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# The socio-economic relations between Scotland's northern territories and Scandinavia and the Baltic in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries

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## Abstract

Traditional historiography has perceived the early-modern northern Highlands as a region that lacked dynamism and had little contact with the outside world. I propose to establish a mercantile framework between the region and the Baltic in a period of European conflicts, but also of commercial opportunities. I investigate the trading relations between an outlying society and Scandinavia, and explore the presence of northern Highlanders to add to the successful network of Scots and Gaels from other Highland areas operating across the Baltic commercial world. These trading exchanges demonstrate the integral location of the northern Highlands within international trade routes. It further illustrates the diversity of a Nordic trade with its multiple points of entry across Scotland, despite the limited scale of these exchanges. The role of the region in international trade remained marginal, but was not altogether non-existent, as assumed in traditional historiography. These commercial relationships can be primarily described as resource-led. The limited identifiable commercial diaspora of Scottish far northerners suggests that they invested the mercantile and burghal ranks of Baltic towns rather than consigned themselves to peddling activities. These northern Highlanders could be found in both itinerant and settled communities.

## Keywords

Scotland, northern Highlands, trade, Scandinavia, early-modern period, migration

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Traditional historiography has perceived the early-modern northern Highland communities of Caithness, Sutherland, Ross, the Outer Isles, and the burgh of Inverness—and the Highlands and Islands in general—together with its people as a region that lacked dynamism to a degree, appeared sclerotic and had little contact with the outside world.<sup>1</sup> Classical works have focused on political developments.<sup>2</sup> More recent publications either do not explore the far north in great depth, or investigate foreign exports.<sup>3</sup> More broadly, this *locus standi* of inertia traditionally defines upland societies in Europe as recipients of developments as opposed to identifying them as proactive actors and subjects, that is to say akin to the modern concept of ‘agency’. This prejudice is part of a wider generic European phenomenon.<sup>4</sup> Alternatively, and anti-thetically speaking, uplanders across early-modern Europe came to be seen as the archetype of peddlers *par excellence*.<sup>5</sup> This generalisation, however, silences the nuances of peddling activities across the continent.<sup>6</sup> Moreover, isolated Gaelic commercial networks, such as the Maclean kin, confuted this upland inactivity.<sup>7</sup> In the present novel conception of the Scottish far-northern *homo peregrinator* over the early-modern period, Scandinavia and the Baltic proved a propitious environment both for historical and contingent factors.<sup>8</sup> The Nordic locale attracted these seemingly unlikely travelling candidates for, among others, martial adventures and

1. I.F. Grant and H. Cheape, *Periods in Highland History* (1987, rptd. London, 1997), 105; J. Goodare, *State and Society in Early Modern Scotland* (Oxford, 1999); J. Goodare and M. Lynch, ‘The Scottish State and Its Borderlands, 1567–1625’, in J. Goodare and M. Lynch, eds., *The Reign of James VI* (East Linton, 2000), 206; T.C. Smout, *Scottish Trade on the Eve of the Union, 1660–1707* (Edinburgh, 1963), 24.
2. D. Gregory, *The History of the Western Highlands and Isles of Scotland, from A.D. 1493 to A.D. 1625*, 2nd ed. (London, 1881); W.C. Mackenzie, *History of the Outer Hebrides* (Paisley, 1903).
3. A.I. Macinnes, *Clanship, Commerce and the House of Stuart, 1603–1788* (East Linton, 1996); R.A. Dodgshon, *From Chiefs to Landlords: Social and Economic Change in the Western Highlands and Islands, c. 1493–1820* (Edinburgh, 1998); F.J. Shaw, *The Northern and Western Islands of Scotland: Their Economy and Society in the Seventeenth Century* (Edinburgh, 1980).
4. J.E. Wilson, ‘Agency, Narrative, and Resistance’, in S. Stockwell, ed., *The British Empire: Themes and Perspectives* (Oxford, 2008), 245; S.K. Cohn, ‘Highlands and Lowlands in Late Medieval Tuscany’, in D. Broun and M. MacGregor, eds., *Miorun Mòr nan Gall, ‘The Great Ill-Will of the Lowlander’?: Lowland Perceptions of the Highlands, Medieval and Modern* (Glasgow, 2009), 110. For instance, this is the conception seminally adopted in F. Braudel, *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II*, 2 vols., 2nd ed. (London, 1972–3).
5. L. Fontaine, *History of Pedlars in Europe* (Cambridge, 1996), ch. 1.
6. S. Murdoch, *Network North: Scottish Kin, Commercial and Covert Associations in Northern Europe, 1603–1746* (Leiden, 2006), ch. 4.
7. J.N.M. Maclean, *The Macleans of Sweden* (Edinburgh, 1971), 1; A. Grosjean and S. Murdoch, ‘The Scottish Community in Seventeenth-Century Gothenburg’, in A. Grosjean and S. Murdoch, eds., *Scottish Communities Abroad in the Early Modern Period* (Leiden, 2005), 198ff.
8. Although not synonymous, this article refers simply to the Baltic or Scandinavia to denote both for brevity’s sake.

commercial ventures.<sup>9</sup> Women are particularly hard to identify in the sources that are relevant for this study. However, this does not preclude their role and influence in both the home and host societies, and especially in the socio-cultural and economic spheres.<sup>10</sup>

The repositioning of economic theory away from being solely driven by profit to one interlocked with social interdependency is key in this view. Reticular approaches combining both micro- and macro-operations have helped in our understanding of commerce conducted from an ethnic or regional angle.<sup>11</sup> However, I more modestly propose to set an operative mercantile framework between the northern Highlands and the Baltic in a period of European conflicts, but also of commercial opportunities. I will investigate empirically the trading relations between an outlying society and Scandinavia, and explore the presence of northern Highlanders to add to the successful network of Gaels from other Highland areas operating across the Baltic commercial world. I further endeavour to reposition slightly the far north vis-à-vis the Nordic trade in the early-modern period and, more importantly, to analyse it. Within this construct, 'transmarine connections' are pivotal to a better understanding of 'an extended maritime community'.<sup>12</sup>

Methodologically speaking, the area generally lacks the merchants' and skippers' papers found elsewhere in the Scottish Lowlands, or detailed local customs books as in Scandinavia.<sup>13</sup> Scottish customs accounts and records of the admiralty were searched, as

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9. T.C. Smout, N.C. Landsman, and T.M. Devine, 'Scottish Emigration in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries', in N. Canny, ed., *Europeans on the Move: Studies on European Migration, 1500–1800* (Oxford, 1994), 76. On the military dimensions: see S. Murdoch, ed., *Scotland and the Thirty Years' War, 1618–1648* (Leiden, 2001); A. Grosjean, *An Unofficial Alliance: Scotland and Sweden, 1569–1654* (Leiden, 2003), chs. 2–3. A more regional presentation is illustrated in T. Brochard, 'Exile and Return from the Far North of Scotland from the Reformation to the Revolution', *Études Écossaises*, xiii (2010), 20.
  10. S. Talbott, 'Scottish Women and the Scandinavian Wars of the Seventeenth Century', *Northern Studies*, xl (2007), 102; M. Rorke, 'Women Overseas Traders in Sixteenth-Century Scotland', *Journal of Scottish Historical Studies*, xxv (2005), 81.
  11. Murdoch, *Network North*; D. Catterall, 'At Home Abroad: Ethnicity and Enclave in the World of Scots Traders in Northern Europe, c. 1600–1800', *Journal of Early Modern History*, viii (2004), 319; J.-P. Priotti, 'Réseaux Sociaux Basques, Commerce Transocéanique et Pouvoir Local au XVIIe Siècle', *Annales de Bretagne et des Pays de l'Ouest*, cxii (2005), 184.
  12. D. Kirby and M.-L. Hinkkanen, *The Baltic and the North Seas* (London, 2000), 149, ch. 7; D. Kirby, 'Locating the Baltic', in P. Salmon and T. Barrow, eds., *Britain and the Baltic: Studies in Commercial, Political and Cultural Relations, 1500–2000* (Sunderland, 2003), xvii–xxiv; D. Worthington, 'A Northern Scottish Maritime Region: The Moray Firth in the Seventeenth Century', *International Journal of Maritime History*, xxiii (2011), 181. Although of great significance to the wider Scottish trade with the Baltic, the Northern Isles would need a specific in-depth assessment beyond the constraints of this study.
  13. K. Zickermann, 'Scottish Merchant Families in the Early Modern Period', *Northern Studies*, xlv (2013), 100; T.C. Smout, 'The Norwegian Timber Trade before 1707, from the Scottish Perspective', in A. Lillehammer, ed., *Timber and Trade: Articles on the Timber Export from the Ryfylke Area to Scotland and Holland in the 16th and 17th Centuries* (Aksdal, 1999), 49; A. Lillehammer, 'Boards, Beams and Barrel-Hoops: Contacts between Scotland and the Stavanger Area in the Seventeenth Century', in G.G. Simpson, ed., *Scotland and Scandinavia, 800–1800* (Edinburgh, 1990), 100.

**Table 1.** Scottish northern Highland cargoes passing through the Sound, 1497–1700.

Year	Port	East-bound	West-bound	Comments
1599	Inverness	1	1	
1602	Caithness	1	1	
1603	Caithness	0	1	
	Thurso	1	0	
	Caithness			'1 Caithness vender tilbage fra Lübeck og Nakskov uden tidligere at have passeret Sundet' '1 Caithness [ship] return from Lübeck and Nakskov without previously passing through the Sound'
1608	Katewell ('Kettvoll')	1	1	
1609	Dunnet Bay	1	0	
1619	Ross	1	0	
1638	Cromarty	1	0	
1670	Lewis	1	0	
1678	Inverness	1	0	
1700	Inverness	1	1	
	Lewis	1	0	from Lübeck

Source: Tabeller over Skibsfart og Varetransport gennem Øresund, 1497–1660, N.E. Bang and K. Korst, eds., 3 vols. (Copenhagen, 1906–33), i, 162, 174, 178, 198, 202, 242, 313; Tabeller over Skibsfart og Varetransport gennem Øresund, 1661–1783, og gennem Storebælt, 1701–1748, N.E. Bang and K. Korst, eds., 4 vols. (Copenhagen, 1930–53), i, 216, 226, 355, 374.

were a few printed Scandinavian customs registers. Further evidence comes from scattered sources, notably a number of family and legal papers. More details could be found in the painstaking investigation of family papers and the much underused, yet richly and widely informative, registers of deeds.

