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# Early modern naval cities, using the example of Karlskrona in Sweden: what was ‘modern’ in the early modern period?

## Abstract

Could the early modern naval city be considered something special for its time, a city unlike other early modern cities? This article argues, using the example of Karlskrona in Sweden, that the European naval city in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries became what could be labelled a ‘hub’, where older ways of thinking and acting were confronted on a new level. The driving force behind this confrontation was Sweden’s ambition to become the major player in the Baltic Sea. With this military ambition followed new demands on existing methods of production and the handling of diseases. In order to reach its goals, Sweden had to build up a strong military state based on established trading networks in the Baltic area, and as these networks were in the hands of burghers, the state had to integrate them into its project by negotiation. It did not help that it was thought the success of the project relied on founding a new naval city in an area only recently conquered from Denmark. The sheer scale of Sweden’s ambitions is shown by the plans for the new city, built on a couple of uninhabited islands in the far south-east of the country, and requiring the mass relocation of burghers out to the islands and the creation of a naval base and shipyard. Together, this created an environment for new encounters and new solutions.<sup>1</sup>

## Background

With the peace agreed in Roskilde in Denmark in 1658, the easternmost part of Denmark became southern Sweden. Those parts of Denmark that lay on the eastern side of the Sound, the strait that to this day separates the two nations, were incorporated in the Swedish realm. The Swedish annexation was last called into question by Denmark in the Scanian War of 1675–9. In the meantime, in the period between 1658 and 1679, the former Danish province was the target of an ambitious incorporation process to bring it fully into the Swedish fold.

The province that this article is concerned with—Blekinge—had been considered a peripheral area of the conglomerate Danish state of the day.<sup>2</sup> The economic heart of the region was Ronneby, a city that was integrated in the Baltic trade system and enjoyed good connections with Amsterdam. Tradesmen and merchants from Germany, and later the Netherlands, dominated the city’s ruling elite. The subsequent incorporation of Blekinge into the Swedish realm paved the way for a permanent presence in the south-eastern part of the Baltic Sea, where Sweden was intent on gaining the upper hand in its competition with Denmark and Russia for control of the seaways. One of the Swedish king’s objectives was an ice-free harbour in the south for the Swedish fleet. In the end, his eye fell on a handful of uninhabited islands in the far east of Blekinge, which had a larger central island, Trossö, suitable for a city. Inhabitants for the new city, named Karlskrona, were to be found in the city of Ronneby to the west, less than thirty kilometres distant. For the Swedish Admiralty, the economic networks that could be provided by the former inhabitants of Ronneby were essential to the new naval city. Initially, the process of integrating an older merchant oligarchy from a once Danish city into a new Swedish port was characterized by mistrust, but relatively soon the Ronneby elite accepted the new conditions, moved out to Karlskrona, and started to build the new naval city. Inevitably, the course of building a base for the Swedish fleet in a former Danish province did not run smooth. There were a number of armed conflicts of differing degrees of seriousness, with the

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<sup>2</sup> Harald Gustafsson, “The Conglomerate State. A Perspective on State Formation in Early Modern Europe”, *Scandinavian Journal of History*, no 3-4 (1988).

Scanian War by far the worst, during which regular troops from Sweden and Denmark were pitted against one another and various irregular local forces. At a lower level, there were clashes over the privileges, taxation, and local customs and excise that were under negotiation with the new masters of the area. These conflicts, and especially the Scanian War, were in fact typical of European war in the pre-Napoleonic era, with a mix of regular army units and temporary local forces, mainly made up of peasants, brought together to form an army. Occasionally these mixed units had the support of the local community, but at other times they were treated as intruders. In the seventeenth century, the standard state ambition of having a monopoly on the use of violence had not yet been realized—there was no clear separation between civilian and military at that time.<sup>3</sup>

For some of the existing inhabitants of this once Danish area, the situation that followed the Swedish takeover was threatening; for others, it was rich with opportunity. Privileges, taxes, and local customs and excise were all under negotiation, and the outcome—whether a certain group would come out winners or losers—was not obvious, and, of course, not everyone had the same opportunity to negotiate with their new Swedish masters. For many of Ronneby's merchants, who were essential to the Swedish Admiralty, the situation was promising, however. The possibility of a contract with the navy was very attractive. Yet, even for them, a heavy naval and government presence in local society may not have been without its drawbacks; equally well, it could be a menacing situation, where merchants who had once been fairly independent now had to bow to a strong state. Perhaps the thorniest question facing people with financial ambitions was whether to count on the Swedish takeover lasting. What might happen if the Danes retook the area and its inhabitants had been heavily involved with the Swedes? Considerations of this kind had no easy answers, but on the other hand this was a common experience for merchants in the European borderlands. In the event, after the heavy fighting of the Scanian War of 1675–9, the situation in the newly Swedish province became far more settled, and it was possible to found the new naval city of Karlskrona.

### **The early modern naval city—a hub for ‘modernity’**

I would argue that any naval city should be considered something special in the early modern period. Were there characteristics associated with being, at one and the same time, a naval city and a special centre with importance for the future? Before I discuss the proposition that the naval city was something out of the ordinary in the early modern urban system, it is worth considering the meaning of the word ‘modern’ in this context.

By modern, I here mean some of the features associated with modernity, although in a fairly simplified way. The very term ‘early modern’ is an implicit criticism of an abrupt separation between early and modern times. My intent here is to examine the arguments in favour of ‘early modern’ as a term—mine is a search for what was modern about the early modern period. The chief focus is the people who were forced to contemplate adopting new ways of thinking and acting when they were confronted by the demands of a strong state power with sweeping military ambitions for the Baltic. Merchants, used to minding their own business on the periphery of the Danish realm, had to deal with the sudden presence of a strong Swedish state in local society. The Swedish Crown insisted that all economic activity had to relate to the state, and above all had to serve its military ends. Politics and economics became more and more linked in a national perspective, being no longer limited to a single city with its merchant networks and guilds. Small-scale production was increasingly replaced by large-scale production, challenging the old ways of protecting production rights and capacity. To succeed, large-scale production needed new technology, administrative capabilities on an entirely new scale, and strong financial backing. Furthermore, the large number of soldiers and seamen<sup>4</sup> at the naval base challenged the old methods of containing contagion. The scale was altogether different, and with communicable diseases able to pose a real threat to the nation, systematization, observation, and medicine became features of a new way of thinking that

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<sup>3</sup> Martin van Creveld, *The Transformation of War* (New York, 1991), 35–6, 51.

<sup>4</sup> The general term “seamen” will be used in this article for the Swedish *båtsman*, a term not totally comparable with the English term boatswain.

ran counter to the religious approach to dealing with disease. Prayer was not rejected out of hand, but it was felt to have its limitations as a means of dealing with disease, and the navy doctor became an important adviser, close to the admiral. It is in describing this process and others that the concept of ‘modernity’ tends to be used in a oversimplified way to mark the distance between past and present. For example, the use of the term ‘modern Sweden’ could be an attempt to distinguish a modern Sweden from its authoritarian, military past.

### **The naval city, an early modern city of a certain kind?**

In his book *Discipline and Punish*, Michel Foucault gives a description of a naval city at a time during the eighteenth century when the plague hit many ports.

