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A 'POLITICK ENGINE'
ASTROLOGY AND POLITICS 1678-1715

BY

DAVID ROBERT WOODCRAFT

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CONTENTS

Acknowledgements

Declaration

Summary

Abbreviations

Preface

| | | |
|---|--|-----|
| | INTRODUCTION | 1 |
| 1 | THE ASTROLOGERS AND CHARLES II, 1678-1685 | 24 |
| | The 'Horrible Hellish Popish Plot' and Exclusion | 24 |
| | The Tory Ascendancy, 1681-85 | 53 |
| | <i>The Tory Astrologers</i> | 56 |
| | <i>The Whig Astrologers during the Tory Ascendancy</i> | 67 |
| 2 | THE ASTROLOGERS AND JAMES II | 84 |
| | <i>The Tory Astrologers</i> | 95 |
| | <i>The Whig Astrologers</i> | 111 |
| 3 | THE ASTROLOGERS AND WILLIAM III | 139 |
| | The Accession, the Jacobites, and War, 1689-95 | 139 |
| | <i>The Whig Astrologers</i> | 140 |
| | <i>The Tory Astrologers</i> | 159 |
| | <i>Gadbury and Partridge: the Continuing Feud</i> | 166 |
| | The Uneasy Peace, 1695-1702 | 173 |
| | <i>The Whig Astrologers</i> | 175 |
| | <i>The Whig Astrologers and Anti-Catholicism</i> | 184 |
| | <i>The Tory Astrologers</i> | 188 |
| | <i>Partridge, Gadbury and Parker: the Feud Widens</i> | 198 |
| 4 | THE ASTROLOGERS AND ANNE | 218 |
| | <i>The Whig Astrologers</i> | 219 |
| | <i>The Tory Astrologers</i> | 245 |
| | <i>Isaac Bickerstaff and the 'Death' of Partridge</i> | 264 |
| | CONCLUSION | 281 |
| | BIBLIOGRAPHY | 312 |

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DECLARATION

I declare that this thesis 'A "Politick Engine": Astrology and Politics, 1678-1715' is the result of my independent research carried out under the supervision of Professor Bernard Capp of The University of Warwick and that all indebtedness to other sources is acknowledged by explicit references in the text or in the notes to the text.

I declare further that this thesis has not already been accepted in whole or in part for any degree and is not being concurrently submitted in candidature for any other degree.

SUMMARY

Historians have long been familiar with the link between astrology and politics, especially during the Civil War and Interregnum. By contrast, the link between them during the later seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries has been neglected by historians.

This thesis sets out to bridge an historical gap. It provides a detailed study of astrology and politics between 1678, with the Popish Plot, and 1715. It examines the extent to which astrology was used as political propaganda during these years through a close study of the works published by the leading astrological polemicists, focusing particularly on their annual almanacs. It also examines the role religion played in politics, and the way in which the astrologers' religious outlooks and beliefs shaped their political views. The vitriolic feuds between leading astrologers on opposite sides of the divide are also examined in detail.

This thesis is divided into four chapters. The first elucidates the outlook of the astrologers writing in the last years of Charles II's reign, covering the Popish Plot and Exclusion Crisis, and the period of Tory ascendancy between 1681 and 1685.

The second chapter assesses how astrologers reacted to the succession of the Catholic James II, and his attempts to give Catholic subjects equality with their Protestant counterparts.

Chapter three examines reactions to the Glorious Revolution and the reign of William III, and chronicles astrologers' attitudes toward the succession, war and the Church.

The final chapter deals with the reign of Anne, focusing on the ferocious party battles for which it is notorious. It assesses the extent to which these were reflected in the works of the astrologers and examines their arguments as the battle lines were drawn.

The thesis argues that the stormy nature of politics between 1678 and 1715 ensured that the link between astrology and politics, which had become much weaker following the Restoration, was reforged and rendered as strong as it had ever been. Indeed the period witnessed a final renaissance in political astrology.

ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|-------------------------------|---|
| <i>B.L.</i> | British Library. |
| <i>Bodl. Lib.</i> | Bodleian Library. |
| <i>B.I.H.R.</i> | <i>Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research.</i> |
| <i>Capp, Astrology.</i> | B. Capp, <i>Astrology and the Popular Press: English Almanacs, 1500-1800.</i> |
| <i>Coley, M.A.E.</i> | H. Coley, <i>Merlini Anglici Ephemeris.</i> |
| <i>Coley, M.A.J.</i> | H. Coley, <i>Merlinus Anglicus Junior.</i> |
| <i>Coley, N.C.</i> | H. Coley, <i>Nuncius Coelestis.</i> |
| <i>Coley, N.S.</i> | H. Coley, <i>Nuncius Sydereus.</i> |
| <i>Coley, N.U.</i> | H. Coley, <i>Nuncius Uranius.</i> |
| <i>Curry, Prophecy.</i> | P. Curry, <i>Prophecy and Power: Astrology in Early Modern England</i> (Oxford, 1989). |
| <i>Curry, Science.</i> | P. Curry (ed.), <i>Astrology, Science and Society: Historical Essays</i> (Suffolk, 1987). |
| <i>Greaves, Secrets.</i> | R. Greaves, <i>Secrets of the Kingdom: British Radicals from the Popish Plot to the Revolution of 1688-1689</i> (Stanford, 1992). |
| <i>Harris, London.</i> | T. Harris, <i>London Crowds in the Reign of Charles II: Propaganda and Politics from the Restoration until the Exclusion Crisis</i> (1990). |
| <i>H.M.C.</i> | <i>Historical Manuscripts Commission.</i> |
| <i>Kenyon, Popish Plot.</i> | J. Kenyon, <i>The Popish Plot</i> (1972). |
| <i>Knights, Politics.</i> | M. Knights, <i>Politics and Opinion in Crisis, 1678-81</i> (Cambridge, 1994). |
| <i>Miller, Popery.</i> | J. Miller, <i>Popery and Politics in England, 1660-1688</i> (Cambridge, 1978). |
| <i>Parker, A.D.E.</i> | G. Parker, <i>A Double Ephemeris.</i> |
| <i>Parker, A.E.</i> | G. Parker, <i>An Ephemeris.</i> |
| <i>Parker, M.A.</i> | G. Parker, <i>Mercurius Anglicanus.</i> |
| <i>S.I.B.</i> | <i>Studies in Bibliography.</i> |
| <i>Taylor, Practitioners.</i> | E. G. R. Taylor, <i>The Mathematical Practitioners of Tudor and Stuart England</i> (Cambridge, 1954). |
| <i>Thomas, Religion.</i> | K. Thomas, <i>Religion and the Decline of Magic: Studies in Popular Beliefs in Sixteenth and Seventeenth Century England</i> (1991). |
| t.p. | title-page. |
| <i>T.R.H.S.</i> | <i>Transactions of the Royal Historical Society.</i> |

PREFACE

All the quotations that appear within this thesis have been reproduced exactly from the original texts and, therefore, retain the contemporary seventeenth-century spelling, punctuation, capitalisation and italicisation.

Where the title of a seventeenth-century almanac or book has been used within the text, it is reproduced exactly as it appeared on the original title-page.

The place of publication of all printed works cited is London unless otherwise stated.

Almanacs usually carried the dates of the year they were published for, though in practice they were published in the closing weeks of the preceding year.

INTRODUCTION

Historians have long been familiar with the link that existed down the centuries between astrology and politics. The close and important link between astrology and politics in England during the Civil War and Interregnum is also well known. 'It was during the Civil War', wrote Keith Thomas, '. . . that the political potentialities of astrological forecasts were most systematically exploited'. Bernard Capp has explained how 'The political quiescence of almanacs, almost complete by 1640, was shattered by the revolution'.¹

With the collapse of traditional ecclesiastical censorship the astrologers were relatively free to express their political hopes and ideals. As the new licenser of almanacs Parliament appointed John Booker, one of the leading compilers of the 1630s, who had frequently suffered at the hands of the Laudian censors.² The almanacs and other astrological works written during the Civil War brim with political polemic. Both sides in the conflict were represented. The doyens of the Parliamentary astrologers were John Booker and William Lilly, whose first almanac, published in 1644, sold out within days. Other Parliamentary astrologers included Nicholas Culpeper, Vincent Wing and Nathaniel Nye. Royalist almanacs were blocked by the parliamentary licenser, but the Cavalier astrologer George Wharton produced a stream of fiery royalist almanacs, pamphlets, and later his newspaper *Mercurius Elencticus*, from the king's headquarters at Oxford, with Charles' blessing. In the 1650s Wharton continued to uphold the royalist cause, using subtle language that slipped past the censor or issuing unlicensed almanacs.

¹ Thomas, *Religion*, p. 406; Capp, *Astrology*, p. 72.

² See Capp, *Astrology*, pp. 47-48.

The important link between politics and astrology during the Civil War and Interregnum has been reflected in the published work on astrology and its leading practitioners, which has concentrated on these years. Bernard Capp devotes an entire section of his *Astrology and the Popular Press* (1979) to the link between astrology and politics, in which he goes into some detail concerning the role of astrology as political propaganda during the Civil War and Interregnum, and the views of the leading astrological polemicists of the day. A briefer exposition of the link between astrology and politics during these years can be found in Keith Thomas' discussion of the social and intellectual role of astrology in his seminal work *Religion and the Decline of Magic* (1971). The pamphlet war between the Royalist and Parliamentary astrologers has also been studied in depth by Harry Rusche, who focused on the vitriolic battle between William Lilly and George Wharton.³ The leading astrologers of the Civil War and Interregnum have also been the subject of several recent biographies. Anne Geneva has recently published a scholarly biography of Lilly, which examines his astrological texts very closely to show how he employed astrological data to predict and justify the Regicide and Republic. The year 1992 witnessed the publication of a less satisfactory biography of the radical political thinker and astrologer Nicholas Culpeper, by Olav Thulesius.⁴

Although historians have also been aware of a link between politics and astrology during the later seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, this has, for the most part,

³ Capp, *Astrology*, pp. 67-101; Thomas, *Religion*, p. 406; H. Rusche, 'Merlini Anglici: Astrology and Propaganda from 1644 to 1651', *E.H.R.*, 80 (1965), pp. 322-333.

⁴ A. Geneva, *Astrology and the Seventeenth Century Mind: William Lilly and the Language of the Stars* (Manchester, 1995); O. Thulesius, *Nicholas Culpeper: English Physician and Astrologer* (New York, 1992). See also D. Woodcraft 'Done (Very Filthily) Into English': *A Critical Study of the Writings of Nicholas Culpeper, 1616-1654* (Unpublished M.Phil Thesis, Wales, 1992). For an earlier biography of Lilly, see D. Parker, *Familiar to all: William Lilly and Astrology in the Seventeenth Century* (1975).

been neglected in print, and has never received the attention it deserves. Keith Thomas mentions astrological propaganda after the Restoration, in passing, in *Religion and the Decline of Magic*. Patrick Curry's work *Prophecy and Power* (1989) deals with the same period as this thesis, but from a very different perspective, focusing on the status and credibility of astrology in late seventeenth and early eighteenth-century England. He does, however, touch on some of the leading astrological polemicists of the day and their political outlook in his account of the battle fought over the reform of astrology during these years, a battle which, as he and Capp point out, was fought along party lines amongst the astrologers, pitching Whig against Tory.⁵ Bernard Capp did give equal consideration to the link between politics and astrology in the late Stuart period, giving a succinct account of how the astrologers reflected the political issues of the day, and the quarrels their differences of opinion engendered. Constraints of space, however, in a work which looked at the wider role of almanacs and astrology in England over a broad time scale prevented an in-depth study.⁶

The link between politics and astrology in late Stuart England has also been neglected by those historians who have examined political propaganda in this period. When Mark Knights examined the link between politics, propaganda and public opinion, and how the press shaped and reflected public opinion, in his recent work *Politics and Opinion in Crisis, 1678-81* (1994), he failed to recognise the almanac as an important vehicle for political propaganda. J.A. Downie was guilty of the same oversight when examining the link between politics, propaganda and public opinion during the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, in his work *Robert Harley*

⁵ Thomas, *Religion*, p. 407; Curry, *Prophecy*, ch. 2, pp. 72-86. Curry also discusses the battle over the reform of astrology in his earlier essay 'Saving Astrology in Restoration England: "Whig" and "Tory" Reforms', in Curry, *Science*, pp. 245-259; Capp, *Astrology*, p. 183.

⁶ Capp, *Astrology*, ch. 3, pp. 91-101, ch. 8, pp. 247-251.

and the Press (1979) which focused on the ‘absolutely crucial’ role Harley played in the rise of the free press in Great Britain. Downie overlooked the almanac again in his essay ‘The Development of the Political Press’ (1987). Geoffrey Holmes neglected the almanac as a source in his brief discussion of the press in *British Politics in the Age of Anne* (1987). So too did W.A. Speck in his *Tory and Whig: The Struggle in the Constituencies 1701-1715* (1970) when investigating the influence exerted by political propaganda on public opinion and election results, particularly in the most fiercely contested constituencies. He also omitted the almanac in his paper ‘Political Propaganda in Augustan England’ (1972), as did Holmes and Speck in their joint study of the role of the press in the struggle between Whig and Tory in *The Divided Society: Party Conflict in England, 1694-1716* (1967).⁷ Only one recent historian, Tim Harris, has recognised the role of the almanac in late Stuart political propaganda, and even he mentions only in passing the Whig and Tory almanacs of Partridge and Gadbury respectively.⁸

This thesis, therefore, sets out to fill a gap. It provides a detailed study of astrology and politics during the latter half of the seventeenth and the early eighteenth centuries, between 1678, with the political upheaval triggered by the Popish Plot, and 1715. It examines the extent to which astrology was used as political propaganda during these years through close scrutiny of the works published by the leading political astrologers, in particular their annual almanacs. It looks too at the role religion played in politics,

⁷ Knights, *Politics*, ch. 6, pp. 153-192; J. A. Downie, *Robert Harley and the Press* (Cambridge, 1979); ‘The Development of the Political Press’, in C. Jones (ed.), *Britain in the First Age of Party, 1680-1750* (1987) pp. 111-127; G. Holmes, *British Politics in the Age of Queen Anne* (1987), pp. 30-33; W.A. Speck, *Tory and Whig: The Struggle in the Constituencies, 1701-1715* (1970), ch. 6, pp. 76-97; ‘Political Propaganda in Augustan England’, *T.R.H.S.*, 5th ser., 22 (1972), pp. 17-32; G. Holmes and W. A. Speck (eds), *The Divided Society: Party Conflict in England, 1694-1716* (1967), ch. J, pp. 66-76.

⁸ Harris, *London*, pp. 106-133.

and the way in which the astrologers' religious outlooks and beliefs shaped their political views. The vitriolic wars of words between astrologers on opposite sides of the political divide will also be examined in detail. The compilers belonged to a relatively small professional community; they knew each other, and some were indeed neighbours. Their fierce political rivalries were inevitably bound up with personal and professional jealousies, and public and private issues were often jumbled together in their polemical writings. The intention here is to build up a picture of the leading astrologers' political and (where relevant) religious views, hopes and aspirations to show how these shaped not only their astrological works but their lives.

Who were these individuals? The majority of the political astrologers were born in the south of England and began their careers as artisans. John Gadbury, who for many years was the doyen of the Tory astrologers, was born at Wheatley in Oxfordshire in 1627, the son of a farmer. He was apprenticed to Thomas Nicholls, an Oxford tailor, before moving to London and becoming the servant of a London merchant adventurer named Thorn. His fellow Tory, Henry Coley, was born at Oxford in 1633, the son of a joiner, before moving to London and becoming a tailor. George Parker, Gadbury's successor as the leading Tory astrologer, was born in 1654 in Shipston-on-Stour, Worcestershire, and began his professional life as a cutler in Newgate Street. Their great Whig rival John Partridge was born in rural East Sheen in 1644 and started his working life as apprentice to a shoemaker.⁹ Most of them had only an elementary formal education and, though well read, were largely self taught. Some of them, like Gadbury, Parker and Partridge, had turned to astrological tutors. The notable

⁹ *D.N.B.*, Gadbury; Capp, *Astrology*, p. 308. *D.N.B.*, Coley; Capp, *Astrology*, pp. 301-302; Taylor, *Practitioners*, p. 241. *D.N.B.*, Parker; Capp, *Astrology*, pp. 322-323; Taylor, *Practitioners*, p. 265. *D.N.B.*, Partridge; Capp, *Astrology*, p. 323.

exception to this pattern is William Salmon who claimed the degree of M.D.¹⁰ Ironically, it was not only the opponents of astrology who pounced on the astrologers' lack of formal education and their background as artisans, but the astrologers themselves, in the feuds which often broke out between them.¹¹ Astrology was, therefore, a ticket with which these men could hope to enter the emerging professional middle classes. There was certainly money to be made, as evidenced by the very substantial estate Partridge left at his death, and the jealous attempts of the Company of Stationers to protect their lucrative monopoly.¹²

With very few exceptions, the political astrologers were based in London, where their almanacs were printed and published. But their almanacs were read far beyond the confines of the capital, and the scale of the market is indicated by the fact that almanacs were printed under licence from the Company of Stationers in Dublin, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Oxford and Cambridge.¹³

One of the most important traditional applications of astrology lay in the field of medicine, astrological assumptions forming an integral part of medical theory and practice. Not surprisingly the majority of the political astrologers were practising astrological physicians. Gadbury and Partridge attained the title (though possibly nothing more) of physician to Queens Katherine and Mary respectively.¹⁴ Many of them, including Parker, Partridge, Woodward, Moore and William Salmon, had thriving medical practices and made and sold their own medicines which they advertised in their almanacs and other astrological works. Some also wrote medical

¹⁰ *D.N.B.*, Salmon, Capp, *Astrology*, p. 329.

¹¹ See below, pp. 172, 207, 208, 269, 270, 272-273.

¹² See below, pp. 280, 38.

¹³ See C. Blagden, 'The Distribution of Almanacks in the Second Half of the Seventeenth Century', *S.I.B.*, XI (1958), p. 112.

¹⁴ Capp, *Astrology*, p. 207.

tracts in which they could also advertise their medical practices and medicines. William Salmon, a prolific author and translator of medical texts, was in many ways the heir of Nicholas Culpeper in his attempts to provide the plebeian classes with a body of medical knowledge in the vernacular.¹⁵

There was an equally close link between astrology and mathematics, particularly practical mathematics. A number of the political astrologers were well-respected mathematicians, including Henry Coley, Matthew Hobbs and John Wing who, between them, practised and taught all branches of practical mathematics.¹⁶ Of the arts related to practical mathematics, navigation most caught the imagination of the astrologers. John Gadbury displayed a passionate interest in the subject. His almanacs often contained navigational essays and in 1691 he published *Nauticum Astrologicum*. One of his great missions in life was to discover ‘The North-East, or Polar Passage’.¹⁷

By far the most popular and accessible works of the political astrologers were their annual almanacs. The almanacs of the later seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries were largely unchanged from their predecessors in the Elizabethan period, which witnessed the rapid emergence of the English almanac and the assumption of its standard form. Most commonly, the almanac was divided into two autonomous sections. The first usually began with a short preface by the compiler. This was followed by a series of tables: a chronological table recounting major historical events from the creation, or sometimes more recent history, a table of the legal terms, and the ‘regal table’, which listed English monarchs since the Norman Conquest, often with a

¹⁵ See Woodcraft, *Nicholas Culpeper*, pp. 26-39, 209-210.

¹⁶ John Wing was a member of the prestigious Wing dynasty, being the nephew of the famous mathematician, astronomer and astrologer Vincent Wing.

¹⁷ See below, p. 264.

verse appended. Tables showing the rising and setting of the sun and the phases of the moon, and tide-tables were also common. So too was the 'zodiacal man', a diagram which illustrated the correspondence between the various parts of the body and the signs which governed them. The remainder of the first part would then be devoted to an astrological survey of each calendar month. Often each month was allocated two pages, the first containing the monthly calendar which gave the reader the Saints' days, a table of the planets' 'Mutual Aspects', which gave details of the planets' motions through the zodiac and positions in relation to each other, and brief predictions of the weather. In the standard almanac, known in the trade as 'sorts', the page opposite the calendar contained a table of 'Lunar Aspects' charting the position of the known planets relative to the moon. It also held the 'Monthly Observations' which offered the reader brief astrological prognostications concerning the weather, diseases likely to be prevalent and their cures and, more importantly for us, politics. At the top of the pages (sometimes both, certainly one), could be found verses whose literary merits depended upon those of their author.

The second part, initially known as the 'Prognostication', was usually entitled 'Astrological Judgements' or 'Observations' and often had its own title-page. It contained a detailed exposition of planetary motions and prognostications derived from them for the year to come. The year itself was divided by the compilers into the four quarters, autumn, winter, spring and summer, each demarcated by the passing of the sun through the zodiac, and its entrance or 'Ingress' into specific signs. Thus the spring quarter was denoted by the sun's entrance or 'Ingress' into Aries, the summer by its entrance into Scorpio. Following the discussion of each quarter came a discussion of the eclipses of the sun and moon due that year, giving details of when

they were to take place and in which sign of the zodiac, where they were to be visible and their likely effects on earth.

The almanacs commonly concluded with advertisements in which the compilers could advertise their forthcoming works and where, as we have seen, the many physicians amongst them advertised their own and their friends' medicines, and generally touted for business. These advertisements can, in themselves, provide useful information for the social historian.

As we will see, every part of the almanac was open to politicisation in the hands of astrological polemicists, and this is what gave it its political significance. Almanacs were not the only astrological works written by the political astrologers. As we have seen, the astrological physicians among them wrote works outlining the principles of astrological medicine and medical handbooks. Some compilers wrote works on the role of astrology in navigation and meteorology. Others joined in the debate over the reform of astrology - which became heated during the latter years of the seventeenth century - and printed reforming treatises. Political propaganda and speculation could be found in all these works, often in the most unlikely places.

Although this thesis is concerned only with authors who used their works as vehicles for political propaganda, these represented only a small minority of compilers as a whole - although the political almanacs were, for the most part, the best sellers. There were other compilers who paid politics only brief attention in their almanacs. Into this category fell individuals such as Roger Kendal and Joseph Pepper, both of whom compiled almanacs for the early years of the eighteenth century which reflected the turbulent political situation in Europe during this period. Kendal, an astrologer and physician, compiled two almanacs for 1700 and 1701 from Frome in Somerset. He was

encouraged and assisted in his endeavours by his ‘. . . very good Friend’ John Partridge. His first almanac carried a recommendation from Partridge and his second was recommended in Partridge’s own edition for 1701.¹⁸ Joseph Pepper of Stamford, Lincolnshire published three almanacs between 1703-05. Both compilers offered very generalised political predictions, but these were too vague to be of any real party political significance.

Other compilers, whilst offering their readers very generalised predictions, chose to avoid the potentially contentious issue of politics. Among these were the astrologer and mathematician Thomas Fowle and his more famous contemporary, Thomas Streete. Possibly an early Fellow of the Royal Society, and held in high esteem by it as an astronomer and mathematician, Streete published the influential *Astronomia Carolina* (1661). He also tutored George Parker in astrology. This, together with his claim that the astrological tables of Ptolomy had been rendered inaccurate by an omission in transcription, earned him a stinging rebuke at the hands of Partridge in his work *Flagitiosus Mercurius Flagellatus: Or The Whipper Whipp’d* (1697). Partridge wrote of Streete that he was famous for being ‘Poor, Ill natur’d, Morose, Peevish, Conceited’ and ‘Knavish’.¹⁹ Streete also compiled several almanacs which admirably reflected their author’s astronomical and mathematical prowess, and which set about popularising these arts.

The majority of compilers, however, avoided making significant astrological predictions of any kind, including those of a political nature. One such individual was the Leicestershire mathematician Richard Saunder, who took over the compilation of Richard Saunders’ *Apollo Anglicanus* from 1684. Like many of his counterparts

¹⁸ Kendal, 1700, sig. A2, A2v; Partridge, 1701, sig. Av.

¹⁹ J. Partridge, *Flagitiosus Mercurius Flagellatus: Or The Whipper Whipp’d* (1697), p. 9.

among the politicised elite of astrologers Saunder also practised and taught mathematics, and his primary aim in compiling *Apollo* was the popularisation of applied science, particularly mathematics and astronomy. *Apollo* often contained astronomical essays and diagrams illustrating the dynamics of eclipses, to demonstrate that eclipses were natural and not magical occurrences. *Apollo* also provided the reader with mathematical tips and advice.

Ironically, Saunder was opposed to astrology. He believed the predictions made by astrologers, including those of a political nature, seriously undermined astronomical predictions. His edition of *Apollo Anglicanus* for 1715 contained an essay entitled 'A Discourse of the Vanity of Astrology' in which he differentiated between the prediction of planetary motions and heavenly phenomena derived from painstaking astronomical observations and the rules derived from them, and astrology which he defined as the art of

. . . fore-knowing and guessing, not at the Appearances of the Heavenly Bodies, but at Events that will happen in the World, God knows when; which with its Folly hath bewitched almost the whole World,(which is very desirous of knowing Things to come).²⁰

Two other Midlands compilers also made it their business to popularise astronomy and mathematics in their almanacs: the Coventry schoolmaster John Tipper, author of *The Ladies Diary* (discussed later),²¹ and John Chattock, based in Castle Bromwich, who produced two almanacs in 1708 and 1710. The first of these, *Coelestial Observations*, was for Coventry, the second, *Telescopium Anglicanum*, for Birmingham. Whilst devoid of any prophetic element, both almanacs reflected their author's considerable astronomical and mathematical knowledge.

²⁰ Saunder, 1715, sig. A6.

²¹ From 1710 Tipper also compiled *Great Britains Diary*, 'Designed chiefly to promote and advance TRADE and BUSINESS'.

Not all the almanacs produced during this period were as scholarly as those compiled by the political astrologers or their contemporaries such as Kendal, Pepper, Steete, Saunder and Chattock et al. Many were bald, formulaic pieces produced by the Company of Stationers and Universities, particularly Cambridge, often in the name of purely fictitious authors, or those long since dead (a fact which did not escape satirists opposed to astrology and the influence it still wielded). Characteristically these almanacs were devoid of any astrological predictions. In their place they offered more utilitarian information. Into this category fell the almanacs of William Dade and John Woodhouse, both of whom had been dead for many years by 1655, and John Swan who died in 1671.²² The famous Cambridge “bird” series was well represented by the almanacs of the fictitious Jonathan Dove and Thomas Swallow.

In order to guarantee a ‘niche’ market, these almanacs often displayed a high degree of specialisation. Thus *Rose, Fly* and *Turner* provided the reader with specimen forms of bonds, bills, apprenticeships, acquittances and even wills. *Woodhouse* and *Pond* contained detailed lists of fairs, whilst *Perkins* provided lengthy chronologies which were strongly royalist in sympathy. Some almanacs were targeted at specific occupations or groups to attract readers. The rural community was catered for in an almanac which bore the name of William Dade entitled, *The Country-Man’s Kalendar*, which gave specialist advice for farmers and country folk. Of particular interest were its herbal remedies for horses and cattle. Other specialist titles included *The City and Countrey Chapmans Almanack* which later became known as *The Chapmans and Travellers Almanack*, and contained ‘. . . things Useful for all Travellers, Traders, or Chapmen whatsoever’, and *The Weavers Almanack* by Thomas Strutt, which contained

²² See Capp, *Astrology*, pp. 303, 340, 333.

no specialist information, and was by the author's own admission a poor seller.²³ A natural corollary to the link between the astronomical and mathematical data provided in almanacs and navigation was the appearance of nautical almanacs such as *The Seamans Kalendar* by John Tapp and *The Mariners New Kalendar*, the latter of which was compiled by the mathematician Nathaniel Colson.²⁴ Both works contained advice on the use of the navigational instruments of the day and astronomical tables to facilitate navigation by the heavens.

Almanacs by, and/or for, women were relatively few and far between during the period covered by this thesis. The midwife and astrologer Mary Holden compiled *The Womans Almanack* for 1688 and 1689. Disappointingly, neither contained any specialist information for women and were fairly astrologically lightweight affairs. 1694 witnessed the publication of an almanac which bore the same title, purportedly by one Dorothy Partridge, midwife and 'Student in Astrology'.²⁵ Despite the rather grandiose claims of the title-page, Partridge's almanac gave little specialist advice for women, though it included interesting if rather dubious tips on matters such as cosmetics. One piece of advice told '*How to make Hair as red as a Fox, a lovely Brown*'. It involved placing a mixture composed of 'Lead Calcined with Sulphur one part, and another part of quick Lime' on one's hair before rinsing off with soap and water. The title-page promised women how to tell '*. . . their Fortune by the Stars*', though in fact the rules it gave were based on palmistry. It also gave instructions on '*How to make Love-powder*' which involved burying a swallow's nest '*. . . young ones*

²³ T. Strutt, *The Weavers Almanack*, 1690, sig. A4.

²⁴ *The Mariners New Kalendar* and *The Seamans Kalendar* were not annual almanacs but specialist handbooks periodically reissued.

²⁵ This may possibly have been a pseudonym; after the turn of the century Benjamin Harris issued almanacs under the name, claiming, falsely, to be the wife of the doyen of the Whig astrologers, John. See Capp, *Astrology*, p. 323.

and all' for forty eight hours before digging it up and powdering the dead young; '. . . this, some say, hath strange effects'.²⁶

Without doubt the most popular and successful almanac produced for women was *The Ladies Diary* compiled by John Tipper. The almanacs contained '. . . many Delightful and Entertaining Particulars, peculiarly adapted for the Use and Diversion of The FAIR-SEX'. Staples included romantic stories, verses and culinary recipes. The edition for 1708 advised women on '*The Methods taken by Intreiguing Men to decoy the Women plainly expos'd, to enable the Fair Sex to stand upon their guard when such Gallants attack them*'.²⁷

The almanacs also served a more serious purpose. Tipper, a mathematician and astronomer, aimed to use *The Ladies Diary* to popularise these arts among women. From the outset the *Diary* contained 'Enigmas', and he invited readers to write in with solutions as well as offering them the chance to submit their own, an invitation which many readers happily accepted. From 1707 the almanacs also contained 'Arithmetical Questions', often of a complex nature, and readers were again invited to submit the solutions. Initially those who sent in correct answers to the 'Enigmas' were rewarded by seeing their names in print. From 1710, however, Tipper displayed his entrepreneurial flair by offering copies of that year's *Diary* to readers who sent in correct answers to specific 'Enigmas' and 'Arithmetical Questions'. The *Diary* also provided its readers with complex astronomical information. The edition for 1708 contained separate essays on the Ptolemaic and Copernican systems, complete with diagrams, Tipper stressing that the latter '. . . is now almost universally received'. It

²⁶ [D. Partridge], *The Woman's Almanack*, 1694, sig. A6, t.p., A6v.

²⁷ J. Tipper, *The Ladies Diary* 1706, t.p.; 1708, sig. B8v-C2v.

also contained an essay on recent telescopic discoveries including the Jovean moons, Saturn's ring, sunspots and '... the Scarred and Rugged Martian Landscape'.²⁸

No discussion of the 'specialist' almanacs would be complete without some account of the important editions compiled by William Winstanley. Winstanley was responsible for three different series of almanacs during the period covered by this thesis, the burlesque almanac *Poor Robin*, *The Protestant Almanack* and *A Yea and Nay Almanack*.

Poor Robin was unquestionably the most successful of all the burlesque almanacs. It first appeared in 1662 and was thereupon suppressed as 'scandalous' (though not before 3,000 copies had been sold). Aware of its commercial potential the Company of Stationers took over its publication. Its recipe was simple but effective, combining jokes and satire with the traditional fare of almanacs, allowing more serious social comment to be interwoven with issues of a more frivolous nature.²⁹ The recipe was completed by Winstanley's lively and colourful prose which made *Poor Robin* such an interesting and amusing read and which guaranteed its popularity.

Despite his conservative values, Winstanley was highly critical of the society in which he lived, and scornful attacks on the legal and medical professions filled the pages of *Poor Robin*. He believed that the law served merely the interests of the lawyers, and repeatedly attacked its costs and delays, and the litigious nature of society. In the edition of *Poor Robin* for 1695 he warned:

When men will law to satisfie their Mind,
The Sauce more costly than the Meat they find;
A Man three Suits of Cloth sometimes wears out,

²⁸ Tipper, *The Ladies Diary*, 1708, sig. A2v-A3, A3v-A4.

²⁹ For earlier burlesque almanacs see F.P. Wilson, 'Some English Mock-Prognostications', *The Library*, 4th ser., XIX (1939), pp. 6-43. Although Winstanley did occasionally allow his strong royalist sympathies to pervade the pages of *Poor Robin*, he chose, for the most part, to indulge in social as opposed to political commentary.

E're he can bring one Suit at Law about.³⁰

He also attacked the high fees charged by physicians, and did not differentiate between professional physicians and quacks when warning of their ineptitude.

'Physick' he warned,

. . . thy *Body will make worse*
*And Cut deep Gashes in thy Purse.*³¹

If physicians exploited the people, so too did the 'Ass-trologers'. Attacking the greed and self-interest of 'Ass-trologers' in the 1681 edition Winstanley declared '*. . . every word in this Almanack was writ on purpose to get money*'. It was also common for editions to contain a ridiculous '*Ass-trological Scheam*', a satirical tool with which Winstanley could undermine the 'Ass-trologers' and their art.³²

Like many of his fellow compilers, Winstanley devoted much of his attention to moral and social issues. He depicted laziness as a cardinal sin and proposed a radical solution:

If lazy now thou art, best thing's a whip for 't,
For lashed soundly, that will make thee skip for 't.³³

It warned readers against wasting their time and money in the alehouse or tavern drinking, gaming or procuring the services of a prostitute:

Wine, Whores, and Dice are three such things
*As many men to beggary brings.*³⁴

As in all things moderation was the key. 'Wines being moderately taken, are good to chear the Heart and Comfort the Body; but drunk to excess they breed a Consumption in the Purse, and Diseases in the Body', he observed.³⁵ Sexual relations

³⁰ *Poor Robin*, 1695, sig. Av.

³¹ *Poor Robin*, 1687, sig. A6v.

³² *Poor Robin*, 1681, sig. Av; 1679, sig. C6v-C8.

³³ *Poor Robin*, 1681, sig. B4.

³⁴ *Poor Robin*, 1688, sig. B3v.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, sig. C4.

with prostitutes, as well as being a drain on one's purse would place a man in jeopardy both from venereal disease and his vengeful wife:

*Who with a Whore will now be dabling
May happen for to get a stradling.*³⁶

Although *Poor Robin* stressed the duties of its readers, and the virtues of work, it also celebrated the seasonal round of festivities and jollifications. At Easter, and in the spring, the upper classes repaired to 'Hide Park' and 'Totnam Court' to see and be seen, whilst others flocked to 'Moor-Fields' and played 'At Nine-pins, and at Pigeon holes'. Apprentices and journeymen took their sweethearts to Islington where they ate 'Cakes . . . Custards, Cheesecakes . . . Bacon slices and stu'd Prunes' and drank 'Bottle Ale'. In the country girls played 'Stool ball' and 'Barley-break' and boys wrestled and played football. At 'Shrove-tide' we are told 'Pancakes and Fritters 'bout do fly', and boys indulged in the dubious pastime of throwing sticks at cocks. May Day, of course, witnessed dancing around the maypole. August saw the famous Batholomew's Fair where Londoners could flock to see a myriad of attractions and have their pockets picked. October 25 was St. Crispin's day when shoemakers went fox catching in honour of their patron saint. On November 5 boys played with 'Squibs and Crackers' and bonfires turned night into day. The year ended with the traditional merry-making at Christmas.³⁷

Poor Robin also appealed to male readers through its strongly misogynist tendencies and sceptical attitude towards marriage. The belief that women were inferior to men permeated the pages of satirical and genuine almanac-makers alike, and Winstanley's misogynist humour belongs to a long tradition upheld in ballads, jest-

³⁶ *Poor Robin*, 1688, sig. B4; 1687, sig. A7v.

³⁷ *Poor Robin*, 1687, sig. A8v; 1688, sig. A7v; 1687, sig. B7v; 1681, sig. A5v; 1690, sig. B; 1681, sig. B3v; 1688, sig. A4; 1690, sig. B6, B7.

books and other chap-books. *Poor Robin* claimed that women were guilty of a multitude of sins, notably garrulousness and sexual promiscuity. They were incorrigible gossips, the chief topics of conversation usually being ‘. . . their Husbands frowardness, and their Maids sluttishness’. Writing of their constant chattering in the 1694 edition of *Poor Robin* Winstanley wittily wrote, ‘. . . it is unreasonable to have a Parliament of Women, because instead of one, they would be all Speakers’.³⁸

Writing of female promiscuity, Winstanley claimed that there were very few virgins left at eighteen, and that most wives were adulterous. In fairness, however, he conceded that both sexes could be guilty of infidelity. In the 1692 edition of *Poor Robin* he recounted the amusing tale of ‘Mistress *E.B.*’ who ‘. . . found her Husband kissing his Maid in a dark Hole behind the Parlor-door; who asking her, how she spy’d him out in that place? She return’d him answer, That formerly she had been kiss’d by several Men in that place her self’.³⁹

Women were at their most cold and calculating when attempting to lure men into the trap of marriage. Once they had caught their hapless victim, they would immediately set about subjugating him to ‘. . . strive for [the] Master ship, and to wear the Breeches’. Women preferred to marry weak and foolish husbands who were easier to subjugate. The result of this process was the creation of the cuckold, of which Winstanley claimed there were nine varieties. The inevitable ‘Discord and Wrangling betwixt disagreeing Couples . . . tugging for the Mastery, and buffeting for the Breeches’ could also have an impact on the children and breed a generation of ‘Wild Cats’. One way to control one’s wife was to keep her short of money.⁴⁰ Another was

³⁸ *Poor Robin*, 1695, sig. B; 1694, sig. C6.

³⁹ *Poor Robin*, 1692, sig. A3v.

⁴⁰ *Poor Robin*, 1681, sig. A7; 1699, sig. A7v; 1698, sig. A5.

to give her a sound beating. In the 1687 edition of *Poor Robin* Winstanley contentiously wrote of how in '*Muscovia*',

. . . the Women love their Husbands best which beateth them most, and think themselves neither loved, nor regarded, unless they be twice or thrice a day well savor'dly swaddled; but the Women in *England*, should they be soundly bang'd but once a day, they would very hardly love that Husband.⁴¹

If Winstanley went beyond the confines of good taste here, he did so equally in his virulently anti-Catholic *The Protestant Almanack*, which attacked the Catholic faith through a combination of virulent abuse and ridicule. Catholicism was portrayed as cruel, conspiratorial and bloodthirsty, its avowed intent the proselytization of whole nations, by force if necessary. Its central tenets, notably transubstantiation, also came under attack. The cruelty of the Catholic faith was made clear in regular features which listed '*Popish Cruelties*' and the '*. . . variety of Popish Tortures*'. They told of children being cast to dogs and swine to be devoured, of mothers forced to drown their children, wives to hang their husbands and children their parents. Liberal extracts from Fox's *Book of Martyrs* reminded readers of the Popish cruelty in England during the Marian persecutions. Regular chronologies listed the Popish plots and conspiracies including the numerous plots against Queen Elizabeth, the Gunpowder Plot, the Great Fire of London and the Popish Plot of 1678.⁴²

The sexual impropriety of the Catholic Church at all levels from the pope down to priests and nuns was asserted in a regular section entitled '*Popish Whoredoms*', and in lists of '*The Pope's Prices for Absolution of Sins*' which also highlighted the venality of the Church and undermined the concept of papal absolution which allowed rich men to '*. . . jump into Heaven*' but forced the poor to go to hell '*. . . for want of Money*'.

⁴¹ *Poor Robin*, 1687, sig. C3.

⁴² *The Protestant Almanack*, 1683, sig. C8-C8v; 1681, sig. C7v-C8.

Fornication in church could, therefore, be absolved for nine shillings and incest for a mere seven and sixpence.⁴³ The veneration of relics was also ridiculed, as was the concept of miracles. The 1690 edition, for example, recounted the story of Saint Fingare who, having sailed from Ireland to Cornwall on a cabbage leaf, was beheaded. Later, however, she was able to replace her head after having washed it in a ‘. . . spick and span new Well’ which had sprung up specifically for that purpose.⁴⁴

Winstanley’s anti-Catholicism found its most sadistic expression in the edition for 1682, which gave instructions on how to construct ‘An infallible’ sundial by hanging a Catholic priest and observing where ‘. . . the shadow of his Roman Nose’ fell.⁴⁵

Winstanley also strongly disliked the Protestant Dissenters. The pages of *Poor Robin* often saw scathing attacks on all shades of Protestant Dissent. The Quakers attracted the greatest odium, and he devoted another series of almanacs to attacking them. *A Yea and Nay Almanack* mocked the central tenets of their faith, including their belief in the inner spirit or light of Christ, and their alleged use of alcohol and tobacco to enhance their spiritual awareness. The relative equality the Quakers afforded women also attracted his opposition, and he saw their refusal to swear on the bible, to remove their hats as a sign of deference, and their use of the terms ‘thee’ and ‘thou’ as deliberately perverse. Indeed, it was their avowed intent ‘To be singular, and contrary to all other Sects and Fashions of the world’.⁴⁶

More dangerous, however, was Quaker and Nonconformist plotting against the Anglican Church and their monarch, which mirrored that of the Catholics. When asked if many of the Quakers were ‘. . . meer Jesuits, and belonge to the Church of Rome’,

⁴³ *The Protestant Almanack*, 1681, sig. C7-C7v.

⁴⁴ *The Protestant Almanack*, 1690, sig. B.

⁴⁵ *The Protestant Almanack*, 1682, sig. A3.

⁴⁶ *A Yea and Nay Almanack*, 1678, sig. C.

in the question and answer section which first appeared in the 1678 edition, a Quaker allegedly admitted that this was the case as both they and the Catholics ‘. . . love to Fish in troubled waters, and are quite obnoxious to all Order and Government’. When asked if the same could be said of the ‘*Nonconformist Presbyterian Parsons*’ the Quaker replied,

Yea Man, we do believe it, because they agree with them in the same Tenets, viz. to breed disturbance in Government, and to make divisions amongst the People, to steal away the hearts of the People from the King, as Thieves have several Vizards and masks to Rob with.⁴⁷

Winstanley’s success reflects his ability to amuse his readers at the same time as playing on their fears and prejudices. His celebration of monarchy, Church and the traditional world of rural sports and pleasures painted a picture of a loyal and ‘merry’ England under constant threat from sinister papists and Dissenters alike. His almanacs thus provide a valuable background to the overtly political almanac series which form the focus of this thesis.

The study of the link between astrology and politics is fraught with problems. Although many rulers employed court astrologers in medieval and Renaissance Europe, astrology had long been associated with subversion and rebellion, and predictions were strictly censored. It was only the collapse of ecclesiastical censorship at the start of the Civil War which allowed the proliferation of astrological propaganda during it, and men such as Lilly, Booker and Culpeper to vent their opposition to Charles I. After the Restoration, with the memory of radical Parliamentarian astrologers and their influence still fresh, the new government took strict measures to

⁴⁷ *A Yea and Nay Almanack*, 1680, sig. C5v.

cancel the astrologers once more, and the relative freedom of political expression of the Civil War and Interregnum was lost.⁴⁸

Throughout the period covered by this thesis, astrologers operated under the constraints of censorship. The contents of their almanacs, for example, were closely scrutinised by the Company of Stationers under whose aegis almanacs were published, and whose output was in turn closely vetted by the authorities.⁴⁹ The astrologers' attempts to evade this censorship illustrate some of the problems in trying to examine the link between astrology and politics. Many wrote under pseudonyms (some of them less than ingenious), and others anonymously, giving themselves the opportunity to vent their feelings more openly. Many hid their opposition to the government, or the political developments around them, behind a veil of platitudes and ambiguity. How is the historian to solve such problems? The methodology employed in this thesis had been to try to build up a rounded picture of the leading astrological polemicists through a close study of each of their almanacs and related works. Through the familiarisation this produces, one learns to recognise the style and nuances of each individual, which also helps with the problem of pseudonymous or anonymous pieces. This methodology in some respects parallels Anne Geneva's study of William Lilly. But where she concentrated on teasing out the secrets of his astrological figures and predictions, I have focused on the nuances of the astrologers' language in their verses and commentaries, and tried to decipher messages that may lie hidden behind a veil of bland or cryptic remarks.⁵⁰ Caution must be exercised, however, to ensure that we do

⁴⁸ See Thomas, *Religion*, pp. 407-409.

⁴⁹ For details of the Company of Stationers' monopoly over the printing of almanacs during the seventeenth century, and their attempts to keep it, see C. Blagden, *The Stationers' Company: A History, 1403-1959* (1960), chs. VI-IX, pp. 92-177; Capp, *Astrology*, pp. 37-46.

⁵⁰ Geneva, *William Lilly*. C. Hill's essay on censorship: 'Censorship and English Literature', in his *Writing and Revolution in 17th Century England* (Brighton, 1985), pp. 54-58, discusses the evasive

not see political polemic and subversion where none exists. Not every platitude conceals a hidden message. My aim has been to find the right balance, and to use it to unveil the political and religious hopes, fears and agendas of the leading political astrologers of late Stuart England.

CHAPTER ONE

THE ASTROLOGERS AND CHARLES II, 1678-1685

During the late 1670s and early 1680s the period of relative political quiescence which had ensued following the restoration of Charles II to the English throne came to an abrupt end as the nation was swept by fears of popery and absolutism. These fears were to dominate and shape the last years of Charles' reign.

It is with these years, and more particularly the outlook of the astrologers writing during them, that this chapter is concerned. The chapter will be divided into two parts. The first will look at the years 1678-81, years which witnessed the Popish Plot and Exclusion Crisis. The second will examine the period of the Tory ascendancy between 1681 and 1685.

'The Horrible Hellish Popish Plot' and Exclusion

By the late summer of 1678, the fears of popery and absolutism engendered by Charles' pro-Catholic policies, the Catholicism of his brother and heir apparent James, and the activities of his leading minister Danby had reached fever pitch. England was a powder keg. All that was needed was a spark, which came through the over-active imaginations of Titus Oates and Israel Tongue.

On 13 August 1678 Charles first received word of a Jesuitically inspired plot to assassinate him. By the time the Jesuits had allegedly finalised their plans at the now infamous meeting which Oates claimed had taken place at the White Horse Tavern on 24 April 1678, a number of abortive attempts had already been made upon the king's life. Charles was to be shot, or if this failed, poisoned at the hand of the queen's

physician George Wakeham. Charles' death was to be followed by a Catholic uprising in Ireland and England.

Oates and Tongue could not have put forward their scam at a more propitious time, and further credibility was given to their story by Oates' adroit performances before the Privy Council. One of the men Oates had implicated in the plot was James' secretary Edward Coleman. A search of Coleman's house unearthed letters which he had written to Louis XIV's confessor, François La Chaise, which served as evidence that, during the mid-1670s, he had sought money from the French king and the pope in order to bribe Charles to dissolve Parliament. It was not only Charles' reputation that suffered through the discovery of the letters; it became clear that James had known of their existence, and that two had been drafted, one to La Chaise, the other to Oliva the General of the Jesuits, which awaited his signature.

The discovery on 17 October, five days after his disappearance, of the body of Sir Edmund Berry Godfrey, the JP who had originally taken Oates' deposition, in a ditch at the bottom of Primrose Hill, fanned the flames of intrigue and suspicion. Though the search for his killers proved fruitless, the belief that he had been murdered by the Catholics to silence him soon became widespread, fostered by two of the most infamous 'Plot' witnesses, William Bedloe and Miles Prance, a Catholic silversmith.

The combination of Coleman's letters and Godfrey's murder seemed to remove any doubt concerning the validity of the Plot. As a result, the latter months of 1678 and the beginning of 1679 saw England undergo a form of collective neurosis as panic swept the nation. However, the wave of anti-Catholic hysteria was relatively short-lived, and during the winter of 1679-80 the Plot gradually ran out of steam, as a result of Oates' and Bedloe's attempts to implicate the queen and as the past criminality of the leading

Plot witnesses was brought to light. They soon found that their evidence carried less weight as scepticism grew. By 1681 the bubble had burst and the Plot had claimed its last victim.

Oates' and Tongue's revelations not only played upon existing fears of popery and absolutism, but acted as a catalyst in intensifying these fears, making the threat of popery and absolutism seem more real and immediate than ever. The Plot brought Danby and, more particularly, the Catholicism of the heir apparent, James, Duke of York, to the centre of the political arena. Once Danby had been removed from the political equation, the opposition was free to give its undivided attention to the question of the succession. On 15 May 1679 the first Exclusion Bill was read. From the spring of 1679 until that of 1681 the political nation was deeply split between the Whig supporters and Tory opponents of Exclusion. Charles' decision to dissolve the Oxford Parliament of 1681 rendered the Whigs politically impotent, brought the issue of Exclusion to a close and gave the king a political advantage which he would exploit to the full.¹

Belief in the Plot was widespread amongst the astrologers writing at the time. Its discovery, and later the execution of some of the leading conspirators, took pride of place in the chronologies of their almanacs, the pages of which predicted the outbreak of further plotting involving those at the helm of government, and warned of its concomitant dangers, particularly the outbreak of fires in the nation's capital.² However, most astrologers remained stoically silent during these tumultuous years on

¹ For the Popish Plot and its political repercussions see Kenyon, *Popish Plot*; J. R. Jones, *The First Whigs: The Politics of the Exclusion Crisis, 1678-83* (Oxford, 1970). See also T. Harris, *Politics Under the Later Stuarts: Party Conflict in a Divided Society, 1660-1715* (1993), ch. 4, pp. 80-116; Miller, *Popery*, ch. 8, pp. 154-158.

² See the almanacs of Coley, Tanner, Woodward, and, most of all, Partridge for evidence of belief in the Plot permeating their almanacs.

the issue of Exclusion. Only two astrologers dared to break the silence. John Partridge and John Gadbury represented opposite ends of the political spectrum, Partridge as a radical Whig; Gadbury as a firm Tory. It is in the pages of their almanacs and other astrological works that the battle lines between Whig and Tory were first drawn amongst the astrological fraternity.

Initially the two were friends. Indeed, for a while Gadbury had tutored Partridge in the art of astrology. Evidence of the friendship and mutual respect each felt towards the other can be found in Gadbury's work *Ephemerides Of The Celestial Motions And Aspects, Eclipses of the Luminaries, &c. For XX Years. Beginning Anno 1682. and ending AN. 1701* (1680). It contains a couple of laudatory verses by Partridge, praising the work and its author, whom it describes as 'The Indefatigable Mr. JOHN GADBURY'. Similarly Gadbury recommended Partridge's work *An Astrological Vade Mecum* (1679) as a fine text on astrological methods.³

Born in 1644, John Partridge had started his working life as an apprentice to a shoemaker. Possessed of an enquiring mind, as time progressed he taught himself Latin, Greek and Hebrew and read the leading astrological works of the day. His interest fired, he set about compiling his first almanac. His efforts proved fruitful, and in 1678 his first almanac *Calendarium Judaicum: Or, An Almanack For the Year of our Blessed Saviours Incarnation* was published. It heralded the arrival on to the astrological scene of a man who was to become one of the leading astrologers of the age, and the king of the Whig astrologers.

The first signs of his alliance with the parliamentary opponents of Charles at the time of the Popish Plot and Exclusion Crisis can be found in his attitude toward Danby.

³ J. Gadbury, *Ephemerides Of The Celestial Motions And Aspects, Eclipses of the Luminaries, &c. For XX Years. Beginning Anno 1682. and ending AN. 1701* (1680), sig. A2, A2v, Bv.

Whilst the political spotlight had remained firmly on James and the Plot, Danby had remained safe - notwithstanding the increasing mistrust of him in some quarters - until the revelations of Ralph Montagu. On 19 December 1678, driven by a desire to seek revenge upon both Charles and Danby, who had brought his promising political career to an abrupt and ignominious end, Montagu produced letters written by Danby containing details of the secret subsidy negotiations which had taken place with France in August 1675 and February 1676. At a stroke, Danby, the self-proclaimed enemy of the French, was revealed as having bargained with them. The knives were out. Articles of impeachment against him emanated from both Parliaments that met after Montagu's revelations. Eventually, after much heated debate and in order to avert an Act of Attainder, Danby surrendered himself and was duly imprisoned in the Tower, there to remain for five long years.⁴

There is no doubt that Partridge shared the public mistrust of Danby. In his almanac for 1678 he launched a thinly veiled attack on Danby, predicting that there would be '... just suspicion of treachery among those that have been intrusted with private Concerns of Kingdoms, either in expence of the Treasury, or betraying their Trust'.⁵ In his edition for the following year, written and published in 1678, he referred to the French subsidy negotiations. 'Some great Martialist about these times is contriving by under-hand dealing to make his Money insinuate where his Sword cannot conquer'. Aware of the growing opposition to Danby, and perhaps trying to fan it, he hinted at Danby's probable impeachment when he predicted that those 'Saturnine Men'

⁴ For an account of the Danby/Montagu affair and its effects see R. Hutton, *Charles The Second King of England, Scotland, and Ireland* (Oxford, 1991), pp. 364-370; J. Miller, *Charles II* (1991), pp. 300-307.

⁵ Partridge, 1678, sig. C5v.

concerned in the ‘. . . secret Affairs and Estates’ of princes would find themselves ‘. . . called in question by the great Councils of Kingdoms’.⁶

Following the downfall of Danby, the opposition concentrated upon the succession, and the Exclusionist Whigs emerged. The Whigs believed that James posed a serious threat to the nation’s ancient constitution and the rights and liberties of the subject. They believed that the primary aim of any future Catholic monarch would be proselytization, the establishment of popery and the extirpation of heresy. Any future Catholic monarch would be an absolutist, a despot who would, like their Catholic predecessor Mary I, actively persecute English Protestants. It was, therefore, essential that James be excluded from the throne. During the Exclusion Crisis, the Whigs’ principal weapon was anti-Catholicism.

In order to convince the nation of the need for Exclusion, the Whigs employed traditional stereotypical anti-Catholic polemic and imagery which formed an integral part of the anti-Catholic tradition. Whig propaganda portrayed the Catholic faith as inherently violent and bloodthirsty, its avowed aim the persecution and rooting out of Protestantism and establishment of popery. It asserted the subversive conspiratorial nature of the Catholic faith. The Whigs alleged that for years the Catholics had been conspiring to subvert both Church and State in England. Proof of this could be found in the large number of plots perpetrated by the English Catholics against Elizabeth I: the Gunpowder Plot of 1605, the Great Fire of London in 1666 and, of course, the Popish Plot.

⁶ Partridge, 1679, sig. C2, C5v.

The Popish Plot became one of the principal weapons in the Whigs' armoury. It was ascribed a central place in Whig propaganda, the main aim of which was to raise awareness of, and belief in, the Plot at a time when it was beginning to lose steam.

John Partridge was in every sense of the word a Whig. He was a vehement anti-Catholic and, as such, passionately opposed to the accession of James. In his almanac for 1682 he declared:

God give us King, and Peace, yet let us pray,
No Popish Heir may *Englands* Scepter sway.⁷

Partridge's almanacs and other astrological writings were suffused with vehement anti-Catholicism. Like his fellow Whigs he relied heavily on traditional, stereotypical anti-Catholic arguments and imagery. For example, he often played upon the contemporary association of popery and fire - an association derived from the Marian persecutions - and the fear it created. His works portrayed graphic, lurid descriptions of the damage and suffering caused by the Great Fire - blame for which he laid firmly at the feet of the papists. In his almanac for 1682 he wrote:

Methinks I still see *London's* wreathed flames,
With Carts by land, and Boat-loads on the *Thames*
Of what they sav'd (when Villains did conspire)
From ruinous thieves, and the devouring fire.
Alas poor *London!* they did thee deceive.
They made thee a Martyr e're thou couldst believe.

It was a powerful image: the city itself as a martyr burned by popish persecutors. A year later he asked his reader,

Can we forget *Londons* devouring flames?
A ruin'd City, and a loaded Thames?
People distrest, distracted, not a home.
Some Wealth preserv'd, the rest the flames call's own.
Houses consum'd, long streets left desolate.
Thank holy Church, and her blest babes for that.⁸

⁷ Partridge, 1682, sig. A3.

⁸ Partridge, 1682, sig. B5; 1683, sig. B5.

Partridge continually played on the endemic fear of fire in London, fear engendered by the memory of the Great Fire and, more recently, a series of fires in the early months of 1679. In his predictions for November 1680, the month the Gunpowder Plot had been discovered, he wrote ‘God preserve *London* from fires’. The following year in his predictions for October he wrote ‘I hope *Mars* passing through *Sagitary* bodes no evil to *London* by fire’, and in 1683 he expressed the wish that London be preserved from ‘. . . unhappy sudden fires’.⁹ The wish of course served to remind readers of their fears.

Like many fellow Whigs, Partridge also portrayed the Catholic faith as inherently violent and bloodthirsty. He asserted that the papists used cruelty and violence as the primary tool in conversion. In his almanac for 1682 he wrote:

These are their arguments with which they swagger,
Convincing too, they call ’em Sword and Dagger:
And sometimes poyson, this hath oft been try’d,
By this *Dilemma John of England* dy’d.
Bless me from *Rome*, and *Rome*’s commanding sway,
I love Conversion, but another way.

The reference to King John and his struggle with the papacy linked current events with memories of earlier threats to England’s national security.

Partridge emphasised too the subversive, conspiratorial nature of the Catholic faith. In the same edition he declared:

King killing Doctrines never came to light,
Till Hell had spawn’d the Pope and Jesuite.

He alleged that the Catholics had for years been conspiring to subvert both the Church and State in England. In his almanac for 1683 he traced the history of popish subversion in England as far back as the reign of King John. The Gunpowder Plot and

⁹ Partridge, 1680, sig. B6v; 1681, sig. B6; 1683, sig. B5.

Great Fire of London were proof of the papists' 'Designs' for England. The Popish Plot was then the culmination of a very long tradition.¹⁰

The evidence would suggest that, like many of his contemporaries, Partridge genuinely believed in the Popish Plot. In his pamphlet *Prodromus* (1680) he declared

. . . since the whole Nation fears it, the Opinion of Two Parliaments confirms it, and our Wise and Loyal Council believes it; I think he is no true Protestant, nor true Bred *English*-man, who will not be of their Opinion.¹¹

For Partridge, belief in the Plot had become an integral part of the definition of a true Protestant.

We have seen how, initially, belief in the Plot was fuelled by the disclosure of Coleman's letters and the 'murder' of Sir Edmund Berry Godfrey.¹² Partridge seized on these two events as proof of the Plot's existence. In his almanac for 1679 he hinted at Coleman's treason and implied further revelations were to follow when he predicted that there would be 'Nothing but impeaching and discovering Villanies . . . among the Servants of Princes'.¹³ He also continually asserted that Godfrey had been murdered by the Catholics. In his edition for 1683 he described Godfrey as ' . . . a Martyr for the Christian Faith'. His murder epitomised the cruelty and violence of the papists and served as a warning of the fate of all English Protestants:

Ah! *Godfrey!* we may well thy death remind,
Thy Throat was cut, and ours all design'd.¹⁴

Gradually, notwithstanding Whig attempts to keep the Plot alive, belief in it began to wane as the political tide increasingly turned in favour of Charles and the Tories.

¹⁰ Partridge, 1682, sig. B2, A5; 1683, sig. B2-B7.

¹¹ J. Partridge, *Prodromus: Or, An Astrological Essay Upon Those Configurations Of The Celestial Bodies, Whose Effects will appear in 1680. and 1681.* (1680), pp. 29-30.

¹² See above, p. 25.

¹³ Partridge, 1679, sig. C6.

¹⁴ Partridge, 1683, sig. B6; 1682, sig. B6.

Partridge, however, refused to bow to the increasing scepticism, resolutely asserting the Plot's reality (as he would do throughout the period with which this thesis is concerned). In his edition for 1682 he declared:

Some were such stupid Sots they would not think;
Some through affected Ignorance did wink;
Some were such Rascals, they believ'd it not,
And by their unbelief help'd on the Plot.¹⁵

One of the most fascinating pieces written by Partridge on the Plot was his *Astrological Essay upon the Nativity of the Popish Plot* (1680), published with *Prodomus*. Here, as the title suggests, he cast a nativity of the Plot and in doing so gave it an aura of authenticity. The essay is one of his most forceful assertions of its existence. He began by informing the reader that the nativity had been cast from the moment,

. . . when the Guards were ordered to go to Apprehend and Seize the Offenders: And that was a little before Twelve of the Clock at Night, the Twenty-Eight of *September, Anno 1678*. At which time I my self met them coming out of *White-Hall-Gate*.¹⁶

One has to ask what Partridge was doing at Whitehall Gate at midnight. Was this a chance encounter, or had he received advance warning that the plotters were to be seized? Unfortunately, we simply do not know.

A special place was ascribed to the planet Saturn in the Plot's nativity. Partridge explained that it was the 'Significator' of the Plot. Under its influence the conspiratorial Catholics had, for centuries, been plotting the downfall of Church and State in England, and the current conspiracy had been born and grown.

Partridge declared that the origins of the current conspiracy lay in the conjunction of Saturn and Jupiter in 1663. It had then been '. . . built up, and perfected' under the

¹⁵ Partridge, 1682, sig. Av.

¹⁶ Partridge, *Prodromus*, p. 42.

influence of a series of five oppositions of Saturn and Jupiter between 1671 and 1673 and a more recent conjunction of Saturn and Mars on 31 July 1678. The position of the other heavenly bodies at these times had also influenced its development. Partridge felt that there was ‘. . . a wonderful Coherence between these Positions, and the Figure of the Discovery of this Damn’d, Pernicious, *Popish Plot*; as if the Ground-work of That, was laid suddenly after that Great Conjunction’. (That is to say the conjunction between Saturn and Jupiter of 1663). He continued, ‘I suppose, it may pass for an *Aphorism*, That *Saturn* in Conjunction with any of the Superiors, [*i.e. Jupiter, Mars, or Sol*] in the Dignities of *Jupiter*, may indubitably shew *Popish Plots*, and *Popish Intregues*’. The Plot was thus subsumed into astrological science by Partridge.¹⁷

In the following extract from *Prodromus*, Partridge traces the evolution of the Plot from the arrival of the five boys from the Jesuit college of St. Omers, brought over by the Catholics to discredit Oates just prior to the retrial of Whitbread, Fenwick and three Jesuits accused of complicity in the Plot, to the arrival on the scene of Captain William Bedloe and Thomas Dugdale, whose evidence supported that of Oates at the aforementioned trial

. . . the *Moon* next applyes to the Square of *Mercury*, in *Scorpio*; and he Dispositor of *Saturn*, and by Consequence, one of his own Profession too: So was there not great and many Endeavours used, to invalidate Dr. *Oates’s* Evidence, and render it not worth believing? Witness the *Boys* of *St. Omers*, from beyond Sea: But those of our own Kingdom, let the World guess at. I’le name none: Though at the writing hereof, some had again the Confidence to make another Tryal; but, *Sine successu*. And as *Saturn* applyed to no evil Aspect, nor the *Moon* to any good one: So the *Doctor* stood singly, without any Assistance in Evidence, for some time: by which means, the Clamours of some grew loud. But when *Mars* came to the Square of *Mercury*, [he falling Retrograde] and *Venus* to the Square of *Saturn*; both which were but Seven Degrees distant: Which from these Signes, may be allowed Seven weeks: And about that time, came in Mr. *Bedlow*, and strengthened his Evidence. And as the *Sun* wants Eleven

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 43-44.

Degrees of the Square of *Mars*; so it was about Eleven Weeks after, that Mr. *Dugdale* came, and confirm'd both.¹⁸

If the origins of the Plot had been written in the stars, so too was its demise at the hands of the Tories with their claims that there had been no Plot, or that it was a smokescreen for the real plotters, the Presbyterians. Partridge asked the reader to

. . . observe, how the Face of affairs altered, upon the coming of *Saturn* into *Cancer*; and what pretty Inventions, the Adverse Party have contrived, to manage their Damnable Designes; and either to make it no *Plot* at all, or else a *Presbyterian Plot*.¹⁹

Partridge thus asserted that the path taken by the Plot had been to a large extent determined from the moment of its inception until its demise, by the influences exerted upon it by the motion of the heavens. The 'scientific' detail of *Prodromus* was clearly an attempt to give the Plot further plausibility.

We have seen how the Whigs perceived their battle against the accession of James as a struggle to protect England from popery and arbitrary rule.²⁰ Those who opposed them, the Tories, were seen as papists or followers of popery. Thus Toryism and Catholicism became synonymous in the eyes of the Whigs. Like his fellow Whigs John Partridge came to equate the Tories with Catholicism. Writing of the influence of Mars in his almanac for 1682 he declared, 'I pray God preserve the Protestants from Popish Massacres, this Year and ever; for *Mars* is in good earnest a perfect *Tory* at all times'.²¹

John Partridge was thus a thoroughgoing Whig. Vehemently anti-Catholic, he opposed the accession of James to the throne, and continually asserted the reality of

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 47.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 50.

²⁰ See above, p. 29.

²¹ Partridge, 1682, sig. C5v.

the Popish Plot which, it seems, he genuinely believed in. He branded all those who opposed Whig ideology as papists or supporters of popery.

Having elucidated the position of John Partridge during these years, let us now turn to examine that of his arch-rival, the Tory astrologer and physician, John Gadbury.

Born at Wheatley in Oxfordshire in 1627, Gadbury published his first almanac in 1656, beginning a long and turbulent career as an almanac-maker. Gadbury became the doyen of the Tory astrologers and acquired a considerable degree of notoriety for his alleged intrigues.

The Tories believed the Exclusion of James posed a threat to the Royal Prerogative, the hereditary line of succession, and the traditional constitutional order. Whereas the aim of Whig propaganda was to maintain belief in the Plot to strengthen support for Exclusion, many Tories, whilst admitting that some sort of plot had existed, were by 1680-1 arguing that it was being used as a smokescreen behind which the Whigs and their allies, the Dissenters, were plotting to subvert both the Church and State in England. In doing so the Whigs shared the same aims as, and were acting in the interest of, the papists.

To many Tories the situation seemed reminiscent of the eve of the Civil War. Increasingly, Whiggism and Dissent became inextricably linked and identified with republicanism in the eyes of the Tories. There was a Presbyterian plot against the monarch and Church, just as in 1641, though now aided and abetted by the Whigs. Furthermore, Whig attempts to mobilise support at a popular level echoed those of the parliamentary opposition in 1641-2.

At the heart of Tory ideology was the belief that they were the true protectors of the realm from popery and absolutism. Rather than posing a threat, James' accession

would safeguard his subjects' rights, liberties and privileges and the Protestant faith. They assumed that a Catholic monarch would be bound by conscience and the law to protect the faith of his subjects. They firmly believed that the risks involved in a popish succession were far outweighed by those inherent in Exclusion. The Tories' position was strengthened by the fact that their views were shared by Charles II.

Gadbury was an outspoken champion of the Tory position. He was passionately opposed to the Exclusion of James, and continually upheld his right to succeed his brother. In his almanac for 1681 he asserted he was doing battle with the assorted enemies of monarchy lined up against it:

Let *Times*, and *Men* be what God please; yet I
Will worship *Charles* my *Sovereign*, till I die;
Honour the *Duke*: But pity those *Madmen*,
Strive to divide them, both with *Tongue* and *Pen*.
For, maugreth' ill *Papist*, *Presbyter* or *Turk*
Bless'd *Charles* is King: Just *James* is *Duke* of *York*.

In his edition for the following year he prayed for the exiled heir to the throne:

God save our *Sovereign Charles!* our *Faiths Defender*:
Let *Englishmen* his *LAWS* and *HONOUR* tender.
Protect *Queen KATHERINE!* [*Englands Nursing Mother.*]
Preserve *YORK'S Duke!* [*our King's illustrious Brother.*]
Who to these *Pious VOTES* denies his *Hand*,
I'll pray for him too! but, wish *him* out o' th' *Land*.²²

Whilst, as we will see, Gadbury believed in the existence of a Presbyterian plot, his outlook concerning the Popish Plot differed markedly from that of many of his fellow Tories.²³ He clearly believed that the Popish Plot had never existed, that it was a fraud, a sham perpetrated by the Earl of Shaftesbury in order to bring down the monarchy. To harbour such views during the late 1670s and early 1680s was dangerous, and to express them in print would have been sheer folly, leaving one open to vilification from

²² Gadbury, 1681, sig. A3v; 1682, sig. B6v.

