

Loyal or Rebellious? Protestant Associations in England 1584–1696

The current historiography of oaths of association in early modern England mainly concentrates on the two oaths which bookend the period discussed in this article, the 1584 association in defence of Elizabeth I and the 1696 association for William III. Generally, the verdict of historians on these two associations has been negative. Christopher Haigh, paraphrasing Sir John Neale, describes the Elizabethan association as a ‘political vigilante group, pledged to use lynch law to safeguard the throne’.¹ The association of loyalty to William III has come in for even harsher criticism, described by John Kenyon as a ‘bitter faction instrument’ imposed on the pretext of a flimsy assassination plot.² In both cases these associations have been seen as exceptional responses to moments of crisis. However, more recently Patrick Collinson, Ann Hughes and Mark Knights have all noted that oaths of association were promoted and imposed in the 1620s, 1640s and 1680s. These historians agree that these documents were not, first and foremost, designed to protect the person of the monarch but were instituted to secure the Protestant state. For Patrick Collinson, the 1584 association fits in with schemes for an interim republic to ensure that the crown passed to a Protestant successor in the event of Elizabeth’s death.³ Ann Hughes sees the Elizabethan association as providing the opponents of Charles I with an earlier, English equivalent of the Scottish National Covenant.⁴ Mark Knights has shown how proposals for an oath of association during the crisis over succession 1678–83 became linked to demands for the exclusion of James II from the throne.⁵

This article follows the work of Collinson, Hughes and Knights by unravelling the radical implications of oaths of association in this period. By dealing chronologically with the proposals for and implementation of these documents, it will be demonstrated that oaths of association were tendered with even more frequency than these historians have realised. It will also be shown that these were all tests imposed at times of particular Protestant crisis, that they were associations which accepted the possibility of the death of the

reigning monarch and that they usually attempted to deal with this eventuality by making provision for a temporary republican government. This article will also explore the ways in which, especially in the 1640s, the notion of an oath of association became intertwined with the idea of a national covenant.⁶ As will be made clear, this carries with it important implications for political allegiance, defining loyalty confessionally and making obedience to the monarch conditional on his or her readiness to defend the faith. Under Elizabeth, the consequences of this redefinition of allegiance were muted. Under a more religiously suspect ruler like Charles I, or an outright papist like James II, the king's apparent inability or unwillingness to defend the faith became not only a grounds for resisting him, but also for deposing him. There were of course differences between these various oaths of association and the ends to which they were put. The point of this article is not to suggest that there was a 'high road' to the Civil War which began in 1642, but to argue that there were intellectual legacies from the end of the Elizabethan era which played an important part in English resistance movements of the 1640s and 1680s.

I

The association of 1584 was a response to genuine anxiety about the security of the Queen's person. William of Orange, having survived one Catholic assassination attempt, had been murdered that year and an English conspiracy, the Throckmorton plot, had recently been uncovered. Parliament was not in session and there was a clear danger of a political vacuum should Elizabeth be killed.⁷ To deal with this situation, in October Walsingham and Burghley set about drawing up an 'Instrument of Association', it seems without the Queen's knowledge. In its final form the association bound those taking it to give their 'lyves, landes and goodes in her defence' and promise that they would 'revenge, all maner of persons of what estate soever they shalbe and their abettors, that shall attempte by any acte counsell or consent to any thinge that shall tende to the harme of her Maties royall person'. They would pursue such persons and 'their comforters, ayders and abettors' to the 'uttermost extermination of them'. Should any pretender (namely Mary, Queen of Scots), in the event of the Queen's untimely death, advance a claim to the throne, they promised to view that person as 'unworthy of all government in any Christian realme of cyvill societie'.⁸ The association was quickly made public and dispersed throughout England and Wales. Leading nobles and magnates gathered subscriptions which were then returned to the Privy Council.⁹

Patrick Collinson has described the Instrument of Association as in form 'a covenant'. The text of the association revealed the way in which it redefined allegiance in confessional terms. God, the association said, had instituted

kings, queens and princes, to preserve their subjects 'in profession and observation of the true Christian religion, according to his holy worde and commandementes'. So, 'in like sorte' subjects should love, fear and obey their sovereigns. Here, the association hinted at an implicit relationship between the sovereign's defence of the faith and the subject's duty of obedience. Although, unlike later associations, the bond was mainly administered by the gentry and nobility, not via county machinery, there were no distinctions of rank as to the role of those within the association.¹⁰ The tendering of the association was also accompanied with much solemnity. The gentlemen of Lancashire came to Wigan to see the Earl of Derby take the oath, bare-headed and on his knees before the bishop of Chester.¹¹ Burghley reported that preachers were also active in encouraging the public to take the association, noting that a 'great multitude of people both of gentlemen and merchants and vulgar people, especially in good towns, where they be taught by discreet preachers, very zealous towards God' were 'thereby earnestly bent to all services for her Majesties safety'.¹² Some expressed the hope that the association would be employed as a Shibboleth, not only to discover Catholics, but also to distinguish the zealous Protestants from the lukewarm. Writing to Lord Cobham in December 1584, Sir Thomas Scott and Sir James Hales asked for the names of subscribers to aid the prosecution of 'every backslider, faithless and, by attestation, perjured person' that had not persevered in the association.¹³

However, almost as soon as the association had been sent out, some were expressing misgivings about its possible implications. Thomas Digges, the mathematician and administrator, believed that the oath's lack of social distinctions could provoke anarchic rebellion. More than this, the association's resort to lynch law meant that there was no definition of what actions against the Queen were punishable by death, moreover it made Mary Stuart liable for the actions of persons that she might not even have knowledge of.¹⁴ Some attempt at limiting the consequences of the association was made by its incorporation into the bill for the Queen's Safety produced in December 1584. By this law, claimants to the throne implicated in any rebellion, would, after investigation by a Parliamentary committee, lose any title to the throne, not only for themselves but also for their heirs. The element of lynch law from the original oath remained, although James VI would now be exempted from any revenge. It was made clear that the bond of association was to be interpreted in terms of the act.¹⁵

However, making the association law did not clear up what would happen if an assassination attempt was successful. It was for this reason that both Digges and Burghley drew up proposals for a republican government which would fill the political void created by the monarch's death. Their proposals varied to some degree, but broadly speaking they provided for either the continuance of the sitting Parliament or the calling of a new one, which, along with a ruling council, would adjudge claims to the throne. A bill providing

for an interregnum was actually introduced into Parliament in January 1585.¹⁶ These proposals were not successful, and we can question how realistic they were, but they highlight the extent to which the purpose of measures to safeguard the Queen's person was really to protect the Protestant state. They also show the readiness with which Burghley, a key government minister, was prepared to turn England from a hereditary monarchy into an elective one, like Poland.

