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"All Men Born in Britain Are Britons": The Development of Britishness During the Long Sixteenth Century, 1502-1615

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"ALL MEN BORN IN BRITAIN ARE BRITONS": THE DEVELOPMENT OF BRITISHNESS

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by

Zachary Bates

Under the direction of Jacob Selwood, PhD

ABSTRACT

The sixteenth and early-seventeenth centuries saw the development of a British identity that was contingent upon a shared dynasty through intermarriage and the composite monarchy of James VI and I, religious developments that led to both Scotland and England breaking with the Roman Catholic Church, and especially England's overseas colonial empire. Using sources representative of the nascent print culture, the *Calendar of State Papers*, the *Letters and Papers of Henry VIII*, and Journals from the House of Commons, this project argues that contrary to prior historical analysis of Britain, empire, and English imperialism that British identity in the sixteenth century became a collaborative process which included both Scots and English. With this in mind, the project suggests that historians must incorporate Scottish angles to the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, and that future studies should include analysis of Scots in the early Atlantic and English imperial worlds.

INDEX WORDS: Britain, Scotland, England, Imperialism, Intellectual and Cultural History, British History, Europe

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DEDICATION

For Mary.

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This project developed from a research paper written for an undergraduate history course. I recall asking the instructor, Jacob Selwood, about pursuing what it meant to be British during the seventeenth century, and he encouraged me to pursue the question. Three years later, I am still asking the question at the graduate level, while extending my research to include the sixteenth century, thus transforming the project. Dr. Selwood had continued to motivate my pursuit of these questions, guide my research in fruitful directions, and improve my writing throughout my academic career. My first thanks, therefore, must go to Jake (as he has became known to me) for responding to my always abundant emails, encouraging me in accomplishing my academic goals, and for supervising this Master's thesis.

I must also thank other faculty in the Department of History at Georgia State University. Douglas Reynolds instilled in me a confidence in my abilities to perform the work of the historian, and listened to my project ideas with great interest. David Sehat provided support by always opening his office to me when I needed to discuss any concerns or fears about the life of a graduate student. Ian Fletcher pushed my academic interests in other directions, providing me with a generous collection of books, and always having an open door. I must also express my gratitude to everyone in my Research Seminar. The discussions about my project in that class helped me immensely.

My family and friends have offered much support as well. Cecilia and Chris were always there to provide me a home away from Atlanta. Zach Hill also afforded me a generous amount of his time by reading all of the thesis during its developmental stages. My Grandmother, whom deserves thanks for many other reasons, encouraged my interest in history - often by buying me

videogames set within an historical context. I especially thank Mary, who has always been

patient and understanding of my academic pursuits.

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Questions of national identity and the formations of such identities have long haunted historians. Benedict Anderson theorized collective identity as framed through democratic processes, such as the development of industrialization, the nineteenth century proliferation and democratization of print culture, and the development of public spheres in political representation.[1] However, historians have problematized this view of national identity as an imagined community by claiming that nationalism first fomented in England during the sixteenth century and spread throughout early modern Europe while also changing in accordance with the social, cultural, and political atmosphere.[2] If one agrees with England being the first modern state and providing an introduction to nationalism, how does the construction of national identity take place during the sixteenth century?[3] Does identity construction take place in an English or British context, or does the development of both of these contexts occur in a concurrent system? And what role does Scotland play in the formulation of Englishness and Britishness? While these questions continue to be asked today, this is not a modern development. Rather, they have a broad foundation beginning in the medieval period. The sixteenth century, in particular, was a moment of great change in the politics and cultures of the kingdoms of the British isles and in the idea of Britain. This was the moment that Britishness tcame to include Scotland, England, and Wales.

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[1] Specifically, this is best argued in Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (New York: Verso, 1991).
[2] Liah Greenfeld, *Nationalism: Five Roads to Modernity* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993).
[3] I agree with G. R. Elton's position that the administrative revolution of the 1530s constructed something resembling a modern state, but the on the ground construction of identity was much messier than the clean administrative transition model that Elton provides. See G. R. Elton, *The Tudor Revolution in Government: Administrative Changes in the Reign of Henry VIII* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967).

Writing in 1521, John Major, a lowland Scottish philosopher, claimed that "all men born in Britain are Britons" and that he found "in Britain one kingdom, that namely of the Britons" which was divided into "two kingdoms in the island: the Scottish kingdom namely, and the English."[4] Major also urged for union between the two kingdoms through dynastic intermarriage so that "one kingdom of Britain may be formed out of the two that now exist."[5] In addition to calling for an egalitarian union between all "Britons," Major, in a rather radical step for print at least, eschewed the competing origin myths of England and Scotland, both of which asserted claims on the island and sovereignty based on who arrived first.[6] As far as is known, this is the first time an idea of Britain based upon birthright, a common identity, and a shared culture had been theorized. Major likely was also writing with recent events in mind, such as the dynastic marriage in 1503. This marriage, between the daughter of Henry VII, Margaret Tudor, and James IV, King of Scots, allowed a dynastic link between the English and Scottish monarchies, and also presented the possibility of union through inheritance.

The prior myths which formed the foundational thought for Britain centered around a medieval articulation of the relationship between England, Scotland, and Wales as being a feudal system of suzerainty and vassalage. While the Scottish had established a very different origin myth and the Welsh framed themselves as true Britons who were invaded by both the English and the Scottish, the English claimed Briton through the Brutus origin myth. According to the English myth, Brutus escaped from Troy, settled on the island of Britain, and established his British kingdom over the entire island. Upon his death, Brutus divided the island between his three sons, with the oldest son receiving England. Within the medieval inheritance system, this

4 John Major, *A History of Greater Britain*, trans. Archibald Constable (Edinburgh: University Press, 1892), 17-18.
[5] Ibid., 41-42.
[6] Marcus Merriman, *The Rough Wooings: Mary Queen of Scots, 1542-1551* (East Linton: Tuckwell Press, 2000), 43.

entitled England as the "older brother" of the island, and as the feudal overlord of Scotland and

Wales. Ireland, during this period, while claimed by England through a Lordship granted by the

Pope in the 1170s, fit "uncomfortably and at best marginally into any pan-Britain mythology."[7]

Major, however, theorized a sense of Britishness that was cultural and geographic. To

him, it made sense for the island to become "whole" under one king, and that the Scots and

English shared a language was no coincidence.[8] Indeed, the poet William Dunbar wrote in this

same vein when he stated his admiration for "O reverend Chaucer" and claimed that "oure

Inglisch" was "ane flour imperiall that raise in Britaine evir."[9] In a way, formulations of

Britishness by Major and some lowland Scots ran parallel to the official idea of Britain which

England propagated well into the 1540s. The English medieval attitudes towards Scotland and

Wales saw both as being vassals to the English king, and becoming a British kingdom essentially

meant becoming an enlarged English kingdom. In other words, in this paradigm, if the Scots and

Welsh could banish their identities and adopt English culture, then an idea of Britain could be

fully realized. This ideology clearly aligns well with an impression that England practiced a

form of medieval imperialism and the idea of Britain was merely a means to creating a more

powerful English kingdom. Thus, English articulations of a larger British kingdom were

anathema to the Scots, as it required the Scottish kingdom to disavow any form of monarchical

independence or equal standing with the English kingdom.[10]

In 1547, in the midst of a war with Scotland, Henry VIII died. Following his death,

pamphlets produced by Edward VI's court began to adopt several of the claims of cultural

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[7] Ibid., 47.
[8] This should be qualified, as Major is clearly circumscribing the cultural sphere of the island to include English speakers, as both England and Scotland had populations that did not fit comfortably into this idea of British unity.
[9] William Dunbar, *The Golden Targe* (n.p., 1508), no pagination (9 of 10 unmarked pages).
[10] R. R. Davies, *The First English Empire: Power and Identities in the British Isles, 1093-1343* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 1-9.

affinity already apparent between England and Scotland, and the mutual benefit that a union of the crowns could provide economically, religiously, and geographically. The claims of suzerainty and overlordship were downplayed, and eventually dropped after the 1550s. While some of the foundational origins were retained from the myths, the moral changed into one that promoted cultural brotherhood and unity. The rest of the sixteenth century provided a continuing negotiation of what Britain, and British, meant, and this negotiation continued in the wake of religious re-definition in England and Scotland, monarchical succession crises, and the beginnings of "British" colonial ventures.

The sixteenth century and early seventeenth century was an especially important period of transformation in how identity formation occurred in Britain. The mechanisms for this change involved the proliferation of print culture, political events, religious change, cultural consolidation, and the development of a British imperial ideology.[11] Thus, this period gives historians an opportunity to observe the development of national identities that are still contested in England and Scotland well into the modern period. The recent conversations in Scotland regarding its position in a British state fall on a line of continuity; several of the recent issues involving Scotland claiming that its national identity exists outside of a British state echo prior incidents in the historical background.[12] Several of the questions and negotiations of identity during the early modern period carry into our present day circumstances. A study of national identity through messy cultural connections, state formation through composite monarchies, and the effects of early modern overseas colonial empires can reveal some of the current tensions

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[11] This takes place in England and Scotland. It has been argued that firm cultural ideas of what it means to be English are developed in this period. For this argument, see Richard Helgerson, *Forms of Nationhood: The Elizabethan Writing of England* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992).

[12] Roger Mason, "Debating Britain in Seventeenth-Century Scotland: Multiple Monarchy and Scottish Sovereignty," (presentation, Royal Society of Edinburgh, Edinburgh, Scotland, United Kingdom, 8 April 2013).

within states which have multiple nationalities.[13] This study can also reveal the intersections of political, cultural, and intellectual constructions of identity during the early modern period, and complicate any narrative that frames the development of Britain or Britishness as a linear process particularly aligned with the development of the nation-state in the late seventeenth century and eighteenth century.

1.1 Historiographical Context

J. G. A. Pocock urged historians to explore the meaning of "British history" and asked, "When does our history begin?"[14] In the last twenty-five years, historians have attempted to answer this question in many ways. This exploration of British history aligns well with contemporary questions of what Britain was and is: an empire, a united kingdom, or an unfair union between England, Wales, and Scotland.[15] Of course, having multiple conceptions of Britishness and different formative periods for identity invites scholarly debate and disagreement.

Traditionally, early historical interpretations of the early sixteenth century took a Whiggish and progressive view of Anglo-Scottish relations. Henry VIII's actions with Scotland in the 1540s are explained within a paradigm of the inevitable Protestant British nation. In fact, the historical processes of union began with Henry VII and his daughter's marriage to the King of Scots in 1503. Thus, the union between England and Scotland was the effect of powerful

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[13] Aside from Scotland, the problematic relationships among the early modern composite monarchical states are being played out in Spain, as the Catalonians are beginning to urge for independence. Perhaps also drawing on historical precedent, the government of Spain has refused to allow a vote for secession from the Spanish state.

[14] J. G. A. Pocock, "British History: A Plea for a New Subject," *Journal of Modern History* 47, no. 4 (December 1975): 603; and J. G. A. Pocock, "The History of British Political Thought: The Creation of a Center," *Journal of British Studies* 24, no. 3 (July 1985): 284.

[15] Not to mention Northern Ireland, which as stated before, fits very uncomfortably into any notions of Britishness.

historical actors and of a natural progressivism that pervaded the Whiggish view of history, and was centered on England.[16]

The focus on England by historians continued into the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s, with Derek Hirst and Nicholas Canny formulating Britishness as a form of English imperialism. Hirst, in his most recent book, charts the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries as a period in which England increases its dominance over its island neighbors through force. Scottish and Irish abilities to project themselves as independent identities becomes impossible due to English coercion and control.[17] Canny, similarly, posits that Ireland was the focal point of English imperialism during the 1560s and influenced later imperial and colonial adventures in America and towards Scotland.[18] Thus, in both of these cases, the mechanisms for English expansion was a thirst for empire, and the role of Scotland and Ireland are those of territories to be controlled and dominated.

Richard Helgerson and other scholars have posited a cultural development of identity during the Elizabethan period.[19] Literary culture was far more influential than any imperial project on the construction of identity in England during the early modern period. Taking into account the plethora of printed materials during this period, this approach engages with the increasing cultural production in the vernacular languages and accounts this into the development of identity. Hence, Shakespeare was just as important, and perhaps more so, to developing identity as was identifying and conquering one's enemies.

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[16] A key example of this is J. D. Mackie, "Henry VIII and Scotland," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 29 (1947), 93-114.

[17] See Derek Hirst, *Dominion: England and its Island Neighbours 1500-1707* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012).

[18] Nicholas Canny, "The Ideology of Colonization: From Ireland to America," *William and Mary Quarterly* 30, no. 4 (October 1973), 575-598.

[19] See Richard Helgerson, *Forms of Nationhood: The Elizabethan Writing of England* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992). Helgerson is not an historian; he is actually a professor of English, hence his close reading of textual sources during this period.

During this cultural turn, a British turn in the construction of identity also took hold. Much of the Whiggish, imperial, and cultural interpretations revolved around the construction of an English identity based on an English constitution that guaranteed certain rights to Englishmen. This Englishness later became synonymous with a British identity. However, new explanations have been put forward that seek to explain the development of Britishness within a co-operative and cohesive paradigm. Perhaps most explicitly, Linda Colley has written of Britishness being forged during the eighteenth century on the basis of a shared Protestant identity that put Britain into opposition with Catholic France, and supplemented through common British interests in commercial enterprises and imperial expansion.[20] Colley dismisses any articulations of Britishness during the early modern period, and posits that nationalism flowed from the Acts of Union in 1707 by being able to channel it through individuals and their relationship to the legal state. Thus Britishness was an "invention" of the eighteenth century.[21]

Historians have, of course, found this explanation of Britishness and identity construction problematic, especially those who focus on the medieval and early modern periods. R. R. Davies has argued that the British problem was already being discussed during the medieval period, and claims that Britishness was being articulated as early as 1093.[22] This position frames the concept of Britishness outside of modern narratives of nationalism, and rather places the current vexing question of the future of the United Kingdom into a medieval context. In other words, the roots of the current questions of what Britain means were being asked in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.

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[20] Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation 1707-1837* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992).
[21] Ibid., 8.
[22] See Davies, *The First English Empire: Power and Identities in the British Isles 1093-1343*.

The role of Scotland in the formation of Britain has often been overlooked by historians of England and of empire. Scotland's position within ideas of Britishness becomes increasingly troubling when placing the process of identity construction alongside that of England during the early modern period. While it has been argued that Ireland does not fit comfortably into concepts of Britain, the same might be said of Scotland. Indeed, it has been posited that Scotland may have been the first European kingdom to display nascent signs of nationalism due to its constant warfare against England in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, and by defining itself as not England and disputing a shared British past with the English kingdom.[23]

With this claim in mind, several historians have posited that Scotland had a separate sphere of identity construction that did not fit into a particularly English narrative of Britain. In many cases, while there was some interest in establishing a British kingdom during the 1540s, neither England nor Scotland pursued a British union during the second half of the sixteenth century.[24] In some ways, this reinforces the position that Britain is an English construct, and that the union forms not from the cultural commonalities or the union of the crowns, but from either the pursuits of English imperialism or a later desire by the Scots to enter the commercial world of the English empire.[25]

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[23] Kristen Post Walton, "Scottish Nationalism Before 1789: An Ideology, a Sentiment, or a Creation?," *International Social Science Review* 82, nos. 3/4 (2006), 111-134.

[24] Two particular studies are of note: the first Marcus Merriman, *The Rough Wooings: Mary Queen of Scots 1542-1551* (East Linton: Tuckwell Press, 2000), which argues that the Rough Wooings of the 1540s further established an independent Scottish identity, but Merriman also argues that a sense of Britishness also took shape during this conflict; and the second Roger Mason, "Scotland, Elizabethan England and the Idea of Britain," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 14 (2004), 279-294, in which Mason argues that Scotland nor England seriously pursued a shared idea of Britain in the second half of the sixteenth century.

[25] Indeed, the English may have avoided and intentionally veered away from the potential Britishness produced by having its first "British" king in James I. See Sarah Waurechen, "Imagined Polities, Failed Dreams, and the Beginnings of an Unacknowledged Britain: English Responses to James VI and I's Vision of Perfect Union," *Journal of British Studies* 52, no. 3 (July 2013), 575-596.

More recently, historians have turned to empire to explain the construction of British identity. David Armitage argues that the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries gave the language of empire to the British, partially through the 1540s, in which a British empire is conceptualized, and then through the ideological development of the seventeenth century. Only by the 1730s can those within this empire begin to conceptualize themselves as connected via a British empire.[26] Alison Games, however, argues against an ideological conception of empire. Instead, the flexibility of identity through an English cosmopolitan approach ultimately provided the foundations for the British empire.[27] In both cases, the activity of the imperial periphery provided the impetus for identity formation.

I propose to link these different discussions regarding identity formation in Britain, and to bring Scotland and Wales into this discussion. Since Ireland does not directly fit into a shared British narrative until the early seventeenth century, I will reserve any treatment of English attempts to subdue the Irish until the "Brittish" colonial project in Ulster from 1607 onwards. Instead of trying to posit a starting point for Scottish and English constructions of Britishness, following a line of continuity during the sixteenth century might provide a more fruitful approach than trying to isolate identity formation and attributing it to specific mechanisms. With this in mind, I eschew fixed formations of identity. I will trace the negotiations in identity from 1502, when Henry VII initiated a dynastic link through marriage with the King of Scots and when articulations of a cultural Britishness began to show up in print culture, to the early seventeenth century, when James's attempts to politically unify Britain failed but "British" colonial projects began in Ireland and the Atlantic. Within this historical period, historians can

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[26] David Armitage, *The Ideological Origins of the British Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).
[27] Alison Games, *The Web of Empire: English Cosmopolitans in an Age of Expansion 1560-1660* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008).

reveal the continuities of Britishness from the medieval into the early modern period but also contextualize the many changes that occurred due to political, intellectual, cultural, and religious factors.

1.2 Approaches and Methodology

I use the methodologies of intellectual and cultural historians, particularly a contextualist methodology. The contextualist methodology uses the language, arguments, and concepts of sources to understand how their authors shaped, justified, and made sense of the world in which they lived.[28] While this methodology certainly invites errors from the historian and the producer of the written source, it seems a good approach for understanding and interpreting the world as it was to the producer of the source. I will interpret the printed source material as an act by an agent who is seeking to persuade the reader to his point and structure the world based upon their intellectual arguments. I will approach the political sources as reflections of the political structuring of the world and as attempts to create institutions or to act based upon this structuring of the world.

I follow an empirical research process, which consults archival and print sources in order to support my argument regarding Britishness from 1502 to 1615. I realize that my research has led me into a relatively elite intellectual and political world in England and Scotland during the mid-sixteenth century and make no claims that anybody outside of this world thought of themselves as British or as Britons. However, taking into account the development of the printing press in England in 1473 and the distribution of several of the propaganda pamphlets in the 1540s throughout northern England and southern Scotland, the intriguing possibility of a

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[28] This methodology is derived from a Harvard faculty video with David Armitage. Found at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=57rjJ2WOfRA.

permeability between elite and popular culture is presented.[29] The possibilities of print and the

exercise of power by the Tudor and early Stuart government may have introduced Britishness to

the "middling folk," though this possibility may be elusive to the modern historian.

I am also questioning Benedict Anderson's theoretical apparatus for national identity

formation. While much of his concept of imagined communities is appealing, positing that

nationalism only began to occur in the nineteenth century as a democratic process independent of

the monarch is a bold claim.[30] Liah Greenfeld refutes this, arguing that nationalism clearly

begins to show in several documents and across languages. Beginning with England in the

sixteenth century, followed by America in the eighteenth century, and continuing, rather than

beginning, in the nineteenth century in France, Germany, and Russia, nationalism was a five-

hundred year process that continuously developed throughout the early modern and modern

periods.[31] In expanding the temporal spectrum of nationalism and broadening the definitions of

the process, I accept Greenfeld's analysis of nationalism, and implement it in my study of

England. I further accept the potential that Scotland may exhibit collective feelings of

nationalism during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.

Identity is difficult to clearly diagnose during the early modern period. As one historian

has commented, identity was fluid during this period and could change according to dress,

religion, or language.[32] Therefore, I do not claim that any identities are fixed or permanent

during this period. In fact, if anything, identities were messy and inchoate. For example,

somewhat interchangeably, the English referred to their kingdom as either "England" or

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[29] See Merriman, *Rough Wooings*, 265-291. For examples, see Nicholas Bodrugan, *An Epitome* (London, 1548); Somerset, *An Epistle* (London, 1548).
[30] Anderson, *Imagined Communities*.
[31] Greenfeld, *Nationalism: Five Roads to Modernity*.
[32] Games, *The Web of Empire*.

"Britain" – in some cases even excluding Scotland from the "Island" of Britain.[33] Steven G. Ellis argues that in the fifteenth and sixteenth century, Englishness was formulated through ethnicity, making it possible to live in Ireland or Calais and to consider oneself as fully English.[34] Qualifying Englishness through ethnicity does not place the Welsh or Scots outside of England, nor should historians think of subjects of the King of England as wearing only one nationality.[35] According to English myth all sources of kingly power in Britain are derived from Brut and his three sons, of which the oldest ruled England and the two younger ruled Scotland and Wales, thus the English king could claim suzerainty over Scotland or Wales as the natural head of the mythical British family. This provides a way of thinking of everyone within Britain as both English and British, and perhaps also Scottish, Welsh, or Cornish.[36] Therefore, in this project, I plan to use a concept of flexible personal identities, in which self-identification is interchangeable, fluid, and constantly negotiated. Futhermore, I also engage with intellectually possible identities and politically possible identities, both of which derive from the fixing ability of print culture and political documentation.

I bring Scotland into the British conversation by emphasizing the writings of several Scottish theorists of Britain.[37] While the Scottish political structure defined itself against England, the sixteenth century was a time when some Scots wrote of a "britanishe nacion"

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[33] For instance, see Griffiths, "The Island of England in the Fifteenth Century: Perceptions of the Peoples of the British Isles," 182. England's declaration at the Council of Constance in 1417, presumably issued by Henry V, referred to itself as the "renowned nation of England or Britain."

[34] Steven G. Ellis, "Crown, Community and Government in the English Territories, 1450-1575," *History* 71, no. 232 (1986), 204.

[35] See Raplh Griffiths, "The Island of England in the Fifteenth Century: Perceptions of the Peoples of the British Isles," *Journal of Medieval History* 29 (2003), 177-200. During the final stages of the Hundred Years' War, several Welsh fought in France for the English and referred themselves as both English and Welsh, without either identity dimming in comparison to the other.