²³ See below, pp. 40-41.

the Whigs. (Roger L'Estrange found himself branded as a Catholic for daring to cast doubt, in print, upon the reality of the Plot). Gadbury did express his scepticism, albeit in the guise of a 'Lady of Quality' in *A Ballad Upon The Popish Plot* (1679). There can be little doubt that Gadbury was the author of this work. Thomas Dangerfield, a man about whom we will shortly be hearing a lot more, had no doubts concerning his authorship, asserting that 'Gadbury was the Author of the Ballad of the Popish Plot, which was pretended to be writ by a Woman; and many other Seditious Pamphlets'.²⁴ Of course, we must be careful not to take Dangerfield's assertions as read. He had good reason to stress Gadbury's authorship of the work. However, in this instance I feel he is to be believed. The work displays many of Gadbury's hallmarks and a style which leaves one in little doubt that he was not only the author of this, but several other ballads in the Popish Plot series. The work began thus:

Since Counterfeit Plots has affected this Age,
 Being acted by Fools, and contriv'd by the Sage:
 In City, nor Suburbs, no man can be found,
 But frighted with Fire-balls, their heads turned round.

From Pulpit to Pot

They talk'd of a Plot,

Till their Brains were enslav'd and each man turn'd Sot.
 But let us to Reason and Justice repair;
 And this Popish Bugbear will fly into Air.

A Politick Statesman, of body unsound,
 Who once in a Tree with the Rabble set round;
 Run Monarchy down with Fanatick Rage,
 And preach'd up Rebellion I' that credulous Age.

He now is at Work,

With the Devil and Turk;

Pretending a Plot, under which he doth Lurk,
 To humble the Miter, while he squints at the Crown,
 Till fairly and squarely he pull them both down.²⁵

²⁴ T. Dangerfield, *Mr. Tho. Dangerfield's Particular Narrative* (1679), p. 26.

²⁵ [J. Gadbury], *A Ballad Upon The Popish Plot* (1679).

Evidently Gadbury felt that the leading Plot witnesses were merely puppets of the Earl of Shaftesbury, and that he had elicited their support with the promise of financial reward. He pointed out that Oates was destitute on his return to London after being ejected from the College at St. Omers in June 1678, whilst Bedloe was a professional criminal, a thief, highwayman and confidence trickster. So well known was his criminal record that he chose to play on it rather than hide it.²⁶ As 'king's witnesses' Oates and Bedloe enjoyed the financial reward and, for a while at least, they prospered. It was obvious that Gadbury felt it was financial reward that had motivated the leading Plot witnesses and lay behind their allegations. In his work *A True Narrative of the Horrid Hellish Popish-Plot* (1682) Gadbury wrote with a heavy irony:

*My Witnesses I bring, and produce [for] the Record,
D'ye think th' are Perjur'd? 'Tis false and absur'd,
Wou'd th' Godly hang Papists for Interest or Pique?
Wou'd a Doctor Swear false for Ten Pound a Week?*²⁷

In the second part of the work he wrote:

To comfort our *Doctor*, brave *Bedloe's* brought in,
A more *Credible Witness* was not above ground;
He vows [a]nd protests though a *Rogue* he had been,
He wou'd now not swear false for *Five hundred pound*:
And why shou'd we fear
They falsly wou'd swear.²⁸

Oates, of course, may also have been driven by another motive: to avenge his ill-treatment at the hands of the Catholics. Gadbury was quick to hint at this:

*All of them swear
To be true to the Plot; yet Oates, not for Fear
Nor Revenge, (though turn'd away, and well bang'd)*

²⁶ [J. Gadbury], *Ballad; A New Narrative Of The Popish Plot* (1680). It is perhaps worth noting that *A New Narrative* the First and Second Parts were reprinted in 1682 under the title *A True Narrative of the Horrid Hellish Popish-Plot*. A few subtle textual changes were made and the works appeared with an amusing cartoon strip ridiculing the leading Plot witnesses and their evidence. For example at one point it mocked the claims made by Oates at the trial of Coleman, that he was well acquainted with him, when earlier he had told the Privy Council that he had never met him. See Kenyon, *Popish Plot*, p. 121.

²⁷ [Gadbury], *A True Narrative*.

²⁸ [J. Gadbury], *A True Narrative of the Horrid Hellish Popish-Plot . . . The Second Part* (1682).

*Discovers them all; The Jesuits are Hang'd.*²⁹

Gadbury took every opportunity to undermine the leading Plot witnesses, mocking them at every turn, and making clear that he had no belief in the existence of the Plot. He poked fun at the claims of Oates and Bedloe that they had been employed as couriers by the Jesuits, and ridiculed the assertion that a Catholic insurrection was to have taken place after the assassination of Charles, with military aid from the Irish and Spaniards.³⁰

Gadbury also hinted at his disbelief in the Plot in his almanacs, though he was too cautious here to state it explicitly. In his edition for 1680 he wrote:

Together with this spirit of Pride that seems now to be let loose among us, there is also a spirit of fraud and hypocrisie that bears it company, which animates men to entrap, ensnare, and betray one another; yea, even their very Friends, and those of the same Feather and Party with them, possibly, to the ruine and destruction of many.

He informed the reader,

. . . many Forgeries, Perjuries, Trepannings, &c. will be practised among men, and divers nefarious actions will be perpetrated, and monstrous and stupendous scandals promoted to the dishonour and disturbance of many in eminent places, not only by the tongues of malicious people, but by their Pens and Prints also. Many will make Cozenage, Backbiting and Lyes, &c. a Trade to live by, and glory in their Frauds.³¹

Whilst it is clear that Gadbury believed there had never been a Popish Plot, he did share the common Tory belief in a Presbyterian plot to bring down the monarchy and the Church in England like that of 1641. Like Roger L'Estrange, he believed they were using the Popish Plot to disguise their own subversive intentions. In his *A Ballad. The Third Part, To the same Tune* (1679), like the first, purportedly written by a 'Lady of Quality', Gadbury informed the reader:

The Presbyter ha's been so active of late,

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ [Gadbury], *A True Narrative . . . The Second Part; A True Narrative.*

³¹ Gadbury, 1680, sig. C4, C4v.

To twist himself into the Mysteries of State,
 Giving birth to a Plot to amuse the dark world
 'Till into Confusion three Kingdom's are hurl'd;
 It is so long since,
 He Murther'd his Prince,
 That the unwary Rabble he hopes to convince,
 With Jingling words that bears little sence,
 Deluding them with Religious pretence.

Gadbury was convinced that the architect of the Plot was Shaftesbury, whom he described as:

A Pestilent Peer of a levelling Spirit,
 Who only the Sins of his Sire doth inherit;
 With an unsteady mind, and Chymerical brain,
 Which his broken Fortune doth weakly sustain,
 He lodg'd i' th' City
 Like Alderman brave,
 Being fed up with faction to which he's a slave;
 He never durst fight, but once for his Whore,
 Which his feeble courage attempted no more.³²

Gadbury's argument was simple. It was Shaftesbury who had set the Presbyterians plotting, and Shaftesbury who, in a deliberate attempt to conceal their plotting, had created the purely fictitious Popish Plot. Other prominent Whigs were also involved in the plotting. Indeed, Gadbury himself tells us that in January 1680 he gave information before the king and Privy Council concerning what he had heard '... the renegade Whig', Sir Robert Peyton, '... say of a Fanatical or Presbyterian plot'.³³ It is highly likely that Gadbury's subsequent pardon was in part due to this information.

Like other Tories and the king himself, Gadbury came to equate the Whigs and Dissenters with republicanism. He believed those who supported Exclusion sought not only to exclude James from the throne, but to bring down the monarch - a view he would express a few years later, during the Tory ascendancy.³⁴

³² J. Gadbury, *A Ballad. The Third Part, To the same Tune* (1679).

³³ J Gadbury, *Merlinus Verax: Or, An Almanac For the Year of our Lord, 1687* (1687), p. 11.

³⁴ See below, pp. 62-64.

In setting out his views on the Popish Plot, the Whigs and Dissenters, Gadbury was placing himself in immediate danger. It seems he was aware of this and, therefore, never directly refuted the existence of the Plot in his almanacs published at the time of the Plot and Exclusion Crisis, and when he did express his views he did so anonymously in the guise of a *'Lady of Quality'*. However, Gadbury's disbelief in the Plot shines through in the pages of his almanacs and it seems clear that his contemporaries were well aware that the views expounded in works such as *A Ballad Upon The Popish Plot* were his. His part in undermining belief in the Plot was so well known that Gadbury soon found himself accused of being a Catholic and of complicity in the Popish Plot.

Gadbury's problems arose through Thomas Dangerfield, a young man who had been languishing for debt in Newgate Prison until, in the spring of 1679, he was bailed by and subsequently taken into the employ of one Elizabeth Cellier. She was a well-known Catholic midwife who had catered to the aristocracy and, at one time, even the young Duchess of York. She had also generally ministered to the needs of many Catholics incarcerated in London's prisons at the time of the Plot. Dangerfield's story of a Presbyterian plot in which Shaftesbury was implicated soon captivated not only Cellier but a number of others, including the Lady Powis, whose husband was one of the five Catholic peers imprisoned on the evidence of Oates and '... the renegade Whig' Sir Robert Peyton.

The enterprising Dangerfield fabricated papers which implicated the Earl of Shaftesbury. He took up lodgings with Roderick Mansell, a leading Whig, and placed the papers behind Mansell's bed; he then attempted to get a search-warrant, but the Privy Council refused him one. Undeterred, Dangerfield organised a bogus customs

search of Mansell's room where he 'found' the papers with the cry 'These Papers contain Treason'.³⁵ This earned him a hearing before the Privy Council. It soon transpired that Dangerfield had, in fact, been prosecuted twice by one Mr. D'Oiley of the Mint at the Old Bailey for '... uttering false Guineys'. He had been fined £50 for the first offence but had been pardoned and acquitted for the second. However, as the Council began to scrutinize Dangerfield's past, the full extent of his criminality became apparent and he soon found himself back in Newgate.³⁶ At this time, on 27 October, the Council gave orders for a search to be made of Mrs. Cellier's house where more papers outlining the alleged Presbyterian plot were discovered in Cellier's meal tub, which led to the whole intrigue becoming known as the Meal Tub Plot. Cellier was duly arrested. She was later to claim that the papers found in the meal tub merely gave details of the Presbyterian plot as recorded by Dangerfield upon her instructions, informing the reader in her *Malice Defeated* (1683) that Dangerfield,

... very often would bring me News of the great Designs of the Factions, and that they talked Treason publickly in the Coffee houses. I encouraged Him to keep them company, and learn what he could of their Practices, in order to discover them to His Majesty.³⁷

At this point Dangerfield seems to have lost his nerve and on 31 October he confessed that the whole Presbyterian plot had been nothing but a fraud, a sham, alleging it had been perpetrated by the Catholics as a smokescreen to cover up their own plotting. Dangerfield wrote in his own *Narrative*,

... it was an absolute falsehood, and only a Story contrived and consented to in general, by the Popish Party, and intended for a Mask, hoping whil'st the King, (if His Majesty should believe it) was preparing for the safety of His Sacred Person and the Government, against the pretended Conspiracy

³⁵ Gadbury, *Merlinus Verax*, p. 8. The story is also recounted, though free from Gadbury's embellishment, in Kenyon, *Popish Plot*, pp. 189-190.

³⁶ For details see Dangerfield, *Narrative*, p. 48.

³⁷ E. Cellier, *Malice Defeated: Or a Brief Relation of the Accusation and Deliverance of Elizabeth Cellier* (1680), p. 14.

of the Presbyterian Party, that they might have the more time to move on with their own Plot.³⁸

Dangerfield alleged that he had been offered £2,000 to kill the king and £500 to kill the Earl of Shaftesbury by the five Catholic peers in the Tower (Lords Arundell and Belasyse, the Earl of Powis, Viscount Stafford and Lord Petre, who Oates claimed had received commissions appointing them as officers to command a popish army and were to be ministers of state in a new popish government). He claimed that on two occasions he had gone to Shaftesbury's residences with a view to killing him. On the first he went armed with ' . . . a short French Dagger' given to him by Cellier. However, an opportune moment did not materialise for Dangerfield to carry out his task and, anyway, as Dangerfield himself tells us in his *Narrative*:

It pleased God to strike me with a sudden fear and horror of mind, insomuch that I was utterly disabled to have done him any mischief, and the apprehension of being discovered was so terrible to me that I was in Torment to be gone: so that I took my leave, and came home.

On the second occasion he tells us he ' . . . was seiz'd with the same trouble and confusion of mind that I had upon me the first time I came', and it was after this second abortive assassination attempt that he resolved not to undertake another.³⁹ Not only did Dangerfield implicate Elizabeth Cellier, but also the Lady Powis, Roger Palmer, Earl of Castlemaine, whom Kenyon describes as ' . . . an active and notorious Irish Catholic, who was extraordinarily lucky not to have been more deeply implicated in the plot from the beginning'⁴⁰ and, more interestingly for us, John Gadbury.

Dangerfield alleged that a meeting was proposed to allow 'Sir Robert Peyton, to treat with the Lord *Peterborough*, about his coming over: (for so they termed it)', and that Cellier had recommended using Gadbury's house as a venue ' . . . because he was

³⁸ Dangerfield, *Narrative*, pp. 33-34.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 37-39.

⁴⁰ Kenyon, *Popish Plot*, p. 190.

the person who had first proposed the matter to Sir *Robert Peyton*; and did from time to time use all his Endeavours to effect it'. Dangerfield informed Lord Peterborough of the proposed meeting and a date and time were arranged, whereupon he went to visit Gadbury at his house in Westminster to give him notice of the meeting. This he duly did and the two men embarked on a discourse during which, Dangerfield tells us:

I perceived his Countenance change; and looking very angrily on me, he told me, That he wondred I would offer to displease the Lords in the *Tower*, and especially the Lord *Castlemain*, (who was then out upon Bail) who designed to advance me in the World, and help me to make my Fortune.

I was not a little surpriz'd to hear such Words from him, and asked him, If he knew the ground of their displeasure?

He reply'd, Yes, yes, he did: And falling into a great passion, said,

'T was because I would not Kill the KING.

-I admire (said *Gadbury*) at your Ingratitude, that when you could not propose to your self any possible way of getting out of Prison, and were like to have continued there as long as you lived, (had not the Charity of Good people reliev'd ye) you should notwithstanding offer to refuse it: (Telling me withal, 'T was to engage me to make that Attempt that I was helpt out of Prison.) Nay, (said he) you might have done it with all the security in the World; for no manner of Hurt could have befallen you.

Why, said I, Mr. *Gadbury*, would not Death unavoidably have been the Consequence of it?

No, said he, not if you undertook it: For before you were Released out of the *Kings Bench* Prison, I had an exact account from Mrs. *Cellier*, what Year, Month, Week, Day, and Hour, you were born in; and the Countess of *Powis* ordered me to Calculate your Nativity.

(Now I do remember that when I was in the *Kings Bench*, I received by the Hands of Mrs. *Cellier's* Maid a Letter, in which her Mistriss desired me to give an exact account of the time of my Birth; which I did in my next Letter to her: But wondering what her meaning might be in desiring it, I read the Letter to the Maid, thinking that she might possibly be able to give me some light into it: But she pretended she knew nothing of the matter; so I sent her away.)

And what I have told ye, said he, appear'd to be so clear and demonstrable, that you were by all (meaning, I suppose, the Lords in the *Tower*) adjudged, A person design'd by Heaven for that bold and daring Enterprize.⁴¹

⁴¹ Dangerfield, *Narrative*, pp. 24-26.

Gadbury had also known of the plans to assassinate Shaftesbury. Dangerfield alleged,

. . . that after *Gadbury* had first Chastised me for not undertaking what the Lords in the *Tower* proposed to me, I found him to smile in another occasion, which made me believe that *Gadbury* knew of the Design to kill the Lord *Shaftesbury*.⁴²

In implicating Gadbury, Dangerfield by implication was calling into question Gadbury's religious beliefs. Indeed, he went further. He claimed that on returning from his meeting with Gadbury he told Cellier about their heated exchange ' . . . at which she fell into a great laughter, and said, *Mr. Gadbury was in his Heart a good Catholick*'.⁴³ Thus Dangerfield was openly accusing Gadbury of Catholicism.

On the basis of Dangerfield's evidence, Cellier was committed to Newgate, the Earl of Castlemaine to the Tower, and on 2 November 1679 Gadbury to the Gate-house. Cellier was tried for treason on 11 June 1680. During the trial, at which Gadbury appeared as a witness, Cellier alleged that Dangerfield had been indicted for burglary and produced a witness, one Ralph Briscoe, who testified that he remembered a Thomas Dangerfield who was burnt in the hand at the Old Bailey. Cellier also brought to the attention of the court the prosecution brought against Dangerfield by D'Oiley. She then produced a copy of Dangerfield's pardon and showed that it did not extend to all the crimes for which he had been convicted and where it appeared Dangerfield was outlawed for felony. The court commanded Dangerfield to produce his pardon and, when he did so, it was found that no mention was made of felony therefore rendering it defective and leaving the jury with no option but to disregard Dangerfield's evidence and to acquit Cellier.⁴⁴

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 26.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 26.

⁴⁴ 'The Trial of Elizabeth Cellier at the King's-Bench for High Treason: 32 Charles II A.D. 1680', in W. Cobbett and T.C. Howell, (eds), *Cobbett's Complete Collection of State Trials and Proceedings*

After having repaired the defects of his pardon, Dangerfield then appeared as a witness at the trial of the Earl of Castlemaine along with Titus Oates. Castlemaine took the upper hand from the start. He personally subjected Oates to a torrid cross-examination that left Oates reeling, and produced witnesses who quickly discredited him. It took the jury a matter of minutes to find a verdict of 'not guilty'.⁴⁵

Gadbury remained a prisoner in the Gate-house for a total of some fifteen weeks until, on 12 February 1680, he received a royal pardon. He denied all knowledge of the Catholic plot and firmly asserted his Protestantism. Whilst a prisoner in the Gate-house he constructed a defence entitled *Magna Veritas: Or, John Gadbury, (Student in Physick and Astrology) Not A Papist, But a True Protestant Of The Church of England* (1680). Gadbury began by denying that he had '*. . . either wilfully or knowingly . . . committed any Crime against his most Sacred Majesty, or the Government . . . Nay, I can most truly say, I have not erred against His Majesty, so much as in a thought*'. He went on,

*. . . neither have I ever done any thing against the Church of God, as it is established in England; of which Church I do, and ever did, and always shall acknowledg my Sovereign Lord King Charles the Second, to be the Supreme, and none else upon earth besides.*⁴⁶

Gadbury was quick to point out that he had formally acknowledged the king as head of the English Church and denied the authority of the pope by taking the Oaths of Allegiance and Supremacy, and was willing to do so again if called upon to do so by the authorities.⁴⁷ He also made a point of explicitly asserting his own Anglicanism and denying his alleged Catholicism, declaring:

for High Treason and Other Crimes and Misdemeanors from the Earliest Period to the Present Time (34 vols., 1809-28), vol. 3 pp. 1050-1052.

⁴⁵ Kenyon, *Popish Plot*, pp. 199-200.

⁴⁶ J. Gadbury, *Magna Veritas: Or, John Gadbury, (Student in Physick and Astrology) Not A Papist, But a True Protestant Of The Church of England* (1680), pp. 3-5.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

I was *born, baptized, and bred a Protestant of the Church of England, (and by Gods Grace afforded to me, I intend so to dye)* and although I have been falsely reputed a *Papist . . . I do most solemnly profess the contrary, having never in my whole life been a member of any other Church than that of the Protestant Church of England, as it is established (now) by Law.*

He continued,

I never yet had any acquaintance with any *Popish Priests*, as such, in all my days; and if any such have at any time happen'd to be in my company, it hath been beyond my knowledg. I never was at *Mass* in my life; nor did I ever *incline* to any *Popish Tenets or Principles, as they stand in opposition to the Principles of my Mother the Church of England.*

He was, however, prepared to acknowledge '*. . . that I have some acquaintance with persons of the Romish Religion, and so I have among all kind of Opinions, as any man of a popular practice cannot avoid*'.⁴⁸ Though he willingly admitted having Catholic acquaintances, he denied ever having met the Lords in the Tower or the Lady Powis, or ever having '*. . . any thing to do for them . . . either directly or indirectly*'.⁴⁹

An ideal opportunity for Gadbury to deny his Catholicism and complicity in the Meal Tub Plot came at the trial of Elizabeth Cellier, at which he appeared as a witness. When asked by Lord Chief Justice Scroggs what he knew of the Plot Gadbury replied 'I know nothing of it, neither one way nor another'. Asked if he knew of any attempt to change the government he replied,

I will tell your Lordship what I do know, if these gentlemen will not be too nimble for me. I have suffered a great deal of prejudice of late in relation to a plot, as if I had known of a plot; but God is my witness, I know of none, unless it were a plot to bring Sir Robert Peyton over to the King's interest. That plot I had some concern in, and had some knowledge of Mrs. Celliers concern in it.

Later he spoke of the Presbyterian plot in which Peyton was allegedly involved informing Scroggs that Cellier had told him '*. . . she had heard Mr. Dangerfield talk of*

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 6, 8.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 14.

a Nonconformists Plot that would off the Popish Plot'. Intrigued, Scroggs asked him '... how come you talk of a Nonconformist Plot', to which Gadbury replied 'It was only common discourse, as it was at coffee houses'.

Gadbury denied he had knowingly calculated Dangerfield's nativity to assess if he was capable of carrying out the papists' designs. Cellier, he asserted, had asked him to calculate the nativity of an unknown individual to find out if the 'native' could be trusted to collect her French merchant husband's debts. It was only after appearing before the king and Council he realised it had been for Dangerfield.

During the course of the trial Gadbury's religious faith was called into question by Scroggs, a reflection perhaps of how widespread the belief was at the time that Gadbury was a Catholic. On one particular occasion Scroggs explicitly asked Gadbury 'Are you a Protestant or a Papist?'. Gadbury replied 'A Protestant My Lord'. On hearing this response the irrepressible Scroggs addressed the court, telling those present that Gadbury '... talks as like a Papist as can be'.⁵⁰

An even more definitive refutation of Dangerfield's allegations came in Gadbury's almanac for 1682, in which he informed the reader:

I never had Discourse with *Dangerfield*, either about his Lordship, or concerning any Matter or Person else, as having never seen him but twice in my Life (before he appeared against me in the Council) and then but transiently neither.⁵¹

He went on to stress his support of monarchical government and his Anglicanism by distancing himself from the subversive papists and equally subversive Nonconformists, who had used the Popish Plot to shield their own subversion:

I honour Monarchy, as the very best of Governments, and most like unto that of Heaven. I naturally abhor the unquiet and contriving Jesuit, whether from Rome or Geneva. I hate the Papist in masquerade, and

⁵⁰ *Cobbett's . . . State Trials*, pp. 1043-1046.

⁵¹ Gadbury, 1682, sig. Av.

*nauseate the Jugling Nonconformist, that writes Narratives, and puts other Mens Names unto them. I do here again aver my self a Member of the Church of England as established by Law, and never was of any other in my Life, and am too old now to alter or change.*⁵²

So vehement was Gadbury's denial that it incurred the wrath of Dangerfield, who was prompted to write *Animadversions Upon Mr. John Gadbury's Almanack, Or Diary For The Year of our Lord 1682* (1682). Here Dangerfield informed the reader:

Meeting with Mr. *John Gadbury's Almanack*, or Diary, for the year 1682. Printed for the Company of *Stationers* (with more consideration of Gain than Loyalty) I could not but take notice of his scandalous Reflections, by them Printed, and by him, according to the Old Papistical Method of Lying, thrown upon my self: of which I take not so much regard under my private Circumstances, as under that publick Circumstance of being the Kings Evidence against him the said *Gadbury*, and several of his Fellow-Conspirators against the Life of His Majesty, and the peace of the Kingdom.⁵³

Dangerfield refuted Gadbury's claim that they had only met twice prior to the time he had given evidence against Gadbury before the Privy Council. He openly scoffed at Gadbury's story that he had calculated his nativity to see if he could be trusted to collect Cellier's husband's debts, and this was why Cellier had procured his release, asserting that her husband was 'Bankrupt'. He also took the opportunity to reaffirm Gadbury's Catholicism and his complicity in the Plot, concluding,

. . . it is so plain, that *You* did draw a *Scheme* of Ensurance for me, to *Kill the King*, and proffered me all the spangled Host of Heaven for Bail, if there be any person that will believe that *You* never did discourse with me about the *Popish Lords* in the Tower, that I never discoursed with *You* about the *Lord Castlemaine*; and in short, that *You*, being one Confederate, never saw me your Brother-confederate, *but twice transiently* in your life; that man is no rational Creature, till he have suck'd his reason from the *Pope's Toe*.

⁵² *Ibid.*, sig. A2.

⁵³ T. Dangerfield, *Animadversions Upon Mr. John Gadbury's Almanack, Or Diary For The Year of our Lord 1682* (1682), p. 1.

He told Gadbury 'You were privy to the design intended by the Papists against the Kings Life, and had made yourself an equal Conspirator with them'.⁵⁴

Despite Gadbury's royal pardon, his denials of knowledge or involvement in the Catholic plot, and his persistent assertions that he was an Anglican, the belief that he had been involved in the Popish Plot and was a Catholic was widespread. In the wake of Dangerfield's accusations Gadbury increasingly found himself the victim of vitriolic abuse on both a personal and professional level. As well as being the subject of a large number of pamphlets and broadsheets which asserted his Catholicism and complicity in the Plot, he also had the dubious honour of being burnt in effigy at the mass pope-burning processions organised by the Whigs which took place in the capital on 17 November 1679 and 1680 (the anniversary of Queen Elizabeth's accession). Gadbury himself gives us an insight into the treatment he received as a result of being implicated in the Plot, writing in 1684:

*If losers may have leave to speak, I have the least reason of any Man (in my Sphear) to be silent; as having been by perjur'd Varlets, falsely sworn into the horrid Popish Plot, whereby I sustain'd fifteen Weeks close Imprisonment: have heard myself bawl'd and sung about the Streets, for a Traytor; and been traduc'd in almost every villanous Pamphlet that then was printed; twice burnt with the Pope, and made the Byword of every little Miscreant, whose trade it was to bespatter his Majesty, his R.H. the Government, and all it's Innocent Subjects, and Friends.*⁵⁵

Some years after the Popish Plot furore, John Partridge used Gadbury's alleged Catholicism and complicity in the Meal Tub Plot as a weapon in the war of words which had broken out between them. At various points during the war Partridge would claim that it was the product of a breakdown in relations between the two in 1680 occasioned by Gadbury's Catholicism.⁵⁶

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 3-4.

⁵⁵ Gadbury, 1684, sig. Av.

⁵⁶ See below, pp. 126-128, 167, 200.

Interestingly, it would appear that it was in 1680 that Partridge first accused Gadbury of Catholicism and complicity in the Meal Tub Plot. In this year there appeared an anonymous piece entitled *Observations upon the Strange & Wonderful Prophecies Of Mr. John Gadbury* (1680). The work, written whilst Gadbury was still a prisoner in the Gate-house for alleged plotting, was almost certainly written by Partridge. It bore all the hallmarks and nuances of his style at this time. In it, Partridge condemned those ‘*Crafty Knaves*’ who used astrology ‘. . . as a Politick Engine to bolster up a Cheat, or colour their Mischievous Designs’. Looking back to the reign of James I he recounted the tale of Gresham ‘. . . a *Papist*, and small Pretender to the Mathematicks’ who had been ‘violently suspected’ to have had a hand in the Gunpowder Plot ‘. . . because he wrote so near the matter in his Almanack’. Looking back still further he observed how ‘Young *Nostradame*, to fulfill a certain Prophecy of his, That in such a Year, such a City should be burn’t, set it on Fire himself’.⁵⁷

Alluding to Gadbury’s frequent predictions in his almanac for 1680 that further plots were to break forth, Partridge implicitly argued Gadbury could be sure they would, for he was himself guilty of plotting against Charles II and his government along with his fellow conspirators, and attempting to conceal their designs with talk of a Presbyterian plot. Writing of his rival, Partridge declared:

*From such Star-gazing Vizards of State,
With their Popish Prognosticks, Defend us:
What they seem to Fore-tell they Create;
And they cause all the Ills they pretend us.*⁵⁸

⁵⁷ [J. Partridge], *Observations upon the Strange & Wonderful Prophecies Of Mr. John Gadbury* (1680), p. 1. The story of ‘Young Nostradame’ is recounted by Partridge in his work *Nebulo Anglicanus: Or, The First Part of the Black Life Of John Gadbury* (1693), when he argued Gadbury’s constant assurances that James would return to the throne were made on the grounds that he was plotting to restore him. See *Nebulo Anglicanus*, p. 10.

⁵⁸ Partridge, *Observations*, p. 2.

Surprisingly, Gadbury does not appear to have responded to *Observations*, in print at least, nor does Partridge appear to have followed it up. It would only be later, in 1687, that the breakdown in relations between the two would explode in a vitriolic war of words.

As Gadbury himself admitted, at the time of the Popish Plot and Exclusion Crisis he - like his fellow Tories - was on the defensive, quite literally fighting for his life. His one-time friend John Partridge, with whom by this time relations had broken down, was riding high, attacking Catholicism and openly expressing his belief in the Popish Plot to strengthen support for the Exclusion of James from the throne. Indeed, he was the only astrologer writing at the time to explicitly call for the Exclusion of James. It would not be long, however, before Partridge would be swallowing his pride as the political tide turned to favour the Tories.

The Tory Ascendancy, 1681-85

During the early 1680s, the period of the Tory ascendancy, monarchical authority in England was strengthened as Charles II followed increasingly authoritarian policies, stepped up the campaign against the Whigs and Dissenters and paved the way for the accession of his brother James to the English throne.

Following the dissolution of the Oxford Parliament in the spring of 1681, Charles, convinced that attack was the best form of defence, launched a fierce offensive against the Whigs, equating them with republicanism. Making full use of a criminal law inherently biased against the defendant, particularly for those charged with treason or felony, Charles set about harassing his Whig opponents. In July 1681 Edward

Fitzharris, who had earlier accused the Duke of York of conspiring to kill his brother, went to the scaffold, ironically with the last victim of the Popish Plot, Oliver Plunket. He was soon followed by the Whig propagandist ‘. . . the Protestant joiner’ Stephen College, found guilty on a charge of treason.

Charles was hunting bigger game during the summer of 1681. In July, the Earl of Shaftesbury was imprisoned in the Tower on a charge of treason. At his subsequent trial, the solidly Whig grand jury nominated to consider the charges produced a verdict of ‘ignoramus’ and Shaftesbury went free. By the autumn of the following year, however, Charles had installed his own supporters in the capital and, in November 1682, realising the precariousness of his situation, Shaftesbury fled to Holland where he died in exile only two months later.

The disclosure of the Rye House Plot in the summer of 1683 gave Charles the opportunity to get rid of the remaining leading Whigs. The plot entailed the assassination of the royal brothers at the home of Richard Rumbold, one of the conspirators, the Rye House near Hoddesdon, Hertfordshire, as they returned from the races at Newmarket. The plan was scuppered, however, when the royal party, which was expected to leave on 1 April, departed early owing to the outbreak of a fire in Newmarket on 22 March.

As the government investigated the plot more deeply it soon became apparent that during 1683 Charles’ illegitimate son James, Duke of Monmouth, had formulated plans for a co-ordinated rebellion in England and Scotland, the latter to be led by the Earl of Argyle. For their part in the Monmouth Cabal’s Insurrection, William Lord Russell and Algernon Sidney were executed, while the Earl of Essex died in suspicious

circumstances in the Tower; Monmouth himself managed to slip away to the Continent.

Charles sought to destroy not only his leading Whig opponents, but the foundations upon which Whiggism was built. As a result a fundamental restructuring of both county and municipal government ensued, the latter facilitated by the *quo warranto* campaign. Arguably the most important *quo warranto* action was that brought by the king against London in December 1681. It was a hard fought battle lasting until June 1683, but eventually the final judgement was for the Crown. At a stroke Charles now controlled the appointment of all London's major office holders. During the last years of his reign Charles committed his support to the Church of England which, in turn, threw its considerable weight behind him. It was not only the Whigs who incurred his wrath, but the Protestant Dissenters. Between 1681 and 1685 and especially after the disclosure of the Rye House Plot, the persecution of Protestant Dissent was carried out with renewed vigour, prompted largely by the king himself and the Privy Council, and facilitated by the stringent enforcement of the penal laws.

By 1684 Charles' policies appeared to be reaching fruition. The Whigs were a broken force and in retreat, and the Dissenters recoiling in the face of intensified persecution. Charles had a firm grip on the judiciary and municipal and county government, and his increasing financial security meant that he could dispense with the need for Parliament. The year 1684 marked something of a watershed as James, who had been steadily moving towards the centre of the political arena since his permanent return from exile two years earlier, began to take a more active role in the government. As a result of James' increasing influence, the first moves were made toward a more

overtly pro-Catholic policy as James set about attempting to improve the lot of his co-religionists.⁵⁹

How did the astrologers writing at the time respond to Charles' increasingly authoritarian policies, and the political and religious developments that went hand in hand with them?

As we saw in part one, whilst a great many of the astrologers were prepared to express their belief in the Popish Plot, hardly any were willing to commit themselves, in print, on the Exclusion of James from the throne. They chose instead to remain, for the most part, neutral and silent, a silence broken only by Gadbury and Partridge.⁶⁰ During the years of the Tory ascendancy, however, the almanacs became increasingly political as the compilers came off the fence and began to enunciate their political beliefs and, more particularly, their views on royal policies.

Not surprisingly, some astrologers seized the opportunity to express support for Charles, the monarchy and the Church of England. Between 1681 and 1685 these individuals were in ebullient mood.

The Tory Astrologers

During the Tory ascendancy Gadbury's lone Tory voice was joined by that of Henry Coley. This section focuses on their works.

Henry Coley was born at Oxford in 1633. After moving to London he became a tailor before taking up mathematics and astrology, eventually becoming William Lilly's

⁵⁹ For an account of the Tory ascendancy from differing perspectives see Hutton, *Charles II*, ch. 15, pp. 404-405; J. Miller, *James II: A Study in Kingship* (1989), ch. 8, pp. 111-119; *Popery*, ch. 9, pp. 189-195; *Charles II*, chs. 13-14, pp. 347-383.

⁶⁰ See above, pp. 26-27.

adopted son and amanuensis. His first almanac was published in 1672. Paradoxically, notwithstanding his close relationship with the man who had once been the doyen of the Parliamentary astrologers, Coley identified himself, during the years of the Tory ascendancy, as a supporter of monarchical government and of Charles' increasingly authoritarian policies, and as a staunch Anglican. In 1683 he equated monarchical government with freedom and liberty:

*I ask our Anti-Monarchists, How they
Could more oblige us, if they had the sway?
For let them fancy what they please, new things,
No Freedom's like to that proceeds from Kings.⁶¹*

In the same year he expressed his belief in the Tory doctrine of divine-right monarchy. He did so under the pseudonym of Nathaniel Culpepper ' . . . student of phisic and celestial science' and allegedly the friend and relative of the great Republican astrologer, Nicholas Culpeper, publishing the first almanac in this guise in 1680. In the 1683 edition of *Culpepper Revived*, Coley asserted that to rebel against your monarch was to rebel against God and warned rebellious spirits of the fate that awaited them:

**Kings are by GOD appointed for to sway
The Sword, and make Rebellious Men obey:
Who does oppose them, makes himself to be
Traitor to Heaven, and to Majesty:
May such for their Demerit, have reward,
The Laws just Doom, and be of God abhorr'd.⁶²**

A year earlier he had declared his firm belief in the doctrine of passive obedience, one of the central tenets of the Tories:

**Let us observe this gentle admonition, To be calm and obedient, and
indeavour to protect and promote the Power and Authority that has
hitherto preserved us in our just rights and liberties - otherwise we may
expect not only severe punishment and correction, but much horroure and
confusion.⁶³**

⁶¹ Coley, *N.C.*, 1683, sig. A2v.

⁶² Culpepper, 1683, sig. A2.

⁶³ Coley, *M.A.E.*, 1682, sig. D3.

Evidently Coley was willing to take his argument to his opponents, denying that monarchy equalled tyranny, and stressing that the 'rights and liberties' of the subject were better protected by a legitimate monarch than by the Republicans and the mob. The obedience of the English subject to the monarch underpinned the existing social and political order, and was a fundamental prerequisite for the preservation of the social and political status quo.

Coley also strongly supported the Church of England. He shared the Tories' distrust of religious Nonconformity and in particular, Protestant Dissent. Like them he felt that the Dissenters were seeking to subvert the Church and State, and posed a real threat to the established government and ancient constitution, using 'religious controversies' as '. . . a cloak to conceal their occultist designs'. In his edition of *Merlini Anglici Ephemeris* for 1683 he wrote:

God bless us from such a reformation that must be advanc'd in the ruins of a well-settled Government and Constitution. For those persons that take delight to broach new Opinions, to introduce strange Innovations, (though under the most specious pretences) cannot wish well to the Church of *England*, or the Government thereof, as 'tis now established.⁶⁴

For a man who believed, as Coley did, that '*Unity and Uniformity, Necessity and Order, Strength and Beauty*' were the ingredients of the Church of England, the Dissenters were anathema.⁶⁵ Coley welcomed the strengthening of the Church of England's authority and the intensified persecution of Protestant Dissent that went hand in hand with it. In 1682 he celebrated '. . . the great promotion of *Church affairs*', and how '. . . those persons that pretend themselves the most zealous (whether *Presbyterians*, collected Churches, as *Anabaptists, Quakers, &c.*) appear the most dissatisfied and uneasy about this time'. Two years later he predicted that '. . .

⁶⁴ Coley, *M.A.E.*, 1683, sig. B6.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, sig. E5.

many pretending religion (whether in reality or for some self-ends) shall be disturbed, molested and many of them imprisoned, fined or otherwise afflicted'.⁶⁶

Like many of the Tories Coley was firmly anti-Catholic. During 1682-3 there occurred, in very close succession, three conjunctions of Saturn and Jupiter in Leo, or a 'triple Conjunction' (examined in more detail later in this chapter). Writing of this 'triple Conjunction' in his edition of *Nuncius Coelestis* for 1680, Coley explained that in 1682-3,

. . . there happen three Conjunctions of *Saturn* and *Jupiter* in *Leo*, the Ascendant of *Rome*, which undoubtedly will have great force thereon, though I cannot say to its total subversion. However, before these Superiors have performed their Period in this *Triplicity*, which will be about the year 1801. there will assuredly be great Alterations, if not a final *Catastrophe* of the Sovereignty and Dominion thereof.⁶⁷

Coley was quick to stress the conspiratorial nature of the subversive Catholics in another series of almanacs which he had a hand in compiling; those that bore the name of Lancelot Coelson.⁶⁸ The monthly verses of Lancelot Coelson's almanac for 1683, implored the reader to:

Forget not Noble *Godfry's* Tragedy,
Who this Month fell by *Popish Cruelty*.

That of November evoked the memory of the infamous Gunpowder Plot, expressing the wish that,

Heaven still preserve our Gracious Sovereigns Life,
From *Popish Flatteries*, and a Jesuits Knife.⁶⁹

Initially, at least, Coley seemed to have believed in the existence of the Popish Plot. It was not long, however, before, like many Tories, he was implying that whilst there

⁶⁶ Coley, *M.A.E.*, 1682, sig. B3v, B3; *M.A.E.*, 1684, sig. B5v.

⁶⁷ Coley, *N.C.*, 1680, sig. C5.

⁶⁸ There is strong evidence that Coley assisted Coelson with the text of his almanacs. They exhibit the style and nuances of Coley's works and express the ideas and beliefs inherent within them, often verbatim.

⁶⁹ Coelson, 1683, sig. B6, B7.

had been a Jesuitically inspired plot to subvert the Church and State in England, the search for the plotters was getting out of hand. Unscrupulous adventurers were finding conspirators everywhere, often pointing the finger of guilt at the innocent. He warned these perjured witnesses that they would meet their own doom in due course:

We are Eagle-ey'd to spy our Neighbours fault,
On this unlucky leg all mankind halt;
Opinion with Opinion is all at odds,
About their Wafer, Wafer Paper Gods;
The Chamber cutpurse doth the Tory doom,
But all these Judges must to Judgment come.⁷⁰

Like the Tories, Coley was more concerned with the subversive plotting of the Whigs and Dissenters. Aware of the mounting opposition to Charles engendered by royal policies on the eve of the Rye House Plot and planned insurrection of the Monmouth Cabal, Coley predicted that 'Sudden and unexpected Accusations' were to be '. . . brought against some person or persons of note' and that '. . . others being conscious of Guilt' would '. . . abscond or lye dormant'.⁷¹

Coley, like Charles, viewed the Rye House Plot and planned insurrection of the Monmouth Cabal as part of an integrated conspiracy. In his edition of *Merlini Anglici Ephemeris* for 1684 he celebrated God's deliverance of the king and English nation from the hands of the conspirators. In the same edition he warned the radical Whigs and Republicans of the folly of conspiring against Charles and at the same time, expounded his belief in the doctrine of passive obedience:

And for such persons who endeavour to promote Rebellion, and subvert the Government, though they may be honoured, and for a time admired by their own Factious Party, yet they must assuredly expect to be justly repaid in the end, not only with scorn and contempt, but as certainly lose their lives too - All men know 'tis not fit the Subjects should prescribe

⁷⁰ Coelson, 1682, sig. B8.

⁷¹ Coley, *M.A.E.*, 1682, sig. D5.

*laws to their Prince, and in vain doth the little Shrub contend with the lofty Cedar for Supremecy.*⁷²

Conspiring against Charles and the government was futile as,

. . . his *Majesty of Great Britain*, shall (in spite of Envy) remain safe, and conquer his greatest Enemies; also countermand their Plots and Conspiracies to the admiration of all *Europe*, and the great satisfaction of all his Loving and Loyal hearted subjects.⁷³

Unlike Charles' opponents, Coley welcomed the developments that went hand in hand with the aggrandisement of monarchical power during these years. Writing in one of his almanacs for 1683 he alluded in favourable terms to the return of James from exile in Scotland, and his return to the centre of the political arena, and to the *quo warranto* campaign against municipal independence, predicting

. . . that such as have been perplexed with great Fears and Vexations, may now begin to see some happy Issue of their present troubles, such Persons who have lost their Honour and places of Trust, now restored, and such Cities and Corperations within this Kingdom formerly under many doubts, are now this Spring happily reduced.⁷⁴

Coley clearly viewed the years of the Tory ascendancy in a positive light and felt that under the auspices of a powerful and benevolent monarch, England was in better shape than it had been for some time. His almanacs were inherently optimistic: ' . . . the Heavens seem to smile on *England*, and contribute much to its Grandeur and Magnificence' he wrote in his edition of *Nuncius Uranius* for 1685. In the same year he told the reader how 'The Peoples Hearts in general seem more cheerful than of late years', and that the people were

. . . coming over to a *solid Reformation*, and a *free Submission* to their *Superiors*; whence naturally follows much quietness and peace to themselves----then a general Unity, and Conformity to the Government as 'tis now Established.⁷⁵

⁷² Coley, *M.A.E.*, 1684, sig. A2-A2v.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, sig. A8v.

⁷⁴ Coelson, 1683, sig. C3v.

⁷⁵ Coley, *N.U.*, 1685, sig. A7, A4, C3-C3v.

It would be an understatement to say that John Gadbury viewed the years of the Tory ascendancy in a positive light. His Toryism was far more militant than that of Henry Coley. As we saw in the previous section, during the years of the Popish Plot and Exclusion Crisis Gadbury had identified himself as a resolute Tory, and was forced on to the defensive.⁷⁶ After the dissolution of the Oxford Parliament in the spring of 1681, however, the political tide began to turn as Charles launched an offensive that sent the Whigs and Dissenters scurrying for cover. Between 1681 and 1685 the Tories had the upper hand and Gadbury was exultant. His almanacs published during the Tory ascendancy were suffused with a new optimism and confidence based, it would seem, upon the belief that James' accession was now irresistible. In his edition for 1683 he proclaimed:

Noble Souls! You that have been long toss'd upon the *Waves* of Trouble, &c. and have born up bravely against the *Rage* and *Madness* of the *Multitude*, in these dangerous *Plotting* Times, and still adher'd to your *Allegiance* and *Duty*: take *Courage*, I say, the time is coming wherein your *Constancy*, *Faith* and *Services*, will be both *valued* and *rewarded*.⁷⁷

A year later he urged Charles to uphold his brother's hereditary right against Republican Exclusionists:

Stand there, *Great CHARLES!* in your *successive might*
Grow greater still, as you *maintain the Right*
 Of your *Bless'd Father's Crown!* supported still
 By *Peerless York*, against all *Rebel's Will*.
 Who strive these to divide, would tumble down,
 Not *YORK* alone, but *Charles himself*, and's *Crown*.⁷⁸

Gadbury obviously felt the time was right to go on the offensive and he did so with a vengeance. In his almanac for 1684 he launched an attack upon the Trimmers who

⁷⁶ See above, pp. 37-53.

⁷⁷ Gadbury, 1683, sig. A5.

⁷⁸ Gadbury, 1684, sig. A2v.

combined the Tories' respect for the royal prerogative with the Whigs' concern for religion and property, predicting how when the:

Hypocritical-Trimmer is removed, and put into an incapacity of *injuring* the *Government*, and it's *Friends*, *Room* will be made for the *honest Loyal Persons* to exercise that DUTY they were *born* with, and do *delight* to *practice* and *pay* toward their *Sovereign*.⁷⁹

He also predicted the downfall of the Exclusionist Whigs, whom he still clearly equated with republicanism, referring to them at one point as 'Antimonarchical *Clubbers*',

. . . sundry *Rich* and *Great Persons* will fall into *Oblivion*, and be *disgraced* and *cozened* of their *Country* or *Neighbours*, losing their *Credit* among them: Their *Equals* or *Persons* of the same *Level* with them, will be *advanced* into *Honours*, or *Places of Trust*, &c. This most exactly points out the late *List* or *Roll* of *Associators*, who are *all* hereby admonished to *make their Peace* with His *Majesty*, and *reconcile* themselves to the *Government*, both of *Church* and *State* in time, before it be too late, lest *Justice* overtake them, and *requite* their *Traiterous Contrivences*.

And that you may be sure it is *they* that are meant by this *Aphorism*: Let it be remembered, that not *many Years* since, some of *them* boasted that their *Party* consisted of *two thirds* of the *richest* and *best Men* of the *Nation*; and that the WORTHY MEN (as they *modestly* call'd *themselves*), were more than *double* the *Number* to the MEN WORTHY: (as they with a malicious distinction had *character'd* the *Friends* to the *King* and *Government*.) All that I can say to *them*, is, - Let *them* be *wise* in *time*.⁸⁰

Gadbury's language here shows his close familiarity with the political developments taking place around him. One of the most potentially damning pieces of evidence at Shaftesbury's trial was the plan for an anti-Catholic and Exclusionist association which had been confiscated from his house just prior to it. Two years later the plans for an insurrection in London to pull down the Stuart regime, made by West's cabal after the failure of the Rye House Plot, were referred to in an anonymous letter to Sir Robert Townsend of Coventry as the 'Association'.⁸¹

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, sig. B6.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, sig. B7, C3v.

⁸¹ See Greaves, *Secrets*, pp. 37-38.

In referring to the Whigs as ‘Associators’, Gadbury hoped to highlight the plotting, conspiratorial and subversive nature of the more radical Whigs, and tarnish all with the same brush. In referring to the Whigs as ‘WORTHY MEN’ he was alluding to the list of MPs compiled by Shaftesbury, just prior to the first Exclusion Parliament of 1679, which indicated those individuals whose support he could count on over the issue of Exclusion, thus enabling him to organise and manage the new House of Commons efficiently.⁸²

In his almanacs for 1684 and 1685, Gadbury used the conspirators’ fate, and the fate of Shaftesbury who, as he informed the reader, met his death ‘. . . in a timerous *wilful* Banishment’, as a warning to future conspirators. He predicted:

That the *Enamies* to *Government* will *wane* and *fall* to nothing; and if they continue *such*, and *unquiet*, they will lose the *dignity* and *happiness* they enjoy; meet with fatal *Contradictions* to all their *designs*, tedious *Imprisonments* . . . and at last *exile* from their *Native Countries*, *Friends* and *Families*, and possibly to *end* their *daies*.⁸³

As well as triumphantly predicting the downfall of the king’s leading opponents, Gadbury championed the policies instrumental in their downfall. He expressed, for example, his warm support for the *quo warranto* campaign:

If *Monarchs* by their *Favours*, *Cities* make;
And *plotting* *Citizens* those *CHARTERS* break,
They justly *lose* such *Power*, when *dare* deny;
Their *Sovereign’s* *Laws*, and’s *Pleasure* *disobey*.
'Tis prov’d a *Legal Maxime* (Just and strong,)
Cities may *err*, but *Kings* can *do no Wrong*.⁸⁴

Gadbury delighted equally in the downfall of the Dissenters and fully approved of the vigorous persecution they now suffered. In 1683 he wrote somewhat gloatingly ‘. . . our *giddy* *Dissenters* . . . are not *half so obstinate* as they were wont’.⁸⁵

⁸² J. R. Jones, ‘Shaftesbury’s “worthy men”: a Whig view of the parliament of 1679’, *B.I.H.R.*, XXX (1957), pp. 232-41.

⁸³ Gadbury, 1685, sig. C6v; 1684, sig. C3v-C4.

⁸⁴ Gadbury, 1684, sig. A3.

Gadbury felt the time was also ripe to inveigh against the perjured Popish Plot witnesses, openly denouncing the leading Plot witnesses for the first time. In his almanac for 1683, he warned them that their ‘. . . crafty Contrivances will be *discover’d to thy shame*’. In the same edition he boldly declared that ‘*Perjured Plotters every good man hates*’ and asked ‘Can any man of sence believe, that *Persons* under a suspicious character, ought to be esteem’d *good Witnesses* against *one sort of Men*, and down-right *Perjur’d wretches* against *another*?’⁸⁶

Gadbury’s triumphalism did not go unchallenged. There were fresh allegations of his Catholicism in 1684 with the publication of the anonymous work *Cometomantia. A Discourse Of Comets*.⁸⁷ Gadbury was only too happy to reply, and did so in *Cardines Coeli*, published in the same year. In it he denied his Catholicism once again, and seized the opportunity to deny his complicity in the Popish Plot, adding a new twist by declaring ‘I affirm it for a Truth, that more than 20 years before my late unfortunate troubles which befell me *Anno* 1679. I Printed the cause of them in my *Doctrine of Nativities*, from my own *Geniture*’. Vindicating himself from the ridicule he had faced from Charles II upon his appearance before the king and Privy Council in 1680 he went on ‘I must confess, I could not foresee the *particular prejudice* I suffer’d: I

⁸⁵ Trigge, 1683, sig. A8. Although this series of almanacs bore the name of Thomas Trigge, it is clear from internal evidence that they were compiled by Gadbury. For further evidence that Gadbury was the author, see Capp, *Astrology*, p. 335. Yet more evidence of Gadbury’s authorship exists in the form of a list, compiled by Gadbury, in which he lists ‘What Almanacks I formerly wrote for the Company’. Among the eleven almanacs he admitted to compiling were those of Trigge. The list can be found on the flyleaf of a collection of almanacs housed in the Bodleian library, ‘Rawl. Alm. 81’.

⁸⁶ Gadbury, 1683, sig. A7, B3v, B5.

⁸⁷ [J. Edwards/H. More], *Cometomantia. A Discourse Of Comets*, p. 252. Both Patrick Curry and the *D.N.B.* suggest the author was John Edwards. Gadbury, however, tells us that contemporaries believed the author was the influential philosopher and divine Henry More, see Curry, *Prophecy*, pp. 140, 195; *D.N.B.*, Edwards; Gadbury, *A Reply*, sig. A3v.

might as well have pretended to presage the *particular Prison* I was to be confined to'.⁸⁸

As we have seen, 1684 marked something of a watershed as Charles' policies appeared to have reached fruition and James took up a more pivotal role.⁸⁹ Gadbury's almanac for 1685 (written during the summer of 1684) exuded its author's delight at the current state of affairs in England. Its style was triumphant. Gadbury was conscious that this almanac was intrinsically different from those he had published in previous years, and explained:

The Reader must not expect from *me* a continuance of the *Stile* and *Genious* of my last *six years* vein of *Predictions*. An *honest Mariner* should briskly *pull the ropes* when *Storms threaten*; but when *they abate*, and the *Ship* is got safe into *Harbour*, his *Fears and Pains* should then *lessen together* - The *Stars* that were our *Enemies* are now become our *Friends*, and we dread no *moral malignant Influence* from them.⁹⁰

In this almanac Gadbury rejoiced openly at the downfall of the Popish Plot and its leading witnesses.

When *Bedloe, Oates, and Dugdale*, rul'd the Roost,
By th' help of *Prance, Smith, Dangerfield*; it cost
Most *Loyal Men*, they peck'd at, *all* they had,
Besides *Confinement*, being *vassals* made.
But now those VARLETS are quite tumbled *down*.
The LAW gives *Prince and People* (too) their *own*.⁹¹

He revelled in the fate of the leading witnesses, writing of Oates that 'The *Salamanca Seer* hath Discover'd, and Talk'd himself *out of his Liberty*; and taken up his *Rest* in a *Prison*', and of the others:

Dangerfield, like a *Duck*, is *Div'd* into the *Dark*, even beyond all present industry to discover....

⁸⁸ J. Gadbury, *Cardines Coeli: Or, An Appeal To the Learned and Experienced Observers of Sublunars* (1684), pp. 19-20.

⁸⁹ See above, pp. 55-56.

⁹⁰ Gadbury, 1685, sig. A4.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, sig. A3.

Dugdale found a Prison too hot for him, and wanting a Lord or Master to swear against for purchase of his Liberty, hath broke Stone-Walls, and is run for it.

And all the rest of that *Tribular Race*, the *underling-Evidencers*, and those that put in for the *Trade, Hangers-on, &c.* who *sculk and sneak* about in *Corners, secret Alleys, &c.* in *Disguises*, and seldom appear but by *Moon-light*: may sit still and *study* what excellent *Fruit* the *Tree of Perjury* yields, and fit themselves by *Repentance* for a *better World*.⁹²

Reading Gadbury's almanac for 1685 one can almost feel that a great weight had been lifted from his shoulders and that the clouds under which he had lain for so long were now lifting. Indeed, he used this analogy himself in praising the state of affairs on the eve of James' accession, triumphantly proclaiming:

If thou beest *Loyal*, Rejoice with Mee! The *Black and Dismal Clouds* which of *late* surrounded us, are *Dissipated*; and the *Angry Genius* of 1678 &c. is *retired*, or with its insatiate violence *wearied*, and (I hope for ever) *laid to sleep*. Our *Church and State* grows *Tranquile*, and *flourishes* again: The *English Monarchy*, (but lately bearded, not to say despised) hath recovered its *Pristine Glory*; and looks like *Heaven* it self *Awful* and *Majestick*: The *Republican Interest* runs *Retrograde*: *Exclusion-mongers* are wholly *out of fashion*: and even the *Trimming-Dissenter* is unwilling to have it believ'd he ever design'd to *Rob the Heir of his Birth-right*; and would make himself *Loyal* again by a *Kiss*.⁹³

The Whig Astrologers during the Tory Ascendancy

Not all the astrologers writing during the years of the Tory ascendancy shared Coley's and Gadbury's enthusiasm for Charles, the policies he pursued, and the aggrandisement of royal power that these years witnessed.

As we saw in part one of this chapter, the Whigs were driven by the desire to protect the rights and liberties of England's populace from popery and arbitrary rule. This desire was fuelled by vehement anti-Catholicism and, more particularly, the strong

⁹² *Ibid.*, sig. Av-A2.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, sig. Av.

identification of Catholic monarchs with arbitrary and tyrannical rule, and lay behind their calls for Exclusion.⁹⁴ Whilst most Tories shared the anti-Catholicism endemic in seventeenth-century English society, for many it was less compelling than support for the cause of monarchy and hatred of Protestant Nonconformity. For the Whigs anti-Catholicism was their credo.

This was certainly true of the Whig astrologers. In typical Whig fashion, John Partridge's calls for Exclusion were based upon his fear and hatred of Catholicism, and how he used anti-Catholicism as a weapon in the battle to exclude James. Whilst his fellow Whig astrologers proved unwilling to show the audacity of their outspoken colleague and explicitly declare their support for the Exclusion of James, they did share his vehement anti-Catholicism, and displayed a willingness to declare it openly. Its most potent manifestation came in the millennial speculation prevalent during the early 1680s, in which the Whig astrologers (and indeed some of their Tory counterparts) indulged.

Conditions were ripe for a fresh bout of heightened millennial interest during the early 1680s. Many saw in the rivalry between Tory and Whig, the avaricious expansionism of Louis XIV and the siege of Vienna by the Turks in 1683, the signs spoken of in the scripture and medieval eschatology which heralded the end of the world. Astrological corroboration was close at hand and could be found in the 'triple Conjunction' of 1682-3. This powerful astrological event was rendered even more significant because it was 'attended' by two comets, the first in December 1680 and the second in August 1682. Drawing heavily upon the teachings of Rabbi Elias, that the world was destined to survive for six thousand years to be followed by a seventh

⁹⁴ See above, p. 29.

‘Sabbatical’ era and Johannes Alsted’s ‘Speculum Mundi’ a large table found within his work *Thesaurus Chronologiae* (1624) in which he synchronised the seven ages of Elias with the seven revolutions of Saturn and Jupiter, the astrologers observed that the first of the conjunctions, in October 1682 in Leo, a regal sign, took place during the seventh or ‘Sabbatical’ return of the two superior planets into the ‘fiery Trigon’ or ‘Triplcity’ and therefore, ‘. . . hath some secret Mystery of *Sabbatism* in it’.⁹⁵

The Whig astrologer and mathematician John Holwell made his first contribution to the millennial frenzy with the publication in 1682 of his *Catastrophe Mundi*, which presented the reader with a harrowing image of the immediate future. In it he drew heavily upon the prophecies of Spineus (after one of whose works Holwell named the piece), Tycho Brahe, Sibyl Tiburtina and William Lilly - notably the hieroglyphics published in his *Monarchy Or No Monarchy* (1651). A pivotal role was given to the comet of 1680 and the ‘triple Conjunction’. In it Holwell predicted that:

. . . the *Christians* shall be at Wars with one another, and shall give encouragement to the *Grand Turk* to invade *Europe*, and he shall pass through all *Germany*, and *France* and *Italy*, and part of *Spain*, almost to the ruining of all *Christendom*.⁹⁶

Holwell drove home his nightmarish vision with the publication of *An Appendix To Holwell’s Catastrophe Mundi* (1683), in which he outlined in more detail the path to be taken by the marauding Turks and published the nativities of the Turkish emperor, the ill-fated ‘Emperor of *Germany*’ and the French king. His work *The Mystery of*

⁹⁵ This view was shared by Whig and Tory astrologers alike, as well as those with no political affiliation e.g. see Coley, *M.A.E.*, 1683, sig. A7v-B3v; C. Nesse, *An Astrological And Theological Discourse Upon this present Great Conjunction* (1682), pp. 25-26; J. Holwell, *Catastrophe Mundi: Or, Europe’s many Mutations Until the Year, 1701* (1682), p. 51.

⁹⁶ Holwell, *Catastrophe Mundi*, p. 17.

Ambras Merlins (1683) went as far as to predict a Turkish invasion of Cornwall, though he reassured his reader that it would be successfully repulsed.⁹⁷

At the core of these works was Holwell's own millennial vision. In his *Catastrophe Mundi* he predicted that in 1699 (the sum of the year 1666, often deemed as the year of the fall of the anti-Christ, and thirty three, the age at which Christ died) there would appear a ' . . . great Conqueror . . . who shall all of a sudden give Peace to all Europe'.⁹⁸

Inextricably linked with Holwell's millennial speculation was a passionate anti-Catholicism. Writing of the year 1700, he predicted the destruction of Rome ' . . . and the downfall of the Seat of *Peter*', to be followed by the 'Conversion of *Turks* and *Jews*'. Special odium was reserved for the tyrannical French monarch Louis XIV whose avaricious expansionism and the wars it had engendered had encouraged the Turks to invade Europe. In his *Appendix*, Holwell predicted that if the French king were to live ' . . . to see but two years' which was doubtful, he would witness his own subjects rebel against his tyranny and oppression, and in a desperate bid for liberation invite the Turks into France.⁹⁹

It did not take long for opposition to Holwell's sensationalist works to emerge. In 1683 there appeared an anonymous attack upon Holwell's *Catastrophe Mundi* under the same title, in which it was claimed Holwell had misinterpreted the Hieroglyphics published by Lilly. The work was, however, as sensationalist as that which it sought to undermine, predicting wars and catastrophes leading to the rise of ' . . . a great

⁹⁷ J. Holwell, *An Appendix To Holwel's Catastrophe Mundi* (1683), pp. 21-29; *The Mystery of Ambras Merlins* (1683), p. 4.

⁹⁸ Holwell, *Catastrophe Mundi*, p. 90.

⁹⁹ Holwell, *Catastrophe Mundi*, p. 91; *An Appendix*, p. 26-29.

Conqueror' and a final age of peace and in the midst of this confusion, the downfall of Catholicism.¹⁰⁰

Arguably the fiercest attack upon Holwell's *Catastrophe Mundi* and his *Appendix* to it emanated from John Merrifield 'Student in *Astrology, Physick, and the Heavenly and Sublime Sciences*'. In 1684 (by which time the Turkish threat had been vanquished) he published his *Catastasis Mundi* in which he sought to allay the fears engendered by 'Holwel's monstrous Falsehoods and Errours' and prove 'That the *Turks* will be defeated in all their Attempts against *CHRISTENDOM, &c.* notwithstanding Mr. *Holwel's* Menaces to the contrary in his *Catastrophe Mundi*, and his *Appendix* thereunto'. Both works, Merrifield asserted, had been '... judged not really from *Astrology, but rather from fancy*'.¹⁰¹ His first task was to rectify the erroneous nativities of the French king and the Turkish and German emperors which he did, basing those of Louis and the 'Grand Seignior' upon nativities previously published by Gadbury. That of the German emperor Merrifield boasted '*I had of my very good Friend Mr. John Gadbury's own Hand*'.¹⁰² He then set about proving that,

... never yet did Christendom under any Conjunction of *Saturn* and *Jupiter* in *Leo*, suffer Detriment, but came off Victoriously over their Enemies, neither can either Turk, Tartar, or any other Enemy to Christendom, under this Conjunction, prevail against them.¹⁰³

Holwell's interpretation of the effects of the comet of 1680 were also called into question before Merrifield concluded by '*Confuting most of Mr. Holwels Judgments*

¹⁰⁰ [H.Coley], *Catastrophe Mundi: Or, Merlin Reviv'd* (1683). There is a strong suggestion that the work was written by Coley. The author was obviously closely associated with Lilly, and we know that Coley became Lilly's adopted son and amanuensis. Furthermore, the discussion on 'Hieroglyphicks' found on pages 62-70 of the work bears a remarkable similarity to that which appears in Coley's edition of *M.A.J.*, for 1704, sig. C7-C8, in which he attacks Holwell's work once more.

¹⁰¹ J. Merrifield, *Catastasis Mundi: Or The True State, Vigour, and growing Greatness Of Christendom, Under the Influences of the Last tripple Conjunction of Saturn and Jupiter in Leo, the late Comet, &c.* (1684), t.p., sig. A3v.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, pp. 3-18, sig. A4.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, p. 22.

on the State of the years from 1683. unto the year 1700. mentioned in his Catastrophe Mundi'.¹⁰⁴

Anti-Catholicism and millenarianism also went hand in hand in the almanacs and astrological works of the Whig astrologer and physician Richard Kirby, and nowhere more so than in his work *Vates Astrologicus* (1683). Like Partridge, Kirby asserted the inherently cruel and bloodthirsty nature of the Catholic faith, accusing its practitioners of the wholesale persecution of Protestants. He also asserted the conspiratorial nature of the Catholics. *Vates Astrologicus* is suffused with talk of plots and, like Partridge, he ascribed a great deal of importance to the planet Saturn ' . . . who is naturally evil and corrupt, Self ended, Covetous, and Malitious, one who hath been an underground worker this many years, in contriveing [sic] damned Plots, to the ruin and subversion of Nations'.¹⁰⁵

The work certainly bore a striking resemblance to Holwell's *Catastrophe Mundi*. Drawing on the same millennial sources Kirby predicted the death of the king of France, the appearance in 1699 of ' . . . a great Conquerour . . . who suddenly, like *Augustus*, gives Peace unto the whole Earth', to be followed by ' . . . the destruction of *Rome*, with the downfall of the Pope'.¹⁰⁶ Such was the similarity between the two works, particularly the astrological judgements of the years 1683-1701, that Holwell accused Kirby of plagiarism, asking sarcastically in his *Appendix*: ' . . . what Mr. Kirby would have done for *Matter* to finish his *Astrological Prophet*, had it not been for my *Catastrophe Mundi*, I know not, for all the material *Matter* in my *Judgement of Years* he hath very fairly transcribed'.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 28-33, 33-35.

¹⁰⁵ R. Kirby, *Vates Astrologicus: Or, England's Astrological Prophet* (1683), p. 18.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 35, 45.

¹⁰⁷ Holwell, *An Appendix*, sig. A3.

During these years the Whig astrologers thus made plain their opposition to Charles' increasingly authoritarian and pro-Catholic policies. They viewed the aggrandisement of royal power with considerable suspicion. John Holwell implied that Charles was behaving in an increasingly autocratic manner, eroding the rights and liberties of his subjects. In *Catastrophe Mundi* he continually asserted that kings and their servants, magistrates and JPs would, through their tyrannical rule, provoke their subjects to rebel against them. Not surprisingly the pages of his Whig rival Richard Kirby's work *Vates Astrologicus* echoed these sentiments.¹⁰⁸

One of the most potent manifestations of the aggrandisement of royal power came with Charles' successful attempt to restructure county and municipal government, the latter through the *quo warranto* campaign. In attacking the tyranny of magistrates and JPs both Holwell and Kirby made their opposition to this process clear. Both, moreover, were willing to voice their opposition to the *quo warranto* campaign a little more explicitly. Writing of the 'triple Conjunction' in his *Catastrophe Mundi*, Holwell predicted that all those towns '... that had their original, or Corporations', granted between 1226-1245, 1285-1305 and 1344-1364, or '... about those times', would be '... undone and impoverished'. A little later in his predictions for 1683 he warned that places 'under' Gemini (which included London)

... shall find great alterations both in matter of Trade, much affliction to the common People in general . . . all things goes cross with them, an Insurrection is feared, the Magistrates grow Tyranical and prove unjust in most of their Actions, the People grow weary of their Burdens, and are inclinable to Rebellion.¹⁰⁹

Another Whig astrologer Daniel Woodward similarly expressed his opposition to the *quo warranto* campaign, particularly the hard fought action waged against

¹⁰⁸ See for example, Holwell, *Catastrophe Mundi*, p. 62; Kirby, *Vates Astrologicus*, p. 28.

¹⁰⁹ Holwell, *Catastrophe Mundi*, pp. 66, 74.

London's charter. In his almanacs written after Charles' victory Woodward continually predicted the outbreak of civil unrest in the capital. In the edition for 1685 he wrote of London, '... the Stars threaten the City with Troubles and Calamities of several kinds', including '... strange disturbances, horrid Murders, Fires,' and '... great Uproars of the common People'.¹¹⁰ Did he really believe that this unrest was to ensue as a manifestation of Londoners' opposition to the city's new charter, or was he simply scaremongering in order to vent his own frustration and disappointment at the king's victory?

The Whig astrologers were also unequivocally opposed to the intensified persecution of Protestant Dissent: a corollary of the aggrandisement of Charles' power and that of the Church of England that went hand in hand with it. None was more outspoken than William Salmon. Salmon, a prolific author and translator of medical texts, published his first almanac in 1684. Prior to this, he had been asked by the Nonconformist publisher, Langley Curtis, if he would be willing to write a spurious edition of Henry Care's infamous Whig periodical *A Weekly Pacquet of Advice from Rome*, (Care and Curtis by this stage having fallen out). Rather cheekily Salmon agreed, and on 25 August 1682 there appeared the first edition of *The Fifth Volume Of The Pacquets Of Advice From Rome*. (Note the subtle title change).

Like Care and Curtis, Salmon was a Protestant Nonconformist. Nevertheless, the arguments against the persecution of Protestant Dissent he put forward in his *Pacquets*, whilst derived from his own experience, reflected those of his fellow Whig astrologers. Salmon argued that in its vigorous persecution of Protestant Nonconformity, the Church of England was creating divisions between English

¹¹⁰ Woodward, 1685, sig. C5.

