

'Wherefore we must be subject, not because of wrath only, but also for conscience sake': Political thinking between Restoration and Hanoverian Succession, 1660-1714.

The landscape of the history of political ideas between the Restoration in the 1660s and the successful accession of the Hanoverian monarchy in the decade after 1714 has traditionally been dominated by the powerful and canonical figures of Thomas Hobbes (d. 1679), John Locke (d. 1704) and (perhaps) Sir Robert Filmer. Commonly regarded as an extended preface to the stable culture of the eighteenth century constitution when the themes of 'liberty' and 'property' were ascendant over those of hierarchy and order, there has been very little attempt to contextualise and examine the dense fabric of what should be called 'political theology', rather than simply political thought, in the period. One of the central points that this chapter will attempt to reinforce is the persisting power of religious, theological and (perhaps most importantly) ecclesiological arguments. Still at the core of conceptions of the nature and authority of political institutions and principle was the prescriptions revealed to man by God in the form of Holy Scripture. The fundamental injunction remained that of *Romans* 13: obey the powers that be. As well as reinforcing the central idea of subordination to established regal authority, and the essential divinity of that authority, the harmonious relationship between church and state - between bishop and king - was a foundational tenet of political theory. Consequently any breach of social or political order or threat to the institutions that defined theological orthodoxy was perceived as seditious.

'Obey the powers that be': defending orthodoxy and order in the Restoration

As a number of historians have underscored, the fundamental understanding of society and politics was hierarchical and divine. This could most effectively be described as a politics of subordination: it applied equally well in a civil and religious context. Priests, especially those of the recently (providentially) restored Church of England, preached true politics. As Robert Nelson put it succinctly in his popular handbook of the festivals and fasts of the Anglican religion 'the good of the state is hereby more secured, in those instructions men receive from the Ministers of God, in the necessary Duties of Obedience, Justice and Fidelity' (Nelson 1795 p.483). Or as the *Book of Common Prayer*, re-established in 1662, enjoined that every child must learn 'to honour and obey the King, and all that are put in authority under him'. The good Christian must submit to all 'governors, teachers, spiritual pastors and masters' (Waterman 1996 p.205). Just as the ecclesiastical polity was the product of Christ's incarnation, so was the civil polity: the significance of the dictum 'no bishop, no king' cannot be too heavily underscored. Priests, then, not only sanctified religion, but politics too. Hierarchy, order and subordinate was the dominant form of political ideology, arguably, up until the 1800s. The

dictum ‘no bishop, no king’ carried a high level of political theorising beneath the apparent clarity of its assertions.

As this chapter will argue, it is possible to recover the dominant ideology from a variety of, sometime ephemeral, sources other than the great set pieces of political thought which have formed the canon of theoretical writings commonly studied today. The many sermons, pamphlets, and broad-sheets, written by the unknown and unstudied defenders of orthodoxy and order provide ample evidence that the core theme of Restoration and late Stuart political thought – of the divinity of monarchical government and the implied obligation of subordination – was ubiquitous. The tasks of political writers after the restoration of the key institutions of order (Bishop and King) in 1660 were to try to annihilate any political legitimacy derived from texts produced during the commonwealth experiment. The virulence of this pamphlet war can be seen most effectively in the attempts at censoring what were identified as ‘dangerous books’.

Roger L'Estrange, licenser to the restored Stationers company defined the moment with the publication of his *Considerations and Proposals in order to the regulation of the Press* (1663) which identified the most subversive of the ‘treasonous and seditious pamphlets’. L'Estrange’s argument was simple, by extracting seditious passages from contemporary tracts he intended to establish the necessity of regulation. The spirit of malice, hypocrisy and error conjured up in the ‘late rebellion’ still reigned. Over a hundred titles had been published (he estimated some 30,000 copies) at least a third of these were so-called farewell sermons delivered by ejected ministers which viciously charged both Church and King with ‘an inclination to popery’. When plotting was still rife and the government was fragile, such texts, directed at the ‘common people’, were regarded as virtual calls to arms ‘to put swords in their Hands, and to engage them in a direct rebellion’.

L'Estrange identified a set of subversive ideas - the obligation of the covenant, the sovereignty of the people, the continuance of the Long Parliament - that derived from the political discourses of the 1640s and 1650s. As he put it bluntly, ‘the books to be suppress are as follows’,

First, all printed papers pressing the murther of the late King. Secondly, all printed justifications of that execrable act. Thirdly, all treatises denying his majesties title to the crown of England. Fourthly, all libels against the person of his sacred Majesty, his blessed Father, or the Royal Family. Fifthly, all discourses manifestly tending to stir up the people against the established government. Sixthly, all positions terminating in this treasonable conclusion, that, His Majesty may be arraign'd, judg'd and executed, by his people'.

The precision of the list indicates the persisting fear of republican political arguments. Acknowledging that many of the texts he condemned dated back to the early 1640s (and before) L'Estrange upheld their persisting pernicious nature. The ideological battle being fought in the 1640s was alive and well in the period after the 1660s. Defending the martyred Charles was an essential project for the reconstruction of the authority of the monarchy. To say that the political thinkers and writers of the Restoration were living in the past would not be to accuse them of nostalgia, but of carrying out their intellectual debates on the battlefields of political memory. L'Estrange listed the deviant titles along with their printers and useful extracts, sampling their seditious works like the Army's *Remonstrance* (1648), and the periodic *Mercurius Politicus*, were named alongside a clutch of libels and treasons. Longer works like Richard Baxter's *Holy Commonwealth* (1659), were condemned with the radical Huguenot resistance text of the sixteenth century, (but translated into English in the 1640s) *Vindicae contra tyrannos*, and Milton's *Tenure of Kings and Magistrates* (1649). The message was clear political sedition was driven by religious dissent. A theme that was re-iterated throughout the period.

