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A Break from the Past: Gibson's *Britannia* and  
Cornwall

By

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On September 3, 1643, King Charles I of England wrote a letter from Sudley Castle to express his appreciation for Cornwall. His letter began, “We are so highly sensible of the extraordinary merit of our County of Cornwall.”<sup>1</sup> The proclamation was to be read publicly in every church throughout the county. Charles was in dire need of allies: he faced a rebellious parliament and the previous year, 1642, marked the onset of the English Civil War. Throughout this conflict, the Duchy of Cornwall resolutely supported King Charles, for which they would be punished by Parliament following its victory in 1651. In the ensuing years, the unique regional identity of Cornwall came under attack. The Cornish language was suppressed, and its cultural and religious practices were dissuaded.<sup>2</sup> Throughout the latter half of the 17th century, English state modernization would increasingly reduce the relevance of regional identities across the nation. The people of Cornwall’s cultural differences chafed against a more intrusive English state. While the subsumption of Cornwall into England was a centuries-long process coinciding with the erasure of the Cornish language, the English Civil War proved to be an inflection point in Cornish identity. Parliament’s intensive measures to assert control in the county in the aftermath of the Civil War serve as a break in how we can understand Cornish identity.

Despite English policies which flattened regional identity, Cornishness persisted into the 18th centuries and beyond through a new understanding of a greater ‘British’ identity. Cornwall became a key player in the burgeoning British Empire through its economic strength and its

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<sup>1</sup> Edmund Gibson, *Camden's Britannia newly translated into English, with large additions and improvements. publish'd by Edmund Gibson ...* "In the digital collection *Early English Books Online 2*, 173.

<sup>2</sup> Due to this suppression, the Cornish language eventually disappeared. It was last spoken around 1750. However, later 19th century Nationalist revivals revived Cornish identity.

importance in providing for national defense. In the early 18th century, a 'new' Cornish identity developed based on the growing prosperity of its tin and copper mining instead of its cultural differences. These changes intensified in the 19<sup>th</sup> century with the onset of the industrial revolution. The mining industry came to define Cornwall, both within the British Empire as well as through the Cornish diaspora abroad. Whereas previously Cornishness was grounded in religious, linguistic, and social differences, including its 'rebellious' and 'litigious' character, during the late 17th and early 18th centuries Cornish identity became more centrally based on its economy.

William Camden's seminal work, *Britannia*, demonstrates the shift in how regional identity became perceived across the 17th century. First published in 1586, subsequent editions were published across the long 17th century. The changes across these editions suggest how popular understanding of the geographic makeup of the British Isles changed across the 17th century, how the politics of late 17th century crisis intersect with our understanding of regional identity in England, and the burgeoning British identity of the early 18th century developed. One of the most significant additions to Camden's original text proved to be Bishop Edmund Gibson's revisions, which were published between 1695 and 1722. Working with a team of twenty-five scholars of differing ideological backgrounds, Gibson's edition conveyed how regional identity was transformed during England's century of revolution. Whereas it has been suggested previously that Gibson's revisions were not political in nature, or that they formed a political project which aimed to bolster support for the Revolution of 1688-89 and the Protestant Succession, I argue that Gibson's edition of *Britannia* was representative of the development of a new, shared conception

of Britishness and British identity which came to define the British Imperial politics of the 18th and 19th centuries. As demonstrated through my analysis of Gibson's annotations, this 'British' identity was not pluralistic, but enforced English norms upon a distinct Cornish people.

This project builds upon trends in British and Cornish historiography relevant to regional identity and analyzes two key sources. The first is the 1610 edition of William Camden's *Britannia*, and the second is Bishop Edmund Gibson's revisions and additions to *Britannia*. While numerous versions of both documents exist the 1610 Holland and 1695 Gibson editions are the editions that best correspond to the dates of this study. I argue that Gibson's revisions were political in nature and served to construct a new British identity through discussions of Cornish regionalism.

Integral to this is an analysis of the author of Gibson's revisions. Individual authors for Gibson's work were selected based upon their expertise in a given area. Sir Jonathan Trelawny, Bishop of Bristol, was selected to draft annotations on Camden's chapter on Cornwall. Trelawny and his family had a long history with Cornwall and the Cornish people; his father and grandfather were key figures in Cornwall's defense of Charles I, and Trelawny himself was sent to Cornwall by James II to stave off the Duke of Monmouth's rebellion. While Trelawny acted in support of the Stuart Dynasty, he was one of the seven bishops charged with seditious libel following their refusal to read James II's Act of Indulgences in 1688. For this act, Trelawny became a national hero. And while the majority of his fellow bishops refused to sign an oath of allegiance to William & Mary, Trelawny did so, demonstrating his support for the Protestant Succession. Trelawny can therefore be understood as a Cornishman, an English patriot, a defender of the House of Stuart, and an ardent supporter of the Revolution Settlement. While these facets of his personality may seem

contradictory, this project will highlight how his writing in *Britannia* demonstrates how regional identity became subsumed into grander national narratives surrounding Englishness and Britishness. Regional identity did not become subsumed or erased through shared conceptions of Britishness, but it impossible to ignore the primacy of English identity and customs. Ultimately, it was not just Trelawny or Gibson's beliefs that shaped this change; their perspectives on British identity were informed by the crises of the 17th century, from the English Civil War to the Revolution.

There are two elements of British historiography crucial to the foundation of this project; firstly, how have authors read Gibson's revisions before? To what extent are Gibson's revisions perceived as a political project, and to what end were they written? The second, how have scholars attempted to explain the impact of the 17<sup>th</sup> century on Cornish identity? I will elaborate how existing answers to these questions are insufficient to explain the changes and implications of Gibson's revisions as they relate to Cornwall.

While there is a scholarly consensus that Camden's initial text ambitiously attempts to inculcate "a patriotic allegiance to the monarch and the land,"<sup>3</sup> no such consensus has been reached surrounding Gibson's revisions. Camden's work strongly reflects the politics of Protestant England; this is most apparent in Camden's discussion of the English Church.<sup>4</sup> Whereas Camden wrote as a single author clearly favoring the supremacy of the English monarch, it is harder to

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<sup>3</sup> Robert Mayhew, *Edmund Gibson's Editions of Britannia: Dynastic Chorography and the Particularist Politics of Precedent, 1695-1722*, 240.

