## Contents

Illustrations ix
Abbreviations xii

	Acknowledgements xiii	
	Dedication xv	
	Preface xvii	
I	The mental world of the peasant reader	I
II	Elementary education and the acquisition of reading skills	19
III	Direct and indirect evidence for readership of the chapbooks	45
IV	The fortunes and the volume of stock of the chapbook publishers	83
V	The distributors: pedlars, hawkers and petty chapmen	111
VI	The content of Samuel Pepys's collection and the bibliothèque bleue	129
VII	Small merry books: courtship, sex and songs	156
ΊΠ	Small godly books: popular religion	194
IX	Portraits of society: historical and chivalric novels	219
X	Conclusion	258
	Appendix: The chapbook section of the trade-list of William Thackeray, c. 1689	262
Index 269		