In France, it seems that Rochefort served both as experiment and model. A port, and a military port, is—with its circulation of goods, men signed up willingly or by force, sailors embarking and disembarking, diseases and epidemics—a place of desertion, smuggling, contagion: it is a crossroads for dangerous mixtures, a meeting-place for forbidden circulations.<sup>5</sup>

This captures much of what made the early modern naval city a very special place. The movement of people, merchants, and sailors was something common to all ports, but it was the sheer volume and the mix that reached new levels in a naval city. A naval city was a place where state representatives, in this case the Admiralty, had to be far more of a forceful, controlling presence than in an ordinary port. The flow of money, merchandise, and people formed a circulatory system that had to be kept under surveillance. Foucault also indicates that the naval city was a place that attracted different kinds of people. Karlskrona in Sweden serves as a useful model in much the same way as Rochefort did for Foucault.

Generally speaking, migration patterns in Europe changed after 1648; something that was specially evident in societies where trade had a strong position. New trade areas were penetrated, national borders were crossed in new ways, and all of it required a military lead that created ‘frontiers of opportunity’. These frontier societies were not ordered along the same, inflexible lines as existing, traditional areas, for their political structure was often quite different, their corporate organization (in the shape of guilds) was not that strong, and their class structure could be less rigid. This situation did indeed create an environment of opportunity, but it was also fertile ground for conflict.<sup>6</sup> The manner in which different societies adapted to new circumstances during the early modern period was to some extent related to the openness or exclusivity of their institutions. Guilds, for example, might accept new conditions of production and thus embark on proto-industrialization, or they could reject them and continue with their traditional production methods. This openness to new ideas or willingness to adapt to changing circumstances seems to have been connected to the way in which ‘social capital’ was accrued by local community institutions. Amassed social capital might prevent new ideas and prompt people to jealously guard old privileges and monopolies, or it might be open to change.<sup>7</sup>

Across Europe, it was common in the early modern period to find stronger state intervention in cities that for centuries had been ruled by small elite groups of merchants. State expansion was of course ruinous for such oligarchies.<sup>8</sup> What could be more convenient for a Swedish state flexing its great power muscles than to found a ‘new’ city in a desolate place (there was only one farm on Trossö at the time) and then entice—or force—the burghers needed for its great project to comply? It gave central government a unique opportunity to control the process. It also meant that there were no ‘old’ city institutions to get in the way. The institutions that were taken to Karlskrona came with

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<sup>5</sup> Michel Foucault, *Discipline and punish. The birth of the prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York 1991), pp44.

<sup>6</sup> Dirk Hoerder, *Cultures in Contact, World Migration in the Second Millennium*, London 2002, pp4.

Dirk Hoerder, *Cultures in Contact: World Migration in the Second Millennium* (London, 2002), 4.

<sup>7</sup> Shelilagh Ogilvie, *A Bitter Living, Women, Markets, and Social Capital in Early Modern Germany*, (Oxford 2003), pp20-1; Jan Lucassen, Marten Prak ‘Conclusion’, in Maarten Prak, Catharina Lis, Jan Lucassen, and Hugo Soly (eds.), *Crafts, Guilds in the Early Modern Low Countries, Work Power, and Representation* (England 2006), pp224-31.

<sup>8</sup> Peter Clarke, *European Cities and Towns 400-2000*, (Oxford 2009), pp202.

the merchants who moved in, a mix of burghers born in Germany or the Netherlands, with some of Danish origin and a scattering of Swedes, all of whom were used to operating in a periphery of the Danish realm where state control was limited.

During the Middle Ages, the burghers had enjoyed a strong economic position in this borderland. The important border trade over the south-eastern border between Sweden and Denmark was under the control of the city of Ronneby. The only threat to the Ronneby burghers' position was local, and came from the peasants who traded out of the many small harbours along the Blekinge coast. This peasant trade survived thanks to the privileges granted to the peasants by the Danish kings in return for a promise of loyalty during war.<sup>9</sup> The same situation was repeated in borderlands across Europe at the time.<sup>10</sup> What mattered here was that it also signalled the weakness of traditional institutions, which could be an advantage for the Swedish state. The conflicts that arose along the Swedish–Danish border with the establishment of Karlskrona were largely prompted by the threat to some groups' freedoms in the area, for example to the peasant trade and the opportunities for smuggling offered by national borders, whereas thanks to their financial clout the unrestricted power of the Ronneby merchants was left almost untouched. Thus it would be reasonable to describe the foundation of a naval base and city as something that for one group of influential entrepreneurs presented a 'frontier of opportunity'. Of course, the future was not bright for everyone, and the question of how to make the best of the situation was a tricky one—but on the other hand, these were the kinds of economic and political calculations that Baltic merchants were quite used to. Kings and countries came and went, new borders and new tolls and taxes materialized, and all the while the differences created by a national border could present a prime opportunity for an astute businessman.

The first burghers took their burgher oaths to the king in Karlskrona in 1682, having moved there to start building the city, house by house, in around 1680. This first wave from Ronneby was to a large extent limited to the more wealthy burghers. The magistrate and mayors retained their offices from the old city, and were among the first to move. Come 1690, the population had grown to about 3,000, and by the 1770s the city probably had over 10,000 inhabitants.<sup>11</sup> Karlskrona quickly reached the position of a second-rank city in the Swedish realm.<sup>12</sup> The speed of its development fell into a pattern similar to other naval cities such as Portsmouth, Chatham, Lorient, Brest, Toulon, and Ronstadt, all being cities that expanded rapidly during war and contracted in peacetime. And all being heavily dependent on the state coffers for their survival.<sup>13</sup>

These new early modern cities also became sites where the centralized state or monarchy and an international economy met, while stronger state intervention in urban affairs slowly pushed aside the older mediaeval pattern of a network of merchants or an oligarchy of burghers ruling the cities. The stronger focus on economies of scale in production was marked in the late eighteenth century by the 'selective' tolerance of religious minorities who might be useful to the state. In Sweden, a Jewish Ordinance was issued in 1782 that permitted Jews to settle in three cities (Stockholm, Gothenburg, and Norrköping), yet in the same year a Jew, Fabian Philip, was allowed to settle in Karlskrona, where he set up a sailmaking factory just outside the city limits. Inevitably there were conflicts with the burghers over this unexpected competition, but with the support of the Admiralty Fabian Philip stayed the course and went on to expand his business. The reason the Admiralty gave for its support was Philip's usefulness to the Swedish fleet.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Karl Bergman, 'Makt möten människor, Skånska kommissionen i Blekinge 1669-70' [Power, meetings, people, The Scania Commission 1669-70] (Univ. of Lund D.Phil thesis 2002), pp88-101.

<sup>10</sup> See for instance: Peter Sahlins, *Boundaries, The Making of France and Spain in the Pyrenees*, (Berkeley 1991).

<sup>11</sup> Sven Lilja, *Tjuvehål och stolta städer, Urbaniseringens kromologi och geografi i Sverige (med Finland) ca 1570-tal till 1810-tal* [Thieve's Dens and Proud Cities. The Cronology and Geography of Urbanisation in Sweden (with Finland) from the Late Sixteenth to the Early Nineteenth Century], (Stockholm 2000), pp404.

