

Some Marginalia in Burnet's *History of My Own Time*

Gilbert Burnet, Bishop of Salisbury (1643–1715) had no known connection with New College during his lifetime, and very little contact with the University of Oxford. He was a graduate of the University of Aberdeen, and as a young man he had served briefly as Professor of Divinity in the University of Glasgow, but he is not remembered primarily as an academic or as a scholar. Yet, long after his death, New College Library acquired a copy of one of Burnet's books of very considerable interest to those historians of the British Isles who specialize in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. To explain why this is so, it is necessary first to describe Burnet, and the part he played in the affairs of the period through which he lived.

I

Burnet began to compile the final version of his *History of My Own Time*, the book in question, in about 1703, during the reign of Queen Anne. It was an exercise in contemporary history, rather than an autobiography, and it covered, in a narrative format, the years from the Restoration of 1660 to, eventually, the conclusion of the War of the Spanish Succession at the Treaty of Utrecht in 1713. An introductory chapter covered the reign of Charles I, the civil wars in Scotland and England, and the Interregnum. It was well known to contemporaries that Burnet was engaged in writing what was called his 'Secret History', and its publication was awaited with keen anticipation, because Burnet was a celebrated figure both in ecclesiastical affairs and in secular politics. He had become a minister in the Church of Scotland (then Episcopalian) shortly after the Restoration, but he resigned his Glasgow chair in 1674, and he established himself in London as an Anglican clergyman. He became a successful and popular preacher, principally at the Rolls Chapel in Chancery Lane and at St Clement Danes in the Strand. He achieved a wider fame as the author of *The History of the Reformation of the Church of England*, which was translated into French and Latin during his lifetime and which went through several editions in the eighteenth century.¹ Another book in a different genre contributed to Burnet's growing reputation, and is still of interest to literary scholars; this described the life, and more particularly the late repentance and death, of the poet John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester.²

Burnet had initially attracted the favourable attention at court of both King Charles II and his brother the Duke of York, but in the late 1670s he became an associate of some of the country party spokesmen, such as Sir Thomas Littleton, who were in opposition to Charles's ministers. He gradually became identified with the embryonic Whig party at the time of its parliamentary campaign to exclude the Catholic Duke of York from the succession to the throne in the early 1680s—not so much with its leader, the first Earl of Shaftesbury, but more with the Earl of Essex and Lord Russell. When Russell was executed after the failure of the Rye House Plot in 1683, Burnet attended him on the scaffold. The Duke of York did succeed as King James VII & II in 1685, and Burnet prudently sought refuge abroad; this self-imposed exile produced another best-seller in a different category of authorship, namely travel-writing.³ He arrived eventually in the United Provinces, where he attached himself to the court of William and Mary, Prince and Princess of Orange, and he accompanied the Dutch invasion of England in November 1688 in the capacity of an unofficial Anglican chaplain to William.

As the Revolution of 1688–9 took its course, Burnet was an influential member of William's entourage, and he advised William on Church of England matters and on Scottish

¹ *The History of the Reformation of the Church of England*, 2 vols (London, 1679–81; a third supplementary volume was published in 1714).

² *Some Passages of the Life and Death of the Right Honourable John, Earl of Rochester* (London, 1680, and numerous subsequent editions).

³ *Some Letters, Containing an Account of what seemed most remarkable in Switzerland, Italy, &c* (Amsterdam, 1686, and numerous subsequent editions).

affairs. It has to be admitted that William found him somewhat garrulous, tactless and intrusive, and so too did others.⁴ He preached at the coronation of William and Mary in April 1689 a week after he had been consecrated Bishop of Salisbury. As Bishop of Salisbury, from then until his death, he was a Whig spokesman in the House of Lords. His controversial speeches on the Occasional Conformity Bill in 1703 and on the trial of Dr Sacheverell in 1710 were published. More widely read books appeared, including works on the duties of the clergy and on the Thirty-Nine Articles, and a biography of Queen Mary written shortly after her death in 1694.⁵ He acted as tutor to the Duke of Gloucester, the only one of Princess Anne's children to survive infancy and the heir presumptive to the throne, who died aged eleven in 1701 before his mother succeeded as Queen Anne in 1702.

Burnet was, in short, a famous personage. He had known five monarchs personally, and he had been a friend and confidant of many of their ministers. He had moved at the fringes of politics and government for forty years, and he had thrust himself into a controversial role in advising the Prince of Orange at the climax of the Revolution of 1688–9. He had published over 150 books, pamphlets and sermons, and some of his books had achieved large sales and were read all over Europe. There was, therefore, much speculation about what his 'Secret History' might reveal.

After Burnet's death, his manuscript was edited and seen through the press by two of his sons, and it appeared in two substantial volumes, the first in 1724 and the second in 1734, containing between them 1,496 pages and approximately 800,000 words.⁶ In the course of the eighteenth century, several more editions and abridgements were published, some pirated, from presses at London, Dublin, Edinburgh, and The Hague. The book was translated into French and Dutch. It attracted much hostile criticism from Tories and Nonjurors, and this had the effect of keeping it in the forefront of the public mind and maintaining its sales. As a work of contemporary history, it was less polished in style than Clarendon's *History of the Rebellion* for the preceding period, and less elegant and sophisticated than Horace Walpole's *Memoirs* for the reigns of George II and George III, but it fills the gap between these classic works. To this day, Burnet's *History* is regarded as supplying valuable, if not entirely trustworthy, material for the period 1660-1713, and it still finds a prominent place in the bibliographies of modern works on the history of politics and religion in the age of the later Stuart monarchs.

II

In the early nineteenth century, the delegates of the Clarendon Press commissioned a new edition of Burnet's *History*, to be completed under the direction of Dr Martin Routh, President of Magdalen. This was published in six volumes in 1823.⁷ A second, corrected, edition

⁴ H.C. Foxcroft (ed.), *The Life and Letters of Sir George Savile . . . first Marquess of Halifax*, 2 vols (London, 1898), II, 216; S. W. Singer (ed.), *The Correspondence of Henry Hyde, Earl of Clarendon, and of his brother Laurence Hyde, Earl of Rochester*, 2 vols (London, 1828), II, pp. 214, 217, 218, 220, 227–8, 269: Clarendon's diary, entries for 3, 5, 6, 8, 16 Dec. 1688, 11 Mar. 1689. After one encounter with Burnet, Clarendon wrote 'Good God, what are we like to come to if this man speaks the Prince's sense? We shall have a fine reformation'.

⁵ *A Discourse of the Pastoral Care* (London, 1692); *An Exposition of the Thirty-Nine Articles of the Church of England* (London, 1699); *An Essay on the Memory of the late Queen* (London, 1695).

⁶ *Bishop Burnet's History of His Own Time. Vol. I. From the Restoration of King Charles II to the Settlement of King William and Queen Mary at the Revolution: To which is prefix'd A Summary Recapitulation of Affairs in Church and State from King James I to the Restoration in the Year 1660* (London, 1724); *Bishop Burnet's History of His Own Time. Vol. II. From the Revolution to the Conclusion of the Treaty of Peace at Utrecht, in the Reign of Queen Anne. To which is added, The Author's Life, by the Editor* (London, 1734).

