

剑桥政治思想史原著系列（影印本）

CAMBRIDGE TEXTS IN THE HISTORY OF POLITICAL THOUGHT

# 博林布鲁克 政治著作选

Bolingbroke  
*Political  
Writings*

Edited by

DAVID

ARMITAGE

中国政法大学出版社

BOLINGBROKE

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*Columbia University*

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## 丛书编辑

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在政治理论领域，“剑桥政治思想史原著系列”作为主要的学生教科丛书，如今已牢固确立了其地位。本丛书旨在使学生能够获得从古希腊到 20 世纪初期西方政治思想史方面所有最为重要的原著。它囊括了所有著名的经典原著，但与此同时，它又扩展了传统的评价尺度，以便能够纳入范围广泛、不那么出名的作品。而在此之前，这些作品中有许多从未有过现代英文版本可资利用。只要可能，所选原著都会以完整而不删节的形式出版，其中的译作则是专门为本丛书的目的而安排。每一本书都有一个评论性的导言，加上历史年表、生平梗概、进一步阅读指南，以及必要的词汇表和原文注解。本丛书的最终目的是，为西方政治思想的整个发展脉络提供一个清晰的轮廓。

本丛书已出版著作的书目，请查阅书末。

# CAMBRIDGE TEXTS IN THE HISTORY OF POLITICAL THOUGHT

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Cambridge Texts in the History of Political Thought is now firmly established as the major student textbook series in political theory. It aims to make available to students all the most important texts in the history of western political thought, from ancient Greece to the early twentieth century. All the familiar classic texts will be included but the series does at the same time seek to enlarge the conventional canon by incorporating an extensive range of less well-known works, many of them never before available in a modern English edition. Wherever possible, texts are published in complete and unabridged form, and translations are specially commissioned for the series. Each volume contains a critical introduction together with chronologies, biographical sketches, a guide to further reading and any necessary glossaries and textual apparatus. When completed, the series will aim to offer an outline of the entire evolution of western political thought.

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## Introduction

Henry St John, later Viscount Bolingbroke, was born in 1678, the year of the Popish Plot, and died in 1751, nine years before the accession of George III and the subsequent revival of Tory fortunes reshaped the British political landscape. However, Bolingbroke's career as an active politician spanned only the period from the last year of William III's reign, when he first entered Parliament in 1701, to the first of George I, when he was impeached by the overwhelmingly Whig Parliament elected in the aftermath of the Hanoverian succession and the Jacobite rising of 1715. St John's fortunes rose and fell with those of the post-Revolutionary Tory party. His political acumen, charisma and industry had recommended him to Tory leaders, who rapidly promoted him up the ranks of their administration until he held the crowning office of his career, as Secretary of State for the Northern Department during the closing years of the War of the Spanish Succession.

St John was elevated to the Lords as Viscount Bolingbroke in 1712, and in the following year he took credit for negotiating the Treaty of Utrecht which ended the war. Bolingbroke looked set to make a bid for the leadership of his party, until the Whigs won the general elections of 1715 by a landslide, 'after which a new and more melancholy scene for the party, as well as for me, opened itself', as he put it in *A Letter to Sir William Wyndham* (1716). The Tories went into the wilderness of proscription and opposition until 1760, and Bolingbroke fled to his first extended period of exile in France (1714–25). While there he became Secretary of State to the Old Pretender in 1715–16. For many of his associates in the Tory



party and the opposition to Walpole, this flirtation with Jacobitism put him beyond the political pale in English politics, despite his association with the Hanoverian heir, Frederick, Prince of Wales, in the late 1730s, and though he protested that he was innocent of the 'treason that claret inspires' (p. 269). Thereafter, he confined his political enterprises to building coalitions and dispensing counsel to the various groups ranged against Sir Robert Walpole. His greatest political writings – the *Dissertation upon Parties*, the letter 'On the Spirit of Patriotism', and *The Idea of a Patriot King* – all sprang from these contexts, and deployed the languages of Whiggism and Toryism, classical republicanism and Stoicism, in defence of the mixed constitution and the common good, in accordance with the order of nature as revealed by reason.

