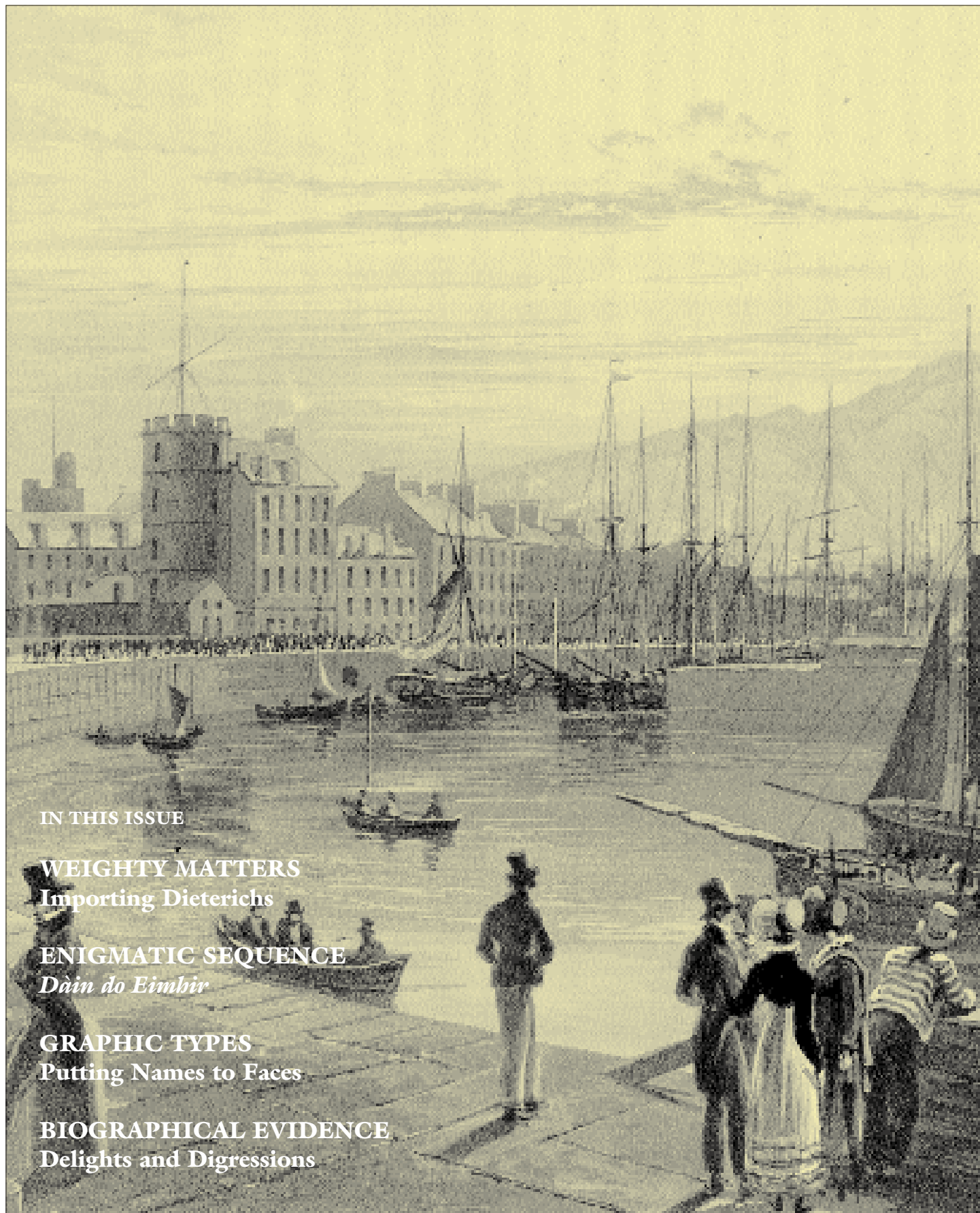


FOLIO

Collections • Research • Events at the National Library of Scotland

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Tons of Tomes

For the fashionable, the ending of the prolonged conflict with France in June 1815 reopened the Continent to the peregrinations of wealthy British travellers. In the port town of Leith, tourism became a new business opportunity for ship owners trading in highly competitive post-war conditions. Early in the following year, advertisements in the Edinburgh press announced the creation of the Leith and Hamburg Shipping Company to form a regular trading link between the two ports. On 18 March 1816 the *Edinburgh Evening Courant* noted that six fast, cutter-rigged sailing smacks with ‘handsome accommodation for passengers’ and ‘moderate freights’ were nearing completion. Four months later, on 22 July, promoting the latest addition to their fleet, the directors enthused over the 142-ton, Newcastle-built *Courier*, ‘elegantly fitted up with two cabins, a dressing room, and separate state-rooms in the style of the newest London smacks’. They hoped travellers

... will embrace this opportunity ... during the summer, to take a pleasure voyage to Hamburg and back, which may be accomplished, and a tour made through the greater part of Germany and Prussia, within a short period of four to five weeks, at the expense not exceeding 30 guineas. Within a short circuit are situated the celebrated cities of Berlin, Dresden, Leipsic, Magdeburg, Hanover, Brunswick, Brunau, etc. ...

The lifting of the prohibition on European travel gave impetus to private and institutional collecting, even before Napoleon’s final defeat. During his tour of Scotland in 1816, Dr Spiker, librarian to the King of Prussia, noted a ‘collection of Medical Dissertations belonging to the late Professor Reimarus of Hamburg’ purchased by the University of Edinburgh. Shipping records show a ‘case of books’ for the ‘College Library’ arriving in the Yarmouth-registered *Bonetta* from Hamburg in late March 1815. Only months before, Samuel Laing of Forth Street in Edinburgh imported 114 prints from Rotterdam to complete a copy of Buffon’s *Natural History*.

The Battle of Waterloo over, collecting increased its momentum and

MICHAEL NIX

The Dieterichs Collection comprises more than 100,000 items – by far the largest special collection in the National Library of Scotland. Alastair Cherry drily commented in For the Encouragement of Learning, ‘The purchase price of £86, cheap even by the standards of 1820, was a reflection of the modest value placed upon it at the time, an opinion which posterity has found no reason to dispute.’

However, the narrative of its import from Leipzig is far from dull. The story emerges both from documents held at the National Archives of Scotland, where Michael Nix found the original bill of lading for the import of Dieterichs’ vast library, and from correspondence in Faculty of Advocates’ records, that brings to life both the daunting logistics and some of the personalities involved in the operation.

geographical scope. At the University of Edinburgh’s Museum of Natural History, founded in 1812, Professor Robert Jamieson added to his expanding collections, but landing specimens and clearing Customs was not always easy. In July 1819, under tight security, forty-two cases containing ‘objects of Natural History’ dispatched from Havre de Grace were discharged at Leith. After ‘examination on the quays’ and the fixing of seals in ‘the King’s warehouse’, they were conveyed to the college ‘under charge of trusty officers’ and deposited ‘in a proper room, under lock’ until further orders. In the spring of 1821, Dr Robert Graham at the King’s Botanic

Gardens off Leith Walk took delivery of plants from Calcutta. Three years later, natural history specimens, minerals and seeds arrived via London from Singapore, Seringapatam and the Cape of Good Hope for the Gardens and University.

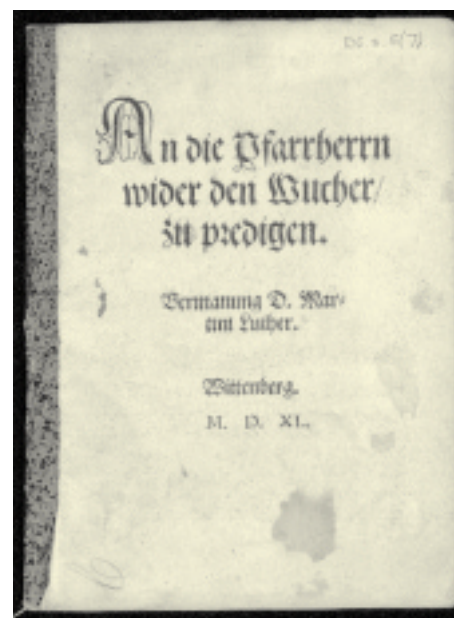
When Lord Alloway imported 605 Australian newspapers in 1827, his acquisition, rated as ‘printed books’, cost him 4s. 6d. in duty. Such imposts, calculated by weight, were to have potentially serious implications for the Advocates’ Library, the forerunner of the National Library of Scotland, when it shipped from Hamburg a consignment of 100,000 printed items in April 1820. In the previous year, the Customs Consolidation Act imposed an importation tax of £6 10s. per hundredweight (50.8 kgs) on ‘Half-Bound, or in any way Bound’ printed books and manuscripts. Unbound items attracted a tariff of £5 for equivalent weight. The amount demanded for the consignment by a Leith Customs clerk was exceptionally large. How did the Library respond?

Before answering this question, it has to be noted that the Library’s acquisition of foreign books directly from abroad was already a long-established practice. During the first half of the eighteenth century, European legal tomes dominated the collection. However, by the 1780s the main focus of collecting from French, German, Dutch and Italian publishing centres shifted towards history, travel, science and the classics. Continental war early in the next century imposed a further change of emphasis. British publications, including material on contemporary events and recent discoveries in Africa and the Pacific, now predominated, to the detriment of contemporary foreign literature.

After the war, the Library started making amends. On 5 July 1817 its five Curators agreed ‘that correspondences be instituted in the foreign markets, such as Paris and Leipsic, for the regular supply of continental works’. Six days later, one of them, Sir William Hamilton, a keen student of European literature, consented to proceed to Leipzig to examine the library of a Dr Schaeffer, then on the market for £1,000 (Records of the Faculty of Advocates FR 121: Minutes of the Curators, 5 July 1817; FR 5: Faculty Minute Book, 11 July 1817). Hamilton

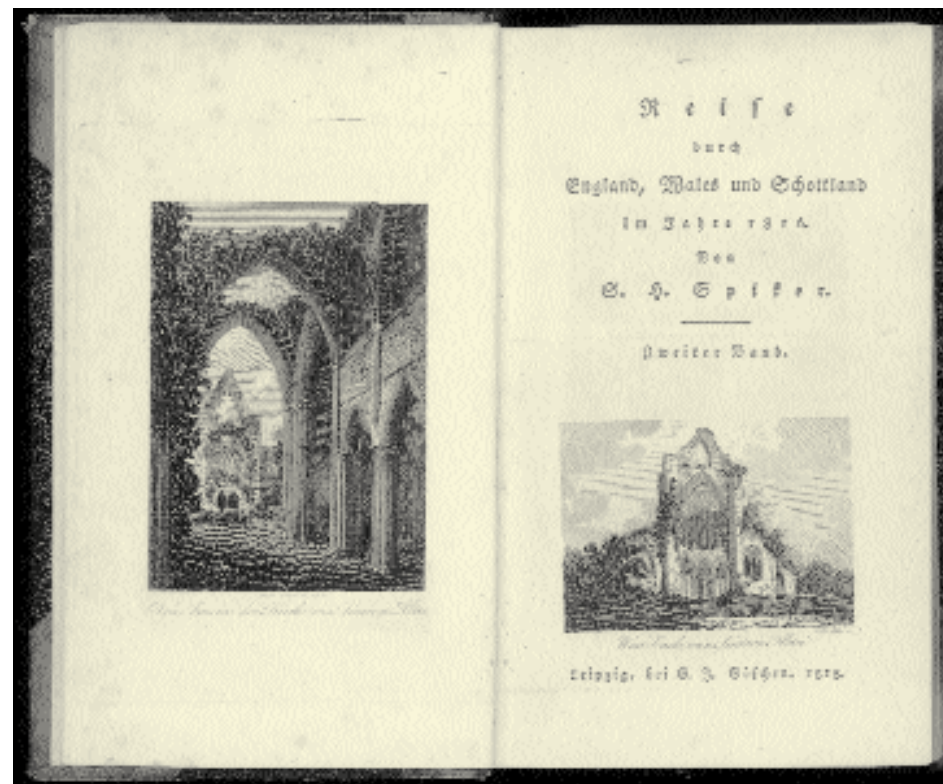


William Daniell’s engraving of Leith from Richard Ayton’s *Voyage Round the Coast of Britain*, 8 volumes, 1814 (MS.6140) shows the port much as it was when the Dieterichs Collection was shipped there.



