INTRODUCTION

The legacy of Sir William Clarke

The Clarke Papers, the working papers of Sir William Clarke (1623/4–1666) now at Worcester College, Oxford, need no introduction to students of the English civil wars and Interregnum. Since their discovery and publication by Sir Charles Firth in the late nineteenth century, they have constituted one of the most comprehensive and important primary sources for the period.[1] Firth's editions took no account, however, of the substantial quantity of Clarke's notes found only in shorthand, which consequently – and erroneously, as can now be seen – have since that time tended to be dismissed as containing little of importance.

From 1645, and perhaps earlier, Clarke was one of the civilian secretaries attached to the headquarters of the parliamentarian army. His career began as an assistant to John Rushworth, secretary to the commander-in-chief of the New Model Army, Sir Thomas Fairfax.[2] From 1647–1650 Clarke acted as secretary to the Council of Officers and by 1650 he had become principal assistant to Rushworth as Fairfax's military secretary.[3] In June of that year Fairfax resigned his command in protest over the Commonwealth's plans to invade Scotland in order to forestall a serious royalist/Scottish insurrection. He was succeeded by Oliver Cromwell, newly returned from his victorious campaign in Ireland, and it was as part of Cromwell's

[1] Several collections from the manuscripts have been published, principally C.H. Firth (ed.), *The Clarke Papers: Selections from the Papers of William Clarke* . . . , 4 vols (Camden Society, N.S. XLIX, LIV, LX, LXII, 1891–1901); *idem* (ed.), *Scotland and the Commonwealth* (Scottish History Society, XVIII, 1895); *idem* (ed.), *Scotland and the Protectorate* (Scottish History Society, XXXI, 1899); A.S.P. Woodhouse (ed.), *Puritanism and Liberty* (London, 1938; 2nd edn, 1974); G. Davies (ed.), *Dundee Court Martial Records 1651*, (Scottish History Society, 2nd ser., XIX, 1919). Vols I–II of the original edition of *The Clarke Papers* were reprinted by the Royal Historical Society in 1992 with a new introduction by Austin Woolrych. Before Firth discovered Clarke's papers they were described in H.O. Coxe's *Catalogus Codicum MSS*, 2 vols (Oxford, 1852) and had been cited by at least one previous scholar, J.B. Deane in *The Life of Richard Deane* . . . (London, 1870), pp. 495–496. For Clarke's life and career see *The Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, 60 vols (Oxford, 2004).

[2] Clarke may already have been acting in some similar capacity when the New Model Army was formed in 1645.

[3] Fairfax was by now Lord General of the Commonwealth and had succeeded to his family title as 3rd Baron Fairfax of Cameron.

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entourage that Clarke accompanied the invading army when it entered Scotland in July 1650.

There he was to remain, principally in and around Edinburgh, for the next ten years as secretary to successive commanders-in-chief of the English army of occupation.[4] For most of that time the post was held by George Monck, whose actions in 1659 and 1660 paved the way for the reinstatement of the Stuart monarchy in May 1660; Clarke's loyalty to Monck earned him many rewards and honours during the Restoration, including a knighthood. His new-found prosperity was short-lived, however, as in June 1666 he was killed in action during one of the fiercest battles of the second Anglo-Dutch war.[5]

Throughout his career, his official position guaranteed Clarke a privileged viewpoint from which to witness and to record many of the foremost military and political events of his day. Perhaps best remembered now for his detailed record of the army debates which took place at Putney in October–November 1647, he was also present on the scaffold during the execution of Charles I, one of three clerks appointed to record in shorthand the king's final words.[6] He carefully preserved his working papers of the 1640s and 1650s, and at the time of his death was systematically engaged in putting them in order, making fair copies of those he wished to keep and discarding those he did not. They eventually passed to his only surviving son George Clarke (1661–1736) who in turn bequeathed them to Worcester College, where for the most part they remain.[7]

The collection, comprising fifty-one volumes of official correspondence, memoranda, accounts, and orders, most of them still in their original calf or vellum bindings, together with a considerable quantity of unbound material,[8] first became widely known with Sir

[4] They are listed in G.E. Aylmer, *The State's Servants : The Civil Service of the English Republic 1649–1660* (London and Boston, 1973), p. 38.