<sup>12</sup> Lilja 2000, pp261–63.

<sup>13</sup> Clarke 2009, pp135,

<sup>14</sup> Hugo Valentin, *Judarna i Sverige, Från 1774 till 1950-talet* [The Jews in Sweden from 1774 to the 1950s], (Falun 2004).

## Driving forces behind the creation of early modern naval cities

The seventeenth century saw a change in warfare at sea. Small convoys of armed ships, often merchant-led, made up of a mix of merchant ships and engaged in small-scale warfare, were replaced by warships built on an entirely different scale. For Sweden, the Battle of the Sound in 1658 against a far superior Dutch fleet seems to have been a turning-point. It was a bitter lesson in modern naval warfare with ships built to carry heavy cannons.<sup>15</sup> The front-runners in this new development were not the old maritime nations around the Mediterranean; rather they were Europe's highly centralized states such as Portugal, France, Britain, Denmark–Norway, and Sweden. Sweden was also at an early stage an exporter of cannons for warfare at sea.<sup>16</sup>

The Swedish state of the time is often referred to as a 'military state', reflecting the fact that almost all its resources, economic and human, were reserved for military purposes.<sup>17</sup> Sweden had joined the ranks of the great powers thanks to a degree of centralization that made it possible to exact a standing army and the necessary economic resources from a population of modest size. This capability could now be used to build up a competitive fleet, with the added advantage that, being new to the building of warships and the like, they were able use the latest expertise and techniques.

There was an important shift in shipbuilding in the early modern period. In around 1586, naval shipyards in England abandoned their older forms of production (based on craftsmen's trial and error) for a new method based on drawings with fixed measurements. This was the result of a move to a more scientific systematization of experience-based knowledge in the shape of drawings.<sup>18</sup> Production methods changed accordingly, which required shipbuilding to be backed by financial muscle on a completely new scale, with an administrative dispensation to match. Engineers (*mecanicus*) became a strategic resource when developing a fleet. British shipbuilders were imported to Sweden, and later Fredrik Henrik of Chapman took Swedish shipbuilding to new heights using the scientific knowledge of the eighteenth century (*architectura navalis mercatoria*).<sup>19</sup>

The development of a new kind of fleet also challenged the traditional military hierarchy based on the nobility's inherited position—something that would go uncontested in the army for years to come. The traditional view of how to behave and act as a nobleman was overturned, and the way opened for new groups to seek careers as naval officers. Sweden embarked on this relatively early compared to other European countries, and its navy, which needed a new kind of officer who offered a mix of technical skills, seamanship, and military leadership, set about finding suitable men, who through their education under the navy's supervision became far more the representatives of the state than did the old nobility in the army. The result was that an officer corps with a defined hierarchical structure was established in Sweden in the early seventeenth century. In England this came in around 1640, while in France the old nobility dominated among naval officers throughout the seventeenth century. One reason why Sweden began on this so early may have been the lack of a strong feudal structure hindering social mobility.<sup>20</sup> Taken together, there seem to have been some telling structural advantages that ensured Sweden had the potential to become a great sea power in the Baltic in the seventeenth century.

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<sup>15</sup> Jan Glete, *Warfare at Sea, 1500-1650, Maritime conflicts and the transformation of Europe*, (London 2000), pp124; Jan Glete, *War and the State in Early Modern Europe, Spain, the Dutch Republic and Sweden as Fiscal-Military States, 1500-1600*, (London 2002), pp201, Harald Gustafsson, *Makt och människor. Europeisk statsbildning från medeltid till franska revolutionen* [Power and People. European State Formation from the Middle Ages to the French Revolution] (Göteborg 2010), pp97.

<sup>16</sup> Glete 2002, pp211; Glete 2000, pp67.

<sup>17</sup> Sven A Nilsson, *De stora krigens tid. Om Sverige som militärstat och bondesamhälle* [The Time of Great Wars. About Sweden as a Military State and as Peasant Society], (Uppsala 1990). The concept "Military State" has been discussed and with slightly different focus adopted by other researcher labeled as "The Power State", "The Tax-state", "The Byråcratic State" or "the Military State, for an overview: Gustafsson 2010 pp228.

<sup>18</sup> Dave McGee, 'From Craftmanship to Draftmanship. Naval Architecture and the Three Traditions of Early Modern Design', *Technology and Culture* 40 vols, no2 (1999), pp2-4, 11-13.

<sup>19</sup> Daniel G. Harris, *Fredrik Henrik af Chapman, the first naval architect and his work*, (Stockholm 2001).

<sup>20</sup> Glete 2000, pp49, 53.

Different patterns or structures can shed light on the forces behind the development of Europe's early modern naval cities, but any explanation also have to consider more tangible factors. An expanding fleet needed kitting out with everything from bread, beer, spirits, meat, timber, cannons, clothing, millstones, and hemp to healthy men. In what follows, the wider meanings behind the ordinary production of common items such as bread and spirits will be examined, as will the development of health care during the plague years. These investigations will serve to problematize the supposedly distinct separation between the early modern military past and modern Sweden.

However, first something has to be said about political culture and the dealings between the state's representatives, the Admiralty, and the burghers in a province so recently seized from Denmark. The Admiralty needed the burghers for their great naval project: they needed their financial know-how, they needed access to their trading networks, they needed their production capabilities. In other words, the burghers could negotiate with the Admiralty from a position of some strength, and the Admiralty could offer financial opportunities to the burghers. Everything was in place for a negotiation.

### **Burghers, admirals, and state representatives—political culture in a naval city**

The foundation of the naval city of Karlskrona was a strategic decision, for it offered an ice-free harbour in the south-east of the country with fast access to the part of the Baltic Sea where enemies such as the Danes or Russians operated. It was a costly project to build a new city on a couple of remote islands, and a risky one at that. If nothing else, it was a state intervention in the local community, something that the early burghers must have been aware of when they swore their burgher oaths in the new city. This was reinforced by the simple fact that the Admiralty itself moved from Stockholm to the new city.

Karlskrona was in many ways a special city with a very distinctive composition. The burghers fell under the jurisdiction that was common to all burghers in Swedish cities; Admiralty staff came under the Admiralty's jurisdiction. The city's inhabitants were divided between different religious confessions, with Swedish and German congregations and, later on in the 1780s, a Jewish congregation. The most powerful was the German congregation, which numbered Hans Wachtmeister, admiral and governor-general, among its members. The position of governor-general meant that he commanded both political and military power—an exceptional way of organizing decision-making, which left him virtually king of the county.

Burghers became citizens of the city on swearing a burgher oath, as was traditional, but in this case it meant being a burgher in the burghers' district of the new city. The burghers of Ronneby who moved out to Karlskrona did not have to retake their oaths—as soon as they moved in they automatically became burghers in the new city. It is obvious that the upper echelons of Ronneby's merchant elite, with leading families such as Van Schooting and Schlyter, were quick to accept the conditions offered by the Swedish state for moving to Karlskrona, while some chose to stay in Ronneby, even though it lost its trading privileges—the burghers' various business and political calculations resulted in different decisions. This situation resulted in trade competition between the two cities. To move or not to move was not a straightforward choice for the burghers, as the stability of the political situation had to be factored in. Might the Danes stage a return or not? What kind of financial return could be expected for the kind of business that was their forte? Was it a safer bet to strike out as an independent local trader, or was this the moment to get more closely involved with the state?

