The Good Natur'd Man

The Bicentennial of Oliver Goldsmith
1730(?)–1774
Oliver Goldsmith. Mezzotint engraving by G. F. L. Marchi, after the portrait painted by Sir Joshua Reynolds. Courtesy the Art Institute of Chicago.
The Good Natur'd Man: Oliver Goldsmith
A BICENTENNIAL CELEBRATION
Being an Exhibition of Selected Works of this Ingenious Author Taken from the Collections of the University of Chicago & Shown for the Amusement and Instruction of All and Sundry, & with a Special Emphasis on the Art, Techniques, and Vicissitudes of Bibliographical Inquiry.

At The Joseph Regenstein Library
November 1974 through February 1975
To the Reader

Commemorating the bicentennial of Oliver Goldsmith's death, this exhibition displays a wide selection of his works, and honors both the author and the scholars who have studied his texts. During the past two hundred years many editors and biographers have collected, preserved and analyzed material concerning Goldsmith's life and writings. Thomas Wright, Bishop Thomas Percy, James Prior, Austin Dobson and J. W. M. Gibbs are but a few of the scholars who have laid the foundation for subsequent research. The late Ronald S. Crane, Distinguished Service Professor in the Department of English of the University of Chicago, augmented the work of these men by making major additions to the Goldsmith canon. Other twentieth-century literary scholars, among whom are A. L. Sells, R. W. Seitz, K. C. Balderston, W. B. Todd and Phillip Harth, have also contributed historical and textual studies which reflect continuing interest in Goldsmith and his works.

The cumulative research of these and other men and women of letters is acknowledged in the tribute this exhibition pays to the scholarship and teaching of Arthur Friedman, Distinguished Service Professor in the Department of English and the College of the University of Chicago. The Collected Works of Oliver Goldsmith (Oxford, 1966), edited by Professor Friedman, is the culmination of over thirty years of study of the Goldsmith canon and the standard twentieth-century edition of Goldsmith's writings. (The last major collection was Gibbs's published eighty years previously.) Friedman's edition was described in Modern Language Review as "a collection made on modern bibliographical principles" within which "we have the best of Goldsmith better than ever before."

This exhibition suggests the scope of Goldsmith's writings and the nature and complexity of the bibliographical problems his texts present to students and scholars. While reflecting Goldsmith's work in many genres, this presentation of his writings is not exhaustive. Limitations of space have necessitated choices from among the holdings of the University Library. An effort has been made, however, to include a wide selection of Goldsmith's major works in a representative number of editions. Minor works of particular interest, either because of their rarity or as examples of special bibliographical problems, have been included when available.

Only the more conspicuous and general bibliographical complexities in Goldsmith's work are discussed. Eighteenth-century printing
practices; the chronology of editions; an explanation of impressions, issues and states; the distinction of piracies from authorized editions; the study of textual variants and the establishment of the canon are among the topics illustrated by specific works in the exhibition.

Except in cases where the demands of continuity are overriding, the arrangement of titles in the catalogue is primarily chronological. All editions of a single work are shown together, however, even when they span a number of years.

I gratefully acknowledge the help of Professors Arthur Friedman, E. W. Rosenheim, Jr., and Gwin J. Kolb of the Department of English at the University of Chicago, and the other scholars, named and unnamed, on whose work the material in this catalogue is based. I deeply appreciate the support of Robert Rosenthal, Curator; Judith Cushman, Exhibitions Coordinator; and the Special Collections staff at the Joseph Regenstein Library.

Jean S. Gottlieb
Oliver Goldsmith

The date and place of Oliver Goldsmith’s birth are both uncertain, but he was probably born in 1730 at Pallas in Ireland, the second son of a poor clergyman. His childhood was spent in Lissoy, said by some to be “Auburn,” the deserted village of his famous poem. After early schooling in Elphin and Athlone he took a bachelor’s degree at Trinity College, Dublin, in 1749. His study of medicine in Edinburgh and then Leyden ended in 1755, when desire for travel impelled him to wander through Belgium, France, Switzerland and Italy, but poverty forced him to do so mostly on foot. Arriving in London, destitute, he tried unsuccessfully to practice medicine (he probably never earned a medical degree), then took a post as usher, or assistant teacher, in an academy.

In 1757 he began writing anonymous book reviews, and from the year 1759, when his first original work was published, until 1774, the year of his death at the age of about forty-three, Goldsmith produced, in addition to many other anonymous essays and reviews, a novel, two plays and considerable poetry. His works also include histories, biographies, translations and books on natural and physical science, the hack work forced on him by economic necessity.

Goldsmith wrote his own “biography,” an amusing—and prophetic—account of his life:

There will come a day, no doubt it will . . . when the Scaligers and the Daciers will vindicate my character, give learned editions of my labours, and bless the times with copious comments on the text . . . . How will they bewail the times that suffered so much genius to lie neglected. . . . This may be the subject of their lecture:—

“Oliver Goldsmith flourished in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. He lived to be an hundred and three years old, [and in that] age may justly be styled the sun of [literature] and the Confucius of Europe. [Many of his earlier writings, to the regret of the] learned world, were anonymous, and have probably been lost, because united with those of others. The first avowed piece the world has of his is entitled an ‘Essay on the Present State of Taste and Literature in Europe,’—a work well worth its weight in diamonds. In this he profoundly explains what learning is, and what learning is not. In this he proves that blockheads are not men of wit, and yet that men of wit are actually blockheads.”

Samuel Johnson, who composed the epitaph which appears on Goldsmith’s monument in Westminster Abbey, said of him, “He
touches nothing that he does not adorn.” Sir Joshua Reynolds described his dear friend, “He was of a sociable disposition. . . . He made always a sort of bustle, and wherever he was there was no yawning. The conversation never stagnated or languished.”

Oliver Goldsmith died, after a brief illness, on 4 April 1774.
An Enquiry into the Present State of Polite Learning in Europe.
Goldsmith's earliest literary efforts were a translation and reviews, followed in April 1759 by his first original published work. In keeping with the convention of concealed authorship still prevalent in the eighteenth century, An Enquiry appeared anonymously. Writing for money was not considered a gentleman's occupation at that time; furthermore, anonymity provided shelter from critical censure until the popularity and reputation of his work made an author's name a valuable literary property in itself.
A group of speculative essays, An Enquiry expressed an educated gentleman's contention that the decline of "polite learning," e.g., poetry and history, is proportional to the rise of criticism. The work further argued that literary criticism, which applied the same standards to the writings of all nations and all ages, is a limiting regimentation.
Gift of Professor Arthur Friedman

An Enquiry into the Present State of Polite Learning in Europe.
London, 1774.
Hostile reviews and public apathy delayed a second edition until 1774, when Goldsmith was paid five guineas "for improving the second edition of my Polite Learning and putting my name to the same." At that time he made extensive alterations both in substance and point of view, omitting two significant chapters which urged that "English taste, like English liberty, should be restrained only by laws of its own promoting." He excised sections critical of theatrical practices and personnel in deference to his friend David Garrick; and the "refined gentleman" speaking in the first edition yielded to Goldsmith's informal and familiar voice in the second.
A fifteen-year interval between first and second editions is unusual and emphasizes an editor's dilemma in choosing one of the editions as his copy-text, the text on which his edition will be based. On the one hand, for a scholarly old-spelling edition, the editor would usually want to select as copy-text the first edition. It is closest to the manuscript in its "accidentals" (the spelling, incidental punctuation and similar mechanics, which do not influence meaning). The editor, however, would normally wish to alter the copy-text by admitting into it readings of later editions for which he thought his author responsible.
On this problem in An Enquiry Professor Friedman observes that "it is difficult to know to what extent the second edition represents Goldsmith's settled convictions at the end of his career; the work may have been cut so drastically because he found excision easier than revision." Since the excised material is among the most interesting in the work and expresses well-
known views of Goldsmith, Professor Friedman followed his usual practice of using the first edition as copy-text; he departed from that practice, however, in not admitting readings from the second edition.

