Edmund Burke and the First Ten Years of the 'Annual Register', 1758—1767

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The Dodsley brothers engaged Edmund Burke to edit the *Annual Register* in April, 1758, and the volume covering the events of that year appeared on 15th May, 1759.\(^1\) The pioneering studies of Professor T. W. Copeland have established beyond reasonable doubt that Burke continued the job single-handed until 1766 and had some part in the book-reviews until the number for 1773.\(^2\) However, the dearth of clues from letters, biographies or receipts means that any solution to the problem of Burke's editorship before and after these dates has so far been based on tenuous evidence and proffered with caution.

One reason for this uncertainty is that Burke himself was totally reticent about his links with the *Annual Register*. As late as 1791 Major John Scott wrote a long abusive open letter to James Dodsley inveighing against the distortions in the history article of the *Annual Register* and warned Dodsley against the prejudices of the editor whom he understood to be Burke.\(^3\) Burke did not own or deny the charge. His associates on the magazine effectively preserved a cloud of anonymity about him so that we can be more sure of the presence of say Dr. Walter King or Dr. French Laurence than we can of Burke. Biographers like Prior and Murray talk about Burke's "direction", his "guidance" of the magazine well after 1766, but never proffer evidence as to what exactly they mean. The generally held view among biographers is that Burke had some kind of controlling influence until the 1790's. More recently scholars have implied or argued that he gave up writing the history

\(^1\) The magazine was always published in the year following that to which it was denoted. The number for 1773, for example, was compiled and written during 1773 and early 1774, and published in August, 1774.

\(^2\) See T. W. Copeland's two chapters on the *Annual Register* in *Our Eminent Friend Edmund Burke* (Yale University Press, 1949), pp. 92-145.

\(^3\) *St. James' Chronicle*, 18th–20th January, 1791.
article, the most original and substantial piece of writing in the magazine, when he entered parliament in 1766.1

The uncertainty surrounding the problem and the attempts to solve it are of Burke's own making. He chose to be tight-lipped and this has made one kind of approach very difficult.

I propose a different tack. The most considerable amount of evidence about the Annual Register lies within the magazine itself. The collection of essays and reviews which makes up the second half, usually a compilation of interesting, weird and topical items from other magazines and papers, is a useful indication of Burke's interest, but the history article is the item I want to focus on. Burke wrote this for at least eight years. It was the most exacting, original and distinctive feature of the magazine, and until an analysis is made of it and of what Burke and Dodsley intended by it, we have but a poor view of the editor and his strategy, what the magazine meant to him, and why he might have wanted to hold on to it after 1766. Assumptions have been made that Burke had to give up writing the history article when he entered parliament because he had enough to occupy him elsewhere, but that kind of reasoning does not take into account what Burke thought about the magazine, what he thought his most useful or important part in it, or what use he might want to make of the magazine to further his own interests. The intention of this paper is to find out what the history article yields to inform us on these considerations.

This paper will look at the first ten years of the Annual Register, particularly at the history article. The analysis will entail first of all a résumé of Robert Dodsley's previous experience of magazine publications, then a surmise of the original plan of the magazine in so far as the first few numbers exemplify this, and, lastly, observations on how the magazine developed once it had established itself and Burke knew how the pressures of political life would affect his contribution to it. By focusing on the history article I hope to sense any shift in editorial policy, any change of writer, or indeed any important alteration within the plan or staffing of the magazine.

Robert Dodsley, joint publisher of the *Annual Register* with his younger brother James Dodsley, had been involved in the publication of four other papers or magazines before he engaged Burke to edit the *Annual Register*, and it is important to glance at these in order to see this his last attempt in the light of earlier failures and successes. When he first tried to break into the journal market in 1741 he met considerable opposition from the established publishers. His *Publick Register or the Weekly Magazine* carried sixteen pages of news, essays, literary criticism and poetry and was a businessman’s venture to compete for the profits and popularity of the monthly *Gentleman’s Magazine*. Edward Cave met the challenge by an unscrupulous economic war intended to push Dodsley’s paper off the market.\(^1\) One of Cave’s allies remarked that Dodsley’s *Publick Register* was technically a “newspaper” and was therefore liable to tax. Dodsley either had to put the price up or leave out the news: he chose the latter and his circulation fell. He reduced the size of the paper, brought back the news, and paid the tax. The paper still posed a sufficient threat to Cave for him to resort to other tactics and, in Dodsley’s words, he “prevail’d with most of the common newspapers not to advertise it”. The move was effective and Dodsley was compelled to give up the venture which had lasted a hectic five months. The failure did nothing to curb his interest in the magazine market.

A few years later in 1746 he started *The Museum*, a forty-page review that came out once a fortnight. It included one or two essays, poetry, book reviews, and to close “Historical Memoirs”. These last are described as “a plain Narrative of Facts” about the Jacobite rebellion and “our general History of the Affairs of Europe”.\(^2\) On 20th January, 1746, Dodsley drew up an agreement with his editor Mark Akenside and the first number appeared on 29th March.

The agreement and the contents of the paper itself clearly foreshadow the *Annual Register*. Dodsley had been Akenside’s publisher for some years and the terms on which Dodsley now employed him were very similar to those proposed later to Burke. On the business side, he was to receive £50 at intervals of six months. Akenside was responsible for the supervision of the magazine and for correcting the copy. All that Dodsley had to do was provide

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\(^1\) For further details of this affair see R. Straus, *Robert Dodsley* (1910), pp. 67–71, from whom I have taken the above outline.

\(^2\) *The Museum* No. 1, 29th March, 1746, p. 25.
whatever books Akenside wanted to review. Although Burke’s agreement for the *Annual Register* in 1758 is couched in much more formal legal terms—probably drawn up on his advice—and stresses the duties if either side wished to give notice, the commitment and pay do not differ at all. Dodsley trusted both men to work as they would and helped if they asked.\(^1\) Akenside’s agreement makes explicit the editor’s autonomy and it is fair to assume the same for Burke. A general outline was agreed upon and the editor went on from there. Dodsley required Akenside to provide two things: “one Essay”, and “an account of the most considerable books in English, Latin, French or Italian, which have been lately published, and which Mr. Dodsley shall furnish”.\(^2\)

Akenside, like Burke, was not contracted to write the copy without assistance, and either through his own or Dodsley’s connections he engaged an impressive cross-section of writers for the essays, many of them Dodsley’s friends like the Wartons, the future poet-laureate Whitehead, and Garrick. At times Akenside was no more than an editor in the strict sense of one who decides what to include in the magazine. Straus suggests that the “Historical Memoirs” on the 1745 rebellion were written by John Brown who had asked Dodsley to publish his historical articles “in some form or other”.\(^3\) The other history chapters on Europe, similar in their compactness and purpose to Burke’s, were by John Campbell who published them separately as *The Present State of Europe* in 1750.\(^4\) Akenside was often left then with just the book reviews to write. He was a controlling editor with his own special literary interest to write up, and under his management *The Museum* ran for eighteen months.

The interesting item in view of the *Annual Register*, and yet an odd feature of *The Museum*, is the series of historical chapters at the end of each volume. Since Akenside’s agreement says nothing about an historical article, its inclusion could well have been an afterthought as Straus suggests. Dodsley had an active interest in history which he wrote about at length in that *vade mecum* of educated gentlemen *The Preceptor* (1748). His approach followed traditional humanist lines: history offers “Maxims of Prudence and Wisdom

\(^1\) The books reviewed in both *The Museum* and the *Annual Register* give strength to this contention in that only a small number of them were published by Dodsley.  
\(^3\) Straus, *op. cit.*, pp. 85–86.  
\(^4\) The chapters from *The Museum* were revised and enlarged upon for *The Present State of Europe* (Dublin, 1750).
for the Conduct of Life . . . Motives to Virtue, and a Detestation of Vice”;¹ as a complement to his theory he writes “a short View of ancient History from the Creation of the World to the Birth of Christ”. The history chapters in The Museum, particularly on Europe, are more contemporary than we might expect from Dodsley, but their manner is similar to Dodsley’s and their inclusion suggests that Dodsley and/or Akenside was prepared to try contemporary history, as distinct from news, on the public. The experiment might well have been the seed for the history article in the Annual Register.

Dodsley had less direct influence or interest in two other papers, The World (1753–56), modelled on The Rambler, and The London Chronicle (1757) which Dodsley withdrew from after eleven months. They reflect his unsatisfied desire, shared by many publishers, to make a permanent mark on the magazine market, to rival the name and fortune of the established papers like The London Magazine, The Universal Magazine, and The Gentleman’s Magazine. In an age in which so many papers had failed after a short run, it showed exceptional business and editorial acumen to be the influence behind a paper that withstood the vicissitudes of public taste and the competition of so many rivals.

Dodsley made one more try, this time with an annual, The Annual Register. The decision proved brilliant on two counts. The annual as a genre had fallen from popular favour since the days of Anne and George I. There were very few left on the market, none of which gave much more than information of appointments, office bearers, and the calendar. Thus Dodsley had no major rivals to contend with. Although the format looked similar to Smollett’s Critical Review and to the Literary Magazine and lifted much of its material in the second part from precisely such magazines, its timing ruled it out as a competitor. Nothing on the market gave an annual summary or analysis of politics, science and the arts. The field was wide open.²

His plan seems to have been to enlarge upon his most successful previous venture, The Museum. The first half would be a history of the war in Europe

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² I have taken the line that the Annual Register was conceived out of Dodsley’s previous experience. For another view, see J. C. Weston, “Predecessors to Burke’s and Dodsley’s Annual Register”, Studies in Bibliography, xvii (1946), pp. 215–220.

The Annual Register was not the last magazine in which Dodsley had a financial interest. In a letter to Thomas Percy, Shenstone remarks that Dodsley wanted to reprint some verses “in the L[ondon] Chronicle, or London Magazine; in each of which he has some Property” (September, 1761), The Letters of William Shenstone, ed. Marjorie Williams (Oxford, 1939), p. 591.
and the rest miscellaneous essays, character sketches of famous persons living
and dead, accounts of extraordinary adventures, poetry, and book reviews. The miscellaneous pieces reminded the public of the best and most interesting passages they might have read in magazines and reviews during the year. Like Akenside, Burke would do the book reviews himself.

The first half of the Annual Register is an extension of the historical contribution to The Museum and is the magazine’s tour de force. It falls into three parts: first, an historical essay on the war in Europe; second, a chronological diary of interesting and curious events in Britain during the year past, and last a collection of “State Papers” which are official documents, speeches, letters, private accounts all to do with events or policies in the European war.

The Chronicle and the State Papers provide background detail to the historical essay, particularly the State Papers which are a compilation of the History’s more important primary source material.

The particularly attractive and original feature of the historical essay is that it gives a comprehensive and analytic account of the events of the year. Several magazines covered the war chronologically, but their reliance on intermittent reports from week to week or month to month made it difficult to offer a broad view of the progress of the war. Burke and Dodsley answered this kind of hazardous history, often coloured with party rhetoric, by a coordinated view. The longer time span of their account gave them an opportunity to point up principal events and developments. In this way they offered the public a service not available anywhere else. From a sales point of view the material was topical and of first importance to the nation. It is no surprise that the first number went into five editions within ten years. At last Dodsley had hit the jackpot.

It would be false to suggest that the project was entirely Dodsley’s brain-child. His past experience certainly suggested the framework and how this might sell, but when we look back to the first few numbers we cannot but reckon with the presence of Burke who had to run the magazine. He had several advantages to persuade Dodsley to employ him as its editor. In the first place Burke had proven competence in such diverse fields as aesthetics, literary criticism, philosophy, history, and politics. Apart from two books already published by Dodsley, Burke had helped his cousin Will Burke to

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1 Some publishers were making good money out of histories: William Robertson asked £600 for his history of Scotland (1759); Andrew Millar gave Hume £3,400 for his history, and £2,000 to Smollet for his.

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write An Account of the European Settlements in America, also published by Dodsley. Burke had sufficiently impressed Dodsley for him to contract Burke to write An Essay Towards an Abridgment of the English History for which he agreed to pay £300 and wanted the job finished by 25th December, 1758. Their relationship already knew moderate success, obligations and above all, respect. If we consider that the £300 for the Abridgment was more than Dodsley had paid Burke for all his previous efforts, it seems that Dodsley was prepared to pay more and more for Burke’s talents. He explained to Shenstone in 1758 that Burke was an Irishman “bred to the Law, but having ye grace not to follow it, will soon I should think make a very great figure in the literary world”. Burke signed the agreement knowing that this was not a full-time job and that he was free to leave it by giving three months’ notice.