The history of one of Ronneby's leading men illustrates the situation faced by a locally and internationally active merchant. Tore Christofersen came from a family of merchants from Bohemia in Germany. Soon after the decision to found Karlskrona and the 'invitation' from the Swedish state to move there from Ronneby, there were a series of clashes between Christofersen and Hans Wachtmeister. These were played out in Karlskrona Town Court, which became the scene for a conflict of major importance. In court, the locally influential merchant faced down the mighty Hans Wachtmeister, the state's representative in the county. Every burgher who had hesitated over how

to deal with the new situation could watch and learn before deciding how to act.

When Ronneby lost its privileges as city, its inhabitants were no longer allowed to participate in the export and import trade. One concrete result of this was that Ronneby's official scales were moved to Karlskrona. The scales had a symbolic meaning for the city, and for Tore Christofersen personally it was of great importance for his potash trade overseas, so he duly moved the scales back to Ronneby. This was an act of defiance by Christofersen, and the question was how Wachtmeister, to whom the challenge was directed, might react to the situation. Other conflicts were involved; for example, there were accusations of illegal trade, and the Swedish authorities confiscated a shipload of potash from Christofersen's brother, Johan. The situation could easily have got out of hand if Wachtmeister had chosen to use his powers. Instead, the conflict moved in another direction. In 1686, five years after the conflict first began, and in open court, Wachtmeister offered Christofersen the chance to become a burgher of Karlskrona. Christofersen hesitated, and made it clear that he was a burgher in Amsterdam and that he had been trading in accordance with the agreement between the Dutch Republic and Sweden, yet ultimately he agreed to swear a burgher oath in Karlskrona, but only if his brother Johan could continue as a burgher in Amsterdam, despite then living and working in the Swedish realm. Wachtmeister, who was present in court, took a pragmatic view of this proposal. He argued that this was a question for the city council, and from subsequent discussions between the city council and Wachtmeister it is obvious that he was unworried by it, although the council was given pause by the practical problems associated with this solution.<sup>21</sup>

Tore Christofersen became a burgher in Karlskrona, and by the beginning of the eighteenth century he was a major player in the supply of the naval city and the Admiralty. His trading fleet expanded, and in the six-year period of 1686–92 he requested sea-passes for at least 15 ships, often in collaboration with other Karlskrona merchants. The ships' gross tonnage was between 40 to 260 'läster' (one *läst* = 24 barrels of grain). At the time, Christofersen was also involved in a tobacco factory in the city.<sup>22</sup>

Tore Christofersen had made his calculations and he came to a decision. In the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, we can see how international merchants increasingly had to rely on state protection for their long-distance trade. The salt route between Sweden and the Mediterranean was one example—the trade had to be organized in convoys under Admiralty protection. Christofersen had a hand in that trade. Perhaps he realized that it might be to his advantage to be more closely involved with the state and the Admiralty, even though he would have to give up some of the freedoms he had enjoyed as a more independent local merchant. Times had changed, and there were new conditions to take into consideration.

Wachtmeister's problem was how to organize the supply of food and material for a burgeoning new city, and above all how to supply a fleet with large ambitions in the Baltic. To achieve this, he needed access to an intact trading network in the Baltic area. This was not the moment to provoke the burghers, the very people he needed so badly. Instead, the situation called for negotiation—and the burghers almost certainly knew it. There were disputes about prices, deliveries, and contracts between the Admiralty and burghers that culminated in court in 1686 as in so many years, and each and every one seems to have been treated by the burghers as an opportunity to negotiate with the authorities. Wachtmeister's tactic was to use both carrot and stick. He dangled before them the possibility of long-term contracts with the Admiralty, protection from competition from outsiders (for example, from their former friends in Ronneby), and the privileges to be gained by being a burgher in the naval city. The tacit threat hanging over the burghers was the Admiralty's ability to punish anyone who tried to flout trading regulations and the law.

At first sight, the Admiralty would seem to have had the upper hand in what was a distinctly asymmetric situation, as it had access to military power. But could it be used? Might not the use of military power be counterproductive? As Christofersen's case showed, the burghers possessed

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<sup>21</sup> Karlskrona Rådhusrätt, protokoll [Karlskrona, Town Court, protocol], (hereafter KTC), 24/11 1684, 4/5 1685, se also Bergman 2012, pp60-61.

<sup>22</sup> Bergman 2012, pp61-62.



something the Admiralty desperately needed. It would not be possible to realize the Admiralty's ambitious plans for the Baltic without the trade that was in the hands of these burghers. This led to a situation where the state and Admiralty representatives had to go more than halfway to meet the burghers on their terms, largely accepting the negotiating and trading culture that had evolved in the northern European trading cities since the Middle Ages. There was a tacit acceptance of the rules of honourable dealing, the use of contracts, and the openness regarding information about credit and finance for those involved in trade. Information of this kind had to be recorded in the city's court records and could be accessed by merchants from abroad.<sup>23</sup> Acceptance of this culture was based not on national regulations and legislation, although they were important, but on the rules and regulations that governed their operations as burghers and merchants involved in production and trade. When Sweden was a great power, its absolutist kings operated in an early modern public sphere shaped largely by an economic culture that was shared and developed by the burghers who stood for much of the nation's trade. Although the situation might appear asymmetric, with the Admiralty in the controlling position, the burghers were not without power.

## **Bread and booze**

One way to examine this mutual dependence is to focus on the interface between the need for vast quantities of supplies in order to pursue Swedish military ambitions in the Baltic Sea and the wealth of economic possibilities for entrepreneurs.

When the Swedish army in 1669 took over the small town of Christianopol in the far south-eastern corner of the former Danish realm, close to old Swedish border, one immediate problem was the supply of bread for its soldiers. The only way to produce flour in this area was by using small hand mills in the burghers' homes. Officers divided the grain to be milled between the burghers and supervised the production process—they even sealed the hand mills after use<sup>24</sup>—for flour was a product of strategic importance for the military, and every possibility of waste or theft had to be eliminated. When the Admiralty established itself in Karlskrona after 1680, with a shipyard and part of the fleet at anchor in its harbour, the supply of bread (and victuals in general) became a matter for the burghers in the city. It is possible in the court records to follow a stream of lawsuits between Karlskrona's burghers and the Admiralty over production, contracts, and prizes. For a great power with naval ambitions, this was clearly not the way to organize production to meet the demands of the fleet, or indeed of any branch of the armed forces.<sup>25</sup>

During the wars of the eighteenth century, one chosen method of dealing with the supply problem was to keep the theatre of war close to the major agricultural areas of Europe.<sup>26</sup> The situation for the Swedish king Charles XII in Norway in 1718 was somewhat different, as 60 per cent of the campaign's supplies had to be produced at home and transported up to the army units.<sup>27</sup> The situation for the navy was different again, as every ship had to be supplied from its home harbour, requiring victuals to be produced, purchased, and stored mainly in-country. This demand meant production units of a new kind were a priority.

