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The creation of a wine entrepôt in 18th-century Boulogne-Sur-Mer: Dedicated commodity chain, politics, and enlightenment economists

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Abstract

This article documents the sudden creation of a significant entrepôt for French wine, particularly Bordeaux claret, in Boulogne-Sur-Mer starting in 1720. Scottish Jacobites who practiced a rebellious version of “fair trade” dominated this commerce, and their network had direct links to 18th-century economic thinkers such as Richard Cantillon, Charles de Montesquieu, and David Hume. The research uses social network analysis to analyze and visualize the concurrent networks, which by the 1750s included the French physiocrats. The research shows how politically inspired actions and strategies affected not only the wine entrepôt’s formation but also the circulation of ideas regarding “fair,” “free,” and balanced trade among Franco-British economic theorists. It also documents the formation of a dedicated claret commodity chain as well as the advent of wine product, packaging, and marketing specialization in the 18th century. These Jacobites formed wine trading firms that lasted long after the relevance of their political objectives had waned.

Keywords: Montesquieu; David Hume; Richard Cantillon; physiocrats; Boulogne-Sur-Mer; Jacobites; wine trade

JEL classifications: B10; B11; B17; B3

1. Introduction

This article for the first time reports on Boulogne-Sur-Mer’s sudden transformation into a wine entrepôt around 1720, thus contributing to knowledge about the entrepôt phenomenon and the contemporary political economy, evidencing with qualitative descriptions an early entrepôt dedicated to wine commerce. This example shows how state action can result in unforeseen economic consequences, particularly related to the case of 18th-century Scottish Jacobite exiles.¹ It adds nuance to the reported Irish domination of the contemporary claret trade (Ludington, 2019, 2023) and complicates the common view that, as Murray Pittcock explains it, “Jacobitism was backward” (Pittcock, 2019, p.9). The Boulogne wine trade network significantly impacted the circulation of

¹The Jacobites were loyal to the exiled Stuart court of King James III in Rome; they engaged in numerous attempts between 1715 and 1753 to violently overthrow the Hanoverian monarchy in Britain.

ideas involving Richard Cantillon, Charles de Secondat de Montesquieu, David Hume, and the French physiocrats.

A social network analysis (SNA; Figures 1 and 2) using Vistorian (Bach et al., 2015), version 2, was employed. Vistorian is an online, open-source software that combines many of the key functions needed to visually explore historical networks and is particularly useful for investigating co-occurrence networks. The SNA shows that Cantillon, Montesquieu, and Hume shared a network with relevant figures such as the wine traders Archibald Stewart and his son John in Edinburgh and London; Thomas Walsh, John Black, and Robert Gordon in Bordeaux; and/or Charles Smith of Boulogne, all Scots except for Walsh, who was Irish (Figure 2). (In Black's case, he was born in Ireland but hailed from Aberdeen).²

Cantillon, Montesquieu, and Hume had particular interest in the French wine trade with Britain involving two regional products: Bordeaux red wine and/or Champagne white wine, or *vin gris*.³ In the late 17th century, two novel products—the “new French claret” (Maldonado Rosso, 2015; Réjalot, 2006) and bottled sparkling Champagne (Leszczyńska, 2016)—simultaneously entered the international market following viticultural and enological advancements. This coincided with the development of strong green glass bottle technology from coal-fired furnaces, first in England and Scotland and then in France through British technology transfer (Le Mao, 2018; Turnbull, 2012), and the use of Iberian cork brought to France through trade dominated by Scots and Irish (Parsons, 1962). Both corks stoppers and strong green glass were critical to profitable commerce in bottled wines, which could be stored for long periods. By 1699, Bordeaux was importing 110,000 glass bottles annually (Le Mao, 2018); Bordeaux négociants increasingly bottled and shipped wine in tall, cylindrical bottles (Black, 1738; Le Mao, 2018). As recounted below, the same occurred in Boulogne.

Importantly for modern banking and credit history, the Stewarts and Smith transacted with John Coutts in Edinburgh, who started to specialize in clearing international bills of exchange before 1715 while also selling claret in both Edinburgh and the Highlands (Steuart, 1915, p.6). Trade and intellectual pursuits often coincided: Coutts, John Stewart, Hume, and Adam Smith later all counted among the members of Edinburgh's high-brow Select Society. Coutts transacted with Charles Smith in Boulogne (Steuart, 1915, p.412). The private Coutts bank evolved out of this specialized

²The SNA used an Excel spreadsheet of over 800 documented ties between individuals, focusing on Smith, Hume, Montesquieu, and James Byres. Vistorian visualized the data. In the visualizations, larger nodes indicate nodes with more connections; smaller nodes have fewer connections. Each line represents contact between two individuals; they are unweighted. Nodes with many common neighbors are drawn closer to each other, while nodes with few connections are drawn at the layout's periphery (Vistorian, 2023). Co-occurrence is evidenced by a documented contact between two nodes. SNA helps understand “important or central nodes” and will “highlight nodes” with particularly important structural roles (Ryan and Tolonen, 2024). An 18th-century network was “a physically realized entity” consisting of “a relatively cohesive social group ... held together as a continuous identifiable whole” through a “combination of kinship, friendship, clientage, and at least occasional geographical proximity.” A network's “membership may undergo shifts over time” (Schellenberg, 2016).

³Montesquieu was a nobleman winegrower; Cantillon worked as a wine merchant throughout his life, including in Bordeaux and Champagne; and Hume briefly worked in the counting house of wine trader Michael Miller (Minchinton, 1957), became a claret connoisseur, and had very close friends in the trade.

