

INTRODUCTION

When Jonathan Swift began writing the work now known as the *Journal to Stella* on 2 September 1710, he was a man on the edge of public life: he was vicar of Laracor and canon of St Patrick's, the author of *Contests and Dissensions* and the unacknowledged author of *Tale of a Tub*. He had some experience of negotiating with the Whig ministry, but had little practical or formal role in London political life. By the time he had completed the *Journal to Stella*, the set of letter-diaries written between 1710 and 1713 to his two close friends Esther Johnson and Rebecca Dingley, he had been chief propagandist for the Tory ministry, member of the Brothers' club, and both mocked and respected as a court insider. The series of letters recounts his experiences during the three most politically active and exciting years of his career in a sequence of familiar and apparently unguarded accounts. The letters themselves are a curious blend of high political narrative, personal memoir, business transaction and flirtatious exchange. They were not given the posthumous title of 'Journal to Stella' until sixty years after their initial composition.

The surviving letters are also, of course, only one side of a correspondence. No letters at all from the *Journal* period from either Johnson or Dingley to Swift survive, and only one letter, from Dingley to Swift, survives outside of the series.¹ Although we have a record of Swift's receipt of his letters from 'MD', or 'the ladies', as Swift routinely referred to his correspondents,

¹ Swift had written twenty-four letters on his former visit to England from the spring of 1708 to June 1709, according to his account books (*Account Books*, pp. 82–4). The letters in this series were also numbered. There is no heading of 'MD' or 'MC', Swift's symbols for Esther Johnson and Rebecca Dingley, until after they came to Ireland in 1701. From this point onwards, they feature in all the account books until Johnson's death (*Account Books*, pp. xxxv–xlii). Swift's other surviving correspondence with Johnson and Dingley, reproduced in Appendix B, is: Swift to [Esther Johnson], [c. January 1698], Woolley, *Corr.*, vol. I, pp. 129–30; Swift to [Esther] Johnson and Rebecca Dingley, [30 April 1721], Woolley, *Corr.*, vol. II, pp. 376–7; 'The Prince of Lilliput' to 'Stella', [c. February 1727], Woolley, *Corr.*, vol. III, pp. 79–80; Swift to Rebecca Dingley, 29 August 1733, Woolley, *Corr.*, vol. III, p. 688; Swift to Rebecca Dingley, [28 December 1734], Woolley, *Corr.*, vol. IV, p. 33; Rebecca Dingley to Swift, 25 June 1737, Woolley, *Corr.*, vol. IV, p. 453. There is also a joint letter from Swift and Johnson to Thomas Sheridan, 14 December 1719, Woolley, *Corr.*, vol. II, pp. 312–15.

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we can only infer the contents of the replies from Swift's own.² We also know very little about the biography of either Esther Johnson or Rebecca Dingley beyond what Swift himself wrote in the short biographical sketch that he began on the night of Johnson's death in 1728.³ In this account, he states that he met Esther Johnson in the spring of 1689, when she was eight and he was twenty-one, at the time that he entered the household of Sir William Temple. Esther's mother, Bridget Johnson, was in the service of Martha, Lady Giffard, sister of Sir William. Rebecca Dingley, then aged around twenty-three, was a dependent relation of Sir William Temple, and the two women had become friendly at Temple's house in Moor Park.⁴ On Temple's death in 1699, Johnson received some money and land, and in 1700–1 she and Dingley were encouraged by Swift to move to Ireland, ostensibly to enable them to enjoy a higher standard of living. Swift's later account of this period in his notes 'On the Death of Mrs Johnson' (1728) gave the following explanation:

Her fortune, at that time, was in all not above fifteen hundred pounds, the interest of which was but a scanty maintenance, in so dear a country, for one of her spirit. Upon this consideration, and indeed very much for my own satisfaction, who had few friends or acquaintance in Ireland, I prevailed with her and her dear friend and companion, the other lady, to draw what money they had into Ireland, a great part of their fortune being in annuities upon funds. Money was then at ten *per cent.* in Ireland, besides the advantage of turning it, and all necessaries of life at half the price.⁵

Whilst Swift's account suggests financial motives behind the move, there are aspects of the story that remain unclear. It is not apparent why Dingley, who was related to Sir William Temple, became companion to a younger woman who was effectively her social inferior. Nor is it evident that the difference in the cost of living would in itself have been sufficient inducement for the two women to move countries, leaving behind family and friends. What is evident is that in the years that Swift lived near them in Dublin, the three

² Only one letter survives in the hand of either Johnson or Dingley, a letter of May 1723 written jointly to Dingley's brother. See Appendix D and Woolley, *Corr.*, vol. II, pp. 457–8.

