

Chapter 3

Boston Pays Tribute

The Political Challenges of the Expanding City-State, 1650-1690

I do count it my duty to spend and to be spent for the public welfare but I think it (with all Humility) also your duty, Honoured Gentlemen, not to suffer me to lose more than needeth.

John Hull to the Massachusetts General Court (1681)

Yea, the Invention had been of more use to the New-Englanders, than if . . . the Mountains of Peru had removed into these Parts of America.

Cotton Mather, Pietas in Patriam (1697)

As King Philip's War shows with the utmost clarity, Boston's desire for territorial expansion, mandated by the perception that its territorial limits under the Massachusetts charter were too confining to sustain its independent economy, produced violence and warfare among the competing forces for political and economic authority within the New England region. The Pequot War of 1637 and King Philip's War in 1675-78 were products of this same expansive impulse, and, like the natural features of a landscape sacrificed to the housing developer's bulldozer, both of these wars were named for what they destroyed. But Boston's desire for expansion created conflict in other spheres as well. The original charter of the Massachusetts Bay Company was, in every way but the amount of land it granted, ideal for promoting the colony's autonomy, and this prospect remained a goal throughout the era of the Stuart monarchs. Although the charter had

been the gift of Charles I, Boston viewed this gift as a license to evade the authority of Charles and his royal sons, Charles II and James II, as much as possible. Had the land grant defined in the charter been large and rich enough to furnish the productive hinterland that Boston's population and mercantile economy needed, then evading royal authority might have been relatively easy. Instead, the Massachusetts Bay Colony was surrounded by other plantations whose settlers also saw the Stuarts as their benefactors, but did not share Boston's desire for independence from royal authority. Consequently, whenever Boston risked expansion for the sake of economic autonomy, it risked the political consequences that crown intervention in the dispute might bring.¹

During the period between 1640 and 1660, when English royal authority was distracted by civil war and then collapsed altogether, Boston made the most of this lack of crown oversight to solve some of the problems caused by its narrow charter limits. The creation of the United Colonies in the mid-1640s began this process by making most of southern New England into a confederation of allies with Boston in the dominant political, military, and economic role.² This achievement was made relatively easy by the fact that the Connecticut, New Haven, and Plymouth colonists shared most of Boston's fundamental religious and political allegiances – Connecticut and New Haven were themselves, at least in part, colonies of Massachusetts. The political organization of the Rhode Island and Providence plantations was so chaotic as to pose little threat to Boston's hegemony in the south. As a consequence, Boston investors managed with little

¹ Jenny Hale Pulsipher, Subjects unto the Same King: Indians, English and the Contest for Authority in Colonial New England, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005), offers an eloquent retelling of New England's history in the middle decades of the 17th century, focusing on English-Indian relations, by emphasizing this framework.

² Harry Ward, The United Colonies of New England, 1643-1690 (New York: Vantage Press, 1961), and see above, Chapter 1. The process did not always work perfectly, as, for instance, when Connecticut authorities frustrated John Winthrop, Jr.'s attempts to align the plantation he founded at New London with Massachusetts; see Woodward, Prospero's America, 75-92.

trouble to gain access to land and resources in southern New England in the years after the Pequot War, even when direct political control remained out of their hands.³

But the region to the north and east of the Merrimac River proved to be a different sort of challenge. Here, the overlapping patchwork of patents and land grants held by various English projectors often predated the claims of Massachusetts Bay, and the holders of these claims, some of them figures of standing with close ties to the royal court, shared few of Boston's sympathies for religious dissent and independence from the crown. During the civil wars and interregnum, Massachusetts took advantage of the demise of royal authority to extend its influence deeply into these regions, demonstrating its self-conception as an independent city-state more strongly than ever. But after the Restoration of Charles II in 1660, the various claimants to these northeastern regions attempted to reassert their authority in the hope of gaining royal support. Consequently, the quarter century following the Restoration saw the rise of a complex political contest, a delicate dance around the issues of economic control, territorial authority, and governmental autonomy, in which the Massachusetts coinage and the power it conveyed once again played a critical role. In effect, two of the principal goals of Boston's seventeenth-century political economy, its need for autonomy and its desire for expansion, did not sit well together. The best way to remain free of crown interference or conflict with neighboring powers would have been to remain quiet, not to expand, but that would have been destructive of the economic and political autonomy that this Atlantic trading state needed to survive. As a result, Boston learned to deal with the

³ The purchase by John Hull and partners of the Point Judith land in southern Rhode Island, and the Atherton Company's purchase of Narragansett Country lands, are but two cases in point; see Richard S. Dunn, "John Winthrop, Jr., and the Narragansett Country," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3d ser., 13, no. 1, (Jan., 1956):68-86, and Chapter 2, above.

notoriety and opposition that its expansionist policies gained by way of diplomacy and tribute – by rendering what tribute was necessary unto Caesar, and maintaining their authority over the godly commonwealth.

Absorbing the Eastern Frontier

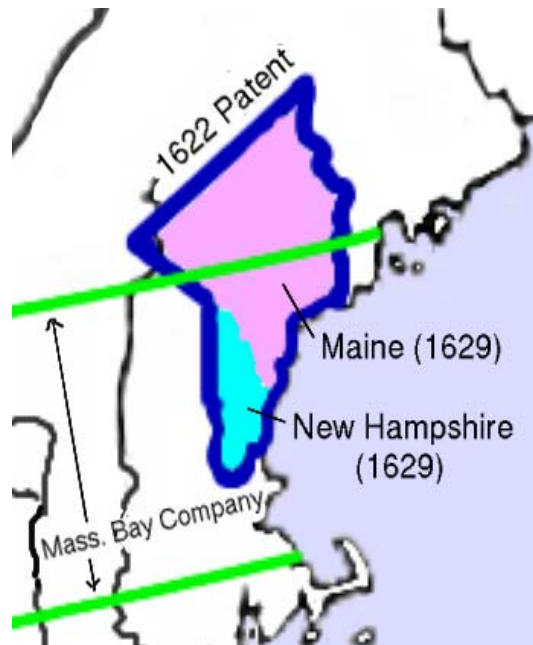
The confused and overlapping legal charters and patents for the northeastern territory were the product of the haphazard workings of the New England Council, an organization of a small group of noblemen and colonial projectors created in 1620 by the government of King James I to administer the northern parts of England’s extensive claims to the North Atlantic seaboard, a region that was then still referred to as “Virginia.”⁴ The most dynamic figure on the Council in its early years was Sir Ferdinando Gorges, an Elizabethan courtier and soldier, friend and contemporary of Sir Walter Raleigh. Gorges saw these lands as a place to develop new overseas domains on a feudal model, imagining the settlers working the lands and seacoasts of northern New England as tenants providing income to their noble patron.⁵ In 1622, the Council granted Gorges and his close friend and ally, Captain John Mason, a patent for the Province of Maine, the region roughly between the Merrimac and the Kennebec rivers. In 1629, Gorges and Mason divided this region, with Mason taking title to the area south and west of the Piscataqua River. Mason’s part of the region was called New Hampshire, and Gorges renamed his northern portion, New Somersetshire.⁶

⁴ The lingering use of this name explains why the salt cod that Boston merchants sold in Bilbao was often described in Spanish records as “Birginia” bacalao; see Regina Grafe, “Globalisation of Codfish and Wool . . .” 15.

⁵ See Sir Ferdinando Gorges, “A Briefe Relation of the Discovery and Plantation of New England,” reprinted in Sir Ferdinando Gorges and His Province of Maine, ed. J. P. Baxter, 2 vols., (Boston: The Prince Society, 1890):I: 203-240.

⁶ Sir Ferdinando Gorges and His Province of Maine, 174ff; Charles E. Clark, The Eastern Frontier: The Settlement of Northern New England, 1610-1763 (New York: Knopf, 1970), 16-20.

As attentive readers will immediately have noticed, the Mason and Gorges patents overlapped with the territory granted to Massachusetts in its own 1629 charter, which gave the Bay Colony territory up to three miles *beyond* the Merrimac River. Because the settlement and exploration of New England later revealed that the Merrimac's course turns considerably northward from the point where it enters the Atlantic, this interior geography served as a basis for Boston's subsequent claim that it was entitled to expand northward far into the territories also claimed by Gorges and Mason. If you take the northern boundary of the Merrimac to be at its *source*, near Lake Winnepesaukee in central New Hampshire, rather than its *mouth* at Newburyport in Massachusetts, then the northern boundary of Massachusetts according to its charter stretches far northeastward along the Atlantic coast, even beyond the Kennebec River where the Gorges patent came to its end.



In the long run, the numbers of settlers sent to these colonial plantations and the legal status of their land holdings proved to be far more powerful than lines on paper

charters in the ultimate determination of these colonial boundaries. The rapid settlement of Massachusetts Bay in the 1630s, and the concentration of a large portion of its initial population on the north shore in Essex County, quickly put pressure on the trans-Merrimac territory as an outlet for newcomers to the Bay to find land. Massachusetts also created a structure, extralegal though it may have been, for land distribution by way of a system of incorporated towns that gave colonists fee simple title to their lands, free of any quitrents or other encumbrances. By contrast, Gorges and Mason attempted to retain much more restrictive controls on the land grants they issued to settlers in their territories, acting more like feudal proprietors than land grant office managers, and they also hoped to control the government of their colonies from afar.⁷

Perhaps this approach to the northeastern settlements might have succeeded had conditions in England remained stable enough for Gorges and Mason to attend to colonial affairs.⁸ But the intensifying English political struggles of the 1630s, descending into rebellion and civil war in the 1640s, prevented these English courtier-proprietors from maintaining their authority and developing the economies of New Hampshire and Maine. As a result, many of the motley groups of settlers who occupied the Mason and Gorges patents gradually came to accept, and even willingly embrace, the idea that government by Massachusetts was in their own best interests. The death of Captain Mason in 1635, just as he was preparing his first voyage to his colony, left the inhabitants of New Hampshire rudderless. They formed their own voluntary governmental associations in

⁷ Clark, *Eastern Frontier*, 19-20; John G. Reid, *Maine, Charles II and Massachusetts: Governmental Relationships in Early Northern New England* (Portland: Maine Historical Society, 1977), 6-11.

⁸ However, Karen Kupperman's persuasive argument in *Providence Island: The Other Puritan Colony*, together with the dismal history of other English colonial projects where the governing interest remained in England, suggests the likelihood that Gorges and Mason's colonies would never have thrived under these circumstances.

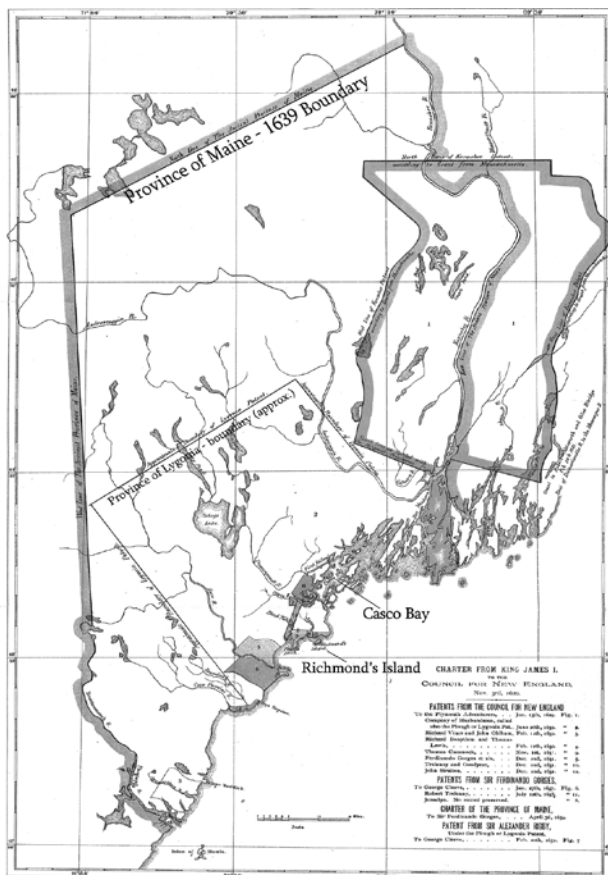
the four towns or “plantations” that had evolved in the region. By 1641, all four towns had come to an agreement to incorporate themselves with Massachusetts, gaining in the process all the rights and privileges of other Massachusetts towns, including representation at the General Court in Boston, and the creation of a court system as part of the Bay Colony as well.⁹

Similar events led to the absorption of Maine’s settlements by Massachusetts, though the details in this case were more complex and the process was consequently slower. Sir Ferdinando Gorges was a devoted Royalist and no friend to puritans, and thus became an ally of Archbishop Laud’s attacks on the Massachusetts charter in the 1630s.¹⁰ In 1639, after his partner John Mason’s death, Gorges arranged for a new patent for the entire Province of Maine to be granted to himself, but his attempts to sustain and supervise the settlers of this region faltered as he grew distracted by England’s civil wars. In the power vacuum of the late 1630s, some of the more prominent and ambitious settlers of the Maine territory in the service of Ferdinando Gorges attempted to construct their own governmental authority and established a colonial project they called the Province of Lygonia, with the eventual support of Parliament. Conflict between these upstarts and Gorges’ agents over land and authority ensued, and through the later years of the 1640s, with Parliament and the crown deep in conflict of their own, the various interests in Maine turned increasingly to Massachusetts and its reliable courts as the only stable authority available to resolve their disputes. Encouraged by the agents of

⁹ Jeremy Belknap, The History of New-Hampshire, ed. John Farmer (Dover, N.H.: George Wadleigh, 1862), 17-34; Charles E. Clark, The Eastern Frontier, 36-47.

¹⁰ The legal process against the Massachusetts charter went forward to quo warranto proceedings and formal recall of the charter, but the turbulent English politics of the late 1630s distracted the crown from enforcing this, and Massachusetts dodged this bullet; see Herbert Levi Osgood, The American Colonies in the Seventeenth Century, vol. 3, Imperial Control: Beginnings of the System of Royal Provinces (New York: Macmillan, 1907) 69-71.

Massachusetts who helped towns and landowners settle some of these conflicts, the Maine plantations one by one voted to accept government under Massachusetts Bay. By 1658, the last holdouts in Lygonia agreed to join the city-state of Boston as well.¹¹ Boston now had direct control over the entire region from Massachusetts Bay to the Kennebec River, including its territory, government, and economy, complementing the influence it had gained over southern New England through the construction of the United Colonies. If Massachusetts had already been the dominant partner within this New England Confederation as of 1643, the acquisition of these new regions made it all the more powerful.



¹¹ For the best and most recent treatment of the Lygonia project, see Hannah Farber, “The Rise and Fall of the Province of Lygonia, 1643-1658,” *New England Quarterly* 82:3 (Sept. 2009): 490-513; see also John G. Reid, *Maine, Charles II, and Massachusetts: Governmental Relationships in Early Northern New England* (Portland: Maine Historical Society, 1977), 1-35.

By the late 1650s, the city-state of Boston had expanded the territory of its hinterland and gained control of the resources it needed to sustain the Atlantic economy on which it depended for growth and prosperity, and it had extended its commercial power even further than its territorial control. For instance, the English fisheries of Newfoundland were by this time essentially a commercial outpost of Boston, not of English ports: “they chiefly consume the products of New England, ye Shipping of which Country furnishes them with French Wine and Brandy, and Madeira Wines in exchange for their Fish without depending for any supply from England.”¹² It should be clear that Boston’s territorial expansion was greatly abetted by the collapse of royal authority in England. In the mid-1630s, the crown was on the verge of rescinding the charter of Massachusetts – a writ of *quo warranto* had been issued against it in 1635, and plans were in the works for a governor general to be established by the crown over the entire New England region. In fact, in June, 1635, the English gentlemen projectors of the old Council for New England gave up all right to their original patent of 1620 in order to make way for this newly constituted royal authority, with Ferdinando Gorges in line to be lord lieutenant of New England.¹³ But the crown grew weaker and distracted by growing strife in England, Ireland, and Scotland -- these plans were never implemented. As royal authority receded, Boston’s claims to independent authority grew stronger.

Restoration, Rendition, and Tribute

The decision to coin its own high-grade silver money stands out as one among a series of claims to sovereignty made by Massachusetts Bay in this era, and the expansion

¹² “An Account of the Colony and Fishery of New Foundland,” 1678 MSS., John Carter Brown Library, cited in Newell, 75. See also Peter E. Pope, Fish into Wine: The Newfoundland Plantation in the Seventeenth Century (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 2004).

