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Regional Perspectives on Global Empire: The North East of Scotland and Pre-1815 British Imperialism

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While Scotland's role in the British Empire is an increasingly well understood phenomenon, the regional dimensions of such involvement have yet to be fully understood. This article considers the North East of Scotland as a distinctive region or 'cultural province' and surveys some of the key means by which the area participated in pre-1815 British imperialism. It argues for a greater awareness of the range of 'staple' primary and manufactured products from this part of Scotland contributing to the colonial economy as well as the often highly localised nature of interactions with the Empire. Likewise, it emphasises the North Sea and London-aligned nature of much of these empire connections. The article concludes that the region is best understood as a 'staple producing province' of metropolitan Britain, but one with similar structural characteristics to the 'resource and service zones' identified for other provincial areas of continental Europe.

Despite the North East of Scotland's relatively muted profile in current interpretations of Scotland's place within the British Empire, its utility as a case study can be understood at three levels. Renewed explorations of the region fit within, and can contribute to, key methodological trends in global history. These involve subjecting all levels of analysis to productive re-evaluation. While the scaling up of investigative perspectives is perhaps more eye-catching, it is not the only approach.[1] The productive intersection of global history with familial and micro-histories, for example, demonstrates how Europe's expansion, including that of the pre-1815 British Empire, requires an eclectic and

1. Patrick O'Brien, 'Historiographical Traditions and Modern Imperatives for the Restoration of Global History', *Journal of Global History*, 1 (2006), 3–39. See specifically, 5.

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connective attitude to interpretative categories.[2] Scaling down to regionality helps to historicise in more nuanced ways the origins, character, and legacies of the new connections generated by Europe's world empires.[3] One way of decentring analytical frameworks is to envisage regional approaches as a form of 'glocal' studies which combine granular yet expansive forms of global history.[4]

Secondly, considering the ways in which involvement in colonialism induced patterns of local and national integration is obviously relevant for Scottish and British histories. Regional dynamics offer a crucial lens onto the question of how the Empire generated both assimilation and new forms of diversity in the 'metropolitan' British and Irish Isles.[5] More immediately, the North East provides an alternative perspective to the existing historiographic tendency to assess Scotland within the pre-1815 Empire using the rise of Atlantic Glasgow, the phenomenon of emigration (especially from the Highlands), or the development of globally active familial networks.[6]

The third benefit of remaining alive to questions of regionality lies in the opportunity it affords for engagement with debates over the role of colonialism in generating both new forms of global integration and unequally developing intra-continental zones, be these in Africa, Asia, the Americas, or Europe.[7] In this context, regions are newly relevant interpretative spaces between the local and national on the one hand and the global on the other. An innovative example of this trend is the reconsideration of what constituted Europe's

2. Miles Ogborn, *Global Lives: Britain and the World, 1550–1800* (Cambridge, 2008), 10–5; David Veevers, '"Inhabitants of the Universe": Global Families, Kinship Networks, and the Formation of the Early Modern Colonial State in Asia', *Journal of Global History*, 10 (2015), 101–3; Margot Finn, 'Family Formations: Anglo-India and the Familial Proto-State', in David Feldman and Jon Lawrence (eds), *Structures and Transformations in Modern British History* (Cambridge, 2011), 100–17.

3. Richard Drayton and David Motade, 'The Futures of Global History', *Journal of Global History*, 13 (2018), 1–21; Natalie Zemon Davis, 'Decentring History: Local Stories and Cultural Crossing in a Global World', *History and Theory*, 50 (2011), 188–202.

4. D. Armitage, 'Three Concepts of Atlantic History', in D. Armitage and M. J. Braddick (eds), *The British Atlantic World, 1500–1800* (Basingstoke, 2002), 21–3; Catherine Hall, 'Introduction: Thinking the Postcolonial, Thinking the Empire', in Catherine Hall (ed.), *Cultures of Empire: Colonisers in Britain and the Empire in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (Manchester, 2000), 16; Felicity A. Nussbaum, 'Introduction', in Felicity A. Nussbaum (ed.), *The Global Eighteenth-Century* (Chapel Hill, 2003), 10.

5. Andrew Mackillop, *Human Capital and Empire: Scotland, Ireland, Wales and British Imperialism in Asia, c.1690–c.1820* (Manchester, 2021), 12–13.

6. T. M. Devine, 'Lost to History', in T. M. Devine (ed.), *Recovering Scotland's Slavery Past: The Caribbean Connection* (Edinburgh, 2015), 29; Stephen Mullen, *The Glasgow Sugar Aristocracy: Scotland and Caribbean Slavery, 1775–1838* (London, 2022), 30–4; Emma Rothschild, *The Inner Lives of Empires: An Eighteenth-Century History* (Princeton, New Jersey, 2011), 1–58.

7. C. A. Bayly, *The Birth of the Modern World, 1780–1914* (Oxford, 2004), 47–8; Jonathan Krieckhaus, *Dictating Development: How Europe Shaped the Global Periphery* (Pittsburgh, PA, 2006), 33–6; Joseph E. Inikori, 'Africa and the Globalization Process: Western Africa, 1450–1850', *Journal of Global History*, 2 (2007), 65–6.

own putative 'peripheries' or 'margins', and the function of these areas in the continent's global colonialism.[8] Rethinking the world systems-inspired rubric of 'cores' and 'peripheries' is enabling a major reconceptualisation of early modern Europe as a fluid, polycentric zone of expansion. As a consequence, the continent is understood as a set of internal, interconnecting districts that participated in empire in ways determined by their distinctive geographies, political status, and social-economic characteristics.[9] Much of the new work focuses on those parts of Europe lying beyond the national territories of the major world powers. It stresses how trans-imperial connections offered such zones alternative avenues into global expansion. This underappreciated phenomenon involved labour migrations of varying scale and duration operating alongside professional and entrepreneurial networks which crossed and recrossed the nationally defined empires.[10] By means of this emphasis the internal geography of Europe starts to look very different. Territories as diverse as the German speaking lands, Scandinavia, the Baltic littoral, and the Swiss cantons are brought firmly into the story of early modern global imperialism. In place of 'cores' and 'peripheries' there emerges an innately interactive, mosaic-like Europe consisting of a complex and as yet not fully understood series of 'multi-imperial resource and service zones'. These were parts of the continent that did not necessarily possess overseas colonies but none the less supplied considerable amounts of capital, products, and migrants of various sorts to the established powers.[11]

Placing the North East of Scotland in this framework gives the area a potential significance beyond its contribution to Scottish and British histories of this period. Yet its example does more than simply supplement existing conceptualisations. It provides a means of challenging the precise nature of a multi-centred Europe connecting to global colonialism in different and often regionally configured ways. Several of the Scottish territory's characteristics are directly

8. Jutta Wimmler and Klaus Weber, 'Constructing Atlantic Peripheries: A Critical View of the Historiography', in Jutta Wimmler and Klaus Weber (eds), *Globalized Peripheries: Central Europe and the Atlantic World, 1680–1860* (Woodbridge, 2020), 7–14; Roman Studer, *The Great Divergence Reconsidered. Europe, India and the Rise of Global Economic Power* (Cambridge, 2015), 101–3.

9. Immanuel Wallerstein, *The Modern World-System II: Mercantilism and the Consolidation of the European-World Economy, 1600–1750* (Berkeley and LA, CA, 2011), 75–91, 131–43; Drayton and Motade, 'The Futures of Global History', 1–21.

10. Julia Adams and Isaac Ariail Reed, 'Coda: Crossing Companies, Theories of Agency and Early Modern European Empire', *Journal of World History*, 33 (2020), 477–8; Jan Lucassen and Leo Lucassen, 'The Mobility Transition Revisited, 1500–1900: What the Case of Europe Can Offer to Global History', *Journal of Global History*, 4 (2009), 347–77.

11. Patricia Purtschert and Harald Fischer-Tiné, 'Introduction: The End of Innocence: Debating Colonialism in Switzerland', in Patricia Purtschert and Harald Fischer-Tiné (eds), *Colonial Switzerland: Rethinking Colonialism from the Margins* (London, 2015), 1–26; Felicia Gottmann, Philip Stern, 'Introduction: Crossing Companies', *Journal of World History*, 31, 3 (2020), 484–5; Bernhard C. Schär, 'Switzerland, Borneo and the Dutch Indies: Towards a New Imperial History of Europe, c.1770–1850', *Past & Present*, 257 (2022), 138–9, 166.

relevant in this respect. Its extensive North Sea hinterland offered a highway to non-British colonial powers, including the Dutch, the Danes, and the Swedes.[12] Balancing this potential for trans-European, multi-imperial patterns of participation is the region's distinctive location in, and contribution to, the evolving metropolitan British economy and state.[13] This fact differentiates the Scottish North East clearly from the 'multi-imperial resource and service zones' of Europe that existed beyond the national territories of the major empires. It is precisely the combination of metropolitan provinciality and integration which makes the North East of Scotland a valuable case study in Scottish, British, European, and global terms. It exhibited some of the characteristics of a European 'multi-imperial resource and service zone' but was firmly situated within the sovereign core of one of the most aggressively expansionist early modern global empires.

Having framed the potential usefulness of this part of Scotland within key trends in Scottish, British, and global histories, the article begins by reflecting on ways of defining regionality in an early modern Scottish context. Then patterns of North East of Scotland participation across the pre-1815 British Empire are considered in terms of the mutually constitutive interactions of locality, region, nation, and global colonialism. These dynamics are used in the final section to suggest a new category – the 'staple-producing province' – for assessing the multiple modes by which differently constituted zones of early modern Europe interacted with global empire.

Regionality and Early Modern Scottish History

A useful starting point for exploring global empire at levels other than imperial, continental, or national is to note that regional perspectives have a recognised but uneven presence within the now substantial scholarship on Scotland and the British Empire.[14] This ambiguous profile reflects the ongoing lack in Scottish historical studies of a fully conceptualised understanding of the country's pronounced internal diversity in the early modern (c.1500–c.1830) era. Precisely why a systematic approach to Scottish regionality has not emerged is beyond the scope of this article. Scholarship has gradually, if intermittently, moved beyond long-established demarcations of 'Highland' and 'Lowland'. Typical in this respect is

12. Andrew Mackillop, 'Accessing Empire: Scotland, Europe, Britain, and the Asia Trade, 1695–c.1750', *Itinerario*, 29 (2005), 7–25; E. Mijers, 'A Natural Partnership? Scotland and Zeeland in the Early Seventeenth Century', in A. Macinnes and A. Williamson (eds), *Shaping the Stuart World, 1603–1714: The Atlantic Connection* (Leiden, 2006), 233–60.

