

Il tema

NOTES ON THE CORRESPONDENCE
OF JOHN TOLAND

ALAN HARRISON
(University College, Dublin)

About eighteen months ago it was suggested to me that I collect and edit the correspondence of John Toland. Toland often re-worked letters he had written to produce his literary and philosophical works – like many scholars he appreciated the value of recycling his material. I decided not to include such works, though they must feature in any study of his habits of writing. The letters to and from Toland contained in the posthumous *Miscellaneous Works*, edited by Pierre Des Maizeaux and published in 1726, some four years after his death can be included¹. Added to these are the manuscript letters and other *disiecta membra* contained in two collections in the British Library². Having located these I was tempted to look for missing Toland items in places where one might expect to find them – Vienna, Holland, Prague, London, Oxford or even Dublin³. There may indeed be Toland letters etc. in any or all of these places, but after reading the available material I felt that it would be just as valuable to place these in context and to explain some of the allusions as it would be to find something new. This paper is the result of some preliminary reading of the material.

I have already alluded to the fact that John Toland recycled some of his letters to produce some of his printed works. A study of this feature of his work would be well worth while. Even it is not the main focus of this paper it might be useful to consider this aspect briefly. Let us take *Nazareus*, for example⁴. This was published as a book in 1718 and it consists of two letters written in 1709 by

ALAN HARRISON

Toland to a patron whom he calls “Megaletor” (= Large-hearted one). Elsewhere I have identified this addressee as Prince Eugene of Savoy, and the purpose of the letters seems to have been to encourage the Prince to purchase two esoteric manuscripts that Toland had come across, an Italian translation of the apocryphal Gospel of Barnabas and a Latin copy of the Gospels written in Ireland in the eleventh century⁵. The result was that Eugene bought the former and passed on the latter. When the letters were published in book form, nine years after they were originally written they took up more than one hundred and fifty octavo pages. Clearly this is not casual correspondence, but indeed a considerable literary exercise even if it was only intended for the eyes of the addressee in the first place. The fact that he was able to print these letters nine years later means that he must have made a fair copy at the time and kept it until he was ready to publish it in book form. *The Letters to Serena* (1704) and the posthumous *History of the Druids* (1726) are similar examples whereas *Vindicius liberius* contains shorter letters written in his defense and is not as coherent as a separate work as the others.

Volume 2 of the *Miscellaneous Works* edited by Pierre Des Maizeaux has a little more than two hundred pages of letters. These consist of letters both to and from Toland. There are fifty-one items in this collection. In addition many other items in the two volumes are, like the works mentioned above, obviously based similarly on original correspondence or are exercises in imitation or translation of the great classical letter writers Cicero and the younger Pliny. The manuscript items are collected in two books, also containing letters to and from Toland, now held in the British Library⁶. They consist of Toland’s own copies and drafts of his letters, letters received from others, lists of books, title pages and lists of contents of books either written or proposed by him, poems, translations and other ephemera. Even the ephemera are fascinating, consisting of memoranda, agreements and accounts between Toland and booksellers and also copies of testimonials on his behalf. There are about one hundred and ten items in these manuscript collections. While this material is interesting for all who wish

NOTES ON THE CORRESPONDENCE OF JOHN TOLAND

to study Toland's life and work, and indeed it has been extensively used by some of his recent biographers and commentators, Sullivan, Daniel and Champion for examples, it can only represent a very small portion of this kind of material produced by him over the period covered by the letters, which is twenty-eight years. I intend to return briefly to this point below after discussing the next issue.

Some items that occur in the printed *Miscellaneous Works* are also found in the manuscripts. This is very useful as it gives us insight into the kind of editing done by Des Maizeaux. To deal with this point briefly also, Des Maizeaux interfered very little with the texts as he found them – and we can be reasonably certain that the manuscript copies we have were the ones he prepared for the printers as they contain his instructions. He was responsible for some punctuation, paragraphing, assigning titles to some of the texts (in some cases rejecting Toland's titles), and the regularisation of the usage of capital letters. He maintains some spelling features which are distinctive in Toland's writing, for examples (Toland's usual spellings in italics) could >cou'd, honour >honor, though >tho' etc. The manuscript versions often identify proper names mentioned in the letters, whereas they are disguised by the use of asterisks in the printed versions. For example Sir Theodore Jansen, a patron and friend of Toland's in his later years who was closely involved with the Southsea Company and the ensuing scandal in the early 1720s appears as Sir T* * * J* * * in the printed text. I don't need to emphasize the importance of the manuscript versions in this respect. Also some of the edited letters were copied from drafts which themselves contain interesting corrections by the author. When it is possible to identify such variant versions I intend to note them and discuss them in critical apparatus to the editions. A note of great interest is that the letters written from Leibniz to Toland appear to have been written by an amanuensis which were then corrected, annotated and signed by Leibniz himself. This is, of course, only obvious when we study the manuscript versions rather than those printed in the Des Maizeaux volume.

