng*, 10.
89 RA, MGDLG E1642, Bengt Jonsson to MG De la Gardie, n.d.

by 49 servants.[90] Every time members of his household went with him. When De la Gardie again relocated to Riga to take up the position of governor general in 1655 he had a personal staff of 140 individuals, with all the usual occupational groups such as secretaries, chaplain, pages, lackeys, cooks, postilions, stable boys, hunters, riders, musicians, craftsmen, and a tailor. Some, like the domestic servants, were part of his household; others arrived in Riga from where they were usually based, such as the coachbuilder from Läckö. It appears De la Gardie wished to be surrounded with staff he knew and trusted, also seen in his and others' reluctance to recruit servants in the Baltic provinces. One difference in the composition of the entourage he took to Riga was the more than fivefold increase in security staff (halberdiers, riders) compared to normal.[91] If this was because the risks were greater or it was a show of force on the part of the Swedish king's representative is difficult to say.

While 140 De la Gardie employees crossed the Baltic Sea to Riga there were still plenty left in Sweden to attend on Countess Palatine Maria Euphrosyne. Besides her 15-strong female staff there were a further 41 household servants, including a steward, a chaplain, a tutor for the children, administrative staff, lackeys, kitchen staff, and postilions and stable staff.[92] His post as governor general of Livonia and a subsequent diplomatic mission kept De la Gardie and many of his employees away from Sweden for nearly five years. For some, travel seems to have opened new possibilities. Jonas Peter Russ, a lackey, followed De la Gardie from the mid-1650s until the peace negotiations between Sweden and Poland at Oliva in 1660, whereupon Russ became a steward at the court of De la Gardie's brother-in-law, Adolf Johan. After six years and a period in France, Russ approached De la Gardie asking to be re-employed and placed at Läckö where he had been born and raised.[93]

According to the petitions, correspondence, and account books, spatial mobility was part of seventeenth-century employees' lives. To be part of the retinue of an aristocrat in government service who combined administrative tasks with military commands and diplomatic negotiations was to travel long distances and work far from home. Some even seem to have travelled on their own on Magnus Gabriel's account: in 1670 it is mentioned that Sven the halberdier was in Germany, and in March 1672 it had been decided that he would go to Västergötland.[94] 'Resepenningar' (travel costs) and 'tärepenningar' (per diems) for servants travelling in the count's service frequently

90 On that occasion De la Gardie had 49 servants with him; see RA, MGDLG E1661, Hovstatsräkenskaper.

91 RA, MGDLG E1661, Hovstatsräkenskaper (1655).

92 The exact number for 1655 is not known, but for the years before and after there were 15 or 16 people.

93 RA, MGDLG E1641, Jonas Peter Russ to MG De la Gardie, n.d.

94 RA, MGDLG E1660, Hovstatsräkenskaper (1670, 1672).

featured in the account books, further underlining his servants' mobility. When Anders Nilsson Rase and Olof Nilsson travelled from Läckö to Stockholm in 1630, they had to eat and to pay for their horse hire, and were given 12 dr km to cover it.[95] There were payments for people's food when herding cattle to market, and for the bailiff who had to appear in court on his master's behalf.[96] Servants sometimes asked to have travel expenses covered even when they were not travelling on the count's business. One Måns Mårtensson, who worked with horses and was supported financially by his parents, petitioned for per diems in order to go home on a visit.[97]

Many of the travel costs were incurred moving between the family estates in Sweden. In a letter dated 27 December 1666, the rider Per Mattsson described how he and a lackey had travelled with carefully packed wine through the cold and snow from the small town of Arboga to Höjentorp, a distance of 200 kilometres. They arrived safely with the wine and wrote to Per, one of De la Gardie's secretaries, for further instructions. Should they remain at Höjentorp or immediately return to Stockholm?[98] Occasionally, there were large groups on the move. When Magnus Gabriel and Maria Euphrosyne travelled from Kägleholm to Venngarn in 1680 they took 17 servants with them, leaving a further 34 behind.[99]

It seems to have been pages, lackeys, riders, and halberdiers who travelled the most, along with craftsmen.[100] The continual movement of goods and people around the De la Gardie sphere demanded an infrastructure for transportation and information. Farm and garden produce, game and livestock: it all had to be delivered from the family estates to the owners and their household. Building materials were shipped to construction sites, servants travelled to collect or deliver goods and news or to take up new positions. The logistics required knowledgeable servants, or at least knowledge that was available to the servants involved. An illustrative example was Gunnar, a forester who in August 1674 was sent from Sundholmen in Västergötland to deliver 60 oxen,

95 LUB, DLG, Topographica, Läckö, vol. 17–19 (1630).
96 LUB, DLG, Topographica, Läckö, vol. 1–2 (1619).
97 RA, MGDLG E1641, Måns Mårtensson to MG De la Gardie, n.d.
98 RA, MGDLG E1641, Per Matsson to Andreas von Broberger, Höjentorp 27 Dec. 1666.
99 RA, MGDLG E1660, Hovstatsräkenskaper (1680).
100 RA, MGDLG E1660, The small outlays in 1666 give sense of how servants travelled and sometimes why. A page called Muhl was sent to Ekholmen to deliver blue cloth. Not long after he went to Uppsala, presumably from Stockholm, to deliver saucers, plates, jugs, candlesticks, and glasses for wine and beer, all for the young student Count Gustav Adolf's household. Within days Staffan the lackey made the same journey with twelve red chairs, more candlesticks, a pestle and mortar, three pans of different sizes, an axe, and a hammer. A few days on and Arvid the rider arrived in Uppsala to deliver a gold bracelet as a gift to Count Gustav Adolf's hostess along with smaller gifts for her daughters and maids. Most of the journeys that can be traced in the financial accounts were between Stockholm, Venngarn, Ekholmen, and Uppsala.

100 sheep, and an inventory of the estate to one of Maria Sofia De la Gardie's estates in the Södermanland region—a distance of nearly 300 kilometres. His directions were to follow the road to the town of Nyköping and when he arrived in Södermanland to ask people for directions to the nearest estate owned by the countess. Once there, he was to seek 'knowledge and orders' as to how to proceed to his final destination. It seems safe to assume that Gunnar knew what he was doing, since he was trusted with driving livestock such a distance; however, he also had to manage his own time, arrange food, drink, and rest, and find his way. His instructions say nothing about whether he had help or was expected to find it along the way, or even if he was alone. Whatever the exact circumstances, he was in charge of quite a challenging undertaking.[101]

While travelling, servants picked up on events and news which could be of interest to their masters, thus contributing to the wider circulation of knowledge in their community. As a letter from the forester Anders Henriksson shows, it also meant they had introductions to people across the De la Gardie sphere. Anders wrote in July 1667 from Läckö about a nightmare journey from Stockholm some 300 kilometres south to Småland to collect some hunting nets given to the count and back north to Västergötland, where he stayed at Höjentorp six days. From there he could report that some of the forest nearby had been razed by fire and some had 'fallen', possibly in a storm. Worryingly, there was also the news that cattle had died en masse at Höjentorp. This was important information for his master, but for Anders it was of equal importance to get help from Magnus Gabriel. Anders did not know the local bailiff, Sigge Torsson, in person and asked his master to send orders to Torsson to let Anders have access to a horse.[102] Letters from the count or his administrators or letters of introduction that a travelling servant carried with him opened doors in the local community when they visited the first time.

There were several reasons why members of the De la Gardie sphere were on the move. It could be because Magnus Gabriel and his household were moving from one residence to another, or as part of a servant's ordinary business, or—as in the case of Jonas Peter Russ and Bengt Jonsson—because servants were changing jobs. The household accounts for 1677 list the people ordered to move from Stockholm to other parts of the De la Gardie sphere. Johan the carpenter was sent to Haapsalu, a family estate in Estonia, while another carpenter was ordered to go to Venngarn. A painter, a carpenter, and a bricklayer were off to Kägleholm, and a turner was ordered to Läckö.[103]

101 LUB, Topographica, Sundholmen, Instruktion för skogvaktaren Gunnar (1674): 'söka efter kunskap och orders'; for a similar example—Johan Oxenstierna's instructions for Johan Jöransson for his journey to Riga and Narva—see RA, Tidöarkivet, vol. 44: Johan Oxenstiernas instruktioner för godstjänstemän, 28 Mar. 1642.

