Chapter 4

Speaking of history: conversations about the past in Restoration and eighteenth-century England

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FOR the past two or three centuries we have become rather used to thinking of history as something found in books. Just as we ourselves are trained to read and criticize documents, and to take these as the basis of all historical knowledge, so we tell our students which books to go off and read, what ‘authorities’ to rely on, which journals to consult, and so on. The advent of the Internet has changed the way in which written texts circulate, but has not altered our perception of history as something that is textualized rather than heard about. There were certainly history ‘books’ (or at least graphical equivalents to books) as far back as Herodotus, but it is only since the eighteenth century that the book has become the vessel *par excellence* for conveying stories about the past. It was then that history really became a commercially successful genre, with every bookseller and publisher having to lay in a good stock of the most famous modern and ancient historians from Gibbon and Voltaire via Clarendon and Guicciardini back to Livy and Thucydides.

This bookishness is likely to make us forgetful of the oral and oratorical origins of history, and of the fact that Clio was, originally, a muse – a performative goddess rather than a scholar. There’s not much left of the era when Herodotus stood in the middle of Athens to read his *Histories*, or of that time, 2,000 years later, when the Italian *condottiere* Federigo da Montefeltro assembled his courtiers to listen to readings from ancient historians. Public readings today are usually of poems or novels, and few people would turn up at Blackwell’s or Waterstone’s to hear a chapter of the latest thing in historical erudition trip resonantly off an Oxford don’s tongue. And yet there are still some contexts in which we do prefer to speak, rather than

read, about history. Our students hear us lecture, and discuss what they have read in classrooms and tutorials (and, we like to think, among themselves); we listen to papers and lectures ourselves, attending international colloquia and inviting guest speakers. Many books and articles first enter the public domain as conference papers, and among the highest honours that can be bestowed on a British historian is to be Ford's lecturer at Oxford for a term. Less formally, chat about history in our offices, in the halls, and with our friends; we go to conferences not merely to listen to our colleagues' papers but to *discuss* them at the hotel bar afterwards, at least when we are not comparing our teaching loads and griping about salary problems, the insensitivity of academic administrators, or the decline of standards.

The early modern era, the age of the great transition to print culture, was perhaps the only point in human history when there has been a near equilibrium between the speaking of history and its silent reading.¹ Although the number of history books available to be read increased steadily through the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, exploding from 1660 on, there were still nearly as many contexts in which history could be listened to, heard about and discussed. And despite the authority that writing, and especially print, were beginning to confer on statements about the past, the two modes of presenting the past, oral and graphical were still seen as complementary rather than as competitive or mutually exclusive. The social origins of a tale or anecdote about the past, or of what we now call a 'fact' – a notion whose modern history also begins in the seventeenth century – counted for much more in terms of its claim to veracity than did the method of its delivery.² The purpose of this chapter (which itself has been read aloud to colleagues once or twice before being trapped on the typeset page) is to offer some illustrations of the ways in which history continued to be spoken aloud, in various social contexts, in early modern England. With occasional backward glances toward the Renaissance, the focus is on the period from the Restoration to the late eighteenth century, the era when the printed history book (and its narrative rival, the novel) made their greatest inroads into the book-selling market. I do not attempt to deal with every type of oral discussion of the past. The matter of 'oral residue' in Renaissance prose has been explored adequately by Father Walter J. Ong, and in another essay I have examined the implications of this for the perception of the past during the Renaissance.³ Early modern oral tradition, the subject of several chapters in the present volume, has also been studied elsewhere, and scholars such as Adam Fox and Laura Gowing have written extensively about the oral presentation of the past in 'everyday' settings such as the ecclesiastical courts.⁴ Finally, there is no space here for the role of the history play, perhaps the most obvious context for the oral presentation of the past, but scarcely one suffering from scholarly neglect.

HISTORY READ ALOUD

While it was not as common a practice as it had been in antiquity and in the early Renaissance, public readings of history books continued to occur in early modern Europe, though there are relatively few documented occurrences of this in England.⁵ By the seventeenth century, with plenty of books available and private homes furnished with libraries and closets, there was little necessity for this among the literate, and the English have in any case never possessed much in the way of a *piazza* sociability. The most obvious exception is the university classroom where the first Camden Professor of history, the inestimable Degory Whear, bored his pupils for a quarter-century with Latin recitations of and commentaries upon ancient historians such as Lucius Florus.⁶ Less formal public recitations – rather than readings proper – of history occurred on ceremonial occasions. When the Lord Chancellor, Lord Somers, visited St Catherine's Hospital in London on 1698, he insisted on giving his captive audience what one observer called 'a large historical account of all the steps and parts in the visitation, which lasted about an hour', before the proceedings even began.⁷ In the 1740s, the bluestocking Elizabeth Carter heard Thucydides read aloud, in the Hobbes translation, but while we learn that 'he did not answer my expectations', it is not clear the degree to which this was a public reading.⁸

In truth, the English never had a strong tradition of public history readings, in comparison with the courts and marketplaces of the Continent, though the kind of intense studying and re-studying of ancients like Livy that Gabriel Harvey is known to have undertaken with successive companions may be seen as quasi-public, at least in the sense that they were intended to provide political advice to public figures.⁹ Private and domestic reading, however, was another matter. In the mid-eighteenth century, for instance, Elizabeth Carter reports reading a translation of Livy 'in a family way', while a year later her 'family book' was Dio Cassius's *Roman History*.¹⁰ There are numerous references to this sort of thing in the diaries and letter-books of the later seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Samuel Pepys, whose appetite for history books at times exceeded his sexual longings, had his own collections on the history of the navy read aloud to him at supper, and he and his wife Elizabeth read other books together in bed.¹¹ A few decades further on, the history enthusiast Henry Prescott of Chester had his son Jack and his wife Suzy read to him. 'Jack reads Speeds Account of the Popish Plott and part of the History of Cataline', recorded Prescott on 5 November 1704, the ninety-ninth anniversary of Gunpowder Plot Day. On 30 January 1706, the fifty-seventh anniversary of the death of the Blessed Martyr of Glorious Memory, Charles I, Jack read aloud 'Nelson's Introduction to the King's Tryall'.¹²

