ABSTRACT

Title of Document:	FORETELLING THE EVERYDAY: EARLY MODERN ENGLISH ALMANACS PREPARE A PUBLIC FOR NEWS
	Robert J. Woodruff 3rd, Doctor of Philosophy, 2014
Directed By:	Professor Emerita Maurine Beasley
	Philip Merrill College of Journalism

This dissertation examines 376 English almanacs printed from 1595 to 1640 for the extent to which they provided basic, everyday information that ordinary citizens sought to increase their agency and place in the world. These almanacs, appearing annually, had highly conventional content features repeated in many different editions. Analysis of twenty of these components show patterns that make it possible for a researcher to systematically discern the information needs and appetites of many people who may not have been represented in the written record.

Because these almanacs were inexpensive and printed in large numbers, they are estimated to have been in one of every three households in England in this period, making them the most common print product of the day.

Since the almanacs were a monopoly of the Worshipful Company of Stationers, the printer's and bookseller's guild, their conventional, highly structured content can be read as coherently responsive to the almanacs' many buyers and users. The considerable importance of the revenue from exclusive almanac production to the guild's financial stability provided incentive for responsiveness to the public. The components analyzed, including various forms of calendars, geographical, historical and health information, and modes of calculation and measurement, show a consistent pattern even though individual almanac brands flourished and expired during this 45-year period. This analysis explicates the value of these component features to the almanacs' users and contends it enhanced their agency. Almanacs' predictive astrological content, this dissertation argues, complemented their access to information by framing a planning process for the coming year, as well as enabling agency-enhancing play or rehearsal. The almanac, also a gateway to improved literacy, is presented as the essential, indispensable information tool for the ordinary people who played a significant role in the civil wars period (1641-60). Without the information base and expectation of annual publication provided by the almanacs, this

dissertation contends, the public would not have been prepared to

recognize the difference between everyday life and new developments, the

routine and the unusual – nor the value of actual news when regularly

provided. The almanacs enabled and prepared ordinary people in

England to be receptive to what came to be called journalism.

FORETELLING THE EVERYDAY: EARLY MODERN ENGLISH
ALMANACS PREPARE A PUBLIC FOR NEWS

By

Robert J. Woodruff 3rd

Dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School of the

University of Maryland, College Park, in partial fulfillment

of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

2014

Advisory Committee:

Professor Emerita Maurine Beasley, Chair, Journalism

Assistant Professor Kalyani Chadha, Journalism

Associate Professor Ira Chinoy, Journalism

Associate Professor Emeritus John Newhagen,
Journalism

Visiting Assistant Professor Sabrina Baron, History

Professor Philip Soergel, History

Acknowledgements:

Contents

List of Figures

List of Tables

Introduction: News and Where It Has Led

News has been the environment in which I have lived since I was a college daily newspaper "heeler," or freshman apprentice. Like many others, I knew it when I saw/heard/experienced it – except when I didn't "know" it, which became increasingly embarrassing as my connection to, and investment of self-esteem in, journalism grew to a vocation.

Also, like many others who became journalists, my roles as a consumer and producer of news developed concurrently and were (by me, at least) easily confused. I participated as both producer and consumer in what Nicholas Carr and Jay Rosen productively have called the "bundle" of sectional special features and service journalism that along with hard news make up the weekly or daily newspaper.[1]

But, of course, I never thought a great deal about what news *was*. It was, well, what I was *doing*. As a producer, I have felt its absence acutely whenever I was temporarily out of a news job, a void always compensated for on my part by enhanced consumption. That should

---

[1] Nicholas Carr, "The Great Unbundling: Newspapers and the Net," *Encyclopaedia Brittanica Blog* April 7, 2008, http://www.britannica.com/blogs/2008/04/the-great-unbundling-newspapers-the-net/ "A print newspaper provides an array of content—local stories, national and international reports, news analyses, editorials and opinion columns, photographs, sports scores, stock tables, TV listings, cartoons, and a variety of classified and display advertising—all bundled together into a single product." Rosen's observation, crediting Carr, is from his blog, "PressThink," Feb. 18, 2013, http://pressthink.org/2013/02/some-shifts-in-power-visible-in-journalism-today/.

have been a clue: producer and consumer melded at some critical juncture where information became "news."

As a consumer, its absence was a quotidian ache to me. It dates me quite precisely to say that the ache was felt most strongly in the morning. If I had been of the previous generation, it would be the evening paper that would most likely have been my solace, and set my news clock. Several generations still earlier, a weekly newspaper would have marked out my different temporal framework, with a less information-stuffed life and little or no broadcast technology to hurry and harry the print model.

When I was writing or editing stories in a newsroom environment, however, it was never hidden from me that news does not take place in a vacuum, nor can it be presented in one. Every particle of "news" – the unusual, the noteworthy – had to be surrounded by a bodyguard of the everyday, the contextual – the ordinary that made these facts extraordinary. Like most reporters, I learned by painful error and editorial reproof just how much of this ancillary information needed to be included in a news account in order for the noteworthiness of the new fact or facts to be comprehensible to the public for whom it was intended.

Later, I spent several years as editor of a newspaper *about* newspapers – *Publishers' Auxiliary*, the service publication of the

National Newspaper Association. Recurrent stories about the trials and triumphs of smaller newspapers, daily and weekly, revealed a starker, more bare-bones anatomy of how news emerges, and is published, from the substrate of *events and routines* in a community. That raised questions that led to my first stint in journalism graduate school, the master's degree program at the journalism school of the University of Maryland College Park's j-school, before it acquired the Merrill monicker.

At a certain point I stopped being a kibitzer and became a teacher of journalism at various higher-ed levels. And some of my unexamined and unanswered questions about the composition and nature of this stuff called "news" began to intrude. I continued to work in the trade at the same time, so molecules of information coalesced into live forms of news in front of my eyes while I was teaching and learning.

All this while, the newer technology began to release news from the time-boundedness, the traditional news cycle, imposed by previous forms of technology. It was at that point that the "bundle" known as the newspaper was revealed more clearly as an artifact of printing – rather than a complement to human cognitive capacity, which, equally clearly, has many different strings to its bow.

 Having passed my threescore and ten in the increasing ubiquity of computer screens, my own news craving has become redistributed across the day's timeframe. Because I am a creature of habit, I still stumble out

to the driveway for the morning paper while the kettle heats to boiling. But I generally have fired up the laptop well before I have gotten much past the A-section front. I get news – real news – from social media as well as news of the legacy variety. And I am scarcely alone. The unbundling continues apace.

I and those of my age have experienced a unique informational transition. Television was new when I was a pre-teener, and radio's presence was moving from the ornate set encased in dark wood that furnished the nation's living rooms inexorably to the car radio, where it has remained protected from the threat of the small screen. Every one of these news-consumer perceptual sets, I hardly have to note, is pegged to a timeframe: frequency, regularity, expectations, familiarity. And every one is also pegged to a *form* of news, without which it seems unlikely the calendrical quality of a news habit – an awareness of news at all – is possible.

These two factors – a news form, and a timetable to which it *con*forms – hardly seem possible without one another. And our definitions of forms of news – paper, broadcast, online – are synchronically pegged to the technologies that encompass the content and help define the structure. Those technologies, we can see from our twenty-first century vantage, successively enabled more frequent, as well

as just plain more, news, altering the temporal framework in which our news experience takes place.

These questions – the manner in which news and its forms help define and reproduce one another – have obviously taken me beyond my roles as consumer and producer into the history of news, and brought me back to student status. And my increased fascination with the way people learned to feel a need for news, and seek it – and the way others accidentally or purposefully began to provide regular, periodic news for a price and as a profession – has led me to the prehistory of news.

My exploration has led me to conclude that a public for news had to acquire a broad, consensual notion of what constituted normal life before that public would effectively recognize the tidings of the unusual that constitutes news. That is still required today as it was in the prehistory of journalism. In the first several centuries of printing, which coincided with the early modern era, that consensus on the everyday was not furnished by Erasmus, or Bacon, or Shakespeare, whose books sold only among the lettered elite. It was provided by a mass-circulation, essentially nonfiction product: the annual almanac.

Chapter 1: A PUBLIC'S PATH FROM INFORMATION TO NEWS

The early modern almanac used by ordinary people in England is a quite humble material object. Its role in providing information about everyday life to everyday people in the early modern period (generally bounded as 1500-1800 C.E.), when deliberately-created periodical news products were sporadic or absent, is large because its circulation was large. Understanding why early modern English people of all social classes suddenly seized on the instantly popular "newsbooks" of the civil wars period (1641-1660) is impossible without recognizing the impact of the ubiquitous annual almanac that preceded them.

An unprepared, sudden audience for newsbooks, regularly published, though hardly objective, weekly propaganda pamphlets was unlikely, despite the obvious stimulus and potential for personal hazard brought by a fight for control between King and Parliament that ranged over most of the emerging nation. These newsbooks proliferated rapidly on both sides of the conflict until Londoners could pick up a different, freshly printed weekly publication every day of the week. In each case, the paper (almost always) had the same nameplate as in the previous week, as the publishers and editors rapidly realized the value of a trusted name. And the customers paid a penny or two for these products, despite

their generally partisan stance, thereby helping to fulfill the (modern) definition for journalism as a professional undertaking. The speed of their proliferation made it highly probable that their audience, their public, was ready to obtain regular printed information at a price, fulfilling our understanding of journalism as a profession for which practicioners might get paid. Recognizing a regular, trusted name on a publication and paying a small amount for it were both practices learned from purchasing an almanac every year.

Denis McQuail's oft-cited definition of the print newspaper was best applied to what he called the "high bourgeois daily newspaper" of the mid- to late 19th century, but it hinges crucially on the notion of is criteria for journalism products were regularity, a price on the cover or "openly for sale," multiple purposes including information and entertainment, and a "public or open character."[2] The "price on the cover" launched these regular, distinctively-named news products, the newsbooks, into the sphere of journalism. McQuail's definition was clearly keyed to the mid-nineteenth century, when other war news, spanning oceans, spurred the emergence of big-city daily news giants and organizations. There was at that point little question that an information product for which millions were willing to pay hard money entailed a profession, a culture and an industry.

---

[2] Denis McQuail, *Mass Communication Theory,* 2nd ed. (Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publications, 1987), 9.

Less apparent is the degree to which this 19th-century "high bourgeois daily newspaper" and its successors through the middle of the 20th century have served as a template for extending the history of journalism both backward and forward from what now begins to look like a relatively brief window of newspaper dominance. Our understanding of "journalism," conditioned by that model, begins to lose applicability when extended to the Anglo-American journalism history canon in the first half of the seventeenth century.

In James I's England, like Elizabeth's before him, regular domestic news publication was forbidden. The earliest kin to an English newspaper evaded that stricture in 1621 by importing only foreign news from the Thirty Years' War, in a newspaper-like pamphlet labeled (after a Dutch counterpart) a *coranto*. The English corantos, which lasted off and on through the 1620s, fell in and out of official disapproval but never published domestic news. Their appeal to Protestant English readers was fresh news of that catastrophic war in Europe between Catholic Spain and Austria on one side and Protestant parts of Germany and Sweden on the other.[3] King James I was under pressure to join the battle on behalf of Protestantism and the corantos were an irritant to authority. Relatively

---

[3] Joad Raymond,*The Invention of the Newspaper: English Newsbooks 1641-1649* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), esp. 5-10 and 90-96; Joseph Frank, *The Beginnings of the English Newspaper 1620-1660* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1961), 4-8, 5; Andrew Pettegree*, The Invention of News: How the World Came to Know About Itself* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2014), 197-200.

few copies, no more than 1,250 and as few as 400 per issue, were likely to have been printed.[4]

The core customer of such "journalism" was still, most likely, the educated elite. This leaves the question: how was a wider public for news to develop a taste for, and a capacity to absorb, the news that would suddenly become a near-necessity when hostilities between King and Parliament began?

History is Silent about Non-elite Publics for Information

That question, raised by this brief account, is met by a crashing silence in the historical record. What ordinary people sought in the way of information, before they had newsbooks to buy as the war began, is unknown because they themselves were nearly mute beneath the considerable chatter of those educated and well-off persons who wrote most of what we know of the early modern period. Carl Bridenbaugh called the latter "the over-recorded privileged order."[5] Part of the task is to find ways to hear those muted voices. Modern researchers have trouble understanding those evidences of the non-elite culture that we do discern. But, as Clifford Geertz said,

> The truth of the doctrine of cultural (or historical – it is the same thing) relativism is that we can never apprehend another people's or another period's imagination neatly, as

---

[4] "…not negligible in terms of that era." Frank, *Beginnings of the English Newspaper*), 12.
[5] Bridenbaugh, *Vexed and Troubled Englishmen 1590-1642* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1967), 17.

though it were our own. The falsity of it is that we can therefore never genuinely apprehend it at all.[6]

A search for the prehistory of news in early modern England leads, this project will argue, to the most popular nonreligious product of print culture, the annual almanac. Cheap, portable, often printed with extra space for a customer's own scribbling and scheduling, these almanacs appeared to have sold enough copies *each year* so that one in three families might have a current one for their use. Each year. Regularly. The purchase was often stimulated by the same popular name on the cover as last year's.[7]

England's population in 1601 was estimated at just above four million, meaning a million households or fewer (some were extended with live-in servants and apprentices). Unlike southern Europe's, English families were characteristically small, nuclear rather than extremely large, the typical household being about 4.5 persons. Though industry was growing, especially in mining and the external trade of cloth products, most English still worked the land.[8] An estimate of 300,000 or more almanacs printed per year underlies the "one in three households"

[6] Clifford Geertz, *Local Knowledge: Further Essays in Interpretive Anthropology* (New York: Basic Books 1983), 44; quoted in S. Elizabeth Bird, "Seeking the Historical Audience," in *Explorations in Communications and History,* ed*.* Barbie Zelizer (New York: Routledge, 2008), 92.

[7] Bernard Capp, *English Almanacs, 1500-1800: Astrology & the Popular Press* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1979), 23; Cyprian Blagden, "The Distribution of Almanacks in the Second Half of the Seventeenth Century," *Studies in Bibliography* xi (1958): 108-117.

[8] Barry Coward, *The Stuart Age: England 1603-1714*, 3rd ed. (London: Longman, 2003), 18, 10.

statements by Capp and others.[9] The families who bought these almanacs were not all elites – in fact, most would have had to be what are here summarily called non-elites: the families of smallholding yeomen, husbandmen and laborers of the countryside and artisans and tradesmen of the towns and cities. Presumably, they had common school experience and that included the teaching of reading. A few youngsters from these ordinary families may have gone on to grammar schools and been taught some writing as well, perhaps even a smattering of Latin. But virtually none had gone to one of the two universities, Oxford and Cambridge, or to London's Inns of Court where readers in law were prepared.[10] University-educated elites certainly bought and used almanacs as well, and historians know that because their references to almanacs have entered the historical record. But they don't begin to account for 300,000 or more almanac copies per year.

As this inquiry shows, there is much that remains unknown about why the almanacs sold as they did. But because they did appear serially, under popular brand names, the component features they offered and, especially, the manner in which those feature offerings changed from year to year, can help provide an understanding of what kinds of

---

[9] Roger Lockyer, *Tudor and Stuart Britain 1485-1714,* 3rd ed. (New York: Pearson Longman, 2005), 511; Keith Wrightson, *Earthly Necessities: Economic Lives in Early Modern Britain* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2000), 30-42, esp. 32.

[10] Lawrence Stone, "The Educational Revolution in England 1560-1640," *Past & Present* 28 (July 1964): 43-46.

information the public sought and what appetites were whetted for the eventual appearance of "news" publications. Research can grasp what ordinary people wanted to know in the pre-news period, based on evidence of their buying behavior. This dissertation is designed to furnish that insight, which has been missing from other scholarly studies.

Because the English almanacs were a lucrative monopoly of the London-based Stationers' Company, the guild of printers and booksellers, it is highly likely that those year-to-year changes in almanacs were anything but random. Instead, they almost certainly reflected the printers' and booksellers' sensitivity to public taste reflected in hard sales figures. The Stationers' Company was a cadre of businessmen struggling to do well in the new, uncertain ambience of early capitalist development. Their lucrative almanac monopoly added to their revenue. Because the almanacs were managed with an eye to profit, the bulk of the evidence of change and continuity in component features of almanacs reflected their users' appetites for information as expressed in sales.

Early modern almanacs' role in the increasing agency and empowerment of ordinary people, in England and elsewhere, was complex and intertwined with some other, less ubiquitous forms of print culture, as well as the historical events of the decades just before the

civil wars.[11] As historians increasingly have realized, the utility and growing accessibility of information propelled many such social changes. This project is part of that story.

Scope and Purpose: Publics for Information Become Publics for News

The goal of this dissertation is to demonstrate that almanacs, an important part of the material popular print culture of early modern England, helped provide the groundwork for a public conception of, and appetite for, periodical news publications before such publications appeared in 1641 at the outset of the civil war period. Specifically, a major part of that preparatory work (though by no means all) was accomplished by the publication of the utilitarian, highly popular annual almanac. This project will argue that

1. Almanacs, as a lucrative monopoly of the printers and booksellers guild – an early capitalist enterprise – received extraordinary attention and management to ensure they met public demand for useful content, and

2. Almanacs anticipated the "newsbooks" of 1641-1650, which are generally counted the first (domestic) "journalism" in English, by creating

---

[11] This dissertation will follow Blair Worden's usage: The "civil war," singular, denotes the the armed conflict between King and Parliament, 1642-46; "'the civil wars' will mean the range of conflicts, military and political, of the 1640s and 1650s." Blair Worden, *The English Civil Wars, 1640-1660* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 2009), "Preface" unpaged.

repeat customers for a regular, recurrent publication through "branding" and the presentation of measurably popular features, and

3. Almanacs generated a public for information and news among non-elites – working folk who used literacy at a variety of levels – that extended their use well beyond the narrower compass of the educated elite whose writings and actions are disproportionately represented in the historical record.

These arguments will be addressed in the form of research questions.

Key Questions: Almanacs, their Makers, and their Public

1. Did the widespread purchase and use of almanacs in pre-civil wars early modern England affect the growth of a public for information?

   1a. Did the Stationers' Company leadership manage its monopoly on the almanac trade to maximize profits and customer base?

   1b. Did annual almanacs, studied previously mostly for astrological forecasting, actually also provide distinct component features with factual information useful in everyday life?

   1c. Did the year-to-year changes in component features offered in annual English almanacs 1595-1640 provide evidence of public preferences and the Stationers' response to public appetite for information – and what kind – as reflected in sales figures?

The early modern period is generally rounded off to have begun at 1450 C.E. and extended to between 1700 and 1800 C.E. – the final date is much more a matter of taste and usage among historians. It is notable

that the ca. 1450 start date for the period on which most agree is roughly also the date when movable-type printing was "invented."

Printing entered England, in the common understanding, with William Caxton in 1476, who had learned the trade in France. Not far behind him came translations of European almanacs – an almanac was one of the *ur*-printer Gutenberg's first commercial undertakings.[12] The low-cost (generally two pennies) almanac became a staple possession of up to one in three English households of the seventeenth century. This was very high media penetration for an age of emerging literacy among the peasant, working and artisan non-elite classes whose labors supported the comparatively easy lives of (often university-educated) economic and social elites.

Almanacs emerged quickly as a genre, with conventions and typical format features, and even at their low price were a lucrative business. From the late sixteenth century on, almanacs were a monopoly awarded by the crown – first to a partnership of two printers, but then (in 1603) to the guild of printers and booksellers that had been earlier incorporated (in 1557) as the Worshipful Company of Stationers. It is that monopoly (patent or royal license) that made the almanac trade of the early seventeenth century a unique tool for investigating the information appetite of non-elite early modern English peoples.

---

[12] Andrew Pettegree*, The Book in the Renaissance* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2010), 49; Capp, *English Almanacs*, 25-26.

Almanacs themselves were mostly small, unprepossessing booklets of forty or forty-eight pages, almost always printed in the "octavo" format that folded two-and-a-half (for forty pages) or three (for forty-eight pages) full sheets of paper into a 3.5 inch wide by 5.5 inch high book format. They were generally divided into the "kalendar" section in front, and a "prognostication" that was the back of the book. The "kalendar" provided a page for each month ruled vertically in a half-dozen columns; the dates of the month ran vertically down the left-hand edge of the page. In the columns one found material relating to each day – saints' days, feast days, phases of the moon, perhaps sunrise times, sunset times or both, symbols of planets and houses of the zodiac packed in to show the astrological bent on that day, or other entries. The first few pages of the front or "kalendar" section also displayed regular single-page component features – a one-page timeline of important historical events since the Creation, a list of that year's feast days with dates, very often an image of a nude human body (the "Zodiacal Body") surrounded by signs of the zodiac and lines drawn to show which zodiacal sign affected which part of the body.

After the kalendar, roughly halfway through the book, there was ordinarily a second cover page for the "prognostication" followed by some stock features, including accounts of the seasons of the coming year and what might be expected in the way of weather and diseases for each. A second series of monthly entries, paragraph-style, might also follow,

often structured by phases of the moon and perhaps offering real

predictions about day to day weather. But the prognostication section, as

well, contained many other popular features that had little to do with

prediction and much to do with facts of the past and present – lists of the
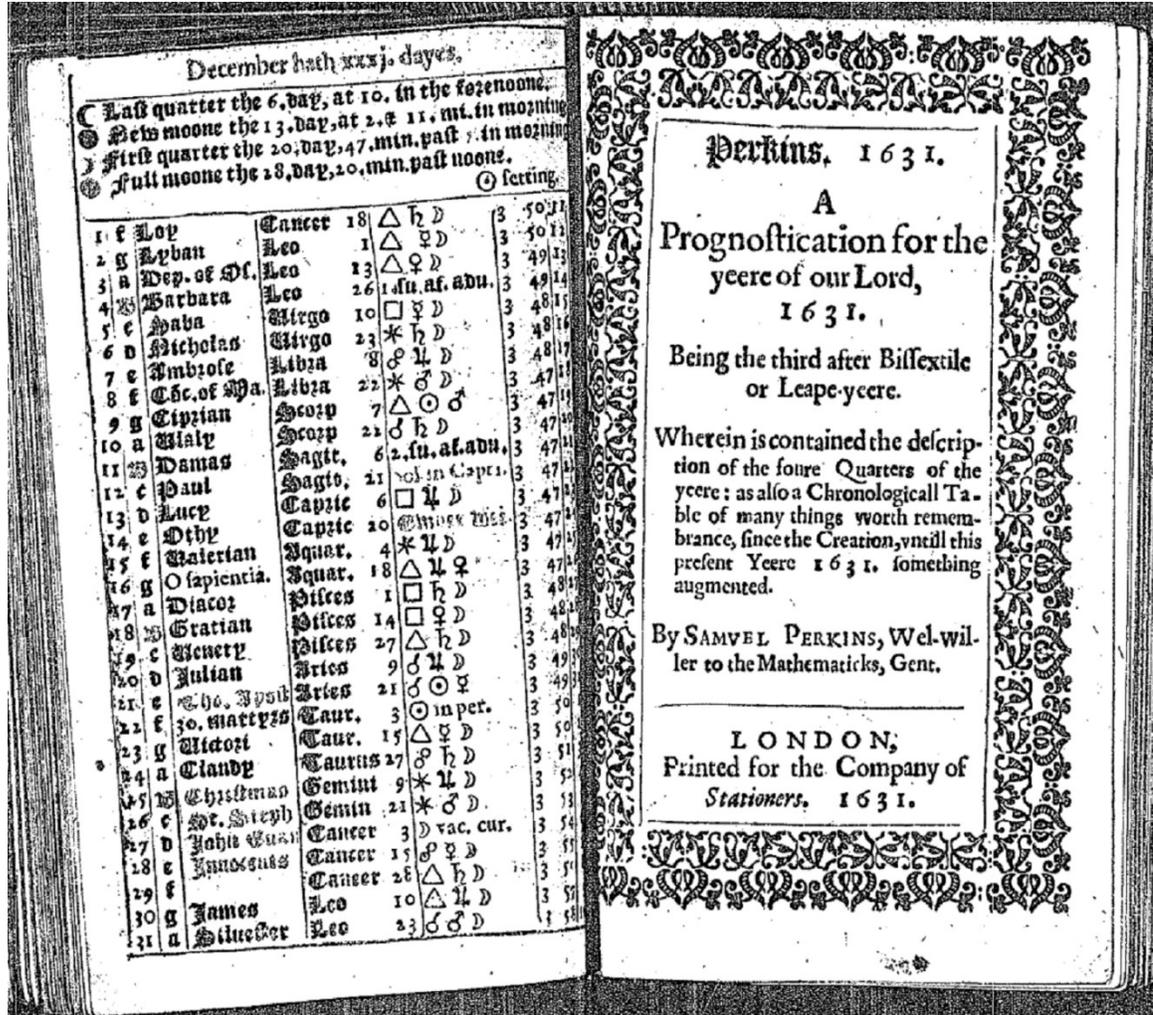
Figure 1: *Perkins's almanac for 1631, showing the last calendar page and the second title page, for the "Prognostication" section. It promotes, among other things, Perkins's expanded historical timeline "since the Creation."* © *The British Library: Digital images produced by ProQuest LLC as part of ProQuest® Historical Newspapers. www.proquest.com*

reigns of monarchs of England for the purpose of dating legal documents, tide tables, the dates of opening and closing of the quarterly court terms, a list of fairs held all around the country, arranged by month and date, or a set of guidelines for getting from one place to another by road, with the order of towns to pass through and the distance from one to the next (most routes eventually led to London). Each of these features was typographically distinct, with paratextual layout devices and imagery that made them easy to look for and hard to miss.

Almanacs were cheap print, and printed on cheap paper. Less care in their composition is often evident, compared to more expensive and elite works. But modern readers will recognize in the unusual internal specialization and compartmentalization of these little books a "bundle" of features that was seldom seen elsewhere, and an early avatar of the large, complex daily newspapers of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, or the visually tooled, articulated modern school textbook.

These almanacs were not only distinguished by their typographical and paratextual devices but by the very fact of their annual-ness. The prerequisites for the precursor or precursors of weekly journalism in time of war revolved around anticipation and repetition. Books, pamphlets and religious publications of the day were one-offs, often popular but self-contained. Some popular authors like Thomas Nashe or, much earlier, Erasmus became sought-after and their books sold well – but

their appearance was irregular, and customers didn't know *when* to expect the next one.

Almanacs, as their production by the Stationers remained routinized, came out every November to be sold for the following year. As Joad Raymond pointed out: "Seriality has significant implications. Most importantly it creates the expectation of future news, of updates. Secondly, and consequently, it encourages future consumption, perhaps enhancing appetite."[13]

A great deal was packed into these little pocket-sized books and every issue's production must have involved decisions about what features to include and what to exclude for lack of space. This decision factor steers part of this inquiry. What information, and in what highly conventionalized forms, did the mostly non-elite customer base appear to favor in its almanacs? Answers to that question help further understanding of how these humble two-penny products fashioned a public for information, and for news.

Definitions: News as a Compound of Routine and Unusual

News, all journalists understand, is the new or novel cast against the background of the everyday. Without understanding of the routine – the background, the way the world ordinarily works – no account of the

---

[13] Raymond, "News," in *The Oxford History of Popular Print Culture, vol. 1: Cheap Print in Britain and Ireland to 1660*, ed. Joad Raymond (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 380.

unusual can be fully understood. This is no new insight, but it seldom gets scrutiny as an historical phenomenon. Mitchell Stephens observed that "[t] he news is not about life but about a peculiar subset of life – those dramatic moments when the spell of daily reality is broken by the death of a dictator, a defection or a drowning."[14]

Almanacs, in their regular annual appearance and presentation of broad facts about the world, cumulatively built this prerequisite understanding, this anatomy of the world-that-is, in their growing public. That slow-building, comprehensive understanding encompassed not only the natural world and the economic lives of ordinary people but the emerging notion of national identity coupled with a view of the scope and texture of the kingdom, beyond the user's immediate neighborhood, village or town.

A significant source of the increase in personal agency and political participation on the part of this wider, non-elite public came not only from the advent of news but from the elements of print culture that prepared that public for news and democratic participation. This project argues that the annual almanac was at the center of this development of

---

[14] Mitchell Stephens, *A History of News: From the Drum to the Satellite* (New York: Viking Press, 1988), 144; C. John Somerville approvingly quotes Todd Gitlin in *The Whole World is Watching*: "…daily news is 'the novel event, not the underlying, enduring condition." Somerville, *The News Revolution in England: Cultural Dynamics of Daily Information* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 263; Kevin J. Barnhurst and John Nerone identify "…one of [news's] manifest values: the unusual as against the expected," *The Form of News: A History* (New York: Guilford Press, 2001), 55.

competent agency for non-elites, a unique attribute of the early modern period. A news public must have a *use* for news, a view of a personal future being fashioned very much in the present-as-possibility, and requiring current information to thrive.

Plan of this Dissertation

Chapter 1 has outlined the historical problem: how did a public for news grow without the presence of news? The premise is that news is a subset of the broader category of information, which was valued by early modern people of all social levels but not yet fully commodified. Information was unevenly accessible to different social levels, but ordinary non-elites had cheap print, above all the annual almanac, available. News, understood as information whose immediate value may quickly vanish with events, must be set against knowledge of the routine, the everyday, in order to be recognized for what it is. And almanacs offered this kind of knowledge.

Chapter 2 reviews the literature that bears on these matters and on the historical context to be elaborated in the succeeding chapters. There is a heavy concentration by English historians on the early modern period as a critical point in their nation's growth to empire, as well as an extensive and rich analysis of "print culture" as a linchpin of early modern Europe's unique stages of development. However, attention to the cheap print stratum of print culture and its role in non-elites'

emergence as self-aware players in this era is has been slim or lacking, particularly with respect to almanacs and their stunningly wide use by a supposedly near-illiterate level of society.

Chapter 3 recounts the historical method and underlying theory employed in this project. The "social cognitive" active-reader media theory of Albert Bandura is aligned with the diffuse but productive media effects theory called "uses and gratifications," with its two-way focus on both producers and users as a double-edged entry to the overall investigative premise. A definition of an "information public" is discussed and elaborated. Methodologically, what's often labeled "history from below" provides strategies of inference that can be applied to cheap print and its users, especially in the (all too typical) absence of a direct record from the non-elites being considered. The universe of surviving almanacs from 1595-1640 is described and an analytical method outlined.

Chapter 4 contextualizes these concepts and consequences in the history of the period 1603-1641 in England. The broad political changes and conflicts and the specific role of print culture in the public perception of those changes and conflicts are set out. The chapter also describes the role of the Stationers' Company in the print culture and its dependence on almanac profits, a point central to this inquiry.

Chapter 5 focuses on the almanacs, their traditions and the genre that the Stationers inherited. An outline of the different features in the

almanacs 1603-1641 provides an overview of the panoply of information types *regularly* provided by almanacs. Other forms of print that jostled almanacs in the marketplace are referred to briefly.

Chapter 6, an extended analytical section, shows how individual almanac brands' content was managed. It begins with a portrait of the genre as it had developed in the decade before 1603. Next comes the period 1603-1640 with the roughly 375 annual editions that appeared consecutively for at least three years as the focus. Individual component features are analyzed as they appear, disappear and reappear in the individual brands and in the Stationers' Company's overall product line during that nearly five-decade span. The alignment between almanac content and the course of a lived year for ordinary early modern English peoples is presented. The patterns of appearance of component features are examined as indications that different types of content inferrably were accepted or rejected by the almanac-buying public – the users.

Chapter 7 draws the project's conclusions from the analysis of almanacs from 1595 to 1640 to show how early modern non-elites emerged as a public for information. That public's enhanced readiness to be a public for news is asserted as a result in significant part of almanac use. Understanding that news, this dissertation contends, depended on a public that had already absorbed some of the "background" from its consumption and use of almanacs. Some similarities to other periods,

including our own, when new or emerging media encounter changing needs of publics are discussed. The research opportunities presented by the limits of this project are also described.

Early Modern Almanacs and Everyday Life in England 1595-1640

"If this history has a moral, it is perhaps that news, like love, will find a way"[15]

This project examines a slippery, fluid and dynamic era. It is important to recognize that early modern non-elites were, by many accounts, still struggling to achieve some sense of collective, possibly even a rudimentary class-based, consensus about ordinary life and its extraordinary tragedies and variations. This consensus expanded slowly beyond villages and towns to patchily inhabit the emerging nation. This consensus about what was normal in everyday life is the gate through which news – the unusual – finds a way into the print culture of ordinary people.

Even as almanacs provided information for growing communities of practice about each year's trade fairs and the roads that threaded through England from fair to fair, they also warned that each season brought its typical pitfalls – mishaps and tragedies, diseases (of humans, crops and animals) even misbehavior or mismanagement by landlords that could turn a prosperous year to a failing or lethal one. In this sense

---

[15] Matthias Shaaber, *Some Forerunners of the Newspaper in England, 1476-1622* (New York: Octagon Books, 1966), 318.

the almanacs, sometimes no more than *pro forma* religious in character,

nevertheless sang the same tune as the preacher: expect the worst and

you'll never be disappointed. Every almanac user knew that disease

would take many souls in the year to come, and the almanac was right

there to outline (for instance) which maladies were most common in

which of the four seasons. The question was not: would there be

extraordinary events? The question was: whose names would be on the

list?

But, though those almanacs warned against complacent

expectations of a lucky life, they spread a positive sense of

contemporaneity among their users from end to end of the nascent

nation, a reflective understanding: as their view widened to encompass

more and more of the nation, so it became clear that more and more of

their fellows grasped everyday life pretty much as they did. Their

awareness of the popularity and ubiquity of the brand-name almanacs

they bought every November, and of their widening use by others, was a

material aid to this sense of contemporaneity and shared experience.

Brendan Dooley, editor of an anthology around this concept, described it

as

> …the perception, shared by a number of human beings, of
> experiencing a particular event at more or less the same time.
> … the observers in question may be out of sight or earshot of
> one another and still imagine themselves as a group. … At the
> very least, it may add to a notion of participating in a shared
> present, of existing in a length of time called "now." … It may

contribute to individuals' sense of community, or their identification with one another. With good reason, anthropologists and historians have identified it as a hallmark of modernity."[16]

If there was a nascent public sphere emerging in early modern England – as some scholars have asserted – this is what it looked like. Almanac users gained an understanding that even the difficult chances of life could be reined in with a heightened management of probabilities that came with better information. There was a growing notion that anticipation and preparation could be practical and proactive within the overall orderly unfolding of the future within the framework of year, month, week and day as laid out in the two-penny book in the householder's pocket.

The almanac's role, this project argues, was to give some order to that grasp of the everyday that anchored behavior and practice even when the course of events made orderliness look shaky and frayed. Even in wartime, almanacs (which were then, if possible, even more popular) represented the order against which disorder might be understood. Disorder, as it grew, finally brought forth a weekly news product, the "newsbooks," that showed specifically, in the new, speeded-up calendar of wartime, how the everyday order was threatened. Without the grounded understanding of the world's materiality imparted to a wide

---

[16] Brendan Dooley, ed., *The Dissemination of News and the Emergence of Contemporaneity* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing, 2010), xiii.

non-elite public by annual almanacs, these wartime messengers of the unusual – counted the first "journalism" in English – could not have had the effect they had or gained the popularity they manifestly did.

Chapter 2: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE on Early Modern Almanacs and their Context

This project aims to show that early modern English almanacs, a hugely popular annual product in the first half of the seventeenth century that were purchased (often regularly in November) by up to one in three households in England *every year*,[17] were instrumental in forming a non-elite public for the kind of information that became "news." The argument here is that the almanac provided that emerging public of ordinary people with substantive factual backgrounding for the new forms of news publications that sprang up in wartime.

The literature that bears on this effort sorts itself into first, works offering direct consideration of almanacs and their makers and second, a variety of other writings and inquiries that helpfully converge on the subject. The convergent inquiries include wider examinations of the development of print culture, studies focusing on literacy and active readership, the growing business of printing and publishing in England's

---

[17] Roger Lockyer said there were just above 4 million living in England in 1601; making (at an estimation) perhaps just under a million households. Keith Wrightson points out that households were more than kinship locations; servants and apprentices were included, so four or more per household would seem reasonable. That would comport with the accepted figure from Blagden that 300,000 to 400,000 almanacs were printed in 1663 (for 1664) just after the Restoration following the civil war. Lockyer, *Tudor and Stuart Britain,* 511; Wrightson, *Earthly Necessities*, 30-42, esp. 32; Cyprian Blagden, "The Distribution of Almanacks in the Second Half of the Seventeenth Century," 116 fold out chart recto.

early seventeenth century and features of social and political history in that era, the prelude to the civil wars that took place 1641-60.

Scholarly consideration of almanacs as such is rich but rare. With some exceptions, relatively little has been written directly about almanacs, and much of that has been of bibliographical, rather than wider, interest. Almanacs' relatively low priority in the literature seems, on consideration, to reflect the preoccupations of scholars with other (perhaps more elevated) topics, at least up to very recent times. Most interest in early modern print culture has focused on print products as literature or as advances in knowledge. Almanacs are lumped, instead, with the "cheap print" that appealed to common tastes. It is exactly their role as popular, cheap print that puts them at the center of this project. Their broad popularity and odd infusion of astrology in a deadly-serious religious era have drawn limited serious scholarly inquiry, and much of that bears on their role as popular information vehicles as well.

Almanacs in Early Modern Historical Writing

The most useful and relevant work focusing on early modern almanacs came from Bernard Capp, Eustace Bosanquet and Keith Thomas. Bernard Capp's account of the English almanacs of three centuries, from their first appearance to their waning toward the end of the eighteenth century, is central to this inquiry. No researcher before or since has gone so deeply into the almanac as a material phenomenon of print culture and social impact. No other

examination of almanacs since his 1979 study has done more than nibble around the edges of his masterwork. Capp's work has made this project possible, but the singularity of *English Almanacs 1500-1800: Astrology and the Popular Press*[18] results in this project's relying on it to an extensive degree, and the debt is gratefully acknowledged.

Because this project's focus is on almanacs as information vehicles and precursors of news, Capp's work provides both an opportunity for rich and productive extension from his effort and a quite different analytical model. Though Capp touched frequently on the way almanacs developed during this period, the factors that could have a role in that development were inconsistently addressed. His approach, in displaying almanacs as instances of the popular press during this period, somewhat flattened the picture of their development and dealt only sporadically with the important commercial incentives that shaped the large and important business of almanacs and their relation to a public.

This project, instead, sees the English almanacs of the first half of the seventeenth century as showing development as a genre in response to a public. For Capp, by contrast, the genre was largely

---

[18] Capp, *English Almanacs, 1500-1800: Astrology and the Popular Press* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1979).

static although individuals occasionally stood out. He saw the Stationers' Company monopoly on almanacs as peripheral and gave the almanac-buying public comparatively little attention. Capp's account, however, presented a rich and valuable thematic approach, setting almanacs in the religious and political context of the day, and in the emerging science of which astrology was both a working model and a blind alley. His 2004 article on "The Potter Almanacs," a private collection, provided a tight summary of the almanacs' essence.[19]

Eustace Bosanquet, working in the early twentieth century, was among the first bibliophiles to catalog almanacs. His *English printed almanacks and prognostications; a bibliographical history to the year 1600*[20] discussed the earlier survivors of the genre. Capp, whose book contained the most complete catalog of almanacs through 1800, noted that Bosanquet, within his chosen dates, was the earlier craftsman who set the bar for completeness. Cyprian Blagden, an important historian of the Stationers' Company, in addition uncovered and explicated a rare find of records of almanac printing and distribution in one critical year (1663), a discovery that empirically placed almanacs as among the most

---

[19] Bernard Capp, "The Potter Almanacs," *Electronic British Library Journal* (2004): article 4, http://www.british-library.uk/eblj/2004articles/pdf/article4.pdf.

[20] Eustace Bosanquet, *English Printed Almanacks and Prognostications: A Bibliographical History to the Year 1600* (London: Bibliographical Society/Chiswick Press, 1917).

widely popular cheap print products.[21]

Almanacs were part of an overall experience and sensibility of non-elites that skewed significantly different from the life-experience of their "betters" in the elite classes. Keith Thomas's *Religion and the Decline of Magic* included almanacs in his broader overview of the factors in the everyday lives of these ordinary folk in a day when Christianity outside the schools remained something of a civic veneer over folk practices that spoke to far more intimate relations between humans and nature. His observations on almanacs, because of their orientation toward popular response and use, served the purpose of this project in some respects as much as Capp's more directed work, which references Thomas as friend and mentor.[22]

Other writers have focused on almanacs of the period in pursuit of slightly different goals. Patrick Curry in *Prophecy and Power: Astrology in Early Modern England* aimed to rescue the astrological craft from historical oblivion and show that the guidance of the heavens was acknowledged by many powerful figures before and after the restoration of the monarchy in 1660. Included in his study are such influential almanac compilers as William Lilly (published 1644-1682). Ann Geneva

---

[21] Blagden, "The Distribution of Almanacks," 108-117.

[22] Capp, *Almanacs,* 13; Keith Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic: Studies in Popular Beliefs in Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century England* (London: Penguin University Books, 1973).

in *Astrology and the Seventeenth Century Mind* also sought to establish the influence of astrology in the era, providing a lengthy chapter on "The Stars' Chiefest Ambassador," Lilly, and his virally popular almanac, *Merlinus Anglicus Jr.*[23] Curry and Geneva's apparent desire to restore astrology to at least plausible status among objects of study overstated the superstardom of individual almanac brand-makers and made their studies thematically less helpful for this dissertation than those of Thomas, Blagden and others.

Don Cameron Allen's *The Star-Crossed Renaissance: The Quarrel about Astrology and its Influence in England* represented the excursion of a scholar of literature into astrology's role in the literature of the time. It was framed by the conflict between religious belief and astrology starting with Italian renaissance thinkers. Allen was generally scornful of the astrologers and almanac-makers themselves, picturing them as writers of less than genius who plodded in the same track year after year. He saw almanacs as properly the butt of witty parody, suggesting that when Restoration wits found popularity with parodies of famous astrologers like Lilly, "the burlesque almanac [became] an established form of literature, and the astrologers' professional compilations had fathered a child more respectable than themselves." [24] Allen's perspective illustrated

---

[23] Patrick Curry, *Prophecy and Power: Astrology in Early Modern England* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1989); Ann Geneva, *Astrology and the Seventeenth-Century Mind: William Lilly and the Language of the Stars* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995).

[24] Don Cameron Allen, *The Star-Crossed Renaissance: The Quarrel about Astrology and Its Influence in England* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1941, reprinted New York: Octagon Books, 1966), 243.

the difficulty almanacs have had gaining a place in the scholarly canon of the era.

Louise Hill Curth focused on case studies of medical advice as found in almanacs. She explored the relation of medical practice to astrology and to almanacs in *English almanacs, astrology, and popular medicine: 1550-1700*. Curth was in turn mentored by Capp, and her work provided much valuable peripheral material on the production, compiling, and sale of almanacs throughout the seventeenth century.[25]

Adam Smyth, also writing from the perspective of a scholar of literature, is among an increasing number of scholars examining the expression ("life-writing") of everyday folk in their diaries, commonplace books and almanacs. Not all everyday folk, of course, could write or were writers, so his work shifts the focus to the emerging bourgeois "middling sort" who occupied social ranks between the poorer agricultural laborers and journeymen and the university-educated elite. He was particularly interested in popular almanacs that were "blanks," providing a double-page monthly calendar with printed entries on the left page and a blank page for appointments, notes and financial jottings on the right. Smyth's article, "Almanacs, Annotators, and Life-Writing in Early Modern England," later expanded in a chapter of his *Autobiography in Early*

---

[25] Louise Hill Curth, *English Almanacs, Astrology, and Popular Medicine: 1550-1700* (New York: Manchester University Press, 2007).

Modern England, examined almanacs closely for the visible engagement the owner/users had with their material, portable calendars.[26]

In a related study that served as a real stimulus to this present project, Neil Rhodes claimed in "Articulate Networks: the Self, the Book and the World" that the almanac was a prime example of the "Renaissance Computer," a kind of "knowledge technology" that served as a "portable compendium of universal knowledge for the man in the cobbled lane."[27] Many of the essays in Rhodes and Jonathan Sawday's anthology *The Renaissance Computer* took an oblique and rewarding perspective on the tools for agency that early modern peoples of all classes found in print culture. Rhodes's especially fertile observation about early modern almanacs encompasses both the individual agency and the wide sense of collective participation that will be asserted about those almanacs: despite the fact that it was reproduced more or less exactly in thousands of copies every year, in its functioning features and especially the inviting space for self-expression in the blanks, the almanac is "paradoxically, a kind of book which was reproduced in enormous quantities to a standard formula, but which also exists in thousands of unique versions," Rhodes said.[28]

---

[26] Adam Smyth, "Almanacs, Annotators, and Life-Writing in Early Modern England," *English Literary Renaissance* 38, no. 2 (2008): 200-244; Smyth, *Autobiography in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

[27] Neil Rhodes and Jonathan Sawday, eds., *The Renaissance Computer: Knowledge Technology in the First Age of Print* (New York: Routledge, 2000), 185.

[28] Rhodes, "Articulate Networks," in *Renaissance Computer*, 185, 186.

Several researchers have explored almanacs as they illustrate both traditional and changing notions of time in the early modern era. Alison Chapman examined the Protestant adaptation of medieval notions of time. Stuart Sherman's *Telling Time: Clocks, Diaries and English Diurnal Form 1660-1785* detailed the way non-elites began to see and manage time as money or opportunity, rather than an unchanging stretch on earth before death. Anne Lake Prescott added valuable observations on the way almanacs adapted (or did not adapt) to the ten-day calendrical gap between the Gregorian calendar used across the Channel and the old-style Julian calendar that the English retained until 1752. [29]

Almanacs as a Genre of Cheap Print

As "cheap print," almanacs are peripherally considered in broader-gauge works on print culture, a modern label for study of a phenomenon that was by this pre-civil wars era about two centuries old. Print culture, as noted, has had something of a class bias as it developed as a separate area of study. The understandable bias of scholarship has been toward the elite products of any era's best writers and thinkers. An example, not overdrawn, comes from Adrian Johns' *The Nature of the Book.* Without

---

[29] Alison Chapman, "Marking Time: Astrology, Almanacs and English Protestantism," *Renaissance Quarterly* 60, no. 4 (2007): 1257-1290; Stuart Sherman, *Telling Time: Clocks, Diaries and English Diurnal Form 1660-1785* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996); Anne Lake Prescott, "Refusing Translation: The Gregorian Calendar and Early Modern English Writers," *The Yearbook of English Studies* 36, no.1 (2006).

apparent irony, Johns asserted: "Learned scholars and gentlemen alike had to commit their tomes to be printed in the midst of almanacs, pamphlets and (in the case of Newton's *Principia*) pornography."[30]

A recent, database-grounded study of medical information available in the vernacular to ordinary folk in early modern England explicitly excluded almanacs from the canon of relevant print works. Asserting (accurately) that almanacs were "complex works with quite variable amounts of health information," Mary E. Fissell nonetheless expelled from "The Marketplace of Print" those cheapest and most accessible print products.[31]

Only in the last few decades have studies of cheap, popular print begun to gain some traction within the wider study of print culture. This parallels the change in historical studies represented by "history from below," [32] an attempt to capture the experience and the roles of ordinary people in those many historical eras when, because they did not produce much writing, they did not not much enter the record.

Anthony Grafton, in a wide-ranging survey of the "history of ideas" in the second half of the twentieth century, observed that

---

[30] Adrian Johns, *The Nature of the Book: Print and Knowledge in the Making* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 100.

[31] Mary E. Fissell, "The Marketplace of Print," in *Medicine and the Market in England and Its Colonies, c. 1450-c. 1850,* eds. Mark S.R. Jenner and Patrick Wallis (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2007), 111.

[32] Eric Hobsbawm, "On History from Below," in *History from Below: Studies in Popular Protest and Popular Ideology,* ed. Frederick Krantz (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 13-28; reprinted in Hobsbawm, *On History,* 201-216 (New York: The New Press, 1997). Citations follow reprint.

During the 1990s… intellectual history took its own material turn. In the 1980s [Robert] Darnton and other scholars, primarily Roger Chartier and Carlo Ginzburg, had created a new history of books and readers. This study used a great range of evidence to reconstruct the ways in which the great books of a given period had actually been shaped, printed, and marketed, *and in which books of lesser quality had actually been sold and read.* Early historians of the book tended to argue… that the experience of large numbers of readers, to be reconstructed from the records of publishers, could shed a bright light on such endlessly debated problems as the origins of the French and English revolutions.[33]

The ordinary folk who are purchasers and users of cheap print are both important to this project and hard to get in focus. Occasionally, individuals emerge from what relatively few records exist. In Ginzburg's *The Cheese and the Worms*, he explored the Inquisition's records of "Menoccio," a literate Italian peasant of the sixteenth century who avidly developed transgressive interpretations of both permitted and suspect books, and who cheerfully retailed his interpretations to the astonished inquisitors. He was burned at the stake for his honesty.[34]

The advent of "history from below" in the world of media and communications began with these scholars and this "material turn" in the history of ideas. They asked to what extent were "Menoccios" not the exception, but rather characteristic of an active readership among non-

---

[33] Anthony Grafton, "The History of Ideas: Precepts and Practices, 1950-2000 and Beyond," in Grafton, *Worlds Made by Words* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009), 211 (my italics).

[34] Carlo Ginzburg, *The Cheese and the Worms: The Cosmos of a Sixteenth-Century Miller*, trans. John and Anne Tedeschi (New York: Penguin Books, 1982).

elite people of the early modern era? This project draws on their ideas.

Cheap Print in the Framework of Print Culture

For the historian approaching print culture from the media or journalism disciplinary framework, the way into the information, and news, appetites and practices of ordinary people often begins with a book called *A History of News: From the Drum to the Satellite.*[35] This account by Mitchell Stephens focused on how peoples from the very earliest times had conveyed critical information, came to recognize some of it as time-sensitive news, and valued and sought it out. The book's thesis, that human impulses and needs eventually brought news to print, is crucial. Well before news was produced by journalists, in Stephens's narrative, it was for people at all social levels the orally transmitted "need to know it right now" component of a wider base of information. And without that background information, "news" is less comprehensible and less valuable. The "history of news" consequently was a history about the information that is the precursor of news and from which it springs.

This dissertation encompasses forms of print that were neither elite nor high art. And because the history of print culture (at least until recently) has been written by academics and intellectuals, and written about their counterparts in the early modern era who wrote or read the products of early modern print culture, much cheap print produced for

---

[35] Stephens, *History of News* (New York: Viking Press, 1988).
.

non-elite publics has gotten scant attention. The growth of a print culture began with print but the human motives for information-seeking preceded it and shaped it.

The canonical works in print culture are, expectably, scholars writing not about ordinary readers but about the work of other, older scholars. They start with Elizabeth L. Eisenstein's pathbreaking *The Printing Press as an Agent of Change* (1979) in which she argued for the unique impact of the press as providing reliable and stable texts (which manuscripts did not). Equally important for Eisenstein was the more rapid distribution of that reliable print and its critical role in building a real "Republic of Letters" that transcended national borders. Almanacs and other cheap print, however, did not figure separately in her account; scholarly and scientific writing was foregrounded, along with the work of Continental scholar-printers like Plantin, of Antwerp, or the Aldine press of Venice. Eisenstein argued that the impact of printing on the advance of European civilization had, before her, been far underestimated. That was her cause.[36]

Plenty of qualifications were offered in the wake of Eisenstein's bold assertions. Adrian Johns, two decades later in *The Nature of the Book,* suggested that Eisenstein's view of print's "fixity" (reliability from

---

[36] Elizabeth L. Eisenstein, *The Printing Press as an Agent of Change* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1979), esp. 631, 659.

copy to copy of an edition) foundered on the fact (which he demonstrated) that many changes took place *during* the process of printing the full run of copies of an individual book. This meant not all copies would be identical so the French correspondent might think he knew, but would not really, what his German friend was really reading (both, of course, reading in Latin).[37]

Robert Darnton in "What is the History of Books?" and D.F. McKenzie in "A Sociology of the Text" saw a process more extended, with more encounters, than Eisenstein's appeared to be. Darnton proposed a "circuit" traveled by texts, out from printer and author, received by reader and kibitzer(s) and then traveled back to author and printer with responses, polite or otherwise.[38] Unlike in the manuscript era, the potential readership for print was of unknown size and reader response, collective or individual, a matter of nervous speculation for the new capitalists of print. From their point of view, several hundred copies of a book for which no-one had asked were a huge risk unless authored by a proven best-seller like Erasmus.

The French Annales School historian Roger Chartier spearheaded a return to consieration of the reading act, in which recipients of text

---

[37] Johns, *Nature of the Book,* esp. 10-11, 13-14.

[38] Darnton, "What is the History of Books?" *Daedalus* 111, no. 3 (1982): 65-84.; D[onald] F. McKenzie, "The Sociology of a Text: Orality, Literacy and Print in Early New Zealand," in *The Book History Reader,* 2nd ed., eds. David Finkelstein and Alistair McCleery, 205-231 (New York/London: Routledge, 2006).

"appropriated" it, perhaps well beyond the early modern writer's intended meaning. Chartier extended the insights of Michel de Certeau, who saw readers and other users "poaching" from a text to create qualities and meanings for themselves that went well beyond author's or publishers' intentions.[39] Chartier's work, like de Certeau's was empirically grounded in close readings.

The magisterial *The Coming of the Book* produced in 1958 (translated into English just as Eisenstein's work appeared in the late 1970s) by Lucien Febvre and Henri-Jean Martin served as a foundational template for continental studies of print culture like Chartier's. The authors focused on print as part of a business and public culture but steered clear of an exclusive focus on works and activities of scholars and their printers. They included those books and pamphlets (and almanacs) brought from cities to the country folk by the *colporteur*, the French peddler who was the counterpart of the English traveling salesman, the chapman.[40]

---

[39] Roger Chartier, *The Order of Books: Readers, Authors and Libraries in Europe between the Fourteenth and Eighteenth Centuries,* trans. Lydia G. Cochrane (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1994); Chartier, *Forms and Meanings: Text, Performance and Audiences from Codex to Computer* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1996); Chartier, "Laborers and Voyagers: From the Text to the Reader," in *The Book History Reader,* 2nd ed., eds. David Finkelstein and Alistair McCleery, 87-98 (New York/London: Routledge, 2006); Michel de Certeau, *Culture in the Plural*, trans. Tom Conley (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1997).

[40] Lucien Febvre and Henri-Jean Martin, *The Coming of the Book: The Impact of Printing 1450-1800*, trans. David Gerard (London: Verso [second impression], 1986). First published 1958 as *L'apparition du livre.*

A close look at French almanacs was provided by Geneviève Bollème in *Les Almanachs Populaires Aux XVII et XVIII Siècles: Essai d'Histoire Sociale.* Bollème's study provided important insights into the role of astrology, time and medical advice in the lives of those ordinary folk across the Channel who were almanac users.[41]

Other scholars discussed or examined how reading and writing changed the thinking and practices of the participants in print culture. Peter Burke and Asa Briggs in *A Social History of the Media* and Jack Goody in *The Logic of Writing and the Organization of Society*, as well as Walter Ong in his groundbreaking, Marshall McLuhan-influenced *Orality and Literacy* treated audiences as publics to some extent created or shaped by print. For Ong, textuality (compared to orality) is a brain-changer, creating the context for longer and more complex chains of reasoning that were dynamically self-enhancing. [42] For all these scholars, the textuality of reading and writing acted in an evolutionary fashion within individuals and cultures. Burke elaborated on the development of distinct spoken and print cultures in *Languages and Communities in Early Modern Europe.*[43] Other relevant works on Continental parallels in

---

[41] Geneviève Bollème, *Les almanachs populaires aux XVII et XVIII siècles: essai d'histoire sociale* (Paris: Mouton & Co., 1969).

[42] Asa Briggs and Peter Burke, *A Social History of the Media, from Gutenberg to the Internet* (London: Polity Press, 2002); Peter Burke, *A Social History of Knowledge: From Gutenberg to Diderot* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2000); Jack Goody, *The Logic of Writing and the Organization of Society* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1986); Walter J. Ong, *Orality & Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word* (London: Routledge/New Accents, 1988).

[43] Burke, *Languages and Communities in Early Modern Europe* (New York: Cambridge University Press,

the development of print culture included Henri-Jean Martin's *The French Book: Religion, Absolutism and Readership 1565-1715* and Natalie Zemon Davis's *Society and Culture in Early Modern France*, in particular the chapter "Printing and the People."[44] David T. Pottinger's *The French Book Trade in the Ancien Regime 1500-1791* provided important comparisons between the printing guild structures in England and France.[45]

In a work preliminary to *Orality and Literacy*, Walter Ong traced the effects of changes in post-medieval rhetorical studies in the universities of Europe and the consequent ripples in the emerging educational systems in *Ramus, Method, and the Decay of Dialogue*.[46] Ong saw the popular French rhetorician and teacher Peter Ramus (1515-1572) and his graphic, schematic method of arranging knowledge in textbooks as blunting the edge and ruining the temper of classic Renaissance scholarship. Ramus's visual method became widespread in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century schoolbooks and Ramism's trademark brackets – among other things, a space-saving layout device – were scattered generously through the English almanacs under study

---

2004).

[44] Henri-Jean Martin, *The French Book: Religion, Absolutism and Readership 1585-1715*, trans. Paul Saenger and Nadine Seanger (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996); Natalie Zemon Davis, *Society and Culture in Early Modern France* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1975).

[45] David Pottinger, *The French Book Trade in the Ancien Regime 1500-1791* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1958).

[46] Ong, *Ramus: Method and the Decay of Dialogue* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1983).

here.

As the educational process, increasingly fueled by print, became formalized and situated in grammar schools, paratextual devices (many derived from Ramus and his canon) to guide the reader/user through extended reasoning and categorizing of nature entered the printing of textbooks. Ann Blair has shown that beginning several centuries before Ramus, typography and the categorizing medieval mentality were put in harness as "finding features of print" by scholars who aimed to preserve and simplify the immense new quantities of information being generated by university education and print. Brackets and tabular layout on the page, indexes, tables of contents and summaries, even navigational cover design, became printer-publisher standards of practice.[47] These features also became part of the paratextual strategy visible in the pages of almanacs. Ong's lament for the end of the medieval tradition of dialogic disputation in education nevertheless acknowledged that the diagrammatic pedagogy of Ramus made its mark. The use of "Ramist" brackets and other typographical devices to organize complex relations among facts and ideas turned up not only in English schoolbooks but also in English almanacs as enablers of advancement for those with varying levels of literacy. "Paratext" not only provided navigability but

---

[47] Ann Blair, *Too Much To Know*: *Managing Scholarly Information before the Modern Age* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2010); Rhodes and Sawday, *The Renaissance Computer*; Helen Smith and Louise Wilson, eds., *Renaissance Paratexts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011); Gerard Genette, "Introduction to the Paratext," trans. Marie Maclean, *New Literary History* 22 (Spring 1991): 261-272.

identified a material print object by genre or purpose. Not only the textuality of print but the manner of presentation and genre signifiers were enfolded in the "reading act" that was increasingly accessible to ordinary people through cheap print products.

The size of the public for cheap print is hard to determine for the period studied in this dissertation. The degree of literacy enjoyed by various social strata (and across genders) is disputed, though scholars generally agree it was low among the less-educated. Data on numbers of children who were schooled – and to what level – remain skimpy, but some were provided by Lawrence Stone in his 1964 article, "The Educational Revolution in England."[48] Stone suggested that literacy in the late sixteenth century was reasonably high, especially among urban men. David Cressy's 1980 book, *Literacy and the Social Order*, made more specific estimates largely based on the proportion of those who could write their names versus those who "made a mark" as seen in some long lists that all citizens were required to sign.[49] By that measure a half to three-quarters of male skilled tradesmen, such as weavers or butchers, qualified as literate. Cressy's findings, like Stone's, were critiqued; Keith Thomas and Barry Reay both argued that literacy was not an either/or status and that there were "literacies" at various levels

---

[48] Stone, "Educational Revolution".
[49] David Cressy, *Literacy and the Social Order: Reading and Writing in Tudor and Stuart England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980).

spread across the spectrum of early modern English people regardless of their ability to write. Reading ability, they suggested, could keep on improving with use after schooling had ended.[50] R. A. Houston, in *Literacy in Early Modern Europe*, noted that reading and then writing were taught at different school levels, not concurrently, and that many young students were pulled out of school by their parents to work after they had learned some reading but before writing entered the curriculum. Boys and girls attended the "humblest" elementary schools together but "women's literacy was... everywhere inferior to that of males...[51] This project's focus on the accessibility and navigability of the almanac favors the incremental improvement to literacy at every age and occupational level that is represented in Thomas's "literacies."