Gift of Professor Arthur Friedman


In the same year An Enquiry was published, Goldsmith began writing a weekly magazine containing his own original essays, translations and, at the beginning of the project, poetry. Although unsuccessful, the little periodical became a literary storehouse whose pieces were conveniently available for reuse in other works.

Ideas, phrases and sometimes entire pieces “borrowed” from the Bee appeared in Goldsmith’s later prose and poetry. The Citizen of the World, a series of letters supposedly written by a Chinese “philosopher”; The Traveler, a poem; The Vicar of Wakefield, a novel, and many of his essays contained material originally published in the Bee. Goldsmith later revised eight essays which appeared in various numbers of the magazine for inclusion in Essays by Mr. Goldsmith, a collection published in 1765.

Bee Number 1, a small booklet of thirty-two pages, appeared on 6 October 1759 priced at threepence. “Every twelve numbers,” publisher J. Wilkie promised, “will make an handsome pocket volume.” Because of poor sales only eight numbers appeared, the last one on 24 November. In December the collected set of all eight weeklies was offered at two shillings sewed or two shillings sixpence bound.

Examination of over a dozen of these collected sets of the Bee reveals that Number 1 appears in two distinct editions. Differences throughout in punctuation and press figures (each pressman’s identifying number or mark) reveal that some copies of the first number were actually printed after the last number. Several explanations are possible. Perhaps, for some reason, fewer copies of Number 1 were printed or some copies were accidentally destroyed. It is most likely, however, that when sales of Number 1 were disappointingly small, some copies were given away for publicity. To make up complete sets of all eight, additional copies of Number 1 would have had to be printed.

Helen and Ruth Regenstein Collection

The Bee, a select Collection of Essays on the most Interesting and Entertaining Subjects. [Second issue.] London, [n.d.].

The collected edition, published just a few weeks after Number 8, was so poorly received that there were enough remainders on hand some years after
Goldsmith's death (1774) to be offered for sale again, this time with an undated engraved title page.
Gift of Professor Arthur Friedman

The Mystery Revealed. London, 1742 [1762].
A piece of hack work, The Mystery Revealed was designed by Goldsmith to capitalize on the notoriety of a contemporary event. Journalism's affinity for sensational trivia made a cause célèbre of the apparition which "spoke" to a young girl in Cock-lane during 1762. Supposedly the spirit of a young woman, the "ghost" through knockings and scratchings accused the father of her unborn, illegitimate child of poisoning her. Samuel Johnson later admitted that he was the author of an anonymous article in the Gentleman's Magazine (February 1762) describing an unsuccessful attempt to confront the spirit, and concluding therefore that it was a hoax.
Later that month an anonymous pamphlet was published recounting the lurid story and branding the entire performance a fraud. (The hoax was revealed almost immediately after the pamphlet appeared.) Evidence confirming Goldsmith's authorship was established by a receipt, signed by him, for three guineas "for a pamphlet respecting the Cock-lane Ghost."
The money came from publisher John Newbery, who, though his name does not appear on the title page, was often a partner of William Bristow, the publisher of the pamphlet.
Only one edition of the extremely rare one-shilling piece of ephemera is known to exist, with two slightly different versions of the title page. Curiously enough, both are misdated 1742.
Helen and Ruth Regenstein Collection

Photostat of the original in the British Museum.
Three to four guineas per octavo sheet (sixteen pages of text), a standard payment to a professional writer of the mid-eighteenth century, was a rate which encouraged "lazy compilation" of history or biography rather than the less remunerative creation of original pieces. Goldsmith wrote book-length biographies of Voltaire, Beau Nash, Thomas Parnell and Lord Bolingbroke. The earliest was the anonymous "Memoirs of M. de Voltaire." In January 1759 he wrote his brother: "There is a book of mine will be publish'd in a few days. The life of . . . Mr. Voltaire. It is no more than a catch penny. However I spent but four weeks on the whole performance for which I receiv'd twenty pound."
Although his source or sources have yet to be discovered, there is evidence that Goldsmith had access to facts on Voltaire's life only to 1750.
Despite his remark to his brother and advertisements by two publishers at two different times (in 1759 and again in 1760), the biography never appeared as a book, but was finally published serially in the Lady’s Magazine in 1761.

Gift of Professor Arthur Friedman

The Life of Richard Nash of Bath, Esq. [First edition.]
London, 1762.

Goldsmith was paid fourteen guineas in 1762 for writing another anonymous piece of hack work, the life of the famous bon vivant and “King” of Bath, Beau Nash. Reportedly completed in five weeks, this biography made extensive use of the anecdotes and other material in architect John Wood’s An Essay Towards a Description of Bath. The story of Sylvia S——, for example, is the pathetic account of a young woman whose unwillingness to heed the kindly advice of Beau Nash results in her degradation and subsequent suicide.

The edition of Wood’s two-volume work which Goldsmith used has been established with considerable certainty because a narrative appearing only in Wood’s second edition is repeated almost verbatim in Goldsmith’s work.

Gift of Professor Arthur Friedman

The Life of Richard Nash, Esq; late Master of the Ceremonies at Bath.

Although reviews criticized the triviality of its subject, the biography, selling at four shillings, required a second edition within the year. Goldsmith made a few changes, corrections and additions, but fewer than he usually did in a first revision.

Gift of Professor Arthur Friedman

The Citizen of the World; or Letters from a Chinese Philosopher, Residing in London, to his Friends in the East. 2 volumes.

In January 1760, when he was about twenty-eight years old, Goldsmith was paid to write anonymous articles, in the form of letters, twice a week for the Public Ledger, the new daily paper of bookseller and publisher John Newbery. By February, Goldsmith’s letters “from a Chinese Philosopher, residing in London, to his Friends in the East,” were making their appearance as a series. According to J. W. M. Gibbs, a nineteenth-century editor
of Goldsmith's works, these were the first of the author's pieces to attract favorable notice. One hundred and nineteen Chinese letters were published between January 1760 and August 1761, for which Goldsmith was paid approximately one guinea apiece.

French Jesuits Louis Le Comte and J. B. Du Halde supplied much of Goldsmith's Chinese "erudition." Many models of the literary epistle were accessible: Horace Walpole's Letter from Xo Ho and Montesquieu's Lettres Persanes, for example. But for both form and content Goldsmith relied most heavily on the Lettres Chinoises of the Marquis D'Argens, from whom he appropriated sentences, paragraphs and even whole letters when his own inspiration flagged.

Which of the many editions of the Lettres Chinoises (in English translation or in the original French) Goldsmith used was established by Professor Phillip Harth, who examined the editions available when Goldsmith was writing. Harth discovered that a passage in Goldsmith's Chinese letter 33 was a direct translation from the preface by D'Argens written exclusively for his 1755 edition.

The extensive changes Goldsmith made in adding four new essays, a preface and a new title delayed publication of a two-volume collected edition of the letters (called The Citizen of the World) until May 1762. The extra expense may have also forced changes in the business arrangements. Although the title page reads "printed for the Author," given his chronic insolvency, it is unlikely Goldsmith paid for the printing and distribution. An acknowledgement from Goldsmith, dated 5 March 1762, of five pounds for the Chinese letters might signify a previous balance Newbery owed him, or a down-payment toward Newbery's eventual ownership of the book. No satisfactory explanation has been advanced either for the words "printed for the Author" on the title page, or for the alteration of the title from the "Chinese letters" to The Citizen of the World.

Gift of Professor Arthur Friedman

The Citizen of the World; or Letters from a Chinese Philosopher Residing in London to his Friends in the East. 2 volumes.