## Context

Scottish trade to the Nordic countries had long been established and continued, with fluctuations, after the Restoration as it was tied—to a large measure—to the geo-politics of northern Europe, and exploited or fell victim to international warfare in this advent of the mercantilist era.<sup>14</sup> Even within the broader Scottish trade, the Baltic ports lagged behind the Irish or North Sea destinations prior to the mid-sixteenth century, except, perhaps, for the trade of the Northern Isles (if only indirectly), and for the import of

14. E.J. Graham, *A Maritime History of Scotland, 1650–1790* (East Linton, 2002), chs. 1, 2, 5.

timber and its ancillaries.<sup>15</sup> Nonetheless, the Baltic emerged as one of the leading destinations of exports by 1610s.<sup>16</sup>

Local studies of a Baltic trade with English ports or with Scottish towns and regions, particularly developed with Denmark's former territories of the Northern Isles, give an insight into its repercussions at the microeconomic level, which itself feeds into the macrostructures of the Scottish and British European commerce.<sup>17</sup> This further correlates with the importance of geographical location as a factor in trade, explaining the prominence of so-called 'peripheral' actors within a country-to-country maritime exchange. This perspective applies to the Northern Isles in this Scoto-Nordic exchange just as early-modern Dalmatia and Albania did, with chronological variations, for the Republic of Venice.<sup>18</sup> At another level, family businesses and town/community studies delineating Scottish activities in Scandinavia and the Baltic have also been investigated in a number of cases.<sup>19</sup> However, general trade studies of the Scottish northern districts are, on the whole,

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15. D. Ditchburn, *Scotland and Europe: The Medieval Kingdom and Its Contacts with Christendom, c. 1215–1545*, vol. 1 (East Linton, 2001), 12, ch. 4; K. Friedland, 'Hanseatic Merchants and Their Trade with Shetland', in D.J. Withrington, ed., *Shetland and the Outside World, 1469–1969* (Aberdeen, 1983), 86. The most comprehensive study of Scottish overseas trade in the Middle Ages is that of M. Rorke, 'Scottish Overseas Trade, 1275/86–1597', 2 vols. (Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Edinburgh, 2001).
  16. J.C. Watson, 'Scottish Overseas Trade, 1597–1645', 2 vols. (Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Edinburgh, 2003), i, 190; D. Ditchburn, 'Trade with Northern Europe, 1297–1540', in M. Lynch, M. Spearman, and G. Stell, eds., *The Scottish Medieval Town* (Edinburgh, 1988), 161; D. Ditchburn, 'A Note on Scandinavian Trade with Scotland in the Later Middle Ages', in Simpson, *Scotland*, 73; S.G.E. Lythe, 'Scottish Trade with the Baltic, 1550–1650', in J.K. Eastham, ed., *Economic Essays in Commemoration of the Dundee School of Economics, 1931–1955* (Dundee, 1955), 63; J. Dow, 'Scottish Trade with Sweden, 1512–80', *Scottish Historical Review [SHR]*, xlviii (1969), 64; J. Dow, 'Scottish Trade with Sweden, 1580–1622', *SHR*, xlviii (1969), 124.
  17. K. Zickermann, 'Shetland's Trade with Northwest German Territories during the Seventeenth and Early Eighteenth Century', *Journal of the North Atlantic*, special vol. iv (2013), 43; J.D. Fudge, 'Maintaining a Presence: Baltic Enterprise and the Merchants of Lynn during the Reign of Henry VIII', in Salmon and Barrow, *Britain and the Baltic*, 3; T. Riis, 'The Baltic Trade of Montrose in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries: From the Danish Sound Toll Registers', in G. Jackson and S.G.E. Lythe, eds., *The Port of Montrose: A History of Its Harbour, Trade and Shipping* (Tayport, 1993), 102; H. Marwick, *Merchant Lairds of Long Ago: Being Studies of Orkney Life and Conditions in the Early 18th Century* (Kirkwall, 1936–9), pt. 1, p. 3; pt. 2, pp. 43, 62.
  18. G. Poumarède, 'Affrontements, Contacts et Échanges dans les Balkans aux XVIe et XVIIe Siècles: Le Cas de la Province Vénitienne de Dalmatie et d'Albanie', in J.-L. Lamboley, ed., *Points de Vue sur les Balkans de l'Antiquité à Nos Jours* (Grenoble, 2002), 109; M.P. Pedani, 'Ottoman Merchants in the Adriatic: Trade and Smuggling', *Acta Histriae*, xvi (2008), 155.
  19. H. Ågren and S. Simander, 'The Heritage of Isak Mackay: A Scottish-Swedish Family in the Iron Industry in the Late 17th and Early 18th Centuries', *Northern Studies*, xli (2010), 41; Zickermann, 'Merchant Families'; S. Murdoch, 'Community, Commodity and Commerce: The Stockholm-Scots in the Seventeenth Century', in D. Worthington, ed.,

lacking, let alone these local or family microstudies.<sup>20</sup> There is a need to reposition our consideration of this maritime traffic within its rich milieu. This oceanic framework can serve as a ferment for historical investigation, as has already been the case with the Moray Firth, seen to be conceptually adaptable or malleable, or with the North Atlantic arc.<sup>21</sup>

Trade studies are generally conducted from the main driving force of a country's leading ports, major goods and/or key mercantile families or networks. The picture varies when it comes to so-called peripheral lands. The Basque country, for instance, constituted an important actor in early-modern Spanish commerce, as was Galway in relation to the Irish Iberian trade at the time.<sup>22</sup> The northern Highlands was a minor player in Scottish international trade throughout the seventeenth century and, indeed, seemingly a non-existent one in the Scandinavian and Baltic trade in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.<sup>23</sup>

## Patterns of trade

Though based on a long historical Nordic interaction, the medieval trade of the northern Highlands with the Baltic was sporadic at best.<sup>24</sup> Yet, the register of ships passing through the Sound for the period 1497–1700 reveals a few voyages to and from the far north. Despite the shortcomings of the published registers, these are still relatively useful for the present

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- British and Irish Emigrants and Exiles in Europe, 1603–1688* (Leiden, 2010), 31; E.-B. Grage, 'Scottish Merchants in Gothenburg, 1621–1850', in T.C. Smout, ed., *Scotland and Europe, 1200–1850* (Edinburgh, 1986), 112; J.G. Duncan, 'Scottish Trading Links with Sweden', *Scottish Local History*, xxiii (1991), 10; the collection of articles gathered in section II of Grosjean and Murdoch, *Scottish Communities*; Priotti, 'Réseaux Sociaux'.
20. D. Worthington, "'Men of noe Credit'?: Scottish Highlanders in Poland-Lithuania, c. 1500–1800', in T.M. Devine and D. Hesse, eds., *Scotland and Poland: Historical Encounters, 1500–2010* (Edinburgh, 2011), 91.
  21. Worthington, 'Moray Firth', where international commercial aspects are touched upon. On the north Atlantic arc, the paradigm was reiterated during the conference on the maritime communities of the arc held in May 2013 at the University of Strathclyde.
  22. J.-P. Priotti, 'Guerre et Expansion Commerciale: Le Rôle des Basques dans l'Empire Espagnol au XVIe Siècle', *Revue d'Histoire Moderne et Contemporaine*, xlviii (2001), 51; K. Schüller, 'Irish-Iberian Trade from the Mid-Sixteenth to the Mid-Seventeenth Centuries', in D. Dickson, J. Parmentier, and J. Ohlmeyer, eds., *Irish and Scottish Mercantile Networks in Europe and Overseas in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries* (Gent, 2007), 178, 181, 184.
  23. Smout, *Trade*, 3, 13, 24; Shaw, *Islands*, ch. 11; Graham, *Maritime History*, 13, 58, 136; T. Riis, *Should Auld Acquaintance Be Forgot ... Scottish-Danish Relations, c. 1450–1707*, 2 vols. (Odense, 1988), i, 48; ii, 31, with tables for sample years between 1574 and 1628 showing absolutely no trade between the far north and Scandinavia. No ships from Inverness are listed as passing through the Sound Toll for the periods 1497–1547, 1574–82, 1618–28 and 1680–86: T. Riis, 'Long Distance Trade or Tramping: Scottish Ships in the Baltic, Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries', in T.C. Smout ed., *Scotland and the Sea* (Edinburgh, 1992), 61. The Highlands retained this marginal role in the eighteenth century: P.R. Rössner, *Scottish Trade in the Wake of Union (1700–1760): The Rise of a Warehouse Economy* (Stuttgart, 2008), 346.
  24. *Atlas of Scottish History to 1707*, P.G.B. McNeill and H.L. MacQueen, eds. (Edinburgh 2000), 253, 256; S. Thomas, 'The Diocese of Sodor and Its Connection to Nidaros and the

enquiry. It should, however, be borne in mind that the nationality used in these registers is actually that of the owners of the cargoes as opposed to that of the ship or skipper.<sup>25</sup>

Table 1 shows a relatively infrequent, yet sustained, contribution from the Scottish far-northern ports, with a wide distribution both geographically and chronologically, and with the participation from the Outer Isles emerging from the late seventeenth century. Interestingly, no Sutherland harbour was used in terms of direct traffic to Scandinavia.<sup>26</sup> The examination of the toll registers for Elblag from 1585 to 1602 and those of Kaliningrad over the period 1588–1602 shows no entries for the Scottish far north.<sup>27</sup> Thus, at face value, the ports of the far north do not seem to have been much used in the Baltic trade.<sup>28</sup> However, throughout the sixteenth century, these customs were ‘almost always’ leased, thus limiting any quantitative study of the area’s exports, as these would not appear in the enrolled custom accounts.<sup>29</sup>

Complementary sources, like the customs accounts for the Inverness precinct and the Northern Isles and Caithness precinct over the period 1665–91 and 1668–81 (both with

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Curia after 1266’, in S. Imsen, ed., ‘*Ecclesia Nidrosiensis*’ and ‘*Noregs Veldi*’: *The Role of the Church in the Making of Norwegian Domination in the Norse World* (Trondheim, 2012), 143; B.E. Crawford, ‘The Bishopric of Orkney’, in S. Imsen, ed., *Ecclesia Nidrosiensis, 1153–1537: Søkelys på Nidaroskirkens og Nidarosprovinsens Historie* (Trondheim, 2003), 143; B. Smith, ‘Archdeacons of Shetland, 1195–1567’, in Imsen, *Ecclesia Nidrosiensis, 1153–1537*, 161. Politically speaking, it is worth bearing in mind that the Western Isles remained under the Crown of Norway until 1266.

25. Riis, *Should Auld Acquaintance*, i, 40. Future use of the Sound Toll Registers online, once completed, should prove to be of immense benefit: <http://www.soundtoll.nl/index.php/en/> [accessed 29 January 2012].
26. *Miscellany of the Scottish Burgh Records Society*, J.D. Marwick, ed. (Edinburgh, 1881), 25.5. Impressionistic evidence described how in 1754 and ‘long before’ there was ‘an immense herring-fishing’ in Loch Ròg (Lewis) with Sweden as its sole market: J. Sinclair, ed., *The Statistical Account of Scotland, 1791–1799* [OSA], D.J. Withrington, ed., 21 vols. (1791–9, Wakefield, 1983), xx, 42, 102. The contribution of Sutherland harbours is nonetheless attested, as mentioned below.
27. *Nederlandse Rekeningen in de Pondtolregisters van Elbing, 1585–1602*, F.B.M. Tangelder, ed. (‘s-Gravenhage, 1972); *Nederlandse Rekeningen in de Tolregisters van Koningsbergen, 1588–1602*, P.H. Winkelman, ed. (‘s-Gravenhage, 1971).
28. Overall, apart from Inverness, these ports were little used for official, i.e. duty-paying, exports. Beside the Scandinavian trade, the Inverness series only lists another direct export from Caithness, namely of barley to Newcastle in July 1666, and two separate consignments of corn leaving Littleferry (‘fferie ounes’; south of Golspie) in March 1686 bound for Holland: National Records of Scotland [NRS], E72/11/1; E72/11/13, Exchequer Records, Customs Books, Second Series, Inverness, 1665–91. The Caithness series lists only one return voyage undertaken by two Thurso merchants to Rotterdam and from Amsterdam in May–June 1669: NRS E72/17/1, Exchequer Records, Customs Books, Second Series, Orkney, Shetland and Caithness, 1668–81.
29. Rorke, ‘Overseas Trade’, i, 87, 323. It is to be noted that the western lochs fell within the remit of the Dumbarton precinct up to 1528. There is a great confusion as to the area of the customs jurisdictions concerning the Isles and the Scottish far north in the sixteenth century: Rorke, ‘Overseas Trade’, i, 82, 203, 209. For the evolution of these jurisdictions in the eighteenth century, consult Rössner, *Trade*, 86.



gaps), respectively, strengthen this view of a sporadic and relatively limited contribution from the area.<sup>30</sup> The absence of a specific port of entry and departure in the records, and the nature of the precinct, meant that these shipments could have been sent from anywhere along the Moray coast between the Spey ports and up to Caithness. Nevertheless, a few interesting points emerge from the consultation of these records. The far north did provide only a few vessels (*Jean, Adventure* and *Elizabeth*, all from Inverness) and possibly skippers (John Law, John Fraser, James Kelloch, Alexander Stewart and William Fraser) in this trade, as far as the Inverness series is concerned. Much more prevalent in the series was the presence of local Inverness merchants and burgesses who freighted these cargoes (eight in total). As for the Caithness series, it reveals the participation of a couple of Thurso merchants (Donald Taylor and John Burn) and Caithness landlords (John Sinclair of Brims, Robert Sinclair of Durran and John Sinclair of Rattar) all for 1669.<sup>31</sup> That year also saw the only Hebridean link across both series. The *Providence* of Stornoway, chartered by John Sinclair of Rattar for a voyage to Bergen, was the only local vessel outside Inverness freighted for the Baltic trade.<sup>32</sup> Thus, so far, the data show a very limited participation in terms of a merchant fleet, but a larger one in terms of freighters.

