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Who Printed the Poetry Pamphlets of 1790s Glasgow?

Iain Beavan

Over the 1790s, three significant series of poetry pamphlets were published in Glasgow, all of which have commanded sustained attention primarily because they included the first appearances in print of some of Burns's compositions. The first to appear, started probably in early 1796 and completed in late 1798, were the Brash & Reid pamphlets, periodically collected into *Poetry; Original and Selected*; followed by *The Polyhymnia*, weekly, begun in 30 January or 6 February 1799 and, assuming regular appearance, completed no later than 12 June that year, printed for and sold by John Murdoch, also with no named printer given;¹ and then finally the parts of the nominally weekly *Poetical Miscellany*, begun on 13 July, the seven instalments actually finishing on 7 September 1799,² which do explicitly name Chapman & Lang as printers for Stewart and Meikle the booksellers. I

The fundamental purpose of this present essay is to corroborate a simple assertion that was made somewhat over a century ago regarding the Glasgow printing firm of Robert Chapman (later, Chapman & Lang). J. C. Ewing, in an article split over two issues of the *Glasgow Herald* of April 1910, noted that 'it is not an unreasonable inference that most of the numbers of the "Brash and Reid" [i.e. *Poetry; Original and Selected*] were printed by Robert

¹ Advertisement, 'Polyhymnia no. 1, containing Original Poetry. To be published every Wednesday. Price 1d.' *Glasgow Courier*, 2 February 1799. Then, on 9 March 1799, John Murdoch advertised in the *Courier* that the first six numbers of the *Polyhymnia* were available and noted that 'those who may not incline to complete the series can be furnished with detached numbers'.

² Craig Lamont, 'Stewart & Meikle's *The Poetical Miscellany* (1800): a Problematic Glasgow 'Edition' of Robert Burns', *Burns Chronicle*, 130:1 (2021), pp. 58-69 (p. 59); J. W. Egerer, *A Bibliography of Robert Burns* (Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd, 1964), pp. 63-65.

Chapman, and the remainder – the latest issues – by Chapman and Lang’.³ Ewing subsequently repeated the claim in his paper for the Glasgow Bibliographical Society in 1936.⁴ Ewing also helpfully distinguished between Brash & Reid’s role in the Glasgow book trade as that of booksellers and that of Chapman (and Chapman & Lang) as primarily printers, though they also occasionally acted as wholesale and retail sellers. Corroboration of the claim falls under three rather different evidential headings: firstly, circumstantial, relating to Chapman’s change of business direction in 1796; secondly, typographical, relating to the use of ornaments by the firm; and thirdly, and in many respects the most important, there is material evidence in the form of a set of volumes put together by the printer himself.

Subsequent scholars have been guarded in what they have said about the Chapman firm’s role in the production of the Brash & Reid titles, with G. Ross Roy arguing that ‘many of ... [Brash & Reid’s] tracts were printed by the Glasgow firm of Chapman and Lang’, yet elsewhere, ‘We cannot from this evidence be certain that Chapman and Lang did all the printing of the chapbooks in *Poetry Original and Selected*’:⁵ J. W. Egerer’s hitherto standard bibliography of Burns has effectively repeated J. C. Ewing’s observations.⁶ The reason for scholars’ caution is obvious and completely understandable. It resides in the evidence, or more precisely, lack thereof, to which Ross Roy and others refer, in that of all

³ [J. C. Ewing], ‘Brash and Reid: their Collection of Poetry’ 2 pts. *Glasgow Herald*, 16 April 1910, p. 13, and 23 April 1910, p. 11. The article is signed, ‘J.C.E.’

⁴ J. C. Ewing, ‘Brash and Reid, Booksellers in Glasgow and their Collection of Poetry Original and Selected’, *Records of the Glasgow Bibliographical Society*, 12 (1936), pp. 1-20 (p. 6).

⁵ G. Ross Roy, ‘The Brash and Reid Editions of ‘Tam o’ Shanter’’, *Burns Chronicle*, 98 (1989), pp.38-44 (p. 41); G. Ross Roy, ‘Robert Burns and the Brash and Reid Chapbooks’, in *Literatur im Kontext - Literature in Context...*(Scottish studies, 14), Hrsg. Joachim Schwend, Susanne Hagemann, und Hermann Völkel (Frankfurt am Main: Lang, 1992), pp. 53–69 (p. 53).