The conservative response to the continuing perceived threat of disorder in church and state was to re-assert the divinity of the status quo. It can be summarised in the title page of a short pamphlet published in the context of the crisis of political authority in 1680 - *God and the King: or Monarchy proved from Holy Writ, to be the onley legitimate species of Politick Government, and the only POLITY constituted and appointed by God*. The author (and compiler) Robert Constable MA dedicated his text to his reverend father who had provided for his education: designed as a 'brief Collection of the Divine Right of Monarchy' the work reviled the 'phantasied principle of supereminencing the peoples welfare above the kings honour'. The idea that Kings were created by 'popular election' was both 'groundless and unreasonable'. Just as Kings were sacred and natural rulers, so was Constable's deference to his father: hierarchy and paternalism converged to reinforce principles of natural deference and obedience. As sons obeyed their fathers, so subjects owed obligation to monarchs. In his short pamphlet of some forty pages Constable outlined the central themes of the *de jure divino* account of political government. Traced back to first principle, as established by God at the creation, 'government' by definition implied order and subjection. The notion of a natural chain of hierarchy and subordination manifest in all creation was 'most manifest and particular in the species of rational creatures': Adam was created not only with a rule and dominion over all other creatures in the world 'but likewise with a monarchical supremacy'. This paternal authority was also regal. Constable contemptuously dismissed any objections which might be drawn from Old Testament history, such as that described in *Samuel* which suggested that the people of Israel might have rejected (with divine approval) the monarchy of Saul. Monarchy was continuous

from Adam to Christ, although he did not that at certain times to punish the sins and ingratitude of the people God visited ‘anarchy’ upon Israel. The sacred history of the Old Testament told of usurping traitors – Abimelech, Absalom, Baasha, Zimri, Omri (and more recent history produced the example of Cromwell) – men who were thieves and robbers who held the title of king not by right and justice, but by conspiracy and deceit.

Constable was concerned to deny the suggestion (again derived from a close reading of biblical history) that the people had some necessary role in anointing Kings: the examples of Saul, David and Solomon were the most obvious cases, but those of Jeroboam, Uzziah and Jehoahas had credit too. To deduce such damnable and rebellious consequences and corollaries from sacred history was one of the causes (in Constable’s view) of the recent and contemporary crisis of political authority. But men did draw such inferences: first, that although the King was ‘minor universalis’ (ie more powerful than any one individual) he was ‘minor universalis’ (ie subordinate to the collective body of the people); and second, that the people only created their obligation ‘by virtue of a stipulation or covenant between himself and the people’. A breach in the trust or terms of this covenant meant that the nation ‘ad salutem populi’ could provide for their own welfare and safety ‘either by resistance, deposition, dethronement, or any such means as themselves shall judge’. Constable refuted such opinions by a ‘correct’ reading of scripture, an interpretation that emphasised that all acts were done by God’s approval and providence. When these acts of seemingly popular independence conflicted with divine providence the nations were visited by ‘some heavy and sudden judgements’. Such judgements were not confined to the distant past but also were manifest in the ‘horrible sins of rebellion and sacrilege’ perpetrated against Charles I. Sin was still sin even if enacted by the whole people rather than a singular malefactor. The evidence of the histories of Athens, Lacedemonia and Rome indicated that ‘democratical’ governments degenerated into ‘intestine wars and tragical conflicts’ which were only resolved by the re-introduction of monarchy. Birthright and hereditary succession were the sacred antidotes to such specious assertions of covenants and popular sovereignty. Far from being created for the original purpose of the people’s welfare, Kings were charged with a priority of establishing God’s glory and then their own honour. Dealing with the counter assertion that since the ‘kings honour is subsequent to Gods Glory ... that when the Kings commands are contrary to Gods, we may resist’, Constable insisted that ‘we may resist his commands, but not his power’. Kings by definition could simply not do wicked things to their subjects: to resist any acts of a monarch was to resist God ‘who cannot be unjust’. Property too, as the evidence of the corn of Egypt being tithed by the Pharaoh established, was in the entire control of the King.

Composed in a time of political crisis when memories of the chaos and disorder of the civil wars and catastrophe of the Parliamentary execution of Charles I was deliberately invoked and exploited by Royalist propagandists, Constable's work was a commonplace and unremarkable, if profoundly robust, defence of *de jure divino* accounts of the powerful political authority of the institution of monarchy. The points to highlight about the nature of the arguments are to be found in theological dimensions and style of these arguments. Although a lay author, Constable's political thought, like the overwhelming majority of his contemporaries was driven by the sacred texts of the Old and New Testaments. Grafted onto the fundamentals of a divinely appointed Kings were more conventional arguments about the absolute nature of legal sovereignty, or the historical rights of conquest, but in essence the political injunctions were straightforward – the King was divine, subjects were bound by conscience to obey.

Priests preaching politics

One of the themes that underlay the political thinking of, essentially ephemeral, works like Constable's was the vilification of religious dissent. Any who claimed rights of conscience against established authority were agents of rebellion and impiety who, under the cloak of religion, engineered political sedition. This bracketing of political and religious deviance was enshrined in the early legislation of the 1660s (known collectively as the Clarendon Code) it was also a staple of the works of a series of clerical authors, who as John Locke put it, beat the 'drum ecclesiastic' vigorously. Peter Heylin (1600-1662) stentorian defender of episcopal authority, Royal Chaplain, and hagiographer of Archbishop Laud was fierce assailant of ungodly presbyterianism in 1640s and 1650s. In a series of works from as early as the 1640s like *The Rebels Catechism* (1643), *The stumbling block of disobedience* (1657) and the powerful and reprinted *Aerius Redivivus* (1670, 1672, 1681) Heylin reviled the disobedient subterfuge of the 'presbyterian' interest. His arguments were simple but powerful. Tracing the origins of political theory of resistance to the theology of Jean Calvin, Heylin intended to taint all Protestant dissenters and non-conformists with the sin of blasphemous insubordination. Especially in *Aerius redivivus*, Heylin delivered a powerful and detailed analysis of resistance theory establishing how Calvinist theology exploited a range of classical and pagan sources to construct a semi-republican discourse. The Ephors of Sparta, the Tribunes of Rome and the Demarchi of Athens were neither proper nor legitimate models for the conduct of Godly politics. In these series of works, which had a powerful posthumous afterlife, Heylin laid the conceptual foundations for what could be termed the political theology of Anglican Royalism. The point to make about this form of political argument is that it conjured powerful authority because it was demanded a primarily religious duty: the background of the awful memories of

King-killing and social disorder in the 1640s and 1650s, reinforced in a very practical way the dangers and consequences of disobedience.