All we know of Burke’s reaction to the work is, as he says in his first preface, that he found the writing of the historical article a difficult task. Dodsley had already published material relating to the Seven Years’ War, but there was no help he could give in the writing of the History, and that is where Burke’s presence was most keenly felt. It was almost certainly Dodsley’s idea to have a history of the war: the characteristics of its telling were Burke’s, and Dodsley clearly trusted him with a free hand and all the data he could supply. Burke’s general aim was to write “one connected narrative”. The major challenge was to see connections in the “broken and unconnected materials” that must have swamped his desk. However, his experiences with An Account of the European Settlements in America would have trained him to cope with the difficulties involved. Under the title “The History of the Present War” the article for 1758 dealt with the war from its beginning. The nature of the task did not differ substantially from Will Burke’s. The unpredictable factor was the supply and authenticity of reports of the war, and it was up to Burke to settle how he might make the best use of the confused and confusing materials.

It was a taxing job. If we look closely at how Burke tackled it, established a modus operandi, how he liked to shape his article, we should be in a strong position to sense his presence or the presence of another writer when we come to look at the years of disputed editorship following his entry to parliament.

1 Quoted by R. Straus, op. cit., p. 256.
2 See R. Straus’ list of Dodsley’s publications about this time for details of books on military and political issues (op. cit., pp. 361f.).
III

If we look first at the question of when did Burke sit down to write the historical article each year we see the myriad problems of organizing and assessing material and how Burke proposed to meet them. As first conceived the article meant to deal with the war in Europe, so it is not surprising that in the opening paragraphs of his first article he links the settlements of the previous war with the causes of the Seven Years' War.1 He could write the first part of the first article touching the events of 1756 and 1757 without being harassed or overwhelmed by their immediacy. But once he came to pull together the material for 1758 the problems multiplied. The work could not be written steadily through the year because any discernible pattern took months to reveal itself, and, as some issues show, there were years when Burke was at a loss to provide even an imaginative order to events. According to the contract Dodsley wanted the magazine published in March each year. Though this deadline was never met, the plan was to give the editor enough time to make his account complete and to allow the printer time to set up the copy. If the History was to be a complete account of the year Burke would need to be still collecting material in November and December. In the Preface to the 1759 issue he asks readers to send contributions before November, which suggests that the miscellania of the second section were set up for print some months ahead of the publication date. He writes to Dodsley from Dublin on 9th February, 1764, “I suppose, that By this, our Work is in the press, and advances prosperously”, a reference to material for the second section of the 1763 issue. He is writing the history article at the time and says it is “in considerable forwardness, so that next week, please God I propose to send over a good part of it”.2 The 1763 issue came out three months later on 17th May, 1764. Since the issue for 1758 came out on almost the same date, 15th May, 1759, and the timing of publication did not differ much during the first ten years, we can take it that Burke usually wrote the History during January and February. This time-scheme allowed him to assess December’s news which took a week from most parts of Europe and a month or more from the colonies. As luck would have it the delay also meant

1 An Account of the European Settlements in America, 2 vols. (1757), II, pp. 131–132; Annual Register, 1758, p. 2.

he was able to include certain State Papers, as in 1761 and 1762, which were a vital support to his narrative.¹

But the work of collecting material went on through the year, and this included writing to contacts in Ireland, Europe, America and India when he could find them. His main source of news was the papers and gazettes. Writing to his uncle Patrick Nagle he described his idea of a good newspaper:

*I therefore enclose with this what I think one of our Best and most entertaining News Letters as it not only contains as much of all foreign transactions as any of the others, but often such remarks upon them, as may serve to explain many publick affairs; as at least shew some thing of the general conversation here concerning them. It contains besides some accounts of the New books which are from time to time published.*²

He was probably referring to *The London Chronicle* which appeared three times a week with news from all the European fronts, extracts from the European gazettes, letters from officers on both sides, political news, shipping news, and lively critical comment and debate. Its European news was usually two weeks old but this did not matter in the compiling of an annual. Editorially it tended to be non-partisan. When Burke said at the close of his first number, “Our accounts are taken from the public ones of the year”, he was referring to a large body of detailed and often slanted reporting which in *The London Chronicle* alone amounted to 155 issues. Other well-known papers like *The London Gazette*, *The Publick Advertiser*, *The General Evening Post*, *The Gentleman's Magazine* and lesser known papers with political news and comment like *The Monitor* offered yet more details and more opinions. In addition individual analyses of certain aspects or theatres of the war appeared from time to time like *A Compleat Journal of the Campaign on the Coast of France*, 1758,³ and if Burke was to write any kind of plausible history of the year he had an enormous amount of material to sort out. The only way to condense his essay into about 60 pages was to be firmly selective as to what to include and what to keep out. Consequently he made a conscious effort to ensure that incidents of the war which did not impinge on his narrative would be relegated to the Chronicle.⁴ Even so there were serious problems of chronology and analysis to face which tied in with difficulties of selection.

¹ *Annual Register, 1761*, Preface, p. i, and Chapter One, p. 3; *Ibid., 1762*, Preface, p. i.
² *Correspondence*, 17th April, 1757, I, pp. 125–126.
³ Advertised in *The London Gazette*, 14th–18th November, 1758.
⁴ *Annual Register, 1758*, p. 76.
If we examine his account for the year 1758 we shall see how he met these problems.

The chronological problem was that the war was fought in different parts of the world—Europe, India, America—and in the European sphere Frederick of Prussia was campaigning on two and sometimes three fronts. Each sphere had to have separate treatment, but that was not easy for the European account because of the multiplicity of action. The narrative switches from the Rhine to Moravia to the Russian front, sometimes without completing the story of a particular action and without analytic comment on the significance of events as they are described. The coherence of his narrative is not as strong as it should be, and there is a marked tightening up in the 1759 History.

His initial floundering is perhaps explained by the extraordinary demands of concision he set himself. For the 1758 History he compacted three years of action into less than 80 pages. Moreover the campaign for 1758 had started by the time he signed the agreement with Dodsley. The action prior to 1758 is covered in the first 33 pages, the European war in 1758 takes up the next 30 pages, and the last short section is given to action at sea and in the colonies. Within the European narrative he concentrates on the period August to November. Only a third of this European account treats of the important developments from Ferdinand’s victory at Hoya on 23rd February to the recapture of Dusseldorf on 7th July, an imbalance of emphasis that warrants some explanation.

The reason might well be that Dodsley and Burke only made a positive move on the Annual Register, and the history article in particular, when they heard of the new treaty between Britain and Prussia, signed in London on 11th April, which extended Britain’s responsibilities in Europe beyond Hanover. From now on Britain and Prussia were “to assist each other to the utmost of their power, and neither of them to make peace without the consent and concurrence of the other”. Britain’s increased commitment would make the Annual Register’s History all the more pertinent. Burke’s immediate problem was to recoup the action of two campaigns and provide a coherent narrative on the one now in progress. From the imbalance of the 1758 account it seems to have taken him until July, that is about three months, to adjust to the demands of collecting material about the war as it happened. His immediate problem was to have his narrative catch up with

the war. He wrote at the start, "we have entered upon our undertaking in the heat of an almost general and very important war";¹ that and the comments in the Preface suggest he had had a rushed and difficult time.

By its errors as much as by its virtues the History for 1758 demonstrated to Burke that his approach was broadly correct. Only by writing his article at the last moment could he give it perspective. Despite the occasional chronological confusion the narrative amply illustrates that he was equal to the demands for a concise, discriminating and lively history, qualities which are themselves a guide to his editorial policy.

Facing the plethora of source material and comment on the war he had an immediate problem of analysis, a choice between two kinds of editorial attitude: he could focus on the British participation, or take a broader allied view with the British involvement subordinate to the major adversaries. He chose the latter which meant writing a history with Frederick of Prussia as its central character. Prince Ferdinand of Brunswick, and the fortunes of the British on the western front against France, took a minor rôle in this larger perspective.

Comparison of Burke’s history article with newspaper accounts of the war shows that he gave the reading public the overall perspective which the monthly and weekly commentators could not do. The nature of his task meant he had to be brief. For example, The Gentleman’s Magazine for April had a 4,000-word “History of the Past Campaign in North America”: Burke compacted the essential details of that together with its adverse critical tone into two short paragraphs.² He had also to be comprehensive, and he achieved this by asserting a firm and fluent movement on his “one connected narrative”. He did not pause for reflections or surmise. On the other hand the events were common knowledge. What he could and did contribute was a cohesive reading of the events, a colour to set them in chronological and causal relationships.

The account is perpetually interpretative. For example, in his comments on Admiral Byng’s fortunes in 1756–57 he blends concision with a tone of authorial direction:

The engagement with the French fleet under M. Galissoniere; the retreat of Byng by which the garrison of fort St. Philip was cut off from all hopes of relief; the surrender of that garrison after nine

¹ Annual Register, 1758, p. 1.
² Annual Register, 1758, pp. 28–29.
weeks open trenches; the sentiments of the court and the public, on
the different merits of the governor and the admiral; the opposition
of some, who thought the one too highly honoured, and the other
too severely censured, and the measures which rather indignation at
our losses and disgraces, than a cool sense of things, obliged us to
take, are known to all the world. Our affairs were in such a condition
that we were driven to the expedient of a court martial to revive the
British spirit, and to the unfortunate necessity of shedding the blood
of an admiral, a person of a noble family, as a sacrifice to the discipline
of our navy.

From this melancholy picture, let us turn our eyes another way,
and review the steps by which this war came to involve the rest of
the contending powers . . .

The pertinent details of this highly contentious affair are presented with
careful antithetical balance. Burke's view comes through clearly but he does
not halt his narrative so as to air his own views. He insinuates himself by tone
and syntax while the narrative moves deliberately forward.

He was not writing a reflective or philosophical history. The purpose was
to explain what was happening. In the early numbers his judgement is not
often as obtrusive as in the above passage. He tried for many years to be as
impartial as his support for Frederick would allow. The interesting point is
that he had sufficient confidence in his own judgement and in his command
of the material to select and determine an interpretative line on a subject so
familiar and contentious. He gets away with it for good reasons. Not only is
the narrative unflagging; he is particularly adept at pointing the ebb and flow
of events, at drawing coherence out of the welter of detail. The challenge to
him as historian was to sift trends of success and failure from the evidence so
close in time and diverse in its reports, to give a controlled view of the war's
direction, and make suggestions as to the wisdom or incompetence of the
generals in charge.

