

Shaftesbury · Standard Edition

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

Unter Mitwirkung von Wolfram Benda

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Rudolf Freiburg

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III,2
CORRESPONDENCE

Letters 101–191
(2 April 1700–22 August 1701)

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INTRODUCTION

The pace of Shaftesbury's life during the early months of 1700 was perhaps only seemingly the quite leisurely one measurable in the available records for February and March. Between mid-February and 12 May, for example, we find no continuation on paper of the philosophical exercises he had taken up again in December 1699; after 12 May, moreover, there would follow a gap of well over two years in the notebooks devoted to those, his *Askémata*.¹ Even if such a long absence of entries cannot necessarily be taken to mean that the Earl pursued no "Closet-Work" at all, none of the "Studdy" and "Practicing" preparatory to the final written texts,² it is significant that he himself, in a letter sent to Benjamin Furlly on 4 November 1702, would look back on his "Efforts in time of Extreimity, for this last year or two" as a degree of participation and engagement in "Publick affaires" that had been seriously detrimental to his health and "in every respect" a cause of undue strain, not least, he implies, because it had deprived him of "the Retirement" he preferred and needed "for my Mind's sake".

The causes and development of that "Extreimity" can most clearly be seen in this volume when Shaftesbury and like-thinking correspondents, in most cases Dutch, assess the situation which arose in November 1700 after the death of Spain's childless Habsburg monarch, Charles II: all were acutely aware that his long-anticipated passing could have far-reaching consequences for much of Europe. In England, matters were in a certain sense compounded by the loss three months previously of the future Queen Anne's sole direct heir, an event which raised the spectre of a succession that might see a Roman Catholic Stuart king on the throne: the "promoters of y^t Intrest", if successful, would ensure that the country be surrendered once again "to y^c Horridest of all Religions, & to y^c Service of the Usurpations & treacheryes of that Neighbouring Crown y^t has Aim^d

1 See pp. 36–7 below, also our conspectus in *Askémata* 55–6.

2 *Askémata* 317 and, in our introduction there, 16–17.

so long att y^e Subjection of all Europe”.³ Those had been the Whigish words of an eighteen-year-old Ashley, written six months after the Glorious Revolution, but, well over a decade later, the conviction and fervour remained undiminished, now fuelled first by the possibility, then by the reality of a Bourbon king in Madrid. The growing intensity of the third Earl’s commitment in the face of “unexpected Terrours” – fears that the Tories might win the elections in January 1701 and promptly steer the country towards a “fatal” succession that would see it, alongside Spain, “firmly in the hands of France”⁴ – are evident in his letters. His strategy, too, is clear: concentration at home on securing and extending the Whig interest in Dorset and Wiltshire, while discreetly using his influence among “those of the right party in Holland” with whom he had “some small Credit”⁵ to bolster confidence in the Anglo-Dutch alliance and quietly to enlist the services of a someone who might be able, over the summer of 1701, to add his Dutch voice to the English ones that hoped to convince William III, hesitant King and Stadholder, of the need for a new Parliament, for a new ministry, and for war with France.

In the nineteen months covered by letters 101–191, not all was politics, of course, and even the added demands of family and estate matters left enough time, as is plain from the records, for the enjoyment of friendship, company, and conversation, whether at Little Chelsea or in Dorset. An opportunity also presented itself, in the person of Pierre Des Maizeaux, for Shaftesbury to return to the text of his earlier *Inquiry*, and John Toland was offered concrete support together with advice and cautions designed both to save him from his private failings and the Earl from having his own efforts among the Dutch, and probably also his connection with the other, become common knowledge in England. Patronage, then, plays a part in this volume, visible not only in relations with Toland, where, given Shaftesbury’s involvement in the other’s publications, the bounty was coupled with a certain self-interest and political intent, but also with the

3 Letter 5,38–40 (Lord Ashley to his father, 3 May 1689). → e.g. letter 129,47–50 and 64–8.

4 Letter 140,10–11.

5 Letter 163,40–1.

more unremarkable and biddable protégés Michael Ainsworth and Henry Wilkinson, the bounty there an act of good nature or personal obligation.

While upwards of sixty letters written or received by Shaftesbury between April 1700 and August 1701 are now missing, the conspicuous lack of any at all from or to John Locke in that same period is unlikely to be explained by their loss. Shaftesbury saw him at Oates in April 1701, and there was some talk in the July following of Locke's possibly being persuaded to return the visit (nothing came of that), but the arrangements in the first case and the plans in the second were made by others, apparently without any direct contact between the two.⁶ The substance of their earlier correspondence clearly indicates that their relationship had been at its closest between 1689 and 1694, but although the four extant letters written between May 1702 and Locke's death in October 1704 contain no exchanges of thought, they also betray not a hint of polite distance, and both certainly had the means, through shared acquaintances, to stay abreast of the other's doings and well-being.