⁷ *Bishop Burnet's History of His Own Time: with the suppressed passages of the first volume, and notes by the Earls of Dartmouth and Hardwicke, and Speaker Onslow, hitherto unpublished. To which are added the cursory remarks of Swift, and other observations*, 6 vols (Oxford, 1823).

followed in 1833.⁸ The footnotes of both these editions contained in the appropriate places transcriptions of annotations made in the margins of the first edition of 1724–34 by four distinguished persons. Two were younger than, but still near-contemporaries of, Burnet, and had known him personally. They were: the first Earl of Dartmouth (1672–1750), who had been Secretary of State and then Lord Privy Seal in the Tory administration of the last four years of Queen Anne’s reign between 1710 and 1714; and Jonathan Swift (1667–1745), who needs no further introduction. Two were born rather later than Burnet, but were qualified to comment valuably on his work by political experience and historical learning. They were: Arthur Onslow (1691–1768), who was Speaker of the House of Commons from 1728 to 1761, and whose reputation both for integrity and for knowledge of parliamentary procedure remains high; and the second Earl of Hardwicke (1720–1790), who was the son of the great Whig grandee Lord Chancellor Hardwicke, and whose tastes were literary and antiquarian, as witnessed by his editions of the correspondence of a Jacobean diplomat and of an anthology of historical documents.⁹ The question now arises: how had Routh gained access to the manuscript notes written by these four persons in the margins of their copies of Burnet’s *History*?

In the ‘Preface’ to the 1823 edition, Routh described his application through an intermediary to the second Earl of Onslow, the grandson of Speaker Onslow, which yielded access to the Onslow family copy of Burnet’s *History*. This contained, written in the margins, the annotations of Speaker Onslow. Also included, all in the margins of the same copy, were a number of passages from Burnet’s own manuscript drafts that had been omitted from the first printed edition, the comments of the second Earl of Hardwicke, and the comments of Jonathan Swift. Routh quoted in full in his ‘Preface’ two memoranda written by George Onslow (1731–1814), the son of the Speaker, who succeeded his cousin as fourth Baron Onslow in 1776 and who was created first Earl of Onslow in 1801. The first, dated 1775, acknowledged Lord Hardwicke’s permission to transcribe both Hardwicke’s notes, and the passages omitted from the first edition, into Onslow’s copy. The second, dated 1788, records that Swift’s remarks had been incorporated in red ink from Swift’s own copy of the *History*, now in the Marquess of Lansdowne’s library. In the 1823 version of his ‘Preface’, Routh added that Swift’s copy had since perished by fire. Routh also gratefully acknowledged the generosity of the Hon. Edward Legge, Bishop of Oxford from 1816 and Warden of All Souls from 1817, who had communicated the marginal notes written by his great-grandfather, the first Earl of Dartmouth, in the Legge family copy of Burnet’s *History*.¹⁰

In Routh’s second edition of Burnet’s *History* published ten years later in 1833, he reproduced his 1823 ‘Preface’, but with two important modifications. First, the statement that Swift’s own copy of the *History* with his autograph notes had been lost to fire was corrected. It still survived in the Marquess of Lansdowne’s library, where Routh had seen it and made use of it to provide a more accurate version of Swift’s remarks. Second, Routh said that he had now had an opportunity to view the original copy of Burnet’s *History* containing Dartmouth’s notes at Sandwell, the Legge family home, and he had collated these notes with the versions supplied by the Hon. Edward Legge.¹¹

The first edition of Burnet’s *History*, back in 1724–34, had been published by subscription. New College does not appear among the lists of subscribers printed in either of the two volumes, but two of the three copies in the college library bear the college bookplate and seem never to have had an owner other than the college.¹² The third copy has the bookplate of

⁸ *Bishop Burnet’s History of His Own Time: with notes by the Earls of Dartmouth and Hardwicke, Speaker Onslow, and Dean Swift. To which are added other annotations. Second edition enlarged*, 6 vols (Oxford, 1833).

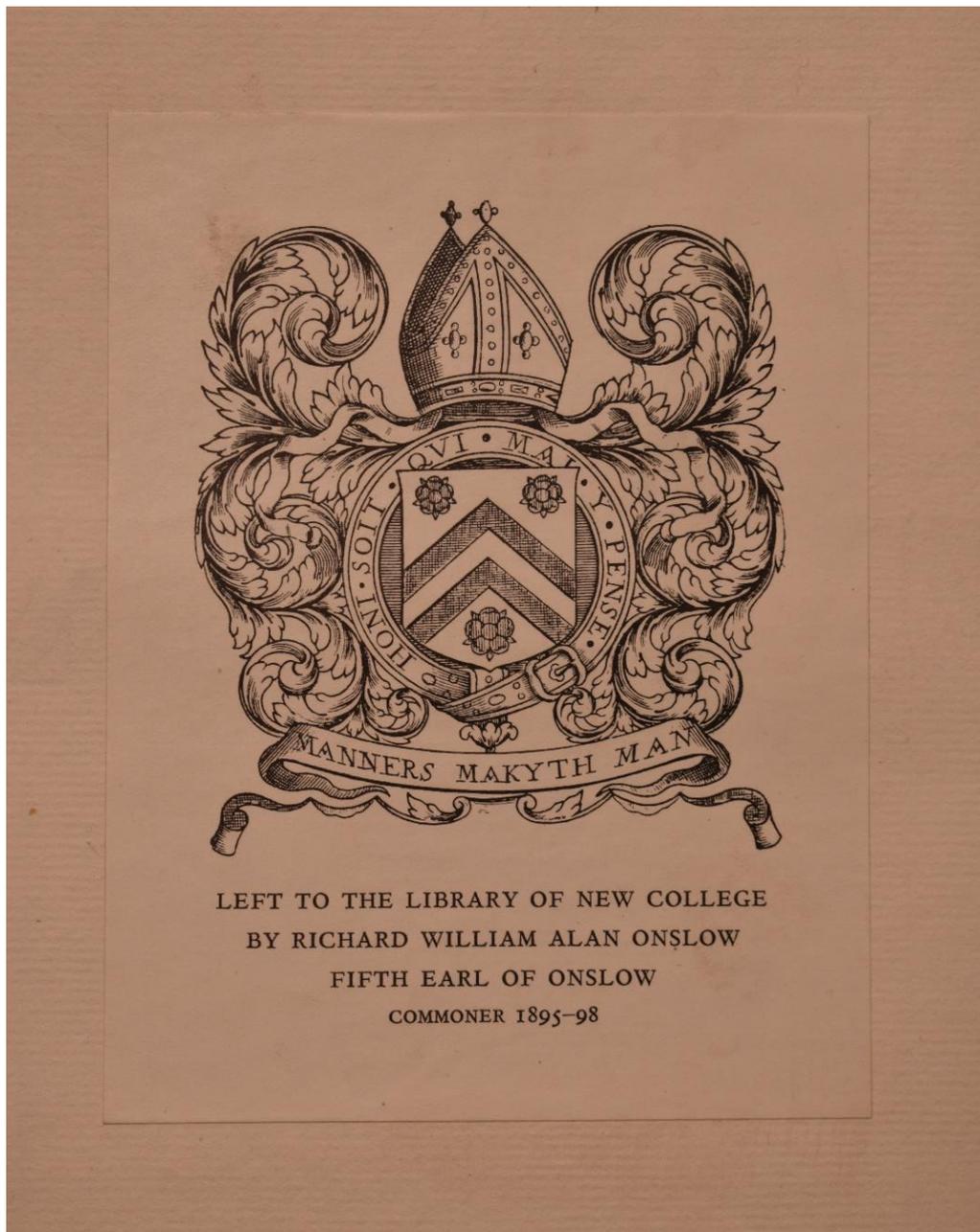
⁹ *Letters from and to Sir Dudley Carleton . . . during his Embassy in Holland* (London, 1757); *Miscellaneous State Papers from 1501 to 1726*, 2 vols (London, 1778). Hardwicke had also contributed to *Athenian Letters: or the Epistolary Correspondence of an Agent of the King of Persia . . .*, 2 vols (London, 1810, following private publication, 1741–3).

