

The Idea of Royal Empire and the Imperial Crown of England, 1542–1698

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I.

After the restoration of Charles II in 1660 and by the end of his reign in 1685, contemporaries increasingly acknowledged the idea of an empire that encompassed the overseas dominions of the English Crown and the multiple kingdoms of the Stuart monarchy. Instead of being forged through a common sense of Britishness or nationhood, the diverse political community—composed of subjects in the Atlantic archipelago and also throughout Asia, the Americas, Africa, and Europe—was united by a free monarch.¹ Tracts and pamphlets recognized and celebrated that the English, and sometimes British, Imperial Crown held a historic right to its surrounding ocean and referred to the monarch as the “Emperor” and his domain as the “Empire of the Seas.”² They also celebrated the “Exploits at Sea” of those Elizabethan and early-seventeenth-century adventurers who “found out *New Worlds*, Planted *Colonies* and Enlarg’d the *British*

¹ “Atlantic archipelago” is meant to encompass Britain, Ireland, and the surrounding islands. “Free” is meant in its seventeenth-century context. For more on the claim of unity through a shared Britishness, see Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707–1837*, rev. ed. (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2009), esp. xxiv–xxv. For English nationhood, see Richard Helgerson, *Forms of Nationhood: The Elizabethan Writing of England* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press), 1992.

² *Britanniae Speculum* (London, 1683), 180–82. All spelling and punctuation has been retained in the original form.

Empire,” giving the imperial entity a history.³ Printed media coherently expressed this concept of a Stuart monarchical empire to an incipient political public from the mid-seventeenth century onwards, building on earlier iterations of the concept from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.⁴ However, the renegotiation of the relationship between Crown and Parliament in 1688, vesting authority in the King-in-Parliament, fundamentally changed the empire and how it was conceptualized by contemporaries. The gap between the formulation of the royalist theory of overseas empire during the seventeenth century and its survival into the mid-eighteenth century deserves more attention from historians of the British Empire. It is the purpose of this study to uncover the seventeenth-century Stuart royal empire and link it to the intellectual history of the modern British Empire, showing the importance of royalism as one of its ideological foundations.

In order to trace the genealogy of Britain’s empire, it is necessary to integrate the Crown into the ideas of empire articulated during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Scholarship on the empire has highlighted its inchoate early modern origins, and has argued that contemporaries only became aware of a Protestant, commercial, maritime, and free political community in the eighteenth century.⁵ Later studies, however, have emphasized the importance of monarchs in archipelagic and overseas expansion, and stressed that “sovereignty was vested in the person of the king” rather than parliaments.⁶ It has been argued that Elizabeth, James I, and Charles I were actively involved in colonial projects, supported the development of arguments to settle territories in the New World, took seriously their responsibility to provide oversight, and participated in the negotiation of treaties with other Crowns—both European and indigenous.⁷ While this body of

³ John Evelyn, *Numismata, a Discourse of Medals* (London, 1697), 160. Emphasis, unless otherwise noted, is retained from the original.

⁴ For political culture in the mid-seventeenth century, see Steve Pincus, “‘Coffee Politicians Does Create’: Coffeehouses and Restoration Political Culture,” *Journal of Modern History* 67, no. 4 (December 1995): 807–34.

⁵ C. H. Firth, “The British Empire,” *Scottish Historical Review* 15, no. 59 (April 1918): 185–89; James Truslow Adams, “On the Term ‘British Empire,’” *American Historical Review* 27, no. 3 (April 1922): 485–89; Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707–1837*; and David Armitage, *The Ideological Origins of the British Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

⁶ Roger A. Mason, “Debating Britain in Seventeenth-Century Scotland: Multiple Monarchy and Scottish Sovereignty,” *Journal of Scottish Historical Studies* 35, no. 1 (2015): 1–24, esp. 2. For accounts of the practice of Crown government, see Steven G. Ellis, “Crown, Community and Government in the English Territories, 1450–1575,” *History* 71, no. 232 (1986): 187–204; and Michael J. Braddick, *State Formation in Early Modern England, c. 1550–1700* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), esp. 340–420.

⁷ Ken MacMillan, *Sovereignty and Possession in the English New World: The Legal Foundations of Empire, 1576–1640* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006); and

scholarship argues for the legal foundations of the empire and stresses the importance of the Crown's duty to govern overseas possessions, it stops short of making claims for a seventeenth-century imperial ideology that comprehended England and its overseas possessions; it follows the current consensus in intellectual history that the British Empire was fully realized as a concept during the eighteenth century.⁸

Until recently, the dominion theory of empire, in which the monarch was the bond that held the empire together, has suffered from a “fit of absence of mind” from historians of ideas and political thought. Two studies recover arguments made by American patriots that were grounded in the dominion theory of empire and subverted the eighteenth-century version of the British Empire, which was firmly grounded in Whig conceptions of Parliamentary sovereignty. Eric Nelson examines the afterlives of 1640s royalist political thought and the dominion theory of empire, and integrates them into the ideological origins of the American Revolution.⁹ James Muldoon argues that John Adams viewed the British Empire as an institution grounded in medieval constitutional thought and opposed the authority of the King-in-Parliament, thus rejecting the settlement reached during the Glorious Revolution.¹⁰ These studies show that royalism and an idea of empire forged through a shared relationship with the monarch remained relevant in the eighteenth century, but the history of this concept has yet to be explored.

This study locates the royal foundations of the British Empire in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. It argues that some contemporaries recognized an idea of empire centered on the monarch, ruled by the Imperial Crown of England and independent of Parliamentary control. At times, this concept encompassed territories beyond the English realm and incorporated Kings of England—or as the Stuarts would style themselves after 1604, Kings of Great Britain—as sovereigns of the sea and rulers of an

Jeffrey Glover, *Paper Sovereigns: Anglo-Native Treaties and the Law of Nations, 1604–1664* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2014).

⁸ While not focusing on the Crown, many other works follow this trend of finding origins for the later empire. For example, see Alison Games, *The Web of Empire: English Cosmopolitans in an Age of Expansion, 1560–1660* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), esp. 291; Carla Gardina Pestana, *The English Atlantic in an Age of Revolution, 1640–1661* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004); James Livesay, *Civil Society and Empire: Ireland and Scotland in the Eighteenth-Century Atlantic World* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2009), esp. 12.

⁹ Eric Nelson, *The Royalist Revolution: Monarchy and the American Founding* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2014), 30.