[36] For a discussion of Englishness and Cornishness, see Mark Stoyle, "The Dissidence of Despair: Rebellion and Identity in Early Modern Cornwall," *Journal of British Studies* 38, no. 4 (October 1999): 423-444.

[37] John Major and James Henrisoun, after all, were Scots.

forged on dynastic, cultural, and religious means.[38] Near the end of the century and when

James's likely succession to the English throne became more apparent, several English writers

adopted some of the earlier techniques of Scottish and English writers from the first half of the

sixteenth century. Far from viewing it as ad hoc, I argue that this is part of an ongoing

conversation regarding Britishness in which the English and some lowland Scots were

interlocutors. James was drawing upon the 1540s language of Britain when he became, as he

claimed, "King of Great Britaine."[39] However, in some ways, overlooked by many historians,

James contributed to the negotiations of Britishness by establishing an early version of the Union

Jack and referring to Scotland and England, respectively, as "South Britaine" and "North

Britaine."[40]

Ireland occupies a problematic position in this project. R. R. Davies's observation that

Ireland occupies an uncomfortable place in imaginings of Britain. While both the Scots and

English attempted to colonize Ulster in the early seventeenth century by inviting "Brittish

Vndertakers," there does not seem to be any indication that the Scots or English viewed the

native Irish as British.[41] Ireland does, however, play a role in the construction of Britain, as

William Cecil conceived of the British Isles as a broader defensive unit, and James considered

Ireland a colonial opportunity to develop a cooperative British plantation.[42] However, since

Ireland does not fit into most discussions of Britain, it will not play a prominent part in this

project. This is not to claim that Ireland should not be studied within a British context, as it does

play an important role for both Scotland and England during the sixteenth century in the process

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[38] Quote from John Knox in Judith Richards, "Mary Tudor as 'Sole Quene'?: Gendering Tudor Monarchy," *Historical Journal* 40, no. 4 (December 1997), 920.
[39] James I, *Proclamation for the Imperial Crown of Great Britaine* (London, 1605).
[40] James I, *Proclamation for the Establishment of Flags* (London, 1606).
[41] Anonymous, *Conditions to be Observed by the Brittish Vndertakers* (London, 1610), Title Page.
[42] Jane E. A. Dawson, "William Cecil and the British Dimension of Early Elizabethan Foreign Policy," *History* 74, no. 241 (June 1989), 213-216.

of identity construction. However, for this project, I reserve discussions of Ireland when necessary for understanding the British relationship between Scotland and England. There were not any serious discussions during this period of incorporating Ireland into a larger unitary British state, but it was a part of the colonial schemes of both Scots and English from the mid-sixteenth century onwards and must be discussed in that context.

My thesis approaches Britishness from a transnational angle by taking Ireland and Scotland into account, and will stress the necessity of viewing British history as encompassing more than the history of England.[43] The third chapter provides a brief discussion about the initial Britishness of the American colonies, as Virginia was referred to in pamphlets from 1609 and 1612 as "Nova Britannia," giving Britishness in the nascent colonial phase a transregional context.[44] The importance of the colonies as laboratories of Britishness was apparent as early as 1609, though the eventual settlement between Scotland and England that made the empire "British" in 1707 was not apparent just yet. When the mythological and cultural theorizations of Britishness are placed on a continuum from the medieval period, we can see not only the political turn in ideas of Britain and Britishness in the 1540s but also the ongoing negotiation of these ideas, in tandem with the development of early modern overseas colonial expansion, well into the seventeenth century.

This thesis is divided into three chapters, framed chronologically. Each chapter contains a separate argument about a specific chronological period. In the first chapter, I provide a survey of identity in Britain during the medieval period, focusing on the political effects of the dynastic marriage between Scotland and England, and the impact of John Major's formulation of a British

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[43] Again, this stems from my acceptance of the arguments by Greenfeld that England qualifies as a nation by the mid-sixteenth century, and my acceptance of Walton's argument regarding Scotland as a nation as far back as the medieval period.

[44] Robert Johnson, *Nova Britannia* (London, 1609), and Robert Johnson, *The New Life of Virginea* (London, 1612).

identity based on dynastic union and a shared culture and geography. I emphasize the intersection of these events during the 1540s, arguing that this decade marked the final attempt by England to enforce a feudal vision of Britain and saw the development of a community of those who subscribed to Major's conception of a British state. In the next chapter, I trace three strands of Britishness that tie into the events of the 1540s: religion, dynasty, and culture. While these continued to shape discussion about identity, none could be coherently articulated to present a unifying sense of Britishness. Instead, after 1570, the two kingdoms further developed senses of identity that were incompatible with a unitary idea of Britain: Scotland continued to define itself against England; England either portrayed Britain as something from the past, or firmly positioned itself as the continuation of a British kingdom. The final chapter analyzes the accession of James VI, King of Scots, to the English throne in 1603, fulfilling the aspirations for a dynastic union between the two kingdoms. However, taking into account the context of the previous chapter, James's attempts to "forge a nation" were unfulfilled due to the incoherent nature of Britishness and the multiple meanings of Britain. I argue that, contrary to some historians, James may have failed in creating a British kingdom as a political unit, but his reign contained events in which he constructed an imagined kingdom that contained recognized symbols and through colonial and imperial projects laid the foundations for a future British imperial state. When taken as a whole, my thesis shows the integral role of Scotland in conceptualizing Britain, the combined effects of both kingdoms in shaping the discussions of Britishness during the sixteenth century, and pushes back against traditional narratives of Britain as an English imperial construct. This thesis intends to shift conversations about Britain beyond beginning in the eighteenth century, and stress that Britain has always been a contested term.

2   Chapter 1: Identities in Britain and Ideas of Britishness, 1502-1550

In proposing a marriage between the daughter of the English King Edward IV and the

Scottish King James III in 1474, the Edinburgh commissioners stated their aim as the resolution

of longstanding tensions between England and Scotland, and as an opportunity to bring peace to

"this Nobill Isle, callit gret Britianee."[1] John Major (Mair) furthered this idea in 1521, when he

argued "all men born in Britain are Britons" and found "in Britain one kingdom, that namely of

the Britons," which was divided into "two kingdoms in the island: the Scottish kingdom namely,

and the English."[2] Major also urged a union between the two kingdoms through dynastic

intermarriage so that "one kingdom of Britain may be formed out of the two that now exist."[3] In

addition to calling for an egalitarian union between all "Britons," Major, in a rather radical step

for print at least, eschewed the competing origin myths of England and Scotland, both which

asserted claims on the island and sovereignty based on who arrived first.[4]

This emerging idea of Britishness as tied to the geographic entity of the island and the

need for an egalitarian union between the English and Scottish monarchies to solve the "British

problem" was novel for the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. While articulations of

Britishness date as far back as the tenth century, the medieval period saw a consolidation of

several different conceptualizations of Britishness: an English idea in which they descended from

the mythological Brut, a prince who escaped Troy and became the first king of Britain, and had

sovereignty over the entire island; a Scottish conception which gave them claim to the island of

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[1] Quoted in Alan MacColl, "The Meaning of 'Britain' in Medieval and Early Modern England," *Journal of British Studies* 45, no. 2 (April 2006), 264. Early modern spelling has been retained, with the exception of shorthand, which has been expanded to include the full lettering.

2 John Major, *A History of Greater Britain*, trans. Archibald Constable (Edinburgh: University Press, 1892), 17-18.

[3] Ibid., 41-42.

[4] Marcus Merriman, *The Rough Wooings: Mary Queen of Scots, 1542-1551* (East Linton: Tuckwell Press, 2000), 43.

Albion, the first name of Britain, through Galthelus, a prince of Athens, when he fled to Egypt

and gained the hand of Scota, the Pharoah's daughter, their descendants then traveling to

Scotland; and finally, the Welsh who set themselves as the true Britons and were invaded by

both the English and Scottish.[5] Ireland, while claimed by England through a Lordship granted

by the Pope in the 1170s, fit "uncomfortably and at best marginally into any pan-Britain

mythology."[6]

It was this edifice of ideas that Major and Polydore Vergil challenged in the 1520s and

1530s and that Henry VIII and Thomas Cromwell began to alter as they sought a solution to the

British problem in the 1530s. While Henry VIII relied upon his understanding of the Brut story

of suzerainty over Scotland in his theorization of a British state, the concepts of Britishness

expressed by Major merged into the writings for union in 1547 and 1548.

Many historians have discounted the medieval articulations of Britishness, or diagnosed a

nascent British identity in specific events, such as the union of the crowns of England and

Scotland in 1603, and posited a development of identity alongside national or imperial lines that

coincides with modernity. Linda Colley structures Britishness as a national identity that flows

from the 1707 Treaty of Union through the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, primarily

in opposition to France.[7] Murray G. H. Pittock attributes many modern ideas of Britishness to a

definition against Celtic identity during the late nineteenth century, while giving brief

considerations to early modern notions of British identity that merged the "Celtic fringe" and

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[5] For more on the origin myths of each, see R. R. Davies, *The First English Empire: Power and Identities in the British Isles 1093-1343* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 46-53 and Hector Boecce, *History of Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1540), B.i.v-B.iii.r.
[6] Davies, *The First English Empire*, 47.
[7] Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation 1707-1837* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), 1-9.

"civilized" centers.[8] Derek Hirst provides a narrative in which Englishness supplants Britishness and replaces it by the end of the seventeenth century through increasing English dominance in the British Isles, which carries conflicts that we see still being played out into the twenty-first century.[9] Finally, David Armitage argues that we should view Britain in an imperial context, with the first "British" empire establishing itself with Edward I and the tools of language being forged during the 1540s, but that the subjects of the British crown could not imagine themselves part of a British empire until the 1730s.[10] While many of these approaches are valuable, all are grappling with J. G. A. Pocock's desire to restore meaning to the idea of "British history" and with his question: "When does our history begin?"[11]

In this chapter, I will argue that the 1540s serve as a meeting ground for these conversations of Britishness, both medieval and modern, especially during the "British moment" of 1547 and 1548, which was the product of the early sixteenth-century marriage arrangement between the English and Scottish monarchs and the British literature of Dunbar and Major arising from this marital union. The prospects for English domination through the exercise of power over an obedient vassal Scotland or military conquest were abandoned after 1550, and union, while still desired, was understood to take the form of a dynastic union between the kingdoms.[12] This chapter will proceed in four sections: the first discusses conceptualizations of Britain in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries; the second surveys the events of Henry VIII's reign up to and beyond 1535, and places Henry's northern progress in 1541 in a British

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[8] Murray G. H. Pittock, *Celtic Identity and the British Image* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999), 2-5.
[9] Derek Hirst, *Dominion: England and its Island Neighbours 1500-1707* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 11-12 and 281-282.
[10] David Armitage, *The Ideological Origins of the British Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 28 and 36.
[11] J. G. A. Pocock, "British History: A Plea for a New Subject," *Journal of Modern History* 47, no. 4 (December 1975), 603; and J. G. A. Pocock, "The History of British Political Thought: The Creation of a Center," *Journal of British Studies* 24, no. 3 (July 1985), 284.
[12] Union by treaty, at least at this point, does not seem possible with regard to political thought.

context; the third situates the 1542 Anglo-Scottish war, the 1543 peace settlement, and the first

"Rough Wooing" from 1544 to 1546; and the fourth and final section highlights the print culture

surrounding the second "Rough Wooing," and seeks to show a different articulation of

Britishness in the print culture, which filtered down from intellectual society into a wider

political discourse.

2.1   *A Kingdom of Their Own Language?: Late Medieval Concepts of Britain*

In 1401, the last native Prince of Wales Owain Glyn Dwr sent letters to the King of Scots

and several Irish chiefs requesting support in his uprising against the English, whom Dwr

positioned as Saxon invaders threatening the Welsh, Irish, and Scots - all natural natives of the

islands.[13] While Dwr had a few initial successes in his battles against the English, his letters to

the Irish chiefs and the King of Scots were ignored. The English King Henry IV was quick to

assemble a force and engaged in a campaign to put the rebellion down.[14] However, the

recalcitrant Welsh were brought back under the English kingdom's control in 1415 by the more

conciliatory Henry V, who placated the Welsh by offering pardons to the leaders of the revolt.[15]

This uprising provides an example of the different conceptual identities within the British

Isles. The Welsh, conquered and controlled by the English crown since the late thirteenth

century, urged for a pan-Celtic unity against the English, who were viewed as invaders and

oppressors to the natural inhabitants of the island. Both Welsh poetry and the Arthurian legend,

which placed Arthur as a Welsh hero who dispelled presumably Anglo-Saxon invaders to their

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[13] Ralph Griffiths, "The Island of England in the Fifteenth Century: Perceptions of the Peoples of the British Isles," *Journal of Medieval History* 29 (2003), 179.

[14] Close Rolls, Henry IV: March 1401, Calendar of Close Rolls, Henry IV: volume 1: 1399-1402, A. E. Stamp (editor), in British History Online.

[15] Close Rolls, Henry V: November-December 1415, Calendar of Close Rolls, Henry V: volume 1: 1413-1419, A. E. Stamp (editor), in British History Online.

island, buttressed the pan-Celtic sentiments among the Welsh.[16] Thus, the history of Wales in the early fifteenth century, as formulated by its own poets, was framed as a struggle of the indigenous peoples of the island of Britain against English invaders.

However, the Scots had constructed a very different idea of their place within the island through their thirteenth- and fourteenth-century conflicts with England and the writing of their history. While the Scots also defined themselves against the English, they felt little kinship or fraternity with the Welsh or the Irish.[17] The difference between the Anglo-Scottish and Anglo-Welsh relationships are reflected by the Scots victory in their wars against England in the early fourteenth century and their assertion of independence in the Declaration of Arbroath in 1320, which was recognized by Edward III, King of England, in 1328.[18] Some historians argue that the assertion of the Scottish origin myth in the Declaration and the recognition of the people of Scotland as being able to overthrow incapable monarchs were an example of "a nationalist theory of sovereignty."[19] The origin myth and ability of the Scottish people to endorse their kings also put them outside of the Anglo-British origin myths and of the Welsh pan-Celtic imaginings of Owain Glyn Dwr. Since the wars with England in the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries, Scottish kings primarily focused on preserving the independence of Scotland through the rest of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.

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[16] Griffiths, "The Island of England in the Fifteenth Century: Perceptions of the Peoples of the British Isles," 179.

[17] Ibid., 180-182.

[18] For the contents of the Declaration, see The National Archives of Scotland, "The Declaration of Arbroath, 1320," translated by Alan Borthwick, http://www.nas.gov.uk/downloads/declarationArbroath.pdf. Edward III's recognition of Scotland's independence was ignored by many English kings in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

[19] Walton, Kristen Post, "Scottish Nationalism Before 1789: An Ideology, Sentiment, or Creation?," *International Social Science Review* 81, nos. 3/4 (2006), 116.

Somewhat interchangeably, the English referred to their kingdom as either "England" or "Britain."[20] Steven G. Ellis argues that in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, Englishness was formulated through ethnicity, making it possible to live in Ireland or Calais and be fully English.[21] Qualifying Englishness through ethnicity does not place the Welsh or Scots outside of England, nor should historians think of subjects of the King of England as wearing only one nationality.[22] According to English myth all sources of kingly power in Britain are derived from Brut and his three sons, of which the oldest ruled England and the two younger ruled Scotland and Wales, thus the English king could claim suzerainty over Scotland or Wales as the natural head of the mythical British family. Indeed, Edward I claimed in 1291 that " the realms of England and Scotland have, by God's favor, been united by reason of the superior lordship" of England over Scotland.[23] Edward IV revived this claim in 1481, writing to Pope Sixtus IV, that England could not "abstain from asserting our primeval right, left dormant for awhile for the sake of foreign affairs," and his goal being "that these two nations should be as united in heart and soul as they are by neighbourhood, soil, and language."[24] Interestingly, Edward IV also appealed to common culture, geography, and language as a case for unity.

Henry VII of England (Henry Tudor, Earl of Richmond prior to the battle) initiated moves towards a united Britain after his victory over the dead former king, Richard III, at

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[20] For instance, see Griffiths, "The Island of England in the Fifteenth Century: Perceptions of the Peoples of the British Isles," 182. England's declaration at the Council of Constance in 1417, presumably issued by Henry V, referred to itself as the "renowned nation of England or Britain."

[21] Steven G. Ellis, "Crown, Community and Government in the English Territories, 1450-1575," *History* 71, no. 232 (1986), 204.

[22] See Griffiths, "The Island of England in the Fifteenth Century: Perceptions of the Peoples of the British Isles," 194. During the final stages of the Hundred Years' War, several Welsh fought in France for the English and referred themselves as both English and Welsh, without either identity dimming in comparison to the other.

[23] Close Rolls, Edward I: July 1291, Calendar of Close Rolls, Edward I: volume 3: 1288-1296, H. C. Maxwell-Lyte (editor), in British History Online.

[24] Venice: 1481-1485, Calendar of State Papers Relating to English Affairs in the Archives of Venice, Volume 1: 1202-1509, Rawdon Brown (editor), in British History Online.

Bosworth in 1485.[25] Referencing the Tudors' ancestral roots, Henry VII emphasized his Welsh

background and encouraged surrounding propaganda that celebrated him as a descendant of

"Cadwaladers line of rightful kyng of Britayne called Englond."[26] Henry VII named his

firstborn son Arthur, tapping into the celebrated mythical monarch of both the English and the

Welsh that last ruled over a united kingdom of Britain.[27]

Peace with Scotland was also made, as Henry VII concluded a peace treaty in January

1502 and married his daughter, Margaret, to James IV, King of Scots.[28] The marriage and Treaty

of Perpetual Peace marked a shift in the relationship between England and Scotland, as Henry

VII dropped the language of suzerainty and instead urged for "loue, amitie, and perpetuall

frendshyp" between the two kingdoms.[29] While the Treaty of Perpetual Peace barely lasted ten

years and James IV met his demise in 1513, Margaret's son, James V, would rule Scotland until

1542.

The marriage also made a union of the crowns possible, a fact that many writers took as a

promising possibility for a re-unified kingdom of Britain.[30] The Scottish poet William Dunbar,

writing in 1508 and likely inspired by the marriage, wrote of his admiration for "O reverend

Chaucer" and "oure Inglisch" as "ane flour imperiall that raise in Britaine evir."[31] A Scottish

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[25] Or at the very least, initiated plans to establish a "perpetual peace"; see J. D. Mackie, "Henry VIII and Scotland," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 29 (1947), 100.

[26] Arthur Kelton, *A Comendacyion of the Welshmen* (n.p., 1546), f.iiii.V; see also Peter Roberts, "Tudor Wales, National Identity and the British Inheritance," in *British Consciousness and Identity: The Making of Britain, 1533-1707*, ed. Brendan Bradshaw and Peter Roberts (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 14-15.

[27] The use of the name Tudor has been questioned as ahistorical and an example of historians re-writing history, but the early uses of Henry VII's Welsh origins continues to be acknowledged; see C. S. L. Davies, "Tudor: What's in a Name?," *History* 97, no. 325 (January 2012), 27.

[28] Close Rolls, Henry VII: 1503-1504, Calendar of Close Rolls, Henry VII: volume 2: 1500-1509, R. A. Latham (editor), in British History Online.

[29] Quoted in David Dunlop, "The Politics of Peace-Keeping: Anglo-Scottish Relations from 1503 to 1511," *Renaissance Studies* 8, no. 2 (1994), 138.

[30] Which indeed happened as a result of the marriage, when James VI won the dynastic lottery and became king of both Scotland and England in 1603.

[31] William Dunbar, *The Golden Targe* (n.p., 1508), no pagination (9 of 10 unmarked pages).

poet finding commonality in "Britaine" through a common "Inglisch" was a new conception of Britain based on a common culture and language and one that can be seen in the shadow of the Anglo-Scottish marriage treaty. Richard Helgerson writes that "a kingdom whose boundaries are determined by the language of its inhabitants is no longer a kingdom in the purely dynastic sense"; indeed, perhaps Dunbar is pre-empting the chronology of Helgerson's argument of the establishment of a way of discussing about England by fifty years, or at the very least operating within a British kingdom of language.[32] Dunbar was not the only Scot who entertained unity in Britain based on common culture and through dynastic union. As we have already seen, John Major theorized in 1521 a dynastic union to re-unite Britain.

While Henry VII and James IV may have been amicable towards one another, the British kingdom of language did not extend very far outside of the two monarchs and a few Scottish intellectuals. Most Scots and English despised each other, with the English caricaturing the Scots as backwards and Scots depicting the English as belligerent and domineering.[33] The intellectual flourishes of poets and philosophers were also not enough to overcome the continued tensions between Scotland and England over the "debatable lands," which continued to serve as a source of conflict between the English and Scots throughout the first half of the sixteenth century.[34] In addition, due to low rates of literacy in England and Scotland, the language of the kingdom of Britain was limited to being an intellectual idea amongst a restricted number of people. The death of Henry VII would also change the political situation between England and Scotland.

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[32] Richard Helgerson, *Forms of Nationhood: The Elizabethan Writing of England* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 2.
[33] Dunlop, "The Politics of Peace-keeping: Anglo-Scottish Relations from 1503-1511," 139-142.
[34] For more, see Andy King, "The Anglo-Scottish Marches and the Perception of 'the North' in Fifteenth-Century England," *Northern History* 49, no. 1 (March 2012), 37-50; and Sybil M. Jack, "The 'Debatable Lands', *Terra Nullius*, and Natural Law in the Sixteenth Century," *Northern History* 41, no. 2 (September 2004), 289-300.