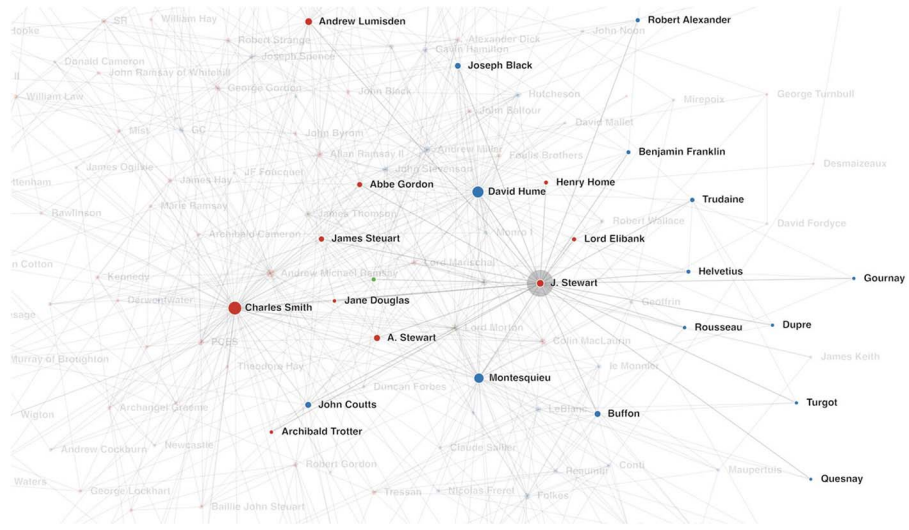


Figure 3. Trader J. Stewart's network included not only Hume and Montesquieu but also other Enlightenment figures such as Rousseau, Tobias Smollett, Benjamin Franklin, Helvetius, Joseph Black, Buffon, James Stewart, Lord Elibank, Henry Home (Lord Kames), and the French physiocrats Gournay, Tugot, Quesnay, and C-E Trudaine.

1987, p. 88; Tornabene, 2023). The prisoners took over this ship and steered it to Bordeaux, where Smith became close to the prominent factor and wine négociant Robert Gordon (RCHM, 1902, pp.105–6). Gordon was the partner and father-in-law of Montesquieu's close friend, the négociant John Black. A reasonable inference is that Smith learned about the Bordeaux wine trade from Gordon and Black. Black knew Smith, who appeared in Boulogne around 1720 (House of Commons, 1722). From there, he traded with the Stewarts in both Leith and London. Hume referred to Smith as his friend (Hume, 1932, p.176), and Montesquieu (Figure 4) knew Smith well, meeting him in Paris in 1750 to check on the status of Robert Gordon's son in Boulogne (de Secondat de Montesquieu, 1750).

Alexander and Robert Gordon were brothers. Robert moved to Bordeaux in the 1690s, grew extremely wealthy from the wine trade, and later appeared in Boulogne. Alexander traded wine in Bordeaux and elsewhere, settling in Boulogne around 1720. The Gordons focused on sales in the Scottish Highlands, although Alexander also sold wine in London through his employee Peter Smyth (Anonymous, 1722; SP, 1725).

III. Historical background

In the early 18th century, Britain instituted prohibitive tariffs penalizing French wine and encouraging consumption of Portuguese wine. Spanish wine also maintained its British market (Ludington, 2013, p.45). As Julie MacIntyre summarizes:

Portuguese wine producers enjoyed favoured status in Britain due to the Methuen Treaty of 1703 which allowed for heavy, fortified Portuguese wines to enter Britain at two-thirds the customs duty of lighter alcohol French wines. In

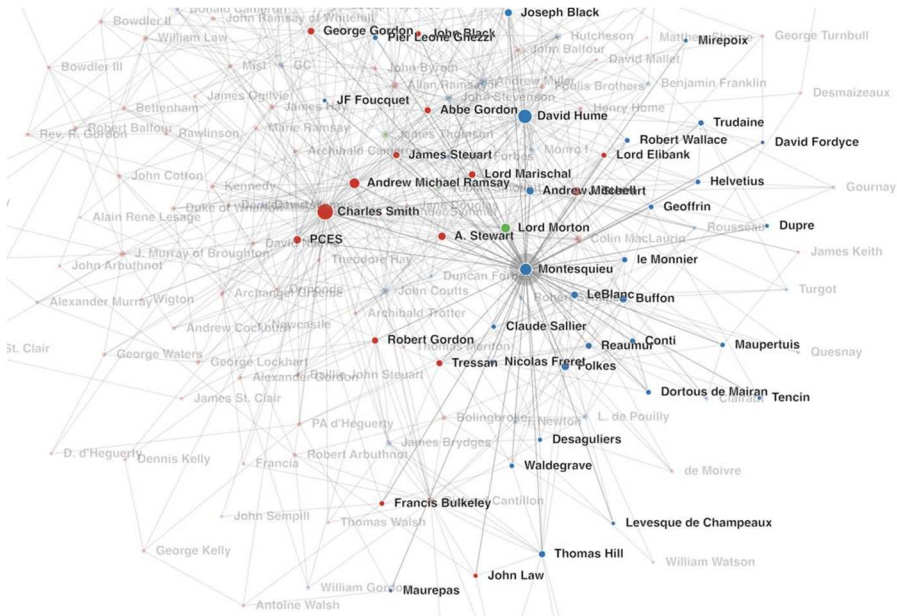


Figure 4. Visualization of Montesquieu’s relevant social network. This illustrates his place as “important or central node” and highlights his structural role bridging (Ryan and Tolonen, 2024) between Scottish (upper portion) and French (lower portion) intellectuals. Wine traders in Montesquieu’s network included John Black, Robert and George Gordon, A. and J. Stewart, and Charles Smith.

exchange, the treaty established a British monopoly on the import of woollen cloth to Portugal. The genius of Methuen’s deal was thought to be its creation of a deliberate imbalance of trade, the result of which was that much of Portugal’s surplus gold from Brazil enriched Britain with the added benefit of excluding an import from traditional rival France. (McIntyre, 2011, p.199)

British tariffs were £55 or greater per tonneau for legally imported French wine (Butel, 1967, p.66). This produced a black market of smuggling and customs fraud officially encouraged by France, including the establishment of a wine and spirits entrepôt in the geographically strategic coastal city of Boulogne around 1720. Boulogne had large wine cellars that were rented to exiled Jacobite traders such as Smith. Both the local and national governments received tax revenue from wines landing by sea at Boulogne, which were then exported to Britain, particularly Scotland. Although not the focus here, it remains important that “merchants from Reims, Épernay and Châlons” sought to expand the British market for bottled Champagne (Leszczyńska, 2016, p.264), which also transited Boulogne.

