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978-0-521-54944-8 - The Cambridge Companion to Alexander Pope

Edited by Pat Rogers

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THE CAMBRIDGE COMPANION TO
ALEXANDER POPE

Alexander Pope was the greatest poet of his age and the dominant influence on eighteenth-century British poetry. His large oeuvre, written over a thirty-year period, encompasses satires, odes and political verse and reflects the sexual, moral and cultural issues of the world around him, often in brilliant lines and phrases which have become part of our language today. This is the first overview to analyse the full range of Pope's work and to set it in its historical and cultural context. Specially commissioned essays by leading scholars explore all of Pope's major works, including the sexual politics of *The Rape of the Lock*, the philosophical enquiries of *An Essay on Man* and the *Moral Essays*, and the mock-heroic of *The Dunciad* in its various forms. This volume will be indispensable not only for students and scholars of Pope's work, but also for all those interested in the Augustan age.

PAT ROGERS is DeBartolo Chair in the Liberal Arts at the University of South Florida.

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CONTENTS

<i>List of illustrations</i>	page vii
<i>Notes on contributors</i>	viii
<i>List of abbreviations</i>	xii
<i>Alexander Pope chronology</i>	xiii
Introduction	I
PAT ROGERS	
1 Pope, self, and world	14
HELEN DEUTSCH	
2 Pope's friends and enemies: fighting with shadows	25
DAVID NOKES	
3 Pope's versification and voice	37
JOHN SITTER	
4 Poetic spaces	49
CYNTHIA WALL	
5 Pope's Homer and his poetic career	63
STEVEN SHANKMAN	
6 Pope and the classics	76
HOWARD D. WEINBROT	
7 Pope and the Elizabethans	89
DAVID FAIRER	

CONTENTS

8	Pope in Arcadia: pastoral and its dissolution PAT ROGERS	105
9	Pope and ideology BRIAN YOUNG	118
10	Pope and the poetry of opposition HOWARD ERSKINE-HILL	134
11	Crime and punishment PAUL BAINES	150
12	Landscapes and estates MALCOLM KELSALL	161
13	Money CATHERINE INGRASSIA	175
14	Pope and the book trade JAMES McLAVERTY	186
15	Pope and gender VALERIE RUMBOLD	198
16	Medicine and the body GEORGE ROUSSEAU	210
17	Pope and the other LAURA BROWN	222
	<i>Further reading</i>	237
	<i>Index</i>	247

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-54944-8 - The Cambridge Companion to Alexander Pope

Edited by Pat Rogers

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

ILLUSTRATIONS

- | | |
|--|----------------|
| 1. “Sol thro’ white Curtains shot a tim’rous Ray.” Frontispiece to Canto I, <i>The Rape of the Lock</i> (1714), courtesy of Special Collections, University of Virginia Library. | <i>page</i> 53 |
| 2. “Books and the Man I sing.” <i>The Dunciad Variorum</i> (1729), Book the First, courtesy of Special Collections, University of Virginia Library. | 60 |
| 3. Pope’s villa at Twickenham, after the painting by Peter Andreas Rysbrack, engraved by Nathaniel Parr (1735). | 163 |
| 4. A plan of Pope’s garden at Twickenham by John Serle, his gardener (1745). | 167 |

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-54944-8 - The Cambridge Companion to Alexander Pope

Edited by Pat Rogers

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

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Edited by Pat Rogers

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

1700–1789 (2003). He is also the author of *Pope's Imagination* (1984), *The Poetry of Alexander Pope* (1989), and editor of *Pope: New Contexts* (1990), *The Correspondence of Thomas Warton* (1995), and the first complete printing of Warton's *History of English Poetry* (1998). With Christine Gerrard he has edited *Eighteenth-Century Poetry: An Annotated Anthology* (second edition, 2004).

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PAT ROGERS is DeBartolo Professor in the Liberal Arts at the University of South Florida, and the author of several books on Pope and his contemporaries, including *The Alexander Pope Encyclopedia* (2004) and *Pope and the Destiny of the Stuarts* (2005). Recent work includes a biography of Edmund Curll (2007), with Paul Baines, and an edition of Pope's major works for Oxford World's Classics (2006).

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Frontmatter

[More information](#)

NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

GEORGE ROUSSEAU has written numerous books, including *This Long Disease, my Life: Alexander Pope and the Sciences* (1968), with Marjorie Hope Nicolson, *Goldsmith: The Critical Heritage* (1974), with Pat Rogers, *The Enduring Legacy: Alexander Pope Tercentenary Essays* (1988), and *The Languages of Psyche: Mind and Body in Enlightenment Thought* (1990). He has also published a trilogy entitled *Pre- and Post-Modern Discourses: Medical, Scientific, Anthropological* (1991), with Roy Porter, *Gout: The Patrician Malady* (1998), *Framing and Imagining Disease in Cultural History* (2003), *Yourcenar: A Biography* (2004), and *Nervous Acts: Essays on Literature, Culture and Sensibility* (2004).

