Now best known for three great novels – Tom Jones, Joseph Andrews and Amelia – Henry Fielding (1707–1754) was one of the most controversial figures of his time. Prominent first as a playwright, then as a novelist and political journalist, and finally as a justice of the peace, Fielding made a substantial contribution to eighteenth-century culture, and was hugely influential in the development of the novel as a form, both in Britain and more widely in Europe. This collection of specially commissioned essays by leading scholars describes and analyses the many facets of Fielding’s work in theatre, fiction, journalism and politics. In addition it assesses his unique contribution to the rise of the novel as the dominant literary form, the development of the law, and the political and literary culture of eighteenth-century Britain. Including a Chronology and Guide to Further Reading, this volume offers a comprehensive account of Fielding’s life and work.
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am indebted to the contributors not only for their own essays, but in many cases for valuable advice. Linda Bree, Thomas Keymer, and Peter Sabor contributed information on multiple occasions. As always, my assistant Cynthia Ingram helped mightily with the preparation of this book.
NOTE ON EDITIONS USED

Unless otherwise noted, all quotations from Fielding will be from the Wesleyan Edition of the Works of Henry Fielding, Executive Editor W. B. Coley (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967–), and page references will be to the relevant volumes of that edition. Sectional references to book, chapter, act, or scene will be provided for readers using other editions. Parenthetical references in the text will therefore give page numbers in the Wesleyan Edition, followed by book and chapter (or act and scene) numbers, e.g. 96; II. iv. The Wesleyan Edition to date includes (for full publication details, see Guide to Further Reading):

*Amelia*, ed. Martin C. Battestin
*Contributions to the Champion*, ed. W. B. Coley
*Covent-Garden Journal*, ed. Bertrand A. Goldgar
‘An Enquiry into the Causes of the Late Increase of Robbers’ and Related Writings, ed. Malvin R. Zirker
*The History of Tom Jones*, ed. Martin C. Battestin
*The Jacobite’s Journal*, ed. W. B. Coley
*Miscellanies*, vol. i, ed. Henry Knight Miller
*Miscellanies*, vol. ii, ed. Bertrand A. Goldgar and Hugh Amory
*Miscellanies*, vol. iii, ed. Bertrand A. Goldgar and Hugh Amory (includes *Jonathan Wild*)
*Plays*, vol. i, 1728–31, ed. Thomas Lockwood
*The True Patriot and Related Writings*, ed. W. B. Coley

1707  22 April, HF born at his maternal grandfather’s house, Sharpham Park, near Glastonbury, Somerset
1710  November, Sarah, the third of HF’s four sisters, born at the family estate at East Stour, Dorset
1714  Death of Queen Anne, accession of George I. Alexander Pope, *The Rape of the Lock*, published
1715–20 Pope, *The Iliad of Homer* (translation), published
1718  April, death of HF’s mother, Sarah Gould Fielding. Within a year HF’s father Edmund Fielding remarries and an acrimonious battle with Lady Gould, the children’s maternal grandmother, for the custody of the children begins
1719–24 Education at Eton. Among his fellow students is George Lyttelton, a friend and patron in HF’s later life
1721  September, birth of HF’s half-brother John, who later worked with HF and succeeded him as magistrate at Bow Street
1724  Defoe, *Roxana*, published
1724–6 Defoe, *Tour through the Whole Island of Great Britain*, published
CHRONOLOGY

1725
May, Jonathan Wild hanged at Tyburn

1725–6
Pope, *The Odyssey of Homer* (translation), published

1726
Jonathan Swift, *Gulliver’s Travels*, published

1727
Death of George I, accession of George II

1728

1729
Return to London from Leiden. April, Pope, *Dunciad, Variorum*, published

1730
*The Temple Beau* (January), *The Author’s Farce* (March), *Tom Thumb* (April), *Rape upon Rape* (later known as *The Coffee-House Politician*) (June) performed

1731
*The Tragedy of Tragedies: Or, the Life and Death of Tom Thumb the Great* (March), *The Letter-Writers* (March), *The Welsh Opera* (April) performed; *The Grub-Street Opera* rehearsed but not performed

1732
*The Lottery* (January), *The Modern Husband* (February), *The Covent-Garden Tragedy* (June), *The Old Debauchees* (June), *The Mock-Doctor* (from Molière, June) performed

1733
February, *The Miser* (from Molière) performed

1734
*The Intriguing Chambermaid* (January), *Don Quixote in England* (April) performed. November, marriage to Charlotte Cradock at Charlcombe, just outside Bath

1735
*An Old Man Taught Wisdom* (January), *The Universal Gallant* (February) performed

1736

1737
*Eurydice* (February), *The Historical Register for the Year 1736* (March), *Eurydice Hiss’d* (April) performed. Passing of Licensing Act, effectively ending HF’s career as a playwright. HF becomes a law student in the Middle Temple
Edits the *Champion*, a paper politically opposed to Walpole

June, called to the Bar. *The Military History of Charles XII, King of Sweden*, by M. Gustavus Adlerfeld (HF translation) published. Colley Cibber, *An Apology for the Life of Mr. Colley Cibber, Comedian*, and Samuel Richardson's novel *Pamela* published. December, beginning of the War of Austrian Succession, which continues until 1748

April, *An Apology for the Life of Mrs. Shamela Andrews*, HF’s parody of Cibber’s *Apology* and especially Richardson’s *Pamela*, published anonymously. December, sequel to *Pamela* (vols. iii and iv), published. HF seems to break with Opposition and to side with Walpole’s government


February, *The Wedding-Day* performed. April, *Miscellanies* published in three volumes, including poems, plays, essays, the otherworldly fiction *A Journey from this World to the Next*, and, occupying the whole of the third volume, *The History of the Life of the Late Mr. Jonathan Wild the Great*. October, Pope, *The Dunciad, in Four Books* (final version), published


The ‘Forty Five’, the invasion by the ‘Young Pretender’ Prince Charles Edward Stuart attempting to restore the long-exiled Stuart monarchy with the aid of Jacobite supporters in Britain. November 1745 to June 1746, HF edits *The True Patriot*, a pro-Hanoverian paper opposing the rebellion

April, final defeat of the Jacobites at Culloden
CHRONOLOGY

1747
April, Sarah Fielding’s *Familiar Letters between the Principal Characters in ‘David Simple’ and Some Others* published, with a Preface and some other contributions from HF. November, marries Mary Daniel, formerly his first wife’s maid, now pregnant with his child. December 1747–November 1748, HF edits *The Jacobite’s Journal*. December 1747, the first part of Richardson’s novel *Clarissa* published.

1748

1749

1750
February, the opening of the Universal Register Office, a clearing house for employment, sales, exchange and property transactions, managed by HF and his half-brother John. July 1750–January 1751, three of HF’s four sisters die in London. 1750–2, Samuel Johnson’s *The Rambler* published.

1751

1752
January–November, edits *Covent-Garden Journal*.

1753
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1754</td>
<td>March, revised edition of <em>Jonathan Wild</em> published. HF’s health, poor for several years, deteriorates to the extent that he has to resign his office as magistrate. June–August, HF travels to Lisbon in hopes the Portuguese air would improve his health. 8 October, dies at Junqueira near Lisbon.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1755</td>
<td>February, the <em>Journal of a Voyage to Lisbon</em> published</td>
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