¹⁰ James Muldoon, *John Adams and the Constitutional History of the Medieval British Empire* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), 250–52.

empire that extended beyond the Atlantic archipelago.¹¹ During the reigns of the Stuart monarchs, the ideological foundations and articulations of the British Empire were forged; aside from an interregnum from 1649 to 1660, this version of the royal empire of the Stuart monarchy flourished from 1625 to 1688, becoming increasingly recognized by contemporaries during the 1670s. This conception was challenged in the seventeenth century by a competing idea that was based on the extension of the realm of England and its empire with sovereignty vested in the King-in-Parliament. Thus, by the 1680s there was a conflict between two articulations of empire: first, the empire of the Stuart monarchs, grounded in a royalist theory of imperial sovereignty, which, in the context 1670s and 1680s, might be referred to as a Tory interpretation; and second, the English Empire ruled by the King-in-Parliament, grounded in revised ancient constitutional thinking that stressed the rights and privileges of subjects, which might be thought of as the Whig interpretation.¹² After 1688, the second idea of empire was ascendant in theory and practice, confirming an English, and later British, Empire ruled by a monarch constrained by and contained in the English, and later British, Parliament, and merging the earlier concepts of royal empire with English ancient constitutional thought and insistence on Parliamentary sovereignty. The Act of Union of 1707 marked the ultimate triumph of the Parliamentary conception of the British Empire and the legislative body's asserted sovereignty over territories of the British Crown in the British state, but different understandings of the institutional framework of the empire lingered throughout the Atlantic world and culminated in the American Revolution.

II.

The language of empire and sovereignty in Europe during the early modern period carried multiple meanings and was a derivative discourse drawn from Roman sources.¹³ Empire could mean the power to command and exercise sovereignty; it could represent the territory over which authority

¹¹ See S. T. Bindoff, "The Stuarts and Their Style," *English Historical Review* 60, no. 237 (May 1945): 192–216.

¹² This is meant to expand on the argument that two concepts of empire and state-formation—Dutch and French—were in ideological competition in England during this period. See Pincus, 1688: *The First Modern Revolution* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2011).

¹³ Walter Ullman, "The Development of the Medieval Idea of Sovereignty," *English Historical Review* 64, no. 250 (January 1949): 1–33.

was exercised; or it could denote the multiple territories ruled over by a single sovereign, sometimes referred to as a composite monarchy.¹⁴ Contrary to the claim that Scotland introduced the language of empire into the Atlantic archipelago, it seems the first claim to imperial jurisdiction was exercised in fourteenth-century England on behalf of Richard II.¹⁵ While James III of Scotland claimed that he held “ful Jurisdictione and fre Impire” within his kingdom in 1469, the English king made a similar assertion in 1397.¹⁶ A statute legitimating the Beaufort family described Richard II as “emperour de son roialme Dengleterre.”¹⁷ This expression of imperial authority was ultimately derived from and modeled on French sources, and survived throughout the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.¹⁸ These articulations of sovereignty and imperial authority emphasized the power and jurisdiction of the monarch, serving as a language of royal empowerment and emphasizing the freedom of the sovereign from the influence of other earthly or ecclesiastical authorities.

Emphasis on the body and person of the monarch continued into the sixteenth century and was instrumental in the construction of a discourse on the British Empire during the 1540s. Since the 1960s, historians have debated Henry VIII’s assertion of royal supremacy, the beginnings of a “Tudor revolution” in government during the 1530s, and the implications of the phrase “this realm of England is an empire, and so hath been accepted in the world, governed by one supreme head and king having the dignity and royal estate of the imperial crown.”¹⁹ However, the claim that the king was the head of an imperial entity, the “realm of England,” and possessed an “imperial crown” impacted the language used to express the English monarch’s authority in the Atlantic archipelago and beyond. Wales was absorbed into the Kingdom of England in 1536, and Ireland was created as a separate kingdom in 1541, making Henry the ruler of a composite monarchy and multiple kingdoms.

¹⁴ Anthony Pagden, *Lords of All the World: Ideologies of Empire in Spain, Britain and France c. 1500–c. 1800* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1995), 12–17.

¹⁵ Armitage, “The Elizabethan Idea of Empire,” *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 14 (2004): 269–77, esp. 273.

¹⁶ *Acts of the Parliaments of Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1814–1875), 1:95.

¹⁷ Alfred Lawson Brown and Stanley Bertram Chrimes, *Select Documents of English Constitutional History, 1307–1485* (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1961), 166–67.

¹⁸ C. S. L. Davies, “Tournai and the English Crown, 1513–1519,” *Historical Journal* 41, no. 1 (March 1998): 1–26, esp. 23–25.

¹⁹ Carl Stephenson and Frederick George Marcham, *Sources of English Constitutional History: A Selection of Documents from A.D. 600 to the Interregnum* (New York: Harper & Row, 1972), 304–6; G. R. Elton, *The Tudor Revolution in Government: Administrative Changes in the Reign of Henry VIII* (Cambridge: Cambridge University

This consolidation of power in the Atlantic archipelago became British when Henry asserted his sovereignty over Scotland in 1542. During what has become known as the “Rough Wooings,”²⁰ Henry was encouraged to make Scotland a part of his “regal empire,” reminded that Scotland was subject to the English Crown, and informed that the “Bishop of Rome” was alarmed at “th’amplification of your Majesty’s empire.”²¹ After Henry’s death in 1547, English and Scottish writers produced pamphlets that urged for union and the restoration of “the whole Empire & name of great Briteigne.”²² James Henrison, an assured Scot arguing on behalf of the English cause, claimed that in the past “al Britayn, was under one Emperor, and beeyng under one Emperor, then was Scotlande and Englande but one Empire.” The marriage of Edward VI and Mary, Queen of Scots, would restore “one sole Monarchie,” which “shalbee called Britayn,” and its subjects would “take the indifferent old name of Britaynes again.”²³ Henrison also stressed that the monarch of England held “a close crowne Emperiall, in token that the lande is an empire free in it selfe, & subject to no superior but GOD.”²⁴ The 1530s and 1540s saw the construction of an imperial language centered on the monarch of England and envisioned an empire of Great Britain, though it was contained to the island of Britain and rooted more in the ideological underpinnings of recovery and restoration instead of the acquisition of new territory.

The limits of the British Empire were conceptually expanded in the 1570s and 1580s. While the Welsh antiquary Humphrey Llywd first used the phrase “British Emyre” in 1577, John Dee envisioned an empire that stretched far beyond the kingdoms of England and Scotland.²⁵ His “Incomparable Brytish Empire” was composed of territories in North America and

Press, 1953); and John Guy, *Tudor England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 369–78.

²⁰ See Marcus Merriman, *The Rough Wooings: Mary Queen of Scots, 1542–1551* (East Linton: Tuckwell, 2000).

