Figure 1   Map of the Customs Port of Alloa

ALLOA PORT, CUSTOMS AND EXCISE ACCOUNTS – ANALYSIS OF A LOCAL HISTORY GROUP'S RESEARCH PROJECT

Marion Haynes

Several members of the Clackmannanshire Field Studies Society had expressed an interest in undertaking research into the history of Alloa Harbour and the possibilities of looking into the Historical Records of the Port were examined. It was initially suggested that the Salt Tax Records should form the starting point for research but a brief examination showed that work on them was likely to be extremely dull, as far as amateur historians were concerned, and the Customs and Excise Accounts were found to be much more interesting, containing references to exotic, far away places, names of ships and people and to a wide variety of cargoes, some of which defied explanation.

It was thought that any work which was undertaken on the Accounts would be of interest to other bodies, notably local schools, libraries and the University of Stirling, and the process of handling the records, together with their analysis, would prove of benefit to those taking part in the research. In the event, much of the success of the project has been related to the tremendous help given by the staff of the Scottish Record Office, within which these particular records are held.

The Alloa Customs Accounts from 1742 – 1880, are available in the Historical Research Department of the Scottish Record Office. The Port of Alloa includes the harbours of the Upper Forth Estuary; Kincardine, Kennetpans, Airth, Dunmore, Clackmannan Pow, Alloa, Cambus, Fallin, Manor Pow, Stirling.

The possibility of photo-copying the accounts was looked into, but this would have proved expensive and would have placed a tremendous burden on the Record Office Staff. Also, in the end, we would have had only one quality-reduced copy which would be difficult to read, difficult to translate and difficult to analyse.

It was decided to manually extract the information in the accounts on a pro-forma designed to produce a first stage analysis. This form gives a title, in this case the Port of Alloa, the year and

the quarter, whether incoming or outgoing goods, and the name of the researcher.

PORT	YEAR		QUARTER		RESEARCHER	
Date	Ship	Port of Registry	Master	Origin or Destination	Agent	Cargo
	1	2	3	4	5	6

Below this in columns, are the date, the name of the ship, the Port of Registry, the Master of the ship. the Origin or Destination of the cargo, the Agent paying the duty and finally the Cargo. The completed format, which lends itself better to copying as it is in pencil on white A4 sheets, is not simply a copy of the accounts, as they have been to a certain extent translated, corrected and interpreted and are now ready for further analysis.

A number of problems were encountered in handling the Accounts. Firstly, only one person could work on one book at a time, so that if several people were working at the same time they were each working on the first year in a particular volume, not on a continuous period. Secondly, some pages of the records were torn with pieces missing, the spellings were inconsistent and the handwriting, though often attractive, was difficult to read. At first, the cargoes were strange to the researcher, and the weights and measures unfamiliar, numbers were written out in full, often in a strange form. (e.g. One hundred, two quarters and eight; meaning 158.)

Lastly, only foreign trade, or that on which duty had to be paid, was being recorded on the accounts, the bulk of coastal traffic being unrecorded.

We soon realised that, with the available workers, it would take 5 or 6 years to transcribe all the accounts and as the first year of nine books had been started it was decided to finish these nine years, which came at intervals from 1742 to 1786, and attempt an analysis of what amounted to a sample of the accounts. The limitations of such an analysis are considerable, as only ships exporting and importing chargeable goods are recorded in the accounts. The analysis is not definitive, as only a sample of nine years is available, but we carried on with the limited information to see if such an analysis was a viable proposition or whether a better approach could be devised, or a revision of the transcription form appeared to be necessary.

