

Philipp Robinson Rössner

Scottish Trade with German Ports 1700–1770

A Sketch of the North Sea Trades and
the Atlantic Economy on Ground Level

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Philipp Robinson Rössner
Scottish Trade with German Ports
1700–1770

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To

AILIDH JOHANNA

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PREFACE

The present study contributes to three fields: comparative or European economic history; German, as well as Scottish economic history. It does so by deliberately picking out two of the smaller players in eighteenth-century European or even world trade, in order to show how intrinsically-linked their trades were with the larger, pan-European, Atlantic, or even “global” economic patterns. Monitoring two comparatively small trading partners – Germany’s North Sea (and to a small extent, Baltic) and Britain’s northern (Scottish) ports in the eighteenth century – provides, due to the exceptionally good source material, a good opportunity of studying the workings of the global patterns in a very detailed way. Mostly this is due to the near-complete preservation of the eighteenth-century Scottish customs accounts since Christmas quarter 1742. These records are the most detailed and comprehensive of their kind, as they – contrary to similar files of other contemporaneous trading nations – afford detailed information as to all commodities shipped into or out of Scotland at any one time, regardless whether these were liable to taxation or not. They are therefore unique and provide the best starting point for studies in bi-lateral and even multilateral trade on a macro- or aggregate pattern (import-export statistics) involving Scottish trade with countries x, y and z, as well as a micro-level (individual merchants involved in the trades).

This will serve as an apology for the thematic approach. Some explanation by ways of another apology, regarding the scope of the present work, may also be made. The monograph is a side-project of a larger study on Scotland’s eighteenth-century trade, which has already been published as P. R. RÖSSNER, *Scottish Trade in the Wake of Union (1700–1760). The Rise of a Warehouse Economy (Vierteljahrschrift für Sozial- und Wirtschaftsgeschichte-Beihefte Nr. 198)*, Stuttgart 2008. As a consequence there are some similarities here and there. But as the present book has existed for a longer time – it was conceived and large parts of it written and accepted for publication in 2005, whilst the other one was written-up in 2006 and accepted for publication in 2007 –, it has the “right of way” so to speak. I therefore kept some of these similarities in, so as to retain the original structure of the work. Nevertheless I chose to leave out chapter five, a study on three Scottish merchants involved in trade with Germany, which would have been identical to chapter 8 in my larger work mentioned above. That chapter – I hope – drives home the “multi-lateral” facets of Scottish trade with Germany, and I consider it part of and intrinsically-linked to the argument put forward within the present work. Therefore the following monograph is to be understood as an addition to and “thematic enlargement” of my *Scottish Trade in the Wake of Union* – in fact the two belong to each other. The resulting and consequential third apology has to go to the publisher, Franz Steiner Verlag, as well as the editors of the *Studien zur Gewerbe- und Handelsgeschichte der vorindustriellen Zeit* (SGHVZ) monograph series, for such a long delay between acceptance and submission of the manuscript.

During the process of writing this study I have collected a great deal of intellectual and other debts from scholars and colleagues. I should like to express my gratitude above all to Professor emeritus Ian Blanchard (Edinburgh) who has proved an admirable academic teacher and companion. Without him the present work could neither have been conceived nor written. I should further like to extend my thanks to my

other colleagues in the subject areas of Economic and Social History and Scottish History at the University of Edinburgh, as well as colleagues and friends Dr Andrew MacKillop (Aberdeen), Professor Leos Müller (Uppsala), Professor T. Christopher Smout (Anstruther / St Andrews), and Professor Christopher A. Whatley (Dundee).

I am also much indebted to Professor emeritus Karl Heinrich Kaufhold (Göttingen) for supporting the inclusion of this study in the *Studien zur Gewerbe- und Handelsgeschichte der vorindustriellen Zeit*. My greatest debt in the academic department, however, has – without question – been incurred to my mentor and teacher, Professor Dr. Markus A. Denzel (Göttingen, now Leipzig). Professor Denzel constantly inspired, supported and actively encouraged my work from its earliest stages onwards. His honours classes on European expansion overseas, the Fuggers and the development of trade-fairs, banks and stock exchanges since the Middle Ages, which he taught at the University of Göttingen during the 1998-2000 academic diet, have to a considerable degree influenced and shaped my way of thinking of the subject. *Vielen Dank, Herr Professor Denzel!*

Last but not least, I should like to dedicate this to the nuclear family of mine. Words cannot adequately describe what you mean to me.

Leipzig, April 2008

Philipp Robinson Rössner

I. THE ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

As demonstrated elsewhere¹, Scotland and her foreign trade – part of British trade – after 1707 underwent some formidable changes, so as to become a “warehouse economy”. Between 1730 and 1760 – the last three decades of Scotland’s pre-industrial period, trade levels began to expand significantly, probably matching or surpassing all growth rates realized during previous decades, if not centuries. Scotland underwent her own “commercial revolution”, yet on terms decidedly different from England. Overseas trade levels tripled between 1700 and 1760. But trade levels remained small, both in comparison to England, as well as in relation to Scotland’s national income. Trade was furthermore biased towards the importation and re-exportation of colonial foodstuffs, particularly tobacco. This peculiar Scottish trading pattern was conditioned by the structure of the domestic economy and the inclusion of Scottish ports and merchants into the English commercial empire, institutionally framed by the Navigation Acts and subsequent parliamentary legislative efforts related to the former. Scotland’s manufacturing base was weak – the domestic economy neither exported particularly large amounts and shares of her production, nor was it heavily reliant upon imports from overseas. Accordingly, average imports of tobacco, sugar and rum from the Americas far outpaced yearly average domestic exports of linen, woollen, leather and other manufactures to that region. On the other hand the commercial regulations covered under the English restoration customs system provided for some beneficial aspects that encouraged and stimulated the re-export trades in colonial non-essentials. Scots traders thus made use of the commercial opportunities afforded by the Union 1707, by the profitable entrepôt trades in American foodstuffs to continental destinations which expanded at an exponential rate after the mid-1730s. These tropical and sub-tropical non-essentials could be sold on continental European markets with a generous profit mark-up, especially since they could draw back up to 100 per cent of customs duties paid upon import. Germany was part of these markets and in some ways intrinsically linked to the cyclical upswing characteristic of Britain’s – both Scotland’s, as well as England’s – foreign trade during the eighteenth century.