An die Pfarrherrn wider den Wucher zu predigen, 1540 (DC.s.517). A pamphlet by Martin Luther from the Dieterichs Collection.

The title page of volume two of *Reise Durch England, Wales und Schottland Jahre 1816* by Samuel Heinrich Spiker, Leipzig, G.J. Goschen, 1818 (ABS.1.88.39) in which Spiker mentions the import of the Dieterichs library.



was already in touch with the bookseller Johann Frederick Gleditsch in the same city, having placed the Library’s first order with his firm on 14 June. Agreeing to a 12 per cent discount on retail prices, Gleditsch forwarded books to Edinburgh using the Leith and Hamburg Shipping Company and its agents Scherr and Connal in Hamburg (FR 337: letters and invoices for purchases of German books, 11 July and 12 September 1817).

Hamilton, in the city during the autumn, may well have attended the great annual Michaelmas fair, opened for a fortnight on 5 October. Streets teemed with people and rows of wagons full of merchandise edged the roads leading into the town. Large numbers of merchants, assiduously searching for the newest and most elegant fashions, gave vent to their frustration at the high prices of British goods arriving by the shipload through Hamburg.

It seems likely that Hamilton would have taken the opportunity to visit Gleditsch’s, and there an auction catalogue for the final disposal of the library of Georg Septimus Dieterichs, Count Palatine and Senator of Regensburg, could be consulted.

The catalogue, dated 1816, was the fourth of a series first produced in 1806 following Dieterichs’ death. They described the contents of a massive private library, embracing antiquarian writings, law, history, numismatics and forensic medicine, wholly assembled by Dieterichs himself. By the time he was thirty-nine in 1760, it was already so extensive he initiated a seven-part alphabetical catalogue which was completed three years later. Its purpose, he explained, was to act as an *aide-mémoire* and to assist his bibliophile visitors.

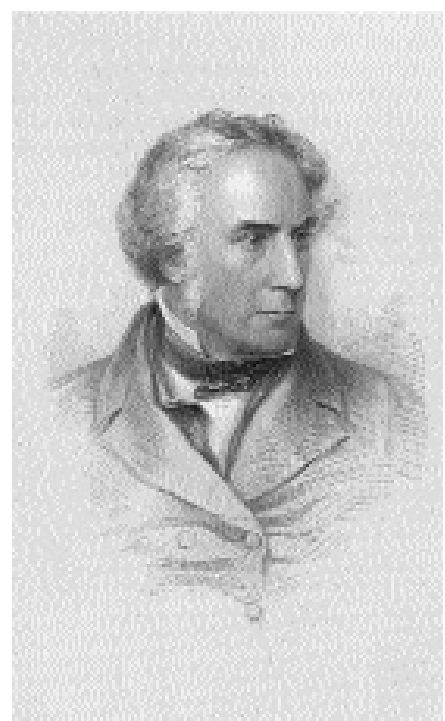
One such visitor was Frederick Karl Gottlob Hirsching. In 1790, he wrote of the library’s fame, noting the rarity of many items; he remarked on the catalogue which Dieterichs, then the city treasurer, had long planned to extend. Dieterichs’ house was overflowing with books, dissertations, pamphlets and treatises and Hirsching was disappointed not to be able to inspect the library properly because everything ‘stands one on top of the other’; he nonetheless acknowledged ‘connoisseurs’ were always amazed at its quality and range. A few

Leipzig d. 12 July 1821.

an 25' Juny & 10 July, abgesandt von L. F. Gleditsch

1. Opus. Bibliothecae Schaeffer. Vol. 1.	6.
1. Opus. Bibliothecae Schaeffer. Vol. 2.	2. 8.
1. Bibliothecae Schaeffer. Vol. 3.	1. 6.
2. Richter. Geist. 11. Vol.	6.
1. Richter. Geist. 12. Vol.	5. 20.
1. Richter. Geist. 13. Vol.	3. 16.
1. Richter. Geist. 14. Vol.	3. 16.
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1. Richter. Geist. 24. Vol.	3. 16.
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1. Richter. Geist. 44. Vol.	3. 16.
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1. Richter. Geist. 47. Vol.	3. 16.
1. Richter. Geist. 48. Vol.	3. 16.
1. Richter. Geist. 49. Vol.	3. 16.
1. Richter. Geist. 50. Vol.	3. 16.
1. Richter. Geist. 51. Vol.	3. 16.
1. Richter. Geist. 52. Vol.	3. 16.
1. Richter. Geist. 53. Vol.	3. 16.
1. Richter. Geist. 54. Vol.	3. 16.
1. Richter. Geist. 55. Vol.	3. 16.
1. Richter. Geist. 56. Vol.	3. 16.
1. Richter. Geist. 57. Vol.	3. 16.
1. Richter. Geist. 58. Vol.	3. 16.
1. Richter. Geist. 59. Vol.	3. 16.
1. Richter. Geist. 60. Vol.	3. 16.

Detail from an invoice relating to the purchase of the Dieterichs Collection. (FR 337) (Reproduced courtesy of the Advocates' Library)



The portrait frontispiece of Sir William Hamilton from Memoir of Sir William Hamilton by John Veitch, Edinburgh 1869. (T.T.1)

years after Hirsching's visit, an unknown party offered Dieterichs £680 (around £27,000 at today's prices) for the library, a sum he declined (FR 337: 27 October 1819).

The 1816 catalogue Preface shows Gleditsch as one of five agents dealing with the sale. It notes a collection of 'well-bound' books and 100,000 'dissertations' valued at 3,000 gulden (over £200) to be sold entire. A partial listing in the 1760s catalogues in the possession of Dr Schaeffer jnr of Regensburg could be viewed by prospective purchasers. If Hamilton was shown the auction catalogue during his 1817 Leipzig visit, his biographer, Veitch, makes no mention of his travelling on to Regensburg.

Two years after Hamilton visited Leipzig, on 3 September 1819, Richter of Gleditsch's wrote to him promising to 'procure for you the Dietrichsche Dissertationen ... much below the sum of £100' (the maximum amount the Advocates were willing to pay). The bookseller undertook to forward it with 'every economy', considering the most 'expedient' route from Regensburg to Edinburgh was via Frankfurt and Rotterdam. On the same day Richter 'used the freedom' to draw £90 from the Library's account with Stirling and Sons in London as, he pleaded, 'I must remit

the amount to Regensburg immediately'. The sum was transmitted to him eleven days later (FR 337: 3 September 1819, 15 February 1820). On 27 October Richter informed the Library that packing and 'embaling' was taking much time and attention and that he had not yet costed transporting the load across Germany (FR 337: 27 October 1819).

A month later, Gleditsch reported 'twelve large boxes' in Leipzig. On their departure from Regensburg, some of the 'learned men' there expressed regret over the collection's transfer to Scotland, 'as in every probability this will be the only one of the kind'. Proudly announcing the purchase price of £86 (around £3,500 today), the bookseller estimated it was hardly more than the 'original cost price of the paper and printing'. Warning that the weight of the boxes was 'uncommonly heavy', he planned to forward them to Hamburg, his earlier shipping scheme via Frankfurt having proved the more expensive (FR 337: 27 November 1819).

The boxes arrived in Hamburg at the end of January 1820, probably completing the German stage of their overland and river journey in an Elbe barge. Costs were heavy:

Embaling and export duty in Regensburg: £17 6s.

Freight from Regensburg to Leipzig including duty and charges on the way: £57 15s.

Charges and duty in Leipzig: £2 15s.

Freight from Leipzig to Hamburg including Leipzig duty: £63 7s.

Gleditsch's commission and postage: £4 11s.

Most of the total amount of £145 14s. was requested by Gleditsch in rix dollars (a monetary unit used in various European countries), on 22 and 27 November 1819; Stirling and Sons released £130 in two equal sums on 2 and 6 December (FR 337: 4 August 1818).

The purchase of the Dieterichs Collection, and for that matter, the acquisition through the Edinburgh bookseller David Laing of about 1,500 Scandinavian items from the library of G.T. Thorkelin of Copenhagen, post-dated the retirement of the Librarian, Alexander Manners, in March 1818. His departure resulted in a significant review which eventually determined the function of his replacement. Richter felt flattered to be invited to help search for a German candidate to fill the vacant post, suggesting amongst others Dr Spiker, who had perused the Advocates' Library during his tour. Early in the year, prior to interviews held in June 1820, a detailed report on the Library was

submitted. It included an estimate of approximately 80,000 'printed works & volumes' and approximately 1,100 manuscripts 'embracing several thousand articles'. Since 'considerable disorder prevails', it was determined to form 'a systematic Catalogue' of all contents (FR 5: 7 March 1820). The Dieterichs collection was not mentioned although, in numerical terms, it was about to more than double the Library's size.

On 29 February 1820, Scherr and Connal requested Hamilton's directions for sending the twelve boxes but it was some time before a bill of lading acknowledging their receipt and promising delivery at Leith arrived in Edinburgh. Signed on 1 April by Thomas Henry, the master of the aforementioned *Courier*, 'now riding at Anchor in the River Elbe', the document refers to the unique identification markings 'IFG 1-12' assigned to the boxes. With the bill came an invoice addressed to Blackwood the bookseller, acting as an intermediary. The document (modified) reads:

Lighterage, receiving, warehousing, delivery & shipping: £36

Warehousing, 2 months: £12

Insurance against fire and Agency: £40 & £88

Less discount of £73 5s. and Scherr and Connal's fee of £5 9s. 8d., a total of £78 14s. 8d.

