On Friday 10 May 1726 it would seem that Voltaire left Calais in the Betty to cross the Channel by the regular service and to arrive the following morning, 30 April, at Gravesend. The shift from Gregorian to Julian calendars, only removed by England’s adoption of New Style some twenty-six years later, was probably the least of his worries. Forced to leave France he must have crossed in a very different frame of mind from that of his friend Bolingbroke who had returned from his exile in France under a year previously. His first letter from England mirrors this uncertainty: ‘Je suis encore’, he wrote to his old friend Thiériot, ‘très incertain si je me retirerai à Londres. Je sais que c’est un pays où les arts sont tous honorés et récompensés, où il y a de la différence entre les conditions, mais point d’autre entre les hommes que celle du mérite. C’est un pays où on pense librement et noblement sans être retenu par aucune crainte servile. Si je suivais mon inclination ce serait là que je me fixerais dans l’idée seulement d’apprendre à penser. Mais je ne sais si ma petite fortune, très dérangée par tant de voyages, ma mauvaise santé, plus altérée que jamais, et mon goût pour la plus profonde retraite, me permettront d’aller me jeter au travers du tintamarre de Witheall et de Londres.’ Nevertheless within a few months he had mastered English well enough to write, from ‘my lord Bolingbrocke’s house’, to Pope and shortly after to Thiériot in a letter which shows a rapidly increasing command of the language. He was acquainted too with Pope’s works and recommended the recently published Gulliver, ‘le Rabelais d’Angleterre’, while at the same time explaining how the bankruptcy of his banker had again complicated his position. He retired to Wandsworth and in 1727, despite social activities such as attending Newton’s funeral in Westminster Abbey and meetings with Gay, Young and Pope, as well—possibly—as one with Swift at the latter’s house, he started writing his Essay on epick poetry. This first publication in England was a strange mixture being entitled An Essay upon the Civil Wars of France, extracted from curious manuscripts. And also upon the Epick Poetry of the European nations from Homer down to Milton. Published late in 1727, the first item was doubtless intended to familiarise the British public with the subject of another work Voltaire had in hand. It was printed by Samuel Jallasson, a type-founder and printer in Prujean’s Court near the Old Bailey and, apparently, ‘sold by the Booksellers of London and Westminster’. Voltaire certainly distributed copies himself, presenting one to Swift and another, on fine paper, to Sir Hans Sloane, President of the Royal College of Physicians and, from that
AN ESSAY UPON THE CIVIL WARS a. OF 1608.
FRANCE,
Extracted from curious MANUSCRIPTS.
AND ALSO UPON THE EPICK POETRY OF THE EUROPEAN NATIONS
From HOMER down to MILTON.

By Mr. de VOLTAIRE.

LONDON:
Printed by SAMUEL JALASSON,
in Pujean's Court Old Baily, and sold by the Booksellers of London and West-
minster. MDCXXVII.

Fig. 1. Voltaire, An Essay upon the Civil Wars of France (London, 1727).
Presentation copy to Sir Hans Sloane. C.60.g.11
year, of the Royal Society as well. This copy, now in the British Library, is inscribed: ‘to S’ hanslone from his most humble servant voltaire’ (fig. 1).

Meanwhile however Voltaire had a larger project, and a better supported one, in view. In 1723 he had published under the title of La Ligue ou Henry le Grand, the epic poem which was to be better known as La Henriade. Revision and expansion had taken place and from his first arrival in England Voltaire had sought subscriptions and support for a fine edition of the full text. George I and the Princess of Wales supported the venture and the Daily Journal of 27 January 1727 doubtless assisted by reporting that the French authorities had forbidden Voltaire to proceed, ‘a prosecution still depending against him on account of the praises bestowed on Queen Elizabeth’s behaviour in matters of religion’. Printing had started in the summer of 1727 but the engraving of the illustrations and the need for more subscriptions held the work up. Voltaire finally obtained some 343 names, the subscription price being two pounds and the ordinary sale price the high one of three pounds. George I having just died, Voltaire turned to his other royal contact and the work was in fact dedicated to the newly proclaimed Queen Caroline. The list of subscribers proper is remarkable, ranging through the Court, Government, Opposition, merchants, writers, scientists and clergy. The first edition, a careful but in fact unimpressive book, was finally issued in mid March 1728 and contains 202 pages. A piracy of 190 pages appeared almost at once and a corrected second edition in octavo was published at a far lower price by Woodman and Lyon, also in 1728, as well as another strange octavo piracy apparently based on uncorrected proofsheets.

