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Edited by Paul Hammond
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SELECTED PROSE OF ALEXANDER POPE

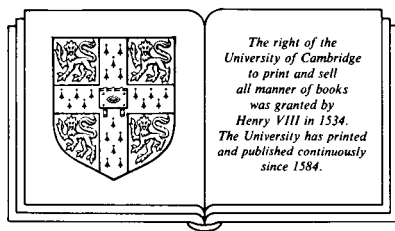
Alexander Pope was the foremost poet of early eighteenth-century England, but he was also a prolific prose writer. This anthology is intended to make Pope's major prose works more widely available. It includes the critical prefaces to his *Works*, to Homer, and to Shakespeare; the mock critical treatises, *A Key to the Lock* and *The Art of Sinking in Poetry* which deride the poetry and criticism of Pope's opponents, and raise important questions about the principles of writing and interpretation; maliciously comic pamphlets attacking John Dennis, Stephen Duck, Edmund Curll, and Lord Herve; and a selection from Pope's wide-ranging correspondence, which illustrates his genius for friendship, and his opinions on literature, politics, and religion.

The volume complements the critical and moral concerns of Pope's poetry, documenting the controversies in which he was continuously engaged. Pope emerges as a gifted critic and a complex mixture of integrity and deviousness, a man concerned both for the culture of his day and for his public image.

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Edited by
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Preface

When Matthew Arnold remarked that Pope was one of the classics of our prose, he was not being complimentary. Pope's poetry has recovered from such disparagement, but his prose is less well known, and less accessible. The aim of the present volume is to offer a selection of the literary criticism, pamphlets and letters, both for their intrinsic interest, and for the light which they cast upon Pope's poetry and the literary world in which it was composed and first read.

The texts which follow are drawn for the most part from originals in the Brotherton Collection at the University of Leeds, and I am grateful to the staff there for their ready and courteous assistance. I have been continually indebted to the work of previous students of Pope, especially to the editions and studies which are cited hereafter by abbreviations.

I am also grateful to Dr Howard Erskine-Hill for his comments on the typescript of this edition.

PAUL HAMMOND

Leeds
August 1985

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Abbreviations

Ault	<i>The Prose Works of Alexander Pope</i> , newly collected and edited by Norman Ault. Vol. I. The Earlier Works, 1711-1720 (Oxford, 1936)
<i>Poems</i>	<i>The Twickenham Edition of the Poems of Alexander Pope</i> , edited by John Butt <i>et al.</i> , 11 vols. (1939-68)
E-C	<i>The Works of Alexander Pope</i> , edited by Whitwell Elwin and J.W. Courthorpe, 10 vols. (1871-89)
<i>Corr.</i>	<i>The Correspondence of Alexander Pope</i> , edited by George Sherburn, 5 vols. (Oxford, 1956)
Guerinot	J.V. Guerinot, <i>Pamphlet Attacks on Alexander Pope 1711-1744: A Descriptive Bibliography</i> (1969)
Mack	Maynard Mack, <i>Alexander Pope: A Life</i> (New Haven, 1985)
Erskine-Hill	Howard Erskine-Hill, <i>The Social Milieu of Alexander Pope: Lives, Example and the Poetic Response</i> (New Haven, 1975)