The *Courier* was reported at Leith's Custom House on 11 April, her manifest listing oak pieces, rags 'fit for making paper', cottons, yarn, biscuits, paintings, 4,600 leeches and – confusingly at first – thirteen boxes of books (one turned out to be another order placed by Hamilton). Until the matter of duty was settled, the Dieterichs boxes were deposited, with permission from the Scottish Board of Customs, in the King's Warehouse.

A record of duty owed has not been found, but Richter states the boxes weighed 139 Leipzig hundredweight (120 cwt in Bavaria). Using a conversion rate of 108.798 Leipzig pounds to one British hundredweight, the total weight comes to about about 6 tons 16 cwt (6.9 tonnes). Assuming the entire collection to be bound, duty at £6 10s. the hundredweight would have amounted to about £884.

Within a month or so of his

appointment as Librarian on 5 June, David Irving wrote to the Board of Customs requesting a further delay of payment. At the end of August, the long-serving library assistant William Gibb, probably writing in Irving's absence while he was on leave studying the management of the Göttingen Library in Germany, appealed for additional storage time. The Board agreed 'to delay taking measures for effecting the payment of the Duties, for the further Term of One Month, but no longer, without authority from the Lords of the Treasury'.

The delays were almost certainly a relief to Irving. Newly in post, he was confronted with the removal of existing collections to the Upper Library (the Upper Signet Library) and a backlog of 10,000 uncatalogued volumes. But the Library was possibly playing for time; its application for a remission was not received by the Treasury until 7 September. Four days later, the Lords gave their approval. However, their order, delivered first to the Board of Customs, then to the Leith Custom House, did not reach the notice of the Library until 16 November, with an instruction to reclaim an unspecified sum of money, perhaps a surety.

Removed from the King's Warehouse to the Library in the latter half of September, the Dieterichs collection cost:

Purchase price: £86 3s.

Transportation from Regensburg to Hamburg: £145 14s.

Transportation from Hamburg to Leith: £78 14s. 8d.

Storage in the King's Warehouse, Leith, 22 weeks 4 days @ 4d. each box per week: £4 10s. 4d.

With other incidentals such as Library administration costs, shore dues charged by the port authority (Edinburgh corporation) and portorage from the harbour to the Library, with a toll payable part way up Leith Walk, the total expense was perhaps around £320 (the equivalent of about £13,000 today).

In the following year Gleditsch's, after failing to fulfil book orders, overstepped the limits of the firm's 'freedom' by withdrawing in two drafts £270 from Stirling and Sons. On being challenged, Richter, 'feeling ashamed', pleaded the business was suffering from

severe losses as a result of the war, bankruptcies of friends and the recall of borrowed capital at the end of 1820. Hamilton angrily responded:

... this proceeding is quite inconsistent with the usage of our institution ... I should be sorry to see your connection with the library broken, yet it is impossible that this can continue if more prompt attention is not paid to our orders in future. (FR 337: 30 June, 12 July 1821)

The link between the Library and the bookseller was finally severed in February 1824, presumably through Gleditsch's insolvency.

It is not without irony that, after all the effort that went into transporting it to the Advocates' Library in Edinburgh, the collection then apparently lay in a damp cellar for some years, as mentioned by E. Edwards in *Memoirs of Libraries: Including the Handbook of Library Economy*, London, 1859 (K.R.22.b). However, it was rescued mid-century by Irving's successor Samuel Halkett, who after drying it out, thankfully concluded that the Dieterichs Collection was indeed 'of considerable value'.

Note on sources

The essays in *For the Encouragement of Learning: Scotland's National Library 1689-1989* edited by Patrick Cadell and Ann Matheson provide a range of authoritative perspectives on the history and development of the National Library of Scotland and its collections. Alex Cain's 'Foreign Books in the 18th-century Advocates' Library' sets the context of the Dieterichs purchase in terms of foreign-language acquisitions and 'Special Collections' by Alastair Cherry provides a brief note on the Dieterichs Collection. The Records of the Faculty of Advocates provide financial details of its purchase and associated correspondence, in particular volume FR 337. The National Library has an unaccessioned photocopy of the title page and Preface to *Sectio Quarta Bibliothecae Dieterichsianae seu Catalogus Librorum* (Regensburg, 1816). Michael Nix has also searched through records held at the National Archives of Scotland, in particular Board of Customs Letterbooks for the period, which enumerate import duties levied and provide associated correspondence.

A Tantalising Tale

Discovering Sorley MacLean's Dàin do Eimhir

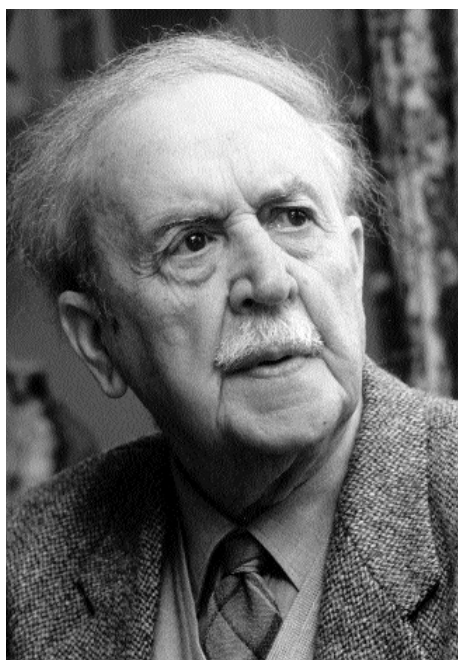
A certain air of mystery has always been attached to Sorley MacLean's sequence of love lyrics 'Dàin do Eimhir' ('Poems to Eimhir'). Nearly thirty years have passed since I sat in Glasgow's Mitchell Library, leafing for the first time through the greying pages of the original edition, printed in 1943 on wartime utility paper. I could not help realising the powerfully transgressive nature of the poetry, even though my Gaelic was still rudimentary then. Thoughts and emotions of an intensely private nature were rendered public in a way which broke resolutely with the tones and canons associated with Gaelic poetry since the preceding century. The sequence's aesthetic stance was élitist and aggressively Modernist, while the range of cultural references went from the English Metaphysicals, Pound, Eliot and MacDiarmid to French and Russian Symbolism and the music of Beethoven. The parallels with Yeats were unmistakable, though his influence was implicit rather than transparent.

Like many readers before and after, I was perplexed and tantalised by the gaps in the sequence. The Roman numerals heading each poem indicated that no fewer than twelve from a total of sixty-one items had been omitted. What were the reasons? Was it conceivable that the poet had fallen so far below the admittedly breathtaking standard he had set himself as to consider them unworthy of publication? Or did they concern elements in the story behind the sequence which he preferred to keep secret? Again like many other readers, I sifted through the 'Dàin Eile' or 'Other Poems' which made up the second section of the 1943 volume, looking for poems which might originally have belonged with the sequence and could therefore offer answers to these questions. In at least two cases, my hunches turned out to be right. But a quarter of a century was to go by before I could assemble the evidence which proved the case.

That first reading took place in spring 1975, inspired by a casual encounter with Iain Crichton Smith's English versions of the Eimhir poems in a London bookshop. During a return visit from Italy, which coincided with the 1984

CHRISTOPHER WHYTE

Christopher Whyte's new edition of Sorley MacLean's Dàin do Eimhir (Poems to Eimhir) breaks new ground in our understanding of the work of the great Gaelic poet, whose achievements have been honoured with many major awards, including the Queen's Medal for Poetry. The Sorley MacLean Papers at the National Library of Scotland, which are currently being catalogued, have already made it possible to identify most of the sequences omitted from previous editions of Dàin do Eimhir. They will doubtless afford future researchers many further insights. Christopher Whyte here describes the challenge posed by this complex literary puzzle.



Sorley MacLean. Photograph by Cailean MacLean.

Edinburgh Festival, I was lucky enough to have the poet's undivided attention for a couple of hours one evening. I was busy putting as much of the sequence as was available to me into Italian, for prospective publication. What I was hoping for was illumination on several points of grammar and expression which continued to puzzle me. And instead MacLean was eager to give me his own version of the story behind the sequence, one he never committed to print, but which I soon realised I was not the only person to have heard. It was to a certain extent a comical encounter, for his reminiscences kept us away from what I looked on as the real business of the meeting, and I did not bother to make notes on what he told me. Different people were in possession of differing versions of the story, which they eked out with their own decoding of the published texts. When, on the prompting of Ronald Renton, the Association for Scottish Literary Studies approached me about doing an edition of the sequence, in the spring of 1999, I realised that I would have to tread a delicate line between what could be said in print and what could not. In this respect, as in others, I was lucky enough to benefit from the interest and involvement of the poet's daughter Ishbel. She read each part of the edition as it was completed and did not attempt to restrict me in any way. The only exception was a scurrilous epigram on the Pope who celebrated the fall of Barcelona in 1939, a manuscript survival which we agreed might still offend some sensibilities.

The epigram was brought to my attention by a friend and colleague, Dr Michel Byrne, editor of the *Collected Poems* (H3.201.1632) of MacLean's contemporary George Campbell Hay (1915-84). Hay had transcribed it, along with items from the Eimhir sequence, into a notebook which forms part of his archive in the National Library of Scotland. One of these was the missing poem XVI, the longest of six unpublished poems now restored to the cycle, and a significant addition to the overall canon of MacLean's work. My major resource, however, in working on the sequence was constituted by the letters MacLean wrote between 1940 and 1943 to Douglas Young, poet, classical



Sorley MacLean during the Second World War (Sorley MacLean Papers, uncatalogued). Dàin do Eimhir appeared while the author was recovering from an injury received at the battle of El Alamein.

scholar and leading light of the nationalist movement at the outbreak of the war. These are also held in the National Library, and I had consulted them around the time I saw MacLean himself. The letters contain typescript copies, with English translations, of two short items from the sequence, neither a major poem, but nonetheless interesting and valuable in their own light. One of them, XLI, as I would later learn, had functioned as closure to an intermediate version of the cycle.

From this correspondence I also learned about the letter MacLean had received on Tuesday 19 December 1939, when XXVII was finished and XXVIII had yet to be written. It implied that he would never be able to enjoy a full relationship with the woman he loved and whose beauty he had already celebrated in lyrics of such outstanding quality that the time-hallowed boast of conferring immortality on the beloved was, in this case at least, far from empty swaggering.