¹³ Sir Ferdinando Gorges and His Province of Maine, 159-172

to the northeast reveals another. As Boston established its authority over the Maine and New Hampshire region, for instance, the colony required landowners who wished to enjoy the privileges of a freeman in the commonwealth to swear an oath of allegiance, not to the crown or to Parliament, but to the General Court of Massachusetts.¹⁴ When Parliament enacted the first of the Navigation Acts in 1651, Boston essentially overlooked it, in part because the enumerated commodities the Act sought to control were not the ones Boston merchants most commonly traded, but also by refusing to enact the laws on their own books within the colony. Even in the face of severe pressure from the crown in later years, the General Court continued to insist:

That for the acts passed in Parliament for incouraging trade and navigation, wee humbly conceive, according to the usuall sayings of the learned in the lawe, that the lawes of England are bounded wthin the fower seas, and doe not reach Amerrica. The subjects of his majte here being not represented in Parliament, so wee have not looked at ourselves to be impeded in our trade by them, nor yett wee abated in our relative allegiance to his majtie.”¹⁵

In fact, far from condescending to obey Parliament’s Navigation Acts, the General Court in Boston created a system of mercantile inspections and customs duties of their own, charging excise taxes on imported wine, rum, and other goods, including those imported directly from England.¹⁶

During the interregnum between the execution of Charles I in 1649 and the Restoration of Charles II in 1660, the de facto sovereignty of Massachusetts within and over most of New England went largely unchallenged, as openly proclaimed by the shillings made by John Hull, with their superscription of “Massachusetts in New

¹⁴ Pulsipher, *Subjects unto the Same King*, 46; Shurtleff, *Mass Recs*, vol. 4, part 1, 79-80.

¹⁵ October 2, 1678, *Mass Recs*, 5: 200.

¹⁶ *Mass Recs*, October 10, 1683, 414-415 [408-09], Newell, 80.

England” as the “Caesar” to whom these coins belonged.¹⁷ But after 1660, the younger Charles demanded a reckoning of the conduct of all his newly regained colonies, and not surprisingly, this was the moment at which Boston’s many enemies, especially those whose land and authority the Bay Colony had usurped, petitioned the new king for redress of their grievances. Chief among these claimants were Robert Mason and Ferdinando Gorges the younger, each grandsons of the original proprietors of New Hampshire and Maine, and for the next two decades they would strive to reclaim their ancestral territories.¹⁸

Massachusetts’ interests at the Restoration court were initially represented by Sir Thomas Temple, who had lived in Boston in the 1650s, while he attempted to make the most of some ancient land grants of dubious validity and extend English authority in the region still further, to the French colonies in Acadia. In 1656, Temple entered into an agreement with Charles Etienne de la Tour, one of the earlier French combatants for control of Acadia who had come to Boston in 1643, seeking help for his conflict with Charles D’Aulnay. The Temple-LaTour agreement claimed Acadia or Nova Scotia, the region northeast of Maine, for English rule under a patent issued by Parliament. Sir Thomas moved to Boston and used the city as his base for establishing forts and settlements along the St. Johns River, in present-day New Brunswick, and in other regions of this vast northeastern territory, extending along both sides of the Bay of Fundy in what is now New Brunswick and Nova Scotia.

¹⁷ For a discussion of the ways in which Massachusetts avoided direct challenges to Parliament’s authority while still steering its own course through the 1640s, see Chapter 1.

¹⁸ The most thorough discussion of these efforts by Mason and Gorges to recover their claims can be found in Reid, Maine, Charles II, and Massachusetts.



ENGLISH NORTH AMERICA AND FRENCH CANADA IN 1692

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As he became more assimilated in Boston society, Temple's interests in Acadia proved to enhance the interests of Boston's merchants as well, including Thomas Lake and Edward Tyng, who used their new connections with Temple to establish trade with the region's settlers and to sponsor fishing and seal hunting ventures off the coast of Cape Sable, on the southern tip of the peninsula. For this, the General Court in Boston rewarded Temple with monopoly rights to license all trade in furs from "Acady and Nova Scotia."¹⁹ Typically for this region, though, Temple's claims were contested by rivals, in this case both French and English, for control of the area. With regime change at home in 1660, Sir Thomas returned to England in order to petition the crown for a more authoritative title to Acadia. By this time, the experience of the New Hampshire and Maine settlements had clearly demonstrated the power and importance that Massachusetts had developed in the region. If you wanted to develop authority over territory in the northeast, it was good to have Boston's interests aligned with your own. So despite his royalist sympathies and his distance from the Puritans' religious and political persuasion, Thomas Temple defended the colony before the crown, even as he pursued his own interests.²⁰

In 1662, at an audience with the King, Charles II questioned Temple closely about various aspects of Massachusetts government and authority, including the currency issued by John Hull's mint. The clear concern behind Charles's questioning was that his

¹⁹ Mass Recs 4, pt 1., 355-56, George A. Rawlyk, Nova Scotia's Massachusetts: A Study of Massachusetts-Nova Scotia Relations, 1630 to 1784 (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1973), 27-33.

²⁰ John R.Reid, Acadia, Maine, and New Scotland: Marginal Colonies in the Seventeenth Century (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1976), pp. 136-141; Arthur Howland Buffington, "Sir Thomas Temple in Boston: A Case of Benevolent Assimilation," CSM Pubs, 27 (1932): 308-19; Richard R. Johnson, John Nelson, Merchant Adventurer: A Life Between Empires (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 11-15. Like most colonial projectors, among the interests Sir Thomas pursued was mining; he sent several shiploads of minerals from Nova Scotia to England for assaying, hoping, as always, to find silver.

royal prerogative had been usurped. Temple attempted to explain that the colony had been ignorant of the law and had meant no harm in coining money strictly for their own use. And as he explained, Temple pulled a Massachusetts coin from his purse and presented it to his majesty:

Charles inquired what tree that was? Sir Thomas informed him it was the royal oak; adding, that the Massachusetts people, not daring to put his majesty's name on their coin, during the late troubles, had impressed upon it the emblem of the oak which preserved his majesty's life.²¹ This account of the matter put the king into good humor, and disposed him to hear what Sir Thomas had to say in their favor, calling them a parcel of honest dogs.²²

In this dexterous act of verbal tribute, Temple insisted that Massachusetts had usurped nothing. In its coinage, the colony had symbolically rendered a form of tribute unto Caesar – a hidden, nearly invisible tribute, appropriate to a temporarily hidden monarch. [Figure, pottery dish made by Thomas Toft of Staffordshire, Mass. Oak Tree tuppence,



²¹ After the defeat of his armies at the Battle of Worcester in September, 1651, Charles reportedly hid in an oak tree at Boscobel House in order to escape capture by Cromwell's forces. After the Restoration, Charles himself confirmed the story, and images of the king hiding in the tree became a popular element in English culture.

²² Sylvester S. Crosby, *The Early Coins of America; and the Laws Governing their Issue* (Boston: Published by the Author, 1875), 75.

The wording of this dialogue between Charles and Temple may be apocryphal, although later testimony by the Massachusetts General Court indicates that the encounter over the coinage between Sir Thomas and the court did indeed take place.²³ But Temple's ingenious gesture nonetheless highlights the technique, the characteristic response, that Boston developed to ward off the inquiries and threatened prosecutions of the crown in the effort to retain its autonomy. Again and again, Boston's leaders, John Hull among them, turned to forms of tribute payment to keep the crown at bay, acknowledging some level of allegiance to the new king (whose father, after all, had given them their charter) and yet sustaining their autonomy all the while.

Paying tribute is not the same as paying taxes. To be taxed is to be counted as an individual in relation to the state, and thus to participate as a member of the body politic. In the famous words from the Gospel of Luke in the King James Version of the Bible, the birth of Jesus took place in Bethlehem because Joseph had brought Mary there in response to the decree from Caesar Augustus "that all the world should be taxed."²⁴ The word tax connotes a sense of burden, obligation, censure, even punishment. In its etymology, tax is essentially the same word as "task," and in earlier times, taxes were often paid in tasks, by rendering labor rather than money to one's lord. Taxpayers often expect some kind of return on their payment in the form of protection or other services. Tribute, by contrast, more frequently involves the relationship between states or

²³ In justifying their earlier course of actions before the challenge to their charter, the General Court claimed that "Nor did we know it [coining money] to be against any Law of England, or against His Majesties Will or pleasure, till of late; but rather that there was a tacit allowance & approbation of it. For in 1662, when our first Agents were in England, some of our Money was showed by Sir Thomas Temple at the Council-Table, and no dislike thereof manifested by any of those right honourable Persons: much less a forbidding of it." Massachusetts Archives, vol. cvi, p. 336, cited in Crosby, p. 76.

²⁴ Luke 2:1, King James Version.

governments, and its connotations have more to do with honor and respect than with burden or censure. Tribute payment also offers greater opportunities for ceremonial relationships of subservience. Taxes can be collected in various ways, and the process was often farmed out to intermediaries, so long as the king or lord got his share in the end. Tribute, by contrast, requires ceremonial contact, gestures of allegiance and obedience, for the act to have performative power. In paying tribute, a weaker state acknowledges submission to a stronger one, and expresses its respect, fear, or affection, but tribute's connotations tend more toward exclusion than inclusion. People pay tribute in order to be left alone.²⁵ From the mid-1630s onward, in the wake of the Pequot War, Boston had been extracting this kind of tribute payment from the Indian nations of southern New England, including Narragansetts, Niantics, and Mohegans, in the form of wampum or, in some cases, persons.²⁶ Now, in response to the closer scrutiny and potential intervention in their affairs by the Restoration monarchy, Boston developed its own forms of tribute payment to keep Caesar at bay.

Managing the Crown's Agents

If Thomas Temple's ready wit allowed Massachusetts to avoid a first challenge to its coinage in 1662, the more formal inquisitory commission that Charles sent to New England two years later took a systematic approach to colonial usurpation of royal authority. The commissioners²⁷ arrived in Boston in the summer of 1664, and spent the

²⁵ Indeed, performing artists will often pay tribute to their powerful predecessors, both to honor their influence and to allow themselves room to get out from under that influence. This discussion of the pre-modern meanings of tax and tribute is drawn from the [Oxford English Dictionary On-Line](#), copyright Oxford University Press, 2004.

²⁶ See Chapter 1.

²⁷ Colonel Richard Nichols had served as a key figure in the household of James, Duke of York, the future James II, during the English civil wars and in wars on the Continent during the interregnum. His appointment was in part intended to pursue the establishment of the Duke's American interests after the Restoration. Samuel Maverick was the longtime Bostonian and opponent of the Puritan leadership of

fall and winter touring through southern New England, hearing grievances from Indians as well as from other colonies, particularly Rhode Island, the one colony excluded from the New England Confederation, before returning to Boston in the spring of 1665. Having perused the Massachusetts laws, the commissioners addressed the General Court and the freemen of the colony, assembled in Boston for the annual election day on 24 May 1665. They announced that in their judgment, twenty-six articles in the “booke of the Generall Lawes & liberties” needed to be amended to bring them in line with royal authority. Twenty-second on the list: “That page 61, title money, the law yt a mint house, &c, be repealed, for Coynig is a Royall prerogative, for the usurping of which ye act of indemnity is only a Salvo.”²⁸

The commissioners’ problem with the mint was not a matter of its economic utility, but rather that the coinage undermined royal authority in a way consistent with other laws on the books. For instance, the commissioners also complained that “undecent expressions & repetitions of the word ‘commonwealth,’ ‘state,’ & the like” in the Massachusetts laws undermined royal authority and that “his majesty’s colony” should be substituted for them. They further noted that the colony had no right to join in confederation with other colonies, a clear assault on the United Colonies and Boston’s leadership role within this organization.²⁹ What the king’s commissioners objected to was that Boston acted like an independent city-state, with unlimited and unchallenged authority over its own territory and regional hegemony over its neighbors, English and

Massachusetts, who was trying to make the most of the opportunities the Restoration created to subdue Puritan rule in New England. Robert Carr and George Cartwright, the other two commissioners, were well connected Englishmen who saw the appointment as an opportunity to enrich themselves; see Reid, 61-62; Hall, Edward Randolph; Pulsipher,

²⁸ Shurtleff, *Mass Recs*, 4, pt 2, 211-213.

²⁹ Shurtleff, *Mass Recs* 4, part 2, 211-213. See also Pulsipher, Chapter 2, *Massachusetts Under Fire*, 61-62, for an excellent discussion of the Commission.

Indian alike. The crown demanded that Boston send agents to London, in order to defend its past behavior and, if necessary, to negotiate terms for a revision to its charter.

In response, the colony acted in a way remarkable for its effrontery, but characteristic of the depth of its commitment to autonomy. The General Court in Boston neither complied with the demand to revise its laws, nor sent a representative or agent to Whitehall to defend themselves. Instead, they offered tribute to the king. The General Court voted to acquire goods “in the best Commodity that may be procured in this his Colony, meete for transportation & accommodation of his Majesty’s Navy to the value of five hundred pounds,” with provisions made in each of the next several years to repeat this gift.³⁰ In his diary for 12 September 1666, John Hull clearly indicates that the General Court saw these gifts as a substitute for the king’s requests for the colony to send an agent: “They [the General Court] concluded to write, and send a present, two brave masts, but sent no person to answer in our behalf.” In the General Court’s own records for this event, “It is ordered, that ye two very large masts now on board Capt Peirce his ship . . . be presented to his majty . . . as a testimony of loyalty and affection from ye country, & that all charge thereof be paid out of the country treasury.”³¹ Two years later, at the time of the May General Court meeting, Hull’s diary repeats: “the Generall Court sent a shipload of masts as a present to the king’s majesty.”³² Even the disgruntled minorities within Boston who had strong connections to the crown and had long reviled the haughty independence of the Puritan leadership were fully aware of the purpose of these gestures. Samuel Maverick mentioned that Boston’s leaders “boast of the gracious letters they have received from His Majesty and of his kind acceptance of the Masts they

³⁰ Mass Rec, 4, 468 (square these vol/p #s with Pulsipher’s)

³¹ Mass Recs, 4: 317-18.

³² Hull Diaries, AAS Trans III, 223, 227.

sent him,” and in a Biblical allusion to the book of Samuel, Thomas Breedon, another royalist and a recent arrival in Boston, referred to the tribute of masts as “Sacrifice, not Obedience.”³³ But given the neutral or even positive response from the crown in the form of these “gracious letters,” the tribute seemed to be obedience enough.

Notwithstanding this expensive show of “loyalty and affection,” the colony was clearly unwilling to stop producing the coins that filled the “country treasury” with silver. In fact, in 1667, in the midst of these annual tribute gestures made to the king, the General Court formed a committee to negotiate with Hull and Sanderson a new adjustment to the ongoing costs of running the mint house, essentially asking Hull and Sanderson to make incremental payments over the next seven years for the “aedifices” that the colony had built on Hull’s property to house the coining operation. Almost to the very end of Hull’s life in 1683, occasional adjustments in matters such as Hull’s minting fees continued, showing no signs that the crown’s objections in 1665 had diminished Boston’s commitment to its coinage.³⁴

Although repeated gestures of tribute and the politics of delay managed to keep Boston free from much royal interference in the late 1660s and on into the 1670s, the situation on the northeastern frontier had become more complicated in these years.³⁵ In addition to the Gorges and Mason heirs pressing the king about their claims to New Hampshire and Maine, the king’s brother, James, Duke of York, had been granted title to

³³ Reid, *Maine, Charles II, and Massachusetts*, 114; Pulsipher, p. 83. The Biblical reference is to a passage in which King Saul refuses to obey God’s command to kill every living thing in the land of the Amalekites, and instead offers up a sacrifice of only a few choice animals; I Samuel 15. The analogy, needless to say, was an alarming one to Boston’s biblically literate population.

³⁴ Mass Recs., vol. 4, part 2, 347, Louis Jordan, *John Hull, The Mint, and the Economics of Massachusetts Coinage*, 15, Crosby, 78.

³⁵ The return of the bubonic plague to London in 1665-1666, followed by the Great Fire of London in September 1666, along with the second Anglo-Dutch War (1665-67) and the subsequent war with France (1667-68), left colonial North America as a low priority for the crown in these years.

the region northeast of the Kennebec River, just beyond the Maine patent's territory, as part of the settlement of New Netherlands upon him, in the wake of the English conquest of the Dutch colony in 1664.³⁶ The crown attempted through various commissions and reports to restore the Maine territory to Gorges' heirs and to the proprietors on the site who had received land grants from Sir Ferdinando. But Boston's leadership still found ways to ignore these claims and even to extend their authority over the Maine region. The crown's great distance from the site, the difficulty of communication and control from afar, and the local power, both political and economic, of Massachusetts meant that Boston had little to fear from crown interference.