Protestants, which the subversive Catholics were waiting to exploit in their attempts to bring in popery. Furthermore, its persecution of Dissent mirrored the former persecution of Protestantism by the papists, and the Church was therefore acting on popish principles. ‘What a sad thing is it’, he wrote,

. . . that we should use the same Weapons to cut one another’s throats, which our Adversaries the *Papists* have always used to cut ours. And therefore I could wish they would timely forbear their *Anathama’s*, *Excommunications*, *Violence*, *Force*, *imprisoning of innocent persons*, *and spoiling of their goods*, or otherwise ruining of them, as they have already done; and daily do, least the common Enemy, who is waigting [sic] all Opertunities, should enter at those Breaches, and retaliate the same things upon you, which you can never hope to escape, should Popery be ever erected upon our Ruin.¹¹¹

Daniel Woodward was equally concerned about divisions within the Protestant ranks, and made an impassioned call for Protestant unity in his almanac for 1685. ‘*How happy would this Nation be if we were all of one way of Worship, viz. All Protestants to live and die of the Reformed Religion, and in the communion of the Church of England*’. The potential for unity was certainly there, Woodward remarked: ‘*I have read several Books of the Presbyterians, Independants, and Anabaptists, (in which three there is but little difference unless in some few matters)*’.¹¹²

Although Woodward was opposed to any toleration for Catholics, he clearly desired the toleration of Protestant Dissent by the Anglican Church. In the same edition Woodward looked forward to an accommodation between the Church of England and Protestant Dissenters, writing,

. . . many of our Dissenters seem less scrupulous, and the Church-men less severe. God grant it may continue, and that *England* and the sweet Doctrine of the Church may ever flourish. Then a fig for the *Pope* and all *Jesuitical Counsels*; let them go for a New-years-Gift.¹¹³

¹¹¹ Salmon, *The Fifth Volume Of The Pacquets Of Advice From Rome*, 36 (27 April, 1683), p. 282.

¹¹² Woodward, 1685, sig. A2.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, sig. A6.

Naturally, the Whig astrologers also inveighed against their rivals the Tories. Perhaps the most powerful attack against them, and one which succinctly summed up the Whig outlook at the time, was made by Salmon in his *Pacquet*.

Earlier editions of the work had been divided into two autonomous sections. The first, 'The History of Popery', traced the history of the papacy and the Reformation. The second section, entitled 'The Courant', was the vehicle for Salmon's own unique brand of political polemic. So extreme were the views it expressed that, as Salmon explained, eventually it

. . . was discontinued, because it suited not with the times; people of different affections and such as were pre-engaged to the Popish party took exception at it: some great persons forbid it. And prudence and particular interests removed it.¹¹⁴

It is no surprise that 'The Courant' attracted the odium of the Tory authorities. For much of its life it took the form of a dialogue centred around two characters, the first a Catholic masquerading as an Anglican, and champion of the Tories, the second a Protestant Nonconformist and supporter of the Whigs. Through these characters and the dialogue between them, Salmon launched a scathing attack on the Church of England and the Tories, particularly the leading Tory polemicist and publisher Roger L'Estrange and his Tory newspaper and mouthpiece *The Observer*.

Using the battle between the Whig and Tory press as a microcosmical embodiment of the wider political debate, Salmon argued that the Tories in their scepticism about the Popish Plot, belief in a Presbyterian plot and support for the Church of England, were acting in the interests of popery to such an extent that they could be considered to be papists. At one point in the dialogue Salmon's Protestant character asked:

Do not I think rightly that all those are *Papists* who would willingly clear the *Papists* of the late *Plot*, and lay it upon the neck of the *Protestants*,

¹¹⁴ Salmon, *Pacquets*, 'The Preface' (25 Aug, 1682), p. 8.

and do daily Write, Print, and belch out all manner of lyes and scandalls against the *reformed Religion*.

This was certainly the case with L'Estrange who, he explained,

. . . has been a long time endeavouring to turn upon the *Protestant* party, by his many late Pamphlets, and outrageous Clamors against several *worthy Patriots*, against *Presbyterians, Dissenters, &c.* as if he was their very *Pensioner* and Actually engaged in *Popish Service*.¹¹⁵

Later, the Protestant character articulated the views of Salmon and the Whigs when he gave his definition of a Tory. Upon being asked by the Catholic in masquerade 'Whom is it you call Tory? hah', he replied:

Be not so huffy, and I'll tell you: I Call Him that is a kind of a civil Robber and Murtherer, and that under the Vizer of *Loyalty*, and *Religion*, and the Laws, designs the ruine of the *Protestant Religion*, the bringing in of *Popery*, the overturning of the *English-men's Liberties*, and to bring in an Arbitrary and Tyrannical Government, with the *Inquisition*, and all the trumpery of *Popery*, which has been so long banished [in] this Nation, a *Tory* and no other.¹¹⁶

Salmon believed that the developments taking place during the years of the Tory ascendancy favoured the Catholics to such an extent that thousands of Catholics masquerading as Protestants would soon be able to drop their vizards and openly declare their Catholicism. Addressing the Catholic in masquerade during the king's *quo warranto* action against London and the vigorous persecution of Protestant Nonconformity, Salmon's Protestant declared:

The days your own, you ride top and top gallant, and Sail with a fair Wind, we shall see your Vizors shortly drop off; and we should know you better, could you but get the *Cities Charter*, and hand up all the *Nonconformists*; you might then rule the world as you please.¹¹⁷

Although the Whig astrologers were, initially at least, prepared to express opposition to developments such as the *quo warranto* proceedings and the harsh

¹¹⁵ Salmon, *Pacquets*, 4 (15 Sept, 1682), p. 31.

¹¹⁶ Salmon, *Pacquets*, 8 (13 Oct, 1682), p. 63.

¹¹⁷ Salmon, *Pacquets*, 3 (8 Sept, 1682), p. 23.

persecution of Protestant Dissent, they were far too circumspect to express direct opposition to their initiator, Charles II. Instead, they blamed the king's supporters, the Tories, and the Anglican bishops. Salmon, for example, was quick to blame the intensified persecution of Protestant Nonconformity on Charles' bishops and not the king himself.¹¹⁸ Daniel Woodward consciously sought to distance himself from the republicanism many of his contemporaries may have ascribed to him, given his sympathetic attitude towards Protestant Nonconformity. Writing of the 'Affairs' of January 1685, he expounded the view that '. . . they'l be good, and I hope advantageous to his Majesty of Great *Britain*, not only to his Life and Health, but also to his long and prosperous Reign'.¹¹⁹ Despite his support for Charles, however, disillusionment shines through. Thus in the same edition he wrote:

We live in a strange conspiring Age; 'tis now become the Glory of one Man to be the downfall of another: However *England* be silent, learn to serve God better, and honour your King, happier days will come, and that before many Years.¹²⁰

The 'happier days' which Woodward longed for must have seemed a long way off to the Whig astrologers as they began to fall victim to Charles' campaign against Whiggism. Thus in 1683 John Holwell paid the price for making clear his opposition to the aggrandisement of royal power and to the king's leading servants when he was convicted of seditious libel.¹²¹ Nowhere, however, is the plight of the Whig astrologers more poignantly reflected than in the fate of the group's most prominent member, John Partridge.

During the years of the Tory ascendancy, Partridge could only watch helplessly as the Whigs and Dissenters were crushed and the foundations upon which he had

¹¹⁸ Salmon, *Pacquets*, 37 (4 May, 1683), pp. 293-294.

¹¹⁹ Woodward, 1685, sig. A5.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, sig. B.

¹²¹ See Capp, *Astrology*, p. 94.

constructed his political and religious aspirations were gradually undermined. During the early years of the Tory ascendancy Partridge remained resilient; his almanacs of 1681 and 1682 were vehemently anti-Catholic, still expounding his belief in the Popish Plot and the need for Exclusion. 1683 saw him launch an invective against a woman he described as a ‘Petticoat-Ambassador’. It is likely that the woman in question was none other than Louise Renée de Penancoët de Kéroulle, better known from 1673 as the Duchess of Portsmouth, who had eclipsed Nell Gwynn as Charles’ favourite mistress. At the time of the Tory ascendancy she was still the most prominent royal mistress.¹²²

Louise unquestionably exerted a powerful influence over Charles, using it to resurrect the political career of Sunderland, and to orchestrate the permanent return of James from exile in Scotland in 1682, from which point she became one of his closest allies. Partridge clearly felt, quite rightly, that she was consciously using her influence to promote the Catholic interest in England, and he viewed her as a thoroughly dangerous individual, warning of her influence in his almanacs for 1683 and 1684.¹²³ Partridge’s edition for 1684 also saw him express opposition to the *quo warranto* campaign and dismay at the loss of London’s charter.¹²⁴

In his edition for 1683 Partridge had written ‘*Hope* makes all our Labours supportable, all our Difficulties conquerable, and is our constant Companion from our Cradles to our Graves’.¹²⁵ By the time his almanac for 1685 was published, however, hope was a commodity in short supply. Like many of his fellow Whigs, Partridge was demoralised and frightened, and his almanac reflects this. He believed the threat posed

¹²² Partridge, 1683, sig. B3.

¹²³ Partridge, 1683, sig. B3; 1684, sig. B7.

¹²⁴ Partridge, 1684, sig. B2.

¹²⁵ Partridge, 1683, sig. B7.

by the Catholics was as grave as ever; ‘. . . they will never give over’, he warned and whilst:

The hurry of the World seems to be allayed in publick, that is, things are not so much talked of, as they were a while ago; but still the old leaven remain, and that will again ferment; for true Malice knows no bounds, nor can terminate no where but in the Grave.¹²⁶

His almanac for 1685 exuded pessimism and despair.

Oh, How I wish that morning Sun would rise.
Our Night with Groans, our days with Fear possest,
When will the God of *Jacob* give us rest?
When will our shapeless Fear, our Pain, our Night,
Vanish and vail to the approaching Light.
When comes the Day, that will remove our Sorrow,
And Night give way, and bid the Sun good morrow?¹²⁷

What did Partridge mean by the ‘morning sun’? Was he desperate enough to be talking of rebellion? Only a change to the succession could provide a remedy, and now that Exclusion was a lost cause that could mean only the death or violent removal of James.

Partridge realised he had brought his precarious position upon himself by his open support for the Exclusion of James and his belief in the Popish Plot, and by his attacks upon the Tories. He warned others against meddling with public affairs, observing:

The restless Soul, uneasie, seeks relief,
His Lust deceives him, passion plays the thief;
Both steal his time, and both presage his fall;
Bad man, worse heart, but Conscience worst of all.
Thus the supposed wise, for slipry self
By grave advice, prudently damns himself.

‘Learn but this Lesson, and you’d soon confess’, he wrote, ‘The quiet soul doth the whole World possess’.¹²⁸

Personal as well as political reversals had helped to break Partridge’s spirit. In 1683 it was alleged that he had offered to take part in an assassination attempt on the royal

¹²⁶ Partridge, 1685, sig. B3.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, sig. A4.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, sig. A5v, A7v.

brothers, and that he had predicted the imminent death of James, Duke of York, and victory for the people. These accusations had been adumbrated a year earlier when he had been prosecuted, along with a number of other radical authors, booksellers and publishers, including Henry Care, Richard Baldwin and Jane Curtis, in a government crackdown against seditious literature. The accusations were made by the leader of the Rye House plotters, Robert West, and were based upon what West claimed to have been told by one of his fellow conspirators, Richard Goodenough. Goodenough's pedigree as a political radical was unquestionable. He was, like many other Rye House conspirators, a member of the Whig Green Ribbon Club and in 1682 he had been prosecuted for taking part in the rioting which had accompanied the hotly disputed shrieval elections of that year in London.¹²⁹

It has been seen how the Rye House conspirators planned to attack the royal party as it passed the home of Richard Rumbold at the Rye in Hoddesdon, Hertfordshire on its return to London from Newmarket.¹³⁰ The attack was to have been carried out by a group of some forty or more assassins known amongst the conspirators as 'Hannibal and his boys' as Rumbold, who was to have led them, had lost an eye.

Goodenough, Rumbold and Ferguson had the task of recruiting the assassins. West claimed that on one occasion Goodenough told him he had attempted to recruit John Partridge, reporting

. . . that he had spoken to one *Partridge* a *Shoemaker* and *Almanack-Maker* in *Covent Garden* to Act in this Assassination, and that the said *Partridge* offered to joyn in it if it were to be done in Town; but was not able to Ride and therefore would not joyn in the Attempt out of *London*: And further said that the said *Partridge* had erected several schemes and thereby found the Duke of *York* would scarce out-live *March* or *April*, and

¹²⁹ See Greaves, *Secrets*, p. 97; *D.N.B.*, Richard Goodenough.

¹³⁰ See above, p. 54.

that the King was under an ill Direction too, and the People would be Victorious.¹³¹

If West's testimony is to be believed, Partridge had declined Goodenough's invitation to take part in the Rye House Plot, citing his inability to ride as an excuse, but had agreed to participate in an assassination attempt upon the royal brothers providing that it took place in London. In so doing he had tacitly given his support to the Rye House plotters. Furthermore, he had actively encouraged the plotters by informing them that the heavens foretold the imminent death of James, and victory for the people and was, therefore, guilty of sedition. The very fact that West spoke of Partridge in his testimony shows that Partridge's opposition to Charles and to the accession of James was well known amongst the radical Whigs and that it is likely he knew many of them personally and was mixing in radical circles.

There can be little doubt that, for Partridge, victory for the people meant the sweeping away of Charles and his government, and of the threat of popish tyranny that emanated from the likelihood of his brother's accession. But what did he envisage as taking their place? Did he feel that the rights and liberties of his fellow countrymen and women would be better protected by a limited monarchy or a republic? As we will see later, Gadbury and his fellow Tory astrologer George Parker (who was yet to enter the astrological arena) shared very similar ideas on what Partridge meant, and would use West's testimony in their quarrels with him.

In the years between the disclosure of the Rye House Plot and the accession of James, the Whig astrologers' resistance to Charles evaporated as he turned on the heat. They could only watch helplessly as the spectre of popery and absolutism drew even

¹³¹ T. Sprat, *Copies Of The Informations And Original Papers Relating to the Proof of The Horrid Conspiracy Against the Late King, His Present Majesty, And The Government: As it was Order'd to be Published by His late Majesty* (1685), pp. 62-63.

closer, with the irresistibility of James' accession now more painfully clear. They did not have to wait long for their fears to be realised.

CHAPTER TWO

THE ASTROLOGERS AND JAMES II

Just before noon on 6 February 1685 Charles II died, ironically helped on his way by the attempts of the royal surgeons to save his life, and after having been received into the Catholic faith. His Catholic brother James, Duke of York, was proclaimed King James II.

James was driven by one overwhelming desire, a desire which shaped his short but tumultuous reign and would eventually lead to his downfall. He wanted to give English Catholics parity with their Protestant counterparts by allowing them to practise their religion without persecution, and to play a full part in the political life of the nation. In order to accomplish this, the penal laws, Test Acts and Corporation Act would have to be repealed. For the repeal to have any legal weight it would have to be carried out by Parliament and, more pertinently, as the 1678 Test excluded Catholics from Parliament, by a Parliament comprised solely of Protestants. James genuinely believed that once this had been done, the floodgates would open and a torrent of conversions to the Catholic faith would ensue without the need for state coercion.

One thing stood in the way, the deep-seated hatred and distrust of Catholicism endemic throughout the country, which he completely misunderstood and underestimated. It was this hatred which lay behind his failure to persuade firstly the Anglicans, and secondly the Dissenters to allow even limited toleration for his fellow Catholics.

James' attempts to persuade the Protestants to acquiesce in his plans rekindled the fear of popery, while his attempts to bypass Parliament and proceed using his prerogative powers of suspending and dispensing revived old fears of absolutism.

Gradually almost the whole political nation, Whig and Tory, Anglican and Dissenter turned against him.

The fears and anxieties engendered by James' policies were heightened when in June 1688 Queen Mary gave birth to a son, James Francis Edward, the Prince of Wales. This threatened an unlimited period of Catholic rule. Faced with this prospect, on 30 June seven leading Protestants representing Tory and Whig opinion wrote to William pledging their support if he were to invade England. This he duly did, landing poignantly on 5 November, and only a month later James fled to the Continent.¹

How did the astrologers feel about the accession of James II and his subsequent attempts to give his Catholic subjects equality with their Protestant counterparts?

Looming large over any attempt to answer this question is the fact that one of the first actions of the new king was to ban political speculation in almanacs or, to be more precise, speculation which attacked or sought to undermine James and his government, as part of a wider attempt to prevent the publication of subversive and seditious material.² As the astrologers tell us, this was facilitated by the banning of astrological 'Observations', 'Prognostications', 'Predictions' and 'Judgements' in their almanacs, so often the vehicles of political polemic. This in itself poses a number of questions: how did the astrologers feel about and react to this censorship, and what effects did it have upon their almanacs?

Reactions to the new controls on almanacs differed greatly according to the compiler's attitude toward James. Those who supported him were more than willing to comply with his wishes. One such was the Essex astrologer, mathematician and

¹ For a good recent account of the reign of James II see Miller, *James II*. Also useful are Miller, *Popery*; D. Ogg, *England in the Reigns of James II and William III* (1963). For a unique interpretation of the potential success of James' campaign to pack Parliament see J. R. Jones, *The Revolution of 1688 in England* (1972).

² See Capp, *Astrology*, p. 50.

physician William Andrews. In his almanac for 1688, Andrews informed the reader that ‘. . . as for large *Astrological Predictions* as heretofore, they are not *now*, nor *any more* to be expected from me, unless Authority will give me leave’. A year earlier, in 1687, Andrews had alluded to the censorship he now found himself under. He recounted how it had such a dramatic effect upon the style of his almanac published the previous year, that some people had concluded it had not been written by him at all:

*My first Appearance in Publick in this manner, was in the year 1655, and I have Annually continued writing accordingly ever since, to this present year 1687. And for the many years past, did pretty copiously deliver some Astrological Judgements every year----(as may be well remembered) until the last year 1686. When we had notice given that, it was the Will and Pleasure of our Superiours, that we should forbear----This I mention here, because some people as I have heard, concluded, that the last years Almanack which came forth in my Name, was none of mine; because it somewhat differed from my former and usuall way of Writing, &c.*³

Another astrologer more than willing to comply with James’ wishes was John Gadbury. In his edition for 1686 Gadbury informed readers that they would find no predictions within in compliance with the wishes of his ‘Superiours’. The following year he advised the reader ‘. . . we must not stretch our Bark beyond the length of our Cable. Let us therefore be modest, and keep within our legal Limits’.⁴

The Whig astrologers, however, were opposed to the new censorship which James and his government had enforced upon them. This is hardly surprising, for it was a direct attack upon their freedom of expression, and it rendered them professionally and politically impotent. Paradoxically, the censorship they opposed made it very difficult to express this opposition, but express it they did.

³ Andrews, 1688, sig. A2; 1687, sig. A2.

⁴ Gadbury, 1686, sig. Av; 1687, sig. C3.

The Whig astrologer and physician John Tanner was one who voiced his dissatisfaction. What was the point, he asked, in studying the planetary motions and positions, if one could not discuss their influence and effects?

*Thou maist their motions showe, and their Aspects,
But silently pass over their effects.
Thou maist find out (in truth it's no small task)
When Sol puts on pale Luna's shady mask;
And when the Moon doth wear a Buety-Spot,
But what succedeth it, pray tell them not.
Superior powers see that thou don't offend;
With what thou maist (in safety) please thy Friend.⁵*

Superficially, Daniel Woodward appeared happy to comply with the wishes of the authorities. In 1686 he wrote,

I had composed Astrological observations and predictions of its general Affairs, but when they come to be licensed would not pass the Test: (no, nor any Astrological Prognostications touching the affairs of the Kingdom.) If it be the pleasure of Authority thus to obliterate what's drawn from the Genuine Rules of Art, who can be against it? I am not factiously inclin'd; neither am I willing to offend my superiours in the least, but most freely submitting to what the Wisdom of Authority deems most requisite, esteeming my self superlatively happy of being an Obedient Subject in the Reign of so just and gracious a Sovereign.⁶

His use of language, his sycophantic deference to his superiors, which bordered on sarcasm, suggest anger and frustration at censorship. (Evidently Woodward had initially failed to comply with censorship and, as a consequence, had some material removed from his 1686 edition). Like Tanner, he obviously felt that it rendered him professionally impotent, indeed, almost redundant. In 1687 he informed the 'Courtious Reader':

I do intend another Year, to present you with other things, both Physical and Mathematical, that the world may see I do not spend my time like a Drone; and possibly the places of the planets; together with a Table of Houses for the latitude of *London*, making this a compleat *Ephemeris*, that it may be serviceable to all my Country-men, especially to those that

⁵ Tanner, 1687, sig. C2.

⁶ Woodward, 1686, sig. A2.

understand the Horory part of Astrology, since we are not admitted to publish Astrological Prognostications.⁷

Whilst these astrologers were opposed to the imposition of censorship, they all eventually complied, albeit reluctantly, with it. Only one individual chose not to do so, John Harrison. As Harrison explained, he had devised an ingenious way around it by couching his discussions on domestic affairs in terms of foreign affairs:

I was impartial, that you might not say
That Love or Fear did sway me either way,
But I with all things else must times obey.
What I inserted, others out did raze,
I might not meddle with our native place:
What here I look for's put beyond the Seas,
I must others, myself I may not please:
Yet Country-men I do present you here
A useful servant for this present Year.⁸

The new censorship had a marked impact upon both the substance and style of the almanacs produced in the reign of James II. Upon opening an almanac the first change the reader would have noticed was the removal of any mention of the Popish Plot and its sequels from the chronological tables of events which were a traditional feature of almanacs of the period. It had become commonplace for compilers who believed in the Plot to denote the anniversary of its discovery within the chronologies before going on to give the dates of the trials, and subsequent executions, of the 'plotters'. Inextricably linked with belief in the existence of the Plot was the belief that Sir Edmund Berry Godfrey had been murdered by Catholics. The murder of Godfrey was also commemorated in the chronologies. In almanacs from 1686, however, all references to the Plot and the murder of Godfrey simply disappeared, as if the Plot had never existed. References blaming the Great Fire of 1666 on the Catholics, or noting the Gunpowder Plot of 1605 also vanished from the chronologies.

⁷ Woodward, 1687, sig. A2.

⁸ Harrison, 1689, sig. Av.

Censorship also had a marked impact upon the 'Monthly Observations' found with the calendar in almost all almanacs. In William Andrews' edition for 1686 there are no astrological prognostications of any kind to be found in his 'Monthly Observations', simply detailed accounts of the planetary motions and positions for each month. Indeed, in his almanac for the following year his 'Monthly Observations' were retitled 'Planetary Transactions and Observations'. The 1689 edition saw the re-emergence of astrological predictions and, more importantly, political polemic in the retitled section. Similarly, in the edition of his *Merlinus Anglicus Junior* for 1686 Henry Coley replaced the 'Monthly Observations' with 'Useful Contemplations'. Here the reader encountered a verse 'To the Buyers yearly of ALMANACKS and PROGNOSTICATIONS', a treatise on 'The virtues of Astrology', a discussion extolling, 'The Excellency of Astronomy' and an explanation of 'The Rain-Bow'. Gradually, however, as James' reign progressed political speculation crept back into Coley's discussions of each month. John Gadbury replaced his 'Monthly Observations' with a detailed chronology of events in England and the Continent. As a Tory, Gadbury felt free to make his chronology highly partisan, using it to praise James, denounce the Popish Plot and vilify the leading Plot witnesses.

In some almanacs the 'Monthly Observations' were replaced by advice and information of a purely utilitarian nature. Thus, in the almanacs of Daniel Woodward 'Monthly Observations' were replaced by tips on husbandry or 'physick'. In Henry Coley's series entitled *Nuncius Sydereus* 'Monthly Observations' were replaced by 'Geographical Descriptions' in which he described the most prominent geographical features of the world.

Censorship thus had a significant effect upon the almanacs written and published during James' reign. They had a completely different feel to almanacs printed prior and subsequently to them. The efforts of the compilers to avoid controversy are almost tangible.

The imposition of tighter censorship shows that James was fully aware of the propaganda value of the almanac. He realised it was a potentially powerful propaganda weapon and sought to harness this power. Those astrologers who wished to praise him and his government were allowed to do so. James also gave his blessing to the publication of the 'Catholic almanacs', the first of which appeared in 1686. These almanacs were published by Henry Hills, 'Printer to the Kings most Excellent Majesty for his Household and Chappel'. Hills was appointed the king's official printer in January 1686 after having converted to the Roman Catholic faith. Only two years earlier he had published a vehemently anti-Catholic almanac entitled *A Starry Lecture*, wherein he predicted the downfall of Rome and the papacy.⁹

The 'Catholic almanacs' fulfilled two primary functions. First, as the name implies, they served as almanacs for James' Catholic subjects. *The Catholick Almanack For the Year 1687* provided the reader with 'The Holy-days of Obligation', a list of popes and an exposition of 'The principal Feasts and Holy-Days' of the Catholic Church. Information of this nature could be found within all the 'Catholic almanacs'.¹⁰ Second, they formed part of a wider propaganda campaign mounted by James and the Catholics, which in turn formed part of a wider missionary effort. They have, however, all too often been neglected as such by historians.

⁹ Hills, 1684.

¹⁰ *The Catholick Almanack*, 1687, sig. A2-A2v, A3-A5, C-Dv.

Throughout James' reign books, pamphlets, broadsheets, tracts and devotional manuals were published (many of them by Hills), explaining the main elements of Catholic doctrine, vindicating James' co-religionists, and containing the type of information found within the 'Catholic almanacs'.¹¹

The first of the new Catholic almanacs was *Kalendarium Catholicum For the Year 1686*. The work made a direct appeal to Anglican and Tory opinion by stressing the loyalty of the Catholics to the royalist cause during the Civil War. It presented the reader with '*A Catalogue of the Lords, Knights and Gentlemen (of the Catholick Religion) that were Slain in the late warr, in Defence of their KING and Country*'. The work also listed '*The Names of such Catholicks whose Estates (both Real and Personal) were sold, in persuance of an Act made by the Rump, July 16. 1652 for their pretended Delinquency; that is, for adhering to their King*'. It went on to name '*Other Catholicks, whose Estates were sold by an Additional Rump-Act made August 4. 1652*', and yet '*More Catholicks, whose Estates were sold by another Rump-Act made November 18. 1652*'.¹²

In an overtly pro-Catholic chronological table, the work sought to rehabilitate Mary Queen of Scots who had been 'Publickly Arraigned, and Ignominiously put to death after 18. years imprisonment in *Fotheringham* castle'. It also denounced the Gunpowder Plot '*. . . suspected to be politically contrived by Cicil, but known to be acted by a few desperados of a Religion that detests such Treasons, though ambition, and discontent made them Traytors*'. The reader was told that it had been only eight years since 'The Discovery of Otes's Popish Plot'. The inference here is clear. Those who had been executed as a result of their alleged complicity in the Plot were listed to

¹¹ See Miller, *Popery*, p. 244.

¹² *Kalendarium Catholicum*, 1686, sig. B5-Cv.

emphasise the scale of the carnage Oates and his fellow perjured witnesses had left in their wake. The work also denoted the discovery of the Rye House Conspiracy ‘. . . a Horrid Phanatical Plot’, which of course illustrated that Protestants were as capable of plotting against their monarchs as their Catholic counterparts. It closed with the rebellions and subsequent executions of Argyle and Monmouth and their ill-fated followers.¹³

Arguably the most polemical of the ‘Catholic almanacs’ was *Calendarium Catholicum Or, An Almanack For the Year of our Lord, 1689*. Within its pages can be found ‘A Brief Chronology of some Memorable matters that have happened since the Reformation’. This provided the reader with an overtly pro-Catholic interpretation of events since the Reformation. Once again Mary Queen of Scots was exalted, the Gunpowder plotters disowned, and the Popish Plot denounced as nothing but a sham perpetrated by Oates.¹⁴

The compiler of *Calendarium Catholicum* naturally made the most of the downfall of Titus Oates and the other leading Plot witnesses. When James came to the throne Oates was awaiting his fate after having been indicted on two counts of perjury appertaining to the evidence he had given against William Ireland in 1678. By mid-May he had been found guilty on both counts and was sentenced to horrific punishments. He was fined 1,000 marks on each count, and then subjected to a series of public floggings before being imprisoned for life. Furthermore, every year on 24 April, 9, 10 and 11 August and 2 September he was to stand in the pillory for an hour at Tyburn, Westminster Hall, Charing Cross, Temple Bar and the Royal Exchange respectively.

¹³ *Ibid.*, sig. C2v-C4.

¹⁴ *Calendarium Catholicum*, 1689, sig. A2v-A4.

Ironically Oates had received as torrid a time from Lord Chief Justice Jeffries as had his victims at the hands of Lord Chief Justice Scroggs.

James also instituted a thorough search for Thomas Dangerfield who had gone into hiding in the summer of 1684. In March 1685 he was arrested. On 30 May he was found guilty of seditious libel and sentenced to the same flogging as Oates. He survived, but as John Kenyon has recounted 'On his way back from Tyburn by coach he got involved in an altercation with one Robert Francis, a Tory barrister in Hatton Garden. Francis struck him on the face with his cane, and by a fluke, it pierced his brain and killed him'.¹⁵

In June, Miles Prance 'The last remaining perjurer' was fined £100, given three sessions in the pillory and ordered to be whipped. (The king would later remit the latter part of the sentence). The Chronological Table of *Calendarium Catholicum* revelled in the downfall of the perjured Plot witnesses, declaring triumphantly that it was four years 'Since *Titus Oats* was Tryed, and by the Oaths of more than forty witnesses, Convicted of Perjury in Two eminent Points of the Popish Plot, and thereupon received the Sentence of the Court'. Four years 'Since *Thomas Dangerfield*, (Oats's second, in the pretended Popish Plot,) was Sentenced to be (and was) Whip'd and Pillor'd for his notorious and horrid Perjuries in relation thereunto', and three years 'Since *Miles Prance* a Silver-Smith, having been Indicted, and Convicted of wilful Perjury, in relation to the Death of Sir *Edmundbury Godfrey*, and to the Popish Plot, Pleaded Guilty thereunto; and was Sentenced to the Pillory, &c, for the same'.¹⁶

The work also alluded, in more detail than its forebear of 1686, to the activities of the West and Monmouth cabals, which were treated as one integrated conspiracy. It

¹⁵ Kenyon, *Popish Plot*, p. 258.

¹⁶ *Calendarium Catholicum*, 1689, sig. A5-A6.

names the members of both cabals who had been executed for their part in the ‘. . . said horrid Conspiracy’ including ‘*William Lord Russel, Colonel Algernon Sydney, Captain Walcot, John Rouse, and William Hone*’. It also alluded to ‘. . . that unfortunate Lord, *Arthur, Earl of Essex*’ who, we are told, in order ‘. . . to prevent the Justice of the Nation, desperately cut his own throat in the *Tower of London*’. Not surprisingly James’ victories over Monmouth and Argyle in 1685 were also celebrated. A special note was made of Monmouth’s execution.¹⁷

In September 1685 James reopened diplomatic relations with Rome. The following February Roger Palmer, the Earl of Castlemaine who, like Gadbury, had been implicated in the Popish Plot by Dangerfield, left to become James’ ambassador in Rome, the first since the Reformation. In November a papal envoy in the shape of Ferdinando d’Adda arrived in England. *Calendarium Catholicum* welcomed both these developments.¹⁸ It also celebrated the ‘Auspicious’ birth of the Prince of Wales, an event which the reader was told had occasioned ‘. . . the rejoicing of all Loyal People in *Great Britain and Ireland*, and all other Parts beyond the Seas under the King of Englands Dominions’.¹⁹

James had succeeded to the throne undisturbed. He received petitions of loyalty and there were even scenes of spontaneous rejoicing in some areas. He was also welcomed by the astrologers, who were quick to heap praise upon the new monarch. They would continue to do so throughout his reign, their sycophancy reaching unprecedented levels. Opposition to James in the almanacs and other astrological works published

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, sig. A4v-A5v.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, sig. A6.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, sig. A6.

during his reign was virtually non-existent. There are two main reasons for the lack of opposition. Firstly, it was a product of the censorship imposed upon the almanac-makers by James, and as such it shows the effectiveness of this censorship. Secondly, it reflects the powerful position of the monarchy. James came to the throne in a strong position. His victories over Argyle and Monmouth, and the consummate ease with which he despatched them were further proof of his strength. Thereafter, James was financially and militarily secure. It was only in the last weeks of 1688 that his regime began to disintegrate. The astrologers were fully aware of his strong position and it is hardly surprising that they were unwilling to oppose him. The remainder of this chapter explores how the different groups of astrologers responded to the events of James' reign.

The Tory Astrologers

Upon his accession to the throne, James had given a number of assurances that he would endeavour to ' . . . preserve this Government, both in Church and State, as it is now by Law established'.²⁰ During the Exclusion Crisis the Tories had argued that the real threat to Church and State in England came, not from James, but from the Whigs and Dissenters. Gradually, however, as James' reign progressed, his conduct convinced many Tories that he did, after all, pose a real threat to Church and State in England. The king's attempts to give Catholics equality through the arbitrary use of the dispensing and suspending powers were widely seen as illegal. They led to fear, hostility, and ultimately opposition among many Tories.

²⁰ A. Grey, *Debates of the House of Commons, from the year 1667 to the year 1694* (10 vols., 1763), vol. VIII, p. 344.

Did this opposition manifest itself in the almanacs and other works of the Tory astrologers? The answer is no: on the contrary, the Tory astrologers continued to support their monarch throughout his reign.

One of James' staunchest supporters was William Andrews. For much of his career Andrews, one of the masters of the platitude and ambiguity, remained politically silent, his almanacs for the most part stereotyped and apolitical. Occasionally, however, he broke his silence with an outburst of political activity. During one such outburst, which coincided with James' reign he revealed himself to be a Tory. Andrews was an exponent of the doctrine of passive obedience and felt it was the subject's duty to remain loyal and obedient to James. In his edition for 1689 he expressed the hope ' . . . that we may all live in the *Fear of God*, in *Humble Obedience* to the King, our *most Gracious and Religious Sovereign*; and in *Brotherly Charity* one to another'.²¹

From the late 1660s onwards, Andrews had adopted a sympathetic attitude toward Catholicism and showed a willingness to express this sympathy in print. He was certainly not afraid to swim against the tide of anti-Catholicism upon which so many of his fellow astrologers were swept. The increased anti-Catholicism of the late 1670s and early 1680s did not quell this sympathy. Though he chose to remain silent during the years following the Popish Plot, it is clear after 1685 and the accession of James that his feelings had not altered. In his almanac for 1686 he expressed the highly contentious wish 'May the *Holy Catholick Church* ever flourish and all the Members thereof'.²² This was the sincere, heartfelt wish of a man who whilst not a Catholic, was sympathetic toward Catholicism, and had been for some time. It stemmed from Andrews' desire to see religious toleration. The accession of the Catholic James II

²¹ Andrews, 1689, sig. Av.

²² Andrews, 1686, sig. C7.

posed no threat for Andrews; on the contrary it may well have offered him hope that his dream of religious toleration would soon become a reality. One feels that when Andrews called on 'The *Great God of Heaven and Earth*' to 'Bless, Protect, and Preserve His most *Sacred Majesty of Great Britain*: and let all felicity attend His *Majesties Kingdoms, and Dominions*', as he did in his edition for 1687, and would continue to do almost verbatim throughout James' reign, he meant it.²³

Andrews remained loyal to James to the last. In the same edition, which would have been written on the eve of William's invasion in 1688, he alluded to the threat of invasion by William, of which he was fully conscious. In his predictions for June 1689 he wrote 'Sundry Reports seem to be abroad about Sea Affairs, and Naval Matters, and many things relating thereunto', and of 'News from *Holland, Zealand*' and the '*United Provinces*'. In his general predictions for the year he spoke of 'Naval Preparations . . . and sundry Negotiations concerning *Sea-Affairs*'. It would seem Andrews was convinced that William would invade in the summer of 1689. Furthermore he was equally convinced that James would defeat him, confidently proclaiming,

. . . the English will be strong, powerful, and successful, both at Sea, and Land, in this Summer of 1689. And those Nations and People that shall displease, quarrel, &c. or provoke them, shall sufficiently smart for their so doing. Cancer is a watry and feminine sign . . . and Astrologers say, That *Holland, Zealand, and the United Provinces of the Netherlands* are under that Sign.²⁴

²³ Andrews, 1687, sig. C8v.

²⁴ Andrews, 1689, sig. B2, C2, C6. Andrews had a long record of hostility toward the Dutch which manifested itself, for example, during the second and third Anglo-Dutch wars, and which shines through in his almanacs written during them, particularly those of 1666 and 1673. In 1672 he published two additional tracts predicting the possible annihilation of the United Provinces if they did not submit, *Annus Prodigiosus, Or The Wonderful Year 1672* and *More News from Heaven, Unto The World. Or the latter Part of The Wonderful Year, 1672*.

During the years of the Tory ascendancy, Henry Coley had stressed that the ‘Rights and Liberties’ of the people were better protected by a legitimate monarch than by the Republicans or the mob. James may have been a Catholic, but he was also the legitimate monarch, divinely appointed by God. As such he was to be obeyed. Ultimately Coley’s adherence to the doctrines of divine-right kingship and passive obedience proved greater than his anti-Catholicism and overrode any fears he may have felt about the activities of James and his government.

Throughout James’ reign Coley continued to preach the doctrines of divine-right kingship and passive obedience, just as he had during the Tory ascendancy. In his edition of *Nunciatus Sydereus* for 1688 he wrote:

KINGS are by God appointed for to sway
The Sword, and make Rebellious Men obey.
Those who oppose them, show themselves to be
Traytors to Heaven and to Majesty.
Lo, here’s a Race of Glorious *Monarchs* shown!
From whence *Great James* Derives his happy Throne,
Monarchy’s Heavens Rule, and every thing
By Nature, pays Obedience to their King:
Then let this be each subjects Wish and Song,
God save our *Gracious King!* May he live long.²⁵

In his edition of *Merlinus Anglicus Junior* for the same year he had written ‘To be humble to our Superiours is our duty’, and urged the populace to ‘Study Peace and Loyalty’.²⁶

One of the most pro-monarchical almanacs Coley ever penned was the 1687 edition of *Merlinus Anglicus Junior*. It began by praising James and his government and predicting that under their auspices England would flourish and remain at peace. In turn the populace would willingly submit ‘. . . to those in Power and Authority over

²⁵ Coley, *N.S.*, 1688, sig. A3.

²⁶ Coley, *M.A.J.*, 1688, sig. A7.

them'. So deferential to his superiors were Coley's predictions that he felt it necessary to stress that they were in '... no way forced' but arose '... purely natural from the scheme it self, according to the genuine Rules of Astrology'.²⁷

The almanac also contained a '*MICRO-CHRONICON. Or a brief Chronological Account of many Remarkable Accidents and Occurances that have happened in all Ages since the Creation to this present year 1687*'. Among other things this gave the reader a High Tory, pro-monarchical interpretation of events in England from the Civil War onwards. The way in which Coley dealt with events such as the Civil War, Regicide and Restoration revealed a great deal about his political outlook. He wrote of how in May 1642, 'A false and malicious Vote passeth the House, That the King intended to levy War against the Parliament', and of how on 3 August '... they (Parliament) impiously declare themselves necessitated to take up Arms'. Coley described the Long Parliament as a 'Rebel-Parliament', Judge Bradshaw, who had presided at the ill-fated king's trial as a 'notorious Traytor'. Of the king's execution he wrote 'On the 30th Day his Royal Majesty *Charles* I. was most barbarously Murthered before White-Hall . . . at which time our late gracious King *Charles* II. of Blessed Memory began his Reign', thus echoing the sentiments of all Royalists and, of course, Charles II. He rejoiced at how Charles II made good his escape after the battle of Worcester, writing of how Charles having escaped, '... the rage of the Rebels . . . shortly gets into *France* to the Great Joy of all his Loyal Subjects'. He described the Barebones Parliament as a 'sham Parliament'.²⁸

From the earliest days of James' reign Coley warned of the growing opposition to his monarch and his policies. After the suppression of the rebellions of Monmouth and

²⁷ Coley, *M.A.J.*, 1687, sig. A4v-A8v.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, sig. D6-E5.

Argyle for example, he warned 'We are not yet free from secret repining which may end in division. I hope no more Rebellion'. He hoped that the heavens would bless and protect the English nation from the 'malice' of her 'Domestick Enemies', and that '... all disturbers of our Nation and the Government were transported to the Land of *Eutopia*'.²⁹

Like Andrews, Coley remained loyal to James to the end and warned of the Dutch threat on the eve of William's invasion. In his edition of *Merlinus Anglicus Junior* for 1689 (written in 1688 before William's intervention), Coley observed '... we may expect great Preparations for Sea Action ... The *Hollander* appears very Potent and in great Splendour'. 'Heaven bless the English Affairs' he implored, '... and direct the Councils of his Majesty'. Thankfully, however, England was itself '... very Formidable and in much Grandeur'.³⁰ He inveighed against those astrologers who predicted the imminent downfall of James and his regime, particularly, one suspects, John Partridge, who did so from the safety of the Netherlands. 'Our *English* Nation remains in great Splendour', Coley insisted, '... notwithstanding the Threats and bold Predictions of such daring persons that pretend to know more, and, to be better acquainted with the Effects of Starry Influences than their Brethren'.³¹ Evidently Coley believed James would triumph over William. 'We know that after a Storm comes a Calm' he wrote, 'May his Majesty of *England* be ever great and glorious in the esteem of his Loyal Subjects, and let his Enemies tremble at his very name'.³²

By far the most vigorous champion of James and his policies was John Gadbury. During the tumultuous years of the Popish Plot and Exclusion Crisis, Gadbury had

²⁹ Culpepper, 1686, sig. A5v, A7v, A8.

³⁰ Coley, *M.A.J.*, 1689, sig. C4, C3.

³¹ *Ibid.*, sig. E.

³² *Ibid.*, sig. C7.

steadfastly upheld the right of James to succeed to the throne; the only astrologer to do so. He was, therefore, delighted when James became king. The accession rendered Gadbury and his fellow Tories victorious and was just reward for all their efforts, often made as Gadbury's own experiences show us, in the face of vilification and great personal risk and sacrifice. Gadbury could not contain his feelings and was in ebullient mood. In his almanac for 1686 he rejoiced at the accession of James, the rightful King of England, and celebrated what he viewed as the final defeat of all Exclusionists, Whigs, Trimmers and Dissenters:

Welcome! thrice welcome is that happy Year,
Wherein no bold *Excluders* dare appear!
Seditious *Ignoramusses* be gone!
And cant to one another Forty One.

Stand there Great JAMES! no more presumptive Heir
But just Possessor of the REGAL CHAIR.
Three glorious Nations now affirm your Right;
And bid all bold EXCLUSIONERS goodnight.
The Trimming Tribe would be true Subjects reckon'd;
And deign to drink a Health to JAMES the Second.³³

Gadbury elevated James to great heights and, indeed, sainthood. He informed the reader that James, by virtue of his defeat of the Exclusionists, was greater than even St. George:

St. *GEORGE* for England! and just *JAMES* the same,
Dragons and *Tygers* they both have made tame!
S. *GEORGE* but *One*, King *JAMES* a *Million* found!
All by his Courage, groveling on the ground.
And, guarded by that Power by whom Kings reign;
Low let him keep 'em, ne're to rise again.³⁴

³³ Gadbury, 1686, sig. A3v, B7v. The allusion to 'Seditious *Ignoramusses*' is a reference to the acquittal of the Earl of Shaftesbury in the winter of 1681.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, sig. A6v.

The following year Gadbury boldly predicted that James would be the greatest monarch England had ever seen. Once again James was elevated to the status of sainthood:

Lo! here a Race of *Albions* glorious Kings!
All which have done, and suffer'd mighty things:
So left the THRONE, whereon just *James* is set,
To OUT-DO all that ever reigned yet;
Just *JAMES!* whose *Saint-like Sufferings*, providence,
With Princely POWER do's wisely recompence.³⁵

He cited the ease with which James had vanquished Argyle and Monmouth as proof of his power, and as a warning that opposition to the omnipotent James was futile:

*Howbeit, let me humbly presume to affirm, That the Stars this Year (and several Years yet to come, nay, I hope for ever) are at an absolute Enmity with the Enemies both of Church and State, and as plainly declare the destruction of the Persons and Fortunes of such as shall oppose either, as they lately did [to] the Confusion and Ruine of the Rebels Army in the West.*³⁶

We have seen how, for Gadbury, the accession of James marked the final defeat of the Exclusionists, and in Chapter One how he believed that it was they who were behind the Popish Plot, and were the paymasters of the leading witnesses.³⁷ And so, as far as Gadbury was concerned, the final defeat of the Exclusionists brought down the final curtain upon the macabre play that was the Popish Plot. 'Here's no Trade for ye! *Oates* and *Dangerfield*', he triumphantly declared in his edition for 1686 'Your swearing Masters, now to Justice yield'.³⁸ He revelled in the fate that had befallen the king's star witness, graphically describing Oates' punishment in his edition for 1689.³⁹

The Popish Plot had been the spark which had reignited the fire of anti-Catholicism, and for many was the epitome of all that was inherently evil in the Catholic faith.

³⁵ Gadbury, 1687, sig. B7v.

³⁶ Gadbury, 1686, sig. Av.

³⁷ See above, p. 101.

³⁸ Gadbury, 1686, sig. A3v.

³⁹ Gadbury, 1689, sig. B.

Whilst Oates had only been convicted on two counts of perjury appertaining to the evidence he had given against William Ireland, his conviction had ramifications for the Popish Plot as a whole. From the moment of its disclosure, Gadbury had denied the Plot's existence. Oates' convictions were yet further proof there had never been a Popish Plot. Furthermore, Oates' fate vindicated the Catholics and left the anti-Catholics without one of their most powerful weapons. In 1689 Gadbury triumphantly declared, 'Say, Anti-Catholick! is not the Truth discovered accordingly? If thou doubttest still, ask *T. Oates*, who gives us annually fine demonstrations thereof for our Conviction'.⁴⁰

Gadbury elevated the victims of the Popish Plot to the status of martyrdom. All had acquitted themselves with dignity upon the scaffold and had died protesting their innocence (which of course was true). As John Kenyon has pointed out, it became commonplace for each victim of the Plot to compose long farewell speeches protesting their innocence and justifying their Catholicism. Not one of the victims made the slightest acknowledgement of guilt, though it was common knowledge that they had all been offered a pardon in return for a confession.⁴¹ In his predictions for December 1689 Gadbury recounted how:

On the 29 day, *Anno* 1680, that most Noble Lord, The Lord *William Howard*, Viscount *Stafford*, was Beheaded, the Crime (pretended) High Treason.

The Witnesses against his Lordship were *Oates*, *Bedlow*, *Turberville*, *Dugdale*, &c. His Lordship made a most admirable Defence at his Tryal; and a most penitent, Christian, Pious end on the Scaffold, forgiving his enemies, but protesting his innocency to the last, as to the Fact for which he suffer'd; and withall, did little less than *Prophesie*, that in 2 years time the Truth of things would be discovered, and his Innocency be justified.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, sig. B8.

⁴¹ Kenyon, *Popish Plot*, pp. 181-182.

In those for July he mourned the death of Oliver Plunket the ‘Primate of *Ireland*’, observing ‘This Reverend and Pious Person dyed with much chearfulness, denying the Fact for which he suffered’. Gadbury pointed out that most of the witnesses brought over from Dublin at the insistence of Shaftesbury, to prove the existence of the Irish ‘Plot’ and give evidence against Plunket (dubious Catholics who later became known as the ‘Macshams’), ‘. . . are since Hang’d in *Ireland*’.⁴²

In Gadbury’s eyes, James could do no wrong. There is no sign of the alienation that many of his Tory counterparts increasingly felt towards the king as the reign progressed. Gadbury praised even the most controversial policies and most unpopular servants of the king. In his almanac for 1688 (compiled in 1687) he predicted nothing but good to befall the Irish nation, thus tacitly praising the hugely unpopular Earl of Tyrconnell who had been appointed Lord Deputy of Ireland in 1687. Tyrconnell quickly turned Irish policy on its head by favouring the Catholic majority.

Gadbury, like James, evidently saw no wrong in granting toleration to the Irish Catholics. But many others did, both among the Protestant minority in Ireland and majority in England. They felt it inviolated the age-old principle that Ireland had to be kept under firm control by the Protestant ascendancy, and always subordinate to England. Gadbury informed the reader that the heavens ‘. . . betoken a more than ordinary happiness to attend that gallant Country’. He was aware that some of the heavenly influences:

Occasion much murmuring and discontent among some sorts of People, willing to undo themselves by opposing Authority; and sundry malicious endeavours may be used to poyson the minds of the multitude against the growing greatness of that Loyal Fertile Country.

⁴² Gadbury, 1689, sig. B8, B3.

Having said that, he explained that a powerful trine of Jupiter and Mars ‘. . . restrains their disorders, and quiets their malevolent Designs by good wholesome Laws; happy *Edicts*, which will be obey’d by that worthy Nation generally’.⁴³

Gadbury recalled that after the Irish rebellion of 1641 Charles I had listened to Irish grievances and offered certain concessions in an attempt to win the support of the native Irish and ‘Old English’. He drew a parallel between Charles’ attempts to listen to the grievances of the Irish Catholics, and the wish of James II to allow them toleration.⁴⁴ It was hardly an argument likely to persuade doubters, however, for Charles I’s negotiations with Irish Catholics in the 1640s had provoked deep suspicion.

Gadbury also supported James’ advancement of his leading Catholic subjects in England. In his almanac for 1689 he welcomed the appointments of Lord Belasyse and Henry Lord Dover to the Treasury Commission, and the appointments of the Marquess of Powis, Lord Arundel of Wardour, Lord Belasyse, Lord Dover, Father Edward Petre and the convert Sir Nicholas Butler to the Privy Council. He also applauded the appointment of Roger Palmer, the Earl of Castlemaine, as Ambassador to Rome.⁴⁵

In April 1687 James issued the Declaration of Indulgence which suspended all the penal laws, the Test Acts and the Corporation Act, thus granting religious toleration for all. It was, without doubt, one of James’ most controversial measures, engendering deep mistrust amongst the Protestants. Even the Dissenters, whose support it was designed to woo, were sceptical. Gadbury, however, supported James’ call for a general toleration. Like the king he believed it would unite the nation behind its monarch and his government. Those who opposed the Declaration, he argued, were

⁴³ Gadbury, 1688, sig. C5.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, sig. C5.

⁴⁵ Gadbury, 1689, sig. A4v, B3, B6, B5.

clearly opposed to this unity. In his edition for 1688, compiled in 1687, the year during which the Declaration was issued, Gadbury wrote

Christs Coat was Seamless, S' Worship *One* should be.
And is, with *all*, but *Foes to Unity*.⁴⁶

Gadbury's support for a general toleration may seem strange, bearing in mind his hostility towards Protestant Dissent. This hostility had manifested itself in his almanacs and other astrological works at the time of the Popish Plot and Exclusion Crisis, and throughout the years of the Tory ascendancy.⁴⁷ Did Gadbury's support for a general religious liberty reflect a change in his attitude toward Protestant Dissent? The answer is no. Unlike James, he did not view a general religious toleration as being right in itself. He did not support the concept of a general religious toleration *per se*. Gadbury did, however, want to see toleration for Catholics, and was willing to accept the toleration of Protestant Dissent to accomplish this. His support of toleration for Dissenters was given only begrudgingly as a means to an end. In his almanac for 1688 he wrote '*Better all Religions be indulged, than the one Ancient Faith excluded, persecuted, harras'd*'.⁴⁸

In the country at large, there was some limited support for the Declaration, despite the widespread hostility it aroused. The Catholics welcomed it, as did some of the smaller sects, the Independents, the Baptists and many Quakers. Somewhat misleadingly Gadbury suggested that the Declaration had received the blessing of the nation as a whole when, in his edition for 1689, he indulged in more pro-Declaration propaganda:

Wise, Just, and Good (Great Sir!) you needs must be:
Your Grandsires Prudence, Fathers Piety
And Brothers mercy, fill your Royal Breast.

⁴⁶ Gadbury, 1688, sig. B4v.

⁴⁷ See above, pp. 40-42, 64.

⁴⁸ Gadbury, 1688, sig. C3.

Hence your INDULGENCE hath your *Subjects* blest
 With tranquil Minds: For which they ever shall
 Record you JAMES the JUST, and MERCIFUL.⁴⁹

The fears and anxieties aroused by the Declaration among most of English Protestants were heightened when, against all the odds, on 10 June 1688 Queen Mary gave birth to a son, James Francis Edward, the Prince of Wales. The birth raised the spectre of an unlimited period of Catholic rule and had a traumatic effect upon English Protestants. Gadbury had predicted the birth in his almanac for 1686:

Venus in her tropick height.
 Receives great *Jove*'s Addresses in that State:
 The Congress is prolifick! glorious!
 Breaths nought but Love and heavenly care of us:
 And (might my Muse prophetick prove) Ide' sware
 Some Royal *Prince* (perhaps of *Wales*) draws near.⁵⁰

Three years later his almanac celebrated the birth of the prince and the fulfilment of his prediction. He could not help but remind readers of the accuracy of his prophecy, writing in his verse for December:

Now MUSE forbear! This year draws to an End.
 In th' next (perhaps) thou may'st thy Measures Mend.
 Thou gav'st such HOPES* long since of this bless'd Birth,
 As warm'd each LOYAL HEART with Joy and Mirth.
 But positive Truth suits not with Humane skill.
 When that is writ an Angel guides the Quill.
 *In August 1686. Vide that Years Almanack.

He pledged his allegiance to the child who, in his opinion, would undoubtedly one day become king, and who would ' . . . the World with *Regal Acts* adorn in *Future Times*'.⁵¹ Gadbury hoped the birth of the child would heal the nation's divisions, and was quick to point out he had been born on Trinity Sunday which seemed to verify his feelings.⁵²

⁴⁹ Gadbury, 1689, sig. A2v.

⁵⁰ Gadbury, 1686, sig. B2v.

⁵¹ Gadbury, 1689, sig. B7v, A6v.

⁵² *Ibid.*, sig. A5v, B2.

The birth of the prince was, perhaps, the straw that broke the camel's back. It united James' opponents, Anglican and Dissenter, Tory and Whig alike, and in the wake of the Declaration of Indulgence led to the formal invitation to William to invade. Gadbury was fully aware of the opposition which was mounting against James, culminating in William's invasion. In his almanac for 1688 he alluded to the duplicity of James' leading subjects, focusing on the Whigs and Trimmers:

Still the *Superiors* move in *Card'nal* Signs;
Bright *Sol* and *Hermes* th' *Equinoctial* Mount,
Opposing *Saturns* Whiggish-deep Designs:
And, for 's *Rebellion*, brings him to Account.
Man is turn'd *Politician*: and discovers
The Frauds of *Trimming Subjects*, and *False Lovers*.⁵³

He was, however, like his fellow astrologers William Andrews and Henry Coley, convinced that James would defeat William. Instead of anticipating the usurpation of James by William, he felt that the reign would eventually reach its natural end, whereupon James' son would ascend the throne. It was upon this that he pinned his hopes for the future. His arch-rival John Partridge would later claim that, on the eve of William's invasion, Gadbury had predicted William would fail in his attempt and would be executed upon Tower Hill.⁵⁴

During James' reign Gadbury was triumphant. It must have seemed to him that all his wishes had been fulfilled. James had taken his rightful crown. The Whigs and Exclusionists lay defeated. Gadbury did not foresee the downfall of James and his regime at the hands of William. He was, therefore, free (at last) finally to vindicate himself and put forward his own frank and comprehensive interpretation of the events of recent years. This he did in 1687 with the publication of *Merlinus Verax*. Gadbury

⁵³ Gadbury, 1688, sig. A6v.

⁵⁴ See below, p. 168.

began by informing the reader that he had observed the events of recent years very closely, and launched a fierce attack on the Dissenters:

I will here acquaint thee, that in our late perilous Times I have been a serious Spectator of the Actions of all Parties, read most of their Publick Prints, took notice of all their strange Thwartings and Opposings, even of Government it self, their spitting (as it were) in the face of Justice, wronging the innocent, acquitting the Guilty, &c. And I have mourn'd in secret at the management of many things, carried on Torment like, by the furious Jehus of the Age (I mean the restless Dissenting Tribe) which was not in my power to remedy.

He remarked somewhat poignantly 'Sorry I am to say it, but it is conspicuously true--- Peace never looked so like a War, as within these last seven or eight Years, viz. since the commencement of the late Damnable Popish Plot (as it was Call'd) Anno 1678'.⁵⁵

With James now settled on the throne, Gadbury could afford to be magnanimous and he expressed a heartfelt wish for unity:

I am no friend to Names of Reproach, Whig and Tory are as odious, when set in opposition to each other, as formerly Roundhead and Cavalier, or Papist and Puritan. I heartily wish such terms of distinction buried, that thereby we might be so wise and happy together, as to remember we are all English Men and Christians, Members of one Body Politick, Subjects to one and the same Sovereign Lord, and his Laws.⁵⁶

Paradoxically, amidst these calls for peace and unity he made an impassioned call to arms to James' supporters:

Howbeit, if we must be so unhappy as still to have Sides, and opposite Parties among us, and that there be a necessity for us to shew our Opinions, otherwise than by our Obedience (as if we were obliged to give every man we met the Word, as in a Garrison Besieged). Then I say, both Reason and Religion too, fully assure us, that it is, not only safe, but conscientiously just, to own what we are, and to indeavour with all our might and skill, to support our admirably and well-ordered Government, and to mark and avoid all such as are Enemies unto it. In the doing whereof we at once perform our Duty, and assert our Allegiance to God and the King, which thing must needs be pleasing and delightful to all good Men; whereas to countenance Faction, either by an ingeneous neutrality, or by a publick approbation or aid, is to wound our Allegiance, dishonour God, in whose Image we are

⁵⁵ Gadbury, *Merlinus Verax*, sig. Av.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, sig. A2.

*created, and advance and abet to the Devils Darling, Rebellion. A Crime which the Scripture hath justly Character'ed, as equal to Witchcraft.*⁵⁷

Gadbury did not blame the 'Rabble-Rout' or 'Multitude' for the upheavals of recent years, but their '*designing Leaders*'. '*These, I say are the Men that have made Englands Misery much larger, and more bitter and tormenting, than twenty such Plots of themselves could ever have done*'.⁵⁸

Gadbury then went on to ridicule the alleged Popish Plot and discredit the leading Plot witnesses. He alluded to the indictment of Oates for sodomy in 1679, and to the testimonial from Salamanca which had been circulated in the Autumn of 1682 and refuted Oates' claim to possess a doctorate from that university.⁵⁹ Gadbury also noted that at the wedding of Oates' right-hand man, William Bedloe, at Dyers Hall in December 1679, the guests had included Sir William Waller, Justice of the Peace for Westminster, who had personally arrested the majority of the priests taken in London since October 1678. It was Waller who discovered the 'villanous Papers' in Cellier's meal tub, and two days later conducted a search of Gadbury's own home. Waller's presence at Bedloe's wedding illustrated the extent of the collusion between Whig officialdom and the perjured Plot witnesses. As a postscript Gadbury added that Bedloe had never paid the fees for the Hall.⁶⁰

Gadbury went on to celebrate the dismantling of the scaffold at Westminster Hall in June 1683, upon which so many Plot victims had died, as the symbolic end of the Plot. He also sought to dispel the myth that Sir Edmund Berry Godfrey had been murdered by the Catholics. We saw earlier how Gadbury had found himself the victim of 'Plot

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, sig. A2.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, sig. A2v.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 9, 33.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 8-10.

fever', accused by Thomas Dangerfield of complicity in it.⁶¹ With the leading Plot witnesses broken and discredited, he seized the opportunity to vindicate not only himself but the others Dangerfield had implicated, including Elizabeth Cellier and the Earl of Castlemaine.⁶²

Gadbury also took the opportunity to discredit the principle of Exclusion, and its leading advocates. Of Parliament's attempt to impeach the Duke of York in April 1679 he wrote scornfully, 'Here's *Metaphysical Justice* for ye!' He rejoiced at the execution of '... the Protestant joiner', Stephen College. He also alluded to the impeachment of the Whig leader the Earl of Shaftesbury, and the discovery of plans for an 'Association' at Shaftesbury's home, on the eve of his trial. Even years after the event his anger and frustration at Shaftesbury's acquittal was still tangible. He also celebrated the rout of the Whigs and Dissenters during the years of Tory ascendancy, praising the actions and policies of Charles II that had brought it about, including the *quo warranto* campaign. The work closed with the discovery of the 'Horrid and Dismal Fanatical Conspiracy', the Rye House Plot which had brought about the downfall of the remaining Whig leaders after the death of Shaftesbury in exile.⁶³ *Merlinus Verax* was an uncompromising assertion of the Tory view of recent history, and looked to the future with total confidence.

The Whig Astrologers

We saw in the previous chapter that only John Partridge had the courage to call openly for the Exclusion of the Catholic James from the throne.⁶⁴ It is very likely

⁶¹ See above, pp. 42-46.

⁶² Gadbury, *Merlinus Verax*, pp. 35, 2, 15.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, pp. 6, 24, 26, 12, 35.

⁶⁴ See above, p. 30.

nonetheless that the attacks made on Charles' increasingly arbitrary rule, pro-Catholic policies and Catholicism in general by the other Whig astrologers, Holwell, Kirby, Salmon and Woodward, reflected their desire for Exclusion as well as their current discontent.

Realising the hopelessness of opposition to James, the Whig astrologers reacted varyingly to his accession. Richard Kirby prudently decided to bow out of the limelight for a while. Others, unable to stomach the Catholic James, and frightened by the prospect of reprisal, took more drastic action. Partridge, aware of the odium his open calls for Exclusion were likely to elicit from the authorities, fled to the Netherlands where he joined the ranks of Whig radicals who had escaped Charles' wrath during the Tory ascendancy. William Salmon, whose opposition to the accession of James shone through in his *Pacquets*, also fled abroad. An unauthenticated story of John Holwell, who it was alleged had written anonymously in support of Exclusion, tells how, in order to silence him, the government sent him to America to survey New York with orders that he was not to be allowed to return. After completing the work he died suddenly, allegedly by poison.⁶⁵

The majority of those Whig astrologers who stayed to face the music prudently pledged their allegiance to James and urged their readers to do so too. For them to have expressed opposition would have been sheer folly and, bearing in mind the new tight censorship, virtually impossible.

⁶⁵ For details of Partridge's and Salmon's flights see below, pp. 117, 141, respectively. Details of the alleged poisoning of Holwell can be found in a biography of his grandson John Zephaniah Holwell, 'An Account of the Life of our Late Governor Holwell', *Asiatic Annual Register*, I (1800), pp. 25-31; See also *D.N.B.*, Holwell.

In his edition for 1689 (written before the Revolution) the astrologer John Tanner, who would emerge as one of the most radical of the Whig astrologers following the accession of William, thus advised:

*Let loyalty and duty be thy guide
Out of that path, be sure turn not aside.*⁶⁶

Initially, so too did the Irish Whig John Whalley, who stayed and witnessed first hand James' Catholicization of Ireland. In 1688 he implored James' subjects not,

. . . to forget their Allegiance, justly due to him the Lords Anointed, as I fear too many do; let them cast an eye back to, and remember in the Tragedy of *England and Scotland*, 1685. how graciously he extended Mercy even to those that would have shewn little to him if their Malice had prevailed. And, Dear Countrymen and Neighbours, consider the Blessing of Peace and Plenty, and that the best of Natures cannot for ever brook of Abuse, Wrong and Ingratitude; but when provoked beyond measure, justly become the most severe Punishers, and no longer the Vessels of Mercy, but Justice in so doing. And therefore let us, who call our selves Christians, shew our selves so in obeying the Lord and his Anointed, and no longer fool our selves with seditious Spirits and Fancies of what can only work the ruine of our selves and Posterity; For Kings have long Arms, and when thereto extended, strike severely.⁶⁷

Daniel Woodward similarly pledged his loyalty. James, in ascending the throne, had overcome the machinations of the Exclusionists:

What Potent Foes did not oppose the Right,
By Books, Cabals and a Rebellious Fight
Of JAMES our present Sovereign? JAMES the Just
His Sacred Brothers most assured Trust,
Who always propp'd up the Battlements of State.
Long may he live, and be for ever Great.⁶⁸

Evidently, so desperate was Woodward to give the impression that he genuinely supported James, that he was prepared to disown his Whig past. In his edition for 1689 he gave the false impression that he supported James on the issue of a general religious toleration, asking:

⁶⁶ Tanner, 1689, sig. A4v.

⁶⁷ Whalley, *Praecognita Astrologica* (1688), p. 5.

⁶⁸ Woodward, 1689, sig. A8v.

Why should a Man be beaten black and blew,
 Because he cannot think as I or you?
 Faith is a free Assent Man only knows,
 Not to be taught by Knocks, or learn'd by Blows:
 For if Severity convert us can,
 Faith is not from the hand of God, but Man.⁶⁹

Woodward's calls for toleration were not new. During the years of the Tory ascendancy he had called for toleration, but only for Protestant Dissent. Bearing in mind the vehement anti-Catholicism he displayed prior and subsequently to James' reign, it seems certain he was tacitly excluding them. John Whalley also praised James for encouraging religious toleration and for helping the French Huguenot refugees who poured into England following the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes in October 1685.⁷⁰

The Whig astrologers went far beyond mere conformity and submission. As the threat grew of an invasion by William they urged their readers to rally behind the king in the name of national unity. In his edition for 1689, written on the eve of William's invasion, Tanner wrote:

*Blest be our Nation, Prince and People too.
 Let none the knot of Unity undo.*⁷¹

Whalley warned that disunity could have disastrous consequences. In his edition for 1688 he reminded the reader that 'It was the Murdering of their Heavenly King that made the Jews Slaves and Vagabonds'. He went on to quote Luke 11.17 '*. . . every Kingdom divided against it self is brought to Desolation*'.⁷² In the same edition he appears to call for a crackdown on subversive plotting against James when he remarked '*. . . there is a certain Sympathy and Antipathy in Nature, which Wills some*

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, sig. B2v.

⁷⁰ Whalley, *Praecognita*, p. 5.

⁷¹ Tanner, 1689, sig. B7v.

⁷² Whalley, *Praecognita*, p. 7.

to Love what others Abhor, and oftentimes there is a Necessity to use force for Ease and Safety, and perhaps may now for Cure of some State Distempers'.⁷³

Both Tanner and Whalley attacked those who actively opposed James, arguing that they acted out of self-interest and that their subversive activities posed a serious threat to the nation's peace and security. In his edition for 1689 Tanner asked:

*Is Peace intended? or is't flourish'd sleights,
With which some crafty States-men do amuse?
Or is't self-ends under pretended Rights,
That doth the too credulous abuse?
Whilst Heaven a Peace proclaims, the Sun & Mars
By Quartile Rays would kindle Civil Jarrs.*⁷⁴

It is almost certain that the Whig astrologers still in England were well aware of the preparations being made by William and the covert activities of James' leading opponents. John Whalley certainly was, writing in his predictions for May 1688 that '... all are not idle, but rather contriving or preparing for the Actions of the following months'. He continued:

*Great Britain is much concern'd in this months Proceedings, and Holland is not idle, but rather preparing for Action; I wish it may prove for good, but fear the contrary; however that Nation is about this time making more than usual preparation for fitting out Shipping, or some considerable Naval Action.*⁷⁵

Scared to reveal their true feelings, they chose to remain silent, or in the case of John Whalley predict defeat for William '... the Dutch are imperious, and will meet Correction from those, whom I beseech God ever to enable to correct the Insolencies of their Enemies, and bless with Health, Peace and Plenty'.⁷⁶

Only one Whig astrologer, John Harrison, had the courage to express any form of opposition to James. Earlier we saw how Harrison had found an ingenious way of

⁷³ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

⁷⁴ Tanner, 1689, sig. Bv.