The geographical or regional distribution of the trade brings forth revelatory patterns. The burghs of the Scottish west coast tended to ply their foreign trade along an Atlantic arc.<sup>33</sup> Nonetheless, the Irish Sea—and so in theory the west coast of Scotland—was not curtailed from the Scandinavian and Baltic trade, as demonstrated in the case of Belfast, with the employment incidentally of Scottish factors.<sup>34</sup> As noted in Table 1, the Isle of Lewis ports and vessels emerged in the records at the close of the period, which would point to a meaningful, if limited, Hebridean participation in the Baltic trade from the late 1660s and 1670s. Corroboration comes with the activities of the enterprising merchant

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30. NRS, E72/11/1-19 and E72/17/1-4. The erection of a separate customs precinct, like the one at Thurso, only dates from the eighteenth century: D. Grant, *Old Thurso* (Thurso, 1966), 50.
31. This meant that these Thurso merchants were trading *ultra vires*, as unfree merchants. This illustrated the support granted to burghs of barony by the nobility, in this case the Earl of Caithness and his relatives, in breaching the royal burghs' monopoly of overseas trade until the end of that monopoly in 1672: A.R. MacDonald, *The Burghs and Parliament in Scotland, c. 1550-1651* (Aldershot, 2007), 184. Landlords were allowed to import and export goods 'for their own particular use' but could not resell these: *The Records of the Parliaments of Scotland to 1707 [RPS]*, K.M. Brown et al., eds. (St Andrews, 2007–2010), online at <http://www.rps.ac.uk>, 1597/11/29 [accessed 19 February 2014].
32. NRS, E72/17/1. Two additional entries, although not registering the origin of the cargoes, can be almost certainly ascribed to the Nordic market, given their content of deals, spars, staves and tar. One was freighted by Robert Barber, merchant in Inverness, chartering the *Jean* of Inverness, and the other was organised by Rattar. The limited use of northern vessels is corroborated with the record in 1642 of the *Blessing* of Thurso transporting flax, iron, and peas from Gdańsk to Dumbarton: *Dumbarton Common Good Accounts, 1614-1660*, F. Roberts and I.M.M. Macphail, eds. (Dumbarton, 1972), 266, 271.
33. Rorke, 'Overseas Trade', i, 291.
34. J. Agnew, *Belfast Merchant Families in the Seventeenth Century* (Dublin, 1996), 106, 112, 114, 119, 134, 141, 179, 181; S. Murdoch, 'The Scots and Ulster in the Seventeenth Century: A Scandinavian Perspective', in W. Kelly and J.R. Young, eds., *Ulster and Scotland, 1600-2000: History, Language and Identity* (Dublin, 2004), 85. On the important role performed by Scottish factors, refer to T.C. Smout, 'Scottish Commercial Factors in the Baltic at the End of the Seventeenth Century', *SHR*, xxxix (1960), 122.

Roderick Campbell of Srannda/Strond whose cargoes contained pitch and tar, traditional Baltic products, if only indirectly acquired.<sup>35</sup>

English schemes to develop the Hebridean fishery, which were briefly mooted in the 1630s but never became fully realised, also had an eye on the markets of the Baltic.<sup>36</sup> This does not exclude an earlier medieval uncommon involvement, as these waters were used by international traffic, including during blockades of the English Channel.<sup>37</sup> Indeed, prior commercial contacts of this thalassocratic people of the Outer Isles with northern Europe is well attested, particularly with the Dutch fishing presence in Hebridean waters by 1540s, and with a fishing enterprise developed by Colin, First Earl of Seaforth, in the 1620s–1630s. The earl and his successor, George, may well have capitalised on their association with Robert Innes, a citizen of Tarnów, burgher of Aberdeen, and merchant in Lewis.<sup>38</sup> Baltic vessels continued to fish in Hebridean waters throughout the rest of the century.<sup>39</sup> Scottish exports from the Lewis fishery also reached the markets in north-west Germany at the time.<sup>40</sup> Coin hoards are suggestive of further commercial connections between the Outer Isles and the North Sea and beyond, with one find in the grounds of Lews Castle (Stornoway) composed of Dutch dollars of the early seventeenth century and a Swedish dollar of Queen Christina's reign (1632–54).<sup>41</sup> Later on, at the close of the century, in 1698, Sir George Mackenzie of Tarbat set in motion a prototype fishing station at Ullapool with a view to develop the export of salt herrings from the region to Stockholm, London and France. He was, nonetheless, frustrated in his endeavour, hindered by such issues as capital, transport, the salt tax and the vagaries of the shoals themselves.<sup>42</sup> The underdeveloped local economy of the Outer Isles thus supplied fish for visiting shipping prior to 1650. But only from around the mid-seventeenth century did the far west of Scotland began to build a limited fishing fleet and merchant vessel stock able to trade with places such as the Baltic. The emerging pattern of the Hebridean trade with Scandinavia and the Baltic over the period, although seemingly not very sustained, was—at least initially—sporadic, and became more visible and recurrent in the second half of the seventeenth century.

35. A. Morrison, 'Early Harris Estate Papers, 1679–1703', *Transactions of the Gaelic Society of Inverness [TGS]*, li (1978–80), 95, also 159.

36. Mackenzie, *Outer Hebrides*, 585.

37. Moreover, this time frame points to the possibility of a wider process in the Irish Sea, as seen with contemporary commercial developments in Belfast and the appearance of the Scottish west (Glasgow) in the Nordic trade: Riis, 'Trade', 61; Graham, *Maritime History*, 35.

38. A.I. Macinnes, *The British Revolution, 1629–1660* (Basingstoke, 2005), 105; A. MacCoinnich, 'Native and Stranger: Lewis and the Fishing of the Isles, c. 1610–c. 1638', unpublished paper; M. Rorke, 'The Scottish Herring Trade, 1470–1600', *SHR*, lxxxiv (2005), 149.

39. For example, *The Register of the Privy Council of Scotland [RPC]*, J.H. Burton, D. Masson, P.H. Brown, et al., eds., 38 vols. (Edinburgh, 1877–1970), 3rd ser., xi, 590; B. Harris, 'Scotland's Herring Fisheries and the Prosperity of the Nation, c. 1660–1760', *SHR*, lxxix (2000), 43.

40. K. Zickermann, *Across the German Sea: Early-Modern Scottish Connections with the Wider Elbe-Weser Region* (Leiden, 2013), 100.

41. R. Kerr, 'A Hoard of Coins from Stornoway', *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland [PSAS]*, lxxxviii (1954–6), 222. It is important to note that there was a great variability in the length of circulation of coins.

42. E. Richards and M. Clough, *Cromartie: Highland Life, 1650–1914* (Aberdeen, 1989), 44; M. Clough, 'Early Fishery and Forestry Developments on the Cromartie Estate of Coigach,

More data are available for the eastern coast of the region under consideration. It is most certain that a fraction, of a variable proportion, of the trade leaving the Inverness precinct consisted of goods from the area, and especially its grain. The only incontrovertible evidence comes from the Caithness series for 1669. The commercial operations of that year saw four sales totalling 430 bolls of bear and 270 bolls of meal despatched to Bergen (three sales) and Romsdal ('Rumsdail'). This represented £235 of customs duties or 65 per cent of the values of all Caithness exports in 1669. Likewise, the sum of £38 2s 8d paid on Baltic imports in that year was the equivalent of 72 per cent of all Caithness imports. In other words, the Baltic trade was the major market for Caithness in that year. Yet, globally, the combined (exports + imports) Caithness trade with the Baltic only amounted to 12.2% of all the official direct trade of the whole precinct of Caithness and the Northern Isles in 1669.<sup>43</sup> Additional indications become available later in the seventeenth century. In the 1680s, Norwegian cargoes customed in the Inverness precinct represented only a fraction of the overall Scottish Norwegian trade (1.9% and 3.9% of its inward and outward cargoes, respectively, for 1680–86) and, similarly, for the import of deals and single trees over the period 1686–96 (amounting to only 0.4% of the Scottish trade). However, within this northern jurisdiction, the Norwegian share of the customs was not insignificant, totalling 14.5% of its inward vessels and 13 per cent of its outward journeys for 1680–86. This is explained, in part, by the fact that Inverness was relatively well served in terms of the delivery of timber from its hinterland. Nonetheless, there was a reasonable degree of export of grain to Norway.<sup>44</sup>

Despite the patchy and scattered nature of the evidence, direct trade between the northern Highlands and northern Europe generated a certain economic activity for the region, albeit difficult to quantify. Numismatic findings, in the form of coin hoards and strays found in the region, attest to some Nordic connections, even if tenuous.<sup>45</sup> Far-northern participation in this commerce lies primarily with goods sold and purchased, in itself not apparent at first sight because of the specifics of the records as mentioned above. Certainly, in 1621, the bailies of Tain contracted an agent in Bergen for the sale of a cargo of bear barley. This large export of 10,000 bolls of bear from Tain to Norway within the ten-year period 1621–31 indicated not only the substantial scale of the grain export, but also its sustainability, if only a temporary one.<sup>46</sup> This cereal link to the Baltic continued in the late seventeenth century with, for instance, one-fifth of the 10,568 bolls of grain shipped from

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1660–1746', in J.R. Baldwin, ed., *Peoples and Settlement in North-West Ross* (Edinburgh, 1994), 229.