Print Culture's Materiality

The evidence on which print culture theory is grounded brings the inquiry back to the venerable warehouse of bibliography. Important, painstaking work underpins (and sometimes undermines) the revolutionary change agents, circuits and active readers of theory.

Andrew Pettegree's *The Book in the Renaissance* followed the material trail from the manuscript era. It showed how book preparation

---

[50] Keith Thomas, "The Meaning of Literacy in Early Modern England," in *The Written Word: Literacy in Transition*, edited by Gerd Bauman, 97-131 (New York: Oxford/Clarendon, 1986); Barry Reay, *Popular Cultures in England, 1550-1750* (London: Longman, 1998).

[51] Houston, *Literacy in Early Modern Europe: Culture & Education 1500-1800* (New York: Longman, 1988), 19, 32-33, 60.

(including manuscripts) became industrialized and secularized as it ebbed away from the monasteries toward the urban universities. The major and minor changes of the first two centuries of printing saw an increased reach for print as scholarly and textbook publishing gave way to popular works. Pettegree's treatment of English print culture relegated it to the margins, which in many ways is where it belonged (as we see from Marjorie Plant, below, as well).[52] With the possible exception of William Caxton, England's first printer[53], no English printing houses of the stature and quality of the continental giants Aldus Manutius or Christophe Plantin[54] stood forth through the period being examined here. Pettegree's expert development of the manner in which the Reformation lit a fire under the cause of mass literacy carries continuing relevance for this study. English Protestantism's internal struggle, the capstone of the era under consideration, shows the reach of that Lutheran impulse.

Marjorie Plant and H.S. Bennett focused on the English printing trade, however paltry it might seem next to the continental examples [55]. Their work definitely predated the full flowering of today's print culture studies and was firmly embedded in the bibliographical tradition. When in Plant's estimate English printing caught up with its continental rivals

---

[52] Pettegree, *Book in the Renaissance,* 123-126.

[53] Caxton, who learned his trade in France before locating in England, is honored today for excellent early printings of canonical English works by Chaucer and Malory (*Morte D'Arthur*).

[54] Pettegree, *Book in the Renaissance*, 60-62; 216-17.

[55] Marjorie Plant, *The English Book Trade: An Economic History of the Making and Sale of Books*, 3rd ed. (London: Allen & Unwin, 1974); H.S. Bennett, *English Books and Readers: Being a Study of the Book Trade…* 3 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1965-1970).

at the beginning of the seventeenth century, it "was not due to progress at home so much as to a falling from the previously high standard abroad."[56] Bennett's exhaustive account of popular as well as lit'ry publication from the beginning of English printing to the civil wars is essential backdrop, and Plant's steadily businesslike narrative from the beginnning of printing, its ancillary factors like paper, and the printers complements the different foci of Blagden and Gadd, below.

The Worshipful Company of Stationers

Britain's guild of printers and publishers, the Worshipful Company of Stationers, figures importantly in this investigation. The investigator quickly found that revered craftsmen like the Continental titans were not found in the Stationers' Company of London. Like printer and bookseller guilds all over Europe, the Stationers' Company was an early capitalist formation that also constituted in England one of the earliest manufacturing industries – in the sense of turning out large numbers of virtually identical products using a mechanical process in which individual craft had a decreasing role. Starting with its formal recognition in a 1557 royal charter, the Company's leadership tried to limit the number of master printers maintaining presses in order to keep prices high, and keep work scarce to keep labor costs low – despite the fact that their charter and their later privileges were granted on the premise they would help to care for the less fortunate among the guild's members. It

---

[56] Plant, *Book Trade*, 31-32.

also granted them a monopoly over the craft of printing and confined all printing in England (save for two specialized, limited university presses) to the political and commercial capital city of London.

The Stationers created a corporate benefit entity, the English Stock, that received royal patents enabling a company monopoly on certain high-value staples of the trade, including some religious materials like psalters, some school textbooks, ballads and – most importantly to this inquiry – all almanacs printed in England.[57]

Critical sidelights on the company were earlier provided by bibliographers including Edward Arber, W. W. Greg, E. Boswell and William A. Jackson, who provided reliable editions of, and commentary on, the Stationers' Company internal records. [58]

Many earlier bibliographic specialists had dealt with the Stationers as the quarrelsome but essential printers and purveyors of the great literature of the Tudor and Stuart period. Cyprian Blagden's study, *The Stationers' Company: A History 1403-1959*, is a forthrightly corporate history Blagden's approach, and Ian Gadd's more recent work, focused on the Company as a profit-seeking corporate entity, struggling for status

---

[57] W. W. Greg, *Aspects and Problems of London Publishing Between 1550 and 1650* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1956), 101.
[58] Edward Arber, *A Transcript of the Register of the Company of Stationers of London 1554-1640*, 5 vols. (London: Peter Smith publishers, 1950) [orig. 1875-94]; Greg, *Aspects and Problems;* Greg and E. Boswell, eds., *Records of the Court of the Stationers' Company, 1576 to 1602 – from Register B* (London: The Bibliographical Society, 1930); William A. Jackson, ed., *Records of the Court of the Stationers' Company 1602 to 1640* (London: The Bibliographical Society, 1957).

among London's professional guilds.[59]

The Stationers' Company was empowered by civil and religious authorities to enforce not only internal regulations about the numbers of printers and presses in London, but also the censorship regime. How rigorous was it at that second duty, and how much pressure was on them from those authorities? Sheila Lambert, historian of seventeenth-century Parliamentary procedure, and Cyndia Clegg, another literary scholar, deflated some myths about the rigor and consistency of censorship.[60] Joad Raymond, Jason McElligott and Michael Mendle augmented and, sometimes, disputed that strand of the research. The earlier scholarly consensus that the state applied rigorous and consistent censorship with the Stationers as willing enforcers has, it is fair to say, been muddied if not shattered in more recent years.[61]

Robin Myers, official archivist of the Stationers' Company in the modern era, edited (often with Michael Harris) many volumes of articles

---

[59] Cyprian Blagden, *The Stationers' Company: A History 1403-1959* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1960); Ian Gadd, *'Being Like a Field': Corporate Identity in the Stationers' Company, 1557-1684* (D.Phil. diss., Pembroke College [Oxford], 1999).

[60]Sheila Lambert, "The Printers and the Government, 1604-1657," in *Aspects of Printing from 1600,* eds. R. Myers and M. Harris (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1987), 1-29; Lambert, "State Control of the Press in Theory and Practice: The Role of the Stationers' Company before 1640," in *Censorship and the Control of Print*, eds. R. Myers and M. Harris (Winchester, UK: St. Paul's Press, 1992), 1-32; Cyndia Clegg, *Press Censorship in Jacobean England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

[61] Michael Mendle, "De Facto Freedom, De Facto Authority: Press and Parliament, 1640-1643," *Historical Journal* 38, no. 2 (1995): 307-32; Joad Raymond, The *Invention of the Newspaper: English Newsbooks 1641-1649* (Oxford: Clarendon Press 1996), esp. 92-95; Jason McElligott, "'A Couple of Hundred Squabbling Small Tradesmen'? Censorship, the Stationers' Company, and the State in Early Modern England," *Media History* 19, no. 1-2 (2005): 87-104.

about the English book trade; *Aspects of Printing from 1600, Censorship and the Control of Print* and *Spreading the Word: the distribution networks of print 1550-1850* were examples.[62] Myers and Harris's collection of scholars provided details of how printers and booksellers did their business and spread their work throughout England when the printing trade was with two university exceptions confined to London. Invaluable information about the university press at Cambridge that became a sudden rival to the Stationers' almanac monopoly in the 1620s and 1630s came from the first volume of David McKitterick's *A History of the Cambridge University Press*, covering the period 1534-1698.[63]

A Political Dimension

An extension of the notion of the active audience or "active reader" offers several applications of public sphere frameworks. Jurgen Habermas's portrait of the late 18th-early 19th-century layering of a self-aware, information-consuming civic culture positioned between the idealizations of "state" and "governed" has been pushed back into the early modern era by political historians. David Zaret, Steve Pincus, Peter Lake, Jason Peacey and Brendan Dooley participated in the retrofitting of Habermas.

Pincus and Lake summarized:

---

[62] Myers and Harris, *Aspects* and *Censorship*, see Lambert *supra*; *Spreading the Word: The Distribution Networks of Print* (Winchester, UK: St. Paul's Press, 1990).

[63] McKitterick, *A History of the Cambridge University Press, vol. I, Printing and the Book Trade in Cambridge, 1534-1698* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

The 'public sphere' has been moving backward in time. The term 'bourgeois public sphere' originally referred to a particular kind of Enlightenment discussion. However, "public sphere" now appears frequently in articles and monographs referring to the Restoration, the Interregnum, the Civil War, and it is even invading the Elizabethan and early Stuart periods."[64]

Zaret, in a 2000 book, *Origins of Democratic Culture: Printing, Petitions and the Public Sphere in Early-Modern England*, found that the rapid-fire interactions of dueling pamphlets and newsbooks in the civil wars era and later created a "dialogic" dynamic that invited more and more self-aware participants into the political mix. For Pincus, it was coffee-house culture that swelled the sphere; Peacey argued in *Politicians and Pamphleteers* (2004) that Parliament was first off the mark in hiring professional polemicists to address "a politically aware mass reading public … which could no longer be ignored."[65] Though many of these participants in political discourse were the educated elite, a greater and greater number of common folk appeared to be joining in as the nation rumbled toward conflict in the 1630s. Whether the almanac trade responded to this increased rhetorical heat, or offered a refuge from it, is part of the narrative.

---

[64] Lake and Pincus, "Rethinking the Public Sphere in Early Modern England," *Journal of British Studies* 45, no. 2 (2006): 270-292; quote at 270.

[65] Jason Peacey, *Politicians and Pamphleteers: Propaganda During the English Civil Wars and Interregnum* (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2004), 36; Steve Pincus, "'Coffee Politicians Does Create': Coffeehouses and Restoration Political Culture," *The Journal of Modern History* 67, no. 4 (1995): 807-834; David Zaret, *Origins of Democratic Culture: Printing, Petitions and the Public Sphere in Early-Modern England* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000).

Brendan Dooley is editor of *The Dissemination of News and the Emergence of Contemporaneity in Early Modern Europe,* which explored the recent and provocative title term "contemporaneity," which he defined as "the perception, shared by a number of human beings, of experiencing a particular event at more or less the same time."[66] Dooley and Sabrina Baron curated a group of studies in *The Politics of Information in Early Modern Europe* that focused on not only print but manuscript newsletters and other channels that were building the discourse in England and on the Continent during the ruinous Thirty Years' War (1618-1648). Daniel Woolf's fertile speculation on the changing perception of time and how to use it resulting from the impact of more and more news-type information is a fertile concept in this project. [67]

As for the culture of cheap, popular print that is the core of this inquiry, it is extensively treated by contributors to the new volume 1 of *The Oxford History of Popular Print Culture*, entitled *Cheap Print in Britain and Ireland to 1660*. Among other entries, Lauren Kassell's roundup of the latest findings on "Almanacs and Prognostications" along with Simon Schaffer's detailed focus on popular almanacs' role in his "Science" entry

---

[66] Dooley, *Emergence of Contemporaneity*.

[67] Woolf, "News, History and the Construction of the Present in Early Modern England," in *The Politics of Information in Early Modern Europe*, eds. Sabrina A. Baron and Brendan Dooley, 80-118 (London: Routledge, 2001).

effectively capstone the more recent literature on almanacs.[68]

The relationship between "cheap print" and popular culture has been explored in many earlier works, including especially Margaret Spufford's *Small Books and Pleasant Histories: Popular Fiction and its Readership in Seventeenth-Century England.* H.W. Bennett's third volume in *English Books and Readers*, covering 1603 to 1640, was a staple in this study. Bernard Capp has written on "Popular Literature" among numerous pertinent works in Barry Reay's anthology *Popular Culture in Seventeenth-Century England* and important work on everyday readers and the low-cost books they read is found dispersed within other anthologies that predominantly focus on the well-known literary figures of the era.[69] Other works that helpfully focus on the cheap print that competed with almanacs for attention from ordinary readers include Tessa Watt's *Cheap Print and Popular Piety 1550-1640*, which focused especially on the ballads of the era.[70] Joad Raymond's thorough *Pamphlets and Pamphleteering in Early Modern Britain* covered the combative genre that was almost the opposite number of the depoliticized almanacs.[71] Essays in *Books and Readers in Early Modern England:*

---

[68] Raymond, *Oxford History*: Schaffer, 398-416; Kassell, 430-442.

[69] Spufford, *Small Books and Pleasant Histories: Popular Fiction and its Readership in Seventeenth-Century England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981); Bennett, *Books and Readers*; Capp, "Popular Literature" in *Popular Culture in Seventeenth-Century England,* ed. Barry Reay, 198-243 (Beckenham, Kent UK: Croom Helm, 1985).

[70] Tessa Watt, *Cheap Print and Popular Piety 1550-1650* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

[71] Joad Raymond, *Pamphlets and Pamphleteering in Early Modern Britain* (Cambridge: Cambridge

Material Studies, edited by Jennifer Anderson and Elizabeth Sauer, focused on specific instances of "readers, booksellers and collectors" such as the preservers of cheap print and the annotators of books; Stephen Orgel's afterword was especially valuable.[72]

The net effect of this tapestry of attention to popular print has been to widen the historically accepted range of public participation in the flow of events and ideas. The non-elite people who would surprise the gentry with their autonomous political engagement were learning the dimensions of their agency and empowerment as they learned more about the dimension and qualities of their political, social and natural environment. The likelihood that print, and print of the cheapest, was instrumental in this significant change has been growing with this scholarship.

Electronic Resources are Primary

The communications researcher based in the United States is, however, contemporaneously blessed when it comes to the primary source, the almanacs that have survived from 1595 to 1640. The trek from library to library by English researchers like Bosanquet and Capp to inspect these ephemera has been turned into a journey of a single (well, a few) clicks by the database Early English Books Online [EEBO].

University Press, 2003).

[72] Orgel, "Afterword: Records of Culture," in *Books and Readers in Early Modern England: Material Studies,* eds. Jennifer Anderson and Elizabeth Sauer, 282-289 (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002).

All the almanacs that have survived the period are recorded in the Short Title Catalog [STC2],[73] now also available online. Many, though not all, of them are displayed page by page and image by image in EEBO. In charting the features of almanacs from 1695 to 1640, the researcher has found occasional disconcerting and inconvenient gaps in EEBO's almanacs. In 1608, for example, three of seven almanacs catalogued by Capp and STC are not represented in EEBO; in 1616, four of thirteen almanacs and in 1635 four of eleven. Some choice items among surviving (mostly late-Elizabethan) almanacs held by the Potter estate have been bought by the British Library but have not yet appeared on EEBO.[74]

Nevertheless, 375 surviving almanacs fitting the survey parameters are available for inspection on EEBO from the 45-year period selected, and they are the material for this project. From 1595 to 1615 there are 108 almanacs analyzed; from 1615 to 1625 124; and from 1625 to 1640, 146. A detailed chart of the occurrence by year of twenty of the most frequently offered features in almanacs appears with the analysis and discussion.

This dissertation argues that almanacs – as a material cultural product, as an economic phenomenon and as a piece of "mental furniture" of print culture purchased by a startling number of early

---

[73] "Almanacks, Prognostications and Kalendars," in A. W. Pollard and G. R. Redgrave, *A Short-Title Catalogue of Books Printed in England…,* 2nd ed., rev. and enl. begun by W. A. Jackson and F. S. Ferguson, completed by Katherine Panzer [1 vol.] (London: Bibliographical Society, 1976-1991), 15-30 (hereafter cited as STC2).

[74] Capp, "Potter Almanacs."

modern people in England – are underexamined themselves. True, they appear as a relevant side issue for many other scholarly endeavors concerning the print culture of the early modern period in England and elsewhere. Nevertheless, they have been a surprising overlooked major player in the lives of many in that era.

Chapter 3: THEORY AND METHOD in Search of a Public Organized by Discourse

This project will help illuminate the creation of a public for information that sought and acquired an information utility – an annual almanac – in demonstrably large quantities. The theoretical framework adopted for evaluating the engagement of early modern non-elites with useful information – almanacs in this case – includes

- Analysis of a posited human appetite for, and process for absorbing, valued new information in line with Albert Bandura's social cognitive theory of mass communication;[75]

- Explanation of broad-spectrum media consumption behavior that is encompassed by the "uses and gratifications" theory of media consumption[76] and

- Analysis of how these frameworks in tandem explain a maturing public that returned for 300,000 or more two-penny almanacs once a year, and made individual selections among numerous almanac "brands" available.

---

[75] Bandura, "Social Cognitive Theory of Mass Communication," in *Media Effects: Advances in Theory and Research,* 3rd ed., eds. Jennings Bryant and Mary Beth Oliver, 94-124 (New York: Routledge, 2009).
[76] Elihu Katz, Jay G. Blumler and Michael Gurevitch, "Utilization of Mass Communication by the Individual," in *The Uses of Mass Communication: Current Perspectives on Gratifications Research,* eds. Jay G. Blumler and Elihu Katz (Beverly Hills, CA: Sage, 1974), 19-34.

This theoretical framework offers new insights into the media behavior of seventeenth century English non-elites despite their near-disappearance from the historical record, based on strategies of inference developed by social history or "history from below" schools.

Explaining and documenting the emergence of a public for information in early modern England that was primed to be a public for the news when the newsbooks appeared in 1641 requires an extended explication of "news" as used here – as a compound of the routine and the unusual. As Bandura and others demonstrated, fresh events are cognitively managed by the media user in concert with the already-known, the "background." The new information may rattle or reshape the schemas (conceptual clusters) already resident in working or accessible memory, if it is different enough from the routines of perception to provide contrast. So "news," the new, acquires its flavor and urgency by contrasting notably with the everyday or routine, the information already stored.

These are human cognitive faculties, perhaps somewhat diversely present depending on era and culture but unlikely to have been absent in early modern people whatever their nationality or level of education and literacy. In the earliest proto-journalism of the seventeenth century as in today's, the proper mix of background and

"new" information constituted a struggle for journalists, who evolved strategies like the inverted pyramid often deployed in years to come.

An array of media theory might not be appropriate for an effort in fairly straightforward, well-documented history concerning media use by early modern elites who left a written record of their activities. But that is not what this project is about. To successfully infer media use by ordinary folk based on the qualities, features and publishing history of a surviving genre, this inquiry will have to presume that in their way, these non-elites practiced information-seeking behavior like modern media consumers – though perhaps on a reduced scale to match their reduced opportunities. This inquiry further argues that our subjects will have sought information for purposes broadly like today's purposes for seeking complex, contextualized news – information for successful conduct of their lives.

Also in the mix is information that contributes to play, or the forms of learning that fiction can offer. Astrology was one of the areas where play was never far from science, fact and faith. As Margaret Spufford observed, "it is highly unlikely that either intellectual doubt or tension between religion and astrology was necessarily felt by the humble in the late seventeenth century."[77]

---

[77] Spufford, *Small Books,* 147.

Bandura's account of the mechanisms of information-seeking, and
the account of motives and practices in matured versions of uses and
gratifications research, combine to inferentially outline the behavior
of early modern English peoples of the ordinary sort who were
purchasers and users of the annual almanac.

Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory: Information-seeking Behavior

Among the unfolding descriptive models of the way humans of
all eras and classes process information, Albert Bandura's work has
held up well since he applied cognitive psychology to uses of mass
communication.[78] It began with the "extraordinary capacity for
symbolization" of humans and proposed a dynamic model of human
information management, with complex stored concepts about things,
ideas and events that are systematically modified as new information
is processed. People "transform transient experiences into cognitive
models that serve as guides for judgment and action."[79]

Although Bandura's complex descriptions of reasoned
processing have the ring of post-Enlightenment "rational choice"
conduct, his model included factors of personal affective arousal, as
well, in the process of information management for decision. The
human capacity for symbolization, Bandura importantly said, allows

---

[78] Bandura, "Social Cognitive Theory of Mass Communication," 94-124.

.

[79] Bandura, "Social Cognitive," 94, 95.

information – including that from all sorts of media – to be used to model or one might say rehearse behavior scenarios before actually risking them.

An individual's personal responses to social norms – total acceptance, rejection or somewhere in between – are also factors in modeling behavior. So the components of the social cognitive media theory include, at least at the input end, the emotive and sub-rational qualities that, since Bandura, have come to the fore in newer research on decision-making and behavior.[80] In addition, Bandura's theoretical developments were clearly bent toward the agenda of correcting social wrongs and improving collective behavior – a positive factor no doubt compatible with early modern religious injunctions but one that may have applied much less in the low-information environment experienced by early modern non-elites than it does in the modern era. Bandura asserts that "[m]odeling influences must, therefore, be designed to build self-efficacy as well as convey knowledge and rules of behavior."[81] That applies not only to Bandura's project of facilitating social improvement through information (by governments, NGOs or other sources)[82] but also to

---

[80] Ruggiero *infra* notes a possible problem emerging in uses and gratifications research: that it is "complicated by evidence that suggests that individuals may have little direct introspective access to the higher order cognitive processes that mediate their behavior."
[81] Bandura, "Social Cognitive," 114.
[82] Ibid. "The most ambitious applications of social cognitive theory are aimed at abating some of the most pressing global problems," 114-115.

the non-elites of the early modern period. Self-efficacy was what they sought, and they fashioned – on their own – their information strategies to achieve it, with the help of almanacs. Self-efficacy, a modern psychological term, to early modern people simply meant applying yourself to make things better than they would have been without the application. Proverbs like "enough is as good as all" reflected this incremental, improving approach to everyday practice, and they were commonplace observations scattered throughout the almanacs.[83]

The users of media adopt management strategies (and sources of information) for a number of reasons in Bandura's scheme, and he acknowledged that not all these are purely rational ones. Commodity fetishism and status seeking are clear factors: "Some of the motivating incentives derive from the utility of the adoptive behavior" whereas "[m]any innovations serve as a means of gaining social recognition and status."[84] Even in the early modern period, a certain commodity fetishism was emerging, and almanacs – often the only secular book in the household – may well have served as the ordinary families' perceived passport to respectability compared to the learned elite.

---

[83] Wrightson, *Earthly Necessities*, 57.
[84] Bandura, "Social Cognitive," 116.

Other social factors interact similarly in Bandura's information-seeking scheme, including social norms (as above). Bandura's web of "triadic reciprocal causation" among personal, environmental and behavior determinants is what made his scheme attractively dynamic and oriented toward "self-efficacy."[85] This inquiry's focus on the early modern period shifts the emphasis a bit, perhaps. Bandura's scheme was grounded on a contemporary, high-information environment where some of the environmental and behavior determinants may be more stable. Still, the early modern social environment saw rapid changes in information access and quality and consequent gains in self-efficacy and quality of environmental surveillance for more and more non-elites.

The changes in cognitive processing that Walter Ong hypothesized as a result of written language and its proliferation in print in the early modern era are not incompatible with a Bandura-type portrait mapped to the early modern era.[86] In fact it is the argument here that Ong's premise – that written language allows for more complex chains of reasoning –offers an explanatory correlate to the increase in self-efficacy among the non-elites of the pre-civil wars era. It was these yeomen and struggling merchants who formed

---

[85] Bandura, "Social Cognitive," 94.

[86] Ong, *Orality & Literacy,* 80-83.

Cromwell's quite singular New Model Army and otherwise represented the constituency of parliamentary forces, even when their leaders stumbled. Their increased access to print in turn enhanced their literacy, and complex but highly navigable utilitarian devices like the almanac advanced the level of literacy higher with frequent use.

Bandura's theory has explanatory power for media in the realms of both political and personal behavior because it keyed into the important value of information prioritized over experience. The experiment of putting oneself at risk – in war, in business, in farming – can be irreversible and sometimes fatal. Measuring the risk more precisely by observing (or hearing or reading about) the experience of others in similar situations allows mental rehearsal of critical decisions.

Bandura did not, it should be noted here, explore the element of play that frequently enters these mental transactions. The symbolization process that utilizes the experience of others to rehearse potential actions of one's own are always, in a sense, fictionalized to fit them to one's vision of one's own future behavior. And fiction certainly provided advisory input for individuals then and does so now for individuals, whatever their social status. As Margaret Spufford has said, fiction was included in "the mental furniture of the English peasantry and the printed influences at work on the non-

gentle reader before 1700."[87] Almanacs, along with their factual

content, provided the fictional play terrain of astrological prediction.

The Wider Range of "Uses and Gratifications" Theory
It is this fictionalizing element – the element of play – that can

be profitably grafted onto Bandura's utilitarian cognitive processing

scheme by the addition of the "Uses and Gratifications" [U&G] theory

propounded by Elihu Katz, Jay G. Blumler and Michael Gurevitch.[88]

Where the social cognitive framework was soberly about information

and news, U&G provides for a broader spectrum of media modes,

including fiction in various forms, even if the variety is collected

between the same covers or (in the era U&G was formulated)

presented at different times on the same television screen.

As the moving parts of such a formulation are assembled, U&G

has real explanatory power, though admittedly diffuse and perilous,

because it provides not a snapshot but a dynamic, like Bandura's, but

embracing more media modes and more types of satisfactions than the

social cognitive scheme by itself.

The original formulation by Blumler, Katz and Gurevitch articulates

a number of related but distinct goals of an active audience:

"To match one's wits against others, to get information and advice for

daily living, to provide a framework for one's day, to prepare oneself

---

[87] Spufford, *Small Books*, xviii.
[88] Katz, Blumler and Gurevitch, "Utilization," 19-34.

culturally for the demands of upward mobility, or to be reassured about the dignity and usefulness of one's role." [89]

There is admirable flexibility in the variety of motives and satisfactions provided in the original. It must be said that subsequent work in U&G has somewhat distorted that original emphasis on both the *uses* and the *gratifications* involved in engagement with communication media. In fact, the history of both theoretical approaches has clearly been – as is frequently the case – quite distorted by the inevitable surplus of research cash available for exploring persuasion of audiences, inducing them to buy either material goods or political slogans.

Thomas E. Ruggiero's analytical and thorough review in 2000 of U&G's first quarter-century was in part designed to show that the early years of online computer activity stimulated a revival of a somewhat moribund theory. Interestingly, his account offered many *aperçus* that make U&G – an audience-centered approach – highly applicable to recovering the voices and media appetites of a quite stratified early modern society's non-elites.[90]

Similarly, LaRose et al. saw a direct connection between these two theories largely because of their respective dynamism. Another study

---

[89] Katz, Blumler and Gurevitch, "Utilization," 20 [quoted by Ruggiero, *infra*].

[90] Thomas E. Ruggiero, "Uses and Gratifications Theory in the 21st Century," *Mass Communication and Society* 3, no. 1 (2000): 1-37.

aimed at orienting U&G research toward Internet use, theirs in fact

provided insight into how these essentially experimentalist theory

regimes map onto earlier historical eras in print culture. Speaking of

user motivations, LaRose and his colleagues said anticipation of gains

from media use echo "an important mechanism in social-cognitive

theory, enactive learning." They continued:

> Enactive learning describes how humans learn from
> experience. In the social-cognitive view, interactions with the
> environment (the media environment, in this case) influence
> media exposure by continually reforming expectations about
> the likely outcomes of future media consumption behavior
> (after Bandura, 1986). Seemingly, this represents the same
> process that describes the relationship among gratifications
> sought, media behavior, and gratifications obtained
> (Palmgreen et al., 1985)….. Individuals use their capacity for
> forethought to plan actions, set goals, and anticipate
> potential behavioral consequences.[91]

Ruggiero noted that Karl Erik Rosengren, in the 1970s, made the

kind of connection being asserted here with the cognitive and

psychological processes that complement those information-seeking

categories named above by Katz et al.

> Rosengren (1974), attempting to theoretically refine U&G,
> suggested that certain basic needs interact with personal
> characteristics and the social environment of the individual
> to produce perceived problems and perceived solutions.
> Those problems and solutions constitute different motives
> for gratification behavior that can come from using the
> media or other activities.[92]

---

[91] Robert LaRose, Dana Mastro and Matthew S. Eastin, "Understanding Internet Usage: A Social-Cognitive
Approach to Uses and Gratifications," *Social Science Computer Review* 19, no. 4 (2001): 397.
[92] Ruggiero, "U&G 20th Century," 6.

The internal dynamic of the social cognitive media use regime –
triadic reciprocal causation – analogizes nicely with the evolved U&G
dynamic of gratifications sought and gratifications achieved. Ruggiero
identified that as a refinement to keep the theory coherent and provided
a closed action, matching Rosengren's "perceived problems and perceived
solutions" above. In both cases the media user or media public operated
on the engine of anticipation and the media culture responded with an
array of choices that are regular, iterative and expectable. If there is
innovation, it presumably must be offered in a measured way, within the
public's comfort zone.

So an important factor in the reception of any regular, iterative
media form like the almanac or – later – the newsbook is expectation.
That element was added in what was probably a crucial adaptive move
by researchers in the 1990s, pivoting off "expectancy value theory" in
earlier research. "[M]any U&G researchers have included some aspect of
expectancy in their models and have turned to established theories of
expectancy to explain media consumption," Ruggiero said, citing 1995
research by Rayburn and Palmgreen, who he contended "combined U&G
with expectancy value theory to create an expectancy value model" of
gratifications sought and obtained.[93] This clearly has a tie-in with the
portrait of social-cognitive theory in LaRose et al.

---

[93] Ruggiero, "U&G 20th Century," 10.

Media users of early seventeenth century England (before 1641 and the newsbooks) had a wide choice of printed offerings but only one – the almanac – was offered anew on a regular basis, and therefore "expectable." Purchasers and users of those almanacs had a distinct, but limited, range of choices due to the Stationers' Company's position astride the gates after 1603. This dissertation will present evidence that the Stationers sought an optimal number (usually ten to fifteen) of almanac brands, varying slightly in their specific features, to fuel the widest audience and largest number of purchasers of almanacs that could be achieved.

The expanded choice for almanac users enhances U&G's value in the inquiry. Ruggiero concluded that "U&G continues to be exceedingly useful in explaining audience activity when individuals are most active in consciously making use of media for intended purposes." [94]

U&G's value in assessing media use by non-elites in early modern England is a matter that this project will demonstrate. Ruggiero in 2000 believed the bumps and bruises consequent on the theory's quarter-century of evolution and refinement have shown its durability and value:

> Thus, if anything, one of the major strengths of the U&G
> perspective has been its capacity to develop over time into a
> more sophisticated theoretical model. Historically, the focus
> of inquiry has shifted from a mechanistic perspective's
> interest in direct effects of media on receivers to a

---

[94] Ruggiero, "U&G 20th Century," 19.

psychological perspective that stresses individual use and choice. [95]

As individuals engage with print media, the utility of the media and the gratifications they provide interact to solidify habits of usage and expectations involving both content and form or genre. The "mass" aspect of the media involved, the genre and brand identities of the product, in turn create a uses-and-gratifications mass consciousness beyond the individual and the individual's sense of agency: a self-aware public. When, as in the case of almanacs and newsbooks, a regular rhythm or temporal pattern of use is overlaid, habits are consolidated and the public becomes both more complex and more populated – and even more self-aware.

Often viewed as simplistic, in reality an almanac is a complex, articulated product with different sections dedicated to fulfilling different needs (including, sometimes, needs for play as well as rehearsal for decision-making). The public it serves seeks similar gratifications and through its commercial transactions and choices creates an almanac canon to serve that public's various needs and wants, uses and gratifications.

---

[95] Ruggiero, 25 [citing A. M. Rubin, "Media Uses and Effects: A Uses and Gratifications Perspective," in *Media Effects: Advances in Theory and Research,* eds. J. Bryant & D. Zillmann (Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc., 1994), 417–436].

Publics and their Development

How is a public different from an audience, in respect to almanacs? Refocusing media theory on the seventeenth century in England, we find the audience is (as in the rawest of U&G approaches) aware only of the value of a media choice. Potential almanac purchasers might choose the popular but distinctly secular Bretnor almanac over the also-popular but decidedly pious Allestree almanac, for instance. A public, in contrast, is composed of audience members who are also *aware of their participation* in a larger group – regular buyers of Bretnor, say, or of Allestree – and may well think of themselves (if only momentarily) that way.

The buyers choosing between the Allestree or Bretnor almanacs would also have thought of themselves as residents of their town, as farmers or as merchants, as travelers to fairs, consumers of medical advice and treatment, litigants in common court, and the like – a number of other kinds of publics involved in everyday lives. Almanac publics overlapped in seeking the kinds of information available in the various components, or features, that are analyzed in this project.

As members of this public became increasingly aware of their wider environment, the almanac they purchased every year provided an absorbing and familiar cross-section and guide to those other aspects of life. The almanacs' all-purpose annual framework replicated in print that posture of future-oriented self-efficacy that

came to characterize the emerging non-elite classes of the early modern era.[96]

Bandura, in a 2000 update on his broader social cognitive theory of human action, specifically embraced a collective action mode as part of the model. "[P]erceived collective efficacy is not simply the sum of the efficacy beliefs of individual members. Rather, it is an emergent group-level property." Referring to today's social conditions, he continued: "Social cognitive theory extends the conception of human agency to collective agency. People's shared beliefs in their collective power to produce desired results are a key ingredient of collective agency."[97]

Bandura's discussion here does not extend to media use, so one must extrapolate from his media regime to conclude that the beliefs collectively held by this group derive from information available to all members. The self-efficacy advice available in early modern almanacs was cheap-print culture's widest offering to this emerging public.

The rich collaborative work of McGill University's 2005-10 "Making Publics" project, which mapped contemporary theories of publics onto the early modern era, yielded fertile observations from

---

[96] E.g., Woolf, "News, History and the Construction of the Present."

[97] Bandura, "Exercise of Human Agency through Collective Efficacy," *Current Directions in Psychological Science* 9, no. 3 (2000): 75.

participants. Some of the participants, notably editors Bronwen Wilson and Paul Yachnin, went on to contribute to the 2010 volume *Making Publics in Early Modern Europe: People, Things, Forms of Knowledge.* [98]

One of their fellow researchers, Brian Cowan, acknowledged that most discussions of public-making amount to extending Habermas's concept of nineteenth-century bourgeois citizenship backward through the eras to postulate conscious group behavior and exchange related to the social changes of those periods:

> Post-Habermasian histories of public making take care to recognize that they are studying a pluralistic process of interest formation, of active recruitment to encourage new members to join a given public, and of claims to the legitimacy of these new interest groups. Publics tend to form around things of interest, broadly conceived - some things are material, other things might be practices, ideas or beliefs.[99]

The quite material almanac was the Stationers' Company's bundle of interest formation, or what Richard A. Lanham called an "attention structure," a device that "teach[es] how to attend to the world."[100]   Around that sort of object, multiplied to 300,000 per year, a public or publics can organize themselves.

---

[98] Bronwen Wilson and Paul Yachnin, eds., *Making Publics in Early Modern Europe: People, Things, Forms of Knowledge* (New York: Routledge, 2010).

[99] Cowan, "On Publics," http://project.makingpublics.org/research/what-do-you-mean/thoughts.php?n=13, posted "2011-06-12", accessed 12 Sept. 2014.

[100] Richard A. Lanham, *The Economics of Attention: Style and Substance in the Age of Information* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), 14.

One difference that can be established between "audience" and "public" is that a public has a temporal dimension that an audience (in the sense of spectators at a one-off performance event) does not. Public and audience are both aware of their standing as consumers of a commodity for entertainment or utility. But the public engages with some frequency with the commodity (information) it seeks, and if there is regularity and brand identity involved, a public and the media producers are in what could be called an implied contract relationship. "Keep giving me value for my tuppence," the public implicitly says, "and I will keep spending it. If not, goodbye."

For the early modern English yeoman or urban artisan and his family, this compact with a regular producer of information would have been an entirely new experience and one that was largely re-examined every November when it was time to think about buying an almanac for the next year. And the almanac trade, from its English Stock overseers to the printers and booksellers to the compilers, had to be prepared to meet that decisional moment with a winning array of products.

How different are publics from audiences? Paul Yachnin noted that Habermas and those who worked his soil typify the making of publics as introducing

    "increasing numbers of 'private' persons into public space,

speech, and action by inviting them to take part in forms of association that were both public and not public – public in the sense of being open to strangers and oriented, if fitfully, toward political matters; and not public because of the non-purposiveness of their political dimension and because of their distance from what counted as real public speech and action in early modern society – real public speech and action having to take place within a sphere defined largely by the social elite. Early modern publics were thus easier of access than was the public sphere itself."

Jeffrey S. Doty amplified Yachnin's observation that the publics provided easy access to agency: "Publics are the social means in which those usually excluded from power or influence can judge. In the form of the public, judgments by non-elites can have demonstrable political and social effects." [101] It is likely that the act of judging started at the level of collective consumer behavior – deciding which almanac to buy, for instance.

One of the important observations here is the ease of access provided by emerging publics. Unlike totally self-conscious communities, they do not continually define themselves and exclude "others" but absorb willing members who happen to be participating in the same discourse or materiality as characterizes the group.

So the public had easy access to the material two-penny almanac, in our frame of reference, but also easy access to an emergent self-aware group of almanac users that, in the framework of "contemporaneity," shared an understanding of what other almanac

[101] Cowan, Yachnin and Doty at http://project.makingpublics.org/research/what-do-you-mean/

users bought their product for, what use they had for it, what information they sought. The group shared a*t more or less the same time,* because most users bought their almanacs in November every year, in a process that was itself replete with publicness and pageantry.

In this inquiry, the public being sought is, in this era, the public least heard from. How do historians penetrate that veil of years?

Theory of a Method: "History from Below"

An important dimension of this inquiry is recovering the voice of the ordinary people. In the early modern era, it was the rare member of the non-elite who left self-consciously public traces investigators can follow: a newsbook editor like the ex-artisan John Dillingham, for instance – a tailor who began moonlighting as a manuscript newsletter writer – during the English civil wars.[102] Rarely, too, did the literate artisan leave more than scraps of "life-writing," as Adam Smyth and others characterize the practice. Singular exceptions like Carlo Ginsburg's "Menocchio" or Nehemiah Wallington, a wood-turner and joiner (carpenter) of London who obsessively read newsbooks and wrestled with the events of the day in his remarkable journals, tend to prove the rule: non-elites are for the most part silent in the written

---

[102] Raymond, *Invention,* 30; Frank, *Beginnings of the English Newspaper,* 45.

historical record.[103] The argument here is that the work of historical recovery of these voices outside the traditional record can draw on outside disciplines like the study of popular culture, emphatically including print culture. But historical method itself has independently grown shoots in this direction, though never without controversy.

The particular historical task of having the closest possible encounter with those whose voice has been damped by boundaries of class, gender or literacy has stirred specific strategies. In his essay, "On History from Below," Eric Hobsbawm focused on the "technical problems, which are both difficult and interesting," involved in what he alternatively calls "grassroots history." It was Hobsbawm's argument that such history did not become relevant until the eighteenth century, when the previously ignored common folk made their presence felt politically, "the moment when the ordinary people become a constant factor in the making of [major political] decisions and events." And the technical problems were ameliorated in some respects because the French Revolution not only pushed common people to the political forefront, "it documented them by means of a vast and laborious bureaucracy, classifying and filing them for the benefit of the historian in the national

---

[103] Smyth, "Almanacs, Annotators, and Life-Writing in Early Modern England," *English Literary Renaissance* 38, no. 2 (2008): 200-244; David Booy, ed., *The Notebooks of Nehemiah Wallington 1618-1654* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2007).

and departmental archives of France."[104]

In the absence, in earlier periods, of this positive evidence, though, a great deal must be inferred either from skimpy birth-and-death records or by interpreting silences. Hobsbawm said, interestingly, that the analytical steps for the latter "I confess, I think I learned from the social anthropologists."[105] Propping detailed knowledge of the era against some hunch-following, the historian hypothesizes that peasant cultures will engage in "primitive rebellion" below the ruling-class radar, activities including banditry, or collective refusal of work or tribute under the guise of "collective ritual and collective entertainment" like a *fiesta* or, as Bakhtin and his followers would have it, carnival. These "disparate social phenomena, generally treated as footnotes to history," occasionally show up as official reports from the hinterlands, often enough to "construct a model which makes sense of all these forms of behavior."[106]

Finally, the historian seeks other fragments of the record that can confirm the hypothesis. The primitive rebellions have been, in fact, signature recoveries of the lost past on Hobsbawm's part, because "one of our tasks is to uncover the lives and thoughts of common people and to rescue them from Edward [E.P.] Thompson's 'enormous condescension of

---

[104] Eric Hobsbawm, "On History from Below," [1997] 202, 205.
[105] Ibid., 213.
[106] Ibid., 213.

posterity.' " [107]

S. Elizabeth Bird's recent examinations of media consumers' autonomy and agency in appropriating and decoding the encoded content of mass media represent another form of valorization by researchers. As print in early modern England broke the information monopoly of class distinction, so Internet use opens new avenues for personal agency of wider, active audiences beyond one-way broadcast modes. Again, the theorization of the active reader implies, even requires that information-seeking behavior is an acknowledged constant in all periods. Emerging non-elite members of early modern English society became quite clear about their needs in times of peace and war. Their almanacs, tools for agency, helped them manage the transition from stability to conflict, though they may not have provided the new kind of "news" that they needed, starting in 1641.[108]

Almanacs, on this accounting, are not responsible for much disturbance of the political sphere. That was their passport for traveling under the radar of authority. If researchers must look for any such

---

[107] Hobsbawm, "History from Below" [1997], 215; M.M. Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World,* trans. Hélène Iswolsky (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, c1984), esp. 196-277.

[108] S. Elizabeth Bird, "Seeking the Historical Audience: Interdisciplinary lessons in the recovery of media practices," in *Explorations in Communication and History,* edited by Barbie Zelizer, 90-106 (New York: Routledge, 2008), esp. 96; Bird, *The Audience in Everyday Life: Living in a Media World* (New York: Routledge/Taylor & Francis, 2003).

disturbances in the public sphere as Hobsbawm proposes, how much can still be discerned? Sheila Lambert and other analysts of the role of various power centers in the early seventeenth century suggest that the Stationers' Company was, yes, complicit in the regime of censorship, but that the censorship regime itself was flaccid and episodic. She said "the most notorious incidents of censorship or repression come in intermittent bursts, often in response to the requirements of the diplomatic situation." For instance, news in the corantos of the 1620s, though restricted to news from overseas, nevertheless irritated the Spanish ambassador sufficiently to cause several revocations of their makers' license to publish.

Lambert concluded that print took very little part in the ongoing political ferment. Her stance is difficult to reconcile with the conventional wisdom, on which this project is to some extent grounded. She argued that "the Stationers' Company played no very significant role in enforcing state control of the press… it cannot be too often stressed [that] the printed word played only a small part in the dissemination of political ideas." [109]

But how about nonpolitical ideas, social practices and their changes, and cultural consensus below the level of politics? Increasingly these factors are seen not only as part of the fabric of history, but part of

---

[109] Lambert, "State Control of the Press," 9.

history's motive force. And they are deeply represented in, and representative of, those voiceless non-elites who bought almanacs in such startling numbers, and who became part of the altogether novel New Model Army that might have been the most significant feature of the Civil Wars. As Michael McKeon said, "with the outbreak of the English civil wars if not before, print can't plausibly be seen as a strictly elite medium." [110]

Method: A Narrative View of Almanacs' Development 1595-1640

The argument for almanacs' central role in preparing a public for news will be made here as a narrative account. The surviving canon of almanacs from 1600 to 1640 offers a range of about 600 annual editions, differently named. Some are solitaries: appearing once only, or perhaps twice separated by several years. This project's approach will be to look only at brand-name annuals like the almanacs of Thomas Bretnor, Richard Allestree, Daniel Browne, Edward Pond and many others that have survived in "runs" from three straight years to dozens of years. Because almanacs from 1603 to 1640 were a lucrative monopoly of the printer's guild, their makeup and the changes they underwent from year to year can be plausibly seen as carefully considered from a business point of view, and aimed at expanding the customer base. Almanacs that appeared for fewer than three consecutive years offer little opportunity to

---

[110] Michael McKeon, "What Was an Early Modern Public, and How was it Made?," *History Compass* 10, no. 9 (2012), 717.

evaluate change, and are omitted from the group examined here.

Again, it is important in this discussion to remember that an incomplete record is being examined. The almanacs that have survived to be held by major libraries, and that are catalogued in Bernard Capp's magisterial account and in the English Short Title Catalog [ESTC], represent our data set. Those chosen for analysis are ones that appeared three or more years consecutively[111]. Their pattern of survival encourages the researcher to view that set as showing the outlines of the genre in this period. Additionally, such a parameter allows for inspection of year-to-year changes within one almanac brand. It is possible that an almanac series of high popularity and fertile innovation emerged, thrived and vanished without leaving a trace in the record – but given the pattern of survival, it seems highly unlikely. The data set is further winnowed by the availability of imagery on the database Early English Books Online, [EEBO]. This essential collection of early print provides imagery of those 375 almanacs chosen and available for this study.

The methodological surmise here is that a "brand" that had at least three consecutive annual editions among the survivors provides enough of a series to be analytically useful. Of the roughly 375 almanacs examined and analyzed for this project, some were rather short-lived and others had very long runs, indeed. The characteristic features and self-

---

[111] Or, in a few cases, three times in four years, to fatten the data baseline.

presentation of those almanacs make a narrative. Almanacs came and they went, but the popular informational component features of these almanacs had a life of their own that will be charted in this inquiry. Twenty distinct and recurring components, or features, of various sorts have been chosen for examination. As almanacs developed (see Chapter 4) the features differentiated and assumed specific, recognizable form marked by clear design aspects (often tabular and/or ruled). The occurrence of these component features in any given almanac year will be enumerated in a table, with the recording of the occurrence of that feature in that year dependent on its being clearly headed or recognizable.

For example, eclipses – an important phenomenon for astrological prediction – are counted as a component feature in this analysis. Sometimes, however, eclipses are mentioned in one or two sentences within another feature, such as the quarterly/seasonal section. But if an eclipse or eclipses are not clearly, separately headed, the eclipse feature is not counted for that year, that edition.

Component features' ups and downs from 1603 to 1640, steered by the Stationers' Company's overall control of the market and its leadership's incentive to maximize the almanacs' reach, allows much to be discerned about the information appetites of the emerging non-elite members of society. These ordinary people made the English civil wars a

distinctly different kind of conflict, bottom-up as much as top-down, and joined the audience for newsbooks and the emerging public for news.

For purposes of analysis, this project looks at the period 1595-1640 in three sections. The period 1595-1603 exemplifies how the late Elizabethan almanac took its form, and how different author/compilers established personal brands and specialty features under the umbrella of Watkins and Roberts. This pattern, already established, was elaborated on as the Stationers took over the trade in 1603 and (with some evident fumbles) developed a stable of "brands," named almanacs that had diverse kinds of appeal, with component features associated with each brand, that maximized and saturated the potential market for the two-penny annual. Numerous new titles were added from 1603-1615, and nearly all the Watson and Roberts titles except the long-lived Dade franchise dropped out of the business. The ups and downs in the deployment of component features in the almanacs is the most discernible of the full survey period.

The almanacs, all titled after their compilers, considered in this first 1595-1615 period are below, with dates their almanacs were published:

[1595-1603] Watson 1595-1605; Frende 1585-99; Gray 1588-1605; Thomas Johnson 1598-1604; William Woodhouse 1602-08; Pond 1601-12; Mathew 1602-14; John Dade 1589-1615, **[after 1603]** White 1613-40; Jeffrey Neve 1604-25; Gresham 1603-07; Hopton 1606-14; Alleyn 1606-12; Bretnor 1607-20, Thomas Rudston 1606-13; John Woodhouse

1610-40; John Johnson 1611-24; Keene 1612-17; Burton 1613-21; Upcote 1614-19

The period 1615-1625 marked the latter part of James I's rule, ending with his death and the accession in 1625 of Charles I. During this stretch, some of the best-known and longest-running almanac brands were established and the genre was clearly becoming entrenched in the practice of its audience. New features became popular and older ones faded, but stability was clearly becoming a principle and some of the brands appeared to have staked out specific component features as their claim to popularity. The titles of the period 1615-1625, some continued from the previous period and some new, were:

Allestree 1617-25>; Bretnor <1616-19; Brown 1616-25>; Burton <1616-21; William Dade 1616-25>; Einer 1620-26; Frende <1616-24; Gilden 1616-25>; John Johnson <1616-24; Keene <1616-17; Jeffrey Neve <1616-25; Perkins 1625>; Ranger 1616-25>; John Rudston <1616-20,24-25>; Sofford 1618-25>; Upcote <1616-19; Vaux 1621-25>; White <1616-25>; John Woodhouse <1616-1625> (< indicates began publishing before 1615; > indicates continued publication after 1625)

During this middle period, 1615 to 1625, the managers of the almanac trade developed a range of almanac types that filled out the potential of the genre and extended its public. Most changes were minor and component stability was being established. This analysis includes 225 almanac editions issued by 1625.

The last arbitrary period, 1625-1640, began with the year Charles I succeeded his father and ended as political conflict was shading toward

military confrontation between the king and Parliament. Those years included the period of "personal rule" from 1629 to 1640 that further soured Charles I's relations with Parliament and the wider nation. During this period the almanacs coped competitively with several other print genres. The rise and fall of the total number of almanac editions the Stationers' Company produced over this part of the timeline reflected this competition. Some of the competition came from more expensive "how-to" books that included much of the advice in the annual almanacs but in expanded form, and were intended to be bought only once rather than every year. More a direct threat within the genre, the University of Cambridge wangled from the Privy Council in 1623 a qualified right to print almanacs. In the 1625-1640 period Cambridge was printing as many as six or seven annual almanacs in some years.

The almanacs surveyed from 1625-1640 are listed below. Cambridge almanacs, which have been spot-checked for content comparison, are in *italics* and not included in the survey.

Allestree 1617-40; Browne <1626-31; Booker 1631-40; Butler 1629-32; *Clark 1628-38 (Cambridge);* Dade, William <1626-40; *Dove 1627-40 (Cambridge);* Gilden <1626-32; *Kidman 1631-38 (Cambridge);* Langley 1635-40; John Neve 1626-40; Perkins 1625-40; Pierce 1634-40; *Pond 1625-40 (Cambridge);* Ranger 1626-31; *Rivers 1625-40;* John Rudston <1626-28; Sofford <1626-40; *Swallow 1628, 33-40 (Cambridge); Twells 37-39 (Cambridge),* Vaux <1626-38; White <1625-40; *Winter 1633-35, 37-38 (Cambridge);* Woodhouse, John <1626-40

In the absence of substantial documentary record of Stationers'

officials' decisions or deliberations about their profitable monopoly in almanacs, this analysis makes several assumptions about the entire prewar period 1595-1640 during which the Stationers' Company dominated the almanac trade.

First, the surviving copies of the Stationers' popular almanacs are a fair representation of the range and scope of the almanacs published in this period.[112] Second, this surviving group of almanacs is not a random assortment, but can be viewed as illustrating the deliberate strategy of the Stationers' Company to maximize the appeal of the genre by managing a stable of annual almanacs with varying kinds of appeal to varying segments of their growing public. Because the printers and booksellers in the company were in a position to get regular feedback through sales of each annual array of issues of this cash cow, year-to-year tinkering with this strategy is presumed to be highly likely, even without a record of such decision-making. Changes – which features appeared in which brand-name almanac – would be part of this strategy, and reflect it. Since almanacs are still available for inspection today, these changes and continuities are our surviving evidence for how this

---

[112] At no time in this period were almanacs registered in the Stationers' registry, apparently, so survivors make up the record. After a 1634 inquiry by the Court of the High Commission, almanacs were for the first time required to be recorded in the Stationers' publication register. The Court records show the Stationers leadership passed this order on to the membership Oct. 27, 1634, but, Jackson says (note 1), "This order does not seem to have been obeyed." Jackson, ed., *Records of the Court of the Stationers' Company, 1602-1640* (London: The Bibliographical Society, 1957), 260 and n.1.

commercial dynamic played out against the domestic and political

background of the era.

Twenty Component Features in the Survey

The component features that commonly appeared in almanacs

1595-1640 and chosen for survey and analysis are:

1. Quarterly or seasonal entries, a four-season prediction

2. Monthly predictions/astronomical configurations (in the "prognostication" or back of the book

3. Monthly predictions that include "good" and "evil" days, a significant subset of (2)

4. "bicalendar" – cross-referenced Julian and Gregorian (continental) calendars

5. "Blank" –forty-eight page format, generally affording two pages for each month in front section calendar with white space for memoranda, journalizing etc.

6. "Sort" – forty-page format, with one calendar page per month in the front section of the book

7. Court T erms – a calendar for the year's sessions of civil (and sometimes also ecclesiastical) courts

8. Royal Timeline – chronological list of English monarchs with dates of accession and end of reign

9. Creation Timeline – chronological account of events since the creation of the world; historical chronicle

10.   Tide tables – table for, or calculation methods for, high tides at London Bridge and (usually) conversion factors for other tidal rivers and ports

11.   List of fairs – a list of the trade fairs and markets in England and Wales, generally grouped by months of the year

12. Roads and routes – a verbal description of routes from one major town to another, showing intervening towns and mileage

13. World cities – a list of major world cities with compass headings and distance from London

14. Legal documents – model wills, deeds and legal materials

15. Physical "elections" – medical advice keyed to astrological prediction

16. Physical elections/husbandry – agricultural advice coupled with medical advice, both framed in astrological prediction

17. Eclipses – events of significance in astrology, generally treated separately

18. Zodiacal Body – woodcut image of nude human male body surrounded by zodiacal signs with lines indicating which body part is influenced by which house of the zodiac.

19. Calculators and mnemonics – a variety of helper features including coin conversion charts, loan interest tables, ways to calculate moonrise and set, etc.

20. Gazetteers – lists of counties, cities, parishes etc. in England and Wales

The almanacs that contain each of these features are tracked year by year from 1595 to 1640 in the analytical chart, along with the number of almanacs in which each feature appears in each year. This method extracts from the pattern of almanac publication the independent patterns of these component features, which were sought by individual almanac users as they replaced this year's almanac with the next one late in the year. The features represent specific "chunks" of information, identified by their format and distinctive headings.

Several component elements that could be called "features" have been omitted from this survey because they are so consistently present. Almost all almanacs opened on the first page with a list of the movable feast days for the year, highlighted by Easter. This was a compact presentation and often shared the page with some other element. What was called the "kalendar" – the monthly accounting in the front of the almanac – was also ubiquitous in every copy. The kalendar, with its ruled columns, either appeared as one page per month in the "sorts" or as two facing pages in the "blanks," with one page fulfilling the nickname by offering white space for memoranda and jottings.

Almost no almanac could contain all of these twenty features, whether forty or forty-eight pages, so every almanac's lineup of component features represented a conscious choice by compiler, printer or Stationers' Company manager. Later in this discussion, compiler John Booker will be heard complaining about the variety of features that fickle customers wanted.[113] His aggrieved point was that no one compiler could satisfy everyone. The Stationers' Company managers of the almanac trade, however, tried to do so. They wanted to ensure that nearly everyone interested in purchasing an almanac could find one that had just what she or he wanted. The chart, giving features' frequency, shows how that goal appears to have worked out in practice over nearly five

[113] Capp, *Almanacs*, 66.

decades.

There is little direct evidence about the reception of almanacs by their non-elite users in early modern England. Some of the "blanks" are scribbled in to fascinating extents; others are untouched by their users' pens. The latter may be almanacs that were never sold but wound up in someone's – a bookseller's, a collector's – probate inventory. The amalgam of media theory set out in this chapter underpins the assumption that these almanac customers deliberately sought information to improve their lives and increase their self-efficacy and agency in their seventeenth-century world. And further, this project assumes that a full panoply of utilitarian motives on the part of these almanac users included gratifications amounting to play, or exercise of a fictional spirit, and that the strange appeal of astrology as a significant focus of almanacs provided that playful, experimental element. The analytical method employed here is designed to tease out both of those factors from the evidence of surviving almanacs from 1595 to1640 and map the information needs of the users of cheap print that sought them and bought them.

Chapter 4: CONTEXTUALIZATION – Information, Monopoly and the Thread of Print Culture

To understand the importance of almanacs, attention is required to the social dynamic in the era stretching from Elizabeth I's last decade to the beginning of the English civil wars in 1643. It was an era suffused with questions of information. From gossip to print, from pricey Latin epitomes of all knowledge to that minimalist encyclopedia the two-penny almanac, access to critical information for protecting and advancing a household, village or other social unit mattered immensely to people at all levels of society.

Power – economic, religious and political – obviously was operative and significant in this period. But the growth of information available to the lower and middle levels of early modern English society became an effective brake on those at the higher levels who held the preponderance of power. The growth of an informed public – an information public – in this period sharpened the ever more widely perceived contrasts between rhetoric and practice and between have and have-not classes in the reigns of James I and Charles I. The estrangement of non-elite, deeply Protestant/Puritan religious sensibilities from the official church's practice was for example widened by more personal reading of the Bible and by harsh pamphlet warfare, not always in pamphlets licensed by the

authorities. English Protestants agitating for going to the rescue of embattled Protestants in the Thirty Years' War, resistance to Charles I's tactics in the 1630s for funding the government without Parliament's approval, and the active everyday task of gaining personal and civic agency in a consumer society of widening inequality – all were pinned to access to better information for those in the lower levels of society. The fear that showed through the contempt Sir William Walker (below) had for William Lilly's public, the "credulous multitude," indicates the power that information conferred on the otherwise powerless.

No "news" as today's communication scholars would understand it was produced; that would wait for active civil hostilities to begin. Instead, an incremental grounding in the facts of the everyday, the skills and practices of normality is what grew steadily in the five decades from 1595 to 1640. And print culture and its almanac trade were at the center of this – actually, rather revolutionary – change.

This project is about almanacs and their role in this growth of a public for information, primarily among the middling and lower social orders. But it is important to acknowledge that a rich river of print culture and other communication of which they were only part was engaging English readers and users more each year through this period. As Peter Lake and Steven Pincus asserted,

A variety of media – print, the pulpit, performance, circulating manuscript – was used to address promiscuously uncontrollable, socially heterogeneous, in some sense 'popular', audiences. Such activity implied the existence of – indeed, notionally at least *called into being* – an adjudicating public or publics able to judge or determine the truth of the matter in hand on the basis of the information and argument placed before them.[114]

THE EARLY INFORMATION SOCIETY IN STUART ENGLAND

Robert Darnton wrote of an "early information society" in studies of prerevolutionary France.[115] It's hard to imagine a society in which information was *not* valued, of course, going all the way back to early human societies where social organization and cooperation – sharing of information – was required to establish and maintain a community surplus of grain or other staples. Social organization also provided division of labor, hierarchy and the consequent opportunity for gaining advantage through violating social norms of behavior. So "cheat detection"[116] and its communication was required to reinforce norms and prevent the gain of unrecoverable power by the cheaters. For many early modern communities, literacy was unnecessary to manage this and other social duties. David Cressy quoted the popular poet Nicholas Breton's (1545-1626) observation that "our chief business in the country," to "plough and harrow, sow and reap… brew and bake" can be

---

[114]Peter Lake and Steve Pincus, "Rethinking the Public Sphere", in *The Politics of the Public Sphere in Early Modern England*, eds. Lake and Pincus (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007), 6 (my italics).
[115] Darnton, "An Early Information Society: News and the Media in Eighteenth-Century Paris," *American Historical Review* 105, no. 1 (2000), 1-35.

[116] R.I.M. Dunbar, "Culture, Honesty and the Freerider Problem," in *The Evolution of Culture: An Interdisciplinary View*, eds. Dunbar et al. (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1999), 197-99.

learned "all without book," nor is "book" required for participating in the routines of cheat detection, when "we be jurymen to hang a thief, or speak truth in a man's right…"[117]

The routines of reinforcing norms in the social order are older than print, writing, or even speech – but each of those technologies has in its turn extended the effectiveness and reach of those routines. Though non-elites could get along without literacy, as Breton's observation indicated, they correspondingly had little role in the historical record other than what those who *are* literate said about them. They were less likely than Bridenbaugh's "over-recorded privileged order"[118] to have left personal evidence of their works and days.

The relevance and pertinence of elite observations to an understanding of the everyday lives of illiterate or only modestly educated persons varied considerably. When elites left written representations of those they considered their inferiors, considerable care must be taken with the evidence those representations provide.