102 RA, MGDLG E1641, Anders Henriksson to MG De la Gardie, Läckö 18 July 1667.

103 RA, MGDLG E1660, Hovstatsräkenskaper (1677).

Apparently, craftsmen in De la Gardie's service had to be ready to go wherever they were needed, despite the distance, and not only them: in 1651 Magnus Gabriel sent two of his administrators from Stockholm to work at his estate on Ösel (Saaremaa), and in 1680 his German secretary was sent off to Livonia.[104]

Knowledge, competence, and personal qualities

To understand early modern approaches to the recruitment or promotion of servants, we need to look at two intertwined ways of thinking. One was patriarchal and centred on the servant's loyalty to their master, emphasizing family connections going back generations and shared geographical origins. When Magnus Gabriel De la Gardie recruited from Läckö or his mother Ebba Brahe from Bergslagen, they helped preserve their family's connection with the people of those regions. The De la Gardies thus acted to maintain their ties and control over places of interest to them.[105] The relationship, which was part of a patron–client system, put a premium on obedience and reliability on the part of the servant.

At the same time, knowledge and proficiency mattered, marking a different way of thinking about employment. Growing numbers of young men had school and university educations in Sweden and abroad. There was a need for knowledgeable administrators to fill the offices in a burgeoning professionalized bureaucracy. As we have seen, experts were recruited from abroad to help develop the mining industry, to be military commanders, or, in estate organizations, to build, paint, and decorate. The De la Gardie sphere was part of that development, and it was impacted by professionalization and bureaucratization.

As the correspondence shows, servants' inadequacies were a perennial theme for their masters and mistresses. Difficulties with recruitment were often synonymous with difficulties finding a reliable, qualified person to do the job. Maids needed to be quick-witted; cooks should at least be able to cook fish. Reasons to be dissatisfied with servants included such personal shortcomings as laziness. In March 1672, Magnus Gabriel had had enough of his valet Håkan Jönsson, who he considered a drunkard and not diligent enough. In his decision Magnus Gabriel pointed out that Håkan never improved, implying that he had been given at least one chance. Instead, Håkan could now try his fortune in the military, as Magnus Gabriel did not wish to have anything more to do with him.[106]

104 RA, MGDLG E1660 & E1661, Hovstatsräkenskaper.

105 For patrons and clients, see Lazer, 'Patronage', 495–498.

106 RA, MGDLG E1656, Sammandrag av brev och suppliker till MG De la Gardie med resolutionspåteckningar, Huvudsakligen 1670-talet, Stockholm 16 Mar. 1672: 'fyllhund', 'oflitigh'.

There was a very different tone in the passports and letters of recommendation for servants who left De la Gardie employ. Although we know of their existence and general importance, few such passports or letters of recommendation survive from the seventeenth century. In the De la Gardie archives there is a small collection of drafts by Maria Euphrosyne at the time of her husband's death in 1686. She was forced to lay off much of their workforce, so she drew up personal passports and long character references for no fewer than 18 servants, detailing their careers, skills, and personal qualities.[107] Evidently 12 of the servants had worked for the De la Gardies for more than 5 years, the longest for 34 years, and 8 servants for over a decade. The commonest attributes were loyalty, honesty, diligence, and industriousness. Sobriety was also mentioned for some employees. On the general level, Maria Euphrosyne's assessments speak to the value of trust, honour, and responsiveness in servants. As we have seen, the loud complaints about recruitment seemed to stem from labour shortages that perhaps made it harder to retain staff. The general qualities of loyalty and diligence may thus have been key for heads of households, affecting the discourse about recommendations and indicating what mattered most—that not only should servants be good at their professions, but they could be counted on to remain in service.

Several character references testified to the conflation of dependability and industriousness. Per Mattsson, who had served for eight years as a *kanslidräng* (clerk), manciple, and *silverknekt* (silver butler), was described by Maria Euphrosyne as faithful, diligent, and assiduous. Further, he had been sober and alert in the recent wars, aiding in Sweden's defence against the Norwegian enemy.[108] The lackey Olof Johansson Stomberg had been in service for three years and had behaved 'honest and well', according to the recommendation. It is however noteworthy that he was also praised for his 'subordinate and humble obedience', diligently doing what he was told.[109] She also wrote of Olof Bengtsson, who had worked his way up from lackey to cupbearer, that he was 'trustworthy' and could be expected to perform his tasks dutifully.[110] The stable lad Olof Andersson had served faithfully, diligently, and untiringly the past four years, and the countess asked anyone where he applied for work to hire him 'for the sake of my husband'.[111] In some of the references she named her former servant's prospective employer. The lackey Olof Johansson Stomberg was hoping to be employed by Baron Johan Sparre, so Maria Euphrosyne went out of her way to stress how honest and obedient

107 LUB, DLG Släkt, vol. 100, Handlingar rörande Maria Euphrosyne De la Gardie.
108 LUB, DLG Släkt, vol. 100, Handlingar rörande Maria Euphrosyne De la Gardie.
109 LUB, DLG Släkt, vol. 100, Handlingar rörande Maria Euphrosyne De la Gardie: 'underdånödmjuka lydnad'.
110 LUB, DLG Släkt, vol. 100, Handlingar rörande Maria Euphrosyne De la Gardie: 'redelig'.
111 LUB, DLG Släkt, vol. 100, Handlingar rörande Maria Euphrosyne De la Gardie.

Stomberg always ways.[112] Similar letters of recommendation can be found in other collections: in the correspondence of Magnus Gabriel De la Gardie, for example, such as for a blacksmith who had served the family for 39 years and who received confirmation of their possession of a cadastral unit when he went blind and had to retire.[113]

Conspicuous by its absence was talk of secrecy. In the manual *Hwszdräng* the author went on at length about testing servants' ability to keep secrets, arguing that no one wanted servants who passed on what was said in conversation with guests or who eavesdropped at doors.[114] It is easy to think of occasions when servants came upon information an employer wanted to keep secret: political or financial matters, family business, deaths, adultery, and the like. So it is interesting that *tysthet* (silence) was not a word used in the sources to describe a good servant. The only times silence was mentioned were apropos Mauritz Gietrop, who promised to keep secret all the information he might encounter as Ebba Brahe's secretary, and Jonas Lorin, who was praised for his ability to keep secrets. That it was not referred to as a positive quality for servants to keep silent was presumably because loyalty included not gossiping.

How, then, were competence and skill addressed? Several letters of recommendation emphasized not only hard work, but a responsiveness and independence that meant the servant remembered and knew what to do in a given situation. In the case of the table-decker Christian Hansson, the element of skill was played up. Maria Euphrosyne's draft reference described an education abroad and a long career, adding to the impression of competence and know-how. Sofia Juliana Forbus passed remarks about employees in her letters, primarily to her husband. In 1690 she wrote about two serving lads who wanted to become lackeys. One of them had the advantage of being related to someone they knew; the other one was said to write in 'a very good hand' and to 'count well'.[115] This made them ideal candidates for a transfer from mainland Sweden to the family's Baltic estates, where Sofia Juliana's husband, Axel Julius De la Gardie, was having trouble recruiting good staff. A similar recommendation appeared in another letter, where a page who was 'a very handsome and quick-witted boy' with 'no inclination to mischief' was put forward as a potential candidate. It helped he was related to Sofia Juliana.[116]

112 LUB, DLG Släkt, vol. 100, Handlingar rörande Maria Euphrosyne De la Gardie, 3 June 1686: 'ärligen'; and Jan. 1687: 'underdånödmjuk lydnad'.

113 LUB, DLG Släkt, vol. 88, Handlingar rörande rikskanslern Magnus Gabriel De la Gardie, MG De la Gardie, Kägleholm 12 July 1674, 11 June 1674 & 30 July 1670; LUB, DLG Släkt, vol. 11:2, Handlingar rörande Jacob Pontusson De la Gardie.