While in England Voltaire also prepared other works. L’Histoire de Charles XII, roi de Suède started him off on his career as an historian and stems from conversations in England with two former ambassadors. Failing to get formal authorisation for the work Voltaire went to Rouen and supervised the printing of it there by Claude François Jore; the volume appeared in November 1731. By arrangement the text was sent to London and at once reprinted there by William Bowyer in an edition with a very similar titlepage. The British Library has both the first London edition (10761.df.14), published in mid January 1732, and the second (611.c.12), published in March of the same year. In the meanwhile three translators had been at work and The History of Charles XII, published by A. Lyon, appeared in mid February 1732. Both the technique and the speed of operation should be noted as they were applied to the works not only of Voltaire but of most important French writers throughout the eighteenth century. A few copies were imported and, often with the permission of the author, were reprinted at once in the original language as this was doubtless simpler, quicker and cheaper than importing copies. The market having thus been created, an English translation was rushed out for the public who could not read French. Voltaire correctly says that the Histoire de Charles XII was printed more frequently in London than in Paris and indeed it heads the table of popularity of his works in England: twenty-five editions of the English text and five of the French appeared, with seven in 1732 alone.

Apart from Brutus, with its important preliminary discourse on tragedy dedicated to Bolingbroke, and which, published in 1731, was rapidly adapted for the English stage
which had inspired it, the main fruit of Voltaire's visit to England, which ended late in 1728, was of course his *Lettres philosophiques*. That his account of his trip should deal with people and ideas and not with monuments and sights was typical. That he should also plan to use London and British freedom from censorship in an attempt to safeguard a dangerous French provincial publication was equally so. This masterpiece, 'one of the first bombs thrown at the Ancien Régime' as no less a French literary historian than Gustave Lanson has termed it, was to be published simultaneously in English (probably the original language of the majority of the text) in England and in French in both England and France, Jore again producing the French edition at Rouen. As it turned out the British booksellers, given a chance of publishing an English text, preferred to follow this part of their arrangement first. Since William Bowyer's ledgers survive one is in a rare position of being able to see exactly how the work went on. ³ Two thousand copies of the English text were to be printed and so eighty reams of demy paper were received on 16 April 1733. Composition naturally began at the beginning of the text proper with sheet B in the week ending 28 April and virtually all the text was set by Charles Micklewright at an average rate of three signatures a week. Printing started off slowly on three different presses. Work was suspended for a week in mid May and for the last two weeks of June. By then Micklewright had completed the text but the presswork was at least six signatures behind so that in early July all hands were called in to help and five or six presses (using press figures up to eight) were at work for a week. Messrs. Mottram and Newstead, two other compositors, completed the setting of the last sheet, the index and the title sheet A by 7 July but in fact the latter was not printed off until the week of the 21st July. That week a hundred copies were delivered to Charles Davis and in the following week, to 27 July, four hundred and fifty more. By 2 August a further three hundred had been delivered and during the rest of the month a thousand and four more. What is interesting is that four cancelled leaves were set at the very end of July but apparently only printed off by 4 August by which date at least a quarter of the edition had been sent to the publisher. It is therefore perhaps not surprising that not all copies have all the cancels. The book was of course at once pirated by George Faulkner in Dublin. Meanwhile in June Bowyer had started at last on the French version of the text, printing one thousand five hundred copies, but this was only completed in March 1734 and indeed the *Lettres écrites de Londres sur les Anglois et autres sujets* (A Basle) bear the date of 1734. By late April Voltaire was, as ever, busy writing to the authorities and to his friends telling them how he had no part in all this. As he wrote to the Comte de Maurepas: 'Ces *Lettres anglaises* qui vous ont amusé, et dans lesquelles vous avez trouvé deux choses que vous aimes assez, des vérités et des plaisanteries, paraissent enfin, et je vous jure qu'on les débite malgré moi, que je n'ai épargné depuis un an ni soins ni argent pour les supprimer, et que je suis au désespoir.' ⁴ How frequently was Voltaire to write to friends and printers in this vein and attempting to cover his tracks.