Jason Peacey, for instance, reported on the contempt the upper classes had for the almanac audience. William Lilly, certainly the most popular almanac-maker of the 1640s, rode his popularity to publish the antiroyalist tract *Monarchy or no Monarchy* in 1651, two years after the

---

[117] Cressy, *Literacy and the Social Order*, 14.
[118] Bridenbaugh, *Vexed and Troubled Englishmen*, 17.

beheading of Charles I. A furious Sir William Walker, in response, wrote to arch-royalist Sir Edward Hyde that though Lilly was "a person below the thoughts of a gentleman or loyal person, yet you know how much his pen hath prevailed with the credulous multitude." The awareness, even fear, of a firmly established non-elite public for almanac makers and their information showed through the contempt here.[119]

The history of early modern Britain, an emerging nation-state that underwent wrenching changes in economic and thus social and political relations from 1550-1700 and the even more wrenching rebellion against and execution of a monarch, bears significantly on the shape of information and its dissemination within the kingdom. Print culture was transformed – and transformative – in more than one way, including the way almanacs related to the growing public for information.

Within that increasingly cosmopolitan society, a multileveled "information society" was always in formation, stratified by various needs and various capacities. For many elites, information included arts that gratified them and patterned forms of information that helped them achieve, or maintain, a dominant role in society.

But the total participants in the information society included all social groups, and in their tiers they were largely parallel to the tiers of

---

[119] Jason Peacey, *Politicians and Pamphleteers: Propaganda during the English Civil Wars and Interregnum* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2004), 84.

power in everyday economic lives. In 1550, the early modern English social landscape had emerged from medieval social relations, but custom still tempered the effects of capitalist practices in the relations between landlords and their tenants. Between those two levels, yeomen and husbandmen, with some control of their land, prospered because they could generate surplus to sell in growing local or regional trade networks. The cloth trade, the nation's principal export activity, spread from towns into rural areas on a cottage industry basis. Population growth gradually overcame intermittent disease and harvest failures and spurred the growth of the economy 1550-1600, but growing inequality created a broad class of nearly landless laborers dependent on wages. This economic insecurity reduced household formation and fertility so that by 1640, population growth had nearly ceased. The political consequences of inequality – again, stemming from increased information about one's own station in life and social justice issues proceeding from that understanding – caused some, though obviously not all, of the social dislocation that preceded the civil wars. While entrepreneurs and landlords prospered conspicuously, Wrightson summarized that "A commonwealth based on households had become one in which a substantial segment of the population was no longer able to sustain a household without periodic public assistance."[120]

---

[120] This overview is largely drawn from Wrightson's chapters 6 through 9. Carl Bridenbaugh, however, asserted that mortality increased during this period as well, contributing to the near stoppage of

For many of the "smallfolk" in the rapidly changing lowest slice of that information society, information was often material accumulated in self-defense. It might be the "neck verse" (often a Bible verse) that, when memorized, protected one against casual execution for vagrancy or worse when wandering far from the home village and familiar bailiffs. The "neck verse" was accepted as evidence of literacy and therefore elevated the suspect stranger above the level of vagrancy. In an era when as much as a quarter of the population was roaming the roads looking for work and existing any way it could, traveling strangers needed the protection that information could provide.[121]

This could be the ability to read or stumble through basic instructions on home remedies to treat illness of oneself or family members. Such information was available in how-to books about the medical practices of the day – some were even being published in English, rather than the Latin favored by the medical practicioners' guild, the College of Physicians.[122] Bridenbaugh observed that the expense of licensed doctoring meant "more than half the population had to confine

---

population growth. Wrightson, *Earthly Necessities*, 226; Bridenbaugh, *Vexed and Troubled Englishmen,* 25-26.

[121] Derek Hirst, *England in Conflict 1603-1660: Kingdom, Community, Commonwealth* (London: Hodder Arnold, 1999), 53; Connie Kendall, "Nooses and Neck-Verses: The Life and Death Consequences of Literacy Testing" in *Rhetorical Agendas: Political, Ethical, Spiritual*, edited by Patricia Bizzell (New York: Routledge, 2005), 97.

[122] Curth, *Popular Medicine*, 24-26.

their medication to home physic."[123] The least expensive access to such material, though, was and had been the two-penny almanac.

Or the protection of information could be found in the ability to puzzle out deed documents – or know someone who could – to avoid having property casually appropriated by nobles, gentry or the government. This became critical during any of the many "enclosure" disputes of the late sixteenth-early seventeenth centuries. Landlords appropriated what had been common land (though admittedly part of their ownership) in order to put it to "better use."[124] But as customary indenture to land and lord and the reciprocal obligations that implied fractured to a memory, the proliferation of written records meant that information – for instance, the chart of monarch's reigns in almanacs that helped date wills and deeds – became the owner's manual for a complete and less entangled life.[125]

Fear of the law's reach moderated among non-elites in the seventeenth century and was replaced by a comfort with the legal system. Derek Hirst observed:

> Despite the law's mystification in obscure forms and archaic language, acquaintance with the law, and not merely as victims, was widespread. … ordinary villagers were sufficiently knowledgeable to use the law skillfully against an

---

[123] Bridenbaugh, *Vexed and Troubled Englishmen*, 108.

[124] Wrightson, *Earthly Necessities,* 210-212.

[125] M. T. Clanchy, *From Memory to Written Record: England 1066-1307,* 2nd ed. (Oxford: Blackwell, 1993), 247.

assertive state in the 1630s [Charles I] and the 1650s [Cromwell's Protectorate] alike.[126]

Increasing comfort with the legal system may have come in part with the almanac's list of the court quarter-sessions, one of the most frequent component features in the annual volumes.

Such examples bracketed the lives of an increasing number of individuals. Some felt themselves to be in a better class than family memory recalled, and found information a key to agency, status and advancement. Many others found themselves "tumbling up and down in the world," trapped in a vise of scarce employment where by some calculations wages had fallen so far behind prices that even working 365 days a year they could not provide for their families.[127] Tenants were experiencing a generation-long tendency for landlords to raise rents after a century of stagnant rents by custom. Only yeomen and husbandmen – who had fairly large (in the former case) or at least adequate (in the latter case) land to produce a surplus were exempt from chronic hard times. For the cottagers and laborers, farther down the scale, information could mean the difference between mere hunger and starvation.[128]

Hence, a public for information emerged. Publics for information, similarly stratified, have existed throughout human history. But this, the early modern English information public, was the first one in history that

---

[126] Hirst, *England in Conflict,* 16.
[127] Wrightson, *Earthly Necessities*, 194.
[128] Wrightson, *Earthly Necessities*, 197-201.

engaged widely with print culture to stabilize and make more accessible the plenum of information. The new public represented, one could say, the first time that an active information public, collectively seeing the value of literacy, engaged with an industrial-grade, mass-produced information product (cheap print, including especially the almanac) that could match demand with supply.

This information public, made up of the non-elites or ordinary people of England in the first half of the seventeenth century, was shaped by the specific events, social practices and ruling policies of the era before the civil wars began in earnest in 1641. When those religious, civil – and class – disputes rose to the level of conflict and monarch and Parliament armed against one another, a threshold was reached. But it took forty years and two kings to get there.

The Jacobean Interval: James I follows Elizabeth I

A widespread sigh of relief was given by many across the related (but not united) kingdoms of England/Wales, Scotland and Ireland when Elizabeth I's long reign ended with her death in 1603 and James VI of Scotland, with his smidge of Tudor ancestry, peacefully succeeded to the English throne as James I.[129] He took over a kingdom in which a religious settlement of deliberately loose Protestantism was beginning to

---

[129] Hirst, *Conflict*, 79.

fray while the economy was improving slightly, in fits and starts, but the gap between haves and have-nots was widening.

England's population growth (from 4.1 million in 1601 to 5.2 million in 1656) meant that mouths to feed consistently exceeded food production in the early decades of the seventeenth century, bringing inflation and misery. But the population growth was spotty; plague years like 1603 and 1625 wiped out around twenty percent of London's population in each instance.[130] The usual paradox of plague – high mortality, followed by a shortage of workers and bidding up of wages– gave the emerging national economy staggered opportunities to recover and improve, and "England slowly outstripped much of the rest of Europe in its ability to feed and employ a growing population."[131] The last real famine, according to Hirst, was in 1623, and it was restricted to only a few counties.

Still, the persistent gap meant that the everyday economy was seldom far from the edge of crisis. Along with the many folk wandering in search of work, many were also poor in place. James I's inherited poor law policy was inexpertly applied by his administration.[132] The fast-growing population, paradoxically, was held down also by later marriages and fewer children resulting from the perennially hard economic times.

[130] Coward, *Stuart Age,* 8.
[131] Hirst, *Conflict*, 57.
[132] C.V. Wedgwood, *The King's Peace, 1637-1641* (New York: McMillan, 1955), 141; Hirst, *Conflict,* 72-73.

James I had less luck than Elizabeth I at raising funds to manage this difficult patch of English development. What Derek Hirst called the last best chance to reform public finances died with Sir Robert Cecil, a counselor inherited from Elizabeth whose grand reform bargain with Parliament failed to gain traction two years before his death in 1612. [133] Hirst suggested that the "absence of an agreed [foreign] enemy allowed localism... free rein,"[134] and made Parliament less likely to grant subsidy to the king – that and increasing evidence that James, ever generous to his favorites, was not a wise spender of the public's money.

Most historians include the financial disarray that peaked in Charles I's reign (1625-41) as a principal cause of the civil wars. The resentments raised by Charles's frantic attempts to raise money without Parliament were considerable. C.V. Wedgwood observed "the measures taken [in the late 1630s] to increase the royal revenues were a principal reason for the dwindling respect in which the government was held."[135]

Public information about James I's louche habits and unthriftiness was largely oral and in manuscript newsletters, but information about the Protestant cause in the Thirty Years' War circulated in print. Protestant England saw Frederick, the Elector Palatine and erstwhile King of Bohemia (now the Czech Republic, more or less) and spouse of

---

[133] Hirst, *Conflict,* 90.
[134] Hirst*, Conflict*, 28.
[135] Wedgwood*, King's Peace*, 153.

James's popular daughter Elizabeth, second in line to the English throne, as a heroic fighter against the looming threat of Catholic Spain and the Holy Roman Empire. Regular – soon, more or less weekly – news pamphlets called "corantos" filled with continental news appeared on London's streets in 1621. Several members of the Stationers' Company saw to translation and printing of foreign news, mostly from Dutch language publications.[136]

The popularity of these (more or less) weekly corantos,[137] early versions of newspapers, identified pent-up demand on the part of those who did not get other news on paper. The breakthrough of the corantos into the marketplace was an important index of the salience of the continental war to ordinary Britons (as they were beginning to think of themselves). [138] Because James I did not intervene actively to aid his son-in-law despite considerable public pressure, the corantos always had the potential to discomfit the powerful. In 1632 the corantos were outlawed and periodical news went back into the realm of manuscript where it would remain until 1641.

The year 1621 saw the country "slipping into the deepest depression of the century,"[139] In the catastrophic continental war,

---

136 Raymond, *Invention of the Newspaper*, 8.
137 The proprietors received a license for foreign news in 1621 and in October 1622 the corantos "began to be numbered consecutively … at approximately weekly intervals." Frank, *Beginnings*, 8.
138 Frank, *Beginnings*, 7-16; Raymond, *Invention*, 8-13; Pettegree, *Invention of News,* 195-98.
139 Hirst, *Conflict*, 104.

James's daughter and son-in-law were defeated and driven into permanent exile. But James still remained reluctant to take on Spain, and the domestic religious conflicts were exacerbated by the perceived refusal to confront the Catholic powers. Domestic religious conflicts flowed out of a strong current of dissent and anti-episcopal feeling that animated many of the country's Protestants, who perceived a top-down religious structure that looked, to them (radical Protestants or Puritans), like "popery."[140]

When Charles I succeeded his father in 1625, James I's assertion of divine right power was redoubled in the son, who had spent months in Spain as a youth, vainly wooing the Infanta Maria Ana and experiencing the formal, ceremonial, cosmopolitan court of Philip III, which made his father's seem rude. As king, he tried to replicate that elegance in his own.[141] Appointment of Arminian bishops who seemed to lean toward Catholic practices had alienated people and Parliament, and Charles I's marriage to a French Catholic princess, who brought her own entourage of priests and advisors, did not ease public fears that popery was insinuating itself at the top of both political and religious hierarchies in England..

---

[140] Hirst, *Conflict*, 80-81.
[141] Wedgwood, *King's Peace,* 21, 65.

In 1629 Charles I sent Parliament home and thereafter indulged in eleven years of "Personal Rule" that required a frantic levying of taxes and impositions decried by an increasing number of his subjects as illegal. Charles had not inherited a well-run kingdom from his father, but his own poor administrative skills and reliance on favorites made it no better. When he finally moved to call a new Parliament in 1640, in order to get the revenue he desperately needed to deal with the rebellious Scots, the voters returned a body that was ready to resist.

Charles I's rule foundered on questions of finance, faith and authority. His various tax and assessment schemes had roiled the gentry of the countryside, many of whom got their information from subscription manuscript newsletters often re-circulated among themselves.[142] Charles defended and promoted an Archbishop of Canterbury, William Laud, an Arminian, seen by the growing Calvinist/Puritan strand in the English church as leaning toward Catholic sensibilities. Many pamphlets on religious topics flew like "paper bullets" and writers and publishers were sentenced to public shame and physical mutilation if not worse – creating a group of popular civic martyrs as in the case of Henry Burton, John Bastwick and William

---

[142] Sabrina A. Baron, "The Guises of Dissemination in Early Seventeenth-Century England: News in Manuscript and Print," in *The Politics of Information in Early Modern Europe,* eds. Brendan Dooley and Sabrina A. Baron (London: Routledge, 2001), 41-56.

Prynne.[143]

After Charles I was forced to call the new Parliament in 1640, the return of the legislators found the communication gap with the crown as wider than ever, and soon the lower house and the court were involved in vigorous combat – in print, a "war of words" described by Michael Mendel. Parliament was still uneasy with making its own workings public. As Joad Raymond argued, the 1641 decision and vote of the House of Commons to pass what it called the "Grand Remonstrance" – a bill of particulars against the king that amounted to an indictment – was difficult enough. The later vote on whether or not to *print and publicly distribute* this statement against the king was even harder for the leadership to win.[144] Parliament was no more used to the transparency that came with widespread print dissemination of its doings than was Charles I.

Print in Politics, Elizabeth I to Charles I

Print culture grew along with the active public. The general historians of the period have varied in their labeling of the new, active non-elite populace. Barry Coward argued that "public sphere" is too linked to the eighteenth-nineteenth century bourgeois era of which Jurgen Habermas wrote, and chose "public opinion." Hirst preferred to

---

[143] Coward, *Stuart Age*, 176; Christopher Hill, *The World Turned Upside Down: Radical Ideas During the English Revolution* (New York: Penguin, 1975), 299.
[144] Raymond, *Invention.* 113, 126

include the civic newcomers in the broader "political nation." Others like Zaret, Pincus and (marginally) Lake (as noted in an earlier chapter) asserted that "public sphere" has analytic power that helps historians understand this unusual convergence.

Whatever one chooses to call this public, print had a crucial role in its growth. During the 1595 to 1640 period being analyzed here, disputatious pamphlets were rife. Some were printed legitimately and licensed; others were not. The famed "Martin Marprelate" pamphlets that rattled the Elizabethan religious authorities in the late 1580s were clandestinely printed and the subject of much official searching and seizing, but the authors remain in dispute to this day. The series of pamphlets attacked the hierarchical Church of England structure, with its rooms full of bishops and ceremonial adornments, from the perspective of Presbyterians who sought a plainer, more independent organization that emphasized preaching, consistent with Calvinist doctrine.[145]

Print culture also swelled the consumption of less controversial material. Ballads, how-to instructional books, pamphlets recounting politics or travels overseas, romances and "pleasant histories," popular medical books (another "how-to") and even cheap playbooks were in considerable circulation. But, as Joad Raymond summarized, forty to

---

[145] Raymond, *Pamphlets and Pamphleteering,* 36.

fifty percent of the print products before the civil wars were religious –

prayer books, psalters and sermons, a great many sermons. Total

publications *per year* flirted with the number 500 as early as 1610

(about doubling the output of 1570) and were almost never fewer than

500 after 1620 (there was a large hiccup in 1626). After 1640, for

reasons obvious (war) and not so obvious (comparatively little

censorship), the numbers shot to over 4,000 per year.[146]

Not all these books and pamphlets were cheap, of course. But

cheap print, Anna Bayman asserted, was not restricted to those low of

income. "there was no sharp division between popular and elite culture

in this [seventeenth-century] era. This is nowhere more obvious than in

popular print culture, which was in large part produced, and rapaciously

consumed, by the elite."[147]

Annual almanacs continued throughout this period to be the most

numerous single print product; by the typical estimate 300,000 or more

copies were sent to booksellers in cities and towns every November,

providing a tight package of fact and prediction for the coming year.

Throughout James I's later years a dozen or more different name-brand

almanacs were printed every year.

Nearly all this printing (barring pirated editions) was produced by

---

[146] Joad Raymond, "Development of the Book Trade," in Raymond, *Oxford History*, 61.
[147] Bayman, "Printing, Learning, and the Unlearned," 76; Burke, "Popular History," in Raymond, *Oxford History,* 443.

the Worshipful Company of Stationers, since 1557 incorporated as the exclusive guild for printing, publishing and selling books, and happy proprietors of many monopolies over the printing of various genres in the book trade. Their path through the difficult years of the first two Stuart kings was cushioned by their lucrative monopoly on the high-volume, low-cost annual almanac.

THE STATIONERS AND THEIR ALMANACS

The Stationers, though governed by a court of officers, pivoted on the fifteen to twenty-five "master printers" for whom the rest worked. Master printers owned presses and operated print shops – the term "master" was no guarantee of skill, but certainly of economic power in the guild. The masters and the Court focused intently on efficient business practices and increasing guild and individual revenue.

The Stationers' Company, one of the emerging capitalist formations among London's many guilds, maintained – and sometimes fumbled – a delicate relationship with the crown, Privy Council and religious authorities. The relationship highlighted the singular nature of print, the dangers that authorities saw in it and the accommodations made by both sides. The Company's register of approved publications kept by a succession of clerks showed careful management of the self-censorship that was the price the company paid for its exclusive hold on printing in London, and therefore virtually throughout the realm. Most entries identified not only printer and title but also the licenser (usually a cleric)

who gave print publications the *imprimatur* ("it is to be printed"). The records of the Court of the Stationers' Company – their executive decisions – showed an equal solicitude for protecting and nurturing the profitable English Stock company formed within the guild that was designed to maximize profits on profitable monopolies including the almanacs.[148]

Cyprian Blagden's 1960 narrative account based on the Stationers' records made it plain that stationers, both on the printing and the bookselling side, kept careful track of sales and returns. The Stationers' almanacs were a diverse line with different component features to attract an optimally wide customer base. Therefore, it defies common sense that the guild leadership did not carefully consider what features remained popular, what had fallen out of favor as evidenced by slacking sales, and what innovations might restore popularity to tattered brands. On October 8, 1611, the Court of the Stationers' Company appointed a committee of veteran printers to oversee an improvement in the quality and workmanship – including paper quality – of printed almanacs, which they were to see was "better done," incident to raising the price per copy in future.[149] This evidence of the importance of almanac business to the Company stands out even more when set against Ian Gadd's more

---

[148] Edward Arber, ed. *A Transcript of the Registers of the Company of Stationers*; William A. Jackson, ed. *Records of the Court of the Stationers' Company, 1602-1640* (London: Bibliographical Society, 1958).

[149] Jackson, *Records of the Court of the Stationers' Company*, 51.

general observation: "Indeed, it seems that [in all printing endeavors] the Company did not generally concern itself with the quality of workmanship."[150]

The Stationers' Company was, in the early decades of the seventeenth century, a full-fledged and emerging-capitalist corporation operating in the early modern milieu of similar trade groups, the London guilds or livery companies. The way the Company printers and booksellers (on the face of it, natural economic antagonists in the "circuit" from creators to users and return[151]) managed their role in the City's volatile economy influenced their behavior in the matter of their meal ticket, the annual almanacs.

The Worshipful Company of Stationers, who did business as "stationers" preparing and selling manuscripts from before the arrival of printing in England, was chartered under that name by Mary I and Philip II in 1557, during the brief and turbulent Catholic interregnum before Elizabeth I put England on a more or less steady Protestant course. The charter gave the Company qualified sole right to printing throughout the country, which was in practice confined to the City of London – if it could enforce it.[152] That bargain included the Stationers' right to inspect

---

[150] Ian Gadd, "'*Being like a field*,'" 93, n99.

[151] Robert Darnton, "What is the History of Books," in *The Book History Reader*, eds. David Finkelstein and Alistair McCleery, 2nd ed. (New York: Routledge 2006), 12 [fig.2.1, "The communications circuit"].

[152] The Stationers acquired the name originally around 1300 because "it described a man who had a fixed [stationary] place of business, a stall-holder rather than a hawker… no one has explained why it adhered to this [book] trade and not to any others." Blagden, *Stationers'*, 22.

printing establishments and sometimes shipments from overseas – not only for illegal printing of popular books "registered" by other Stationers' members, but also (on behalf of Crown and Church) to ferret out sedition. A chilling matter-of-fact entry in the Stationers' Court Book for December 6, 1596 recounts the disciplining of "Edward Venge and his complices" for illicit printing of, among other items, almanacs (at this time a "patent" or monopoly of the printers and guild members Richard Watkins and James Roberts). Invoking specific Star Chamber rulings against this "disorderly printing," the Court ruled that Venge's press and type be "sawed in peece(s) melted and defaced and made unserviceable for pryntinge."[153]

Along with their police powers, the Stationers could flourish the legend "*cum privilegio regali ad imprimendum solum.*" (by royal privilege to be the only printers) on the title pages of their products[154] The Crown's purpose in extending these privileges was to enlist the printers and publishers in the task of suppressing political discussion that the authorities deemed dangerous. The Register often – but by no means always – identified the authorities who had signed off on the book or pamphlet being registered prior to publication. This authorizing process generally consisted of two steps, one internal to the Company, and one

---

[153] W.W. Greg and E. Boswell, eds*., Records of the Court of the Stationers' Company 1576 to 1602 from Register B* (London: Bibliographical Society, 1930), 56.
[154] Mendle, "De Facto Freedom, De Facto Authority," 309.

external. The external authorizing process was pre-publication licensing, the early modern version of censorship.Most often the licencers for the press were designees of the Bishop of London, a power derived from the Star Chamber decree of 1586 intended to clamp down on printed materials with content that the church and the state found dangerous. Only with their authority would the book or pamphlet (in theory) be printed. The other part of this process was one that was internal to the Company and was intended to protect the economic interests of Stationers rather than address concerns of church and state. The was entrance into the Company's Register which like the system of "privilege" in the Paris guild of printers and publishers,[155] served as a form of copyright before such laws were established. This process was supervised by the Wardens of the Company. Some items were registered as place-holders to keep others from pirating them; some of the registered items do not appear to have been printed.[156] The Stationers' register gives us glimpses into early seventeenth century attempts to control the contents of printed matter as well as attempts of the trade guild to protect its craft and its members.

The Stationers, in the teeming business culture of London, were by no means included among the most powerful livery companies,

---

[155] Pottinger, *The French Book Trade*, 210-211.

[156] W. W. Greg, *Some Aspects and Problems of London Publishing* (London: Oxford/Clarendon Press, 1956), 112-122.

as Ian Gadd made clear. They ranked in the bottom third of the livery companies, based on their position in ceremonial parade order.[157] Their collaboration with the ruling authorities throughout their early history was no doubt intended to raise their profile and their potency in The City. And it made them just like the rest of the livery companies, and guilds all over urban England, in Keith Wrightson's summary:

> The guild system was in essence a system of control. Its basic purpose was to regulate competition within limited local markets in a manner which would ensure the livelihood of guild members. This was attempted in the first instance by controlling entry to the trade. Rules were laid down restricting the number of apprentices permitted, the fees to be charged for taking them, and the length of time they must serve….. Secondly, the conduct of masters [the top echelon of the guild] was regulated. …Thirdly, attempts were made to control labour and labour relationships. …it involved the setting of wages and conditions of labour and the placing of restrictions upon labour mobility.[158]

The Stationers may be contrasted in their *parvenu* status among London's guilds with the printers and booksellers of Paris, who early gained high status among the city's and the nation's guilds. David Pottinger noted that in 1563 (less than a decade after the Stationers' Company of London were getting their first royal charter from Philip II and Mary) the Paris booksellers were among the top half-dozen of the city's guilds and had an *ex officio* member in rotation on the Court of Commerce set up by Charles IX to settle commercial disputes in the city,

---

[157] Gadd, "'Being Like a Field'," 9.
[158] Wrightson, *Earthly Necessities*, 81.

giving them "an assured position among the guilds."[159]

The English Stationers were perhaps a little institutionally insecure, hungry for status and money, and as H. S. Bennett observed long ago "they were on the *qui vive* to exploit every turn of the national fortunes..."[160] A culture that was both conservative and acquisitive emerged within the Stationers, and specifically in the top-tier "Court" hierarchy of Masters, Wardens and Assistants. The power placed in the sometimes errant or corrupt hands of treasurers and beadles tended to benefit the organization's more powerful members.[161] Historians have disagreed, however, on the degree of cooperation or resistance that Stationers offered to the authorities' censorship regime – and on how consistently rigorous the authorities were in applying the regime to authors, printers and booksellers. At moments of particular political tension or crisis, where it was considered print might have an inflammatory role, the state cracked down on print publication with all the tools at its disposal, including the expectation that the Stationers' Company would also police the content of print. At other more politically calm moments, this duty was ignored.

The rigor of censorship is particularly relevant because according to many accounts the earlier almanacs (c. 1540-1570) were thought

---

[159] Unlike in England, where printing was restricted to London and the two universities, printers' guilds flourished all over France, particularly in Lyon as well as Paris. Pottinger, *The French Book Trade,* 119.
[160] Bennett, *English Books and Readers, 1558-1603*, xvi, 4.
[161] Blagden, *Stationers'*, 100-101.

dangerous by those in power because of their prognostications of the

social and political future. "The sixteenth century," Capp reported,

"witnessed the gradual suppression of dangerous political material in

alomanacs through a combination of censorship, licensing and the self-

restraint of timid compilers." [162] Were the almanacs de-fanged by the

booksellers and printers? The award of lucrative patents provided an

incentive for self-censorship on the part of the Company as well as

individual producers. The compilers (authors) of the almanacs clearly

had strong views, especially in religious areas. As Capp pointed out,

almanacs had to read the currents of political change in England with

care when conflicts became hot.[163]

William Parron, an Italian astrologer who worked for Henry VII,

was circumspect in his predictions about the future fates of most

European regimes and "reserved his prophecies of disaster for the remote

and infidel Ottoman Empire." However, the most common English

almanacs of the first half of the sixteenth century were translations of

those produced by the Laet family, Flemish astrologers whose

prognostications included hints of misfortune for the mighty – one of

their prophecies apparently was taken to have successfully predicted the

downfall of Cardinal Wolsey in Henry VIII's reign. The second half of the

---

[162] Capp, *Almanacs*, 67; and "For most of Elizabeth's reign there was fairly tight supervision over the contents of prognostications," Capp, *Almanacs*, 70.
[163] Capp, *Almanacs*, esp. 70-72.

sixteenth century, however, was dominated by native astrologers "aware of their precarious legal status" and "political speculation diminished considerably."[164]

Richard Buckminster, for example, compiled almanacs for most of Elizabeth's reign (1567-1599). In his 1568 almanac, printed by "John Kyngston for Garet Dewes," he made distinct social and political predictions, foreseeing discord among the powerful and the possible deaths of important men (no names or other identifying characteristics provided, as was standard). There was also the unexceptional contention that "much poore folk are like to be oppressed by the riche and wealthy."[165] Three years later Buckminster was being printed by Richard Watkins, who that same year partnered with fellow Stationer James Roberts to gain the first almanac privilege granted by the crown. Under Watkins's management, Buckminster's more risky social and political predictions vanished by 1571. Buckminster took care to point out in his front-of-the-book message to the "gentle reader" that he was providing "for thy behoof and profit," medical and husbandry advice, "but be not curious to seke in these workes those thynges which neither pleasure nor profite thee." Quoting Seneca, he continued that "it shall not hurt thee to passe over those things it is not lawful for thee to know, or

---

[164] Capp, *Almanacs*, 67-68.

[165] *Buckminster 1568*, Early English Books Online [hereafter EEBO], image 20 recto [Folger Shakespeare Library], http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:image:16561:20.

knowyng them, shal not profit thee." He finished "I could have combred thee with many more matters, but because they are nothyng profitable for thee, I cease from troubling thee." [166] A better washing of hands in public is hard to imagine. Buckminster was announcing that he was getting out of his former business of social and political prognostications (as weak tea as they may have been). When such a monopoly was granted by authorities, there was usually a political *quid pro quo.*

The 1557 award of the charter to the Stationers was confirmed a few years after the death of Mary I by her successor, her half-sister Elizabeth I. Ian Gadd said the charter "had immense totemic power" for the Company, but noted the downside of chartered incorporation: "Whilst incorporation articulated an absolute rhetoric of unity, stability and perpetuation, a company's incorporated status made it vulnerable to litigation, lobbying, institutional poverty, devolutionary desires of groups within it or the whims of monarchs in a way that a less definable group of tradesmen was not." [167]

When in 1603 James I confirmed the Stationers' chartered status once again – and awarded the Company the exclusive privilege for printing almanacs and other best-sellers that became the basis for the separately chartered English Stock company within the guild – political

---

[166] *Buckminster 1571*, [STC2 422.5] sig. Aii v and v2, EEBO, images 2 & 3, [University of Illinois Urbama-Champaign], http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:image:176681:2 .

[167] Gadd, "'Being Like a Field'," 42, 60.

prognostication in almanacs was at a low ebb. "By the early seventeenth century," Capp said, "many almanac-makers were omitting political speculations altogether, from principle as well as prudence." The principled aspect stemmed from a continuing dispute within the astrological trade itself over "judicial astrology," that portion of astronomical calculations that might provide specific predictions about future events and specific persons rather than (more safely) characterizing future periods, places and classes of society as more or less favored, more or less at hazard, because of major perturbations in the heavens.[168]

Many of the astrologers overtly said that judicial astrology did not comport with religious tenets. For them, "the stars rule man, but God rules the stars" and no explicit prediction gained through "casting a figure" (calculating the effects of the stars) could be accurate because the divine will could override it.[169] Clearly, this was also a good hedge against being wrong, and it was repeated faithfully by compilers through the next century.

Not until the beginning of hostilities in 1642 and the essential collapse of censorship did politics re-intrude in a major way in the almanacs. Those compiled by John Booker, William Lilly and George

---

[168] Capp, *Almanacs,* 16, 180-82; Allen, *Star-Crossed Renaissance,* esp. ch. 1 and 105-112.
[169] Capp, *Almanacs*, 136.

Wharton, all distinctly partisan astrologers, predicted victory for their chosen side. Lilly and Booker were pro-Parliament; Wharton a member of Charles I's wartime circle.

An Aid to Everyday Life

In that 1603-1641 period under Stationers' Company management, most almanacs settled into a routine of providing serviceable advice on everyday matters, framed in a document that laid out the year to come, in its sameness and differences. The potential stimulus of social and political change as suggested in predictions of future strife took a back seat to the everyday requirements of ordinary, non-elite life – farming, health, staying solvent or getting ahead. Instead of, or in addition to, prediction, many almanacs provided retrospect, in the form of a one-page timeline of historical events dating from the Creation but noting comparatively recent episodes like the Gunpowder Plot of 1605, a Catholic conspiracy that aimed to kill James I and decimate his Parliament in a large explosion. For the largely anti-Catholic common folk that was a sure-fire reminder of a persistent danger to the realm.[170]

What made the almanacs' plenum of information – and the public for which it was issued – a force for change had in part to do with the corporate management by the Stationers' Company's leadership of the

---

[170] Hirst, *England in Conflict*, 48-49 e.g.

entire almanac trade. The persistent self-dealing and collaboration with power that characterized the Stationers' leadership began with the initial 1557 charter. By the time of James I's accession, a long-term ascendency of the booksellers over the printers in the leadership of the Company was well developed. The 1603 privilege was awarded to the *Company*, rather than individual printers, for many popular and profitable products including almanacs. In that same year, 1603, came the Stationers' incorporation of the English Stock, the joint stock company encompassing almanacs, textbooks and some religious book genres that were the core privileges and lucrative heart of the 1603 royal patent.[171]

The creation of this stock company and its resolute dedication to a long-term profits cushion for the Company was to be a stabilizing factor in the guild's long and mostly successful run through the seventeenth and ensuing centuries (the Company still exists today).[172] Managing the public's access to these ubiquitous, utilitarian products for the conduct of religious, educational and practical living also made the Stationers, in effect, a choke point for the *publicness* of *mass* information in Stuart England.

Cheap Print, but Who's the Winner?
Through the critical years of this period, c. 1615-1640, the almost

---

[171] Blagden, *Stationers'*, 75-76; Gadd, "'Being Like a Field'," 101-07.

[172] Blagden, *Stationers'*; Lambert, "Printers and the Government" in Myers and Harris, *Aspects of Printing*, 1-29.

inevitable struggle between printers – who wanted the best price for their product – and the booksellers – who wanted low wholesale prices and therefore higher retail margins – went the booksellers' way. More and more, they took over the "publisher" role that organically emerged as the book trade grew and management of titles, genres and relations with authority grew with it. The booksellers and publishers also accumulated power *within the Company* at the expense of the printers and their fellow artisans, the compositors and bookbinders. This trend was not unique to the Stationers' Company, as Bridenbaugh pointed out: "at the opening of the seventeenth century. … the guilds were splitting into producers and purveyors, and the latter were gaining almost complete control of the industries."[173] And as the booksellers triumphed (a trend visible as early as 1582, Blagden said) printers were more and more at their mercy – an imbalance that ended only with the collapse of the censorship regime in the early 1640s, when the printers flourished with new untrammeled business and were as strong as they had been for a century.[174] Part of the censorship regime depended on the Company's limiting the number of master printers who could operate print shops. At the end of the sixteenth century this number was fixed at twenty and the collapse of civil and religious administration in 1641 allowed anyone trained in the craft—and even some untrained—to set up printing operations of their

[173] Bridenbaugh, *Vexed and Troubled Englishmen*, 170.
[174] Blagden *Stationers'*, 89-90, 147.

own.

This internal battle didn't remain internal. In some hot religious publishing disputes of the early seventeenth century, disgruntled authors like George Wither lambasted the booksellers' dominance in the Stationers' Company:

> "… the Bookeseller hath not only made the Printer, the Binder, and the Claspmaker a slave to him: but hath brought Authors, yea the whole Commonwealth, and all the liberall Sciences into bondage. For he makes all professors of Art, labour for his profit… and in such fashion, and at those rates, which please himselfe." [175]

Wither, who was not an almanac compiler, had managed to secure a royal patent requiring that his versions of psalms be included in all psalters. On this point he carried on a long feud with Stationers' leadership. Michelle O'Callaghan in her *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* article on Wither noted that "The monopoly on the English psalter was held by senior members of the company." Wither, up against the financial interests of the Company's most powerful members, outlined his grievances in 1624 in *A Scholler's Purgatory*.[176] A poet and sometime satirist, he oscillated in his life between being favored by the very great – Charles I and (apparently) Charles's sister Elizabeth, the erstwhile Queen of Bohemia, as well as Cromwell during the protectorate

---

[175] Gadd, "'Being Like a Field'," 160.
[176] Wither, George, *The Scholler's Purgatory Discovered in the Stationers Common wealth…* (Norwood, NJ: Walter Johnson, Inc. 1977) [facsimile reprint of 1624 edition, STC 25919].

– and alienating his benefactors through incautious publication, often landing in prison. But he had a voice at the time he needed it and needled the Stationers mercilessly.[177]

Wither lived a long and varied life that extended into the Restoration, publishing copiously; but his battle with the Company in the 1620s illuminated specifically the increasing dominance of booksellers and the overall profit motive in the Stationers' equation late in James I's reign and early in Charles I's. It reinforces the likelihood that those who had their fingers on sales figures also made the call on which almanacs to print, how to adapt them to public taste and how to keep them cheap.

The effect of the guild's tacit control somewhat belied H.S. Bennett's observation that "No man could well complain in Elizabethan England that knowledge was hidden from him. Once he had learned to read, the way was open." Given the degree of control and collaboration in the trade, Bennett's romance of universal access seems more a mythic gesture than a sound claim. John Calvin had asserted that astrology was a design for disclosing knowledge that God did not want man to have.[178] Between the authorities, the Stationers' complaisant self-censorship and the booksellers' protection of their best-sellers against interlopers,

---

[177] Michelle O'Callaghan, "Wither, George (1588–1667)," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford University Press, 2004) [accessed 09 October 2014], doi:10.1093/ref:odnb/29804.
[178] Allen, *Star-Crossed Renaissance*, 71.

Calvin's religious injunction had plenty of help from the earthly sphere.

By 1587, when the Stationers were trying to manage the perpetual volatility of their business and (when pressed) treat their less fortunate brothers rightly, the Court of the Company decreed that "standing formes" were to be discouraged. This meant that pages of set type should not be left intact (in order to quickly print more copies of an edition should it prove popular) but should be disassembled so as to maintain a level of work (and a supply of always-scarce type) for the compositors. The exceptions were telling: the "double impressions" that were permitted (therefore letting the formes stand for at least a while) were the staple moneymakers, the grammars and "accidence" (schoolbooks) – and, interestingly, the almanacs.[179] It is not likely a coincidence that these were the linchpins of the 1603 patent and of the establishment and profit-taking of the English Stock.

Even the restrictions on standing formes for other, non-excluded print jobs could go by the board depending on the era being examined. D.F. McKenzie observed:

> …the loss of much ephemera of the 16th and 17th centuries
> (almanacks, school texts, and many other books required in
> multiple editions by the several Stocks of the Stationers' Company)
> has perhaps made us unmindful of the volume of such work. …
> the major evidence of large editions, far in excess presumably of
> the limits set, is the complaints from journeymen. The Company
> regulations of 1587, designed for the benefit of the journeymen,
> sought to provide further work by restricting the use of standing

[179] Greg and Boswell, *Records of the Court of the Stationers' Company, 1576 to 1602,* 25.

formes and by limiting impressions to 1500 copies of some books and 3000 of others [here he cites Greg, *Companion to Arber*, 43]. These were of course Company regulations enforced, if at all, by those least likely to gain from them. The workmen are further complaining in 1614, and in 1635 an organized protest is made about the extraodinary number of books printed at one impression and the abuse of standing formes. The alleviation of the journeymen's distress may have been procured by the restriction of standing formes to the Psalter, Grammar and Accidence, Almanacks and Prognostications, but one doubts it.[180]

Bernard Capp was more straightforward about it: despite the English Stock's avowed purpose to make more work for the less-fortunate printers and apprentices in the trade, much type for the biggest meal ticket, the almanacs, was left standing, sometimes for more than a year, and doubtless used for more than one edition of the lucrative publications.[181] The *English Short Title Catalog*'s bibliographers caught Elizabeth Allde (widow of Edward Allde, a longtime almanac printer) for example, using the same type and forms for the front-of-the-book calendar pages for three different almanacs she printed in 1631.[182]

Ian Gadd noted the steady erosion of equality in the Company under the financial pull of the English Stock. More and more, in the late 1620s, the yeomen, ordinary journeyman printers, supposed to be represented on the Stock's board were replaced by liverymen (well-off senior stationers). And, he added, printer George Wood, a member, in 1621 "alleged that the English Stock was in the hands of 'men of other

---

[180] McKenzie, *Making Meaning,* 61.
[181] Capp, *Almanacs,* 42.
[182] The editions were Gilden, Perkins and Sofford. STC2 (New York: Modern Language Association, 1994), 22, 26, 28.

trades, brought in by tricks' and that 'proctors, cheesemongers, keepers of bowling-allies' and the like … 'so they be moneyed men' joined the company 'by favour or purchase.' "[183]

The printers had their own agenda. Since their petition for a charter in 1557, the Stationers' leadership had periodically (in 1586, 1615 and 1637) gone back to the crown asking to have the total number of printers, print houses or presses – or all three – kept low by law to enrich those already in the business and cut out the up-and-coming journeymen and newly freed apprentices clamoring for paid work. Too many printers would mean a decline in the price of printing as desperate journeymen outbid the guild's established senior members.[184] It would also defeat the interests of the crown in limiting capacity for producing printed materials. Within the Company, though, the booksellers and publishers had the opposite goal – lower the price of printing to improve their margin and keep their products competitive. The fact that prices for books, pamphlets and other printed products had stayed low (as Tessa Watt's research determined)[185] well into the seventeenth century indicates that the booksellers and publishers were either selling the product at or below cost, or that they were winning the internal battle to keep the price of printing low.

---

[183] Gadd, "'Being Like a Field'," 81 n60, 184.
[184] Blagden, *Stationers'*, 71, 80, 122.
[185] Watt, *Cheap Print and Popular Piety*, 261.

The plain fact is that the English Stock was a genuine meal ticket, and the haves increasingly were not willing to share the bounty with the have-nots as time went on. Ironically, their request for the monopoly on popular products like the almanac, and their sanctioned creation of the English Stock to multiply the revenue from that monopoly, was made to authorities on the grounds that the poor members of the Company needed charity and work. But the eventual effect instead was to further disempower them.

The large runs of almanacs and other lucrative titles like the psalters and the grammar or "accidence," as noted by McKenzie above, were almost certainly enriching the Stationers' leadership at the cost of violating the prohibition against, for instance, "standing forms." Only the ongoing power struggle between printers and booksellers, one can guess, would have tempered the senior printers' attempts to reduce the number of print shops and keep the cost of printing high. The booksellers, after all, wanted the cost of printing low. The journeymen and apprentices were least well treated, and McKenzie's account of their frequent protests illustrated the continuing inequality in the guild.

In 1643, civil conflict was under way, the royal censorship regime had collapsed and Parliament was only inconsistently monitoring the printers' output. The Stationers had no official backup for their supposed role as enforcers of official censorship – nor for their right to their

registered claims, or rudimentary copyright. Facing loss of much of their control of the trade because of the collapse of the royal government and thus regulatory authority and proliferating piracy of printed works, the Stationers made a "Humble Remonstrance" to Parliament for relief. They argued that a healthy printing industry was "a necessary part of the cultural hegemony of the state." Not only printing, the Company continued, but "well ordered" printing must be assured. The Stationers handed Gadd his dissertation title with the statement that printing was unhealthily bloated, "Being like a field o'erpestered with too much stock."[186]

In this appeal they invoked what is now called generically "the tragedy of the commons," the notion that a resource had to be controlled and meted out by some authority because if left open for exploitation by all, it would suffer the fate of a "commons," or public grazing area, stripped bare by the cattle of every resident. A standard capitalist argument for ownership of property as versus the open, public quality of a commonwealth available to all members of society was invoked on behalf of the most powerful stratum of the Stationers' Company.[187] The metaphor was echoed, not surprisingly, by the Merchant Adventurer's Company, monopolists of the lucrative Netherlands trade, who pushed

---

[186] Gadd, "'Being like a Field'," 147-48; Blagden, *Stationers'*, 146.
[187] Garrett Hardin, "The Tragedy of the Commons," *Science* 162, no. 3859 (1968): 1243-1248.

back against an attempt to ease access to joining the company with "to ad more persons to bee marchants adventurers is to put more sheep into one and the same pasture which is to serve them all."[188]

In the previous century, increased appropriation of open, presumably "common" fields and lands had brought rebellious words and actions from common people who were generally the victims. The commons were in fact the property of noble or gentry landlords who from 1550 increasingly reclaimed with "enclosure" what traditionally had been open to the use of all in the village or manor area. The incentive was increasing pasturage for raising more profitable sheep as England's cloth trade took off. Invocation of the spirit of ownership had increasing power. As the carnage and lapse in lawful behavior of the civil wars began, the nascent industrial capitalists of The City prioritized property over the "commonwealth" tradition of reciprocal obligation between the propertied and landless classes, and the Stationers defended their right to "copy," or intellectual property, the early version of copyright represented by an entry in the Register. In the Stationers' deliberations and decisions, however, there is very little evidence that any kind of civil conflict is going on. Nevertheless, the disruption of well-established distribution networks in towns and cities outside London, in a countryside now roiled by combat, had to be affecting cheap-print aspects of the business like the

---

[188] Wrightson, *Earthly Necessities*, 191.

almanac trade. Despite their self-serving "Humble Remonstrance" (which went nowhere with the legislators), the Stationers had to ride out the civil wars era without the express help of Parliament, attempting to take on the role of licensing authority.[189] Parliament had other concerns, such as war.

This broad-strokes look at the Company's essential traits, development and practices glosses over the variant episodes in the life of the guild, such as the rowdy behavior of Elizabethan printers like John Wolf, who was disciplined numerous times for piracy (printing others work and selling it) and whose unrepentant push-back against the Court eventually led to his taking a leadership role himself.[190] In the almanac trade, however, the practical problem the Company faced was balancing its inner impulse for efficiency and cost-cutting against the need to grow a customer base in a cheap-print information public with widely different tastes and needs in both factual, calendrical material and the quasi-fiction of astrological prediction. A compromise extending the model developed by the almanacs' pioneer monopolists, Richard Watkins and James Roberts, was its choice.

A Plenum of Almanacs – the Stationers' Solution

Why so many brands of almanacs? Almanac users were diverse in

---

[189] Blagden, *Stationers'*, 148-49.
[190] Plant, *Book Trade*, 105, 108.

terms of urban versus rural living, artisan versus agricultural vocation, a graded spectrum of religious practices and intensities and a still-parochial consciousness of locality rather than nationality. And, as Anna Bayman and others have said, popular and elite culture had not at this time begun to diverge, so almanacs *as a genre* aimed to appeal to elite and non-elite alike.[191]

To come up with offerings that would sell among this varied public for information, the Company appropriated the already-extant stable of name-branded almanacs established by the decades-old patent exercised by Richard Watkins and James Roberts that it took over in 1603. Watkins' and Roberts's strategy had proved successful. The Queen's Printer, Christopher Barker, wrote a report to the crown in 1582 in which his Company colleagues did not come off well. Most of the patents (monopolies) enjoyed by individual members, he said, were stifling the trade and beggaring the journeymen printers who could use the opportunities that would open up if privilege were abolished. Barker, who did rather well by his own exclusive privilege for printing the Bible and prayerbooks, suggested that many of those privileges held by colleagues would make more money for the trade if openly competitive. Marjorie Plant observed "there was only one patent which he [Barker] admitted to be profitable to its holder. That was the one held by Richard Watkins for

---

[191] Bayman, "Printing, Learning and the Unlearned," 76-87; 78-79.

almanacks and prognostications, 'a pretty commoditie toward an honest mans lyving.' " [192]

The controlled number of different almanacs, which had narrowed to a half-dozen or so during the era of Watkins and Robert's monopoly, was judiciously expanded by the Company's English Stock to a dozen in the early years after James I's 1603 patent was awarded, and then to nearly twenty in the 1620s and '30s. This allowed the guild to experiment with different variations – some blanks and some sorts, some heavy on prognostication in the back of the book and others full of service features in the front of the book. These formats could be tested by sales without putting large amounts of capital at risk with just one almanac that had a huge print run. Even when the university printers at Cambridge managed in 1623 to wangle a limited patent for almanacs from friendly members of the Privy Council and get a piece of the monopoly, the number and range of Stationers' almanacs and their component features maintained stability, and the choices for consumers remained broad.[193]

The Stationers took over a business in which different almanac brands were already engaging the public as a group. Almanacs by John Dade, Walter Gray, Edward Gresham, Henry Hill, Thomas Johnson, William Mathew, Jeffrey Neve (from 1604), Edward Pond, Robert Watson

---

[192] Plant, *Book Trade*, 106, quoting Barker.

[193] Blagden, *Stationers*, 103.

and William Woodhouse were published both before and after the 1603-1604 transition.[194] They constituted the going market for popular almanacs and a fair guess would be that the Stationers were careful not to rock the boat during their transition to monopoly operation until a clear message from the customer base helped them decide which to continue, which to discontinue and what new brands might be tried. In fact, some of the almanac lines mentioned above were apparently discontinued not long after the 1603-1604 transition – whether by the compilers' decision (or death) or by the Stationers' leadership will probably remain unclear. Gray, for instance, was last sighted in 1605, as was Watson; Gresham in 1607. Copies of Thomas Johnson's almanac only survive from 1602 and 1604. It is important, particularly with almanacs printed before 1600, to remember that this is a canon of survivors. Almanacs, once they were covered by patent after 1571, were almost never entered in the Stationers' register, as all the non-patent items were required to be, so there is no record of almanacs that may have been printed but have not survived to be today's rare books.[195]

Specific features like court quarter-session terms and listings of fairs would appear and disappear in Company almanacs as the branded

---

[194] The 1604 almanacs would have been in preparation in 1603 for November delivery. For some of these brands, the 1604 edition had the new colophon "for the Company of Stationers" but others did not. It was likely a chaotic year for the English Stock and its new managers. The actual signed patent handing over the almanac trade to the Stationers' Company did not arrive until October 29. See Greg and Boswell, *Records of the Court of the Stationers' Company 1576 to 1602,* 94.

[195] Capp, *Almanacs* 347-386 ["Bibliography of English Almanacs to 1700"]. Watkins and Roberts appeared to enter a few almanacs, but hardly all, in the register up to 1584, but none later.

array sorted itself out and developed sub-markets among the English households who spent two pennies a year on this paper staple of early modern life. "Some of the more basic almanacs," Louise Hill Curth acutely noted,

> … would have appealed to semi-literate readers, while others were aimed at a more mainstream audience. Other almanacs were differentiated by locale, profession and religious beliefs …. In all cases, however, the aim was to develop and encourage 'brand loyalty' in order to maintain a satisfied customer base.[196]

> "The almanac trade developed steadily in the seventeenth century under the control of the Stationers' Company," Capp observed. "There was increasing specialization" as brands became known for one or another feature, such as lists of fairs and agricultural advice, historical chronologies, prices of commodities and gazetteer-like lists of parishes and counties.[197]

Of "cheap print" strategies of the era more generally, Michael J. Braddick wrote:

> It is possible to say something about these questions on the basis of the internal evidence of the cheap print itself – to the extent that these are market-responsive productions**,** *their contents can reasonably be interpreted as attempts to reach or foster particular markets.* … [And later] The business of cheap print was clearly market-responsive in some fundamental ways, suggesting the consumers helped to create print culture, that they were not simply passive

---

[196] Hill Curth, *Popular Medicine,* 45.
[197] Capp, *Almanacs*, 33.

recipients.[198]

Evidence that almanacs responded to feedback from users was sparse, but it is clear from the way individual brand-name almanacs changed from year to year that some changes were made purposefully, not at random. John Booker, the radical parliamentarian compiler of almanacs, complained in 1648 that the customers' choosiness complicated the compilers' decisions. "This man will have the fairs, another the highways … This man will know nothing but when to sow, set, plant, plough etc."[199] The individual compiler, hoping to produce a top-selling almanac, had a dilemma when portioning out these features in a forty- or forty-eight-page almanac. The Stationers' problem was much reduced because it could offer many different forty- or forty-eight-page combinations and satisfy a wide range of almanac purchasers whom Booker, by himself, could not. On the other hand, juggling features across a range of almanac brands from a dozen to nearly twenty must have presented its own problems for the English Stock's managers.

The persistence of titles in the almanac trade itself demonstrates that continuity and continued growth were goals sought by the managers of the almanac trade, or English Stock as it was called within the Stationers' corporate society. "Families" like the Dades, Woodhouses and

[198] Michael J. Braddick, "England and Wales," in Raymond, *Oxford History*, 25, 27.
[199] Capp, *Almanacs,* 66.

Rudstons put out long runs of the annual product that crossed generations. Almanacs by John and then William Dade appeared (i.e., have survived for) nearly every year from 1589 to 1700. Generic names like Pond, Dove and Fly sought out repeat customers year after year. Literary figures of the day like the playwright Ben Jonson expected their audiences to recognize top-selling almanac names like Allestree and Bretnor.[200] For the city or country family in England, these recurrent names would have been as comforting as the rhythms of nature or industry on which they depended, and which the almanacs – full of advice on nature and agriculture that was, importantly, couched in calendrical sequences – reflected.

Before newsbooks appeared with the same name every week, almanacs appeared with the same name every year, and the familiarity appeared to provide a comfort zone for the customers. Louise Hill Curth quoted a verse from one 1662 almanac ("Bird," possibly made-up to match the popular "Swallow" and "Dove" series) that linked its name to repeat business:[201]

> To please all sorts I'me fitted with a Name
> And if so be, my Book do please most men,
> You many [sic] be sure, next year I'le write agen.

Shakespeare's Rosalind said farewell to the audience of *As You*

[200] Capp, *Almanacs*, 23.
[201] Curth, *Popular Medicine*, 66-67.

Like It with the common adage "A good wine needs no bush."

Increasingly, though, it did. The notion that a wine-shop sign, often

incorporating a bush, was unneeded in the increasingly crowded towns

of early seventeenth-century England, might not have been absorbed

without a wrinkled brow, so Rosalind unwrinkled them with an

amendment that "to good wine they do use good bushes."[202] Likewise,

the branded almanac gained visibility on crowded booksellers' tables and

shelves.

This strategy – a "line" of almanacs offering a measured diet of

different popular component features – satisfied, as much as possible,

the Stationers' essential impulse to cut costs and work efficiently and to

maximize the customer base and generate repeat business. The scale

problems that would have been presented by one almanac printed in

300,000 or more copies targeted at a November deadline were certainly

eased by this strategy. Those problems would have included having

enough type standing by in feature formats to enable several print shops

to turn out that many copies. Early modern print shops did not stock

endless fonts of type.

And the single almanac would have presented the dilemma of

which John Booker spoke: how could the Stationers have created one

almanac to please everyone without printing many more than forty or

---

[202] *As You Like It*, V, epilogue [prose lines in epilogue are unnumbered].

forty-eight pages? Instead, the Watkins and Roberts model, expanded, provided a varied array of products that *did not compete significantly with one another* but satisfied every niche in the market.

A Perennial Business Tool: Cost Containment

Almanacs as a genre may have hit a sweet spot in the economic history of print culture in Britain. Tessa Watt noted of the period 1550-1640:

> "Taking into account the general inflation, books were becoming more affordable during our period. Book prices remained steady from 1560 to 1635, when other commodities more than doubled in price and wages rose by half to two-thirds."

Although Watt acknowledged "It is almost impossible to measure what was 'affordable' to an individual," a building tradesman who would have shelled out a fifth or more of his daily wage for a two-penny volume in 1560 would in 1640 have paid more like a tenth of his daily; she concluded "a regular twopenny purchase begins to look more affordable."[203] Stable book prices in the midst of rampant swings of wages and prices, each trying to keep up with the other must have made printed products look like an old-fashioned bargain. Not all accounts of wage rates in this period are as generous as Watt's, however; Keith Wrightson's estimates were well below the shilling-a-day that would have to be paid to make a two-penny almanac amount to only a tenth of a

---

[203] Watt, *Cheap Print and Popular Piety,* 261.

day's pay. Increasing, overall national prosperity was creating a class structurally bound to exploitatively low wage rates.[204] There were some who were priced out of even a two-penny almanac. Capp observed: "the Company maintained some check [on the pressure to raise prices] by curtailing strictly the length of each item. An inflated almanac would simply price itself out of existence."[205]

Low cost and its maintenance were clearly indicated for gaining a wide audience. The Stationers' Company managers of the almanacs tended to keep costs low by controlling the most expensive part of the product – the paper, often imported because English-made paper was based on wool rags and of low quality compared to the more varied rag base furnished by Continental clothing habits and styles. The paper was mostly doled out from the Stationers' Hall to individual printers specifically for the individual jobs by the managers of the English Stock.

Other methods for keeping the price of almanacs low included limiting the size of the almanac and paying the compilers at extremely low rates. Allestree was not the only compiler who chafed at the page restrictions on his product. Louise Hill Curth reported that whereas some superstars like William Lilly could get the pagination they wanted,

> Other, less fortunate, authors often complained about the small amount of space that they were allocated. Vincent Wing begrudged the 'narrow scantling' of paper that he was allowed, while John

---

[204] Wrightson, *Earthly Necessities*, 195-97.
[205] Capp, *Almanacs*, 41.

> Partridge confessed that he was forced to end his almanac, having 'filled up my allowance of paper.' Lancelot Coelson was luckier, and thanked his Printer for agreeing to 'Printe close, and give me a little room'. [206]

Capp observed that "Most astrologers accepted as a 'law' that 'an almanac is to three sheets confined…' " meaning forty-eight pages or less, generally.[207]

Since their charter had been awarded in 1557, the Stationers' Company emerged (as did other London guilds) as a capitalist enterprise, justifying its existence to authority by claiming social benefits; justifying its privileges as the enablement of internal charity even as power and money was markedly redistributed toward the top leadership of the company; struggling with the optimization of a monopoly position in some products. The growth of the almanac trade from 1595 to 1640 has been presented in this dissertation as something of a paradigm of this phenomenon. As happened in brief intervals in the history of other new technologies – British and American telegraph and telephone systems; monopolies in the extension of railroads – monopoly may have accelerated the access to the technology for a vast public in a short time. Many historians read the confluence of the Lutheran Reformation and the movable type press as illustrating this explosive quality.[208] This appears to have been what happened with the almanacs. As historians of

---

[206] Curth, *Popular Medicine,* 40.
[207] Capp, *Almanacs,* 41.
[208] E.g. Pettegree, *Book in the Renaissance*, Ch. 5 "Book Town Wittenberg," 91-106.

the genre have explored, the monopoly on almanacs had a half-life of effectiveness followed by a long decline as their utility was overtaken by other, more effective versions of the technology, like Britain's genuine, recognizable newspapers of the late Restoration. Empires, even those fueled by royal patents, wax and wane. [209]

At the same time, a different form of subversion was being enabled by monopoly and greed. The English Stock and its benefits and beneficiaries were being fattened by sales of a learning tool and practical device, the almanac, that would have a role in building an information public ready to discern the value of news in hazardous times.

---

[209] James R. Sutherland, *The Restoration Newspaper and its Development* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986); Tim Wu, *The Master Switch: The Rise and Fall of Information Empires* (New York: Knopf, 2010).

CHAPTER 5: THE ENGLISH ALMANACS' DEVELOPMENT

When that devout Christian mathematician and astronomer of Derbyshire, Richard Allestree, managed to get his almanac accepted for printing in 1616, it was quite in the standard pattern. It was certainly printed around November of that year, but dated 1617. After some pages of preamble, his almanac marched through the months of that year with a page per month in the little booklet, just six-and-a-half inches high and less than four inches wide. Pages for, for instance, February and March, faced one another. The second half of the forty-page booklet included his "Christian prognostication" for the year, fourteen years into James I's reign.

Allestree's almanac must have sold well enough to allow for his second, 1618 edition, which showed little change, repeating the calendar pages, the prognostication and a number of tables and strategies for measurement and – crucially for country folk – how to plan for moonlit nights, when outdoor agricultural work was possible. Only one bow in the direction of his mostly nonscholarly audience was clear – the dates on the calendar pages were now in Arabic numerals, not Roman as in 1617. Additionally, his calendar page columns now included one for the Gregorian calendar date – the first of the Julian month being the eleventh of the month across the Channel.

His 1619 almanac continued to reflect his devout personality – unusually, Allestree disavowed the influence of the stars on events and attributed all to the predestinate Calvinist God of nonconformists, with the conformation of the heavens as a secondary indicator of the deity's will. But the 1619 version also showed a marked change. It had been transformed from a sort almanac to a blank, and increased in size to forty-eight pages. Each calendar page was now on the left side of the open booklet, and the right-hand page was blank except for a four-line inspirational poem at the top and the dates of the month running vertically down the page's left-hand margin. The blank space invited user participation and planning, or inscribing the events of importance, day by day.

