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Hume and the 1763 Edition of His *History of England*: His Frame of Mind as a Revisionist

FREDERIC L. VAN HOLTHOON

A Quotation, and Three Questions

I suppose you will not find one book in the English Language of that Size and Price so ill printed, and now since the publication of the Quarto, however small the sale of the Quarto may be, it shows, by its corrections and additions, the Imperfection of the 8vo so visibly, that it must be totally discredited. (HL II 228)¹

Question 1. Hume was referring to the 1763 octavo edition of his *History of England*. It was the first complete edition of the *History* to be published as a set. Why did he consider it such an “abominable” edition as he calls it in another letter? (HL II 457)

Question 2. The quotation given above also makes clear that the 1770 quarto edition was much better in his judgment. Better in what respect?

Question 3. Hume’s verdict on the 1763 edition also involves a judgment on two other editions, a quarto and an octavo edition of 1767. Both of them are “title editions” in a way I shall explain. Yet these editions contain a cancel in the part dealing with the reign of Charles II which brought forth Hume’s only documentary discovery: the secret provisions of the treaty of Dover. What did Hume think of the importance of these cancels relative to the sum total of his revisions?

In answering these three questions I will allow myself one digression. In a short compass I will provide an overall view of Hume's revisionary effort concerning all editions which were published between 1754 and 1778. This description together with the three answers will give us a clue to Hume's frame of mind as a revisionist. What were his motives for changing his text throughout the editions which appeared during his lifetime and shortly thereafter?

Hume and the 1763 Edition of His *History of England*

In October 1766 Hume wrote Andrew Millar, his publisher:

I shall endeavour to render the next Edition of my History as correct as possible; tho' I do not expect to see it necessary for several Years.
(HL II 105-106)

What Hume probably did not know was that Strahan, Millar's printer, had already printed the title pages for a quarto and octavo "edition."² The term "edition" should be put between quotation marks for the octavo edition was made with the old sheets of the 1763 edition and the quarto set was a rejuvenation of volumes printed in 1762. And we don't know what Millar had in mind while writing to Hume on November 2, 1766 that he deplored the fact that he had printed so many octavos in 1763, otherwise Hume "might have had more frequent opportunity of correction."³ Did Hume know about these "upgraded" editions or was Millar less than honest?

The correspondence between Millar and Hume reveals a tug of war between the publisher who wanted Hume to continue his *History* and the author who was very hesitant on this point, but who otherwise was keen on having the opportunity of a new edition for the purpose of correcting his text. So Millar wrote in November 1764 that 2,000 copies of the 1763 edition had already been sold and added, "Sure this is full encouragement for you to go on" (HL II 354). When Hume discovered that he had been deceived and that either Millar had ordered more copies or had been able to sell less than he told Hume, he was mortified. Even Strahan, who became Hume's friend, saw no way to pacify him. Writing to Strahan, Hume declared that he hoped that the new edition (the octavo edition of 1773) would take away the discredit caused "by that abominable Edition, which has given you and me so much Vexation, and has been one Cause why I have thrown my Pen aside for ever" (HL II 270).⁴

At a first glance one is perhaps prepared to take this reason for the discontinuation of his *History* with a pinch of salt and attach greater weight to the fact that Hume had decided to retire to Edinburgh away from the sources he needed to continue the *History* beyond 1688. However, the outburst mirrors Hume's frame of mind concerning his book. He was extremely sensitive as to

its reputation and apparently that "detestable edition" damaged it in two ways: it was badly printed and in such great quantity that it took a horribly long time to replace it by a new one (as far as the octavo edition was concerned: ten years). I quoted Hume's verdict on the 1763 edition at the beginning of this essay and Greig adds in a note: "Both type and paper in this 1763 edition are undoubtedly bad" (HL II 228, note 1).

Is the 1763 edition undoubtedly bad? Greig may have seen a particularly foul copy, but my exemplar is neatly printed on good paper. I have noted three misprints. In the transition from volume four to volume five 39 for the numbering of the chapter is skipped and to correct this number 40 is repeated. Volume five has two pages 106, *verso* and *recto* and continues with page 108. The third one is in volume six: on page 397, 1660 was printed at the top of the right margin; this should have been 1662. It was corrected in the cancel of the 1767 edition. Undoubtedly I will have missed some misprints, but it is not the case that the 1763 is riddled with misprints, and that compared to other editions it deserves Hume's judgment. The 1770 quarto edition Hume is referring to also skipped number 39, but did not redress the omission and in this case the printers did not have the excuse of preparing the first set with a consecutive numbering of chapters. The 1773 edition which pleased Hume very much has a number of misprints in the page-numbering.⁵ But we should not take Hume's judgment on the quality of the printing too seriously anyway. In 1764 he wrote to Millar:

I shall be oblig'd to you, if you will inform yourself exactly how many Copies are now sold both of that Edition [the 1764 edition of the *Essays*] and of the Octavo Edition of my History. I think both these Editions very correct. (HL I 465)

So there was a time he was satisfied with the 1763 edition, it only *became* "abominable" and "detestable," when Hume discovered that it took such a long time to get sold. Because Millar in his "rapacity" had printed a large edition Hume was precluded from making new revisions to his text. Hume was very keen on making them and perhaps this fact provides us with a special reason why he came to dislike the 1763 edition. From all the editions of separate volumes or complete sets between 1754 and 1778 it is the only one which is completely derivative. The table (see Appendix II) in which I have registered the more important revisions provides proof of this.⁶ It shows that there are no important revisions to be registered for the 1763 edition. Its text is based on that of the quarto sets of the 1762 reprints (Ib, IIb, IIIb, IVb, Vc, and VIc).⁷

Hume may have held the 1763 edition in low esteem not because of the quality of the printing, but because he regarded it as a lost opportunity for

revising his *History* and his indulgence with it turned into dislike when he discovered that it blocked a new edition in which he could introduce new revisions.