This was not the last instance in Elizabeth's reign that proposals were made for an oath of association. The so-called 'Appellant Controversy' between English secular priests and Jesuits, generated by the appointment of George Blackwell as archpriest in 1598, provided the context for a pamphlet titled, *Humble Motives for Association to Maintain Religion Established*.¹⁷ The book was printed in 1601 but it contains a tract by Thomas Digges, written sometime between 1584 and his death in 1595.¹⁸ In this tract, Digges argued that the only way to extinguish Catholic hopes of overthrowing Elizabeth was for her to 'establish a firme continuance and perpetuation of the substance and sinceritie of doctrine now professed in this realme'. This, he urged, could only be done by 'generall lawes, by generall league, and by generall oth'. All magistrates, gentlemen and free-holders would take the oath of association whilst the oath of supremacy would be administered to all men aged sixteen and older. Any that refused to take these oaths would be disabled from taking public office.¹⁹ Digges felt sure that these measures would convert the 'Papists of estate' (those whose religious affiliation stemmed only from a belief that Protestantism would be short-lived in England) to the reformed religion.²⁰ Digges ended his treatise in apocalyptic terms, paraphrasing the text of Rev. 3. 15–16. If the Queen would accept these proposals, he said, her enemies would find that 'the sword of the Lord shalbe upon them in the mountains of Israel'. However, a lack of zeal in this regard would be costly for, 'If we be neither hott, nor cold, but luke warme, and so rather frozen than fervent, when the Lord shall taste us in to his judgement, he will voyd us out of the mouth of his maiestie.' However, if England would be a 'mountayn of Israell' by making an oath of association God would rain fire and brimstone down upon her enemies.²¹ The postscript to this treatise, written (in all probability) by the puritan William Bradshaw, warned against granting toleration to those secular priests that offered allegiance to the Queen, as the Pope would let them make any declarations of loyalty they wanted provided they were still ready to strike when the time was right.²²

The tendering of a new oath of allegiance in 1606 specifically designed to counter the threat from seditious Papists did not satisfy those that wanted a new Protestant association. One anonymous manuscript treatise written sometime after 1606 called for all the 'youth of the Realm' to take an oath of association. The seminary priests and Jesuits, the author argued, were already teaching English Catholics to combine against the state, and loyal Protestants must put in an opposing condition of readiness. Gentry that

refused the oath would be imprisoned and those of ‘base quality’ banished.²³ This treatise reinforces the point that, as with the Elizabethan association, these oaths were not merely meant to uncover Catholics but also to strengthen and unite Protestants. Further proposals for a new oath of association were made in the 1621 Parliament. In one of his first recorded speeches, on 27 November John Pym urged the passing of a new oath of association. The session took place against the background of the deteriorating fortunes of Protestantism in Europe. Elector Frederick of the Palatine had been forced to take refuge in The Hague, whilst the Catholic Maximilian of Bavaria had been installed as the new ruler of the electorate by the Emperor Ferdinand. Pym’s speech made three recommendations. Firstly, he urged that English arms would do little good for Protestants in Germany. War abroad was dangerous and expensive and the chances of success were slim. Secondly, it would, for this reason, be better to take measures against Roman Catholics at home to ensure internal security. Finally, the Commons should give up a session to the question of granting the king supply, in return for which he would end his lenient policy towards papists and approve a new oath of association. The king, Pym urged, should not presume he was safe because he had a Protestant heir. Again, an association was proposed on the grounds that Catholics were already combining themselves via confederations like the Catholic League.²⁴

Having discussed the oaths of association imposed or proposed between 1584 and 1621, it is possible to see some common features to them. The continued demand for the imposition of these oaths after 1606 indicates that they should not be seen as essentially anti-Catholic measures. Equally, there are elements to them which seem to fit in with the idea of a national covenant: the emphasis on allegiance being confessionally defined; the lack of distinctions of rank within these associations; the solemnity that accompanied the taking of them; and the stress on the need for constancy and zeal amongst those that have joined in the association. However, it should also be added that the 1584 association was motivated by genuine concern for the safety of the queen and it is likely that many of those that subscribed saw the association simply as a new oath of loyalty to her. Similarly, proposals for an oath of association under James were unequivocal about the allegiance to be given to the king. It is also the case that up to 1621, oaths of association seem to have been seen as a domestic security measure.²⁵

II

From 1641 onwards the stress on the need for loyalty to the monarch and the domestic focus of Protestant associations lessened. Instead, proposals for oaths of association became bound up in Pym’s desire for an English national covenant. The intimations in the Elizabethan association that allegiance was

conditional on the prince's defence of the faith were made increasingly explicit, whilst the idea of a covenanted union of nations was frequently alluded to. The Protestation introduced into the Commons on 3 May 1641 represents the first of Pym's attempts to impose a radical oath of association on the nation.²⁶ The revelation of the first army plot helped to give weight to the Protestation's claim that England was now under threat from a papal conspiracy. The Protestation was ostensibly made in defence of the Church of England.²⁷ Yet the original version of the oath only protected an ill-defined 'true reformed Protestant religion'²⁸ and, following petitions from London clergy, it later had to be explained by the Commons as only defending the public doctrine of the Church of England, 'so far as it is opposite to Popery, and popish innovations'.²⁹

Aside from protecting the church, the text of the Protestation also bound those that took it to defend the monarchy. The swearer promised that according to his 'duty of allegiance' he would 'maintain and defend His Majesty's royal person and estate, as also the power and privilege of Parliaments, the lawful rights and liberties of the subject, and every person that shall make this Protestation'.³⁰ Contemporaries compared it to the 1584 association. George Peard, MP for Barnstaple, cited the association as being the same in substance as the Protestation.³¹ Denzil Holles used the same analogy, describing the MPs as having entered into 'an Association among themselves' by taking the oath.³² Yet, in spite of the Protestation's apparently moderate aims of defending the church and the king, it was clear that some wished to use it as a test of the loyalty of MPs and the general public to the cause of further reformation. Referring to Judg. 12. 5–6, John Pym described the Protestation as a 'shibboleth to establish a true Israelite'.³³ The exact citation recalled the use of the word 'Shibboleth' as a means of distinguishing the godly Gileadites from the idolatrous Ephraimites, a way of discriminating between the faithful and the unfaithful amongst the Israelites themselves. On 5 May 1641 every shire was sent copies of the Protestation, but subscription was not enforced until January 1642.³⁴ The research of John Walter and Keith Lindley has shown that in London, Suffolk and Essex, taking the Protestation was often the spur for radical acts of iconoclasm.³⁵

I have argued elsewhere that the Protestation was described by many as a national covenant.³⁶ In line with federal theology, the advocates of the Protestation placed great emphasis on renewing covenants between God and his chosen nation. In the same way that the Scots had harked back to the Negative Confession of 1581 to justify making the National Covenant of 1638, MPs and ministers used the Elizabethan association as a evidence of an earlier parliamentary 'covenant'. This was also to be more than just a covenant binding England. As early as 1641 allusions were being made to the possibility of a covenanted union between England and Scotland. Although the oath contained a promise to defend the king's person and authority, Conrad Russell has detected a 'more than implicit' threat to use force in the Protestation. The

oath seemed to make allegiance to the king conditional on his defence of religion and the laws. Like the Scottish National Covenant of 1638, the Protestation identified loyalty with a religious cause, rather than with a person.³⁷ It is clear that by 1642, some English pamphleteers, in line with Scottish covenanting thought, were also suggesting that the king could be held accountable for breaking his covenant. The author of *Annotations upon the Late Protestation* (1642) stated that, by making this oath, ‘his Majesty and the Parliament hath tyed themselves each to other in an Abraham-like Covenant, not to passe the limits of their own bounds’, so that if the king should forget this ‘so serious Protestation, vow and profession, this were deplorable’. It was, the author said, an abomination for kings not ‘to hold and keepe Covenants, vowes and Protestations’.³⁸

However, despite greater enforcement, the hope that the oath might act as a shibboleth was largely thwarted. The subscription returns for the Protestation revealed that it was not even a very effective means of distinguishing Catholics from Protestants.³⁹ The failure of the Protestation to act as an effective shibboleth, despite some radical interpretations of it, led those committed to continuing the war against Charles to press for more exacting tests of loyalty. William Montagu wrote to his father in June 1642 that it was ‘whispered, and I beseech you let it be no more, that there is a Covenant and an oath of association a-drawing like those of Scotland’.⁴⁰ (Note here the way that Montagu was already using the terms association and covenant interchangeably.) In response to the king’s proclamation against the forces raised by the Earl of Essex, the Commons ordered the drawing up of a covenant to be taken by Parliament.⁴¹ On the 27 August 1642 the members acceded to a covenant to assist the earl’s forces ‘with Life and Fortune, in the Defence of the true Protestant Religion, the King’s person, the laws of the Land, the Liberties and Property of the Subject’.⁴²

The covenant to the earl seems largely to have been intended as a test of MPs’ and soldiers’ loyalty to the Parliament. However, Pym proposed the imposition of a new nation-wide oath of loyalty to the Commons in October 1642, referring to it as a ‘new Covenant or association’.⁴³ On 20 October Pym reported a conference with the Lords in which they had agreed on the necessity ‘that the Kingdom should be quickened and thoroughly awakened’.⁴⁴ The words of this association bound subjects to assist one another in the defence of the Protestant religion, the privileges of Parliament and the liberty and property of the subject, but not to defend the person of the king.⁴⁵ On 22 October a declaration of both houses was produced urging the necessity of an association for the defence of the kingdom. The king, the declaration stated, was now so imbroiled with the Popish party that ‘all hopes of Peace and Protection were excluded’. In employing these popish councillors the King had gone against the terms of his coronation oath ‘whereby His Majesty Bound Himself to maintain the Protestant Religion and the Law of the Land’. For these reasons, the Parliament had resolved to enter into a

‘solemn Oath and Covenant with God’ and they expressed the hope that Scotland would join them in this association.⁴⁶ Despite protestations of loyalty to Charles, this was clearly an association in defence of God’s cause, not the king’s life.