1 P. R. RÖSSNER, *Scottish Trade in the Wake of Union (1700–1760). The Rise of a Warehouse Economy*, Stuttgart 2008.

1. THE “EMBEDDEDNESS” OF EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY SCOTTISH-GERMAN TRADE (I): THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT

On September 1st in 1716, John Steuart, a Scottish fish and grain merchant based at Inverness, wrote to his correspondent Alexander Andrew, merchant banker in Amsterdam. He was concerned about money due to him at various places across north-western Europe. At that date he had credit in the Netherlands, in Spain, and not least in Germany: “I hope to Balance what I am Due you by the proceeds of hering I am Just shepping for Hamburg.”² These balances were the result of commodity sales on Steuart’s account all across the northern European sea ports, stretching from the Baltic to the North Sea. Steuart’s fellow merchant, Alexander Mackintosh, likewise dealt in herring; the proceeds of his sales on the Hamburg market were remitted by bill of exchange drawn on a London merchant banker, Nathaniel Cambridge, whom both Mackintosh, as well as his Hamburg correspondent, Bartholomew Bludworth, had an account with.³ At that time the exchange rate for bills Hamburg on London stood below par (12.46 Mark Banko per £Sterling) – a scenario which had obtained for virtually the entire first half of the eighteenth century.⁴ Thus Mark Banko, the local Hamburg bank money, stood at a premium, Sterling was available at an attractive price. This situation corresponded to a glutted fish market in Hamburg. In 1715–1717, Scots herring dispatched to Hamburg generally came “to a Very bad Markett. [...] Our fishmongers are so very much overstocked [...] if they bidd any price at all [...] t’will be a very poor one. [...]”⁵ Even early in the eighteenth century, therefore, Scottish-German trade was contingent upon generally prevailing European commodity and financial market conditions – conditions and spatial frameworks that went far beyond either Scotland or Germany.

This was by no means different later on in the century or confined to a particular group of merchants. Whenever the large Glasgow tobacco firm of BUCHANAN & SIMSON sent over tobacco, sugar or coffee to Hamburg and Bremen, they usually sent out letters to their German factors first, enquiring about the current market conditions.⁶ What they normally had to bear in mind, other than the German market, or the current exchange rate between the £Sterling and Mark Banko in correctly determining their anticipated profits, were factors such as French demand for tobacco in Britain, or French supply of sugar and coffee from the French Antilles to Hamburg, because the

2 W. MACKAY (ed.), *The Letter-Book of Baillie John Steuart of Inverness 1715–1752*, Edinburgh 1915, pp. 24s. (1 September 1716).

3 NAS, GD23/6/33/6, e.g. 29 May 1716, 5 October 1717, Bartholomew Bludworth to Alexander Mackintosh.

4 J. SCHNEIDER / O. SCHWARZER / F. ZELFELDER / M. A. DENZEL (eds.), *Währungen der Welt, VI: Geld und Währungen in Europa im 18. Jahrhundert*, Stuttgart 1992, pp. 45–47 (par exchange rate); 200–203 (bill rate). W. Reiss, *Historical Exchange Rates*, in: W. FISCHER / R. MARVIN MCINNIS / J. SCHNEIDER (eds.), *The Emergence of a World Economy 1500–1914*, Pt. I.: 1500–1850, Wiesbaden 1986, pp. 171–190, at p. 189 / Fig. 5.

5 Bludworth (factor resident in Hamburg) to Mackintosh. NAS, GD23/6/33/2, GD23/6/33/8 (copy), identical wording but different dates (29 November 1715, 10 December 1716).

6 RÖSSNER, *In the Wake*, ch. 8, esp. p. 277f.

French usually offered colonial products at very attractive prices.⁷ With regard to the tobacco available in Glasgow for re-export to Germany, BUCHANAN & SIMSON also monitored the purchasing patterns of the French tobacco buying agents in London, Glasgow and Edinburgh. If the French agents bought too much or made a bulk purchase earlier than expected, there would be no cargo available in Glasgow to be shipped to the German market.⁸