A. Social network encompassing Cantillon, Hume, Levesque de Pouilly, and Quesnay

Cantillon, Montesquieu, and Hume helped lay the international foundations of classical political economy, particularly regarding exchange theory as well as the balance and

“jealousy” of trade: Cantillon with his *Essai sur la Nature du Commerce en Général* (c. 1731); Montesquieu in *L'Esprit des Loix* (1748); and Hume with his *Political Discourses* (Montesquieu, 1752). SNA shows that one dedicated commodity network moved fine claret from Bordeaux and sparkling wine from Champagne via Boulogne to British consumers, and it had tangible links to these theorists. Scholars have long argued that Hume studied with Levesque de Pouilly and that Cantillon's unpublished *Essai* somehow influenced Hume (Thornton, 2007) as it later did François Quesnay and Adam Smith. The precise mechanisms, however, have remained unclear. The SNA provides fairly conclusive answers regarding the social network involved (Figures 5 and 6).⁴

In particular, the large number of common neighbors in Cantillon's, Hume's, and Montesquieu's networks shows high network transitivity, which indicates a cohesive community linked to the “fair trading” wine merchants using Boulogne. Unsurprisingly, after his initial French sojourn, Hume compared Bordeaux claret and sparkling Champagne in his *Treatise*, while James Brydges, first Duke of Chandos, bought fraudulently imported wine from Robert Gordon, Cantillon, and Walsh as early as 1713–14, and subsequently from Smith's Boulogne firm. A Walsh also purchased wine, alongside the Stewarts, from Hume's friend Smith in Boulogne (Boulogne-Sur-Mer, 1884, p.68).

SNA is thus important to discerning the genealogy of 18th-century economic theory, because this “fair trade” Jacobite supply chain through Boulogne linked winegrowers Montesquieu in Bordeaux as well as Jean Godinot and Levesque de Pouilly in Reims and Châlons, to wine traders like John Black, John Stewart, and the partners Cantillon and Walsh (Murphy, 1986, p.59; Ludington, 2013, p.101), via people like Smith and Gordon in Boulogne, to British sellers like Archibald Stewart, and end consumers including David Hume, Chandos, and James Douglas, 14th Earl of Morton, the influential president of the Edinburgh Philosophical Society (EPS). In fact, while trading claret through Boulogne after 1748, Smith and Stewart couriered Montesquieu's *L'Esprit* to Hume (which he had translated and published); Hume's *Discourses* to Montesquieu; Hume's and Robert Wallace's economically significant EPS

⁴Following Baldensperger (1942), the fact that Levesque was involved in wine commerce is significant in proving Cantillon's influence on Hume's economic theory. Although this topic is neglected in the literature (except by Baldensperger), Levesque de Pouilly was a major winegrower and close friend of Jean Godinot (who contributed substantially to technological advancements in Champagne (Godinot, 1718)) as well as Henry St. John, Viscount Bolingbroke. Mossner speculated that Hume met Godinot in Reims (Mossner, 2001, pp.96–7). Thornton (2007, p.466) finds the ties Cantillon-Bolingbroke-Levesque-Hume significant in trying to prove Cantillon's influence on Hume. Examination of Cantillon's *Essai* enlightened by SNA shows that Cantillon acted as banker and négociant for Levesque, transmitting official tax payments from Châlons to Paris using bills of exchange (Cantillon, 2015, pp.529–35). Levesque de Pouilly, his father, and uncle all served as the *trésoriers de France* for Châlons. Cantillon and the Levesque family were thus close. Cantillon's *Essai* circulated in manuscript form among French academicians starting around 1730, and Hume studied in Levesque's Reims library in 1734–5 (Waldmann, 2020). Enhancing this conclusion is the fact that Hume also read the debate between Levesque, Nicolas Fréret, and Claude Sallier, published in the mid-1720s (Faria, 2021), copies of which were certainly in Levesque's library. Acting as a central node in Boulogne, Smith had documented SNA ties with Sallier and Fréret; Andrew Michael Ramsay, Hume's initial host in France; Bolingbroke; and Hume's French publisher and translator Abbé LeBlanc. Smith also recommended that Lord Elcho study in Reims after Hume. Smith counted Chandos as a customer, who also bought wine from Cantillon, Thomas Walsh, and Robert Gordon. Walsh purchased wine from Smith.

population monographs to Montesquieu; Jean-Charles Trudaine's French translation of Hume's *Natural History of Religion* to Hume; Hume's essay "On the Jealousy of Trade" to Turgot (which he translated); and Hume's publications on commerce for translation by Jean-Bernard LeBlanc, who was a mutual acquaintance of Montesquieu and Charles Smith.⁵ In the 1750s, LeBlanc formed part of the "Gournay circle" that advanced "le science de commerce" initiated by Cantillon and Montesquieu. Not by happenstance, Stewart befriended Daniel-Charles and Jean-Charles Trudaine, Jacques de Gournay, Turgot, and Quesnay, who later all befriended Hume (Charles, 2008; Robel, 2017). These links to the French physiocrats (Charles and Théré, 2021; van den Berg and Steenge, 2012) show that combined commodity and intellectual commerce—the circulation of economic ideas alongside free trade wine—impacted transnational economic theory in an intriguingly holistic manner. Jacobite commercial intermediaries like Stewart and Smith put "fair trade" into practice by evading British tariffs while disseminating Hume's "Scottish ideas throughout Europe" and Cantillon and Montesquieu's theories in Britain "both in the economic and political domains" (Robel, 2017).

B. The new French claret

The new French claret was a style of red wine. It largely replaced the previous, lighter, rosé hued claret, or *vin claret*, that had dominated Bordeaux exports to Britain since the Medieval period. The owners of Haut-Brion in Pessac innovated the new style in the 1660s and successfully marketed it in London, including opening a tavern there (Réjalot, 2006). This was a darker, more extracted red wine with high levels of phenolic compounds and tannins (LaMude, 1720).⁶ By the 1710s, British wine merchants heavily advertised the new French claret. It travelled well and improved with age, particularly in corked bottles. This points to the pronounced shift in taste and market demand, not only among English but also Scottish elites such as Hume, Lord Morton, and the Jacobite Patrick Murray, Lord Elibank; the latter two bought Montesquieu's wine (Montesquieu, 1955, p.1426, 1440, 1527). In England, wine merchants pushed the new claret style, which suddenly had to compete with fortified Portuguese wine (Duguid, 2005). The December 29, 1712, *Daily Courant*, for example, identified "the noblest new French claret that ever was imported, bright, deep, strong and of the most delicious flavour, being of the very best growth in France." In addition, simultaneously, costly Bordeaux and Champagne wines required bottling, a trend that increased.