⁷⁵ Whalley, *Praecognita*, p. 6.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

beating censorship by discussing the affairs of England in terms of those countries ‘. . . beyond the Seas’.⁷⁷ A little later, noting that Mars was in Capricorn, he remarked: ‘I gather that Mars is not a fortunate Ruler, neither from him can many Countries beyond the Sea expect a prosperous year’. The heavens, he continued, signified nothing but ‘. . . trouble and discord’ to befall these countries.⁷⁸

As we will see in the following chapter, there can be no doubt that the apparent loyalty of the Whig astrologers who stayed in England under James stemmed not from any genuine support, but a strong desire for self-preservation. With the notable exceptions of John Whalley, who on the eve of the invasion, reversed his previous stance and published a ‘Williamite’ almanac, and the puerile opposition of John Harrison, it was only after the Glorious Revolution that these Whig astrologers felt able to express their true feelings.⁷⁹

Astrological opposition to James was certainly forthcoming from the Continent, however, where many of the more radical Whigs were in exile. The year 1688, for example, saw the publication of a satirical ballad, *The States-Mans Almanack* which attacked James both as king and man. It mocked his failure to pack a Parliament which would repeal the penal laws, Test Acts and Corporation Act and predicted (quite rightly) that this Parliament would never meet:

I

THE Talk up and down,
In Country and Town,
Has been long of Parliaments sitting;
But we’ll make it clear,
N’er a Month in the Year,
Is prosperous for such a Meeting.

⁷⁷ See above, p. 88.

⁷⁸ Harrison, 1689, sig. C6.

⁷⁹ See below, pp. 140-141.

II

The Judges declare it,
 The Ministers swear it:
 And the Town as a tale receives it:
 Let em say what they can,
 There's never a Man,
 Except God's Viceregent believes it.⁸⁰

The work also mocked James' womanising which continued unabated, though more covertly, even after his conversion, dubbing him the 'Fumbler Royal':

APRIL

In this by Mishap,
 Southask had a clap
 Which pepper'd our Gracious Master:
 An therefore I' th' Spring,
 He must Physick his Thing,
 And venture no new Disaster.

OCTOBER

Now Hunting comes in,
 That Licence for Sin,
 That do's with a Cloak befriend him,
 For if the Queen knows,
 What at *Grahams* he do's,
 His Divine Right can hardly defend him.⁸¹

On the accession of James II as we have seen, John Partridge, the doyen of the Whig astrologers, fled into exile to the Netherlands.⁸² In his almanac for 1686 he told his readers 'I Here present thee with one years over-sight more, and intreat thee to correct what Errors thou findest therein, because I could not attend the Press, as I usually did'.⁸³ Partridge was the only Whig astrologer to attack James explicitly and predict the downfall of his regime. Exile served to revive his militancy. During the

⁸⁰ *The States-Mans Almanack*. An anonymous and undated broadside, which from internal evidence was almost certainly written in 1688.

⁸¹ *Ibid.* The allusion to 'Southask' may well be referring to the king's most prominent mistress, Catherine Sedley, Countess of Dorchester and Baroness Darlington.

⁸² See above, p. 112.

⁸³ Partridge, 1686, sig. A2.

latter part of the Tory ascendancy he had become despondent and retreated from the political fray. His almanacs written at the time reflected his state of mind, downbeat, full of pessimism and free of polemic. Writing and publishing in the Netherlands he was at last safe and free from the constraints of censorship and the Stationers' monopoly. His first almanac printed in exile, for the year 1687, saw the re-emergence of the Partridge of old. He launched a scathing attack on James and his regime. In the almanac's chronology he recalled the Gunpowder Plot and the Irish Rebellion of 1641, 'The *Popish Massacre in Ireland*, where 300,000 Protestants were Murdered', and blamed the Catholics for the Fire of London. He confirmed Miles Prance's account of the murder of Sir Edmund Berry Godfrey. The reader was then told that it was only two years since 'That Pious Prince, *Charles the Second* dyed a *Roman Catholic*, and yet Head of the Church of England', and since 'James the Second took his Coronation Oath and was crowned in Westminster', a reminder of how James had reneged on his undertakings.⁸⁴

Partridge then launched a thinly-veiled attack on James' judges, particularly the eleven who had concurred with Lord Chief Justice Herbert in the *Godden v Hales* case, equating them with Sir Robert Tresilian, the hated Chief Justice of the King's Bench at the time of Richard II. He questioned the dispensing power they had granted James, particularly the way it allowed him to dispense individuals from the Test Acts, hinting that James would be quick to abuse this power to subvert the laws of the land. One year ago, he wrote, it was established that 'The *King* could dispense with the *Test* and all *Laws*'.⁸⁵

⁸⁴ Partridge, 1687, sig. A8v.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, sig. A8v.

Earlier in the almanac, Partridge alluded to the way in which, late in 1686, James had stepped up his campaign to secure the repeal of the penal laws, the Test Acts and Corporation Act, by removing those who opposed him and replacing them with individuals amenable to his wishes, at court, in the army and at all levels of the nation's administration. He predicted that in 1687 one could expect more of the same, but insisted that despite James' best efforts '*Popery will not do, neither is it a good way to promote it, to prefer scandalous Favourers of it*'.⁸⁶

Partridge could not believe that the English had been taken in by James' promises prior to, and upon, his accession, that he would uphold the Church of England, and had thus allowed popery to get a foothold:

*Now to your Cost you see (with Grief and Tears)
The tricking shams of the preceding Years,
You that now see, scorn'd to believe it then,
Impos'd upon, even by the Worst of men.
Now hangs your Freedom on each Villains sword,
Cheated yourselves, taking your Princes Word.*

He apportioned particular blame to the English clergy, whom he described as '*. . . pimps to the Roman Whore*', for it was they, he argued, '*. . . that pull'd in Popery by preaching up that cursed Slavish Doctrine of Passive Obedience*'.⁸⁷

All was not lost, however, as the heavens showed that the people would realise the error of their ways, '*. . . and release themselves from the Oppressions they now labour under*' by rising up and overthrowing James and his regime by the October of 1688. '*The Fools that pull'd 'em in*', he wrote, '*. . . shall Kick 'em out*'. He implored all English Protestants:

*Give not your Faith up, nor yet tamely dye,
The Sun will rise, the Actors fill the stage,
And one and twenty months is not an age.*

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, sig. A4v.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, sig. Av, B.

A little later he declared:

England, thou shalt yet make a further advance; for it is yet more than three months to the harvest, and at the appointed time thy *deliverance* come, even at that time when the *Sun* makes the *Scorpion* a second visit, and then will the *Spanish Apple* be grateful to the English Palates.⁸⁸

As we will see, there were those observers who felt that not only was Partridge predicting the downfall of James and his regime, but his death.⁸⁹

Partridge's almanac for 1687 thus provides us with evidence that he may well have been considering Dutch intervention as a cure for all England's ills as early as 1686 when it would have been written. '*Holland*' he wrote, '. . . resume thy pristine Courage, stand to thy Arms, and be bold, and thou shalt yet plow the Ocean with success, and tame the insolence of thy Enemy: *A good Cause and Conscience, is better than a hated Monarch*'.⁹⁰

Did Partridge envisage intervention by William as the possible catalyst to a rebellion against James in England, and believe that William would provide the banner around which the people of England could rally? The answer would appear to be yes. Of course, Partridge may well have been predicting success for William in his endeavours against the Sun King and, indeed, to a certain extent, he certainly was. I feel, however, that this quotation is something of a double-edged sword in that Partridge was also encouraging William to invade England by guaranteeing the support of the English people if he were to do so.

Whilst Partridge clearly wanted William to intervene in English affairs, and James to be deposed, a question mark hangs over his vision of what would follow. In his almanac for 1687 he put forward his argument for a republic, based upon his

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, sig. Bv, B4, Av, B3v.

⁸⁹ See below, pp. 135-136.

⁹⁰ Partridge, 1687, sig. A3.

opposition to the arbitrary popishness of the reigns of the royal brothers Charles and James:

*A Commonwealth's the thing that Kingdoms want:
No plots grow there, poor Mankind to abuse;
Those little tricks of State that Monarchs use:
No Cut Throats there do Murder with applause;
No Burning City's to promote the Cause:
No Charters seized for Rome by new found writ,
Nor City Rights question'd as they thought fit,
And Rogues made Judges to determine it
No monster of a Mouth we there yet saw
Made Judge of Equity, that nee'r knew the Law.⁹¹*

However, as we will see later, he seems to argue in his *A Short Answer to . . . John Gadbury*, (1687) in favour of a strictly limited constitutional monarchy.⁹²

Partridge continued the attack in his almanac for 1688, which unfortunately does not appear to have survived. It was, however, reproduced in *Annus Mirabilis* (1689) and, with a few controversial additions, in *Mene Tekel* (1688). Partridge mocked James' attempts to persuade the intransigent Anglican clergy to acquiesce in his wishes and, in particular, his appointment of compliant bishops such as Parker at Oxford and Cartwright at Chester in the spring and summer of 1686. 'I conclude there will be about this time some *Clergymen* preferred, men of *Excellent parts* and great *proficients* in *Atheism*, *Socinianism* and *Popery*. For example, *Sa. Par--r of Oxford*, or *C-----ht of Chester*'.⁹³ He also condemned James' attempts to force the Fellows of Magdalen College Oxford, a bastion of Protestantism, to accept a Catholic President through the Ecclesiastical Commission in 1687.⁹⁴ Partridge also attacked James' plans to pack a Parliament in order to facilitate the repeal of the penal laws, by warning that

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, sig. B4.

⁹² See below, pp. 130, 133-134.

⁹³ J. Partridge, *Annus Mirabilis Or Strange and Wonderful Predictions And Observations* (1689), pp. 11-12.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 12.

there would be ‘. . . new attempts in *England*, to wheedle a people to chuse a *Parliament*, to destroy their Laws and Religion’.⁹⁵

Partridge went far beyond mere criticism. As in his almanac for 1687 he made an impassioned plea to the people of England to make a stand against their monarch. In particular he urged them to defend the penal laws and Test Acts, the last barrier against popery and absolutism:

*Stand for your Laws, Religion, Liberties,
You have the odds, the Law is still your own,
They’re but your Traytors, therefore pull ’em down.
They struck with Fear, seek to destroy your Laws.
They’re raving mad, you see they fix their paws,
Because from them they fear their fatal fall,
And by them Laws, they know you’ll hang ’em all,
Then keep your Laws, the Penal and the Rest,
And give your Lives up, ere you give the Test.
And thou great Church of England hold thy own,
Force you they may, otherwise give up none.*⁹⁶

Once again he predicted the imminent downfall of James’ regime. A ‘. . . tripple Square of Saturn and Jupiter from Cardinal Signs’ the first of which took place in March 1688, the second in July and the third in January 1689 would, he predicted, ‘. . . certainly make an Irruption in the Government of *England*, especially when it stands tottering as at this time’.⁹⁷ He now looked forward to James’ death. In his predictions for the autumn quarter, he hinted that the heavens seemed ‘. . . to threaten death to great men in this Quarter, and perhaps a *King* or *Prince* too’. In *Mene Tekel* he was a little more explicit, adding the following comment to his predictions for the autumn of 1688:

I have seen a *Nativity* of a certain great Man in Europe, whose fate seems to agree with this position, and I care not much if I give you the particulars of his present impending directions and other adjuncts that the common Astrologers know nothing of.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, sig. A2v.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 5-6.

He continued:

Now suppose the question was asked, whether a man of 55 years of age, under such a Crowd of directions, could live or not? Why really I must needs say, if it was my own Brothers case, I should not think it was possible for him to escape with his Life.⁹⁸

Readers would be well aware that James II would be 55 in the autumn of 1688.

Partridge's sensational writings provoked a fierce response in England from his rival John Gadbury. In 1687 Gadbury published *A Reply To That Pernicious and scandalous Libel, lately Printed in Holland In An Almanack For the Year 1687. Writted by (whom?) but Jo. Partridge an English Renegado* (1687). In it, he triumphantly declared:

*I have ript up his Ridiculous Follies, expos'd his Blasphemies and Treasons, Corrected his Errours in Art, made known his gross Juglings, and the no-ground he had, wherein to Traduce his KING and Country . . . I have Explain'd all the horrid Scandals and Falsehoods contain'd in his Chronology, and have taken the pains to inform him of somethings, he'l no more thank me for, than come to hear of.*⁹⁹

This in turn elicited a response from Partridge entitled *A Short Answer To A Malicious Pamphlet, called, A Reply; Written by John Gadbury, the King of Englands Juggler, and Astrologer in Ordinary to the Pope* (1687).

As the titles suggest, both combatants came out fighting with no holds barred, frequently hitting below the belt, each taking the opportunity to vilify the other. The best way to discredit Partridge's almanac was to discredit its author, and Gadbury set about doing so with a vengeance. Gadbury seized upon his rival's allegedly subversive past as a weapon against him. The accusations made by Robert West concerning Partridge's willingness to take part in an assassination attempt upon the royal brothers presented Gadbury with ideal material. He declared that West's testimony with

⁹⁸ J. Partridge, *Annus Mirabilis*, p. 10. *Mene Tekel: Being An Astrological Judgement On The Great and Wonderful Year 1688* (1688), pp. 9-10.

⁹⁹ J. Gadbury, *A Reply To . . . Jo. Partridge* (1687), sig. A2v-A3.

Partridge's flight to the Netherlands in 1685 and subsequent attacks on James were conclusive proof of his rival's sedition and subversion. '*Rebellion. - - - Resolve!* you have been good at this before, as appears by the Testimonies, in the History of the *Rye-House* Conspiracy against you; which your *Flight* and present *Malice* prove to be true', he informed his rival. Although Partridge had refused to take part in the Rye House Plot itself, Gadbury thought his alleged willingness to take part in an attempt upon the royal brothers, provided it took place within the capital, made him as guilty as the leading conspirators. '*You Varlet!*' he declared. '*You were One that Flutter'd up and down in that Black Design*'.¹⁰⁰

At the time of the Popish Plot it was widely believed that Gadbury was a Catholic and involved in the conspiracy, and as this chapter has shown, he adopted an increasingly overt pro-Catholic attitude during James' reign. This was more evident than ever in *A Reply*:

*To Rail at Priests, and Ban the Holy Cross.
May purchase to thy Soul eternal Loss.
Alas! No Inquisition here can free
Us, from the Abyss of Eternity
To Rome none need be Slaves! 'Tis Heresy
Ingulpths our Souls! The True Church sets us Free.*¹⁰¹

Gadbury scorned the stereotypical arguments against Catholicism used by Partridge and many of his contemporaries. He made a spirited defence of the priesthood, the targets of some of Partridge's most vitriolic abuse, and, at the same time, took the opportunity to accuse his rival of republicanism:

*Let France and Spain, and all the World make known,
The prejudice that Priests; as Priests, have done.
And then consider how this Wretched man,
At th' Sacred Name of Priest, dare Curse and Ban,
But They that Freedom take Gods Priests to Curse,*

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, sig. B4v, p. 8.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, sig. B2.

*Would serve Kings so! and (had they Power) worse.*¹⁰²

He decried the conventional view that the Catholic Church was inherently bloodthirsty:

*Nor can our Holy Mother give command
To Murder men! For, on Her Ivory Hand
A Spotless White is seen! No Blood-Stains there,
The Schismaticks for Blood! the Church for Prayer.*¹⁰³

Gadbury also mocked Partridge's predictions of the imminent downfall of the Catholic Church in England:

*The Canting Varlet thinks he hath done well;
To Grin at God, and 'gainst his King Rebell:
And, for to Menace Gods true Church again,
Raises his Raptures to a higher strain:
And boldly boasts her certain down-fall here;
When nothing like the Contrary's more clear.*

A little later he noted,

*An Admirable Position of Heaven, enough to Dazle the Eyes of Romes
greatest Enemies: and sufficient to confirm them, that they shall be no
more able to prevail against Her, than the Gates of Hell can against the
Truth she Maintains.*¹⁰⁴

At the same time Gadbury reassured Protestant readers that they had nothing to fear. He dismissed Partridge's claims that the Anglican clergy were in effect 'fellow-travellers' and that the Catholics were about to overwhelm the Protestants, and denied Partridge's assertions that popery had been 'pull'd in' by the English clergy and its dogged adherence to the principle of passive obedience, asking,

*. . . have the English Clergy pull'd in Popery in earnest? Are they the
Friends to it as this Man asserts? Is it really settled yet among us? Let the
Libeller reckon again, and calmly, and he'll find for one Catholick
Chappel, an hundred Conventicles. He need not therefore make Popery
the Bugbear wherewith to affrighten the Nation.*¹⁰⁵

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, sig. B3.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, sig. B2v.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, sig. C, p. 41.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 20.

Partridge's allegedly subversive past provided Gadbury with all the ammunition he needed for the war of words. But his vociferous support for Catholicism at that time, and alleged Catholicism at the time of the Popish Plot and his complicity in it, provided Partridge with a powerful weapon to retaliate with in *A Short Answer*.

So partisan was Gadbury's espousal of Catholicism in *A Reply* that it prompted Partridge to remark that,

. . . he cannot be so impudent after all these *villanies* and *abusive Language* to the *Church of England* and *Protestants*, crying up *Popery*, and railing at its *Enemies*, calling them *Traytors* and *Rebels*, &c. to believe any man will think him a *Protestant* tho he says he is, or to shroud himself under that title for security.¹⁰⁶

Partridge recalled how 'In 1685. On Sept. 9. two Romanists and my self being at his house, he shewed us a *Popish Bishops Picture*, and said, that now the *true Religion* was coming in again'. He pointed out too, that Gadbury's mother had been a Catholic, noting that Gadbury had been '. . . reduced to the principles of his original Spawn, his *Mother* being a *Papist*'.¹⁰⁷

It is clear that during the earlier part of his life, Gadbury's religious outlook had been unsettled. As we have seen in his *Magna Veritas* and almanac for 1682, he claimed never to have been a member of any Church other than the Church of England.¹⁰⁸ This was simply not the case, and contradicts what he himself had confessed some years earlier in *The Doctrine Of Nativities* (1658). That work contained a nativity, clearly his own, in which he wrote:

The Native confesseth that about the twenty second year of his age, he haunted the Congregations of the Presbyterians in *London* to purpose; and continued very zealous among them, until (by their preaching of that prodigious and uncomfortable Doctrine of Predestination unto eternal misery) they had made him (almost) mad, and driven him even to the very Gates of Desperation; insomuch, that he sometimes concluded himself

¹⁰⁶ J. Partridge, *A Short Answer To . . . John Gadbury* (1687), p. 23.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

¹⁰⁸ See above, p. 48.

damn'd, because he could not find in himself those signes and tokens of God's Love and Favour, that *they* so often prated of.¹⁰⁹

Seizing on the inconsistencies and contradictions in Gadbury's accounts of his religious outlook during the Republic and at the time of the Popish Plot, Partridge traced the evolution of his adversary's religious development from his self-confessed dalliances with the Presbyterians, through various shades of radical Nonconformity to Catholicism. He observed that initially Gadbury had been brought up in

. . . the Doctrine of the *Church of England* while he was young; and in this he continued for some years: but after he came to *London* [*as he tells us in his Doctrine of Nativities*] he shook off that, and went among the *Presbyterian* and *Independent* Congregations, and followed them so long, that he says [*in that Book*] they made him almost mad by preaching up the Doctrine of *Free Grace*. So that he then began to think of inquiring after a new Religion.

And the first that he pitcht upon, and best pleased his vicious Inclinations, was that prophane Persuasion called *Ranters*, *Familists*, or *Sweet Singers of Israel*, a sort of *profuse debauched Atheists*, at that time very numerous: and to this he was Converted [*or as the Cant then was, Begotten in the Faith*] by Abiezer Cope....

Cromwel being dead, and the King likely to return, *he then began to set up for a Church of England man and Loyalty*, complaining of his hard usage in the time of Rebellion; and then it was *Charles the Martyr* at every word. In this Course and Cant he went on for some years, railing at the Rebels in defence of the *Church of England*, as now he doth at the *Church of England in defence of Popery*.¹¹⁰

Partridge asserted that Gadbury had been a Catholic long before the accession of James. Indeed, he claimed that between 1666 and 1677 Gadbury ' . . . began to grow intimate with Popish Priests' and had attempted to convert him.¹¹¹

Partridge then played his trump card, reviving the accusations first made by Dangerfield, that Gadbury had been involved in the Meal Tub Plot. He openly mocked Gadbury's testimony at Cellier's trial, that she had asked him to calculate Dangerfield's nativity to ascertain whether or not he could be trusted to recover her husband's debts:

¹⁰⁹ J. Gadbury, *The Doctrine Of Nativities* (1658), Part 1, p. 262.

¹¹⁰ Partridge, *A Short Answer*, pp. 1-2.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

About the Year 1677, and forwards, he then being intimate with that worthy Matron Mrs. *Cellier*, Midwife to the Popish Plot, and his Kinswoman . . . she came to him to ask an Astrological Question, and that was, whether *Dangerfield* was fit to be trusted or not? Trusted, to do what? to Kill the King. No, No, but to know whether *Dangerfield* was fit to be trusted to get in her Husbands Debts, who was a Bankrupt, and had never a penny owing to him. [But this was the sham Question that she told the Council, to excuse her self.] So *Dangerfield* was trusted, and his business was to Kill the King; and this by *Gadbury's* direction, as you may see at large in *Dangerfields* Depositions.¹¹²

At the time of the Plot, the belief that *Gadbury's* pardon had been secured by bribery was widespread in some quarters. So too was talk that a sum of £200 had been paid to *Gadbury* on his release by the Catholics, grateful for his silence. Addressing *Gadbury* in his *Animadversions*, *Dangerfield* remarked, '. . . 'tis true enough, *You* had this money, and it was given *You* for your sufferings and fidelity to the *Catholic Cause*'.¹¹³ Not surprisingly *Partridge* reaffirmed these stories, writing how *Gadbury* to prevent himself coming to trial had,

. . . sent a large Bribe to Sir *T.D.* to desire him to procure his Pardon. But that *Gentleman's* honesty and integrity was above Bribery; and besides he knew [by what he had confest before the Council] too much of his Villany to be concerned in his Pardon, and so refused. Then he sent 100 Guinea's to the late *Lord Anglesey* to beg the same thing of him, to which his *Lordship* condescended; and by his Endeavour his Pardon was past, and he pleaded it in *Westminster-Hall* the *Hillary Term* following, and so escaped hanging at that time . . . and when he came out of Prison he was by the Papists presented with 200 pound for his faithful Service in the Cause, because he had confest so little of the design.¹¹⁴

During the war of words *Gadbury* and *Partridge* revealed a great deal about both their feelings toward James and the foundations upon which their political beliefs were built. Championing Catholicism once again, *Gadbury* attacked the scorn *Partridge* had expressed in his chronology in his edition for 1687, that Charles II had been head of the Church of England, and yet had died a Roman Catholic:

¹¹² *Ibid.*, p. 3.

¹¹³ *Dangerfield*, *Animadversions*, p. 5.

¹¹⁴ *Partridge*, *A Short Answer*, p. 3. 'Sir *T.D.*' is probably Sir. Thomas Danby, see *D.N.B.*, *Gadbury*.

Yes, *Libeller!* this good *King* did *Die* a *Roman Catholick*, and yet *Head* of the *Church of England*. Why not? What have you to do with *Liberty of Conscienc^e*, if you will not allow it your *Prince*? What infamy is it to *Die* a *Roman Catholic*?... He *Died* a *Roman Catholick!* He knew what was best to do.

He then reconciled James' Catholicism with his headship of the Church of England:

Our present Pious *Monarch* lives a *Catholick*, (and long so *God* grant Him to *live!*) and yet *Head* of the *Church of England*. His *Headship* over the *Church of England*, is no more a *Bar* to his *living*, or *dying* a *Member* of the *Catholick Church*, (A *Church*, that built all the *Famous Churches* in *England!*) than His *Supremacy* over the *Presbyterian* and *Congregational Assemblies*, &c.¹¹⁵

Partridge's chronology had also recalled James' Coronation Oath, reminding readers of the obligations enshrined in the oath which he had subsequently broken. Gadbury seized on this. He argued that as James had been appointed by God, he was under no obligation to take the Coronation Oath, or be bound by its promises. He was accountable only to God, not to his subjects. Gadbury cited the patriarchal theories of divine-right kingship of Sir Robert Filmer, expounded in his *Patriarcha*, written during the reign of Charles I, to back up his arguments. Filmer's theories were used by the Tories during the Exclusion Crisis to support their argument that English monarchs ruled by divine-right, and that hereditary succession could not be broken. They were now being used by Gadbury to support his own belief in divine-right kingship and undermine the Whig concept of the original contract between monarch and subjects:

It is very true, that this most Excellent and greatly *Suffering Prince*, as He was the *lawfull Heir*, is now (by Gods wonderful Providence, Maugre the Malice of all *Exclusioners*) *Monarch* of *Great Britain*, *France* and *Ireland*, &c. and as such, was *Crowned* at *Westminster*, on *April* the 23. 1685. And then, and there did take an *Oath*, called the *Coronation Oath*, as the *Libeller* intimates. What then? was it not of His own *Free Choice*? He was *King* of *England* without it. And, tho' it hath been *Customary* for the *Kings* of *England*, (I think since the time of King *Richard I.*) to take an *Oath* at their *Coronation*, it is not of irresistable *Obligation*, but *prudence* and *Humanity* that they do so. As Sir *R. Filmore* hath fully

¹¹⁵ Gadbury, *A Reply*, pp. 7-8.

proved. *Kings* have their *Patents* from *Heaven*, not *Men*. They are founded in the Law of *Nature* upon *Paternal Right*. The *Coronation* makes not the *King*, but only declares the *Sovereign*. 'Tis *Treason* to Act against the *King*, even before he is *Crown'd*.¹¹⁶

In *A Short Answer* Partridge reiterated his argument that it was the king's duty to take the Coronation Oath:

. . . it is not *Condescension* and *Choice* in the *King* to take it, but an *Indispensible* duty: neither are the *Subjects* obliged to take the *Oath of Allegiance* till he hath taken that. For as he swears to preserve them in their *Rights* and *Priviledges*, so they swear to stand by him in the *Execution* of the *Laws*, so that the *Oath of Allegiance* and *Coronation Oath* are *Reciprocal* and *Equally* binding. And the *King* is defective in divers points of his *Duty* and *Power* till that is performed and done. And let me tell you Mr. *Jack*, the *Subjects* have a *Right* as well as the *King*, and both by the same *Law*, and if the *King* refuseth to be a *King* by *Law*, there is neither reason nor necessity for them to swear *Obedience*, for the *Obedience* due to him as *King* by *Law*, doth also oblige him by the same *Law* to protect them in their *Lives*, *Liberties*, and *Estates*. So that it is unreasonable that the *Law* should force the *Subjects* to swear to obey and maintain a *Prince* in his *Right*, and not *compel* him to give them assurance by *Oath*, that they shall enjoy theirs also.¹¹⁷

Partridge was basing his arguments on the beliefs that underlay the Whigs' constitutional position during the Exclusion Crisis: that government originated from and served the people, and that as such monarchs derived their authority from their 'consent'. The people's 'consent', as enshrined in the Oath of Allegiance, was in turn dependent upon the monarch's undertaking to defend the Church and their people. Herein lies the Whig notion of the contract between monarch and subject. A logical extension of this argument, and one made by John Locke, was that the subjects had the right to resist a monarch who reneged on the promises inherent in the Coronation Oath, an idea which would later be employed by the Whigs to justify the Glorious Revolution.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 8-9.

¹¹⁷ Partridge, *A Short Answer*, p. 11.

Partridge then attacked Filmer, upon whose theories Gadbury based his arguments, evoking the memory of Louis XIV's *dragonnades* against the Huguenots to argue that Catholic monarchs, and James in particular, were tyrannical despots and that the Tories' espousal of divine-right kingship had paved the way for James to run roughshod over his subjects:

. . . my Friend *John* builds his opinion on *Filmore*, such another sorry *Sycophantizing Fellow* as himself, who hath many flourishes and words, and but very little Law, and less Reason and Honesty. However, he and *Jack* together would form a most admirable sort of Government for a Kingdom or Nation to be governed by *Dragoons*, and converted by *Booted Apostles*: Thus you may see what a special Englishman our Friend is, and a hopeful Casuist, that can guard and defend their tottering Cause with nothing but Lyes.¹¹⁸

For his part, Gadbury pounced on Partridge's attack on the eleven judges who found in favour of James' dispensing power in the *Godden v Hales* case, and on the way he equated them with *Tresilian*:

What have *They* done that looks *Parallel* to the actions of *Tresilian*? with whom have *They* Conspir'd? or against whom? What Countries have they injur'd? What *Single person* have *They* oppress'd? Or, wherein have *They* contradicted *Themselves*, or given *double Advice*? Speak! Infamous *Libeller*! that *They* should be thus *Menac'd* with *Tresilian*.¹¹⁹

Partridge, of course, had an answer, asserting that 'They have by their Suffrage given the *King* a power *Superior* to *Law*, for which Crime *Tresilian* was *hanged*'. They had, ' . . . in giving their Opinions, that the *King* may dispence with *all Law*, as he sees good', dispensed with the 'Laws made for the *Safety* and *Security* of the *Kingdom*, *Religion*, and *Subjects*'. Partridge went on,

They have used their utmost endeavour to bring in *Popery*: they have not only connived at the base Actions, used to encourage the *Popish Party* in the present damnable designs, to overthrow the Government, and alter Religion; but have also given advice and direction for the doing of it, and visably shewed their Endeavour by encouraging base and unjust

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 12.

¹¹⁹ Gadbury, *A Reply*, p. 10.

Prosecutions, Fining, Hanging, &c. all those that have stood in the way of it.

Proof of this could be found in their attempts through the Ecclesiastical Commission (which he described as ‘. . . an Abortive sprung out of the ruins of the *Star Chamber Tyranny*’) to foist a Catholic president upon Magdalen College, and their barbaric treatment of Monmouth’s unfortunate band of rebels following his failed rebellion.¹²⁰

Gadbury upheld James’ inviolable dispensing power, arguing that it was an invaluable safeguard against wrongful conviction. The execution of those accused of complicity in the Popish Plot by Oates illustrated the need for royal mercy in the form of the dispensing power. Gadbury believed the dispensing power was an inherent part of the ‘Prerogative Power’ of a divinely-appointed monarch: ‘. . . both *Reason* and *Religion* allow a *Dispensing Power* in the *King*’, he wrote ‘Else he cannot be said to be exactly like *God*, whose *Viceregent* He is’.¹²¹ He then turned to discuss the fear Partridge expressed concerning the way this power could be used to dispense individuals from the Test Acts. Gadbury dismissed such concerns, describing the second Test Act of 1678 as nothing but ‘. . . a *Trick* contriv’d by the *Associating Party*, to *Exclude* the *Lawful Heir* to the *Crown*’. Like the Solemn League and Covenant, he thought, it had been ‘. . . *design’d* for the *Ruine* of the *English Monarchy*’.¹²²

Partridge, like many of his contemporaries, did not deny the king possessed a dispensing power. He was more concerned with the way this power was being used and in defining its limits. He pointed out that the dispensing power was not designed to abrogate a law, but only to allow justice to be tempered with mercy in certain

¹²⁰ Partridge, *A Short Answer*, pp. 12-14.

¹²¹ Gadbury, *A Reply*, pp.10-11.

¹²² *Ibid.*, p. 11.

circumstances. It did not give the king the right ‘. . . to dispense with those Laws made by the three Estates for the security of the *Kingdom* and *Religion*’. ‘And this the *Papists* well know’, he added, ‘. . . which makes them try so many tricks to pack a *Parliament*’.¹²³

Gadbury was not content merely to defend James’ position and policies. He believed the concerns Partridge had voiced about absolutism concealed a wish to overthrow monarchy altogether and bring in a republic, and he launched a scornful counter attack on such a misguided idea:

Oh! *English-men!* ye know not the *happiness* you enjoy under a Lawfull and *Religious Monarch!* *Holland* it self (the place that protects this *Libeller*) is, in comparison of *England*, a *Hell* to the *Subject*; where he cannot so much as wear a *pair of Shoes*, or eat an *Herring*, before they be *nine times Excis’d*.¹²⁴

He continued the assault by citing the traditional belief that monarchs and their subjects formed a body politic of which the king was head. The body politic was in the image of man who had in turn been created in the image of God. He asked ‘. . . how any man endu’d with *Reason* can plead for a commonwealth?’

If *God* had intended a *Man* should have been in *Love* with a *Commonwealth*, he would have Created him with a *Head* on each *Shoulder*, as well as with what he did make him, which renders him both of *Form* and *Figure* pleasant and graceful . . . If *Government* therefore, like the *Body Natural*, should have *many Heads*, ’tis a *Monster*, and we know it ever bodes *Ill*.¹²⁵

Partridge had a blunt reply to this:

If *God* had intended the world should have been governed by *Arbitrary* and *Lawless Monarchs*, he would have sent all *Princes* and *Kings* into the world with *Boots* and *Spurs* on, and all *Subjects* should have been born with *Saddles* on their *Backs*, that they might have been rid without *Controule*, as their *Riders* had seen fit.¹²⁶

¹²³ Partridge, *A Short Answer*, pp. 15-16.

¹²⁴ Gadbury, *A Reply*, p. 24.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 26.

¹²⁶ Partridge, *A Short Answer*, p. 17.

He was consciously echoing the dying words of the veteran radical Richard Rumbold. A Leveller, self-confessed guard on the scaffold of Charles I and deeply involved in the Rye House plotting, Rumbold had joined the Earl of Argyll's ill-fated expedition to Scotland in 1685. After being captured he was tried and executed on the same day, and his last words gave posthumous fame to a central Leveller commonplace.¹²⁷ In echoing them, Partridge was once again upholding the rights and liberties of the people against a tyrannical absolutist monarch, and his willingness to do so reveals how closely he identified himself with the radical tradition. Refuting Gadbury's pro-monarchical arguments more directly he added:

A *second* Reason is, If Government (like the body natural) should have many Heads, it would be a Monster: and would it not be the same if it had but one *Head*, and that a great deal too *big* for the *body*, or a very *ugly* one? for a single Head may be a Monster as well as *two Heads*.¹²⁸

Absolute monarchy was closely linked to a powerful standing army. Partridge lashed out at James' military build-up with his sneering remark that 'Now hangs our freedom on each villains Sword'. Gadbury naturally objected. 'This is a brisk gird at his *Majesty* for keeping an *Army* for the Security and Peace of the *Kingdom*', he complained. He alleged that Partridge's opposition to the standing army stemmed from a desire to see the king defenceless in the face of rebellion. The need for a standing army had been shown, he argued, during Monmouth's rebellion when the inadequacies of the militia had been cruelly exposed. Furthermore he insisted that the army was well disciplined and posed a threat to no one.¹²⁹ Partridge rejected these arguments. He alleged that the army was an ill-disciplined rabble, guilty of a number of heinous

¹²⁷ H. N. Brailsford, *The Levellers and the English Revolution* (1976), p. 624; *D.N.B.*, Rumbold. His last words were 'I am sure there was no man born marked of God above another; for none comes into the world with a saddle on his back, neither any booted and, spurred to ride him'.

¹²⁸ Partridge, *A Short Answer*, p. 17.

¹²⁹ Gadbury, *A Reply*, pp. 27-28.

offences, particularly against Protestants, and that it could, and probably would, be used at any time to extirpate Protestantism in England.¹³⁰

What outraged Gadbury most of all in Partridge's almanac for 1687 were the author's hints that James would die by October 1688:

The Libeller, notwithstanding, is here come to the highest pitch of his Treason and Daring. For by these Hellish passages, he most Treasonably and Falsly imagines the Death of the King, and hath presumed to set Bounds to His Sacred life. [One and Twenty months is not an age!] For which I doubt not but Justice will Requite him.

He continued:

And for his Spanish Apple, which He says will then be grateful to the English Palate; he tacitly but most wickedly menaces His Majesty with Poyson....This Rancorous-Bloody Villain! nothing can satiate his malice, but the life of his Sovereign! and that by a Death of his own appointment, without ground in Art. But Libeller! let me tell you, God hath preserved Him from the Lyon and the Bear; from the Associators and Exclusioners! from Perils by Land! and Dangers by Sea! And I doubt not he will Deliver Him from the malicious groundless menaces of this Uncircumcis'd Philistine too.¹³¹

Gadbury argued that it was simply not possible to make such predictions as James' exact time of birth was not known, which rendered the calculation of his nativity an impossible task. '*Astrology cannot own any such damnable suggestion, unless his Majesties Birth were known*', he declared '*. . . which I am confident it is not either to the Libeller, or any other Truly*'. Yet we know that Gadbury had calculated a nativity for James in his work *The Nativity Of the late King Charls* [sic] of 1659.¹³² Not surprisingly, Gadbury went to great lengths to stress the inaccuracy of this nativity. 'There was a *Scheam*, pretended to be His Majesties Birth Figure published (among

¹³⁰ Partridge, *A Short Answer*, p. 19.

¹³¹ Gadbury, *A Reply*, pp. 29, 31.

¹³² J. Gadbury, *The Nativity Of the late King Charls* [sic] (1659), pp. 108-111.

other things) in *Anno 1659* (By no enemy to the *Royal Family* as the Book shews;) . . .

But the *Figure* is not true, for many *Reasons* I could give'.¹³³

Partridge denied Gadbury's claims that he had ' . . . terminated the present happiness and Government of *England* by *October 1688*'. On the contrary, he predicted that, at that time

. . . the Glory and Happiness of *England*, the *Protestant Religion*, and the *Church of England*, will then begin to appear, and suddenly after thrive and flourish again, to the Eternal sorrow and grief of *Jack Gadbury*, and all his *cursed Faction*, that so much desire and delight in the ruin and destruction of the *Protestants*, and *Protestant Religion*.

He then mocked Gadbury's claim that he had predicted the king would be poisoned, and revealed what was really meant,

. . . like a Fool He tells the World there, that I threaten the *King* with *Poyson*, when I mention the *Spanish Apple*. I perceive the Fellow is *Ignorant* what the meaning of an *Orangean Apple* is; and if he be, let him be so still, till the Judgement of God comes down upon them. [Gadbury and all his 'cursed Faction'].¹³⁴

The Spanish apple was an orange, and readers were left to deduce the obvious message: that William of Orange would soon be welcomed by the English people.

The feud between Partridge and Gadbury was resumed in Partridge's almanac for 1688, written towards the end of 1687. Late in 1687 news began to filter through that the queen, Mary Beatrice, was pregnant. It was not long before rumours began to spread among some Protestants that she was not really pregnant, or that if the child were born a girl, a boy would be substituted in its place. When the healthy young prince was eventually born it was widely insinuated that the father was the hated Jesuit Edward Petre, a man whom contemporaries believed had a great influence over James. News of the queen's pregnancy had soon reached Partridge on the Continent, and in

¹³³ *Ibid.*, p. 30.

¹³⁴ Partridge, *A Short Answer*, pp. 19, 23.

his almanac for 1688 (as reprinted in *Annus Mirabilis and Mene Tekel*) he made wild allegations about it. He alleged that the queen was not really pregnant, and that another child would be passed off as the Prince of Wales at the appropriate time. This child, he claimed, was the illegitimate son of Father Petre. Who was involved in this scheme? None other than John Gadbury and Elizabeth Cellier, alleged partners in the Meal House Plot.

I judge that there is some *bawdy Project* on foot, that must be managed by such people as are described by the *Moon in Scorpio*. And this is either about *buying, selling or procuring a Child or Children* for some *Pious* use. Perhaps it may be nothing else but the taking care of Fa. *P----s Child* that he got on Mrs. *Betty* at the *Bath* last Summer, and that I may do you all the service I can, I will here describe what manner of mad persons they are that are to be concerned in this *bawdy project*. And they are a sort of *scandalous, impudent, mercenary* people, that will sell or ruin their own Souls, to serve the cause they are dipt in, of a *fat corpulant* Body, not very tall, perhaps but short; for they are like the *Moon in Scorpio* which may give both, but always fat or inclined to it.

The pages of *Mene Tekel* went on to name names, 'For a *Man Gadbury*, the *Popes Astrologer* is exactly described both for body and mind, and for a Woman *Mrs. Cellier Midwife* to the *Popish Plot* who doth not come an inch behind him for Reputation and Honesty'.¹³⁵ The plan would reach fruition in June 1688 during which 'Some *Child*' would be '... topt upon a *Lawful heir* to cheat them out of their *Right and Estate*'.¹³⁶

On the eve of James' accession Partridge, like most fellow Whigs, had been disheartened and frightened. Realising that opposition to James was futile he retired from the political fray before fleeing to the safety of the Netherlands. As his offensive against James and vigorous feud against Gadbury show, whilst in exile, surrounded by fellow radicals, he was invigorated and re-entered the political fray with a vengeance.

¹³⁵ Partridge, *Annus Mirabilis*, pp. 6-7; *Mene Tekel*, p. 7.

¹³⁶ Partridge, *Annus Mirabilis*, p. 13.

Nonetheless, it was Gadbury who had the upper hand during these years. He rejoiced at the accession of the Catholic James, and by the time of his feud with Partridge he had come to share the king's Catholicism or was, at the very least, a vociferous supporter of Catholicism. Encouraged by the birth of the Prince of Wales he openly expressed his support for Catholicism and hoped for an unlimited period of Catholic rule. He was convinced that James would defeat the threat posed by William of Orange, and that his infant son would eventually succeed him. The shattering of this confidence at the end of 1688 turned Gadbury's world upside down. Only Partridge (and at the last moment Whalley) had anticipated William's triumph, at least in public. The whole of the astrological fraternity now had to make a rapid and dramatic adjustment to a situation they had signally failed to predict.

CHAPTER THREE

THE ASTROLOGERS AND WILLIAM III

On 1 November 1688 the prevailing westerly wind gave way to the 'Protestant' easterly and William of Orange and his fleet set sail for England. The same easterly wind which drove William's fleet westwards through the English Channel pinned down the English navy at anchor in the Thames estuary. On 5 November, a day already etched upon the Protestant consciousness, William landed at Torbay.

It is not at all certain that at this stage William and his supporters sought to depose James. The notion of deposing him was certainly anathema to the Tories, wedded to the principles of divine-right kingship and non-resistance. However, the Tories were soon abandoned by their own king who, in the face of defections from the army, growing support for William throughout the country and the defection of his daughter Anne, fled to the safety of France. On 11 April 1689 William and Mary were crowned King and Queen of England.¹ It is with the reign of William that this chapter is concerned. It will be divided into two parts, the first dealing with the period 1689-95, the second with the latter half of William's reign between 1695 and 1702.

The Accession, the Jacobites and War, 1689-95

The Glorious Revolution brought to the English throne a man whose interests were centred not in England, but in Europe. William was determined to establish a firm and

¹ For a good introduction to the Glorious Revolution, see J. Miller, *The Glorious Revolution* (1683); Jones, *Revolution*, and W. A. Speck, *Reluctant Revolutionaries: Englishmen and the Revolution of 1688* (1990). For details of the political history of William's reign, see J. Kenyon, *Revolution Principles: The Politics of Party, 1689-1720* (Cambridge, 1991). The standard biography of William is S. B. Baxter, *William III* (1966).

lasting European peace by maintaining a balance of power between Europe's leading dynasties, the Habsburgs and the Bourbons, by checking the power of the expansionist French monarch Louis XIV.

The autumn of 1688 had seen the French invade the Palatinate, a show of strength perhaps designed to pave the way for the determination of the Spanish succession in France's favour. If this was the case it backfired with disastrous consequences. Louis' invasion of the Palatinate allowed William to invade England free from the fear of a French invasion of the United Provinces, and plunged Europe into a war that would last nine years. French expansionism was met by a European coalition forged by William: the Grand Alliance. On 7 May 1689 England, as part of the Grand Alliance, entered the war against France, a war destined to have a massive impact upon English politics and society. How did the astrologers respond to the accession of William to the English throne, and to the long-drawn-out war with France and the changes it brought? It is the aim of this part of the chapter to answer these questions, taking the story to 1695. We will begin by examining the Whig astrologers.

The Whig Astrologers

Whilst those Whig astrologers who stayed in England under James pledged their allegiance to him, their sycophancy hid a growing anger and resentment. They saw his attempts to bring in popery, as eating away at the laws, liberties and religion of the nation. With the Glorious Revolution this anger exploded amidst the rapturous welcome they offered William.

Welcoming William as the saviour of England from the grip of 'Popery and Slavery', the Whig astrologers declared the Revolution a miracle, divinely ordained. 'How thankfull ought the people of *England, Scotland, and Ireland* to be to the Almighty God, for the Miraculous Deliverance of these Kingdoms from Popery and Slavery', a delighted Daniel Woodward proclaimed in his edition for 1691.² The theme was developed by a new Whig astrologer Mathew Hobbs, who entered the political fray in 1693. In a striking image Hobbs presented James II's regime as a band of bloodthirsty and drunken ruffians:

How Pot-valiant then was Popery? How merrily was that Blood-thirsty Gang going to carouse in our Blood? Then in that critical time, did it please God to send in KING WILLIAM to be our Deliverer; He spoil'd their Mirth, broke up their Company, made them leave their Liquor behind them, and Three Kingdoms to pay the Reckoning.

'William's intervention could not have come at a more propitious moment:

A miserable sea of Disorder and Confusion was broke in upon us: our Lives, Liberties and Estates; and that which is most dear to all good Men, our very *Religion* (the best Reform'd throughout the World) were ready to be swallowed up. But no sooner did his glorious Person appear amongst us, but those furious Waters did abate; and that black cloud of Misery and Calamity from thence exhaled, and ready to fall upon us, was dispers'd and gone.³

The Glorious Revolution heralded the return of those Whig astrologers who had fled James' rule. Among them was William Salmon⁴ who rejoiced at William's accession and thanked him for having 'Delivered us from Popery and its curse', '. . . rescu'd our Religion, and the state', and restored '. . . our Liberties...And Priviledges'.⁵ Like the other Whig astrologers he shared the widespread belief that God

² Woodward, 1691, sig. A4v.

³ Hobbs, a 'Student in Physick and Astrology' and a teacher of mathematics, surveying and music, was born in Buckinghamshire and published almanacs for London between 1693 and 1696. Hobbs, 1693, sig. C3-C3v; 1695, sig. C5v.

⁴ Salmon alluded to his flight and subsequent return in his almanacs for 1691 and 1694. Salmon, 1691, sig. A2; 1694, sig. A2.

⁵ Salmon, 1692, sig. B6v-B7.

had driven the 'Protestant' easterly wind and calmed the seas to bring William safely to England.⁶ They all saw William as God's instrument sent to deliver England from 'Popery and Slavery'. This divine blessing established his clear right to the crown.

How else did the Whig astrologers set about justifying the Glorious Revolution? As we saw earlier the Whig position during the Exclusion Crisis rested on the belief that government originated from, and served, the people. Monarchs ruled by their subjects' 'consent' as encapsulated in the Oath of Allegiance, given in return for the monarch's undertaking to preserve their lives, liberties and estates, and their Church, inherent in the Coronation Oath.⁷ Herein lies the Whig notion of the original contract between monarchs and their subjects. Taking this to its logical conclusion the Whigs argued that subjects had the right to resist a monarch who reneged on the Coronation Oath and thus broke the original contract. Driven by the belief that James would do just this, they had argued that his potential subjects had the right to resist his accession.

In the Convention Parliament elected in wake of the Glorious Revolution, the Whigs argued that their fears had proved well founded, and that James' subjects had been well within their rights to resist him. Opposition from the Lords, however, to a Commons resolution linking James' abdication to the breaking of the original contract ensured that no mention was made of James having broken any contractual obligation in the Declaration of Rights. It concluded merely that James had '. . . abdicated the Government, and that the throne is thereby become vacant'.⁸

The majority of Whig astrologers shared the parliamentary Whigs' interpretation of the Glorious Revolution. William Salmon had no sympathy for a king who had reneged

⁶ See for example, Salmon, 1691, sig. A6v.

⁷ See above, p. 130.

⁸ Kenyon, *Revolution Principles*, ch. 2, p. 10.

upon the promises he had made in the Coronation Oath. James had flagrantly abused the prerogative power to rule as an absolute monarch:

The Abdicated King by Regal Act,
When he was Crown'd, made us a Solemn Pact.
The People claim'd his Royal Word and Oath,
But by Prerogative he broke them both.
His subjects might not their own Right dispute,
His Parasites declar'd him Absolute.

No King had e're a more prodig'ous Rise,
Declared Gracious, and reputed Wise:
Supported by his Subjects Love, not Fear,
And in the Hearts of all his People dear.
Thus he the Crown and ravisht Kingdom seiz'd,
And spite of all our Laws did what he pleased.

God had therefore sent William to deliver the English nation.⁹

By virtue of the fact that James had broken his contract with his subjects, and William had been divinely appointed, the Whig astrologers declared William the rightful king ' . . . by Choice and Law', the 'Choice' not only of God but, as John Partridge would point out, the people. Not only had James' subjects the right to resist him, but to choose his successor!¹⁰ As far as the Whig astrologers were concerned, there was simply no question of William's legitimacy, and they urged his subjects to unite to support him. Daniel Woodward hoped to see,

No more Debates, Distinctions, nor such Dins
About *de Jure* or *de Facto* kings.¹¹

The Whig astrologers were well aware that many people did not share their enthusiasm for their new king. They took the Jacobite threat very seriously, conscious that if James were restored to the throne all the rights and liberties he had eroded, and which had been restored with the Glorious Revolution, would be lost once again. The

⁹ Salmon, 1692, sig. B2v, B3; 1691, sig. A5v.

¹⁰ Salmon, 1692, sig. B4; see below, pp. 153-154.

¹¹ Woodward, 1692, sig. A7v.

Jacobites, they declared, were traitors, 'French Pensioners' who wished to enslave England under the yoke of Catholic oppression and French tyranny. James was merely the puppet of the French king. John Tanner informed his readers that the whole purpose of his 1692 edition was to act as an

*Eye-salve to clear the sight, that we may see
The difference 'twixt Englands Liberty
And the worst Plague, the Gallick Tyranny.*

The Jacobites, he argued, were '*Eagerly courting their own Slaverie*'.

*You passive Fools, that have your selves betray'd
Put on your Wooden Shoes, your Rags, and Chains
The Fruit and Just Reward of all your Pains.*¹²

The Jacobite threat was arguably at its most potent whilst William's reign was in its infancy, especially between the years 1689-90, and this was clearly reflected in the almanacs and other works of the Whig astrologers. Scotland was torn asunder by a Jacobite rising in the summer of 1689, though by August the Jacobite cause in Scotland had been lost. The massacre of Glencoe in February 1692 ensured that Jacobite sympathies would remain high in some parts of Scotland for many years to come and Tanner alluded to the Jacobite threat and unrest in Scotland in his almanac for 1693, written shortly after the massacre at Glencoe.¹³ On 12 March 1689 James, bolstered by French support, landed in Ireland at Kinsale, bringing the threat of a French-supported invasion of England. The Irish Catholics rose to support him. With William's victory at the Boyne in July 1690 the pendulum began to swing back in his favour. He left Ireland in September, though it would take his subordinates Ginkel and Marlborough over a year to complete the conquest of Ireland and staunch the Jacobite threat.

¹² Tanner, 1692, sig. C3; 1696, sig. C3.

¹³ Tanner, 1693, sig. B5v.

The Whig astrologers fully recognised the importance of the Irish situation, and devoted much attention to it. In 1690 Richard Kirby, who had remained silent during James' reign, published his work *Catastrophe Galliae, & Hiberniae Restitutio*, whose title page predicted '... the Reduction of Ireland, This Revolution, 90. ending March the 10th 1691. Also The Conquering of proud *Lewis*, and Abasing *France* by Their present Majesties William and Mary, King and Queen of *England*, Defenders of the Faith, &c.'¹⁴ Kirby was aware that James saw Ireland as a stepping-stone to his restoration in England. He was, however, adamant that such plans would be scuppered, not only by defeat in Ireland, but the subsequent downfall of Louis '... let the Papists know', he wrote, that

... tho the *French* King joyns with them, yet all is in vain; for on the 23d. of *November*, 1690. will be Celebrated a Famous Conjunction of the two Malevolents, viz. *Saturn* and *Mars*, in *Scorpio*, the *French* King's *Horoscope*: therefore, expect in a short time, the Power of *France* to be brought very low, and all their wicked Designs end in Confusion.¹⁵

John Whalley, an Irish Protestant as well as a Whig, had an especial concern for Irish matters. A month after James II landed there, Whalley joined the Protestant exodus to England. In the two almanacs printed in England following his flight, Whalley rejoiced at the accession of William, triumphantly declaring that '... *one drop of Orange Juice works greater effects than a whole Barrel of Holy Water*',¹⁶ and he predicted the reconquest and subsequent downfall of the Catholic interest in Ireland.

Whalley had witnessed at first hand the policies of Catholicization vigorously pursued by James' Lord Deputy in Ireland, Tyrconnell, who had purged the army of Protestants, appointed Catholic sheriffs, and used *quo warranto* proceedings to give Catholics ascendancy in the corporations. Furthermore, he had confiscated the

¹⁴ R. Kirby, *Catastrophe Galliae, & Hiberniae Restitutio* (1691), t.p.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 18.

¹⁶ Whalley, 1691, sig. A2v.

Protestants' estates and redistributed them to the Catholics, giving rise to fear amongst Protestants that the Restoration land settlement was about to be overturned. In his almanac for 1690 Whalley inveighed against Tyrconnell's regime and particularly those Protestants who had collaborated with it. He was confident enough to predict that by the summer of 1690, those who had served the administration would be getting a taste of their own medicine.¹⁷ In his edition for 1691 Whalley celebrated William's victory at the Boyne pointing out how James:

The Cowardly King (the second time by chance)
Like man from wits, new chas'd, escapes to *France*.¹⁸

The downfall of the Catholic interest in Ireland was now inevitable, he rejoiced.¹⁹

Whalley had a personal as well as political bitterness towards the Catholic authorities for in November 1688 they had sentenced him to be pilloried for sedition. He used his almanac to vindicate himself, revealing that his offence had been to predict that William's invasion would be a success and that the Irish authorities were planning to disarm the Protestants in Ireland. Both these predictions, made in an almanac published in Ireland in 1688 on the eve of William's invasion, had proved accurate. In the 1690 edition of *Englands Mercury* Whalley wrote, with more than a hint of triumphalism:

Now, you late Great and Mighty *Rulers* and *Ruiners* of *Ireland*, what do you think of your selves now? Pray consider whether it was for telling the Truth or Lies you Vouchsaf'd me your Courtesie in *November* 1688? Turn about, is fair play: It was your turn to ask Questions then; pray vouchsafe me the favour now to be answered. Whether you think my asserting Him you impudently then call'd *Rebel*, but now, against your wills, is your lawful Sovereign, *was landed in England, freely received into Exeter, and making his way towards London, courted and kindly received by the People; and that you design'd to disarm the Protestants, as you did the latter end of February following:* I say, I desire to be answered, *Whether I*

¹⁷ Whalley, 1690, sig. Bv.

¹⁸ Whalley, 1691, sig. C4v.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, sig. A6.

*told truth? And if so, Why I was so sentenced to be punished, as I unjustly was?*²⁰

James' presence in Ireland heightened fears of an invasion of England itself. In June 1690, the French navy had inflicted a crushing defeat upon the English fleet off Beachy Head. With William and his army in Ireland, and the English navy vanquished, England was temporarily defenceless and gripped by the fear of a French invasion. These fears were reflected in the Whig almanacs. In his almanac for 1691, written in the summer and autumn of 1690 in the wake of the French victory, John Tanner lamented, '*Rumour on Rumour, all is out of Order*'. He was particularly concerned that the Jacobites would try to exploit England's vulnerability by fomenting panic and unrest. He warned against those '*. . . home-bred Vipers our most dang'rous Foes*', who with,

*Murmurs, with Fears and Jealousies intrude,
Disturb the Heads o'th' Brain sick Multitude.*

Tanner was particularly concerned by the threat of Jacobite activity in London. The war was hitting the capital's commercial life. Acknowledging that '*. . . our Troubles do impede thy Trade*', Tanner warned London,

*. . . beware; a secret Enemy
thy envy'd Happiness doth undermine.*²¹

Though the French invasion never came, and the panic gradually receded, the Jacobite threat continued long after the crisis of 1689-90 and the Whig astrologers continued to attack the Jacobites and warn of the consequences of restoring James II. Their almanacs constantly predicted the discovery of Jacobite plots and the publication of seditious pamphlets and broadsheets. Their message was clear: any opposition to William, the divinely-ordained and protected monarch was futile. Shortly after the discovery of Preston's Plot in 1690, Daniel Woodward declared:

²⁰ Whalley, 1690, sig. C8.

²¹ Tanner, 1691, sig. B3v, B4v, B8, B7v.

The *Jacobites* do all fret, fume and swear,
 Because (alas) th' are catch'd in their own *snare*;
 Forge factious Libels, and contemn our *Laws*,
 As being repugnant to their old Cause.
 But, Gentlemen, take heed, pray, lest you fall,
 For *Squire Catch* looks grim upon you all.²²

In their campaign against the Jacobite cause the Whig astrologers made much use of the stereotypical anti-Catholic propaganda employed earlier during the Exclusion Crisis. Once again they evoked memories of the Great Fire and Popish Plot to emphasise the Catholics' cruelty and conspiratorial nature. John Tanner argued that the oppression of the Protestants in Ireland should be a warning against restoring James, as should the miseries of life in absolutist France. He urged the Jacobites:

*If French Dragooning you so much desire,
 Plunge you yourselves, not us into that Fire.*²³

To keep James at bay, it was essential to stand firm against the French as well as the Jacobites at home. Not surprisingly, the Whig astrologers wholeheartedly supported King William's war. From the outset they adopted a bellicose stance toward the French. Their almanacs and other pieces served as a rich source of propaganda, drumming up support for the war effort and constantly striving to bolster the readers' morale.

Taking the notion of William as an 'Instrument' of God a step further, the Whig astrologers argued that he had been ordained for greater things: to free Europe from the grip of the French tyrant Louis XIV. In a verse dedicated to William in his 1693 edition, William Salmon declared:

You'r preordain'd to set the bounds unto
 The Gallick Tyrants rage; to make him know,
 Heaven rais'd you up to scourge his Pride and Lust,

²² Woodward, 1692, sig. A6v. Woodward's allusion to '*Squire Catch*' evokes the memory of the notorious executioner John Ketch (indeed, his name may possibly have been Catch) commonly known as 'Jack Ketch', who died late in 1686. *D.N.B.*, Ketch.

²³ Tanner, 1690, sig. B7.

And your strong Arms to shake him into Dust.
 To set th' enslav'd European Nations free,
 And their Eternal Liberties decree.²⁴

God was clearly protecting William and guiding the allies under his command, God had saved him at the Boyne when he had been grazed by a cannon-ball, and again at the Battles of Neerwinden and Namur. As Daniel Woodward reassuringly wrote in his edition for 1692:

Take Courage *England!* God's great Providence
 Salutes thy Actions, is thy strong Defence;
 Conducts thy Motions, guides thy Measures well;
 When the *united Forces* will prevail.
 Advance thy Vigor then, t' enlarge thy *Crown*;
 Thy Valiant *Monarch* will pull *Monsieur* down.²⁵

Richard Kirby urged his readers not to be shocked by his predictions of Louis' downfall at the hands of William, in his *Catastrophe Galliae*, observing that 'God regards bad Kings no more than silly Shepherds'.²⁶

Many of the Whig astrologers argued that, with God on his side, William was destined to sweep through France. England's naval victory off La Hogue in 1692 made the prospect of such an invasion real. In his almanac for 1693, written shortly after the victory, Hobbs gloated at the capture or destruction of many of the French warships and warned the French to prepare for invasion:

France . . . thy *Royal Sun* is Set, thy *Lightning* is quenched, thy *Thunderer's* Noise is Drowned, thy *Victory* is Overcome, thy *Triumphant* is Captivated; in fine thy Invincible Armado is Eighty-Eighted.----
 ----Defend thy Shore if thou canst; the brave English, thy old Masters are coming. Alas, poor Slaves of *France!* WILLIAM, the King of Gentlemen, is coming. Against his arrival, Christen your Monarch, and his Mermidons, by such Rhodamantado Names as your Fleet was, that so your Fall may be more fatal and ridiculous, from such huffing high Titles.

²⁴ Salmon, 1693, sig. A2.

²⁵ Woodward, 1692, sig. A4v.

²⁶ Kirby, *Catastrophe Galliae*, p. 19.

In his edition for the same year, Daniel Woodward triumphantly predicted that ‘. . . the War should be carried into the very Bowels of France’.²⁷ Some of the Whig astrologers predicted that Louis was also faced with insurrection - many citing the old prophecies made by William Lilly in his work *Monarchy Or No Monarchy* (1651) that the French people would rise up against their monarch’s tyranny and drive him out of the country. Some were even prepared to predict his death. Woodward observed ‘. . . his most Unchristian Majesties Pride is coming down, and his Death, or some strange Catastrophe is assuredly approaching’. A year earlier John Whalley had remarked ‘I will not absolutely affirm him [Louis] to dye this year; but I am certain, if not, he cannot live long’.²⁸

The Whigs based their predictions on older prophecies as well as their own reading of the stars. According to Salmon, William’s victory had been prophesied in a set of ‘Hieroglyphicks’ which he published in his almanac for 1692. Salmon claimed he had copied them

. . . out of a large Folio Book about Twenty Years since. The Book was designed without doubt by a very learned Hand, and was nearly as large as a Church-Bible, containing the future State of *England* for several Hundreds of Years to come; curiously done in large Figures and admirably painted, beginning from 1650 and ending *Anno* 2150.²⁹

He claimed he had shown them to several individuals twenty years earlier, among them Henry Coley, and that Coley had persuaded him to publish them.³⁰ The ‘Hieroglyphicks’ numbered sixty two, and traced England’s history through the Great Plague, the Fire of London, the Anglo-Dutch Wars, the tyrannical reign of James II and the Glorious Revolution. They closed with the final defeat of Louis at the hands of

²⁷ Hobbs, 1693, sig. C2v; Woodward, 1693, sig. B3.

²⁸ Woodward, 1691, sig. A6; Whalley, 1690, sig. C7.

²⁹ Salmon, 1692, sig. C4v.

³⁰ Salmon, 1693, sig. C3-C3v.

William and the resulting European peace. They had not been written in chronological order, and Salmon only published the 'key' to them in the following year's edition. Here to give a taste of these mysterious 'Hieroglyphicks' is No. 64, complete with key.

It spoke of:

A Ram treading upon a Garden of Lilies,
or Field of Flower de Luces, and at his
feet three dead Dragons.

This signified:

The Absolute Conquest of *France*, and overturning
of its *Polity*, signified by Three dead Dragons;
the one of which signifies the *Tyrant* himself:
The second his *Tyrannick* Power: The third the
Power and Dominion of their *Clergy*, or the
Romish Church.³¹

Despite their bellicose stance, the Whig astrologers were fully aware of the suffering caused by the war and the resentment it produced. In his almanac for 1694 John Tanner predicted '... a mutinous and disobedient humour among Subjects against their Superiours, and a wearisomeness to bear the burthen of Taxes and Impositions that are laid upon them'. He noted how rulers too had become exhausted by the strains of war, as he wrote in 1693: '... it is probable that several Princes and States would willingly enjoy a Peace, being wearied with the Charge and Fatigues of War, and may by this time or soon after eagerly seek it'.³² Indeed, there is some evidence that Tanner came to share their war weariness. In his almanac for 1694 he observed in his predictions for the 'Autumnal' quarter:

There are many peaceful Aspects this Quarter, and we of the Commonalty long for nothing more but Peace, and to be eased of the Burthens under which we groan. Peace is now talk'd of, Peace now is wish'd for, and I

³¹ Salmon, 1692, sig. C6v; 1693, sig. C3.

³² Tanner, 1694, sig. C7, 1693, sig. C5v.

hope there is a sort of Men that will heartily endeavour it: And may the Gracious Hand of God assist their pious Endeavours.³³

Before long he was voicing the widespread complaints against war profiteers who had a vested interest in seeing the war continue. In his edition for 1695 he remarked poignantly:

*War is a Trade affords abundant gain,
We know full well, who 'tis endures the pain.*³⁴

The weariness felt by Tanner and many others was fully shared in France. From as early as 1693 Louis had made repeated calls for peace. The Whig astrologers, however, warned of the danger of making any agreement with the duplicitous French monarch. Alluding to the peace negotiations of 1693 John Wing declared:

*France sues for Peace with our British Isle
Believe him not for 'tis not worth the while.
Tho a Neighbouring Prince's kindness is but small
His friendships less, and 's actions worst of all.*³⁵

Mathew Hobbs cited Louis' expansionism following the Treaty of Nijmegen as proof of Louis' duplicity.³⁶

The Whig astrologers' message was simple, and would be repeated later during the War of Spanish Succession. There could be no peace until Louis had been finally vanquished and the balance of power in Europe restored. As Daniel Woodward wrote in his edition for 1695,

. . . there are yet more impending storms ready to discharge themselves, still more Business to be done, more *Tragical* Events to be expected, before the great Work now on the Anvil, be accomplished; and the great Business of Europe settles: Such as is the Establishment of ancient Legal Government and Authorities, the Just Rights of *Princes* and *People*, the

³³ Tanner, 1694, C8.

³⁴ Tanner, 1695, sig. A5v.

³⁵ Wing, 1694, sig. B.

³⁶ Hobbs, 1693, sig. C3v.

Restitution of Violated Treaties, and the Reduction of that grand Tyrant and Disturber of Europe, the French Tyrant.³⁷

The most important Whig astrologer, John Partridge, had stood apart from his fellows by continuing his attacks on James and his policies in the years after 1685, from the safety of his refuge in the Netherlands. Returning to England following the Glorious Revolution, he promptly celebrated his new freedom to speak out against popery:

*Heaven and our good Stars have been so kind to give me an opportunity to kiss your hand in this nature again in my Native Country, without danger of being whipp'd or Jail'd for affronting Popery, &c. or being indicted for Seditious writing against it in my own way.*³⁸

Partridge was so delighted by England's liberation from 'Popery and Arbitrary Government' that he changed the title of his series of almanacs to *Merlinus Liberatus*.

In the 1690 edition (the first published after the Revolution), he triumphantly declared:

*Since my last Appearance in this manner, there have been many and strange Mutations in this Kingdom: And to our Comfort, the Lord hath wrought a mighty Work in delivering his Church and People from the Rage of their Enemies, the Rapacious Papists, whose Design was Murder.*³⁹

Partridge too saw England's deliverance as divinely ordained, and William as the 'Instrument' of God. He even went so far as to claim that God had placed an angel at the head of William's forces as they marched southward toward London.⁴⁰

Notwithstanding his support for a republic in his almanac for 1687, Partridge now welcomed William, England's saviour, as a wholly legitimate monarch, '. . . the lawfull'st we ere had before'. James, by abdicating, had left the throne vacant, and

³⁷ Woodward, 1695, sig. A5.

³⁸ J. Partridge, *Mene Mene, Tekel Upharsin. The Second Part of Mene Tekel* (1689), sig. A2.

³⁹ Partridge, 1690, sig. A2.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, sig. A4.

William and Mary had been chosen by God and the people to rule in his place, ‘Of all this Line [as Lawful Heirs] were none’ he averred in his edition for 1691:

More Just Possessors of the *English Throne*
Than they that now sit there [maugre their Foes]
By all thats *Just* and *Sacred* too, were chose
Right, Faith, and Merit, and with this the Choice
Of Heavens Vote, the Peoples Mighty Voice.

In his edition for the following year he proclaimed:

God save the King, that *King* that sav’d the Land,
When *James*, your *Martyr’s Son*, your Laws had shamm’d,
That sav’d your *Babes*, your *Lands, Estates* and *Wives*,
And your own *Throats* too from *dispensing Knives*.⁴¹

Partridge’s former republican sentiments were not his only potential embarrassment during the 1690s. Whilst his predictions of the downfall of James and the Catholics in England had proved accurate, those that James was to die in October of 1688 had not. Partridge moved swiftly to defend his position, claiming now that he had not actually ‘said’ James would die - a white lie, for he had strongly hinted at the king’s imminent death. He argued too that his predictions had been fulfilled in part, for the Glorious Revolution had produced an ‘Effect’ for James ‘. . . *so like Death, that it doth as well for the Deliverance of the Nation . . . It is indeed a Civil Death*’.⁴²

Like the other Whig astrologers, Partridge did his best to rally support for the revolution settlement. He reminded readers of James’ tyranny and oppression, stressing that in his attempts to bring in popery James had reneged upon his promise to maintain the people’s ‘Laws, Liberties and Religion’, and had invaded ‘. . . every Mans Propriety’. If James were ever to return the nation could expect far worse: James would emulate Louis’ *dragonnades* and eradicate Protestantism by force! ‘In short’, he warned his readers,

⁴¹ Partridge, 1691, sig. A2v; 1691, sig. A2v; 1692, sig. A2v.

⁴² Partridge, *Mene Mene*, sig. A3-A3v.

