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Reconstructing Student Reading Habits in Eighteenth-Century Glasgow: Enlightenment Systems and Digital Reconfigurations

Matthew Sangster, Karen Baston and Brian Aitken (University of Glasgow)

Abstract

This essay discusses eighteenth-century student borrowings from the University of Glasgow, using these as a case study to examine how digital transformations of manuscript sources might help us move beyond received narratives and technologies of Enlightenment. It argues that while many of the assumptions of digital systems are inherited from Enlightenment discourses, freeing data from the confines of physical space using simple digital approaches has considerable potential for allowing us to construct a fuller, more detailed, and more democratic history of eighteenth-century readers and reading, surfacing idiosyncrasies, continuities, sociality, and forms of interconnection.

Biographical Note

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Main Text

Searching for the Histories of Reading

The reconstruction of reading habits has always been more challenging than recovering the histories of writing and publishing. There have been a lot more readers than there have been authors and book trade professionals, and unlike writing or printing, most acts of reading have not left legible traces in the form of material texts. Consequently, researchers studying the histories of reading have often had to rely on anecdotal accounts in printed books, manuscript letters, commonplace books, and diaries, usually written by those in relatively elite positions. The nature of this evidence—intensified by the influence of modern disciplinary frameworks seeking to trace the roots of their own assumptions in historical discourses—has led to a strong focus on emergent forms and novelties. Emphasising discontinuities rather than continuities reflects history's wider tendency to pay especial attention that which is new or perceived to be new. In discussing textual receptions, Tom Mole has recently described the prevalence of what he calls "punctual historicism," which privileges the moments of a text's composition and first publication.[1] Through suggesting what such a perspective overlooks, he rightly seeks to draw our attention to the ways in which books linger and re-emerge in different contexts, rather than speaking to a single historical moment and then vanishing.

Many of our existing accounts of Enlightenment thought implicitly assume that a burgeoning of new texts swiftly changed the intellectual world, outmoding older paradigms.

[1] Tom Mole, What the Victorians Made of Romanticism (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 2017), 21–23.

While we have a relatively clear sense of what we think paradigmatic Enlightenment readers should have been reading, what these books might have meant to them, and how they were organised conceptually, this rests heavily on our notions of what changed in the period, on our current disciplinary preoccupations, and on subsequent processes of canon formation. In his insightful discussions of the Scottish Enlightenment, for example, Nicholas Phillipson writes authoritatively that

> In the three decades which followed the Union philosophers, politicians and men of letters set out to fashion an alternative language of civic morality. By the 1760s the process was complete, and a new language of civic morality has been created which provided the Scots with a new understanding of civic virtue and that 'sociological' understanding of the Science of Man which is the unique contribution of the Scots to the philosophy of the Enlightenment.[2]

Phillipson's account constructs a compellingly legible intellectual history, but that an alternative language was produced does not mean that it was universally taken up or widely apprehended at the time in the holistic manner retrospective analysis implies. While Phillipson's ensuing discussion laudably interweaves primary text analysis with considerations of leading social formations, the affordances of his account make it difficult to discern how the discourse he draws out might have intersected with others in the lived experiences of diverse readers.

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[2] Nicholas Phillipson, "The Scottish Enlightenment," in The Enlightenment in National Context, ed. Roy S. Porter and Mikuláš Teich (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1981), 22.

This area is one in which relatively simple digital transformations have considerable potential for enriching our perspectives. The reason that much traditional scholarship has relied on the qualitative use of texts, cases, and implied readers is not because data on historical reading does not survive, but because it survives in specific and inflexible manuscripts, archives, and inscriptions that twentieth-century scholarly technologies could only reproduce in printed forms that were similarly inflexible. Its specificity and traditional intransigence has meant that such evidence is often poorly accounted for. While the University of Glasgow's surviving eighteenth-century library borrowing registers—the principal focus of this essay—have long been available to Special Collections librarians with access to the stacks and legacy paperwork, they went unrecorded in any public catalogue until recently.[3] Their hundreds of pages of neat tabulated entries would in any case have presented a formidable challenge to twentieth-century researchers seeking to account for them with paper and pencil as their principal tools. While mid-twentieth-century library historians like Paul Kaufman and Philip Ardagh were able to draw fascinating conclusions from surviving borrowing records, the labour necessary to complete such work was very considerable, and what they could present to their readers was an interpretation, rather than an evidence base that would allow their conclusions easily to be tested and expanded upon.[4]

However, digital modes of transmission and reconfiguration can serve as powerful means for engaging with formerly intractable sources. While compiling a concordance was

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[3] A new catalogue record is now available here: http://collections.gla.ac.uk/#/details/ecatalogue/251379.

[4] See Paul Kaufman, Libraries and Their Users: Collected Papers in Library History (London: Library Association, 1969) and Philip Ardagh, "St Andrews University Library and the Copyright Acts," Edinburgh Bibliographical Society Transactions, 3 (1948–55), 180–211.

once an enormous feat of scholarly labour, now anyone with a decent digital copy of a work's text and access to free software such as Voyant Tools can make in under a minute a concordance vastly easier to use and far more powerful in its analytical and comparative functions than an unwieldy bound volume.[5] While it is not quite so straightforward to deal with manuscript administrative records—which require careful and judicious interpretation—organising data from such sources in a spreadsheet or database allows it to be connected, compared, sorted, and manipulated so queries can be framed and answered in seconds or minutes, rather than hours or days. When considered with the possibilities of digital transformation in mind, the three surviving Glasgow registers covering student borrowings between 1757 and 1771 and the three professorial registers covering the period from 1751 to 1790 present an opportunity to test and refine our accounts of how Enlightenment readers interacted with books. The student records are of especial interest and will be the principal focus here: while it is fascinating to see what figures like Robert Simson, Adam Smith, and John Millar were borrowing, their intellectual preoccupations are already well known, so their borrowing records serve mainly as supplements to existing knowledge. However, we know far less about which books those being introduced to Enlightenment knowledge commonly sought out or encountered. In his chapter on "Reading in Universities" in the Edinburgh History of the Book in Scotland, Roger L. Emerson opines that, "perhaps the best guide to the readings of late-eighteenth-century students are the citations of books in the writing of such men as George Jardine, Hugh Blair, Thomas Reid, James Beattie, Dugald

[5] Stéfan Sinclair and Geoffrey Rockwell (developers), Voyant Tools, 2016, http://voyant-tools.org/.

Stewart and John Anderson."[6] Such citations are certainly of interest, but it seems more likely that they show what professors thought their students should be reading than what students actually read. Borrowing registers offer a rich alternative means of enquiry. While it is true that borrowing a book does not equate directly to reading it, it nevertheless bespeaks an intention and an effort to engage. Evidence from borrowing registers can also be used in concert with other accounts and with the individual copies borrowed to create a detailed panorama of reading habits. As this essay will demonstrate, use marks and marginalia in volumes held in Glasgow provide compelling qualitative corroboration for quantitative assessments of influence constructed using borrowing data.

The opening pages of the first surviving Glasgow student register describe the information that the Library Keeper was supposed to collect about each book borrowed:

> [T]he Keeper be obliged to keep a Register ruled and columned, according to the Pattern here given; in which shall be inserted every Book lent to every Student, in manner following, V^iz^.
>
> In the first Column the Borrower's own Subscription.
>
> In the 2.^d^ the Class he belongs to, as Divinity, Law, Chemistry, &c.
>
> In the next three Columns, the Press, Shelf, & Number, as marked on the Book.
>
> In the 6.th the Name of the Book.
>
> In the 7.th the Professor, or Professors' Names who sign the Note.
>
> In the 8.th the Date when lent.

