**'Neptune to the Common-wealth of England' (1652):**

**The 'Republican Britannia' and the Continuity of Interests**

In the seventeenth century, John Kerrigan reminds us, 'models of empire did not always turn on monarchy'.[1] In what follows, I trace a vision of 'Neptune's empire' shared by royalists and republicans, binding English national interest to British expansion.[2] I take as my text a poem entitled 'Neptune to the Common-wealth of England', prefixed to Marchamont Nedham's 1652 English translation of *Mare Clausum* (1635), John Selden's response to *Mare Liberum* (1609) by Hugo Grotius.

In an era of fake news and claims to be taking the country back and making it great again – an era much like our own – Nedham stands out as a writer who typifies the spirit of the times.[3] Notoriously shifty, he is consistently inconsistent. Nedham remained committed to the cause of England – monarchy and republic – through turbulent regime change. If Milton's reputation was for unwavering consistency – 'In the face of near-universal backsliding, he stands as a one-man remnant'[4] – by contrast, Nedham was as slippery, if not as subtle, as Andrew Marvell.

1

Benjamin Woodford observes: 'Finding consistency in [Nedham's] labyrinth of allegiances and writings can be challenging'.[5] For Philip Knachen, 'his several shifts of political allegiance [...] badly compromised his intellectual integrity'.[6] Convert to the Commonwealth, traitor to his royalist friends – Blair Worden calls him 'the serial turncoat of the Puritan Revolution'[7] – Nedham acknowledged his own capacity for metamorphosis:

> Perhaps thou art of an Opinion contrary to what is here written: I confesse, that for a Time I my Self was so too, till some Causes made me to reflect with an impartiall eye upon the Affairs of this *new Government*.[8]

A flighty side-switcher, Nedham was a pivotal figure as a servant of the new republic and influential editor and publisher, an outsider-turned-insider who knew his enemies as well as his allies. As Jason Peacey notes, 'one of the hallmarks of Nedham's newspapers [was] his almost unrivalled ability to secure detailed intelligence from within Westminster'.[9] Nedham's changing partisanship damaged his reputation, but paradoxically his inconsistency reveals the continuity at the heart of radical change, reminding us that those upon whom we too readily confer consistency have their own contradictions – the anti-imperialist Milton's

charged advocacy of Irish colonisation being one example.[10] Homing in on a short text attributed to Nedham I argue that it mattered little in the end whether the goal of global conquest was achieved through imperial monarchy or colonial republic.[11]

The 2016 EU Referendum and the United Kingdom's decision to quit the European Union dredges up old arguments around sovereignty.[12] We are urged to look to the Reformation for the submerged origins of the current crisis.[13] An exception is Mark Royce, for whom a strand of the 'critique of governance at the European level ultimately derives from the revolutionary theology of the English Civil War'.[14] Mid-seventeenth century politics offers an excellent starting-point in our efforts to understand how we arrived at breakpoint for the British state, but only if we look beyond Anglocentric narratives and attend to archipelagic dimensions. The UK vote to exit the EU entailed a 'Leave' campaign supported by radicals and reactionaries alike. Strangers to the seventeenth century might puzzle over an anti-European movement supported both by progressives and conservatives, radical Left and extreme Right – hence 'Lexit' (Left-wing Brexit). Scholars of the seventeenth century will have no such problem.[15] According to Stefan Collignon: 'The political map of [the] Brexit vote resembles the regional distribution of support for the King, Court and Tories against Parliament, Merchants and liberal Whigs.'[16] But this 'regional distribution' overlooks national differences.

When it comes to 'Taking our country back', one-nation conservatism reigns. But what is this 'nation'? An imperial monarchy that blanks its own history, forgets Ireland and Scotland, never remembers Wales, and confuses its Left and its Right. That the Irish Border became news in 2017 is evidence of the amnesia afflicting British state formation.[17] As for England 'itself', it may well secure what it sought in the 1530s, namely independence.[18] The problem goes back to the moment when a colonial republic that deemed itself more capable of pursuing a successful foreign policy supplanted an imperial monarchy.[19] What emerged was a common commitment to the British imperial project, an anti-European enterprise from its inception, not because it excluded intra-European activity – Ulster and Gibraltar, both at issue because of Brexit, testify to the contrary – but because it sought an imperial power base that went beyond Europe and challenged continental colonial powers. Nedham is an exemplary figure for understanding this crossroads in Anglo-British history.

On 28 March 1649, Cromwell's Council of State asked 'Milton […] to make some observations vpon the Complicacon of interests […] amongst the severall designers against the peace of the Commonwealth'.[20] Milton took up the gauntlet and in *Observations upon the Articles of Peace with the Irish Rebels* duly exposed what he chose to depict as the underlying complicity between Irish Catholic royalists and

Ulster Presbyterians, united in opposition to English hegemony. The *Observations*, now viewed as key to Milton's archipelagic interests, has attracted considerable attention in recent years.[21] The complication of interests it identifies is really a complicity of opponents that conceals a broader entanglement in the period between royalist and republican imperial ambitions. In accepting this commission Milton declined another closer to home. Cromwell's Council also sought a riposte to Leveller demands for more radical change, and it has been speculated that Milton was reluctant to accept due to some residual Leveller sympathies.[22] Two days before the Irish commission, Milton was asked to 'make some observations upon a paper lately printed called old & new Chaines'. According to Martin Dzelzainis: 'The "paper" […] actually comprised two incendiary Leveller pamphlets by John Lilburne'.[23] This commission may have passed to another respondent, and possible takers have been identified.[24]

One contemporary who could have taken on the task Milton declined is Marchamont Nedham.[25] In 1650 Nedham published *The case of the Commonwealth of England, stated*, with a section addressed explicitly to the Levellers, even using the same phrase – 'complication of Interests' – employed by the Council of State to unpick the tangled knots and expose the underlying ties of the 'opposite parties'.[26] One biographer calls it 'Nedham's most unified, most thoughtful, and most

persuasive work'.[27] Joad Raymond considers it 'a hybrid pamphlet, made up of different languages and perspectives: […] stimulating and user-friendly, a little like a newspaper'.[28] Seldom cited in discussions of Milton's *Observations*, Nedham's text has other intriguing echoes.[29] It confronts four key groups that challenge the authority of the new regime, denouncing 'the Designes of the severall Parties claiming an Interest in this Nation; Viz: {ROYALISTS. SCOTS. PRESBYTERIANS. LEVELLERS; as they stand in opposition to the present Government, and would each of Them introduce a New *Form* of their owne'.[30] Nedham was well placed to handle the topic of 'interest' – he practically invented it. As John Gunn observes: 'His tract, *Interest Will Not Lie*, firmly established the maxim in English thought'.[31]

David Norbrook suggests that in converting to the commonwealth cause Nedham had a mentor: 'Milton […] one of those charged with hunting him down […] became licenser to [Nedham's] journal [and] may have had something to do with the change'.[32] Norbrook sees Nedham's sudden switch of allegiance as 'explicable within the terms of interest politics', and thus strategic rather than merely opportunistic: 'In the spring of 1650, Charles II was moving closer […] to an alliance with Nedham's arch-enemies, the Scottish Presbyterians, and to return to Parliament's side was to campaign against them'.[33] Here, 'interest politics' is the politics of 'national interest', an English nationalism that

maps in equal measure onto imperial monarchy or colonial republic. For

Nedham, as for Milton, England's interest is paramount. Charles I's Irish-

Scottish machinations threaten England's integrity and entitlement to

dominance within the three kingdoms. Norbrook's reluctance to discuss

the archipelagic and imperialist implications of Nedham's position allows

him to flit all too easily between Britain and England:

> If he […] first voiced British patriotism against the court
>
> (*Mercurius Britanicus*), his royalist phase could be seen as a
>
> merely tactical adjustment (*Mercurius Pragmaticus*), from which
>
> he emerged not just as a nationalist but a republican (*Mercurius*
>
> *Politicus*). He had chosen this title […] because the new
>
> government was a true *politeia* as opposed to a despotism. He thus
>
> aligned himself with Milton in linking the English republic with
>
> the Greek *polis*.[34]

This slippage from British patriotism to English nationalism and

republicanism is evident in Norbrook's reading of the title-page image of

Nedham's translation of Selden's *Mare Clausum*: 'It was specifically as

an image of the English republic, treading down the Stuart crown, that

Britannia made an early appearance as the symbol of an emergent naval

empire'.[35] That image of 'Britannia', treading down Ireland and Scotland,

bears the inscription 'ANGLIÆ RESPUB'.[36] According to David Armitage:

> This was the first time the image of Britannia had been used in the context of extending British dominion and, though the origins of this embodiment of expansionism should surprise no-one familiar with the radical strains in later British patriotism, the knowledge of this republican Britannia seems to have been lost along with the Cromwellian moment itself.[37]

The 'republican Britannia' complicates our image of nation in the seventeenth century. Nedham's epistle laments of Selden's work 'that so rare a Jewel as this […] should lie so long lockt up in a Language unknown to the greatest part of that Nation whom it most concern's [*sic*]' (A2ᵛ). This locked aspect goes beyond language. Selden's Latin work, dedicated to Charles I, 'defined British territorial waters as part of the new British Empire'.[38] Nedham's translation, in the wake of the 1651 Navigation Act, was dedicated to the Commonwealth.[39]

In cutting Selden's dedication, Nedham added something new, his translation bookended by the Neptune poem (facing the title-page) and some supplementary tracts. Marc Shell homes in on Nedham's Neptune, which

poses a powerful rhetorical question:

> What then should great *Britannia* pleas,
>
> But rule as Ladie o're all the seas…

Here was the overt claim to rule the world's main (ocean) and, by implication, to rule also the world's main(lands).[40]

'Neptune to the Common-wealth of England' is a little tugboat pulling Selden's great ship of state. It is a rousing verse – 'Go on (great STATE!) and make it known/ Thou never wilt forsake thine own'.[41] Verse 5 renders regal a republican claim to Empire:

> For Sea-Dominion may as well bee gain'd
>
> By new acquests, as by descent maintain'd.

The phrase 'new acquests' – acquisitions, or possessions, rather than conquests – anticipates, or echoes, Milton's *Samson Agonistes*: 'His servants he with new acquist', &c (line 1755). Andrew Zurcher fastens onto this lexical choice: 'Milton reaches for a technical legal term […] "acquist", attested most frequently, in this period, by lawyers and political philosophers in their efforts to describe the way in which political sovereignty can be gained over land through conquest, purchase,

or treaty'.[42] In a footnote, Zurcher links 'acquist' in the closing Chorus of *Samson Agonistes* with Nedham's translation of Selden:

> 'Acquest' or 'acquist' is a key term in John Selden's 1636 [*sic*] work on English rights to dominion over the sea […] Marchamont Nedham's 1654 [*sic*] English translation […] is fronted by an English poem, 'Neptune to the Common-wealth of *England*', the fifth stanza of which spells out the lawyer's traditional distinction between rights acquired by inheritance and acquest.[43]

Zurcher gets his dates wrong, but is astute in refusing to assume Nedham wrote these verses – there remains some dubiety around the poem's provenance – and in linking *Samson* and Selden, Zurcher reminds us that Milton's text may have been written around 1647-53.[44]

Two earlier occurrences of the phrase 'new acquests' argue against fresh imperial acquisitions. In 1640, James Howell – later a polemical opponent of Nedham – wrote: 'A true maxime it is […] *that state which goeth out of the lists of mediocrity, passeth also the limits of safety*: there is a cloud of examples to this purpose: while *Sparta* kept her selfe within those boundaries that *Lycurgus* prescrib'd unto her, she was both safe and flourishing; but attempting to enlarge her territories by new acquests of

other Cities in *Greece* and *Asia*, shee went every day declining'.[45] Two

years later, Richard Baker's translation of Virgilio Malvezzi's *Discourses*

*upon Cornelius Tacitus* sounded the same cautionary note: 'But if the

Prince have no ayme at augmentation by new acquests and stands not so

much in feare of externall enemies, as of friends at home, he then ought

to let the people enjoy a negotious ease, of buildings, and playes, and

such like things. And [..] *Augustus* […] aymed not at all, at any

amplifying of his Empire'.[46] A later treatise by William De Britaine

pursues the same line: 'Consider, the *East-India* Company by reason of

their exceeding Charges in enlarging their Dominions there, and the vast

expences which must necessarily attend the keeping of them, cannot be

rich. *For all Countries of new acquest, till they be setled, are matters*

*rather of burthen, then of profit*'.[47]

Milton's use of Neptune, from *Comus* – '*Neptune* besides the

sway/ Of every salt Flood, and each ebbing Stream,/ Took in by lot 'twixt

high, and neather *Jove*/ Imperial rule of all the Sea-girt Iles' (ll 18-21) –

to *The History of Britain*, where he recounts with characteristic

scepticism – 'perhaps as wide from truth' – the tale of '*Albion* a Giant,

Son of *Neptune*: who call'd the Iland after his own name, and rul'd it 44

years', only to add 'Sure anough we are, that *Britan* hath bin anciently

term'd *Albion*, both by the *Greeks* and *Romans*', suggests that the sea-

god, Empire, and Britain were tethered in his thought.[48]

Neptune was a nodal point for imperial narratives in the period. Michael Drayton's great archipelagic poem, *Poly-Olbion*, with historical notes by Selden, features Neptune in various guises, including father of Albion, 'from whom that first name of this *Britaine* was supposed'.[49] It opens with an invocation heralding Prince Henry's future rule as Henry IX:

> *He like great* Neptune *on three Seas shall rove,*
>
> *And rule three Realms, with triple power, like* Jove.[50]

In Ben Jonson's masque for James I, *Neptune's Triumph* (1624), the poet announces:

> The mightie *Neptune*, mightie in his styles,
>
> And large command of waters, and of Isles,
>
> Not, as the *Lord and Soueraigne of the Seas*,
>
> But, *Chiefe in the art of riding*, late did please
>
> To send his *Albion* forth, the most his owne,
>
> Vpon discouery, to themselues best knowne,
>
> Through *Celtiberia*.[51]

'Celtiberia,' or 'Celtiberian', a term freighted with colonial ballast, was used by Nedham, who alludes to the '*Celtiberian*s in *Spain*' in a passage on the dissolution of the Roman Empire, 'rent in pieces' by a multi-pronged process of self-determination of its former colonies:

> The *Scots* and *English* shook off the imperiall yoke in *Britain*.
> The *Burgundians* and *Franks* seized part of *France*. The *Gothes*
> another part of it, and part of *Italy*, the Country of *Aquitain*, with
> the seats of the ancient *Cantabrians* and *Celtiberians* in *Spain*
> […] By which means, the *Emperors* had no certain power in the
> *West*.[52]

Milton depicted Comus 'ripe and frolic of his full grown age, Roving the *Celtic* and *Iberian* fields' (ll 59-60), and Nedham's geography maps onto Jonson's and Milton's.[53]

In Dryden's *Annus mirabilis* (1667), Neptune is invoked as the scourge of the Dutch:

> It seemd as there the *British Neptune* stood,
>
> With all his host of waters at command,
>
> Beneath them to submit th'officious floud:
>
> And, with his Trident, shov'd them off the sand.[54]

Invocations of Neptune from Drayton to Dryden, and from Campion's

hymn to Nedham's naval anthem, reflect the archipelagic and imperial

history of an expansionist England reliant on naval power to extend its

frontiers. Although Nedham's Neptune poem is seldom cited, its patriotic

potential did not go unnoticed. It may have had a lyrical source, since the

line 'Thou never wilt forsake thine Owne' appears in George Sandys'

1638 paraphrase of Psalm 9.[55] It certainly had a musical afterlife, for in

1794 Willoughby Bertie, fourth earl of Abingdon, commissioned the

Austrian composer Joseph Haydn to set Nedham's muse to music. As one

commentator notes, 'the 17th-century verses, which petulantly criticize

an earlier generation for allowing Spanish colonization of the Indies,

must have appeared rather odd in late 18th-century England'.[56] Haydn's

biographer speculates that the commission was unfulfilled 'because the

text […] was of poor quality'.[57] Quality aside, 'Neptune to the Common-

wealth of England' repays attention. The petulant passage in the Spain

stanza cited by Arthur Searle arguably anticipates Cromwell's 1655

declaration of war against that country, a declaration laced with the

language of colonial resentment:[58]

> Thy great endeavors to encreas
>
> The Marine power, do confess

> thou act'st som great design.