C. Boulogne, customs fraud, and smuggling

Prior to the Union, Scots overwhelmingly drank claret, but not fine claret; it was commodity wine. Scotland's low tariffs had helped create a substantial market. The tax on one tonneau was less than £3. This suddenly rose to £46 with the 1707 Union of Scotland and England. Nonetheless, the Scots "would needs have their favourite liquor French claret, by some means or other," that is, either smuggling or fraud (Anonymous, 1781). Charles Ludington has documented Leith's importance as a wine

⁵LeBlanc and his friend Buffon had used Smith's cross-border smuggling services since 1737–38.

⁶Both Montesquieu and Walsh purchased vineyards in Pessac.

port finding that “the actual amount of claret coming into Scotland [from Bordeaux] was a mindboggling 55 times greater than official imports.” (Ludington, 2013, p.113). Other sources confirm that Boulogne acted as a major center of Jacobite wine commerce (W. M. G., 1755; Simon, 1926, pp.92–3). In the late 18th century, official French texts spoke of how historically wine “did not arrive [in Britain] directly from Bordeaux, but via Boulogne and other ports on the coast” (Boyetet, 1789, p.61). This included especially the new French claret. Trader William Ballantyne recalled that at mid-century the trade was in “first growth claret” shipped from Boulogne to the Stewarts in London (Ballantyne, 1863).⁷ The Boulogne-based Capuchin monk known as “Archangel Graeme,” wrote in 1739 about the “good wine” handled by Smith, which ended up in Edinburgh. In the late 1730s, according to Graeme, Boulogne became known as a place “you’ll find friend enough to divert you and raise your drooping spirits with good burgundy and claret” (Graeme, 1903, p.199). At this time, the lesser expensive wines from Auxerre (Bourgogne) were mostly for domestic consumption, not export (Cantillon, 2015, p.162), although by the 1750s Bourgogne wines were imported from Boulogne (W. M. G., 1755).

Smuggling from Boulogne occurred (Monod, 1991), but obviously the quantities involved remain unknowable. Ships often landed at smaller ports, had to depart on a moment’s notice, and evade patrols. In 1767, for example, a single ship had its 38+ hogsheads (about 10,000 L) of Boulogne claret impounded (Janes, 2018, p.126).

Customs fraud appears to have been more frequent than smuggling because it involved less risk of asset loss. This skirted the law through a widely practiced conspiracy between continental shippers and the Scottish wine merchants. Shippers declared “that their ships came from some port in Spain” or even Hungary (Anonymous, 1781; Graham, 2017). This was chiefly practiced at Leith and London but also in regional centers. One Glasgow merchant, for example, queried Alexander Gordon’s agent in advance “whether their wines are to be entered according to French or Spanish duty” (Anonymous, 1722). This evidenced the falsification of the British customs declaration known to both buyer and seller. Any blame lay on the shipper, who was not subject to British jurisdiction in Boulogne. The merchants entered the wine according to what the shipper declared. The customs officers, charged with confirming the wine’s origin, generally acquiesced to that declaration. In fact, they “judged it prudent to wink at the practice” of fraudulently declaring French wine to be of Iberian origin because wine imports “constituted a principal article of the [government] revenues raised” in Scotland; some tax revenue was better than none. The practice was common knowledge (Anonymous, 1736, p.31). Hume was surely thinking of this undocumented and/or untaxed wine trading engaged in by his close friends (see Figure 6) when he wrote in 1752:

It is easy to observe, that all calculations concerning the balance of trade are founded on very uncertain facts and suppositions. The custom-house books are allowed to be an insufficient ground of reasoning; nor is the rate of exchange

⁷Regarding fine claret from Boulogne, see also Atterbury (1798, p. 59; Essex Council, 1952, p. 151).

much better; unless we consider it with all nations, and know also the proportions of the several sums remitted; which one may safely pronounce impossible. (Hume, 1994, p.137)

In his *Pensées*, vigneron Montesquieu wrote, “commerce by fraud (*le commerce en fraude*) is always detrimental to the nation against which it is committed, because it ruins its customs duties.” (C. de S. Montesquieu, 1950, p.52). This eventually drew the ire of British tax authorities. “The said practice continued in Scotland till Christmas 1754, at which time an effectual stop was put to it” (Anonymous, 1781; Aberdeen Magazine, 1796, p.226). This was confirmed by Lord Morton. In October 1754, he wrote to Montesquieu: “I recently had occasion to see a gentleman who told me he had tasted very good red wine from your vineyards, which you had sent to Lord Elibank.” He insisted on receiving his order of eight *barriques* (1800 L) at Leith by December 20 “because all the wines imported from France will be charged with a much higher duty after that day” (Montesquieu, 1955, p.1517). Britain also started stopping ships without passes attempting to enter Boulogne to buy wine (HCA, 1763).

After 1754, then, increasingly “only those whose fortunes allow, and whose taste inclines, them still to use claret” (Anonymous, 1781). The new French claret increasingly became a luxury item and status symbol. Usually blended and aged by merchants, it became popular among the Scottish upper classes and intellectuals. David Hume declared that “for ... old claret, no body excels me” (Hume, 1932, p.208).

IV. How Boulogne became a wine entrepôt

Given a completely free trade environment, Boulogne does not make logical sense as an entrepôt for Bordeaux wine. Bordeaux was a much larger and important port city serving a vast wine production region (Ludington, 2023, p.6). Ships could easily sail directly from Bordeaux to British ports. How and why, then, did Boulogne become a substantial wine entrepôt?