[5] BL, Additional MS 14286, fo. 41^{r}.

[6] G.E. Aylmer (ed.), *Sir William Clarke Manuscripts 1640–1664* (Brighton, 1979), p. 11; *England's Black Tribunall* (London, 1703), p. 47. Clarke's fair copy of the Putney debates survives at Worcester College (Worc. MS LXV), but not his written record of the king's speech.

[7] Some of Clarke's papers found their way to Littlecote House in Wiltshire. Worcester College was eventually able to acquire some of these while a few went to the British Library; others have now disappeared. Those which remained at Littlecote in 1899 (although by then some had already been sold) are described in the Historical Manuscript Commission's *Report on the Manuscripts of F.W. Leyborne-Popham Esq.* (Norwich, 1899). There are isolated volumes in the National Library of Scotland, the library of the Thoresby Society, Leeds, and at Chequers Court, Buckinghamshire. For George Clarke see *OxDNB*.

[8] There is no printed catalogue, but the best summary of their contents is found in Aylmer, *Sir William Clarke Manuscripts*. A more detailed listing of the unbound papers is held by the National Register of Archives.

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Charles Firth's editions for the Camden Society and Scottish History Society in the 1890s and 1900s.[9] It is not always realized, however, that these did not include any of the documents which Clarke recorded in a contemporary shorthand.[10] Now known to amount to some 230,000 words, most of them are to be found in a series of small working notebooks, some 14.5 × 19.5 cm in size, which Clarke used between May 1651 and early 1660 during his time in Scotland.[11] In these, shorthand notes alternate with the longhand passages which were found and published by Firth. Presumably Clarke had already worked through and disposed of similar volumes from the earlier part of his career when he met his unforeseen death.[12] The shorthand had apparently not been read since Clarke's own lifetime when, in 1973, Worcester College sought the help of an expert cryptographer, Dr Eric Sams, who established that Clarke had used Thomas Shelton's *Tachygraphy* (1635), one of the most popular of some dozen or so systems then available.[13]

Despite this breakthrough, the shorthand remained unread until I began my own transcription in the mid-1980s. Now that this is complete, I am able to say that the notes fall into three distinct but unequal categories. The largest of these relates, predictably, to the administration of the army in Scotland during the 1650s. Secondly, there is a small collection of Clarke's own personal letters and memoranda, the only such known to survive. A third component, of more than 400 documents, relates to the English (and, to a lesser extent, European) political and military intelligence which was being sent from England to army headquarters in Scotland, and occasionally vice versa. It is this category which forms the basis of the present volume.[14]

[9] See above, p. 1n.

[10] It appears that, despite a considerable scholarly interest in early shorthands at the time when he was producing his editions, Firth made no attempt to have Clarke's shorthand deciphered. I have discussed the possible reasons for this in F. Henderson, 'The hidden hand of William Clarke', *Worcester College Record*, (1998), pp. 70–73.

[11] Worc. MSS XIX, XX, XXII, XXIV–XXXII. The last section of MS XXXII was begun by Clarke during his return to London from Scotland in early 1660. There is also a small amount of shorthand in a later, post-Restoration notebook (Worc. MS XXXIII), not included in the present volume.

[12] None of the original notebooks which Clarke processed in this way survive. A note on the fair copy of the Putney debates tells us that Clarke began that in 1662 (Worc. MS LXV, flyleaf).

[13] E. Sams in Aylmer, *Sir William Clarke Manuscripts*, pp. 29–34. I am much indebted to Dr Sams who, with characteristic scholarly generosity, made available to me not only the original notes on his sample decryptment but much helpful advice in the early stages of my work.

[14] Editions of the other two categories are in preparation.