It is a mutual friend who takes Locke's place, as it were, in the present volume: Benjamin Furly. While letters 1–100 include twenty-nine to or from Locke and thus more than in any other individual correspondence dating from those earlier years, letters 101–191 show twenty sent by Furly and seventeen received by him, with overall at least fifteen since lost. In terms of sheer numbers, this particular correspondence, ninety-nine letters written between June 1691 and October 1712, was to be the most prolific of all, with 1700 and 1701 showing the greatest frequency. Such statistics might be thought deceptive, and, indeed, Shaftesbury would receive more letters from Pierre Coste than from Furly although his correspondence with the former appears only to have begun in March 1705. Whereas Coste, however, was largely, and definitely by late 1711, Shaftesbury's "only Book-Correspondant",⁷ with the greater part of their discussions devoted to their reading or to publications in preparation, the letters exchanged by Furly and the Earl reveal a good deal about the thoughts and fears of both regarding political developments, local, national and international, about the select network of Dutch Whigs which, thanks in part to Furly,

⁶ See below, pp. 172 and 219–20.

⁷ The Earl to Coste, 12/23 November 1711 (from Naples).

LETTERS 101–191

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February–May 1700

After leaving St Giles's House in early January 1700, Shaftesbury had taken up residence in the house at Little Chelsea which, leased three months previously, would pass into his possession in October 1700 and was to be his London home for the next nine years.¹ The insights into his activities offered by extant correspondence dating from the period between early February (→ letter 99) and his return to the country on 24 May can be supplemented with details taken from the records of the House of Lords.

Of the nineteen February sittings, Shaftesbury attended only five (the days: 8, 10, 13, 17, and 21), but was appointed in his absence to two committees: the first (12 February) for the consideration of a private bill (sale of an estate and provisions for its deceased owner's family), the second (26 February) for the examination of a bill that would enable French Protestants living in London to build a place of worship there on the site of St Martin Orgar, a church destroyed in 1666 during the Great Fire.²

The Earl is recorded as present on 2, 8, 11, 12, 18, 22, and 26 March, for just seven, that is, of twenty-three sittings, whereas he missed only the first of the ten held between 1 and 11 April (Parliament was prorogued on the last of those). His average attendance was to improve markedly during the next Parliament, when he would be present for roughly seventy-two per cent of the sittings as opposed to forty per cent in early 1700. There is no indication, however, that Shaftesbury's absences in February and March were due to ill health, or indeed that his attendance record was conspicuously poor. And, as will be seen below, he was in the House daily during the dramatic "Contest of the People of England with Nobility & Crown" with which the session ended (letter 102,13).

¹ See SE III 1, pp. 311–12.

² For the details here and in the following see *JHL* 16. The Earl had attended the House of Lords for the first time on 19 January (→ letter 98, head-note), missing the previous seven sittings in that month; he was then only present on 27 January (thus missing six more), but named two days later as a member of the committee tasked with reporting on a private inheritance bill.

On one of the days when the Earl was absent from the House of Lords (5 February, a Monday), as well as on a Wednesday when no sitting was held (14 February), we find him working on his *Askémata*. A deletion in the section “Deity” – “Chelsea. Feb: 5^t 1699/1700” – suggests that he had been rereading and planning to continue the entry written on 20 January 1700, its content an exercise on “that cheif Originall Beauty, & that perfect Simplicity & Grace of w^{ch} all other is the Shaddow Reflection & Resemblance.”³ The passage marked “Chelsea. Feb: 14. 1699./1700.” follows entries written at St Giles’s House in December 1699 and in “London” on 14 January 1700. All three belong to the section “Mankind, and Human Affaires” and were to a certain extent written under the impression of the “Affaires” which had now led (or permitted) him to make of himself “a Slave to the present”. The proper “Attention”, the “Superintendancy and Care of Self” practised “some Months” previously, had now been replaced by a different kind of “Attention”: “an anxious Care” for his family and those dependent on him, for “y^e State” with its “Nobility, Barons, Counts”. The exercises of 14 January and 14 February 1700 were a warning not to seek “Order or Settlement” there, but to be mindful of “the Laws of thy first & greatest Country”, of “the Economy & Order of the Whole”, not to

determine ag^t Goodness in the Whole” or “be an Enemy to that Goodness, & to the Prosperity of the WHOLE, as well as to thy own Prosperity, by being like one of those Slavish People y^t refuse Liberty when offerd them.”⁴

Three months after the February entry, Shaftesbury added another short passage to the same notebook (the earlier of two), this time in the section “Passions”: dated 12 May 1700 (a Sunday) and written at Little Chelsea, the lines reiterate the previously discussed need for strict management of

³ *Askémata* 113–17 (113); deleted date: see 117, n. 2.