The preceding remarks provide some first hints as to the “degree of embeddedness” of Scottish-German trade in the eighteenth century in its various contexts: contemporary economy and society, as well as historiography – past and present. First, regardless the type of transactions and scale of business involved, early modern European trade was hardly ever truly bilateral, as the *ceteris paribus* conditions of the various trade models in international economics would have it. This applies to market conditions and payments alike. Market conditions in Germany for products traded by Scots were, apart from German demand for and Scottish supply of these products and depending on the type of commodity under consideration, frequently also contingent for instance upon the Amsterdam bill market, or determined by preceding French purchases and sales and so on. If neutral shipping was required, the size of the Scottish-German trade volume was partly contingent upon the availability or supply of Hamburg and Bremen shipping.⁹ Therefore Scottish-German trade took place within a pan-European economic matrix. Secondly, many transactions involved a multilateral system of payments. As commodity flows, which can be captured statistically (chapter four; financial flows are normally elusive), were almost never balanced, they usually required further financial streams in the opposite direction. But was that really the opposite direction? Assume that a Scots merchant sent over tobacco and rice to Bremen, did he always receive back *Osnaburghs* (Osnabrück linen cloth) and other German cloth from Bremen directly in return to roughly the same value? – Hardly. Such transactions usually involved locations and time frameworks different from those obtaining in the commodity trades, even though it is impossible to prove that point quantitatively. Preciously few private papers and records have survived on either the Scottish or German side, but those examples that have, seem to suggest that even comparatively small merchants whose business operations did – in comparison to some English Atlantic traders – not require particularly impressive outlays of circulating capital, nevertheless used the recently developed multilateral payments mechanism with its foci Amsterdam and London as a matter-of-course. This aspect has been fully developed in chapter 8 of *Scottish Trade in the Wake of Union 1700–1760. The Rise of a Warehouse Economy*.¹⁰ In terms of the argument the reader should consider it the consequential collateral to the statistical analysis of chapters two to four of the present book.

7 M. A. DENZEL, Zur Geschäftspraxis eines Nantenser Handelshauses: Der Preiskurant von Pelloutier & Cie (1763–1793), in: J. HOOCK / W. REININGHAUS (eds.), *Kaufleute in Europa. Handelshäuser und ihre Überlieferung in vor- und frühindustrieller Zeit*, Dortmund 1997, pp. 61–87, at p. 78.

8 NAS, CS96/507, Buchanan & Simson Letter Book, 12 January, 25 February, 29 February, 26 May 1760.

9 NAS, CS96/507, 28 December 1759, 25 February 1760.

10 RÖSSNER, *In the Wake*, ch. 8.

Thus, regardless whether the “top-down” (statistical analysis) or “bottom-up” (individual merchants) approach is chosen, the same pattern occurs: trade was usually multilateral. Scottish-German trade was furthermore firmly integrated into what scholars have variously called the “Atlantic economy” (Price)¹¹, or the “European-centred world trading system” (Sperling).¹² Its corollary in accounting terms was the north-west European financial network and system of cashless payments, studied in-depth by Denzel.¹³ In this way, Scottish-German trade during the eighteenth century was a phenomenon of truly European dimensions.

11 J. J. McCusker / K. Morgan (eds.), *The Early Modern Atlantic Economy*, Cambridge 2000.

12 J. Sperling, *The International Payments Mechanism in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries*, in: *Economic History Review*, Second Series, XIV (1961–2), pp. 446–68.

13 M. A. Denzel, *‘La Practica della Cambiatura’*. *Europäischer Zahlungsverkehr vom 14. bis zum 17. Jahrhundert*, Stuttgart 1994.

2. THE "EMBEDDEDNESS" OF EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY SCOTTISH-GERMAN TRADE (II): HISTORIOGRAPHY

How is the present study to be placed in historiography? A brief survey of the available literature on the topic under consideration might best commence with the remark that new territory is being claimed. Whilst sound and general studies on British and German overseas trade as such do exist, especially in the British tradition of writing economic history, as Britain has the best historical statistics of her time and those statistics were usually concerned with trade and taxation, very few and truly comparative studies, defined here as cross-country or bi-lateral studies of overseas commerce, exist for early modern Europe. The present study is a first step into this direction. Accordingly it will have to remain synoptic to a certain extent, linking different views and traditions of economic history, in order to achieve a comparative and more detailed perspective on eighteenth-century European trade.

Scottish-German relations have not received detailed treatment ever since Fischer's ground-breaking yet anecdotal studies. Fischer first raised awareness of the presence of Scots, in particular small traders, but also larger merchants, in considerable numbers in the larger German and quasi-German cities such as Stralsund¹⁴, Danzig and other cities in the Baltic¹⁵, and the German empire in general.¹⁶ Recently, Zickermann has worked on Scots resident in Hamburg in the seventeenth century.¹⁷ Neither these, nor Ditchburn's study, however, which includes Germany, but does not go beyond the Middle Ages¹⁸, have an economic focus. This represents a considerable scholarly gap, in particular since German ports such as Hamburg and Bremen were amongst the closest destinations for Scottish sea-borne traffic outside the British Isles, and trade – much more than politics – was one of the most obvious reasons for Scots to engage in relations with Germany and vice versa.

The same deficiency still applies to eighteenth century German overseas trade in general. In 1964 Kellenbenz remarked pitifully that there was not a single comprehensive study on Germany's overseas trade available for any period in the eighteenth century.¹⁹ Unfortunately, this statement has remained valid to-day. True, Germany had no commercial statistics comparable to those famous English, Irish (both 1696s.), and later on Scottish (1755s.) sources. These *Ledgers of Imports and Exports*, which for the first time in the history of statistical recording covered *all* imports and exports, regardless whether these were liable to duty or not (thus drawing up a balance of trade), really were unique. But at least for the larger German North Sea ports of Ham-

14 T. FISCHER, *The Scots in Sweden*, Edinburgh 1907, p. 90.

15 ID., *The Scots in Eastern and Western Prussia*, Edinburgh 1903, ch. 1.

16 ID., *The Scots in Germany*, Edinburgh 1902.

17 K. ZICKERMANN, 'Briteannia ist mein patria'. Scotsmen and the 'British' Community in Hamburg, in: A. GROSJEAN / S. MURDOCH (eds.), *Scottish Communities Abroad in the Early Modern Period*, Leiden / Boston 2005, pp. 249–273.

18 D. DITCHBURN, *Scotland and Europe: The Medieval Kingdom and its Contacts with Christendom, c.1215–1545*, Vol. 1: Religion, Culture and Commerce, East Linton 2000.

