

PART I

*Beginnings*

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Excerpt  
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## CHAPTER I

*First Impressions*  
*Dublin and London to 1699*

Swift in print began in the early 1690s with two oddly printed poems. Published in two different kingdoms, one in Dublin and one in London, they anticipate an uneasily asymmetrical relation between Ireland and England that would shape Swift's publications as decisively as it did his life and writing. Slender (even nugatory) as these two first publications are, their material oddities present a striking contrast with the higher standards later available to Swift. Yet their publishers were also linked with networks that would continue to shape Swift in print well into the future – a future in which cheap popular print would also display its own particular force. These scanty and erratic first publications offer revealing insights into the print cultures that Swift in print inherited and would to a degree transform.

That Swift in print should be so deeply marked by the asymmetrical power relations that connected and differentiated the Irish and English print trades is hardly surprising. Born in 1667 into the Anglo-Irish professional community around Dublin Castle, Swift would later claim that as a child he had been taken away to England by his nurse.<sup>1</sup> By about 1673 he had been placed at Kilkenny School, 70 miles south of Dublin, and in 1682 he entered Trinity College, staying until 1688, when the War of the two Kings prompted an exodus of Protestants to England. There Swift became secretary to the retired diplomat and family patron Sir William Temple (1628–1699), returning to Ireland in 1690, the year of William III's victory at the Battle of the Boyne: Swift's first printed work, *An Ode. To the King*, celebrates this event and is dated Dublin 1691. In the same year Swift rejoined Temple in England, and 1692 saw the London publication of his second printed work, *Ode to the Athenian Society*. He began a career in the Church of Ireland: having been ordained deacon in 1694 and priest in

<sup>1</sup> For Swift's early life, see *Family of Swift, PW*, vol. V, pp. 192–5, and chronology in each volume of *CWJS*.

1695, he took on a thankless ministry in Presbyterian-dominated Ulster, which he left to return to Temple again in 1696. By now he was almost thirty, and for the next three years he stayed in England as Temple's secretary, also working during this time on *A Tale of a Tub*. On Temple's death in 1699 he took on the role of literary executor, overseeing the London printing of Temple's as yet unpublished works.

Swift had grown up in a print world where Dublin and London exemplified opposite approaches to the threats and advantages posed by print to the early modern state.<sup>2</sup> In Restoration Dublin the advantages were secured by appointing a King's Printer in Ireland, and the threats were suppressed by giving him a monopoly: apart from the King's Printer, no one in Ireland had any business to be printing or selling books at all. London print, in contrast, had long operated under the more expansive regime run by the Stationers' Company, which effectively managed the trade on the Crown's behalf. As John Feather puts it: 'The interests of the Company and the Crown coalesced in a desire to control the trade, the Crown to control content and the Company to protect the commercial interests of its members.'<sup>3</sup> Crucially, the Stationers' Company enjoyed monopoly rights in the works of the so-called English Stock – notably almanacs, the Bible, the Book of Common Prayer and Lily's Latin grammar (all of which would be important to Swift). The English Stock was powerfully constitutive of authority, whether in presenting a Protestant understanding of the Bible, promulgating Anglican liturgy, systematising the language fundamental to elite education, or tabulating times of sunrise and sunset. Both London and Dublin had systems to ensure that print and authority went hand in hand, but, as Swift in print would amply demonstrate, the instantiation of that union in traditional print genres also invited co-option and challenge.

Swift's well-known preference for London publication might at first sight seem to align Swift in print with a London-orientated Anglo-Irish outlook: Pollard notes that London, 'the centre of all social, political, and literary excellence in the eyes of most of the Anglo-Irish', gained further traction for Irish authors, after the British Copyright Act of 1709, from what was for many (if not for Swift) 'the compelling attraction of payment

<sup>2</sup> Mary Pollard, *Dublin's Trade in Books, 1550–1800*, Lyell Lectures, 1986–7 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), p. 1, and, for overview, Charles Benson, 'The Irish Trade', in Michael F. Suarez and Michael L. Turner (eds.), *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain*, vol. V: 1695–1830 (Cambridge University Press, 2009), pp. 366–82.