2.2   *English Ambitions, Welsh Traditions, and Scottish Premonitions: 1536-1541*

Following Prince Arthur's death in 1502 and Henry VII's death in 1509, another Henry, the second son of Henry VII, was crowned King of England. From Henry VIII's foreign policy, it seems that he may have been more inspired by Henry V rather than his father. While he initially renewed the peace with Scotland,[35] Henry VIII's hunger for glory and to rectify England's losses in the previous century led him to war with France and Scotland in 1513, in which James IV of Scotland, Henry VIII's brother by marriage, was killed. While France was Henry VIII's primary target, Scotland honored their "Auld Alliance" with France and made war with England.[36]

Henry VIII's approach to Scotland has stirred substantial debate among historians. In the first half of the twentieth century, many thought that the English king had British ambitions.[37] Since the 1960s, scholars has placed Henry VIII's focus on France with the intent to subdue Scotland or control the Scottish kingdom through his sister, the former wife of the deceased James IV, Margaret Tudor.[38] Regardless, it is clear from Henry VIII's dealings with Scotland, in which he rarely mentioned his theoretical overlordship, and his letters to his ally, Charles V of Habsburg, in which he referred to Scotland as "his vassal,"[39] that he at least viewed the claim of suzerainty as a tool of convenience. Henry VIII viewed his relationship with Scotland and France as a combined affair and the Scottish kingdom as an extension of French influence and

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[35] Henry VIII: August 1509, *Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic, Henry VIII, Volume 1: 1509-1514*, J. S. Brewer (editor), in British History Online, http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=102621 (accessed 01 April 2014). Henry VIII renewed the treaty of peace with Scotland in 1509.

[36] Elizabeth Bonner, "Scotland's 'Auld Alliance' with France, 1295-1560," *History* 84, no. 273 (January 1999), 23-27.

[37] Mackie, "Henry VIII and Scotland," 112-114.

[38] David M. Head, "Henry VIII's Scottish Policy: A Reassessment," *Scottish Historical Review* 61, no. 171 (April 1982), 7-8.

[39] Ibid., 8-9. Henry VIII is quoted from his Letters and Papers in this section of Head's article.

power; Thomas More reflects this when he writes in *Utopia* of the French king considering that England "must be called friends, and had in suspicion as enemies. And that, therefore, the Scots must be had in readiness, as it were standing, ready at all occasions, in aunters the Englishmen should stir never so little, incontinent to set upon them."[40]

Thomas Cromwell's rise to power as Henry VIII's chief minister, according to G. R. Elton, not only caused a "Tudor Revolution" in government, but also brought a renewed focus on the "British problem."[41] Cromwell had advocated a union between England and Scotland as early as 1523, stating in a speech in Parliament that after Scotland is subdued, the English goal should be "to Joyne the same Realme vnto his, Soo that both they and we myght lyue vnder oone Bessaunce Law and Pollecy for euer."[42] Cromwell's idea of union, however, seems like a Britain dominated by England. It also seems to frame itself well with Henry VIII's ambitions in France; in that same 1523 speech, Cromwell also says, "I alledge another commen sayng, who that endendyth Fraunce to wyn with Skotland let hym begyn."[43]

The separation of the English church from Rome brought new tensions in the relationships between England, Wales, Ireland, and Scotland. The Act in Restraint of Appeals in 1533 asserted "that this realm of England is an empire," and it was "governed by one supreme head and king having the dignity and royal estate of the imperial crown."[44] England's relationships with Wales and Ireland were constructed based on Papal authority and endorsement; these relationships needed to be redrawn if England were to remain the theoretical

[40] Thomas More, *Utopia* (1516), trans. Ralph Robinson (1551) and ed. Wayne A. Rebhorn (New York: Barnes and Noble, 2005), 44.
[41] G. R. Elton, *England Under the Tudors: Third Edition* (New York: Routledge, 1991), 160-192.
[42] Thomas Cromwell, *Life and Letters of Thomas Cromwell: Volume 1*, ed. R. B. Merriman (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1902), 44.
[43] Ibid., 44.
[44] Carl Stephenson and Frederick George Marcham, eds., *Sources of English Constitutional History: A Selection of Documents from A.D. 600 to the Interregnum* (New York: Harper & Row, 1972), 304.

overlord of all of them. With Scotland still Catholic and its King, James V, possessing a strong claim to the English throne, Henry VIII began to make overtures to Scotland for a continued friendship and peace in order to secure his troubled northern border.

This new vision of an English "empire" began with Cromwell's earlier notions of unifying realms and consolidating power within the British Isles. The first relationship addressed was that of England and Wales. The Act for the Government of Wales (1536) formally "established that his said country or dominion of Wales shall be, stand, and continue forever from henceforth incorporated, united, and annexed to and with this his realm of England" and established the "English tongue" as the official legal language, "from henceforth no person or persons that use the Welsh speech or language shall have or enjoy any manner office or fees within the realm of England, Wales, or other the king's dominions."[45] The second relationship addressed was that of Ireland, though after Cromwell's fall from power in 1540. The Pope awarded this ancient lordship in the 1170s, which complicated Henry VIII's justification of rule over the island. This problem was addressed by Henry VIII's proclamation, which created a kingdom in Ireland and "annexed to the title King of Ireland to the crown."[46]

The relationship with Scotland was even more complicated. Scotland was outside the scope of the English Parliament's ability to legislate, and it is not clear if Henry VIII ever had any designs whether than simply maintaining peace.[47] It has been shown that Henry VIII and Cromwell began making overtures to James V, King of Scots, as early as October 1534. Henry VIII hoped to prevent his nephew from marrying Madelaine, the daughter of Francis I, the

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[45] Ibid., 315.
[46] Henry VIII: January 1542, 21-31, Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic, Henry VIII, Volume 17: 1542, James Gairdner and R. H. Brodie (editors), in British History Online.
[47] This calls back to both sides of this argument: Mackie claims that Henry VIII had British designs in "Henry VIII and Scotland," while Head argues in "Henry VIII's Scottish Policy: A Reassessment" that Henry VIII wanted to maintain peace in order to pursue war on the continent.

French king.[48] Problems in the north of England, from the Pilgrimage of Grace in 1536, an

uprising in response to Henry's break from the Catholic faith, to the Wakefield conspiracy of

1541,[49] along with escalating diplomatic problems with Scotland, led Henry VIII to a northern

progress in the summer of 1541.

Historians have contested the intent of Henry VIII's progress. Some argue that it was to

address problems in the north and a Scottish angle appeared during the progress but not before.[50]

David Head and Marcus Merriman argue that the progress was intended to facilitate an actual

meeting with James V in York through a show of force and was necessary to settle diplomatic

issues with Scotland over religion, border warfare, and French relations so that the English King

could pursue war on the continent.[51] Conversely, Elizabeth Bonner argues that Henry VIII was

deliberately trying to provoke a war with the Scots in order to force the French to enter the war,

perhaps taking literally Cromwell's comment about winning France through defeating Scotland

first.[52] Taken into account with the consolidation of power and authority in Wales and Ireland, it

is difficult to downplay the British dimension of Henry VIII's northern progress, both as a means

of a show of power to the recalcitrant north and the potential allies of the French, the Scots.

Whether Henry intended to cause a war with Scotland or not, he seems to have been acting on

the prior assumptions of both Thomas More and Thomas Cromwell. The road to France is

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[48] R. W. Hoyle and J. B. Ramsdale, "The Royal Progress of 1541, The North of England, and Anglo-Scottish Relations, 1534-1541," *Northern History* 41, no. 2 (September 2004), 243-244.

[49] For the most recent investigation of the Wakefield conspiracy, see Christopher J. Sansom, "The Wakefield Conspiracy of 1541 and Henry VIII's Progress to the North Reconsidered," *Northern History* 45, no. 2 (September 2008), 222-227.

[50] See Tim Thornton, "Henry VIII's Progress Through Yorkshire in 1541 and Its Implications for Northern Identities," *Northern History* 46, no. 2 (September 2009), 233-236; Sansom, "The Wakefield Conspiracy of 1541 and Henry VIII's Progress to the North Reconsidered," 222-227; and Hoyle and Ramsdale, "The Royal Progress of 1541, The North of England, and Anglo-Scottish Relations, 1534-1541," 243-244.

[51] See Head, "Henry VIII's Scottish Policy: A Reassessment," 15-17; and Merriman, *The Rough Wooings*, 58-59.

[52] Elizabeth Bonner, "The Genesis of Henry VIII's 'Rough Wooing' of the Scots," 33 (1997), 51-53.

through Scotland. Regardless of the exact causes of the royal progress, war with Scotland was one of its effects.

2.3   War and Marriage, 1542-1546

War officially broke out between Scotland and England upon Henry VIII's return from his northern progress, and the English King ordered the archives searched for historical precedent for English suzerainty over Scotland.[53] Two publications from 1542 demand attention. The first, *A Cronicle of yeres, from the Begynning of the Worlde*, published before Henry VIII's demand for the justification of Scotland being a vassal of the king of England, begins its history of "Bryteyne" with the arrival of Brut into "land that fyrst was called Albion," the first king of Britain.[54] This leaves the meaning of Britain ambiguous, and whether the Scots or Welsh were there first, or whether they were even British. The second publication, *A Declaration, Conteyning the Ivst Cavses and Consyderations of this Present Warre with the Scottis*, was less ambiguous about who held authority over the entire island of Britain and brought the Scots under the British umbrella. Much of the *Declaration* reasons that the current war was based on Scottish border violations, the harboring of English Catholics, and James V's failure to meet with Henry VIII at Yorkshire in September 1541. The *Declaration* also claims that "this present warre hath not proceded of any demaund of our right of superioritie, which the kinges of Scottes have alwaies knowleged by homage and fealtie to our progenytours even from the begynnynge: But this warre hath ben provoked and occasioned upon present matier of displeasure, present

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[53] Marcus Merriman, *The Rough Wooings*, 266-267.
[54] *A Cronicle of yeres, from the Begynning of the Worlde* (London, 1542), A.ii.r.

iniury, present wrong mynistred by the Nephieu to the Uncle."[55] While Henry VIII justified the

war on "present iniuries," he makes a point of reminding the Scots that "if we had minded that

possession of Scotland, and by the motion of warre to ateyne the same, there was never kynge of

this realme had more oportunity in the minority of our Nephieu."[56] Indeed, Henry VIII laid the

blame for this war entirely on Scotland. Further printed chronicles would support and repeat

Henry VIII's claims for war against Scotland and overlordship of all of Britain.[57]

  Writing in December 1542 to William Paget, the English ambassador in Scotland, Henry

VIII further placed the blame for the war on Scottish transgressions and claimed that "the Scots

heap up injuries against him and barbarously refuse to ransom the prisoners they took when he

was in treaty for peace with them, and have cruelly murdered Somerset herald, returning from

the king of Scots with the refusal of delivery of the said prisoners, Paget shall declare to the

French king how the Scots provoked this war."[58] Thus Henry VIII articulated an English-

dominated view of Britain and may have intended to pursue an agenda for enforced unity, with

his recently printed pamphlet enforcing his strong claims to the titles of Scotland. Indeed, at the

very least, it seems that Henry VIII wanted Scotland subdued so that he could turn his focus to

France, with which he was already making plans for war, and formally declared war along with

Charles V on France in May 1543.[59]

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[55] Henry VIII, *A Declaration, Conteyning the Ivst Cavses and Consyderations of this Present Warre with the Scottis* (London, 1542), B.iii.r.
[56] Ibid.
[57] For examples of this, see Edward Hall, *The Vnion of the Two Noble and Illustre Famelies* (London, 1548), and Anonymous, *A Breuiat Cronicle* (Canterbury, 1552). Hall's account even reprints Henry VIII's *Declaration* in its entirety.
[58] Henry VIII: December 1542, 1-10, Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic, Henry VIII, Volume 17: 1542, James Gairdner and R. H. Brodie (editors), in British History Online.
[59] Merriman, *The Rough Wooings*, 112.

This changed with the decisive defeat of Scotland at the Battle of Solway Moss in October 1542,[60] and with the news out of Scotland on 8 December that "the Scottish Queen is brought to bed of a son."[61] The son turned out to be a daughter, and the death of James V six days later made Mary, the daughter, the Queen of Scots. Henry VIII's son and heir apparent, Edward (born in 1537), made a royal match between England and Scotland possible for the first time since the late Margaret, the Maid of Norway and Queen of Scots, died in 1290.[62] Peace negotiations now included provisions for betrothing Mary to Edward.

Much of 1543 revolved around the Earl of Arran and his bid to maintain his position of power in Scotland. He became Mary's protector and the Governor of the Scottish council upon James V's death. Henry VIII was initially excited by Arran's amenability to the English terms of peace and to Arran's Protestantism. The Scottish Earl agreed to the Treaties of Greenwich on 1 July 1543, which arranged the details of the betrothal and for Scotland's alliance with France. While Henry wanted the "Auld Alliance" dismantled, the Scottish council managed to arrange for its preservation and for the protection of their liberties during the betrothal, with Mary staying in Scotland until her tenth birthday and Scotland maintaining its independence.[63]

At this point, the Catholic Cardinal David Beaton had regained his influence within the Scottish government, along with Arran's support. Scotland renewed its alliance with France, and England began seizing ships from Scotland that were supporting France's war effort on the continent against Henry VIII and Charles V, the Holy Roman Emperor and King of Spain. Arran

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[60] For a summary of the battle and what it means in British history, see Merriman, *The Rough Wooings*, 77-82.

[61] Henry VIII: December 1542, 1-10, Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic, Henry VIII, Volume 17: 1542, James Gairdner and R. H. Brodie (editors), in British History Online.

[62] Her death sparked numerous succession wars in which England exercised its "right of suzerainty" over Scotland, which eventually led to rival claimants in Scotland to fight against the English candidate. Robert the Bruce eventually won the throne and Scottish independence through the Battle of Bannockburn in 1314 and the 1328 Treaty of Edinburgh-Northampton.

[63] Merriman, *The Rough Wooings*, 121.

also renounced the conditions of the Treaties of Greenwich, and ended the betrothal between Mary and Edward.[64]

"The First Rough Wooing" began when Henry VIII resumed his war with Scotland in 1544. The explicit war goal was to force the betrothal of Mary to Edward. As opposed to the minor border raids by the English during the 1542 war, the English pursued this war by escalating the severity of the tactics of their incursions into Scotland. Indeed, "The English and Scots make daily courses upon one another with as much hostility and cruelty as ever."[65] Henry VIII made plans for his "journey over sea" for glory on the battlefields of France, and he sent Edward Seymour, the Earl of Hertford, to command the northern armies.[66]

Hertford commenced with Henry VIII's plans for "total war": the raising of 20,000 men, the sacking of Edinburgh, and the burning of Tyvdale and Mersh.[67] The discipline that Henry intended for both the war in France and in Scotland is captured in the *Statutes and Ordynances for the Warre*, which demanded obedience to the "kynge's lieutenants" and "capitaynes," perhaps in the absence of the overseas king and for the extreme measures that the soldiers participated in.[68] This campaign into Scotland is also captured in *The Late Expedition in Scotlande*, which details the burnings and destruction in Scotland. The author could "not name" the total number of places that the expedition destroyed.[69] Suffolk, in a letter to Henry VIII, thought that this land invasion would bring "to pass the King's 'noble and godly purpose," and to

[64] Ibid., 134-136.
[65] Henry VIII: January 1544, 26-31, Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic, Henry VIII, Volume 19 Part 1: January-July 1544, James Gairdner and R. H. Brodie (editors), in British History Online.
[66] Ibid.
[67] Ibid.
[68] Henry VIII, *Statutes and Ordynances for the Warre* (London, 1544), A.i. r and A.ii.r.
[69] Anonymous, *The Late Expedition in Scotlande* (London, 1544), C.iiii.v.

abate the Scots' proud hearts."[70] The burnings continued well through April, with a lengthy

justification for the war being to sent to other Protestant monarchs in Europe.[71]

Taking this approach to war did not seem to gain Henry VIII any traction in convincing

anyone in Scotland of the benefits of union, and did not succeed in strong-arming the Scots to a

peace settlement in which Edward and Mary were betrothed. The war continued along these

lines over the next three years, though a few "assured" Scots crossed borders and recognized

Henry VIII's title to Scotland and supported his attempt to enforce the betrothal between the

Queen of Scots and his heir.

Many Scottish religious reformers also supported Henry VIII, and fled to England at this

time. The Scottish cleric John Elder presented Henry VIII with a tract recommending the violent

and forced union of Edward and Mary on Protestant grounds, lamenting that "there is no people

so perturbed with 'bishops, monks, Rome-rykers and priests' as those who inhabit Scotland" and

Henry had "just cause to invade them, hunt, drive and smoke the said false, papistical foxes out

of their caves."[72] Henry VIII saw that a common religious identity between the two kingdoms

would help to promulgate a union between the realms.[73]

Nonetheless, the French began to support the Scots in the summer of 1544, and the

burnings by the English soldiers were doing little to inflict a defeat upon the Scots. By the

summer of 1546, Henry VIII's war in France, to which he paid more attention, had cost him

dearly, only gaining the city of Boulogne in three years of war. The Treaty of Camp was signed

on 6 June between England and France, which included Scotland and provided for 18 months of

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[70] Henry VIII: February 1544, 26-29, Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic, Henry VIII, Volume 19 Part 1: January-July 1544, James Gairdner and R. H. Brodie (editors), in British History Online.

[71] Henry VIII: April 1544, 26-30, Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic, Henry VIII, Volume 19 Part 1: January-July 1544, James Gairdner and R. H. Brodie (editors), in British History Online.

[72] Henry VIII: Miscellaneous, 1543, Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic, Henry VIII, Volume 18 Part 2: August-December 1543, James Gairdner and R. H. Brodie (editors), in British History Online.

[73] Merriman, *The Rough Wooings*, 154.

peace between the countries.[74] The English still pushed for the inclusion of the betrothal in the peace settlement, unwilling to fully accept it without this provision, and Henry VIII's death in January 1547 changed the focus of the next war from conquests in France to union with Scotland.

2.4   A British Moment? 1547-1550

Edward Seymour, the Lord Protector and newly created Duke of Somerset, resumed the war with Scotland in the summer of 1547 and pursued the marriage of the newly crowned King Edward VI and Mary, Queen of Scots. Somerset's "Second Rough Wooing" initiated a different military strategy than the first war; instead of burning and destroying, he "modernized" his tactics and set up fortified positions in Scotland, notably at Eyemouth. On 10 September 1547, Somerset won a great victory over the Scots at the Battle of Pinkie, which placed the Scots on the defensive for the rest of the war.[75] Some of this is captured in William Patten's *The Expedition into Scotlande*, in which he describes the methods of warfare and famously quotes the Earl of Huntly: "I wud it sed gea furth, and haud well wyth the marriage, but I lyke not thys wooyng."[76]

In addition to the methods of war, the rhetoric of the English drastically changed as a slew of printed material engaged in the construction of a British identity and British state. James Henrison, an "assured" Scot and supporter of the union, petitioned King Edward VI for support

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[74] Ibid., 163.

[75] Merriman, *The Rough Wooings*, 248-257 and Marcus Merriman, "The Forts of Eyemouth: Anvils of British Union?", *Scottish Historical Review* 67, no. 184 (October 1988), 142-155. Merriman also posits a "military revolution" occurring in Britain during this time, as both Scotland and England modernized their fortifications, artillery, and methods for warfare.

[76] William Patten, *The Expedition into Scotland* (London, 1548), d.ii.R.

in July and, later in the year, printed a plea for union between the two kingdoms in 1547.[77] The pamphlet, *An Exhortation to the Scottes*, urged for the marriage of Edward and Mary so that "those hatefull termes, Scottes and Englishemen, shalbe abolished and blotted oute forever, and that we shal al agre in the onely title and name of Britons" and that the new realm "of one sole Monarchie, shalbee called Britayn."[78] Henrison reappears in July 1548 presenting his *Godly and Golden Booke for Concorde of England and Scotland* to William Cecil, and Henrison reiterates some of his earlier *Exhortation*'s points: "By the union of marrage, peace betwen realme and realme is exalted and love betwen countre and countre is norished!...Which unyon matrymony and amyte to address amonges us of this Ile of Great Bryttane, we pray God the worker of all goodnes, to steir up the hartes of our nobilles to sek that thing that may be moste to his glory, ther honour and wealth of both the realmes, wherby this longe warr pestilence famen and infamyne may take an ende."[79]

The concept of Britain, and perhaps of solidarity in the Protestant religion, as the product of the "thys wooyng" was also expressed in a poem by John Merkeley, Clerk of the Southwark Mint, from September of 1547: "When I do consydre, that unto oure salvacyone, Their ys but one onely waye, to lyfe eternall. And fre withoute boundage with us to remaigne, As in one hole kingdome called great breataigne."[80] Indeed, both Henrison's and Merkeley's forms of union harken back to John Major's line in 1521: "All men born in Britain are Britons."[81]

Protector Somerset also urged union in a pamphlet that was distributed throughout northern England and southern Scotland. He claimed that the present war could be ended with

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[77] Edward VI: July 1547, Calendar of State Papers, Scotland: volume 1: 1547-63, Joseph Bain (editor), in British History Online.

[78] James Henrison, *An Exhortation to the Scottes* (London, 1547), g.v.R.

[79] Edward VI: July 1548, Calendar of State Papers, Scotland: volume 1: 1547-63, Joseph Bain (editor), in British History Online

[80] 'Cecil Papers: 1547', Calendar of the Cecil Papers in Hatfield House, Volume 1: 1306-1571 (1883), pp. 48-54

[81] Major, A *History of Greater Britain*, 18.

"no conquest" but instead offered "love," "amitie," and "peace."[82] Foreshadowing the economic benefits of union during the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, Somerset asked, "What can be more offered and profered, then entercourse merchaundises, enterchaunge of marriages, the abolishing of all suche lawes, as prohibiteth thesame, or might bee impediment to the mutall amitie."[83] The marriage of Edward and Mary would result in an end to warfare with no side having been defeated, and the implementation of "the indifferent old name of Britaynes again."[84] A prayer also survives from 1548, which prayed for the "happye and Godly marriage of the kynges Maiestie oure souereygne Lorde and the yong Scottysh Quene" in order to bring "unitie and concorde of both nacyons" and unify the "Isle of Brytaigne"[85]

However, the Scots desired no part of a unified Britain in the 1540s. Many Scots looked to Wales for a preview of what would happen following a marital union between Edward and Mary: the English subjugation and eventual annexation of their kingdom. Furthermore, for most Scots, the arguments of the English during the first Rough Wooing did not cohere with Scottish myths or history, which placed the Scots as arriving on Albion far before the Britons ever did. Writing in 1550, Robert Wedderburn questioned the justness of Henry VIII's title, and even claimed that Mary had a better claim to the throne of England than did Edward VI.[86] Wedderburn thought that union was possible and even beneficial as long as both parties entered it as equals, but it could not occur through the use of force and conquest, or the marriage of Edward and Mary.[87]

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[82] Edward Seymour, *An Epistle to Scotland* (London, 1548), B.j.V.
[83] Ibid., B.j.R.
[84] Ibid.
[85] Anonymous, *A Prayer for Vyctory and Peace* (London, 1548), A.iii.V and R.
[86] Robert Wedderburn,*The Complaynt of Scotland* (n.p., 1550), 52.R-53R.
[87] Perhaps union by marriage of a Scottish King and English Queen would have been feasible?