For the ever expanding armies of the time, the supply of bread was a strategic problem of huge proportions, from the supply of raw materials and production to logistics and administration.<sup>28</sup> Charles the XII's winter campaign in Norway underlined the problems. The part of the army that

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<sup>23</sup> KTC 27/7, 2/11 1685, 4/5 1686, 7/3, 5/5, 26/5, 8/6, 11/7, 7/11 1688, 4/9, 17/7, 25/9, 18,10 1689, 28/4, 6/9, 10,9, 13/9, 1690, 4/9, 7/10, 2/11 1690, se also Bergman 2012, pp65-7.

<sup>24</sup> Riksarkivet Stockholm, Skånska kommissionen 1669-70, Äldre kommissioner nr 629:1 [The Swedish State Archive, Stockholm, The Scania Commission 1669-70, Older Commissions 629:1], pp120.

<sup>25</sup> Bergman 2012, pp58-60.

<sup>26</sup> Martin van Creveld, *Supplying from Wallenstein to Patton* (Cambridge, 2004), pp7-74.

<sup>27</sup> Jan Lindegren, 'Bröd som vapen. Karl XII och succariebrödet', [Bread as weapon: Charles XII and the succarie bread], *Saga och sed Kungl. Gustav Adolfs akademis årsbok – annales Academia Regia Gustavi Adolphi* (Uppsala 2000), 'Brödet och kriget, den jämtländska armén och 1718-19 års fälttåg' [Bread and the War, the Jämtland army and the campaign 1718-19], *Jämten* (1999).

<sup>28</sup> For the general importance of this issue, see Van Creveld 2004; Christer Kuvaja, 'Provisioning of the Russian Army in Finland during the Occupation, 1713-1721, *Scandinavian Journal of History*, 27/1 (2002), pp31-46.

broke into Norway from the south comprised 30,000 men and 20,000 horses, and needed totally 1.9 lispounds of victuals and 3.7 lispounds of grain for the horses (one lispound, Swedish *lispund*, was 8.502 kg). The division that marched into Norway from central Sweden needed 150,000 lispounds of victuals, largely ‘*succarie* bread’ (a rye hard-tack), plus fodder for the horses.<sup>29</sup> For Swedish fleet, the extent of the production problem was if anything worse. A list of ship supplies from 1790 indicates the quantities involved. The *Wasa* needed 59,000 kg of bread, more than 13,000 litres of beer, almost 9,500 litres of Swedish spirits, and slightly over 5,000 litres of French spirits, and the other ships equipped for the same campaign had similar requirements. This was demand on scale that could not be met by individual burghers in the immediate area.

Sweden, for all its ambitions, had military supply problems that resulted in new methods of large-scale production which, paradoxically, mainly became evident in the years *after* Sweden had lost its place as a great power, in the mid and late eighteenth century. The connection between Sweden’s military supply problems at the height of its power and the country’s rising large-scale production—what some researchers see as proto-industrialization—is an interesting pattern directly related to its great-power ambitions.

At the end of seventeenth century, the first Crown bakery was established in Karlskrona, later replaced by a larger outfit in 1730. The accounts from 1752 and 1754 reveal what it was capable of. In September 1752 there were 17 baking days, and the ordinary level of production was 100,000 ‘dice’ or pieces of *succarie* bread a day. The lowest figure for a single day was 76,506 pieces. In the same month in 1754, around 80,000 pieces were produced in a single day, but occasionally the figure dropped to 20,000 or 40,000 pieces a day. The bakery also produced *ankerstock* (lit. ‘anchor-stock’), a soft black bread, of which 14,993 loaves were baked in September 1752 and 5,079 in the same month two years later.<sup>30</sup>

The first mills in the area were small, and were built along the Lyckeby å, the river that flows into the Baltic just outside Karlskrona, but they were insufficient when demand grew. Indeed, the entire county of Blekinge could not supply sufficient flour, so it was imported from Skåne (Scania), the county to the south-west. To keep up with demand, a large mill with a sequence of six millstones was established in Lyckeby just outside Karlskrona. This considerable change, which came in the first half of the eighteenth century, saw a large, single unit not far distant from the naval base replace the small mills.<sup>31</sup> A naval officer rented the Lyckeby mill from the Admiralty and supplied the fleet with flour. From the surviving inspection logs and records of repairs, it is evident that technical expertise from the Karlskrona shipyard was essential to the operation of the mill.<sup>32</sup> The work at the mill and everything associated with it was done by soldiers and seamen and their officers.<sup>33</sup> A great many surviving technical drawings by several ‘*mecanicus*’ at the shipyard give a clear picture of the innovative environment the Admiralty had created by this point<sup>34</sup>—conditions that were essential for the building and maintenance of technically advanced constructions such as the large Crown mill. In considering the importance of the early mills to Sweden’s industrialization, much of the academic discussion has turned on whether the small mills only served agricultural purposes, or whether they had a wider significance.<sup>35</sup> The example of Karlskrona shows how the demands of the growing fleet and Sweden’s military ambitions in the Baltic area must have been a

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<sup>29</sup> Jan Lindegren, 2000 pp43.

<sup>30</sup> Krigsarkivet Stockholm, Amiralitetskollegium, Ekonomikontoret, Kansliet, Räkenskaper kronobageriet [The Swedish War Archive, Admiralty collegium, Economy office, chancellery, account, crown bakery], J:1.

<sup>31</sup> Lantmäteriets kartor, karta Lyckebyån, Lösens socken 1731, [The Swedish land surveying office, map Lyckeby river, Lösen parish 1731], act 123-1:1; Krigsarkivet Stockholm, Amiralitetskollegium, Kammarkontoret 2 [Swedish War Archive, Admiralty collegium, Finacial and Administrative Services], G IV:1.

<sup>32</sup> Krigsarkivet Stockholm, Amiralitetskollegium, Varvskontoret [The Swedish War Archive, Admiralty collegium, Shipyard office], F V:6, pag 21, 35, 57,99,109,115,119,189,369,399, 1029, 1064.

<sup>33</sup> Krigsarkivet Stockholm, Amiralitetskollegium, Varvskontoret [The Swedish War Archive, Admiralty collegium, Shipyard office], F V:6, pag 153, 303, 311, 401.

<sup>34</sup> Krigsarkivet Stockholm, Marinens ritningar [The Swedish War Archive, Naval drawings], (hereafter WANd). A XVIII, cover no 206, 3, 5, 6, 8, 11.

<sup>35</sup> Adam Robert Lucas, ‘Industrial milling in the ancient and medieval worlds’, *Technology and Culture* 45 vols, (2005), pp139, 153.

key incentive to switch from small mills to a large-scale unit of industrial proportions.

