

# The Africa Trade from the Ports of Scotland, 1706–66

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In the seventeenth century, and the early years of the eighteenth century, prior to the Act of Union in 1707, several attempts were made to initiate trade between Scotland and Africa.<sup>1</sup> These attempts included an investigation of the possibility of trading for slaves on the West African coast<sup>2</sup> and two disastrous ventures in the Indian Ocean slave trade,<sup>3</sup> but until recently no conclusive evidence has ever been found to demonstrate the involvement of any port in Scotland in the trans-Atlantic slave trade before 1707. However, it can now be shown that in the period 1700–1707, at least one member of the Scottish merchant community was promoting the idea of investing in the transatlantic slave trade, and that at least one voyage to the Guinea coast and the West Indies, probably from Leith, took place in 1706.

In 1705, ‘Bass’ John Spreul, an apothecary and merchant of Glasgow, proposed trading voyages from Scotland to the ‘Negroes Coast’ suggesting that in exchange for ‘Black Negroes, Elephant Teeth, Bees-wax and Honey, Gum Arabick’ the Scots should offer coarse white linens, ‘fingrines with other toyes, strong waters, peuther dishes, tobacco’ and cowries, also suggesting voyages to Guinea, recommending that in exchange for gold dust and ivory the Scots should offer ‘Linnen and woollen manufactures, knives, scizers, small looking glasses, and other toyes, strong waters, tobacco and beads, and peuther dishes; Glasgow plaids and blue bonnets may do for their kings and queens.’<sup>4</sup> In 1706, Robert Richardstone, a mariner of Leith, made a will in which he refers to his voyage in *The Two Brothers* ‘to Guinea and the West Indies and returns to Holland’.<sup>5</sup>

The Act of Union removed the remaining political obstacles to the development of a slave trade from Scottish ports, and on eight separate occasions between 1709 and 1711 merchants from Glasgow, Edinburgh, Aberdeen, Dundee, Inverness and Montrose petitioned the United Kingdom Parliament against proposals to restore to the Royal African Company the monopoly of trade on the west coast of Africa that it had formerly enjoyed. The petitioners objected to this proposal on the grounds that the restoration of the monopoly

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would infringe the terms of the Act of Union, with its guarantee that 'all the Subjects of Great Britain shall have full Freedom and Intercourse of Trade'. The merchant petitioners from Scotland were joined by many English petitioners, who were equally opposed, though for different reasons, to the restoration of the Royal Africa Company's monopoly. Government and Parliament rejected the proposal to restore the monopoly privileges the Company had lost in 1698, and the right of the Company to charge a ten per cent fee on the value of all the slaves sold by independent traders lapsed in 1712 and was not renewed.<sup>6</sup>

The merchants in the aforementioned Royal Burghs, through their petitions, had signalled a potential interest in the possibility of participating in the Africa trade, but there is no evidence of any great eagerness to rush into that business. The tables presented here suggest experimentation in the Africa trade between 1717 and 1720, followed by a falling away of interest until the 1750s, when there was a limited revival of interest that lasted until 1766.

Studies by Donnan, Rawley, Tattersfield, Minchinton and his co-authors, and most recently Devine, have all referred to the Africa trade from the ports of Scotland, though without going into much detail. The important work by Eltis, Behrendt, Richardson and Klein, *The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade: A Database on CD-ROM* (hereinafter referred to as *Database*) has incorporated material from some of these authors and from archival sources, greatly adding to what we know about the slave trade from the ports of Scotland. In this article, drawing on the *Database* and other sources, an attempt is made to throw more light on the participation of the Scottish ports in the transatlantic Slave trade.<sup>7</sup> So far as I am aware, no previous attempt has been made to bring together the published material on the participation of the Scottish ports in the eighteenth century Africa trade, add to it from previously untapped sources, present the voyages in tabular form and subject the material to analysis and comment. Materials extracted from the *Database*, with new data drawn from an examination of the Customs Accounts for selected Scottish ports, from a single testament, and from papers relating to cases heard before the High Court of the Admiralty of Scotland, now make it possible to present a preliminary overview of the Africa trade from Scottish ports.<sup>8</sup> This will allow comment on both the scale and characteristics of that part of the British slave trade that originated from the ports of Scotland.

The records relating to the eighteenth century slave trade from the Scottish ports have been almost entirely overlooked by scholars investigating the British slave trade. The surviving Customs Accounts for the Scottish ports covering the period 1742–1830, record in great detail the arrival and departure of vessels, the goods they carried, their quantity and the duties paid on them; the name of the master of the vessel and the names of some of those with an interest in the voyage. The destinations of outgoing vessels are usually given,

while with incoming vessels the last port of call, and sometimes other places or regions visited by the vessel, are recorded. Sometimes information is given regarding the type of vessel employed.<sup>9</sup> For the period 1707–42, only one short extract from the Customs Accounts for Scotland is known to have survived, so what little we know about the Africa trade from the Scottish ports in that period remains largely dependent upon the sources used by the compilers of the *Database*, among them the Naval Office Shipping Lists for the Colonies and related documents, held in the Public Record Office at Kew, themselves far from complete or comprehensive in their coverage.<sup>10</sup> However, court case materials, testaments, local records, newspaper reports, references in books, journals and contemporary letters may add to the information available, or give clues to fresh lines of inquiry.

Though relatively few voyages in the Africa trade originated at Scottish ports, by comparison with the number of Africa trade voyages that took place from the three leading English ports, there were Scottish merchants and mariners who participated actively in the eighteenth century Africa trade, and vessels from Scottish ports did transport men, women and children from Africa to a lifetime of slavery in North America and the Caribbean. There were other Scottish merchants and mariners with an interest in the slave trade who conducted their business from Liverpool, London and Bristol.<sup>11</sup> Some idea of the scale of Scottish penetration of the English slave trade may be gleaned from other sources, especially the *Database* and the sources used in its compilation.

Those voyages in the Africa trade from Scottish ports about which we have information originated on both the east and west coast. On the west coast of Scotland, Port Glasgow was the main port of departure for voyages in the Africa trade until the 1750s, when Greenock took over that position, remaining active in that trade until 1766, possibly the final date for a slaving voyage direct from a Scottish port. No departures for Africa from the city of Glasgow are likely to have taken place during the period under review, largely on account of problems connected with the navigation of the River Clyde.<sup>12</sup> For the purposes of tabular presentation, voyages in the Africa trade from Port Glasgow and Greenock have been grouped together (see Table 1). On the east coast of Scotland, both Leith and Montrose had a limited involvement in the slave trade. Four voyages originated from Montrose, with at least one and probably two voyages originating from Leith (see Table 2: two voyages from unknown Scottish ports are also included in this table). Three vessels registered at Glasgow and one registered at Dundee made voyages in the slave trade from English ports, and these are listed in Table 3.

From the material incorporated into the *Database*, 18 voyages in the Africa trade from the Scottish ports were identified during the entire period of the legal slave trade from British ports. However, a search of selected Customs Accounts, papers relating to cases heard before the High Court of

TABLE I  
THE AFRICA TRADE OF SCOTLAND FROM THE CLYDE PORTS, 1717-66  
DEPARTURES FOR AFRICA FROM GREENOCK AND PORT GLASGOW  
(G. = PORT GLASGOW. GR. = GREENOCK)