³ 'On the Death of Mrs Johnson' (1728) in Davis, *PW*, vol. V, pp. 227–36. Swift was typically imprecise when he wrote about Johnson's age. On the absence of information about Johnson, see Hermann J. Real, 'Stella's Books', *SStud*, 11 (1996), 70–83.

⁴ On Rebecca Dingley's family background, see Margaret Toynbee, 'The Two Sir John Dingleys, II', *N&Q*, 198 (1953), 478–83.

⁵ Swift, 'On the Death of Mrs Johnson' (1728) in Davis, *PW*, vol. V, p. 228.

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had lived in close proximity, with a shared social circle.⁶ During that time, as the editors of Swift's *Account Books* observe, Rebecca Dingley and Esther Johnson became the closest thing Swift had to a family.⁷ The two women seem to have arranged their accommodation around Swift's location, and as he moved between Laracor and Dublin, they contrived to lodge near him. When the two women first arrived in Ireland, they lodged in William Street in Dublin, then on the outskirts of the city, later moving to lodgings in Stafford Street, opposite St Mary's Church, north of the Liffey. When Swift was not living in his accommodation, Johnson and Dingley lived in his vacated house, and in the early letters of the *Journal*, they were living in his lodgings 'at Mr Curry's House over against the Ram in Capel-Street'.⁸

When he left Ireland for London at the very end of August 1710, on his mission to plead the cause of the Irish clergy with Queen Anne, Swift wrote confidently that he would be home by Christmas, little imagining that he would be away for almost three years.⁹ The letters he wrote back to the ladies in Dublin anticipate an imminent return which was endlessly deferred as he became further embroiled in the workings and writings of the Tory ministry.¹⁰ Whilst the *Journal to Stella* clearly demonstrates Swift's enjoyment of his new role close to the centre of political power, it also articulates his sense of distance and isolation from what he envisages as the pastoral idyll of his parish of Laracor, and the cosy domesticity of Johnson, Dingley and their mutual friends in Dublin and Trim. Some of the most moving passages within the *Journal* take the form of an imagined evocation of life in Ireland: 'Oh, that we were at Laracor this fine day! The willows begin to peep, and the quicks to bud. My dream's out: I was a-dreamed last night that I eat ripe cherries' (p. 166). We can see here how the *Journal* functions as a way of mediating imaginatively between London and Ireland, as Swift uses his letters to recall happier scenes of a simpler life. But the letters also served more practical purposes. There are numerous references in the *Journal* to financial dealings between Swift and his two addressees – we know from the account books that Swift was paying the ladies £52 pounds

⁶ John Lyon's marginal annotations to his copy of Hawkesworth's *Life of Swift* emphasise Esther Johnson's sociability. He notes that she entertained not only Swift's close friends, but 'all other Persons of any Taste in the neighbourhood'. John Lyon, manuscript annotations to John Hawkesworth, *Life of the Revd. Jonathan Swift* (London and Dublin, 1755), National Art Library, Pressmark Forster 48.D.39, note to p. 35.

⁷ Thompson and Thompson, Introduction to *Account Books*, p. xxxv.

⁸ Ehrenpreis, vol. II, pp. 72–3.

⁹ See Letter 2, 9 September 1710. On Swift's role in negotiating for the First Fruits, see Landa, pp. 52–67.

¹⁰ For the full history of Swift's deferred departure, see Ehrenpreis, vol. II, p. 660.

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a year, £44 of it from his own income and £8 of it from the interest on a loan he had made to Dr John Hawkshaw, a Dublin lawyer and friend.¹¹ Hawkshaw would pay Isaiah Parvisol, Swift's land-agent and tithe collector, who would then pay 'MD', as the two women were called. The letters also enabled Swift to instruct his addressees in other financial matters: when Swift was in London, he used a mutual friend, Thomas Walls, as receiver in Ireland. He generally sent his letters or instructions to Walls through the ladies, and at one point he suggests to Johnson and Dingley that one of them could act as his receiver (p. 166). The ladies were also used as a point of dissemination of news and letters for other Irish acquaintances, and as a communication hub: in Letter 6, Swift gives information to enable them to instruct others wishing to send him parcels (p. 39). In return, Swift performs various commissions at their request in London: spectacles, china, tobacco, a Bible, an apron and chocolate are all bought and sent during this period.