43. NRS, E72/17/1. This meant that the Northern Isles carried out most of the international trade. Comparatively speaking, the ports north of the Spey only accounted for three per cent of the Scottish duties on exports for the period 1597 to 1645: Watson, 'Overseas Trade', i, 179. Smuggling and indirect trade figures would distort this overall pattern: Smout, *Trade*, 21, 38, 238, 246; Rorke, 'Overseas Trade', i, ch. 5. It has been argued that pre-industrial Scottish society, and the Highlands in particular, was marked by a 'remarkably high propensity to tax evasion': Rössner, *Trade*, 38.
44. Smout, 'Timber Trade', 45.
45. N.M. McQ. Holmes, 'The Evidence of Finds for the Circulation and Use of Coins in Medieval Scotland', *PSAS*, cxxxiv (2004), 271.
46. M. Clough, 'The Cromartie Estate, 1660–1784: Aspects of Trade and Organization', in J.R. Baldwin, ed., *Firthlands of Ross and Sutherland* (Edinburgh, 1986), 90; Richards

Inverness destined for Norway in 1684–85.<sup>47</sup> This correlates with the overall close connections between western Norway and the east coast burghs of Scotland, but extends these trading routes to areas further north.<sup>48</sup> Thus, the direct commerce of the far north with Scandinavia was not the preserve of merchants of royal burghs, but a combination of individual estates and burghs. Both landlords and urban merchants accompanied the expansion of these mercantile activities. This conjunction was perhaps more acute than with the rest of the country, given the geographical cadre of these operations.<sup>49</sup> This is an essential aspect in terms of international trade carried out from outlying rural areas, which studies solely restricted to some customs accounts might overlook.

People further capitalised on opportunities presented to them by the Thirty Years' War. In 1643, Colonel Donald Mackay, First Lord Reay, and his son, Mr John, contracted with Hamburg traders for 440 rix-dollars for which the Germans left 1118 'peesces' of salmon, 'some Spanish salt' and other unspecified commodities in Mackay's 'Cellor' in security.<sup>50</sup> More evidence would be needed to establish a meaningful pattern visible with other Scots in Scandinavia and the Baltic in which the mercantile and military communities were enmeshed.<sup>51</sup> These Scottish uplanders, however, differed in a major way from the Basques. The Pyreneans commanded a lead in maritime commerce. They complemented their revenues by acting as a major moneylender and producer and provider of ships and arms to the Crown's military campaigns when global conjecture turned negative during periods of war. The Scottish uplanders were not merchant warriors.<sup>52</sup>

Beyond this direct trade, a large proportion of the Nordic commerce, if not the largest, was actually conducted indirectly via other Scottish ports so that far-northern goods

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and Clough, *Cromartie*, 42, 464 n. 8, but mis-referenced; D. Alston, *My Little Town of Cromarty: The History of a Northern Scottish Town* (Edinburgh, 2006), 39; NRS, RH15/77/7, Miscellaneous Papers, Hamilton of Blackburn and Binnie Papers, letter John Murray of Pennyland to Sir George Hamilton, 25 April 1647. Tain's massive export certainly flew in the face of its denigrators and rivals, namely Inverness, in questioning its right to exercise the privileges of a free burgh: MacDonald, *Burghs*, 13.

47. Alston, *Cromarty*, 70; *Atlas*, McNeill and MacQueen, eds., 278; Edinburgh City Archives [ECA], Moses Bundles, bundle 47, no. 2031. The rest went to Holland. NRS, GD305/1/147, Cromartie Muniments, no. 32; Clough, 'Cromartie Estate', 95, and 90–3 for the overall logistics of the grain trade on the Cromartie estate.
48. N.Ø. Pedersen, 'Scottish Immigration to Bergen in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries', in Grosjean and Murdoch, *Scottish Communities*, 148.
49. Smout, *Trade*, 72, 143. Rather tellingly, a comparable picture of direct export emerges for the Dutch market: NRS, E71/26/1, Exchequer Records, Customs Books, First Series, Spey, 1622, fos. 2r-3v.
50. NRS, GD84/2/195-6, 198, Reay Papers; K. Zickermann, "'Briteannia Ist Mein Patria': Scotsmen and the 'British' Community in Hamburg", in Grosjean and Murdoch, *Scottish Communities*, 249. The strong economy of Hamburg benefited from its political circumstances, namely the fact that it remained untouched during the Thirty Years' War, and capitalised upon that from all opposing forces and from among the British factions during the conflagrations of the mid-seventeenth century.
51. Murdoch, *Network North*, 9, 23, 40, 151, 232, 298.
52. Priotti, 'Guerre'. In return, the Spanish authorities upheld and protected the economic potential of the Basque country, helping in the process shape the Basques' group identity. But, like the Basques, the Scottish uplanders provided large contingents of soldiers to the Crown.

transited through these southern ports to Scandinavia and elsewhere, as they had done since the Middle Ages.<sup>53</sup> This stood in contrast to the Basque country, which acted as an entrepôt for Mediterranean goods and their own goods destined for the northern European markets and transported in Basque vessels. In the Scottish case, there were, nevertheless, large fluctuations in terms of years, goods and percentages/quantities.<sup>54</sup> For instance, most of Thurso's trade in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries was carried in vessels belonging to southern ports.<sup>55</sup> This indirect articulation of the trade was visible across the country.<sup>56</sup> The alternative was for ships to sail in ballast before their Scandinavian expedition.<sup>57</sup> The transit of goods, or movements of customed goods between jurisdictions prior to their actual export, continued later in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.<sup>58</sup> This inter-regional traffic preceding export accounted for the bulk of the far north's salmon sales from the early sixteenth century.<sup>59</sup> The same applied for the herring of the area's west coast and isles, being first shipped to Aberdeen, Dundee, Edinburgh and burghs of the Scottish south-west coast prior to its export, but with an element of evasion, that is direct export, difficult to gauge.<sup>60</sup> Overall Scottish shipments to the Baltic increased from the mid-sixteenth century—after the final collapse of the Skåne fisheries—yet only reached a substantial level from the 1590s owing to the sharp rise in the price of herring in Gdańsk.<sup>61</sup> Plaiding, skins and leather from ports north of the Spey found their way to

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53. This inter-regional trade in Scotland does not appear in records such as the Sound Toll registers.
54. Ditchburn, *Scotland and Europe*, 12, 161; Alston, *Cromarty*, 92; J.-P. Priotti, 'Basques Péninsulaires et Réseaux Portuaires en Méditerranée', *Rives Méditerranéennes*, xiii (2003), §4, online at <http://rives.revues.org/161> [accessed 28 November 2012]. This indirect trade is illustrated in an entry in the Aberdeen shore work accounts for May 1625 with a 'Thomas Buk from Catnes payit be Alex Reid to Gottenburg': *Aberdeen Shore Work Accounts, 1596–1670*, L.B. Taylor, ed. (Aberdeen, 1972), 131, also 78, 584. The wider context is explored in Grosjean and Murdoch, 'Scottish Community', 191.
55. Grant, *Thurso*, 49.
56. Rorke, 'Overseas Trade', i, ch. 4; Watson, 'Overseas Trade', i, 23. This is not to be confused with the re-export of foreign goods: Rorke, 'Overseas Trade', i, ch. 14; Watson, 'Overseas Trade', i, ch. 3.
57. *Old Ross-shire and Scotland As Seen in the Tain and Balnagown Documents*, W. MacGill, ed., 2 vols. (Inverness, 1909–11), i, no. 466.
58. NRS, E72/11/1; L. Longmore, *Inverness in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century* ([Inverness], 2001), 2.
59. A.L. Murray, 'The Salmon Fishings of Strathnaver, 1558–1559', *Review of Scottish Culture*, viii (1993), 77.
60. Rorke, 'Overseas Trade', i, 112, 121, 205; ii, 572, 676, 817; J. Fraser, *Chronicles of the Frasers*, W. Mackay, ed. (Edinburgh, 1905), 494; Dundee City Archives [DCA], GD/Hu/SF/3/1, Seaman Fraternity of Dundee, April, December 1669; 20 May 1670; January, March 1671; January, February 1675; NRS, E71/1/9, fo. 17v (14 lasts of Loch Broom herring from Aberdeen to Dieppe, Jan. 1582/3; 12 lasts three barrels of Loch Broom herring from Aberdeen to Le Havre, Mar. 1582/3); E71/32/1-10, 12-13, throughout. Initially, in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, part of the herring catches was actually directly customed in Lewis if one identifies 'Lowis' with the Hebridean island as opposed to its synecdochical use for the more general western lochs: Rorke, 'Overseas Trade', i, 203, 211.
61. Rorke, 'Scottish Herring', 155, 159; *Atlas*, McNeill and MacQueen, eds., 257.

Aberdeen prior to their subsequent continental consignments. From the area also came salmon, skins and feathers, first to Leith to then be despatched to Europe.<sup>62</sup> Merchants and lairds directly and indirectly marketed their goods by freighting cargoes at their own expense, reflective of the broader pattern of the area's shipments to the rest of Scotland.<sup>63</sup> In March 1663, George Baines, a merchant burgher of Edinburgh, commissioned John Brown, a skipper in Leith, to sail to 'the Road of Cromartie', receive 650 bolls of victual and unload the same at Kristiansand, Rotterdam or Amsterdam.<sup>64</sup> In comparison, Swedish Sami tended to trade their reindeer fur locally with Crown representatives and *birkarl*-merchants though they did resort to Norwegian markets themselves.<sup>65</sup> By the early eighteenth century, the sophistication and maturity of the Scottish far-northern commercial activities with the Baltic markets were already established, with a system of resident factors in the Baltic and at North Sea ports, convoy and insured cargoes, and bills of exchange.<sup>66</sup>

Indeed, complex trading routes and operations are on record, evincing alternative direct routes between the Scottish far north and Scandinavia in the process. In January 1657, William Anderson, brother to John Anderson in Torry (Aberdeen), took 25 lasts of herring out of Lewis destined for markets in Flanders, Norway and Gdańsk.<sup>67</sup> Certainly, by the latter half of the seventeenth century, merchants prosecuted direct trade from the Outer Hebrides to Scandinavia within their overall multi-stop route. A charter party of July 1678 shows the plan for a Crail fisherman, then in Leith, to resort first to the herring fishing in Lewis and then to sail with up to 24 lasts of the fish to either Gdańsk, Kaliningrad or Gothenburg.<sup>68</sup>

Evidence of commerce with foreign merchants can be further elicited from illegal activities.<sup>69</sup> In May 1564, a Hamburg trader was arrested in Inverness for unlawfully

62. Watson, 'Overseas Trade', i, 24.

63. Alston, *Cromarty*, 100. In the 1690s, Montrose and Edinburgh merchants commissioned their own buyers or local agents to purchase a large proportion of the Caithness bear and meal to be then shipped to Norway: J.E. Donaldson, *Caithness in the 18th Century* (Edinburgh, 1938), 155, 179.

64. ECA, Moses Bundles, bundle 47, no. 2031.

65. G. Fur, *Colonialism in the Margins: Cultural Encounters in New Sweden and Lapland* (Leiden, 2006), 51.

66. *The Letter-Book of Bailie John Steuart of Inverness, 1715–1752*, W. Mackay, ed. (Edinburgh, 1915), throughout. Its modelisation as a multilateral pattern of a smaller merchant type is briefly described in Rössner, *Trade*, 267.

67. *Aberdeen Shore Work*, Taylor, ed., 379, 403, 405. Many thanks to Aonghas MacCoinnich for this reference and for making the connections. *Social Life in Former Days: Second Series, Illustrated by Letters and Family Papers*, E.D. Dunbar, ed. (Edinburgh, 1866), 115; NRS, AC7/8, High Court of Admiralty, Decrees, 1627–1830, 26 November 1686.

68. NRS, AC7/4, fos. 121r-121Av. This was the favoured option with the alternative of disposing of the cargo in Leith instead. The Scandinavia-bound fish would be paid £57 Scots per last compared with a mere £29 per last if bound for Leith.