<sup>3</sup> John Feather, 'The Stationers' Company and Copyright: Evidence in the Company Archives', in *Literary Print Culture* ([www.literaryprintculture.amdigital.co.uk](http://www.literaryprintculture.amdigital.co.uk)).

for copy'.<sup>4</sup> The material texts of Swift's writings tell more complicated stories: London publications could prove problematic, Dublin publications might achieve what London publications could not, and additional advantages, as well as difficulties, arose from the interplay between them. The printed canon of a major author was also likely to exert a different cultural and commercial force in the two kingdoms: in the 1730s Swift's first collected *Works*, published in Dublin by George Faulkner (c. 1703–1775), constituted an unprecedented achievement for an indigenous author and a proportionately valuable investment for his bookseller; but in the much larger London trade, which had long boasted impressive folios of Chaucer, Jonson, Spenser and Shakespeare, a single author could hardly have loomed so large (though Swift's friend Alexander Pope arguably came close).<sup>5</sup>

The changes in scale and range that facilitated Swift's later Dublin profile were already well under way in his youth. Gillespie's table of the output of Irish presses in the seventeenth century (based on *ESTC* data from 2003) confirms the overwhelming dominance of Dublin within a relatively small national output.<sup>6</sup> The table provided by Bullard and McLaverty (based on *ESTC* data from 2012) further suggests that over the first half of the eighteenth century Dublin's production almost doubled – although the preponderance of London production remained massive.<sup>7</sup> Gillespie also suggests the restricted range of seventeenth-century Dublin printing: in the final decade he identifies around 250 official items, around 100 reprints (typically from London originals) and around 200 other items.<sup>8</sup> (As for poetry, the core of imaginative writing in the period,

<sup>4</sup> Pollard, *Dublin's Trade in Books*, p. 67.

<sup>5</sup> See David Foxon, *Pope and the Early Eighteenth-Century Book Trade*, revised and edited by James McLaverty (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991); McLaverty, *Pope, Print and Meaning*.

<sup>6</sup> Raymond Gillespie, *Reading Ireland: Print, Reading and Social Change in Early Modern Ireland* (Manchester University Press, 2005), table 1, p. 186. For booksellers in Dublin in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century, see James W. Phillips, *Printing and Bookselling in Dublin, 1670–1800* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 1998), pp. 26–30, and, for printers and journeymen, pp. 34–6.

<sup>7</sup> Bullard and McLaverty, 'Introduction', in *JS Book*, pp. 1–28 (p. 8, and, for necessary cautions, p. 26 n. 29, citing Stephen Karian, 'The Limitations and Possibilities of the *ESTC*', *The Age of Johnson: A Scholarly Annual*, 21 (2011), 283–97 (pp. 291–3)). Suarez breaks English imprints down by region but treats Ireland (like Scotland and Wales) as a single unit, using *ESTC* data from 2002–4 (Michael F. Suarez, 'Toward a Bibliometric Analysis of the Surviving Record, 1701–1800', in Michael F. Suarez and Michael L. Turner (eds.), *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain*, vol. V: 1695–1830 (Cambridge University Press, 2009), pp. 39–65 (pp. 39, 50–1), noting, *passim*, the cautions necessary in estimating from *ESTC* data). For poor survival rates of Dublin publications for 1710–35, see James May, 'False and Incomplete Imprints in Swift's Dublin, 1710–35', in *Münster* (2019), pp. 59–99 (pp. 66–7).

<sup>8</sup> Gillespie, *Reading Ireland*, table 2, p. 188.

Carpenter notes its relative rarity in Dublin print right through into the 1680s; and James Woolley, noting the small size of ‘the poem-buying public in Dublin’ in the time of Swift, suggests ‘the likelihood that when Dublin poems were published, they were published with a subvention from the author or a patron or both’.<sup>9</sup>) Pollard’s account of the seventeenth-century printer William Bladen (*d.* 1695), who printed successively for Charles I and the Commonwealth from the 1640s until 1660, gives a stark perspective: ‘Bladen was the only printer in Dublin and for most of this thirty-odd years the only bookseller . . . From 1640 to 1660 he issued a mere 20 or so works that were not official pub[licatio]ns, news, or propaganda.’<sup>10</sup> Both scale and range would change markedly under his successors, as the King’s Printer’s monopoly was largely ignored by rival tradesmen, and official strategy for the control of offensive books relied increasingly on prosecutions for seditious libel (which would also bear on Swift in print).<sup>11</sup> Nonetheless, the King’s Printer remained a pervasive presence in the Dublin print of Swift’s youth.

