

## *Introduction*

### *'History Now Is the Favourite Reading'*

The story of John Stuart Mill's precocious childhood 'predilection' for reading history books is quite well known. By the age of eight, he had read 'a great number' of histories, including the works of Enlightenment luminaries Edward Gibbon, David Hume and William Robertson, taking 'notes on slips of paper' so that he could make daily reports to his father on what he had learned. His 'greatest delight', he recalled, was Robert Watson's eminently instructive biographies of Spanish monarchs Philip II and Philip III, where 'the heroic defence of the Knights of Malta against the Turks, and of the revolted Provinces of the Netherlands against Spain, excited in me an intense and lasting interest'. While these works were read as 'a voluntary rather than a prescribed exercise', Mill's father also made him read 'many books which would not have interested me sufficiently to induce me to read them of myself', amongst them John Millar's technically challenging *Historical View of the English Government* (1787). Before his twelfth birthday in 1818, he had graduated to another 'voluntary exercise, to which throughout my boyhood I was much addicted', which was

what I called writing histories. I successively composed a Roman History, picked out of Hooke; an Abridgement of the Antient Universal History; a History of Holland, from my favourite Watson and an anonymous compilation; and in my eleventh and twelfth year I occupied myself with writing what I flattered myself was something serious. This was no less than a History of the Government, compiled (with the assistance of Hooke) from Livy and Dionysius . . . My father encouraged me in this useful amusement, though, as I think judiciously, he never asked to see what I wrote; so that I did not feel that in writing it I was accountable to any one, nor had the chilling sensation of being under a critical eye.<sup>1</sup>

Book historians generally treat such anecdotal accounts of reading experiences with extreme caution. As William St Clair rightly points out, 'they

<sup>1</sup> Mill, *Autobiography*, pp. 6–10.

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can never be, at best, anything beyond a tiny, randomly surviving, and perhaps highly unrepresentative, sample of the far larger total acts of reception which were never even turned into words in the mind of the reader let alone recorded in writing'.<sup>2</sup> When reading experiences have generated written accounts in the past, these records have tended to be produced in unusual circumstances by highly unusual readers. In this instance, our reader was quite obviously a boy of exceptional mental capacities, whose father was uncommonly committed to subjecting his children – and his precocious eldest child in particular – to a Lockean approach to domestic education, nurturing them from 'blank slates' to useful and productive citizens.<sup>3</sup> Still more disconcerting, we are in this instance looking at a recollection written some forty years after the fact, published in an autobiography that one noted expert has termed 'a somewhat disingenuous work', which 'left out as much as it revealed'.<sup>4</sup> It would therefore be unwise to extrapolate too far from John Stuart Mill's exuberant memories of reading Watson's *History of Philip II* (1777) as a boy, or indeed from what he claimed about his exceptionally critical method of processing historical literature.

Notwithstanding the fact that we are dealing here with one of the brightest minds in British intellectual history, the central contention of this book is that there was much about John Stuart Mill's childhood history reading that was, in fact, quite common. Historical knowledge was throughout this period acquired at home through reading, rather than through learning in the classroom. Readers habitually kept rigorous notes on their reading, often under the close supervision of a parent, sibling, tutor or friend. They talked about their reading with those around them, sharing favourite stories and arguing over interpretations of fact. Many spent their hours – never mind precious reams of paper and boxes of candles – 'writing histories', abridged or abstracted from the published histories they read. In doing so, they took ownership of historical narratives for themselves, choosing what to take down and what to leave out, and folding in material pillaged from other relevant books or plucked from their own memories or imaginations. Many readers returned to these personal compilations of historical knowledge in later life, editing them to reflect changing personal and political circumstances or to include information collected from books read more recently. Most importantly, histories – and the meticulous records that people kept about reading

<sup>2</sup> St Clair, *Reading Nation*, p. 5.    <sup>3</sup> Burston, *James Mill on Education*.    <sup>4</sup> ODNB.

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them – had a profound effect on how readers understood and interpreted the world around them.

This book investigates the culture of history reading that emerged in the English-speaking world between 1750 and 1840. Though this period is generally known for the rise of the novel, the historical works of Gibbon, Hume and Robertson were some of its most commercially successful books. *Reading History in Britain and America* treats their histories not as landmark intellectual contributions to the Enlightenment, but as books encountered daily by readers from a very wide range of social and occupational backgrounds. It argues that histories provided a lens through which events, beliefs and opinions could be filtered, helping readers – whether by consolidating ideas they already had or by changing their minds – to negotiate a rapidly changing world marked by social change, global entanglements and political revolution.