In a paper like this, which is itself a preliminary analysis of the

ALAN HARRISON

material, or as Toland himself would probably have called it a Prolegomena to study of John Toland's correspondence, I cannot hope to cover everything. I intend to confine myself to some general comments on the range and variety of the items and to their importance for our study of Toland's life, thought and works. Then I'll take one or two examples as a demonstration of what can be garnered from Toland's correspondence.

As I mentioned earlier the time scale of the letters involved is twenty-eight years. Letters were extremely important to John Toland. He used them to make requests and proposals to those whom he hoped would act as patrons for his work. He also wrote to friends and others who were like-minded, sharing his ideas and learning and, on occasion, debating with them. The letter was his form of contact with many others and played an important part in the networking that was essential to his chosen way of life. The one hundred and fifty items mentioned in the sources above are only a very small residue of all such correspondence and are not sufficient to be more than footnotes in the type of study I alluded to previously. I am confident in saying this because there is evidence in what is left that his letters are part of a lifelong habit. However we are lucky to have what there is as we can learn more of his relationships with his patrons and his friends. We can tell where he was a certain times and often there are hints in the letters of what he was engaged in at those times. The addressees vary from luminaries like Leibniz, Shaftesbury, Locke, Harley, Molesworth and Jansen mentioned above, to booksellers, printers and agents like Edmund Curl and Bernard Lintot and to unidentified friends, male and female.

The first example I want to look at is the earliest, written in January 1694 from Oxford⁷. He had come there from London where he had recently arrived from his studies in Leiden and Utrecht. In London he had already been introduced to John Locke's circle, Shaftesbury among them. He thanks the addressee for introducing him to influential people at Oxford, and speaks to him in the following terms:

NOTES ON THE CORRESPONDENCE OF JOHN TOLAND

I am not a little proud of the honor my friends did me, in making me known to so considerable and ingenious person: and that I am very sensible of your goodness in contributing to make my life more easy and my studies more free.

This praise is very respectful and perhaps contains a clue to the identity of the addressee. I believe it could have been either Locke or Shaftesbury, both of whom would have had contacts at Oxford. His description of his arrival among the scholars is worth quoting at length:

I ly under great obligations to the Gentlemen who recommended me, both for the advantageous Character they were pleas'd to bestow upon me, and the suitable reception I met with: Mr CREECH in particular has been extraordinary civil to me, and did me the honor to recommend three or four of the most ingenious men in the University to my acquaintance, who accordingly visited me. The like of Dr MILL and Mr KENNET. This I look upon as very obliging, and so I take it, but it is very troublesome, and somewhat a la mode de France: for I am put into as great agonies as Sir Lionel Jenkins to answer the expectations of those grand Virtuosos; especially some of their Antiquaries, and Linguists who saluted me with peals of barbarous sounds and obsolete words, and I in return spent upon them all my Anglo-Saxon and old British Etymologies; which I hope gave them abundant satisfaction. Hebrew and Irish, I hope, will bear me out for some weeks, and then I'll be pretty well furnish'd from the Library, into which I was sworn and admitted yesterday only.

There are many interesting features about this passage, not least of which is the assurance, even arrogance of the twenty-four year old scholar. Three of the "virtuosos" he met in Oxford are mentioned. Mr Creech was a Latin scholar who published an edition of Lucretius; Whyte Kennet was one of the great pioneer antiquarians of the period, later one of the founders of the Royal Society of Antiquaries, a Vice Principal of St Edmund Hall, Oxford and Bishop of Peterborough. Perhaps the most interesting of the connections

