

Shaftesbury · Standard Edition

ANTHONY ASHLEY COOPER,
THIRD EARL OF
SHAFTESBURY

STANDARD EDITION

Complete Works, Correspondence and
Posthumous Writings

Edited with German Translations
and a Commentary by

Christine Jackson-Holzberg, Patrick Müller
& Friedrich A. Uehlein

With the Assistance of Wolfram Benda

Advising Coeditor:

Rudolf Freiburg

frommann-holzboog

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Sämtliche Werke, Briefe und
nachgelassene Schriften

Herausgegeben, übersetzt und
kommentiert von

Christine Jackson-Holzberg, Patrick Müller
& Friedrich A. Uehlein

Unter Mitwirkung von Wolfram Benda

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III, I
CORRESPONDENCE

Letters 1–100
(December 1683–February 1700)

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The edition of the third Earl's correspondence has been long in the making, and the period of intermittent gestation has inevitably been accompanied by changes within the team responsible for the Standard Edition as a whole. We are particularly indebted to our former colleague Wolfram Benda, one of the very first editors involved in the Shaftesbury Project. Before moving on to a new career as university lecturer, he devoted his considerable skills over a number of years to the deciphering and transcribing of the letters found among the Shaftesbury Papers held in The National Archives at Kew. His work represents an invaluable contribution to the preparation of this volume.

We would also like to thank the various student and graduate helpers who have assisted us with the digitisation of the material collected: Cosima Herbst, Rebecca Kestler, Katharina Lempe, Michael Nied, and Julia Venemann. Special mention must go to Simone Broders, who, among other things, supervised that conversion and ensured that no text fell by the wayside. Thanks are also due to Silvana Nedela Rusca for her work on a preliminary index to the entire correspondence. The contributions made by all those named in this paragraph would not have been possible without the funding placed at our disposal by the Department of English at the Friedrich-Alexander-Universität Erlangen-Nürnberg, support for which we are very grateful.

The annotation in this volume has benefited greatly from the expert knowledge and findings very kindly passed on to us by Andrew Agha (University of South Carolina), Ross Carroll (University of Exeter), Suzannah Fleming (London), Ian Jackson (Sydney), David Morrow (George Mason University, Fairfax, VA), Norman D.H. Murphy (East Saltoun), Graham Powell (Bournemouth), and Nicholas Rodger (All Souls' College, Oxford). Much appreciated assistance has also been provided by Robin Darwell-Smith, Christine Ferdinand, and James Fishwick of Magdalen College, Oxford, similarly Elizabeth Back of Oxford's University Archives.

We are deeply indebted to Antony McKenna, whose expertise, accumulated over the course of his experience as editor of Pierre Bayle's cor-

Acknowledgements

respondence, as well as his generosity in sharing with us both material and time, have saved us from countless mistakes not only in our versions of the letters sent by Bayle to the third Earl, but also in many a note on those and other texts.

The manuscripts consulted during our work on this volume are held by the following public and private repositories: the Belvoir Muniments at Belvoir Castle in Leicestershire, the Bodleian Library in Oxford, the British Library in London, the Gloucestershire Archives at Gloucester, the Hampshire Record Office at the Hampshire Archives and Local Studies in Winchester, the Universiteitsbibliotheek Leiden in the Netherlands, The National Archives at Kew, the National Art Library at the Victoria and Albert Museum in London, the National Library of Scotland in Edinburgh, the Shaftesbury Muniments at St Giles's House in Wimborne St Giles, Dorset, and the Wiltshire and Swindon History Centre at Swindon. We are grateful to all of these for the assistance always willingly offered on site and from afar, as well as for the granting, where required, of permission to publish. Letters from the Belvoir Muniments are shown here courtesy of His Grace the Duke of Rutland, texts held by the Hampshire Record Office by kind permission of the depositor of the Malmesbury Papers, and those preserved among the Shaftesbury Muniments courtesy of the present Lord Shaftesbury, who has, in addition, been extremely supportive, allowing us access to a wealth of material over and above letters proper.

INTRODUCTION

Even allowing for the third Earl of Shaftesbury's comparatively early death on 4/15 February 1713, eleven days before his forty-second birthday, his extant, or rather his hitherto registered correspondence – at our last count 954 letters which span the final three decades of his life and of which just over half were penned by him – does not point to a strikingly prolific letter writer. A degree of shrinkage was to be expected, of course, and it is obvious from references throughout to specific letters sent or received that the collection now extant does not represent the original complete correspondence.¹ In one prominent case, the alleged loss of “letters in which Mr. Locke recommended Christianity to his Lordship”, albeit to “no avail”, was already “to be lamented” in the late eighteenth century,

though many years ha[d] not elapsed since they were read by two Gentlemen, who were so affected by the strong and pressing terms in which Mr. Locke expressed his sentiments, that they could not abstain from tears.²

While this anecdote may need to be treated with caution,³ there are certainly grounds for the assumption that some of John Locke's letters to

¹ We estimate, for example, that at least forty letters from the early years covered in this volume can be counted as lost.