The fact that powerful churchmen like Heylin saw an intimacy between the rights and powers of the Church and State, also riveted this connection, in a very practical way. The pulpit became an compelling instrument for the broadcast of these ideas. The parish priest was one of the most effective political authorities in late Stuart culture. As will be discussed below, the institutions of set-piece sermons on key days in the political calendar – January 30th (commemorating the execution of Charles I being the most sensitive), May 29th (Restoration Day) or November 5th (Gunpowder Plot) – were one of the most effective forms of disseminating political ideas in the period, communicating with congregations and parish communities orally, but also in the circulation of printed versions of the more popular and valuable sermons, to a broader more ‘public’ audience. The institutions and authority of the Church was deeply bound up in the business of political argument: ecclesiology (or the relationship between Church and State, or between believer and subject) was as important as civil and secular arguments about sovereignty and representation.

Importantly it was also this Anglican royalist connection that contrived the publication of the works of Sir Robert Filmer at the height of the exclusion crisis in 1680. Although written much earlier in the century as a reflection of the deeply embedded patriarchal structures of social authority in early seventeenth century society, famously Filmer’s influential book *Patriarcha* was first published in 1680 by the agency of Anglican royalists inspired by the example of Peter Heylyn who had highly valued his friend’s work (and indeed an introductory epistle to Filmer’s work was written by Heylyn). The example of the powerful bibliographical afterlife of his collected works, published to reinforce Royal order against the incipient threat of a second rebellion, is testimony to the continuity of debates in political discourse throughout the second half of the seventeenth century.

Indeed the case of the continuing intellectual purchase of Filmer’s work underscores the fact that it would be possible to reconstruct a general map of the contours of political thinking by simply exploring the process of reprinting the important works of earlier decades. Radical Calvinist works of the sixteenth century by figures like Christopher Goodman, John Ponet, John Knox, George Buchanan who constructed powerful arguments defining the grounds of legitimate resistance to ungodly monarchs as simply injunctions of religious duty were republished in the 1640s, 1680s, and the 1690s. Certainly the evidence of library catalogues shows that there was a wide level of ownership of these classic works right into the eighteenth

century. Again the fact that these works were still perceived as having powerful persuasive potential in 1689 as much as 1649, underscores the continuity of political discourse, although not necessarily the continuity of audience or intention. For example the *Vindiciae contra tyrannos* loosely translated in 1648 was understood (if not conceived) as an argument contributing to the Regicide. By 1689 it was redeployed as a text defending a particular interpretation of the popular deposition of James II: same text, similar outcomes, but different conceptual arguments. It was not simply the radical works defending the *salus populi* or theories of popular consent that had extended shelf lives - the opposition similarly had a perennial claim on intellectual fashion. So the works of Laud, of Hooker and Heylyn, but most effectively and repeatedly (as we will see below) the *Eikon Basilike* (supposedly) of Charles I were reprinted for the edification of unborn generations.

The central matter of dispute was then about the nature of obligation. The starting point was that of *Romans 13*, ‘obey the powers that be’, it remained a key injunction of political theology throughout the period. With the Restoration of King and Bishop in 1660 came a full blown reassertion of *de jure divino* theories of authority in both Church and State. The overwhelming anxieties of the fear of social disorder and religious sectarianism conspired to compromise any attempted defence of what contemporaries called the ‘good old cause’. As Cromwell and the regicides were vilified in print and their bodies desecrated in person, one of the key commonplaces of Restoration political theory was the unshakeable conviction that any form of religious, political or social dissent was a fundamental crime against divine order.

After the Revolution

The problems of political thought, then, after the Restoration, were driven by the ideological consequences of the English Revolution: this was a revolution against the established patterns of legitimate government in both Church and State. Thus, in one sense the fall, trial and execution of Archbishop William Laud in 1645, was as significant as the ‘Killing of the King’ in 1649. The contemporary view that the chaos of the turbulent years of the 1640s and 1650s had been driven by the insubordination of Protestant dissenters and republican plotters was powerfully advanced by Thomas Hobbes in his controversial writings of the 1650s and 1670s – *Leviathan* (1651) and *Behemoth* (1679) – works which cast a long pall over the first two decades after 1660. In the first work Hobbes, in attempting to provide a material diagnosis of disorder, and the appropriate remedies, had indicted those civil thinkers who had corrupted the youth with readings from the ancient republican authors. This insight was compounded in the second account where the role of the self-interested Presbyterians had combined with civil

disobedience to provide an ideology corrosive of all order and security. Hobbes' remedial advice, prompted by a combination of his bleak view of human psychology, his reduction of the business of government to that of restraining the antisocial aspirations of most individuals, and his denial of the continuing operation of grace in history, was unpalatable to most contemporary Protestants. For Hobbes, authority was legitimate if it worked – liberty might very reasonably be exchanged for a just measure of protection: in order to work, by necessity, it needed to draw in all sources of power and sovereignty. While his arguments could be exploited by some Royalists, keen to refurbish the absolute power of the monarchy, the concomitant insistence that civil sovereignty in all (or indeed any) of its forms also established a superior position over the definition of not only the institutions of the Church, but also over the very definition of what was 'true' religion, made his arguments incompatible with the constitution of Anglican royalism.

