

Horace Imitated but before the Preface to the 1737 *Letters*.⁶⁵ But by far the most surprising appearance of this Mercury engraving is in its original unribboned and unlettered state at the beginning of the letters in the 1741 volume, *The Works of Mr. Alexander Pope in Prose, Volume II* (Griffith 530–1) (figure 13). It would be expected to appear in the same revised state as it had at the beginning of the 1737 *Letters*. It forms the headpiece to a letter from Pope to Swift of 18 June 1714. Lord Orrery had left Dublin on 5 July 1737, according to Sherburn, bringing with him Pope's letters to Swift. He wrote to Swift saying Pope had the letters on 23 July 1737.⁶⁶ But this evidence of the plain engraving suggests that Pope had already started printing his letters to Swift before the engraving appeared in its enhanced form in the *Letters* on 19 May 1737. In a case like this, the engraving affords valuable bibliographical evidence. Examination on the Traherne collator does not suggest there were two engravings, and such duplication would in any case be most unlikely. The whole affair of the publication of the Pope and Swift letters clearly invites further investigation, as does the rest of Pope's printing in quarto and folio in the summer of 1737, but it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that Pope had printed some of his letters to Swift before July 1737; perhaps he had saved copies of them; perhaps he made them up.

65. David Foxon thinks it was intended with other prose pieces for the 1735 *Works* (Pope and the Early Eighteenth-Century Book Trade, 133), but that now seems unlikely. *The First Epistle of the First Book of Horace* would not have been ready in 1735.

66. *Correspondence*, 4:81.