. . . if you desire him again, you must take him with Thanks to him for all the *Oppression, Trouble, Ruine, and Destruction* that he hath brought upon the whole Nation in general, and every Man in particular; and lay your *Necks* at his *Feet*, and beg of him to make you *Slaves* of what Quality and Degree he pleaseth; to set up what Religion he likes best, to protect you according to the *Irish and French Modes*, and to destroy all your antient *Laws, Rights, and Priviledges*.⁴³

To allow James back would be tantamount to placing Louis on the throne, and England would be enslaved by the French tyrant. Louis' support of James in Ireland was proof, if any were needed, that James was merely his puppet

. . . you see plainly now, by the Affairs in *Ireland*, that the *French King* is his *Tutor and Master*, and that he is wholly under his Guide and Management and therefore at the same time you take *James* for your *King*, you must take the *French Tyrant* for your *Governour*, and expect all the *Oppression and Tyranny* that the poor *Protestants* in *France* have suffered, and indured, these last six or seven Years.

'Would you be *Slaves*?' he asked in his almanac for 1694:

In *Slavery* live and die?
The Worst of *Slaves, Slaves to French Tyranny!*
Slaves to his *Priests*, those mimick State Buffoons!
Slaves to the Scum of *Hell*, his damn'd *Dragoons*.
Who Begg these *Plagues*, he speaks himself a sot;
Let them be *Slaves* who will, I Like it not.⁴⁴

Like other Whigs Partridge continually predicted Jacobite plots and warned readers of their seditious activity in England, Ireland and Scotland. A Jacobite was easy to identify, he explained:

Now you may know this sort of unhappy and Disaffected Men by their Language and Carriage, for they always either talk in favour of their *Abdicated King*, drink Healths to their *old Master*, thank God they had no Hand in *driving him* out, nor *bringing in* his present *Majesty*, do all they can to shelter *Papists* and ill Men from Justice, or else when any thing is to be done, they raise doubts and difficulties, lay *Bears* and *Lyons* in the way if it is for the Service of his Present *Majesty*, but remove Mountains if it be for the other side. Others cry out, *For the Lords sake take Care of the*

⁴³ *Ibid.*, pp. 22-23.

⁴⁴ Partridge, *Mene Mene*, pp. 23-24; 1694, sig. B8.

*Church, Oh the Church will be destroyed when there is not the least to suspect it.*⁴⁵

It was not only the bloodthirsty conspiratorial papists who desired the return of James, but the Tories. Partridge jibed that their seditious activities contravened their own doctrines. ‘*Where’s Non resistance?*’ he asked sardonically in 1693 of the Tory plotters.

Now let *de facto* Traitors use their Sting,
They may at last *de jure* swing.⁴⁶

Naturally Partridge wholeheartedly supported William’s war against France, and years after the event he still celebrated William’s victory at the Boyne which had heralded the beginning of the end for James’ cause in Ireland.⁴⁷ Partridge waged a ferocious personal war against the French king. Louis the ‘*Christian Turk, Murderer in Chief, The Grand Oppressor, and the Master Thief*’ was guilty of:

*Villanies, Murders, Perjuries, breach of Oaths, Promises, destroying of his Subjects, disturbing the peace of Europe, burning Towns without any cause, hanging his Subjects, sending others to the Gallies, while others of them are starving in Jailes and all for being Protestants.*⁴⁸

The heavens, he declared, threatened Louis with everything from lack of supplies and funds to insurrection and invasion. In his almanac for 1693 he published a nativity of the ill-fated monarch and in 1696 hinted at Louis’ death. Writing of a ‘Square’ of the sun to the moon he remarked ‘I will not say positively that it shall kill him, but to one in his Condition, I think it is sufficient to kill, the offensive smells that proceed from him being noisome not only to those about him, but to himself too’.⁴⁹

⁴⁵ Partridge, *Mene Mene*, pp. 24-25.

⁴⁶ Partridge, 1693, sig. B4, B8.

⁴⁷ For example, in his almanac for 1696 there appeared a verse, ‘On King Williams passing the Boyne’ in which he praised the valour of William and the Blue Guards, and mocked their opponents’ flight. See Partridge, 1696, sig. A3v-A4.

⁴⁸ Partridge, 1693, sig. B8; 1695, sig. B7; *Mene Mene*, p. 8.

⁴⁹ Partridge, 1692, sig. C5v; 1695, sig. B8; 1693, sig. C-Cv; 1696, sig. C4.

Partridge fully shared the Whig view that there could be no real peace until Louis had been finally defeated, and did his best to counter the growing calls for an end to the war. In his edition for 1696 he demanded:

Had not we better endure the War a year or two, and humble the Oppressor, and make him incapable to play his Tyrannies and Villanies any more, than give it over now the Work is almost done, and give him by that means an opportunity to cheat us out of our Liberties, Laws and Religion, and make us Slaves into the bargain? think what you will of it, it must be either K. *William* or K. *Lewis*; therefore do not cheat yourselves; if he baffles you now, he will get *England* by Promises and Claims, as he did *Flanders*.⁵⁰

Partridge's vitriolic writing during these years aroused equal passion among his political opponents. He even claimed to have received a death threat. In his almanac for 1695 he published a letter he had purportedly received on 11 January 1694 from an 'unknown Hand'. It read as follows:

'Tis pity but all such *Usurping, Slandering Rouges*, as you should have a *Gallows* for your Reward, and if the times should *shance* to turne, as I hope it will in some short time, you shall certainly be requited for your diligence.

It makes my blood rise to see and hear such an *Illeterate Coxcombe* as thou art, Scandalize a Prince of so Noble a Blood; whose Actions were they equal to what thou sayest of them, (which I will not believe, because I know most of it to be false) ought not in the least to lessen our Duty to him.

But I'll not plead this here to such a *Heretick Rouge* as you are; but this I will let you know, That the generality of People are of my Opinion, which I hope you will be made to know in some *Times*. What I have sworn to, that you will stand to let all your cursed Crew afflict me with Death this very instant; it shall not move me at all, though such hypocritical Vagabonds as you will *Mercer* your Oath and Conscience you care not how.

It'e not leave you utterly in the dark, though I will not plainly declar[e] myself, because its not suitable with the customs now abroad.-----I live in *Amsbury*, near *Salisbury* you may know my Name too soon for your desire.

⁵⁰ Partridge, 1696, sig. C2v.

In reply Partridge sought to turn the tables on his anonymous adversary. ‘*By the Words Heretick Rogue*’, he declared,

. . . you may easily guess at the Man and his Religion: And if we should allow this Man to speak the Sense of the whole Party when they get in Power, the best word any Protestant (besides me) may expect from them, is *Heretick Rogue*, or *Heretick Dog*; and the next Favour they will bestow upon you, this Gentleman tells you in his first Paragraph, is a *Gallows*.

He continued:

The words *Shance*, *Illeterate*, *Mercer*, &c. shews him to be either of the *Irish* or *French* Nations, and if so, I do not Wonder at his zeal for *Popery* and *King James*, and indeed, if he is a *Papist*, you can expect nothing else from him, nor is he to be blamed; but if a pretended *Protestant*, he is not Just to his own Principles, or else he hath no Principles at all to pretend to: And yet the Men of this last Perswasion in *England*, have done the *French* King more service than any twenty *Battalions* in his Army.

Partridge argued that he had not broken his oath to James as he had never taken one. He was bound ‘. . . by the Laws of Nature, as well as the Nation . . . to defend and support a *Protestant King*’. As he astutely pointed out, ‘I owe a duty to *King William*, and none to *King James*; and the reason is, one protects me, the other would have destroyed me, as he did a great many besides’. In a damning attack upon the reigns of James and his brother, Charles II, or more particularly their pro-French foreign policy, Partridge went on to ask:

And doth this Man think that I am bound by the *Doctrine* of *Non-resistance*, to make my self miserable for a *Prince* that did not keep his *Coronation Oath*, nor would he Fight to defend Himself and Nation; and what is worse, endeavoured to bring us under the *French* Slavery, or one equal to it, not to say a word of *Popery*. And besides, it is from this *Prince*, and his *Brother’s* supporting of *France*, and making that *King* great in this last Thirty Years, that brought us into this Ruinous War, which we are bound to maintain, or else become a Prey to the *Tyranny* of *France* and *Rome*.

He concluded on a defiant note, challenging his adversary ‘. . . to bring his Name with him, and write better *English* and Sense’ the next time he chose to attack him.⁵¹ Did

⁵¹ Partridge, 1695, sig. C7-C8.

the unknown adversary really exist, had Partridge received such a letter, or was this yet another ingenious invention by a master polemicist?

The Tory Astrologers

As we saw in the last chapter, the Tory astrologers, bound by their adherence to divine-right kingship and passive obedience had accepted James as their legitimate monarch despite his Catholicism.⁵² How did they react to the accession of William? Did their Tory principles prevent them from reconciling themselves to the new monarch?

For some the answer was no. Unlike their Whig counterparts, most Tories denied that resistance had taken place in 1688. Many adopted the providentialist view that James had ‘abdicated’ and that God had placed William upon the ‘vacant’ throne, which allowed their adherence to the principles of divine-right kingship and passive obedience to remain intact. This was a position shared by both Henry Coley and a new Tory combatant, George Parker. Coley found no difficulty in reconciling himself to the accession of William, while keeping to his principles of divine-right kingship and passive obedience. In 1690 he declared:

Monarchs are God’s Vice-Roys, the Imperial *Throne*,
No hand but Heavens *Paramont* doth own;
Their lawful *Sceptors*, Power Divine doth sway,
But Subject’s Work, and Duty’s to Obey.⁵³

He found no difficulty in applying these principles to William.

⁵² See above, pp. 95-111.

⁵³ Coley, *N.S.*, 1690, sig. A2.

Though Coley's almanacs were less vitriolic than those of the Whigs, he used them to encourage public support or at least acceptance of the Revolution. He argued, for example, that drastic remedies were sometimes necessary in the State as well as in the human body. In his edition of *Nuncius Sydereus* for 1690 he remarked,

. . . when we consider the Distractions and Confusions of other Nations, &c. we may conclude, that *Kingdoms, Cities, States, and all Body-Politicks*, are subject to *Convulsions, to Calentures, and Consumptions*, as well as the frail Bodies of Men, and must have an *Evacuation* for their Corrupt Humours, they must be *Phlebotomiz'd*; so that this is but . . . an Old Play Represented by New Actors.

There then followed a chronology surveying England's history, which showed that from William the Conqueror to Charles I only four English monarchs had ' . . . escaped free from unhappy Intestine Broils'. Coley reminded readers that 'The *Kings of England* have spilt much of their Blood abroad', for example during the Crusades and the numerous conflicts with the French, and observed:

This short *Chronological* Collection I thought proper here to insert, to inform those that never read any thing considerable of this Subject, that there has been as Considerable *Revolutions* and Changes in former Ages as we have seen in ours.

Clearly Coley was attempting to reconcile his readers to the Revolution by showing that such upheavals were commonplace in England's history, and perhaps inevitable. William, he argued, would prove himself to be a 'just PRINCE'.⁵⁴

Parker, an astrologer and physician, born in 1654 at Shipston-on-Stour, Worcestershire, published his first almanac *Mercurius Anglicanus, Or The English Mercury* in 1690. From 1691 he also published an annual ephemeris. From the outset Parker made his strong monarchism explicit. Each year in his monthly prognostications for January, he elevated Charles I who ' . . . was, by his own Subjects (a Nest of

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, sig. C4-C5v.

Religious Cut Throats) Murdered before his own Palace Gate at Whitehall', to the status of a martyr. The act of Regicide had been madness, he wrote in his edition for 1692:

*Here Treasons a-la mode in Riddles lye.
A King turn'd Traytour to his Royalty.
Poor Charles against himself arraign'd for Treason;
Cast and Condemn'd against both Law and Reason.*⁵⁵

A staunch Anglican and opponent of Protestant Nonconformity, Parker was also fervently anti-Catholic. It is primarily for this reason that he appears to have willingly accepted the accession of William and Mary, and he continued to support them throughout the first half of the 1690s. In his edition for 1690 he declared:

*William and Mary now enjoy the Crown,
Jesuits and Fryers they are tumbled down:
With all that high and domineering Crew,
Which did Divisions in our Israel brew.
To God therefore with humble Hearts lets render
All Praise, all Glory, for our Faiths Defender.*⁵⁶

In 1693 he expressed the hope that God would grant that William's throne '... may be Established by a *Constant* Lineal Succession'.⁵⁷ Unlike the Whig astrologers he did not inveigh against James II himself. James was portrayed as having been forced to abdicate because of his reliance on fanatical Catholic advisors who bore all the blame for the ills that had befallen England during the reign. James, he wrote, '... irritated by Jesuitical, pernicious Counsel; and deluded by Phanatical Addresses, soon lost the Hearts of his People; whereby the Government became uneasie, which he Abdicated in December 1688'.⁵⁸ Each year in his prognostications for June, Parker commemorated the heroism of the seven bishops who had defied the second Declaration of Indulgence,

⁵⁵ Parker, *M.A.*, 1690, sig. C4; *M.A.*, 1692, sig. B2.

⁵⁶ Parker, *M.A.*, 1690, sig. A3.

⁵⁷ Parker, *M.A.*, 1693, sig. A3v.

⁵⁸ Parker, *M.A.*, 1692, sig. B4.

‘. . . opposing the Current of Tyranny and Popery, that then prevailed’, and had then been acquitted by the jury of all the charges against them ‘. . . to the exceeding Joy, and Satisfaction of all good Protestants and true *Englishmen*’.⁵⁹

Like the Whig astrologers, both Coley and Parker constantly warned of the Jacobite threat, predicting a stream of seditious Jacobite publications, conspiracies and plotting. ‘Why some mens minds should be thus infatuated’, Coley observed, ‘I think no man can give a sober Reason, nor themselves neither’. Some, he wrote, ‘. . . pretend tender Consciences in Matters of Religion, others are variously byassed, some by Promise or Oath, others by Interest’. Of one thing he was certain, that their endeavours would only procure ‘. . . their owne ruine and destruction’. In 1692 he asked ‘*What Sot would go plot when his Lot is a Rope?*’⁶⁰

Coley and Parker differed in their attitude to King William’s war. Initially Coley supported it. In his edition of *Merlinus Anglicus Junior* for 1691 he endeavoured to allay the fear engendered by the French victory off Beachy Head in the summer of 1690 by citing the ‘. . . sayings of my Old Friend, the famous Mr. *William Lilly*’, that popery could never return to England. They were, he felt, ‘. . . not improper to remembered in these troublesom times’.⁶¹ By the time he came to compile the 1692 edition the political situation was far better and the almanac was suffused with optimism. Drawing on Lilly’s prophecies in *Monarchy Or No Monarchy* of the ‘wofull Calamity’ set to befall the French within half a century of its publication in 1651, Coley expressed a desire to see William ‘. . . end His Conquests in the *Heart of France*’. He predicted that Ireland’s troubles were nearly at an end, and declared that England was

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, sig. C4.

⁶⁰ Coley, *N.S.*, 1690, sig. C4; *M.A.J.*, 1691, sig. B5; *M.A.J.*, 1692, sig. C4v; Parker *M.A.*, 1692, sig. D2; *M.A.*, 1691, sig. E3.

⁶¹ Coley, *M.A.J.*, 1691, sig. C3v-C4.

likely to ‘. . . flourish with a good Trade, also Peace and Plenty, in spite of the worst of thy Enemies’.⁶²

Gradually, however, Coley’s almanacs became less bellicose, and by the mid-1690s he was both hoping for, and expecting, peace. During the early 1690s he saw little likelihood of peace, observing in 1693 that ‘. . . the *French K.* is not asleep, but still as active as ever, we are not yet likely to hear of any Peace’.⁶³ Later, however, he grew more optimistic. In 1696 he wrote that the stars ‘. . . do give rather hopes of a Happy Peace to the European Kingdoms, than a continued War’, adding:

*To sing of Peace, Plenty,
and Pleasant Things
Is Welcome News to Peasants,
States and Kings.*⁶⁴

Parker, on the other hand, expressed his support for the war throughout the period 1689-95. His almanacs were full of bellicose propaganda. William’s soldiers would conduct themselves ‘. . . valiantly . . . with great Courage in all their Undertakings’, and the heavens promised ‘. . . his Majesty of Great Britains Arms Success and Advantage against his Enemies’. In his edition for 1696 he attacked (Whig) astrologers for having predicted ruin for Louis and France, but he went on himself to predict that Louis would be forced to concede defeat. While he had not

. . . used any bold, scurrilous, rhodomantading Reflections, to pronounce Misery and Destruction to the Crowned Heads, as some of late years have foolishly done, when no such thing hath come to pass, but on the contrary, like the Fox in the Fable, the more he was cursed the better he thrived, and this purely to have the World think they were sharper sighted, and could see further into a milstone than others. Yet now I will venture to tell my honest Country Friend, that a great neighbouring Prince, who hath lately aimed at a Universal Empire, and to give laws to all about him, is past the Vertex of his Grandeur, and must speedily expect to lower his Topsail.⁶⁵

⁶² Coley, *M.A.J.*, 1692, sig. C3v-C4, A3, C7v.

⁶³ Coley, *M.A.J.*, 1693, sig. A8.

⁶⁴ Coley, *M.A.J.*, 1696, sig. C4v, B6.

⁶⁵ Parker, *M.A.*, 1691, sig. B2v, D3; *M.A.*, 1696, sig. Av.

Notwithstanding his support for the war, Parker acknowledged that it was costly and unpopular. In 1694 he spoke of ‘. . . the general complaint for want of Trade’ in England and especially London, and the high price of bread.⁶⁶

Coley and Parker were thus able to reconcile themselves to the Revolution, but there were other Tory astrologers who could not. The Revolution came as a total surprise to John Gadbury, the doyen of Tory astrologers. In his almanac for 1689 he had confidently predicted that James would defeat William and eventually be succeeded by his infant son. Partridge later alleged that, on the eve of William’s invasion, Gadbury had circulated a paper predicting it would fail. Gadbury was dumbfounded by the Revolution, and his edition for 1690 was understandably downbeat: *‘Pardon, kind Reader, if you find me a little different from former Almanacks. Every year affords not the same Aspects or Actions. Nor is the most active Vaultier in the World at all times fitted for the High Rope’*. *‘To be plain’*, he continued *‘. . . my Muse hath of late been Planet Struck’*.⁶⁷ Gadbury now withdrew from the political fray, out of despair or prudence, and concentrated on his quest to reform astrology, a quest begun some thirty years earlier. In the place of political polemic there were now astrological essays and experiments, particularly of a meteorological nature. There was no place for predictions of a political, prophetic nature in his reformed utilitarian astrology.

It is still possible nonetheless, to speculate on Gadbury’s political outlook in the years 1689-95. No sooner had William come to the throne than Gadbury, once again, found himself in trouble. Whilst the nature of his visits to leading Jacobites such as the Earls of Peterborough and Castlemaine in the autumn of 1689 remains a mystery, they

⁶⁶ Parker, *M.A.*, 1694, sig. B5.

⁶⁷ Gadbury, 1690, sig. Av.

were closely monitored by the authorities, and understandably aroused suspicion. On 10 June 1690 he was arrested and accused of complicity in a plot against William, on the basis of letters from him intercepted at the post office. He was held some eight to ten weeks before eventually being released.⁶⁸ Though no charges were brought, it is clear that Gadbury was dismayed by the accession of William and Mary. He could not bring himself to take the Oaths of Allegiance and, if Partridge is to be believed, had still not taken them in 1693; nor was he willing to pledge his support for them in any of his almanacs or other astrological works published between 1689 and 1695. He prayed only for the 'present' king and queen.⁶⁹ It is likely that he never fully reconciled himself to William and Mary as rightful and lawful monarchs, though he appears to have submitted quietly to their rule. In 1690 he prudently declared 'To be Passive is the only Province of a Subject'.⁷⁰ In short, like many of his Tory counterparts, Gadbury was prepared to obey William only as *de facto* King, while probably continuing to regard James as *de jure* monarch.

What of Gadbury's religious outlook during the early and mid-1690s? We know that in 1692 he was worshipping as a Protestant at the church of St. Margaret's, Westminster.⁷¹ Does this mean that his brief flirtation with Catholicism was over and that he had reverted back to Protestantism? Or that he simply wanted to lead a quiet life by giving the authorities this impression? One clue may be found in the strangest of places, tucked away in his work on navigation, *Nauticum Astrologicum* (1691). Defending the new 'experimental' astrology, Gadbury declared:

I desire no longer to plead for *Astrology*, than the *Verity* thereof will indemnifie, 'Tis matter of Fact I here defend. And such Fact too, that it is

⁶⁸ *D.N.B.*, Gadbury; Capp, *Astrology*, p. 97. See below, pp. 168-169.

⁶⁹ *D.N.B.*, Gadbury; J. Partridge, *Opus Reformatum: Or, A Treatise Of Astrology* (1693), p. 87; *Nebulo Anglicanus*, p. 15; Gadbury, 1692, sig. C7v.

⁷⁰ Gadbury, 1690, sig. Av.

⁷¹ Partridge, *Nebulo Anglicanus*, p. 10.

not inhibited by the *Catholick Church*. What that forbids, I readily renounce. What that Indulges, I should cease to be a Christian if I did not Embrace.⁷²

But even here, Gadbury could hide behind the ambiguities of the term ‘Catholick’.

Gadbury and Partridge: the Continuing Feud

During the vituperative war of words between Gadbury and Partridge in James’ reign, Gadbury had held the upper hand. Confident that James would succeed Gadbury had adopted an overtly pro-Catholic attitude, and hinted at his own Catholicism. By so doing he provided Partridge with all the ammunition he required in the later stages of their war of words. Indeed, in 1689 Partridge wryly commented that if Gadbury ‘. . . had known that *Popery* would have kick’d up its heels, I dare say he would not have declared himself a *Papist* so soon’.⁷³

With the accession of William, the tide turned firmly in favour of Partridge. He returned to England determined to avenge the ill-treatment he had received in Gadbury’s *A Reply*. Each of his almanacs between 1690 and 1693 contained a section dedicated to vitriolic personal abuse of Gadbury. The allegations against Gadbury ranged from having circulated defamatory anagrams concerning Partridge, to sexual impropriety and even murder. Partridge continued the assault in his *Opus Reformatum* (1693) which, whilst primarily a reforming astrological treatise, attacked Gadbury on both a personal and professional level.⁷⁴ Initially Gadbury appeared unconcerned by the attack. In 1692 he wrote of Partridge that whilst ‘. . . *he no way deserves my Good Word, I shall be most unwillingly brought to cast away an ill one upon him*’, while

⁷² J. Gadbury, *Nauticum Astrologicum: Or, The Astrological Seaman* (1691), sig. A3.

⁷³ Partridge, *Mene Mene*, p. 30.

⁷⁴ Partridge, 1690-1693, sig. C8-C8v, *Opus Reformatum*.

noting that some of his friends were anxious to reply on his behalf.⁷⁵ This was the precursor of an ingenious scam. In 1692, under the guise of one of these friends, Gadbury published *Merlini Liberati Errata* which answered Partridge's allegations and exposed the openly parliamentarian view of the Civil War Partridge had expounded in his *Opus Reformatum*.

This, in turn, elicited a response from Partridge, in *Nebulo Anglicanus: Or, The First Part of The Black Life Of John Gadbury* (1693). As the title suggests, it was an invective against Gadbury and asserted his authorship of *Merlini*, which the entire second part was devoted to undermining. Partridge claimed that Gadbury initiated the quarrel by writing, 'A Reply; *so full of Malice, ill Language, Lies and Malicious Expressions, almost impossible to be believed, or, that a Villain should be so ungentile to a man in Tribulation, that never gave him the least occasion imaginable*'. Yet in his *Mene Mene, Tekel Upharsin*, Partridge had claimed it was Gadbury's Catholicism that had led to the breach between them in 1680.⁷⁶

Gadbury was quick to pounce on Partridge's inconsistencies and contradictions. In his *Merlini Liberati Errata*, he wittily exclaimed:

'Tis pleasant to note how he labours to acquit himself from a Contradiction he own'd 1690. *He knew no ground of a Difference with his Tutor: And now in 1693, pretends to find one. The Fellow, Jugler like, plays Fast and Loose; we know not where to have him. In the Epistle to his Mene Tekel, 2d Part. he owns . . . The Strangeness began about Popery. (A wretched Lye!). If the Quarrel, or Strangeness began in 1680, and upon so strange a ground too: It is strange it should not be known to him in 1690. And if it was known to him in 1690, (which he both Owns and Disowns:) Then his pretended ground thereof in 1693, pick't out of a Reply to him in 1687, is a meer Prevarication, and like himself, without Truth or Conscience.*⁷⁷

⁷⁵ Gadbury, 1692, sig. A2.

⁷⁶ Partridge, 1690, sig. A2; *Mene Mene*, sig. A2v.

⁷⁷ J. Gadbury, *Merlini Liberati Errata* (1692), p. 19.

In Chapter Two we touched on Partridge's allegation that, on the eve of William's invasion, Gadbury had circulated a paper predicting it would fail.⁷⁸ This allegation appeared in *Mene Mene*, *Tekel Upharsin* and *Nebulo Anglicanus*, and also in the anonymous broadsheet *Gadburies Prophetical Sayings* (1690).⁷⁹ There can be no doubt Partridge was its author; it bore all his hallmarks. It featured a portrait of Gadbury (entitled '*Merlinus Verax*', after Gadbury's work of that name published in 1687), which depicted him wearing a cross and rosary. From his lips issued the words '... a special Protestant'. In it he 'Travestyed' the verses written by Gadbury in his almanac for 1689 rejoicing at the birth of the Prince of Wales. Partridge reprinted them and placed next to them his own verses mocking Gadbury's current plight. This was one of his favourite tricks, repeated in his almanacs for 1690 and especially 1692. In *Gadburies Prophetical Sayings* he also printed the pro-Catholic statements Gadbury had made throughout his career to prove his long-standing Catholicism.⁸⁰

Throughout the years 1689-95 Partridge's line of attack was simple. Gadbury was a Jacobite. Proof, if any were needed, could be found in his refusal to take the Oaths of Allegiance to William and Mary. 'I am sure our King is not his', Partridge proclaimed, '... if he cannot take an Oath to be true to Him'.⁸¹ Partridge also seized gleefully on Gadbury's arrest for alleged Jacobite plotting. He informed readers that:

In 1690, about *June*, *John* was catch'd at the *Post-Office*, in sending a Bundle of treason to some of his *Popish* Friends, in which was one of King *James's* *Declarations*, a *Treasonable Copy of Verses* against the King and Queen, which he promised his Friend, should be printed in a short time; but above all, a most *Villanous Letter* against the *Government*, in which he assured his Friend, that King *J's* *Declarations* were set up on all the *Church Doors* in *Devonshire* and *Cornwall*, and that they had agreed with the *French* King to take off all their *Tin* at a certain rate, and they had all declared for King *James*; and to use his own Words for It, he said, *King*

⁷⁸ See above, p. 108.

⁷⁹ Partridge, *Mene Mene*, pp. 26-29; *Nebulo Anglicanus*, p. 9; *Gadburies Prophetical Sayings*.

⁸⁰ Partridge, *Gadburies Prophetical Sayings*, 1692, sig. A4v-B8; 1690, sig. A4v.

⁸¹ Partridge, *Nebulo Anglicanus*, p. 15.

J's Interest was like a Cart overthrown, and therefore they must get a considerable help to set it upright on its Wheels again, and then drive on as before.

'Now I would ask him if this Rebellious Principle is agreeable to his old *Noisey Doctrine of Non-resistance*', Partridge continued. Gadbury had been lucky in meeting with such a 'merciful Government', he remarked, for such treasonous acts '... in the *Late Bloody Reigns* would have hang'd any man'.⁸²

Gadbury's religious views also featured in the war of words. Partridge seized upon the fact that Gadbury had begun to worship at St. Margaret's church, as a sign of his religious fickleness and hypocrisy:

I hear he comes now to St. *Margaret's* Church as a Protestant, and with abundance of Devotion, you may be sure; where he certainly lies *purdue*, to watch for another Opportunity to change his Religion, or rather to shape his Conscience according to the next New Cut of Faith that he finds suitable to his Advantage and Interest, they being the two main Arguments of his Religion and Piety.

However, he continued,

... notwithstanding he is again turned a *Mungrel Protestant of the Church of England*, I have heard very lately, that he hath trump up a New Argument, to encourage the Papists, and their Accomplices to expect their Old Master next Year, 1694.⁸³

Partridge also descended to a personal level, attacking Gadbury's private life. He alleged that in 1667 Gadbury had met and '... fell mightily in love' with a Mrs. Gardiner. By the liberal employment of 'Vocal Conversation, and Amorous Letters, and Copies of Verses' Gadbury persuaded her '... to leave her Husband's Bed, and come and keep him and his Wife company at his House'. Soon afterwards she conceived, and Gadbury farmed her off to a country midwife, a Mrs. Wright amidst promises that he would '... take care of her, and visit her often'. In the months

⁸² *Ibid.*, pp. 9-10.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, pp. 10-11.

leading up to the birth she struggled to make ends meet. Shortly after the birth ‘. . . when she was got up and abroad after her lying in’ she was attacked by ‘. . . *two or three whores*, and only narrowly escaped with her life’. The enraged Mr. Gardiner indicted Gadbury at the sessions for ‘. . . *debauching his Wife*’. However, a few days before the case was due to come to trial ‘. . . the *poor Man* was murdered in *Holburn* privately’. Partridge was implicitly accusing Gadbury of complicity in the attempted murder of Mrs. Gardiner and the murder of her husband.⁸⁴ As for Gadbury himself, Partridge alleged that he had been ‘*Begot by Chance*’ and had lived in ‘*Vice and Tricking*’ all his days.⁸⁵

Gadbury’s response to Partridge’s offensive was muted. In his almanac for 1691 he made a thinly-veiled attack on his rival by reminding readers that a certain astrologer had been killing the French king off every year, though he obstinately lived on.⁸⁶ His main reposte came with *Merlini Liberati Errata*:

*I Here Present you with a short Specimen of J.P’s skill in Astrology, shewing how fit he is to set up for an Interpreter of the Stars. Brutish Baulings and Beastly Language, are his prime Talents; and noisy Lyes, Scandals and Nonsense, the Natural Products of his virulent Pen. Deprive the Man of this Furniture, and his Almanack’s like a Room Unhung, will be purely Naked.*⁸⁷

Gadbury opened his attack by challenging Partridge’s assertion in the chronology of his 1692 edition, that Charles I’s stubbornness had caused the Civil War, and that Archbishop Laud had been intent on bringing in popery.⁸⁸ He went on to remind readers that in 1680 Partridge had published a favourable nativity of Louis XIV. ‘What strange Misfortune hath blinded his Understanding’ Gadbury asked, ‘. . . that he could

⁸⁴ The story is recounted in *Nebulo Anglicanus*, pp. 4-5; *Opus Reformatum*, p. 90; Partridge’s almanac for 1692, sig. C8v.

⁸⁵ Partridge, *Nebulo Anglicanus*, sig. Av.

⁸⁶ Gadbury, 1691, sig. C8v.

⁸⁷ Gadbury, *Merlini*, sig. A2.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, sig. A2.

not call this to mind before he had wrote the opposite Predictions hereunto?’⁸⁹

Partridge later acknowledged having been the author of this nativity:

I do confess the *French King's Nativity* is as certainly mine, as the *Merlini Liberati Errata* was *Jack Gadbury's*; nor do I disown any of it, tho I confess it was done by the approbation as well as the instigation of *J. G.* nor do I deny his *Nativity* to be a great one; but this doth not hinder him from being a *Tyrant* and an *Oppresser*.

He claimed he had been ‘deluded’ by Gadbury into printing it, and that Gadbury had provided him with a printer. At the same time, Partridge claimed that Gadbury had given him a work entitled *Utrum Lorum; Rome or Geneva, Never a Barrel better Herring* to have printed in his name, ‘. . . designed against all *Religions*, but most chiefly against the reformed *Protestant Profession*’. It was so extreme that the printer had refused to print it.⁹⁰

Gadbury’s next line of attack was to seize upon the republican arguments Partridge had put forward in his almanac for 1687, adding that ‘I cant hear he ever Recanted this *Treasonous Republican Position*’. He equated him with the Whig polemicist Stephen College, and reiterated his complicity in the Rye House Plot: ‘He hath been well known to many *Plot-Makers viz. Tongue, Mansel, Hunt &c.*’⁹¹

Merlini Liberati closed with an attack on Partridge’s *Opus Reformatum*, which had just appeared:

I am to acquaint my Reader, that I have just now met with a New Piece of *JP's Astrology*, as like the *Dad* as ever it can stare; It rather excels, than falls short of his other *Bedlam Prints* in *Ignorance*, loud *Railing*, and superlative *Impudence*.⁹²

During the early 1690s Gadbury found himself under attack not only from Partridge, but from Partridge’s Whig ally Richard Kirby. Kirby launched his offensive

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 18.

⁹⁰ Partridge, *Nebulo Anglicanus*, p. 24.

⁹¹ Gadbury, *Merlini*, pp. 18, 7, 19.

⁹² *Ibid.*, p. 20.

in response to Gadbury's attack on his *The Marrow Of Astrology* (1687), (co-written with John Bishop) in his almanac for 1688, and Gadbury's attack on himself, Partridge and John Holwell in his *Reply*.⁹³ He dedicated an entire section of his *Catastrophe Galliae* to attacking Gadbury, who was derided as a 'Gypsie', 'Fortune Teller', an 'Idiot' and a '. . . vaunting, upright Needle of a Taylor'. Gadbury's attack on himself and his fellow Whig astrologers, Kirby stressed, had been totally unprovoked, asking, '. . . who can expect anything better from such a Fellow, who hath been of all Religions, and never stuck to any?'⁹⁴ He went on to claim that his *Marrow Of Astrology* was '. . . more Infallible than *John Gadbury's* wearing the Cross, or eating the Wafer', a jibe at Gadbury's Catholicism.⁹⁵ Like Partridge he turned Gadbury's own words against him. He reminded the reader that in his work *The Doctrine Of Nativities* Gadbury had asserted that, according to Guido Bonatus, Mars in Taurus or Libra denoted the 'Native' to be '. . . a Fornicator, a Sodomite, and wickedly given to all abominable and filthy Actions; a Deluder of Women'. Yet, in his *Doctrine Of Nativities*, Gadbury had informed his readers that he himself had Mars in Taurus, '. . . see, how this Spark hath spoke of himself unawares', Kirby exclaimed triumphantly.⁹⁶

During the reign of James, Gadbury had definitely had the upper hand in his war of words with his rival Partridge. The Glorious Revolution shifted the balance of power firmly in Partridge's favour. Gadbury found himself accused of complicity in a plot against the king, just as in 1679, and under ferocious attack. He tells us himself that on a number of occasions he nearly decided to retire as an almanac-maker, and that only the pleas of his friends had persuaded him to carry on.⁹⁷ Gadbury was to continue for

⁹³ Gadbury, 1688, sig. A2; *A Reply*, p. 25.

⁹⁴ Kirby, *Catastrophe Galliae*, pp. 30-31, 28.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 31.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 28-29.

⁹⁷ Gadbury, 1693, sig. Av; 1696, sig. Av.

several more years, but never regained the upper hand, and in the period 1689-95 the Whig astrologers as a group clearly - and inevitably - held the initiative.

The Uneasy Peace, 1695-1702

In September 1697 the Treaty of Ryswick brought to an end King William's war. A weary nation rejoiced. However, by 1701 public opinion had swung firmly in favour of a renewed war against France. Whilst Ryswick saw Louis recognise William as King of England and pledge not to assist his enemies (James being clearly implied), it did not provide the foundations upon which a lasting European peace could be built. Unlike most of his subjects, William realised that it had not solved the problem of the Spanish succession. For three years after the Treaty, William and Louis attempted to settle the issue through diplomatic means. Their diplomacy resulted in two partition treaties. The first of 1698 granted the majority of the Spanish kingdoms and empire to Joseph Ferdinand, the electoral prince of Bavaria. The second of 1699, precipitated by Joseph's death, granted all the Spanish possessions to Archduke Charles - son of the Holy Roman Emperor Leopold - with the important exception of the Italian territories which were ceded to the French claimant. However, these territories, a vital link between Austria and Spain, were the one area Leopold was not prepared to make any concessions over. He therefore refused to ratify the Treaty.

William's wish to maintain a standing army during the diplomatic negotiations aroused a great deal of opposition in England. So too did the revelation of the existence of the Partition Treaties in the summer of 1700, which were viewed in many people's eyes as a betrayal of English interests.

In November 1700 Charles II of Spain died, leaving his kingdom and empire to Louis' grandson, Philip of Anjou. Louis' public acceptance of the will, whilst further alienating Leopold, did not make a general war inevitable and it certainly failed to alter the prevailing mood in England. Many believed the will provided for a lasting general European peace and guaranteed English security, as it appeared that any hostilities would be confined to Italy. Furthermore, a condition of the will was that the French and Spanish crowns were never to be united.

This optimism was soon shattered by Louis who persuaded the French courts to recognise the right of Philip of Anjou to succeed to the French throne if his elder brother should die, allowing a possible unification of the two thrones. In order to substantiate this decision, Louis seized several key towns in the Spanish Netherlands, and placed a series of trading embargoes on English trade with France and Spain. Louis' provocative actions convinced the majority of William's subjects that French expansionism posed a real threat to them. During the spring and summer of 1701 public opinion swung firmly in favour of a renewal of hostilities with France.

At home the fierce party rivalries between Whig and Tory continued, and Tory Anglicans grew increasingly concerned for the position of the Church of England, now that Protestant Dissent in England had been legalised. New groups were emerging, such as the Deists and Socinians, with alarming ideas. From the middle of the reign these fears intensified, and William's final years were overshadowed by disputes.

How did the almanac-makers react to these events and developments? This section of the chapter explains their responses.

The Whig Astrologers

From the outset, the Whig astrologers had given their support to William, whom they perceived as the legitimate and divinely-ordained monarch, and inveighed against his opponents both at home and abroad. They had fervently supported his war with France. They continued to support William for the remainder of his reign.

Throughout its first half they had continually warned of the subversive activities of the Jacobites. Early in 1696 their fears and suspicions were vindicated as, in February, England was rocked by revelations of a Jacobite plot to assassinate William. The plot was led by Sir George Barclay, and formed part of a wider plot which encompassed a full-scale Jacobite insurrection. It was scuppered, however, when one of the conspirators, gripped by pangs of guilt, betrayed it to the authorities. This was by far the most serious Jacobite plot to date, and both Daniel Woodward and William Salmon were quick to give thanks to God for William's deliverance from the hands of the plotters. Salmon declared:

In the late Grand attempt upon your Life,
Design'd by the sons of Belial, sons of strife;
The God of all our Mercies kept you still,
When they combin'd your precious blood to spill.⁹⁸

In his edition of 1697, written shortly after its disclosure, John Tanner exclaimed:

*A Zealous anger, 'gainst the Worst of Crimes,
Bid me rouse up and openly defie,
Such villanies scarce known i'th worst of times.*

He marvelled that there were still '*ungratefull Slaves*', that sought '*To murder him that fought for Europe's peace*', '*For popish Tyranny to make the Way*'.⁹⁹ Each year

⁹⁸ Salmon, 1697, sig. A2.

⁹⁹ Tanner, 1697, sig. A5v, A6v-A8v.

in his monthly prognostications John Partridge commemorated the plot. In his edition for 1697 he proclaimed:

In this Month Anno 1695/6 was that *Horrid, Bloody, Barbarous* Jacobite-Plot discovered. A Plot to *Murder the bravest Prince in Europe*, to burn the *City of London*, Murder the Inhabitants, destroy the best *Government in Europe*, ruin *Religion*, set up *Slavery*; and this they have the Impudence to call God's cause.

Like Tanner and his other Whig astrologers, he stressed that the plot had been designed to 'Enslave us and bring in Popery'.¹⁰⁰

The Whig astrologers insisted that the plotters had acted in the interests of their patron Louis XIV, a view expounded by Salmon in his edition of 1697:

*Some only aim to set the French Man right,
And Mischiefs to their Country do for spight.
Rejoyce if ill befalls us, or the King,
And in their Revels, Songs of Triumph sing.
These are the Toads that always backward pray,
These are the Rebels that the King betray....
What e're they do, they act for Monsieur's sake
These are the Men whom French promotions make.*¹⁰¹

Partridge claimed that the plot had been instigated by Louis himself. Confident that it would succeed, Louis had promised to assist James in a new bid to recapture the English throne, knowing that with his puppet once again upon the throne, he would, in effect, be ruling England:

*Lewis being very sure the Plot would do,
Got James to Mortgage Crown and People too;
A plaguy sum was due; and as they say,
James sign'd the Deed but promis'd we should pay.
'Twas a good Bargain, and a hopeful Plot,
Could the *Curst Tyrant* a surrender got.*¹⁰²

¹⁰⁰ Partridge, 1697, sig. A6; 1698, sig. A6.

¹⁰¹ Salmon, 1697, sig. B4v-B5.

¹⁰² Partridge, 1697, sig. B2.

In his edition for 1697 Partridge launched a scathing attack against those who plotted against William, reminding the reader of the arbitrary rule and popery of the previous two reigns:

What! *English-men!* have *English-men* forgot
 Their former dangers, and thus basely *Plot?*
 False to the *Prince* that sav'd you! Change your note:
 Instead of thanks, contrive to cut his Throat!
 He never *Cully'd* you by false pretence,
 Nor sold you and your *Liberties* to *France*.
 Nor *broke* his *Oaths*, as some that wore these Crowns;
 Nor *burnt* your *Cities*, no, nor sold your *Towns*.
 He's made no *Plots*, as you knew some did do,
 To *seize* your *Liberties* and *Charters* too.
 Nor chose your *Mayors* and *Sheriffs*, nor ever sent
 To bid the *Church* preach up the *Passive Cant*.
 Nor took your *Wives*, nor made your *Daughters Whores*,
 Nor turn'd out *Parliaments*, and lockt the *Doors*.
 Nor set up *Tools* to overthrow your *Laws*,
 Nor made you *Truckle* to the *Popish Cause*.
 Nor brought in *Nuncio's* no nor *Jesuit Schools*;
 Nor fill'd the *Courts of Law* with *Knaves* and *Fools*.
 Nor hir'd *Ruffians* to encrease your fears,
 To hang the *Commons*, and destroy the *Peers*.
 Nor did he ever yet with *Laws dispence*;
 Nor *sneak behind*, when call'd to your *Defence*.
 But against *Tyrants* doth defend your *Cause*;
Fights for your *Faith*, your *Liberties*, and *Laws*.¹⁰³

In the wake of the Plot the Whig astrologers stepped up their campaign against the Jacobites, convinced that its failure did not mark the end of subversive Jacobite activity. In his edition for 1697 John Wing warned his readers:

*There's still a sort of Men that fear no ill,
 Till Justice on them justly has her will.*

In his edition for 1701 he wrote how the heavens ' . . . may occasion another Plot against his Sacred Majesty and the Government', though reassuringly, ' . . . with as little success as any of the former'.¹⁰⁴ As in the early 1690s, the Whig astrologers

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, sig. A3-A4.

¹⁰⁴ Wing, 1697, sig. B; 1701, sig. C4v.

described life in absolutist France in chilling terms to warn their readers of the consequences of restoring James to the throne. In his almanac of 1697 Tanner asked incredulously:

*What is't fond fools that you expect from France?
Or what good from a Tyrant Popish King?*¹⁰⁵

Predictably the most bitter attack upon the Jacobites came from John Partridge. He claimed that the assassination plot of 1696 showed that the Jacobites were as great a threat as the papists to Church and State in England. Indeed, he viewed all Jacobites as papists. In typical Whig fashion he described the French people as living in semi-starvation, oppression and slavery under the tyrannical Louis. If successful, the Jacobites would reduce the English to a similar miserable condition.¹⁰⁶ He attacked the Jacobites as hypocrites, arguing their defence of the Anglican Church was merely a veil to hide their attempts to bring in popery.¹⁰⁷ He branded all Tories as Jacobites, accusing them of having ‘. . . betray'd their Heirs and Fellow Citizens in the late Reigns, by giving up their Liberties, destroying their Ancient Laws, and making their Government precarious’.¹⁰⁸

Partridge's edition for 1701 contained an impassioned ‘Dialogue between a red hot Jeraboam Tory and a Jerusalem Whig’, in which the Tory stood for popery, tyranny and idolatry. The Tories' worshipping of the Golden Calf of the Book of Daniel was clearly an analogy for Tory divine-right kingship and passive obedience.¹⁰⁹

The clerical Nonjurors came under attack in Partridge's almanac for 1700. Their strict adherence to divine-right kingship and passive obedience led them to refuse to

¹⁰⁵ Tanner, 1697, sig. B2v.

¹⁰⁶ Partridge, 1697, sig. A6.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, sig. A3v-A4.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, sig. C5.

¹⁰⁹ Partridge, 1701, sig. A3v-A4.

swear the Oaths of Allegiance to William and Mary. The almanac contained ‘. . . a Dialogue *between the Pope and a Non-swearing Parson*’, in which Partridge mocked the Nonjurors’ position and used it to accuse them of Catholicism.¹¹⁰

From 1699 the Whig astrologers were joined by an outspoken new recruit, Francis Moore, with his *Kalendarum Ecclesiasticum: Being a New Two-Fold Kalendar*. To this day an almanac is published annually bearing Moore’s name. Moore’s first almanac proper was published in 1701 and opened with a hymn of praise to William:

God bless the King (say some) what King, say I:
William the Third, his Sacred Majesty.
 May he live long to do this Nation good,
 Who for us ventured his life and Blood.
 He ’twas who came for to redeem us all
 From *Gallick* Slavery and Popish Thrall.
 Therefore let all true loyal subjects sing
 God save Great *William* our most gracious King.¹¹¹

At the heart of the Whig astrologers’ offensive against the Jacobites lay the fear that if James was restored to the throne England would be enslaved under the yoke of popish tyranny and oppression, and rendered subservient to Louis XIV. Ever since 1689, they had insisted on the need to stand firm against the French, and they continued to denounce Louis right up to the Treaty of Ryswick. In his edition for 1698, written in the summer of the previous year, John Wing triumphantly proclaimed:

*A Neighbouring Prince, with all his ore bought Skill
 Doth now begin to tumble down the hill.*¹¹²

John Partridge was more explicit, rejoicing in his almanac of 1697 at the defeat of Louis and his expansionist ambitions:

By this time, I hope, the Great Tyrant is in a great Measure if not perfectly humbled, and the hopes of his Western Empire utterly destroyed. He that not long since was a common Pest to his Neighbours, and by Injustice and Force made every Man’s property a Sacrifice to his Will; not any small

¹¹⁰ Partridge, 1700, sig. A3v-A4.

¹¹¹ Moore, 1701, sig. A3.

¹¹² Wing, 1698, sig. B7.

Dominion, Petty Principality, (or Kingdom, if it come in his way) but he had certainly a Title to it if his Army but was able to March, and his Adversaries not able to oppose him, as every one will readily own that, remembers his Villanies acted in *Savoy, Germany, Lorrain, Burgandy, Holland*, with divers others.¹¹³

Throughout the first half of William's reign the Whig astrologers had stressed that there could be no peace with the duplicitous French monarch until he had been finally vanquished. By 1696, they were anticipating a satisfactory conclusion to the war. On the eve of peace Daniel Woodward celebrated William's victory over the tyrannical French king, now desperate to sue for peace, demanding:

*Has not the Courage, Conduct and Success of this Glorious MONARCH already made Europe's grand Enemy court and importune the Confederate Princes for a General PEACE? which renders this Kingdom the Pride of Germany, the Succour of Spain and Belgia, the Queen of Nations; nay, the Empress of the World, and Scourge of France.*¹¹⁴

John Partridge was also convinced that peace was likely to come in 1697, though uncertain about the timing.¹¹⁵

When peace did arrive in 1697, with the Treaty of Ryswick, William Salmon was quick to celebrate it, equating William with the victorious Roman Emperor Augustus.¹¹⁶ The Whig astrologers wasted no time in pointing out its ramifications, especially Louis' recognition of William as legitimate King of England, and his promise not to assist any of his enemies, which meant James.¹¹⁷ Woodward predicted that even the Jacobites would now see Louis in his true colours, as the main threat to European peace.¹¹⁸

¹¹³ Partridge, 1697, sig. C4v.

¹¹⁴ Woodward, 1697, sig. Av.

¹¹⁵ Partridge, 1697, sig. C4, B2.

¹¹⁶ Salmon, 1699, sig. A2.

¹¹⁷ Woodward, 1697, sig. Av.

¹¹⁸ Woodward, 1698, sig. B.

The Treaty certainly dashed the Jacobites' hopes, a fact Partridge was quick to exploit. In his edition for 1699 (the first to be written following the conclusion of peace) he wrote gloatingly of how on 'Octob.19. the Peace was *proclaimed* in London, to the great comfort of the *Jacks* and the new Non-cons, they I mean who to secure the *Protestant Religion* and *Liberty*, did their utmost to bring in *Popery* and the *French Power*'.¹¹⁹ Tanner, aware that Louis was now unable to assist James, and had in any case turned his attention to the Spanish succession, urged the Jacobites:

*Cease puny Plotters Plotting's out of Season,
Your grand Patron is call'd another way.*¹²⁰

The Whig astrologers differed on the durability of the peace. Some like Woodward and Wing believed, initially at least, that it was destined to last. In 1697 John Wing had predicted that '... all our storms of discontent will be blown over, and peace and plenty established amongst us, ye[a] and such of one as may be of some continuance'.¹²¹ Woodward believed, in the summer of 1697, that with peace now beckoning, England and Ireland could set about repairing the damage inflicted by the war, and that trade and commerce would revive. Wing shared his optimism.¹²²

Not all the Whig astrologers, however, believed that Ryswick had laid the foundations for a lasting European peace. Whilst Tanner welcomed the peace, he was very conscious of its fragility. Only a year after Ryswick he prophetically wrote, '... the Wounds scarcely healed, and the Orifices ready to burst out with fresh Blood'. In his edition for 1700 he declared 'I could wish I could say the Sword is sheathed, but rather feel it is whetting for some future Enterprise'.¹²³ John Partridge was equally

¹¹⁹ Partridge, 1699, sig. B6.

¹²⁰ Tanner, 1698, sig. A5v.

¹²¹ Wing, 1698, sig. C4v-C5.

¹²² Woodward, 1698, sig. B7, C5; Wing, 1699, sig. C4v.

¹²³ Tanner, 1699, sig. C3v; 1700, sig. C2v.

quick to note the increasingly tense European situation in the years following the Treaty, and was soon convinced that war would break out once more. In his predictions for January 1700, he wrote, ‘. . . about this time or suddenly after, there will be some great Council or Councils about Eminent and public Affairs. in order to a more durable Peace, or an open bloody War; and indeed I think it will end in the latter’. A little later in the same edition he predicted with unerring accuracy:

This year 1700, will produce Commotions and Mischiefs in remote Parts; but as to these parts of *Europe* where we inhabit, we shall yet enjoy Peace and Quietness for about two or three Years; yet in the mean time, it [war] will be brooding in (almost) all Kingdoms, to be hatched at the appointed time; for at the time of the Conjunction, or suddenly after, we shall find the violent and turbulent Spirits of this World inclin’d to pursue Dominion and Empire by Blood and Destruction.¹²⁴

The conjunction he alluded to was one of Saturn and Jupiter due to take place in 1702, the year England went to war with France.

Shortly after the second Partition Treaty of 1699, and aware of the way it had alienated Leopold, Partridge declared ‘The German Emporer . . . seems inclin’d to take Arms, on the pretence of wrongs done to him . . . the state of Peace stands tottering and is uncertain everyway’.¹²⁵ By the summer of 1701, even before Louis’ provocative recognition of James III, the Whig astrologers were conscious of the threat that Louis still posed, and were convinced England would have to go to war with France once more if she were to be saved from popish tyranny. These views were set out clearly in Tanner’s edition for 1702. He called on William:

*To help us save free Conscience from the Paw
Of Shaveling Wolves whose Gospel is their Maw.
Rouze up, Brave Hero, there is much remains!
Our Foes still threats to Bind our Souls in Chains.*¹²⁶

¹²⁴ Partridge, 1700, sig. A5, C4v.

¹²⁵ Partridge, 1701, sig. B2.

¹²⁶ Tanner, 1702, sig. C3.

He urged English Protestants to unite in support of William, upon whose success their very faith now depended.¹²⁷ Even John Wing, who had initially been convinced that the peace would be lasting, now believed war was imminent and began steeling his readers for its outbreak. ‘*War is preparing and will soon appear*’,¹²⁸ he warned in his edition for 1702. Partridge published an almanac under the less than inspired pseudonym John Parrot. In it he predicted that Louis’ acceptance of the will would inevitably lead to an escalation of hostilities (which had already begun in Italy):

. . . the Death of the King of *Spain*, which hath (by the help of a Knavish Priest) open’d a door to a War, founded on base surreptitious Will, which was without doubt bought by the *French*, by which he makes his Claim to the Kingdom of Spain in right of his Grandson. This War you see has already begun in Italy upon that ground, and is ready to break out in other parts of *Europe* as well as *America*, though at this present writing, in the Places last mentioned, things are yet in Peace, such as it is.¹²⁹

The inference is clear. Louis, through the machinations of Cardinal Portocarrero - who persuaded Charles to sign the will in favour of the Duke of Anjou, after he had initially bequeathed the entire inheritance to Archduke Charles - had procured the Spanish empire for his grandson through bribery.¹³⁰ Partridge made the same accusation in his own almanac of 1702. It included a nativity of the ‘Duke of Anjou’ who, he informed the reader, had been ‘. . . made King of Spain by Portacarrero a Priest. A thing publicly known to all Europe, as well as the ways and means by which it was done’. ‘It is a very poor Nativity’, Partridge remarked, ‘. . . and not at all fit for one that thinks, or hopes to be the Foundation of a new Family’. ‘Did ever any King that got a Crown as he got this, hold it?’, he asked ‘Shew me an example if you can’.¹³¹

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, sig. C3.

¹²⁸ Wing, 1702, sig. A7.

¹²⁹ Parrot [Partridge], 1702, sig. B2.

¹³⁰ Partridge, 1702, sig. C7v.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, sig. C7v, B7.

The Whig Astrologers and Anti-Catholicism

At the heart of the Whig astrologers' concern lay fear of Catholicism and arbitrary rule and the desire to ensure that England never again fell into the grip of a popish monarch. Anti-Catholicism was still as potent amongst the Whig astrologers as it had been at the time of the Popish Plot and Exclusion Crisis. As ever the Catholics were portrayed as subversive, cruel and bloodthirsty. John Partridge and the newcomer, Francis Moore, led the attack. In 1701 Moore launched a scathing attack upon the papacy which, he claimed, had built its power upon the 'ruins' of the Roman Empire. It had evolved into an avaricious, cruel and tyrannical institution, with the pope now claiming a power equal to that of God and undermining the authority of kings.¹³²

In his edition for 1702 Moore attacked the priesthood. It included the tale of a Catholic priest who, upon his death '. . . went down immediately to Hell'. Upon arriving at the Gates he was met by 'The Sent'nal Devil', who asked him to declare from whence he had come, his 'Business', 'Profession' and 'Name'. The priest replied:

I am a Priest from *Rome*, Sir Devil, pray
Observe what I am going now to say:
I've wander'd *England, Scotland, Ireland* too,
And there can find no Bus'ness for to do,
They having scatter'd all our holy Crew.¹³³

In more traditional fashion, Moore also portrayed the Catholics as cruel, bloodthirsty and intolerant. In his almanac for 1701 he wrote how 'The Papists . . . will afflict and much torment those poor Protestants they have under their power, and will not suffer them to worship the true God, except it be in a false and Idolatrous Way'.¹³⁴

Moore paid particular attention to the subversive activities of the Catholics in England.

¹³² Moore, 1701, sig. A4v-B7v.

¹³³ Moore, 1702, sig. Av.

¹³⁴ Moore, 1701, sig. B6.

Writing of the conjunction of Saturn and Jupiter in Aries in 1702, he noted that Saturn never passed through the aforementioned sign ‘. . . without spitting his Venome, as well on *England* as other Countries and Cities subject to that Sign’. Saturn had passed through Aries, for example, between 1673 and 1675,

. . . and what hapned in *England* in or near those years is not yet forgot (and I hope will not) by all those that love the Peace of these Kingdoms and the Protestant Religion. Remember therefore . . . that damnable Popish Plot against the Royal Person of the late K. *Charles II* . . . remember the Murder of Sir *Edmondbury Godfrey* (that worthy and pious protestant Knight) by a Crew of Popish Villains.¹³⁵

Saturn was also due to enter Libra, the opposite sign of the zodiac to Aries. Again he stressed the importance of this event and drew significant parallels. Saturn had occupied Libra for most of James II’s reign; leaving in November 1688, the month of William’s invasion. If Saturn,

. . . (as all Authors agree) be the Significator of Monks, Jesuits, Friars and all the rest of that hopeful holy Crew, then let us not forget what sport those sort of Cattle made in *England* at that time, how many *Mass-houses* were then set up, and how did the sacred Mob flock from foreign Parts to take possession of this long desir’d, tho’ but little Spot of Land; then was the great *Tyr[o]connel* sent to be Lord Lieutenant of *Ireland* . . . then were the Protestant Bishops sent to the Tower, and Father *Peters* exalted to a high degree; then was the true born Heirs disinherited, and mighty Fire works and Crackers upon the *Thames* for joy of a new *Pr--ce* of *W--es*; now the Church of *England* lay languishing, and the *Protestant Religion* quaking for fear, whilst *Popery* came rushing in upon us like a mighty Giant.¹³⁶

But the stars had also brought about the eventual downfall of the popish crew.¹³⁷

Moore assured his readers that ‘Popery which has appear’d so bare and brazen-fac’d in these Kingdoms, will not dare do the like again . . . Popery is now in a very ill

¹³⁵ Moore, 1702, sig. C6-C6v.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, sig. C6v.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, sig. C6v-C7.

condition; therefore let the Devil, Priest, Jesuits, Friars &c. do their worst, the *Protestant Religion* will flourish'.¹³⁸

John Partridge continued his own campaign against Catholicism in his almanac for 1700, attacking the Catholic priesthood and mocking their doctrines and practices. Of transubstantiation he wrote:

So have I seen these Spiritual Juglers play
 Their Tricks, to make unthinking sots obey.
 Here *Jack* and *Tom* what's this? what is't? Tis Bread:
Hocus, Pocus, Presto; now its a God.
 This is fine Priest Craft, and perhaps you'l guess
 The Sot can make his Maker, nothing less.¹³⁹

His edition for 1701 evoked memories of the Irish massacre of 1641.

I'th' *Irish Massacre* their Zeal was shown,
 Where all the Acts of Cruelty were done.
 The *murd'red Bodies* lay in heaps about,
Women ript up, and their *Babes Brains* dasht out;
Guts torn out alive, before them laid,
 And of their *Fat* these *Saints* their *Candles* made.¹⁴⁰

In the same edition he traced the theme back to the sixteenth century:

'Twas *Charles* the Ninth, who for the Churches good
 Pursu'd its *Murders* to a sea of blood;
Queen Mary's Zeal the *Hereticks* well know
 And to increase their *Light*, she burnt 'em too
 But *D'Alva* outdid both i'th' *Flemish Wars*,
 That murdering *Spaniard*, *Prince of Murderers*.¹⁴¹

Partridge warned that a Catholic ruler posed a threat to both Church and State in England. Under James II the rights and liberties of the subject had been eroded, the laws flouted and the Anglican Church undermined. As the Catholic threat increased at the turn of the century, Partridge urged his readers to be alert:

What! do ye sleep? wink at our Foes success,
 And let *Rome's* Cut-throat Faction still encrease.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, sig. C7v.

¹³⁹ Partridge, 1700, sig. B4.

¹⁴⁰ Partridge, 1701, sig. B3.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, sig. B4.

In Foreign Parts you hear they play their Tricks,
 To Hang and Jail those they call *Hereticks*.
 Then root 'em here out of their *plotting Cells*;
 Unman the *Priests*, and take off *Aaron's Bells*.¹⁴²

In his edition for 1701, written as the international situation deteriorated further, Partridge prayed for the deliverance of England from the Catholic menace and for the establishment of a clear Protestant succession:

And now, *Great God*, to whom our Prayers are due,
 Preserve our State deliver us from this *Crew*;
 They of the *Cheating Faith*, that mold and make
Cut-Throats, and *Murder* for *Christ Jesus sake*.
 Inspire our Legislation; for we hope,
 They will at last set a *Priest-Gelder* up.¹⁴³

His prayers were answered almost immediately by the Act of Settlement (1701).

William Salmon, another leading Whig astrologer and equally hostile towards Catholicism employed an ingenious piece of anti-Catholic propaganda in his almanac for 1699. In the monthly verses he gave advice to an imaginary painter on how best to portray life under the rule of 'Popish Kings', inspired by the 'Advice to a Painter' poems of Andrew Marvell and John Denman:

*To the skilful Painter, here advice we give,
 How under Popish Kings just Men must live.
 How they with hell do faithfully combine,
 Implore its Aid, and drive on their Design.
 Lay Kingdoms truly waste, and in a Word,
 How they put Hereticks, to fire and sword.*

*Yet to proceed, where Massacres should stand,
 Paint there the Plague, and desolation Land.
 For towns burnt down, and Cities in a Flame,
 Draw there the Pope, his holinesses name?
 And for a Murdered King, a Virgin draw,
 Cloathed in White, crown'd with Relig'on, Law.*¹⁴⁴

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, sig. A5.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, sig. B8.

¹⁴⁴ Salmon, 1699, sig. A4v, A8v.

Anti-Catholicism also formed an integral part of the millennial speculation rife amongst the Whig astrologers, particularly at the turn of the century. Drawing on the prophecies of Nostradamus, and the 'wandering Jew', Partridge believed the millennium would be preceded by the destruction of Rome and downfall of the pope.¹⁴⁵ Millennial speculation and anti-Catholicism also went hand in hand in the pages of Tanner's almanacs. In the edition for 1699 he wrote:

We are now arrived at the Year 1699, which puts a Period to the Century and a Year of famous Expectations, and by them that pretend to understand the Scripture Prophecies. This is the Year (say they) that answers to the Number of the Beast; which is to be accounted, not from the Birth of our Saviour, but from his Passion and Death, by which he accomplished the great Work of our Redemption. From which they conjecture great Tribulation to the See of *Rome* and the Downfall of the *Roman Pontificate*....It is true, the Heavens do seem to cast a frowning Ray upon *Italy* and *Rome* it self.¹⁴⁶

The Tory Astrologers

The Glorious Revolution had posed a dilemma for the Tory astrologers. For, whilst their commitment to monarchical government remained, whom should they recognise as the legitimate monarch: William or James? As we saw earlier, the majority of Tory astrologers found little difficulty in reconciling themselves to William, the man who had delivered England from the Catholic menace.¹⁴⁷ They continued to support him throughout his reign.

In 1699 a new Tory astrologer emerged, William Cookson, an astrologer and physician who lived at the Beehive and Globe in Gunyard, Houndsditch. Cookson was a friend of the Tory astrologer Richard Gibson - who did not enter the political fray

¹⁴⁵ Partridge, 1702, sig. C7.

¹⁴⁶ Tanner, 1699, sig. C3-C3v.

¹⁴⁷ See above, pp. 159-164.

until 1707 - and of George Parker. In his very first edition, published at a time when the Whig and Tory astrologers were diametrically opposed over the reform of astrology, Cookson placed himself firmly in the Tory camp:

*I must needs own, that I cannot but admire at the indifatigable pains of the Learned Mr. Gadbury, Coley, Parker, &c. and shall always be much more Ambitious of Imitating, than Presumptious in Exceeding them; well knowing that they are much more able than I.*¹⁴⁸

Cookson supported William enthusiastically. In 1699 he proclaimed that all the actions of previous monarchs,

Crowded into One
Are by King WILLIAMS Single Reign Outdone.

In 1702 he described William as,

*William the Great, Faiths chief Defence, the main
Prop of all Europe, Albion's Sovereign,
England's Glory, Holland's Bulwark, France's King,*¹⁴⁹

Throughout the first half of William's reign, Tory and Whig astrologers alike had continually warned of the Jacobite threat which had materialised in 1696 with the failed assassination plot. George Parker alluded to it in his ephemeris for 1700, recalling how on 22 February 1696:

*The Consults met, they March in Troops amain,
Great William's Blood the tender grass must Stain
Noble and Ignoble, they all Agree.
Actors to be i'th Crimson Tragedie.
Whilst Smiling Heav'n did frustrate their Intent
And sav'd the King, but hang'd those Instruments.*¹⁵⁰

Two years earlier he had warned how the Jacobites would seek to undermine William and his government, while hoping there would be '... no more damnable Plots to disturb our Peace'.¹⁵¹ Parker's sentiments appear to have been sincere. As William's

¹⁴⁸ Cookson, 1699, sig. A2.

¹⁴⁹ Cookson, 1699, sig. A3; 1702, sig. A2.

¹⁵⁰ Parker, *A.D.E.*, 1700, sig. B2.

¹⁵¹ Parker, *M.A.*, 1698, sig. B4, B2.

reign drew to a close there was still no sign of the Jacobitism of which he was to be accused later, by Partridge.

Another Tory astrologer, Henry Coley, warned of the continuing Jacobite threat in the wake of the 1696 plot. Its failure he thought, had only served to harden the Jacobites' resolve. In his edition for 1697 he predicted,

. . . in the midst of our greatest Hopes, we may expect to hear of the Discontented Tongues or Pens of some hot Brain'd Spirits, that delight to bring themselves into Trouble, who might otherwise live at Peace. Let all such Persons consider, that the Mischief which they design to Expel by imprudent Revenge, will undoubtedly return upon their own Heads, with Usury.¹⁵²

In his edition for the following year he warned ' . . . there are many discontented Spirits amongst us, and always will be, whence libels and malicious Invectives will be frequent enough, against our governors or Government or both, which will prove of very ill consequence'.¹⁵³

But if the majority of the Tory astrologers appear to have been able to accept William as the legitimate monarch, this was not true of them all. As we saw in the first part of the chapter, John Gadbury remained politically silent during the first half of William's reign, and his silence continued throughout the reign. He was now old and often ill, and more concerned with his own impending death and the folly of his youthful days than with political speculation. But it is also likely that his silence after 1689 reflected disillusionment at the accession of William.

Anxious not to provoke the authorities, Gadbury was ready to pay lip-service to the 'present' king and queen. In his almanac for 1697 he mourned the death of Queen

¹⁵² Coley, *M.A.J.*, 1697, sig. C5v.

¹⁵³ Coley, *M.A.J.*, 1698, sig. B2.

Mary, although it should be remembered she was James' daughter and a Stuart. He informed the reader that he had done so

. . . chiefly out of the Veneration and Duty I owe the *Regal Family*. My humble Prayer to God is, That this mighty Loss may be speedily repaired to His Majesty, for the strengthening the *British* Monarchy and Kingdoms, that both may be the better enabled to defeat the Purposes and Practices of all Foreign and Domestick Enemies.¹⁵⁴

Notwithstanding his circumspect style, there is evidence that Gadbury never accepted William as the legitimate King of England. He was, for example, never prepared to pledge explicit support for William and Mary. In his edition for 1697 he sniped at the Whigs for opposing James in the name of religion by recalling the use of religion by Charles I's opponents:

It is not Zeal to God, or Religion, but wilful Obstinacy, that makes Men to oppose Authority, or disturb the Publick Settlement. 'Tis a *strange Fallacy in Religion* (saith the most Reverend *Laud*) for any Man to Dishonour (or oppose) the King, and to make that a Proof that he fears God.¹⁵⁵

In his almanac for 1702 he praised the decision of the Dauphin of France to renounce his claim to the Spanish throne in favour of his son the Duke of Anjou in accordance with Charles II's will. Gadbury explained how in 1700,

. . . the great King of *Spain*, after a tedious Sickness, left this mortal life for a better; and the Illustrious D. of *Anjou* second son to the most Serene Prince the *Dauphine* of *France*, and Grandson to *Lewis* the XIVth. King of *France*, was advanc'd to the Monarchy of that Great and Populous Empire by the peculiar Will of the late deceased King. And here I may not omit the Mention of One Passage of so wonderful and surprizing Remark that History can't parallel, viz, that tho' the *Spanish* Monarchy was thought the *Dauphins* Right, as descending to him from his Illustrious Mother, yet such was his Princely Humility, and great Self-denial, that in compliance to the Regal Testator's Will, and for the general Quiet of *Christendom*, he in publick Council renounc'd his said Title, adding-That while he lived his Desire was to say - *The KING my Father, and the KING*

¹⁵⁴ Gadbury, 1697, sig. C4.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, sig. C6.