Servants were also pressed into service to read history to their employers. An especially interesting example of this is Prescott's older contemporary Lady Sarah Cowper, an embittered matriarch who lived in a state of constant warfare with her husband, looking for solace in books. Failing eyesight threatened to remove this pleasure. A terrible quarrel with her husband in 1702 was precipitated by Sarah's request that she be accompanied to London by a servant who 'cou'd read well which would comfort me much now my sight is near gone'. Indeed, the prospective reader would have to be an educated woman who could not, therefore, dine with the other servants: 'Now such as are so well bred will think themselves too good (and indeed so do I) to dine in the kitchin therfore I desired she might sitt at our table ffor moreover I can scarce see to carve my meat decently.' By the beginning of 1705 Sarah had her way. Having acquired 'to wait on mee a woman that reads well', her new companion immediately began to read to her from the earl of Clarendon's newly-published *History of the Rebellion*. We can follow Sarah's reactions to hearing this read through successive entries in her diary, which is dominated by reflections on Clarendon for the better part of two months.¹³

Wives often had the task of reading history to their husbands, whether or not the works were of any personal interest. Mary Rich, Countess of Warwick, tells us in her diary that she regularly ministered to her ailing spouse by reading him extracts from history. On 11 February 1669 Rich notes 'After dinner my Lord that day againe falling ill of the gout, of which he kepte his bed, I was constantly with him and red to him history.' Her function there was entirely as entertainer and palliative care-giver; there is no suggestion that this unnamed work was being read by her choice rather than the earl's. Similarly, a week later 'After dinner I was constantly with my Lord and red in a history to him', an act repeated the following day.¹⁴ Sometimes, it is even clear that this was a demanding chore, a marital duty akin to unwelcome sex and from which she fled at the earliest opportunity (usually when his lordship dozed off) in order to return to her private devotions. 'In the after noone [I] red to my Lord in a history, and after super I comited my soule to God.' And, even more cheerily: 'After diner red in History to my Lord; at evening reatired and red in a good booke, and aftwardes meditated upon death.'¹⁵

Mary Rich's readings aloud of secular history are devoid of any comment on the quality of what she read, nor does she even tell us the name of the historian; there is no sign of intellectual response to the matters discussed, as if a story were being recited with no attention to its content.¹⁶ In contrast, the deeply religious countess was considerably more enthusiastic about Foxe's *Book of Martyrs*, which she sometimes retreated to read by herself, but on occasion heard read by a member of her household or her husband. During the afternoon of 19 December 1666, for instance, she 'hearde red bichop Latimers and Ridleys martyrdome, with which my heart was very much affected to read the courage and resolution with which thay dide'. On hearing

the passage she retreated to pray to God 'that if he called me too I might as willingly suffer for his truth'.¹⁷

Not all women found secular history a bore, and it had made considerable headway with them, as an alternative to romances and novels, a century later, when we find Lady East of Hall Place, Hurley, and her husband, both invalids, engaged in reading to each other from Gibbon. 'I was very ill all day & did not go out. Began to read the 4th Vol. of Gibbon Roman History.' She continued with Gibbon the next few days, interspersed with walks when she and her husband were able: 'We read Gibbon – walk'd a little ... A wet morning & worse weather all day than we have had some time; read all the morning in Gibbon.' Sometimes guests were included in this domestic decline and fall. On 20 February, which fell on a Sunday, Rome had to take a back pew to religion, if not to barbarism: 'I read aloud in the morning to Mr Clyfford & Sir William – from the moral part of *Elegant Extracts*, & Mr Holroyd's *Translation of Reflections* for every day in the year. In the evening we read the Roman His[tory by] Gibbon.'¹⁸

By the beginning of the nineteenth century, such scenes of men and especially women reading history books together, in mixed- or single-sex pairs and larger groups, is a familiar one, found in novels like Elizabeth Hamilton's *Memoirs of Modern Philosophers* (1800), in which the heroine Harriet is described 'quietly seated at her work with her aunt and sister, listening to Hume's *History of England* as it was read to them by a little orphan girl she had herself instructed'.¹⁹ More famously, in Jane Austen's *Mansfield Park* the child Fanny Price is given daily rations of history to read aloud and later, as a young woman, embarks on readings of history and biography with her sister Susan. The dullness of the bare text of history is considerably enlivened in Fanny's oral summations. 'Fanny was her oracle', Jane Austen writes of Susan. 'What Fanny told her of former times, dwelt more on her mind than the pages of Goldsmith.'²⁰

WHAT'S GOOD TO READ?

The advertising of history books, generally in the form of lists published at the end of other books, was in its infancy, and those curious to know which histories they should read relied much more on word of mouth in selecting titles, or even in learning of their publication. When Pepys took the historian and divine Thomas Fuller to The Dog, an alehouse, in 1661, he was told by the cleric about his forthcoming *Worthies of England*, a 'history of all the families of England', while its author boasted he could tell Pepys more about his own family than he knew himself. Pepys was to be severely disappointed when he first encountered the book in print, for Fuller made no mention of his family at all.²¹

The advent of circulating libraries in the mid-eighteenth century made this *viva voce* shopping more rather than less necessary, especially for recent works which might be blandly advertised in *The Gentleman's Magazine* and were not likely to be mentioned at all in courtesy literature, the historical prescriptions which tended to favour the classics. Lady Mary Coke, a keen reader, often spent her evenings in female company immersed in history, and freely dispensed her tastes to her friends. On 27 March 1769, with a friend in residence, she recorded with some frustration that 'I don't find Frances has read so much History as I thought She had. I have recommended some books to her.'²² Coke herself learned of books by conversation, as on the occasion when Horace Walpole dropped by the house in 1773 and left her with a copy of his newly published *Memoires du comte de Gramont*, while on a previous day she had discussed with Lord Lyttelton 'the History of Henry the second, which he has just publish'd', and the author's fears that it would not be well received.²³ Elizabeth Carter, whose family had made Lyttelton their 'after supper book' in July 1767, told her confidante Catherine Talbot to advise Archbishop Secker, with whom Talbot lived, 'that I hear a bookseller at Maidstone is going to publish a new edition of [John] Philpot's history of Kent, with some additions that have been found amongst his papers'.²⁴

Opinions on specific authors, historians as much as novelists, are increasingly a feature of genteel Georgian conversation: the sociable study of books for the purposes of sharing their contents was often contrasted with a more selfish, 'bookish' form of private study.²⁵ Mary Coke records a discussion concerning the virtues of Clarendon's *History of the Rebellion* and Horace Walpole's attack on it. Coke suggested to Lady Mary Forbes, the great-great granddaughter of Clarendon, that she thought Walpole merely to be saying 'what every one allowed, that his History was a very fine one, but that it was not a singular opinion to say that it was a partial history'. Forbes's defensive response that 'misrepresentation was very different to partiality' inclined Coke to drop the conversation rather than argue further and risk a scene.²⁶ Fanny Burney was asked by Dr Johnson, 'Miss Burney, what sort of Reading do you delight in? – History? – Travels? – Poetry? – or Romances?' She declined to answer for fear that any choice would be the wrong one.²⁷ On another occasion, however, Burney was more forthcoming. When discussing with William Seward a play they were jointly plotting, the latter suggested to Fanny that they begin a scene with the hero, Mr Dry, in his study, picking up a book. Burney records the exchange as follows:

'For Example, *this*,' cried I, giving him Clarendon's History.