19 H. KELLENBENZ, *Der deutsche Außenhandel gegen Ausgang des 18. Jahrhunderts*, in: F. LÜTGE (ed.), *Die wirtschaftliche Situation in Deutschland und Österreich um die Wende vom 18. zum 19. Jahrhundert*, Stuttgart 1964, pp. 4–60, at p. 5.

burg, Bremen and Emden quite a good set of import statistics can be derived from those ports' customs records. The Hamburg *Admiralitätszoll- und Convoygeldeinnahmebücher*, Bremen's *Schlachteangabebücher*, and Emden's *Licenteinnahmebücher* have all been preserved from at least the mid-eighteenth century onwards, for Hamburg even earlier.²⁰ Yet only the Hamburg records were – fairly recently – edited as a statistical manual useable by historians, and no comprehensive study on their trade has hitherto been produced.²¹ To an extent this deficiency is not only due to the absence of financially viable and manageable computerized databases prior to the 1980s, but also to the fact that “German overseas trade” is a non-operational tool. Kellenbenz and Kaufhold²² pointed out the theoretical as well as technical difficulties of constructing “German” aggregates or even time series of imports and exports. They also elaborated on the potential pit-falls of proposing the analytical concept of “Germany's foreign trade” as a topic for discussion for the period under consideration.

One consequence of this was the emergence of a peculiarly “German” academic tradition of focusing on particular ports, rather than attempting the big synopsis. Very obviously this approach was chosen mostly for reasons of analytical safety and robustness of the conclusions (and perhaps, prior to the 1980s/1990s the absence of affordable and manageable spreadsheet and database programs). On the other hand, these studies have not usually reached beyond the article level and have thus been severely limited in terms of scale and analytical scope. Exemplary, but frequently outdated, studies are available for Emden²³, Bremen²⁴, Hamburg²⁵, Lübeck²⁶ and Flens-

20 K. NEWMAN, Hamburg in the European Economy, 1660–1750, in: *Journal of European Economic History*, XIV, 1 (1985), pp. 57–93.

21 J. SCHNEIDER / O.-E. KRAWEHL / M. A. DENZEL (eds.), *Statistik des Hamburger seewärtigen Einfuhrhandels im 18. Jahrhundert. Nach den Admiralitätszoll- und Convoygeld-Einnahmebüchern*, St Katharinen 2001.

22 K. H. KAUFHOLD, Deutschland 1650–1850, in: W. FISCHER / J. A. VAN HOUTTE / H. KELLENBENZ / I. MIECK / F. VITTINGHOFF (eds.), *Handbuch der Europäischen Wirtschafts- und Sozialgeschichte*, Vol. 4: Von der Mitte des 17. zur Mitte des 19. Jahrhunderts, Stuttgart 1993, pp. 530–588, at pp. 571–573.

23 K. H. BOKELOH, *Emder Wirtschaftsgeschichte 1744–1806. Preußischer Absolutismus der zweiten Hälfte des 18. Jahrhunderts in einer Randprovinz*, University of Tübingen PhD Thesis, Tübingen 1984. A. MÜLLER, *Emdens Seeschiffahrt und Seehandel von der Besitzergreifung Ostfrieslands durch Preußen bis zur Eröffnung des Dortmund-Ems-Kanals 1744–1899*, *Hansische Geschichtsblätter*, LV (1930).

24 H.-J. VON WITZENDORF, *Beiträge zur Bremischen Handelsgeschichte in der zweiten Hälfte des 18. Jahrhunderts*, *Bremisches Jahrbuch*, XLIII (1951), pp. 342–394; ID., *Bremens Handel im 16. und 17. Jahrhundert*, *Bremisches Jahrbuch*, XLIV (1955), pp. 128–174.

25 E. BAASCH, *Zur Statistik des Ein- und Ausfuhrhandels Hamburgs Anfang des 18. Jahrhunderts*, *Hansische Geschichtsblätter*, LIV (1929).

26 C. MEYER-STOLL, *Die lübeckische Kaufmannschaft des 17. Jahrhunderts unter wirtschafts- und sozialgeschichtlichen Aspekten*, Frankfurt-am-Main / Bern / New York / Paris 1989, has focused on the later seventeenth century, based on the Lübeck *Zulagebücher*. E. HARDER (-GERSDORFF), *Seehandel zwischen Lübeck und Rußland im 17./18. Jahrhundert nach Zollbüchern der Novgorodfahrer*, Pt. I, *Zeitschrift des Vereins für Lübeckische Geschichte und Altertumskunde*, LXI (1961), pp. 43–114, and E. HARDER-GERSDORFF, *Handelskonjunkturen und Warenbilanzen im lübeckisch-russischen Seeverkehr des 18. Jahrhunderts*, *Vierteljahrschrift für Sozial- und Wirtschaftsgeschichte*, LVII (1970), pp. 15–45, focus on Lübeck's trade with “Russia” (but mainly Riga, Nerva, and Reval). ID., *Mitteuropäische Gewerbebezonen und ostbaltischer Handel im 18. Jahrhundert*, in: K.

burg²⁷ (the latter being a Danish port at that time).²⁸ Editions of primary sources or databases derived from information contained in customs accounts are virtually nonexistent. Hamburg represents the exception; recent rediscoveries of earlier volumes of the *Admiralty Toll Accounts* have initiated a fresh research initiative with a source whose value had been discovered long ago.²⁹ The main obvious downfall of all these works, however, is that their analysis, by normally relying on the local set of quantitative sources only, tends to be unilateral and its focus accordingly biased. True cross-country or comparative studies, in which the number of sets of sources used is equal to the number of trade links examined, are rare, not only for British-German trade, but for eighteenth century European trade in general. Partly this outcome is an inevitable one, as none of the contemporary nations or ports are as well endowed with statistical material in the eighteenth century as Scotland – not even England, where the eighteenth century port books equivalent to the Scottish series, have been destroyed by several fires in the London Customhouse.