From now on Voltaire's immediate connections with English publishing cease and one moves into the period of reprinting and translating of works first published on the Continent. His tragedy *Zaire* (1733) was adapted for the English stage by Aaron Hill and acted
at the Theatre-Royal, Drury Lane in 1736, being frequently reprinted in the next half century. In the same year Alzire was also reprinted by Bowyer in so very close a copy that it is hard to differentiate it from the original French edition by Jean-Baptiste Claude Bauche except for the presence of the British press figures. The case of La Mort de César, also 1736, is equally odd, the English reprint impudently putting as imprint ‘Imprimée à Londres chez Innis. Et se vend, à Paris, chez Jean-Baptiste Claude Bauche.’ Indeed it may have been in an attempt to counter such piracies that the French publisher began signing his own copies, as can be seen in his 1736 Alzire; this became a reasonably common practice by the end of the century. Aaron Hill also adapted Alzire and Mérope (1749), although the latter had also been translated by Dr. John Theobald in 1744, the same year in which James Miller, ‘a gentleman of Wadham College’, had translated Mahomet the Imposter. From dramatist Voltaire turned to scientific populariser, having first come across Newton when in England. In 1738 his book introducing this author to the general public on the Continent appeared in Amsterdam and was promptly both reprinted in Paris and translated into English under the title Elements of Sir Isaac Newton’s philosophy (1738) but it did not apparently have any great success. A copy of the 1738 Nouvelle édition of the French text, with a false London imprint, bears four lines on the flyleaf which appear not to be in the author’s hand (British Library: 8703.aaa.32). Voltaire’s scientific interests were in fact acknowledged and in 1743 he was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society, an honour he appreciated and for which his letter of thanks has now recently returned to the archives of that Society. A portrait of Voltaire painted by Théodore Gardelle in 1760 and labelled: Voltaire F.R.S. was presented to the British Museum by Matthew Maty, its Principal Librarian (d. 1776) and is kept today in the Department of Prints and Drawings. In the same year as the Newton book the original edition of Voltaire’s play L’Enfant prodigue was published in Paris and the copy in the British Library has a number of manuscript corrections by the author. This is among the Egerton manuscripts (n. 43) bequeathed to the British Museum in 1829 by the eighth Earl of Bridgewater who had lived much of the latter part of his life in Paris. A similar item of the same period is the Library’s copy of the Discours en vers, sur les evenemens de l’année 1744 (Paris, Prault, 1744: C.60.n.8) where the same volume contains the manuscript corrected by the author, the first proof also with his corrections, and the final version with three more corrections on it. This item was acquired in 1896.

In later years Voltaire turned more to history but the 1739 Essay on the Age of Lewis XIV was translated from an early draft for the Siècle de Louis XIV by one of Voltaire’s English friends, John Lockman, sometime Secretary to the British Herring Fisheries and a translator of a number of his pieces. In fact the first edition of the Siècle appeared, published under Voltaire’s eye, in Berlin in 1751. The edition is notable as an example of the author’s views on typographic style as he not only abandoned the widespread (if declining) eighteenth-century use of italic but even deliberately avoided use of upper case letters as far as possible. This edition was copied the following year ‘A Londre, Chez R. Dodsley, a la Tête de Tully en Pall-mall’ (fig. 2) with the same idiosyncratic typography. This copy was inscribed incidentally by one Elizabeth Hay on 24 July 1752. The Scottish firm of
LE SIECLE DE LOUIS XIV.

PUBLIE

Par M. DE FRANCHEVILLE conseiller aulique da sa Majeste, & membre de l'académie royale des sciences & belles lettres de prusse.

TOME PREMIER.

LA SECONDE EDITION.

A LONDRE,
Chez R. Dodsley, a la Tete de Tully en Pall-mall.