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The historical background[15]

The decade which Clarke spent in Scotland was unlike any other period in British history – a decade which followed revolution and regicide, when the country was without a king and was often governed by nothing less than crisis management.[16] While it may have seemed to the republic's principal architects, political and religious radicals and army activists alike, that they had permanently changed the course of British history, the reality was that the constitutional stability which they strove to establish was never truly within their grasp. Throughout the 1650s, as the abrupt termination of one parliament after another demonstrated, there were irreconcilable conflicts of interest between civil and military leaders. In a nation where the majority of the population would have welcomed a return of the monarchy – if not necessarily a Stuart monarchy – its successive parliaments were obliged to maintain a substantial military force in order for the regime to survive. The army in its turn was dependent upon parliamentary legislation for even such inadequate funding as it was able to acquire; the two bodies found that they could live neither with nor without each other.

After the death in 1658 of Oliver Cromwell, who had governed the country as Lord Protector since December 1653, and a brief interlude during which his civilian elder son and successor Richard faced escalating confrontation with both army and republican civilian leaders, the Protectorate collapsed during the spring of 1659. The near anarchy which followed saw the most serious split yet to occur within senior army ranks, and it was George Monck, based in Scotland and commanding an army paid up to date and rigorously disciplined, who took control by marching to London in early 1660, and in doing so paved the way for the restoration of the Stuart monarchy a few months later. By now Clarke had earned the position of one of Monck's most trusted advisers, rebuffing an attempt by his former commander, Robert Lilburne, to lure him over to the side of the military junto in England.[17] It was his loyalty to Monck at this stage which would earn Clarke such rich rewards during the reign of Charles II.

These dramatic events provide the backdrop to Clarke's papers, whether in longhand or in shorthand, most often in the 1650s

[15] The course of the English Interregnum is traced here in only the briefest detail. Introductions provided at the beginning of each notebook describe more fully the background to the documents to be found there.

[16] There are many detailed accounts of the Interregnum, from S.R. Gardiner, *History of the Commonwealth and Protectorate*, 3 vols (London, 1886–1891) to Austin Woolrych, *Britain in Revolution 1625–1660* (Oxford, 2002), pp. 434–702.

[17] Pp. 319, 324 below.

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comprising his copies of London newsletters. It is easy to visualize how, at a time when even the fastest express from London took three days to reach Edinburgh, all news from the capital was eagerly received, passed round, and hoarded. When the large number of written newsletters to which we now know Clarke had access is added to his vast collection of printed newsbooks and pamphlets,[18] we realize just how well informed he was about affairs both inside and outside Scotland.

The value which he placed on such information is clear from the meticulous copies of most, if not all, of the incoming newsletters which are found in his working notebooks. Entered in strictly chronological order under their date of origin, many were copied in longhand, beginning in Clarke's own elegant hand and then taken up by another, presumably belonging to one of his clerks. Others, however, he preferred to write himself in shorthand, as he also did with certain memoranda and copies of official correspondence. We have to guess Clarke's reasons for doing so. Doubtless he used shorthand, at least on occasion, to save himself time, or space in his notebooks. But one of its main attractions – and one enthusiastically promoted by its early inventors – was its value for purposes of secrecy. There is no doubt that, for both Clarke and his colleagues in the army secretariat, this was one of its principal advantages.[19] While the sensitive nature of some of the documents which Clarke copied in 'tachygraphy' is self-evident,[20] his criteria for deciding which passages he wished to protect in this way are not always so readily apparent.

Although Clarke's shorthand notes conceal much that is new to us and much that is of interest, the value of the unexplored information which they provide is cumulative. There is no sensational new dimension of Interregnum politics (although that realization will itself be important to scholars who have long wondered what secrets Clarke's shorthand might contain); sometimes the gains in understanding are slight. As we read through the documents, however, we undoubtedly acquire a richer sense both of the world of army intelligence within which Clarke moved and of the broader picture of national events. Of particular interest are the fresh details which emerge concerning two episodes: the court martial at Edinburgh in June 1651 of Colonel Edward Sexby, of which Clarke kept a full, but hitherto unknown, record; and the part played by George Monck in the events preceding the Restoration, an issue which has

[18] Clarke's collection of printed material is now also at Worcester College.

[19] See below, Appendix C, pp. 378–379, 382.

[20] For example, much of the material relating to the 'Overton plot' in Notebook XXVII, and the unsuccessful royalist approaches to George Monck of 1658 (pp. 268–270).