## I

None of this would have been especially surprising to the men and women who produced historical literature in the long eighteenth century. When David Hume wrote to the bestselling author of polite sermons Hugh Blair about the commercial success of a mutual friend's latest book, he announced that 'history now is the favourite reading, and our other friend the favourite historian. Nothing can be more successful than his last production; nor more deservedly.' Even so, Hume was puzzled that a book on such an apparently unappetising subject had done quite so well: 'Neither the character of Charles V, nor the incidents of his life, are very interesting; and, were it not for the first volume, the success of this work, though perfectly well writ, would not have been so shining.'<sup>5</sup> The book concerned was William Robertson's *History of the Reign of Charles V* (1769), which used the life of one of sixteenth-century Europe's dominant rulers to reflect not simply on the age in which he lived but also – in the ambitious introductory volume referred to by Hume – on the comparative development of European civilisation over a period of some 500 years. The esoteric subject matter, as it turned out, was perfectly suited to the times, its resonance merely increasing in the decades following the book's publication as the certainties of the *ancien régime* began to unravel in the face of revolutionary movements in Europe and America, and as Napoleon emerged as Charles V's successor as European emperor. As we will discover in what follows, Robertson's *Reign of Charles V* was read, amongst other

<sup>5</sup> *Letters of David Hume*, 2.196–97.

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purposes, as a handbook of good governance; a practical resource in parliamentary debates; a demonstration of the social and political benefits of religious toleration; a moral sermon on the debilitating effects of greed, superstition and imperial overreach; an argument against the pernicious trade in African slaves; a tool for resisting the Napoleonic conquest of the Iberian Peninsula; and a roadmap to securing an effective revolutionary settlement in America, following the successful overthrow of imperial rule.

For Richard Sher, Robertson's *Reign of Charles V* represents 'a monumental event in Enlightenment print culture' and an important landmark in the history of authorship and publishing.<sup>6</sup> As Hume reported in a second letter, this time to the French economist André Morellet, 'Dr Robertson received £4,000 for his *Charles V*, the greatest price that was ever known to be given for any book.'<sup>7</sup> The astonishing commercial performance of his four historical works brought Robertson both social prestige and institutional preferment, helping him to realise his long-held ambition to become 'a social leader committed to fostering the ideals of the enlightenment within Scottish religious and social institutions'.<sup>8</sup> Hume himself was ultimately able to secure upwards of £5,000 for the copyright on his six-volume *History of England*, a sum that he claimed 'exceeded any thing formerly known in England'. Such success meant that Hume had become in his own words 'not only independent, but opulent', reflected in his decision to invest in the prestigious New Town development across the North Loch in Edinburgh, where for the last ten years of his life he held court amidst the celebrated luminaries of the Scottish Enlightenment.<sup>9</sup>

Although such sums were not quite unprecedented – Alexander Pope had brought in comparable amounts earlier in the eighteenth century – James Raven suggests that they were 'far beyond the reach of the vast majority of writers of the period', including the bestselling novelist Henry Fielding, who earned £700 for *Tom Jones* and £1,000 for *Amelia*.<sup>10</sup> Wild rumours circulated about how much Robertson had been paid, inspiring a wave of imitators keen to cash in on what Sher calls the 'quarto history bug'.<sup>11</sup> Edward Gibbon was undoubtedly the most successful, earning more than £9,000 for his *History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman*

<sup>6</sup> Richard B. Sher, 'Charles V and the Book Trade: An Episode in Enlightenment Print Culture', in Brown (ed.), *William Robertson*, pp. 164–95, at p. 164; see also Karen O'Brien, 'The History Market in Eighteenth-Century England', in Rivers (ed.), *Books*, pp. 105–33.

<sup>7</sup> *Letters of David Hume*, 2.203. <sup>8</sup> Smitten, *Life*, p. 63.

<sup>9</sup> Phillipson, *Hume*, pp. 1–4, 13–14; Hume quoted on p. 13. Harris, *Hume*, p. 438.

<sup>10</sup> Raven, *Judging New Wealth*, p. 59; for Pope, see Sher, 'Charles V', p. 165.

