

PREFACE TO TEMPLE'S *LETTERS*

Textual Introduction

Swift's elegiac tribute to his deceased patron was inscribed on the fly-leaf of a quarto Bible bearing signature and date on the title "Jonathan Swift Feb^r 14. 1697." It read: "Jan^{ry} 27. 1698/9 Dyed S^r W^m Temple Bar^t at one O Clock in the Morning aged 71 years - He was a Person of the greatest Wisdom, Justice, Liberality, Politeness, Eloquence, of his age or Nation; the truest Lover of his Country, and one that deserved more from it by his eminent publick services, than any other Man before or since: Besides his great deserving from the Commonwealth of Learning; having been universally esteemed the most accomplisht writer of his time."¹

Temple's will, dated 8 March 1694/5, was drawn up during Swift's two-year absence in Ireland, from May 1694 to May 1696, and one witness was his cousin Thomas Swift, already in holy orders and beneficed at Puttenham, near Moor Park. A codicil, added on 2 February 1697/8, includes the legacy to "Mr. Jonathan Swift,"² alluded to in the editorial preface to Temple's *Letters*, which were published within ten months of the statesman's death. Nearly forty years later,³ in his autobiographical memoir "Family of Swift," Swift recalled that he had "continued in Sr W Temple's house till the Death

¹ Text from a nineteenth-century transcript in the National Library of Scotland, MS 881, fols 58, 70; printed by Elias, *Swift at Moor Park*, p. 100. See also SCOTT, I, 43; George P. Mayhew, "Jonathan Swift's 'On the burning of Whitehall in 1697' Re-examined," *Harvard Library Bulletin*, 19 (1971), 399-411 (p. 404n7); Ehrenpreis, *Mr Swift*, p. 257; Hermann J. Real and Heinz J. Vienken, "'A Pretty Mixture': Books from Swift's Library at Abbotsford House," *Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library of Manchester*, 67 (1984), 522-43 (pp. 523-26).

² Temple Prime, *Some Account of the Temple Family: The Appendix* (New York, 1899), p. 59; Thomas Peregrine Courtenay, *Memoirs of the Life, Works, and Correspondence of Sir William Temple, Bart.*, 2 vols (London: Longman, *et al.*, 1836), II, 484-86; *Correspondence*, ed. Woolley, I, 139 and n2.

³ This statement assumes that "Family of Swift" was written in 1738 (Ehrenpreis, *Dean Swift*, p. 879). There is, however, evidence that Swift scribbled his notes, possibly intermittently, between 1727 and 1729. See Hermann J. Real, "The Dean's Grandfather, Thomas Swift (1595-1658): Forgotten Evidence," *Swift Studies*, 8 (1993), 84-93 (p. 91n36).

of that great Man, who besides a Legacy [of a 100 ll *erased*] left him the care and trust and Advantage of publishing his posthumous Writings.”⁴ The will was proved 29 March 1699, by Temple's brother and sister, Sir John Temple and Martha Lady Giffard.⁵

Much of the preparation of this first posthumous publication had been carried out, however, in Temple's lifetime and with his assistance, and a manuscript of the text, being an early stage in the task of transcription,⁶ remained among Swift's own books until they were dispersed after his death.⁷

In view of the intended dedication of the published work to the King of England, and the need to finalize preparations before the Editor left England for Ireland as the Earl of Berkeley's chaplain, in the summer of 1699,⁸ some care must have been devoted to planning the appearance of the volumes in the succeeding winter. William sailed for the Continent at the end of May, not to return until 18 October. Swift himself set out for Ireland (where he stayed till 1701) via Bristol, on 18 July. But in May, a single volume of Temple's *Letters* mainly to Sir John Trevor was advertised in the press.⁹ This must have alarmed Swift and his publishers, since a fortnight later *The Flying Post* for 1-3 June 1699 carried an advance notice of their intended

⁴ *Prose Works*, V, 194.

⁵ National Archives, Records of the Prerogative Court of Canterbury, PROB 11/450.