Various ways of analysing the information on the transcription form were investigated. We could look at the analysis from the "Ship" point of view; that is from column 1 on the transcription form, where individual ship movements and voyage studies could be undertaken. From column 2, the Port of Registry, we could look at the increase or decline in the importance of the various ports of registry of vessels in relation to total traffic of the Port of Alloa in overseas trade. From columns 3 and 5, the Master and the Agent, ship-owning and trading families could be investigated. It was found for example, that the Master often acted as his own Agent, and carried cargo on his own behalf. From the trade point of view, we could use column 4, the Origin or Destination of the cargo, to study patterns of trade and its movement to or away from certain areas and ports. From column 6, the Cargo, we could look at the types of cargo, and their relative importance by weight and volume, e.g. in 1763 timber was the most important import into Alloa. We could then go into finer detail, comparing quantities of Fir and Oak wood or see the growing importance at certain times, of ready worked timbers such as wainscotts, boom spars and harrow bills. We could analyse certain cargo movements, for example, the quantity of coal exported, either as gross port figures or the export volumes from Alloa to an individual destination. An interesting study could be made of the cargo in general, looking at the weights and numeration used during this period and deducing the increasing size of ships from the increasing weights of cargo. Finally the date, months and season could be studied in relation to movements of ships and different types of cargo in an endeavour to arrive at patterns of annual trade.

Summary Form Analyses

The first step in the analysis after the transcription of information from the records was to devise a Summary Form, which enabled the extraction of four columns; the Ship, the Port of Registry, the Master and the Origin or Destination of the cargo.

PORT	YEAR	RESEARCHER
Ship	Port of Registry	Master	Origin/Destination

This greatly simplified the available information and moved away from complicated investigations of the cargo. As the Accounts referred to duties paid, the total cargo from one vessel might be recorded as a large number of separate entries spread over several pages. From these sometimes numerous entries relating to one ship as

116 it unloaded or loaded its cargo, the information was now rationalised to a single entry. This created the major problem related to the Summary Form, and was a potential source of error; a decision had to be taken on whether a ship stayed in harbour during its various unloading or loadings, or whether it may have undertaken a coastwise journey while waiting. Ship movements between entries are mere supposition and, therefore, some ships appear to have been in harbour several weeks, which may indeed have been the case if the weather was unfavourable for sailing. Three to four weeks was in general allowed for a return journey to the Low Countries and Scandinavia, and longer for a Baltic journey, before a ship was counted as being involved on another trip.

The next step was the construction of various synopses to try to identify trends and in Figure 2 we can see the basic trade pattern involving the gross volume of the traffic in terms of the number of ships going in and out of the Port of Alloa. It can be seen that the number of ships exporting is generally greater than the number importing. In only two of the years we were able to study is this pattern reversed and these have the smallest differences between outgoing and incoming traffic. Perhaps we may conjecture that ships importing landed their cargoes at other ports and then came to Alloa to load up with coal for export. It may be possible to clarify this supposition by studying the Customs Records of other East Coast ports.

It is important to bear in mind that a decrease in the number of ships over the period studied would not necessarily mean a decrease in the volume of cargo as ships became bigger as the century progressed.

In Figure 3 the yearly totals are broken down into the four quarters of the year. At this time of sailing ships we expected to find that the bulk of trade would be in the mid-summer quarter, but it is interesting to note that this is not often the case, and that trade is often biased towards the Michaelmas and Christmas quarters. This suggests that if the market was there ships braved all weathers to deliver, and of course, there would be more demand for coal in the colder months and a higher demand for wines before Christmas.

The synopses in Figure 4 list, in A1, the annual totals of the Ports of Registry for incoming ships and, in A2, the annual totals of the Ports of Origin. In B1 the annual totals of the Ports of Registry for outgoing ships and B2 the annual totals of the Ports of Destination.

If we look at A1, ignoring infrequent entries, we have a short list of local ports, in order of importance; Alloa, Kincardine, Airth, Bo'ness, Stirling, Leith and Elphinstone. If we look at the trends we see a build up of vessels registered in Alloa and Kincardine and a run down of those from Airth, with Bo'ness coming to a peak at mid-period, then declining and finally reviving at the end of the period under study.

