Ideas about the Economic Advantages of Colonial Maritime War and their Impact on British Politics and Naval Policy, 1701-1729

2 volumes: volume 1

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I certify that all material in this thesis which is not my own work has been identified and that no material has previously been submitted and approved for the award of a degree by this or any other University.

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Abstract

In early modern England (after 1707, Britain), there was an argument that war at sea, especially war in Spanish America, was an ideal means of warfare for England. This argument, whose origin can be traced back to the glorious memory of Elizabethan maritime war, revived at the beginning of the War of the Spanish Succession.

This thesis examines this pro-maritime war argument, by focusing on its connection with its supposed economic advantages, and investigates its impact on British politics and naval policy during the war, and changes after the war.

It reveals that this argument received support from politicians of different political stances because of its alleged economic advantages; colonial maritime war was expected to damage enemy financial resources while enriching Britain, and help to recover the Spanish American market where French merchants were making a rapid advance. At the same time, it makes clear that different political affiliations of the supporters created two types of pro-maritime arguments with different political functions.

The thesis also shows that the supporters of colonial maritime war in the government as well as in the opposition tried to implement pro-maritime war policy by naval operations such as capture of Spanish silver fleets and colonial expeditions, and by legislation such as the American Act of 1708. However, their attempts were frustrated by diplomatic considerations, incapacity of naval administration, and by conflicting interests between several groups concerned in the West Indian colonies and Spanish American trade.

After the South Sea expedition planned by the South Sea Company in 1712 did not materialise due to similar difficulties, the government focused on protection of the Spanish American trade, and refrained from taking aggressive action against Spanish colonies partly because of considerations for the interests of the company which started the Asiento trade. On the other hand, by the late 1720s the opposition, which championed the interests of private merchants, gradually came to advocate pro-maritime war policy, which eventually led up to propaganda campaigns against the Walpole ministry in the period of the War of Jenkins’s Ear.
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From the Gulf of Mexico to Peru, the main area of concern for Spanish viceroy in 1700.
Lawrence V. Mott

Abbreviations

Add. MSS. Additional Manuscripts

ADM Records of the Admiralty

AHR American Historical Review

BIHR Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research

BL British Library

Bolingbroke Correspondence Viscount Bolingbroke, Henry St. John, Letters and Correspondence, Public and Private, of the Right Honourable Henry St. John, Lord Visc. Bolingbroke; during the Time he was Secretary ... (London, 1798)

Chandler Richard Chandler, The History and Proceedings of the House of Commons from the Restoration to the Present time (London, 1742-4)

Ch (H) MSS. Cholmondeley (Houghton) Manuscripts

C.J. Journals of the House of Commons

CO Records of the ‘Colonial Office’ [Colonial State Papers and records of the Old Board of Trade]

Cobbett Cobbett's Parliamentary History of England: from the Norman Conquest, in 1066, to the Year, 1803 (London, 1810)

ECCO Eighteenth Century Collections Online [online sources]

EEBO Early English Books Online [online sources]

EcHR Economic History Review

EHR English Historical Review
FH.MSS.  Finch Hatton Manuscripts

HAHR  Hispanic American Historical Review

HJ  Historical Journal

History of Parliament, 1690-1715  David Hayton, Eveline Cruickshanks and Stuart Handley, 

HLQ  Huntington Library Quarterly

H.M.C. Carlisle  Manuscripts of the Earl of Carlisle, Preserved at Castle Howard (London, 1897)

H.M.C. Egmont Diary  Manuscripts of the Earl of Egmont: Diary of the First Earl of Egmont
(Viscount Percival) (London, 1923)

H.M.C. Stuart  F. H. Blackburne Daniell (ed.), Calendar of the Stuart Papers belonging to
His Majesty the King, Preserved at Windsor Castle (London, 1902-23)

JEBH  Journal of Economic and Business History

JICH  Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History

JMH  Journal of Modern History

Knatchbull Diary  Aubrey Newman (ed.), The Parliamentary Diary of Sir Edward
Knatchbull, 1722-30 (London, 1963)

L.J.  Journals of the House of Lords

MM  Mariner’s Mirror

MoME  Making of the Modern World: The Goldsmiths’-Kress Library of Economic Literature
1450-1850. [online sources]

MSS. H. of L.  C. Headlam and J.B. Hotham (eds.), Manuscripts of the House of Lords
(London, 1912)
A Note on Dates

In this thesis, all dates are given in the Old style of the Julian Calendar except where the New Style is indicated or both dates are used. (e.g. 6/17 August) The new year is taken to have begun on 1 January, not 25 March.