<sup>4</sup> To this point, Camden writes that the English Church was established by Joseph of Arimathea and therefore was the apostolic church of England.

define the politics of Gibson's work. In part, that is because Gibson's edits were collaborative.

However, Robert Mayhew suggests that despite the disunity of the scholars behind it, a singular political vision is apparent in Gibson's work. Mayhew recognizes that despite contributions from dissenters, Catholics, and 'trimmers,'<sup>5</sup> <sup>6</sup> Gibson's revisions suggest a uniformity of purpose:

Gibson's work can be characterized as strongly pro-Revolution and pro-Protestant succession. His county-by-county additions can be read in support of these politics. Moreover, Mayhew argues that Gibson's individual perspective is dominant across the work.<sup>7</sup> *Britannia* was representative of a 17th century English political project and provided justification for the Protestant succession.

Thus, Gibson's work provides a crucial perspective on how the English elite, particularly those in support of the Glorious Revolution, perceived Cornish regionalism. This project does not contest Mayhew's understanding of *Britannia*; rather, it builds off of it to explore what Gibson's revisions suggest about British identity. It does not read the revisions as merely supporting the Protestant Succession, but rather in its unsaid depictions of British identity through regionalism.

It is impossible to divest an analysis of Cornish history as presented through *Britannia* without understanding how historians of Cornwall have attempted to understand the impact of 17<sup>th</sup> century political crises on Cornish identity. As early as 1933, Coate's foundational work on

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<sup>5</sup> Robert Mayhew, *Edmund Gibson's Editions of Britannia*, 242.

<sup>6</sup> A 'trimmer' is defined as a political moderate; the term suggests that they 'trim' or court competing political parties. In the context of late 17th century English politics, a trimmer was one unsure about the Glorious Revolution. This can be contrasted with Gibson's pro-Revolutionary views or a Catholic's desire for a Stuart restoration.

<sup>7</sup> Mayhew notes that Gibson personally wrote the additions for sixteen of the thirty-eight counties of England. A number of Gibson's colleagues shared his political sentiments. This includes White Kennett, William Nicholson, Thomas Tanner, and Jonathan Trelawny.

Cornwall suggests that Cornish support for King Charles I during the Civil War resulted in political backlash and oppression. One of the ways the dissident county was punished was Parliament's repression of the Cornish language.<sup>8</sup> Modern historians such as Mark Stoyle have characterized this process as 'sustained assault,' driven from Parliament's desire to extirpate regional idiosyncrasies.<sup>9</sup> Anne Duffin nuanced this interpretation with her work emphasizing the political and religious diversity of Cornwall.<sup>10</sup> Although historians disagree to what extent Cornish identity was impacted by the crises of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, they have recognized a dramatic shift in what Cornish identity looked like after the English Civil War. Philip Payton went so far as to suggest that by the early 18<sup>th</sup> century, Cornish identity is wholly 'new,' that is to say entirely separated from what Cornish meant during the mid-seventeenth century. I suggest that as demonstrated through Gibson's revisions, the crises of the 17<sup>th</sup> century did not in any way eliminate or warp perceptions of Cornish identity but built a place for regionalism within a larger British national identity.

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<sup>8</sup> Mary Coate, *Cornwall in the Great Civil War and Interregnum*, 2.

<sup>9</sup> Mark Stoyle, *The Dissidence of Despair: Rebellion and Identity in Early Modern Cornwall*, 439.

<sup>10</sup> In her work, *Faction and Faith*, Duffin highlights that in parts of Cornwall there was outspoken support for Parliament. Duffin's work brings to the forefront the religious diversity that was present in Cornwall at this time. She identified pockets of Catholicism within Cornwall, and her study of 17<sup>th</sup> century Cornish wills discovered many used Calvinist language. Duffin purported that Calvinism was also important within Southeast Cornwall.<sup>10</sup> This serves to emphasize the complexity within Cornish identity. Contrasting this perspective, Stoyle emphasizes the importance of ethnicity, claiming that it was the most significant determinant of Royalist allegiance, and therefore became integral to the development of Cornish, Welsh, Irish, and Scots national identities. Philip Payton *suggests* that the source of this historiographical contestation is the respective source bases that these authors rely on. Payton emphasizes that while Duffin's work focuses on the Cornish gentry, Stoyle more broadly explores the inclinations of commoners. Therefore, the difference in understanding the political leanings of the Cornish can come down to the argument that members of the gentry were somewhat split in their support of the king, while commoners tended to favor him

Camden's 1607 edition of *Britannia* was originally written in Latin, as all his successive iterations would be. In 1610, Philémon Holland published an English translation of this version; as his translation was conducted under Camden's own supervision, it can be reasonably assumed that his writing matches Camden's intent.<sup>11</sup> This marked the first English translation of the work; it wouldn't be until Gibson's revisions that English editions became commonplace. In his own words, Camden sought to "renew ancientie, enlighten obscurity, cleare doubts, and recall home Veritie by way of recovery."<sup>12</sup> He acknowledged the shortcomings of this survey, expressing that he was "not ignorant that the first originals of nations are obscure by reason of their profound antiquitie."<sup>13</sup> This is suggestive of his purpose; through his all-encompassing survey he desired to restore what he perceived as a loss of knowledge surrounding the history of Britain. In doing so, he established, or at least contributed, to developing a narrative and linear view of British history. The island underwent progressive stages of development, beginning with Roman conquest and leading up to the present day. This narrative served to promote a shared patriotism and British consciousness, uniting Britons by a shared heritage and historicity.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Because of the nature of Camden's oversight over this translation, I will reference this work in the future as if it were Camden's own writing rather than citing Holland. I perceive Holland's translation to be of a different character than Gibson's. Writing after Camden's death, Gibson sought to not just translate but expand the work with his own *Additions*.

<sup>12</sup>Philémon Holland, *Britain, or A chorographical description of the most flourishing kingdomes, England, Scotland, and Ireland, and the ilands adjoyning, out of the depth of antiquitie beautified vvith mappes of the severall shires of England: vvritten first in Latine by William Camden Clarenceux K. of A. Translated newly into English by Philémon Holland Doctour in Physick: finally, revised, amended, and enlarged with sundry additions by the said author*, Preface.