This particular proposal seems to have foundered on renewed peace negotiations in the winter of 1642 but Pym did not give up on this project. In December 1642 he managed to get a similar oath included into the legislation setting up the Eastern Association. This could be seen as merely a pragmatic measure, binding the counties to mutual defence. However, Clive Holmes states that for ‘Pym and his allies the ideal association would parallel the Scottish National Covenant’.⁴⁷ Perhaps unsurprisingly given the ideological commitment now required, local committees appeared reluctant to tender the oath. Calls for a more efficient means to uncover the Parliament’s enemies (and the unfaithful within the Parliamentary cause itself) continued in spite of this. The author of *Plain-English* (printed in January 1643), possibly Edward Bowles, chaplain to the Earl of Manchester, demanded a new national association ‘more particular than the Protestation, which like the net in the Gospel brought up fishes good and bad’. Instead this association should ‘be wisely laid so as to give us to know our friends and our enemies’.⁴⁸ In these proposals for an association we do not find, as in 1584, plans for an interregnum. At this stage, the deposition or execution of Charles I was too extreme a solution for even members of the ‘War Party’ to fully contemplate. However, the radical potential of the covenant idea was demonstrated by the suggestion that it could be an extra-parliamentary association, in case the two Houses should betray the people by making a soft peace with the king.⁴⁹ The threat of an impending Royalist attack in February 1643 also led to the oath which Pym had incorporated into the Eastern Association finally being tendered in Suffolk.⁵⁰ In March 1643 there were calls from radical groups in the city that the oath of association should be applied there.⁵¹ On 10 April 1643 the Commons named a committee to ‘consider the desires of the citizens, concerning a covenant, and an Oath of Association; and to bring it into the House’.⁵² That same month the Venetian secretary reported that Parliamentary commissioners had already begun ‘to apply the oath of association in the country, considering those who refuse to take it as royalists’.⁵³

However, although the oath of association incorporated into the structure of the county associations was being tendered more frequently, this was still not the nation-wide Shibboleth that Pym hoped for. The discovery of Waller’s plot to seize control of London for the king finally allowed Pym to pass a new national oath, the Vow and Covenant, through the Commons with almost no opposition. On 6 June 1643 the Commons resolved to draw up a covenant ‘for Discovery of such Designs as these ... and to distinguish the good and well-affected Party from the bad; and to unite the good Party faster among themselves’.⁵⁴ The same day the Vow and Covenant was presented to the House. It required subjects to state that they were convinced that ‘the Forces

raised by the Two Houses of Parliament' were 'raised and continued for their just defence and for the defence of the true Protestant Religion, and Libertie of the Subject, against the Forces raised by the King'.⁵⁵ The oath broke with the conventional rhetoric of the Long Parliament by failing to make any claim that it was made for the defence of the king's person and authority. Pym undoubtedly hoped this harsher tone would help separate the zealous from the lukewarm within the Parliamentary cause.⁵⁶ The Lords, however, attempted to ameliorate the language of the oath by producing a declaration of their loyalty to 'the King's Person, and His Crown and Dignity', which, it seems, some of them took when subscribing to the Vow.⁵⁷

Again, this covenant was also referred to as an oath of association, the Venetian secretary writing on 26 June that 'the oath for the Covenant or Association' had been passed by the Commons.⁵⁸ As with the Protestation, some supporters of the Covenant suggested that the King could be held accountable for failing in his covenanted duty to defend the faith. The author of *The Late Covenant Asserted* (1643) argued that Charles and Henrietta Maria were themselves guilty of breaking the Oaths of Allegiance and Supremacy, he for failing to defend the church and she for bringing in foreign powers. As a result the Parliament had a warrant to take up arms even against the king's person. The author warned his readers that any protestations that Charles might make in defence of the Protestant religion were worthless, as Queen Mary had made a similar plea to the men of Suffolk in order to gain England for the Pope.⁵⁹ Advocating resistance on religious grounds alone, the author argued that it did not even have to be proven that Protestantism was under threat. He compared the Parliament's case with that of the children of Israel who waged war against the children of Reuben, Gad and Manasseh (Josh. 22. 10) on the mere suspicion that they had committed idolatry.⁶⁰ He urged Covenanters to do their duty and 'make good our Vow, Not to lay downe Armes, till the wicked be destroyed, and evill put away'.⁶¹

As a political test the Vow and Covenant's life was short-lived. It was undoubtedly too divisive, even raising scruples in areas of strong Parliamentary support in Essex and London, and following Parliament's military reversals at Chalgrove Field, Lansdowne and Bristol, the oath ceased to be tendered.⁶² The defeats suffered by the Parliament's forces during the summer of 1643 did not dampen the enthusiasm of many for a new parliamentary covenant. Rather, military failure necessitated a treaty with Scotland, which drove the English Parliament to accept a new covenant as a means to cement the alliance. The Solemn League and Covenant was the product of these negotiations. The religious intent of the Solemn League and Covenant was clearly expressed in the hope 'that the Lord may be one, and His name one in the three kingdoms'. It bound the parties sworn to the defence of the Church of Scotland and the reformation of the Church of England 'according to the example of the reformed Churches' so that the Churches in both kingdoms could be brought into 'the nearest conjunction and

uniformity in religion'. The Solemn League and Covenant returned to the more orthodox Parliamentary position of arguing that the war was continued for the king's defence. The third clause required the swearer to promise to defend 'the King's Majesty's person and authority, in the preservation and defence of the true religion and liberties of the kingdoms'.⁶³ Though the Parliament took the oath in September 1643 it was not till January of 1644 that it was imposed nationally.⁶⁴

Again, we find the terms 'association' and 'covenant' used as equivalents of each other. The sixth clause of the covenant expressed the hope that other Christian churches would 'join in the same or like association'.⁶⁵ Similarly, the irenicist John Dury wrote several letters in which he referred to the covenant as an association for reformation of religion.⁶⁶ Although it contained a promise of loyalty to the king this was clearly equivocal. Often those promoting the Covenant explicitly stated that the people's loyalty was conditional on the king's continued defence of the Protestant religion and the kingdom's liberties. Here they were following the rationale of the Scottish National Covenant of 1638 by which the subscribers promised to 'stand to the defence of our dread Sovereigne, the Kings majesty, his Person and Authority, in the defence and preservation of the foresaid true Religion, Liberties and Lawes of the Kingdome'.⁶⁷ The English Presbyterian Richard Ward defined the allegiance to be given the king under the Solemn League and Covenant in similar terms. The subscribers had, Ward said, promised to defend the king's person and estate 'so long as he really endeavours the preservation, and defence of the true religion, and Liberties of the Kingdom'.⁶⁸ The text of the Covenant also demanded that subscribers should not give themselves to a 'detestable indifferency or neutrality in this cause'. One pamphleteer used the same text from Judges employed earlier by Pym when discussing the Protestation, in relation to the Solemn League and Covenant, declaring it 'Great Brittaines Shibboleth'. The author made his militant stance clear, stating that whosoever could not or would not 'pronounce it [meaning the Covenant]' was 'an Ephraimite, and must looke for his reward'.⁶⁹ As we have already seen from its sixth clause, the Covenant was clearly also a document with an international purpose, being translated into French, Dutch and Latin. Divines often portrayed the document as the touchstone of a pan-European struggle against the forces of anti-Christ. On 30 November 1643 the Westminster Assembly sent a letter to other European reformed churches including a copy of the Solemn League and Covenant. The divines begged them to view the Parliament's case as their 'own common cause' and asked for their favourable judgement and sympathy for the Covenant.⁷⁰