Date, vessel name, tonnage & home port	Captains & Owners C. = Captain, O. = Owners	Voyage information, including numbers of slaves, embarked and disembarked, known or imputed.
1717 <i>George Galley</i> <sup>13</sup> G.	C. David Buckland O. Not known.	Imputed numbers: 293 slaves embarked; ? 239 disembarked at Barbados ? 19 were disembarked in Virginia, 2 in Britain?
1718 <i>Loyalty</i> <sup>14</sup> G. 80 tons.	C. 1 Mungo Graham C. 2 Patrick Cheape O. Richard Graham & Co.	For West Africa via Liverpool, Rotterdam and Cork. 73 slaves embarked when taken by pirates, 51 slaves disembarked Barbados.
1720 <i>Hannover</i> <sup>15</sup> G. ◆ 60 tons.	C. Garrett Garratts O. Robert Bogle & Co.	For Ivory & Gold Coasts, Old Calabar. 118 slaves purchased, 32 deaths before sale. 3 sold in Barbados, 83 in Leeward Islands.
1730 <i>Neptune</i> <sup>16</sup> G. ◆	C. James Lyon O. J. Maxwell & A. Cathcart.	Disembarked 130 slaves at Barbados in May 1731.
1750 <i>Brithe Betty</i> <sup>17</sup> G.? 70 tons.	C. Hugh Moore O. R. Offwell	Imputed number. 167 slaves embarked. 136 slaves disembarked in Virginia.
1751 <i>Methuen</i> <sup>18</sup> G. & Gr. 100 tons.	C. 1 Duncan Campbell C. 2 Robert Ramsay C. 3 John Coppell O. D. Campbell & Co.	Port Glasgow & Greenock via Rotterdam to the Gold Coast. Imputed numbers: 320 slaves embarked; 277 disembarked at St Kitts.
1759 <i>Agnes</i> <sup>19</sup> Gr. ◆ 110 tons.	C. Robert Duthie O. J. White & Co.	For Africa in March 1759. Return from Virginia in Feb. 1760. No information on slave numbers, but see March 1760 voyage.
1760 <i>Agnes</i> <sup>20</sup> Gr. 110 tons	C. Robert Duthie O. J. White & Co.	For Bance Island, Sierra Leone, March 1760. Imputed numbers: 226 slaves embarked; 202 disembarked Virginia, Sept. 1760.
1761 <i>Patriot Pitt</i> <sup>21</sup> Gr.	C. John Cousins O. Buchanan, Simson & Co.	For Gold Coast, Sept. 1761. Imputed numbers: 320 slaves embarked, 277 disembarked at Martinique.
1761 <i>Maxwell</i> <sup>22</sup> Gr. 150 tons	C. William Seaton O. Buchanan, Simson & Co.	For Windward & Gold Coasts in Nov. 1761. Imputed numbers: 260 slaves embarked; 225 disembarked Maryland or Virginia?

(continued)

TABLE 1 *CONTINUED*

Date, vessel name, tonnage & home port	Captains & Owners C. = Captain, O. = Owners	Voyage information, including numbers of slaves, embarked and disembarked, known or imputed.
1762 <i>Agnes</i> <sup>23</sup> Gr. ◆ 110 tons	C. Robert Duthie O. J. White & Co.	For the Gambia River in Dec. 1761 or Jan. 1762. Disembarked 118 slaves in Virginia.
1763 <i>Othello</i> <sup>24</sup> Gr. 110 tons	C. John Cousins O. Houston & Co.	For Africa Sept. 1763. Imputed numbers; 319 slaves embarked. 260 disembarked Jamaica. Stranded in Ireland on return voyage.
1763 <i>Maria</i> <sup>25</sup> Gr. ◆	C. George Forrester O. Houston & Co.	For Africa as tender for the <i>Othello</i> , Sept. 1763
1763 <i>Affrica</i> <sup>26</sup> Gr. ◆ 90 tons	C. William Seaton O. Simson, Baird & Co.	For Africa Sept. 1763. No information on slave numbers. Left Grenada in ballast Nov. 1764.
1763 <i>The Beggar's Benison</i> <sup>27</sup> Gr.?	C. 1 Fleming C. 2 Boyd O. Not known	For the Windward Coast. Imputed numbers: 210 slaves embarked, 191 disembarked Barbados.
1764 <i>Coats</i> <sup>28</sup> Gr. 120 tons	C. Ambrose Green O. W. Coats & Co.	For Angola in Jan. 1764. Imputed numbers: 268 slaves embarked, 245 disembarked at Barbados in Feb. 1765.
1765 <i>Affrica</i> <sup>29</sup> Gr. ◆ 90 tons	C. James Noble O. Simson, Dunlop & Co.	For Africa, July 1765. Nothing known about this voyage.
1765 <i>Juba</i> <sup>30</sup> Gr. ◆	C. Stephen Rowan O. Simson, Dunlop & Co.	For Africa and Barbados, July 1765. Return to Greenock, July 1767.
1766 <i>Coats</i> <sup>31</sup> Gr. ◆ 120 tons	C. Ambrose Green O. W. Coats & Co.	For Africa, May 1766. Nothing known about this voyage.

Admiralty for Scotland, and a single testamentary source, have revealed a further 13 voyages in the Africa trade from Scottish ports. The symbol ◆ in Tables 1 and 2 identifies these additions to the number of voyages in the Africa trade. Thirty-one voyages in the Africa trade over a 60-year period is not a large number, but further research may discover more voyages in the Africa trade from the Scottish ports.

The first conclusion to be drawn from the tables presented here is that there was relatively little interest in the Africa trade within the merchant and maritime communities resident in Scotland. This lack of interest in the Africa trade by Scottish merchants and mariners operating from Scottish ports requires some explanation. Among the factors that may be relevant are the following: The development of Scottish trade with the Americas, in the context of the general development of the Scottish economy from *c.* 1640 to *c.* 1740;

TABLE 2  
THE AFRICA TRADE OF SCOTLAND, FROM LEITH, MONTROSE AND UNKNOWN  
SCOTTISH PORTS, 1706–1770

Date, vessel, tonnage & port	Captains & Owners. C. = Captain, O. = Owner	Voyage information, including slave numbers embarked and disembarked, known or imputed.
1706 <i>Two Brothers</i> <sup>32</sup> ◆ (Leith ?)	C. Unknown. O. R. Thomsone & Co.	For Guinea and the West Indies, 'the returns to Holland'.
1708 <i>Coward Gally</i> . <sup>33</sup> (Unknown Scottish port)	No information.	For the African coast, vessel taken before slaves embarked, see note 48.
1719 Vessel from Scotland. <sup>34</sup> ◆ (Unknown Scottish Port)	C. Arkenqual O. Unknown	Taken by pirates, probably in the area of Sierra Leone, with slaves on board.
1735 <i>Success</i> <sup>35</sup> (Montrose) 75 tons	C. Renny, James O. Unknown.	Africa and the West Indies intended. Imputed numbers: 293 slaves embarked; 239 slaves disembarked.
1751 <i>Potomack Merchant</i> <sup>36</sup> (Montrose) 100 tons	C 1. Gibson, Thomas C 2. Hartley, Richard O. T. Douglas & Co.	Bonny via Rotterdam. Imputed numbers: 244 slaves embarked, 197 slaves disembarked in Virginia.
1753 <i>St George</i> <sup>37</sup> ◆ (Montrose) 100 tons	C. Hartley, Richard O. T. Douglas & Co.	Africa, via Campveere, Zealand. Estimates: 225– 250 slaves embarked, 175– 200 disembarked at Antigua.
1754 <i>Delight</i> <sup>38</sup> ◆ (Montrose).	C. J. Elphinstone O. T. Douglas & Co.	To the Gambia via Holland. Estimates: 125–175 slaves embarked; 100–150 disembarked in Virginia.
1764 <i>Glasgow</i> <sup>39</sup> (Leith) 70 tons.	C. Smith, George O. R. Alexander & Co.	To the Gambia. Imputed numbers: 114 slaves embarked, 93 disembarked at Barbados.

Scottish migration to and settlement in those English colonies in the Americas, where slave labour was a central feature of the economy; the penetration of the English slave trade by Scottish mariners and merchants operating from the ports of London, Bristol and Liverpool, and finally, the local availability of capital for investment in the Africa trade. The relevance of these factors may be the subject of a future article, but space does not permit any examination of them here. However, it is necessary to draw attention to the importance of Scottish connections with the Netherlands, and to note the relevance of these connections to a number of slave trade voyages from Scottish ports. Attention is also paid to Scottish trade with the Cape Verde Islands, as this trade may have contributed to the slave trade, either directly or indirectly.

TABLE 3  
THE AFRICA TRADE IN SCOTTISH REGISTERED VESSELS, THAT SAILED FROM  
ENGLISH PORTS, 1717–52

Date, vessel, tonnage and port of registration.	Captains & Owners C. = Captain, O. = Owner	Voyage information, including numbers of slaves embarked and disembarked, known or imputed.
1717 <i>Hammer Galley</i> <sup>40</sup> 60 tons Glasgow reg.	C. 1 Robert Sykes C. 2 Garrette O. R. Robertson & Co.	From London. Imputed number of slaves embarked: 100. 87slaves disembarked at Kingston, Jamaica.
1730 <i>Antonia</i> <sup>41</sup> 50 tons Glasgow reg.	C. Hugh Crawford O. Not known.	From Liverpool. Slave revolt at Anamabo on the Gold Coast. 140 slaves had been embarked, when the revolt occurred.
1730 <i>Greenock</i> <sup>42</sup> 150 tons Glasgow reg.	C. John Anderson O. Not known.	From Liverpool. Voyage details unknown. Imputed numbers: 293 slaves embarked, 239 disembarked.
1752 <i>Hunter</i> <sup>43</sup> 80 tons Dundee reg.	C. Thomas Ogilvie O. Sir G. Stewart	From London to Sierra Leone. Imputed numbers: 104 slaves embarked; 85 disembarked at Barbados.