<sup>13</sup>Philémon Holland, *Britain, or A chorographical description of the most flourishing kingdomes, England, Scotland, and Ireland, and the ilands adjoyning, out of the depth of antiquitie beautified vvith mappes of the severall shires of England: vvritten first in Latine by William Camden Clarenceux K. of A. Translated newly into English by Philémon Holland Doctour in Physick: finally, revised, amended, and enlarged with sundry additions by the said author*, Preface.

<sup>14</sup> Robert Mayhew, *Edmund Gibson's Editions of Britannia*, 240.

Camden focused on exploring the ‘ancientie,’ that is the Roman history of Britain. Camden also expressed an interest in linguistic history. Holland’s preface included a table listing the letters of the Anglo-Saxon alphabet. He first discussed Cornish history in his chapter *Danmonii*, the Roman name for southwestern Britain. *Danmonii* includes both Cornwall as well as neighboring Devon. He discussed the history of the name of Cornwall, highlighting its origins in its Corns or ‘kearns,’ the horns protruding from the land across the region. The Celtic ‘Britones’ living there knew it as Kernow, and in Roman times this was Romanized into Cornubia. Its residents are called the *Occidentales Britones*, the Britons of the West parts. These Western Britons aided the *Amorici* against Caesar’s invasion, and for this they were subjugated. Camden highlighted the role of Cornwall during the Saxon migrations. He described how, “Cornwallians, although they stoudly bent al their force together in defence of their Country, yet soone became they subject to the Saxons, as who neither matched them in number, neigher was their Countrey sufficiently fenced by nature to defend them.”<sup>15</sup> From this, Camden likened the people of Cornwall to those of Wales. In particular he articulates how the people of Cornwall, like the Welsh, were known for their rebellious character and resistance to English rule: “The Kings of England have had trial of their constant fidelitie, and loyal allegiance.”<sup>16</sup> Cornwall was identified in the 17th century as having a rebellious character.<sup>17</sup> Recognizing this historical rebelliousness is imperative in understanding the significance of the English Civil War as a determinant of change

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<sup>15</sup>Philémon Holland, *Britain, or A chorographically description of the most flourishing kingdomes*, 114.

<sup>16</sup>Philémon Holland, *Britain, or A chorographically description of the most flourishing kingdomes*, 114.

<sup>17</sup> Mark Stoye, in his work, *The Dissidence of Despair*, has discussed this stereotype of Cornish identity.

in Cornish identity. That Cornwall would side overwhelmingly with the reigning monarch defies popular conceptions of Cornish identity within English writing.

Rebelliousness was but one side of Cornish identity. Camden also explored what became the most significant identifier of Cornishness into the modern era, the ascendancy of Cornish mining. As early as 1607, mining was already significant to not only the people of Cornwall but its rulers. Camden buried himself in the specificity of tin mining, writing about the different aspects such as ‘lode-workes’ and ‘stream-workes.’<sup>18</sup> He conveyed that this industry was in part a legacy from Roman Cornwall, again implicating the kind of stagiest narrative surrounding British history that he sought to develop.

Exploring the mining industry further, Camden conveyed how since the Norman invasion the Earles of Cornwall have generated vast amounts of wealth off of Cornish mining. Most significantly, Henry III’s brother Richard was a great beneficiary of this industry.<sup>19</sup> Interestingly, Camden explained what made Cornish mining so important to the English Crown at this time. During this period, Cornish tin gained a great deal of strategic importance after “incursions of Mores had stopped up the tinne meins of Spaine.”<sup>20</sup> German tin veins had yet to be discovered, further pointing towards the relative importance of Cornish mining. The crown promulgated royal ordinances pertaining to tin mining, and in Camden’s time the Earls of Cornwall received tribute in the form of rents on tin production based off of these policies. The English King and

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<sup>18</sup> Philémon Holland, *Britain, or A chorographicall description of the most flourishing kingdomes*, 183.

<sup>19</sup> Philémon Holland, *Britain, or A chorographicall description of the most flourishing kingdomes*, 185.

<sup>20</sup> Philémon Holland, *Britain, or A chorographicall description of the most flourishing kingdomes*, 185.

Duke of Cornwall retained a preemption upon this tribute; Camden writes that this would protect their incoming from tin mining in case of embezzlement by others.<sup>21</sup> The Crown also stamped tin into coinage; which further emphasized the significance of Cornwall to the English realm.

Cornwall held value to the Crown beyond its essential mining industry; the other natural resources of the region include Eryngium (Sea Holly), grain, and fish. While text pertaining to the significance of Cornish industry is relevant in discerning how Cornwall was understood in of Camden's time, his work can also be read to reveal an outsider's perspective on Cornish identity.

Camden's description of the Cornish people clarifies this fundamentally English understanding of the county. Describing the Cornish people, he wrote, "they were endured and adorned with all civility, even in those ancient times."<sup>22</sup> What he wrote following this endorsement is more telling. Camden suggested that the Cornish have always been more courteous towards strangers. Seeking to explain this further, he posited that this was due to their relationships with foreign merchants seeking tin. We simultaneously ascertain a picture of Cornwall as rebellious, civil, and industrious. Throughout his description, Camden locates this 'rebelliousness' to be in the past. He does not contextualize this characterization with any description of contemporary Cornish rebellions that would have been familiar to his audience such as the uprising of 1549. This rebellion was the direct result of the English Crown's policy of Anglicization. The religious identity of Cornwall was consistently under assault.

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<sup>21</sup> Philémon Holland, *Britain, or A chorographical description of the most flourishing kingdomes*, 185.

<sup>22</sup> Philémon Holland, *Britain, or A chorographical description of the most flourishing kingdomes*, 186.

Despite not addressing such issues, Camden did emphasize the county's particular religious character; this issue sits at the forefront of scholarship on Cornish identity. Mark Stoye wrote how in the 17th century, "traditional Cornish identity came under sustained (though largely accidental) assault, as Parliament's national drive to extirpate religious and cultural conservatism began to be implemented locally."<sup>23</sup> At this time, the people of Cornwall did not reject Protestantism, but instead maintained their own Protestant beliefs of a distinctly conservative character that clashed with Parliament's attempts to curtail the regional divisions of England. The religious character of Cornwall is a recurring theme in exploring Cornish identity. In *Britannia*, Camden described how Cornwall "alwaies honoured Irish Saints as tutelar patrons of their owne."<sup>24</sup> Irish saints were revered in Cornwall; this suggested a closeness with other regions of Britain associated with 'Celticness.' Into the 17th century, members of the English clergy were seen as outsiders. The English themselves considered the people of Cornwall to be backwards, with a conservative religion.