¹⁰ M. J. Routh, ‘Preface’, in *Burnet’s History* (1823), I, pp. vi–vii.

¹¹ M. J. Routh, ‘Preface’, in *Burnet’s History* (1833), I, pp. iv–v, vi note.

¹² New College Library, Oxford, NB.89.11–12; NB.89.13–14.

the fourth Earl of Onslow on the recto of the endpaper and the college bookplate on the verso, with an inscription 'Left to the Library of New College by Richard William Alan Onslow fifth Earl of Onslow Commoner 1895–98'.¹³ The fifth Earl had been styled Viscount Cranley as an undergraduate, and he succeeded to the earldom in 1911 after a career in the Foreign Office, in the course of which he had been briefly assistant private secretary to Sir Edward Grey. He served in the Great War, and then held junior office in successive Conservative administrations in the 1920s before becoming Chairman of Committees and Deputy Speaker of the House of Lords in 1931. He died in 1945.



New College Library, Oxford, BT1.5.11

The copy of Burnet's *History* bequeathed to New College by the fifth Earl is undoubtedly the same copy as that loaned to Martin Routh by the second Earl. It contains a large quantity of

¹³ New College Library, Oxford, BT1.5.11.

marginal annotation in several different hands. Some of this annotation is written on separate sheets of paper and is either bound into the volumes, or fixed to the pages with glue or sealing wax. Some printed material, such as a cutting from the *London Magazine* dated 1759, is also bound in. The handwritten inscriptions are the comments of Arthur Onslow, the second Earl of Hardwicke, and Jonathan Swift, that were employed to illustrate the 1823 and 1833 editions. Those of Swift are in red ink. Also incorporated are some passages allegedly found in Burnet's original manuscripts and omitted by his sons from the first edition of 1724–34.¹⁴ The two memoranda by George Onslow, relating to Hardwicke's notes and to the location of Swift's marginalia, are written at the top and down the right-hand margin of p. 5 of the first volume; and, although Routh modified the wording slightly, it is apparent that they are indeed the memoranda printed in his 'Preface', as described above. Routh's source for the annotations of Onslow, Hardwicke and Swift, and one of his sources for the passages omitted from the first edition, are thus accounted for.

The provenance of the comments made by the first Earl of Dartmouth, which are not in the New College copy, can also be traced. Routh explicitly says in the 1833 edition that an earlier version of Dartmouth's notes, which he had printed in 1823, had now been collated with the book itself, containing Dartmouth's handwritten observations in the margins and preserved at Sandwell. But what was this earlier version, the first that Routh had seen? Were there two different sets of Dartmouth's observations on Burnet's *History*? It seems that there were. Among the papers of the Legge family deposited at the Staffordshire Record Office is a stout bound manuscript containing, among copies of letters of various dates between 1714 and 1745, three sections headed respectively 'Memorandums that I wrote in Bishop Burnetts History of his own Time' (about 75–80 folios); 'Memorandums that I wrote in the second volume of Burnetts History of his own Time' (about 135–40 folios) and 'Memorandums added upon reading Bishop Burnetts History a 2d time' (about 25 folios).¹⁵ It appears that Dartmouth, late in life, had sat down to transcribe his comments.¹⁶ It may be that he intended to give these comments a wider readership than would be possible if they had remained confined to the margins of the printed copy in his library. After his death, the manuscript was indeed circulated to, among others, the second Earl of Hardwicke.¹⁷ In 1808 it was in London, at the chambers of the Hon. Henry Legge, a barrister and the younger brother of the third Earl of Dartmouth and of the Hon. Edward Legge, the future Bishop of Oxford. Henry Legge was prepared to allow enquirers to consult it there, though he was not willing to lend it.¹⁸ It is probable that this manuscript was the source of the footnotes by Dartmouth included by Routh for the edition of Burnet's *History* published in 1823, and that it was collated with the Legge family copy of the printed book for the edition of 1833.

The marginalia of Onslow, Hardwicke, Swift, and Dartmouth were adapted by Routh to a form appropriate for the early nineteenth century. The spelling was modernised, and the punctuation and the capital letters were adjusted. Routh says that Swift's remarks, though 'shrewd, caustic, and apposite', were 'not written with the requisite decorum', and three of them

¹⁴ The authenticity of the passages omitted from the first edition of Burnet's *History* in 1724–34 (often described as 'castrations') is an issue of some complexity. These 'castrations' are not 'marginalia', and so are not discussed here. They are subjected to analysis by Helen C. Foxcroft in her essay 'On the Text of Burnet's *History*' forming the 'Introduction' to her *Supplement to Burnet's History of My Own Time* (Oxford, 1902). The versions of these 'castrations' found in the Onslow copy at New College are an important addition to the evidence relating to their content.

¹⁵ Staffordshire R[ecord] O[ffice], D (W) 1778/V/760. The folios have writing at both recto and verso.

¹⁶ The presence in the same manuscript volume of copies of Dartmouth's communication of some Jacobite letters to the Duke of Newcastle during the 1745 Rebellion suggests a date of compilation when Dartmouth was in his seventies.

¹⁷ Hardwicke thanked the second Earl of Dartmouth for the loan of 'y[ou]r Grand Fathers Mss Notes on B[isho]p Burnet'. Staffordshire R.O., D (W) 1778/III/421: Hardwicke to [Dartmouth], 8 Mar. 1783; D (W) 1778/III/425: Hardwicke to [Dartmouth], 9 Mar. 1783.

¹⁸ Staffordshire R.O., D (W) 1778/I/ii/1720: George Rose to [Henry Legge], two letters both dated 27 Aug. 1808.

