

THE READING NATION IN THE ROMANTIC PERIOD

During the four centuries when printed paper was the only means by which texts could be carried across time and distance, everyone engaged in politics, education, religion, and literature believed that reading helped to shape the minds, opinions, attitudes, and ultimately the actions, of readers.

William St Clair investigates how the national culture can be understood through a quantitative study of the books that were actually read. Centred on the romantic period in the English-speaking world, but ranging across the whole print era, he reaches startling conclusions about the forces that determined how ideas were carried, through print, into wider society.

St Clair provides an in-depth investigation of information, made available here for the first time, on prices, print runs, intellectual property, and readerships gathered from over fifty publishing and printing archives. He offers a picture of the past very different from those presented by traditional approaches. Indispensable to all students of English literature, book history, and the history of ideas, the study's conclusions and explanatory models are highly relevant to the issues we face in the age of the internet.

WILLIAM ST CLAIR is a Senior Research Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge University. He is the author of award-winning books, including *That Greece Might Still Be Free* (1972), *Trelawny, the Incurable Romancer* (1978), *The Godwins and the Shelleys, The Biography of a Family* (1989), and *Lord Elgin and the Marbles* (1967, third revised edition, 1998). Formerly a senior official in the British Treasury, he uses his experience of economic matters to analyse the whole political economy of texts, books, reading, and its consequences.





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WILLIAM ST CLAIR





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Abbreviations

Ac from the author's collection of books,

advertisements, other print not available or easily discoverable elsewhere, and manuscript

commonplace books.

Accardo Peter X. Accardo, 'Byron in America to 1830'

in Harvard Library Bulletin 9, 2, (1998).

Ackers ledger A Ledger of Charles Ackers, edited by D. F.

McKenzie and J. C. Ross (Oxford 1968).

add. mss. additional manuscripts.

Aldis H. G. Aldis, ed., A List of Books Printed in

Scotland before 1700 (1904, updated 1970).

Altick Richard D. Altick, *The English Common*

Reader (Chicago 1957).

Altick, Writers Richard D. Altick, Writers, Readers, and

Occasions (Columbus, Ohio 1989).

Arber E. Arber, A Transcript of the Registers of the

Company of Stationers of London, 1554–1640

(1875-94).

Arber, Transcript A Transcript of the Registers of the Worshipful

Company of Stationers, 1640–1708 AD (1913).

Armstrong Elizabeth Armstrong, Before Copyright: the

French Book-privilege system 1498–1526

(Cambridge 1990).

Ashton John Ashton, Chap-Books of the Eighteenth

Century (1882).

Austen, Letters Jane Austen's Letters, collected and edited by

Deirdre le Faye (third edition 1995).

BL British Library.

Baldick Chris Baldick, In Frankenstein's Shadow

(Oxford 1987).

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xiv List of abbreviations

Barnes and Barnes James J. Barnes and Patience P. Barnes,

'Reassessing the Reputation of Thomas Tegg, London Publisher 1776–1846' in *Book History*

3 (2000)

Bennett, 1558 to 1603 H. S. Bennett, English Books and Readers 1558

to 1603 (Cambridge 1965).

Bennett, 1475 to 1557 H. S. Bennett, English Books and Readers 1475

to 1557 (second edition, Cambridge 1970).

Bennett, 1603 to 1640 English Books and Readers 1603 to 1640

(Cambridge 1970).

Bentley, 'Copyright Bentley, G. E. Jr, 'Copyright Documents in the George Robinson Archive: William

the George Robinson Archive: William Godwin and Others 1713–1820' in *Studies in*

Bibliography (1982).

(Bennet and Clements) Norma Hodgson, and Cyprian Blagden, The

Notebook of Thomas Bennet and Henry

Clements (Oxford 1956).

Besterman, The Publishing Firm of

Cadell and Davies. Select Correspondence and

Accounts 1793–1836 (1938).

Bew John Bew, 'Chapmen's Books' printed list in a

copy of The New History of the Trojan Wars

(n.d., late eighteenth century), Ac.

Black Book The Black Book or Corruption Unmasked

(1820).

(Blackwood) Mrs Oliphant and Mrs Gerald Porter, William

Blackwood and his Sons (Edinburgh 1897 and

1898).

Blagden Cyprian Blagden, The Stationers' Company, A

History (1960).