The phrase 'Godly rule' was then invoked as powerfully by the voice of the Anglican and Royalist establishment, as by the radical and heterodox. It is not an understatement to suggest that the *de jure divino* account of the 'power of kings' was reinvented in the 1660s against the persisting claims of those interests who still beat the drum of the 'Good old cause'. It is sensible to trace this invention back to 1649 and the execution of Charles I. Powerful images of this act of blasphemous desecration were broadcast around the kingdom: the most instrumental device for the projection of the sacral majesty of the Stuart monarchy was the *Eikon basilike* (1649), a work which exercised tremendous affective power. Indeed the centrality of this book to the formation of a powerful cultural belief in the legitimacy of monarchical rule has been little underscored in studies of the political ideas of the later seventeenth century. The *Eikon Basilike* was a text with persistent and vibrant cultural power (Madan, 1949). Published immediately after the regicide, the work achieved some sixty editions in England, Ireland and abroad in 1649 alone. It was reprinted throughout the remaining part of the seventeenth century, especially at moments when the belief in the divine legitimacy of monarchy required emphasis in the 1660s, 1670s, 1680s and 1690s.

Extracts, verse renderings, imitations and pirated editions supplemented the standard edition. Importantly the book was prefaced by a frontispiece representing the King as an image of Christ, kneeling before an altar, upon which a crown of thorns and the open Bible lay: the Royal brow received divinity from the heavens. This frontispiece, often published separately and distributed as an icon of Royal divinity, epitomised the arguments of the text to an audience perhaps unfamiliar with (or unable to read) the printed text (Potter, 1989 p.161). The visual and imaginative power embedded itself in the political creation of the cult of the Royal martyr: the

key image that was constructed was the sacred analogy between Charles' and Christ's passion. The parallel between *Christos* and *Carolus* was re-inscribed time and time again in the defences of *Eikon Basilike* written by Royalists after 1649 (Zwicker, 1993, 37-59). Reworking the images of the Davidic monarchy from Psalms, with the typologies of Josiah, Saul and Christ, the *Eikon Basilike* instantiated the scriptural authorisation of monarchy. After the Restoration, these powerful literary and iconographic images also became embedded as a social practice when the revised Book of Common Prayer incorporated commemoration of Charles' martyrdom as an annual event on January 30th. The second lesson of the Common Prayer for January 30 took Matthew 27, the trial and crucifixion of Christ as its scriptural theme.

There is evidence to suggest that these days of fasting and humiliation were strictly observed by parts of the community (Stewart, 1969). Certainly the sermonising on January 30, increasingly as the century progressed became an opportunity for recapitulation of the themes of *Eikon Basilike* and Anglican Royalism in general. As the only systematic study of the commemorative sermons has argued, after 1670 the January sermon was translated into an instrument of political education, adopting a strident imperative idiom in defence of divine right theories of government (Randell, 1947). The point to be emphasised here is that *Eikon Basilike* was more than simply a book: it was, in the phrase that many of the modern literary commentators use, a 'holy book of Royalist politics' (Zwicker, 1993:37). As we will see below, in the 1690s, attacking the authority of *Eikon Basilike*, became a key part of the republican attempt to compromise monarchical discourses.

The notion of a sacral monarchy was further reinforced by a series of cultural practices known as the Royal Touch. Both Charles II and his brother James II reinvigorated the ceremony of 'touching'; the latter refurbishing the ritual with additional medieval material in the mid to late 1680s. Although it is difficult to derive any subtle political theory from the ceremony beyond the obvious claims of miraculous abilities to cure a minor skin ailment it is quite clear that the ubiquity of the ceremony, tying as it did the localities with the King, projected powerful representations of the divinity of monarchy right into the core of Restoration society: here was a political theory that produced real effects. This hinterland of political theology was the staple material of the many January 30th sermons throughout the period.

Writing against tyranny and persecution

Not all wrote in defence of the restored order of Kings and priests. Despite the accusations of people like Heylin and Constable these oppositional writers were not necessarily republicans. Those who opposed such *de jure divino* arguments, rather than developing anti-monarchical

positions, defended their interests by promoting the rights of ‘tender’ religious conscience. The fact that Charles II, in searching for a platform for social stability, attempted repeatedly (at least up until the early-1670s) to establish some sort of compromise with dissenting communities, meant that the focus of critical hostilities tended to be ecclesiological matters rather than the more obviously constitutional issues of the power of Kings or the privileges of parliament. Although, of course, to contemporaries, the issues were most likely indistinguishable, because defining the relationship between political authority and private conscience by necessity held implications for the prerogatives of Church and State. Once again these discourses were articulated by a myriad of minor figures - ejected clergymen, Godly laymen, and radical Quaker prophets. To delve into the details of the hundreds of pamphlets produced by these men would be to become submerged in the intricacies of a bewildering range of theological positions upon the strategies the good conscience could adopt in accommodating the dual demands of God and civil society. The point to make is that the impact of ‘Anglican Royalism’ was manifest in the form of penal statutes which established what has been aptly termed a ‘persecuting society’ (Goldie, 1993). It was against this persecution that dissenters tried to develop an oppositional ideology. By necessity the form of these arguments were driven by theological anxieties, rather than simply political commitments. Anglican figures, inebriated with absolute conviction that they preserved the one and only line of communication with Christ’s true pattern of religious worship, regarded the persecution of dissidents as acts of pious Christian love (citing the impeccable authority of St Augustine). On the other hand, those who suffered (sometimes willingly) saw this persecution as confirmation of the ungodly nature of the established ecclesiastical institutions. The differing dissenting communities adopted different attitudes to the correct form of engagement with such illegitimate government. While some took refuge in the unknown hand of God’s providence and counselled caution and a ‘waiting upon prophecy’, others called for an immediate intervention against the wiles of the Popish beast. Just as the fear of dissident subversion underpinned Anglican political arguments, so the ‘fear of popery’ and the anti-Christ, shaped and motivated those writers attempting to legitimate their conduct and defend their communities.

It was from these diverse religious contexts that the so-called Country opposition, closely associated with the writings in the 1670s of Andrew Marvell, The First Earl of Shaftesbury and John Locke, developed a dual attack upon (in the words of one of the famous pamphlets by Andrew Marvell) the ‘growth of popery and arbitrary government that eventually erupted into a explosion of political pamphleteering and polemic during the Exclusion crisis of 1678-81. Much ink has been spilt on assessing the nature of this constitutional crisis. It still remains an issue of considerable debate whether the successive parliamentary elections, the politicisation of the

electorate and the popular community beyond, and the Royalist *revanche* after the Oxford Parliament were really a potential return to the days of the 1640s. However the ideological conflict was fought out in traditional terms: Whigs advanced a defence of the rights and liberties of parliament and Protestant conscience, Tories defended the *de jure* claims of the King and the established Church. While the non-conformist cried up the claims of religious conscience, the Anglican episcopacy defended Godly order. Just as in the 1640s the political language was drenched in the vocabulary of providence and conspiracy.