⁴ *Askémata* 169–75 (entry of 14 February: 174–5); see *ibid.* 83–4 for a passage dated 16 January 1700 (in the section on “Naturall Affection”). See also 16–22 (in our introduction to the *Askémata*) on the process of writing, reading, rereading, and rewriting visible in the *Askémata* notebooks, as well as on the programmatic, philosophical nature of the exercises, which can only very seldom be read as a form of journal.

desire and aversion, for the cultivation of a condition akin to “what the Misticks call *Dryness*”.⁵

101. SHAFTESBURY TO THOMAS STRINGER, 2 April 1700

HRO: Malmesbury Papers 9M73/G238/11; holograph original.

Date: year based on content (noted in the manuscript by a later reader first as 1699, then corrected).

98 ↔ 102

Little Chelsea April the 2^d

My Good Friend

I receivd y^{rs} in answer to my last, & shall be still further obligd to you for giving y^t help to Harry Dalicourt who so much needs it, & must often
5 be beholden to you.¹

I heartily thank you for so kindly interesting y^f Self in my sisters Concerns. What you mention as to my Sister Dorothy, wishing kindly y^t her

⁵ *Askémata* 253. Viewed together with the absence of *Askémata* entries between late April (the Earl’s “First Return”: *ibid.*, 475) and December 1699, then, after 12 May 1700, with an even longer gap – he would not take up his written excercises until late 1703 – the sporadic nature of those added in early 1700 seems to confirm the importance for Shaftesbury of “perfect Retirement” (letter 22,38; → also e.g. letter 174,35).

¹ Thomas Stringer (1638 or 1639–1702), formerly the first Earl of Shaftesbury’s steward and for almost three decades now legal adviser to the family (→ letter 8, head-note), was at this time doubtless the person most familiar with the estate’s deeds, tenancy papers, etc., and appears to have been guiding the current head steward Henry Dalicourt (c.1660–1709; → letter 1, head-note) through, for example, the ongoing inventorying at St Giles’s House (→ letter 102, n. 1). While the third Earl would come to doubt Dalicourt’s honesty and reliability over the course of this year (see below, Appendix I, pp. 304–8, lines 45–108), the remarks here may reflect no more than the worries about his servant’s experience and competence, misgivings which were compounded by his own absence from Dorset – he had left St Giles’s House for London on or immediately after 7 January (*Day Book*) – and had led him, in February 1700, to send Dalicourt detailed instructions as to the organisation of his household (→ letter 99). Line 3: the extant “last” to Stringer being letter 98 (13 January 1700), the one alluded to here was probably more recent and is now missing, as is Stringer’s “in answer”.

Lott might fall nearer to us, & further from her Northern Friends,² is a Thought I have long had. nor can I wish any thing more sincerely. But I
10 fear, it must not be as I desire: for I am in a manner engag'd for her other-
wise, in case this of M^r Hooper be for my Sister Frances, & not for Her.³
However She is oblig'd to you for y^r kind Wishes, and w^tever Country she
goes into, will I hope acknowledg it. for, I have reason to think that (as
to her own Case particularly) She would count it a greater Happiness to
15 be near her own Family & Friends of her Father's Side, than of the other.
But this you know as much of, as I can tell you. I wayt the Event. and
shall impart to you (as you will, I know, to me) w^tever happens on any
Side. Pray write the word w^t Deeds are necessary for me to send for up, in
order to morgage Beebe for raising a Portion: for I must think of Sending

² Lines 12–15 below indicate that the “Northern Friends” were members of the Manners family and thus related to Shaftesbury and his siblings through their mother (born Lady Dorothy Manners, *d.* 1698). We have found no evidence of any journeys undertaken by the second Countess's four daughters to visit her at Haddon Hall, the Manners' Derbyshire home, during her long estrangement from their father between late 1691 and early 1697, or, in that same period, to see her brother, the ninth Earl of Rutland (→ letter 48, head-note) at his other “Northern” home, Belvoir Castle in Leicestershire; the second Earl of Shaftesbury's strained relations with his wife's family suggest, moreover, that he would scarcely have permitted any such trip; see SE III 1, Appendix II (“Family Matters”), esp. pp. 406–13. In 1697, however, his daughters may have been allowed to spend some time in London (→ letter 65, n. 14), and we know that all four sisters, who had now been in town since the beginning of December 1699, were in contact there with their two surviving maternal aunts (→ letter 97, 13–14).

³ The outcome of the negotiations was a marriage between the second eldest of Shaftesbury's sisters, Lady Dorothy Ashley (1679–1749) and Edward Hooper (*b.* in the early or mid-1670s, *d.* 1750), heir to estates in Dorset and Hampshire; → letters 98, n. 1 and 104, n. 3. The “M^r Hooper” mentioned here was James, an older relative of the groom's and his family's representative in the matter (a proposal which had been under discussion since January 1700: → letter 98). The offer appears originally to have been unspecific, open either to Lady Dorothy or to her older sister Lady Frances (1677–1706). Nothing is known of any prospective “Northern” husband Shaftesbury had in mind for the former, but → letters 76, 81, and 82 for previous unsuccessful marriage negotiations on her behalf.

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