

Ships' cargo ledger of the Company of Scotland Trading to Africa and the Indies, 1698



United Nations
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These records are part of a collection held by RBS Archives relating to the [Company of Scotland Trading to Africa and the Indies](#).

The whole collection is inscribed on UNESCO's [UK Memory of the World Register](#)ance to our shared cultural heritage.

background

The details of the Company of Scotland's planned trading colony were a closely-guarded secret throughout the preparations for the first expedition. Nevertheless, it was widely known that an expedition was in preparation, and that the Company needed to buy a great deal of equipment, large supplies of provisions and plenty of trading goods. A Committee for Improvements was set up, tasked with sourcing everything that the settlers – wherever they were going – would need to undertake a long sea voyage, establish their new community and begin trading.

The Committee's purchases were stored at the Company's warehouse in Leith until the ships were loaded up and sailed for Darien in the summer of 1698.

document

The ledger records details of the cargo carried by *Unicorn*, *St Andrew* and *Caledonia*, three of the five ships which sailed to Darien in the first expedition in 1698. The left-hand pages are arranged by category-headings, beneath which are given details of various goods transported (for example, under 'Shoemakers tools' are paring knives, pincers, heel awls, heel tacks and punches). The corresponding right-hand pages record how these goods were divided between the three ships.

The ledger includes an alphabetical index of goods, which includes references to some pages no longer surviving.

physical description

96 pages, conserved and rebound. Some parts of the index illegible; some latter pages apparently missing. Handwritten in ink on paper. Dimensions: 35.5 x 23cm.