² Recounted by George Isaac Huntingford (1748–1832, warden of Winchester College from 1789, later Bishop first of Gloucester, then of Hereford) and cited by Andrew Kippis in his article on the third Earl: *Biographia Britannica*, 2nd edn, Vol. IV (London, 1789), 286. Huntingford's “undoubted authority” (*ibid.*) for the anecdote, as for the reference in that same context to Shaftesbury's 1698 preface for his edition of Benjamin Whichcote (*Select Sermons*), was evidently either the Earl's nephew, the scholar and politician James Harris (1709–1780), or his great-nephew, also James Harris (1746–1820, from 1800 first Earl of Malmesbury). See also William Seward, *Anecdotes of Some Distinguished Persons*, Vol. II (London, 1795), 56, where Huntingford's words are paraphrased, but with a confident “[the letters] are still in MS.”

³ Kippis (see foregoing note) also reported, for instance, that the first Lord Shaftesbury “wrote an Essay on Toleration [...] which was evidently the ground-work of Mr. Locke's admirable letters on that subject” (266, note in the entry on the first Earl); see also Seward's *Anecdotes* II, 63 (an “outline [...] of that great work was found some years ago in Lord Shaftesbury's hand-writing”). The manuscript on which this notion was based has been identified as one “very neatly written by a

the third Earl have indeed gone astray,⁴ just as others, sent by the latter to Pierre Bayle or, for example, to Pierre Coste, by late 1711 his “only Book-Correspondant”,⁵ remain untraceable. There is, however, no evidence to suggest that the third Earl’s letters suffered the same fate as those of Bayle, the original body of whose correspondence was deliberately and permanently stripped after his death in December 1706 of “des pans entiers”, in some instances perhaps because certain of his cautious correspondents “en position de pouvoir ont fait jouer leur influence pour faire soustraire des lettres qui risquaient de les compromettre comme les complices du «philosophe sceptique de Rotterdam»”, in others simply because money was to be made with them.⁶ Although it is clear that a large number of letters addressed to Shaftesbury – their writers Bayle, Coste, Jean Le Clerc, and very probably John Locke – were separated from the bulk of his correspondence and passed on by the fourth Earl to an interested reader, his first cousin James Harris,⁷ the only casualties of that extraction appear to have been the letters from Locke.⁸

skilled and attentive copyist” and “most likely [...] designed to be read by Ashley, and then perhaps passed on to colleagues in the government” (Milton 2011, 173).

- 4 See Appendix I, p. 350. References in what survives of their correspondence between November 1687 and September 1704 suggest that fifteen or more letters are now missing.
- 5 Shaftesbury to Coste, 12/23 November 1711; the Earl, by this time in Naples, hoped to receive “now and then a Page or two about the matters of the literate World” from the other.
- 6 McKenna XII, xv. Of the letters written or received by Bayle between April 1696 and December 1702, for example, 488 have been found, while at least 255 can be considered lost (see McKenna X, 669–72; XI, 507–10; XII, 563–6). None of the third Earl’s letters to Bayle have survived.
- 7 Hence their presence today among the Malmesbury Papers at the Hampshire Record Office. Harris is known to have been in possession of (or to have borrowed) various of Shaftesbury’s philosophical jottings as well as his copy of Locke’s *Essay* (→ letter 9, n. 11) and an edition of Epictetus (Frankfurt, 1595) containing the third Earl’s marginal notes; those were shown by Harris to the scholar John Upton, who selected many of them for inclusion in his own edition of Epictetus (1739–41).
- 8 We have found no indication at all that the now missing letters to Bayle and to Coste had been returned at some point to the Shaftesbury family and were then also seen by Harris, but that does remain a possibility.

If neither wholly intact, nor as vast as, say, Locke's correspondence,⁹ the corpus of letters to and from Shaftesbury does offer a reasonably complete picture of his life, tracing for us not only his own particular understanding and attentive, even meticulous execution of his responsibilities first as son and heir, then paterfamilias, as owner of a large estate, and as active politician, but also of his profound interest in the philosophy and literature of the ancient and modern worlds, in the fine arts, in numismatics, in landscaping, gardening, and husbandry. The texts afford insights into the writing, publishing, and, in some cases, the translating of his published works from the late 1690s through to his elaborate preparations and instructions for the second, posthumously printed edition of *Characteristicks*. They show us the strict health regimen and the constant, deliberate "*Presence of Mind*"¹⁰ which made it physically and mentally possible for the Earl to remain active through years of deteriorating health and even during the weeks before his death. Finally, they allow us to observe his practical application, as a man of "good Temper, Honesty, Love of [his] Relations and Country, Sobriety, and Virtue",¹¹ of that which he believed "teaches Happiness & gives the Rule of Life" – of philosophy.¹²

The life that can be reconstructed on the basis of the correspondence remains on occasion fragmentary, and particularly so for the early years covered in this volume. We have endeavoured to fill in the gaps caused either by the complete lack of letters or by the missing portions of exchanges (i. e. the initiation or the response), drawing to that end on various other documents preserved among Shaftesbury's papers and elsewhere. At various points, moreover, we include and number as correspondence texts which, while formally addressed in each case to a specific individual employed by the Earl, are more properly sets of instructions and orders,¹³ our intention being thereby to illuminate aspects of his day-to-day occupations and, in addition, to demonstrate the rigour and thoroughness with which he attended to them.