Camden's emphasis, therefore, is on the peculiarities and differences that define Cornwall relative to the rest of the British Isles. He lingered on their connections with outsiders such as the Armoricans, as well as their interactions with merchants. He suggested what scholars of Cornwall have described as a Cornish 'rebellious character,' but locates this rebelliousness entirely within a distant past. And Camden conveyed that there is a 'peculiar,' Celtic influence on Cornish religious practices. While this harkens towards Cornwall's pagan past, it also suggests a connection between

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<sup>23</sup> Mark Stoye, *The Dissidence of Despair*, 439

<sup>24</sup> Philémon Holland, *Britain, or A chorographicall description of the most flourishing kingdomes*, 188.

Cornwall and Catholic Ireland. Cornwall is at once rebellious, remote, vaguely heretical, and associated with strangers. While Edmund Gibson's later additions suggest an effort to locate Cornwall within a shared Britishness, they maintain the same sense that they were written by an English outsider determined to promote his ideological ends.

Bishop Edmund Gibson's 1695 revisions sought to correct and build upon Camden's work. Writing in his preface to the reader, Gibson suggested that "the space of sixty or eighty years must make a strange alteration in the face of things."<sup>25</sup> Across the 17th century, the counties of England became increasingly intertwined. While Holland was the first scholar to translate *Britannia* into English, the widespread distribution of Gibson's work made it the definitive version. He recognized what a massive undertaking a section-by-section update of *Britannia* would be. Each county was assigned to a respective expert. As Robert Mayhew demonstrates, these authors were not selected on ideological or political grounds. Whigs and Tories worked together on this project.<sup>26</sup> Ultimately, the ideological goal of Gibson's annotations was to cement a unified narrative of British history supportive of the Revolution of 1688-1689, as well as of the Protestant Succession. If Gibson's annotations are to be read in this manner, then it is imperative to understand the worldview and perspective of their author, Sir Jonathan Trelawny. Born in Cornwall and educated at Oxford, Trelawny was Cornish, a staunch royalist, as well as an English nationalist. While his annotations present an image of Cornwall proud of a shared British heritage, his works betray the incursion of English hegemony within that concept.

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<sup>25</sup> Philémon Holland, *Britain, or A chorographical description of the most flourishing kingdomes*, Preface.

<sup>26</sup> Robert Mayhew, *Edmund Gibson's Editions of Britannia*, 242.

At the time in which he wrote Sir Jonathan Trelawny was bishop of Exeter. He had been appointed as a reward for his support of the Revolution of 1688; he would be further promoted to the Bishopric of Winchester by 1707. In 1688, Trelawny was one of the seven bishops prosecuted with seditious libel for refusing to read James II's Declaration of Indulgences. More than any other act, the resistance of these bishops against James II's attempt to use the clergy as a political mouthpiece fostered support for regime change in England. The bishops' resistance to this act was primarily motivated by political rather than theological objections towards it.<sup>27</sup> In a secretly published petition, the seven bishops argued that the Declaration of Indulgences was "founded upon such a dispensing power as hath been often declared illegal in Parliaments."<sup>28</sup> Whatever their individual reasons for opposing the act, the Anglican clergy united in their rejection of its provisions. James II's prosecution of the bishops made them political martyrs against their King's Catholic tyranny. For his part, Jonathan Trelawny's role in the bishop's controversy underscores his political aims in drafting revisions to Camden's *Britannia*. What is more, Trelawny's rejection of James II is significant because of his historically unwavering support of the Stuart dynasty, as well as his individual significance to the people of Cornwall.

For the Tory Trelawny to publicly rebuke James II demonstrates the changes in English politics of the late 17th century. Trelawny, along with his father and grandfather, had been staunch supporters of the House of Stuart. His grandfather, Sir John, as well as his father, Sir Jonathan Trelawney, both fought on behalf of Charles I during the English Civil War. The elder

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<sup>27</sup> Steve Pincus, *1688: The First Modern Revolution*, 193.

<sup>28</sup> Steve Pincus, *1688*, 193.

Sir Jonathan raised his own troops to this end, at the age of just seventeen. He fought under the command of Sir Bevil Grenville; Grenville was the leader of the Cornish forces in the Civil War and was famously killed leading a charge at the Battle of Lansdowne. The Trelawny family suffered as a result of their support of Charles I. After the Royalists' defeat, Sir John was imprisoned, and his estate was seized. When the crown was restored in 1660, the bishop's father petitioned Charles II to grant him monetary compensation. This petition demonstrates the significance of Sir John to the royal effort in Cornwall; Trelawny's father wrote how "[He] was designed three times to have lost his life , beinge allwayes considered by the enemy as most obnoxious to them of all the King's partie in that countrie , beinge twice imprisoned when noe other of his Majesties partie in that county was soe treated."<sup>29</sup> Both of Bishop Trelawny's precedents fought to maintain the Stuart dynasty at great expense. In Trelawny's petition, he argues that his family never received any compensation for their efforts. These facts are verified by Charles II's Lord Chancellor Clarendon, who added an addendum to this petition, writing "he was alwaies nere your Majestie dureing the time of your being in Cornwall, and of extraordinary use to your service."<sup>30</sup>

All this pertains to Bishop Trelawny's father and grandfather. However, Bishop Trelawny's actions prior to James II's Act of Indulgences suggests that like his predecessors' efforts during the English Civil War Trelawney greatly favored the Stuart Dynasty. In 1685, the Duke of Monmouth<sup>31</sup> landed forces in Cornwall in a desperate attempt to overthrow James. Trelawny

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<sup>29</sup> Sir Jonathan Trelawny to King Charles II, July 24th, 1660, in *Trelawny Papers*, ed. William Durant Cooper. (Camden Old Series, Volume 55: The Camden Miscellany, Volume the Second, 1853), 10.

<sup>30</sup> Bishop Trelawny to the Earl of Sunderland, May 21st, 1686, in *Trelawny Papers*, ed. William Durant Cooper. (Camden Old Series, Volume 55: The Camden Miscellany, Volume the Second, 1853), 14.