13. Christopher A. Whatley, *Scottish Society, 1707–1830* (Manchester, 2000), 229–31.

14. John M. MacKenzie and T. M. Devine, 'Introduction', in John M. MacKenzie and T. M. Devine (eds), *The Oxford History of the British Empire: Scotland and the British Empire* (Oxford, 2011), 1–29.

Eric Richard's insightful summary of post-union Scotland's integration into the British Atlantic World. The familiar story of the West Central Lowland's evolution as a dynamic mercantile and manufacturing zone is juxtaposed with the different developmental path of the Highlands. In the case of the latter, interaction with both the national and colonial economies generated structural dependencies on the export of primary produce in the form of cattle, sheep, fish, kelp, and people.[15] The value of this emphasis is two-fold. It underlines the markedly mosaic-like character of Scottish involvement in the Empire while also highlighting the way overseas connections consolidated and reproduced in new ways pre-existing regional distinctiveness and inequalities. However, an important consequence of this framing is that it can reify conventional understandings of Scotland's internal makeup. As a result, engagement with colonialism still tends to be understood primarily through long established categories like 'the Highlands', 'West Central Scotland', and, less conspicuously, 'the Borders', and 'the North East'.[16]

If a comprehensive conceptualisation of Scottish regionality has yet to be articulated along the lines of Phythian-Adams's 'English cultural province' (discussed below), some movement in that direction can be identified.[17] The importance of distinct socio-economic zones, often shaped in part by overseas links, has a discernible if underdeveloped profile in early modern and modern Scottish History. A recent reassessment of the historiography relating to post-union Scotland and British Atlantic World slavery, for example, traces the waxing and waning of the 'enclave' theory. Primarily concerned with the extent to which colonial profits were concentrated in Glasgow and the other Clyde burghs, the idea has met substantive and persuasive criticism.[18] It is highlighted here as an important if atypical example of a sustained historiographic debate over how imperial connections forged new forms of regional development and diversity.

While the West of Scotland and, to a lesser extent, the Highlands, are the most developed examples of a regionalised approach to empire, the country's internal makeup lends itself to extending this perspective.[19] There is now a

15. Eric Richards, 'Scotland and the Uses of the Atlantic Empire', in B. Bailyn and Philip D. Morgan (eds), *Strangers Within the Realm: Cultural Margins of the First British Empire* (Chapel Hill, NC, and London, 1991), 67–114.

16. Edward J. Cowan, 'From the Southerland Uplands to Southern Ontario: Nineteenth-Century Emigration from the Scottish Borders', in T. M. Devine (ed.), *Scottish Migration and Scottish Society* (Edinburgh, 1992), 61–83; Marjory Harper, *Emigration from North-East Scotland*, vols. 1–2 (Aberdeen, 1988), passim; T. M. Devine, *Scotland's Empire, 1600–1815* (London, 2003), chapters 5–6.

17. Charles Phythian-Adams, *Societies, Cultures and Kinship, 1580–1850: Cultural Provinces and English Local History* (Leicester, 1996), Figures I: 1–4; 9–18.

18. Stephen Mullen, 'Centring Transatlantic Slavery in Scottish Historiography', *History Compass*, 20: 1 (January 2022), 1–14.

19. David Worthington, 'Introducing the New Coastal History: Cultural and Environmental Perspectives from Scotland and Beyond', in David Worthington (ed.), *The New Coastal History: Cultural and Environmental Perspectives from Scotland and Beyond* (Basingstoke, 2017), 3–30.

greater appreciation of the country's North Sea alignment in consolidating the economic primacy of the Firth of Forth area prior to the shift in axis towards the Atlantic between c.1680 and c.1720. Similarly, a clearer understanding of the linen districts of the Clyde and Firth of Tay basins during the long eighteenth century has added much needed nuance to what constituted an historic region while also confirming that the Empire's impact extended beyond West Central Scotland.[20] These interpretations of regionalisation provide a productive context for reassessing the North East's interaction with the wider Empire.[21] As already noted, Charles Phythian-Adams's concept of the English cultural province offers a subtle and readily transferrable model. Such provinces are constituted through a combination of factors, including environmental and topographic influences, riverine systems, upland watersheds, and maritime hinterlands. The interaction of these natural features with rural and urban settlement patterns generated distinctive socio-economic as opposed to purely administratively defined regions.[22]

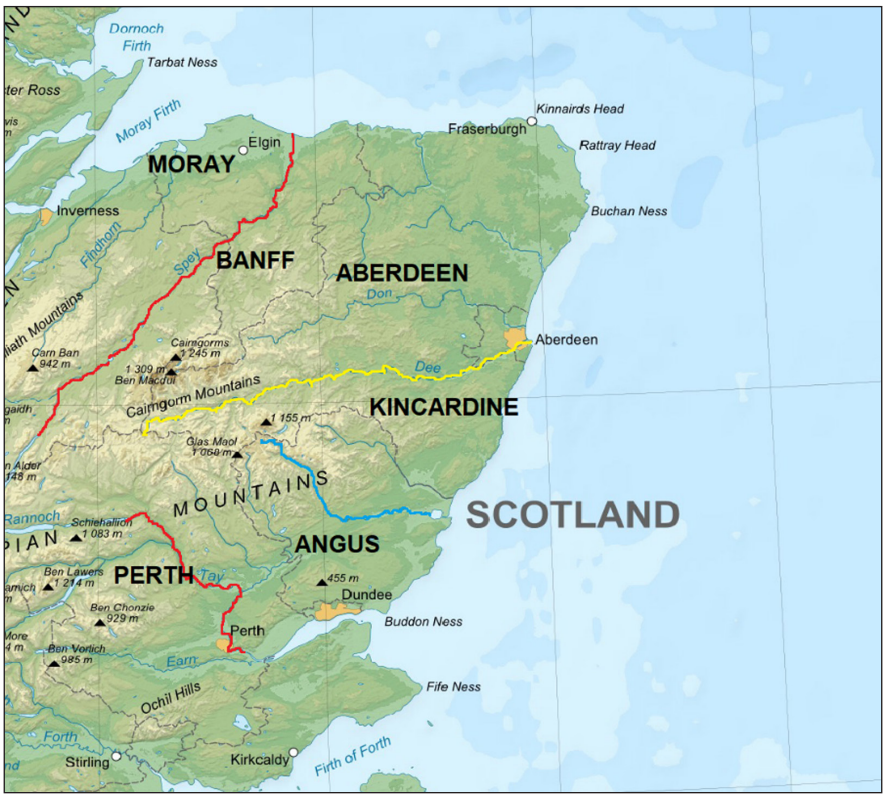
Adapting these determinants for the North East produces a large district shaped by the upland watershed of the Grampian mountains as its western boundary, while a series of river basins constitute its northern and southern limits. It is possible to conceive of what might be called a 'Greater North East', bounded by the Rivers Tay and Spey (marked in red on the map) or a 'Lesser North East' defined by the Spey and the South Esk drainage systems (marked in red and blue). Not only would the first version encompass substantial parts of the south east Highlands, it would include large areas of lowland eastern Perthshire aligned towards the Tay basin. An alternative delimitation based on the Rivers Isa and Spey would align more closely to conventional administrative definitions. Consideration of internal variation follows similar principles and is at its most obvious through the influence of the Dee system (marked in yellow). Not only did this major natural feature help determine the location of the key urban centre of Aberdeen, it also in effect divided the North East into a northern and southern subset.

All these options result in the demarcation of a substantial portion of Scotland. Its alignment involves a pronounced north-west to south-east axis in the south, shifting on its northern flank towards a south-west to north-east orientation determined by the drainage systems of the Spey and Deveron. Phythian-Adams's insistence on the pivotal role of maritime hinterlands is equally applicable. The North Sea is not usually deemed a central influence in Scotland's involvement in the British Empire, especially when compared with the Atlantic. However, any re-assessment of the North East moves this maritime sphere into a central,

20. Anthony Slaven, *The Development of the West of Scotland, 1750–1960* (London and Boston, 1975), 9–8; Whatley, *Scottish Society*, 23–4, 73.

21. Alexander Murdoch, *British History, 1660–1832* (Basingstoke, 1998), 77–8.

22. Phythian-Adams, *Societies, Cultures and Kinship, 1580–1850,* Figures I: 1–4; 9–18.



Map 1: A Scottish 'Cultural Province?': The 'Greater' or 'Lesser' North East of Scotland. (Source: Wiki-Commons and Author).

even defining, position.[23] Commercial activity at the Scottish and British levels relied heavily on coastal shipping between the Moray littoral, the Firth of Tay and Forth basins, the Tyneside and Humber estuaries, and the port of London.[24] To these pronounced north-south routes should be added a vital west-east axis. Transnational and trans-imperial horizons linked naturally and easily to the other side of the North Sea rim and to Denmark-Norway, Sweden, the north German ports, the Low Countries, and north-west France. Beyond lay the Baltic economic zone, a crucially important extension of Scotland's easterly facing maritime hinterland.[25]

23. Devine, *Scotland's Empire*, 26–48; Mackillop, 'Accessing Empire', 7–30.

24. Patrick Colquhoun, *A Treatise on the Commerce and Police of the River Thames: Containing an Historical View of the Trade of the Port of London; …* (London, 1800), 12–7.

25. Douglas Catterall, *Community Without Borders: Scot Migrants and the Changing Face of Power in the Dutch Republic, c. 1600–1700* (Leiden, 2002); passim; Philipp Robinson Rossner, *Scottish Trade with German Ports 1700–1770: A Sketch of the North Sea Trades and the Atlantic Economy on Ground Level* (Stuttgart, 2008), passim; Kathrin Zickermann, *Across the German Sea: Early Modern Scottish Connections with the Wider Elbe-Weser Region* (Leiden, 2013); passim; Siobhan Talbott, *Conflict, Commerce and Franco-Scottish Relations, 1560–1713* (London, 2014), passim.