But why this preoccupation with the revision of his text? It cannot have been money, because Hume was paid a lump sum for his manuscript, and he received no royalties from subsequent editions. Let me first of all establish that his obsession with revisions was an enduring characteristic of his historical writing and indeed of all his compositions.⁸

The second printing of his medieval volumes provides an illustration of Hume's preoccupation. He started revising the text of the first edition almost as soon as it left the press. He writes to Andrew Millar, his publisher, on March 15, 1762:

I am running over both the antient History & the Tudors, and shall send you them up by the Waggon as soon as they are corrected. Please tell Mr Strahan to keep carefully this Copy I send up, as well as that which I left of the Stuarts: For if you intend to print an Octavo Edition next summer, it will be better to do it from these Copies which are corrected, than from the new Edition, where there will necessarily be some Errors of the Press. (HL I 352)

In March 1771 Hume writes to Strahan with regard to the plans for what became the 1773 octavo edition:

This is the last time I shall probably take the pains of correcting that work, which is now brought to as great a degree of accuracy as I can attain; and is probably much more labour'd...than any other production in our Language. (HL II 239)

But making corrections was not such a painful experience, as he admitted in June 1772. He mentions that he will send the corrected copies by "Waggon" and adds:

It gives me sensible pleasure, that I shall now have an Edition of that work, corrected nearly to my mind. (HL II 243)

Yet Hume was insatiable. He writes to Strahan on March 15, 1773 that he hopes he will get "Information some time beforehand," if a new edition should be planned (HL II 278). And indeed it would be unwise to use the 1773 octavo edition as a copytext for a critical edition (using the argument that this was the last edition which appeared during his lifetime) for the posthumous octavo edition of 1778 contains some major revisions obviously made by Hume and appearing for the first time. So the answer to my first question is that Hume came to dislike the 1763 edition because it blocked the way to a

new revised edition. And possibly Hume held this edition in low esteem anyway, because it is the only edition he had never reworked.

How important are these revisions which appeared in the 1770 edition and which would totally discredit the 1763 edition as he wrote to Strahan? To be able to judge these revisions I must first provide the reader with an overall view of the revisions that Hume made in the editions that are represented in my table.

Hume's Revisions

During a number of years I have been registering the revisions which Hume made in the text of the subsequent editions up to the posthumous edition of 1778. In total I have recorded more than 2,000 revisions. These revisions constitute by no means the total sum of the revisions Hume made.⁹ It is impossible to register *all* variants with any degree of accuracy. This task must be left to a computerized collation. To give an indication of what is involved, I tried to administer all variants for chapter 45 of book V.¹⁰ The number is 182, the total for book V is 730. The number of variants—most of them made by Hume himself and not by his printer—which can be registered is stupendous.

The report on my work will have to await a different occasion, but to put Hume's revisionary work on the 1770 edition in perspective let me refer again to table I in appendix II. In note 6, I defined what the "more important revisions" are. Obviously the changes of words or of passages less than a sentence are the most subject to interpretation. As with my work of collation in general it is often not easy to distinguish the significant from the trivial. Another important restriction on my count is my method of collation. First I have checked variants between the modern LibertyClassics reprint of the 1778 edition (I–VI) and the first editions which appeared between 1754 and 1762 (Ia–VIa). Then I checked these variants in subsequent editions. Variants which only occur in the intermediate editions may and will have escaped my attention. Most of them will be trivial ones. I feel confident that I have traced the quantitatively more important passages.¹¹ I have made a check in the editions intermediate between the first and the posthumous editions to see whether I have missed important passages and found none. It strikes me that Hume very seldom introduced notes or passages in the text which he then excised again. His was a persistent effort to work towards the perfect text. I hope soon to be in a position to publish my registration of the revisions to which I have referred in my table.

The percentages represent the number of important revisions in the texts of the first editions as they appeared for the first time in a particular edition. This simple (if hard won) statistic tells us the following facts:

- (1) For five of the six volumes it is clear that Hume was very busy revising his texts in the 1770 quarto and 1773 octavo editions.
- (2) A significant exception is volume V. Sixty-three percent of the revisions are concentrated in the editions before 1770. The only significant cancel relating to volume VI was also printed before 1770.
- (3) His revisionary labour did not stop with the edition of 1773. The entries for the 1778 edition prove that Hume worked on shaping his texts to his own satisfaction till the end of his life. And perhaps the most important fact this statistic reveals is the dedication which the continuous flow of revisions reveals. As I explained before, my method of comparing the first and the posthumous editions and then checking the editions in between on the basis of the variants found in my original comparison may make my statistics appear more "teleological" than they should be in fact. Yet, when we are looking at the larger notes which appear at the back of each volume, it is striking how Hume worked toward his final version. There are almost no variants that only occur in one or two editions.

This statistical overview should be supplemented with the qualitative judgment of the revisions involved. For this purpose I have used the following categories of revisions:

- 3.1 Important excisions, additions and alterations.
- 3.2 Large scale excisions probably made for editorial purposes.