Looking at the Ports of Origin, in A2, we see a wide scatter of ports with a few such as Campvere, Gottenburg, Danzig, Memel and Rotterdam pre-eminent and we see trade moving increasingly from the Low Countries to the Baltic Ports.

In B1, the Ports of Registry of outgoing traffic, Alloa, Airth, Bo'ness, Leith and later Kincardine are the most important ports using Alloa and we see significantly many East Coast ports, and this is possibly where the missing imports are. Ships could have taken imports to the East Coast ports before coming on to Alloa for coal and this could be an interesting area for study.

An analysis from the synopses looked at trade between Alloa Port and Campvere, figures 5a and b, with block graphs of the percentage of total dutiable trade in import and exports. (Percentages were used because of the discrepancy between exports and imports in the total figures.) As far as trade into Alloa is concerned Campvere is important with an average of 10%, but exports are much more significant with an average of 23%, with most years considerably in excess of this. Secondly there is a decline in both so that by the end of the period trade with Alloa has more or less disappeared. There are wide variations within the period and, to be more specific, there is a need to fill in the missing years.

In an analysis of a single Port of Registry, in figure 5c, ships from Airth using the Port of Alloa are expressed as a percentage of the total trade of Alloa Port. It can be seen that these vessels were more important in Alloa's imports than in exports, with a decline to near zero towards the end of the period. Here again more data is needed to show the intervening years and perhaps explain the 'wild' years in mid-period.

A number of conclusions may be tentatively drawn from the work so far accomplished. Firstly, the system of forms designed to transfer information from the original records is technically viable using "amateur" labour. Secondly, the hierachical nature of the summary

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forms does permit easy handling of the more specific types of information. Thirdly, the years currently available would appear to be too widely spaced to permit any detailed patterns of trade being postulated. Lastly, and perhaps most importantly, we might conclude that the work was sufficiently interesting to attract the necessary "volunteers" to undertake it.

We are hoping to continue with the work of filling in the gaps and would like to take the opportunity of thanking all those members of the Clackmannanshire Field Studies Society who have given of their time. We would also like to express our appreciation for the vast amount of guidance and assistance afforded to us by the Keeper of the Scottish Record Office and his staff.

Ports of Registry	1743	1748	1755	1761	1766	1771	1776	1781	1785
Airth	8	8	3	1	8	2	5	–	1
Alloa	5	1	4	1	7	11	11	5	12
Amsterdam	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Arbroath	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	1
Bo'ness	1	5	1	5	–	–	–	3	3
Burntisland	1	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Carron	–	1	–	–	–	1	–	1	2
Christiansands	–	3	–	2	–	–	–	–	–
Clackmannan	–	–	–	–	1	–	–	–	–
Culross	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	2	1
Dundee	–	–	–	–	1	1	–	–	1
Dunmorepark	–	–	–	–	1	–	–	–	–
Dysart	–	–	1	–	–	1	2	1	1
Elphinstone	4	1	2	–	–	–	–	–	–
Ely	–	–	–	–	–	1	–	–	–
Fallin	–	1	1	–	–	–	–	–	–
Fleckyfever	–	–	–	–	2	1	–	–	–
Fraserburgh	–	–	–	–	–	–	1	–	–
Frederickshalls	–	–	–	1	–	–	–	–	–
Frieland	–	–	1	–	–	–	–	–	–
Glasgow	–	–	2	–	–	–	–	–	–
Glenburgh	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	2
Gottenburgh	–	–	–	8	–	–	–	–	1
Grangemouth	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	1
Inverkeithing	–	1	–	–	–	–	1	–	1
Kennet	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	1	1
Kincardine	–	2	–	1	7	8	20	8	22
Kirkcaldy	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	1
Leith	2	1	–	1	1	–	–	–	–
Leven	–	–	1	–	–	–	–	–	–
Longraind	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	1
Lymkilns	–	–	–	–	1	2	–	–	–
Mandale	–	–	–	–	–	1	–	–	–
Queensferry	–	–	–	1	–	–	–	–	–
Redhead	–	–	1	–	–	–	–	–	–
Stirling	4	1	–	1	3	1	–	–	–
Stockholm	–	–	–	2	–	–	–	–	–
Sunderland	–	–	–	–	1	–	–	–	–
Torryburn	–	–	–	–	1	–	–	–	2