### Scottish Trade with the Netherlands

The fact that five of the voyages listed in Tables 1 and 2, namely those of the *Loyalty* and *Methuen* from Port Glasgow and/or Greenock; the *Potomack Merchant*, *St George* and *Delight* from Montrose, commenced with a visit to ports in the Netherlands, before departure for the African coast, complicates any inquiry into the volume of the slave trade from Scottish ports. There may well have been other such voyages, and it is by no means certain that the owners and masters of vessels leaving Scottish ports for the Netherlands, and intending to proceed to Africa, would give full details of the voyage to the customs authorities.

Slave trading vessels from Scotland, and from some English ports, would visit ports in the Netherlands before leaving Europe for Africa, in order to obtain certain commodities that were often much cheaper in the Netherlands than in Britain.<sup>44</sup> Among these commodities were items such as high quality German linens, Oriental textiles, beads, iron bars, firearms, and cowrie shells, essential for effective trade in West and West-Central Africa.<sup>45</sup> Scottish merchants had long-standing trading connections with such places as Rotterdam in Holland and Campveere in Zealand. These connections could be used to obtain goods such as those mentioned, at advantageous prices.<sup>46</sup> In the eighteenth century masters of Scottish vessels laden with tobacco and other plantation produce, and/or cured salmon, for a Dutch port, might be instructed to load a suitable cargo at that port, where they could also obtain the gear required for slave-trading voyages.

Departures for Africa, via the Netherlands, would not necessarily be recorded by the Customs clerks in Scotland, unless the master or the owner informed them that the vessel would proceed from the Netherlands to Africa. When a vessel carried a cargo to the Netherlands, without any lading for Africa, there would be no reason to enter Africa in the customs accounts. Furthermore, a final decision on an Africa voyage might be left until the vessel had reached the Netherlands. At Montrose in the 1750s two of the three departures for the Netherlands and Africa were noted by the clerk, but in these two cases goods definitely intended for Africa were loaded there. In the case of the *Methuen* no declaration of an African destination was made to the Customs authorities, either at Port Glasgow or Greenock, though goods almost certainly destined for Africa were loaded at Greenock (see note 18). It is possible, even likely, that other slave trading voyages from Scottish ports to Africa and the Americas were immediately preceded by voyages to the Netherlands, or to ports in other countries, for cargo and the special gear needed for slaving voyages, with no reference to Africa appearing in the outgoing accounts, or in the incoming accounts, unless there was African produce to declare. In the Scottish Customs Accounts (Inward) the only evidence for a slave-trade voyage might be its duration, or the presence of African products such as ivory in the return cargo, though African ivory could sometimes be purchased in the Americas.

### **Scottish Trade with the Cape Verde Islands**

It is not known when Scottish trade with the Cape Verde Islands first commenced, but it probably arose from a demand for cheap high-quality sea salt by the Scottish fish curing industry. The goods in demand in the Cape Verde Islands that the Scots could supply were similar to those carried by the slave trading vessels that left Scottish ports, or those goods that the produce trading vessels from the Clyde ports carried to the Americas for use by the slaves, such as coarse linens, hats and shoes.

Vessels from several Scottish ports – Port Glasgow, Greenock and Dumfries, have been identified – cleared customs for the ‘Isle of May’ (Maio, in the Cape Verde archipelago), though there were two other islands – Sal and Boavista – in the group, where evaporated sea salt was produced and could be obtained.<sup>47</sup> From the 1740s until the 1760s, perhaps ten vessels a year would leave Greenock and/or Port Glasgow for the ‘Isle of May’, the majority of them declaring no other destination. However, with a minority of these voyages the customs authorities were informed that the voyage would be extended to Virginia or Barbados. For example, from Greenock in 1748 the *Freemason* and the *Clyde* cleared for the ‘Isle of May’ and Virginia; and in 1756 the *Two Sisters*, *Grand Bank* and *Elizabeth* cleared for the ‘Isle of

May' and Barbados.<sup>48</sup> From Dumfries there were voyages to the 'Isle of May' and Virginia by single vessels in 1750, 1751, 1753 and 1754.<sup>49</sup> Captains and supercargoes from these and other Scottish vessels might well find that any goods that did not sell well in the Cape Verde Islands would find a market in the West Indies or in North America.

At various times, the Cape Verde Islands were a centre for the Portuguese slave trade, and large numbers of slaves were imported into the islands from the African mainland. These slaves, especially in the early years, were often re-exported to Portugal, including Madeira, or to Spain, including the Canary Islands. Others were transported to destinations in Spanish America and Brazil. Many would remain in the Cape Verde Islands. The trade goods carried from Scotland to the Cape Verde Islands may have been required by local landowners and others for their own slaves, or by the slave merchants and slave smugglers resident in the islands, or with bases there, for their trade with the mainland. Drought and famine frequently occurred in the Cape Verde Islands, with high rates of mortality in the slave population as a result. Inevitably, in these circumstances, the slave owners and slave traders of the Cape Verde Islands, like their counterparts in the West Indies, turned to the West African mainland to obtain replacements for those slaves who had died as a consequence of famine, disease and other causes.<sup>50</sup>

British vessels, visiting or trading in the Cape Verde Islands, are thought to have tapped into the Portuguese slave trade from the Upper Guinea Coast to the islands, though to what extent is far from clear.<sup>51</sup> Walter Rodney drew attention to the trade of the Cape Verde islanders with the *lançados* and their kindred, the Afro-Europeans of the Upper Guinea Coast, noting their continuing involvement in the slave trade throughout the eighteenth century, and their dependence on manufactured goods from northern Europe for that trade.<sup>52</sup> Nigel Tattersfield, in his observations on the slave trade from Lyme Regis, noted the fact that in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries Portuguese slave trade captains operating in the waters between the Cape Verde Islands and the Upper Guinea Coast were often ready to exchange slaves for European manufactures such as woollens, linens, brass and pewter. This form of trade could have continued on into the later eighteenth century, with Scottish merchants and mariners actively participating therein.<sup>53</sup>

Slave trading with heretics from northern Europe, or indeed with Catholic Frenchmen, was officially prohibited by the Portuguese authorities, but in practice there was relatively little the authorities could do to prevent a trade for slaves with captains of vessels bound for destinations in British America, provided those involved were discreet and conducted their business at isolated locations in the Cape Verde Islands, at suitable locations off the African coast, or at sea. Furthermore, it is entirely possible that some

Portuguese officials could be induced to 'turn a blind eye' to such transactions, in return for a suitable *douceur*.

It is possible to conclude that the masters of vessels from Scotland, who carried suitable trade goods to the Cape Verde Islands, would have had the opportunity to trade for relatively small numbers of slaves, perhaps women and children for the most part, in the waters around the islands and the adjacent mainland. Any slaves so acquired could have been carried to North America and the Caribbean, perhaps with salt or with the livestock that the Cape Verde Islands are known to have supplied to Barbados and probably to other Caribbean islands. Even if this did not happen, it can be said that the supply of suitable trade goods to the slave traders of the Cape Verde Islands would have facilitated their trade for slaves on the Guinea coast.

### Conclusions

Our knowledge of the Africa trade from Scottish ports is seriously compromised by the fact that we know so very little about that trade between 1706 and 1750, particularly in relation to the Clyde ports. Taking Tables 1, 2 and 3 together, there is evidence for just 11 voyages in the period 1706–50, four from the Clyde ports, another most probably from Leith, one from Montrose, two from unknown Scottish ports, and three by Scottish registered vessels that made voyages in the Africa trade from English ports. At least three of these 11 vessels left Scottish ports for ports in the Netherlands before leaving Europe for Africa and the Americas. By 1755 at least four more Scottish slave trading vessels had made the voyage to Holland or Zealand for gear and cargo. Connections with the Netherlands were of importance to some of those Scottish merchants and mariners who entered the slave trade, not only from ports on the east coast, but on occasion from the Clyde ports as well.