Charles's wars with France and the Netherlands, especially the third Anglo-Dutch War of 1672-74, in which New York was briefly retaken by the Dutch, allowed Massachusetts a free hand on their near frontier to the east. By the mid-1670s, Boston's control over Maine was stronger than ever. Massachusetts circuit courts headed by Boston magistrates such as Richard Waldron met regularly to keep order and resolve disputes. The Maine towns sent deputies to the General Court in Boston, granted land to local inhabitants on the freehold Massachusetts model, paid their taxes based on the country rates set in Boston, and sold land to Boston speculators like Joshua Scottow. Boston's strength in the region was such that even the new settlements beyond the Kennebec in the Duke of York's patent were incorporated into a new Massachusetts county, the county of Devon.³⁷ In the words of Nicholas Shapleigh, a local proprietor whose allegiance lay with Gorges and the crown, Massachusetts loyalists "drew away most part of the people to petition the Government of the Bay of Boston to Governe and

³⁶ Reid, 61, 95, 254.

³⁷ For administrative purposes, Massachusetts had previously named the near part of Maine "York County."

Rule over them.”³⁸ Although a decade and more of royal commissions and decisions by the Council for Trade and Foreign Plantations, an organization created in 1672 by Sir Anthony Ashley Cooper, the future Earl of Shaftesbury, to bring greater crown oversight to its new world settlements, had tried to restore the maritime northeast to the hands of royal patentees and to bring Massachusetts in line with the norms of English government, the effort had been a failure.³⁹ As John Evelyn, the famous diarist and member of the Council on Plantations, noted in 1671, the government of the Bay of Boston was proving to be “very independent as to their regard to old England, or his Majestie, rich and strong as they now were We understood they were a people al most upon the very brink of renouncing any dependence of the Crowne.”⁴⁰

The long and costly Indian wars starting in 1675 sapped Boston’s riches and strength. In fact, when peace on the northern frontier was finally established in 1678, it was not through the decisive victory over Indian forces that had ended the war in the south. The strength of the Abenaki alliance was such that it was Boston, fighting alone without the aid of the other United Colonies, as Connecticut and Plymouth were reluctant to support warfare so far from their homelands, that now had to pay tribute in return for peace, though corn, not coin, was the form of payment the tribute took.⁴¹ At the same time, a new round of royal investigation further tested Boston’s “very independent” will. By 1676, just as the first phase of King Philip’s War was coming to an end, the chronic problems that had plagued Charles II in the late 1660s (among them, literally, England’s

³⁸ Reid, *Maine, Charles II, and Massachusetts*, 132-139.

³⁹ Osgood, *The American Colonies*, III:281

⁴⁰ *The Diary of John Evelyn*, ed. Esmond Samuel de Beer, 6 vols. (Oxford, 1955), 3:579-81.

⁴¹ Pulsipher, 237; also Reid, 162. At the outbreak of renewed warfare with the Abenaki in 1688, one of the stated reasons for renewed violence was “Because the English refused to pay that yearly tribute of corn, agreed upon in the ‘articles of peace’ formerly concluded with them by the English commissioners.” Cotton Mather, *Magnalia Christi Americana*, ed. Thomas Robbins, 2 vols. (Hartford: Silas Andrus, 1853), II:584.

last major outbreak of the bubonic plague in 1665-66) had abated enough for a new royal commissioner to be sent to New England in the person of Edward Randolph, a cousin of Robert Mason, who arrived in Boston in June, 1676.⁴²

The potential threat borne by this second commission promised to be considerably greater than the first one. In addition to pressing the claims of his cousin to territory in the northeastern region, Randolph also renewed the critique of Boston's independence, asserting that the coins that Hull had been minting for years were a mark of the colony's claims to be a free state: "And, as a mark of sovereignty, they coin money stamped with inscription Mattachusets and a tree in the centre, on the one side; and New England, with the year 1652 and the value of the piece, on the reverse."⁴³ Randolph actually overstated the relationship between the coinage and the colony's autonomy, saying "All the money is stamped with these figures, 1652, that year being the aera of the commonwealth, wherein they erected themselves into a free state, enlarged their dominions, subjected the adjacent colonies under their obedience, and summoned deputies to sit in the generall court, which year is still commemorated on their coin." Although it was essentially true that Boston had accomplished all these things, they did not all happen in 1652, nor did the date on the coins commemorate them.⁴⁴

Randolph also sent the Lords of Trade and Plantations new information to apprise the crown of the extent to which Boston merchants were violating the Navigation Acts.

In his "Narrative of the State of New England," Randolph listed the many merchant

⁴² Michael G. Hall, *Edward Randolph and the American Colonies, 1676-1703* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1960), offers the most detailed account of Randolph's career; Richard R. Johnson, *Adjustment to Empire: The New England Colonies, 1676-1715* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1981), provides a wider context and a number of important correctives to Hall's account.

⁴³ Edward Randolph to the Lord Commissioners of Trade and Plantations, Sept 20 – Oct 12, 1676; Hutchinson, *Original Papers* (Boston, 1769), 480

⁴⁴ Fn on what the 1652 did mean, and the various numismatic controversies over this.

ships, mostly Boston-owned, that had recently arrived in the city from foreign ports in France, Spain, the Canaries, the Azores, the Netherlands, the Hanse cities in the Baltic, “Scanderoon,” or Iskanderun in Anatolia in the Eastern Mediterranean, various African ports from Madagascar to Guinea, and several Caribbean locations as well:

There is no notice taken of the act of navigation, plantation, or any other lawes made in England for the regulation of trade. All nations having free liberty to come into their ports and vend their commodities, without any restraint; and in this as well as in other things, that government would make the world believe that they are a free state and doe act in all matters accordingly.⁴⁵

In Randolph’s eyes, this virtually unrestrained trade had an extremely deleterious effect on England’s own commerce with its new world possessions. He lists many of the commodities that Boston merchants supplied to the American colonies:

. . . as brandy, Canary, Spanish and French wines, bullion, salt fruits, oyles, silkes, laces, linen of all sorts, cloath, serges, bayes, kersies, stockings, and many other commodities,” and complains that “there is little left for the merchants residing in England to import into any of the plantations, those of New-England being able to afford their goods much cheaper than such who pay the customes and are laden in England. By which meanes this kingdome hath lost the best part of the western trade, . . . and Boston may be esteemed the mart town of the West Indies.”⁴⁶

Although he exaggerated the extent of Boston’s coordination and deliberate planning in bringing about these conditions, most of what Randolph reported was nonetheless true.

The remarkable expansion of Boston’s trade throughout the Atlantic world, and the powerful role this commerce gave to the city within British America, were the marks of the successes that the political economy of the city-state of Boston had enjoyed.

Randolph’s descriptions were designed to make these successes look like disobedience to crown authority in the most blatant terms possible.

⁴⁵ Edward Randolph to the Lord Commissioners, in Thomas Hutchinson, Original Papers, 495-496; see also Newell, 79.

⁴⁶ Randolph to Lord Commissioners, in Hutchinson, Original Papers, 495.

Despite the greater severity of the new threat represented by Randolph, and in the midst of the sea of troubles the colony now faced, the General Court nonetheless responded in much the same way they had a decade earlier, by presenting the king with still more tribute. Pursuant to the court's order, John Hull, now the colony treasurer, consigned aboard his own ship *The Blessing* a handsome gift consisting of 1860 codfish (about 700 of them "very large fish, between two and three feet long") along with ten barrels of cranberries and three barrels of samp (high-grade cornmeal mush).⁴⁷ Whether the king again received these presents as a "blessing" remains unknown. The utility of the masts is obvious, by this time they were already a proven tribute commodity, and an essential element in the naval expansion that Charles II pursued with his commercial wars against the French and Dutch. But what Boston's leaders thought Charles would want with cod, cranberries, and samp is hard to fathom unless one imagines that these humble commodities somehow *represented* the Massachusetts economy to the king. They were tangible symbols of what the colony's humble coins served to circulate, the equivalent for New England of Virginia's tobacco or Jamaica's sugar. Although it seems unlikely that the king accepted these gifts as adequate tribute, from Boston's point of view, these gestures "worked" – John Hull continued to make and circulate Pine Tree Shillings to the end of his life. Only when the Massachusetts charter was vacated in 1684 did the mint stop producing coins. Even then, his majesty's treasury seriously considered the idea of re-establishing the mint, based on arguments of economic utility that Boston had been making for thirty years. The royal governor under the Dominion of New

⁴⁷ Hull Diary, AAS Transaction, III (1857); John Hull to John Phillips, Master of the Ship *Blessing*, December 24, 1677, Hull Letterbook, AAS, 368.

England, Sir Edmund Andros, actually applied for leave to continue the Boston mint, only to be denied in the end by the Treasury.⁴⁸

The continuity the coinage brought to Boston's political economy remained important through the 1670s and into the 1680s, for Edward Randolph intended to assail the legality of Boston's expansion to the northeast, and economic and fiscal power proved vital in resisting this threat. Indeed, Randolph was ordered by the crown to act as a kind of agent, presenting the complaints of the heirs of Ferdinando Gorges and John Mason to the governor and magistrates "of our town of Boston in New England," alleging that Boston had usurped their rightful authority and title to Maine and New Hampshire, and demanding that the colony send agents to London to respond to these charges.⁴⁹ After delivering this message upon his arrival in June, 1676, Randolph then toured through the northeastern towns and settlements, notifying the New Hampshire inhabitants that Mason's heirs were reasserting their claims and contesting Boston's authority over the colony, and spreading a similar message to Maine as well.⁵⁰

There ensued a reprise of the initial struggle for territorial control that had ended in Boston's favor in the 1650s, only now the situation was complicated by the ongoing warfare between Massachusetts, the Abenaki Indians of coastal Maine, and, perhaps, their French allies.⁵¹ The outbreak of violence in the northeast began in September, 1675, when Abenakis attacked the town of Falmouth, then one of the most distant English communities from Boston, on the edge of Casco Bay. The scattered and sporadic pattern of Maine's settlements, spread out along the immense and intricate coastline of

⁴⁸ Crosby, *Early Coins of America*, 90-95; Jordan, *John Hull*, 41-45.

⁴⁹ King Charles to . . . " March 10, 1676, CSPCS, 9:358, item 838.

⁵⁰ Michael G. Hall, *Edward Randolph*, Reid, Pulsipher .

⁵¹ note on dispute among historians over whether the french were actually involved.

the region, made defense and communications difficult for the English settlers. The long duration of the war in this region, well beyond the end of fighting in southern New England, and the intensity of violence on both sides, gradually eroded the settlers' willingness to remain in this exposed territory. The argument over the future of Maine and New Hampshire took place while the settlements themselves were crumbling.⁵²

Financing the Colony's Agents

In this turbulent context, the General Court changed its strategy. In addition to the now-traditional gift of tribute (the codfish, cranberries, and samp described above were dispatched to his majesty in 1677), the court selected two leaders, Peter Bulkeley of Concord, speaker of the lower house, and William Stoughton, Esq., a member of the upper house and one of Boston's wealthiest merchants, to send as agents for the colony. In fact, John Hull consigned the fish, berries, and samp directly to Bulkeley and Stoughton to present to the king when they sailed aboard the *Blessing*, with instructions to negotiate a favorable outcome for the colony. In particular, their instructions encouraged them to emphasize their readiness to obey the king's command, to diminish the significance of Mason's and Gorges' "pretensions and accusations," to underplay the actual value of the Maine territories, even if Mason's and Gorges' claims turned out to be valid, and finally:

Yet notwithstanding, if yow finde a sume of mony will take them [Gorges and Mason] off from further prosecution of their pretensions, and that they are willing & doe resigne & release all their interest to those parts unto us, and that that may be a fynall issue, yow shall engage in that way as yor discretion shall direct.⁵³

⁵² Pulsipher, 207-37.

⁵³ "Instruction for William Stoughton, Esq., & Mr Peter Bulkeley, our messengers, now chose for to goe for England to present our deffence, in reference to the claimes of Mr Gorges & Mr Mason," 16 September 1676, *Mass. Recs.*, 5: 115-116

This was the strategy: try to make the claims of Gorges and Mason look doubtful, try to make the land of Maine itself look worthless, and then try to buy it at a good price.

The purchase of a valid title to Maine from the younger Ferdinando Gorges required a good deal of complex negotiation, and it was almost two years before a deal was made. Peter Bulkeley and William Stoughton were verbally roughed up by the king's ministers in the process. The Committee for Trade and Plantations pressed the Massachusetts agents on the colony's violations of crown prerogatives, including the coining of money, but Bulkeley and Stoughton claimed that they had not been given instructions or authority by the General Court to deal with any issue besides the Mason and Gorges claims. To this, the committee insisted that "His Majesty did not think of treating with his own subjects as with foreigners and to expect the formality of powers."⁵⁴ But this was, essentially, how Boston thought of treating with His Majesty. They would render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's, but as to their own godly commonwealth, that was their own business. The crown seemed entirely fed up with Massachusetts, and was on the verge of deciding the matter of legal title to Maine in favor of Ferdinando Gorges, when a Boston merchant in London, John Usher, the son Hezekiah Usher, long-time friend and business partner of Hull's, negotiated the purchase of the title from Gorges. In the end the General Court's instructions to Bulkeley and Stoughton proved to be prophetic – it was a "sume of mony" that did the trick. Usher agreed to pay Gorges some £1250, but only had access to a little over £500 himself.

At this point, the question of *where* Bulkeley and Stoughton might find such a large "sume of mony" to pay off the rest of Gorges' price ought to have an obvious answer. And indeed, if we turn to John Hull's Letterbooks, the answer is readily

⁵⁴ Reid, Maine, Charles II, and Massachusetts, 170.

available. On 26 November 1678, Hull wrote to John Ive, one of his many frequent London correspondents, with the following unusual request:

Sir . . . I understand the countreys occasions to bee such that mr Stoughton & mr Buckly haveing bought the province of Main will need seven hundred pound to compleat the payment thereof I desire you to doe mee that favr to take up soe much mony at interest on behalfe of the countrey as shall make up what money of mine you have in yor hand seven hundred pound if sd mr stoughton and Bulkly have not taken it on their own Credit I confess I am very bold with you to desire such a great favr of you but I hope you will not denie it it being it is for publique service but I doe oblidge my Selfe that through the Goodness & favr of god what ever I my Selfe should suffer by it you shall not loose one peny.⁵⁵

Hull was prepared to raise this large sum of money at his own risk.⁵⁶ But with the Indian wars he had helped to finance only barely at an end, and many Massachusetts towns still in arrears on their back taxes from the war, Hull felt that his credit was being stretched thin, perhaps to the breaking point. He hoped that Stoughton and Bulkeley, each a prosperous merchant in his own right, might bear the burden of the Maine purchase themselves, as Hull had done for the colony for so long. On the same day that Hull wrote to John Ive, he also wrote a separate letter to Stoughton and Bulkeley, urging them to do their best to assume the costs themselves:

Therefore if you doe not herein need my Credit I beseech you spare it for I am almost afraid least I should crack it. But what contracts you have made I beseech you please to give me the notice of it clearly & as speedily as you can that I may not bee over suddenly Surprized whether the money bee to bee repaid in London or in Boston. The truth is it is verry Difficult to gett money here but it is much more Difficult to get money at London.⁵⁷

In the end, when Stoughton and Bulkeley failed to arrange the payment on their own credit, Hull made the sacrifice himself, arranged for a shipment of goods (“sixteen

⁵⁵ John Hull to John Ive, Nov. 26, 1678, Hull Letterbook p. 399.

⁵⁶ In fact, this was not the first large sum of money Hull had extended to Stoughton and Bulkeley. When the two were first appointed as the colony’s agents in 1676, Hull gave the two a letter of credit for £300 to present to Thomas Papillon when they arrived in London, “for their use, as they shall need it, . . . and if you dare not Credit me, you may keep my monies, & send me no Goods.” John Hull to Thomas Papillon, October 20, 1676, Letterbook, p. 317-18.