*my Son. Which Words as proceeding from so Great a Prince, deserve an Eternity of Rememberence among Christians.*¹⁵⁶

Clearly such a statement extolling the virtues of the Dauphin, apparently validating the French right to the Spanish throne and portraying them as the upholders of European peace, was highly contentious, written at a time when England seemed destined to renew hostilities. At the very least such a statement implied hostility toward William. It seems clear that, despite Gadbury's submission to the rule of William, he obeyed him only as *de facto* king, and continued to recognise James as *de jure* monarch.

Jacobite sympathies also found expression in the editions of the broadsheet *Oxford Almanack* for 1700-1702,¹⁵⁷ if the satirical Whig broadsheet *Hieroglyphica Sacra Oxoniensa* (1702) is to be believed. It claimed that the engraving in the edition for 1700 allegedly represented the crowning of the Old Pretender. The edition for 1701 allegedly portrayed the triumph of the High Church Faction.¹⁵⁸

Whilst the Tory astrologers may well have been split over the issue of who should be king, from 1695 they were united in their desire for peace, and believed it was imminent. Despite their initial support for King William's war, they soon turned against it. As peace appeared to draw closer Henry Coley's almanacs became increasingly optimistic. Peace would bring the better days he had predicted throughout the first half of William's reign. Once again he cited the xenophobic, jingoistic prophecies of William Lilly predicting that England would flourish once more and its enemies be destroyed. He reminded the reader of the prophecies of Sibyl Tiburtina, alluding to the downfall of the once mighty French, and in his edition for 1697 wrote that '... the People in general are in great expectation of happy days approaching'. The following

¹⁵⁶ Gadbury, 1702, sig. C.

¹⁵⁷ For a history of *The Oxford Almanack*, see H. M. Petter, *The Oxford Almanacks* (1974) and Capp, *Astrology*, pp. 37-38.

¹⁵⁸ Quoted in Petter, *The Oxford Almanacks*, pp. 41-42.

year he declared 'People in general are active and their spirits up, being in greater expectation to see better days'.¹⁵⁹ Those who could not fully reconcile themselves to William's rule were equally desirous of peace. In his edition for 1697, John Gadbury expressed the wish:

May th' *Sword* be *sheathed*; Plenty and *Peace* prevail
Be it by th' *Lyons* Skin, or *Foxes* Tail.

He believed peace was close at hand.¹⁶⁰

Views as to how long peace would last differed among the Tory astrologers. John Gadbury believed the peace was destined to last. He mistakenly assumed that the Dauphin's renunciation of his claim to the Spanish throne in favour of the Duke of Anjou went a long way to guarantee European peace.¹⁶¹ Initially Coley seemed to believe the peace would be firm and lasting. In his first almanac published following the Treaty of Ryswick, he noted that tension was already beginning to rise in Europe, and predicted that the government would need to consider '... putting ourselves in a posture of defence'. Nonetheless he remained fairly confident that England would remain at peace. He assured readers that

... tho' many Rumors may be of War, and tho' it may be the desires of several dissatisfied Persons it should be so, yet I have great hopes that the Prudence of a Wise King, and the Foresight of a Grave Council, may prevent any such Accidents to happen to the English Nation.¹⁶²

In his edition for 1700 he wrote, 'We are now at Peace with all Nations, nor is there any danger or Probability of War, or real Hostility this *Spring*'. But by the time he came to compile his edition for 1702 war seemed inevitable. Coley informed the reader '... there is often a necessity for War, of which, about this time we may have very

¹⁵⁹ Coley, *M.A.J.*, 1697, sig. A5; 1698, sig. B.

¹⁶⁰ Gadbury, 1697, sig. B4v, Bv.

¹⁶¹ Gadbury, 1702, sig. C.

¹⁶² Coley, *M.A.J.*, 1699, sig. C4-C5.

great discourse pro & con'. Louis was faced with mounting opposition which crystallised in the second Grand Alliance of 1701. Coley may well have been alluding to this when he wrote of 'Notable endeavours in Many Countries, to joyn in Confederacy to carry on some high Design now in agitation'. He predicted that

. . . near unto these times some kind of astonishment or surprize seizeth an active Potentate of Europe, to see that his projects do not succeed according to his expectation, being strangely circumvented or frustrated by the Vigilancy and no less Activity of Neighbour-Princes.¹⁶³

England and its monarch would have a central role to play upon the European stage. 'Now the Affairs of *Europe* seem to be upon the *Ballence*' Coley declared '. . . and his Majesty of *England* very active therein to good purpose'.¹⁶⁴

Coley's fellow Tory William Cookson appeared to share his initial view that the peace was destined to last. In his edition for 1699 he observed that the heavens foretold '. . . a prosperous and happy Peaceable time, with an increase of Trade', and that '. . . we in *England*, may now expect to live as happy as any Nation under the Sun'.¹⁶⁵ In his edition for 1700 he wrote how the heavens '. . . do unanimously concord, to predict this Nations Peace, Plenty, and Safety, in all parts, and in all places from the noise of the roaring Cannon, and warlike Drum, more than of late it has been'. He went on to assure readers that the British had '. . . no cause at all to fear any new irruptions'.¹⁶⁶ With peace now firmly established, England would prosper.

Yet despite Cookson's optimism he too was aware of the increasingly tense European situation. Even before the outbreak of hostilities in Europe, his almanacs became increasingly jingoistic. His almanac for 1702 declared how the heavens guaranteed England's security, showing,

¹⁶³ Coley, *M.A.J.*, 1700, sig. C4v; *M.A.J.*, 1702, sig. A5v, B2v, C4v.

¹⁶⁴ Coley, *M.A.J.*, 1702, sig. A5v.

¹⁶⁵ Cookson, 1699, sig. C6v.

¹⁶⁶ Cookson, 1700, sig. C5, C5v.

. . . the extraordinary care, diligence, and vigilance of our Senators and Chief Men in Authority, in the Government, to prevent anything in that nature, and also shews that they can not be surprised, and also how ready they are provided against any opposition that can come, and withal, that they are capable of quashing anything in that nature, even in Bud, before it appears. Or if they should admit of any Warlike Proceedings, or Actions, to be carried on further, it will only be by way of Stratagem, to take the greater advantage over the Enemy, and to Revenge with more Bravery, so False and Perfidious, Insulting Incroachments of that Enemy that put so little value upon all Oaths, and Treaties, that did use to be, and still are among Nations.¹⁶⁷

The enemy was obviously Louis. Cookson portrayed England as a nation at one with itself, its inhabitants ready to deal with all their enemies domestic and foreign, united in their support for William.¹⁶⁸

What bound the Tory astrologers together during the latter half of William's reign even more than their desire for an end to the war was their continued adherence to the principle of passive obedience and their support for the system of monarchical government. Their message was simple and unchanged from the time of the Popish Plot: it was the subjects' duty to obey their superiors, in effect the monarch. As Henry Coley succinctly put it in 1700:

If we were *Kings* then we might *Rule* and *Sway*;
But as we *Subjects* are, we must *Obey*.¹⁶⁹

It was Gadbury's adherence to this principle which led to his quiet submission to the rule of William, even though he probably regarded James as monarch *de jure*. He was certainly not prepared to countenance active opposition to William. Instead, he warned of the dangers of such disobedience. In his edition for 1697 he wrote that if the people,

. . . will study Duty to their Superiors . . . will be so wise and careful, as not to offend. I say no Damage or Danger can attend them either in their Persons or Estates. But if they will be Imperious, Resolute, and Contentious, and run retrograde to their own Good, they will find the

¹⁶⁷ Cookson, 1702, sig. C5v.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, sig. C4v-C6.

¹⁶⁹ Coley, *M.A.J.*, 1700, sig. C8.

Heavy impression of *Saturn* to their Portion, and indeed, will neither deserve Charity or Piety.¹⁷⁰

Throughout William's reign the Tory astrologers (Gadbury, Coley, Parker and Cookson) experienced continuing outrage at the popular disobedience that had led to Civil War and Regicide. In his edition for 1697 Gadbury alluded to Hampden and the furore over ship money to show the catastrophic effects that disobedience could bring:

It grieves me every time I call to Mind, how an Eminent Subject of England, who being tax'd but 20s towards the building of that Ship call'd the Royal Sovereign (which was not only for the Honour of the King, but also for the Glory and Defence of the Nation) chose rather Obstinate to go to Law with His Majesty, than to pay such a Trifle, tho' a Gentleman of vast Estate. Which wilful and disobedient Refusal, procur'd our late horrid Rebellion, and was the cause all the Black, Tragical, Regicidal, and Episcopal Effects, that attended it. I could produce more Instances of this nature, were it needful. But the Enemies to Government are obdurate and not to be wrought upon by Reason. God forgive them and reveal their Eyes.¹⁷¹

In his edition for 1700 Cookson spoke out firmly for monarchy, portraying Charles I as a martyr, while his friend George Parker gave an emotional account of the Regicide stressing Charles' divinity:

*See Royal Charles the dismal Stage ascend,
Where Hellish Imps in Vizards on him tend.
Whilst *Angels round His Head their Wings display
And wait on him, whom nothing can dismay.
And soon as e're the Fatal stroke is given
Convey him hence, to Reign with Christ in Heav'n.*

*I have heard it affirm'd, that two Doves or Pidgeons were Observ'd to fly circling over the Scaffold, during the time of the Kings being upon it, which disappeared, and could not be seen as the Head was Severed from the Body.¹⁷²

Hand in hand with Parker's fervent royalism went vehement anti-republicanism which he equated with subversion, popular insurrection and mob rule.¹⁷³ He cleared the

¹⁷⁰ Gadbury, 1697, sig. C6v.

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*, sig. C7.

¹⁷² Cookson, 1700, sig. B3v; Parker, *A.D.E.*, 1700, sig. B.

¹⁷³ Parker, *A.D.E.*, 1700, sig. B5.

papists of all blame for the Fire of London, placing it instead at the feet of the Republicans. He based his accusations upon the activities of John Rathbone and his fellow conspirators, former Cromwellian officers executed in 1666 for conspiring to seize the Tower, set London on fire, and execute the king before setting up a republic in which property would be redistributed equally.¹⁷⁴ Parker asked sardonically:

*Was London Burnt in Anno Sixty Six,
By fierce Phanaticks, or by Popish Tricks.
Rathbone and his Accomplices, can tell,
Tho' Silly Hubert for't a Victim fell.
May Plotting Villains that with Envy Cope,
Have their like Fate, swing in a Hempen Rope.*¹⁷⁵

Parker was at his most polemical in *The Gardners Almanack*, published under the pseudonym of Kepar. The monthly verses carried on his offensive against republicanism. The verse for February, for example, celebrated the birth of Princess Anne, eldest daughter of James II, as sent by Heaven to ‘. . . *preserve the Stuarts Royal Blood*’, and dash the hopes of the Republicans.¹⁷⁶ Other verses smeared the Whigs with republicanism and blamed them for the Fire of London.¹⁷⁷ The verses for June denounced the Popish Plot as a Whig sham to further the exclusionist cause.¹⁷⁸

During the first half of William’s reign, the Tory astrologers had relatively little to say concerning religion. Parker, defending the Anglican Church in the face of Protestant and Catholic heresy, was the most vocal. This pattern continued in the latter years of William’s reign.¹⁷⁹ Parker’s fervent Anglicanism was probably representative

¹⁷⁴ The conspirators decided to enact the plan on 3 September, the anniversary of Cromwell’s death, and the battles of Dunbar and Worcester. Later the conspirators alleged the date had been chosen after consulting Lilly’s almanac, where he had written that the heavens prognosticated the downfall of monarchy, and from which they had construed the third as being a lucky day.

¹⁷⁵ Parker, *A.D.E.*, 1700, sig. C.

¹⁷⁶ Kepar [Parker], 1702, sig. A3.

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, sig. A6v.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, sig. A5.

¹⁷⁹ Parker, *A.D.E.*, 1700, sig. C2.

of the religious outlook of the majority of his fellow Tory astrologers. There was, however, one exception: John Gadbury. Gadbury's Catholic sympathy has been well documented in this thesis, and it has been argued that by 1687 he had become a Catholic, or was at least a passionate Catholic supporter.¹⁸⁰ In his edition for 1702 he mourned the death of Pope Innocent XII and welcomed his successor Clement XI, heaping praise upon both.¹⁸¹ To display such a benevolent attitude toward Catholicism at a time when England was, once again, about to be plunged into war with the Catholic menace was an exceptionally controversial step and shows that Gadbury was, at the very least, still very sympathetic toward the Catholic faith and probably still a Catholic himself.

Partridge, Gadbury and Parker: the Feud Widens

For the most part it is possible to treat individual astrologers within the wider groups of Whig or Tory astrologers. In the case of John Partridge and his rivals, however, we need to focus more closely on the bitter feuding that covered both private and public affairs.

As we have seen, from 1687 Gadbury and Partridge were embroiled in a vitriolic war of words. It was at its most fierce during the late 1680s and early 1690s, covering not only their political and religious beliefs, but also their views concerning the reform of astrology.¹⁸² For his part, Partridge championed the Ptolemaic system and, more particularly, its interpretation by the Italian monk Placidus de Titis, which he had learnt

¹⁸⁰ See above, p. 138.

¹⁸¹ Gadbury, 1702, sig. C.

¹⁸² See above, pp. 123-137, 166-173.

from his tutor Dr. Francis Wright. He had found fellow enthusiasts in his Whig compatriots, Richard Kirby and John Whalley. Not all astrologers were convinced of the validity of the Placidian system. Gadbury, along with his fellow Tory astrologers Henry Coley and George Parker, called for a Baconian reform of astrology along scientific, experimental lines. By 1693 the feud between the two rivals had reached its zenith, after which a cease-fire ensued. Indeed, in his work *Defectio Geniturarum* (1697), (a critique of Gadbury's earlier work *Collectio Geniturarum*), Partridge had announced, 'I will be totally silent in all things that concern his *Person, Morals, Religion and Reputation* . . . and only stick to the matter in hand'.¹⁸³ But the cease-fire was short-lived. In his almanac for 1698 Gadbury added '*Something touching the Placidian Astrology*' in which he criticised the Placidian system, as '. . . truthless and useless'.¹⁸⁴ Partridge was quick to respond. His almanac for 1699 contained a reply entitled '*Something in Answer to something, touching the Placidian (alias the Ptolomaick) Astrology*'. Casting aside his recent charitable attitude, he now inveighed against not only his rival's astrology, but his political and religious outlook, using the debate over astrological reform as an excuse to rake over the embers of past hostility.

Once again, Partridge highlighted Gadbury's religious inconsistency, adding a new twist by asserting that Gadbury had now turned atheist. Gadbury, he argued, had been at '*Bopeep with his God* . . . for this forty years last past, dancing out of one Religion into another, till now at last he hath none left, but what lieth in his Tongue'. He pointed out that his rival had been '. . . a *Ranter*, then a *Presbyterian*, then a *Churchman*, then a *Papist*, and now I think nothing at all, except an *Athiest*'.¹⁸⁵ He

¹⁸³ Partridge, *Defectio Geniturarum: Being an Essay toward the Reviving and Proving The True Old Principles of Astrology, Hither To Neglected, Or, at leastwise, not Observed or Understood* (1697), p. 270.

¹⁸⁴ Gadbury, 1698, sig. C2v.

¹⁸⁵ Partridge, 1699, sig. Cv, C3v.

also highlighted Gadbury's subversive politics, reaffirming his rival's complicity in the the Meal Tub Plot of 1679. Once again he accused Gadbury of Jacobitism:

He prays for the *King, his successful Sovereign*, but doth not dare name him. Now take off the Vizard of Hypocrisy, and ask him what King he means, I am certain not *King William*, and for this reason; ever since the Happy Revolution he hath left out the Table of *Kings*, because, if he had printed that, he must have put in *William and Mary*, who he doth not nor ever did allow to be *King and Queen of England*, and therefore certainly means the *French King*, or his Old Master.¹⁸⁶

He also asserted Gadbury's sexual impropriety, reminding the reader of the story he had first told in 1693 concerning Gadbury's scandalous impregnation of one Mrs. Gardiner, asking '. . . who would think that a man could knuckle a Gardiner's Daughter in his own house under his Wife's Nose, and she never see nor perceive it?'¹⁸⁷

Partridge's assault failed to elicit a response from his rival. As noted earlier in this chapter, Gadbury was an old man, ravaged by ill health and thoughts of death.¹⁸⁸ He gives the impression of a man who simply wanted to see out the rest of his days in peace, free from the controversy that had dogged him for much of his career. It is perhaps for this reason that by 1700 the feud was all but over. In his edition for 1701 he remarked that after publishing almanacs for forty five years:

I had some Thoughts of Retiring from Acting any more on the Mundane Stage. And this be rather, since *Gray Hairs*, and the concomitant *Maladies*, have overtaken me; besides, my being enforced to bend beneath the *Burthen* of more than *Seventy Years*. All which are loud and repeated Warnings, to wean any Intelligent Man from ingaging further with a Mutable and Critical World: and to think of preparing for the Possession of a more Noble, Contentive, and Fixed Place of Rest. And, as such, I thankfully accept them.

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, sig. C5-C5v.

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, sig. C3.

¹⁸⁸ See above, p. 190.

Only the 'Importunity of some choice and worthy Friends' persuaded him to continue.¹⁸⁹ The edition for 1702 spoke of a 'Tyrannous Chronical Lameness, and other Indispositions as to his Health; from the which he is not yet freed, and doubts whether he ever shall, by reason of his great Age; being now enter'd into his 75th Year'.¹⁹⁰ From 1698 there was little sport to be had in attacking Gadbury. In any case, by this time Partridge had found a new adversary, reminiscent of Gadbury in his heyday.

Around the time the feud between Gadbury and Partridge ended, the debate over the reform of astrology was at its most heated, pitching Tory astrologers against Whigs. Partridge launched invectives against his Tory opponents William Cookson and Henry Coley over astrological reform, though neither showed much inclination to enter into a protracted quarrel. Not everyone on their side was so passive. As Coley hinted in his edition for 1700, a new Tory champion had taken up the gauntlet. After reprimanding Partridge for one of his attacks, Coley remarked that he had no intention to,

*. . . regard or trouble my self to Reply to his Scomma's, and Base Reflections (as I could yet do to better purpose than he is aware of) but leave him rather to be Castigated by younger Men and I doubt not but now he has met with his match, and one that will stick close enough to him.*¹⁹¹

The younger man was George Parker who, by this stage, had come to replace Gadbury as Partridge's leading rival.

The feud between them had its origins over astrological reform but soon strayed into the realms of politics, religion and personal lives. It began in 1696 when Partridge printed 'A Remarkable Nativity', informing the reader 'I have made choice of this

¹⁸⁹ Gadbury, 1701, sig. Av.

¹⁹⁰ Gadbury, 1702, sig. A2v.

¹⁹¹ Coley, *M.A.J.*, 1700, sig. Av.

Nativity, to shew there is something [more] in the Genethliacal Part of Astrology, than what is generally known to our Modern Professors and Pretenders'.¹⁹² Parker interpreted this comment as a personal insult. In his almanac for the following year he wrote:

Now I being one of those Pretenders (if not the principal one aim'd at) think my self equally concern'd at least with the rest of my Brethren Astrologers, to take notice and make a reply to this lofty and conceited Author, and convince him (or at least those he has endeavour'd to deceive) that there be those in the world which can see within an inch as far into a Millstone as himself.¹⁹³

After undermining the accuracy of Partridge's nativity, and the astrological grounds upon which it had been cast, Parker launched a scathing attack upon Ptolemaic astronomy, the basis of his astrology. 'Now I would gladly know' he asked,

. . . a reason why *Ptolomy* should be more Infallible than any other Author; it was not his great knowledge in Astronomy beyond other Authors that must make us think so; nor indeed was he worthy to *stand* in Competition with them; witness his botch'd and confused System of the Visible Word, and perplext Epicycles to solve the Caelestial appearances, and yet to little purpose; for how vastly wide are the inferiour Planets especially found to deviate from his Limitations!...For what reason then should we think he must be so profound an Artist in, and yet so deficient in *Astronomy*, which is the very foundation of the former.¹⁹⁴

Notwithstanding the ferocity of Parker's attack upon the Ptolemaic system, he refrained from descending to a personal level.

Partridge's reply was swift and merciless. *Flagitiosus Mercurius Flagellatus: Or The Whipper Whipp'd* was divided into two sections, the first primarily dealing with Parker as astrologer. Partridge began by alleging his rival had only picked a quarrel with him in order to raise his beleaguered profile:

The truth of all is, to be plain both with you and him; He is *Poor* and *Infamous*, *Despicable* in his Person, *Ill-natur'd* and *Sawcy* in his Conversation, *Unjust* in his Dealings, *Immoral* in his Behaviour, *Weak* in

¹⁹² Partridge, 1696, sig. C7.

¹⁹³ Parker, *M.A.*, 1697, sig. C6v.

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, sig. C8.

his Understanding, *Ignorant* in his Profession; and wanting *Parts, Prudence, Virtue* and *Honesty*, finds he hath no other way to recommend himself to the World to be taken notice of, but by quarrelling with somebody or other, no matter whether they give him any occasion or not. And knowing this to be the Truth of the Case, I will certainly give him a cast of my Office, and do the most and best I can to make my hard-fac'd Adversary Famous.¹⁹⁵

He then ridiculed Parker's belief that his condemnation of the 'Modern Pretenders' had been primarily aimed at him, blaming it on his rival's conceit,

. . . he would have the World believe, That he was the man aimed at (as he expresseth it) in that Example; as supposing none more able nor eminent than himself to be pointed at in that case: When, to say the truth, he is the most *Ignorant* and *Illiterate man* of all that do pretend to *Astrology* in Print....In a word, I conclude this Conceit to be like the Fly on the Coach-wheel, that cry'd out, *Oh: what a Dust I make!*¹⁹⁶

In the remainder of the first part Partridge ridiculed Parker's ignorance in astrology, criticising his espousal of Keplerian astrology, especially when attacking the nativity Partridge had published in 1696 describing Kepler as ' . . . an Enemy to Astrology'.¹⁹⁷ He also vindicated the Ptolemaic system. To add insult to injury he accused Parker of plagiarism, observing ' . . . his Almanack is made fine, like a Common Whore, by the help of twenty Brokers Shops; if every one should come and pluck out his own Feather, there would not be matter of his own left to fill a Horn-Book'.¹⁹⁸

In the second part Partridge turned to Parker's political and religious beliefs and his private life, publishing Parker's nativity ostensibly ' . . . to shew the young Student how to judge of an *honest Nativity*'. In reality, it gave him an excuse for malicious invective against every aspect of Parker's life:

Saturn in the Ascendent with the *Sun*, gives him Pride and Uneasiness, and at the same time supplies him with a large share of Envy against every one that doth exceed him in *Parts* or *Practice, Interest* or *Reputation, Wit* or

¹⁹⁵ Partridge, *Flagitiosus Mercurius Flagellatus*, pp. 1-2.

¹⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

¹⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

*Honesty. Saturn on the Ascendent, in Conjunction with the Sun and Square of the Moon, inclines a man to a Sordid, brutish Temper, cruel, envious and seditious; this you may read in his common Language preceding, &c. All that Saturn addeth to his Ingenuity, is to make him thoughtful and studious, but at the same time it poisoneth his Thoughts, and the Product of it, and gives it a knavish Consequence.*¹⁹⁹

Partridge then set out to show how ‘. . . his Manners and Fortune agrees with his Stars’. He began by calling into question Parker’s skill as a physician. He described how in the previous January, a woman in Drury Lane had been referred to him suffering from consumption. Unfortunately, mistaking ‘Salisbury Street’, home of his practice, and ‘Salisbury Court’ she had arrived at Parker’s surgery. Having examined her water, Parker informed her that ‘She was in a deep Consumption, and over-run with *Saturn*’. At that the Gentlewoman began to stare at Parker wondering what he meant, ‘. . . as he had an *odd countenance*, so (said she) I thought he had been mad indeed’. She then asked Parker if she was ‘with Child’ to which he replied yes, and if there was a cure for her ailment to which he replied yes again. At this she expressed her concern that if she was pregnant surely it would be dangerous to ‘*take Physic*’. Parker reassured her that the treatment he would give her ‘. . . a Child may take’. He then prescribed her ‘*Four doses of Pills, and Four Papers of Powder* to . . . strengthen her *Womb*’. However:

The Pills wrought with her 30 or 40 times every Dose she took of them, and had almost *killed her*; and when she was grown so very low and weak with *his Pills*, she begins with her *strengthening Powders*, expecting that they would have repaired her again: But instead of that, they proved very *strong Diureticks*, made her *miscarry*, and brought away the *whole Conception*.

‘Now what will you call This’, Partridge asked, ‘*Impudence, Ignorance, Knavery or Murder?*’

¹⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 12 -13.

Did you ever know any but Blockheads give strong Purges to People in a deep Consumption, as he told her she was? Or any but those flusht in Murder, give strong Diureticks to a Woman above Three months gone with Child? If he thinks I trifle with him, let him put it to the Proof if he dares. Here's your Doctor, good Women!

*Would you be cured? then take great Parker's Pills,
They'll do, the more he gives, the more he kills.*²⁰⁰

Partridge then turned his attention to Parker's personal life, particularly his broken marriage. The attack centred around Parker's alleged sexual impropriety and emotional and physical abuse of his family. Partridge alleged that Parker had left his wife to '... live publicly with another Woman'.²⁰¹ A little later he observed that Parker's nativity showed

*... a Libidinous Nature. The proof of this is easy, for the Neighbourhood in Newgate-street do not spare to talk largely of his Wife's Maid and he... Yet the worst of all is, they tell you, he used to make court to his Wife's Daughter.*²⁰²

Partridge noted that the nativity also indicated '... a Cruel Tyrannick Humor and Temper; and so we find him'. Thus the impoverished Parker had allegedly forced his own son to go begging.²⁰³ And worse followed, for Partridge accused his rival of:

*That which is almost scandalous to name, but far more base and scandalous to act, and indeed what I cannot mention but with a regret and Unwillingness, and that is, the Whipping of his Wife; such a piece of Barbarity, Cruelty and Inhumanity, that is not to be parallel'd in any one but he that hath bid Defiance to all Modesty and Christian Morals.*²⁰⁴

Partridge also used this story in the war over the reform of astrology, accusing Parker of whipping his wife the '*Heliocentrick* way', and made political play of it too, noting how Parker had commended the whipping of Titus Oates in his almanac for 1697 and '... practiseth it on the *Body* of his *poor Wife*'.²⁰⁵ Partridge claimed to have a witness

²⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 14-15.

²⁰¹ *Ibid.*, p. 16.

²⁰² *Ibid.*, p. 18.

²⁰³ *Ibid.*, p. 17.

²⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 17.

²⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 11, 17.

who had seen Parker throw knives at his wife in 'her' shop.²⁰⁶ Nor did Parker's alleged cruelty stop with his wife. He was forced to borrow money from the 'Wench' he had gone to live with. Her requests for it back, however, were usually met with a sound beating.²⁰⁷

Partridge also lambasted his rival's religion. Parker had been born and raised amongst the Quakers. After meeting his wife, however, he had become a staunch Anglican. Partridge told a different story. Parker, he wrote, had been of a 'mungrel Perswasion' until his mid-twenties when, hearing of the generosity the Quakers showed their proselytes, he had joined their ranks. The 'subtle *Quakers*' however, aware of his motives had '. . . made no court to the new Proselyte' and so, disenchanted, Parker had returned to the fold of the Anglican Church.²⁰⁸

Partridge concluded that Parker's nativity was '. . . in the general the worst and most despicable positions that I ever saw':

In a word, it is such a Nativity, that had it been brought to me to have looked over, as one unknown, I should have judged it a fit position for a *Clipper*, a *Pick pocket*, an *Informer*, a *Common Barreter*, a *Traytor* to his *King and Country*, Ay and his *Master* too; a *Bankrupt*, and a person fit for any thing, though never so unjust and wicked.²⁰⁹

Parker responded to this vitriolic attack in his almanac for 1698, devoting an entire section to his adversary entitled 'J Partridge's *Villany detected*'. He claimed (as Partridge had done) that his rival had initiated the quarrel for the sake of publicity alone, and denied his own responsibility for it:

I used no scurrilous Language, no nor so much as mentioned his Name (as will appear by the Almanack) to provoke him, tho he is pleased to report the contrary, so that had he been silent himself, but few could have guess'd who was the Party intended.

²⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 17.

²⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 17.

²⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 17-18.

²⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 19.

Later he remarked 'Altho I opposed him in point of Art, yet he would turn the Quarrel from Art, into Nature & Grace'.²¹⁰

Parker then set about vindicating himself from the accusations Partridge had made against him in *Flagitiosus*. Turning his rival's own words against him, he mocked Partridge's intellect, his abilities as a physician, and his past as a cobbler:

J. Partridge in his Pamphlet says I am poor, by which he would signifie he is rich; yet let me tell him, The emptiest Vessels give the biggest sound; I am a Mechanick, by which you are to suppose he is an Academician, or else some great Don, Heir or Nephew, undoubtedly, to the great *Esculapius*; yet by our Laws he ought not to give Physick to a poor Brother Cobler. He says, I am illiterate, by which, no doubt, he would have it thought, that he was brought up at the Feet of *Gamaliel*: And yet after all this Rattle of Riches, Grandeur, and Learning, his Education was but on a four-footed Stool, strip'd up to the Elbows, thumping his Last on his Knees, and now and then joyning in melodious Harmony of that memorable Song of *Chevy Chase*, and sometimes for Variety, in extolling the famous Acts of the great and renowned *Crispin*, the only Champion of the *Gentle Craft*.²¹¹

Turning Partridge's claims to learning against him once more, he accused his adversary of anti-clericalism and republicanism, remarking that

. . . if Learning makes men wise, then this Libeller *J. Partridge* is a Fool by his own confession; for the Clergy are [the] most learned Persons in this Kingdom, and more learned than *J. Partridge*, yet *J. Partridge* rails against them: *Ergo*, the Clergy are wise Men, but *J. Partridge* a Fool, and, in my judgement K---- may be also added unto it.²¹²

Responding to Partridge's allegations that he was impoverished, he informed the reader that he had been a freeman of the City of London for some twenty two years,

. . . lived friendly and lovingly with my Neighbours, and bore my share with them all that chargeable Time of *Oats's Plot*, in guarding of the said City, which was not so little Damage to me as 20 pounds: whilst this profligate Villain, this *Jack* with a *Lanthorn*, at his highest Elevation was but exalted to a Garret of about 3 pounds a year.²¹³

The following year Partridge returned to the attack, telling readers:

²¹⁰ Parker, *M.A.*, 1698, sig. C4-C4v, C5.

²¹¹ *Ibid.*, sig. C4v-C5.

²¹² *Ibid.*, sig. C5v.

²¹³ *Ibid.*, sig. C5v.

Last Year, in an *Almanack*, I was very uncivily treated by one *G. Parker*, who hath been nibling at me in print some Years, and at last began a Quarrel with me about his Art, all which I have fairly answered without any Reply from him, except Rudeness and ill Words, and therefore I shall not make any further discourse about that matter; only tell you what he is, and by that to make you capable to judg[e] of the man.²¹⁴

In fact, whilst Parker had started the quarrel, it was Partridge who reduced it to a personal level.

Partridge kept to his word: his almanac reiterated the allegations made in *Flagitiosus*, and made a few new ones. He reminded the reader that Parker had initially been a cutler and had ‘. . . kept a Shop in *Newgate-street*, a little bigger than a Butterskin’. He then wrote of Parker’s conversion to Quakerism, made in the hope of financial gain. Adding a new twist to the tale he wrote that his rival’s efforts had not been in vain. Whilst a Quaker, Parker had met his wife and secured her fortune of £300. He had then become a ‘Churchman’ and, at the time of writing, had evolved into a ‘fulsom Jacobite’.²¹⁵ With his wife’s money, Partridge continued, Parker had taken a large house, and it was then that the cruelty began. Parker had whipped and beaten his wife, and on one occasion locked her in a garret for a week. On another occasion he had hidden linen and then brought her before a magistrate accusing her of stealing it. He had even attempted to poison her.²¹⁶

Partridge also alluded to his rival’s financial downfall, pointing out that in 1696 Parker had become a bankrupt. He concluded by accusing Parker of having ‘. . . counterfeited my Almanack to the Companies great Injury, for which piece of Villany they will print for him no more’.²¹⁷

²¹⁴ Partridge, 1699, sig. C7v.

²¹⁵ *Ibid.*, sig. C7v.

²¹⁶ *Ibid.*, sig. C7v.

²¹⁷ *Ibid.*, sig. C8.

Parker's reposte came in his ephemeris for 1699. To call it an ephemeris is something of a misnomer for it was entirely devoted to repudiating Partridge's allegations and to launching a counter-attack. Parker informed the reader that he had refrained from publishing his astrological data in order to '*. . . vindicate my Reputation, from the inhuman Assaults of that Person*'.²¹⁸ Partridge's malicious attack had come as no surprise he remarked. After all 'Not long since, for several years successively' Partridge had spent his time, '*. . . in a most grievous manner abusing and villifying Mr. Gadbury, the very Person that first learnt him his Art, and taught him how to get his Bread; yet that Person must not go scot-free, but must be the subject of his Raillery*'. Parker continued, 'Having worried himself at Mr. *Gadbury*, and raised all the Dust he could there, his next work was to fall upon Mr. *Coley*, a Person of a quiet and peaceable Disposition, abusing him also, and giving him horrid Provocation, with scurrilous Epethites'.²¹⁹

Parker went on to accuse his rival of subversion, echoing Gadbury's attack and using the same evidence from the time of the Rye House Plot. He argued that Partridge's alleged willingness to take part in an assassination attempt on the royal brothers, his calculation of the Duke of York's nativity and predictions that Charles and his government were about to be toppled, made him as guilty of complicity in the Rye House Plot as the leading conspirators. He described how Partridge had '*. . . entered into the Confederacy for Loping the Black Bird, Gold Finch, as they termed their dark designs*'.²²⁰ (The 'Black Bird' and 'Gold Finch' were Charles and James respectively). As proof of Partridge's guilt, Parker relied heavily on Robert West's

²¹⁸ Parker, *A.E.*, 1699, sig. Av.

²¹⁹ *Ibid.*, sig. A3v.

²²⁰ *Ibid.*, sig. A5v.

deposition, which he transcribed in his ephemeris for 1699. It had first appeared published by Thomas Sprat at the direction of Charles in 1685.²²¹ ‘Now Reader’ Parker wrote, ‘Judge on the whole matter, whether he is not a person of bloody and most horrid Principles’.²²² Like Gadbury, he saw Partridge’s flight in 1685 as further proof of his treason.²²³ In addition, Parker mocked the seditious predictions made by Partridge at the time of the Rye House Plot, that James would be dead by the spring of 1684, reminding the reader that sixteen years later James was still alive, and Partridge’s further predictions of James’ death in *Mene Tekel* (1688).²²⁴ He alleged too that, in an attempt to persuade the Duke of Monmouth to participate in the Rye House Plot, Partridge had calculated his nativity and predicted that he would become king.²²⁵

Parker fought back vigorously, devoting an entire section of his ephemeris to answering the ‘Scurrilous Reflections’ Partridge had cast upon him in his almanac for 1699. In answer to the invectives upon his ‘Domestick Affairs’ Parker conceded that his domestic life had been fraught, and his marriage by this time over. But he denied many of his rival’s allegations. He insisted that he had not always been impoverished, but had lived in a large ‘double House’ for which he paid £40 a year. Furthermore, he had once owned perhaps the largest cutler’s shop in London.²²⁶ Nor had he become a Quaker simply to secure his wife’s money. On the contrary, he had been born and raised amongst the Quakers, attending Quaker meetings long before he had met his future wife, ‘. . . yet never conformed to their ceremonies of thee and thou’. When he had eventually married he had ‘. . . refused to Marry with them’. He pointed out that in

²²¹ See above, pp. 81-82.

²²² Parker, *A.E.*, 1699, sig. A4v-A5.

²²³ *Ibid.*, sig. A4v.

²²⁴ *Ibid.*, sig. A5.

²²⁵ *Ibid.*, sig. A5v.

²²⁶ *Ibid.*, sig. B2v.

1687 when 'Popery was rampant, and the Church in danger of being Crucified between that and other Enemies' (the Dissenters) he and his four children were baptised into the Church of England.²²⁷

Parker also denied that he had used his wife's money to purchase a large house. After the marriage he and his wife had resided in Newgate Street where they had taken a smaller home than Parker's previous one because his wife had refused to live in Newgate Market. He had lived there for eight years before taking a larger one.²²⁸ He could not deny that he had declared himself bankrupt, but claimed he had been given little choice in the face of the debts his wife had been running up unbeknown to him.²²⁹ He did, however, 'utterly deny' having beaten his wife, claiming, '. . . on the Contrary, I used too much Lenity, which I experimentally know was to my damage'. Nor had he ever whipped her.²³⁰ As to the charge of poisoning, Parker claimed his wife made such accusations so frequently '. . . that it caused Game and past-time in the Family several times'. He asserted that on one particular occasion her claims to have been poisoned had been made to '. . . make a Noise and drown a *Design* that was laid, and discovered, of cutting my Throat'.²³¹

He did, however, admit that he had, on one occasion, locked her up, not in a garret, but in her bedroom, but only after extreme provocation. Indeed he believed '. . . there is few Men but that would do the same, if they were yoaked to a Woman that used all Tricks and Stratagems to bring a Man to Prison as my wife did'.²³² It would appear Parker believed his wife had mounted a co-ordinated offensive against him, with the

²²⁷ *Ibid.*, sig. B3.

²²⁸ *Ibid.*, sig. B3.

²²⁹ *Ibid.*, sig. B3.

²³⁰ *Ibid.*, sig. B3v.

²³¹ *Ibid.*, sig. B3v-B4.

²³² *Ibid.*, sig. B5.

aim of seeing him imprisoned. Another of her favourite tricks, allegedly, was to 'make off' with his money, sometimes to the tune of £10. To add insult to injury, when asked for the money by their creditors, his wife would tell them he had taken it from her, thus compounding his debts and discrediting him.²³³

Clearly, Parker's broken marriage had left him embittered. At one point he poignantly wrote:

*True it is, that by an unhappy Marriage with a Turbulent and froward Woman, I am a Man that has been for many Years, acquainted with Sorrows and a Companion of Grief, and have found the old Proverb really verified, viz. He that Marries a Widow with one Child, Marries two Thieves, otherwise my Circumstances in the World had been much better than now they are; and altho' it be my Affliction to be thus unhappily Yoaked, yet am I not the first Man that has been in these Afflictions, and 'tis to be feared, shall not be the last, tho' I heartily wish I might.*²³⁴

He had undertaken the painful task of looking back over his broken marriage, publishing all the details, upon finding out - or so he alleged - that his wife had been feeding Partridge information, part, no doubt, of her plan to discredit him:

*All these things are over and past, and for me, should have been buried in Oblivion; but finding she has been assistant to this Villain, I have published this for my vindication, and if it disturbs her, let her thank the said Partridge for it.*²³⁵

Parker concluded by confronting Partridge once more:

*I charge him to be Fool, Knave and Blockhead; and all this I have proved herein upon him. Blockhead, in being ignorant in the Art he pretends to, Fool for meddling in a Cause that's purely domestick, and did in no respect concern him; and Knave to villifie and bespatter any Man's Reputation, to gratifie his Revengeful Spirit.*²³⁶

Parker renewed his assault in his ephemeris for 1700, this time focusing on Partridge's allegedly subversive past. His main weapon was to publish a damaging

²³³ *Ibid.*, sig. B5.

²³⁴ *Ibid.*, sig. B4.

²³⁵ *Ibid.*, sig. B5.

²³⁶ *Ibid.*, sig. B5v.

letter purportedly written by Partridge in 1683, which he claimed had been ‘. . . secretly co[n]veyed to and fro among the Plotting Caball’, complete with details of the Duke of Monmouth’s nativity. The letter read as follows:

I Mist meeting with you that Afternoon that we did appoint, by reason of some Business that I was sent for into Holbourn, and therefore what I then promised to give you, I have sent by the hands of your Friend. This is his true Nativity; and he hath for some Years now approaching a successive Series of Good Directions; and in particular, the next Year will be of Great Note; and in my Opinion, he will, if ever he comes to Engage in such an Affair, be the only Man that will turn the Affairs of the French Success, that is he will beat him, for his Nativity shews him to be a Soldier, and one designed from his first Being to do Great Things by the Power and Conduct of War, &c. Although the French King be now Sick, my Opinion is, that he will not die This, but the next Year, that is, in August or near it, he will then go to the D----I and I doubt not but to see James Duke of Monmouth greater than ever he was yet, and that in less time than some think. Pray Sir, what News of Luxemburg is Considerable, let me hear, for honest Men wish well to that City in England, and we hope it will prevent the French Designs.

Pray give my Service to Mr. Sparrow, and all the rest of my Friends, and assure your self that I am

Your Friend and Servant,

J. Partridge.²³⁷

Ostensibly in this letter (if it ever existed) Partridge was alluding to the fact that in the spring of 1683 Louis XIV had besieged Luxemburg for the second time and was predicting that the Duke of Monmouth would, if he became involved in the conflict, defeat the Sun King. Of course, Parker had his own interpretation of the letter which he claimed showed Partridge’s ‘. . . excellent knack . . . of Communicating Treason to a Brother Conspirator, without the danger of being discover’d’,

. . . the Reader may observe about the middle of his letter he promises the Duke of M----great Success against the *French*; by which is meant (as it is reasonable to be supposed) the then Government of *England*, and when he speaks of the *French King*, it is to be understood King *Charles* (if not, then he that was to die the next *August*, and go to the D---- is at this time alive, tho’ it is 16 Years since. [Parker is alluding to James].

²³⁷ Parker, *A.D.E.*, 1700, sig. A3-A3v.

He continued:

In the Conclusion of his Letter, he desires his friend to let him hear what News of *Luxemburgh* is Considerable, for honest Men wish well to that City in *England*. By *Luxemburgh* the Reader must understand is meant *London*, and by those honest Men, who wish well to that City were signified those Pious, peaceable, sanctified, good Christians, who were studying and projecting along with honest *John Partridge*, to destroy K. Charles II. pull down the Establish'd Church, and betray the whole Kingdom into the hands of Rebels, all disguised under the Cobweb Notion of preventing the *French Designs*; with which Pretence our Factious Wiseaker in those days used to guild his Treasonable Baits, that the greedy Rabble might swallow them the better without kecking.²³⁸

Of course, Partridge's predictions, allegedly made at the time of the Rye House Plot of the royal brothers' impending deaths, and the success of Monmouth had proved wholly inaccurate. Parker claimed that Partridge's predictions owed nothing to his knowledge of astrology and,

. . . were no more than bare ordinary Guesses, all hap-hazard, drawn from no Rules, proving themselves nothing but the froth of his own Zeal to Rebellion, as a means to encourage his restless and aspiring Believers, to push on their Wicked, Trayterous and detestable Designs, with a more infatigable Resolution.²³⁹

Parker averred that Partridge's predictions had encouraged the plotting of the West and Monmouth cabals and that, therefore, he had the blood of the conspirators on his hands.²⁴⁰ He claimed too that Partridge, despite his former support for Monmouth, had subsequently turned into a fully-fledged Republican. Proof could be found in his membership of the Whig Calves' Head Club and the anti-monarchical opinions he freely vented upon his return from exile following the Glorious Revolution. Parker observed,

. . . that among his Antimonarchical Crew, he has been often heard to declare, That in his Opinion, a Common-wealth was the only Government in the World, which shews he has sucked up so much *Dutch Poyson* during

²³⁸ *Ibid.*, sig. A4, A4v.

²³⁹ *Ibid.*, sig. A4.

²⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, sig. A4v.

his residence in *Holland*, that 'tis a Scandal to his Native Country to own himself an *Englishman*.²⁴¹

He had not always been of a Whiggish disposition, Parker claimed. He was a political turncoat who had only become a Whig after having been rejected by the Tories. Parker recounted how,

. . . the Tory side looking upon him to be a Shatter'd Brain Fellow, one of no Principles, were so far from showing him any manner of Countenance, that they thought him not worth Notice; at which he was so highly disgusted, that he turned Cat in Pan, and came over to the Whiggish Faction, unsaying all that he had before said, undoing all he had before done . . . bespattering the *English* Govenment with false and odious Calumnies; Ent[e]ring into the *Rye-house* Plot to kill the King and betray the Nation, and from that time has imbib'd such Rebellious Principles, that no good Admonitions can irradicate, or worst of Subjects parallel.²⁴²

He pointed out how Partridge's republicanism was plain in his almanacs' chronologies observing how:

In Opposition to Authority, Contempt of the Laws, and in favour of the blackest Murtherers, (the Regicides,) he endeavours to mollify their Guilt, and stifle the Remembrance of their abominable Cruelty, by incerting in his Almanack for the Year 1691, K. Ch. I. D. which is understood K. Charles I. died or departed this Life, leaving out the Martyrdom of the Pious Prince.²⁴³

Having got away with this, Partridge had compounded it the following year, by completely omitting the Regicide.²⁴⁴ This 'sawcy Omission' had not gone unnoticed, attracting the attention of Archbishop Tillotson and other members of the ecclesiastical hierarchy. Shortly afterwards 'Orders were dispatch'd to the Company of Stationers, to reprehend this Insolence',

. . . and for the future prevention of the like Error, they were strictly required to bring all Almanacks to the Arch-Bishops Chaplains to be

²⁴¹ *Ibid.*, sig. A5v.

²⁴² *Ibid.*, sig. A5v.

²⁴³ *Ibid.*, sig. A5v.

²⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, sig. A5v.

perused and approv'd on by them, before handed to the Press, which ever since has been carefully observ'd.²⁴⁵

Even now Partridge had failed to comply fully. In his almanac for 1694 he noted Charles' martyrdom but used black instead of the customary red lettering. Parker asserted that this 'awkward unwillingness'

. . . shows not only his obstinacy to Authority, and his disobedience to the Laws of the Nation, but implies his Consent and Approbation to the Mur. of K. *Charles* the I. which he has endeavoured by sundry Ways to bury in obscurity.²⁴⁶

He also pointed out how, to add insult to injury, Partridge had printed the name of the Whig polemist Stephen College in red, placing an m after it '. . . which must signify either Murther'd or Martyr'd . . . thus to insinuate himself with the Factious Party'.²⁴⁷

As we have seen, Parker had alleged that Partridge had not always been of a Whiggish persuasion, only joining their ranks after being rebuffed by the Tories.²⁴⁸ Like Gadbury, Parker drew attention to the sycophantic nativity of Louis XIV Partridge had published in 1680, proof of how his political outlook had changed. 'The first thing that I take notice of', Parker observed sarcastically, '. . . is, how he stiles it the Nativity of the most Valiant and Puissant Monarch *Lewis* the XIV: which is a Title quite different to what he has lately bestow'd on him'.²⁴⁹

Pray observe how heartily he Prays for the *French* King, as if he was inclinable to be as true a Convert as ever was brought over to the Roman Catholick Faith; and no doubt on it, had His Christian Majesty encouraged his first Essay, to please that Party, he would have stayed long enough in *England*, to have gone to *France* with King *James*, instead of running to *Holland*, with D. of *M----*s Party.²⁵⁰

²⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, sig. A6.

²⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, sig. A6.

²⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, sig. A6.

²⁴⁸ See above, p. 215.

²⁴⁹ Parker, *A.D.E.*, 1700, sig. A4v.

²⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, sig. A5.

There could have been no greater insult to Partridge than to suggest that, at one stage, he might have become a Catholic and Jacobite. Parker concluded by remarking ‘He’s a Rebel in his Principles, an Enemy to Monarchy, Ungrateful to his Friend, a Scoundrel in his Conversation, a Malignant in his Writings, A Lyar in his Almanack, and a Fool of an Astrologer’.²⁵¹

Partridge’s vehement attacks upon Gadbury, Coley, Cookson and Parker reflected the bullish mood he was in during William’s reign. It is true that Parker initiated the quarrel with Partridge by deriding Ptolemy and questioning his skill as an astrologer; but it was Partridge who took it into the realms of politics, religion and personal vilification. In Parker he found a willing adversary at a time when his feud with Gadbury had all but come to an end.

From the mid-1690s the debate over the reform of astrology reached a peak of intensity with the Ptolemaic Whigs, Partridge, Whalley and Kirby on one side, and the Baconian Tories Gadbury, Parker, Coley and Cookson on the other. Gadbury and Coley found their astrological beliefs attacked by Whalley in his Translation of Ptolemy’s *Quadripartite*, published in 1701, and Parker found himself embroiled in a feud with Wing over astrological reform.²⁵² The quarrels over the reform of astrology were thus entangled with the deep political divisions between Whig and Tory, which in turn encouraged scurrilous personal abuse. The astrological war mirrored the vicious party battles of the period. And it is at least possible that the attempts to blacken rivals both personally and professionally helped to discredit the standing of astrology itself.

²⁵¹ *Ibid.*, sig. A7.

²⁵² Parker, *A.D.E.*, 1701, sig. Av; Wing, 1702, sig. C8-C8v; J. Whalley, *Ptolomy’s Quadripartite: Or, Four Books Concerning The Influences of the Stars* (1701), sig. A3v.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE ASTROLOGERS AND ANNE

On Friday 21 February 1702 King William III fell from a new horse he was trying out and broke his collar-bone. By seventeenth century standards a broken collar-bone was not considered a serious injury. It was not long, however, before he became feverish, and on 8 March he died. So began the reign of Queen Anne. Even before William's death, however, the stage was being set for his successor.

As we have seen, during the summer of 1701 public opinion swung in favour of renewed war against France, as Louis' provocative installation of Philip of Anjou in line to the French throne convinced the English public that the expansionist French monarch posed a real threat to English security and interests.¹ The situation was exacerbated by Louis' impolitic decision to recognise James III as King of England on his father's death in September 1701. This decision further convinced the English of the necessity of war with France, in part to defend the Protestant succession provided for by the Act of Settlement of June 1701.

As war approached once more, the relative political calm of William's last years evaporated. In its place came renewed party strife and faction, as the political nation divided once more over the war, the succession and the Church. It was over these issues that the Tories and Whigs fought the ferocious party battle for which Anne's reign is notorious.²

It is with this battle that this chapter is primarily concerned. How far was it reflected in the almanacs and other astrological works of Anne's reign? What arguments were

¹ See above, pp. 173-174.

² For a good insight into political life during Anne's reign see Holmes, *British Politics*. The standard biography of Anne is E. Gregg, *Queen Anne* (1980).

employed by the leading polemicists amongst them as the battle lines were drawn? Let us begin by examining the Whig astrologers.

The Whig Astrologers

The Whig astrologers were naturally quick to mourn the death of King William, the man who had liberated Europe from French tyranny and rescued English liberties from the grip of popery and arbitrary rule. In his almanac for 1703 John Partridge solemnly noted, '*Great William's* dead, our *Guardian Angel's* gone':

His Gen'rous Soul for Freedom was design'd,
To pull down *Tyrants*, and *unslave* Mankind.
He broke the chains of *Europe*; and when we
Were doom'd for *Slaves*, he came and set us free.
Preserv'd the State (when *Rome's* *Banditts* sway'd)
By *Unjust Princes*, and *Lewd Priests* betray'd.

Praising the valour William had shown during his war with the French he declared:

His Heart, his Hand, his Soul, and Head did work
For Truth and Justice, 'gainst the *Christian Turk*,
That *Haughty Prince*, who King of *Slaves* wou'd be,
Fought to oppress, this *Prince* to set us free.³

John Tanner described William as 'Europe's *chief* Hero',⁴ while Francis Moore declared:

He was a Prince whom God ordain'd to be
A Scourge to *France*, and set these Nations free.
A Prince he was sacred, mild and good;
And for our Liberties he firmly stood:
But being gone, lets bear him still in mind,
And pray for the Successor left behind.⁵

³ Partridge, 1703, sig. A6, A7, B3.

⁴ Tanner, 1703, sig. C3v.

⁵ Moore, 1703, sig. B7v.

Anne received a whole-hearted welcome from the Whig astrologers. She was clearly perceived as William's successor in more ways than one. On her shoulders now fell the responsibility for liberating Europe from the Catholic menace, once again in the guise of Louis XIV. Moore declared she was destined:

To do us good, and set all *Europe* free
From Gallick Fetters and its Tyranny.⁶

More importantly, of course, she had to defend the 'Lives, Laws and Liberties' of her subjects from the same threat. Failure to do so was unimaginable, for it would only result in the destruction of Protestantism at the hands of the Old Pretender. 'God made you shepardess, we are your sheep', Moore told Anne in 1706:

And under you he will us safely keep,
From rav'nous Wolves, and other Beasts of Prey,
That would our Liberties and Lives destroy.⁷

Anne, moreover, possessed one advantage which William had not. She was English.

Thus in 1703, Tanner implored William's former subjects to:

*Cease mourning now, and see what doth appear,
After our Sun-set, a Star bright and clear
To grace our Horizon, our glorious Anne,
Her Heart all English, whom France cannot trapan.*⁸

In Anne's reign, as throughout the period covered by this thesis, the Whigs perceived the main threat to these 'Lives, Laws and Liberties' as emanating from Catholicism. Fearful of the arbitrary nature of Catholic monarchs, they continued to espouse the virtues of limited monarchy and the notion of the original contract between monarchs and their subjects. Sovereignty was shared by the monarch, Lords and Commons, and monarchs should rule in the interests of their subjects. It was only in a limited monarchy like England that the rights and liberties of the subject could be

⁶ Moore, 1706, sig. B5v.

⁷ *Ibid.*, sig. A8v.

⁸ Tanner, 1703, sig. C3.

safeguarded. Catholic absolutism led to the complete subjugation of these rights and liberties, as witnessed in France, or in England under James II who had flouted the law and abused his prerogative. In his edition for 1709 Tanner published a carefully phrased eulogy of monarchy, declaring:

'Tis said you're Gods! What Glory is't to be
 Accounted Gods, if Gods of Tyranny?
 Sacred's the name of *Sovereign* full of Splendor,
 When truly Stiled is the *Faiths Defender*,
 Justice and Law adorns the *Sovereignty*,
 Safely preserves the Subjects Liberty.
 Thus is Great *Britain* blest; can she but see
 Since Majesty agrees with Property?

Tanner clearly shared the traditional Whig belief that the rights and liberties of the subject were preserved by the laws of the land, laws which bound monarchs as well as subjects. '*Just Heaven fram'd Government, and soon found cause*', he wrote in the same edition:

*The form to limit by prescribed Laws,
 Least Humane Nature stained be by Crime,
 And Lust may interfer[e] with Laws sublime.
 Which binds the Sovereignty, and it maintain,
 A Buckler to the just, to th' Vile a Chain.⁹*

Monarchy was sacred and glorious only when it upheld the property, religion and liberty of its subjects.

For the Whig astrologers defence of the rights and liberties of the English subject against popish tyranny and oppression included defence of the Protestant succession. Their support for the Hanoverian succession was early and unequivocal. John Partridge included a eulogy of the Hanoverian family as early as 1704, asserting its right to the succession. They had in no way sought the English throne, he stressed, but had come

⁹ Tanner, 1709, sig. C, Bv.

to it ‘. . . by Fate and due Descent’. Not for them the trickery of popish plotters. On the contrary they had been:

By full Consent, join’d with the Senat’s Voice,
 Declar’d Successors in a glorious Choice:
 All men almost agreed, few did oppose:
 These were the Steps, the Steps by which they rose.

The Hanoverians were honourable, valiant and courageous; both the Turks and French had experienced at first hand the wrath of the House of Hanover. More important, however, they were Protestant (albeit Lutherans). Partridge assured his readers:

In point of Faith they’re right, to all intents;
 The Family are faithful Protestants:
 No Popish Gimcracks can their Faith betray,
 Nor use they Toys and Baubles when they pray.

He concluded with a simple prayer:

Let Great *Sophia* in the Van appear,
 And *George* her Glorious Son support her there.
 Heaven bless ’em all, all the whole Family,
 And curst be him that doth this Prayer deny.¹⁰

A year later, Francis Moore rejoiced that with Anne on the throne and the Protestant succession secured, Catholic hopes lay in tatters:

Great *Anne*, our Queen, now settled on the Throne,
 Can, by just Right, call that great Seat her own.
 There’s now no room for any blind Pretence,
 Nor hopes for juggling Priests to bring their Prince.
 The next Succession, now to end the stir,
 Is settled on the House of *Hanover*.

In the same edition he published ‘*An Account of the Regal Succession from the Union of the two Houses of Lancaster and York, call’d the Red and White Rose, in the Year 1485, to the Settlement of the Protestant Line by Act of Parliament in the Year 1701.*

¹⁰ Partridge, 1704, sig. A7-B8.

in the most *Illustrious House of Hanover*'. In his edition for 1711 he claimed that his almanac was read and welcomed at the Hanoverian court:

Thy Fame does reach the Court of Hanover;
Where for some Years, O thank kind Heav'n for't,
Thou has been entertain'd in Noble sort.¹¹

The main threat to the Protestant succession came from James Edward, the Old Pretender, and his champion Louis XIV. The Whig astrologers insisted the struggle against them had to be fought on two fronts. Louis had to be defeated on the Continent, and the Jacobites crushed at home.

Support for the War of Spanish Succession amongst the Whig astrologers was whole-hearted. Defeating Louis would guarantee the Protestant succession in England, and liberate Spain from the tyrannical rule of his grandson, Philip V, thus restoring the balance of power in Europe. As during King William's war, the Whig almanacs became a rich source of bellicose propaganda, aimed at encouraging support for the war amongst their readers.

The Whig astrologers were quick to inveigh against Louis XIV, for throwing Europe into yet another bloody war by his avaricious expansionism. In his edition for 1703 John Partridge employed a traditional propaganda device invented by Waller, Denham and Marvell in the late 1660s. In a verse entitled '*The TYRANT*' he instructed an imaginary artist to:

Draw him at length, (that wicked *Monstrous Thing*)
A Bloody, Faithless, Perjur'd, Bankrupt K---.

Partridge declared with savage irony:

Each country's his, and what he claims is just;
What Arms can't conquer, Coin or Poison must.

¹¹ Moore, 1705, sig. A3, C3-C4; 1711, sig. C7v.

‘Him I’ll renounce, and let my wishes kill’, he concluded:

May he not live, or live against his Will.
 Let dying Pains his Carcas always maim,
 And all the Plagues he gave, return with Pain.
 His kindness scorn’d, his Name grow Infamous,
 His Conscience be the Devil’s Custom House.
 Let *Fistula’s* the Family supply,
 And Hell rejoice too when such Monarchs dye.
 His *Warriors Thieves*, his Statesmen Juggling knaves,
 He a damn’d *Tyrant*, and his People *Slaves*.¹²

Francis Moore’s edition for 1710 began with a polemical verse in the form of a ‘DIALOGUE between a British *COCK* and a French *MONKEY*’, two emphatically partisan emblems, in which the monkey lamented his ill fortune in having to live in an authoritarian, absolutist state which had impoverished and enslaved his fellow countrymen. The cock revelled in his liberty, telling the monkey how a British cock would hate such a life; how he lived freely and willingly supported his monarch and how their support for the war effort would lead to the defeat of Louis and expulsion of the puppet King, Philip V.¹³

Throughout Anne’s reign Moore’s almanacs offered the reader an eclectic collection of prophecies, from the better known like those of Merlin and Nostradamus to the more obscure like those allegedly ‘. . . found in an Abbey in *Germany* some Years ago’, and from 1706 ‘Hieroglyphicks’, which foretold the defeat of Louis at the hands of the allies, the elevation of Charles III to his rightful place on the Spanish throne, and later in the reign a peace with France by which Louis would be forced to bow to the allies.¹⁴ In a blatantly labour-saving device, William Salmon reproduced the ‘Hieroglyphicks’ he too had published in William’s reign, updating the key so that Anne replaced William, and promising that like her predecessor she would vanquish

¹² Partridge, 1703, sig. A3v-A4.

¹³ Moore, 1710, sig. Av.

¹⁴ For example, see Moore, 1706, sig. C6v-C8; 1707, sig. C5-C8; 1710, sig. C3v; 1711, sig. C4v-C5.

Louis and forge a European peace.¹⁵ Louis' queen Madame de Maintenon was also the butt of Whig insults: Francis Moore accused her of witchcraft in his edition of 1705.¹⁶

Louis' allies too came under attack. Francis Moore reassured the reader that the cowardly upholders of the French cause in Spain, still haunted by the failure of the Armada, would refuse to fight and '... readily will quit the Field'.¹⁷ A special odium was reserved for the traitorous Bavarians, who left the allied camp in 1703 to ally with the French or, as Partridge put it, had been '... kidnapp'd, cully'd by the *French*'.¹⁸ Partridge took special delight in the defeat of the Bavarians at Bleinheim where they had fought alongside their newly acquired allies, the French.

The Whig astrologers wholeheartedly supported the Austrian Habsburgs' claim to the Spanish throne, upholding Archduke Charles' right to rule as Charles III. They argued that the French monarch had usurped the Spanish throne for his grandson by bribing Portocarrero to forge Charles II's will. John Tanner asserted that the 'Sordid Tyrant' Louis, in his quest to seize the Spanish throne for the Duke of Anjou:

*Gave up the Christian Stile to make a King:
Thus lofty Spain was trick't by a Forg'd Will,
Seal'd by French Gold, declar'd by Priestcraft skill
Thus Anjou reign'd, the Spaniard thus obey'd,
And stoopt to have their Libertys betray'd.*¹⁹

In his edition for 1707 Moore gave his reader '*An Account of the House of Austria, both in the German and Spanish Line*'. Beginning with the Spanish line, he took the story up to Charles II '... at whose Death', he informed the reader, '*Lewis XIV. of France, set up his Grandson the Duke of Anjou, second Son to the Dauphin, and has*

¹⁵ Salmon, 1705, sig. C6-C8v.

¹⁶ Moore, 1705, sig. Bv.

¹⁷ Moore, 1704, sig. Av.

¹⁸ Partridge, 1706, sig. A8v.

¹⁹ Tanner, 1710, sig. B2.

the Title of *Philip V. of Spain*'. He expressed the hope that Emperor Joseph I, who had replaced Leopold on his death in 1705,

. . . by the Help of God and his Arms, with those of his Allies in Confederacy with him . . . will firmly fix his Illustrious Brother *Charles III.* on the throne of *Spain*, will be a Curb to the French Tyrant, in being a universal Monarch, and settle a firm and lasting Peace in all *Europe*.

Philip V, he remarked, had been ' . . . for a little time, highly esteem'd, as a King of Ginger-Bread with Children, who, when they are weary of playing with him, will eat him up'. He then traced the German line, from whence had arisen 'Charles III' of Spain ' . . . which Crown and Kingdom, with all the Dominions, thereunto belonging, you may plainly see is his undoubted Right, notwithstanding the French King's Intrigues, by a pretended Will, and other cunning Devices to disinherit him'.²⁰

After a relatively slow start, the war in Europe outside the Spanish theatre gained momentum. Louis was defeated in Italy and in northern and central Europe, at the hands of the Duke of Marlborough and his ally, Prince Eugene. Marlborough's rout of the Franco-Bavarian army on 2 August 1704 at Blenheim was followed by Eugene's victory at Turin, which delivered Italy from the hands of the French, and Marlborough's successes at Ramilles in 1706 and Oudenarde in 1708.

Initially, the war in Spain appeared to be going equally well. On 23 July 1704 the English fleets under Sir George Rooke and Sir Cloudesley Shovell captured Gibraltar, and later repulsed a French attempt to recapture it after a naval battle off Málaga. The allied invasion of Spain also progressed well. Archduke Charles and the Earl of Peterborough captured Barcelona, and in the wake of their victory, many in eastern Spain, particularly Catalonia, rallied to support 'Charles III'. The Earl of Galway invaded Spain from Portugal and was able to occupy Madrid.

²⁰ Moore, 1707, sig. C2v-C4.

Naturally the Whigs were quick to exploit the allied victories in their war of words with Louis. Celebrating Marlborough's victory at Blenheim, at which the French commander Tallard was captured, Francis Moore proclaimed in his verses for August 1706:

In this same month, and but a two Years flight,
 What Numbers fell, (Lord) sure they dy'd for spight;
 'Twas then the famous *Marlborough* got a Name,
 A faithful Servant to his Royal Dame;
 As he in Triumph gloried in the Field,
Tallard did humbly to the Conqueror yield.

Four years later, Moore wrote of the heroic Marlborough:

Your Victory at *Hochstedt's* not forgot
 Count *Tallard* taken, *Bavaria* paid the shot;
 At *Ramelles*, Lord, how the *French* did run,
 Leaving their Baggage, Musket, Pike and Drum:
 At *Audenard* another mighty Rattle
 The *French* were thump'd, and so did end the Battle.

'The mighty Acts' of Marlborough would be recorded in the 'Books of Fame', he continued, and '. . . make a Volume when a Peace is come'.²¹ Marlborough's ally, Prince Eugene, received only passing mention in the Whig almanacs. Moore conceded that whilst:

Marlborough the Great, to give him just due,
 Is a brave General, so's Prince *Eugene* too.²²

John Tanner joined in this patriotic fervour. In his edition for 1707 he celebrated

. . . the great Victory obtain'd in the *Netherlands* by the famous Prince and Duke of *Marlborough*, in Conjunction with the *Dutch* Generals, and other of the Confederates, together with the Reduction of most of the eminent Towns in *Brabant* and the *Spanish Netherlands*, to the Obedience of *Charles III.* their lawful Sovereign.

He celebrated the allied success in Spain too, praising

. . . the unparall'd Defence and Relief of the City of *Barcelona*, by his Majesty's [Charles III] Prescence and Valour, and the Care and Wise

²¹ Moore, 1706, sig. B3v; 1710, sig. A8v, Bv.

²² Moore, 1710, sig. B2v.

Conduct of the noble Earl of *Peterborough*, and the seasonable Succours of our Fleet. With the *Portugual's* Army, in the heart of *Spain*, which we hope will facilitate the Reduction of that Kingdom from the Tyranny of *France*.²³

In the wake of the continued allied success Louis was portrayed as a broken man. Writing of the humiliated French monarch in his edition for 1707, Partridge declared, 'He hath nothing else to do now but die; his Lawrels are withered, his Glory is blasted, and his Arms grown scandalously weak'. The planetary aspects of 1707 showed that '... his ill Success will be increased, and his Life in danger, either by Discontent or Poyson. It would be strange, if he should die the common Death of all Men'. Partridge assured his reader that the ill-fated French monarch lay under '... a train of Directions, which in my Opinion will prove mortal when they touch'. He was quick to point out the ramifications Louis' death would have in England for the High Church asking sarcastically, '... and then Woe and Alas! what will become of the *High-Church* when her Pillar is taken down'?²⁴

Francis Moore preferred ridicule to dire warnings. In his almanac for 1707, he devised a dramatised meeting between Louis and his queen, in which the defeated king laments his downfall, bewails his sins and seeks comfort following the allied victories both inside and outside the Spanish theatre. 'When puff'd with Pride, which now my Ruin brings', the ill-fated French monarch reminisced sadly:

Then I set up a Trade, for making Kings;
Made one for *England*; but, as soon as done,
The People sware, 'Twas a T-le m-kers' Son.
Then straight another I set up in *Spain*;
But this, even as the other proves in vain.

²³ Tanner, 1707, sig. C4v.

²⁴ Partridge, 1707, sig. C5-C5v.

‘No King had sure, a more prodigious Rise’, he recalled. His subjects, under pain of death, were quick to submit to his will and willing to kill for him if he so desired. But now all had changed:

Curse on my Fate, What plaguy Stars rule now!
Must I, who sway’d the World, be forc’d to bow?
It strikes my Heart, they’ll never take my Word,
Nor make a Peace, but with the Conquering Sword:
Help *Maintenon*, my Spirits ’gin to faint;
To thee alone, now, I make my Complaint.

Finding no relief from his mistress, the French king angrily bids her leave his presence, declaring:

’Tis you, and that curs’d Priest *Portocarrero*,
Has ruin’d me, and drove me on Tantaro.²⁵

The allied victories in Europe were consolidated at home by the union of England and Scotland, ratified in March 1707. The union was not without its opponents, most notably amongst the High Tories, who hated the idea of unifying with the economically backward and Presbyterian Scots. Whig support for the union was unequivocal and based firmly on strategic considerations. Throughout William’s reign, Highland Scotland had been a hotbed of Jacobite support and the scene in 1689 of a Jacobite rising. Under Anne the prospect of a Jacobite invasion from Scotland remained real, amidst genuine fears of a revival of the Auld Alliance between Scotland and France. For the Whigs, union with Scotland was a powerful weapon in the war with France and battle to safeguard the Protestant succession.²⁶

²⁵ Moore, 1707, sig. Bv-B7v.