As many historians have established the political crisis did produce radical texts, but perhaps very few new radical arguments. The canonical works of John Locke, Algernon Sidney, as well as the deaths of men like the Protestant apprentice Stephen College and Lord Russell created a profound tradition of political radicalism which certainly influenced later thinkers, even if it remained submerged to contemporaries. What is clear is that radical discourses failed in the early 1680s and were driven either underground or abroad. The anxiety about social chaos and the strength of political memories recalling the days of the 1640s laid the foundation for a powerful and effective Tory reaction after 1682-3. The strength and authority of this conservative reaction can most effectively be seen in the (almost) untroubled accession of the openly Roman Catholic James II in 1685. The evidence of his coronation and the accompanying iconography of the medal struck in celebration indicates that *de jure divino* assumptions were at the heart of his ambitions. Simply portraying a hand thrust from the heavens holding an imperial Diadem (the crown of England) the legend around the coin read ‘A. Militari. AD REGIAM’ – from a military crown to an imperial one. As the sermon by Francis Turner reinforced, the king was not elected by the people but appointed by the Lord: he was a ‘living sacred image’ a reproduction of his martyred father. As one commentator has succinctly pointed out, the King was represented only by laurels on a cushion: an austere and severe representation ‘evoking not the happy workings of providence, but the abstract principle of authority and right’ (Edie, 1990).

Turning from the well known works of men like Locke and Sidney it is possible to explore the theme of those political writers who defended ‘English Liberties’ in a more practical manner. The career of Henry Care (1646-1688) provides a useful case-study. He earned his radical reputation by the pungency of his pamphleteering campaign against the succession of the Roman Catholic, James Duke of York between 1679 and 1683, but when James came to the throne in 1685, Care was to be at the forefront of the campaign to defend the King’s policy of establishing a liberty of conscience. Care’s radical credentials were excellent: a member of the semi-republican Green Ribbon Club, his weekly *Pacquet of Advice* was prohibited temporarily

by the state for its virulence against 'popery' and for 'writing too sharply against the government' in 1680.. By 1687 Care was writing with equal vigour in defence of James II's policy of indulgence. His weekly newsletter *Public Occurrences Truly Stated*, advertised the benign qualities of the Jacobean regime, defending axioms such as 'no man (keeping within the bounds of the law morall) ought to suffer in his civil rights for his opinions in matters of religion' (Care 1688).

The theme that links these two apparently incompatible positions was Care's commitment to arguments that upheld the toleration of dissident religions. This should serve to remind us that politics and religion were implicitly connected. The mistaken accusation of time-serving hypocrisy originates in a misunderstanding of the relationship between authority and conscience in his polemic. Like many radicals of his time Care's primary allegiance was to the liberty of religious belief: his political thought was driven by this commitment. Thus his earlier opposition to the succession of James, Duke of York was motivated by the belief that as king he would establish a persecuting regime. Care's indictment of 'popish' authority was not because it was theologically insupportable (although he undoubtedly thought Roman Catholic theology was corrupt and mistaken), but because it imposed upon tender conscience.

Again like many other contemporaries Care's political hostility towards 'popery' was directed, not just at the Roman Catholic Church, but also at the intolerance of the Church of England. The prelacy and persecution conducted by the Church of England, under the rubrics of the Clarendon Code, was as 'popish' as Roman Catholicism. Any who claimed the legitimacy of establishing 'an unlawful hierarchy over the consciences of their brethren' were corrupt (Care, 1682). Care believed that liberty of conscience was right because as he wrote, 'all mortals are full of mistakes, especially in the business of religion, and since there is no such thing as infallibility on earth, why all this bitterness and persecution?' (Care 1682a). Since no authority, political or religious, could be confident that it understood the form of true religion, thus each conscience must have an equal ability to find its own beliefs. To punish conscience for sincere belief was unjust, irrational and ungodly. The primacy of this ethical defence of liberty of conscience meant Care was willing to defend any political authority that set out to achieve toleration. This is an important point to help us acknowledge that a commitment to political ideals and values could very rarely escape a prior allegiance to religious principles.

Care's contribution was not merely one that proposed a theoretical defence of the rights of conscience: importantly he also represents a more practical response to the problem of persecution by law. It was ultimately this pragmatic advice that was to be more effectual than

many speculations about the nature of the constitution or the powers of kings. Drawing from his ethical condemnation of intolerance Care had argued from the early 1680s that the penal statutes were unjust, when James II issued his Declarations of Indulgence in 1687 (and again in 1688) suspending the penalties and establishing a *de facto* toleration Care defended the morality and indeed legality of the sovereign's actions. Put simply, he argued that the rights of sovereignty in ecclesiastical affairs legitimated the suspensions. In effect he turned the Royal Supremacy against the advocates of persecution. Once again authority was used to reinforce rather than destroy rights of conscience. Similarly Care defended the exercise of regal jurisdiction in the creation of legal commissions to investigate the actions of the clerical persecutors (Goldie 1993).

This sort of political thinking was practical, contrived to resolve how could (or should) dissidents behave when confronted with persecutors. Attention has been paid in historical writings to the strategies that radical sectarians like the Quakers made, but the example of Care's writings in the 1680s suggests that such forms of engagements with the processes and procedures of the law were far more mainstream. In a number of pamphlets and advice books Care defended *English Liberties* (the title of one of his more successful, and repeatedly reprinted, works first published in 1680). Little scholarly attention has been paid to these texts, although the first, *English Liberties*, was perennially popular and reprinted later in the seventeenth and eighteenth century in both England and America. It might be possible to argue that it was a more influential text in the first instance than the much more famous political writings of Locke. These works were handbooks of advice for the preservation of civil and religious liberties. Written for the 'reader's information', the books were intended to give practical advice on how dissidents might react to the legal charges and judicial procedures that they suffered. *English Liberties* was composed to defend the 'lives, liberties and estates' of the nation. Much of the first half of the book involved reprinting 'magna charta, the petition of right, the *habeas corpus* act; and divers other most useful statutes'. Central to his argument was the claim the law, and correct judicial procedure, were the main preservatives of liberty. Care went into detail about the functioning of important processes such as *habeas corpus*. In the second part of the text he presented similar legal advice on how to construct legal defences against the many ecclesiastical laws that compromised conscience.