‘are worded in so light a way, that even modesty forbad their admission’. Altogether, six of Swift’s comments were omitted. Routh also left out three of Dartmouth’s contributions, because they ‘contained reflections on the private character of as many individuals irrelevant to their public conduct’.¹⁹

The Clarendon Press initiated another new edition of Burnet’s *History* in the late nineteenth century. The task of preparing this was entrusted to a team of scholars, each responsible for a part of the whole. The only one who completed his allotted portion was Osmund Airy, who published two volumes containing Burnet’s introductory chapter and his account of the reign of Charles II.²⁰ Airy made an editorial decision to incorporate only such of the notes by Onslow and Dartmouth as seemed to him to possess historical value. He seems to have reproduced these notes from Routh’s editions of 1823 and 1833. Airy also preserved some of Swift’s remarks, though he adds ‘I have thought it inadvisable to encumber the pages with simple terms of abuse which tend neither to edification nor to knowledge’.²¹ This edition made no further progress after Airy’s second volume appeared in 1900. A modern scholar seeking to exploit the evidence provided by Burnet’s *History* would normally use Airy’s edition for the reign of Charles II, and Routh’s second edition of 1833 for everything after the death of Charles II in February 1685.

Another new edition of Burnet’s *History*, conformable to the requirements of the twenty-first century, has been commissioned, and work on it is in progress. It is hoped that this will follow the example of Martin Routh’s editions by including the annotations made by Onslow, Hardwicke, Swift, and Dartmouth, this time in full and in the original spelling, using as copy-texts the two volumes of the first printed edition presented by the fifth Earl of Onslow to the library of New College and the manuscript among the Dartmouth papers in the Staffordshire Record Office.

III

Routh was the first to bring together in an accessible form the marginalia he had found, and he related them directly to the text which they had been written to illustrate. But he was not the first to discover them. Earlier, in the second half of the eighteenth century, some of these marginalia had been deemed of sufficient interest to be published independently, as valuable contributions to the history of the period covered by Burnet. It is instructive to trace the processes by which they had been brought to light.

Speaker Onslow’s comments in the *History* were first described in the *European Magazine*, a journal founded in 1782 and informally edited by the Shakespearean scholar Isaac Reed.²² In January 1793, the miscellaneous writer and literary biographer William Seward contributed a short collection of anecdotes relating to Burnet, which concluded:

The late Speaker Onslow had a copy of Bishop Burnet’s *History* interleaved, with notes and observations by himself, which must certainly be very curious, as he lived very near to the times of which the Bishop treated, and must have known intimately the descendants of many of the illustrious persons mentioned by him.²³

¹⁹ M.J. Routh, ‘Preface’, in *Burnet’s History* (1833), I, vi, viii.

²⁰ *Burnet’s History of My Own Time: A new edition based on that of M.J. Routh, D.D. Part I. The Reign of Charles the Second*, 2 vols (Oxford, 1897 *Supplement to Burnet’s History of My Own Time* 1900).

²¹ O. Airy, ‘Preface’, in *Burnet’s History: The Reign of Charles II*, I, p. viii. Hardwicke’s annotations are concentrated within the period from 1689 to 1713, and therefore did not fall within Airy’s remit.

²² Arthur Sherbo, ‘Isaac Reed and the *European Magazine*’, *Studies in Bibliography* 37 (1984), pp. 210–11.

²³ [William Seward], ‘Bishop Burnet’, *Eur[opean] Mag[azine]* 23 (January 1793), pp. 18–19.

The Onslow family copy of Burnet's *History* now at New College is not precisely 'interleaved', but it is surely the one to which Seward was referring. Seward had evidently not seen it in 1793, but he seems to have gained access to it shortly afterwards. Two years later, in 1795, the *European Magazine* printed the first of eight instalments, spread over thirteen months, of marginalia to Burnet's *History*.²⁴ These instalments all have the same heading:

Curious remarks on "Bishop Burnet's History of His Own Times". By Dr Swift, the late Lord Hardwicke, and the late Speaker Onslow. (Never before published.)

The first seven instalments add to this heading:

Those Passages marked N.P. are parts in the original Manuscript of Bp. Burnet's History not printed.

The copy now in New College combined the annotations of Swift, Hardwicke, and Onslow, and it also included transcripts of the passages omitted from the first printed edition. The supposition must be that Seward (or perhaps another writer connected with the *European Magazine*) had now had an opportunity to consult this copy, and that it was the source from which the *European Magazine* printed its extracts.

It became apparent quite quickly that the initial intention of the *European Magazine* to print all the marginalia it had discovered had been over-ambitious. The first three instalments consisted of a total of 36 comments by Swift, 21 by Onslow, and 14 passages omitted from the first edition. These had come from the first 182 pages of the first volume of Burnet's *History*, leaving the remainder of the first volume and the whole of the second volume—1,314 pages altogether—still to be covered. Hardwicke, whose marginalia are concentrated in the second volume of Burnet's *History*, was unrepresented, in spite of the reference to him in the headings to the instalments. A change of plan was initiated in the fourth instalment, and continued thereafter: Swift's remarks alone were printed. The eighth and last instalment reached the end of Burnet's first volume, and it also included the relatively few notes Swift had made in the second volume printed in 1734. This instalment did not conclude, as the earlier ones had done, with the phrase 'To be continued occasionally'. The majority of Onslow's comments, the majority of the omitted passages, and all of Hardwicke's comments, therefore remained unpublished until Routh's editions of 1823–33 added them more systematically to Burnet's text. The *European Magazine* printed Swift's 183 annotations more or less in full, and they correspond closely, though not quite exactly, to the versions in red ink in the margin of the New College copy.²⁵

The comments inscribed by the first Earl of Dartmouth in the margins of his copy of Burnet's *History* had surfaced even earlier. Sir John Dalrymple (1726–1810) acknowledged in the 'Preface' to the second volume of his *Memoirs of Great Britain and Ireland*, published in the early 1770s, the generosity of the second Earl of Dartmouth, who had 'communicated to me, with other papers, a collection of letters between his gallant ancestor and King James'.²⁶ The letters were those passing between the Duke of York, subsequently James VII & II, and George Legge, first Baron Dartmouth (c. 1647–91), especially those written at the time of the Revolution of 1688–9, when Lord Dartmouth had commanded the fleet that failed to prevent the landing of

²⁴ *Eur. Mag.* 27 (Jan.–June 1795), pp. 37–41, 157–61, 374–6; 28 (July–Dec 1795), pp. 88–91, 245–8, 312–15, 392–5; 29 (Jan.–June 1796), pp. 87–9.

²⁵ Swift's notes in the *European Magazine* are more liberally adorned with exclamation marks than those in the New College copy, giving a greater impression of vehemence and ill temper.