Since the first blank had appeared around 1571, many other almanacs had adopted that style off and on, an adaptation which made the book much more like the "planner" still in wide use today. Many of the "blanks" that have survived – including some of Allestree's long run through 1643 – show heavy use by owners, including many notes about historical events, travels and mercantile calculations. Others, interestingly, are blank as the day they were purchased.
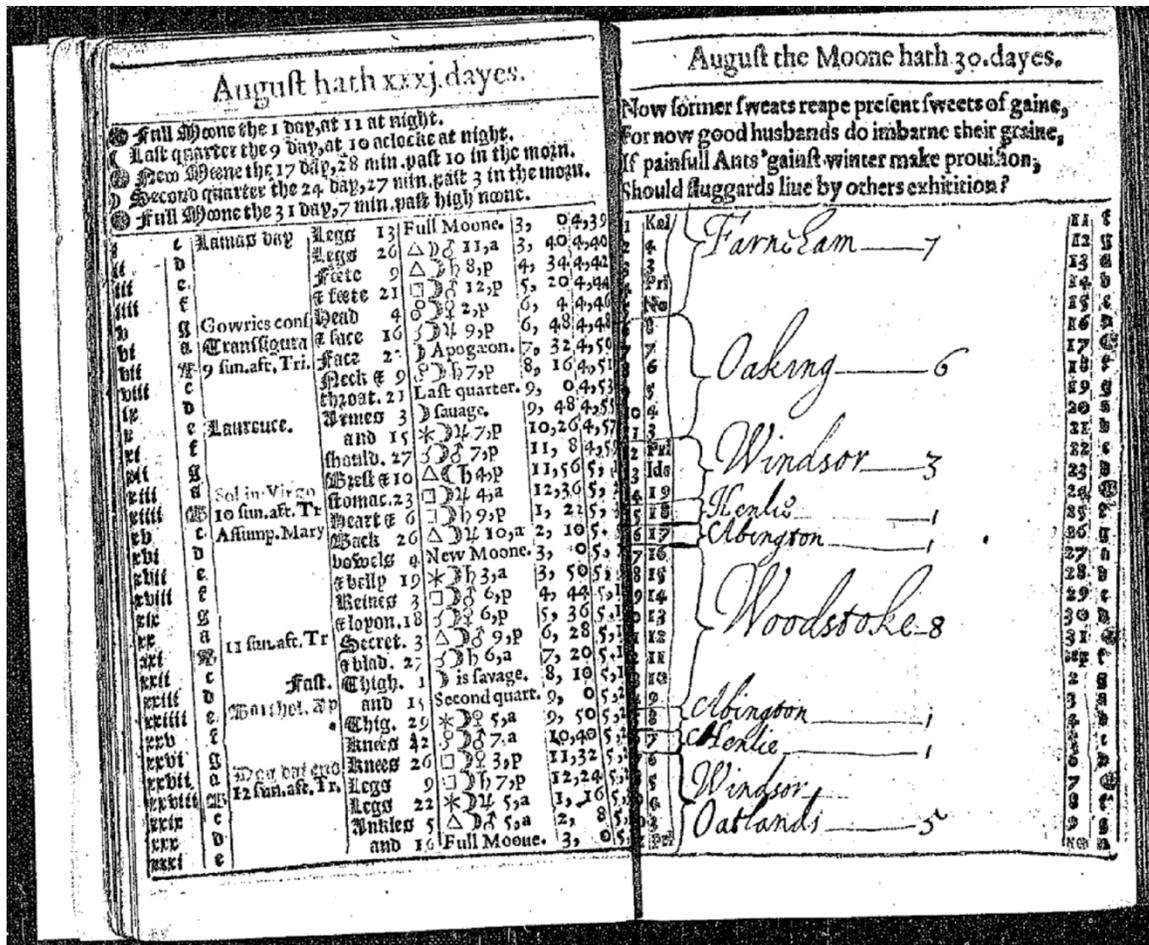
Figure 2: *Richard Allestree's 1631 almanac, a "blank" with the right-hand page annotated, presumably for an August sales or buying trip to various town fairs.*
© The British Library: Digital images produced by ProQuest LLC as part of ProQuest® Historical Newspapers. www.proquest.com

Was it Allestree's decision to adopt this format? It meant dropping some features from his almanac, which remained at forty-eight pages. Adding eight pages but committing twelve more pages of the book to the double-sized calendar would mean four pages of features would have to go. Present in 1618 but missing in 1619 were handy tables of weights and measures, several woodcut diagrams of eclipses and astrological phenomena and some extended essays on how to use various tables in

the edition. Allestree's hyper-religious approach had already been publicly attacked by fellow compiler Thomas Bretnor, only a few years in the business but rapidly becoming one of the most popular compilers, and Allestree expended some of his precious space in 1619 rebutting Bretnor's charges.

Notably, Allestree complained in his first, 1617 edition that he had spent the two previous years vainly trying to reduce his almanac copy to satisfy a printer/publisher's prescribed number of pages: "that I had written more than could be printed within two and a half sheets of Paper…my labors would never be admitted to the Presse."[210]

So why make this change? Answers to those questions – answers that can be, at most, informed inference – engage all the parts of this inquiry. In general, the argument here is that changes like this were often made at the suggestion (or orders) of the Stationers' Company managers who oversaw the production of all English almanacs after 1603. They were made because of a belief, perhaps well-grounded, that the change increased popularity and sales among the almanacs' large public of non-elite users by providing a wider range of choices of almanacs as a group.

---

[210] *Allestree 1617*, [STC2 407] sig. B2; EEBO image 10 [Lambeth Palace Library], http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:image:25655:10.

The complicated historical and social context in which Allestree compiled almanacs from 1617, about the middle of the reign of King James I, until 1643, after the collapse of relations between Parliament and James's successor, his son Charles I, bears on this story. Nevertheless, the almanacs of 1603-1640, beginning with the Stationers' Company's lucrative 1603 exclusive patent for printing and selling them, stayed almost entirely out of the fray, well below the level of hot rhetoric in the pamphlet wars of the period.[211] The monopoly status of the almanacs effectively removed them from the jurisdiction of any proactive censorship on the part of the church or the state.

However, Allestree was entering a newly crowded field. Using a biblical metaphor, he said his delayed entry was also attributed to the fact that "one had stept in before me." In fact, 1615 began a few years of considerable turnover in the almanac market overseen by the governors of the English Stock for the Stationers. From a conservative nine (surviving) almanacs in 1615 the number jumped to fourteen almanacs in 1617. After a little more than a decade of enjoying the monopoly on almanacs, the Stationers may have decided there was more trade out there than a half-dozen titles could appeal to. Eleven new titles entered the almanac market in 1616, followed by Allestree the next year. It appeared that more than one had stepped in before him.

---

[211] Capp, *Almanacs*, 70-72.

Who were the purchaser/users of the new, larger crop of almanacs and what did they want from their two-penny booklets? Because the Stationers were almost certainly more interested in making money than in pushing a political agenda, their almanacs were tooled to meet the taste of ordinary folk who, like the almanac makers, were keeping their heads down as political and religious disputes played out, and focused on making in a living in difficult times. What helped them was information.

How was this evolving, recurrent uses-and-gratifications transaction negotiated among almanac authors ("compilers"), the printer/publishers, and a public for information? That information public was *cultivated* by annual almanacs as well as other publications in advance of the appearance of even more complex and institutionalized instances of news in print culture. Almanacs like Allestree's had a major part in imprinting an idea of, and appetite for, periodical – regular – portions of information in a broad, non-elite public that sought increasingly sophisticated, complex and useful information to enable increasing personal and group agency. When news publications emerged in times of conflict, this public would have the information base, the understanding of the everyday world, to effectively interpret what was important and critical about the news being offered – an important tool in trying to negotiate the mental and physical terrain of civil war, for example.

Frames for Examination and Analysis

Following – most explicitly – the approach of Jonathan Sawday and Neil Rhodes in *The Renaissance Computer*, this project views almanacs and their articulated structure as utilities as well as objects of print culture, sought and purchased by users as well as readers, self-gratifiers as well as scholar-grinds. The almanac was also a material production of a nascent industrial-capitalist production sector – the printing and publishing industry. Almanacs offered a complex anatomy of component features, recognizable and stimulating to users, and competed robustly with their competitors on the bookstall stand. Almanacs vied for bookstall space and public attention (among the cheap print) against the unitary and linear but grey, low- imagery presence of the rhetorically "hot" one-off religious and political pamphlets.[212] In terms of content, these disputatious pamphlets were the ancestors of the newsbooks of the post-1641 future. But neither those contemporary pamphlets nor those forthcoming newsbooks of the civil wars displayed the diverse, complex bundle of utilitarian component features of the almanac. The contrast between the richly articulated but rhetorically underwhelming almanacs and their plain-looking but hot-speaking newsbook counterparts echoes the interplay between background and foreground, between the everyday context, or routine, and the newsworthy unusual, in an individual's learned grasp of "news."

---

[212] Jason Peacey, "Pamphlets" in Raymond, *Oxford History,* 455-56.

The Material Almanac: Anatomy of a Genre

The "almanack" published in England in the last years of Elizabeth I's reign and those of her Stuart successors, James I and Charles I, was already an established genre, with recognizable sections and component service features – and regularity of publication – that clearly distinguished it from those one-off polemical pamphlets and current-history news pamphlets that shared the world of emerging print culture in the early seventeenth century. Popular fiction also competed with all these offerings, and helped accent the contrast they made with the sober, practical almanac. Margaret Spufford, in her study of cheap popular early modern fiction in print, said: "If the reader of twopenny and threepenny publications did get any accurate information, it came from the almanacs, which appear to have been the practical guides."[213]

The routines of printing in octavo or (rarely) the smaller duodecimo format – based on how many times a standard printed sheet might be folded to become a book or a "signature" section of a book – meant that many almanacs were forty to forty-eight pages. Most almanacs were printed on the cheapest (though still likely imported) paper stock and it is rare to see a surviving almanac copy with typography and layout that show care and craftsmanship as a priority.

The octavo almanac, in the range of four inches across and less

---

[213] Spufford, *Small Books and Pleasant Histories*, 219.

than six inches tall, was touted for pocket use. A less-common but still widely used almanac was printed on one poster-sized page and designed for display on the wall of home or commercial establishment for quick reference – like today's wall calendar.

Common features of these almanacs made them superficially much alike and probably put the compilers on their mettle to come up with distinguishing characteristics. Whether or not these efforts at diversity made a quality difference from one almanac brand to the next, the compilers, speaking usually in the first person, were not shy about asserting that theirs was superior.

Don Cameron Allen observed, condescendingly, that "At the death of Queen Elizabeth, the English almanack and prognostication was completely standardized; it could almost be compiled by formula."[214] Variations *within* that formula can aid understanding of how almanacs were used by their largely non-elite information public.

The usual paradox familiar to today's marketers applies: The customer wants a familiar, recognizable pattern (hence Allen's "formula") but is on the lookout for differences that make one offering preferable to another. So that's the truth of Allen's point: it is easy to describe a

---

[214] Allen, *Star-Crossed Renaissance,* 201.

"typical" almanac of the period.

A Bundle of Component Features

Many almanacs began with a table of major feast days, frequently showing both the English (Julian, "Old Style") dates and the reform Gregorian dates, which Britain did not adopt until 1752. The ten-day difference between the monthly calendars was important for anyone whose goods traded across the Channel.

Other early, front-of-the-book matter included historical or royal timelines, calendars for that year's courts and Star Chamber meetings, and a "Zodiacal Body" – a woodcut of a nude male human body, more or less anatomically correct, surrounded by names or images of the twelve signs of the zodiac.[215] Lines connected each sign with the body part of which the health (or lack of it) is, supposedly, uniquely affected by the sign. Some versions of the figure showed the belly opened to display the organs affected.

The preliminary matter was followed by the calendar. Generally in a forty-page sort, each month had its own page, in tight, ruled tabular/column form showing the days of the month, saints' and feast days, dominant planetary and zodiacal influences and other features that fit in what was usually about six or seven available columns. They might

---

[215] Lauren Kassell points out that the royal timeline – a list of the years reigned by each monarch, William I to current incumbent, enabled "a standard form for dating documents." "Almanacs and Prognostications," in Raymond, *Oxford History,* 435.

include brief weather prognostications, daily high tides at London Bridge

or a column of the equivalent Gregorian date observed "beyond the sea"

(i.e. just across the English Channel).[216]

---

[216] Like many of the Protestant nations, England did not adopt the Gregorian Calendar when it was first promulgated in 1582 because it was the product of a Catholic church council. Almanacs found themselves running a dual day-and-date system – especially useful for those transacting business or visiting fairs across the Channel – until Britain's adoption of the international standard in 1752, in which year Sept. 2 was followed the next day by Sept. 14 in order to catch up. A detailed account of the competitive appearance of the two calendars in English print culture is Anne Lake Prescott, "Refusing Translation: The Gregorian Calendar and Early Modern English Writers," *Yearbook of English Studies* 36, no. 1 (2006), 1-11.
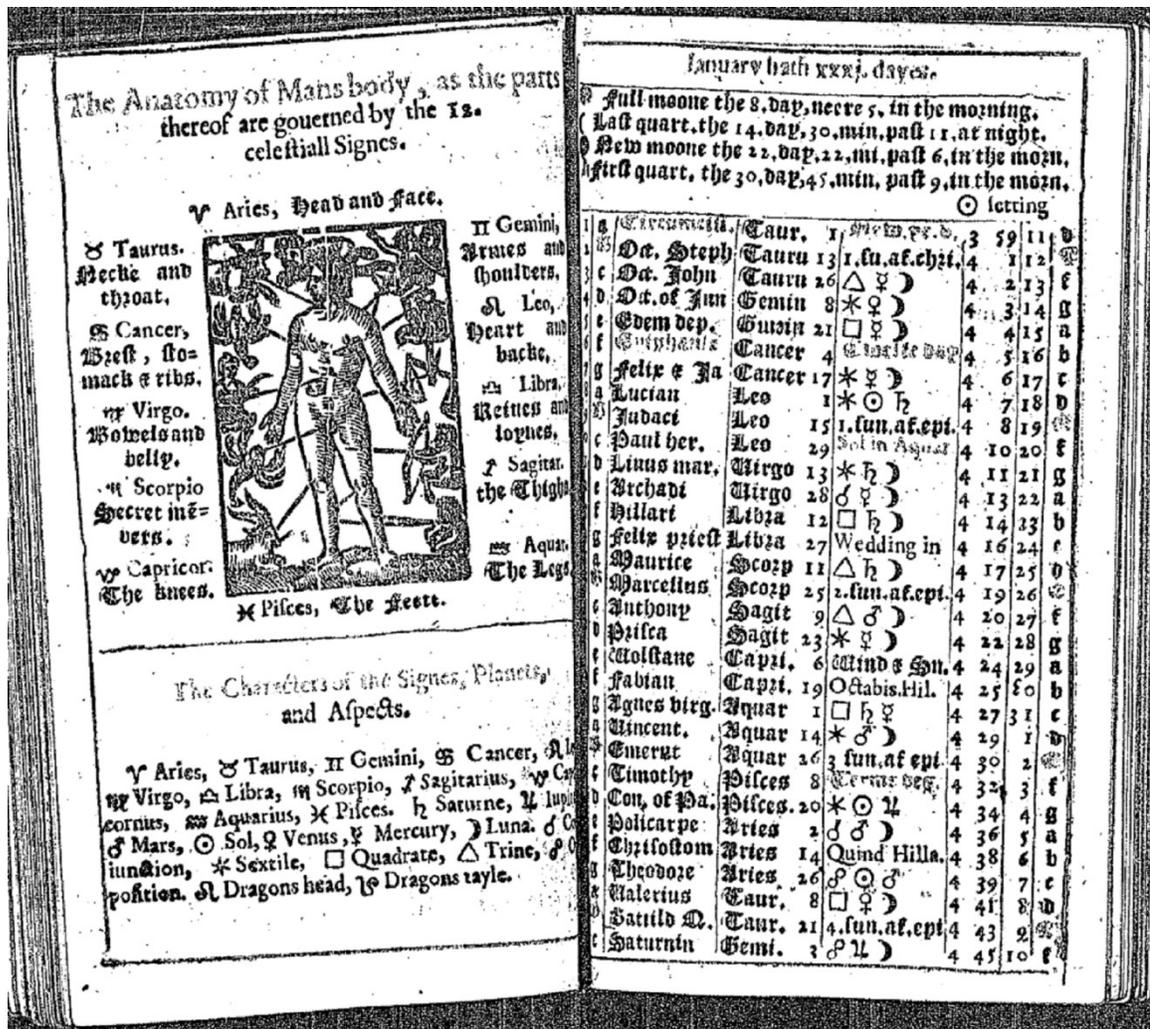
Figure 3: *Perkins's 1631 Almanac, Zodiacal Body and first calendar page*
© The British Library: Digital images produced by ProQuest LLC as part of ProQuest® Historical
Newspapers. www.proquest.com

After the twelve monthly calendar pages, many almanacs began

their "prognostication" section with what amounted to a second cover

page. What followed usually included a discussion of any eclipses for the

year covered, an explanation of the four seasons or "quarters" in terms of

the influence of the heavens and how that might affect weather, crops,

human and animal illness and (infrequently) even vaguely described

social and political events. Often an eclipse's motions across the

occluded body were shown in an elaborate diagram with times of first contact, full eclipse and the eclipse's end – a showy display of the astrologer/astronomer's degree of skill. Eclipses were certainly considered the most portentous events of the heavens, and their effects often were forecast over months-long periods.

The prognostication section often finished with practical helpers – tables to calculate tides in other places in and out of England; a month-by-month calendar of the fairs all across the land; a table showing the compass heading and distances of major world cities from the city of London; routes between major towns of Britain with interim villages and the distances between them.

Each of these features was distinguished by a style of layout and design – some quite widely used across the almanac offerings, and others distinctively associated with the individual almanac's "brand." Often the choice of traditional "blackletter" gothic-style type or more modern "roman" type was typical of the feature's appearance. As Bernard Capp has pointed out, much of this type was kept "standing" in made-up pages from year to year for easy addition to an almanac (despite a Stationers' prohibition against this practice as eroding the job prospects of compositors and incurring the cost of multiple fonts of type).[217]

So the divisions of the "bundle" that made up the individual

---

[217] Capp, *Almanacs*, 42.

almanac were visually quite apparent to the user – a "paratextual"
articulation or "the means by which the text makes a book of itself and
proposes itself as such to the readers, and more generally to the public."
These varieties of paratext were a distinctive feature of an almanac's
characteristics that gave each component feature its own identity,
enhanced its utility and navigability and allowed users to improve their
literacy through these non-textual helpers.[218]

The general layout of the English almanac between the late
sixteenth and the tumultuous middle of the seventeenth century was the
most consistently varied, articulated and diverse-featured of any genre in
the growing book trade and in the print culture that was spreading from
a narrow elite to a wider society. Navigating an almanac was very easy
compared to using many other products of print culture.

The closest competition in this vein appeared to be the popular
how-to books; but even those as translated and marketed by the
indefatigable Gervase Markham, for example, were by comparison set in
solid type as were most books of the era. Markham's 1616 *Cheape and
Good Husbandry for the vvell-ordering of all beasts, and fowles, and for
the generall cure of their diseases* was well indexed but otherwise was set
solid, with a few decorated-capital chapter headings. Markham's best-
selling *The English Huswife*, Wendy Wall showed, went through nearly a

---

[218] Genette, "Introduction to the Paratext," 261.

dozen editions starting in 1615 and slowly added a detailed, nearly index-like table of contents in succeeding editions, cementing its use as a reference.[219] But the distinct visual identity of almanac component features was singular. As a popular visual genre, the almanac's rich diversity of forms and segmentation would not be matched until the nineteenth-century daily newspaper emerged as a typographically diverse, segmented offering.[220]

The almanac seemed a natural illustration of an increasing need for useful information in a widening public that was shaking off the mentality of the medieval period and slowly seizing both personal and collective agency as its due. The non-elite public identified here had always produced the bulk of the goods that fueled the economy of the emerging nation. Now that public was increasingly, as well, a *consumer* of goods in an extended marketplace.[221] Ordinary English peoples' new existence on both sides of the cash nexus was providing the awareness of *agency* and *contemporaneity* – a sense of being in a public.

Recent work on branding suggests that brands are typical of a low-information society, substituting for the more discriminating forms of consumer choice associated with highly informed seekers of goods. In the

---

[219] Bennett, *English Books and Readers 1603-1640*, 254 ff.; Wendy Wall, "Reading the Home: The Case of *The English Housewife*," in *Renaissance Paratexts*, eds. Helen Smith and Louise Wilson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 176 ff.

[220] Barnhurst and Nerone wrongly, I believe, locate this change in the early twentieth century. Barnhurst and Nerone, *The Form of News*, 21.

[221] Wrightson, *Earthly Necessities*, 128-29.

early modern era, brands were a stabilizing factor for a generation new to a role as consumers of others' products.[222] An important analytical consideration with respect to the Stationers' line of almanacs was that brands only emerge as essential when there is more than one version of a commodity available for choosing.

Even so, individual characteristics were associated with brands even in the early seventeenth century. The early development of day-by-day predictions of "good" and "bad" days in each month pioneered by Watson and John Dade and refined by Bretnor made their almanacs top sellers and made them near-celebrities, named in popular plays.

As Neil Rhodes and Jonathan Sawday put it, the almanac is a tool kit between covers for the ordinary non-elite Briton, and a schoolbook as well. Most of the almanacs' compilers were educated – mathematicians, surveyors and tutors of those arts – and missed no chance to demonstrate their learning. The almanacs' users, along for the ride, seldom put their book down without knowing a little more than when they picked it up – including vocabulary and reading skills. It was, Rhodes said, "the information superhighway – or cobbled lane, at any rate – of the later sixteenth century." [223]

---

[222] As summarized by James Surowieki in *The New Yorker,* Feb. 17 & 24, 2014, 40. The reference is to Itamar Simonson and Emanuel Rosen, *Absolute Value: What Really Influences Consumers in the Age of (nearly) Perfect Information* (New York: HarperCollins, 2014).
[223] Neil Rhodes, "Articulate Networks: the Self, the Book and the World," in Rhodes and Sawday, *Renaissance Computer,* 185.

The growth of almanacs both in number of brands and in number of purchasers in the 1595-1640 period showed them meeting the information needs of ordinary people in consistent, specific ways. Some of the almanacs' component features defined and articulated the coming year in civil society at various levels. Some aided in extending users' ability to mentally map their world, human and geographic, in an emerging nation-state. And some provided insight into the workings of nature and of the body, normal and otherwise. But that consistent, conventionalized genre of almanacs did not appear all at once or without stumbles and conflicts.

Development of English Almanacs: Slow Path to Monopoly

Cheap print in the form of the almanac took its time getting to England – and the halting path of that genre was not an isolated instance. The first book printed in English (by William Caxton, England's first printer) was actually printed in France.[224] Printing came late to England, as shown on a time-scale map in Lucien Febvre and Henri-Jean Martin's *Coming of the Book*.[225]

> Marjorie Plant outlined the situation thus:

> The truth was that at the time of the invention of printing England was economically of little importance. …. The revival of learning, spreading northwards and westwards from Italy, reached her after the rest of Europe had become readjusted to the new intellectual spirit.

---

[224] Joad Raymond, "The Development of the Book Trade in Britain," in Raymond, *Oxford History*, 59.
[225] Febvre and Martin, *Coming of the Book*, 178-79.

Though the sixteenth century's religious wars and later the ruinous Thirty Years' War (ca. 1618-1648) gradually degraded the supremacy of Continental printing, the English never quite caught up, Plant later noted. "In order to realise to the full our international unimportance as producers of books during the whole of this period we have only to glance at the statistics of new works shown at the Leipzig [book] fair." Of 731 new works shown at the 1616 fair, only four were English.[226]

And as Capp detailed, astrology and almanacs were equally slow getting to late medieval England, which he called an "astrological backwater."[227] Most early almanacs were Continental imports. But it was an English printer, Thomas Hill, who in 1571 hit on the strategy of expanding the calendar section by interleaving blank pages "so that long-term almanacs could be used as diaries."[228] Thus the popular blanks began to appear.

The "bundle" of utilitarian features that came to characterize the seventeenth-century almanac developed slowly and unevenly, however. Capp pointed out that some of the earliest, and most down-market, almanacs focused heavily on medical advice:

> *Erra Pater* was the most successful of the handbooks aimed at the bottom end of the market for almanacs. Like the *Kalendar of*

[226] Plant, *Book Trade*, 25.
[227] Capp, *Almanacs*, 18.
[228] Simon Schaffer, "Science" in Raymond, *Oxford History*, 402.

Shepherdes, its primary function was to explain astrological medicine and inform the reader how to ensure that he "shall never have infirmities of body." …. Information of a similar kind appeared in *A Perfyte Pronostycacion Perpetuall* (c. 1555), which was aimed specifically at "the ignorant" and "them which knoweth not a letter on the book." [229]

Almanacs as a genre were also slow to emerge as annual periodicals. Like the *Perfyte Pronostycacion Perpetuall*, mentioned above, many early almanacs were designed to provide long-term astrological advice stretching over many years, and functioned as a print-based calculator for the clever user to predict the alignment of planets, stars and houses of the zodiac at theoretically any time, in any year.

Such a "perpetual almanac" was clearly a cost advantage to the buyer – if the buyer were fluent in its use. But the almanacs that came to rule the market from the 1580s through the civil wars era and into the eighteenth century were annuals. It seems likely that a convergence of maturing public appetite for information, continued low cost for the books and the economic interests of the publishers brought about that trend. For the printers, selling one two-penny almanac that worked for the user's lifetime was nothing like the bonanza that selling a two-penny almanac once a year would be. It is not wrong to call almanacs the first periodicals.[230]

The component features that became the face and anatomy of the

---

[229] Capp, *Almanacs*, 31.

[230] C. John Somerville sees periodical information/news as a distortion of the actual flow of events for commercial purposes. *The News Revolution in England* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 10.

annual almanac arrived piecemeal as the genre became English. The first almanacs were translations from Flemish almanacs produced by generations of the Laet family. The 1534 Laet almanac was set almost solid, with little white space or paragraphing, and provides only monthly weather, day by day, in addition to a great deal of attention to eclipses and their consequences. The 1541 Laet offering showed slightly more white space but still very little typographical contrast or diversity. It contained one table of numbers for calculating movable feasts' dates for any year, and the solid type was otherwise relieved only by a woodcut of the sun with facial features, about the size of a half-dollar, inset into an account of a solar eclipse.[231]

The first English compiler's almanac (Boorde, 1545) survives only as a title page, but subsequent almanacs by Anthony Askham began to improve the navigability and accessibility of the genre with white space and tabular presentations. His 1556 annual included pages of tabular numbers to be used with a walking-stick to tell the time of day and calculate building heights,[232] and his calendar pages began to resemble the high late-Elizabethan style with tabular entries, lacking only the vertical column rules. That Askham 1556 edition was printed by Thomas

[231] Capp, Almanacs, 27; *Laet 1534* (partial) [STC2 471.7], EEBO [British Library], http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:image:209590;
 Laet 1541 (incomplete) [STC2 473] EEBO [Boston Public Library], http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:image:176593.
[232] Capp, *Almanacs*, 201.

Marshe, who for twenty years would print increasingly innovative almanac versions under various names and may be one of the unsung heroes of almanac development.

Marshe also printed Lewes Vaughan's 1559 almanac, which showed full vertical rules on the tabular calendar pages and novel typographic variety, with large, recognizable header type for the sections on eclipses, monthly weather and the terms for court sessions – one of the first appearances of that component feature, which would become one of the most commonly used in almanacs up to 1640 and beyond. Other features that were emerging from the muddle to have distinctive identities were the Zodiacal Body, getting one of its first appearances here, and profuse woodcut diagrams detailing eclipses and the changes of season. Also appearing with clear distinguishing headings were seasonal diseases, predictions of dearth and plenty for crops and staples, and vague but foreboding social prognostications of bad luck for some social and occupational classes. Another longtime favorite component feature, though not as compact or widely used as the court session terms, was the month-by-month calendar of fairs that first showed up in Rochefort's 1560 almanac, as Bosanquet recorded.[233]

Marshe also printed an early almanac by John Securis (published 1562-1581), one of the more popular almanacs to have survived from the

---

[233] Bosanquet, *English Printed Almanacs*, 36.

earlier half of Elizabeth I's reign. That Securis 1568 almanac shows a classic ruled monthly calendar of the sort that was ubiquitous in the 1603-1640 genre and continues a trend begun with Vaughan of an elaborate letter code for types of good and bad days (astrologically) for various activities in physick and husbandry. A column in the monthly calendar pages was reserved for those codes, considerably economizing on the need for astrological textual matter.

In 1571 the partners Richard Watkins and James Roberts received the first of three consecutive patents for exclusive printing of almanacs that would make them the master builders of the genre until the 1603 the Stationers' monopoly was put in place. They printed John Securis's 1574 almanac, which has survived complete and shows even more of the shape of the genre as it would appear at the turn of the century. Mounslowe's 1581 almanac presented an historical timeline, though abbreviated. Other component features that populated the almanacs of the next century were still to emerge, but the almanacs, especially in the hands of printers like Marshe, Watkins and Roberts had begun to show the unique typographical and layout innovations that made them recognizably a genre for the information-seeking buyer of cheap print after 1603. Many of the classic component features would be made distinctive, and tailored for accessibility and utility, by Watkins and Roberts in the last decade of Elizabeth I's reign. These almanacs clearly appealed in many different ways as they sought their annual two-penny

price from this widening public. The component features, measured out among the various almanac brands for maximum penetration of a growing public, are a key.

Astrology and the Advancement of Science

Prognostication was always popular, though we can easily overemphasize its importance to customers and the degree to which it was credited by them. Along with Capp and Thomas, Curth and Deborah Harkness [234] included almanacs in their accounts of the growth of medicine and science in the era, because they were vectors for advice to ordinary folk and because the stance of astrologers represented, or was taken to represent, the advance of science. This foregrounding of something like systematic, empirical knowledge is credited with considerable improvement of the general public's understanding of nature and the human body in the early modern period.

Astrology's linkage with measures of time (the sun and moon, dictators of the calendar) and measurement of nature (tides, seasons, weather phenomena, husbandry) as well as the human body was displayed in distinct component features in the evolving almanacs of the late Elizabethan and early Stuart periods. In their astrological, "prognostication" content almanacs offered a convergence of old-school folk magic and nascent science to match the emerging science of the day,

---

[234] Harkness, *The Jewel House,* 105.

which was insinuating itself into the everyday of getting and spending for many. Astrology represented itself as a master science of the universe without risking its credibility with many readers and users, and additionally claimed to be compatible with religious faith of several stripes. For those already predisposed to buy into the non-religious supernatural, the almanacs "added the authority of print to popular belief,"Capp said.

He added that "The astrologers believed themselves, and to a considerable extent, were believed) to be on the side of progress, modernity and scientific rationalism." Keith Thomas said that astrology was intellectually "seductive... in principle there was no question it could not answer." Febvre and Martin reported that at the same time in France "astrology … was regarded as a perfectly rational subject." And Thomas noted further that "As Auguste Comte was to recognize, the astrologers were pioneering a genuine system of historical explanation." [235]

Christopher Hill observed, however, that there's a residuum of practical folklore in the "new science," so that "we cannot separate the early history of science from the history of magic." Astrology, with its mathematical tools and kinship to astronomy, in its way amounted to a comforting systematization of some of the magic otherwise draining from

---

[235] Capp, *Almanacs,* 20, 274; Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic,* 383, 387; Febvre & Martin, *The Coming of the Book*, 277.

older belief systems that in their time, Capp said, "developed partly as attempts to explain the creation and operation of the world … [and] strengthen man's position in his struggle against the environment." [236] This linking of new knowledge with proverbial common wisdom through an established "system of the world" like astrology cannot have been a drawback for the ordinary folk who were almanac users, as much as it might have cramped the style of a scholar.

Many observers appeared to feel that a belief in stellar influence was deep and wide in the period. Don Cameron Allen, as usual the least likely to speak in half-measures, said:

> "The high and the low, the rich and the poor, the learned and the ignorant, the pious and the impious shared a common belief in the influence of the stars. There were, of course, gradations in the fixity of this faith, but the scholar of the twentieth century must not lose sight of the fact that in the sixteenth century disbelief in the essential hypotheses of the astrologer was the exception rather than the rule."[237]

For almanac users and readers who for reasons of religion or "gradation of belief" did not buy completely into these notions, it was alternatively possible that (as often happens today) astrological prognostication operated as a kind of entertainment, or play, providing the pleasures and utility of fiction, not necessarily held in the same stead as science, but comforting nonetheless. It's likely that this was icing on the cake for

---

[236] Hill, *World Turned Upside Down*, 88-89; Capp, *Almanacs,* 15.

[237] Allen, *Star-Crossed Renaissance*, 106.

many almanac "users," for whom the annual editions provided tools for agency. They were able to absorb and use time-tested advice (some of which appeared verbatim, year after year, in many brand-name almanacs) on everything from how to purge and bleed as home medicine, to when to geld sheep, and when to cut hair in the family. It is not likely that any almanac user who waited until the rising influence of Taurus and Libra to cut his or her hair – because it would grow faster rather than more slowly as the compiler suggested it would under the influence of declining houses – ever felt short-changed by the result.[238]

Almanacs and the Ordering of Time

Almanacs were first and foremost instruments of time. The coming year was described, defined and articulated in a number of different temporal dimensions – seasonally, monthly and by lunar phases (weekly), and daily. The past was not omitted; types of history were prominently featured as well.

All these dimensions were aligned with both religious and secular calendars; the tightly packed columnar monthly calendar in the front of the book enumerated saints' days, the birthdays of kings and queens, the alignment of planets and zodiacal houses one to another, natural features like the daily tides, and phases of the moon. Each way to

---

[238] *Bretnor 1615* [STC2 420.8] sig. C2 image 18 lhp EEBO [Huntington Library], http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:image:23706:18.

measure the year was dealt with redundantly in most almanacs –
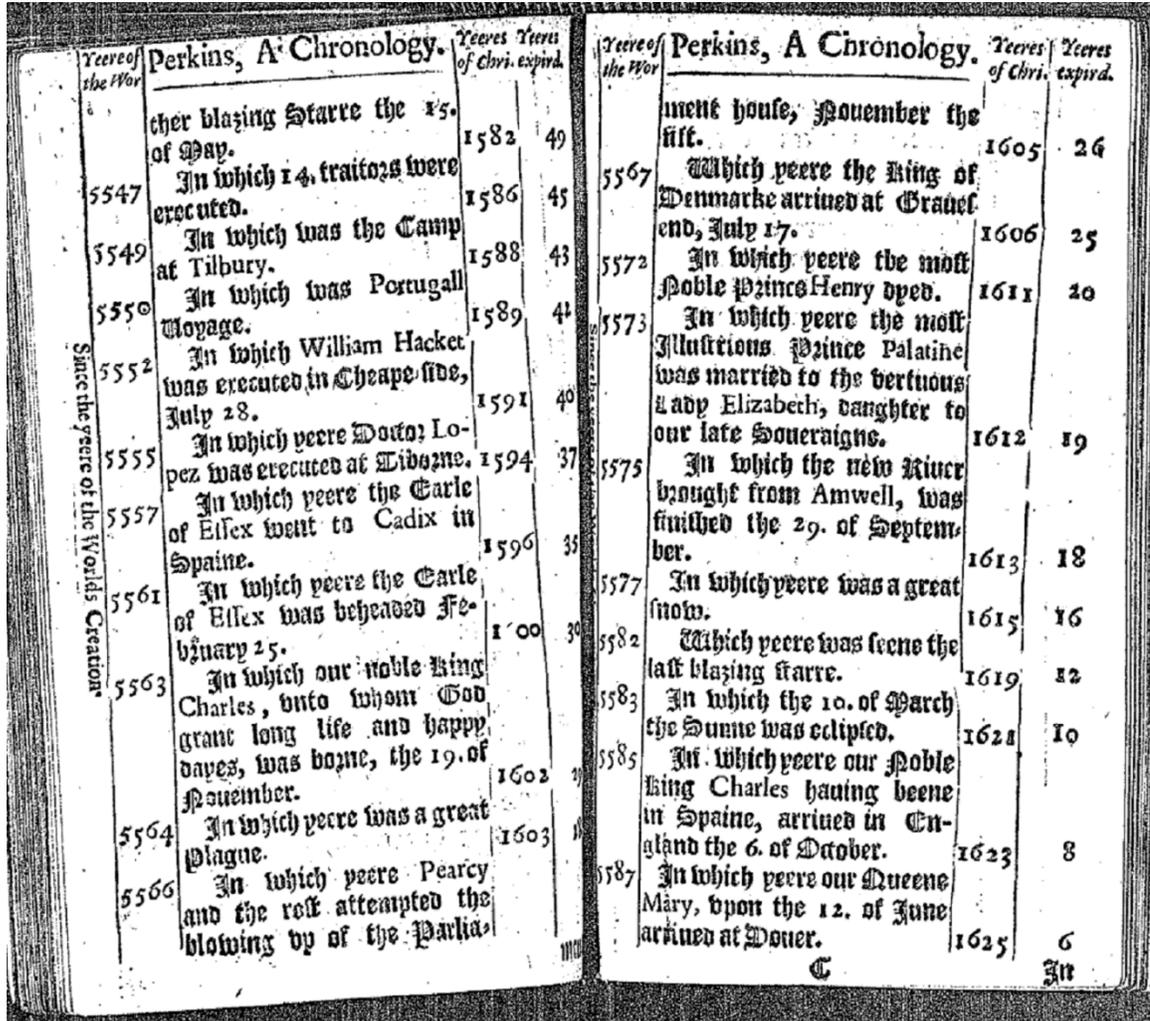
Figure 4*: Perkins's 1631 almanac showing pages 10 and 11 of 13 devoted to his historical timeline. This feature, presented by most almanac compilers as just one very compressed page, was Perkins's claim to the attention of the almanac's public.*
© The British Library: Digital images produced by ProQuest LLC as part of ProQuest® Historical Newspapers. www.proquest.com

monthly in those front-of-the-book columnar calendars and in a different layout in the prognostication, enumerating weather and agricultural information. The civic future was encompassed in a page of county court

session days for the coming year; the civic past in a timeline of the reigns of monarchs and a similar timeline of historical events since the Creation. Specifically of the almanac and its users, Stuart Sherman argued that "Astrology claimed to order the whole field of time," and in the use of the ubiquitous blank almanac, users "were purchasing a reference work that ranged through time's three modes" in that it "systematized the past.... Facilitated the present... [and] predicted the future." [239]

Astrology was not the only aspect of time engaged by the almanacs, though the relations between the calendar and the sun and moon were inextricably bound. Almanacs dealt with time, instrumentally, like a device or tool, and many of the component features in them had little to do with prediction and everything to do with the way the coming year was scheduled – religiously, as a civic order, personally and in the regular routines of nature. The sorts, which provided no extra space for the user to annotate the volume, offered an unfolding account of the year in all those respects.

The blanks – almanacs constructed like today's monthly planners – show evidence that they were used by many for that purpose. Alison Chapman quoted a contemporary observer on the opportunities presented by this new sense of time:

---

[239] Sherman, *Telling Time,* 56.

In 1612, John Monipennie wrote, "who is there that maketh not great account of his almanac to observe both days, times, and seasons to follow his affairs for his best profit and use." [They provided] a more secular framework in which marking astrological time was linked both to the movements of the human body and to what Monipennie calls 'profit and use.' The proliferation of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century almanacs seemingly allowed men and women to observe time with new ardor. [240]

This interactivity with the instrumental almanac was specific and different. Daniel Woolf suggested that the "reconstruction of the present" by individuals in the early modern period took on a new quality, one in which a sense of agency grew because whereas medieval time had incorporated a past and future in which the present was just "an instant rather than a duration," the early modern present grew to become a measurable time in which one could accomplish something, help or advance oneself. [241]

Keith Thomas contended that the expansion of print itself provided something of the same widening of personal horizons: "the vast expansion of print gave the ordinary reader new models to imitate, a greater awareness of the past and other societies, *a wider sense of the possible*, and a general consciousness that things might be other than they were."[242]

---

[240] Alison A. Chapman, "Marking Time: Astrology, Almanacs and English Protestantism," *Renaissance Quarterly* 60, no. 4 (2007), 1279.

[241] Woolf, "News, History and the Construction of the Present," 81-82.

[242] Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic,* 199 (my italics).

For moderns, it is important to realize how persistently another, older early modern sensibility was pushing against this expansion of perspective – a consciousness of mortality and the brevity of humans' years that was demonstrably ingrained in the almanacs' users. A taste of that sensibility comes through when an almanac compiler bids the reader farewell and expressed hope that he would be allowed to return the next year with a new edition. Within that scope, however, there remained a sense that more could be accomplished personally and in society every year, and the almanac enabled that.

Almanacs' Structure and Paratextuality: Literacy Device?

The almanacs delivered these diverse features to users not through (or not only through) elaborate argumentation or appeal to scriptural authority, but with a *paratextual* quality, about which authorities disagree. Genette's umbrella term for variations in the appearance of a print text was largely limited to what is called "front matter" like title pages and tables of contents. Genette's minimalist approach was challenged and elaborated in various ways in Helen Smith and Louise Wilson's anthology, *Renaissance Paratexts*. Moving outward from Genette's focus, contributors to that volume zeroed in on all visual ways in which a text is annotated by variation and difference, typography and

illustration, white space and not. Still, the essential "transactional" nature of these variations was emphasized.[243]

Genette asserted elsewhere that "the paratext, in all its forms, is a fundamentally heteronomous, auxiliary, discourse devoted to the service of something else which constitutes its right of existence, namely the text."[244] That is, authors are engaging and aiding reader/users with these paratextual devices, which may have beauty but always have function in the reader-encounter. In the case of almanacs, the design variations, the recognizable typography of popular features like the tabular timeline since the Creation or illustrations like the Zodiacal Body became conventions of the genre and navigational aids as users employed the book as a device of utility, and a reference. Don Cameron Allen's "formula" became something of a visual catechism for the regular user.

The almanac was the supremely navigable print product of its era, divided into distinct parts like a reference volume, typographically laid out along lines that would be familiar to today's textbook designer, and frequently tricked out with the seventeenth-century version of Technicolor: rubrication, or red-inked type. Distinct conventions in the almanacs grew from Laet to Vaughan to Securis and the versions produced by the printers Watkins and Roberts under their exclusive patent after 1571. In their half-dozen or so brands they had a very

---

[243] Smith and Wilson, *Renaissance Paratexts*, 2 ff.
[244] Genette, "Introduction to the Paratext," 269.

salable, mature "line" of offerings in the last decade of Elizabeth I's reign. By the time the almanacs were handed over to the Stationers' Company monopoly management in 1603, they were as predictable as a genre as Don Cameron Allen dismissively asserted they were. And that provided a comfort zone for the potential purchasers, who could choose among slightly variant brands looking for the combination of component features they wanted *and* the navigability that attracted them.

Neil Rhodes referred definitionally to these paratextual features as "articulation," and they confirmed Chartier's notion of the "definitive triumph of white [space] over black [ink] – the introduction of breathing space on the page... . [which] echoed the intellectual or discursive articulation of the argument in the visual articulation of the page." The ultra white-space almanacs known as blanks additionally afforded a chance to engage directly with the printed text and respond to it.[245] It seems arguably likely that the almanac's compact presentation of graphics (the astrological body; eclipse diagrams), tabular and indicative layout for bulk material (annual fairs, roads between towns, the monthly calendars) and print large and small altogether served as a scaffold for improving literacy, whatever the skill level of the user.

Until much later when the daily newspaper began routinely to

---

[245] "It is equally the *organization* of the book as a knowledge system..." Rhodes, "Articulate Networks," 196; Chartier, *Order of Books,* 11.

appear in sections headed with different topics, and filled with conventional and routinized service features, the almanac was far more specifically divided into parts with different appearances and uses than any other widely used print, certainly of its era. These practices introduced a dynamism to text that allowed users to upgrade their "literacies" bit by bit. The blanks, inviting expression for the user, furthered the process. Time was opening up, along with a wider "surveillance of the terrain," in a text-tool-device providing a field of agency for the individual.

It is important to understand literacy as process as well as snapshot of competency, as Keith Thomas pointed out. "The pressures to acquire some rudimentary literary skill were relentless" in everyday life.[246] Early modern almanac users would have responded by gaining a little more overall literacy and competence with each resort to the almanac. For Thomas – and for this account – the human field is strewn with different "literacies" and none of them was standing still. David Cressy summarized the advantages of print literacy even for the non-elite:

> Works on husbandry which reported successes in soil
> improvement, lawbooks for the layman with abridgments for
> the statutes and model instruments for legal actions, tables
> of tides and calendrical, medical and meteorological
> information of the sort found in almanacs, all put valuable
> information into the hands of people who could profit from

---

[246] Thomas, "The Meaning of Literacy in Early Modern England," 110.

it.[247]

Cressy might have noted, but did not, that the husbandry and (after 1640) legal information available in other forms of print were provided (albeit in abbreviated form) in almanacs as well.

People in the early modern era who were experiencing a broadening of their own life-chances and sense of agency as the array of paths to prosper widened and beckoned were likely to learn the functional literacy they needed incrementally, day by day. Not every child (and certainly few female children) even went to the earliest schools, and the temptation for families in the almost perpetual hard times of the early modern era was to give in to the "opportunity cost" argument and move children from schooling to work.[248]

The almanac provided an articulated, symbol-based device that could manipulate time and space to enhance an individual's chances to prosper. It also served as a schoolhouse for advancing one's literacy, linking literacy and agency to practice in a way that helps define the gateway offered by the early modern era for many previously subordinated peoples.

There could very well have been a reason to purchase an almanac

---

[247] Dooley, *Contemporaneity,* xiii; Thomas, *The Meaning of Literacy;* Cressy, *Literacy and the Social Order,* 6-7.

[248] Houston, *Literacy in Early Modern Europe*, 108.

even if the owner (or family members who also used the product) was not fully literate. Daily use could be daily schooling. Tessa Watt, quoted by Angela McShane, noted that "many more people could get through the text of a broadside ballad than could sign their names to a Protestation oath." [249]

The argument here is that almanacs' social ubiquity, patterned and responsive provision of everyday information and clear evolutionary reshaping to meet their users' wants and needs provides evidence of participation – in discourse and its use, if not always in political action. Almanacs' clear penetration into the non-elite sector of society – their purchase, year after year, by folk many of whom were marginally literate – gives modern researchers material evidence of a dynamic two-sided relationship between an information public and the tools of incremental information acquisition and use.

---

[249] Angela McShane, "Ballads and Broadsides," in Raymond, *Oxford History,* 359, citing Watt's *Cheap Print and Popular Piety,* 6-7.

Chapter 6 ANALYSIS: Almanacs in the Marketplace – Continuity and Change

When the Stationers' Company took over the almanac business from their longtime member James Roberts[250] in 1603, all the elements of the annual offering that Allen amusedly said could be composed "by formula" were in place, and the formula appeared to be effective and attractive. This routinization of the almanac's appearance gave it a distinctive, articulated quality unlike most printed products of the day. Many component features were recognizable because they were tabular, ruled, or styled differently than the solid-set text so characteristic of other cheap print of the day. The sections on physick, as well as some others, were full of brackets after the fashion of the French textbook innovator Peter Ramus, showing relationships among the elements of nature and the human body.

Ong argued that Ramus's innovations were "part of a large-scale operation freeing the book from the world of discourse and making it over into an object, a box, with surface and 'content.' "[251] Elizabeth Tebaux asserts that English "technical writing, particularly works printed after 1550, reveal applications of text technology to page design that suggest

---

[250] Roberts' partner Watkins died in 1599. Bosanquet, *Printed Almanacs*, vii.
[251] Allen, *Star-Crossed Renaissance,* 201; Ong, *Ramus, Method and the Decay of Dialogue*, 311.

that even in the late sixteenth century readable visual design was the writer's intent."[252]

In the prehistory of journalism, the assembly of the components of news by ordinary people, the non-elite, began with these kinds of learning. Tudor and Stuart England contrasted with Europe, where this kind of timely news of current events was being purveyed by, for instance, the German weekly *Zeitungen* and other somewhat regular periodicals[253].

Capp and others made it clear, however, that with some singular exceptions the almanac trade stayed under the political radar. On a different path, this dissertation shows, almanacs systematized, regularized – and periodized – the everyday, an essential prerequisite of news. Andrew Pettegree asserted that the "domestic" began to establish itself as news alongside the political in the early sixteenth century. He contended Antwerp's city decrees about the rules for selling produce or animals on the market allow us to

> detect the beginning of a news culture that touches on domestic affairs. This was an aspect of news that had previously bubbled along as the domain of word-of-mouth gossip, rather separate from the great events captured in international correspondence and print. In the sixteenth century matters close to home began to impact on the news prints.[254]

---

[252] Tebeaux, "Ramus: Visual Rhetoric, and the Emergence of Page Design in Medical Writing of the English Renaissance," *Written Communication* 4 (1991): 412.

[253] Pettegree, *Invention of News,* 72-75.

[254] Pettegree, *Invention of News,* 88.

When James I was installed in 1603, however, he retained Elizabeth's top minister Robert Cecil, soon created first early of Salisbury, and there was no substantial change in the informal circulation of domestic news in manuscript rather than print throughout his and his son Charles I's reigns. If there was pent-up demand for the domestic in news, as Pettegree suggested, in continental Europe, almanacs provided a domestic form of information for the English.

What interests the analyst of journalism's prehistory is the way component features of the almanac were deployed and which ones, year by year, appeared and disappeared in how many of the popular name-brand almanacs. These patterns of change were indicators of an emerging information public's appetite for information and responses to that appetite from the compilers, printers and publishers of this lucrative cheap-print sector of the book trade. As detailed in Chapter 3, about 375 almanacs have been examined in this analysis in regard to the appearance or absence of twenty specific features. Almanacs published between 1595 and 1645 that appeared consecutively for three or more years were selected, with the exception of those published by the Cambridge University printers from 1624 to 1640 (which were spot-checked for comparison).

During the period being examined – 1595 to 1645 – the almanac

trade and the almanac format and content narrative underwent

significant changes and met – or dodged – significant challenges. The

production and compilation of English almanacs was somewhat

consolidated even by 1595, when the printers Watkins and Roberts held

the royal patent, or monopoly, for producing them. Watkins and Roberts

appeared to successfully defend their monopoly in the way that counted

most: their names are on nearly all the surviving almanacs from 1571,

when the patent was granted, until 1603, when the Stationers'

Conmpany directly assumed the monopoly over almanac publication.[255]

The integration and (at least presumptive) coordination of all

almanac production by the Worshipful Company of Stationers 1603

played out visibly in the following decade. The Stationers' Company came

quickly to depend on the stability of income that was provided by

almanacs as a linchpin of the joint-stock company known as the English

Stock. That entity, officially chartered entirely within the Stationers'

Company, encompassed almanacs and other regular best-sellers

including religious texts and schoolbooks.[256]

Timeframes for Analysis

For purposes of analytical discussion, this project divided the

period 1595-1640 into three sections. The period 1595-1603 exemplified

how the late Elizabethan almanac took its form, and how different

---

[255] Capp, *Almanacs*, 29.
[256] Blagden, *Stationers'*, 92-99; Gadd, "'Being Like a Field'," 24.

author/compilers established personal brands and specialty features under the umbrella of Watkins and Roberts. This established pattern was elaborated as the Stationers took over the trade in 1603 and (with some clear fumbles) developed through 1615 a stable of "brands," named almanacs that had diverse kinds of appeal, with component features associated with each brand, that could maximize and saturate the potential market for the two-penny annual.

The period 1615-1625, the latter part of James I's rule ending with his death and the accession in 1625 of his son Charles I, saw. some of the best-known and longest-running almanac brands established, and the genre clearly became entrenched in the practice of its audience. New features became popular and older ones faded, but stability clearly became a principle and some of the brands appeared to have staked out specific component features as their claim to popularity.

During this middle period, the managers of the almanac trade developed a larger range of almanac types that filled out the potential of the genre and extended its public. From 1595-1625 this analysis included 225 almanac editions. The number of Stationers' almanacs surviving from 1615 to 1625 never went below a dozen in any given year.

The last period, 1625-1640, began the year Charles I succeeded his father James I and ended as political conflict was shading toward military confrontation between the king and Parliament. It included the

period of Charles I's "personal rule" from 1629 to 1640 that soured the king's relations with the wider nation even further. During this period the almanacs coped competitively with several other print genres. The rise and fall of the total number of almanac editions the Stationers' Company produced over this part of the timeline reflects this competition. Some of the competition came from more expensive "how-to" books that included much of the advice in the annual almanacs but in expanded form, designed to be bought only once and consulted over a long period of time. More a direct threat within the genre, the University of Cambridge wangled from the Privy Council in 1623 a qualified right to print almanacs. In the 1625-1640 period Cambridge printed as many as six or seven almanacs in some years.[257]

This examination of 375 surviving, continuous almanacs shows the deliberate strategy of the Stationers' Company to maximize the appeal of the genre by managing a line of (aspirationally, long-running) annual almanacs with varying kinds of appeal to different segments of their growing public. Because the printers and booksellers in the company were in a position to get regular feedback through sales of each annual array of issues of this cash cow, year-to-year tinkering with this strategy is presumed to be highly likely, even without a record of such decision-making. Changes – which component features appear in which

[257] David McKitterick, *A History of Cambridge University Press,* vol. 1, *Printing and the Book Trade in Cambridge, 1534-1698* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 202-203.

brand-name almanac at different points in time – reflected this strategy. Because these almanacs are still available for inspection today, changes in them are the surviving evidence of how this commercially driven cultivation of a public for information dynamically played out against the domestic and political background of the era. The component features of almanacs, which had developed slowly out of the sixteenth-century almanac canon, took on independent careers. Their persistence as almanac brands came and went shows their specific importance to the information public that was purchasing brand-name almanacs and sought out their favorite features.

It must be conceded that there are potentially confounding factors within this broad assertion about a grand strategy of Stationers' Company almanac managers. Many annual issues of almanacs that have survived from 1595-1645 show evidence that the individual printer of an almanac autonomously may have inserted material for convenience to make the issue come out to its forty or forty-eight pages. Certainly compilers – most of whom delivered their copy early in the previous year, May or June – were frequently quick to complain about the material not submitted by them that showed up in their almanacs when finally printed in time for the November release of the following year's editions.[258] Few if any compilers – even those living in London, the center

---

[258] E.g. Arthur Hopton, who said he had hoped to have parts of his "concordance" (an elaborate calendar, to be printed as a book) included in his 1610 almanac. He wrote in 1611 that it was

of activity for the printing trade – were apparently able or allowed to oversee their work into print as Erasmus and other luminaries of the earliest age of print had done and contemporary authors in a literary vein often still did.[259]

Printers' responsibility for their almanacs' quality, as with all other printing of this era, was inconsistently enforced. Though some of the almanacs in this period featured the names of some of the master printers of the day, most did not.[260] In 1634, the same year that the Privy Council order to register almanacs was promulgated (and apparently ignored), the Court of the Stationers' Company ordered that the name, or at least the initials, of the printer of any almanac must appear on the cover. The loose quality of supervision and sometimes unfortunate autonomy of the printer who was assigned the work was demonstrated in that the Court made the above rule "whereby the *company* may know by

---

omitted because it might conflict with sales of the book and "a paltry old Rutter [possibly the roads and routes feature, which did appear in Hopton 1610] thrust into my book to stuff up the volume, which I much disdained to pass under my name." *Hopton 1611*, sig. b2 image 11 EEBO [British Library], http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:image:24067:11; Capp, *Almanacs*, 44, said the "Rutter" was a "nautical chart" but Hopton 1610 contains no such feature,nor the sort mentioned by Bridenbaugh, *Vexed and Troubled Englishmen,* 233, who confirms that "rutter" was the contemporary term for "sailing directions" used by blue-water captains to find their way to and around the new lands to the West.

[259] Pettegree, *Book in the Renaissance*, 83. Compiler John Vaux, in his 1624 almanac, complained to his "Friendly Readers" about the 1623 version's errors and omitted material that it was "alleged, came in too late" but averred that he would have a London friend oversee his almanacs from then on "and so quit me of the like censure which might otherwise befall me hereafter." *Vaux 1624*, sig. B2, image 11 EEBO [British Library], http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:image:24067:11.

[260] This refers to the 15 to 25 "masters" in the Company, not necessarily to skills. Masters owned presses and operated printing concerns; other apprentices and journeymen worked for them.

whom they [the almanacs] were printed."[261] And D.F. Mackenzie and

many other scholars have shown that printers were likely to share their

work with others when the volume was heavy.[262] Considering that

almanacs were all pointed, from the production standpoint, at a delivery

date in November, it is easy to imagine near-gridlock in the trade at some

periods in October or even earlier. The name Edward Allde appears on (or

is attributed to) as many almanacs as any other printer during the first

quarter of the seventeenth century (he died in 1627 and his widow

Elizabeth's name appears as printer on many subsequent almanacs). But

as Ian Gadd notes in Allde's entry in the *Oxford Dictionary of National*

Biography, "The Short-Title Catalogue associates him with the

production of over 700 items during his career; however, he mostly acted

as a 'trade printer', printing material for others."[263]

The Stationers had petitioned for their almanac privilege in part on

the basis that poorer members of the company needed work and this

monopoly could be their salvation. Many of these members were

journeymen recently "made free" of the company through apprenticeship

or other means; many may not have had the skill of the master printers.

Gaps between the compilers' wishes and the product of the individual

print shop were inevitable, one would think; the question is, did this

---

[261] Jackson*, Court Book*, 221 (my italics).

[262] McKenzie, *Printers of the Mind*, esp. 57-61; Capp, *Almanacs,* 42-3.

[263] I. Gadd, "Allde, Edward (1555x63–1627)," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford University Press, 2004) accessed 18 May 2014, doi:10.1093/ref:odnb/363.

happen often enough to distort this dissertation's intended portrait of a deliberate, market-driven range of almanac types? This analysis will help answer the question.

Competition from Within and Without the Genre

During this 1625-40 period, "how-to" books on an increasing range of household and vocational activities burgeoned. Many of these works, though more expensive than almanacs by far, overlapped them in their everyday utility if one wanted depth and detail. Almanacs, in some respects, appealed to those who wanted, or could only manage, the short version. And the price difference appears to have been significant. Izaak Walton, whose *The Compleat Angler* (1653) is considered a paradigm of the elegant how-to manual, warned readers that they "may... learn something that may be worth their money, if they be not needy."[264] Though the most popular how-to manuals came out in many successive editions, it should be stressed, they did not share the regularity and periodicity of annual almanacs, a distinguishing characteristic and one that made them unique in their ability to create and sustain a public for information. Natasha Glaisyer notes that production of this how-to genre "largely did not take off until the middle of the seventeenth century."[265] but the indefatigable Gervase Markham, who made a career of how-to books, brought out his first edition of *The English Huswife* in 1615 and it

---

[264] Glaisyer, "Popular Didactic Literature," in Raymond, *Oxford History*, 511.
[265] Glaisyer, 510.

went through ten editions by 1695.[266]

The corantos – small, cheap and riding the wave of events – presented an early challenge to the Stationers' annual almanacs, about two decades into their monopoly opportunity. It was one that they pretty clearly dodged. By the time the corantos came on the scene, the almanac genre was established and, in its variations, understood by its public for what it was. Being not newsy was no handicap; the almanac answered to and referenced a different kind of calendar, and both wider and more articulated expanses of time. It was still easier to accommodate an information public to the macro and micro rhythms contained in a year, and for a nation still largely agricultural the rhythm of a weekly update of news from Europe held an entirely different, rather than a competing, attraction. Almanacs made no apparent move to present current events in Europe in response to the corantos. The pent-up demand for news from the Continent was somewhat assuaged by these translated Dutch periodicals, but they had to have been an additional buy for the almanac user, not a substitute.

In fact, both in their popularity and in their economic utility to their Stationers' Company overseers, the almanacs were sensitive to what Stephen Greenblatt called the "pressures of genre." Almanacs were established in a representative role that did not include heroic or warlike

---

[266] Wall, "Reading the Home," in *Renaissance Paratexts,* 184.

themes. Greenblatt observed that a humane author like Sir Philip Sidney (who wrote *Arcadia*, a romance of upper-class deeds) was nevertheless unable to be sympathetic to oppressed and rebellious poor folk because it would burst the conventions of his chosen genre and the social class distinctions on which it was grounded.[267] Those rebels, who when at home and at peace may well have bought an almanac every year, saw the world as well as the calendar differently and chose their genres accordingly.

A different and closer challenge emerged to the Stationers' captive genre in the 1625-1640 period: the competition with the press at Cambridge University. Cambridge managed to get a limited piece of the almanac trade and, desperate for revenue and business, ran with it. The privilege was awarded in 1623, two years before Charles I succeeded James I and two years after corantos (with foreign news only) began to be published in England. But the threat from the university press appeared to have had a wider impact.