He took it up *in Character*, & flinging it away, cried, 'No, – this will never do, – a History by a Party writer is odious.'

I then gave him Robertson's America [*History of America*, 2 vols, 1777].

'This', cried he, 'is of all reading the most melancholy; an account of Possessions we have lost by our own folly.'

I then gave him Baret's Spanish Travels.

When Seward declined this, also, as shot through with falsehoods, she changed genres altogether, giving him *Clarissa* (which he disliked, thinking the only readable novel Burney's own *Evelina*). Burney then continued to present her companion with other books on which he continued to make 'severe, splenetic, yet comical comments'.²⁸

Certain historians – Robertson, Gibbon, Hume, for example – because socially prominent as well as commercially successful, were especially common subjects of and occasional participants in conversation; as living historians, they could literally speak to readers outside of their own texts. Perhaps no one was more discussed and with greater animation than Catharine Sawbridge Macaulay. The 'republican virago's' life and political views attracted attention, with her own sex holding especially strong views on her character and historiographical talents.²⁹ Elizabeth Carter 'defended' Macaulay ambivalently on the grounds that she came across much better in person than in her books, and in spite of her 'extraordinary conduct' in marrying a much younger husband late in life.³⁰ 'Poor Mrs Macaulay!' Carter wrote to Elizabeth Montagu, who was less impressed with the historian's work. 'So you will not read her book, I cannot help it; I will, as I have a much higher opinion of her talents than you have. I am but very little acquainted with her, but in a tête-à-tête conversation of between two and three hours that we once had; she appeared to me to have [a] very considerable share both of sense and knowledge.'³¹

Quite aside from her unorthodox political views, Macaulay was already the object of suspicion among female as well as male readers simply for being that highly unusual creature, a woman historian. Mary Coke, for one, had a low view of Macaulay's talents, while conceding her knowledge. 'In the evening I read Sherlock upon Providence, & then the fourth volume of Mrs Macaulay's History. She shews herself Mistress of great learning, but with it has such strong prejudices as makes her unfit for the office of an historian.' A few days later, Coke and the Princess Amelia engaged in conversation about Macaulay, and a week after that Coke busied herself preparing for a visit from Macaulay's great rival, David Hume, by studying the latter's more conservative history. 'This evening I've been comparing Mr Hume's History with Mrs Macaulay's, not to the advantage of the latter, tho' I really think a Lady of her great learning an honor to the Sex, & lament her being so prejudiced.' When Hume showed up in person five days later, he and Coke 'talk'd then about Mrs Macaulay's history, & on that subject we agreed'.³² Yet despite her grudging sympathy for Macaulay's victimization, a rumour that Coke and Macaulay were cohabiting proved too much to

bear."The Princess Amelia said she had hear'd I lived with Mrs Macaulay. I cou'd not help smiling at so strange an invention, & assured Her Royal Highness I was not positive whether I knew her by sight, but cou'd affirm I never spoke to her, & tho I thought her writings proved her to have genius, yet her ideas of government were so unreasonable & so absurd that I had no patience with her.'³³

ANECDOTES AND NAME DROPPING

It was not necessary, however, for a history book to be read collectively, or for a historian to come to tea, for history to become an item in conversation. In fact, one did not need a book at all, since education still encouraged the memorizing of the most important facts about the past. These were often digested in textbooks and cheap chronologies in a manner calculated to encourage the most rudimentary rote learning. The number of historians appreciated for their great style, and who were read as master narrators of the past, was tiny in comparison to the enormous number of authors whose books simply contained historical trivia which the socially adept were expected to have at their command. A long line of works stretches from Renaissance titles such as *A Thousand Notable Things* and *The Varietie of Memorable and Worthy Matters* to Richmal Mangnall's enormously popular *Historical and Miscellaneous Questions* in the early nineteenth century. These were standard issue first for sixteenth-century students, then for a broadening urban and rural elite and middling sort. Those lower down the social ladder could find in broadsheets and almanacs all manner of reproducible historical information, from the names of the Nine Worthies to the regnal years of English kings and Roman emperors, to the year in which boots were invented.³⁴

There is a long-standing 'history' to this, reaching back to the medieval and Renaissance emphasis on the study of particular characters and episodes of the past for the purpose of comparison, and for their deployment in rhetoric. As early as the 1590s Shakespeare provided a humorous take on Plutarchian parallels in a battlefield discussion between Fluellen and Gower on the character of 'Alexander the Pig', or Great as compared with Henry V (*Henry V*, IV, 7, 1–56). The commonplace books of the early modern period are littered with incidents wrenched from their temporal contexts to provide illustrations of moral or political points. Once collected, they furnished the speaker with a *copia* of examples with which to argue, either by precedent or analogy, the rightness of a particular action. The parliamentary debates of the seventeenth century show that Members of Parliament had regular recourse to the chronicles of the Middle Ages and sixteenth century to provide ammunition for political argument. These occasionally included blistering denunciations of particular historians, such as Edward Littleton's

denunciation of the Tudor historian Polydore Vergil as a liar on the floor of the Commons in 1628.³⁵ The past similarly figured in sermons, which most obviously drew material regularly from biblical 'histories', a point taken up in Donald Meek's chapter on the Scottish clergy. By the end of the seventeenth century, preachers were also paying much more attention to secular history, especially on occasions such as anniversaries. Bishop White Kennett, a historian in his own right, gave an oral account of the Gunpowder Plot in one such sermon in 1713; several years earlier he had preached on the causes of the Civil Wars.³⁶ On 29 May 1705 Henry Prescott heard a similar sermon preached by a Mr Kippax of Ormskirk. 'The sermon is historicall out of Lord Clarendon, plain, honest but rustick.' On another occasion Prescott records 'Mr Lancaster has in the parish church a sermon on Ps. 115 v. 1 mixt with English History'.³⁷