69. Oral tradition richly exemplifies accounts of smuggling: F. Foden, *Wick of the North: The Story of a Scottish Royal Burgh* (Wick, 1996), 94. Hanseatic merchants provide comparisons of commercial illegality in the Baltic: M. Burkhardt, 'Policy, Business, Privacy: Contacts Made by the Merchants of the Hanse Kontor in Bergen in the Late Middle Ages', in H. Brand, ed., *Trade, Diplomacy and Cultural Exchange: Continuity and Change in the North Sea Area and the Baltic, c. 1350–1750* (Hilversum, 2005), 149.

disposing of his cargo and banned export.<sup>70</sup> The use of Hamburg measures in relation to both barrels of herring in Inverness (1458) and salmon from the River Conon (1500s–1520s) would, at first sight, appear to reinforce this North Atlantic route.<sup>71</sup> However, these were red herrings. These containers merely denoted ‘big’ barrels as opposed to ‘small’ or ‘herring’ barrels.<sup>72</sup> The route was, nonetheless, attested as shown by the traffic to and from Inverness in the late sixteenth century, with, *inter alia*, wine coming in and building stones and lead going out.<sup>73</sup> This northern Highland connection was actually part of a wider Scottish (extra-) commercial engagement in north-west Germany.<sup>74</sup> This convenient German shipping destination was used as a cover by proscribed Jesuit priests in June or July 1589 sailing aboard a ‘victuel boîte’ from Sutherland on their way to Flanders.<sup>75</sup> The Hanse city actually remained a destination for cargoes of grain, perhaps uncommonly, well into the late eighteenth century.<sup>76</sup>

Northern Highlanders not only participated in, but also disrupted, the Scandinavian and Baltic trade with their international commercial partners, echoing uskok piracy in the Adriatic.<sup>77</sup> Beside piratical misdeeds, commercial shipwrecks were pillaged. In October 1594, Abraham Dewar, burgess of Bergen, owner of the *Jonas*, was the victim of a raid within Tarbat Ness opposite Arbolll at the hands of Rosses, Munros, Corbets and Vauses. Dewar appealed to King James VI and the Danish king, Christian IV, for the recovery of his goods, mainly fish, tar, barley, butter, biscuits, pulse, hams and weapons. But his prolonged litigious enterprise was seemingly not crowned with ultimate

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70. NRS, NP1/25, Notarial Protocol Book of William Cumming, fo. 16r-v. The term ‘hune’ could apply to the vessel part called the hound, some honey or an oven.
71. *Invernessiana: Contributions toward a History of the Town & Parish of Inverness, from 1160 to 1599*, C. Fraser-Mackintosh, ed. (Inverness, 1875), 137; *The Exchequer Rolls of Scotland: Rotuli Scaccarii Regum Scotorum [ER]*, J. Stuart, G. Burnett, A.J.G. Mackay, et al., eds., 23 vols. (Edinburgh, 1878–1908), xiii, 50, 148, 349, 444, 513; xiv, 88, 145, 149, 306, 386; xv, 26, 172.
72. Rorke, ‘Overseas Trade’, i, 190; ii, 778.
73. *Records of Inverness*, W. Mackay, H.C. Boyd, and G. Smith Laing, eds., 2 vols. (Aberdeen, 1911–24), i, lxxxi, xciv, 10, 29, 103, 107, 156, 160, 268. While on the continent, far-northern soldiers were part of a British and European credit system, and not simply as mere debtors, which relied on, among other things, English and Gdańsk merchants, and with Hamburg serving as one of the financial hubs for the exchange of money: National Library of Scotland [NLS], Edinburgh, Dep. 175/65, Gordons of Gordonstoun and Cummings of Altyre Papers, nos. 201–2, 250, 308.
74. NRS, CC19/1/1, Commissary Court Records of Ross, fo. 36r; Zickermann, ‘Shetland’s Trade’.
75. *Calendar of State Papers Relating to Scotland and Mary, Queen of Scots 1547–1603 [CSP, Sco.]*, J. Bain, W.K. Boyd, H.W. Meikle, et al., eds., 13 vols. (Edinburgh, 1898–1969), x, 202.
76. I.R.M. Mowat, ‘The Moray Firth Province: Trade and Family Links in the Eighteenth Century’, in Baldwin, *Firthlands*, 82; I.R.M. Mowat, *Easter Ross, 1750–1850: The Double Frontier* (Edinburgh, 1981), 73.
77. C.W. Bracewell, *The Uskoks of Senj: Piracy, Banditry, and Holy War in the Sixteenth-Century Adriatic* (Ithaca, 1992), 8, 82, 300; S. Murdoch, *The Terror of the Seas?: Scottish Maritime Warfare, 1513–1713* (Leiden, 2010); A.P. van Vliet, ‘The Influence of Dunkirk Privateering on the North Sea (Herring) Fishery during the Years 1580–1650’, in J. Roding and L.H. van Voss, eds., *The North Sea and Culture (1550–1800)* (Hilversum, 1996), 150.

success.<sup>78</sup> Attacks also took place once vessels had landed. Prior to 1627, the captain of Clanranald and his Macdonald men boarded a Leith ship at the Isle of Barra freighted by Glasgow merchants on route to Gdańsk with a cargo of wine, herring, plaiding and dollar pieces worth £4180.<sup>79</sup> These reports, and those of shipwrecks, as well as correlated attacks on foreign vessels during the blockades of the English Channel, at least demonstrate the integral nature of the Scottish far north—with its Hebridean waters—within international trade routes including to and from Scandinavia, or of ships carrying cargoes from the Nordic area.<sup>80</sup> However, a broad-brush depiction of generalised raids amidst these waters serves no purpose. Indeed, in 1627, after a ship from Spain bound for Lübeck was stranded off Donald Macdonald of Sleat's coastal lands, Sleat protected its crew from the country people, transported them to Edinburgh and entertained them en route.<sup>81</sup>

Although of a less direct invasive and confrontational nature, legal wranglings interfered with the Nordic commerce.<sup>82</sup> The convenience of the port of Cromarty for shipments meant mariners took full advantage of the safe haven of international

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78. NRS, DI62/1, Particular Register of Hornings and Inhibitions, Inverness, 1st ser., hornings registered 27 February 1599, 8 November 1599; *RPC*, 1st ser., v, 643; vi, 48, 54, 120, 175; *Extracts from the Records of the Burgh of Edinburgh, A.D. 1589 to 1603*, M. Wood and R.K. Hannay, eds. (Edinburgh, 1927), 123; *Tain and Balnagown Documents*, MacGill, ed., i, no. 683; *The Calendar of Fearn: Text and Additions, 1471–1667*, R.J. Adam, ed. (Edinburgh, 1991), 174, 177, 184, 210. Indeed, the chief offenders and their abettors in the *Jonas* incident had been declared escheat by 1600: W. Coutts, *The Business of the College of Justice in 1600: How It Reflects the Economic and Social Life of Scots Men and Women* (Edinburgh, 2003), 324. Aonghas MacCoinnich is duly thanked for this reference. Other cases are found in: NRS, CS7/258, Court of Session Records, Register of Acts and Decrees, 1st ser., 1542–1659, fo. 253r-v; PS1/56, Register of Privy Seal, fo. 25r.
79. NRS, GD201/1/18, Clanranald Papers; A.D.M. Forte, 'A Preliminary Account of an Early Sixteenth-Century Episode of Highland Piracy', *Scottish Gaelic Studies*, xxiv (2008), 207; *Shetland Documents, 1195–1579*, J.H. Ballantyne and B. Smith, eds. (Lerwick, 1999), no. 165.
80. *Burgh of Edinburgh*, Wood and Hannay, eds., 35; *Highland Papers*, J.R.N. Macphail, ed., 4 vols. (Edinburgh, 1914–34), ii, 56; iii, 125; *RPC*, 1st ser., v, 371, 396; 2nd ser., ii, 131, 135, 138; *Criminal Trials in Scotland from 1488 to 1624*, R. Pitcairn, ed., 3 vols. (Edinburgh, 1833), iii, 99. Around 1600, a ship carrying Norwegian timber foundered at Littleferry and another one, a Dutch ship, with its cargo of indeterminate commodities, rammed against the sandy shores of Kintradwell: R. Gordon, *A Genealogical History of the Earldom of Sutherland* (Edinburgh, 1813), 239. Oral tradition concurs with this assessment as the Barra chiefs kept a watchman whose duties covered the reporting of all ships' ports of origins and destination: *The Earls of Cromartie*, W. Fraser, ed., 2 vols. (Edinburgh, 1876), i, p. xliv.
81. *RPC*, 2nd ser., ii, 131, 135, 138; also 1st ser., v, 371, 396.
82. D. Horsbroch, 'From Bergen to Biscay: Privateering, Diplomacy and Scottish Seaborne Operations, 1502–1560', unpublished paper; A. Grosjean, 'Scottish-Scandinavian Seventeenth Century Naval Links: A Case Study for the SSNE Database', *Northern Studies*, xxxii (1997), 111.



reputation.<sup>83</sup> Beyond these facilities at Cromarty, historians have interpreted the decisions issued by the regional judicature of the Admiralty as having manifested signs of exceeding its powers over a long period of time, if only occasionally.<sup>84</sup> A re-assessment of the court can actually denote, perhaps, a combination of practical reasons (weather, etc.), judicial opportunism exercised by Scottish privateers and a confidence in the legal validity of its decision, having been allowed to adjudicate for so long without the High Court of Admiralty curbing its powers.<sup>85</sup> In 1590, privateers brought an Orkney-bound Bremen vessel to Cromarty where her goods were sold, presumably after the ruling of a local admiralty court declared it a prize.<sup>86</sup> An analogous *cause célèbre* judgement concerning the Swedish ship the *Castle of Riga*, formerly called the *Three Kings of Amsterdam*, in 1666 expresses the judicial resilience and confidence displayed by the vice-admiralty court sitting at Cromarty in the 1660s–1670s.<sup>87</sup> Apart from the financial profits of these cases, urban antagonism over wrecks betrays the concern over fiercely contested status and jurisdiction.<sup>88</sup>

In terms of imports, timber and its by-products made an important contribution to the far north.<sup>89</sup> Throughout the seventeenth century, cereals were exported from the east coast across the area—from the Black Isle to Sutherland and Caithness—to Norway usually, but not necessarily, with return cargoes of timber, in the process known as ‘stulling’.<sup>90</sup> These arboraceous imports complemented, rather than displaced, the native production and exploitation of

