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THE CAMBRIDGE EDITION OF THE CORRESPONDENCE OF DANIEL DEFOE

This comprehensive and authoritative edition of the correspondence of Daniel Defoe situates each letter in its biographical, literary, and historical contexts. A unique source for a turbulent period of British history, Defoe's correspondence spans topics including the first age of party marked by Tory and Whig rivalry, religious tensions between the Church and Dissenters, the uncertainty of the monarchical succession, the birth of Great Britain and its establishment as a global empire, and the use of the press to mould public opinion. As well as an introduction discussing Defoe's epistolary habits and the distinctive features of his letters, headnotes and annotations explain each document's occasion, beginning in 1703 with Defoe hunted by the government for sedition, and ending in 1730 with him again in hiding, fleeing creditors months before his death. The volume is illustrated with examples of Defoe's letters, offering a fresh window onto Defoe's manuscript habits.

Nicholas Seager is Head of the School of Humanities and Professor of English Literature at Keele University. He has published on literature of the long eighteenth century, including on Bunyan, Swift, Defoe, Haywood, Johnson, Sterne, Goldsmith, and Austen. He is co-editor of *The Oxford Handbook of Daniel Defoe* (2023).

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THE CAMBRIDGE EDITION OF THE
CORRESPONDENCE OF DANIEL DEFOE



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CORRESPONDENCE OF

DANIEL DEFOE



Edited by

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This edition began as a collaboration between Andreas Mueller and me. Circumstances intervened to limit Andreas's capacity to work on the project, but he remained as a valued associate editor. Marc Mierowsky joined as a research associate on the edition in 2017–18 and kindly remained on board as associate editor too. Their expertise has greatly enhanced the edition. The advisory editors – Alan Downie, Jim McLaverty, Bob Owens, and Pat Rogers – provided exemplary guidance for which I am deeply grateful. All errors are my own.

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EDITORIAL PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICE

Principles of Inclusion

This is an edition of letters to and from Defoe, including their manuscript enclosures. Publications in epistolary form, such as *A Letter to Mr. Bisset* (1709), are excluded. Several letters within publications are included when their authenticity is credible (Letters 92–3 and 133). A pamphlet attacking Defoe in 1711 printed a letter purportedly written by him; Defoe disavowed it in the *Review* and, while it is plausibly authentic, it is not verifiable.¹ For the same reason, no letters sent to Defoe in his capacity as author of the *Review* are included. The dedicatory epistle to his wife Mary in ‘Historical Collections’ is omitted: to sever that message from its source in the gifted book would be distortive. Identifying what is a ‘letter’ can be fraught. Defoe’s report to the Lords committee on manning the navy (Letter 25), the receipt made out for Defoe when Queensberry purchased books from him (Letter 104), and his petition to Queen Anne (Letter 240) are included because they are handwritten communications and can be considered correspondence, if not strictly letters. Printed enclosures are omitted, as is one manuscript enclosure that was also printed at the time, Defoe’s poem *The Vision* (Letter 63). Some of the enclosures are only partially in Defoe’s hand (for example, Letter 151). This applies also to ‘Humanum Est Errare’, apparently planned for publication and shared with Harley but excluded here as it is a draft pamphlet rather than part of the Defoe–Harley correspondence.

Previous Printings

This edition applies a different editorial policy from previous printings of the letters. Manuscripts (or copies) have been discovered for several letters the previous editor of Defoe’s letters, G. H. Healey, knew only from printed sources (and Healey had access to one manuscript I have been unable to trace, Letter 132).² Aside from differences of policy and copytext, this edition corrects mistranscriptions and supplies omissions in previous printings. These are not recorded.

¹ *A Hue and Cry after Daniel Foe and His Coventry Beast* (1711); *Review*, v 111, 118 (10 May 1711). It was also printed as *A Letter from Daniel de Foe to Mr. Matthews Printer in Little-Britain. About the Birth of the Pretender* (1711).

² *Letters*, ed. Healey, 254–6.

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Copytexts

In the majority of cases, autograph manuscripts supply the copytexts for letters written by and to Defoe. Where an original has not been traced, either a manuscript copy or printed version is most authoritative. Letters 274 and 278 survive as tracings of autographs, Letter 19 as a photostat copy; for Letters 130 and 131 I have had to rely on images of the autographs. The copytext is recorded following each letter, with discussion of the choice and provenance in a note, if necessary. The treatment of manuscript copytexts is guided by the principle that every feature is potentially significant but that trying to replicate these documents in near-facsimile fashion would be to deny the nature of a printed edition, as well as not fully to satisfy the manuscript scholar, who needs to see the originals. The majority of Defoe's letters are those to Harley in BL Add. MS. 70291. That volume has two runs of foliation, so in this edition 'fol. 28', for example, refers to the first sequence, and 'fol. ²28' refers to the second.