From the start Burke's forte was recapitulation and assessment. As we
shall see he learned certain improvements and made changes as the years
went on, but his skill at estimating the state of the opposing powers at any
given moment remained constantly sure and adroit. An example is important
because Burke stamps the Annual Register history article with this particular
competence. When its balance and perception flag we must seriously question
why. An example is his summary of Frederick's actions for 1757. The verve
of his writing, the urgency of the rhythms capture his own excitement:

1 Annual Register, 1758, p. 5.
The King of Prussia now saw the full effect of his counsels and his labours. His dominions were freed; his allies were enabled to assist him; and his enemies defeated, broken, and flying everywhere before him. In what light posterity will view these things is uncertain; we, under whose eyes, as we may say, they were achieved, scarcely believed what we had seen. And perhaps in all the records of time, the compass of a single year, on the scene of a single country, never contained so many striking events, never displayed so many revolutions of fortune... The King of Prussia at first triumphant; the whole power of the Austrians totally defeated; their hopes utterly ruined: then their affairs suddenly reestablished, their armies victorious, and the King of Prussia in his turn hurled down; defeated; abandoned by his allies; surrounded by his enemies; on the very edge of despair: then all at once raised beyond all hope, he sees the united Austrian, Imperial, and French power levelled with the ground. 40,000 Hanoverians, a whole army, submit to 80,000 French, and are only not prisoners of war. The French are peaceable masters of all the country between the Weser and the Elbe: anon, these subdued Hanoverians resume their arms; they recover their country, and the French in a little time think themselves not secure to the eastward of the Rhine. 400,000 men in action. Six pitched battles fought. Three great armies annihilated. The French army reduced and vanquished without fighting. The Russians victorious, and flying as if they had been vanquished. A confederacy, not of smaller potentates to humble one great power, but of five the greatest powers on earth to reduce one small potentate; all the force of these powers exerted and baffled. It happened as we have related; and it is not the history of a century, but of a single campaign.1

Despite the marked bias of the penultimate sentence and the pro-Frederick sentiment throughout, he rises above the polemics of the more frequent accounts in the monthlies and weeklies. A résumé of the war at the start of 1758 which appeared in The London Magazine has an exhortatory tone not uncommon in many reports of the war: "Let us emulate the king of Prussia; let not a few misfortunes deject us: We have yet power, let us make a proper use of it."2 Burke preferred to address himself to the war rather than to the public. The struggle itself intrigued him, not the response of the people, and he tried to maintain the tensions of the campaign within his style. Where his narrative made Frederick appear set for victory, Burke restored the balance by concluding that Frederick was not as strong as the narrative had suggested.3

1 Annual Register, 1758, pp. 27–28.
3 Annual Register, 1758, pp. 54–55.
He repeatedly claimed that his narrative was impartial: "The reader will observe, that I do not pretend to decide concerning the right of either nation in this contest";¹ and he hesitated to judge because "we stand too near the time to decide".² In the early issues he was careful to include both sides of every argument he raised. He made every effort in the structure of the narrative to show impartiality and avoid the prejudice he so deplored in other historians like Swift.³

But as already hinted the History has a national and government slant. It is politically diplomatic, never openly critical of Britain's involvement in the war. Frederick, a rallying point for British interests because the mainstay of Hanover's ultimate security, was a contentious figure in the British press and attitudes towards him were the clearest mark of pro- or anti-war sentiment. Burke played the government line admiring him in high rhetoric and including what laudatory material he could, such as Maupertius' character sketch in the miscellaneous section of the magazine.⁴ Frederick's defeat at Cohn in 1757 is smoothed over by double ententes: "whatever small blemish his military skill might have suffered, his reputation was raised higher than ever, in the opinion of all judicious men, by the noble and candid manner in which he acknowledged his mistake".⁵ "Judicious" men had little option but to stick by their hero.

Without ever stating his own views Burke went along with government policy that Britain should be involved in the war: "It was impossible that England could have stood neuter in this contest."⁶ As later issues show he felt the opposite, but he chose to put up a government face on the general question of Britain's involvement and in a sense opted out of the problem when it came to details of where Britain's forces would be best employed in the fight by giving both sides of the argument without a resolution.⁷

¹ Ibid., p. 2.
² Ibid., p. 4.
³ See Burke's review of Swift as historian, ibid., pp. 256–257. Burke was never free of the faults he saw in other historians and in this respect it is interesting to compare his remarks in reviews of books in the second part of the Annual Register with his own performance in the history article; see his reviews of Jortin's Life of Erasmus (Annual Register, 1758, pp. 464–469) and Robertson's History of Scotland (Annual Register, 1759, pp. 489–494) for a comparison of what he considered a badly written and a well written history.
⁴ Annual Register, 1758, pp. 235–237.
⁵ Ibid., p. 18.
⁶ Ibid., p. 39.
⁷ Ibid., pp. 65–66.
Only when faced with a British disaster does he begin to sound critical, but the attempt borders on obsequiousness. These are his comments on the débâcle at St. Malo in 1758:

There is undoubtedly something very unaccountable, as well in the choice as in the whole conduct of this affair. The persons in the principal commands, shifted the blame from one to another. There is nothing more remote from our design, than to set up for judges in matters of this nature; or ungenerously to lean on any officer, who meaning well to the service of his country, by some misfortune or mistake fails in such hazardous and intricate enterprises. We shall be satisfied with relating the facts as they happened.1

No sooner does he sound the opening for independent criticism than he covers up with words like "ungenerously", "misfortune", "hazardous" and "intricate". Not until 1762, after the Russian withdrawal, and knowing that Germany and therefore Hanover were safe from Austria, and that Silesia was back in Frederick's hands, did Burke criticize Britain's involvement in the war. By then Britain could afford an independent policy.2 Prior to that his generosity had given his political criticism so partisan an air that he seemed to surrender individual judgement for the sake of broad government support.

It would be as wrong to overemphasize this aspect as it would be to let it go unnoticed. Whatever Burke's reasons for it he compensates by an exciting and original narrative skill. His treatment of the personalities of the war gives dramatic strength to the story. It revolves on the struggle between Frederick, ready to risk everything, resourceful, resilient in the most hopeless situations, and Daun, the cautious, calculating Austrian general who looks invincible, but by chance or brilliance. Burke individualizes characters on both sides, M. d'Etrees, the Duke de Randan, Marlborough, Count Schmettau: he dramatizes the difficulties of their predicaments, their decisions, their fears, their courage. He keeps the narrative as personal and as humane as possible.

As before, analysis of how Burke writes is sound evidence for what he wanted to achieve. He took what opportunities he could to personalize the narrative and this determined the kind of sources he preferred to work from. This is well illustrated in his handling of Count Schmettau's decision to set fire to the suburbs of Dresden in order to thwart the French. The narrative is brief:

1 Ibid., p. 68.
2 Annual Register, 1762, pp. 1–2, 53–56.
The governor Count Schmettau saw that from the weakness of the suburbs, it would prove impossible for him to prevent the enemy from possessing himself of them by a coup de main; and if they succeeded in this attempt the great height of the houses, being six or seven stories, and entirely commanding the ramparts, would render the reduction of the body of the place equally easy and certain. These considerations determined him to set these suburbs on fire.¹

This is a much abbreviated version of an account in the State Papers entitled "Memorial concerning the destroying of the suburb of Dresden" written by Schmettau himself.² Burke leaves out details like naming the gates of the city, Schmettau’s messenger de Bose, and particulars about who knew of his decision to burn the suburbs.³ Making frequent use of words and phrases from Schmettau, Burke concentrates on the arguments running through Schmettau’s mind and the tense moments leading up to the fires. He reduces Schmettau’s report to about one-third of its original length. He likes the eyewitness account but he is discriminating in his use of it. Comparison with the detailed and chronological report of the events at Dresden printed in The London Gazette shows that Burke was ruthless in excising particulars extraneous to his purpose.⁴ He makes ready use of Schmettau’s more personal narrative because it brings out the human qualities Burke is interested in, particularly Schmettau’s firmness of decision. Burke builds his narrative around that. From the wealth of material he had to choose from to support his story in the State Papers he leaves out various military reports of the incident preferring the more individual evidence.

This example also demonstrates the close interplay between the State Papers and the narrative, a clearly intentional and important aspect of the Annual Register in its first few years. Of the 27 items in the State Papers in 1758 almost every one links directly with the History and the links serve several purposes. The number of State Papers on Hanover for example and its rôle in the war far outweighs the emphasis given to Hanover in the History. This suggests that Burke used the State Paper section to bring in a bias which he would not allow himself in the narrative. The public’s interest in Britain’s part in the war is pandered to not in the History but in the State Papers.

¹ Ibid., 1758, p. 60.
² Ibid., pp. 167–171. A copy of this account appears in The London Magazine, 1758, pp. 681–684, one of the many public sources Burke could draw from.
³ Annual Register, 1758, pp. 167–168.
The State Papers also give an insight on the enemy's view of the war. The rescript of the Austrian chancellor Count Kaunitz gives the thinking behind Marshal Daun’s plans and the enemy’s assessment of the sieges of Olmutz and Dresden.\(^1\) The inclusion of the Pope’s brief to the Queen of Hungary throws light on the character and colour of the enemy alliances. Burke also includes evidence of conditions in enemy camps, their physical circumstances, morale, and the difficulties they fought under. He never lets pass an opportunity to demonstrate, in their own words if possible, that the decision makers among the enemy were unscrupulous.\(^2\) But his treatment of the men fighting, defeated or surrendering, is always compassionate. The History takes much of its strength from the State Papers because they give immediacy and breadth to particular incidents and issues and they give the reader the assurance that Burke’s direction of the History is not imposing, wilful or whimsical. They stand surety for his self-confessed obligation to tell an impartial story. That would appear to be Burke’s intention and most of the time it effects its laudable purpose.

On occasion though Burke seems unable to see himself as he appears to us. For example he includes a letter from Chevalier Drucour, Governor of Louisbourg, to a friend in Paris. Drucour describes conditions in the town before his surrender and the realistic appraisal does nothing but enhance our respect for him. Drucour knew he faced impeachment for surrendering, yet he had no alternative.\(^3\) The letter stirs our sympathy; it also demonstrates the effectiveness of British action and the sore straits to which it had reduced the enemy. In other words this particular letter supports Burke’s contention in the History that the capture of Louisbourg “was the most effectual blow which France had received from the commencement of the war”.\(^4\) This interdependence of the State Papers and the history article helps Burke to turn the account of the war from a chronology of events into a humane description of the struggle between general and general. However, Burke’s selection of supporting material in the State Papers tends to show that the suffering in that struggle was invariably at the hands of the British. Desperate conditions forced Drucour to surrender: in response Boscowen and Amherst exercised firm justice, but did not exploit the situation. Similarly a petition from the merchants of Amsterdam complaining of harassment of their trade

\(^1\) Annual Register, 1758, pp. 157–161.
\(^2\) Annual Register, 1758, pp. 182–185, 200–213.
\(^3\) Ibid., pp. 179–181.
\(^4\) Ibid., p. 72.
by British ships demonstrates that the British policy to hamper Dutch trade and cut off French supplies was working.¹ Some of the State Papers lend themselves to this propagandist interpretation.

It is not difficult then to see that the State Papers have a direct and sometimes subtle bearing on the history article. Not only do they provide supporting material, their presence gives a depth and objectivity which the concision of the History cannot always achieve. They allow Burke an extra dimension to his supposedly neutral or impartial history. He is careful to select but a few of the enormous number of documents available, on the basis of their detailed relevance to the events described in the History. They lend weight to the kind of history he wanted to write which was to be more analytic of causes and less cluttered with facts than were the weeklies and monthlies. His co-ordinated overview could capture the drama of a more detailed history provided he was careful to select the high points in the action and support these with verbatim reports from the men directly involved. This was his intention, and if we look carefully through the History itself we see Burke ever attentive to pertinent details of geography, weather, season, morale, and the actual words of the generals involved. This material is then augmented by the State Papers.

The second half of the Annual Register was not a whit as original and had little direct bearing on the History. Occasional items from year to year echo sentiments in the History but they are infrequent and too irregular to be taken as policy. In the 1759 number, the year of success in Canada, we find poems on Pitt and Wolfe, in the Natural History section there is a description of Niagara; in the 1761 number there are poems on principal figures during the year, Pitt, Boscowen, Broglio; but links with the history article are slender. As Burke says in the Preface, the intention of the second half was to unite the plan of the magazines with that of the reviews. He regarded it as a separate exercise from the first half.

The item on which the Annual Register made its reputation was the History, and by comparison with ensuing numbers the first attempt in 1758 did not entirely satisfy Burke. Lecky’s description of the demands on a writer of “the higher forms of history” is a useful summary of Burke’s intentions, and could be applied much more readily to his achievement for 1759 than that for the previous year:

³ Ibid., pp. 76, 154–155.

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The art of portraying characters; of describing events; of compressing, arranging, and selecting great masses of heterogeneous facts, of conducting many different chains of narrative without confusion or obscurity; of preserving in a vast and complicated subject the true proportion and relief, will tax the highest literary skill, and no one who does not possess some, at least, of these gifts in an unusual measure, is likely to attain a permanent place among the great masters of history.1

The History for 1759 is a very much better example of what Burke could do than the 1758 History. He co-ordinates the spheres of action more carefully according to “the order of time” and keeps the reader better informed of the direction of his narrative.2 He is more ready to make judgements and to surmise, on the battles of Minden and Cunnersdorf for example where he makes a clear evaluation of what is at stake.3 He is more intent on the decisive points of the war with the result that his own assessments of its main developments and the movements of fortune stand out more confidently: Colonel Dohna had been too timid in the face of the Russians, Frederick had been too bold against the French.4 Burke also extends the sphere of attention to the colonies in an attempt to integrate the progress of the war there with that in Europe. With each year’s passing the colonies become increasingly important to the narrative. Burke moves surely to a more individual and interpretative history than he had written in 1758.