[6] Roger L. Emerson, "Reading in Universities," in The Edinburgh History of the Book in Scotland Volume 2: Enlightenment and Expansion 1707–1800, ed. Stephen W. Brown and Warren McDougall (Edinburgh: Edinburgh Univ. Press, 2012), 320.

In the 9.th the Date when returned.[7]

It is immediately apparent that register line entries can potentially provide a great deal of valuable data. Users can trace the interests of students, consider courses of study, extrapolate the arrangement of the library during the 1760s (previously unknown due to the paucity of the surviving catalogues), study the works and authors borrowed, and observe changes in borrowing patterns over time. There is also potential for tracing the activities and interests of the professors who authorised students to borrow, although examining student entries makes it clear that the professorial authorisations did not relate uncomplicatedly to their interests or their classes. It is also possible to consider the ways that these things interrelate, building up a picture of the complex web of connections between authors, books, readers, and institutions that the library mediated.

However, pre-digital engagements with the registers would have faced formidable challenges when seeking to realise their potential. A printed transcription of the whole data set would have needed to select one data type as the principal mode of organisation, creating a resource that would be useful for chronological searching (replicating the original arrangement), or for examining works based on their authors, or for studying particular individuals, but which would be difficult to employ for the other purposes unless a whole new arrangement was produced or a series of indexes was compiled. Even in the latter case, the main text would clearly have privileged one angle of enquiry as being primary. A pre-digital user of the first surviving student borrowing register might relatively easily have spotted on folio 47r a line entry documenting the law student James Boswell borrowing the

[7] Students' Borrowings, 1757–60, MS Lib 2, 2r, University of Glasgow Special Collections. Page images are available here: https://18c-borrowing.glasgow.ac.uk/library-rules/.

fifth, sixth, and seventh volumes of Paul de Rapin's History of England on February 7th 1760. By moving backwards and forwards, it would be possible to discover that Boswell renewed these volumes two weeks later and that he had previously borrowed volumes fourteen, fifteen, and sixteen of the Universal History on November 22nd 1759, returning these when he borrowed Rapin.[8] These entries might be read as matters of interest in themselves. The last entry in particular is intriguing. Boswell, fed up with provincial life and longing for the delights of London, is recorded as having fled Glasgow on March 1st 1760.[9] However, the borrowing register lists the return of the three volumes of Rapin's History of England as occurring on March 5th. We cannot know if Boswell returned the books himself or if someone else did so on his behalf, but in either case the disparity opens up a less fraught interpretation of his final days as a Glasgow student.

In the past, though, moving beyond such observations to examine Boswell's borrowings in the context of the registers as a whole would have required a considerable amount of further work that can be dispensed with now that good digital surrogates are available. With the Eighteenth-Century Borrowing from the University of Glasgow data set,

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[8] Matthew Sangster, Karen Baston and Brian Aitken, Eighteenth-Century Borrowing from the University of Glasgow (Glasgow: University of Glasgow, 2020), https://18c-borrowing.glasgow.ac.uk. For Boswell's borrowings, see https://18c-borrowing.glasgow.ac.uk/results/?type=student&letter=B&sid=172.

[9] Gordon Turnbull, "Boswell, James (1740–1795)," Oxford Dictionary of National Biography (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2004-), https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/2950. An earlier version of the DNB states that Boswell's father removed him from Glasgow in March 1760 and took him to London to be enlisted in the army. Either way, the point stands that Boswell's exit may have been more orderly than assumed.

it becomes trivial to discover how conventional Boswell's borrowings were (Rapin's History of England and the Universal History were the second and third most-consulted works in the library respectively during the period the registers cover).[10] It also becomes possible to move out from Boswell's line entries to study students reading law, or the wider presence of histories in the collection, or the prevalence of French authors, or the movements of particular volumes from Boswell to other students at the university, allowing for far more comprehensive kinds of quantitative and contextual analysis.

It might at this point be useful briefly to discuss the process of producing the resource on which this essay builds, before introducing the University of Glasgow in the 1760s and then turning more directly to the registers' contents. Responsibility for the project was divided between Matthew Sangster, who managed the work, designed the data structure, worked on elements of the normalisation and produced the site text; Karen Baston, who completed the lion's share of the transcription, matching and interpretation; and Brian Aitken, who designed the site and converted a prepared spreadsheet into the MySQL database that underpins the openly-accessible resource. Work was supported by a Research Incentive Grant from the Carnegie Trust for the Universities of Scotland and funding from the University of Glasgow's Chancellor's Fund.[11] High resolution images of the original manuscripts were produced by Glasgow University Library's Photographic Unit, and transcriptions of the nine fields described above completed from these images, with recourse to the originals when

[10] A list of the most frequently borrowed works can be seen here: https://18c-borrowing.glasgow.ac.uk/frequency-lists/?type=books. We discuss the most frequently borrowed authors in detail later in this essay.

[11] The total funding secured for the project was just shy of £14,000; the vast majority of the budget was spent on specialists' time, with a small fraction covering the digitisation.

necessary. Alongside the full transcription, normalisation fields were added to create consistent records for students, classes, professors, authors, and book titles. Professorial and student identities were mapped where possible against information contained in the University of Glasgow Story, an earlier digital project indexing the university community since 1451.[12] Authors and titles were mapped against the modern university's rare books library catalogue to facilitate copy-specific analysis and were also indexed against the English Short Title Catalogue (ESTC).[13] A comprehensive data set was completed for the student registers; a full transcription of the professorial registers was also completed, and significant progress made on matching and normalising this second tranche of data.[14]

The student data set covers 8,141 line entries relating to borrowings, and also records further register entries struck through as errors or relating to the library's management. Of these borrowings, 6,313 (or around 77.5%) were of a book matched to an entry in the English Short Title Catalogue, with most of the remainder relating to continental printings. 7,615 of the borrowings (or around 93.5%) were matched with books in the University's current collections that could plausibly have an Old Library provenance based on their classmarks.[15]

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[12] University of Glasgow Story, https://universitystory.gla.ac.uk/.

[13] University of Glasgow Rare Book Catalogue, https://eleanor.lib.gla.ac.uk/search~S15/; English Short Title Catalogue, http://estc.bl.uk/.

[14] Normalisation and matching for the professorial data have subsequently been completed; these records will be incorporated into the large-scale database currently being prepared as part of the Arts and Humanities Research Council-funded Books and Borrowing 1750–1830: An Analysis of Scottish Borrowers' Registers project: https://borrowing.stir.ac.uk/.

[15] We thank Julie Gardham and Bob MacLean (University of Glasgow Special Collections) for their support with assessing provenance.