The egalitarian moment of 1547 and the first half of 1548 shifted back into old

arguments, though with the key difference that the name of Britain continued to signify the union

of the kingdoms. Nicholas Bodrugen's pamphlet saw an opportunity for the "restitucion of the

name and Empire of greate Briteigne," but also argued for English superiority and the right of

Edward to the throne of Scotland.[88] Research was still being done to establish "the King's

Majesty's records for the justification of his Highness' propriety and superiority to the realm of

Scotland."[89] Perhaps this change in tone stemmed from the Scottish Parliament's agreement, in

July 1548, to a French marriage treaty, with Mary betrothed to the future French King Francis II

and her departure from Scotland for France in August 1548. Some time seems to have elapsed

between the English knowing about Mary's exit from Scotland, as a Scot, Robert Lockhard, was

advising the English in January 1549 to send a large army into Scotland to secure Mary before

the French took her away.[90] From this point forward, many pamphlets, such as John Cheke's

The Hurt of Sedition, took a much more religious tone,. In his pamphlet, which talked primarily

about the problems of religious division (presumably in Britain), Cheke dedicates a few pages to

directly addressing the Scots and their "sedition." Cheke wrote that the Scots "hath lacked

nothinge hitherto but their good wylles, to be englishe, to be equal in al benefites of this realme,

to bee governed wyth one ruler and with one lawe, to have ioyned oureselfes in aliaunce of

bloud, in equalite of frendship, in benefite of one comunewealth."[91] Though not explicitly

mentioning Britain, it seems clear that Cheke advocated an Anglo-Protestant Britain in which

everyone could be "equal" and "englishe."

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[88] Nicholas Bodrugen, *An Epitome to the Title* (London, 1548), a.iij.R.
[89] Cecil Papers: 1548, Calendar of the Cecil Papers in Hatfield House, Volume 1: 1306-1571, in British History Online.
[90] Cecil Papers: 1306-1541, Calendar of the Cecil Papers in Hatfield House, Volume 1: 1306-1571, in British History Online.
[91] John Cheke, *The Hurt of Sedition* (London, 1549), G.iii.V and R.

By 1549, England's war with Scotland and France was essentially over. A preliminary cessation of hostilities was settled with France in 1550, and England came to peace with Scotland in 1551. In this time, Mary had been transported from Scotland into France and been betrothed to Francis, the future King of France. England had also agreed to give up its only spoil from the wars of the 1540s, the French city of Boulogne. The opportunity for a dynastic union between England and Scotland had passed, with Scotland now firmly in France's sphere of influence, at least until the radical changes of the late 1550s and early 1560s. Robert Crowley's *The Phylargyrie of greate Britayne*, printed in 1551, perhaps was speaking to either Henry VIII or Edward VI after its titular king has overthrown his evil councilors Hypocrosie and Phylargyrie and cries out, "Lorde God, Thou hast chosen me, Over thy flock to raygne, Make me of myght, And make me well againe."[92]

2.5   Conclusion

This chapter has argued that the 1540s served as a meeting ground for various discussions of Britishness, which Scottish and English writers had begun to undertake in print culture in the early sixteenth century. It also asserts that a British moment occurred from 1547 to 1548, which saw John Major's idea of a geographic claim to Britishness and William Dunbar's concept of a Britain united through language intersect with the dynastic opportunity provided by Mary and Edward. This intersection was made possible by the emergence of a sense of Britishness endorsed and formulated by southern Scots and the Anglo-Scottish marriage of 1502. While justifications for English wars in Scotland originally rested on circumstances and claims to overlordship, by the end of the decade the plea for an equal union, and at times a Protestant

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[92] Robert Crowley, *The Phylargyrie of great Britayne* (London, 1551), E.iiij.R.

union, supplanted the medieval concepts of Britain. Due to its appearance and multiplication in print, the idea of a united British state did not go away, as William Cecil continued to pursue a British policy well into the reign of Elizabeth.[93] England rarely made reference to claims of overlordship of Scotland from the 1550s forward.[94]

Henry VIII should also be viewed as the last war-like medieval King of England who was more interested in creating a continental English empire in France than desiring union between England and Scotland. Though Thomas Cromwell may have changed the shape of government and participated in radical religious reforms, Henry VIII still conducted his foreign policy very much like his medieval predecessors, especially after the execution of Cromwell in 1540. No monarch of England after Henry VIII went to war with Scotland claiming a mythical overlordship or to war with France seeking a glorious continental conquest.[95]

It seems that we could look at John Major and James Henrisoun as Britons. Major certainly thought of himself as a Briton, and Henrisoun argued that all were Britons in the beginning and should return under one monarchy. Both advocated the economic and geographic conveniences of unity, echoing contemporary debates concerning British unity. Furthermore, this spirit continued into the 1550s, as fears for the "britanishe nacion" continued from Geneva by Protestants such as John Ponet and John Knox.[96] Perhaps the 1540s and 1550s also gave Britishness a distinctively Protestant spin as well. Britishness and British history extend further back than Linda Colley suggests, a fact revealed by the incorporation of its medieval, sixteenth century, and seventeenth century articulations.

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[93] For more information, see Jane E. A. Dawson, "William Cecil and the British Dimension of early Elizabethan Foreign Policy," *Journal of the Historical Association* 74, no. 241 (June 1989), 196-216.

[94] Elizabeth briefly entertained the "overlordship" of Scotland as a reason for intervening during the Scottish Reformation in 1559, but not much was made of pressing for action on this claim.

[95] Calais, the last English stronghold in France, was lost in 1558.

[96] Judith Richards, "Mary Tudor as 'Sole Quene'?: Gendering Tudor Monarchy," *Historical Journal* 40, no. 4 (December 1997), 920.

The brief moment, from the summer of 1547 to the summer of 1548, provided an intersection in the political imagining of Britain and the earlier non-mythical conception of Britain that John Major endorsed in 1521. With this intersection, a new way of imagining Britain entered into the realm of English and Scottish thought. Although it is difficult to know how many read the pamphlets, it is striking that the use of the term "Great Britain" and "British" became more prevalent in print as conversations about multiple Britishnesses continued into the second half of the sixteenth century. When James VI of Scotland inherited the English throne in 1603, writers knew what to call his composite realm and he styled himself as "King of Great Britain." The possibilities for creating a united British kingdom were discussed throughout the rest of the sixteenth century, continuing to take on a religious, political, and cultural character. The next chapter will discuss these possibilities and developments and show the continuity in the discourse of Britain and Britishness.

3   Chapter 2: Protestant Britishness, Dynastic Britishness, and Forgotten Britishness, 1550-1603

The beginning of the sixteenth century presented a different articulation of Britishness, based on a common culture instead of the mythological Brutus story or the feudal rights of English suzerainty over Scotland and Wales. This new formulation of Britishness was initially proposed in 1521 by the Scottish philosopher John Major in *The History of Greater Britain*.[1] The political events of the 1540s provided an opportunity for the convergence of both of these articulations of British identity, with a nascent religious identity also being formulated in response to the English Reformation of the 1530s and the stirrings of religious change in Scotland.

While the events of the 1540s failed to produce a British state, they brought an ideological vision of Britain to a larger audience through the production and dissemination of printed materials in southern Scotland, a new religious movement that urged for rebellion against Catholic rule, appealing to a common history and language.[2] Though the ambitions for a dynastic union between King Edward VI of England and Mary Queen of Scots had failed, the 1550s and 1560s would find those involved in the British project of the 1540s continue to urge an immediate union between the two kingdoms.

Most historians have highlighted the events of the 1540s as the product of a larger project of English imperialism without recognizing the adoption of Scottish elements of a cultural and religious union. In this formulation, the 1540s served as a continuation of medieval attempts to

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[1] See John Major, *The History of Greater Britain*, translated by Archibald Campbell (Edinburgh: University Press, 1892).
[2] See William Dunbar, *The Golden Targe* (n.p., 1508).

establish a British empire consisting of England, Wales, and Scotland. David Armitage writes of the 1540s as when the "vernacular language of British imperial ideology - of 'Great Britain,' 'empire' and 'colony' - was forged."[3] This formulation serves to frame the development of a British kingdom as an imperial project that is realized when England comes to dominate or subsume the island of Britain. While this view helps us understand the aftermath of the Union of 1707, it distorts the possibilities of the 1540s. Moreover, it ignores the fact that Britain was also a Scottish project during the 1540s and 1550s. Derek Hirst frames the entire sixteenth and seventeenth centuries as a continuing process of English imperialism and views the English discourses of Britain as cynical and focused on constructing a more powerful Anglo-centric kingdom.[4] This view tends to ignore individuals like William Cecil, John Major, and John Knox, who are difficult to explain when articulations of Britishness are treated as forms of English subversion.

This chapter seeks to connect ideas of Britain and Britishness with the events immediately after the Rough Wooings and reframe them within a British context instead of viewing them as precursors to English imperialism or as leading to a fixed British, English, or Scottish national identity. I will show that ideas of Britain and identifications as British were variegated, multifaceted, and adaptable within different religious, political, and cultural circumstances. Furthermore, different versions of Britishness existed concurrently, including older and newer articulations in tandem with varieties rooted in religious beliefs, shared linguistic culture, and dynastic possibilities.

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[3] David Armitage, *The Ideological Origins of the British Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 36.
[4] Derek Hirst, *Dominion: England and its Island Neighbours 1500-1707* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 55-57.

This chapter will progress in three temporally chronological sections, each thematically centered. The first section focuses on the Scottish and English Genevan exiles. Here I argue that this community should be seen as a British Protestant group advocating on behalf of a British Protestant nation. Several of the exiles, including John Knox and Christopher Goodman, shared experiences in Geneva and also traveled extensively in England and Scotland; Knox would go on to be a highly influential figure in the Scottish Reformation. The second section will explore William Cecil's role in establishing a foreign policy centered on the British Isles. I propose that Cecil serves as an intermediary figure between the 1540s articulations of Britishness and future views of Britain as a Protestant defensive arrangement between England and Scotland against potential invasions by hostile Catholic powers, even though the indifference of Elizabeth, England's Queen, stymied this policy of union with Scotland. Cecil also anticipates the advantages of Britain's island position and emphasizes the development of naval power as the key to defense. The third section centers on a brief conversation about national identity and print culture. This section discusses the cultural reimagining of Britishness as an exclusively English characteristic that is not shared with Scotland. My goal in this chapter is to show the continuing relevance of Britishness during the second half of the sixteenth century and its evolution as a national identity alongside other identities in formation.

3.1   Protestant Britishness

In a letter presented to King Henry VIII in 1545, the Scot John Elder described Scotland as "so perturbed, so molestide, so vexide, and so vtterly opprest withe bussheps, monckes,

Rome-rykers, and priestis" that it was in need of the "help and assistance of God."[5] Elder urged

the English King to "bring the forsaid traiterous priestis of Scotland, if it wer possible, to

mischief and vttir ruyne."[6] This letter is a clear example of the religious undertones of the

Rough Wooings of the 1540s. Moreover, the travels of its author conveys Protestant mobility

between England and Scotland during the 1540s and 1550s. As a religious dissenter, Elder fled

Scotland and went to England in 1543. He returned to Scotland at some point in the 1550s, and

there is record of his assistance being recommended to William Cecil in 1561.[7]

Elder belonged to a British network of Protestants in the 1550s. While some historians

have argued that a common Protestantism helped to spiritually unite the kingdom after the Acts

of Union in 1707, the mid-sixteenth century served as a moment in which the connections

between Protestants in England and Scotland also took on a British coloring.[8] Both kingdoms

were ruled by Catholic queens during the 1550s and radical Protestants from both countries fled

to Geneva and other refuges on the continent.

This section will take a look at connections between England and Scotland during this

period through the experiences of some of these exiles. By analyzing these connections, the

geographic movements of the exiles, and the written works of these figures, it becomes apparent

that a nascent form of British Protestantism was taking shape. Of course, events in the 1560s

would redefine the Protestant communities in both kingdoms and each subsequently developed a

distinct religious identity tied to a sense of either Englishness or Scottishness.

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[5] John Elder, "Elder's Letter to Henry VIII," in *The Balletyne Miscellany: Volume 1* (Edinburgh, 1832), 17.
[6] Ibid.
[7] Elizabeth: December 1561, 21-25, Calendar of State Papers Foreign, Elizabeth, Volume 4: 1561-1562, Joseph Stevenson (editor), in British History Online, http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=73017.
[8] Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation 1707-1837* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), 18.

The religious atmosphere in England during the 1550s must be viewed in light of the events of the prior two decades. In the 1530s, a state church was effectively legislated into existence, which denied the authority of the "Bishop of Rome," asserted the King as its natural head, and claimed a return to the true religion while adopting a relatively conservative reform agenda.[9] In the early 1540s, the more radical Protestant reformers who wished to change many of the doctrines of the Church that Henry had retained were stifled.[10] However, Henry's death in 1547 and the accession of his young son Edward VI ushered in a moment of what has been called reforming "radicalism," in which the Church was permanently altered both materially and spiritually, perhaps in opposition to the wishes of the majority of the population.[11] The vicissitudes of religious change continued with Edward's premature death and the arrival of a Catholic queen in 1553. Queen Mary abolished her supremacy over the English Church and returned England's ecclesiastical obedience back to the Pope in Rome, thus becoming the only kingdom to shift from Catholicism to Protestantism and back to Catholicism.[12] While many of her subjects accepted the return of the authority of Rome, there was a substantial Protestant minority: a few were famously martyred as heretics burned at the stake; some fled into exile; most adapted to the changed religious environment.[13]

Scotland, in contrast to the structural and institutional shifts in the English Church, adhered to Catholicism well into the late 1550s. While Henry VIII tried to persuade James V, King of Scots, to deny the authority of Rome and reform the Scottish Church, it seems that

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[9] Carl Stephenson and Frederick George Marcham, editors, *Sources of English Constitutional History: A Selection of Documents from A.D. 600 to the Interregnum* (New York: Harper & Row, 1972), 304-311.

[10] Christopher Haigh, *English Reformations: Religion, Politics and Society Under the Tudors* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 152-167.

[11] Eamon Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England 1400-1580* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), 448-479.

[12] While some of the smaller German states were less stable, the Holy Roman Empire only consisted of one kingdom: the Kingdom of Bohemia.

[13] Haigh, *English Reformations*, 203-234.

James played this situation to his immediate advantage. By at least attempting to appear to flirt with the idea of declaring a break with Rome, James drew enormous financial concessions from the Papacy while also securing his marriage to a Valois princess, which reaffirmed the "Auld Alliance" between France and England and further asserted Scottish independence from England.[14] While the immediate benefits of Henry's break with Rome resulted in his divorce and the recognition of his marriage with Anne Boleyn, allowed him to seize wealth from the monasteries, and redefined the monarch's authority, James acquired both wealth and a marriage by remaining Catholic.

Scotland officially remained a Catholic kingdom, but there was a small contingent of Scots who desired a reformed church and a spiritual break with Rome. The wars between England and Scotland in the 1540s brought many of these reformers to England and they often supported the union of the two kingdoms on religious grounds.[15] While many of the tracts written by both Scots and the English during the wars urged for union on the grounds of dynastic, cultural, and geographic causes, as John Major had in the 1520s, they also incorporated a religious angle to union.[16]

The wars of the 1540s, therefore, brought Scottish Protestants to England and further germinated the idea of the creation of a Protestant Kingdom of Britain having on its "side God" and "Gods true worde."[17] The end of the Anglo-Scottish wars in 1550, however, closed this momentary window of dynastic and providential union, as Mary, the Catholic Queen of Scots, was betrothed to Francis, the future King of France. Events further complicated ideas of a

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[14] Roger A. Mason, "Scotland, Elizabethan England and the Idea of Britain," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 14 (2004), 282. For more on the "Auld Alliance," see Elizabeth Bonner, "Scotland's 'Auld Alliance' with France, 1295-1560," *History* 84, no. 273 (January 1999), 5-30.
[15] See Elder's letter above.
[16] For Major's theorization of Britain, see John Major, *A History of Greater Britain*, translated by Archibald Constable (Edinburgh: University Press, 1892), 17-18.
[17] See James Henrison, *An Exhortation to the Scottes* (London, 1547).

Protestant British Kingdom when the Catholic daughter of Henry VIII, also named Mary,

became Queen of England in 1553. Scotland had remained Catholic with its queen married to a

French prince and England returned to Catholicism with its queen matched with the King of

Spain. However, prospects looked much better for the kingdoms either becoming satellites of

competing Catholic powers or, perhaps even worse in the minds of Protestants, a Catholic

Kingdom of Britain.

Under these circumstances, several of the more prolific Protestants left England and took

refuge in communities on the continent. It has been estimated that eight hundred people left for

the continent and established communities in Emden, Frankfurt, Strassburg, Wesel, and Zurich,

with many eventually coming to settle in Geneva.[18] It is important to note that some of those

who fled England were also Scots who had come to England during the 1540s. Their presence in

the British Protestant community in Geneva was integral to the radical intellectual and moral

formation of Puritanism, which was to play such a forceful role in England and especially the

Scottish Reformation in 1560.[19]

It is difficult to identify what the English and Scottish Protestants who took refuge in

Geneva held in common in terms of beliefs. However, the writings of several of these exiles

survive and allow us to at least explore the ideological developments of this time. Moreover, a

few individuals appear in the historical record before, during, and after the Genevan exile.

Remarkably, when looking at both the writings and the lives of those preserved in the historical

record, they appear not only as English or Scottish, but as British Protestants.

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[18] Haigh, *English Reformations*, 228.
[19] Jane E. A. Dawson, "Revolutionary Conclusions: The Case of the Marian Exiles," *History of Political Thought* 11, no. 2 (Summer 1990), 257-259.

John Bale, often a celebrated figure in the English Reformation, produced two major works within a British context. The first, the *Illustrium Maoiris Brittanae scriptorum, hoc est Angliae, Cambriae, ac Scotiae Summarium* ('Summary of Famous Writers of Greater Britain') was written in England during the British moment of the Rough Wooings.[20] However, the second and more substantial, the *Scriptorum illustrium Maoiris Brittanae, quam nunc Anglium & Scotium vocant: Catalogues* ('Illustrious Writers of Greater Britain'), was written while in Geneva and answered many of the challenges to the history of Britain presented by Polydore Vergil in the 1530s.[21] In both of these texts, Bale appeals to a Britain that was populated with the true Christian church well before Rome became the seat of Christianity.[22] In his second work, Bale includes Scotland in his conception of Britain and attributes a common Christian identity as well as history to England, Scotland, and Wales.[23] Indeed, the idea of a shared British religious identity is further promulgated in John Foxe's frontispiece to the 1563 edition of his *Actes and Monuments*, in which the "Realme of England and Scotlande" are recognized as sharing a resistance to "Romish Prelates."[24]

Many of the pamphlets were written in the backdrop of an ideological British struggle against two Catholic queens in which appeals were often made to a "britanishe nacion."[25] In *The First Blast of the Trumpet*, John Knox addressed the "Ile of greate Britanny" and warned against

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[20] John Bale, *Illustrium Maoiris Brittanae scriptorum, hoc est Angliae, Cambriae, ac Scotiae Summarium* (Ipswich and Wesel, 1548).

[21] John Bale, *Scriptorum illustrium Maoiris Brittanae, quam nunc Anglium & Scotium: Catalogues*, 2 volumes (Basel, 1557 and 1559).

[22] Alan MacColl, "The Construction of England as a Protestant 'British' Nation in the Sixteenth Century," *Renaissance Studies* 18, no. 4 (December 2004), 594.

[23] Ibid., 594-595.

[24] John Foxe, *Actes and Monuments* (London, 1563), Title Page.

[25] Quoted in Judith M. Richards, "Mary Tudor as 'Sole Quene': Gendering Tudor Monarchy," *Historical Journal* 40, no. 4 (December 1997), 920.

the "Rule of a wicked woman."[26] Speaking in general terms, Knox posits that "to promote a woman to beare rule, superioritie, dominion or empire aboue any realme, nation, or citie, is repugnant to nature."[27] Knox also protested against the means of "two cruell tyrannes (to France, and Spain I meane)" to the "right and possession of England, and Scotland," since "iust or laufull that possession neuer be, till God do chaunge the statute of his former lawe."[28] Furthermore, the rule of women was a punishment for the "proude rebellion and horrible ingratitude of the realmes of England and Scotland."[29] In perhaps the most revolutionary sections of the pamphlet, Knox calls for the "godly" (which seems to be a rather broad term meant to break down hierarchical notions of obedience) to depose a woman ruler (presumably referring to all female rulers, including Mary of England and Mary of Scotland) because the "nobilitie both of England and Scotland" had become "inferior to brute beastes."[30] The general tone of the pamphlet and its publication immediately before the Protestant Elizabeth assumed the throne of England provided Knox with quite a bit of embarrassment, and Knox's pamphlet, to the English, served more as a warning of uncontrolled radicalism.[31] Knox's friend Christopher Goodman furthered the idea of monarchical deposition in his pamphlet, *How Superior Powers Oght to be Obeyd*, stating that "when Magistrates and other officers cease to do their duetie" that "then God giveth the sworde into peoples hande, and he himself immediately their head."[32] Some writers advocated for the deposition of the English queen by appeals to the "ancient Constitution," and the power of the High Constable to restrain tyrants.[33] This ideological British

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[26] John Knox, *The First Blast of the Trumpet* (Geneva, 1558), A2v.
[27] Ibid., B1v.
[28] Ibid., G1v.
[29] Ibid., D6r.
[30] Ibid., D8r.
[31] Dawson, "Revolutionary Conclusions: The Case of the Marian Exiles," 257-258.
[32] Christopher Goodman, *How Superior Powers Oght to be Obeyd* (Geneva, 1558), 185.
[33] John Ponet, *A Short Treatise of Politic Power* (n.p., 1556), G5v.

Protestant struggle against Catholic queens in the two countries was no coincidence and allowed

for radical solutions to be presented along with appeals to a "britanishe nacion."[34]

Perhaps the most lasting and widespread British collaborations from the Genevan exiles

were the Genevan Bible, the most popular English translation of the Bible until the King James

version, and the *Forme of Common Prayers*, which became the Scottish Book of Common Order

and the preferred liturgy of English Puritans.[35] Both were the products of intensive work by

John Knox and Christopher Goodman and emblematic of the shared English "tong" used by

English and Scottish Protestants, perhaps affirming the Scottish poet William Dunbar's assertion

of "oure Inglisch" as the language of "Britaine."[36] In many ways, Geneva was a meeting ground

for both religious and cultural strands of Britishness.