²¹ Edmond Harvel to Henry VIII, 22 October 1542, in *Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic, Henry VIII* [hereafter *LP*] (London: Her Majesty’s Stationery Office, 1900), 17: no. 978; John Eldar to Henry VIII, *LP*, (London: Her Majesty’s Stationery Office, 1902), 18: no. 539; and Edmond Harvel to Henry VIII, 22 May 1543, *LP*, (London: Her Majesty’s Stationery Office, 1901), 18: no. 601.

²² Nicholas Bodrugan, *An Epitome of the Title That the Kynges Majestie of Englande, Hath to the Sovereigntie of Scotlande* (London, 1548), sig. a3v.

²³ James Henrison, *An Exhortacion to the Scottes to Conforme Themselves to the Honourable, Expedient, and Godly Union Betweene the Two Realmes of Englande and Scotlande* (London, 1547), sig. d1r–d2v.

²⁴ Henrison, sig. d3v.

²⁵ See Bruce Ward Henry, “John Dee, Humphrey Llywd, and the name ‘British Empire,’” *Huntington Library Quarterly* 35, no. 2 (February 1972): 189–90.

Europe, and peopled by the English and Welsh, being “the true and naturall born subjects of this Brytish Empire.”²⁶ Dee’s conception of the empire was transatlantic, maritime, and Anglocentric. Derived from an understanding of historical precedent and Roman laws concerning the occupation of land, it included territories both in the New World and in Europe.²⁷ While the 1570s and early 1580s may have appeared to be an imperial decade, in which the imaginations of some Englishmen were captured by the possibilities of overseas colonization and the potential to recover mainland European possessions, the extent of Elizabeth’s actual imperial endeavors were confined to protecting her royal prerogative in England and governing a parochial empire limited to the realm of England and its Church.²⁸ Illustrating this idea of an imperial entity limited to the island of Britain and headed by a monarch that was supreme in both religious and secular affairs, Sir Amyas Paulet, the ambassador to Venice, asserted that Elizabeth governed an empire held by the Imperial Crown granted to her by Henry VIII.²⁹ By the end of the sixteenth century, different concepts of the British Empire were available for reference. One was insular, constrained to the island of Britain; and the other was extensive, composed of overseas possessions, and expansive. Both were ruled by the Imperial Crown of England.

III.

James VI of Scotland inherited the English throne in 1603, uniting the crowns of England and Scotland over fifty years after the pamphlets from the 1540s celebrated the potential for an empire of Great Britain. John Dee referred to James as “the most blessed and Triumphant Monarch, that euer this Brytish Empire, enioyed.”³⁰ The new king, however, decided to pursue a parochial vision of empire during the early years of his reign, primarily envisioning any conception of a British imperial entity as consisting of only

²⁶ John Dee, *General and Rare Memorials Pertayning to the Perfect Arte of Navigation* (London, 1577), 8, 14; and Dee, “Brytanici Imperii Limites,” British Library, Add. MS 59681, fols. 4r–8v.

²⁷ MacMillan, *Sovereignty and Possession in the English New World*, 49–78. For an argument that Dee was more oriented toward Europe and his arguments were largely ignored, see Glyn Parry, “John Dee and the Elizabethan British Empire in Its European Context,” *Historical Journal* 49, no. 3 (September 2006): 643–75.

²⁸ For Elizabeth’s relationship with Scotland, see Mason, “Scotland, Elizabethan England and the Idea of Britain,” *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 14 (2004): 279–93.

²⁹ Protest of [Sir Amyas Paulet] the Ambassador from England, *Calendar of State Papers, Venice* [hereafter CSPV] (London: Her Majesty’s Stationery Office, 1890), 7: no. 682.

³⁰ Dee, *To the Kings Most Excellent Maiestie* (London, 1604).

the island of Britain. After assuming the style “King of Great Britain” via royal proclamation in 1604, James initiated proposals for the union of the Parliaments of Scotland and England, drawing on concepts of empire that usually referenced England as the seat and Scotland as an appendage.³¹ However, the union remained limited to the crowns due to the difficulties in assimilating different laws and churches and the insistence of the English Parliament on a “perfect union” with Scotland—similar to that of Wales in the 1530s—that would place England as the cultural, political, and institutional hegemon.³² Aside from some reprints of Dee’s materials and a sentence in John Bainbridge’s pamphlet discussing the movements of a comet over “the vtmost limites of the *British* Empire,” references to an expansive overseas empire were limited and rare until the 1620s.³³

A royal proclamation of 1625, printed in the “first yeere of [Charles I’s] Reigne of Great Britaine,” reverted the government of the Virginia plantation to the Crown. It stated that “the Colonie of Virginia” was “Planted by the hands of Our most deare Father [James I] of blessed memory, for the propagation of Christian Religion, the increase of Trade, and the enlarging of his Royall Empire.” It was “publish[ed] and declare[d]” that the Crown held “those Territories of Virginia and the Sommer-Ilands, also that of New England” as “a part of [its] Royall Empire.” The “Regal office” was bound “to protect, maintaine, and support” its possessions “as any other part of our Dominions” under “one uniforme course of Government, in, and through all Our whole Monarchie.”³⁴ Since the proclamation was printed for Charles’s “loving Subiects” and presented to “the whole world,” it was meant as an assertion of royal authority in the New World to a global audience.

The concept of “Royall Empire” showed the interconnected relationship between the dominions of the Crown, forming a pan-Atlantic composite monarchy. The proclamation listed both Christianity and commerce as strong motivations for the colonial project. The characteristics of this “Royall Empire,” therefore, were monarchical, transatlantic, Protestant,

³¹ *Proclamation Assuming the Stile of King of Great Brittain* (London, 1604); and King’s Speech Concerning the Union, 2 May 1607, *Journal of the House of Commons* (London, 1802), 1:366–68.

³² Bruce Galloway, *The Union of England and Scotland, 1603–1608* (Edinburgh: John Donald, 1986).

³³ Richard Hakluyt, *The Principal Navigations, Voyages, Traffiques, and Discoveries of the English Nation* (London, 1599), 2, 6–7; Luke Foxe, *Northwest Fox* (London, 1635), 2; and John Bainbridge, *An Astronomical Description of the Late Comet* (London, 1618), 7.