While it is likely that some proportion of these matches do not correspond to the exact copy present during the eighteenth century, copy-specific checks for frequently borrowed works have supported the matches, with codices containing shelfmarks and marginalia that clearly place them as parts of the eighteenth-century collection. Some ambiguous line entries in the registers could not be mapped definitively to particular books, but it was possible to associate nearly 99% of the line entries with authorial entities (sometimes collective or institutional) and over 97% with specific bibliographical editions. This was above our initial expectations and reflects the emerging affordances of our digital transcriptions while these were in process. The interim spreadsheet allowed for sorting and comparison, which made it considerably more straightforward to untangle poorly-written titles by comparing their classmarks with those for more confident attributions and to normalise student identities through observing progress through classes. The richness of the data could thus be realised to help interpret itself, as well as to trace patterns and trends in conversation with other resources. We hope that the open availability of the published data set will allow this process to continue. While we have endeavoured to be thorough and scrupulous in our matching, it is likely that other researchers from different backgrounds will be able to amend and augment our data, bringing it into conversation with further intertexts and increasing its interpretive possibilities. Making dynamic data created by digital methods openly accessible will ideally facilitate and encourage more efficient and equitable research practices, both by lowering barriers to entry and by moving from a paradigm in which a publication purports to be a closed authoritative endpoint towards one in which it constitutes a reporting stage in a continuing iterative process of knowledge refinement.

The Glasgow Context

To understand what the data in the borrowing registers can reasonably be used to assert, it is important to position them in their social and institutional contexts. The University of Glasgow flourished during the eighteenth century, playing a leading role in what was later dubbed the Scottish Enlightenment. The period between March 1757 and January 1771 covered by the surviving student borrowing registers coincides with the tenures of many of the University's most renowned professors, including the moral philosopher and economic theorist Adam Smith; the legal scholar and sociologist John Millar; the chemist and anatomist Joseph Black; the common-sense philosopher Thomas Reid; and the natural philosopher and technologist John Anderson.[16] These leading lights took part in the administration of the university—including acting as curators for the library—and interacted extensively with the student cohort in a variety of roles. As David Allan points out "when students attended Glasgow between 1751 and 1763, for example, and took moral philosophy, as they were required to do, it was Smith . . . to whom they were directly exposed."[17]

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[16] All these figures are discussed in further detail in Andrew Hook and Richard B. Sher, eds., The Glasgow Enlightenment (Edinburgh: Tuckwell Press, 1995). A full history of the University can be found in Alfred Lawson Brown and Michael Moss, The University of Glasgow, 1451–1996 (Edinburgh: Edinburgh Univ. Press, 1996). A good recent account of this period in the university's history can be found in Craig Lamont, The Cultural Memory of Georgian Glasgow (Edinburgh: Edinburgh Univ. Press, 2021), Chapter 2.

[17] David Allan, "The Universities and the Scottish Enlightenment," in The Edinburgh History of Education in Scotland, ed. Robert Anderson (Edinburgh: Edinburgh Univ. Press, 2015), 97–113 (101).

During this period, the university was educating an increasingly large and diverse student body, riding high as both a centre of intellectual inquiry and a training ground for practical knowledge. Its substantial library was a crucial support for its missions. While not as large as those of the English universities or some of the aristocratic collections in Scotland, it was nevertheless a major and expanding repository of knowledge. The shelves initially covered in the 1691 manuscript catalogue, which was subsequently added to as the library grew, contained 4,222 volumes, including about forty manuscripts.[18] By the late eighteenth century, the library had more than quadrupled in size. The first printed catalogue, compiled by Archibald Arthur and published in 1791, contained over 20,000 items.[19] This growth was partly attributable to donations, partly to faculty purchases and partly to the copyright privilege granted to the Scottish universities in 1710, which entitled them to claim a copy of each new book registered at Stationers' Hall. While the Act of Parliament that underpinned this privilege was often circumvented, with publishers declining to register expensive learned works, it did send a great deal of cheaper print to Glasgow, including most of the novels and many of the travel accounts that proved popular among the students. Growth in the collections accelerated later in the eighteenth century, but during the period the student

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[18] MS Gen 1312, University of Glasgow Special Collections.

[19] Archibald Arthur, Catalogus Impressorum Librorum in Bibliotheca Universitatis Glasguensis (Glasgow: A. Foulis, 1791). A student in 1758, Arthur took his MA in 1763. He appears in our database as a student of divinity and a preacher from 1766 to 1768, borrowing twenty-nine times: https://18c-borrowing.glasgow.ac.uk/results/?type=student&letter=A&sid=533. He became the university's librarian in 1780 and held the post until 1794, alongside teaching duties as Thomas Reid's assistant and then successor as professor of moral philosophy. See University of Glasgow Story, https://www.universitystory.gla.ac.uk/biography/?id=WH2041&type=P.

registers cover, the collection was well north of 6,000 works. Of these, just over 1,000 different titles circulated during the window the registers document.[20]

During the eighteenth century, the university was located on High Street in the centre of the city. In a letter to his father in 1758, Henry Penruddocke Wyndham wrote that the university "consists of three neat courts & has a pretty front towards the street," adding that "The members of the College are 16 Professors and about 300 students."[21] In 1771's The Expedition of Humphry Clinker, Tobias Smollett described the university as "a respectable pile of a building, with all manner of accommodation for the professors and students, including an elegant library, and an observatory well provided with astronomical instruments."[22] The elegant library Smollett noted was a relatively recent addition designed by the architect William Adam; it was completed in 1743 and the books rehoused within it in 1744. It contained two basement teaching rooms; a two-storey library room with a columned gallery; and rooms above the main library that provided space for the Academy of Fine Arts run by the publisher brothers Robert and Andrew Foulis.

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[20] For a fuller account of the library, see Peter V. Davies et al., eds, The University of Glasgow Library: Friendly Shelves (Glasgow: Friends of Glasgow Library, 2016), and especially Andrew Hook's chapter on the eighteenth century.

[21] Henry Penruddocke Wyndham to Henry Wyndham, 25 July 1758, printed in Richard B. Sher, "Wyndham's Letters on Scotland and Northern England, 1758," Yale University Library Gazette, 65 no. 3/4 (April 1991), 146–58 (152).

[22] Tobias Smollett, The Expedition of Humphry Clinker, 2nd edition, 3 vols (London: W. Johnson, 1771), III: 34.

As well as serving Glasgow and its environs, the University attracted numerous students from Scotland more broadly, from England and Ireland (particularly the north), and from abroad, including America and Russia (two Russian students, Ivan Andreyevich Tretyakov and Semyon Efimovich Desnitsky, studied at Glasgow under the patronage of Empress Elizabeth II; both went on to become Professors of Law at the University of Moscow).[23] While some students took classes without matriculating or matriculated without planning to complete a full course of studies, many pursued the degree of Master of Arts. To graduate with an MA usually entailed taking classes in Latin and Greek, Rhetoric (including Logic), Ethics, and Natural Philosophy. More advanced courses of study, sometimes leading to higher degrees, were offered in Theology and Divinity, Law, and Medicine and Anatomy.

Matriculated students could borrow up to three books at a time from the university library for up to a fortnight if they paid two shillings a year to the library fund. Those with an MA could borrow for four weeks, and ex-students could also make relatively free use of the library (as shown by the significant number of borrowings in the student registers by those signing themselves as preachers or ministers). As detailed in the library rules included in Register 2, students needed authorisation from a professor to borrow, or from three professors in the case of some fragile, rare, or valuable works.[24] Students also agreed to be fined if they returned works late or damaged. While reading in the library was possible, the hours it was

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[23] See John W. Cairns, "John Millar, Ivan Andreyevich Tret'yakov, and Semyon Efimovich Desnitsky: A Legal Education in Scotland, 1761–1767," in Enlightenment, Legal Education, and Critique: Selected Essays on the History of Scots Law, Volume 2 (Edinburgh: Edinburgh Univ. Press, 2015), 219–237. Tretyakov's borrowings are discussed below.