They concern:

- 3.2.1 Excisions of passages about the reign of Elizabeth occurring in volume V.
- 3.2.2 Excisions of passages on the history of Scotland.
- 3.2.3 Excisions of passages on the history of the Dutch revolt.
- 3.2.4 Excisions of passages on the Italian campaigns of Francis I of France.
- 3.3 Corrections of fact.
- 3.4 Excisions and Additions, as the outcome of Hume's general editorial Policy.

Revisions in the 1770 Quarto Edition

My categories of revisions are listed in such a way that the first three categories (3.1-3.3) contain the revisions which Hume made for an express purpose or for which we can at least assume that he had a specific aim in making them. The first category of revisions is the most important one,

because they—for example, a new lengthy note on the character of Charles I—are the expression of Hume's wish to change the content of his text or to accentuate it as part of making his message more explicit and forceful. I will suggest some of the reasons why Hume deleted—often quite large—passages for editorial purposes. These excisions are not indications that Hume had changed his mind on the subject; they were made because Hume thought they had become superfluous. The reason why Hume made certain corrections of fact is obvious. As we no longer read his text for information, most of them have become trivial. They indicate, however, that Hume wanted to get his numbers right.

About the fourth category I also need to make some general remarks. In the course of the editions Hume saw through the press he took out certain passages and added others. At first sight it is not clear why he eliminated certain passages. They do not concern errors of fact nor do they indicate that Hume changed his mind. It is instructive in this respect to look at the manuscripts of the medieval volumes, the only manuscripts which survived. The manuscript is not a clean copy, though it is the one that was used for printing. It is in Hume's handwriting and shows Hume's corrections, his excisions and additions to the text. We don't know whether Hume worked from a draft, but as he dated his chapters we know that he wrote it so quickly that it is unlikely he made a draft first. Hume reports to Millar on 18 December 1759 that he is planning to undertake the "antient English History" (HL I 317). Chapter II, the first one dated, has March 7 (of what must be 1760) at the head of it; the last chapter has April of what must be 1761.¹² Printing started in November 1761: the rapidity of Hume's writing and Strahan's printing puts us all to shame.

So we must assume that the manuscript faithfully portrays Hume's writing method. If so, Hume wrote "aus einem Guss"; he had a wonderful facility of writing. Passages he wanted to insert were added as notes at the end of the folios on which he wrote. Looking at the notes you notice Hume's tendency to lapse into general observations. A number of them are crossed out again. This is never an indication that Hume changed his mind, for they represent Hume's general ideas.¹³

The best general reason I can think of for making excisions is that Hume wanted to write a *narrative* history and that he had constantly to remind himself of this aim.¹⁴ But Hume could not resist the impulse of making these general observations. So he developed the strategy of relegating them to large notes which after 1770 appeared at the back of each volume. Most of them deal with manners, customs, and prices. Every reader of the *History* knows the celebrated note on the household book of the Earl of Northumberland who lived at the turn of the fifteenth to the sixteenth century. It was added in 1773 and is representative of many notes and added passages in the text. Hume uses the example to make the point that even for the highest in the land the diet was poor, dwellings uncomfortable and living conditions miserable and dirty

(III note C 469). Many of the additions were made in the Appendices which in 1778 had grown into social histories in their own right.

Important Alterations, Additions, and Excisions

Some notes stick out which were altered and added to in such a manner that they are in a category of their own. They are long notes and they deal with important issues in English history.

Important alterations or additions which occur in the 1770 editions are a rewritten note in III, an added note on Mary Stuart's guilt in IV, two revisions connected with Charles I's reputation and an alteration in VI which may possibly indicate that Hume revised his text under the influence of the Wilkes affair.

In III, Hume considerably enlarged note A on the pretender Perkin during the reign of Henry VII, because as he explained at the end of the note Horace Walpole had published his *Historic Doubts concerning Richard III*. The enlarged version appeared for the first time in 1770 (III 63.21, note A 465-469; 1770[3] 408.21 note 479-483).

In IV, he added another note on Mary's guilt or innocence in 1770. In 1773 he added the celebrated remark to that note that there are "three events in our history, which may be regarded as touchstones of partymen. An English Whig, who asserts the reality of the popish plot, an Irish catholic, who denies the massacre in 1641, and a Scotch Jacobite, who maintains the innocence of queen Mary" (IV 115.31, note M 394-395; 1770[5] 115.20; 1773[5] 145.17, note N 503-504).

In V, Hume made many retouches in his judgment on Charles I. Some occur in the 1770 edition. Hume had written in Va "Charles, by his precipitation and oversights had brought himself to such a situation"; in Vb this became "Charles, by mistakes and oversights,..."; then in 1770 we read, "Charles had fallen into such a situation" (Va 234.14; Vb, 224.23; 1770[6], 378.13). Another excision in the same vein was made at V 306.26. Hume had written that "the true rule of government" was not "steddiness" or "facility," but a "judicious mixture of both." 1770[6], 433.6 provides the excision which is the final version.

Giarizzo has written that Hume changed his view of the Whig party because of the Wilkes affair.¹⁵ His rewriting of his comment on the Whig party in VI may point at this change of opinion. He had written in 1757:

And because the ruling party had obtained an advantage over their antagonists in the philosophical disputes concerning some of their general principles; they thence assumed a right to impose on the public their account of all particular transactions, and to represent the other party as governed entirely by the lowest and most vulgar prejudices. (VIa 445.30/34)

In 1770 this became:

And forgetting that a regard to liberty, though a laudable passion, ought commonly to be subordinate to a reverence for established government, the prevailing faction has celebrated only the partizans of the former, who pursued as their object the perfection of civil society, and has extolled them at the expence of their antagonists, who maintained those maxims, that are essential to its very existence. (240.8/14; cf. VI, 533.31/37)

This alteration was, however offset by many revisions also occurring in the 1770 edition in which Hume added to his criticism of Charles II. And it is doubtful that Hume revised his text under the influence of contemporary events.¹⁶ Another revision he made in 1770 was that he banished an important observation on the evolution of the relationship between authority and liberty to a note at the back. The reason for this change of place of note J I have already given in another context (see note 14): Hume wanted to avoid "the style of dissertation in his History."

