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Studies in German Literature Linguistics and Culture Series

Publishing Culture and the “Reading Nation” German Book History in the Long Nineteenth Century

Edited by LYNNE TATLOCK

**Essays examining aspects of German book history - in relation to
writers, readers, and publishers - from the 1780s to the 1930s.**

Over the long nineteenth century, German book publishing experienced an unprecedented boom, outstripping by 1910 all other Western nations. Responding to the spread of literacy, publishers found new marketing methods and recalibrated their relationships to authors. Technical innovations made books for a range of budgets possible. Yearbooks, encyclopedias, and boxed sets also multiplied. A renewed interest in connoisseurship meant that books signified taste and affiliation. While reading could be a group activity, the splintering of the publishing industry into niche markets made it seem an ever-more private and individualistic affair, promising variously self-help, information, *Bildung*, moral edification, and titillation. The essays in this volume examine what Robert Darnton has termed the "communications circuit": the life-cycle of the book as a convergence of complex cultural, social, and economic phenomena. In examining facets of the lives of select books from the late 1780s to the early 1930s that Germans actually read, the essays present a complex and nuanced picture of writing, publishing, and reading in the shadow of nation building and class formation, and suggest how the analysis of texts and the study of books can inform one another.

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