114 Cousin, *Hwszdräng*, 12–13, 19–21.

115 LUB, DLG Släkt, vol. 123:1, Axel Julius De la Gardie och hans hustru Sofia Juliana Forbus, Sofia Juliana Forbus to Axel Julius De la Gardie, Stockholm 29 Aug. 1690: 'skrifwer en Mücket godh handh', 'recknar Well'.

116 LUB, DLG Släkt, vol. 123:1, Axel Julius De la Gardie och hans hustru Sofia Juliana Forbus, Sofia Juliana Forbus to Axel Julius De la Gardie, Stockholm 7 June 1694: 'som är en mücke Wacker och snel gose, och til ingen odygt in Clinerat'.

Competence and skill (or lack thereof) were something which concerned employers. Recommendations, either in correspondence or character references for employees to take with them on their departure from the household, concentrated on more general qualities such as not being drunk or disloyal. In asking what was valued, the answer is more likely to be found in the discourse in other types of evaluations, which characterized servants' personal qualities. In the surviving estate management correspondence, servants' doings were continually discussed and their behaviour and performance assessed. Competence and skill and their opposites were noted in their handling of specific situations or their performance of a variety of tasks. Employees were often evaluated.

From our analysis of the portion of the De la Gardies' correspondence that was their exchanges with estate managers at different levels, comprising 698 letters, we can make several observations. Roughly 200 of the letters included a judgement or evaluation of their employees. Of those, some 60 per cent concerned high-ranking staff such as bailiffs, overseers, chief stewards, fiscals, secretaries, and comptrollers and the remaining 40 per cent the lower-ranking servants such as cooks, lackeys, sculptors, maids, arquebusiers, gardeners, postilions, and musicians. While the majority of letters about higher-ranking servants were about the same few problematic individuals, hardly any lower-ranking servants featured more than once. The servants discussed were primarily male, the only exceptions being housekeepers, maids, and a *löjtnantska* (lieutenant's wife) who was recommended for service in Reval.

Of the lower-ranking servants, the cooks stood out as the group whose competence and skill was most often raised in the correspondence. A contributing factor may have been a series of drawn-out recruitment processes and lack of qualified candidates. However, the effort that went into finding cooks with a certain set of skills speaks to the importance of qualities other than loyalty and honesty among this group. When describing them, their skill in producing good food was what mattered. One skilled cook was not only praised for his abilities and knowledge, for example, but was also described as having 'förståndh till Wetta', 'the sense to know', indicating a higher level of understanding.[117] Other letters show that cooks were tried out or they brought with them 'kocke proof' to prove their qualifications, but nonetheless they were useless in the eyes of their potential employers.[118] Sofia Juliana Forbus, writing to her husband, remarked that their fellow aristocrat Carl

117 LUB, DLG Släkt, vol. 123:1, Axel Julius De la Gardie och hans hustru Sofia Juliana Forbus, Sofia Juliana Forbus to Axel Julius De la Gardie, Stockholm 29 Aug. 1690: 'han mycke Wel Wetta at laga till den moltin, tÿ han har förståndh till Wetta hwat till en sodan molti bör Wara'.

118 LUB, DLG Släkt, vol. 123:1, Axel Julius De la Gardie och hans hustru Sofia Juliana Forbus, Sofia Juliana Forbus to Axel Julius De la Gardie, Stockholm 15 Nov. 1691.

Gyllenstierna had tried out ten cooks after his head cook died, and found not a single one who was good enough.[119] When Sofia Juliana and her husband finally managed to recruit a cook who suited them, the best she could say of him was that he 'cooked reasonably well'.[120]

In the correspondence between the estate manager Johan Bratt and Sofia Juliana, the recruitment of a new housekeeper at Tullgarn was brought up, especially in view of the demands of the estate. Praying for a better year to come, Bratt told Sofia Juliana he had installed a new housekeeper, the wife of a non-commissioned officer, who could only be better than the previous housekeeper who lacked the proper qualifications, being simple-minded and unable to keep the estate workers under control, allowing them to 'harass' her and to treat themselves to milk and butter, to the detriment of the estate and the De la Gardie household. The new housekeeper seemed to have been held in higher regard, thanks partly to her husband's position, but also because she was 'serious' and had 'a good reputation'.[121] The qualities that suited her for the job along with her competence gave some hope of her running Tullgarn successfully.

Other cases similarly suggest there was a constant search for competent employees, and that managers kept their eyes open for possible recruitments, sometimes getting other employees to help. Sometimes it was sparked by an employee who wished to leave, thus suggesting a replacement. In a letter from Stockholm on 2 May 1684, the estate manager Heinrich Herzog informed Magnus Gabriel that Anders the stableman 'who arrived with me' had no desire to continue to serve under 'Rittmeister Sparman'. Anders had suggested 'Pelle Småländingen' in his place. Pelle was a postilion by trade, but also a farrier, and was said to be good at his job.[122]

It was not only cooks where there was a perceived lack of qualified candidates. The same could be said about lackeys, a category of servants liable to the loss of good men to the military. The urge to join 'militien', which may have offered more interesting opportunities than an aristocratic household, was viewed with much concern. In an exchange of letters between Ambrosius Graff, a servant whose occupation is unknown, and his master Magnus Gabriel, the question of departure from De la Gardie service to join the army

119 LUB, DLG Släkt, vol. 123:1, Axel Julius De la Gardie och hans hustru Sofia Juliana Forbus, Sofia Juliana Forbus to Axel Julius De la Gardie, Stockholm 23 May 1693.

120 LUB, DLG Släkt, vol. 123:1, Axel Julius De la Gardie och hans hustru Sofia Juliana Forbus, Sofia Juliana Forbus to Axel Julius De la Gardie, Stockholm 27 Jan. 1694: 'han kokar temlig Well'.

121 LUB, DLG Släkt, vol. 125:1, Axel Julius De la Gardie och hans hustru Sofia Juliana Forbus, Johan Bratt to Sofia Juliana Forbus, Stockholm 19 August 1704: 'tribulera', 'alfwarsam', 'gått looford om sig har'.

122 LUB, DLG Släkt, vol. 89:3: Brev till MG De la Gardie, Johan Henrik Herzog to MG De la Gardie, Stockholm 2 May 1684: 'der mit mir herein kam'.

was pushed to the very limit. In his letter, Ambrosius explained his humble wish to be released from his duties in order not to miss the chance that had arisen, since 'my happiness depends on it' and it was a job for life. The decision, signed by the count on 5 December 1685, showed an utter disregard for Ambrosius' case. Magnus Gabriel took it all as a personal affront. Where he had thought Ambrosius a 'reliable and faithful servant', he now found on further inquiry that he was a 'disserviceable' man. He was therefore ordered to finish his work (bookkeeping, it seems), whereupon he would be dismissed without 'redeliget afskeed' or proper references—the letter of recommendation and passport he needed to obtain employment elsewhere. The count concluded that he if he proved unemployable it was only 'what he deserved'.[123]

The strength of Magnus Gabriel's response was a sign of the challenges of maintaining a workforce, which given his deteriorating financial and political position must then have been acute. He plainly expected it to be a warning example to other 'waywards', hence his recourse to a punishment that had far-reaching consequences, because it in practice sentenced Ambrosius to a life without employment or the means to support himself. By dismissing Ambrosius without references, De la Gardie showed his power as an employer and head of household, simultaneously revealing the pressure he himself was under. Faced with the reality that military service might be a more tempting prospect than serving in an aristocratic household, he had to set an example, and Ambrosius seems to have served his purpose.

Conversely, in another case, a competent fisherman had been tracked down by the *kanslist* (clerk) Johan Heinrich Herzog, but was unavailable for permanent employment because he was serving in the navy. He could thus only be employed on a monthly basis. The outcome is unknown, but Herzog's report to De la Gardie about his potential recruit nevertheless suggests that the count would accept those sorts of conditions when he found the right candidate.[124]

A seemingly important aspect when assessing competence concerned servants in managerial positions who had heavy responsibilities and had to be trusted with staff, money, and goods. A large part of correspondence about employees was focused on higher-ranking servants. Some were praised for their ability to handle other servants and for their honesty and hard work,

123 LUB, DLG Släkt, vol. 89:2, Brev till MG De la Gardie, Ambrosius Graff to MG De la Gardie, n.d.; LUB, DLG Släkt, vol. 89:2, Brev till MG De la Gardie, Ambrosius Graff to MG De la Gardie, resolution dated Venngarn 5 Dec. 1685: 'Emedan min lÿcka där på mÿcket beroor', 'redelig och trogen tienare', 'otienst', 'När detta skedt är, må han gå sin wäg och tiena andra wanartige till exempel. Som jag och wäl skal förekomma, at han uthan redeliget afskeed eÿ skull få emploÿ under militien, elr på någon ort, och ökend skall blifwa för hwad han meriterar.'