In 1766, perhaps to capitalize on the success of Goldsmith's novel, The Vicar of Wakefield (also published by John Newbery that year), a newspaper advertisement announced: "This day was published" The Citizen of the World. It was designated neither a new edition nor the second edition, but three months after Goldsmith's death, when The Citizen of the World was published in 1774 from a new setting of type, it was called the third edition.

Though it was probably not revised by the author, this edition is most often used as a copy-text for modern editions. In keeping with his conviction
that the first printing is the one most likely to reflect the author's original intention. Arthur Friedman used a copy-text the Chinese letters as they appeared serially in the *Public Ledger*.

Despite the comment of a reviewer in 1762 that "this Chinese philosopher has nothing Asiatic about him and is as errant an European as the Philosopher of Malmsbury," the work continued to be admired. During the last quarter of the eighteenth century, ten London editions appeared, and *The Citizen of the World* enjoyed a growing popularity which coincided with the Chinese vogue.

Gift of Professor Arthur Friedman

*The Citizen of the World; or, Letters from a Chinese Philosopher Residing in London to his Friends in the East*. 2 volumes.


During the eighteenth century, while the question of copyright was still in a formative legal state, unauthorized printers, or pirates, subjected authors and their official publishers in England to considerable economic harassment by consistently underselling the legitimate booksellers and frequently producing irresponsible and corrupt copies of texts.

Although the legal position of the Dublin printers is ambiguous, it is clear that Irish editions enjoyed some respectability because they were not regarded as piracies. Irish editions were probably intended for circulation and sale only in Ireland and on that basis were given the status of legitimate editions. In the case of Goldsmith's *The Citizen of the World*, the first Irish edition looks almost exactly like its London counterpart, suggesting by the format, title page and general quality of printing an acknowledged and unconcealed relationship to the first English edition.

Irish publishers no doubt had copies of London editions mailed to them. No economic transaction was involved except the sale of the copy of the book at the normal rate. English copyright law provided that the author or the person to whom he sold his work had the sole right to print it for fourteen years, with printing rights for the next fourteen years reverting to the author if he were not the owner. The question of later printing rights was still being fought out in the courts, one of the most controversial legal issues of the late eighteenth century.

An author seldom retained ownership of his own copy and often sold his printing rights with his work. When Goldsmith complained that Dublin booksellers republished his works without remuneration to the author, he was criticizing them for behavior which, although ungenerous, was quite within the law.

Helen and Ruth Regenstein Collection

A second Dublin edition of The Citizen of the World in two volumes, distinguishable from the other English and Irish editions by its title page, appeared in 1769. The title was printed in set type on the upper half of the title page; the lower half, the vignette and imprint, was made from a copper-plate engraving. The plate was probably made for another work, but by excising the upper part containing the title, the publisher was able to use the plate for all the works he printed in 1769. Furthermore, by simply changing the roman numerals in the date each year he could continue to use the plate until it wore out.
Gift of Professor Ronald S. Crane


One hundred and thirty years after its first appearance a special edition of The Citizen of the World, limited to 200 copies, was published. It included a few etchings of sections of London referred to in Goldsmith's text, and an introduction by Austin Dobson, civil servant, man of letters and one of Goldsmith's editors and biographers.
University of Chicago Library Purchase Fund

“A Prospect of Society.” Photostatic copy of a galley fragment in the British Museum (C.58.g.7).

In The Traveller Goldsmith first transformed into poetry the political and social philosophy he had expressed in prose in The Citizen of the World and other periodical essays. John Newbery, who paid him twenty-one pounds for this 438-line poem, published it in December 1764 at one shilling sixpence.

Its complex printing and textual history involved nine authorized editions published during Goldsmith's lifetime and a number of piracies and Irish editions. One of the complexities involved antiquarian bookseller Bertram Dobell's discovery in 1902 of a printed fragment of the text. He described his find as follows:

Looking recently over a parcel of pamphlets which I had purchased, I came upon some loose leaves which were headed “A Prospect of Society.” The title struck me as familiar; I had only to read a few lines to recognize them as belonging to “The Traveller.” But the opening lines of my fragment are not the opening lines of the poem... [They seem instead to be] material, as yet formless and unarranged.
More than fifty years elapsed before a plausible hypothesis was developed to account for the "orderly derangement" of the Dobell fragment and its relationship to the published poem. The work of A. E. Case, R. S. Crane and W. B. Todd, among others, revealed a mix-up in sequence when the galley proofs went into pages. The mistake was caught and corrected after a few sheets had been printed. Dobell acquired some of these discarded galley proofs almost one hundred and fifty years later.

Gift of Professor Arthur Friedman

_The Traveller, or a Prospect of Society._ [First edition, first state.]
London, 1764. Photostatic facsimile of the original in the Huntington Library.

A complication of longer standing, however, has to do with the first edition, which occurs in four states, or versions, the differences being in the preliminaries (half-title, title page and any other prefatory matter). All four states are part of a single edition, since an edition consists of all copies of a book printed from a single setting of type, and changes made in the preliminaries are not of sufficient magnitude to justify the designation of a new edition.

Each state of _The Traveller_ has its identifying characteristic. For example, the first state, dated 1764, marks the only appearance of a one-sentence dedication: "This poem is inscribed to the Rev. Henry Goldsmith, M.A. by his most affectionate brother, Oliver Goldsmith."

Gift of Professor Arthur Friedman

_The Traveller, or a Prospect of Society._ [First edition, third state.]
London, 1765.

Goldsmith's six-paragraph dedication to his brother and the date 1764 identify the second state. Both the third and fourth states are dated 1765. They differ from each other only in details of punctuation in the half-title.

Helen and Ruth Regenstein Collection

_The Traveller, or a Prospect of Society._ The Second Edition.
London, 1765.

The poem was not an immediate success with the public although the critics praised it. The second edition, not published until three months after the first, contained extensive revisions by Goldsmith and was printed from an entirely new setting of type.

Celia and Delia Austrian Collection
The Traveller, or a Prospect of Society. The Third Edition.
London, 1765.
Since no advertisement for the third edition has been located, its day and
month of publication in 1765 are not known. The third edition is probably
an invariant reimpersion; that is, a machining of the same setting of type as
that used for the second edition, the only change being the edition number
on the title page. The third edition may also be an example of continuous
impression, part of an uninterrupted printing process in which the designa-
tion of third edition is made after a requisite number of copies of the second
edition has been run off. (An eighteenth-century edition, according to con-
temporary printers’ ledgers, usually consisted of 500–2,000 copies.)
Gift of Professor Arthur Friedman

The Traveller; or, a Prospect of Society. The Fourth Edition.
London, 1765.
The fourth edition was published on 4 August 1765 and printed from a
new setting of type, using the third edition as copy. Goldsmith’s habits and
methods of revision indicate that the changes appearing in the fourth edition
did not originate with the author. Most subsequent editions retained these
unauthorized changes.
Over the years several scholars wrote the results of their collation of texts
into the margins of a copy of the fourth edition. This copy contains their
respective notations locating and describing textual variations in substantive
readings and accidentals.
Gift of Professor Arthur Friedman

The Traveller; or, a Prospect of Society. The Fifth Edition.
London, 1768.
John Newbery died in 1767, and by the time the fifth edition appeared on
25 February 1768, Francis Newbery, Jr., had succeeded to the business. His
name appeared on the title page for the first time. The fourth edition was
used as copy, and although a few changes occur in it and were transmitted to
subsequent editions, the fifth edition was not revised by Goldsmith.
University of Chicago Library Purchase Fund
The Traveller; or, a Prospect of Society. The Sixth Edition Corrected. London, 1770.