[24] MS Lib 2; see https://18c-borrowing.glasgow.ac.uk/library-rules/ for images and a transcription.

open were quite limited and students were discouraged from loitering, so sustained engagements with works would often mandate borrowing them.

The main university library was not the only source of books available to students. A dedicated library for the Humanity class had been established in 1725, and others followed for some of the other Arts classes, for Divinity, and for Medicine.[25] Unlike St Andrews, where there were relatively few recourses apart from the university library, Glasgow had a thriving book culture.[26] While the foundation of William Stirling's public library did not occur until 1791, access to booksellers (including John Smith, who established his business in 1751 and operated Glasgow's first circulating library from 1753) along with publishers, literary clubs, and private collections meant that students did not inevitably need to borrow from the university. There is a notable discrepancy between the number of students who matriculated in the period and the number of names that appear in the borrowing registers. While Wyndham estimates student numbers in 1758 at 300, meaning that we might expect around 1,000 students to have attended the university in the sixteen years the records cover, the registers contain 830 borrowers, and some of those (like Boswell) only borrowed a small number of books in a restricted window.[27] The data from the borrowing records is thus a long way from representing a completely comprehensive view of what students were engaging

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[25] William Purdie Dickson, The Glasgow University Library: Notes on Its History, Arrangements, and Aims (Glasgow: James MacLehose and Sons, 1888), 26–27.

[26] On the difficulties of book access in St Andrews, see Matthew Sangster, "Copyright Literature and Reading Communities in Eighteenth-Century St Andrews," Review of English Studies, 68 no. 287 (2017), 951–952.

[27] This rough estimate is based on the standard period of study being around five years, while factoring in those who stayed for higher degrees and students who studied for briefer periods.

with. Nevertheless, the registers demonstrate that the library provided a key means through which keener students could work with periodicals and larger multivolume works, study more esoteric subjects, access additional copies of popular texts, and interact with the new and entertaining volumes the Copyright Act brought in.

Exploring the Quantitative Evidence

There has been a notable tendency in studies of the eighteenth century to stress the Scottish Enlightenment's Scottishness, as, for example, in Richard Sher's emphasis on the network of Scottish-born publishers who published major Scottish authors and comprised what he describes as the "London-Edinburgh publishing axis" or Robert Crawford's titular contention in The Scottish Invention of English Literature.[28] However, looking at what students were actually reading in Glasgow suggests some different emphases, at least for the period from which the surviving records date. Without denying the importance of modern Scottish thinkers and publishers in the period, the borrowing registers demonstrate that new Scottish philosophical and historical writings shared shelves and mindspace with English theology, French rhetoric, Latin and Greek histories, Roman comedies, bawdy novels, and practical technical manuals. The table below shows the forty-two most frequently consulted authorial entities across the student registers (as well as thirty-eight individual primary authors, the table includes two complex examples of multiple authorship, one periodical, and one learned society). These forty-two authorial entities (out of 718 overall) account for 3,721 borrowings,

[28] Richard B. Sher, The Enlightenment & the Book (Chicago and London: Univ. of Chicago Press, 2006), 274; Robert Crawford, ed., The Scottish Invention of English Literature (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1998).

or a little over 45% of the total number. While not representing the full diversity of student reading, they might be taken as indicative of the sources of knowledge to which Glasgow students commonly had recourse. It is important to note that the numbers in the table refer to borrowing acts as modelled by line entries in the register. Some of the works written by these authors are long multivolume compositions, most notably the twenty-volume Universal History and Rapin's fifteen-volume History of England. It would be possible to adjust for such works either by reducing their weighting by considering volumes as a proportion of a whole or by increasing their weighting by disaggregating lines on which students are recorded as borrowing multiple parts of the same work (as in the case of the Boswell entries discussed earlier). However, for the purposes of this analysis, the original structure of the line entries has been preferred as an organising principle that offers a reasonable suggestion of the time students spent with given works and authors.

Rank	**Author**	**Times Borrowed**
1	Charles Rollin	353
2	Samuel Clarke	174
3	Francis Hutcheson	171
4	Paul de Rapin-Thoyras	168
5	Homer	153
6	Universal History	149
7	Henry Fielding	147
8	Xenophon	136
9	David Hume	133
10	Marcus Tullius Cicero	123
11	John Leland	108
12	Livy	96
13	Robert Dodsley	95
14	Monthly Review	91
15	Colin MacLaurin	87
16	Tobias Smollett	85
17	Eliza Haywood	76
18	Terence	74
19	James Weston	71
20=	John Locke	69

20=	Isaac Newton	69
20=	William Robertson	69
23	Benjamin Hederich	67
24	Jean Baptiste Massillon	63
25	Philosophical Society of Edinburgh	62
26	Gilbert Burnet	59
27	Horace	58
28	John Harris	56
29	Humphrey Prideaux	55
30=	William Derham	54
30=	Euclid	54
32	Virgil	53
33	Alexander Pope	50
34	Titus Lucretius Carus	48
35	Herodotus	47
36	John Angell	46
37=	Nathaniel Hooke	43
37=	Cornelius Tacitus	43
37=	James Thomson	43
40=	Anacreon	41
40=	Nathanial Crouch	41
40=	Modern Universal History	41

The headline finding here is that the most popular authority of these years of the Scottish Enlightenment in Glasgow appears to have been a Frenchman, Charles Rollin, whose works were borrowed just over twice as many times as the next-most-popular author. As Robert Crawford has acknowledged, and Neil Rhodes has explored in more detail, the pioneering mid-century innovations in the teaching of rhetoric and belles lettres that took place at the Scottish universities had an important precursor in Rollin.[29] Rollin had taught extensively in Paris, but his position at the head of this list is the result of his having authored three major educational works late in his life: the Antient History of the Egyptians, Carthaginians, Assyrians, Babylonians, Medes and Persians, Macedonians, and Grecians

[29] Crawford, 3; Neil Rhodes, "From Rhetoric to Criticism," in The Scottish Invention of English Literature, ed. Robert Crawford (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1998), 27–28.

(first on the list of most-frequently-borrowed books, with 196 borrowings), his Method of Teaching and Studying the Belles Lettres (sixth-most-borrowed; 111 times), and his Roman History (borrowed 45 times).[30] The frequent use of English translations of Rollin's two large-scale accounts of the ancient and classical world attests to the importance placed on histories by those seeking to acquire an education during this period, a finding supported by the positions on the list of Paul de Rapin (in fourth; all 168 borrowings were of volumes of his History of England), the Universal History (sixth), David Hume (ninth), William Robertson (joint twentieth), and Gilbert Burnet (twenty-sixth). These findings back Mark Towsey's recent contention about the prevalence of historical reading in the later eighteenth century, with such works providing a crucial "lens through which events, beliefs and opinions could be filtered," particularly for new aspirants trying to situate themselves in literary culture.[31]

The provenance of Rollin and Rapin's works also speaks to the extent to which the production and use of Enlightenment knowledge cut across national boundaries, with translations being regularly employed to cover wide fields for which no representative work existed in a given national literature. In the 1760s the Enlightenment in Scotland was operating as an aspect of a wider European concern, a fact that reminds us that the notion of Scottish Enlightenment is itself a later imposition. While it is useful to highlight the astonishing intellectual fecundity of Scotland in this period, the developments in its universities were not occurring in isolation, but in dialogue with an international network of thinkers, works, and ideas. Rollin's Method of Teaching and Studying the Belles Lettres is an important precursor to and influence on Hugh Blair's Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles

[30] See https://18c-borrowing.glasgow.ac.uk/frequency-lists/?type=books.

