

University of Glasgow Archives and Special Collections

# William Hunter's Library

A Transcription of the Early Catalogues

**Notes on Transcriptions of Museum Records 1-3**  
**25 October 2018**



Dr Karen Baston  
Special Collections Project Manager

October 2018



## About the Project

William Hunter (1718-1783) is a major figure in the history of eighteenth-century medicine. The leading obstetrician, teacher of anatomy, and physician of his day, Hunter amassed one of the finest private libraries and museums of his age. The quality of his library earned him international fame. Containing about 10,000 printed books and 650 manuscripts, his library is exceptional for being both a working medical library and an example of book collecting in the wider context of the Enlightenment. Most similar contemporary book collections have been dispersed but Hunter's is a unique survival.

Hunter's bequest of his collections – book and otherwise – to the University of Glasgow realised his enlightened vision of retaining his museum and library together for public use. Glasgow's Hunterian Museum opened in 1807 as the first public museum in Scotland. It was an instant success.

Although the majority of books in the Hunterian Library today probably belonged to Hunter, many nineteenth-century additions were not made distinct from the core collection. The transcription of MR3 allows us to determine which books were in Hunter's possession at the time of his death.

Nine inter-relating manuscript catalogues of the library (MR1-9), dating from before Hunter's death in 1783 to the early nineteenth century are part of a series of Museum Records. These are crucial to our knowledge of Hunter's book collection during his life and how its contents relate to the library held in Glasgow today. MR3, compiled by Hunter's Trustees in 1785, is the most comprehensive of these catalogues.

This project is part of a wider project to bring together the collections of The Hunterian to reunite Hunter's original library and museum. The **Digital Hunter Portal** will be a virtual version of Hunter's enlightened vision.

## Project Team

Principal Investigator:

Julie Gardham, Senior Librarian and Head of Special Collections

Project Manager:

Karen Baston

Project Assistants (April-Nov 2018):

Michelle Craig, Hannah Grout, Lucy MacIver, David McOmish, Jade Scott, Katelyn Smith, Jennifer Young, Jasna Zwimpfer

## Transcription notes: the early catalogues

**Please note that the data presented in the transcriptions of the earliest of Hunter's book catalogues is unchecked and incomplete but it is hoped that researchers will nevertheless find it interesting and useful.**

### **Museum Records 1 (MR1)**

The manuscript now known as Museum Records 1 is a book catalogue Hunter and his assistants kept during Hunter's lifetime. It is primarily a catalogue for Hunter's medical books, although books on other topics are also found in it.

MR1 is cross-referenced with Hunter's list of non-medical books. The transcription offered now (October 2018) must be regarded as an incomplete draft. The catalogue is complex featuring crossings-out, a variety of hands, and many cross-references both internally and with MR2.

Many of the entries are not found in MR3 (see below) – a finding that requires more research. The primary purpose of the transcription of the earlier catalogues was to 'link' its entries with those found in MR3. Because so many of the entries were not found in MR3, there are no links (as yet) to the modern University of Glasgow Rare Books catalogue. However, many of the books are indeed in the modern collection. More research is needed to determine why these were not recorded in the catalogue created by Hunter's Trustees after his death.

The transcription of MR1 is also not complete because it does not include shelf marks in various forms that date from Hunter's ownership of the books. Because our main focus while transcribing it was on matching its entries to the already completed transcription of MR3, we did not capture all of the cross references used by Hunter and his team.

#### *Haller Index/Haller refs*

Some of the entries in MR1 do not refer to books but are indexes to essays collected by Albrecht von Haller. The indexes generally occur on dedicated pages. Some of these pages have been transcribed and the others are indicated as 'Haller index' for the age. Individual entries are tagged as 'Haller ref'. These were not fully transcribed since they would not each link to an entry in MR3.

### **Museum Records 2 (MR2)**

Museum Records 2 is the catalogue Hunter used to document what he called his 'Common' books, that is, books on topics other than medicine.

As with MR1, there are cross-references between the two catalogues and the same issues detailed above also apply to this transcription.

### **Museum Records 3 (MR3)**

MR3 is a book catalogue created by Hunter's Trustees from 1783 to 1785. In theory, it combined MR1 and MR2 to create a list of Hunter's entire book collection at the

time of his death. As with the earlier catalogues, MR3 is arranged in rough alphabetical order by author and divided by book size (folio, quarto, octavo et infra, and pamphlets).

### **Word**

A Word version of MR3 is available at <http://eprints.gla.ac.uk/151114/> (NB: this has not been updated to reflect the most recent project findings, e.g. 'not found' books which have now been found.)

In the Word version, each page has been transcribed to match the manuscript: blank pages have been left blank. Therefore, the original foliation has been retained.

Ligatures (e.g. Æ, æ) have been silently expanded. All other spelling and capitalisation has been retained.

Entries that appear as *Albius* are later additions and not part of the original list. However, many of these have been matched in the modern online catalogue so they have been retained pending further research.

'Not found' means that no match has (yet) been found with a 'Sp Coll Hunterian' shelf mark. There may be other copies of the same books in the University of Glasgow Special Collection but they do not have a connection with William Hunter. Unmatched entries have been highlighted.

Corrections of publication dates given in MR3 have been noted in footnotes.

### **Excel**

A revised Excel version (October 2018) is also available at <http://eprints.gla.ac.uk/151114/>

## Book descriptions used in the early catalogues

- C. T. F. D.** Corio Turcico, Foliis deauratis [bound in goat skin; gilded edges to pages]
- C. R.** Corio Russico [bound in Russian calf; distinctive diamond etching]
- C. M.** Charta maxima [largest paper]
- L. R.** Lineis rubris [red lines]
- L. P.** Large Paper
- R. L.** Ruled Lines