⁶ J. W. Egerer, p.55.

the individual parts that constitute *Poetry; Original and Selected*, only two carry a printer's name, albeit that of Chapman & Lang; otherwise the information on the imprint usually appears simply as 'printed for and sold by Brash and Reeid' who throughout were the publishers, and primary sellers. In short, what we have is a lack of evidence from the relevant Brash & Reid imprints as to what firm or firms actually printed them. Questions over the role or roles of Chapman & Lang in the book trade go much further than the poetry publications of Brash & Reid.

Theoretical calculation and reality infrequently coincide, but if a steady, regular weekly production of these titles is assumed, then there appears to have been very little or no overlap in the publication schedule of these three poetical series. One set neatly followed the next. If production schedules are accurately calculated, it meant that direct competition for sales between the relevant booksellers was minimised - at least when the parts were first issued. It is possible that this was the result of collusion, or, if the three series were indeed produced by a single printer, it reflected that firm's ability, preparedness or agreement to produce no more than one text per week. There is also a limited number of other small poetry publications brought out by these and other Glasgow booksellers that fall outside the three series that are also relevant within the present context. It also has to be said that any attempt to settle the question as to who printed the poetry series is arguably rather tangential - one might almost say secondary - to Burns studies directly, but is of central importance to any understanding of what was happening more broadly in the book trade of 1790s Glasgow. Consideration of four closely related pieces of evidence - though of different strengths - should allow us to reach an enhanced understanding of the role of Chapman (& Lang) as printers and publishers. They are: the activities of other printers within Glasgow; evidence beyond the imprints of the poetry pieces themselves; what we know of Robert Chapman and his background; and finally some volumes from his own personal collection.

Robert Chapman and his background⁷

Robert Chapman (jnr) came from a family of printers though did not immediately follow in the trade. He was born in London in 1765. His father, James, was a printer in London, and is said by Robert (jnr) to have 'carried on his business in a very respectable manner for many years'.⁸ James, along with his own brother, Robert (snr) had served their apprenticeships with the Foulis printing firm in Glasgow, the former as a printer, the latter as a bookbinder. But whereas James went south to London to establish his printing business, Robert (snr) continued to work for the Foulis brothers until about 1775 when he entered into a business partnership with Alexander Duncan as R. Chapman and A. Duncan (with minor variation) - who himself had also served an apprenticeship with the Foulis firm. And it was Robert Chapman (snr) and James Duncan, a Glasgow bookseller, who wound up the heavily indebted business affairs of Robert and Andrew Foulis in 1781.⁹

The teenage years of Robert (jnr) were seemingly adventurous, though unsettled might be an equally good description. He was persuaded to join a maternal uncle (surname, Henderson) who had been living in the West Indies for many years. It is clear from Robert's autobiographical notes that the move did not work out as hoped, but nevertheless he spent at least five years in the Caribbean. Robert subsequently ended up in Quebec and

⁷ Mitchell Library, Glasgow: Special Collections, Ref 53971: MS 101. Chapman, Robert (1765-1838). Transcript of Chapman's own short account of his life down to 1822 and of the continuation (to his death in 1838) by...John Kerr, writer in Glasgow. Transcript of the Chapman & Kerr MSS made in 1881 by 'W.W'.

⁸ Frustratingly, James Chapman is not to be clearly identified within the relevant book trade resources. He may be the J. Chapman of Fleet Street who did a limited amount of printing of emblem books in the 1770s and 1780s for Elizabeth Newbery.

⁹ *Notices and Documents Illustrative of the Literary History of Glasgow During the Greater Part of the Last Century*, ed. by William J. Duncan (Glasgow: printed at Glasgow [for the Maitland Club], 1831), p. 46.

Newfoundland after becoming shipwrecked in the St Lawrence River, before returning to London. It was the death of Robert (snr) in June 1788 that brought Robert (jnr), his nephew, then aged 23, directly into the printing trade.¹⁰ Robert Chapman (jnr) moved to Glasgow and succeeded his bachelor uncle as partner in business with Alexander Duncan, their steady work being book printing and the continuing production of the weekly *Glasgow Mercury* newspaper that had begun some ten years earlier in January 1778. The imprint of Chapman and Duncan last appeared on monograph material in 1794, at which time Alexander Duncan seems to have retired, and the business was initially continued by Robert Chapman (jnr) alone.