<sup>11</sup> Sher, 'Charles V', p. 165; Sher, *Enlightenment*, p. 249.

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*Empire* (1776–89) by the time the last volume was brought to press, although the £3,000 made by Robert Henry's relatively unheralded *History of Great Britain on a New Plan* (1771) – initially brought out at the author's own expense – was almost as eye-watering.<sup>12</sup>

One obvious reason why we should therefore be interested in the reception of these books is that they were a hugely profitable feature of the literary marketplace – and a major part of the cultural landscape. Almost 3,000 copies of Robertson's *Reign of Charles V* were sold in the first four months, a 'great number', Sher suggests, for a work marketed at the 'very high price' of £2 12s. 6d.<sup>13</sup> Gibbon boasted that the first volume of *Decline and Fall* – released initially in a run of 1,000 copies at the more manageable price of one guinea – had sold out in a matter of days, and could be found 'on every table, and almost on every toilette'.<sup>14</sup> As Gibbon's euphoric response suggests, the most important historical works of the age were virtually ubiquitous in the drawing room libraries of grand landed families and affluent urban professionals. Lest we assume that they were the eighteenth-century equivalents of today's coffee-table bestsellers that no one actually reads, they also tended to be shelved where they could most easily be reached. David Allan has shown that the relatively modest book collection at the Jacobean pile of Mark's Hall, near Great Dunmow in Essex, was arranged so that 'the most intensively used books were in the most accessible and most visible positions', with Robertson's *Reign of Charles V* and *History of Scotland* (1759) joined at 'eye-level' by Watson's *History of Philip II* and Henry's *History of Great Britain*.<sup>15</sup> As several recent studies have shown, polite histories also tended to be kept close at hand in more informal locations around the house, such as studies, dressing rooms, salons, breakfast rooms and family parlours, suggesting that they were a central part of the rhythm of everyday life for men, women and children in genteel families across the English-speaking world.<sup>16</sup>

These works were far from cheap, of course. William St Clair reminds us that 'new books . . . were expensive luxuries which could be bought, if at all, only by the richest groups in society'.<sup>17</sup> As Richard Altick famously put it in his pioneering work on *The English Common Reader* (1957), 'a

<sup>12</sup> Barker, 'Note on the Bibliography of Gibbon', p. 49; Sher, *Enlightenment*, pp. 259, fn. 161, 218–19; O'Brien, 'History Market', p. 124.

<sup>13</sup> Sher, 'Charles V', pp. 175–76. <sup>14</sup> Quoted by O'Brien, 'History Market', p. 122.

<sup>15</sup> Allan, *Making British Culture*, pp. 91–95, at p. 92.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 91–92; Towsey, *Reading the Scottish Enlightenment*, chapter 1; Williams, *Social Life of Books*, pp. 53–55. For the circulation of some of these works beyond the English-speaking world, see Jones (ed.), *Reception of David Hume*; Kontler, *Translations, Histories, Enlightenment*.

<sup>17</sup> St Clair, *Reading Nation*, p. 196.

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merchant's clerk . . . would have had to choose between buying a newly published quarto volume and a good pair of breeches (each cost from 10s. to 12s.).'<sup>18</sup> Nevertheless, mechanisms did exist whereby these works could quite rapidly reach the purchasing power of Altick's putative merchant's clerk. The histories of Gibbon, Hume and Robertson – together with many others – appeared in a dazzling number of editions, priced and formatted for different parts of the market.<sup>19</sup> John and Charles Cooke's pocketbook *Hume's History*, in nineteen tiny volumes, was one of 'the most popular and accessible genteel primers of . . . the 1793–4 season',<sup>20</sup> while such was its dominant position in the market that Hume's *History of England* had been stereotyped by 1810 as one of a small handful of works of which 'a continuing large demand was expected'; it was joined in 1816 by Goldsmith's *History of England* (1764) for children.<sup>21</sup> Histories also dominated the market for books sold in instalments. Tobias Smollett's *Complete History of England* (1756–65) was initially published as a three-volume quarto edition priced at three guineas, but it later reached as many as 20,000 consumers when released in 110 much more affordable sixpenny instalments.<sup>22</sup>

