

Kathrin Zickermann

*Across the German Sea. Early Modern Scottish
Connections with the Wider Elbe-Weser Region*

Series: The Northern World. Brill: Leiden/Boston,
2013; pp.272 (including index), €109,00

ISBN 9789004248342

SCOTTISH mercantile, military, and religious connections with northern-western German territory are the focal point in Kathrin Zickermann's study. The estuaries of the two big rivers—the Elbe and the Weser— and the dominating commercial centres of Hamburg and Bremen made the region economically distinct. Formally a part of the Holy Roman Empire, the region was also divided among other polities. Hamburg and Bremen were independent Hanseatic cities with their own institutions, including a marked religious tolerance, and specific economic and political interests.

Denmark and Sweden recognized the region's significance and attempted to incorporate it into their territories. Their engagements entailed new tensions and conflicts between the two Nordic kingdoms, and between the kingdoms and the two free cities. Covering a "long" seventeenth century the study takes into account the political developments of the Oldenburg-Stuart (Danish-Scottish) diplomacy in the late-seventeenth century, the Thirty Years' War, the conflicts between Sweden and Denmark, the Civil Wars in Britain, and the Glorious Revolution of 1688. These were all historical circumstances that had a big impact on movements of Scots to and from Scotland, as well as on their activities in Hamburg and Bremen, and Sweden and Denmark. The story told is closely related to the destiny of Scottish communities in the wider Baltic area, the United Provinces, and other parts of the Holy Roman Empire. Zickermann relies heavily on previous research on these communities. Her approach is a study of Scottish networking, although without explicitly reflecting much on networking as a tool of analysis. The approach allows for an exploitation of a wide range of archives in Scotland, Germany, Sweden

and Denmark. One of the strengths of the book is how it draws on a variety of rich sources in different languages. If anything the subject, Scottish networks, is a good illustration of the necessity of going beyond state borders when conducting historical research. Scots, as well as many other early-modern groups, migrated fairly freely across the borders.

The reasons for their migration are discussed in three empirical chapters. Chapter 2 studies Scottish commercial links and mercantile networks in the Wider Elbe-Weser Region, chapter 3 looks at the diplomatic (political) and military networks of the Scots, and chapter 4 focuses on religiously motivated migrations. Of course, a strict division between the three migrant contexts is difficult to draw. Soldiers and officers also entered into economic relations, and Scottish merchants could have strong religious identities. It is also important to stress that the motives for emigration changed over time. Thus Calvinism appears to play an important role in the 1620s, 1630s and 1680s, but there was no religiously motivated migration after 1688. Loyalties to the Stuarts were important during the Thirty Years' War and after 1688, in the Jacobite transformation.

Chapter 2 pays attention to the commercial exchanges between Bremen and Hamburg, Scotland, and the people engaged in it. First, it is important to stress that Hamburg's role was much more significant, mainly because of the magnitude of the trade in the city. Hamburg was a commercial entrepôt with a similar role to Amsterdam or London, as aside from commodity exchange there was a concentration of other functions in the city (finances, commercial information, diplomatic representation etc.). Second, Hamburg was a staple of Merchant Adventurers which, as Zickermann shows, also had many Scottish members. Third, the city of Hamburg welcomed Protestant migrants (Calvinists and Lutherans) from the southern Netherlands as well as other parts of Europe, including Scotland. The combination of natural preconditions, institutions, political independence, and the mixture of migrant communities made Hamburg a highly dynamic commercial centre.

The chapter investigates three typical Scottish commodities the significance of which has not been fully understood and valued: fish (whitefish and herring), salt, and coal. It was especially in regards to the fish that the Elbe-Weser Region was an important destination. Scottish fish competed with Dutch herring on the German market, and Scottish trading networks linked together the German hinterland, Bremen and Hamburg, and the Shetland Islands. Scottish salt was also significant in the exchange. While of a lower quality than French or Portuguese salt the price of Scottish salt made the commodity attractive. Coal was supplied to city industries in Bremen and Hamburg. In general, Scottish merchants were not specialists, they traded

in many goods. As the businesses of Alexander and Robert Jolly in the late-seventeenth century show, they exploited family networks and acquaintances with officials, officers and other useful connections. Zickermann's detailed study of merchant networks illustrates well the complexity and trans-border character of Scottish trade, but without trade data it is difficult to estimate the actual share of Scottish trade in Hamburg or Bremen in comparison to Dutch and/or German trade.

In the next empirical chapter (chapter 4) we meet Stuart diplomats, men like Robert Anstruther or Joseph Averie, who represented Scottish and British interests with Denmark. For example, with the Scottish troops involved in the Thirty Years' War on the Danish side the diplomats organised provisioning for Scottish soldiers in the region. After Sweden's entry in the war Scots in the services of the Swedish king often ended up playing a crucial role on the vulnerable borders marking out Swedish territory on the continent. Alexander Erskine (von Erskain) for example played a key role in establishing the Swedish administration in Stift Bremen-Verden. Sweden received the territory in the Peace Treaty of Westphalia but the Stift did not include the city of Bremen itself; instead the city of Stade was made the seat of Swedish administration and many Scots settling there. This symbiosis between Swedish kings and Scots continued until the end of Swedish administration of Bremen-Verden. The concluding empirical chapter deals with Scottish missionaries and Calvinist migrants in the area. John Durie's attempts to establish himself in Hamburg and Bremen are described in detail, together with the efforts to invite Calvinists to Bremen and Brunswick-Lüneburg in the late-seventeenth century, in the light of the deteriorating situation in Britain during the final years of Stuart reign. The book comes with a detailed name index, an especially valuable addition given the number of individuals, families and networks mapped out in the work.

The strength of this book lies in the systematic cover of the Scottish presence in the Elbe-Weser Region. The author has collected an impressive amount of individual information from a variety of sources, including many non-Scottish archives. The mapping of Scottish networks, links between merchants, diplomats, officers and religious migrants and others, illustrates well the significant Scottish presence in the area. In that respect Zickermann's work is an important contribution for our understanding of the Scottish presence in the early-modern history of the states, and in territories stretching across north-west Europe.

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