By 1625, Cambridge was publishing two almanacs. One was Edward Pond's, a development that might have meant that Cambridge was paying better for compilers than the Stationers. Pond (who had been compiling an almanac for the Stationers beginning in 1601) in 1612 had

---

[267] Stephen Greenblatt, "Murdering Peasants: Status, Genre and the Representation of Rebellion," in *Learning to Curse: Essays in Early Modern Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1990), 108.

bolted their stable of almanacs quite publicly, labeling them as cheapskates in his last edition. By 1627 the Cambridge stable of almanacs was up to four, and in 1628, five. From 1633 to 1637, Cambridge published six almanacs every year, and the effect on the Stationers' Company's fortunes wass certainly visible. During many years in this period a reduced number of Stationers' almanacs and a conservative approach to innovation were apparent. There is a fair chance, however, that the almanacs that they did publish may have been printed in greater numbers, so reduction in the sheer number of brand-name almanacs did not necessarily mean lower print runs or revenue. The Company had a distribution network and contacts with booksellers that Cambridge would have had trouble matching. The Stationers had shown themselves shrewd businessmen so far, and could well have been hanging back, waiting for Cambridge to experience its own crisis of overproduction. After 1638, the number of Cambridge almanacs dropped to four.

Anatomy of the Almanacs: Features and Innovations

Most almanacs[268] were divided into a calendar and a "prognostication" (roughly half and half) and the front and back of the

---

[268] To restate the parameters of study: The almanacs considered in this examination are those Stationers' Company almanacs surviving that were published for at least three consecutive years between 1595 and 1640. Year by year, those surviving, consecutive almanacs numbered as few as one to three in 1595-1603 but swelled to as many as thirteen or fourteen per year in 1617-18-19, for instance. See the charts of features frequency.

book were separated by a unique second title page signaling the beginning of the prognostication. The second title page also afforded the compiler and printer a chance to make statements that were not immediately evident on the front of the almanac, where the text must be ultra-inoffensive. Most of the time (at least before the 1634 Privy Council ruling), if a printer was identified for the volume, his or her name appeared on the second cover. However, it is apparent from front and second front imprints that sometimes the front and back of the book were printed in different shops.

The front cover, the first sales point for the user looking for the same "brand" that he or she enjoyed the previous year, brandished the compiler's last name and the year date at the top of the presentation. Some covers had ornate frames with mythological or heraldic cameos, others were simple pattern borders. Text below the compiler's name and date varied, but almost invariably located the almanac geographically, saying it was compiled for the latitude and longitude of a county or city – and it was by no means always London. The full name of the compiler and his credentials ("practicioner of physic" or "teacher of the mathematics") anchored the bottom along with the identity of the printer (after 1603, "for the Company of Stationers") and sometimes "Cum Privilegio," shorthand for by license from the monarch.

Arranged with the front of the book monthly calendar were other

component features that made each almanac the unique bundle of distinct utilities that it was. This analysis will group these component features – with some functional overlap – under three categories representing how the information was probably used by the consumer whom this preamble has pictured. That would be a rising early modern English person, consumer, producer of goods for sale, seeking new forms of agency in a growing mercantile nation-state where entrenched social classes are being shaken by change but loosening of social bonds and reciprocal obligations created hazards. The broad categories encompassing component features are:

- the calendarized, articulated and elaborated civic year;
- events, places and the enablement of mental mapping of them in the growing "Great" Britain;
- understanding and mastery of nature and the body, or a "system of the world."

Component Features Group: Defining, Dividing and Articulating the Civic Year

The main work of an annual almanac was, of course, to display the year in all its numbers, divisions and sectors: time management and its anticipation, a key component of agency. For early modern English people this was a civic year that included the religious calendar, helping to locate movable feast days (pre-eminently Easter) and placing them in the context of other, more secular engagements. The individual might

want the calendar to keep track of each month. The civic aspect applied because every event in the calendar was communal or official, and involved others.

The feast days were generally on the first inside page of any calendar – when they are missing it was most likely a printer's omission or last-minute and wrongheaded space-saving option. The feast calendars, which could be handled in a half-page and combined with other brief memoranda, were so commonly present they are not tracked in this analysis. But sometimes they sported a cosmopolitan refinement, as discussed below.

The component features of the almanacs that are tracked in this category include the front-of-the-book monthly "kalendar," either sort or blank; the quarter-session court terms; the timeline of English monarchs' reigns, the furnishing of parallel Julian and Gregorian calendar dates and the listing of the year's fairs in England and Wales, which had a foot both in this civic category and in the next one.

Above all, the coming civic year was articulated by the front-of-the-book "kalendar," one or two pages devoted to each month, with the dates arranged vertically in the left-most column in a way recognizable to Anglophone persons of all eras. Whether forty-page sort or forty-eight-page blank, this calendar represented the orderly unrolling of the next year. Because the extra page of a blank invited self-writing, Stuart

Sherman said:

> For many families, the almanac and the Bible comprised the entire household library, and the almanac, like the family Bible, offered a venue for self-recording. People not only read it; they also wrote in it the data of their lives.[269]

Other regular almanac features catalogued in this analysis (see the chart of features and their frequency) contributed mainly to this category of marking out the boundaries, intervals, potential civic problems and civic solutions of the year to come. One component feature of the almanacs of this pre-civil wars period that was least likely to be left out was the table or account of quarter-session court terms – a notice of the dates when quarterly civil courts would meet during the year. If an almanac user were to be the target or initiator of litigation, knowing these dates was essential. J.A. Sharpe, who examined court records at the county and parish level, observed that: "Only recently… has realisation spread of the importance of the law and legal institutions not just to elite politics and the political nation, but also to the everyday life of large sections of the general population."[270]

That "law-mindedness," Sharpe noted, was uniquely characteristic of English society.[271] It persisted in the early modern period and

---

[269] Sherman, *Telling Time,* 56.

[270] J. A. Sharpe, "The People and the Law," in *Popular Culture in Seventeenth-Century England*, ed. Barry Reay (Beckenham, Kent, UK: Croom Helm, 1985), 245.

[271] Sharpe, ibid. 246, quotes Robert Muchembled to the effect that in France at that time, the pressure of government and church control of the law had eroded a similar French medieval sense of popular identification with the law.

mushroomed in the period treated in this project.
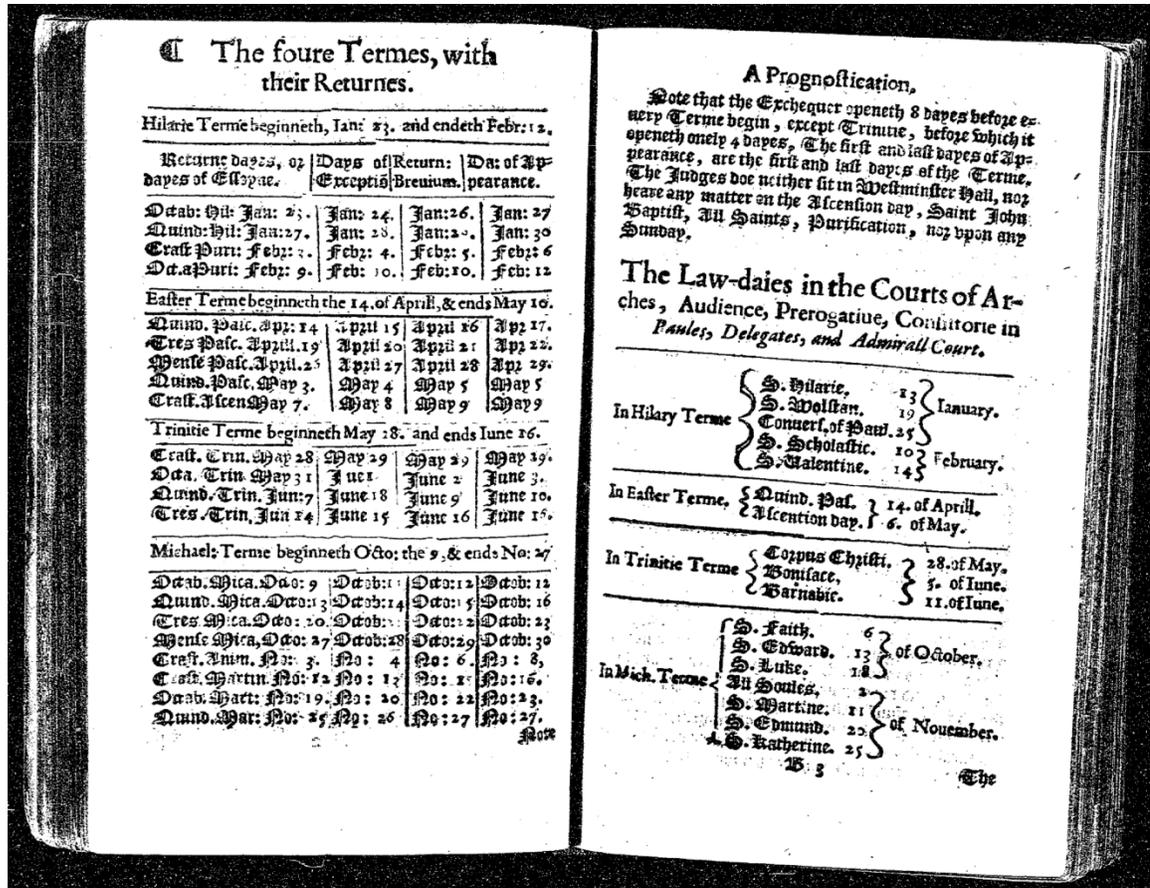
Figure 5: *Court quarter-session terms in John Woodhouse's 1624 almanac, showing Ramist brackets in the page design and strong graphic identification with the feature.* © *The British Library: Digital images produced by ProQuest LLC as part of ProQuest® Historical Newspapers. www.proquest.com*

…even for persons of moderate property, contact with the law, via bonds, deeds and contracts could be frequent. … County society was to some extent focused upon, and in large measure organized by, the court of quarter sessions, where many decisions about local government were enforced by indictments or recognizances.[272]

---

[272] Sharpe, "Law," 246.

During this period (1560-1640) "there occurred what has been described as a 'great, and probably unprecedented, increase' in the amount of litigation entertained by the two main common-law courts at Westminster. . . .[and] away from the centre, it seems that most courts in the localities were also experiencing an upsurge in their business."[273]

The degree to which the law, and its representatives, suffused the lives of ordinary folk in England was made plain by C. V. Wedgwood:

> Justice was administered throughout the kingdom in a multitude of small local courts, and the governors of England, in all that affected the daily life of the subject, were the local justices of the peace – small gentry in the countryside, aldermen in the cities. At Quarter Sessions the justices, gathered together in the county town, fixed the rate of wages and discussed the state and needs of the county. They were competent to try all crimes except treason or offences by the King's servants. . . .
>
> Between sessions the justices saw to the daily affairs of the village, apprenticed boys to trades, disciplined unruly servants, ordered idlers into the fields at harvest time, licensed or suppressed alehouses, punished rogues and vagabonds, put bastard children out to nurse, sent lewd women and incorrigible beggars to the house of correction, relieved the sick, poor and disabled, encouraged lawful and discouraged unlawful sports, and saw to the maintenance – such as it was – of roads and bridges.[274]

It is not difficult to understand why the court terms component was one of the most consistent features in the almanacs of the period, even when other apparently popular features were juggled by the compilers, the printers, or both. As Wedgwood noted, "As plaintiff or

---

[273] Sharpe, "Law," 250.
[274] Wedgwood, *King's Peace*, 137.

defendant, as witness or surety, or as a minor official of the court, the great majority of the population would be at one time or another directly involved with the law."[275]

The growth in written documentation of agreements and contracts, clearly connected with the growth in engagement with the law in general, pointed as well to another feature in this civic category that was less a constant in almanacs than the court terms, but certainly showed up often: a timeline of the reigns of English monarchs, conveniently including a column showing how many years had elapsed since each reign began and ended. Those making contracts or deeds often identified past years by their location in a specific reign. "In the fourteenth year of the reign of King Henry VIII" might be the peg on which a past acquisition of property was identified in history. [276]

Despite the apparent public embrace of law as the birthright of "free-born Englishmen" and a stay against abuse by elites, lawyers did not escape the lash of public sentiment in almanacs or in other popular literature like ballads.[277] Still, among the self-advertisements that were the most common adverts in pre-civil wars almanacs, several compilers or their associates promoted their readiness to assist reader/users with

---

[275] Wedgwood, *King's Peace*, 139; Capp, however, pointed out that admonitions against such thoughtlessly litigious behavior were rife in almanacs, especially in the adage-heavy and behaviorally conservative verses atop the calendar pages. Capp, *Almanacs*, 106-07.
[276] Capp suggests this feature first appeared about 1571 in almanacs. Capp, *Almanacs*, 30.
[277] Capp, *Almanacs*, 107.

the drawing up of contracts, though the words "lawyer" or "barrister" were never mentioned.[278]

The table of court terms, often laid out in organized grid-like form because there were four "terms" with gaps between them, frequently appeared in the front of the almanac, on the first right-hand or recto page, matched on the left or verso page by the feast days calendar of important dates of the coming religious year.

Of the 225 almanacs surveyed between 1595 and 1625, there were eight years in which *every* almanac surveyed contained the court terms entry. In only one year (1607) did the proportion fall to two-thirds of the almanacs; in the remaining years of this period the proportion was always higher. From 1625 to 1640, every surveyed almanac had at least one page of court terms for seven of those years, and in seven more years, only one of the almanacs lacked court terms. In 1626, eight of ten almanacs had court terms.

The timeline of monarchs' reigns got a slower start in this period (1595-1625) and only three times appeared in more than half the almanacs in a given year. From 1625-40 they appeared more in demand, being in half or more of the almanacs every year except 1634 and 1636.

---

[278] For example, *Gilden 1630* [STC2 448.15] image 20 EEBO [British Library], http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:image:24056:20.

The utility of model legal documents for use by those who wanted

to avoid both lawyers and a challenge to their wills or contracts would

seem obvious, and such model documents appeared in almanacs – but

not until the second half of the century. The almanac called "Fly" first

included a model will in 1658, Capp said, and no almanac surveyed in

this project from 1595 to 1640 provided this feature.[279]

Overlapping between this civic category of component features and

the next (geography and national idea of Britain) were several features

that helped establish both the divisions of the next year and the sense of

location in an emerging nation-state and an increasingly explicable

material world. The most popular, even though long and difficult to fit

into an edition, was the month by month list of fairs throughout England

and Wales. Taking up generally five to six pages, it was an anatomy of

the commercial and mercantile year as well as establishing geographical

patterns for the emerging nation-state.

In 1598, for which three almanacs survive, all three carried the

fairs list. Though the feature was sporadic through 1604, when three of

the eight surviving almanacs carried fairs, it appeared in at least one

almanac every year until 1625, with the exception of 1608 and 1609.[280]

As the Stationers produced a steady ten to twelve surviving almanacs per

---

[279] Capp, *Almanacs*, 145.

[280] As will be discussed below, there appears to have been a crisis of overproduction in those years and a temporary scaling-back in editions and numbers of pages.

year in 1612 and the years following, fairs listings were present in three, four and even five of each year's almanacs through 1625. After 1626, the fairs listings appeared in two of the longer-running almanacs, Sofford and John Woodhouse, every year. If a small tradesman in Charles I's reign needed this year's listings, he knew what names to look for on the cover of his almanac.

The emergence of mercantilist opportunism at the village level that was reflected in the fairs listings also extended to increased trade with the Continent. Catholic Europe was ten days "ahead" of England, which had stuck to the older Julian calendar. France and Spain, among England's trading partners, had adopted the newer, corrected calendar in the late sixteenth century. Many almanacs showed both systems in their calendars, with the monthly page showing Julian dates in a column on the far left and Gregorian dates ("the forrein accompt") in a column on the right side of the page. The first of every Julian month was already the eleventh of that month across the Channel. After 1606, half or more of the almanacs in any given year provided this cosmopolitan dual calendar in their monthly calendar pages. In many almanacs, as well, the feast day calendar (described above) was dual, showing the (Protestant) feast days for across the Channel as well as those for Julian-calendar England.

Component Features Group: Locating Citizenship, Civitas, Nation

The ordinary almanac user also counted on the annual to provide detailed information on her or his identity as a citizen of the emerging nation as well as how each household was situated physically and economically in the village or town. The fairs listings had a role in that information, as well. Other component features contributing to this aspect of everyday life were timelines of history, both the list of events from the date of the Creation and that showing reigns of England's monarchs, and gazetteers that provided the names and some information about the cities and towns of the nation or more rarely about the world's great cities.

England's fairs, one of the consistent attractions of the annual almanac, created in their aggregate display not only a different, rich and productive month-by-month map of the year's commercial calendar but a mental map of the breadth of the kingdom and the opportunities for buying and selling. The society was slowly converting from one in which people and families made most of what they used to one in which they bought a good deal of what they used from others.[281] Division of labor was taking hold in a pre-industrial time. The fairs, and the opportunity to travel to them, provided a cornucopia of the material goods of others (and a wider sharing of gossip and social norms).

---

[281] Coward, *Stuart Age*, 18ff; Hirst, *Conflict*, 57; Wrightson, *Earthly Necessities*, 41, 128-29.

Many almanacs also provided a map of England in words, or at least a "map" enabling one to get around in England. The component feature typically headed "The geographicall description of waies from one town to another, all over England, and thereby how to travel from any one of them to the citty of London" showed the order of towns and mileage on a number of different journeys. Each town's distance from the next one in the sequence was shown, and as promised, most of the journeys converged on London, the commercial metropolis. The feature (called "roads and routes" in the chart of features and their frequency) never achieved the prominence and ubiquity of the fairs listing in the almanacs. It appeared for the first time in the 1595-1625 period in two editions of 1602. It was sporadic throughout the period and only in 1621 and 1622 appeared in more than two of the almanacs.

The sheer space that had to be allocated to the feature – generally six to eight pages, like the fairs list –made it hard to fit into a forty-page sort for even the most ingenious printer without omitting other, more popular single-page features. But from 1617 to 1624 there was at least one almanac each year, and often two or three, in which the footloose almanac user could find "waies" from here to there. From 1625 to 1640 there was never a year when one or more almanacs did not feature the roads guide. The most consistent was the long-running almanac compiled by Samuel Perkins (1625-1643) – again, a brand name to seek if one wanted that road guide in his or her almanac.

If there was a spur to keep the Stationers in the business of almanacs with fairs and the roads guide during the 1625-1640 period, it was significant competition from the Cambridge album by Peregrine Rivers. As Bernard Capp noted, the name was almost certainly made-up to take advantage of Cambridge's acquisition of the Pond almanac series after the long hiatus following Pond's squabble with the Stationers over low compensation for almanac compilers and his leaving the business in 1612.[282] It was one of several water-oriented almanac brands taking off from "Pond." Rivers' accomplishment was fitting both the roads guide and the fairs list into the same almanac – a rarity. The lists were set in three columns per page and made liberal use of the brackets associated with Ramist organization.

A less common feature, somewhat similar to the "roads and routes," was a list of towns, parishes, cities and counties. This gazetteer, as it might be called now, provided a static layout of the towns large and small that appeared dynamically in the "roads and routes." It appeared sporadically, starting in 1611, was absent in 1616 and 1622, and never appeared in more than two almanacs in a given year. It seemed mainly a signature feature for the almanac of John White, a long-running and otherwise decidedly ordinary, conventional entry that nevertheless lasted from 1613 to 1651 where some more adventurous compilers

---

[282] Capp, *Almanacs*, 327.

experimented themselves out of business.

A cosmopolitan variant of the gazetteer feature appeared first in Thomas Bretnor's 1607 almanac, which was also Bretnor's first offering. It was a list of major world cities with their compass headings and distance from London. Places in the New World such as Virginia were included. It is tempting to see this feature as a stimulus to a wider understanding of the round earth by non-elites who made up a great part of the almanacs' public. But the fact is that Bretnor, from 1607 to his last annual in 1619, was almost the only compiler to include it. For several years Bretnor's feckless competitor Daniel Browne offered the one-page table of world locations, but he abandoned it and after Bretnor's departure from the scene in 1619 only one other compiler (Vaux) offered it, for just one year (1622). From then to 1640 it remains absent from the surviving Stationers' almanacs.

A sense of one's location in Britain – let alone Britain's location in the world – would seem to be an important role for an information source and navigation tool like the annual almanac. As seen here, though, the list of fairs – something of a gazetteer in itself – as well as the roads-and-routes guide were persistently present in the almanacs but not with the near-ubiquity of the one-page table of court terms or the one-page list of reigns of the English monarchs. Part of the difference was use of space: one-page features were much easier to fit into the puzzle of an optimal

forty- or forty-eight-page almanac than were features like fairs or roads-and-routes that consumed at least four pages, if not six or eight.

During the 1615-1625 period the proportion of almanacs that provided one of the two back-of-the-book features, fair listings or roads and routes, seemed to wobble but there was never a year after 1612 (when the number of consecutive almanacs under Stationers management reached double digits) when both were absent from the available almanac inventory. From 1617 to 1625, each of these component features was available in at least one surviving Stationers almanac. In the 1625-40 period the roads guide was not in any surviving almanac in 1628 and 1631-32 and the fairs listings likewise were missing in 1635.[283]

Space was also, one would think, the reason that maps almost never appeared in a pocket-sized octavo almanac with pages that measured no more than four by six inches. The prose narrative of fairs, of routes from town to town, or even lists of counties and their towns, stood in for maps, though scholars tend to agree that the cartographic representations "worked to create national unity, while obliterating topographical and local difference."[284]

---

[283] In 1628 and 1632 the Perkins almanac, which routinely carried the roads guide, was unavailable in EEBO. John Woodhouse's almanac, a regular source for the fairs listings, was unavailable for 1635 in EEBO.
[284] Lesley B. Cormack, rev. of Bernhard Klein, *Maps and the Writing of Space in Early Modern England and Ireland* (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave, 2002) in *Renaissance and Reformation* 26, no. 1

One singular exception, again, was the almanac of John White. In 1648, after the period covered by this study and during the actual civil wars, White's edition added a map to his gazetteer. He had previously called the text gazetteer a "Catalog of Shires, Cities… and much else but now called the package a "Geographical Epitomie."[285] The map, on the left-hand page, showed the boundaries of the shires and numbered them for reference to the list on the facing page. No other feature, not even the name "London," appeared on this small and Spartan map. The gazetteer list, which had in previous editions taken up nearly two pages itself, was now set in minuscule type to get all fifty-two shires on the facing page. And in a one-city nation, several columns were set aside to show the distance in miles of each shire from London, as well as its compass heading from the nation's major city.

For early modern English people, a sense of where one was in the emerging nation-state also involved a sense of history. Almanac users could turn to the chronologies or historical timelines that appeared with high frequency in almanacs of this period. They were supplemented by

---

(2002), 84.

[285] "A Catalog of all the Shires, Cities, Bishopricks, Market Towns, Parishes, Rivers, Bridges, Chases, Forrests and Parks contained in Every Particular Shire in the Kingdom of England," *White 1626* [STC2 527.15], sig. C2, EEBO image 19. [Worcester College Library, Oxford], http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:image:150552:19,.

the separate chronology of royal reigns that were mentioned above. Those monarchy timelines were mainly provided, as noted earlier, to facilitate dating of legal documents ("in the fourteenth year of the reign of Edward IV"). But they underpinned popular understanding of the realm as having an unbroken sequence of rulers who provided continuity and (mostly) stability as well as majesty. Peter Burke noted that the almanac historical timelines provided a sense, as well, of the material world's continuity, since most began with the consensus date of the Creation and included Biblical events as well as moments of national triumph. One such event with a high frequency of appearance was "the Camp at Tilbury." That denoted a signature moment for Elizabeth I, who appeared in person and in armor to rally defenses against the 1588 Spanish Armada and pronounced her breakthrough line, that though a woman she possessed "the heart and stomach of a King").[286] As Burke further observed, the timelines also memorialized the "history of the everyday" – notes on when cultural pivot points considered routine in the sixteenth or seventeenth centuries were first introduced, such as gunpowder and printing, horse-drawn stagecoaches and tobacco.[287]

The historical timelines also, however, buttressed the almanacs' deployment of astrology, astronomy, medicine and mathematics as evidence of a system of the world that could be grasped and used. Ryan

---

[286] Lacey Baldwin Smith, *The Elizabethan World* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1991), 202-204.
[287] Burke, "Popular History," in Raymond, *Oxford History*, 447-48.

J. Stark, who analyzed the changes in the historical timelines in the Jonathan Dove almanac series put out by the enterprising Cambridge University printers, quoted Robert Markley's observation that the timelines "reveal 'a master narrative […] demonstrating the providential ordering of history' " and noted that Anthony Grafton "characterizes Renaissance chronologies as providing a visual scheme of a metaphysical order."[288]

The timelines, generally tidily laid out on one page, were a high-frequency feature throughout the pre-civil wars period. Between 1604 and 1625 they were absent only in 1608, a year that may represent an overproduction crisis, when additionally only three of the six almanacs for which copies survive appear on Early English Books Online.[289]. After 1610 the timeline was always in at least half of the almanacs, and frequently two-thirds of them.

As Stark pointed out, the timelines sometimes became the compiler's *pièce de resistance* – certainly the case for the Dove series, which expanded the timeline to six pages in 1636 and continued into the 1640s (when for a time the Stationers appear to have seized back the Dove franchise in the comparative lawlessness of wartime and the end of

[288] Ryan J. Stark, "The Decline of Astrology in the Jonathan Dove Almanac Series," *Renaissance & Reformation* 30, no. 2 (2006): 45.
[289] Almanacs by Neve and Woodhouse, long-running almanacs that had included historical timelines in 1607 and 1609, were not represented in EEBO for 1608 and Pond survived in that year only as a title page.

print controls).[290] That was not, however, as Stark appeared to think, an innovation of the Dove series; the equally long-running and popular Sofford almanac showed six pages of "Memorable Accidents" (events) in 1630 and seven pages in 1641. Sofford's chronology departed from the standard one-phrase-and-a-date format and offered short descriptive paragraphs of three to five lines for each event. Dove's remained terse and thus included more actual events, mostly Biblical. But these two were the exceptions; most almanacs' timelines were one-pagers with few variations in the highlights of history.[291]

All these representations of the emerging nation-state, its past and its present, converged to provide the growing almanac public with a sense of not only the individual's but the collectivity's role in the scheme of things, a widening arena of agency.

Component Features Group: Mastery of Nature and the Body— A "System of the World"

Some of the most common component features of the almanacs 1595-1640 combined generations of direct material experience of the everyday with highly structured astrological prediction to synthesize a kind of science-like, apparently coherent information system about the natural world and the human body. For the almanac users, the familiar rhythms of nature and the mathematical rigor of astrology often

---

[290] Stark, "Dove," 50-51.

[291] Some frequent recent-history timeline entries in Charles I's reign appeared to subtly remind readers of their problems with the king; details and discussion in the analysis of 1625-40 almanacs, below.

reinforced and confirmed one another.

The component features that are grouped in this category include the image of the Zodiacal Body, the back-of-the-book revisitations to the calendar of the quarters or seasons section and the monthly entries, eclipses, advice on physick (medicine and health) and husbandry (agricultural and animal care knowledge), tide tables, and calculators and "reckoning" tables.

Early modern peoples in Europe followed many paths from subservience to agency, but that transition, however traveled, was the hallmark of change that is associated with the Renaissance. Even as elites gained still more splendid status, the emerging role and independence of non-elites made them more uneasy on their perches. One acknowledged element of this change was the path of literacy and access to printed information. Information from the almanac, as well as from many other sources print and nonprint, including the communal orality of lay sermons, the gossip of taverns and coffee houses, broadened the ordinary English household's grasp of the material world, the nation and its locality's place in them. The astrological lore that inevitably saturated every almanac brought, along with its penumbra of superstition, a sense of *system* that dovetailed with the increasing scientism that was capturing the attention of elites. Ordinary people of the early modern era had new systems for understanding their world,

nature and their own bodies. These first few centuries of early modern empirical inquiry and theoretical speculation often stumbled down scientific and medical blind alleys. But today's researchers should not overlook the fact that to the early modern perspective, more and more of the world seemed to make sense every year, more and more of it was predictable and manageable with each year, with each almanac edition. Astrology, with its connection to astronomy and mathematics,[292] partook of that sense of a "system of the world," as Sir Isaac Newton later subtitled his *Principia Mathematica.*

The singular image that more than anything else represented the almanac genre to its customer-users fused these notions of system and the connection of the material world with the motions of the heavens. The Zodiacal Body, the most common illustration in the almanacs of this era, had roots in the work and iconography of the early Christian fathers although by the fifteenth century had come to represent to readers the most modern of science – showing "an aspect of most precisely co-ordinated and sound knowledge, founded upon an accurately determined and predictable order of the heavens." [293] The nude anatomically correct male body was graphically and verbally keyed to those houses of the zodiac that influenced various body parts and "was… the epitome of an

---

[292] Capp said "The history of astronomy, astrology and applied mathematics in England shows repeatedly the close connections between the three fields." *Almanacs*, 19.
[293] Harry Bober, "The Zodiacal Miniature of the *Tres Riches Heures* of the Duke of Berry--Its Sources and Meaning," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 11 (1948), 8.

exact science."[294] It was a real rarity to see it missing from the English almanac of the day, and it generally introduced the monthly calendar pages in the front of the book. The condition of the – often very crowded – image, surrounded by text about the relationship between organs and houses of the zodiac, was sometimes markedly worse than the rest of the typography and likely indicated a small number of well-worn woodcuts being widely shared among print shops.

In the period 1595-1625, there were ten years in which every surviving almanac used the Zodiacal Body image, and most of them were before 1610. After 1610, as the number of almanacs the Stationers published each year increased to a dozen or more, one or two each year would drop the image. This, arguably, wass exemplary of a wider practice by the Company to fill out the market with editions appealing to different tastes. The Zodiacal Body was almost invariably posted on the left-hand page ("page four") facing the first of twelve calendar pages. When it was dropped, one can surmise, it was so it could be replaced by one of the other equally popular one-page staples such as the court terms, timeline of monarchical reigns, or historical timeline from the Creation.

The highly recognizable Zodiacal Body imagery was so emblematic of an almanac, though, that its omission risked a hasty customer's dismissal of the whole book as not being in the genre that was sought.

---

[294] Bobor, "Miniature," 3.

Capp noted that

> A number of Stuart compilers derided the Anatomy... but they generally inserted the figure, conceding its popularity with the ordinary buyer, who without it "with contempt would straight refuse to buy/the book, and 'tis no almanac contend." [295]

The way in which the almanac enabled increased control of the present and future with its division and articulation of the year to come is bound to puzzle moderns with its apparent redundancy. The year was divided into months and days by the conventional calendar in the front of the book. Then, in the back-of-the-book "prognostication" section, it was divided into quarters (seasons) and – often but not always – one more time into months again. One way to view this multiperspectival year is as both a merger and a dissection of the everyday, numerical calendar, and the religious calendar of feasts and saints' days, with one that referenced different and slightly mysterious rhythms linked to astrology.

The monthly calendar in the front of the book was divided into vertically ruled columns and sometimes very, very busy in appearance, with each column devoted to a different element connected to the days in the left-hand column, including, frequently, phases of the moon for the month. All of those elements were highly practical information predictable in advance. The moon, seen by moderns more as romantic decoration, was precious illumination to farmers and workers in that

---

[295] Capp, *Almanacs,* 64, cite from *Rivers 1638* Sig. A2, [STC2 505.12; Cambridge press], EEBO image 2 [Bodleian Library], http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:image:184163:2.

light-poor early modern period. Knowing the moon's phases helped plan hours of work. It might also predict when animals in the herd or members of the family were more likely to give birth. The calendar was a tightly-packed page of practical information.

In addition, a column of the calendar page might be filled with astrological symbols denoting planets and houses of the zodiac and their relations on that specific day, inviting the user to parse their interactions to foretell the date's events for him- or herself. The prognostication section frequently offered instructions to the almanac user on how to judge the future encounters of the planets and their effect on the future. It is difficult to know how many almanac users viewed that information as solid prediction and how many saw it as a playful exercise. But John White, as well as Gilden and several of the later compilers of almanacs published 1625-1640 by the Cambridge University printers, specialized in a compact two-page table showing (with planetary symbols) the alignment of the planets and zodiacal relationships for every day of the coming year. This table, printed back to back on one page, was the last page of White's almanac and the user was invited to tear it off and carry it around for constant reference.[296]

Astrological data purportedly calculated specifically for the coming

---

[296] The "portability" of the compact almanac seems more obvious to modern analysts perhaps than to early modern users. It is perplexing why an already compact device should be made more portable by dismembering it.

year appeared in the quarters (seasons) and in the monthly entries. These were among the regular component features most deeply implicated with the astrological, predictive side of the almanac's appeal. In the almanac's articulated offerings, these features contrasted sharply with the quite certain unrolling of the planned year in the calendar pages, the tide tables, the court terms, and the fairs list. These were beyond prediction, a sure thing in the routine of the year to come.

As suggested, the quarters and the monthly entries in the back of the book echoed the calendrical, scheduled pattern of the routine entries with which they were just contrasted. That routinized format, however, encompassed content from astrological prediction that carried much of the message of the "figure-caster" or astrologer who was the compiler of the almanac. In these two features the compiler both extended his[297] authority into the rigor (and uncertainty) of astrological prediction, and cloaked that authority in the familiar experience of the everyday.

The quarters, or seasons, were almost without exception solid-set in paragraph form, with an account of the planetary motions that defined each season, usually some poetic descriptions of the particular season's phenomena (new greenery for spring or bitter cold and ice for winter) and ordinarily a list of the particular diseases and afflictions associated with

---

[297] No female compiler emerged, or has survived, up to 1640. During the Protectorate, several almanacs (1658-60, and 1664) appeared by Sarah Jinner, including one specifically called "The Woman's Almanac." Capp persuasively identifies her as a radical and class-conscious adherent to republicanism who offered "a spirited defense of women." Capp, *Almanacs,* 87.

that time of year. Again, though the quarters were ostensibly newly calculated for each year, the language in many editions duplicated that of the previous year, often word for word. Critics like William Perkins (in *Four Great Lyers*, 1585) noticed and decried this, and it is hard to imagine the repeat users' not noticing it as well.[298] Nevertheless, quarters were one of the real constants in the prognostication section of any almanac. Other than in 1610 and 1611, no more than two almanacs in any given year made do without a distinct, headlined quarters section, and from 1625-1640 only three years saw two almanacs minus the quarters feature – 1626, 1631 and 1636. The rest of those years saw only one almanac missing that feature. Despite (or perhaps because of) their unchanging and routine nature, they were ubiquitous. They carried part of the weight of some important astrological aspects – "physick" and "husbandry" that were not so tightly connected to the calendar, weaving the whole of the almanac into greater coherence.

Monthly entries were less a constant, but not much. They showed a more open layout, with an individual paragraph for each month, January to December. Because they generally took more space than the quarterly entries, they may well have been harder to fit into the usually jam-packed almanac format. The monthly entries could be tightly composed into just a few pages but in some cases they instead offered

---

[298] Allen, *Star-Crossed Renaissance*, 116; Capp, *Almanacs*, 32.

some of the most attractive typographical layouts in almanacs, with plenty of white space, typographical variation within each entry and occasionally small woodcut images or dingbats distinguishing one month from the next.

Often the monthly paragraph entries were topped with schematic descriptions of planetary motions and relations for that month. Usually they included lunar phases, for they were keyed to the maker of months – the moon. Sometimes they offered the riskiest of all predictions – next year's day-by-day weather, or "Disposition of the ayre." More criticism was heaped on almanacs for their manifestly bad long-range weather forecasting than for nearly any other peccadillo. When one wonders how much credibility ordinary folk who purchased almanacs assigned to astrology, the contrast between the weather predictions for the year and what the user actually lived through had to be telling.
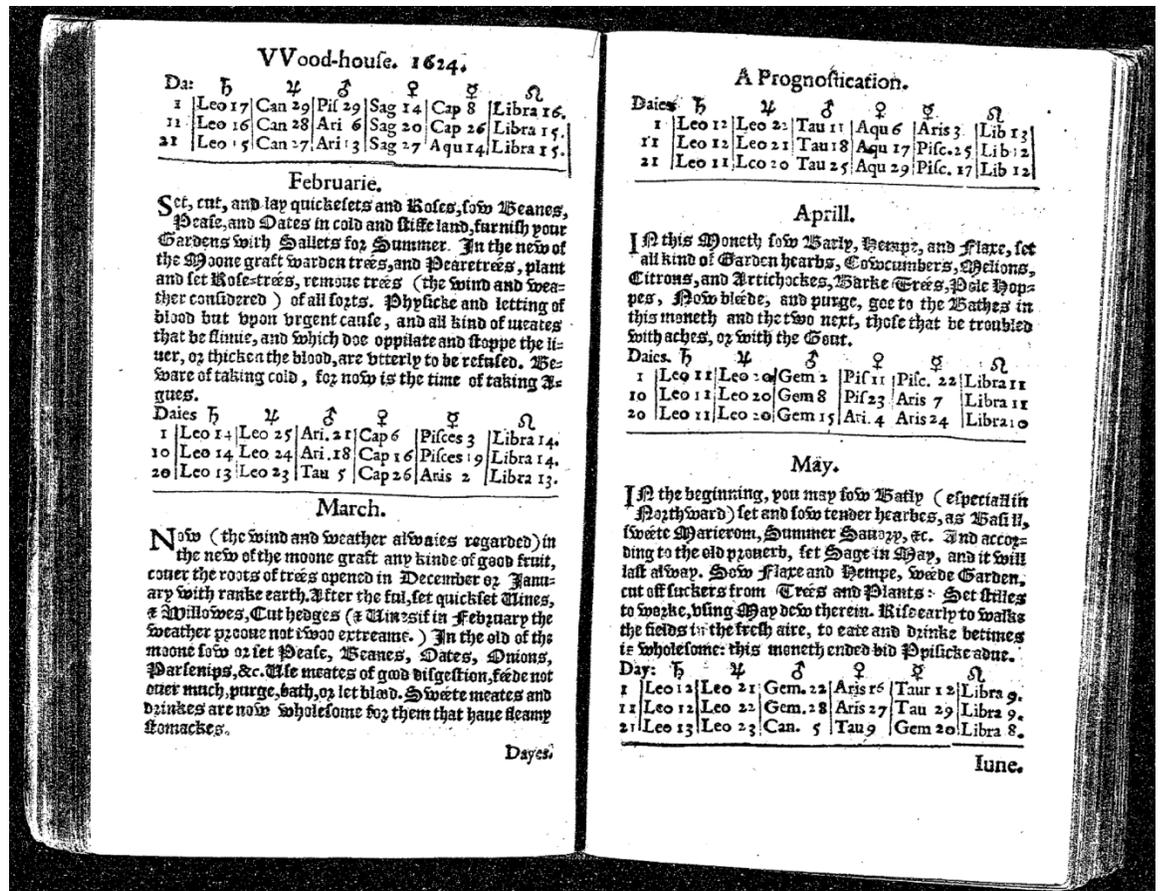
Figure 6: *John Woodhouse's 1624 almanac with monthly entries providing husbandry advice and planetary/zodiac interactions.* © *The British Library: Digital images produced by ProQuest LLC as part of ProQuest® Historical Newspapers. www.proquest.com*

Most interesting and provocative were those compilers who set forth "good days/evil days" during each month – the closest that compilers would come to "judicial astrology," which made predictions about what might happen to individual humans and the practice of which was viewed with great suspicion by religious authorities.[299] In many cases, the good and evil days referred to illness and its treatment, most particularly in relation to phlebotomy (or bloodletting). On those

[299] Capp, *Almanacs*, 16.

days called evil, it was not good to get ill because the usual remedies would be less effective. As noted previously, this helped keep the "body" aspects of astrology, the medicine and husbandry, more closely knitted to the calendar and to routine.

For clever compilers like Thomas Bretnor, whose fame emerged from the "good and evil" monthly entries and was enhanced by the mockery of playwrights like Ben Jonson, the good and evil days' effects were extended beyond strictly medical concerns to good or bad luck for the user across the board. Bretnor in his first almanac (1607) followed the early adopter Robert Watson (see below) and three other innovators who in 1602 offered monthly entries with good and bad days. It was Bretnor's adage-like phrases attached to the good and bad days that, by all accounts, elevated him above the rest of the genre and kept his almanacs popular. In September 1610 he endorses the "good" 24th as a day when "an old friend's best" and warns "come not at Court" on the "evil" 22nd.[300]

Monthly entries without good and bad days appended were fairly common throughout the early and middle periods (1595-1625), with the proportion of almanacs offering the plain-vanilla variety hovering around a half in any given year. Monthly entries with the spice of good and bad

---

[300] *Bretnor 1610* [STC2 420.3], sig. C3 recto EEBO image 19 [Lambeth Palace Library], http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:image:173329:19.

days scored about the same – until 1621, when they suddenly vanished from all almanacs. For the next five years of the middle period, only one compiler risked offering good and evil days – John Johnson, and only in 1623. The abrupt disappearance of that reasonably popular, slightly edgy feature variant raises the question: had there been sudden, fear-inducing reaction from the religious authorities who had nominal oversight of all printing?

But the spice of "good and evil" days in the monthly prognostication entries had apparently been attractive enough in the earlier period that from 1609 to 1611, and again in 1614, five compilers offered them. In each of those years, they appeared in half, or more than half, of the total almanacs surviving. By contrast, after John Johnston's 1623 venture into the no man's land of good/evil, the period from 1625 to 1640 saw only one other compiler – the idiosyncratic and combative Daniel Browne – offer a "good and bad days" version of the monthly entries, in 1630. The monthly entries without the apparently problematic "good and bad" spice continued to be popular, appearing in at least half the almanacs every year from 1625-1640 save for 1631 and 1637.

Eclipses were treated either under their own heading or as a part of the quarterly or seasonal section. It was rare that a year would pass without an eclipse, even if not visible to English viewers. A startling departure from the daily routine, they were always anomalies in their

way, despite being quite predictable by the compilers of almanacs. They were different; clear and shocking special events in the skies, they were taken seriously by many more than believed in weather from the stars. They reflected what Pettegree called "our ancestors' fascination with the extraordinary" and Matthias Shaaber observed "The age was never weary of reading signs and portents in natural happenings of all sorts."[301] Eclipses had the paradoxical quality of being wholly out of the ordinary, but predictable by the science of astronomy.[302] They were sometimes treated as part of the quarters, more often under their own distinctive heading. But even when eclipses for the covered year would be seen in other lands but not in England, they were still at least briefly noted. Only in 1604, 1608 and 1611 were they present as a headed feature in fewer than half the almanacs of those years; in all others 1595-1625 they were half or more. Toward the end of that period, two-thirds or more of the almanacs in any year included eclipses as a headed feature. This proportion persisted from 1625 to 1640 with the single exception of 1631.

Tied to the calendar in a different way were the astrological features dealing with "physick" (medicine) and "husbandry" (managing nature, from the kitchen garden to cash crops and herd animals). Physick was always presented in some form in any almanac, husbandry

---

[301] Pettegree, *Invention*, 365; Matthias Shaaber, *Some Forerunners of the Newspaper in England,* 144.
[302] Capp, *Almanacs*, 197.

almost as often, and most of the time both appeared under major headings that made the sections easily identifiable. The instructions for bloodletting, purging and several other remedial measures were keyed to planetary influences, including (as above) times when they should *not* be attempted, the source of the original good and evil days. But such information on "physick" – "perhaps the most important application of astrology" in almanacs[303] – was seeded all through the typical annual edition. In the front-of-the-book monthly calendar pages, four lines of doggerel verse on top often provided healthy-living advice on what activities to avoid or enjoy and what food and drink to eat, or eschew, that month. Similar advice would often show up in the quarterly (seasonal) prognostication section, where (as already noted above) the different diseases associated with each season would also be listed. But the potential purchaser who wanted what was purported to be up-to-date information on illness, remediation and healthy lifestyle might make a choice based on the presence of clearly headed, distinct sections on "physick."

Many almanac compilers touted themselves as physicians or students of physick, and in a day when licensing was still unfamiliar and reputation was everything,[304] it was possible to see them drumming up business for themselves and colleagues in their almanacs through the

---

[303] Capp, *Almanacs,* 204.
[304] Curth, *Popular Medicine,* 17.

double strategy of presenting a world full of frightening diseases and risk of mortality at every turn, while warning explicitly to avoid "quacksalvers" (bogus doctors or "cunning men") and instead consult a real physician whenever afflicted.

Physick, wherever it appeared in the almanac, was keyed to the Zodiacal Body that was essentially omnipresent in the very front of the almanac. It showed which zodiacal signs were associated with which body parts. Bleeding, purging, induced vomiting and other interventions were seldom detailed as process, though at least one compiler's version of the Zodiacal Body also showed veins and locations appropriate for bleeding.[305] But the propitious and dangerous times for them were provided, not generally as days in the calendar but as the convergence of stellar influences, generally first involving lunar phases.

Thomas Bretnor, identifying himself as a "practicioner of physick," cautioned the reader about bloodletting and provided a checklist of considerations: the patient's age and predominant "humour," physical condition and the season of the year should be meshed with "the place and configuration of the Moone."[306] Many of the self-identified physicians among almanac compilers mixed the imperatives of astrology with such reasonable, comprehensive considerations oriented to the patient and

---

[305] Capp, *Almanacs*, 205.

[306] *Bretnor 1609* [STC2 420.2], sig. B3, EEBO image 11 [Lambeth Palace Library], http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:image:24879:11.

her or his condition. For many others, though, a minimalist and unchanging prescription of "elections" required scheduling medical procedures by the heavens without tempering the regime with common sense.

Husbandry instructions, though also clearly linked to planetary and lunar motions, were less obscure and clearly more in tune with the regular rhythms of nature. The right time of year to plant a particular crop, or harvest it, was just as readily described in astrological terms as by the plain month and week, and compilers generally reinforced their art by doing the former. Husbandry often provided equal levels of detail as did physick, and was more likely to be included in the back-of-the-book monthly prognostications, linked to their framework of lunar phases and providing monthly instructions for the countryman.

Though the link between management of the land and property and the frames and guidance of astrology was always implicitly stressed, the occasional compiler acknowledged that the wisdom of experience was equally significant (and cultural historians would say folk experience probably precedes and underpins the astrological superstructure rather than vice versa)[307]. In a telling quatrain atop the October calendar page of his 1628 almanac[308], William Hewlett confessed: *"It were in vain for*

---

[307] E.g. Capp, *Almanacs,* 31; Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic*, 352.
[308] *Hewlett 1628* [STC2 457.4], EEBO image 8v [Bodleian Library], http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:image:24923:8.

me to tell/good husbands when their wheat to sow/experience teacheth

them right well/best times and seasons how to know."

Disease and crop failure – especially in the "Little Ice Age" of the early seventeenth century – kept mortality on the minds of elites and non-elites alike. They were common enough so that they were part of the expected routine,[309] and most quarterly features, as noted, included the expectable diseases of each season, couched as predictions. There was no professional hazard for astrologer/compilers in predicting that some would fall from disease, that crops might fail – catastrophe like that were all too routine for early modern people in England and across Europe.

Non-elites were not as able to evacuate the city as their richer fellow citizens when epidemic threatened, however. The accession of James in 1603 and Charles in 1625 were both accompanied by severe plague outbreaks – especially the 1625 episode, which apparently killed twenty percent of Londoners. In both cases, "providentialists" were quick to make a connection with the Stuart kings.[310]

The almanacs, however, dwelt on the annual rhythms of health and agriculture as well as the anomalies. It was rare for a compiler to focus only on physick and omit husbandry, or vice versa; the two

---

[309] Wrightson noted "in the late 1590s, there were four consecutive harvest failures. … famine conditions in the winters of 1596-8. … further harvest crises in 1622-3. … and in 1630-31…." Wrightson, *Earthly Necessities*, 198-200.

[310] Hirst, *Conflict*, 113.

features were, however, clearly integral to the popularity and utility of their annual editions. Throughout the period 1595-1640, most compilers included both features in clearly headed sections. In five of those years, every almanac included both; in 1611 only five of nine included both but that was the lowest proportional finding between 1595 and 1625; eight out of ten and twelve out of fourteen were common ratios throughout the period. From 1625-1640, which included the competitive influence of the Cambridge University almanacs, both physick and husbandry as clearly headed sections were always in at least two-thirds of the almanacs, with physick often even more frequent than husbandry – it was rarely absent in more than one almanac in any given year. As noted, physick and husbandry were also scattered in other parts of the almanac, including quarterly and monthly features – often in addition to appearing under their own headings.

A far more predictable but essential measure of nature was the tide table, which appeared in almanacs both calculated for London and for other areas of the nation. Relatively low-lying England's high proportion of tidal rivers meant that there was water transport deep into the interior, and thus interest in tides far from the Thames at London, where their understanding was essential to commerce. Many compilers of tide tables keyed them to the motions of the moon – that body was well understood as the cause of ocean tides – and then listed river mouths around the nation with plus or minus hours and minutes based on the

Thames high water of the day. In some instances tide tables were inserted as a column in the calendar pages in the front of the book, but that space was highly competed for and their appearance there was less frequent.

England was a maritime island with many navigable rivers. Transportation by water was cheaper than by land – in fact, the roads and routes section of an almanac might sometimes include the sequence of coastal towns in a coastal trip from one port center to another. So tide tables had remarkable staying power in the almanacs. They first appeared in the surveyed period in 1604, right after the Stationers' takeover. Until 1617 they generally appeared in about one-third of almanacs; in 1617 they jumped abruptly to appearing in half of almanacs or more in each year and maintained that presence until the mid-20s, when they dwindled slightly. Extraordinarily heavy snow in the winter of 1615 followed by equally extraordinary flooding when it melted may have sparked more intense interest in the behavior of tidal rivers.[311]

Component Features: Helpers in the Values of an Orderly System

As suggested above, analysts of almanacs have concurred that the sense of system, of order and manageability in the material world represented by almanacs reinforced that increasing opportunity for

---

[311] http://booty.org.uk/booty.weather/climate/1600_1649.htm accessed Sept. 11, 2014. The site, "Meteorology @ West Moors," collects "the most notable events in our 'weather history' across the British Isles."

agency in the everyday lives of non-elites in early modern Britain.

The attractions of regularity were strengthened, and the sense of the almanac users' personal agency strengthened as well, by a variety of different do-it-yourself devices included in the almanacs. They were tabular or chart-like devices for calculating much everyday information – tables of simple interest for loans, the assortment and comparative value of coins that made up the monetary system, methods of determining sunrise and sunset, moonlight or its absence, and the time of day by manipulating nature – in the last instance, by measuring the shadow cast by a standard-issue walking stick.

Some were mnemonics, verses or acronyms to aid memory of important facts. To moderns, the rhyme "Thirty days hath September, April, June and November" seems childish, but it and its like were scattered through almanacs to enable users to gain a sense of command over the order of nature and the sequence of the human and natural calendars.

All these devices were compact, and many probably in "standing forms" (or type) so they were handy filler for the printer to use to make the submitted text come out right at forty or forty-eight pages. Some devices got the compiler off the hook for specific predictions by providing a table, for instance, showing what kind of weather could be expected if certain planets were in conjunction or opposition. All these, it seems

clear, gave the almanac user a sense of connection and complicity with both the compiler and the system of nature while exercising personal agency. These features were often introduced explicitly as helpers for those without much schooling who were trying to get along in the world.

Astrology: How Believable, How Much Believed?

Skepticism about astrology was spotty but real, despite the prevailing consensus that astrology was universally subscribed to in that era.[312] Many of the compilers tiptoed, despite their disclaimers, into the more specific social predictions called "judicial astrology," which augured good or bad times for specific social and occupational classes. To the extent that they did, they might risk disturbing (with consistently incorrect predictions) any broader acceptance of the heavens as influencing matters on earth. Instead, the almanac compilers shied away from such predictions and often hinted that they were going to stay mum about what they knew for their own safety. If they did make social prognostications, they were often so vague that it made them easy targets for satirists. Capp noted a mock-almanac with "predictions of the obvious – 'old women that can live no longer shall die for age'."[313] Allen paraphrased the "safely trite… series of predictions" in John Securis's

---

[312] "The high and the low, the rich and the poor, the learned and the ignorant, the pious and the impious shared a common belief in the influence of the stars. There were, of course, gradations in the fixity of this faith, but the scholar of the twentieth century must not lose sight of the fact that in the sixteenth century disbelief in the essential hypotheses of the astrologer was the exception rather than the rule." Allen, *Star-Crossed Renaisance*, 106.
[313] Capp, *Almanacs*, 33.

1571 almanac, including "Women… will bear children before term, and there will be trouble with ambassadors; Mars [battle] will cause the death of many in middle age, incite servants to vex their masters…"[314]

All these wishy-washy predictions and bad weather forecasting could breed skepticism among the customer base. A counterpoint chorus of critics suggested that there were indeed many skeptics among the early modern audience, that it is one of the "injudicious assumptions of modern critics that Elizabethans of all classes, irrespective of position or training, endorsed the tenets of judicial astrology." [315]

There had to be skeptics as soon as the actual year rolled around and farmers tried to plan their haying according to the day-to-day weather predicted in the monthly entry. Many compilers hedged their bets, buttressing the astrological weather forecast with traditional folk-wisdom advice about guessing the weather from observation of natural occurrences in clouds or animal behavior. Others explicitly said they would have nothing to do with specific weather predictions because of their vulnerability, instead providing tables to allow the user to calculate the "disposition of the ayre" for any day based on the planetary relations.

---

[314] Allen, *Star-Crossed Renaissance*, 198.

[315] Warren D. Smith, "The Elizabethan Rejection of Judicial Astrology and Shakespeare's Practice," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 9, no. 2 (1958), 159

Figure 7: The 1624 almanac of G. Gilden, who left weather prediction up to the almanac users and provided this table for forecasting the weather and other phenomena for every day of the coming year. © The British Library: Digital images produced by ProQuest LLC as part of ProQuest® Historical Newspapers. www.proquest.com

The compiler G. Gilden noted the persistence of criticism: "For other astrologicall predictions, they are so vulgarly taxed…. That I hold it lost labor to write." [316] When astrologers hedged their prophecy with these pieces of country wisdom, it seems legitimately dubious that hard-headed almanac users credited every aspect of the books' astrology.

[316] *Gilden 1616* [STC2 448] "To the Reader," sig B2, EEBO image 10 and "Disposicion of the Ayre" sig B4 recto, image 13 [Lambeth Palace Library], http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:image:173350:10.

These component features – medicine, farm practice, and the unfolding of nature's calendar in the year ahead – were the heart of the compiler's self-representation as a master of astrology and prediction. The compilers would often break off in the middle of one of these sections to argue at length about disputes in the trade. Copernicus's heliocentric notion versus the still-majority notion that the sun circled the earth was a common wrangle.[317] But almanac compilers often went after one another, trying to assert the superiority of their work. Sometimes the extensive "proofs" of their methods' superiority would take page after page and bump popular features from inclusion in a forty- or forty-eight-page octavo.

The discussion of how much of the astrological matter in almanacs was sincerely credited by the bulk of almanac users, and to what extent it may instead have served as a form of entertainment, is marginally important to this analysis though it will be explored in the conclusions. Those who were not believers in astrology doubtless looked for these astrological features for a number of reasons.

Certainly the hammer-and-tongs disputes among compilers, which became even more bitter in the second half of the century,[318] had to be of interest to only a small, elite portion of the almanacs' broader public.

---

[317] Capp, *Almanacs*, 191-93.
[318] Capp, *Almanacs*, 88-94.

Many of the compilers who were most vociferous and combative were also the compilers of the slightly more expensive (to produce, if not to the customer) blank 48-page almanacs. This points to the conclusion that the elite stratum of the customer base, more likely to be writers as well as readers, were also more likely to be attracted to the rarified arguments among those compilers. Bretnor, Allestree, Browne and other blank-compilers were notable disputants and (in the case of the first two) direct disparagers of one another's skills – another attraction to the university-educated or Inns of Court graduates.

This basic core of features – a monthly calendar, astrological features predicting variations on the usual (and sometimes the unusual) and thorough accounts of the official and expectable (court terms, fairs, aspects of national geography) were the appeal of almanacs in the era before the civil wars. The argument here is that this information, in printed quantities up to 300,000-400,000 per year, incrementally created a public that held in common this knowledge, this entertainment, and finally the aspirations and practice of agency that this material could underpin. The next section examines those individual almanacs as a linear narrative from 1595 to 1640, seeking evidence of the Stationers' development of this lucrative form of print culture to maximize its customer base and profits.