124 LUB, DLG Släkt, vol. 89:3: Brev till MG De la Gardie, Johan Henrik Herzog to MG De la Gardie, Stockholm 12 May 1685.

such as the overseer Bjurberg at Tullgarn, the fiscal Engelbrekt Staare, or the overseer Ljunggren.[125] Others seem to have caused great concern. One in particular, an overseer called Biugg, warrants closer investigation. The De la Gardie correspondent Johan Henrik Herzog was also involved in the accusations that cost Biugg his career and which sheds further light on how employees were evaluated.

Biugg was often mentioned in correspondence for his ability to get things done and for being difficult.[126] He demanded to be paid before he would consider extending credit to his masters. He refused to travel to Stockholm to sort out some back pay. In a letter of May of 1692, Sofia Juliana Forbus described 'biugen' as a 'clever but very odd man' whom she only with great effort had convinced to go to Tullgarn.[127] He seems to have had some of the necessary qualities for his position and in some letters he even received praise for his efforts.[128] However, his constant demands for compensation bothered his superiors. He was also described as unreliable, troublesome, and corrupt, and in one instance was suspected of taking bribes. Yet it was not straightforward, because he was deeply involved in Sofia Juliana and Axel Julius De la Gardie's business, helping them with various legal disputes, to the point where they evidently thought it dangerous to sack him at that stage of proceedings. They tried to convince him to finish his work, promising to pay his wages, and letting him choose when to depart in exchange for a final push in their court cases. He had blotted his copybook with his bad habits, drunkenness, and, above all, his unwillingness to perform his services without payment, at the same time as his competent legal advice was valued.

Higher-ranking servants in managerial positions were important to their masters for several reasons. Their qualifications and skills in handling people, overseeing accounts, and advising their masters to help them make informed decisions were often crucial. The problems that arose seem to stem from the expectations of these employees. Servants in managerial positions were often accused of not doing what they should, of demanding their wages in advance,

125 LUB, DLG Släkt, vol. 89:3: Brev till MG De la Gardie, Johan Henrik Herzog to MG De la Gardie, Stockholm 2 May 1684; LUB, DLG Släkt, vol. 125:1; Axel Julius De la Gardie och hans hustru Sofia Juliana Forbus, Johan Bratt to Axel Julius De la Gardie, Stockholm 16 June 1702; LUB, DLG Släkt, vol. 123:1, Axel Julius De la Gardie och hans hustru Sofia Juliana Forbus, Sofia Juliana Forbus to Axel Julius De la Gardie, Stockholm 7 July 1693.

126 LUB, DLG Släkt, vol. 123:1, Axel Julius De la Gardie och hans hustru Sofia Juliana Forbus, Sofia Juliana Forbus to Axel Julius De la Gardie, Stockholm 29 Aug. 1690.

127 LUB, DLG Släkt, vol. 123:1, Axel Julius De la Gardie och hans hustru Sofia Juliana Forbus, Sofia Juliana Forbus to Axel Julius De la Gardie, Stockholm 18 May 1692: 'klook män mücke underlig man'.

128 LUB, DLG Släkt, vol. 123:1, Axel Julius De la Gardie och hans hustru Sofia Juliana Forbus, Sofia Juliana Forbus to Axel Julius De la Gardie, Stockholm 27 May 1696.

or even of theft or trying to profit from their position.[129] It is fair to conclude that these servants were highly regarded for their competence, and that rather than a lack of qualifications it was a lack of goodwill and loyalty (perhaps in the sense of demanding their pay) which caused trouble and harm to employers. Exactly what role such knowledge or skills played in relation to loyalty and diligence is hard to say. The emphasis on loyalty and diligence implied they were seen as important qualities in their own right, especially in the recruitment or advancement process. It can also be seen as an important precondition for that kind of work, and as long as a person was loyal and diligent they could be trained in the skills needed to do the job.

At career's end

People did leave the De la Gardie sphere, whether of their own volition, because they were sacked, or because of old age or death. One such reason was marriage. R. C. Richardson has concluded that marriage 'commonly marked the point at which a female servant left employment'.[130] Fairchilds claims that for women in France marriage was a way out of service, which implies that it was not necessarily seen as an obstacle but rather as an escape, and Maza suggests that maids looked for husbands while in service.[131] For those who wished to marry and stay in service, though, being married *was* a problem. Employers were advised against having married servants since their first priority would be their own family, not their employers.[132] German examples show that combining marriage with staying in service was difficult, and Raffaella Sarti in an overview of research has concluded that 'while for men lifelong service and marriage were not incompatible, women generally did not marry if they stayed in service all their lives, whereas they left service if they married'.[133] In many European regions, Sweden included, a servant who wished to marry needed their master's permission.[134] Hence when Nils Andersson Dalman wished to marry his fiancée, a 'chaste and honest maid', he wrote to his master Magnus Gabriel, because it should not be done without his master's knowledge and approval.[135] When the pregnant maid Brita wished to marry Clas who was in service with the young nobleman Johan

129 For example LUB, DLG Släkt, vol. 100, Handlingar rörande Maria Euphrosyne De la Gardie, Johan Siversson Lund to Countess Palatine Maria Eufrosyne, Venngarn 12 June 1686; LUB, DLG Släkt, vol. 89:1, Brev till MG De la Gardie, Sven Månsson Brochius, n.d.; LUB, DLG Släkt, vol. 89:1, Brev till MG De la Gardie, Johan Henrik Herzog to MG De la Gardie, Stockholm 4 May 1685 & Stockholm 10 May 1685.

130 Richardson, *Household Servants*, 76.

131 Fairchilds, *Domestic Enemies*, 81; Maza, *Servants and Masters*, 62–63, 83.

132 Fairchilds, *Domestic Enemies*, 81.

133 Sarti, 'All masters discourage', 429, 440.

134 Sarti, 'All masters discourage', 421–422.

135 RA, MGDLG E1641, Nils Andersson Dallman to MG De la Gardie, n.d.

Ekeblad, she turned to Ekeblad for his permission. Ekeblad was unhappy, but since Clas wanted to marry Brita he approved on condition that Brita lived with her mother as long as Clas remained in Ekeblad's service; however, as Johan Ekeblad wrote to his father, 'I want nothing to do with their wedding'.[136] A master's involvement in a servant's love life was also evident in two petitions from abandoned women. Kerstin Jonsdotter complained that Magnus Gabriel's servant Hindrich Larsson Prytz, who in March 1664 had proposed to her, had withdrawn his promise to marry her. When she protested, the church and Stockholm's Lower City Court found for her and demanded that Prytz keep his promise. He had now disappeared, so Kerstin turned to Magnus Gabriel to urge Prytz to return.[137] Margreta Lucasdotter's case was similar. The cupbearer Gudmund Persson had promised her marriage with 'sweet words', and Margreta asked Magnus Gabriel to intervene to get Persson to the altar.[138] An important factor in cases was that the women were pregnant and risked both disgrace and destitution.[139]

Petitions from male servants reveal that many were married or intended to get married, and without leaving service. There were servants ranging from gardeners, postilions, and lackeys to cooks, halberdiers, and woodmen. In the De la Gardie sphere there were unmarried, married, and widowed servants of both sexes, so it is difficult to state what the attitude was towards employing and keeping married servants in employment. There are indications that employers saw the advantages of married servants. There were several examples of men in charge of estates or houses who were married to the housekeepers.[140] Sofia Juliana Forbus mentioned in passing to her husband that their chief steward's wife had compiled an inventory, thus suggesting that she was involved in household work without being on the payroll.[141] A note on a payroll that the secretary Jonas Lorin's wife had received shoes was a one-off, but was another sign of the wives' presence.[142] Christopher Pihl has suggested it was an advantage for an employer to have married employees in management positions as they were considered to have more

136 Ekeblad, *Bref*, ii. 414, Johan Ekeblad to Kristoffer Ekeblad, Stockholm 9 Mar. 1664.

137 RA, MGDLG E1622, Kerstin Jonsdotter to MG De la Gardie, n.d.

138 RA, MGDLG E1622, Margreta Lucasdotter to MG De la Gardie, n.d.

139 Sex before marriage was not in itself an issue as long as the couple had promised each other marriage; see Lennartsson, *I säng och säte*, 157–160.