The movements and activities of John Knox and Christopher Goodman are well

documented. While both produced a plethora of written work in exile, their cultural experiences

and travels during their lives might also have led them to think of themselves as Britons.

Christopher Goodman was born in England, left with the religious exiles in 1553, went to

Scotland in 1558 in order to foment religious reformation, and died in England in 1603.[37] John

Knox was born in Scotland, participated in Protestant uprisings during the 1540s, took refuge in

England in 1549 and became a royal chaplain to Edward VI, then left with the exiles in 1553.

Knox briefly returned to Scotland in 1556 and permanently in 1558, and took part in the Scottish

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[34] Dawson, "Revolutionary Conclusions," 271-272.

[35] Maurice S. Betteridge, "The Bitter Notes: The Genevan Bible and Its Annotations," *Sixteenth Century Journal* 14, no. 1 (Spring 1983), 41-44.

[36] William Dunbar, *The Golden Targe* (n.p., 1508), no pagination (9 of 10 unmarked pages).

[37] This brief sketch was assisted by Jane E. A. Dawson, 'Goodman, Christopher (1521/2–1603)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, Jan 2008 [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/10975].

Reformation, continuing to write for Church reform until his death in 1572.[38] While in Geneva, Goodman and Knox shared a close friendship and working relationship.

The death of Mary and the accession of a Protestant queen in England, along with the growing unrest in Scotland against a French king and a strengthening desire to reform the Scottish Church may have looked promising to adherents of a Protestant British kingdom. After all, open rebellion against both the French and Catholic monarchy of Scotland broke out in 1559, thus allowing for a decisive intervention from the recently reestablished Protestant Kingdom of England. After the failure of dynastic union in the 1540s and the perceived punishment from God during the 1550s, those in favor of union saw divine providence once again favoring them. However, the complications of displacing Mary, Queen of Scots, the reticence of the majority of Scots to express what kind of Britain they were willing to become a part of, and the reluctance of Elizabeth to intervene in the conflict prevented any sort of British policy of union or lasting friendship to emerge.[39] From 1560 onwards, the English began to look inwards and develop what some academics have posited as a true sense of national identity and cultural awareness.[40] Furthermore, ideas of a Protestant Britain became synonymous with and subsumed within this awareness of Englishness.[41] Meanwhile, Scotland also articulated its newly constructed Protestant identity as one that was unique to Scotland and independent of a British context.[42]

Thus the 1540s and 1550s marked a period in which religious and cultural union entered into the ideology of Britain, but ultimately never passed into becoming culturally, politically, or

[38] For Knox's life, see John Knox, *The History of the Reformation within the Realm of Scotland* (n.p., 1587), 501-560, and Jane E. A. Dawson, 'Knox, John (c.1514–1572)', Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, Jan 2008 [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/15781].
[39] Mason, "Scotland, Elizabethan England and the Idea of Britain," 286-287.
[40] See Richard Helgerson, *Forms of Nationhood: The Elizabethan Writing of England* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992).
[41] MacColl, "The Construction of England as a Protestant 'British' Nation in the Sixteenth Century," 607-608.
[42] Roger A. Mason, "Usable Pasts: History and Identity in Reformation Scotland," *Scottish Historical Review* 76, no. 201 (April 1997), 67-68.

socially understood by a larger community outside of those exiles in Geneva. This ideology would later be used by James VI and I in 1603, as he became the first "King of Great Britain," when it would once again fail to transcend beyond being an ideology of interest to a small community until a more stable and unifying foundation based on commerce and empire forged a British national identity.

It seems fitting that the death of John Major in 1550 coincided with the failure of the dynastic union between Mary, Queen of Scots, and Edward VI, King of England and the end of the Rough Wooings. Major was the first writer to dispense with mythological histories of Britain, to pose geography and culture as the true marks of Britons, and to hope for a dynastic union to establish the British Kingdom. While Major does not seem to have ever accepted the Protestant visions of Britain that Knox and his fellow Genevans embraced, there is one important link between these two Britons: Major's best and most well-known student was John Knox.

3.2   Dynastic Britishness

With the accession of Elizabeth and the transition of the kingdom back to a state-endorsed Protestantism and monarch-headed church, England once again faced the threat of a Catholic invasion, in particular from France. The marriage between the heir apparent to the French throne, Francis, and the current Queen of Scots, Mary, made Scotland the perfect staging ground for a land invasion of England. War had already begun between England and France in 1556 as a result of the English Queen Mary's marriage to the newly crowned King Philip II of Spain. This led to the capture of the last English continental possession, Calais, in 1557, and, as Sir Anthony Cook wrote to Sir William Cecil, this was "news which make in England a sorrowful end of Christmas and altereth matters this Parliament purposed, whereof the good had

no need of let, and if any were otherwise this will increase and not remedy them."[43] The

potential now for a French invasion of England was not lost on Sir William Paget in a letter to

Sir William Cecil in 1559, as he writes of the threat of France as being both "by sea or by

Scotland."[44]

While the peace made with France in 1559 in the Treaty of Cateau-Cambresis marked the

final Anglo-French war of the sixteenth century, the loss of the last piece of England's empire in

France and the renewed focus on Scotland marked a shift towards a foreign policy with a British

dimension.[45] In response to the loss of Calais, Cecil wrote to Elizabeth that "God forbydd that

your Majesty should enter into that bottomless pytt" of warfare with France for continental

territory and treasure.[46] Indeed, the 1560s would appear much more like the 1540s to many

contemporaries, as it was viewed as a second opportunity for England and Scotland to join in

over reformed religion and dynastic union.[47] This period shows that there was a continuation, in

some form, of a conscious British policy carried on, in many cases, by those who were involved

in the Rough Wooings of the 1540s and that the language of union was couched in the Anglo-

Scottish Protestant ideas of Britain.

William Cecil was the key figure in the 1560s for this articulation of Britishness. Cecil

had accompanied Somerset on his campaigns in Scotland in the 1540s, and he also seems to have

been involved in shaping some of the propaganda pamphlets that were printed in 1547 and 1548,

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[43] Cecil Papers: 1558, Calendar of the Cecil Papers in Hatfield House, Volume 1: 1306-1571, in British History Online, http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=111972 (accessed 29 November 2014).
[44] Cecil Papers: 1559, Calendar of the Cecil Papers in Hatfield House, Volume 1: 1306-1571, in British History Online, http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=111973 (accessed 29 November 2014).
[45] Elizabeth: April 1559, 1-10, Calendar of State Papers Foreign, Elizabeth, Volume 1: 1558-1559, Joseph Stevenson (editor), in British History Online, http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=71737 (accessed 29 November 2014).
[46] Elizabeth: July 1560, Calendar of State Papers, Scotland: volume 1: 1547-63, Joseph Bain (editor), in British History Online, http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=44061 (accessed 29 November 2014).
[47] Mason, "Scotland, Elizabethan England and the Idea of Britain," 285-287.

which advocated a shared cultural form of Britishness that reflected John Major's formulation.[48] Geographical representations of Britain were also important to Cecil; it has been argued that the main motivator behind Christopher Saxton's maps of England and Wales was Cecil, and he pushed for accurate maps of Ireland and Scotland throughout the 1560s and 1570s.[49] Thus, Cecil was able to cartographically and geographically imagine Britain as well as theorize a single cultural and political unit based on a common language, shared religion, and mutual security interests.

As early as 1559, Cecil was advocating for English involvement in Scotland in order to support Protestant rebels against their Catholic queen. Writing in reference to France's involvement in Scotland, he stated that "rather than see an ancient nation oppressed by foreign power, when her nobles seek to maintain the Christian religion, England would adventure aid against such invasion."[50] Peace with France in 1559 allowed the English to concentrate their policy on securing their last remaining land border with Scotland and aiding religious reforms in Scotland, which would immediately reduce Anglo-Scottish tensions and possibly set the stage for a future dynastic union along Protestant lines. This was a drastic change from the 1550s, when it appeared that Britain's dynastic future was in Catholic hands.

Scotland, however, was still ruled by a Catholic monarch, Mary, even after the peace between France and England. Mary also became the Queen of France after King Henri II died in a jousting accident in 1558, thus making her the Queen of Scots and Queen of France, with a strong claim to the throne of England. Further exacerbating religious tensions within Scotland

[48] Jane E. A. Dawson, "William Cecil and the British Dimension of Early Elizabethan Foreign Policy," *Journal of the Historical Association* 74, no. 241 (June 1989), 197-199.
[49] Helgerson, *Forms of Nationhood*, 322, n. 11; and Dawson, "William Cecil and the British Dimension of Early Elizabethan Foreign Policy," 198.
[50] Elizabeth: July 1559, Calendar of State Papers, Scotland: volume 1: 1547-63, Joseph Bain (editor), in British History Online, http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=44049 (accessed 29 November 2014). Also, of note is the correspondence between John Knox and William Cecil during this period.

was the powerful presence of the Protestants and the regent, Mary of Guise, who ruled Scotland in the absence of her daughter, Mary, Queen of Scots.[51]

Cecil convinced Elizabeth to intervene in the internal conflict in Scotland in order to prevent the French from stationing military forces there in support of Mary of Guise and in a position to invade England. In February 1560, Elizabeth committed to friendship with the Scottish reformers and provided military support in the form of a blockade to prevent the landing of any French soldiers.[52] The potential for a marriage between the Earl of Arran, who had a claim to the crown of Scotland, and Elizabeth presented the opportunity for a dynastic union between the two kingdoms but this would have required the deposing of Mary, which Elizabeth was reluctant to do as she believed in the Queen of Scots's rights as a fellow sovereign.[53] The Treaty of Edinburgh, signed in July 1560, reaffirmed the prior Treaty of Cateau-Cambresis, bringing peace to Scotland and England with a religious settlement in favor of the Protestants. The treaty also, as Cecil wrote to Elizabeth, procured for England the "conquest of this land that none of your progenitors with all their battells never obteyned—that is in a manner, the whole hartes and good wills of the nobilitie and people of this land—which suerly is better for England as we gess, than the revenneue of this Crowne."[54] Thus, the conclusion of this war allowed for two major changes in Scotland: first, the establishment of an alliance with England, which was unprecedented in Anglo-Scottish relations; and second, the carrying out of a religious reformation. Both of these developments fit with Cecil's defensive British policy by

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[51] As Queen of France, Mary remained with her husband, Francis II, in France.
[52] Elizabeth: February 1560, Calendar of State Papers, Scotland: volume 1: 1547-63, Joseph Bain (editor), in British History Online, http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=44056 (accessed 29 November 2014).
[53] Mason, "Scotland, Elizabethan England and the Idea of Britain," 287.
[54] Elizabeth: July 1560, Calendar of State Papers, Scotland: volume 1: 1547-63, Joseph Bain (editor), in British History Online, http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=44061 (accessed 29 November 2014).

constructing an alliance that limited potential enemies to overseas threats and promoted a

common Protestant religious identity within Britain.

While Cecil argued for this intervention based on a preventative war against France, the

real motivation seems to have been a more comprehensive British defensive strategy, which

called not only for perpetual friendship ("whole hartes and good wills") and union ("conquest")

with Scotland, but also gave much attention to Ireland.[55] Cecil's British foreign policy included

the wider British Isles, which departed from more traditional medieval ideas of Britain.[56] As part

of the Treaty of Berwick, the Earl of Argyle agreed to employ his Scottish forces to "reduce the

north parts of Ireland."[57] In December 1560, the Lords of Scotland wrote to the English Privy

Council, and affirmed their interest in continuing the friendship and amity but also in reforming

and joining Ireland to the Anglo-Scottish union.[58] This dialogue between Cecil and the Lords of

Scotland shows that a shared British vision existed in this period, and that a combined Anglo-

Scottish involvement in Ireland, while fleeting, occurred far earlier than most historians have

posited. Furthermore, this suggests a wider British agenda at work in the Irish invasions of the

mid-1560s and 1570s, instead of a simple imperial story of conquest and colonization.[59]

The death of King Francis II of France and the return of Mary, Queen of Scots, to her

native kingdom further complicated the relationship between England and Scotland. While the

two kingdoms maintained their close relations, these circumstances were contingent upon Mary's

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[55] Dawson, "William Cecil and the British Dimension of Early Elizabethan Foreign Policy," 206-207.
[56] Ibid., 210.
[57] Elizabeth: February 1560, 26-29, Calendar of State Papers Foreign, Elizabeth, Volume 2: 1559-1560, Joseph Stevenson (editor), in British History Online, http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=71814 (accessed 29 November 2014).
[58] Elizabeth: December 1560, 6-10, Calendar of State Papers Foreign, Elizabeth, Volume 3: 1560-1561, Joseph Stevenson (editor), in British History Online, http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=71879 (accessed 29 November 2014).
[59] For this view, see Nicholas Canny, "The Ideology of English Colonization: From Ireland to America," *William and Mary Quarterly* 30, no. 4 (October 1973), 575-598.

ambition to have her place in the English succession affirmed by Elizabeth and also became much more ambiguous and rife with tension.[60] The English Queen refused to affirm any plans regarding the succession or whether she planned to marry.[61] Instead of placing any value on British union, Elizabeth seemed more interested in continental affairs, as she intervened in the French religious wars in 1562, with the intent of regaining Calais.[62] In her lack of interest in Britain and focus on French possessions, Elizabeth was very much her father's daughter, but in not taking advantage of the settlement of 1560 by absorbing or directly controlling Scotland, she was very different from her more ambitious father. The embarrassing English defeat at Newhaven would end any continental ambitions that Elizabeth may have had and further reinforce Cecil's insular rather than continental strategic inclinations.[63] Elizabeth seemed to withdraw from becoming involved in any foreign entanglements, seeking only to secure her position within her own kingdom.

Cecil's British policy fell apart in 1565 due to the marriage of Lord Darnley and Mary. The year began with the promise of a future dynastic union with the proposed marriage of the Earl of Leicester and Mary.[64] Leicester did not desire to wed Mary and Elizabeth refused to make a decision regarding the English succession, so Mary instead chose to marry Henry Stewart, Lord Darnley. This marriage was particularly threatening to Elizabeth since Mary had the strongest competing claim and Darnley had the next strongest claim to the English throne. Their marriage combined their claims, and presented the possibility of Mary mounting an

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[60] Jane Dawson, "Mary Queen of Scots, Lord Darnley, and Anglo-Scottish Relations in 1565," *International History Review* 8, no. 1 (February 1986), 1.
[61] Mason, "Scotland, Elizabethan England and the Idea of Britain," 287.
[62] Dawson, "William Cecil and the British Dimension of Early Elizabethan Foreign Policy," 214.
[63] Ibid.
[64] Prospects and proposed benefits of the marriage are discussed in Elizabeth: March 1564, Calendar of State Papers, Scotland: volume 2: 1563-69, Joseph Bain (editor), in British History Online, http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=44132 (accessed 29 November 2014).

invasion on behalf of these claims. The English Queen and most of her Privy Council did not

support the internal Scottish Protestant opposition to the marriage of their Catholic Queen and

her religiously ambivalent suitor. This reversed the earlier English position of support and

friendship established in 1559 and 1560. Furthermore, there was also Cecil's fear that

involvement would risk a war with both France and Spain, for which England was ill-prepared.[65]

Concerns regarding Ireland also dominated the discussion of the Privy Council in this period;

most Scottish support from the Earl of Argyle had been expelled by this point, and Shane

O'Neill had assumed control of Ulster. It was feared that if England intervened in Scotland,

O'Neill would declare his loyalty to Mary and completely destabilize the English position in

Ireland.[66] In effect, Elizabeth's refusal to intervene in this conflict alienated the British coalition,

especially the Earl of Argyle, that Cecil had built in Scotland, and put the interests of the two

kingdoms on divergent courses. There were initially two options which would have alleviated

the potential conflict: one involving Elizabeth's ability to affirm Mary's place in the succession;

the other being Elizabeth explicitly supporting the Protestant rebels seeking to overthrow Mary.[67]

      While Cecil's British policy had essentially failed by the end of 1565, Mary was by no

means in firm control of Scotland. It appeared that Mary could possibly press her claims against

England, at least until her position in Scotland was undermined by her political decisions, her

lackluster husband Darnley, and finally the resurgence of a coalition against Mary's foreign

advisors, in particular David Rizzio.[68] Darnley was murdered in February 1567, and the Queen

of Scots then married James Hepbern, Earl of Boswell, who was implicated in Darnley's murder.

This made Mary more unpopular amongst her Protestant nobility, and they moved to depose her

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[65] Dawson, "Mary Queen of Scots, Lord Darnley, and Anglo-Scottish Relations in 1565," 17.
[66] Ibid., 18.
[67] Ibid., 22.
[68] Ibid., 22-24.

in favor of her heir, who was still just an infant.[69] The crowning of Mary's infant son as James

VI, King of Scots, led Mary to flee to England for protection, which Elizabeth granted to her.

Friendship with England resumed, but with a very different tone than earlier in the decade;

instead of amity and union, the Scots viewed their relationship with England as one of

"conformity" and the loss of trust produced by the English intervention of 1559 and 1560.[70]

Hence, the events of the 1560s had a lasting impact on the relationship between England and

Scotland, and set the tone for the future relationship of the two kingdoms.

Scotland remained somewhat unstable during the 1570s, though firmly Protestant and

removed as a threat to England's security. Perhaps it is because of these two factors, particularly

the latter, that Elizabeth never pursued a more coherent Scottish policy or took a firm stance

against the imprisoned Mary, at least until the mid-1580s when she agonized over the decision to

punish the exiled Queen of Scots. With the execution of Mary in February 1587 and the English

focus on war with Spain, the acknowledgement of the eventual succession of James VI, King of

Scots, was affirmed by simply doing nothing, which Elizabeth continued until her death in

1603.[71]

Though William Cecil's British policies ultimately were unsuccessful in producing a

united and coherent Protestant British kingdom in the 1560s, his actions served as a bridge

between the 1540s articulations of Britishness during the Rough Wooings and a vision of Britain

as a defensive unit in opposition against a hostile Catholic Europe. In many ways, Cecil's ideas

of an incorporation of Ireland as a key point of defense for Britain furthered the articulation of

Ireland's place within the community of the British Isles. Indeed, the calls for its "reforming"

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[69] Ibid., 21-23.
[70] Ibid., 22.
[71] Mason, "Scotland, Elizabethan England and the Idea of Britain," 290-291.

and integration into the two kingdoms of Britain would be the dominant struggle over the next four centuries. Cecil continued to call for a union between England and Scotland to face Catholic opponents in 1569, as he pushed for a perpetual league with Scotland and for the government of Scotland to be regulated by Elizabeth.[72] Cecil also called for an expanded navy, as his geographic approach to Britain led him to the conclusion that the best way to defend the island was the navy, which was the "wall of England."[73] While the initial excitement over union during the 1560s gave way to irreconcilable differences that foreclosed closer religious or dynastic union, Cecil's vision should not be discounted. Whether or not he Cecil shared a Protestant conception of Britain, he took a strategic view of Britain as key to the security interests of England. This view and ideological disposition would come to dominate English articulations of a British state for years to come.

3.3   *Forgotten Britishness*

While the first half of the sixteenth century provided a British identity that could have developed into a nascent national identity, historians have claimed that both English and Scottish national identities were firmly articulated in the second half of the century. Geoffrey Elton has argued that England recognized itself as a nation as early as the thirteenth century, while other historians locate English nationalism as beginning with the Reformation of the 1530s and the

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[72] Cecil Papers: January-June 1569, Calendar of the Cecil Papers in Hatfield House, Volume 1: 1306-1571, in British History Online, http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=111989 (accessed 29 November 2014); and Cecil Papers: July-December 1569, Calendar of the Cecil Papers in Hatfield House, Volume 1: 1306-1571, in British History Online, http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=111990 (accessed 29 November 2014).
[73] Elizabeth: August 1571, Calendar of State Papers Foreign, Elizabeth, Volume 9: 1569-1571, Allan James Crosby (editor), in British History Online, http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=73093 (accessed 29 November 2014).

cultural products of the late sixteenth century.[74] Other recent views of English nationalism take different approaches. Richard Helgerson argues that language formed and shaped English national identity in the second half of the sixteenth century, especially through the new printed medium that allowed for the dissemination and entrenchment of pluralist views of English nationalism.[75] Conversely, Liah Greenfeld posits that Englishness was a sociological development in accordance with the Reformation, which emphasized reason and the Humanist notion of the nation perceived as a community of free and equal individuals.[76] Steven Ellis claims that national identities were contested within national boundaries. Thus historians have made the mistake of conflating southeastern Englishness with the rest of England during the sixteenth century.[77] Historians of Scottish identity have claimed that the ability to think of oneself as Scottish stretches back to the late thirteenth century, when it was a mechanism of difference and opposition to England.[78]

While all of these interpretations of national identity, Englishness, and Scottishness are important, searching for original articulations of identity or attempting to elucidate a firmly fixed identity is difficult, as it is perhaps impossible to reduce identity to precise definition or clearly understood meaning. Individuals in the British Isles in the late medieval period exchanged and wore multiple national identities. For example, one could go from being Welsh to English.[79] Also, fluid identities were in a constant process of being negotiated, reimagined, and

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[74] For this early view of English nationalism, see Geoffrey Elton, *The English* (Cambridge: Blackwell Publishers, 1992), 111-113.

[75] Richard Helgerson, *Forms of Nationhood: The Elizabethan Writing of England* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 1-7.

[76] Liah Greenfeld, *Nationalism: Five Roads to Modernity* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992), 29-31.

[77] Steven Ellis, "Civilizing Northumberland: Representations of Englishness in the Tudor State," *Journal of Historical Sociology* 12, no. 2 (June 1999), 122-123.

[78] Kristen Post Walton, "Scottish Nationalism Before 1789: An Ideology, a Sentiment, or a Creation?," *International Social Science Review* 81, no. 3/4 (2006), 111-112.

[79] Ralph Griffiths, "The Island of England in the Fifteenth Century: Perception of the Peoples of the British Isles," *Journal of Medieval History* 29 (2003), 179.

historicized. This is not to say that identity is meaningless, but that it is nuanced: John Knox

may have thought of himself as British due to his Protestant faith, whereas William Cecil might

found the political and defensive benefits of a shared Britishness as something more

fundamental. There is, however, a key feature of the second half of the sixteenth century that

does lead to a more firm foundation for identity: print culture and the ability to historicize

identities.