Figure 4 A1   Annual totals incoming by port of registry

Marion Haynes

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PORT OF ALLOA CUSTOMS ACCOUNTS

Figure 2   Analysis so far completed

Totals of Outgoing Ships:		Total of Incoming Ships:	
1742-43	66		25
1748-49	34		25
1755-56	35		17
1761-62	20		24
1766-67	54		35
1771-72	45		30
1776-77	46		39
1781-82	35		21
1785-86	49		54

Figure 3   Quarterly totals

	Outgoing Ships				Incoming Ships			
Year	Xmas	Lady-day	Mid-sum	Mic.-mas.	Xmas	Lady-day	Mid-sum	Mic.-mas.
1743	11	11	21	23	6	2	8	9
1748/9	6	6	12	10	6	4	9	8
1755/6	14	2	7	11	6	3	6	2
1761/2	2	1	6	11	8	1	9	6
1766/7	16	14	6	18	11	8	5	11
1771/2	5	10	8	22	10	4	6	10
1776/7	11	10	18	7	16	4	7	12
1781/2	4	8	7	16	9	3	—	9
1785/6	3	4	18	24	29	4	4	17

Figures 2 and 3

Ports of Origin	1743	1748	1755	1761	1766	1771	1776	1781	1785
Amsterdam	1	—	1	—	2	—	—	—	1
Arrundale	1	3	—	—	—	—	1	—	2
Bergen	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—
Bremen	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1
Campvere	5	1	3	1	6	4	5	—	—
Christiana	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—
Christiansands	2	8	2	2	—	—	—	—	1
Copenhagen	—	—	2	—	1	—	1	—	—
Danzig	—	—	—	—	4	4	5	2	10
Drunton	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Dunkirk	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Easterspere	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—
Fleckyfever	—	2	—	—	2	—	—	—	—
Frederickshalls	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—
Gottenburg	3	4	3	13	11	9	10	10	15
Guernsey	—	—	—	2	—	—	—	—	—
Hamburg	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—
Koningsburgh	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	2
Larwick	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Lisbon	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—
London	—	—	2	1	1	—	—	1	—
Mandale	2	—	2	—	—	2	—	—	2
Memel	—	—	—	—	1	3	11	7	14
Moss	1	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Nefsham	—	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Norway	3	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—
Oporto	1	—	1	—	2	—	—	—	—
Petersburgh	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	1	—
Pillaw	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1
Prigas	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	2
Prostocks	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1
Riga	—	—	—	4	1	—	—	—	—
Rotterdam	3	2	—	—	1	3	4	—	1
Seibon	—	—	—	—	2	—	—	—	—
Shien	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1
Stavanger	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Stetin	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—
Stockholm	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—

Figure 4 A2   Annual totals incoming by ports of origin

Ports of Registry	1743	1748	1755	1761	1766	1771	1776	1781	1785
Aberdeen	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	3
Airth	14	9	1	—	6	1	3	2	2
Alloa	6	—	2	2	6	9	8	8	15
Amsterdam	—	1	—	2	—	—	—	—	—
Anstruther	1	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Arbroath	—	—	1	—	3	—	2	—	1
Arrundale	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—
Berwick	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Bo'ness	—	8	4	1	4	4	3	1	9
Burntisland	6	1	2	—	—	—	—	—	—
Campbeltown	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—
Carron	—	1	—	—	—	1	1	2	—
Christiana	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—
Christiansands	—	—	—	2	—	—	—	—	—
Clackmannan	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—
Crail	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—
Denbigh	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—
Dunbar	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1
Dundee	3	2	3	—	1	—	1	—	1
Dunnyker	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—
Dysart	2	—	—	—	—	1	1	—	—
East Frieland	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—
Edinburgh	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Elphinstone	4	3	2	—	—	—	—	1	—
Eyemouth	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—
Fain	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—
Fallin	—	1	2	—	—	—	—	—	—
Frayerburgh	—	—	—	—	—	1	1	—	—
Frederickshall	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	2	—
Frietyland	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—
Gardenstone	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—
Glensburgh	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1
Gottenburgh	—	—	—	2	—	—	—	1	—
Grangemouth	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1
Helensburgh	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1
Hull	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—
Inverkeithing	6	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—
Kincardine	—	—	—	1	10	7	11	10	7

