

Professor Steven Pincus

Department of History
Yale University

<http://www.yale.edu/history/faculty/pincus.html>

‘Addison’s Empire: Whig Conceptions of Empire in the Early Eighteenth Century’

Steve Pincus studied at Harvard for his doctorate, awarded in 1990; subsequently he was a Junior Fellow of the Society of Fellows at Harvard. From 1993 he was Professor of History at Chicago, and latterly also Director of the Nicholson Center for British Studies. In 2005 he was appointed Professor of History and International and Area Studies at Yale, where he teaches 17th and 18th century British and European history and the history of the early British Empire. In addition he is currently Chair of Yale’s Council of European Studies. In 2010 he gave the Sir John Neale Lecture at UCL, and he is currently a Visiting Fellow of All Souls College, Oxford. His current projects include a volume in the New Oxford History of England (with Adam Fox), and ‘Becoming an Empire: Britain c.1580-1780’.

Select Publications

Protestantism and Patriotism: Ideologies and the Making of English Foreign Policy, 1650-1668 (Cambridge, 1996, pb. 2002);

1688: The First Modern Revolution (New Haven and London, 2010);

Edited with Alan Houston *A Nation Transformed: England after the Restoration* (Cambridge, 2001);

Edited with Peter Lake, *The Politics of the Public Sphere in Early Modern England* (Manchester, 2007);

Introduction to the paper

Why did the Whigs in 1715 and beyond consider the peace of Utrecht, which had delivered Gibraltar, Minorca, St. Kitts, Nova Scotia and the Asiento to Britain, to be an imperial betrayal? Current scholarship makes it difficult to answer that question. Some scholars have described the peace of 1713 as an imperial triumph. Others have noted the importance of party conflict in constructing the peace, but have denied that there was an imperial dimension. I suggest that there was a lively political economic debate about empire that cut along party lines. The Tories insisted that Britain's economic well-being depended on being able to buy cheap and sell dear on European markets. The best way to do that was to seize a territorial empire in India, or after Oxford and St. John came to power in 1710, in the southern cone of South America.

Whigs, by contrast, insisted that Britain's economic future lay in creating an integrated manufacturing empire that would make full use international labour markets. The key to Britain's economic future, argued the Whig imperialists of the early eighteenth century, lay in developing the manufacturing capacity of New England. More conservative Whigs – such as those who would later be embraced by Robert Walpole – shared the manufacturing emphasis of their Whig brethren, but rejected the argument about labour markets. They therefore came to prize the sugar colonies, and urged the elimination of colonial manufactures.

Suggested reading

- Steven Pincus *1688: The First Modern Revolution* (New Haven and London, 2009), Ch. 12
- Brendan Simms *Three Victories and a Defeat. The Rise and Fall of the First British Empire 1714-1783* (London: Penguin, 2008), Ch 2
- David Armitage *The Ideological Origins of the British Empire* (Cambridge, 2000), Ch 6
- Linda Colley *Britons* (New Haven and London, 1992), Ch 2
- Doohwan Ahn ‘The Anglo-French Treaty of Commerce of 1713: Tory Trade Politics and the Question of Dutch Decline’, *History of European Ideas*, 36 (2010), 167-180.