If taken together, these features mean the North East can be conceived of as a microcosm of early modern Scottish society, encompassing its Lowland, Highland and maritime aspects. In both a topographic and linguistic sense, inland parts of Banff, Aberdeenshire, and Angus formed the eastern limits of Scottish Gaeldom.[26] Conversely, the coastal littoral hosted some of the most populous and economically significant parts of pre-1820s Lowland Scotland. Such was the area's productivity that it sustained two of the country's four major regional metropoles (Aberdeen and Dundee) and two of the five colleges of higher learning.[27] The North East's potential to connect with colonialism extended well beyond the main ports and urban centres. The regional metropoles serviced a relatively dense web of satellite burghs like Kirriemuir, Brechin, Forfar, Arbroath, Montrose, Keith, Banff, Stonehaven, Fraserburgh and Peterhead. In Scottish terms these were all substantial settlements.[28] The two main ports with their ancillary towns constituted distinct northern variants of the manufacturing, market-orientated, and shipping complexes identified for the Clyde and Forth basins. The crucial distinction lay in the greater reliance in the North East on a web of small planned villages specialising in rural forms of production as well as the centrality of North Sea as opposed to Atlantic World markets.[29] In this respect the North East shared some intriguing structural similarities with the Forth basin, especially in terms of north-to-south aligned contact with London.

These local, seemingly mundane configurations determined much of the North East's intersection with European as well as British colonialism. They also point to the potential of new research questions shaped by an holistic understanding of early modern Scotland's regionality. What follows is an initial, and far from comprehensive, effort at exploring some of these possibilities. The definition of the North East used here incorporates key elements of Phythian-Adams's 'cultural province', particularly the importance of inter-related rural and maritime hinterlands, while retaining the established demarcation based on county boundaries. As such, the North East is understood conventionally and encompasses (from south to north) the historic counties of Angus, Kincardine, Aberdeen, and Banff. While a strong case could be made for including the county of Moray, the fact that the majority of its territory and its major burgh, Elgin, lies to the west of the Spey explains its exclusion (Map 1).

26. *The Statistical Account of Scotland*, Kirkmichael, Banff, Vol. 12, 454.

27. *The Statistical Account of Scotland*, Aberdeen, Aberdeen, Vol. 19, 182.

28. Bob Harris, Charles McKean and Chris Whatley, *The Scottish Town in the Age of Enlightenment, 1740–1820* (Edinburgh, 2014), passim.

29. T. C. Smout, 'The Landowner and the Planned Village in Scotland, 1730–1830', in N. T. Phillipson and Rosalind Mitchison (eds), *Scotland in the Age of Improvement: Essays in Scottish History in the Eighteenth Century* (Edinburgh, 1996), 102. For the fourth Duke of Gordon's placing of empire service personnel and their dependents in his new planned village of Tomintoul, see, National Records of Scotland (NRS), Gordon Castle Muniments, GD44/23/33/2.

The North East and the British Empire

The involvement in Empire of this significant part of Scotland was shaped by a range of mutually influencing factors. One of these was politics. Over the course of the long eighteenth century the area lacked the consistent influence of a top rank aristocratic family in the mould of the Campbells of Argyll.[30] *Ancien regime* Britain's political culture meant aristocratic leverage could be an important determinant in the precise timing and contours of local access to the Empire's institutions.[31] An ability to secure empire-related offices was doubly important for the North East given the less direct modes of access to the Atlantic World and the presence of kin and kith networks associated with the displaced Episcopalian interest and the defeated Jacobite movement.[32]

Patronage managers like the second and third dukes of Argyll or, later, Henry and Robert Dundas undoubtedly nurtured clients in their home districts of Argyll and the Lothians. However, the absence in other parts of Scotland of similarly influential connections to government did not necessarily impair the uptake of imperial employment.[33] The county of Inverness lacked a single dominant aristocratic or managerial interest. Yet the resultant rivalry between the Grants of Grant, Gordons of Huntly, Frasers of Lovat, and Macleods of Dunvegan worked to embed empire patronage in local political culture. In the North East, the decline of the House of Gordon resulted in an equally competitive situation. The arriviste Duff, earls Fife partially filled the vacuum but never replicated the extended regional hegemony or sustained influence with government of the kind exercised by the House of Argyll or, later, the Dundas family.[34]

This distinctive balance of dispersed political power ensured that gentry, burgh, and merchant interests drove much of the North East's expansion into the British imperial complex. The productive capacity of the two university colleges and the parochial/burghal education infrastructure also facilitated involvement in

30. Andrew Mackillop, 'The Political Culture of the Scottish Highlands from Culloden to Waterloo', *Historical Journal*, 46: 3 (2002), 511–32; Matthew Dziennik, 'The Fiscal-Military State and Labour in the British Atlantic World', in Aaron Graham and Patrick Walsh (eds), *The British Fiscal-Military States, 1660–c.1783* (Abingdon, 2016), 161–8.

31. National Library of Scotland (NLS), Sutherland Papers, Dep 313/979/4, 9, 21–6.

32. Allan I. Macinnes, *Clanship, Commerce and the House of Stuart, 1603–1788* (East Linton, 1996), 216–7; Murray Pittock, *The Myth of the Jacobite Clans: The Jacobite Army in 1745* (Edinburgh, 2009), 37–48, 74–84.

33. David J. Brown, 'The Government of Scotland under Henry Dundas and William Pitt', *History*, 83 (1998), 271.

34. Barry Robertson, *Lordship and Power in the North of Scotland, The Noble House of Huntly, 1603–1690* (Edinburgh, 2011), 183–7; David J. Brown, '"Nothing but Strugalls and Corruption": The Commons' Elections for Scotland in 1774', *Parliamentary History*, 15, 1 (1996), 116; Alistair Mutch, 'A Contested Eighteenth-Century Election: Banffshire, 1795', *Northern Scotland*, 2, 1 (2011), 22–35; Richard, C. F. Forty, 'A Financial and Political Study of James Duff, 2nd Earl of Fife, between 1763–1809' (PhD Dissertation, University of Aberdeen, 2014), 90–145.

the landed and maritime economies that in turn created access to global colonialism. The result was a regionally configured sequence of contacts with European as well as British colonialism.[35] Indeed, the North East experienced a discernible phase of multi-imperial engagement which directly paralleled the connections that evolved between Scandinavian maritime labour markets, Swiss military entrepreneurs, and the Dutch East India Company. The seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century movement of Scots within this intra-continental zone of labour was amongst the highest per capita of any European society.[36] The contribution of the North East to this underappreciated phenomenon was conspicuous. While clearly part of the British imperial core after 1707, it shared some striking similarities with the other European 'multi-imperial resource and service zones'. Long-standing commercial-migratory avenues to the Netherlands ensured a continual if low-level drift of individuals into the institutions of Dutch colonialism. Five-year sampling of the personnel of the Zeeland chamber of the Dutch East India Company between 1690 and 1710 reveals 38 Scots: two of these individuals were sailors from Aberdeen. Typical of this sort of piecemeal, multi-step involvement is the case of James Smith, the son of a baker from Aberdeen. In 1719, aged sixteen, he sailed on one of the port's merchant vessels to the Netherlands, where he subsequently joined the Dutch East India Company. He died on board one of their vessels, the *Castill Van Woorden* off the coast of present-day Indonesia in 1728.[37]

In much the same way that networks and individuals from the pre-1707 Highlands drifted into Dutch colonial service, Scots merchants, supercargoes, and captains joined the Gothenberg-based Swedish East India Company in some numbers upon its formation in 1730.[38] Individuals from the North East were especially prominent in this trans-imperial, North Sea route into the world economy. A list from 1761 detailing forty-nine wealthy returnees from Asia living in Scotland shows that five were Swedish Company men; Irvines from Aberdeenshire and Abercrombies from Banffshire formed the majority of those made wealthy via European as opposed to British expansion.[39] Far from consti-

35. Mackillop, 'Accessing Empire', 24–5; Allan I. Macinnes, 'Political Virtue and Capital Repatriation: A Jacobite Agenda for Empire', *Journal of Scottish Historical Studies*, 38, 1 (2018), 36–54.

36. Jelle van Lottum, *Across the North Sea: The Impact of the Dutch Republic on International Labour Migration, c.1550–1850* (Amsterdam, 2007), 46–53; Jelle van Lottum and Jan Luiten van Zanden, 'Labour Productivity and Human Capital in the European Maritime Sector of the Eighteenth Century', *Explorations in Economic History*, 53 (2014), 90–8; Schär, 'Switzerland, Borneo and the Dutch Indies', 140–3.

37. David Worthington, 'Sugar, Slave-Owning, Suriname and the Dutch Imperial Entanglement of the Scottish Highlands before 1707', *Dutch Crossing*, 44, 1 (2020), 3–20; Nationaal Archief, The Hague, VOC 1.04.02/11706; 1.04.02/11708; 1.04.02/11709; 1.04.02/11534; 1.04.02/11537; 1.04.02/11539; 1.04.02/11545; 1.04.02/11553; 1.04.02/11558; Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Archives, Propinquity Book 1706–1733, fo. 184.

38. NRS, Steuart of Dalguise Muniments, GD38/2/6/30 and 70.

39. NRS, Grant of Monymusk Papers, GD345/1166/4/152. I am grateful to Dr David Brown, formerly of the NRS, for highlighting this reference. For Gothenburg-based merchants purchasing

tuting a strategic cul de sac when compared with the Atlantic World, the North Sea acted as a highway that enabled incremental if unspectacular access to transnational forms of empire. The decades-long existence of such conduits underline the extent to which the North East, and indeed pre-1750s Scottish society more generally, can be considered an example of Europe's differently configured resource and service territories.