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83. Cromarty’s sheltered harbour, so praised by contemporary chroniclers, appeared as ‘Portus Salutis’ on contemporary maps: *The Works of Sir Thomas Urquhart of Cromarty, Knight*, T. Maitland, ed. (Edinburgh, 1834), 395; J. Leslie, ‘Scotiae Regni Antiquissimi Accvrata Descriptio’; T. Porcacchi, ‘Scotia’, 1605; W. Hole, ‘Scotia Regnum’, 1607, all online at <http://www.chartingthenation.lib.ed.ac.uk/> [accessed 1 April 2009].
84. Graham, *Maritime History*, 21; Alston, *Cromarty*, 19.
85. S. Murdoch, A. Little, and A.D.M. Forte, ‘Scottish Privateering, Swedish Neutrality and Prize Law in the Third Anglo-Dutch War, 1672–1674’, *Forum Navale*, lix (2003), 37; DCA, GD/Hu/SF/3/1, Seaman Fraternity of Dundee, 26 April 1672.
86. *CSP, Sco.*, J. Bain, W.K. Boyd, H.W. Meikle, et al., eds., x, 399. In 1525, the Veere ship *Oliver* was seized at Cromarty and its goods escheated by Thomas Urquhart of Cromarty: NRS, GD305/1/129/3.
87. Swedish Riksrarkivet, Stockholm, Anglica, VII, vol. 542, 1660–1670, entry for the *Castle of Riga*; vol. 543, 1670–1691, entry for the *Three Kings of Amsterdam*; Steve Murdoch deserves much gratitude for supplying a copy of these Swedish documents; NRS, GD29/43, Kinross House Papers; Graham, *Maritime History*, 21; J. Dalrymple, *The Decisions of the Lords of Council & Session, in the Most Important Cases Debate before Them; from July 1671 to July 1681*, part II (Edinburgh, 1687), 85; J. Dalrymple, *The Institutions of the Law of Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1681), 218; Murdoch, *Terror*, 266. Similarly, see R.D. Oram, P.F. Martin, C.A. McKean, et al., *Historic Tain: Archaeology and Development* (Edinburgh, 2009), 47; Gordon, *Earldom*, 239.
88. *RPC*, 1st ser., ix, 389.
89. The study of household inventories would contribute to detail Scandinavian imports in a greater diversity, and as an illustration of presumably both direct and indirect imports: NLS, Dep. 175/53, bundle 132, note of plenishing in 1624 (Gdańsk ‘tyking’, i.e. a cover or casing used as a mattress or pillow).
90. *RPC*, 2nd ser., iv, 202; *Social Life, Second Series*, Dunbar, ed., 115; NRS, GD280/6/7/2, Sinclair of Dunbeath Papers, p. 30; Rorke, ‘Overseas Trade’, i, 174, 265; ii, 788; Watson, ‘Overseas Trade’, i, 102; Lillehammer, ‘Timber Trade’, 97. This export–import pattern continued into the eighteenth century: Alston, *Cromarty*, 329, 333; Donaldson, *Caithness*, 163, 168.

timber.<sup>91</sup> The combination of treeless areas in lowland Scotland, special individual building projects and, most importantly, rapid urbanisation from the mid-sixteenth century meant that the timber trade between Scotland and Norway took off in the latter half of the sixteenth century.<sup>92</sup> Two ships from Caithness traded in Ryfylke (Stavanger area), presumably for timber, in 1605–06 and 1611–12.<sup>93</sup> The Scottish customs records in the Exchequer Roll series overall are of limited use for the origins and destinations of traded goods. Yet, in the ten-year period from 1617 to 1627, deals, roof spars and stings were downloaded onto the shores north of the river Spey. Given the nature of these products and the Scottish timber trade at the time, these must have come from the Baltic, even if indirectly.<sup>94</sup> These imports of timber further reflect rather positive economic activities for the Scottish boreal regions, as testimonies to undertakings in housebuilding, shipbuilding and the fisheries.<sup>95</sup> Around October 1678, Alexander Fearn, a merchant of Inverness, loaded a cargo of deals in Bergen bound for Inverness and entered into a bond of bottomry ('Bomarie') with Trondheim burgesses.<sup>96</sup> Later on, Baltic imports evolved over time so that in the second half of the eighteenth century Baltic flax became a central component in the Easter Ross economy, spearheaded by the linen industry.<sup>97</sup> It remained the case, nonetheless, that Norwegian timber retained its considerable niche in the Scottish local economy.<sup>98</sup> It certainly played its role in the regional economy of Scotland's outlying territories.

## People

Evidence suggests that the contribution of the far north to the Baltic trade was greater in terms of goods than in logistics, that is the personnel and the vessels used to carry that

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91. This was particularly true from the Restoration onwards with the exploitation of Balnagown's woods in Strathcarron and Glen Oykel: T.C. Smout, A.R. MacDonald, and F. Watson, *A History of the Native Woodlands of Scotland, 1500–1920* (Edinburgh, 2007), ch. 12.
  92. Smout, 'Timber Trade', 39.
  93. A. Lillehammer, 'The Scottish-Norwegian Timber Trade in the Stavanger Area in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries', in Smout, *Scotland and Europe*, 111; Lillehammer, 'Boards', 100. The second shipment in 1611–12 coincided with the presence of the Caithness contingent in the Kalmar War at the time. In the accounts of imports and exports at Inverness for 15 August 1640 is the entry for Robert Robertson from 'milstrand' (modern Marstrand, west of Göteborg) with a cargo of 600 deals and four lasts of tar 'small bind' pertaining to James Ross, provost of Inverness: NRS, E73/9/6, Exchequer Records, Customs Accounts, General Collectors' Accounts, 1639–1641.
  94. NRS, E38/569, 573, 582, 585, 591, 594, Exchequer Records, Exchequer Rolls, Customars' Accounts.
  95. *RPC*, 2nd ser., iv, 202; H. Miller, *Scenes and Legends of the North of Scotland or the Traditional History of Cromarty*, J. Robertson, ed. (Edinburgh, 1994), 76; *Extracts from the Records of the Burgh of Edinburgh, A.D. 1626 to 1641*, M. Wood, ed. (Edinburgh, 1936), 182; K. Newland, 'Norwegian Timber and the Scottish Great House', *Architectural Heritage*, xviii (2007), 35; K. Newland, 'The Acquisition and Use of Norwegian Timber in Seventeenth-Century Scotland', *Vernacular Architecture*, xlii (2011), 67.
  96. NRS, AC7/5, fos. 143Av–147Ar; also *Records of Inverness*, Mackay, Boyd, and Smith Laing, eds., ii, 219.
  97. Mowat, 'Moray Firth', 82.
  98. Smout, 'Timber Trade', 54.

trade.<sup>99</sup> Real connections and origins are difficult to establish.<sup>100</sup> Nevertheless, some connections can be tentatively ascertained. In 1553, Alexander Ross of Balnagown imported goods through a John Ross in Gdańsk, very probably a kinsman, and used Cromarty to unload his cargo. In return, John Ross would receive £100-worth of salmon, hides and nondescript merchandise.<sup>101</sup> This illustrates the importance that Scots, in general, placed on kin networks for commercial ties. It also reveals at least one commercial method employed by the clan elite, who used kinsmen as a conduit for trade with the family or clan.<sup>102</sup> The entries of Scottish ships sailing back from foreign ports, including Scandinavian ones, to Dundee merely record the names of the shipmasters and not their home ports.<sup>103</sup> Andrew Munro, Hutcheon Munro, and Thomas Munro were recruited by Walter Morton, shipmaster at an unspecified Fife port, at some time over the period 1589–1600 as crew members for trips to Norway, Flanders and Gdańsk.<sup>104</sup> Similarly, for almost two and a half years, from April 1656 to August 1658, Kenneth and his brother John Mackenzie defended a case before the Scottish court of Admiralty so as to secure compensation for a ‘Gottenborough voyage’.<sup>105</sup> Nevertheless, northern seafarers, like Donald Sligoe, an Inverness seaman, did definitely ply these Baltic waters.<sup>106</sup>

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99. No ships from the northern Highlands carried cargoes of salt and coal for the export market. This is the finding from a compulsion of the accounts of all salt and coal customs from 1618 (1619 for coal) to 1630: NLS, MS 2263, Salt and Coal, Events, 1635–1662. Similarly, in a short account of the customs of Ross for 1621, goods were exported to Holland and once to Spain, but only in Dundee, Aberdeen, Leith, and Bo’ness vessels. Cargoes shipped from Caithness in 1620–21 to Holland and France were carried in Kirkcaldy, Bo’ness, or unspecified bottoms: NRS, E71/26/1, fos. 2r–3v. Likewise, the entries of Scottish ships sailing back from foreign ports, including Scandinavian ones, to Dundee only record the names of the shipmasters and not their home ports: DCA, Register of Ships, 21 March 1612–18 April 1694.
100. On the issue of geographical origin and the difficulties of its identification, consult P.P. Bajer, *Scots in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, 16<sup>th</sup>–18<sup>th</sup> Centuries: The Formation and Disappearance of an Ethnic Group* (Leiden, 2012), 118.
101. Tain and District Museum, Balnagown MSS, 2090.5.6, mis-transcribed in *Tain and Balnagown Documents*, MacGill, ed., i, no. 673. The purchase consisted of refined food, such as sugar, cinnamon, saffron, ginger, nutmeg and aniseed, as well as furniture, cloth, and hemp and corks (possibly for use in fishing). However, the provenance of these goods cannot be ascertained.
102. Murdoch, *Network North*, chs. 4–6.
103. DCA, Register of Ships, under 7 August 1620; *The Compt Buik of David Wedderburne Merchant of Dundee, 1587–1630*, A.H. Millar, ed. (Edinburgh, 1898), 288, 298. Compare Alexander Ross in *Aberdeen Shore Work*, Taylor, ed., 39; and *Compt Buik*, Millar, ed., 230, 242, 254.
104. NRS, RH9/1/5, Miscellaneous Accounts and Discharges, Shipmaster’s Memorandum Book, 1589–1600.
105. NRS, AC2/1, High Court of Admiralty, Diet Book, 1654–1830, 10 April 1656–21 August 1658, throughout. The Mackenzie brothers were also engaged in the Lewis fishing. NRS, GD172/1796, Henderson of Fordell Writs, items 3, 8–10, 12, mention a John Mackenzie, merchant in Harris, now indweller in Leith in 1648.
106. *Inverness Kirk-Session Records, 1661–1800*, A. Mitchell, ed. (Inverness, 1902), 48, dated between 1688 and 1711.

As a result, except for Sligoe, none of the above personnel could actually be from Scotland's outlying territories. Genealogical research needs to be done in this field to try and uncover family patterns of seamanship within the wider mercantile networks in the Baltic and elsewhere.<sup>107</sup>

As part of the wider phenomenon of the Scottish diaspora, individuals seized the opportunity of making a living abroad in Europe's northern climes.<sup>108</sup> The phenomenon must have been sizeable enough to raise the concern of the Crown in 1625 as destitute youths went to the Baltic.<sup>109</sup> It is problematic to gauge how far these outlying Scots capitalised on this Baltic presence to secure trading arrangements as Scottish Lowlanders did. However, a number of them certainly did. Scots put these traditional kin structures to contribution and used them to form bonds overseas, including decommissioned soldiers-turned-merchants.<sup>110</sup> Out of such migration, families, such as the Mackays, clearly maximised an expansive overall marriage strategy and favoured integration and networking with Swedish families in their iron business of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. This was reflective of a hybrid marital pattern with Scottish and non-Scottish spouses. It preserved links to Scotland, while strengthening the connections to the host community through new family alliances, whether by strategic design or fortuitously.<sup>111</sup> A number of Scottish far northerners are on record as established burgesses of Poznań or Gdańsk, or were present elsewhere in Poland.<sup>112</sup> The vitality of contacts between far northerners and Poland–Lithuania can be deduced from these movements which from their late-medieval foundations continued into the eighteenth century.<sup>113</sup>

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107. As Worthington points out, the Ross surname was not 'exclusive to the Scottish Highlands', in fact far from it, nor was a wide range of Highland-looking surnames or patronymics: Worthington, 'Scottish Highlanders', 97.
108. In a sense, this article complements Worthington's 'Scottish Highlanders' in demythifying both the immobility of Highlanders and their absence in northern Europe in the early-modern period. In relation to problems of identification, consult S. Murdoch, 'More Than Just 'Mackay's' and Mercenaries: Gaelic Influences in Scandinavia, 1580–1707', *TGSI*, lx (1997–98), 161.
109. *RPC*, 1st ser., xiii, 702, 846.
110. Murdoch, *Network North*, chs. 4–6, especially pp. 80, 138.
111. Ågren and Simander, 'Isak Mackay', 41; L. Müller, 'Britain and Sweden: The Changing Pattern of Commodity Exchange, 1650–1680', in Salmon and Barrow, *Britain and the Baltic*, 61; Murdoch, *Network North*, chs. 4–6. It is important to remember that the presence of individuals from the Western Highlands and Islands in Scandinavia at the time though most visible in a military capacity was also attested in other fields: Maclean, *Macleans*, 1; Grosjean and Murdoch, 'Scottish Community', 198ff.
112. A. Biegańska, 'A Note on the Scots in Poland, 1550–1800', in Smout, *Scotland and Europe*, 157. An unspecified number of Scottish emigrants actually came from the settlements on the far north-eastern coastland, but a few were from the Sutherland hinterland and from Cape Wrath.
113. H. Samsonowicz, 'Deux Formes d'Activité Commerciale: Les Anglaises et les Ecosaises en Pologne et dans les Pays Limitrophes aux XIVE – Première Moitié du XVIIe Siècle', *Studia Maritima*, ii (1980), 70; C. Ozóg, 'Scottish Merchants in Poland, 1550–1750', *Journal of the Sydney Society for Scottish History*, iii (1995), 53; Bajer, *Scots*; Worthington, 'Scottish Highlanders'; and Appendix 1.

