



# L·I·F·T·E

## LOOKING IN FROM THE EDGE



The impact of international commercialisation on north-west Europe's peripheral communities 1468-1712: production, commerce and consumption in Orkney and Shetland

DFG/AHRC Call 2019; started Feb 2020 with extension to Jan 2024

### Excavations in Shetland



### Museum exhibitions: Bremerhaven



### Excavations in Orkney



The LIFTE project explored the early modern trade networks of Orkney and Shetland, using archaeological and historical methods to look for evidence of trade between the Scottish Northern Isles and the wider world. Despite the challenges of Covid, the project successfully undertook three excavations, organised three museum exhibitions, undertook underwater, standing building and coastal surveys, transcribed hundreds of documents from several archives, and looked at thousands of artefacts and animal bones.

German merchants were present in Shetland from the 15<sup>th</sup> century, buying in and preparing preserved fish, bringing in much-needed grain, cash/credit and luxuries including ceramics, and wine, and in time, tobacco and clay pipes for smoking. Later, merchants arrived in the isles from the Netherlands, from the Scottish mainland, and elsewhere on the Continent. Mercantile activity also developed within the isles during this time, with corresponding rise in merchant families organising trade locally.

Our excavations in both Orkney and Shetland explored daily life. During the Early Modern period rents were paid in the form of animal and plant products. We have mapped these for the first time, showing how surpluses were created, collected and exported. We have shown how locally-made products like butter, marine oils, fish, bere barley and malt became enmeshed in this early system of world trade. New flavours arrived during this time and documents show increases in imports of sugar, cinnamon and other spices.