If part of the practical and emotional function of the *Journal* is to communicate between Ireland and London, the letters are perhaps most famously known for their detailed recording of Swift's participation in political life. As editor of the *Examiner* and pre-eminent propagandist of Harley's administration during the three years covered by the letters, Swift was close to the centre of the negotiations and manoeuvrings that were to lead to the dismissal of the Duke of Marlborough, the signing of the Peace of Utrecht and the eventual disintegration of the Robert Harley–Henry St John alliance. Whilst at least one recent literary historian has questioned the degree of Swift's actual influence over government policy, in the *Journal* letters Swift presents himself as a man at the centre of political life.¹² We can glimpse some of his excitement in being present as history is made from his letter of December 1711, written in the midst of the final negotiations over the peace. He remarks to Johnson and Dingley: 'this is a long journal, and of a day that may produce great alterations, and hazard the ruin of England . . . I shall know more soon, and my letters will at least be a good history to shew you the steps of this change' (p. 344).

The *Journal* letters clearly play an important part in creating Swift's narrative of the most politically active period of his life, a period that he would return to again and again in his political prose. Moreover, in their detailed and engaging depiction of Swift's movements in London from 1710 to 1713, the letters have subsequently become an important primary source for our

¹¹ *Account Books*, p. xxxvii.

¹² See J. A. Downie, 'Swift and the Oxford Ministry: New Evidence', *SSStud*, 1 (1986), 2–8.

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historical understanding of the workings of Harley's ministry, the political negotiations leading to the Peace of Utrecht, Swift's involvement in the print culture of the time, and the social life of the period. In their combination of detail and informality they seem to offer an eyewitness account. Yet although the *Journal* in many ways offers us an inside view of Swift's world during a particular period of his life, it also remains tantalisingly inaccessible in some ways. Biographical and historical annotation will never entirely enable the modern reader to reconstruct all the contexts within which its original addressees read it – the in-jokes, the shared and now unknown friends and places.¹³ In addition, our occasional sense of bafflement or incomprehension at Swift's accounts was probably also shared by his original readers. Swift teases Dingley and Johnson:

I fancy my talking of persons and things here must be very tedious to you, because you know nothing of them, and I talk as if you did. You know Kevin's Street, and Werburgh Street, and (what do you call the street where Mrs. Walls lives?) and Ingoldsby, and Higgins, and Lord Santry; but what care you for Lady Catherine Hyde? (p. 379)

He frequently alludes to the ladies' ignorance of a subject, and in drawing attention to their incomprehension, he emphasises the differences between their world and his.¹⁴ It is hard to know what the St Mary's ladies made of the bulletins arriving with such regularity. John Hawkesworth's early biography of Swift offers a suggestive image for the relationship between Swift's public role and his writings to MD:

Whatever Excellence we possess, or whatever Honours we obtain, the Pleasure which they produce is all relative to some particular Favourite with whom we are tenderly connected, either by Friendship or Love; or at most it terminates like Rays collected by a Burning-glass, in a very small Circle which is scarce more than a Point, and like Light becomes only sensible by Reflexion. Thus *Swift*, while he was courted and caressed by those whom others were making Interest to approach, seems to have enjoyed [t]his Distinction only in Proportion as it was participated with *Stella* . . .¹⁵

¹³ In this edition, historical and brief biographical information are given in the footnotes. Fuller biographical accounts are in the Biographical Appendix (Appendix F).

¹⁴ He writes in a similar vein to Dean Stearne: 'One would think this an admirable place from whence to fill a letter; yet when I come to examine particulars, I find they either consist of news, which you hear as soon by the public papers, or of persons and things, to which you are a stranger, and are the wiser and happier for being so.' Swift to Dean Stearne, 26 September 1710, Woolley, *Corr.*, vol. I, p. 294.

¹⁵ Hawkesworth, *Life*, p. 41.

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This offers an important way of understanding the function of the *Journal*, which is by turns both an evocation of a shared world of familiar associations and people, and also a glimpse of a distant and glamorous London for two readers who could only know that world through Swift's account of it. The biographical range of figures mentioned within the letters reveals the different social worlds inhabited by Swift in this period, from the card-playing gentry in Laracor to the Tory grandees in London. The letters to MD enabled Swift to write a memoir of his time amongst the great, its splendour magnified by its geographical and social distance from his primary readers.