> Which had Seventh *Henrie* don, before

> *Columbus* lanch'd from Spanish shore,

> the *Indies* had been thine.

> Yet do thy Seas those Indian Mines excell

> In riches far: the *Belgians* know it well.


Armitage cites the Haydn commission without mentioning its patron or unfinished state: 'This poem contributed to the burgeoning maritime mythology of the eighteenth century in various musical settings, including a truncated one by Haydn from 1794, but without acknowledgement of its republican roots'.[59] In the English commonwealth republican roots are intertwined with empire, and it was as naval ballad rather than classical composition that Nedham's Neptune survived.

Armitage astutely identifies the acceleration of Empire under the commonwealth as key to understanding Nedham's prefatory poem:

> This was not merely a poetaster's idle epigram. The English crown had been slow to take up the imperial gauntlet and had proceeded by colonies planted under charter by private individuals and companies. The Navigation Ordinance of 1651

tied Britain and its overseas possessions for the first time into a single transatlantic trading unit […] The turn to a non-dynastic foreign policy […] left the commonwealth and Protectorate open to take an aggressive attitude towards the dominions of competing powers.[60]

For Armitage, 'Selden's work provided the foundation for later claims to dominion over the seas in the name of a "British Empire"'.[61] More pointedly, Armitage notes 'the commingling of regal and republican claims'.[62]

    This confluence of commonwealth and crown around empire made the various editions of Selden – 1635, 1652, 1663 – consistent with the times. In 1636, in the backwash of its first appearance in Latin, a pirated edition was proscribed by Charles I, the language of dominion applying to books as well as boats:

> *WHereas there was heretofore by Our expresse command published in print a Booke*, intituled *Mare Clausum* […] manifesting of the right and dominion of Vs and Our Royall Progenitors, in the Seas which incompasse these Our Realmes and Dominions of great *Brittaine* and *Ireland*: […] since the publishing thereof, some persons […] haue caused the same

Booke to be printed in some place beyond the Seas, and to the

same impression haue added some other things, as if they were

parts of that which was first printed here by Our Command […]

From henceforth no person or persons […] shall at any time

import, publish, put to sale, or in any kinde buy, sell, exchange or

disperse, in any of Our Realmes or Dominions any Bookes or

Copies of any Edition of the said Booke.[63]

In *Areopagitica* Milton compared the blockading of books implicit in

licensing to the restriction of trade, 'more then if som enemy at sea

should stop up all our hav'ns and ports, and creeks, it hinders and retards

the importation of our richest Marchandize, Truth'.[64] Charles's

proclamation turns Selden's flagship defence of freedom of the seas into

a pirate vessel.

Sebastian Sobecki notes that Nedham's 'Neptune encourages

England to adopt an imperialist policy, grounded in its naval strength'

and goes on to suggest that 'Edgar's alleged possession of the four seas

becomes the foundation myth of maritime Englishness as well as the

vindication for the Protectorate's archipelagic empire'.[65] Sobecki sees

Nedham pushing out the boat on Selden's claims to sovereignty of the

seas: 'Equipped with Neptune's ode and the triumphalist allegory of a

demonstrably English Britannia, Nedham's authoritative translation

elevates Selden's riposte to Grotius to the level of a national epic'.[66] Sobecki's richly detailed reading of Nedham's cover image makes Norbrook's use of it for *Writing the English Republic* (1999) appear anomalous:

> Its iconography makes it the companion piece to Neptune's ode: Britannia is shown holding an English shield, and under her feet piles up the loot of her conquests, marked by the flags of subdued Scotland, Ireland, and Wales [...] Next to each other on the ground, the crowns and sceptres of Scotland and Ireland (territories which were occupied by the Protectorate at the time) make her an empress. To mark the historical continuity of the Republic's claim to the archipelago, Britannia is dressed in a Roman centurion's armour and sandals as she sits on the insular rock of the English Commonwealth (*Angliae respvb.*), washed by the English sea.[67]

'English sea' aside, this is astute. As Derek Hirst, always alert to the imperial undertow of the English republic, observes, Nedham's 'frontispiece trumpeted Cromwell's first, British, conquests on which Britannia's rule of the seas was to be based'.[68] Nedham's contemporary, Michael Hawke, urged Cromwell's 'acceptation of the empire', praising

'our Prince, a *Caesar* for valour, *Augustus* for fortune, […] By whose valourous vertue *England* was quieted, *Ireland* settled, and *Scotland* subdued and brought under subjection'.[69]

According to Mark Somos, 'The English colonial advantage of secularising law' allowed it to pursue its imperial aims with a clear conscience.[70] Indeed, the claim in the 1533 Act in Restraint of Appeals 'that this realm of England is an empire' suggests that the roots of this quest for colonial advantage lay in the Reformation.[71] The Reformation itself was partly a response to the pope's donation of the 'New World' to Portugal and Spain, and partly a declaration of England's intention to secure the borderlands of the Tudor state.[72] This is a grievance laid out explicitly in Cromwell's 1655 declaration of war against Spain, sometimes thought to have been authored by Milton.[73] Colonial commonwealth blurs into British Empire. Selden's work is crucial because it served the continuity of interests from 1635 to 1663, the year James Howell, recently appointed first historiographer royal, reissued Nedham's edition of *Mare Clausum* with the original dedication to Charles I restored and a prefatory 'Advertisement' castigating its English translator as one who 'gave himself the licence to foist in the name of a Commonwealth, instead of the Kings of *England*'.[74]

Nedham was steeped in the sovereignty of the seas. According to Robert Batchelor, 'Two other English pamphlets most likely by Nedham

also supported the Parliamentary cause: *Additional Evidences Concerning the Right of Soveraigntie and Dominion of England in the Sea* (London: William Du Gard, 1652); and *Dominium Maris: or the Dominion of the Sea ... translated out of Italian* (London: William Du Gard, 1652)'.[75] To complicate matters further, David Padwa notes that Nedham tacks onto his translation without acknowledgment the concluding section of another maritime treatise.[76] Nor is Nedham's role as translator secure, for Batchelor notes that 'William Watts made a translation in 1636 that may have been the basis for Nedham's edition'.[77]

In Selden's text, according to Edward Cavanagh, 'the case for a public law relationship between *praescriptio* and *imperium* was developed and Anglicized: the Italians had used prescription for their *civitates*, the Spaniards had used it for their own *supremum potestatem*, and now came the turn of Anglia, Scotia, and Hibernia'.[78] But rather than '*rule three Realms, with triple power*', Selden, and later Nedham, envisaged Anglia trampling Scotia and Hibernia. Another critic describes *Mare Clausum* as a 'treatise in defense of exclusive fishing rights in English waters', and a 'celebrated vindication of exclusive fishing rights in the North Sea', which underestimates the text's significance, and rebrands Scottish waters as English.[79] Cromwell's interest in angling rights – and Anglo rights – extended beyond the archipelago.[80]

Selden's case for a three-kingdom British Empire under Stuart sovereignty differs from Nedham's dismissive attitude to Ireland and Scotland in his commonwealth writings. They are not oceans apart, but there's a shift from an archipelagic to an Anglocentric perspective. Chapters 30-32 of Nedham's translation show that Selden set out to subsume the three kingdoms into one: 'Of the Dominion of the King of Great Britain in the Irish and Western Sea' (433-443), 'Touching the Dominion of the King of Great Britain in the Scotish Sea' (443-447), and 'Touching that Right which belong's [*sic*] to the King of Great Britain, in the main and open Sea of the North' (447-459). Since *Mare Clausum* is a response to Hugo Grotius' *Mare Liberum* (1608), Selden cleverly cites Grotius' panegyric to James I on his accession, to hoist his Dutch counterpart by his own petard, before concluding:

> that the very Shores or Ports of the Neighbor-Princes beyond-Sea, are Bounds of the Sea-Territorie of the *British* Empire to the Southward and Eastward; but that in the open and vast Ocean of the North and West, they are to bee placed at the utmost extent of those most spacious Seas, which are possest by the *English*, *Scots*, and *Irish*.[81]

A Restoration pamphlet poem against the Dutch rehearsed the Grotius-Selden debate:

> The *Dutch* no sooner thriv'd, no sooner grew,
>
> But slighted us, as if no duty due
>
> As when their *Grotius,* forward by their Pride,
>
> Did undertake their Title should reside
>
> On these our Seas; as if their Fleet was come,
>
> To challenge Right be'ng *Mare Liberum.*
>
> And though by arguing Selden overcame
>
> His strongest Reasons, they were still the same;
>
> Their courage not abated, till we us'd
>
> Expelling force to Right us be'ng abus'd.[82]