[31] Mark Towsey, Reading History in Britain and America, c.1750–c.1840 (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2019), 3.

Lettres. While Blair eventually replaced Rollin as a favourite in the Scottish universities, before the publication of his lectures, the available printed authority was Rollin.

The Scottish universities placed more weight on vernacular knowledge than the curricula at Oxford and Cambridge did, but classical authors nevertheless remain relatively well represented among the student borrowings. Homer, Xenophon, Cicero, Livy, Terence, Horace, Euclid, Virgil, Lucretius, Herodotus, Tacitus, and Anacreon all make this list, with their works being borrowed collectively 926 times across editions in the original languages, in translation, or employing parallel texts. Classical histories were particularly heavily employed, alongside more modern interpretations, but classical exemplars were also important in the fields of rhetoric, poetry, drama, and mathematics. In both intellectual and social terms, classical learning retained a prominent and prestigious position amidst the burgeoning of new knowledge systems.

Writers we might now characterise as religious were frequently consulted, but the precise works employed demonstrate how intrinsically intertwined religious writing was with forms of knowledge that modern disciplinary systems might frame as principally secular. William Derham's Physico-Theology and Astro-Theology sought to demonstrate the being and attributes of God from "his works of creation" and "a survey of the heavens" respectively, but did so using methodologies grounded in natural philosophy, advancing through doing so important innovations in astronomy, biology, and technology. While budding natural philosophers might consult the Philosophical Transactions or the medical essays published by the Philosophical Society of Edinburgh, Derham was clearly also part of the conversation. John Leland wrote explicitly to oppose deism, but was necessarily in dialogue with philosophers like Lord Shaftesbury, David Hume, and Viscount Bolingbroke.

For some students, his framings and interpretations would have been the prism through which more sceptical thinkers were read. Gilbert Burnet was a major historical writer as well as a theologian, with his Exposition of the Thirty-Nine Articles of the Church of England being read alongside his History of the Reformation and History of his Own Time. Samuel Clarke, who occupies the second spot on the list, was consulted as a model for popular sermon writing, but was also a profoundly influential metaphysician. His position as "the de facto spokesperson for Newtonianism in the first half the eighteenth century" was evidently still accorded currency during the 1760s.[32] Religious reading also ranged across denominations: the French sermons of the Catholic Jean Baptiste Massillon, twenty-fourth on the list, appear to have been used extensively as formal models (during this period, volumes of Massillon were borrowed by William Leechman, James Buchanan, John Anderson, John Millar, Robert Trail, Thomas Reid, and George Muirhead, as well as by their students).[33]

Fiction is represented by Henry Fielding, Tobias Smollett, and the only woman on this list of popular authors, Eliza Haywood. While the library did not hold Haywood's entire oeuvre, the books it did hold circulated briskly, as students engaged extensively with The Female Spectator, The History of Miss Betsy Thoughtless, The Fortunate Foundlings, and Epistles for the Ladies. Beyond Haywood, circulations of female-authored works are notably lacking. Sarah Fielding's History of David Simple, Charlotte Lennox's Life of Harriot Stuart,

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[32] Timothy Yenter and Ezio Vailati, "Samuel Clarke," in The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Winter 2020 Edition), ed. Edward N. Zalta, <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2020/entries/clarke/>.

[33] Manuscript page references in the Glasgow professorial registers: Leechman, MS Lib 1, 3^{v}; Buchanan: MS Lib 1, 6^{r}, 14^{r}; Anderson: MS Lib 1, 9^{v}; Millar: MS Lib 1, 16^{r}; Trail: MS Lib 1, 16^{v}, 22^{r} and MS Lib 4, 2^{r}; Reid: MS Lib 4, 28^{v}; Muirhead: MS Lib 4, 34^{r}.

and Catherine Macaulay's History of England all enjoyed a certain level of popularity, along with poetry and prose by Elizabeth Singer Rowe, but borrowings of works by Charles Rollin in this period outweigh the total borrowings of all works by women. This may of course reflect the character of a self-consciously learned library, rather than providing a full picture of students' reading habits, but nevertheless demonstrates the extent to which women's voices were sidelined in the context of an all-male institutional environment.

A fair number of novels circulated from the library, but other forms that we would now class as literature fared less well. Vernacular poetry in English, Scots, and Gaelic is conspicuous by its relative absence, with Alexander Pope and James Thomson the only representatives among the most consulted. Edmund Spenser's Fairie Queene was borrowed three times during the period, John Milton's Paradise Lost six times, and his Paradise Regained twice. Later in the 1760s, there is evidence of interest in James Macpherson's Ossian—Fingal and Temora circulated twenty-eight times in total after being accessioned in 1767—but verse seems to have been a fringe form in the library.[34] Drama is also largely absent—volumes of Molière circulated on ten occasions, but there are no records of students using the library to read Shakespeare, Jonson, or Dryden.[35] It is possible, however, that students were accessing poetry and drama elsewhere, along with further fiction. Both poetry and plays were relatively cheap when compared with large historical works, and the stereotype of the circulating library as being dedicated to meeting the demand for novels has some basis in reality.

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[34] For borrowings of Ossian, see https://18c-borrowing.glasgow.ac.uk/results/?type=author&letter=O&aid=604.

[35] For borrowings of Molière, see https://18c-borrowing.glasgow.ac.uk/results/?type=author&letter=M&aid=327

The list also highlights the use of practical instructional works that seldom play any substantial role in our discussions of Enlightenment knowledge production. Benjamin Hederich produced a much-consulted Greek lexicon and James Weston and John Angell were the authors respectively of Stenography Compleated, or the Art of Short-hand Brought to Perfection (1727) and Stenography: Or Shorthand Improved (1758). Practical systems such as these have an underappreciated role in Enlightenment knowledge organisation; it is an interesting continuity that two hundred and fifty years ago, Glasgow students were already learning to code. Large-scale surveys also assisted students in getting up to speed. Robert Dodsley's appearance on the list is almost solely due to his Preceptor: Containing a General Course of Education, a work that covers some similar ground to Rollin's Belles Lettres. Regular borrowings of the Monthly Review helpfully remind us that readers commonly encountered key ideas in mediated forms such as review extracts, references, and compilations. While intellectual history tends to privilege authors' own formulations, in practice, these commonly reached readers in contexts framed and modified by others.

While this account has indicated the potential intellectual cosmopolitanism of an Enlightenment education at Glasgow, it is clear that Scottish thinkers did play leading roles in students' approaches to philosophy, history, morality, and mathematics. The publications of Francis Hutcheson's System of Moral Philosophy and Essay on the Nature and Conduct of the Passions and Affections meant that he continued as a paramount influence on Glasgow students in the decades after his death in 1746. David Hume, Colin MacLaurin, and William Robertson were also becoming leading authorities. However, during the 1760s many of the key publications of the Scottish Enlightenment were still getting established as shaping influences. While students may have encountered Hume's ideas in the writings of opponents

like Leland, the first recorded borrowing of one of his works occurred roughly halfway through the span the registers cover, when Mathematics student Archibald Ferguson borrowed his Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals on Christmas Eve 1763. However, between February 1765 and December 1770, works by Hume circulated on 132 further occasions, with the vast majority of these loans being volumes of his History of England. This implies that it was not until the later 1760s that Hume's writings began to make a major impression on Glasgow's students, with his historical writing leading the way.[36] Such chronologies suggest that if, as Phillipson contends, a new discourse of civic morality was substantively complete by the 1760s, it was nevertheless still in the process of being assimilated into the circulating collections at Scottish institutions of education.