Britishness during this period provides an excellent case study of this evolution and

renegotiation of identity and the establishment of articulations through print. Through the efforts

of English writers of this period, a combination of identities also became established through the

stories of England's founding and religious history. Other articulations of Britain and

Britishness existed as well. This is especially evident when King James VI inherited the throne

of England from Elizabeth and urged a union based on an "outdated" form of Britishness. Those

of the current English generation could not understand based upon the cultural flowering and

understanding of England during the late sixteenth century, which cultivated a generational

difference when discussing England and Britain.[80]

Attempts to unite the kingdoms of England and Scotland via religion or dynastic matches

may have failed from the 1540s into the end of 1560s, but cultural articulations of Britishness

remained in print culture. English writers tended to follow two different strands of writing about

Britain: the first involved Britain and Britons as formerly existing, often in the form of the

Welsh; and the second simply equated Britain and England as essentially the same entity, with

Britain being an antiquarian term for the kingdom, and the Scots as being barbarians equivalent

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[80] Helgerson, *Forms of Nationhood*, 4-6.

to the Irish. Thus, from this view, the internalization of England during this period also internalized notions of Britain within this ideological structure.

This is not to say that writers still did not think of Britain as involving union between Scotland and England. John Leslie, writing in 1569, urged that union was an opportunity to "aduance vs bothe and the vvhole Islande of Britanye" and by their union the "Ilande of Albyon" will" dayly growe more and more."[81] It must be noted that Leslie was a Scot and fled to England upon Mary's deposition, and was arguing for Mary's right to the thrones of both Scotland and England in this pamphlet, which was published in London.

More typical of the trends in print culture was Humphrey Llwyd's *The Breviary of Britayne*, in which the "Welsh, or Britysh" is "Englisshed" from the "British tongue" by Thomas Twyne.[82] The narrative follows the Brutus story for the most part, with Britain divided into three kingdoms of which England is ruled by the oldest son. This makes England the senior member in the partnership between the kingdoms of the island. Britons are clearly located in the past, with the "Cornishman, beynge the remnantes of the olde Britaynes, as they are the stoutest of all the British nations."[83] John Leland told the story of King Arthur, "King of great Brittaine," from a specifically English perspective and shaped him as an English national hero in 1582.[84] Leland claims that Arthur "vanquished" the "Scottes," as opposed to incorporating them into Britain or defining them as Britons.[85]

In these writings, Britishness is repositioned in two ways: the first involves placing Britain in the past and with the Welsh, who were now ruled by the English; the second defines

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[81] John Leslie, *A Defence of the Honor* (London, 1569), 146-147.
[82] Humphrey Llwyd, *The Breviary of Britayne* (London, 1573), 7-8.
[83] Ibid., F92r.
[84] John Leland, *Prince Arthur* (London, 1582), Title Page.
[85] Ibid., 2-3.

England as a continuation of Britain, with the Scots existing outside of this conception of Britishness. This second strand is further articulated by merging Britain and England in the form of Elizabeth in Henry Lyte's *The Light of Britayne*. Lyte calls Elizabeth "the Angell of Englande" and "the Britona of Britaine."[86] This pamphlet also claims that England has dominion over "Britania maior," which includes England, Scotland, and Wales.[87] In some ways, while not returning to feudal claims of overlordship that typified the earlier relationship between the British kingdoms, there were some returns to celebrating the Englishness of Britain through the Brutus story during the late sixteenth century. Both Edmund Spenser's *The Fairie Queene* and William Harrison's introduction to Raphael Holinshed's *Chronicles* define Britain in terms exclusive to England and, in Harrison's case, make a special note of the barbaric and uncivilized behavior of the Scots.[88]

Thus, by the end of the sixteenth century, the predominant printed articulations of Britishness involved a celebration of a very ideologically English strand of Britishness. In this sense, the development of Englishness and Britishness were concurrent in England. Perhaps it is not surprising that when James gained the English throne in 1603 and proposed to unite the kingdoms much of the English nation was hostile to altering their idea of Britain and allowing the Scots to share in it.

Conclusion

Religion, foreign policy, and print culture provided the basis for three articulations of Britishness to ideologically emerge, develop, and interact during the second half of the sixteenth

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[86] Henry Lyte, *The Light of Britayne* (London, 1588), A3v.
[87] Ibid., A5v.
[88] MacColl, "The Meaning of Britain in Medieval and Early Modern England," 268.

century. All three of these variants were contingent upon the events of the 1540s, and these events drew upon Scottish articulations of Britain during the 1520s. This led to a departure in thinking about Britain as a feudal state and medieval mythologies of Britain began to shift into a framework that stressed the religious, political, and cultural advantages of union during the mid-sixteenth century.

By focusing on religion, a common ground between Scotland and England could be found through a shared embrace of Protestantism. While the directions taken by each kingdom were different, there were many opportunities for them to converge, especially during the 1550s and immediately after when Scotland began its own Reformation in the 1560s. William Cecil, who was involved in the English ideological construction of Britain during the 1540s, urged Elizabeth to take an active role in supporting Protestants in Scotland and pushed for the union of the two kingdoms. Elizabeth, however, was reluctant to subvert another monarch's rights and did not seem to have an interest in forging a British state or relationship, which ultimately led to missed opportunities for bringing Scotland and England closer together in the 1560s. Cecil served as a link between the early sixteenth century articulations of Britishness and for future definitions of Britain, as he primarily emphasized the defensive aspects of a united island and even incorporated Ireland into his idea of Britain. Representations of Britain in print culture also took a turn in which the mythological origin story was refocused on either placing the Scots outside of the British mythology or putting Britain in the past with the Welsh being "formerly British." Colonial language was also used when referring to the similarities between Scotland and Ireland, conflating them both as savage and wild places in need of civilizing. Thus, from 1570s onwards, the English idea of Britain came to look less and less like a cultural union between Scotland and England, and rather more like England writ large.

It was in this political, religious, and cultural milieu that James VI and I inherited the English throne in 1603. James proclaimed himself as the new King of Great Britain, but each kingdom had established incompatible identities, celebrated their Englishness or Scottishness, and had come to suspect the intentions of the other in a union. However, if articulating Britishness became more complicated in Britain, new possibilities and new definitions began to unfold in an expanding British colonial world.

4   Chapter 3: A British King Without a British Kingdom

James VI, King of Scots, entered Berwick, situated on the border between England and Scotland and often a point of contention between the two kingdoms, in April 1603 following the death of Elizabeth I the previous month.[1] The Venetian ambassador observed that James issued his first orders as the new King of England while in Berwick, dealing with arrangements for the late queen's funeral and his eventual arrival in London as well as diplomatic affairs in Holland, Zealand, and Brabant. James would also "stay a few days in Berwick in order to arrange the form of the union of these two crowns. It is said that he is disposed to abandon the titles of England and Scotland, and to call himself King of Great Britain," much "like that famous and ancient King Arthur."[2] Any dispute to his title to England was also addressed, as "the Queen before dying named the King of Scotland as her successor, and said she had not done so before because of the danger to her life, which would at once be menaced by those who desired to disturb the peace of England."[3] This account was further buttressed by the reiteration that James "wishes to call himself King of Britain."[4]

Thus, in 1603, a monarch whom the early sixteenth-century philosopher John Major would certainly have called a "Briton" ruled both the kingdoms of England and Scotland.[5] With the dynastic marriage in 1503 between James IV, King of Scots, and Margaret, sister of the English King Henry VII, both kingdoms had faced the possibility of being inherited by the

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[1] For information regarding the role of Berwick in Anglo-Scottish affairs, see Marcus Merriman, "The Forts of Eyemouth: Anvils of British Union?", *Scottish Historical Review* 67, no. 184 (October 1988), 142-155.

[2] 'Venice: April 1603,' in Calendar of State Papers Relating To English Affairs in the Archives of Venice, Volume 10, 1603-1607, ed. Horatio F Brown (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1900), 2-16, https://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/venice/vol10/pp2-16.

[3] Ibid.

[4] Ibid.

[5] According to Major's criteria, any man born in Britain was a Briton, and the union of the crowns was simply the uniting of two kingdoms divided. See John Major, *The History of Greater Britain*, translated by Archibald Campbell (Edinburgh: University Press, 1892).

monarch of the other country.[6] Especially given the dynastic problems in Scotland during the

1540s, in England during the 1550s and 1560s, and again in Scotland during the mid-1560s, a

monarch ruling both kingdoms was only a death away. In such circumstances, the monarch

assuming the other kingdom could have done so by force, questionable inheritance practices, or

unlawful deposition, which would have been controversial and contestable means of gaining the

throne and constructing an unwieldy composite monarchy on foundations that normally

crumbled over time.[7] James inherited the throne naturally, however. If the account of the

Venetian ambassador is to be believed, he was anointed by Elizabeth as her successor and thus

enjoyed a lawful succession.

In fact, James seems to have placed the union of the kingdoms at the top of his initial

priorities. He arrived in London in May, and by September he was urging "Parliament… to deal

with the question of the union of these two crowns, and to propose that both kingdoms should be

united under the one name of Britain."[8] This question would dominate parliamentary discussions

and print culture during the first four years of James's English reign, especially during moments

of heightened tension between England and Scotland.[9] James's excitement, and perhaps

impatience with the legal proceedings of union, were on display on the morning of 3 November

1604 when he "resolved to issue a proclamation to be published in the presence of the Mayor and

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[6] For an account of the marriage and the immediate events afterwards, see David Dunlop, "The Politics of Peace-keeping: Anglo-Scottish Relations from 1503-1511," *Renaissance Studies* 8, no. 2 (1994), 138-161; for the 1540s, see David M. Head, "Henry VIII's Scottish Policy: A Reassessment," *Scottish Historical Review* 61, no. 171 (April 1982), 1-24; and for the 1550s, 1560s, and 1570s, see Roger A. Mason, "Scotland, Elizabethan England and the Idea of Britain," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 14 (2004), 279-293.

[7] On the weakness of forcible integration into kingdoms or unions, see J. H. Elliott, "A Europe of Composite Monarchies," *Past and Present* 137 (November 1992), 48-71.

[8] 'Venice: September 1603,' in Calendar of State Papers Relating To English Affairs in the Archives of Venice, Volume 10, 1603-1607, ed. Horatio F Brown (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1900), https://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/venice/vol10/pp88-98.

[9] Especially during the 1630s and 1640s, 1670s, and 1690s and 1700s. See Jenny Wormald, "The Creation of Britain: Multiple Kingdoms or Core and Colonies?," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 2 (1992), 191-193.

Aldermen, ordering all officers and ministers of the Crown to style the King for the future as 'of Great Britain, France, and Ireland;' to use that style in all documents where his Majesty is mentioned, and to coin money with that legend."[10] The king had barely reigned a year and half but he was already attempting to remake his two kingdoms into a single realm.

However, James's attempt to create a British kingdom failed. By 1607, debates in Parliament had reached an impasse. James resorted to other measures in order to create symbols of Britain and, at least, bonds between the two kingdoms. Along with maintaining his proclaimed title as "King of Great Britain," James shifted his focus to repealing hostile laws, dismantling the separate legal status of the Borders, establishing a commercial union, and promoting common naturalization in both kingdoms. His efforts met with varying degrees of success.[11] An administrative and legal union was not attempted again during James's lifetime. After James's death in 1625, his son and successor Charles I attempted a religious union during the 1630s by enforcing the English Book of Common Prayer. A disastrous,war broke out instead between Scotland and England in 1638, leading to the rather awkward circumstances of an English and Scottish king fighting himself and the complete breakdown of the British monarchies.

Historians have explained the failure of attempts at union in many different ways. One dominant line of thought posits that the English disdain for Scots doomed the union to failure. Jenny Wormald argues that the English actively wanted to conquer and dominate Scotland, as

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[10] ' Venice: November 1604,' in Calendar of State Papers Relating To English Affairs in the Archives of Venice, Volume 10, 1603-1607, ed. Horatio F Brown (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1900), 189-193, https://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/venice/vol10/pp189-193.
[11] Conrad Russell, "James VI and I and Rule Over Two Kingdoms: An English View," *Historical Research* 76, no. 192 (May 2003), 192.

they did Wales, and to transform King James into an English king.[12] Wormald also claims that

English Scotophobia was so extreme that the Gunpowder Plot of 5 November 1605 not only

caused vitriol against Catholics, but also Scots as they were blamed for being a part of the plot.[13]

While Wormald claims that Scotophobia was inherent to the English after the mid-sixteenth

century, Neil Cuddy argues that James's initial favoritism towards Scots in his Court set the

English Parliament against his plans for union, as they feared the Scots would claim other

opportunities for English patronage.[14] Conrad Russell argues that the inability of the English and

Scots to agree on the meaning of "union" made a negotiation for terms impossible.[15] Other

historians have posited that the construction of respective national identities in England and

Scotland during the sixteenth century made a conversation about a unifying Britishness

difficult.[16] Most of these models use a binary structure of two kingdoms or two cultures to

explain why union failed and often why civil war began in the mid-seventeenth century.

　　　I propose, however, that the early seventeenth century should not be viewed as the failure

of union, but rather as the beginning of a century-long negotiation over what kind of union was

possible. While James did not create the British kingdom that he dreamed of at the beginning of

his reign, he did make the problem of multiple kingdoms an issue that both the English and

Scottish kingdoms had to confront.[17] Furthermore, the failed attempts at union, when looked at

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[12] Wormald, "The Creation of Britain: Multiple Kingdoms or Core and Colonies?," 185-188.

[13] See Jenny Wormald, "Gunpowder, Treason, and Scots," *Journal of British Studies* 24, no. 2 (April 1985), 141-168.

[14] Neil Cuddy, "Anglo-Scottish Union and the Court of James I, 1603-1625: The Alexander Prize Essay Proxime Assessit," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 39 (1989), 121-124. Further research on the Scots in patronage networks can be found in Linda Levy Peck, *Court Patronage and Corruption in Early Stuart England* (New York: Routledge, 1993).

[15] Russell, "James VI and I and Rule Over Two Kingdoms: An English View," 162-163.

[16] Richard Helgerson, *Forms of Nationhood: The Elizabethan Writing of England* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 3-5; Kirsten Post Walton, "Scottish Nationalism Before 1789: An Ideology, a Sentiment, or a Creation?," 119-126.

[17] For the use of the term "problem of the three kingdoms" and a long-term explanation, see Conrad Russell, *The Causes of the English Civil War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 26-57.

by historians, can also reveal some successes and nascent possibilities for the grounds of union between England and Scotland.

In this chapter, I will look at three models of union that James attempted during his reign. The first model involves his attempt to construct a legal union through the English Parliament and through legal mechanisms which would shift English law into incorporating Scots and vice versa. The second model will engage with some of the English who endorsed the union, and their motives for doing so, and also James's own attempts to construct a British culture without the use of parliamentary measures. Finally, renewed discussions of a British empire and attempts at British colonization will serve as the focus for the last model. While the political unification of the two kingdoms did not succeed, James created cultural symbols of Britain that are still in use in today's United Kingdom. Moreover, the potential for overseas British colonization provided an arena within which future negotiations over the commercial and imperial benefits of union between Scotland and England would take place.

4.1   Creating a British Kingdom Through Legal Means

In the early seventeenth century, many in England had either relegated Britain into a long ago past or saw England as the continuation of Britain.[18] This ideological structuring of Britain pushed Scotland outside of Britain, whether in the past or in the present, often with those who settled Scotland seen as related to the "wild Irish."[19] As we have seen, many Scots accepted this vision of Britain without Scotland (but not the explanation of them being wild or barbaric), with the exception of lowland Scots who appealed for a Britain consisting of two kingdoms uniting

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[18] Alan MacColl, "The Construction of England as a Protestant 'British' Nation in the Sixteenth Century," *Renaissance Studies* 18, no. 4 (December 2004), 606-608.
[19] Ibid., 601-604.

under an equal union. Thus, James's appeals for an immediate union between the kingdoms was

difficult for many English and Scots to understand, especially since James appealed to a common

history and culture as the basis of the proposed new British kingdom.

In April 1604, James sent a letter to Robert Cecil asking whether he could adopt the title

"King of Great Britain" without repealing any of the laws in either of the two kingdoms.[20] While

some in Parliament wanted James to assume the title and establish Commissioners to create a

treaty of union between the two kingdoms, others in the House of Commons issued objections to

the assumption of the title, citing that it was dangerous to the kingdom of England, without

precedent, and had no basis in law.[21] Some in the Commons, however, argued that the name of

Great Britain was not new, but was instead suggested by the proposed earlier union of King

Edward VI and Mary, Queen of Scots. It was proposed that James become Emperor and Ireland,

Scotland, and England be included in this new Empire of Great Britain.[22] Some in the House

supported the union in the physical body of the king, and appealed to his descent of "the Blood

of England and Scotland"; one opinion claimed that while the union should take place, the

respective kingdoms should keep their name, as a married man and woman; others thought the

union benefited Scotland since England was more "honourable" and the greater kingdom of the

two.[23] Near the end of April, it seems that fear of change gripped the house, as the only union

which made sense to many of the speakers involved conquest and the continuation of the English

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[20] ' James I: Volume 7, April, 1604,' in Calendar of State Papers Domestic: James I, 1603-1610, ed. Mary Anne Everett Green (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1857), 90-103, https://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/domestic/jas1/1603-10/pp90-103.

[21] Ibid.

[22] 'House of Commons Journal Volume 1: 16 April 1604 (2nd scribe),' in Journal of the House of Commons: Volume 1, 1547-1629 (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1802), https://www.british-history.ac.uk/commons-jrnl/vol1/16-april-1604-2nd-scribe.

[23] 'House of Commons Journal Volume 1: 18 April 1604 (2nd scribe),' in Journal of the House of Commons: Volume 1, 1547-1629 (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1802), https://www.british-history.ac.uk/commons-jrnl/vol1/18-april-1604-2nd-scribe.

name; the abolishing of the English kingdom meant that English laws would cease to exist as well.[24] Lord Cecil then wrote to Sir James Elphinston, Secretary of Scotland, that the Judges had expressed concern over the possible invalidation of all laws of England should the name change, and that James had agreed to postpone it until the Commissioners had all agreed upon the proposal and Parliament endorsed their decision.[25]

At this point, James appeared in Parliament on 7 July to speak. He urged the Commons to stop suspecting his intentions, and rejoice in good feelings between the Scots and English since they shared a Protestant faith and king. While he was disappointed at their delay in creating the union, James assured Parliament that he would not assume the title of "King of Great Britain" until they consented to the joining of the kingdoms.[26] By October, James reversed course and decided to issue a proclamation proclaiming himself as the "King of Great Britain." The House of Commons reiterated their position that the title should be conferred by Parliament, instead of through the king's prerogative.[27]

As the events of 1604 show, the propositions for union were messy and difficult to define. For one, the conceptions of union differed between the English and Scots. The Scots resisted any union that would abolish the name of Scotland or allow English interference in their kingdom. Indeed, the Venetian ambassador recorded that the Scots intended to preserve their

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[24] 'House of Commons Journal Volume 1: 25 April 1604,' in Journal of the House of Commons: Volume 1, 1547-1629 (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1802), 184-185, https://www.british-history.ac.uk/commons-jrnl/vol1/pp184-185.

[25] 'James I: Volume 7, April, 1604,' in Calendar of State Papers Domestic: James I, 1603-1610, ed. Mary Anne Everett Green (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1857), 90-103, https://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/domestic/jas1/1603-10/pp90-103.

[26] 'James I: Volume 8, May, 1604,' in Calendar of State Papers Domestic: James I, 1603-1610, ed. Mary Anne Everett Green (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1857), 103-140, https://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/domestic/jas1/1603-10/pp103-140.

[27] 'James I: Volume 9, August-October, 1604,' in Calendar of State Papers Domestic: James I, 1603-1610, ed. Mary Anne Everett Green (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1857), 140-163, https://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/domestic/jas1/1603-10/pp140-163.

ancient laws and to petition the king that the Scottish Estates sit in the English Parliament to take part in the debates.[28] Most articulations of union that the Scots found acceptable involved a common king and the maintenance of each kingdom's traditions, with both receiving equal treatment. The English may have shared these sentiments about preserving their national identity and sacred common law, but their idea of union was not based on each kingdom's equal standing. Instead, a perfect union was only possible through the rule of one law and one kingdom.[29] For many in England, any alteration or abolition of the common law was unthinkable; the study of law and the continuous republication of John Fortescue's *Laws of England* had a profound effect in establishing the law as a symbol of Englishness.[30]

James, then, was proposing a form of union that neither kingdom could find acceptable. The proposal for union stalled from 1604 until the end of 1606, with pressure to have James's title as "King of Great Britain" confirmed by the House of Commons.[31] In December 1606, Mr. James, speaking in the Commons, railed against the name of Great Britain and accused the ancient Britons of being pagans, fugitives, and idolatrous peasants.[32] By 1607, the debates in Parliament had reached a point in which union was no longer a possibility, and hostility towards Scots was becoming more and more regular.[33]

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[28] 'Venice: September 1603,' in Calendar of State Papers Relating To English Affairs in the Archives of Venice, Volume 10, 1603-1607, ed. Horatio F Brown (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1900), 88-98, https://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/venice/vol10/pp88-98.

[29] Russell, "James VI and I and Rule Over Two Kingdoms: An English View," 162-163.

[30] See John Fortescue, *Laws of England* (London, 1567); and Helgerson, *Forms of Nationhood*, 63-104.

[31] 'James I: Volume 24, December, 1606,' in Calendar of State Papers Domestic: James I, 1603-1610, ed. Mary Anne Everett Green (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1857), 336-342, https://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/domestic/jas1/1603-10/pp336-342.

[32] 'House of Commons Journal Volume 1: 09 December 1606 (2nd scribe),' in Journal of the House of Commons: Volume 1, 1547-1629 (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1802), https://www.british-history.ac.uk/commons-jrnl/vol1/09-december-1606-2nd-scribe.

[33] 'House of Commons Journal Volume 1: 13 February 1607 (2nd scribe),' in Journal of the House of Commons: Volume 1, 1547-1629 (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1802), https://www.british-history.ac.uk/commons-jrnl/vol1/13-february-1607-2nd-scribe. Member Christopher Piggot, in an oft cited speech, "spoke sharply" against the union. At this point, it looked as if the union was doomed to constant discussion and no resolution.