The demand for bread was almost matched by the demand for spirits and beer, along with '*dricka*', or small beer. In this instance, too, the court records are full of incessant arguments between Karlskrona's burghers and the Admiralty over prices, quality, contracts, and quantities.<sup>36</sup> In the seventeenth century, rural home production on a small scale was the order of the day for spirits. In the early eighteenth century, the authorities tried to support the production of beer by promoting hop cultivation in the area. It was later in the eighteenth century that large production units in the shape of the Crown breweries were established in the area. In 1777, it was estimated that the Crown brewery in Karlskrona could produce around 424,000 litres of spirits from 9,000 barrels of grain.<sup>37</sup> When potatoes became the main raw material for spirits during the 1790s, the production of both potatoes and spirits rocketed, matched by a clear industrializing pattern that saw a constellation of numerous small production units spread across the county resolve into several larger units, organized as co-operatives among the peasantry, and finally in the nineteenth century a handful of large industrial units. (The last Crown brewery in Sweden, Absolut Vodka, was in the neighbouring county of Kristianstad, and was sold to the French company Pernod Picard in 2008.). In 1900, the county of Blekinge was the second largest producer of spirits in Sweden, beaten only by Kristianstad.<sup>38</sup> Potatoes, so crucial to spirits production, went on in the nineteenth century to become an essential part in a new industrial process producing starch.

The strive towards a state-controlled production of standard victuals came out of the Admiralty's need to control supplies for the fleet, and it was first established on military soil and under both the technical and the financial supervision of the Admiralty. The Admiralty, with its shipyard, could provide the technical skills and the workforce necessary for this kind of large-scale operation. By the good offices of the Admiralty it was also possible to raise the money needed for the projects. Sweden was then a small and sparsely populated country, and the question is whether any other institution or individual had the clout and the know-how to develop something like the Crown mill or the Crown breweries? And as the example of potato-based spirits shows, there was an essential link between early modern demand prompted by military ambitions and modern industrial patterns.

## **The plague years, 1710–12**

In the summer of 1710, an outbreak of plague struck Sweden, and by the late autumn of 1710 it had reached the naval base in Karlskrona. It did not come as a bolt from the blue, however, as rumours of its existence, its progression through Europe, and its decimation of enemy armies were a subject of concern at the Admiralty at least a year before it hit Sweden. Over the course of 1710, news came that the plague had reached the far coast of the Baltic. This time the information was not hearsay, it was cold fact. Yet as the institutional records show, borne out in the way the Admiralty hesitated to take real precautions, the Swedish authorities still clung to the hope that the catastrophe would only strike 'others'. Throughout the plague crisis, it is obvious that the mental or psychological defence mechanism that governed official action (or lack of it) was connected to the impression that the plague came from the outside, and that it was connected to all things foreign, to strangers or outsiders. For a long time, the only precaution in place was to prevent people from entering Karlskrona, while soldiers or seamen were free to leave city to return to their home villages. That said, when the seamen on their way back to their villages passed through an area under army control, they found the same mindset at work, but the other way around—now they were 'the other'. The army protected its area with transition zones where they were quarantined. In other words, there was no coordination between the navy and the army; there were different budgets, different leadership, and no one took responsibility for more than their own men.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Bergman 2012, pp87-8.

<sup>37</sup> Lantmäteriets kartor, Situations Charta öfver Regale Brenneri 1778 [The Swedish land surveying office, map over Crown Brewery 1778], act 117-1:4, Bergman 2012, s93.

<sup>38</sup> Bergman 2012, pp99–100.

<sup>39</sup> Bergman 2012, pp148-51; 'Bodil Persson, Pestens gåta, Farsoter I det tidiga 1700-talets Skåne' [The Riddle of Plague : Pestilences in Early Eighteenth Century Scania], (Univ. Lund D.Phil thesis 2001), pp285

It was a complicated situation for the Admiralty. The rumours coming in from merchants and its own officers about the advance of the plague were mixed with information about enemy movements, ship positions, and mobilizations on the other side of the Baltic.<sup>40</sup> It was not possible simply to seal off Karlskrona, a city so vital to Sweden's defence and indeed to its military ambitions for the entire region. Throughout the period, men and boats came and went, although with some precautions. For example, ships could be ordered moor at special anchorages in the archipelago under regulations that had much in common with ordinary quarantine regulations.

In the first half of 1710, a great deal of intelligence about sick soldiers and seamen reached the Admiralty, but at that point it was still possible for the Admiralty doctor to talk about the contagion in more general terms rather than as a specific problem to be tackled. There was squabbling about whether it should be thought a 'disease' or something else—the term 'plague' was deliberately avoided. During August, reported deaths among navy personnel began to rise, but still the attitude was that it was other people's problem, elsewhere. Information was withheld from the city for fear that it would affect business. On 14 September it was still possible for the Admiralty clergy to discuss whether the plague prayer should be used in the city's churches or not (using the plague prayer would amount to public recognition that the plague was established in the area),<sup>41</sup> and in September the Admiralty was still debating whether certain ships from areas plainly affected by plague should be allowed to enter the city harbour or not.<sup>42</sup>

In October 1710, the death rate in the city soared. A 'heap of corpses' was left unburied, piled up outside the Admiralty church. The Admiralty ordered an investigation of how many deaths the fleet had suffered.<sup>43</sup> As the month progressed, more regulations were imposed on passing ships and crews.<sup>44</sup> Finally, when the Swedish warship with the sadly appropriate name of *Scorpion* arrived in Karlskrona from the farther reaches of the Finnish Gulf, denial or hesitation were no longer possible: the plague was now inside the fleet. The ship was put into quarantine on an island outside the naval base. A report from the Admiralty doctor established that twelve men were already dead and more of the crew were affected.<sup>45</sup>

For December 1710 and on into 1711 it is possible to follow the constant flow of reports to the Admiralty of disasters small and large. Of 200 carpenters, only 54 were healthy; there was not enough timber to make coffins; two-thirds of the carpenters and smiths were dead; the factory could not produce rifles as all its carpenters were dead; it was not possible to get firewood for the bakery.<sup>46</sup> In January 1711, Admiral Sparre reported that there was no question of delivering barrels to the fleet's ships, as all the coopers in the city were dead.<sup>47</sup>

By December 1711, the indications in the somewhat sparse sources are that the worst was over for Karlskrona,<sup>48</sup> although of course the disease was spreading on through Sweden to areas that were important for the Navy. The numbers of dead in the city of Karlskrona itself and in the fleet and shipyard are uncertain, with different figures in circulation and the basis for the various calculations unclear. Was it 6,000, 13,000, or 14,000 dead? Pooling information from a variety of sources, I would say that a death rate of between 30 to 50 per cent seems likely, and figure above 50 per cent not impossible.<sup>49</sup> The figures and the course of events in Karlskrona seem to have followed the same pattern as in other afflicted cities, including Danzig, Königsberg, Copenhagen, and

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<sup>40</sup> Krigsarkivet Stockholm, Amiralitetskollegium protokoll, [The Swedish War Archive, Admiralty Collegium, protocol], (hereafter WAACp), 29/8, pp514, 517, 3/9, pp1022, 14/10, pp1203, 18/10, pp 1256, 26/10, pp 1357, 31/10, pp 1412, 1710; Bergman 2012 pp151-52.

<sup>41</sup> Länsbibliotekt Karskrona (microfilm), Amiralitetskonsistoriet, protokoll [County Library, Karlskrona, The Admiralty Consistory, protocol] (hereafter CLKACp)14/9 1710..