Table 1.1 Timeline of appearance of component features in Almanacs 1595-1614

Analysis of the component features as they appeared in almanacs is detailed in the following tables for 1595-1614. In this and two following tables, the appearances are represented by abbreviations of the compilers' names. In the final, bottom rows, the number of almanacs surveyed in that year is followed in parenthesis by the number of almanacs that have survived for that year if Early English Books Online has not completed the publication of images for almanacs published in that year. When abbreviation has been required, the compilers whose work is represented in this first table are abbreviated as follows:

Jdade = John Dade

Jneve = Jeffrey Neve

Tjohns = Thomas Johnson

Gresh = Edward Gresham

Wwdhs = William Woodhouse H

Hopt = Arthur Hopton

Bret = Thomas Bretnor

Ruds = Thomas Rudston

Jwdhs = John Woodhouse

Jjohns = John Johnson

Burtn = Gregory Burton

FEATURE	1595	1596	1597	1598	1599	1600
QUARTERLY predictions (* has woodcut diagrams)				watson frende gray 3/3	frende	watson
MONTHLY predictions (weather)				watson gray 2/3	frende	watson
MONTHLY good/bad days						
BICALENDAR (> means included in calendar pages)				frende> gray> 2/3	frende	watson>
BLANK (two facing pages for each calendar month)				frende 1/3		watson 1/1
SORT (one page for each calendar month)				watson gray 2/3		
COURT TERMS schedule for judicial courts				watson 1/3	frende	watson
ROYAL TIMELINE list of monarchs and dates						
CREATION TIMELINE historical events since creation						
TIDE TABLES (> means included in calendar pages)						
LIST OF FAIRS trade fairs in all England				watson frende gray 3/3		
ROADS AND ROUTES how to navigate England						
WORLD CITIES distance, compass heading						
LEGAL DOCUMENTS model wills and contracts e.g.						
PHYSICK ELECTIONS self-medication through astrology				watson 1/3		
PHYSICK ELEX/ HUSBANDRY (if *, physick is omitted)				frende gray 2/3	frende	
ECLIPSES (* has woodcut diagrams)				watson gray 2/3		
ZODIACAL BODY woodcut illustration				watson frende gray 3/3	frende	watson
CALCS & MNEMONICS with appearance of filler						
GAZETTEER: CITY, COUNTY AND PARISH LISTS						
ALMANACS THIS YEAR				1598: 3 almanacs	1599: 1 alm	1600: 1 alm
notes: missing/partial						

238

1601		1602	1603	1604
	quarters	pond, mathew, jdade watson 5/5		mathew jdade jneve pond watson gray tjohns gresh 8/9
	monthly	pond 1/5		jneve watson gray tjohns 4/9
	monthly good bad	mathew> jdade watson> wwdhs> 4/5		mathew> jdade wwdhs> gresh 4/9
	bicalendar	pond 1/5		pond watson> tjohns> gresh 4/9
	blank	pond 1/5		jneve pond watson 3/9
	sort	mathew, jdade watson wwdhs 4/5		mathew jdade wwdhs gray tjohns gresh 5/9
	court terms	mathew pond watson wwdhs 4/5		mathew jneve pond watson wwdhs tjohns gresh 7/9
	royal timeline			pond gresh 2/9
	history timeline	pond 1/5		jneve pond gresh 3/9
	tide tables			pond gresh 2/9
	fairs of England	jdade 1/5		3/9 tba
	roads & routes	watson wwdhs 2/5		wwdhs 1/9
	world cities gazetteer			
	legal documents			
	physical elections			
	physick and husbandry	mathew pond watson 3/5		mathew jneve pond gray tjohns wwdhs> gresh 7/9
	eclipses	jdade pond watson wwdhs 4/5		pond gray wwdhs 3/9
	Zodiacal Body	mathew jdade pond watson wwdhs 5/5		mathew jneve pond watson gray tjohns wwdhs gresh 8/9
	calculator help	mathew 1/5		mathew 1/8
	England gazetteer			
1601: none		1602: 5 almanacs	1603: n	1604: 9 almanacs

	1605	1606	1607
	mathew jdade jneve pond gray 5/5	mathew jdade alleyn jneve hopt pond gresh* 7/8	mathew jdade alleyn jneve hopt pond gresh* bret 8/9
	jneve gray 2/5	jneve hopt wwdhs 3/8	hopt pond wwdhs 3/9
	mathew> jdade 2/5	mathew> jdade alleyn> gresh 4/8	mathew> jdade alleyn> jneve gresh bret 6/9
	jneve pond 2/5	jneve hopt pond gresh> 4/8	jdade alleyn jneve> hopt pond gresh> bret> 7/9
	jneve pond 2/5	jneve hopt pond 3/8	jneve 1/9
	mathew jdade gray 3/5	mathew jdade alleyn wwdhs gresh 5/8	mathew jdade alleyn hopt pond wwdhs gresh bret 8/9
	mathew jdade jneve pond 4/5	mathew jneve pond wwdhs gresh 5/8	mathew alleyn jneve pond wwdhs gresh 6/9
	pond 1/5	pond gresh 2/8	bret 1/9
	jneve pond 2/5	jneve hopt pond gresh 4/8	jneve hopt pond bret 4/9
	pond 1/5	hopt pond gresh> 3/8	hopt gresh> bret> 3/9
	jdade gray 2/5	wwdhs 1/8	alleyn wwdhs 2/9
			pond 1/9
			bret 1/9
		wwdhs> 1/8	wwdhs> 1/9
	mathew jdade jneve pond gray 5/5	mathew jdade alleyn jneve hopt pond gresh 7/8	mathew jdade alleyn jneve hopt pond gresh bret 8/9
	jdade jneve pond gray 4/5	jneve hopt pond wwdhs> 4/8	jdade* alleyn jneve hopt wwdhs* gresh bret 7/9
	mathew jdade jneve pond gray 5/5	mathew jdade alleyn jneve hopt pond wwdhs gresh 8/8	mathew jdade alleyn jneve hopt pond wwdhs gresh bret 9/9
	mathew 1/5	mathew 1/8	mathew 1/9
	1605: 5 almanacs	1606: 8 almanacs	1607: 9 almanacs
	watson tps only		

240

1608		1609	1610
mathew alleyn 2/3	quarters	mathew alleyn jneve ruds bret 5/6	mathew jdade alleyn jneve hopt ruds bret 7/9
	monthly		alleyn jwdhs 2/9
mathew> alleyn> hopt> 3/3	monthly good bad	mathew> alleyn> jneve ruds bret 5/6	mathew> jdade jneve ruds bret 5/9
alleyn> hopt 2/3	bicalendar	alleyn> jneve> pond ruds bret> 5/6	alleyn> jneve> hopt pond ruds> bret> 6/9
alleyn 1/3	blank	pond 1/6	pond 1/9
mathew hopt 2/3	sort	mathew alleyn jneve ruds bret 5/6	mathew jdade alleyn jneve hopt ruds jwdhs bret 8/9
mathew alleyn hopt 3/3	court terms	mathew alleyn pond ruds bret 5/6	mathew jdade alleyn hopt pond ruds jwdhs bret 8/9
hopt 1/3	royal timeline	pond 1/6	hopt jwdhs 2/9
	history timeline	jneve pond bret 3/6	jdade jneve pond jwdhs bret 5/9
	tide tables	pond ruds bret> 3/6	bret> 1/9
	fairs of England		jwdhs 1/9
	roads & routes	alleyn ruds 2/6	hopt ruds 2/9
	world cities gazetteer	bret 1/6	bret 1/9
	legal documents		
	physical elections		
mathew alleyn hopt 3/3	physick and husbandry	mathew alleyn jneve pond ruds bret 6/6	mathew jdade alleyn jneve pond jwdhs bret 7/9
hopt 1/3	eclipses	alleyn jneve bret 3/6	jneve hopt pond jwdhs bret 5/9
mathew alleyn hopt 3/3	Zodiacal Body	mathew alleyn jneve pond bret 5/6	mathew alleyn jneve hopt pond ruds jwdhs bret 8/9
mathew alleyn 2/3	calculator help	mathew 1/6	mathew 1/9
	England gazetteer		
1608: 3 alms (7)		1609: 6 almanacs	1610: 9 almanacs
msg. EEBO; pond tp only			

	1611	1612
quarters	mathew jdade jneve ruds bret jjohns* 6/9	mathew jdade alleyn jneve keene* bret jjohns 7/10
monthly	jwdhs jjohns 2/9	alleyn jwdhs jjohns 3/10
monthly good bad	mathew> jdade jneve ruds bret 5/9	mathew> jdade jneve bret 4/10
bicalendar	jneve> hopt> pond ruds bret> jjohns 6/9	jdade alleyn> jneve> hopt> pond keene> bret> jjohns 8/10
blank		pond 1/10
sort	mathew jdade jneve hopt ruds jwdhs bret jjohns 8/9	mathew jdade alleyn jneve hopt jwdhs keene bret jjohns 9/10
court terms	mathew jdade jneve hopt pond ruds jwdhs bret jjohns 9/9	mathew jdade jneve hopt pond jwdhs keene bret jjohns 9/10
royal timeline	hopt jwdhs 2/9	jwdhs keene 2/10
history timeline	jdade jneve pond jwdhs bret 5/9	jdade jneve pond jwdhs bret 5/10
tide tables	bret> 1/9	bret> 1/10
fairs of England	jwdhs bret# 2/9	jwdhs keene jjohns 3/10
roads & routes		alleyn 1/10
world cities gazetteer	bret 1/9	bret 1/10
legal documents		
physical elections		
physick and husbandry	mathew jdade jneve jwdhs bret 5/9	mathew jdade alleyn jneve pond jwdhs* keene bret 8/10
eclipses	jneve jwdhs bret 3/9	alleyn jneve hopt jwdhs bret jjohns 6/10
Zodiacal Body	mathew jneve hopt pond ruds jwdhs bret jjohns 8/9	mathew alleyn jneve hopt pond jwdhs keene bret jjohns 9/10
calculator help		
England gazetteer	jwdhs 1/9	jwdhs 1/10
	1611: 9 almanacs	1612: 10 almanacs

	1613	1614
quarters	jdade jneve ruds keene* bret jjohns white burtn 8/10	jdade jneve hopt* frende keene* jjohns white upcot burtn 9/10
monthly	ruds jwdhs jjohns white 4/10	jwdhs frende jjohns white 4/10
monthly good bad	jdade jneve bret burtn 4/10	jdade jneve white upcot burtn 5/10
bicalendar	jdade jneve> hopt> keene> bret> jjohns 6/10	jdade jneve hopt> jwdhs frende> keene> jjohns white> 8/10
blank	hopt 1/10	hopt 1/10
sort	jdade jneve ruds jwdhs keene bret jjohns white burtn 9/10	jdade jneve jwdhs frende keene jjohns white upcot burtn 9/10
court terms	jdade jneve hopt ruds jwdhs keene bret white burtn 9/10	jdade jneve hopt jwdhs frende keene jjohns white upcot burtn 10/10
royal timeline	hopt jwdhs 2/10	hopt keene 2/10
history timeline	jdade jneve hopt jwdhs bret 5/10	jdade jneve hopt frende keene 5/10
tide tables	hopt bret> 2/10	hopt keene 2/10
fairs of England	jwdhs jjohns burtn 3/10	keene upcot 2/10
roads & routes		jwdhs burtn 2/10
world cities gazetteer	bret 1/10	burtn 1/10
legal documents		
physical elections		jneve 1/10
physick and husbandry	jdade jneve ruds jwdhs* keene bret white burtn 7/10	jdade jwdhs frende keene white upcot burtn 7/10
eclipses	jneve jwdhs keene bret jjohns white 6/10	jneve hopt jwdhs frende keene jjohns* white upcot 8/10
Zodiacal Body	jneve ruds keene bret jjohns white burtn 7/10	jneve hopt jwdhs frende keene jjohns white upcot burtn 9/10
calculator help		frende 1/10
England gazetteer	white 1/10	white 1/10
	1613: 10 almanacs	1614: 10 almanacs

THE TRANSITION: 1595-1615

The importance of the almanac trade to the Stationers' Company makes it logical to infer some patterned motives and behavior on the part of different sectors of the Company, already being divided by the increasing dominance of the bookseller-publishers over the printers. As the Company took over an existing stable of brand-name almanacs in 1603, mixed motives were likely in play. Some of the almanac brands inherited from Watkins and Roberts must have been known to be more popular than others, or popular with different constituencies and even geographical parts of the realm. Others may have been struggling to get traction with the emerging information public.

What the observer finds in the changes to those almanacs, particularly in the decade spanning the award of the 1603 patent, is significant for the long-term development of the lucrative almanac trade. The mixed motives of not rocking the boat in the case of success, or of visibly experimenting to determine what features or tone might be more successful, were as visible in this decade as they would be at any point in the almanacs' history in the first half of the seventeenth century.

The almanacs and their compilers, printers and sellers were perforce pioneers in the fine-tuning of a periodical product for a changing market and public. Such a product, in order to bring repeat customers to the named "brand" of almanac, had to offer both familiarity and the

sense that the purchaser was getting something new, new this year, for his or her two pennies spent to replace the outdated edition. The transfer of authority (and profitability) from Watkins and Roberts to the Stationers' Company in 1603 brought some rapid and visible changes in some of the long-standing almanacs (some of which would not be standing for much longer, as it developed). And new named almanacs emerged almost immediately, some to last, others to flicker and disappear.

The record being examined is incomplete, as noted before. The premise is that enough almanacs published from 1603-1640 have survived to provide a reasonable representation of the original menu available to users in the bookstalls and at the fairs. The chances of history that determine survival or disappearance are illustrated, perhaps, by an inscription on the first inside page of Walter Gray's 1591 almanac (discussed below). On its path to the Folger Shakespeare Library and thence to the invaluable image database Early English Books Online, someone named Sarah Finch, resident of (or while she was in) Canterbury, put her name atop the contents page along with the date: 1797. Over two centuries ago, a vulnerable piece of "ephemera" already nearly two centuries old acquired a temporary friend and caregiver who may have helped it survive another two centuries. So, when future scholars are lucky, the chain of ownership and care goes in history's favor.

From Watkins & Roberts to the Stationers' Corporate Management

Ten named almanacs were appearing both before and after the 1603 acquisition of the royal patent for almanacs by the Stationers' Company: those by John Dade (1589-1614), Walter Gray (1588-1605), Edward Gresham(1603-07), Henry Hill (1603 and 1609, not in EEBO), Thomas Johnson (1598, 1602 and 1604), William Mathew (1602, 1604-14), Edward Pond (1601-1612), Robert Watson (1595, 1598-1602, 1604-5) and William Woodhouse (1601 [lost], 1602, [1603?] 1604, 1606-08). It may be worth noting that, among survivors, only Gresham, Hill and Pond appear to have published almanacs for 1603.[319] Watkins had died in 1599, and Roberts, the surviving partner, may or may not have been wary in 1602 of a looming royal succession as Elizabeth was clearly nearing her end. She died in late March, 1603. As it turns out, the succession was smooth. But successions had not always been and indeed, there was no guarantee this one would be either.

The next-to-last entry in Register B, the Court Book edited by Greg and Boswell, dated December 19, 1603, announced "The newe patent from the Kinge to the Company of the p[ri]'vilege of the psalters, psalms, primers, Almanack[s] and other books, dated 29 octobr' vlt[imo]' was

---

[319] Woodhouse apparently published that year; the only evidence is one signature, unbound (and possibly printer's waste?), held at the library of Lincoln College, Oxford. *Woodhouse 1603* [STC2 532.2] Online ESTC record permalink http://estc.bl.uk/S95968, not in EEBO.

openly Redd and published in the [Stationers'] hall to A Court of assistant[s] and the p[ar]ten[er]'s &c' " [320] This was the transfer of the almanac patent from the late Watkins and the still-living Roberts (who would get a nice annual payment), to the Stationers.[321] Along with the monopoly opportunity came almanacs by Gray, Watson and Dade, as well as the others mentioned above in the Watkins and Roberts stable. The compilations of those three during the transitional period illustrate the state of the compiler's and printer's art at the point where the Company was beginning its management of the almanac trade.

An almanac by Walter Gray had first appeared in 1588, and survived spottily through 1605. A 1591 copy in Early English Books Online's database was printed by the licensed team of "Richarde Watkins and James Roberts" and must have been a good seller for them – it merited an unusual sixty-two pages.[322] The pagination is a bit deceptive, though – Gray 1591 as it survives is a "sextodecimo" where the vast majority of almanacs were octavos. The very small page size resulting from one additional fold of the signature meant that even the most

---

[320] Greg and Boswell, *Court Book*, 94. The December 1603 entry is an outlier; no other entry in Register B is later than 1602, though other backdated memos follow on pages not printed by Greg and Boswell.

[321] David Kathman, "Roberts, James (*b.* in or before 1540, *d.* 1618?)," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford University Press, 2004); online edition, Oct. 2006 [accessed 19 Oct. 2014], doi:10.1093/ref:odnb/23756.

[322] *Gray 1591* [STC2 451.4] EEBO [Folger Shakespeare Library], http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:image:13632.

compact almanac features would require more pages. At this time the "blanks" had already begun to appear – almanacs with a double calendar page for each month, with columnar data day by day on the left-hand page and a blank page for the owner's jottings with the month's dates in a column down the left margin on that right-hand blank page. But Gray's calendar, though double-paged, was full of generous columnar data spreading across both pages – again, because of the reduced page size. The double monthly page, plus a full complement of the standard features at which Don Cameron Allen scoffed, made up this late-Elizabethan almanac.

Gray's 1591 almanac[323] included feast days (using the Julian/English calendar only), as well as notes on "Physick" (he was a doctor by trade) and husbandry, all keyed to astrology and the theory of "humours" (four bodily fluids whose behavior changed under different stellar influences). The standard woodcut of the Zodiacal Body appeared before the calendar pages began, as did the tabular court dates.

Halfway through the volume appeared the second title-page, for the "prognostication." In this case we see Walter Gray, "gentleman," and his work imprinted by Richard Watkins and James Roberts showing "*cum privilegio*," under the patent awarded by the queen.

---

[323] Ibid. *Gray 1591* [STC2 451.4].

It is not as though real astrology had waited until the book's "prognostication" began – much of the material in the front of the book was also linked to planetary motions and zodiacal considerations. The calendar pages, for instance, contained columns showing the intersection of planetary motions with those of the moon for each day of the month. Both "physick" and husbandry were keyed to favorable and unfavorable times and zodiac/planet relations.

Gray, after first identifying a lunar eclipse for the year, began an overview of the seasons or quarters of this year, including a list of the likely diseases and health dangers in each. Though Watkins and Roberts had been lauded by the Privy Council for taming the political content of the earlier almanacs, Gray slipped in a few such predictions. In Autumn, the "brawles of foreign regions" will bring "the ruin of some romish commaunders"[324] and subsequent peace and quiet for a time, he said. English eyes were on the Low Countries, where English Protestant volunteers were fighting to keep the United Provinces from being overwhelmed by the Catholic forces of Spain and Austria.

Gray proceeded from there to a monthly accounting that was quite specific about which days (still in Roman numerals) would get which weather. The months, one to a page, were followed by one of the more typical service-journalism features, a list of all the fairs in England and

---

[324] Ibid. *Gray 1591,* sig. Ciiii verso.

Wales for 1591, "orderly set foorth" by the month in which they took place.[325]

By the time Gray compiled a 1598 issue[326], a forty-page octavo, like some other compilers he took into account the difference between calendars in England and on the Continent – the "double account shewing the forraine from us" prominently advertised on the cover. The opening page, with feast days presented, alternates English dates with "forraine accompt." The ornate seasonal quatrain atop the calendar pages is replaced by the more utilitarian table of sunrises and sunsets. The running dates are now in Arabic numerals, and the dates as they would be observed across the Channel have their own column for comparison, also in Arabic.

It would be tempting to say that Gray's use of Arabic numerals where he previously had used to use Roman numerals reflects a general usage change toward modernism in print culture. But it becomes apparent that this usage could be as easily credited to the whims of the compositor in the print shop (and the supply of type) as to the will of the compiler at his desk. Individual almanacs, and the almanacs of 1595-1615, 1616-25 and 1626-40 all switch back and forth between Roman and Arabic numerals for various uses, as indeed was the case in the

---

[325] Ibid., sig. Dii
[326] *Gray 1598* [STC 451.11], British Library. Not available on EEBO; imagery in author's possession.

society generally, even in the case of government accounting.

The conventional features were retained in 1598: physick and husbandry (though condensed to one very brief page, despite Gray's profession), Zodiacal Body, the eclipses (three in 1598, poetically described), the seasonal and monthly accounts and the fairs listing. The monthly accounts of weather were more tightly composed instead of being laid out one to a page. Still, one feature from the 1591 almanac was missing: the one-page guide to the schedule for courts of justice. And despite the switch to Arabic dates in the front of the book, both the dates in the monthly weather prediction and those in the list of fairs for the year were in Roman numerals.

There is a gap in Walter Gray's surviving almanacs from 1598 to 1604. The 1604 almanac, however, was right on the cusp of the transition to the Stationers' Company's control – and showed it, unlike some other almanacs of that year. Gray's 1604 almanac was printed by E[dward]. Allde, the veteran printer, "for the Company of Stationers,"[327] while some 1604 almanacs were still printed for the "assigns of James Roberts." Fancy footwork at the last minute in the print shop, or insider knowledge, may be assumed for the Gray 1604 almanac. It was a very different product from the 1598 edition, the last surviving one with which

---

[327] *Gray 1604* [STC2 451.14], EEBO image 1 [Bodleian Library], http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:image:12650 .

it can be compared.

The format was expanded from forty to forty-eight pages. The "double account" isn't touted on the cover and is not present in the list of feast days but the English and Continental calendars do appear as separate columns (with Arabic numerals) on the calendar pages – perhaps so common now in Gray's almanacs that it no longer needed to be touted on the cover. Physick and husbandry entries remained abbreviated. The calendars remained one-pagers, and Roman numerals returned for the English dates in the most left-hand column. So much for any trend-seeking, at least at this level.

The Zodiacal Body woodcut remained a fixture; it appeared in 1604, though, as a variation in which the abdomen was opened up to display the actual organs affected by the houses of the zodiac, with lines connecting them to the surrounding text and symbols. It was a variation that would appear in other, later almanacs from time to time, and though it looked like a blow on the side of advancing science by showing the human anatomy more completely, it also may well have been a matter of access and convenience for the printer – that is, which woodcuts were available, whether custom made or borrowed.

A rare (for Gray) first-person message "to the courteous reader" following the prognostication second title page suggested that there was a 1603 edition (the *Short Title Catalog* listed it as "stolen" from the

Cambridge University libraries, where it was once held).[328] The seasonal pieces were as before, but the monthly weather predictions returned to a one-per-page layout, very nicely illustrated with seasonal woodcuts atop the slightly larger text size. Allde's work on this almanac at least used white space and woodcut dingbats generously, probably the reason for its expansion to forty-eight pages, because it is a sort, not a blank. The fairs listing, apparently a consistent feature for Gray, was in smaller type and squeezed in at the end of the book by comparison.

The 1605 almanac is Gray's last surviving one. He was said by Capp to have died in 1613.[329] It remained forty-eight pages and a sort and did not show any marks of experimentation, but continued the regular features that had made Gray's almanac a comparatively stable product through the years surrounding the takeover by the Stationers. Changes that occurred in the 1605 edition were not advances so much as reversions to practices in previous almanacs. The calendar pages, for instance, in 1605 displayed Arabic numerals in the first column rather than Roman numerals. But the column that previously showed the European (Gregorian) dates was missing entirely. The monthly weather predictions in the back of the book were not set off by woodcuts, but laid out more tightly to gain space, one presumes, for an enlarged fairs listing that appended "moveable fairs" listings after the regular month-by-

---

[328] *Gray 1603* [STC2 451.8].
[329] Capp, *Almanacs*, 310.

month listings.

Walter Gray's series of almanacs, edging out of the Elizabethan and into the Jacobean political environment, showed remarkable stability and fealty to the late-Elizabethan model of the almanac. There is no doubt that the practices of compilers and the conservative instincts of Watkins and Roberts combined to not rock the boat. And Gray's work offered a concrete example of the late-Elizabethan almanac's most popular features.

Robert Watson, also a physician, began publishing an almanac as early as 1595, and copies from 1598-1605 have survived as well.[330] Only the 1605 edition – for which only the title page, alas, has survived – was printed under Company privilege. Watson, Cambridge-trained and licensed to practice medicine,[331] was more likely than Gray to tout the virtues of getting "physick" from a professional. The quatrains of verse above each calendar page in the 1598 almanac were about physick and defense against the maladies of the season, rather than purely seasonal. And a separate column was set aside on the calendar pages to mark "bad days to be sick" with an asterisk, a variation on the earlier Elizabethan almanacs' use of letter codes in the calendar columns for a variety of astrological indicators.

---

[330] 525 to 525.10, STC2 29; Capp, *Almanacs*, 382.
[331] Capp, *Almanacs*, 336.

In the prognostication, the eclipses for the year (three) were assessed in terms of their effects on individual health rather than the body politic, and (as with Gray) the four seasonal/quarterly entries also report expected diseases. Each of the latter concludes with a couplet expressing what will be a common escape hatch for those who must project weather and other events by the stars more than a year ahead of time: the stars incline, but the deity rules all.

"Thus every planet in his kind
 is to perform the almighty's mind"
or
"Though starres encline to worke us ill
 still shalbe as the maker will"[332]

Watson's almanac for 1600 expanded to forty-eight pages, becoming a blank – two calendar pages for each month, with space for user annotation on the right-hand page. Called a "doble [sic] almanac," it acknowledges on the first page the two calendars, English and "Roman," as well as advertising that it was one of the increasingly popular blanks.

Watson's "doble almanac" of 1600 also moved to Arabic numbers in the calendar whereas the 1598 edition used Roman numerals. Nearly every section of this edition offered one imperative: watch out for quacks. The four seasonal entries in the prognostication are even more focused

---

[332] *Watson 1598* [STC2 525.2]. sig. B4 verso EEBO image 13 [British Library], http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:image:24696:13.

on health and professionalism, if possible, than in 1598. In this version, Watson made his personal case and demonstrating an increasing tendency among compilers in the early seventeenth century: vocational self-promotion.

Even with the additional eight pages, this 1600 blank edition omitted the listing of fairs to make room for his self-promotion efforts. But Watson was still working inside the same popular template as had Gray. A page outlining the year's court dates was included, the "quarters" or seasons segment the year in four ways and the monthly entries contained a new wrinkle that has a future. Using a tabular format with brackets, Watson prefaced each monthly entry with a showing of the "good," "indifferent" and "badde" days of each month. It was certainly more space-consuming than the tidy use of letter codes in a column of the ruled calendar pages. But some compilers who entered the market in the next fifteen years will take that idea and run with it.

During the short span in which he published almanacs, Watson did not succumb to consistency. In1602, he backtracked on the blank format and returned to one calendar page per month. The dates in the calendar were Roman numerals; another reversion. The space saved by cutting back to single-page calendars went for two new departures for Watson: a detailed account of some of the arts of medicine and a nine-page list at the book's end of the nation's major roads, what towns they

passed through (usually en route to London) and the distances between. But the space-consuming monthly recounting of good, bad and indifferent days did not survive from the 1600 almanac.

Inclusion of the descriptive roads and routes listings certainly appealed to those who wanted to travel for commercial purposes, whether buying or selling at fairs and trading districts. But Watson's choice of features – assuming that Dr. Watson and not the Watkins and Roberts team was calling the shots – shows an inconsistency that made it difficult for users to develop brand loyalty. The almanac user who sought out Watson's edition every year might be disappointed to find last year's listing of fairs, or the spacious blank of the year before that, now among the missing.

Indeed, in Watson's 1604 edition the expectations were scrambled again. It went back to a blank. Whereas the 1602 calendar pages included a narrow column where triangles appeared to indicate bad days to be sick, that column was now devoted to the European calendar dates. As vigorously as Watson pushed his profession in 1602, all that energy was damped in 1604. And there was no "physical observation" in this almanac at all; the space was dedicated instead to a defense of astrology and to several lengthy poems.

Watson 1604's quarterly/seasonal accounts of the coming year were prefaced by a sober and godly discussion of astrology and the

heavens as the instruments of the deity, with the implication that if the prognostication does not prove out, the deity must have overridden the stars. This was followed by two pages of verse describing class conflict in the realm that resulted from failure of mutual obligation between social classes – "rich spend oft-times more in waste/then would suffice the poor mans need." The poem suggests that only mutual love would ease the rancor between suffering poor and uncaring rich and bring the deity's favor.[333]

The quarterly/seasonal entries were brief, and covered weather and the diseases of each season only. Likewise the monthly entries were pristine – weather only – and tightly laid out with no embellishments or design. Neither a list of fairs or of roads, routes and distances anchored the final pages of the book. Instead the final two pages provided another poem, a heartfelt farewell to Elizabeth I and welcome to James I that showed the compiler was able to adapt to the rapid change of regimes (in spring of 1603). The change of regimes in printing, however, apparently happened too late to affect this almanac; Watson 1604 was still announced as printed "for the assigns of James Roberts," not "for the Company of Stationers." (Those "assigns of James Roberts" were in fact the Stationers' Company.) Roberts lived until probably 1618 and received

---

[333] *Watson 1604* [STC2 525.9], sig. C3 r & v, EEBO image 19 [Lambeth Palace Library], http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:image:27403:19.

fifty pounds per year from the Company as an annuity for his now-transferred privilege of printing almanacs.[334]

A comparison of Walter Gray's almanacs with the even shorter span of Robert Watson's compilations provided an early look at a significant, recurring pattern through at least the first few decades of Stationers' Company management. Gray's series of almanacs appeared to be managed conservatively and to rely on several solid crowd-pleasers, like the list of fairs, almost without exception: a consistent product a customer could count on. Watson, for whatever reason, appeared to cast about inconsistently for a winning combination. As observed earlier, an almanac customer who paid attention at all to the composition of what he or she was buying from year to year would look for a name-brand almanac that was consistent in the features offered though sensitive to what new features might be gaining in popularity. But continuity and comfort often, one surmises, led the purchaser to look first for last year's brand name, assuming it had not disappointed.

Watson and Gray both apparently ceased compiling almanacs after their 1605 appearances, though Gray lived until 1613 and Watson until at least 1611.[335] Their joint exit from the trade despite the differences between their approaches as presented by their almanacs is a sober

---

334 Kathman. "Roberts, James." *ODNB* online, doi:10.1093/ref:odnb/23756.
335 Capp, *Almanacs*, 310, 336.

reminder that there were plenty of reasons for plans to be disrupted in early modern England. One or both may have fallen out of favor with the new overseers of almanac production, or illness may have intervened, as it it often did.

How much can researchers really know about the motives underlying the choice of features visible in the almanacs? The relationship between printers and almanac compilers appeared to have been frequently testy, with the compiler getting in the last word the following year about the quality of printing, omissions and extras through complaints or – quite rarely – praise. How much control the compiler had over the features offered in the almanac is almost unknowable at this distance. The printer and his compositors had the final call over how the availability of resources – say, Roman numerals versus Arabic numerals in the given font, or a woodcut diagram of an eclipse – would condition the appearance of the individual features. Some of the features in these surviving almanacs may have been chosen because the printer had standing type that could be used in a crunch to solve a layout problem.

But the differences in continuity and change of features in Gray's and Watson's almanacs give us some guidelines for assessing other almanacs in the canon of surviving copies. Both continuity and change had their roles in adapting individual almanac brands, as well as the

whole almanac trade, to the needs and perceived appetites of the emerging public for information. As the Stationers' Company fashioned itself into an institutional overlord of the almanac trade, the ebbs and flows of sales would almost certainly have been apparent to them and charged its decisions about what brands would survive and what brands would fade.

John Dade's nearly three-decade series of almanacs represents an opportunity to view the effects of the Stationers' Company's management for a good decade after the 1603 transition. Dade's earliest efforts, based on survivals, paralleled those of Walter Gray, from the beginning of the sixteenth century's final decade, and his last almanac appeared in 1614, a decade beyond establilshment of the Company monopoly. Gray and Watson, we recall, apparently published their last efforts in 1605.

John Dade's first name is used consistently here because in 1615, the year after Dade's final almanac appeared in 1614, an almanac of quite similar conformation appeared under the name William Dade. That new "Dade" almanac continued well into the Restoration era (post-1660) "though [William] Dade was reported dead in 1655" by a fellow compiler, Capp says. Little is known of either Dade beyond what they say of themselves on the almanac covers, by Capp's account.[336] What can be taken from this record is the popular acceptance of the brand name

---

[336] Capp, *Almanacs*, 303.

"Dade," which allowed for an apparent smooth handoff.

Like all too many of the almanacs of the last decade of the sixteenth century, John Dade's compilations exist from that era more as forensic evidence than as a full record. Only title pages and fragments exist for his 1591, 1592 and 1600 almanacs. The first full copy available in Early English Books Online is for 1602. But the *Triple Almanacke* by one J.D. in 1591 is solidly attributed to John Dade[337] and provides a baseline for his late-Elizabethan work.

The Gregorian (Roman) is here not only acknowledged alongside a Julian (English) calendar, but contested. Dade argues on the book's title page that the winter solstice is the correct date for Christmas, and his "true and exact" calendar tacks that differential onto the Gregorian calendar to provide a third version – hence "a triple almanac" It appears to be a lively argument among the astronomically literate. It is likely, however, that most of Dade's user/customers used the unaltered Gregorian when they planned mercantile encounters across the Channel, and the Julian at home.

The Gregorian/Julian calendrical dispute continued to play out during the period 1595-1645 and well beyond. "For a while, though, English rejection of papist novelty and fear of disruption had provided,

---

[337] *J. D. A Triple Almanack…* [STC2 433.5], EEBO title page [Cambridge University Library], http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:image:24900.

along with inconvenience and occasional embarrassment, a chance for cleverness and a sharpened insight into cultural difference," Anne Lake Prescott observed.[338] Certainly almanac makers took advantage of the disparity between England and the Continent and provided another critical metric for the emerging small-merchant class.

The 1591 almanac sported a generous double-page layout for each month, as had Gray's 1591 book – perhaps both had sold well the previous year. But John Dade's, a standard forty-page book, displayed no name or printer on the outside cover, making it look rather more like a one-off pamphlet or book. Regular almanac users might also have been confused by the absence in "J.D." 1591 of the Zodiacal Body, which usually appeared before the calendar pages began. A prose listing of the body parts and their counterparts in the zodiac in that position possibly was intended as a substitute. In both a letter to a friend and a message to the "friendly reader," the compiler detailed his reasons for doubting both the English and Continental calendars.

The pages that followed this message were as standard for the day as one could imagine – a brief "elections" section with timing for bloodletting, bathing and husbandry; a discussion of a lunar eclipse to come in 1591, and of the quarters of that year. Dade was less

---

[338] Anne Lake Prescott, "Refusing Translation: The Gregorian Calendar and Early Modern English Writers," *Yearbook of English Studies* 36, no. 1 (2006), 11.

conservative with predictions than many compilers, hinting at some of the effects of the eclipse and the planetary conjunctions of the seasons of the covered year.[339]

The seasonal or quarter sections made few predictions, other than vague references to plenty or want that would safely suit most years of the "adverse climate of the 'little ice age' that set in around 1550."[340] The quarterly section was followed by what could be filler from the printer – bland instructions on how to calculate the sunrise and sunset (information already provided in detail in the up-front monthly calendar section) and tables for discerning which planet ruled at any hour of the day or night. Compared to the wide range of service sections provided that same year by Gray, the "J.D." almanac for 1591 was very focused on astrological calculation and the shape of the year to come. The court terms schedule, for instance, was absent, as were the fair listings.

Of the several surviving copies of "J.D." 1591, the one held by Cambridge University Library was heavily annotated by a user, and not just for the year 1591. Instead, it offered another look at how some almanacs – published to be useful only one year, then potentially discarded – have survived to today. Many of the annotations referenced civil wars and interregnum years including 1647, 1649, 1651 and 1652,

---

[339] J.D. *A Triple Almanack* [STC2 433.5], sig Aiiii, EEBO image 18 [Cambridge University Library], http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:image:24900:18.
[340] Hirst, *England in Conflict*, 52.

and the blank page facing the prognostication front showed what looks like a manuscript account of the important battle of Marston Moor (1644). Paper was frequently scarce and an old almanac offered space to write – especially if, as seemed to be the case with the Cambridge copy, it was bound together with other printed material. [341]

John Dade's 1602 almanac was a robust forty-eight-page issue that returned to genre conventions, incorporating several features that were missing from the 1591 triple almanac. On the cover he identified himself as a gentleman and practicioner of physick; inside some basic tasks and timetables for physick were followed by the Zodiacal Body in its conventional location just before the first of the monthly calendar pages.

Each month occupied one page, with helpers for sunrise and sunset on top and columns with dates in Roman numerals, feast days, ruling zodiacal sign and quarters of the moon. The prognostication front was followed by the quarterly or seasonal account, with disease warnings and urgings to consult professionals when ill.

For the first time in surviving editions[342] of John Dade month-by-

---

[341]EEBO image 1 shows the *J.D.* almanac held by Cambridge to be bound in sequence following a print volume dealing with the wars in the Low Countries and image 21 shows that the almanac is followed by a bound-in page from a printed book in the Dutch language. STC2 433.5.

[342] This does not include the 1598 copy, until recently owned by Mrs. W.A. Potter (STC2 434.9) in a private collection but now presumably among those sold at auction to the British Library. Bernard Capp. "The Potter Almanacs," *Electronic British Library Journal* (2004) article 4, 1. "John Dade" 1598 has not been made available to EEBO.

month prognostications appeared. These were largely weather predictions, but they were accompanied in bracketed table form by "good days" and "evil days" for the use of "physick" as consequences of various conjunctions and conflicts between planets and houses of the zodiac. The good-bad variation seen in Watson's 1600 almanac appeared to be getting some traction with customers.

Two months in which eclipses were expected, May and November, sported woodcut insets showing the configuration of the planets and houses at the time of the eclipse. The 1602 edition ended with a seven-page layout of the fairs held in England and Wales for the year, "the like not hetherto gathered by any."[343] The "movable" fairs were listed separately.

John Dade's 1604 edition acknowledged James I as the new monarch in several places, but still appeared as printed for the assigns of Roberts, rather than for the Stationers. The 1604 issue was very similar to the 1602 version in layout and features offered. The list of fairs this time integrated moveable fairs into the same monthly block as the regular fairs, so there is just one January-December sequence.

The 1605 edition offered several changes. The monthly account, which in 1604 included "good and evil days" for physick with each

---

[343] *John Dade 1602* [STC2 434.14], EEBO image 21 [Lambeth Palace Library], http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:image:24901:21.

month, this time separated them. The weather prediction for the days of each month of the year was followed by another January-December sequence that listed only the good and bad days, still in the fashionably Ramist format using brackets. And the 1605 edition introduced a page of court terms. This was the first appearance in a surviving John Dade almanac of a feature that many other almanacs of this era had regularly provided both before and after the 1603 transition to Stationers management.

John Dade's 1606 almanac tucked the "good and bad days" back into the monthly weather predictions and laid them out one to a page, generously, with decorative printers' devices helping to pleasingly portion out the white space. This generosity, however, squeezed out both the court terms and the fairs from this issue. Court terms, a relatively easy single page to slip into the layout, returned in future John Dade almanacs through 1614 but the listing of fairs would not.

This Dade franchise, with John Dade's name on it through 1614, seemed to have established its main selling point by this time: the detailed blocks of monthly prediction, with planetary configurations for each month discussed quickly, followed by day-by-day weather forecasts and the separate lists of "good and bad days." After John Dade ended his series in 1614, by death or retirement, the "William Dade" almanacs continued to feature "good days/bad days" monthly entries until 1621.

If Walter Gray had shown the value of consistency, and Watson the promise and perils of innovation without consistency, John Dade had marked out a path with his long-running almanac that provided consistency but manifest change when necessary to please the user public.

Another popular almanac had come on the scene in 1601, compiled by Edward Pond, self-styled "practicioner in the mathematicks." In the first full copy that survived, from 1602, Pond provided a blank with facing pages for each month, plus a medley of service features: reigns of the monarchs, tide tables, both country court terms and (on a separate page) schedules for the major courts, civil and ecclesiastical, in London and vicinity. Astrological advice for physick and husbandry was brief, but the quarterly predictions were followed by detailed monthly entries that filled out the volume. In 1603 Pond published an almanac, but only fragments are available; in 1604 he bravely put forth an "Enchiridion," Greek for "manual," literally. His almanac became a popular brand, showing both consistency and a compiler personality combative and combustible enough to eventually (in 1612) abandon the Stationers' Company and almanac compiling in a very public huff over poor compensation. He returned to almanacs decades later in a way that could not have pleased the Stationers.

The period 1595-1605 saw almanac brands – at least, the

persistent survivors that are standing as evidence here – appear in numbers as high as six in 1598 during Watkins and Roberts's management to as low as two in 1600 and three in 1603, the year of the patent award to the Stationers' Company. Though the 1603 almanacs would have had to be prepared in 1602, one could guess that Queen Elizabeth's clearly failing health and some uncertainty about the succession might have brought caution on the part of the almanac-makers that year. In 1603 regular brands like Woodhouse, Mathew, Johnson, Watson and Gray were among the missing, though each was represented by an almanac in 1604. It's possible to speculate that far fewer copies of the almanac titles that did publish, out of an abundance of caution, may have been printed for 1603, reducing their chances of survival. By the time publishing decisions were made for 1604 a smooth succession had been accomplished after Elizabeth's death in March. Watson, in 1604, versified the relief after the smooth handover from Tudors to Stuarts:

"A storm was feard; a pleasant calm was found…."[344]

Early Confidence and Expansion of the Brands

Once the transition was accomplished, the trend was up. The Stationers would allow more almanac brands in the marketplace than

---

[344] *Watson 1604,* [STC2 525.9], EEBO image 24 [Lambeth Palace Library], http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:image:27403:24.

had Watkins and Roberts. Almanac brands titled Gresham (began 1603), Pond (1601), Mathew (1604), Hopton (1605), Neve (1606), Rudston (1606) and Alleyn (1606) entered the market to join William Woodhouse and John Dade in the next three years, while Gray, Thomas Johnson and Watson apparently left the field soon after the change in management.[345]

Edward Gresham, who published only a few almanacs but continued the edgy trend of "good and bad days" with embellishments that would have imitators, began and ended with a forty-page sort. It was remarkably tidy and precise, explaining the way to use various features of the almanac with unusual clarity. Both a mathematician/astronomer and a physician, Gresham was considered (at least by Capp) the ranking compiler of his short (1603-07) tenure.[346] He provided, however, almost no advice on physick or husbandry, despite his medical vocation. His almanacs contained the most popular features, including the history timeline, court terms, quarterlies, and monthly entries with good and evil days. Gresham's good and evil listings included brief aphorisms to illustrate the peril or promise of the day. The good days adages were pervaded by a certain X-rated quality for the times, such as "Lust if not love" and "shee will not deny you"; the bad days are tagged with the likes of "crafty and cruel" and "a running sore." This enhancement of the

---

[345] Almanacs with a succession of "family" names like John/William Dade or William/John Woodhouse will continue to be identified by both first and last name in all references.

[346] Capp, "Bretnor, Thomas (1570/71–1618)," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* online (Oxford University Press, 2004) accessed 2 Aug 2014, doi:10.1093/ref:odnb/3339.

good/evil monthly component feature will recur in Thomas Bretnor's (1607-1620) almanacs, some of the best known of the early Stuart period.

Gresham, born in 1565, entered the marketplace in his maturity; he died in 1612 or 1613. His final surviving almanac in 1607 had a "To the Reader" section with a valedictory flavor. Lamenting the many criticisms he had apparently collected in a few short years as a compiler, he rebutted charges of a more sinister practice ("some worse art") masked by astrology (probably witchcraft, a charge often directed at casters of horoscopes). Gresham suggested that to "undertake so homely a piece of service, as the publication of a yeerly Almanac and Prognostication" was "not woorthy the better labors of schollers of any sufficiency." After several pages of earnest demonstration of his scholarship and wit, Gresham suggested he will move on to "publication of some thing of greater profit" and "in the mean time I cease interpelling thy patience any longer"[347] and left the field for good, by his own choice or not cannot be determined. His exit was not as bombastic as Pond's, but he was not to be the last compiler to wonder out loud if his printers and publishers – and customers – fully appreciated him.

One almanac did publish (although only a prognostication title

---

[347] *Gresham 1607* [STC2 452.7] sig. B2, B3, EEBO images 10, 11 [British Library], http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:image:204055:10.

page survives) in the cautious year of 1603: that was Pond (above). Almanacs with his name brand would stay popular throughout the pre-civil wars period (despite his recorded death in 1629). He published in 1601 but the 1602 edition is the first that survived as more than a title page.[348] Though Pond indeed tutored mathematics and sold "clocks, watches and mathematical instruments" from a shop in London,[349] he touted his 1602 almanac (on the inside "prognostication" front) as composed "in a most plaine and vulgar manner, for the better and more easie understanding of the unlearned, or those of a meane capacity."[350] Nevertheless he flaunted his upscale connections with a dedication (rarer in almanacs than in pamphlets) to "John Peeter, Knight." The dedication argued the legitimacy and compatibility of the art of astrology with religion. Excuse the occasional misstep, he asked: "what art so perfect, that errors hath not crept into[?]"[351]

Pond's almanacs at their beginnings featured some of the more popular add-ons: a timeline of monarchical reigns, court schedules both for the country courts and the major civil and ecclesiastical courts at or near London, tide tables, and quarterly weather and disease predictions. His first surviving almanac (1602) included monthly weather and

---

[348] STC2 501 and 501.2.
[349] Capp, *Almanacs*, 325.
[350] *Pond 1602* [STC2 501.2] EEBO image 17 [Lambeth Palace Library], http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:image:27363:17.
[351] Ibid. image 18.

planetary aspects as well as quarterlies, but by 1604[352] that space-consuming feature was omitted in favor of more prose instruction in the astrological art, complete with critiques of competitors, as well as verse on the natural world. His letter to the reader led the inside pages and invited readers to his "storehouse" of knowledge. Pond characterized himself as one who is trying to return the art of astrology to its former glory before it was despoiled "by the errours and ignorance of many professours." With mathematical hauteur, he upbraided astronomers who were less careful than he to correct European (of "Frankfurt and Antwerp") tables of planetary and stellar motions to make them accurate for England.

Pond's 1604 almanac continued as a blank and included a full-page timeline of history since the Creation (1602's was minimal) and (as in 1602) a Zodiacal Body. After the calendar pages, there was no second title page for the prognostication but instead a two-page pedagogical piece on how to use the almanac's features. Sincerely or not, the educated mathematician Pond professed to make it easy for the unlearned and even provides instruction on how to learn to count -- "of numeration, for such as do not have that knowledge."[353] As mentioned, only the quarterly predictions remained in this 1604 edition, followed by

---

[352] Pond's 1603 almanac is not available in EEBO; Capp lists it as held by the Cambridge University Library but STC2 says only fragments of the prognostication section survive.
[353] *Pond 1604* [STC2 501.4], sig. C3, EEBO image 19 [British Library], http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:image:24636:19.

a "general prognostication" that predicted good outcomes for those who believed and behaved in a godly manner.

The Pond 1604 almanac set the tone for Edward Pond's first rapid flight (1601-1612) through the almanac business. Apparently learned and happy to show it off, Pond devoted many pages of his subsequent almanacs to extensive discourse (and some verse) on astrology, the natural world and the relation of both to godliness. Nevertheless, he represented himself (not quite accurately) as writing so plainly even the part-literate can grasp his meaning. This space-consuming indulgence in more and more astrological lore kept the service features of his 1605 and 1606 almanacs to a minimum. The Zodiacal Body, court terms, brief "elections" for medicine and husbandry and a tide table were constants along with quarterly (four-season) weather and disease predictions, the shorter and more compact features being more easily fitted into the book between and around Pond's extended and self-indulgent prose.

Pond's 1607 almanac gained twelve pages of space overall by switching from a forty-eight page blank to a forty-page sort, losing eight pages but gaining twelve with the elimination of the monthly blank pages. This change allowed the return of monthly weather predictions in back of the book, though they were spare and brief, and ten pages of a genuine popular service feature, the roads and routes of England.

It is hard to gauge how popular this change was because Pond's

next almanac, in 1608, survived only as a title page.[354] But in 1609, Pond's almanac returned to a blank as in 1606. The monthly entries and the account of routes and distances both disappeared, and the season-by-season weather account was replaced by a one-page table of symbols for predicting weather as planets conjoin or misalign. A briefer, do-it-yourself and recognizably tabular calculating device for predicting weather via astrology thereby replaced a longer prose feature in which the compiler did the work for the reader – a frequent variant as almanac compilers struggled to fit all the popular features into limited pages.

Pond's 1610 and 1611 almanacs continued the pattern of prosy explanation and argument about poor calculations among both ancient and modern astrologers that lead to error. More and more pages of Pond's work were set in solid type, with long blackletter paragraphs working the murkier areas of astrological lore. And in 1612, Pond explicitly tells his readers at the front of the book that he is taking leave of the almanac business because the pay is so low – "who they are that purse the pence I publish not… [but] every scholler [should] have a just reward for his own pains …"[355] Pond leaves the field to (he is careful to include) be a tutor in mathematics and astronomy at his shop in London, the address of which is thoughtfully furnished.

---

[354] *Pond 1608* [STC2 501.8].

[355] *Pond 1612* [STC2 501.12], sig A2 verso and recto; EEBO image 2 [Bodleian Library], http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:image:183980:2.

It is difficult to say how Pond's indulgence in dense prose about astrology and its compatibility with religion when properly conducted affected the brand's sales. He had difficult competition in the later part of this, his first run.[356] Among his competitors, starting in 1607, was the popular Bretnor almanac. Hopton's almanac from 1606 to 1614 competed with Pond in being equally entangled in astrological disputation, sometimes undisguisedly arguing directly with Pond. Hopton, who was also a published author on the burgeoning practice of surveying, left the trade in 1614, in his case because of his early death.[357] John Dade, meanwhile, published almanacs through 1614 with the steady attention to popular features that seemed to be at least one path to good sales over the long haul.

Pond and Hopton were the only almanac compilers who appeared to have been exempt from a rather abrupt reduction in size for the Stationers' Company almanacs from forty-eight to forty pages, around 1610. Some compilers, like Gresham, had been enjoying forty-eight page sort issues, with plenty of room for all the features in the popular inventory. Paper, a pricey commodity in England where it mostly had to

---

[356]   After the disruptive award of limited almanac privilege to Cambridge University's printers in 1623, "Pond" resumed publishing for that press in 1625, just a few years before the actual compiler's death in 1629. The brand continued for many decades after that under his name.

[357] Bernard Capp, "Hopton, Arthur (*c.*1580–1614)," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford University Press, 2004) accessed 5 Sept 2014, doi:10.1093/ref:odnb/13769.

be imported for printing purposes, was stockpiled at Stationers' Hall and doled out judiciously for specific projects.[358] From 1610 on, a forty-eight page issue was a blank. It is tempting to speculate that a slight crisis of overproduction due to overconfidence brought on the rationing; the first solid evidence since the 1603 takeover of the elasticity of the almanacs' popularity must have been coming in at this point.[359] Perhaps not coincidentally, in 1611 the ruling Court of the Stationers' Company raised the price of bulk quantities of almanacs to provide for better workmanship from better paid printers ("that they may be reasonably paid for their woorke and that the woorke be better done") and to provide better-quality paper for those almanacs.[360] The hope that retailers might hold fast on the two-penny price of individual copies despite the wholesale increase was implicit here and may reflect some confidence in the almanac market's stability. The contemporaneous cutback in number of pages for many almanacs was consistent with the Company's deep conservatism, running in parallel with that confidence

The short but stellar career of another almanac compiler, Thomas Bretnor, represented some of the genre's greatest penetration into the wider literary culture. Bretnor, a surveyor, mathematician and physician, began his almanacs in 1607, and after an apparent one-year hiatus,

---

[358] Curth, *Medicine,* 39; Jackson, *Court Book*, x.
[359] Capp observed "The market for almanacs was not infinitely expandable." *Almanacs,* 42.
[360] Jackson, *Court*, 51.

compiled almanacs from 1609 to 1620 under a brand name that was name-checked by playwrights of the day – mostly making fun of the credulous almanac users.[361] This recognition, Capp said, indicated Bretnor "had succeeded Edward Gresham as the leading compiler of the period."[362]

Bretnor's reputation was made by amplifying Gresham's variation on the "good and bad days" format that appeared in monthly entries in the back, prognostication section of his and other almanacs. These aphoristic, meme-like comments appended to each good or bad day were amusedly cited by dramatists like Ben Jonson and Thomas Middleton as words to live by, and by which to make decisions, for the rural characters who were the comic relief in so many of their comedies set in the sophisticated city.[363]

Bretnor began with a tidy forty-page sort but traded up to a blank in 1615, keeping at least one of the forty-eight-page writeable books on the market for the Stationers after Hopton's death ended his series of blanks. Since Bretnor was another wrangler, who gleefully argued with his fellow compilers, a pattern began to emerge associating the blanks with compilers who devoted considerable space to debate on astrology, rather than simply setting out this year's rules for health and happiness.

[361] Capp, *Almanacs,* 23.
[362] Capp, "Bretnor, Thomas" *ODNB* online, doi:10.1093/ref:odnb/3339.
[363] Capp, *Almanacs,* 63.

From 1610 until 1632 the Stationers' blanks were compiled by Neve, Pond, Hopton, Bretnor, Allestree and Browne. All these compilers had strong feelings either about astrology or (in Allestree's case) about religion and its incompatibility with astrology. Some of them carried on disputes in print with fellow compilers, for example, Hopton vs. Bretnor and Bretnor vs. Allestree. Only Neve appeared to stay out of that fight; he was among those compilers who devoted space to the history of calendars and the reckoning of days. And as others took over the blank market Neve settled sedately back into a sort in 1609 and stayed there until 1625. But all of those compilers whose annuals appeared as blanks were quite unlike those many other compilers who provided a solid but bland diet in each almanac, without fireworks.

At least one blank appears to have been published every year. The best guess is that there was a substantial market for a blank but no need to flood it. Those who bought "blanks" presumably wanted to write in them. A possible association between literacy at the writing level and the enjoyment of disputatious, highfalutin language may be discerned here.

Among those compilers who mainly produced the forty-page sorts there was less disputing *about* astrology, although many of them engaged in a more measured defense of the "art" against attackers from both the religious and philosophical side. And some included low-key social prediction, mainly couched in the abstract vocational and class terms

that kept them below the censors' radar. William Woodhouse, whose first surviving almanac was in 1602, produced an old-fashioned Elizabethan sort of product with many predictions of woe for nations, leaders and whole classes of society, with no specific individuals identified. He identified these bad outcomes especially with eclipses, and analyzed in detail the effects of eclipses of the "past" year as they related to the upcoming year, a wrinkle not often seen in pre-civil wars almanacs. A self-described clerk of "her (and after 1604, his) majesty's great customs," he placed his "good/bad" prognostications in a column in the front-of-the-book calendar pages, using letter codes that are not always available in the volume in question.

Woodhouse provided most of the popular features, though, including substantial monthly entries in the prognostication section that included weather. Like most compilers, he could choose to carry the fairs listings or the roads and routes account, but (because of their size) not both. He wobbled; starting in 1602 with roads, he switched to fairs in 1606; his last surviving almanac was published for 1608. There was little physick in his almanacs; he identified himself as a student of mathematics, along with his customs duties. His successor beginning in 1610, John Woodhouse, was no apparent relation but maintained the conformations of the Woodhouse brand, and carried the fairs listings unfailingly through 1640. Because John Woodhouse was the assistant to a well-known physician, his almanacs would prove to give medical care

more attention.[364]

William Mathew published a largely unchanging almanac from 1602 through 1612, typical in providing the quarterly and monthly weather sections along with a Zodiacal Body, a one-page per month sort calendar and terms for court sessions. Until the cutback of 1610-11, he enjoyed a rare forty-eight-page sort that enabled back-of-the-book monthly entries that each took up a page, nicely laid out with tabular material on sunrise, sunset and the length of the day. Mathew's almanacs generally ended with four to seven pages of calculation aids – ways to, for instance, find out the time of evening by the state of the moon. That helper material was significantly reduced in Mathew's last two years of publication, 1611 and 1612, when the size of his almanac was cut from forty-eight to forty pages.

Henry Alleyn, a self-identified physician, infused many of the features in his almanacs (they ran from 1606-12) with more than the ordinary amount of advice about health and "physick," seldom failing to recommend expert advice when in doubt. His run in the almanac canon was livened by many changes, none of which appeared to keep him viable. In one year his almanac appeared as a diary-type blank but reverted the next year to a sort. He added a list of fairs one year, dropped it the next. Another year he included a list of the roads and routes of

---

[364] Capp, *Almanacs*, 340.

England. In 1609 Alleyn was among those cut to forty pages and his surviving almanacs of 1610 and 1612 were also on that short ration of pages, a sign perhaps (as with Mathew) that his brand was not getting traction with the public.

Jeffrey Neve, whose almanac career stretched from 1604 to 1625, followed the opposite strategy – consistency and predictability. Another self-identified physician, he tested various features in his early almanacs – his new brand appeared as forty-eight-page blanks from 1604 to 1607 – but from then on he produced forty-page editions every year that changed very little, maintaining the useful features of a double calendar, timeline of history since the creation and court terms as he promoted his trade with medical and "husbandry" advice, both in sections so labeled and in his quarterly and monthly prognostications. Surviving single broadsheet wall almanacs from 1607, 1609, 1612, and 1615 testify to Neve's crossover popularity – single sheets have proved even more ephemeral in terms of survival than have the pamphlet-style almanacs. Capp suggested he may have become less popular in his own home grounds, as evidenced by a curious change of name and place.[365]

---

[365] Immediately upon Jeffrey Neve's departure from the almanac compiling scene, a very similar sort of almanac was begun by "John Neve" in 1626. Capp suggests that a business reversal may have caused Jeffrey Neve to adopt the pseudonym due to his unpopularity in Great Yarmouth, where he had lived and calculated the effects of the heavens. "John Neve" calculated almanacs for a different meridian, Norwich. Capp, *Almanacs,* 321.

One of the longest-running almanacs of the first half of the seventeenth century began publication in 1613 under the name John White, a mathematician. The almanac followed a steady pattern until 1651, the last issue under the name John White.[366] For most of those years, White's almanac was the only one that provided a detailed tabular chart of the more than fifty shires in the "Kingdom of England" including Wales and Scotland. The gazetteer-like table showed the numbers of natural (rivers, forests), man-made (cities, towns, bridges and castles) and religious (parishes, bishoprics) features for each shire. This tabular and accessible enumeration of the nation's geographical substance, something of a mental map, apparently stayed exclusive to White's almanac brand throughout its long run, and may have contributed to it.[367]

As the Stationers' stable of almanacs grew, diversified and adapted to public appetites from 1604 to 1615, a broad pattern was established: most popular features were available in at least one or two almanacs, and the most popular and utilitarian appeared in many of them. The number of almanacs offered every year remained steady, between eight and ten, though it increased significantly after 1615. The individual compilers retained personal idiosyncrasies and engaged in bouts of

---

[366] In 1653 an almanac by William White began publication and continued until 1676. Capp, *Almanacs*, 384.

[367] E.g. *White 1613* [STC2 527], sig. C5 and verso, EEBO image 19 [Bodleian Library], http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:image:184167:19.

debate about the value of astrology and its congruency with Protestant Christianity – or at least of the religious settlement made in the Elizabethan years and maintained by James I. Emerging Calvinist fundamentalism characterized some (but not all) of the compilers and the ever-present anti-Catholic sentiments were frequent.

Some of the compilers became known for providing one or another of the more popular features, especially the space-consuming ones for which other, more compact features were sometimes sacrificed. The Woodhouse brand (John and, after 1610, William) consistently offered the many-paged list of English and Welsh fairs while other compilers were inconsistent about including them. The roads guide gained popularity in the second half of this period, with Rudston the most consistently carrying that equally space-consuming feature. Other, shorter features like the court terms, list of royal reigns and one-page digest of history from the Creation were widely offered.

Guidance on physick and husbandry, generally with a spine of traditional astrology merged with common sense, was always offered in half or more of the almanacs. Astrological prediction also underpinned the seasons or "quarters," which were steadily available in two-thirds or more of the almanacs. Most also had at least a headlined notice of the coming year's eclipses and few compilers were inclined to leave out the Zodiacal Body woodcut that was taken by many potential buyers as the

image that distinguished almanacs from other books available in St. Paul's churchyard, where bookselling stalls drew Londoners and visitors constantly.[368] By 1615, the Stationers' Company's almanacs were a stable group of offerings; each of the surveyed features (with the exception of legal documents) was available in some form most years and the most popular and easiest to include, like quarter-session court terms and the Zodiacal Body, were available in a very high proportion of surviving almanacs. Court terms, for example, were in *all* surviving almanacs in 1608, 1611 and 1614 and after 1607 were in all but one of the rest of the surviving editions up to 1615.

The presumption here is that sales of individual almanacs and of the entire almanac output were driving decisions, perhaps made annually, about choice of compilers/brands (and when to discontinue them) as well as what features to foreground. The orderly pattern of deployment of those features in the overall body of almanac production suggests that there was attention given at a supervisory level in the Company to managing almanacs so that all popular features stayed available in proportion to their popularity, as well as to managing the total number of almanac brands to ensure that any reasonably popular feature had a home in some (at least one) almanac brand – an early version of niche publishing. The fortunes of survival of the almanacs and

---

[368] Bridenbaugh, *Vexed and Troubled Englishmen*, 191.

the vagaries of printers and compilers doubtlessly intervened to roughen the patterns visible today. But it seems unlikely that the evolution of the Stationers' almanacs from 1603-1615 happened randomly.

Table 1.2 Proportions of Component Features in Almanacs 1595 to 1615

The tables following extract the numbers from the full table at the beginning of this section. The proportion of each component feature appearing in almanacs in each year are shown for an easy assessment of trends.

