During the four centuries when printed paper was the only means by which texts could be carried across time and distance, everyone engaged in politics, education, religion, and literature believed that reading helped to shape the minds, opinions, attitudes, and ultimately the actions, of readers.

William St Clair investigates how the national culture can be understood through a quantitative study of the books that were actually read. Centred on the romantic period in the English-speaking world, but ranging across the whole print era, he reaches startling conclusions about the forces that determined how ideas were carried, through print, into wider society.

St Clair provides an in-depth investigation of information, made available here for the first time, on prices, print runs, intellectual property, and readerships gathered from over fifty publishing and printing archives. He offers a picture of the past very different from those presented by traditional approaches. Indispensable to all students of English literature, book history, and the history of ideas, the study’s conclusions and explanatory models are highly relevant to the issues we face in the age of the internet.

THE READING NATION IN THE ROMANTIC PERIOD

WILLIAM ST CLAIR
Contents

List of figures page vii
List of tables ix
Acknowledgements xi
List of abbreviations xiii

1. Reading and its consequences 1
2. Economic characteristics of the printed-book industry 19
3. Intellectual property 43
4. Anthologies, abridgements, and the development of commercial vested interests in prolonging the obsolete 66
5. The high monopoly period in England 84
6. The explosion of reading 103
7. The old canon 122
8. Shakespeare 140
9. Literary production in the romantic period 158
10. Manufacturing 177
11. Selling, prices, and access 186
12. Romance 210
13. Reading constituencies 235
14. Horizons of expectations 268
15. ‘Those vile french Piracies’ 293
16. ‘Preparatory schools for the brothel and the gallows’ 307
## Contents

17. At the boundaries of the reading nation 339  
18. Frankenstein 357  
19. North America 374  
20. Reading, reception, and dissemination 394  
21. The romantic poets in the Victorian age 413  
22. The political economy of reading 433  

### Appendices

1. Markets, book production, prices, and print runs 453  
2. Intellectual property and textual controls. Custom, law and practice 480  
3. Intellectual property. Rights of authors and performers, anthologies and abridgements 490  
5. Book costs, prices, and margins. Romantic period and later 506  
6. The old canon 525  
7. Romantic period. Book production arranged by literary genre 551  
8. Periodicals 572  
9. Romantic period. Authors and texts. Publishing histories, prices, print runs, and sales 578  
10. Libraries and reading societies 665  
11. Pirate and radical publishers and publications 676  
12. Shakespeare 692  
13. The romantic poets in Victorian times 715  

**Bibliography** 724  
**Index** 743
Figures

1. An English printing shop in the age of moveable type, showing the writing, composing, type-setting, inking, drying, and pressing. From George Bickham, *The Universal Penman* (1735–41).

2. A ‘number’ sold for sixpence, 1823.

3. The old canon. First page of a four-page catalogue of Cooke’s editions of inexpensive reprints, c. 1810.

4. Frontispiece to Roach’s selection of eighteenth-century verse sold in 1792 at sixpence a part.


7. Advertisement of a provincial bookseller, late eighteenth century, showing the close links between the printed book and pharmaceutical industries. Pasted in a copy of Eliza Heywood’s *Epistles for Ladies*, property of Lloyd and Dennis’s Circulating Library, Thetford.


10. ‘The Library’. Coloured aquatint by Ackerman, 1813.


13. Printed label of Mr Ridge’s Book Society, 1817. Probably Newark. In a copy of Southey’s *Poet’s Pilgrimage to Waterloo* (1816).
List of figures

14. A Scottish child being taught to read from the family Bible. From Mrs Marshall, A Sketch of My Friend's Family (1818).


16. The government’s attempts to prevent freedom-loving Britannia from reading. From The Man in the Moon (William Hone, second edition 1820). The figures wielding the noose, axe, dagger, and chains are Wellington, Castlereagh, and Canning.