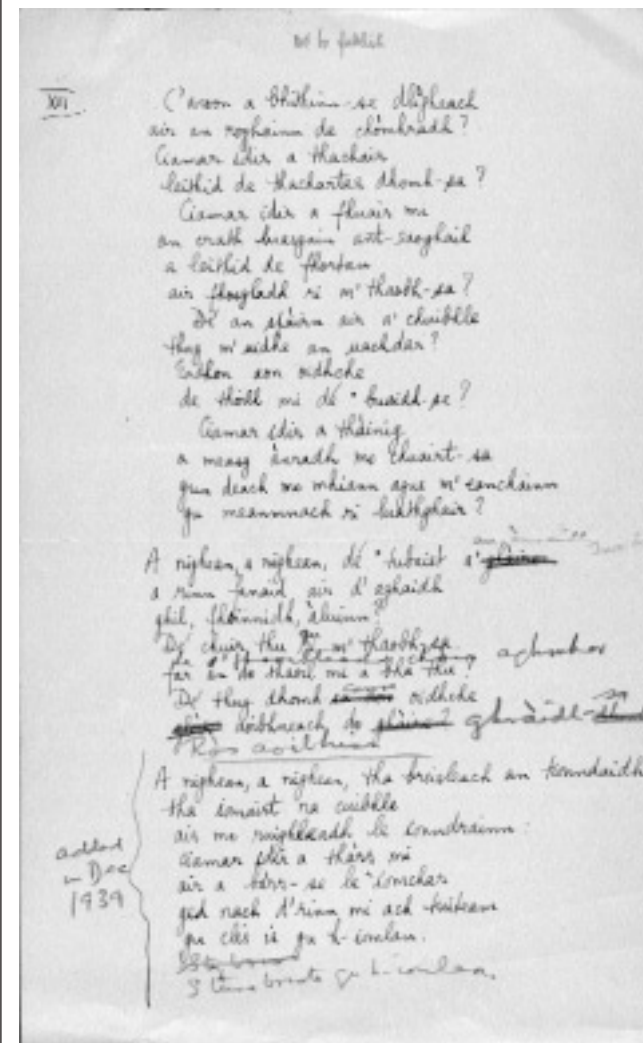
Three more of the missing items had appeared in Callum Macdonald's *Lines Review* (NH.290) in 1970, disturbing in the graphic intensity with which they



Douglas Young in the 1940s (Sorley MacLean Papers, uncatalogued).

describe the mutilation MacLean believed the woman to have suffered. But when at last, after fully thirty-four years, he was able to publish a second collection with Canongate in 1977, the 'Dàin do Eimhir' disappeared from public view. Those items he chose to reprint carried individual titles, without any indication that they had once belonged to a larger entity. When a collected volume was issued by Carcanet in 1989, Roman numerals, added almost surreptitiously at the end of poems, indicated their position in the sequence as originally conceived. But it would have taken a very patient reader to piece these together in order to gain a valid impression of the sequence as it once existed.

I only learned this spring that Douglas Young had deposited certain manuscript copies of the Eimhir poems,

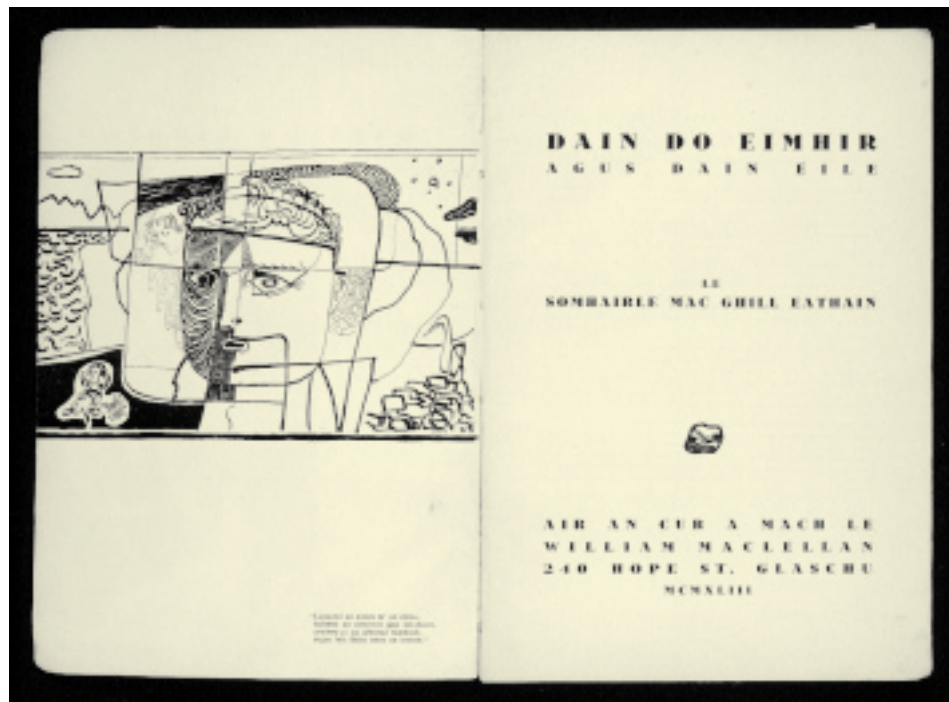


Poem XVI (Sorley MacLean Papers, uncatalogued). Christopher Whyte notes in the new edition of Dàin do Eimhir that this transcript in Douglas Young's hand was among items Young sent the poet on 3 April 1968: 'After receiving this copy, MacLean made alterations in pencil which indicate he was working towards a revised version of the lyric, never completed.'

entrusted to him by MacLean before he departed on active service, in Aberdeen University Library. Had I known this earlier, it would have made my task considerably easier. Nonetheless, it proved possible to recover all but one of the missing items from the National Library's holdings, thanks in part to a series of hypotheses and deductions which enriched my understanding of the sequence and of MacLean's contradictory, often vacillating attitude towards it. In the spring of 2001, the wakeful hours between three and five in the morning were frequently taken up with conjectures about the fate and content of one or another of the missing items, and how their restoration might affect the cycle as a whole.

Let me give two examples. An item which appears as XVI among the 'Dàin Eile' in the 1943 edition compares MacLean's two great loves of this period, an Irish woman and a Scottish woman. In a letter to Young, MacLean instructs him to place VI and XV from the cycle proper among the 'Dàin Eile' 'as in the list'. By a process of elimination, I worked out that 'Dàin Eile' XVI must originally have been 'Dàin do Eimhir' VI. But that brought the Scottish woman into the cycle at far too early a stage! In poem XXII, MacLean was still preoccupied with the Irish woman, whom he had met at the time of the Spanish Civil War, and who was to marry another man late on in 1939. When another missing item, V, addressed to the 'nighean ruadh', emerged, in a transcript made by Young in 1941 and returned to MacLean as late as 1968, I concluded that MacLean had removed those earlier items which referred explicitly to the Scottish woman, in order to ensure a smooth transition in the sequence as published. In a subsequent poem, 'A' Mhalairt Bhreugach' ('The False Exchange') he was to apologise retrospectively to the Irish woman, for having inserted poems she had inspired into a sequence where the Scottish woman was dominant.

The Scottish woman definitively ousts the Irish woman from MacLean's imagination in poem XXIII, the 'concert poem'. It concerns a performance of a Beethoven symphony in which Eimhir is herself involved. Its evocation of



turbulent, passionate music in search of joy suggested that the Ninth, the 'Choral Symphony', with its setting of words from Friedrich Schiller's 'Ode to Joy', must be intended. And indeed, the Gaelic 'còisir' is twice rendered as 'chorus' in MacLean's 1989 English translation. Yet reference to the *Scotsman* revealed that not the Ninth, but the Eighth Symphony had been performed in the Usher Hall, with Adrian Boult conducting, on 9 December 1939, the day before MacLean began work on the poem. Two native speakers whom I consulted gave contradictory answers. For one, 'còisir' obviously meant 'chorus', while for the other it could only mean 'orchestra'. In a 1941 translation written in pencil by the poet, and preserved among the Caird Papers (Acc.10193) in the National Library of Scotland, the word is rendered 'orchestra' the first time it appears. The second time, the translation has been deleted so energetically as to make a hole in the paper, and 'my love in the great chorus' substituted. Had MacLean done everything he could to cover his tracks, in an honourable attempt to prevent the Scottish woman's real identity being traced? His daughter had spoken to me of her as a violinist. The manuscript version of XXIII in Aberdeen confirmed my conjectures. There the poem carries

As press cuttings among the Sorley MacLean Papers show, when *Dàin do Eimhir* (HP4.84.1691) was first published in 1943 initial critical responses were variable.

(Reproduced courtesy of Mrs Anne Crosbie)

the title 'An t-Ochdamh aig Beethoven agus Eimhir' ('Beethoven's Eighth and Eimhir'), and the crucial line has 'shuidh' ('And my love *sat* in the great [orchestra]').

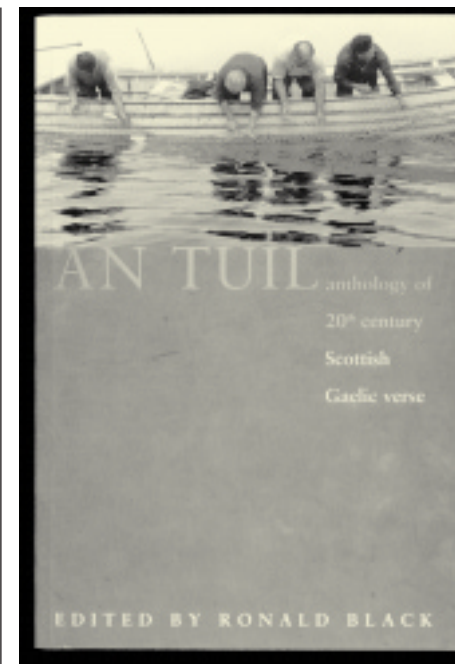
MacLean's letters to Young offer an engrossing compendium of the poet's views on literature, culture and politics around the time the sequence was completed. As with all correspondences, there is effectively a dual authorship. Hardly any of Young's letters are included in the archive. Yet in so far as these were letters written to him, and so are excerpts from a dialogue between the two men, Young bears a large responsibility for their existence. As I pored over them, noting down everything that could be relevant to the edition, I became more and more aware of a debt of gratitude to Young: for reaching an accurate assessment of MacLean's enormous talent, in circumstances that could hardly have been more distressing and distracting; for teasing information out of a troubled and introverted genius, full of scruples and reticences, with exemplary patience and persistence; and for the conscientious

expertise, characteristic of a trained philologist, with which he treated the Gaelic texts, carefully recording MacLean's vacillations with regard to even a single word, at times dating his receipt of a new variant, so as to ensure maximum fidelity to the poet's intentions, once publication became possible. The eventuality, even the likelihood of MacLean's death on active service hung over many of their exchanges, giving an especial poignancy to Young's meticulous concern.