Bolingbroke was a member of the first generation that came to maturity under the Revolution Settlement of 1688. 'Under this constitution the greatest part of the men alive were born', he noted in 1733 (p. 78). This was the constitution under which David Hume, thirty years his junior, and for a time his adversary, grew up; it became the envy of continental contemporaries, such as Voltaire and Montesquieu, both of whom drew upon Bolingbroke as a constitutional authority. The Glorious Revolution had affirmed the Protestantism of the English state, restored the supposedly ancient constitutional balance between monarchy and Parliament, and set the terms for political debate in Britain for the next century. Yet the cost of securing Protestantism was military invasion by the Dutch stadtholder, William of Orange, and entry into the opening stages of a second hundred years war between Britain and France that ended at Waterloo. As Bolingbroke acknowledged in the *Dissertation*, annual parliaments were the offspring of the fiscal necessity of continental warfare. The uneasy political truce negotiated in 1688 soon began to fracture into party strife, as the Whigs benefited from William's patronage, while Tory fortunes only revived with the accession of Queen Anne in 1702. Bolingbroke was the chronicler of these ambivalent consequences, which made and unmade his own political career.

The Glorious Revolution, according to Bolingbroke, had scrambled the traditional markers of party politics. The classic labels of Whig and Tory first appeared in the context of the Exclusion Crisis of 1679–81. The pre-Revolutionary Whigs were

those politicians who favoured the exclusion of Charles II's Catholic brother, James, Duke of York, from the succession to the throne; the Tories, those who resisted such tampering with the succession. The national and international dimensions of the Exclusion debate identified Whigs and Tories with distinct positions on the relative powers of Parliament and monarchy, on the Church of England and its toleration of Dissent, and on the menace of international Catholicism. The Exclusionist Whigs demanded the power for Parliament to alter the succession, and hence placed statute above prerogative. They supported toleration for Dissent, yet were fearful of the supposed relationship between popery and arbitrary government, and hence resisted toleration for Catholicism, and proposed vigorous measures against the threatening power of Louis XIV's France. The anti-Exclusionist Tories resisted Parliamentary supremacy in the name of royal power, upheld the exclusivity and sacramental validity of the Church of England, were less wary of international Catholicism, and believed that the danger of altering the succession would be greater than the consequences of a known Catholic taking the English throne. The inept authoritarianism and expedient political and religious somersaults executed by the Duke of York during his reign as James II (1685–88) alienated both Whigs and Tories. Accordingly, the majority of both parties joined forces in 1688 to resist his innovations in Church and state, and ultimately to legitimize the accession of the Dutch invader, William of Orange, to the English throne.

The Glorious Revolution in England was a genuine compromise between Whigs and Tories, achieved under pressure of political necessity, and by means of ideological legerdemain in the Convention Parliament of 1688. No party could be held to have won over the other in 1688, and it seemed for a time that the divisions opened up by the Exclusion Crisis had finally been closed. However, during the course of William's reign, the Whigs emerged as the victors, and they became the natural party of government for most of the eighty years after 1688. Ideological and religious divisions persisted into the first Age of Party, the age of Bolingbroke's political maturity, and the scene for his own early political career.

After 1688, the two parties remained divided over the legacy of the Glorious Revolution and the Church of England's attitude towards Protestant Dissent. Post-Revolutionary Whigs increasingly

appealed to the notion of a contract between the crown and the people (or, rather, their representatives as assembled in Parliament), which James II had violated, and to which future monarchs would be held accountable. Tories argued that, since James had abdicated his throne, there had been neither a contract to be broken nor any future right of resistance implied by the Revolution. Instead, subjects should be passively obedient to their monarchs, and could have no justification for resistance. This left Tories open to the charge that they were half-hearted in their support for the Protestant succession, a suspicion that their intolerance of Dissent also raised. The Whigs remained the party of Dissent, the Tories the supporters of Anglicanism at all costs. For High Church Tories, the national church could only be the Church of England or nothing; for Low Church Whigs, it had to be the Church of England with toleration for almost all Protestants. The Whigs' greatest victory was the Toleration Act of 1689, which to Tories smacked of support for heresy and irreligion that put the 'Church in Danger', as their rallying-cry had it. As Bolingbroke noted, the idea of a Whig became inseparably associated with '[t]he power and majesty of the people, an original contract, the authority and independency of Parliament, liberty, resistance, exclusion, abdication, deposition'; that of a Tory with '[d]ivine hereditary, indefeasible right, lineal succession, passive-obedience, prerogative, non-resistance, slavery, nay and sometimes popery too' (p. 5).