Johnson and Dingley

Hawkesworth's emphasis in the quotation above on Stella, or Esther Johnson, as the primary recipient of the letters reflects an important aspect of the reception history of the letters, which were only posthumously entitled the *Journal to Stella*. The majority of the extant manuscripts of the letters are in fact addressed to Rebecca Dingley, and in Hawkesworth's first edition of the letters, most are identified as 'Dr Swift to Mrs Dingley'.¹⁶ In presenting the letters to their first external readers, Hawkesworth commented that 'the letters are addressed, sometimes to Mrs. *Johnson*, and sometimes to Mrs. *Dingley*; and seem to be considered as written not to one, but both; for they are frequently addressed jointly'.¹⁷ Hawkesworth's emphasis on the dual addressing and readership of the letters became less prominent in the subsequent reception of the *Journal*. The notion that Esther Johnson was the primary or even sole recipient of the correspondence first took hold during the early 1770s when the series began to be known by this title, and the title was subsequently used by Thomas Sheridan in the first collection of the complete letters under the title of *Dr Swift's Journal to Stella* in 1784.¹⁸ By the time that Sheridan was presenting the collection as '*The Journal to Stella*', the notion that the letters were addressed to two women had been replaced by the emphasis on the collection as a series addressed to Stella, or Mrs Johnson.¹⁹ Since the late eighteenth century, discussion of the

¹⁶ Of the twenty-five letters with original addresses, three have Johnson's name on the outside, and twenty have Dingley's.

¹⁷ *Letters, Written by the late Jonathan Swift and several of his friends . . . published from the originals, with notes explanatory and historical, by John Hawkesworth*, 3 vols. (London, 1766), vol. I, p. 152 (TS 88).

¹⁸ The first use of the title for the whole set of collected letters appears in Thomas Sheridan (ed.), *The Works of the Rev. Dr. Jonathan Swift, Dean of St. Patrick's, Dublin. Arranged, revised, and corrected, with notes . . . in seventeen volumes* (London, 1784), vol. XIV, pp. 201–404.

¹⁹ See Sheridan's introductory footnote, *ibid.*, p. 201.

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correspondence has tended, for various reasons, to emphasise Esther Johnson as the primary recipient of the letters. The evolving and disputed theory of a ‘secret marriage’ between Esther Johnson and Swift undoubtedly added to the emphasis on Stella as recipient: Swift’s earliest biographers, namely the Earl of Orrery, Deane Swift, Patrick Delany and Thomas Sheridan, all claimed that Swift and Esther Johnson were secretly married by St George Ashe, the Bishop of Clogher, at some point in 1716, and the story continued to be repeated through the early to mid-twentieth century.²⁰ Early readers seem to have inferred a single addressee.²¹ Yet it is important not to lose sight of the fact that the letters are consistently addressed to two women, and often through them to a wider network of friends and acquaintances in Dublin. Swift alternates between one woman and another, and dramatises their conversations. His record of the receipt of their letters always records them as from and to MD, his abbreviation for both women.²² If part of the candour, the sense of the great man in dishabille, that we find in the *Journal* sometimes takes the form of bawdy or sexualised jokes, the apparently transgressive nature of those passages is increased when we remember that the bawdy comments were directed at two women at the same time.²³ While the present edition has retained the traditional title by which the series of letters has become known, its subtitle draws attention to its dual readership.

As we have established, one of the consequences of the posthumous entitling of the letters as the ‘*Journal to Stella*’ is that it has focused attention on the notion of a romantic relationship between Swift and Esther Johnson.²⁴

²⁰ For a summary of the various accounts, see Louise Barnett, *Jonathan Swift in the Company of Women* (Oxford University Press, 2007), pp. 40–2. For the documentary support for the claim, see Maxwell B. Gold, *Swift’s Marriage to Stella Together with Unprinted and Misprinted Letters* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1937). Gold argues that Swift and Johnson married in around 1716, and that Swift offered to acknowledge the marriage publicly. They never lived together because of Swift’s ‘pathological unfitness for the marriage state’ (p. 5).

²¹ See, e.g., Samuel Johnson to Hester Thrale, 18 May 1769, *The Letters of Samuel Johnson*, ed. Bruce Redford, 5 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), vol. I, p. 322. On the parallels between Johnson and Thrale and Swift and Stella, see Bruce Redford, *The Converse of the Pen: Acts of Intimacy in the Eighteenth-Century Familiar Letter* (University of Chicago Press, 1986), pp. 237–43.