Congregants, like Members of Parliament, may be expected to have either nodded piously or nodded off as uplifting and enlightening episodes from history wafted through the air around them. Yet despite the arguments of contemporaries that history was a serious genre, much of what was lifted from the pages of histories and then floated in conversation was amusing rather than grave. In a recent study of a sixteenth-century history, Holinshed's *Chronicles*, Annabel Patterson has usefully commented on the 'portable' quality of many of the tales to be found in Tudor chronicles. Some of these involved very minor or domestic events rather than the great deeds that were normally expected from historians, at least according to the canons of humanist historiography, which continued to be accepted throughout the eighteenth century.³⁸ A memorable tale, once learned, was liberated from its paper and vellum prison, to be recounted again and again, the way jokes and urban folk-tales circulate today. Anecdotes became social tools, used to make points not only in private correspondence, but also in civil conversation.

It was not unusual to find the facts of history, or the virtues and vices of a particular figure, the subject of animated discussion. In old age Mary Wortley Montagu complained of the ill manners of the Italian Catholics with whom she had to debate religious issues. Their attacks on at least one English national figure were a particular irritant. 'As I do not mistake exclamation, invective, or ridicule for argument, I never recriminate on the lives of their popes and cardinals, when they urge the character of Henry the Eighth; I only answer, good actions are often done by ill men through interested motives, and 'tis the common method of Providence to bring good out of evil: history, both sacred and profane, furnishes many examples of it.'³⁹ Just as often, history was produced for a lighter purpose, to entertain friends and visitors. Ambrose Barnes, alderman of Newcastle in the late seventeenth century, was, his biographer records, 'furnisht for all manner of conversation in history. He entertained men to admiration by reciting the times, places, occasions and precise actions, as if he had seen them.'⁴⁰ Facts of history

could be produced at the supper table, like salt, to enliven otherwise dull and stiff encounters. The day after her sixty-seventh birthday Sarah Cowper, who *was* easily bored, hosted a Kentish parson who amused her with the tale of an Elizabethan nobleman having a minister buried alive for refusing to perform a funeral service without advance payment, 'for which the earl was try'd and condemnd to dy. But the Queen pardon'd him.'⁴¹ She herself collected many such 'histories' she had heard in her commonplace books.

Discussion of history often went hand in hand with conviviality. The already-mentioned Henry Prescott, who served as deputy registrar of the diocese of Chester in the early eighteenth century, conversed on history in settings outside church and hearth. Indeed, he was as fond of the alehouse as the study, and found many opportunities to combine his two favourite pastimes, discussing history with friends and associates in surroundings more redolent of Bacchus (coincidentally the name of one of his haunts) than of Clio. 'I take 3 hours and 2 pints at the Fountain. Roman Antiquity our discourse', we hear on one occasion; on another Prescott prevailed upon the chancellor of the diocese to stay late in the evening at the same tavern to discuss 'Books, learning, [and] Lives'. On 14 July 1706, again at The Fountain, he encountered two travellers, 'Sir Richard of Lincolnshire and Mr Worsley of ... a Member of Parliament' who asked him about several local antiquities they'd seen including the church altar. 'I give them account of that and the antiquity of Chester'. They soon fell to arguing about the merits of hereditary succession and primogeniture and Prescott suspected them 'of the deprav'd humor of the age as to religion and the Church of England'. During a particularly heavy evening of drinking and jollity, in November 1706, 'the wine, Church of England history, discourse, healths go on till 11 when the Archdeacon and I (the last men) return in a cold and rugged temper of the night'. During a severe winter storm in 1707 Prescott and his antiquarian friend Mr Davies repaired for warmth to the coffee house and then The Bacchus where they had three pints and discussed the life of the Elizabethan scholar Dr John Rainolds. With equal attention to detail in matters of history and libation, Prescott notes on another evening: 'Wee go to the Bacchus where wee (over 2 pints of white and ½ pint of sack) have an History of the House of Derby and the Island, with the Healths concurrent, past 10.'⁴² A meeting in the same venue involved a discussion of a two-century old squabble as to which of the two universities, Oxford or Cambridge, had been founded first. At The Fountain, his favourite watering hole, he was entertained with some friends by a Mr Poole of Liverpool who tells 'long and great stories'. At The Ship, another pub, Prescott and several companions chatted about 'Mr Cloptons Genealogy' while drinking in the evening.⁴³ Sometimes private homes were the scenes of such discussions, as when Prescott and a friend were received by the antiquary Davies in his study; there they were entertained 'with indifferent claret but with gratefull variety

of books and learning, especially ecclesiastical antiquity'. Personal reminiscence often figured in such encounters. On one occasion Prescott met 'with Mr Daniel Chadwick of Preston who was present at the barbarous execution of the earl of Derby, hee [*sic*] remembers the History of the Time and the Officers in and against Lathom House'.⁴⁴

This last example is a reminder that there was a category of 'facts about the past' which might best be termed 'privileged' – details about persons, principally from recent history, known to only a few, and not to be found in books. Memories and tales of interest passed informally in conversation and sometimes by tradition across generations, long before they were consigned to the written record. The seventeenth century produced a whole series of 'Thomas More jokes' and witticisms involving other famous lawyers, many of which appear to have had oral rather than written origins.⁴⁵ At the end of the eighteenth century Hester Thrale Piozzi repeated for a friend a story involving Queen Caroline of Anspach. Attempting to acquaint herself with English history, the queen had told Sir Woolston Dixie, Bart, that she knew of his connection with Bosworth Field, the site of Richard III's defeat and death, near which Dixie lived. The baronet immediately became embarrassed and fled the room, because, being a brute with an 'utter ignorance of historic literature' he had assumed the queen was referring to a recent incident in which Dixie had been thrashed within an inch of his life by a tinker he had provoked while crossing Bosworth.⁴⁶

