

“Published but not printed”: John Toland and the circulation of manuscripts c.1700-1722.

I would like to start with the death of the author. After suffering from a combination of severe rheumatism, black jaundice and fever, John Toland died in the backroom of the house of Mr Hinton, a carpenter, in Putney on Saturday March 10th 1722. According to the account of his death, written by an ‘intimate Friend’ and sent ‘In a Letter to Lord ***’, he was surrounded by his friends.¹ Financially compromised by his dabblings in the South Sea Bubble, and weakened by the ‘violent indisposition’ of illness, Toland was stoical in the face of his imminent death.² It is possible to picture his surroundings in the backroom of Hinton’s cottage: stacked on four chairs and a chest of drawers was his collection of books. His closet was stuffed with various unbound books and pamphlets. In his locked trunk ‘are all my papers and manuscripts’.³ Some hours before his death Toland ‘delivered the keys of his trunk’ to a ‘valuable and worthy friend Mr W -’. Before witnesses, Toland consigned to ‘Mr W’ ‘all his printed books both there and elsewhere, together with his manuscripts’ as a token of ‘his gratitude for the many favours he had received from him’. Mr W settled Toland’s debts with Mrs Hinton and arranged for Toland’s burial plot in the Church yard of Putney ‘expressing his intention of putting a stone over him’.⁴ The memorial gave some indication of Toland’s manuscript possessions at the end of the ‘exact catalogue’ (with prices) of his works when he identified five titles: a *Life of Socrates*, *Systems of Divinity*, *The History of the Canon of the New Testament*, *Respublica Mosiaca*, and a *Treatise concerning Tradition*. As the author of the memorial continued, ‘How many, or which, of these designs are executed, we know not’. The only manuscript that could be located was the *History of the Druids*, ‘the introduction of which is finished, and in the hands of that worthy nobleman the Lord Molesworth’.⁵

Examining John Toland’s various relationships with the production, function and consumption of manuscripts, such as those indicated as being in his trunk, will be the purpose of this paper. By an intensive examination of this individual’s involvement in the world of the manuscript the intention will be to engage with some of the wider issues related to the cultural relationships between scribal and printed texts, and consequently between the oppositional nature of such works, their clandestinity, and processes of intellectual change. Toland’s example provides a wealth of material for such an investigation. A fluent and talented public author facile in the rhetorics of print culture, Toland also played a critical role in the production and dissemination of manuscript material in England and on the continent in the early eighteenth century. Indeed Toland has been regarded as one of the pivotal polemicists of the ‘Radical Enlightenment’, qualifying for this role in particular because of his participation in a milieu of irreligious materialists responsible for the production and circulation of scribal works like the *Traité des trois imposteurs*.⁶ The

¹ See E. Curl *An Historical Account of the Life and Writings of the Late Eminently Famous Mr John Toland* (1722) reproducing the account ‘To Mr ****’, St James, March 15th 1721/22’ p. 90-102.

² Although it should be pointed out that Toland had generated some hostility towards the medical men who had endeavoured to treat him. As the author of the memorial indicated ‘There was found upon his table when he died, a small Latin tract, intitled, *Diatriba contra Medicos*, chiefly levelled against the use of oils and emetics, so much of late in vogue’ p. 102. His posthumous works also contained the short work *Physic without Physicians* written in a letter to his friend Barnham Goode (See *A Collection* volume II, p. 273-291).

³ See BL Add Mss 4295 f. 41-42.

⁴ *Ibid* p. 91.

⁵ *Ibid* 102.

⁶ See M.C. Jacob *The Radical Enlightenment: Pantheists, Freemasons and Republicans* (London, 1981); M. Benitez ‘La coterie hollandaise et la reponse a m. de la monnoye sur la *Traité des trois*

historiographical treatment of the production, meaning and consumption of the latter text is an exemplar of the commonplace understanding of the relationship between manuscripts, clandestinity and intellectual change.⁷ Texts such as the *Traité*, because of their radical anti-religious content, are conceived as operating as corrosive solvents upon orthodox discourse and systems of belief, in a necessarily clandestine form (thus avoiding the censor). The consumers of this counter-orthodox discourse were the literate elite habitués of salons, coffee houses and masonic coteries. In this model of the processes of cultural production, form, function and content are intimately connected: the subversive (function) of the (irreligious) content implied a (clandestine) form. The context of censorship combined with the broader cultural hostility to irreligious discourse has privileged the status of the 'subversive manuscript' as a powerful agent in undermining the discursive foundations of the *ancien régime*. Such ideas, translated into the public sphere of print in the latter half of the eighteenth century, provided a platform for the crisis of the revolution of 1789.⁸ Although there is much merit in this model there are also problems.⁹ As Benitez has underscored, there is a tension between the textual form of many of the subversive manuscripts, their intended audience, and implicit objectives as transformative works: in some sense philosophical content and codicological form conspired to subvert the function of the text.¹⁰

While Franco-phone historians have led the way (for example) in producing definitive inventories of extant manuscript texts,¹¹ in exploring in forensic detail the codicological relationships between the variant 'versions' of particular texts, and establishing the precise intellectual sources and circumstances of composition,¹² anglo-phone historical understanding of the book has, in general, eschewed the study of manuscript culture in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.¹³ Those historians of England who have examined the function of manuscript texts have concentrated in general on the political and social dimensions of satire and libel, rather than philosophical or theological material.¹⁴ In historical writing there is little work directed to an examination of the production and cultural significance of manuscript work. The exception to this absence can be found in the increasingly sophisticated literary examination of scribal publication by scholars of English Literature like Love and Woudhuysen.¹⁵ Although such works almost exclusively

imposteurs' *Lias* 21 (1994) p. 71-94. The best account of Toland's life and thought remains R.E. Sullivan *John Toland and the Deist Controversy* (Harvard, 1982)

⁷ For an overview of the state of scholarship on the *Traité*, see S. Berti, F. Charles-Daubert, R.H. Popkin (eds) *Heterodoxy, Spinozism, and Freethought in early eighteenth century Europe* (Dordrecht, 1996). See also O. Bloch (ed) *Le matérialisme du XVIIIe siècle et la littérature clandestine* (Paris, 1982).

⁸ See R. Chartier *The Cultural Origins of the French Revolution* (Duke, 1991) and R. Darnton *The Forbidden best-sellers of pre-revolutionary France* (1996)

⁹ For an important collection of essays that address many of these problems see, F. Moureau (ed) *De bonne main. La communication manuscrite au XVIIIe siècle* (Paris, 1993)

¹⁰ See in particular M. Benitez 'Lumieres et élitisme dans les manuscrits clandestins', but also the other essays in his, *La Face Cachée des lumières. Recherches sur les manuscrits philosophiques clandestins de l'âge classique* (Paris, 1996) p. 199-211.

¹¹ See M. Benitez 'Traité manuscrits philosophiques clandestins' in *La Face Cachée* p. 20-61.

¹² See the work of S. Berti on the *Traité des trois imposteurs* (Turin, 1994) and the forthcoming volume by F. Charles-Daubert.

¹³ For some important reflections on the reasons for the differences between anglo-phone analytic bibliography and Franco-phone 'histoire de livre' see, G. Thomas Tanselle 'Printing history and other history' *Studies in bibliography* 48 (1995) p. 269-289.

¹⁴ See P. Croft 'Libels, popular literacy and public opinion in Early Modern England' *Historical Research* (1995) p. 266-285; A. Fox 'Ballads, libel and popular ridicule in Jacobean England' *Past and Present* 145 (1994) p. 47-83.

¹⁵ See H. Love *Scribal Publication in Seventeenth Century England* (Clarendon, Oxford, 1993) and H.R. Woudhuysen *Sir Philip Sidney and the Circulation of Manuscripts 1558-1640* (Clarendon, Oxford, 1996). Important other works are A.F. Marotti *Manuscript, Print and the English Renaissance Lyric*

concentrate upon the scribal production of poetic, musical, and newsletter materials, they provide some sophisticated accounts of the status of scribal texts and cultural transactions implicit in the production and circulation of such material. It is possible to identify a number of key suggestions that might inform a study of the type of philosophical or irreligious manuscripts under consideration in an examination of Toland's career. Perhaps one of the most significant dispositions of (in particular) Love's work, is to treat the scribal work as an object of sociological significance as much as intellectual statement. The manuscript performs a role in a system of connectivity, bringing writers, scribes, readers, and ideas into a form of ideological community. Scribally circulated texts could be conceived of as 'a group possession' produced and read within (perhaps) specific institutional settings (legal inns, musical circles, political nexi like the Court or parliamentary connections).¹⁶ The circulation of scribal texts was a process whereby distinct control might be exercised over the conditions of access to the text: as there might be specific sites of reading, so might there be prescribed communities of readers. Just like the printed book, the manuscript was the bearer and signifier of a series of inscribed social relationships.¹⁷ These questions of audience and readership, of access and inclusion, and of 'communities of readership' can be explored with precision in the case of Toland.

A second theme that can be drawn from the contributions of Love *et al*, is of the need for careful consideration of the relationship between manuscript and printed texts and the idea of 'publication'. Countering the commonplace assumption of an assumed trajectory from manuscript to print it is possible to raise questions about the priority between these two different forms of textual production. In Toland's extant corpus there is a variety of texts in different form: there are manuscripts which exist in scribal form, and those which only exist in posthumous printed 'versions', but also manuscripts which were also 'published' in printed form, as well as circulated in a scribal state, by Toland. Exploring the different textual structures, presentations and linguistic force of these works will allow a consideration of wider issues about the public or private 'function' of printed and scribal material. The ability to control access to scribal material was clearly compromised in the translation to print: how did this 'adjust' the illocutionary intention of the scribal text, and what rhetorical techniques were necessary in the printed form to establish or replicate the objectives of meaning. A comparative analysis of scribal and printed texts in Toland's case might allow some engagement with such questions of the relationship between print and scribal material: were these variable 'forms' of equivalent material? Was the textual function of a piece of writing implicit or independent of its bibliographical or material form? Did scribal and printed texts have convergent or competitive relations? The political function of writing and 'ways of reading' was a matter that Toland paid specific attention to, in particular in *Clidopherous*. It has been a commonplace interpretation of this work to collapse his distinctions between esoteric and exoteric forms of communication into public (print) and private (manuscript) forms. This has marginalised Toland's concern with the way a text was read. One consequence might be the commonplace assumption that the 'style' or radical 'form' (ie. 'subversive' manuscript) of a work could take priority over the intellectual content of a work in a different form ('censored' and therefore less 'radical' print). Ultimately the issue is an hermeneutic one: does the material form of a text determine or shape the 'social meaning' of its content?

(Cornell, 1995); W. Wall *The Imprint of Gender: Authorship and Publication in the English Renaissance* (Cornell, 1997); see also J. Goldberg *Writing Matter* (1990)

¹⁶ Love *Scribal Publication* p. 180-182.