VALERIE RUMBOLD is Reader in English Literature at the University of Birmingham. She is author of *Women's Place in Pope's World* (1989) and of a range of articles on Pope and on women writers of the eighteenth century. Her edition of *Alexander Pope: The Dunciad in Four Books (1743)* appeared in 1999. She is one of the editors, with Julian Ferraro and Nigel Wood, contributing to the Longman Annotated Pope, and is currently working on a volume for the Cambridge Edition of the Works of Jonathan Swift.

STEVEN SHANKMAN is Professor of English and Classics at the University of Oregon. He is the author of *Pope's Iliad: Homer in the Age of Passion* (1983) and *In Search of the Classic* (1994). His edition of Pope's translation of *The Iliad* appeared in 1996. Recent books include, with Stephen Durrant, *The Siren and the Sage: Knowledge and Wisdom in Ancient Greece and China* (2000).

JOHN SITTER is Notre Dame Professor of English at the University of Notre Dame, the editor of *The Cambridge Companion to Eighteenth-Century Poetry* (2001), and author of *Literary Loneliness in Mid-Eighteenth-Century England* (1982), which was awarded the Louis Gottschalk Prize, and *Arguments of Augustan Wit* (1991), other studies of eighteenth-century poetry and satire. He teaches courses in those areas and in modern poetry.

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Edited by Pat Rogers

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

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ABBREVIATIONS

- Anecdotes* Joseph Spence, *Observations, Anecdotes, and Characters of Books and Men*, ed. J. M. Osborn, 2 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1966).
- Corr* *The Correspondence of Alexander Pope*, ed. G. Sherburn, 5 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1956).
- Johnson, *LOP* Samuel Johnson, *The Lives of the Poets*, ed. G. B. Hill, 3 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1905).
- Life* Maynard Mack, *Alexander Pope: A Life* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985).
- Prose* *The Prose Works of Alexander Pope*, vol. 1, ed. N. Ault (Oxford: Blackwell, 1936); vol. 2, ed. R. Cowler (Hamden, CT: Archon Books, 1986).
- Swift *Corr* *The Correspondence of Jonathan Swift*, ed. D. Woolley, 3 vols. (in progress) (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 1999–).
- TE* *The Twickenham Edition of the Poems of Alexander Pope*, ed. J. Butt *et al.*, 11 vols. (London: Methuen, 1938–68).

In the *Imitations of Horace*, vol. 1v, *Ep* refers to the *Epistles* and *Sat* to the *Satires*. Unless otherwise indicated, *The Dunciad* is quoted from the A text (1729) in *TE*, vol. v.

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[More information](#)

ALEXANDER POPE CHRONOLOGY

- 1688 Alexander Pope born in the commercial area of the City of London, 21 May. King James II flees to France, prior to accession of William III and Mary.
- 1692 The Pope family move to Hammersmith, outside London.
- 1698 Alexander Pope's father acquires house at Binfield, Berkshire, in Windsor Forest: the family in residence there by 1700. While living there, Pope meets older men who will serve as literary mentors, including the retired diplomat Sir William Trumbull, the dramatist William Wycherley and the actor Thomas Betterton.
- 1702 Accession of Queen Anne. Start of the War of the Spanish Succession (to 1713), with British forces under the command of the Duke of Marlborough.
- 1703 Isaac Newton becomes President of the Royal Society (to 1727).
- 1704 Jonathan Swift, *A Tale of a Tub* and *The Battle of the Books*. Marlborough and the allies gain a spectacular victory over the French at the battle of Blenheim.
- 1705 Alexander Pope's first surviving letters. Close friendship with Trumbull, a neighbour in the Forest. Has begun work on his *Pastorals*.
- 1707 About this time, Pope meets Martha and Teresa Blount, members of the Catholic gentry; Martha was to become his closest woman friend for the rest of his life.
- 1708 Final stone laid on St Paul's cathedral, designed by Sir Christopher Wren.

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Frontmatter

[More information](#)

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- 1709 *Pastorals* and other early work published.
- 1710 In the wake of the divisive Sacheverell affair, the Tories gain power under Robert Harley (later Earl of Oxford) and Henry St John (later Viscount Bolingbroke), who become important supporters of Pope. Swift begins his *Journal to Stella* (to 1713). George Frideric Handel arrives in London and helps to initiate a fashion for Italian opera.
- 1711 *Essay on Criticism*. Addison and Steele begin *The Spectator*, runs until 1713 (Pope is an occasional contributor). South Sea Company launched under the aegis of Oxford. Marlborough dismissed as commander as part of Tory moves to end the war.
- 1712 First version of *The Rape of the Lock* in two cantos. *Messiah* appears in *The Spectator*.
- 1713 Pope publishes *Windsor-Forest*, celebrating end of the War of the Spanish Succession. Addison's *Cato*, with prologue by Pope. By now Pope is familiar with the Scriblerus group, including Swift, John Arbuthnot, Thomas Parnell and John Gay. He also is in contact with the leading ministers, Oxford and Bolingbroke. Contributes to Steele's *Guardian*.
- 1714 The full *Rape of the Lock* appears in five cantos. Death of Queen Anne; succession of George I. The Tories lose power and Whigs dominate national politics for the rest of Pope's life.
- 1715 *The Temple of Fame*. First instalment of the *Iliad* translation, issued by subscription. Bolingbroke flees to France. Jacobite rising led by the Old Pretender, James Francis Edward Stuart. Pope friendly with Lady Mary Wortley Montagu (later a bitter enemy). John Gay, *The What d'ye Call It* (comedy on which Pope and Arbuthnot may have given assistance).
- 1716 Rising put down. Pope family forced to leave Binfield, in the wake of anti-Catholic legislation, and move to Chiswick, outside London. Pope becomes familiar with members of the court of the Prince and Princess of Wales. John Gay, *Trivia*. Some of Pope's earliest brushes with the rascally publisher, Edmund Curll, initiating a lifelong war of words.
- 1717 Death of Pope's father. Collected *Works* published, containing *Eloisa to Abelard*, *Elegy to the Memory of an Unfortunate*