Pre-Industrial Revolution entrepôts achieved steady distribution, balancing of supply and demand, and relative price stability by “stockpiling great reserves of commodities in central storehouses, or entrepôts.” They made “the flow of goods from one part of the world to another, even one region of a country to another” more regular and predictable. “The basic need for these central reservoirs of goods to iron out the unevenness and ensure a certain regularity of flow and stability of prices was bound to bestow enormous power and influence, political as well as economic, on the main entrepôts and this, in turn, led to a process of unending struggle, on the one side to expand and, on the other, to curb them” (Israel, 1990, p. x).⁸ Around 1720, Boulogne became highly specialized French entrepôt for wine and wine spirits dominated by exiled British subjects, the Jacobites, whose aim was regime change in Britain. It replaced and then quickly outperformed nearby Calais.

⁸By 1755, wine smuggling from Boulogne had become a political issue (W. M. G., 1755).

A. French regulations

Since the mid-17th-century Calais, Boulogne, and Etaples had been sanctioned by the French state as places to “entreposer” Bordeaux wine brought in by sea, with related taxes imposed. A 1730s text referred to “the wines of Bordeaux” brought to these ports “which *after having been stored there*, leave by sea for Foreign Countries, & for Provinces reputed to be foreign” (emphasis added). To *entreposer* meant storage and thus aging. These wines were exempted from “various Entrance Duties” but paid lower exit duties and “local Duties.” These regulations only concerned wines “transported by Sea” (Francheville, 1738, p.899). That is, both the federal and local governments received tax revenue from Bordeaux claret and Champagne wine brought into Calais and Boulogne by ship and then exported. This formed part of the complex, “corrupt, predatory and deeply unpopular feudal tax-farming regime” that France used to raise “a significant portion of its public revenues” (Brunet de Granmaison, 1730; Vassiliou, 2023, p.27). For the wine merchants, the lower tax burden was relatively favorable.

Before 1720, the Stuart court-in-exile had agents in Calais, but they did not engage in the wine trade. Calais served as an important waypoint for two-way passenger traffic between Britain and France and the official waypoint for trans-national postal communications via packet boats. During 1716 and most of 1717, Calais thus served as the prominent Jacobite intelligence-gathering outpost. In 1716, both Archangel Graeme and his father sent intelligence reports from Calais, including identifying passengers from England. The “Jacobite Jew,” Francis Francia, a Stuart court financier born in Bordeaux and tried for treason in London in 1716, moved his family to Calais in August 1717 (RCHM, 1902, p.490). Calais also thus served as a Stuart court communications hub between Britain and France. The Jacobites, however, had to rely on the British packet boats that sailed twice a month from England; the British Post Master monitored and opened letters, and Calais housed British spies (SP, 1742; Fritz, 1973, p.273). Secret Stuart court communications sent by post were often intercepted.

Then, the French liberalized tax policy regarding British imports. In early 1717, C. Smith’s brother-in-law, Hugh Paterson, wrote to Lord Mar regarding Jacobite trader “friends” and a shift in French regulations, noting that the traders would receive favorable tariffs on “woollen manufactures and other commodities,” including “leave to bring in these goods at all the ports of France [including Boulogne], which was permitted before only at Calais and St. Valery” (Ribadiou, 1853; RCHM, 1907, p.443). The Stuart court used such textile traders to smuggle printed Jacobite propaganda (RCHM, 1907, p.184). Notably, Richard Cantillon, a Stuart loyalist, also acted as an international channel of funds to Jacobites using the trading credit system, including correspondents in Calais and London (RCHM, 1910; Cruickshanks, 1995, p.32; Cruickshanks and Erskine-Hill, 2004, p.137). Cantillon’s firm also did business with Francis Francia in London in 1715, as revealed during Francia’s 1716 trial (Francia, 1717). Cantillon was close friends with Henry St. John, Viscount Bolingbroke, and the former partner of mercantilist John Law. Both subsequently appeared in Boulogne when it became an entrepôt (Leigh, 1721, 1722b).

B. Pre-1720 trade in Calais and Boulogne

A 1719 French text referred to ships arriving at Calais with salt from Brouage as well as wine and brandies from Bordeaux. The British merchants travelled there, in turn, trading in Irish butter and leather as well as English wool, despite official restrictions. “However, the commerce of this port is not considerable,” noted the 1719 text. Boulogne’s trade in 1719 was even less significant, consisting of “nothing but herring and mackerel” (LaForce, 1719, p.40). It was by and large a fishing port, not a wine entrepôt.

By 1718–19, therefore, Boulogne had the potential, in terms of favorable tax regulations, to become a much more important wine trading port, but its local economy relied on fishing. A notable confluence of events helped propel Boulogne’s emergence as a substantial fine wine entrepôt. This included market demand for claret in Britain, the 1715 Jacobite uprising’s failure, a resulting exodus of Scottish exiles to France, and the Stuart court’s need to place those on its payroll in less costly French locations starting around 1717 (RCHM, 1902, 1912).

C. Lord Stair’s strategy backfires

The critical intervening event was, very ironically, action by the British ambassador to France, John Dalrymple, Lord Stair. He cultivated influence with the Duke of Orleans, regent to the young Louis XV. Stair devised a plan to rid Calais of the growing number Jacobites living there, many of whom spied on the British. He pressured the Regent to “drive them out of France” (Ormonde and Dickson, 1895, p.xxiv). Stair wrote in 1719 that the expulsion would “help to keep our Jacobites in awe, who, upon ye whole matter, I believe, are much better disposed to drink ye Pretender’s health than to fight for him” (Ormonde and Dickson, 1895, p.xxxix). His mocking of the Scots’ abundant wine consumption is notable. The Scots, particularly the “free trade” Jacobites, were renowned for their love of Bordeaux claret (Ludington, 2013, 2018). In fact, the British government had criminalized wine toasts made to King James and/or his sons (Rogers, 1998, p.30, 35). Acutely aware of this law, Montesquieu condemned it as despotic in both editions of *Grandeur et de la Décadence des Romains*. His statement was censored from 18th- and 19th-century English translations of *Romains* published in Britain (Montesquieu, 1752, 1825).

The Duke of Orleans obliged Stair. In the Fall of 1717, Mar reported that “all strangers are ordered to retire from Calais,” which he had learned from his agent Archangel Graeme, a former military officer for King James II (RCHM, 1912, p.97). The French government demanded the departure of all foreigners from Calais, including Graeme, Smyth, and Francia (RCHM, 1910).