James abandoned the project of a legal and formal union, and instead pursued objectives

that would serve as smaller steps towards establishing a closer relationship between the two

kingdoms. James adjusted his approach to establishing a bond over time instead of the

immediate establishment of a British kingdom. James's agenda involved abolishing the hostile

laws, normalizing the legal status of the Borders, instituting a commercial union with a common

currency, and arranging for the mutual naturalization of all of his English and Scottish subjects.[34]

The first two objectives were accomplished when Parliament repealed the hostile laws and

border laws on 10 February 1607, but refused to take steps towards normalizing commerce

between the two kingdoms and continued to treat the Scots as "strangers."[35]

Naturalization, however, was a much more complicated subject than any of the first three

objectives, primarily because it was the central issue of Calvin's Case in 1608. This case was

framed around the issue of allegiance to the king. The central claim of the case centered on

whether a Scot born after the accession of James to the English throne could inherit property in

England. Specifically in this case, could the Scottish infant, Robert Calvin, born in 1605, inherit

his two estates in England? The defendants in the case argued that Calvin was an alien in

England since he had been born in Scotland, and not in the allegiance of the King of England.

This argument rests on two major points: the first, that allegiance and subjectivity exist within

the kingdom, thus an English subject can only have a relationship with the English kingdom and

not with the person of the king; the second, as Littleton and Fortescue argued, allegiance was tied

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[34] Russell, "James VI and I and Rule Over Two Kingdoms: An English View," 162.

[35] 'House of Commons Journal Volume 1: 10 February 1607,' in Journal of the House of Commons: Volume 1, 1547-1629 (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1802), 332, https://www.british-history.ac.uk/commons-jrnl/vol1/p332.

to the law of the kingdom.[36] In order to rule in the case, the English judges had to decide which political theory of kingship and the state to embrace.

Prior to this case, two major theoretical views of loyalty and allegiance to the king were posited in the form of constructing the king's political body: in the "corporate" view of kingship, the body politic and natural body of the monarch were separate entities, thus when the corporal being of the king died, the political entity passed onto the next monarch; the "descent" view of kingship posited that the monarch held one body, and ruled through that body, hence there was only one king in a composite monarchy, instead of multiple kingships.[37] In the corporate theory of kingship, the monarch ruled with the consent and understanding of the subjects and guaranteed them protection and stability, thus entering into a sort of contract, similar to that of a corporation, while also upholding and being subject to the prior established laws of the kingdom.

The defendants, who appealed to the corporate theory of kingship, could not possibly have imagined James's articulation of Britain as being possible, since it required the abolition of England and the construction of a new kingdom, which, in their minds, uprooted the very foundations of kingship and state. The only way to properly change laws was through conquest and legislative change, with Wales providing the model example. In this context, the case was very important in James's attempts to create a unified crown of England and Scotland, and in creating British subjects.

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[36] Rei Kanemura, "Kingship by Descent or Kingship by Election?: The Contested Title of James VI and I," *Journal of British Studies* 52, no. 2 (April 2013), 337.

[37] For a detailed discussion of these two versions of kingship in Britain, see Kanemura, "Kingship by Descent or Kingship by Election?: The Contested Title of James VI and I," 317-342; and Jacob Selwood, "'English-born Reputed Strangers': Birth and Descent in Seventeenth-Century London," *Journal of British Studies* 44, no. 4 (October 2005), 728-753.

James's own views on kingship are well known, and he clearly eschewed the concept of the king's two bodies.[38] The ruling in Calvin's Case came close to echoing James's writings on kingship. Lord Chancellor Ellesmere dismissed the corporate theory of kingship and asked "Now then, since there is but one king, and soveraigne to whome this faith and allegeance is due by al his subjects of England and Scotland, can any humane policie divide this one King, and make him two kinges?… Can there bee warres betweene the king of England and the king of Scotland? or betweene the kingdome of England and the kingdome of Scotland, so long as there is but one kinge?"[39] Ellesmere answered by writing that "as the King nor his hear cannot bee divided, for hee is one intier king over all his subjects, in which soever of his kingdomes or Dominions they were borne, so hee must not bee served nor obeyed by halves; hee must have intier and perfect obedience of his subjects."[40] Turning his attention to the broader project of union, Ellesmere claimed that "no doubt God will blesse this Union of both these Nations, and make them, and the King, and greate Britaine to be famous through the world."[41] Ellesmere also commented on the possibilities for union between the two in terms of laws and constitution: "The Constitutions of the Countires bee such there can hardly in all things bee such an absolute and perfect reconciling or uniting of Lawes as is fancied. Is it yet so betweene England and Wales? or between Kent and Cornwall? or betweene many other parts of this Kingdome? I say no; and I speak it confidently, and truely it is not so; nor well can be so."[42] Using Wales as his

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[38] For James's own theories of kingship, see James VI and I, *The Trve Lawe of Free Monarchies* (Edinburgh, 1598). James ultimately argues that the monarchy is ruled by hereditary succession and obedience to the monarch. Within this structure, the king is "free" to reign without obligations to corporate entities or other interests.
[39] Lord Chancellor Ellesmere, *The Post-Nati*, in Louis A. Knafla, *Law and Politics in Jacobean England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), 246.
[40] Ibid.
[41] Ibid., 251.
[42] Ibid., 251-252.

model, Ellesmere urged patience so that "Union and Love increase amongst us."[43] Thus, time would create and construct a bond of union between the two kingdoms.

While union had failed, some legal steps had been taken to bring the two kingdoms closer together. In the space of the first five years of his reign, James was not able to change English minds and hearts immediately, but had gained some privileges within England for his Scottish subjects and vice versa. Indeed, after Calvin's Case, James could claim everyone born after 1603 as his "British" subjects, though this clearly did not take hold for quite some time and very few actually claimed the benefits.[44] Those taking advantages of the benefits of naturalization were also often then excluded from Parliament.[45] Jenny Wormald has claimed that "Calvin's Case signified much less of a victory for those pursuing the case of union, or defeat for those who opposed it, than might have been expected."[46] Her criticisms, however, depend upon the unfolding of future events: the absolutist mentality and practice of Charles, and the possibility to construe either argument to radical ends.[47] Furthermore, her criticism also relies on viewing English opinions about the Scots as homogeneous and hostile, or misguided in their support of a king trying to consolidate his power according to a divine right philosophical outlook of kingship.

The legal attempt at union failed for three primary reasons. The first reason was the failure of prior attempts at union during the sixteenth century and the ensuing thirty years of silence regarding the possibilities of union between England and Scotland. The next reason was that during the second half of the sixteenth century, both England and Scotland further developed

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[43] Ibid., 252.
[44] Selwood, "'English-born Reputed Strangers': Birth and Descent in Seventeenth-Century London," 732-734 (for a discussion of the actual reasoning and rationale of the case) and 751-753 (for the effects of Calvin's Case in London during the seventeenth century).
[45] Wormald, "The Creation of Britain: Multiple Kingdoms or Core and Colonies," 180-181.
[46] Ibid., 181.
[47] Ibid., 182-184.

internal institutions, especially within their established state churches and a literary culture which celebrated their respective Englishness and Scottishness, which made a perfect union between them difficult, with neither kingdom willing to abolish or abandon these institutions or compromise. The final reason involved the many different and confusing visions of Britain that were expressed during this period. This last reason is perhaps the most important: as the language of Britain and Britishness expanded and traveled during the mid sixteenth century it became more fluid and harder to define. From the traditional articulations of Britain that the English formulated during the medieval period to the Scottish version envisioned by John Major along with the Welsh claim to being the oldest Britons, when it came time to fashion a British state, it was difficult to define what this might be since there were so many claims and ideas of Britishness already in circulation. It should not be surprising that James failed to instigate a union between Scotland and England, but rather surprising that he was able to establish some legal victories in the first place. This is not to claim that the English were not Scotophobic, or the Scottish were not Anglophobic, because there were strong animosities on both sides of the border. However, ethnic tensions were not the primary barriers to union; ethnic tensions had existed in both Scotland and England for quite some time.[48] In the next section, a look over the printed material during the early years of James's English reign will serve to complicate the image of the purely Scotophobic English and to broaden James's cultural appeals to a shared Britishness by his use of symbols and institutions.

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[48] For a survey of England's internal ethnic tensions during the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century, see Mark Stoyle, *Soldiers & Strangers: An Ethnic History of the English Civil War* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005), 1-11.

4.2   Symbols of Britain

James was active in waging a cultural and public campaign to promote his British agenda. Furthermore, several of James's new English subjects were supporting his vision of Britain and sharing their own thoughts on the new British culture and kingdom through printed works. The legal attempts at establishing a new British kingdom failed, but the sheer possibility of its creation and the attempt to fashion it spurred conversations about Britain and Britons. The figure of a monarch of both Scotland and England with two sons and an assured succession provided the context to talk of a future British state; this monarch, unlike the three previous Tudor monarchs, was not in danger of losing his throne and lived without the impending succession crisis that each Tudor contended with at the end of their lives. In other words, James was firmly ensconced on the throne of both England and Scotland, or, as he might put it, the throne of Great Britain.

As noted above, James began his reign envisioning a union between the kingdoms and the creation of a British state and crown. What is especially interesting about the timing of James's urging is that he seems to have, on his way to London, made it a point to present himself at a British king while in Berwick. Though speculative, it's not hard to imagine that James continued this during his progress towards London. While not quite a modern day public relations campaign, it is not difficult to think that if James continued to make his intentions known in each city he visited about creating a British crown that a public discourse about Britain might emerge. Unfortunately due to the lack of written sources and spotty records, it will never be known what the "middling sort" thought of this proposition, and whether a change of the name of the kingdom or the title of the monarch would have caused them as much controversy as we have seen in the House of Commons.

James also sought to create a British court. Before Elizabeth's death, he had already accepted both Scots and the English into his court, perhaps in anticipation of his eventual succession to the English throne.[49] Once James became king, the Outer and Privy Chambers of his court contained an equal number of Scots and Englishmen, but Scots dominated his Bedchamber. It has been argued that his decision to maintain primarily Scots in his Bedchamber was a central source of tension in the debates for union, with the English fearing that James would favor Scots and unevenly distribute patronage towards his Scottish favorites.[50] It has also been argued that while James attempted to forge a British Court, the identity did not become essential or well-defined for many of his courtiers, especially the Scottish members; while they enjoyed the benefits of the expanded Court, they maintained their Scottish identity and did not seem to adopt a broader feeling of Britishness.[51] However, arguing that James failed at establishing a British Court does not do justice to the situation. Unless the assumption is that James should have created a coherent and generally accepted Court, one could look at his Court settlement as a success, and the beginnings of an Anglo-Scottish aristocracy.[52] Much like the legal debates over union, the structuring of the court and how to negotiate identity within it were also confused.

James created space for a broader discussion of Britain by issuing several proclamations during the first three years of his reign that moved towards creating a symbolic and imagined Britain. With these, he legitimated a conversation about Britain and Britishness that was not possible under the previous two Tudor monarchs, both of whom were more concerned about

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[49] Cuddy, "Anglo-Scottish Union and the Court of James I, 1603-1625," 109.

[50] Ibid., 110-111.

[51] Keith M. Brown, "The Scottish Aristocracy, Anglicization and the Court, 1603-1638," *Historical Journal* 36, no. 3 (September 1993), 574-576.

[52] Cuddy, "Anglo-Scottish Union and the Court of James I, 1603-1625," 119-121. Cuddy praises James for his use of two favorites (a Scottish and an English) in the operation of his British Court.

English affairs, religious settlement, and respecting the rights of other monarchs. Following his statements in favor of union in Berwick in April 1603, James issued a proclamation the next month calling for the "uniting of England and Scotland," which had begun in his person, to be formally and legally "perfected" by erasing the border between the kingdoms with the consent of the English and Scottish Parliaments.[53] In this proclamation, James insisted that a union had already taken place due to his kingship, and it was now necessary for both Parliaments to pass implementing legislation. Later in that year, James would use his prerogative powers to provide a more stable economic union between England and Scotland. The king issued a proclamation that declared "what values certain Moneys of Scotland shalbe currant within England."[54] While far from James's eventual goal of creating a single currency and commercial union of his two kingdoms, this proclamation advanced the process by constructing an official exchange rate for the Scottish and English currency.

James's most symbolic proclamations came in 1604 and 1606. Perhaps impatient with the slow progress of the English Parliament, James issued a proclamation in 1604 that gave him the title of "King of Great Brittaine." James stated that Britain, due to being an island, was a "little world within itselfe" and "Acommunitie of Language, the principall meanes of Civil socitie, An unitie of Religion, the Chiefest band of heartie Union, and the surest knot of lasting Peace." Furthermore, the union was "not inforced by Conquest and violence," but was naturally arrived at due to James's "Right and Title" and the "worke of God and nature."[55] By basing his title on his person, natural law, cultural community, and God's will, James constructed an

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[53] James I, "Proclamation of May," 1603 quoted in Sarah Waurechen, "Imagined Polities, Failed Dreams, and the Beginnings of an Unacknowledged Britain: English Responses to James VI and I's Visions of Perfect Union," *Journal of British Studies* 52, no. 3 (July 2013), 580.
[54] James I, *Proclamation for Scottish Monies in England* (London, 1603).
[55] James I, *Proclamation Creating the Title of King of Great Britain* (London, 1604).

argument that placed him, and the union, above English common law. There is no doubt that

James assuming the title and his justification for doing so caused much of the consternation that

we saw earlier in the Parliamentary debates over the union of the kingdoms.[56] However, the

similarities between this proclamation and Somerset's *Epistle* from 1547 are striking. Both

advocate a union on the same nonviolent, dynastic, and religious grounds, while using similar

rhetoric to John Major's earlier work theorizing Britain. In 1606, James issued a proclamation

for his "Subiects of South and North Britaine," which concerned the "bearing of their Flagges"

and supported a nascent maritime Britishness. James ordered the creation of a flag that the

"Subiects of this Isle and kingdome of great Britaine" would "beare in their Mainstoppe the Red

Crosse, commonly called S. Georges Crosse, and the White Crosse commonly called S.

Andrewes Crosse, ioyned together according to a forme made by our heralds."[57] Thus, the flag

that we now call the Union Jack first appeared in 1606 on oceangoing vessels. These symbolic

measures did not create a kingdom of Britain, but did create images for what one could describe

as a state in waiting. While the garments of state had not yet been sewn, James had devised its

insignia.

James was not alone in envisioning Britain and celebrating his kingship of a united

island. Sir Francis Bacon, an early proponent of union, wrote in favor of James and touted him

as "the first king, which hath had the honour… to vnite these two mighty and warlike nations of

England and *Scotland*, vnder one Soverainity and Monarchy."[58] Echoing Polydore Vergil and

John Major, Bacon argued that "it dooth not appeare by the recordes and memories, of any true

history, nor fearely by the fiction and pleasure of any fabulous narration, or tradition that ever, of

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[56] Arthur H. Williamson, "Union with England Traditional, Union with England Radical: Sir James Hope and the Mid-Seventeenth-Century British State," *English Historical Review* 110, no. 436 (April 1995), 306.
[57] James I, *Proclamation for a Common Flag* (London, 1606).
[58] Francis Bacon, *A Briefe Discovrse* (London, 1603), A7v.

any antiquity, this Iland of great *Brittaine* was vnited vnder one king, before this day."[59] This

vision of Britain was formed by the creation of a kingdom not ever established before, perhaps

eschewing even the myth of King Arthur. John Thornborough published the Parliamentary

objections to union, therefore publicizing them, and refuted them by appealing to the right of the

king to change the name of his kingdom and appealing to the more prestigious historic name of

Britain.[60] This ancient name was further celebrating by the poet William Herbert, and in

Englands Sorrows he chastises England for its failings and calls for a return to the name of

Britain.[61] Herbert claimed that while God had ordained the union between England and

Scotland, the English were resisting and refusing to return to their more glorious and prestigious

British past.[62] There were also semiotic expressions of Britain, which envisioned Britain as one

cartographical entity, thus adding on to the text of a shared past.[63] However, while many were

writing in celebration, others were expressing qualms and fears about joining England to

Scotland, especially since the latter kingdom was viewed as poorer and less honorable.[64]

It was possible, however, to write about Britain and celebrate James by appealing to a

different interpretation of history and precedent. Some writers still appealed to a British past in

which Brutus was the first king and divided the kingdoms into three, with his oldest son

receiving England.[65] Another writer grounded the laws of England as the "ancient laws of Great

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[59] Ibid.

[60] John Thornborough, *A Discovrse Plainely Proving the Euident Vtilitie and Vrgent Necessitie of the Desired Happie Vnion* (London, 1604), 4-6. Also see John Thornborough, *The Ioiefvll and Blessed Revniting* (London, 1605.

[61] William Herbert, *Englands Sorrow; or, A Farewell to Essex* (London, 1606), C2v.

[62] Ibid., H1r.

[63] See William Camden, *Brittania* (London, 1610). Especially on the title page, which celebrates the island of Britain. Of note, only a small portion of the eastern Irish coast is depicted. Also see Michael Drayton, *Poly-Olbion* (London, 1613).

[64] Waurechen, "Imagined Polities, Failed Dreams, and the Beginnings of an Unacknowledged Britain: English Responses to James VI and I's Vision of Perfect Union," 587-589.

[65] George Owen Harry, *The Genealogy of the High and Mighty Monarch James* (London, 1604).

Britain," thus creating a union in which returning to the British past essentially meant that Scots needed to become English.[66] Edward Ayscu held onto the claim that Scotland owed England homage, that it had been repeatedly defeated in various battles in the past, and that Scotland was a dependency of the English kingdom. The cover image of the book shows a disproportionate map of Britain, with "Anglia" dwarfing "Hibernia" and "Scotia."[67] As these writings illustrate, the debate over union was not a homogeneous group or between binaries. Rather, it was possible to disagree within the group of those who supported the union. Those who supported an Anglocentric union were bound to fail in their efforts to convince the Scottish Parliament that an unequal union was the only possible union. However, this does not mean that the writers who propagated an Anglocentric union were averse to the idea of Britain, but rather had a very different conception of Britishness.

The writings of James and others opened up the space for a discussion of Britain and how to negotiate a now possible British identity and state. If looking at the proclamations and writings from the viewpoint of the eventual failure of legal union in 1607, one might suppose that James's overall efforts to create a British union and state did not take hold or had little effect. However, when looking at these efforts separately, it is apparent that union was a serious topic and desired by many, but there were multiple and competing images of what constituted a union and how to administer it. James did, at the very least, create an imagined British kingdom, and took very seriously his title of King of Great Britain. Furthermore, his attempts to push forward a union advanced the conversation about Britain from a courtly to a public discussion. This is not to downplay the failure of union and the difficulties and tensions within the two kingdoms. Neither kingdom was willing to push forward with an actual union based on the

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[66] George Salteren, *Of the Antient Lawes of Great Britaine* (London, 1605), L3v.
[67] Edward Ayscu, *A Historie* (London, 1607), Title Page and 118.

vague bonds and confusing schemes which James and the other writers discussed; after all, matters of law, religion, patronage, and representation had to be settled in ways agreeable to both kingdoms. While Britain now had a British king, it lacked a British kingdom.

4.3   A British Empire?

While a legal union between the kingdoms failed in 1607 and there was no attempt to reignite the parliamentary debates afterwards, James had, through his prerogative, created an official language of Britain in his kingship and through British symbols, such as his image on coins and the flags flying over English and Scottish ships. Another avenue through which to experiment with a British identity as well as state was unique to the early seventeenth century: James oversaw the launch of several colonial projects and pushed to give them a British character. In addition, writers during this period capitalized on the language of a British empire and union between the kingdoms to present colonial endeavors as distinctively British. Thus, while the island of Britain could not offer a British kingdom, perhaps overseas possessions could provide a British empire.

James was no stranger to colonization and practice, as he pursued an aggressive internal "civilizing" mission in Scotland, especially in the Highlands, which were populated predominantly by Gaels.[68] In fact, the civilizing process that James took up in Scotland had a long history during the sixteenth century; John Major had urged the Scottish kings to subject the Highlanders to the culturally superior Lowlanders.[69] The same dynamic of internal colonization

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[68] David Armitage, *The Ideological Origins of the British Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 56-57.

[69] Arthur H. Williamson, "Scots, Indians and Empire: The Scottish Politics of Civilization, 1517-1609," *Past and Present* 150, no. 1 (1996), 57-59.

had been practiced in England since the twelfth century, especially in Wales and Cornwall.[70]

Thus, when James became king of England as well as King of Scots, it was not difficult to create

a binary between "civilized" Britons and "barbaric" Gaels. Those English and Scottish who may

have been attracted to this project would have found common ground in a cultural and religious

alliance.[71] However, as we have seen from the earlier debates over union, the binary claims to

identity and civilization of the English and Scots could not be broken down to ideologically

create a coherent British identity.

Some writers in the beginning of James's reign stressed the potential imperial benefits

that the union might bring to Britain. John Gordon, a Scot, argued that it was now possible to

"plant" truths in the "Ilands of great Brittaine," and that the "vnion of English and Scottish hath

beene long before foreseene by the diuine prouidence."[72] Sir William Cornwallis, a member of

the English Privy Council, urged the "increase of Empire" and hoped for a battle between the

true and false faiths.[73] John Hayward claimed that the Scots were "great in multitude, resolute in

minde, for service apt, in faith assured, in wils treatable, moderate in hopes, bearing one common

desire to commit their lives to aduenture, not only for the safetie, but for the glorie of their state,"

and the union would lead to the "encrease of dominion and power."[74] John Skinner posited that

England was destined to fight France and Spain. Scotland was a natural Protestant ally of

England in this struggle and a union between them would forge a combined Protestant power

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[70] For Wales, see R. R. Davies, *The First English Empire: Power and Identity in the British Isles 1093-1343* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 142-171; for Cornwall, see Mark Stoyle, "The Dissidence of Despair: Rebellion and Identity in Early Modern Cornwall," *Journal of British Studies* 38, no. 4 (October 1999), 423-444.

[71] Arthur H. Williamson, "An Empire to End Empire: The Dynamic of Early Modern British Expansion," *Huntington Library Quarterly* 68, nos. 1-2 (March 2005), 233-265. Though, as Conrad Russell has argued, there were religious tensions throughout and within Britain, see Russell, *The Causes of the English Civil War*, 26-57 and 83-108.

[72] John Gordon, *A Panegyriqve of Congratvlation* (London, 1603), 1-5.