### The King’s Printer in Ireland

Early modern books customarily included, usually at the foot of the title page, a formal statement (‘imprint’) that declared their city of publication, the name of the person responsible, and the year of publication.<sup>12</sup> In Swift’s youth the Dublin imprint of the King’s Printer generally featured the name of the London bookseller Benjamin Tooke the elder (*c.* 1642–1716), often accompanied by one or more of the Crooke family.<sup>13</sup> John Crooke (*d.* 1669), who received the patent in 1660, had been Tooke’s apprentice in London, and had married Tooke’s sister, Mary. While John Crooke

<sup>9</sup> Andrew Carpenter, ‘Circulating Ideas: Coteries, Groups and the Circulation of Verse in English in Early Modern Ireland’, in Martin Fanning and Raymond Gillespie (eds.), *Print Culture and Intellectual Life in Ireland, 1660–1941: Essays in Honour of Michael Adams* (Dublin: Woodfield Press, 2006), pp. 1–23; James Woolley, ‘The Circulation of Verse in Jonathan Swift’s Dublin’, *Eighteenth-Century Ireland: Iris an dá chultúr*, 32 (2017), 136–50 (p. 138). Such payments were not unknown in the London trade: see *The Correspondence of Alexander Pope*, ed. George Sherburn, 5 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1956), vol. III, p. 489.

<sup>10</sup> Pollard, *Dictionary*, p. 39; Pollard, *Dublin’s Trade in Books*, pp. 4–5.

<sup>11</sup> Pollard, *Dublin’s Trade in Books*, pp. 1–11.

<sup>12</sup> For imprint conventions (and ways of evading them), see May, ‘False and Incomplete Imprints’, pp. 70–2 and *passim*.

<sup>13</sup> E. R. McClintock Dix, ‘The Crooke Family’, *Bibliographical Society of Ireland* [papers], 2 (1921), 16–17; Pollard, *Dictionary*, pp. 128–36 (family tree, p. 128). For the Crookes as ‘a highly successful printing dynasty’ and an example to later entrants to the trade, see Colm Lennon, ‘The Print Trade, 1550–1700’, in Raymond Gillespie and Andrew Hadfield (eds.), *The Oxford History of the Irish Book*, vol. III: *The Irish Book in English, 1550–1800* (Oxford University Press, 2006), pp. 61–73 (p. 73).

looked after his London interests, Mary Crooke ran the King's Printer's business in Dublin. When John Crooke died in 1669 (the year of Swift's second birthday), Tooke acquired the patent in trust for his sister and her sons, and his name appeared in the imprint, alongside a shifting combination of Crooke names and roles, until John and Mary's son Andrew Crooke (*d.* 1732) acquired the patent in 1693. The King's Printer's Printing House (initially on Skinner Row, bounding Christ Church Cathedral yard to the south, and later on Ormonde Quay, on the north bank of the Liffey) was a central fixture in the Dublin print world: in 1673, the Franciscan Peter Walsh commented on the utility of Mrs Crooke's house as a 'randevue', 'by reason of a publick shopp', a sociable space where surreptitious contacts could pass unremarked.<sup>14</sup>

Mary Crooke's output featured an extensive official repertory of proclamations, acts of parliament, loyal sermons and editions of the Book of Common Prayer and psalter, along with liturgical supplements for special occasions. At the heart of her operation was the new type that her husband had commissioned when he took up the patent: featuring royal arms, elaborate initials, the traditional authority of archaic black letter type and an Irish harp motif, it affirmed the restoration of Church and King in Ireland.<sup>15</sup> (In 1673 the Crookes also acquired the type used by Bladen, and by the 1690s they were deploying a range of type that descended from even earlier King's Printers.<sup>16</sup>) The expressive force of the Crookes' loyal typography is well illustrated by a warning issued in 1662 by the Lords Justices and Council, complaining that 'Recusants, Non-conformists, and Sectaries have grown worse by Clemencie.'<sup>17</sup> As a brief notice for public display it was printed on one side only, in the typical format of a half sheet (also useful for news-sheets, poems and other short pieces – as many later Swift publications would testify). Authority was emphasised by a headpiece of the royal arms, surmounted by a border of crowned roses and acorns (the latter recalling the oak in which Charles II had escaped capture after the Battle of Worcester). The main text, in black letter, had a heading in large lower-case roman type, beginning with a large upper-case roman initial wreathed in foliage; and at the foot were the names of the signatories, surmounting the imprint of 'John Crook, Printer to the Kings most

<sup>14</sup> Pollard, *Dictionary*, p. 135, quoting Bodleian, Carte MS 45, f. 400v.

<sup>15</sup> Pollard, *Dictionary*, p. 134.

<sup>16</sup> Lennon, 'The Print Trade, 1550–1700', p. 71; Pollard, *Dictionary*, p. 131.

<sup>17</sup> Ireland, Lords Justices and Council, *Whereas in expectation of Conformity to the Laws of the Land, concerning uniformity of Common-Prayer and Service in the Church and the Administration of the Sacraments* (Dublin, 1662; ESTC R39307).