By 1689, the diplomat Philip Meadows, who in 1653 had served as assistant to Milton as Latin translator, could praise Selden as an imperial monarchist without mentioning Nedham or the commonwealth: 'Mr. Selden has excellently well deserv'd of the Publick, by heightning the Sea-Sovereignty of the Crown of England, in his Learned Book, entituled, *Mare Clausum*; a Treatise so comprehensive of what can be said on that Argument, that he, who should now write of the same, would certainly incur the old Censure, of writing an Iliad after *Homer*'.[83]

John Kerrigan observes how 'stringently and classically republican was the language used in 1651-2, by […] Nedham, to justify the English Commonwealth's policy towards Scotland'.[84] In a section 'Concerning the Scots' in *The case of the Commonwealth of England, stated*, Nedham is unequivocal about the hierarchy of nations in the new republic, saying of Scotland, 'I Am sorry I must waste Paper upon this Nation'.[85] Many modern 'British' historians have refused to waste paper on Scotland, whose subordinate status, alongside that of Ireland and Wales, is the key to the colonial commonwealth, as it is to the British Empire. This is 'the plural history of a group of cultures situated along an Anglo-Celtic frontier and marked by an increasing English political and cultural domination' identified by John Pocock.[86] Here I must make a brief digression on Pocock's plea, and in doing so double back to my opening gambit on Brexit.

Often read as the founding statement of the new British history, Pocock's essay is actually a recapitulation of the anti-European history of the seventeenth century, as the passage that follows on from the familiar sentence just cited makes clear:

> The history of Scotland in relation to England in the seventeenth century, like that of the United Kingdom in relation to Europe in the twentieth, is that of the progressive absorption of one political

culture by a neighboring culture complex whose conflicts it fails to dominate; but Scotland is no more English than Britain is European. The fact of a hegemony does not alter the fact of a plurality, any more than the history of a frontier amounts to denial that there is history beyond the advancing frontier.[87]

Pocock's analogy between English hegemony within the early modern British imperial monarchy and the status of Britain in the context of post-war European Union is striking, for in each case Anglo-British sovereignty is at stake. Pocock was quite explicit about his aim:

> Within very recent memory, the English have been increasingly willing to declare that neither empire nor commonwealth ever meant much in their consciousness, and that they were at heart Europeans all the time. […] With communal war resumed in Ireland and a steady cost in lives being paid for the desire of one of the 'British' peoples to remain 'British' as they understand the term, it is not inconceivable that future historians may find themselves writing of a 'Unionist' or even a 'British' period in the history of the peoples inhabiting the Atlantic archipelago, and locating it between a date in the thirteenth, the seventeenth, or the

nineteenth century and a date in the twentieth or the twenty-
first.[88]

Here, British history – 'neither empire nor commonwealth' – is
imperilled by an encroaching European union. But what 'historically
based identities' are maintained by being subsumed within British
history, old or new, especially one 'marked by an increasing English
political and cultural domination'? The new British history, it transpires,
is the old 'English political and cultural domination' writ large.
Conversely, for Murray Pittock, 'if Britishness depended on the British
Empire, it is doomed; and moreover, if so it is by its nature in part
colonial, a demanding appropriation which denies variety'.[89] A fuller
examination of early modern Irish and Scottish relations with Europe
would act as a reminder that there was a world beyond the Anglo-British
project.[90]

The strange paradox of the seventeenth-century press identified by
Joad Raymond applies to politics more generally: 'early newspapers are,
importantly, national phenomena; yet they are also transnational'.[91]
Likewise, English political theory, including, perhaps even especially
republican theory, is transnational. Moreover, in an archipelagic context –
and beyond – it is colonial. Yet in his essay on early modern media
management, Raymond frames the nation as 'Britain' in a way that is

problematic precisely because it depicts the four nations of the Anglo-Celtic frontier as a single political entity to be set against, or alongside, Europe, apparently unaware that this challenge to archipelagic history is also a restoration of the Anglocentric model that critics from Pocock to Pittock ostensibly sought to displace:

> Though following a popular format and […] written in English, *Politicus* crossed linguistic and national boundaries. It used the vernacular in an era when Britain's second language was Latin, the language of pan-European communication, and Latin may have served as a conduit between one vernacular and another […] But a paradox nonetheless emerges from this account of a vernacular form and a nationalist historiography versus a trans- and inter-national life and it needs unravelling. And to do this we need to go much further than the archipelagic perspective that currently informs early-modern history and criticism.[92]

Before we go beyond the archipelagic perspective we need to address the residual Anglocentric perspective that underpins purportedly European and global perspectives. Raymond shows how Nedham balanced his role as news editor with that of state employee, and his commitment to offering an international perspective with his championing of the English

Commonwealth, surrounded by foreign enemies.[93] Raymond speaks of

Nedham's complex role as author-editor-journalist-pamphleteer, and calls

his collected articles, *The Excellencie of a Free State* (1656), 'a key text

in British republicanism'.[94] But just how 'British' was Nedham's

republicanism? According to Blair Worden, 'Milton and Nedham […] are

in at the birth of English republicanism'.[95] They were certainly in at the

birth of a short-lived colonial republic, and as champions of English

hegemony and English imperialism they are in at the death of any

levelling aspirations. This is not to suggest that the imperial monarchy

that supplanted the colonial republic would establish business as usual.

Rather, there was colonial continuity within constitutional change.

Worden recognises this when he identifies Nedham's 'ambitious

initiatives in foreign policy' in the early 1650s:

> Following Machiavelli's advice about colonization, and invoking
>
> classical examples, he recommends the 'incorporation' of
>
> Scotland, which Cromwell has conquered, into England and the
>
> award of parliamentary representation to the Scots – a policy
>
> carried out by the Rump in 1652, if in terms less bold than those
>
> for which Nedham may have hoped. Nedham wants England to
>
> become, in Machiavelli's language, a commonwealth for
>
> expansion.[96]

That commonwealth for expansion gave way to an imperial monarchy for expansion, and in time the word 'commonwealth' itself would lose its roots in appeals to a more equitable society and come to describe the subjugated former colonies of the British Empire.

Other English republicans found ways to reconcile liberty and land grabs. In *Oceana* (1656), James Harrington observed: 'Empire is of two kinds, *Domestick* and *National*, or *Forrain* and *Provinciall*'.[97] Harrington distinguishes between three types of national empire: 'absolute *Monarch*y', 'mixed *Monarch*y', and '*Common-wealth*'.[98] With foreign empire things get complicated: 'A man may as well say that it is unlawfull for him who hath made a fair and honest purchase to have tenants, as for a Government that hath made a just progresse, and inlargement of it self, to have Provinces'.[99] This prompts a discussion around establishing provinces and their relationship to the colonizing nation. Harrington insists that Empire begins at home, and Scotland and Ireland – in his allegory, Marpesia and Panopea to England's Oceana – 'will be of greater Revenue unto you, then if you had the *Indie*s; for whereas heretofore She hath brought you forth nothing but her native Thistle: ploughing out the ranknesse of her *Aristocracy* by your *Agrarian*, you will find her an inexhaustible Magazine of Men'.[100] Harrington suggests that combining Celtic forces under English rule 'may adde unto

a Parliamentary Army an equall number of *Marpesians*, or *Panopeans*, as that Colony shall hereafter be able to supply you'.[101] Later, Algernon Sidney, in his refutation of Robert Filmer's *Patriarcha* (1680) asks ironically 'whether the intire conquest of *Scotland* and *Ireland*, the Victories obtained against the *Hollanders* when they were in the height of their Power, and the reputation to which *England* did rise in less than five years after 1648. be good marks of the instability, disorder, and weakness of free Nations'.[102] The free – and freely conquering – nation in this case being England.