140 Examples included the keeper Bengt Biörsson's wife Anna, (RA, MGDLG E1661); the housekeeper who was married to Tomas, the man in charge of Ekholmen (RA, MGDLG E1661, draft MG De la Gardie 20 May 1651); and the housekeeper who was married to Lars Axelsson, doorkeeper at the Main House in 1682–1683 (RA, MGDLG E1642).

141 LUB, DLG Släkt, vol. 123.1, Axel Julius De la Gardie och hans hustru Sofia Juliana Forbus, Sofia Juliana Forbus to Axel Julius De la Gardie, Stockholm 11 July 1690. For similar examples of wives assisting their husbands do their jobs as servants, see Pihl, *Arbete*, 89.

142 RA, MGDLG E1666, Klädesräkningar.

authority than those who were unmarried.[143] What suggests that being married was at least no obstacle was the fact that servants asked to change job but stay in the De la Gardie sphere when they got married, and there were plenty of examples of the head of the household paying for wedding festivities, christenings, and the funerals of spouses and children. The epistolean Johan Ekeblad noted in November 1650 that Field Marshal Count Lennart Torstensson held a lavish ball for three of his maids, while two months later Ekeblad wrote that he had danced at the wedding party held by Magnus Gabriel De la Gardie for his valet.[144]

For a man being married was most likely a positive, which helped him stay on as a servant in the De la Gardie sphere. Given management's difficulties in obtaining resources to pay salaries, having a second income was most likely essential. As suggested by previous research, husbands' financial reliance on their spouses was typical of the early modern Swedish society.[145]

Besides marriage, which under certain circumstances may have forced servants—primarily women—to leave, there were several other reasons a career ended. Poor performance was one, as was drunkenness or crime.[146] However, noted the author of *Hwszdräng*, heads of households should be lenient about minor wrongdoings if the servant is willing to learn and be corrected.[147] Some apparently behaved too badly to be allowed to stay on, such as the lackey Håkan Månsson, who in one unhappy moment had fallen into disfavour with the count and, duly sacked, wrote to ask for forgiveness and a recommendation.[148] The gardener Christoff Manall at Läckö was another example. He had lost his job because the estate manager said his work was poor. Manall tried to excuse himself in a petition in late May 1663, saying he had little help from the under-gardeners and there had been a problem with a badger.[149]

Some servants documented why they left service voluntarily. Olof Östensson, who had been a stable lad for 12 years, and Lars Ryttare, a rider, had received inheritances and asked to be relieved of service.[150] Matthias Johansson Finne, who had worked as a postilion and in the kitchens, cited

143 Pihl, *Arbete*, 145.

144 Ekeblad, *Bref*, i. 56, 75, Johan Ekeblad to Kristoffer Ekeblad, Stockholm 13 Nov. 1650 & 22 Jan. 1651.

145 Lennersand et al., 'Gender, Work', 185–188, 201; Ågren, *State as Master*, 64–70.

146 Johan Ekeblad complained about an impertinent drunkard in his service (Ekeblad, *Bref*, i. 24) and a boy who disappeared having stolen all the buttons from his guests' coats (Ekeblad, *Bref*, ii. 232), while Magnus Stenbock wrote to his wife about his useless cook who drank heavily (Stenbock, *En brefväxling*, ii, Laisholm 17 January 1701).

147 Cousin, *Hwszdräng*, 9, 15. See also Rosenhane, *Oeconomia*, 5, 11, 19–20.

148 RA, MGDLG E1641, Håkan Månsson to MG De la Gardie, n.d.

149 RA, MGDLG E1642, Christoff Manall to MG De la Gardie, 28 May 1663.

150 RA, MGDLG E1642, Oloff Östensson to MG De la Gardie, n.d., Lars Ryttare to MG De la Gardie, 1 Jan. 1682.

old age when he asked to be allowed to move back to Finland to join his wife and children.[151] What Olof, Lars, Matthias, and others had in common was that they intended to move 'back home'—to Ångermanland, Västergötland, and Finland respectively—when they left service. They seem to have left voluntarily and had something to fall back on outside the De la Gardie sphere.

Illness could lead to dismissal, though not necessarily. Servants being ill was a recurring theme in aristocrats' letters from the period: Johan Ekeblad remarked in the early 1660s that there was a perennial problem with servants in the city who fell ill, did not get the treatment they needed, and therefore were no use to their masters.[152] Despite complaints about having to pay for someone unable to work, there seems to be a certain amount of patience as shown by letters by Count Magnus Stenbock, Magnus Gabriel's nephew. He wrote to his wife in 1693 that his lad Anders was ill and costing him a great deal of money while another, Knut, had wounded himself and was also of little use.[153] There was no mention of dismissing either of them, however. An example of how illness could become an obstacle was the case of Olof Jonsson. Olof had been lackey in the De la Gardie household for several years, but then became a cellarer, working below stairs with drink and food. He complained in his petition to the count that he had to rely on relatives for clothing having received none from the De la Gardies, and even though he had been ill and not fit for work, the chief steward had ordered him down into the cellar or hand in his resignation.[154]

What happened to the servants when an aristocratic household was dissolved is equally unclear. The hypothesis that the servants would simply be transferred to the next generation cannot be proved. One Mauritz Gietrop is an interesting case in point. Gietrop first appeared as a bookkeeper on Jacob De la Gardie's payroll in 1652. What happened to Gietrop on Jacob's death that year is unclear, but in December 1655 he was petitioning to become Ebba Brahe's secretary. In the letter he emphasized he would be a faithful, upright, and hard-working servant, and would never speak of the secrets he might learn while in her service. In return he would be eternally in her favour.[155] It was important these things were said, and people knew it.[156] We know he succeeded because in Ebba Brahe's records he was mentioned as her secretary in 1669, and he was remembered in her will, opened in January 1674, as a highly regarded, faithful secretary. Gietrop's 'loyal service' resulted

151 RA, MGDLG E1642, Matthias Johansson Finne to MG De la Gardie, n.d.

152 Ekeblad, *Bref*, i. 265, 270, 303, 307.

153 Stenbock, *En brefväxling*, ii, Stenbock to Oxenstierna 8 & 18 July 1693.

154 Olof Jonsson was listed in 1664 but then disappeared, see RA, MGDLG E1661, Hovstatsräkenskaper.

155 LUB, DLG, vol. 81:2, Ebba Brahe, Mauritz Gietrop to Ebba Brahe, Stockholm 20 Dec. 1655.

156 Stadin, *Stånd och genus*, 36–38.

in a bequest of land near her estate of Runsa in Uppland, which provided him with an income.[157] Several letters of recommendation written by Maria Euphrosyne De la Gardie following the death of her husband in April 1686 revealed that she did what she could to help the servants she could no longer keep in service.

Ultimately, though, death was most likely one of the more frequent reasons why careers were cut short. In July 1652 the young Johan Ekeblad wrote from Stockholm to his father that many in the capital were ill, among them Count Magnus Gabriel and 70 of his household servants.[158] One of them was Swen the lackey, who was severely ill for twelve weeks and was taken care of by his landlady Carin Persdotter.[159] By the time the count and Swen had recovered, the disease had taken its toll: of 103 servants listed in De la Gardie's household in 1652, 73 were missing the following year after—an unusually large loss of people from one year to the next. In 1653, 43 new names were added, it too an unusually high intake of new recruits at one time.[160] Even if some of those who disappeared between 1652 and 1653 had left because they moved away or took jobs elsewhere, it seems probable that the majority had succumbed to the disease.