ALAN HARRISON

Toland made was the introduction to Dr John Mill. Mill was a notable Biblical scholar and philologist, who was Principal of St Edmund Hall⁸. He was well-known not only for his own scholarship but also for the encouragement he gave to others. At the end of Toland's *History of the Druids* published posthumously in the *Miscellaneous Works* in 1726 Toland includes a copy of an Irish/Breton Dictionary which he says was communicated to him by the Rev. Dr John Hall⁹. This points to a comparative method of studying language, an approach that he introduced Toland to long before it became popular or commonplace. It seems that Mill may have also encouraged the "Father" of Celtic linguistics, Edward Lhwyd in the same way. Lhwyd was a Welshman born near Oswestry on the border of Wales and England¹⁰. He came to Oxford in 1691 to work as an assistant curator in the Ashmolean Museum. He was appointed curator himself in 1694 and spent the rest of his life studying many aspects of the British Isles. He understood at a very early stage that the key to this study was an analysis of the languages spoken there and proceeded to become the foremost expert in this field. He published his linguistic researches in Oxford under the title of *Archaeologia Britannica* in 1707, and in it he thanks John Mill for the encouragement and practical help the Principal of St Edmund Hall had given him¹¹. Not only was Mill useful to Toland because of the books and manuscripts he provided for him but he may have been instrumental in introducing him to Lhwyd. The Welshman wrote to John Aubrey in January soon after Toland's arrival in Oxford:

One Mr Tholonne (sic) is lately come hither, but as yet I am not acquainted with him with a design to write an Irish dictionary and a dissertation to prove the Irish a colony of the Gauls¹².

Toland could not have come at a better time as far as Lhwyd was concerned as he had previously written:

I am now at some spare hours learning Irish, that I maybe the better critic in the British, in case I should ever be concern'd in the *History of*

NOTES ON THE CORRESPONDENCE OF JOHN TOLAND

Wales. But I can not learn that there is any Dictionary, Vocabulary or Grammar of that language extant, nor one man in this town that can read it; which makes the task somewhat difficult¹³.

This was written very shortly before Toland's arrival, depending, as he says in his letter, on his ability in Hebrew and Irish to impress the Oxford "virtuosos". Incidentally his competence in Hebrew was doubtless due to the time he had spent in Leiden and Utrecht with the great biblical scholar Bernhard Spanheim.

We can ask why the possibility for comparative study in the Celtic languages in co-operation with Edward Lhwyd did not take place at this time. The answer lies, I believe in the other letters from this Oxford period published in the *Miscellaneous Works* which indicate to us that he was also engaged in debating many of the ideas which were later published as *Christianity not Mysterious* in the Oxford Coffee-Houses and other fora¹⁴. Later references from Lhwyd to Toland make it clear that the Welshman was fascinated by him he regarded him as a dangerous and volatile person¹⁵. Toland himself, later at any rate realized the importance of Lhwyd as an authority for his Celtic studies as he mentions that he consulted him in the *History of the Druids*¹⁶.

I will return to the evidence the correspondence gives us about that book after I deal with one or two other small points that arise from this first letter. Toland mentions the readiness of some of the Oxford scholars to lend him books and to his having been allowed to read in the Library. I have already alluded to the gift that John Mill seems to have made of a manuscript Breton /Irish dictionary. It would be interesting to see if there are any other records of loans made to Toland at this time and to check the Library records for the evidence of his induction into the Library and any subsequent borrowings he may have made from it. We know from later entries in the journal of the Librarian of the Bodleian Library, Thomas Hearne, that the Librarian heartily disliked him, but this was probably after the publication of *Christianity not Mysterious* when he became anathema to others with whom he had been earlier in contact¹⁷. I am mentioning this here

because, while I do not believe that there is a goldmine of undiscovered Toland items I feel that the possibilities of records of his activities in the various places he visited have not been fully exhausted and it would be worth while spending some time in the Oxford archives looking at the papers and libraries of his acquaintances there.

To return to the production of Toland's *History of the Druids* I have said elsewhere that I believe that Toland never lost his interest in the history and the languages of the Celts¹⁸. I believe it was a genuine interest but he was also not blind to the possibilities that his expertise in that domain gave him an advantage over some of his fellow scholars that he was not slow to exploit. I have already mentioned his use of this expertise in relation to the manuscripts mentioned in *Nazarenus* (written in 1709, but published in book form in 1718). It is likely that the return to Celtic studies which the publication of *Nazarenus* represented was the particular inspiration for a renewed interest in the project he had mentioned to Lhwyd more than twenty years previously namely (in Lhwyd's words): "to write an Irish dictionary and a dissertation to prove the Irish a colony of the Gauls". Indeed the publication of *Nazarenus* provoked the type of debate that he revelled in, both in print and in private correspondence¹⁹. It may also have attracted attention once again, because of his remarks on the culture of the Celts contained in his description of the Irish Latin manuscript of the Gospels known as the Gospels of Mael Brighte, to the language and culture of the ancient Irish. There is another reason why he may have been inspired to return to his studies in that domain and that was the recent republication of the *Description of the Western Isles of Scotland* by Martin Martin²⁰. This was originally published in 1703 and the second edition came out in 1716. Toland's own annotated copy of this second edition (subsequently owned by Robert Molesworth) is now in the British Library²¹. We can, I believe, speculate on the sequence of events as follows. For whatever reason Toland revived the scheme for a history of the ancient Irish, laying special emphasis on the druids, and sought patronage for the venture. The fact that the letters (originally written in 1718) that later made up