It was odd to perceive such cordiality between individuals with diametrically opposed political views. Though MacLean did not waver, he respected Young's position and constantly questioned the validity of his own:

For myself, and I speak quite selfishly, I could see only the concentration camp if the Nazis won. That is, if I didn't shut up permanently. Even if Nazism is not a capitalist dictatorship, even if it is only the aristocracy of a 'strong, warrior caste', I loathe the inhumanism of that. If it won, I am afraid it would make its triumph far too permanent. I may be wrong, but for myself I cannot take the risk of treating it even as the equal of English imperialism. Even if I were intellectually convinced, I don't know if I would have the courage to take your line, or Hay's, but my attitude to the Nazis is crudely like what I imagine Muir's is, that they are just the very devil. You have Grieve on your side but I cannot lean much on his political judgement. What worries me far more is that I fear you have too the example of John Maclean – but is the case the same? I believe he would have taken your line in effect and that fills me with misgiving about myself. (1 October 1940)

Young received a prison sentence for his determined opposition to a London government's imposing military conscription north of the border. MacLean, on the other hand, doggedly placed his hopes in Stalinist Russia and in an eventual victory of the Red Army. What we now know of conditions in Russia in the 1930s, and of the fate of those countries which were indeed 'liberated' by the Red Army at the end of the war, casts MacLean's enthusiasms in an ironic light. But he lacked the benefit of hindsight, and his views were shared by many left-wing intellectuals less



An Tuil (HP2.200.03475), an anthology of twentieth-century Scottish Gaelic verse; its editor, Ronald Black, provides extensive notes on Sorley MacLean. (Reproduced courtesy of Polygon)

isolated geographically, who had the benefit of greater access to relevant accounts and information. André Gide was one of very few contemporary figures prepared to look honestly at what had become of the Bolshevik dream.

The realisation that he had been duped by the Scottish woman, and the peculiar circumstances which surrounded her deception, were perhaps the major factor in the antipathy which MacLean increasingly felt for the sequence. He came to look on the prospect of its publication with indifference and even hostility. The same cannot be said for the extended political poem which occupied him in the spring of 1939, and again at the end of the year, and which took its title from the beloved mountain range in Skye on whose peaks he had so often roamed alone, when appointed to his first teaching post at Portree High School. While making full reference in the edition of the 'Dàin do Eimhir' to the text of 'An Cuilithionn' as published in *Chapman* magazine and then in the 1989 collected volume, I was also able to consult the original, 1939 version of the poem in the poet's archive, which the National Library of Scotland is in the process of cataloguing. The early

version is about a third as long again and contains some 400 lines of unpublished poetry. Comparison of the two versions sheds a fascinating light on the poet's attitudes at the outbreak of the war, as well as on the cutting and pasting which he undertook so as to come up with an 'acceptable' abridgement half a century later.

Perhaps the next step in making MacLean's poetic achievement fully available to a broad public will be to collate both texts with the related materials lodged in the university libraries of Aberdeen and Edinburgh, offering a structured presentation which will make a valid assessment of this major poem feasible at last.

Note on sources

The Sorley MacLean Papers (MS.29501) are currently being catalogued: the records will be accessible via the Library's online catalogue. The collection comprises extensive correspondence, 1934–96; diaries and notebooks; mss of poetry and prose, including unpublished material; and lectures, including texts of unpublished lectures. The collection also includes the papers of four of Sorley MacLean's relatives: Alexander Nicolson (boxes 33 and 34) and James Nicolson (box 35), both of whom collected songs from Skye and Raasay; folklorist and author, Calum Iain MacLean (boxes 36 and 37); and essays, poems, translations and correspondence of John MacLean (box 38). Printed items include press cuttings and photographs. In 1981 the Library mounted an exhibition to mark the author's seventieth birthday and the catalogue, *Sombairle MacGill-Eain – Sorley MacLean*, edited by Ann Matheson, bears the shelf mark Lit.S.37.M. *An Tuil* (HP2.200.03475), an anthology of twentieth-century Gaelic verse (Polygon, 1999) edited by Ronald Black, contains extensive notes on the author's background and writing. The Library has all of Sorley MacLean's published works, including the 1943 first edition of *Dàin do Eimhir* (HP4.84.1691) and the latest, *Dàin do Eimhir* (Association of Scottish Literary Studies, 2002) (H3.202.3779) edited by Christopher Whyte, who provides a full account of the genesis of this new edition as well as bibliographical references.

Designs of the Best Type

From Gutenberg to PDF

One of the pleasures of researching my book *Printing Type Designs: A New History from Gutenberg to 2000* (HP3.201.0720) was looking at some very fine and historically important books. As I read the final proofs of this narrative, the National Library of Scotland put on display a copy of a very fine illustrated folio edition of the King James Bible, published in 1999 in two volumes by the private Pennyroyal Caxton Press of Barry Moser and Bruce Kovner (FB.1.281). Seeing this important very-late-twentieth-century American example of a private press tradition that began with the English Doves Press Bible of 1903 (L.178a) tempted me into adding some sentences to my supposedly completed book. The typeface used by Barry Moser is Matthew Carter's excellent Galliard. Interestingly, and quite unknown to me, the National Library had just adopted Galliard for use on correspondence and publications, including *Folio*. Carter's lower case italic *g* has a very distinctive design.

Carter's Galliard was first issued by the Mergenthaler Linotype Company of New York in 1978 as a photo-composition face. Carter based Galliard on a sixteenth-century typeface by Robert Granjon who was working in Paris from the middle 1540s. Now digitised, Galliard is a continuation of a style of roman typefaces – the so-called 'Old Faces' – that go back in an unbroken line to Paris in the 1530s when Claude Garamond cut some of the most beautiful roman letterforms of our western culture.

There has been considerable scholarly debate as to who first designed and cut these 'Old Faces' and it was important to my researches that the National Library has copies not only of the many volumes of the English *The Library* (NG.1619 SER) and the Scottish *Bibliothek* (NRR) but also, for example, the Papers of both the Bibliographical Society of America and the Bibliographical Society of the University of Virginia, and a complete run of *Printing History* (HJ5.1 SER), the elegant and scholarly journal of the American Printing Society.

I enjoyed retelling something of this scholarly debate on the development of an important group of typefaces, but it is the end products that count and in the

In one way or another, Duncan Glen has worked with typefaces since 1948. His Printing Type Designs: A new history from Gutenberg to 2000 is written from a 'Scottish stance' and poses the question, 'Has Gutenberg left the house?' The author's passion for his subject and narrative verve carry the reader on a breathtaking journey through the history of printing and now, for Folio, he recounts the vital research he undertook at the National Library of Scotland, where he was able to inspect some of the finest printed books ever created and consult diverse critical and historical material.

DUNCAN GLEN

National Library I handled again some of the finest books printed in these typefaces.

The 1530s was the age not only of the great Estienne family but also of Simon de Colines and the influential Geoffroy Tory. Alongside these great Parisian printer-publishers we can place several typecutters who are worthy to stand alongside the great Garamond – not only Robert Granjon but Antoine Augereau, the Le Bé family and Jean Jannon who designed the typeface on which the mis-named Monotype Garamond was based.

At the end of the fifteenth century, Francesco Griffo cut for Aldus Manutius not only roman typefaces that influenced Garamond but also italic types that all later type designers learned from, including Robert Granjon. No man has cut better italic typefaces than Granjon. As James Mosley excellently wrote in 1965 in his introduction to Pierre Simon Fournier's *Modèles des Caractères de L'Imprimerie* (FB.s.237), 'they have an elegance and vigour that was unprecedented in cursive types. They

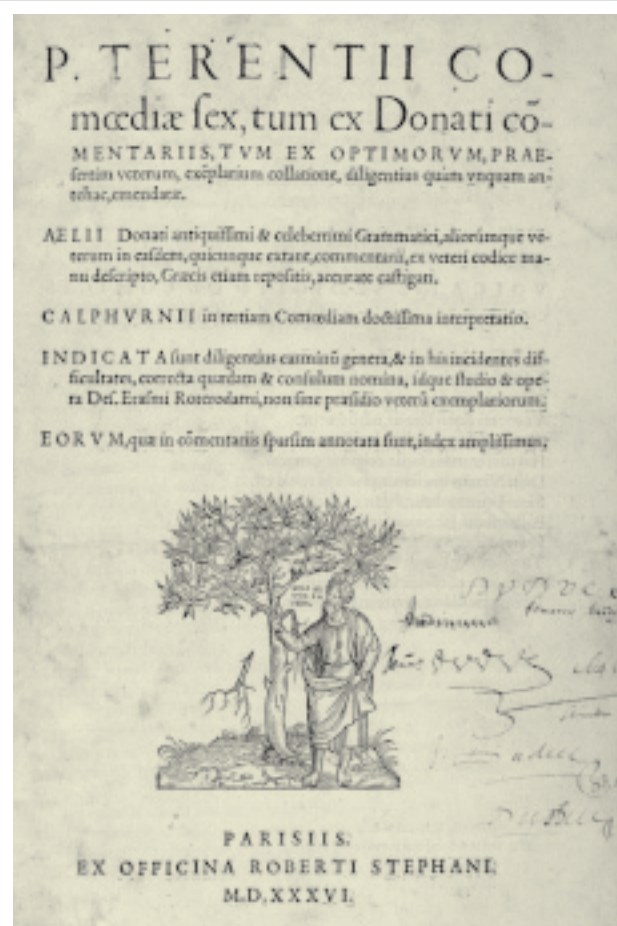
remain one of the most remarkable displays of technical virtuosity in the history of typefounding.'

Until 2000, James Mosley was the Librarian at St Bride Printing Library, off Fleet Street, and a copy of his *British Type Specimens Before 1831: A handlist* (SU.37) Oxford Bibliographical Society, 1984, is readily available on the open shelves of the North Reading Room of the Library.

The earliest surviving type specimen book from a Scottish printer is believed to be that issued in 1709 by John Moncur, an Edinburgh printer, 'on the North-side of the Trone'. Its rugged design makes an interesting contrast to the sophisticated typography of fourteenth-century Paris (Pt.el.1/12).