Kicked out of Calais, the Jacobites simply moved to nearby Boulogne, where they established a Scottish expat colony and a substantial trade presence farther removed from British monitoring and control. Charles Smith moved there as did Alexander Gordon, Peter Smyth, Francia, and Graeme, who became the head of Boulogne’s Capuchin monastery. Stair’s plan had spectacularly backfired.

V. Boulogne's geographic advantages produced an expat colony

The French government, in fact, appears to have encouraged the Jacobites in establishing Boulogne as a geographically strategic wine entrepôt for the British trade using smuggling and fraud; this increased French exports as well as both local and national tax revenues while depriving the enemy Britain of duties (Anonymous, 1784, p.131; Monod, 1991, p.167). Boulogne had geographical advantages for rapid shipping, including smuggling, owing to its proximity to England; 'the slightest delay must harm smuggling; a quarter of an hour wasted can become disastrous' stated one French text. Boulogne was also economically favorable for those from Edinburgh and London headed to Paris or elsewhere on the continent (MacDonald, 1790, p.235), saving "3 posts and ½ travelling" while going to Paris (Steuart, 1909, p.364).

A. The Jacobite colony at Boulogne

By January 1721, a British intelligence report noted that Boulogne was "a nest of hornets and vipers," adding that the Capuchin Graeme, who was banished from Calais by Lord Stair, resided there (Leigh, 1721). The ingress of Scots Jacobites into Boulogne profoundly impacted wine commerce, and the coincidental appearance of both the wine trade and the Jacobite presence in Boulogne was sudden. In high-level Jacobite political correspondence from 1716 to 1718, Boulogne was barely mentioned. Yet by 1722, during the British Parliamentary hearings on the Atterbury Plot, Smith's and Gordon's "bye-boats" carrying wine formed a repeated topic (Cruikshanks and Erskine-Hill, 2004).

Around 1720–21, Smith started a packet boat service between Boulogne and the Thames transporting wine and passengers; he advertised its advantages in both London and Paris (House of Commons, 1722). Alexander Gordon and his employee Smyth traded wine in Glasgow and London (Anonymous, 1722; SP, 1725). The Jacobite agent Andrew Cockburn in London wrote in 1731 that "the Masters of the [Boulogne] Ships" never do "least dishonest thing, for they would be destroyed in their business, he [Smith] having them all under his command; their occasions are very frequent this waie, almost every fourteen or twenty dayes" (Guite, 1987, p.54)

Indeed, a notable increase in trade volume from Boulogne accompanied the Jacobite influx, which lasted into the 1780s (Ballantyne, 1863; W. M. G., 1755). In October 1722, from Boulogne, the British spy Edward Leigh reported "a three-fold increase in the number of ships trading along this part of the French coast"; he specifically mentioned Smith and Gordon, "wine merchants" (Leigh, 1722b). By November 1722, another British intelligence report drew attention to the large quantities of "English gold and silver" surreptitiously exported into Boulogne and concern over the growing trade imbalance between the two countries; Graeme, 'the Scotch Capuchin' was mentioned (Leigh, 1722a). The illegal outflow of gold continued: in 1744 Captain Meriton headed from London to Boulogne on the "Duke of Kingston" laden with "300 or so guineas concealed behind the stove and in a cake of gingerbread" (HCA, 1744). Meriton worked for Charles Smith. Notably, the international flow of specie and balance of trade constituted major themes for Law, Cantillon, Montesquieu, and Hume (Schabas and Wennerlind, 2008; Spengler, 1954; Thornton, 1998). Cantillon wrote of "the increase or decrease of actual money in a State is not perceived because it flows

abroad, or is brought into the State, by such imperceptible means and proportions that it is impossible to know exactly the quantity which enters or leaves the State” (In: Noggle, 2020, p.176).

The Scots expat colony developed considerably, including a freemason lodge, a Scots Club, and various taverns during the 1720s and 1730s (Murdoch, 2006, p.337). It also became a small center of oppositional publishing beyond British government control and a place for both French and Stuart court intelligence gathering. In the 1740s, Smith had ships transiting both Boulogne-Leith and Boulogne-London. Captain James Ogilvie was dedicated to the Leith route and Captain Thomas Meriton to the London route. Smith’s son, Hugh, joined the firm around 1744, and they hired employees like Archibald Trotter, and a manager, Theodore Hay. Trotter next worked for John Coutts, forming the firm Coutts Trotter that became the Coutts Bank utilized by Hume (Forbes, 1860, p.3; Waldmann, 2020).

VI. Dedicated commodity chain, blending, and market specialization

The Stewarts and Smith grew extremely wealthy and expanded business by creating dedicated commodity chains and engaging in market segmentation, packaging, branding, and product specialization for specific markets. A dedicated commodity chain is “a kind of network, but a highly specific one, reticulated around a particular commodity and often a particular market, towards which it will stretch in a linear fashion from production to consumption” (Duguid, 2005, pp.2–3). Boulogne as a wine entrepôt provides an example of successful traders who “narrowed down their activities from extensive trading connections to focus more intensively on relatively linear set of links” much earlier in the 18th century than Duguid documented for the Port wine trade. Within the dedicated commodity chain, Smith and the Stewarts also created specific products for specific markets. Notably, contemporaneously, only “a few” Scottish traders existed in Bordeaux. Ludington finds that “the great majority were Irish and they dominated the trade, including trade to England” (Ludington, 2023, p.12). The Scotch Boulogne entrepôt adds greater nuance to that picture.

A 1744 judicial appeal observed that Captain Meriton “usually” engaged in “importing French wine from Boulogne [to London] with a pass” (HCA, 1744). That is, a legally sanctioned dedicated commodity chain existed stretching from production in Bordeaux, to blending and aging in Smith’s Boulogne cellars, and finally to retail sale in the elite London market. Wealthy English and Scots both bought “at the upper end of claret quality,” with London representing the highest priced and most lucrative market (Ludington, 2023, p.11). The established Boulogne merchants examined here—the Stewarts, Gordons, and Smith—appear to have engaged mostly in fraud rather than smuggling, although in 1744 the Stewarts were caught importing “unlicensed wine” (Wood, 1744). Others, who probably bought wine from Smith and Gordon, attempted to smuggle it (HCA, 1738).