¹⁷ See M. de Certeau *The Practice of Everyday Life* (California, 1988); see also R. Chartier *The Order of Books* (1994).

The first place to start this investigation is with the destiny of Toland's manuscripts immediately after his death in March, 1722. Although there are Toland papers scattered around European archives the two concentrations of materials are in the British Library, and in published form in the two volume collection edited by Pierre Desmaizeaux (1726). An experienced editor, Desmaizeaux noted that the collection was 'now first publish'd from his original manuscripts'. The volumes included nineteen works, ranging from the early essay on Atilius Regulus (dated Oxford, 1694), through longer pieces like *A Catalogue of Books* and *The Primitive Constitution of the Christian Church* (c1699-1705), to the work that he devoted the last years of his life to composing, the *History of the Druids* (composed between June 1718 and April 1719). The collection included works of classical erudition (on Cicero, Pliny and Roman education), political memorials (written for Shaftesbury c1711-1712), and proposals for fiscal and literary projects. Importantly, a selection of Toland's correspondence dating from the early days in Oxford, to days before his death were added to the second volume. Appended to Toland's material were 'some pieces found among Mr Toland's Papers', which comprised of three responses against Toland's own published works, included perhaps to suggest that the Desmaizeaux edition was authentic and un-censored.¹⁸ Evidence on how Desmaizeaux got access to Toland's papers is circumstantial but seems more than likely to have been through his friendship with Anthony Collins. Certainly, the latter wrote to Desmaizeaux a number of times after Toland's death inquiring about the return of some of his own books.¹⁹ Both Collins and Desmaizeaux were friends with Hugh Wrottesley who is the most likely candidate for the identity of the 'Mr W' who received Toland's trunk.²⁰ Comparing the published papers with the holdings in the British Library (Add Mss 4465 and 4295) is instructive about the editorial skills exercised by Desmaizeaux. Most of the 'original' papers found in the 1726 edition do not survive in the manuscript collection. Three of the shorter works and some of the political materials are to be found in a condition close to that of the published versions. A proportion of the correspondence is also present displaying evidence of editorial amendment such as the erasure of names and adjustment of titles. While the bulk of the printed correspondence does not survive in manuscript, there are also a quantity of original letters not reproduced in 1726. None of the longer works printed in 1726 survive in scribal form in the British Library collections.

There are then two divergent sources available for the reconstruction of Toland's scribal activities. The printed collection, represented by its editor as based on original material, is neither comprehensive nor pristine. The corpus of original material is deficient in respect of the longer 'published' manuscripts. It does however contain a great deal of fragmentary material relating to Toland's transactions (both financial and literary) with booksellers and printers, as well as correspondence with sympathetic readers, and notes towards works in progress. It is possible to exploit this material to construct an account of the dynamics of his relationship with both scribal and printed texts. There is little doubt that there are two different Tolands made by the manuscript archive and the printed collection. The Toland of the Desmaizeaux collection is represented as the honest if eccentric scholar-critic: the editor's memoir recounting the narrative of Toland's life and works indicates a man whose love of learning and indiscretion often led him into unintentional (and unnecessary) contention with Christian orthodoxy. There is no doubt that the material

¹⁸ These other works were by Benjamin Bayly, rector of St James, Bristol on the nature of the immortal soul c1700, Leibnitz's rebuttal of *Christianity not mysterious* and an anonymous composed, 'Critical Remarks on Nazareus'.

¹⁹ See BL 4282 f. 190, 192

²⁰ Indeed Collins was to marry Hugh Wrottesley's sister Elizabeth in 1724 (see BL Add Mss 4282 f 244). Desmaizeaux dedicated his *Collection of Several Pieces of Mr John Locke* (1720) to Hugh Wrottesley. The assiduous editor later fell out with Elizabeth over his handling of Collin's manuscripts.

reproduced in the collection was unorthodox: anticlericalism, anti-scripturalism, and a materialism pervade many of the texts. The works in collected form are 'miscellaneous': unanchored from the social and political context in which they were composed and circulated it is difficult to contrive specific 'meaning' to them. Although a number of the reproduced works preserve some evidence of their social provenance in the form of dedications most of the details of social context (especially from the correspondence) have been erased. The printed collection represents some of the authenticity of Toland's thought, but it has been shorn of the dynamism of circulation. The texts simply exist in print: Desmaizeaux neither supplies details of when and how Toland composed them, nor who read them, and how they reacted. Integrating the printed collection with the evidence of the BL archive may enable a reconstruction of the context of production and consumption of these scribal publications. The manuscript archive, fragmentary and disordered as it is, provides evidence for the composition, circulation and even interaction of author and reader.

Amongst the various papers and palimpsests there is a source of particular importance in establishing the community established by Toland's scribal efforts. On a small scrap piece of paper, sometime after 1718 but probably c.1720-21, Toland noted a record of 'Manuscripts of Mine Abroad'.²¹ The manuscript was compiled over a period of time: the recordings of names and titles are made in the same hand but in different qualities of ink. Again indicating periodic amendment of the record, six of the items are crossed through suggesting that the text had been read and returned. 'Manuscripts of mine abroad', although a modest document (it is less than 100 words), is a source that can be exploited to explore the range of Toland's scribal activities and contacts. Twelve people are named: nine men and three women. Seven of these individuals can be identified. Sixteen manuscripts were in circulation, although only fourteen titles are named.²² Of these works ten can be identified: two were published during Toland's life and three in the (1726) post-humous collection. Only four of the texts remain obscure. Although this document is superficially little more than a list, when contextualised it can be used to illuminate a number of themes.

The manuscript confirms one of the suggestions of recent historiography: that Toland was involved in the dissemination, both in England and on the continent, of the writings of Bruno. The work of Jacob, and more recently Ricci, has provided ample evidence of Toland's entanglement in the appropriation of Bruno's thought to the exigencies of a crypto-masonic freethought.²³ Toland had probably come into contact with Bruno's work by 1698; certainly he corresponded with an anonymous Englishman and Leibnitz between 1705 and 1710 about the meaning of the *Spaccio*; by 1713 he was implicated in the publication of a translation of the same work.²⁴ The list of 'lent' manuscripts indicates that as late as 1719-20 Toland was still undertaking the distribution of Bruno's works. He sent a 'Life' of Bruno to Hartsoeker

²¹ See BL Add Mss 4295 folio 43. The first transcription of this was made by F. H. Heinemann 'Prolegomena to a Toland Bibliography' *Notes and Queries* volume 185 25th September 1943 p. 182-86. A more recent transcription can be found in J.A.I. Champion *The Pillars of Priestcraft Shaken* (Cambridge, 1992) p. 150n. Both these transcriptions are faulty and are replaced by the appendix here. On dating see: peerage dates for Aylmer and Castleton, also internal dates of *Druids*, dates of references in Martin Martin; Letters to Shaftesbury published in 1721.

²² The two duplicated texts were the 'Specimen of the History of the Druids' and 'Revelation no Rule'.

²³ See Jacob *Newtonians* p. 227, 245-7; G. Aquilecchia 'Nota su John Toland traduttore di Giordano Bruno' *English Miscellany* 9 (1958) p. 77-86; S. Ricci *La Fortuna del Pensiero di Giordano Bruno 1600-1750* (Florence, 1986) is the most comprehensive account, in particular of Toland's involvement in the translation of Bruno's *Spaccio* see p. 231-330.

²⁴ See Ricci; Carabelli 'John Toland e G.W. Leibnitz: otto lettere'; Champion *Pillars*.

in Holland, and two other works of Bruno to Englishmen.²⁵ Evidence of Toland's labours in translating and commenting on Bruno's work are found in both his archive and the (1726) printed collection.²⁶ If we ask the question 'what resources did Toland require in order for him to have been able to produce these different works?' it is apparent that in distributing such texts he was acting as an intermediary between geographical dispersed archives. The Viennese library of Baron d'Hohendorf and Prince Eugene, as Toland acknowledged to Leibnitz, was one resource.²⁷ Anthony Collin's library was the source of the translation that ultimately resulted in the printed edition of the *Spaccio* (1713). The translation had originally been made 'for the private use of Mr Collins, nor ever intended to be printed'. Toland borrowed it and promptly sent it to the press.²⁸ Toland thus acted to disseminate Bruno's texts both in scribal and printed form according to opportunity: importantly, Toland's brokerage of archival sources relating to Bruno was not one-way-traffic but operated between England and the continent.

Emphasising this point, the evidence of 'lent list' points to an even more complex series of transactions between manuscript and print, and the continent and England. Amongst the material that Lord Castleton received was 'The Cloud & Pillar', a text that he presumably had read and returned since the entry was crossed through. While no anglo-phone manuscript text is known, the work was published in 1720 as part of *Tetradymus* under the title of *Hodegus: or the Pillar of Cloud and Fire*.²⁹ The work was, however, first circulated in scribal form in French c1710 in the collection of *Dissertations Diverses* sent to Prince Eugene and Baron d'Hohendorf.³⁰ As has been discussed elsewhere this work originally drew from the researches Toland had pursued in the Low Countries: some of the material was published in Latin in the Hague, the other material (which shares a textual proximity with sections of particular traditions of the *Traité des trois imposteurs*) Toland disseminated in scribal form to an audience of two. The 'Cloud & Pillar' text then was born in a specific franco-phone elite context, but a decade later was first circulated in manuscript and then printed. In each case the work entertained a distinct audience presented in a different form: the distinction between a clandestine manuscript and a public printed work, in this example, is far from clear cut.³¹ There is little sense that the destiny of 'Cloud & Pillar' was necessarily to be found in becoming a printed text. A more careful interpretation might suggest that Toland, operating in a number of different milieux, developed a subtle repertoire of managing his ideas either in scribal or printed form. The intellectual components of a particular text were not independent of the material form of the work, but implicitly took part of their meaning, or significance, from the

²⁵ It is perhaps possible that the material sent to his Dutch contact was the 'Dissertation' he referred to in his correspondence with Leibnitz, which he had clearly employed an (inexperienced) amanuensis to transcribe. (See Carabelli p. 425 Toland to Leibnitz 22.2.1710 'My copyer is indeed a very young lad, but in reading over his transcript I have corrected all his mistakes', and p. 430 to the same, 25.2.1710 'You'll wonder (I make no doubt) that you did not receive this Dissertation with my last letter. But the true reason is, that correcting of ye copy made by my Amanuensis, took up so much of my time, as made it impossible to dispatch it by the night's post: and after all tis so foul and illegible, that I thought fit to keep it for my self (as best able to decypher it) and to send you my own original'.

²⁶ See BL Add Mss 4295 f. 64r 'A Psalm before Sermon in Praise of Asinity' and f. 65r 'A very pious Psalm after Sermon about the meaning of the Ass & her Foal': both of these are reproduced in Aquilecchia p. 80-82. The 1726 collection included *De genere, loco, et tempore mortis Jordani Brunii Nolani* (dedicated to Hohendorf dated 1709) and an account of Bruno's 'Of the infinite Universe'.