In 1770 the appearance of his poem The Deserted Village inspired a revival of interest in Goldsmith's other poetry. On 29 June the sixth authorized edition of The Traveller was published. Using the fifth edition as copy, it was the last edition revised by Goldsmith and the last of the contemporary authorized editions with a printed title page. The designation "The Sixth edition, Corrected" was an effort to discredit a piracy which appeared that year, and perhaps also to imply that it was more up to date than a recently published Dublin edition.

University of Chicago Library Purchase Fund


The seventh edition was published with an engraved title page. This seems an extravagant gesture since the copper plate included the year, 1770, and the seventh edition (an unrevised reprint of the sixth edition) was not published until December. To change the date, however, required minimal alteration of the plate, and no reference to edition number was included in the title. The seventh edition of The Traveller was probably intended to compete with Goldsmith's The Deserted Village, issued earlier that year by a different publisher and boasting the work of the well-known engraver Isaac Taylor.

Gift of Professor Arthur Friedman

The Traveller. [Eighth edition.] London, 1770 [1772].

Although it would have been simple to add the necessary numerals to the copper plate, the eighth edition was advertised for publication in 1772 and appeared with its title page still reading 1770. There is neither an edition designation nor press figures to differentiate the eighth from the seventh edition. What distinguishes them is the difference in the line endings of the dedication.

Gift of Professor Arthur Friedman


The ninth edition, an unrevised reprint of the eighth, appeared in 1774 and could conceivably have embodied Goldsmith's final revisions. It has therefore often been used as copy-text for modern printings; in fact, however, Goldsmith made no alterations to any edition after the sixth.
A half-title page with the edition number was added in the ninth edition and the date on the engraved title page was corrected. The dimensions of the letterpress, the page numbers and the line breaks of the dedication differ from those of the eighth edition, evidence of a new setting of type.

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After Goldsmith's death *The Traveller*, instead of being printed separately, was more often included in anthologies of poetry. The tenth edition, a reprint of the ninth with the same pagination but different press figures and ornaments, was published in 1778. The copper-plate engraving for the title page was used with the date corrected, and a half-title, "The Tenth Edition," was again included. On the verso of the final leaf of text the publisher advertised eight of Goldsmith's works.

University of Chicago Library Purchase Fund


Bookseller and author alike frequently paid a penalty—in piracy—for the popularity of a work. Unauthorized editions, generally of inferior quality and workmanship which undersold their legitimate competitors, appeared as soon as a work was successful. Piracy was a profitable trade, or it would not have survived the dangers constantly threatening it. Its development as the dark side of publishing suggests a growing readership among the less affluent, and a high degree of technical proficiency in the speedy acquisition, printing and distribution of material. The Edinburgh pirates, by cutting into publishers' profits, were heartily despised for their unscrupulous practices.

Like most piracies, "The Fifth Edition," so named arbitrarily, did not seek to imitate the format of the authorized edition. It sought to compete for sales by using an edition number and appropriating the name and address of London bookseller William Griffin. Though he published other works by Goldsmith, Griffin had no connection with this poem. Devoid of textual authority, possibly the reprint of a reprint, this piracy represented clandestine press work hastily done in the remote areas of Britain or on the Continent by printers who were immune from any copyright restrictions due to the limited reach of the law.

Gift of Professor Arthur Friedman
The Traveller: or a Prospect of Society. London, [n.d.]. [Piracy].

The appearance of another piracy "printed for booksellers in town and country" with no date can only suggest a continuing market for the poem sufficient to have justified the small expense of printing a duodecimo (pocket size) pamphlet. Copyright restrictions supposedly prohibiting unauthorized publication for fourteen years were circumvented by the publisher's anonymity and ambiguity.

Gift of Professor Arthur Friedman


Even though some of it was anonymous, Goldsmith's writing motivated John Newbery and William Griffin to bring out a collection of his essays. The author was paid twenty guineas to select and revise twenty-five essays from among the considerable number he had written for various newspapers, monthly magazines and other periodicals. Publication at three shillings bound was advertised for early June.

Gift of Professor Arthur Friedman

Essays by Mr. Goldsmith. London, 1765. [Piracy]

Two editions appeared in 1765, although only one was announced for publication. Certain differences in their readings and their appearance suggest that one of these two is a piracy.

University of Chicago Library Purchase Fund


A revealing analysis can be made by comparing both versions dated 1765 with the second authorized edition, Essays by Oliver Goldsmith, published by Griffin and Newbery in 1766. Textual similarities apparent in the two Griffin-Newbery editions contrast with the suspected piracy, the other 1765 version, also called Essays by Mr. Goldsmith.

The title pages offer the most palpable evidence of a break in printing sequence suggestive of piracy. Of the two editions published in 1765, one has an engraved title page with a vignette; the other has a printed title page. The first authorized edition can be presumed to be the one with the more expensive engraved title page, and the piracy, a cheap reprint, the one with a printed title page. The vignette, used again on the title page of the second authorized edition, establishes the cognate relationship of the two legitimate publications, and consigns the probable piracy with its printed title page to a
place outside the printing sequence. Furthermore, the two authorized editions share a similar overall title page design which differs from that of the printed title page of the 1765 piracy.

Establishment of the genuine printing sequence makes it possible to reproduce with greater accuracy what Goldsmith wrote and to trace the history of an authorized text as it first appeared in periodical form, as he prepared it for the first authorized edition of 1765 and then as he finally revised it for "The Second Edition, corrected" of 1766.

University of Chicago Library Purchase Fund

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The English, Goldsmith observed, who are most deficient in the production of devotional poetry and most copious in their output of entertaining verse, write the best moral poems. His own "Edwin and Angelina," he believed, qualified as an example of this moral excellence. Its text, which Goldsmith claimed he could not improve, exists in four different printed versions and is known by three different titles. Two versions of the poem are called "Edwin and Angelina" and two are entitled "A Ballad." Goldsmith himself referred to the poem as "The Hermit."

In 1765 "Edwin and Angelina" appeared as a privately printed pamphlet "for the amusement of the Countess of Northumberland." It also appeared in a different version in the first edition of The Vicar of Wakefield in 1766, entitled simply "A Ballad." There are enough major differences between "Edwin and Angelina" and "A Ballad" to suggest that they are derived from two distinct manuscript sources. These were in turn drawn from an earlier postulated original.

"A Ballad," which was the first product derived from that original manuscript, became part of The Vicar of Wakefield, a work probably completed some time in 1762. The second and later derivation supplied copy for the privately printed, undated pamphlet.

When Goldsmith revised The Vicar of Wakefield for the second edition, he also revised the text of his poem "A Ballad." The changes he made involved adopting readings from both of the earlier printed texts: from "A Ballad" as it appeared in the first edition of The Vicar and from "Edwin and Angelina" as it was printed in the pamphlet. Such a composite is called a conflated text. The version of "Edwin and Angelina" which Goldsmith prepared for his anthology, Poems for Young Ladies (1767), is also a conflated text. Adopting readings from the first edition of The Vicar of Wakefield and from the privately printed pamphlet, but in a different combination, the anthology version constitutes the fourth known form of the poem. The accompanying diagram, an elaboration of Professor Friedman's stemma and based on his

13
hypothesis explaining the genealogy of the texts, offers a schematic and simplified explanation.


An example of what Goldsmith called “building a book,” his euphemism for compiling, Poems for Young Ladies was published anonymously in December 1766. Goldsmith selected the poems and wrote the preface for this collection produced to capitalize on the vogue for combining entertainment with instruction. “In this little work,” he wrote, “a lady may find the most exquisite pleasure while she is at the same time learning the duties of life; and while she courts entertainment, be deceived into wisdom.” The text is divided into three sections, “Devotional, Moral, and Entertaining,” and includes one of Goldsmith’s own poems.

He received ten guineas for this work, but perhaps because of unfavorable reviews it had a poor sale. The “New Edition” of 1770, a reissue of the original unsold sheets, with a new title page using Goldsmith’s name, was timed to take advantage of the acclaim he received after publication of The Deserted Village earlier that year.