For decades, Smith and the Stewarts amassed substantial wealth from selling expensive French wine to London elites, Whig and Tory alike. This included, for example, Chandos and Benjamin Mildmay, first Earl FitzWalter (Baker and Baker, 1949, p.190; Edwards, 1977, p.96). In the 1750s, his firm sold wine to the Duke of Newcastle

(Ludington, 2013, p.138). Such commercial relationships with Whig lords served as Jacobite intelligence gathering.

In September 1756, France and Britain were again at war. Archibald and John Stewart had obtained French passports to ship Bordeaux claret from France to Guernsey. They also had British permission to ship wine from Boulogne to London (using Smith's ships). Their intended market on September 30, however, was Scotland, because the wines were of a "quality unsuitable" for "this market [London] and which were bought with a view to supplying Scotland and other countries which drink cheap wine." Common claret went to one market, and fine claret went to another. They concluded their application with a statement assuring the British authorities of a balanced trade. Around this time, J. Stewart began socializing with Trudaine, *intendant général des Finances*, and the physiocrats (Robel, 2017):

Foreseeing we should be told that the French would grant passports during the whole war to bring away their own commodities we took care in the application we made for our Bordeaux passport to have a permission granted us of sending thither a cargo of British commodities such as provisions, tobacco or coals which we shall comply with or not as the gentlemen of the Administration may think proper. (Stewart and Stewart, 1756)

Notably, coal going to Bordeaux would have likely supplied the *verrierie*, or glassworks, of Jacobite Pierre Mitchell that had developed since the 1720s, stanching the flow of imported green glass bottles from Britain (Le Mao, 2018).

A. Focus on high value and investment in glass bottle manufacturing

Despite also marketing "cheap" claret, the Stewarts' and Smith's highly lucrative specialty was fine claret, the new French claret. Ballantyne was an immediate descendant of Scots wine traders who worked under Smith's son, Hugh, starting around 1750 (Hamilton, 1784). He recalled "Mr. Stewart of York Buildings⁹ and Mr. Allan of Mark Lane" in London sold "the first growth claret, properly prepared and of proper age," which "came to England from Boulogne" (Ballantyne, 1863). Achieving a consistent "first growth" product required blending. An inventory of the Boulogne archives includes a receipt from Hugh and Charles Smith for £280 for wine from "Stuart, négociant anglais" for "wines made [*fait*] by them in their *caves et maisons* during two years" (Boulogne-Sur-Mer, 1884, p.68). This was a wine manufacturing process similar to that practiced in contemporary Bordeaux (Ludington, 2019). However, Ballantyne emphasized that Boulogne's "excellent conditions" made the Boulogne claret superior to that coming from Chartrons. One contemporary reported that the merchants "find the cellars of Boulogne excellent; they are very deep and have very expensive rent" (Watkins, 2002 [1756], p.2). These cool, stable temperature and humid subterranean *caves* were provided for ideal aging.

⁹York Buildings Company was managed by Chandos and also invested in Scottish glassworks.

Montesquieu, Smith, and Hume's mutual acquaintance, Lord Morton, aired his acute awareness of ubiquitous blending practices: "I find it very difficult, if not impossible, to procure any wine that is pure and unmixed when once it has passed through the hands of a wine-merchant" (Montesquieu, 1955, p.1527). Blending occurred to meet market demand for a particular taste. Barrel aging resulted from the maintenance of steady stock at the entrepôt while it also improved the highly phenolic and tannic new French claret. What was blended in Boulogne? First, sources identifying the origin of Boulogne-bound wine overwhelmingly indicate Bordeaux (HCA, 1747c, 1747a, 1747b, 1755a; Minet, 1744; Stewart and Stewart, 1756). Blending claret from different Bordeaux estates and vintages was commonplace (Ludington, 2019). However, after 1754, evidence also exists of Languedoc wine bound for Boulogne in a 200 ton French merchant ship (HCA, 1755b). Mixing in less costly, higher alcohol southern wines while manufacturing "claret" for a segmented British market was far from unknown (Grosley, 1772, p.82; Redding, 1836, p.158). Such wine probably contributed to the "cheap wine" the Stewarts mentioned in 1756.

Did contemporaries perceive this as an objectionable form of wine adulteration or fraud? It appears that by 1750, connoisseurs like Elibank, Newcastle, and Chandos increasingly demanded vintage and sometimes single-estate claret as Lord Morton did in 1754, whereas most "first growth" claret did not have an estate or vintage designation. Also in 1754, Smith's employee Theodore Hay counseled Newcastle's purchasing agent against buying the "most expensive 1752 clarets (at £30 per hogshead) but instead to buy a slightly less expensive claret, which he described as 'smooth and mellow'" (Ludington, 2013, p.138), likely the result of blending and aging. From the noble *vigneron* perspective, Montesquieu agreed with Morton. In 1752, he emphasized that his 1751 claret for Elibank could be aged for up to "fifteen years if he wants; but he must not mix it with other wines." Purity had value: "he can be sure that he has it immediately as I received it from God: it is not passed through the hands of merchants" (Montesquieu, 1955, p.1426).

The Stewarts and Smith created highly successful firms that continued beyond their lifetimes. As the 18th century progressed, sources show not only product specialization for specific markets, as in 1756, but also packaging innovation to enhance fine claret sales by decreasing temporal tariff burdens, thus enhancing cash flow. Fine claret's capacity to be stored and the fact that its value enhanced with age, including in-bottle, resulted in further business advancements. Smith increasingly focused on selling bottled fine claret rather than barreled wine to London. The Stewarts, in turn, opened the London wine outlet at the York Buildings in 1743 (Lea, 1970). Captain Meriton's Boulogne packet frequently landed in London (see entries in Lloyd's, 1764), surely bringing wine to the Stewarts. Smith's firm had devised a method of enhancing the value claret sales to the elite British market despite prohibitory tariffs. One traveler recalled:

I embarked at Boulogne in the sloop commanded by Captain Meriton, whose business during the whole year is to carry over in bottles, from Boulogne to Dover, or even to London itself, the French wine drunk by the English. In consequence of this management, they pay only in proportion to the consumption, the great duties with which that wine is loaded. (Grosley, 1772, p.6)

That is, storing wine in Boulogne, blending and aging it to meet market demand, and then shipping it bottled to Britain enhanced sales and steady cash flow in comparison with shipping it in *barrisques* (225 L) or *tonneaux* (999 L), owing to the heavy import duties. This innovation helped “iron out the unevenness and ensure a certain regularity of flow and stability of prices” (Israel, 1990, p.x).