Virtually all of the oaths and covenants imposed by the Long Parliament between May 1641 and September 1643 were also described as associations. This could be seen as an attempt to sugar the pill of taking these more radical tests of loyalty. Yet it is clear that Pym and other advocates of these oaths and covenants promoted them precisely because they would separate the

goats from the sheep within the Parliamentary cause. Moreover, seeing the precedent of the Elizabethan association as giving the Protestation and Solemn League and Covenant a veneer of respectability is dependant on us keeping to the simplistic view that the 1584 bond was merely an oath of loyalty to the Queen. It seems to me that Pym used the terms association and covenant interchangeably because he felt they were synonymous with each other. As the Scots pointed to a history of covenants and bands to demonstrate the regular renewing of their covenant with God, so the English looked to past associations as confirming a similar relationship. This is not to say that the oaths of association produced in the 1640s were identical in form to those produced under James and Elizabeth. They made the conditional nature of allegiance to the monarch far more explicit. Even more than previous associations, they were designed as tests of the faith and loyalty of Protestants as well as Catholics (it is revealing the Long Parliament produced separate oaths and tests for recusancy). Unlike Elizabethan and Jacobean associations, these oaths often urged British and pan-European responses to the threat of popery. However, these associations represent a development of, not a break from their Elizabethan predecessors. In turn, the associations of the 1640s would serve as models for later oaths in the 1680s and 90s.

III

Tory propagandists were quick to portray proposals for a new oaths of association in 1680s as really being a revival of the Solemn League and Covenant. The discovery in 1681 of an association to resist the Duke of York in the Earl of Shaftesbury's papers, following his arrest for treason, led one author to write that it was 'the Scotch Covenant in a New Edition'.⁷¹ John Knightley described the ignoramus jury which acquitted Shaftesbury as a 'band of covenanting associators'. He claimed that the branding of the oath as an association was precisely to make it more acceptable. 'Association', he said 'will be easily swallowed, when League might stick a little in the Throat'.⁷² Tory clerics, John Knights, Nathaniel Bisbie and Edward Pelling preached sermons denouncing the Association as a new covenant.⁷³ The pamphlet, *The Two Associations* (1682) simply reprinted the Vow and Covenant side by side with Shaftesbury's association.

It was fairly common practice for Tory propagandists to present their Whig opponents and dissenting allies as adherents to the 'Good Old Cause' of the 1640s. Equally, the comparison of historical documents for political gain was unexceptional.⁷⁴ However, there still seems to be a grain of truth to these Tory accusations. Certainly, when the first few proposals were made for an oath of association in October 1678 and April 1679, this was just one of a raft of measures suggested for securing the nation from the dangers posed by a popish successor. None the less, Mark Knights has argued that the intent

of these proposals was 'that the subjects' right to resist such a king, if he should invade religion or property should be acknowledged in the form of an "association of protestants" based upon Elizabethan precedent'. (In fact, members sought even earlier precedents, Colonel Edward Cooke referring to an act of association made in Edward III's time.)⁷⁵ A long debate in the House of Commons on 7 December 1678 included an association in provisions that would enable protestants to 'withstand and defend themselves against any Papist whatsoever that should come with commission and bear arms in any military employment'.⁷⁶ By December 1680 the idea of an association was radicalised further by linking it with proposals for the exclusion of James II. It was now suggested that no-one should bear office in the government without taking such an oath. It is clear that by this stage the political demands of the crisis rendered an association like that imposed in 1584 unsatisfactory. In a debate of a Grand Committee of the house on 15 December, Sir William Jones stated that the Elizabethan association was now an inadequate model, as it was important that the association 'take effect during the King's lifetime, so that if the Papists should be in arms to bring in their religion, we may have a law on our sides to defend ourselves'.⁷⁷ He reminded the members that Charles II's Privy Councillors were not cut from the same cloth as Burghley and Walsingham. These proposals were now also linked to the idea of an interregnum with the suggestion that Parliament would continue sitting in the event of the king's death.⁷⁸

Further links back to earlier oaths and covenants are apparent in the texts of these draft associations. The Protestant Association Bill proposed 23 November 1680 shares far more similarities with the Solemn League and Covenant than with the Elizabethan association. As with the Covenant, the association was to be read and pasted up in churches. It was to be taken not only by the gentry and nobility but all males over the age of 18. Upon the King's death the people within the association were to arm themselves until the Parliament should be recalled. Those that took the association were also to subscribe to the test acts as proof of their Protestantism. The militia was to be placed in the control of the heads of the association who were also to have the power of martial law during the time between the King's death and the recall of Parliament.⁷⁹ Pamphleteers emphasised the necessity of this association 'not only for the right ordering of a Protestant League and Association within ... these three kingdoms, but to further and promote the same amongst all Protestant Princes and Countries'.⁸⁰ Even Tory critics of the association found in Shaftesbury's papers had to admit that it was little different in substance from the bill that had already been discussed in Parliament.⁸¹ The radical potential of these proposals extended to suggestions that whilst Parliament was not in session, an extra-Parliamentary association should be formed 'to preserve the King's person, Protestant Religion and Government'.⁸²

There was a grain of truth to the claims of Tory propagandists that the projected association in defence of Charles II was really a reconstituted version of

the Solemn League and Covenant. They were both documents which saw England as in the centre of an international conflict between the forces of Protestantism and the allies of Anti-Christ. The protestations of allegiance to the reigning monarch in both the Covenant and the Exclusionist association are equivocal to say the least. Equally, though, there were elements to the associations proposed in the 1680s which pointed forward to the documents that would succeed it. Whilst being couched in religious terms, the international aspect of these associations increasingly reflected commercial, dynastic and military rivalries, as well as confessional differences. The idea of armed companies drawn from the county associations which would quell internal rebellion or external invasion replaced the idea of association offering justification for taking up arms against the government.

Despite being tainted by a link with sedition, only six years after the discovery of Shaftesbury's association, Englishmen were again taking an oath of association, this time to William, prince of Orange. Greatest attention has been given to the association of 1696 in defence of William once he had assumed the crown but the bond signed at Exeter in December 1688 is also worthy of investigation. Historians have essentially seen the Exeter association as a means of avoiding explicitly stating that William's supporters were resisting the king. J. P. Kenyon pointed to it as evidence of the lack of ideological conviction in 1688, whilst W. A. Speck discussed it as a pragmatic measure designed to give the heterogenous group of supporters William had attracted some cohesion.⁸³ However, although it was proposed by the Tory Sir Edward Seymour (who would later refuse the 1696 association), it was in fact an astoundingly bold political statement. We should recall at this point that even the associations drawn up in the 1640s were made ostensibly for the defence of the king's person, but here was an association made by English subjects to a foreign head of state whilst the actual sovereign was still alive. As in previous associations, the takers promised that they would pursue not only those that attempted to kill or injure William, 'but all their Adherents, and all that we find in Arms against us'. Even a successful assassination attempt would not divert them 'from prosecuting this cause ... but that it shall engage us to carry it on with all the vigour that so barbarous a Practice shall deserve'.⁸⁴ Nowhere in this association is there mention of the subject's duty of allegiance to James II and it seems probable that king was meant to be included in the clause discussing the punishments to be handed out to the adherents of papists in arms. Like earlier associations this oath was also tendered to the public as William made his progress east. The Assembly of Commoners also subscribed the association, with, according to Roger Morrice, less than twenty of two hundred and twenty members refusing it. It was even rumoured that no one would be allowed to hold public office without taking the Exeter Association.⁸⁵ In December 1688 it almost seemed as if the schemes of the 1580s and 1680s for an interim republic, secured by an oath of association, had

been made a reality as *ad hoc* assemblies of peers and commoners bound themselves to defend William and the Protestant religion.

