

**Field, John [or 'Feild']** (c.1520-1587), was the first person to publish an ephemeris in England based on the Copernican theory. He later acquired the epithet 'the Proto-Copernican of England'. In his will, Field described himself as 'John Feild of Ardslow, fermor, sometymes studente in the mathematicall sciences'(sic). It is thought that he was buried, in accordance with his wishes, under the porch of the Parish Church of St Michael in East Ardsley, near Leeds. There is a wooden plaque inside the church commemorating him. At the suggestion of his friend, John Dee (1527-c.1608), who had learned of Copernicus's heliocentric theory during his travels around Europe, Field published his *Ephemeris Anni 1557, Currentis Iuxta Copernici et Reinholdi Canones Supputata*. In the introduction, Field criticised the errors of his predecessors, who had relied on the ptolemaic Alphonsine Tables for their almanacs. This new almanac, he declared in early 1556, followed "the authority of N.Copernicus and Erasmus Reinhold, whose writings are founded and firmly built on true, sure, clear proof". The magnum opus of Copernicus, *On the Revolutions*, had only come off the press in Nuremberg thirteen years earlier (1543); the Prutenic Tables of Reinhold, based on Copernicus, had been published in Germany a mere five years before (1551). It is possible that Field, in common with most other astronomers of the time, regarded the Copernican approach as a superior calculating method, whilst not accepting the literal truth of the Earth's diurnal rotation or annual revolution about the Sun.

Field and Dee were briefly imprisoned in 1555 for 'conjuring'. It seems that their chief offence was the drawing up of astrological 'nativities' – or horoscopes – for Queen Mary, her husband Philip, and Princess Elizabeth (*ODNB*; Hunter, Rev.Joseph, 'Some particulars of the life of John Field, the 'proto-Copernican of England"', *GentMag* (1834), 491-497; Field, Osgood, 'A few hitherto unpublished facts relating to John Field' *GentMag* (1862), 604-8; Kelly, Howard L., 'John Field', *JBAA*, (May 1945), 82-4).