⁶ See THE ROTHSCHILD LIBRARY II, 610 (2255), for an analysis of the contents, and the frontispiece to Shane Leslie, *The Script of Jonathan Swift and Other Essays* (London: Oxford University Press, and Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1935), for an illustration of Swift's beautiful transcribing hand. Among the other scripts which contributed to this most interesting folio manuscript, those of Thomas Downton and Stella (Esther Johnson) have been identified by A. C. Elias, Jr (“Stella's Writing-Master,” *The Scriblerian*, 9, no 2 [1977], 134-39, and *Swift at Moor Park*, pp. 4-16, 311-13).

⁷ *A Catalogue of Books: The Library of the Late Rev. Dr. Swift ... to Be Sold by Auction* (Dublin: George Faulkner, 1745), lot *634, fetching 10s. at the sale (reprinted in PASSMANN AND VIENKEN IV, 347-64 [p. 364]).

⁸ See Ehrenpreis, *Dr Swift*, pp. 5-9.

⁹ This appeared under the title *Letters Written by Sir William Temple, during his Being Ambassador at The Hague, to the Earl of Arlington and Sir John Trevor, Secretaries of State to K. Charles II ... Publish'd from the Originals, under Sir William Temple's Own Hand ... by D. Jones* (London: A. Baldwin, 1699).

authorized publication.¹⁰ It also appeared in *The London Gazette* for 8 June 1699, with a slight change of wording: “Mr Jac. Tonson, by Direction of the Rev. Mr Jonathan Swift (to whom Sir W. Temple left the Care of his Writings) gives Notice, That with all convenient speed will be Published by the said Mr Swift, A Collection of Letters from the Year 1655, to 1672, written by Sir Wm. Temple, Baronet, containing a compleat History of those Times, both at home and abroad; Which Letters were all review’d by the Author some time before his Death, and digested into Method by his Order.” Internal evidence suggests that the cancelled fragment of a trial preface in Swift’s holograph seems to have been written at this time.¹¹ It is also printed here.

Sir William had employed Jacob Tonson, Jr as publisher for the third and subsequent editions of *Miscellanea: The First Part* (London, 1691, 1693, and 1705), and the fifth and subsequent editions of *Observations upon the United Provinces of the Netherlands* (London, 1690, 1693, and 1705), so his choice as publisher of the *Letters* seemed natural.¹² He included in his entry in the Stationers’ Register of 12 April 1710, “S^r W^m Temple’s Letters 1st and 2^d Voll. 8^{vo}.”¹³

The London Gazette for 30 November 1699 (Swift’s birthday) announced publication of the two volumes of *Letters*, giving the title (echoing that of Temple’s anonymous *Memoirs* of 1692) at length. Naming the author, the following advertisement was for a new edition of those *Memoirs* (1700), “Beginning exactly where his Letters leave off.” Swift was by then in

¹⁰ See Alfred F. Robbins, “Swift and Temple’s Letters,” *Notes and Queries*, 10th ser., 8 (1907), 21-22.

¹¹ THE ROTHSCHILD LIBRARY II, 610 (2254).

¹² See Michael Treadwell, “Swift’s Relations with the London Book Trade to 1714,” *Author/Publisher Relations during the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries*, eds Robin Myers and Michael Harris (Oxford: Oxford Polytechnic Press, 1983), pp. 1-36 (8-9); and Homer E. Woodbridge, *Sir William Temple: The Man and his Work* (New York: The Modern Language Association of America, and London: Oxford University Press, 1940), p. 334.

¹³ The Stationers’ Register, MS at Stationers’ Hall, *Coppy Book 1682-95*, entry of 12 April 1710 (unpaginated).

Ireland, described as “Domestick Chaplain to his Excellency the Earl of Berkeley, one of the Lords Justices of Ireland.”

The advertisement does not mention the fine-paper printing of the *Letters* prepared in addition to the trade edition and printed on paper of inferior quality, which has since browned and foxed in most copies. For presentation, the dedication copy must have been handsomely bound, using the fine-paper printing. According to John Evelyn, who “went to see the Kings house at Kensington” on 23 April 1696, William III had “a pretty private Library.”¹⁴ As the Editor, known to his Majesty from audiences in Kensington and at Moor Park,¹⁵ was abroad, one may speculate that the presentation was made at Kensington Palace in the week before publication by Temple’s younger brother, formerly the Irish Attorney-General, Sir John Temple of Sheen, near Richmond. Two beautifully bound copies of the *Letters*, in blue Turkey finely gilt and from the same bindery, are known today. Each is part of a set of the same four volumes of Temple’s works: one bears the signatures of Sir John’s wife Jane Temple, née Yarner,¹⁶ and the other was presented to their daughter Martha Jane, Lady Berkeley of Stratton, later Countess of Portland.¹⁷ Enquiries at the Royal Libraries in

¹⁴ *The Diary of John Evelyn*, ed. E. S. de Beer, 6 vols (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1955), V, 237.