In spite of this previous flirtation with an association to the Prince of Orange, the new oath of allegiance to William and Mary passed in 1689, unlike those to previous monarchs, made no reference to them being 'rightful and lawful' sovereigns.⁸⁶ The tendering of the new oaths none the less sparked a considerable controversy which was largely dominated by arguments about giving allegiance to powers in possession.⁸⁷ Neither the Whigs nor William himself seem to have been willing to settle for long with just *de facto* allegiance. *De facto* theory could not, as the nonjurors pointed out, offer much protection if the king *de jure* should invade the kingdom and attempt to regain his throne. For the Whig party, the presence of so many Tory statesmen in government whose allegiance to the king was equivocal at best offered them the opportunity to press for more stringent oaths of loyalty, as a means to exclude their political opponents from office. Bills for an oath of abjuration disclaiming James's right to the throne were introduced in 1690 and 1693, but failed in Tory-dominated parliaments.⁸⁸

A more stringent test of loyalty was finally passed in 1696 as news of an assassination plot against William led the Commons to agree to a sworn 'association' in defence of the king. According to this, the subscribers were to 'heartily, sincerely, solemnly profess, testify and declare, That his present Majesty, King William, is rightful and lawful King of these Realms'. They promised to assist each other in revenging the king's death should any assassination plot prove successful.⁸⁹ In wording and form the oath harked back to the 1584 Association, and contemporaries noted the Elizabethan parallel.⁹⁰ In this instance, however, the anxiety caused by the assassination was relatively minimal and it was even rumoured that the whole plot had been fabricated to serve the government's purposes.⁹¹

Dennis Rubini and John Kenyon have convincingly argued that the 1696 Association was a means for Court Whigs to cut off a ministerial challenge from *de factoist* Tories and, by imposing the oath nationally, cripple the country opposition in England as a whole. Certainly, a large number of Tory MPs and peers had considerable problems in swearing to William as a *de jure* monarch. Sir Edward Seymour and Heneage Finch complained that the words rightful and lawful 'imported one, who was king by descent, and so could not belong to the present king'. Sir John Lowther, though he subscribed to the Association, described it as 'the work of an enemy sent to divide us'. In the Lords, Edward Hyde, earl of Rochester, successfully moved that the wording of the Association, as taken by the peers, should be changed so that it would acknowledge only that William had a 'right by law' to the throne.⁹² Overall, one hundred and thirteen MPs and more than twenty peers refused to take the oath, though at this stage there were no penalties for failing to subscribe.⁹³ In the localities many of the loyal addresses included with the Association tied the subscribers to returning in future only MPs that 'shall be firme to this Present Government'.⁹⁴

Unlike the oaths of allegiance passed in 1689, which were only imposed on the clergy and those in public office, the association was tendered to the public at large.⁹⁵ In some areas, subscription to the association was accompanied by great pomp and ceremony. Edward Canby wrote to John Roades in April 1696 with news of subscription at Doncaster where for ‘the honour of my Lord and the credit of our lordship, we marched in with 200 horse ... It made a great noise in the town so that the streets were filled and windows decked with fair ladies.’⁹⁶ Yet, in contrast to the situation in 1584, a significant number of people refused or equivocated with the 1696 Association. Two groups in particular, Quakers and Anglican clergy, found greatest difficulty with the oath.⁹⁷ Friends generally responded by stating their inability to use carnal weapons but promising their loyalty to the king and his government.⁹⁸ Parochial ministers feature regularly in county returns as either refusing or placing limitations on the Association.⁹⁹ What is truly remarkable, however, is that, of the deans and chapters, only the clergy of Beacon in the diocese of St. David’s actually took the Commons’ Association.¹⁰⁰ The loyal address taken by the clergy of York only described William as having a ‘Right by Law to the Crowne.’¹⁰¹ In Exeter there is evidence that clergymen were encouraging locals to refuse the oath by putting ‘scruples into peoples heads’ about the words ‘rightful and lawful’ and ‘revenge’.¹⁰² The loyal declarations appended to the association oath rolls also varied in character. This oath was taken in Britain’s colonies and by British merchants in Europe, and their declarations reflected the different political relationship with the monarchy. The address from Montserrat made no mention of William being rightful and lawful king but only hoped that his survival would allow the colonists to continue to go about their business freely and ‘eate our Breade with more safety’. William Wilkinson and his son appended a declaration to their subscriptions to the Bermuda roll that they would be ‘willingly subject to’ William’s ‘just and Lawfull Commands’ and suffer his unlawful ones (hardly a ringing endorsement of the king’s title).¹⁰³ Within England the tone of the declarations ranged from the unctuously toadying to that produced by the inhabitants of Bere Regis in Dorset. They called on William to become an ‘Angel of God’ and ‘discern between ye good and ye wicked, that yor searching and trying may not be over, till a compliant purge be made’.¹⁰⁴ Here we are back with the language of the 1640s.

The intention of the association was undoubtedly to set William’s title on a firmer footing and to expel the politically suspect both from central and local government.¹⁰⁵ It is ironic then, that the few published defences of the association that exist actually employ radical contract theory to support William’s title. The author of *The Necessity of Altering the Present Oath of Allegiance* (1696) stated that the king was the subject’s ‘liege lord’ and that ‘Allegiance at Common Law, binds to the Defence of the Kingdom as well as the King’. James had broken the political contract with the people and had consequently forfeited the right to demand their obedience. To those that

objected to such proposals on the grounds of the dangerous precedent of radical oaths of loyalty during the Civil War, the author bluntly stated that 'few if any of 'em, have been against the King till he, by the Constitution of the Monarchy, ceased to be King'. Getting into his stride the writer argued that if Cromwell had lived a while longer, the Restoration of Charles II would have been 'morally impossible'. He noted that many delayed taking the association, shamefully keeping off 'from the Cause of God and their Country; thinking it a commendable piece of wisdom to attend the events of providence'.¹⁰⁶ The Presbyterian John Humfrey claimed that the association actually bound William to rule according to law for 'if William be Lawful King, King by Law then he must be Rightfull King'.¹⁰⁷ He hoped these arguments would convince not only the doubtful to take the oath, but also would remind William to rule within the law.¹⁰⁸ One anonymous author attacked divines who preached against the right of resistance following the 1696 assassination attempt and the passing of the association.¹⁰⁹ The Whig polemicist William Atwood used the association to argue that historically English kings were not made monarchs by the death of their predecessors but by a parliamentary settlement of the crown upon them. Atwood claimed that James I had only come to the throne by the express vote of Parliament, as the 1584 association had abjured the right of Mary Queen of Scots and her progeny, and it was a 'piece of flattery' for the act of recognition to describe him as king by 'inherent birthright'.¹¹⁰

Like the draft associations produced during the succession crisis of 1677–83, the 1696 association in defence of William was developed to counter the threat, political, religious and economic, posed by Louis XIV's France. Far more than in earlier associations, the dominant fear was of the growth of French influence and the possibility of invasion. This was reflected at a popular level too, as many of the loyal declarations to William spoke of him protecting England from the French 'Interest'.¹¹¹ Equally, these associations demonstrate the expansion of the political nation after 1660. In answer to the Whig associations of the early 1680s the Tories responded with a counter-petitioning movement. The scale of the Williamite association rolls dwarfs those gathered under Elizabeth to the extent that it seems some of the rolls were never even opened.¹¹² Still there remain resonances with earlier associations. Pamphleteers continued to invest these documents with a religious purpose and stressed the limitations these oaths placed upon the king, obliging him to defend the faith. As in the 1640s, these associations were sometimes seen as part of a European effort to resist the forces of Counter-Reformation Catholicism. However, by the 1680s the apocalyptic element to this struggle had diminished significantly.