Excellent Majesty'. Royal imagery, traditional black letter and names of authority underlined the coercive force of the verbal text, exemplifying the King's Printer's power to give material expression to the restored order of Church and King.<sup>18</sup>

Yet this order would be challenged in the following reign; and when in June 1688 the order went out for a supplement to the Book of Common Prayer to celebrate the birth of a son to James II and Mary of Modena, it was the Crookes who printed it: *A Form of Prayer with Thanksgiving for the Safe Delivery of the Queen, and Happy Birth of the Young Prince. To be used on Sunday the first of July, in the City of Dublin, and the Liberties thereof; and upon the 8<sup>th</sup> day of the same month in all other places throughout this Kingdom of Ireland. By His Excellency's Command.*<sup>19</sup> The pamphlet adopted the typographical scheme of large black letter with roman headings and rubric that was usual for such supplementary prayers. But the familiarity of the format can only have underlined, for Anglican congregations, the unprecedented threat of the content (also expressed in a procession to High Mass in Dublin Castle accompanied by public feasting and fireworks).<sup>20</sup> The prayers, part of daily worship for Swift and his fellow students at Trinity College, envisioned a Catholic succession extending to the crack of doom: 'That when the Kings days shall be fulfilled, and he shall sleep with his Fathers in Peace and Glory, his Seed may be set up after him, and his House and Kingdom may be established for ever before Thee.'<sup>21</sup> The Crookes' role was to print for the king, whoever he was and whatever he stood for: when in 1689, after the Revolution, James arrived in Ireland to reassert his right to the throne, it was the Crookes who set Tooke's name to James's 'Act of Supply for his Majesty for the Support of his Army', which once more flourished the royal arms on its title.<sup>22</sup> Even when James's ordinances began to appear under the imprint of a new King's Printer,

<sup>18</sup> Nearly a century later, John Smith's *Printer's Grammar* would declare that 'Black Letter is so far abolish'd here, that it is seldom used in any other matter than what belongs to Law, and more particularly to Statute Law', while conceding its occasional use 'to serve for matter which the Author would particularly enforce to the reader', or 'instead of printing in Red, what is designed to be made more conspicuous than common' (*The Printer's Grammar*, 1755, English Bibliographical Sources, Series 3, No. 2 (London: Gregg Press, 1965), pp. 18–19).

<sup>19</sup> ESTC R173987.

<sup>20</sup> John Gerald Simms, *Jacobite Ireland, 1685–91* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1969), pp. 44–5.

<sup>21</sup> Andrew Carpenter, 'A School for a Satirist: Swift's Exposure to the Wars of Words in Dublin in the 1680s', in *Münster* (2003), pp. 161–75 (pp. 163, 165–6); S. J. Connolly, *Divided Kingdom: Ireland, 1630–1800* (Oxford University Press, 2008), p. 178.

<sup>22</sup> *Anno Regni Jacobi II. Regis. Angliæ, Scotiæ, Franciæ & Hiberniæ Quinto. At the Parliament begun at Dublin the seventh day of May, Anno Domini 1689. In the fifth year of the reign of our most Gracious Sovereign Lord James the Second, by the grace of God, of England, Scotland, France and Ireland King, Defender of the Faith, &c.* (Dublin, 1689; ESTC R215420).



the Catholic bookseller and book importer James Malone (*d.* 1721), who held James's patent with his relation Richard Malone for a few months in 1690, it seems that most of the printing was actually done by Andrew Crooke, continuing a stable coding of royal authority through a period of radical uncertainty.<sup>23</sup> But by this time Swift had left for England.

The output of the King's Printer, even when supplemented by the publications of rival presses, was insufficient to satisfy national demand, and readers of English books in Ireland were substantially reliant on imports.<sup>24</sup> Another possibility was Dublin reprinting of London titles, for by convention this was regarded as entirely legitimate, provided that no other Dublin printer had already laid a claim.<sup>25</sup> Such reprints were cheaper to supply than imports, especially if corners were cut on materials and printwork; and since the Copyright Act of 1709 would not extend to Ireland, these older, more permissive conventions, which persisted in Dublin throughout Swift's lifetime, encouraged the circulation of different printed texts (often of the same work) on the two sides of the Irish Sea. In the case of school books, for example, the Crookes were by the 1690s advertising their own range:

Whereas such *Chapmen* as deal in *Books* have been forced to send to *England* for all their *Histories* and *School-Books*. These are to give them an account that the *Books* under-named may be had at the *Kings Printing-House* on *Ormonde-Key*, or at *Eliphel Dobsons*. Bookseller at the *Stationers-Arms, Dublin*: And all other *School Books* and *Histories* useful in this *Kingdom* will be done so fast as possible, and afforded as cheap as can be had in *London*.<sup>26</sup>

Their list includes reprints of standard Latin textbooks, but also 'The Church Catechism, with the Bishop of *Cork's* Notes upon it', such favourite chapbooks as 'Valentine and Orson' and 'Seven Champions', and two items on military topics: 'Military Discipline' and 'Articles [*sic*] of War'. It is an eloquent reminder of the unsettled times, as well as the schoolboy culture, in which Swift had his formation.