Relatedly, in the 1740s and 1750s, both the Stewart and Smith firms made major investments in the Leith Glassworks, a company that produced dark green glass wine bottles from coal-fired furnaces for both domestic sale and international export (Turnbull, 2012, p.165, 172). This evidences strategic investment in a related industry, lowering costs. In a typical example of securing business alliances with family ties (Graham, 2013), John Stewart was engaged Charles Smith’s daughter in 1749, and they married in 1750. This cemented the merger of their fortunes.

Smith’s firm owned and managed ships that also transported passengers and couriers (often through smuggling) other items, including weapons, art, silk cloth for Morton’s daughters, and London-printed books for distribution in Paris and Brussels (C. de S. Montesquieu, 1950, p.1231; Budd, 2021, p.116). This created additional income streams. One of his firms, Meriton and Smith, also built an inn in Boulogne thus combining transportation services, lodging, wine sales, and foodservice, although this appears to be after Smith’s 1768 death (Hickey, 1782, p.75). This business diversification may argue against the dedicated commodity chain hypothesis; however, these activities provided added value to the core business, which remained the same.

VII. Conclusion

Boulogne maintained its reputation for having fine claret. In 1853, Charles Dickens wrote of encountering “by far the best wine at ten pence a bottle that I have ever drunk anywhere” during one of his many Boulogne sojourns (Dickens, 1882, p.320). Ballantyne, however, observed in 1807 that “of late years” Bordeaux merchants “can ship [claret to London] in the same excellent conditions as formerly from Boulogne” (Ballantyne, 1863); the *entrepôt*’s utility had declined. Surely, the French Revolution spelled its end as an *entrepôt* dominated by Scots. Charles Smith died in 1768, but in 1784, Alexander Hamilton still referred to “Charles and Hugh Smith and Company” (Hamilton, 1784). Meriton and Smith remained active in the 1770s. The Stewart wine business at York Buildings prospered into the early 19th century (Fisher, 2009).

Could this rebellious, Jacobite-managed “fair trade” commodity network known first-hand by Cantillon, Montesquieu, and Hume have influenced their interconnected commercial theories? Consider the Stewarts’ concern regarding a trade imbalance in 1756 in the context of Hume’s complaint about Britain’s exclusionary Methuen Treaty: “We lost the FRENCH market for our woollen manufactures, and transferred the commerce of wine to SPAIN and PORTUGAL, where we buy worse liquor at a higher price.... But would we lay aside prejudice, it would not be difficult to prove, that nothing could be more innocent, perhaps advantageous” than fairer tariffs. Echoing Cantillon, he asserted that “each new acre of vineyard planted in FRANCE, in order to supply ENGLAND with wine” would, given appropriate trade conditions, result in a balance that would “correct these exorbitant inequalities” through “the

art and industry of each nation.” Using his favorite hydraulic economics analogy, he added: “All water, *wherever it communicates*, remains always at a level” (“Of the Balance of Trade” (1752); emphasis added). Hume had used the same metaphor in an April 1749 letter to Montesquieu couriered by J. Stewart. Montesquieu similarly asserted that mutual economic dependence implied a need for wealthy states, such as France and Britain, to protect trade, fairly regulated. “In trading countries, money which has suddenly evaporated returns, because the states that have absorbed it also owe it” (*L’Esprit* book XX). In 1726, he argued against Louis XV’s recent “prohibition on planting vines” because the entrepreneurial vineyard “owner knows, much better than the Minister, if the vines suffer economic losses; he calculates accurately.” International export demand, particularly in Britain, meant that Bordeaux “must provide different kinds of wines to the foreign market” (in Meloni and Swinnen, 2016, p.382). Finally, “the entire thrust” of Jacobite wine trader Cantillon’s *Essai* explicated “a free trade, laissez-faire direction” (Rothbard, 1995, p.359). Trading wine for foreign products, Cantillon wrote, “will compensate ... and the balance of trade for these two branches will be equal” (*Essai*, III, i). As Noggle points out, Hume’s hydraulic metaphor “recalls Cantillon’s picture of money flowing in and out of sight in ‘little rills of exchange’” (Noggle, 2020, p.181). Cantillon “was the first to show in detail that all parts of the market economy fit together in a ‘natural,’ self-regulative, equilibrating pattern” (Rothbard, 1995, p.359). The SNA thus reveals a network using Boulogne that simultaneously embodied both intellectual and commercial “fair trade.”

Boulogne’s sudden emergence as a significant wine entrepôt also evidences a convergence of geopolitical, economic, and strategic elements. This transformation was not merely an outcome of favorable tax policies or geographic advantages; rather, it unfolded through a complex interplay of historical events, including the 1715 uprising, the expulsion of Jacobites from Calais thanks to Lord Stair, their resettlement in Boulogne, and subsequent strategic maneuvers. The Jacobites’ commercial adeptness catalyzed Boulogne’s evolution from a fishing port into a flourishing wine entrepôt. Up to late 1754, fraudulent importations from the Boulogne entrepôt enhanced local and federal tax revenues, deprived Britain of tax income, and lowered prices for British consumers. The success of Boulogne’s wine trade depended on to the astute business acumen of figures like Smith, the Stewarts, and the Gordons. Cantillon would have called them “entrepreneurs.” Their innovative approaches, such as creating dedicated commodity chains, market specialization, packaging innovations, and investment in glass bottle manufacturing helped revolutionize the wine trade. The intertwining of geopolitical dynamics, entrepreneurial prowess, and economic strategies make Boulogne an enlightening example of 18th-century wine economics.

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