Recipients, Addresses, Endorsements, and Dates

In this edition, recipients are given in the heading, placed in square brackets where supplied editorially in the absence of internal evidence. In cases of doubt, the grounds for assuming the recipient are given in the headnote. Dates are recorded in the heading to each letter, in square brackets when inferred and with a question mark in case of uncertainty. Where a date within a letter uses the old style, the text is left as written and it is accompanied by an explanatory note.

Where present, the address is recorded following each letter, with vertical bars designating line breaks: 'To | Mr Tho: Bowrey | In Marine Square Near | Goodmans fields'. The address is written by, or is presumed to have been written by, the sender unless otherwise stated. Endorsements and notations, by the recipient or others, are likewise recorded following each letter, except for notations obviously by curators, which are usually omitted. When a handwritten copy serving as the copytext bears no address, the edition states 'none present' (rather than 'none'), because it is possible that that part of the original was not copied. Where a printed version serving as the copytext bears no address, the edition states 'none recorded'.

Editorial Interventions and Textual Notes

Square brackets designate editorial interventions such as text supplied in cases of manuscript damage, misspellings or abbreviations that could mislead the reader, and deliberate blank spaces. These are always accompanied by a textual note. I have made an exception in some cases where square brackets would produce a fussy text, such as when supplying an omitted parenthesis, which would give '[D]'; in

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such a case, a textual note alone explains the addition. Defoe sometimes signs his letters with monograms that cannot be replicated in print (see Figure 9): in this edition I have represented these by [*monogram*]. Punctuation has been supplied silently (see below).

Textual notes are denoted by superscript bold letters. As well as manuscript tears, holes, frays, and blots, textual notes record Defoe's cancellations, insertions, and amendments, and more occasionally quirks of layout, such as vertically written text. Italic text within explanatory notes explains the placement of cancellations and interlined insertions. So, 'your^a Serviçe', for which the note states 'your] *following word* 'Intrest' cancelled', signals that the manuscript reads: 'your **Intrest** Serviçe'. Defoe typically strikes through text with a single horizontal line. The notes record the cancelled text or specify where it is illegible; they use 'probably' and 'possibly' in (respectively) cases of near-certainty and reasonable conjecture about what Defoe cancelled. Amendments within individual words are selectively recorded: where Defoe changed one word to another, or where letters are interlined within a word, that is noted; but where he merely amends the first letter, indicating a false start rather than a revision, that is not usually recorded.

Defoe's insertions in his manuscripts are usually interlined above the main line of text with a caret below the main line to pinpoint the placement. In this edition, such insertions appear as normal text and are identified by a textual note stating '*interlined*'. Occasionally in the manuscripts, words or some letters of a word appear above the main text where limitations of space necessitated it, usually when Defoe reached the edge of the page. These have neither been treated as insertions nor noted. Most of Defoe's letters use catchwords; these have been omitted and a few minor failures to catch are not recorded.

Printed copytexts have been edited conservatively, with no attempt to recapture Defoe's manuscript traits such as abbreviations that previous editors have probably expanded and standardised.

Capitalisation

This edition reproduces most of Defoe's initial capital letters, but where a lower-case letter begins a new sentence or paragraph it has been silently capitalised. Proper nouns have been given an initial capital when Defoe has not used one. Distinguishing in Defoe's handwriting between certain majuscule and miniscule graphs can be difficult, the main two problem cases being *s* and *w*. I have adopted the basic principle that an initial *s* with an ascender is miniscule if it has a significant descender coming below the baseline, designating a long *s* (i.e. double-length *s* graphs are miniscules, supralinear are majuscules). A *w* is majuscule if its left stem is an ascender (the right stem on Defoe's *w* almost always ascends above the x-height).

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Orthography, Abbreviations, Diacritics, and Sigla

Defoe's original spelling is preserved, but the long *s* has been silently modernised. Dots below raised letters in Defoe's abbreviations are omitted, so that which resembles 'w:ch' is rendered 'wch' and such like. The dots have never been interpreted as a colon, as has been the case in previous printings. Contractions and abbreviations are preserved. Defoe variously signals abbreviations not involving raised letters with periods, apostrophes, and colons, which have been preserved unless specified otherwise. I retain Defoe's use of the archaic thorn, transmogrified by this period so as to be indistinguishable from *y*: 'ye' is 'the'; 'yt' is 'that', and 'ym' is 'them'.

The brevirgraph resembling an enlarged miniscule *p* with a double-line, slanted spine is a version of the 'special *p*' that Defoe often uses in place of 'per' and more occasionally in place of 'par', 'pro', and 'pre', and very rarely in some other way, such as '*ps*' for 'piece'. This abbreviation has been expanded, signalled by a square-bracketed insertion, so '*p*son' becomes 'p[er]son', '*p*cell' becomes 'p[ar]cell', '*p*posed' becomes 'p[ro]posed', and such like. This symbol is amply illustrated in the figures in this edition.