At a series of meetings of the Commissioners for Trade and the Plantations held between 9 and 18 January 1749–50, called to discuss proposals for the reorganization of the Africa trade, reference was made to the minor ports with an interest in that trade. In evidence given to the Commissioners it was claimed that taken together the ports of Lancaster, Chester, Plymouth and Glasgow had at least six vessels engaged in the Africa trade. If this was correct, then it may be inferred that Glasgow had at least one vessel engaged in the Africa trade at that time, and quite possibly more than one. In 1753 an official of the Board of Trade, in a report on the extent of the slave trade from British ports, informed his correspondent that at that time Glasgow had four vessels engaged in the Africa trade.<sup>54</sup>

The information available to officials of the Board of Trade in the early 1750s suggests that during the later 1740s and early 1750s there may have

been more voyages in the Africa trade from the Clyde, than appear in the Customs Accounts of Port Glasgow and Greenock. It is entirely possible that some slave trade voyages from Scottish ports would be recorded in ways that obscure the true character of the voyage. In some cases the outward voyage would only become a voyage in the slave trade following the lading of a suitable cargo and slave trade gear at Rotterdam, or some other Dutch port, or at an English port, as with the four Scottish registered vessels listed in Table 3. The return voyage would be recorded as an arrival from the Americas, without any reference being made to Africa, unless African products were discharged and duties paid on them.

Evidence has been found in the Customs Accounts and other records that relate to Port Glasgow, Greenock, Leith and Montrose, for 13 voyages in the Africa trade that were not recorded in the first edition of the *Database*. This brings the number of voyages in the Africa trade from Scottish ports to a total of 31, including the four voyages recorded in Table 3. Thirty-one slave trade voyages over a 60-year period (1706–66) is not a large figure. It is roughly equal to the number of voyages that the slave merchants of Liverpool might have sent out in a single year in the 1740s. A rough estimate of the total number of slaves carried in the vessels listed in Tables 1, 2, and 3 is of the order of 4,000 to 5,000 men, women and children, with perhaps one quarter to one third of that number being new additions to the total estimated number of slaves carried by British vessels engaged in the trans-Atlantic slave trade. This is a very small addition to the 2,532,300 slaves that Lovejoy estimated were transported in British vessels between 1701 and 1800, or the 3,112,300 slaves that Eltis estimated were transported in British vessels between 1519 and 1825.<sup>55</sup>

Further examination of the Scottish Customs Accounts might bring to light some previously unrecorded voyages in the slave trade, especially if such an examination were accompanied by a search of local records and the shipping news reported in the Scottish press. Particular attention might be paid to the major ports of Leith, Aberdeen and Dundee, but records relating to ports such as Bo'ness and Kirkcaldy on the Firth of Forth, and the relatively minor ports of the north-east and the south-west of Scotland, including Irvine on the Lower Clyde, should not be overlooked.<sup>56</sup>

Trading connections with the Netherlands have been shown to be relevant in the context of voyages in the Africa trade, not only for the east coast port of Montrose, and quite possibly for Leith as well, but also in the case of at least two vessels that left Scotland from the Clyde, both of them going to Rotterdam, before leaving Europe for Africa. Similar voyages from Port Glasgow, Greenock and other Scottish ports to the Netherlands, where a voyage in the Africa trade would be prepared, may have taken place, and a careful study of the relevant Customs Accounts could reveal them.

Scottish interest in trade with the Cape Verde Islands probably had a loose connection with the Portuguese slave trade, but no hard evidence has been found to demonstrate that Scottish vessels carried slaves from those islands, or more generally from the Upper Guinea Coast, to North America and the Caribbean, during the period under review. However, further investigation of both Scottish and English trade with the Cape Verde Islands could produce information that may be of relevance to the ongoing study of the slave trade.

Space does not permit an examination of the reasons why the Clyde ports, or other Scottish ports, never became seriously engaged in the Africa trade. However, the success of the merchants of Glasgow in the development of the tobacco and sugar trades, together with the manufacturing industries that serviced those trades, probably attracted most of what surplus capital there was in Scotland, leaving relatively little capital available for what were probably perceived as high-risk investments. In the eighteenth century, those Scottish merchants and mariners who thought that there were opportunities for profit in the slave trade were inevitably drawn to London, Bristol or Liverpool as a base for their operations, and certainly not to the Clyde ports or to any other ports in Scotland. The position might have been different if Scottish merchants and mariners had made a successful entry into the slave trade in the period 1690–1730, but this did not happen and probably could not happen, given the weakness of the Scottish economy, particularly in the early part of that period, and the lead already established in the slave-trade by at least two of the three great English ports.

The Africa trade did not attract the sustained interest of the great majority of merchants and investors resident in Scotland. However, there was a short-lived flurry of interest in the Africa trade in the 1760s, especially in the period 1763–66. The increased interest in the slave trade in that period is undoubtedly related to British successes in the West Indies during the Seven Years War. Peace was concluded in 1763, and the islands of Grenada with the Grenadines, St Vincent, Tobago and Dominica were ceded to Britain by France. Planters from Barbados and the Leeward Islands, together with adventurers and speculators from Britain, rushed into these ‘Ceded Islands’, just as they had rushed into Guadeloupe and Martinique, following the capture and occupation of these two islands by British forces during the war (Guadeloupe, Martinique and St Lucia were returned to France by the Treaty of Paris in 1763).<sup>57</sup> The ambition of these British planters, speculators and adventurers was the acquisition of land, particularly uncultivated lands, or lands that French planters had abandoned or were willing to sell. Scots were prominent among those who took up lands in all the ‘Ceded Islands’. These new arrivals in the ‘Ceded Islands’ would have needed slaves, especially for the heavy work of forest clearance and preparation of the ground for the cultivation of

sugar and other crops.<sup>58</sup> Planters in the older British colonies, especially Jamaica and the Leeward Islands, would also have been demanding slaves for the restocking of their plantations – slave deliveries to these islands having fallen off during the war, largely as a result of the activities of French and Spanish privateers. A strong demand for slaves in the West Indies, some of it coming from both present and prospective clients of the Scottish produce trading merchants and their local agents, was probably the single most important factor leading to a brief intensification of interest in the slave-trade as a source of profit, amongst some few members of the Scottish mercantile and maritime communities.

#### NOTES

This paper could not have been written without the help, advice and encouragement of Professor David Richardson of the University of Hull, who kindly lent me a copy of *The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade: A Database on CD-ROM*. In the early days of my researches at the National Archives of Scotland, Edinburgh, I was fortunate enough to meet David Dobson of St Andrews, who kindly drew my attention to several slave trade voyages I might otherwise have overlooked, and I gratefully acknowledge his assistance. My thanks also go to Valerie and James Leaver of Highgate for their valuable assistance at a late stage in the work. The encouragement I have had from Professor Paul Lovejoy of York University, Toronto, Dr Christopher Fyfe, formerly of the University of Edinburgh, and Susannah Honeyman of Edinburgh are gratefully acknowledged. Until her death in November 2002, my good friend Marlene Hinshelwood, and her partner Dr Geoffrey Brooker, took a most helpful, though a deservedly critical interest in my progress with a project from which this article is the first ‘spin-off’. My thanks also go to Dr Gad Heuman, Editor of *Slavery and Abolition* for his patience in dealing with the several drafts of this article submitted in 2003 and 2004. I am grateful to staff at the National Archives of Scotland, Edinburgh, the Public Record Office, Kew, and the British Library, St Pancras, for their courteous help at all times, and for advice whenever I requested it.

1. There is firm evidence for Scottish interest in trade with Africa, during the seventeenth century, and in the period between 1700 and the Act of Union of 1707: (1) Two Scottish vessels were trading on the West African coast in 1637, but they did not trade for slaves. They traded for gold in the area of Cormantine, an English fort on the Gold Coast, and probably for sugar at the Portuguese island of São Tomé. Robin Law, ‘The First Scottish Guinea Company, 1634–9’ *Scottish Historical Review*, 76 (1997), 185–202. (2) In 1663 the Scottish merchant John Browne, who had a patent to refine sugar in Scotland, was authorized by the Crown to send out four Scottish ships annually for ‘full and free trade with the King’s lands, islands, possessions and territories in Asia, Africa and America’. As Robin Law has observed, this may refer to Tangier, a British possession from 1661 to 1684, and a possible source of sugar. R. Law, pp.201–2. Three vessels from the Firth of Forth are known to have sailed for Tangier in 1667. Eric J. Graham, *A Maritime History of Scotland, 1650–1790*. East Linton (2002) p.144, citing S. Mowat, *Ships into Leith, 1624–1690*, database of the Leith Customs Records. Scots were present in the civil population of Tangier, and Scottish soldiers from the Earl of Dumbarton’s Regiment (later the 1st Regiment of Foot, or Royal Scots) distinguished themselves in action during the siege of Tangier, 1680–84. E.M.G. Routh, *Tangier: England’s Lost Atlantic Outpost, 1661–84* (London, 1912) pp.187–9, 194–5, 320 fn. 2, 323–5.