²⁷ Carabelli p. 425 '... I found my self oblig'd to send as farr as Vienna a kind of dissertation on this subject'.

²⁸ See Ricci, p. 250.

²⁹ The work was published shortly after 17th August 1720, the date given for the completion the last essay in the collection.

³⁰ See 'Projet d'une dissertation sur la colombe de feu et de nuée des Israelites: dans une lettre à Megalonymus'. OBN 10390.

³¹ For an examination of the french manuscript and the printed copy, see J.A.I. Champion 'John Toland and the *Traité des trois imposteurs*'.

nature of relationship established in the exchange of text from author to reader. That Toland could have worked upon a text, and thought it viable for a different audience, for over a decade is testimony both to the continuity and the flexibility of his intentions in disseminating his opinions.

If the trajectory of works like the 'Cloud & Pillar' was not a straightforward one from manuscript to print, nor easily confined to a specific circle or milieu, the evidence of the BL archive also muddles the commonplace assumption of the clandestine or private origins of scribal material. Although Toland clearly kept many of his intellectual activities discreet from public knowledge he quite commonly and deliberately drew attention to projected works. It is possible in a number of cases to identify the scribal results of such advertisement. Perhaps many of Toland's announcements were the result of intellectual hubris, rather than an indication of any serious declaration of intention or demarcation of intellectual property. Certainly, from his earliest published works. In *Christianity not mysterious* (1696) he announced a work called 'Systems of divinity exploded'; in *The Militia Reform'd* (1698) his proposal was for an account of 'Brutus, or the history of Liberty and Tyranny'; in the 1700 edition of Harrington's works, he claimed that he was going to draw 'parallel' between Socrates and Christ.³² Rumours of Toland's intentions were encouraged by this use of print to cultivate expectation.³³ Commenting on the project for a comparative history of Socrates and Christ, Toland admitted 'that I have been some time about it, I freely avow; yet not in the manner those officious informers report, but as becomes a disinterested Historian, and a friend to all mankind, as will more fully appear to the world whenever the Book itself is published'.³⁴ In 1706 Elisha Smith commented to Thomas Hearne, that 'Mr Toland is making collections for his Brutus yt he promis'd and for ye life of Socrates'.³⁵ It is quite clear then that Toland's research activities were not entirely clandestine or secret. Unfortunately, no surviving fragments of these works exist to allow an assessment of their intellectual intentions. There is little doubt that Toland liked to exploit processes of literary rumour in order to set off the anxieties of the orthodox: for example, the hearsay that he was about to reveal evidence of a 'new Gospel' convulsed the Church in 1713-1714, and prompted attack from Francis Hare prior to any publication by Toland.³⁶ Not all of these announcements were unsubstantiated provocation. In *Amyntor* (1699) Toland published a short consideration of apocryphal scripture: using this printed material as a premise he indicated his intention of composing a fuller 'History of the Canon of the New Testament' in 1710. In another printed preface (1718) he noted that his history of the canon 'whereof I have written ... in two parts, to be publish'd in convenient time'.³⁷ The 'lent list' recorded that Mr Hewet had borrowed and returned a text called 'History of ye canon'. The 1726 collection reproduced *A Catalogue of Books ... as truly or falsely ascrib'd to Jesus Christ, his Apostles, and other eminent persons*, which is an expanded version of the original printed fragment in *Amyntor*. Toland, thus, had produced a text that was originally printed, then he adapted it in an expanded scribal form for circulation between (at least) 1710-1720. A version of this expanded text was ultimately printed again in 1726. The function of making public his intentions, and then consequently the circulation of such material, suggests a much more complex relationship between print and scribal production than is commonly assumed.

³² See *CNM* preface p. xxvi; *Militia Reform'd* [Carabelli *Tolandiana* p. 3]; *Harrington's Works* p.xli.

³³ Report of Toland's intention was made in Basnage's *Histoire des ouvrages des savants* September 1699, see Carabelli *Tolandiana* p. 64.

³⁴ Curll *An Historical Account* p. 22.

³⁵ Carabelli *Supplement* p. 3, citing Bod. Ms Rawlinson Letter 9 f. 107r.

³⁶ Carabelli *Tolandiana* p. 169-170

³⁷ *Nazarenus* p. ix.

These were not isolated instances: Toland persistently throughout his career employed the prefaces of his printed works to ‘hint’ at on going or future works. One of the most significant of the ‘missing’ works of Toland is his ‘Respublica Mosiaca’. He first drew attention to such a work in the collection of manuscript dissertations he sent to Prince Eugene c. 1708-10.³⁸ By 1718 he reported in print ‘I can now gladly tell you, my materials are in such a readiness; that one half year, free from all other business, wou’d be sufficient for me to form and finish the whole work’.³⁹ Two years later the work had still not appeared, but Toland again drew attention to the ‘promis’d’ work: because of the controversial nature of the proposed text he continued, ‘I find it highly necessary to publish before-hand some short specimen of my undertaking’. His declared purpose in doing this was to ‘prevent surprise’ in his readers at the novelty of his arguments; the probable result of advertising the work in this way was (again) to prompt anxiety rather than comfort amongst his potential audience.⁴⁰ Beyond the evidence of his library, which contained a number of important works on the history of Judaism, there is nothing to suggest that the work was circulated in specimen or indeed even completed. In the absence of extant material (scribal or printed) we are encouraged to speculate and imagine (from other contextual Toland material) what such a text might have argued. In this sense it is possible to suggest that the twentieth century historian might experience the process of engaging with a fictive text in a similar manner to that encountered by Toland’s potential audience. Toland, by straddling the bridge between scribal and print culture in this way, was able to ‘circulate’ the idea of a text without material form. As the evidence of yet another fictive text, *A Treatise upon Tradition*, suggests Toland devoted some efforts to grounding his projected works by researching the reactions of a potential audience. In the course of responding to clerical critics of his 1718 *Nazarenus*, Toland, naming his antagonists, insisted that he would ‘publish a tract on this subject very soon’.⁴¹ Indeed the evidence of Anthony Collin’s correspondence with Desmaizeaux (in March 1722) does confirm that Toland had undertaken some effort to research such a work.⁴² Toland’s ‘promise that I both will write, and dare publish a treatise concerning TRADITION before Midsummer next, my life and health continuing’,⁴³ was broken perhaps only by the failure of his physical well-being. Certainly, Toland had indicated that although he had intended to publish the work in 1720, upon ‘second thoughts’ he had delayed publication.⁴⁴ Whether the text was produced or not, it is not unreasonable to suggest that those men named by Toland (Thomas Brett, and Thomas Mangey) may well have been expectant of such a text, and at least in an oral context may have prepared themselves to rebut its imagined assertions.⁴⁵ Toland contrived then, by using the medium of his printed work, to target the potential hostile audience for a project, before embarking upon the production of such a work. Presumably this enabled him to scrutinise the reactions of his audience through oral or printed responses, and so adapt his work to take account of this. The evidence of Toland’s re-writing of works like *Nazarenus* and

³⁸ ONB 10325 ‘Projet’ f. 4-5.

³⁹ *Nazarenus*, Appendix I, p. 2.

⁴⁰ *Tetradymus: Hodegus* p. 6.

⁴¹ *Tetradymus: Mangoneutes* p. 209.

⁴² See BL Add Mss 4282 f. 190 (March 15th 1722) Collins had asked Desmaizeaux to see if he could track down some of books that Toland had borrowed (he had written earlier in April 1716 with the same request, see f. 116). In particular he wanted his ‘Tracts of Dr Whitby 4^o back, ‘This last I lent him above half a year ago, as of use to him in writing a Treatise of Tradition; and he promised me to return it soon’.

⁴³ *Tetradymus: Mangoneutes* p. 209.

⁴⁴ *Tetradymus* ‘Preface’ p. xxii.

⁴⁵ The evidence of Carabelli’s bibliography indicates that both men did publish responses to Toland’s earlier work.

Hodegus for different scribal or printed forms indicates that he was adept at reconfiguring his work according to its potential reception.⁴⁶

Toland supplemented this process of testing the reception of works by printed advertisement and scribal circulation by the more standard practise of making scribal proposals for specific works to booksellers and other 'publishers'. As the papers in the British Museum illustrate, Toland had an enduring and (at least in financial terms) unprofitable relationship with a series of booksellers, printers and *libraires*. Figures like Samuel Buckley, John Darby, Abigail and Richard Baldwin, James Roberts, Thomas Johnson and Bernard Lintott were all periodically involved in the publication and circulation of Toland's printed work: it is possible to speculate that some of them may have also fostered the traffic of his scribal material.⁴⁷ In some cases these transactions were very particular. For example, between September and October 1712, Toland made an agreement with John Humfreys of Bartholomew Lane, London to print *Cicero Illustratus* and *Proposals for Cicero's Works*.⁴⁸ The terms between Toland and Humfreys dictate the amount and quality of the paper, the costs of printing and extra payment for 'working the title in red'.⁴⁹ The work cost Toland in total £6.17s, of which he made three payments leaving an outstanding bill of £3.12.6. Toland undoubtedly put money and effort into the production of this Latin work which was dedicated to Prince Eugene and Baron d'Hohendorf. Strangely (for a printed text) the work was reproduced in Desmaizeaux's 1726 collection of Toland's 'original' manuscripts. In defence of including the work, Desmaizeaux pointed out that, 'it is very scarce; and the reason is, that it was never made publick'.⁵⁰ Printed but not published, Toland had only 'printed a few copies at his own charge, to distribute among his friends and subscribers'. Toland's involvement with the bookseller had not been to 'publish' a printed work, but to facilitate what Love would call 'author publication'.⁵¹ Presumably Toland opted for reproduction in print rather than employing the services of a scrivener because either of the cost, the time it would take to produce the number of copies desired, or aesthetic preference for 'print', or some combination of all of these. The critical point was that, although Toland had used the technology of moveable type, his text was not distributed as a printed work, but very much like a scribal publication he retained a precise control over the distribution of copies, and consequently over the audience for the work. Evidence for this personalised dispersal is found in the manuscript annotation Toland added to the copy of the work in the Bodleian: 'in token of respect, and for his old acquaintance-sake this book is presented to Doctor John Carr, by his most humble servant, Sept. 30: 1712. J. Toland'.⁵² Toland wished to produce an edition of the entire works of Cicero furnished with critical notes: in order to attract sponsorship for such an enterprise (especially given his reputation) he set out to create a community of readers through the distribution of his proposal. Since no Toland edition resulted we might presume either the project was unpalatable, or the costs too great.⁵³ Toland

⁴⁶ See Champion (ed) *Nazarenus* 'Introduction' *passim*; and Champion 'John Toland and the *Traité des trois imposteurs*' *passim*.

⁴⁷ Certainly it seems likely that at least one bookseller, Jacob Robinson, received some of his scribal work (see below p.). Thomas Johnson, as Jacob suggested, was a significant figure in the production of the *Traité des trois imposteurs*: see M. C. Jacob *The Radical Enlightenment*; and Champion 'John Toland and the *Traité des trois imposteurs*'.