Diacritics are preserved, or if they are removed that is explained in a textual note. Defoe uses macrons, usually to double a single letter, more occasionally to abbreviate: 'Coṃon', 'Iṃmediately', and 'Brō:' ('Brother'). Defoe infrequently places diereses on 'ÿ'. More commonly than macrons and diereses, he uses a tilde-like mark on 'c' to designate either that its pronunciation is soft ('Senécible', 'Concérnd') or to stand for the 'sh' sound made by 'si', 'ti', or 'ci' ('Condesençon', 'Dedicaçon', 'Speçall'). Defoe's practice is inconsistent, resulting in hybrids such as 'Pacencé'. In this edition these stand as written. Manicules have been preserved in Letter 14 but with a limited ability to capture the appearance of the original. An array of other scribal features – including spiral swirls, elongated tails, and embellished letters – cannot be replicated in a print edition.

Symbols used in manuscripts to designate pounds, shillings, and pence have been standardised to '£', 's', and 'd' respectively, except where a printed copytext has used 'l' for pounds. '£' is preferred to 'l' because it more closely resembles the symbol Defoe commonly uses. These symbols tend to be superscript. Defoe occasionally places a period after numbers but this has always been silently deleted. Defoe's superscript ordinal numbers are sometimes little more than squiggles, so have been interpreted as best fits the context, but clear 'incorrect' instances such as '22th' have not been altered. Initial 'ff' is silently converted to 'F' ('ffinley' to 'Finley'). Sigla such as ampersands have been retained, as has underlining.

The practice for presenting the letters to and from Defoe outlined here has been applied to quotations from manuscript material in explanatory notes, but amendments are not recorded.

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Layouts

This edition neither preserves nor denotes straightforward lineation or pagination breaks in manuscripts (i.e. when the writer reaches the righthand edge or bottom of the page). It does however attempt to replicate some spatial features, such as different levels of indentation for paragraphs and lists, headings, and hanging paragraphs. Paragraph formatting has in some places been standardised. The layouts – line breaks and placements – of subscriptions ('I am | yor hearty Frd & Servt | DeFoe') have been replicated as far as possible, though some untypical line breaks deemed insignificant have been removed. Subscriptions are indented from the right margin. In manuscripts datings and postscripts are generally adjacent to the subscription (placed to its left, as in Figures 1, 6, 7, and 9), but in this edition they always come below it, still on the left.

Scottish Handwriting

The letters written by several of Defoe's Scottish correspondents present new challenges. Macrons over 'ū', sometimes creating *w*, are common and are preserved. Scottish secretary hand uses several abbreviations that have been silently expanded in this edition, such as a loop to signify 'es' at the end of a word. Scots use of 'quihilk' or 'qhk' for 'which' and of 'quhen' or 'qhn' for 'when' have been standardised to 'which' and 'when', respectively. Lower-case roman numeral 'i' has been converted to 'I', so 'ii5' becomes 'II5'.

Punctuation

Adding, and more rarely removing, punctuation has been the most subjective and extensive process of preparing the text. This has been done silently to avoid an overly fussy text covered in square brackets. On occasion, Defoe's spacing has implied the punctuation mark adopted. Supplying and altering punctuation is generally less susceptible to blanket rules than are other features, though some can be stated here. Comma splices that do not risk being misread are left alone. Commas placed by Defoe between subject and verb, or between verb and object, are judged to be expressive usages that represent pauses, and so have not been adjusted to fit modern grammatical conventions. For example, 'My being Oblig'd to abandone, an Employ of Such Consequēce, to My Own Ruine' (Letter 121). Missing possessive apostrophes have not been supplied. Apostrophes omitted from contractions that could otherwise prove confusing have been supplied (e.g., 'Il' becomes 'I'l'), but where the word seems clear it has been left (e.g., 'Youl'). Full stops at the end of paragraphs have been supplied, occasionally in place of other marks, such as colons and semi-colons; where a paragraph ends with no punctuation and leads

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into an inventory, a colon has sometimes been preferred to a full stop. Omitted commas separating items in lists have been supplied (but not the serial comma before a coordinating conjunction after the penultimate item in a list). Defoe's use of quotation marks placed to the left on every line of quoted matter has been modernised: this edition gives an opening quotation mark, a running one for the start of each new paragraph, and a closing one.