Once again political thinking was conducted in an ecclesiological idiom. In many other works Care developed a strategy for how the conscientious dissident might engage and oppose the threat of legal persecution by gaining knowledge about the function of the law. He was not alone, especially in targeting the ecclesiastical courts. There is evidence that the ecclesiastical courts had been re-invigorated by the Anglican interests as an effective way of punishing dissidents. Imprisonment under the various canon law writs was not subject to the usual counter pleas of *habeas corpus*: the imprisoned could be incarcerated until they submitted to the ecclesiastical authorities. The point to be made here is that this sort of political thinking and writing had profoundly practical objectives.

After the Glorious Revolution

Issues of the nature of monarchy, the powers of Parliament, and the relationship between Church and state (especially the connections between conscience and citizenship) remained unresolved after the second crisis of Stuart government in the late 1680s which saw James II toppled by an Anglican coup. Contrary to the commonplace historical narrative, the Glorious Revolution of 1688-89 and the consequent constitutional legislation did not see the creation of the modern democratic state. Although historians for many decades have proudly invoked the name and reputation of John Locke as apologist and theorist of a pluralist, tolerant and political theory, more recently some agreement has been contrived to underscore the marginality of his contribution. John Locke's two treatises on government, published in 1690, were composed for the much more radical circumstances of guerrilla war against the popery and arbitrary government of Charles II. As a consequence of Locke's radical defence of individual rights of resistance, his text was deeply unsuitable for any respectable defence of the Revolution of 1689. While his essays on human understanding and the, initially anonymous letters on toleration written in the 1690s, projected his reputation as a controversial and potential heretical writer, his political writings remained beyond the pale. A tradition of radical theorising, that did draw from Lockean sources, as well as republican and other radical Whig writings of the Exclusion period, was circulated in the populist form of a series of pamphlets with the names *Vox populi*, *vox dei* and *Political aphorisms* throughout the 1690s and 1700s. The explicit defence of theories of popular resistance as 'true maxims of government' meant that in a political environment driven by anxieties about social disorder as much as tyrannical magistrates, these works were of marginal influence.

Political theory still, between 1689 and 1714 (and far beyond) was dominated by a God-centred view of the duties of subjects, the powers of Kings and the rights of the Christian Church. The

traditional assertion that the triumph of the Williamite monarchy (and the associated dominance of the Whiggish cause and interests) led to a civil and secular theory of political society and government, rather than a theological and divine understanding, is both an inaccurate and over-confident assessment. The relationship between God and political authority and civil institutions was the enduring issue of political thinking.

Initially, thinking about the nature of political society, the limits of civil power, the relationship between subject and sovereign, and between conscience and authority, and ultimately between Church and State, was prompted by a drive to understand the meaning of the events of 1688-89: an interpretative battle that continued on deep into the intellectual traditions of the long eighteenth century. Dominated by the political memories of 1649, the initial ideological battle was fought out over the implications of the second fall of the Stuart monarchy. Far from being an obvious problem the constitutional meaning of the termination of James II's rule was profoundly obscure. Deposition, abdication, providential punishment, rebellion were all words tentatively associated with the historical facts that James was no longer King in 1689. Whether the rule of William and Mary was sanctioned by rights of conquest, parliamentary legitimacy, the providential hand of God, or convoluted hereditary principle were the subjects of sustained, vocal and increasingly violent controversy. Had James been deposed by the people of England as a tyrant for breach of the duties of Kingship. Had he merely deserted the Kingdom and been replaced by the next legitimate successor (on the authority of Parliament?). Was this deposition an indication of the contract between monarchy and people, or merely an act of an impious, seditious and irreligious minority?

After 1689, clergymen still defended the traditional principles of divine right, passive obedience, and the duties of loyalty and subordination with as much authority and power as those who advanced a more consensual or conventional defence of the co-ordinated powers of Kings, parliaments and people. The problems of political thought were still driven by issues of conscience: the immediate task in the summer of 1689 was to justify and resolve the need to take an oath of allegiance to the new regime. Failure to take the oath would result in suspension and deprivation from all civil and ecclesiastical office; but taking the oath would mean compromising oaths taken to James II. Resolving this moral problem drove political writers throughout the period. Allegiance to the legitimate actions of the revolution was still a matter of fierce contestation in 1710 when the failure of the Whig administration to combat the virulent polemic of the Highchurchman Henry Sachaverell in a show trial resulted in a massive electoral victory for the Tory party.

Rethinking monarchy

Although the Anglican interest might have been regarded as a lost cause after their role in abandoning James II, there was a powerful and co-ordinated attempt to refurbish the authority of monarchy. Commemoration of Charles I's martyrdom on January 30th became a focal point of increasingly royalist propaganda in the 1690s and 1700s. Set piece sermons before the monarchy or before the separate houses of parliament became the platforms for the assertion of loyalty, obedience and humiliation, but also moments when a defence of the 'revolution principles' of 1688-89 had to be insinuated into public discourse (Kenyon, 1977). While the mainstream of the established Church defended the rights of Protestant liberties and the legitimate Royal Supremacy, the Highchurch and the Non-Jurors were more vigorous in attempting to assert the continuing legitimacy of *de jure divino* government in Church and State, even if it meant *in extremis* defending the legitimacy of the exiled House of Stuart.