⁴⁸ For bibliographical details see Carabelli *Tolandiana* p. 157-8, 162.

⁴⁹ See BL Add Mss 4295 f. 24.

⁵⁰ P. Desmaizeaux 'Introduction' p. lxvii.

⁵¹ Love *Scribal Publication* p. 47.

⁵² See Carabelli, p. 158.

⁵³ Thomas Hearne was very unhappy to learn that Toland had embarked upon such an editorial project. Interestingly Anthony Collins indicated in his correspondence with Desmaizeaux that he had prepared materials for editions of some of Cicero's writings: see BL Add Mss 4282 f. 184, 26th September 1721, 'I have a plan for publishing my translations of Cicero's books of ye nature of the God's & of Divination'.

acted in the same way with at least one other printed text, although in the case of *Pantheisticon* (1720) his motives may have been prompted initially by circumspection rather than anything else. Although there is some manuscript correspondence relating to the work there are few details indicating the print provenance of the book. The place of production is given on the title page as 'Cosmopoli' a device used by other authors to signify the subversive nature of the text. That the work was not published in the commonplace manner of a printed text is suggested by the odd lack of critical reception for the work. As Carabelli's magisterial bibliography establishes, the usual response to Toland's work was a steady stream of printed counter-polemic. The rejoinder to *Pantheisticon* was muted. Most of Toland's other works, whether published in English or Latin, attracted hostile attacks in England and commonly critical reviews in the continental journals of learning. Swift rebuttal of *Pantheisticon* simply did not occur: the first substantial attack on it was published in Hamburg in 1725 and was followed by a trickle of other continental works in the 1730s and 1740s.⁵⁴ It would not seem unreasonable to suggest that Toland was very careful about distribution of the work. Certainly Toland seems to have treated the work more as a scribal text than a printed one: Desmaizeaux noted that Toland made manuscript additions to some copies of the work, presumably tailoring the work even more specifically to a particular reader.⁵⁵ Although he was unaware of Toland's authorship and had more than likely not seen a copy of the work, Francis Hare, commented that this 'Atheistic writer not content with what he has dared to print in this Prophanie piece, has, I am told, in some copies inserted a prayer in MSS'.⁵⁶ The inclusion of the manuscript addition of blasphemous prayers to Bacchus into a particular copy of the work indicated, perhaps, a higher level of intellectual intimacy the recipient had with Toland, or was an indication of the latter's assessment of the extent of impiety that particular reader might embrace. In any case the distribution of *Pantheisticon* is further evidence that Toland might use the services of printers and booksellers without necessarily being consequently committed to the print publication of any work.

As well as the various legal documents indicating transactions between Toland and bookseller-printers,⁵⁷ the BL archive also contains a series of five mock title pages for proposed works. These are carefully written pieces with lining and decoration. That these fragments were serious proposals is confirmed by the first item 'The Critical History of the Celtic Religion & Learning: Containing An Ample Account of the Druids ...'.⁵⁸ As will be discussed below, this proposal or description, (as the 'lent list' records) resulted in a circulated scribal publication which ultimately was printed in the 1726 collection. The mock-title page differs from the circulated manuscript in that it indicates four parts rather than three. That the work was destined for print publication is suggested by the remark that the book would be 'illustrated with copper cuts'. It seems unlikely that this was written post-composition: not only do the 1726 divisions of material between books not correspond to the archive version, there is also no reference to the patronage of Lord Molesworth, who was as will be discussed below, a critical factor in the composition and production of the text. If the mock-title does pre-date the creation of a scribal publication what relationship does it have to the text? It could be a plan of work composed by Toland for his own inspiration. It similarly might have been designed with the intention of attracting a patron like Molesworth. A third alternative explanation could suggest that these fragments were

⁵⁴ See Carabelli, index '*Pantheisticon*'. Interestingly, the 1751 English translation of the work did not prompt any noticeable criticism either.

⁵⁵ Collection Introduction p. lxxxiv-v.

⁵⁶ Carabelli *Tolandiana* p. 237.

⁵⁷ See Add Mss 4295 f. 25 and f. 4, for examples of other 'contracts' that did not result in published titles.

⁵⁸ BL Add Mss 4295 f. 61. For a transcription see Carabelli *Tolandiana* p. 6-7.

designed to entice the printer-booksellers into some financial arrangement with Toland. At the very least, these mock-titles can be thought of as scribal equivalents to the 'advertisements' for works he placed in his other printed works. An examination of the four other titles provides evidence to support all of these alternatives.

Priesthood without Priestcraft, dated 1705, not only included a title-page, but also a list of sixteen chapter headings divided between two books. That a text under this title was circulated is confirmed by the evidence of Anthony Collin's library catalogue (c1720) which recorded a volume under that name.⁵⁹ The description of chapter content for the first book bears a close proximity to the papers published in the 1726 collection under the title of *The Primitive Constitution of the Christian Church*. Again the trajectory of the 'proposal' seems to have been, in the first instance, the production of scribal material. Of the other titles, two (*Superstition Unmasked*, and *The Church by Law Established*) seem to have left no other trace in Toland's *oeuvre*. The first of these was in brief a proposal for an edition of Plutarch's *On Superstition*, with additional commentary by Toland. The second, set out to prove 'that the Church of England is neither believed in its doctrine, nor obey'd in its Discipline, nor observ'd in its ceremonies, by any one Conformist whatsoever, and consequently by no body in the whole world'.⁶⁰ Neither of the works seem especially attractive as either commercial propositions, or as subtle vehicles for the perpetration of Toland's polemic. The last title, *Christopaedia, or an Account of the Pueril studies of Jesus Christ*, is an beguiling text that inverts and subverts the commonplace relationship between print and manuscript. The document includes a title page complete with sub-title, instructive scriptural citation, and acknowledgement that the work was to be a 'translation' of a work by 'The reverend and very worthy divine, Mr Christian Hilscher, Minister of Old Dresden in Saxony'.⁶¹ That Toland expected the work to be attract interest from the print trade was suggested by the inclusion of the phrase 'London printed &c' at the foot of the title page. On the reverse the contents of thirteen chapters which gave an account of Christ's life were summarised: Christ the 'schoolboy', the illiterate, the Jew, 'that he was a Messianic; but controverted whether a mason, carpenter, blacksmith, or Goldsmith; or whether a Cartwright, shipwright, joiner, or Architect; and the dispute reconciled, by his having a smater of all'. The final chapter was to examine 'the books said to be written by him' including the twenty-seven volumes 'wch he left at his ascension into heaven', a work of magic, secret hymns, parables and correspondence, and finally 'his subscription, seal and manuscripts'.⁶² Ironically, Toland indicated that the work was to conclude with an address to 'all sober Christians'. The state of the manuscript (it includes crossings through and pencil insertions) shows that Toland worked and amended it a number of times suggesting that he was cautious about it. The resultant document would leave any prospective reader (be they printer, bookseller or intimate) in no doubt about the anti-Christian intention of the work. What is the status of the work? Although it is not a completed work, what was the effect of its circulation: given the potential subversion indicated by its chapter summaries did it need to be written up to wield an effect? The evidence for Toland's motivations in preparing this text is circumstantial. Carabelli in pondering the nature of the fragment suggested that Toland was simply adopting the pseudonym of Hilscher to underscore one of his most effective (and ambiguous) authorial persona as 'honest Christian' critic of

⁵⁹ See King's College, Cambridge, *Bibliotheca Collinsiana* Keynes 217 f. 469. Collins also owned another manuscript title 'Christianity Restored'. A contract with Richard Baldwin (witnessed by Samuel Buckley) for a book of this title is in BL Add Mss 4295 f. 4.

⁶⁰ BL Add Mss 4295 f. 67.

⁶¹ BL Add Mss 4295 f. 69-70.

⁶² Toland seems to have had second thoughts about the latter and crossed it out.

priestly corruption.⁶³ The evidence of Toland's source affirms a more complex process. The material upon which *Christopaedia* was based was a printed work published by Johannes Fabricius in his collection of biblical criticism *Codex Apocryphus Novi Testamenti* (Hamburg, 1719):⁶⁴ the author of the short text *Domini nostri & salvatoris JESU CHRISTI cum versaretu inter homines, studiis* was Paul Christian Hilscher, sometimes associate of the theological college of Leipzig and 'pastoris Ecclesiae Palaeo Dresdensis'. Hilscher's printed work was a work of hyper-orthodox scholarship rebutting pagan and Jewish slanders against the Messiah. Comparing Hilscher's 'summa' of contents with Toland's 'Contents' is instructive: as he translated from the German's Latin prose, he amended and expanded to twist the meaning.⁶⁵ Toland proposed to appropriate the orthodox reputation and scholarship of both Hilscher and Fabricius to his anticlerical project. That he devoted some energies to this exploitation of a printed source is illustrated by other fragments of scribal material found in his archive: *Certain sayings attributed to Christ, and not found in the 4 receiv'd Gospels*,⁶⁶ which he translated from Fabricius' 'Dicta Christi quae in Evangeliiis Canonicis non extant'.⁶⁷ Again the fragment is amended with crossings through and erasures, indicating perhaps the process of Toland making his translation from the Latin of the original. The remarks he appended to the transcription of Fabricius' extracts, however, suggests a reader other than himself, and indeed refers to other material 'which I have noted elsewhere': it is possible, then, that the text was circulated. What these two texts do show is that Toland moved easily between print and scribal material: he saw the possibilities and opportunities to make polemical capital by transferring material from one 'form' to another. It is not possible to draw to rigid a distinction between the public nature of print and the private or clandestine use of manuscript material. Toland calculated carefully the suitability of his written work for specific audiences: this consideration focused not simply upon intellectual content but also the appropriate literary 'form' for the work.

It was a key part of Toland's skill as an intermediary between scribal and print culture that he recognised the opportunities of translation between the two media. Much of Toland's brilliance as a critic was his ability to identify and exploit moments of discursive translation and slippage: his contribution was not necessarily in the articulation of new ideas, but in the redeployment of ideas, sources, and texts into different social and cultural contexts. The innovation in meaning was established not simply by propositional statement but by re-configuration of text with context. Toland was adept at discerning when the moment was apposite for turning scribal material into print, and the reverse. Very often his perception of the potential of the moment brought him into conflict with his associates. The most famous example of this is his role in the publication of Anthony Ashley's *Inquiry concerning virtue* in 1699, with the bookseller-printers Andrew Bell and Samuel Buckley with whom he had published other works of his own. There is evidence that *Virtue* had been circulated scribally prior to this printed version 'in a private manuscript by an anonymous author'.⁶⁸ Toland, without consulting his patron and author of the work, decided printed

⁶³ Carabelli *Tolandiana* p. 11.

⁶⁴ Toland owned both the first (1703) and second expanded edition (1719) of this work.