M. DCC. LII.
Hamilton, Balfour and Neill of Edinburgh, who were establishing themselves in opposition to the London booksellers,\textsuperscript{5} also produced an edition in 1752 'suivant la copie de Berlin' but in fact, though the titlepage follows that of the original, the rest of the volume has more normal typography. These authorial foibles did not catch on and in the *Abrege de l'histoire universelle depuis Charlemagne jusques à Charlequin* (La Haye, Neaulme, 1753) Neaulme tells how he met someone in Brussels who had the manuscript of this book and how he, Neaulme, knew it was Voltaire by his genius, his style ‘... et surtout son orthographe.’ ‘J'ai changé cette derniere,’ he continues, ‘parce qu'il est notoire que le Public a toutes les peines du monde à s'y accoutumer.’ The British Library has another copy of the basic text sheets of Neaulme's edition (9007.bb.1) which however lack this advertisement since it would have betrayed the origins of the edition which claims, on the cancelled titlepage, to have been published 'A Londres, chez Jean Nourse, 1753'. The layout of the two titlepages shows that they were clearly both printed in the Low Countries and the London one must therefore have been deliberately provided by Neaulme for Nourse's copies.

With John Nourse, a well-known London bookseller, active in the Strand from the 1730s to his death in 1780, one reaches a third stage in the publication of Voltaire's books in England, as Nourse, who traded regularly with Voltaire's printers in Geneva, soon became not only the most constant reprinter and publisher of translations of Voltaire's works in England (rivalled only by Dodsley) but indeed so well known for this on the Continent, whither he travelled, that his name was used for fictitious imprints abroad.\textsuperscript{6} Voltaire knew of him and even wrote in December 1755: 'Cependant cette maudite édition [of the *Abrege*] de Jean Nourse m'obligerai de mettre en ordre l'Histoire véritable.'\textsuperscript{7} From 1753 indeed Nourse almost automatically both reprinted and translated most of Voltaire's works and particularly the more historical ones due to appear in the next fruitful decade. For example in 1756 a reprint of the *Histoire de la guerre de 1741* was followed by an English translation which ran at once into a second edition. By 1758 Nourse is thought to have been sufficiently committed to reprinting Voltaire that he had three of the fleurons used by Voltaire's Geneva printers copied for his own use; these appear first in an unacknowledged edition of the *Essay sur l'histoire générale* where one sees again the regular eighteenth-century practice of a British bookseller reprinting the French original, as closely as possible to the first edition, presumably in order to hold the market even for the short space of time it then took to make and to market an English translation. The most outstanding and the most debated case of this is the publication of *Candide*. Voltaire's Genevan edition was distributed from that town on 15 January 1759, copies being explicitly sent to Paris and Amsterdam. It was a month before the ensuing row over the book broke out almost simultaneously in Paris and Geneva. On 18 January John Nourse was sent from Geneva the largest consignment he ever received from those publishers but it should be noted that no particular mention was made of *Candide* in their account book.\textsuperscript{8} These books had to travel by boat along the Lake of Geneva, over to Basel, down the Rhine and finally over to England. By 26 April Nourse was announcing the availability of a French text here in London and the fact that he had
an English translation in hand. The story of the two French text editions published anonymously in England has yet to be fully sorted out but two important facts can be noted: firstly, at least one of them clearly reprints an early state of the text probably altered in Voltaire’s final editing of his Genevan edition, and yet secondly, the English editions copy the layout of the Genevan text so closely in all other respects that one feels they must have been made from printed and not from manuscript copy. The conclusion that Nourse received an early state of the Genevan printed text suggests itself but is remarkable in that virtually no other European bookseller seems to have been treated to this. The British Library possesses both of these London reprints (fig. 3), the first and closest to the original being C.107.aa.30 (sometimes called 59⁸) and the second, probably printed after receipt of the published Geneva text, C.125.aa.10 (called 59⁹). Nourse’s translation, Candid: or, All for the best was published on 22 May and was thus beaten to the post by the rival translation of W. Rider, ‘late scholar of Jesus College, Oxford’ published by J. Scott and J. Gretton on 15 May under the title Candidus: or, The Optimist, a title nearer to that of the original French. It is evident that it was then known that there was some textual problem behind these texts since the Rider translation advertised itself as ‘translated from the last correct copy sent by him [Voltaire] as a present to the translator’ and added ‘The Public need not be intreated to ask for this particular Translation, as we may presume to assert there is no other authenticated copy under the Author’s hand of this work in the Kingdom’ (The Public Advertiser, 15 May 1759). Three other British editions also appeared in this same first year of publication.