⁵⁷ John Hull to Wm Stoughton and Peter Bulkeley, Nov. 26, 1678, Hull Letterbook, AAS, p. 400.

hogsheads of good muscovado Sugers”) and bills of exchange (“for £500 on Mr: John Paige and Comp”) to pay off his debt to John Ive in London. This meant that Hull’s own orders from Ive would have to wait until he had further resources with which to buy them, a loss to which Hull reconciled himself with the following observation: “I wold have noe debt of the Countreys left unpaide which they descire I might so discharged though I shold be dissappointed of what I wold have for my selfe. Publique Concernness must be prefered before private.”⁵⁸

The purchase of Maine, which gave Boston control over this extensive hinterland (control that would endure for the next 140 years), and improved the colony’s future access to still greater resources in Acadia as well, would be the last major victory for Boston’s strategy of political economy in the era of the first charter. In 1679, efforts to make a similar deal to secure New Hampshire to Boston’s control fell through, when the Attorney General in England declared that Mason’s proprietary title to the *land* in New Hampshire was valid, but that Mason’s patent had not come with *governmental* rights over the region. To clear up this discrepancy between the New Hampshire towns’ voluntary political allegiance to Massachusetts and Mason’s valid land title, the crown separated the four New Hampshire towns (Portsmouth, Exeter, Dover, and Hampton) from Boston’s political control and created a new province, to be placed under royal authority.⁵⁹ Edward Randolph, who had returned to England in 1677 to present his report to the crown on the outrages of Massachusetts, now came back to New England with the

⁵⁸ John Hull to John Ive, June 20 and 21, 1679, Hull Letterbook, AAS, pp. 4116-417. Indeed, not only did Hull put aside his own merchant business to pay off the debt for Maine, but in the same letter, he asked Ive to advance, on his credit, £50 to pay the ransom money for “Poore Mr Elson,” a Boston mariner taken captive by Algerian pirates earlier that year.

⁵⁹ Jeremy Belknap, *History of New Hampshire*, 85-90, provides details, including reprinting the NH commission created in September 1679; see also Clarke, *Eastern Frontier*, 56-60.

revised New Hampshire commission, and proceeded to push forward his vendetta against the Bay Colony. He was now backed more strongly than ever by a general policy within the later Stuart governments of Charles II and, after Charles' death in 1685, James II, to undermine independently chartered forms of power everywhere within the king's dominions.

The magistrates on the General Court, and the merchants and ministers who supported them, did their best to fend off these threats, using what by now were well-tested methods: tribute to the king, bribery in Whitehall, agents sent to the Lords of Trade and Plantations, and whatever combinations of defiance, negotiation, delay, flattery, appeasement, prayer, and good luck that might be hoped to work. But the extent of the crown's efforts to push through a new program of imperial organization and political centralization grew increasingly obvious, and not just in Boston. In England, a concerted attack on town corporations, the boroughs which sent many of Parliament's members to Westminster where they challenged the powers of the king, led to the revocation of many of these charters, similar in structure to the colonial charters. Other forms of corporate privilege, from oyster monopolies to the operation of the Stationers Company, which licensed the press in England, were challenged in this way as well. By 1681, even the City of London itself, arguably the most powerful and important corporation in the realm, had been served with a *quo warranto* inquiry, and in April, 1683, its charter was seized by the crown, where it remained in limbo until the Revolution of 1688.⁶⁰ With respect to the king's overseas possessions, in addition to Massachusetts, the charters of Connecticut,

⁶⁰ On the many challenges to town corporations, and the resuscitation of the writ of *quo warranto* (literally, "under what warrant") as a legal method for challenging corporate charters, see Paul D. Halliday, *Dismembering the Body Politic: Partisan Politics in England's Towns, 1650-1730* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 149-235, especially 175 (on oysterers and Stationers) and 204-09 (on London),.

Rhode Island, Bermuda, the Bahamas, Maryland, Delaware, and East and West Jersey, came under scrutiny or were revoked in the 1670s and 1680s.⁶¹

John Hull and his fellow members of the General Court fought against Randolph's persistent challenges with the same methods that had worked to gain the title to Maine. The colony chose two new agents, John Richards and Joseph Dudley, both Boston merchants, to argue its case in Whitehall, and again Hull was ready to supply them with whatever tools they needed. Although he had been succeeded as colony treasurer by another Boston merchant, James Russell, Hull still expected to provide the power of his credit for the colony's interests whenever necessary. In June, 1683, as Richards and Dudley were working to save the Massachusetts charter from the threatened writ of *quo warranto*, Hull wrote to Thomas Glover, another of the many London merchants with whom he did business, in a familiar manner:

Sir if the agents of this colony mr Joseph dudly & mr John Richards should . . . find that the having some quantity of money in London would be of anny considerable advantage unto this poor country These are to Intreat you to take up five hundred pound In my behalf at as low Interest as you can & supply them with it I do hearby oblige my self my heirs my excecutors & administrators to see you honestly & fully repaid both principall & Interest. It is not for their ordinary expences for that the Treasurer of the country mr James Russell will take effectuall care about but as I may Impart to you privately what yo can easily there guess at whether it will be advisable or If so whether feasible to buy our peaceable enJoiymts of men⁶²

But in the climate now prevailing in Whitehall, the "peaceable enjoyments" of the Massachusetts charter rights were no longer for sale. In the face of intransigence from the Massachusetts agents, whose instructions from Boston prevented them from

⁶¹ Philip S. Haffenden, *The Crown and the Colonial Charters, 1675-1688: Parts I and II*, *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3d ser., 15:3 (July, 1958): 298-311; and 15:4 (October, 1958): 452-486. Eventually, Charles II and James II would challenge every instance of corporate or propriety chartered government in the empire, but James was overthrown before the process could be completed; see Richard R. Johnson, *Adjustment to Empire*, 53-63.

⁶² John Hull to Thomas Glover, June 20 1683, Hull Letterbooks 550.

endorsing any revisions to the charter that would undermine the colony's independence in religion and government, the Committee on Trade and Plantations ordered the Attorney General to prepare a writ of *quo warranto* against the Massachusetts charter in the summer of 1683, only months after it had been used to undermine the charter of London. In the letter from Edward Randolph to the Committee putting forward the "Grounds for Revoking the Colonial Charter," the first item read: "1. They have erected a Publick mint in Boston and Coine money with their Own Impresse."⁶³ Because of a technicality in its preparation and delivery, this writ in the end failed to nullify the charter, but the following year, an alternative strategy, a writ of *scire facias et alias* was used to the same effect, and on October 23, 1684, the charter under which Boston had form a quasi-independent city-state was vacated, and the colony's future left in limbo.⁶⁴

These last years of independent government under the original charter were difficult and disheartening ones for John Hull, and for many other Bostonians like him who had invested their lives and fortunes in the commonwealth of Massachusetts. Even as Hull wrote to his London correspondents to raise money for Boston's ongoing efforts at expansion, his letters revealed some of these worries. His strenuous efforts to "give [John Ive] as much Ashurance as I was Capable that what Ever I suffered he shold not looss one peny by it," and his promise to Thomas Glover to "oblige my self my heirs my excecutors & administrators" to pay the debts he was now incurring, reflected the fact that at this moment, Hull lived "in a place of such mortality." He feared he might not

⁶³ Edward Randolph, "Articles against the Government of Boston," June 4, 1683, Randolph Letters, ed. Toppan and Goodrick, III:229.

⁶⁴ Michael Hall, Edward Randolph, 79-83; David S. Lovejoy, The Glorious Revolution in America, 2d ed (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1987), 148-157.

survive to pay these debts himself.⁶⁵ Boston suffered through a smallpox crisis in 1678-79: “wee have had two verry sicke Townes Charlestowne first & then Boston. I suppose about foure hundred in both have dyed of the small pox in little more then one yeare & yet it contineweth.”⁶⁶ Hull’s son-in-law, Samuel Sewall, came down with smallpox during this outbreak, and Hull himself feared that he was vulnerable. The following year, on August 8, 1679, a massive fire struck Boston’s North End, destroying some of the most valuable property in the city: “About midnight began a fire in Boston, an alehouse, which, by sunrise, consumed the body of the trading part of the town: from the Mill Creek to Mr. Oliver’s dock, no one house nor warehouse left.”⁶⁷ And through all this, the financial crisis brought on by the Indian wars continued. Several of Hull’s letters from the early 1680s are addressed to the Selectmen of various Massachusetts towns, such as Salisbury, Dedham, and Lynn, which were badly in arrears to Hull for payment of the taxes levied during the war. The town of Salisbury alone owed Hull some £650, enumerated in Hull’s letter along with relevant receipts.⁶⁸

On October 25, 1681, Hull addressed an eloquent letter to the meeting of the General Court in Boston, laying out the financial difficulties in which his contributions to

⁶⁵ Hull to Stoughton and Bulkeley, February 1, 1678/9, Letter Book, 410.

⁶⁶ Hull to Stoughton and Bulkeley, Nov. 26, 1678, Letter Book, 401.

⁶⁷ Hull Diary, 245.

⁶⁸ Gentlemen I cannot but wouder at yor negligence and Indeed you may wonder at my patience but Indeed these are to warne & Informe you that if you doe not Speedily send to mee and make payment of all yor arreares which are very greate and you Cannot be Ignorant of them for you had my warrants for all the severall rates while I was Treashuror and yor Constables have there receipts from me for what payments they have made in unto mee upon yor Towns behalf: I pray you therefore take an accot of them and se what yor Town yet standeth in Debt for Rates untell may 1680 and make honest and Efectuall paymt other wise I must be forced to send & Destrayne upon each Constable who hath not made up his accompts and obtained my Discharge for Each one of those yeares afore sd five pound apeice and upon yor Town or any able men among you for the whole Remainer. John Hull to the Selectmen of Salisbury, June 25, 1681, Letterbook, 485-86. Although Hull’s letters to only these three towns survive in his letter book, the towns of Salem, Newbury, Medfield, Topsfield, and perhaps others were in Hull’s debt for back taxes as well. See Diary, AAS, 264.

the cause of the state had left him. In explaining his willingness to put his own money and credit at the colony's service, Hull wrote:

My encouragement was that God had called me to the place and had given me what I had for such a time, -- that it was for a good people as (I hoped) such would be just & righteous if not also grateful. Gent. I am willing to lose freely one hundred Pound out of my own estate, & if it were indeed needful, much more. . . . I do count it my duty to spend and to be spent for the public welfare but I think it (with all Humility) also your duty, Honoured Gentlemen, not to suffer me to lose more than needeth.⁶⁹

The hardships his colony suffered in these years even led Hull, at one point, to fantasize about a more benevolent and loving monarch than Charles II or his brother James would ever be. While writing to Stoughton and Bulkeley about his credit problems, the difficulty of raising money for the colony's causes, and the damage caused by the Indian wars and smallpox, Hull falls into a kind of utopian reverie, imagining not only what a loving king might do for his people, but also what an alternative way of life might be from the one he has lived as an Atlantic merchant and trader:

I am thinking Some times the king's maj[es]ty is a father to this Country and he hath here for quantity of Subjects as obedient Children as any in his dominion. And though they are represented a rich People yet they are really a poore people and yet deeply in debt for the late Indian wars & many of them made more poore by the Sickness since. Why might he not please to Conferr upon these his poore Children ten thousand Pound to helpe them out of their debts?

He briefly gripes about how little the city-state of Boston has cost the crown in its half century of development, especially when compared with other colonial projects. And he bewails the unfairness of the Navigation Acts, which Charles's government has multiplied in recent years, to a trading society like his own, which has

. . . not Occasioned any charge to him by shiping and men as Virginia and other plantations. If they [New England] have Gotten a little Shipping it is by great diligence and Industry. And pittty such industry shold be discouraged by being obliged to such a Corse as must of necessity Crush them. I doe not see how it is

⁶⁹ Hull Diary, AAS, 264-65.

Possible the Acts of navigation Can be attended to here. The Mercht People will be occationed to bid farwell to the Country and Com to England.

In this moment of despair, the only alternative Hull can imagine to this pitiful end of everything he and his fellow Bostonians have been striving for is a radical one -- simplicity and self-sufficiency. Hull briefly becomes a puritan variant on Shakespeare's Gonzalo, who mused about the perfect kingdom in *The Tempest*. Hull again:

Though the heavinly King knoweth Easily how to make all worke for o[u]r best Good, to make us fall Close to all sorts off manufacture and forbear trading by sea: and so Enable us to live more of o[u]r without such dependancies if we Co[u]ld be so low and Content in o[u]r Spirits as then wo[u]ld be o[u]r Condition to Eate noe fruite sugr Spice and drinke noe wine but o[u]r owne Cyder and weare noe Clothing but of o[u]r owne making I doe not know but we might be as helthy and as warme as we are now and It may be more holy righteous and humble.⁷⁰

Then, just as quickly as this reverie came over him, Hull snaps out of it, and returns to the details of life as a colonial “champion” operating in the shifting currents of Atlantic trade and politics. He makes plans for protecting the colony's and his own resources, should the worst happen and Randolph's threats become reality. He arranges for scribes to take down the details of the Atherton Company's claims to land in the Narragansett Country, should Rhode Island's charter be attacked.⁷¹ He raises still more money to ransom captured Boston seafarers in the hands of Algerian pirates.⁷² He writes to Sir Henry Ashurst, a London Alderman and Treasurer of the New England Company, offering to put his own credit at Ashurst's disposal in order to resume Indian missionary work in New England, even while he is still futilely trying to collect the debts owed to him from

⁷⁰ John Hull to Stoughton and Bulkeley, February 1, 1678/79, Letterbook, 410-411.

⁷¹ John Hull to Peleg Sanford and Josiah Arnold, August 21, 1679, Letterbook, 427-436.

⁷² William March, James Elson, Letterbook, 417, 470-73; “This year [1679] Mr. James Elson, with his ship and her lading, bound from London to Boston, was taken by the Algerines” Diary, 245; “Master William Condy and his ship, bound from Boston to London, was taken by the Algerines.” Dec 23 1679, Diary, 246.

the recent ghastly Indian war.⁷³ And, intriguingly, he and his longtime merchant friend and partner, Eliakim Hutchinson, explore a new prospect, or rather, a new version of an old prospect – getting their hands on Spanish silver.

The Lure of the Wracks

In the 1670s and '80s, rumors began to circulate around the English Caribbean about lost Spanish treasure ships whose silver had never been recovered. Notions of this sort had been a staple in the English Atlantic from the time of the settlement of Bermuda, early in the 17th century. They increased with the colonization of the Bahamas in the 1640s by puritans from Bermuda, who settled on the islands that they named Eleuthera (“freedom” in Greek) and New Providence. Bermuda and the Bahamas lay in the path taken by the Spanish treasure fleets as they returned to Spain from the Caribbean through the straits between Cuba and Florida. The notoriously dangerous weather and invisible undersea coral reefs of this region led almost inevitably to shipwrecks. In 1648, a Bermudan named William Berkeley wrote to John Winthrop Jr. about “a Spanish ship of three hundred and fifty tonnes cast away upon our rockes . . . the richest ship that hath bin cast away there since the iland was inhabited.”⁷⁴

Although this ship was never recovered, over the years the Bermudans managed to scavenge a certain amount of silver from the remains of a number of Spanish wrecks. They were aided by the invention of a kind of diving bell, known as the “Bermuda tub,” reportedly developed by a local pirate named Richard Norwood. This was essentially a large wine cask, inverted and weighted around its edges so that it could be lowered into the sea with air trapped inside. Divers working the ocean floor could enter the tub and

⁷³ John Hull to Sir Henry Ashurst, Dec. 17, 1679, Letterbook 438-39.

⁷⁴ William Berkeley to John Winthrop, Jr., 25 June 1648, Winthrop Papers, MHS, V: 232.

breathe for a few minutes, then return to work without having to swim to the surface. In 1642, exactly such a device was used by Edward Bendall to salvage the *Mary Rose*, a ship which had exploded in Boston harbor while bringing munitions to the city, and which the magistrates were keen to recover. According to John Winthrop Sr., Bendall “could continue in his tub near half an hour, and fasten ropes to the ordnance, and put the lead etc., into a net or tub.”⁷⁵ In addition, Captain Thomas Coytmore’s ship, *Trial*, which sailed for the Caribbean in 1642, used a “diving tub” to recover sunken treasure on its voyage as well.

By the early 1680s, the Bermuda Tub had become a standard device in places like New Providence and Eleuthera, islands in the Bahamas where “fishing” for Spanish wrecks began to show some signs of success. Sailors on the provisioning ships sent by merchants like John Hull to the Bahamas, Jamaica, and other Caribbean islands began to return to Boston with gossip about these expeditions, gossip which increasingly began to center on stories about two or three Spanish wrecks of the mid-seventeenth century, reported to be unusually rich in undiscovered treasure. One of these, a ship with the elegant name of *Nuestra Senora de la pura y limpia Concepcion*, went astray from its fleet during a storm in 1641 and wrecked upon coral reefs in shallow water, somewhere east of the Turks Islands, north of Hispaniola, and within striking distance of the Bahamas and Jamaica. It was reputed to have carried as much as 140 tons of silver, worth £1,000,000.⁷⁶ Stories about the possible location of the *Concepcion* stirred interest

⁷⁵ JW Journal, Dunn ed., 399-400.