Knowledge and prospects

Provided he did not fall seriously ill or die young, a man had a good chance of making a career in the De la Gardie sphere. At least 31 per cent of the servants in Magnus Gabriel's court in Stockholm changed their job title at the same time as they received a wage rise. There were numerous instances of career movement between the family's estates in the De la Gardie sphere, and an expectation from employees that it would be possible to advance in the hierarchy and so improve their material circumstances. Women, on the other hand, had far more limited career opportunities: therein lay the difference between women and men. At the same time, it is important to recognize that it might be a product of gaps in the source material, while the clearly documented accounts and correspondence related to male employees.

There was not just social mobility, but also continual geographical mobility in the De la Gardie sphere. People were sent to deliver or collect goods and messages, they travelled with the count in the realm and abroad, and some were moved around to work at various estates. Again, this primarily concerned male servants. We would argue this led to knowledge circulation, which left them better informed about the De la Gardie sphere and the

157 LUB, DLG Släkt, vol. 11:2, Handlingar rörande Jakob Pontusson De la Gardie, document by MG De la Gardie, Kägleholm 11 June 1674: 'hulde och trogne'.
158 Ekeblad, *Bref*, i. 150.
159 RA, MGDLG E1622, Carin Persdotter to MG De la Gardie, n.d.
160 RA, MGDLG E1661, Hovstatsräkenskaper.

opportunities it presented, helping them to navigate positions, vacancies, and possible promotions. The rumours, information, and news they picked up on their travels made them an indispensable part of the De la Gardie sphere as a knowledge community.

We have singled out two general understandings of how to value servants' work. Looking at character references and passports, the qualities they privileged were loyalty and diligence, highlighting the subordinate side of the reciprocal yet hierarchical relationship between servant and master. We consider it an effect of the dominant patriarchal ideology, codified in the catechism, and a vital part of official rhetoric of the social order. For the De la Gardie sphere, with all its connections across vast distances, loyalty to one's master was still the most prized quality of them all when assessing potential employees, whether they were newcomers or already in service. Knowledge and competence were not highlighted to any great degree in the character references; however, they were in the discussions and correspondence about recruitment. When it came to recruiting staff, training, professional qualifications, and skills were deemed necessary for the ability to perform services, be it as cooks, bookkeepers, or housekeepers. Yet, as we have shown, geographical origin and existing connections with the De la Gardie family were often important factors when picking new staff. This suggests even if competence was of essence, the security provided by personal ties seems to have been indispensable. Certainly, the De la Gardie sphere seems to have been powered by internal recruitment: many employees had previously been in their service, if not at the same family estate then at least in the wider De la Gardie sphere.

Despite all the effort that went into training and educating young servants, it was rarely recognized. It is possible people were uncertain how to interpret qualifications such as loyalty or diligence and what traits they should look for. Remembering the *Hwszdräng* handbook, we could argue that loyalty and diligence were part of the inculcation when entering service. Was loyalty perhaps a sign of knowing what it meant to be a servant? By unlearning their crude, provincial behaviour, a servant might even become wise and kind—that was *Hwszdräng*'s message. Perhaps we should view such qualities as part and parcel of the education ideals of the day.

7

LIFE IN AN EARLY MODERN KNOWLEDGE COMMUNITY

Concluding remarks

The expanding early modern Swedish state required not only military personnel but also trained administrators and officers, creating new and wider opportunities for the Swedish people to improve their financial status and pursue professional advancement. The sons of burghers and priests could now choose an administrative or officer's career and, if they were successful, achieve nobility in time. The relatively small nobility, which numbered about 450 adult males at the beginning of the century, thus grew to about 2,500 by the end. The creation of jobs and opportunities for education and careers was closely linked to the robust growth of the Swedish state and to the increased wealth of the Swedish aristocracy that resulted from this growth. In a changing society the desire to move up the social ladder became a prominent feature. The aristocracy's newfound wealth manifested itself, as we have seen, in the construction of large, modern, city palaces and country estates, as well as the expansion of their households, which often included individuals who aspired to enhance their living standards and future prospects. As a result, a discernible pattern emerges, whereby the aspirations of both the state and the aristocracy influenced those of the less affluent, yet still ambitious, such as the lackey, the silver butler's boy or even the hopeful kitchen boy. These individuals were part of the broader state-formation process.

While particular aristocratic households, family estates, and domestic servants have often been the focus of research and popular culture, the dynamics of early modern aristocratic spheres, which encompassed several estates, farms, and businesses and thus a large number of employees, have received comparatively less attention. The complexities of these large organizations, with their myriad of interconnections, interactions, and transactions, are difficult to grasp, demanding a body of primary sources that go

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beyond the boundaries of a single estate to tell us about ordinary life in this large ecosystem. The discussions about servants' lives in the early modern period, the hierarchical and patriarchal relationships established by law and aristocratic privilege, and the impact of household codes and confessional discourse, are lively and informative. Yet, less has been said about the particularities of employment relations, obligations, and prospects for those who worked for the rich and powerful, not to mention their wives and families. What did it mean to be a servant in an early modern aristocratic sphere? It is, we believe, a question best answered by charting how people navigated the system, with all the twists, turns, and opportunities of a large estate organization and aristocratic sphere.

The De la Gardie estate organization was a centralized knowledge community where information was collected, circulated, and put to practical use. Bureaucracy played an integral part in the organization of knowledge and information, and for managing and implementing specific instructions for the individuals who made up the organization. The bureaucratic demands on employees and others associated with the De la Gardie sphere had the effect of making bureaucracy routine to an unprecedented extent. The estate organization also had its own infrastructure for travel and information exchange: produce and goods were delivered; people travelled between the family estates; news, information, and gossip were shared.

In this book we have shown what employees in the De la Gardie sphere needed to know to navigate the organization. Their knowledge of the organization and its complexities was produced at the point where individual employees, fellow servants, and different levels of the patriarchal and bureaucratic hierarchies met. We argue that the system yielded servants who were knowledgeable about who to communicate with, what communication channels there were, what arguments would find their mark, how to substantiate a case, and what exactly was negotiable. We conclude that the De la Gardie sphere demanded more from its employees than the competencies associated with various trades. Being a servant also required an ability to calculate and negotiate the value of services provided. The ultimate expression of this fundamental condition of the ecosystem of the estate organization was the skill and perseverance servants needed if they were to be paid anything close to what they were owed.

One of the most important communication channels for servants was the written petition to their master or mistress. The substantial amount of petitions which we have investigated demonstrate that servants possessed at least rudimentary skills in the epistolary genre of petitioning—if not necessarily reading and writing—revealing their ability to make their case with a degree of sophistication. (Some petitioners, it must be added, did know how to read and write, given their jobs required it.) Yet while literacy may not have been required, numeracy was essential. In order to keep track of what they were

owed in cash, shoes, clothes, or food and to value any outstanding debt, servants needed a head for numbers. Keeping track of arrangements, back pay, and taxes was an important skill. Calculating the true worth of wages in kind in order to add or subtract them from their wages owed demanded experience and proficiency. Servants also needed the ability to keep records of how long they had been in service and under what circumstances. Previous benefits and adversities had to be remembered as evidence in negotiations to come, suggesting people kept their own financial records. It seems reasonable to posit that servants must also have had access to some degree of legal literacy, given that they were able to navigate legal issues concerning employment, inheritance, and taxation. When considered collectively, these navigational abilities constitute a form of phronetic knowledge, which encompasses both an understanding of the circumstances at hand and the capacity to effectively manoeuvre them. We believe this demonstrates that servants in the De la Gardie sphere had a high degree of aptitude for learning and adaptation in a context of challenging circumstances.