The ability to recount such details conferred on the speaker a higher, 'in-the-know', status among his or her peers; it gave the listeners, afoot or at table, the pleasure of microhistories, revealed only to them, which in turn could be passed on selectively to chosen companions. A good example of this process is the attention paid by a late seventeenth-century northern antiquary, Abraham de la Pryme, to the tales told by his parishioners and others, including an elderly civil war veteran, Cornelius Lee (1629–1702). From Lee the young Pryme heard such 'facts' of history as that the French king Henri IV had been assassinated by Jesuits in 1610 for warning James I of the Gunpowder Plot. 'This relation', noted Pryme, 'he says, he had from the mouth of a great popish lord, in King Charles the First's time, who had it discover'd to him by his confessour.'⁴⁷

There are many such instances of people recording, late in life, stories that they heard when much younger. In 1701, the very old Cuthbert Bound, who had been minister of Warmwell in Dorset at the Restoration, reported an incident he had witnessed in 1661. This involved a delirious prophet, visited by spirits who allowed him to predict both who would visit him later that day and political events such as the 1665 Plague, the Great Fire and the invasion of William of Orange in 1688. Bound, having been convinced in the fullness of time that these prophecies were legitimate, reported them to the Cambridge scholar John Covel in 1701. Thence they passed to Covel's

brother-in-law Philip Traheron, who determined to interview Bound, 'who is decayed of late' before he died and extract further information.⁴⁸ Famous literary names often figure in such exchanges. Mary Coke, when riding in Hyde Park with the octogenarian Lord Bathurst in 1767, began to converse about her companion's relations with Pope, Swift, Bolingbroke and Atterbury half a century previously; Bathurst told her 'many things of them I had not heard; his memory never cou'd have been more perfect'.⁴⁹ The greater suspicion with which oral sources were often greeted after the middle of the seventeenth century did not always extend to personal recollections, especially when passed by members of the elite among themselves. On the other hand, there was no reason to accept a story, even from a family member, if he or she had a reputation as a liar or blowhard. When Sir Denny Ashburnham came calling on his cousin John he 'told a great many incredible stories' at dinner, but he got a cool reception from his host. John, the grandson of a royalist, disliked his kinsman on principle as a member of the parliamentary side of the family, and he also thought Sir Denny 'a great prevaricator, and not to be trusted by me or myne'.⁵⁰

The converse of this sort of private information, valued principally because it could not be found in books, was the type of detail about the historical past that was well-documented in books, yet was also so well known that it did not require a written authority. We would call this 'common knowledge'. The learned would make claims about the past while at table, many of which were matters of opinion rather than fact. Sir Edward Walker, the quarrelsome Garter King of Arms, asserted to Samuel Pepys 'that there was none of the families of princes in Christendom that do derive themselves so high as Julius Caesar, nor so far by a thousand years, that can directly prove their rise'.⁵¹ Disputed facts were sometimes the occasion of arguments, and by the early eighteenth century Richard Steele found it possible to satirize club-and-coffee-house wagers over history in a bet between two gentlemen, one a recognized authority on ancient sex scandals, 'upon a point of history, to wit, that Caesar never lay with Cato's sister'.⁵²

Real-life arguments could turn on points nearly as pedantic. Hester Thrale Piozzi sought the aid of the antiquary Daniel Lysons in order to resolve her argument with a male associate as to whether Cardinal Wolsey had once, as suggested in Hume, stopped at Esher, the site of her own grandson's estate.⁵³ A few years later Piozzi turned to Lysons's brother Samuel to resolve the question of some 'disputants' as to what 'authority' could be adduced for the occurrence of a great frost on the Thames during the third century AD. 'Do me the very great kindness to let me know, and where you read the fact, whether in Holinshed, Stowe, Speed, or Strype's Annals and from what record the incident is taken, it having been averred that no records would then have been kept. I mean in 260 or 270 A.D.'⁵⁴ Lady Mary Coke notes in her journal an argument with David Hume about Oliver Cromwell's

religion: 'I said he was as great a hypocrite in that as he was in every thing else, but he wou'd not allow it & insisted he was religious.'⁵⁵ On another occasion, in 1771, Coke found herself involved in a wager with Anne Pitt, whom she disliked. 'Mrs [Anne] Pit[t] & I had another violent dispute: I said that the Emperor Rodolphus the first was in possession of Austria, Stiria, &c.: she affirm'd the Family were not in possession of those Country's till long after, in the reign of Albert the second.' In order to resolve this important matter, the two women 'agreed to lay a crown, & when She came to me on monday I presented her with a history of the Empire'. Mary Coke won the point. Poor Mrs Pitt, to add insult to injury, then embarrassed herself publicly. 'With her eagerness to find herself in the right, She forgot She wanted to blow her nose, & as it wou'd not wait for her, it dropt, or rather let fall a drop, not at all to the advantage of my book, just upon the place where She found herself in the wrong: upon which She cry'd out, my nose has dropt, & will remain a mark of my infamy, yet notwithstanding this confession She wou'd only pay me half a crown. She is a droll Creature that is certain.'⁵⁶

As this last example suggests, women were as apt as men to make history the subject of conversations with either sex, though the highly gendered character of history made women's relationship to the formal record of the past – which few of them actually wrote about – an ambiguous one.⁵⁷ Hume himself had strongly recommended historical knowledge for women, principally as a conversational tool rather than to encourage either deep scholarship or public life (the reasons men usually read it). Without a basic familiarity with the facts of national, and classical, history, he wrote, 'it is impossible her conversation can afford any entertainment to men of sense and reflection'. Hester Chapone's *Letters on the Improvement of the Mind, Addressed to a Young Lady* (1773), perhaps the most widely reprinted advice book to women of the eighteenth century, similarly associated historical knowledge principally with conversation rather than scholarship.