Hume is not reacting to events, but is concerned that his text will have the maximum impact. In this case he feels that this long observation obstructs the narrative and so he reduces it to a note even though it provides an apt commentary on Wilkes and the London "mob" that supported him.

The greater number of alterations and additions that Hume made to underscore particular points were made before 1770. Many of the 63 percent of revisions made in Vb(1759) and Vc(1762) concern Hume's effort to retouch the portrait of Charles I. For the case I want to make in this essay it will suffice to cite only a few examples to illustrate Hume's method. In V there are two notes (GG, and KK) which deal with the King's involvement with the mission of Glamorgan to Ireland during the uprising of 1641. In the case of note GG Hume entirely rewrote it for Vb on the basis of Birch's treatise on the subject. The object of the note—revised or not—remained the same: to prove that King Charles was innocent of the attempt to win the Irish Catholics for his cause in the quarrel with Parliament (V 481.22, note GG 576-578; Vb[1759] 402.10). The text to which the note is attached was also changed between Va and Vb in such a manner that Hume made explicit that the King was innocent of any plotting with the Irish Catholics (V 480.35/481.22; Va 412.26/30; Vb 401.30/402.15). The text reached its final shape in the 1770 and the note in the 1773 edition, but the revisions in both these editions are minor stylistic ones. Note KK was published as an afterthought in the first edition of the second volume on the Stuarts, i.e., VIa. This most elaborate vindication of Charles' character was then added to the re-editions of the first volume on the Stuarts (Vb ff.). There is a steady stream of revisions in subsequent editions after 1757 till in 1773 it reached its final shape. Again the revisions in 1770 were minor ones.

In volume VI the most important set of alterations and additions was first published in a cancel of 1766. It was then included as cancel in the "title" editions of 1767 (see *infra*)—quarto as well as octavo—and then printed in this form in the 1770 and 1773 editions. Finally, in 1778, Hume added to this note important information which he derived from a publication of John Dalrymple. The subject of this note was the so-called secret provisions of the treaty of Dover. In 1757 Hume gave his reasons why these could not exist, though he thought it likely that a plan existed to subvert the constitution. When as secretary to the embassy of Lord Hertford Hume discovered that a conspiracy to effect this had existed, Hume rewrote the note. There was a formal plan to restore Catholicism in Britain, to make Charles II an absolute monarch, and to destroy the Dutch Republic (VI 286.23; VIa 238.4; CAN 238.1). Then he derived from Dalrymple the knowledge that two treaties had been signed in 1670: the secret treaty, and a sham treaty that did not contain the clause on the King's conversion to Catholicism. This was done to dupe the Protestant ministers, Buckingham, Lauderdale, and Ashley.

Hume made excisions of two passages dealing with Protestants and Catholics.¹⁷ These were made in Vb. Hume developed a tendency to avoid giving unnecessary offense with sneers on the "fanaticism" of the Protestants and the "bigotry" of the Catholics. The excisions of these passages may have been part of this policy. Enough offensive passages stayed in place to demonstrate that Hume did not change his mind on the subject. In the 1770 edition Hume made one long excision of this nature. He originally wrote in a note that a criticism of the abuses of religion is not necessarily a proof of irreligion (VI 539.33; VIa(1757) 449.34; 1770[8] 348.14). It is a strongly worded note and perhaps the reason for its excision is again his general policy to tone down his criticism of certain religious beliefs.

The survey of this category of alterations, additions, and excisions shows two things. First, though it is evident that Hume made some major revisions in the 1770 edition, they are not as important as the ones he undertook in earlier editions. Second, all these revisions were in line with an editorial policy he had developed before he undertook to revise the 1770 edition. To answer the question why Hume preferred this edition to the edition of 1763, we must look at the other revisions.

Excisions of Passages about the Reign of Elizabeth

Hume took out passages about the reign of Elizabeth because, as he explained at V 124 in a note, the publication of the Tudor volumes would make them repetitive. All but one were made in Vb. The last, possibly overlooked, was made in the 1778 edition.

Excisions of Passages on the History of Scotland

Robertson published his *History of Scotland* in 1759. This work possibly caused Hume to cancel largely descriptive passages on the subject. Concerning volume III, the excisions occur in IIIb, 1773(2), and 1778(2). Concerning volume V, they occur in Vb. None occur in 1770.

Excisions of Passages on the History of the Dutch Revolt

Concerning volume IV, one excision on the Dutch revolt was made in 1770, and concerning volume V, excisions were made in Vb, Vc, 1770, and 1773. I cannot think of a reason why Hume took out these passages, but they are clearly part of a deliberate editorial policy.

Excisions of Passage on the Italian Campaigns of Francis I of France

Most of Hume's excisions relating to the Italian campaigns concern volume III and were made in 1773; an additional passage was excised in 1778. A probable reason for these excisions was the publication of Robertson's *History of the Reign of the Emperor Charles V*, which appeared in 1769. Some months later Hume's 1770 quarto edition was printed, which evidently then was published too early to make the necessary adjustments. So these were made in 1773.

A survey of these excisions shows that the 1770 edition is almost devoid of them and again we must conclude that Hume's approval of this edition must rest on other grounds.