Lenin's marginal note on the dramatic increase in shipbuilding in the 1650s reads 'the republic and imperialism!!!!'[103] Marx made the link earlier, declaring that 'the English republic under Cromwell met shipwreck in – Ireland'.[104] By this Marx meant that the social revolution was supplanted by overseas expansion.[105] Colonialism displaced class.[106] More broadly, Empire-building wrecked the republic.[107] While Empire, and the triumphalism and racism that accompanies it, may prove popular, it does not lead to social equality at home. But if 'republican Britannia' sank, the refitted imperial monarchic version sails on.[108] As Milton declares in his last-ditch effort to save the republic: 'The ship of the Commonwealth is alwaies under sail'.[109] That ship steered a steady course, and the fortunes of Nedham's Neptune poem suggest that the

short-lived republic – a Republican Britannia that harboured Empire at its heart – speeded up rather than slowed down its imperial progress.

*University of Glasgow, Scotland*                    WILLY MALEY

**Notes**

---

[1] John Kerrigan, *Archipelagic English: Literature, History, and Politics 1603-1707* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), p. 51. For a sidelight on this see Jonathan Sawday, 'Marvell's "Bermudas" and the History of the Eleutherian Republic', *English Literary Renaissance* 48, 1 (2018): 60-97.

[2] The phrase, Horatio's in *Hamlet* (1.1.122), rippled through the Restoration. See Thomas Ross's translation of *The second Punick war* (London, 1661), p. 406; William Canning's *Gesta Grayorum* (London, 1688), p. 58; and Erasmus Warren's *Geologia, or, A discourse concerning the earth before the deluge* (London, 1690), p. 249. Canning's allusion, an account of Gray's Inn revels for 1594-5, predates *Hamlet*, with a poem, 'Of Neptune's Empire let us sing', attributed to Thomas Campion in Francis Davison's 'The Masque of Proteus' (1594). See Evelyn May Albright, '*The Faerie Queene* in Masque at the Gray's Inn Revels', *PMLA* 41, 3 (1926): 497-516, at 500.

[3] This is not to equate two civil wars, regicide and constitutional collapse with more recent uncivil wars and efforts at regime change abroad, but I would maintain that the seeds of the current crisis were sown in the battlefields of the seventeenth century.

[4] James Holstun, *A Rational Millenium: Puritan Utopias of Seventeenth-Century England and America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), p. 262.

[5] Benjamin Woodford, 'From Tyrant to Unfit Monarch: Marchamont Nedham's Representation of Charles Stuart and Royalists during the Interregnum', *History* 100, 339 (2015): 1-20, at 20.

[6] Philip A. Knachel, 'Introduction', Marchamont Nedham, *The Case of the Commonwealth of England, Stated* (Charlottesville: Published for the Folger Shakespeare Library by the University of Virginia Press, 1969), p. ix.

[7] Blair Worden, *Literature and Politics in Cromwellian England: John Milton, Andrew Marvell, Marchamont Nedham* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), p. 14

[8] Marchamont Nedham, *The case of the Common-Wealth of England, stated*, 2nd ed. (London, 1650), A2$^r$.

[9] Jason Peacey, 'Marchamont Nedham and the Lawrans Letters', *Bodleian Library Record* 17, 1 (2000): 24-35, at 26.

[10] Only by overlooking Ireland can we view Milton as anti-colonial. See David Armitage, 'John Milton: Poet Against Empire', in David Armitage, Armand Himy and Quentin Skinner (eds.), *Milton and Republicanism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 206-225.

[11] As Victor Kiernan observed of the English bourgeoisie: 'The solution they really aimed at (as became apparent under Cromwell) was a programme of militant imperialism'. David Parker (ed.), *Ideology, Absolutism and the English Revolution: Debates of the British Communist Historians 1940-1956* (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 2008), p. 98.

[12] See my 'Spenser and Europe: Britomart after Brexit', *Spenser Review* 47.3.42 (Fall 2017), http://www.english.cam.ac.uk/spenseronline/review/item/47.3.42.

[13] The current crisis being Britain's relationship with Europe and the future of Britain itself, as the Irish Border, crucial to the maintenance of the British state even when all too conveniently forgotten, once again becomes key to British identity. Meanwhile the question of Scottish independence, seemingly put to bed by the outcome of the 2014 Referendum, resurfaces as a determination to remain within or rejoin Europe post-Brexit.

[14] Mark R. Royce, 'The Protestant Supranationalism of Britain', in *The Political Theology of European Integration: Comparing the Influence of Religious Histories on European Policies* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), pp. 207-259, at 248.

[15] On the unionist anti-European project see Willy Maley, '"Another Britain?": Bacon's *Certain Considerations Touching the Plantation in Ireland* (1606)', *Prose Studies: History, Theory, Criticism*, 18, 1 (1995): 1-18, esp. 10.

[16] Stefan Collignon, 'Brexit has the Semblance of a New English Civil War', http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/brexit/2018/03/09/brexit-has-the-semblance-of-a-new-english-civil-war/, accessed 9 March 2018. I do not share Collingnon's analysis, only his recognition of the shaping force of the 1640s and 1650s.

[17] On the complication of interests in Ireland after Brexit, see Cathy Gormley-Heenan and Arthur Aughey, 'Northern Ireland and Brexit: Three Effects on "The Border in the Mind"', *The British Journal of Politics and International Relations* 19, 3 (2017): 497-511; Daniel Holder, 'Neither Hard nor Soft but Racist? The Good Friday Agreement and the Irish Border after Brexit', *Race & Class* 59, 2 (2017): 90-101; and Jonathan Stevenson, 'Does Brexit Threaten Peace in Northern Ireland?', *Survival* 59, 3 (2017): 111-128.

[18] See Fintan O'Toole, 'Brexit is being driven by English nationalism. And it will end in self-rule', *The Guardian* (18 June 2016), https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2016/jun/18/england-eu-referendum-brexit, accessed 5 December 2017.

[19] The imperialism of the Protectorate was implicit in the early policies of the Republic. See Blair Worden, 'The Politics of Marvell's Horatian Ode', *The Historical Journal* 27, 3 (1984): 525-547, at 534-35. I am grateful to John Kerrigan for this point.

[20] J. Milton French (ed.), *The Life Records of John Milton, Volume II, 1639-1651* (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1950), p. 240.

[21] John Milton, *Articles of peace made and concluded with the Irish rebels* (London: Printed by Matthew Simmons, 1649). See Joad Raymond, 'Complications of Interest: Milton, Scotland, Ireland, and National Identity in 1649', *Review of English Studies*, 55, 220 (2004): 315-345.

[22] The Levellers were certainly sympathetic to Milton, or at least willing to use him as a conduit to the Council of State. Lilburne's mention of Milton is more than a passing reference, for Lilburne cites – and translates – the conclusion of Milton's *Defence*. John Lilburne, *As you were, or, The Lord General Cromwel and the grand officers of the armie their remembrancer wherein as in a glass they may see the faces of their soules spotted with apostacy, ambitious breach of promise, and hocus-pocus-juggleing with the honest soldiers and the rest of the free-people of England* (Amsterdam?: s.n., 1652), pp. 16-17, citing John Milton, *A defence of the people of England by John Milton; in answer to Salmasius's Defence of the king* ([Amsterdam?: s.n.], 1692), pp. 245-46.

[23] Martin Dzelzainis, 'History and Ideology: Milton, the Levellers, and the Council of State in 1649', *The Huntington Library Quarterly* 68, 1&2 (2005): 269-287, at 274.

[24] Dzelzainis lists some likely candidates, including John Canne, John Hall and Walter Frost.

[25] On relations between these two major republican thinkers see Blair Worden, 'Milton and Marchamont Nedham', in David Armitage, Armand Himy and Quentin Skinner (eds.), *Milton and Republicanism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 156-180. On Nedham and the Levellers see Worden, '"Wit in a Roundhead": The Dilemma of Marchamont Nedham', in Susan Asmussen and Mark Kishlansky (eds.), *Political Culture and Cultural Politics in Early Modern England* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995), pp. 301-337.

[26] Nedham, *The case of the Common-Wealth of England, stated*, p. 37.

[27] Joseph Frank, *Cromwell's Press Agent: A Critical Biography of Marchamont Nedham, 1620-1678* (Lanham, Md: University Press of America, 1980), p. 75.

[28] Joad Raymond, 'Marchamont Nedham', in *The Oxford Handbook of Literature and the English Revolution*, edited by Laura Lunger Knoppers (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), pp. 375-393, at 384.