Candide was a relatively short work but it is evident that Voltaire’s popularity sold anything with his name on it and we find larger historical works such as the Histoire de l’empire de Russie being sold both in French and in English as well as the shorter more polemical pamphlets relating to the Calas affair. Voltaire took a keen personal interest in the printing of his works and indeed had finally settled in Geneva largely at the bidding of the Cramer brothers in order to use their press for occasional minor works and for a new and better edition of his complete works. The British Library possesses a rare and possibly unique example of the minor genre in the Mémoire of 1761 addressed to the Procureur Général of the Parlement de Dijon on the subject of a suit instituted against Voltaire by the Bishop of Annecy. This short, three-page document concerns Voltaire’s role as local landlord and the rebuilding of the church at Ferney. The British Library copy, unknown to Dr. Besterman who printed the text from a manuscript,⁸ bears Voltaire’s own manuscript annotations (fig. 4) and ends with this interesting and illuminating statement: ‘J’ai fait imprimer six exemplaires de ce Mémoire pour les présenter à Dijon, jugeant qu’il est plus court & plus commode de les imprimer que de les copier à la main.’ On the other hand it was constantly Voltaire’s aim in the last decades of his life to publish fuller and better editions of his complete works despite the fact that he was still writing new ones and constantly tinkering with many of the old ones. In England there does not seem to have been a market for the reprinting of these editions in the original French but as the number of editions and translations of individual works was rising sharply in the early fifties—after a period of popularity in the late thirties based
La démolition du Chœur et les vitraux auront lieu à la fin de l'année, en même temps que la construction de la nouvelle nef. Les travaux seront confiés à un entrepreneur de l'Église, et ils se feront dans le plus grand respect des règles de l'architecture religieuse.

L'Église de Ferney, qui avait été la propriété de la famille de l'abbé de Ferney, a été achetée par un entrepreneur étranger, qui a demandé un permis de démolition pour édifier une nouvelle église dans le même site. Les habitants de Ferney ont protesté, mais sans succès.

Toutefois, la nouvelle église sera construite selon les plans de l'architecte local, et les anciens vitraux seront conservés dans la nouvelle nef. Les travaux seront terminés dans l'année suivante.
largely on the plays and on the biography of Charles XII—it was natural that a complete
Works in English should finally appear. What was to be a thirty-six volume edition,
translated under the direction of Smollett, appeared between 1762 and 1765 with a final
volume in 1770. A second and a third edition followed within these dates, followed by
a Dublin edition and another London one immediately after Voltaire’s death in 1778.
Nevertheless the rate of translation and of reprinting of earlier English language editions
continued at a high level. R. S. Crane studied the diffusion of Voltaire’s writings in
England between 1750 and 1800 by means of an analysis of the sales catalogues of 218
English private libraries of the period and established his very widespread popularity. Voltaire was in fact represented in 172 libraries, comparable figures for other contemporary
authors being Pope 115, Young 62, Thomson 51, Rousseau 50, Gray 43. Even allowing
for the fact that the number of Voltaire’s publications was much larger than that of any of
the others, the very general interest shown in him is extraordinary. The most popular
works were: Histoire de Charles XII (to be found in 72 libraries); Siècle de Louis XIV
(in 68); Lettres philosophiques (in 54); La Henriade (in 45); Candide (in 42). Professor
Crane concluded by stressing the particular interest in the historical works, the small part
in these totals played by translations and the fact that so many of the copies found belonged
to editions dating to the year of original publication.