²⁶ Sir John Dalrymple, *Memoirs of Great Britain and Ireland, from the Dissolution of the last Parliament of Charles II until the Sea-Battle off La Hogue*, 2 vols (Edinburgh and London, 1771–3; a third volume with a slightly different title followed in 1790), II, p. iii.

the Prince of Orange and his army on the south coast of England.²⁷ This Lord Dartmouth was the father of the first Earl of Dartmouth, the annotator of Burnet. The ‘other papers’ mentioned by Dalrymple presumably included the first Earl’s remarks on Burnet’s *History*, since Dalrymple printed a selection from these as well. Dalrymple nowhere refers to Dartmouth’s observations as inscriptions in the margin of a printed book; rather, he calls them ‘manuscript notes’ or ‘memorandums’.²⁸ This suggests that he had been given access, not to the copy of Burnet’s *History* in which the first Earl’s observations had been written, but to the bound manuscript now in the Staffordshire Record Office. Moreover, that manuscript includes a copy of a letter from Dartmouth to his friend Erasmus Lewis, written at the time of the publication of the first volume of Burnet’s *History* in 1724. This expressed indignation at Burnet’s account of the conduct of Dartmouth’s father and the Duke of York (the future King James) on the occasion of the shipwreck of the *Gloucester* frigate in 1682.²⁹ Dalrymple printed this letter in full, and it may reasonably be supposed that he had transcribed it from the same source.³⁰

Dalrymple also thanked the second Earl of Hardwicke for providing ‘copies of several curious manuscripts from the treasures of historical knowlege in his possession’. These included copies of the letters from Princess, later Queen, Anne to her sister the Princess of Orange in 1687-8, and the manuscript memoirs of George Byng, later Earl of Torrington, a naval officer at the time of the Revolution; but not, it seems, Hardwicke’s annotations to Burnet’s *History*. At all events, Dalrymple made no use of them.

Another writer who drew public attention to the annotated copies of Burnet’s *History* was John Nichols (1745–1826). Nichols’s interest in Burnet derived partly from his friendship with Isaac Reed of the *European Magazine*, and partly from his association, first as apprentice and then as partner, with the printer William Bowyer the younger (1699–1777). The two Bowyers, father and son, had started to print the first volume of Burnet’s *History* in the early 1720s, but had passed the work on to others because Burnet’s version of history conflicted with their Nonjuring principles. Nichols reminded the readers of his *Biographical and Literary Anecdotes of William Bowyer*, published in 1782, of the controversies of the 1720s and 1730s over the omissions from Burnet’s text allegedly made by his sons, the editors of the first edition. Nichols went on to mention that the copy of Burnet’s *History* in the library of the Earl of Shelburne (who became Marquess of Lansdowne in 1784) contained Swift’s annotations, and he quoted some of Swift’s strictures on Burnet’s preoccupation with Scotland and on his alleged bias in favour of the Presbyterians.³¹ Nichols also referred to one of the annotations made by Dartmouth, which differs from that transcribed by Dartmouth himself from his own copy, and from the version afterwards published by Routh. He further added that the Duchess of Portland was then in possession of Lord Dartmouth’s copy of the first edition of Burnet’s *History*.³²

IV

Routh became aware, in the course of preparing his own editions of 1823 and 1833, that the Bodleian Library contained three more annotated copies of the first edition of Burnet’s *History*. The *European Magazine* had reported in 1795 that the Bodleian possessed one that had

²⁷ This correspondence, beginning in 1679, was printed in the late nineteenth century in Historical Manuscripts Commission, Eleventh Report, Appendix V, *Dartmouth MSS*, I, pp. 30ff, 255–85.

²⁸ Dalrymple, *Memoirs of Great Britain*, II, (second pagination) 59, 99, 289, 297, 342; (third pagination) 169.

²⁹ The Duke had been travelling by ship to Scotland; Burnet alleged that he had been more concerned for his dogs than for the lives of his fellow-passengers and the sailors.

³⁰ Dalrymple, *Memoirs of Great Britain*, II, (second pagination) pp. 71–2. Routh printed this letter as well: *Burnet’s History* (1823), II, p. 316n; *Burnet’s History* (1833), II, p. 325n.

³¹ John Nichols, *Biographical and Literary Anecdotes of William Bowyer, and of many of his learned friends . . .* (London, 1782), pp. 34n, 521.

³² *ibid.*, p. 613. Dartmouth’s copy had presumably only been loaned to the Duchess of Portland; by the time Routh saw it, it was back with the Legge family at Sandwell.

belonged to Charles Godwyn, Fellow of Balliol (1701–1770), with ‘severe Remarks on the margin . . . made by Mr Godwyn’.³³ This must refer to a ‘large-paper’ copy with *E Libris Caroli Godwin B.D.* inscribed on the title-page of each of the two volumes.³⁴ Godwyn confined himself, for the most part, to remarks along the lines of ‘This is false’ and ‘Burnet’s reflections are without foundation’, accompanied by cross-references to books and other sources of information that contradicted Burnet on specific points or illustrated his party bias. The *Biographia Britannica* (1747–66), John Boswell’s *The Case of the Royal Martyr* (1758), and Clarendon’s *Life* (1759) are examples of the works Godwyn exploited for these purposes. Godwyn additionally included versions of some of the passages allegedly suppressed by Burnet’s sons. Routh made use of at least one of Godwyn’s comments for his footnotes.³⁵

At some point between 1823 and 1833, Routh discovered a copy of Burnet’s *History* in the Bodleian that had belonged to William Cole (1714–1782), the Cambridge antiquary, containing what Routh called ‘vituperative remarks’.³⁶ Cole was both more copious and more intemperate than Godwyn. The margins of his copy, down to the end of the second volume, are filled with exclamations such as ‘Infamous hypocrisy!’, ‘What a Rascal!’, and ‘What Impudence!’. His longer comments are indiscriminating denunciations of Burnet’s alleged republicanism and of his dishonesty and falsehood. Only rarely does Cole engage in a reasoned rebuttal of Burnet’s arguments, and his loathing of Presbyterians and Scots is apparent throughout. Routh printed a selection from Cole’s comments in the footnotes to his 1833 edition, where they supplement the somewhat similar annotations of Jonathan Swift.

Routh identified and exploited one further copy of Burnet’s *History* in the Bodleian, at the beginning of which is a memorandum ‘This was Mr Bowyer’s Book; and given by him to Mr Gough’.³⁷ The Bowyer publishing house had made a start on printing the first volume of Burnet’s *History* in the early 1720s, as described above, and William Bowyer senior must therefore have been entrusted with Burnet’s manuscripts: an autograph copy, and a transcript made by amanuenses and corrected both by Burnet himself, and also, in their editorial capacity, by his sons. The transcript was used as the working copy from which the first edition was set up in type, as is apparent from the mark-up of successive printers relating to such matters as the division of the text into signatures and the places where new paragraphs are to start. Burnet’s manuscripts were eventually acquired by the Bodleian in 1835, two years after the publication of Routh’s second edition.³⁸ More than a hundred years earlier, William Bowyer senior had evidently taken the opportunity offered by his access to them to transcribe the passages crossed out by Burnet or by his sons on loose sheets of paper, which he then arranged to have interleaved and bound into his printed copy. Both Bowyers added in the margins some transcriptions of documents and of passages from other books, including an anecdote relating to the execution of Sir Harry Vane in 1662 supplied by Speaker Onslow in 1764. The ‘Bowyer’ copy contains at the end a bound-in pamphlet, *A Compleat Alphabetical Index to the late Bishop Burnet’s History of His Own Time* (London, 1724), printed to supply ‘with the utmost Exactness’ the deficiencies of the ‘Table of Contents’ with which the published edition concludes. The comments of the two Bowyers are less marked by personal animus and less colourful than those

³³ *Eur. Mag.* 27 (April, 1795), p. 221

³⁴ Bodl[ician Library, Oxford], O.2.7-8 Jur. The pages in a standard folio copy of Burnet’s *History* measure approximately 13.5 inches (34.4cm) x 8.3 inches (21.5cm); the pages of a ‘large-paper’ copy measure approximately 18 inches (45.6cm) x 11 inches (28cm). The print is identical, so a ‘large-paper’ copy has greatly extended margins, especially at the right-hand side of the rectos and the left-hand side of the versos.