[29] There is a brief but incisive discussion in Nicholas McDowell, *Poetry and Allegiance in the English Civil Wars* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), pp. 222-3, 232-3 and 237. McDowell expands the familiar focus on the Engagement Controversy (Part 1, Chapter 5, pp. 25-32) to home in on Nedham's treatment of the Presbyterians but doesn't compare Nedham's text to Milton's *Observations*, stress its archipelagic dimension, or suggest it may be Milton's unfulfilled commission.

[30] Nedham, *The case of the Common-Wealth of England, stated*, p. 33.

[31] John A. W. Gunn, '"Interest Will Not Lie": A Seventeenth-Century Political Maxim', *Journal of the History of Ideas* 29, 4 (1968): 551-564, at 557, 558.

[32] David Norbrook, *Writing and the English Republic: Poetry, Rhetoric, and Politics, 1627-1660* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. 222.

[33] Norbrook, *Writing and the English Republic*, p. 222.

[34] Norbrook, *Writing and the English Republic*, p. 223.

[35] Norbrook, *Writing and the English Republic*, p. 294. Norbrook uses this imperialist image as his own cover.

[36] John Selden, *Of the dominion, or ownership, of the sea two books: [...] translated into English, and set forth with som[e] additional evidences and discourses by Marchamont Nedham* (London: Printed by William Du-Gard, 1652).

[37] David Armitage, 'The Cromwellian Protectorate and the Languages of Empire', *The Historical Journal* 35, 3 (1992): 531-555, at 534.

[38] Brian P. Levack, 'Britain's First Global Century: England, Scotland and Empire, 1603-1707', *Britain and the World* 6, 1 (2013): 101-118, at 107.

[39] A feature corrected by the 1663 reprint which kept the translation but dropped Nedham's name and dedication. See David J. Padwa, 'On the English Translation of John Selden's *Mare Clausum*', *The American Journal of International Law* 54, 1 (1960): 156-159.

[40] Marc Shell, *Islandology: Geography, Rhetoric, Politics* (Stanford CA: Stanford. University Press, 2014), pp. 184-85. The 1652 text reads 'o're all seas'. In the BL copy, owned by Oswald Allen Moore – Wing / 294:01 – the poem faces the image of 'ANGLIÆ RESPUB', while in the Harvard copy of Francis Hargreave – Wing / S2432 – it faces the title page and the image is omitted.

[41] Norbrook speculates that the Greek letters with which the poem is signed – which phonetically appear to spell out 'Klareamont' – may be an anagram of 'Thomas Chaloner' (1595-1660), a key figure with naval experience who played a part in the production of the accompanying engraving of Britannia. See Norbrook, *Writing and the English Republic*, p. 294, n. 146. Norbrook's suggestion holds water. Chaloner wrote a dedicatory poem along similar lines for Thomas Gage's *The English-American, his travail by sea and land, or, A new survey of the West-India's* (London, 1648). See David Scott, 'Chaloner, Thomas (1595-1660), politician and regicide', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. Retrieved 26 Dec. 2017.

[42] Andrew Zurcher, 'Milton on Tragedy: Law, Hypallage, and Participation', in Edward Jones (ed.), *Young Milton: The Emerging Author, 1620-1642* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), p. 185.

[43] Zurcher, 'Milton on Tragedy', pp. 201-2, n. 8. The word appears again in the text of Nedham's translation (p. 425), and Zurcher appears to attribute this to Selden rather than Nedham.

[44] The debate is rehearsed in Martin Dzelzainis, 'Dating and Meaning: *Samson Agonistes* and the "Digression" to Milton's *History of Britain*', *Milton Studies* 48 (2008): 160-177.

[45] James Howell, *Dendrologia Dodona's grove, or, the vocall forrest* (London, 1640), p. 29. Nedham's *The Excellencie of a Free State* (1656) was in part an answer to Howell's *Som sober inspections made into the cariage and consults of the late-long Parlement* (1655).

[46] Virgilio Malvezzi, *Discourses upon Cornelius Tacitus written in Italian by the learned Marquesse Virgilio Malvezzi [...] translated into English by Sir Richard Baker* (London, 1642).

[47] William De Britaine, *The interest of England in the present war with Holland by the author of The Dutch usurpation* (London, 1672), pp. 22-23; emphasis in original.

[48] John Milton, *The history of Britain, that part especially now call'd England from the first traditional beginning, continu'd to the Norman conquest* (London, 1670), p. 4.

[49] Michael Drayton, *Poly-Olbion* (London, 1612), p. 19. See Spenser, *The Faerie Queene* (4.16.1): 'For *Albion*, the son of *Neptune* was'. See also Arthur Stanley Pease, 'The Son of Neptune', *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* 54 (1943): 69-82.

[50] Drayton, *Poly-Olbion*, p. 35. On Selden's archipelagic annotations see Andrew Hadfield, 'Spenser, Drayton, and the Question of Britain', *The Review of English Studies* 51, 204 (2000): 582-599, at 593-94. See also Anne Lake Prescott, 'Marginal Discourse: Drayton's Muse and Selden's "Story"', *Studies in Philology* 88, 3 (1991): 307-328: 'Selden undoes *Poly-Olbion*'s mythology from its margins like acid eating a book from the edges' (309). Selden was averse to wordplay: 'Take largest etymologicall liberty, and you may haue it from *Ellan-ban, the white Isl*e, in Scottish, as they call their *Albanie*; and to fit all together, the name of *Britaine* from *Brith-inis, the coloured Isle* in Welsh [...] But this is to play with syllables, and abuse precious time'. Drayton, *Poly-Olbion*, p. 20.

[51] Ben Jonson, *Neptunes triumph for the returne of Albion celebrated in a masque at the court on the Twelfth night 1623* (London: s.n., 1624), A^r. In Anthony Munday's Jacobean pageant, Britannia, hitherto known as Albion, 'After the name of *Neptunes* valiant Sonne:/ *Albion* the Gyant', is now renamed after Brute, who, coming 'from *Albania*' has made conquest of '*Britania*'. Anthony Munday, *The triumphes of re-vnited Britania* (London, 1605), B2^v. Neptune as imperial theme was exploited by other colonial powers. See Ellen R. Welch, 'Performing a New France, Making Colonial History in Marc Lescarbot's *Théâtre de Neptune* (1606)', *Modern Language Quarterly* 72, 4 (2011): 439-460. In a restoration royalist panegyric, Neptune would address not 'great STATE', but 'GREAT SIR!" See John Tatham, *Neptunes address to His most Sacred Majesty Charls the second: King of England, Scotland, France and Ireland, &c. Congratulating his happy coronation celebrated the 22th. day of Aprill, 1661. In several designements and shews npon [sic] the water, before White-hall, at His Majesties return from the land-triumphs* (London: printed by William Godbid for Edward Powel, 1661), p. 6.

[52] Nedham, *The case of the Common-Wealth of England, stated*, p. 3.

[53] See Willy Maley, 'Peninsula Lost: Mapping Milton's Celtiberian Cartographies', *SEDERI Yearbook* 24 (2014): 69-93.

[54] John Dryden, *Annus mirabilis, The year of wonders, 1666 an historical poem containing the progress and various successes of our naval war with Holland, under the conduct of His Highness Prince Rupert, and His Grace the Duke of Albemarl: and describing the fire of London* (London: Printed for Henry Herringman, 1667), p. 47. This recalls *Cymbeline*'s wicked Queen commending to the King the capacity of his country to repel borders: 'The natural bravery of your isle, which stands/ As Neptune's park, ribb'd and pal'd in/ With rocks unscaleable and roaring waters,/ With sands that will not bear your enemies' boats,/ But suck them up to th' topmast' (3.1.19-23).

[55] George Sandys, *A paraphrase upon the divine poems (*London, 1638), p. 10. Sandys' dedication is to Charles I, 'LORD OF THE FOUVRE SEAS'.

[56] Arthur Searle, 'Haydn Autographs and "Authentic" Manuscript Copies in the British Library', *Early Music* 10, 4 (1982): 496-97.