<sup>42</sup> WAACp, 22/9 1710, Bergman 2012, pp127.

<sup>43</sup> WAACp 20/10, 1710, s1293, 1294.

<sup>44</sup> WAACp, 18/10 1710, s1251, 27/10 1710, s1370.

<sup>45</sup> WAACp, 31/10, 1710, s1412, 2/11, 1710, s1418, 1461, 5/11 1710, s1452, 1461.

<sup>46</sup> WAACp, 20/1 1710, s103, 6/12, 1710, s1793, 7/2 1711, s281, 22/2 1711, s277, 4/3 1711, s490, 10/3 1711.

<sup>47</sup> Hult, TO, 'Några anteckningar om pesten i Blekinge och på Örlogsflottan 1710-1711', *Tidskrift i Sjöväsendet* 1915, [Some notes about the plague in Blekinge and on the fleet 1710-1711], pp381-83.

<sup>48</sup> CLKACp, pp197.

<sup>49</sup> See Bergman 2012, pp121-2.

Stockholm.<sup>50</sup>

This plague was a severe setback for a Swedish state intent on maintaining its position as a great power. But the crisis did not end there. When Admiral General Wachtmeister, as head of the navy, reported to the Swedish Privy Council in August 1712 before the fleet put out to sea, his conclusion was that only the most strenuous efforts had made it possible to replace the dead, and most crews now consisted of young men and inexperienced farmhands. It would not be possible to engage Sweden's enemies with the fleet in its current state. On 16 October that year, another report from Wachtmeister concluded that now the 'bloody flux' (sv. *Rödsot*) had hit the fleet. Of the 11,030 ordinary men who had enrolled, only 6,579 men were healthy, most were sick, and 728 were dead, not including sick and dead officers. Wachtmeister ended with a grim warning: nothing could be accomplished ('intet står till att uträtta'), and the realm was under severe threat.<sup>51</sup>

## **The Admiralty and anti-plague measures**

The Swedish Privy Council had issued a number of plague ordinances between 1708 and 1710. The governor of Skåne (the county next to Blekinge), head of the army in the region, followed suit and published his own ordinances on 8 November 1710.<sup>52</sup> Finally, on 9 November 1711 the Admiralty in Karlskrona published its own plague ordinances directed at the fleet and the district alike.<sup>53</sup> The publication of all these different ordinances, although they have a common text, illustrates a problem that was evident throughout the plague years: a lack of coordination; the divisions—and to some extent the competition—between the army and the fleet; and the telling issue of how authority was exercised, with the fleet, the shipyard, and the city Karlskrona all under the authority of the Admiralty.<sup>54</sup>

The ordinances issued by the Admiralty consisted of twelve paragraphs. The introduction made clear that in order to overcome the plague, the inhabitants of Karlskrona would have to abandon their pride and ungodly living, for God demanded that all do penance, and everyone had to throw themselves on God's mercy. The message was that the plague was God's punishment, and people now had to act accordingly. However, after this religious statement, the ordinances give us a clear picture of medical thinking of the time, which was outside the religious sphere. As elsewhere in Europe at the time, the disease was thought to cause by 'miasmatic vapours' emanating from filth, rotting rubbish, and excrement. While the notion (or rather, the suspicion) was circulating that the plague could be spread between people or even from animals to people, the main explanation remained miasma.<sup>55</sup> The main message in the ordinances stemmed from this, concentrating as they did on how to clean the air, eliminate dirt, and deal with the city's excrement. In doing so, the ordinances make it clear that the environment in which this problem could be seen was largely connected with places where the city's poor lived. The regulations also singled out 'the others', meaning strangers, peasants coming to the city, beggars, peddlers, and the poor.<sup>56</sup>

The plague's arrival in Karlskrona served to reinforce one particular fact: authority. In this case, it was the Admiralty that had the responsibility, capability, and power to govern the health of the city. The fight against the plague in Karlskrona under the Admiralty's leadership followed a well-known European pattern. There was a strict military hierarchy, from the admirals at the top of the organization down to the priests, doctors, and barber-surgeons, and, lowest of the low, the women

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<sup>50</sup> Frandsen, Karl-Erik, *Kampen mot pesten, Karantänestationen på Saltholm 1709-1711*, [The struggle against the plague, Quarantine station on Saltholm 1709-1711], (Århus 2004), pp18-24.

<sup>51</sup> Krigsarkivet Stockholm, Amiralitetskollegium, Registratur, [The Swedish War Archive, Admiralty collegium, registry], (hereafter WAACr), 16/8 1712, s1753-1766, 16/10 1712, pp1896-1966.

<sup>52</sup> Persson, Bodil, *Pestens gåta. Farsoter i det tidiga 1700-talets Skåne 1710-1713*, Lund 2006, s269-271, 276-278.

<sup>53</sup> WAACr, 9/11 1711, pp2138.

<sup>54</sup> Made clear in several paragraphs, see WAACr, 9/11 1711, pp2168.

<sup>55</sup> Daniel Defoe, *A Journal of the Plague Year*, (London 2003) (1722), pp73, 242; Carlo M Cipolla, *Faith Reason and the Plague in Seventeenth-Century Tuscany*, (New York 1979), pp5-11, 20; Ann Carmichael, *Plague and the Poor in Renaissance Florence*, (New York 1986), pp25-26; Bodil Persson, *Gud verkar med naturliga medel. Pestens härjningar i Skåne 1710-1713* [God works with natural means, Plague ravage in Scania 1710-1713], (Lund 2006), pp46.

<sup>56</sup> See for instance WAACr, paragraph 3, 4, 10, pp2113.

who examined the houses. The way that the Admiralty tried to control the epidemic was predicated on the fact that people's respect, even fear, of military rank could be upheld.<sup>57</sup>

Everything in daily life could be the target for regulation and control. The plague ordinances decreed order, discipline, and control based on a rationality that welcomed the state—or in this case, the Admiralty—assuming responsibility for individuals' welfare from the Church. It was an early example of the kind of liberal exercise of medical power that became more common during the nineteenth century.<sup>58</sup> This process, this transformation of power, was not without problems and met with protests from Karlskrona's inhabitants. Regulations were often disobeyed: people resisted visitations or refused to follow burial regulations; they continued to gather, even though this was strictly forbidden; they violated the regulations for entering and leaving the city.<sup>59</sup>

The way in which the Admiralty assumed the position of 'welfare' provider in the city accentuated a displacement of power of a different sort—that between priest and doctor. In the early modern period, the priest's traditional role as the provider of spiritual care, underwriting wellbeing, health, security, and protection, was slowly relinquished.<sup>60</sup> This was matched by the doctor's rise in status. During the 1710–1712 plague, it was the Admiralty doctor, not a chaplain, who was the main adviser to the admirals in Karlskrona—one Dr Traæneus, who investigated and diagnosed, and was always quick to provide the Admiralty Board with his advice. The doctor had foreign experience, and used it: he relied on his trained eye, and he discussed his investigations and analyses in relation to the science of the time.<sup>61</sup> A doctor then was not a doctor in the nineteenth-century fashion, after the development of chemistry; he was more gardener than physician.<sup>62</sup> The clergy still had an important role when it came to preparing the plague's victims for death, and the Admiralty worked hard to replace its priests when they died or to persuade clergymen to work as plague priests for the Admiralty.<sup>63</sup> Yet in most other instances, the clergy's interpretations and actions, especially in the countryside, were treated as a problem.<sup>64</sup> True, the contradiction between a more scientific view of disease represented by the medical profession and a religious one represented by clergymen should not be overestimated. It was at that time possible to combine a religious and a scientific view.<sup>65</sup> But the priest had to take a step back in favour of the doctor.