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Frontmatter

[More information](#)

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- Lady*, and other new poems. Farcical comedy written by Pope, Gay, and Arbuthnot, *Three Hours after Marriage*, performed to a mixed reception.
- 1718 Pope leases house at Twickenham, his home for the rest of his life. Death of his Scriblerian colleague Parnell.
- 1719 Daniel Defoe, *Robinson Crusoe*, part 1, admired by Pope.
- 1720 Last instalment of the *Iliad*. South Sea Bubble, a major financial crash which has widespread political and social effects.
- 1721 Pope brings out edition of Parnell's poems. Robert Walpole attains power and serves as prime minister until 1742, frequently incurring the criticism of Pope.
- 1722 Death of Marlborough, unlamented by Pope.
- 1723 Pope's edition of the Duke of Buckinghamshire's works. Jacobite plot involving Pope's friend Atterbury discovered; the bishop exiled to France. Pope's in-laws implicated in Waltham Blacks affair, a politically charged crime spree in Berkshire and surrounding counties. Death of Sir Christopher Wren, admired by Pope.
- 1725 First instalment of the *Odyssey*. Edition of Shakespeare. Bolingbroke returns from exile and settles not far from Pope's home.
- 1726 Translation of the *Odyssey* completed. Swift visits England and stays with Pope. *Gulliver's Travels* published. Voltaire begins three-year exile in England, where he will meet both Pope and Swift.
- 1727 First two volumes of *Miscellanies* published, including work by Pope, Swift and other Scriblerians. Swift's final visit to England. Death of George I. His son George II ascends the throne, with Caroline as consort. *The Craftsman* begins as a weekly journal of the opposition to Walpole. Death of Newton.
- 1728 *The Art of Sinking*, written largely by Pope, published in third volume of *Miscellanies*. *The Beggar's Opera*, by John Gay, performed and scores a major hit. First version of *The Dunciad* in three books.

Cambridge University Press

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Frontmatter

[More information](#)

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- 1729 *The Dunciad Variorum* published, with fuller apparatus and annotation. Edmund Curll, *The Curliad*, one of many ripostes. Swift, *A Modest Proposal*.
- 1730 Colley Cibber, a frequent butt of Pope, appointed Poet Laureate. Throughout the coming decade Pope grows more closely involved with the opposition to Walpole's government, enjoying friendship with the "Patriot" leaders who stood against the influence of the court. *The Grub-street Journal* begins its career (to 1737), supporting Pope's stance in literary politics and satirizing his enemies.
- 1731 *Epistle to Burlington*. Death of Defoe.
- 1732 *Miscellanies*, fourth volume. Death of John Gay. Death of Atterbury. Hogarth, *The Harlot's Progress*.
- 1733 First of the *Imitations of Horace* published (to 1738). *Epistle to Bathurst*. *Essay on Man*, epistles I–III published. Death of Pope's mother.
- 1734 *Essay on Man*, epistle IV published. *Epistle to Cobham*.
- 1735 *Epistle to Arbuthnot*, followed by death of Arbuthnot. *Epistle to a Lady*. Second volume of Pope's *Works*. Curll's edition of Pope's *Letters* (publication engineered by Pope).
- 1737 *Epistle to Augustus* published. Authorized edition of *Letters*. Death of Queen Caroline. Theatrical Licensing Act increases government control over new plays. Samuel Johnson, *London*.
- 1738 *Epilogue to the Satires* brings the imitations of Horace to an end. Samuel Johnson, *London*, praised by Pope.
- 1739 Swift's *Verses on the Death of Dr Swift* first published.
- 1740 Pope's health grows worse. Samuel Richardson, *Pamela*, Part I.
- 1741 *Memoirs of Scriblerus* published under Pope's direction.
- 1742 Fourth book of *The Dunciad* published separately. Henry Fielding, *Joseph Andrews*.
- 1743 Pope publishes complete version of *The Dunciad* in four books. Fielding, *Jonathan Wild*.

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Frontmatter

[More information](#)

ALEXANDER POPE CHRONOLOGY

- 1744 Pope working on deathbed edition of his works. Dies, 30 May. Buried at Twickenham. Johnson, *Life* of Richard Savage (a writer well known to Pope).
- 1745 Death of Swift. Death of Robert Walpole. Jacobite rising led by the Young Pretender, Charles Edward Stuart.