³⁴ *A Proclamation for Settling the Plantation of Virginia* (London, 1625), 1–2.

and commercial, mirroring many of the eventual ideological assumptions of the eighteenth-century British Empire. Andrew White's tract describing Maryland reiterated several of the points made in the proclamation, though it elided some of the contentious points regarding the colony's practice of religious toleration and its proprietor's Catholic faith. Maryland would be beneficial for "the propagation of the Christian Faith, and the enlargement of our Empire and Dominion," and the transport of "ample Colony of the *English* Nation unto a certaine Countrey hereafter described, in the parts of *America*, not yet cultivated and planted, though in some parts thereof inhabited by certaine barbarous people, having no knowledge of Almighty God."³⁵ Instead of displacing or massacring the native population, White argued that incorporating them into "his Majesties Empire" would enlarge it by the addition of "many thousand Subjects, as well as of large Territories," and would make "Our Nation honoured, and the Planters themselves enriched by the trafficke and commerce which they may be had with them."³⁶ The "Royall Majestie" was expected to create the conditions for "good government" within his colonies.³⁷

The proclamation from 1625 and Andrew White's pamphlet both show that the Imperial Crown of England had a responsibility to govern its overseas possessions. In 1634, King Charles I created the Lords Commissioners for Foreign Plantations in order to improve the administration and oversight of the American colonies. It was recommissioned in 1636 and existed until 1641.³⁸ The Commission was formed to issue laws and orders in overseas English colonies. It was vested with the authority to require accounts of colonial government and hear complaints, and it had power over charters and patents.³⁹ While the legal ramifications of the Crown's responsibility have been discussed by Ken MacMillan, the ideological importance of the monarch in the early Stuart empire has been overlooked.⁴⁰ Aside from Dee's work in the 1570s, Charles's proclamation was one of the earliest and most forceful expressions of an ideology on behalf of a pan-Atlantic "Royall Empire," and it asserted the Crown's authority

³⁵ Andrew White, *A Relation of Maryland* (London, 1635), 58.

³⁶ White, 37.

³⁷ White, 58.

³⁸ Braddick, "The English Government, War, Trade, and Settlement, 1625–1688," in *The Origins of Empire*, Nicholas Canny, ed., *The Oxford History of the British Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 286–308; and MacMillan, *Sovereignty and Possession in the English New World*, 104–5.

³⁹ MacMillan, *Sovereignty and Possession in the English New World*, 105.

⁴⁰ For Crown involvement in charters during the early Stuart period, see MacMillan, 79–120.

over not just Virginia but also Bermuda and New England. It would be an overstatement to argue that there was a coherent and complete understanding of a concept of royal empire, but the framework for an Imperial Crown of England that ruled over the Atlantic archipelago and possessions in North America was well articulated and acknowledged by Charles by at least 1625.

The execution of the king in 1649 and the Interregnum would seem to have no place in any account of the history of royal empire except as an ending, yet the 1650s were a fertile decade for the formation of imperial ideology. While many initiatives of this time continued efforts from Charles's reign, the English Republic and Cromwellian Protectorate substantially reformed the military and navy, and asserted more direct control over colonial government.⁴¹ Even though it had some revolutionary elements, the regime was strikingly traditional in how it drew on the royalist conception of empire, especially during what David Armitage has called the "imperial monarchy" of Oliver Cromwell. Some contemporaries speculated that Cromwell might even assume the title "emperor of Great Britain" or "emperor of the West Indies,"⁴² regarding Cromwell's perceived private ambitions with suspicion and fearing that he was exercising "absolute arbitrary sovereignty."⁴³ The Rump Parliament's assertion of dominion over the surrounding seas was ultimately derived from Stuart precedent and prerogative powers. John Selden's *Mare clausum*, translated by Marchamont Nedham in 1652, clearly had royalist roots, despite a dedication to the "Supreme Autoritie of the Nation, Parliament."⁴⁴ Dominion over the sea, according to Selden, was part of the "Royal Patrimoine of the British Empire" and the "Right" of the "King of Great Britain" was to possess the "Sea-Territorie of the British Empire," making the monarch the possessor of "so great a Crown."⁴⁵ While the Rump and Protectorate relied on historical arguments to assert sovereignty over the seas and justify expansion, contemporary scholars were questioning the legitimacy of Parliament as an institution predating the Norman Conquest and for its relationship to the king—criticisms that undermined Parliamentary assertions of sovereignty.

⁴¹ For continuity from the 1620s and 1630s, see Braddick, "Government, War, Trade, and Settlement," 292–307; and for the changes during the 1640s and 1650s, see Pestana, *The English Atlantic in an Age of Revolution, 1640–1661*, 213–26.

⁴² Armitage, "The Cromwellian Protectorate and the Language of Empire," *Historical Journal* 35, no. 3 (September 1992): 531–55, esp. 531–32.

⁴³ Armitage, 544–46.

⁴⁴ John Selden, *Of the Dominion, Or, Ownership of the Sea*, trans. Marchamont Nedham (London, 1652), sig. A2r.

⁴⁵ Selden, sig. G2v, 449–58.

Sir Robert Filmer, Peter Heylyn, Robert Sheringham, and Sir Henry Spelman—all somewhat ignored and overlooked in the 1650s—produced works from a firmly royalist perspective.⁴⁶ Forming what might be considered a royalist canon, these works argued against what would become known as the “Whig interpretation” of history and were thus discounted or held in low regard by historians from the eighteenth century until recent years. Because of the appropriation of royal imagery and the idiom of empire rooted firmly in a monarchical past, the idea of royal empire was firmly entrenched in English political thought, and perhaps strengthened during the Interregnum. While not overly consequential in the 1650s, the royalist scholars provided an intellectual foundation for the absolute power of the Imperial Crown that would be expanded to include overseas possessions in the 1670s—not coincidentally when many of their works were reprinted and reissued. When Charles II returned as king in 1660, he inherited an empire that had been strengthened both institutionally and ideologically.

IV.

The return of Charles II in 1660 was met with enthusiasm for the reinstatement of the monarchy and the Restoration of the royal empire. In a speech to the House of Lords, the Lord Chancellor said the potential union between Charles and Catherine de Braganza could provide the “Empire of the World.” The addition of Tangier and Bombay, as a part of Catherine’s dowry, would serve “for the Advancement of the Trade and Empire of this Kingdom, the like hath not been offered in this Age.”⁴⁷ With Tangier, the royal empire had the opportunity to take a new approach to administering a colony. It also faced challenges in maintaining the defenses of a city surrounded by hostile forces.⁴⁸ Instead of implementing the Navigation Act of

⁴⁶ See Sir Robert Filmer, *Patriarcha: Or the Natural Power of Kings* (London, 1680); Peter Heylyn, *Cosmographie* (London, 1652); Robert Sheringham, *The Kings Supremacy Asserted* (n. p., 1660); and Sir Henry Spelman, *Posthumous Works* (London, 1698), 49–65. For more on Spelman and his impact in the 1670s, see J. G. A. Pocock, *The Ancient Constitution and the Feudal Law: A Study of English Historical Thought in the Seventeenth Century*, 2nd rev. ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), esp. 148–228.