Over time, however, the status of both region and nation changed. Increasingly, Britain's empire attracted the majority of Scottish individuals and networks. Compared to the Clyde basin, which experienced a profound and eye-catching transformation from the 1720s to 1770s, the North East's trajectory was more muted and, crucially, indirect in nature.[40] If oblique modes of contact with the British Empire produced less immediately obvious changes, their importance lies in the fact that such interactions may well have been the experience of large parts of post union Scotland. Growing participation revolved around individuals, networks, and niche commercial sectors rather than a generalised and transformative shift of the kind experienced by Glasgow and its hinterlands. Yet this cautious assessment should be tempered by the realisation that not enough is known about the overall scale and pattern of North East aristocratic, gentry, merchant, or artisanal engagement with pre-1815 British colonialism. In common with other areas of British imperial studies, the lens of familial networks now offers critical insights into how kin-interests from the region branched out into global patterns of participation. The Duffs of Rathven and Gordons of Letterfourie demonstrate the intermarriage of North East–based Presbyterian and Catholic kindreds, their simultaneous exploitation of the Atlantic and Asian hemispheres, and their reshaping of local landed and political society with repatriated colonial wealth.[41]

The region certainly contributed a proportionate share of permanent settler migrants from the earliest stages of Scotland's growing contact with England's North American colonies. Gentry interests from the North East formed the dominant grouping among the six Scottish 'proprietors' in the province of East New Jersey by 1680. In an example of how socio-economic norms could be transferred from a provincial region in Europe to an overseas colony, this elite established a network of laird-like landholding and a mixed Presbyterian and Episcopalian social order.[42]

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estates in the North East see, NRS, Minute Books of the General Register of Seisins, RS62/18: 12 June 1767: William Stewart, merchant in Gothenburg; 28 May 1768: George Carnegie, merchant in Gothenburg; Printed Abridgements of Sasines, Forfar [711 and 713].

40. Devine, *Scotland's Empire*, chapter 4; Whatley, *Scottish Society*, 64–7.

41. Alistair Mutch, *Tiger Duff: India, Madeira and Empire in Eighteenth-Century Scotland* (Aberdeen, 2017), 12–198.

42. Ned C. Landsman, *Scotland and Its First American Colonies 1683–1765* (Princeton, NJ, 1985), 102–4; Linda G. Fryer, 'Robert Barclay of Ury and East New Jersey', *Northern Scotland* (First Series), 15, 1 (1995), 1–17.

Although indicative of the region's capacity to connect to the Atlantic World, the current state of the evidence points to the Caribbean rather than North America as the most prominent point of contact with the colonial economy during the long eighteenth century.[43] The realignment from European migratory and commercial routes towards the Empire, which the Duffs and Gordons exemplify, was a gradual process. It stretched over many decades, with North East society exploiting both pre-existing European and new Atlantic World opportunities during a crucial era of overlap between approximately the 1680s and 1750s.[44] The patronage strategies of Sir Archibald Grant of Monymusk, MP for Aberdeenshire from 1722 to 1732 are instructive in this regard. Eight requests between 1722 and 1729 from local gentry and clergy for career assistance resulted in a range of solutions. The placing of clients in Holland and at Danzig demonstrate the persistence of North Sea horizons during a period usually associated with the growing influence of the Union and the Empire. Yet British avenues were already beginning to predominate. While employment in Liverpool and in the English East India Company offered some opportunities, three of Grant's eight clients ended up in London.[45]

One means of assessing the general characteristics of the region's immersion into British expansion is to chart references to the Empire and associated activities in the parish entries of the Statistical Account of Scotland. Although far from comprehensive, and certainly susceptible to the foibles of individual ministers, the Account nevertheless offers an unrivalled insight into how contemporaries understood the Empire's local and regional influences.[46] While its deficiencies and uneven character are easy to highlight, the source's value when considering local perceptions of empire should not be underestimated. Not only did it have no equivalent in the rest of Great Britain or Ireland, the stated aim involved the creation of a national encyclopaedia or socio-economic census of the country's strengths and weaknesses. An even more relevant aspect was that the Account sought to understand the local manifestations of domestic and global economic capacities, marketable products, and the ability to wage war. These were all features of local society that directly shaped the capacity for

43. Marjory Harper, *Migration from North-East Scotland. Vol. 1, Willing Exiles* (Aberdeen: 1988); David Ditchburn and Marjory Harper, 'Aberdeen and the Outside World', in E. Patricia Dennison, David Ditchburn and Michael Lynch (eds), *Aberdeen Before 1800* (East Linton: Tuckwell, 2002), 396–8.

44. Steve Murdoch and Esther Mijers, 'Migrant Destinations, 1500–1750', in T. M. Devine and Jenny Wormald (eds), *The Oxford Handbook of Modern Scottish History* (Oxford, 2012), 320–37.

45. https://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1715-1754/member/grant-archibald-1696-1778 [Last accessed 19 November 2024]; NRS, GD345/1155/14-43.

46. For the value and limitations of the Statistical Account of Scotland as a source, see T. M. Devine, *The Transformation of Rural Scotland: Social Change and the Agrarian Economy, 1660–1815* (Edinburgh, 1994), 112–13.

involvement in overseas expansion. By means of Sir John Sinclair of Ulbster's standardised questionnaire, each parish minister had certain themes and issues brought to his immediate attention. Among these were issues of demography and economy that amounted, in effect, to an assessment of the 'resource and service' capacity of different parts of Scotland.[47] The Account's information is also organised in ways that make it possible to retrieve both a parish and a county level analysis. This makes it an ideal source for considering regional and sub-regional perspectives. Table 1 lists colonial destinations or empire-related occupations/activities mentioned in the entries for parishes which comprised the North East counties.[48]

County/Parishes	Army	Navy	Caribbean	North America	Asia	London
Aberdeen: 84	9 (10.7%)	8 (9.5%)	11 (13%)	7 (8.3%)	2 (2.3%)	22 (26.1%)
Angus: 55	10 (18.1%)	6(10.9%)	3 (5.4%)	2 (3.6%)	2 (3.6%)	15 (27.2%)
Banff: 24	7 (29.1%)	1 (4.1%)	6 (25%)	3 (12.5%)	5 (20.8%)	7 (29.1%)
Kincardine: 19	1 (10.5%)	1 (5.2%)	3 (15.7%)	1 (5.2%)	0	7 (36.8%)

Table 1: The Statistical Account of Scotland, North East Society, and the British Empire.[48]

It is important to stress the impressionistic nature of this evidence. The table does not constitute a systematic or detailed survey of the area's involvement in the Empire. Yet allowing for the limitations of the source material, several general trends are still evident. With between ten percent and nearly one third of parishes recording attitudes to the army, that institution clearly acted as a well-recognised channel to the wider world. However, many of the minister's accounts referred to military service in non-specific ways, or with reference to defence patriotism manifesting itself in local volunteer units.[49] Rather than imperial affairs, it was more immediate allegiances and practical socio-economic motivations around rates of pay that largely explained attitudes to the armed forces. Nevertheless, such involvement still denoted practical and symbolic support for the British constitutional, economic and propertied order, of which the Empire was a fundamentally important component. The minister of Peterhead's

47. Rosaline Mitchison, *Agricultural Sir John: The Life of Sir John Sinclair of Ulbster, 1754–1835* (London, 1962), passim.

48. The table is constructed using the following search terms on the Statistical Accounts of Scotland online resource: 'army'; 'navy'; 'North America'; 'America'; 'New York'; 'Virginia'; 'Canada'; 'Quebec'; 'Nova Scotia'; 'West Indies'; 'West India'; 'Barbados'; 'Bermuda'; 'Demerara'; 'Dominica'; 'Grenada'; 'Guiana'; 'Jamaica'; 'Nevis'; 'St Vincent'; 'Tobago; 'Trinidad'; 'Bengal'; 'Bombay'; 'Calcutta'; 'Madras'; 'East Indies'; 'East India Company'; 'India'; 'London'. https://stataccscot.edina.ac.uk/static/statacc/dist/home [Last accessed 7 October 2024].

49. Bob Harris, *The Scottish People and the French Revolution* (London, 2008), 149–55.

observations regarding the population's opinion of the British military were typical. Enlistment into the regular army, a branch of state service much more likely to involve a colonial dimension, received far less attention when compared with the emphasis placed on enthusiasm for local 'volunteering'.[50] Indeed, the majority of assessments, such as the entries for Marnoch in Banffshire, Kemnay in Aberdeenshire or Auchterhouse in Angus, highlighted the population's clear reluctance to consider a regular army career.[51] Such examples point to a sophisticated sense among the population of the different geographies of military service. Attitudes to these existed on a sliding scale of positivity to negativity. The Caribbean and Asia were feared as places that destroyed health and life, and which contained enslaved or conquered populations that understandably sought any opportunity to physically resist their subjugation.[52]

The Statistical Account's projection of ambivalent and even negative attitudes towards participation in the regular army should not disguise the North East's early involvement in military migration to imperial destinations. The Grants of Monymusk and associated Forbes gentry supplied officers and men for the six 'Scotch' independent companies sent to India in 1747. The first Highland unit committed to the Asian theatre by the British army, the 89th Highland regiment, was raised in 1759 under the auspices of Catherine Gordon, the widow of Cosmo, third duke of Gordon and her second husband, the New York-born Colonel Staats Long-Morris. One consequence of what amounted to a trans-regional recruitment effort encompassing the North East, Moray, and eastern Inverness-shire, was a cluster of officers and men from Aberdeenshire and Banff in India throughout the early 1760s to 1770s.[53] These early modes of contact expanded rapidly, generating enduring connections between the region's service gentry and Britain's emerging empire in Asia. At a conservative estimate, 280 individuals from the North East became officers in the English East India Company between c.1750 and c.1810, equivalent to just over one in seven of all commission-level Scots traced to that branch of the Empire's military complex.[54] Besides the obvious

50. *The Statistical Account of Scotland*, Peterhead, Aberdeen, Vol. 16, 1795, 592.

51. *The Statistical Account of Scotland*, Marnoch, Banff, Vol. 3, 1792, 96; *The Statistical Account of Scotland*, Kemnay, Aberdeen, Vol. 12, 1794, 207; *The Statistical Account of Scotland*, Auchterhouse, Forfar, Vol. 14, 1795, 521.

52. D. Arnold, 'India's Place in the Tropical World', 1770–1930', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 26 (1998), 6–11; Mark Harrison, *Medicine in an Age of Commerce and Empire: Britain and Its Tropical Colonies* (Oxford, 2010), 15–21, 35–6, 207–8. For the underlying fear of alienated, hostile populations, see, NRS, Leslie of Warthill, RH4/136/1/84-V2.