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always tantalized historians and on which Clarke gives us crucial new evidence.[21]

The transcript

The documents reproduced below vary considerably not only in content but in frequency, and the number written in shorthand during periods of intense political activity is strikingly higher than at other times. In the last three months of 1659, for example, during Monck's clash with the army commanders in London, the number of shorthand items averages sixteen per month, whereas there are only four from the whole of 1657.[22] Similarly, in the notebook covering 1654 – the year of Glencairn's Rising – almost every page is written in shorthand.[23] While Clarke's shorthand includes both memoranda and copies of official correspondence, most are incoming newsletters. Of these nearly three-quarters (some 72 per cent) originated in London, while the rest came from correspondents in a wide range of locations, from important intelligence gathering centres near the English-Scottish border such as Newcastle and Carlisle, to those on the Continent and particularly in Holland.[24]

Out of a total of 403 documents, some 31 are more or less exact copies of documents known from other sources, either in manuscript or print, although none is an exact duplicate.[25] In manuscript, these include 14 written also in longhand among Clarke's own papers,[26] and 5 among the newsletters which Gilbert Mabbott sent to the mayor and aldermen of Hull,[27] while a few others are found in the British Library.[28] Of those duplicated in print, some are copies of pamphlets

[21] Pp. 26–36, and Notebook XXXII *passim*.

[22] Notebooks XXXII and XXVII respectively.

[23] Notebook XXVI.

[24] Newcastle was also used as a centre from which to send Scottish news to London; *Mercurius Politicus*, 62 (7–14 Aug. 1651), pp. 988–989. In later 1659, when all Scottish post was being intercepted, Monck had letters from London directed to Newcastle, whence they were secretly carried to him in Scotland; T. Gumble, *The life of General Monck, Duke of Albemarle &c., with Remarks upon his Actions* (London, 1671), p. 170.

[25] A further six, all of them appearing in newsbooks, are sufficiently similar to suggest a direct connection (pp. 36, 62, 64, 69, 76, 89), and six others include short excerpts found elsewhere (pp. 26, 43, 117, 119, 307, 355).

[26] Pp. 47, 210, 231, 241, 245, 271, 272, 325, 328 which are at Worcester College; p. 159 in the Egerton MSS at the British Library. Longhand versions of documents on pp. 307, 349 and 355 now apparently lost but originally among Clarke's papers at Littlecote, Wiltshire, are calendared in *L-P*.

[27] Pp. 61, 71, 106, 107, 110, 157, 213.

[28] Pp. 21–24, 117, 119, 251, 253, 269.

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printed during the political turmoil of 1659,[29] while several of Henry Walker's letters quote directly from the official journal of the House of Commons and/or the official newsbook of which he was an editor, *Severall Proceedings in Parliament*.[30] Other documents which originated in the Scottish headquarters appear subsequently in newsbooks such as the *Perfect Diurnall* or *Mercurius Politicus*.[31]

I have included transcripts of duplicated material for two principal reasons: first, in order that *all* shorthand passages can be identified and read by those consulting the original manuscript, whether or not they are familiar with Shelton's shorthand; second, because in almost every case there are minor but often important differences which the reader may wish to have the opportunity to assess.

Of the incoming newsletters reproduced below, by far the greatest number came from just two correspondents, the Scoutmaster-General, MP, and diplomat, George Downing, and Clarke's brother-in-law, the professional news impresario, Gilbert Mabbott, with sixty-one and sixty-two letters respectively.[32] Next in frequency are those from the newsbook editor Henry Walker (sixteen) and from John Thurloe (fifteen). Most of the seventy-four correspondents have army or private connections of some sort with Clarke and would have been personally known to him, and most of their names are familiar to us. There are several from Monck's brother-in-law Thomas Clarges (five), and from Clarke's old colleagues in the army secretariat, Richard Hatter (six), and John Rushworth (four), although relations between Clarke and Rushworth appear to have been cool in 1653.[33] Clarke's wife Dorothy, whom he married in September 1648 and who was with him during almost all of his time in Scotland, is among them;[34] there is also a letter from one John Milton writing from Westminster.[35]

From about 1657 Clarke identified most of his correspondents (and certainly all regular ones) by their initials only. In document headings, where I have felt that an identification was secure I have supplied it in

[29] Pp. 301, 312, 314, 316, 340.