⁴⁷ Lord Chancellor’s Speech, 8 May 1661, *Journal of the House of Lords* (London, 1767–1830), 11:244.

⁴⁸ See Tristan Stein, “Tangier in the Restoration Empire,” *Historical Journal* 54, no. 4 (December 2011), 985–1011; and Gabriel Glickman, “Empire, ‘Popery,’ and the Fall of English Tangier, 1662–1684,” *Journal of Modern History* 87 (June 2015): 247–80.

1661, Charles II declared Tangier a “free port.”⁴⁹ His instructions to the Earl of Peterborough, the first royal governor of Tangier, stated that “this addition to our Dominions” would bring “gaine to our subjects the trade of Barbary & enlarge our Dominions in that sea & advance thereby the Honor of our Crowne & the Generall comerce & weale of our subjects.”⁵⁰ He also instructed Peterborough to declare that “no dutys Customs, or taxes whatever” would be issued for the next five years.⁵¹ Aside from showing that Charles was the head of an empire that was heterogeneous, flexible, and administratively diverse, allowing free trade in the Mediterranean port also demonstrated that the monarch could rule his overseas possessions independent of the English Parliament.⁵²

In 1663 the Crown wrote to the governors of Massachusetts, Connecticut, and Plymouth to express its concern that the “spirited people of Providence Colony” were obstructing attempts to enlarge the royal empire, and requested the due administration of justice on behalf of the king.⁵³ In 1674, William Dyer of New England petitioned for the king’s intervention due to the Massachusetts colony’s “ambitious conceit of being lords of a great empire” that would exercise “dominion over all the inhabitants of New England.”⁵⁴ Much like his father, Charles II was interested and involved in governing his overseas dominions and was expected by the colonists to provide good government.

The wars between the Dutch and English were motivated by more than religious differences and the clash between republican and absolutist ideologies. Trade and the supremacy of the seas also motivated the ongoing conflicts.⁵⁵ At the beginning of the second war in 1665, the Venetian ambassador reported that a medal had been created to assert the English claim to

⁴⁹ Charles II, *A Proclamation Declaring His Majesties pleasure to Settle and Establish a Free Port at His City of Tangier* (London, 1662).

⁵⁰ Charles II, “Instructions for the earle of Peterburgh, general of our army designed for Tangier in Africa,” The National Archives [hereafter TNA], Colonial Office [hereafter CO] 279/1, fols. 29v–r.

⁵¹ Charles II, “Instructions.”

⁵² Sir Matthew Hale posited that the king could acquire overseas possessions as “the king of England . . . or Charles Stewart.” See Sir Matthew Hale, *The Prerogatives of the King* (London: Selden Society, 1976), 43.

⁵³ The King to the Governors and etc. of the Massachusetts, Connecticut, and Plymouth in New England, June[?], 1663, *Calendar of State Papers Colonial, America and West Indies* [hereafter CSPC] (London: Her Majesty’s Stationery Office, 1880), 5: no. 497.

⁵⁴ Petition of William Dyer, of New England, gentleman, to the King, May 1674, CSPC (London: Her Majesty’s Stationery Office, 1889), 7: no. 1279.

⁵⁵ See Pincus, *Protestantism and Patriotism: Ideologies and the Making of English Foreign Policy, 1650–1668* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

the empire of the seas to the Dutch and French.⁵⁶ A letter to Joseph Williamson claimed that the King of Great Britain was still viewed as the sovereign of the seas and ruled the empire of the surrounding British ocean.⁵⁷ Taken together, this medal and letter drew on past arguments that centered on the monarch's historical claims to dominion over the British seas and reinforced that one of the ideologies of this empire was commercial. The conclusion of the war in 1667 saw the loss of Surinam in South America, but the addition of New Netherland, then renamed New York in honor of Charles's brother James, Duke of York, created a contiguous North American empire.⁵⁸

Just before the third Anglo-Dutch war in 1672, several pamphlets asserted the monarch's right to the seas. In one pamphlet, Edward Chamberlayne argued that "To the Crown of *England* belongs the Dominion of all the Narrow Seas, round about the whole Island of *Great Britain*, by Ancient Right whereof, it hath had possession in all times."⁵⁹ In order to "maintain this Right and Title, to protect Trade, to subdue Pirates, to defend this Kingdom against hostile Invasions, and to reduce foreign Potentates to Reason, the Kings of *England* have had (especially of later times) a considerable number of Ships of War, for Strength, for Beauty and Sailing (if not for number) surpassing all those of our Neighbor Nations."⁶⁰ Robert Codrington, in *His Majesties Propriety, and Dominion on the British Seas*, drew on John Selden in setting out two propositions that declared the monarch as sovereign as the seas and thus integrated a maritime ideology into the conceptual framework of the royal empire: first, "*That the Sea by the Law of Nature and Nations is not common to all Men, but is capable of Private Dominion, as well as the Land*"; and second, "*That the KING of GREAT BRITAIN Is LORD of the SEA Flowing about, as an Inseparable and Perpetual Appendant of the Brittish Empire*."⁶¹ Similar to the iteration asserted in the proclamation from 1625, this empire continued to be

⁵⁶ Enclosure, Alvisé Sagredo, Venetian Ambassador in France, to the Doge and Senate, 3 July 1665, CSPV (London, 1933), 34: no. 210.

⁵⁷ Ja. Hayes to Williamson, 3 September 1666, *Calendar of State Papers Domestic* [hereafter CSPD] (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1864), 170: no. 55.

⁵⁸ Justin Roberts, "Surrendering Surinam: The Barbadian Diaspora and the Expansion of the English Sugar Frontier, 1650–75," *William and Mary Quarterly* 73, no. 2 (2016): 225–56.

⁵⁹ Edward Chamberlayne, *The Second Part of the Present State of England* (London, 1671), 164.

⁶⁰ Chamberlayne, 165.

⁶¹ Robert Codrington, *His Majesties Propriety, and Dominion on the British Seas* (London, 1672), 1.

described as monarchical, commercial, Protestant, free, and maritime.⁶² William de Britaine anticipated that the upcoming war with the Dutch would provide an opportunity to “behold his Majesty culminant in the highest Orb of Glory, and his Dominions fix’d upon the Center of a flourishing Happiness.”⁶³ De Britaine went on to ask playfully, “His Majesty hath an Imperial Name; it was *Charles* that brought the Empire into *France*; a *Charles* that brought it first into *Spain*: Why should not *Great Britain* have his turn?”⁶⁴ While the war essentially confirmed the status quo of the Treaty of Breda from 1667, celebration of Charles’s kingship and recognition of the English overseas possessions proliferated in print.