⁷⁶ Peter Earle, The Treasure of the Concepcion: The Wreck of the Almiranta (New York: Viking Press, 1980), 46-47, 112-116.

at many levels, from English projectors who began petitioning the crown and the royal



navy for permission and support to locate and salvage the wreck, to local projectors around the British Atlantic from the Bahamas to Boston.

Prospects like these for windfall profits in silver led John Hull and his sometime business partner, Eliakim Hutchinson, in the spring of 1683 to outfit the ship *Endeavor* for a salvaging expedition, commanded by projectors Richard Rook, Peres Savage and ship captain Francis Lester:

we doubt not but you will make all speed to the wrack where when the lord shall bring you we desire; this as your dayly constant to love & assist & to your utmost help each other, be united your selves & do your utmost to keep your wholl company we think it will be very profitable to agree to send home the treasure In some vessel which may be kept here safe without cutting untill you have all with consent ended your voyage & come home hither to share be careful to maintain his maiesties peac & to break no law of nature nor nations especially of old england & new. In attending to the law of god & making his word your rule you will keep all which that you may be helped to doe.⁷⁷

⁷⁷ John Hull and Eliakim Hutchinson to Richard Rook, Peres Savage, and Francis Lester, May 16, 1683, Hull Letterbook, 549.

The odd juxtapositions here, the excessive emphasis on keeping the peace and obeying the law of god, are the product of the sensibilities of two puritan traders now applying themselves to a business more commonly associated with pirates and buccaneers. Indeed, in a second letter to Richard Rook, Hull and Hutchinson alluded to some nefarious practices that previous New England “wreckmen” may have engaged in, when they warned Rook:

that you do not bring upon your self nor the company neither upon the owners any part of the guilt of innocent blood for truly we fear the taking Indians by force is man stealing and to kill any of them in that designe will Involve in the guilt of blood which I would have you & us keep far from & walk humbly & mournfully under a deep sence of what passed formerly all though indeed we our selves are but very darkly acquainted what the wrackmen did.⁷⁸

Yet at the same time, given the desperate straits that New England’s finances (and their own personal investments) had been facing, Hull and Hutchinson envisioned that a successful salvaging voyage would bring the treasure “home hither” to share.

Most other contemporary English projectors included the crown and its agents more directly in the plans to salvage the wrecks and distribute its proceeds, with the king receiving a substantial cut of the proceeds.⁷⁹ This is not to say that if Rook and company had brought home the *Concepcion’s* millions, the Boston merchants would have tried to deny the crown its share, but rather that in the now long history of Boston’s Caribbean trading projects, and in the habits formed over half a century, these merchants, Hull and Hutchinson, characteristically saw this salvage operation as yet another project stemming from the independent interests of their own political economy. Like the initial trading voyages to the Caribbean of the 1640s, the coinage of silver shillings in the 1650s, and

⁷⁸ Hull and Hutchinson to Richard Rook, May 16-24, 1683, Letterbook, 547-48

⁷⁹ For example, at exactly this same time, two West Indian informants approached Sir John Narborough, a Royal Navy officer with a long history of interest in shipwrecks and salvage operations, to outfit an expedition with the protection and support of the crown and the Royal Navy; see Peter Earle, 118-120.

the expansion of their territory through politics, purchase and warfare in the 1660s and '70s, this new venture was designed to solve Boston's problems, not the crown's. It seemed ever more obvious that the king was not the kind of benevolent father who might grant his "poor children" £10,000 to ease their economic suffering, so the poor children would have to find it on their own.

This expedition failed. Richard Rook and the *Endeavor* did not bring the treasure of the *Concepcion* or any other wreck "home hither" to Boston. So too failed the efforts of the colony's agents, John Richards and Joseph Dudley, to salvage the Massachusetts Bay charter. John Hull did not live to see either disappointment. His health began to fade in the summer of 1683, shortly after the departure of the expedition to the "wracks," and he died on October 1. The writ of *quo warranto* that brought the charter under assault named Captain John Hull among those it personally called to account for violations of royal authority, but Hull was dead before Edward Randolph arrived in Boston bearing the writ.⁸⁰ Over the next few years, in a process that was delayed by the death of King Charles II and the succession of his brother James to the throne, the charters of Connecticut and Rhode Island were revoked as well, and James created a new colonial entity, ruled by the crown through an appointed governor, uniting all the colonies from New Jersey to Maine under a single government, known as the Dominion of New England.⁸¹

Fighting the Kleptocracy

The history of the Dominion of New England and its eventual overthrow, prompted by news from England of William of Orange's invasion and James II's flight,

⁸⁰ Hull Diaries, AAS Transactions, III (1857); Clarke, *John Hull: A Builder of the Bay Colony*.

⁸¹ Viola F. Barnes, *The Dominion of New England* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1923).

is a story that has been told many times over, and need not be repeated here at length.⁸² James II's royal governor, Sir Edmund Andros, a soldier, experienced colonial administrator, and recently the governor of New York, was seen by most Bostonians as well as those in the New England hinterland as tyranny embodied. Andros and the Dominion government threatened the very things that lay at the heart of the city-state of Boston: political autonomy and self-governance; free-hold land title that allowed middling folks throughout the commonwealth to engage in market production; free trade throughout the Atlantic world for Boston's merchants to make this production profitable, and a firm commitment to a communitarian ethos grounded in the religion of the puritan churches. Andros's assault on these practices constituted the chief grievances that the rebels who rose up on April 18, 1689, and arrested Edmund Andros (and Edward Randolph) listed in the manifesto justifying their actions. But what is worth highlighting about these events is something that has often been neglected in the various existing accounts of the Glorious Revolution in America; namely, the distinctive quality of Boston's rebellion within the larger British Atlantic world, a distinction made possible by the unique strategy of political economy pursued by the city-state of Boston, and by the moral economy of the commonwealth of Massachusetts.

The last quarter of the seventeenth century saw a series of colonial rebellions against royal authority in British America. Boston's uprising in April, 1689 was among the series of these events that were precipitated by the downfall of James II and the invasion of William of Orange in 1688-89. Others occurred, at more or less the same

⁸² The best accounts of this era include: Richard R. Johnson, *Adjustment to Empire*; David S. Lovejoy, *The Glorious Revolution in America*; Viola F. Barnes, *The Dominion of New England*; two biographical studies by Michael G. Hall, *Edward Randolph* and *The Last American Puritan*; important documentary editions include: *The Andros Tracts*, the *Randolph Letters*, the *Glorious Revolution in Massachusetts*.

moment, in New York, Maryland, and Antigua. Still further rebellions were narrowly averted in Virginia by the governor's rapid proclamation accepting William as the new monarch, and in Jamaica by the sudden death of that island's governor, the Duke of Albemarle, who had overindulged in food and drink in celebration of the birth of an heir to James II in November, 1688. But these other rebellions and near-rebellions differed from the one in Massachusetts, because in all these other cases, the overthrow of royal government was either caused by or unleashed internal tensions within the colonies. In each of these other colonies, tensions between local elites, merchants or great plantation owners, and the common folks who resented the rule of these local aristocrats and the support they received from the crown, led to outbreaks of violence. In some cases, such as Leisler's Rebellion in New York and the rebellion led by John Coode in Maryland, ethnic and religious differences within the colony played into the conflict as well; Dutch vs. English in New York, Catholic vs. Protestant in Maryland.⁸³

Boston was different. Although thousands of common soldiers, many of them members of the town militias who had fought in the Indian wars, marched into the city with the aim of arresting Governor Andros and his small group of supporters, they met no resistance from local elites in Boston. Quite the contrary; the merchants, ministers, and magistrates of the city put aside the minor differences they had over the best tactics for resisting royal control, and stepped forward to embrace the common cause by gathering as a collective and demanding the surrender of Andros and his henchmen, including the despised Edward Randolph. In the words of Randolph's biographer, "the revolution was

⁸³ For general discussions of the Glorious Revolution in America, see Richard S. Dunn, "The Glorious Revolution and America," in The Origins of Empire, ed. Nicholas Canny, vol. 1 of The Oxford History of the British Empire (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 445-466; David S. Lovejoy, The Glorious Revolution in America, 2d. ed. (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1987).

entirely conservative. And it was, as near as anything could be, unanimous.”⁸⁴ Cotton Mather agreed; he called it “the most Unanimous Resolution perhaps that ever was known to have inspir’d any People.”⁸⁵

Historians across the centuries have spilled much ink in trying to distinguish among various factions in Massachusetts politics in the later decades of the seventeenth century, and in general have settled on a split between “moderates,” who favored some accommodation with the crown as the best way to retain most of their original charter privileges, and the “popular” party favoring complete resistance to any change as the best approach. But in the larger context of the British Atlantic, and under the pressure of revolution in the metropolis, these small differences in tactics seem far less important than the general agreement expressed in Boston’s uprising against Andros and the provisional restoration of charter government until a new settlement could be made. After the arrest of Andros, the former governor of the colony from the charter period, the elderly Simon Bradstreet, who had avoided any kind of public service during the hated Andros regime, stepped forward to resume his role as acting governor until new instructions from the new king arrived. Even among the fifteen “gentlemen” who arrested Governor Andros, a deliberate balance was struck between those who had favored total resistance to charter revisions, and those who had wanted to cooperate with the crown in order to retain their larger autonomy.⁸⁶ Both symbolically and actually, the

⁸⁴ Michael G. Hall, Edward Randolph, 122. By contrast, both Dunn, 458-460, and Lovejoy, 251-270, highlight the lack of unanimity in the New York and Maryland uprisings. On the bitter internal conflict in New York that drove Leisler’s Rebellion to its tragic end, see David William Voorhees, “The ‘fervent Zeal’ of Jacob Leisler,” William and Mary Quarterly 3d. ser, 51, no. 3 (July, 1994): 447-472.

⁸⁵ Cotton Mather, Pietas in Patriam: The Life of Sir William Phips, in Magnalia, Bks I and II, ed. Kenneth Murdock, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1977), 294.

⁸⁶ Richard S. Dunn, Puritans and Yankees: The Winthrop Dynasty of New England, 254-56.

overthrow of Edmund Andros was perhaps the most unanimously acclaimed political act in the history of Boston.

What made this unanimity possible the general agreement among the city's denizens and the population of the New England hinterland that the political economy of the region, together with its thick religious culture and the moral economy it helped to sustain, knit the population together into an integrated set of interests. It was exactly the interconnections among varied economic interests, from rural farmers to Atlantic merchants, fostered by the coins that John Hull had minted over these decades, when wampum and other forms of small change could no longer do this work, that held the city-state of Boston together in the face of divisive forces better than other colonies in English America. This is not to say that the region was without conflict, or that the interests of city merchants always aligned perfectly with those of farmers or fishermen. But compared with the other major plantations in colonial British America, the degree of mutually self-sustaining integration within the region Boston controlled is quite extraordinary. Although different groups within Boston's ambit might have emphasized somewhat different aspects of their grievances against Andros and King James's Dominion of New England, collectively their commitment to unrestrained Atlantic trade, to freehold land titles within the Massachusetts town system, to political self-rule through an assembly of elected deputies and counselors, and to an orthodox puritan religious culture fully supported by the state, were the foundations of a political economy they badly wanted to keep, and it was this system that royal government had threatened at every level.

Perhaps the most instructive comparison to be made on this point is not with the immediately contemporary rebellions in New York, Maryland, and Antigua, but with the violence that tore apart Virginia in 1676.⁸⁷ In a brief and intense period of conflict, Bacon's Rebellion compressed together many of the elements of colonial struggle within the imperial world of the later seventeenth century that Boston would face over the longer stretch of time from the Restoration to the Glorious Revolution. In Virginia, royal government had been established for half a century when Bacon's Rebellion exploded, so the concept of royal government itself was not the issue. Rather, the conflict stemmed from hostility toward Indians shared by many white planters and their former indentured servants who sought to expand ever farther into the Virginia interior. Although this racial animosity may well have been shared by the Tidewater planter elite, economic interests and connections arrayed the elite, who were close allies of royal governor William Berkeley, against the interests of the upstart Nathaniel Bacon and his supporters. It was exactly this difference between Virginia's costly factionalism and New England's self-sustaining unity that John Hull noted in his letter of February 1, 1678/79 to Stoughton and Bulkeley in London, when he commented on how little Boston had ever cost the crown: "They have not Occasioned any charge to [the king] by shiping and men as Virginia and other plantations." Hull was clearly thinking of the fact that only the year before, King Charles had been forced to send a thousand soldiers to Virginia, along with three royal commissioners, to restore the peace, maintain order, and resolve the internal conflicts in his royal colony.⁸⁸

⁸⁷ See Chapter 2, above.

⁸⁸ For details on Bacon's Rebellion, see Wilcomb Washburn, The Governor and the Rebel: A History of Bacon's Rebellion in Virginia (New York: Norton, 1972).

The unanimity of opposition in Boston to the Dominion of New England was enhanced by the widespread feeling that the king's appointees, Sir Edmund Andros and his small group of supporters, were rapacious usurpers, stealing the wealth, profiteering from the trade, and banking on the political stability that the city-state of Boston had taken decades to build on its own. At the time of the creation of the Dominion of New England, there were two other royal colonies in British North America, Virginia and New York. In the case of the former, the crown had rescued a colonial project that had failed completely, taking it over in the wake of Opechancanough's Rebellion in 1622, an Indian assault that virtually destroyed what was already a floundering colony.⁸⁹ In the case of New York, the crown's army and navy had seized New Netherlands, a Dutch enterprise that was likewise suffering badly from a fading fur market and conflict with Indians.⁹⁰ But the city-state of Boston was not a failed state. The "Bostoners" (as Edward Randolph continually referred to them)⁹¹ saw no need for the crown to create a Dominion of New England, because Boston had already created a very successful dominion of New England on its own account. Starting from the independence of their strong but geographically small charter, Boston had hived off new colonies in southern New England along Long Island Sound and up the Connecticut River, and then built a political, military, and economic confederation to bring this region under control. The "government of Boston Bay" had expanded to the northeast and incorporated large new regions in New Hampshire and Maine. Boston's merchants had created a vigorous and

⁸⁹ Morgan, *American Slavery, American Freedom*, 98-107.

⁹⁰ Robert C. Ritchie, *The Duke's Province: A Study of New York Politics and Society, 1664-1691*, 2d ed. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009), 9-24; J. M. Sosin, *English America and the Restoration Monarchy of Charles II: Transatlantic Politics, Commerce, and Kinship* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1980), 138-149

⁹¹ See Randolph Letters, IV: 187 "I arrived at N. Hampshire and after great Opposition made by ye Bostoners, settled his [Majesty's] Government in that Province," VI: 72, 74, and passim.

amazingly wide-ranging commercial network, stretching to the far reaches of the Atlantic world and beyond, and they used this skill to become the “market town of all British America.”⁹² From their point of view, the imposition of royal authority, especially in the persons of crypto-Catholic soldiers and place-men like Andros and Randolph, the chosen agents of England’s Roman Catholic King, was the imposition of a useless kleptocracy on a successful and virtuous colony.⁹³

During the three miserable years of Andros’s rule, and in the aftermath of the rebellion that overthrew the Dominion, the grievances expressed by Bostonians against Andros and his men repeated these accusations. They argued that Andros neglected the interests of the people and instead “govern[ed] by the advice only of a few others, the principal of them Strangers to the Countrey, without Estates or Interest therein to oblige them, persons of known and declared Prejudices against us, and that had plainly laid their cheifest Designs and Hopes to make unreasonable profit of this poor People.”⁹⁴ A great

⁹² In his 1654 account of the history of New England, Massachusetts writer Edward Johnson had even gone so far as to enumerate “the charges expended by this poor people, to injoy Christ in his purity of Ordinances” in New England. In this remarkable accounting, Johnson comes up with the figure of £192,000, breaking the cost down according to categories – transportation of people, livestock, food, tools, arms, etc. And he asks, “where had this poore people this great sum of money? The mighty Princes of the Earth never opened their Coffers for them, and the generality of these men were meane and poore in the things of this life.” Johnson, *Wonder-Working Providences*, 54-55.

⁹³ Among the small number of supporters brought in by Andros to help run the Dominion were several Roman Catholics, including Anthony Brockholls, Gervais Baxter, George Lockhart, and David Condon, who served on the Royal Navy frigate *Rose* stationed in Boston harbor in support of Andros’s government. On the role of fears of Roman Catholic conspiracy as a cause of the rebellion, see David Lovejoy, *GRA*, 281-88. As one among many examples of the profiteering that promoted interest in restructuring authority in America, Richard R. Johnson shows that Robert Mason, grandson of the New Hampshire claimant John Mason, had promised that proceeds from any land he received in his suits against Massachusetts would go to the son of Lord Danby, the king’s first minister of the treasury, and the Duke of Monmouth, illegitimate son of Charles II; Johnson, *Adjustment to Empire*, 43.