Figure 4 B1   Annual totals outgoing by port of registry

Ports of Registry	1743	1748	1755	1761	1766	1771	1776	1781	1785
Kinghorn	2	—	3	—	—	—	—	—	—
Kirkcaldy	6	—	—	—	2	—	2	1	—
Leith	4	3	4	—	8	5	7	2	5
Leven	—	—	—	—	1	4	—	—	—
Lymekilns	—	—	—	—	1	4	—	—	—
Methill	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—
Montrose	—	1	—	—	1	1	1	—	—
Newburgh	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—
North Arrundale	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
North Berwick	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	1
North Queesferry	1	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—
Ostend	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—
Perth	2	—	1	—	3	—	1	—	—
Pittenweem	1	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—
Portsoy	—	—	—	—	1	1	1	—	—
Prestonpans	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Queensferry	1	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—
Rotterdam	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—
Sealoch	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—
Spey	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—
Stavanger	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—
Stirling	2	—	—	—	2	1	—	—	—
Stockholm	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—
Stonehaven	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—
Sunderland	—	—	—	4	2	1	—	—	—
Torry	—	—	—	—	—	2	—	—	—
Wemyss	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—
Whitby	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Zurichzee	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—

Figure 4 B1   Annual totals outgoing by port of registry — continued

Port of Destination	1743	1748	1755	1761	1766	1771	1776	1781	1785
Amsterdam	12	4	10	6	3	1	1	—	—
Arnholt	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1
Arrundale	1	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—
Bergin	1	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Bremen	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1
Campvere	29	17	10	1	17	14	11	—	3
Christiansands	1	—	1	2	—	1	—	—	1
Clayholm	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1
Copenhagen	4	1	—	2	6	12	10	11	11
Danzig	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—
Denmark	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—
Dram	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—
Emden	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1
Fardel Island	1	—	1	—	1	—	—	—	—
Frederickshall	—	—	—	1	1	—	—	2	—
Gibralter	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—
Gottenburgh	2	2	1	3	8	2	3	12	14
Guernsey	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	1	—
Hamburgh	—	—	2	2	5	7	7	1	3
Holland	2	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Koningsburgh	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—
Leghorn	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1
Lentort	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—
Lisbon	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1
Mandale	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Middleburg	3	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Naze	—	3	—	—	—	1	—	—	1
Norway	1	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—
Nyding	—	1	—	—	1	—	—	—	—
Oporto	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	1	1
Ostend	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—
Petersburgh	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	4	5
Rotterdam	6	4	6	1	9	5	9	—	1
Sandisand	—	—	—	—	—	1	1	—	—
Soiban	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—
Scaw	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1
Stavanger	—	—	1	—	—	—	1	—	1
Stockholm	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	1
Strabourd	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Zealand	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Zurichzee	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—