At the other political pole, the 'true whigs' and 'commonwealthsmen', from the early 1690s produced a variety of works calculated to keep the process of revolution going. The 'good old cause' was reinvented, almost single-handedly by the editorial labours of John Toland, a heterodox religious figure close to the circle of Shaftesbury, whose theological writings were burnt in Ireland and prosecuted in London. From the mid 1690s Toland was republishing works by republican authors like Edmund Ludlow, John Milton, Algernon Sidney and James Harrington. Carefully designed with editorial material that made the republican agenda engage with the dangers of a priestly tyranny manifest most obviously in the polemics of the highchurchmen, Toland adapted the language of the 1650s to the political circumstances of the 1690s. These adaptations were driven by the particular need to defend the legitimacy of a Protestant succession. Indeed Toland became the major apologist for the Hanoverian succession after 1701 – his *Anglia Libera* (1701) presented to the Electress Sophia alongside the *Act of Settlement*, as a defining statement of her power, reinforced the idea of a limited monarchy established to protect the liberties and consciences of all subjects.

The power of this extensive republication can be seen in the reaction to the edition of Milton's prose works and the accompanying *Life* (1698). For many Anglican contemporaries, Milton 'was the great Anti-monarchist' (Von Maltzahn 1995, p.241). As we have seen, these regicide works were burnt at the Restoration and again by decree in Oxford in 1683. His political reputation in the 1690s was unambiguously radical and identified in the public sphere with 1649 and the fall of monarchy. Republican writers such as Charles Blount (1654-1693) had liberally used Miltonic writings to attack the licensing act and defend a populist interpretation of the settlement of 1689. For example, the *Tenure of Kings and Magistrates* was adapted to the

exigencies of Williamite political discourse as *Pro Populo Adversos Tyrannos*, losing in the process most of the Biblical and ecclesiological language originally used by Milton. Perhaps the most politically aggressive republication was Milton's *Eikonoklastes* (1649) at Amsterdam in 1690: a book which anatomized the *Eikon Basilike* of the martyred Charles I. At a moment when Anglican royalists were suffering the ideological shock of having condoned (and perhaps even facilitated) yet another practical denial of the principles of divine right with the departure of James II, the republication of *Eikonoklastes* was provocative (Straka 1962). Unsurprisingly, it generated a prolonged and determinedly hostile response from Tory Anglican quarters concerned to preserve the affective power of *Eikon Basilike*. The commonwealth tradition persisted as a powerful set of textual resources through out the period.

Evidence of how republican languages reached the mainstream can be seen in the example of the radical Whig Churchman, William Stephens and his January 30th sermon of 1700. Typically such a sermon did not ordinarily turn to the language of regicide and resistance. On the set day however preaching before the House of Commons, Stephens, far from reinforcing the cult of martyrdom, told the Commons 'that the observation of the day was not intended out of any detestation of his murder, but to be a lesson to other Kings and rulers, how they ought to behave themselves towards their subjects, lest they should come to the same end' (Evelyn 1952 p.359). Omitting the prayer for the king and the royal family, Stephens attempted to invert the commonplace practice: 'God forbid that this day of solemn humiliation should be made use of to flatter princes with notions of arbitrary power'. 'Modern tyranny' was rejected in favour of a republican account of the popular and consensual origins of government. The audience was appalled and not only was the usual vote of thanks denied but a resolution passed insisting that the selection of future preachers would only include those of suitable seniority and learning in the Church. The invitation to print the sermon by authority of the Commons was also withheld.

As one contemporary, 'who took the said sermon in short-hand', put it, Stephens was an 'indelible Disgrace to the present age'. Publishing his reflections upon the sermon 'for the use of the Calves-head Club in order to their conversion' the gentleman condemned the return to republican principles. The 'seditious Hot-headed Crew of Republicans' were returning to the days of 1642. Stephens, 'chaplain in ordinary to the Calves-Head club', was notorious for preaching 'wholesale' republican principles to his parishioners. Rights of resistance, the 'liberty of the subject' and republican readings of Jethro's advice to Moses were not suitable themes either for the commemoration or for 'a true son of the Church of England' (Anon 1700 p.2, 4-5). For this man such 'republican scribblers' were 'numerous, insolent and formidable'. The texts of the 1640s and 1650s, like Milton's, were being promoted: 'are not that vile man's works now

reprinted? And for fear they should not do mischief enough that way, is not an abridgement of the most poisonous passages, put all together in the Account of his life?'. Having Milton republished was bad enough, but 'are not Ludlow's letters, and Harrington's Commonwealth of Oceana, in every hand?'. Reading groups, 'Calves-Head Clubs of commonwealth men, who nightly assemble to promote that interest', prepared the way for sedition. That Stephens intended such a reception, amongst 'his Party', for his sermon was suggested by the fact that the rights of publication were sold for the considerable sum of £25, before the sermon was preached, contrary to his claims that it was published without his knowledge (Worden 1978 p.44). Two editions were printed in 1700, with a third added in 1703, under the pretence that it was preached before the commons in that year.

Stephens' radical political commitments were notorious: a friend of 'commonwealthsmen' like Trenchard, Shaftesbury and Toland, as well as more controversial men like Anthony Collins, his hostility to tyranny was trenchant. It is one of the paradoxes of the political thinking of the period that such a convinced republican could also be a passionate and committed defender of the Hanoverian succession. Yet by the first Sunday after George I's landing in England in 1714, Stephens delivered a sermon to his long standing parish in Sutton under the title of 'A second delivery from Popery and Slavery'. Addressed to the 'people of England' Stephens blessed heaven for the safe arrival of his 'Majesty'. George I had 'brought light out of darkness, order out of confusion'. Halting the wicked designs of the 'sons of Belial' George had destroyed 'a barbarous, bloody civil, ceremonial war'. The true majesty of the Hanoverian King was contrasted with the 'base ignoble Phantom of Majesty' which would have established a 'treble tyranny over soul, body and property'. A special providence had delivered England from the 'spirit of slavery'. This 'most Glorious second deliverer' was 'our rightful and lawful King George, the preserver and defender of our faith'. By his 'happy accession to the throne of these Kingdoms', liberty, truth and peace was restored 'to this our Israel'. The almost overwhelming gratitude for the regal succession of George was tempered by the careful distinction between lawful and usurping princes, calculated to legitimate the Hanoverian case against that of the pretended claims of the Stuarts. Rightful princes were 'shepherds to their people' whose authority was cultivated by the 'free consent of those nations which they govern'. Such princes established a 'just liberty' which consisted in the 'preservation and improvement of our reason' and resulted in both prosperity and happiness. The sermon employing, in particular, Old Testament language from *Deuteronomy*, *Leviticus* and *Jeremiah*, celebrated liberty and freedom: 'how much God Almighty discourages a slavish spirit'. The 'law of liberty' established a tolerant model of government in Church and State, 'a moderation, which included condescension, Toleration, Candour, Ingenuity, and fair-dealing'. A prince that pursued such