⁹⁴ “A Narrative of the Proceedings of Sir Edmund Androsse and his Complices . . . “ in *The Andros Tracts*, cited in *The Glorious Revolution in America: Documents on the Colonial Crisis of 1689*, ed. Michael G. Hall, Lawrence H. Leder, and Michael G. Kammen (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1964), 31. The narrative went on to assert that the fees to be charged for surveying and regrating land titles were so extensive that “it hath by some been computed that all the money in the Country would not suffice to patent the Lands therein contained.” *GRA Docs*, 34. A similar narrative justifying the rebellion quoted a letter from Edward Randolph to another of Andros’s placemen, “I believe all the Inhabitants of

deal of evidence supports the truth of this accusation. Edward Randolph stood foremost among those “persons of declared Prejudices” seeking unreasonable profits. In addition to promoting the bizarre idea of bringing Roman Catholic priests into New England,⁹⁵ Randolph spent much of his time during the Dominion seeking lucrative offices in Boston that would provide fees to build his fortunes and trolling for land on which to build an estate.⁹⁶ On several occasions, Randolph petitioned Andros’s hand-picked Council (of which he was a member) for grants of “a certain tract of vacant and unappropriated land,” usually about 500 to 700 acres, near enough to Boston for building a suitable country manor house from which he could still keep his eye on his lucrative city contracts.⁹⁷ But land that in Randolph’s eyes appeared “vacant and unappropriated” was actually common land at Nahant, used by the residents of the town of Lynn, “the whole fenced as a common field & . . . afterwards by the agreement of the proprietors turned into a pasture & soe ever since to this day improved . . . a grazing field with great benefit to the body of the whole town.” In defending their collective ownership of this tract, the townspeople of Lynn expressed their “hope” that “arguments of this nature wil

Boston will be forced to take Grants and Confirmations of their Lands, as now intended; the Inhabitants of the Province of Maine which will bring in vast profits to Mr. West, he taking what Fees he pleases to demand.” Randolph Letters, IV: 168.

⁹⁵ “Randolph to Sir Nicholas Butler Proposing a Romanist Mission, Randolph Letters, VI: 240-242: “I heare his Majesty intends to send over some preists to New York: I humbly propose it more necessary to have some recommended to that service in this Gومت in regard the greatest part of Our Indians are bordring upon the french to the Eastward and by that meanes they will be kept at home and prove serviceable to the Crown in peace by their trade in tyme of war by their assistance.” This proposal was the sort of thing that inspired Bostoners to fear that Edmund Andros, who was a native of the isle of Guernsey, secretly planned to turn New England over to the French.

⁹⁶ For an example, see “The Humble Petition of Edward Randolph (to be Secretary of all New England,” Randolph Letters, IV, 165-66. Randolph knew how lucrative this office could be, as he was the author of “A Table of Ffees Humbly Presented to his Excellencie the Governour and Councell for their Allowance to the Secretaries Office in New England,” Randolph Letters, IV. 147-148. Randolph also wrote the list of fees due to the Customs Collector in Boston, an office he held as well. IV: 149.

⁹⁷ “Petition of Edward Randolph for Nahant Neck,” 1 October 1687, Randolph Letters, IV: 171; and “Warrant for Cambridge Proprietors of Land to Appear and Put in Claims Adverse to Petition of Edward Randolph,” Randolph Letters, IV: 207.

be swaying with soe rationall a Common Wealths man as as Mr Randolph. . . . “ They believed that if Randolph were to seize this land, “It will be extremely prejudicial if not impoverish the body of ye inhabitants of Lynn who live not upon Traffique & trading as many seaport townes doe, who have greater advantages, but upon husbandry & raising such stocks of Cattle & Sheep as they are capable & as their outlands will afford.” And finally, they argued, “if the pasture be alienated from us . . . we shall be rendered very uncapable . . . to contribute such dues & duties to his Majesty’s Government sett over us.”⁹⁸

Here in a nutshell was the political economy of the city-state of Boston, but the petitioners of Lynn falsely flattered Edward Randolph when they called him a “rational Common Wealths man.” From the land distribution within its country towns and villages to the operation of its overseas trade in the humble commodities these towns produced, the city-state of Boston had created a remarkably successful commonwealth through this system, but its virtues were mostly invisible to Randolph, Andros, and their cronies, seeing them as they did from an imperial perspective.⁹⁹ Andros, Randolph, and their cohort were no commonwealth men. In fact, so alien to Randolph were the

⁹⁸ “Objections of Lynn to the Petition of Edward Randolph,” Randolph Letters, 202-204. The town of Cambridge made a similar, if less eloquent, objection to Randolph’s petition for land in their town, “plainely evincing that those Lands are neither vacant nor unappropriated.” see “Reply of Proprietors of Lands between Sanders Brook and Spy Pond, Randolph Letters, 213-216. These complaints were incorporated in item 5 of “A Narrative of the Proceedings of Sir Edmond Androsse and his Complices” in the following language: “The Enjoyment and Improvement of Lands not inclosed, and especially if lying in common amongst many was denied to be possession.” GRA Docs, 34.

⁹⁹ Earlier in the seventeenth century, English writers on political economy such as Francis Brewster and William Petty simply failed to see any value at all to New England’s economy. In 1655, Brewster called it “that unprofitable plantation, which now brings nothing to this Nation, but to the contrary buries Numbers of Industrious People in a Wilderness, that produceth nothing but Provisions to feed them.” Later 17th-century economists such as Josiah Childs, William Davenant, Thomas Mun, and Thomas Manley began to appreciate the value of the carrying trade as a productive enterprise in its own right, but they followed Edward Randolph in seeing New England’s growing trade as a loss to English revenue, “so that New England is become the great mart and staple, by which means the navigation of the kingdom is greatly prejudiced.” See Margaret E. Newell, From Dependency to Independence, 70, 81-83.

commonwealth practices of the Massachusetts political economy, of the sort to which John Hull had devoted much of his fortune and his career, that he simply could not recognize them for what they were. When Randolph observed the existence of large pools of collective wealth gathered for the public service, like the endowment of Harvard College or the funds raised by the New England Company for Indian missions, and saw that these funds were administered by “private” individuals such as John Hull, William Stoughton, or Daniel Gookin, he could only assume that “they have possessed themselves of the money of the Colledge converting it to their private benefitt.”¹⁰⁰ That, after all, is the kind of thing that Randolph tried to do whenever he could.

Most of Edmund Andros’s entourage had simply moved with him to Boston from New York, where Andros had previously been the chosen governor of the Duke of York, now King James II. Andros and his cronies saw this new and richer colony as yet another opportunity to line their pockets. Andros was to be paid “the princely salary of twelve hundred pounds a year,” far beyond anything that Boston’s elected governors in the charter period had ever made. In fact, many of the early colonial governors, from John Winthrop forward, were “Volunteers, governing without pay from the people.”¹⁰¹ The Declaration of Grievances issued on the day of the revolt against Andros, possibly written by Cotton Mather and signed by the fifteen “Gentlemen” who led the uprising, claimed that “of all our Oppressors we were chiefly squeez’d by a Crew of abject Persons fetched from New York . . . nor could a small Volume contain the other Illegalities done by these

¹⁰⁰ Randolph to Sir Nicholas Butler, March 29, 1688, Randolph Letters VI:245.

¹⁰¹ Johnson, *Adjustment to Empire*, 52. A number of the governors in the charter period impoverished themselves in their devotion to colony service – Winthrop was the prime example. According to Edward Johnson, *Wonder Working Providence of Sion’s Savior in New England* (1654), ed. J. Franklin Jameson, (New York: Charles Scribner’s, 1910), 141, the early magistrates of Massachusetts “have hitherto been Volunteers, governing without pay from the People, onely the Governor of Mattacusets hath some years 100 l. allowed to him, some years less.” On Winthrop’s expenditures and financial setbacks as governor, see Francis J. Bremer, *John Winthrop, America’s Forgotten Founder* (New York: Oxford University Press),

Horse-leeches in the two or three Years that they have been sucking of us.”¹⁰² The background and experience that brought the Andros “crew” to colonial service lay in the military, so in addition to the fees of office and the prospects of land grants, Andros and his circle thought that Boston needed a greater military presence, from which they might profit as well. Andros introduced two new “companies of souldiers,” infantry companies under the governor’s command and paid for by taxes on the local population, that would transform the traditional system of self-defense by local militia that had served Boston since its founding.¹⁰³

Everything that Andros and company stood for was directly opposed to the city-state of Boston and its commonwealth tradition. Even the consolidation of all the colonies from Delaware to Maine in the omnibus Dominion of New England demonstrated this. The process of expansion that Boston had conducted in its first fifty years was also a process of exclusion. They had deliberately kept the Dutch colony of New Netherlands from encroaching on their access to the Connecticut territory, they had excluded heterodox Rhode Island (founded by Massachusetts exiles) from the United Colonies, and in expanding to incorporate New Hampshire and Maine, they had fought to rid these regions of rival claimants whose royalist values and proprietary land rights conflicted with their own vision of their commonwealth.¹⁰⁴ They had made determined efforts to include the native population of southern New England within this

¹⁰² “The Boston Declaration of Grievances, April 18, 1689,” in Andrews, ed., Narratives of the Insurrections, 175-82, GRA Docs, 43.

¹⁰³ Richard R. Johnson, Adjustment to Empire, p. 55 “The Dominion had from its inception a martial flavor characteristic of James’s approach to government.

¹⁰⁴ Richard R. Johnson argues that Boston’s unique level of resistance to royal government was a product of this exclusionary aspect: “The roots of this intransigence, it would seem, lay in Massachusetts’s differences from its neighbors – the colony’s keen sense of its role and duty as leader of New England Puritanism, its confidence in its greater military strength, and its larger stake in protecting commercial and territorial expansion.” Adjustment to Empire, 40.

commonwealth, but when these efforts collapsed in violence in the 1670s, their exclusionary response had been brutal – and effective. In other words, the city-state of Boston had created the dominion of New England that it wanted, even if it had failed to live up to the Augustinian standards of a commonwealth in many respects. Its citizens saw no purpose in being yoked together under a single government with other colonial projects they had themselves worked to steer clear of, especially when they suspected that “an horrid Popish plot” lay behind this “Design,” and that “Popish Commanders” in the King’s army and “papists” among the members of Andros’s appointed Council were stealing the wealth and security that New England Protestants had created for themselves.¹⁰⁵ For all these reasons, their rebellion against Andros and Randolph was overdetermined. Although the news that William of Orange had invaded England and that James II had fled gave energy and impetus to their rebellion, the country militia and the “Gentlemen” of Boston nevertheless rose up and arrested Governor Andros *before* the triumph of William was confirmed, and without any evidence to make them sure that even if William were to be crowned the new king, he would look with favor upon a rebellion against royal government in the colonies.

Once that coronation took place, the settlement that the new king made with Massachusetts offered neither complete approbation nor outright rejection of the rebellion. Over a period of three years from 1688 to 1691, Increase Mather, Boston’s leading minister, negotiated a new charter, beginning with personal interviews with James II before his dramatic downfall, and then continuing with William III after the

¹⁰⁵ “The Boston Declaration of Grievances, April 18, 1689,” in [GRA Docs](#), 42.-46.

Glorious Revolution.¹⁰⁶ Although many of the defenders of Boston's old regime would have preferred to restore the original charter of 1629 as the framework of government, this was not to be. Yet in many ways, the city-state of Boston had outgrown the original charter, in large part by remaking it themselves. The new charter issued in 1691 ratified many of the remarkable gains that Boston had made during its half-century and more of relative independence. The new charter confirmed that the territory of Maine, its ownership and allegiance contentious for so long, and much in doubt for the decade after the purchase of its title in 1678, did indeed belong to Boston. It added the region of the old Plymouth Colony, including Cape Cod, to Massachusetts' governance, giving the Bay Colony effective control of the entire coast line from the Cape to the Bay of Fundy.

In this sense, the new charter was much better than the old one, confirming legally the gains that Boston had won over half a century of struggle. The new charter also restored most of the rights and liberties that Andros and Randolph had threatened, including land titles granted under the previous regime, restoration of the system of town governance, religious liberty (which in Boston meant the right to sustain the puritans' established churches so long as tolerance of other protestants was allowed), and the right to elect a colonial assembly, both the lower house of deputies and the upper council of magistrates, whose consent was necessary for all revenue and taxation measures.

Essentially, the major difference between the new charter and the old, the tradeoff Mather accepted in return for the guaranteed title to Maine and Plymouth along with all the other

¹⁰⁶ Michael G. Hall, *The Last American Puritan: The Life of Increase Mather, 1639-1723* (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 1988), 212-254, offers a fine-grained account of Mather's negotiations in London for the new charter. However, Hall's work posits a sharp-distinction between the "spiritual" rhetoric of Boston's founders and the "language of English constitutionalism," and sees the new charter as an abrupt and decisive shift from the first to the second, while I am arguing for a far greater degree of overlap and continuity between these two rhetorical worlds from the beginning of the colony, and for the continuity of this interplay into the second charter period.

original liberties that the Mass Bay Colony had enjoyed, was the crown's assertion of the privilege to appoint a royal governor. In the remarkable story of the man whom the new king chose to appoint as the first royal governor of Massachusetts, our account of the political economy of Boston in the world of 17th-century Atlantic empires comes full circle, back to the search for silver and the making of local money where we began.

The Apotheosis of William Phips: Silver and the Making of a Bostonian

The failure of John Hull and Eliakim Hutchinson's 1683 expedition to the shipwrecks off Hispaniola did not mean the end of these "fishing" projects to the "wracks," not by any means. Although the odds against success seemed ludicrous, rated by Daniel Defoe as "a Lottery of a hundred thousand to one odds,"¹⁰⁷ shipwreck salvaging remained an obsession of dozens of Atlantic seafaring men, among them, William Phips of Boston. Actually, William Phips was not "of" Boston. He was born in the province of Maine in 1651, where the religious culture of Boston was thin and the political hold of Boston was sporadic. His birthplace was "at a despicable Plantation on the River of the Kennebeck, and almost the furthest Village of the Eastern Settlement of New England."¹⁰⁸ As a youth, Phips learned the skills of a shepherd and a ship's carpenter, but he was barely literate. He grew to be a large, powerful, and sometimes violent man, coarse and somewhat wild in his manners and behavior. But if Boston's political and religious control of Maine was weak, its economic influence was strong, and Phips was drawn to the city in search of greater fortunes and adventures than shepherding

¹⁰⁷ Daniel Defoe, *An Essay Upon Projects* (London, 1697), 16.

¹⁰⁸ Cotton Mather, *Pietas in Patriam: The Life of His Excellency Sir William Phips, Knt.* (1697) in *Magnalia Christ Americana*, Books I and II, ed. Kenneth B. Murdock, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1977), 278. Mather's biography of Phips, written shortly after his death, is the most important contemporary source of information on Phips's life. The best modern biography is Emerson W. Baker and John G. Reid, *The New England Knight: Sir William Phips, 1651-1695* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998). The following pages rely extensively on these two works.

and joinery could win him in Maine. In 1673, Phips moved to Boston, married the widow of a local merchant (whose late husband's name, oddly enough, was John Hull, though apparently unrelated to our mintmaster), and although he began to establish himself as a shipbuilder, he set his eye on becoming a ship captain and perhaps a substantial merchant. As Cotton Mather described Phips' ambition, "He would frequently tell the Gentlewoman his Wife, That he should yet be Captain of a King's Ship . . . and, That he should be Owner of a Fair Brick-House in the Green-Lane of North-Boston."¹⁰⁹

For Phips, as for John Hull, the key to achieving this vision of success involved silver, but the path Phips took to wealth was very different from Hull's. In the background of the Phips family lay obscure connections to English nobility, not an uncommon trait among the settlers of early Maine, where the early land grants often came through the hands of minor gentry such as Ferdinando Gorges and John Mason.¹¹⁰ But these connections gave Phips the idea, a relatively rare idea among most Bostonians, but becoming more common in the 1680s as the prospect of change to royal government grew greater, that noble patronage offered the best route to worldly success. After trying his hand in a minor salvaging voyage off the Bahamas in 1682, where he learned about the great Spanish treasure ships still undiscovered in Caribbean waters, Phips went to London in the spring of 1683 – at the same time that Hull and Hutchinson were sending their own ship Endeavor to the "wracks," -- to search for patrons and funding to mount a substantial expedition.