<sup>31</sup> The Duke of Monmouth was the illegitimate son of King Charles I.

himself was dispersed to this region to strengthen support for the King. In a 1686 letter to the Earl of Sunderland, Trelawney suggested the purpose of this mission. He wrote, “your lordship cannot choose but remember the honor that his Majesty and your lordship was pleased to doe me in sending me , upon the expectations which you had of the designed landing of the late Duke of Monmouth at some place in the West , down into Cornwall , to putt the country into the best posture I could of resisting any attempt there.”<sup>32</sup> That the bishop’s presence could ‘put the country into the best posture’ demonstrates his significance to the people of Cornwall. With that said, his attempts to gather a militia to oppose Monmouth was met with apathy.<sup>33</sup>

If Trelawny was so devoted to the King’s cause that he personally attempted to persuade those in Cornwall to resist Monmouth’s rebellion, how are we to read his rejection of James II’s Act of Indulgences? The answer is that his support of James II is complicated through his actions as Bishop of Bristol; ultimately, his concerns surrounding the religious identity of England fostered into a rift between him and the monarchy. This element of Trelawny’s character is readily apparent in his letters to the Earl of Sunderland upon his arrival in Dorsetshire as Bishop. When James II passed the Act of Indulgences, he echoed the Seven Bishop’s Petition by grounding his dissent in a political basis rather than a theological one. In doing so, he couched his argument by leveraging his family’s past service to the Stuarts. In a 1687 letter to the Earl of Sunderland, Trelawney argued that it is this legacy that makes it impossible for him to carry out the Act. He wrote, “My Lord, as I

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<sup>32</sup> Bishop Trelawny to the Earl of Sunderland, June 14th, 1686, in *Trelawny Papers*, ed. William Durant Cooper. (Camden Old Series, Volume 55: The Camden Miscellany, Volume the Second, 1853), 16.

<sup>33</sup> Bishop Trelawny to the Earl of Sunderland, June 14th, 1686, in *Trelawny Papers*, ed. William Durant Cooper. (Camden Old Series, Volume 55: The Camden Miscellany, Volume the Second, 1853), 16.

am descended from loyal ancestors , so I have not, through the whole course of my life , in any one instance , departed from those principles of duty to my prince which I derived from them, and am ready to hazard all that is deare to me in this world to serve his Majestie , and one great reason which sways me in this present concern is, that I am fully perswaded that the signing of this Adresse is not for his Majesties service.”<sup>34</sup> He so objected to the act that he would ‘hazard all’ by refusing it. His eventual prosecution suggests that this was not enough to persuade James II. Fascinatingly, Trelawny explained further in a memorandum to this letter that while he consulted with the clergymen of his Bishopric about the Act, he began the discussion by informing them that he would refuse to sign it. He elaborated that it “‘twas hinted to me, [that] out of feare [they] would otherwise have signed it, but now they refused to a man.”<sup>35</sup> He not only refused to follow the stipulations of this act but led his fellow clergymen in its opposition.

Therefore, as Bishop of Bristol Sir Jonathan Trelawny both supported and opposed the efforts of the Stuart Monarchy. Despite his support of James II, through his role as Bishop Trelawny rejected concessions towards Catholicism. His work drafting Bishop Gibson’s additions to William Camden’s *Britannia* must be read through the lens of his efforts to build consensus for his actions as well as the Protestant Succession following the Glorious Revolution. Writing on Gibson’s revisions, I will reference Gibson and Trelawny’s as its authors interchangeably; while Trelawny was responsible for writing edits and additions to the chapter on Cornwall, Gibson’s

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<sup>34</sup> Bishop Trelawny to the Earl of Sunderland, April 26, 1687, in *Trelawny Papers*, ed. William Durant Cooper. (Camden Old Series, Volume 55: The Camden Miscellany, Volume the Second, 1853), 18-19.

<sup>35</sup> Bishop Trelawny to the Earl of Sunderland, April 26, 1687, in *Trelawny Papers*, ed. William Durant Cooper. (Camden Old Series, Volume 55: The Camden Miscellany, Volume the Second, 1853), 20.

editorial hand was present across the work. It is impossible to differentiate what text may be written by one or the other, and I will assume joint responsibility for their writing.

The first difference apparent to Gibson's revisions on Cornwall is where the chapter is located within the work. William Camden was content to list Cornwall, as well as the other constituent county of Danmonii, Devon, among the counties of Britain. In that way, he made no distinction between the counties of England and elsewhere within the British Isles. In contrast to this, William Gibson organizes his work differently. In his edition, he more formally separates Scotland and Ireland from the rest of Britain. The counties of England and Wales are listed together. Ordered alphabetically, Cornwall is the first listed under the heading of Danmonii. This serves to emphasize perceived connections between countries. Cornwall, and even Wales are not seen as distinct regions, but are grouped with and a part of England.

Interestingly, both versions of this chapter on Cornwall begin with the same Latin poem, credited only to 'a famous poet.' However, Gibson and Holland offer different translations of it.

Pars Corinea datur Corinaeo, de duce nomen

Patria, de{que} viro gens Corinensis habet.<sup>3637</sup>

Holland translates these lines as

To Captaine Corineus, part was given, to hold by right:

Of him both coast Corinea, and people *Cornish* height.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Philémon Holland, *Britain, or A chorographicall description of the most flourishing kingdomes*, 184.

<sup>37</sup> Edmund Gibson, *Camden's Britannia newly translated into English, with large additions and improvements; publish'd by Edmund Gibson ...* In the digital collection Early English Books Online 2, 166.

<sup>38</sup> Philémon Holland, *Britain, or A chorographicall description of the most flourishing kingdomes*, 184.

Copying the same versus, Gibson and Trelawny eliminate this rhetorical flourish of Hollands in favor of a more literal translation of the text. This results in the translation stating

Cornwall by grant to Corinaeus came;

The Country from the Prince receiv'd its name.<sup>39</sup>

While this removal of this reference to Cornish height is congruent with Gibson's stated intention of sticking to Camden's original text where possible and leaving his editorial opinions to his additions, it is possible to read into it and glean an understanding of how Gibson and Trelawny sought to present Cornwall. Camden emphasized the county's Celtic and Roman past, conveying a picture of a wild, in some respects almost barbarous people. Combined with the editorial decision to group Cornwall in with England, changes such as this highlight how the narrative around Cornish identity has shifted by 1695. It is no longer a remote, windswept backwater but part of a grander English nation. While England and Wales were broken down into individual counties, Scotland and Ireland were not. Cornwall was written as a part of England, and England and Wales the most significant parts of the British Isles.