²⁶ For details concerning the Union, see T. C. Smout, ‘The Road to Union’, in G. Holmes (ed.), *Great Britain after the Glorious Revolution* (1989), pp. 176-195; P. W. J. Riley, *The Union of England and Scotland: A Study in Anglo-Scottish Politics of the Eighteenth Century* (Manchester, 1978).

These sentiments were admirably reflected in the Whig almanacs for 1708, the first to be published following the ratification of the union. Francis Moore declared:

Thanks noble Peers, and worthy Commons all,
This UNION will produce the Tyrants Fall.²⁷

Tanner praised Anne, who had ‘. . . united the kingdoms of *England* and *Scotland* into one Body for the good and safety of Both, and a firm Barrier to the Protestant Interest’. Alluding to High Tory opposition to the union, he added:

It is needless to insert here who were the Men, or of what Interest that laid the Clog upon the Design to hinder its Motion and Accomplishment; If you consider who they be, or what they are that so strenuously opposed it whilst it was in Agitation; and who murmurs at it, and maliciously contrive invectives against it now it is perfected.²⁸

Not everything was going well for the Whigs. While the war was still being won in most theatres, the campaign in Spain began to go disastrously wrong for the allies. Galway’s occupation of Madrid proved short-lived and on 14 April the allied forces under his command were soundly beaten at the Battle of Almanza. More defeats followed as Catalonia fell, overwhelmed by Castilian national feeling.

With victory over Louis in the rest of Europe all but won and the campaign in Spain collapsing, Tory disillusionment with the war turned into a clamour for peace. The Whigs’ support of the war, however, remained solid. They believed victory in Spain could still be attained and rallied around the policy of ‘No Peace without Spain’. Even defeat at the Battle of Brihuega in December 1710 failed to shake their resolve.

Louis had made his first official peace proposals in 1705, though feelers had been put out long before. By the end of 1708, with France bankrupt and suffering a cruel winter, he began to offer substantial concessions to the allies, including recognition of the Protestant succession in Britain. Still the intransigent Whigs refused to make peace.

²⁷ Moore, 1708, sig. A5v.

²⁸ Tanner, 1708, sig. C4v.

Hopes for peace lay shattered until 1710 when an increasingly war-weary nation voted in the Tories. Even then Whig opposition to the peace negotiations remained strong; fed by the Tories' desertion of the Dutch in their attempts to make a separate peace with France and their readiness to abandon Spain to Philip V.²⁹

Whig scepticism about making peace with Louis was shared by their colleagues amongst the astrological fraternity. Their argument was simple. There could be no peace with the duplicitous French monarch until he had been totally vanquished by the allies. All too often in the past Louis had shown he could not be trusted, giving his word only to break it; making peace when faced with defeat, only to use it as a veil behind which to regroup before launching another bloody offensive against his unsuspecting European neighbours. The Whig astrologers were adamant that this must not be allowed to happen again. Initially Francis Moore implored the reader not to trust Louis' overtures, declaring wittily in his edition for 1704, 'The French Tyrant now begins to truckle, but trust him not, he is like the Fox, laugh in your Face to day, and rob your Hen-roost before next Morning'. With a side-swipe at the papacy he went on, 'The *French King* now would fain preach the World into a belief of his Fidelity; it is Pity he is not a Pope, as he might forgive Sins also, for the Pope's Pardons and his Word are of a like Value'. Echoing the views of William III, he proclaimed:

The Gallick Tyrant offers for a Peace,
Believe him not, for he will never cease
To act with Fraud, Deceit and Treachery,
And does all acts of justice still defy
Therefore ne'er trust him, never take his Word,
Nor give him Peace, but at the point o'th' Sword.³⁰

²⁹ For the divergent attitudes of the Tories and Whigs to the war, and changing attitude toward it in Britain, see Holmes, *British Politics*, pp. 71-81; A. D. MacLachlan, 'The Road to Peace 1710-13', in Holmes (ed.), *Britain*, pp. 197-215.

³⁰ Moore, 1704, sig. B, B5; 1710, sig. A5v.

In his edition for 1704, Tanner similarly urged his readers:

*Talk not of Peace, tho' 'tis each good Man's Joy,
First bring the Tyrant to a level coil,
That he his Neighbours may no more annoy,
And Glory gain by Europe's fatal Spoil:
Confine him home, his kingdoms fair and wide,
Although too narrow to maintain his Pride.*

Five years later Tanner still urged Britain and her allies to bind the 'Grand Tyrant' by '... *Hand and Feet*', that Europe might see '*An End of his Tyrarnick [sic] Villany*'.

Louis was clearly up to his old tricks again and '... would gladly once more take Breath under a Treacherous and Fallacious Peace'. He could only hope that '... the Allies will no more trust one, that slights all Promises and Engagements, and scruple not to break the solemn Oaths, when he can do it to his own Advantage, as all *Europe* are fully sensible of'.³¹

Even the Whigs were not against peace in principle, and the Whig astrologers were no exception. What they demanded, however, was an 'Honourable' and 'lasting' peace; a peace which would safeguard the Protestant succession in England and also the 'Protestant Interest' across the whole of Europe. Views as to what this constituted differed amongst the Whig astrologers. As far as Partridge and Tanner were concerned, there could be no secure peace whilst the allied war effort in Spain had all but collapsed and Philip V still held sway. Right up until the Treaty of Utrecht, and beyond in the case of Tanner, they argued that the time was not yet right for peace. Louis had not been sufficiently humbled. Implicit in these calls lay the belief that the war in Spain had to be won. Louis was facing defeat and his final downfall seemed close at hand, but a premature peace would only rescue him. Partridge saw the Jacobites' and High Church Tories' quest for peace as a last, desperate attempt to save

³¹ Tanner, 1704, sig. B6v; 1709, sig. A6; 1708, sig. C4-C4v.

Louis and rescue their drowning cause. 'The *Jacks* and *High-Church* are for Peace. But Why?' he asked. The answer was simple: it reflected their desire '... to embroil the Nation and the publick Affairs, and to bring in the Master *Perkin* and Popery. Brave fellows'.³²

Nowhere did Whig anger at the Tory ministry's peace initiative find a louder voice than in the almanacs of John Tanner, who notwithstanding old age, made his views concerning their actions strikingly clear. In his edition for 1714 he expressed his opposition to a separate peace, and distaste at the Tories' attacks on the Dutch allies in their attempt to gain public acceptance of their peace terms. He inveighed against those who

*... ne'er wish'd that hostile Acts might cease,
Unless for us to make a separate Peace.
Hence no expence of Lyes and Labour grutch,
And call the best Allies, Perfidious Dutch.*³³

Such proposals had been made, he argued, to engender a split between the allies which Louis could then exploit. Tanner also attacked the Tories' dismissal of Marlborough as Captain General in December 1711. In his first almanac to be published after Marlborough's dismissal he asked:

*Must Marlborough's Actions be in Silence lost?
Can he in vain such Mighty Conquests boast?
Such is, indeed, the Justice of our Days,
He plants our Safety, but can't reap our Praise.*

'Ungrateful Britain, is no Praise his due?' he asked, 'Who could alone impervious France subdue'.³⁴

On the eve of peace Tanner was still fighting against it. In his edition for 1713 he mocked Tory assertions that there was now nothing to fear from the French king, and

³² Partridge, 1709, sig. A5.

³³ Tanner, 1714, sig. B6.

³⁴ Tanner, 1713, sig. B6v, B7.

that his overtures for peace were sincere. He praised the queen for her great victory in war, but added a sting in the tail:

*Did Lewis ever fear superior Force?
Or ever think to feel this sad Remorse?
To you, great Queen, what mighty Honour's due,
Who brought the haughty Monarch thus to sue?
But we the Terms of Peace may justly fear,
Can Lewis ever yet be thought sincere.³⁵*

Furthermore, there could be no secure peace whilst Britain was still victim to the rage of party faction. With defeat staring him in the face Louis had abandoned open warfare in favour of the '... greater Force of Policy', Tanner argued. By fomenting the party strife prevalent in Britain, Louis could,

*... try his Forces without Fear,
Without the Chance of War, can conquer here:
His Triumph boast his Conquests here maintain,
Without the loss of One in Battle slain.³⁶*

Even after the conclusion of peace Tanner still expressed his scepticism. In his edition for 1715 he ridiculed the Treaty of Utrecht, warning a '... vanquish'd L----s is but L----s still'. It was imperative for the allies to make him adhere to the terms of the Treaty:

*For if the Vanquish'd should his Strength repair,
And with new Vigour prosecute the War,
He who before his conquering Arms laid down
Must ne'er expect to have that Mercy shown.*

He ended by warning Britain:

*If Britain's Pow'r should thus, through Mercy fail,
And let its rival Nations once prevail,
A Popish Prince (who'd ne'er his Claim disown)
Would with a mighty Hand usurp the Throne.³⁷*

³⁵ *Ibid.*, sig. Bv.

³⁶ Tanner, 1714, sig. B3-B4v.

³⁷ Tanner, 1715, sig. B5v-B7.

Not all the Whig astrologers, however, were keen to see a perpetuation of the war in the later years of Anne's reign. We have seen how, initially, Francis Moore shared the jingoism of his fellow Whig compilers, urging Anne to defeat Louis and force Spain to expel its counterfeit king, and expressing his scepticism of Louis' overtures for peace.³⁸ But between 1709 and 1710 a change in Moore's attitude towards the war is perceptible. From 1710 onwards he was in favour of peace. In his edition for 1710, written in the summer of 1709, Moore still made clear his support for the war, warning that Louis' calls for peace were not to be trusted and that the time was not right for peace.³⁹ Yet in later editions his desire for peace is tangible. Lying behind this change of heart was the belief that the defeated Louis no longer posed a threat to European security and was now willing to recognise the Protestant succession in England. It also seems likely that by this stage Moore believed the war in Spain was a lost cause and that Philip V was too powerful to be forced off the Spanish throne.⁴⁰ A similar shift is perceptible in the almanacs of Moore's fellow Whig, John Wing.⁴¹

On the domestic front the Whig astrologers took the threat of Jacobitism very seriously. They argued that the Jacobites, in upholding the cause of the Old Pretender, and his champion Louis XIV, stood for popish tyranny and oppression as opposed to Protestant liberty and freedom. If they were successful, England would once again be enslaved under the yoke of popish tyranny, and firmly in the grip of the French king.

³⁸ See above, pp. 224-225, 227-232.

³⁹ Moore, 1710, sig. A5v, C7.

⁴⁰ Moore's desire for peace is tangible in his almanacs for 1711-1714, in the last of which he celebrates the advent of peace.

⁴¹ Wing's support of the war is clear in his almanacs compiled during Anne's reign (though they were in no way as polemical as those of Moore, Tanner and Partridge) up until that for 1711, which would have been compiled in 1710. From this point onwards, however, his almanacs reflected his desire for peace, and his edition for 1714 celebrated its arrival.

The Old Pretender was merely Louis' puppet. 'He'll Reign in Name, the Tyrant Reign in Power', Partridge declared. He went on to paint a graphic picture of what life under the Pretender would be like. He would rule as an absolute monarch, receiving his instructions from France. His subjects would '*French* Laws receive at his desire'. 'You must imbrace your Chains, and be content, With all his Plagues of a *French* Government', Partridge warned his reader:

Learn to live frugal; Garlick and Onions eat,
Slip on your Wooden Shoos, and walk in State,
Learn the *French* Art; sing, dance, look big and proud
When you have neither Mony, Clothes or Food.

Partridge looked back to James II's reign to illustrate what life would be like under his son:

His servants must be such, and do so too,
As you well knew about two Reigns ago;
Ne'r stick at Wrongs (so they increase their store)
Nor Orphans Spoils, nor plund[e]ring Rich or Poor,
Nor Childrens Tears, nor Widows Sighs can stir,
Nor Pity, Faith, or Sense or Shame deter.

'He'll save your Church, and the Fanaticks damn', Partridge declared, 'And bring the Nuncio to *Guild-hall* agen'. Looking back to the reigns of James and Charles, Partridge warned his reader to 'Expect again the *Quo-Warranto* Trade'.⁴²

If readers were frightened by this nightmarish vision, Partridge warned that far worse was to come. In a brilliantly alarmist piece of propaganda, he argued that the French would demand repayment of the debt incurred by defending James' right in two wars and raising his son:

All these are Toys to what is yet to come,
To what *France* calls his due, and claims as's own.
There's a long Debt which two long Wars hath cost,
A Prince maintain'd, for him much Shipping lost:
Perkin bred up, with all the Godly Train,

⁴² Partridge, 1705, sig. A5-B4.

And don't you think this must be paid again?

If James Edward came to the throne, the English nation and its monarch would be 'mortgag'd' to the French. 'Slav'ry' would be the 'final doom' of his subjects.⁴³

One of the central arguments of the Whig astrologers was that the Catholics, and particularly the Jesuits, were pursuing a European-wide policy of 'divide and conquer', spearheaded by their most powerful advocate, Louis XIV. In his edition for 1705 John Tanner spoke of how coming to write his almanac he found '*. . . all Kingdoms, every State*',

*Infected with French Guilt, Counsels betray'd,
Designs defeated, or at least delay'd.
The crafty Jesuits knaves lead away,
By French Gold, they the unwary do betray,
And run them blindfold on such dangerous Shelves,
Ruin their Neighbours first and then themselves.*

Louis, he asserted, was attempting '*With his curst Politicks*' to '*. . . divide each State, Themselves against themselves with mortal hate*'.⁴⁴

The Whigs believed that the Jacobites in England were in effect Louis' ready-made agents. They suspected that the Jacobites were behind the political and religious differences which threatened to engulf the nation, fomenting divisions between Whig and Tory, High and Low Church. Indeed in the High Church the Jacobites had found a willing ally. The logic behind this was simple. As we saw in the last chapter, Tory/High Church fears for the Church of England had continued to grow under William, fears engendered by the apparent growth of Dissent. From the mid-1690s the High Church Tories had rallied around the cry of 'The Church in Danger', a danger not from Catholicism but from Protestant Dissent.⁴⁵ This rallying cry had been carried into

⁴³ *Ibid.*, sig. B5-B8.

⁴⁴ Tanner, 1705, sig. C3; 1704, sig. B3v.

⁴⁵ See above, p. 174.

Anne's reign where, particularly between 1702 and 1705, it could be heard reverberating amongst High Church Tories. Anne's accession raised Tory/High Church hopes that the Church of England would receive royal support against Dissent and irreligion. In the first few months of her reign Anne certainly seemed to fulfil her promise. As such Tory/High Church confidence became unbounded, increased by a Tory majority in the elections of 1702.

The time was right for a High Church offensive, which began with a vengeance in the winter of 1702-3. At the heart of this offensive lay the practice of occasional conformity, which seemed to epitomise the threat of Protestant Nonconformity. Between November 1702 and December 1704 three bills against the practice of occasional conformity were killed by the Upper House, where the Whigs held the upper hand. Famously the third had been 'Tacked' on to a Land Tax Bill. During these years, and indeed throughout Anne's reign, Tory/High Church views found a mouthpiece in the writer and fiery preacher Dr. Henry Sacheverell.⁴⁶ His campaign against occasional conformity attracted the particular odium of the Whigs and, of course, the Whig astrologers. They claimed that in persecuting Protestant Dissent, the High Church was driving a dangerous wedge between English Protestants, which could only benefit the Jacobites and Catholics: for any division between Protestants in England would allow the Pretender, and with him French tyranny and oppression, to gain a foothold. This belief clearly lay behind the impassioned attacks on the High Church and Dr. Sacheverell by two of the leading Whig astrologers, John Partridge and John Tanner.

⁴⁶ Sacheverell's colourful life is chronicled in G. Holmes' biography, *The Trial of Doctor Sacheverell* (1973).

Partridge made his feelings clear in his almanac for 1706, in which he celebrated the defeat of the 'Tack' in a verse entitled '*The Englishman's Humble Thanks to the Honourable Peers of England, both Temporal & Spiritual. By way of an Introduction*'. In it he wrote of the Whig peers who had defeated the Bill:

Like *Noble Patriots* you our Chains have broke,
 And bravely freed us from the *hated Yoak*.
 A YOAK- - - -
 By *Papists* forg'd, by *Perkin's* Friends fil'd o're,
 By *High-Church* hugg'd, whose Seal and Stamp it bore.
High Church! the common Curse, the Nations Shame,
 'Tis only *Pop'ry* by another Name.
 The Shortest Way, Blood, Ruin to Excess,
 Sa-----ll's *Brimstone Church* is nothing less.
Betray'd to France, and had the Trick took place,
 They'd brought again their wish'd-for *Babe of Grace*,
Rome's little *Hobby-horse*, *High Church's* Heir;
 A special Bargain: Then we'd *Tack'd* it fair.
 Thus far they went, thus far the *Craft was shown*,
 Which here you stopt, so sav'd the *Queen and Thron[e]*
 Had You forsook us too (sad Truth to tell)
 Old *England*, and its *Glory* must have fell.⁴⁷

A similar verse introduced his almanac for the following year. In both verses, Partridge argued that the 'Tack' was merely a device to bring in the Pretender. He pointed out that:

Had that gone on, we'd Paid and Fought in vain;
France must have beat, the *Monkey* [Philip] staid in *Spain*:
 All our Allies must have been left i'th Lurch,
 And *Popish Perkin* must have sav'd the Church;
 The Whipping Church, that Sacred Mystery,
 But little Diff'rence 'twixt the *Pope* and she.⁴⁸

His edition for 1707 also contained a fictional dramatised meeting between 'Young Perkin and his Parson'. During the course of the meeting the Pretender put forward his theory on kingship to his 'Eternal Slave', clearly Sacheverell, asking:

Can I who am the Lords Annointed sneak;
 Be fetter'd by the Laws my Vassals make.

⁴⁷ Partridge, 1706, sig. A3v-A4.

⁴⁸ Partridge, 1707, sig. A4.

Crown me a Tyrant (I'll ne're mince the thing)
I hate that snivelling word, *A Lawfull King*.

He continued:

France teacheth me to Murder, rowl in Blood,
And yet accountable to none but God.
'Tis God that gives us Crowns, and bids us Reign,
And their Heretick Principles restrain.

His 'Slave' could only agree with him, offering his master his wife, goods and children and promising to ' . . . swear and lye, do any thing' for him. God had given him his royal prerogative which gave him the inherent right to rule as an absolute monarch:

When Heaven did your Royal Charter give,
It gave you all in your Prerogative;
Mankind were made for Slaves, 'twas so design'd.⁴⁹

The dialogue was an attack on popish absolutism, and the Tories' adherence to the doctrine of divine-right kingship which had upheld it under James and would do so, if allowed, for his son.

The Whig astrologers also hit back at Tory/High Church attempts to smear their opponents with sedition and republicanism. A common cry amongst the Tories during the Exclusion Crisis and Popish Plot had been 'Forty one is here again', implying that the attack by the Exclusionist Whigs on the monarchy and constitution echoed that made by the parliamentary opposition on the eve of the Civil War. The Whigs had been identified with Dissent and republicanism, and with responsibility for the Civil War and Regicide, an identification still being made by High Church Tories during the reign of Anne. The Whig astrologers, especially Tanner, hit back at the High Church Tories by turning their own words against them:

*What is 't of Forty-one you so much dread?
Is't not the Irish Massacre I wot?
When Floods of harmless, senseless Blood was shed,
A Popish Cruelty never to be forgot.*

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, sig. A4v-B7v.

*Where was the Church's Danger? Where wast then
Worth the Enquiry of all knowing Men?*

With his gaze fixed on Laud's days Tanner blamed the High Church, with its readiness to see the subjects' laws and liberties eroded, for the downfall of Charles I. He urged his readers to:

*Look back and see, what did our High Church dress
In former days, of which you now complain,
Murder'd our Laws, the Nation to distress,
All Subjects Liberties at Bar arraign;
By high-flown Laud, Sibthorp and Manaring, &c.
Ruin'd a potent well accomplish'd King.*

Turning his attention to the reign of James, he recalled that when the Church had been placed in real danger, with the threat of being swept away by a tide of popery, the High Church had remained strangely silent:

*Where was Church Quixots in the latter Reign,
When Bare-fac'd Popery 'mongst us did appear,
Who of the Churches Danger did complain,
When Popish Idols set up here and there?
And forc'd their entry into Magdalen,
Where was the flaming hot S-ch-----l then?*

He also challenged the High Church to answer the attack made by Daniel Defoe, whose witty work *The Shortest-Way With The Dissenters* (1702) had earned him a spell in Newgate:

*You High-Church Hectors, answer honest Dan,
Not with a Dagger, but fair Argument.*

If they could not his attack would be vindicated and, wrote Tanner, '*We'll call him Friend, although his Name's DeFoe*'.⁵⁰ Like Partridge he thanked the peers for defeating the 'Tack', extending his thanks to those who had voted against it in the

⁵⁰ Tanner, 1707, sig. A5v-B4.

Commons and labelling it '*Popery under another Name*'. In defeating it the Church had been saved from '*rank Idolatry*', '*The State from the abhorr'd French Tyranny*'.⁵¹

Tanner was careful not to appear as an enemy to the Church of England. He implored the Dissenters to '*. . . carefully demean Themselves*' under the legal toleration they now enjoyed, and to pay due respect to the members of the Established Church. They were not to blame the Church itself, merely '*Cause some hot Zealots inflamed are with Ire*': for even '*The purest Church may Scandals undergo*'.⁵²

In characterising the Jacobites themselves, the Whig astrologers continued to argue that they were driven by greed and self-interest which they pursued in the service of their French paymasters. Branding all Tories as Jacobites in his almanac for 1714, John Tanner described them as:

*Men who no Inter'st but their own regard,
And seek their Country's Ruin for Reward.*⁵³

Francis Moore was a little more temperate in his appraisal of the political and religious infighting which now split the nation. Calling for an end to it in his almanac for 1708, he admitted there were men on both sides of the political and religious divide who were motivated by financial rewards, not principles. He urged that:

No High nor Low Church, Whig, nor Tory more,
Be ever nam'd within Great Britain's shore.
Could we but love God more, and Money less,
These marks of Knave and Fool would quickly cease.⁵⁴

Throughout the late Stuart period, the Tories smeared Whigs as Nonconformists and Republicans. This remained the case in Anne's reign. It is certainly true that the majority of Whig astrologers sympathised with the Nonconformists and did all in their

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, sig. B3v, Bv.

⁵² *Ibid.*, sig. B6v-B7.

⁵³ Tanner, 1714, sig. B5v.

⁵⁴ Moore, 1708, sig. C7.

power to prevent their persecution at the hands of the High Church. This raises the issue of how far there was a direct link between the Whig astrologers and Dissenters. It would appear that only one of their number, William Salmon, was a known Nonconformist in the time of Anne, and his career as an astrologer had all but come to an end even before her accession. Not all the Whig astrologers were even sympathetic towards Protestant Nonconformity. One such individual was Francis Moore. Like his fellows Moore was very concerned with the threat posed to the Church of England by Catholicism, but he differed from them in his assertion that the Church was also under threat from Dissent. 'Many are the Enemies of our Church', he declared in his edition for 1714,

. . . yet I hope neither *Rome* nor *Geneva*, nor both together, will ever be able to prevail against her. She is a Medium between two Extrems, being neither Guilty of the Superstition of the one, nor the slovenly and indecent behaviour of the other. She is built on such a Rock that the Gates of Hell can never prevail against her.⁵⁵

His almanacs frequently contained attacks on the Dissenters for their constant invectives against the Church of England. Their reluctance to join in Communion with the Established Church, he argued, fomented divisions which could only ' . . . undermine their great Tower of Defence against Popery'.⁵⁶ His attacks upon Dissent prompted a reply in July 1713 when he received an anonymous letter from a member of the dissenting brethren. Moore observed disparagingly that his adversary ' . . . wrote in the Stile of a *Quaker*' and had made many 'reflections' against the Church of England.⁵⁷ It is striking that Moore did not join his Whig compatriots Partridge and Tanner in their attack on the High Church persecution of Dissent. His own attacks on

⁵⁵ Moore, 1714, sig. C5v.

⁵⁶ Moore, 1713, sig. B8.

⁵⁷ Moore, 1714, sig. C7.

the High Church indicated simply a loathing for popery, not any warmth towards the Nonconformists.

In his almanacs published during the later years of Anne's reign, Moore also consciously sought to free the Whigs from the Tory smear of republicanism. Espousing the cause of monarchical government in his edition for 1712, he declared: '. . . one Master is better than many, and Monarchy a more pleasant Government than Anarchy'.⁵⁸ Denouncing the radical Whig view that ultimate power lay with the people he proclaimed in his edition for the following year, '*Vox Populi* cannot make a King'. On the contrary, kings were set up by the hand of God. In his almanac for 1714 he wrote of kings:

God set them up - Dares Man to pull 'em down,
The greatest Rebel durst not take the Crown.
If some were bad, -- who durs't them Tyrants call,
Since Good or Bad they're God's Vicegerents all,
Tho' God sets up a wicked King, what then.
'Tis for a Scourge to chastise wicked Men.⁵⁹

In his defence of the Whigs from the Tory charge of republicanism, Moore began to sound increasingly Tory, particularly in his apparent advocacy of divine-right kingship and passive obedience, and his denial that the subject had the right to resist even the most tyrannical of monarchs. This did not mean, however, any sympathy for James II. Moore believed that the Jacobites and High Church Tories had a hidden agenda when they called for obedience to a divinely-appointed monarch:

All their Aim is only to deceive,
And the misguided World of Sense bereave:
When they Obedience teach, 'tis their Intent
At the same time to model Government,
Conspire with *Rome* and *Hell* to curb the State.
This we have heard, have seen, and felt of late.⁶⁰

⁵⁸ Moore, 1712, sig. C4v.

⁵⁹ Moore, 1713, sig. B3; 1714, sig. A2.

⁶⁰ Moore, 1712, sig. Bv.

For Moore, a good king maintained true religion and traditional liberties. It was for God, not rebellious subjects, to remove bad kings. Moore's relaxed manner suggests an underlying confidence: God had sent William of Orange, a Protestant prince with legitimate rights in England, to dispose of James II, and the Act of Settlement had already averted the danger of a popish 'James III'. What need was there for rebellion, with its risks of extremism or anarchy?

Moore was certainly justified in defending the Whig astrologers from the charge of republicanism. Not one of those writing during Anne's reign was a Republican. They were staunch supporters of Anne, and knew who they wanted to succeed her - George of Hanover. Moore summed up the Whig position neatly when pledging his support for the Hanoverian succession in his edition for 1713: he expressed his desire to see 'No Pretender, No Anarchy'.⁶¹

Whig hopes were fulfilled in 1714 when George peacefully ascended the throne. In his almanac for 1715 Partridge celebrated his accession, and summed up traditional Whig sentiments in his prayer:

God bless and preserve K. *George*, and all the Branches of his Illustrious Family, with the Protestant Nobility, Gentry, and Commonalty of this Nation; and make him an Instrument of maintaining the Ballence of Europe, of securing and enlarging the Protestant Interest abroad, and of transmitting our Liberties both Civil and Religious, to all Generations.⁶²

The Tory Astrologers

Like their Whig counterparts, the Tories welcomed the accession of Anne. In William Cookson's case, quite literally, when in his almanac for 1703 he proclaimed:

⁶¹ Moore, 1713, sig. C7v.

⁶² Partridge, 1715, sig. B8.

Welcome most Gracious Sovereign Anne: O Happy Wee!
 And above hope blest to behold this day;
 As our Tongues speak, our Hearts with them agree
 And what save Welcome, can we think or say!
 Our Tongues your Welcome in loud Tones Proclaim,
 Our Hearts rejoyce, when we but hear your Name.⁶³

Like their Whig counterparts, they viewed Anne as a bulwark against popery and arbitrary rule. She was all the more attractive to the Tories as a committed member of the Church of England, which William had never been. Anne 'Preserves the Church and rectifies the State' George Parker declared in his edition for 1703, 'Against homebred Schism and foreign Popery'.⁶⁴

The Tories' adherence to the doctrine of passive obedience remained steadfast during the reign of Anne. It was, however, balanced by their stress on the fact that the laws bound monarchs as well as subjects. The law maintained an equilibrium between the ruler and the ruled, acting as a safeguard against arbitrary rule as well as anarchy. This was certainly the view of Cookson. In his edition for 1711 he praised:

That just harmonious Model of our Law,
 Whereby both King and People jointly draw,

 Whereby the King's install'd with Royal Power,
 But is so qualify'd he can't devour
 Those little Rights, which justly appertain
 Unto those People over whom he reigns:
 Nor dare the People to invade the Throne,
 But Law confines the Subjects and the Crown.

He continued:

But when those Golden Rules are laid aside,
 That for their mutual Safety do provide,
 The King or People soon will soar too High
 And Government devolve to Anarchy;
 This Equilibrium chang'd it cannot stand,
 But Deluge threatens the divided Land.

⁶³ Cookson, 1703, sig. A3.

⁶⁴ Parker, 1703, sig. A5.

Anne deserved positive support, rather than merely passive obedience, by her willingness to rule within the law and protect her subjects' rights.⁶⁵

Many Tories argued that there was no guarantee that the rights of the subject would be so well preserved by a Catholic monarch. Popery and arbitrary rule were epitomised in the tyrannical rule of Louis XIV of France, who threatened not only Europe but, more particularly, the Protestant succession at home. Initially the majority of the Tories were as determined as the Whigs to protect the Protestant succession and the war being fought in its defence. The Tory astrologers too were swept along by a tide of bellicose patriotism. Cookson's almanac for 1703 emphasised that England was ready and willing to fight the French, and others too if need arose. Great Britain, he proudly declared, was:

*The Curb of Spain, the Pride of Germany, the aid of Belgia, the Scourge of France, the Empress of the World, and Queen of Nations: She is begirt with Walls whose Builder is the Hand of Heaven, whereon there daily rides a Navy Royal, whose unconquerable Power proclaims Her Prince Invincible, and whispers sad Despair into the Hearts of Foreign Majesty.*⁶⁶

Cookson was joined in his bellicose patriotism by Richard Gibson and, initially at least, George Parker. Gibson, who hailed from Bishop's Waltham in Hampshire, made his first foray into the world of astrology with the publication in 1707 of *Astrologus Britannicus*, the first in a series of almanacs which ran until 1712. From the outset he adopted a bellicose stance. In his first almanac he proclaimed,

. . . let the Confederacy proceed and prosper until they have totally subdued their common Disturber, and reduc'd their Dominions to a state of Peace and Tranquility beyond the Power of any Petulant or Pragmatical Prince to disturb.⁶⁷

⁶⁵ Cookson, 1711, sig. A5-A6v.

⁶⁶ Cookson, 1703, sig. C3v.

⁶⁷ Gibson, 1707, sig. C8v.

He was quick to inveigh against the tyrant Louis XIV. Writing of an eclipse of the sun which had taken place in May 1706, he explained to the reader how it had occurred ‘. . . in exact opposition to the French King’s Ascendant’. Furthermore Mars was placed ‘. . . upon the opposite place of his Sun’. These positions would lead his enemies to ‘. . . insult him in earnest, and do him much displeasure both by Sea and Land’. So melancholy would the ill-fated French monarch be, Gibson claimed, that he would not be surprised ‘. . . if, in a pet and discontent, he makes his *Exit*’. ‘Mourn for him they that will I shan’t make one of that Number; but shall pray with those that wish no worse news may ever come to *England*’, he remarked.⁶⁸ The heavens also boded ill to Louis’ grandson the Duke of Anjou. Thus, in his almanac for 1710, Gibson declared:

Saturn is in the opposite place of the *Moon* and *Mars* near the opposite place of *Saturn* in Anjou’s Nativity. This must needs disturb *him* much, raise *him* up new Enemies, divest *him* of many good Friends; make *him* angry and melancholy, stir up popular Noise and Clamours against *him*, and put him to his *Ne plus ultra*.⁶⁹

The ‘*Bavarians, and Frenchify’d Spaniards*’ also came under attack. Gibson expressed the hope in 1707 ‘. . . that this Ratling year has ratled their Rags to some purpose’.⁷⁰

Like their Whig counterparts, the Tory astrologers eulogised the heroic deeds of Marlborough, scourge of the French. In his edition for 1705, Parker claimed to have predicted Marlborough’s successful Blenheim campaign and Rooke’s capture of Gibraltar. His prediction that ‘. . . *the Forces of our Sovereign Lady the Queen, would be Victorious over those of the French King*’, in the previous year’s edition, had, he triumphantly declared, been fully verified ‘. . . by the Valour and Conduct of the

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, sig. A6.

⁶⁹ Gibson, 1710, sig. C5.

⁷⁰ Gibson, 1707, sig. C4v.

Renowned *John* Duke of Marlborough, who has given such a Rout to the *French* and *Bavarian* Forces in the *German* Empire that the like Victory is not to be parallel'd in many Past ages'. 'In the like manner', he continued,

. . . the English Seamen in her Majesties Royal Navy, under the Prudent Management, and Noble Behaviour of Sir *Geo.* Rook, became masters of *Gibraltar*, a Port of Mighty Advantage to our Ships of War, and to all our Merchants trading that way, for by it, a Secure Passage is made through the Straits, and a Trade upheld into the Mediteranean, so that the Value of it is of an unestimated worth to this Nation.⁷¹

Gibson heaped praise on Marlborough in graphic and emotional terms. In his almanac for 1709 he proclaimed:

Let Donawert, Blenheim, who'th so lately known
His Valour, tell *them*, and with warlike Tone,
Loud as the sulphur-breathing Brass enlarge
His spreading Trophies, and report their charge.
Ramillies, *Oud'narde* too, *his* Fame shall tell,
Sufficient to compleat a Chronicle.

Glorying in the famous victory of Blenheim he declared:

Legions of proud *Vendosmes* ne'r yet could stand
'Gainst *Britains* Arms when Marlborough bore command
Whose Center-shaking *Guns*, when once they spoke
In flames of Lightning and dark clouds of smoke,
Charon grew faint with ferrying *Souls* to *Hell*,
Such *Hecatombs* of haughty *Frenchmen* fell.⁷²

Notwithstanding this initial zeal, it did not take long for doubts to arise amongst the Tories, first concerning the best war strategy to be pursued, and then whether the war should be fought at all. By 1708 their desire for peace was tangible, and even more so after 1710 with the advent of a Tory ministry. The attitude of the Tory astrologers toward peace was not uniform, however. From the outset, Richard Gibson wished that any peace '. . . may be such as our Enemies get no advantage by'.⁷³ Throughout his

⁷¹ Parker, 1705, sig. B2.

⁷² Gibson, 1709, sig. A7v, Bv.

⁷³ Gibson, 1707, sig. A6.

career as an astrologer, Gibson continually urged caution when dealing with the duplicitous French monarch, and clearly believed his overtures for peace were not to be trusted. In his edition for 1710 he drew an analogy between Louis and the planet Saturn, renowned amongst astrologers as the planet of treachery and subversion, asking,

. . . who can trust a Retrograde and Detrimental Saturn whose necessity compels him to cloke and collogue? To put on the mask of Friendship and seem a Saint tho' he's really a Devil; loath to give himself to Justice, and part from his ill-gotten Honours, to do them Right he hath wronged; to have Laws and Limits prescrib'd him, when he thought (tho' vainly) to have given Laws to the whole World; to make Kings for other Nations, and now to be so much unmade himself is a terrible Turn of Fortune, a strange and unwelcome mortification.⁷⁴

Gibson's fears appeared to be verified in 1709, when, with all about him collapsing, Louis chose to fight on rather than accept the allies' peace terms which required him to help them expel Philip from Spain. In his almanac for 1711, Gibson observed,

. . . the French King seems (like Pharoah) to be hardned, and some miracle must be wrought to suffer him to a Peace, for the repeated peaceful Rays of the Two Superior Planets have not yet been forcible enough to make him comply, notwithstanding the frequent Instances of God's Displeasure against him. The *Chimerical* Humours for an Universal Monarchy having been so deeply rooted in his ambitious Vitals.⁷⁵

Writing in his work *Vox Solis* (1711) on a solar eclipse due to take place on 7 July, Gibson explained that the heavens,

. . . tell us, He will still be aspiring and swell'd with ambitious Hopes, Vexing and Perplexing his Protestant Subjects, and disturbing his own Clergy by his Arbitrary Authority, Impositions and such proceedings as may incense the holy Father against him; and won't that be a sad Thing?⁷⁶

Reassuringly Louis' efforts were in vain, for nothing could halt his slide to defeat.

Though the heavens at the time of the eclipse prophesied his newly-found confidence,

⁷⁴ Gibson, 1710, sig. C4v.

⁷⁵ Gibson, 1711, sig. C4v-C5.

⁷⁶ R. Gibson, *Vox Solis. Or The Voice Of The Sun* (Gosport, 1711), p. 19.

they also foretold his downfall: ‘*Mars* being upon the Radical place of *Mercury* (Lord to the Tenth and Eighth Houses) in Square to his [Louis’] Radical Place; and *Jupiter* Retrograde upon the same’, Gibson observed,

. . . will go near to ruine his Honour and Interest to such a Degree as may give him just cause to wish Death would free him from the Cares and Calamities that accost him on every side, seing no Prospect of any other way or means to secure himself from a direful Destruction.⁷⁷

Gibson believed that there could be no peace with Louis until he could no longer pose a threat to European security. Yet with his imminent ruin, peace did now beckon. In his almanac for 1711, Gibson wrote how Louis:

Expiring lies, and shall not now revive,
Nor our faint hopes of pleasing *Peace* deprive.

In the same edition he indicated that a peace could well be concluded ‘. . . before the end of 1710’. (We recall that the almanac would have been written in the middle of that year).⁷⁸ When he came to compile his edition for 1712, however, the position had still not been reached where he thought a peace could be safely concluded. Gibson hoped to see the heavens:

*Persuading our States-men that War is honourable and necessary both for the sake of good Laws and Religion, and so much more in regard the Haughty Enemy is not yet sufficiently humbled nor brought so low as he ought to be for future security.*⁷⁹

Thus notwithstanding his hopes for peace, Gibson continued to support the war until the end of his astrological career, driven by the belief that there could be no secure peace until the treacherous French monarch had been totally vanquished.

Like Gibson, William Cookson remained a supporter of the war throughout his career as an almanac-maker, which ended with the publication of his 1711 edition. In it

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 19.

⁷⁸ Gibson, 1711, sig. A6v, C5.

⁷⁹ Gibson, 1712, sig. A7.

he mocked the plight of Louis whose defeat was imminent, and whose expansionist dreams lay in tatters. Predictions of France's downfall made long before by Lilly and Nostradamus, and used to good effect by Whig and Tory alike during William's reign, found their way into his almanac.⁸⁰ He had no sympathy for the French, ravaged by war, who now desperately sought peace. The treacherous French, he wrote, could ' . . . have had honourable Terms of Peace, had they prosecuted it in good earnest, and not rather as a Blind to lull some of her Neighbours asleep, that she might the more easily cut the Throats of others'.⁸¹ Cookson pointed out how in the past the wily French had secured for themselves peace treaties which had allowed them to pursue their expansionist ambitions. Now, with defeat staring them in the face, their desperate cries for peace were at last sincere. Never - according to the heavens - had the time for a peace been more auspicious, for they indicated that Britain's allies were also willing ' . . . to accept or comply with such Proposals, as they think will be for the Honour and Advantage of all the Confederacy in general'.⁸² One major obstacle, however, stood in the way of the peace Cookson so desired: the party faction which now threatened to engulf England and undermined the war effort. Addressing those who fomented such division he warned:

Know then, you poor mistaken Sots, that strive
 To keep these Quarrels in our Bowels alive,
 You neither are your Queen's nor Country's Friends,
 But basely serve your Party's private Ends;
 Since for Contention sake you pelt each other,
 And for meer Trifles raise such hideous pother;

Which tend t' embroil and clog our Wheels of State,
 But mitigates the dire impending Fate
 O'er *Bourbon's* Arms, which *Anna's* Sword must bring
 (If we agree) on that Tyrannick King;
 For now 'tis worthy Heaven to cramp his Power,

⁸⁰ Cookson, 1711, sig. C6v-C8.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, sig. C7v.

⁸² *Ibid.*, sig. C6v.

That he to *Europe* prove a Scourge no more.

He urged the party men to 'give o'er' their 'intestine Broils'. Political unity would facilitate the ' . . . last concluding Glorious Blow' against France and bring peace at last.⁸³ Even so, he remained anxious that any peace with the French ' . . . may be obtained upon Honourable Terms for the Good of all her Majesties Subjects, and Welfare of all *Europe*'. If such terms were not available, the war should go on.⁸⁴

Initially, George Parker, the best known of the Tory astrologers, also supported the war effort, urging Anne and her allies to press on and conquer the French. In his edition for 1705 he employed a metaphor used by Whig and Tory astrologers alike, rejoicing at how God ' . . . hath already put a Hook, into the Jaws of that Leviathon [Louis XIV]'.⁸⁵ By 1710, with the advent of the Tory ministry, his attitude had changed and he shared the Tory desire for peace. In his ephemeris compiled that year, for 1711, he wrote of the 'Friendly Aspects' of Saturn and Jupiter which had frequently occurred in 1709 and 1710, and expressed his disappointment that they had not yet brought about the peace he desired:

*True it is, I had hopes that they would have introduced a firm and lasting Peace, among the several Nations of Europe which are engaged in War; and accordingly, several Embassies and Tr[e]jaties have been in Agitation, to compleat so greatly a desired Blessing; yet all Endeavours have been dissipated, and our Hopes, when brought to a Period have prov'd Abortive.*⁸⁶

In his ephemeris for the following year he praised the Tory peace initiative, dedicating the work to the Tory Parliament:

Wherein you'll find each Planetary Star
Dispos'd to put a period to the War.
Conspiring all, with eager Haste to crown,

⁸³ *Ibid.*, sig. A7v-B4.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, sig. C6v.

⁸⁵ Parker, 1705, sig. B2.

⁸⁶ Parker, 1711, sig. A2.

The Heav'nly Work you have so well begun.⁸⁷

Thus, when Cookson and Gibson still saw obstacles in the way of the peace for which they longed, Parker felt the way was clear for peace.

Having elucidated the Tory astrologers' attitudes toward the war, let us now turn to consider their outlook on domestic affairs.

As we have seen, most Whig astrologers believed that the real threat to Church and State in England emanated from Catholicism and the popish Jacobite Tories. The Tories, by contrast, felt that the threat posed by Catholicism was equalled if not eclipsed by that posed by Protestant Dissenters and their champions, the Republican, anti-episcopalian Whigs.

Nowhere did this traditional Tory sentiment find a more vociferous advocate than in George Parker. Throughout Anne's reign (as in William's), Parker utilised his almanacs as weapons in the war against the real enemies of Church and State, the Whigs and Dissenters. Attacking both Catholicism and Protestant Dissent in his ephemeris for 1708, he expressed the hope that:

Great Heav'n those secret Enemies at home,
Whether *Geneva* Saints, or Sons of *Rome*;
May from their dusky Holes with Shame be torn.
And for their *Ills*, be made the Peoples Scorn.
For Britain ne'er can flourish as she ought,
Till those that wrong *her*, are to *Justice* brought.⁸⁸

In traditional Tory fashion, he equated Protestant Dissent with republicanism. In his ephemeris for 1711 he reminded the reader that Charles I had been '... brought to the scaffold by the Dissenter'.⁸⁹

⁸⁷ Parker, 1712, sig. A2.

⁸⁸ Parker, 1708, sig. C3.

⁸⁹ Parker, 1711, sig. C4v.

Low Church Whigs who upheld the Dissenters' cause also came under attack. Throughout Anne's reign Parker continually asserted the republicanism of the subversive Whigs, manifested by their support of Protestant Dissent. Parker's ephemeris for 1709 contained an essay on the astrological origins of the War of Spanish Succession, marked by the conjunction of Saturn and Jupiter in Aries in May 1702, and he seized the opportunity to reflect on upheavals following earlier conjunctions. A conjunction in 1641-2 had led to the terrible Civil War started by '... a sick giddy brain'd People, mighty pretenders to Religion'. It had been fought under the pretence of religion when in truth the Parliamentarians sought only to bring down the monarch and the Church of England. When peace finally came Charles had been murdered, his children forced into exile and his revenues arbitrarily seized. Furthermore, the clergy of the Church of England had been '... turned to Grass' and its wealth divided amongst the victors.⁹⁰ 1682-3 had witnessed the famous 'triple Conjunction' of Saturn and Jupiter in Leo, which had stirred up the heirs of the Parliamentarians, the Whigs. Like the Long Parliament, the Whigs had hidden their subversive plans beneath a veneer of religious sanctity. He recalled the danger of the period,

... when the Sanctified Crew did again contend with the Crown, insomuch that at one time they seemed to have an equal parr with the Government, and to plot its downfall, which was nearly effected; but prevented by a timely Discovery, and by executing several of the Ring Leaders. But it went not off so, for about 2 Years after a Rebellion broke out, wherein several appear'd in Arms that were accused and escaped hanging in the late Plot.

⁹⁰ Parker, 1709, sig. A4.

Of course, Parker was alluding to the Rye House Plot of 1683 and Monmouth's ill-fated rebellion of 1685.⁹¹ The passage is a good example of Parker's determination to blacken the Whigs of his own time by linking them to their subversive 'forebears'.

By 1706, Parker had become embroiled in a quarrel with the monopolistic Company of Stationers, primarily over the contents of his calendars. The quarrel over the calendar was itself closely tied up with Parker's campaign to use history to blacken the Whigs. He was determined to commemorate the Rye House plotters as his rival Partridge commemorated Guy Fawkes and the Popish plotters. The Company's refusal incensed him, especially '*. . . when at the same time others are suffered to range persons executed for High Treason in the same Class with the Saints*'. This was a side-swipe at Partridge.⁹² Furthermore, the Company's refusal ensured that from 1707 onwards Parker's *Ephemeris* were 'Printed and Sold at the Authors house'. There may well have been another reason behind the Company's refusal to handle Parker's works, which will be examined shortly.⁹³ Parker's independent edition for 1707 contained a passionately High Church Tory chronology, in which he gave thanks for the discovery of the Rye House Plot and also of Rathbone's Republican Plot of 1666. He also commemorated the execution of Stephen College, the Whig polemicist, whom he described as '*. . . a Notorious incendiary for fomenting Comotions and Rebellion*'.⁹⁴

Under the influence of the conjunction of Saturn and Jupiter in May 1702, Parker believed, the Whigs were still plotting the downfall of both Church and State and still using religion as a cloak to conceal their plans. Their plots were fomenting divisions on two levels. First, they aimed to divide the nation at large using the fear of popery to

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, sig. A4.

⁹² Parker, 1707, sig. A4.

⁹³ See below, p. 265.

⁹⁴ Parker, 1707, sig. B-B2.

whip up the mob and gain popular support. As Parker pointed out, those who did not participate in the traditional displays of popular anti-Catholic fervour, for example, the commemoration of the Gunpowder Plot, ran the risk of being accused themselves of Catholicism and Jacobitism. In his ephemeris for 1703 he declared:

Faggots and Fire will now put us in mind,
Of Powder Plots long since by Rome design'd.
No curring favour with the head-strong Mob,
Without some timber, stick, or broken Tub:
Therefore contribute Wood or set up Lights,
Lest Captain *Tom* cries out you're *Jehusites*.

It was a common Whig tactic to accuse their opponents of Catholicism, a fact obviously not lost on Parker.⁹⁵

On a higher level, he blamed the Whigs for the virulent party faction which now split the political nation. Rejoicing at their downfall in his edition for 1712, he urged them to look and

See *Low Church* Low, the *High Church* justly High;
As if those Base Distinctions you design'd,
For Mischief were Prophetically coin'd.⁹⁶

Thankfully their heinous plot had been brought to light by the courage of one man, his hero Dr. Henry Sacheverell. On 5 November 1709 in St. Paul's Cathedral, Sacheverell had delivered a contentious sermon 'The Perils of False Brethren', in which he attacked the threat posed to the Church and State by Dissent and Whiggism. It had prompted Articles of Impeachment to be drawn up against him by the Junto Whigs. For Parker the sermon had been a revelation. Sacheverell had '... happily open'd the Eyes of the Nation, and detected the Designs of its Enemies in *Church* and State'.⁹⁷ Once more 5 November had proved an auspicious day for the Church of England. On

⁹⁵ Parker, 1703, sig. A8v.

⁹⁶ Parker, 1712, sig. A7.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, sig. B4-B4v.

this day in 1605 the Gunpowder Plot had been discovered, and on the same day in 1688 England had been saved from popery and arbitrary rule by William. Now in 1709 the Church had been saved once again, this time from Whiggism and Dissent, by Sacheverell. In the monthly verse for November in his 1711 edition a triumphal Parker observed:

Thrice in this Month our Nation has been freed
From fatal *Mischiefs*, by her *Foes* decreed.⁹⁸

As we have seen, 1710 witnessed the victory of the Tories at the elections, and the advent of a Tory ministry. Parker celebrated their success in his almanac for 1711, rejoicing at the downfall of the Whigs and Dissenters. The almanac began with a verse entitled '*The True English-Man's Thanks to Her Sacred Majesty Queen ANN, for Her Changing the Ministry, and Calling a New Parliament*'. Anne had dashed the hopes of those:

Whose rash Proceedings have proclaim'd 'em *Foes*
Not only to the Church but to the *Throne*,
And all the Kingdom that depend thereon,

those who had hoped:

In time by Stratagems and Stealth
To change the *Crown* into a Common wealth.⁹⁹

In his preface Parker declared:

1710. has proved the reverse of 1641. *The Populace and Mob now, are not inclin'd to be impos'd upon again, to attack with Clubs and Out-cries the Palaces of Kings and Reverend Prelates, as they have heretofore, by the Contrivances of those subtle Holy Cheats, the Pretenders to Sanctity and Moderation, who guild over their Designs with specious Pretences, and appear to have Jacob's Voice, when really they have Esau's rough Hands.*¹⁰⁰

⁹⁸ Parker, 1711, sig. A7.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, sig. A3v.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, Sig. A2.

Such Tory triumphalism was to be short-lived, however. Paralysed by a lack of coherent leadership, the Tories were once more in disarray by the time of Anne's death. The accession of George brought a triumphal Whig revival driving the Tories into the wilderness. Parker was filled with despair at the Whigs' strength. Their protestations of devotion to the Hanoverians, he argued, were simply a cover for their old schemes to bring down the Church and monarchy. He warned that

*. . . altho, at present, they take Umbrage and make a great Noisie Pretence of Loyalty to King George, yet let none deceive themselves, Grapes don't grow on Thorns, nor Figgs on Thistles, for tis well known, their love of Monarchy and Bezlebubs for Holy Water, have an equality.*¹⁰¹

The other Tory astrologers used similar arguments in attacking the Whigs. Thus Richard Gibson, in his edition for 1712, praised the Tories for expressing how the Whigs were ' . . . covering their actions with Religious hue'; 'Religion and Redress of Grievences' he argued, were terms often used by the Whigs

*. . . as Cloaks for all deceit.
Shrowding Designs that be of greatest weight.*¹⁰²

Gibson also introduced another theme. As we saw in Chapter Three, during the later years of the seventeenth century the controversy between the Whig and Tory astrologers broadened from politics and religion to encompass astrological reform. The Whigs championed the system of the Italian monk Placidus de Titis, which they claimed was a purification of that of Ptolomy.¹⁰³ In Anne's reign Gibson seized on the irony of this situation after having become embroiled in a feud with the Whig John Whalley over the reform of astrology.¹⁰⁴ Here were the Whigs, the avowed enemies of

¹⁰¹ Parker, 1715, sig. A2v.

¹⁰² Gibson, 1712, sig. Bv.

¹⁰³ See above, pp. 198-199.

¹⁰⁴ Evidence of the feud can be found in R. Gibson, *Flagellum Placidianum Or A Whip For Placidianism* (Gosport, 1711), which was dedicated to attacking Whalley and Ptolemaic Astrology; 1712, sig. C7-C8v.

Catholicism, espousing the cause of an Italian monk. He asked incredulously ‘. . . how! (in the name of wonder) came those Sparks (that for many Years have taken such pains in their Writings to ridicule a *Monkish Religion*,) to be such sticklers for a *Monkish Astrology*’.¹⁰⁵

Paradoxically, despite their ferocious polemical attacks on the Whigs, Gibson and Parker joined William Cookson in his call for unity and an end to faction. Echoing the sentiments of the Whigs in his *Vox Solis* (1711), Gibson argued that Louis and the pope were behind the political and religious divisions which plagued the nation: ‘The *French King* and *Pope* will find ways and means to discompose *Protestants*, by dashing them one against another; We wish *High-Church* and *Low-Church* may see into their Designs’. ‘Once *Cavalier* and *Round-Head*, was the distinguishing Epithets of our Nation, to discriminate each other’ he continued; ‘Next, *Tory* and *Whig*; Then, *Jacobite* and *Williamite*; Now, *High-Church* and *Low-Church*, make a Pother; God send those Annimosities annihilated’.¹⁰⁶ Such calls reflected a deep-rooted reluctance to accept political divisions as natural or inevitable. Surely good men, loyal to Crown and Church, could agree on fundamentals? Gibson’s comments show that he recognised that Tories as well as Whigs might be exploited by subversive foreigners, but there is no doubt that the political unity he dreamed of was one based on Tory values.

One of the Whigs’ central lines of attack was that all Tories were Jacobites. How true was this of the Tory astrologers we have identified in this thesis? Interestingly, Bernard Capp gives the impression that all the Tory astrologers were Jacobites. In *Astrology and the Popular Press* (1979) Capp argues that *The Oxford Almanack* gave

¹⁰⁵ Gibson, *Flagellum Placidianum*, p. 2.

¹⁰⁶ Gibson, *Vox Solis*, pp. 10-11.

the Tory astrologers support ‘. . . by publishing engravings clearly Jacobite in sympathy’, thus implying the inherent Jacobitism of the Tory astrologers.¹⁰⁷ To call all the Tory astrologers Jacobites, or to imply that this was the case, is misleading. Whilst their levels of support for the Hanoverian succession differed, none of the individuals we have identified as Tory astrologers were open Jacobites.

Richard Gibson appears to have wholeheartedly supported the Hanoverian succession. Throughout Anne’s reign he continually warned of the threat posed by the popish Jacobites and their plotting. In his edition for 1710, writing of the failed invasion attempt of 1708, he expressed the hope that ‘. . . no mischief come from a Plot or Knavish Contrivance in favour of the old Spark beyond Sea’. In both *Vox Solis* and his almanac for 1712, Gibson pledged his support for the ‘Protestant Successor, *as is now by Law Established*’, George of Hanover, the rightful heir according to the Act of Settlement.¹⁰⁸

As we have seen, the Glorious Revolution posed a dilemma for George Parker, forcing him to weigh his support for the Stuarts and James II against his hatred of Catholicism. Eventually his hatred of popery proved stronger and he welcomed William and Mary as the deliverers of England from popery. This does not mean that he did not have reservations concerning the overthrow of James. Indeed, he displayed an unusually sympathetic attitude to the deposed monarch, blaming his evil councillors for the ills that had befallen England during his reign.¹⁰⁹ The pill was made easier to swallow by the fact that Mary, William’s queen, was also James’ daughter and a Stuart. So too was Anne, and James was in any case dead by the time of her accession.

¹⁰⁷ Capp, *Astrology*, p. 250.

¹⁰⁸ Gibson, 1710, sig. C5; *Vox Solis*, p. 11; 1712, sig. B8.

¹⁰⁹ See above, p. 161.

Parker stressed that James had been deposed, not for his political failings, but for his Catholicism. In his ephemeris for 1708 he declared:

Two Renown'd Queens have issu'd from the Loins
Of Royal James, whose pious Mem'ry shines,
Amongst the Race of Heavenly Kings undone,
Not for their Vices, but Religion.
God save the Product of the Royal Root,
And tho' the Tree is dead, preserve the Fruit.¹¹⁰

When two years earlier he had refuted Partridge's claims of disaffection to the present government, he was being sincere. From his effusive praise for Anne it is clear that his support for her was stronger than it had ever been for William. When praising Anne's early victories in his ephemeris for 1703 he proclaimed:

So blest is glorious *Anna* in the Throne,
That Her successful Arms more fame have won;
In a few Weeks upon the *Spanish* shore
Than Nine Years vain Attempts could do before.¹¹¹

This was clearly a side-swipe at William.

As Anne's health deteriorated in the latter years of her reign, Parker, like his fellow Tories, had once again to weigh up his support for the Stuarts and their hereditary claim against his fear and hatred of Catholicism. Once again the latter won, and he chose to accept the Protestant succession, but he clearly felt no enthusiasm for George. George I was by no means as welcome as Anne had been, his only redeeming features being his Protestantism and that he was '*. . . on the surest Side in Blood*' allied to the Stuarts.¹¹²

¹¹⁰ Parker, 1709, sig. C. Despite his Catholicism James' memory is still deemed pious by Parker. His piety stemmed from his religious devotion (though Parker abhorred the religion to which he was devoted). James was perhaps too pious, too unworldly for worldly success (another Henry VI). His devotion to the Catholic faith made him easy prey for his fanatical Catholic advisors who had eventually brought about his downfall. James had, therefore, been a martyr to his religious devotion.

¹¹¹ Parker, 1703, sig. A2v.

¹¹² Parker, 1715, sig. A2.

The ranks of Tory astrologers had been thinned by death at the start of Anne's reign. Parker began his ephemeris for 1705 declaring: 'Two eminent Artists are gone of the Stage unto Eternity the last Year'.¹¹³ He was mourning the deaths of two of his fellow Tory astrologers in the spring of 1704, Henry Coley and John Gadbury (Gadbury had died on 24 March to be followed by Coley on 30 April). As we have seen, as Coley became older, the almanacs he compiled, most notably *Merlinus Anglicus Junior* and *Culpepper Revived*, had become increasingly stereotyped, devoid of political or religious polemic. The last years of Gadbury, a far more combative figure, found him in reflective mood. He often used the pages of his almanacs to contemplate his own mortality, as he succumbed to the rigours of old age. Turning his back on the political infighting on which he had once thrived, he chose instead to immerse himself in his quest to reform astrology, reflecting his old interests in meteorology and navigation.

For much of his career, Gadbury had championed a utilitarian, empirical astrology. As part of his programme of reform, Gadbury, following in the footsteps of his friend and colleague John Goad, set himself the task of finding a correlation between the weather and the position of the heavens, from which he could reduce weather forecasting to a set of well defined astrological rules. By the time he came to compile his almanac for 1703, he was forced to concede defeat:

I have been a Daily Observer of *Aireal Variety* for almost 35 Years, as the Noble Lord *Bacon* directs as necessary: And though I have met with several Similitudes of Verity in many Things therein . . . yet, I must freely own to have met with other Arguments too hard for me to bring under a Regimental Order of Experience.¹¹⁴

¹¹³ Parker, 1705, sig. A2.

¹¹⁴ Gadbury, 1703, sig. A2v.

In the last almanac he compiled, for 1705, '*Writ by him in his Life, and found Finished after his Death*', Gadbury also admitted to failing in his quest to discover 'The North East, or Polar Passage'.¹¹⁵ Despite these disappointments he refused to '... wholly Renounce, or bid Good Night to *Astrology*'.¹¹⁶ In his final almanac, the fiftieth edition he had compiled, he observed 'I was born particularly for such an Astral Purpose'.¹¹⁷ But he does seem to have renounced astrological meddling in the affairs of State.

Overall, the Tory astrologers were happy to accept Anne, a Stuart devoted to the Established Church. Initially they supported the Spanish war but turned against it when it seemed to drag on for little purpose except to enrich Whig contractors and profiteers. The succession was the issue they found most difficult, for as in 1688 the claims of the Stuart dynasty clashed with those of the Church. Their responses varied, from the crypto-Jacobitism of the *Oxford Almanack* through Parker's grudging acceptance of George to Gibson's firm endorsement of the Protestant succession.

Isaac Bickerstaff and the 'Death' of Partridge

Ever since the Civil Wars, political feuds among the almanac-makers had sometimes taken on a personal dimension. In the 1680s and 1690s, as we saw in earlier chapters, John Gadbury and John Partridge had been the two main protagonists.¹¹⁸ By the late 1690s this rivalry was almost exhausted. It was left to Partridge to have the last word. In his almanac for 1704 he reasserted his belief that Gadbury had been at the bottom of the plan to foist a sham Prince of Wales upon an unsuspecting nation and, when the

¹¹⁵ Gadbury, 1705, t.p., sig. Av.

¹¹⁶ Gadbury, 1703, sig. Av.

¹¹⁷ Gadbury, 1705, sig. C.

¹¹⁸ See above, pp. 123-137, 166-171, 198-201.

baby had died two months later, replace it with ‘. . . a lucky, fortunate child that came in by Chance’.¹¹⁹ By the middle of William’s reign, however, Partridge had found a new adversary among the Tory astrologers, George Parker. By the turn of the century the quarrel was at its most vitriolic, and it became clear that Partridge had met his match.

The first years of Anne’s reign were a period of relative quiet as far as their feud was concerned. The calm was shattered by Partridge’s edition for 1707, which described Parker as a ‘Jacobite Conjurer’. The accusation stemmed from Parker’s inclusion in a work for the previous year of the Old Pretender (or as Partridge called him ‘Pug at St Germain’s’) in a table of the royal family. Partridge construed this as an attempt by Parker to give the Pretender ‘. . . a Right to the Crown’. He warned that this year Parker might include him again, only this time ‘. . . by the Title of James the T---rd’.¹²⁰ Thomas Hearne, an out-and-out Jacobite academic at Oxford and friend of Parker tells much the same story after a meeting with Parker some years later in 1723:

In queen Anne’s time, George happened to print, in his almanack, the pretender (as they call the chavallier de St. George) and his sister (who is now dead) among the sovereign princes of Europe, for which he was prosecuted, and fined fifty libs. and hindered from printing almanacks. Upon which he printed only an annual Ephemeris, with the saints days, without doing it in the nature of an almanack, tho’ now the stationers let him go on again (if he pleases) as he did before.¹²¹

This episode may well have contributed to the Company of Stationers’ refusal to handle Parker’s works, which meant that from 1707 onwards, Parker published his *Ephemeris* independently.

¹¹⁹ Partridge, 1704, sig. C5-C5v.

¹²⁰ Partridge, 1707, sig. C8.

¹²¹ P. Bliss, *Reliquiae Hearnianae: The Remains Of Thomas Hearne, M.A., Of Edmund Hall, Being Extracts From His M.S. Diaries, Collected With A Few Notes By Philip Bliss* (2 vols., Oxford, 1857), vol. II, pp. 497-498.

Parker's response was swift and merciless. In his ephemeris for 1707 he denied the charge of Jacobitism, reprinting the 'Dedication to the Queen' and pro-Anne verses which had appeared in his ephemeris for 1703 as well as 'diverse passages' from his ephemeris for the following year, '. . . which to all impartial Judges will make it significantly appear how unjustly I have been Calumnated'.¹²² He then launched a scathing counter-attack against his rival, which marked the beginning of a sustained assault against him.

Parker devoted an entire section to attacking Partridge, labelling him 'Johannidion, alias Johannodion castigatus':

The Title I have affixed to this Discourse is Johannidion, alias Johannodion castigator, the Reason of it is this: Persons remarkable in any kind are to be distinguish'd by remarkable Names, this put me upon some Thoughts of doing our *Mock-Merlin* Justice, by giving him an Appellation adapted to his Qualities; *Johannides*.

This, however, would be too flattering.

Johannidion the Diminutive, is much fitter for him, tho' by the by, I must advertise that the Name is fitted to be the exiguity of his Understanding, and not to the Bulk of his Body; Men are call'd Great from the Greatness of their Minds; on the contrary, those may be called Little Men (how Brawny soever the Body be) who like our *Johannidion*, have nothing within them, beside the thin Spectre of an Understanding.

Having arrived at '*Johannidion, or Little Jockey*', Parker hoped '. . . the Criticks in Etymologie will forgive me, if I alter one Letter, and make it *Johannodion, or John the Noddy*'.¹²³

In an attack foreshadowing Jonathan Swift's later assault, Parker seized upon the ambiguities of Partridge's predictions, observing:

The last Year, that Author discovered in the various Configurations of Celestial Bodies, the Advancement of Cunning States-Men, the Exits of Eminent Persons, the Fall of Experienced Soldiers, &c. affix these

¹²² Parker, 1707, sig. A4.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, sig. B5.

Prognosticks to any Year, and I will venture to affirm they will prove true,
For what Year runs round without these General Contingencies?¹²⁴

Parker also pointed out the total inaccuracy of Partridge's predictions which he nonetheless brazenly published year after year. In his ephemeris for 1708 Parker wrote how his rival,

. . . has more Confidence than an old Carted Bawd, for when-ever she is brought to Justice, there is some Side turns to obstruct the View of her Face, and that People when they see her again, may not know, that she is the Person that has render'd her self so remarkably infamous. But it is otherwise with *Johannodion*, he writes Predictions Year after Year, which never come to pass.¹²⁵

So persistently did Partridge offend that Parker said he felt forced to change the label he had first given his rival, explaining:

'Tis Demonstrable that Impertenant Scribling is as Natural to him as Antick posture is to an Old Baboon, and for [t]his reason I shall be obliged to change the Stigma of his name, and instead of *Johannodian*, [sic] be oblig'd to make it *Johannidian* the little, the Diminutive, for so indeed are his parts.¹²⁶

It was Partridge's constant and false predictions of the death of the French king that particularly infuriated Parker. Writing of Partridge's constant predictions of Louis' death he declared:

Well, this he may depend upon, the *French King* will dye one time or other, for a Man of 70 Years old, can't live abundance of Years; therefore let him but continue his Yearly Method of pronouncing Death to him. He'll hit it at last; and then *Johannodion* will have foretold something.¹²⁷

Parker did his best to turn the tables by claiming it was Partridge who was disaffected toward the present government, and not himself. In his edition for 1707 he observed how Partridge had warned the reader that the influence of the heavens promised ' . . . a sort of *Violence and Convulsions*, the effects of which were to be so

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, sig. B5.

¹²⁵ Parker, 1708, sig. A2v.

¹²⁶ Parker, 1709, sig. A5.

¹²⁷ Parker, 1708, sig. A4; 1709, sig. A5-A5v; 1708, sig. A3v.

uncomfortable that he did not care to write 'em, nor the People to hear them'.

Turning these words against him, Parker remarked:

True it is, the Duke of *Savoy*, assisted by the Heroick Prince *Eugene*, at this time rais'd the Seige of *Turin*, routed the *French Army*, and regain'd all his Dominions, which were in a manner quite lost, at which News there was great Rejoycings throughout this Kingdom. Was this some of the dismal Effects of that he did not care to relate? If so, it's pitty but he were whipp'd out of the Kingdom for a disaffected Person, and not suffer'd to reside here, to disturb and molest honest Men, and cause 'em to be indicted for Crimes they never thought of, as of late he has done.¹²⁸

In his almanac for 1708, Partridge had predicted the death of an old statesman and the calling into question of an eminent sea commander. Parker pointed out that no statesman had died, though Prince George, 'High Admiral of *England*', who had occupied the post of Admiral with 'great Care and Sincerity' had died, lamented by the whole Nation. Accusing his adversary of Whiggish subversion, Parker declared in his edition for 1709:

But *Jack*, I suppose that Prognostick was calculated in the Meridian of Whiggism in order to raise Complaints or Murmurings against one not far from the Helm at that time, that they might be heaving out, to make Room for to put in one of the Party. Somewhat of this Nature (there is Ground to believe) was in Agitation for a great while since.¹²⁹

Partridge's railings against the High Church incensed Parker even more. In his ephemeris for 1707, Parker declared:

How insolent and unnatural an Employ it is to abuse the Church of *England*, which has Laws and Sanctions for its Guards and Protection, and into which 'tis probable *Johannodion* was baptiz'd (tho' perhaps not, for he was born in the midst of Rebellion) and yet this Fool-hardy Fellow in the last Year's Almanack, stiles our Mother, the *Brimstone Church*.

Writing of his hero Dr. Sacheverell he continued:

The Learned and Worthy Gentleman he abuses by his wretched Rhimes, is a Man of great Worth, whose shoes *Johannodion* is not worthy to clean. Mr. *Sacheverel* is a true Son of the true Church, the *Church of England*, who has Courage and Abilities to defend the Doctrine and Discipline of

¹²⁸ Parker, 1707, sig. B4v.