But contrary to the situation of a comparatively excellent source endowment, Scottish historiography has not advanced particularly far, either. There is only one cross-country study, on Scottish trade with Ireland, which is based on both Scottish, as well as Irish records.³⁰ But even regarding trends, structure and fluctuations in Scotland's trade in the eighteenth century, the situation is in fact similar to the one prevailing for Germany. Existing studies have focused on particular commodities, ports, or countries Scotland traded with. The big synopsis is an issue scholars have largely evaded to-day.³¹ General surveys on Scotland's eighteenth-century trade have not reached beyond the article or chapter level: remarkable but heavily out of date is the

FRIEDLAND / F. IRSIGLER (eds.), *Seehandel und Wirtschaftswege Nordeuropas im 17. und 18. Jahrhundert*, Ostfildern 1981, pp. 26–37. R. HAMMEL-KIESOW, *Hansischer Seehandel und wirtschaftliche Wechsellagen. Der Umsatz im Lübecker Hafen in der zweiten Hälfte des 14. Jahrhunderts, 1492–6 und 1680–2*, in: S. JENKS / M. NORTH (eds.), *Der Hansische Sonderweg? Beiträge zur Sozial- und Wirtschaftsgeschichte der Hanse*, Cologne / Weimar / Vienna 1993, pp. 77–93 tentatively yet briefly discusses trade in relation to Lübeck's economic development in the longer run.

- 27 T. LINK, *Flensburgs Überseehandel von 1755 bis 1807. Seine wirtschaftliche und politische Bedeutung im Rahmen des Dänisch-Norwegischen Seehandels*, Neumünster 1959.
- 28 Further references to literature up to 1964 can be found in KELLENBENZ, *Außenhandel*.
- 29 SCHNEIDER et al. (eds.), *Statistik*.
- 30 L. E. COCHRAN, *Scottish Trade with Ireland in the Eighteenth Century*, Edinburgh 1985; ID., *Scottish Trade with Ireland in the Eighteenth Century*, Unpubl. University of Stirling PhD thesis, 2 Vols. Stirling 1980; ID., *Scottish-Irish Trade in the Eighteenth Century*, in: T. M. DEVINE / D. DICKSON (eds.), *Ireland and Scotland 1600–1850. Parallels and Contrast in Economic and Social Development*, Edinburgh 1983, pp. 151–162.
- 31 For earlier centuries this deficiency has been partly compensated for by recent studies: M. RORKE, *Scottish Overseas Trade 1275/86–1597*, Unpubl. Univ. of Edinburgh PhD thesis, 2 Vols., Edinburgh 2001; I. BLANCHARD, *Northern Wools and Netherlands Markets at the Close of the Middle Ages*, in: G. G. SIMPSON (ed.), *Scotland and the Low Countries 1124–1994*, East Linton 1996, pp. 76–88; D. DITCHBURN, *Trade with Northern Europe, 1297–1540*, in: M. LYNCH / R. M. SPEARMAN / G. STELL (eds.), *The Scottish Medieval Town*, Edinburgh 1988, pp. 161–179; Sections on Trade in P. G. B. MCNEILL / H. L. MACQUEEN (eds.), *Atlas of Scottish History to 1707*, Edinburgh 1996, pp. 238–283; A. STEVENSON, *Trade with the South, 1070–1513*, in: LYNCH / SPEARMAN / STELL (eds.), *Medieval Town*, pp. 180–206.

first general discussion in two chapters by Hamilton.³² Unfortunately, the instructive accounts on trade by Lynch and Stevenson in the *Atlas of Scottish History*³³ finish their analysis in 1700. The accounts on trade in the generalist but rather outdated economic history textbooks on eighteenth century Scotland are limited in scale and scope, which is apparent from the works of Butt and Lythe³⁴, Campbell³⁵, Lenman³⁶ and Whyte.³⁷ The most recent textbook on Scottish economic history, which is largely a reprint of articles written in the 1970s and 1980s, contains no systematic discussion of the commercial sector of the economy in eighteenth-century Scotland.³⁸

It should be noted that until very recently, earlier centuries had not been served well either. Model studies for the mediaeval period by Rorke³⁹ and for the early seventeenth century by Watson⁴⁰ came in the wake of a handful of rather pioneering articles in the 1980s, which for the first time used quantitative evidence (customs accounts) for their analysis.⁴¹ These studies were overdue, as by that time the pioneer edition of England's customs accounts was already old and out-dated.⁴² Generally speaking, trade as a sub-sector of the inhomogeneous tertiary or service sector of the economy, should ideally be dealt with in a macro-economic perspective. Without doubt in that regard the 1960s appear as a watershed, as English economic historiography became quantitative since that date, more interested in pinpointing the overall and long-term quantitative framework (trends and fluctuations), rather than discussing trade purely on the basis of institutional aspects and non-quantitative accounts. Unfortunately, this tendency never reached north of the English Border. Exemplary English exercises in the field, such as the classical works by Davis⁴³ and Schlote⁴⁴, are either

32 H. HAMILTON, *An Economic History of Scotland in the Eighteenth Century*, Oxford 1963, chs. IX, X.

33 MCNEILL / MACQUEEN, *Atlas*.

34 S. G. E. LYTHER / J. BUTT, *An Economic History of Scotland, 1100–1939*, Glasgow / London 1975, ch. IX.

35 R. H. CAMPBELL, *Scotland since 1707. The Rise of an Industrial Society*, Edinburgh, 2nd revised ed., 1985, ch. III.

36 B. LENMAN, *An Economic and Social History of Modern Scotland 1660–1976*, London 1975.

37 I. D. WHYTE, *Scotland before the Industrial Revolution. An Economic and Social History c1050 – c1750*, London / New York 1995, esp. pp. 301–307; ID., *Scotland's Society and Economy in Transition, c.1500–c.1760*, Basingstoke / London / New York 1997.