17. Advertised publications of the pirate publisher William Dugdale (1824), showing that Byron’s Don Juan and Shelley’s Queen Mab were sold cheaply alongside expensive pornography. Printed on covers of Byron’s The Prisoner of Chillon, pirated in 1822.

18. Byron’s Don Juan. Title page and portrait frontispiece of a pirate edition, the author identified by the excessively Byronic portrait, reversed from an original by Harloue.

19. Title page and illustration of Guy of Warwick, a mediaeval romance read mainly in abridged versions until the mass extinction in the romantic period.

20. Reading aloud to the family by candlelight. From A Course of Lectures for Sunday Evenings (1783).


22. ‘Catherine Macaulay in her Father’s Library’ from Clever Girls (Victorian n.d.).

All figures, except number 9 are reproduced from the author’s collection.
### Tables

3.1. Summary of the changing intellectual property regime, sixteenth to nineteenth century  
8.1. Shakespeare. Minimum prices  
8.2. Shakespeare. Market value of the intellectual property in the 'Dramatic Works', as sold at closed auction  
11.1. Representative book prices, 1810s, 1820s, retail  
11.2. An indication of the shape of the demand curves, copyrighted books, romantic period. Sales of Moore’s *Lalla Rookh*  
11.3. Rising retail price of the long romantic poem  
11.4. Steeply rising retail price of the three-volume novel  
11.5. Illustrative prices of out-of-copyright poets, 1810s and 1820s  
11.6. Prices of comparable baskets of verse reading, c. 1820, at cheapest new retail prices  
11.7. Prices of a comparable quantity of novel reading, c. 1820, at cheapest new retail prices  
12.1. Printed verse of the romantic period. Records and estimates of total book production during the period  
12.2. Individual long romantic poems. Production during the romantic period  
12.3. Novels of the romantic period. Estimated total book production during the period and later  
12.4. Individual new novels and romances. Estimated sales during the romantic period. Excluding collected editions, exports, imports, and piracies  
13.1. Characteristics of collective reading institutions  
13.2. Collective reading institutions  
13.3. Reading societies, 1821, geographical spread  
13.4. Implied multipliers, 1821  
16.1. Southey’s ‘Wat Tyler,’ all pirated
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>16.2.</td>
<td>'Don Juan,' early cantos. Prices and production</td>
<td>327</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.3.</td>
<td>'Don Juan,' whole poem, falling prices</td>
<td>330</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.4.</td>
<td>The radical canon, 1820s onwards</td>
<td>337</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22.1.</td>
<td>Author-led model</td>
<td>447</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22.2.</td>
<td>Reader-led model</td>
<td>448</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22.3.</td>
<td>Commercial and political model</td>
<td>449</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Acknowledgements


I record my warm thanks to the many individuals who have helped me during the long time when the book was in preparation and production, of which the following is an incomplete list: Bathsheba Abse, Christine Alexander, Betty Bennett, Michael Bott, Sue Bradley, Linda Bree, Rimi Chatterjee, Jonathan Clark, Peter Cochran, Stephen Colclough, Patrick Collinson, Keith Crook, Robert Darnton, Paul David, Gernot Doppelhofer, Ian Donaldson, Simon Eliot, Paula Feldman, Doucet Fischer, Ian Gadd, Stephen Gill, Abijit Gupta, Tanya Hagen, Michael Harris, Anne Henry, Boyd Hilton, Mary Hilton, Debbie Hodges,
Acknowledgements

Clive Hurst, Heather Jackson, Robin Jackson, Paulina Kewes, Ian King, Sally King, Maureen Leach, Iain McCalman, the late Don McKenzie, Irmgard Maassen, Giles Mandelbrote, Scott Mandelbrote, John Marenbon, the late Colin Matthew, James Raven, Jean Maxwell-Scott, Patricia Maxwell-Scott, John Murray, Virginia Murray, Robin Myers, Judith Pascoe, Robert Picken, Mark Reed, Charles Robinson, Richard Serjeantson, Miranda Seymour, John Simmons, Jon Stallworthy, Michael Suarez, Michael Turner, David St Clair, John St Clair, Melissa Sydeman, Marc Vaulbert de Chantilly, Stephen Wagner, Jack Wasserman, Paul Watt, Steve Weissman, Tim Whelan, Donald Winch, Karen Waring, Teresa Webber, Bill Wexler, Frances Wilson, Linda Woodward, and William Zachs.