³⁵ *Burnet’s History* (1823), IV, 379; *Burnet’s History* (1833), IV, p. 388.

³⁶ Bodl. Gough Gen. top. 115-16; M.J. Routh, ‘Preface’, in *Burnet’s History* (1833), I, p. xxv note.

³⁷ Bodl. Gough Gen. top. 114. This copy lacks an accompanying second volume.

³⁸ Bodl. MS. Add. D. 15-16, 18-20; W.D. Macray, *Annals of the Bodleian Library* (Oxford, 1890), pp. 329–30. Routh made use of the manuscripts to publish *Bishop Burnet’s History of the Reign of King James the Second* (Oxford, 1852), a revised version of that part of Burnet’s *History* covering 1685-1688, and he described them briefly in an ‘Appendix’, pp. 474–6.

of Godwyn and Cole, but the 'Bowyer' copy is still of interest to those concerned with establishing the text of Burnet's *History* at successive stages of its composition.

V

Routh employed the marginalia in the 'Godwyn', 'Cole' and 'Bowyer' copies in the Bodleian Library in somewhat eclectic fashion for his editions of Burnet's *History*. He printed the marginalia in the 'Onslow' copy' at New College and in the 'Dartmouth' manuscript at Stafford more systematically as footnotes, omitting only those that offended an early nineteenth-century sense of propriety. Over time, these footnotes have become entwined with Burnet's text, and many of them are regarded by historians of the period as valuable observations in their own right. It remains only to provide some examples of the marginalia at New College and at Stafford, to illustrate the character and value of the contributions of their respective authors.

Some of Arthur Onslow's notes were in the nature of laconic *aides-mémoire*, in which he cross-referenced relevant passages in the records of Parliament and the law-courts. His knowledge of parliamentary history was unrivalled, and he had access to materials that were subsequently lost in the fire at Westminster in 1834. More excitingly, Onslow also provided anecdotes he had heard about the personalities Burnet described. For example, at an early stage of his narrative, Burnet included short character-sketches of the leading figures in politics at the time of the Restoration. He wrote of the first Earl of Clarendon:

He was always pressing the King to mind his affairs, but in vain. He was a good Chancellor, only a little too rough, but very impartial in the administration of justice. He never seemed to understand foreign affairs well: And yet he meddled too much in them.³⁹

Against this passage, Onslow noted:

He, at least, understood foreign affairs better than any other of the Ministers. None of them were much esteemed, for that, abroad, as has been said. I was told by the Master of the Rolls (Sir Thomas Clarke) that the Lord Clarendon never made a Decree in Chancery without the Assistance of two of the Judges.

Of Sir Anthony Ashley Cooper, the first Earl of Shaftesbury, Burnet observed:

He was as to religion a Deist at best: He had the dotage of Astrology in him to a high degree . . . He fancied, that after death our souls lived in stars.⁴⁰

Onslow, referring here to Shaftesbury as 'the Earl', recollected an anecdote he had heard about his views on religion:

A person came to make him [Shaftesbury] a visit whilst he was sitting one day with a Lady of his Family, who retired upon that to another part of the room with her work, and seemed not to attend to the conversation, between the Earl and the other person, which turned soon into some dispute upon subjects of Religion. After a good deal of that sort of Talk, the Earl said at last, 'People differ in their discourse and profession about these matters, but men of sense are really but of one Religion' upon which says the Lady of a sudden, 'Pray my Lord, what Religion is that which Men of Sense agree in?' 'Madam,' says the Earl immediately, 'Men of Sense never tell it.'

³⁹ Burnet, *History* (1724–34), I, pp. 94–5.

⁴⁰ *ibid.*, I, pp. 96–7.

Such anecdotes as these are recorded by Onslow at second or third hand, but this does not necessarily diminish their interest to the modern reader. In addition, he had evidently read the whole of both volumes of the first printed edition, and his observations can be found throughout.

By contrast, the comments of the second Earl of Hardwicke are confined to the second volume, covering the period from 1689 to 1713. Hardwicke's marginalia demonstrate the reflections of a man committed by his family connections to the principles of the mid-eighteenth-century 'Whig oligarchy'. At the same time, he felt himself to be at a little distance from the vehement disagreements between Whigs and Tories of the period before the Hanoverian Succession, which he deprecated. Of particular interest, since Onslow commented on the same passage, was Hardwicke's reaction to Burnet's disparaging reference to the management of government finance by Robert Harley, first Earl of Oxford, Lord Treasurer during Queen Anne's last administration in 1710–14. Burnet wrote:

It soon appeared, that his Strength lay in managing Parties, and in engaging weak People by Rewards and Promises, to depend upon him; but that he neither thoroughly understood the Business of the Treasury, nor the Conduct of foreign Affairs.⁴¹

Onslow and Hardwicke both disagreed with Burnet. Onslow tells us:

The people of that Office say otherwise, and that the Business there was carried on by him with great exactness.

Hardwicke quotes Henry Pelham, first Lord of the Treasury from 1743 to 1754, to much the same effect:

Mr Pelham (who cannot be supposed to have any Partiality to the Earl of Oxford) has said frequently, that, in his administration of the Treasury, he was the most exact and attentive Minister that ever presided at the Head of it. And has preferred his Management and CEconomy at the Board to Sir Robert Walpole's.

Hardwicke's own researches into recent history enabled him to quote occasionally from materials that have since disappeared. Most of the library of Lord Somers, Keeper of the Great Seal and then Lord Chancellor from 1693 to 1700, allegedly consisting of some hundreds of volumes of printed pamphlets and manuscripts, was lost in a fire at the chambers of Hardwicke's younger brother, Charles Yorke, at Lincoln's Inn in 1752, fortunately not before the publication of many of the pamphlets as the *Somers Tracts*. Burnet wrote a short description of Somers which included the sentence:

He had always agreed in his notions with the Whigs; and had studied to bring them to better thoughts of the King, and to a greater confidence in him.⁴²

Hardwicke added in the margin:

I remember among Lord Somers's Papers, a very spirited Letter to Lord Nottingham [Secretary of State], on the making (if I mistake not) of an Attorney or Solicitor General without consulting him. This was just after his receiving the Seals. His chief Argument is a just one, and drawn from the inability of the Great Seal to serve the Crown with proper Weight and Authority without being considered in the disposal of