FEATURE	1595	1596	1597	1598	1599	1600	1601	1602	1603	1604	1605
total alms	0	0	0	3	1	1	0	5	0	9	5
quarterly	*	*	*	3/3	1/1	1/1	*	4/5	*	8/9	5/5
monthly				2/3	1/1	1/1		1/5		4/9	2/5
month gb								4/5		4/9	2/5
bical				2/3	1/1	1/1		1/5		4/9	2/5
blank				1/3		1/1		1/5		3/9	2/5
sort				2/3				4/5		6/9	3/5
court trm				1/3	1/1	1/1		4/5		7/9	4/5
royal tml										2/9	1/5
hist tml								1/5		3/9	2/5
tide tab										2/9	1/5
fairs				3/3				1/5		3/9	
roads rts								2/5		1/9	2/5
wrdl cit											
legal doc											
phys el				1/3							
phys hus				2/3	1/1			3/5		7/9	5/5
eclipses				2/3				4/5		3/9	4/5
zod bod				3/3	1/1	1/1		5/5		8/9	5/5
calc help								1/5		1/9	1/5
gazetteer											

	1606	1607	1608	1609	1610	1611	1612	1613	1614	1615
alms	8	9	3	6	9	9	10	10	10	9
qtly	7/8	8/9	2/3	5/6	7/9	6/9	7/10	8/10	9/10	8/9
mnth	3/8	3/9			2/9	2/9	3/10	4/10	4/10	6/9
m-gb	4/8	6/9	3/3	5/6	5/9	5/9	4/10	4/10	5/10	3/9
bical	4/8	7/9	2/3	5/6	6/9	6/9	8/10	6/10	8/10	7/9
blnk	4/8	1/9	1/3	1/6	1/9	1/9	1/10	1/10	1/10	1/9
sort	4/8	8/9	2/3	5/6	8/9	8/9	9/10	9/10	9/10	8/9
ct trm	5/8	6/9	3/3	5/6	8/9	9/9	9/10	9/10	10/10	8/9
ryl tm	2/8	1/9	1/3	1/6	2/9	2/9	2/10	2/10	2/10	3/9
hsttm	4/8	4/9		3/6	5/9	5/9	5/10	5/10	5/10	5/9
tide	3/8	3/9		3/6	1/9	1/9	1/10	2/10	2/10	3/9
fairs	1/8	2/9			1/9	2/9	3/10	3/10	2/10	3/9
roads		1/9		2/6	2/9		1/10		2/10	1/9
w-cit		1/9		1/6	1/9	1/9	1/10	1/10		1/9
leg dc										
phys	1/8	1/9							1/10	
phusb	7/8	8/9	3/3	6/6	7/9	5/9	8/10	8/10	7/10	8/9
eclipse	4/8	7/9	1/3	3/6	5/9	3/9	6/10	6/10	8/10	5/9
zbod	8/8	9/9	3/3	5/6	8/9	8/9	9/10	7/10	9/10	9/9
c-hlp	1/8	1/9	2/3	1/6	1/9				1/10	1/9
gaz						1/9	1/10	1/10	1/10	1/9

<u>Table 2.1</u> Timeline of component features 1615-1624

Component features for almanacs surveyed from 1615-1624 are shown in the following table. For those compilers' names needing to be abbreviated, the abbreviations are:

Rudsj = John Rudston

upcot = Augustine Upcote

brwn = Daniel Brown

gild = G. Gilden

jneve = John Neve

rang = Philip Ranger

Allst = Richard Allestree

Soff = Arthur Sofford

Hawk = George Hawkins

	1615	1616
quarters	jneve rudsj frende keene bret jjohns white upcot 8/9	upcot dadew frende bret brwn* gild jjohns* 7/8
monthly	jwdhs frende jjohns white upcot jwdhs 6/9	upcot frende brwn jjohns jwdhs 5/8
monthly good bad	jneve bret white 3/9	dadew bret 2/8
bicalendar	jneve ruds jwdhs frende> keene> bret> white>7/9	dadew frende bret 3/8
blank	bret 1/9	bret 1/8
sort	jneve ruds jwdhs frende keene jjohns white upcot 8/9	upcot dadew frende brwn gild jjohns jwdhs 7/8
court terms	jneve ruds jwdhs frende keene jjohns white upcot 8/9	dadew frende bret brwn gild jjohns jwdhs 7/8
royal timeline	ruds keene bret 3/9	bret gild 2/8
history timeline	jneve jwdhs frende keene bret 5/9	dadew frende bret gild jwdhs 5/8
tide tables	ruds keene bret> 3/9	bret> brwn gild 3/8
fairs of England	jwdhs keene upcot 3/9	upcot frende brwn jwdhs 4/8
roads & routes	ruds 1/9	
world cities gazetteer	bret 1/9	bret brwn 2/8
legal documents		
physical elections		
physick and husbandry	jneve ruds jwdhs frende keene bret white upcot 7/9	upcot dadew frende bret brwn gild jjohns jwdhs 8/8
eclipses	jwdhs frende bret jjohns white 5/9	upcot bret gild jjohns* jwdhs 5/8
Zodiacal Body	jneve ruds jwdhs frende keene bret jjohns white upcot 9/9	frende bret brwn gild jjohns 5/8
calculator help	frende 1/9	frende gild 2/8
England gazetteer	white 1/9	
	1615: 9 almanacs	1616 8 almanacs (13)

	1617	1618
quarters	upcot burtn dadew frende allst bret brwn* keene rang jneve gild jjohns rudsj 13/14	white upcot dadew frende allst* bret brwn soff* jneve gild jjohns rudsj 12/13
monthly	upcot burtn frende rang jjohns jwdhs 6/14	upcot brtn frende brnw jjohns jwdhs 6/13
monthly good bad	dadew bret brwn jneve 4/14	white dadew bret jneve 4/13
bicalendar	dadew frende allst bret jneve rudsj 6/14	white dadew frende allst bret soff jneve gild rudsj 9/13
blank	bret 1/14	bret 1/13
sort	upcot burtn dadew frende allst brwn keene* rang jneve gild jjohns rudsj jwdhs 13/14	white upcot dadew frende allst* brwn soff jneve gild jjohns rudsj jwdhs 12/13
court terms	burtn upcot dadew frende allst bret brwn keene rang jneve gild jjohns rudsj jwdhs	white upcot dadew frende allst* bret brwn soff neve gild jjohns rudsj jwdhs 13/13
royal timeline	bret brwn keene rang gild rudsj 6/14	bret brwn soff gild rudsj jwdhs 6/13
history timeline	dadew frende bret rang jneve gild rudsj jwdhs 8/14	dadew frende bret soff jneve gild rudsj jwdhs 8/13
tide tables	allst> bret> brwn keene rang gild rudsj 7/14	allst> bret> brwn soff gild rudsj 6/13
fairs of England	upcot allst# brwn jwdhs 4/14	upcot allst# soff jwdhs 4/13
roads & routes	rang rudsj 2/14	brwn rudsj 2/13
world cities gazetteer	bret brwn 2/14	bret 1/13
legal documents		
physical elections	burtn 1/14	
physick and husbandry	upcot dadew frende allst bret brwn keene jneve gild jjohns rudsj jwdhs 12/14	white upcot dadew frende allst bret brwn soff jneve gild jjohns rudsj jwdhs 13/13
eclipses	burtn allst> bret brwn rang jneve gild jjohns* rudsj 9/14	white allst bret brwn soff jneve gild jjohns rudsj jwdhs 10/13
Zodiacal Body	frende allst bret brwn keene rang jneve gild rudsj jwdhs 10/14	white frende allst bret brwn soff jneve gild rudsj jwdhs 10/13
calculator help	frende gild 2/14	frende gild 1/13
England gazetteer	rudsj 1/14	white rudsj 2/13
	1617 14 almanacs	1618 13 almanacs

	1619	1620
quarters	white upcot burtn dadew frende allst* bret brwn rang jneve gild rudsj 12/14	white burtn dadew frende allst brwn jneve gild rudsj 9/12
monthly	upcot burtn frende bret brwn rang jwdhs 7/14	burtn frende allst jwdhs 4/12
monthly good bad	white dadew jneve 3/14	white dadew jneve 3/12
bicalendar	white dadew frende allst bret soff jneve gild rudsj 9/14	white dadew frende allst brwn einer soff jneve gild rudsj 10/12
blank	allst bret 2/14	allst brwn 2/12
sort	white upcot burtn dadew frende brwn soff rang jneve gild rudsj 12/14	white burtn dadew frende einer soff jneve gild rudsj jwdhs 10/12
court terms	white upcot burt dadew frende allst* bret brwn soff rang jneve gild rudsj jwdhs 14/14	white burtn dadew frende allst brwn soff jneve gild rudsj jwdhs 11/12
royal timeline	bret rang gild rudsj jwdhs 5/14	soff gild rudsj jwdhs 4/12
history timeline	white dadew frende bret rang jneve gild rudsj jwdhs 9/14	white dadew frende brwn soff jneve gild jwdhs 8/12
tide tables	allst> bret> brwn soff rang gild rudsj 7/14	allst> brwn soff gild rudsj 5/12
fairs of England	upcot burtn soff jwdhs 4/14	burtn allst# einer soff jwdhs 5/12
roads & routes	rang rudsj 2/14	rudsj 1/12
world cities gazetteer	bret 1/14	
legal documents		
physical elections	burtn 1/14	
physick and husbandry	white upcot dadew frende allst bret brwn soff rang jneve gild rudsj jwdhs 13/14	white burtn dadew frende allst brwn soff jneve gild rudsj jwdhs 11/12
eclipses	burtn allst bret soff rang jneve gild rudsj jwdhs 9/14	burtn allst soff jneve gild rudsj jwdhs 7/12
Zodiacal Body	white upcot burtn frende allst bret brwn soff rang jneve gild rudsj jwdhs 13/14	white burtn frende allst brwn einer soff jneve rudsj jwdhs 10/12
calculator help	frende brwn gild 3/14	frende brwn gild 3/12
England gazetteer	white rudsj 2/14	white rudsj 2/12
	1619 14 almanacs	1620 12 almanacs

		1621	1622
quarters		white burtn frende allst brwn soff vaux rang jneve gild jjohns 11/12	frende allst brwn soff vaux rang gild jjohns 8/10
monthly		burtn frende rang jneve jjohns jwdhs 6/12	frende soff rang jjohns jwdhs 5/10
monthly good bad			
bicalendar		white frende allst brwn soff jneve gild 7/12	frende allst brwn soff gild 5/10
blank		allst brwn 2/12	allst brwn 2/10
sort		white burtn frende einer soff vaux rang jneve jjohns jwdhs 10/12	frende einer soff vaux rang gild jjohns jwdhs 8/10
court terms		white burtn dadew frende allst brwn soff jneve gild rudsj jwdhs 11/12	frende allst brwn soff rang jjohns jwdhs 7/10
royal timeline		white brwn soff rang gild jjohns jwdhs 7/12	brwn soff rang jjohns jwdhs 5/10
history timeline		white frende soff vaux rang jneve gild jwdhs 8/12	frende soff vaux rang gild jwdhs 6/10
tide tables		allst> brwn soff rang gild jjohns 6/12	allst> brwn soff rang gild jjohns 6/10
fairs of England		burtn allst# soff jwdhs 4/12	allst# soff jwdhs 3/10
roads & routes		einer vaux rang 3/12	einer vaux rang 3/10
world cities gazetteer			vaux 1/10
legal documents			
physical elections			
physick and husbandry		white burtn frende allst brwn soff rang jneve gild jjohns jwdhs 11/12	frende allst brwn soff rang gild jjohns jwdhs 8/10
eclipses		allst soff* vaux rang jneve gild jjohns jwdhs 8/12	allst einer soff vaux rang gild jjohns jwdhs 8/10
Zodiacal Body		white burtn frende allst brwn soff vaux rang jneve gild jjohns jwdhs 12/12	frende allst brwn einer soff vaux rang gild jjohns jwdhs 10/10
calculator help		frende brwn vaux gild 4/12	frende brwn vaux gild 4/10
England gazetteer		white 1/12	
		1621 12 almanacs (13)	1622 10 almanacs (12)
		missing dadew	dadew white no EEBO

	1623	1624
quarters	white dadew frende allst brwn soff rang jneve gild jjohns* 10/12	white dadew brwn einer soff vaux rang gild jjohns* rudsj hawk 11/14
monthly	white dadew frende rang jneve jwdhs 6/12	white dadew einer rang jneve jjohns jwdhs 7/14
monthly good bad	jjohns 1/12	
bicalendar	white dadew frende allst brwn soff jneve gild 8/12	white dadew allst brwn soff jneve gild rudsj hawk 9/14
blank	allst brwn 2/12	allst brwn 2/14
sort	white dadew frende einer soff rang jneve gild jjohns jwdhs 10/12	white dadew einer soff vaux rang jneve gild jjohns rudsj jwdhs hawk 12/14
court terms	white dadew frende allst brwn soff jneve gild jjohns jwdhs 10/12	white dadew allst brwn einer soff jneve gild jjohns rudsj jwdhs hawk 12/14
royal timeline	white frende soff rang jwdhs 5/12	white soff rang jjohns rudsj jwdhs 6/14
history timeline	white frende einer rang jneve gild jjohns jwdhs 8/12	white einer soff vaux rang jneve gild rudsj jwdhs 9/14
tide tables	allst> brwn rang gild 4/12	allst> brwn einer soff gild rudsj 6/14
fairs of England	allst# einer jwdhs 3/12	einer soff jwdhs 3/14
roads & routes	rang 1/12	vaux 1/14
world cities gazetteer		
legal documents		
physical elections		
physick and husbandry	white dadew frende brwn rang neve gild jjohns jwdhs 9/12	white dadew brwn soff rang jneve gild jjohns rudsj jwdhs 10/14
eclipses	white allst brwn rang jneve gild jjohns jwdhs 8/12	white brwn einer soff vaux rang jneve gild jjohns rudsj jwdhs hawk 12/14
Zodiacal Body	white dadew frende allst brwn einer rang jneve gild jjohns jwdhs 11/12	white dadew allst brwn einer soff vaux rang jneve gild rudsj jwdhs hawk 13/14
calculator help	frende brwn gild 3/12	brwn vaux gild hawk 4/14
England gazetteer	white 1/12	white hawk 2/14
	1623 12 almanacs	1624 14 almanacs

Almanac Features in James I's Later Years – 1615 to 1625

After 1615, a series of new almanac brands began to swell the chorus while others vanished from the field. There was, however, continuity in the overall offerings to the almanacs' public – which was likely growing significantly. This presumed growth can be attributed to increases in literacy, more widespread acclimation to the almanacs' paratextual helpers to that literacy, and shrewd marketing and distribution by the Stationers' Company.[369]

In 1615, ten almanacs were published by the Stationers' Company that illustrated continuity: Bretnor (began 1607), Rudston (began 1606), John Woodhouse (began 1610), Jeffrey Neve (began 1604), John Johnson, William Dade (followed John Dade and began 1615), Gabriel Frende (began 1614[370]) John Keene (began 1612), John White (began 1613), and Augustine Upcote (began 1614). Though several (Woodhouse, Dade) continued popular names from the Elizabethan era, all were the work of new compilers since the 1603 handover from Watkins and Roberts to the Stationers' Company. The number of consecutive (more than three in a row) almanacs published had remained at ten since

---

[369] Curth, *Medicine*, 45-46.

[370] Almanacs by Gabriel Frende were published from 1585 to 1599 [STC2 444 to 444.11 and 445 to 445.5]. Capp said the almanacs from 1614-24 [STC2 445.9 to 445.19] "do not appear to be by the same author [as the earlier series]." *Almanacs,* 307. STC2 however numbers them sequentially.

1612; in 1616 the number of almanacs covered here dropped to eight –
an artifact of surviving copies included in Early English Books Online,
because thirteen were known to have been published that year[371] – but
jumped to fourteen in 1617 and never dropped below ten after that until
the competition with Cambridge University's press in the later 1620s.
Three new almanacs entered the market in the next three years after
1615: Gilden (1616), Allestree (1617) and Sofford (1618). The latter two
had long runs past 1640.

During the period 1616-25, the popular and compact features –
court terms, royal reigns and timelines of potted history – continued to
be offered by half or more of the almanacs most years. Of these, the
timeline of monarchs' reigns, which was more sparsely offered at the
beginning of this period, gained considerably in popularity in the 1620s
based on its increasing representation, showing perhaps an increase in
the number of almanac users who actually initiated a document or brief
on behalf of their interests. The number of self-identified "practicioners of
physick" or doctors who compiled almanacs, which had been the
dominant vocation of compilers in the late Elizabethan era, began to
decline after the Stationers took control in favor of self-identified
mathematicians. This may have reflected the growth of the occupation of

---

[371] EEBO is missing an unusually large number of extant copies from 1616 – four, with one other that is
mutilated and missing the back "prognostication" pages. All are stated by both Capp and STC2 as held in
institutions, mostly by Lambeth Palace Library, the library of the Archbishopric of Canterbury.

surveyor, a practical application of mathematics, in part because of the enclosure boom. [372] Nevertheless the presence of "physical observations" in all almanacs stayed strong through this period, appearing in three-fourths of all almanacs covered in every year and in all of them in 1616 and 1618. In most cases this was also accompanied by guidance on "husbandry," including doctoring animals.[373]

Allestree, Sofford, Woodhouse and Upcote were consistent in offering the fairs listings, a feature whose popularity remained steady from 1616 to 1625 despite the space it took up. The roads and routes guide, also a space-consuming feature, had struggled for popularity in the earlier (1603-1615) period and in 1616 to 1625 started off the same way, even being absent entirely some years. But in 1617 Rudston and Ranger began offering it regularly and it continued when Rudston was succeeded in 1622 by Einer and Vaux, joining Ranger. From 1617 until 1628 one or more almanacs offered the roads guide. Increasing interest in that feature suggests increased travel, better roads and transportation (regular stagecoaches from London to distant parts of England by the 1630s) and increasing internal trade,[374] all of which turned almanac

[372] In the late sixteenth century, accurate, legally supportable assessments of land ownership became critical as the competition between agriculture and sheepherding for food and wool production became intense and landowners asserted their property rights over the traditional reciprocal, mutualist relationship with tenants. Wrightson, *Earthly Necessities*, 183. See also *Pond 1612*'s reference to his availability after leaving the almanac compilation trade: "You may have any Lordships, Lands or Woods by me exactly surveighed, measured and proved according to Art." *Pond 1612*, note *supra*.
[373] Curth, *Popular Medicine*, 206-227
[374] Hirst, *Conflic*t,56

users' eyes more and more outside their own towns and villages.

The Compilers of 1615-1625

William Dade, as discussed above, continued the signature feature of predecessor John Dade (fl. 1591-1614), the detailed monthly weather predictions with accompanying lists of "good and evil days" for practicing medicine at home. After a few issues William Dade also restored the page of terms for county courts, but not until 1623 did the Zodiacal Body image return to the book.

Augustine Upcote began his short-lived run of almanacs in 1614, but unlike John White's long run from 1613-1651, Upcote's otherwise conventionally formatted almanac did not survive past 1619. He included the popular list of fairs in every issue, but answered the constraints of pagination by dropping the Zodiacal Body in 1616. Eclipses, a compact and easy feature to retain, nevertheless disappeared after 1615. A physician, Upcote nevertheless included only a bare minimum of physick and husbandry guidance, confined to a single page, plus the standard advice on nutrition tucked into his quarterly entries. Only in his final edition, 1619, did he restore the iconic Zodiacal Body graphic that signaled "almanac" to many browsing buyers. That may have been too late, but the 1619 issue showed no sign of a farewell.

Gilden's almanacs (1616-32) were chatty and astronomical rather than focusing on health and husbandry. He provided numerous

calculating tables and tools for interpreting weather and nature; a rare innovation shared by a few other almanacs like White's was a two-page table providing the lunar and planetary relations for each day of the year – a do-it-yourself astrological kit "for the Judicious to find out of themselves." When used with an accompanying table showing how the heavenly relations affected weather, it became a do-it-yourself weather forecaster as well, getting the compiler out of the weather prediction business since as Gilden said, "predictions of the weathers dispose, are commonly by the common sort taxed of untruth." [375]

Richard Allestree, a resolutely religious compiler, began his almanac in 1617. As noted in an earlier chapter, it was altered from a forty-page sort to a forty-eight-page blank two years later. During much of his long run (1617-43), he consistently insulted the astrology that he was practicing, suggesting (for instance) that the Zodiacal Body and its implications of connection between the houses of the zodiac and human health was a "heathenish" belief.[376] Allestree's almanacs offered the secular features – royal reigns, court terms, history timeline, tide tables and the like – regularly and faithfully. He consistently maintained that astrology was a contingent science and that the deity ruled all, drawing

---

[375] *Gilden 1621* [STC2 448.6] sig. B2; EEBO image 10 [Harvard University Library], http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:image:24921:10.

[376] *Allestree 1618* [STC 2 407.1], e.g.; zodiac's relation to human body "heathenishly attributed," EEBO image 3 [Lambeth Palace Library], http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:image:25656:3.

considerable scorn and attacks in print from the more cosmopolitan Bretnor in the few years that their work overlapped.[377] After Bretnor's death in 1618, Allestree did not lack for other tormentors among his brother compilers. In 1629, after a dozen years of calling his back-of-the-book section a "prognostication," as was customary, Allestree began referring to it as an "Appendix." He dropped the use of the iconic ("heathenish") Zodiacal Body the following year, in 1630, and with one lapse (1635) it was absent for the rest of his run.

Daniel Browne, a fervently anti-Catholic compiler whose series began in 1615, two years before Allestree's, was his competitor and occasional tormenter. In 1620, Browne's offering changed from sort to blank, one year after Allestree's similar move, and the two remained the Stationers' sole blank offerings until Browne's series ended in 1631. Browne, though anti-Papist to a fault, nevertheless rejected religious arguments against astrology itself of the sort that Allestree mounted in almost every issue. In 1619 Browne made the standing argument that the configuration of the heavens influenced the future only because the deity willed it so and could override it at will: "therefore are they to be mistaken who out of their peevish holiness do speak against Astronomie…" [astrology].[378] Browne, whose pettish rhetoric and strident

---

[377] Bernard Capp, "Allestree, Richard (*b.* before 1582, *d. c.*1643)," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford University Press, 2004) [accessed 28 Aug 2014], doi:10.1093/ref:odnb/53655.
[378] *Browne 1619* [STC2 421.4], sig. C verso; EEBO image 17 [Lambeth Palace Library], http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:image:173332:17.

anti-Catholicism strikes the modern reader as immature compared to his peers, published his last almanac in 1631 while Allestree continued to 1643.

Table 2.2 Proportions of feature frequency, 1616-1625

	1616	1617	1618	1619	1620	1621	1622	1623	1624	1625
alms	8	14	13	14	12	13	10	12	14	13
qtly	7/8	13/14	12/13	12/14	9/12	11/13	8/10	10/12	11/14	12/13
mnth	5/8	6/14	6/13	7/14	4/12	11/13	5/10	6/12	7/14	3/13
m-gb	2/8	4/14	4/13	3/14	3/12	6/13		1/12		
bical	3/8	6/14	9/13	9/14	10/12	7/13	5/10	8/12	###	9/13
blnk	1/8	1/14	1/13	2/14	2/12	2/13	2/10	2/12	2/14	2/13
sort	7/8	13/14	12/13	12/14	10/12	10/13	8/10	10/12	12/14	11/13
ct trm	7/8	14/14	13/13	14/14	11/12	11/13	7/10	10/12	12/14	11/13
ryl tm	2/8	6/14	6/13	5/14	4/12	7/13	5/10	5/12	6/14	6/13
hsttm	5/8	8/14	8/13	9/14	8/12	8/13	6/10	8/12	9/14	8/13
tide	3/8	7/14	6/13	7/14	5/12	6/13	6/10	4/12	6/14	7/13
fairs	4/8	4/14	4/13	4/14	5/12	4/13	3/10	3/12	3/14	4/13
roads		2/14	2/13	2/14	1/12	3/13	3/10	1/12	1/14	1/13
w-cit	2/8	2/14	1/13	1/14			1/10			
leg dc										
phys		1/14		1/14						2/13
phusb	8/8	12/14	13/13	13/14	11/12	11/13	8/10	9/12	10/14	9/13
eclipse	5/8	9/14	10/13	9/14	7/12	8/13	8/10	8/12	12/14	10/13
zbod	5/8	10/14	10/13	13/14	10/12	13/13	10/10	11/12	13/14	9/13
c-hlp	2/8	2/14	2/13	3/14	3/12	4/13	4/10	3/12	4/14	5/13
gaz		1/14	2/13	2/14	2/12	1/13		1/12	2/14	2/13

Table 3.1 Timeline of almanac component features from 1625-1641

Abbreviations for those compilers coming on the scene from 1625 to 1640 are

Hewl = William Hewlett

Butl = Robert Butler

Book = John Booker

Lang = Thomas Langley

Prce = Matthew Pierce

      The number of almanacs known to have been published in any year is in (parentheses) in the next-to-last row after the number actually surveyed. Explanations for the discrepancy, generally because not all almanacs are imaged yet in EEBO, are provided where known.

	1625	1626
quarters	white dadew allst brwn einer soff vaux gild rudsj perk hewl hawk 12/13	dadew rang* nevej white perk vaux brwn rudsj allst 9/11
monthly	white dadew jwdhs 3/13	dadew rang nevej white jwdhs 5/10
monthly good bad		
bicalendar	white dadew allst brwn einer soff vaux gild jwdhs 9/13	einer dadew nevej white perk brwn rudsj allst 8/11
blank	allst brwn 2/13	brwn allst 2/11
sort	white dadew einer soff vaux gild rudsj jwdhs perk hewl hawk 11/13	einer dadew rang nevej white perk vaux jwdhs rudsj 9/10
court terms	white dadew allst brwn einer soff rudsj jwdhs perk hewl hawk 11/13	dadew rang nevej white perk jwdhs brwn rudsj allst 9/11
royal timeline	white brwn soff rudsj jwdhs hewl 6/13	rang white perk jwdhs brwn allst 6/11
history timeline	white brwn einer soff vaux gild jwdhs perk* 8/13	einer rang nevej white perk* vaux jwdhs brwn allst 9/11
tide tables	brwn einer soff gild rudsj perk> hewl 7/13	brwn rudsj allst 3/11
fairs of England	allst# einer soff jwdhs 4/13	jwdhs allst* 2/11
roads & routes	perk 1/13	perk 1/11
world cities gazetteer		
legal documents		
physical elections	brwn perk 2/13	perk vaux 2/11
physick and husbandry	dadew allst einer soff gild rudsj jwdhs white hewl 9/13	dadew rang nevej white jwdhs brwn rudsj allst 8/11
eclipses	white allst brwn einer soff vaux gild rudsj perk hewl 10/13	rang nevej white perk vaux jwdhs brwn rudsj allst 9/11
Zodiacal Body	dadew allst brwn einer soff gild jwdhs perk hewl 9/13	einer dadew rang nevej white perk vaux jwdhs brwn allst 10/11
calculator help	brwn vaux gild hewl hawk 5/13	rang perk vaux brwn 4/11
England gazetteer	white hawk 2/13	white 1/11
	1625 13 almanacs (15)	1626 11 almanacs (13)
	ranger, jneve msg EEBO	soff, gild msg EEBO

	1627	1628
quarters	dadew rang soff nevej white perk vaux brwn rudsj hewl hawk allst 12/13	dadew rang soff nevej white vaux brwn hewl allst 9/10
monthly	dadew rang nevej white jwdhs 5/13	dadew rang nevej white jwdhs 5/10
monthly good bad		
bicalendar	dadew soff nevej white perk brwn rudsj hawk allst 9/13	dadew soff nevej white brwn allst 6/10
blank	brwn allst 2/13	brwn allst 2/10
sort	dadew rang soff nevej white perk vaux jwdhs rudsj hewl hawk 11/13	dadew rang soff nevej white vaux jwdhs hewl 8/10
court terms	dadew rang soff nevej white perk brwn jwdhs rudsj hewl hawk allst 12/13	dadew rang soff nevej white vaux jwdhs brwn hewl allst 10/10
royal timeline	rang soff white perk jwdhs rudsj hewl allst 8/13	rang soff white jwdhs hewl allst 6/10
history timeline	rang soff* nevej white perk* vaux jwdhs brwn allst 9/13	rang soff* nevej white vaux jwdhs brwn hewl allst 9/10
tide tables	brwn rudsj hewl allst 4/13	brwn hewl allst 3/10
fairs of England	soff jwdhs allst* 3/13	soff jwdhs allst* 3/10
roads & routes	perk hewl hawk 3/13	
world cities gazetteer		
legal documents		
physical elections	perk vaux 2/13	vaux 1/10
physick and husbandry	dadew rang soff nevej white jwdhs brwn rudsj allst 9/13	dadew rang soff nevej white jwdhs brwn allst 8/10
eclipses	rang nevej white perk jwdhs brwn rudsj hewl hawk allst 10/13	rang soff nevej white vaux jwdhs brwn hewl allst 9/10
Zodiacal Body	dadew rang soff nevej white perk vaux jwdhs brwn hewl hawk allst 12/13	dadew rang soff nevej white vaux jwdhs brwn hewl allst 10/10
calculator help	rang perk vaux brwn hewl hawk 6/13	rang vaux brwn 3/10
England gazetteer	white hewl hawk 3/13	white 1/10
	1627 13 almanacs	1628 10 almanacs
	gild msg STC	perk, brwn msg EEBO, gild msg STC

	1629	1630
quarters	dadew butl rang soff nevej white perk gild brwn allst 10/11	dadew butl rang soff nevej white perk gild vaux brwn hewl allst 12/13
monthly	dadew butl rang nevej white jwdhs 6/11	dadew butl rang nevej white jwdhs 6/13
monthly good bad		brwn 1/13
bicalendar	dadew soff nevej white perk gild brwn allst 8/11	dadew soff nevej white perk gild brwn allst 8/13
blank	brwn allst 2/11	brwn allst 2/13
sort	dadew butl rang soff nevej white perk gild jwdhs 9/11	dadew butl rang soff nevej white perk gild vaux jwdhs hewl 11/13
court terms	butl rang soff nevej white perk gild jwdhs brwn allst 10/11	dadew butl rang soff nevej white perk gild vaux jwdhs brwn hewl allst 13/13
royal timeline	butl rang soff white perk gild jwdhs allst 8/11	butl rang soff white perk gild jwdhs brwn allst 9/13
history timeline	butl rang soff* nevej white perk* gild jwdhs brwn allst 10/11	butl rang soff* nevej white perk* vaux jwdhs brwn allst 10/13
tide tables	butl brwn allst 3/11	butl brwn hewl allst 4/13
fairs of England	soff jwdhs allst* 3/11	soff jwdhs allst* 3/13
roads & routes	butl perk 2/11	butl 1/13
world cities gazetteer		
legal documents		
physical elections		vaux 1/13
physick and husbandry	dadew butl rang soff nevej white gild jwdhs brwn allst 10/11	dadew butl rang soff nevej white gild jwdhs brwn hewl* allst 11/13
eclipses	butl rang soff nevej white gild jwdhs brwn allst 9/11	rang soff nevej white perk gild vaux jwdhs brwn hewl allst 11/13
Zodiacal Body	dadew butl rang soff nevej white perk gild jwdhs brwn allst 11/11	dadew butl rang soff nevej white perk gild vaux jwdhs brwn hewl 10/13
calculator help	rang perk brwn 3/11	rang perk vaux brwn 4/13
England gazetteer	white 1/11	white 1/13
	1629 11 almanacs (13)	1630 13 almanacs
	vaux hewl msg EEBO	

305

		1631	1632
quarters		dadew rang soff nevej white perk gild vaux brwn allst book 11/13	dadew butl soff nevej white gild allst book 8/9
monthly		dadew rang nevej white jwdhs 5/13	dadew butl nevej white jwdhs 5/9
monthly good bad		book 1/13	
bicalendar		dadew butl soff nevej white perk gild brwn allst book 10/13	dadew butl nevej white gild allst book 7/9
blank		brwn allst 2/13	butl allst book 3/9
sort		dadew butl rang soff nevej white perk gild vaux jwdhs book 11/13	dadew soff nevej white gild jwdhs 6/9
court terms		dadew butl rang soff nevej white perk gild vaux jwdhs brwn allst book 13/13	dadew butl soff nevej white gild jwdhs allst book 9/9
royal timeline		butl rang soff white perk gild jwdhs brwn allst 9 /13	butl soff white gild jwdhs allst 6/9
history timeline		butl rang soff* nevej white perk* gild vaux jwdhs brwn allst 11/13	butl soff* nevej white gild jwdhs allst 7/9
tide tables		butl brwn allst book 4/13	butl allst book* 3/9
fairs of England		soff jwdhs allst* 3 /13	soff jwdhs allst* 3/9
roads & routes			
world cities gazetteer			
legal documents			
physical elections		vaux 1/13	
physick and husbandry		dadew butl rang soff nevej white gild jwdhs brwn allst 10 /13	dadew butl soff nevej white gild jwdhs allst 8/9
eclipses		perk gild vaux jwdhs brwn allst book 7/13	soff nevej white gild jwdhs allst* 6/9
Zodiacal Body		dadew butl rang soff nevej white perk gild vaux jwdhs brwn 11/13	dadew butl soff nevej white gild jwdhs 7/9
calculator help		rang perk vaux brwn 4/13	
England gazetteer		white 1/13	white 1/9
		1631 13 almanacs	1632 9 almanacs (11)
			perk, vaux msg EEBO

		1633	1634
quarters		dadew soff nevej white perk vaux* allst 7/8	dadew soff nevej white perk vaux allst 7/9
monthly		dadew nevej white jwdhs 4/8	dadew nevej white jwdhs book 5/9
monthly good bad			
bicalendar		dadew nevej white perk allst 5/8	dadew nevej white perk allst book 6/9
blank		allst 1/8	allst book 2/9
sort		dadew soff nevej white perk vaux jwdhs 7/8	dadew soff nevej white perk vaux jwdhs 7/9
court terms		dadew soff nevej white perk vaux jwdhs allst 8/8	dadew soff nevej white perk jwdhs allst book 8/9
royal timeline		soff white vaux jwdhs allst 5/8	white perk jwdhs allst 4/9
history timeline		soff* nevej white perk* vaux jwdhs allst 7/8	soff* nevej white perk* vaux jwdhs allst 7/9
tide tables		allst 1/8	allst book 2/9
fairs of England		soff jwdhs allst* 3 /8	soff jwdhs allst* 3/9
roads & routes		perk 1/8	perk 1/9
world cities gazetteer			
legal documents			
physical elections		vaux 1/8	vaux 1/9
physick and husbandry		dadew soff nevej white jwdhs allst 6/8	dadew soff nevej white jwdhs allst 6/9
eclipses		soff nevej white perk vaux jwdhs allst* 7/8	soff nevej white perk vaux jwdhs allst book* 8/9
Zodiacal Body		dadew soff nevej white perk jwdhs 6/8	dadew soff nevej white perk jwdhs book 7/9
calculator help		perk vaux 2/8	perk vaux 2/9
England gazetteer		white 1/8	white 1/9
		1633 8 almanacs (9)	1634 9 almanacs (10)
		book msg EEBO	pierce missing EEBO

	1635	1636	1637
quarters	white perk lang allst 4/4	dadew nevej white perk vaux allst 6/8	dadew prce soff white perk vaux lang allst 8/9
monthly	white lang 2/4	dadew nevej white jwdhs 4/8	dadew white jwdhs 3/9
monthly good bad			
bicalendar	white perk lang allst 4/4	dadew nevej white perk lang allst 6/8	dadew soff white perk lang allst /9
blank	allst 1/4	allst 1/8	lang allst 2/9
sort	white perk lang 3/4	dadew nevej white perk vaux jwdhs lang 7/8	dadew prce soff white perk vaux jwdhs 7/9
court terms	white perk allst 3/4	dadew nevej white perk jwdhs lang allst 7/8	dadew prce soff white perk jwdhs lang allst 8/9
royal timeline	white perk allst 3/4	white perk jwdhs allst 4/8	prce soff white perk jwdhs lang allst 7/9
history timeline	white perk* lang allst 4/4	nevej white perk* vaux jwdhs allst 6/8	prce soff* white perk* vaux jwdhs lang allst 8/9
tide tables	allst 1/4	allst 1/8	prce lang* allst 3/9
fairs of England	allst* 1/4	jwdhs allst* 2/8	soff jwdhs lang* allst* 4/9
roads & routes	perk 1/4	perk 1/8	prce perk 2/9
world cities gazetteer			
legal documents			
physical elections		vaux 1/8	
physick and husbandry	white lang allst 3/4	dadew nevej white jwdhs allst 5/8	dadew soff white jwdhs lang* allst 6/9
eclipses	white perk allst* 3/4	nevej white perk vaux jwdhs allst 6/8	prce soff white perk vaux jwdhs lang allst 8/9
Zodiacal Body	white perk lang allst 4/4	dadew nevej white perk jwdhs 5/8	dadew prce soff white perk jwdhs lang 7/9
calculator help	perk 1/4	perk vaux lang 3/8	perk vaux lang 3/9
England gazetteer	white 1/4	white 1/8	white 1/9
	1635 4 almanacs (11)	1636 8 almanacs (9)	1637 9 almanacs (10)
	jwdhs book missing EEBO soff nevej tp only book is	soff msg STC, EEBO's lang incompl book is camb	nevej msg EEBO book is oxf

	1638	1639
quarters	dadew prce soff nevej white perk lang allst book 9/10	dadew prce soff nevej white perk lang allst book 9/10
monthly	dadew nevej white jwdhs 4/10	dadew nevej white jwdhs 4/10
monthly good bad		
bicalendar	dadew soff nevej white perk allst book 7/10	dadew soff nevej white perk lang allst book 8/10
blank	allst book 2/10	lang allst book 3/10
sort	dadew prce soff nevej white perk jwdhs lang 8/10	dadew prce soff nevej white perk jwdhs 7/10
court terms	prce soff nevej white perk jwdhs lang allst book 9/10	dadew prce soff nevej white perk jwdhs lang allst book 10/10
royal timeline	soff white perk jwdhs allst 5/10	prce soff white perk jwdhs lang allst 7/10
history timeline	prce soff* nevej white perk* jwdhs lang allst 8/10	prce soff* nevej white perk* jwdhs lang allst 8/10
tide tables	prce lang* allst book* 4/10	prce jwdhs lang* allst book* 5/10
fairs of England	soff jwdhs lang allst* 4/10	soff jwdhs allst* 3/10
roads & routes	prce perk 2/10	prce perk 2/10
world cities gazetteer		
legal documents		
physical elections		
physick and husbandry	dadew soff nevej white jwdhs lang allst 7/10	dadew soff nevej white jwdhs lang allst 7/10
eclipses	prce soff nevej white perk jwdhs allst* book 8/10	prce soff nevej white perk jwdhs lang allst* book 9/10
Zodiacal Body	dadew prce soff nevej white perk jwdhs lang book 9/10	dadew prce soff nevej white perk jwdhs lang book* 9/10
calculator help	perk lang 2/10	perk lang 2/10
England gazetteer	white 1/10	white 1/10
	1638 10 almanacs (11)	1639 10 almanacs
	vaux is tp only	

	1640	1641
quarters	dadew prce soff white lang allst book 7/8	soff perk
monthly	dadew white jwdhs 3/8	
monthly good bad		
bicalendar	dadew soff white lang allst book 6/8	soff perk
blank	lang allst book 3/8	
sort	dadew prce soff white jwdhs 5/8	soff perk
court terms	dadew prce soff white jwdhs lang allst book 8/8	soff perk
royal timeline	prce soff white jwdhs lang allst 6/8	soff perk
history timeline	prce soff white jwdhs lang allst 6/8	soff* perk*
tide tables	prce jwdhs lang* allst book* 5/8	
fairs of England	soff jwdhs allst 3/8	soff
roads & routes	prce 1/8	perk
world cities gazetteer		
legal documents		
physical elections		
physick and husbandry	dadew soff white jwdhs lang allst 6/8	soff
eclipses	prce soff white jwdhs lang allst book 7/8	soff perk
Zodiacal Body	dadew prce soff white jwdhs lang book 7/8	soff perk
calculator help	lang 1/8	perk
England gazetteer	white 1/8	
	1640 8 almanacs (10)	[1641]
	nevej, perk msg EEBO	

The Accession of Charles I and the Cambridge Printers' Challenge

In 1625, the year King James I died and was succeeded by his son Charles I, the Stationers' Company was publishing a peak-level fifteen almanacs, including the long-lived versions by White, Dade, Allestree, Vaux, Neve and Sofford. Sofford (who began his almanacs in 1618) in particular offered an expanded history timeline that seemed to catch interest among almanac customers. It required even more pages than a fairs listing or guide to roads and routes. In 1620, Sofford offered two pages of history, gradually increasing the amount until by 1625 it ran to five pages or more. Sofford had run the fairs listing since 1618 but by 1624 had dropped it to make more space for the history listings. The additional pages allowed Sofford to present history in complete, active sentences with more details rather than foreshortened fragments. In 1625 Samuel Perkins began his series with an extended history timeline also, and his would grow to as many as thirteen pages in 1630. The popularity of this new, extended history among almanac users appeared to last well beyond the momentary salience of the 1625 transition from one king to another.

In fact, some of the most common entries in the history timelines of whatever size were tonally subtle but had the potential for mischief as Charles I suffered increasing criticism for letting "popery" invade the official English church. Right from the beginning of James I's reign, a contrast began to be infused in history timelines with what were already

becoming the "good old days" of Queen Elizabeth. One of the most frequent references in timelines was to "the Camp at Tilbury," Elizabeth I's shining moment. [379] That entry, with its reminder that Catholic Spain was a formidable enemy, persisted throughout the reigns of James I and Charles I.

History timelines also routinely memorialized the death in 1612 of Charles's promising, charismatic older brother Henry, who was being groomed for the throne while Charles, the second younger son, was being groomed for the Church. With no elaboration, these "good old days" and "what might have been" entries had to be a constant irritant to the socially and consequently politically awkward Charles, who could never live up to the lost potential of his deceased brother.[380]

Other anti-Catholic nudges persisted in the historical timelines as well. The Gunpowder Plot of 1605 was consistently an entry, as were (less frequently) references to the catastrophic building collapse at Blackfriars that killed many clandestine Catholics gathered for a worship service and was seen as the deity's reproach to "popery."[381] Especially mischievous was a frequent entry for "Prince Charles's happy return from Spain" – a reference to the Spanish match controversy of the early 1620s, when Charles and the royal favorite Buckingham traveled

[379] Lacey Baldwin Smith, *Elizabethan World*, 202-204.
[380] Hirst, *Conflict*, 112.
[381] Hirst, *Conflic*t, 110.

incognito to Madrid so Charles could woo the Infanta, daughter of King

Philip IV, as a bride. James I, who had slow-walked the match for almost

a decade to keep Spain neutralized rather than a Catholic foe, was

embarrassed by his son's escapade and it was taken as another example

of James's willingness to compromise with the Catholic powers through a

marriage match. Charles, who failed in his mission to Spain and looked

ridiculous to many, subsequently married a Catholic French princess,

Henrietta Maria. That kept the salt in the wound for the increasingly

restive ultra-Protestant opposition.[382] Without giving overt offense, the

almanacs' history entries frequently kept the political pot simmering, if

never boiling.

The Lessons of Competition

But 1625 was also the year that the consequences of a 1623 Privy

Council ruling were first felt. The printers at Cambridge University that

year received permission to print almanacs that were offered to them

first, rather than to the Stationers' Company of London. As with the

Stationers, so it was with the Cambridge printers: it was all about

money. There is no evidence that Cambridge scholars thought they could

produce better almanacs than the Stationers, and scant evidence that

they did. But the Cambridge printers complained to the authorities that

the ups and downs of academic printing made it hard to keep workers

employed and operate a going shop – the same complaint that the

---

[382] Hirst, *Conflict*, 107-09.

Stationers had used to secure the almanac monopoly in 1603. Having received the partial exception from the Stationers' monopoly privilege, the Cambridge printers on the evidence proceeded to abuse it.[383]

The first consequence that shows up in the record was, however, an almanac that probably *was* actually offered first to Cambridge for publication – by Edward Pond, the malcontent (but popular) compiler who bolted the Stationers' stable in 1612 with a very public denunciation of his penny-pinching overseers at the Company. As Blagden noted, Cambridge had an advantage because their work was cheaper (presumably they didn't have to pay prevailing London journeyman rates) and Pond may have wangled a benefit from that in his compensation. [384]

The privilege was awarded to the university in December 1623, too late for 1624 editions, but Pond reappeared in 1625 with the first Cambridge almanac, and as a blank. His book was quickly followed by almanac brands that are widely considered made-up to capitalize on the popularity of Pond: "Thomas Lakes" and "Peregrine Rivers." In 1627 Cambridge added the "Jonathan Dove" almanacs, a series that was to continue for many years beyond the Restoration. Between Dove's 1624 and 1636 editions (1635 only survives as a title page) Dove switched from carrying a fairs list to carrying an extended history timeline similar to

---

[383] Capp, *Almanacs*, 37; Blagden, *Stationers'*, 102-104.
[384] Blagden, *Stationers'*, 103.

those of Perkins and Sofford. The Rivers almanac used the Ramist multicolumn bracket typographical strategy to trim the fairs list and the roads guide back so that both could be accommodated in the same forty-page sort, a considerable achievement. In 1628 the Stationers apparently retaliated by printing an almanac by *William* Rivers.[385] No Peregrine Rivers almanac has survived from that year.

The Cambridge almanacs appear to have actually depressed almanac production – or at least the number of editions – on the Stationers' part through most of the 1630s. In 1632, Stationers' almanac editions dropped from a dozen to nine, and remained at that single-digit level for the rest of the decade. The Stationers' almanacs by Hawkins, Rudston, Ranger and Gilden all apparently left the marketplace between 1627 and 1631 and only Booker was added to the Stationers' stable of products. From 1633 to 1636, Cambridge published six almanacs every year, and in 1637, published seven before tapering to four at the end of the decade.

Most of the Cambridge almanacs were, like most of the Stationers' almanacs of this period, relatively unadventurous and presumably stuck steadily to what had sold in the past. Although Cambridge printers produced as many as seven almanacs (in 1637), the Stationers' almanacs diminished in number but continued to offer the standard fare in

---

[385] STC2 505.17.

proportion. The Cambridge products, fewer and newer to the trade, showed some uncertainty about the proper balance of features among a group and several promising titles floundered and disappeared. By 1638 the Cambridge printers were flagging, having replaced professional printing management with academics several years earlier, and in 1639 the Stationers' Company signed an agreement with the Cambridge printers to provide them with a minimum level of work and the paper to print it on, and pay them as well. "At a cost of £200 a year," Blagden said, "competition from Cambridge had been bought off."[386]

The Stationers' uneasy relations with the presses at both Oxford and Cambridge universities resulted in some further financial settlements respecting the almanac privilege in both the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. "[T]he large sums involved reflect the continuing profitability of the [almanac] trade," Capp observed.[387]

---

[386] Blagden, *Stationers'*, 104.
[387] Capp, *Almanacs*, 240.

Table 3.2 Proportions of component features in Stationers' almanacs 1626-1640 (on following two pages)

	1626	1627	1628	1629	1630	1631	1632
alms	11	13	10	11	13	13	9
qtly	9/11	12/13	9/10	10/11	12/13	11/13	8/9
mnth	5/11	5/13	5/10	6/11	6/13	5/13	5/9
m-gb					1/13	1/13	
bical	8/11	9/13	6/10	8/11	8/13	10/13	7/9
blnk	2/11	2/13	2/10	2/11	2/13	2/13	3/9
sort	9/11	11/13	8/10	9/11	11/13	11/13	6/9
ct trm	9/11	12/13	10/10	10/11	13/13	13/13	9/9
ryl tm	6/11	8/13	6/10	8/11	9/13	9/13	6/9
hsttm	9/11	9/13	9/10	10/11	10/13	11/13	7/9
tide	3/11	4/13	3/10	3/11	4/13	4/13	3/9
fairs	2/11	3/13	3/10	3/11	3/13	3/13	3/9
roads	1/11	3/13		2/11	1/13		
w-cit							
leg dc							
phys	2/11	2/13	1/10		1/13	1/13	
phusb	8/11	9/13	8/10	10/11	11/13	10/13	8/9
eclipse	9/11	10/13	9/10	9/11	11/13	7/13	6/9
zbod	10/11	12/13	10/10	11/11	10/13	11/13	7/9
c-hlp	4/11	6/13	3/10	3/11	4/13	4/3	
gaz	1/11	3/13	1/10	1/11	1/13	1/13	1/9

	1633	1634	1635	1636	1637	1638	1639	1640
alms	8	9	4	8	9	10	10	8
qtly	7/8	7/9	4/4	6/8	8/9	9/10	9/10	7/8
mnth	4/8	5/9	2/4	4/8	3/9	4/10	4/10	3/8
m-gb								
bical	5/8	6/9	3/4	6/8	6/9	7/10	8/10	6/8
blnk	1/8	2/9	1/4	1/8	2/9	2/10	3/10	3/8
sort	7/8	7/9	3/4	7/8	7/9	8/10	7/10	5/8
ct trm	8/8	8/9	3/4	7/8	8/9	9/10	10/10	8/8
ryl tm	5/8	4/9	3/4	4/8	7/9	5/10	7/10	6/8
hsttm	7/8	7/9	4/4	6/8	8/9	8/10	8/10	6/8
tide	1/8	2/9	1/4	1/8	3/9	4/10	5/10	5/8
fairs	3/8	3/9	1/4	2/8	4/9	4/10	3/10	3/8
roads	1/8	1/9	1/4	1/8	2/9	2/10	2/10	1/8
w-cit								
leg dc								
phys	1/8	1/9		1/8				
phusb	6/8	6/9	3/4	5/8	6/9	7/10	7/10	6/8
eclipse	7/8	8/9	3/4	6/8	8/9	8/10	9/10	7/8
zbod	6/8	7/9	4/4	5/8	7/9	9/10	9/10	7/8
c-hlp	2/8	2/9	1/4	3/8	3/9	2/10	2/10	1/8
gaz	1/8	1/9	1/4	1/8	1/9	1/10	1/10	1/8

The Stationers Benefited from the Incubator of Monopoly

The Stationers' Company had been fortunate to be protected against such competition by its monopoly privilege for some twenty years, during which a stable pattern of almanac production had been achieved and the features that sold almanacs become clear. In addition, the Stationers had a distribution network built up over that same time that Cambridge must have found it hard to duplicate as a start-up. It is probably significant that, as McKittrick observed, "Of the fourteen surviving [almanac] titles known to have been printed at Cambridge between 1625 and 1640, none survives in a complete annual series."[388] That evidence of survival, considerably lower than the survival rate of Stationers' products, may indicate either low press runs or poor distribution networks, or both. The Cambridge press was a small operation and could well have had trouble producing large numbers of diverse almanacs for a November deadline.

The Stationers' Company's lucrative and important almanac operation had in nearly four decades established a settled lineup of almanacs that depended less on the survival of individual brands and more on the proper distribution of its highly conventionalized array of component features. The almanacs were spiced (or sometimes not) by the

---

[388] McKitterick, *Cambridge University Press,* 203

personalities of the compilers and their particular interests and obsessions. But the maintenance of the independent existence and evident popularity of those component features clearly emerged as the business plan. Certain features showed increasing appeal – the roads and routes of England, for instance, which grew in frequency and presence from a low point at the beginning of the Stationers' management of almanacs to steady, regular appearances in the last period (1625-40). Still, if the Stationers' Company had not had those decades of unchallenged primacy in the almanac trade and the resulting stability and acceptance of the product, the challenge of the university press could have been much more of a threat.

With the exception of Sofford and Perkins's (and Dove's) extended historical timelines, the Stationers' almanacs had already achieved a settled and growing relationship between its offerings of features – carefully managed on the basis of sales experience – and a public that annually made its preferences known. The most popular features represented, broadly, interest in an orderly prospect for the next year with events calendarized; reminders of the worst that could happen and remedial strategies for sidestepping those pitfalls; and an expanding understanding of the natural and political world in which that public lived in a changing nation.

Chapter 7 CONCLUSION: Almanacs and their Engagement with an Emerging Public 1595-1640

If newspapers produced what [Benedict] Anderson calls an "imagined community," then who could have produced the "imagined community" characterizing an emergent nation if not people who already thought they belonged to that community?[389]

DEVELOPMENT PATTERNS: THE STATIONERS' ALMANACS 1603-1640

The era of the English civil wars was an intensely political era as historians, political scientists and even the contemporary participants have recognized. For many historians it is as exciting a subject as any in English history. The story of Charles I's eventually fatal conflict with Parliament is indeed a fascinating one that this dissertation has very nearly ignored. Instead, the focus has been on a genre of cheap print in England that also virtually ignored the conflict that was going on right before its metaphorical eyes.

And scholars of the stature of Sheila Lambert have claimed that print did not have much to do with the politics of the era.

This was, on the other hand, an era exemplified by much higher participation from non-elite, ordinary people than in previous periods of conflict. The level of political discussion among the soldiers of the

---

[389] Nancy Armstrong and Leonard Tennenhouse, *The Imaginary Puritan: Literature, Intellectual Labor, and the Origins of Personal Life* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), 148.

parliamentary forces, called the New Model Army, is acknowledged to have been extraordinary.[390] Scholars like Lambert may have been taking too narrow a view, too rarified a definition, of politics. For the common people of England, Wales, and for some periods Scotland, the civil wars era's politics were personal, intensely local and intimately related to households and their success or devastation. The avenues for agency and emancipation – via information – from the strictures of the Great Chain of Being paradigm proved to be critically important.

Part of this growing sensibility came, this dissertation has argued, from individuals' wider understanding of their place and potential in society; of the mental and physical geography of England, the emerging nation-state; and of nature and the human body as integral parts of a "system of the world." In the absence of printed "news" of the periodical, recapitulative sort, other kinds of print built up these understandings. Cheap print reinforced and stabilized the fertile, but evanescent oral substrate of community understanding. Almanacs, in their annual appearances, ubiquity, accessibility and utility, did more than any other single print genre to forward this new understanding and prepare a public for news.

The path of development of the Stationers' Company almanacs as a

---

[390] On the "Putney Debates" when common soldiers challenged their generals about the postwar future, see Hirst, *Conflict*, 245; Hill, *The World Turned Upside Down*, 67.

maturing genre, as shown in the previous chapter, mixes innovation and caution. The plan evidently adopted by the behind-the-scenes managers of the almanac trade within the Stationers' Company was to broaden the choice of almanacs and their features to penetrate as deeply as possible into the potential public for this cheap, ubiquitous print product.

The development of the Stationers' almanacs from 1595-1640 occurs on several different levels. On one level, the almanacs presented a diet of their most popular component features in the composite vehicles of brand-name almanacs whose tenure of years showed their staying power. On another level, those features had their own independent careers when considered as discrete units (forms of information) of this highly complex and articulated product. On still another level, the Stationers' strategy – to provide a diverse stable of almanac brands to maximize sales and brand loyalty – is indicated by those features' rational, steadily proportional deployment within that lineup in the genre.

As noted, productions under the royal patent were exempt from the Stationers' internal prohibition against keeping type "standing" for longer than it took to print a specific issue with a standard maximum run of about 1,500 copies. The other profitable patents, the schoolbooks and psalters, were printed in long runs on the same "standing formes." So would it have made sense for the Stationers to print just one version of

the almanac, with as much standing type as possible and in long press runs? It would have simplified their task as the panic moments approached, occasioned by the drop-dead November deadline for shipping next year's almanacs. Bernard Capp builds a strong case for the Stationers' impulse toward maximum efficiency and economy in the production of almanacs.[391]

Instead, the Stationers expanded on the practice of Watkins and Roberts. Those two early monopolists (1571-1603) had printed from three to five distinct almanacs each year, with brand names that were becoming known to, and sought by, purchasers. Each of them varied slightly in its offerings, because the forty- or forty-eight-page limit that kept the almanacs cheap could not accommodate all the popular features in one edition. The Stationers' almanac lineup followed suit, but expanded in number almost from the start, and with a few hiccups approached double digits in title numbers at the end of the first decade of the Stationers' direct management of the genre. Instead of expecting almanac users to purchase one unchanging form of the almanac, the Stationers—in what seems in retrospect a brilliant anticipation of brand profusion and consumer choice as illustrated by today's supermarket shelves – opted for a variety of different editions. Despite the additional difficulty of managing up to fifteen idiosyncratic compilers and fifteen or

---

[391] For instance, *Almanacs*, 41.

more separate print runs all aimed at a November distribution date, the

Stationers' almanac regime would put more different almanacs in more

different households, very likely, than they could ever have accomplished

with one.[392]

Reprise: The Research Questions

This project's original research questions are answered by the

evidence developed in the previous chapter's analysis of the Stationers'

Company almanacs from 1595-1640.

1. The widespread purchase and use of almanacs in pre-civil wars
   early modern England *significantly* affected the growth of a public
   for information.

   1a. The Stationers' Company leadership managed its monopoly on the
   almanac trade to maximize profits and customer base.

   1b. The annual almanacs, known mostly for astrological forecasting,
   actually also provided distinct features with factual information useful
   in everyday life.

   1c. The year-to-year changes in component features offered in annual
   almanacs 1595-1640 provided evidence of public preferences and the
   Stationers' profit-optimizing response to that public appetite for
   information as represented by those features.

Contours of Development

This inquiry was premised on a complicated reflexive inference.

The ordinary folk here called "non-elites" left little record of what kind,

degree and quantity of information they believed important to their lives.

---

[392] The identities of all these compilers can be ambiguous, especially in those cases where "family" brand names are continued with different first names, as in Woodhouse or Dade. After the Restoration the Stationers apparently had some compilers writing under several different almanac compiler pseudonyms. Capp, *Almanacs*, 43 notes several Restoration compilers who, payment records show, compiled up to seven almanacs in one year for the Stationers.

All historians, but especially historians of mass media and communication history, want to know more about the information appetite and menu of ordinary folk of the early modern era – the rising working class and emergent bourgeoisie that would become the customers of mass information media like the newsbooks and newspapers. The half-century during which the Stationers' Company had the lucrative almanac trade all to itself provided a natural experiment for analysis by researchers.

In this comparatively controlled set of conditions, the contours of a public's perceived needs for information became apparent. The composite, conventionalized features of the almanac of 1595-1640 made it possible to identify a discrete number of forms of information – component features – that appeared or disappeared in individual almanacs. Because the entire plenum of English-language almanacs was controlled by one profit-oriented entity, the assortment of informational features offered by the totality of that almanac population would be optimized by the managers for maximum customer penetration throughout the nation. The information offered was an effective assessment of the public's perceived information needs, though that public left no report on that in the historical record.

If the Stationers' Company was the nascent capitalist enterprise hypothesized here, then the printers and booksellers would have tried to

provide the widest feasible range of choices in almanacs to the customers who made it their biggest meal ticket. The more choices, the more customers and the more profit to be made from the forty-page (or forty-eight-page) ranking representative of "cheap popular print." The scope of the almanacs' public (the consensus is one out of every three families) and the articulated nature of each edition – full of features drawn from a proven menu of popular offerings – affords a reflexive portrait of what this growing information public wanted.

In Chapter 4 the Stationers' dependence on the income from the English Stock was outlined, as well as the Company's frequent profit-seeking behavior in other aspects of its business. In classic early capitalist fashion the almanacs whose monopoly was enjoyed by the printers and booksellers reached a wider and wider audience through the elaboration of Watkins' and Roberts' original method of providing a range of brand-named purchases to the consumer. The non-random degree to which component features were provided for all potential customers, despite the constraints of pagination, in at least rough proportion to their apparent popularity becomes clear in the timeline table of features frequency. The early stumbles and uncertainties about the appeal of some features and some almanacs were apparent in the 1603-1615 period. By 1615, the Company had established a pattern of production that produced ten or twelve almanacs every year, many with "specialties" in one or several popular features with which they became associated.

Table 4.1 feature frequency 1595-1640 as percentages

PERIOD	TOTAL 1595-1640	1595-1615	1616-1625	1626-1640
Total almanacs	375	107	122	146
Articulating the civic year				
Sort	82%	80%	86%	79%
Blank	18%	20%	14%	21%
Bicalendar	66%	65%	61%	71%
Court terms	90%	84%	90%	94%
Royal reigns	44%	20%	43%	64%
Fairs of England	29%	24%	31%	29%
Citizenship, civitas, nation				
History timelines	65%	44%	63%	82%
Royal reigns	44%	20%	43%	64%
Gazetteer	9%	5%	11%	12%
World cities	4%	7%	6%	0%
Roads/routes	12%	11%	13%	12%
Fairs of England	29%	24%	31%	29%
Mastery of nature & body				
Quarterlies	86%	83%	86%	88%
Monthlies	44%	36%	45%	45%
Monthly good/bad	21%	50%	14%	1%
Physick	5%	4%	3%	7%
Phys/husbandry	80%	79%	85%	75%
Tide tables	33%	21%	47%	32%
Zodiacal Body	87%	92%	84%	86%
Calc helpers	2%	10%	26%	27%
Eclipses	70%	57%	70%	80%

After that period of experimentation, the almanac managers found that the features developed under Watkins and Roberts had appeal and staying power, and offerings stabilized largely according to that formula.

Most years there were one or two "blanks," forty-eight-page almanacs with room for memoranda alongside the printed calendar page in the front of the book. The individual features that, though popular, consumed a half-dozen or so pages (the fairs listings and the roads guide) were more difficult to include in these small octavo books but nearly always were in one or two almanacs. Those that were confined, mostly, to one rather modular page could be inserted in various positions in the almanac and had a very high frequency of appearance. Session terms for civil courts, one-page historical timelines and the list of English monarchs and their reigns were most frequent, all contributing to wider knowledge in the information public of the scope of the nation and the individual's place and agency within it. The twelve-month calendar in the front of the book was never absent and contained in its busy, ruled columns a variety of material relating to both the religious and secular calendar of the coming year. Features that were implicated with astrology and prediction, such as the quarters (seasons) and monthly prognostications were of more variable scope and space considerations but also very frequent. Less frequent, but almost always present in at least one almanac every year, were the gazetteer-type features, lists of towns and parishes that added to the mental map of the nation.

It became clear over time that stability and consistency of features within a brand made it easier for the potential customers to find the information they wanted, especially if their level of literacy was low. Many of the almanacs were as pedestrian and predictable as Don Cameron Allen said they were, and yet they were some of the longest-lasting brands. John White, John/William Dade, even the religious malcontent Richard Allestree, provided the same menu virtually every year. Buying the same almanac brand each year and finding that it had the same, desired features was a gratification for the consumer. Finding that the compiler (or printer) had altered the pattern of composition from the previous year, on the other hand, might not have encouraged the repeat customers that made almanacs such a profitable, ongoing operation for the Stationers' Company. It should not escape notice that securing repeat customers is the linchpin of any kind of journalism, weekly or daily. Almanacs – and only almanacs – established that mental pattern in their users early in the parade of print culture's history.