⁶⁵ See Hilscher *Domini nostri & Salvatoris JESU CHRISTI* p. 424-441 in volume 3 of J.A. Fabricius *Codex Apocryphus Novi Testamenti* (Hamburg, 1719) §5 'An artem scriptoriam tenuerit?' becomes in Toland 'Whether he learnt to write or not, & probably yt he did not'; in Chapter 11 Toland added to Hilscher's words 'and the dispute reconciled, by his having a smater of all'.

⁶⁶ BL Add Mss 4465 f. 61-62; for a transcription see Champion (ed) *Nazarenus*: appendix.

⁶⁷ Fabricius *Codex Apocryphus Novi Testamenti* (Hamburg, 1719) Part I p. 321-335.

⁶⁸ See A. Aldridge 'Two versions of Shaftesbury's *Inquiry concerning virtue*' *Huntingdon Library Quarterly* 13 (1945-50) p. 207-214, citing Robert Day in 1700 (at p. 209).

publication was necessary.⁶⁹ Toland's intimacy with both the bookseller-printers of London, and with the radical circles of writers around men like Ashley, Harley and Molesworth, enabled him to make dangerous liaisons between text and type.

Although intimate with many of the bookseller-printers of London Toland often did his best to keep his involvement in the process of publication confidential. The example of the controversy surrounding the publication of the *A letter to the Author of the Memorial of the State of England* in 1705 illustrates the shadowy role Toland could adopt. Correspondence between him and Charles Montague, (Lord Halifax) insinuates that he was the author of the libellous work, 'yet if I should be guest, tis still but guessing, for the printer himself knows no more of the author than the great Turk'.⁷⁰ The authorship of the work is still obscure. William Stephens, Rector of Sutton near Epsom prosecuted and convicted as author of the libel in 1706 was more than likely covering up for his mutual friends Thomas Rawlins or John Toland.⁷¹ Stephens had claimed that he had merely seen the text through the press, 'that he was no more than the transcriber of that book'. Indeed the most forensic examination of the incident suggests that the manuscript was the joint product of several men, most likely a 'republican clubbe': importantly, the episode reinforces the complex relationship between authorship, scribal publication and print culture.⁷² Although Toland was sometimes over-eager in the production of printed editions of manuscript material his friends and associates were keen to use his services. William Stephens, showing no regrets for his experience of 1706, still hoped to use Toland's 'publishing' services in 1717.⁷³

In 1721 Toland published a series of *Letters* between Anthony Ashley and Robert Molesworth that revealed some intimate material: Toland carefully discussed the matter with Molesworth and indeed circulated the edition in manuscript prior to publication to gauge the nature of their reception. Molesworth wrote to Toland reporting the response of Lord Castleton (who is recorded in the 'lent list' as having a copy of 'Shaftesbury's Letters') who said they 'wou'd encourage him to try for heirs to his honours and estate'. Molesworth concurred with Toland's opinion 'that those letters were very valuable ... and had it in my thoughts that it would be a good thing to publish them'. However doubts about accusations of personal vanity, and worries about reflections upon Shaftesbury's family, had led him to the conclusion that it was 'better to have such publication deferr'd till after my death'. Molesworth did however encourage Toland, 'if you think fitting, [to] communicate them to Mr Collins, and take his opinion of them, and what is best to be done with them'.⁷⁴ Resolving the delicacies of intimacy the letters were published in 1721 as incentives and examples of public and private virtue. Toland noted, underscoring the transition of this material from manuscript to print, that 'if any be curious to see these letters in the Lord

⁶⁹ Ashley had his own *Sociable Enthusiast* 'privately printed (but not published)' in 1704, see (Mirandola p. 222) S. F. Whitaker 'The first edition of Shaftesbury's Moralists' *The Library* 7 (1952) p. 233-41.

⁷⁰ Cited in F. Heinemann 'John Toland and the Age of Enlightenment' *Review of English Studies* 20 (1944) p. 125-146, at p. 134-5.

⁷¹ Stephens had also been the object of Tory hostility when a Republican sermon of his which had been circulating in manuscript (with additions from John Trenchard) was printed 'without his privity'. See Worden p. 44.

⁷² See J.A. Downie 'William Stephens and the Letter to the Author of the Memorial of the State of England' *Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research* 50 (1977) p. 253-259, at p. 257. See also D. Coombs 'William Stephens and the Letter to the Author of the Memorial of the State of England, 1705' *Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research* 32 (1959) p. 24-37.

⁷³ See BL Add Mss 4465 f. 12; for another example of people approaching Toland to assist them in publishing their work see Anthony Newcomen's letter (BL Add Mss 4465 f 24, 27th May 1721) concerning his history of 'Lucius & Cloe'.

⁷⁴ *Collection Letters* p. 461 Molesworth to Toland 25th June 1720.

Shaftesbury's original writing, they shall not be deny'd that liberty; and for that purpose they are left for three months in the hands of Mr Peele'.⁷⁵

Toland, over the course of his career, developed a sophisticated repertoire of skills, honed to negotiate the different and sometime divergent cultures of print and scribal cultures. One of the consistent themes that can be deduced from his various activities was of the subtlety and sophistication of his attempt to communicate his ideas to audiences and readers of differing types. As has been discussed elsewhere, Toland developed a arsenal of different authorial strategies when writing for a print audience, that included the presentation of scholarly apparatus, the appropriation of orthodox rhetoric and the careful presentation of typographical style: the function of this variety of authorial presence was to attempt to engage with as many types of reader simultaneously. Since the amount of authorial control over the nature of the community of readers was diminished with a publicly circulated printed text, Toland attempted to exercise mastery over this plethora of readers by the orchestration of textual authorities within the text.⁷⁶ Insinuation, appropriation and ambiguity were strategies adopted by Toland to capture the reader's mind and initiate the process of persuasion or corrosion of accepted patterns of authority and belief. The imperatives and constitution of scribal publication offered a different set of conventions and relationships between author and reader. In particular, scribal publication offered the author a potentially untrammelled dominion over audience: the author could chose whom to send a text, and might *encumber* that transfer of material with precise stipulations about whom, when and where other access might be had to the manuscript. This allowed an author to have a dialogue or conversation with a specific group of people: the nature of this author-reader relationship could have implications for the way the text worked. Indeed the text might have a different function altogether. By focusing upon the evidence of the list of Toland's 'manuscripts abroad' it will be possible to explore with precision the dynamics of one community of readers created by Toland, and address the wider issue of the function of the (clandestine) manuscript.

Margaret Jacob has convincingly underscored Toland's involvement in a pan-European clandestine community, possibly centred upon a shared membership of a homosocial masonic coterie.⁷⁷ It should come as little surprise to scholars of Tolandiana that the evidence of the 'lent list' argues for another community of readers and associates: an elite, heterosocial, and overwhelmingly British, affinity. This is not to suggest that the masonic connection, converged upon communal reading of works like *Pantheisticon* and collaborating to produce texts like the *Traité des trois imposteurs*, is diminished. On the contrary, the intention is to suggest that Toland's skill was at being able to fabricate, participate and move between divergent intellectual, social and political communities. An exploration of these differences (both in community and textual production) could illuminate the structure of intellectual change in the period. The 'lent list' records the names and titles of twelve people: three women and eight men. Of these individuals eight have been identified: three Whig Lords (Molesworth, Castleton and Aylmer); one woman, Lady Janet Carriere, wife of Thomas Parker the Earl of Macclesfield and Lord Chancellor of England (1718-1726); one Whig placeman the Surveyor General, Thomas Hewett (1656-1726); one bookseller, Jacob Robinson; a lawyer and antiquary Hugh Wrottesley (d. 1725); and the Dutch natural philosopher, Nicholas Hartsoeker. It is

⁷⁵ See Toland *The Late Earl of Shaftesbury's Letters* (1721); Mr Peele was the bookseller.

⁷⁶ See Champion (ed) *Nazareus*; and idem 'Making Authority'.

⁷⁷ See M. Jacob *The Radical Enlightenment* (1981); but see also idem 'Clandestine Culture in the early Enlightenment' in H. Woolf (ed) *The Analytic Spirit. Essays in the history of science in honor of Henry Guerlac* (Cornell, 1981) p. 122-145.

also possible that the 'Mr Tormine' is Rene Joseph de Tournemine (1661-1736) editor of the *Mémoires de Trévoux*.⁷⁸ Of those who cannot be identified, two are women - Mrs Laney and Mrs Lane - the other is a Mr Loyd.⁷⁹

With the exception of Robert, Lord Molesworth, the majority of these figures are unknown to commonplace historiography. With a little research however, it is possible to establish the political and intellectual status of these figures. Five of the individuals (Molesworth, Hewett, Castleton, Aylmer and Carriere-Parker⁸⁰) were intimately connected with the Hanoverian Whig political establishment: most of them favouring the neo-republican wing of the party identified by Molesworth's 'commonwealth' ideology.⁸¹ Four of these men had been Whig members of Parliament: importantly, led by Parker (who was part of the prosecution against the High Churchman Henry Sacheverell in 1710) all of these politicians had supported the tolerant and sometimes anticlerical platforms of the true Whigs.⁸² Castleton, Aylmer and Parker had all received promotion and peerages as rewards for political loyalty to the Hanoverian regime after 1714. Matthew Aylmer a former client of the irreligious second Duke of Buckingham and regarded by Swift as a violent partisan, was a senior naval officer, ultimately becoming rear-Admiral of the United Kingdom after 1718. James Sanderson, trained as a lawyer, represented Lincolnshire as a member of Parliament, and was rewarded for political loyalty between 1714 and 1720 by being successively made Baron, Viscount and Earl of Castleton. Thomas Parker a key legal figure in the early eighteenth century was a staunch Whig in both corporation and national politics. Making his name defending Whig printers like John Tutchin, Parker used his legal skills in defence of toleration and the Hanoverian succession. A fierce prosecutor of Sacheverell, Parker became Lord Chief Justice and ultimately Lord Chancellor of England (April, 1718).⁸³ As a legal officer Parker was a key figure in the succession of George I meeting him on his arrival in Greenwich in 1714. A popular courtier, Parker also established favour with George I because of his judgement affirming the King's rights over his grandchildren. Parker became first Lord of the Regency between 1718 and 1725. At different times he read the King's Speech to Parliament in place of George I. As a legal officer Parker was hostile to the Test and Corporation Acts and defended the interests of Quakers in 1722. An examination of his correspondence between c1704 and 1730 indicates that he was also a man of letters: amongst the various legal matters Parker acted as patron for scholarly figures like George Hickes, David Wilkins and Zachary Pearce.⁸⁴ He also had a correspondence with Pierre Desmaizeaux mainly concerned with the receipt of the standard foreign literary journals.⁸⁵ Parker, with his legal power and popularity with George I, was clearly a significant figure: it is of profound interest that Toland (admittedly through the agency of Parker's wife) was able to include him in his circle.