NOTES ON THE CORRESPONDENCE OF JOHN TOLAND

the text of the book were addressed to Robert Molesworth indicate that he did indeed receive encouragement from him. I would go further and say that the close friendship that is evident between the two of them in some of the final letters written and received by Toland before his death could have had its origin in the patronage and encouragement for this venture that Toland had received from Molesworth.

The date of the first letter published in the *History of the Druids* is June 1718 with the second letter following in July and the third in April 1719. The manuscripts have at least three items written at the same time as the first letter and I will quote at length from them because they add to our knowledge of the production of the work. The first is a draft of a letter to a Thomas Southwell and I will print this in full below:

My Lord,

I have been a great while upon a work wch all real lovers of learning will be glad to see compleated, so I have brought it very forward, there being already two books of it finish'd, and the whole consisting of four. Most of the material for the two last are ready. My subject is The history of the Druids, or a critical account of the antient Celtic Religion & Literature. The Irish are not less concern'd in this disquisition than the Britons and Gauls, nor have their very fables and Mythology been a little serviceable to me. But your Lordship will better judge of the use I make of their language and customs from the specimen call for them after the holy-days. My Lord Molesworth has kindly inform'd me, that none of British extract was better vers'd in the Irish Antiquities than My Lord Southwell, wch is the reason that I take the liberty of haveing recourse to your Lordship for what assistance or advice you'll think fit to communicate towards bringing a work to perfection, wch will prove no less useful than entertaining, unless suffering under my management. About a week hence I shall do myself the honor of waiting upon you, and in the mean time with true respect. I send hereby, wch are five sheets of the introductory book, and wch I beg you to preserve safe till I call for them after the holy-days. My Lord Molesworth has kindly inform'd me, that none of British extract was better

ALAN HARRISON

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M.L. [My Lord etc.]

The next text also written in June 1718, perhaps even before the text above is a draft to the famous (or infamous) Edward Curll, the Grub Street bookseller and publisher²²:

I was not a little encouraged by the approbation you bestow'd last munday on my design of writing The History of the Druids: which as has been long in my thoughts, did occasion me not only to purchase all the printed books particularly treating of them, or specially relating to them: but to collect all the Celtic Remains concerning them, that my acquaintance or correspondents in Ireland, Wales, Scotland or Bretagne cou'd procure me. Yet as there are many writings very material in the Highlands and in Ireland, which are well worth going for (not to speak of transcribing their traditionary poems) as well as diverse monuments which I wou'd willingly see and delineate with the greatest accuracy my self, I form'd the design of going to Scotland forthwith, cou'd I meet with the encouragement I propos'd from a few hands. Your naming the Lord Chancellor PARKER for one in your last Letter, is not onely proper, but very agreeable (for tis not to every man I wou'd be oblig'd) but tho he's not onely universally acknowledged to be a patron of men of Letters, and an encourager of all curious or useful discoveries: but to be himself eminently learned, a polite philologist, a solid philosopher, and (as you assure me) a profound divine, yet it has never been my good fortune to be known to his Lordship; and you can bear me witness that I am no [*written lenthways on lefthand margin*] intruder into great men's acquaintance, except where the occasion is very natural and proceeding from themselves. So that as you nam'd a person, who I assure

NOTES ON THE CORRESPONDENCE OF JOHN TOLAND

you was not out of my thoughts, you must e'en manage the rest, and *[written upside down on top of letter]* place it in the account of the other obligations you have laid on, Sir etc.