2. In 1696 the Company of Scotland Trading to Africa and the Indies investigated the possibility of trading for slaves on the West African coast, but nothing came of this until 1699, when the Company of Scotland, in association with a Scottish merchant resident in Rotterdam, sent *The African Merchant* to the western Gold Coast to trade and to examine the possibility of establishing a Scottish fort and trading post in that area. Such a fort, had it been established, would have had no purpose other than trading for slaves, ivory, gold, etc. *The African Merchant* does not appear to have traded for slaves on the West African coast, and she returned to Leith in 1700, with a cargo of gold dust, ivory and rice. George P. Insh *The Company of Scotland Trading to Africa and the Indies* (London/N.Y., 1932) pp.245–52. G.P. Insh, *Historian's Odyssey: The Romance of the Quest for the Records of the Darien Company* (Edinburgh/London, 1938) pp.241–55, 319–20.
3. In 1701 and in 1707, the Company of Scotland Trading to Africa and the Indies initiated or licensed voyages in the Indian Ocean slave trade from Madagascar. (1) Two vessels owned by the Company of Scotland, the *Speedy Return* and *Content*, on their return from the Darien expedition in 1701, were ordered to Madagascar. Slaves were purchased from a pirate band on that island, carried to Bourbon (Reunion), where they were sold. The events that followed are outside the scope of this article, but see Richard C. Temple *New Light on the Mysterious Tragedy of the 'Worcester', 1704–05* (London, 1930); G.P. Insh (ed.) *Papers Relating to the Ships and Voyages of the Company of Scotland Trading to Africa and the Indies* (Edinburgh, 1924) pp.245–8; G.P. Insh (1932) pp.253–312; G.P. Insh (1938) pp.256–306; John Prebble, *The Darien Disaster* (London, 1978) pp.1–9, 308–16. (2) In 1707 in what was almost its last act, the virtually bankrupt Company of Scotland licensed a voyage from Leith to Madagascar, where slaves would be purchased from the pirates, carried to Java and sold to the Dutch. The *Neptune*, owned by a group of Edinburgh merchants, was severely damaged in a storm off the coast of Madagascar and was subsequently seized by pirates. G.P. Insh (ed.) (1924) pp.259–60; R.C. Temple (1930) p.322.
4. 'Bass' John Spreul, *An Accompt Current betwixt Scotland and England Ballanced* (Edinburgh, 1705), pp.13–14. In referring to 'the Negroes Coast' Spreul may have meant the Slave Coast, but the phrase could mean almost anywhere on the West African coast from Senegal to Angola. (The eponym 'Bass' refers to Spreul's period of some seven years imprisonment on the Bass Rock in the Firth of Forth, during the 1680s.)
5. The Will of Robert Richardstone, in the National Archives of Scotland (NAS) at C8.8.83/25, and on the website (Scottishdocuments.com). Robert Richardstone, mariner of Leith, died 'abroad', presumably while on the voyage of *The Two Brothers*. He had a one-twelfth share in the ship, cargo and profits on this voyage, and was also owed his wages as 'seaman and sailor aboard the said ship'. All Robert Richardstone's property, real and personal, was left to Bessie Dougall, his spouse, or to her assigns (I am grateful to David Dobson of St Andrews for bringing this will to my attention.) See also note 32 below.
6. *Journal of the House of Commons*, 16, 29 January to 4 March 1709, February 1710 and March 1711. On the ending of the Royal African Company's monopoly of the Africa trade in 1698, and the subsequent history of the Company, see James A Rawley, *The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade* NY/London (1981) pp.159–64; K.G. Davies *The Royal African Company* (London, 1957).
7. Elizabeth Donnan, *Documents Illustrative of the Slave Trade to America*, 4 vols. (Washington, D.C., 1930–35) see index refs.; Walter Minchinton, Celia King and Peter White, *Virginia Slave Trade Statistics, 1698–1775* (Richmond, Va., 1981); Walter Minchinton, 'The Seaborne Slave Trade of North Carolina', *North Carolina Historical Review*, 71 (1994), pp.1–61; James A. Rawley (1981) pp.243–5, Nigel Tattersfield, *The Forgotten Trade* (London, 1991), pp.348–9; T.M. Devine *Scotland's Empire, 1600–1815* (London, 2003), see index refs.; David Eltis, Stephen D. Behrendt, David Richardson and Herbert S. Klein *The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade: A Database on CD-ROM* Cambridge (1999), hereinafter referred to as *Database*.
8. The Customs Accounts for Scotland are in the National Archives of Scotland, in the series E.504, and may be examined at General Register House, Edinburgh, situated at the east end of Princes Street, though they are stored elsewhere and must be ordered in

- advance. Four ledgers relating to Greenock (Sept. 1748–Oct. 1752 and Oct. 1758–April 1762) have been microfilmed, and may be consulted at General Register House, without prior notice. Papers relating to legal cases arising from the voyages of the *Loyalty*, *Hannover* or *Hanover* in Table 1; or to the *St George* and the unidentified vessel of 1719 in Table 2, may be found in the series Ac.9 and Ac.16/1, located at West Register House, Charlotte Square, Edinburgh, where they may be examined, unless withheld for conservation reasons.
9. The Customs Accounts for Port Glasgow, 1742–65 (E.504/28/1–12), Greenock, 1742–67 (E.504/15/1–14), Dumfries, 1743–66 (E.504/9/1–3), Montrose, 1742–60 (E.504/24/1–4) and Leith 1753–55 and 1763–65 (E.504/22/5–6, 10–11) were examined, but I may have overlooked some relevant departures and arrivals, especially in cases where voyages in the slave trade from Scottish ports commenced with a departure for the Netherlands.
  10. The sole extract known to have survived from the Scottish Customs Accounts, 1707–42, relates to Kirkcaldy, and covers the period March to June 1737 (Laing Mss. II, 491/11/4, Edinburgh University Library). There is probably more material relating to voyages in the Africa trade from Scottish ports, or in Scottish registered vessels from English ports, in other records from the Scottish Board of Customs. Most of the records from the Scottish Board of Customs are deposited with the National Archives of Scotland at General Register House, Edinburgh. However, much of the correspondence between local Customs collectors and the Boards of Customs in Edinburgh and London has been deposited in several Scottish regional archives. For a general guide to these materials and their location, see Frances Wilkins, *Scottish Customs and Excise Records, with particular reference to Strathclyde, from 1707 onwards* (Kiddermminster, 1992). However, since that work was published some materials from smaller museums and archives, among them the Greenock Customs House Museum, have been transferred to the National Archives of Scotland in Edinburgh, primarily to ensure their conservation. For guides to the PRO materials, see Walter Minchinton, *Naval Office Shipping Lists for Jamaica in the Public Record Office, London* (East Ardsley, 1977); Walter Minchinton and Peter Waite, *Naval Office Shipping Lists for the West Indies (excluding Jamaica) in the Public Record Office, London* (East Ardsley, 1981).
  11. In 1748, the Anglo-Scottish merchant house of Oswald, Grant & Co., with headquarters in the City of London, purchased Bance Island, an old Royal Africa Company fort and slave trading station in Sierra Leone. For a study of this slave trading business, David Hancock, *Citizens of the World: London Merchants and the Integration of the British Atlantic Community, 1735–1785* (Cambridge, 1995), and his article ‘Scots in the Slave Trade’, in Ned C. Landsman, *Nation and Province in the First British Empire: Scotland and the Americas, 1600–1800* (Lewisburg/London, 2001) pp.60–93. Scots or Scots-Irish merchant houses were conspicuous in both the Bristol and Liverpool slave trades. For example, at Bristol, the house of Anderson & Co. (1764–1805) sent out at least 82 vessels in the slave trade; while at Liverpool, vessels owned or chartered by the house of Shaw & Co. (1752–1807) made at least 87 voyages in the slave trade (Source *Database*).
  12. There were problems with navigation, harbour and mooring facilities on the River Clyde in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Though the Clyde is a tidal river right up to the city of Glasgow, the mouth of the river at Gourrock is some 25 miles from the city. The river, though tidal, was shallow and contained many sandbanks and other obstacles to navigation, and hence to the development of maritime commerce. The problem was that vessels drawing more than two feet of water could not ascend the river much above Dumbarton, and could not reach the city, except on a spring tide, or when the river was in flood. On the development of harbour facilities and the improvement of navigation on the Upper Clyde, T.C. Smout, ‘The Development and Enterprise of Glasgow, 1556–1707’, *Scottish Journal of Political Economy*, 7 (1960) 204–10; E.J. Graham (2002) pp.318–21; J.D. Marwick, *The River Clyde and the Clyde Burghs* (Glasgow, 1909).
  13. *Database* voyage number 21806. E. Donnan, *Documents*, 2, p.175, cites a report (PRO T.70/6 f.52) to the effect that on 30 May 1717, the *George* had approximately 190 slaves on board, bound for Barbados or Virginia. Walter Minchinton, et al. (1981) pp.34–5. The slaves who