The consequences of the post-Revolutionary wars against France sharpened the ideological divisions between the two parties. The Whig war party benefited most obviously from William's patronage, as they were most committed to the anti-Catholicism and anti-Bourbonism of their new monarch, and to the military and fiscal measures needed to finance European warfare. The Tories however balked at the expense of the continental commitment, and proposed instead a 'blue-water' policy to sap French commercial might by attacking shipping, draining trade-revenues and dispersing their defences by assailing French coastlines and colonies rather than seeking pitched battles on the European continent. The Whigs rode high politically on the benefits of their aggressively interventionist policies, achieving victory in eleven of the twelve general elections held between 1689 and 1715. Nevertheless, it was the Tories – Bolingbroke pre-eminent among them – who gained temporarily

from the reaction to the costs of war, as they swept to power in 1713 at the end of the War of the Spanish Succession.

The institutional consequences of making Britain into a fiscal-military state cut across and complicated these party divisions. The financial demands of international warfare accelerated the transformation of England from an overwhelmingly agricultural economy, with a low tax-base, a comparatively unintrusive and informal bureaucracy, and an isolationist stance towards the outside world, into the United Kingdom of Great Britain, home to Europe's greatest financial institutions and most productive system of public credit, an expanding fiscal capacity, a growing and professional bureaucracy, and the financial resources to prosecute continental war, commercial expansion and imperial growth. Whig leadership and investment lay behind the greatest fiscal and institutional innovations after the Revolution, such as the Bank of England and the National Debt, and the benefits of investment in these institutions flowed most of all to Whigs and the so-called 'monied interest'. This alliance between policy and profit, created by royal favour and cemented by the spoils of office, led to the association of a specific 'Court' programme, encompassing high taxation, governmental expansion, financial innovation and international aggression, with the Whigs. The supporters of the competing 'Country' programme protested that half of the tax burden fell on the 'landed interest', feared the growth of the executive, benefited less from the suspicious new institutions, and were sceptical of the benefits to be had from costly continental commitments. Since the bulk of the Whigs were beneficiaries and backers of the Court programme, and the majority of Tories opposed the actions of the Whigs, 'Court' Whigs became counterposed to 'Country' Tories, and the so-called Old Whigs who were committed to the neo-republican constitutional Whiggism of the 1690s joined forces with the Tories in an uneasy oppositional alliance.

The ascendancy of the Whig Robert Walpole to the post of principal, or prime, minister in 1722 sharpened the appeal of a Country interest arrayed against the increasingly powerful Court Whigs. Bolingbroke emerged as the pre-eminent spokesman for this interest, as well as the most talented and mercurial of Walpole's opponents. The chief instrument of his campaign against Walpole was *The Craftsman* (later retitled *The Country Journal*), the journal he

founded with the dissident Whig William Pulteney in December 1726 and which carried both the *Remarks on the History of England* (1730–31) and the *Dissertation upon Parties* (1733–34) in the form of weekly editorials. The aim of these publications was to construct a platform for the disparate constituencies which made up the opposition to Walpole, and to convince them that they were bound together not solely by their common enemy but rather by a shared set of political principles.

Bolingbroke's Country platform combined Old Whig and Tory elements in order to put Walpole's regime on the defensive against the charge that it had betrayed the heritage of Whiggism and that its policies endangered the liberty guaranteed by the Revolution Settlement. Bolingbroke reminded Walpole and his ministry of 'the civil faith of the old Whigs' (p. 8), that body of political principles which stretched back through the early years of the eighteenth century, via the works of the Whig apologists for the Revolution and the supporters of Exclusion to the republicanism of the Interregnum. These principles enshrined a classical republican vision of liberty as freedom under the protection of law and of virtue as devotion to the welfare of the community. According to the writers in this tradition, the greatest threats to liberty and virtue were a standing army in time of peace (which could overturn the laws, and deprive citizens of their property by force) and the corruption of the nation's politicians and people by means of bribery, placeholding and a more general lack of moral activity. Bolingbroke's oppositional campaign returned time and again to the charges that the armed forces under Walpole were a threat to 'public liberty', and that the minister's shrewd management of Parliament amounted to packing it with placemen and thereby disabling its function as the assembly of the nation.