The first point about these two letters is that they provide us with the names of three people who, along with Molesworth, may have also helped Toland with his Celtic researches. The first, Thomas Southwell, was a member of a family that had associations with the governance of Ireland²³. Some of them had the reputation of an antiquarian interest in Ireland and they were in possession of several Irish manuscripts. Robert Molesworth seems to have known this and suggested to Toland that he approach Thomas Southwell with a view to consulting them and perhaps to receiving help for his project. In August 1719 Molesworth wrote from Ireland once more to Toland and once again mentions the possibility of using Southwell's manuscripts and expertise:

I have yours of the 21st of July. My Ld Southwell is now in London settling the affairs of his family upon the late clandestine marriage of his Eldest Son. I cannot tell you where he may be heard of if not from some of Lord Coningslyes servts at his house in Albermarle street. He did once assure me that he had severall materials proper for your work, either old Irish Records or something of that sort & he speaks as if he himself understood a great deal of the matter. I shall not leave this kingdom till towards the Session of Parlt at Westminister, so that I advise you not to tarry for me but put your work into the best form your friends there shall think proper. The you are so kind as to give me the unlimited right you speak of, I should make use of very little of it, being persuaded you know how to do your own part & I am altogether ignorant of that sort of ancient Learning.

Although there is no evidence in the text of the posthumously published book that Toland ever availed of the opportunity to consult the manuscripts and books in Southwell's possession, there is a draft of a letter from Toland to Molesworth that is either the letter Toland wrote that provoked the above letter or an answer to it, and

ALAN HARRISON

it also contains interesting material about the proposed *History of the Druids*:

My Lord

It is not for any news I have to communicate, either foren or domestic (of wch there never was a greater famine here) that I do my self the honor to write at present to your Lordship: but out of pure respect and gratitude, in acknowledgement of the many obligations, both in sickness and health, for wch I stand indebted to you, an wherof no man can be more truely sensible. I am farr advanc'd in my History of the Druids, which will either be a thin folio or a thick quarto, with about 26 copper curls: but as to the form I shall intirely submit it to your Lordship's taste, when on your return to England, you'll have the goodness to peruse my manuscript. I have lately met with extraordinary helps, where I had lest reason to look for them: & besides well attested manuscripts from abroad, sixteen manuscripts here at home, wch will render my work very entertaining, unless the subject shou'd have the misfortune to suffer under my management. But in this case I am resolv'd not to ly under all the blame, since by giving you the same absolute right of the Sponge and the Stile that Cicero did to Atticus, I have nothing to fear but from your indulgence. On this occasion I take the liberty of putting your Lordship in mind, that you once told me Sr Thomas Southwell had some notes or memoirs if not books or some other materials, that might be serviceable to my purpose. Provided this be so, and that he'll please to impart them, I shall not fail to [do] him all the justice so great a favor deserves, whether or not I have the same things my self or not.

We should note also the reference to Cicero's correspondence with Atticus which Toland would have doubtless thought fitting for himself and suitably flattering for Robert Molesworth.

The second person mentioned in the above letters was Edmund Curl (sometimes spelt Curll). Curl is often seen as the epitome of Grub Street being involved with many of the notorious publications of the period. Be that as it may he was a successful businessman and it is not surprising that Toland should have been in touch with him as he was himself associated with publications of a clan-

NOTES ON THE CORRESPONDENCE OF JOHN TOLAND

destine nature. The Lord Parker mentioned is Thomas Parker, who was created Baron Macclesfield and Lord Chancellor from 1716. We have no correspondence written from him to Toland but another letter from a third party gives us an indication of how it would have been received by the Lord Chancellor. The author of the letter is one John Chamberlayne:

Sir,

I saw my Ld chanc. yesterday, who among other papers gave me your project of a History of the Druids, which he told me he did not understand, but which he suspected to be level'd agst Christian Priests etc. His Ldp also seem'd offended at your title Nazareus as if intended with contempt like Julian's Galilaeus. You must therefore have been misinform'd by him who told you that the sd No[ble] Lord approv'd your last Book, for he himself said he had not seen it. If there be any Poison lurking under it, which I own I am not sagacious enough to discover, let my Religious Philosopher be the Antidote; for twas writ for the conviction of Atheistick Infidels, & tho' you should be neither, I hope it will not be a disagreeable Present from your most humble Servt.

J etc.²⁴

I believe the above portions from Toland's letters show us more of the story of the production and publishing plans that he had for his *History of the Druids*. Nor is this all that can be gleaned from the manuscript papers. There is a fair copy of the Title page of the intended book, which I will reproduce below marking the additions not in the printed version by underlining the words and including versions in the printed edition and not in the manuscript between square brackets:

ALAN HARRISON

[A
SPECIMEN
of the]
The Critical History
of the
Celtic Religion & Learning:
containing
An ample account of the Druids, or the priests & Judges; of the Vuids,
or the Diviners & Physicians; & of the Bards, or the poets & Heralds
of the antient Gauls, Britons, Irish, & Scots, in IV books illustrated
with copper cuts.