[30] Pp. 62, 64, 69. Gilbert Mabbott also quoted directly from the journal of the House on occasion (p. 43–46).

[31] Pp. 36, 76, 83, 84, 89, 293.

[32] For Downing see *OxDNB*; J. Beresford, *The Godfather of Downing Street: Sir George Downing 1623–1684* (London, 1925). Mabbott, for whom also see *OxDNB*, was trusted as providing reliable information; T. Birch (ed.), *A Collection of the State Papers of John Thurloe Esq.*, 7 vols (London, 1742), VII, p. 377.

[33] P. 98.

[34] P. 271.

[35] P. 203. We cannot be sure which of several of the same name this particular John Milton is. There would have many opportunities for contact between Clarke and the poet and civil servant John Milton, who is perhaps the likeliest candidate. I am most grateful to Nicholas von Maltzahn for sharing his views on this question.

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square brackets. For example, 'G.D.' writing from the Hague in 1659 is without doubt George Downing.[36]

Only rarely there is an indication within the text of whether the letters were addressed to the commander-in-chief, to the headquarters in general, or to Clarke himself.[37] Several items relating to the Leveller John Lilburne, including two eye-witness accounts of his trial in 1653, may have been intended for his brother Robert, acting commander-in-chief in Scotland from March 1653 to April 1654.[38] Sometimes where a letter is copied entirely in longhand, Clarke provided the writer's (or recipient's) name in shorthand.[39]

Many newsletters were probably provided on a reciprocal basis, as Clarke wrote regularly to both private individuals and public figures, a practice he recorded in a list of correspondents from late 1651 which survives among his papers.[40] Among those to whom he was sending weekly letters at that time were the Speaker, William Lenthall, George Downing, John Downes, John Rushworth, Richard Hatter, and his brothers-in-law Gilbert Mabbott and William Cary. From, unfortunately rare, copies which he made of his own letters, there are other clues that he was regularly sending news from Scotland; he actively promoted this service in letters to influential figures such as Oliver Cromwell in London or Robert Venables in Ireland.[41] On many occasions Clarke's letters to the Speaker appeared subsequently in the official *Severall Proceedings in Parliament*, edited by Henry Walker,[42] and Clarke may also have contributed directly to other newsbooks.[43]

Clarke seldom kept shorthand copies of official papers or correspondence, presumably because they needed to be accessible to others, although the number noticeably increased in the sensitive days of late 1659.[44] There are some copies of intercepted or confiscated

[36] P. 295.

[37] I have only provided such information when it is a certainty or (in square brackets) a near certainty. Mabbott, for example, sent letters both to Clarke and to Monck.

[38] Pp. 102, 103. News of John Lilburne featured in many of the London newsletters, and Clarke owned many pamphlets connected with him which he had bound into a single volume.

[39] These are listed in Appendix A and do not appear in the main transcript.

[40] Worc. MS CLXXXI, fo. 243^{r}.

[41] Pp. 34, 50, 53, 54, 91. One of Clarke's newsletters to William Lenthall is found at Bodl., MS Tanner LIII, fos 92–93.

[42] For example, a letter written on 25 September 1651 from Dundee; Worc. MS XIX fos 140^{r}–141^{r}; *Severall Proceedings*, 106 (2–9 Oct. 1651), pp. 1630–1631. Another, written by Clarke from Stirling Castle, is a compilation of his daily notes (in shorthand); *Severall Proceedings*, 100 (21–28 Aug. 1651), pp. [1545]–[1548]; Worc. MS XIX, *passim*.

[43] P. 36; *Perfect Diurnall*, 81 (23–30 June 1651), p. 1131.

[44] Out of a total of forty from the whole series, sixteen were written between October 1659 and January 1660.