To these Whiggish principles Bolingbroke added distinctive planks from earlier Tory platforms, in particular a commitment to maintaining the mixed and balanced constitution. This had its roots in the moderate Toryism of the opening decade of the eighteenth century, which upheld mixed government, the common good, and the moral leadership of the monarchy in response to the Court Whigs' exaltation of the power of Parliament and doctrines of popular sovereignty. For example, in 1701, Sir Humphrey Mackworth's *A Vindication of the Rights of the Commons of England* argued that

only internal political divisions could ruin England, that all three parts of the constitution – King, Lords and Commons – must balance one another to safeguard the common good, and that the best guarantee of the national welfare would be a reciprocal relationship between crown and people, for ‘no king was ever great and glorious in England, but he, that . . . became the prince of the people’. The twenty-three-year-old Bolingbroke praised Mackworth’s work as ‘a just draught of our admirable constitution’. The closeness of Mackworth’s constitutional vision to that espoused by an Old Whig theorist such as John Toland in *The Art of Governing by Partys* (1701) made it doubly attractive for Bolingbroke’s purposes. It could be used to affirm that post-Revolutionary Whigs and Tories had been united in principle, and to argue that their common platform could again provide the impetus for the co-operative enterprise of defending British liberties in the face of Walpolean ‘corruption’.

The defeat of Walpole’s excise scheme in 1733 and the necessity of general elections in 1734 provided the occasion for the *Dissertation upon Parties*, the greatest monument to Bolingbroke’s oppositional activities. Walpole’s plan to extend the excise to wine and tobacco encountered a storm of protest from those who feared the imposition of a general excise, and offered the opposition its best opportunity yet to mobilize opinion both inside and outside Parliament. The bill proposed to increase the powers of excise officers, and could therefore be presented as offering a threat to liberty and property, and hence to the very principles of the post-Revolutionary political order. The opposition rallied in Parliament and left Walpole with such slim majorities for his unpopular measure that he was forced to withdraw the bill in June 1733. The onus was now on the opposition to exploit their victory at the elections scheduled for the coming year.

Bolingbroke himself had stayed on the sidelines through most of the Excise Crisis, yet he seized the opportunity offered by Walpole’s defeat to produce the decade’s most sophisticated statement of Country ideology, in the *Dissertation upon Parties*. Bolingbroke’s aim in this series of essays was to keep the opposition together in the face of the impending elections, as well as to undermine the legitimacy of Walpole’s shaken government. George II’s steadfast support of his chief minister had restored Walpole’s standing, and the ministry quickly regained its control over Parliament. This recovery

made it all the more necessary for the opposition to maintain a united front, and for its writers to expose the vulnerability of Walpole's ideological position.

Bolingbroke's main strategy in the *Dissertation* was to show that the party divisions of Whig and Tory had been made redundant by the Glorious Revolution. He argued that the only true distinctions were now between Church and Dissent and, most importantly, between Court and Country. All political parties are necessarily ideological coalitions: Bolingbroke exploited this structural fact in the hope of leaving Walpole and his closest supporters isolated from the majority of those who assented to the principles derived from the Revolution. Accordingly, he rewrote the history of seventeenth-century Britain to show Walpole's apostasy from the Old Whig principles which had been forged in the century-long battle against monarchical absolutism.

Bolingbroke's earlier series of essays in *The Craftsman*, the *Remarks on the History of England* (1730–31), had cast British history from the earliest times to the calling of the Long Parliament in 1640 as a perpetual battle between 'prerogative and privilege', the 'spirit of faction' and the 'spirit of liberty'. The first ten letters of the *Dissertation* (published in *The Craftsman* between October 1733 and January 1734) projected this narrative into the later seventeenth century by tracing the 'epidemical taint' (p. 14) of absolutism from the accession of James VI of Scotland to the English throne in 1603, through to the climactic reign of James II. Bolingbroke had promised that the *Dissertation* would trace the origin of parties both civil and ecclesiastical. He therefore argued that the only true divisions in the years after 1660 were those between Churchmen and Dissenters, since the factions of 'roundhead and cavalier' had expired before the Restoration, while Whig and Tory would not arise until the latter years of Charles II's reign. The battle over the exclusion of the Duke of York from the succession allowed the court to use its power to foment faction. The court alone was therefore culpable for having shattered the civil consensus on the common good which had been maintained by the Country party of the 1670s. Bolingbroke hoped to show that the party divisions of 1679–88 had been contingent, temporary, and created only by misguided passions and 'the wily intrigues of the court' (p. 37). The spirit of liberty and the national interest should therefore prevail over manipulation

by the court and private interest in the name of the natural and historic 'Country party . . . authorized by the voice of the country' (p. 37).