Corrections of Fact

Hume's discovery of the secret provisions of the Treaty of Dover was of course a major correction, but the example in the 1770 edition is trivial. Hume originally had associated the colour blue with the emerald and green with the sapphire; at 1770[2] 64.6/7 he changed colours.

Excisions and Additions

Most of the revisions made in 1770 fall within category 4.4.¹⁸ To quote some of the examples: In I Hume added note R (I 496) on the prices of livestock in the reign of Henry II, and he quoted the conclusion of the author of the *Miroir des justices* that during the period of the Anglo-Norman government, "laws are oftener dictated by will than founded on right" (I 484.7, addition to a note, see 1770[2] 142.17). In II, in what became note D, the first part was rewritten for the 1770 edition to make it more explicit that long after the Magna Carta the Commons had had no legislative authority (II, note D 529;

IIa 91.23; 1770[2] 288.1 [note not at the back of the volume]). And to end this enumeration of examples of additions made in the 1770 edition, Hume added the following line after his report of Rochester's remark that Charles "never said a foolish thing nor ever did a wise one":

When the king was informed of this saying, he observed, that the matter was easily accounted for: For that his discourse was his own, his actions were the ministry's. (VI 447.27/29; 1770[8] 223.19)

In the 1770 edition, Hume cancelled a severe judgment on a statute of Elizabeth which made doubting the Act of Supremacy treason (IV 62.4; IVa 453.17/19; 1770[5] 80.3). In III, the story that Henry Tudor went to visit St. Paul's after his victory, was taken out in 1770 (III 8.26; IIIa 5.31/34; 1770[3] 335.10). In II Hume had speculated on the Salic Law in France in the first edition. In the edition of 1770 it was cancelled (II 255.31; IIa 217.25/27; 1770[2] 489.18). In volume I no excision of note belonging to this category occurred in the edition of 1770.

Why did Hume cancel these passages and add other ones? I have already suggested the answer. To avoid the obstruction of the narrative flow of his *History* he pruned his text to avoid side issues and anecdotes distracting the reader's attention. But he kept adding to his text in notes, and appendices. The end product of this revisory labour is curious. One could say that it is as if Hume wrote two histories in one to express the fact that there is almost no link between the *political* and the *social* history. In the political history Hume unabashedly uses the (Enlightenment) value judgments of his time, most notoriously on religious issues and beliefs; he uses his social history, however, to emphasize the fact that until a recent period Englishmen had a dim view of constitutional proprieties; that reigning monarchs, particularly the Tudors, did everything to frustrate the expansion of commerce; and that kings and subjects only very gradually learned from abroad what refinement of taste means. Hume adopted an historicist attitude in his social history—interpreting customs and manners as part of the situations and beliefs of the past—which is notoriously lacking in his political history. But it is more relevant to point out that his social history served the general purpose of his *History* by debunking a *laudatio temporis acti*, and that his use of social history was in line with the tendency of his political history to belittle the notion of a golden past, which many Whig writers past and contemporary treasured.

What does the evidence of the revisions made for the first time in the edition of 1770 suggest?

(1) Even on the basis of the examples given so far, it is reasonable to conclude that the revisions in the categories I distinguished portray Hume as a writer whose first priority was to clarify his original text, not to change it. His revisionary labour for the 1770 edition fits this picture.

(2) Even so, the major revisions reported in category (4.1), which involved major decisions on Hume's part to change his text, are clearly underrepresented in this edition. Many of these occur in volume V and were already made in Vb (i.e. 1759).

(3) If Hume nevertheless was particularly satisfied with this edition (and the next one of 1773), it indicates that all his revisions are part of his effort to get his original message across. Hence the massive attention to style and the shift to a certain manner of elaboration of detail.

(4) The change of the note on the secret provisions to the treaty of Dover, to which I now turn, is a case in point.

The Quarto and Octavo 1767 Editions

I have carefully checked the 1767 octavo edition, and except for the cancels occurring in volumes 7 and 8 it is identical with the 1763 edition and to such an extent that the variants which are the purpose of my study occur at identical lines in the page. The beginning and end of all pages also have words which are identical. These facts suggest that the sheets of the 1763 editions were used. There are other indications for this. First of all, each volume has a title page as cancel. Secondly, the printer's errors and idiosyncrasies, which already have been mentioned, corroborate the fact that we are dealing with sheets printed in 1763.¹⁹

Volume I to VI of the 1767 quarto edition refer to the 1762 reprints (Ib, IIb, IIIb, IVb, Vc and VIc). In fact they are these editions made up with new title pages, as a number of identical misprints make clear.²⁰ The comparison of Vc and 1767q involves the special problem that the University of Chicago Library (and the Houghton Library at Harvard) have a copy of volume V printed in 1763: Vd. It was a new offprint, as can be shown by certain printing peculiarities;²¹ these peculiarities confirm that 1767q conforms to Vc.

So in the case of both 1767 editions, sheets were used of earlier editions. They are thus "mock" editions. Yet in another sense they deserve the epithet which was printed on the title pages: "A New Edition with Corrections and some Additions," a phrase somewhat different from the usual one occurring in other editions ("A New Edition Corrected"), because of the cancel which brought Hume's important new discovery on the secret provisions of the treaty of Dover.