From 1674 to 1688, the royal empire of the Stuarts was at its height. If the ideological foundations for the overseas empire were forged in the 1620s and 1630s, the monarchical imperial entity was embraced in the 1670s and 1680s, as can be observed in several tracts and pamphlets that effectively answered William de Britaine’s question in the affirmative. Sir Winston Churchill, a royalist soldier during the 1640s and member of Parliament after the Restoration, wrote perhaps the first history of the period of Stuart expansion, praising James I for finding a way to “enlarge his Empire” and then providing a narrative of the king’s early expansion through “the first possession we had of *New-England* being principally ascribed to that of his here in *Old England*, both that *Virginia* and *Bermudas*, three of our most famous Plantations (however discover’d before his time) having in no measure recover’d so much strength as to make good the Ground they laid Title to, till influenced by his Wisdom.” After discussing the founding of Jamestown and its importance, Churchill then ascribes the “Dimensions of his [the king’s] Greatness” to “the Ocean he commanded, betwixt this and that other World, which was no less properly his Dominion, then the *Terra Firma* beyond it.”⁶⁵ The Stuarts also attempted to make the empire more British through a Crown-endorsed colonial project in New Jersey that employed the monarchy’s dispensing powers to allow Scottish merchants, administrators, and colonizers access to possessions throughout the Atlantic world.⁶⁶

⁶² On the religious goals of the late Stuarts, see Scott Sowerby, *Making Toleration: The Repealers and the Glorious Revolution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013).

⁶³ William de Britaine, *The Interest of England in the Present War with Holland* (London, 1672), 20.

⁶⁴ De Britaine., 20–21.

⁶⁵ Sir Winston Churchill, *Divi Britannici* (London, 1675), 340–42.

⁶⁶ Declaration Concerning East New Jersey, National Records of Scotland, RH 14/127; and Allan I. Macinnes, *Union and Empire: The Making of the United Kingdom in 1707* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 158.

In addition to providing a historical narrative of the development of the empire, printed media acknowledged the overseas dominions in their discussions of the geography of the king's dominions and in contemporary political tracts. A reprint of John Speed's *Theatre of the Empire of Great Britain*, originally published in 1611, included the colonies in the Americas in its description of the geography of the Stuarts' dominions.⁶⁷ John Seller, hydrographer to the king, included the "English Empire in America" in his *Atlas Minimus*, and Nathaniel Crouch's popular historical works described the overseas possessions in the New World, Africa, and Asia.⁶⁸ The interconnected relationship between England and its colonies was made forcefully by Edward Littleton, a planter in Barbados, when he argued that the "[negative] Opinion concerning us (if any really be of it) is a great mistake; and that the Plantations are not only not pernicious; but highly beneficial and of vast advantage to *England*."⁶⁹ Since the "Grandeur" of Rome was due to "its free emission of Colonies," plantations in the Americas were based on the model of a "wise and glorious State."⁷⁰ According to Littleton, the colonists' "Labour, Hazards, and Industry, have enlarged the *English Trade and Empire*," and "the *English Empire in America, what ever we think of it our selves, is by others esteemed greatly considerable*." The colonists' contributions, therefore, were beneficial to the mother country and the plantations. Noticeably absent in Littleton's account was the increasing presence and contributions of African labor in Barbados and the rest of the possessions in America.⁷¹ Richard Blome, in his pamphlet *The Present State of His Majesties Isles and Territories in America*, stressed the "growing Greatness of those distant Colonies" and lamented "Neighbours" that did not "represent their Foreign Plantations as vast and might[y] Accessions to their Government."⁷² The colonies, according to Blome, benefited from "the most clement and wise Administration of the Monarchs of *Great Britain*" and supplemented the "Mighty Power of the *British Crown*."⁷³

The anonymous author of *Britanniae Speculum* built on some of the royalist arguments regarding the powers of the monarch and integrated

⁶⁷ John Speed, *Theatre of the Empire of Great Britain* (London, 1676).

⁶⁸ John Seller, *Atlas Minimus* (London, 1679); [Nathaniel Crouch], *The English Empire in America* (London, 1685); and [Nathaniel Crouch], *A View of the English Acquisitions in Guinea, and the East-Indies* (London, 1686).

⁶⁹ Edward Littleton, *The Groans of the Plantations* (London, 1689), 27.

⁷⁰ Littleton, 30.

⁷¹ Littleton, 27.

⁷² Richard Blome, *The Present State of His Majesties Isles and Territories in America* (London, 1687), Preface.

⁷³ Blome.

possessions in America, Africa, and Asia as a part of the territories of the “British Crown.” Citing Sir Robert Filmer, the pamphlet situated “Great Britain” as a “Hereditary” and “Free Monarchy,” which allowed for the “Industry, Liberty, and Happiness of the Subject.”⁷⁴ Since the king was not limited by earthly authority and headed the Church in all of the Crown’s dominions, the empire was free and Protestant. The author then lists the possessions of the Crown:

The Dominions of the King of *Great Britain* are at this day in possession the Islands of *Great Britain* and *Ireland*, containing three Kingdoms of large Extent, with all the other Isles lying in the *British* Sea, being above four hundred in all, great and small, some whereof are very considerable, together with all the adjacent Seas even to the Shores of the Neighboring Nations. As a Mark whereof all Ships of Forreigners have anciently demanded leave to fish and pass in these Seas, and do at this day lower their Topsails to all the Kings Ships of War. And therefore Children, born upon those Seas (as it sometimes happens) are esteemed natural born Subjects to the King of *Great Britain*, and therefore need no Naturalization, as do those, that are born out of his Dominions. He hath likewise in possession the Isles of *Jersey*, *Guernsey*, *Alderney* and *Sark*, being Parcel of the ancient Dutchy of *Normandy*; besides the profitable Plantations of *New England*, *Virginia*, *Barbados*, *Jamaica*, *Maryland*, *Bermudos*, *Carolina*, *New-York*, and other places in *America*, with some in the *East Indies*, and upon the Coast of *Africa*.⁷⁵

The rather extensive list contains dominions in America, Africa, and Asia, making the royal empire not only transatlantic, but also global. After cautioning against the principles of “Democratism” and “Presbyterianism,” the author discusses the capabilities of the monarch:

Thus admirable is the Defensive Strength of the Monarch of *Great Britain*; nor can his Offensive Puissance but be formidable to the World, when it shall be considered, that being Master of the Sea (as, if he be not wanting to himself, or his Subjects to him, he must be) he may in some sort be said to be Master of every Countrey,

⁷⁴ *Britanniae Speculum*, 172.