Students and their Books

While the table of popular authors gives a sense of the types of works students commonly accessed, it does not accurately model the experience of any given student. However, the granular and reconfigurable nature of the digital Glasgow data affords opportunities to approach from other angles. Focusing on individual borrowers, rather than authors, can give a sense of how various library use could be. The future MP William Windham (Secretary at War during the 1790s) only borrowed works in Latin and Greek, perhaps seeking to prepare himself for his impending move to Oxford by familiarising himself with Homer, Plato, Cicero, Horace, and Herodotus, as well as Latin works on

[36] For a full list of borrowings of Hume, see https://18c-borrowing.glasgow.ac.uk/results/?type=author&letter=H&aid=351.

classical civilisation by the German historians Philipp Clüver and Christoph Cellarius.[37] The most prolific borrower in the student registers, Henry Stevenson, took out 203 books between 1761—when he was enrolled in the Logic class—and 1770, when he was working as a preacher in the city.[38] Fittingly, in 1772, his devotion to the library resulted in his being appointed briefly as Librarian. However, Stevenson's borrowing was initially sporadic—the only book he borrowed while studying Logic was Thomas Stanley's History of Philosophy (which he took out on three occasions), and it was not until he began to study Divinity in 1765 that he became a committed library user. He was evidently a careful scholar, frequently renewing and returning to books. He also ranged widely in terms of subject matter: in the first six months of 1766, for example, he borrowed Alexander Monro's Anatomy of the Humane Bones, works by Xenophon, Terence's comedies (in two different editions), Smollett's Adventures of Roderick Random, Robertson's History of Scotland, the Works of Geoffrey Chaucer, and Fielding's Miscellanies. None of these have obvious relevance to the study of Divinity, instead reflecting the diverse education the library might offer a regular visitor.

A more typical student was William Hazlitt, father of the Romantic-period essayist. One of the university's many Irish students, Hazlitt made fourteen borrowings over the course of his career, working extensively with Rollin's Antient History and displaying considerable interest in John Tillotson's sermons.[39] While Tillotson ended his career as the

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[37] For Windham's borrowings, see https://18c-borrowing.glasgow.ac.uk/results/?type=student&letter=W&sid=542.

[38] For Stevenson's borrowings, see https://18c-borrowing.glasgow.ac.uk/results/?type=student&letter=S&sid=253.

[39] For Hazlitt's borrowings, see https://18c-borrowing.glasgow.ac.uk/results/?type=student&letter=H&sid=92.

leader of the Anglican church, he was considered to harbour anti-Trinitarian opinions in line with Hazlitt's later Unitarianism. Duncan Wu thinks that Hazlitt developed his Socinian views while at Glasgow; his engagement with Tillotson suggests a key inspiration.[40] Hazlitt also spent time in the winter of 1761 working with Samuel Shuckford's Sacred and Prophane History of the World Connected, which he took out on three occasions. For Hazlitt, perhaps, as for other Glasgow readers, the science of man might still necessarily be integrated with the logic of the divine.

For Russian student Ivan Andreyevich Tretykov, the library provided not just the textbooks he needed for his law and moral philosophy courses, but also an opportunity to explore innovations in the practical sciences of distilling, agriculture, and husbandry. Browsing the database by month shows the ebb and flow of the student community throughout the year, but Tretyakov was an unusually consistent user.[41] While local students could return home for the holidays, Tretyakov and his compatriot Semyon Efimovich Desnitsky would have found it very difficult to travel to Russia and back between sessions.[42] Tretyakov was one of the most prolific student borrowers, with a total of seventy loans between January 1762 and May 1767. An entry of January 9th 1765 offers an insight into his assimilation into the community when we find "Ivan" crossed out in favour of "Johannes" when he borrowed a volume of Tacitus. From January 1767 on, he was simply "John." His surname is spelled in various phonetic ways throughout the register. Desnitsky, by contrast,

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[40] Duncan Wu, William Hazlitt: The First Modern Man (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2008), 23.

[41] See https://18c-borrowing.glasgow.ac.uk/dates/.

[42] The loans Tretyakov made in the summer of 1766 while the university was in recess are recorded without a class designation, showing one of the ways the system flexed in practice.

was less keen on the library, borrowing only one book, Athanasius Kircher's *Physiologia Kircheriana Experimentalis*, during his time at Glasgow.[43]

Former students could continue to rely on the university library after their courses ended. 208 borrowings are associated with a class description given as "Preacher." Many of these borrowers were recent graduates. Somewhat surprisingly, most of the books they borrowed are on general topics rather than the supply of inspiration for sermons that we might expect to see.[44] Ex-students pursuing other professions also continued to use the library. James Parlane, a Glasgow surgeon, took courses in physic and divinity in 1759 and returned to the university library to borrow books on medicine and botany regularly throughout the 1760s.[45] Parlane entered the Faculty of Physicians and Surgeons of Glasgow in 1764 and was appointed surgeon to the Glasgow Infirmary in 1772, serving until 1792.[46]

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[43] For Tretyakov's borrowings, see https://18c-borrowing.glasgow.ac.uk/results/?type=student&letter=A&sid=276. For Desnitsky's sole borrowing, see https://18c-borrowing.glasgow.ac.uk/results/?type=student&letter=E&sid=338. For a full discussion of the courses Tretyakov and Desnitsky may have taken and their importance in the development of legal education at the University of Moscow, see Cairns, "John Millar, Ivan Andreyevich Tret'yakov, and Semyon Efimovich Desnitsky," 219–237.

[44] For borrowings by preachers, see https://18c-borrowing.glasgow.ac.uk/results/?type=class&cid=9.

[45] For Parlane's borrowings, see https://18c-borrowing.glasgow.ac.uk/results/?type=student&letter=P&sid=150.

[46] Alexander Duncan, Memorials of the Faculty of Physicians and Surgeons of Glasgow, 1599–1850 (Glasgow: James MacLehose and Sons, 1896), 259; Fiona A. Macdonald, "The

External borrowers like Parlane provide glimpses of the interconnections and networks that existed between the university and other institutions in the city.