Did Hume know about these editions? Soon after his arrival in Paris Hume reported to William Robertson that he had "made great discoveries," because he had been able to read the manuscript memoirs of King James II which were kept in the Scots College (HL I 417). The same day he wrote to Millar that because of his discoveries "I shall be able to make use of them for improving & correcting many Passages of my History, in case of a new Edition" (HL II

418). A few months later Hume writes to his publisher:

I shall send you from hence [his sister's address in Edinburgh], the Alterations, which my Perusal of K. James's Memoirs has occasioned. They are not many; but some of them, one in particular, is of Importance. (HL I 444)

This is undoubtedly a reference to the note I have discussed.²² It is the closest we get to a reference to the cancels printed separately in 1766. There is no direct mention of them or of the 1767 editions in Hume's published correspondence. He must have known about the cancels because he wrote them, and possibly he knew about Millar's method of making new editions by using old sheets. Perhaps this was the reason for his rage, not because he disapproved of the practice, but because in his eyes it meant that the "abominable" 1763 edition still had pride of place, notwithstanding the fact that it now incorporated the 1766 cancel in an octavo and quarto printing.²³

The "moral" of this tale on the 1767 editions is a spectacular one. Hume had made an important archival discovery—his only one. Instead of being happy that the abundance of the 1763 sheets afforded him the opportunity to include this discovery in the text of his *History* as soon as possible, he focused his rage on the fact that this abundance did not allow him to make *other* revisions, which as we have seen almost all had to do with grooming his *History* and not with changing its tendency. In fact, Hume's change of the note itself confirms this conclusion.

The remarkable thing is that Hume did not change his verdict on Charles. He was too indolent and pleasure seeking to see the serious implications of his scheme, which Hume condemned as being totally against the national interest, but—what is more—revealed "an absolute want of common sense" (VI 286-288, line 27 in the note on 287). Before he discovered the secret provisions Hume had already decided that the policy was foolish and that it was another proof of Charles' weak character. Is this not a remarkably cool and low-keyed reaction to the behaviour of a king betraying his country? Suppose that Charles had succeeded in his policy and had been able to turn England into an absolute monarchy ruled by a Catholic king whose power was backed by a standing army (to mention three items which almost any contemporary Englishman would find horrible even to contemplate). How would Hume then have reacted? Perhaps he was right in dismissing the secret provisions as a hare-brained scheme, but what about Charles himself? We only can conclude that the sensational revelations had no impact on his judgment of Charles. Hume used new facts to sustain old arguments.²⁴

Conclusion

This complicated story leads me to the following conclusions:

- (1) The “abominable” edition of 1763 was only “abominable” because it was a derivative one and Millar printed too many sheets.
- (2) Whether Hume knew about the existence of the 1767 editions we do not know, but he must have known that the existence of the 1763 sheets afforded the inclusion of his cancels about the secret provisions of the treaty of Dover at the earliest opportunity.
- (3) He did not care, because his mind was not set on making historical discoveries, but on polishing the message as he originally had conceived it. Hume had set down the scheme of the *narrative political* history already in the first editions, and he shifted his interest more to *analytical social* history. I wrote that this *social* history has the function of debunking any attempt at a *laudatio temporis acti*, but we can also add that these new facts and details of his *social* history by their nature did not question his scheme for the *political* history as he had conceived it to start with. All Hume had to do was to see to it that the new facts did not obstruct the flow of his narrative. We have seen that Hume was aware of the problem.

The revisions made in the 1770 edition must be interpreted in the light of this explanation. The excisions serve the narrative, the additions add to the social history. The time for the important alterations which—as we have seen—were major efforts to elucidate Hume’s original intentions had passed. In his comfortable retirement in Edinburgh, Hume turned his full attention to further polishing the text of his *History*, and his situation explains both why the number of important revisions grew and why Hume was particularly satisfied with these revisions. Hume never fundamentally changed his historical judgment on any issue, but at times used new methods of reaching his verdict.

- (4) And so his angry outburst that the deceit of Millar had caused him—among other reasons—to discontinue his *History* has some logic to it. Hume was so overconscious of the risk of being misunderstood that he shuddered to think that he would not have the time to revise his future work if he moved into the troubled waters of the reigns of William and Mary, and of Queen Anne, let alone the Hanoverian kings.

Appendix I

*A Survey of the Editions which Appeared During Hume's Lifetime or
which Contained his Revisions*

As is well known, Hume wrote his *History* backwards, starting with the Stuarts and ending with the Medieval volumes. The volumes seen by him through the press have the following sequence (in using Va etc., I am following the nomenclature used by W. B. Todd*):

| | | | | |
|----------|-------------------------|--------------|-----------|---------------|
| Va(1754) | | | | |
| | VIa(1757) | | | |
| Vb(1759) | Vib(1759) | IIIa(1759) | IVa(1759) | |
| Vc(1762) | Vic(1762) ²⁵ | IIIb(1762) | IVb(1762) | IA +IIa(1762) |
| | | | | IB +IIb(1762) |
| Vd(1763) | | | | |
| | | IIIc(1764) | IVc(1764) | |
| | CANVI(1766) | | | |
| | | 1763(octavo) | 8 vols | |
| | | 1767(octavo) | 8 vols | |
| | | 1767(quarto) | 6 vols | |
| | | 1770(quarto) | 8 vols | |
| | | 1773(octavo) | 8 vols | |
| | | 1778(octavo) | 8 vols | |

* See W. B. Todd, "David Hume. A Preliminary Bibliography," W. B. Todd, *Hume and the Enlightenment* (Edinburgh/Austin 1974), 189-205.