¹⁵ Sir William first sent Swift to Kensington to set forth his views to the King “early in 1693, when he was only twenty-five” (Ehrenpreis, *Mr Swift*, pp. 144-45); see also *Prose Works*, V, 193, and *Correspondence*, ed. Woolley, I, 129n2. While not ruling out that Swift presented his first published poem, *Ode. To the King* (1691), to William III, then at Waterford, in person, James Woolley thinks the contrary to be “more likely” (“Swift’s First Published Poem: Ode. To the King,” *Reading Swift* [2003], pp. 265-83 [276-77]).

¹⁶ In the David Woolley Collection at the Ehrenpreis Centre today (EC 8605). Jane Temple’s beautiful autograph appears at the top of the title pages of both volumes.

¹⁷ THE ROTHSCHILD LIBRARY II, 647 (2397). It is likely that Swift saw to the completion of these two sets for Temple, who had initiated them with the 1696/7 reprints of *Miscellanea in Two Parts* (*The First Part*, 5th ed. [London: Jacob Tonson, and Awnsham and John Churchill, 1697]; *The Second Part*, 4th ed. [London: Ri. and Ra. Simpson, 1696]), including one to Swift himself (now in Armagh Public Library). Lady Temple’s copy of *An Introduction to the History of England*, 2nd ed. (London: Richard Simpson and Ralph Simpson, 1699) contains an autograph correction in Swift’s hand (p. 275).

England and the Netherlands have failed to locate the dedication copy, which may have been among William III's books included in a sale at The Hague in 1749.¹⁸

The two volumes of *Letters* were listed in *The Term Catalogues* of February 1700, and in *Bibliotheca Annuæ* at the price of 9s. the set.¹⁹ The frontispiece portrait of Temple in volume I was engraved by Robert White after the fine painting by Sir Peter Lely, exhibited on loan to the National Portrait Gallery in 1978-79 (*Catalogue*, no 36). A set has come to notice recently in which volume I has a cancel title with the imprint "London: Printed for Ralph Smith ... 1716."²⁰ As with all of Temple's earlier writings, which commanded interest on the Continent, the *Letters* were immediately translated into French, and editions were printed at The Hague bearing the dates 1700, 1710, and 1711.²¹

Historical Introduction

Letters Written by Sir W. Temple, Bart forms the first instalment of five volumes of Temple's writings which Swift edited and published after the death of his employer on 27 January 1698/9. Until then, Swift had lived and worked with Temple in Sir William's country retirement at Moor Park, near Farnham in Surrey. The years of this employment, one of the formative periods in Swift's development as a thinker and writer, were broken into three parts.²² At the beginning, from mid-1689 to mid-1690, Swift seems to have been little more than a useful clerk for Temple. In his letter of recommendation for Swift to Sir Robert Southwell of 29 May 1690, Sir

¹⁸ *Catalogue des livres de la bibliothèque de S. A. S. Frédéric-Henri* (La Haye, 1749).

¹⁹ *The Term Catalogues*, III, 174; *Bibliotheca Annuæ*, no 1, p. 25 (13).

²⁰ Falkner Greirson, Dublin, *Catalogue*, 25 (1975), item 422.

²¹ Copies at La Bibliothèque de l' Arsenal, Paris; see TEERINK AND SCOUTEN **470** and **471**.

²² Ehrenpreis, *Mr Swift*, p. 102n1.