University of Chicago Library Purchase Fund

The Vicar of Wakefield. 2 volumes. [First edition.]
Salisbury, 1766.

While he was earning his livelihood in 1761 and 1762 by such productions as the pamphlet on the Cock-lane ghost and the Life of Nasb and by writing
THE
VICAR
OF
WAKEFIELD:
A TALE.
Supposed to be written by HIMSELF.

Sperate miseris, cauete salices.

VOL. I.

SALISBURY:
Printed by B. COLLINS,

MDCCLXVI.

Title page from The Vicar of Wakefield, first edition.
Volume one of a two-volume duodecimo set. The Latin epigraph, from Robert Burton's Anatomy of Melancholy, reads, "Take heart, you who are miserable: take heed, you who are happy."
anonymous journalism, Goldsmith was probably also at work on *The Vicar of Wakefield*, his fictional tale of the sufferings and ultimate happiness of the Primrose family. Internal evidence, though scanty, suggests that his only novel was probably completed by 1762, when Samuel Johnson, acting on his behalf, sold the manuscript to John Newbery. According to Johnson, the full amount of sixty pounds was "a sufficient price, too when it was sold; for then the fame of Goldsmith had not been elevated, as it afterwards was, by his 'Traveller.'"

No satisfactory explanation has been offered to account for the four-year hiatus between the sale of the manuscript and its publication in two volumes on 27 March 1766, at six shillings bound or five shillings sewed. Financial risk may have contributed to the delay. But such a risk was reduced because ownership of the work was divided between Francis Newbery (as his uncle's associate) and the two printers involved with the first three editions, Benjamin Collins and William Strahan. If the first edition brought renown to Goldsmith it did not shower instant wealth on the partners. Collins later sold his twenty-one pound share to printer Thomas Carnan for five pounds.

Helen and Ruth Regenstein Collection

London, 1766.

Although *The Vicar* was given an ambivalent critical reception, three authorized editions and three Irish editions were published in 1766. The second edition, published on 31 May 1766, was printed by William Strahan in London, and according to his ledger consisted of 1,000 sets of the two-volume duodecimo work.

Goldsmith made numerous stylistic revisions for this edition, but did not remove some of the narrative inconsistencies in the novel which have remained part of its uneven fabric, creating more difficulties for critics than for ordinary readers.

Gift of Professor Arthur Friedman

London, 1766.

Although there are some changes in the text of the third edition of *The Vicar of Wakefield*, they were probably not authorial. Goldsmith tended to make frequent and extensive changes in large sections of any work he revised. In this edition, however, only infrequent and minor changes occur.

One thousand copies of the third edition were printed, again by Strahan, and published on 28 August 1766. Although Strahan's ledgers do not reveal
evidence of profit, the fact that a third edition equal in size to the second appeared within three months suggests success and the probability of some financial return.

Gift of Professor Arthur Friedman

London, 1770.

According to the publisher’s records, the fourth edition, dated 1770, consisted of 1,000 two-volume sets and made a profit of nearly £100. A scattering of new substantive readings appeared in the fourth edition, but Goldsmith probably did not revise any editions later than the second.

Gift of Professor Arthur Friedman

London, 1773.

The fifth authorized edition, although it is dated 1773, was actually published on 2 April 1774, just two days before Goldsmith’s death. Evidence for the precise date of its appearance is drawn from advertisements appearing in contemporary newspapers, which regularly announced both forthcoming books (“shortly will be published”) and, not always with complete reliability, their actual publication (“this day was published”).

Gift of Professor Arthur Friedman


The popularity of *The Vicar* resulted in translations into French, German and Dutch. French enthusiasm for the English novel brought immediate acclaim to the first Paris edition and Goldsmith’s reputation grew accordingly.

English habits which the translator felt needed to be interpreted or explained for Gallic readers were footnoted in the French edition. For example, when the Vicar describes the gooseberry wine which is synonymous with his family’s hospitality, a footnote is appended to the French text expressing restrained incredulity: “En Angleterre . . . on fait des vins de toutes sortes de fruits.”

University of Chicago Library Purchase Fund
Poems on Several Occasions. Written by Dr. Thomas Parnell. . .
To which is prefixed, The Life of Dr. Parnell, Written by Dr. Goldsmith.
London, 1770.

Goldsmith's acquaintance with the relatives of Dr. Thomas Parnell gave him access to the personal papers of the Irish prelate and poet who had assisted Alexander Pope with his translation of Homer. The biography Goldsmith wrote for publisher T. Davies appeared in 1770 in two forms. Published in mid-June, one was prefixed to a new edition of Parnell's Poems on Several Occasions, a volume which sold for three shillings sixpence, with Goldsmith's name on the title page.

Gift of Professor Arthur Friedman

The Life of Thomas Parnell, D.D. Archdeacon of Clogher.
London, 1770.

As a separate pamphlet costing one shilling, The Life of Thomas Parnell was published on 5 July 1770, also "By Dr. Goldsmith." Although dual publication probably did not double Goldsmith's income (since an author did not receive royalties but was paid outright for his copy), the bookseller's profit may have been increased because larger sales were likely. Furthermore, by this time the prestige of Goldsmith's name as author of the recently written and highly acclaimed poem The Deserted Village would have attracted buyers.

Helen and Ruth Regenstein Collection


Though critics deplored its lack of essential facts, the life of Parnell was reprinted in subsequent editions of Parnell's collected poems and was included in abridged form after Goldsmith's death in Poems by Goldsmith and Parnell.

Gift of Dr. Lester Curtis

The Life of Henry St. John, Lord Viscount Bolingbroke.
London, 1770.

Another hastily assembled biography, the account of Lord Bolingbroke—rake, erstwhile Jacobite, statesman and philosopher—was inspired by public interest in the man and his works. Goldsmith drew eighty percent of his material from volume five of Biographia Britannica. His "adaptation" of the article, "St. John," was, as one critic observes, merely amplified borrowing.
Goldsmith wrote *The Life of Bolingbroke* as a biographical preface to the ninth edition of the famous Viscount’s *A Dissertation upon Parties*, which was published by Thomas Davies in December 1770. Within a few days the *Life of Bolingbroke* appeared separately at one shilling. Although the work was anonymous both as preface and separate book, no effort was made to conceal Goldsmith’s authorship because advertisements for other books he had written were included in the volume.

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“My bookseller having informed me that there was no collection of English Poetry among us of any estimation, I thought a few Hours spent in making a proper selection would not be ill bestowed.” Following this arrogant statement in the preface to his anthology, Goldsmith described his prospective audience as those who “either want leisure, skill or fortune to choose for themselves.”

*The Beauties* certainly qualifies as the kind of “lazy compilation” Goldsmith had scorned in *An Enquiry* and in *An History of England, In a Series of Letters*; it was treated harshly by the critics. The two-volume anthology with a standard selection of works by such poets as Dryden, Pope and Milton sold for six shillings bound. William Griffin, the publisher, probably paid Goldsmith no more than fifty pounds for this negligible effort, although the sum of £200 was a rumored figure. As a flattering piece of hearsay the sizeable amount was neither affirmed nor denied by Goldsmith. The only other known edition was published in 1771.

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Using the unconventional format of a series of letters, Goldsmith’s first history of England was compiled anonymously for John Newbery in 1764. The two pocket volumes sold for six shillings bound, and a receipt was signed by Goldsmith for “twenty-one pounds, which with what I received before is [payment] in full.”

