Jonathan Swift lived through a period of turbulence and innovation in the evolution of the book. His publications, perhaps more than those of any other single author, illustrate the range of developments that transformed print culture during the early Enlightenment. Swift was a prolific author and a frequent visitor at the printing house, and he wrote as critic and satirist about the nature of text. The shifting moods of irony, complicity and indignation that characterize his dealings with the book trade add a layer of complexity to the bibliographic record of his published works. The essays collected here offer the first comprehensive, integrated survey of that record. They shed new light on the politics of the eighteenth-century book trade, on Swift's innovations as a maker of books, on the habits and opinions revealed by his commentary on printed texts, and on the reshaping of the Swiftian book after his death.

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JONATHAN SWIFT AND THE EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY BOOK

EDITED BY
PADDY BULLARD
and
JAMES McLAVERTY
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Preface

This volume gathers together twelve new essays on the history of the book in the eighteenth century, focused on the satirist and churchman Jonathan Swift. The phrase ‘history of the book’, as it is usually understood today, is an umbrella term that covers a range of distinct disciplines and research practices. Some forms of book history have practical, material concerns, while others are more abstract. Some of them fall within the pale of literary history, where the ‘single author’ approach that we have adopted in this volume is common. Others involve the study of social, commercial and mechanical phenomena that are far removed from the world of the solitary writer, scribbling away in the isolation of his or her study. On the empirical side there is the work of descriptive and technical bibliographers; of social historians investigating the print shop, guild or publisher’s firm; of legal historians concerned with censorship or the history of copyright; and of library historians interested in the ordering of books. Tending more towards the sphere of ideas there is the work of editors, textual critics and theorists of hermeneutics interested in the text as intentional form. In practice, however, many involved in the history of the book produce work from across this spectrum of scholarly enterprise. In this collection we have tried to integrate the broadest possible range of book history methods in the study of a single author and, in each essay, to let sparks of insight play between the disciplines.

A range of recent research has concentrated on late seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century print culture, and on parallel developments in the world of manuscript circulation. Jonathan Swift (1667–1745) witnessed the dawn of modern authorship, and his career as a writer coincided with a period of rapid change in the print trade. These years saw the advent of modern fixed-term copyright, the professionalization of authorship, the emergence of female professional writers, the rise of Works by living literary authors and the gradual passing of an earlier culture of manuscript publication, among other crucial developments in the history of
print. The importance of this period to book history had been emphasized in recent work by Paul Baines, Maureen Bell, Roger Chartier, Robert Darnton, Margaret Ezell, John Feather, Adrian Johns, Harold Love, Paula McDowell, Don McKenzie, Lisa Maruca, James Raven and Pat Rogers, to name only a few of its most prominent commentators. The vibrancy of this field of inquiry is represented most conspicuously by the recent publication of *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain: Volume V, 1695–1830*, edited by Michael F. Suarez SJ and Michael L. Turner (Cambridge University Press, 2009). Until now, however, no comprehensive account of Jonathan Swift’s uniquely complicated involvement with this scene has been attempted.

But why focus a study of eighteenth-century book history on a single author when so many crucial aspects of that history – the manufacturing and supply of paper, for example, or the warehousing of printed books – were simply beyond the sphere of any writer’s influence? The case for using Jonathan Swift as the frame for book history is made at length in the introduction below. To sum it up, Swift was not only an author who operated with unusual knowledge and skill within the print trade. He also left behind him a major body of writing in which textual complications are deeply entangled with material expression. It is the intelligence with which that entanglement has been contrived by the author himself that makes his work a compelling subject for historians of the book. There are circumstantial reasons for the Swiftian focus as well. The editors of this volume were able to call upon a network of researchers working at the moment on textual criticism and book history specifically related to Swift. Much of this research is connected with the on-going *Cambridge Edition of the Works of Jonathan Swift*, 18 vols. (Cambridge University Press, 2008–), and with the range of publications (including the journal *Swift Studies*) and the series of *Proceedings* of the Münster symposia on Swift produced by scholars associated with the Ehrenpreis Centre for Swift Studies at the Westfälische Wilhelms-Universität, Münster. *Jonathan Swift and the Eighteenth-Century Book* grows out of this rich field of collaboration and investigation.

During the writing and assembly of this volume the editors have accumulated many particular debts of gratitude. We would like to thank the staff of the Upper Reading Room and of Special Collections at the Bodleian Library, Oxford, for their courteous and efficient assistance. We also wish to thank Janine Barchas, Marie-Lise Spieckermann, Michael F. Suarez SJ and James Woolley for their help with the planning of the project. Our two anonymous readers at Cambridge University Press offered detailed
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Abbreviations


*CWJS*  *Cambridge Edition of the Works of Jonathan Swift* (2008–)


*ECCO*  *Eighteenth Century Collections Online* (Thomson Gale, online subscription database)


*ESTC*  *English Short Title Catalogue*


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Abbreviations

GT
Jonathan Swift, *Gulliver’s Travels*

Johns, Piracy

JSt (1948)

Karian, Print and Manuscript

Library and Reading, Part 1

Münster (date)

Pollard, Dictionary
Abbreviations


SSstud  Swift Studies

Swift–Pope Miscellanies  Miscellanies in Prose and Verse, 4 vols. (1727–32)