53. NRS, GD345/1195, 'Accompt of Men Enlisted for HM's Service in Captain Grant's Independent Company, 22 June 1747–29 August 1747'; NRS, Grant of Seafield, GD 248/413/1; NRS, Fraser-MacKintosh Collection, GD 128/1/1/1: 'Return of the Men of H.M.s 89th Regiment'; David Stewart, *Sketches of the Character, Manners, and Present State of the Highlanders of Scotland*, 2 vols. (Edinburgh, 1825), II, 103–5.

54. Mackillop, *Human Capital*, 136.

implications for the extent of imperial engagement, these figures underline how the trends outlined in Table 1 almost certainly hide as much as they reveal.

Given the region's maritime character and the centrality of fishing and coastal shipping for the socio-economic life of many of its medium and smaller sized urban settlements, the lower profile of the navy is surprising. As with the issue of military enlistment, the majority of parish entries highlighted naval service in a negative fashion.[55] Hostility to impressment was common to all parts of Britain and Ireland. This reflected ongoing debates over its constitutional status and the harsh realities of its implementation. While sharing this common antipathy to the press gang, there is evidence that the North East did not exhibit the same degree of 'naval patriotism' that can be traced across parts of England.[56] Both Aberdeen and Dundee were in the bottom half of Scottish ports in terms of Greenwich Pensioners per capita by 1815, although the residence of North East men in other parts of the UK after the completion of their service could disguise a more substantive rate of involvement.[57] The reduced presence of former navy personnel probably reflected wider factors operating across the whole of Scotland. For most of the long eighteenth century, the Royal Navy lacked in Scottish culture the same kudos as the army. This was partly the result of the senior service's less obvious day-to-day presence north of the border in this period.[58] But as with the case of army enlistment, other factors complicate any definitive conclusions on attitudes. The dominance of an overtly English as opposed to British institutional ethos may detract from a substantial but submerged presence of Scots in all ranks of the organisation.[59]

A reasonable inference from the Statistical Account is that interactions with the state's two key empire-related institutions seem to have been marked by relative ambivalence and indifference. Care is needed, however, when assuming this semi-detached dynamic applied generally. One of the benefits of a regional sensitivity is that it highlights otherwise difficult to detect local nuance and diversity. For all its global scale, the British Empire's influence played out with markedly local and even micro variations. The implications of this diversity for understanding the nature and evolution of 'service and resource zones' are yet to fully untangled. Some ministers stressed disengagement and reluctance; others provided specific numbers joining the army or navy and contextu-

55. *The Statistical Account of Scotland*, Benholme, Kincardine, Vol. 15, 1795, 231–2; *The Statistical Account of Scotland*, Mains of Fintry, Forfar, Vol. 5, 1793, 225.

56. Timothy Jenks, *Naval Engagements: Patriotism, Cultural Politics, and the Royal Navy 1793–1815* (Oxford, 2006), 100–22; J. Finlay, '"Inter arma enim silent leges?" Impressment and the Scottish Courts in the Later Eighteenth Century', *Edinburgh Law Review*, 26, 1 (2022), 1–28.

57. The National Archive, Kew, (TNA), Scottish Commissioners of Customs Accounts T. 47/21.

58. Colin Helling, *The Navy and Anglo-Scottish Union, 1603–1707* (Woodbridge, 2022), 220–1.

59. Sara Caputo, 'Scotland, Scottishness, British Integration and the Royal Navy, 1793–1815', *The Scottish Historical Review*, 97, 1 (2018), 85–118.

alised such involvement against overall parish demography. The impact of conflicts such as the American War of Independence was sufficiently intense as to leave a clear local memory. Two such entries were those for the parishes of Kirriemuir in Angus and Aberdour in Aberdeenshire. In the latter, 27 men fought in Britain armed forces between 1775 and 1783 from a male population that in 1792 numbered approximately 277 between the ages of 15 and 50. In Kirriemuir, 52 individuals joined the army and navy during the same conflict from a pool of approximately 1,100 eligible men. The accumulative numbers meant that state service lay in the mid-point of Kirriemuir's overall employment structure.[60] The more important conclusion to draw from the matter-of-fact observations that make up Table 1 is that participation in the Empire was understood as an everyday, almost mundane economic option.

Adopting this ground up perspective reveals the Empire to be less a monolithic entity as a series of disparate geographic theatres and distinctive avenues of employment. Table 1 supports existing assessments regarding the key importance to the Scottish North East of the Caribbean and its slavery-derived economies and commodities.[61] This sector of the Empire had a greater prominence in local perception than either North America or Asia. Participation in the colonies of enslavement occurred in a number of ways, one of the most important of which was migratory. Besides the minister of Grange in Banffshire noting the propensity for economically active men to depart for the West Indies, the detailed summary of local employment already noted for Aberdour reveals the sociology of this human movement. One 'surgeon', two 'clerks', and two 'carpenters' from the parish were noted as recently taking employment in the Caribbean.[62] Often intending to reside in the colonies only for as long as it took to secure the material means to live respectably back in Scotland or elsewhere in Britain, these men were 'sojourners'. They were part of a social phenomenon common to all of Scotland in this period.[63] The majority would neither make a fortune nor survive. One such sojourner was John Ross, son of John Ross of Arnage from the parish of Ellon in Aberdeenshire. Ross's plans to exploit the enslavement-based economy of Britain's southern mainland colonies were shattered by the War of American Independence. As an overseer on the East Florida estates of Tonyn, Hawke, Padanaram, and Streachy in the 1770s and early 1780s, he built

60. *The Statistical Account of Scotland*, Aberdour, Aberdeen, Vol. 12, 1794, 587; *The Statistical Account of Scotland*, Kirriemuir, Forfar, Vol. 12, 1794, 618–19.

61. Douglas J. Hamilton, *Scotland, the Caribbean and the Atlantic World, 1750–1820* (Manchester, 2005), 115, 208–11.

62. *The Statistical Account of Scotland*, Grange, Banff, Vol. 9, 1793, 582; *The Statistical Account of Scotland*, Aberdour, Aberdeen, Vol. 12, 1794, 587.

63. A. I. Karras, *Sojourners in the Sun: Scottish Migrants in Jamaica and the Chesapeake, 1740–1815* (Ithaca, NY, 1992), 11, 125–9; Stephen Mullen, 'John Lamont of Benmore: A Highland Planter who Died "in harness" in Trinidad', *Northern Scotland*, 9, 1 (2018), 44–66.

up a fortune of £802 while also trafficking in enslaved people. Britain's eventual defeat forced the abandonment of these property interests and a relocation to Dominica, where he died in 1786.[64]

The Old Statistical Account is a snapshot of conditions across Scotland in the 1790s. Had it been compiled in the 1750s or 1770s, North America would in all probability have assumed a greater prominence. Alternatively, with the publication of the 'New Statistical Account' in the 1830s and early 1840s, the Asian hemisphere looms more obviously. Compared to the nine parishes citing interaction with the 'East India Company' or commerce and colonialism in 'India' or the 'East Indies' in the 1790s, 31 did so in the later account.[65] Unlike the British Atlantic, where individuals and businesses could pursue their own professional and commercial concerns, the eastern Empire lay under the monopoly of the English East India Company until the reforms of 1813 and 1834.[66] The London-based corporation, while never entirely able to control the flow of British and Irish individuals to Asia, exerted a tight degree of supervision before these dates. As a result, it is possible to chart the presence of people and social networks from the North East in the Asia half of the Empire in considerable detail. The Company's records enable the recovery of the origins and career cycles of a minimum of 4,015 Scots who acted as civil servants, military and merchant marine officers, surgeons, or private merchants and mariners between 1690 and 1813, the year the organisation lost its monopoly of trade with India.[67] This number may seem trivial when set against the large quantity of Scots moving across the Atlantic in the same period. However, these were sojourners operating at the apex of an organisation that controlled one hemisphere of Britain's global empire and c. 40 million people in South Asia by the 1810s.[68]

When compared with other districts of Scotland, the North East secured a proportionate share of these elite forms of employment, including 48 out of a total of 439 Scots traced to the civil service which controlled the Company's trade between Asia and Europe and administered the emerging colonial state in India. This was a greater ratio than either the Lothians (excluding Edinburgh),

64. Aberdeen University Library, Leith-Ross of Arnage Papers, MS33464/5–24. For further consideration of the commitment of North East gentry to Britain's enslavement based societies in the Caribbean, see the forthcoming work of Dr Désha A. Osborne on Alexander Leith, a scion of the Leith of Leith Hall family, active in St Vincent in the 1770s to 1790s.

65. https://statacccscot.edina.ac.uk/static/statacc/dist/home [Last accessed 7 October 2024]. Parish numbers are based on comparative searches under terms relating to India and East Indies outlined for Table 1.

66. Eliga H. Gould, 'Zones of Law, Zones of Violence: The Legal Geography of the British Atlantic, circa 1772', *The William and Mary Quarterly*, 60, 3 (2003), 471–510; Philip J. Stern, *The Company State: Corporate Sovereignty and the Early Modern Foundations of the British Empire in India* (Oxford, 2011), 41–2.

67. Mackillop, *Human Capital*, 89.

68. Andrew Phillips and J. C. Sharman, *Outsourcing Empire: How Company States Made the Modern World* (Princeton, NJ, 2020), 136–49.

the Borders or West Central Scotland.[69] The capacity of the region's educational infrastructure to deliver the requisite professional training and cultural capital for specialised overseas employment facilitated such trends. Its influence can be seen in the fact that, with a minimum of 65 surgeons in EIC employment between 1690 and 1813, the area provided the greatest per capita percentage of medical personnel of any part of Scotland.[70] These patterns cast revealing light on the role of regionality in British integration. The North East's status as a metropolitan 'margin' or 'province' was at once consolidated and modified by gentry and burgh networks operating through a web of educational, commercial, and patronage connections to London. The use of local educational provision and associated networks to access London and its institutions suggests that the analytical emphasis should be less on themes of marginality or periphery than on provincial expansion into the metropole. The North East's trajectory was one of British connectivity and global integration.