His imaginative grasp of the military geography of Europe and his extraordinarily detailed knowledge of particular places combines with concise assessments of defensive and attacking positions.5 As in later narratives and speeches on America and India, he gives every consideration to physical geography and climatic conditions. A distinctive feature of his narrative is his clear understanding of the intricacies of military sieges and manoeuvres, and why certain actions had to precede others. He is very good at perceiving the overall plight of a commander, say Frederick, when attacked on two fronts in Pomerania and Silesia, and in discussing what he should do.6 As he sees England become more confident in her policies, “emerging from the rubbish of low principles and timid conduct”, so his own style becomes

1 W. E. H. Lecky, Historical and Political Essays (1908), p. 3.
2 Annual Register, 1759, p. 28, et passim.
3 Ibid., pp. 25, 29.
4 Ibid., pp. 23, 29.
5 See for example ibid., pp. 17–18, 24.
6 Ibid., pp. 24–25.
firmer in its analysis, and his narrative more exciting. These qualities make this 1759 number an outstanding piece of military history.

But no sooner had he mastered the difficulties of compilation, selection of State Papers, organization of narrative in the 1759 number in a way that set his own skills to their best advantage than he started to make changes, particularly in his use of the State Papers. These changes are most useful pointers to Burke's editorial thinking. It was noted earlier that he and Dodsley were probably prompted to include the History and the State Papers as a public service. If Dodsley's altruism was qualified by business considerations, Burke's was coloured at this time by loyalty to the British Government and its policies.

The war could not go on forever. Burke had to adapt his newly furbished skills to the needs of the History which changed as the war slowed down from fighting to negotiation. The first sign of this is in his use of the State Papers in 1760. They answer a different purpose to that seen so far. There is less material of a directly explicatory nature; many more formal addresses begin to appear from now onwards, largely to do with official occasions like the coronation and the royal wedding. By 1761 only two of the State Papers describe engagements on the battlefield. Burke has shifted this kind of material into the Chronicle which has trebled its size since 1758. This editorial change indicates the first significant alteration in the History itself which attends more and more to the peace negotiations. Accordingly the State Papers provide the terms of peace, treaties, addresses, terms of capitulation. In 1762 the State Papers remind us of the politically diplomatic tone of the History. The trend seems firmly set. The History can be read as a patriotic review of events in Europe and the colonies. Without recourse to high rhetoric or polemics Burke gives loyal support to British policies. His irritation with and suspicions of the Bourbons in France and Spain reflect exactly the attitude of the ministers or the king or the London councillors who are cited in the State Papers.

The second change is in Burke's attitude to the war. His writing is openly critical on points which he used to support or keep quiet about, and this looks like a contradiction of the argument just given above of his conformity to government thinking. He admits for the first time that the war has cost Britain dearly.1 His erstwhile hero Frederick is "not the natural and necessary

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1 Annual Register, 1762, p. 2; cp. Annual Register, 1761, pp. 301–302, for the plea of the Lord Mayor of London and city councillors for "a safe and honourable peace".
ally of this nation”.¹ He concludes that for all the bloodshed the war has but changed its face and not a single power yet rests in tranquillity.² He criticizes the Prussians for ravaging the Austrian empire,³ and argues that Britain is right to leave Frederick to fend for himself, “to stop that current of English and French money, which, as long as it ran into Germany, would be sure to feed a perpetual war in that country”.⁴ Add to these bold changes Burke’s boisterous defence of Pitt in 1761 for advocating war with Spain,⁵ and we realize that a shift has occurred in Burke’s editorial policy. His broad support for government policies takes on a more individual and direct frankness. His warm championing of Pitt against the government is a good example, as is his backing of the Corsicans. On particular items he was now prepared to trust his own political acumen.

To explain the change we need to remember that Britain had been able to pursue a more independent European policy in 1762; also we should look at Burke’s new circumstances. He had found a job as assistant to Hamilton who was Secretary to Halifax, the new Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, and in August, 1761, Burke moved to Dublin to prepare for the arrival of his seniors.⁶ One of the first things he did was to sign in as a reader at Dublin University from where he had graduated in 1748. He soon renewed acquaintance with Henry Flood, a college contemporary who was now a member of the Irish parliament. He became friends with Lord Justice Stone, one of the most influential men in Irish politics. His work brought him closer than he had ever been to the sources of government power and policy, and probably gave him his fresh confidence on British policies in Europe and informed him as to how far he could safely go in his criticisms. They are bolder because he was better briefed. Certainly he had more ready access to official papers. Perhaps from these and from conversations with officials in Dublin Castle he gauged how accurately his History caught the government’s changing attitude to European affairs. On British politics, however, and not unexpectedly, he remains as tactful and brief as ever.⁷ With his new job comes a note of sensi-

¹ Annual Register, 1762, p. 2.
³ Ibid., p. 53.
⁴ Ibid., pp. 54-55.
⁵ Ibid., 1761, pp. 44-48; Ibid., 1762, p. 5.
⁶ A sign of Burke’s dutiful nature is the inclusion of Halifax’s address to the Irish parliament in the Annual Register for 1761, pp. 251-253.
⁷ Ibid., 1762, pp. 46-47.
tivity to the correctness of his history article, a wary eye not to oppose government thinking on contentious matters, and yet a particular sharpness on isolated matters like Pitt and Corsica.

IV

The fact that Burke carried on with the *Annual Register* and particularly the history article after the conclusion of the war says much for his determination to hold on to the job. Difficulties beset him with increasing pressure in terms of his post with Hamilton, and later with his own health, and in terms of material for his article. The compilation of the miscellaneous essays in the second part, even of the Chronicle and the State Papers would be of little private and no public benefit to him. The *Annual Register* was published anonymously. The only feature that could possibly serve him in some way or other was the history article. Either from the writing of it or from its reception Burke drew sufficient satisfaction to make him want to keep on with it.

The writing of the History for 1763 proved the most problematic yet. He wrote at the end of the 1762 number, “We have thus, in some measure, accomplished our design of laying before the public an annual connected narrative of the events of the late most remarkable war; which we have pursued from its commencement to its conclusion.”\(^1\) He and Dodsley were in the odd situation of producing a best-seller whose well-springs had dried up. The war was over. The editor would have to find a new orientation and in the next few years the History attempts new lines and faces new pressures which determine its overall character for the foreseeable future, certainly for Burke’s editorship. Clearly it could no longer be what its title purported, “The History of the Present War”, and Burke changed this to “The History of Europe” which, as subsequent numbers proved, was a very loosely applied title. Even in 1763 only one of eight chapters was on Europe and one on Britain. Burke was lost for a “design”, but he made no attempt to hide the fact and the History for 1763 was something of a jumble.

Much of the material concerns the dying sparks of the war and relates unashamedly to 1762. The first 18 pages of what is the shortest narrative so far recount action in the Manillas and South America. These far-flung and

\(^1\) *Ibid.*, p. 64.
unimportant events take up the first four chapters. Burke spends the first third of his history stolidly finishing the war.

The story of the expedition to South America is particularly strange because the expedition had no official backing. It was a calamity and effected nothing. For want of new direction Burke seems content to stick with the kind of writing he has grown accustomed to and prolongs the war as best he can. But the account contrasts badly with the discriminating and selective narrative of the war years. He makes room to continue with his intriguing military narratives: details of attack and siege, difficulties of the ground, of timing, of supplies are there as in the European history, but the overview is missing. He would have to come to grips with the difficulties of writing a more politically orientated history and we see his first careful probes in this direction this year.

A new and interesting feature is the care with which he explains the background to political situations, particularly to the predicament of the American Indians, and of the Poles. He could well have done the same thing on Britain but refrains. He prefers to try his hand on other countries before he touches a topic seemingly delicate to himself. He baulks the Wilkes affair which is indicative of his hesitancy. He avoids including the issue in his narrative for 1763 where we expect it to appear because it “did not properly come within the design”; and he prefaces that remark with talk of the impartiality “necessary in an historian” and the unlikely suggestion that he is not all that interested in home affairs anyway: “Little heated ourselves, we have not endeavoured to inflame others.” He does not want to burn his fingers so he leaves off his own comment and includes someone else’s version of the highly contentious affair in the Chronicle, “the best account which has appeared”.

But he cannot put off a chapter on British affairs indefinitely and his first concerted attempt tackles a limited sphere, the cider tax and the royal prerogative to appoint ministers. He is scrupulous to give both sides of each argument, to be as thorough as possible in his details, and tactfully to keep his own voice out of the debate. Although his sympathy lies perceptibly with the opposition on the matter of royal prerogative, the chapter achieves a remarkable balance and fairness to both sides.

1 *Annual Register, 1763*, pp. 22–24, 32.


The same self-imposed pressures to write impartially show in his two chapters on the war with the North American Indians. Although he clearly is very well informed on the colonies by this stage he still steers between a partisan and a government review. Chapter Five demonstrates how he does this. On the one hand it takes much of its spirit and detail from the king’s proclamation printed in the State Papers.\(^1\) Yet Burke correctly includes his own analysis of the Indians’ fears of the British and the need to treat them humanely.\(^2\) His case since 1759 has been that Britain would have done better to give more consideration to the Indians.\(^3\) His praise for Sir William Johnson who pursued that kind of policy is accordingly high every time he is mentioned. British policy had never been as compassionate as Burke would have liked, and he shows the consequences.\(^4\)

Clearly he could not be tactful on home affairs where his own career interests might lie and damningly anti-government on America, so he surrounds his critical points with plenty of detailed evidence to give them the respect and authority they need to stand distinguished from party polemics. In this way he strengthens his case without resorting to party rhetoric, and satisfies his own desire to be impartial.

His treatment of Poland, particularly his analysis of the monarchial system there, presented no similar challenge to his political sympathies. He treats Poland because it is the country most likely “to disturb the tranquility of the north”. For that reason Burke is quick to analyse and assess, and although this choice of topic looks random Burke’s argument for writing about it is a pointer to the direction of the history article in years to come. He liked to be well informed on political trouble spots, and this fact is an important clue to Burke’s continued presence on the *Annual Register* after he had entered parliament.

His problem was to find a linking thread for such interests and thus to give his History something of its former coherence. In the potpourri of chapters for 1763—on the Manillas, South America, North America, Britain, Poland—he makes no attempt to tie the narrative together. In defence it must be remembered that he had much else to distract him. His letters during 1763 to Mrs. Elizabeth Montagu, to his lawyer in Ireland, John

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\(^3\) *Ibid.*, 1759, pp. 32–33.
Ridge, and to Hamilton indicate the fervour with which he pursued the politics of the day in England and Ireland. He attended the parliamentary debates. He used what influence he could to get his brother Richard a job as collector of customs in the West Indies. What he says to Mrs. Montagu is half in jest and whole in earnest: "My whole conversation turned upon nothing but what might lead to intelligence." Hamilton was overworking him in Ireland as his political aide and he wanted a break. He was still working on his *Abridgment of English History*. The history article was written in Ireland where he had been since the autumn of 1763 and it is small wonder that it was brief and fragmentary.

Its important aspect is the willingness to embark on political analysis; so although Burke has no "design" to work to he attempts a new area of interest this year which will prove central in the years ahead.

The history article for 1763 looks so uncoordinated and stilted that one would be justified in wondering whether Burke would produce an article at all the following year. He persists and an even shorter article appears for 1764. More troubles had beset him and of a different kind. On the surface the 1764 History betrays few of the ever increasing pressures on Burke. The general plan is much closer to the former history of Europe with chapters on France, Russia, Poland, Britain and India. The opening chapter's survey of Europe links more closely with the state of Europe at the end of 1762 than with the period 1763. One doesn't have to look hard to see that Burke is short of material, or time, or both.

The narrative is shorter than ever; the State Papers are more fragmentary and less well related to the History. Also there are comparatively few of them. Burke virtually copies two of them into the History without acknowledgement which was not his previous wont. Twice he refers to "the compilers" of the History. The phrase is not used elsewhere in the first ten years and it is

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1 James Prior, *Life of Edmund Burke* (5th edn., 1891), p. 78. Further proof of Burke's interest in parliament is his review of *Debates of the house of commons, from the year 1667 to the year 1694* (*Annual Register, 1763*, pp. 264–290).
2 *Correspondence*, 29th July, 1763; I, p. 170.
3 See *Annual Register, 1764*, pp. 21 and 172; pp. 22 and 176; pp. 16–17 and 185–187.
unlikely that he uses it carelessly. As so often we can only guess as to why all this should be. The Annual Register for 1764 came out in May, 1765. Since Christmas, 1764, when Burke would normally be writing the History he had had plenty to attend to. The row with Hamilton had reached breaking point. He demanded too much of Burke’s time and that to the detriment of his “Literary reputation”, among other things. Burke was looking for another job. He applied unsuccessfully for the post of London agent for the West Indies. His elder brother Garret died in April. He had good reason to enlist help.