A practiced compiler, Goldsmith prepared for this work by reading in the morning (mainly from Rapin and Hume) as much fact as he intended to incorporate into one chapter. He then enjoyed a carefree and convivial day with friends and just before retiring wrote up his material “with as much facility as a common letter.” As Sir Joshua Reynolds once observed: “Goldsmith’s mind was entirely unfurnished. When engaged in a work he
had all his knowledge to find which when he found he knew exactly how to use, but forgot it immediately after he had used it."
Although his intimates knew he had written the work, public speculation on the identity of its supposed aristocratic author may have contributed to its popularity. Five London editions were published during Goldsmith’s lifetime; only the second edition (1769) was revised by the author.
Gift of Professor Arthur Friedman

The Roman History, From the Foundation of the City of Rome, to the Destruction of the Western Empire. 2 volumes. [First edition.]
London, 1769.
The multi-volume historical compilations Goldsmith produced with such facility, although popular because of their readability, were important to the author because of their bulk since he was paid by the sheet. Goldsmith signed an agreement with bookseller Thomas Davies to write a Roman history under his own name. If the history were completed within two years the author was to be paid 250 guineas. In 1769, well within the time limit, the two-volume Roman history was published at ten shillings sixpence in boards or twelve shillings bound. "My only aim," Goldsmith observed in the preface, "was to supply a concise, plain, and unaffected narrative . . . a cheap Roman history in two volumes, octavo. . . . I shall be fully satisfied if it furnishes an interest to allure the reader to the end."
In December 1769 Goldsmith was named Professor of Ancient History, an honorary post "with no sallary annexed," in the newly-founded Royal Academy. "Honours to one in my situation are something like ruffles to a man that wants a shirt," he wrote his brother Maurice.
Gift of Professor Arthur Friedman

Dr. Goldsmith’s Roman History Abridged. [First edition.]
London, 1772.
To "excite the curiosity of youth," history had to be "thrown into easy narrative," Goldsmith wrote in the preface, and The Roman History Abridged is an example of "Goldsmith’s plain narrative" which Dr. Samuel Johnson said "will please again and again."
Though economic necessity forced Goldsmith to produce bulky compilations, he disparaged the work of abridgers and compilers. He wrote that they, like commentators and critics, "are in general only fit to fill the mind with unnecessary anecdotes." He deplored the substitution of "words for things," and dreaded the possibility that "lazy compilations [would] supply the place of original thinking."
Yet both the two-volume Roman History and its abridgement continued to

20
be reprinted in England, Ireland, Scotland and America well into the
nineteenth century. The complete work was translated into French and
German and the abridgement into Italian and Spanish as well.
University of Chicago Library Purchase Fund

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The History of England, From the Earliest Times to the Death of

Goldsmith was commissioned by Davies to produce another history of
England, using the format of his previous compilation, The Roman History,
and putting "his name to the said work." Its author modestly proclaimed it
"a plain unaffected narrative"; it is, in fact, a plain unaffected borrowing. In
his Preface to the work, Goldsmith himself stated "The books which have
been used in this abridgement are chiefly Rapin, Carte, Smollett, and
Hume."

"The Second Edition, Corrected," although it appeared eight months
after Goldsmith's death, was probably revised by him, as indicated by a
letter he wrote to the publisher in 1773 or 1774 requesting a "set of the
history of England for correction."

Gift of Professor Ronald S. Crane

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The Grecian History, From the Earliest State to the Death of Alexander
the Great. 2 volumes. [First edition.] London, 1774.

The popularity of his earlier histories encouraged Goldsmith to begin
compiling a history of Greece in 1772. Although he claimed he could earn
four guineas a day by writing, he was forever borrowing in advance from his
booksellers. In 1773, with only half the work completed, he managed to
obtain payment in full, according to a signed receipt which acknowledged
payment of "£250 for writing and compiling the History of Greece from
Mr. William Griffin, for which I promise further assignment on demand."

Published at ten shillings, or twelve shillings bound, the two-volume set
did not appear until June 1774, two months after Goldsmith's death. Merely
another "lazy compilation," it was another popular work and The Grecian
History saw steady reprints (including translations into German, French,
Italian, Greek and Spanish) for the next fifty years.

University of Chicago Library Purchase Fund

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21
An History of the Earth, and Animated Nature. 8 volumes.
London, 1774.

Goldsmith agreed in 1769 to "write a new natural history of animals &c.,
to be comprised in eight volumes, octavo, . . . for which Mr. Griffin agrees
to pay Dr. Goldsmith 800 guineas." This compilation was similar to one he
had previously worked on, A New and Accurate System of Natural History
by Dr. Richard Brookes. Having acquainted himself with a number of sources
while preparing that work, Goldsmith needed only to return to works al-
ready familiar to him for enough erudition to "build" his own An History
of the Earth, and Animated Nature. Dr. Johnson said of Goldsmith: "He has the
art of compiling and of saying anything he has to say in a pleasing manner.
He is now writing a Natural History and will make it as entertaining as a
Persian Tale."

Goldsmith was paid 500 guineas in advance and the work was described as
half finished in a letter to a friend in 1771: "I will shortly finish the rest. . . .
God knows I'm tired of this kind of finishing, which is but bungling work, and
that not so much my fault as the fault of my scurvy circumstances." In 1772
Griffin sold part of the still unfinished manuscript to John Nourse, another
bookseller, but the voluminous work though completed was not published
until June 1774. The eight-volume set, selling for two pounds eight shillings
in boards, was copiously illustrated with 101 copper-plate engravings, many
by the well-known engraver Isaac Taylor.

Gift of Professor Arthur Friedman

An History of the Earth, and Animated Nature. 8 volumes.
London, 1774 [?].

An edition bearing the same date, but of inferior quality throughout (its
engravings being mere copies of Taylor's and fewer in number), was prob-
ably a later printing misdated to deceive prospective buyers about the illus-
trations.

Gift of Professor Ronald S. Crane

A Survey of Experimental Philosophy, Considered in its Present State
of Improvement. 2 volumes. London, 1776.

Goldsmith may have begun compiling A Survey of Experimental Philosophy
as early as 1762. (A list of books Goldsmith borrowed from publisher John
Newbery that year included volumes on chemistry, astronomy and New-
tonian philosophy.) It was the year during which he wrote a pamphlet on
the Cock-lane ghost, contributed a half-dozen essays to Lloyd's Evening Post,
abridged volumes one through four of Plutarch's Lives, revised his Chinese
letters (published as *The Citizen of the World*), wrote the *Life of Nash* and probably completed his novel *The Vicar of Wakefield*.

In 1765 while he was revising and enlarging *Experimental Philosophy*, Newbery again supplied him with reference materials. In June 1766 the publisher paid him sixty guineas, and the two-volume work may have been completed by that date. Although it was not published until ten years later in 1776, volume one was described as being "printed off in the lifetime of the author," and the entire work was apparently in Newbery's hands long before Goldsmith's death.

Containing twenty-four copper-plate engravings illustrating experiments in simple physics, the work sold for twelve shillings. Only one edition was published.

University of Chicago Library Purchase Fund

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Professor Ronald S. Crane discovered an illuminating progenitor in prose to *The Deserted Village* when he identified Goldsmith as the author of "The Revolution in Low Life," a newspaper essay which appeared in 1762. Goldsmith's social philosophy, his concern for the misery of villagers whose way of life was being destroyed by the incursions of wealthy landowners, was expressed in this piece. This philosophy also became the principal theme of *The Deserted Village*. Dedicated to his eminent friend, the portraitist Joshua Reynolds, and published in May 1770, *The Deserted Village* established Goldsmith's reputation as "the foremost poet of our age." Some critics objected that its grim picture of the depopulation of villages was exaggerated or erroneous, but all agreed that in style and versification the poem was a masterful work.

Goldsmith reportedly received 100 guineas from William Griffin, the publisher, for the copy. According to one biographer, he modestly returned the sum as excessive, but it is unlikely that Goldsmith would have refused money he had earned on the basis of both his reputation and his labor. In fact, he once said: "I consider an author's literary reputation to be alive only while his name will ensure a good price for his copy from the booksellers."