In the text I will use I-VI to indicate the LibertyClassics reprint of the 1778 edition (Indianapolis 1985, foreword by W. B. Todd. A number of misprints have been corrected in the CD-Rom version published by Intellex in Charlottesville, VA). This reprint was published in six volumes conforming to the numbering of the 1762 reprints. For the quarto reprints of separate volumes I will use Todd's nomenclature. The collective sets are indicated by their date of publication; 67q indicates the quarto set published in 1767; page x line y is written as x.y; volumes within the collective sets are indicated as 1770, vol. 1 = 1770[1].

Appendix II

*Hume's Major Revisions in Percentages of the Total Number
of Revisions per Volume.**

| | Ia(62) | IIa(62) | IIIa(59) | IVa(59) | Va(54) | VIa(57) |
|------------|--------|---------|----------|---------|--------|---------|
| Ib(1762) | 6 | | | | | |
| IIb(1762) | | 2 | | | | |
| IIIb(1762) | | | 15 | | | |
| IVb(1762) | | | | 23 | | |
| Vb(1759) | | | | | 38 | |
| Vc(1762) | | | | | 25 | |
| VIa(1757) | | | | | 0,4 | |
| VIb(1759) | | | | | | 7 |
| VIc(1762) | | | | | | 24 |
| 1763 | | | | | | |
| CAN | | | | | | 4 |
| 1770 | 19 | 32 | 15 | 44 | 14 | 33 |
| 1773 | 61 | 46 | 57 | 15 | 14 | 9 |
| 1778 | 15 | 20 | 13 | 19 | 10 | 23 |
| N=100 | 54 | 50 | 79 | 62 | 267 | 130 |

*I have left out 1767 and 1767q, which except for the cancels are title editions, and Vd(1763), which though a reprint is almost identical to Vc(1762).

NOTES

1 J.Y.T. Greig, ed., *The Letters of David Hume*, 2 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1932). Cited parenthetically in text as HL.

2 Manuscript from the British Library, 48800 Add, p.151b, entry for August 1766.

3 National Library of Scotland Ms 23156.

4 Strahan, who had admitted to Hume that he had joined Millar in deceiving him (HL II 219, n.1), put up a spirited defense and told Hume that neither he nor Cadell (Millar's successor) had ever deceived Hume since that one occasion on the subject of the further sales of the 1763 edition. In fact, he wrote there were only 76 copies left. He had done everything in his power to persuade ("or if you please, to seduce") Hume to continue his History. Whether it was wise to press this advice time will tell. "I know I meant well; that to me is great cause of satisfaction" (HL II 360).

5 See 1773, vol.5, p. 13 = 139; p. 204 = 205; p. 70 = 370; and vol.6: p. 0 = 80, p. 30 = 139; p. 382 is missing. This, at least, is the case in the copy of the British

Library. In the copy I recently bought myself only one misprint remains: vol. 5, p. 70 = p. 370. Such is the hazard of eighteenth-century books!

6 My definition of the “more important revisions” is as follows. I have selected from my notes all the excisions, additions and alterations of a sentence or more. To these I have added those revisions of words or passages of less than a sentence which—according to my judgment—change the meaning of the text.

7 According to Strahan’s ledgers, the second edition of the Medieval volumes Ib and Iib were printed in December 1762; the first edition is of November 1761. Todd (198) mentions that the second printing is in the New York Public Library and the National Library of Australia. The copy in the New York Public Library, however, is of the first edition. My findings are based on the copy in the National Library of Australia (the second printing of the Medieval volumes is in a set with the shelfmark Cam.440) and I wish to thank the staff who provided me with a microfilm of this set.

8 Excepting the rewriting of the *Treatise* in the form of the two *Enquiries*—which texts were (most of them) indeed rewritten—Hume’s method of making revisions is that of a “scissors and paste” man. He uses the original text as the base of his revisions, adds to it, deletes certain words and passages and rewrites others.

9 In the National Library of Scotland a proof reading by Hume was bound up with Henry Grey Graham, *Scottish Men of Letters in the Eighteenth Century* (London, 1901) (MS. 1703 A); it is a sheet of the second volume of the octavo edition (referred to as chapter XI, which should be chapter X, sheet starting with signature E) bound between pages 42 and 43. All of the revisions can be found in the 1778 edition for the first time except one. On page 56.6, the “church which” is changed to the “church who.” This revision was not taken up (cf. I 420.19) and shows how Hume in his preoccupation with revising could make mistakes. All of the revisions concern minor stylistic changes.

10 An important restriction on the reliability of the count in this chapter is my method of collation as explained in the text. Variants which only occur in editions between the first editions and the 1778 posthumous edition will have escaped my attention. I have also ignored spelling variants.

11 I cannot guarantee that I have found all the excisions, additions or alterations of the length of a sentence, but if these pertain to—say—five sentences or more, I would be surprised if I have missed any.

12 Last chapter in the manuscript, that is. Appendix II and chapters XXXI-XXXIII are missing. The manuscript is in the National Library of Scotland.

13 The compositor has written the signatures in the margin, when he started a new sheet. Here is an example of one of Hume’s excisions. In the sentence before the crossed out passage the king’s justice Roger de Thurkesby exclaims: “*Alas! What times are we fallen into? Behold, the civil court is corrupted in imitation of the ecclesiastical, and is poisoned from that fountain.*” [IIa(1762)17]. The manuscript then continues: *that fountain*. [The Reasonings of Lawyers, more than the Restraints of Law, set afterwards some Bounds to the King’s Dispensing Power and determin’d, that it neither cou’d permit what was in

itself morally Evil, nor invade the Rights of Individuals: Limitations which the Pope never would submit to: But as this Prerogative of the Crown, even with such Mitigations, was judged to be inconsistent with any regular Establishment of Liberty, it was very reasonably abolished by the Bill of Rights after the Revolution.](Second folio volume, folio 7 recto.10/16. For excisions and additions I use the symbols []; for alterations the symbols << >>. For an identification of the editions, see Appendix I.)