The whole collected

*As well from the most authentic Writing
several nations, and from the monuments of Stone, of mettal, or other
materials, that are still remaini; as from the consonant relations of the
Greeck & Roman authors, till the utter subversion of the
Government, priesthood, and*

Philosophy of the Druids,

By

John Toland

These are added [with the]
The history of Abaris ye Hyperborean,
priest of the Sun:
[In THREE LETTERS
TO
The Right Honourable
The Lord
VISCOUNT MOLESWORTH
And
A Dissertation concerning the Celtic Dialects
and Colonies.]

NOTES ON THE CORRESPONDENCE OF JOHN TOLAND

There is also a list entitled “Manuscripts of mine abroad”²⁵. This doubtless refers to manuscripts of his works that he had lent to others or given them to them in order to get approval and patronage. Of the sixteen entries in the list the *History of the Druids* is mentioned three times. Firstly it seems a copy of the Specimen was given to Lord Molesworth himself. Another copy also entitled “Specimen of the History of the Druids” was given to a Mr Hewet, who was probably a bookseller. The third entry is crossed out, presumably because it had been returned reads “part of the History of the Druids” was given to a Lady Cairnes. She was probably the wife of Alexander Cairnes, a banker, who was created a baronet on 1706. We may ask what was Toland doing in showing his work to the wife of a Scottish banker. However if we remember that at this time he was also connected not only with Robert Molesworth but also with others who had an interest in the Southsea Banking Company. The manuscripts give plenty of evidence of this activity, but I know that Justin Champion is engaged in studying that period of Toland’s life, and I look forward to seeing the results of his research in due course.

I have followed the evidence from the correspondence that applies to the production of *The History of the Druids* for several reasons; firstly being a Celtic scholar myself the subject and Toland’s treatment of it is a special interest; also it gives testimony to a life-long interest in the subject and to the way he used his academic competence as a part of his polemic armory; it also introduces us to some of those with whom he corresponded and suggests further fruitful lines of enquiry. It would also be possible to take other subjects and other books of his and look for the evidence of his developing ideas and of the methods he used to broadcast them. This is very much what Stephen Daniel attempted, and in a large measure achieved in his biography of Toland²⁶. We could also study the relationships he had with his patrons, fellow scholars, booksellers and friends, and although, as I said earlier we only have the meagre remains of what must have been a full epistolary life, the samples we have give a very good flavour of the real world that Toland lived in.

In writing his letters Toland was drawing on at least two traditions, namely the Classical and his own native Irish traditions, and

ALAN HARRISON

it is worth looking at each of them briefly. There is plenty of evidence that Toland was a student and admirer of the great letter writers of the Latin tradition, Cicero and Pliny, and that he consciously imitated them in both style, content and tone in his own letters. Some of his letters read rather like exercises in the mode. The Gaelic Irish tradition has no record of letter writing as such, however the praise poems written by the familial Irish bards, (and I have said elsewhere that I believe that Toland belonged to a hereditary bardic family) were often like letters asking for patronage from the chieftains²⁷. Although he was not writing in verse Toland would not have been unfamiliar with the type of flattery imposed on those who had to write for a living. Both of these angles on Toland's correspondence deserve further study.

I would like to finish this paper by quoting from two other letters and commenting very briefly on them. The first was addressed to "Barnharn Goode Esqr, to be left for him at Brown's Coffeehouse in Spring Garden, near St James's Park/London". Barnham Goode was a Fellow of King's College, Cambridge and a friend of Toland's fellow deist Anthony Collins. The letter was written on October 30 1720 when, it seems, Toland was staying with Collins at Baddow-hall near Chelmsford in Essex. I will give the letter (which is itself only a draft) almost in full.

Dear Sir

news you can expect none from hence, but what will seem incredible to the people at London; that as to any discourse about the Southsea, I injoy as profound a tranquility, as if living in Arabia. And after all I think it the wisest course, at least the most becoming a Pantheist (who ought to be prepared for every caprice and reverse of fortune) to leave this national affair to the consideration of the Parliament, which alone can redress its own mistakes, and punish the miscarriages of the managers. Most of the members are no less interested in profit and loss than other persons, which will make them as zealous to set all things right, and which is a happiness that does not always accompany parliamentary procedings. This being Sunday I inculcate these hints to you, as uses of consolation and *[insert taken from top margin]* *Laetate, and let your