The principal study I would recommend, is *history*. I know of nothing equally proper to entertain and improve at the same time, or that is so likely to form and strengthen your judgment, and, by giving you a liberal and comprehensive view of human nature, in some measure to supply the defect of that experience, which is usually attained too late to be of much service to us. Let me add, that more materials for conversation are supplied by this kind of knowledge, than by almost any other.⁵⁸

For women, however, trimming a course between a Lady Knowall pedantic display of knowledge on the one hand and trivial discussions of frivolity on the other was not an easy task. Elizabeth Carter, for instance, uses the term 'historiettes' to pillory the gossip of 'the good gentlewomen of Ealing'.⁵⁹ Carter, who loved polite conversation but despised idle banter in

the empty-headed, found history a subject she could hold forth on at great length in writing or in person. As she remarked to Elizabeth Montagu:

O dear, O dear, why will you set me to talking over history, when there is so much danger that I may not stop till you are tired to death of the subject. I must, however, at even that risk, add a few words more on this subject, just to ask you, whether the brutality of the Sicilian character in this dreadful transaction, in which fathers murdered their own daughters, because they had married Frenchmen, does not bear a strong resemblance to their ancient stamp, and remind you of their behaviour with regard to the daughter of Hiero, so many centuries before. I have not read Constanza's History, though I have been looking out for it a long while. I know where to borrow it; but, by all accounts, it is a book worth having in one's possession.⁶⁰

Men, for their part, were expected to have a commanding knowledge of history, to respond with authority when questions arose about the past in discussion; we recall the above-cited reference to the Lysons brothers of questions by Hester Thrale Piozzi. History was even considered to be among the decorous topics suitable for courting couples. In Jane Austen's *Northanger Abbey*, the oft-cited dispute between the heroine, Catherine Morland, and her friend Eleanor Tilney as to the utility and appeal of history is resolved by Eleanor's brother Henry, to whose arguments (and eventually marital overtures) Catherine assents.⁶¹ While the modern undergraduate male is unlikely to have his way with women by displaying his familiarity with Tacitus or Toynbee, we have an excellent example of the conversational uses of history, principally for sexual purposes, in the young law student Dudley Ryder. A future chief justice of King's Bench, Ryder was the son of a dissenting draper. He kept a diary in 1715 and 1716, one of the explicit purposes of which was to record what he read every day and his moods on that day, so that he could review it later and 'know what best suits my own temper'. Most of all it would help him remember what he read. The diary gives us a very good sense of what a law student thought he should read and how best to do so. An added bonus derives from the fact that, like Samuel Pepys half-a-century earlier, he kept the diary in shorthand, revealing that he shared with Pepys both a strong libido and a proclivity for hanging about with whores – though in Ryder's case a bit more nervously, his emotions confused by fear of infection and by his concurrent infatuation with a tailor's daughter, Sally Marshall.⁶² Also like Pepys, young Dudley read history books in a variety of contexts, at his lodgings, at booksellers' stands, and while travelling from place to place, taking Sallust's *Conspiracy of Catiline* – a topical book in the year of the Fifteen – to dinner on one day, dipping back into it after practising his viol on another. Feeling ill after a bad night's sleep he consoled himself by reading both Virgil and a modern, Perizonius's *Universal History*.⁶³

Ryder's interest in reading in general and history in particular derived, however, largely from social rather than intellectual concerns. Above all, the compulsively shy Dudley saw history as a great way to meet women. Sometimes his tactics may not have worked: he read Burnet's *History of the Reformation* to the women at his lodging-house, though privately admitting that he found the bishop's style 'too stiff and formal'. A pleasant walk with some ladies along the marsh at Hackney turned Ryder's conversation to love, his thoughts to 'gallantry and knight-errantry and enchanted castles and cruel giants who barbarously treated the Fair', and his eyes away from Sallust or Sir Edward Coke and in the direction of *The Adventures of Lindamira, a Lady of Quality*.⁶⁴ Above all, what he craved was *stories*, true or false, to be able to haul out of his mental bag of tricks at a moment's notice; his colourless and sketchy memories of a trip to Paris proving unequal to a witty conversation about France, for instance, he decided to refresh them by reading someone else's printed travel accounts.⁶⁵

CONCLUSION

This essay has only pointed out a few of the contexts within which men and women read history together and aloud, or discussed it conversationally. While much more could be said on each of these, and others, a few tentative generalizations may be in order. For a start, it is clear that oral and written modes of discourse about the past cannot be viewed in opposition. Although scholarly tradition, by 1700, had already vested greater authority in the written text for two centuries, no book ever remains exclusively the subject of silent reading and individual contemplation; certainly not the sorts of books that were being read by the educated populace outside the college chambers. A very long tradition of rhetoric, which had once used the matter of the past as the 'invention' for formal oratory, now provided the framework within which detailed knowledge of historical events, and familiarity with the greatest historical writers, ancient and modern, could be used in social intercourse. Secondly, it is equally evident that however overwhelming the number of history books from which ladies and gentlemen could choose, the knowledge to be gleaned from them was intended not to be used principally for the advancement of historiography, as modern historians are too apt to think, nor even for the furtherance of public and private virtue, as the courtesy literature and advice books of the era proclaimed. Rather, history was intended to be a *lingua franca* among and between the sexes, a serious but also an entertaining tool, much like religion, philosophy, politics and fiction, to be employed in the art of conversation.

NOTES

This chapter was delivered as a lecture in the Department of English at Dalhousie University in January 1999, and I am grateful for comments received therein; some of the examples have been used, though in a different form, in my book *Reading History in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