Broadly, edits towards the main chapter of Cornwall sought to maintain the same information that Camden provided, albeit in the form of a new translation. Gibson's desire for parity and his refusal to change what Camden wrote even when it was incorrect, leaving such measures for his additions, all the more emphasizes editorial decisions such as his differing translation of the initial poem. What is truly telling, however, is the information that Bishop

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<sup>39</sup> Edmund Gibson, *Camden's Britannia newly translated into English, with large additions and improvements; publish'd by Edmund Gibson*, In the digital collection Early English Books Online 2, 173.

Trelawny decided to include in his additions to the chapter. He began his writing by expressing how popular imagination depicts Cornwall as vastly different from the rest of England. He wrote, “by its peculiar customs and privileges, added to a difference of Language, it may seem to be another Kingdom.”<sup>40</sup> The key word in this quote is ‘seem’-- for while Trelawny’s additions highlight the distinct regional differences that define Cornish identity, his work ultimately argued that Cornwall is a part of England. He viewed his role in portraying Cornwall to be “shedding light into these matters.”<sup>41</sup> He demonstrates this by highlighting the differences, or lack thereof, between the governance of Cornwall and that of England.

He first turned to look at the issue of Cornish privileges, its political rights which differentiate the county from its neighbors. The first of these privileges is the exemption of the Cornish from customs duties related to the transportation of cloth. Gibson suggested that this was first granted to them by the Black Prince, heir apparent to King Edward III. However, it was re-instituted by Queen Elizabeth during the twenty-first year of her reign. This exemption promoted the transportation of Cornish cloth. Importantly, this exemption existed in exchange for the price that the Cornish pay in the coinage of tin. Gibson emphasized that “for every hundred of tinn” Cornwall pays four shillings; he contrasted this with Devonshire, which pays eight pennies for the equivalent amount.<sup>42</sup> The second major privilege of the people of Cornwall was their right to

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<sup>40</sup> Edmund Gibson, *Camden's Britannia newly translated into English, with large additions and improvements; publish'd by Edmund Gibson ...* In the digital collection Early English Books Online 2, 173.

<sup>41</sup> Edmund Gibson, *Camden's Britannia newly translated into English, with large additions and improvements; publish'd by Edmund Gibson ...* In the digital collection Early English Books Online 2, 173.

<sup>42</sup> Edmund Gibson, *Camden's Britannia newly translated into English, with large additions and improvements; publish'd by Edmund Gibson ...* In the digital collection Early English Books Online 2, 173.

fertilize their soil with sand from the ocean. Beyond writing the fact that this has historically been the primary way the people of Cornwall have improved their land, Gibson refrained from exploring this topic further. A contemporary of his, a Mr. Ray, wrote an “ingenious discourse on this subject” precluding it from further investigation. This Mr. Ray argued that the sand was so beneficial due to the mixture of salt within it. Due to the importance of this sand, barges carried it up to ten miles upstream, where it was then delivered to farms by horse. Gibson also discussed how an inquisition discovered the town of Saltash had illicitly charged barges a yearly duty to carry this sand.<sup>43</sup> By far the most significant privilege that Gibson discussed, however, was that which was granted to them by King Charles I for their unwavering loyalty during the English Civil War. At the outset of this project, I cited Charles’ letter on the support of Cornwall from Sudley Castle, dated from 1643. As part of Charles’s recognition of Cornish support, he granted the people of Cornwall the privilege to trade with all parts of the world. That Charles would grant this during the Civil War highlights the value Cornish royalist support had for him in that time.<sup>44</sup> The association with Charles that Cornwall maintained led to Parliamentary persecution of Cornwall after his defeat. Beyond these privileges, Gibson maintained that Cornish governance remained the same as the rest of England. He noted that during the reign of Henry VIII, the people of Cornwall rejected Parliamentary proposals to establish councils in the Western parts of England, preferring

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<sup>43</sup> Edmund Gibson, *Camden’s Britannia newly translated into English, with large additions and improvements; publish’d by Edmund Gibson ...* In the digital collection Early English Books Online 2, 173.

<sup>44</sup> Edmund Gibson, *Camden’s Britannia newly translated into English, with large additions and improvements; publish’d by Edmund Gibson ...* In the digital collection Early English Books Online 2, 173.

to remain under the immediate governance of the King.<sup>45</sup> This perspective emphasizes Cornwall's governmental ties with the English Crown, while providing a throughline of Cornish Royalist support. Beyond governance, language is another key difference of Cornwall. Trelawny used this opportunity to stress that while the Cornish language is disappearing, it is something that the Cornish people are not trying to resist.

Amusingly, Gibson conveyed that despite the continued influence of the Cornish language, English is often spoken better in Cornwall than outside of it. He credited this “pure and refin’d” English to the way in which it was often introduced to the county through merchants or members of the gentry.<sup>46</sup> These individuals sought to imitate the way English was spoken in court, and it carried down to those learning (or forced to learn) it. Visitors in Cornwall were not just surprised by their eloquence in English, but also “their neat way of living and housewifery, upon which they justly value themselves above their neighbours.”<sup>47</sup> Gibson credited this neatness to the same cause.

As for the Cornish language, Gibson felt that “in all likelihood, a short time will destroy the small remains that are left of it.”<sup>48</sup> Writing in 1695, he argued that its remnants have already all but disappeared. We know that his prediction came true; by 1750, all traces of the Cornish language were gone. Despite this, 19th century Celtic-nationalist movements' attempts to recover it have

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<sup>45</sup> Edmund Gibson, *Camden's Britannia newly translated into English, with large additions and improvements; publish'd by Edmund Gibson ...* In the digital collection Early English Books Online 2, 173.

<sup>46</sup> Edmund Gibson, *Camden's Britannia newly translated into English, with large additions and improvements; publish'd by Edmund Gibson ...* In the digital collection Early English Books Online 2, 173.

<sup>47</sup> Edmund Gibson, *Camden's Britannia newly translated into English, with large additions and improvements; publish'd by Edmund Gibson ...* In the digital collection Early English Books Online 2, 173.