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papers, mostly associated with the Anglo-Dutch war, although one group concerns the discovery of the so-called 'Overton plot' in late 1654, and there is evidence that Monck was intercepting letters sent from London by Archibald Johnston of Wariston in late 1659.[45]

In addition to copies of written documents there are some rare records of oral material.[46] Foremost among these must rank Clarke's extensive notes of the court martial in Edinburgh in June 1651 of Colonel Edward Sexby.[47] There are also notes of two private conversations held with separate messengers sent from London immediately after the collapse of the Protectorate in May 1659,[48] and of an unidentified meeting of February 1660 at which there was violent criticism of Monck by leading radical political figures.[49]

Copies of twenty-one of Clarke's own official or semi-official letters provide some clues about Clarke himself and about his professional life.[50] Several suggest that, at least in the early years of the decade, his position was not a secure one. Its precarious nature is demonstrated by his unease in January 1652 on realizing that the English parliamentary commissioners had brought their own secretarial team with them.[51] Furthermore, with each new commander-in-chief, despite the high regard in which he was held, it appears to have been necessary for him to advance his claims for reappointment.[52] While promoting his own interests he did not forget those of others, for example his brothers-in-law Gilbert Mabbott and William Cary, both of whom were useful to him in maintaining close links with London,[53] and he also used his influence to secure the position of Nathaniel Mew, army postmaster first at Berwick and then at Leith.[54] Letters of introduction when the eccentric poet-turned-historian Payne Fisher (whom Clarke seems to have befriended during Fisher's time in Scotland) returned to London in 1653, earned him during the following year at least one newsletter in return.[55]

[45] Pp. 83, 88, 94 (a translation from the Dutch apparently prepared at the headquarters), 231, 234, 242, 244, 349, 350.

[46] These are not in the strictest sense verbatim accounts, but nonetheless provide full summaries of what was said.

[47] Pp. 26–36.

[48] Pp. 290–293.

[49] P. 362.

[50] Pp. 34, 49, 50, 77, 78, 80, 86, 91, 95, 96, 98, 104, 105, 117, 144, 153, 183, 240, 319, 324. These do not include many personal letters and memoranda of which Clarke kept shorthand copies, which are not included in the present edition.

[51] P. 51, introduction to Notebook XXII.

[52] Pp. 78, 80, 144.

[53] Pp. 49, 144.

[54] P. 47n, 86.

[55] Pp. 104, 105, 180.

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There is confirmation that in his professional life, Clarke was both careful and trustworthy. In February 1654 he turned down some kind of proposition from his colleague, the army treasurer George Bilton – wisely as it turned out, as Bilton was later discovered to have been engaging in embezzlement on a massive scale.[56] Clarke's loyalty and caution can be no better demonstrated than by the letters which he exchanged with Robert Lilburne in 1659.[57] When writing about his commanders, especially George Monck, Clarke was characteristically discreet, in Monck's case disguising potentially incriminating approaches from the ever-optimistic supporters of Charles Stuart by copying them in shorthand.[58] Nowhere even in these, however, is there the slightest hint that Monck might at any point have been tempted to join the royalist cause.

The shorthand of the Clarke manuscripts

Of the fifty-one volumes of William Clarke's papers now at Worcester College (some of them unbound), twenty-six include varying amounts of shorthand as follows:

In ten there are a few brief shorthand phrases, principally marginalia or other such short comments.[59]

Four have rather more shorthand, but fall outside the chronological limits or subject matter of this study.[60]

Twelve quarto leather-bound working notebooks, running consecutively from May 1651 to February 1660[61] contain substantial quantities of shorthand notes, all of them written by Clarke himself (some 230,000 words in all). These are scattered throughout longhand passages which are written in several different hands. It is from these volumes that the material reproduced below has been taken, although reference will be made to others in the collection. As I have noted above,[62] the proportion of shorthand to longhand varies considerably from volume to volume and from year to year.

[56] Pp. 153, 264.
[57] Pp. 319, 324.
[58] Pp. 268, 269.
[59] Worc. MSS XV, XLVI–LI, LXIX, LXXII, CX.
[60] Worc. MSS XXXIII (1660–1665) and CXIV (1648–1649) fall outside the chronological limits; LXXXVI and CLXXXI contain only rough drafts and memoranda, many of them relating to internal matters in Scotland.
[61] Worc. MSS XIX–XXXII, excluding XXI and XXIII.
[62] P. 6.

