



# Frances Burney's Cecilia: A Publishing History (Ashgate Studies in Publishing History)

*Catherine M. Parisian*

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In her exhaustive publishing history of Frances Burney's *Cecilia, Or Memoirs of an Heiress*, Catherine Parisian mines an extensive archival record that includes portions of the original manuscript, annotated page proofs, legal records relative to its copyright, and an abundance of letters, to chronicle the novel's composition, printing, and publication from its first edition in 1782 to the present-day Oxford World's Classics paperback. Generally regarded on its publication as the most important novel since Tobias Smollett's *Humphrey Clinker*, *Cecilia* is a deft blend of the satire of Henry Fielding with the sentimentality of Samuel Richardson that brings a female perspective to the novel while perceptively probing class and gender relations in eighteenth-century British society. Parisian combines the methods of the book historian with those of the bibliographer to show how the two usefully inform one another and bear on the interpretation of the literary text. Examining 51 different editions of *Cecilia*, Parisian considers what these editions reveal about *Cecilia*'s reading audiences and what insights these books provide into the printing and publishing trends of the past 200 years. Lavishly illustrated and accessibly written, her timely history demonstrates the importance of *Cecilia* to the art of the novel and the history of the book.

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