[57] David Wyn Jones, 'Haydn, (Franz) Joseph (1732–1809), composer', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. 2005-05-26. Oxford University Press. Retrieved 22 Dec. 2017. One sign that something survived from Haydn's commission or that the poem proved popular is the fact that three verses (1, 5 and 6) were published as 'Neptune to England' in James Orchard Halliwell-Phillipps (ed.), *The Early Naval*

*Ballads of England* (London: The Percy Society, 1841), p. 68. As the editor observes, 'the triumphs of our marine powers cannot be too frequently recalled to our memories' (viii). C. H. Firth reprinted the same three verses in 1908, dating them from the time of Selden's *Mare Clausum* and the strengthening of the navy under Charles I in the mid-1630s, suggesting the poem 'was probably derived from some masque played at Court during these years'. C. H. Firth (ed.), *Naval Songs and Ballads*, Navy Records Society, vol. 33 (1908), p. xxv. The poem appears on p. 36. Two twelfth night masques by Ben Jonson might lie behind Firth's suggestion, the already mentioned *Neptunes* triumph (1624), and *The fortunate isles and their vnion Celebrated in a masque design'd for the court, on the Twelfth night. 1624* (London: s.n., 1625). Abingdon was a slippery character himself, as his biographer indicates. Echoing Leveller opposition to Cromwell's Irish campaign, in his best-known work, *Thoughts on the letter of Edmund Burke, esq. to the sheriffs of Bristol on the affairs of America* (1777), Abingdon declared: 'The dagger uplifted against the breast of America, is meant for the heart of Old England'. Cited William C. Lowe, 'Bertie, Willoughby, fourth earl of Abingdon (1740–1799), politician', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. Retrieved 26 Dec. 2017.

[58] Oliver Cromwell, *A declaration of His Highnes, by the advice of his council setting forth, on the behalf of this Commonwealth, the justice of their cause against Spain* (London, 1655).

[59] David Armitage, *The Ideological Origins of the British Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 119.

[60] Armitage, 'The Cromwellian Protectorate and the Languages of Empire', 535.

[61] Armitage, *The Ideological Origins of the British Empire*, p. 119. See also David Armitage, 'Empire and Liberty: A Republican Dilemma', in Martin van Gelderen and Quentin Skinner (eds.), *Republicanism: A Shared European Heritage*, Volume 2, *The Values of Republicanism in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 29-46: 'At the heart of the shared European heritage of republicanism lay a tension between the competing demands of two overwhelmingly desirable but ultimately irreconcilable goals: liberty and greatness' (29). For later developments in colonial republican ideology see Reginald Horsman, 'The Dimensions of an "Empire for Liberty": Expansion and Republicanism, 1775-1825', *Journal of the Early Republic* 9, 1 (1989): 1-20.

[62] Armitage, *The Ideological Origins of the British Empire*, p. 120.

[63] Charles I, *A proclamation to forbid the importing, buying, selling, or publishing any forraine edition of a booke lately printed at London by His Maiesties command, intituled Mare Clausum* (London, 1636).

[64] John Milton, *Areopagitica* (London, 1644), p. 29.

[65] Sebastian I. Sobecki (ed.), 'Introduction', *The Sea and Englishness in the Middle Ages: Maritime Narratives, Identity and Culture* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2011), p. 4, p. 5.

[66] Sobecki, 'Introduction', p. 7.

[67] Sobecki, 'Introduction', p. 5.

[68] Derek Hirst, 'The English Republic and the Meaning of Britain', *The Journal of Modern History* 66, 3 (1994): 451-486, at 467. For Hirst: 'There can be little doubt of the imperialist fervor engendered during the period of the Western Design, or of the dreams spawned then of imperial status for Cromwell' (467, n. 70).

[69] Michael Hawke, *The right of dominion, and property of liberty, whether natural, civil, or religious* (London, 1655), pp. 86-87. Hawke is cited – but not quoted – in

Hirst, 'The English Republic and the Meaning of Britain', 467, n. 69. On the colonial commonwealth see also Jim Smyth, 'Empire-Building: The English Republic, Scotland and Ireland', in David Finnegan and Ariel Hessayon (eds.), *Varieties of Seventeenth- and Early Eighteenth-Century English Radicalism in Context* (London: Routledge, 2011), pp. 129-144

[70] Mark Somos, 'Selden's *Mare Clausum*: The Secularisation of International Law and the Rise of Soft Imperialism', *Journal of the History of International Law* 14 (2012): 287-330, at 290. While Grotius 'essentially argued that the sea was international territory and that all nations should be free to use it for seafaring trade [...] Selden developed the opposing doctrine of *mare clausum*, amounting to a division of the sea into national spheres of interest to the exclusion of third states'. Beate M. W. Ratter, 'Geopolitics of Small Islands', in *Geography of Small Islands: Outposts of Globalisation* (Cham: Springer, 2018), pp. 93-131, at 108.

[71] Cited in Hugh MacLachlan, 'Arthur, Legend of', in A. C. Hamilton (ed.), *A Spenser Encyclopedia* (London and Toronto: Routledge, 1990), pp. 64-66, at 66.

[72] For a beautifully textured treatment of the colonial roots and routes of the 1530s see J. P. Conlan, '"[Who] Hath Covered the Naked with a Garment": The Homespun Origins of the English Reformation', *Reformation* 9, 1 (2004): 49-66. For fascinating sidelights see David Potter, 'French Intrigue in Ireland during the Reign of Henri II, 1547-1559', *International History Review* 5 (1983): 159-180, and D. G. White, 'Henry VIII's Irish Kerne in France and Scotland', *The Irish Sword* 3 (1957-58): 213-225.

[73] For the attribution to Milton see John Milton, *A manifesto of the Lord Protector of the Commonwealth of England, Scotland, Ireland, &c. Published by consent and advice of his council. Wherein is shewn the reasonableness of the cause of this republic against the depredations of the Spaniards. Written in Latin by John Milton, and first printed in 1655, now translated into English ... The second edition. To which is added, Britannia, a poem; by Mr. Thomson: first published in 1727* (London, 1738). Here within the bounds of a single publication is the 'republican Britannia'.

[74] John Selden, *Mare clausum the right and dominion of the sea in two books [...] formerly translated into English, and now perfected and restored by J.H., Gent.* (London, 1663), p. (d). The story of Samuel Pepys' restoration struggle with Nedham's republican text has been well told. See for example Timothy Brook, *Mr. Selden's Map of China: Decoding the Secrets of a Vanished Cartographer* (London/Berlin: Profile Books, 2013), p. 38: 'Samuel Pepys, secretary to the Navy board and therefore concerned with such matters, spent his evenings in the winter of 1661-2 reading the two books [i.e. Selden and Grotius] side by side. He read Selden in the English translation of 1652 by Marchamont Nedham, in which the original dedication to Charles I was replaced by a paean to Parliament's "right of Soveraigntie over the Seas". On 17 April 1663, with Britain once again under a monarch, Pepys had his copy rebound with a new title page dedicated to the king, "because I am ashamed to have the other seen dedicated to the Commonwealth". Four days later he wrote in his diary: 'Up betimes and to my office, where first I ruled with red ink my English "Mare Clausum," which, with the new orthodox title, makes it now very handsome'.

[75] Robert K. Batchelor, *London: The Selden Map and the Making of a Global City, 1549-1689* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2014), p. 285, n. 82. Both are appended to Nedham's 1652 translation as part of its '*additional evidences and discourses*'.

[76] Sir John Borough's *The Sovereignty of the British Seas* (London: Printed for Humphrey Moseley, 1651); Padwa, 'On the English Translation of John Selden's *Mare Clausum*', 158. In Nedham's translation, pp. 484-499 map onto pp. 108-165 of Boroughs' text.

[77] Batchelor, *London: The Selden Map and the Making of a Global City, 1549-1689*, p. 287, n. 100. On Watts, who translated Augustine's *Confessions* in 1631 and later served as chaplain with the English army in Scotland and Ireland, see Jason Mc Elligott, 'Watts, William (c. 1590-1649), Church of England clergyman and author', *Oxford Dictionary of National Bio*graphy. Retrieved 31 Dec. 2017.

[78] Edward Cavanagh, 'Prescription and Empire from Justinian to Grotius', *The Historical Journal* 60, 2 (2017): 273-299, at 292.

[79] Mónica Brito Vieira, 'Mare liberum vs. Mare clausum: Grotius, Freitas, and Selden's Debate on Dominion over the Seas', *Journal of the History of Ideas* 64, 3 (2003): 361-377, at 362 and 377.