¹⁰⁹ Mathe, Pietas in Patriam, 280,

¹¹⁰ A distant cousin, Constantine Phips, became a leading London attorney, a Tory politician, and eventually Lord Chancellor of Ireland; Baker and Reid, 5. For an elegant study of the connections of early Maine colonists to the claims of English aristocrats, see Richard R. Johnson, John Nelson, Merchant Adventurer: A Life Between Empires (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991).

In London, Phips met two naval officers, Sir John Narbrough and Sir Richard Haddock, who had served in the Caribbean and developed their own interests in salvaging Spanish wrecks. Through their assistance and support, and with a good deal of his own blustering self-confidence, Phips secured the loan of a royal navy frigate to take on a salvaging expedition. The ship was called *The Rose*, or sometimes *The Rose of Algiers* or the *Algier-Rose*; it had been a vessel in the naval forces of Algiers, captured by the English in the ongoing battles off the Barbary Coast, and outfitted with 20 guns by the royal navy. Phips's first task as its commander was to sail to Boston, where he delivered his quarrelsome passenger, Edward Randolph, bearing the writ of *quo warranto* against the Massachusetts charter. At this point in his life, Phips seemed to care not at all about Boston's politics and its fate at the hands of the crown. All that mattered to him was that from Boston, he could supply the ship with diving tubs and other necessities for its voyage to the wrecks.¹¹¹

This first major venture failed to find the *Concepcion*, but Phips picked up enough additional information during the voyage to convince his English supporters to try again. The fact that Phips also proved capable of withstanding his frustrated crew's entreaties to turn from fruitless wreck-hunting to potentially lucrative Caribbean piracy enhanced his reputation as well.¹¹² He gained some new patrons, including the Duke of Albermarle, soon to be Jamaica's governor, and set off in 1686 in a larger ship, the *James and Mary*, armed with better information, a larger crew, and stronger backing.

¹¹¹ Baker and Reid, 25-29; Mather, *Pietas in Patriam*, 280-282; Peter Earle, *The Wreck of the Concepcion*, 124-128.

¹¹² In Mather's recounting of these events, "So proper was [Phips'] Behaviour, that the best Noble Men in the Kingdom now admitted him into their Conversation." *Pietas in Patriam*, 283.

This time, Phips and his crew succeeded beyond anyone's wildest imaginings. On 19 January 1687, divers from one of Phips' companion ships discovered the wreck of the *Concepcion*, and a salvage operation began that "brought up Thirty Two Tuns of Silver." Cotton Mather recorded Phips' reaction: "Thanks be to God! We are made."¹¹³ To Phips' credit, he managed the delicate feat of sailing this enormous treasure back to London, with a ship's crew that had signed on for fixed wages but now declared that "they knew not how to bear it, that they should not share all among themselves, and be gone to lead a short Life and a merry." (285). By promising the men a share in the profits, "which if the rest of his Employers would not agree unto, he would himself distribute his own share among them," Phips staved off the mutiny, and brought the *Mary and James* back to London with a treasure larger than any seen since Sir Francis Drake had seized a Spanish treasure fleet more than a century before.

All told, the silver Phips recovered was valued at £210,000 sterling. King James II claimed his share, the royal "tenth," the various investors claimed their cuts, and honored Phips' promise to reimburse the crew. In the end, Phips received a 1/16th share of what remained after the king's tenth was taken, worth roughly £11,000, plus a series of gifts from the grateful patrons who sponsored the voyage, including a golden cup for his wife reportedly worth £1000, and a medal cast in his honor, with King James and Queen Mary on one side and an image of the eponymous ship salvaging the wreck on the other, affixed to a golden chain to wear around his neck.¹¹⁴

¹¹³ Mather, *Pietas*, 284.

¹¹⁴ For a breakdown of the distribution of the profits from the *Concepcion*, see Peter Earle, p. 201. The king's tenth amounted to roughly £21,000, and the largest investor, the Duke of Albemarle, received £43,000.



1802

King James knighted Phips in June, 1687, making him henceforth “Sir William,” the first New England native ever to earn this honor. In August, Phips was awarded the title of Provost-Marshal of New England, a new position under the Dominion of New England that would have put Phips in charge of naming and overseeing the county sheriffs, a new judicial system that the King and Governor Andros had envisioned to replace the county courts of the charter period.

The enormity of Phips’s treasure and the popular notoriety it received in England set off a wave of speculation in further treasure-seeking, joint-stock corporation forming, and other financial adventures that actually influenced the formation of the Bank of England in the following decade.¹¹⁵ In his Essay Upon Projects, Daniel Defoe pointed to the extraordinary success of the Phips venture as the key to touching off the projecting

¹¹⁵ John Maynard Keynes, A Treatise on Money, 2 vols. (London: Macmillan, 1930) 2: 151, 156-57; John Clapham, The Bank of England, A History, 2 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1944) 1:13-14

spirit that had taken hold in Britain.¹¹⁶ A second venture to the *Concepcion* was immediately planned to salvage the remainder of the treasure, as estimates suggested that Phips had salvaged only one fourth of the total. The Master of the Royal Mint was among the leading investors in this return voyage, as England too faced a specie shortage in the late 17th century.

At this point, many an enterprising colonist might have continued along the path that Phips was already on, perhaps buying a country estate in England, living off his fortune, making friends and allies among other minor gentry who had prospered in the military or colonial service. Certainly this was the path taken by many of the West Indian planters who had prospered in the sugar industry, been given knighthoods as a reward for their wealth, and retired to England where they lived as absentee landlords.¹¹⁷ According to Cotton Mather, Phips was offered “a very Gainful place among the Commissioners of the Navy, with many other Invitations to settle himself in England,” but instead decided to return to Boston and take up his position as Provost-Marshal in the Dominion of New England.¹¹⁸

The reasons for this choice are a bit obscure, but several possibilities exist. First, Phips joined the return expedition to the wreck of the *Concepcion*, but this time not as its commander. His earlier patron and one of the major investors, the retired admiral Sir

¹¹⁶ Defoe writes: “There are . . . fair pretences of fine Discoveries, new Inventions, Engines, and I know not what, which being advanc’d in Notion, and talk’d up to great things to be perform’d when such and such Sums of Money shall be advanc’d, and such and such Engines are made, have rais’d the Fancies of Credulous People to such height, that meerly on the shadow of Expectation, they have form’d Companies, chose Officers, Shares, and Books, rais’d great Stocks, and cri’d up an empty Notion to that degree, that People have been betray’d to part with their Money for Shares in a New-Nothing.” For this credulity he blamed Phips’s unlikely success: “Sir William Phips’s Voyage to the Wreck; ‘twas a mere Project, a Lottery of a Hundred thousand to One odds; a hazard, which if it had fail’d, every body wou’d have been asham’d to have own’d themselves concern’d in; a Voyage that wou’d have been as much ridicul’d as Don Quixot’s Adventure upon the Windmill.” 11-12, 16.

¹¹⁷ Cite Andrew O’Shaughnessy, *An Empire Divided*, on knighthoods and absenteeism in the British Caribbean.

¹¹⁸ Mather, *Pietas in Patriam*, 288.

John Narborough, now took charge of this much larger expedition, which despite its greater size and resources turned out to be far less lucrative. After Phips's initial success on the *James and Mary*, word of the location of the wreck had spread, and much salvaging had been carried out by small parties of local scavengers from the Bahamas, Jamaica, and Hispaniola before the second expedition returned in 1688. Little remained to be salvaged, and Sir John Narborough died of a contagious fever, so Phips decided to return to New England. He had been away from his wife for five years, and now he had the money to build her the brick house in the North End he had promised, which he proceeded to do. In addition to losing his most prominent patron in Narborough, his other major supporter, the Duke of Albemarle, now the Governor of Jamaica, would die later in 1688 as well, cutting Phips off from the strongest connections he had in England.

[Figure: Phips Mansion in Boston's North End, from 'A South-East View of Boston'. The Phips Mansion is in the center, the large multi-story house between the two North End churches]



A second reason for his alienation from imperial advancement developed on his return to Boston, where Sir Edmund Andros, Edward Randolph, and other members of

the Dominion government were openly disdainful of Phips and his claim to gentry status. They ignored his appointment as Provost-Marshal, as Andros had already appointed one of his own clients to this potentially lucrative position, and excluded Phips from the honors he felt he deserved. Cotton Mather even suggests, and the Randolph letters confirm, that Edmund Andros and Edward Randolph attempted a kind of bureaucratic double-dipping on Phips' treasure, attempting to assess the royal share of the treasure when this had already been done in London after the initial return voyage.¹¹⁹

In the meantime, leading Bostonians of the old guard saw an opportunity in Phips's arrival, and made the most of it. They slowly drew Phips into their circle and groomed him for the role of "champion," to serve the interests of the state while serving his own purposes in much the way John Hull and others had done before him. The role and the image that Boston's traditional leaders began to cultivate for Phips, an image that Cotton Mather's biography would eventually set in print, drew on the commonwealth tradition that John Hull and others had been devoted to in earlier decades. Mather made much of Phips's honest commitment to the sailors and salvagers who had signed on for wages but were rewarded by Phips with shares of the silver. According to Mather, when Phips was faced with the potential mutiny of his crew on the return voyage to London bearing the *Concepcion's* treasure:

. . . he made his Vows unto Almighty God, that if the Lord would carry him safe home to England with what he had now given him, to suck of the Abundance of the Seas, and of the Treasures hid in the Sands, he would for ever Devote himself unto the Interests of the Lord Jesus Christ, and of his People, especially in the Country which he did himself Originally belong unto."¹²⁰

¹¹⁹ Baker and Reid, 66-67; Viola Barnes, 282-283, Mather, *Pietas in Patriam*, 286-88; *Randolph Letters*.IV: 200-201.

¹²⁰ Mather, *Pietas in Patriam*, 285.

Mather also repeated the story that Phips had refused any offers of reward from King James, save “That New-England might have its lost privileges restored.”

The £11,000 in silver that Phips possessed would have been, a decade earlier, the answer to dreams of Bostonians like John Hull, who had longed for cash from the king to relieve the colony’s troubled fiscal state. But now it seemed strangely irrelevant; silver is not what Boston needed most. John Hull was dead, the mint was shut down, and the oppression of Andros’s government weighed heavily on the local economy and public spirit. Still, according to Hull’s son-in-law, Samuel Sewall, Phips’s arrival in town turned out a large crowd, as “many of the Town . . . [went] to complement him.” At the Harvard College commencement that summer, the speaker, Reverend William Hubbard, took special care to honor Phips, and “compared Sir William to Jason fetching the Golden Fleece.”¹²¹ Phips’s new North End mansion lay quite near Boston’s Second or North Church, where Increase and Cotton Mather shared the pulpit, and the father and son clergymen quickly cultivated their rich new parishioner. On his first Sunday back in Boston, Phips ostentatiously attended Cotton Mather’s sermon at the North Church, deliberately avoiding the upstart Anglican service that Andros and Randolph had recently initiated, a choice favorably observed by Sewall and other Boston leaders.

Over the next two years, Phips would go through the intensive process involving baptism and full membership in the Mathers’ church, a rigorous religious education that, no matter what the state of his actual inclinations toward piety, served to link Phips closer to the Mathers and the old guard of Boston’s rulers. Later in 1688, Phips sailed to London again, where he joined Increase Mather, who had evaded the efforts of Edward Randolph to detain him and sneaked out of Boston to begin negotiations with King

¹²¹ Sewall Diary I: 167, 172.

James, in the hopes of dismissing Andros and restoring the Massachusetts charter.¹²²

These hopes were more realistic than they might at first seem, as James was at this point cultivating the support of Protestant dissenters in London for his own reasons, pushing for reforms that would bring tolerance to English nonconformists, including his fellow Roman Catholics, for which support from other dissenters might be useful. As a result, Increase Mather had already begun a series of meetings with James, and when Phips arrived Mather brought the celebrity treasure hunter into the game as well – James tended to look with favor on anyone who had brought him a gift of £21,000. Despite the incredible turbulence of the later months of 1688 and early 1689 in England, with William’s invasion and James’s flight, Mather and Phips managed to ride the waves of change adeptly, picking up negotiations with William where they left off with James, and petitioning for the restoration of the old charter.¹²³

William Phips returned to Boston in the spring of 1689, sailing from London in March bearing a definitive proclamation that William and Mary had been crowned as England’s new monarchs, and ordering the temporary reinstatement of the old charter government until a final determination could be made. The new king had been about to order the reappointment of all standing colonial governors, simply as an expeditious measure for continuity, but Phips and Mather had urgently petitioned him to exclude Edmund Andros and the Dominion from this order. Phips’ slow journey across the Atlantic meant that by the time he arrived, the rebellion against Edmund Andros and the

¹²² Mather, Pietas in Patriam, 295-298, which records Phips’s conversion testimony at his admission to church membership; Baker and Reid, 78-79; Hall, Last American Puritan, 210-11. The fact that Phips had never been baptized as a child reflects how weak the establishment of churches of any kind on the Maine frontier had been in the mid-17th century, when Phips was born.

¹²³ Hall, Last American Puritan, 220-224; on Mather’s abrupt shift to William, see Increase Mather to William of Orange [9 January 1689], in The Glorious Revolution in Massachusetts: Selected Documents, 1689-1692, ed. Robert Earle Moody and Richard Clive Simmons, CSM Publications, 64 (Boston: Colonial Society of Massachusetts, 1988) 423.

Dominion government had already occurred. Instead of encountering the hostility he expected from the Andros government, Phips instead was met with a different crisis, which had been one of the precipitants of the rebellion.

Over the winter of 1688-89, violence had erupted on the northeastern frontier, with Abenaki Indians in league with French supporters from Canada attacking the villages and towns of Maine. Edmund Andros had attempted to quell the violence early in 1689, but suspicion that Andros and his fellow officers were part of a French Catholic conspiracy to overthrow New England's liberties had undermined his support among the New England militiamen sent to the front.¹²⁴ The mutiny of some of these soldiers in the spring of 1689 initiated a rising tide of anger against the Dominion government throughout the New England hinterland, and it was this anger that eventually sent thousands of men marching on Boston in April. The rebellion restored a more acceptable government, at least until further word from the crown arrived with a permanent settlement, but it left the problem of frontier violence unresolved. Although Boston's leaders could not have known this, royal instructions from Louis XIV to the new governor of Canada, Count Frontenac, ordered him to encourage the Abenaki to continue their attacks on New England's frontier. What Boston did know came in the form of continuing attacks on their frontier and rumors of French soldiers and priests aiding and inspiring the assaults. In response, the General Court devised a plan to attack

¹²⁴ As one account described it, “. . . our Indian Enemies are not above 100. in number, yet an Army of One thousand English hath been raised for the Conquering of them; which Army of our poor Friends and Brethren now under Popish Commanders (for in the Army as well as in the Council, Papists are in Commission) has been under such a conduct, that not one Indian hath been kill'd, but more English are supposed to have died through sickness and hardship, than we have adversaries there alive; and the whole War hath been so managed, that we cannot but suspect in it, a branch of the Plot to bring us low.” “The Declaration of the Gentlemen, Merchants, and Inhabitants of Boston, and the Country Adjacent. April 18, 1869,” in Glorious Revolution in Massachusetts, 49-50.

AT THE TOWN-HOUSE in

BOSTON:

April 18th. 1689

SIR,

Our Selves as well as many others the Inhabitants of this Town and Places adjacent, being surprized with the Peoples sudden taking to Arms, in the first motion whereof we were wholly ignorant, are driven by the present Exigence and Necessity to acquaint your Excellency, that for the Quieting and Security of the People Inhabiting this Countrey from the imminent Dangers they many waies lie open, and are exposed unto, and for your own Safety: We judge it necessary that you forthwith Surrender, and Deliber up the Government and Fortifications to be Preserved, to be Disposed according to Order and Direction from the Crown of England, which is suddenly expected may Arrive, Promising all Security from violence to your Self, or any other of your Gentlemen and Soldiers in Person or Estate: or else we are assured they will endeavour the taking of the Fortifications by Storm, if any opposition be made.

To Sr. Edmond Andross Knight.