Blakey Dorothy Blakey, The Minerva Press, 1790–1820

(1939).

Blanning T. C. W. Blanning The Culture of Power and

the Power of Culture, Old Regime Europe

1660–1789 (Oxford 2001).

Blayney Peter W. M. Blayney, The First Folio of

Shakespeare (Washington 1991).

Bloomfield B. C. Bloomfield, 'The Publication of *The*

Farmer's Boy'in The Library (1993).



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χV

Blunden Edmund Blunden, Keats's Publisher, A Memoir

of John Taylor (1936).

Bodleian Bodleian Library, Oxford.

Thomas Bonnell, 'John Bell's Poets of Great Bonnell, 'John Bell's

Britain' in Modern Philology 85 (1987). Poets' Bonnell, 'Bookselling' Thomas Bonnell, 'Bookselling and

Canon-Making: The Trade Rivalry over the English Poets, 1777–1783' in Studies in Eighteenth Century Culture (1989).

W. Bowyer, Biographical and Literary Anecdotes Bowyer

of W. Bowyer, and of many of his learned friends

Brack O. M. Brack, Jr., ed., Writers, Books and Trade,

An Eighteenth-Century Miscellany for William

B. Todd (New York 1994).

Earl L. Bradsher, Mathew Carey (New York Bradsher

Joyce Hemslow et al., eds., The Journals and Burney

Letters of Fanny Burney (1972–

The Letters and Journals of Lord Byron, edited Byron, Letters and Journals

by Leslie A. Marchand (1973-82).

Byron, Poetical Works The Complete Poetical Works of Lord Byron,

edited by Jerome J. McGann (Oxford

1980–93).

The Complete Miscellaneous Prose, edited by Byron, Prose Works

Andrew Nicholson (Oxford 1991).

CBAWHugh Amory and David D. Hall, eds., The

Colonial Book in the Atlantic World

(Cambridge 2000).

CHBB iii The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain

iii: 1400-1557, edited by Lotte Hellinga and

J. B. Trapp (Cambridge 1999).

CHBB iv

The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain iv: 1557–1695, edited by John Barnard and D. F. McKenzie, with the assistance of Maureen

Bell (Cambridge 2002).

CUL Cambridge University Library.

Bernard Capp, Astrology and the Popular Press, Capp

English Almanacs, 1500–1800 (1979).



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> List of abbreviations xvi

Guglielmo Cavallo and Roger Chartier, eds., Cavallo and Chartier

A History of Reading in the West (1999).

Chambers Memoir of William and Robert Chambers

(twelfth edition with supplementary chapter

1883).

Chilcott Tim Chilcott, A Publisher and his Circle (1972). C. Paul Christianson, Memorials of the Book Christianson

Trade in Mediaeval London (Cambridge 1987).

Clare's Autobiographical John Clare's Autobiographical Writings, edited

by Eric Robinson (1983).

Cyndia Susan Clegg, Press Censorship in Clegg

Elizabethan England (1997).

John Clive, Scotch Reviewers (1957). Clive

J. A. Cochrane, Dr Johnson's Printer, The Life Cochrane

of William Strahan (1964).

The Collected Letters of Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Coleridge, Letters

edited by Earl Leslie Griggs (Oxford 1956-72).

Collins, Authorship A. S. Collins, Authorship in the Days of Johnson

Collins, Profession of A. S. Collins, The Profession of Letters. A Study Letters

of the Relation of Author to Patron, Publisher,

and the Public, 1780–1832 (1928).

Archibald Constable and his Literary Constable

Correspondents (Edinburgh 1873).

Moncure Daniel Conway, The Life of Thomas Conway

Paine (one-volume edition 1909).

Cooper The Life of Thomas Cooper Written by Himself

(1872).

Amy Cruse, The Shaping of English Literature Cruse, Shaping

Amy Cruse, The Englishman and his Books in Cruse, Englishman

the Early Nineteenth Century (1930).

Amy Cruse, The Victorians and their Books Cruse, Victorians

Curwen Henry Curwen, A History of Booksellers (n.d.

1873).

DNBDictionary of National Biography.

Darnton, Underground Robert Darnton, The Literary Underground of

the Old Regime (Cambridge, Mass. 1982).



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Darnton, Forbidden Robert Darnton, The Forbidden Best-Sellers of

Pre-Revolutionary France (1995).