<sup>48</sup> Edmund Gibson, *Camden's Britannia newly translated into English, with large additions and improvements; publish'd by Edmund Gibson ...* In the digital collection Early English Books Online 2, 173.

allowed for the continued use of Cornish into the present day. At the time of his writing, there were still a few speakers; according to Gibson only in two or three parishes at Lands' End, the most Southwesterly point of England. Within these parishes, only the 'vulgar' or commoners continued to speak Cornish. Even those who still knew Cornish understood English. And beyond these peripheral parishes nowhere else in the county still spoke Cornish. The number of those with the knowledge to write Cornish was even more limited. Gibson suggested that only two Cornish writers remain, one of which who was blind with age.<sup>49</sup>

To Trelawny's credit, he did not constrain himself to only write that Cornish is dying; instead, he sought to explain to his audience the intricacies of the language and even publish some Cornish text. In some small way, this served to support its further existence. He contrasted Cornish with two languages: Welsh and Armorican. The Armoricans were a Celtic people living in what is now Brittany, in Northwest France. Across both Holland and Gibson's translations of Camden, the authors have expressed the similarities and bonds between the Armoricans and Cornish, stretching back to Roman times. As an example, it was the Cornish support of the Armoricans during Caesar's conquests that served as his justification to invade the British Isles. Gibson suggested that the bonds between Cornwall and Armorica persisted well into the Late Middle Ages, and the reign of Henry VII. Until then, the two peoples were to some extent economically and socially interlinked. Owing to this, Gibson perceived an 'affinity' between

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<sup>49</sup> Edmund Gibson, *Camden's Britannia newly translated into English, with large additions and improvements; publish'd by Edmund Gibson ...* In the digital collection Early English Books Online 2, 173.

Cornish, Armorican, and Welsh. With regards to Welsh, he suggested that Cornish shared the same ‘inconveniences’ of the language.

In order to demonstrate the commonalities of these languages, he wrote the Lord’s Prayer in all three.<sup>50</sup> Feeling the reader may be unconvinced by this comparison, he articulated that “they affirm the affinity much greater than appears here.”<sup>51</sup> He also provided the Nicene Creed in Cornish. In doing so, he made an argument contested by Cornish scholars such as Mark Stoyle: that the people of Cornwall “being in love with English” desired to have common liturgy in that language.<sup>52</sup> He cited this claim as being the primary reason for the decay in the language. By Bishops Gibson and Trelawny’s view, therefore, the Anglicization of Cornwall was a voluntary process and not one they sought to resist. This perspective seems contradictory in light of the Prayer Book Rebellion of 1549, where Cornish rebels violently rejected the replacement of Latin mass with English.<sup>53</sup> However, this point of view is critical in the establishment of what Robert Mayhew has called Gibson’s “Williamite, and Protestant” agenda.<sup>54</sup> Writing after the Glorious Revolution, there was a necessity among Gibson and his compatriots to present a narrative view of British history critical of Jacobinism and Catholicism. Suggesting that the Cornish violently fought to protect their Catholic church was contrary to a message of Protestant uniformity and

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<sup>50</sup> The Lord’s Prayer in Cornish: Ny Taz ez yn neau, bonegas yw tha hanaw. Tha Gwlakath doaz. Tha bonogath bo gwrez en nore pocaragen neau, Roe thenyen dythma yon dyth bara givians ny gan rabn weery cara ny givians mens o cabin. Ledia ny nara idn tentation. Buz dil|ver ny thart doeg.

<sup>51</sup> Edmund Gibson, *Camden’s Britannia newly translated into English, with large additions and improvements; publish’d by Edmund Gibson ...* In the digital collection Early English Books Online 2, 174.

<sup>52</sup> Edmund Gibson, *Camden’s Britannia newly translated into English, with large additions and improvements; publish’d by Edmund Gibson ...* In the digital collection Early English Books Online 2, 174.

<sup>53</sup> Mark Stoyle, *The Dissidence of Despair*, 436-7.

<sup>54</sup> Robert Mayhew, *Edmund Gibson’s Editions of Britannia*, 250.

legitimacy. In narrativizing Cornish history to promote the county's Anglicization, Gibson again projects an 'English' perspective onto a shared Britishness.

Supplementing descriptions of this voluntary desire for the English language, Gibson also credited the arrival of English-speaking merchants, tradesmen, and ministers for the promotion of the English language and the 'decay' of Cornish. Despite this assertion, it remained clear that active Cornish opposition to English persisted well into the 17th century. The imposition of English clerics on Cornish parishes after the Civil War was seen as an invasion of 'foreign priests.'<sup>55</sup> The use of 'foreign' underscored how despite the efforts of scholars such as Gibson to categorize Cornwall within England and Wales, many of its inhabitants still considered the English to be external interlocutors. Interestingly, here Gibson made note of existing Cornish language books. Of the three he states existed, one "contains the History of the Passion of our Saviour... in 1036 verses."<sup>56</sup> Etched into calfskin, Gibson is unclear on how this work should be dated. However, he maintained that the work is strongly against the doctrine of *Transubstantiation*<sup>57</sup>; in that minor way, his inclusion of this work functioned to strengthen the Protestant argument that the 1695 *Britannia* sought to make.

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<sup>55</sup> Mark Stoye, *The Dissidence of Despair*, 439.

<sup>56</sup> Edmund Gibson, *Camden's Britannia newly translated into English, with large additions and improvements; publish'd by Edmund Gibson ...* In the digital collection Early English Books Online 2, 174.

<sup>57</sup> Transubstantiation is the belief that during the Holy Eucharist, the bread and wine of the sacrament is literally replaced by the blood and body of Christ. During this process, it retains its original appearance. Debates around transubstantiation were critical to the Protestant Reformation in Britain; by the time of Gibson's *Britannia*, Protestants strongly criticized this practice.

Another area of Camden's description of Cornwall that Gibson sought to clarify and build upon is with Camden's description of the *stanneries*<sup>58</sup>, that is the Cornish tin mines. While Gibson commended Camden for his work detailing the stanneries, he conveyed that Camden downplayed the significance of Devon in this industry. In fact, at the time of King John Devon produced a greater amount of tin coinage than Cornwall. This represented one of the major purposes of Gibson's revisions; correcting Camden's errors or misinterpretations and building upon his blind spots. Through his collaboration with regional experts, Gibson's revisions provided a much more definitive picture of English history at this time.