While navigating the system and negotiating with their master, petitioners—sometimes intentionally, sometimes unintentionally—supplied their master with inside information on how the wider De la Gardie sphere operated. The stories they told to present themselves in the best possible light concerned everyday matters: financial and social relations, work, family, births, sickness, hunger, vulnerability, and deaths, but also the actions or inactions of bailiffs, bookkeepers, and other middlemen. The petitions thus became an informal audit of how well business was going. For the addressees, petitions were an information resource. They allowed a master such as Magnus Gabriel De la Gardie to sit at the centre of a larger web of estates and operations and reinforce his position as a patriarch. We also know that the contents of petitions reached a wider circle of administrators who monitored the interests of De la Gardie, striving to create an overview of the organization and its employees. The clerks, secretaries, and scribes who received petitions and summarized them for De la Gardie were thus able to gain knowledge of daily operations, networks, and relations, including potentially sensitive and compromising information.

The central administration at Makalös in Stockholm can be described as the nexus of the knowledge community of the De la Gardie estate organization. This was the point of convergence for the efforts and day-to-day practices of the various parts of the sphere, with the aim of creating a transparent whole. The implementation of bureaucratic procedures was designed to facilitate the centralised exercise of power through the establishment of reporting networks and auditing systems. Additionally, these procedures were instrumental in promoting values of efficiency and archival order. This was accompanied by deliberate efforts to eschew verbal decision-making, requiring that agreements, reports, and checks be documented in writing. In conclusion, this

knowledge community placed significant reliance on written documentation, centralised power, and meticulous auditing systems that bestowed considerable responsibility upon those in managerial positions, albeit with limited influence. The lack of delegation within the larger estate organization and its high administrative standards resulted in inefficiencies, delays, and time-consuming processes. There is evidence that employees were aware of the power structure and its weaknesses, exploiting them to their own advantage.

An examination of the everyday practices of the aristocracy's servants has revealed a remarkably active group, constantly striving to adapt, manoeuvre, and exploit the given circumstances, suggesting that they possessed a high level of phronetic knowledge. This stands in stark contrast to the hierarchical and patriarchal perspective on education espoused by their superiors and the prevailing discourse of the era. The aristocratic workplace fostered an environment where hierarchical differences were manifested through written instructions and rules, as well as material conditions such as food, clothing, and access to resources. It served as a space for socialisation and discipline, prone to employing violence to impose its paternalistic views. Those who refused to work or demonstrated subordination were punished severely, with instances of torture occurring. Those who expressed rebellious sentiments faced dire consequences. This did not preclude servants from challenging the system, employing the very instruments of socialisation to confront their superiors. The case of Daniel Feldt and the stolen livery provides a germane example.

The De la Gardie sphere was a place of learning, and while it was certainly less formal in its composition than the guilds, universities and schools of the day, it still engaged large numbers of people in activities that promoted competence and skill, and to varying degrees shaped literacy and numeracy. But not for all. The study reveals the highly gendered nature of the De la Gardie sphere. The premise of our project was that by studying aristocratic households we would be able to access both girls' and boys' learning opportunities, since aristocratic households, unlike formal educational institutions, were also places for women. This ambition was not realized. The main reason for this is that girls are largely absent from the sources: there are no petitions from girls asking to be apprenticed, and it is rare to find girls or younger women in the account books. This does not preclude the possibility, however, that the few younger women and girls who do appear in the employment lists could, by their presence, observe and learn in the same way as the boys. However, this is never explicitly stated.

The number of professional positions for men far outweighed those for women, whether as domestic servants in the family mansion or as agricultural servants on the estates. Women may have worked more on the estates than the sources show, as we know that the wives of male employees often did unpaid work. However, not only were men more numerous, but they also had more occupations to choose from, regardless of social class. The career

opportunities of ordinary women in the De la Gardie sphere were further limited by the fact that the top positions were filled by women from the social elite, usually the lower nobility. The few positions an aspiring maid could hope for were housekeeper or cook. Gender differences were also evident among those who underwent training in the De la Gardie sphere. While there were many requests for training opportunities for men, there were none for women. Women did not ask for training, nor did women ask on behalf of other women. However, women—often mothers or other relatives—did ask for education on behalf of men. While boys could make up between a fifth and a third of the labour force in the De la Gardie household accounts, girls rarely appeared as a category. Even when they were lumped together with maids, a category that might have implied some kind of education, the numbers were small. One reason for the absence of female apprenticeships in the De la Gardie sphere was that the more formal training between master, journeyman, and apprentice, which was an important part of the business, did not exist for women.

However, although being a boy or a man was a prerequisite for a favourable position, it was not sufficient in itself. Frequent references to the loyal work of fathers in the service of the family, or to the fact that the applicant was born in a place where De la Gardie had an estate, indicate that it was considered important to be able to demonstrate some form of pre-existing connection to the De la Gardie sphere. We have shown that once employed, individuals perceived opportunities for advancement within the sphere, and that these perceptions were well founded. The most common aspirations were for advancement within the sphere, but there were also aspirations to move outside of it, for example, by taking up a position at the royal court. Being employed by the De la Gardies played an important role in securing one's position. It could be a position in a particular household within the conglomerate of estates and workplaces that constituted the De la Gardie sphere, or in other locations where the De la Gardie family had established connections. A position could be many things: a particular job, a particular title, an education, a career, a future for oneself or one's children. It might be a matter of accruing status or prestige, of getting a higher salary, or wearing a smart livery. The outcomes could be as simple as putting food on the table or being allowed to stay on in a homestead when one could no longer work or when one's husband had died. There were also other arrangements that the De la Gardie sphere could offer, such as being relieved of corvée or taxes, but also income-generating opportunities such as running an inn on the side. And for some it was a springboard to a career at the royal court or in government.

Looking at the character references drafted by the heads of households it is easy to detect a heavy emphasis on loyalty, diligence, and sobriety, and a conspicuous absence of godliness (though that is another story). In the detailed correspondence about recruiting servants and the petitions about

jobs, what mattered were knowledge, competence, and skill. Far from being contradictory qualities, they went hand in hand. Masters and mistresses needed loyal, knowledgeable servants, and training and education in the aristocratic sphere was one way of getting them. Servants wanted to make a living, and to do so they had to prove their loyalty and be knowledgeable about the landscape they navigated together.

Although we now know more about the De la Gardie sphere as a knowledge community, we still lack insight into some potentially important knowledge that servants were likely to have possessed. One example of what we have found difficult to access is servants' knowledge of their master's private affairs. Some servants, through their duties, became involved in the most intimate details: those who emptied the count's or countess's pots, those who cleaned their rooms, those who washed their bedding and clothes. This was the place to learn about illness, pregnancy, and perhaps infidelity. It may also have been possible to overhear family or other secrets by being present when private conversations took place.

Similarly, it is safe to say that scribes who helped their sick masters write letters from dictation were privy to information about everything from family relationships and disputes to business secrets. When Ebba Brahe was ill and unable to write her own letters, she enlisted the help of a clerk who, by writing her letters to her son Pontus Fredrik De la Gardie, gained an insight into her and other family members' health, her disappointment with her daughter-in-law, but also her strategic thinking regarding the purchase of the Bjersjöholm estate and investment in a planned steelworks. Jacob De la Gardie's loss of sight in his old age made him dependent on scribes, who in turn were informed of paternal admonitions to Jacob's son Magnus Gabriel, warning him against corrupt strangers, card games and the company of women. There was also information about how much money Jacob sent his son when he travelled abroad, spiced with criticism that his son wrote too little. We have established that silence was a virtue for servants, but the extent to which servants violated this and turned their knowledge of the private into gossip, or even a commodity, is something that deserves further study.

Another aspect of the knowledge community of the de la Gardie sphere about which we know little is what a servant learnt beyond what was required to navigate the sphere and carry out work tasks. In their encounters with the aristocratic household, children from more humble backgrounds were exposed to objects, materials and techniques rarely found outside the wealthiest homes. Examples include raw materials and spices, but also methods of food preparation. An obvious conclusion, of course, is that a young kitchen boy or maid who came into contact with exotic spices or fruits for the first time had to learn how to use them. But aristocratic homes were also filled with objects imported from far away, made from rare materials, and with representations of people and places from other parts of the world.

Nowhere in our sources does it say whether any of this mattered to the servants. Were they impressed, surprised, frightened? Did they learn anything, and if so, what?