The biographical detail in the English East India Company archive is such that it is possible to recover aspects of the highly localised geographic subsets and urban-rural dynamics outlined in the earlier discussion of what constitutes a cultural province. Some of these previously unknown micro-patterns are summarised in Table 2, which profiles North East individuals serving in the Company as civil servants, merchants, military, medical, and merchant-marine officers between 1750 and 1813. A number of trends can be identified. While the major urban centres stand out as providing a substantial minority percentage in each of the counties, the second rank burghs in Angus in particular secured noticeably larger shares of empire-related employment than their equivalents in Aberdeenshire. Conversely, Aberdeen's greater number of parishes ensure that employment was more evenly spread out over the rural hinterlands, while the other counties witnessed opportunities becoming concentrated in select number of parishes. The underlying reasons for such distribution remain unclear and could be partially explained by the gravitational pull of key landed families, burghs, or the influence of locally based interests.[71]

The social origins of these sojourners underlines the extent of participation by county gentry, merchants, clergy, and medical or legal families. But there were significant differences in some geographic and social patterns. Merchants from the secondary Angus burghs, especially Montrose, placed a noticeably greater share of family members into Company service than did their equivalents in Aberdeen or Banff. The small but persistent presence of the sons of tenant

69. Mackillop, *Human Capital and Empire*, 96.

70. British Library, Asia, Pacific and Africa Collections, India Office Records (IOR), L/MIL/9/358-365; P/328/60-64; L/AG/34/29/4-22, 185-210; 341-43; TNA, PROB 11/401/-1321.

71. For the varying political influence, both within and across the North East counties, of local aristocrats, gentry, burgh merchants, financiers, and lawyers, see Charles Elphinstone Adam (ed.), *View of the Political State of Scotland in the Last Century* (Edinburgh, 1887), 1–17, 50–7, 147–59, 188–90.

farmers among those acquiring what were after all prestigious and potentially remunerative imperial offices underlines how the North East's rural order, just as surely as the urban-based merchants and professional classes, connected to colonial opportunities. A surprising absence is the relative lack of involvement by those with maritime and shipping backgrounds. The wider point is that these trends only become apparent when adopting a regional perspective.

County	**Total Individuals**	**Known Parish/Social Origins**	**Top 5 Parish Origins**	**Top 5 Known Social Origins**
Aberdeen	204	188/150	Aberdeen = 67 (35.6%) Strathdon = 10 (5.3%) Old Machar = 8 (4.2%) Turriff = 7 (3.7%) Fraserburgh = 5 (2.6%)	Gentry = 52 (34.6%) Clergy = 21 (14%) Merchant = 15 (10%) Tenant Farmer = 15 (10%) Legal = 8 (5.3%)
Angus	190	177/91	Dundee = 47 (26.5%) Montrose = 33 (18.6%) Forfar = 17 (9.6%) Brechin = 14 (7.9%) Kirriemuir = 8 (4.5%)	Gentry = 29 (31.8%) Merchant = 25 (27.4%) Clergy = 12 (13.1%) Tenant Farmer = 10 (10.9%) Medical = 8 (8.7%)
Banff	53	49/36	Banff = 13 (26.5%) Fordyce = 7 (14.2%) Mortlach = 7 (14.2%) Inveran = 4 (8.1%) Cullen = 2 (4%)	Gentry = 18 (50%) Clergy = 4 (11.1%) Merchant = 4 (11.1%) Tenant Farmer = 4 (11.1%) Military = 3 (8.3%)
Kincardine	29	27/22	Fetteresso = 6 (27.2%) Fordoun = 6 (27.2%) Marykirk = 3 (13.6%) Nigg = 2 (9%) St Cyrus = 2 (9%)	Gentry = 9 (40.9%) Clergy = 3 (13.6%) Tenant Farmer = 3 (13.6%) Legal = 2 (9%) Military = 2 (9%)

Table 2: Local Engagement with Empire: North East Personnel and the English East India Company, 1750–1813 [72]

While Table 2 reveals some instructive sociological patterns, the overall trend suggested by Table 1 is that the Empire did not loom especially large across the North East. One exception to this seemingly muted profile is Banffshire, where

72. Scots, Irish, Welsh in Asia (SIWA) Database. Sources: IOR, J1/1-29; B/40-B/95; P/328/60-64; P/416/77-98; LAG/34/29/4-22, 185-210, 341-343; L/MIL/9/85, 107-127, 358-365; O/5/26-27, 30-1; TNA, PROB 11/549-1903; A. Farrington (ed.), *A Biographical Index of East India Company Maritime Service Officers, 1600–1834* (London, 1999), 1–885.

one parish in four or five regularly noted interaction with some aspect of colonialism. This was a discernibly higher level than in the other counties. In the case of Kincardine, observed empire connections were conspicuous by their near absence. While doubtless reflecting the idiosyncrasies of individual parish ministers, these considerable variations in the Empire's presence (or at least in perceptions of its presence) underline the insights offered by regional sensitivities. A counter to this assessment is that the accumulative effect of the different geographic sectors and empire related activities sketched in Table 1 must have been substantial. Along with a clearer identification of otherwise sub-emerged micro trends, the Statistical Accounts' representation of these developments demonstrates the role global colonialism played in metropolitan society's understanding of its own regions or 'margins'. Empire, in other words, helped constitute British 'provinciality'.

Regional and Metropolitan Intersections: London and the North East

Beyond highlighting issues of an uneven local presence, the example of the North East raises fundamental questions about how interactions with Britain's global colonialism are best framed and assessed. The direct and unmediated connections between the long eighteenth-century West of Scotland and North America and the Caribbean have a defining influence on conceptual understandings of Scotland's place and function within the Empire. As a result, the historiography emphasises bi-lateral links between Scotland and any given colonial geography rather than recovering how participation also flowed along convoluted, indirect channels.[73] The effect of this approach is to downplay the working of colonial connections through intermediate, ancillary pathways that placed some regions in a one- or two-steps-removed relationship with the wider Empire. It was through this particular mode that staple goods from the North East of Scotland first moved through British domestic markets before onward re-exportation from other regional economies and Empire-aligned ports.[74] This form of interaction explains the clear status in Table 1 of London as a defining marker of the North East of Scotland's intersection with Britain's pre-1815 colonial order.

73. For a prominent example of modelling Scotland's trajectory within the Empire through a set of direct, bilateral links to discreet geographies, see the chapter structure of T. M. Devine, *Scotland's Empire, 1600–1815* (London, 2003).

74. 'Staples' was a key concept in eighteenth-century European political economy and ideas of 'improvement' (not least in Scotland). Staples were also seen as vital to a sustainable and profitable system of empire. See, John Knox, *A View of the British Empire, More Especially Scotland; with Some Proposals for the Improvement of That Country, the Extension of Its Fisheries, and the Relief of the People* (Edinburgh, 1784), 49, 109, 140.

Not only is the metropolis mentioned in at least one-in-four or one-in-three of all parishes, its central role as the global distribution centre for the region's produce was underlined repeatedly in the Statistical Account. With such a significant percentage of the area's shipping committed to the British coasting trade, transportation aligned to the imperial metropolis rather than directly and consistently to the Atlantic colonies themselves. This was a less obvious or eye-catching alternative to Glasgow's Atlantic entryism. Stone paving, sail cloth, woollen stockings and yarn, arable crops, and especially fish and linen were fundamental to the area's economy and were shipped in large volumes to the Empire's central emporium.[75] These last two commodities in particular employed tens of thousands of men, women and children in Banff, Peterhead, Fraserburgh, Aberdeen, Arbroath and Dundee as well as across their rural hinterlands. The subsequent re-exporting overseas of these staples meant that labour, income, and daily life for large sections of the population were indirectly but substantively connected to Britain's colonial economic system. In Aberdeen alone, five companies employed 2,700 women, men, and children in the production of thread by the 1790s. The linen and sail cloth manufactory of Messrs Collison, Thompson and Co. in Aberdeen sent goods to London, from where the material was shipped to the West Indies among other markets. The same trade in linen and sail cloth destined for onwards transportation by London's merchant fleet was a primary means of employment in Arbroath, producing a turnover of £39,600 per annum in the 1790s.[76]

It was through this circuitous, two-phase mode of re-exporting that the income of the lower social classes across the North East was to some degree reliant on slavery-based transatlantic commerce and colonies. What is not clear is how consistent or significant the share of re-exporting might have been compared either to local and wider British markets or consumer demand elsewhere in Europe. These qualifications notwithstanding, such connections mean that the region shared more characteristics with West Central Scotland than the literature on Scotland's place in the Empire in this period has allowed.[77] An emphasis on wool and linen versus cotton's place in the Empire's commerce, and on

75. Andrew Mackillop, 'Dundee, London and the Empire in Asia', in Charles McKean, Bob Harris, and Christopher A. Whatley (eds), *Dundee. Renaissance to Enlightenment* (Dundee, 2009), 160–85. For examples of produce flowing to London see, *The Statistical Account of Scotland*, Aberdeen, 157–8, 181, 220; Banff, 352, Menmuir, 155; Peterhead, 549, 558.

76. *The Statistical Account of Scotland*, Aberdeen, Aberdeen, Vol. 19, 201–2. See too the statement for Monquhitter parish which emphasised the importance of the West Indies as a destination for locally produced textiles. *The Statistical Account of Scotland*, Monquhitter, Aberdeen, Vol. 21, 140.

77. Christopher A. Whatley, *The Industrial Revolution in Scotland* (Cambridge, 1997), 27–9, 85; Devine, *Scotland's Empire*, 92–3; Immanuel Wallerstein, '"One Man's Meat": The Scottish Great Leap Forward', *Review (Fernand Braudel Centre)*, 3, 4 (1980), 638.

bi-lateral as opposed to multi-lateral export flows, can underplay crucial structural similarities in the means by which Scotland's different regions accessed the Empire.

The same re-export dynamic applied with fish. This commodity, along with linen and migrants, formed a third mainstay of the North East's growing colonial connectivity. While a number of parish accounts noted the central importance of fishing to populations along the entire Moray Firth, the minister of Rathven in Banffshire detailed the mechanics of onward re-exportation of salted and pickled cod, whiting, and herring. Newcastle, London and Greenock were primary markets for the latter in particular; from there they were shipped to Jamaica and across the British Caribbean.[78] The role of Scottish herring in sustaining enslaved communities is one of the least understood aspects of the country's place in the pre-1815 empire. Given the importance of fishing to the regional economy, its neglect in the Scotland and empire literature has the knock-on effect of downplaying the substantive if indirect role of the North East in sustaining Britain's slavery-based system. Recovering the scale of fish processing and trading to transatlantic destinations will demonstrate the extent to which communities along Scotland's North Sea littoral contributed to Britain's imperial commerce.