38 T. M. DEVINE / C. L. LEE / G. C. PEDEN (eds.), *The Transformation of Scotland. The Economy Since 1700*, Edinburgh 2005.

39 RORKE, *Scottish Overseas Trade*; ID., *English and Scottish Overseas Trade, 1300–1600*, in: *Economic History Review*, Second Series, LIX, 2 (2006), pp. 265–288.

40 J. C. WATSON, *Scottish Overseas Trade, 1597–1645*, 2 Vols., Unpubl. University of Edinburgh PhD Thesis, Edinburgh 2005.

41 BLANCHARD, *Northern Wools*; DITCHBURN, *Trade*; MCNEILL / MACQUEEN (eds.), *Atlas*, pp. 238–283; STEVENSON, *Trade*.

42 E. M. CARUS-WILSON / O. COLEMAN, *England's Export Trade 1275–1547*, Oxford 1963.

43 R. DAVIS, *English Foreign Trade, 1660–1700*, in: *Economic History Review*, Second Series, VI (1954), pp. 150–166; ID., *English Foreign Trade, 1700–1774*, in: *Economic History Review*, Second Series, XV (1962), pp. 285–303.

absent or exist, but do not quite match the analytical level of the studies available for England.⁴⁵ And at their time pioneering editions of information contained in English customs accounts and contemporary trade statistics have not yet been repeated for Scotland.⁴⁶ Instead, scholars previously working on Scotland have chosen to pursue a particularistic approach, sometimes in a way very similar to Germany, by focusing on specific commodities, countries, ports and merchants. The most prominent examples, which have been discussed elsewhere, are tobacco⁴⁷, the ports of Aberdeen⁴⁸, Dundee⁴⁹, Glasgow⁵⁰ and Montrose.⁵¹ Coherent geographical areas (regional economies) and their trade have also been studied, for instance Shetland⁵² and "the West" of Scotland.⁵³ Another framework of trade in a historical perspective is represented by studies on particular merchants or companies or partnerships of merchants. With the exception of tobacco, such studies are almost completely absent. There is only one study on a small merchant active in the early decades in Leith, who clearly was a minor player

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- 44 W. SCHLOTE, *Entwicklung und Strukturwandlungen des englischen Aussenhandels von 1700 bis zur Gegenwart*, Jena 1938. Engl. translation: *British Overseas Trade. From 1700 to the 1930s*, Oxford 1952.
 - 45 HAMILTON, *Economic History*, chs. IX, X is an exception, as in a way is T. C. SMOUT, *Where Had the Scottish Economy got to by the Third Quarter of the Eighteenth Century?*, in: I. HONT / M. IGNATIEFF (eds.), *Wealth and Virtue. The Shaping of Political Economy in the Scottish Enlightenment*, Cambridge 1983, pp. 45–72.
 - 46 CARUS-WILSON / COLEMAN, *England's Export Trade*; E. B. SCHUMPETER, *English Overseas Trade Statistics, 1697–1808*, Oxford 1960. "Guides" to the immensely rich (and in the eighteenth century richer than England) Scottish statistical materials have likewise not been produced. G. N. CLARK, *Guide to English Commercial Statistics 1696–1782*, London 1938.
 - 47 J. M. PRICE, *The Rise of Glasgow in the Chesapeake Tobacco Trade, 1707–1775*, in: *William and Mary Quarterly*, II (1954), pp. 179–199; as well as his article collections: ID., *The Atlantic Frontier of the Thirteen American Colonies and States. Essays in Eighteenth Century Commercial and Social History*, Aldershot 1996; ID., *Tobacco in Atlantic Trade. The Chesapeake, London and Glasgow 1675–1775*, Aldershot 1995; ID., *Overseas Trade and Traders. Essays on Some Commercial, Financial and Political Challenges Facing British Atlantic Merchants, 1660–1775*, Aldershot 1996; T. M. DEVINE, *The Tobacco Lords. A Study of the Tobacco Merchants of Glasgow and their Trading Activities 1740–1790*, Edinburgh 1975; I. W. STEVENSON, *Some Aspects of the Geography of the Clyde Tobacco Trade in the Eighteenth Century*, in: *The Scottish Geographical Magazine*, LXXXIX (1973), pp. 19–35.
 - 48 G. JACKSON, *The Economy: Aberdeen and the Sea*, in: E. P. DENNISON / D. DITCHBURN / M. LYNCH (eds.), *Aberdeen Before 1800. A New History*, East Linton 2002, pp. 159–180.
 - 49 C. A. WHATLEY / D. SWINFEN / A. M. SMITH, *The Life and Times of Dundee*, Edinburgh 1993.
 - 50 G. JACKSON, *Glasgow in Transition, c.1660 to c. 1740*, in: T. M. DEVINE / G. JACKSON (eds.), *Glasgow, Vol. 1: Beginnings to 1830*, Manchester / New York 1995, pp. 63–105; and T. M. DEVINE, *The Golden Age of Tobacco*, in: *ibid*, pp. 139–183.
 - 51 G. JACKSON / S. G. E. LYTHER (eds.), *The Port of Montrose: A History of its Harbour, Trade and Shipping*, Tayport 1993; therein: I. D. WHYTE, 'All Kynds of Grain': the Trade in Victual c. 1680–1825 (pp. 115–124); D. G. ADAMS, *Trade in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries* (pp. 125–149).
 - 52 H. D. SMITH, *Shetland Life and Trade, 1550–1914*, Edinburgh 1984.
 - 53 A. SLAVEN, *The Development of the West of Scotland 1750–1960*, London 1976.