[80] Oliver Cromwell, *A Proclamation declaring the right of the Fellowship and Company of English Merchants for Discovering of New Trades (commonly called the Muscovia Company) to the sole fishing for whales upon the coasts of Green-land and Chery-Island, and for restraining and prohibiting of all others* (London, 1657 [i.e. 1658]). The transition from monarchy to republic and back again saw England angling for fishing rights, and other resources, far and wide. See Simon Smith, *A true narration of the royall fishings of Great Brittaine and Ireland* (London, 1641); John Smith, *The trade & fishing of Great-Britain displayed with a description of the islands of Orkney and Shotland* [i.e. Shetland] (London, 1661); Robert Codrington, *His Majesties propriety and dominion on the Brittish seas asserted together with a true account of the Neatherlanders insupportable insolencies and injuries they have committed, and the inestimable benefits they have gained in their fishing on the English seas* (London, 1665). See also Rebecca Bratspies, 'Finessing King Neptune: Fisheries Management and the Limits of International Law', *Harvard Environmental Law Review* 25 (2001): 213-258. The finessing doesn't extend to archipelagic nuance, as we're told Selden 'claimed, on behalf of King James I of England [sic], all the seas "inseparably and perpetually appurtenant to the British Empire"' (220, n. 34).

[81] John Selden, *Of the dominion or ownership of the sea in two books* (1652), trans. Marchamont Nedham, p. 459.

[82] Elkanah Settle, *Mare clausum: or A ransack for the Dutch May 23. 1666* (London: Peter Lillicrap, for John Million, at the Man in the Moon in the Little Old Baly, 1666), p. 4. The two texts were spoofed earlier in Edmund Gayton, *The lawyer's duel, or two sonnets composed on Grotius's Mare liberum. and Selden's Mare clausum* ([London?: s.n., 1655]). For the early development of Dutch maritime policy see Louis Sicking, *Neptune and the Netherlands: State, Economy, and War at Sea in the Renaissance* (Leiden: Brill, 2004).

[83] Philip Meadows, *Observations concerning the dominion and sovereignty of the seas being an abstract of the marine affairs of England* (London, 1689), A$^v$.

[84] Kerrigan, *Archipelagic English*, p. 51. Alluding to 'decades of English royalist and republican antagonism towards the Scots', Kerrigan cites 'the ease with which the versatile Marchamont Nedham could recycle hostile material from the chapter "Concerning the Scots" in his apology for the Republic, *The Case of the Common-wealth of England, Stated* (London, 1650), Pt II, ch. 2, to a royalist-phase *True Character of a Rigid Presbyter: With a Narrative of the Dangerous Designes of the English and Scotish Covenanters, as they have Tended to the Ruine of our Church*

*and Kingdom* (London, 1661), 13-24'. Kerrigan, *Archipelagic English*, p. 276, p. 510, n. 43.

[85] Nedham, *The case of the Common-Wealth of England, stated*, p. 56.

[86] J. G. A. Pocock, 'British History: A Plea for a New Subject', *Journal of Modern History* 47, 4 (1975): 601-628, at 606.

[87] Pocock, 'British History', 605-6.

[88] Pocock, 'British History', 602-603.

[89] Murray Pittock, *Celtic Identity and the British Image* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999), p. 102. Pittock's characteristically trenchant comment on the British Empire and the complexity of Scottish complicity is astute: '"Britons never never shall be slaves" is a historic sentiment of imperial Protestant identity which functioned externally in ruling the waves, not internally through understanding each other. Less than ten years after the Scot, James Thomson, wrote these lines, his compatriots were being sold into slavery in the American colonies for bearing arms in the cause of "Prosperity to Scotland and no Union", the badge on their Jacobite blades' (144).

[90] For the deep roots of Franco-Scottish relations see Elizabeth Bonner, 'Scotland's "Auld Alliance" with France, 1295-1560', *History* 84, 273 (1999): 5-30. On sixteenth-century Irish-Spanish relations, see Barbara Fuchs, 'Spanish Lessons: Spenser and the Irish Moriscos', *Studies in English Literature 1500-1900* 42, 1 (2002): 43-62. For Fuchs, 'Ireland functions as a key site for analyzing England's tortuous relationship to Spain as both model and rival' (43).

[91] Joad Raymond, 'Newspapers: A National or International Phenomenon?', *Media History* 18, 3-4 (2012): 249-257, at 249.

[92] Raymond, 'Newspapers', p. 256. The claim that Britain's second language was Latin would have to be looked at in light of the fortunes of the Celtic languages under English expansion, since at the outset of the early modern period, 'The archipelago was still predominantly Celtic-speaking – at least when measured in terms of geographical area'. Steven G. Ellis, Christopher Maginn, *The Making of the British Isles: The State of Britain and Ireland, 1450-1660* (London: Routledge, 2013), p. 4.

[93] Joad Raymond, '"A Mercury with a Winged Conscience": Marchamont Nedham, Monopoly and Censorship', *Media History* 4, 1 (1998): 7-18, at 8-9.

[94] Joad Raymond, 'Nedham , Marchamont (bap. 1620, d. 1678)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, Sept 2015 [http://www.oxforddnb.com.ezproxy.lib.gla.ac.uk/view/article/19847. Retrieved 12 March 2016].

[95] Worden, 'Milton and Marchamont Nedham', p. 166.

[96] Worden, 'Milton and Marchamont Nedham', p. 173.

[97] James Harrington, *The common-wealth of Oceana* (London: Printed by J. Streater for Livewell Chapman, 1656), p. 4. In Richard Flecknoe's opera, *The marriage of Oceanus and Brittania* (1659), the mariners are urged 'Brittania to please,/ Queen of all Iles, and Empress of the Seas'. Richard Flecknoe, *The marriage of Oceanus and Brittania an allegoricall fiction, really declaring Englands riches, glory, and puissance by sea: to be represented in musick, dances, and proper scenes* ([London: s.n.], 1659), p, 11.

[98] Harrington, *The common-wealth of Oceana*, p. 4.

[99] Harrington, *The common-wealth of Oceana*, p. 8.

[100] Harrington, *The common-wealth of Oceana*, p. 233.

[101] Harrington, *The common-wealth of Oceana*, p. 233.

[102] Algernon Sidney, *Discourses concerning government* (London, 1698), p. 112.

[103] V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, vol. 39, *Notebooks On Imperialism* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1968; 1974), trans. Clemens Dutt, ed. M. S. Levin, p. 446. On Cromwell's shipbuilding strategy see Jonathan Scott, *When the Waves Ruled Britannia: Geography and Political Identities, 1500-1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), p. 75: 'the republic patrolled the channel, Mediterranean and Caribbean simultaneously'.

[104] Marx to Ludwig Kugelmann, 4 December 1869. Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *Ireland and the Irish Question*, eds. L. I. Golman and V. E. Kunina (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1986), p. 379.

[105] In his 'Confidential Communication on Bakunin' of 28 March 1870, Marx declared: 'England today is seeing a repetition of what happened on a gigantic scale in ancient Rome. A nation that enslaves another forges its own chains'. Karl Marx, *On the First International*, edited by Saul K. Padover (London: McGraw-Hill, 1973), p. 174.

[106] Studies of the period that fail to take on board Marx's perspective remain flawed. See for example James Holstun magisterial *Ehud's Dagger: Class Struggle in the English Revolution* (London: Verso, 2000).

[107] Empire helped the British state navigate a later revolutionary tempest: 'When it was announced that a convict ship, the Neptune, was on its way to the Cape with 288 prisoners on board, many of them Irishmen convicted during the agrarian agitation of 1848, a petitioning campaign against the Colonial Office began, coordinated by the newly formed Anti-Convict Association'. Miles Taylor, 'The 1848 Revolutions and the British Empire', *Past & Present* 166 (2000): 146-180, at 168.

[108] See Esther Weber, 'Could Brexit bring back the Royal Yacht?, BBC News 27 September 2016, http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-37428864, accessed 31 December 2017, and Nell Frizzell, 'Use Lottery Money to pay for a Royal Yacht? OK – Under these Conditions', *The Guardian*, 29 December 2017, https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2017/dec/29/royal-yacht-lottery-brittania-monarchy-queen-timeshare, accessed 31 December 2017.

[109] John Milton, *The Readie and Easie way to establish a free Commonwealth* (London, 1660; 2nd edition), p. 46. On this passage see Scott, *When the Waves Ruled Britannia*, p. 90. Milton's work is awash with maritime metaphors. In the same treatise he feared liberty of conscience, rather than pursuit of colonies, might prove 'the rock wheron they ship wrack themselves', and urged parliament 'to keep thir due channell' (92, 108).