

*Paper Sovereigns: Anglo-Native Treaties and the Law of Nations, 1604–1664.*

Jeffrey Glover.

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Jeffrey Glover's fascinating book *Paper Sovereigns* is a study of treaty making between Native Americans and Europeans on the Atlantic seaboard of North America from 1604 to 1664. Although the subtitle suggests a study occupying a potentially narrow niche, in many ways this is a work of considerable scope. It occupies a crucial space at the juncture of scholarship on colonization and intercultural contacts, on the one hand, and of European state building and the shaping of international law during the early modern era, on the other.

Glover argues that Europeans in North America often negotiated on Native Americans' terms and used their protocols, and that native peoples sought to use

transatlantic debates about North American treaties for their own purposes. In doing so, he expands on a growing scholarly literature in early American studies that emphasizes the power native peoples wielded during the early years of contacts with Europeans and the impact that Native American politics had on early European colonial efforts. This study will be of considerable interest to scholars of intercultural contacts and colonization. In addition, *Paper Sovereigns* will be of particular interest to scholars interested in early modern Europeans' evolving notions of international law. One of the most impressive dimensions of this study is the degree to which Glover links the two somewhat disparate fields, and his emphasis on the transatlantic context of colonial treaties makes a strong argument against the view that treaties with Europeans were invariably a one-sided tool of European empire and Native American dispossession and conquest. While useful in its own right, Glover's work adds to a robust scholarship on the topic. His more significant contribution is to connect the North American piece of the dynamics with early modern European diplomatic landscapes.

*Paper Sovereigns* makes an implicit argument that categories such as travel narratives, colonial promotional material, correspondence, or diplomatic records, which modern scholars use to categorize seventeenth-century texts, often obscure the original purpose and complexity of the documents. Glover makes a compelling case that many of these texts were intended as treaty documents, indeed as instruments to be recognized under the law of nations. He further argues that these documents cannot be understood without also considering Native Americans' actions and symbolically rich use of material goods as part of the diplomatic record.

Glover's study consists of five chapters, ranging from the English colonies in the Chesapeake to southern New England, and arranged chronologically by English efforts to claim lands along the Atlantic seaboard from 1604 to 1664. Much of his material is familiar to scholars of the early colonial period, but his emphasis on treaty making and on the transatlantic dimensions of treaty-making performances and documents adds a new dimension to our understanding of intercultural contacts and conflicts in North America before the English Restoration. Two chapters stand out in particular. Chapter 1, "Heavy Heads: Crowning Kings in Early Virginia," reconciles some of the inconsistencies and complexities of the records from the Virginia Company and the early years of the Jamestown colony by emphasizing their uses as treaty records. Chapter 5, "Gift of an Empire: The Land Market and the Law of Nations in Narragansett Bay," puts the assassination of Narragansett leader Miantonomi into a larger transatlantic context by exploring Puritan colonists' depiction of him as treaty breaker. In other chapters, Glover explores Pocahontas's kidnapping and marriage and the public relations war that followed from both, framing these events in the context of transatlantic debates over English-Powhatan treaties; he then examines the ways in which colonists in Plymouth took a rather different approach to alliances with its native neighbors than he found in the early years of the Virginia colony. And chapter 4, "Trading Sovereignty: The Fur Trade and the Freedom of the Seas," raises the important issue of early modern European debates over freedom of the seas; however, Glover's focus on individual

traders' claims ultimately limits his engagement with the larger issue of sovereignty of the seas and its relationship to Native American sovereignty. Ultimately, this is a testament to the kinds of complexity *Paper Sovereigns* highlights. In the early modern colonial world, "treaties never had only one meaning, and their outcome was always in doubt" (226).

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