- survived the Middle Passage may have been sold in Barbados, or at some other location in the West Indies, where no record has survived, the remainder being taken to Virginia.
14. *Database* voyage number 20529. From Port Glasgow the *Loyalty* sailed to Liverpool for fitting out and cargo in August 1718, then to Rotterdam for out-rig and cargo in November, then to Cork for provisions in February 1719, then to the African coast for slaves. The *Loyalty* was taken by pirates in May 1719, probably in the Sierra Leone area, before the embarkation of slaves had been completed. The pirates eventually released the *Loyalty* and the vessel reached Barbados, where her presence was recorded on 4 December 1719, PRO CO. Barbados 33/15. The pirates had damaged the *Loyalty*, repairs were necessary, and these probably delayed her return to Glasgow, but her cargo of Barbados sugar was sold in Glasgow in May 1720. (This account may be enlarged from papers relating to cases heard in the High Court of the Admiralty of Scotland, NAS Ac.9/769 and Ac.16/1316–400). For an account of the pirates in West African waters in 1719–20, Daniel Defoe, *A General History of the Pyrates* (London, 1972 repr.) pp.166–76, 191–3. Defoe mentions the taking of two Scottish ships by Captain Howel Davis, but places the action off the Gold Coast, not in Sierra Leone (for the second Scottish ship, see Table 2 and note 34).
  15. Not in the *Database*. Almost certainly this is the same vessel as that which made the 1717 slave trade voyage from London, see Table 3. The primary sources for the 1719–20 voyage of the *Hannover* or *Hanover*, and the court cases that followed its completion, are to be found in the records of the High Court of the Admiralty of Scotland in the NAS at Ac.9/1042 and Ac.7/33/433–583. These items may be consulted, but they are extremely fragile and the staff at West Register House will not accept requests for photocopies to be made from them. For an account of the voyage and the court cases, see Eric J. Graham and Sue Mowat, 'The Slaving Voyage of the *Hannover* of Port Glasgow, 1719–20', *History Scotland*, 3/5 (Sept./Oct. 2002), pp.26–34.
  16. Not in the *Database*. Source: PRO CO. 33/16. The *Neptune* left Barbados for Glasgow towards the end of July 1731 with a cargo of sugar and cotton.
  17. *Database* voyage number 25211. I failed to locate this vessel in my search of the Port Glasgow and Greenock Customs Accounts in 2003, but it is possible that a record may be found in the Customs Accounts for Dumbarton, or the Lower Clyde ports. Alternatively, this vessel may have been chartered by merchants from English or American ports.
  18. *Database* voyage number 90406. (*Methuen* is also written as *Methven* and *Methwen* in the Scottish records). The *Methven*, Duncan Campbell, master, is recorded as clearing from Port Glasgow for Rotterdam, with a cargo of 180 hogsheads of Maryland tobacco, on 29 April 1751, see NAS *Port Glasgow C.A.* E.504/28/5. On departure from Port Glasgow the *Methven* moved down stream to Greenock, where some 41 cwt. of Braziletto wood were loaded for Rotterdam on the 16 May 1751. This was followed on the 20 May 1751, by a quantity of linens, woollens and hats. The linens included over 1000 yards of the cheapest British linens. Cheap linens, woollens and hats invariably formed part of slave trade cargoes from the Clyde. For the *Methven* at Greenock, NAS *Greenock C.A.* E.504/15/5. A report of the *Methven/Methuen* from the coast of West Africa was printed in the *Glasgow Courant* 29 June 1752, and in the *Aberdeen Journal* # 236, July 1752. 'By the *Elijah*, Captain Low, from Africa, we have advice that after a passage of 7 weeks the *Methven* of Glasgow, Coppel, arrived on the Windward Coast in Guinea, December 11th, had begun his purchase of Negroes and was to touch at every place of trade from Cape Palmas to Anamboos till his number was complete. He left him at Grande Bassa, December 31st, all well.' (I am grateful to David Dobson for this quotation). It may be noted that the *Methven/Methuen* does not appear to have returned to the Clyde.
  19. Not in the *Database*. NAS *Greenock C.A.* E.504/15/9, loading for Africa, 2 May 1759. The *Agnes* returned to Greenock from Virginia in February 1760 with tobacco, pig iron, barrel staves and hoops. NAS *Greenock C.A.* E.504/15/9. Investors: James Dunlop and David Hutcheson.
  20. *Database* voyage number 25214. NAS *Greenock C.A.* E.504/15/9, loading for Africa, 26 March 1760. Returned to Greenock, 21 May 1761, with tobacco, indigo, barrel staves and

- hoops. NAS E.504/15/10. Investors: James Dunlop, Thomas & David Hutcheson, James Stodart, Andrew Scott, Archibald Campbell and Andrew Donald.
21. *Database* voyage number 24552. NAS *Greenock C.A.* E.504/15/10, loading for Africa, July/August 1761. Buchanan & Simson formed a separate company for the voyages of the *Patriot Pitt* and *Maxwell*. The *Patriot Pitt* had capacity for 300 slaves, the *Maxwell* for 200, see letters dated 2 Nov. 1761 and 9 Dec. 1761, in the firm's *Letter Book 1759–61*, now in the NAS at CS. 96/506. On departure from Greenock the *Patriot Pitt* and *Maxwell* were ordered to the Isle of Man, to load brandy. The *Patriot Pitt* returned to Greenock from Guadeloupe and Africa in May 1763, discharging West Indian produce and six pieces of ivory, NAS *Greenock C.A.* E.504/15/11. On the house of Buchanan & Simson, the investors in the voyages of the *Patriot Pitt* and *Maxwell*, and other slave trade voyages the house invested in, Jacob M. Price, 'Buchanan & Simson, 1759–63. A Different Kind of Glasgow Firm Trading on the Chesapeake', *William & Mary Quarterly* 3rd series, 40 (1983) pp.3–41, esp.29–31.
  22. *Database* voyage number 24019. NAS *Greenock C.A.* E.504/15/10, loading for Africa, 11 Sept. to 26 Oct. 1761. The *Maxwell* probably went to Maryland and/or Virginia, the *Patriot Pitt* having been diverted to Martinique. I found no evidence for the return of the *Maxwell* to Greenock.
  23. Not in the *Database*. NAS *Greenock C.A.* E.504/15/10, loading for Africa, late Dec. 1761 to late Jan. 1762. Walter Minchinton, et al. (1981), p.165, records the arrival of the *Agnes* on the Upper James River on 7 Oct. 1762, with 118 slaves from the Gambia. Returned to Greenock with tobacco, barrel staves, beeswax and 6 cwt. of ivory in March 1763, NAS *Greenock C.A.* E.504/15/11. Investors: James Dunlop and David Hutcheson.
  24. *Database* voyage number 24576. NAS *Greenock C.A.* E.504/15/11, loading for Africa, 6 August to 7 Sept. 1763. On the return voyage the *Othello* was stranded in Donegal, in the area of Malin Head, on the 6 December 1764. Part of the cargo was salvaged and brought into Greenock and Port Glasgow between January and May 1766, *Greenock C.A.* E.504/15/13, *Port Glasgow C.A.* E.504/28/13. The salvaged goods cleared through customs for Alexander Speirs, Robert Shannan, Richard Weir, Alexander Walker and Hugh Millikin, included mahogany, logwood, cotton, pimento and cow hides.
  25. Not in the *Database*. NAS *Greenock C.A.* E.504/15/11, loading for Africa as tender for the *Othello*, 8 September 1763.
  26. Not in the *Database*. NAS *Greenock C.A.* E.504/15/11, loading for Africa, 6 August to 1 September 1763. Investors: James Simson, John Baird, Colin Dunlop, James Weir and James Gammell. Left Grenada, under the command of W. Setton, in ballast for Glasgow, on 24 November 1764, PRO CO Grenada 106/1.
  27. *Database* voyage number 24554, where recorded as returning from Barbados to Glasgow in April 1765. May have returned to a port on the Lower Clyde, or in ballast. I found no record of this vessel in the Greenock and Port Glasgow Customs Accounts in the second half of 1765. It is possible that this vessel was engaged in round-about trade in the Americas before its next recorded return to Greenock from Boston, Mass. in April 1766.
  28. *Database* voyage number 91063, where recorded as leaving Greenock 24/1/1764, and disembarking slaves at Barbados on 26/2/1765. I found no record of the *Coats* having cleared customs at Greenock or Port Glasgow for any destination in late 1763 or early 1764. The arrival of the *Coats* at Greenock from Africa, Barbados and Dublin is recorded in Sept. 1765. Goods from Africa and Dublin were discharged, including small quantities of ivory, marble and Irish linen, NAS *Greenock C.A.* E.504/15/13. Goods from the West Indies were probably discharged at Dublin.
  29. Not in the *Database*. NAS *Greenock C.A.* E.504/15/12, loading for Africa, 10 June to 12 July 1765. Investors: James Simson, Colin Dunlop, George McFarlan, William McCann, William Seward, James Weir, John Cunningham. Nothing known about this voyage.
  30. Not in the *Database*. NAS *Greenock C.A.* E.504/15/12, loading for Africa, 18 June to 5 July 1765. Investors: James Simson, Colin Dunlop, John Cunningham, James Weir, Alexander Creighton and Walter Ritchie. The *Juba* discharged Barbados sugar and a small quantity of ivory from Africa at Greenock on 2 July 1767, NAS *Greenock C.A.* E.504/15/14.