NOTES ON THE CORRESPONDENCE OF JOHN TOLAND

Litany consist of one Petition, [*portion in Greek*].* I had not time to inform you how proud I am of Mr Ingram's good opinion, who's by all that know him as well as your self, accounted a most accomplished Gentleman, but particularly in respect of the Belles Lettres. As to F.P. in the Epistle before the Pantheisticon, let him know that it signifies no more than Felicitate precatur, or as he well expresses it himself, Felicitate perpetuam a Roman form answerable to S.D. or S.P. or S P D but not so commonly us'd. The next question none can resolve but my self, and some few of my Schoolfellows. Wherefore, since you'll condescend to learn such trifles relating to so inconsiderable a person, Janus Junius is the name that was given me at the font, but which for brevity-sake was quickly chang'd into John, as well as to make it easier to servants & others. I was call'd however by this name at first in the School-roll every morning, till the other boys made such game about it (to use this boyish phrase) that the master himself order'd John to be call'd for the future. Eoganesius is form'd as Proconnesius or Peloponnesius: for the peninsula where I was born, which you'll see in the most northerly point of the map of Ireland, and in the Isthmus wherof stands Londonderry, is corruptly call'd Iniseon whereas it is properly and originally Inis Eogan i.e. Eogani insula, unde Eoganesius. By this time you see, that my own name serves for as good a cover as any I cou'd feign or invent. Pray keep this foolery to your self and Mr Ingram, since I hope it will be a long time, before it can be of use to any other [*portion at end of letter to be inserted here*] *for diversion if not for information: my doctrines I'm willing shou'd be scann'd during my life, but critical descants on my name shou'd depend [on] Anthony Wood's successor.* If you'll be so kind as to send me any news public or private, it will be an acceptable favor. I can with as much sincerity and esteem as Mr Ingram (to whom my hearty respects) and with the very same meaning subscribe my self,

Dear Sir

Your most faithful
humble sert

Philagathus

Mr Collins, your quondam Collegian, at whose I now am, is your humble servant.

ALAN HARRISON

Both Robert Sullivan and myself have cast doubts on the truth of this story²⁸. There is much that one could add as commentary to the above text, but I'll leave that until a later date.

The last portion I wish to quote here is a footnote to the often-mentioned certificate the Franciscans in Prague gave to John Toland when he visited them in 1708. I have alluded to this certificate elsewhere and noted that the names of those who signed it indicated that they were not only from the same region of Ireland as Toland but they were also Irish speakers and at least one of them was an Irish language scholar in his own right²⁹. He is the Rev Father Francis [O'] Devlin, lecturer in Theology, both at Prague and later in Dublin to which he returned in the year 1714. On his return he established contact with the "school" or "circle" of scribes and scholars known as the "O Neachtain school/circle" and composed at least one poem himself³⁰. The letter from Toland returns the compliment and introduces O'Devlin to a powerful friend in Vienna, perhaps Prince Eugene himself or his aide Baron de Hohendorf.

Sir,

I have nothing to add to what I did my self the honor to write to your Excellency per post, but that the Countess of STERNBERG is not the only person at Prague to whom I am particularly oblig'd: for the very reverend Father Guardian, and the rest of the worthy members of the Irish Convent, were not more disposed to do me all the good offices of humanity, than they were forward to shew me the most zealous affection Countrymen. yet I did not receive half the satisfaction from their many civilities to my own person, as I was charm'd with their putting round the Queen's health in full Refectory, where many strangers were present, and of several nations as well as different religions. Nor did I find 'em less easy and well-bred upon this last article than in other things; tho' I frankly told 'em my sentiments, and perhaps, that I might sometimes, to improve by the discourse of ingenious persons, carry matters further than reason or the reformation will allow. But I must do that justice to the bearer of this Letter, Father FRANCIS O DEULIN, LECTOR OF DIVINITY, as to own my self not a little pleased with his courteous behaviour and

NOTES ON THE CORRESPONDENCE OF JOHN TOLAND

good literature. The least I cou'd therefore do in return of so much kindness and friendship, was to recommend him according to his own desire, to a person of your Excellency's extraordinary candor and capacity, not doubting by my own experience, but that during his stay at Vienna, you'll not only favor him with your protection (he being a good Imperialist, without which I wou'd not espouse him) and be ready to forward or countenance him in all lawful occasions. But I am confident his own merit will prevail farther than anything I can say in his behalf. I am etc.