Helen and Ruth Regenstein Collection


In order to compare readings of the authorized first edition with readings of other editions, including possible piracies, a few scholars combined their
THE DESERTED VILLAGE
A POEM
BY DR. GOLDSMITH

LONDON:
Printed for W. GRIFFIN, at Garrick's Head, in Catherine-street, Strand.
MDCCCLXX.

Title page from The Deserted Village, first edition.
Vignette depicting the deserted village engraved by Isaac Taylor.
observations and textual notations. They used a facsimile reprint of the British Museum first quarto edition as their working copy.
Gift of Professor Ronald S. Crane


"A run of success such as few poems of the time had experienced within so short a period," as one of Goldsmith's early biographers, James Prior, commented, necessitated a second edition on 7 June 1770, and a third less than a week later on 13 June. The fourth edition, containing Goldsmith's final revisions, was published on 28 June.

By the end of the eighteenth century printers were remarkably astute at estimating public demand for a new work. The popularity of the author and the genre influenced the number of copies run off for an edition. A relatively small amount of type was used in printing a poem, and was frequently left "standing," i.e., stored in its page settings to facilitate rapid reimpession. Revisions made in an edition printed from standing type were often authorial although compositors did sometimes disturb set type to regularize accidents.

Six authorized editions, each selling for two shillings, as well as two Dublin editions and four piracies appeared in 1770.
Gift of Professor Arthur Friedman


The fifth edition was published 9 August 1770, according to an advertisement which appeared in the _Gazetteer_, a London newspaper.
Gift of Professor Arthur Friedman


The sixth edition appeared on 4 October. It was the last authorized quarto published in 1770 and it was not revised by Goldsmith.
Gift of Professor Arthur Friedman


With William Griffin's death in 1775 (the year the eighth authorized edition appeared), copyright protection of Goldsmith's poem lapsed, as there was no heir to assume ownership until 1779 when the poem appeared under another publisher's imprint. During that year the successors issued the
ninth edition. A caveat in the eleventh read: "There being a pirated edition of the *Deserted Village*... it is thought necessary to prevent the public from being imposed on and to inform them that the spurious Edition is incorrect, and contains upwards of seventy errors." The similarity in wording between the warning of pirate J. Barker and the legitimate publisher is noteworthy.

Gift of Professor Gwin J. Kolb in honor of Professor Arthur Friedman

Was there such a village as Auburn, the deserted village of Goldsmith's famous poem? Does this imaginary place reflect "a general condition in England, or a particular history in Ireland?" Was Goldsmith describing his childhood home? Newell's verse by verse analysis in an 1811 edition of the poem was one of many efforts to endow the symbolic site with a geographic identity.

University of Chicago Library Purchase Fund


[ Piracy]  
In one piracy of *The Deserted Village*, William Griffin's address, Catharine Street, is misspelled in the imprint and Goldsmith's medical degree is added to his name on the title page. These were just two obvious departures, among several, from the work of the real William Griffin.

Literary works were pirated with great economy of effort by obtaining copy from books, magazines, newspapers and other reprints. Accuracy, whether in the reproduction of the text or in the facts of publication, was of secondary importance.

Gift of Professor Ronald S. Crane

*The Deserted Village.* London, 1777. [Piracy]

Although William Griffin died in 1775, a piracy dated 1777 bore his name in the imprint, a disparity which revealed the pirate-printer's remoteness from London and its events. Use of a well-known publisher's name, as in this case, was only a superficial effort to obtain respectability by association.

Gift of Professor Arthur Friedman

The title pages of the authorized quarto editions feature an engraved vignette by Isaac Taylor. Entitled "the sad historian of the pensive plain," the scene portrays the elderly country woman of the poem pointing out her ruined village to a pastoral poet. In 1784 when the copyright restrictions expired, an octavo edition, probably a piracy, appeared. The title page of this unauthorized edition reduced and reversed the vignette, pirating Taylor's as well as Goldsmith's work.

The pirate-publisher in a further attempt at assumed respectability cautioned: "N.B. The Public are respectfully desired to be careful not to have an inferior Edition imposed on them, instead of that printed by J. Barker." This edition was in fact printed from an extremely corrupt text.

University of Chicago Library Purchase Fund


Four duodecimo piracies were thought for a time to be private or trial editions issued before the 26 May 1770 publication date of the first authorized edition. They were divested of their prestige and consigned to their rightful place as cheap surreptitious reprints without textual authority by Professor W. B. Todd. He amassed evidence for a family tree of twenty-one interrelated unauthorized editions that graphically demonstrates the proliferation of textual corruption.

"Printed for Booksellers in Town and Country" which appeared on the title page of one later piracy was generally a way of circumventing copyright restrictions, especially when no incriminating date appeared. Professor Todd assigned one specimen so labelled a date of 1784 on the basis of a comparative study of such bibliographical and textual features as type sizes and faces, watermarks and successive degeneration of text.

Durrett Collection

The Good Natur'd Man. [First edition, second impression.]
London, 1768.

Goldsmith's first comedy, The Good Natur'd Man, opened on 29 January 1768 at Covent Garden Theatre, six days after the successful debut of its more popular rival, Hugh Kelly's genteel comedy False Delicacy. Goldsmith's treatment of character, though described as "more bold, more comic, and more characteristik," lacked refinement and correctness, qualities loudly demanded by contemporary audiences. In spite of this deficiency he received £400 from the traditional author's benefit nights and
an additional £100 from its sale in book form. Published on 5 February 1768 at one shilling sixpence, The Good Natur'd Man was praised as “an agreeable play to read.”

Gift of Professor Arthur Friedman


The first large impression was sold out by the following day, and within three weeks a “Fourth Edition” was being advertised. In fact all five printings published by Griffin in 1768 were impressions within a single edition, each with distinctive but minimal revisions. Two Dublin editions were published in 1768 and 1770.

Gift of Professor Arthur Friedman

The Novel; or Mistakes of a Night. Photographic copy of the manuscript in the Huntington Library (Larpent play, 349).

Compared to the tedium of compiling histories, or the meager profit accruing from essays and poetry, writing for the stage may have seemed to Goldsmith an attractive if not an easy way to make money. The effort to get his second and final play, She Stoops to Conquer, put on the stage met with equivocation from theater managers. They were convinced that a “laughing comedy” would be hissed off the stage by audiences who had shown their preference for the sentimental or “weeping variety.” Goldsmith finally wrote George Colman of Covent Garden Theatre: “For God sake—take the play and let us make the best of it, and let me have the same measure at least which you have given as bad plays as mine.”

Before it could be staged, a play had to be licensed for performance by the Lord Chamberlain. Censorship, which was more political than moral, concerned itself with the removal of libellous and seditious matter rather than with suppression of the obscene or the prurient. A copy of the prompter’s script, kept by the licenser, was submitted for approval some time before the play was to open, though the author frequently continued to revise even after it was deposited.

The manuscript of She Stoops to Conquer, probably a scribal copy, differs from the printed play in several important respects. The anguish genesis of the title is traceable through such rejected efforts as “The Novel,” “The Mistakes of a Night,” and even, according to a newspaper account, “The New Inn.” (Samuel Johnson reported, “We are all in labour for a name to Goldby’s play.”) The printed play omits parts of scenes found in the manuscript and generally represents a more polished literary effort.

Courtesy of the Huntington Library
She Stoops to Conquer: or, The Mistakes of a Night.

The comedy opened on 15 March 1773 and was an immediate success. When it was published ten days later "almost everyone present [at the theater] had the play in their hands." The contemporary newspaper account reported that 4,000 copies were sold in the first three days. The author's benefit nights earned Goldsmith £500 in addition to what publisher Francis Newbery paid him for his copy.