William wrote: "Hee has lived in my house, read to mee, writ for mee, and kept all accounts as farr as my small occasions requird."²³

A bout of ill health in mid-1690 caused Swift's physicians to recommend a return to Ireland.²⁴ He came back to Moor Park about August 1691,²⁵ in time to respond with *An Answer to a Scurrilous Pamphlet*, published before 22 February 1693, to the *Lettre de Monsieur Du Cros* of September 1692.²⁶ *An Answer* probably marks Swift's increasing usefulness to Temple. In May 1694, however, when he resolved to seek preferment in the Church of Ireland,²⁷ he parted from Temple with some coolness, since his work as secretary had made him, as Swift told his Uncle William, "a little necessary" to his employer.²⁸ After a humiliating experience of parochial work at Kilroot,²⁹ on the shore of the Belfast Lough, he was glad to accept Temple's invitation and return yet again to Moor Park, in May 1696.³⁰

Rumour has had it that Swift's position was always that of a dependent and social inferior. Samuel Richardson, who was no friend of Swift,³¹ told Lady Bradshaigh in a letter of 22 April 1752, that "Mr. Temple, nephew to Sir William Temple ... declared, to a friend of mine, that Sir William hired Swift, at his first entrance into the world, to read to him, and sometimes to be his amanuensis ... but that Sir William never favoured him with his conversation, because of his ill qualities, nor allowed him to sit down at table

²³ *Correspondence*, ed. Woolley, I, 101 and n6.

²⁴ *Prose Works*, V, 193; *Correspondence*, ed. Woolley, I, 103n8.

²⁵ After having visited his mother in Leicester (see *Correspondence*, ed. Woolley, I, 103n8).

²⁶ Textual and Historical Introduction, pp. □□. See *Correspondence*, ed. Woolley, I, 117n5, 115n5.

²⁷ *Prose Works*, V, 194; *Correspondence*, ed. Woolley, I, 120-21 and n4.

²⁸ *Correspondence*, ed. Woolley, I, 116 and n5.

²⁹ For this and the following events, see Ehrenpreis, *Mr Swift*, pp. 157-82.

³⁰ See *Prose Works*, V, 194.

³¹ Peter Sabor has recently reevaluated the standard view of Richardson's antipathy to Swift. See his "'A large Portion of our ethereal Fire': Swift and Samuel Richardson," *Reading Swift* (2003), pp. 387-401.

with him.”³² This charge has been vigorously rebutted more than once.³³ Whatever the truth may be, with Temple's increasing loneliness after his wife's death in February 1695³⁴ and his growing infirmities, he will have relied more and more on his secretary, introducing him to his grand visitors, and even bringing him to the notice of his old friend, King William. On 2 February 1698, Temple made a codicil to his will, by which he assigned a “hundred pounds to Mr. Jonathan Swift, now dwelling with me.”³⁵ This may have been, at least in part, a reward for Swift's preparing the publication of Sir William's writings. In dedicating the two volumes of *Letters* to the King, Swift presumably felt that the record of Temple's services could best be brought to public notice. It was in writing these letters, public as well as personal, during his career as diplomat that Temple had formed his prose style, the eloquence of his later *Essays* and *Memoirs*, that was to make him “the most perfect Pattern of good *Writing* and good *Breeding* this Nation hath produced.”³⁶ Besides, both Temple and Swift are likely to have considered Swift's editorial task to be of benefit to a young man who was ambitious of preferment and literary acclaim.

The two volumes contain, as the subtitle describes their contents, “An Account of the most Important Transactions that pass'd in Christendom from 1665 to 1672,” the first ending with the negotiations leading up to the Triple Alliance, the second covering Temple's first embassy at The Hague.³⁷

³² *The Correspondence of Samuel Richardson ... Selected from the Original Manuscripts*, ed. Anna Lætitia Barbauld, 6 vols (London: Richard Phillips, 1804), VI, 173.

³³ See, for example, Ehrenpreis, *Mr Swift*, pp. 142-49. For a more recent and well-balanced reassessment, see Richard Faber, *The Brave Courtier, Sir William Temple* (London: Faber and Faber, 1983), pp. 173-76.

³⁴ Woodbridge, *Sir William Temple*, p. 233.

³⁵ Courtenay, *Memoirs of the Life, Works, and Correspondence of Sir William Temple*, II, 484-86; *Correspondence*, ed. Woolley, I, 140n2.

³⁶ Henry Felton, *A Dissertation on Reading the Classics and Forming a Just Style*, 3rd ed. (London: Jonah Bowyer, 1718), p. 57; see also *The Spectator*, ed. Donald F. Bond, 5 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965), I, xcvi.