Special thanks are due to Anne Barton, Richard Holmes, David McKitterick, Emma Rothschild, and the anonymous readers of Cambridge University Press who commented at various stages of draft.

I also wish to thank the many antiquarian and second-hand booksellers who have shared their specialist experience with me, and who, over the years, have enabled me to examine a huge range of books. Without the knowledge I have gained from them, the book could not have been attempted.

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Abbreviations

Ac  from the author’s collection of books, advertisements, other print not available or easily discoverable elsewhere, and manuscript commonplace books.


add. mss. additional manuscripts.


Altick, Writers Richard D. Altick, Writers, Readers, and Occasions (Columbus, Ohio 1980).


Arber, Transcript A Transcript of the Registers of the Worshipful Company of Stationers, 1640–1708 AD (1913).


BL British Library.

Baldick Chris Baldick, In Frankenstein’s Shadow (Oxford 1987).
List of abbreviations

Barnes and Barnes

Bennett, 1558 to 1603
H. S. Bennett, English Books and Readers 1558 to 1603 (Cambridge 1965).

Bennett, 1475 to 1557

Bennett, 1603 to 1640

Bentley, ‘Copyright Documents’

(Bennet and Clements)

Besterman

Bew

Black Book
The Black Book or Corruption Unmasked (1820).

(Blackwood)
Mrs Oliphant and Mrs Gerald Porter, William Blackwood and his Sons (Edinburgh 1897 and 1898).

Blagden

Blakey

Blanning

Blayney

Bloomfield
List of abbreviations

Blunden Edmund Blunden, Keats’s Publisher, A Memoir of John Taylor (1936).

Bodleian Bodleian Library, Oxford.


Bowyer W. Bowyer, Biographical and Literary Anecdotes of W. Bowyer, and of many of his learned friends (1782).


Bradsher Earl L. Bradsher, Mathew Carey (New York 1912).

Burney Joyce Hemslow et al., eds., The Journals and Letters of Fanny Burney (1972–).


CBAW Hugh Amory and David D. Hall, eds., The Colonial Book in the Atlantic World (Cambridge 2000).


CUL Cambridge University Library.

Cavallo and Chartier, Guglielmo Cavallo and Roger Chartier, eds., *A History of Reading in the West* (1999).

Chambers, Tim Chilcott, *A Publisher and his Circle* (1972).


Clare’s Autobiographical Writings, John Clare’s Autobiographical Writings, edited by Eric Robinson (1981).


Constable, Archibald Constable and his Literary Correspondents (Edinburgh 1873).


Cooper, The Life of Thomas Cooper Written by Himself (1872).


DNB, Dictionary of National Biography.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>List of abbreviations</th>
<th>xvii</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Duppa</td>
<td>(Richard Duppa), <em>An Address to Parliament on the Claims of Authors to Copyright</em> (1811).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESTC</td>
<td><em>English Short Title Catalogue</em>.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
List of abbreviations

in the United States of America from the Genesis of Printing in 1629 down to and including the Year 1820 (Chicago 1903).

Feather, Publishing

Feather, Publishing, Piracy, and Politics

Feldman

Fell’s Kelly
R. C. Fell, Passages from the Private and Official Life of the late Alderman Kelly (1856).

Finkelstein and McCleery

Floud and McCloskey
Roderick Floud and Donald McCloskey, eds., The Economic History of Britain since 1700 (second edition 1994).