The strain of completing the previous number, for 1763, might well have prompted Burke to ask Dodsley during 1764 for an assistant. He could save Burke much of the hard slog and the time needed to gather material for the History, the Chronicle, the State Papers and the miscellaneous essays for the second half of the Annual Register. The assistant’s presence in the Annual Register for 1764 is marked only by the two references in the text but he is to become an important figure.

The inadequacies of the 1764 History are evidence enough that Burke kept on as the writer of the History. At his best he was neither brief nor out of date, yet the History for 1764 has signs of both faults. The material on Wilkes, France, India and America all relates to the year 1763. There are signs that he has skimped over sources which he would normally explore more thoroughly. The chapter on France, also relating to 1763, is an unexpected and unannounced sally into the internal politics of that country without discussion on how these affect the politics of Europe. His reason for doing a similar exercise on Poland in the 1763 number was Poland’s ties with the rest of Europe. Although he was writing about Europe in 1764 he failed to co-ordinate the History. The poor organization, rather than the quality of the writing, suggests that Burke was working under increased pressure.

The convincing Burkean feature of the 1764 narrative is the treatment of India. This is clearly the first stage of a three-year programme to inform

1 B. D. Sarason argues that “compilers” approximates to the editorial “we”, and notes the use of “I” in the same chapter. My case is that Burke alone is writing the narrative and that he uses the word “compilers” in deference to his assistant. See B. D. Sarason, “Editorial Mannerisms in the Early Annual Register”, Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America, LII (1958), pp. 135–136.
2 Correspondence, I, p. 184.
3 Correspondence, 31st December, 1764, I, p. 177.
4 Annual Register, 1764, pp. 33, 44.
himself on every possible aspect of Indian affairs and Britain's involvement there. Each year from 1764 to 1766 he wrote two chapters on events in India between 1760 and 1766, so that by the time he had completed his 1766 narrative he had a series of six chapters giving a thorough analysis of the most recent events leading up to Clive's decision to restore Sujah Doula and the problems surrounding the East-India Company.

As with Poland in 1763 and 1764, and America in 1765 and 1766, Burke used the *Annual Register* as a self-disciplining framework within which he could master topical issues. The same applies to his approach to British affairs in this 1764 number. Chapter Six is his first effort at a detailed economic survey of Britain, and, as with India, he had given occasional signs in the past of an accumulating interest in the subject. Since 1762 he had included in part one of the *Annual Register* the national financial accounts. In 1764 he reviews Anderson's History of Commerce. In other words, his background reading had been in progress for some years before he wrote this chapter.

The same argument applies to his review of a book on British military transactions in Indostan between 1745 and 1755, for his 1764 number. He had struggled between 1759 and 1761 to keep in touch with events in India but gave up for want of material. By 1764 the position had changed and there can be little doubt that he planned certain sections of the *Annual Register* like the chapters on India two or three years in advance; he put the other chapters together as best he could.

His editorial strategy had changed. He no longer kept to a coherent "design”, but preferred to take a long-term look at certain specific topics which might or might not cohere within a single year’s narrative. If we look back at the topics covered in previous numbers we see that he had consolidated himself on America, Britain, and now India.

The reason for the uneven quality of the 1764 narrative is that he had prepared his chapters on India more thoroughly than any other chapter this year. India had figured largely in the parliamentary debates, and he probably felt a responsibility to give his public as acute an analysis of affairs in India as any being offered in parliament. In this respect the *Annual Register* was of immeasurable value to Burke as a preparation for his political career. Conversely, if he was to develop special areas of interest, he would have to rely more and more on his assistant for material on topics he had not followed

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1 *Annual Register*, 1761, p. 57.
so closely. If he could establish this kind of working relationship with his assistant, there is no reason why the two of them could not work together after Burke took his seat in parliament.

It is not then surprising to find that the next year’s History in the 1765 number is not a history of Europe, but of Britain and the colonies. The India narrative picks up exactly from where he left off in 1764. He continues his line that the Indians suffer from “natural timidity” on the battlefield;\(^1\) he continues his admiration for the British commander Adams;\(^2\) he gives the same hint of uneasiness about Britain’s conduct in India.\(^3\) These links demonstrate not only Burke’s presence, if that should have been doubted by the mention of “compilers”, but Burke’s plan to write a six-chapter résumé of affairs in India over the years 1764 to 1766.

His coverage of America is similarly orientated to British interests and less concerned with the American Indians. This is a political and economic history, much more like the *Accounts of the European Settlements in America* than anything on America so far in the *Annual Register*. It might be argued that of necessity Burke had to write about these topics because they loomed large in the public mind, but the total shift from his previous concern for the American Indians supports the idea that he meant, as with India, to do an in-depth study of British interests in America. He consciously excludes the former kind of material which we find relegated to the Chronicle.\(^4\)

On the home front too he had become equally purposeful. The main body of the State Papers relates directly to British home affairs and ties in, with one exception, with points in the History. If we compare his treatment of home affairs in 1763, one good and carefully uncommitted chapter, with the four chapters in 1765, we see a movement towards total involvement in the British political scene.

But to arrive at this he had to adjust through 1763 and 1764 to the fact that the original intention of writing the history of the war was no longer possible. This year Britain and her affairs gave him a more unified topic than he had been able to find during the previous two years. What cracks, however, is his strenuous effort to give an impartial narrative. To explain this we have to remember that he was making new links with Rockingham and his party.

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The style is noticeably more partisan. In 1765 he picks up the 1764 narrative on British politics just where he had left it at the administration's attack on certain army officers. The tone is ironically critical without open hostility, but soon devolves into accusations of resentment, contradiction, and rudeness. He openly criticizes the king's speech as tactless, and sympathizes with the colonists in their resistance to taxation. Supposedly "generous and humane" proposals to consult with the colonists are regarded as an affront by them, and Burke admits that the arguments for the colonists' independence "must be owned, to carry great weight". For the first time he does not offer opposing arguments with anything like the same tone of impartiality attempted in previous years. The America chapters are marked by fierce antagonism to the ministry. The movement away from his former desire for impartiality seen in this one volume culminates in his grandiloquent few paragraphs on the advent of the new ministry and particularly Rockingham who gets a paragraph to himself.

This change has been taken as part evidence that the *Annual Register* had a new editor for the 1765 volume. More likely, Burke starts his chapters on home affairs determined to be impartial, gets into his material with some spirit, and soon lets the narrative loose with his anti-government sentiments.

Although the second part of the *Annual Register* had shown very few changes since the 1758 number, the history article had assumed a different character, particularly in its bias on domestic politics. There is no evidence that Robert Dodsley objected to this or that James Dodsley minded after Robert's death in 1764. Burke was fast becoming an influential man and he pursued what editorial policy he wanted; that was to support the Rockingham Whigs. The point is worth making because it helps to explain the anti-Tory bias in future numbers where Burke's editorship might be in doubt.

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1 Ibid., 1764, p. 33; Ibid., 1765, pp. 16–17.
2 Ibid., 1765, pp. 16–17.
4 Ibid., p. 37.
5 Ibid., p. 44.
The pressure of political involvement and personal affairs which we shall look at shortly make it probable that he looked now to his assistant to write a small part of the history article for 1765. At least the 1765 issue gives the first positive evidence of what the assistant did.

The style and attitude of the first two chapters for 1765 sit uneasily with the rest of the narrative for the year and will repay careful comparison with the chapters that follow. The Preface hints at difficulties behind the scenes. The formal, even grandiose language of the first paragraph together with the complex syntax of its sentences has an awkwardness and strain not found in the Preface for 1764. The 1765 volume came out on 28th May, 1766, later than any previous number, and Burke's explanation lacks feeling or conviction. He starts with an ingratiating apology, but gives no reasons for the delay as he had done in 1761 and 1762. We are entitled to suspect that he had no cogent excuse; he simply had not finished on time. The clear direct tone of the Preface of 1764 gave no hint that Burke had difficulty holding down the job, but this Preface does, and the first two chapters give a clue as to why.

Burke had always given the opening section of the History to a survey of the state of affairs in Europe, and the same applies this year. The opening paragraph takes up the story from the general summary of 1764, and argues that the three major powers, Britain, France and Spain—a narrowing down of the positions held in the 1764 narrative—are so balanced that peace is virtually assured. The writer hopes that France and Spain will not force Britain into a new war, but admits that their reluctance to negotiate might well force Britain to such a step. He puts the onus for peace on France and Spain, confident that Britain's conduct has been above reproach. His suspicions of the untrustworthy Bourbons are balanced by an assertive patriotism: he writes of Britain's "just demands", her "just reasons", the "justice" owed her. Bourbon intransigence would "justify" a hostile response. France and Spain on the other hand have a "litigious disposition", they "persist in refusing" to comply with Britain, they show "reluctance...to do...justice". The antitheses are never explained or argued out. Furthermore the language is encumbered by qualifying phrases like "if possible", "apparent", "prob-

1 The passages referred to in this comparison are at Annual Register, 1764, p. 10, and Ibid., 1765, pp. 1-2.
ably”, “in the end” which weaken the prose rather than give it edge. The writer is reluctant to analyse, happy simply to assert Britain’s superior justice.

If we look back at the passage in 1764 from which this takes its cue we see Burke arguing that Spain is subject to French influence and will not break the peace if France does not; this is unlikely because France still pays for the upkeep of her prisoners. He then considers who will most benefit from the peace. This will depend on who makes the most of their resources. The logical force of the early part of the argument and the analytical acumen in discussion of the peace are noticeably absent from the 1765 passage. In the 1764 passage Burke is not apprehensive about the conduct of France and Spain because he can see the restricting influences on them. The question of peace is made to look more interesting because it is open-ended and discussed without side. There is no hint of British righteousness, nor is the style assertive or syntactically cluttered.

The writer of the 1765 passage uses a number of conditionals and talks in possibilities: “it is to be wished . . .”, “it is to be hoped . . .”, “may”. Burke writes more purposefully and confidently: Spain “remains, and is likely to remain, entirely subject . . .”, “That France will on her part seriously endeavour to fulfil her engagements, we are satisfied”, “Much . . . will depend . . .” He does not assert or repeat concepts like justice. There is no recurrence of qualifying phrases to enervate his prose. It moves forward deliberately. The writer of the passage in 1765 mounts a defence of Britain. In 1764 Burke is arguing about peace, not propping up a particular cause. He is not hesitant but writes with a compelling logic, and where the topic lends itself to conjecture he is analytic without prejudice. The 1765 writer has not the same versatility of attitude nor of style.

Further evidence of a different hand is the stylistic mannerism often employed by Burke but only in the early volumes. It suddenly recurs in the first two chapters of 1765 with surprising regularity. A phrase to link the narrative with the previous volume or to guide the reader is brought in, usually at the start of a paragraph; for example, “In our last volume . . .”, “Among the events which serve to distinguish the period now under our consideration . . .”, “To complete our survey . . .”, “Having thus examined the present general complexion of Europe . . .”1 But the mannerism stops abruptly at the end of the second chapter. The attempt of a new hand to

1 *Annual Register, 1765*, pp. 1, 2, 5, 8. See also *Ibid., 1758*, pp. 1, 28, 62; *Ibid., 1759*, p. 45; *Ibid., 1761*, p. 3.
emulate Burke’s style could account for the strong reappearance of a mannerism frequently used by Burke in the early volumes, but since discarded by him.

An obvious difficulty of wedding two narratives is to link them together unobtrusively, and the last paragraph of the second chapter is particularly interesting in this respect. It precedes the chapters on India with an explanation of how the History for the rest of this volume will be organized. It sets the line for the remaining nine chapters. Nowhere else in the first ten volumes does a paragraph thus introduce the order and trend of the remainder of the narrative. It looks as though the writer knew of or had seen the last nine chapters and had to introduce them.