Many of the Statistical Account entries that highlight London did so by drawing attention to another of the North East's primary means of interaction with the Empire, namely middling social order migrants. In an important social trend evident across the whole of Scotland, parish ministers commented frequently on individuals moving to the British capital and establishing careers for themselves. The promotion of what can best be described as a culture of the celebrity migrant was part of a crucial realignment in Scottish attitudes which stressed the virtuous and positive, as opposed to negative and destabilising, properties of migration.[79] Typical examples included the conspicuous philanthropy of the senior partners of the London merchant house of Phyn and Ellis and Co., both of who were natives of the Aberdeenshire parishes of Forgue and Auchterless. Active in the Montreal-based fur trade and in commerce between post-1783 British North America and the Caribbean, the company was a sprawling transatlantic organisation.[80] It is noticeable that many of these celebrity migrants were medical men. The likes of Dr Lorimer from Mortlach, Sir William Duncan from Lundie, and Sir William Fordyce from Aberdeen were taken to embody vibrant provincial con-

78. *The Statistical Account of Scotland*, Rathven, Banff, Vol. 13, 1794, 404.

79. Andrew Mackillop, 'Poverty, Health, and Imperial Wealth in Early Modern Scotland', in Gurminder K. Bhambra and Julia McClure (eds), *Imperial Inequalities The Politics of Economic Governance Across European Empires* (Manchester, 2022), 169–71.

80. Aisling MacQuarrie, *Running the Rivers: The North West Company and the Creation of a Global Enterprise, 1778–1821* (PhD Dissertation, University of Aberdeen, 2014), 31–45.

tributions to Britain's metropolitan enlightenment and the productive capacity of the university colleges.[81] The celebratory tone of this variant of mobility contrasts sharply with the noted reluctance of the population at large to countenance forms of military service likely to result in deployment overseas. The basis of this difference may have involved a latent social fissure in attitudes to the Empire or, more likely, a manifestation of a general preference for movement to London.

Interaction with the Empire through staple re-exports such as textiles (both spun and unspun), fish, quarried stone, and unskilled and professional migrants produced a recycling of colonial influences back into the North East of Scotland. An obvious example of this return dynamic was the acquisition of landed estates by individuals or families with colonial-derived wealth. This phenomenon is a well-established method of assessing the Empire's capacity to reshape Scottish society. The percolating of slavery-connected fortunes into West Central Scotland and the Highlands via estate purchase is already well quantified. To this is being added a fuller appreciation of the scale of acreage acquisition across the rest of the country by those active in other sectors of colonialism.[82] If not matching the substantial nexus between property and slavery-derived capital evident around Glasgow and large parts of the Highlands, the North East nevertheless shared in this aspect of returning empire influence. A comprehensive survey of purchases in the region by those with Atlantic empire wealth has yet to be realised. However, if other parts of Britain's global system are included it is clear that investment in acreage occurred on a substantial scale. Between 1740 and 1815 at least 31 landed estates in the area were owned by those active in the Asia half of British expansion.[83]

A less well recognised returning impact was the large-scale use of empire profits as credit to existing owners, with their properties acting as collateral. Sasine evidence confirms that while the amount deployed in this way in the North East was less than in west- or east central Scotland, the sums involved were still considerable. A typical example of these often transient and difficult to trace transactions was the loan on 10 March 1801 by Charles Ogilvie, a retired East India Company surgeon living in Montrose. On that date he lent James Carnegie-Arbuthnott of Balnamoon, west of Brechin, the sum of £2,500. In Aberdeenshire, the Udny laird, Arthur Maitland of Pittrichie borrowed £2,000 on 17

81. *The Statistical Account of Scotland*, Mortlach, Banff, Vol. 17, 1794, 433–34; *The Statistical Account of Scotland*, Lundie and Fowlis, Banff, Vol. 7, 1793, 287; *The Statistical Account of Scotland*, Vol. 21, 1799, 109.

82. T. M. Devine, 'Did Slavery Make Scotia Great? A Question Revisited', in T. M. Devine (ed.), *Recovering Scotland's Slavery Past: The Caribbean Connection* (Edinburgh, 2015), 238–39; Stephanie Barczewski, 'Scottish Landed-Estate Purchases, Empire and Union, 1700–1900', in Stephanie Barczewski and Martin Farr (eds), *The MacKenzie Moment and Imperial History: Essays in Honour of Professor John MacKenzie* (Cham, 2019), 171–88.

83. Mackillop, *Human Capital*, xvi.

July 1790 from the retired Madras army officer, Colonel Charles Campbell of Barbreck in Argyll.[84] The cumulative amount of such lending between 1781 and 1813 was £183,845 and encompassed one parish in four across the entire region.[85] Given that the average lending stock of a provincial bank in Scotland in this period amounted to approximately £50,000, profits from the East India Company's empire amounted to additional liquidity for the region equivalent to two to three additional financial institutions.[86] The extent of human, commodity and capital links between the region and the Caribbean ensured that capital derived from enslavement-reliant economies similarly appeared in the localities. On 10 April 1781 David Reid, late of Drumgeith, on the outskirts of Dundee, agreed a loan of £2,000 with David Fyffe, described as 'late of Jamaica'.[87] A survey of the sasines for the relevant counties will undoubtedly uncover other examples and almost certainly rival, if not surpass, the volume of lending identified for returning capital from Asia.

These localised developments speak to wider debates over how best to evaluate the scale, character, and significance of the Empire's impact. Attempts to explain the pervasive but often disguised ways that the overseas connection reshaped British society stress its 'everyday' and 'mundane' percolation into life and culture.[88] These characterisations of colonialism's domestic influence are part of a wider reappraisal involving the whole of the British and Irish Isles. While Scottish historical studies have been to the fore in providing robust evidence for such returning influences, the process is marked by an uneven concentration on some regions rather than others. Given the significance of the North East – be it in population terms or the London-alignment of its burghs and ports – it urgently needs attention in order that the full extent of Scottish interactions with the Empire is properly understood. Similarly, attention has focused on estate purchase as opposed to other aspects of civic and urban society. In another indication that the North East's engagement was more substantial than the existing literature suggests, returning impacts can be traced into aspects of community life not usually associated with the Empire. In a pattern common to the rest of Scotland, property acquisition by those with empire-derived capital was quickly followed by the implementa-

84. NRS, Registers of Sasines (Abridgements), Forfar [4083]; [4111]; Aberdeen [891].

85. NRS, Registers of Sasines (Abridgements), Aberdeen [1–3991]; Banff [1–338]; Forfar [1–7184]; Kincardine [1–1045].

86. C. W. Munn, *The Scottish Provincial Banking Companies, 1747–1864* (Edinburgh, 1981), 23–58.

87. NRS, Register of Sasines (Abridgements), Forfar [37, 40].

88. Catherine Hall and Sonya Rose, 'Introduction: Being at Home with the Empire', in Catherine Hall and Sonya O. Rose (eds), *At Home with the Empire: Metropolitan Culture and the Imperial World* (Cambridge, 2006), 13–14, 32–4, 51–2.

tion of 'improvement'.[89] In a reflection of the importance of the Caribbean link to the North East, the most prominent examples of this phenomenon in the Statistical Account related to West India returnees. Ownership of the estates of Kincardine and of Knockespock in Aberdeenshire, Dunnottar, Netherby, and Sketraw in Kincardine between the 1780s and early 1800s entailed the deployment of enslavement-related wealth in country house construction, enclosure, and tenurial innovation.[90]

To the reshaping of the propertied order and rural landscapes can be added the injection of imperial wealth into the region's civic, educational and social welfare sectors. The link between philanthropy and the cultural politics of domesticating colonialism's impact on metropolitan society is an important new area of research.[91] With its well-developed educational, kirk, and hospital provision (and a commensurate surviving archival record), the North East of Scotland is arguably one of the best districts of the British and Irish Isles for exploring this crucial dynamic. A survey of the Statistical Accounts and the wills and testaments of North East individuals in the Asia half of the Empire reveal that at least 17 parishes, as well as the two university colleges, were in receipt of charitable bequests. Between c.1730 and c.1820 those benefiting from Caribbean-based economies of enslavement donated, at a conservative estimate, £10,692 to civic philanthropy. East India donations amounted for a further £12,115, although the vast bulk of this (£10,000) was a single bequest by the Episcopalian educationalist Dr Andrew Bell of Madras; his donation established two schools in Aberdeen with a combined roll of 700 male and female pupils by the 1830s.[92] What these processes reveal is the innately co-constitutive relationship between the development of long eighteenth-century North East society and the Empire. The region's well developed educational and social welfare infrastructure produced well-trained, educated migrants who were ideally placed to exploit technocratic and professional service opportunities overseas. But in turn imperial profits helped to materially sustain, enhance, and modernise the civic and educational sectors.

89. Andrew Mackillop, 'The Highlands and the Returning Nabob: Sir Hector Munro of Novar, 1770–1807', in Marjory Harper (ed.), *Emigrant Homecomings: The Return Movement of Emigrants, 1600–2000* (Manchester, 2005), 233–61.

90. *Statistical Account of Scotland*; Appendix for Kincardine O'Neil (Aberdeen), 134; Clatt (Aberdeen), 540; Fetteresso (Kincardine), 593; *New Statistical Account*, Dunnottar (Kincardine), 222–23.

91. Kate Donington, *The Bonds of Family: Slavery, Commerce and Culture in the British Atlantic World* (Manchester, 2020), 254–6; Mackillop, 'Poverty, Health, and Imperial Wealth', 165–9.

92. *The Statistical Account of Scotland*: Tulloch, Glengairn and Glenmuick (Aberdeen), 221; Appendix to Glenmuick (Aberdeen), 236; Midmar (Aberdeen), 525; Birse (Aberdeen), 119 and 127; St. Vigeans (Forfar), 180; *New Statistical Account*, Gamrie (Banff), 295; Cullen (Banff), 352; Aberdeen (Aberdeen), 40; Montrose (Forfar), 290; Mackillop, *Human Capital*, 274.