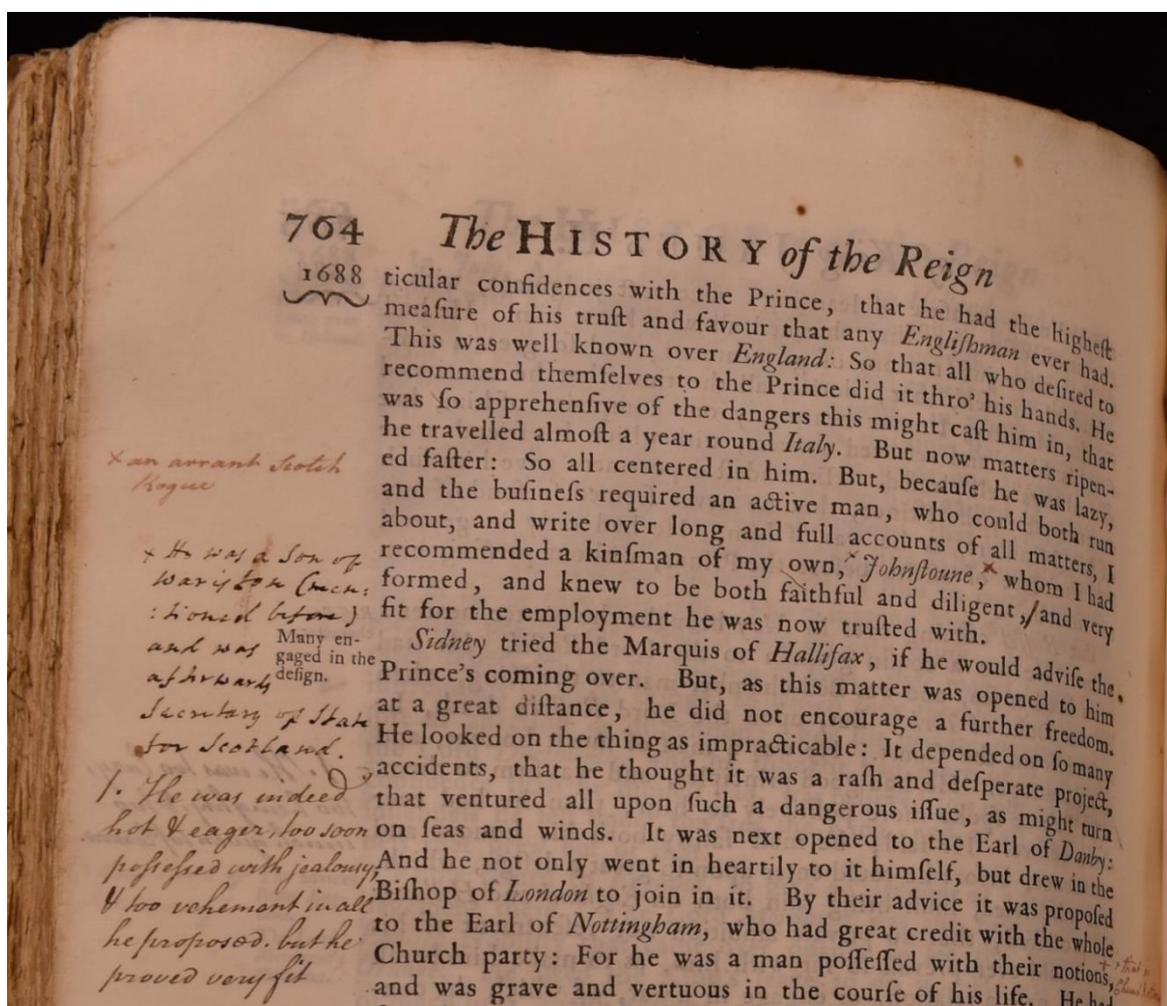
⁴¹ *ibid.*, II, p. 579.

⁴² *ibid.*, II, p. 108.

Law Places. This was just after Lord Somers having the Seals, and before the King went abroad.

Somers had presumably kept a copy, or a draft, of his letter to Nottingham, and Hardwicke had seen this copy in his brother's chambers before the fire.⁴³

The comments of Jonathan Swift are for the most part very short expressions of distaste, derision, contempt, scorn, animosity and detestation, directed at Burnet's character, prose style, opinions and judgements. Early examples include 'Nonsense', 'Poor Malice', 'Sad Trash', 'Weak' and 'All this is full of malice and ill Judgement'.⁴⁴ Burnet was the principal target, but other persons, especially Scotsmen and Whigs, came within Swift's range. For example, alongside Burnet's account of the execution of the Marquis of Argyll in 1661, Swift wrote 'He was the greatest Villain of his Age'.⁴⁵ Lord Lumley, Henry Sidney and James Johnston, all mentioned when Burnet was describing the clandestine invitation to the Prince of Orange to come to England in 1688, were respectively characterized by Swift as 'a Knave and a Coward', 'an idle, drunken, ignorant Rake, without Sense, Truth or Honour', and 'an arrant Scotch Rogue'.⁴⁶



New College Library, Oxford, BT1.5.11, p. 764 [detail]
with Swift's left-hand marginal manuscript note in red ink: 'an arrant Scotch Rogue'

⁴³ It may be that the original of the letter survives among Nottingham's papers, which are divided between the State Papers Domestic in the National Archives, the British Library, and the Leicestershire Record Office.

⁴⁴ Burnet, *History* (1724–34), I, pp. 6, 23, 31, 46, 50.

⁴⁵ *ibid.*, I, p. 126.

⁴⁶ *ibid.*, I, pp. 763–4.

Conversely, Burnet's attempts to disparage persons of whom Swift approved met with vigorous objections in the margin. When Burnet presumed to hint that the second Duke of Ormonde had conveyed the secrets of the Allies to the French in 1712, Swift responded 'Vile Scot, dare to touch Ormonde's Honour, and so falsely'.⁴⁷ Swift also drew attention to the awkwardness of Burnet's style. When Burnet wrote:

When the peace of Breda was concluded, the King wrote to the Scottish Council, and communicated that to them; and with that signified, that it was his pleasure that the Army should be disbanded . . .

Swift noted 'Four *thats* in one line'.⁴⁸ Swift might fasten on the comic infelicity of Burnet's expression, as when he encountered Burnet's assertion that Laurence Hyde, Earl of Rochester, had 'a very good pen' and commented sarcastically 'I suppose it was of gold or silver'.⁴⁹ It seems likely that Swift read through the whole of the first volume when it appeared in 1724, but that when the second volume came into his hands in 1734 he turned straight to those passages that dealt with the last part of Queen Anne's reign, without concerning himself with the passages covering the 1690s. His first marginal comments in the second volume were made against some remarks by Burnet relating to the activities of the High Church party in England and Ireland in 1709, when he wrote 'Dog', and then on the next page 'Dog, dog, dog'.⁵⁰ He was unexpectedly restrained when he encountered a hostile sentence referring to his own writings. Burnet stated:

Many mercenary Pens were set on work, to justify our Proceedings, and to defame our Allies, more particularly the Dutch; this was done with much Art, but with no regard to Truth, in a Pamphlet entitled the Conduct of the Allies, and of the late Ministry; to which very full Answers were written, detecting the Thread of Falshood, that ran thro' that Work.⁵¹

Here Swift simply wrote next to this: 'It was all true'.