- 1 Andrew Taylor, 'Into His Secret Chamber: Reading and Privacy in Late Medieval England', in James Raven, Helen Small and Naomi Tadmor (eds), *The Practice and Representation of Reading in England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 41–61; cf. N. Tadmor, '"In the Even my Wife Read to Me": Women, Reading and Household Life in the Eighteenth Century', in *ibid.*, 162–74.
- 2 Lorraine Daston, 'Baconian Facts, Academic Civility, and the Prehistory of Objectivity', *Annals of Scholarship*, 8 (1991), 337–63; M. Poovey, *A History of the Modern Fact: Problems of Knowledge in the Sciences of Wealth and Society* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1998); Barbara J. Shapiro, *A Culture of Fact: England, 1550–1720* (Ithaca, NY, and London: Cornell University Press, 2000).
- 3 Walter J. Ong, 'Oral Residue in Tudor Prose Style', *Rhetoric, Romance and Technology: Studies in the Interaction of Expression and Culture* (Ithaca, NY, and London: Cornell University Press, 1971); D. R. Woolf, 'Speech, Text, and Time: the Sense of Hearing and the Sense of the Past in Renaissance England', *Albion*, 18 (1986), 159–93; see also the very interesting treatment of the sound of language in Bruce R. Smith, *The Acoustic World of Early Modern England* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1999), esp. 127–9 on the relation between reading and oral cues.
- 4 D. R. Woolf, 'The Common Voice: History, Folklore and Oral Tradition in Early Modern England', *Past and Present*, 120 (1988); this will be handled at greater length in my forthcoming book *The Social Circulation of the Past*; Adam Fox, 'Custom, Memory and the Authority of Writing', in P. Griffiths, A. Fox and S. Hindle (eds), *The Experience of Authority in Early Modern England* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1996), 89–116; *idem*, *Oral and Literate Culture in England 1500–1700* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2000); Laura Gowing, *Domestic Dangers: Women, Words and Sex in Early Modern London* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996).
- 5 On reading aloud in general, see Roger Chartier, 'Leisure and Sociability: Reading Aloud in Early Modern Europe', in Susan Zimmerman and Ronald F. E. Weissman (eds), *Urban Life in the Renaissance* (Newark, DE: University of Delaware Press, 1989), 103–20; Alberto Manguel, *A History of Reading* (New York: Viking, 1996), 109–23.
- 6 J. H. M. Salmon, 'Precept, Example, and Truth: Degory Wheare and the *ars historica*', in Donald R. Kelley and David Harris Sacks (eds), *The Historical Imagination in Early Modern Britain* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press and Woodrow Wilson Centre Press, 1997), 11–36.
- 7 Arthur Charlett to Thomas Tanner, 1 October 1698, Bodl. MS Tanner 22, fo. 86r.
- 8 *A Series of Letters between Mrs Elizabeth Carter and Miss Catherine Talbot from the Year 1741 to 1770*, 2 vols (London: F. C. and J. Rivington, 1808), I. 56–7 (6 January 1745).
- 9 Lisa Jardine and Anthony Grafton, 'Studied for Action: How Gabriel Harvey

- Read his *Livy*', *Past and Present*, 129 (1990), 30–78; for a similar approach see William H. Sherman, *John Dee: the Politics of Reading and Writing in the English Renaissance* (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 1995); Kevin Sharpe, *Reading Revolutions* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2000).
- 10 *Letters between Mrs Elizabeth Carter and Miss Catherine Talbot*, I, 30 (27 December 1743); I. 67 (6 January 1745).
 - 11 *The Diary of Samuel Pepys*, ed. R. Latham and W. Matthews, 11 vols (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1970–82), IX. 506 (2 April 1669).
 - 12 *The Diary of Henry Prescott, LL.B., Deputy Registrar of Chester Diocese*, ed. John Addy, 3 vols (Record Society of Lancashire and Cheshire, 1987–97), 30. 'Nelson' is actually John Nalson, *A true copy of the Journal of the High Court of Justice, for the tryal of K. Charles I, as it was read in the House of Commons, and attested under the hand of Phelps, clerk to that infamous court. Taken by J. Nalson, LL D. Jan. 4, 1683. With a large introduction* (1684). Cataline is certainly Sallust's account of the conspiracy of Cataline, and Speed probably the account of the Gunpowder Plot in an edition of John Speed's *Historie of Great Britaine*, first published in 1611 and republished several times during the seventeenth century.
 - 13 Sarah Cowper, *Diaries*, 7 vols, Herts. Record Office, Panshanger MSS, D/EP F. 29–35 Diary I. 265; III. 10 ff.
 - 14 British Library (hereafter BL) Add. MS 27351, fos 292v (11 February 1669), 295r (18–19 February 1669).
 - 15 BL Add. MS 27351, fo. 297r (25 February 1669); Add. 27352, Diary, II. fo. 5v (26 November 1669), emphasis mine. For an explicit complaint of the time taken attending her husband and the brief moments seized for personal reading and meditation, see *ibid.* fos 87r and 229v.
 - 16 Other examples: BL Add. MS 27352 fos 27r (28 December 1669), 54r (8 February 1670), 54v (10 February 1670), 55r (11 February 1670), 145v (4 February 1671), 147r (8 February 1671); a 'French history' is as precise as Rich gets in naming the works read: Add. 27358, fo. 33r (8 January 1669).
 - 17 BL Add. MS 27351, fo. 47r, 19 December 1666. Two months earlier, on 17 October, she rose from dinner and 'heard some storys out of ye Book of martyrs read, w[i]th w[h]ich my heart was much affected': MS 27358, fo. 4v.
 - 18 Berkshire Record Office, Reading, D/EX 1306/1, Diary of Lady East, 1791–92, unfoliated, entries from 7 to 20 February 1791.
 - 19 Elizabeth Hamilton, *Memoirs of Modern Philosophers*, 3 vols (Bath and London, 1800), I. 107–8.
 - 20 Austen, *Mansfield Park* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1989), 363.
 - 21 *Diary of Samuel Pepys*, II. 21 (22 January 1661); III. 26 (10 February 1662).
 - 22 *The Letters and Journals of Lady Mary Coke*, 4 vols (Edinburgh: D. Douglas, 1889–96), II. 28 (Lyttelton); III. 51.
 - 23 *Ibid.*, IV. 163 (7 January 1773).
 - 24 *Letters between Mrs Elizabeth Carter and Miss Catherine Talbot*, I. 459 (19 April 1760); II. 46 (9 July 1767).
 - 25 Adrian Johns, *The Nature of the Book* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 470. For a useful introduction to social discourse in early modern Europe, see Peter Burke, *The Art of Conversation* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1993) and, more recently, Peter Burke, 'A Civil Tongue: Language and Politeness in Early Modern England', in P. Burke, B. Harrison and P. Slack (eds), *Civil*