⁷⁸ Collins, in correspondence with Desmaizeaux (1718), mentions Tournemine's controversy with Leibnitz; see BL Add Mss 4282 f. 151. The *Mémoires des Trévoux* reviewed a number of Toland's works: see Carabelli *Tolandiana* p. 128, 142-3, 149, 215.

⁷⁹ Of course it is possible that Mrs Laney and Mrs Lane are the same person: the handwriting and structure of the list does suggest they are independent people.

⁸⁰ That Lady Carriere passed on the copy of 'The History of the Druids' is clear from the letter from John Chamberlayne to Toland, BL Add Mss 4295 f. 27, 21 June 1718.

⁸¹ See C. Robbins *The Eighteenth Century Commonwealthmen* (Harvard, 1959); J. P. Kenyon *Revolution Principles* (Cambridge, 1977); W. Laprade *Public Opinion and Politics in the Eighteenth Century* (1936).

⁸² Tack, Naturalisation etc.

⁸³ On the Sacheverell Trial see G. Holmes *The Trial of Dr Sacheverell* (1977) 149-155. On Parker See J. Campbell *The Lives of the Lord Chancellors* (1846) volume 4.

⁸⁴ See BL Stowe 750.

⁸⁵ See BL Add Mss 4287 f. 210-216.

Of less national significance, but equally interesting are the last three men: Hewett, Robinson and Wrottesley. Thomas Hewett was notorious as a strong Whig. Prior to 1719 he had held local office: in that year he became part of the 'new junta for Architecture' with appointment to the office of Surveyor General. In the 1680s he had travelled Europe and returned with 'a wife, atheism and many eccentricities'. He was known to the Molesworth family⁸⁶ and in 1724 was employed by Parker to design the Library at Shirburn Castle.⁸⁷ Although little more is known of his life and beliefs, it is probably significant that, as well as receiving four manuscripts from Toland, he also borrowed books from Anthony Collins.⁸⁸ Mr Robinson, possibly Jacob Robinson co-publisher of the 1747 second edition of Toland's works. He is most likely to be the bookseller Anthony Collins used to buy and sell books. That Robinson was discreet enough to be trusted with subversive works is indicated by his involvement in the distribution of Collins' *The Art of Freethinking* (1713). Collins had written to Desmaizeaux indicating that he would send a parcel of the work to Robinson 'which he may, if he can, sell to the customers who come to his shop'. Desmaizeaux was to negotiate a price with Robinson and to pass on a message of caution 'never to have above 3 or 4 of my books of Freethinking to lye in his shop at a time, and not to publish them in any publick manner'.⁸⁹ Robinson, who worked out of the Golden Lion, St Paul's Churchyard, also published Collins' *Philosophical Inquiry* (1724).⁹⁰ Clearly, Robinson was comfortable with handling dangerous material whether in printed or scribal form. The final name is that of Hugh Wrottesley (d. 1725) a lawyer based at Lincoln's Inn and a Fellow of the Antiquarian Society.⁹¹ Known as a diligent collector of works on archaeology, Wrottesley was a close friend of Anthony Collins, and worked with both Parker and Desmaizeaux.⁹² As well as passing on a manuscript to him, Toland also dedicated a work to Wrottesley: interestingly, although this work was printed in Michel Mattaire's *Annales Typographici* (1722), Desmaizeaux included it in the 1726 collection.

It is possible, by examining further correspondence, to establish links between many of the individuals, beyond the co-incidence of their connection to Toland. One of the important supplementary connections was made through communication with Anthony Collins and Pierre Desmaizeaux, whose exchanges of letters between 1712 and 1727 invariably mention the complicated transactions between men and books.⁹³ So for example, Desmaizeaux visited Parker at Shirburn Castle in the winter of 1716⁹⁴, and liaised with Wrottesley about translating various legal documents for a legal case Parker was pursuing. Wrottesley also inquired of Desmaizeaux whether he could recommend a French speaking tutorial companion for a child of his acquaintance in Bristol.⁹⁵ Collins periodically wrote to Desmaizeaux asking for accounts of Wrottesley's welfare and asking him to pass on invitations to stay at his

⁸⁶ See HMC Var Coll. P. 336, 368.

⁸⁷ See H.M. Colvin, J. Mordant-Crook, K. Downes, J. Newman (eds) *The History of the King's Works, 1660-1782* (1976) p. 71-73.

⁸⁸ See BL Add Mss 4282 f. 228.

⁸⁹ See BL Add Mss 4282 f. 127, 128. There are a series of references to Robinson detailing the purchase of books and journals, (see BL Add Mss 4282 f. 129, 133, 151, 155).

⁹⁰ O'Higgins p. 23.

⁹¹ See G. Wrottesley *The History of the family of Wrottesley of Wrottesley* (1903) p. 342.

⁹² See BL Add Mss 4289 f. 215-216 (Wrottesley-Desmaizeaux); and 4282 f. 139, 143, 172, 244 (Collins-Desmaizeaux).

⁹³ The starting place for exploring the intricacies of Collins and Desmaizeaux's separate and connected lives are J. O'Higgins *Anthony Collins the Man and his Works* (The Hague, 1970), and J. Almagor *Pierre Desmaizeaux (1673-1745), Journalist and English Correspondent for Franco-Dutch Periodicals 1700-1720* (Amsterdam, 1989).

⁹⁴ Parker invited him to 'take a piece of Christmas Pye' (BL Add Mss 4287 f. 210); Desmaizeaux reported an earlier visit to Collins in Spetember 1716 (BL Add Mss 4282 f. 121)

⁹⁵ BL Add Mss 4289 f215, 216.

Essex house.⁹⁶ Collins married Wrottesley's sister Elizabeth in 1724. Robert Molesworth, a Whig leading politician from the 1690s had links with almost all of the other figures in the circle: he was friendly with Sir Thomas Hewet,⁹⁷ who also worked on projects on his estate,⁹⁸ his son, John, corresponded with Parker about the allocation a clerical living,⁹⁹ he knew Lord Castleton and had correspondence with both Collins and Desmaizeaux.¹⁰⁰ A graphical representation of these contacts suggests that there were two main axes of association: Toland, by his distribution of manuscripts brought these individuals into yet another configuration.

Lawyers, booksellers, aristocrats, politicians, admirals and architects formed the majority of Toland's circle. One of the significant minorities of people to whom Toland distributed texts was that of women: of the three named, only Lady Janet Carriere (d. 1733) has been identified. Mrs Lane and Mrs Laney remain anonymous, consequently it is difficult to locate them within dynamics of the community. Mrs Laney was sent a copy of a work ('Revelation no Rule') that was also sent to Sir Thomas Hewett. Mrs Lane received a copy a 'A Letter about Error' which has not been identified. The presence of women in this group is profoundly interesting. The gentle status of Lady Janet Carriere may in some sense explain her presence on the list: clearly, Toland used her as a conduit to pass scribal material to her husband. The fact that she was a useful instrument in establishing such a relationship is significant in itself. Her later involvement in the sale of legal offices suggests she had a measure of intellectual and even political independence.¹⁰¹ In the face of a paucity of information about the lives of these women it is necessary to broaden the context to consider the nature of Toland's associations with other women. Perhaps the most immediate circumstance for such encounters was through his familiarity with the print-bookselling trade. Abigail Baldwin, Ann Dodd and Mrs Smith were three women *libraires* who published a number of Toland's works between 1700 and 1718. Baldwin published overwhelmingly material in defence of the Hanoverian succession, while Dodd was involved in producing the second edition of *Nazarenus* (1718), and Mrs Smith the virulently anticlerical *An Appeal to honest people against wicked priests* (1712).¹⁰² An indication of Toland's perhaps unusual interest in the relationship between women and ideas can be seen in his edition of Sophia Charlotte's (Queen of Prussia), *A Letter against Popery* (1712). This work, printed for Ann Baldwin, was dedicated 'to the Lady E.C.' turned the anti-patristic tone of the original text against those in the Church of England who 'wou'd corrupt our religion with certain things that have no footsteps in the scriptures'.¹⁰³ Toland grasped the opportunity to represent the succession as staunchly Protestant, and perceived no hindrance in the fact that the vehicle for this polemic was written by, printed for, and dedicated to, women. In the early years of the 1700s, Toland (as a result of various diplomatic missions) had established a close conversational association with both Sophia, Electress of Hanover, and consequently Sophia Charlotte (her daughter) in Berlin. One important literary result of this relationship was Toland's *Letters to*

⁹⁶ BL Add Mss 4282 f. 139, 143.

⁹⁷ See BL Add Mss 4465 f. 19 Molesworth to Toland, August 1 (1719): 'My service to Mr Hewit when you see him'.

⁹⁸ HMC Var Coll VIII 336, 359; the comment to Sir John Molesworth on the difficulties they were having achieving permissions to initiate a draingae scheme, are evidence of Hewett's less than pious attitude to the Church: he commented 'no great public work can succeed under the worst of tyrannies, I mean Church tyranny for life' (368).

⁹⁹ See John Molesworth to Parker 19th August 1718, BL Stowe 750 f. 284. Interestingly, Parker co-operated with Lord Aylmer over the appointment to another rectory see f. 337.

¹⁰⁰ HMC Var Coll VIII p. 231.

¹⁰¹ See *Lives of the Lord Chancellors* p. 544.

¹⁰² For full details of all their publications, see Car.

¹⁰³ J. Toland (ed) *A letter against Popery ... by Sophia Charlotte. The Late Queen of Prussia* (1712) p. 7, 8, 17.

Serena (1704). Addressed to Sophie Charlotte, Toland took the opportunity to defend the female sex against male 'prejudice'. He claimed to have demonstrated 'the Parity of the intellectual Organs in both sexes, and that what puts 'em both on the same foot in discourse of ordinary business (which is deny'd by no body) makes em equally capable of all improvements, had they but equally the same advantages of education, travel company, and the management of affairs'.¹⁰⁴ Whether lauding the 'Pythagoric Ladys of ancient Italy' or contemporary defenders of Locke, Toland insisted that women were potentially capable of apprehending the highest philosophy, virtue and religion.¹⁰⁵ In a preface to a much earlier work *A Lady's Religion in a letter to the Honourable My Lady Howard* (1697) Toland had horrified his readers with the suggest that women had an equal facility for reasonable 'plain, short and intelligible' religion (and thus for priesthood) as men. He had underscored this point about the potentially clerical role of women, in the *Primitive Constitution of the Christian Church* (1704), when he had provided patristic evidence for the status of deaconesses in Christian antiquity.¹⁰⁶ Later in *Hypatia* (1720), Toland took the fate of the ancient philosophess of Alexandria who was assassinated in 415 AD, as indicative of the cruelty and perfidy of priestcraft: the work was intended to celebrate the 'vast number of Ladies, who have in every age distinguished themselves by their professions and performances in learning'. Women had been eminent in all kinds of literature but 'especially in Philosophy; which as it is the highest perfection, so it demands the utmost effort of human nature'.¹⁰⁷ One of the manuscripts Toland circulated (to Mr Robinson) 'Piece of ye Roman Education' celebrated the role women like Theano and Muia, wife and daughter of Pythagoras, undertook in the raising and education of children.¹⁰⁸ In print and scribal publications Toland self-consciously laid emphasis upon the intellectual abilities of women: while much of this may be the manifestation of his desire to ingratiate himself with an elite social and political milieu, the evidence of his correspondence also reveals a similar attitude.