Histories were thereby able to reach book buyers of quite modest means. A collection of household inventories put together by the Geffrye Museum of the Home in Shoreditch shows that middling-sort Londoners – a motley group of pawnbrokers, bricklayers, bakers and obscure attorneys – owned copies of Gibbon's *Decline and Fall*, Robertson's *Reign of Charles V*, various histories of England and a two-volume compilation of 'Beauties from History'.<sup>23</sup> The same was true in other parts of the country. Ebenezer Rhodes, a master cutler in Sheffield, owned Hume's *History of England* and Robertson's *History of Scotland*, while Mrs George Trevelyan, the wife of an Anglican clergyman from rural Somerset, owned Hume's *History of England*, Watson's *History of Philip II* and Lord Kames's *Sketches of the History of Man* (1774), together with Robertson's histories of America and

<sup>18</sup> Altick, *English Common Reader*, p. 51.

<sup>19</sup> St Clair terms this 'tranching-down', *Reading Nation*, p. 32; Sher prefers 'the simpler word down-sizing', *Enlightenment*, pp. 27–28.

<sup>20</sup> Raven, *Business of Books*, p. 249; Sher notes further pocketbook editions by George Mudie in 1792 and John Parsons in 1793, *Enlightenment*, p. 538.

<sup>21</sup> St Clair, *Reading Nation*, p. 515; for W. & R. Chambers's 1835 stream-printed edition of Hume priced at one shilling sixpence for the entire work, see Secord, *Victorian Sensation*, p. 69.

<sup>22</sup> Williams, *Social Life of Books*, p. 239; O'Brien, 'History Market', p. 114.

<sup>23</sup> TNA, J90/1843, Inventory for John Jackson; PROB 31/913/733, Inventory for Gawler Gryffyth Rickman; PROB 31/921/736, Inventory for Nicholas Browning. Sourced and transcribed for the Geffrye Museum by Jane Hamlett and Laurie Lindey. I am indebted to Abigail Williams for bringing this collection to my attention.

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Scotland.<sup>24</sup> North of the Scottish border, Daniel Mackellar, a merchant and draper from Greenock, boasted copies of Sir John Dalrymple's *Memoirs of Great Britain* (1771) and Robertson's *History of Scotland* in a small library of forty books, keeping Hume's *History of England* close at hand in his bedroom.<sup>25</sup> James Harper, a distiller from Clynelish in Sutherland, owned copies of Kames's *Sketches* and the complete historical works of William Robertson in a modest collection of thirty-four books.<sup>26</sup>

Ownership of these works spread out across the English-speaking world, not least on ships bound for continental Europe, North America, Africa, Asia and Australasia carrying Britons involved in commerce, diplomacy or empire.<sup>27</sup> Their global reach was extended by editions – some authorised, some pirated – produced in Ireland and America. When radical Philadelphia bookseller Robert Bell decided to publish by subscription an octavo edition of Robertson's *Reign of Charles V* in 1770–71, his subscribers came from a very wide range of social and occupational backgrounds, including clerks, druggists, peruke makers, carpenters, engineers, watchmakers, silversmiths, brewers and chandlers.<sup>28</sup> Mark Spencer has identified a similarly broad range of subscribers to the first American edition of Hume's *History of England*, published in 1795–96 by Robert Campbell, an expatriate Scot also plying his trade in Philadelphia. Numbering 326, they were 'an improving and middling sort of one kind or another', and included 'merchants, lawyers, doctors, teachers, and other leading professionals, civil servants, . . . architects, builders, grocers, hatters, ironmongers, lumbermen, scriveners, shoemakers, surveyors, and tailors', not to mention manufacturers 'involved with ropewalks, nail manufacturing, ironworks, saltworks, . . . grit mills, saw mills, and paper mills'.<sup>29</sup>

It was therefore quite possible for ownership of historical texts to extend quite far down the social scale in Britain and North America, just as it was for copies of Gibbon, Hume and Robertson – and their imitators – to travel to the furthest reaches of the British mainland and across the wider

<sup>24</sup> Allan, *Making British Culture*, pp. 95, 89; David Allan, 'Reading Hume's *History of England*: Audience and Authority in Georgian England', in Spencer (ed.), *David Hume: Historical Thinker, Historical Writer*, pp. 103–20, at p. 106.

<sup>25</sup> NRS, CS96/4658, MacKellar and Company, Merchants and Drapers, Greenock, Sederunt Books, 1822–25.

<sup>26</sup> NRS, CS96/150/1, James Harper, Distiller, Clynelish, Sutherland, Sederunt Books, 1827–28.