in the game.⁵⁴ Jackson's study of the Edinburgh whale fishing company remains an interesting starting point for the larger companies.⁵⁵ With regard to firms or partnerships active in the Atlantic trades, Price's article on Buchanan & Simson is still fairly much the starting and the ending point.⁵⁶

54 T. MCALOON, A Minor Scottish Merchant in General Trade: The Case of Edward Burd 1728–39, in: J. BUTT / J. T. WARD (eds.), *Scottish Themes. Essays in Honour of S. G. E. Lythe*, Edinburgh 1976, pp. 17–27.

55 G. JACKSON, Government Bounties and the Establishment of the Scottish Whaling Trade, 1750–1800, in: BUTT / WARD (eds.), *Scottish Themes*, pp. 46–66.

56 J. M. PRICE, Buchanan & Simson, 1759–1763: A Different Kind of Glasgow Firm Trading to the Chesapeake, in: *William and Mary Quarterly*, XL (1983), pp. 3–41.

3. OBJECTIVES AND SUBJECTS OF STUDY

Considering the aforementioned deficiencies in historiography, particularly of eighteenth-century Scottish trade, the present study is intended to bridge, if not close, the gap. This will be done using a statistical or top-down viewpoint – for the individual merchants involved in trade with Germany on the Scottish side, or the micro-economic / bottom-up aspect so to speak, the reader is referred to chapter 8 of the above-mentioned *Scottish Trade in the Wake of Union*. A thesis on *Scottish Foreign Trade towards the End of the Pre-industrial Period, 1700–1760* formed the initial starting-point for both.⁵⁷ It is hoped that the present book serves a heuristic purpose on its own, being a model study of how eighteenth-century intra-European trade worked as part of a larger historical context which might be labelled an “Atlantic economy”. It is intended to tease out the more subtle patterns of the commodity trades, as they appear from contemporary quantitative, as well as narrative sources, but moreover to suggest directions for future research into European trade and economy in a comparative framework.

The analysis will focus on eighteenth-century Scotland, drawing on the under-explored Scottish customs accounts which have been preserved nearly in entirety after 1742. The Scottish records are unique. Not only are British customs accounts generally the most detailed of their kind available for early modern Europe. But the loss of the London port books, covering about 80 per cent of England’s foreign trade in the period, also places Scotland into pole position for a historical analysis of commercial fluctuations within a European dimension. This is because the basic difference of British accounts to most other available material for European ports in the period is that, inasmuch as foreign or overseas trade was concerned, all commodities imported or exported were recorded, regardless whether they were liable to duty or not. Thus, whilst the limitation on Scotland on the one and northern Germany on the other hand is to an extent a choice of academic convenience, it will nevertheless facilitate conclusions that reach far beyond this merely geographic limitation, but in fact apply to early modern European or “world” trade in general. Much of the following will show characteristic signs of “suggestions for further research” rather than “textbook evidence”. And even though Scottish-German trade was firmly embedded into the eighteenth-century Atlantic economy without any apparent or significant deviance in the general patterns, some explanation is necessary nonetheless, chiefly for the choice of eighteenth century Scotland and Germany as the objects of study. There is, of course, the problem that neither of the two were “countries” in the full modern sense.

As of Mayday 1707, Scotland and England were joined together into one United Kingdom, which cost the Scots their parliament and political sovereignty (the Scottish Parliament was only re-established in 1997–1999). In economic terms the Union 1707 created a customs union between Scotland and England, furthermore allowing Scotland legal access to the tradable products of the English colonies overseas. By abolishing customs duties on Scottish-English trade, Scotland’s two main domestic exports, cattle and linen, now had free entry into their largest foreign market. Furthermore, the

57 P. R. RÖSSNER, *Scottish Foreign Trade towards the End of the Pre-industrial Period, 1700–1760*, Unpubl. University of Edinburgh PhD Thesis, Edinburgh 2007.

inclusion of Scots traders into the protection of the English Navigation Acts (including the protection of Scottish merchant shipping by the English Navy) now allowed for certain colonial goods previously reserved to English traders, such as tobacco and sugar, to be legally imported into Scottish ports. These “enumerated commodities” subsequently laid the foundation stone for a thriving re-export business, enjoying the highest growth rates in eighteenth-century Atlantic trade. The Union 1707 therefore positively affected Scotland’s future chances for economic growth, even though the time framework, as well as the precise causal nexus, is open to debate.⁵⁸ But as will be shown below overseas trade levels remained small, both in relation to total economic activity, as well as in comparison to England. The Union of 1707 generally failed to make a large impact on Scottish economic and commercial performance until late. The administrative grip of the “British” state, as well as the ability of British institutions to penetrate Scottish economic and social life remained rather weak until well after the middle of the century. Suffice it to cite just a few relevant aspects.