Fontaine

Ford

Forry
Steven Earl Forry, Hideous Progenies, Dramatizations of Frankenstein from the Nineteenth Century to the Present (Philadelphia 1990).

Fox

Frost
Thomas Frost, Forty Years’ Recollections (1880).

Gadd

Garside, Raven, and Schöwerling
List of abbreviations

Geduld

Gettman
Royal A. Gettman, A Victorian Publisher, A Study of the Bentley Papers (1960).

Gilmont

Gilmore

Gilson
David Gilson, A Bibliography of Jane Austen (1982).

Glasgow
Glasgow University Library.

Gohdes
Clarence Gohdes, American Literature in Nineteenth Century England (Carbondale, Ill. 1944).

Gomme, Bibliographical Notes and Literary Curiosities
George Laurence Gomme, ed. The Gentleman’s Magazine Library, Being a Classified Collection of the Chief Contents of the Gentleman’s Magazine from 1731 to 1868 (Boston n.d., c. 1868) Volumes entitled Bibliographical Notes and Literary Curiosities and Notes.

Goodhugh

Goodrich

Graham
George MacGregor, ed., The Collected Writings of Dougal Graham (Glasgow 1883).

Green
Ian Green, Print and Protestantism in Early Modern England (Oxford 2000).

Greg, Companion

Greg and Boswell
W. W. Greg and E. Boswell, Records of the Court of the Stationers’ Company, 1576 to 1602 (1930).

Gregory
Benjamin Gregory, Autobiographical Recollections (1903).
List of abbreviations

Griest

Groom

HBA

Hackwood
Frederick William Hackwood, William Hone, His Life and Times (1912).

Hansard

Harlan

Harriette Wilson
Memoirs of Harriette Wilson (1831) Stockdale’s eight-volume edition, with much detailed additional information about the trials for piracy and libel. BL.

Herbert

Herford and Simpson

Hernlund

Houston

Hughes
Thomas Hughes, Memoir of Daniel Macmillan (1883).

Hunt, Mandelbrote, and Shell

Jackson
William A. Jackson, Records of the Court of the Stationers’ Company, 1602 to 1640 (1957).
List of abbreviations

Jerdan

John Rylands

Adrian Johns

C. R. Johnson

Francis R. Johnson

John Johnson

John O. Jordan and Robert L. Patten

Cyril Bathurst Judge

David Kaser

Paul Kaufman

Kewes, Authorship

Kewes, Plagiarism

Keir

King and Stuart

Charles Knight

Charles Knight

Henry Knox

John Johnson collection of printed ephemera, publishers’ announcements, circulating library catalogues, book club labels, book plates, and other material relating to books and reading, Bodleian.
Elizabethan Book-Pirates (Harvard 1934).
The House of Collins (1952).
The House of Warne, One Hundred Years of Publishing (1965).
The Old Printer and the Modern Press (1854).
Passages of a Working Life (1864).
‘Henry Knox and the London Book-store in Boston 1771–1774, transcriptions of
List of abbreviations

correspondence by the editor', Proceedings of Massachusetts Historical Society, June 1928.

Korte, Schneider, and Lethbridge
Barbara Korte, Ralf Schneider, and Stephanie Lethbridge, eds., Anthologies of British Poetry, Critical Perspectives from Literary and Cultural Studies (Amsterdam and Atlanta, Ga. 2000).

Kubler

Lackington

Leavis
Q. D. Leavis, Fiction and the Reading Public (1939).

Lee
(Lee, John) Memorial for the Bible Societies in Scotland (Edinburgh 1824).

Lehmann-Haupt

Liber A
Typed transcription of the unpublished Stationers' Company confidential ledger known as Liber A. Pollard papers 304, Bodleian.

Linton
W. J. Linton, James Watson, A Memoir (1880).

Linton, Memories (Lister)
William James Linton, Memories (1895).

Liveling

Livingston

Lockhart

Love

Loewenstein
Joseph Loewenstein, The Author’s Pen, Printing and the Prehistory of Copyright (Chicago 2002).