²² The ladies also used ‘MD’ of themselves, as we can see from Dingley’s interleaved pages of expenses in the account books, and from her endorsement to Letter 1, which reads ‘MD Rec^d. this Sept^r. 9’. The account books show that the abbreviations ‘MC’ and ‘MD’ were being used as early as 1703 or 1708 (*Account Books*, pp. xxxv–xxxviii). ‘MC’ may stand for ‘my children’ and ‘MD’ may stand for ‘my dears’.

²³ On Swift’s bawdiness in the *Journal*, see, e.g., ‘I think oo might have had a Dean under your Girdle’ (p. 536); ‘I will open my business to him [Harley]; which expression I would not use if I were a woman’ (p. 27).

²⁴ For the rare exceptions to the critical focus on Johnson, see Alice Meynell, ‘Mrs. Dingley’, in *Alice Meynell: Prose and Poetry*, ed. F. P., V. M., O. S. and F. M. (London: Jonathan Cape,

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That title also grants Esther Johnson a name that Swift had not yet coined for her: the surviving manuscript letters of the *Journal* show that the common endearment he used for her in the *Journal* letters was ‘Tpt’ or ‘Ppt’, an abbreviation he also used in his contemporary account books. The name ‘Stella’ was not used by Swift until 1719. It features in the *Journal* through the interpolation of Swift’s early editor, his cousin Deane Swift.²⁵ Deane Swift played a crucial role in the textual and interpretative history of the *Journal*, since for the text of two thirds of the letters (Letters 3–40) we are dependent upon the transcriptions he made of the letters in the mid-eighteenth century (1755–68). In those transcriptions, Deane Swift regularised, normalised and censored aspects of his source texts that he believed to be unclear or offensive, with the result that the series of letters that now constitutes the *Journal to Stella* is a work of two parts. The first forty letters, which are based of necessity on the printed transcriptions of Deane Swift, have a coherence and polish that is very different from the fragmented and elliptical texts based on the surviving manuscript letters that form the source of Letters 41 onwards. Deane Swift not only modernised and regularised Swift’s spelling and punctuation, but he also removed most of what Swift referred to as the ‘liddle language’, the representation of childish speech that characterises Swift’s letters to the two women. He observes in Letter 15: ‘It must be confessed this liddle language, which passed current between *Swift* and *Stella*, has occasioned infinite trouble in the revisal of these papers’ (*Letters* (1768)). The current edition provides a glossary of the surviving liddle language found in the *Journal* in Appendix E, and in the annotations.

With the recent discovery of the manuscript of Letter 2 we are now able for the first time to examine an example of Swift’s original holograph against the transcription produced by Deane Swift, showing the extent to which Deane Swift corrected, substituted and interpolated in his attempts to bring clarity to his famous relative’s work. The two are presented in Appendix C.²⁶ We can also see Deane Swift introducing the name ‘Stella’ in place of ‘Tpt’ in the original letter, and ‘Presto’ instead of Swift’s ‘pdfr’. In addition, Swift

1947), pp. 185–6; Aileen Douglas, ‘Mrs. Dingley’s Spectacles: Swift, Print, and Desire’, *ECL*, 10 (1995), 69–77; Abigail Williams, ‘“I Hope to Write as Bad as Ever”: Swift’s *Journal to Stella* and the Intimacy of Correspondence’, *ECL*, 35 (2011), 102–18.

²⁵ Swift first uses the name ‘Stella’ in writing ‘On Stella’s Birth-day’ in 1719 (Williams, *Poems*, vol. II, pp. 720–2). On the history of the name ‘Stella’ in the poems, see *ibid.*, pp. 720–1. From 1722 Swift referred to Esther Johnson as ‘Stella’ in letters to Thomas Sheridan.

²⁶ The letter was acquired by Quaritch from the autograph collection of Richard Monckton Milnes at Christie’s on 29 June 1995, and then sold to the British Library. See James E. May, ‘Swift and Swiftiana Offered, Sold, and Acquired, 1991–2002’, *SStud*, 17 (2002), 140–88, p. 142.

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did not, at this time, identify Rebecca Dingley as ‘Dingley’. All these names are the editorial inventions of Deane Swift. In a footnote to his first edition of the letters, Deane Swift tells us of the editorial principle he has used to clarify his text:

In these letters *pdfr*, stands for *Dr Swift*; *Ppt*, for *Stella*; *D* for *Dingley*; *D.D.* generally for *Dingley*, but sometimes for both *Stella* and *Dingley*; and *MD* generally stands for both these ladies; yet sometimes only for *Stella*. But, to avoid perplexing the reader, it was thought more adviseable to use the word *Presto* for *Swift* . . . instead of *Ppt*. *Stella* is used for *Mrs. Johnson*, and so for *D. Dingley*; but, as *MD* stands for both *Dingley* and *Stella*, it was thought more convenient to let it remain a cypher in its original state.²⁷