The remarks of the first Earl of Dartmouth are not immediately relevant to the New College copy of Burnet's *History*, but some illustrative examples may be provided for the sake of completeness. Dartmouth was less intemperate than Swift, but his attitudes were those of a Hanoverian Tory, and he disapproved of Burnet's Whig partisanship, his sympathy for Protestant dissenters, and his active participation in the Revolution of 1688–9 that overthrew King James. In the first volume, covering the years from 1660 to 1689, Dartmouth did not normally seek to criticise Burnet's narrative directly, or to contradict him on points of fact (although he did so occasionally). In the second volume, covering the years from 1689 to 1713, Dartmouth did challenge Burnet's narrative more explicitly, especially when Burnet reached the ministry of 1710–14, in which Dartmouth had served as Secretary of State and Lord Privy Seal. For example, Burnet wrote of the unsuccessful expedition to capture Quebec in 1711:

This was a great Mortification to the new Ministry [that of 1710–14, composed largely of Tories]; it being their first Undertaking, ill projected, and worse executed, in every step of it: It was the more liable to Censure, because at the very time, that the old Ministry [that of 1708–10, composed largely of Whigs] were charged with entring on Designs, that had not been laid before the Parliament, and for which no Supplies had

⁴⁷ *ibid.*, II, p. 610.

⁴⁸ *ibid.*, II, p. 242.

⁴⁹ *ibid.*, II, p. 258.

⁵⁰ *ibid.*, II, pp. 525–6.

⁵¹ *ibid.*, II, p. 581.

been given, they projected this, even while a Session was yet going on, without communicating it to the Parliament.⁵²

Dartmouth took exception to this:

If it was ill projected, it was so by the old Ministers: for I wrote many Letters about it, the year before, by their Order:⁵³ and it was then stopt, after great Expense and Trouble, upon a Representation from the Admiralty, that it was too late in the Year; which I understood the Duke of Marlborough was much displeas'd at, the Design being laid by himself: and I suppose the good Bishop, had he known that, would have shortened his Remarks upon a Subject so much out of his own sphere.

Earlier, Dartmouth was less often concerned to express his corrections of Burnet's evidence, although he was always uninhibited in his disapproval of Burnet's opinions. More commonly, his intention was to illustrate and expand Burnet's narrative by adding anecdotes from his own experience. A good example is supplied by an episode in the summer of 1688. King James VII & II's second Declaration of Indulgence, granting toleration to Catholics and Protestant Dissenters by an exercise of the royal prerogative and suspending several Acts of Parliament by royal decree, was ordered to be read aloud at Church of England services on consecutive Sundays.⁵⁴ Burnet described what happened as follows:

. . . now it appeared, that the body of the Clergy were resolv'd not to read the declaration. Those who did obey, were few and inconsiderable. Only seven obeyed in the City of London, and not above two hundred all England over: And of these some read it the first Sunday, but chang'd their minds before the second: Others declar'd in their sermons, that tho' they obeyed the order, they did not approve of the declaration: And one, more pleasantly than gravely, told his people, that, tho' he was oblig'd to read it, they were not oblig'd to hear it; and he stopt till they all went out, and then he read it to the walls: In many places, as soon as the Minister began to read it, all the people rose, and went out.⁵⁵

Dartmouth was inspired to remember:

I was then at Westminster School, and heard it read in the Abbey. As soon as Bishop Sprat, who was Dean, gave order for reading it, there was so great a murmur and noise in the Church, that nobody could hear him; but before he had finish'd, there was none left but a few Prebends in their Stalls, the Queristers, and Westminster Scholars. The Bishop could hardly hold the Proclamation in his hands for trembling, and every body look'd under a strange Consternation.

Dartmouth possessed something of a gift for vivid recollection. He also had a sense of humour, and a sardonic appreciation of the more absurd foibles of his contemporaries. Burnet described Sir Edward Seymour, a member of the House of Commons from 1661 to 1708 and Speaker from 1673 to 1679, as follows:

⁵² *ibid.*, II, p. 578.

⁵³ Dartmouth had been made Secretary of State on 14 June 1710. The Duke of Marlborough, Lord Godolphin, and the Whig ministers over whom these two presided, lost office and were replaced by Tories only gradually between June and October in that year. The Tory Dartmouth therefore served alongside the old Whig ministers through the second half of the summer, and into the early autumn.

⁵⁴ A petition of the Archbishop of Canterbury and other bishops to the King, requesting him to withdraw this order, led to the 'Trial of the Seven Bishops', one of the more significant events of the period leading up to the Revolution.

⁵⁵ Burnet, *History* (1724–34), I, p. 740.

The ablest man of his party was Seimour, who was the first Speaker of the House of Commons that was not bred to the law. He was a man of great birth, being the elder branch of the Seimour family; and was a graceful man, bold and quick. But he had a sort of pride so peculiar to himself, that I never saw any thing like it. He had neither shame nor decency with it.⁵⁶

Dartmouth improved on this by recording in the margin:

When [Seymour] was Speaker, his Coach broke at Charing Cross, and he ordered the Beadles to stop the next Gentleman's they met, and bring it to him. The Gentleman in it was much surprised to be turned out of his own Coach, but Sir Edward told him it was more proper for him to walk in the streets, than the Speaker of the House of Commons; and left him so to do, without any further apology.

Dartmouth's elaboration of Burnet's narrative adds greatly to the interest of the *History of My Own Time* for modern historians. His observations were often shrewd and pointed, as well as entertaining, and they were evidently composed with some care.

VI

The copy of Burnet's *History* at New College in which the marginalia of Onslow, Hardwicke, and Swift are written, and the manuscript volume in the Staffordshire Record Office containing Dartmouth's marginalia, together provide an intermittent commentary on Burnet's work which is of great value. We are reminded that Burnet described events from a Whig, Low Church standpoint that did not command universal approbation. Two of his critics—Dartmouth and Swift—were prejudiced on the Tory, High Church side, while Swift additionally allowed his dislike of Scotland and Scotsmen to colour his judgement. Onslow and Hardwicke provided a more moderate Whig retrospective. Routh's decision to incorporate these marginalia in the footnotes of his editions in 1823 and 1833 cannot have been taken lightly, since it entailed a good deal of laborious transcription from the pages of the Onslow copy and from Dartmouth's manuscript. Routh was, perhaps, well-advised not to give too much prominence to the comments of Godwyn, Cole, and the two Bowyers in their respective copies of the *History* in the Bodleian Library, but he was aware of these, and he provided a judicious selection from them. Historians since then have had reason to be grateful for the additional light cast upon the period by these annotations. The nineteenth-century French bibliographer Jacques-Charles Brunet remarked of Routh's achievement: 'Cette édition est préférable à toutes celles qui l'ont précédée, à cause des additions, des corrections et des nombreuses notes qu'elle renferme . . .'.⁵⁷ It is intended that the annotations of Onslow, Hardwicke, Swift, and Dartmouth will be restored to their eighteenth-century spelling, and included, without omissions arising from considerations of delicacy, within the footnotes of the new edition now in the course of preparation.

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⁵⁶ *ibid.*, I, pp. 382–3.

⁵⁷ Jacques-Charles Brunet, *Manuel du Libraire et de l'amateur de livres . . .*, 5th edn, 6 vols (Paris, 1860–5), I, p. 1410.