¹²⁹ Parker, 1709, sig. A5v-A6.

that Church, for which our Fathers suffer'd. *Johannodion* is infinitely to little to be taken notice of by so great a Man. Had this profligate *Hewson* a little more Bulk, he might receive from Mr. *Sacheverels* Pen such a Chastisement as would split his Skull; but he is far from that Gentleman's Observation; for, even I my self am Conscious, I do *Johannodion* too much Honour by Animadverting upon his Scurilities; for he that can equal Traytor's with Saints, cannot only do all that has been done, but much more.¹³⁰

Interestingly, Parker's invectives against Partridge in his almanacs between 1707-9 did not elicit a response from his adversary. A possible explanation for Partridge's failure to respond is that, in the midst of Parker's attack upon him, he had become embroiled in another controversy which threatened to end his career as an almanac-maker.¹³¹

1708 witnessed the publication of an intriguing pamphlet entitled *Predictions For The Year 1708*, purportedly written by one Isaac Bickerstaff Esq. Hiding behind this pseudonym was the Tory polemicist and satirist Jonathan Swift. Swift's aim in writing this satirical gem was to expose to ridicule the fraudulent quackery of the almanac-makers practising at the time. He chose as his main target John Partridge. Partridge's fame, his rampant Whiggism, his constant railings against Catholicism, the High Church and the Tories, and the equivocal nature of his predictions, made him the ideal victim of Swift's wit.

Bickerstaff opened the work, which he asserted had been '*Written to prevent the People of England from being further impos'd on by vulgar Almanack-makers*', by remarking, 'I have long considered the gross Abuse of Astrology in this Kingdom and upon debating the matter with my self, I could not possibly lay Fault upon the Art, but

¹³⁰ Parker, 1707, sig. B5v. Parker was linking Partridge with John Hewson, the Regicide, who was also a shoemaker by origin.

¹³¹ For an account of the controversy from a more literary point of view see R. P. Bond, 'Isaac Bickerstaff, Esq.', in C. Camden (ed.), *Restoration and Eighteenth-Century Literature: Essays in Honor of Alan Dugald McKillop*, (Chicago, 1963), pp. 103-124.

upon those gross Imposters who set up to be the Artists'. He lamented the state he now found astrology in, and how it had been abused,

. . . by a few Mean Illiterate Traders between us and the Stars; who import a yearly Stock of Nonsense, Lies, Folly and Impertinence, which they offer to the World as genuine from the Planets, tho' they descend from no greater a Height than their own Brains.¹³²

Bickerstaff was incensed at the influence the almanac-makers still wielded. He observed with incredulity:

Gentlemen rich enough to serve the Nation in Parliament, poring in *Partridges' Almanack*, to find out the events of the Year at Home, and Abroad; nor dare to propose a Hunting Match, till Gadbury or he have fixt the Weather.¹³³

He pounced too on the literary ineptitude of the compilers:

I will allow either of the Two I have mention'd or any others of that Fraternity, to be not only Astrologers, but Conjurers too, if I do not produce a hundred Instances in all their Almanacks, to convince any reasonable Man, that they do not so much as understand common Grammar and Syntax; they are not able to spell any Word out of the usual Road, nor even in their Prefaces correct common Sense or intelligible *English*.¹³⁴

He went on to ridicule the platitudinous ambiguities of their 'Observations and Predictions',

. . . they are such as will equally suit any Age or Country in the World. *This Month, a certain great Person will be threatned with Death or Sickness.* This the News Paper will tell them, for there we find at the End of the Year, that no Month passes without the Death of some Person of Note; and it would be hard, if it should be otherwise when there are at least Two thousand Persons of Note in this Kingdom, many of them old, and the Almanack-maker has the liberty of chusing the sickliest Season of the Year where he may fix his Prediction.¹³⁵

¹³² J. Swift, *Predictions For The Year 1708* (1708), t.p., p. 2.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 2-3.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

Bickerstaff closed questioning the use of almanacs as propaganda weapons for party politics, and the subsequent ‘. . . mutual Quarrels in Verse and Prose of *Whig* and *Tory*, wherewith the Stars have little to do’.¹³⁶

In a pretended attempt to reform astrology, Bickerstaff claimed to have spent much of his time adjusting and correcting the astrological calculations he had made over the past years, upon which his predictions were based, and thus improved their accuracy. So precise had his predictions become that he could confidently aver, ‘For these last two Years I have not failed in above one or two Particulars, and those of no very great Moment’. ‘I make bold to tell the World’ he declared

. . . that I lay the whole Credit of my Art upon the Truth of these Predictions; And I will be content, that *Partridge*, and the rest of his Clan, may hoot me for a Cheat and Imposter if I fail in any single Particular of Moment. I believe, any Man who reads this Paper will look upon me to be at least a Person of as much Honesty and Understanding, as a common Maker of Almanacks. I do not lurk in the Dark; I am not wholly unknown in the World; I have set my name at length, to be a Mark of Infamy to Mankind if they shall find I deceive them.¹³⁷

Bickerstaff then made his predictions; their detail clearly an attack on the compilers’ lack of precision. 1708 was to be a year of great consequence. The Dauphin, Louis XIV and the pope were all to die at definite times of specified causes. So too, if his first prediction was to be believed, was John Partridge:

My first prediction is but a Trifle, yet I will mention it to shew how ignorant these Sottish Pretenders to Astrology are in their own Concerns: It relates to *Partridge* the Almanack-maker; I have consulted the Star of his Nativity by my own Rules, and find he will infalibly dye upon the 29th of *March* next, about Eleven at night, of a raging Feaver; therefore I advise him to consider of it, and settle his Affairs in time.¹³⁸

On the day after Partridge was to have died there appeared *The Accomplishment Of the First of Mr. Bickerstaff’s Predictions. Being an Account Of the Death of Mr.*

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 3, 4.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

Partridge [sic], the Almanack-maker, Upon the 29th Instant. In a Letter to a Person of Honour (1708). This too was written by Swift, who now adopted the guise of an anonymous author.

The author informed the lord to whom he wrote that he had been acquainted with Partridge whilst employed in the revenue and that he had made it his business to ascertain the accuracy of Bickerstaff's predictions. He had ' . . . for some Days past enquired constantly after Partridge [sic]'. He had discovered that two or three days earlier Partridge had become ill, been confined to his chamber and then, as his condition deteriorated, his bed. Curious, the author sent a servant to enquire after Partridge three times a day. 'Yesterday, about Four in the Afternoon', he went on, 'Word was brought me that he [Partridge] was past Hopes'. On hearing the news he had decided to visit Partridge ' . . . partly out of Commiseration, and, I confess, partly out of Curiosity'.¹³⁹

When he arrived Partridge recognised him. Those attending him claimed that his condition had deteriorated for some time, though he appeared to the author to be in full charge of his faculties (thus validating all he was about to say). The two men soon became engaged in conversation during the course of which Partridge admitted that Bickerstaff's prediction had weighed heavily on his mind, and it had been the stress engendered by Bickerstaff's predictions that had brought about his 'present Distemper'. Notwithstanding his concern, he was quick to point out that Bickerstaff ' . . . spoke altogether by Guess, and knew no more what will happen this Year than I did my self'. Surprised, the author had asked Partridge how he could be so sure, to

¹³⁹ J. Swift, *The Accomplishment Of the First of Mr. Bickerstaff's Predictions* (1708), pp. 1-2.

which Partridge replied 'I am a Poor Ignorant Fellow, Bred to Mean Trade, yet I have Sense enough to know that all Pretences of foretelling by Astrology are Deceits'.¹⁴⁰

Having failed to get the message, the author asked Partridge why he had not cast his own nativity in order to see if it agreed with Bickerstaff's predictions. An incredulous Partridge, shaking his head replied 'O! Sir, this is no Time for Jestings, but for Repenting those Fooleries, as I do now from the very bottom of my Heart'. 'By what I can gather from you', the author retorted, the penny having dropped '. . . the Observations and Predictions you printed with your Almanacks were meer Impositions upon the People'. Ruefully, Partridge replied 'If it were otherwise I should have the less to answer for'.¹⁴¹ He then explained how his fellow almanac-makers compiled their works. 'We have a Common Form for all those Things', he explained,

. . . as to foretelling the Weather, we never meddle with that, but leave it to the Printer, who takes it out of any Old Almanack as he thinks fit; the rest was my own Invention to make my Almanack Sell, having a Wife to Maintain, and no other Way to get my Bread, for Mending Old Shoes is a Poor livelihood.¹⁴²

Partridge went on to confess his ignorance as a physician and the fraudulent nature of the medical advice he gave in his almanacs, sighing: 'I wish I may not have done more Mischief by my Physick than my Astrology, tho' I had some good Receipts from my Grandmother, and my own Compositions were such as I thought could at least do no Hurt'.¹⁴³

More conversation followed which the author said he failed to remember. He did, however, remember that, at one point during their discussion, Partridge had '. . .

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 2-3.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 3.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

declar'd himself a Nonconformist, and had a Fanatick Preacher to be his Spiritual Guide'.¹⁴⁴

Stifled by the closeness of the room, and aware that Partridge could not live much longer, the author retired to a nearby coffee-house, leaving a servant in Partridge's residence with orders to tell him immediately, as accurately as he could, the exact time Partridge expired. Some two hours later, at five past seven, the servant found him and informed him Partridge had died. So, whilst Bickerstaff had been correct in his prediction of Partridge's death to the day, his prediction had been wrong by some hours.¹⁴⁵

At the same time this witty pamphlet was being circulated about London, Swift published *An Elegy on Mr. Patrige [sic], the Almanack-maker, who Died on the 29th of this Instant March, 1708*, where he proclaimed:

WELL, 'tis as *Bickerstaff* has guest,
Tho' we all took it for a Jest:
Patrige [sic] is Dead, nay more, he dy'd
E'er he could prove the good *Squire* ly'd.

Swift ironically continued by observing that it was:

Strange, an Astrologer should Die,
Without one Wonder in the Sky;
Not one of all his *Crony* Stars,
To pay their Duty at his Hearse!
No Meteor, no Eclipse appear'd!
No Comet with a flaming Beard!
The Sun has rose, and gone to Bed,
Just as if *Patrige [sic]* were not Dead.

Swift concluded with an irreverent epitaph:

HERE *Five Foot deep lyes on his Back*
A Cobler, Starmonger, and Quack,
Who to the Stars in pure Good-will,
Does to his best look upward still.
Weep all you Customers that use

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 3-4.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

*His Pills, his Almanacks, or Shoes.
 And you that did your Fortunes seek,
 Step to this Grave but once a Week.
 This Earth which bears his Body's Print,
 You'll find has so much Virtue in't,
 That I durst Pawn my Ears, 'twill tell
 Whate'er concerns you full as well,
 In Physick, Stolen Goods, or Love,
 As he himself could, when above.¹⁴⁶*

By this time the capital had become captivated by the saga and soon many of its wags were joining the bandwagon and publishing their own squibs. One of the most amusing was entitled *Squire Bickerstaff Detected* (1708). Purportedly written by Partridge, it recounted the bizarre series of events which had allegedly befallen him on the night of 29 March as a result of Bickerstaff's prediction of his death.

On the night in question, Partridge's wife had prevailed upon him to take a sweat for a cold and then, between eight and nine, to repair to bed. Whilst warming the bed Partridge's maid had heard the bell tolling. Asking a passer-by who it tolled for she was told for 'Dr. *Partridge* . . . the famous Almanack-maker, who died suddenly, this Evening'. A second passer-by confirmed the story, at which as Partridge tells us, 'My wife . . . fell into a violent Disorder; and I must own, I was a little discompos'd at the Oddness of the Accident'.¹⁴⁷

Stranger things were about to happen, for in the meantime there came a knock at the door. Believing the sober, grave person she found to be one of Partridge's patients, his maid showed him into the dining room. Having composed himself, Partridge went to him,

. . . and was surpriz'd to find my Gentleman mounted on a Table with a 2-Foot Rule in his hand, measuring my Walls, and taking the Dimensions of the Room. Pray, Sir, says I, not to interrupt you, have you any Business with me? Only, Sir, replies he, Order the Girl to bring Me a better Light,

¹⁴⁶ J. Swift, *An Elegy on Mr. Patrige [sic], the Almanack-maker, who Died on the 29th of this Instant March, 1708* (1708).

¹⁴⁷ *Squire Bickerstaff Detected; Or, The Astrological Imposter Convicted* (1708), pp. 3-4.

for this is but a very dim one. Sir, says I, my Name is *Partridge*: Oh! the Doctors Brother belike, crys he; the Stair-Case, I believe, and these two Apartments hung in close Mourning, will be sufficient, and only a strip of Bayes round the other Rooms. The Dr. must needs die Rich, he had great Dealings, in his Way, for many Years; if he had no Family-Coat, you had good as use the 'Scutcheons of the Company, they are as Showish, and will look as Magnificent as if he was descended from the Blood Royal.¹⁴⁸

Having got rid of his unwelcome visitor, Partridge prepared for bed once more, '... in hopes of a little Repose after so many ruffling Adventures', only to be confronted with another knock at the door. Opening the window he shouted down asking who was there, and what was their business? He was met by the reply that it was '*Ned*, the Sexton' and that he had come to enquire '... whether the Doctor left any Orders for a Funeral Sermon, and where he is to be laid, and whether his Grave is to be Plain or Brickt'. Flustered, Partridge shouted down that Ned knew him well enough, that he knew he was not dead, and how dare he confront him in this manner. Ned replied by informing him his death was in print and the whole town knew of it, pointing out to Partridge that '*White*, the Joyner, is but fitting Screws to your Coffin, he'll be here with it in an instant'. The affray was soon joined by a passer-by who implored Partridge to get into his 'Flanel Gear' telling him it would look 'indecent' for him to stand 'frightning Folks' in his window, when he should have been in his coffin for over three hours.¹⁴⁹ Partridge concluded by asserting he had '... scarce a Moments Rest' ever since Bickerstaff's prediction, and his wife had been '... almost run distracted with being call'd Widow *Partridge*'.¹⁵⁰

The real John Partridge chose to answer Swift in his edition of *Merlinus Liberatus* for 1709. On the title page he described himself as 'A Lover of Truth', and not as a 'Student in Physick and Astrology', as he usually did. After a couple of brief allusions

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 5-6.

to Bickerstaff, he set about refuting Swift's prediction and subsequent attempts to prove his death, remarking:

You may remember there was a paper published predicting my Death on the 29th March at Night, 1708, and after the day was past, the same Villain told the World I was dead, and how I died, and that he was with me at the time of my death. I Thank God, by whose Mercy I have my Being, that I am still alive, and (excepting my age) as well as ever I was in my Life, as I was also at that 29th of March.¹⁵¹

Clearly, Partridge could not see the perversity of publicly denying his own death. Unfortunately, Swift could, and seizing upon Partridge's mistake composed *A Vindication Of Isaac Bickerstaff Esq.*, once again under the pseudonym of Bickerstaff.

In it he observed:

My Concern is not so much for my own Reputation, as that of the *Republick of Letters*, which Mr. *Partridge* hath endeavoured to wound thro' my Sides. If Men of publick Spirit must be superciliously treated for their ingenious Attempts, how will true useful Knowledge be ever advanced?

'I wish Mr. *Partridge* knew the Thoughts which *Foreign Universities* have conceived of his ungenerous Proceeding with me', he continued, '. . . but I am too tender of his Reputation to publish them to the World'.¹⁵²

Bickerstaff asserted that support for his work had been forthcoming throughout Europe, and he had been deluged by letters praising it. He had received only two objections to his prophecies. The first had emanated from an incensed Frenchman who had been pleased to inform him that Cardinal de Noailles, who he had predicted would die, along with Partridge, in 1708, was still alive. Mocking the xenophobic nature of Partridge's predictions he retorted '. . . how far a *Frenchman*, a *Papist*, and an *Enemy*, is to be believed in his own Case, against an *English Protestant*, who is true to the

¹⁵¹ Partridge, 1709, sig. C7v-C8.

¹⁵² J. Swift, *A Vindication Of Isaac Bickerstaff Esq* (1709), p. 3.

Government, I shall leave to the candid and impartial Reader'.¹⁵³ The second had come from Partridge himself and it was to this that he now turned his attention. 'This is the Subject of the present Controversie between us; which I design to handle with all Brevity, Perspicuity and Calmness: In this Dispute, I am sensible, the Eyes not only of *England*, but of all *Europe*, will be upon us'.¹⁵⁴

Turning Partridge's own words against him Swift, alias Bickerstaff, gleefully observed that over a thousand gentlemen had bought Partridge's almanac in order to ascertain what Partridge had said against him, and that '. . . at every Line they read, they would lift up their Eyes, and cry out, betwixt Rage and Laughter, *They were sure no Man alive ever writ such damn'd Stuff as this*'. By rebutting him, Bickerstaff observed, Partridge had created a 'Dilemma' for himself, '. . . either of disowning his Almanack, or allowing himself to be, *No Man alive*'.¹⁵⁵ Wittily, Swift argued Partridge's wife's frequent assertions to the Gossips that '*Her Husband had neither Life nor Soul in him*', were proof of his death.¹⁵⁶

Employing a cunning ruse Swift then had Bickerstaff rebuke the author of *The Accomplishment* for pointing out that his prediction of the time of Partridge's death had been wrong by a few hours, '. . . an Error of no very great Magnitude, that Men should raise Clamour about it'.¹⁵⁷

Attacking the Company of Stationers' practice of publishing almanacs in the name of compilers long since dead, Bickerstaff remarked that one objection to Partridge's death he had sometimes encountered was that he still continued to write almanacs. 'This' he explained, '. . . is no more than what is common to all that Profession;

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, pp. 4-5.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

Gadbury, Poor Robin, Dove, Wing, and several others, do yearly publish their Almanacks, tho' several of them have been dead since before the *Revolution*'.¹⁵⁸ His jibe reminds us that Swift intended his attack to be not only on Partridge but on the whole trade of almanac-making, and the monopolistic Company of Stationers which controlled it.

Though, as we know, Partridge did not die in 1708, his career as an almanac-maker appeared to have ended in 1709 by virtue of a feud with the Company of Stationers. During the summer of 1709 Partridge had infringed the Company of Stationers' monopoly by selling his edition to one John Darby, a member of the Company, both having decided to act independently. The Company acted swiftly and obtained an injunction to stop Partridge from printing and publishing his own almanac, and refused to handle it themselves. As a result, no edition of Partridge's almanacs appeared between 1710 and 1713. Commenting on the feud, Abel Bower, the author of *The Post Boy*, astutely observed, 'Thus the Prophecy, of Isaac Bickerstaff, Esq; is, at last, accomplish'd: For, altho' Mr. Partridge may still be alive, as to his Animal Functions, yet he is, at present, Dead, *quatenus* an Astrologer and Almanack-Writer'.¹⁵⁹ When discussing the injunction in *A Letter to a Member of Parliament* written in 1710, Partridge took the opportunity to assert that he was still alive, remarking, 'This Injunction was not granted upon the suggestion of my being dead, as some have foolishly imagined'.¹⁶⁰

Upon his return as an almanac-maker with his edition for 1714, Partridge brought the Bickerstaff controversy to a close. Still styling himself 'A Lover of Truth', he

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 7-8.

¹⁵⁹ Quoted in R. P. Bond, 'John Partridge and the Company of Stationers', *S.I.B.*, XVI (1963), p. 67.

¹⁶⁰ J. Partridge, *A Letter to a Member of Parliament from Mr. John Partridge* (1710).

dedicated the work 'To Isaac Bickerstaffe, Esq'. Seemingly aware of his earlier folly in publicly trying to prove himself alive, he remarked, 'There seems to be a kind of fanatical Propriety, in a *Dead Man's* Addressing himself to a Person not in Being. *Isaac Bickerstaffe* is no more; and I have nothing now to dispute with, on the subject of his Fictions concerning me'. He went on 'I have indeed for some Years [been] silent, or in the Language of Mr. *Bickerstaffe*, Dead; yet, like many an Old Man that is reported so by his Heirs, I have lived long enough to bury my successor'. Partridge closed by making clear it had been Swift who had composed the works under the pseudonym of Bickerstaff before signing off 'Your Revived Friend....John Partridge'.¹⁶¹

Partridge's revival proved short-lived. He was to compile only two more almanacs before his death on 24 June 1715. He died a reasonably wealthy man, leaving his widow a legacy of £700 and other legacies of £2,000, his wealth a reflection, perhaps, of the influence astrology wielded, not only at a popular level, but among the educated classes of society.¹⁶²

¹⁶¹ Partridge, 1714, sig. A2v.

¹⁶² *The Last Wills and Testaments Of Jo. Partridge* [et al.] (1716).

CONCLUSION

This thesis set out to examine the link between astrology and politics during the latter part of the seventeenth and in the early eighteenth century, between 1678 and 1715. The stormy nature of politics during these years ensured that the link, which had become weaker following the Restoration, was reforged and rendered as strong as it had ever been. Indeed, the period witnessed a renaissance in political astrology. Once again, as during the Civil War and Interregnum, almanacs and other astrological works brimmed with political speculation and, on occasion, theory. Political astrology was reborn. The aim of this conclusion is to summarise the findings of the thesis and then, in section II, to consider some of the wider issues and problems they raise.

I

During this period the world of political astrology again mirrored the wider political world, as in the 1640s, splitting along Whig and Tory lines. The Whig and Tory astrologers were not monolithic groups, but like-minded individuals who, for the most part, shared the same political ideology. Friendships existed within the loose groupings, but so too did rivalries, as between Richard Kirby and John Holwell. Friendships occasionally crossed the political divide, and there were sometimes divisions within a group on certain issues. It is possible, nonetheless, to identify certain beliefs and principles which lay at the heart of each group and gave it a distinctive identity. Moreover the constant political to-ing and fro-ing of the period ensured that both the Tory and Whig astrologers had the opportunity to represent political orthodoxy.

It was during the years of the Popish Plot and Exclusion Crisis that the Whig/Tory split first surfaced amongst the astrologers. Whilst most ignored this development, two

men took up fiercely polemical positions which heralded the return of political faction to the astrological world, the Whig John Partridge and the Tory John Gadbury. From the outset Partridge nailed his political colours firmly to the Whig mast. It was not until the years of the Tory ascendancy, however, that the Whig astrologers emerged as a group. At its heart lay the desire to protect the rights and liberties of their countrymen from popery and arbitrary rule. Anti-Catholicism was their stock in trade and their most powerful weapon. Though they were far too circumspect to criticise Charles himself, there can be no doubt that beneath their opposition to Charles' policies, and their attacks on Catholicism, lay a desire to Exclude James from the succession to preserve traditional English rights and liberties.

James' accession brought for the Whig astrologers fears of reprisal. Partridge fled abroad, as did William Salmon. For those who stayed, James' accession brought tighter censorship. Constrained by this, and driven by a natural desire for self-preservation, most Whig astrologers prudently pledged allegiance to their monarch and urged readers to do so too. By contrast Partridge, from the safety of the Netherlands, railed against Catholicism and prophesied the downfall of James and his regime.

For the Whig astrologers, the Glorious Revolution was a 'miracle', and they greeted William as the saviour of England from 'Popery and Slavery'. They found no trouble in justifying the overthrow of James and the break in hereditary succession. They combined providentialist arguments with the belief in an original contract between monarchs and subjects, and the subject's right to resist monarchs who broke it, arguments formulated by Whigs during the Exclusion Crisis and used to justify the Glorious Revolution by the Convention Parliament. James, they argued, had reneged on the original contract by attempting to bring in popery, and his subjects had therefore

been within their rights to resist him. James had 'abdicated' and left the throne 'vacant', and God had placed William on the throne in his place.

In the years following the Glorious Revolution the Whig astrologers gave wholehearted support to William. They constantly reminded readers of the popish tyranny of James' reign and the miseries of life in absolutist France, which they cited as a model of England's future should James ever return. Their propaganda war against James was fought on two fronts. They denounced the Jacobites as 'French Pensioners' driven by self-interest and greed, and they warned against Jacobite plotting, especially following the discovery in 1696 of an assassination plot. They also insisted that to block James England had to defeat his champion, Louis XIV, and their support for William's war against France was unequivocal. Building on the idea of William as God's 'Instrument' to save England from 'Popery and Slavery', they argued that he was also ordained to save Europe from the popish tyranny of Louis XIV. With God on his side, they argued, William would sweep through France and topple the French king, a view particularly popular following the English naval victory off La Hogue in 1692. They prophesied for Louis the ignominy of defeat, insurrection at home and imminent death.

Throughout the war the Whig astrologers stressed that there could be no peace with the duplicitous French monarch until the threat he posed to his neighbours had been destroyed. By 1696 they were sure this defeat was imminent. They celebrated the Treaty of Ryswick in 1697 as dashing the hopes of both Louis and the Jacobites, though they had differing views on its durability. Some doubted whether Ryswick provided the foundations for a lasting European peace, and predicted a speedy renewal of hostilities. By the summer of 1701, even before Louis' provocative recognition of James III as King of England, the Whig astrologers were convinced of the need to

renew hostilities with France, and called on William to save the nation once more from the threat of popery and arbitrary rule.

The Whig compilers warmly welcomed Queen Anne on her accession in 1702, charging her with protecting English liberties from popery and arbitrary rule, and rescuing Europe from the chains of 'Popery and Slavery'. The threat to the Protestant succession came now from James Edward, the Old Pretender, whose claims they firmly rejected. As in William's reign, they repeatedly warned of seditious Jacobite plotting. Their support for Anne extended to her war against France. Once more they argued that there could be no peace until Louis was vanquished, demanding a peace which would safeguard the Protestant succession in England and the 'Protestant Interest' in Europe, though they differed as to what this constituted. No such divisions existed over the succession. From the outset Whig support for the Hanoverian succession was unequivocal. Only under the Protestant (if Lutheran) Hanoverians would the rights and liberties of the British be safeguarded from popery and arbitrary rule. Whig hopes were fulfilled with the peaceful succession of George I in 1714.

Within the rival group of Tory astrologers, John Gadbury played a role that paralleled Partridge's as the pioneer. During the Popish Plot and Exclusion Crisis he was the lone Tory voice amongst the astrological fraternity. An outspoken supporter of the Crown and passionate adherent of the Tory doctrines of divine-right kingship and passive obedience, he was the only astrologer explicitly to pledge his opposition to Exclusion.

Whilst the Whigs perceived the threat to the Church and State as emanating from Catholicism, Gadbury, like other Tories, felt that the real threat was that posed by

Protestant Dissent. Gadbury argued that the Popish Plot had never existed, that it was a fiction behind which the Presbyterians were plotting to bring down the monarchy and Church. His outspoken Toryism nearly cost him his life, when in 1680 he was accused of complicity in the Meal Tub Plot.

During the years of the Tory ascendancy the voice of Henry Coley joined that of Gadbury. Like Gadbury, he was a fervent monarchist, a staunch adherent of divine-right kingship and passive obedience, and a fervent Anglican who shared the Tory distrust of Protestant Dissent. Whilst he had initially believed in the existence of the Popish Plot, he soon came to share Tory scepticism. Both Coley and Gadbury viewed the years of the Tory ascendancy in a positive light and supported the aggrandisement of royal power and the vigorous persecution of Protestant Dissent. During James' reign both compilers strongly supported the king. Gadbury explicitly endorsed the king's pro-Catholic policies and his most controversial servants at every turn.

It is only during the reign of William that it is really possible to speak of the Tory astrologers as a prominent group. Gadbury and Coley were now joined by George Parker and later William Cookson. All were staunch monarchists and adherents to the principles of divine-right kingship and passive obedience. They displayed an outspoken hostility to the Civil War, Regicide and Republic, and fostered the cult of King Charles the Martyr, which enjoyed a resurgence during the 1690s. They insisted that the rights and liberties of the subject were better protected by a legitimate monarch than a Republican mob. They were mostly firm Anglicans and all fervent opponents of Protestant Dissent. The identification of the Dissenters with republicanism made by Gadbury during the years of the Popish Plot and Exclusion Crisis held firm throughout William's reign.

Despite their adherence to divine-right kingship and passive obedience, most Tory astrologers appear to have reconciled themselves to the accession of William, albeit with differing degrees of ease. They found themselves in a difficult position. At a professional level they had to make some gesture of acceptance if they were to satisfy the new Whig censors and continue to publish their almanacs. At an ideological level, their love of order and repugnance for rebellion made it hard for them to accept the idea of rebellion, whatever their distaste for the new regime. Moreover James had not been overthrown by force: he had fled. Both Henry Coley and George Parker kept their Tory principles intact by denying that James had been driven out by his subjects. They appealed to the providentialist arguments put forward by the Convention Parliament, matching, in more muted tones, the arguments of their Whig rivals. James, they argued, had 'abdicated' and God had placed William on the throne as his successor. Parker, however, appears to have found it considerably harder to reconcile himself to the Glorious Revolution than did Coley, and John Gadbury could not.

From 1695 onwards the Tory astrologers were, however, united in their desire for peace with France. This does not appear to reflect Jacobite leanings, as their Whig rivals alleged, but rather a belief that Louis had been humbled and no longer posed a major threat to his neighbours. The Tory compilers also shared, of course, the widespread resentment of high taxes and war-profiteers, though when peace came in 1697, Tory as well as Whig astrologers differed over its likely durability.

Those Tories who had reconciled themselves to William's rule welcomed the accession of Anne who was the more attractive as a committed Anglican, which William had never been. They viewed her as a bulwark against both popery and Protestant Dissent. The majority appear to have been as eager as the Whigs to

safeguard the Protestant succession. Initially most of them openly supported the War of Spanish Succession, but by 1710 and the advent of a Tory ministry, they were split over the issue of peace. As Anne's reign drew to a close, the question of the succession surfaced once again. Though the majority of the Tory astrologers appear to have been reconciled, in varying degrees, to the Hanoverian succession, the foreign Lutheran, George I, was certainly not as welcome to them as Anne had been.

The ideologies, hopes and aspirations which characterised the Whig and Tory divide were thus clearly reflected in the astrological works of this period. Both Whig and Tory astrologers claimed to stand for the Protestant Church, and the rights of the monarchy and its subjects, but each side located the threat as emanating from different sources. Where Whigs focused on the Catholic threat, Tories insisted on the dangers posed by Protestant Dissent. Whig astrologers, like the Whigs as a whole, displayed a sympathetic attitude toward Protestant Dissent. They called for an end to persecution and for Protestants of whatever denomination to unite in the face of the Catholic menace. The Whigs' sympathetic attitude towards Dissent gave their Tory rivals their most potent weapon. As we have seen, the Tory astrologers strongly identified Protestant Dissent with republicanism, claiming that the Dissenters had been responsible for bringing Charles I to the scaffold after plotting the downfall of the monarchy and Church of England. They argued that subversive Dissenters were still plotting for the same ends. They accused the Whigs of being Nonconformists and Republicans. Their logic was as simplistic as that which led the Whigs to smear all Tories as Catholics and later Jacobites: if the Whigs supported the Protestant Dissenters, they must be Nonconformists and Republicans themselves. As we have seen, there was very little truth in these stereotypes.

These opposing stereotypes featured prominently in the feuds which broke out between individual compilers. These are one of the most striking features of the political astrology of the period. Whilst the majority of the astrologers contented themselves with attacking their rival groups, a few became embroiled in vitriolic personal feuds. The two most dramatic examples both involved the doyen of the Whig astrologers, John Partridge.

The first was between Partridge and his one-time friend and tutor, Gadbury. Animosity between the two erupted in 1687 in a vicious war of words. So disgusted was Gadbury by Partridge's uninhibited almanac for 1687, which predicted the downfall and probable death of James II, that he wrote *A Reply* dredging up Partridge's alleged involvement with the Rye House plotters and accusing him of republicanism. Partridge hit back by accusing Gadbury of Catholicism and complicity in the Meal Tub Plot. In his almanac for 1688 he alleged further that Gadbury had been involved in a plot to foist a sham Prince of Wales on an unsuspecting public. Later, he would accuse Gadbury of Jacobitism, basing his claims upon his rival's alleged complicity in a Jacobite plot of 1690. Each combatant set out to discredit his rival personally and professionally, as well as politically. At various points in the feud Gadbury found himself accused of everything from sexual depravity to murder.¹

By the late 1690s Gadbury had turned away from political polemic, and the feud petered out. But Partridge now became embroiled in a second feud with George Parker, now emerging as the foremost Tory astrologer. In many respects this feud echoed the earlier one. Both astrologers employed the traditional stereotypes of Whig

¹ See above, pp. 123-137, 166-173, 198-201, 264-265.

and Tory. Thus Parker portrayed Partridge as a subversive radical, citing his alleged involvement with the Rye House plotters, and a Republican. Partridge damned his rival as a Jacobite. Both combatants were willing to drag their feud into the realms of personal vilification. Partridge unashamedly used Parker's broken marriage as a handy weapon, accusing him of the emotional and physical abuse of his family, whilst Parker mocked Partridge's intellect and lowly origins as a cobbler.²

The feuding between Partridge, Gadbury and Parker, described in some detail earlier in this thesis, poses a number of intriguing questions concerning their political outlook and beliefs. Partridge, for example, accused Gadbury of both Catholicism and Jacobitism. How true were these allegations?

Gadbury vehemently denied being a Catholic, notably in his *Magna Veritas*, written whilst he was a prisoner in the Gate-house for alleged complicity in the Popish Plot, and in his almanac for 1682, written following his release. We know, however, that his claims in both works to have been a member of the Church of England all his life were simply not true, and that his mother was a Catholic. We also know that Gadbury was acquainted with a number of prominent Catholics, but as he himself pointed out, so were many men in his position and this certainly did not make him a Catholic. It is true that he attacked Catholicism in his almanacs for 1682-4, but this was tempered by attacks on Protestant Dissent in the same editions, and he may well have been playing lip-service to the prevailing political climate. Gadbury's religious outlook at the time of the Popish Plot and during the years of the Tory ascendancy remains shrouded in mystery.

² See above, pp. 201-217, 265-269.

There can be no doubt, however, that by the time his feud with Partridge really began in 1687, Gadbury was a Catholic or at least a Catholic supporter. In his *Reply to . . . Jo. Partridge* Gadbury made his Catholic loyalties clear. From 1687 he heaped praise even on the most controversial policies and servants of James II and looked forward to a continued period of Catholic rule, through the eventual succession of James' son and heir to the throne.

By 1692, however, Gadbury was worshipping at the Protestant church of St. Margaret's, Westminster. His almanacs and other works fell silent on politics and religion. Had his Catholicism been nothing but a brief dalliance? The evidence suggests otherwise. The silence of his almanacs was, in itself, an expression of despair at the Glorious Revolution. As we have seen, his support for Catholicism was still evident in his *Nauticum Astrologicum*, published in 1691, and his almanac for 1702 displayed a very positive attitude towards it, mourning the death of Pope Innocent XII and welcoming his successor.³ This strongly suggests that only three years before his death he was still at the very least sympathetic toward Catholicism. Setting this against his attendance at St. Margaret's we might conclude that Gadbury was in effect a Church-papist: emotionally a Catholic, but making a token conformity to the Established Church.

Partridge had argued that, during the reign of William, Gadbury was also a Jacobite. But was this true? We know that in the autumn of 1689 Gadbury made visits to leading Jacobites such as the Earls of Peterborough and Castlemaine and that in the summer of 1690 he was accused of plotting against the king and arrested. We also know that he could not bring himself to take the Oaths of Allegiance to William and Mary; there is

³ See above, pp. 165-166, 198.

no evidence to suggest that he ever did so, nor did he ever pledge his support to William in any of his works. Indeed, he appeared to take a side-swipe at William in his edition of 1702. None of this proves that Gadbury was a Jacobite in the sense of actively seeking, or expecting, James to be restored to the throne. On the contrary, his almanacs during William's reign extolled the Tory doctrine of passive obedience and implored readers to obey the new king. What it does indicate, however, is that Gadbury was dismayed by the accession of William, regarded his claim as invalid, and remained emotionally drawn to the Jacobite cause. It is likely that Gadbury never reconciled himself to the rule of William and Mary but submitted quietly, swayed by the Tory doctrine of passive obedience and perhaps the belief that James did not have any realistic chance of reclaiming his throne. It appears that like many of his fellow Tories, Gadbury was prepared to obey William as *de facto* king but continued to recognise James as *de jure* monarch.

In the epistle to his almanac for 1682 Gadbury had written,

*. . . if Kings are God's Vice-gerents on Earth, as I do know and perfectly believe them to be, I have no reason to doubt but that they are inspired from Heaven, with that very way of Worship in the Parts they govern, which is most agreeable to the Mind, Will, and Honour of the Divine Majesty.*⁴

This provides us with an intellectual framework for Gadbury's life which his almanacs and other works would tend to support. During the years of the Popish Plot, Exclusion Crisis and Tory ascendancy he was sympathetic toward Catholicism and its practitioners. On the accession of the Catholic James, he became an open supporter of the Catholic faith. He continued to recognise James as monarch *de jure* following the

⁴ Gadbury, 1682, sig. A2.

Glorious Revolution, and probably remained sympathetic to Catholicism for the remainder of his life.

Partridge also accused George Parker of Jacobitism. Historians have tended to agree with him. How accurate is this portrayal? Partridge based his accusations almost solely on Parker's inclusion of James Edward among the Royal family in a work for 1706 (which unfortunately appears to have been suppressed). Thomas Hearne, an Oxford academic, Jacobite and friend of Parker, later recounts a similar story. Parker replied by stressing his warm support for Anne, which is clear in his almanacs throughout. His almanacs during William's reign had also expressed support for the monarch. At the same time his almanacs during both reigns displayed an overtly sympathetic attitude towards James, blaming evil counsellors and not James himself for the evils that had befallen England during his reign, and stressing that James had been deposed not for any faults, but for his Catholicism.

There can be little doubt that the Glorious Revolution caused Parker to weigh his fervent anti-Catholicism against his staunch Toryism. Eventually, the former proved stronger and he welcomed William and Mary as the saviours of England from popery despite a genuine sympathy for the deposed James. To make the decision more palatable, Parker contented himself with the fact that William's queen, Mary, was also James' daughter and a Stuart. So too was Anne, and Parker's support for her proved stronger than it had ever been for William. As Anne's reign drew to a close Parker was once more forced to weigh his support for the Stuarts against his anti-Catholicism. Once again, he appears to have accepted the Protestant succession, albeit begrudgingly. He was clearly unenthusiastic about the accession of George I. There can be little doubt that Parker harboured Jacobite sympathies, as evidenced by his

friendship with Hearne. There is no evidence, however, that he was a Jacobite in the sense of wanting or waiting to see James II restored to the throne or his Catholic son James Edward succeed to it. Though he may have been sympathetic to their plight, he did not wish to see a Catholic on the throne.

For his part, Partridge found himself accused of radical plotting and republicanism by both Gadbury and Parker. Both argued that his alleged support for the Rye House plotters made him as guilty of conspiracy as the leading conspirators themselves, and cited his flight to the Continent as proof of his guilt. They argued that it reflected Partridge's desire at the time of the Plot to see Monmouth placed on the throne. Both also claimed that despite Partridge's support for Monmouth he had later evolved into a fully-fledged Republican. Parker seized upon Partridge's membership of the Whig Calves Head Club and anti-monarchical railings during his period of exile, as well as his unwillingness to commemorate the martyrdom of Charles in his almanacs of the mid-1690s, as proof of his republicanism. Gadbury argued along similar lines, deriding Partridge's switch from Monmouth to republicanism by demanding to know '... how comes the *Libeller* to be now so zealous for a *Commonwealth*? When, not long since, he contended as earnestly for *Monarchy*, provided the unhappy *Monmouth* had been the *Man*'.⁵

Was Partridge really a subversive plotter and a Republican? That he was a political radical at the time of the Rye House Plot there can be no doubt. His radicalism manifested itself in his explicit calls for Exclusion and open dissent towards Charles II. The very fact that he was mentioned by Robert West shows that, even before his flight to the Netherlands, he was mixing in radical circles and that his radical beliefs were

⁵ Gadbury, *A Reply*, p. 25.

well known amongst them. Whether or not he actually plotted against Charles is another matter, and highly unlikely. If we are to believe West's testimony, he declined Goodenough's invitation to join in the Rye House Plot. The evidence that he had supported and encouraged the plotters and predicted victory for the people amounts to little more than hearsay.⁶

Partridge's radicalism continued throughout James' reign, when from the safety of the Netherlands he predicted the downfall of the regime. It was whilst in exile, in his almanac for 1687, that Partridge put forward his arguments in favour of a republic, which Gadbury seized upon. Paradoxically, in the same year he put forward arguments in favour of a limited monarchy and espoused his belief in the original contract between monarchs and their subjects, and the latter's right to resist tyrannical monarchs who broke it, thus articulating the Whig radical populist position.

How can we explain this apparent paradox? We know that Partridge was alarmed at the popery and arbitrary government of Charles II and James II. By 1687 he was willing to explore any alternative to James to free England from the grip of popery and arbitrary rule, hence his espousal of both a republic and a limited monarchy. As Gadbury astutely remarked of Partridge in 1687, 'Any thing but the *Legal Heir* will please his Pallate'.⁷ The Glorious Revolution liberated England from popery and arbitrary rule and Partridge was ready to welcome England's saviour William with open arms.

II

The fiercely partisan views and party propaganda published by Tory and Whig astrologers throughout the period covered by this thesis raise a number of wider issues.

⁶ See above, pp. 80-82.

⁷ Gadbury, *A Reply*, p. 25.

One is the intriguing fact that the campaign to reform astrology, which reached its zenith in the 1690s was fought along party lines pitching Ptolemaic Whigs against Baconian Tories. Why should this have been the case? Why did the Whig/Tory division among the almanac-makers mirror conflicting views on astrological reform? Patrick Curry puts forward an interesting theory concerning the Whigs in his work *Prophecy and Power*. He argues that it was a central tenet of Whig ideology that there existed an Ancient Constitution which justified the rulership of a monarch by the consent of the people. Taking the argument a step further, he argues that,

. . . it seems highly plausible that for the Whig reformers, Ptolemy's *Tetrabiblos* was astrology's Ancient Constitution. Ptolemy was the warrant to condemn and sweep away all the popish-monarchical-tyrannical corruptions of astrology, brought about by astrologers who had strayed from the fundamental text, and reinstitute 'the true Primitive Astrology'.⁸

Although this is an interesting theory, I feel there is probably a simpler answer to the question of why the Whig astrologers advocated a programme of Ptolemaic reform whilst their Tory counterparts espoused a scientific Baconian reforming programme. The answer appears to lie in the astrologers' personal networks of tutors and friends. Thus Partridge became a follower of Ptolemaic or, more specifically, Placidian astrology after having been tutored by Dr. Francis Wright, who taught it to him. Partridge acknowledged his debt to Wright in the first of his reforming treatises, *Opus Reformatum*. Partridge was a friend of his fellow Ptolemaic reformer Richard Kirby who, together with John Bishop, wrote the astrological handbook *The Marrow Of Astrology*. Both were greatly influenced by the ideas of Placidus de Titis. Kirby had read Placidus' influential work *Tabulae Primi Mobilis* (1657) and readily admitted that a large part of the work was based upon its astrological techniques. Bishop had

⁸ Curry, *Prophecy*, pp. 84-85.

actually become acquainted with Dr. Wright and wrote of how ‘. . . by conversing with Dr. Wright. I . . . came to know truth from fals[e]hood’. The Irish Placidian John Whalley was profoundly influenced by Partridge’s reforming treatises *Opus Reformatum* and *Defectio Geniturarum*. Indeed, he dedicated his translation of Ptolemy’s *Quadripartite* to Partridge. His Tory rival Richard Gibson asserted that Whalley had been converted to Placidian astrology after having read Partridge’s works.⁹

A similar network of influence existed among the scientific Tory reformers. John Gadbury was a friend of the reformer John Goad. His attempts to find a correlation between the weather and position of the heavens were, by his own admission, influenced by the herculean efforts of Goad to do the same. When in his almanac for 1703 Gadbury confessed his failure to reduce weather forecasting to a clear system, he wrote of how ‘The divers knotty Difficulties’ he had encountered had only highlighted his admiration ‘. . . at the great Pains and Patience’ of Goad, and recommended his *magnum opus, Astro-Meteorologica* (1686), to future generations of astrological reformers.¹⁰

The scientific Tory reformers also had close links with the scientific community, notably the Royal Society. Notwithstanding the Society’s official opposition to astrology, encapsulated in Thomas Sprat’s *History Of The Royal-Society* (1667), there was unquestionably support for the attempts of reformers to create a purified empirical astrology from within its ranks.¹¹ Many members could clearly relate to the attempts of reformers to put astrology on a firm, natural philosophical footing which paralleled

⁹ Partridge, *Opus Reformatum*, p. ii; R. Kirby and J. Bishop, *The Marrow Of Astrology* (1687), p. 122, sig. A3v; Whalley, *Quadripartite*, sig. A2v, A4; Gibson, *Flagellum Placidianum*, p. 4.

¹⁰ Gadbury, 1703, sig. A2v. For details of Goad’s reforming efforts, see Curry, *Prophecy*, pp. 67-72.

¹¹ T. Sprat, *The History Of The Royal-Society Of London* (1667), pp. 364-365.

their own attempts to create a body of natural philosophical knowledge based on empirical facts. Thus Gadbury had many friends and colleagues among the members of the Royal Society, some of whom, including Jonas Moore, John Collins, John Aubrey and Elias Ashmole, were supporters of his reforming efforts. Gadbury was also a friend of Sir Edward Sherburne, well-known poet, amateur astrologer, and son of Francis Bacon's secretary. Though describing Gadbury as 'mad' and astrology as 'vaine', Robert Hooke often visited him and Goad and retained a residual interest in astrology. Gadbury's fellow scientific Tory reformer Henry Coley also counted among his friends members of the Royal Society including Aubrey, John Hoskins and, probably, Joseph Moxon.¹² We have also seen how William Cookson was greatly influenced by the works of Gadbury, Coley and Parker and was, indeed, a close friend of Parker who took the reforming baton from Gadbury after his death in 1704.¹³ Parker was in turn a friend of the Astronomer Royal, John Flamsteed, and the celebrated astronomer and mathematician, Edmond Halley, both of whom assisted him with the astronomical side of his almanacs, indeed, the latter commended the first of these for its astronomical accuracy.¹⁴

The partisan character of political astrology also raises the far more important question of patronage. Were the leading participants employed or rewarded by the major Whig or Tory politicians of the period and, in effect, no more than hired pens? Rival astrologers occasionally alleged that this was true of their adversaries. Richard Kirby alleged that his rival Gadbury '... had a Commission to Dissemble' and that he

¹² Curry, *Prophecy*, pp. 73-74, 88; Capp, *Astrology*, pp. 188-190.

¹³ See above, p. 189; Capp, *Astrology*, p. 302.

¹⁴ Capp, *Astrology*, pp. 191-192, 310, 323; Curry, *Prophecy*, p. 77; M. Hunter, 'Science and Astrology in Seventeenth-Century England: an Unpublished Polemic by John Flamsteed', in Curry, *Science*, pp. 265-266.

‘. . . took Pay to Forge Lies by Law’ from James II’s regime. Later, echoing Gadbury’s claim that Charles X had bribed William Lilly with a ‘Golden Chain to predict him victory and success over his enemies from the stars’, Kirby argued that Gadbury’s own sycophantic support of James II’s regime had been procured by bribery.¹⁵

Three years earlier Gadbury himself had tried to link his rival Partridge to prominent and now discredited political leaders, mocking the plight of his ‘Patrons’, Shaftesbury and Monmouth. Was this a serious accusation of political connection or, as seems more likely, a slur designed to highlight Partridge’s radical politics? There is no evidence to substantiate these allegations nor, indeed, to substantiate the rival allegations by Kirby in the papers of the leading politicians of the time which I have examined.¹⁶

There is a little more evidence in the case of George Parker. During the course of his feud with Partridge, Parker tells us that, following his bankruptcy in 1696, he received a pension of £300 from what he describes as ‘. . . a Society of Honourable Worthy Gentlemen’, no doubt to help him on the road to financial recovery. Following Partridge’s vitriolic assault on him in his *Flagitiosus* this was increased to £400.¹⁷ Unfortunately, Parker does not tell us who these individuals were. It is certainly possible that some of them were members of the political community, although it is likely that many came from the ranks of leisured and moneyed men with an amateur interest in matters scientific.

¹⁵ Kirby, *Catastrophe Galliae*, pp. 32, 44.

¹⁶ See footnote 18, below.

¹⁷ Parker, 1698, sig. C4v.

The lack of any concrete evidence of political patronage in the works or papers of the leading political astrologers, together with my failure to uncover any evidence of patronage from the papers of the leading political figures I have examined, suggests that the works of the political astrologers were largely freelance affairs. This would also appear to have been the case during the Civil War and Interregnum. Leading politicians, whilst no doubt glad of the astrologers' support, preferred to remain at a distance even if some of them, like Shaftesbury, undoubtedly possessed an interest in astrology.¹⁸

Although evidence for direct patronage is lacking, the astrologers nonetheless did have numerous connections with the political world, both among courtiers and their dependants, and among the allies and associates of the leading politicians. John Gadbury, for example, revealed that he was a friend of Captain John Seymour, gentleman of the King's Privy Chamber and a member, no doubt, of the aristocratic Seymour family. He was also a friend of the Bishop of Peterborough, Joseph Henshaw, and probably also linked to the Duke of Ormonde's chaplain, John Butler who, Gadbury repeatedly tells us, had a keen interest in astrology. In his almanac for 1695 he mentions discussing astrology in person with the notorious rake, the Earl of Rochester who sent him details of his birth and requested a nativity, and with the Earl of Bristol who, Gadbury tells us, 'Excell'd in . . . Astrology'.¹⁹

Gadbury's alleged political connections at the time of the Popish Plot are intriguing. By his own admission he was, at the very least, acquainted with Sir Robert Peyton and

¹⁸ K.H.D. Haley, *The First Earl of Shaftesbury* (Oxford, 1968), p. 14. Few personal papers of leading astrologers survive for this period in contrast to the mid-seventeenth-century. For details of those which survive, together with those of leading political figures which I have examined, see the list of manuscript sources below, pp. 319-321. I have also consulted the volumes of the *H.M.C.* under the names of leading astrologers and politicians such as Harley and Shaftesbury for evidence of patronage, to no avail.

¹⁹ Gadbury, *Magna Veritas*, p. 7; 1695, sig. A8, B6.

the notorious Mrs. Cellier who were at the heart of the affair. It seems likely that he was acquainted with the Earls of Peterborough and Castlemaine at the time of the Plot, and was certainly acquainted with them by the autumn of 1689, when his frequent visits to them in prison aroused the suspicion of the authorities.²⁰

The allegations that Gadbury secured his pardon by bribing the Earl of Anglesey to the tune of £100 and had been paid £200 on his release by his Catholic friends as a reward for his silence were probably false, but he did owe his pardon, in part at least, to friends in high places. One such individual was his friend Sir George Wharton, the former Royalist almanac-maker and, by this time, Treasurer of the Royal Ordnance. Gadbury acknowledged that, whilst a prisoner in the Gate-house following Dangerfield's allegations, Wharton had interceded on his behalf by writing a 'Petitionary Letter' to the king. Gadbury publicly thanked Wharton whom he described as having been '*. . . a great Instrument under God, to preserve my Life*', when editing Wharton's works, published in 1683.²¹

Wharton may not have been the only individual to intercede on Gadbury's behalf over his alleged complicity in the Meal Tub Plot. In 1684 Gadbury dedicated his work *Cardines Coeli* to Sir Edward Dering, half-brother of the better-known Lord Commissioner of the same name. Dering, a London merchant and staunch Royalist, was an important patron of astrology and was himself an astrological practitioner. When dedicating the work to Dering, Gadbury thanked him for all his 'Manifold Favours; chiefly those afforded me in the time of my greatest *Distress* when you so Generously interposed on my behalf, and helped to *stop the Mouths* of LYONS, that

²⁰ See above, pp. 42-53, 164-165.

²¹ See above, p. 128; J. Gadbury (ed.), *The Works Of That Late Most Excellent Philosopher And Astronomer Sir George Wharton* (1683), sig. B3-B3v.

were then opened against *Me*'.²² John Partridge was aware of this episode, and made play of his rival's '... fawning Epistle to the Learned Sir *E.D.*' who, he alleged, had '... sav'd him from the Gallows'.²³

Later Gadbury found himself accused by Partridge of complicity in a proposed scheme to pass off the illegitimate son of Father Edward Petre as the Prince of Wales. Partridge claimed that Gadbury had strong links with Petre, alleging that he had converted Gadbury to the Catholic faith and acted as his confessor.²⁴

During his feud with Gadbury, Partridge accused him of political sycophancy and manoeuvring throughout his entire career. Although one must take these claims with a pinch of salt, they are certainly worthy of consideration. He alleged that, when Cromwell assumed the title of 'Protector', Gadbury had attempted to 'ingratiate himself' at Whitehall '... and make friends to Cromwell'. He had even sought permission to dedicate his *Doctrine of Nativities* to Cromwell, but was refused. 'I am credibly informed', Partridge wrote of Gadbury, '... that he had promised all that a base Fellow could to be a creature in that Government to the best of his power, but was not accepted'.²⁵ Following the Restoration Gadbury had changed his tune. 'The *Protector* going off the Stage, and *Charles II.* coming in, *John* then falls in, Hand and Heart, with that Government; ... and it was *Charles the Martyr* at every word'.²⁶ Interestingly, Partridge alleged that in 1666 Gadbury had '... removed to *Westminster*, and turned a *Whitehall Broker*, which in plain terms is a *Pimp*; in which Profession he did mighty well'. Through the connections which he made whilst

²² Gadbury, *Cardines Coeli*, sig. A3v. Interestingly, Partridge also claimed Dering as a patron, and his work *Defectio Geniturarum* carried a laudatory preface by him. See Partridge, 1697, sig. Av; *Defectio Geniturarum*, sig. A3-A7v.

²³ Partridge, *Opus Reformatum*, p. 70.

²⁴ See above, pp. 136-137; Partridge, *Opus Reformatum*, p. 88; *A Short Answer*, p. 24.

²⁵ Partridge, *A Short Answer*, p. 2.

²⁶ Partridge, *Nebulo Anglicanus*, p. 4.

practising this dubious occupation Gadbury had ‘. . . found the *Inclination of the Court*’.²⁷ Whatever the truth, if any, behind these claims they suggest that Gadbury had been on the fringes of court life for many years.

Partridge too had connections with members of the political community at one remove from the leading figures. His work *Defectio Geniturarum* was dedicated to Sir Joseph Tily, Knight and MP whom he may have known. Further evidence of his political connections can be found in a fascinating manuscript in the British Library, a collection of nativities apparently in Partridge’s own hand, the last of them also signed by him. The families of some of the leading politicians are well represented in the manuscript, notably those of Churchill and St. John. Among the nativities can be found those of Robert Harley, Henry St. John (Viscount Bolingbroke) and the Duke of Marlborough. All this evidence suggests connections with the political world.²⁸

Partridge’s support for the ill-fated Duke of Monmouth has already been documented in this thesis. Evidence to suggest that Partridge was personally involved with Monmouth is, however, lacking. Indeed, when Parker accused him of calculating Monmouth’s nativity he made it clear that Partridge had done so of his own volition and had not been commissioned by Monmouth himself.²⁹ There is thus no reliable evidence that the leading astrologers were in the pay of Whig or Tory leaders, or writing at their command. They were men of forceful, indeed combative character, unlikely to be willing to write to order. At the same time, they clearly enjoyed links with a number of courtiers and lesser political figures through whom they had indirect

²⁷ Partridge, *A Short Answer*, pp. 2-3.

²⁸ B.L., Ms Egerton 2378, fols., 33v, 37v, 21v.

²⁹ See above, pp. 210, 212-214, 293; Parker, 1699, sig. A5v.

contact with national leaders. It probably suited both the astrologers and the political grandees to keep a discreet distance from one another.

Another important issue raised by the political almanacs is their effectiveness *vis-à-vis* other genres of printed political propaganda. We must begin with an assessment of the size and nature of the political astrologers' audience. There can be no doubt that they commanded a sizeable audience during these years. Over a three year period between 1685 and 1687 the leader of the pack was John Gadbury, 71,000 copies of whose almanacs were printed, an average of 24,000 a year; 38,000 copies of John Tanner's almanacs were published, an average of 13,000 a year. At the lower end of the spectrum 9,000 copies of Daniel Woodward's almanacs were published, an average of 3,000 a year.³⁰ These figures are certainly large when compared to the print runs of other pamphlets, which averaged around 1,000 copies, though they are eclipsed by the new periodical essays and newspapers (particularly the newly emerging 'dailies' of the early eighteenth century). It is perhaps worth pointing out, however, that the direct impact of any form of printed propaganda cannot be measured simply in terms of print runs and sales figures.³¹

The almanac-makers set out to attract readers by targeting a diverse audience. For the educated classes their almanacs contained reforming treatises, astrological essays

³⁰ These figures are based on statistics calculated by Cyprian Blagden and presented in 'Table 1' in his article 'Distribution', pp. 107-116. Although these figures represent the number of almanacs printed for these years and not those sold, they do provide an accurate indication of sales figures, for as Blagden points out, the size of the market was normally accurately estimated by the Company of Stationers. Interestingly, Blagden makes no comment on the prevailing political climate when giving his figures. It is interesting to note that the years he deals with coincide with the reign of James II. It is hardly surprising, therefore, that Gadbury's almanacs were the best sellers during these years as they were the representatives of political orthodoxy.

³¹ For details of the print runs of pamphlets see Knights, *Politics*, p.168. For those of the periodical essays and newspapers see Downie, *Robert Harley*, pp. 8-10. Lack of any concrete figures precludes a comparison between almanacs and other forms of printed propaganda including prints, ballads and broadsheets.

and data, along with medical discussions. For the artisans, labourers and farmers they included ready reckoners, guides to markets, fairs and highways and calendars. Tables of the rising and setting of the sun and of the moon's phases and weather forecasts were particularly important for the majority of the English populace who still lived in the countryside, close to the land, in tune with the cyclical round of the seasons and prey to the vagaries of the weather.

The surprisingly high levels of adult male literacy during the years covered by this thesis ensured that the almanac was as likely to be read by the artisan or labourer as by those higher on the social scale, particularly in London where literacy rates were higher than elsewhere.³² The political message of the almanac-maker might, of course, also be heard, quite literally, among the illiterate members of society who could gather round an individual who could read, and discover the astrologers' political views and propaganda through an aural medium.³³ The most common venues for such gatherings were the coffee-houses where all classes of people went to read, or have read to them, political propaganda including, no doubt, that found in the almanac.³⁴

How wide was the astrologers' audience in practice? The almanac-makers' potential audience was dependent upon the impact that astrology itself still wielded upon society, and it is to this that we must now briefly turn.

The evidence suggests that the astrologers were successful in their quest to reach a socially and intellectually diverse audience. An audience for their political propaganda certainly existed among the lower classes, where historians agree that astrology remained a potent force throughout the period covered by this thesis, and well into the

³² Harris, *London*, p. 98; Knights, *Politics*, p. 169.

³³ Harris, *London*, p. 99.

³⁴ Knights, *Politics*, pp. 172-173; Harris, *London*, p. 99; Downie, *Robert Harley*, p. 6; Curry, *Prophecy*, p. 48.

eighteenth century according to Curry.³⁵ It is also clear that an audience for astrological propaganda existed among the educated classes of society. This may seem more surprising, when one considers the conventional view of historians that astrology was losing its appeal among the educated élite during this period. Citing Samuel Butler's ridicule of Wharton and Lilly in *Hudibras* (1662), Keith Thomas argued that, shortly after the Restoration '... astrology had ceased, in all but the most unsophisticated circles, to be regarded as either a science or a crime: it had become simply a joke'. He went on to claim that 'After 1700 . . . almanacs continued, although their prognostications were vaguer and emptier than ever'.³⁶ Although both Capp and Curry paint a more moderate picture of the fate of astrology among the educated classes of society, citing evidence of the influence astrology still wielded throughout the period covered by this thesis, it is still one of serious decline. Capp writes that 'A current of scepticism was always present, and by 1700 had become dominant among the educated classes'.³⁷

The strong links between the astrologers and the scientific and political communities, documented in this thesis, reveal that, whilst astrology had lost some of its respectability, it still commanded a widespread influence among the educated classes, and that almanacs continued to circulate widely among them. The dedicatees of almanacs and other astrological works also show that the astrologers counted among their friends and sometimes clients, members of the medical profession, lawyers, civic dignitaries and even naval commanders. Most surviving copies of almanacs, in fact, belonged to members of the aristocracy and gentry and members of

³⁵ Capp, *Astrology*, pp. 281-283; Curry, *Prophecy*, ch. 4, pp. 95-117.

³⁶ Thomas, *Religion*, pp. 423, 424.

³⁷ Curry, *Prophecy*, ch. 3, pp. 45-91; Capp, *Astrology*, p. 276.

the nascent professional classes. We have evidence of almanacs being read and discussed among the educated classes. When writing to Richard Coffin, High Sheriff of Devon, one Richard Lapthorpe alluded to the arrest of Gadbury in 1690 and declared ‘. . . what is remarkable, its sayd Mr. Partridge, in his last yeares Almanack, hath prognosticated his fate this yeare’.³⁸ Sir John Trenchard, Secretary of State to William III, had his nativity cast and confessed to its accuracy on his deathbed.³⁹ At the heart of Jonathan Swift’s campaign against the almanac-makers lay his concern at the influence these ‘*vulgar*’ men who lacked any formal education and had begun life as artisans still wielded among the educated classes. Francis Moore claimed his almanacs were even read and commended at the Hanoverian court.⁴⁰

It would seem, therefore, that the almanac-makers successfully bridged the gap between political and social élites and a mass audience, securing a socially and intellectually diverse audience for their almanacs on a nation-wide scale.

Measuring the direct impact that any form of printed propaganda had upon its readers is an impossible task. We can, however, try to assess the potential impact of the almanac compared with that of other forms of printed propaganda.

Almanacs were, of course, limited in their political scope in that they appeared only once a year at fixed times. Indeed, the contents of an almanac for any given year might have been written as early as the previous summer and the almanacs were usually published in the closing weeks of the preceding year. They, therefore, lacked the topicality of a pamphlet or broadsheet which could be produced within a week or two

³⁸ *H.M.C., 5th Report*, Appendix, p. 380.

³⁹ Thomas, *Religion*, p. 345.

⁴⁰ See above, pp. 269-280, 223.

in response to the latest political developments and, of course, the newspapers, particularly the newly emerging 'dailies' of the early eighteenth century.

However, most squibs and newspapers, like those of today, would have been thrown away once read. The almanac was designed to be kept and referred to for a whole year and was, therefore, less ephemeral than other forms of printed propaganda. The author's political message might gradually seep into the reader's consciousness. Readers could also check prophecies against events as the year advanced, to assess their accuracy. We know that rival compilers frequently did so, usually in an attempt to undermine their rivals' professional and political credibility. So too did the opponents of astrology, in their attempts to discredit the art.⁴¹

Most of the leading political astrologers, moreover, were well-known public figures who commanded some respect among all levels of society. Most pamphlets, by contrast, merely carried the initials of the author or a pseudonym and were in effect anonymous.⁴² Their impact rested on style and content alone. The works of the leading astrologers thus carried the additional authority of a well-known author. Further weight was added by the fact that their political prophecies were still astrologically based and, therefore, rested on an objective 'scientific' foundation and not merely the personal opinions of the writer. Of course, astrologers also provided commentary on the basis of purely 'secular' political analysis. Having said that, there can be no doubt that, aware of the influence astrology still enjoyed, compilers often exploited their art to give their political views and propaganda greater currency and to undermine their rivals professionally and personally. Proof of this can be found in the way in which

⁴¹ See above, pp. 135, 210, 267-268. Swift's attack on Partridge was sustained by his publication of *The Accomplishment*, in which he masquerades as an unknown author anxious to ascertain the accuracy of Bickerstaff's prediction of Partridge's death.

⁴² Knights, *Politics*, p. 157.

Partridge subsumed the Popish Plot into astrological lore in order to give it greater plausibility at a time when belief in it was waning, in his work *Prodromus*, or when rival compilers based the most scurrilous accusations upon their adversaries' nativities.⁴³

Not surprisingly, satirists pounced on the astrologers' apparent exploitation of their art for party ends. Earlier in the thesis we saw how Swift accused the compilers of being fraudsters whose predictions, including those of a political nature, were based not on astrology, but on their desire to sell almanacs.⁴⁴ The astrologers themselves were also quick to pounce on their rivals' alleged lack of professional integrity, particularly with regard to their political prophecies. Indeed, the very title of this thesis is derived from Partridge's exasperation at the exploitation of astrology, particularly by Gadbury, for political ends. Later he claimed that Gadbury's predictions of the birth of the Prince of Wales in 1686 had proved so accurate because he had been involved in a plot to foist a sham Prince of Wales upon an unsuspecting public. Gadbury's prediction that London would lose its Charter had also been based, he claimed, on inside information.⁴⁵

For his part, Gadbury alleged that Partridge's predictions of the downfall of James II were based, not upon astrological rules, but on his desire to incite readers to rebel against their monarch. Gadbury declared they were written,

. . . with a design to Traduce and Trample upon his Majesty, and Government, to decry Monarchy, vent Treason, with Blasphemy and all manner of wickedness that can be exprest in Ink and Paper; And all this under pretence of Astrology.

⁴³ See above, pp. 33-35, 205-206, 172.

⁴⁴ See above, pp. 270, 272-273.

⁴⁵ Partridge, *A Short Answer*, p. 21.

Writing of Partridge's predictions of James' imminent death, Gadbury remarked, "Tis the *Libellers Malice*, not his Art, that makes him guilty of this palpable and most *Treasonous Falsehood*. So incensed was Gadbury at Partridge's abuse of astrology that he accused his rival of having 'prostituted *Astrology*'.⁴⁶

We have seen how, later still, George Parker made similar accusations against Partridge, this time in relation to his alleged involvement with the Rye House plotters. He alleged that Partridge's predictions of the death of the royal brothers and success of the ill-fated Duke of Monmouth owed less to his knowledge of the stars than to his rebellious principles. During Anne's reign he accused Partridge of making all his predictions under the 'Meridian of Whiggism'.⁴⁷

Over the period as a whole accusations of this nature, amidst the constant feuding of the astrologers, must have undermined astrology and, therefore, the impact of their political propaganda. It is striking, nonetheless, that the political authorities continued to take astrological propaganda very seriously. During the 1640s parliamentary leaders had exploited its value to the full, and Charles I made sure that the royalist astrological message was heard too. In the aftermath of the Great Fire of London, William Lilly found himself interrogated by a parliamentary committee under suspicion of involvement in starting it, either directly or indirectly, after it was brought to the authorities' attention that his work *Monarchy Or No Monarchy* had contained a prophetic series of woodcuts which appeared to predict the outbreak of the fire. In 1667 it was alleged that the Duke of Buckingham had engaged John Heydon to calculate Charles II's nativity. A decade later George Wharton was created a baronet, partly in gratitude for earlier political services rendered. During the Popish Plot furore

⁴⁶ Gadbury, *A Reply*, sig. Av, pp. 31, 52.

⁴⁷ See above, pp. 214, 268.

Gadbury found his life in danger for allegedly dabbling in treason, and Partridge fled abroad to avoid a similar fate in 1685. The following year, in the wake of Monmouth's failed rebellion, the 'Astrologer and Physician', Mark Warman, was found guilty of predicting that the duke would replace James on the throne. In Ireland John Whalley was pilloried by the authorities for predicting that they planned to disarm Irish Protestants and that William's invasion would be successful. James II imposed tighter controls on the remaining almanac-makers. Those who wished to praise him and his Government were, of course, allowed to do so. James also gave his blessing to the publication of the 'Catholic almanacs' which formed part of a wider missionary effort. In the wake of the Glorious Revolution Gadbury, once again, found himself accused of plotting against his monarch.⁴⁸ By the end of the century it might have been fashionable for wits to poke fun at astrology, but political astrology was clearly still a potent force among all levels of society. Partridge's wealth at the time of his death in 1715 reflects the success a political astrologer could still achieve at the end of the Stuart age.

The year 1715 marked something of a watershed for astrology and the almanac. The astrological world had lost many of its leading exponents, including Henry Coley, John Gadbury, John Tanner, Francis Moore and, of course, John Partridge. These men were among the last of the great astrological polemicists and some of the most colourful actors ever to have taken the astrological stage. Their political and religious beliefs (real and suspected), and the quarrels and intrigues they engendered, gave astrology a vibrancy which ensured high sales and made them household names. Some were cast as heroes, others as villains, but all played key roles in the interplay between

⁴⁸ See Curry, *Prophecy*, p. 52; Thomas, *Religion*, p. 408; Capp, *Astrology*, p. 337; R. Clifton, *The Last Popular Rebellion* (1984), p. 235. See also above, pp. 146-147, 85-90, 95-108, 90-94, 164-165, 172.

politics and astrology. Once they left the stage political agitation and speculation all but disappeared from the almanacs, and the world of astrology lost much of its vitality.

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