From this point onwards, then, ‘Ppt’ became ‘Stella’ and ‘DD’ became ‘Dingley’. One recipient was given the Christian name of Sidney’s adored mistress, the other a titleless and genderless surname, suggestive of a domestic servant. All previous editions of the *Journal* have retained Deane Swift’s substitutions. However, the surviving manuscript versions of the letters identify the women as the abbreviated ‘Ppt’ and ‘Dd’, as the following entry from 17 June 1712 illustrates: ‘Do y ever read; why dont y say so; I mean does Dd read to ppt. Do y walk. I think ppt should walk to Dd, as Dd reads to ppt. for ppt oo must know is a good walker; but not so good as pdfr’ (p. 431).

We can see here the way in which the abbreviated pet names provide a link between the three, in the way that they must have done in the original complete set of letters. And as this example shows, the distinctions of familiarity between ‘Stella’ and ‘Dingley’ are not present in the references to ‘ppt’ and ‘Dd’. The current edition of the *Journal* attempts to reverse this interpretation, and emends the names of Johnson and Dingley back to their original form, wherever possible. ‘Stella’ has been emended back to ‘Ppt’, ‘Dingley’ to ‘Dd’, and ‘Presto’ to ‘pdfr’. Suggestions of the meaning of individual abbreviations are given in the glossary of little language. Swift seems to have used upper and lower case characters indiscriminately in these names.

Political context: First Fruits and Twentieth Parts

The years between 1704 and 1711 saw Swift engaged in a project to gain for the Irish clergy remission by the Crown of England of clerical levies known as the First Fruits and Twentieth Parts. It was an endeavour that brought

²⁷ *Letters* (1768), vol. IV, pp. 5–6.

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about Swift's political realignment, and his transformation from a relatively obscure Irish clergyman to one at times thought fit for an English bishopric, and finally for his appointment as Dean of St Patrick's. In February 1704 Queen Anne promised the English clergy remission of the First Fruits – that is, a tax once payable to the Pope, and since the Reformation, to the Crown, a sum amounting to the value of the first year's revenue from an ecclesiastical benefice. The Twentieth Part was originally intended to be one twentieth of the annual income of a benefice. By the early eighteenth century both these taxes took the form of a fixed sum, which was calculated on the established value of each benefice. The total sum paid from all the Irish benefices was, Swift estimated, around £1,000 per year. The idea that the Irish clergy should seek remuneration similar to that enjoyed by their English counterparts was not Swift's own: in 1704 the Bishop of Cloyne had put a petition before Queen Anne on behalf of the Irish clergy, which she had approved in principle.²⁸ Swift was in London at the time of the Queen's announcement of her bounty to the English clergy. On his return to Ireland, he wrote to his superior, William King, Archbishop of Dublin, asking him to press the case and, in addition, suggesting that King should add to his request the remission of the Crown rents on clerical holdings, which, he believed, would be of even greater significance to the Irish clergy.²⁹ These Crown rents were effectively rentals imposed during the seizure of Church lands by the Crown during the Reformation, and they had in many places remained even once lands had been given back to the Church. Swift argued that the levies, which he calculated at between a third and a half of the real value of the living, weighed most heavily on the poorest clergy.

Swift's active part in the enterprise did not begin until 1707, when the Lower House of Convocation of the Church of Ireland, of which he was a member, prompted the Upper House to make an application on behalf of the Irish clergy. Swift, with a warrant from the Irish bishops, began his work negotiating with the powerful Whigs with whom he had become acquainted: Charles Montagu, Earl of Halifax, and Thomas Herbert, eighth Earl of Pembroke, who had become lord lieutenant of Ireland in April 1707, John Somers, dedicatee of the publisher of the *Tale of a Tub*, and Charles Spencer, third Earl of Sunderland whom Swift knew from Moor Park. Swift travelled over to England to pursue his claims at the end of 1707, but by April 1708 there was no progress. When he finally secured an interview with Earl Godolphin, the lord treasurer, it became clear that the Whig ministry

²⁸ Landa, p. 52; W. A. Phillips, *History of the Church of Ireland: From the Earliest Times to the Present Day*, 3 vols. (London: Oxford University Press, 1933–4), vol. III, pp. 178–9.

²⁹ Swift to Archbishop King, 31 December 1704, Woolley, *Corr.*, vol. I, pp. 155–6.