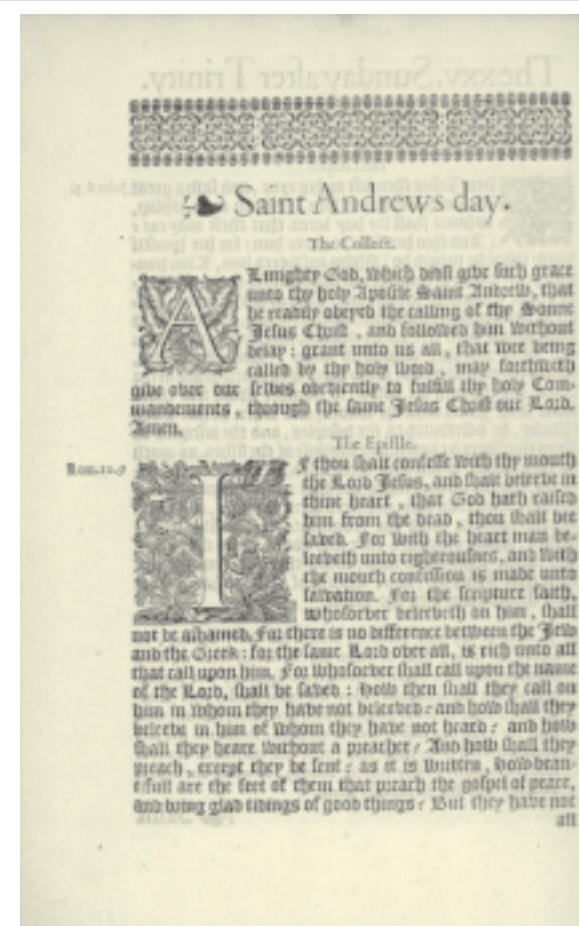
When writing on Scottish literature, I think of James Watson as the editor and publisher of the important anthology *A Choice Collection of Comic and Serious Scots Poems both Ancient and Modern*, Edinburgh 1706–11 (H.29.c.34). Watson, however, is also important for his pioneering *History of the Art of Printing*, Edinburgh, 1713, in which he showed some of the Dutch typefaces he had imported. Watson's most individual contribution to his history is a well-written Preface in which he attacked what he saw as the unfair advantage enjoyed by the Anderson family through a patent given to them in 1671 by King Charles I. In 1698 the Andersons issued an interesting type specimen sheet. This sheet attracted the attention of A.F. Johnson, an assistant keeper of books in the Printed Books Department of the British Museum, and his paper on it is printed in the first volume, 1935–38, of the *Transactions of the Edinburgh Bibliographical Society*. Professor William Beattie, Librarian of the National Library of Scotland, was an influential member of this Bibliographical Society.

We cannot claim James Watson as one of the great eighteenth-century British printers. He was neither a Baskerville nor a Foulis, but he did import excellent typefaces from Holland and used good black letterpress ink which, for his more important books, he pressed into good paper. The pages of his *The Works of that Eminent and Learned Lawyer, Sir George Mackenzie of Rosehaugh* (2 vols., 1716–22) (Nha.M9) show that he could produce good-quality



P. Terentii: Comediae (NLA.G54) printed by Simon de Colines in Paris in 1536. In 1526 De Colines set up his own press. According to Nicholas Barker, his Cicero italic 'was the first to be produced outside Italy based on a model other than the Aldine italic'.

The Booke of Common Prayer, printed by Robert Young, 1637 (Cwn.720). Young used a Black Letter with a roman type for the glosses and decorative flowers by Granjon.



press-work. Indeed, these are sparkling pages, with Van Dyck's types shown to very good effect.

When my book was launched in the Library in March 2001, Dr Brian Hillyard, of the Library, selected works to display in two cases; one of these was Watson's two-volume Mackenzie. Alongside that grand work there was displayed a unique copy of *Rules and Directions to be Observed in Printing Houses* (Pt.la.1/38), composed and printed in 1721 by Watson's apprentices but approved by other printers who were aware of the need to improve the quality of their work. This excellent piece of 'ephemera' was purchased by the Library from an Edinburgh dealer as recently as 1987. But in 1967, the Library had received a photograph of it from an employee of a printing-house in Nottinghamshire where the original hung.

Some of the Scottish books I referred to in the National Library are central not only to my interest in the history of printing and the design of typefaces, but also to Scottish history. For example, as I examined a copy of the controversial *The Booke of Common Prayer* (Cwn.720), printed by Robert Young in 1637, I was reminded of the mythical Jenny Geddes throwing her stool in the High Kirk of St Giles.

Sometimes these historically

important works were poorly printed, and used types that were worn and poorly cast, but a surprising number are beautiful volumes. Young's edition is old-fashioned for 1637 in that he used a Black Letter with a roman type for the glosses. He also used decorative flowers by Granjon, but it is the Black Letter that makes a handsome page.

For the second display case that he prepared for the launch of my book, Brian Hillyard chose two books from the press of Robert and Andrew Foulis: a volume of the 1756–58 folio Homer (F.6.d.22) and the 1770 folio edition of Milton's *Paradise Lost* (Bdg.1.6). As Dr Hillyard noted, I singled out these books as 'outstanding examples of Foulis standards of good editing, proof-reading, design, press work and the restrained use of good typefaces'. The typefaces were cut for the Press by Alexander Wilson, whose foundry was also based in Glasgow. As Dr Hillyard noted, 'The Greek fount, notable for its relative lack of ligatures and contractions when compared against earlier Greek founts, won massive acclaim for this edition.'

The Library's copy of the Foulis folio Homer was presented by the University of Glasgow to William Pitt the Elder (Prime Minister 1766–68) and was subsequently owned by Lord Rosebery and Ramsay MacDonald, and, according to a pencil note by Rosebery, boasted a

fourth Prime Minister, Robert Peel, as a former owner.

Handling such personalised volumes of important works gave an extra dimension to my researches in the Library. In asking for a copy of Stanley Morison's quite rare *The Dawks Family of Booksellers and Stationers, 1635–1730; With particular reference to Ichabod Dawks and his news-letter*, Cambridge, 1930 (X.218.f), I was surprised to receive proof sheets with corrections and comments by Dr Morison, a major figure in so many aspects of twentieth-century typography, including the design of any important typefaces, and a man whom I'd had the privilege of knowing when I worked in London in the 1950s.

With Oliver Simon, Stanley Morison edited the sumptuous typographic journal the *Fleurion* (Y.112), which was founded in 1923, and later, from November 1935, Simon edited and published the less grand but equally valuable *Signature* (P.90.PER). The American typographer Bruce Rogers was a contemporary of Stanley Morison, and his very impressive Oxford Lectern Bible (designed in 1929 and published in 1935) is set in his own Centaur typeface. Rogers based Centaur on a type used by Nicolas Jenson for his *Eusebius* of 1470. This elegant typeface was first used in 1915 for *The Centaur* by Maurice de Guerin, translated by G.B. Ives, which

was printed in a tall quarto edition of 135 copies at the Montague Press at the Dyke Mill in the village of Montague, Massachusetts.

William Morris admired Jenson's types and in my book I reproduce a page from his *The Well at the World's End*, 1896 (X.148.b), as I also did a section of a page from what is perhaps the finest book from an English private press, the Doves Press Bible of 1903.

Although famous for his roman types, Jenson did use Black Letter or Gothic types. There is a superb *Breviarium Romanum*, Venice, 1478 (Inc.118), in which the typeface is a rotunda. The Library has a magnificent copy, finely printed in red and black on vellum, and illuminated for an Italian family.

Printing Type Designs had its beginning in an essay I wrote – the nineteenth-century ‘modern’ typefaces produced by Miller & Richard, Edinburgh typefounders, which became known in America as ‘Scotch’. M. & R., as they were known in the printing trade, were a large and important company with premises at Reekie's Close, Nicolson Street, who supplied types not only to the many excellent Edinburgh book printers but also to many large London houses. In 1914 this influential foundry had almost 800 employees, but when it closed in 1952 there were fewer than twenty-five working for the company. M. & R.'s Old Style typeface of 1858 was copied across the UK, Europe and the USA.

William Miller, who founded his independent company about 1807, served an apprenticeship with the renowned Alexander Wilson's foundry. Access to type specimens issued by Wilson and by Miller & Richard was important to my work. So also were those issued by Stephenson, Blake, an important Sheffield foundry. Some of Wilson's specimen books are expensive productions and the best of William Caslon's broadsheet specimens are promotional masterpieces. Other very commercial nineteenth-century London foundries issued interesting specimens for the display types through which their names live on – Figgins, Thorne and Thorowgood. Specimens issued by Vincent Figgins to show his ‘fat’ display types can be seen in the Library, reproduced in a book edited by Berthold Wolpe (NG.1187.c.10) whose classic



Breviarium Romanum printed by Nicolas Jenson, Venice, 1478 (Inc.118): the Library has a magnificent copy, finely printed in red and black on vellum, and illuminated for an Italian family.

Albertus typeface, first issued in 1936, I was pleased to feature in my chapter on display types, as I also do pages from specimen books issued by Miller & Richard.

The Library has copies of books that were set in typefaces made by John Baine, a neglected typefounder who was for a time in partnership with Christopher Wilson. These include a three-volume edition of Henry Fielding's *The History of Tom Jones*, 1767 (Hall.193.c), printed in Edinburgh by Martin & Wotherspoon. Baine is now recognised as having been important not only in developing the ‘modern’ style of typeface but also as a very early typefounder in America.

There is no better place to research the history of Baine's work before he emigrated to America than the National Library of Scotland. I am pleased to have been able to have used the researches of John Alden and Jennifer Lee in the USA, Berthold Wolpe in London and Dr John Morris, until recently of the National Library, to make better known the typefaces of Baine and other Scottish founders who have not received the attention given to London-based typefounders. For example, for too long it was accepted that the first printing of

the American Declaration of Independence by John Dunlap of Philadelphia was in a Caslon typeface imported from London, but now we know it to have been one of John Baine's types.

It needs no saying by me that the National Library of Scotland has a unique collection of the printed editions of the early Scottish poets. Scholarly editors of this poetry are fortunate that amongst the earliest examples of Scottish printing to have survived are a group of nine verse pamphlets printed by Chepman and Myllar c. 1508. The Library also has a copy of the very interesting *Aberdeen Breviary* (Sa.3), Edinburgh, Walter Chepman, 2 vols., 1509–10, which is a highly significant Black Letter achievement by Scotland's earliest printers.

Andrew Myllar learned the craft of printing in Rouen, and this Scotto-French tradition was continued by Thomas Bassandyne who may have learned to print in Paris and Leyden before he established his press in

Edinburgh. The Bassandyne Bible of 1579 (Cwn.1091) is not only the first Bible to be printed in Scotland but also the first in English to be printed in roman types. The types of this book link Scottish printing to important European typefounders and printers, including Robert Granjon, Pierre Haultin, who in the 1570s was working in La Rochelle, and François Guyot, a Parisian typefounder who settled in Antwerp and cut types for Christopher Plantin.

Equally interesting is Bassandyne's use, in 1571, of Granjon's Civilité type for an edition of Robert Henryson's *The Morall Fabillis of Esope* (F.5.b.48). The Library has the only known copy of this Bassandyne edition. Printers in England did not use Granjon's Civilité type, so this copy of Henryson's work is especially valuable to a researcher into the history of printing types. The woodcuts also add to the charm of this important book.

In researching *Printing Type Designs*, I was most interested in printed books but, whilst writing on the relationship between the humanistic script of pre-printing manuscripts and the first roman typefaces, I was pleased to learn that the National Library of Scotland has a manuscript copy of Eusebius, *De temporibus* (Adv.MS.1.1.5), translated by Jerome, with the continuation by Prosper, that may have been written in Florence in 1426. It was written in a

round, upright humanistic script, and the scribe was Antonio di Mario of Florence. Known to have worked from 1417 to 1451, Antonio was exceptionally productive and produced forty-one surviving manuscripts, including some for Cosimo de' Medici.