During the first half of the century, government in Scotland took place informally via the Scottish “viceroy”, the Duke of Argyll and his system of nepotism and patronage.⁵⁹ Twenty years after the Union, he commented that in Scotland “by a long series of no administration, the mere letter of the law has little or no weight with the people” – there had been no real political administration at all prior to that date.⁶⁰ Throughout the eighteenth century the £Scots, Scotland’s pre-Union currency, remained in use as a money of account, especially when it came to rents and related transfer payments, as well as certain forms of taxation.⁶¹ A further outright violation of the stipulations and spirit of the Treaty of Union was the retaining of the old Scottish measures of length and capacity, which differed from parish to parish. Apart from standardized measures to be used in customs and excise procedures, the old Scottish pre-Union measures continued to be used well into the nineteenth century.⁶² But most importantly, pre-industrial Scottish society and economy were marked by a high propensity to tax evasion. Partly this was a result of the very weak and in many ways rather informal administrative grip of the state.

58 Ibid., ch. 6.

59 C. A. WHATLEY, *Bought and Sold for English Gold? Explaining the Union 1707*, East Linton 2nd ed. 2001; L. Paterson, *The Autonomy of Modern Scotland*, Edinburgh 1994, esp. p. 24, pp. 31–34. M. Lynch, *Scotland. A New History*, Edinburgh 8th ed. 1997, chs. 18–19, esp. pp. 315–319, 323–326.

60 J. S. SHAW, *The Management of Scottish Society 1707–1764. Power, Nobles, Lawyers*, Edinburgh Agents and English Influences, Edinburgh 1983, p. 86.

61 In the years preceding the Union, the £Scots exchanged at 1/12 £Sterling. This rate was retained after 1707 for accounting purposes. NAS, Trinity House Records, GD 226/7/1, Crown Money Book, *passim*; GD 226/18/250, GD 229/13/36, Tables of Shore Dues, Leith (3rd June 1761 – January 1775, 29th May 1776 – 10th May 1780, January 1788 – 18 January 1827). See also R. SAVILE, *Bank of Scotland. A History 1695–1995*, Edinburgh 1996, p. 78 and n. 14.

62 A. D. CONNOR / A. D. C. SIMPSON, *Weights and Measures in Scotland: A European Perspective*, East Linton 2004; R. E. ZUPKO, *The Weights and Measures of Scotland before the Union*, in: *Scottish Historical Review*, LVI, 2, Nr. 162 (1977), pp. 119–145; I. LEVITT / (T.) C. SMOUT, *Some Weights and Measures in Scotland, 1843*, in: *Scottish Historical Review*, LVI, 2, Nr. 162 (1977), pp. 146–152, esp. pp. 146s., p. 151; J. M. HENDERSON, *Scottish Reckoning of Time, Money, Weights and Measures* (no date / place of publication indicated), pp. 5s. A. BALD, *The Farmer and Corn-Dealer’s Assistant*, Edinburgh 1780.

Prior to 1746, when the last Jacobite uprising was finally subdued and roads suited for long-distance travel, reaching far into the Highlands were constructed, the arm of the British state (in the shape of customs and excise taxation) did not effectively extend to the Highland region of Scotland at all. There were no permanent customs precincts north-west of Loch Ness or the line spanning the two customs precincts of Inverness and Fort William (The Scottish Highlands and Islands). To contemporary “Lowlanders”, members of the educated urban Scottish and English elites, this was where civilization ended and an entirely different, even alien, tribal society and economy began. The customs precinct of *Lochbroom* with its head- or outport Ullapool in the northwest of Scotland, which in theory covered virtually the entire Highland area north-west of Loch Ness, was closed in 1747. This closure followed a period of four years of complete inactivity during which the resident customs collector had recorded no taxable incoming or outgoing waterborne traffic whatsoever. Partly this was due to the Jacobite uprising in 1745/6, when the customs collector left his post for good on the grounds that as a British official he feared for his life in an environment that was thoroughly Jacobite. But the fact that no economic activity had been recorded since 1742 is a telling example of the generally very weak grip of the central or “British” state – chiefly the Treasury and Exchequer based in London – in this area of Great Britain. It does not mean that nothing had been traded or produced in the vicinity of Ullapool and the North-western Highlands, but the locals clearly were in formidable opposition to British taxes and duties.⁶³ But it was by no means the Highlands region alone that frequently and successfully evaded taxation. The level of smuggling in Scotland’s overseas trades was remarkable, as will be seen below, but it was particularly high in the south-western tobacco ports of Glasgow, Ayr, Irvine, Dumfries and Kirkcudbright. A similar situation applied with regard to the *excise*, a duty charged at the point of production on selected essentials, such as beer, ale, malt, skins, hides, candles, and certain types of linens. Thus a considerable yet unquantifiable share of Scottish economic activity was neither taxed nor recorded during the eighteenth century. Net remits of taxation yields from Edinburgh to London remained tiny, especially in the Customs, during the first half of the eighteenth century.⁶⁴ British government institutions concerned with economic administration, such as the Treasury or the Board of Trade, showed little interest in Scotland in anything that went further than revenue accounting. These aspects had a considerable effect on the amount and coverage of economic statistics that were compiled for Scotland.⁶⁵ Trade statistics, which for Ireland and England had been compiled since 1696, were not produced for Scotland prior to 1755, and no “British” aggregate trade statistics were kept, either after 1707.⁶⁶ Those statistics available for Scotland prior to 1755 were mainly concerned

63 NAS, E504/23/1, Customs Accounts Lochbroom (Ullapool), esp. signatures of collector in permanente absentia.

64 R. H. CAMPBELL, The Anglo-Scottish Union of 1707.II. The Economic Consequences, in: Economic History Review, Second Series, XVI, 3 (1964), pp. 468–477; J. M. PRICE, Glasgow, the Tobacco Trade, and the Scottish Customs, 1707–1730, in: Scottish Historical Review, LXIII (1984), pp. 1–36, at p. 7.

65 See ch. 2 below.

66 The English “ledgers of imports and exports” continued to record only English overseas trade after 1707. See ch. 2 below.