[73] William Cornwallis, *The Miraculous and Happie Union of England and Scotland* (London, 1604), B4v and D2v.

[74] John Hayward, *A Treatise of Vnion* (London, 1604), 5.

that could stop Catholic expansion.[75] Many of these appeals to empire, expansion, and unity in religion sprang from the previous century's vision of a mutually beneficial union, a vision with a strongly Protestant coloring. English articulations of a larger British empire, which consisted of various possessions in the Americas, were in circulation least as early as 1574 when John Dee presented his *Limits of the British Empire*.[76] John Dee would send a letter to James in 1604 celebrating him as "the most blessed and Triumphant Monarch, that euer this *Brytish* Empire enioyed."[77] Thus, when viewed together, John Major's concept of Greater Britain, John Dee's envisioning of a global British empire, and the writers of the early seventeenth century underpinned an ongoing discussion over the benefits of a unified Britain pursuing an empire. By the seventeenth century, one definition of Britain and Britishness had shifted to a civilizing Protestant imperialism.

The failure of union in 1607 coincided with the explosion of colonial experiments, most of which gained a "distinctly British character."[78] With the legal and political unification of Britain off of the table, some looked overseas in order to establish British communities that might serve as a model for those at home to follow. The first, and perhaps most successful, "plantation" was located in Ulster. Indeed, the English and Scottish settlers in the colony were referred to as "Brittish Vndertakers" and given equal treatment in terms of land grants.[79] British settlements also emerged in Kedainiai and Januszow in Lithuania, in Sweden, in Asia, in the Americas, and within England, Ireland, and Scotland. These colonial undertakings provided an

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[75] John Skinner, *Rapta Tatio: The Mirror of His Majesties Present Government, Tending to the Union for his Whole Iland of Brittonie* (London, 1604), F1v-F2r.

[76] Ken MacMillan, *Sovereignty and Possession in the English New World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 53-57.

[77] John Dee, *Letter to James I* (n.p., 1604).

[78] Williamson, "An Empire to End Empire: The Dynamic of Early Modern British Expansion," 255.

[79] Anonymous, *Conditions to be Observed by the Brittish Vndertakers* (London, 1610), 1-4.

interconnected and intersectional arena for both Scots and English to become involved.[80]

Virginia, traditionally thought of as an English colony, had Scottish involvement and was

originally referred to as a larger colonial entity called "Nova Britannia."[81]

      While claiming British identity within Britain was often a confusing and entangled affair,

it seems that simply being off of the islands established a degree of Britishness. For example,

Henry Blount, an English trader in the Mediterranean, justified declaring that he was a Scot by

saying that this was not "any quitting of my Countrey, but rather a retreat from one corner

[England] to the other [Scotland]," inferring his allegiance to the common king that ruled both

kingdoms.[82] Indeed, as Alison Games has posited, the Scots "presence in colonies, trading posts,

fisheries, and armies made foreign settlements precociously British before the two kingdoms

joined in formal union in 1707."[83] In a petition in 1621, the Scottish undertakers of the colonies

in Newfoundland boasted that they had "10,000 British seaman" and that the "King's subjects,

both of England and Scotland, are now joined together, in hopes of making a more settled

plantation there."[84] Lord Baltimore wrote to King Charles I in 1628 on behalf of the safety of

"many thousand British subjects."[85] Continuing into the 1630s, there were concerns for "wrongs

done to British subjects" by the French in Canada on two different occasions.[86] Perhaps we can

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[80] Williamson, "An Empire to End Empire: The Dynamic of Early Modern British Expansion," 255.

[81] For examples of this, see Robert Johnson, *Nova Britannia* (London, 1609); and Robert Johnson, *The New Life of Virginea* (London, 1612).

[82] Quoted in Alison Games, *The Web of Empire: English Cosmopolitans in an Age of Expansion 1560-1660* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 78.

[83] Ibid., 8.

[84] 'America and West Indies: March 1621,' in Calendar of State Papers Colonial, America and West Indies, Volume 1, 1574-1660, ed. W Noel Sainsbury (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1860), https://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol1/pp25-26.

[85] 'America and West Indies: August 1628,' in Calendar of State Papers Colonial, America and West Indies, Volume 1, 1574-1660, ed. W Noel Sainsbury (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1860), 93-94, https://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol1/pp93-94.

[86] 'America and West Indies: January 1630,' in Calendar of State Papers Colonial, America and West Indies, Volume 1, 1574-1660, ed. W Noel Sainsbury (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1860), 105-107, https://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol1/pp105-107; and 'America and

see the development of Britishness against the French "Other" in a much earlier setting than has previously been discussed by Linda Colley?[87] From the examples just presented, claiming a British identity was something that occurred in both official documents and non-official sources. Though it is hard to detect how British anyone felt, the appeals to the identity at least were structured according to an established discourse, but with, as we have seen, multiple meanings and a high degree of incoherence. It seems that having a common king, sharing anti-Catholic sentiment, and joining together for colonial and commercial endeavors were sometimes enough to claim a common British identity.

None of this, however, is to say that there was a concentrated and orchestrated effort to create a colonial British empire by either the Jacobean or Caroline regimes.[88] Often, the motivations for colonial settlement were purely for religious freedom or economic interests, and not as part of a grand struggle against the Catholic powers or for the glory of either an English or British empire.[89] Several of the writers who urged empire and those who pursued colonies did so within an English imperialist intellectual context.[90] Many of the projects during this period did, however, attract Scots, the English, and in some cases, the Irish to plan and settle the colonies, which created an interconnected colonial world, one which we may tentatively call British.

4.4   Conclusion

In this chapter, I have discussed three different attempts by James and others who desired a union between the kingdoms to create a British state and culture. The first model, legal

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West Indies: January 1636,' in Calendar of State Papers Colonial, America and West Indies, Volume 1, 1574-1660, ed. W Noel Sainsbury (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1860), 219-220, https://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol1/pp219-220.

[87] Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation 1707-1837*, 4.

[88] Williamson, "An Empire to End Empire: The Dynamic of Early Modern British Expansion," 256.

[89] Freedom, I realize, is a dangerous word to use, but it should be read as "freedom from the established Church."

[90] Ibid., 257.

incorporation, was frustrated in 1607 and was perhaps James's most obvious failure. Nevertheless, it provided a context for talking about a British state that was removed from myth and could arguably exist in the form of the king's natural body. Ultimately, while the conversation provided some legal gains for a union, such as the abolition of hostile laws, border laws, and the naturalization of all subjects born after James's ascension to the throne, a British kingdom could not be established during this period. The confusion created by many different versions of Britishness and ideas of Britain was the main reason why this proposal failed, along with the lack of interest in union from 1570 to 1603 and the firm establishment of Scottish and English identities that could serve as barriers to the acknowledgement of Britain.

The next attempt involved the use of symbolic gestures and the make-up of James's Court. By using his prerogative and the public potential of the proclamation, James established a language and symbolism of Britain that adopted the title "King of Great Britain" and created a new British flag for ships. Furthermore, writers who favored union published several pamphlets that also argued for the existence of Britain and appealed to a common Britishness. This existed in the imaginations of some of his subjects, and allowed for a broader discussion that may be tentatively termed "public." However, it was difficult to find a coherent meaning of Britain, as James provided symbols but vague definitions, and each of the writers articulated very different versions of Britain. This provided a discourse in which there were many incompatible formulations of Britain and its identity.

The final attempt was the creation of a colonial empire. The concurrent civilizing missions in both Scotland and England converged with James's accession to the throne of England in 1603. The ingredients for a shared endeavor to civilize the British Isles were in place, but as in the other attempts at Britishness, there was much difficulty in finding a mutually

acceptable message within Britain to express the shared cultural vision of both the English and the Scottish. Overseas, however, it became somewhat easier to claim Britishness, as the distance from nuances provided a basis for identity in the form of a shared language, religion (in the form of anti-Catholic Protestantism), and king. The lack of colonial unity meant that claims to Britishness in these instances were drawing from a vague and elastic concept, one that could not be shared or concretely explained, without potentially coming into conflict with other people who might claim a very different form of the identity.

Legal, cultural, and imperial attempts were insufficient to forge a common Britishness, produce a British state, or demonstrate a sensible identity during James's reign over his two kingdoms. There were, however, legal steps towards integrating the Scots and English into a unified monarchical and economic system; there were also cultural symbols of Britain created in the form of a British king and flag; and finally, there was the realization that the Scots could be useful partners to the English in a broader British imperial project. While this period did not create any sort of a unified or agreeable identity, Britishness was, from this point, attached to the concept of a British empire. This meant that state formation would coincide with the imperial project taking place in a broader and wider reaching early modern British world, and a nascent form of Britishness was then available for use in discourse well before 1707.

Conclusion

David Armitage has argued that by 1730 it was possible for subjects of the British crown to recognize themselves as part of a larger British empire that encompassed territories in Europe, the Americas, and Asia.[1] Furthermore, Linda Colley has argued that the ingredients that made the empire possible were a common Protestantism, conflict with a French Other, and the colonial and commercial benefits of empire.[2] Both of these arguments posit the establishment of an ideologically articulate British empire and the development of a distinct British identity in the eighteenth century. The thrust of this thesis has been to challenge claims that characterize Britishness as a modern development and instead to link British identity to the medieval period, to emphasize discursive and political developments in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries that subsequently underpinned eighteenth-century "forgings" of identity, and to elucidate the importance of Protestantism and empire in these early modern centuries. This thesis has also sought to challenge any claims to a "common" Britishness, which, when articulated, could have been universally understood.

The first chapter linked the late medieval conceptions of Britain with early sixteenth-century Lowland Scottish articulations of Britishness based on geography, a shared culture, and dynastic union. These conceptions were a background to the marriage of Henry VII's daughter, Margaret, to James IV, King of Scots, in 1503. Immediately after the wedding, poets began to write of the shared "Inglisch" language of "Britaine."[3] Thus, confluent cultural similarities and political events created the possibility to imagine a future British king, which was envisioned by

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[1] See David Armitage, *The Ideological Origins of the British Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 8.

[2] See Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation 1707-1837* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), 6-7.

[3] William Dunbar, *The Golden Targe* (n.p., 1508), no pagination (9 of 10 unmarked pages).

the Scottish philosopher John Major as existing outside of the mythological origins of Britain.[4]

This nascent Scottish articulation of Britain was then linked with the events in the Kingdom of

England during the 1530s and 1540s. Determined to consolidate his position within the British

Isles, Henry VIII tried to force Scotland to break with Rome, but this effort ended in a war with

Scotland in 1542. The death of the King of Scots placed the young infant Mary on the throne,

and the possibility for a marriage between the English heir, Edward, and the new Queen of Scots

seemed to be an opportunity for a union of the crowns. While Henry VIII sought union based on

mythological legends of English dominance over Scotland and Wales, his death opened up a

moment in which Edward Seymour, Duke of Somerset and Lord Protector of the new King

Edward VI, embraced the joining of the kingdoms through an equal marriage and drew on the

language of John Major. Ultimately, this vision of union would fail due to Scottish fears of

subjugation under the English crown, residual English views of dominance and overlordship of

the island, religious tensions in Scotland between Catholics and Protestants, and French

involvement in the politics of Scotland.

The second half of the sixteenth century saw the continuing development of Britishness

flowing from the events of the 1540s. With both kingdoms ruled by Catholic monarchs in the

1550s, several Protestants from both realms fled to the continent. What might be called a

nascent British Protestantism found expression in the work of John Knox, Christopher Goodman,

and John Bale, all of whom used the discourse of Britain in order to establish a shared Protestant

faith that predated Roman Catholicism. Most of the exiles returned to England at the end of the

1550s, and, in the case of John Knox and Christopher Goodman, split their time between

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[4] John Major's seminal work posits a Britain consisting of a definition of Greater Britain that includes England, Scotland, and Wales, while eschewing mythological origins. See John Major, *A History of Greater Britain*, translated by Archibald Constable (Edinburgh: University Press, 1892).

England and Scotland. The Scottish Reformations of the 1560s provided several opportunities

for England to assert a settlement that may have provided a more uniform "British" church.

Certainly, figures like William Cecil, who participated in the campaigns of the 1540s, practiced

foreign policy with the intention of bringing Scotland and England closer to union. Elizabeth,

however, respected the rights of her sister Mary, Queen of Scots, and chose not to take the

opportunities presented to her, as she was more focused on maintaining her position as a Queen

of England. From the 1570s onwards, the English and Scottish churches developed on divergent

lines and discourses of Britishness in England tended again to view the Scots as outsiders and

barbaric, while placing Britain in an Anglocentric framework or in the Welsh past.

Although James I failed to create a political union between Scotland and England, he did

construct an imaginary kingdom of Britain, which used symbolic gestures to acknowledge its

existence, such as the creation of the title of "King of Great Britain" and a flag for ships that

combined the English and Scottish standards. The legal union between the kingdoms failed

primarily because of the difficulty in articulating a coherent and mutually agreeable version of

Britain, and not only due to Scottophobia by the English. The construction of an empire that

elicited the participation of both Scots and English provided a new avenue for imagining

Britishness: while the two kingdoms may not have found common ground within their island, the

mutual benefits of colonial endeavors could serve as a catalyst for union and a shared identity.

Two important observations arise from this study. The first is the multiple opportunities

for political union between England and Scotland during the sixteenth and early seventeenth

centuries and the dominance of the British political question in both of these centuries. The

failures to create a kingdom of Britain in the 1540s, 1560s, and 1600s show the difficulties

inherent in early modern state-creation and the relationship between kingdoms within a

composite monarchy.[5] Furthermore, these experiments also fit into a conversation dating at least

to the 1200s.[6] In order to understand the discourse on Britain in the sixteenth century, historians

must link it to medieval ideas of a British kingdom, especially since the sixteenth century

provides a concurrent conversation between late medieval discourses on Britain and newly

emerging conversations of a shared British culture between Scotland and England.[7]

     With this in mind, the dynastic policy that Henry VII initiated by marrying his daughter

into the ruling Stuart dynasty becomes apparent: the intent was to recreate an imagined British

kingdom bound by blood; it is not by coincidence that Henry VII's first-born son was named

Arthur. Much of the sixteenth century was transfixed with the proximity of the English and

Scottish monarchs to their neighbor's throne. Of course, James VI, King of Scots, eventually

won this dynastic lottery when he inherited the English kingdom in 1603, but was unable to

effect an official union of the kingdoms. James's failure has often been attributed to English

xenophobia and desires for a "perfect union" of the kingdoms.[8] However, as I have argued, the

real difficulty was in articulating a coherent and acceptable vision of a British kingdom in the

political sphere within the new composite monarchy of Britain.

     The political questions of what Britain would be were not settled or in stasis during the

remainder of the seventeenth century, bur rather constantly being asked and negotiated. Some

historians have argued that the kingship of Charles I and the English Civil Wars must be viewed

in light of the "British problem" of how to rule England, Scotland, and Wales either as a unit or

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[5] For a broad European approach to this during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, see J. H. Elliott, "A Europe of Composite Monarchies," *Past and Present* no. 137 (November 1992), 48-71.

[6] For early articulations of a united British kingdom, see R. R. Davies, *The First English Empire: Power and Identities in the British Isles 1093-1343* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000).

[7] For late medieval articulations of Britain and how identities were envisioned, see Ralph Griffiths, "The Island of England in the Fifteenth Century: Perceptions of the Peoples of the British Isles," *Journal of Medieval History* 29 (2003), 177-200.

[8] For an example of this view, see Jenny Wormald, "The Creation of Britain: Multiple Kingdoms or Core and Colonies?," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 2 (1992), 175-194.

separately.[9] Derek Hirst has argued that even after England's execution of Charles I, neither the English Republic nor Scotland could disentangle itself from an idea of Britain, even though English and Scottish definitions diverged quite significantly.[10] While forcible attempts to create a British state failed, ultimately the Scottish desire for access to an English commercial and territorial empire and the English aspiration to create a stable Protestant succession for both kingdoms provided the impetus for a negotiated union, which resembled a business deal rather more than a cultural union.[11] Thus, the British political question was being asked throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

The second observation is that a cultural construction of Britain unfolded during these two centuries, albeit one that was vague, varied, and often incompatible with ideas of Englishness, Scottishness, Welshness, and even Britishness. The culture of Britain also intersected with the political circumstances above: the initial writings of William Dunbar which celebrated a shared language within Britain and John Major's urging for a dynastic recreation of the Kingdom of Britain were both issued in the shadow of Henry VII's dynastic marriage. Many of the elements of Linda Colley's argument for the establishment of British identity existed well before the eighteenth century. We can see a common Protestantism in the early religious urgings for a Protestant union in the 1540s by John Elder, individuals such as John Knox and Christopher Goodman, John Bale's writings about a shared British church which antedated the Roman Catholic Church, and the writings during James's accession to the English throne which urged for religious unity under the new king. Colley's claim that the definition of a unified Protestant

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[9] See Conrad Russell, *The Causes of the English Civil War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991); Arthur H. Williamson, "Union with England Traditional, Union with England Radical: Sir James Hope and the Mid-Seventeenth Century British State," *English Historical Review* 110, no. 436 (April 1995), 303-322.

[10] See Derek Hirst, "The English Republic and the Meaning of Britain," *Journal of Modern History* 66, no. 3 (September 1994), 451-486.

[11] See David Armitage, "Making the Empire British: Scotland and the Atlantic World, 1542-1707," *Past and Present* 155 (1997), 34-63.

Britain being defined against external "Others" was instrumental in forging a common identity

can be seen as applying earlier, apparent in two cases: in the first, against the traditional English

enemy and Catholic "Other" France during the 1540s when the French kingdom was attempting

to forge a permanent dynastic bond with Scotland, and during the union of the crowns, as the

French and Spanish were depicted as the mutual enemies of the newly imagined British

kingdom. Imperial projects during James's reign were also seen as British projects, and

incorporated both English and Scottish participants. While the complications of a coherent

cultural and political union within the island of Britain proved to be too much a barrier to effect a

union, colonial projects provided a common ground for inhabitants of both kingdoms to occupy

an equal space and construct a common identity. Thus, the ingredients for "forging the nation"

were well in place long before the eighteenth century.[12]

The significance of both of these observations suggests future directions for research.

One suggestion is to move beyond the Anglocentric vision of Britain and to provide a more

nuanced study of the Scottish and English debates over what a British kingdom meant. Instead

of positing Britain as the creation of an expanding English state or Englishness writ large,

historians should recognize the integral role of Scots in shaping and contributing to the

ideological and imagined Britishnesses throughout the British Isles.[13]

A second suggestion is to dispense with fixed meanings of Britishness that come to

fruition and coherence during the eighteenth century; from what we have seen, statements that

strongly resemble a shared sense of Britishness existed in the early 1600s as well as in 1730.

Difficulty may arise when trying to posit that the 1730s version of a British empire provided

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[12] Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707-1837*, 1.
[13] For the argument of Britain being a product of England writ large, see Derek Hirst, *Dominion: England and its Island Neighbours* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012).

more coherence and a more unifying force than some of the early seventeenth century writings;

one may find both as ideological conceptions that did not provide a strong or unifying force

beyond the confines of an educated group.[14] While a more politically unified Britain became a

legal unit and a coherent administrative state in the eighteenth century, defining Britishness

remained difficult and somewhat incoherent - as it seems to continue to be into the twenty-first

century.

A third, and perhaps most fruitful, suggestion is to explore identities within empire.

While some historians have written of the effects of the Atlantic world on English society, a

wider scope could be envisioned for interrogating the impact of colonial projects on identities

and on Britain.[15] Alison Games has recognized the British angle to early colonizing projects and

has referred to a larger early modern "British world."[16] Both Arthur Williamson and Ken

MacMillan have acknowledged the ideological British dimension to colonization during the first

half of the seventeenth century, with the Scots taking an active role in English colonies and in

their own projects.[17] Furthermore, according to Games, the presence of Scots in commercial

endeavors and colonial settlements made "foreign settlements precociously British before the

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[14] For the argument that the empire became ideological coherent by 1730, see David Armitage, *The Ideological Origins of the British Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 7-9.

[15] For an example of the Anglocentric approach, see Carla Gardina Pestana, *The English Atlantic in an Age of Revolution 1640-1661* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004); and Susan Dwyer Amussen, *Caribbean Exchanges: Slavery and the Transformation of English Society, 1640-1700* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007). For a study that recognizes the multiplicities within the Atlantic world, but still approaches it from an English perspective, see Christian J. Koot, *Empire at the Periphery: British Colonists, Anglo-Dutch Trade, and the Development of the British Atlantic, 1621-1713* (New York: New York University Press, 2011).

[16] This term is used in Alison Games, *Migration and the Origins of the English Atlantic World* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999), 215.

[17] See Ken MacMillan, *Sovereignty and Possession in the English New World: The Legal Foundations of Empire, 1576-1640* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 199-200; and Arthur H. Williamson, "An Empire to End Empire: The Dynamic of Early Modern British Expansion," *Huntington Library Quarterly* 68, nos. 1-2 (March 2005), 253-256.

two kingdoms joined in a formal union in 1707."[18] Even in the later seventeenth century, the competition offered by a newly formed Scottish company to English companies in the Indian Ocean was viewed as competition not from a European competitor but from an interloping British subject.[19] Hence, Scottish involvement in the British empire during the seventeenth century helped to create its early modern foundations.

These three suggestions provide an historical framework in which the Scots were integral to the formation of British identity in the sixteenth century and the imperial project of the seventeenth century. Far from being passive subjects of a developing English imperialism or defining themselves against an English other, the Scots played an active role in negotiating Britishness. The divisions between Scotland and England which we saw nearly lead to Scotland removing itself from the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland in 2014 are nothing new; the appellation of Britain from the sixteenth century to the twenty-first century has continuously been contested, difficult, and vague. However, the role of Scotland in defining what it meant to be British and in supplying symbols of Britain during the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries must not be ignored. After all, it was a Scottish writer, John Major, who redefined Britain as a cultural and geographical entity which stood on equal and mutually beneficial grounds, proclaiming himself a Briton; it was a Scot, John Knox, who appealed to a British Protestant nation during the 1550s and hoped to forge a British kingdom through a shared church; and it was a Scot, James Stuart, who became the first British king.

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[18] Alison Games, *The Web of Empire: English Cosmopolitans in an Age of Expansion 1560-1660* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 8.

[19] Philip J. Stern, *The Company-State: Corporate Sovereignty and the Early Modern Foundations of the British Empire in India* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 160.

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