In many cases Defoe's commas and full stops are indistinguishable, though he was capable of writing them in distinct ways. Instances where a mere dot could be either a full stop or a comma have been interpreted as best suits the sense. Overall, I have silently added or altered punctuation where I have judged it needful for the sense, though the approach has been minimalist. This requires some illustration.³

The insertion of commas has seemed needful in some cases of simple subordinate clauses and conjunctions:

About 14 days Since[,] they Rabbled the wholl synod of Ross and Maltreated the Ministers[,] and this by a Made Rabble of Men Disguised in Womens Cloths ... (Letter 115)

Though without punctuation the correct reading will quickly be established, the unpunctuated sentence could easily be misread ('14 days Since they Rabbled': 'they' may not have been noticed as the main subject of the sentence). The pronoun 'this' is imprecise, and its verb is elided, so to avoid its being read as conjoined to 'the Ministers' the second comma is supplied. The basis for adding commas is clarity:

This was put to ye Question and past in ye Negativ or Rather[,] According to ye Method here[,] Delay or proceed[,] and Carryed proceed[.]

Then ye Main Question was Put[,] Approv ye Second Article or Not Aprove[,] and Carry'd Approv by a Majority of 58[.] (Letter 64)

Adding punctuation in this manner is fraught and I have sought to avoid it when an intention cannot be inferred:

The people who have broke this to me are few and have promised to keep it private if possible to have it Remedied... (Letter 77)

In all likelihood 'if possible' refers to the Scottish ministers keeping private their apprehensions about the oath of allegiance: we might place commas around those words or just one after 'possible'. But a comma after 'private' alone works grammatically and transfers 'if possible' to the remedy. This and comparable instances have been left alone in this edition to avoid forcing a single sense on prose that is potentially ambiguous.

³ In the subsequent examples punctuation in square brackets represents an editorial addition. In the edition itself the square brackets are absent.

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More elaborate phrasing requires additions to avoid misreading, but again I have done this in as minimal a way as seemed possible:

To morrow I leav this Town and County and[,] Presumeing your Direcçons for my Returne proceed from yo^r Apprehensions of my p[er]sonall hazards and are ye Effect of yt Concern for me wch I Can Never Enough Acknowledge and Not from an alteraçon in yo^r Opinion or Design of haveing this work Done[,] I proceed... (Letter 40)

In this example, the verb that could be read as the sentence's second active verb is the same as the actual active verb which is delayed until towards the end of the sentence ('proceed'). The commas added editorially only surround the long subordinate clause, whereas commas could have been added within that clause before the several conjunctions. The cadence invites pauses and Defoe sometimes uses larger spaces between words to punctuate; this spacing is most pronounced between 'Done' and 'I proceed'.

There are numerous arguable cases, concerning both when I have added punctuation and when I have not:

I here wth Send you the thing it Self — and as to the Generall Opinion it gains here I must Own it does some harm — but Not what it Was Expected[,] for while it was in Debate like ye English Fleet while it lay at Torbay it kept all Françe in suspence so ye Country Expected the Kirk would have protested as ye Burghs have done Against the Union in Generall as Destructiv to ye Civill Intrest and the Intrest of ye Church in Generall but Instead of That It Containes Six heads as you will see[,] all which suppose the Union as Reall and Certain[,] (Letter 61)

When Defoe uses 'for' as a conjunction, it generally needs a comma, but that is less the case with 'so' or even 'as' (less so still for 'and' and 'but'). Another editor might prefer commas around clauses such as 'like ye English Fleet while it lay at Torbay', but that seems unnecessarily interruptive to me, whereas the final subordinate clause seems to need a comma for clarity, mainly because 'you will see all' is possible as an initial misreading.

It is important to recognise not only that Defoe can proceed without punctuation for some time but that another editor would see the text differently:

Then we had a long Debate what Price ye Oat meal must bear when ye Bounty should be Due, and ye price of Oat meal being an Uncertain thing Espeçally in England and hard to Determine[,] I Offred an Expedient[,] Viz that the price should be stated on ye wholl Corn[,] I proposed 12s p[er] Quarter[,] My Ld presid^t Demanded it at 20[,] m^r Paterson Offred it at 13s. 4d[,] and there it passed[,] and so ye Amendment will be thus[,] (Letter 68)

This passage illustrates the principle of supplying a full stop when there is no punctuation, or rather when Defoe leaves a fractionally larger space between words. There are multiple ways of punctuating the passage, and perhaps my approach

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is more interventionist than elsewhere in the edition due to the convoluted subject matter and my interpretation of Defoe's exposition of these negotiations as deliberative and measured rather than chaotic. An editor of Defoe's manuscripts should be honest about the evaluative bases for such decisions, and I should state my admiration for Defoe's prose style when unmediated by compositors, as we must remember that the punctuation and typography of his printed works have undergone changes that he probably did not oversee. The present edition replicates some unusual features of Defoe's manuscripts and provides illustrations, allowing readers to experience something of the originals.