As well as permitting examinations of individual students, the borrowing data can be used to infer group engagements. The 1765 borrowings of Samuel Richardson's lengthy novel The History of Sir Charles Grandison seem to show three members of the same Logic class attempting the challenge.[47] Keen novel reader Colin Campbell began first and appears to have made his way through the whole narrative over the course of a couple of months (his other borrowings include Henry Fielding's Amelia and Robert Paltock's The Life and Adventures of Peter Wilkins, as well as Orlando Furioso, Tasso's Jerusalem Delivered, and the Life of Edward Earl of Clarendon). The pattern of borrowings suggests that he recommended the book to two similarly-inclined classmates. The first, Hamilton Maxwell, used the library almost exclusively as a source of novels, borrowing Joseph Andrews in his first year and then Peter Wilkins and Tom Jones prior to Grandison during 1765. The second, Gavin Wallace, made heavy use of Rapin's History, but also borrowed works including Richardson's Pamela, Sarah Fielding's The Adventures of David Simple, and John Campbell's Lives of the Admirals. Neither Maxwell nor Wallace persevered with Grandison as Campbell did, but they were hardly alone in this. Of the thirty-seven recorded borrowings, fifteen are of Volume 1 and only four of Volume 6. However, this is not to say that only a few Glasgow readers engaged meaningfully with Richardson's novel. Christina Lupton has

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Infirmary of the Glasgow Town's Hospital, 1733–1800: A Case for Voluntarism?," Bulletin of the History of Medicine, 73 no. 1 (Spring 1999), 64–105 (104–105).

[47] For the 1765 borrowings of Grandison, see https://18c-borrowing.glasgow.ac.uk/results/?type=search&searchBook.Title=Charles+Grandison&searchDateFrom=1765-01-01&searchDateTo=1765-12-30.

recently emphasised the importance of contingent engagements with novels: dipping in and out, "flipping backward and forward," and forms of "circular and occasional return."[48] Complete consumption has never been the only way to engage with narratives, and in these borrowings of parts, we can detect readers sampling and reading socially, testing waters suggested by coterie reading groups before swerving to new interests.

By using the borrowing registers to locate popular books that survive in Glasgow's modern collections, we can also locate more tangible traces. To return to Charles Rollin, it is apparent that students were not always impressed with his rhetoric (or at least with the ways it was translated). On several of his title pages, where he is described as a "Professor of Eloquence," the word "Eloquence" has been gently pencilled out.[49] Students evidently enjoyed correcting the grammar of a perceived authority: the archaic "loaden" of Rollin's translator is corrected with "loaded" or "laden" and "was broke" is amended to "broken."[50] Students also enjoyed adding extra details and factual corrections, one-upping their supposed preceptor. Annotations could be quite prim about authority: against Rollin's assertion that "even those, that had the privilege of approaching [Dejoces, King of the Medes], might neither laugh nor spit in his presence," a student has written "which was very proper" and another had added "(Hear Hear)."[51] Users were deeply aware of books as material objects.

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[48] Christina Lupton, Reading and the Making of Time in the Eighteenth Century (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 2018), 101.

[49] See for example Charles Rollin, Antient History of the Egyptians, Carthaginians, Assyrians, Babylonians, Medes and Persians, Macedonians, and Grecians, 12 vols (London: James, John and Paul Knapton, 1726–37), X, title page, Sp Coll Bk9-h.1–12.

[50] Rollin, Antient History, V, 263.

[51] Rollin, Antient History, II, 53.

Marginal remarks attack the bad printing of the Glasgow copy of the Antient History; an upside-down "ing" is labelled as "some stupid beasts work with the wrong side up" and a repeated run of page numbers is gently amended.[52] Students could become quite angry about damage to the books they read. Against eight missing pages in the second volume of Rollin's Belles Lettres, a student has written "Some blackguard has had very little to do when he tore out these leaves it was him that took it out on the 10th November" (there is also a grammar correction under the "him").[53] There are many more playful annotations. At the back of the first volume of the Belles Lettres, a student has drawn a cock and labelled it, "This is a Specimen of the French mode of Walking." Above, another student has commented "It is a bad specimen of the writer's Penmanship & Drawing."[54]

Marginal responses could vary quite considerably depending on the tone of the work addressed. The only major marks in the thirteen volumes of Massillon are a couple of sermons with key words glossed in English. There are a few more obstreperous annotations in religious works; against a prefatory description of Samuel Clarke's modesty and lack of desire for high church office, someone with a nose for cant has written "It was his being an Arian that prevented him."[55] Annotators seem to be more talkative in books we would now class as literature, perhaps responding to apparent dialogism, or perhaps provoked by affect.

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[52] Rollin, Antient History, V, 234; in volume VI, the page numbers 401–416 are given twice; the second run has been corrected to 417–432.

[53] Charles Rollin, Method of Teaching and Studying the Belles Lettres, 4 vols (London: A. Bettesworth, and C. Hitch, 1734), II, 238, Sp Coll Bk9-h.13–16.

[54] Rollin, Belles Lettres, I, 414.

[55] Samuel Clarke, Sermons, ed. John Clarke, 10 vols (London: James and John Knapton, 1730–31) I, xlviii, Sp Coll Bk2-i.1–10.

One student was horrified by Jonathan Swift's "On a Lady who Pissed at the Tragedy of Cato," calling it "damned low disgusting silly stuff," although another writes that as an anatomist he concurs with Swift's assertions about the way to reach a lady's heart.[56] Fielding's Tom Jones, the period's most popular novel, provided numerous registers of entertainment. Students regularly underlined the innuendoes, showing that they understood the author's winks. They recorded visceral reactions: one student notes their "disgust" at the thought of a bosom "exactly resembling an Antient Piece of Parchment."[57] Fielding's narrative could foster strongly divergent responses: while one reader rapturously writes "truth & nature!!" against a passage about Tom's blushing in Sophia's presence, another eliminates a "Small" to suggest that Sophia has the pox (although a third annotator calls this alterer "a d_mn_ble beast").[58] At the end of the narrative, a "huzza" and a bottle appear in the margin alongside the couple's final permission to marry, although an ambiguous correction also changes Tom's kissing Sophia's hand to something unclear, and a rather less ambiguous alteration has Sophia surrender to Tom's "eager P_k" rather than his "eager Arms."[59] On the very final page (often a busy site of discussion), we have a "good Mr Allworthy" and a "d_mn'd Blifil" to show that the book's moral lesson carried; an assertion on the back cover adds that the book is "d__d good."[60]

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[56] Alexander Pope and Jonathan Swift, Miscellanies in Prose and Verse, 3 vols (London: Benjamin Motte, 1727) III, 169, Sp Coll Bh10-h.11–13.

[57] Henry Fielding, The History of Tom Jones, 6 vols (London: A. Millar, 1749) II, 56, Sp Coll Bk1-k.1–6.

[58] Fielding, Tom Jones, II, 159, 232.

[59] Fielding, Tom Jones, VI, 290, 299.

[60] Fielding, Tom Jones, VI, 304.

Systems of our Worlds

In the foregoing, we have shown how making digital data out Glasgow's manuscript borrowing records provides practical tools for analysing and understanding the past, but the process also brings to mind larger questions about the continuities and discontinuities between eighteenth-century and contemporary technologies of knowledge. It would be unfair to assert that the eighteenth century is alone among historical periods in exerting a substantial controlling influence over the ways we order the world. Nevertheless, it seems reasonable to trace the roots of many of our modern modes of conceptual and pragmatic organisation in eighteenth-century systematisations. Clifford Siskin has recently convincingly contended that system "became a primary form of the Enlightenment."[61] In his account, he describes the development first of scaled-up "Master Systems" that sought to encompass knowledge as a whole and subsequently (and consequently) of "specialized systems scaled to old and new institutional rubrics."[62] These constituted the organising principles of emergent disciplines that still serve, in modified forms, to structure our libraries, museums, schools, universities, and textual discourses, underpinning in fundamental ways the manners in which we conceptualise and organise society and culture, including digital systems. However, digital systems also offer affordances that call into question some of the orthodoxies of Enlightenment thought. While they clashed and intersected in complex manners, individual Enlightenment systems were commonly based on the assumption that the things they organised had to be located in one and exactly one place. This was the principle underlying

[61] Clifford Siskin, System: The Shaping of Modern Knowledge (Cambridge, MA and London: MIT Press, 2016), 110.