14 See, for example, note J, V 556-559. At the end Hume wrote: "This Note was in the first editions a part of the text; but the author omitted it, in order to avoid, as much as possible, the style of dissertation in the body of his history. The passage however, contains views so important, that, he thought it might be admitted as a note." This note expresses his general aim as well as his temptation to deviate from it. It appeared as a note for the first time in 1770(6) 608-611; the remark just quoted started to appear in the 1778 edition.

15 G. Giarizzo, *David Hume Politico E Storico* (Torino: Einaudi, 1962), 94.

16 I know only of one exception. See IV 373.14, where Hume added a note in the 1778 edition on the problem of a national debt. He wrote: "For, I suppose, there is no mathematical, still less an arithmetical demonstration, that the road to the Holy Land was not the road to Paradise, as there is, that the endless encrease of national debts is the direct road to national ruin. But having now compleatly reached that goal, it is needless at present to reflect on the past."

17 These were printed by Todd in his Introduction to volume I of the LibertyClassics edition.

18 The ratios of categories [4.1-4.3] to category [4.4.] in terms of number of revisions are: Ia 1:18; IIa 0:32; IIIa 1:14, IVa 2:42; Va 3:11; VIa 2:7.

19 On page 386 in the same volume, the 6 in the 1767 edition is standing higher and not on line with the 3 and 8. This irregularity does not exist in the 1763 edition. Is this an irregularity that occurred during the printing process?

20 IIIb and 1767q 149.6 have "evidents" which should be "evident"; IIIb and 1767q have page number 135 which should be 235; Vc and 1767q have the misprint "mainained" which should be "maintained"; the printing of page number 120 is defective in both editions.

21 So Vc 12.21 has "mainained," Vd "maintained," Vc 9 has "A parliament" in the margin, Vd, "A parlia-{next line} ment"; Todd suggests there is also a VI d. I could not find this copy in the Library of the University of Chicago Library or the Houghton Library.

22 Greig curiously enough maintains that Hume made no significant changes because of his discoveries. He obviously missed the note on VI 286.23. See HL II 444, n. 1. Other references to King James's memoirs are made in Hume's letter to Millar of 18 April, 1764 (HL I 433-434), and in his letters to the Earl of Hardwicke, HL I 453-455 and 459-461.

23 The octavo cancel is bound with an edition printed in Dublin in 1769 [shelfmark: Vet.A5e 5312, 1-8] available in the Bodleian. The London editions of the *History of England* were followed shortly after by a Dublin edition. (The first Dublin set is in eleven volumes and is made up of earlier editions—1755 for part of V; the other separate volumes for part of V and VI are nowhere

mentioned; for III and IV 3 volumes were published in 1759; for I and II 4 volumes were published in 1762. Regular sets appeared in 1769, 1772, 1775, and 1780. My thanks go to Charles Benson of the New Library at Trinity College Dublin, who let me examine his set of eleven volumes. All editions are in octavo.

24 I am reasoning from the perspective of Hume. He and Dalrymple were the first, I guess, who understood the implications of the Treaty of Dover. Among modern historians Clark reaches a verdict somewhat similar to Hume's: "For this great miscalculation [that he could convince English opinion to accept his conversion to catholicism and that he could remain independent from Louis XIV] his own easy good nature, his tolerance, and his French leanings must bear the chief blame" (G. Clark, *The Later Stuarts* [Oxford: Clarendon, 1965], 77), but he also calls Charles II "a conspirator" and not a "patriot king." Haley, (in K. H. D. Haley, ed., *The Stuarts* [London: Sidwick & Jackson 1973], 146-150) argues that a personal conversion of the king did not necessarily mean a change in the religion of England. This seems not a very strong argument, because in article two, which was suppressed in the sham treaty, Louis promised Charles troops to assist him if his change of religion got him into trouble with his subjects. At any rate, Hume—following Rapin de Thoyras in this matter—believed that a change of religion was a prelude to absolutism.

25 Todd (200) mentions that Strahan registered the printing of a second volume on the Stuarts in 1763, which Todd marked IVd. The trouble with this reprint is that no one has been able to find it. It is not in the library of the University of Chicago as Todd suggested; volume VI is dated 1762 (see however *infra*). Recently, the library of the University of Groningen bought a set in which appears Vd, printed in 1763, and VI?, printed in 1762. I compared volume VI in this new set with reprints from other libraries at my disposal: a second volume of the British Library (597 h3), the National Library of Australia (Cam 400), and the corresponding volume in the quarto title edition of 1767 in the Houghton Library (EC 75 3525 Zz 167h). The conclusion must be that volume VI in our set has been printed separately from the other three, which are identical. If one examines chapter I in all these volumes, our VI (KW C876) has 11.11: "starting", and 11.12: "from". The other volume VIs have 11.11: "starting from". KW C876 has 30.19: "who had ac-", and 30.20: "cidentally joined them"; the other three have 30.19: "who had accidentally joined", 30.20: "them". So it appears that there is a VI_d after all, although it is impossible to decide as yet whether KW C876 is VI_d and BL 597 h3, EC 75 3525 Zz 167h, and Cam 400 are VI_c or the other way round. When in Chicago I was not in a position to check to which family the volume in the University Library belongs. Needless to say, to which family VI_d belongs is of no importance for checking Hume's revisions. The text in all volumes is identical.

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