Darnton and Roche Robert Darnton and Daniel Roche, eds.,

Revolution in Print, The Press in France

1775–1800 (Berkeley 1989).

David, Intellectual Paul David, Intellectual Property Institutions

Property and the Panda's Thumb (Stanford 1992).

Davidson Cathy N. Davidson, ed., Reading in America

(1989).

Deloney Francis Oscar Mann, ed., The Works of

Thomas Deloney (Oxford 1912).

Dibdin T. F. Dibdin, The Library Companion, or The

Young Man's Guide and Old Man's Solace in the Choice of a Library (second edition 1824).

Dickson and Edmond Robert Dickson and John Philip Edmond,

Annals of Scottish Printing (1890).

Dodsley The Correspondence of Robert Dodsley

1733–1764, edited by James E. Tierney

(Cambridge 1988).

Dorne John Dorne, bookseller in Oxford c. 1520,

Daybook, edited by F. Madan (Oxford Historical Society, 1885). See also Henry Bradshaw, 'A Half Century of Notes on the Day-book of J. Dorne' in *Collected Papers*

(1889).

Dunton The Life and Errors of John Dunton (1818

edition).

Duppa (Richard Duppa), An Address to Parliament on

the Claims of Authors to Copyright (1813).

Duval Gilles Duval, Littérature de colportage et

imaginaire collectif en Angleterre à l'époque des

Dicey (1720-v. 1800) (Bordeaux 1991).

ESTC English Short Title Catalogue.

Elfenbein Andrew Elfenbein, Byron and the Victorians

(Cambridge 1995).

Eliot Simon Eliot, Some Patterns and Trends in

British Publishing, 1800–1919 (1994).

Evans Charles Evans, American Bibliography, A

Chronological Dictionary of all the Books, Pamphlets, and Periodical Publications Printed



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> > in the United States of America from the Genesis of Printing in 1629 down to and including the

> > John Feather, Publishing, Piracy, and Politics. An

Year 1820 (Chicago 1903).

John Feather, A History of British Publishing Feather, Publishing

(1988).

Feather, Publishing, Piracy, and Politics

Historical Study of Copyright in Britain (1994). Paula Feldman, 'The Poet and the Profits. Feldman Felicia Hemans and the Literary Marketplace'

in Keats/Shelley Review (1997).

R. C. Fell, Passages from the Private and Fell's Kelly

Official Life of the late Alderman Kelly (1856).

David Finkelstein and Alistair McCleery, eds., Finkelstein and McCleery

The Book History Reader (2002).

Floud and McCloskey Roderick Floud and Donald McCloskey, eds.,

The Economic History of Britain since 1700

(second edition 1994).

Laurence Fontaine, History of Pedlars in Fontaine

Europe, translated by Vicki Whittaker

(Durham, NC 1996).

Worthington Chancey Ford, The Boston Book Ford

Market 1679–1700 (Boston privately printed

1917).

Forry Steven Earl Forry, Hideous Progenies,

> Dramatizations of Frankenstein from the Nineteenth Century to the Present (Philadelphia

Fox Adam Fox, Oral and Literate Culture in

England, 1500-1700 (Oxford 2000).

Thomas Frost, Forty Years' Recollections (1880). Frost

Ian Anders Gadd, "Being like a field": Gadd

Corporate identity in the Stationers'

Company 1557–1684' (unpublished D. Phil.

thesis, University of Oxford, 1997).

Peter Garside, James Raven, and Rainer Garside, Raven, and

Schöwerling, eds., The English Novel, Schöwerling

1770–1829: A Bibliographical Survey of Prose Fiction Published in the British Isles (Oxford

2000).



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Geduld Harry M. Geduld, Prince of Publishers, A

Study of the Work and Career of Jacob Tonson

(Bloomington 1969).

Gettman Royal A. Gettman, A Victorian Publisher, A

Study of the Bentley Papers (1960).

Gilmont Jean-François Gilmont, ed., The Reformation

and the Book, translated by Karin Maag

(Aldershot 1998).

Gilmore William J. Gilmore, *Reading Becomes a*

Necessity, Material and Cultural Life in Rural New England, 1789–1835 (Knoxville 1989).

Gilson David Gilson, A Bibliography of Jane Austen

(1982).

Glasgow University Library.

Gohdes Clarence Gohdes, American Literature in

Nineteenth Century England (Carbondale, Ill.