*William Stoughton.
Thomas Danforth.*

*Simon Bradstreet.
John Richards.
Elisha Cook.
Isaac Addington,
John Foster.
Peter Sergeant.
David Waterhouse.
Adam Wintrop.
John Nelson.*

*Wait Wintrop.
Samuel Shrimpton.
William Brown.
Barthol. Gidney.*

Boston Printed by Samuel Green. 1689.

the French fort at Port-Royal, in Acadia. The hope was that the seizure of this fort might undermine French encouragement of Indian attacks, and further, that if Port-Royal were

easily taken, then the expedition might even move on to the St. Lawrence valley and seize the center of French American power, the city of Quebec.¹²⁵

Old habits die hard. In making these invasion plans, Boston followed its long tradition as an independent city-state, organizing the expedition, raising the troops and ships, supplying the arms and equipment, and funding the whole enterprise on its own, without applying to the crown for assistance, despite the knowledge that the new king was himself going to war with France. Although it took time for this realization to sink in, the *need* for this remarkable degree of independence from the crown was changing, largely because the traditional goals of Boston's political economy were suddenly, and for the first time, becoming congruent with the foreign policy of Britain's monarchs. William III, unlike his Stuart predecessors, would have supported Boston's desire to conquer Acadia and even Quebec.¹²⁶ Louis XIV's instructions to Frontenac to harass New England's frontiers marked a new phase in relations between New England and New France. They were issued in direct response to William III's fiercely anti-French policy, which would lead Europe into a quarter century of Anglo-French warfare that spilled over into North America.¹²⁷

In its long years under the first charter, Boston's many military ventures had seldom included amphibious assaults, combining naval and ground forces, a notoriously difficult feat to coordinate in the early modern era.¹²⁸ Now an assault on Port-Royal, and

¹²⁵ See "Bill for volunteers against the French," "Committee to Consult referring to an Expedition against Port Royal," and "Proposals for the Reducing of Nova Scotia," in Glorious Revolution in Massachusetts, 191-195; Baker and Reid, 87-95.

¹²⁶ On the anti-French military policy of William III and its resonance with New England interests, see Tony Claydon, William III and the Godly Revolution (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 122-147.

¹²⁷ Emerson and Reid, The New England Knight, 83.

¹²⁸ Richard Harding, Amphibious Warfare in the Eighteenth Century: The British Expedition to the West Indies, 1740-1742 (Boydell Press, 1991).

perhaps Quebec as well, required a greater degree of coordination and expenditure than Boston had ever managed before. Much as they had done in King Philip's War, the General Court appointed a committee of merchants and magistrate to oversee the logistics and planning for this expedition, including old hands like John Richards and Elisha Hutchinson, younger magistrates like Samuel Sewall, John Hull's son-in-law. Sir William Phips was named the commander of the expedition.¹²⁹

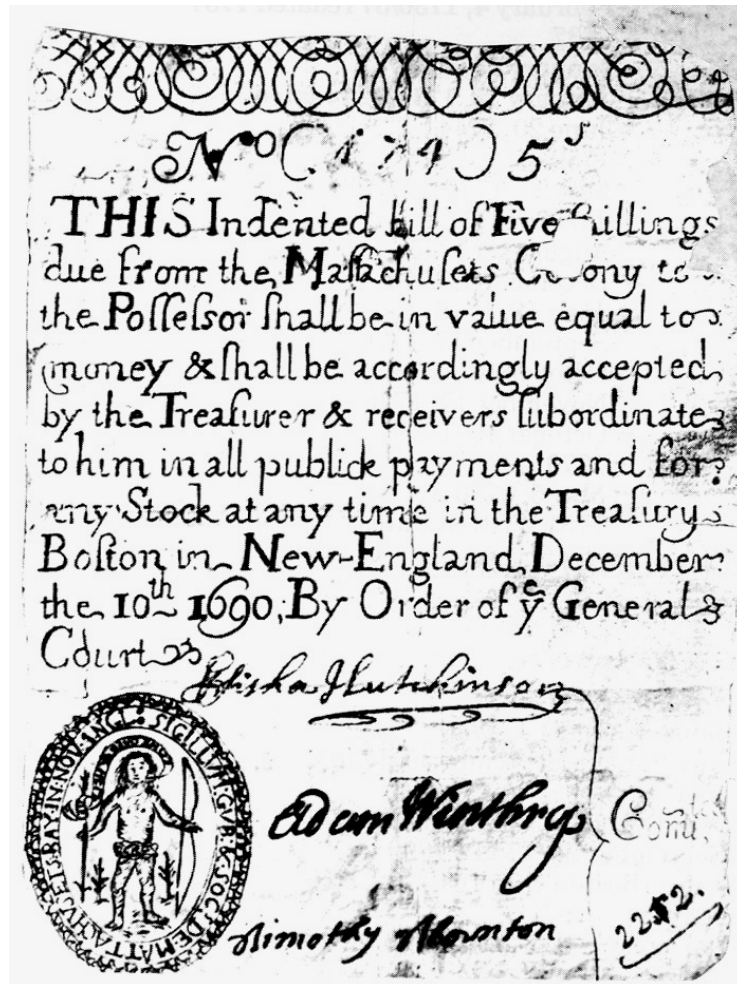
The assault on Port-Royal won an easy victory. The French fort, it turned out, had few defenses, Phips and his men gained considerable plunder from the local population, and Acadia, for the moment, fell into English control. But the assault on Quebec did not go well. Phips and his naval expedition entered the St. Lawrence River as fall was coming on, with little time to mount a deliberate attack on the fortified city before the snows came and the river started to freeze. A hoped-for but ill-planned second attacking flank coming from western New England never materialized, and after a brief but fruitless bombardment of Quebec's stone walls, and an embarrassing encounter between Frontenac and Major Thomas Savage of Boston, who demanded a French surrender to the New Englanders' laughably inadequate forces, the expeditionary fleet retreated. Many of the soldiers and sailors fell ill and died of smallpox on the miserable return voyage. The expedition had momentarily shored up the colony's frontier defenses by undercutting the French in Acadia, but it had been enormously expensive for its slight gains. Cotton Mather reported that the General Court was in debt to the amount of £40,000, "and not a Penny in the Treasury to pay it withal."¹³⁰

¹²⁹ Glorious Revolution in Massachusetts, 192-93, Emerson and Reid, 84-85.

¹³⁰ Mather, Pietas in Patriam, 307. An important contemporary source for the 1690 expeditions is A Journal of the Proceedings in the Late Expedition to Port-Royal (Boston: Benjamin Harris, 1690); see also Emerson and Reid, 86-109, Johnson, Adjustment to Empire, 190-99.

In this moment of fiscal crisis, with only a temporary and provisional government in place, a large debt to be paid, and nothing in the Treasury to pay it, the Massachusetts General Court built upon the lessons learned in its many decades of fiscal experimentation, first with wampum, then with the ‘small change’ of the Pine Tree shillings, and took this process a step further. They issued paper money:

Printed from Copper-Plates, a just Number of Bills, and Florished, Indented, and Contrived them in such a manner, as to make it impossible to Counterfeit any of them . . . all Signed by the Hands of Three belonging to that Committee. These Bills being of several Sums, from Two Shillings, to Ten Pounds, did confess the Massachuset-Colony to be Endebted unto the Persons, in whose Hands they were, the Sums therein Expressed.¹³¹



¹³¹ Mather, Pietas in Patriam, 308.

But where the Pine Tree shillings had claimed to be a full shilling, even though everyone knew they only contained three quarters of a shilling's worth of silver, this paper money was based on nothing. Nothing but faith, that is, in the promises made by a provisional government with not a penny in its Treasury to honor its obligations, promises based on taxes it vowed to collect in the future.

This was a bold experiment, a “project,” in Defoe’s terms, with little precedent in the history of government in Europe or its colonies. It may have been prompted by the appearance in London in 1688 of an anonymous pamphlet, entitled A model for erecting a bank of credit . . . Adapted to the use of any trading countrey, where there is a scarcity of moneys: more especially for his Majesties plantations in America., which had described in glowing terms the bank of credit developed in Venice, where the bills issued, originally backed by specie, became so useful and desirable as to rise in value above that of specie itself, “till they came to be in every ones Estimation, 28. 1 per Cent. better than Moneys in Specie; and so pass’d accordingly.” With public faith in and demand for these bills of credit so high, the state of Venice issued even more of them, and began to spend the specie they had kept in reserve “in their Publick Occasions . . . A notable way to pay a vast Debt.” In essence, the Venetian Bank of Credit was a way to issue money based on faith in the state, “by means hereof, the Creditor has no other Fund or Security but the States Word: For there is not one Ducket for them in Bank.”¹³² Cotton Mather had clearly read this pamphlet, for his own account of the Massachusetts General Court’s paper money system follows the pamphlet quite closely: “The Massachusetts Bills of Credit had been like the Bank Bills of Venice, where though there were not, perhaps, a

¹³² Anon., A model for erecting a bank of credit with a discourse in explanation thereof. Adapted to the use of any trading countrey, where there is a scarcity of moneys: more especially for his Majesties plantations in America (London, 1688, reprint Boston, 1714), 23-24.

Ducat of Money in the Bank, yet the Bills were esteemed more than Twenty per Cent. better than Money, among the Body of the People, in all their Dealings.”¹³³

Where the city-state of Boston failed to match the city-state of Venice was in the trust common people had in the government’s fiscal promises. At this moment of great and uncertain transition, with the colony under a provisional government pending the negotiations between Increase Mather and King William’s councilors, it was extremely difficult to sustain faith in “the State’s Word.” The paper money issued by the General Court did depreciate significantly, although not disastrously. It fell to “Fourteen or Sixteen Shillings in the Pound,” or in other words, roughly three quarters of the declared value, oddly like the ratio of intrinsic to stated value of the Pine Tree shillings, only now, the “intrinsic” value was not measured in silver, but in faith in the state). Nonetheless, the bills were used to pay the soldiers and sailors who had participated in the Canadian expedition and the merchants who had supplied them, and despite the depreciation, “this Method of paying the Publick Debts, did no less than save the Publick from a perfect Ruin.” Part of the reason for this success, and for the limited depreciation the paper money suffered, was a familiar one from Boston’s commonwealth tradition. In Mather’s words:

that which helped these Bills unto much of their Credit, was the Generous Offer of many Worthy Men in Boston, to run the Risque of selling their Goods reasonably for them: And of these, I think I may say, that General Phips was in some sort the Leader; who at the very beginning meerly to Recommend the Credit of the Bills unto other Persons, cheerfully laid down a considerable quantity of ready Money for an equivalent parcel of them.¹³⁴

¹³³ Mather, Pietas in Patriam, 309.

¹³⁴ Mather, Pietas in Patriam, 309.

In this sense, Phips's treasure did lend its value to the political economy of Boston after all, to the extent that some portion of its value as specie encouraged greater faith among the public in the provisional government's promises.¹³⁵

Cotton Mather, for one, was certain that if the government had not been in such an unsettled state, with the people unsure whether a change directed by Whitehall might undermine the tax measures on which the paper money promises were made, that "the Bills of Credit had been better than so much ready Silver." The image he uses to emphasize this point is striking and bears close attention, for it demonstrates how far the city-state of Boston had come in the forty years since the crisis at Potosi led the General Court to commission John Hull to make silver coins:

Yea, the Invention [of paper money] had been of more use to the New-Englanders, than if all their Copper Mines had been opened, or the Mountains of Peru had removed into these Parts of America.¹³⁶

Mather's analogy is, on the surface, the sign of an amazing conceptual transformation in the space of a few decades. In 1650, Bostonians were seeking desperately for any way to fetch silver from the "Mountains of Peru" to their city, and to devise a plan for keeping silver coins circulating within the colony, under the belief that small change of some sort, but in the form of reliable commodity money, was essential to stimulate the internal economy and create credits for purchasing goods from England. In 1690, it seems, many Bostonians were ready to give up on the need for silver to do this work, and instead attempted an experiment, to see if obviously worthless paper – worthless in an intrinsic

¹³⁵ On the beginnings of paper money and the Bank of Credit in Boston, see Margaret E. Newell, From Dependency to Independence, 121-131. Newell makes the important point, reiterated here, that unlike other banking schemes that usually relied on private collateral, and unlike the Bank of England founded soon thereafter, which issued large denomination notes with interest payments that purchasers viewed as investments, the Massachusetts 1690 emission was a "major innovation in financial practice," (129) making paper money as a public venture of the commonwealth, with no other collateral or "sinking fund," than the Commonwealth's credit.

¹³⁶ Mather, Pietas in Patriam, 308-309.

sense, that is – could function as a substitute, nay, an improvement on silver, as a “big money” trading currency.¹³⁷

But it would be a mistake to see this change simply as a leap from medieval to modern conceptions of money in one concentrated forty year period. In 1690, and for many decades thereafter, resistance to the idea that paper money could retain its face value without backing from silver or other commodities of reliable worth remained a feature of life in Boston, and throughout the Atlantic world where various governments attempted such experiments. The fact that one of the government’s chief supporters, William Phips, happened to be sitting on a large pile of Spanish coins and bullion helped the General Court to have the confidence necessary to issue paper currency. Because of its striking combination of a limited supply of valuable commodity resources with an incredibly vigorous trading economy, Bostonians were compelled to be more creative, perhaps more “modern,” in the way they thought about money than many other places in the Atlantic world, but they had by no means shaken off all older customs. The conceptual leap from silver coins to paper was an important shift, but it was not the most striking development in Boston’s political economy in the seventeenth century. It was, in fact, part of a larger world of experimental political economy, which had been part of English political and religious improvement schemes from the middle of the seventeenth century onward.¹³⁸

¹³⁷ Note that the denominations in which the paper money was issued tended to be quite large, the smallest (two shillings) being twice as valuable as the largest of the coins that John Hull minted, and rising from there up to five pounds.

¹³⁸ See Carl Wennerlind, “Credit Money as the Philosopher’s Stone: Alchemy and the Coinage Problem in Seventeenth-Century England,” which suggests that members of the Hartlib Circle developed the possibility of using paper money as an improvement on alchemical transmutation schemes., – probably develop more of this earlier – Hull’s interests in and relationship to JW2, his cousin Leonard Hoar, etc. discussion of influence of Hartlib circle economic theory on Boston’s experimental approaches to money supply. 1652 as the year that Henry Robinson connects alchemy to credit-money schemes, Worsley is

Rather, the key to understanding the changes that transpired in this period is to grasp the actual development of the overall political economy of the city-state of Boston, from a small experimental corporate colony in the 1630s, unclear on the direction of its political and economic future, except insofar as the advance plans made at the time of settlement were not going to work, into the sort of entity – expansive, integrated internally, well-connected externally, fiscally sound, militarily strong, and socially stable -- which might generate and sustain public faith in its ability to honor its financial promises, even in the absence of silver. Boston was certainly not Venice, not in the strength of its government, the power of its navies and armies, the reach of its commerce, the wealth of its merchants, or the glory of its artists – no one would ever mistake it for the Lion City of the Adriatic. But as Cotton Mather’s citation of the Venetian example for the Bank of Credit reflects, Venice was very much a model for the kind of place Boston had become. In that sense, the silver coins that John Hull issued for over thirty years, from 1652 to his death in 1683, had done their job – they had played an important part in the development of a city-state’s integrated political economy. Its mercantile interests and proven powers of self-government were now strong enough that the coins themselves were no longer necessary; they had served as a kind of fiscal scaffolding that could be kicked away, now that the political economy had been built. The growth and expansion of the city-state of Boston in the seventeenth century was a remarkable accomplishment, if also, at times, a brutal and exclusionary one. The specific definition of who might be included in the commonwealth shifted and evolved with time and circumstances, but the commitment to the ideal of commonwealth remained steady

working on gold-making, Hartlib devising credit-money land bank schemes. My point is that Boston is actually doing what the Hartlib circle is mainly dreaming of. . . James II and Charles II as alchemical enthusiasts, especially Charles II. this can also strengthen the Atlantic connections of chs 2&3

throughout. The model for this Atlantic commonwealth may have drifted from the definition favored by St. Augustine's *City of God*, and in the end become more literally "Utopian," devastating to the native populations of southern New England who would not commit themselves to joining the city-state of Boston, and aggressively elbowing aside rival English, French, and Dutch claimants to the territories, resources, and trade routes Bostonians wanted to make their vision of their commonwealth succeed. But succeed it did, and no better mark of this success could be found than the crown's agreement to appoint Sir William Phips, the cultivated ally of Increase and Cotton Mather, a Bostonian made, not born, and made by turning Spanish imperial silver toward New England commonwealth ends, to be the first royal governor of the Province of Massachusetts under the new charter granted by King William in 1691. The creation of the city-state of Boston was all the more remarkable for the fact that it had been done in the face of the hostility of the Stuart monarchs and their colonial agents. Now that Boston had found, at last, a Caesar that it could love and an empire worthy of its support, the prospects for a beneficial, even a glorious future in the cooperation between the city-state of Boston and the new British empire seemed limitless.