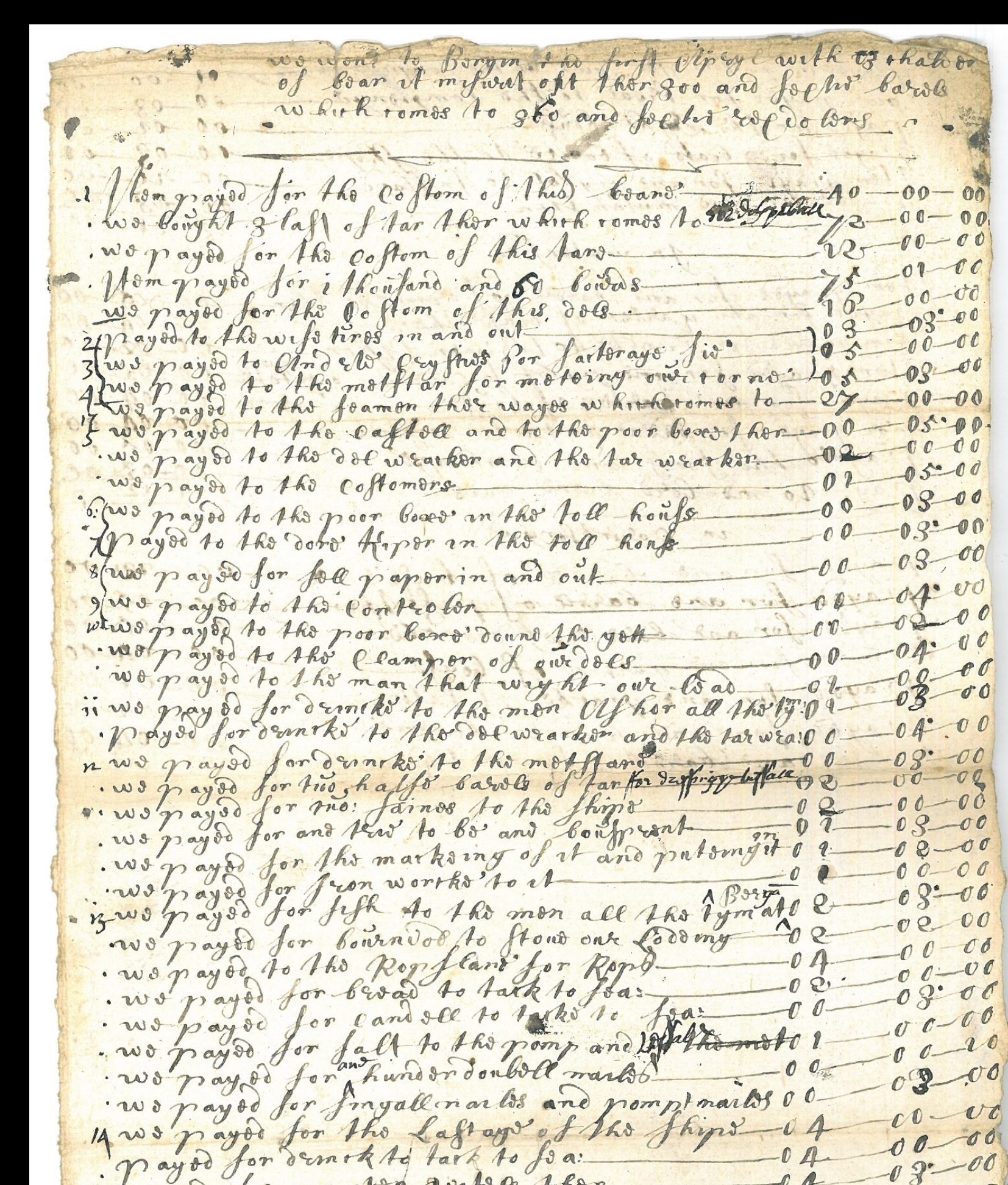
### Artefacts



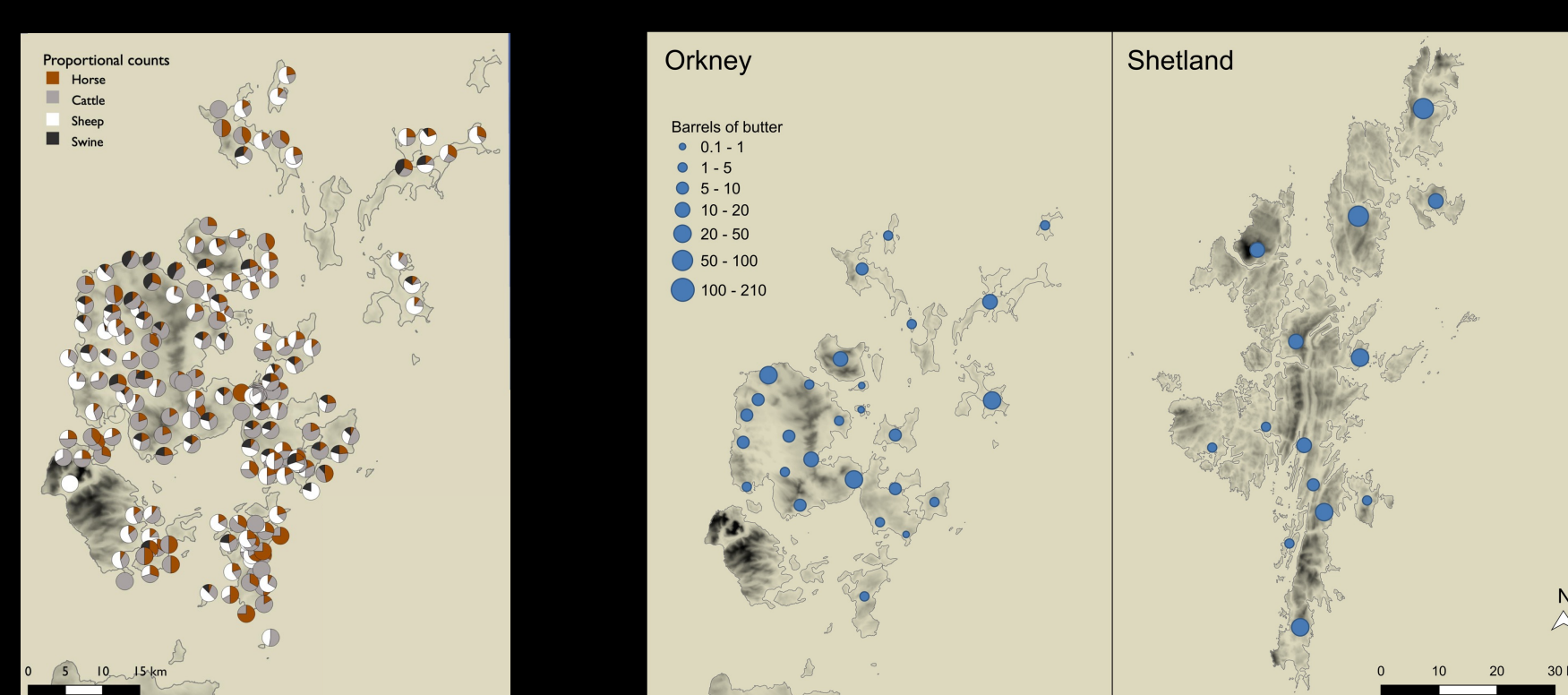
### Zooarchaeology



### Documents



### Digitising rentals and inventories



**Project Leads:** Sarah Jane Gibbon and Natascha Mehler with Mark Gardiner, Julie Gibson, Jen Harland, Ingrid Mainland  
**Project Team:** Siobhan Cooke-Miller, Paul Clark, Julia Cussans, Philipp Grassel, Derek Hall, Bart Holterman, Dan Lee, Anne Mitchell, Jocelyn Rendall, Paula Schiefer, Paul Sharman, Brian Smith, Linda Somerville  
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DFG Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft

UHI Archaeology Institute | Institut Arc-eolais

Leibniz-Gemeinschaft

Deutsches Schifffahrts Museum

UKRI Arts and Humanities Research Council

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