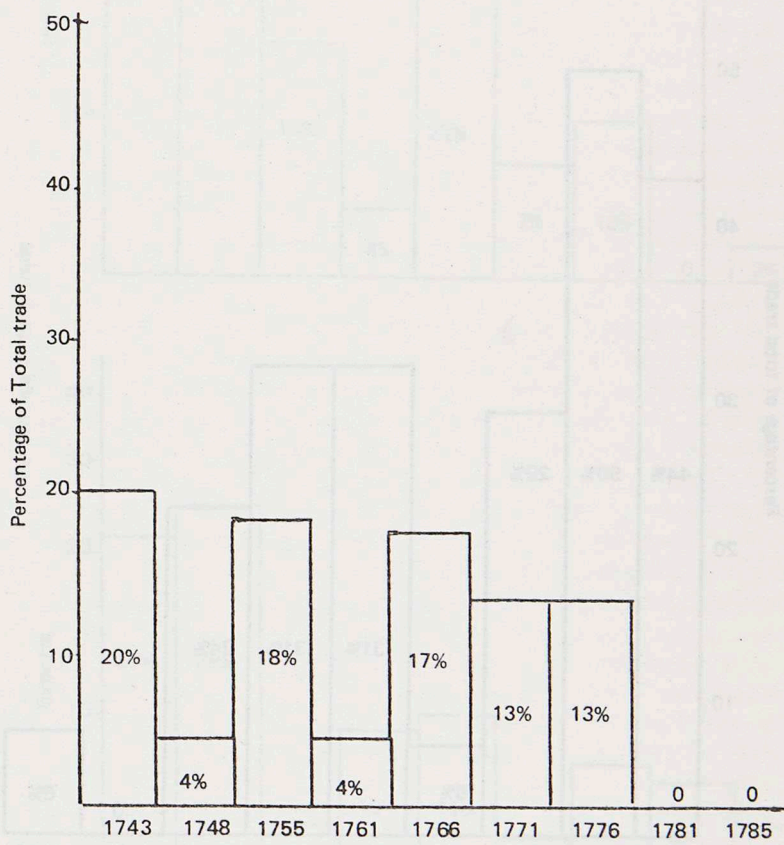Figure 4 B2   Annual totals outgoing by port of destination

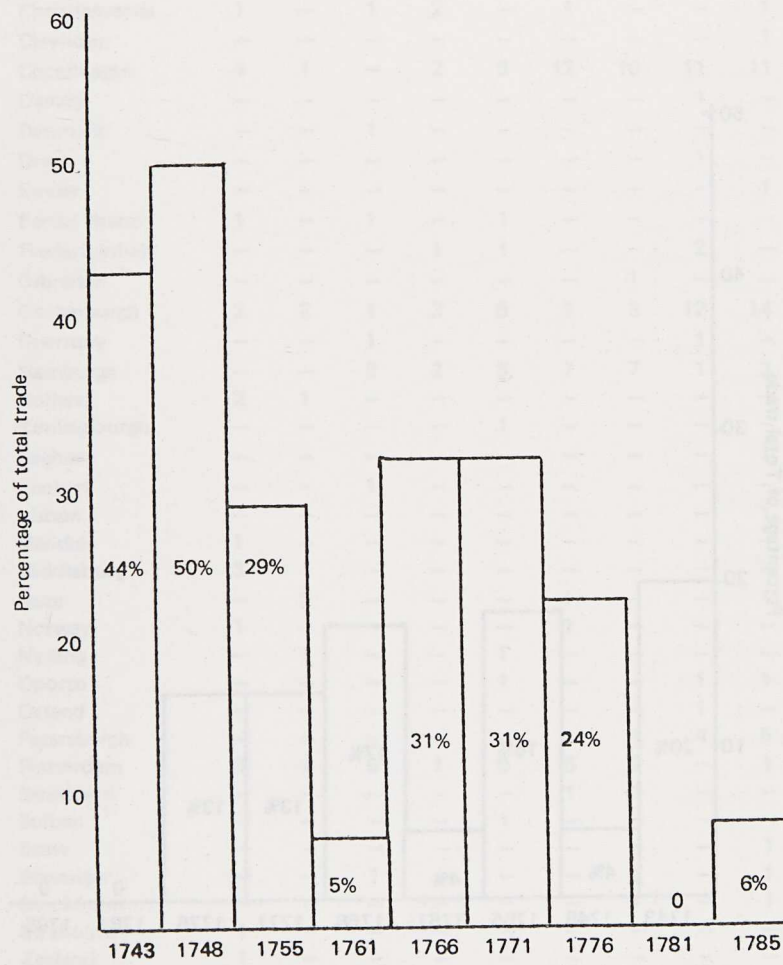Figure 5(a)   Port of origin : detailed imports from Campvere