What especially interested me about this manuscript is that it derives from a version of the text written by Poggio Bracciolino who has been credited with inventing the new humanistic script that became one of the models for the first roman printing types. Today we live in an electronic age in which the making of books is about to be further revolutionised thanks to the Internet and encoding to Portable Document Format and other systems only vaguely discernible on the electronic horizon. It seems, however, that the design of the letters used in these printed books will continue the tradition that has its roots in Renaissance manuscripts.

Note on sources

As well as sources of information on printing and type design such as the *Fleuron* and *Signature*, the Library has copies of other less visually interesting journals that are nonetheless important to any researcher into typeface history. These include the *Journal of Typographic Research* (1967–70 Y.91); *Printing Technology: Proceedings of the Institute of Printing* (P.205 for 1962–72; *Professional Printer* SJ.861 for 1973–2002); and *Visible Language* (HJ3.1025 for 1971–87; 4.1363 for 1973–2002). As well as finely printed and designed books from all eras, the Library has many books by experts on typography such as Stanley Morison. Duncan Glen's *Printing Type Designs: A New History from Gutenberg to 2000* (HP3.201.0720), with many illustrations showing books from the collections of the National Library of Scotland, illuminates and contextualises Scotland's contribution as well as providing a sweeping overview of the subject. The Library has an extensive collection of papers deposited by Duncan Glen featuring aspects of his life as a writer, editor and publisher, including manuscripts and typescripts of poems, essays and lectures and correspondence with booksellers, publishers and numerous literary figures, notably Hugh MacDiarmid. Catalogue details of most of these accessions are listed in the online Guide to Manuscripts under ‘Glen (Duncan), Editor of *Akros*’ (and can be downloaded in the form of PDFs) at www.nls.uk/catalogues/online/cnmi/index.html

The Biographer's Tale

Beauties and Barrel Vaults

John Knox is a controversial figure regarded by some as little short of heroic and vilified by others as a ranting misogynist. In John Knox – Democrat, Roderick Graham offers a fresh perspective, emphasising the contribution Knox made to the Scottish system of education, and declaring him to be ‘the man who handed the torch of democracy to the citizens of today’. His vivid description of Knox and his milieu was the fruit of several years’ research, during which time the National Library of Scotland became his second home. In this article, he offers a personal and delightfully humorous impression of working in the Library and highlights the role of staff in facilitating readers’ quests. The accompanying illustrations pick up on his mention of the fascinating small displays mounted in the Barrel Vaults.

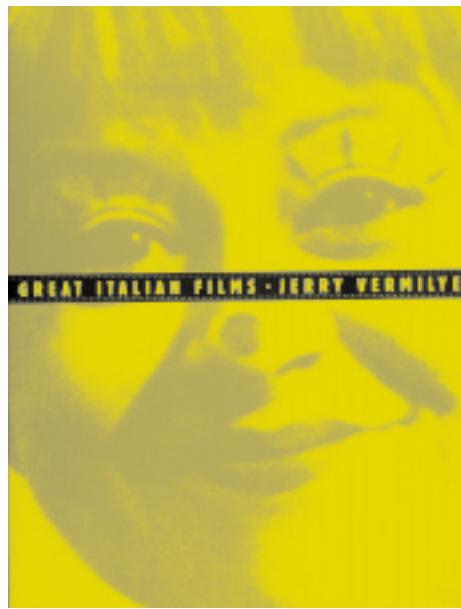
RODERICK GRAHAM

Having spent much of my life as a television director, I am always acutely aware of visual moments which encapsulate a whole story. A few years ago, I had just such an experience while I was working in the North Reading Room of the National Library of Scotland. Diagonally opposite me was a young woman, twenty-something, freshly laundered and dry-cleaned, and with that particularly American healthy tan. (When I later heard her speak to the librarian, her accent was as unmistakably Californian as Napa Valley Chardonnay.) She was working on a number of illuminated parchment documents, skilfully transferring their contents to her laptop. Her fingers fluttered almost silently over the keyboard, as opposed to the rattle of musketry which announces the more aged readers’ hunt and peck technique. Documents written with a state of the art quill long before her country's foundation were being recorded using state of the art technology that until recently belonged to the realms of science fiction, their interpretation was being undertaken by a scholar from the New World, and all this was taking place in the context of a library founded by Scottish advocates in the seventeenth century. Observing such activity is only one of the fascinations the National Library of Scotland holds for me.

The austere exterior of the Library does not proclaim the extraordinary extent and diversity of the treasures

within. The building is decorated by seven distinctly unhappy-looking figures, who, I am sure, skittishly change places during the hours of darkness, solemnly returning to their designated places before day-break. The glass entrance doors open on to a somewhat daunting flight of stairs. Having collected my breath and presented my Reader's Card at the security point (known internally as the ‘pulpit’), I proceed to the Issue Hall on the first floor. *En route* I pass the ‘Barrel Vaults’, exhibition cases which offer the most diverting juxtapositions – on this occasion, a Pont map, a mediaeval girdle book of exceptional rarity, and a record of the friendship between that cinematic poet of fantasy Federico Fellini and the master of gritty reality Georges Simenon. This book is in Italian, as is a new biography of Sophia Loren – I have a sudden fantasy of Fellini directing *La Scozza di Castello*, in which La Loren is walking in a garden, mentioned by Pont, while consulting her horoscope in her girdle book after the murder of her husband, with the whole piece being scripted by Simenon. Enough! Go to the lift and get to work!

The Issue Hall on the first floor is where the bustle of the outside world ceases and calm begins. The portage at the Athenaeum or the Garrick could not be more helpful or discreet and all requests are equal. I have ordered up a book, unaware that it is in seven folio volumes, and it has been delivered with the same good humour as what, on one



Great Italian Films by Jerry Vermilye (New York: Carol Publishing Group, 1994) (HP4.95.662). On the back cover of this book there is a shot of the famous Italian actors Sophia Loren and Marcello Mastroianni. This book was part of a display in the Barrel Vaults on Italian film which caught Roderick Graham's eye; also on display was Françoise Pieri's *Federico Fellini: Conteur et Humoriste 1939-1942* (HPI.200.7213), a biography focusing on a period when Fellini was published in magazines as a caricaturist and humorist.



A physician's girdle-book c.1390 (Acc.12059/3). Iain Brown, Principal Curator of Manuscripts, described this unique item for a recent display as 'a *vade mecum* with the *Kalendarium* of John Somer. Physically it is a book of folded sheets of vellum constructed in such a way as to be suspended from a belt or girdle. It was designed for practical use (for example, in astronomical prognostications such as eclipses of the sun and moon, 1387-1462, or as a manual of bloodletting techniques) over a fairly short period of time.'



Diarum Itineri in Moscoviam by Johann Georg Korb, Vienna, [1700]. This account of the Austrian diplomatic mission in 1698 at the court of Peter the Great reveals the important role played by a Scot - Patrick Gordon - in Russian political and military life. Gordon, born in Auchleuchries, Aberdeenshire, in 1635, had served in Russia since the 1660s and was responsible for putting down the Streltsy rebellion while the Tsar was on a tour of western Europe. The magnificent and graphic plates in this volume depict the fate of those who dared to rebel. Because of the brutal way in which the Russian authorities were portrayed, the Austrians deemed it politic to suppress the book and hence few copies have survived.

occasion, turned out to be a flimsy pamphlet of the sort once found in remote English churches, usually written by the incumbent and on sale for 7d.

The elegant peace of the split-level reading room is the perfect environment for concentrated study. Even so, for a grasshopper brain like mine, it is full of distractions. I can never desist from wondering what the person in the next chair is researching. Even at the risk of seeming rude, it's tempting to lean over and steal a closer look, but since there seem to be a lot of charts and figures it is probably of no interest to me. Some distance away, behind a veritable parapet of books, sits the red-bracered, bearded figure of Owen Dudley Edwards. What is he preparing? A treatise on Arthur Conan Doyle, or a lecture on Burke and Hare? Around the long tables, a focused silence reigns. Then suddenly, heads jerk up and backs unhunch - some unfortunate has forgotten to mute the sound from his laptop and the denizens of the Reading Room are treated to a brief burst of electronic music. The National Library's very own Bateman cartoon.

In one of his most beautiful poems Siegfried Sassoon talks of 'kindly books that hold me late', and the National Library is for me the very home of such

books. From bibliography to catalogue to order slip - then back to the Reading Room to remember the number of one's seat (not always easy to read) - and then through to the Issue Desk. Return to the laptop and tap away until pleasantly interrupted by the arrival of the books I have requested.

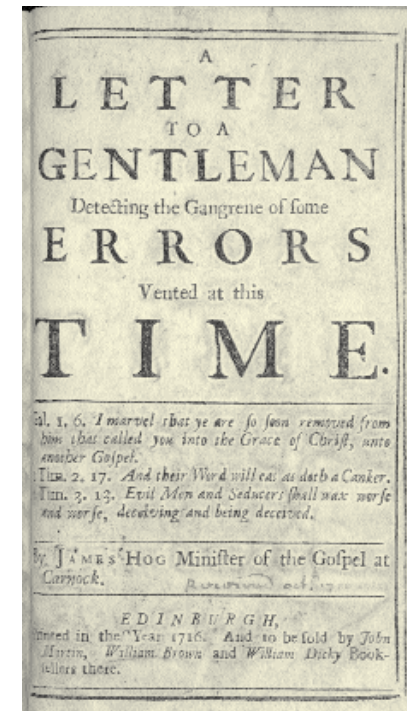
The bookfetchers are the unsung heroes of the National Library, walking miles to produce a volume in which the reader may check no more than a single fact. Their journeys to and fro through the stacks are as essential to the Library users as the blood pulsing through our arteries. The joy of pouncing on new material overcomes the temptation to order sandwiches and a glass of wine from Readers' Services. I quell my humorous daydreams, open a volume, and am lost to the world. Hours disappear in what feels like minutes.

Preparing a biography is very like a murder investigation. First there is the corpse (in my case, the biographees are long dead). You set about gathering information about his or her life. You question immediate family, then close friends and work associates, before moving to more distant relatives and casual associates. One contact leads to another. You must always be sensitive to

seemingly unrelated remarks dropped in casual conversation. Policemen, however, talk to human contacts, while my research requires me to wrest all the information from books and manuscripts. The police have to make door-to-door enquiries in all weathers, while I can search the Library catalogues on the Internet at home and call Readers' Services to ensure that the material I want is immediately available on arrival at the Library - hence I never turn up only to find that the principal suspect has absconded to Marbella. The police collate their notes, scrutinising them for hidden clues. I write drafts and go over the seemingly innocent remarks, otherwise known as footnotes, until the moment is reached when Morse would turn to Sergeant Lewis and say, 'I think a picture's starting to emerge, Lewis.' Morse was lucky to have a Sergeant Lewis; humble researchers like myself must plod along on their own.