The first point is undoubtedly true and is indeed characteristic of the period but the
two other points are probably the result of market conditions and operations which we
understand better today. The study of printers’ ornaments and the identification of
press figures as a uniquely English practice have allowed us to identify numerous apparently
French editions as having been printed in London. The popularity of French literature
throughout the middle of the eighteenth century, the absence of international copyright,
war conditions and economic forces, all meant that it was financially viable for a London
(or Glasgow, Edinburgh or Dublin) bookseller to reprint a popular French author’s
latest work in French in order to hold the market while his English translation was made.
This appears indeed to have been the case even up to 1796 when Diderot’s La Religieuse
and Jacques le fataliste appeared. The closeness with which these piracies copied the
original editions was remarkable and as a result many libraries and individual collectors,
particularly in this country, need to look at their holdings with care to see whether they
have a genuine first edition or the first English edition of the French text, the presence of
press figures being in many cases the easiest of clues. In the case of Candide for example,
perhaps the most discussed of all, there were some sixteen or seventeen editions in French
all within the year of publication. The British Library has both those printed in London,
one of those printed in Paris but it still lacks at least the genuine Geneva edition with
exactly the same number of pages. It is important to British scholars that they should be
able to compare such texts, where the physical differences can be very small, side by side
in the same library and in many cases until this has been done one will not be able to
evaluate fully the number of such reprints and thus the apparent popularity of these
continental authors and their works. The censorship in France and elsewhere on the
Continent led eighteenth-century publishers to fabricate anonymous or misleading title-
pages so that the resolution of the true place of printing is often the major problem in continental bibliography of this period. These problems hardly ever affect English literature and are therefore unfamiliar to many Anglo-Saxon bibliographers but as the compilers of the eighteenth-century short-title catalogue are rightly aware they are important in the study of British production of the period. The skill, accuracy and speed of British printers at the time was considerable. The translation by John Lockman of the introduction to what was to be Voltaire’s Siècle de Louis XIV says ‘The Translation of the whole will be finished immediately after the Publication of the Original’. The eighteenth century may not have had simultaneous translation—although the case of the Letters concerning the English Nation leaves even this in doubt—but its speed of reprinting and translation could hardly be met today. As Professor Crane pointed out, most contemporary libraries had Voltaire in editions bearing the same date of publication as that of the first edition even if we cannot know today exactly which edition they had.

Voltaire’s wide range of publications is evidently of considerable interest in itself and because of his early and doubtless formative visit to England the publication of his works in this country has rightly been a subject of study. It seems likely that the first version of that French classic of the Enlightenment, the Lettres philosophiques, was not only printed here but even written in English. The number of early presentation copies of other works to Englishmen which have appeared in the salerooms has been impressively listed by Professor Rousseau. The popularity of Voltaire on the English stage has been noted and his influence on our historical consciousness and on British historians is established. The bicentenary of his death on 30 May 1778 is a good occasion to see how these considerable European influences were handled by the European booktrade of the time. When Voltaire first crossed the Channel few English language books were exported and French was highly fashionable over here. It is noticeable from Professor Crane’s researches that reprints in French were rarely made after the year of first publication and clearly the growing British market for Voltaire was one for Voltaire in translation. But then during his lifetime the respective status and standing of the French and English languages were to change and by the end of the eighteenth century it was English works which were being reprinted all over the Continent. By the early nineteenth century Benjamin Constant and Madame de Staël were being published simultaneously both in Paris and in London and by the 1850s international copyright was being established to defend writers such as Hugo and Dickens. The great Kehl edition of Voltaire’s works, published by Beaumarchais in 1785 was, despite Voltaire’s printers’ use of Fournier type, printed in Baskerville and this French-language edition had a specially printed prospectus (now very rare) in English. It would thus seem that even the physical form of Voltaire’s own works reflects, in some way, the Anglomania which he himself, the most French of Frenchmen even in exile, did so much to promote.
These dates, and much other information in this article, are drawn from Professor A.-M. Rousseau's important study *L'Angleterre et Voltaire* (Oxford, 1976), 3 vols., published in *Studies on Voltaire and the eighteenth century*, vols. 145-147.


Bowyer's paper stock ledger is Bodleian MS. Don. b. 4 and his other ledgers, currently on deposit in the Bodleian, are the property of the Grolier Club of New York. For early information from these sources see K. I. D. Maslen, 'Some early editions of Voltaire printed in London', *The Library*, V, 14 (1959), pp. 287-293, and A.-M. Rousseau, 'Naissance d'un livre et d'un texte: les *Letters concerning the English nation* in the proceedings of the colloquium held on *Voltaire and the English* (Oxford, 1978), to appear as a forthcoming number of *Studies on Voltaire*.

Best. D. 723 (24 April 1734).


I am engaged in a full-scale study of John Nourse, his publications and trade.


Best. D. app. 206: Memoranda on the building of the church at Ferney, May 1761.