<sup>27</sup> Murphy, *British Soldier and His Libraries*; Richards, *People, Print and Paper*, pp. 10–12; Mark Towsey, '"The Book Seemed to Sink into Oblivion": Reading Hume's *History* in Eighteenth-Century Scotland', in Spencer (ed.), *David Hume: Historical Thinker, Historical Writer*, pp. 81–102, at pp. 88–89.

<sup>28</sup> Sher, 'Charles V', pp. 189–90. <sup>29</sup> Spencer, *David Hume*, pp. 259–69, 425–67, at pp. 268–69.



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English-speaking world. At the same time, it was rarely necessary for eighteenth-century readers to buy these works to have access to them. Magazines and periodical reviews carried lengthy excerpts of newly published texts, while select passages were reprinted in pedagogical handbooks, elocution manuals, children's books and entertaining anthologies.<sup>30</sup> The late eighteenth century was also a great age of book borrowing, with a flourishing culture of private book lending co-existing alongside an increasingly wide variety of formal book-lending institutions and reading clubs.<sup>31</sup> By the turn of the century, there were private subscription libraries in virtually every urban community in the British Isles and North America for whom the historiography of Gibbon, Hume and Robertson was 'virtually compulsory' amidst a much wider diet of earnest historical and antiquarian material, some of it with a distinctly local flavour.<sup>32</sup>

Not only were these works very widely held by libraries of the period, we also know that they were very frequently borrowed by readers. History books dominated lending at every subscription library for which such records survive – in the bustling Atlantic port of Bristol; amidst the plantations of Charleston, South Carolina; in the fledgling manufacturing community of Easton in the Lehigh Valley, Pennsylvania; amongst the farmers, artisans and urban professionals of Selkirk in the Scottish Borders; in the tiny market town of Wigtown in the far southwest corner of Scotland; and at the temporary home of the US Congress in New York City.<sup>33</sup> Not only did the historical works of Gibbon, Hume and Robertson prove unrelentingly popular, they were regularly borrowed alongside a wide range of other historical material, such as Watson's *History of Philip II*, Henry's *History of Great Britain*, George Lyttelton's *History of Henry II* (1767–71), John Gillies's *History of Ancient Greece* (1786), Nathaniel Wraxall's *History of France* (1785), Adam Ferguson's *Essay on*

<sup>30</sup> Spencer, *David Hume*, pp. 283–85; St Clair, *Reading Nation*, pp. 66–83; Williams, *Social Life of Books*, pp. 255–56 and chapter 4.

<sup>31</sup> For a recent overview, see Towsey and Roberts (eds), *Before the Public Library*.

<sup>32</sup> Allan, *Nation of Readers*, pp. 101–02; Cheryl Knott, 'Uncommon Knowledge: Late Eighteenth-Century American Subscription Library Collections', in Towsey and Roberts (eds), *Before the Public Library*, pp. 149–73; Spencer, *David Hume*, pp. 16–19, Appendix A; Sweet, *Writing of Urban Histories*, p. 118; Towsey, *Reading the Scottish Enlightenment*, chapter 2.

<sup>33</sup> Kaufman, *Borrowings from the Bristol Library*; Isabelle Lehuu, 'Reconstructing Reading Vogues in the Old South: Borrowings from the Charleston Library Society, 1811–1817', in Towheed and Owens (eds), *History of Reading, Volume 1*, pp. 64–83; Christopher N. Phillips, 'Reading on the Edge of the Atlantic: The Easton Library', in Towsey and Roberts (eds), *Before the Public Library*, pp. 286–303; Towsey, 'First Steps in Associational Reading'; Towsey, *Reading the Scottish Enlightenment*, chapter 2. For the New York Social Library, which briefly shared premises with the temporary US Congress, see *City Readers*.