Of course, Morse often uncovered crimes only marginally connected with his main investigation. Similarly, we researchers share the risk of the dangerously slippery slopes of a seductive side-track. There are no side-tracks more attractive than finding a gap in the accepted canon of knowledge. I recently

came across a figure seemingly unconnected with my main subject, but linked through mutual acquaintances. Then - joy of joys! - as a result of my door-to-door enquiries in the catalogues, I established that nothing had been written about him since 1728. The subject of this fruitful digression was a pamphlet, bound together with various others. I had never heard of it and it did not appear in any of the bibliographies I had consulted. By James Hog (1658?-1734), Minister of the Gospel at Carnock, its slim fifty pages bore the declamatory title: *A Letter to a Gentleman Detecting the Gangrene of Some Errors Vented at This Time* (2.246(11)). The title page informed me it was published in 1716 and sold by John Martin, William Brown and William Dicky, booksellers in Edinburgh. Such things are read with growing excitement, since they might represent a fresh lead, or merely turn out to be a dead end. In this case, the pamphlet was relevant. It relates to a heated theological dispute between Professor John Simson and James Webster. Originally it was sold to the public as a topical communication of the author's vehemently held views, but its acquisition by the Advocates' Library transformed it into a document held for time immemorial for readers and researchers. Robert Graves contended that museums hold objects to be viewed but not used, thus depriving the objects of their virtue. Could it then be said that since libraries hold books to be read, they enhance their virtue? My pamphlet might have lain dormant for nearly three hundred years, awaiting its moment of destiny with me. I am probably overly romantic, but these moments of discovery still give me a thrill. But the greatest thrill comes from actually handling original manuscripts, an experience which I first had in the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library at Yale University. The documents in question were James Boswell's journals, and when I read his account of meeting Dr Johnson for the first time, I felt directly connected to the eighteenth century. I have had the same feeling in the National Library of Scotland with the letters of David Hume. Even when I know they have been transcribed, footnoted and published, it is still possible that something might



A Letter to a Gentleman Detecting the Gangrene of Some Errors Vented at This Time by James Hog, Minister of the Gospel at Carnock, John Martin, William Brown and William Dicky, booksellers in Edinburgh, 1716.

have been missed by previous editors. Having sentimental emotions of this sort perhaps marks me out as lacking academic objectivity, but the kick is dangerously habit-forming.

During my researches I have spent quite some time with the microfilm readers; my initial problems with these machines may have been because I suffer from what a BBC video technician once described as Bio-Mechanical Interface Malfunction. In other words, I can be relied upon to push the wrong button. Connecting a laptop to the mains on the floor under the desk and lacing up the spool of film while wearing gloves, before deciding which way to turn the spool knob, can be an exhausting process. But then! A keyhole into the past is unlocked and I can read the newspapers and journals of eighteenth-century Edinburgh or London. I know I should go directly to the page my footnote clue led me to, but the peep into daily life afforded by antique newspapers is too tempting to resist. Garrick was giving a benefit on Tuesday! People were trying to ransom their stolen purses! So that's what they thought of returning nabobs!

All good detectives will spend time at the scene of the crime; for my part, I do my best to visualise the physical locale of the past as accurately as possible. In my experience, the staff of the Map Library cannot do enough to help and before minutes have passed, maps are spread out. Like all good librarians, they bring

you what you asked for and direct you to other items you knew nothing of. Perhaps the reader's ignorance is welcomed by the Library staff, in that it provides them with a challenge. On one occasion, for reasons that now seem obscure, I wanted to track down the name of a boarding kennel for dogs operating in the Home Counties in the late 1940s. The business librarian gulped hard two or three times, then proceeded to narrow down what I was looking for. As the afternoon wore on, more and more business directories were brought until I had a deskful and a very short list of suspects. Then I realised that the librarian was shadowing my researches. In fact, it turned out that she had beaten me to it and had come up with the prime suspect.

Whatever I have wanted to research, and in whatever form, the librarians at the National Library of Scotland have always enthusiastically contributed. I am conscious that I am not a distinguished academic, but a tyro biographer. Access to the part of our nation's memory lodged in the National Library of Scotland is open to everyone who requires to use its resources to further their research. In this way the Library quietly performs the key function of enriching our common store of knowledge through facilitating dialogue across the centuries.

The Barrel Vaults

The Barrel Vaults flank the corridor immediately beyond the security point on the way into the Library's George IV Bridge Building. Responsibility for mounting the displays is divided between the Rare Books, Collection Development and Manuscript Divisions. One case is devoted to new books, promoting awareness of the range of modern material in the Library. Themes have ranged from US Presidents, BOSLIT, Cinema, Polar Regions, Official Publications and Classics to Fine Art, the Queen's Jubilee and Siena. Displays of manuscripts and rare books highlight recent acquisitions; Dr Iain Brown of Manuscripts explains that the aim is to 'make the documents speak' by putting them in context, and perhaps drawing attention to a telling phrase or incident.

Notes on contributors

DUNCAN GLEN taught typography from 1960 till 1986 and was Professor of Visual Communication in Nottingham Trent University. Dr Glen first worked in printing in 1948, in publishing in London from 1956, and since 1964 has been an independent publisher, editor, critic, historian of Scottish literature and poet. He became a Fellow of the Chartered Society of Designers and served on the Graphics Board of the Council for National Academic Awards. In 1987 he returned to Edinburgh to write, edit and publish full-time; he now lives in Fife, where he publishes a variety of works under the Akros imprint.

RODERICK GRAHAM's illustrious career as a producer and director began in 1962 when he joined the BBC. In the 1970s he went freelance and worked on numerous productions including *Elizabeth R*, for which he received two Emmy Awards. In 1976 he was appointed Head of TV Drama at BBC Scotland, and in the years that followed he produced or directed a host of series and films. Among other recent projects, he was the historical adviser and writer for the Greenwich Gateway Exhibition. His first book, *John Knox – Democrat*, was published by Robert Hale in 2001.

MICHAEL NIX has worked widely in education, museums and libraries. Before completing his doctoral thesis in maritime history at the Department of English Local History, Leicester University, he co-founded and continues to co-own a coastal museum at Hartland Quay in North Devon. He is currently completing a book on emigration and trade between Scotland and Australia in the early nineteenth century and is about to jointly edit an autobiography of an Edinburgh-born shipmaster. He wishes to thank Ulrike Moret, Ann Nix, Stephen Price, Martin Rackwitz and staff in the Manuscripts Division for their assistance.

CHRISTOPHER WHYTE is a poet, translator and Reader in Scottish Literature at the University of Glasgow. He is a member of the board of BOSLIT (Bibliography of Scottish Literature in Translation). His *Uirsgeul/Myth*, poems in Gaelic with English translations, was published by Gairm in 1991 and he is the author of four novels in English: *The Cloud Machinery*, 2000, *The Gay Decameron*, 1998, *The Warlock of Strathearn*, 1997, and *Euphemia MacFarrigle and the Laughing Virgin*, 1995, all published by Gollancz. His annotated edition of *Dàin do Eimhir* by Sorley MacLean (Association of Scottish Literary Studies, 2002) is a major contribution to Gaelic studies and to Scottish literature in general.

NLS diary dates

All events take place in the George IV Bridge Building, beginning at 7pm. The events are free but ticketed (phone 0131-622 4807 or e-mail events@nls.uk to book).

November 2002

A series of lectures mark the recent acquisition by the Library of a rare album of calotypes. The Edinburgh Calotype Album will be on view at each event, with Library curatorial staff in attendance. The calotype album will be available for browsing online from 19 November at www.nls.uk/pencilsoftlight.

21 November

Amateur and Professional in Early Scottish Photography

Sara Steverson (Scottish National Portrait Gallery)

25 November

The Calotype Process and the Beginnings of Scottish Photography at St. Andrews

Roddy Simpson

27 November

Civil Warrior (book launch)

Author Robin Bell talks about the extraordinary life – and the poems – of James Graham, first Marquis of Montrose (1612-50).

29 November

The National Library of Scotland/Saltire Society Scottish Research Book of the Year is announced as part of the Saltire Society Literary Awards.

December 2002

2 December

Photography – the Beginning of the New Art

Richard Morris explains the calotype process.

5 December

World Light

Author and broadcaster Magnus Magnusson talks about the Nobel prize-winning author, Halldór Laxness, on the occasion of the centenary of his birth.

11 December

Balcarres Lute Book

Musicians Matthew Spring, Sara Stowe and Ian Fraser perform music from the Balcarres Lute Book, a rare 16th-century manuscript belonging to the Earl of Crawford and Balcarres and held in the National Library of Scotland.

The winner of the Robert Louis Stevenson Award for writers, funded by the National Library of Scotland and the Scottish Arts Council, is announced.

More writers' events are planned for early 2003. Contact the Events Line (0131-622 4807) or e-mail events@nls.uk to be added to the mailing list to receive information on upcoming Library events.

In the next *Folio* (Spring 2003)

IAIN GORDON BROWN, Principal Curator of Manuscripts in the National Library of Scotland, discusses an important new David Hume document which he recently discovered. This is a memorandum giving instructions to the philosopher's ne'er-do-well nephew on how to behave in Paris. The document is described and analysed in the context both of what Paris had meant to Hume himself and in that of the role 'le bon David' played as kindly uncle. A Hume discovery is not exactly an everyday occurrence, and Dr Brown tells a tale both scholarly and appealing.

COLM McLAUGHLIN is a curator in the Manuscripts Division, with particular responsibility for twentieth-century military history, especially the First World War. He was closely involved in researching and identifying images for the Library's *Experiences of War* website, www.nls.uk/experiencesofwar. He discusses insights given into pre-war relations between Britain and Germany gleaned from some less well-known items within the Manuscripts collections, including a magnificent photograph album gifted by Kaiser Wilhelm II to R.B. Haldane, the British War Secretary, and the notes he made in preparation for a newspaper interview in the late 1920s.

ANNE SCRIVEN, a final-year research student at the University of Strathclyde, offers a new interpretation of the life and work of Victorian novelist Margaret Oliphant, with close reference to papers held at the Library. Oliphant was a prolific novelist, essayist, biographer, translator and journalist, for whom writing was not only a passion, but a vital source of income – she supported her family through her earnings from writing. She made a distinctive contribution to the Scottish literary tradition, but how far can her work be seen as embodying a specifically Scottish identity?

STEPHEN BROWN of Trent University, Canada has since 1994 been a frequent visitor to Scotland to study the eighteenth-century Edinburgh book trade, especially the careers of the printers William Auld, James Tytler, and William Smellie, whose extensive manuscript papers he edited and annotated for the Society of Antiquaries. In the next *Folio* he will tell the story of Edinburgh printing during the Enlightenment by describing some of the remarkable items he examined at the Library, including a rare copy of Burns's *Merry Muses*, a bewildering London imprint of the first edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, and a political review which led to one of the first arrests in Scotland for seditious writing in the 1790s.

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Front cover image: detail from William Daniell's engraving of Leith, 1814