Not exclusively mere peddlers, just as the other Scots present in Scandinavia, these emigrants found combined employment in commercial, judicial, administrative and diplomatic positions.<sup>114</sup> The career of the merchant and spy James Ross demonstrates the various avenues available to gifted and adventurous young men outwith the military.<sup>115</sup> Dr Robert Macculloch (fl. 1652–1726), son of Thomas Macculloch of Kindeace, had many interests in Denmark, being both a medical doctor and a merchant entrepreneur. A graduate of Aberdeen's King's College, he was both a merchant and a burges of Copenhagen, where he owned a house. In June 1670, he was authorised by King Christian V of Denmark to set up tobacco manufactures there and at Elsinore. Later, in 1680, he was further licensed by the Danish government to translate into Danish all bills of the English and Scottish nations delivered at the customs office of Copenhagen. In the 1710s, he served as a doctor at the Danish court, thus capitalising on his 1680 medical doctorate from the University of Rheims. He died in the Danish capital in 1726.<sup>116</sup> Robert most likely used his presence and position in the country to assist in the settlement of his nephew Alexander Ross (b. 1659), eldest son of the second marriage of Malcolm Ross of Kindeace.<sup>117</sup> John Peterson from Caithness was listed as a burges of Bergen in 1619, where he appears as a blacksmith. Only a few other far northerners were subsequently granted this burghal accolade in comparison to the 118 burgesses from Orkney and Shetland from 1558 to 1673.<sup>118</sup> Also from Caithness (Thurso), but alternatively mentioned as from Örebro, Thomas Clerk assumed political offices at *norra bergslag* (modern Bergslagen) in the 1640s, and attended the riksdag in Stockholm between 1660 and 1680. He was ennobled in 1678 and married three times into indigenous families.<sup>119</sup> Other individuals from the area are reported to be in Sweden. Yet few details, if any at all, are available as to their presence in the country.<sup>120</sup> The far northerners thus

114. Riis, *Should Auld Acquaintance*, i, chs. 2–5, listed separately.

115. A. Biegańska, 'James Murray: A Scot in the Making of the Polish Navy', *Scottish Slavonic Review*, iii (1984), 1; 'Scotland, Scandinavia and Northern Europe, 1580–1707' [SSNE], S. Murdoch and A. Grosjean, eds., available online at <http://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/history/ssne/index.php>, ID no. 6611 [accessed 1 May 2012]; The National Archives [TNA], SP77/19, State Paper Office, State Papers Foreign, Flanders, fo. 59v.

116. F.N. Reid, *The Earls of Ross and Their Descendants* (Edinburgh, 1894), 15, 69, 75; [D.M. Rose], *The Maccullochs of Glastullich* (s.l., c. 1900), 2; Riis, *Should Auld Acquaintance*, i, 233; ii, 197, 233; SSNE, ID no. 898898, [accessed 9 February 2012]; Royal College of Physicians, London, Papers of Robert William Innes Smith, MS 546, pp. 33, 38; MS 550, p. 45; MS 891, p. 43; <http://www.rcpe.ac.uk/library/read/people/english-students/>, as per university listing [accessed 17 November 2009].

117. Reid, *Earls of Ross*, 15, 75; Riis, *Should Auld Acquaintance*, i, 235; ii, 201; NRS, GD158/1788, Hume of Polwarth MSS; SSNE, ID no. 7166, [accessed 9 February 2012].

118. See Appendix 1; *Proceedings of the Orkney Antiquarian Society*, xiii (1935), 39.

119. See Appendix 1. The Clerk family integrated itself into Swedish society over several generations in various military, political, and educational fields: NLS, Adv. MS 21.2.14, Notes on Scots in Sweden, 1845, pp. 56, no. 442; Grosjean, 'Naval Links', 116; S. Murdoch, 'Surfing the Waves: Scottish Admirals in Russia in their Baltic Context', *Journal of Irish and Scottish Studies*, iii, pt. 2 (2010), 65, 83; Steve Murdoch is thanked for pointing out this reference.

120. See Appendix 1.

represented one link in the chain of the nebulous Scottish network abroad present across Scandinavia and elsewhere, and used by fellow Scots, as well as the Scottish and British Crowns, in their international relations, just as the Basques did for themselves and, more widely, for fellow Spaniards and the Spanish authorities.<sup>121</sup>

The wealth generated from mercantile incomes in the Baltic trade was invested in land purchases in Scotland in a classic demonstration of upward social mobility. The Kraków merchant Alexander Ross, known as 'Polander Ross' for his connections with the country, acquired Little Kindeace in 1721 and renamed it Ankerville.<sup>122</sup> Likewise, once his money was collected from debtors, the merchant William Robertson directed his executors for it to 'be invested in landed estate in Lothian and not lent on written security'.<sup>123</sup>

The vast majority of Scottish migration or overseas studies reveal the presence, role and influence of Scots in their host communities. However, the research would be greatly enhanced by an examination of the reverse process—foreigners in Scotland and the interrelations between the two, if any. In 1707, the then laird of Balnagown entered into a venture with Scottish and English partners for the building of five ships and for the production of tar and timber. Balnagown proposed to bring a 'Norway man' to Easter Ross for the production of tar. Even though the scheme never saw the light, it identifies the expertise of the foreign skilled workforce in the development of an innovative niche for the local/regional economy.<sup>124</sup>

## Conclusion

These trading exchanges between the Scottish far north and the Baltic demonstrate the integral location of the northern Highlands within international trade routes, in particular during the blockades of the English Channel. Reinforcing comparable regional and local studies, it further illustrates the diversity of a Nordic trade with its multiple points of entry across Scotland, even though the scale of these exchanges was relatively limited. The role of the area, and of the Highlands and Islands in general, in international trade

121. Murdoch, *Network North*; Catterall, 'Ethnicity', 319; Priotti, 'Guerre', 60; Fontaine, *Pedlars*, ch. 1.

122. See Appendix 1. It seems almost certain that Alexander married Zofia French and was a member of the Reformed congregation of Wielkanoc in Kraków. Their young son, George, died in 1706, and their daughter, Zofia, married Władysław Gordon, son of Major George Gordon, naturalised in Poland in 1676. Whoever George's father, Alexander Ross, was, he claimed descent from the earls of Ross as intimated by the heraldic three lions rampant on George's gravestone: Bajer, *Scots*, 473, 505; 'Scots in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, 1569–1795' [SPLC], P.P. Bajer, ed., privately held by the editor, nos. 3616, 3617.

123. T.A. Fischer, *The Scots in Eastern and Western Prussia* (Edinburgh, 1903), 97.

124. Alston, *Cromarty*, 106. The Scottish oral tradition has preserved a story of the murder of an unidentified Swedish captain in Sutherland towards the end of the sixteenth century: D. Morrison, *Traditions of the Western Isles*, N. Macdonald and A. Morrison, eds. (Stornoway 1975), 333.

remained marginal, but was not altogether non-existent, as assumed in traditional historiography. These commercial relationships can be described as resource-led rather than transport- or manpower-led. Specifically, the area's contribution to the Scandinavian commerce in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries lies primarily in goods sold to and received from the Baltic, either directly or indirectly, including re-exports. Indeed, in terms of the local economy, the Baltic trade, at times, constituted its main partner, but with huge variations in terms of the chronology and the products. At first glance, its personnel was not, generally speaking, on board the vessels that carried this traffic, though further genealogical work would be welcome to confirm or deny this point. Similarly, an analysis of some mercantile contracts shows that the Baltic trade from the region was not initially carried out in local bottoms, but only gradually emerged in the second half of the seventeenth century—or at least gained strength by then. Additional research into family papers, deeds and court records would add to the difficult question of smuggling, touched upon in this paper. A succinct analysis suggests that both landlords and urban burgesses circumvented the monopoly of the royal burghs. The limited identifiable commercial diaspora of Scottish far northerners suggests that they invested the urban mercantile and burghal ranks of Baltic towns, rather than consigned themselves to peddling activities—contrary to the current historiography. In parallel to the wider Scottish presence there, these men can be found in both itinerant and settled communities. Regionally speaking, the vast majority actually came from the low-lying lands and towns of the far north-eastern coast of Scotland as opposed to the Western Highlands and Islands.<sup>125</sup> Their social composition revealed that these belonged to cadet or minor rural landholding families, and urban burgh families. From a very patchy basis, women assisted socially and at times financially in the settlement of their husbands into local communities.

Further detailed genealogical investigation and microstudies are required to fathom such appreciation of the presence and operations of far-northern merchant families and their wider connections in the Baltic trade. European regional participation in international commerce could then be mapped out more precisely, as with the Blakes from Galway in the Irish Iberian trade, chartering the use of Scottish ships in the process.<sup>126</sup> Already, this research indicates that sons of cadet or minor landholding families took up mercantile positions that brought them within the remit of the Baltic Sea. There seems an element of truth in their professional career as having been motivated, even if subconsciously, by the Scottish royal burgh ethos of respectability.<sup>127</sup> Nonetheless, the financial rationale of success and survival, in general, as an individual/family cannot be overlooked. For the sons of burgesses from these Scottish outlying coasts, their Nordic presence represents a geographical transfer of operations with similar financial and social motives also present. In the end, despite the softly pronounced commercial links between the Scottish far-northern communities and the Baltic and Scandinavia, these belonged to a broader socio-economic and cultural multiplicity within a maritime unity. From these 'transmarine connections', these Scots moved into transterrestrial

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125. Scotland's morphological variations are conveniently silenced in the equation of Scots as peddlers: Fontaine, *Pedlars*, ch. 1; Murdoch, *Network North*, ch. 4.

126. Schüller, 'Trade', 181, 183.

127. Catterall, 'Ethnicity', 340.

connections as ethnic ‘boundary-crossers’ in the Baltic and Scandinavia, albeit on a very modest scale. Their ‘ethnically delineated corporate identity’ should not detract from their broader connections, including local indigenous ones, in their multipolar *modus operandi*.<sup>128</sup>

### Acknowledgement

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### Author biography

Thomas Brochard graduated from the University of Angers (MA) and Paris-IV (D.E.A). He was awarded a PhD in History (started at the University of St Andrews) from the University of Aberdeen in 2011 for a thesis entitled ‘The “Civilizing” of the Far North of Scotland, 1560–1640’. He is currently an honorary research fellow at the University of Aberdeen and working on the conversion of the thesis into a monograph, as well as additional journal articles dealing with various aspects of the northern Highlands of Scotland from 1500 to 1700.