- Histories: Essays Presented to Sir Keith Thomas* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 200), 31–48; cf. Smith, *The Acoustic World of Early Modern England*, 252–61. For contemporary notions of ‘civil’ conversation (in both its modern, narrower sense and the older, broader meaning of ‘public conduct’), see Anna Bryson, *From Courtesy to Civility: Changing Codes of Conduct in Early Modern England* (Oxford, 1998), 153–9, 173–87; and Peter N. Miller, *Peiresc’s Europe: Learning and Virtue in the Seventeenth Century* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2000), 51–63. I have also found helpful the theoretical discussions in Ronald Wardhaugh, *How Conversation Works* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1985).
- 26 *Letters and Journals of Lady Mary Coke*, II. 191.
 - 27 *The Early Journals and Letters of Fanny Burney*, ed. Lars E. Troide and Stewart J. Cooke (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), vol. III: *The Streatham Years, part I*, 1778–1779, 106 (August 1778).
 - 28 *Ibid.*, 322 (c. 15–26 June 1779).
 - 29 Bridget Hill, *The Republican Virago: the Life and Times of Catharine Macaulay, Historian* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992).
 - 30 *Letters from Mrs Elizabeth Carter, to Mrs Montagu, between the years 1755 and 1800*, ed. Montagu Pennington, 3 vols (1817), III, 98 (no. 218, 7 December 1778).
 - 31 *Ibid.*, II. 309 (no. 181, 3 June 1775).
 - 32 *Letters and Journals of Lady Mary Coke*, III: 4, 8, 11, 18 (8–19 January 1769).
 - 33 *Ibid.*, III, 18, 22.
 - 34 Thomas Lupton, *A Thousand Notable Things of Sundrie Sortes* (1627); Walter Owsold, *The Varietie of Memorable and Worthy Matters* (1605); Richmal Mangnall, *Historical and Miscellaneous Questions: for the use of young people with a selection of British and general biography*, 11th edn (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme & Brown, 1814).
 - 35 *Commons Debates*, 1628, ed. Mary Frear Keeler, Maija Jansson Cole and William B. Bidwell (New Haven, CT, and London: Yale University Press, 1977–83), IV. 42 (31 May 1628).
 - 36 White Kennett, *A memorial to Protestants on the fifth of November, containing a more full discovery of some particulars relating to the happy deliverance of King James I. and three estates of England, from the massacre by gunpowder, anno 1605* (1713); idem, *Moderation maintain’d, in defence of a compassionate enquiry into the causes of the civil war, &c. In a sermon preached the thirty-first of January, at Aldgate-church* (1704).
 - 37 *Diary of Henry Prescott*, I. 52, 67. For another example from 1709, see *ibid.* p. 222.
 - 38 A. Patterson *Reading Holinshed’s Chronicles* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1994); idem, ‘Foul, his Wife, the Mayor, and Foul’s Mare: the Power of Anecdote in Tudor Historiography’, in Kelley and Sacks, *Historical Imagination in Early Modern Britain*, 159–78.
 - 39 *The Letters and Works of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu*, ed. W. Moy Thomas, rev. edn, 2 vols (London: Bell & Sons, 1887), II. 296 (Wortley Montagu to Lady Bute, 20 October 1755).
 - 40 M.R., *Memoirs of the Life of Mr Ambrose Barnes* (Surtees Soc., 50, Newcastle, 1866), 151.
 - 41 Sarah Cowper, *Diary*, V. 279 (15 February 1711).
 - 42 *Diary of Henry Prescott*, I. 38, 82, 84, 107, 125, 131, 155.

- 43 Ibid., I. 81, 147, 193. The work referred to is possibly Hugh Clopton (ed.), *Historical discourses, upon several occasions ... By Sir Edward Walker* (1705).
- 44 Ibid., I. 149, 229.
- 45 Robert Parker Sorlien, 'Thomas More Anecdotes in an Elizabethan Diary', *Moreana*, 34 (May 1972). Sorlien notes the first written appearance of one of these anecdotes in Cresacre More's *Life of Thomas More*, composed about 1615.
- 46 *Autobiography, Letters, and Literary Remains of Mrs Piozzi*, ed. A. Hayward, 2nd edn, 2 vols (London: Longman, Green, Longman, and Roberts, 1861), I. 340.
- 47 *The Diary of Abraham de la Pryme, the Yorkshire Antiquary*, ed. Charles Jackson (Surtees Soc., 54, Newcastle, 1869–70), 233, 258.
- 48 CUL MS Mm. 6.50 (Covel letters), fos 251, 253, Covel to Traheron 25 July 1701.
- 49 Coke, *Journals*, I. 236 (8 May 1767).
- 50 East Sussex Record Office (Lewes), MS Ash. 931, p. 33, Diary of John first Lord Ashburnham for 3 August 1686.
- 51 *Diary of Samuel Pepys*, V. 319 (11 November 1664).
- 52 *Spectator*, ed. Donald F. Bond, 5 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965), II, 72 (no. 145, 16 August 1711).
- 53 *Autobiography, Letters, and Literary Remains of Mrs Piozzi*, II. 70 (Piozzi to D. Lysons, 9 July 1796).
- 54 Ibid.; II. 89 (Piozzi to S. Lysons, 17 February 1814).
- 55 *The Letters and Journals of Lady Mary Coke*, III. 19 (7 February 1769).
- 56 Ibid., III. 440–1.
- 57 D. Looser, *British Women Writers and the Writing of History, 1670–1820* (Baltimore, MD.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000); Mark S. Phillips, *Society and Sentiment: Genres of Historical Writing in Britain, 1740–1820* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000); D. R. Woolf, 'A Feminine Past? Gender, Genre and Historical Knowledge in England, 1500–1800', *American Historical Review*, 102 (1997), 645–79.
- 58 See Woolf, 'A Feminine Past?', 666–7, for Hume and Chapone, and for the differences between their views, which are inconsequential in the present context.
- 59 *Letters from Mrs Elizabeth Carter, to Mrs Montagu*, I. 84. Compare Mary Coke's reference to the 'terrible Histories' she heard walking the streets of London, tales of recent murders and crimes: *Letters and Journals of Mary Coke*, II. 66.
- 60 *Letters from Mrs Elizabeth Carter, to Mrs Montagu*, II. 140, (no. 145, 20 June 1772); II. 239 (no. 167, 24 December 1773).
- 61 Jane Austen, *Northanger Abbey*, Introduction by M. Drabble (New York and London: Penguin–Signet, 1989), III.
- 62 *The Diary of Dudley Ryder 1715–1716*, ed. W. Matthews (London: Methuen, 1939), 29 (n.d. 1715), 72 (8–9 August 1715), 171 (23 January 1716).
- 63 Ibid., 67 (3 August 1715), 70 (6 August 1715), 130 (3 November 1715, for his reading at the booksellers). Sallust was a favourite of his; the next month he continued with the *Jugurthine War*: ibid., 92 (8 September 1715).
- 64 Ibid., 337 (27 September 1716), for his reading of De la Rivière Manley's *The Secret History of Queen Zarah and the Zarazians* (1705); ibid., 209–10 (31 March to 2 April 1716); ibid., 357 (1 November 1716) for the *Art*.
- 65 Ibid., 282 (23 July 1716); 297 (15 August 1716).