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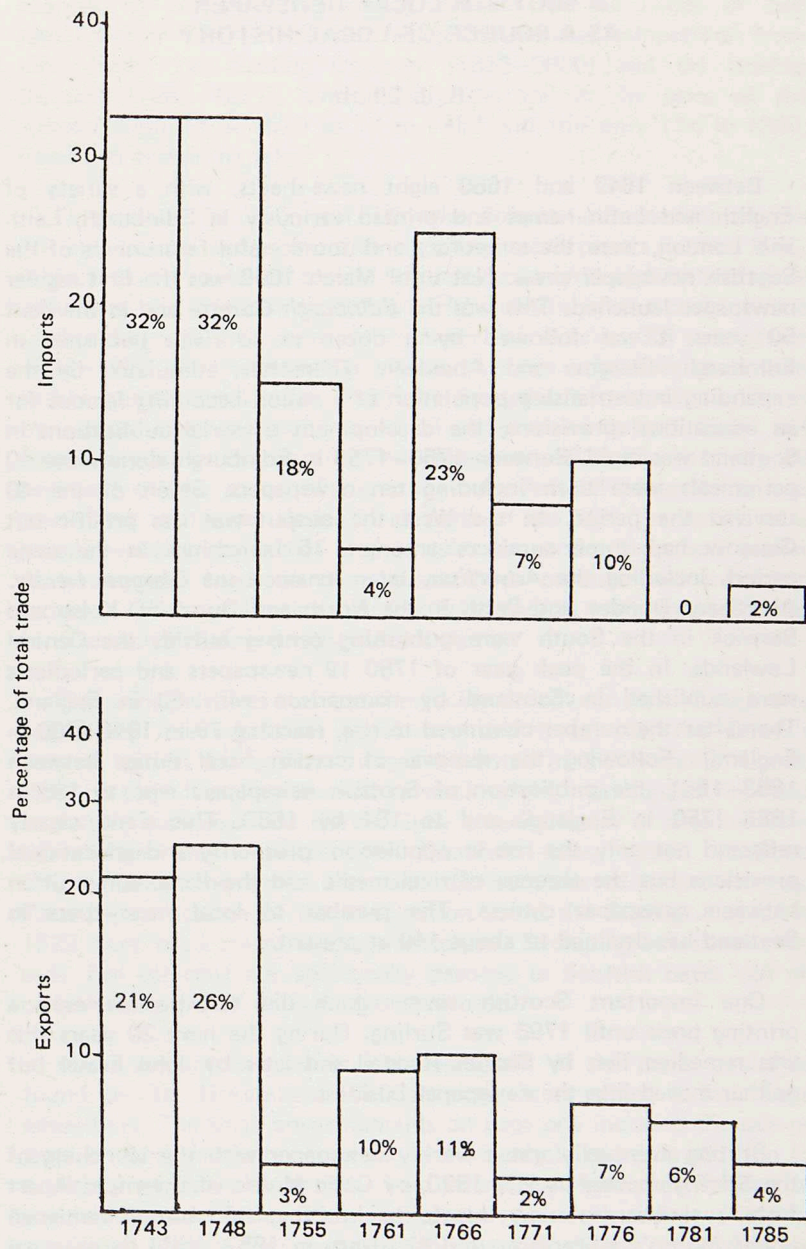Figure 5(b)   Port of destination : detailed exports to Campvere

Figure 5(c)   Port of registry Airth : imports and exports