IV

The history of oaths of association in England is more than the story of the events of 1584 and 1696. Indeed, Protestant associations played an important part in late eighteenth-century British history. James Burgh, author of the highly influential *Political Disquisitions* (3 vols, 1774–75), explicitly linked his proposals for a ‘Grand National Association for Restoring the Constitution’ to the precedents provided by the Elizabethan and Williamite associations (and revealingly the Solemn League and Covenant).¹¹³ Historians are just beginning to pick up on the possible links between Hanoverian associations and their seventeenth-century predecessors.¹¹⁴ However, what is remarkable about eighteenth-century associations is the absence of any discussion of their historical forebears. In contrast to the case in 1641 or 1696, no attempt was made to tie these documents into part of an English tradition of Protestant associations. Burgh’s ideas, along with those of John Jebb and Thomas Cartwright were an important influence on Charles Wyvill’s reformist association movement of 1779–80. There are overtones of the associations of the 1640s and 1680s in Jebb’s suggestion that a central representative body formed from the county organisations could become an anti-Parliament, superseding the corrupt institution.¹¹⁵ The pamphlets produced in support of Wyvill’s associations often used the Convention under William III as an example of just such a national assembly.¹¹⁶ Yet, as Sir Herbert Butterfield noted, though these writers used seventeenth-century historiography, including the works of William Prynne, Nathaniel Bacon, and Sir Edward Coke, to support their arguments, they did not employ the actual incidents of previous Protestant associations as precedents for their actions.¹¹⁷ When Wyvill produced his collected political papers, he began them with the text of Yorkshire association of 1745 but included no other historical examples.¹¹⁸ For the reformers of 1780 the most potent precedent was offered by an anti-Jacobite association, designed to defend a British constitution which the Wyvillian associators now sought to rescue from corruption and decay.

The associations discussed in this article were never associations first and foremost in defence of the monarch. They all envisaged the possibility of the monarch’s death and many of them were combined with proposals for an acephalous republic that would rule in their stead. These associations shared many features with national covenants binding the people together to defend the faith. In the early 1640s, the words association and covenant were often treated as analogous terms. These documents were never simply anti-Catholic measures but from the 1640s onwards they were increasingly envisaged as defences against the international, as well as domestic threat of popery. John Pym in particular aimed to use an oath of association to test the faith and allegiance of Protestants themselves (even those within the Parliamentary cause). From 1678 to 1682, the idea of an association was revived,

first as a means to protect Protestants from the apparent threat posed by a Popish successor and then as a way of preventing James from taking the throne altogether. Even in 1696, contrary to William III's intentions, the idea of an association continued to be invested with radical potential. However, it was now largely secular contract theory, rather than the notion of a religious covenant binding king and people to God, which most threatened the notion of giving unconditional allegiance to the king.

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Notes

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- 1 C. Haigh, 'Introduction', *The Reign of Elizabeth I* (London, 1984), pp. 1–27 at 17–18.
- 2 J. P. Kenyon, *Robert Spencer, Earl of Sutherland* (London, 1958), p. 332.
- 3 P. Collinson, 'The Monarchical Republic of Queen Elizabeth I', *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library*, 69 (1986–87), 394–424; P. Collinson, 'The Elizabethan Exclusion Crisis and the Elizabethan Polity', *Proceedings of the British Academy*, 84 (1994), 51–93.
- 4 A. Hughes, *The Causes of the English Civil War* (London, 1991), p. 59.
- 5 M. Knights, *Politics and Opinion in Crisis, 1678–1681* (Cambridge, 1994), pp. 33–7, 84–7, 97n., 100, 198, 238, 351; K. H. D. Haley, *The First Earl of Shaftesbury* (Oxford, 1968), pp. 471, 483, 516, 603, 614, 678, 687, 691, 694.
- 6 I am currently working on a book length study of the idea of a national covenant in seventeenth-century England.
- 7 D. Cressy, 'Binding the Nation: the Bonds of Association, 1584 and 1696', in *Tudor Rule and Revolution, Essays for G. R. Elton from his American Friends*, eds D. J. Guth and J. W. McKenna (Cambridge, 1982), pp. 217–37 at p. 217.
- 8 *The Egerton Papers*, Camden Society, 12 (1840), pp. 108–111.
- 9 Collinson, 'Monarchical Republic', p. 414.
- 10 *Ibid.*, p. 416.
- 11 *Ibid.*, p. 414.
- 12 Collinson, 'Elizabethan Exclusion Crisis', p. 64n.
- 13 HMC, *Salisbury MSS*, III (1889), p. 77.
- 14 B[ritish] L[ibrary] Lansdowne MS 113, fols. 156–8.
- 15 Sir J. Neale, *Elizabeth I and Her Parliaments 1584–1601* (London, 1957), pp. 33–5, 52–3.
- 16 BL Add MS 48099 (Yelverton MS 108), fols. 6–21; Collinson, 'Monarchical Republic', pp. 419–421.
- 17 On the Appellant controversy see J. Bossy, *The English Catholic Community, 1570–1850* (London, 1975), ch. 2; D. Lunn, *The English Benedictines, 1540–1688* (London, 1980), pp. 11–14; P. Milward, *Religious Controversies of the Elizabethan Age* (London, 1977), pp. 116–25.

- 18 See commonplace book of Gilbert Fruele, bishop of Middleton, BL Eg. MS 2877 fols. 90–90v, ‘A peticon pferred to Qi Elizabeth for association in religion, about the end of her highnes raign.’ This treatise seems to have been heavily circulated, BL Add MS 38823, fols. 13–16; BL Lansdowne MS 98 fols. 14–18.
19. [W. Bradshaw and T. Digges], *Humble Motives for Association to Maintain Religion Established* (1601), pp. 6–7. Unless otherwise stated, works published before 1700 were printed in London.
- 20 *Ibid.*, pp. 14–15.
- 21 *Ibid.*, pp. 20–21.
- 22 *Ibid.*, p. 30.
- 23 BL Add. MS 25277, fols. 101–102v. I am dating this treatise on the basis of references to James I and ‘the Oath of Alledgeance now sett downe’.
- 24 W. M. Macdonald, *The Making of an English Revolutionary: The Early Parliamentary Career of John Pym* (London, 1982), pp. 49–53; J. S. Morrill, ‘The Unweariability of Mr Pym: Influence and Eloquence in the Long Parliament’, in *Political Culture and Cultural Politics in Early Modern England: Essays Presented to David Underdown*, eds S. D. Amussen and M. A. Kinshlansky (Manchester, 1995), pp. 19–55 at p. 23; *Commons Debates 1621*, eds W. Notestein, F. H. Relf, H. Simpson, 7 vols (London, 1935), II, 453, 461–3.
- 25 A good example here is provided by Sir Edward Stafford, Elizabeth’s ambassador in France, who wrote to Walsingham in November 1584 expressing his willingness to enter into the Association only to be rebuffed by the minister who told him it was unnecessary as he was not in the country. Calendar of State Papers Foreign, 1584–85, pp. 139, 175
- 26 *C[ommons] J[ournal]*, II, 132.
- 27 J. P. Kenyon, *The Stuart Constitution* (Cambridge, 1966), pp. 222–3.
- 28 *Verney’s Notes of the Proceedings of the Long Parliament*, ed. J. Bruce, Camden Society, 31 (1855), pp. 66–71; 67–8.
- 29 Kenyon, *Stuart Constitution*, p. 258; C. J., II, 134.
- 30 Kenyon, *Stuart Constitution*, p. 258.
- 31 S. R. Gardiner, *The Fall of the Monarchy of Charles I, 1637–1649*, 2 vols (London, 1882), II, 159.
- 32 *Speeches and Passages of this Great and Happy Parliament* (1641), p. 236.
- 33 HMC., *5th Report* (London, 1876), p. 3.
- 34 C. J., II, 135, 389.
- 35 J. Walter, *Understanding Popular Violence in the English Revolution* (Cambridge, 1999), pp. 295–6, 292–6, 304; K. Lindley, *Popular Politics and Religion in Civil War London* (Aldershot, 1997), pp. 38–40.
- 36 E. Vallance, ‘“An Holy and Sacramentall Paction”: Federal Theology and the Solemn League and Covenant in England’, *English Historical Review*, 116 (2001), 50–75.
- 37 C. Russell, *The Fall of the British Monarchies, 1637–1642* (Oxford, 1991), p. 295.
- 38 L. T., *Annotations upon the Late Protestation: or a True Character of an Affectionate Minde to King and Parliament* (1642), pp. 2, 5, 6, 11.
- 39 In West Sussex, some Catholics were allowed to take the oath whilst making reservations concerning their religion. Others who had previously appeared on recusancy lists reappeared on the oath rolls as having taken the Protestation wholesale, see T. J. McCann, ‘Midhurst Catholics and the Protestation Returns of