At sometime (probably after 1720) Toland fell in love with a young women he identified only by the letters 'A.B.C.D'. Rumour had misidentified the object of his amour. Writing to 'Mrs D***', Toland intended to clarify the misunderstanding that had been made worse by the insinuations of various balladeers. While he acknowledged that he had used some 'roguish expressions, which I know to be one of her favourite diversions' he was ready to swear on his 'corporal oath, she was never the object of my thoughts'. Toland had engaged his heart to be 'constant to merit in the person of one excellent creature', even though this meant 'that I may ruin my self all at once with some other Darlings of mine (meaning the venerable society of vain and wanton Widows, the honourable company of Virgin, that have large fortunes and small understandings; with the faded skins, and cherry-cheeks of both sorts)'. The robust language suggests an intimacy and assured playfulness with the *moeurs* of gentile female company. Toland continued to give 'the character of my real or imaginary mistress': she 'ever thinks before she speaks, tho she never speaks half she thinks'. While not the 'monster they call a learned lady' she joined moderate reading with prudent observation, combining the wit and beauty of youth with the 'sense and virtue' of age. Her religion 'lyes not in her tongue, but in her heart'. Her command of the social graces meant she was 'genteel without affectation, gay without levity, civil to strangers without being free, and free with her acquaintance without being familiar'. Toland sadly acknowledged that there was no 'return of mutual love' partially because he had not 'made her a positive

¹⁰⁴ *Letters to Serena* (1704) Preface, §3, 5.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid* §7, 8.

¹⁰⁶ *Primitive Constitution* p.191-92.

¹⁰⁷ *Tetradymus* p. 105-106.

¹⁰⁸ The work was published in the 1726 collection, volume 1 'A letter concerning the Roman Education', p. 1-27.

declaration'.¹⁰⁹ In a subsequent letter to the same woman Toland describing his own love as combining the 'ardour of the youngest man, ... with all the constancy of the oldest philosopher', continued to laud the physical beauty of his mistress which verged on the sensual.¹¹⁰ In another letter to a different women correspondent Toland explained his understanding of the philosophical difference between 'retirement' and 'solitude' which shows that he was capable of conducting abstract intellectual discussion with women.¹¹¹

That Toland's infatuation with 'A.B.C.D' was real rather than fictional is substantiated by some fragmentary drafts of letters to a mother and daughter written c.1720 found in his archive. The prompt for his correspondence was his gift of a copy of *Hypatia* to the daughter. Addressing the mother he requested the 'favour of you to present the enclosed from me to your daughter, who, from her own excellent disposition, cannot be but pleas'd, to find that one of her sex attained so unexamp'd a pitch of wisdom and virtue'. Assuring the mother that the small present was 'purely honorable' he 'hope[d] you have a better opinion of my charming Sory (I am sure I have) then that she would exchange her heart for a sixpenny pamphlet'.¹¹² Accompanying the note to the mother was a letter to the daughter. Toland's draft (ironically written on the reverse of a very crude anti-South Sea Bubble ballad) shows a number of revisions where he carefully chose the correct phrases to establish his point. In the course of his letter Toland gave directions about how the volume of essays should be read. The account of *Hypatia* 'will most affect you, considering that a young lady of your distinguished merit must needs be sensibly touch'd'¹¹³ to find such an unparallel'd example of her sex, but the envy and reproach of ours'. The second discourse (*Clidopherous*) would convince her 'that men do commonly use as little sincerity to each other as to all women; in wch charge no way you are nothing concern'd, since your beauty and virtue, joined to so many good qualities, have privileged you against all dissimulation'. The first and last parts of the work (*Hodegus* and *Mangoneutes*) are described as 'idle comments' designed to 'amuse where they cannot instruct you'.¹¹⁴ Here, although perhaps driven by desire for the particular woman, Toland provides confirmation of the motivation for circulation of (printed or scribal) texts to other women in his circle: women were a legitimate and responsive audience for his critique of prejudice, dissimulation and priestcraft. The evidence of both the printed and manuscript correspondence attests to Toland's intellectual and social ease with the company of women whether queens, printers, ladies or lovers. This participation in the dispersion of his texts was a means of engaging with female sociability.¹¹⁵

The prosopographical understanding of these people identifies a group that had certain characteristics in common: they shared a platform of similar political and religious beliefs. This can be broadly described as a commonwealth Whig ideology which made a firm connection between political and religious liberties, and was very commonly articulated in the form of attacks upon the legal foundations of the confessional state or in a type of political anticlericalism. The significance of the

¹⁰⁹ *Collection* volume II, 'My aversion and Inclination in a letter to Mrs D***' p. 357-363

¹¹⁰ He described the woman's chest as 'heaving adorable twins of the most refined and unspeakable delights' and speculated on the 'excessive perfection of those other beauties, which the troublesome disguise of garments hide from my longing eyes', p. 364, 367, 368.

¹¹¹ *Ibid* p. 412.

¹¹² See BL Add Mss 4465 f. 44.

¹¹³ 'highly pleased' is struck through.

¹¹⁴ BL Add Mss 4465 f. 45

¹¹⁵ Evidence of a letter written from Putney 28th January 1722 describes women 'drudging at the longwinded and unwieldy Cleopatra': Toland promised to provide more entertainment by writing a play called 'Zayde'. *Collection* volume 2, p. 487.

affinity its identity as a politically active grouping and the intimacy of political connections with the Hanoverian court and political establishment. Toland's community of readers were not marginal and radical figures, but worked and acted at the very centre of national politics. At the minimum this ought to prompt a reconsideration of the purpose of Toland's distribution of manuscripts. Were they contrived to integrate Toland into a circle of patronage, and in that sense simply instrumental in creating a social connection that would enable Toland to advance his ideas and opinions in an oral or conversational context? Or were the texts themselves contrived to act as stimulants towards the development of political activity? One way of examining some of these issues is to reconstruct in detail the dynamics of the production of the scribal material that Toland distributed. In the case of one text, *The History of the Druids*, this is possible. As recorded in the 'lent list', three copies of a text relating to the history of the druids were sent to Lady Carriere, Mr Hewet and Lord Molesworth.¹¹⁶ Toland completed work on these three specimens between June 1718 and April 1719. The idea that this work was the result of clandestine original work by the sole authorial labour of Toland is not supported by the evidence of his correspondence. The project of a Celtic history had been, as Toland noted, 'form'd several years ago at Oxford, and which I have ever since kept in view; collecting, as occasion presented whatever might any way tend to the advantage or perfection of it'.¹¹⁷ Ultimately the work was designed for Robert Molesworth being composed in three letters to him. That Toland was researching such a project was not a secret: indeed he systematically exploited his relationship with Molesworth to publicise it. That Toland was pursuing such a work was public knowledge within his circle: at times he presented it as a collaborative enterprise. Through Molesworth's connections, Toland wrote to men like Lord Edward Southwell (1671-1730) enclosing extracts of his work ('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'), asking for any assistance and advice which was 'fit to communicate towards bringing a work to perfection'.¹¹⁸ In June, 1718 Toland wrote to another interested party (Mr ****) recapitulating the long gestation of the druidical research, noting that he had purchased 'all the printed books particularly treating of them',¹¹⁹ and that he had a network of correspondents in 'Ireland, Wales, Scotland and Bretagne'. He had even travelled to Scotland in the course of his investigation. Accentuating his intimacy with the powerful he mentioned that Lord Chancellor Parker had offered his help too.¹²⁰ Molesworth repeatedly discussed the progress of the study: while he pointed out that he had no learning to offer himself, he gave specific encouragements and suggestions about who might.¹²¹ Toland spread his net widely: in asking for advice and scholarly recommendation he was doing more than seeking material, but was attempting to include the reputations and status of such contacts in his project: implicitly, he was constructing a community of collaborators as well as of readers. The project bound together a collection of men even before it matured into scribal form.

The hub of this activity was Toland's relationship with Molesworth. Toland kept Molesworth up to date with the progress of his composition. In one of the last letters

¹¹⁶ It is of course possible that the three items were not copies of the same text, but the three separate letters of the printed version.

¹¹⁷ *Collection* volume I p. 4. Evidence of his early interest in Celtic languages can be seen in the preservation of his 'A Specimen of the American Language' dated December, 1693 Oxford, (published in the 1726 collection).

¹¹⁸ BL Add Mss 4465 f 13 (1718).

¹¹⁹ The evidence of his library listings shows that he had a number of the key works; see, Champion (ed) *Nazarenus* Appendix.

¹²⁰ BL Add Mss 4465 f. 16 (June, 1718).

¹²¹ BL Add Mss 4465 f. 19 (1st August, 1719).

to discuss the text, Toland commented, 'I am farr advanced in my history of the Druids, which will rather be a thin folio or a thick quarto, with about six copper cuts'.¹²² The work was destined clearly for print form. The decision about the final appearance of the text 'I shall entirely submit to you Lordshps taste'. Since Molesworth had given Toland 'extraordinary helps' in arranging things like transcriptions from abroad and access to manuscripts in Britain it was only just that he was given the same 'absolute right' over the manuscript 'that Cicero did to Atticus'. Toland's forfeiture of authorial control to Molesworth was more than an act of deference from client to patron. Combined with his lack of discretion about the project such renunciation was an effective instrument for incorporating Molesworth's social power into the textual form of the work. It was after all Toland's prerogative to determine the circulation of the text although Molesworth's name might be invoked to facilitate the consequent passage and reception of the work. The manuscript work thus provided not just a forum for the communication of ideas but also an instrument of social integration. The text, although scribal, became, as a result of this a fixed, semi-permanent resource. That Toland thought of the text a valuable monument of scholarship and testimony to his intimacy with Molesworth is shown in the marginal comments of his copy of Martin Martin's *A Description of the Western Island of Scotland* (1716) [BL C.45.c.1]. Toland had read the book through a number of times, 'with pen in hand (as tis often my custom)'. He incorporated in the margins of the printed text corrections and explanations. In October 1721 he lent the book to Molesworth who had added his own commentary. It is possible to distinguish the different comments which were initialled.¹²³ The tenor of Toland's annotation is to impugn the credulity of Martin Martin's work and to expose the priestcraft of both Protestant and Catholic traditions.¹²⁴ The language of popery, imposture, and priestly deceit, runs like a thread through both series of commentaries, although Molesworth displays an eccentric interest in fishing and techniques for catching sand-eels. It seems that the dynamic of the exchange was driven by Toland's role as inquisitor of Martin's text in response to Molesworth's requests for explanations. One of a series of repeated exchanges resulted in Toland advising 'see my H. of Druids'.¹²⁵ The frequency of reference to the work on druids argues both that Molesworth had easy access to the work, but also that it was considered as a solid enough scholarly resource to compete with (and indeed trounce) the authority of Martin's printed text.