⁷⁵ *Britanniae Speculum*, 180–81.

bordering thereupon, and is at liberty, where, when, and upon what Terms he pleaseth, to begin or end a War, for the carrying on of which he is well able, whenever he shall think fit so to do, to raise of *Englishmen* (besides Auxiliaries of valiant *Scots* and *Irish*).⁷⁶

Being master of the sea makes the empire of the Stuarts maritime, and the ability to deploy English, Scots, and Irish makes the empire “British.” The king, according to the author, was “Omnipresent” in his empire and retained a “kind of Universal Influence over all his Dominions.”⁷⁷ This pamphlet articulated a vision that was perhaps the closest to fulfilling John Dee’s idea of a British Empire. However, it also expressed an idea of kingship that many Whigs resisted.

Some overseas administrators advocated for gradual reform in governing the colonies and the creation of a federal system to govern the entire empire. Richard Wharton, in a letter to William Blathwayt, the auditor-general of royal revenues from America and later a Whig member of Parliament, recognized the need for gradual alterations in colonial administration and argued for a “favourable reformation” that would make the “Collonyes very considerable to y^e Crowne of England.” Too drastic a change, warned Wharton, would “in short tyme I feare Blast not onely a hopefull plantacon but those y^t should be y^e most active Instrum^{ts} therein It were easye to demonstrate that the Improvm^t of thes Colonyes under Due Incuragem^t and Regulations might be more advantageous both for y^e support and inlargem^t of the English Empire.”⁷⁸ The political economist Sir William Petty had a comprehensive vision of “The King of Englands Empire,” which included “His European Islands,” the colonies in America, and the East Indian and Asian trades.⁷⁹ He proposed a federal Parliament—representing England, Ireland, Scotland, and the king’s dominions in Asia, Africa, and America—and a colonial council that would advise the English Parliament.⁸⁰ These ideas effectively reconsidered the relationship between Crown, Parliament, and colonial assemblies, but none were adopted by James II, whose creation of the Dominion of New England was an innovative attempt to centralize authority in the colonies.⁸¹

⁷⁶ *Britanniae Speculum*, 187–88.

⁷⁷ *Britanniae Speculum*, 214.

⁷⁸ Richard Wharton to William Blathwayt, 30 December 1680, Colonial Williamsburg, John D. Rockefeller Library, MS 46.02.

⁷⁹ Sir William Petty, untitled fragment, British Library, Add. MS 72866, fol. 148r, in Armitage, *Ideological Origins of the British Empire*, 152.

⁸⁰ Armitage, *Ideological Origins of the British Empire*, 152–53.

⁸¹ For a comprehensive treatment of Sir William Petty, see Ted McCormick, *William Petty*

Two major political factions, Whigs and Tories, were formed in the context of concerns over the monarchy's powers and relationship to Parliament during the 1670s and 1680s. Debates in Parliament surrounding the Exclusion Crisis had an imperial dimension as well, since Titus Oates had located the origins of the so-called Popish Plot in Tangier, a colony under direct Crown control.⁸² Whigs critiqued the port as a haven for "popery" and claimed that the Stuarts were planning to create a Catholic base to eventually strip away English liberties. Tories, however, rallied to defend the city and the Stuarts' interests in Tangier.⁸³ While debates over the Mediterranean port ended after its fall to the Empire of Morocco in 1684, a Tory theory of empire, based on the powers of the king and grounded in the earlier conception of "Royall Empire," emerged in *Britanniae Speculum* in tandem with the debates over the royal monarch's powers in the domestic realm.

V.

The relationship between the Imperial Crown of England and the English Parliament was fundamentally altered with the clear victory of parliamentary sovereignty after the Glorious Revolution.⁸⁴ Even Tories, by this point, admitted that the absolute power of the king was exercised through its place in the English Parliament and acknowledged that the current king was granted his title through legislative fiat, firmly embedding the English Crown within the matrix of Kings, Lords, and Commons.⁸⁵ After 1688, the Parliament of England captured the Imperial Crown of England, and the monarch ruled the empire thereafter as a King-in-Parliament.

The Stuarts' royal empire transformed into the Parliamentary empire of England, and then Britain after 1707. Language continued to situate the monarch as the center of the empire, but the concept of the Imperial Crown

and the *Ambitions of Political Arithmetic* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009). For James II's attempts to extend his control over the North American colonies, see Richard Dunn, "The Glorious Revolution and America," in *The Origins of Empire*, 445–66.

⁸² *The Observer*, no. 120, August 23, 1684.

⁸³ Glickman, "Empire, 'Popery,' and the Fall of Tangier, 1661–1684," 249–51.

⁸⁴ See Pincus, *1688: The First Modern Revolution* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2011); and W. A. Speck, *Reluctant Revolutionaries: Englishmen and the Revolution of 1688* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 213–51.

⁸⁵ For later Tory and Whig theories of empire, see Pincus, "Addison's Empire: Whig Conception of Empire in the Early 18th Century," *Parliamentary History* 31, no. 1 (February 2012): 99–117.

now included Parliament as a necessary partner in the exercise of sovereignty within the Atlantic archipelago and throughout the overseas dominions.⁸⁶ Though John Cary has been recognized as a skilled political economist, he was also a theorist of the Whiggish Parliamentary concept of empire that superseded the Tory royalist version. In 1698, Cary argued that “*England* must be allow’d to be the Head of this Empire, from whence all its Members do derive their Being, and must depend for their Support and Protection, the Riches which she attracts from the Benefit of her Forreign Trade.” England, according to Cary, must “maintain such Fleets and Armies as are requisite for the Defence of all her Territories” and “she must therefore prosecute all justifiable Methods for the preserving her Commerce, and hath the utmost reason to restrain her Members from any prejudicial interfering with her in her Trade, because this hath a direct Tendency to weaken her power.” Departing from previous articulations of the empire based in the monarch, Cary located the source and head of this entity in England with the constituent parts under the “great Charge of her Government.”⁸⁷ Cary then described the governmental structure of England:

The Imperial Crown of *England* denotes the Supream Authority of the Kingdom; the Material Crown is but a Badge of this Authority, and is given to the King, not as his own separate Propriety, but as an Ensign of the Authority which he enjoys, as Head of the Kingdom; if any Body should steal this Material Crown, and break it to pieces, as *Bloud* did, the Supream Authority of the King and Kingdom remains entire and inviolated: This Supream Authority always resides in the Legislature, which in our Constitution is inseparably vested in the King, Lords, and Commons; there can be no annexing to the Imperial Crown of *England*, distinct from the Supream Imperial Authority of the Kingdom; if any Territory shall be annex to this Imperial Crown, it must become a Member of the Empire, otherwise ’tis no annexing; and because there can be but one Supream Legislature, every Member or part of the Empire must be in some Subordination to that Supream Legislature.⁸⁸

Cary’s description located both the Imperial Crown of England and the empire within the legislative body of England, and granted control of the

⁸⁶ William Phips, Letter to the King, 30 October 1693, Colonial Williamsburg, John D. Rockefeller Library, MS 46.02.