The Crookes, however, did not always work to a quality commensurate with their royal authority, particularly since they supplemented their

<sup>23</sup> Pollard, *Dictionary*, pp. 395–6, 480–1.    <sup>24</sup> Pollard, *Dublin's Trade in Books*, pp. 32–65.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 66, 169–73.

<sup>26</sup> Advertisement on the final leaf of the Crookes' erratically printed *Mercurius Hibernicus, or, an Almanack for the Year of Christ, 1693 . . . Fraught with Variety of Matter Befitting such a Work . . . By John Whalley, Esq; Student in Pphysick [*sic*] and Mathematicks* (Dublin, 1693; ESTC R170269); Pollard cites a similar advertisement from 1690 (*Dictionary*, p. 130). For cheap Dublin reprints of English school books commissioned by the Catholic bookseller James Malone, see also Pollard, *Dictionary*, p. 395, and J. W. Phillips, *Printing and Bookselling*, p. 75.

official business with cheap popular print such as almanacs. Gillespie points out that ‘at least part of the success of the almanac lay in its low cost’, which was often no more than a penny; but the traditional design was fussy and labour-intensive, requiring tables, astrological symbols and rubrication.<sup>27</sup> Combined with low prices, small type and cheap paper, the results were predictably tawdry. The Crookes’ *Bourks Almanack Hiberniae Merlinus for the Year of our Lord 1685*, for example, loyally affirmed the legitimacy of English rule by offering a chronology ‘of all the Kings of Ireland, with the Remarkable things done by them from the time of *St. Patrick*, till *Henry the 2d.* the first English *Monark* of this *Kingdom*’, but it also littered the text with mis-spaced words and transposed letters, and resorted to a last-minute reduction in type size (in November) to fit in the remaining text.<sup>28</sup> It is not surprising that the Crookes, though tried out by the Whig almanac-maker John Whalley (1653–1724), failed to give satisfaction: in the end Whalley set up a printshop of his own.<sup>29</sup> Complaints of the Crookes’ textual errors, illegible type and poor paper intensified during the 1670s, and recurred in the 1700s.<sup>30</sup> The new type commissioned at the Restoration began to wear; and the type inherited from previous King’s Printers was even older. Even new type would have required good paper for best effect, but paper was a major target for economy, particularly as Irish printers relied mainly on imports from France and Holland.<sup>31</sup> In the absence of constant reinvestment, some of the texts issued over Benjamin Tooke’s imprint teetered on the verge of unsustainable pretension.

Meanwhile the patent monopoly was ceasing to be an effective reality. In 1670 the Dublin Guild of St Luke the Evangelist had been incorporated to admit ‘Cutlers, Painter-stainers and Stationers’, and within this body members of the Dublin book trade were admitted to the faculty of stationers.<sup>32</sup> Since one of the two patentees in this faculty was none other than Tooke, Pollard surmises that ‘it may be taken as legitimizing the

<sup>27</sup> Gillespie, *Reading Ireland*, pp. 168–9; Pollard, *Dublin’s Trade in Books*, p. 3; Valerie Rumbold, ‘Ignoring Swift in Dublin? Swift’s Bickerstaff Hoax in the Dublin Print Trade’, *Publishing History*, 57 (2017), 9–42 (pp. 16–18).

<sup>28</sup> ESTC R170116. For Bourke’s attempts to shape his material to attract Irish readers, see Gillespie, *Reading Ireland*, pp. 168–9.

<sup>29</sup> Pollard, *Dictionary*, p. 603. See Whalley, *Mercurius Hibernicus . . . 1693*, printed by Andrew Crooke under the Tooke imprint, and for discussion, Rumbold, ‘Ignoring Swift’, pp. 16–19.

<sup>30</sup> Pollard, *Dictionary*, pp. 131, 136. For an overview of Irish papermaking and of imported papers used in Dublin, see J. W. Phillips, *Printing and Bookselling*, pp. 151–96.

<sup>31</sup> Pollard, *Dublin’s Trade in Books*, pp. 145–6.

<sup>32</sup> Pollard, *Dictionary*, pp. ix–xxxiv; Pollard, *Dublin’s Trade in Books*, pp. 5–6.