Lowndes
List of abbreviations


McDougall Warren McDougall, ‘Smugglers, Reprinters and Hot Pursuers’ in Myers and Harris, Spreading.


McGrath Alister McGrath, In the Beginning, The Story of the King James Bible (2001).


Marston E. Marston, Sketches of Some Booksellers of the Time of Dr Samuel Johnson (1902).

Mary Shelley, Letters The Letters of Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley edited by Betty T. Bennett (Baltimore 1980–8).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Authors</th>
<th>Title</th>
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<tr>
<td>Minto John A. Minto</td>
<td><em>History of the Public Library Movement in Great Britain and Ireland</em></td>
<td>1932.</td>
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<td>Moulton W. F. Moulton</td>
<td><em>The History of the English Bible</em></td>
<td>(n.d.).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Myers and Harris, ed.</td>
<td><em>Spreading the Word, The Distribution Networks of Print, 1550–1850</em></td>
<td>1990.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PMLA</td>
<td><em>Proceedings of the Modern Languages Association of America</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
List of abbreviations

Plant

Plomer, Wills
Henry R. Plomer, Abstracts from the Wills of English Printers and Stationers from 1492 to 1630 (1903).

Pomeroy

Potter

Pottinger

Raven, London Booksellers
James Raven, London Booksellers and American Customers (Charleston, SC 2002).

Raven, Export

Rees and Britton
Thomas Rees, Reminiscences of Literary London from 1779 to 1853 (1866).

Remer

Richardson
Brian Richardson, Printing, Writers and Readers in Renaissance Italy (Cambridge 1999).

Roberts
William Roberts, Memoirs of the Life and Correspondence of Mrs Hannah More (1814).

Robinson

Rogers

Rollins, Phoenix Nest

Rollins, England’s Helicon

Rose
Mark Rose, Authors and Owners (1993).
List of abbreviations

Roston


Rotemberg and Salone


Ruff


Russell’s Moore

Lord John Russell, Memoirs, Journal, and Correspondence of Thomas Moore (1853).

STC


St Clair, Godwins and Shelles


St Clair, ‘Godwin as Bookseller’


St Clair, Byron


Scherer and Ross


Select Committee

Minutes of Evidence Taken before the Select Committee on the Copyright Acts (House of Commons 1818).

Seng


Shaylor

Joseph Shaylor, The Fascination of Books with Other Papers on Books and Bookselling (1912).

SC


Shelley, Letters

List of abbreviations xxvii


Smiles Samuel Smiles, Memoir and Correspondence of the late John Murray (1891).


Southey, Life Charles Cuthbert Southey, The Life and Correspondence of Robert Southey (1850).

Sparke (Sparke, Michael) Scintilla, or A Light Broken into darke Warehouses (1641), reprinted by Arber iv. 35–8.


Tegg’s Select Library A Select Library of Books . . . now offered at greatly reduced prices, By Thomas Tegg bound in a copy of Locke’s An Essay on Human
List of abbreviations

Understanding . . with notes (Twenty-fifth edition 1825), Ac.

Thin

Thomson

Thompson
Ralph Thompson, American Literary Annals and Gift Books (New York 1916).

Ticken-Boon van Ostade
Ingrid Ticken-Boon van Ostade, ed., Two Hundred Years of Lindley Murray (Münster 1996).

Timperley

Todd

Todd and Bowden

Townley
James Townley, Biblical Anecdotes (1813).

Typographia
T.C. Hansard, Typographia (1825).

Vincent

Vizitelly
Henry Vizitelly, Glances Back Through Seventy Years (1893).

Watt

Webb

Welsh
Charles Welsh, A Bookseller of the Last Century (1885).

Wheatley
Henry B. Wheatley, Prices of Books: An Inquiry into the Changes in the Price of Books which have occurred in England at Different Periods (1898).

White
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<th>Work Title</th>
<th>Notes</th>
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