The ideology of the Country party, as elaborated by Bolingbroke, was recognizably Whig in its conception of the Glorious Revolution. James II had violated the nation's fundamental laws, and had therefore forfeited the throne. There had been no dissolution of government, but the Revolution had restored the ancient constitution and, with it, the 'spirit of liberty, transmitted down from our Saxon ancestors' (p. 82) that had withstood the assaults of faction and prerogative government down the ages. All monarchs since William III had ruled under the 'original contracts' (p. 83) that were the pillars of the Revolution Settlement, the Declaration of Rights (1689) and the Act of Settlement (1701). These guaranteed that the 'rights and privileges of the people' (p. 84) limited the monarchy, and that among those privileges was a limited right of resistance. All were now agreed in their subscription to these original contracts. Extreme exigency alone could justify resistance like that in 1688, Bolingbroke argued, as he took up the argument from necessity originally employed by post-Revolutionary Tories, and later taken up by the anxious Whig managers of the Sacheverell trial in 1710, Walpole among them. There was therefore no foreseeable possibility of justifiable resistance. Nor was it likely that malcontents would attempt to overthrow the government or, at the most extreme, the constitution itself (an admission intended to marginalize the Jacobites, and perhaps to distance Bolingbroke himself from his own earlier associations with the Pretender). The only threat came from those who were attached to the government yet enemies to the constitution, by which Bolingbroke meant Walpole's placemen in Parliament and others who profited from the Whig oligarchy at the cost of abandoning true Whig principles.

Bolingbroke had argued that Whig and Tory had been replaced by Court and Country parties, and that the only true enemies to the principles of the Revolution were Walpole and his supporters. All that remained for him, in his first series of letters, was to provide a criterion for judging political behaviour in the new era of Country consensus. To this end, he proposed a major conceptual distinction between 'government' and 'constitution'. He defined government as the instrumental activity of administration, an evaluatively neutral



activity that could be used to describe the conduct of any 'chief magistrate, and inferior magistrates under his direction and influence' (p. 88). Attachment to the principles of the constitution, however, provided the means to judge whether a government was good or bad, and hence whether it fostered the spirit of liberty or the practice of tyranny. 'By constitution', he argued in a classic definition, 'we mean . . . that assemblage of laws, institutions and customs, derived from certain fixed principles of reason, directed to certain fixed objects of public good, that compose the general system, according to which the community hath agreed to be governed' (p. 88). Any government that acted against the common good, or that went against the original contracts which formed the basis of the constitution, could be accused of being 'unconstitutional', a term coined by Bolingbroke himself (p. 124).

In order to convict Walpole's government of unconstitutionality, Bolingbroke turned to two further shibboleths of the Old Whig tradition, standing armies and the corruption of Parliament. Now Walpole was keeping the army on foot, on the pretext of potential Jacobite invasion. Bolingbroke's argument at this point was rather undeveloped, though he was compelled to make it because of the association between tyranny and standing armies which had most recently been affirmed in the 1690s by Old Whig authors such as John Trenchard, John Toland and Andrew Fletcher. His argument that Walpole was corrupting Parliament was more persuasive. If the monarch could sufficiently pack both Houses of Parliament, either through his direct influence or through his chief minister, the balance of powers in the mixed constitution would be destroyed, and with it liberty itself. 'Parliaments are the true guardians of liberty', Bolingbroke asserted, '[b]ut then no slavery can be so effectually brought and fixed upon us as parliamentary slavery' (p. 94). The crucial support of the crown in keeping Walpole in power after the Excise Crisis lent conviction to this argument, and it was on the ground of Parliamentary 'corruption' that the opposition mobilized its attack during the election campaign of 1734.

The diagnosis of corruption provided the link between the *Dissertation's* first ten letters, 'Letter xi' of the *Dissertation* (first issued as a separate broadside in the spring of 1734), and the work's concluding suite of letters (published in November and December 1734), though Bolingbroke's target shifted from the crown to the