It has to be said that overall, the publications of the firm of Chapman and Duncan are rather unexceptional. Of the approximately eighty-five titles they published, the single largest group, constituting c.38%, was – unsurprisingly – theological, and of those several were recently delivered sermons. What is noticeable, however, is the very plainness of the printed page as produced by the firm of Chapman and Duncan, with the occasional swelled rule being the most ornamental typographical feature that the firm employed. When Robert Chapman (snr) and Alexander Duncan began their weekly *Glasgow Mercury*, in 1778 - publication day was a Tuesday - it became the third newspaper then available in the city, with the *Glasgow Journal* (1741-1841?) and the *Glasgow Chronicle* which began in 1773 (subsequently absorbed by the *Glasgow Journal* in 1779) as competitors. And with the appearance of John Mennons's *Glasgow Advertiser* (1783-1802) the field remained quite crowded. The *Glasgow Mercury's* last issue was that for 27 September 1796, at which time it still faced competition from three Glasgow newspapers, two of which were then published more frequently than once a week. William Reid & Co. issued the *Glasgow Courier* (1791-1866) thrice: Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays, the *Glasgow Advertiser* appeared on

¹⁰ A person by name 'Mr Robert Chapman' (no address) is present on the subscribers' list of Creech's 1787 edition. Chapman is listed but unidentified in J. W. Egerer, 'Annotated List of Subscribers. First Edinburgh Edition, 1787', *Burns Chronicle*, 3rd ser., XI (1962), pp.11-43 (p.20).

Mondays and Fridays, and the weekly *Glasgow Journal* also Tuesdays. And whilst it is tempting to view the closure of the *Glasgow Mercury* as a result of the pressure of competition, Robert Chapman (jnr) claimed otherwise.

The printing firm of Robert Chapman (and Chapman & Lang)¹¹

Chapman's editorial notice in the issue of 9 August 1796, repeated in that of 13 September reveals the predominant, if not sole, factor in his wanting to end his relationship with the paper:

The Proprietor of the GLASGOW MERCURY, wishing to devote his time to the business of *Printing in General*, with which the publication of the Newspaper has been found to interfere, has resolved to dispose his right of property in that Paper.

Although the announcement might feel disingenuous, the fundamental truthfulness of the announcement is supported by Chapman's advertisement in the same issue for 'WANTED IMMEDIATELY. Two APPRENTICES – One, a stout lad for the Press, the other as a Compositor'.

In the last issue, 27 September, Chapman expanded slightly on his previous remarks:

The proprietor's chief, or rather only, motive for discontinuing the publication of the MERCURY arises from the extensiveness of his *printing business in general*. Were this not the case, so far from having any thought of resigning the paper, he is enabled to declare that he would carry it on though the encouragement he has always experienced were considerably lessened.

These statements tempt us to make a number of assumptions about the firm. First, that it was a small enterprise, with few employees; second, that Chapman himself did not own many printing presses, or if he did, he did not have sufficient skilled hands to operate them all, and finally that general printing was potentially more profitable than relying on income generated by the newspaper and its advertising charges. What can be said with certainty is

¹¹ Henceforth, discussion is of Robert Chapman (jnr) unless indicated otherwise.

that Chapman never started his new business initiatives with any profit from the sale of the *Mercury*, as he failed to find a buyer for it.

Throughout 1796, there were relatively few advertisements for books or serials within the *Mercury*, but what there was tended to relate to Brash and Reid. Robert Chapman's only known attempt at a periodical, *The Sibyl*, four pages, weekly at 2d. was advertised in late May and early June, 1796. It appears to have been a failure as only five issues are known, but what is noticeable is the list of Glasgow booksellers that were selling Chapman's serial. There are ten firms on the list, but they include four with whom Chapman had considerable further business dealings over the next years, namely Brash & Reid, Cameron & Murdoch, T[homas] Stewart and R[ichard] Scott. On 5 April, and repeated on 6 September, the paper carried advertisements of one and a half-columns placed by Charles Cooke of London, almost certainly as a British-wide campaign, listing the titles in his two series, Select Novels, and Select British Poets, which offered novels in parts, at 6d. each, or as a single volume.¹² Cooke's publishing initiatives and their influence throughout Britain are well recognised,¹³ but again it is the name of Brash & Reid that is significant in the present context as the named agent for both the series.¹⁴ What is at present unknown are the circulation figures for the *Mercury*, and, as importantly, where copies were available for sale. What little can be said, however, is that London readers and those outwith Glasgow wishing to advertise had no reason to be unaware of the *Glasgow Mercury*, as William Taylor's major advertising agency