The Stationers inevitably found themselves at the crossroads of most successful capitalist ventures: if the enterprise is profitable, it will get imitators. Though the Company had felt secure in its monopoly, the printers at Cambridge University persuaded James I's Privy Council to give them a piece of the almanac business in 1623, and then began publishing almanacs under their own imprint in 1625. The Stationers' Company flinched somewhat, reducing its number of almanacs in the

1630s, while Cambridge produced nearly as many almanac titles as the Stationers in some of those years.

It was the classic reversal of fortune typical of capitalism's risk-and-reward existence, but *the proportion of features in the almanacs that the Stationers produced remained consistent* with the pattern established in the earlier decades. And the Cambridge almanacs, by and large, imitated the patterns established by the Stationers. By the end of the decade (1630-40), Cambridge's production was down to three or four a year while the Stationers maintained a level of seven or eight. And in 1639 the Stationers paid the Cambridge printers off (provided an annual payment), gave them the printing of a few of their own almanacs, and essentially quashed the challenge by absorbing the Cambridge printers within their larger almanac empire. The narrative of the Stationers' conflict with the Cambridge printers and its outcome was not a deviation from but a confirmation of the Stationers' mercantilist instincts as a guild, which led their leadership to exploit the appetite for basic information, extend its reach to the widest possible public and always, always manage for optimal revenue.

There are no total almanac sales or distribution figures available for the decade of the battle with the Cambridge printers, so the picture presented by the comparative numbers of almanacs published by the dueling printers is incomplete. As mentioned, however, the Cambridge

printers did not have the distribution network for almanacs that the Stationers had developed over the years. The Company had bookseller members in cities and towns all over England and Wales, and routines for supplying them that it is hard to imagine the Cambridge printers were able to match.[393] It seems likely, then, that the Stationers printed more copies of each of their almanacs than Cambridge did. Cambridge was a small shop and printing large quantities of as many as six or seven different almanacs in a deadline rush aimed at November distribution had to be a mortal strain. Had the Stationers, with their twenty to twenty-five or more printing establishments in London, not maintained a significant advantage over the Cambridge printers, it seems unlikely they would have found that £200 a year payoff worth their while, or even achievable.

The Stationers Company enjoyed a public built by three decades of managing almanacs *as a group* to provide *different assortments and combinations* of popular features to please the appetite of most subgroups within that public. That public appeared to have stuck by the Stationers' brands in the early years of Charles I's reign even with the attractions of Cambridge's new almanacs and the educated gloss of

---

[393] Barry Reay, *Popular Cultures in England 1550-1750* (New York: Longman, 1998), 49, paraphrasing Spufford, ed., *The World of Rural Dissenters 1520-1725* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 47-55, 236-40, on the "wide distribution networks of the early modern English print trade…."

university publishing.

The durability and popularity of those brand-named combinations, although unsupported by print-run figures (which don't surface until 1664), was nevertheless established by the fleeting ascension of the Cambridge almanacs, their decline – and the fact that the Cambridge printers really could not find much that was new to offer in the way of almanacs that was not already being offered by the Stationers.[394]

The staying power of some of the Stationers' almanac brands and the fleeting existence of others also demonstrated the durability of many of the most-common combinations. Ultimately, the Stationers learned a lesson still important – and sometimes overlooked, to their peril – by publishers of later years including those of today. That lesson is that settled formats that are in the customers' comfort zone should not be meddled with idly. Users of weekly, daily and even today's web-based media with a high degree of content and format churn have been imposing that lesson for centuries on media managers too quick to disturb the customer's comfort zone with layout or content changes.[395]

---

[394] As mentioned, Cambridge's most impressive innovation (in *Rivers 1627*) was incorporating both the roads and routes features (seven pages) and the list of fairs for the year (eleven pages) in one forty-page sort. The use of a Ramist (quite academic) bracket system in two and three columns per page appeared to have been part of the trick, though it actually does not seem to have saved many pages. The Stationers printed a "Rivers" knockoff in 1628, but (more used to being imitated than imitating) included neither of those lengthy features.

[395] Daily newspaper managers who spring a "redesign" on readers, complete with new headline faces, radically different layout and shifts in the emphasis of coverage have to be ready for serious pushback from those readers. Daily papers have the ability to respond to those criticisms quickly, weekly less so and annual almanacs must wait a year to repair relations with users who feel jilted by the dropping of a

And the qualities of that independent group of conventional almanac component features can be seen as confirming the premise here – that there was a range of information and stimulation that ordinary folk in early modern England wanted or learned to want, that almanacs provided that range of information with increasing responsiveness to the public. In fact, print products and the users interacted in significant ways that echoed the social forces and changes leading up to civil conflict in 1642. Certain features were popular and drove almanac sales, visibility and a growing public.

The second research question asked if the features were indeed a mix of astrology and factual information, and how that might have borne on their popularity. As categorized here, the features tabulated in this study spoke to users' needs for factual information about the coming year's religious, civic and mercantile aspects. In the columnar calendar in the front of the book, the saints' days and feasts were merged with the secular calendars. The calendar into which those facts were integrated was (as it is now) dictated by the presence and behavior of the sun and moon, which also were central to the compiler's predictions about the everyday for the next year. Sunrise and sunset, and the moon's quarters, also appeared in the combinatory columns of that front-of-the-book

---

feature. Sometimes the readers will not wait and jump to another source; sometimes the publishers do not have enough patience to tough it out while the public accommodates itself to the new format and begins to see it as routine, not unusual.

calendar. The users also sought information about the terrain on which they lived and worked, stretching from local parish and county to the scope of the emerging nation-state. For this reason, almanacs included court terms, fair dates, the roads that led from town to town and the gazetteers that enumerated those towns and cities. And the almanac's purchasers sought information about health, remedies for sickness and guidance on crops and farm animals. In that category also was information about the natural world, from the heavens on down, and how nature might be managed to the user's benefit.

The motions of sun and moon were intimately implicated with the structure of the entirely factual, non-hypothetical shape of the next year's various calendars. Sun and moon, in turn, generated the predictions and rules of nature and health at the core of astrological prediction in their relations to the other planets and to the signs of the zodiac. Untangling factual information from astrological prediction and guidance within these categories, then, is clearly difficult for today's reader. Most of the strictly astrological information found in the pre-civil wars almanacs (as in those of today) amounted to fluid degrees of probability rather than offering the certainty of a calendar, a list of fairs or a prose map of roads. When the almanac hinted at a bad crop year, there was a fair chance, experientially based, that a palpably good one would not materialize. If the compiler suggested, based on the confluence of planets, that the coming summer would yield certain diseases, the

likelihood that some neighbor would sicken or die of one of them was not low. Phlebotomy (bloodletting) was so inherently risky that following – or not following – the almanac's guidance about phases of the moon during which bloodletting should be avoided was likely to look prescient no matter what the outcome.

As for the weather predictions based on astrological calculations, they were often explicitly hedged by the compilers who offered them. Many compilers, as noted, included non-astrological methods of predicting immediate, next-day weather through traditional natural divination, such as by observing clouds or animal behavior. Still others provided tables for calculating weather from planetary interactions for the coming year – a reader's do-it-yourself package – and explicitly renounced weather prediction because it brought them nothing but ridicule and criticism. It is likely that users of the early modern almanac saw their little volume as a compound of facts and probabilities, most of the time, and looked skeptically at weather predictions made a year in advance regardless of their level of belief in the art of the stars.

Almanacs, Users and the Nature of the Periodical

No doubt the annual almanacs created and enlarged a public for *periodical* information, regularly updated. They were annual, but they were *reliably* annual. C. John Somerville had an interesting, almost conspiratorial perspective on the introduction of the periodical publication. "Periodicity is about economics," Somerville said in *The*

News Revolution in England. "Periodicity is a marketing strategy, a way of holding property in information – information of the most ordinary sort." Later on the same page he argued that "[e]vents are natural but periodical news is a manufactured product."[396] His subsequent discussion suggested that periodical publications, geared to profit and repeat business, entrapped the consumer in an unnecessary news cycle that did not match the pace of events. He implicated almanacs in the early growth of periodicity, but not for the right reason: "The first hint of a commercial motive behind periodicity is found in the sixteenth-century almanacs that printed summaries of the previous year's events," he wrote, referencing Anthony Smith's enormously valuable *The Newspaper: An International History*.[397] However, Somerville accepted Smith's characterization of *Mercure Francais* (first published in 1611) as an "almanac," although Smith was imprecise in his characterization. *Mercure Francais* (or *Francois*) was indeed an annually published history of the previous year but it was not called an almanac by its makers and had none of the features of English almanacs of the time. It was a chronicle-style recounting of the previous year, sprightly and well printed but it was no almanac. When periodical news publications appeared during the English civil wars, they were frequently called "mercuries,"

---

[396] Somerville, *News Revolution in England*, 4, 19-20.
[397] Anthony Smith, *The Newspaper: An International History* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1979), 9.

and that was no accident.[398]

This research supports Somerville about the incentives to engage in periodical publishing, and these incentives were exploited by the Stationers' Company in building this early version of a public of lifetime learners. "Periodical publication reduced the financial risk to publishers by guaranteeing a steady return," he observed, and later:

> Periodicity produced a revolution in consciousness every bit as important as the introduction of printing, though it has gone unnoticed in our histories and even in communications theory. … Periodicity allowed information to become a business, where it had once been a part of personal relations.[399]

The almanacs, periodicals but not primarily providers of news, played their part in the development of the next generation of periodical news publications by providing the consistent information base about everyday routine, the patterns of time enclosed within a year, <mark>that</mark> is essential if the "newness" of news is to make sense.

As best outlined by Rhodes and Sawday in *The Renaissance Computer*, the features in almanacs – simultaneously text and image – provided a scaffold for improving literacy at most levels. Almanacs served as "knowledge technology"[400] for the less lettered as well as the better-

---

[398] *Mercure Francois*, http://mercurefrancois.ehess.fr/index.php?/categories , accessed 11 Aug 2014.
[399] Somerville, *News Revolution*, 21, 161.
[400] Print as technology "reversed" the "fragmentation of understanding, and of the individual's sense of their own place within the world…" that resulted from the "collapse of an ancient form of knowledge organization…" Rhodes and Sawday, *Renaissance Computer*, 184.

educated. In the component features' dual existence as text and image, especially in terms of the tabular and calculable material, they served the user in two ways. They provided both facts/content that was woven into an emerging collective schema of ideas about order and orderliness in everyday life, and the framework of that order, which could be manipulated scientifically to gain further facts/content as desired. As Rhodes pointed out, each user had a unique purpose for the almanac – and maybe a different one the next day, or the next month – but also was aware that many copies of that same brand-name almanac were being read and used all over England.

Almanacs as Image, Paratext and Content

As a combination of imagery, typography and navigability, the almanac routinized and conventionalized the component content features that were the markers of the genre. This hybrid conformation has been called "paratextuality" and bears strongly on the contention here that this form, this genre, specifically boosted whatever literacy the individual user brought to the reading act. This was a long-term rather than instantaneous change. But when last year's almanac looked like this year's new one – the sameness that Don Cameron Allen scoffed at – the only somewhat literate could immediately enter a comfort zone, where her or his level of literacy could be advanced in small increments at an individualized pace.

It took several more centuries and the insight of L.S. Vygotsky to

identify this "zone of proximal development" where the learner could take part in her or his own development of a skill, often with the guidance of "more competent peers" but out from under the authoritarian rule of the early modern schoolmaster, whose teaching strategy often started with shaming and frequently included corporal punishment. In the zone of proximal development, any student – or any human – is exposed to a new level of skill far enough advanced to be challenging and engaging but not so advanced that it frustrates the student or causes the student to shut down learning. Now Vygotsky's notion of this comfort zone of challenge without frustration, in various forms, is central to many methods of teaching, including the teaching of reading.[401] The combination of orienting imagery, typographical accents (headings), Ramist arrangement of text on the page and tabular devices for organization and calculation made the almanac singular among print products of its day, and (for better or worse) anticipated some of the design strategies of late twentieth-century textbooks.

Almanacs were a genre and users responded to the identifying characteristics outlined above. The advantages of that generic identity, and the frankly imitative qualities that made almanacs easy to characterize as boring and unchanging, kept the genre alive in the minds and eyes of users and purchasers from year to year but certainly

---

[401] L. S. Vygotsky, *Mind in Society: The Development of Higher Psychological Processes*, ed. and trans. Michael Cole et al. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1978), 86.

discouraged adventurous variation.

This examination of individual brands and their fates over the years showed that the risks of adventurism were very much present from 1603 to 1640. Arthur Sofford's excursion into a long-form historical timeline, space-consuming and unusual, appeared to have paid off with a long and successful run (1618-1641). But Augustine Upcote, who began compiling almanacs just a few years earlier in 1614, provided a standard almanac although he dropped the iconic Zodiacal Body image in 1617 and 1618. He restored it in 1619 but that was his last issue, so customers who did not recognize an almanac without the image may have already given up on him. Richard Allestree, on the other hand, dropped the same image for good well into his long run (1617-1651) and was apparently not penalized. It is worth noting that in all other aspects of almanac composition Allestree, an intensely and overtly religious compiler, provided an unvarying diet of the most popular features.

The argument in this inquiry has been that almanacs in a quasi-encyclopedic way provided a recurrent information base for their users. On a regular and (putatively) updated schedule they offered a way for individuals and groups to envision a "normal" society, including issues of health, relationship to nature as a science-based order and nurturer, relationship to a deity, as well as relationship to the economy and civil society and an individual's place in an emerging nation-state.

All of these inputs also would have been available to ordinary folk of early modern England from a variety of other publications of the Stationers' Company. Self-help books became popular early in James I's reign and remained so for the balance of the seventeenth century.[402] They included various forms of household management and home health information. There were books and even pamphlets about the history and present state of England, many factual more than polemical. But they were expensive and often hard to navigate (though detailed tables of contents began to appear with later editions of the self-help books). For the laborer or farm worker, a two-penny, forty-page almanac provided all this information that one needed (albeit abbreviated) in one place and was equipped with easy-to-follow guideposts. The readily grasped identity of the genre, and its ubiquity in city and countryside, were powerful selling points for users to buy a new almanac every November. When an early modern almanac user had more than two pennies to spend on print, a self-help book might be next. Years of reading, or struggling to read, the almanacs would have sharpened that user's literacy, perhaps sufficiently to tackle one of the self-help books. Almanacs can be called gateway print.

Almanacs' ubiquity and popularity fulfils the notion of contemporaneity. The almanac's user bought it because it was popular

---

[402] Bennett, *Books and Readers 1603-1640* [vol. 3], 150.

and widely known. The user could not fail to be aware that she or he was thumbing through it at the same time, in the same year, as many others, perhaps in search of the same information about tides, the convening of county courts, or the interest rates charged on loans. The contemporaneity involved in owning and using an almanac translated eventually into a contemporaneous sense of what information was needed to make sense of the religious, civic and natural worlds in which the user simultaneously lived. This consciousness is essential to the creation of a self-aware public for information. In Daniel Woolf's words (speaking more broadly of news in all its printed, manuscript and oral forms), such a wide dissemination of print products, diverse brand by brand but identical within brand identities, "expand[ed] the number of people simultaneously reading or discussing variant versions of the same news … and eventually regularized the rate at which events were transmitted and the intervals between transmissions."[403]

Speaking of the astrological core of French almanacs, Geneviève Bollème observed that astrology was central to the almanac because it offered a coherent view of the future and considered the year as a totality within which individuals could better manage their needs and fortunes. Astrology, she said, partakes of dreams and the "verbal form of the

---

[403] Woolf, "News, History and the Construction of the Present," 83.

romance" to foresee both the foreseeable and the unforeseeable.[404]

This observation is an important insight for the perplexing question of whether the astrology in almanacs was essential to their popularity or an entertaining add-on. The debate over whether astrology was deeply believed by most early modern people at every social level or not was mentioned above; it is hard to imagine its being settled absent the sudden recovery of widespread testimony from those not previously represented in the historical record.

Bollème's observation put the astrological, predictive content of the almanac in the context of the "small books and pleasant histories" described by Margaret Spufford. She described a category of popular narratives that allowed readers (or listeners) of all social classes to live the lives of others, to imagine oneself in situations that one might never be in, or want to be in – part of the "mental furniture" of "non-gentles" in the era.[405] But the uncertainty of life for early modern people made this opportunity for rehearsal a mental exercise or thought-experiment that was both satisfying and necessary. Additionally, it served as a structured reminder of what scenarios might visit the nation, the neighborhood or oneself. The high rates of mortality events and their scale, as well as the frequency of bad harvests and untrammeled natural disasters, made

---

[404] Bollème, *Les almanachs populaire aux XVII et XVIII siècles: essai d'histoire sociale* (Paris: Mouton & Co., 1969), 49.
[405] Spufford, *Small Books and Pleasant Histories,* xviii.

early modern life uncertain in ways that moderns can only imagine, or perhaps not even imagine.

Like today's popular fictions of "counterfactual history," predictions for the coming year outlined more or less plausible and characteristic scenarios of coping, even "good and bad days," for individuals and groups that could be factored into one's plans for the year – a rehearsal of the possibilities. If these (usually bad) predictions did not take place, all the better. But if they did it was better to have had some warning, rehearsed some response. The gratification of fiction, and its counterpart in the predictions of the almanac, turned out to have a use for the early modern English, as for their counterparts in other places and other times.

This project has schematically followed the careers of twenty of the most common component features in almanacs as they appeared, year by year, in almanacs from 1595-1640. What is most significant about these component features was not changes so much as lack of them. The features from 1603 to 1640 showed remarkable consistency in their presence in the overall mix. The conclusion is that the almanac public (a rather smaller one in 1603, inherited from Watkins and Roberts) had essentially settled on its preferences in almanac components by, or in the decade encompassing, 1603. Following suit, the Stationers' almanac managers maintained the proportion of each feature in the overall

almanac mix despite the comings and goings of individual compilers and their brands.

What has emerged from this analysis is that the almanacs were roughly measured out to their public with a variety of popular features, combined and recombined to attract the widest possible customer base. The features that proved most popular broadly enabled almanac users to:

- expand their understanding of their emerging nation-state and its economy;
- gain a flavor of the way emerging science and systematic knowledge were becoming more significant to their everyday practices, including home medicine and husbandry (agriculture);
- recognize the way this "new science" both complemented and conflicted with their religious ideas – which were increasingly coming under stress in their own right;
- enhance their own agency in coping with and adapting to the changing early modern world; and
- build an information base that made acquisition of further critical information – in its time, including news – more manageable.

What has been most illuminating about the independent careers of these component features as detailed in the "features frequency 1595-1640" table is not some massive increase in popularity of individual

features over time. That was frankly the expectation and hope in this project – that some features would predominate and show palpable changes in the information needs of the almanacs' public that would be indices of a growing self-consciousness and agency in that public. Several component features did show measurable gains over time – the "roads and routes" account of how to get around the nation, and the timeline of monarchs' reigns. It is possible to suggest that these changes signified growing activity among almanac users in travel and trade, in developing political self-awareness, and in creating documents to mirror their lives and households. But by and large, changes in the frequency of these component features did not take place. The researcher's expectation that public sensibility in an age of print would change in the half-century preceding the civil wars – a change measurable, at any rate, in the framework of this analytical scheme – was not fulfilled. Felt needs for information seemed to have been expressed at a steady rate. Watkins and Roberts – and, following them, the Stationers' managers of the almanac trade – responded to late-Elizabethan authorities' concerns about astrology and prediction by removing most of the provocative material from the almanacs. So some potential bellwether forms of information that might have been particularly sought as the first decades of the seventeenth century accelerated toward conflict are absent from the almanacs.

The remarkable result, instead, is that despite the changes in

numbers of almanacs and in their brands, the component features remained consistent. That, itself, is strong evidence of a managed outcome.

LIMITATIONS OF THIS STUDY AND UNEXPLORED TERRAIN

Readers of this dissertation can reasonably question both the choice of component features for examination, and the commensurability of those features. The twenty features being surveyed exclude some features that appeared invariantly, such as the half-page list of important movable feasts for the coming year that was on the first inside page of every almanac. A few – although very few – almanacs omitted the prognostication front, the second title page that generally separated front of book from back of book. But the prognostication front was not included as a feature because its absence appeared a vagary of the individual printer's convenience rather than a choice by the compiler. The movable feasts calendar was information; the second cover was often a space for promoting the almanac's back-of-the-book components. But neither appeared to be a choice as the appearance or nonappearance of other component features appeared to be. The researcher's goal in choosing the surveyed features was to illustrate options.

It is worth discussing the commensurability of features. Identifying the twenty features from almanac to almanac was often a reductive

process – a lowest common denominator version of the feature qualified. As mentioned, the eclipses were sometimes a major part of the astrologer's discussion, especially if they could be viewed from some part of England. Other compilers devoted only two or three sentences to the eclipses for the year. Some included woodcut diagrams illustrating the eclipse's stages. But as long as there was a typographically distinct heading, "eclipses," that almanac was identified as having that feature, that year.

Other component features that showed significant variations were the court terms and the history timeline. The basic court terms entry was a tabular, often ruled single page that showed the four terms for quarter-session courts, their openings and closings. In some almanacs, though never consistently, a second page (sometimes facing the first) would appear with dates for the important national courts, such as Star Chamber and the Court of the High Commission for Causes Ecclesiastic, the civil and religious prerogative courts. One page or two, the entry is simply "court terms" for that almanac, that year. And, as mentioned, some almanacs, like Sofford and Perkins (and Cambridge's Jonathan Dove), came to specialize in a many-paged timeline from the Creation that included far more historical events – Perkins, for example, published as many as thirteen pages. Because it forced the omission of other features choices, this certainly represented more of a commitment than the single-page historical timeline that was characteristic of most other

almanac appearances. Some of these distinctive efforts may have made their almanacs more attractive to purchasers, such as those in the long-running Sofford (1618-1641). But they appear uniformly in the survey, regardless of the number of pages. Some of the reductionist results of this method may have further flattened some differences among almanacs.

Other Limitations

The chapters preceding this have been, it is necessary to recall, a study in media history, not in the history of early modern Britain. Conducted by a student researcher in the United States who has undertaken no research in the many scattered libraries that hold copies of early modern English almanacs, it must be viewed accordingly.

This project has schematically followed the fates of twenty selected features that were common in almanacs printed in England from 1595 to 1640. The fortuitous fact of the Stationers' monopoly on almanac production and sales from 1603 to 1640 created something of a natural experiment, comparatively closed to intervening factors (at least until 1625 and the Cambridge incursion). That opportunity is rare in history. The important material that slipped through the cracks of such a process includes the quality of the work provided by almanac compilers, along with their backgrounds and their motivations for taking on a poorly paid task that set them up for carping criticism. Glimpses of those factors

emerged from anecdotal observations in the course of the narrative of almanac development from 1595-1640, but the evidence that would give a rounded portrait of this singular group is scant and scattered. Much of what is known was found and presented by Eustace Bosanquet and Bernard Capp, but as a minor theme in their work. Since their efforts, the scope of research has remained narrow.

Another important factor still to be explored is the reliability of the information provided to users. Did the apparent high numbers of sales in the period reflect real, recurrent confidence placed by this information public in the accuracy of those features that were not dependent on prediction, such as the tide tables or court terms? The attitude of the users, as always, is the last factor that can be found in the record. But the accuracy of the roads guide, or the fairs listings, could be checked and compared among almanacs of the same year, just as early almanac critics compared wildly variant weather predictions for a given year in that year's almanacs. As for the weather predictions, their futility was already well picked over by contemporary commentators and probably contributed to what skepticism had evolved about the value of astrological prognostication. It might be noted however that humanity had succeeded and failed at predicting the weather since the beginning of its existence, and even with the scientific knowledge and technology available to professional meterologists today, failure is still experienced as well as success.

The degree of comparability between the Stationers' almanacs and their competition – whether almanacs from the university presses after 1625 or self-help books providing deeper, or just different, looks at the medicine, husbandry and life management of the day – is little explored here and should be pursued in future studies.

This project suggests that users of these English almanacs learned much about what it meant to be English and becoming British[406] and about the shape, economy and peoples of the emerging nation(s). Many of the almanacs were keyed to locations other than London and showed specific local attachments and interests. An examination of how they sold in their home areas might be possible, though the evidence is again sparse. Perhaps these almanacs reinforce the "localness" that was a principal impediment to consolidation of Oliver Cromwell's republican realm from 1650 to 1659. Did the Stationers seek almanac compilers from parts of the nation where sales were weak in order to improve the reach of the genre lineup? Most almanac covers clearly stated the town, county or region for which their predications were calculated; this could have attracted the eyes of local buyers. It remains to be seen if this shows signs of systematic purpose.

---

[406] Starting with the accession of James I, who was also James VI of Scotland, England and Scotland were two separate kingdoms that shared an island and a monarch, and were in no way sure how to cope with this unique, somewhat bizarre situation. Scotland and England would not become a united political entity until 1707. And even so, that union was just challenged in September 2014, surviving – for now.

Epilogue: Prophecy Falls Behind Events in Time of War

One of the early questions that spurred this inquiry was this: If almanacs were so useful and familiar to the one-third of English households that owned them, why didn't they morph into more frequently published news products as needed – for instance, in wartime? This exploration of this historical record made it clear that this would have been an unlikely outcome.

Almanacs were already *too* specific of format and purpose, too complex and "articulated," as civil war hostilities began, to be easily altered (consistent with maintaining their popularity) to carry the news accounts that a growing public sought in order to be informed and safe. Almanacs had become a well-defined genre and their brand role, including their annual frequency, was fixed in the minds of the public they themselves had created. A shift of almanacs – which for half a century had remained largely apolitical – to tackling the many-sided political and religious conflict that was the civil wars would have been disorienting to users and damaging to the genre identity. [407]

Evidence is strong, as well, that the Stationers' Company license and stake in the almanac would have been considered too valuable by these businesslike publishers (among them many Royalist sympathizers)

---

[407] The few exceptions prove the rule. Even the most popular astrologer of the seventeenth century, William Lilly, only tried to break the annual mold once during the conflict by publishing a second, updated edition of his 1644 almanac, *Merlinus Anglicus Jr.,* in spring of that year.

to allow them to readily (and, from their perspective, riskily) alter the meal-ticket genre to adapt to the fast-moving requirements of the civil wars era.

It was the specificity of form and articulated, conventional sectionalization of almanacs of this era that made them *accessible* precursors of the later, pioneering yet one-dimensional newsbooks. The almanacs had been, for decades, steadily building an information public with varying but always-increasing literacies. But their business was to cover the year, not last week or even yesterday.

Previous investigators have not explored how an apparently ready-made public for regular, brand-identifiable news during the civil war era was created during the essentially peaceful prior half-century. This inquiry has endeavored to demonstrate that there was a wide, economically and socially diverse public for information, or news in the process of being created through the popularity of the almanac, the Swiss Army knife of early modern publishing. That regularly appearing vehicle for information laid the ground of the familiar and "normal" against which the unusual – and fast-moving – events of the civil wars era could readily be cast, and understood.

Always Cautious, the Almanacs Ignore the Civil Wars

During the wartime period, 1642-59, almanacs continued to publish but took little part in the national debate. Capp's summary is

that most of the sorts "chose to ignore [the conflict's] existence for the next twenty years," that is, 1640 to 1660.[408]

Some well-known brands cautiously backed Parliament (some later to flip-flop for the Restoration) and patriotic fervor welled in the almanacs during various of Cromwell's conflicts outside England.[409] The best-known names among astrologers burnished their claims to fame during the wars and showed initiative while firming up the case being pursued here that the almanac was too mature, convention-heavy and complex a genre to change its spots.

Jason Peacey noted, however, that "Parliament... exploited popular providentialism in cheap literature ... and there is certainly evidence of support for, and exploitation of, the astrological literature of John Booker and William Lilly by parliamentarians, and of George Wharton by royalists." The opportunity offered by the already-formed popular public for almanacs was not missed.[410]

A genre that classified, categorized and defined the "everyday," almanacs did not directly engage with the new culture of "news." Capp, who clearly saw the Restoration almanacs as superior literature to the pre-civil wars versions, made the claim

---

[408] Capp, *Almanacs*, 72.
[409] Capp, *Almanacs,* 90, 80.
[410] Peacey, *Politicians and Pamphleteers*, 320.

for the almanac as journalism in his conclusion:

> …despite all the repetition and crude sensationalism, the almanac played a valuable role. It was distinctive in its ability to span the intellectual and social horizons. Compilers familiar with Fellows of the Royal Society wrote on an immense range of subjects for the benefit of a mass readership. In the form it had already evolved by the Elizabethan period, the almanac was the greatest triumph of journalism until modern times."[411]

The argument in this dissertation, in fact, has been that the almanacs generally fell short of journalism in the sense of providing "news." Their role, instead, was to establish the "normal" information base against which the unusual qualities of news could be cast. The apparent fact that almanacs sustained their share of the print market even as newsbooks proliferated is probably the best – though quite inferential – evidence that the two informational genres operated complementarily, but in parallel, in those times of war.

Almanacs' role in preparing the ordinary, less educated members of society for "news" publications when those arrived to accompany the beginning of England's agonizing civil wars was of extraordinary importance. No other form of print culture could likely have done it.

---

[411] Capp, *Almanacs*, 292.

BIBLIOGRAPHY OF WORKS CONSULTED

Primary Sources**:**

Almanacs published by the Stationers' Company 1595-1640

"EEBO lacks" means the edition exists in the Short Title Catalog 2nd ed. (STC2) but it is not available in Early English Books Online; "missing" means there is a gap in the series shown in the Short Title Catalog.

[1595-1615]

Alleyn. 1606-12, STC2 408-408.8;
Bretnor. 1607-20, STC2 420-420.13;
Burton. 1613-21, STC2 426-426.9;
John Dade. 1589-1615, STC2 434-434.26 [1601, 1603 missing; EEBO lacks 1608];
Frende. 1585-99 and 1614-24, STC2 444-444.11 and 445-445.19;
Gray. 1588-1605, STC2 451-451.15 [1599-1603 missing];
Gresham. 1603-07, STC2 452-452.7 [EEBO lacks 1603];
Hopton. 1606-14, STC2 461-461.9 [1609 missing];
John Johnson. 1611-24, STC2 465-465.12;
Thomas Johnson. 1598-1604, STC 466-466.7 [1509, 1601, 1603 missing];
Keene. 1612-17, STC 468-468.6;
Mathew. 1602-14, STC 483-483.13;
Jeffrey Neve. 1604-25, STC22 489-489.27 [EEBO lacks 1608, 1625];
Pond. 1601-12, STC2 501-501.12 [1603 frag only];
Thomas Rudston. 1606-13, STC2 507-507.8;
Upcote. 1614-19, STC2 519-519.6;
Watson. 1595-1605, STC2 525-525.10;
White. 1613-40, STC2 527-527.30 [EEBO lacks 1622];
John Woodhouse. 1610-40, STC2 531-531.31 [EEBO lacks 1635];
William Woodhouse. 1602-08, STC2 532-532.7 [EEBO lacks 1608].

[After 1615]

Allestree. 1617-40, STC2 407-407.23;
Browne. 1616-31, STC2 421-421.16 [EEBO lacks 1628];
William Dade. 1616-40, STC2 435.4-435.29 [EEBO lacks 1622, 1635];
Einer. 1620-26, STC2 438-438.6;

Gilden. 1616-32, STC2 448-448.17 [EEBO lacks 1626, 1627; 1628 missing];
Ranger. 1616-31, STC2 502-502.9; 503-503.8 [EEBO lacks 1625];
John Rudston. 1615-20, 24-28, STC2 506.7-506.19;
Sofford. 1618-40>, STC2 515-515.23 [EEBO lacks 1626];
Vaux. 1621-38, STC2 522-522.18 [EEBO lacks 1629, 1632, 1635];
[> indicates continued publication after 1640]

[1625-1640]

Booker. 1631-40, STC2 419-419.9 [EEBO lacks 1633, 1635];
Butler. 1629-32, STC2 427-427.4;
Hewlett. 1625-1630, STC2 457-457.6 [EEBO lacks 1629];
Langley. 1635-40, STC2 479–479.6;
John Neve. 1626-40, STC2 490-490.16 [EEBO lacks 1637, 1640];
Perkins. 1625-40, STC2 495-495.15 [EEBO lacks 1632, 1637];
Pierce. 1634-40, STC2 496-496.7 [EEBO lacks 1634, 1635].

Almanacs published by the press at the University of Cambridge 1624-1640 were spot checked for comparisons but not surveyed for component features.

Clark. 1628-38 (Cambridge) STC2 430-430.7;
Dove 1627-40 (Cambridge) STC2 436-436.12;
Kidman 1631-38 (Cambridge)STC2 469-469.7;
Pond 1625-40 (Cambridge) STC2 501.15-501.30;
Rivers 1625-40 STC2 505-505.14;
Swallow 1628, 33-40 (Cambridge) STC2 517-517.8;
Twells 37-39 (Cambridge) STC2 518.4-518.6;
Winter 1633-35, 37-38 (Cambridge) STC2 530-530.7

Other Primary Sources:

Arber, Edward, ed. *A Transcript of the Registers of the Company of Stationers of London, 1554-1640 A.D.* 5 vols. 1875-94. Reprint, New York: Peter Smith, 1950.

Briggs, Katharine M., ed. *The Last of the Astrologers: Mr. William Lilly's History of his Life and Times from the Year 1602 to 1681.* 2nd edition of 1715. Reprinted with notes and introduction by Katherine M. Briggs. London: Folklore Society, 1974.

Greg, W.W. and E. Boswell. *Records of the Court of the Stationers' Company 1576 to 1602 from Register B.* London: Bibliographical Society, 1930.

Jackson, William A., ed. *Records of the Court of the Stationers' Company, 1602-1640.* London: Bibliographical Society, 1958.

Wither, George. *The Scholler's Purgatory Discovered in the Stationers Common wealth...* Norwood, NJ: Walter Johnson, Inc. 1977 [facsimile reprint of 1624 edition, ESTC 25919].

Unpublished Sources:

Gadd, Ian Anders. "'Being Like a Field': Corporate Identity in the Stationers' Company, 1557-1684." D.Phil. diss., Pembroke College [Oxford], 1999.

Campbell, Thomas. "Almanacs and the French Revolution: Politicizing a Traditional Genre." M.A. thesis [History], University of Wisconsin, Madison, 1996.

Secondary and other sources:

Allen, Don Cameron. *The Star-Crossed Renaissance: The Quarrel about Astrology and its Influence in England.* Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1941. Reprint, New York: Octagon Books, 1966.

Armstrong, Nancy and Leonard Tennenhouse. *The Imaginary Puritan: Literature, Intellectual Labor, and the Origins of Personal Life.* Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992.

Bakhtin, M. M. *Rabelais and His World.* Translated by Hélène Iswolsky. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, c1984.

Bandura, Albert. "Exercise of Human Agency Through Collective Efficacy." *Current Directions in Psychological Science* 9, no. 3 (June 2000): 75-78.

_____. "Social Cognitive Theory of Mass Communication." In *Media Effects: Advances in Theory and Research*, 3rd ed., edited by Jennings Bryant and Mary Beth Oliver, 94-124. New York: Routledge, 2009.

Barkow, Jerome, Leda Cosmides and John Tooby. *The Adapted Mind: Evolutionary Psychology and the Generation of Culture.* New York: Oxford University Press, 1992.

Barnhurst, Kevin G. and John Nerone. *The Form of News: A History.* New York/London: Guilford Press, 2001.

Baron, Sabrina Alcorn. "The Guises of Dissemination in Early Seventeenth-Century England: News in Manuscript and Print." In *The Politics of Information in Early Modern Europe,* edited by Sabrina A. Baron and Brendan Dooley, 41-56. London: Routledge, 2001.

_____. "Licensing Readers, Licensing Authorities in Seventeenth-Century England." In *Books and Readers in Early Modern England: Material Studies,* edited by Jennifer Anderson and Elizabeth Sauer, 217-242. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002.

Baron, Sabrina Alcorn, Eric N. Lindquist, and Eleanor F. Shevlin, eds. *Agent of Change: Print Culture Studies After Elizabeth L. Eisenstein.* Boston: University of Massachusetts Press, 2007.

Bayman, Anna. "Printing, Learning, and the Unlearned." In Raymond, *Oxford History,* 76-87.

Bell, Allan and Peter Garrett, eds. *Approaches to Media Discourse.* London: Blackwell Publishers, 1999.

Beniger, James. *The Control Revolution: Technological and Economic Origins of the Information Society.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1986.

Bennett, H. S. *English Books and Readers: Being a Study of the History of the Book Trade....* Vol. 1, *...1475-1557*; Vol. 2, *...1558-1603*; Vol. 3, *...1603-1640.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1965-1970.

Bird, S. Elizabeth. *The Audience in Everyday Life: Living in a Media World.* New York: Routledge/Taylor & Francis, 2003.

_____ . "Seeking the Historical Audience: Interdisciplinary Lessons in the Recovery of Media Practices." In *Explorations in Communication and History,* edited by Barbie Zelizer, 90-106. New York: Routledge, 2008.

Blackmore, Susan. *The Meme Machine*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999.

Blagden, Cyprian. "The Distribution of Almanacks in the Second Half of the Seventeenth Century." *Studies in Bibliography* xi (1958): 108-117. http://www.jstor.org/stable/40371233

_____. *The Stationers' Company: A History 1403-1959.* Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1960.

Blair, Ann M. *Too Much to Know: Managing Scholarly Information before the Modern Age.* New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2010.

Bober, Harry. "The Zodiacal Miniature of the Tres Riches Heures of the Duke Of Berry - Its Sources and Meaning.**" *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 11 (1948): 1-34.

Bollème, Geneviève. *Les almanachs populaire aux XVII et XVIII siècles: essai d'histoire sociale.* Paris: Mouton & Co., 1969.

Booy, David, ed. *The Notebooks of Nehemiah Wallington 1618-1654.* Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2007.

Bosanquet, Eustace F. *English Printed Almanacks and Prognostications: A Bibliographical History to the Year 1600.* London: Bibliographical Society/Chiswick Press, 1917.

Boyd, Robert, and Peter J. Richerson. *The Origin and Evolution of Cultures.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005.

Braddick, Michael J. "England and Wales" in Raymond, *Oxford History.* 17-30.

Bridenbaugh, Carl. *Vexed and Troubled Englishmen 1590-1642.* New York: Oxford University Press, 1967.

Briggs, Asa, and Peter Burke. *A Social History of the Media, from Gutenberg to the Internet.* London: Polity Press, 2002.

Burke, Peter. *Languages and Communities in Early Modern Europe.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004.

_____. "Popular History" in Raymond, *Oxford History.* 443-452.

_____. *A Social History of Knowledge: From Gutenberg to Diderot.* Cambridge: Polity Press, 2000.

Capp, Bernard. "Booker, John (1602–1667)." In *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, online ed., edited by Lawrence Goldman. Oxford: Oxford University Press. Accessed July 9, 2014. doi:10.1093/ref:odnb/2865.

_____. *English Almanacs, 1500-1800: Astrology and the Popular Press.* Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1979.

_____. "Popular Literature." In *Popular Culture in Seventeenth-Century England*, edited by Barry Reay, 198-243. London: Croom Helm, 1985.

_____. "The Potter Almanacs." *Electronic British Library Journal*, art. 4 (2004). http://www.british-library.uk/eblj/2004articles/pdf/article4.pdf

Carlson, Norman E. "Wither and the Stationers." *Studies in Bibliography* 19 (1966): 210-215.

Carr, Nicholas. "The Great Unbundling." http://www.britannica.com/blogs/2008/04/the-great-unbundling-newspapers-the-net/ accessed 7 Oct 2014.

Cavallo, Guglielmo, and Roger Chartier, eds. *A History of Reading in the West* (translated by L. G. Cochrane). Cambridge: Polity Press, 1999.

De Certeau, Michel. *Culture in the Plural.* Translated by Tom Conley. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1997.

Chapman, Alison A. "Marking Time: Astrology, Almanacs and English Protestantism." *Renaissance Quarterly* 60, no. 4 (Winter 2007): 1257-90.

Chartier, Roger. *Forms and Meanings: Text, Performance and Audiences from Codex to Computer.* Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1996.

_____. "Laborers and Voyagers: From the Text to the Reader." In *The Book History Reader*, 2nd ed., edited by David Finkelstein and Alistair McCleery, 87-98. New York/London: Routledge, 2006.

_____. *The Order of Books: Readers, Authors and Libraries in Europe between the Fourteenth and Eighteenth Centuries.* Translated by Lydia G. Cochrane. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1994.

_____. "The Practical Impact of Writing." In *A History of Private Life III: Passions of the Renaissance*, edited by R. Chartier. Cambridge, MA/London: Harvard University Press, 1989. Reprinted in *The Book History Reader*, 2nd ed., edited by David Finkelstein and Alastair McCleery, 118-142. London: Routledge, 2001.

Clanchy, M.T. *From Memory to Written Record: England 1066-1300.* 2nd ed. Oxford: Blackwell, 1993.

Clegg, Cyndia Susan. *Press Censorship in Jacobean England.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001.

Coward, Barry. *The Stuart Age: England 1603-1714.* 3rd ed. New York: Pearson/Longman, 2003.

Cressy, David. *Literacy and the Social Order: Reading and Writing in Tudor and Stuart England.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980.

Curry, Patrick *Prophecy and Power: Astrology in Early Modern England.* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1989.

Curth, Louise Hill. *English Almanacs, Astrology, and Popular Medicine 1550-1700 .* Manchester/New York: Manchester University Press, 2007.

Darnton, R. *The Business of Enlightenment: A Publishing History of the Encyclopedie, 1775-1800.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1979.

_____ . "An Early Information Society: News and the Media in Eighteenth-Century Paris." *American Historical Review* 105, no. 1 (2000): 1-35.

_____. *The Forbidden Best-Sellers of Pre-Revolutionary France.* New York: Norton, 1996.

_____ . "The Heresies of Bibliography." *The New York Review of Books* 50, no.9 (2003): 43-5.

_____. "What is the history of books?" *Daedalus* 111, no. 3 (1982): 65-84.

Davis, Natalie Zemon. "Printing and the People." In *Society and Culture in Early Modern France: Eight Essays*, 189-226. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1975.

Dayton, Cornelia Hughes. "Rethinking Agency, Recovering Voices." *American Historical Review* 109, no. 3 (June 2004): 827-844.

Dehaene, Stanislas. *Reading in the Brain: The Science and Evolution of a Human Invention.* New York: Viking Press, 2009.

_____, Jean-Pierre Changeux, Lionel Naccache, Jerome Sackur and Claire Sergent. "Conscious, Preconscious, and Subliminal Processing: a Testable Taxonomy." *Trends in Cognitive Science* 10, no. 5 (2006): 204-211.

Dennett, Daniel C. *Darwin's Dangerous Idea: Evolution and the Meanings of Life.* New York: Simon & Schuster/Touchstone, 1996.

Dooley, Brendan, ed. *The Dissemination of News and the Emergence of Contemporaneity in Early Modern Europe.* Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing Co., 2010.

Dooley, Brendan and Sabrina Baron, eds. *The Politics of Information in Early Modern Europe.* New York: Routledge, 2001.

Dunbar, R. I. M. "Culture, Honesty and the Freerider Problem." In *The Evolution of Culture: An Interdisciplinary View*, edited by R.I.M. Dunbar, Chris Knight and Camilla Power, 194-213. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1999.

Eisenstein, Elizabeth L. *The Printing Press as an Agent of Change: Communications and Cultural Transformations in Early Modern Europe.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980.

_____. *The Printing Revolution in Early Modern Europe.* 2nd ed. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005.

_____. "Some Conjectures about the Impact of Printing on Western Society and Thought: A Preliminary Report." *The Journal of Modern History* 40, no.1 (1968): 1-56.

Eliot, Simon and Jonathan Rose, eds. *A Companion to the History of the Book.* Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2007.

Febvre, L., & Martin, H.-J. *The Coming of the Book: The Impact of Printing 1450-1800.* Translated by David Gerard; edited by Geoffrey Nowell-Smith and David Wootton. London/New York: Verso, 1976.

Finkelstein, David and Alistair McCleery. *The Book History Reader.* 2nd ed. London: Routledge, 2006.

_____. *An Introduction to Book History.* London: Routledge, 2005.

Fissell, Mary E. "The Marketplace of Print." In *Medicine and the Market in England and Its Colonies, c. 1450-c. 1850,* edited by Mark S. R. Jenner and Patrick Wallis, 108-132. New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2007.

_____. "Popular Medical Writing." In Raymond, ed., *Oxford History.* 417-430.

Frank, Joseph. *The Beginnings of the English Newspaper, 1620-1660.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1961.

Geertz, Clifford. *Local Knowledge: Further Essays in Interpretive Anthropology.* New York: Basic Books, 1983.

Genette, Gerard. "Introduction to the Paratext." *New Literary History* 22, no. 2 (1991): 261-272.

Geneva, Ann. *Astrology and the Seventeenth-Century Mind: William Lilly and the Language of the Stars.* Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995.

Ginzburg, Carlo. *The Cheese and the Worms: The Cosmos of a Sixteenth-Century Miller.* Translated by John and Anne Tedeschi. New York: Penguin Books, 1982.

Glaisyer, Natasha. "Popular Didactic Literature." in Raymond, *Oxford History.* 510-519.

Gleick, James. *The Information: a History, a Theory, a Flood.* New York: Vintage, 2011.

Goody, Jack. *The Logic of Writing and the Organization of Society.* New York: Cambridge University Press, 1986.

Grafton, Anthony. "The History of Ideas: Precept and Practice, 1950-2000 and Beyond." *Journal of the History of Ideas* 67 (2006): 1-32. Reprinted in

Worlds Made by Words: Scholarship and Community in the Modern West, 188-215. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009.

Grafton, Anthony and Ann Blair, eds. *The Transmission of Culture in Early Modern Europe*. Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1990.

Grafton, Anthony, "AHR Forum: How Revolutionary was the Print Revolution?" *American Historical Review* 107 (February, 2002): 84-6.

Greenblatt, Stephen. "Murdering Peasants: Status, Genre and the Representation of Rebellion." In *Learning to Curse: Essays in Early Modern Culture,* 99-130. New York: Routledge 1990.

Greg, W[alter]. W[ilson]. *Some Aspects and Problems of London Publishing between 1550 and 1650.* London: Oxford University Press/Clarendon, 1956.

Habermas, Jürgen. *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*. Translated by Thomas Burger. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1991.

Harkness, Deborah. *The Jewel House: Elizabethan London and the Scientific Revolution.* New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2007.

Hardin, Garrett. "The Tragedy of the Commons." *Science* 162 no. 3859 (1968): 1243-1248.

Hill, Christopher. *The Century of Revolution 1603-1714*. New York: WW Norton, 1961.

_____. *The World Turned Upside Down: Radical Ideas During the English Revolution.* London: Penguin, 1975.

Hirsch, Rudolf. *Printing, Selling and Reading 1450-1550.* "Second printing with a supplemental annotated bibliographical introduction." Wiesbaden, Germany: Otto Harrassowitz, 1974. First printed 1967.

Hirst, Derek. *England in Conflict, 1603-1660.* New York: Oxford University Press, 1999.

Hobsbawm, Eric. "On History from Below." In *History from Below: Studies in Popular Protest and Popular Ideology*, edited by Frederick Krantz, 13-28. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988. Reprinted in Hobsbawm, *On History.* New York: The New Press, 1997.

Houston, R. A. *Literacy in Early Modern Europe: Culture and Education 1500-1800.* London: Longman, 1988.

Howell, Martha and Walter Prevenier. *From Reliable Sources: An Introduction to Historical Methods.* Ithaca, NY/London: Cornell University Press, 2001.

Jenner, Mark. S. R. and Patrick Wallis, eds. *Medicine and the Market in England and Its Colonies, c. 1450-c.1850.* New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007.

Johns, Adrian. *The Nature of the Book: Print and Knowledge in the Making.* Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1998.

Kassell, Lauren. "Almanacs and Prognostications." In Raymond, *Oxford History,* 430-442.

Katz, Elihu, Jay G. Blumler and Michael Gurevitch, "Utilization of Mass Communication by the Individual." In *The Uses of Mass Communication: Current Perspectives on Gratifications Research,* edited by Blumler and Katz, 19-34. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage, 1974.

Kendall, Connie. "Nooses and Neck-Verses: The Life and Death Consequences of Literacy Testing." In *Rhetorical Agendas: Political, Ethical, Spiritual,* edited by Patricia Bizzell, 97-107. New York: Routledge, 2005.

Klein, Bernhard, and Lesley B. Cormack. "Maps and the Writing of Space in Early Modern England and Ireland." *Renaissance and Reformation/ Renaissance et Réforme* 26, no. 1 (2002): 83-85.

Lake, Peter, and Steven Pincus. "Rethinking the Public Sphere." In *The Politics of the Public Sphere in Early Modern England,* edited by Peter Lake and Steven Pincus, 1-30. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007.

_____. "Rethinking the Public Sphere in Early Modern England." *Journal of British Studies* 45, no. 2 (2006): 270-292.

Laland, Kevin and Gillian R. Brown. *Sense and Nonsense: Evolutionary Perspectives on Human Behaviour.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002.

Lambert, Sheila. "The Printers and the Government, 1604-1657." In *Aspects of Printing from 1600,* edited by R. Myers and M. Harris, 1-29. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987.

_____. "State Control of the Press in Theory and Practice: The Role of the Stationers' Company before 1640." In *Censorship and the Control of Print,* edited by R. Myers and M. Harris, 1-32. Winchester: St. Paul's Press, 1992.

Lanham, Richard A. *The Economics of Attention: Style and Substance in the Age of Information.* Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2006.

LaRose, Robert, Dana Mastro and Matthew S. Eastin. "Understanding Internet Usage: A Social-Cognitive Approach to Uses and Gratifications." *Social Science Computer Review* 19, no. 4 (2001): 395-413.

Lewis, C.S. *English Literature in the 16th Century:* Vol. 3 of *Oxford History of English Literature.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1954.

Lockyer, Roger. *Tudor and Stuart Britain 1485-1714.* 3rd ed. London: Pearson Longman, 2005.

McElligott, Jason " 'A Couple of Hundred Squabbling Small Tradesmen'? Censorship, the Stationers' Company, and the State in Early Modern England." *Media History* 19, no. 1-2 (2005): 87-104.

McKenzie, D[onald]. F. *Making Meaning: "Printers of the Mind" and Other Essays.* Edited by Peter D. McDonald and Michael F. Suarez, S.J. Boston: University of Massachusetts Press, 2002.

_____. "The Sociology of a Text: Orality, Literacy and Print in Early New Zealand." In *The Book History Reader*, 2nd ed., edited by David Finkelstein and Alistair McCleery, 205-231. London: Routledge, 2006.

McKeon, Michael. "What Was an Early Modern Public, and How Was it Made?" *History Compass* 10, no. 9 (2012): 714–730.

McKitterick, David. *A History of Cambridge University Press.* Vol 1 *Printing and the Book Trade in Cambridge, 1534-1698.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992.

McQuail, Denis. *Mass Communication Theory*. 2nd ed. London: Sage Publications, 1987

McShane, Angela. "Ballads and Broadsides." In Raymond, *Oxford History*, 340-362.

Making Publics Project (McGill University)
http://project.makingpublics.org/

Martin, Henri-Jean. *The French Book: Religion, Absolutism and Readership 1585-1715*. Translated by Paul Saenger and Nadine Saenger. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996.

_____ "The Bibliothèque Bleue: Literature for the Masses in the Ancien Régime." *Publishing History* 3 (1978): 70-102.

Mendle, Michael. "De Facto Freedom, De Facto Authority: Press and Parliament, 1640-1643." *Historical Journal* 38 (1995): 307-32.

_____. "News and the Pamphlet Culture of Mid-Seventeenth-Century England." In *The Politics of Information in Early Modern Europe,* edited by Sabrina Baron and Brendan Dooley, 57-79. London: Routledge, 2001.

Muchembled, Robert. *Popular Culture and Elite Culture in France, 1400-1750*. Translated by Lydia Cochrane. Baton Rouge, La.: Louisiana State University Press, 1985. Originally published as *Culture populaire et culture des elites dans la France moderne (XV-XVIII siècles),* Paris: Flammarion, 1978.

Myers, Robin and Michael Harris, eds. *The Stationers' Company and the Book Trade 1550-1990*. Winchester: St. Paul's Bibliographies, 1997.

O'Callaghan, Michelle. "Wither, George (1588–1667)." In *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004. Accessed 14 Sept. 2013. http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/29804, doi:10.1093/ref:odnb/29804.

Ong, Walter J. *Orality & Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word.* London: Routledge/New Accents, 1988.

_____. *Ramus: Method and the Decay of Dialogue*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1958.

Peacey, Jason. *Politicians and Pamphleteers: Propaganda during the English Civil Wars and Interregnum.* Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004.

_____ . "The Politics of British Union in 1642 and the Purpose of Civil War Pamphlets." *Historical Research* 80, no. 210 (2007): 491-517.

Peacey, Jason, "Pamphlets" in Raymond, *Oxford History,* 455-56.

Perkins, Maureen. *Visions of the Future: Almanacs, Time and Cultural Change 1775-1870.* Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996.

Pettegree, Andrew. *The Book in the Renaissance.* New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2010.

_____. *The Invention of News: How the World Came to Know About Itself.* New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2014.

Pincus, Steve. "'Coffee Politicians Does Create': Coffeehouses and Restoration Political Culture." *The Journal of Modern History* 67, no. 4 (1995): 807-834.

Plant, Marjorie. *The English Book Trade: An Economic History of the Making and Sale of Books.* 3rd ed. London: Allen & Unwin, 1974.

Pollard, A.W., G.R. Redgrave, W.A. Jackson, F.S. Ferguson and Katharine Pantzer. "Almanacks, Prognostications and Kalendars." In *A Short-Title Catalogue of Books Printed in England...,* 2nd ed. (vol 1, A-H). 15-30 (London: Bibliographical Society, 1976).

Pottinger, David. *The French Book Trade in the Ancien Regime 1500-1791.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1958.

Prescott, Anne Lake. "Refusing Translation: The Gregorian Calendar and Early Modern English Writers." *Yearbook of English Studies* 36, no. 1 (2006): 1-11.

Raymond, Joad. *The Invention of the Newspaper: English Newsbooks 1641-1649.* Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996.

_____. "News" in Raymond, *Oxford History* ., 377-397. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011.

_____, ed. *The Oxford History of Popular Print Culture.* Vol. 1, *Cheap Print in Britain and Ireland to 1660.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011.

_____. *Pamphlets and Pamphleteering in Early Modern Britain.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003.

Rhodes, Neil. "Articulate Networks" in Rhodes and Sawday, eds.. *The Renaissance Computer,* 184-196.

Rhodes, Neil and Jonathan Sawday, eds. *The Renaissance Computer: Knowledge Technology in the First Age of Print.* London: Routledge, 2000.

Richerson, Peter J. and Robert Boyd. *Not By Genes Alone: How Culture Transformed Human Evolution.* Chicago,IL: University of Chicago Press, 2005.

Ruggiero, Thomas E. "Uses and Gratifications Theory in the 21st Century." *Mass Communication & Society,* 3, no. 1 (2000): 3–37.

Rusche, Harry. "Merlini Anglici: Astrology and Propaganda from 1644 to 1651." *The English Historical Review* 80, no. 315 (1965): 322-333.

Russell, Conrad. *The Causes of the English Civil War.* New York: Oxford University Press, 1990.

Schaffer, Simon. "Science." In Raymond, *Oxford History,* 398-416.

Scott, James C. *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance.* New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1985.

Shaaber, Matthias. *Some Forerunners of the Newspaper in England.* Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1929.

Sharpe, James. "The People and the Law." In *Popular Culture in Seventeenth-century England,* edited by Barry Reay, 244-270. Beckenham, Kent: Croom Helm, 1985.

Shepard, Alexandra and Phil Withington, eds. *Communities in Early Modern England: Networks, Place, Rhetoric.* Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000.

Sherman, Stuart. *Telling Time: Clocks, Diaries and English Diurnal Form 1660-1785.* Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1996.

Skerpan, Elizabeth. *The Rhetoric of Politics in the English Revolution, 1642-1660.* Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 1992.

Smith, Anthony. *The Newspaper: An International History.* London:

Thames and Hudson, 1979.

Smith, Helen and Louise Wilson. *Renaissance Paratexts.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011.

Smith, Warren D. "The Elizabethan Rejection of Judicial Astrology and Shakespeare's Practice.*" Shakespeare Quarterly*, 9, no. 2 (1958), 159-176.

Smyth, Adam. "Almanacs, Annotators, and Life-Writing in Early Modern England." *English Literary Renaissance* 38, no. 2 (2008): 200-244.

Somerville, C. John. *The News Revolution in England: Cultural Dynamics of Daily Information.* New York: Oxford University Press, 1996.

Spufford, Margaret. *Small Books and Pleasant Histories: Popular Fiction and its Readership in Seventeenth-Century England.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981.

Steinberg, S.H. *Five Hundred Years of Printing.* 2d ed. Harmsworth, Middlesex: Penguin, 1961.

Stephens, Mitchell. *A History of News: From the Drum to the Satellite.* New York: Viking Press, 1988.

_____. *The Rise of the Image, the Fall of the Word.* New York: Oxford, 1998.

Stone, Lawrence. *The Causes of the English Revolution, 1529-1642.* New York: Harper & Row, 1972.

_____. "The Educational Revolution in England 1560-1640." *Past & Present* 28 (July 1964): 41-80.

Sutherland, James R. *The Restoration Newspaper and its Development.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986.

Tebeaux, Elizabeth. "Ramus, Visual Rhetoric, and the Emergence of Page Design in Medical Writing of the English Renaissance." *Written Communication* 4 (October 1991): 411-445.

Thomas, Keith. "The Meaning of Literacy in Early Modern England." In *The Written Word: Literacy in Transition,* edited by Gerd Bauman, 97-131. New York: Oxford/Clarendon, 1986.

_____ . *Religion and the Decline of Magic.* London: Penguin, 1973.

Thompson, E.P. *The Making of the English Working Class.* New York: Vintage, 1966.

Unwin, George. *Industrial Organizations in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries.* 2nd ed. London: Frank Cass & Co., 1957. Reprint, 1963.

Vygotsky, L. S. *Mind in Society: The Development of Higher Psychological Processes.* Edited and translated by Michael Cole *et al.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1978.

Wall, Wendy. "Reading the Home: The Case of *The English Housewife.*" In *Renaissance Paratexts*, eds. Helen Smith and Louise Wilson, 165-184 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

Warner, Michael. "Publics and Counterpublics." *Public Culture* 14, no. 1 (2002): 49-90.

Watt, Tessa. *Cheap Print and Popular Piety, 1550-1640.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991.

Wedgwood, C. V. *A Coffin for King Charles: The Trial and Execution of Charles I.* New York: Time-Life Books, 1964. Reprint, 1981.

_____. *History and Hope: Essays on History and the English Civil War.* New York: E.P. Dutton Publishers, 1989.

_____. *The King's Peace 1637-1641.* New York: MacMillan, 1955.

_____. *The King's War, 1641-1647.* New York: MacMillan, 1959.

_____. *The Thirty Years War.* New York: New York Review of Books, 1938. Reprint, 2005.

Wilson, Bronwen and Paul Yachnin, eds. *Making Publics in Early Modern Europe: People, Things, Forms of Knowledge.* New York: Routledge, 2010.

Woolf, Daniel. *The Idea of History in Early Stuart England.* Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990.

_____. "News, History and the Construction of the Present in Early Modern England." In *The Politics of Information in Early Modern Europe,*

edited by Sabrina Baron and Brendan Dooley, 80-118. London: Routledge, 2001.

Worden, Blair. *The English Civil Wars: 1640-1660.* London: Phoenix, 2010.

Wrightson, Keith. *Earthly Necessities: Economic Lives in Early Modern Britain.* New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2000.

Wu, Tim. *The Master Switch: The Rise and Fall of Information Empires.* New York: Knopf, 2010.

Zaret, David. *Origins of Democratic Culture: Printing, Petitions and the Public Sphere in Early-Modern England.* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000.

Zelizer, Barbie, ed. *Explorations in Communication and History.* New York: Routledge, 2008.