Stylistic evidence alone can be a precarious foundation. A new hand is bound to introduce variations of attitude however slight. The points of emphasis in the survey of Europe in 1765 differ awkwardly from previous years. The struggle in Europe is seen in terms of Protestants against Catholics, a not uncommon view of the day, but not one which Burke raised in his discussions.\(^1\) There is no mention of Prussia or Frederick whose fortunes Burke had followed even in peace.\(^2\) The passage on France, far from dwelling on her weak finances or internal dissensions from which “much more is to be expected”,\(^3\) looks at her purchase of ship-building materials from Sweden.\(^4\) France’s internal troubles have been relegated to the Chronicle.\(^5\) The Empress of Russia is mentioned sympathetically as Burke was wont, but not a word about the perpetual state of insecurity in Russia which made Burke anxious.\(^6\) The writer of the 1765 European survey follows the same general pattern of coverage as in previous years, but he takes a different line in his emphasis and assessments.

An equally surprising departure is the inclusion in the History of material normally reserved to the second part of the *Annual Register*, like the review of agriculture and the section on science.\(^7\) Burke’s previous policy had been to admit only political, military, economic and allied material to the History:

\(^1\) *Ibid.*, p. 3.
\(^2\) See *Ibid.*, 1764, p. 3.
the arts and sciences had their own place in the second section, and to bring them in here would be a major and unnecessary change of editorial policy. As if sensing this the writer tries to explain and excuse the intrusion and reminds the reader that such subjects are covered more fully in the latter half of the magazine. There is nothing like such an intrusion elsewhere in the first ten years, and this leads one to suspect that these first two chapters were written after Burke had completed the other nine chapters and that Burke did not have the chance to look these over. He would almost certainly have excised such material if he had edited them.

The accumulation of the above changes in the well established habits of style and attitude makes it very unlikely that Burke was the author of these two chapters. They are written by someone with a close working knowledge of the historical narrative. He continues some of the attitudes and concerns of previous years, support for the Corsicans,\(^1\) for the Empress of Russia, for the Emperor of Turkey,\(^2\) and has a similar interest in the elective monarchy of Germany.\(^3\) But the links with previous years lack the close detailed development which Burke effected from year to year on, say, India. Perhaps even more telling these two chapters bear no relation to material in the rest of the narrative for this year, nor does it refer to them.

Without these first two chapters the History would have nothing on Europe. It had declined in length from about 60 pages during the war years to a meagre 44 pages for 1764. With the addition of these eight pages at the start of the 1765 narrative the total returned to a more normal 56 pages, and could still call itself, though loosely, a History of Europe. But the internal evidence suggests that this year Burke had given his attention entirely to British affairs and left Europe to his assistant.

VII

It is not difficult to build up a plausible argument as to why this was so. We have to remember that Burke had already mentioned a fellow compiler, and that this number was embarrassingly late onto the book-stalls; also that he had been elected to parliament in December, 1765, and took his seat in

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\(^1\) Ibid., p. 4.

\(^2\) Ibid., pp. 5–6; see Ibid., 1764, p. 13.

\(^3\) Ibid., 1765, p. 2; see Ibid., 1763, chapter 8.
January, 1766. In the normal course of his work on the *Annual Register* he would start writing the History sometime in December and continue until late February. This programme clashed with his first appearance in parliament. We know that he spoke five times in February, 1766, each time on America. He could have no better preparation than his reading and researches for his two chapters on America in the history article. It stands to reason that in anticipation of parliament he would concentrate his attention on Britain's interests at home and in the colonies, and he would give what time he could to writing up these first.

It seems likely that in February, 1766, he realized he had written as much as he was able and handed over the copy to his assistant with instructions for a preface on Europe. This was a slight demand on someone who had probably done the laborious business of collecting material for the Chronicle and the State Papers from gazettes and newspapers from all parts of Europe. The assistant would know the needs of the moment from a study of previous numbers and could write a couple of short chapters to lead into Burke's material. No one would expect that he would have the confidence of analysis or control of argument that Burke had developed over seven years. But his contribution, though brief, could mean the difference between the collapse or the survival of the *Annual Register*.

In addition the pace of life had begun to wear Burke down. He had every reason to hand over some of the load on the *Annual Register* to an understudy. We see why in a letter he writes in March to Charles O'Hara:

> I catch a moment of very interrupted leisure and of very precarious health to write to you. I have been extremely ill of a flux, which was relieved by violent sweats; both these Causes, together with the heavy cold with which the Session began, and which this Session was ill calculated to relieve, have so reduced me, that I am scarcely the shadow of what I was when you saw me. However, weak as I am, I thank God, my Spirits have not wholly deserted me; and I am now once more able to apply a little to Business.¹

It is easier to put a name on the assistant than to say when he joined the project. He was almost certainly Thomas English (1725–98) since he received £140 from Dodsley "for writing & compiling the Annual Register for the Year 1766",² and he was probably working with Burke from the time of his

¹ *Correspondence*, 1st, 4th March, 1766, vol. 1, p. 239.
mentioning the “compilers” which means some time late in 1764. He would almost certainly be given the more humdrum jobs of compilation for the Chronicle, Appendix to the Chronicle and the second part of the magazine. The even coverage of events through the year in the Chronicle suggests that this was an on-going editorial task, time-consuming and hard work for the pay. It was an obvious task for an assistant. He could also compile the second part of the magazine without difficulty. But the selling point of the *Annual Register*, the piece that required most exacting attention, was the History and it would be extraordinary for Burke to hand this over *in toto* to a new assistant. He would reserve whatever time he had to write as much of it as interested him.

English was probably eased into the work over a couple of years. It seems likely that the strain of handling the magazine proved too much for Burke in 1764 and he asked for an assistant to take over the time-consuming tasks. English could have come late in the year to help Dodsley and Burke put the 1764 number through the press; he probably did most of the hack-work for the 1765 number and was on hand to write the introduction early in 1766 when the demands of parliament and Burke’s health forced him to hand over his incomplete history for 1765.

Besides, the Dodsleys were good businessmen and knew the need to have a man like English available now that the *Annual Register* had established itself and Burke’s time for the History, let alone the rest, was at a premium. There is nothing to suggest that English took over any more of the History than the first two chapters. It is probable that both Dodsley and Burke would want to break him in slowly. On his death he was reputed to be a man “of very considerable literary talents”, to have a warm temper and to be hasty. His style has these characteristics and it is highly unlikely that Burke would willingly surrender his history article to such an apprentice at the first sign of distress. The evidence shows that in the bleakest of times he would part with but a few pages.

As mentioned at the start, cogent reasons for Burke’s presence and his intention to stay with the history article are to be found in the history article itself. His letters during the first couple of busy years in parliament confirm

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1 For an argument that he would do so, see B. D. Sarason, “Editorial Mannerisms in the Early Annual Register”, *Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America*, LII (1958), pp. 134–135. Sarason’s main point is “that the post (of editor) might prove a future embarrassment”, but there is no strong evidence to support this.

that politics, not to mention his farming interests, might leave him little time for historical writing however much he might like to keep on with it. But the *Annual Register* had become more than a hobby to Burke, although it was never a full-time occupation. By 1766, his first year in parliament, with the issue for 1765 behind him, he had established a series of special interests within the history article. These, like India and later Poland, took time to prepare, assess, and write. The appearance of chapters on India and America coincided with discussion on these topics in parliament. His writing kept himself and the public informed, aware of central issues and difficulties to be watched. The article served as a self-discipline, a workshop in which Burke made up his mind on public affairs. When he came to speak on America in the first few months of his career in parliament he had an immense store of information and saw his way clearly through it. He would be unwilling to part with the history article while it fulfilled what was to him a vital service.

What jars against the consistency of the style established between 1758 and 1766 is a new assertive and rhetorical voice which is confined to certain chapters only of the numbers for 1765, 1766 and 1767. As we have already seen this new voice is distinct from Burke's. Nor is it to be equated with the sometimes careless and rushed writing on parliamentary affairs in the numbers for 1766 and 1767. It is too careful and less imaginative.

Not only is it plausible to argue that the history article meant too much to Burke for him to surrender it to English; the links, particularly on America and home affairs are solidly maintained in the numbers from, say, 1764 to 1767.

Presuming that it was English who took over some of the work in the 1765 issue, he keeps close to much of Burke's policy for the history article, but naturally enough has individual touches which distinguish his contribution from Burke's. If Burke had given up the history article in the 1766 or 1767 issue, the writer who took his place would need to have been a remarkable imitator and would have to be distinguished from the writer whose presence we have already noticed. On grounds of the internal evidence a third presence is very much less likely than the continued presence of Burke. What follows can be no more than a suggestion that Burke wrote the bulk of the article and English parts of it, but the suggestion has much in its favour.

Furthermore, English would strengthen rather than threaten Burke's hand with the history article. The magazine looks more secure for English's presence than for some years past. Burke could go about his considerable
parliamentary business, his correspondence, his farm, his visits to the country and to Ireland, knowing that English was getting on with the bulk of the work. Burke might not have solved the root problem of an overall design for the History, but its survival at least was assured.

The signs from the 1766 and 1767 numbers are that Burke continued to write the bulk of the history article. He used it to write up political areas in which he had a special interest. In 1766 there is the opening survey of Europe, chapters on France, Poland, and Spain, and the expected chapters on India and America. Although Europe is more widely covered than in 1765, British interests are still dominant. Hopefully the article could now settle down to a size and focus which, with English’s help, Burke could handle. The experience of past numbers suggests that he would keep his attention on those areas which occupied him most closely in parliament.

But before tackling the main body of the article for 1766 it is important to look at the survey on Europe to see whether English had established anything more than a temporary foothold in the history article. The reasons to doubt that Burke wrote the opening survey for 1766 are much the same as in 1765: the style, the attitudes, the scope are not in line with what Burke normally did. The opening chapter is noticeable for metaphoric flights and superlatives which are found in none of the subsequent chapters. Take the first paragraph:

the beginning of the year 1766 appeared to teem with the most interesting events, and threatened to be an aera of great revolutions. A spirit of liberty, which no time nor oppression can entirely efface in the human breast, dawned forth in regions and amongst people, where, it might have been imagined, the term was scarce ever heard, much less understood.1

The second paragraph has phrases like “most alarming”, “most dangerous”, “so very unusual”, “always characterized”, “most inviolable”, all in the space of two sentences. Burke never attempted to whip up the drama of his narrative like this.

Other non-Burkean elements are a paragraph of rambling anti-war sentiments,2 and an intrusion as in 1765 on the arts. Burke made the point of giving his narrative a firm direction within the first or second paragraph of his first chapter. This writer delays the narrative with his own reflections.

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1 My italics.
2 Annual Register, 1766, pp. 3–4.
When Burke has the opportunity later in the History to exaggerate or reflect on America or India,¹ he does not pause to garnish the narrative in this way. Similarly his narrative on the riots in Spain is comparatively restrained.

Comparison with other chapters also suggests that the first chapter is by a different hand. For example it is said in the opening chapter that the Spanish disturbances "appeared the more serious, as they were so very unusual in a nation, which has always been characterized by the most inviolable loyalty and attachment to its monarchs". Burke's point in the chapter on Spain is not that the people were disloyal or not affectionate towards their monarch. He says plainly that they were both loyal and affectionate towards him.² That point is never an issue. He takes time to explain the link between the monarchies of Spain and France and Italy, and tells how the king of Spain had let foreign influences affect his deliberations. The people objected to this, wanting to be ruled by their own countrymen.³ He has a more sensitive understanding of the situation than the person who wrote the first chapter. Likewise on Peru, Burke draws a different conclusion to that given in Chapter One. The latter argues that a successful revolution in Peru would seriously affect world trade and Spain would be unable to quell it. Burke does not speculate on that. He is more interested in the difficulties Spain has in collecting her colonial revenues, a point that has a direct relation to Britain's problems with her American colonies. The two writers differ in their handling of much the same material.

Yet the writer has moved perceptibly closer to Burke's attitudes than in 1765, on the importance of Britain's trade for instance, on Russia, and on France's economic difficulties. These are slight but significant adjustments. They suggest that the new hand did try to iron out discrepancies to bring his contribution into line with his mentor's. Certainly Burke would be quick to discuss divergencies with his assistant. English had proved competent enough to keep on at the limited but useful job of writing the survey and that left Burke free to write the chapters he wanted.