## Appendix I

### Selected Scottish far northerners in Scandinavia and the Baltic, 1500–1700<sup>129</sup>

Anderson, Andrew, a cooper, perhaps from Lybster (‘Lester’) was made a burgess of Bergen in 1636. [*Bergens Borgerbog 1550–1751 Udgiven efter Offentlig Foranstaltning*, N. Nicolaysen, ed. (Kristiania, 1878), 59; D. Dobson, *Scots-Scandinavian Links in Europe and America, 1550–1850* (Baltimore, MD, USA, 2005), 3; ‘Scotland, Scandinavia and Northern Europe, 1580–1707’ [SSNE], S. Murdoch and A. Grosjean, eds., available online at <http://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/history/ssne/index.php>, ID no. 4594, accessed 9 February 2012].

Bayne, Alexander, apparent heir to Duncan Bayne, apparent of Tulloch. In 1598, Alexander killed, allegedly in self-defence, James Grieve/Greir with whom he was staying while in Gdańsk. Another version, however, claimed that Bayne killed him with a sword ‘behind his bak’. He returned to Scotland by way of the duchies of Brandenburg and of Pomerania assisted by James Urquhart, son of the late Alexander Urquhart in Innerathy. During the combat, ‘ane lit-ill Hieland man’, armed with a sword, took part in the ensuing fracas. [*RPC*, 1st ser., vi, 856; NRS, RD1/118, Register of Deeds, 1st series, 1552–1659, fo. 210r-v. Aonghas MacCoinnich is warmly thanked for this reference].

Bruce, William, was from Stanstill in the diocese of Caithness. Bruce served as a professor of law, a soldier and was the British ambassador to Poland from 1604. [SSNE, ID no. 4384, accessed 9 February 2012; A. Kalinowska, ‘Pardon Me my Lord, that I Wrytte to your Honor in Scottish...’: William Bruce as the First Stuart Diplomatic Agent in the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth’, in T.M. Devine and D. Hesse, eds., *Scotland and Poland* (Edinburgh, 2011), 51].

Clerk, Thomas, from Thurso, but alternatively mentioned as from Örebro, was the grandson of Andrew Clerk, a burgess from Thurso. He assumed political offices at norra bergslag (modern

128. Catterall, ‘Ethnicity’, 319.

129. Soldiers have not been included.



- Bergslagen) in the 1640s, and attended the riksdag in Stockholm between 1660 and 1680. [SSNE, ID no. 6333, accessed 9 February 2012; T.A. Fischer, *The Scots in Sweden: Being a Contribution towards the History of the Scot Abroad* (Edinburgh, 1907), 38.
- Fearn, Alexander, merchant in Inverness, loaded a cargo of deals in Bergen around October 1678 bound for Inverness and entered into a bond of bottomry with Trondheim burgesses [NRS, AC7/5, fos. 143Av–147Ar].
- Gilbertson, Thomas, perhaps from Dornoch ('Dornau'), received his burghership of Bergen in 1642. [*Bergens Borgerbog*, Nicolaysen, ed., 65; SSNE, ID no. 4616, accessed 9 February 2012].
- Gordon, Arthur, illegitimate son of Gilbert Gordon (d. 1602), illegitimate son of Alexander Gordon of Cyderhall, was mentioned as a resident in Sweden. [J.M. Bulloch, *The Gordons in Sutherland (including the Embo Family)* (Dingwall, 1907), 20; *The House of Gordon*, J.M. Bulloch, ed., 3 vols. (Aberdeen, 1903–12), ii, 147].
- Keith, Sir Andrew, baron of Dingwall. He served as Stuart ambassador to Denmark-Norway as part of the ongoing marriage negotiations in 1589. His integration into Swedish society transpires in the grant of a lordship and a knighthood. Keith was a member of King Sigismund's court councillors. [Riis, *Should Auld Acquaintance*, ii, 64; SSNE, ID no. 1534, accessed 9 February 2012].
- Keith, Sir William, of Delny. He spent the winter of 1589–90 in Denmark. He received the barony of Dingwall for his services in concluding King James VI's marriage. [Riis, *Should Auld Acquaintance*, ii, 65; *The Warrender Papers*, A.I. Cameron, ed., 2 vols. (Edinburgh, 1931–32), ii, 413; SSNE, ID no. 1537, accessed 9 February 2012].
- Leslie, George ('Georgius Lessel'), from Carnoch ('Canaricencis') in Ross is listed as burgher of Poznań in 1606. Yet it is doubtful that he actually came from rural Ross given his surname [Fischer, *Scots in Prussia*, 206; SSNE, ID no. 1076, accessed 9 February 2012].
- Macculloch, Robert (fl. 1652–1726), son of Thomas Macculloch of Kindeace, had many interests in Denmark, being both a medical doctor and a merchant entrepreneur. [Reid, *Earls of Ross*, 15, 69, 75; Riis, *Should Auld Acquaintance*, i, 233; ii, 197, 233; SSNE, ID no. 898, accessed 9 February 2012].
- Mackenzie, John, baptized his son John at the St Elisabeth parish church in Gdańsk on 24 June 1639 ['Scots in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, 1569–1795' [SPLC], P.P. Bajer, ed., privately held by the editor, nos. 3524, 3525].
- Mackenzie, Kenneth, and his brother John defended a case before the Scottish court of Admiralty for almost two and a half years, from April 1656 to August 1658, so as to secure compensation for a 'Gottenborough voyage'. [NRS, AC2/1, 10 April 1656–21 August 1658, throughout.].
- Macleod, Neil, the Lewis rebel of the early seventeenth century, reportedly had an unnamed nephew in Sweden. The nephew sent him ammunition to enable him to continue his rebellion [Morrison, *Traditions*, 31].
- Munro, Andrew, son of colonel John Munro of Obsdale, was killed near Gdańsk in 1641, unmarried [NLS, Adv. MS 6.1.17, Brydges MS, fo. 94r; *The Munro Tree: A Genealogy and Chronology of the Munros of Foulis and Other Families of the Clan, A Manuscript Compiled in 1734*, R.W. Munro, ed. (Edinburgh, 1978), R/14, has him killed in that year by the English near Berwick].
- Peterson, John, from Caithness was listed as a burgher of Bergen in 1619 where he appears as a blacksmith [*Bergens Borgerbog*, Nicolaysen, ed., 35; SSNE, ID no. 4519, accessed 9 February 2012].
- Pope, Alexander, from Tain, son of Gilbert Pope of Meikle Rhynie and Anna Munro, daughter of John Munro of Pittonachy, swore an oath for a birth certificate in Gdańsk in 1686. This declaration was witnessed by Alexander Ross of Cockenzie and John Ferguson of Allan [Fischer, *Scots in Prussia*, 183; D. Dobson, *Scots in Poland, Russia, and the Baltic States, 1550–1850* (Baltimore, MD, 2000), 124].

- Robertson, Robert, is recorded in the accounts of imports and exports at Inverness for 15 August 1640 as arriving from 'milstrand' (modern Marstrand, west of Göteborg) with a cargo of 600 deals and four lasts of tar 'small bind' [National Records of Scotland, E73/9/6].
- Robertson, William, son of Thomas Robertson, merchant burghess of Ross, and Christina Lefries, was a merchant burghess of Gdańsk from 1634. Robertson was a moneylender, and invested his capital in loans and credit operations [*Letters of Two Centuries Chiefly Connected with Inverness and the Highlands, from 1616 to 1815*, C. Fraser-Mackintosh, ed. (Inverness, 1890), 33; Fischer, *Scots in Prussia*, 96, 196; M. Bogucka, 'Scots in Gdansk (Danzig) in the Seventeenth Century', in A.I. Macinnes, T. Riis, and F. Pedersen, eds., *Ships, Guns and Bibles in the North Sea and Baltic States, c. 1350–c. 1700* (East Linton, 2000), 41; SSNE, ID no. 940, accessed 9 February 2012; Dobson, *Scots in Poland*, 137].
- Ross, Alexander (b. 1659), eldest son of the second marriage of Malcolm Ross of Kindeace. Alexander became probably Copenhagen's leading Scottish merchant. Ross invested in shipping, and also acted as creditor and interpreter. [Reid, *Earls of Ross*, 15, 75; Riis, *Should Auld Acquaintance*, i, 235; ii, 201; SSNE, ID no. 7166, accessed 9 February 2012].
- Ross, Alexander, of the Balnagown line, appeared in Warsaw in 1697 as purveyor to the court (i.e. a royal merchant), and as a royal secretary and postmaster. In 1717, his genealogy was recorded in the *Metryka Koronna*, or 'Crown Register' of the kingdom. [Bajer, *Scots*, 136 and n. 83; T.A. Fischer, *The Scots in Germany: Being a Contribution towards the History of the Scot Abroad* (Edinburgh, 1902), 257].
- Ross, Alexander, son of William of the Invercharron branch, was a Kraków merchant known as 'Polander Ross' for his connections with the country. He acquired Little Kindeace in 1721 and renamed it Ankerville. [H.M. Meldrum, *Kilmuir Easter: The History of a Highland Parish* (Inverness, 1935), 95; Reid, *Earls of Ross*, 22; SPLC, nos. 3616, 3617].
- Ross, James, was a spy employed by King Sigismund III of Poland-Lithuania in Sweden from the 1590s to 1632. He is the Scottish 'merchant' James/Jacob Ross who was interrogated by the Swedish government on 10 December 1628 on suspicion of being a Polish spy. [SSNE, ID no. 6611, accessed 1 May 2012; TNA, SP77/19, fo. 59v].
- Ross, John, in Gdańsk, entered into a commercial contract in 1553 with Alexander Ross of Balnagown, very probably his kinsman. [Tain and District Museum, Balnagown MSS, 2090.5.6, printed but with mistranscription in *Tain and Balnagown Documents*, MacGill, ed., i, no. 673].
- Sligoe, Donald, an Inverness seaman, was postponed in his appearance before the kirk session of Inverness since 'he having gone a voyage to Danzick'. [*Inverness Kirk-Session*, Mitchell, ed., 48].
- Trimble?/Turnbull?, James, was a burghess of Bergen in 1641, perhaps from Lybster ('Lester'). [*Bergens Borgerbog*, Nicolaysen, ed., 64; SSNE, ID no. 4607, accessed 9 February 2012; Dobson, *Scots-Scandinavian Links*, 89].
- Urquhart, David, migrated to Poland as a juvenile. He was first recorded in Kcynia, where he contributed 30 zloty to the 1651 Polish subsidy for King Charles II. He was the son of John Urquhart in Cromarty and Isabella Leslie. With his birth-brief issued in Cromarty on 19 May 1663, he was admitted citizen of Kcynia around 1663-5. In 1672 and 1685, he is recorded as the local *burmistrz* (mayor). He married a Marianna (of unknown surname) and had most likely two children, Anna and John (Jan). [Bajer, *Scots*, 368; SPLC, no. 1118; M. Górny, 'List pochodzenia Dawida Urquharda z 1663 roku: Źródło do dziejów osadnictwa szkockiego w Polsce', *Genealogia: Studia i Materiały Historyczne*, i (1991), 81].
- Vaus, Jasper, from Inverness is listed as burghess of Poznań in 1608. [Fischer, *Scots in Prussia*, 206; SSNE, ID no. 1077, accessed 9 February 2012].