³⁷ See, in addition to Woodbridge, *Sir William Temple*, pp. 64-111, Faber, *The Brave Courtier, Sir William Temple*, pp. 30-47, 91-128, and K. H. D. Haley, *An English*

Correspondents include Sir John Temple, Sir William's father; Lord Arlington, Secretary of State and thought by Temple to be his patron at this time³⁸; his childhood-friend Philip Sidney, Lord Lisle; Sir John Trevor, Speaker of the House of Commons; the first Duke of Ormonde, Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, and Lord High Chancellor Clarendon. In each volume, a block of letters *by* Temple, 72 in the first and 65 in the second, is followed by 36 and 16 letters *to* Temple. A few documents, such as memorials and the text of the Triple Alliance, are also printed.³⁹ The care Swift took in editing these letters and documents becomes evident in the large tracts of translation from Latin, French, and Spanish, which he added "*for the Use of such Readers as may be unacquainted with the Originals*" (l. □). At times, Swift not only improved the sources he was translating in pithiness and force,⁴⁰ but also relied on the assistance of friends.⁴¹ From this careful work, Swift acquired respect for the letter as a literary genre and for

Diplomat in the Low Countries: Sir William Temple and John De Witt, 1665-1672 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986).

³⁸ Backed by Woodbridge (*Sir William Temple*, pp. 81-85), Ehrenpreis describes Temple's confidence in Arlington as "misguided." In accordance with his King, Arlington was secretly busy to undercut the central principle of Temple's diplomacy, "that the English must join with the Dutch to prevent Louis XIV from overwhelming Europe" by arranging the Treaty of Dover "by which England joined with France against the Dutch" (*Mr Swift*, pp. 95-97).

³⁹ The Treaty was signed and sealed on 23 January 1668 (N.S.) (*Letters Written by Sir W. Temple, Bart, and Other Ministers of State, both at Home and Abroad*, 2 vols [London: J. Tonson; A. and J. Churchil, and R. Simpson, 1700], I, 241-64). See also Pierre Marambaud, *Sir William Temple: sa vie, son œuvre* (Paris: Minard, 1968), pp. 264-66.

⁴⁰ See, for this view, Ehrenpreis, *Dr Swift*, pp. 35-36; since modified by Elias, *Swift at Moor Park*, pp. 2-33.

⁴¹ The Spanish was probably rendered into English by Lady Giffard, who had previously translated songs from Books I and II of the *Diana* by Jorge de Montemayor (see Elias, *Swift at Moor Park*, p. 18; *Correspondence*, ed. Woolley, I, 113n8, and *A Critical Edition of Yong's Translation of George of Montemayor's "Diana"*, ed. Judith M. Kennedy [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968]). See also Archibald E. Irwin, "Swift as Translator of the French of Sir William Temple and his Correspondents," *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900*, 6 (1966), 483-98.

its importance in writing history.⁴² In “The Publisher’s Epistle to the Reader,” he expressed his admiration for Temple’s stylistic graces, and by echoing his patron’s ideas and phrases illustrated the impact of Sir William’s example on his own prose style.

When Temple died in January 1698/9, his collected *Letters* had been prepared but not yet published. As he noted in his autobiographical fragment “Family of Swift,” Swift moved to London “upon this Event.”⁴³ He is likely to have delivered the manuscripts to Temple’s publishers soon after arrival, but unlikely to have attended the press to read proof. In May 1699, the Earl of Berkeley was appointed one of the Lords Justices of Ireland, sailing from Bristol and landing at Waterford on 17 August 1699. He was accompanied by his “Domestick Chaplain,” as Swift described himself on the title page of the *Letters*, having thought it advisable “to comply with an Invitation given him by the E[arl].”⁴⁴ Providently, Swift took care to apologize for any possible errata in the printing, “*occasioned by [his] Absence.*”

⁴² See, for example, Swift’s letter to Pope of 20 September 1723, *Correspondence*, ed. Woolley, II, 458.

⁴³ *Prose Works*, V, 195.

⁴⁴ *Prose Works*, V, 195. See also Ehrenpreis, *Mr Swift*, pp. 260-61, for more of the circumstances. The invitation to attend the Earl as his chaplain is likely to have come to Swift after 3 June 1699 (see *Correspondence*, ed. Woolley, I, 140n3).