objectives was both religious and just. Clearly, by 1714, the exigencies of political circumstance had encouraged Stephens to adjust the tone of his republican language of 1700 to accommodate and even recommend the ‘majesty’ of George I.

It would be wrong to suggest, in the face of the persisting power of this commonwealth ideology that, what we can call Tory political thought, was insubstantial. Focused upon the rights of the Christian Church as represented in the institutions of an apostolic episcopacy and the rights and powers of Convocation, figures like Francis Atterbury, George Hickes and Charles Leslie, engaged what they called the ‘false brethren’ in head-on debate. In a series of popular works – pamphlets and serial journals, as much as systematic writings – these Churchmen constructed a powerful ideology that centred upon the key principle of a descending theory of government. In face of the arguments upholding the liberties of the subjects and their estates, or the rights of tender consciences, men like Atterbury advanced the cry of the ‘church in danger’ as grounds for reinforcing the principles of orthodoxy, conformity and the patriarchalism of Filmer. The conviction amongst these men, that the traditional patterns of government were being subverted by a commonwealth conspiracy can be best explored in the controversial figure of yet another Churchman, Benjamin Hoadly, who repeatedly attracted the ire of the Tory press in the 1700s and 1710s. Although a turbulent figure on the radical margins of Whig political affiliations, he was a believing Christian, a conforming minister, and a moderate episcopalian.

Hoadly, as contemporaries complained, had a reputation as a fierce defender of 'revolution politicks' making a link between his defence of civil liberties, the attack upon a resurgent *de jure divino* conception of society, and true religion. In fighting against the non-juror political theology, Hoadly was engaging with brother priests: those clergymen who re-invigorated divine right accounts of monarchy and the Church, celebrating the Royal touch, defending the reputation of Charles I as a Royal Martyr in Restoration Day and January 30th sermons, were the butt of Hoadly's writings. Vilifying the Caroline divines who defended an absolutist political theology, Hoadly condemned the 'universal madness of Loyalty (falsely so called)' which caused the people to be 'accounted slaves rather than subjects'. In the 1700s he turned specifically to a consideration of the key scriptural text -Romans 13- attempting to recast the classic Pauline injunction 'to obey the powers that be' into a defence of the legitimacy of the revolution of 1689 by employing the Bucerian reading of the text commonly employed by Calvinist theorists of revolution. Just as tyrannical magistrates might be removed by popular sovereignty, so the example of Solomon's deposition of Abiathar, legitimated the civil deprivation of non-juring Bishops. Hoadly's political thought then, engaged directly not only

with issues of conscience (defining the limits of obligation), but also with directly ecclesiological matters. In return for his efforts, at different moments in the 1700s Hoadly was burnt in effigy at various places around the country alongside his books, by devout Anglicans.

That Hoadly was regarded as a problematic political figure, as well as a religious deviant is apparent from the representation of his intellectual sources in powerful and popular prints such as 'The Church in Danger' printed in the context of the Whig trial of the extremist high Church cleric Henry Sachaverell. Provoked in the immediate sense by his controversy with Ofspring Blackall, Bishop of Exeter, Hoadly is portrayed in the engraved print at his desk. On the writing desk before him he has in draft his reply to Blackhall's sermon which lies discarded at the edge of the table. Haunted by a violent hydra armed with an axe, the foreground shows the Devil making off with the vestments and staff, while trampling under foot an episcopal mitre, the Book of Common Prayer, and Church ceremonies (represented by an organ). Underscoring the political heritage determining his theological corruption, Hoadly is seated in front of a bookshelf lined with dangerous books: Gilbert Burnet's *Pastoral Letter*, Toland's *Christianity not Mysterious*, Tindal *The Rights of the Christian Church*, William Coward's *Second Thoughts*, the full canon of Republican political writings -Milton, Harrington, and Sidney-, as well as Hobbes' *Leviathan*, Bacon 'on Government', Sexby's *Killing no murder*, Locke 'of Government' and writings by Baxter. In a variant on the engraving 'Guess at my meaning' published in the same year, although the political library was trimmed of the works of Baxter, Coward, Bacon and Sexby, the mixture of low-church Christian theology (Tindal, Burnet and Toland) and what might be later terms enlightened 'revolution politicks' is profound. It seems then the central languages of political thought in the 1710s were driven by both a vocabulary and a conceptual tradition derived from the 1650s and afterwards.

Conclusion

To understand the nature of political thought between 1660 and 1714 is not ultimately to engage with the great canonical figures of Thomas Hobbes, Robert Filmer, John Locke, James Harrington, and Algernon Sidney. It can be best reconstructed by charting the cut and thrust of political and religious exchange amongst the minor figures, the priests, the pamphleteers, the editors and re-publishers of the canon of earlier texts. After the revolutions of 1649 and 1689, the overwhelming tenor of political thinking was still driven by theological imperative: preserving Godly order was a primary ambition. In contesting the legitimate nature of that Godly order – in defining the rights, powers and privileges of Church institutions as much as in matters of State power and authority – despite the conceptual innovations of Locke and others,

most political thinking remained within the carapace of a God centred world-view. The urgent and compelling issues were preservation of a Protestant succession, a legitimate Church settlement, and the liberty of tender conscience. The bugbears of ‘popery and arbitrary government’ that bedevilled earlier seventeenth century political thinking persisted into the later eighteenth century.

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