As part of this, the period saw a move away from early modern hospitals to the creation of the clinics so strongly connected to a military context in the eighteenth century. The first plague barracks were part of that development.<sup>66</sup> (Later, a larger hospital with a thousand beds was built by the navy in Karlskrona in 1789, probably with the experience of the plague year in mind.<sup>67</sup>) In the clinic it was possible to combine the medical knowledge of the day with military discipline and order.<sup>68</sup> During the plague years in Karlskrona, the Admiralty used its hospital and in addition built

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<sup>57</sup> WAACp, 24/12, 1710, pp2015, 13/1, 1711, s93, 6/2 1711, pp237, 17/2, 1711, pp405. The plague decree paragraph nine, WAACr, 9/11 1711, pp2138.

<sup>58</sup> Nicolas Rose, 'Medicine History and the present', in *Reassessing Foucault. Power Medicine and the Body*, (red Colin Jones & Roy Porter), New York 1999, pp64.

<sup>59</sup> WAACp, 3/1, 1711, pp13, 21/1, 1711, pp138, 143, 146-147, 23/1 1711 pp154, WAACr, 3/1 1711, s3, 27/2 1711, pp110, KTC, 12/12, 22/12, 1711, pp678, 699

<sup>60</sup> Randall McGoven, "Power and Humanity, or Foucault among historians", Colin Jones & Roy Porter (eds.) *Reassessing Foucault. Power Medicine and the Body*, (New York 1999), pp100.

<sup>61</sup> WAACp, 21/1 1711, pp138 -140, 143,17, 23/1 1711, 154..

<sup>62</sup> Michael, Foucault, *The Birth of the Clinic, An archaeology of the medical perception*, trans. Alan Sheridan (Great Britain 2010), pp110, 114-15, 147-48.

<sup>63</sup> WAACp, 10/1, pp73-79, 14/1, pp100, 19/1, pp125, 20/1, pp131-134, 23/1, pp157, 28/3 , pp558, 8/11, pp1484, 1711.

<sup>64</sup> Persson 2006, pp183-191, 193-216, Torsten Rosencrantz, *Blekinges beskrivning, författad av Christopher Cronholm år c:a 1750-1757*, [Blekinge a description, composed by Christopher Cronholm år ca 1750-1757] (Malmö 1976), pp62.

<sup>65</sup> Carmichael, 1986, pp101, 107, Katherine A Lynch, *Families, and Communities in Europe, 1200-1800, The Urban Foundation of Western Society*, (Cambridge 2003), pp109-111, 133, Persson 2006, s47-50.

<sup>66</sup> Foucault, 2010, Thomas A Markus, *Building and Power, Freedom and Control of Modern Building Types*, (London 2004).

<sup>67</sup> WANd, Serie A XVIII, omslag 231, Michael Helgesson & Bengt Lindskog, *Dessa arma uslingar - sjuk och fattigvård i 1700-talets Karlskrona* [Those miserable wretches – nursing and poor relief in 17th century Karlskrona], (Blekinge Museum 1999).

<sup>68</sup> Foucault 1991, pp110, 114–15, 147–8.

plague barracks.<sup>69</sup> Its facilities were primarily intended for those under the Admiralty's control, and not for the use of ordinary city-dwellers; however, after a strong disagreement between the Admiralty and the city, rooms were also made available to people from the city. A whole range of conflicts arose between the city and the Admiralty concerning responsibility for the sick, the poor, and the distribution of medicine. According to the Admiralty's plague ordinances, its responsibility ended with its own people, and there were special regulations that distinguished between burghers and Admiralty staff, according to paragraph nine. Medicine could be delivered from the city or the Admiralty pharmacy. A fixed price was to be paid by higher ranking officers and 'others', while non-commissioned officers and commoners in Admiralty employ were to receive medicine free of charge.<sup>70</sup>

The Admiralty became the 'welfare' provider for the city, and even though there were special regulations and better guarantees for Admiralty staff, there still must have been a huge difference for Karlskrona's inhabitants in comparison with life in the countryside. It is illuminating that even during the plague years there was still a steady stream of men enrolling as seamen in spite of the dangers.<sup>71</sup> In the city and in the fleet there was a lack of money for salaries, not enough medicine or food, and problems filling the gaps left by sick or dying doctors and barber-surgeons, yet even so conditions were probably better there than in the countryside.

## Summary

Using the three investigations covered here, all of which relate to the creation of a naval base during Sweden's period as a great power, the importance of a naval cities can be discussed. The label of the 'Swedish military state' denotes a state with absolute power of the kind that was common during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in Europe. That state had the power to concentrate its economic and military power by building a naval centre in the southern part of the Baltic. Yet the project also needed human capital to succeed. The military state needed the support of burghers who commanded access to a developed trading network in the Baltic area, and that could be found in the old mediaeval city of Ronneby. To use force to persuade the burghers to cooperate would probably have been counterproductive. The situation called for negotiations. Some of the burghers abandoned their former independence and cooperated with the Admiralty—which seems to have been very much to their profit. In return, the Admiralty, the absolute state, had to adapt to the burghers' culture. The basic infrastructure for an ambitious naval city had its price.

With the basic city structure settled, the city started to develop. Around the naval shipyard, large-scale early modern production expanded, driven by the Swedish military expansion in the Baltic area. The combination of access to Baltic trading networks, the use of the shipyard's skilled elite, and the Admiralty's ability to concentrate resources for the project meant it was possible to confront and partly overcome old structures and build a production structure at a new level. The naval city became a hub for social, economic, and political encounters of lasting importance.

With the plague years of 1710–1712, the whole project threatened to collapse. The role played by infectious disease in the early eighteenth century in dethroning Sweden as a great power still awaits its historian. The plague years were a severe setback for Swedish ambitions in Europe, but also marked an important meeting between old and new. The Admiralty took the lead in organizing what today would be labelled health care. It was in many ways a rudimentary care, not without its problems, and certainly not equally distributed, but it was something that was not reachable outside the naval city. Disease and health care were no longer solely in the hands of local quacks and priests and became largely a matter for surgeons, doctors, and barber-surgeons organized under the Admiralty. Swedish military ambition came at a price: keeping its men healthy and fit for service in the army and the fleet became a matter for the 'society'. The naval city seems to have developed into to an experimental field for this new order.

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<sup>69</sup> Bergman 2012, pp126.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid. pp143.

<sup>71</sup> WAACp, 1710-1712, pp 1187, 1191, 1198, 1222, 1225, 1229, 1295,1296, 1335, 1359, 1384, 1406, 1436, 1437, 1563, 1569, 1759, 1813, 1833.