Returning to stanneries, Gibson added to Camden's account of tin mining in two ways. One is through highlighting the growing significance of Cornish copper mining, and the other by exploring the history of Cornish mining charters. He described how Cornish miners discovered a yellow ore termed *Mundick*; through a smelting process, this was found to create 'true copper.' Where this ore was previously neglected owing to the high price of tin, the now 'extraordinary' price of copper was beginning to devalue tin. As early as 1695, the ecological impact of copper mining was understood. *Mundick* was 'unwholesome' and "the water in which 'tis wash'd is so venomous, that it festers any sore, and kills the fish of any river it falls into."<sup>59</sup> The Cornish obtained mining charters distinct from Devonshire during the thirty-third year of King Edward I.

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<sup>58</sup> A stannery was an administrative district established to manage the collection of tin coinage. In 1838, these stanneries were dissolved.

<sup>59</sup> Edmund Gibson, *Camden's Britannia newly translated into English, with large additions and improvements; publish'd by Edmund Gibson ...* In the digital collection Early English Books Online 2, 175.

These charters gave tanners the right to mine and sell tin, on the grounds that they fulfill legal obligations to stamp coinage.<sup>60</sup>

Other instances where Bishops Gibson and Trelawny saw fit to annotate Camden's work include instances where relevant events occurred after the 1610 edition's publication. One such instance pertained to an island off of the coast of Lands' End. Gibson described how a rock spire known as *Caren an Peale*, meaning the Armed Knight, collapsed in 1648.<sup>61</sup> Gibson noted that this occurred one year before the beheading of Charles I; its inclusion is suggestive of the fact that the authors, and perhaps locals, viewed it as an ill omen. That would support the larger scope of the work, which was supportive of Charles I and the Stuart dynasty, but not of Charles II's brother James.

Gibson's explanation of the marvelous healing water of Saint Maddren's Well supports this interpretation. He discussed that this well in Cornwall has remarkable healing properties; a Bishop Hall described a cripple of sixteen years walking again after washing in it. In another instance, two men were healed after drinking the water. Gibson explained that while he has no evidence of the former case, the latter was "undoubtedly true."<sup>62</sup> He noted that one of the men was under the service of Colonel William Gondolphin and died fighting for King Charles I during the English Civil War. Gondolphin was a significant leader of the Cornish forces during the war and was a

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<sup>60</sup> Edmund Gibson, *Camden's Britannia newly translated into English, with large additions and improvements; publish'd by Edmund Gibson ...* In the digital collection Early English Books Online 2, 175.

<sup>61</sup> Edmund Gibson, *Camden's Britannia newly translated into English, with large additions and improvements; publish'd by Edmund Gibson ...* In the digital collection Early English Books Online 2, 175.

<sup>62</sup> Edmund Gibson, *Camden's Britannia newly translated into English, with large additions and improvements; publish'd by Edmund Gibson ...* In the digital collection Early English Books Online 2, 176.

symbol of Cornwall. This addition associated Cornish support for Charles with holy miracles. With that said, despite Gibson's earlier credulity surrounding the well, he expressed some skepticism. If it were true a rector was healed after drinking the water without performing the requisite ceremony of 'offering, and lying on the ground,' then that ceremony provided nothing, and the water was solely responsible.<sup>63</sup> Gibson made a final reference to the English Civil War in Cornwall by referencing Stratton. Located in the North-east of the region, the town marks the site of a significant Cornish victory during the war.<sup>64</sup>

This thorough examination of Bishop Edmund Gibson's revisions to William Camden's *Britannia* demonstrates the political nature of the work. While Gibson's regions served to shore up support for the Protestant succession, they are also indicative of the burgeoning British national consciousness of the time. This is evidenced by the change in how the counties of Britain are organized, Trelawny's discussion of the privileges of Cornwall and systems of Cornish mining relative to Camden's, and most significantly his appeals to a shared British history. This is the primary story of Gibson and Trelawny's reinterpretation of Cornwall, and where the political nature of the work is most apparent. Gibson and Trelawny emphasize that despite the regional and linguistic peculiarities of Cornwall, its people desired the English language and have a shared history with the people of England. Through his editorial pen, Gibson changes the depiction of the Cornish people, from popular conceptions of a tall, windswept, and barbarous people to one adept

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<sup>63</sup> Edmund Gibson, *Camden's Britannia newly translated into English, with large additions and improvements; publish'd by Edmund Gibson ...* In the digital collection Early English Books Online 2, 176.

<sup>64</sup> Edmund Gibson, *Camden's Britannia newly translated into English, with large additions and improvements; publish'd by Edmund Gibson ...* In the digital collection Early English Books Online 2, 176.

at ‘housewifery.’ Trelawny even suggests that his Cornish compatriots speak English better than their neighbors. Gibson himself succinctly summarizes this argument, conveying that Cornwall ‘seems’ another kingdom. Despite this, it remains not a distinct entry into *Britannia* like Scotland, but a key county of England & Wales. Because of the political nature of Gibson’s project, Trelawny’s changes to *Britannia* reflect more about his politics than the social reality of Cornwall during the late 17<sup>th</sup> century. Trelawny is quick to suggest that the people of Cornwall desired the English language and the Anglicization of their church.

The early 18<sup>th</sup> century saw a massive upswell of British patriotism, whereby the residents of the British Isles began to identify themselves as members of a shared British nation rather than through their distinct regional identities. Linda Colley argues that a growing British identity did not ‘supplant’ or blend other loyalties, nor was it solely imposed from above on a ‘helpless and defrauded Celtic periphery.’<sup>65</sup> From this perspective, Cornishness was not replaced; it merely became a secondary identifier relative to Britishness. While this interpretation acknowledges the agency of regional entities, it falls short of explaining the subordinate position of Cornwall. While Gibson’s compatriots may have viewed themselves as writing in support of the Revolution, their work promoted a new understanding of Britishness. And while this suggests that the Cornish people were receptive towards the development of a broader British identity, Gibson’s additions highlight that is impossible to divorce this understanding of Britishness from that of Englishness. The Anglicization of Cornwall and the repression of its language convey the English primacy

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<sup>65</sup> Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707-1837*, 6.

inherent to this transitional period. Filtered through the lense of Trelawney, one would be mistaken of thinking that the Cornish people welcomed the imposition of the English. Rather, the story of Cornwall in the 17<sup>th</sup> century suggests that there was little difference between 'English' and 'British' identity; both were a means by which to pave over regional uniqueness.

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