The North East of Scotland: A 'staple-producing province'

This survey inevitably misses out as much as it covers. The state of research into empire connections is such that there are still large gaps in knowledge and interpretation. Little has been said about the Episcopalian community and how its networks shaped the trajectory and character of the region's participation. Loss of established status in the early 1690s certainly produced a diaspora of that church's clergy into what was a relatively receptive Anglican-dominated empire. This understudied development, exemplified by the migration of the King's College educated James Blair to Virginia in 1689, is a major theme requiring detailed research.[93] Neither has the influence of the regionally inflected enlightenment culture at King's and Marischal College been systematically linked to key imperial controversies, be these the Empire's dependency on the mass enslavement of Africans and their descendants or the rejection of British authority by North Americans.[94] James Beattie's denunciation in 1770 of David Hume's racialised reading of Africans and their culture is well known. It certainly marked profound differences in personal philosophy; but individualised disagreements co-existed alongside the reality that both men resided in communities actively benefitting from Britain's economies of enslavement.[95]

Missing too are those on the receiving end of British colonialism, be it enslaved peoples working on the plantations of the likes of Gordon of Knockespock, or Margaret Campbell, the mixed-race daughter of an East India Company surgeon and an Indonesian woman. Sent to Scotland upon her father's death, she was kept at a geographic and emotional distance from her paternal family in Perthshire, and subsequently lived and died in mid-to-late 1780s Aberdeenshire.[96] Recovering the lived experience of such people requires methodologies that bring together disparate, local, national, and transnational archive resources.[97] Given the scale of such a research agenda, regional approaches offer realistic and realisable ways forward.

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93. J. Bell, 'Blair, James (1655/6–1743), Church of England Clergyman and Founder of the College of William and Mary', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. https://www.oxforddnb-com.ezproxy.lib.gla.ac.uk/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-2564 [Last accessed 7 October 2024].

94. For a yet to be superseded survey of Enlightenment-era Aberdeen's intellectual milieu, including assessments of the Empire, see Jennifer J. Carter and Joan H. Pittock (eds), *Aberdeen and the Enlightenmen*t (Aberdeen, 1987).

95. James Beattie, *An Essay on the Nature and Immutability of Truth; In Opposition to Sophistry and Scepticism* (Edinburgh, 1770), 478–81.

96. Andrew Mackillop, 'Gender, Race, and Fortunes in the English East India Company's 'Familial Proto-State': The Evidence of Scottish Wills and Testaments c.1740–c.1820', *Journal of Indian Ocean World Studies*, 5, 2 (2021), 180–1.

97. Eloise Grey, 'Natural Children, Country Wives, and Country Girls in Nineteenth-Century India and Northeast Scotland', *Historical Reflections*, 47, 1 (2021), 31–58.

Stressing the positives of a regional lens should be balanced by an awareness of some of the constraints. Indeed, it is perfectly valid to ask what value there is in centring the North East of Scotland within ongoing reassessments of the global nature of pre-1815 British imperialism? If viewing Britain's empire through a Scottish lens constitutes a form of 'metropolitan parochialism', as has been argued by some scholars of the 'New Imperial History', then are there additional challenges arising from a focus on just one region?[98] Given the rebalancing of Eurocentricism towards interpretative space for individuals, communities, and cultures previously silenced by historic colonialism, the question is an important cautionary injunction.[99] In an increasingly de-centred landscape of British imperial studies and new global histories, adopting a North East of Scotland framework might seem to be a case of the regional turn re-privileging the coloniser over the colonised?

While remaining sensitive to this potential for unreflective metrocentricism, the emphasis here is on the renewed value of regional perspectives when considering early modern Europe's global expansion. There is undoubtedly a case to be made for working regionally and for using the North East of Scotland as a productive example of this local-to-global approach. Moving beyond the established emphasis on direct and bilateral frameworks – Glasgow to the Chesapeake, the Highlands to North American settlement frontiers, or Orkney to the Hudson's Bay territory – offers more than a simple geographic extension in coverage of Scotland's early modern globalisation. A crucial insight offered by the North East is that it points to less obvious, circuitous, and multi-lateral modes of interaction with empire. Like the Highlands, this part of Scotland relied heavily on key staple exports, not least primary produce like fish and migrants. However, the North East was also endowed with a greater urban, commercial, civic and educational capacity and a broader range of higher value manufactured commodities, especially finished woollen and linen textiles. Ultimately, its range of staples was more diverse and more valuable than those of the Highlands.

Meanwhile, in ways similar to the 'resource and service zones' of mainland Europe, the North East engaged between the c.1680s and c.1750s in trans-imperial forms of migration shaped by its pronounced North Sea orientation. While these points of contact enabled involvement in Dutch and Swedish

98. Antoinette Burton, 'Who Needs the Nation? Interrogating "British" History', *Journal of Historical Sociology*, 10 (1997), 227–48. While a long-established critique of the 'Scotland and Empire' approach, Burton's point has not been addressed by Scottish historical studies in a systematic way.

99. Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (Princeton, New Jersey, 2000), 11–21; Sebastian Conrad, *What is Global History?* (Princeton, New Jersey, 2016), 62–89.

expansion, the region's dominant and most influential mode of connection was with the pre-1815 phase of British expansion. This part of Scotland therefore sits in an intriguing middle ground, neither an imperial 'core' nor a resource and service zone sitting beyond the national borders of a colonial metropole. While it shared some structural characteristics with other European margins or service and resource areas like Scandinavia or the Swiss Cantons, the North East was a well-integrated, albeit provincial, part of imperial Great Britain. This difference points to a previously unrecognised feature of the 'resource-service zones' concept. The precise contours of interaction with empire, which a regional-level analysis reveals, demonstrate that the European zones or margins existed on an important and still to be fully explored spectrum. This ranged from 'staple provinces' inside the sovereign territories of the imperial powers to the 'resource service zones' that existed outside national boundaries and which participated indirectly and circuitously in global expansion. In the case of the North East of Scotland, involvement occurred through sustained and diverse forms of human migration and large-scale staple commodity re-exporting, especially through London. These modes of participation in empire underline the area's status as a staple-producing metropolitan province. This was a form of relationship with empire that was more sustainable, formative, and integrative than the 'resource service zones' identified for large parts of continental Europe.

Yet the value of the Scottish North East goes beyond simply confirming existing interpretations. Engagement with early modern British imperialism involved the highly effective re-purposing of local educational and civic provision to facilitate artisanal and technocratic forms of employment overseas. This development enabled substantial social and material mobility for a variety of different groups, including those below the landed gentry. These migration and service-led responses to emerging global colonialism operated along a clear North Sea and London orientation. As a regionally appropriate adjustment, this phenomenon heavily influenced the timing and extent of the region's economic and social inclusion into the British Empire and the domestic British economy. In a Scottish and British context, this mode of integration is an underexplored way of better understanding national, transnational, and global links. Ideas of migration-led capitalism and of the staple-producing metropolitan province are more apt for large parts of Scotland when compared with the better-known direct, bi-lateral interactions with empire associated with the Clyde basin or mass tenant emigration from the Highlands. In this sense the North East offers productive ways for thinking about other regions or 'provinces' of Scotland, such as the East Central Lowlands or the East and West Borders, whose trajectories within the British Empire in this period remain relatively unclear.

It is also a model which is potentially transferable to other provincial regions of Europe, especially those contained within the metropolitan territories of the dominant imperial powers like the Netherlands, France, Portugal and Spain. The example of the North East enables a better understanding of the ways in which trans-imperial connections both relied upon older modes of socio-economic exchange while simultaneously reconfiguring large parts of Europe. The history of this part of Scotland in this period points towards a diverse range of 'resource and service zones' and more integrated 'staple provinces' which functioned on a sliding scale of proximity to, and interaction with, the metropolitan centres. These regionally constituted districts relate directly to wider questions in global history around the role of early modern Europe's 'peripheral' or 'comparatively disadvantaged' zones in the continent's worldwide expansion.[100] Indeed, it is testimony to the distinctive trajectory of Scotland's integration into pre-1820 colonialism that the country is already used as an example to test general models of global development. It is cited as illustrative of the ways in which the emerging world economy ensured certain areas of Europe were 'peripheralised' or developed 'by invitation'. In this framing Scotland experienced the former process between c. 1600 and 1707, and the latter phenomenon after c.1750.[101] Yet these wider understandings neglect (or at least under play) the role of regionality. In Scotland's case, the status and significance of the North East is decidedly ambiguous. On the one hand, it is aligned with the Highlands on the basis of lacking the type of broad manufacturing and industrialising economy emerging by 1800 in the central Lowlands. Yet the area's productive capacity and diversity was such that the linen producing zone around Dundee is simultaneously seen as an exemplar of the regionalisation of production which so marked out Britain's early industrial revolution.[102] By these understandings a key part of Scotland experiences both 'peripheralisation' and 'development' simultaneously. That the region can be conceptualised in such diverse ways underscores its wider value beyond its own boundaries.

If reviewed with the sensitivities provided by a regional lens, the North East offers a range of insights which extend beyond Scottish and British histories. It offers a nuanced example of an early modern Europe engaging with

100. Pomeranz, *The Great Divergence*, 31–107; Prasannan Parthasarathi, *Why Europe Grew Rich and Asia Did Not: Global Economic Divergence, 1600–1850* (Cambridge, 2011), 5–7.

101. Wallerstein, 'One Man's Meat', 636–9; T. C. Smout, 'Where Had the Scottish Economy Got to by the Third Quarter of the Eighteenth Century?', in Istvan Hont and Michael Ignatieff (eds), *Wealth and Virtue: The Shaping of Political Economy in the Scottish Enlightenment* (Cambridge, 1985), 48, 50, 57, 71.

102. Wallerstein, 'One Man's Meat', 638; Whatley, *The Industrial Revolution in Scotland*, 27–9, 74, 85.

global imperialism not simply through 'core' zones or consolidating nation states but also by means of a mosaic of distinctive yet integrating 'staple producing provinces'.[103] A clearer awareness of this configuration and mode of entry into empire and the emerging world economy is one of the key insights to be gained by focusing on this part of Scotland. Its example confirms how approaches which scale down to the regional and local are a valuable way of scaling up to the global.

103. Wallerstein, *The Modern World-System II*, 75–91, 131–43; Kenneth Pomeranz, *The Great Divergence: China, Europe, and the Making of the Modern World Economy* (Princeton and Oxford, 2000), 5, 7–8, 31–107.