The main part of the narrative for 1766, despite its oddities, suggests that Burke was still writing it. It has been said of Burke that he had no close knowledge of France early on in his political career, but the coverage here as in 1764 is in considerable detail. The purpose plainly is to complete the

¹ Ibid., pp. 31 (America), 20 (India).
² Annual Register, 1766, pp. 17–18.
³ Ibid., p. 16.
France narrative he left unfinished in 1764. In addition the interest in Poland is maintained, a topic he had written about for some years past. Burke had long regarded it as a possible trouble spot and this year there was good reason to cover it because Britain had made a plea on behalf of the Protestants that they be allowed the freedom to practise their faith. Burke tactfully suggests the difficulties that might arise out of the conflict. His apprehension over Poland had proved remarkably accurate and as we shall see in 1767 he became deeply involved in its problems. As with India and America he throws all his energies into the issue and thoroughly acquaints himself with the historical, political, social and religious circumstances affecting the country. His approach is compassionate: he wants to understand all there is to know, and he has clearly worked at this for a number of years before he is prepared to write on it at length.

Spain too has caught his attention because of its apparent domestic and colonial instability, and typically he prefaces his comments with an historical review of the forces at work there. But he seems never to have understood Spain in the detail that he did Poland, in spite of an interest dating back to 1762. There is no even movement to his attack as there is in his work on India, which culminates this year, or on Poland, which comes to a head in 1767. The coherence of the magazine now stems from a continuing interest in certain topics dealt with year by year. The material of a single year does not lend itself to uniform treatment, and that is why a number like this for 1766 looks as disorganized as that for, say, 1763 or 1764. We seem to jump around Europe on no clear plan. However, Burke is asking us to read certain issues from year to year.

This view is further strengthened by his handling of Britain and America. On the surface these chapters look unnecessarily curt. They cover affairs from December, 1765, to Rockingham’s fall from power in July, 1766. The main issue is the Stamp Act and much of the narrative is a résumé of speeches in parliament. The other major issue of the day, the corn crisis, is left out of the History. As with the Wilkes affair Burke seems to side-step the issue by offering no direct comment, preferring to leave it in abeyance in the Chronicle and State Papers, whereas one would expect a history of the year to deal with it. He had the background material, he had the time, since he takes the Poland and Spain narratives through to November and December,

yet he excludes it and breaks off his account barely more than half-way through the year.

There is no discussion on why Rockingham’s administration fell. Nothing is said about the return to favour of Bute’s brother Mackenzie whose removal Burke had so deplored in 1765. As if to vindicate the supposedly spotless conduct of the Rockingham administration the Chronicle has an address to Rockingham from the merchants of London trading to America and the West Indies complimenting him on his work in administration, and similar addresses from merchants in Yorkshire. The decidedly partisan bias of the narrative noted in 1765 is kept up. Rockingham’s administration is blessed with “the happiness not to be obliged to act systematically wrong”; the administration’s arguments are put at greater length and with more weight; the opposition are accused of changing their ground; they argue from a baseless foundation; the administration’s care for the mercantile interests is “so different from what had been generally practised by preceding administrations”. Looked at like this the History has lost much of its attractive impartiality and fairness, and its comprehensive thoroughness. The article ends with an attack on Pitt which runs against Burke’s sturdy support for “this great minister” in 1761, and looks more like a party broadside than an historian’s assessment. Certainly the chapters on British affairs are written under the Rockingham spell.

After the fall of Rockingham Burke wrote to Charles O’Hara in January, 1767, “Little as I like opposition, I relish it much more than the support of such an administration”. Barely a year into his parliamentary career he had had to decide his political loyalties. He opted for Rockingham and his determined conviction comes through strongly in the historical article.

But there are two considerations to offset too harsh a judgement. The priorities of this year’s history article are stated in the Preface: parliamentary proceedings on America “claim the preference”. The Rockingham adminis-

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1 Annual Register, 1765, p. 43.
2 Ibid., 1766, pp. 124, 126. He told Rockingham that he thought the former “really simple, Neat, and elegant” (Correspondence, 21st August, 1766; I, p. 267). Presumably he handed it on to English for inclusion.
3 Ibid., p. 33.
4 Ibid., p. 44.
5 Ibid., p. 46.
6 Ibid., p. 47.
7 Correspondence, 15th January, 1767; I, p. 291.
tration had concluded the repeal of the Stamp Act: the topic of central importance to the narrative concludes with that achievement. Secondly, and probably more important, Burke is implicitly making an editorial change which operates for the first time this year.

As originally planned, the Annual Register together with the history article was geared to cover the calendar year from January to December. This suited the history of the war because it meant each year's narrative could start with the campaign in spring and conclude with the retirement to winter quarters. Parliament ran to a different time-scale with the session usually starting in November and concluding about July, for the summer recess. Burke's old schedule which he kept to years after the war concluded meant he had to write up the History during busy parliamentary months, January to March. Also his account of home affairs had to bridge two sessions.

He could remedy both failings by running his parliamentary chapters from November to July. The change makes the chapters more coherent and gives him the summer months of recess to work at them, and this is what he hoped to do during 1766.

The evidence for this year shows a cut-off on home affairs at July. On topics like India and Poland the treatment is fuller and more expansive reaching through to December, thus supporting the view that he worked steadily at these throughout the year. The plan might well have been to buy time on the chapters on home affairs. As we shall see they were written in a hasty prose, were less well thought out or controlled. Burke's letters to O'Hara show that his head was full of their business anyway, and he seems to have rushed them off. But the change did have the advantage of allowing him more time to write up his other chapters and perhaps to consult with English who lived near him in the country. His unflagging admiration and attachment to Burke ensured ready co-operation. The volume for 1767 shows what happened to these hopes.

VIII

By the time he came to write the History for 1767 he had seen the Annual Register through crises of content and crises of demands on his time and health. He had now had two years in parliament and his career seemed indefatigably set in politics. By the end of 1767 when he was probably writing up the narrative he had a fairly good idea of what he could give to the magazine

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in terms of time. He would have to settle about now for a schedule and load that he could handle for the foreseeable future, and it is worth looking at the 1767 number to see what Burke might have decided in these terms.

Although deference is paid to “the Plan of our Work” in the Preface for 1767, the progress of the narrative shows the same signs of strain as in the last few years. Poland features prominently as expected, but there are only three short paragraphs on America, and nothing on India though extensive treatment of the East-India Company under British affairs. But this is no reason to doubt Burke’s guiding presence. The point is that he has solved none of his editorial difficulties; he seems set to write the narrative from year to year on an *ad hoc* basis, looking into issues which seem to him important and leaving English to do the rest. The firm marks of his hand are these. The treatment of Poland has the thorough detail and historical perspective of Burke’s best writing on India and America in 1764, 1765 and 1766. There is no attempt to arouse or dwell on religious differences in the consciously hostile way that the writer of the European survey did in 1765 and 1766. His interest in the legal background to the Poland dispute has the same historical orientation as is found in 1763 and in his writing on the Stamp Act in 1765. The handling of the Corn Law this year bears the same marks. The now expected party bias on home affairs continues despite the repeated claim to impartiality in the Preface. The chapter on “this tedious session of parliament” ends with another attack on Pitt.

His hopes to give coherence to the parliamentary business from November to July and save himself the rush of writing in January–February have come to nothing because the two chapters on home affairs have the same signs of hurry about them as in the 1766 number. For example, Chapter Seven means to deal with home affairs between the formation of the new administration and the next session of parliament starting in November, 1766. The bulk of the chapter is on the internal squabbles of the East India Company. Chapter Eight deals mostly with the two major debates in parliament which Burke took part in, on the corn crisis, and India. Chapter Eight is an unabashed summary of these debates: the corn crisis and the East India Company are again covered but without much attempt to link the material with what had

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2 On 9th March, 1767, Burke spoke on India. He had spoken on the corn crisis on 11th November, 1766. See *Annual Register, 1766*, Chronicle, pp. 137f. for background material on the corn crisis.
been said in Chapter Seven. The lack of co-ordination is very unlike Burke but is the kind of blemish that could creep in if he were writing in a hurry.

It could also arise if he were to dictate his material, a strong possibility in view of Burke’s later reputation for what Boswell called “the extraordinary promptitude of Mr. Burke”.¹ He seems to have relied very much more on what he kept in his head than on carefully organized paper records.² One of the best known quips about him is that his stream of mind was “perpetual”. Perhaps he used English as his amanuensis for this material. Since he had used Joseph Emin in 1756 to copy his *Vindication of Natural Society* and the *Sublime and Beautiful*, it is possible that he would employ English to take down these chapters as he dictated them. He had obviously given more time and effort to researching and constructing his chapters on Poland than he had to material as immediate to him as the political debates.

Whatever the arguments about Burke’s being the principal editor or overall manager of the *Annual Register* after he entered parliament, there is plenty of evidence that in either rôle he paid much less attention to its composition, the integration of the chapters and their material than he had done before. An example is the placing of chapters Five and Six, on Spain and Corsica respectively. The events in the Spain chapter run through to November, 1767: in the next chapter he deals with Corsica only as far as May, 1767. His sensitivity to chronology, in the 1759 and 1760 numbers for example, would have him place Chapter Six before Chapter Five. If we compare this 1767 number with Chapters Three to Five in the 1764 narrative we see there a more fluent and conscious ordering of events in terms of time, theme and sphere of action as he moves from Poland (III) to Russia (IV) to Britain (V). Chapter Three of that sequence picked up the account from the previous year (“The last year concluded with . . .”), and Chapter Four started with the sly remark “Whilst the Empress of Russia was employed abroad in disposing of crowns . . .”; Chapter Five started “Having taken notice of the internal state of the other great powers of Europe, it is now time to say something of our own country . . .” That degree of editorial care and sensitivity had deserted him by the 1767 number.

Another noteworthy feature in the 1767 number suggesting a clear division of work between the assistant English and the principal writer Burke is that

² See Lord Inchiquin’s account of how Burke’s wife Jane tried to combat Burke’s carelessness with papers, C. B. Cone, *op. cit.*, I, p. 136.
the State Papers run to a meagre ten pages. This section had suffered a decline since the publication of the peace papers in the 1762 number. Now it includes only the most formal of speeches by the king to parliament, replies and similar addresses in the Irish parliament.¹ Much of the background material for his history of the corn crisis had been included in the 1766 number, though the narrative for that year avoided the issue, and that accounts in part for the fall-off in State Papers this year. The State Papers have been thoroughly rid of their less formal aspect and their function is largely to support Burke’s choice of the important issues of the day, to demonstrate that he is writing about affairs which occupied the top people. In past years they informed the narrative much more closely. The kind of material that used to be included is now in the Chronicle or the Appendix to the Chronicle, but its relation to the History is not as regular as in past years and this gives reason to doubt that Burke still compiled this section.

As a journalist of no public place during the war years he had been able to gather relevant material to enliven his narrative. He was now in a better position to ferret out such material but it is not there. The section shows more variety and discrimination in the earlier numbers. If, as seems likely, English did the compilation he would have to guess at which State Papers or similar material for the Appendix might be pertinent to the narrative which Burke would complete as late perhaps as February or March. The result would be, as in the 1767 number, that this supporting material would have a direct bearing on the History only some of the time.²

From the evidence of the 1765 and 1766 numbers it seemed that English would probably continue to write the introductory survey on Europe, and the first two chapters of the 1767 History again suggest his hand. There is a more clear and logical movement in the survey, but it does have extraordinarily un-Burkean moments. There are further anti-war sentiments which bear no relation to the events in these chapters or in the History as a whole. The writer says he wants “to derive reasons for prognosticating the approach of a less martial age”,³ and follows with six paragraphs of generalization on reasons for strife in Europe from feudal times to the present. The

¹ The State Papers occupied the following number of pages between 1758 and 1767: 1758, 90; 1759, 82; 1760, 57; 1761, 61; 1762, 90; 1763, 26; 1764, 21; 1765, 19; 1766, 19; 1767, 10.
² Annual Register, 1767, p. 200, two items on astronomy relate to chapter two: p. 185 relates to chapter five; p. 180 relates to Chapter Eight.
³ Ibid., p. 2.
remarks have the gloomy tone and pessimism of the paragraph on war in Chapter One of 1766 and look equally obtrusive. Both passages remind us of the extreme language on war in the 1765 narrative. We know from the Correspondence that Burke went through bouts of extreme depression, but the tenor of the History never suggests that he let his private moods interfere with his narrative. There is nothing in the rest of the History for 1767, nor in previous numbers, to equate the following remarks with Burke’s hand:

The natural inconstancy of mankind, the sport which fortune seems at some times to make of every system, destroying in a day, or an hour, the best laid foundations, and trampling the labour of ages, and the wisest institutions, in the dust; all these may forbid the hopes of a lasting permanency to any system of tranquillity, let the present appearances be ever so serene.