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*the History of Civil Society* (1767) and Lord Kames's *Sketches on the History of Man*. By these means, history books reached readers from a very wide range of social and occupational backgrounds, including merchants, manufacturers, surgeons, lawyers, booksellers, clergymen, local government officials, farmers, tanners, millers, innkeepers, ironmongers and schoolmasters – as well as a large number of women, who could read borrowed books either as library members in their own right (as at Bristol, New York and Wigtown) or through family memberships owned by fathers, husbands or brothers.<sup>34</sup>

Borrowing was the principal means by which several of the readers featured in this study accessed historical literature. James Smith, a Unitarian wool merchant, acquired most of the books he read from a local book club, from friends and (after it opened in 1784) from the Norwich Public Library, a private subscription library. These sources enabled Smith to read very widely across the history of modern Britain, continental Europe and the ancient world, focussing especially – as we see in what follows – on histories of empire.<sup>35</sup> Across the Atlantic in Salem, Massachusetts, William Bentley was a hugely voracious reader. By the time of his death at the age of sixty in 1819, Bentley had accumulated one of the largest personal libraries in the early republic with more than 4,000 volumes to his name, but in his twenties and thirties he relied predominantly on borrowed books. Many of these were lent informally by friends and relatives: Robertson's *Reign of Charles V* came from Major General John Fiske and William Alexander's *History of Women* (1779) from the physician Joshua Plummer, while Gibbon's *Decline and Fall* came from three different sources – the first two volumes from Captain Benjamin Goodhue, a US Senator, the last three volumes from Judge William Winthrop in Cambridge, and the third volume was subtlet 'from Capt Joshua Ward by Capt B. Hodges'. Bentley also sourced books from various public institutions, including the Salem Social Library (which provided copies of Lord Bolingbroke's *Letters on the Study of History* [1742] and Horace Walpole's *Catalogue of the Royal and Noble Authors of England, Scotland and Ireland* [1759]) and the commercial circulating library run by Salem printer and postmaster John Dabney (from whom Bentley borrowed, amongst other histories, Robertson's *History of Scotland*).<sup>36</sup>

<sup>34</sup> Bristol: Central Library, B7464-68, Bristol Library Society, Registers, 1795–1800; *City Readers*, Towsey, 'First Steps in Associational Reading', pp. 460–62, 477.

<sup>35</sup> Smith, *passim*. <sup>36</sup> AAS, Bentley Papers, volume 17.

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The last of these loans is significant: while commercial circulating libraries were condemned by contemporary conduct writers for offering access to the ‘forbidden fruits’ of morally degenerate novels, there is now little doubt that they also supplied large numbers of canonical historical texts – amongst much other fashionable non-fiction – at very generous terms.<sup>37</sup> Likewise, histories could also be borrowed from church and congregational libraries, from universities and schools, from charitably endowed libraries offering books to the wider community for free and from the increasing number of libraries serving the reading needs of the working classes, some of them philanthropic enterprises set up by paternalist benefactors, others put together by mechanics, apprentices, weavers and labourers themselves.<sup>38</sup> When a promotional pamphlet was produced celebrating the launch of the new Mechanics & Apprentices Library in Liverpool in the 1820s, the middle-class proprietors proudly announced that Hume’s *History of England* had been the first book borrowed from the library on 1 May 1824.<sup>39</sup> Given the rhetorical context within which this loan appears there may be some reason to doubt whether it ever took place – and we have no independent evidence for why cabinetmaker Hugh Campbell might have chosen to borrow Hume – but this fleeting advertisement for working-class reading reveals the potential social reach of the reading material dealt with in this book.

## II

There was a time when intellectual historians would simply have used evidence of the widespread distribution and circulation of these books as a proxy for the influence of the ideas contained within them. For conventional historians of ideas, the key to understanding the historical significance of books lay within the text produced by the author. To understand what Hume’s *History of England* or Robertson’s *Reign of Charles V* meant, so it was thought, we simply needed to take our copy down from the shelf, read the book closely and work out what it was intended to accomplish. The so-called Cambridge School led by Quentin Skinner and J. G. A. Pocock has helped to transform this approach, placing texts much more fully within their

<sup>37</sup> Varma, *Evergreen Tree*; Fergus, *Provincial Readers*, especially p. 7; Schürer, ‘Four Catalogs’. See also Allan, *Nation of Readers*, chapter 4; Spencer, *David Hume*, p. 19, Appendix A; Towsey, *Reading the Scottish Enlightenment*, chapter 3. For Daniel O’Connell’s use of history books at London circulating libraries, see Abbas, ‘Dublin Library Society’, p. 149.

<sup>38</sup> See for example Dunstan, ‘Glimpses into a Town’s Reading Habits’; Kaufman, ‘Unique Record’; Towsey, *Reading the Scottish Enlightenment*, chapter 4.

<sup>39</sup> Towsey and Roberts (eds), *Before the Public Library*, pp. 4–5.