- 1642', *Recusant History*, 16 (1983), 319–23; *L[ords] J[ournals]*, 6, 242; *West Sussex Protestation Returns*, ed. R. G. Rice, Sussex Record Society, 5 (1906), p. 75.
- 40 HMC, *Bucclench-Whitehall MSS*, I (London, 1899), p. 303. See also p. 291.
- 41 *C. J.*, II, 715; *Stuart Royal Proclamations Volume II: Royal Proclamations of King Charles I 1625–46*, ed. J. F. Larkin (Oxford, 1983), p. 791.
- 42 *C. J.*, II, 740, 822, 827, 874.
- 43 S. R. Gardiner, *The History of the Great Civil War*, 4 vols (London, 1987), I, 39–40.
- 44 *C. J.*, II, 821.
- 45 *L. J.*, V, 412–13,
- 46 *Ibid.*, V, 418
- 47 C. Holmes, *The Eastern Association in the English Civil War* (Cambridge, 1974), pp. 62–6.
- 48 *Plaine-English or, a Discourse Concerning the Accomodation, the Armie, the Association* (1643), p. 27.
- 49 D. Wootton, 'From Rebellion to Revolution: the Crisis of the Winter of 1642/3 and the Origins of Civil War Radicalism', *Eng. Hist. Rev.*, 105 (1990), 654–69; 664. The possibility of an extra-parliamentary association was even explored in the otherwise moderate *Scripture and Reasons Pleaded for Defensive Armes* (1643), p. 44; for references to an association in this tract see p. 1. See also H. Woodward, *The King's Chronicle* (1643), part I, *passim*.
- 50 Bodl[eian Library, Oxford]. MS Tanner 284 fols. 42–47. The Lieutenants and Deputy Lieutenants of Essex, Cambridge and Huntingdonshire also took the oath; Bodl MS Tanner 114, fol. 98.
- 51 *C[alendar] of S[tate] P[apers] V[enetian]*, 1642–3, p. 255.
- 52 *C. J.*, III, 37.
- 53 *C. S. P. V.*, 1642–3, p. 265.
- 54 *C. J.*, III, 117–18.
- 55 Gardiner, *History*, I, 149; *A Sacred Vow and Covenant Taken by the Lords and Commons Assembled in Parliament* (1643).
- 56 D. M. Jones, *Conscience and Allegiance in Seventeenth Century England: The Political Significance of Oaths and Engagements* (London, 1999), p. 120. For a European perspective on political oaths see P. Prodi, *Il Sacramento del Potere: Il Guiramento Politico Nella Storia Costituzionale dell'Occidente* (Bologna, 1992).
- 57 *L. J.*, VI, 87, 97; H[ouse of] L[ords] R[ecords] O[ffice], *Original Journals*, H.L., 27, fols. 158–161, 215–6. *A Letter to a Noble Lord at London from a Friend at Oxford, upon Occasion of the Late Covenant Taken by Both Houses* (n. pl., 1643), p. 2. HLRO, Manuscript Minutes, H.L., 10, 9 June 1643.
- 58 *C. S. P. V.*, 1642–43, p. 289.
- 59 *Late*, pp. 5, 9, 20.
- 60 *Ibid.*, pp. 13–14.
- 61 *Ibid.*, p. 17.
- 62 A. Everitt, *The Community of Kent and the Great Rebellion 1640–60* (Leicester, 1973), ch. 6; *The Knyvett Letters*, ed. B. Schofield, Norfolk Historical Society, 20 (1949), p. 119; *The Diary of Ralph Josselin 1616–1683*, ed. A. Macfarlane (British Academy, 1976), p. 13; however, on 29 Jan. 1645 the Commons ordered that all members that had not already taken the Vow and Covenant were to swear to it, *C. J.*, IV, 35.

- 63 Gardiner, *History*, I, 226–36; Kenyon, *Stuart Constitution*, pp. 263–6.
- 64 C. J., III, 382.
- 65 Kenyon, *Stuart Constitution*, p. 266.
- 66 Sheffield University, Hartlib Papers, electronic version, Disc I 29/9/1A, 67/19/1A–2B.
- 67 Quoted in J. S. Morrill, *The Nature of the English Revolution* (Harlow, 1993), p. 104.
- 68 R. Ward, *The Analysis, Explication and Application of the Sacred and Solemne League and Covenant* (1643), p. 2.
- 69 *The Covenanters Catechisme: or, a Brief and Familiar Analysis and Exposition of the Covenant* (1644), p. 23.
- 70 S. Orr, *Alexander Henderson, Churchman and Statesman*, (London, 1919), pp. 250–1.
- 71 *Massinello: or, a Satyr Against the Association, and the Guildhall Riot* (1682), p. 7.
- 72 [J. Knightley], *The Parallel: or, the New Specious Association an Old Rebellious Covenant* (1682), pp. 1, 7.
- 73 J. Knights, *The Samaritan Rebels Perjured by a Covenant and Association* (1682); N. Bisbie, *Prosecution no Persecution, or the Difference Between Suffering for Disobedience and Faction, and Suffering for Righteousness* (1682); J. Knights, *The Modern Pharisees* (1683); E. Pelling, *A Sermon Preached at St. Mary le Bow, Nov. 27 1682* (1683).
- 74 See J. Scott, *England's Troubles: Seventeenth-Cetury English Political Instability in European Context* (Cambridge, 1999), pp. 439–43.
- 75 HMC, *Ormond MSS, n. s., V.*, (1908), p. 502 (This is probably a reference to the petition of 1376 which urged Edward to recognise Richard of Bordeaux, not John of Gaunt, as his heir, see *English Historical Documents 1327–1485*, ed. A. R. Myers (London, 1969), p. 122.)
- 76 Knights, *Politics and Opinion*, p. 33.
- 77 A. Grey, *Debates of the House of Commons, from the year 1667 to the year 1694*, 10 vols (London, 1763), VIII, 167–8; *The History of the Association* (1682), p. 5; see also HMC, *Finch MSS, II* (1922), p. 95.
- 78 L. J., XIII, 684, HMC, *Ormonde MSS n. s., V* (1908), 502
- 79 HMC, *House of Lords MSS, 1678–88* (London, 1887), pp. 210–11.
- 80 *The Instrument: or Writing of Association: that the True Protestants of England Entred into in the Reign of Queen Elizabeth* (1679), p. 12.
- 81 *A Second Return to the Letter of a Noble Peer, Concerning the Addresses* (1682?), p. 1.
- 82 *The Instrument*, p. 4; Knights, *Politics and Opinion*, p. 238.
- 83 J. P. Kenyon, *Revolution Principles* (Cambridge, 1977), p. 6; W. A. Speck, *Reluctant Revolutionaries: Englishmen and the Revolution of 1688* (Oxford, 1988), pp. 230–2.
- 84 C. J., X, p. 6.
- 85 R. A. Beddard, 'The Unexpected Whig Revolution of 1688', *The Revolutions of 1688*, ed. Beddard (Oxford, 1991), pp. 11–102 at pp. 40, 45, 52. See BL Add MS 28252, fol. 53, 'List of members that refused the association to the Prince of Orange'.
- 86 J. C. Findon, 'The Non-Jurors and the Church of England 1689–1716' (Oxford Univ. D.Phil. thesis, 1978), pp. 6–14; E. N. Williams, *The Eighteenth Century*