Chronology

1688	21 May	Pope born in London
c.1700		Pope's family moves to Windsor Forest
c.1705		Pope begins to become acquainted with London literary figures
1709	2 May	<i>Pastorals</i>
1711	15 May	<i>An Essay on Criticism</i>
	20 June	John Dennis's <i>Reflections Critical and Satyrical upon a late Rhapsody call'd, An Essay upon Criticism</i>
	? July	<i>The Critical Specimen</i>
1711-12		Pope contributes essays to <i>The Spectator</i>
1712	20 May	<i>The Rape of the Locke</i> (two-canto version)
		Pope becomes acquainted with Gay, Swift, Arbuthnot and Parnell, the Scriblerians
1713		Pope contributes to <i>The Guardian</i>
	7 March	<i>Windsor-Forest</i>
1714	4 March	<i>The Rape of the Lock</i> (five-canto version)
	1 August	Death of Queen Anne; accession of George I
1715		Pope becomes acquainted with Lady Mary Wortley Montagu
	April	<i>A Key to the Lock</i>
	6 June	<i>The Iliad</i> vol. i
	8 June	Tickell's rival translation of <i>Iliad</i> 1
1716	22 March	<i>The Iliad</i> vol. ii
	26 March	Curll publishes <i>Court Poems</i>
	31 March	<i>A Full and True Account</i>
	1 May	Curll publishes <i>State Poems</i> , including Pope's <i>The Worms</i>
	? November	<i>A Further Account</i>
1717	3 June	<i>The Iliad</i> vol. iii
	3 June	<i>Works of Mr. Alexander Pope</i>

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	23 October	Death of Pope's father
1718	28 June	<i>The Iliad</i> vol. iv
1720	? Late March	<i>A Strange but True Relation</i>
	12 May	<i>The Iliad</i> vols. v-vi
1721	3 April	Walpole appointed First Lord of the Treasury
1723	? January	Pope's edition of <i>The Works of John Sheffield, Earl of Mulgrave</i>
	May	Atterbury's trial in the House of Lords, at which Pope testifies
1725	12 March	Pope's edition of <i>The Works of Shakespear</i>
	23 April	<i>The Odyssey</i> vols. i-iii
1726	March	Theobald's <i>Shakespeare Restored</i>
	June	<i>The Odyssey</i> vols. iv-v
	October	Swift's <i>Gulliver's Travels</i>
1727	June	Pope–Swift <i>Miscellanies in Prose and Verse</i> , vols. i-ii
	12 June	Death of George I; accession of George II
1728	8 March	Pope–Swift <i>Miscellanies. The Last Volume</i> (dated 1727); includes <i>The Art of Sinking</i>
	18 May	<i>The Dunciad...In Three Books</i>
1729	10 April	<i>The Dunciad Variorum</i>
1730	19 November	<i>Of the Poet Laureate</i> in <i>The Grub-street Journal</i>
1731	December	<i>Of Taste. An Epistle to the...Earl of Burlington</i>
1732	4 October	Pope–Swift <i>Miscellanies. The Third Volume</i>
	4 December	Death of Gay
1733	15 January	<i>Of the Use of Riches, An Epistle to...Lord Bathurst</i>
	15 February	<i>The First Satire of the Second Book of Horace, Imitated</i>
	February–May	<i>An Essay on Man</i> , Epistles I–III.
	9 March	Lady Mary Wortley Montagu's <i>Verses Address'd to the Imitator of the First Satire of the Second Book of Horace</i>
	7 June	Death of Pope's mother

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	10 November	Lord Hervey, <i>An Epistle from a Nobleman to a Doctor of Divinity</i>
	30 November	<i>A Letter to a Noble Lord</i> [not printed]
1734	16 January	<i>An Epistle to...Viscount Cobham</i>
	24 January	<i>An Essay on Man</i> , Epistle iv
	4 July	<i>Imitations of Horace</i> , Sat. II ii
	28 December	<i>Sober Advice from Horace</i>
1735	2 January	<i>Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot</i>
	8 February	<i>Of the Characters of Women: An Epistle to a Lady</i>
	27 February	Death of Arbuthnot
	23 April	<i>Works</i> , vol. ii
	12 May	Curll's edition of Pope's letters
1737	28 April	<i>Imitations of Horace</i> , Ep. II ii
	19 May	Pope's official edition of his letters
	25 May	<i>Imitations of Horace</i> , Ep. II i
1738	23 January	<i>Imitations of Horace</i> , Ep. I vi
	7 March	<i>Imitations of Horace</i> , Ep. I i
1742	20 March	<i>The New Dunciad</i> (i.e. Book iv)
1743	29 October	<i>The Dunciad</i> (revised four-book version)
1744	30 May	Death of Pope