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978-0-521-81017-3 - The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain, Volume V 1695-1830

Edited by Michael F. Suarez, S.J. and Michael L. Turner

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THE CAMBRIDGE

History of the Book in Britain

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VOLUME V
1695-1830

This volume covers the history of printing and publishing from the lapse of government licensing of printed works in 1695 to the development of publishing as a specialist commercial undertaking and the industrialization of book production around 1830. During this period, literacy rose and the world of print became an integral part of everyday life, a phenomenon that had profound effects on politics and commerce, on literature and cultural identity, on education and the dissemination of practical knowledge. Written by a distinguished international team of experts, this study examines print culture from all angles: readers and authors, publishers and booksellers; books, newspapers and periodicals; social places and networks for reading; new genres (children's books, the novel); the growth of specialist markets; and British book exports, especially to the colonies. Interdisciplinary in its perspective, this book will be an important scholarly resource for many years to come.

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History of the Book in Britain

The history of the book offers a distinctive form of access to the ways in which human beings have sought to give meaning to their own and others' lives. Our knowledge of the past derives mainly from texts. Landscape, architecture, sculpture, painting and the decorative arts have their stories to tell and may themselves be construed as texts; but oral traditions, manuscripts, printed books, and those other forms of inscription and incision such as maps, music and graphic images, have a power to report even more directly on human experience and the events and thoughts which shaped it.

In principle, any history of the book should help to explain how these particular texts were created, why they took the form they did, their relations with other media, especially in the twentieth century, and what influence they had on the minds and actions of those who heard, read or viewed them. Its range, too – in time, place and the great diversity of the conditions of text production, including reception – challenges any attempt to define its limits and give an account adequate to its complexity. It addresses, whether by period, country, genre or technology, widely disparate fields of enquiry, each of which demands and attracts its own forms of scholarship.

The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain, planned in seven volumes, seeks to represent much of that variety, and to encourage new work, based on knowledge of the creation, material production, dissemination and reception of texts. Inevitably its emphases will differ from volume to volume, partly because the definitions of Britain vary significantly over the centuries, partly because of the varieties of evidence extant for each period, and partly because of the present uneven state of knowledge. Tentative in so many ways as the project necessarily is, it offers the first comprehensive account of the book in Britain over one and a half millennia.

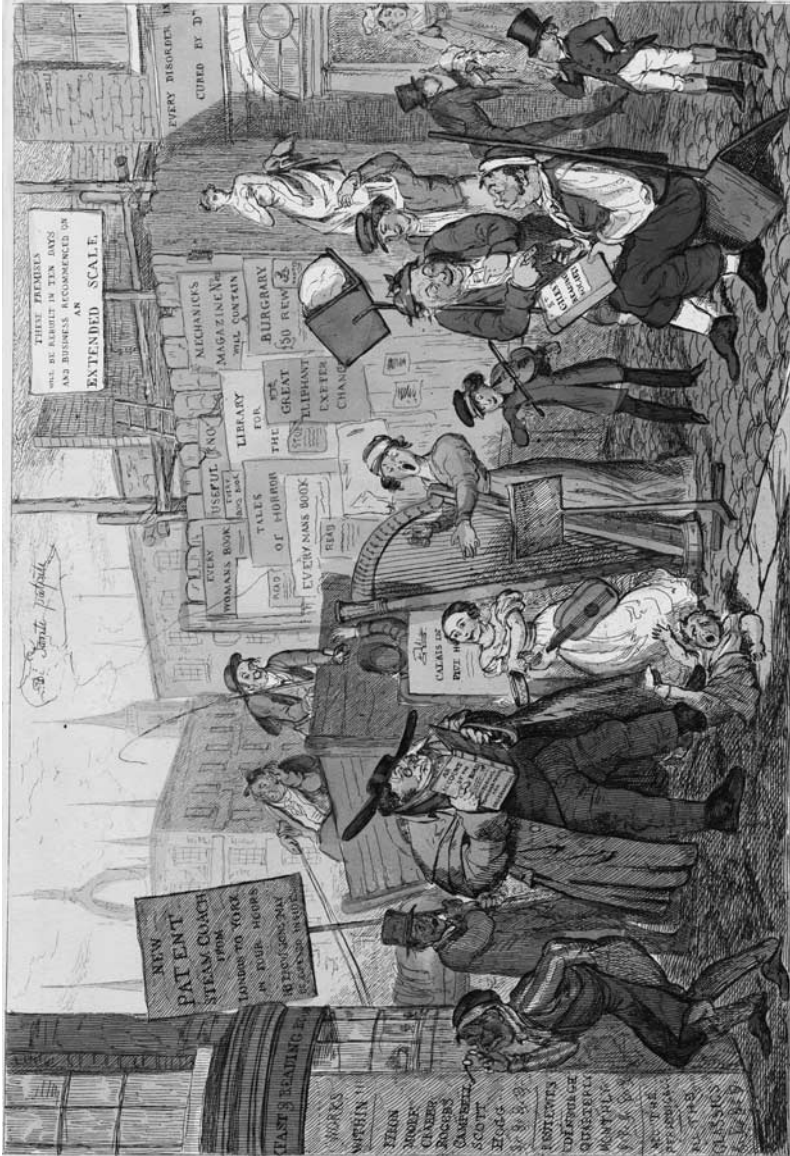
JOHN BARNARD · D. J. MCKITTERICK · I. R. WILLISON
General Editors

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Frontispiece: Robert Seymour, "The March of Intellect", 1829. Courtesy of The Lewis Walpole Library, Yale University.

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In Memoriam

Hugh Amory

Don McKenzie

Michael Treadwell

manet opera homines moriuntur

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