¹² Sterne's *Sentimental Journey* was available in one single part, at 6d.; his *Tristram Shandy* was completed in eight numbers and cost in total 4s.

¹³ Thomas F. Bonnell, *The Most Disreputable Trade: Publishing the Classics of English Poetry, 1765 - 1810* (Oxford: O.U.P., 2008), ch. 8. Also Sandro Jung, *The Publishing and Marketing of Illustrated Literature in Scotland, 1760–1825* (Bethlehem, Penn.: Lehigh U.P., 2018), *passim* but esp. ch. 1.

¹⁴ Agent is here understood as being the local or regional wholesaler. Brash & Reid were also agents for other publications by Cook, e.g. the new edition of William Henry Hall's *New Encyclopaedia*.

in Warwick Square, London, and Peele's Coffee-house and Hotel in Fleet Street took in the newspaper and kept files of it available for consultation.¹⁵

Then on 16 August, Brash & Reid themselves placed a detailed advertisement for the first collected volume of *Poetry; Original and Selected*, containing twenty-four numbers, and noted that 'since they introduced the mode of publishing Poems...in detached Selections, they have experienced very liberal encouragement'. The advertisement went on to state that the publishers had, since the completion of what was the first volume of *Poetry; Original and Selected*, 'published several other small Selections at One Penny each', and listed *Elegiac Stanzas Applicable to the Untimely Death of...Robert Burns*, *Monody on the Death of Robert Burns*, and *Verses to the Memory of Robert Burns*. Then, rather tellingly, and suspiciously conveniently, Brash & Reid offered the writings of another Robert Burns, of different working background, said to have been a weaver from a manufacturing town, in the form of 'TWO ORIGINAL POEMS: The Echo of Friars Carse Hermitage, and Avon's Stream by Robert Burns of Hamilton. This Publication by a second poet of the name of ROBERT BURNS will naturally excite attention. Should these Two Pieces meet favourable reception, several other poems by the same author will speedily appear'.¹⁶ Nothing of this, of course, tells us who actually printed Brash & Reid's material, but equally, it indicates how appealing as a mode of production was the publishing programme of Charles Cooke of London. Brash & Reid may

¹⁵ On Peele's see 'List of Scotch Newspapers', in *Browne's General Law List, for the Year 1787...8th ed.* (London: pr. for the author...by Axtell and Purdon, [1787?]) and on Tayler, Michael L. Turner, 'Distribution: the Case of William Tayler', in *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain, vol. V: 1695-1830*, ed. Michael F. Suarez and Michael L. Turner (Cambridge: C.U.P., 2009), pp. 466-78 (pp. 471-75).

¹⁶ *Glasgow Mercury*, 16 August 1796, p. 264 (cumulative pagination). The death of the recognised poet Robert Burns was recorded in the *Glasgow Mercury* of 26 July.

have been the designated Glasgow agents for Cooke,¹⁷ but both Stewart & Meikle and Cameron & Murdoch were also 'supplied regularly with Cooke's various publications so soon as published' and offered for sale 'Cooke's edition of select novels, poets, &c.'¹⁸ Contacts between Brash & Reid and Chapman go back a few years earlier: evidence from imprints suggests that Duncan and Chapman (as the firm then was) were printing for Brash & Reid from at least 1792, with one of the many editions of John Quincy Adams's (writing pseudonymously as Publicola) *Observations on Paine's Rights of Man*. And Robert Chapman and James Brash knew each other as officials within the Bookbinders Society in Glasgow.¹⁹

