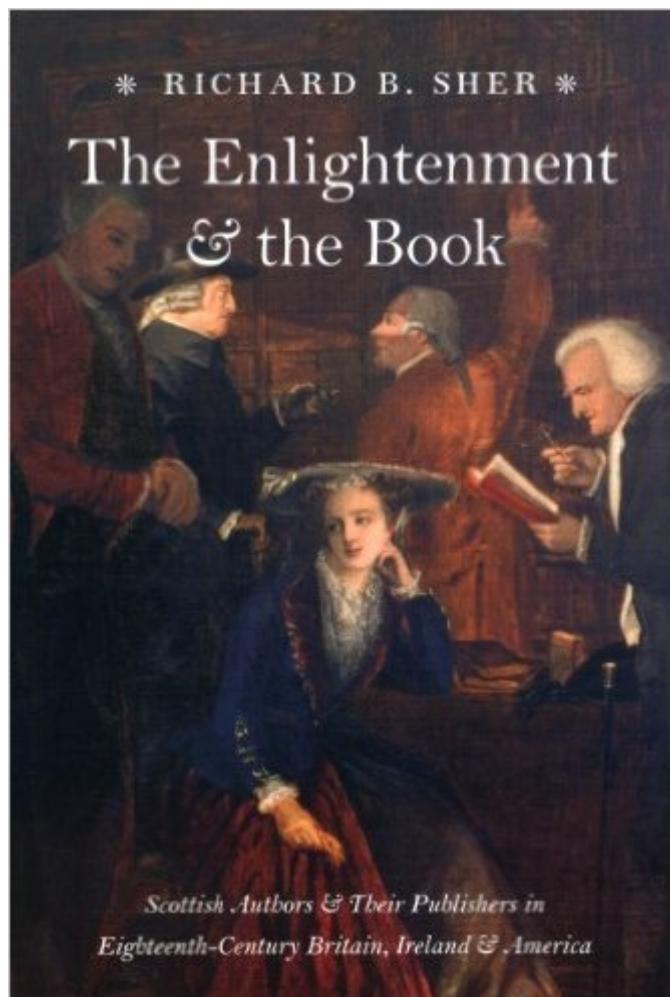


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The Enlightenment And The Book: Scottish Authors And Their Publishers In Eighteenth-Century Britain, Ireland, And America



Synopsis

The late eighteenth century witnessed an explosion of intellectual activity in Scotland by such luminaries as David Hume, Adam Smith, Hugh Blair, William Robertson, Adam Ferguson, James Boswell, and Robert Burns. And the books written by these seminal thinkers made a significant mark during their time in almost every field of polite literature and higher learning throughout Britain, Europe, and the Americas. In this magisterial history, Richard B. Sher breaks new ground for our understanding of the Enlightenment and the forgotten role of publishing during that period. *The Enlightenment and the Book* seeks to remedy the common misperception that such classics as *The Wealth of Nations* and *The Life of Samuel Johnson* were written by authors who eyed their publishers as minor functionaries in their profession. To the contrary, Sher shows how the process of bookmaking during the late eighteenth-century involved a deeply complex partnership between authors and their publishers, one in which writers saw the book industry not only as pivotal in the dissemination of their ideas, but also as crucial to their dreams of fame and monetary gain. Similarly, Sher demonstrates that publishers were involved in the project of bookmaking in order to advance human knowledge as well as to accumulate profits. *The Enlightenment and the Book* explores this tension between creativity and commerce that still exists in scholarly publishing today. Lavishly illustrated and elegantly conceived, it will be must reading for anyone interested in the history of the book or the production and diffusion of Enlightenment thought.

Book Information

Paperback: 848 pages

Publisher: University Of Chicago Press (July 1, 2010)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 9780226752532

ISBN-13: 978-0226752532

ASIN: 0226752534

Product Dimensions: 6 x 2 x 9 inches

Shipping Weight: 2.6 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

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