To what extent are the results we have presented valid outside the De la Gardie sphere? The De la Gardies belonged to an elite in Swedish society, but they were not unique. In the introduction we noted that the De la Gardie family belonged to some ten highly influential and wealthy aristocratic families during much of the seventeenth century. These families controlled estates of varying sizes, were involved in large-scale construction, and had large staffs of servants. There is reason to believe that the employees of their castles and estates could be offered similar forms of training and careers in the spheres controlled by these families. For servants working for the less wealthy gentry, or in families whose heyday was short-lived, the opportunities were probably different. The ability of the aristocratic elite to provide opportunities for their servants was largely based on their involvement in a variety of spheres: the men were senior state officials and high military commanders, combining their positions with control of large estates. The women were often the de facto leaders of the estates. Families ran their own businesses while also being involved in state trade, and there was an interest in exploiting this for their own benefit at a time when state and private activities were merging. Employees were sometimes drawn from the state administration, but the reverse was also true: administrators who had been trained in an aristocratic household went into the state administration. The fact that this mix of state and private activities was less characteristic of noble families outside the circle of the wealthiest aristocracy does not rule out the possibility that these households may also have been important knowledge communities, but this would require further study.

Another question that would merit further study is the extent to which what we have described is a seventeenth-century phenomenon. That this is so, is suggested by the rapid increase in the wealth of the Swedish aristocracy from the beginning of the century, which came to a halt as a result of the Great Reduction of the early 1680s and the Great Northern War of 1700–1718, with the concomitant economic decline of Swedish society as a whole. Both events also affected the political influence of the nobility over the Swedish state. As a result of the Reduction, royal power was strengthened at the expense of the nobility, and after the wars of the early eighteenth century, the Riksdag of the Estates became the real power holder.

The introduction to the book tells of a Danish traveller, Corfitz Braem, who visited in 1671 and was impressed by the palace that had become popularly known as Makalös ('unequalled'). At that time the aristocracy was at its height and large palaces had been built around Stockholm, which were arenas for the display of the aristocracy's power and exalted status, and which housed large staffs of servants. Just 15 years later, a few months after

Magnus Gabriel's death, the first inventory was made of the rich holdings of silver, jewellery, art, furniture, and much more. Impressive as it was, most of it, including the palace itself, now belonged to the state. After a short period of use as a granary, Makalös was transformed into a storehouse for army trophies and became the home of the Royal Armoury.

Today, the house no longer exists. It was converted into a theatre at the end of the eighteenth century—which is perhaps fitting, given its original function—and burnt down in 1825. The picture of aristocratic decay is reinforced by the fact that Pontus Fredrik De la Gardie, after the reduction, complained that he could no longer go out among decent people because he lacked shoes and clothes, and by the fact that Maria Eufrosyne, Magnus Gabriel's widow, wrote letters of recommendation for some of the large staff of servants who were now dispersed and had to seek their fortunes elsewhere. The time when Makalös was the centre of a vibrant estate organization was over. Households, both large aristocratic and small peasant, may have continued to function as centres of learning, but the scope and breadth of the great aristocratic spheres did not survive after the peace that followed the Great Northern War. They were by then part of a bygone knowledge society.

GLOSSARY

apprentice (*lärdräng*), boy apprentice (*lärpojke*)
armourer (*arklimästare*)
arquebusier (*hakeskytt*)
bailiff (*fogde*)
bank assignment (*assignation*)
barber surgeon (*fältskär*)
bird-keeper (*fågelvaktare*)
bookkeeper (*bokhållare*)
bosun (*båtsman*)
bouche (*kostordning*)
boy (*pojke*)
brickmaker (*tegelslagare*)
butler (*källarmästare*)
cadastral unit (*hemman*)
carpenter (*timmerman*)
cash account (*kassaräkning*)
cashier (*kassör*)
castellan (*slottsloven*)
castle guard (*slottsknekt*)
cellarer (*källarsven*, *källardräng*)
chamber gentleman (*kammarjunkare*)
chamber woman (*kammarhustru, kammarjungfru*)
chambermaid (*kammarpiga*)
chief steward (*hovmästare*)

city constable (*stadsvaktmästare*)
clerk (*kanslist*, *kanslidräng*, *ränteskrivare*, *kontorsskrivare*)
clerk of the counting house (*kammarskrivare*)
clerk of the works (*byggningsskrivare*)
commission (*kommiss*)
comptroller (*kamrer*)
cook (*kock*, f. *kökshustru*)
counting house (*kammarkontoret*)
county comptroller (*landsbokhållaren*)
cupbearer (*munskänk*)
dining rules (*bordsartiklar*)
discharge papers (*avskedspass*)
doorkeeper (*vaktmästare*)
dr km, daler kopparmynt
dr sm, daler silvermynt
drummer (*pukslagare*)
estate (*gods, säteri*)
estate manager (*hauptman*)
Estate of the Realm (*stånd*)
falconer (*falkonerare*)
farm bailiff (*drengefogde*)
fiscal (*stadsfiskal*)
foreman (*konduktör*)
forester (*skogvaktare*, regionally *hejderidare*)
fowler (*fågelfängare*)
garden boy (*trädgårdspojke*)
groom (*hovryttare*)
halberdier (*livknekt*, *drabant*)
harbinger (*hovfurir*)
head cook (*köksmästare*)
head gardener (*trädgårdsmästare*)
head kitchen gardener (*humlegårdsmästare*)
herdsman (*djurvaktare*)
hod carrier (*murdräng*)
homestead (*hemman*)
horse marshal (*fodermarsk*)
horse-trainer (*beridare*)
household (*hovstat*)
household board (*consilium*)
Household Codes (*hustavlan*)
household ordinances (*bordsartiklar*)
housekeeper (*fatburshustru*)
housekeeper's maid (*fatburspiga*)

hunter (*jägardräng*)
huntsman (*jägare*)
innkeeper (*värdshusvärd*)
joiner (*snickare*)
journeyman cook (*kockgesäll*)
journeyman gardener (*trädgårdsgesäll*)
keeper (*husvaktare*)
kitchen boy (*kockpojke*)
kitchen maid (*kökspiga*)
kitchen under-gardener (*humlegårdsdräng*)
lackey (*lakej*)
lad (*dräng*)
landlady, *see* lodging-house keeper
legostadga
lieutenant's wife (*löjtnantska*)
lodging allowance (*logementspengar*)
lodging-house keeper (värd/värdinna)
maid (*piga*)
main estate (*sätesgård*)
Main House, *see* Makalös
Makalös, palace
manciple (*skaffare*)
manor (*herrgård, säteri*)
mason (*murare*)
master of the kitchen (*spismästare*)
metes and bounds (*rå och rör*)
organist (*organist*)
overseer (*rättare*, *befallningsman*)
page (*page*)
painter, junior (*underhavande målare*)
pantry maid (*fatburspiga*)
pastry cook (*sockerbagare*)
personal cook (*riddarkock*)
pewterer (*tennknekt*)
postilion (*kusk*)
postman (*brevvisare*)
provost (*profoss*)
rdr km, riksdaler kopparmynt
rdr, riksdaler
reeve (*länsman*)
rent roll (*jordebok*)
rider (*ryttare*)
sculptor (*bildhuggare*)

seaman (*båtsman*)
serfdom (*livegen*)
servant (*tjänare*, f. *tjänarinna*)
silver butler (*silverknekt*)
silver butler's boy (*silverkammarpojke*)
silver under-butler (*silverkammardräng*)
stable boy (*stallpojke*)
stable lad (*stalldräng*)
stableman (*stallknekt*)
stablemaster (*stallmästare*)
subsistence money (*kostpenningar*)
superintendent (*husgerådsmästare*)
surety (*kaution*)
swan-keeper (*svanvaktare*)
table-decker (*taffeltäckare*)
tailor (*skräddare*)
tax collector (*skattdragare*, *uppbördsman*)
tax farm (*skattegård*)
Tre Kronor, royal palace
under-clerk (*kontorsdräng*)
under-cook (*kockdräng*)
under-gardener (*trädgårdsdräng*)
upholsterer (*klädedräng*)
valet (*kammartjänare*)
victualler's clerk (*proviantskrivare*)
warden (*gevaldiger*)
washer woman (*tvätterska*)
wet nurse (*amma*)
woodman (*huggekarl*)

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