1944).

Gomme, Bibliographical George Laurence Gomme, ed. The

Notes and Literary Gentleman's Magazine Library, Being a

Curiosities Classified Collection of the Chief Contents of the

Gentleman's Magazine from 1731 to 1868 (Boston n.d., c. 1868) Volumes entitled Bibliographical Notes and Literary Curiosities

and Notes.

Goodhugh William Goodhugh, The English Gentleman's

Library (1827).

Goodrich S. C. Goodrich, Recollections of a Lifetime

(New York 1856).

Graham George MacGregor, ed., The Collected

Writings of Dougal Graham (Glasgow 1883).

Green Ian Green, Print and Protestantism in Early

Modern England (Oxford 2000).

Greg, Companion W. W. Greg, A Companion to Arber (Oxford

1967).

Greg and Boswell W. W. Greg and E. Boswell, *Records of the*

Court of the Stationers' Company, 1576 to 1602

(1930).

Gregory Benjamin Gregory, Autobiographical

Recollections (1903).



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Griest Guinevere L. Griest, Mudie's Circulating

Library and the Victorian Novel (1970).

Groom Nick Groom, The Making of Percy's 'Reliques'

(Oxford 1999).

HBA i Hugh Amory and David D. Hall, eds., The

History of the Book in America i: The Colonial Book in the Atlantic World (Cambridge 2000).

Hackwood Frederick William Hackwood, William Hone,

His Life and Times (1912).

Hansard T. C. Hansard ed., The Parliamentary History

of England from the Earliest Period to the Year

1803 xvii: AD 1771–1774 (1813).

Harlan Robert Dale Harlan, 'William Strahan,

Eighteenth Century London Printer and Publisher' (unpublished Ph.D. thesis,

University of Michigan 1960).

Harriette Wilson Memoirs of Harriette Wilson (1831) Stockdale's

eight-volume edition, with much detailed additional information about the trials for

piracy and libel. BL.

Herbert A. S. Herbert, Historical Catalogue of Printed

English Bibles 1525–1961 (1968).

Herford and Simpson C. H. Herford and Percy Simpson, Ben Jonson

(Oxford 1927).

Hernlund Patricia Hernlund, 'Three Bankruptcies in the

London Book Trade, 1746–61, Rivington, Knapton, and Osborn' in O. M. Brack, Jr, ed., Writers, Books and Trade, An Eighteenth

Century Miscellany for William B. Todd (New

York 1994).

Houston R. A. Houston, *Literacy in Early Modern*

Europe (1988).

Hughes Thomas Hughes, Memoir of Daniel Macmillan

(1883).

Hunt, Mandelbrote, The Book Trade and its Customers, 1450–1900:

and Shell Historical Essays for Robin Myers, edited by

Arnold Hunt, Giles Mandelbrote and Alison

Shell (Winchester 1997).

Jackson William A. Jackson, Records of the Court of the

Stationers' Company, 1602 to 1640 (1957).



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Jerdan The Autobiography of William Jerdan (1852–3).

John Rylands University Library, Manchester.

Johns Adrian Johns, The Nature of the Book: Print

and Knowledge in the Making (1998).

Johnson C. R. Johnson, Provincial Poetry. 1789–1839

(1992).

Francis R. Johnson Francis R. Johnson, 'Notes on English Retail

Book-Prices 1550–1640' in *The Library* (1950).

John Johnson collection of printed ephemera,

publishers' announcements, circulating library catalogues, book club labels, book plates, and other material relating to books and reading,

Bodleian.

Jordan and Patten John O. Jordan and Robert L. Patten, eds.,

Literature in the Market Place. Nineteenth Century British Publishing and Reading

Practices (1995).

Judge Cyril Bathurst Judge, Elizabethan Book-Pirates

(Harvard 1934).

Kaser David Kaser, ed., The Cost Book of Carey and

Lea, 1825–1838 (Philadelphia 1963).

Kaufman, Libraries and their Users,

Collected Papers in Library History (1969).

Keats Circle The Keats Circle, Letters and Papers 1816–1878,

edited by Hyder Edward Rollins (Harvard

1848).

Kewes, Authorship Paulina Kewes, Authorship and Appropriation,

Writing for the Stage in England, 1660–1710

(Oxford 1998).

Kewes, *Plagiarism* Paulina Kewes, ed., *Plagiarism in Early*

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