9 Esmond de Beer counted 3648 letters in his eight-volume edition, and a supplementary ninth is now forthcoming, its editor Mark Goldie.

10 *Askémata* 342.

11 The Earl to Robert Molesworth, 12 October 1708.

12 *Askémata* 284.

13 → e.g. letter 99 below.

LETTERS 1–100

St John's¹ De: y^e 29th 83

Your kind expressions (my Dear L^d) I received for y^e which I give your Lordship many thanks. your Lordship must need think me to be very ill natured If I should think y^t you should forget me, after y^t you have
5 promised me so often y^t you would never forget me; yet I must confess y^t it is your kindness towards me to reassure me of your Lordships new favours. I was very glad to hear in my Bro: Smiths² letter y^t you was to keep your Chrstmas at Winton, not doubting but y^t y^r Lordship will be as merry there as you would a been at S^t Giles.³ My Lady gives her blessing
10 to you, and I told her y^t you had write a letter to her Ladysp: on sunday: y^e which her Ladyship never received, she would have write to you ere now but y^t she did not know whether you did doe to S^t Giles or stay at Winton, I suppose y^t it will not be Long before y^t you will hear from her, pray my dear Lord: doe not forget her for I doe assure you y^t your
15 letters has been y^e greatest comfot to her imaginable, and will be, for she is always a talking of you with y^e kindest expressions y^t can be thought of. I was this day wth my Lady Exeter⁴ who ask'd me how your Lordship did, she was extream glad to hear of your good health, but she was extream sorry y^t she could not hear from you, I told her honor y^t your L^dship
20 had wrote a letter to her last Sunday, y^e w^{ch} (as she said) she was not soe fortunate as to received it. I hope my dear L^d y^t you will not think y^e worst of me for writing to you about these things, sure I am y^t this is for you

¹ St John's Court, Clerkenwell, the London home of the Dowager Countess (the "My Lady" of line 9).

² Also mentioned in the postscript, and probably Dalicourt's brother-in-law. Entries in the *Day Book* for 1682 and 1683 (e.g. 21 July 1682 and 30 October 1683) show that a servant named John Smith accompanied the second Earl's sons to Winchester (see n. 5 below). The Dowager Countess would later have twenty shillings given to "Mis^s Smith at St Gilles" (Hampshire Record Office, Malmesbury Papers 9M73/672/32, in her letter to Jane Stringer of 16 January 1690).

³ Ashley had left St Giles's House for Winchester College (Winton) on 6 November 1683 (*Memorandums* fol. 2^r; see p. 54).

⁴ Either Anne Cecil, fifth Countess of Exeter (1649–1703), whose husband John Cecil (c.1648–1700) and Ashley were first cousins through their mothers, or Elizabeth, Dowager Countess of Exeter (d. 1688; widow since 1643 of David Cecil, third Earl of Exeter), Ashley's great-grandmother: her daughter Frances (1633–1652) had been mother to the second Earl of Shaftesbury.

intrest otherways I should not presume to write to you soe audaciously.
 pray my Lord make me soe happy as to let me intercept a line or two from
 25 you, it will be (dear Lord) y^e greatest comfort to
 your Lordships most humble and faithfull Servant
 Henry Dalicourt.

I humbly beseech your L^dship to give my hum: duty to M^r John and M^r
 Maurice if he is wth return to you:⁵ my service to my Bro: smith.

30 Address: These For y^e Hono^{ble} y^e Lord Ashley att his Chamber In Winchester Colledge
 Seal
 Postmark: DE 29

1684

Apart from one entry made by the second Earl in the *Day Book* – 13
 June, “Gave my Son Ashley 001-00-00” – we have found no record of
 the boy’s movements during this year, most of which he appears to have
 spent at Winchester College; the “Children” with whom the Earl went to
 Salisbury in December of this year were most likely his daughters.¹

1685

The second Earl spent £1 5s. on “New Years Gifts” for “y^e Children”,²
 those again most likely his three daughters. A fourth – Gertrude – would
 be born at Kensington seven months later on 30 July. As far as we can

⁵ *Day Book* entries show that the second Earl’s two younger sons John (1672–1692)
 and Maurice (1675–1726) had been accepted at Winchester College in late June 1682.
 John was still there in 1685, but would be moved in late November 1686 to Sherburne
 School (Dorset), probably after spending much of that year at home; see Appendix IV,
 p. 435. Maurice would remain at Winchester until early 1689: → letter 6.

¹ See the *Day Book* entry for 18 December 1684. The money given to Ashley (£1)
 corresponds to what the second Earl regularly withdrew “to Pocket” for himself.

² *Ibid.*, 1 January 1685. This amount was roughly the same as, for example, the costs
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