Popularity of such magnitude might have created enough confusion in the printing house to account for the complex bibliographical history of the play. W. B. Todd's analysis of the texts has shown that the five "editions" printed for Newbery in 1773 were, in fact, six impressions of one edition. Variants in page numbering, headlines and punctuation probably represent changes made as the work was being printed. Copies are found with these variants in several combinations. The first impression lacks half-title page and price, and the character Diggory is omitted from the "Dramatis Personae."

Helen and Ruth Regenstein Collection

She Stoops to Conquer: or, The Mistakes of a Night.
London, 1773.

"The Second Edition" and "The Third Edition" were both part of the same impression of type; for, after a number of copies of the "Second Edition" had been run off, the designation was simply changed to "Third Edition" on the title page. The name of Diggory was added to the "Dramatis Personae," possibly by Goldsmith, although he made no revisions of the play after it was published. The price, one shilling sixpence, appeared only in some copies of the second edition.

Gift of Professor Arthur Friedman

She Stoops to Conquer: or, The Mistakes of a Night.
The Third Edition [First edition, third impression].
London, 1773.

Since Goldsmith did not revise his comedy, those changes which appear in the "third" and subsequent "editions" have no textual authority. Regularization of punctuation and the few substantive changes which appear were probably introduced by compositors.

Gift of Professor Arthur Friedman
She Stoops to Conquer: or, The Mistakes of a Night.
London, 1773.

With an unforeseen “best-seller” on his hands, the only way the printer
could keep up with the enormous demand for copies of She Stoops to Conquer
was to subcontract the last few gatherings of the work. The textual variants
and the press figures reveal different press men and perhaps different
presses.

Although compositors in the last half of the eighteenth century followed
their copy carefully and correctors inspected for errors in punctuation and
spelling, type sometimes went astray as did an entire line on page 13 in “The
Fourth Edition.” The mistake remained undetected through several “edi-
tions,” a consequence of the confusion engendered by divided jobbing and
ambiguous responsibility. Probably scrambled when a pressman was re-
moving his identifying number, the offending line continued to be printed
upside down and backwards until it was finally noticed and corrected in

Gift of Professor Arthur Friedman

Holograph Letter to Mrs. Catherine Horneck Bunbury.
[London, ca. December 1773]. Photographic facsimile of
the original in the Pierpont Morgan Library.

An invitation in verse from his dear friend Mrs. Bunbury “to open our
ball the first day of the year” inspired a reply from Goldsmith in both prose
and poetry. Research has established the latter part of December 1773 as the
probable date of composition of the letter, written in the poet’s own hand
and containing a specimen of Goldsmith’s light occasional verse. James Prior
was the first to publish the letter in Goldsmith’s Miscellaneous Works (1837).

Gift of Professor Arthur Friedman


Probably written early in 1774, Retaliation, a group of mildly satirical
verse portraits of selected friends, was published on 19 April of that year,
fifteen days after Goldsmith’s death. An anonymous letter to Mr. Kearsly,
the bookseller, precedes the text of the poem with a partial explanation of its
origin. Several of Goldsmith’s acquaintances also described the inception of
the poem, actor David Garrick’s account being the most reliable. In a con-
test of wits, Garrick triumphed over the poet with an extempore characteri-
zation: “Here lies Nolly Goldsmith, for shortness call’d Noll,/ Who wrote
like an angel, but talk’d like poor Poll.” “With the greatest good humor”
Goldsmith went home again and began to compose his poetic retaliation.
No evidence exists that the publisher was given Goldsmith’s own manuscript. The poet told a friend that while he was writing the verses he “had given copies to others, who had given copies to others again.” These manuscripts may have differed from the copy printed as the first edition, much as they probably differed from one another, and all that is known about the first edition is that it was, according to the prefatory letter to the publisher, printed from an “authentic copy.”

The earliest issues from the press while the first edition was in the process of being printed can be distinguished from the later issues in the same edition in two ways. The medallion on the title page is in a proof state, lacking the lettering “published as the Act directs,” which was added later. Again, the earliest issues do not include two pages of “Explanatory Notes and Observations” and a list of errata at the end which were printed after publication of the first edition had begun. Advertisements for the forthcoming second edition stated that “those who purchased the first edition, may have the additions gratis.” These two supplementary pages are found bound with many copies of the first edition.

Helen and Ruth Regenstein Collection


During 1774 seven editions were published, and though the author was dead his poem seemed to continue growing by a process of accretion. The second edition incorporates into the book two additional pages of explanatory notes from the second issue of the first edition, and lists a “new” group of errata. The third edition scatters these notes as footnotes throughout the text. The second issue of the fourth edition adds as a postscript a new epitaph on Caleb Whitfoord, supposedly by Goldsmith but probably written by Whitfoord himself.

Gift of Professor Arthur Friedman


The postscript of the fourth edition, second issue, was carried over into the fifth and later editions.

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The title page, in addition to announcing “some Account of the Life of the Author,” lists six of the more eminent men whose epitaphs were included.

Gift of Professor Arthur Friedman

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31

Probably written late in 1770 following a sojourn in the country with his friend Lord Clare, Goldsmith's "poetical epistle" amusingly recounts what became of the Lord's gift to the poet of a haunch of venison. No explanation was offered for the sudden appearance of another work by Oliver Goldsmith after so considerable an interval following his death. But the poem, according to a contemporary review, "is written so much in the genuine manner of Doctor Goldsmith that even were there no other proof of its authenticity it could hardly be suspected."

The poem was not published until 1776 when two London editions were issued (as well as a Dublin edition without textual authority). Professor Friedman notes that "the second edition, described on the title-page as 'a new edition, With considerable additions and corrections, Taken from the Author's last Transcript,' was clearly set... from a second manuscript." The whole system of accidentals was changed and since the poem in this second version appeared to embody the author's final intentions, Professor Friedman chose the second edition as copy-text for the Collected Works.

Helen and Ruth Regenstein Collection

Essays and Criticisms. 3 volumes. London, 1798.

In 1798, twenty-four years after Goldsmith's death, Thomas Wright, a printer, assembled a group of anonymous essays he identified as Goldsmith's. 'Engaging in the kind of inflating of literary matter called "book-making," Wright compiled a three-volume collection called Essays and Criticisms. He is credited with this pioneer attempt to enlarge the Goldsmith canon; i.e., that body of writings, whether or not they are anonymous, known beyond a reasonable doubt to be by Goldsmith. Volume one is simply Goldsmith's own 1766 collection, Essays by Oliver Goldsmith, reprinted with two additional essays. Volume two consists of works Wright selected from a number of anthologies (notably one called Beauties of the Magazines), few of which show evidence of Goldsmith's hand. Volume three, however, is of the utmost significance: it includes ten reviews and twenty essays which have since found a secure place in the canon.

One of Goldsmith's best-known pieces, "An Essay on the Theatre, or a Comparison between Laughing and Sentimental Comedy," made its first appearance as part of a collection in volume three of Essays and Criticisms. Originally printed in the Westminster Magazine a few months prior to the opening of She Stoops to Conquer, this piece expresses Goldsmith's views on the nature and purpose of comedy.

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The Triumph of Benevolence; or, the History of Francis Wills.
2 volumes. [First Dublin edition.] Dublin, 1772.

The Triumph of Benevolence was published anonymously in 1772 and its authorship remains unknown. The only evidence for associating this novel with Goldsmith is the title of the anonymous French translation of 1773: Histoire de François Wills: ou le Triomphe de la Bienfaisance, par l'Auteur du Ministre de Wakefield. Critical reviews in English periodicals, although they supply publication information, offer no substantial clues to identify the author of The Triumph of Benevolence. No copy of the first London edition of two volumes, published in 1772, has ever been found. Only one copy of a Dublin edition of that year is known to exist.

Gift of Professor Arthur Friedman