31. Not in the *Database*. See NAS *Greenock C.A.* E.504/15/13, loading for Africa, 10 to 20 May 1766. Investors: William Coats, William Gray, James Gammell, Neil Campbell and John Lindsay. No evidence was found for the return of this vessel to Greenock. The *Coats* probably returned to another British or Irish port, if this voyage was completed (cf. the 1764 voyage, note 28 above).
32. Not in the *Database*. The Dutch connection with this voyage is of interest. There were Dutch forts and trading stations on the Guinea Coast and Dutch islands in the West Indies. The will names two men with an interest in this voyage, Robert Thomsons, merchant burghess of Edinburgh, and Robert Watson of Muirhall. See also note 5 above.
33. *Database* voyage number 20824. See Donnan *Documents*, 2, p.72, fn. 40, citing British Library Add. Mss. 10453, f. 189, for the reference to Scotland in the context of this voyage, also noting that the intended voyage was for gold and ivory, rather than slaves. Donnan, p.94, also records that this vessel was taken. Those responsible are likely to have been French or Jacobite privateers, or quite possibly European pirates or Barbary corsairs.
34. Not in the *Database*. See the Register of the Criminal Court of Admiralty for Scotland, NAS Ac. 16/1/316–400, *The Crown v. Roger Hows and others*, wherein Arkenqual is mentioned as the commander of a Scottish vessel, taken by pirates and plundered in 1719. The trial record suggests that up to ten African captives were taken off this Scottish vessel by the pirates, who first tortured and then murdered them. See also note 14 above.
35. *Database* voyage number 94597. The voyage of the *Success* is the first piece of direct evidence for slave trading voyages from Montrose in the 1730s. Local histories mention a ship's captain by the name of Stuart or Stewart, whose home was in Montrose, and who was reported to have been active in the slave trade between 1733 and 1753. D. Mitchell, *The History of Montrose*. Montrose (1866) p.78; David G. Adams, 'Trade in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries', in G. Jackson and S.G.E. Lythe (eds.), *The Port of Montrose. A History of its Harbour, Trade and Shipping*. N.Y./Tayport, Fife (1993) pp.125–49, esp.125–9.
36. *Database* voyage number 25212. The *Database* contains no reference to the departure of this vessel from Montrose to Rotterdam and Africa in October 1751, or to the return of the vessel to Montrose from Virginia, in December 1752. NAS *Montrose Customs Accounts* E.504/24/2 and E.504/24/3, and David G Adams, 126–7. The Montrose Museum holds the manuscript contract between Thomas Gibson, first captain of the *Potomack Merchant*, and Thomas Douglas and Co.
37. Not in the *Database*. NAS *Montrose C.A.* E.504/24/3, outward entries 20–29 March 1753. Returned to Montrose 4 June 1754, see entries in the Customs Accounts dated 2 February and 9 August 1755, relating to proceedings taken by the customs authorities for the recovery of unpaid duties. *Montrose C.A.* E.504/24/3; and NAS Ac.7/46/51–62 (for conservation reasons unavailable in 2003). D.G. Adams, p.127 for a single reference to this vessel in a slave trade context.
38. Not in the *Database*. The *Delight* probably left Montrose, or some other east coast Scottish port, late in 1752 or early in 1753, for the Netherlands, returning to Leith from the Gambia and Virginia in March 1754 with ivory, bees-wax, tobacco, barrel staves and naval stores. NAS *Leith Customs Accounts* E.504/22/5, and E.504/22/6 for the 29 June 1754, the latter entry relating to proceedings taken by the customs authorities for the recovery of unpaid duties. See also E. Donnan *Documents*, 2, p.499, citing CO 388/45, Dd. 162–7, for a reference in correspondence from Fort James, to an unnamed vessel from Scotland and Holland, under the command of a Capt. Elphinstone, proceeding up the River Gambia to trade.
39. *Database* voyage number 77781. The *Glasgow* is recorded as having left Leith for the Gambia on 22 May 1764, NAS *Leith Customs Accounts* E.504/22/11. The only cargo declared on departure from Leith was 6 hogsheads of tobacco, so in all probability Captain Smith was under orders to sail to some port in the Netherlands, or to London, in order to obtain a cargo containing a mix of suitable trade goods. It has not yet been possible to establish whether or not the *Glasgow* returned to Leith.
40. *Database* voyage number 76588. Registered Glasgow, 1717. Departure from London, 3 August 1717. A voyage in the *asiento* trade to the Spanish Colonies in America. A letter from the Directors of the South Sea Company to their agents at Cartagena, dated 31 October 1717, notes that the *Hannover Galley*, Robert Sikes, master, was one of five vessels the Company were sending to Spanish America with slaves, and was scheduled to