⁸⁷ John Cary, *An Answer to Mr. Molyneux* (London, 1698), 72–73.

⁸⁸ Cary, 107.

empire to the King-in-Parliament. Compared to the previous iteration of the Stuart composite monarchy, this conception of the empire was profoundly Anglocentric.

By asserting that the supreme authority of the Imperial Crown of England was vested in the legislature—itsself composed of Kings, Lords, and Commons—Cary articulated a Whig theory of empire that became hegemonic, at least in Britain, during the eighteenth century.⁸⁹ While Cary exempted Scotland from English hegemony and argued that its Parliament had invested William III with the Scottish crown, William Atwood—a lawyer, parliamentarian during the 1670s and 1680s, and advocate for the ancient constitution—argued in favor of the Imperial Crown of England holding both Ireland and Scotland in its orbit of control.⁹⁰ By extending the boundaries of the realm of England to include Ireland and Scotland, Atwood argued that the supremacy of Parliament transcended the English realm and encompassed all of the possessions of the Crown of England; the law of England, instead of the monarch, was the supreme authority in England and its empire. This line of reasoning was adopted by the colonial governor of the Leeward Islands, Christopher Codrington, in the early eighteenth century when he compared himself to “a majestrate in a Platonick Commonwealth” and argued that “Government is or ought to be the Empire of Laws, and not of men, and this principle is so universal that all Magistrates whatever are bound by it, an Emperor as well as a Petty Constable.”⁹¹ Whiggish conceptions of empire could, therefore, resemble a republican system, a discourse that would eventually challenge the assumptions of Parliamentary sovereignty in the later eighteenth century.⁹² The main ideological transition in the 1690s and first decade of the 1700s was the integration of the Imperial Crown’s authority within the English legislature. Debates in the House of Lords in 1701 stressed the need to annex

⁸⁹ See Ian K. Steele, *The English Atlantic, 1675–1740: An Exploration of Communication and Community* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), 251–78.

⁹⁰ William Atwood, *The History and Reasons of the Dependency of Ireland upon the Imperial Crown of the Kingdom of England* (London, 1698); and Atwood, *The Superiority and Direct Dominion of the Imperial Crown of England, over the Crown and Kingdom of Scotland* (London, 1704).

⁹¹ Governor Codrington to the Council of Trade and Plantations, TNA, CO 152/4, no. 36; and Governor Codrington to the Council of Trade and Plantations, 23 April 1702, CSPC (London, 1912), 20: no. 369.

⁹² Codrington’s phrases echo James Harrington; see James Harrington, *The Commonwealth of Oceana* (London, 1656), 2. The later challenges would come from John Adams, when he argued that “a republic is ‘an empire of laws, and not of men’”; see John Adams, *Thoughts on Government, 1776, Papers of John Adams* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1977), 4:86–93.

the colonies in America to the English Crown in order to prevent colonial proprietors from exercising absolute power of governance, to better benefit England, and to buttress the administrative control over trade and revenues.⁹³ Instead of the 1680s leading to the empowerment of a British emperor over an institutionally heterogeneous entity, the eighteenth century was a period when attempts at imperial standardization and reform occurred under the aegis of Parliamentary sovereignty. It is in the integration of the Imperial Crown of England into the idea of an empire headed by a sovereign Parliament that both the origins of the modern British Empire and the genesis for conflict between the American colonies and the new imperial King-in-Parliament can be found.

VI.

While it has been recognized that the English Parliament extended its control over various colonial institutions during the eighteenth century, historians have neglected the Crown's role in this process.⁹⁴ The union consolidated Parliamentary control over Scotland and asserted the doctrine of Parliamentary sovereignty as a maxim of the British state, but the languages of empire were slow to adapt and adopt new terminologies. While contemporaries throughout the Atlantic world began to coherently recognize the Whig version of the British Empire during the 1730s, it was a revised understanding of the royal empire of the Stuarts expressed in the preceding century. Many of the ideological foundations described as characteristic of the British Empire during the mid-eighteenth century were articulated much earlier in the seventeenth century. Authors of pamphlets and tracts in the 1670s and 1680s were instrumental in the public perception of the conglomeration of Stuart dominions into one imagined political community. From this perspective, it was not surprising to see John Adams's claim that the British Empire was not the creation of the common law, but "the language of newspapers and pamphlets."⁹⁵ The British Empire did not originate with creole elites and colonial officials in the second quarter of the

⁹³ An Act for Reuniting to the Crown the Government of Several Colonies and Plantations in America, Parliamentary Archives (London), HL/PO/JO/10/6/17/1634, fols. 20r–23r.

⁹⁴ See Philip J. Stern, *The Company-State: Corporate Sovereignty and the Early Modern Foundations of the British Empire in India* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 121–63; and Paul Halliday, *Habeas Corpus: From England to Empire* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010).

⁹⁵ John Adams, February 6, 1775, in *Novanguls and Massachusettensis* (Carlisle, MA: Applewood Books, 2009), 30.

eighteenth century; rather, it was the result of the late seventeenth-century transformation of the royal empire of the Stuarts.

This study has argued that such an ideological articulation of an empire did exist in the seventeenth century, and was comprehended by individuals in the metropole and the peripheries. While the royal empire of the Stuarts was subsumed by England as a result of English state-formation after 1688, ways of understanding it were established in the seventeenth century and carried over into the American colonies during the eighteenth century. To question the authority of Parliament in governing overseas possessions and claim that the monarch was the source of the bonds of the British Empire, a contingent of American patriots redeployed royalist and Tory arguments regarding the relationship of the Crown with overseas possessions.⁹⁶ They also argued that the king should rule his overseas dominions without the interference of Parliament, and that his seventeenth-century prerogative powers should be fully restored.⁹⁷ By examining this concept of empire and recovering the discourse surrounding it, the ideological origins of its later iterations become more complex and nuanced. The British Empire was Protestant, commercial, maritime, and free, but it was also royalist.

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⁹⁶ Nelson, *The Royalist Revolution: Monarchy and the American Founding*, 29–65.

⁹⁷ Nelson.

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