The function of the intellectual content of the *History of the Druids* intermingled with its socially integrative purpose. The work was calculated as a work of profound and comprehensive scholarship, at some points including footnotes of footnotes.¹²⁶ The first letter constructed an analysis of the history of the druids as 'the complete History of Priestcraft'. The druids even invented the word. The text exposed the 'system' as one that combined sophistry, juggling and 'the art of managing the mob'. If there were parallels between druidical religion and the modern experience readers 'ought not to impute it to design in the author, but to the conformity of things'. If this 'conformity of things' convicted the modern church with the sins of antiquity then they ought to be 'blasted too, without a possibility of ever sprouting up again'. Toland self-consciously denied that he was prompting the reader in any way to form an opinion: he explained, 'all that I can do to show my own candour, is, to leave the reader to make such applications himself, seldom making any for him; since he that is neither

¹²² See BL Add Mss 4465 f. 36.

¹²³ See BL call-mark C.45.c1: manuscript additions opposite title page (dated 'Putney, September, 1720). Molesworth's comments were added after 28th October 1721.

¹²⁴ See JT note p. 29 'In this story the superstition is pretty equal on both sides'; p.172 'our author was a very poor philosopher, & no astronomer at all'; p. 230 'Protestants we see, may be very superstitious'.

¹²⁵ See p. 8, 26, 28, 35, 47, 60, 67, 68, 87, 88, 113, 141, 154, 249; there is also a reference to 'my Nazarenus, Letter 2' at p.257.

¹²⁶ p.5.

clear sighted not quick enough of conception to do so, may to as good purpose read the fairy tales as this history'. In establishing the techniques of priestcraft, Toland hoped that his work was both entertaining and instructive 'to all sorts of readers, without excepting the Ladies, who are pretty much concerned in this matter'.¹²⁷ The second and third letters were much less obviously polemical, although the attempts to parallel Egyptian and Celtic antiquities, and the examination of Pythagorean contexts for druidical doctrines of the soul, undoubtedly had unorthodox implications while being buried in layers of recondite scholarship. At least one reader of the work was dubious or unconvinced by Toland's arguments. Thomas Parker, the Lord Chancellor had almost certainly seen the first (and more aggressively anticlerical) letter shortly after its completion. John Chamberlayne recounted to Toland, '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 against Christian Priests'.¹²⁸ Chamberlayne, associated with the SPCK, was not disposed to appreciate irreligious discourse, admitted that he was not intelligent enough to detect any 'poison lurking' in Toland's work. As an antidote he passed on a copy of his own *Religious Philosopher*, which 'was writ for the conviction of Atheists and Infidels'.¹²⁹ Chamberlayne, as his correspondence with Desmaizeaux shows, was interested in the circulation of ideas and scholarship, but concerned to challenge impiety.¹³⁰ Interestingly, Toland passed on Chamberlayne's manuscript to Hugh Wrottesley. One interpretation of Parker's reaction as reported by Chamberlayne, and of Toland's consequent circulation of the latter's text, is that the community of readers obviously held a variety of differing qualities of belief: some (presumably like Molesworth and Hewet) might relish the impiety of works like the *History of the Druids*. Others like Chamberlayne, and presumably Parker,¹³¹ found the works elusive in terms of their religious identity and problematic in respect of their implied impiety.

The distinction between the reception of Toland's scribal publications and the illocutionary force behind their composition and circulation is an important matter to pursue. One of the implied historiographical commonplaces related to the nature of clandestine literature is the assumption that such texts, because limited in audience, were more honest in the presentation of ideas. Since they were beyond (or at least hoped to be) the purview of the censor and the law, philosophic, religious and blasphemous opinions might be articulated in an unadulterated and sincere voice. John Toland, in his *Clidopherous* (1720), could be represented as arguing along the same lines: the tyranny of priestcraft meant that the 'truth' could rarely be spoken in public. Only with 'doors fast shut and under all other precautions' could men communicate 'onely to friends of known probity, prudence and capacity'.¹³² The clerical environment, 'must of necessity produce shiftings, ambiguities, equivocations, and hypocrisy in all its shapes; which will not merely be call'd, but actually esteem'd necessarily cautious'. Heraclitus had established the 'secret meaning' of texts might be opened by readers with a 'key': for Toland, 'such a key ... is to be, for the most part, borrow'd by the skillful from the writers themselves'.¹³³ This was an open invitation for his readers to examine his texts carefully: an open

¹²⁷ p. 14, 15, 16, 29, 30.

¹²⁸ BL Add Mss 4295 f. 27.

¹²⁹ On Chamberlayne, see L. Stewart *The Rise of Public Science* (Cambridge, 1992) p. 56. Chamberlayne's work was a translation of Bernard Niewentyt's work of a similar name (Amsterdam, 1715).

¹³⁰ See BL Add Mss 4282 f. 61, 63, 65, 67.

¹³¹ Although it is always possible that Parker mistook the way Chamberlayne might react to Toland's work, or indeed that he was masking his own thoughts in the presence of a more orthodox man.

¹³² *Tetradymus* p. 66.

¹³³ p. 76.

invitation for his public audience to read his public printed books with caution. In private, away from the observation of the mob and the priest, a man might ponder the truth, but it was 'dangerous ... to publish it to others'.¹³⁴ The implication of these remarks could be thought to be that Toland argued that his printed writings contained the truth in a scanty or obscure style, while in private (with 'friends of known probity, prudence and capacity') he had eschewed all equivocation. The consequence of this division between the public and private, between print and manuscript texts, and between disguised and sincere meaning, has obscured and fragmented the integrity of intentions articulated in Toland's writings. The 'real' John Toland is only present in the clandestine, secret, shadowy masonic coterie, while the public Toland was little more than a hypocritical gad-fly irritating the orthodox establishment. This understanding not only devalues the sophistication of Toland's public writing, but mischaracterises his similarly creative exploitation of manuscript publication. Manuscripts were not simply a different space for the unhindered utterance of ideas, but, for Toland, performed a much more subtle function of bonding a group of individuals into an intellectual community. This affinity of readers became a platform for intruding his ideas into the highest echelons of elite culture.

The connections Toland established through the circulation of manuscripts c1720 place his relationship with elite political culture from the margins closer to the centre. It is clear from the trajectory of his career and the concatenation of his political patrons that from the late 1690s to the end of his life Toland held an intimacy with the mechanics of power. Whether acting as purveyor of arguments in defence of the Hanoverian succession, editing the canon of republican texts for the Whig commonwealthmen, or composing *livre de circonstance* against Tory enemies, it can be argued that Toland was a subtle and effective political pamphleteer. Even as a political writer Toland exploited the scribal form in writing private memorials for Harley, Shaftesbury and later Molesworth. Some of these materials survive both in manuscript and in printed versions in the 1726 collection: works like *A Project of a Journal* and *A scheme for a National Bank* were original essays composed presumably to persuade his patrons (Shaftesbury and Molesworth) to pursue his advice in the arena of national politics.¹³⁵ If these texts were meant to persuade within a political context, what persuasive role did the less straightforwardly political works on the 'lent list' perform? In the last five years of his life, Toland achieved the vertex of his political influence. Because the historiography of the early years of the Hanoverian regime has been overshadowed both by the spectre of Jacobitism and the rise of Walpole, little attention has been paid to the radicalism of high politics between 1716 and the South Sea Crisis of 1720. One Victorian historian described Stanhope's ministry as being more 'favourable to true toleration than any England had ever known prior to that of Earl Grey'.¹³⁶ The attempts to remove the Test and Corporation Acts, the silencing of Convocation, proposals for the reform of the Universities, and the attempted Peerage Bill were part of a radical semi-commonwealth programme.¹³⁷ Toland's most successful political pamphlet *The State Anatomy of Great Britain* (1717: 9 editions) can not only be thought of as a 'manifesto for the Molesworth connection', but also a symptom of the radical potential for tolerant civic 'commonwealth' reform.¹³⁸ When Molesworth announced his plans to run for election at

¹³⁴ p. 100.

¹³⁵ See *Collection* volume 1, p. 448-474; volume 2, p 201-215. See BI Add Mss 4295 f. 68, and Add Mss 4465 f. 39-42, for manuscript copies.

¹³⁶ *Lives of the Lord Chancellors* volume 4, p. 393. For an old account of the ministry see B. Williams *Stanhope* (Oxford, 1932) p. 385-413.

¹³⁷ See G.M. Townend 'Religious radicalism and conservatism in the Whig party under George I: the repeal of the Occasional Conformity and Schism Acts' *Parliamentary History* 7 (1988) p. 24-43; E. Turner 'The Peerage Bill of 1719' *English Historical Review* 28 (1913) p. 243-259; J.M. Beattie 'The Court of George I and English politics, 1717-1720' *English Historical Review* 51 (1966) and *The English Court in the Reign of George I* (1967); A.S. Turberville *The House of Lords in the Eighteenth Century* (Oxford, 1927); J.F. Naylor *The British Aristocracy and the Peerage Bill of 1719* (Oxford, 1968)

¹³⁸ Robbins *The eighteenth century commonwealthmen* p. 127.

Westminster to Toland he reassured him 'believe me when I tell you, you shall fare as I do'. Toland replied (a week before his death) 'Since you will embark once more on that troublesome sea, I heartily wish you all good luck, and wish I had been able to run for you night and day, which with great ardour I would'.¹³⁹ It would be wrong to separate this political relationship from the intellectual intimacy established between the two men represented in the exchange of scribal material. How far the content of the manuscript material set the context for the development and articulation of the 'political' tenets is difficult to establish with precision. However, it is possible to indicate that far from consigning him to the radical margins, at least in England, Toland's scribal labours projected him into the swell of national politics.

APPENDIX

BL Add Mss 4295 folio 43

'Manuscripts of mine abroad'

Hartsoeker in Holland	Life of Jordanus Bruno
Mrs Laney	Revelation no Rule
Mr Robinson	Piece of Ye Roman Education
Mr Hewet	History of Ye Canon
Mrs Lane	A Letter about Error
Mr Wrottesley	A piece of Dr Chamberlain's
Mr Hewet	Revelation no Rule
Lord Castleton	The Cloud & Pillar
Mr Tormine	Toland's Perigrinans
Mr Hewet	Translation of Bruno's Asse, 2 Dialogues
Mr Loyd	The Creed no Apostolick
My Lord Molesworth	Specimen of the History of the Druids
Mr Hewet	Specimen of the History of the Druids
Ld Castleton	Shaftesbury's Letters
Lady Carriere	Part of the History of the Druids
Ld Aylmer	Bruno Sermon

¹³⁹ See BL Add Mss 4465 f. 27, 29. (1-2 March 1722)