- embark 240 slaves, E. Donnan, *Documents*, 2, p.224, citing Brit. Lib. Add. Mss. 25563, f. 173. The Barbados Naval Office list records that this vessel had 90 slaves on arrival there, Nigel Tattersfield (1991), p.349, fn. 88, citing PRO, CO. 33/15.
41. *Database* voyage number 94504. Registered Glasgow, no date. Departure from Liverpool. First mate and several crew reported killed, Donnan, *Documents*, 2, p.431, citing a report in the *Boston News Letter*, 9/9/1731.
  42. *Database* voyage number 94512. Registered Glasgow, no date. Departure from Liverpool. Nothing known about this voyage.
  43. *Database* voyage number 77606. Registered Dundee, 1752. Departure from London. In the Barbados Naval Office list this vessel is recorded as the *Belinda Hunter*, PRO CO. 33/16, f. 74. This was probably the result of an error by the clerk, who mistook the term 'bilander' – a type of rig – for the name *Belinda*. The *Hunter* was shipwrecked, or otherwise destroyed, after the disembarkation of the slaves, and before returning to Britain. Sir G. Stewart was probably the second baronet of Blair and Balcaskie (Fife), 1686–1759.
  44. Some London slave merchants, in the early eighteenth century, are known to have regularly sent their slave trading vessels to the Netherlands for some part of their West Africa cargo, J.A. Rawley (1981) p.235.
  45. A knowledge of the pattern of local demand for European goods on the West African coast was vital to European slave traders, for there was considerable variation between one region and another as to what would sell and at what price. The European slave traders had to make a careful selection of an assortment of goods to be offered to the African traders in the areas where they intended to trade for slaves. British merchant houses active in the slave trade found it necessary to import a significant proportion of the trade goods they would offer in exchange for slaves. On the goods imported into Britain, subsequently exported in the slave trade along the West African coast, see David Richardson 'West African Consumption Patterns and their Influence on the Eighteenth Century English Slave Trade', in H.A. Gemery and Jan S Hogendorn (eds.) *The Uncommon Market: Essays in the Economic History of the Atlantic Slave Trade* (New York, 1979) pp.303–30; Jan S. Hogendorn and Marion Johnson, *The Shell Money of the Slave Trade* (Cambridge, 1986) esp. pp.80–100.
  46. Scottish trading connections with the Netherlands were in existence long before the fourteenth century, when the first formal arrangements for the establishment of a 'staple' were reached with the authorities in Flanders. On the Scottish staple in the Netherlands, see Michael Lynch (ed.), *The Oxford Companion to Scottish History* (Oxford, 2001) pp.590–91, and sources cited. In the seventeenth century Scottish merchants were to be found in all the major commercial centres of the Netherlands, engaged in import–export business with the homeland, and offering factoring services to Scots seeking trading opportunities. On the Scottish merchant class of the seventeenth century, their trading interests and their links with the Netherlands, T.C. Smout, *A History of the Scottish People, 1560–1830* (Glasgow, 1971 edn., 1985 repr.) pp.153–60, and the same author's *Scottish Trade on the Eve of Union, 1660–1707* (Edinburgh/London, 1963); 'The Glasgow Merchant community in the seventeenth century', *The Scottish Historical Review*, 47 (1968) pp.53–71 and 'The Early Scottish Sugar Houses, 1660–1720', *Economic History Review*, 2nd ser., xiv (1961), pp.240–53.
  47. T.B. Duncan, *Atlantic Islands, Madeira, the Azores and the Cape Verdes in Seventeenth Century Commerce and Navigation* (Chicago/London, 1972) p.161.
  48. N.A.S. *Greenock Customs Accounts*, E.504/15/3, 25/1/1748 & 2/4/1748; E.504/15/7, 1/3/1756 & 3/4/1756. T.B. Duncan, p.4, refers to the market for Cape Verde salt in several areas in the Americas, but fails to mention Virginia. Landowners with riparian rights on the rivers draining into Chesapeake Bay are known to have developed fisheries. Colonel George Washington had a fishery on the Potomac River in 1760, and by 1770 was contracted to supply up to 500 barrels of cured fish yearly to a merchant of Alexandria. Washington was proud of his fishery and the salt herring he sold to the West Indies, claiming in 1773 that the herring from his fishery was 'equal if not superior to any that is transported from this country'. A.P. Middleton, *Tobacco Coast. A Maritime History of Chesapeake Bay in the Colonial Era* (Newport News, Va., 1953) pp.204–5.

49. The four vessels noted were the *Queensberry* in 1750 and 1753, the *Peggy* in 1751 and the *Lilly* in 1754. NAS *Dumfries Customs Accounts*, E.504/9/2, 13/12/1750 and 13/4/1753; E.504/9/2, 8/11/1751, 11/12/1754. My attention was drawn to the trade of Dumfries with the Cape Verde Islands and Virginia by a reference to the voyage of the *Lilly* to Virginia and the 'Isle of May' in A.E. Truckell, 'Early Shipping References in the Dumfries Burgh Records', *Transactions of the Dumfriesshire and Galloway Natural History and Antiquarian Society* 33 (1954/5) pp.132–75; 34 (1955/6) pp.29–53 (see also note 56 below).
50. On the role of the Cape Verde Islands in the Portuguese slave trade, and on slavery in the islands, T.B. Duncan (1972) pp.195–238; Jean Mettas, 'La Traite Portugaise en Haute Guinée, 1758–1797' *Journal of African History*, 16 (1975) pp.343–63; J.A. Rawley, pp.36, 39–41. Mettas and Rawley have shown that the shipowners of Lisbon and the Cape Verde Islands were bitterly opposed to the monopoly created by the Marquis of Pombal in 1756 to handle the slave trade between Cacheu and Bissau in Guinea, the Cape Verde Islands and north-east Brazil. Mettas has also shown that the monopoly carried 112 slaves from Guinea to the Cape Verde Islands, and 81 slaves from the islands to north-east Brazil. These low figures may suggest that the monopoly could have come to an informal arrangement with the Lisbon and Cape Verde shipowners and slave-traders, including those who traded slaves with the heretics from north-west Europe. Such an informal arrangement may have given the slave-traders from Lisbon and the Cape Verde islands access to parts of Guinea, on the understanding that they kept away from the ports of embarkation used by the monopoly. On drought, famine and their effects on population and the lives of slaves on the islands, António Carreira (trans/ed. Christopher Fyfe) *The People of the Cape Verde Islands: Exploitation and Emigration* (London/Hamden, Conn., 1982).
51. British trade with the Cape Verde Islands, and such connections as British trade with those islands may have had with the Africa trade in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, has received relatively little attention, but see David Richardson, 'Cape Verde, Madeira and Britain's Trade to Africa, 1698–1740' *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 22 (1994), pp.1–15.
52. Walter Rodney *A History of the Upper Guinea Coast, 1545–1800* (Oxford, 1970), esp. chapters 3, 5, 7, 8 and 10.
53. N. Tattersfield (1981), p.267. My investigation of the cargoes carried in 26 vessels that departed the Clyde for the Cape Verde Islands between 1743 and 1763, with 12 of those vessels intending to proceed to Virginia or Barbados, show that linens predominated, being carried in all 26 vessels, with hats or caps, shoes and haberdashery carried by most of these vessels. Woollens, hardware (brass, pewter, cutlery, etc.), wines and spirits formed part of the cargo in half of these departures from the Clyde. Such typical slave trade commodities as muskets, gunpowder and Oriental cotton goods were present as cargo in a few of these vessels, while cowries, beads and iron were entirely absent from the cargoes of these 26 vessels, as declared to the customs authorities.
54. *Journal of the Commissioners for Trade and Plantations 1749/50–53* (London, 1932) pp.15 and 25 for references to Glasgow. For the letter of 1753, see British Library Add. Mss. 38416, f. 221.
55. P.E. Lovejoy, 'The Volume of the Atlantic Slave Trade. A Synthesis', *Journal of African History*, 23 (1982), pp.473–501. D. Eltis, 'The Volume of the Transatlantic Slave Trade: A Reassessment', *William and Mary Quarterly*, 58 (2001), pp.17–46.
56. David Hancock has suggested that the ports of Dumfriesshire and Kirkcudbrightshire in south-west Scotland may have been involved in the slave trade. See the article in N.C. Landsman (2001) pp.62–3 and p.84, fn 14. There is one piece of evidence that may support this suggestion. In May 1738 the vessel *Unity*, 60 tons, registered at Dumfries, James Corbitt, owner and master, with a crew of eight, disembarked 81 slaves from St Kitts on the Lower James River, Virginia. Such a relatively large number of slaves imported from the West Indies suggests the possibility that these were slaves transported direct from Africa, possibly in the *Unity*. However, the small size of the crew might also suggest that a voyage from Africa was unlikely, but there is evidence that vessels with

crews of roughly the same size disembarked larger numbers of slaves from Africa in Virginia, for example the *Broomfield* of Bristol (164 slaves and 9 crew), Walter Minchinton, et al. (1981), pp.97, 125. (See observations on the trade of Dumfries with the Cape Verde Islands and Virginia in note 49 above. James Corbett had an interest in the voyage of the *Lilly*, and may have had an interest in other voyages from Dumfries to the 'Isle of May' and Virginia).

57. Guadeloupe capitulated to the British on the 1 May 1759; Martinique on 15 Feb. 1762.
58. On the Scottish presence in the 'Ceded' or Windward Islands, and more generally on the Scottish population of the West Indies, and their activities in the later eighteenth century, Douglas J. Hamilton, *Patronage and Profit: Scottish Networks in the British West Indies, c. 1763–1807*. Ph.D. (Aberdeen, 1999).