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The size of William Clarke's library of printed material (also at Worcester College) is such that it has not yet been possible to complete a systematic search for shorthand annotations. Such examples as I have seen either consist of personal memoranda or relate to the adjacent literary texts, and so do not qualify for inclusion in this study.[63]

The evaluation of texts which have reached us via the medium of seventeenth-century shorthand is greatly enhanced by an understanding of its history and context, its methodology, and its use for purposes of conciseness, speed, or concealment; these are discussed in Appendix C.

Most of the difficulties in producing this transcript have arisen from one of two causes: inherent weaknesses in Shelton's system, or its unclear, idiosyncratic, or hurried use by Clarke himself.[64] In the former category lie a number of ambiguous outlines which can be read in anything up to nine separate ways.[65] In most cases their intended meaning has been clear from their context. The absence of almost all signs denoting vowels in Shelton's system, in common with others of its time, can prove a particular problem in the transcription of proper names.[66] Where more than one reading was plausible I have offered the reader a choice of all likely equivalents. Initially, other obstacles arose from a number of personal symbols developed by Clarke. I have subsequently been able to establish equivalents for most of these by comparing such passages as are found in both shorthand and longhand.[67] Clarke's omission of virtually all punctuation marks has provided further difficulties; in order to clarify the reader's understanding of the text I have inserted these where I judged them to be appropriate, identifying any instances where I was in doubt about

[63] I am most grateful to Lesley Le Claire, Joanna Parker, Matthew Seccombe, and Laurence Weeks for drawing my attention to several of these. Clarke's library has been estimated to contain 7,000 items.

[64] The potential pitfalls were outlined by Eric Sams in his descriptive note on the shorthand in 1979; Aylmer, *Sir William Clarke Manuscripts*, p. 33. William Matthews has also drawn attention to the general difficulties in relation to the shorthand of Samuel Pepys, although Pepys's shorthand is more legible than most, and by no means all of Professor Matthews's comments apply in all cases; W. Matthews (ed.), T. Shelton, *A Tutor to Tachygraphy, or, Short-Writing* (Los Angeles, 1970), p. vii.

[65] As an example, in Clarke's shorthand the outline which resembles the Arabic numeral '2', apart from denoting 'to', 'two', 'too', and of course '2', can also, with or without the addition of a dot, represent 'upon', 'an', 'any' or the prefixes 'des-' or 'dis-'.

[66] For instance I found a printed reference to Nathaniel Mew, whose name I had transcribed as 'Maw' (p. 86). The same applies to place names; for example, 'Amiland' is indistinguishable from 'Holland'.

[67] In this way I was able to identify Clarke's idiosyncratic equivalent for 'cast': the symbol 'c' with a dot above, which he had adapted from Shelton's outline for 'fast' – symbol 'f' with a dot above; p. 252, *TSP*, IV, p. 745.

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their correct position.[68] In a few cases ink-blots or modern rebinding have obliterated a whole word or phrase of shorthand where perhaps only a letter or two of longhand might have been lost.[69] Where an outline has proved illegible, the general meaning of the missing word or phrase will usually be clear to the reader from its context.[70]

As a general rule, because of the extremely abbreviated nature of shorthand outlines, the only person who is in a position to make an entirely dependable transcript of a document written in this medium (and not always then) is its author, who can draw on personal memory. No amount of editorial vigilance or skill can make up for that advantage. In making this transcription I have always been strongly aware that I was completing the task which William Clarke himself set out to perform. Where I have felt any doubt about the accuracy of a particular reading I have shown this in the way indicated in my note on editorical practice.[71] I hope that Clarke would have approved of the result.

[68] Comparison with *TSP*, IV, p. 745, was again helpful in establishing whether certain phrases should be placed at the end of one sentence or the beginning of the next.

[69] e.g. pp. 49, 246.

[70] e.g. p. 243.

[71] Above, p. IX.

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