I am not going to comment at length here on this letter, but particularly interesting to us is the fact that both this document and the certificate supplied to Toland by the Irish Friars of Prague are evidence that Irishmen, and Irish speakers showed such loyalty to each other despite their religious and political differences!

NOTES

- 1 P. DES MAIZEAUX, ed., *A Collection of Several Pieces of Mr John Toland, now first publish'd from his Original Manuscripts: With Some Memoirs of his Life and Writings*, 2 vols, London, 1726.
- 2 Add. Ms 4295 and Add. Ms 4465.
- 3 This list is based on locations where he spent some time during important periods of his life or on the present locations of collections of papers belonging to known friends and addressees of his.
- 4 JUSTIN CHAMPION's edition of *Nazarenus* appeared just after I had finished this paper and his researches presented there add considerably to our understanding of Toland's habit of recycling material. It seems that the original letter written to Prince Eugene may have been in French. Stuart Brown's paper given also at the Enlightenment conference in Dublin seems to suggest that some of the material that later was presented as a letter written in English was actually originally in French. The evidence in both cases suggest a slight variation of the method of working that I mention below. See JUSTIN CHAMPION, ed., *Nazarenus*, Oxford, 1999.
- 5 See A. HARRISON, *John Toland and the Discovery of an Irish Manuscript in Holland*, "Irish University Review", 22, 1992, pp. 33-39.
- 6 See note 2 above.
- 7 *Miscellaneous Works*, vol. II, pp. 292-294.
- 8 Mill was specially well-known for his work of textual criticism of the New Testa-

ALAN HARRISON

- ment. See A. FOX, *John Mill and Richard Bentley: A Study of the Textual Criticism of the New Testament 1675-1729*, London, 1954.
- 9 *Miscellaneous Works*, vol. I, pp. 204-228. See also my article, A. HARRISON, *John Toland (1670-1722) and Celtic Studies*, in *The Proceedings of the Second North American Congress of Celtic Studies*, Halifax, 1992, pp. 653-679.
 - 10 *Ibid.*
 - 11 E. LHUYD, *Archaeologia Britannica : Vol I. Glossographia*, Oxford, 1707, Preface.
 - 12 R. W. T. GUNTHER, ed., *The Life and Letters of Edward Lhwyd*, Oxford, 1945, p. 217.
 - 13 *Ibid.*, p. 214.
 - 14 See for examples the letters in *Miscellaneous Works*, vol. II, pp. 295-314.
 - 15 GUNTHER, *op. cit.*, p. 278.
 - 16 *Miscellaneous Works*, vol. I, p. 4.
 - 17 See the references to him in THOMAS HEARNE's diaries, Oxford, 1885-1921.
 - 18 See note 9 above.
 - 19 See the account of this debate in Champion's edition of the work.
 - 20 MARTIN MARTIN, *A Description of the Western Isles of Scotland*, London, 1703 & London, 1716, 2nd ed.
 - 21 British Library, shelfmark C.45.C.1.
 - 22 See the references to Curl(l) in PAT ROGERS, *Grub Street: Studies in a Subculture*, London, 1972.
 - 23 See the references to the Southwell family in D.N.B. and in the Catalogues of Irish Manuscripts in the British Museum (vol. I, edited by S. H. O'GRADY, London, 1926; vol. II, edited by R. FLOWER, London, 1926; and vol. III, edited by R. FLOWER, London, 1953).
 - 24 The book mentioned is JOHN CHAMBERLAYNE's *The Religious Philosopher*, London, 1718.
 - 25 The text of this manuscript list has been published by CHAMPION as an appendix to his edition of *Nazarenus* pp 302-313. I was delighted to find this edition included in Champion's book especially as he has successfully identified most of the texts and editions in Toland's possession. This he has done with much greater success than I had thought possible. Having acknowledged this, perhaps he will forgive my churlishness in pointing out that he has misidentified some of the Irish language items. I intend to return to this at a later date.
 - 26 STEPHEN H. DANIEL, *John Toland: His Methods, Manners and Mind*, Kingston and Montreal, 1984.
 - 27 See the article mentioned in note 9 above.
 - 28 ROBERT SULLIVAN, *John Toland and the Deist Controversy*, Harvard, 1982, p. 2; ALAN HARRISON, *John Toland (1670-1722): Béal Eiriciúil as Inis Eoghain*, Baile Atha Cliath, 1996, p. 5.
 - 29 HARRISON, 1996, p. 5.
 - 30 See ALAN HARRISON, *The Dean's Friend: Anthony Raymond, Jonathan Swift and the Irish Language*, Dublin, 1999.