[62] Siskin, 121.

the conceptual hierarchies of Linnaean classification and a practical necessity for the bookish systems used to organise libraries, where each physical codex occupied a particular location on the available shelving.

To assert that Enlightenment systems were generally concerned with locating ideas and objects in individual spaces is not to argue that such systems were blind to other forms of relationality. Paratexts such as marginal notes, contents lists, and indexes provided alternative routes through codex pages, and libraries often employed parallel cataloguing systems, such as the combination of author catalogues and shelf catalogues used in the main library at the University of St Andrews.[63] Enlightenment discourses could also provide spaces for the particular and the idiosyncratic. We might, if we choose, set the anecdote and the miscellany against the dictionary and the encyclopaedia, while recognising the inductive roles played by anecdotes, the canonising potential of miscellanies, and the eccentricities of dictionaries and encyclopaedias.[64] Systemic ideals were always subject to the complexities of their creators, and in practice conceptual systems yielded to pragmatic constraints. In her discussions of artifacts as fragments that remain "sufficiently intact to support reconstructions of the object's full shape and history" but of which not enough "persists for either the

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[63] The eighteenth-century catalogues of the main library at St Andrews are UYLY105/3–13, St Andrews University Special Collections. The first author catalogue (UYLY105/7) dates from 1763.

[64] On anecdotes, see James Wood, Anecdotes of Enlightenment: Human Nature from Locke to Wordsworth (Charlottesville, VA: Univ. of Virginia Press, 2019). On miscellanies, see the 2017 special issue of Eighteenth-Century Life edited by Abigail Williams and Jennifer Batt (41 no. 1). On encyclopaedias, see Seth Rudy, Literature and Encyclopedism in Enlightenment Britain (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014).

reconstructions or the resulting interpretations . . . to be conclusive," Crystal B. Lake has highlighted the extent to which antiquarian systems remained contested and provisional due to the unruliness of the evidence they sought to interpret.[65] Similarly, while subject classifications or meaningful groupings operated to some extent in many repositories, for librarians who had to arrange numerous books on limited shelving, the sizes of volumes necessarily became an organising principle, and acquisitions were often placed in provisional manners that persisted for a considerable time, sometimes serving themselves to shape a collection's long-term patterns of organisation.

Nevertheless, regardless of the complexities of practice, it seems fair to assert that the organisation of Enlightenment systems was bound up in mental habits derived from organising physical spaces: the library, the specimen cabinet, the chart, the map, the diagram, the poetic stanza, the expanse of a canvas, the inscribed page. The purpose of dwelling on this is probably relatively obvious: to stress how modern digital systems have inherited as starting points many of the assumptions, affordances and problems of their Enlightenment forebears, but also to gesture towards how different digital systems of knowledge organisation might potentially become due to the removal of the constraints of space as understood in Enlightenment terms. After it is printed onto a page or when bound between covers on a library shelf, a text is in many respects physically invariant. Subsequent modifications may seek to challenge or correct assumptions, but they commonly do so in ways that redirect an established flow. Penned intrusions such as marginalia usually appear as part of an order obviously different from printed lines. The pages of printed books are organised according to sequential or narrative conventions, underpinned by the pragmatics of

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[65] Crystal B. Lake, Artifacts: How We Think and Write about Found Objects (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 2020), 6.

collation and the restraints of publishing technologies. A printed list implies an organising principle (often one that privileges the powerful, as when aristocratic titles override strict alphabetical order in subscription lists). A printed table privileges particular headers. A library's shelves necessitate a single dedicated position for each book held. By contrast, digital texts, unconstrained by the physical spatiality of rooms, covers, and pages—except as conceptual legacies—can be malleable and reconfigurable. The text of a digital book can be sorted, filtered, or navigated associatively via links. Once held in a spreadsheet, a digital list or table can be rearranged at the touch of a button (albeit in manners constrained by programmatic assumptions and modes of data collection). A digital library can locate each book in numerous different spaces in a web of relations as simple or as complex as time, effort, and desire will allow (although many of the organising principles of such webs are currently drawn from older and more hierarchal systems of classification).

Digital technologies thus have the potential for allowing us to organise, reorganise, and potentially democratise knowledge by removing the constraints imposed by physical space and the manners of thinking it imposes. However, the ways in which we have approached naming digital elements and constructing digital systems still owe considerable debts to tools refined during the Enlightenment, which remain powerful as means as means of making sense. Recent scholarly work in the humanities and social sciences has begun to find ways of challenging inherited modes of categorisation. These include the notion of the fuzzy set, transferred from biology to genre studies by Brian Attebery; Actor-Network Theory as posited by Bruno Latour; and assemblage theory, as conceptualised by Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari and developed further by Manuel DeLanda.[66] This essay has in certain respects

[66] For context, see Brian Attebery, Strategies of Fantasy (Bloomington, IN: Indiana Univ. Press, 1992), Bruno Latour, Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network-

followed such work through examining how the digital reinterpretations of previously intractable data can suggest alternative approaches to top-down accounts of Enlightenment thought, revealing webs of connections among previously occluded books and readers. However, the nature of the technology of the essay means that the discussion within this limited page space remains necessarily reliant on narrative, selection, and quantitative reduction to communicate partial observations. The larger potential of the digital is better substantiated by the data on which this essay draws, which is freely available for further examination both in its raw form and through its powerful online interface.[67] Unlike pre-digital research, in which tip-of-the-iceberg assessments were often the only things that were easily accessible, this essay is symbiotically linked with the material it interprets, allowing its headline findings to be checked, nuanced, challenged, and built upon.

In concluding, we would contend that the surviving Glasgow borrowing records occupy an important transitional moment in the history of knowledge, during which modes of authority were being renegotiated and dividing into more specialised forms. Nevertheless, the range of books that students engaged with indicates that a wide general knowledge remained both socially desirable and potentially graspable. It is also clear from surviving copies that students approached the library with levity and scepticism, as well as seriousness and reverence. The imagined community that emerges from the records is in tune with a wide

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Theory (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2005), Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, A Thousand Plateaus (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1987) and Manuel DeLanda, Assemblage Theory (Edinburgh: Edinburgh Univ. Press, 2016).

[67] Matthew Sangster, Karen Baston and Brian Aitken, Eighteenth-Century Borrowing from the University of Glasgow (Glasgow: University of Glasgow, 2020), https://18c-borrowing.glasgow.ac.uk. The raw data can be downloaded from the site.

range of discourses, from classical learning and Scottish philosophy to cosmopolitan theology and scandalous fiction. However, the granularity of the records let us see that this overall impression occludes hundreds of more specific and contingent engagements driven by particular interests and chance sociality as well as learned curricula and the systemic pursuit of modern knowledge. In sketching this overview, we want to stress that what we offer in this essay is just that: a particular narrative overview of this data set and some of the issues that it raises. Now the data is freely available, we hope other scholars will use it, manipulate it, integrate it, and juxtapose it in order to test our inferences, exploring further lives and details to see to what extent the situation at Glasgow accords with the situations in other locations where similarly rich manuscript records are still waiting to be tapped.