- Constitution 1688–1815* (Cambridge, 1960), pp. 29–30; H. Horowitz, *Revolution Politicks: The Career of Daniel Finch, 2nd Earl of Nottingham, 1647–1730* (Cambridge, 1968), p. 82; H. Horowitz, *Parliament, Policy and Politics in the Reign of William III* (Manchester, 1977), pp. 21–2, 24–5, 26.
- 87 M. Goldie, ‘The Revolution of 1689 and the Structure of Political Argument’, *Bulletin of Research in the Humanities*, 83 (1980), 473–564.
- 88 Kenyon, *Revolution Principles*, pp. 31–2; Horowitz, *Parliament, Policy and Politics*, p. 56; *The Parliamentary History of England*, ed. W. Cobbett and J. Wright, 36 vols (London, 1806–1820), V, 595, 602.
- 89 C. J., XI, 470.
- 90 *The Parliamentary Diary of Sir Richard Cocks*, ed. D. Hayton (Oxford, 1996), p. 36.
- 91 ‘Association Oath Rolls for Wiltshire’, ed. L. J. Acton Pile, *Wiltshire Notes and Queries*, 6 (1908–10), 197–201; at 198. On the plot see J. Garrett, *The Triumphs of Providence, the Assassination Plot, 1696* (Cambridge, 1980).
- 92 Cobbett, Parl. Deb., V, 992; HMC, Kenyon MSS (1894), p. 406; HMC, *Hastings MSS, II* (1930), p. 259; *An Impartial Account of the Horrid and Detestable Conspiracy to Assassinate His Sacred Majesty King William* (1696), p. 17; D. Rubini, *Court and Country 1688–1702* (London, 1967), p. 64.
- 93 Cressy, ‘Binding the Nation’, p. 228.
- 94 P[ublic] R[ecord] O[ffice, Kew] C213/218 (Corporation of Bishop’s Castle, Shropshire); see also the returns for the Isle of Wight, C213/256; Nottinghamshire, C213/204; and Brackley in Northants, C213/191.
- 95 D. Cressy, ‘Literacy in Seventeenth-Century England, More Evidence’, *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, 8 (1977), 141–50; 144; J. S. W. Gibson, *The Hearth Tax, Other Later Stuart Tax Lists and the Association Oath Rolls* (Federation of Family History Society Publications, 1985).
- 96 HMC, *Various MSS*, VIII (1913), p. 81
- 97 It is worth noting that there were very few Catholics recorded as refusing the Association; C213/264, pt. 21; C213/2 fol. 1v. This suggests either that virtually the whole English Catholic community was loyal to the Williamite regime or that equivocations and reservations were being widely employed by recusant subscribers.
- 98 C213/264 pt 17 (Westthorpe, Suffolk); C213/269 (Godalming, Surrey); C213/170b (London Friends). Mary Geiter suggests that the Quakers’ expressions of loyalty were part of a political bargain in return for which the government would loosen the requirements for swearing judicial oaths; ‘Affirmation, Assassination and Association: The Quakers, Parliament and the Court in 1696’, *Parliamentary History*, 16 (1997), 277–88.
- 99 C213/2, fols. 3v; 4v; 7v; 9 (Bedfordshire ministers); C213/129 (Sevenoaks, Kent); C213/152 pt. 4 (Hoston, Middlesex).
- 100 C213/420.
- 101 C213/404; it seems that objections were raised to the clergy taking the oath in this way, but the government did not, in the end, reject these addresses; *Letters of Humphrey Prideaux to John Ellis*, ed. E. M. Thompson, Camden Society, 15 (1875), p. 174.
- 102 HMC, *Fitzherbert MSS*, (1893), pp. 38–9
- 103 *The Association Oath Rolls of the British Plantations*, ed. W. Gandy (London, 1922), pp. 60, 67.

- 104 C213/104; For toadying see the Windsor roll, C213/7
- 105 Bills were introduced in 1699/1700 to disable MPs and members of corporations from holding office if they had refused the Association, *Diary of Sir Richard Cocks*, p. 7; *L. J.*, XVI, pp. 557, 559, 561, 578.
- 106 W[illiam] A[twood]?, *The Necessity of Altering the Present Oath of Allegiance* (1696), pp. 2–3.
- 107 [J. Humfrey], *The Free State of the People of England Maintained* (1702), p. 9.
- 108 *Ibid.*, p. 10.
- 109 S. P., *A Letter Written in the Year 1697 to Dr. Lancaster* (1710), p. 3. This was written in response to William Lancaster's sermon of 30 January 1697, *A Sermon Preached Before the Hon. House of Commons* (1697). The publication of the reply was probably timed to coincide with the Sacheverell trial, in which Lancaster was involved on the defence side, see *The History of the University of Oxford*, Vol. V, eds L. S. Sutherland and L. G. Mitchell (Oxford, 1986), pp. 84–5.
- 110 W. Atwood, *Reflections upon a Treasonable Opinion, Industrious Promoted, Against Signing the National Association* (1696), pp. 55–7.
- 111 C213/32, (Chester, Non-Conformist Ministers); C213/201 (Malmesbury).
- 112 *Lancashire Association Oath Rolls, 1696*, ed. W. Gandy (Soc. Genealogists repr., 1985), p. xvii. The Elizabethan rolls are in PRO SP 12/174.
- 113 J. Burgh, *Political Disquisitions*, III (1775), 428–34; However, Burgh's association was now targeted at those very eighteenth-century problems, political corruption and luxury. On this see also his *Britains Remembrancer: or the Danger Not Over* (1746), p. 40; elsewhere Burgh made clear that he did not see the persecution of Catholics as benefiting the security of the state, *Crito, or Essays on Various Subjects*, I (1766), xii; on Burgh see C. H. Hay, *James Burgh, Spokesman for Reform in Hanoverian England* (Washington, 1979).
- 114 C. Haydon, *Anti-Catholicism in Eighteenth-Century England, c. 1714–80* (Manchester, 1993), p. 240 and n.; N. Rogers, *Crowd, Culture and Politics in Georgian Britain* (Oxford, 1998), p. 173.
- 115 H. Butterfield, *George III, Lord North and the People, 1779–80* (London, 1949), p. 192.
- 116 *Ibid.*, p. 257; *Copy of a Letter from the Right Honourable Lord Corysfort to the Huntingdonshire Committee* (1780), p. 5; *The Associators Vindicated; and the Protestants Answered* (London, 1780), p. 13.
- 117 Butterfield, *George III*, p. 345.
- 118 C. Wyvill, *Political Papers, Chiefly Respecting the Reformation of the Parliament of Great Britain*, 5 vols (York, 1794–1804), V, ix.

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