This is the most depressing piece in a long speculative passage which lacks Burke’s usual animated style.

From the outset of his very first number for 1758 Burke had refused to let speculation hold up his narrative. Yet since the 1765 number it had been common enough in the opening chapters. The general nature of this new writing is an expansive view of mankind stretching back through time and across nations with phrases like “so many centuries”, “the people of those ages”, “the approach of a less martial age”, “great bodies of mankind”, “most countries”, “all mankind”. Arguments are repeated in spite of a phrase like “it may be unnecessary to recapitulate . . .” The rhetoric flows with a studied ease. As an attempt at analysis, the style here has no foundation in particulars, nor the urgency of say Burke’s analysis of the nature and causes of Poland’s problems later on in the History. As in the opening paragraphs of the last two history articles, the writer makes an effort to stir us to the seriousness and drama of what is to follow. He achieves little of the interest of Burke’s more direct approach.

When the narrative of the opening section does tackle details the style continues its sometimes verbose and pretentious manner: comparing the work of British with Russian astronomers the writer says,

1 Ibid., p. 3.
2 Ibid., 1765, p. 6.
3 Ibid., 1767, pp. 2–3.
4 Ibid., pp. 1–2.
5 Ibid., pp. 12–13.
We observe with pleasure upon this occasion, that English artificers preserve the rank they have hitherto held in the mechanicks subservient to this science.¹

On the introduction of printing to Turkey by the Grand Seignior the style is no less bombastic.

But the particular circumstance of his life, which may possibly preserve his name with great honour to posterity, when even the cruel and ferocious conquests of his predecessors are lost in oblivion, is the encouragement he has given to the introduction of the art of printing into his dominions.²

This ponderous often latinate language and the drawn-out syntax do not occur later in the 1767 narrative.

On the thematic side new attitudes noticed in the opening chapters of 1765 and/or 1766 are continued, but not into Chapter Three where Burke’s hand is clearly present on Poland. There is the same interest in marriage alliances among the Bourbons and in the balance of Protestant against Catholic powers.³ The former line on France and shipbuilding is now fully rectified, though no mention is made of France’s internal troubles which so disturbed Burke in 1764 and 1765. Prussia continues to receive scant attention, only a short paragraph implying that the King of Prussia spends time reviewing his army which should be spent doing something about the domestic happiness of his subjects.⁴ This disapproving attitude to Frederick’s military spirit perhaps explains why he has had so little mention in the last three years and ties in with the writer’s anti-war feelings.

Other points of common interest to the opening chapters for the years 1765 and 1766 are Turkey,⁵ a hostile attitude to the Pope and the Church of Rome,⁶ interest in the new King of Denmark,⁷ and an admiration for the Empress of Russia especially for her patronage of the arts and sciences.⁸

The accumulation of the above evidence tells us enough about the assistant to offer a few conclusions about him. His views are not radically

¹ Ibid., p. 10.
² Ibid., pp. 10–11.
³ Ibid., 1765, pp. 2–3; Ibid., 1766, pp. 5–6; Ibid., 1767, pp. 3–4.
⁴ Ibid., 1767, p. 5.
⁵ Ibid., 1765, pp. 5–6; Ibid., 1766, p. 3; Ibid., 1767, pp. 10–11.
⁶ Ibid., 1766, p. 6; Ibid., 1767, p. 6.
⁷ Ibid., 1766, p. 5; Ibid., 1767, p. 9.
⁸ Ibid., 1765, p. 5; Ibid., 1766, p. 6; Ibid., 1767, p. 9.

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different from Burke’s. He tends to be extreme and extravagant in his style and works at those areas of Europe which interest him. He introduces new emphases, most interestingly perhaps of a political-religious nature. His anti-Catholic tone, for example, is alien to Burke. Also, he tends to keep off topics to which Burke devotes whole chapters. For example, Poland is hardly mentioned in the opening survey chapters of 1767, and no hint is given that the ensuing narrative will discuss it. So Burke is left free to deal with Poland without fear of contradiction or variance in the opening chapters. There is never a detailed relation between the survey and the rest of the narrative. On Britain the new hand never offers comment. Apart from writing the survey he also seems responsible for the compilation of the State Papers, the Chronicle and the Appendix to the Chronicle, and the bulk of these second half of the Annual Register with the exception of the book reviews.

This brief survey is useful in trying to solve the problem of the chapter on Spain this year. There is reason to doubt Burke’s hand here too. The determining piece of evidence may be the relation of the chapter to Chapter One, and that will be dealt with last. In view of English’s now established part in the first couple of chapters it is not unlikely that he might be called in to write other chapters occasionally, but we need to be cautious.

Reasons to doubt Burke’s hand in this chapter are, first, the long and inflated introduction. Comparison with the treatment of Spain in 1766 or of Corsica in 1767 demonstrates as so often that Burke did not write long discursive introductions of a page and a half. The fifty to sixty pages he had each year gave him little enough room and he used it with economy and urgency. The language here jars. It strains for effect: “one of the most remarkable incidents that has happened in the course of the present century”, “Mankind have beheld with amazement”, “Such is the uncertainty of human affairs”.

Secondly, there is an uncommonly close relation all of a sudden between the narrative in this chapter and the Chronicle. Normally the Chronicle mentions many of the events in the History, though the bulk of its material is very brief notices, usually domestic—strange court cases, murders, royal engagements, strange natural observations of storms, civil disturbances; and there is a steady flow of information on events abroad, usually in letter form.

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1 Ibid., pp. 4–5.
2 Ibid., pp. 27–28.
Sometimes this last kind of material does find its way into the History, but there is never a scrupulous contact between the History and the Chronicle.\(^1\) Any overlap usually shows the History better informed. But this chapter on Spain has regular and detailed links on events surrounding the expulsion of the Jesuits which suggest that the writer based his story on the several letters printed in the Chronicle.\(^2\) The links are closer than for any chapter in the first ten years.

The result is a chapter of straight narrative, with virtually no historical perspective to the events. Comparison with chapters on Poland and Corsica shows that the writer’s speculation on causes for the Jesuits’ expulsion is not as convincing or as energetic as the detailed historical analyses which Burke always did so well.

Nor does the chapter tie in with events in the History before or after it. It is self-contained and could be written up and inserted here without prejudice to Burke’s narrative. The only hint of a connection is with Chapter One where the writer remarks that the expulsions of the Jesuits from Naples and Parma are events “intimately connected with . . . the measures which had been already taken in Spain”.\(^3\) Therefore, he continues, “we shall include them under that head, as well as the ineffectual remonstrances made by the court of Rome in their favour”, and does so in Chapter Five. As in 1765 this is a rare occasion where the writer of the survey has forecast or foreseen in detail what the rest of the narrative would include. The edict passed by the regency of Parma will be dealt with, he says, in the following year. The point is that the writer of Chapter One makes only brief mention of Poland which is dealt with in Chapters Three and Four, and says nothing of Corsica which is treated in Chapter Six. It was an editorial policy of non-interference established in 1765 and 1766: the new hand keeps off topics that receive attention in the main part of the narrative. If the new hand did contribute Chapter Five on Spain he would feel free to comment on it in his introduction in the way he does.

Another consideration is that the new hand, judging from his treatment of the Protestant–Catholic rivalries in Europe and his anti-Rome feelings,

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\(^1\) Compare the comments on Poland in the narrative (\textit{Ibid.}, p. 27) and in the Chronicle (\textit{Ibid.}, p. 154).

\(^2\) For example compare \textit{Ibid.}, pp. 29 and 80, 31 and 93, 32 and 101, 33 and 154, 34 and 165. The compiler had kept his eye on the Jesuits and Spain since at least October, 1766 (\textit{Ibid.}, 1766, p. 146) and knew of the expulsion order in April, 1766. So he had plenty of time to gather material for the 1767 narrative.

\(^3\) \textit{Ibid.}, 1767, p. 5.
would be more willing than Burke to tackle a topic like the Church in Spain and the Jesuits. Burke’s treatment of the Catholics in Poland this year is adroitly clear of side or favour. He blames individuals, like King Sigismund III for a neglectful reign, or the Bishop of Cracow. He argues that the Catholics started the present prejudice against the Protestant minority, but he has no fear or suspicion of the institution of the Catholic Church. Unlike his co-writer he argues within the historical context dating back to the tenth century. He has as good material for anti-Roman polemics as the writer of Chapter Five, but his handling of the material is more studied and careful. Besides, Burke suffered enough attacks of a religious colour for him to know at once their harm and their pointlessness.¹ His mother and sister were Catholics as were many of his relations and it is improbable that he would allow himself to partake in prejudices of this kind. Although the evidence is not conclusive it is probable that Burke’s assistant wrote the chapter on Spain and the opening survey on Europe. The problem might be more surely solved by studying the treatment of Papal affairs in subsequent numbers.

The narrative for 1767 looks like the work of two authors. English probably wrote the opening survey in Chapters One and Two, and the chapter on Spain. Burke concentrated on the topics which interested him, or which occupied him in parliament, namely British domestic affairs, Poland, and Corsica.

IX

By the end of the first ten years Burke’s position on the *Annual Register* was determined by two considerations. He probably wanted to hold on to as much of the History as he could manage. This would enable him to write up areas of particular interest in Europe and the colonies. If he wrote the chapters on home affairs, which seems likely, he did so in a hurried and partisan fashion, judging by the two attacks on Pitt for example. He might well have thought that the platform would help the Rockingham group. He seemed determined to hold on to it. Yet he had to give ground. From the time of his last year with Hamilton he was coping with a frightening load. His health suffered from the strain. He had to have assistance, and English seems to have been the man who in the last three years took more and more of the

¹ See T. W. Copeland, *Our Eminent Friend Edmund Burke*, pp. 41–44.
work. English played a decidedly minor rôle in the significance of his contributions. He writes comparatively short and not central chapters. But Burke needed him if the Annual Register, and himself as its editor were to survive as he wanted.

As far as the construction of the History is concerned Burke had given up a "design" or "plan". After the war the structure of the magazine had become almost arbitrary. The framework, an average of just below 60 pages, roughly followed this sequence (i) a survey of the year in Europe, (ii) major topic of interest in Europe, (iii) minor European interests, (iv) colonial affairs, (v) Britain. But chapters within this sequence had none of the close-knit relation which he achieved during the years 1758 to 1762, or which he attempted in 1764 and 1765. Each chapter could stand on its own without prejudice to the rest of the narrative. The variation in quality from chapter to chapter suggests that he worked on his special interests, say Poland, more assiduously than on others like Britain, and because these variations are not smoothed out we have to presume that the editorial duty was not taken very carefully.

The internal evidence of the Annual Register gives the opposite view to that held or suggested by commentators, that he stopped writing the history article when he entered parliament and that he directed the magazine in some effective way after he stopped writing. He clearly does write the bulk of the history article in 1767 and looks set to continue.¹ He decided what he wanted to comment on in his history, and left the small remainder to his assistant who also did most if not all the compilation of material for the rest of the magazine. But the other aspects of an editor's job are neglected. It looks unlikely that he was interested in these, nor would he hold on to them if he stopped writing the historical article. It seems a case of staying in for the historical article or withdrawing to act only in some loose advisory capacity.

These conclusions do not necessarily deny English's remark in the Gentleman's Magazine for 1795, "I have conducted the Annual Register ever since the year 1765 down to the present moment."² In another letter to the Gentleman's Magazine, he regarded himself as "The Author and Editor" of the magazine since 1765 because he dates the "short but true narrative of his conduct of the Annual Register" from that year.³ 1765 was the first year in

¹ I have research in progress on Burke's relationship with the Annual Register from 1768 onwards.
³ Ibid., pp. 734-736.
which English appears to have written some of the history article. That together with the spade-work of collecting, sorting and editing material for the rest of the magazine gave him a tenuous claim to that title. Certainly 1765 is the first year in which his work is indispensable to the magazine and is therefore a landmark in his career.