Glasgow printers of the 1790s and the poetry pamphlets

A preliminary question needs to be dealt with immediately. Why should we even assume that it was a Glasgow printing firm – or firms – that carried out the physical production of the poetry sets of Brash & Reid and John Murdoch? One feature – of several – that is shared across the three publishing exercises, *Poetry; Original and Selected*, *The Poetical Miscellany* and *The Polyhymnia* is the frequency with which each individual instalment was printed and published. *Poetry; Original and Selected* (ninety-six instalments) certainly appeared more frequently than fortnightly, and *The Poetical Miscellany* (seven instalments) and *The Polyhymnia* (twenty instalments) both aimed at a weekly production. It is therefore

¹⁷ Brash and Reid were advertising Cooke's Cheap and Elegant Pocket Library as available from their shop and warehouse. *Glasgow Advertiser*, 16 February 1798, p. 1.

¹⁸ Stewart & Meikle's booklist is a final advertisement leaf in Edward Topham, *The Life of Mr. Elwes, the Celebrated Miser...* (Glasgow: pr. for Stewart & Meikle, [1796?]). Advertisement of Cameron & Murdoch as final leaf in vol. 1 of James Macpherson, *The Poems of Ossian*, 2 vols (Glasgow: printed for Cameron & Murdoch, [1796-97]).

¹⁹ *British Almanack and Glasgow Register for 1801* (Edinburgh: pr. by Alex. Chapman & Co. for J. and A. Duncan, Glasgow), p. 244. James Brash was preses (chairman); Robert Chapman acted as collector (treasurer).

highly unlikely, even with improved transportation and mails, that either Brash & Reid's or John Murdoch's series were printed anywhere other than in Glasgow or immediate area. And we do know that the parts constituting *The Poetical Miscellany* were physically produced in the city. Whilst it is not actually impossible that manuscript versions of all the instalments were prepared and ready beforehand, and sent off to a printer in, say, Edinburgh, sheer practicality would dictate that there would need to be regular communication and interaction between printer and publisher in Glasgow itself.

We can now move a further step forward by considering who amongst the Glasgow printers might have carried out the work for Brash & Reid and the other poetry publishers. Relying on imprint information from ESTC, the list is not short: there were over fifteen printers working in Glasgow in 1795, including the specialist chapbook printing firm of J. and A. Robertson that alone produced at the very minimum 140 titles from that date to 1800 inclusive.²⁰ David Niven (an amalgamated firm was formed in 1800, as Niven, Napier and Khull) was an active printer in Glasgow from the late 1770s, and can be credited with the production of nearly one hundred titles to the end of 1800, but one single sixteen-page pamphlet appears to have been the smallest item to have come from their press. Putting aside the rather special case of their being one of a number of Scottish firms that over the century reprinted a collected edition of the *Spectator*, there is no evidence that Niven – and subsequent business amalgamations – undertook the printing of any regularly or serially published material. And indeed, that firm's printing output of eighteenth-century Scottish literary authors seems to have been limited to Gavin Turnbull, *Poetical Essays* (1788), Ramsay, *The Gentle Shepherd* (1798) and Macpherson's *Poems of Ossian* (1800). Other important printers, like John Mennons and William Reid & Co. were heavily committed to the

²⁰ This number of 140 titles is in fact extremely conservative, as it excludes the very many titles Robertson firm undoubtedly published under the bland imprint of 'Entered (or Licensed) according to Order'.

production of their respective newspapers, and, in Mennons' case, also the *Glasgow Almanack*.

The firm of Robert Chapman (and Chapman & Lang) is listed as a *printer* in ESTC in slightly over fifty titles between 1795 and 1800. But for whom did Chapman act as printer – as directly identified from imprints? The list is very suggestive, as no other Glasgow printer of the time appears to have carried out work so regularly for a similar combination of publishers or booksellers. The list includes Brash & Reid, Alexander Cameron, Stewart & Meikle, John Murdoch, James Imray and Richard Scott, and what is common to all but one of them (less so, Richard Scott) is that they published small poetical pieces. And again, relying on imprint analysis only, it is clear that Chapman (& Lang) printed a much higher percentage (c.54%) of literary and poetical material, between 1795-1800 than in the earlier period, when the firm functioned as Chapman and Duncan.²¹

What of the small poetry publications themselves? Once the output of the Glasgow chapbook printers is excluded, it is very clear that the producers and publishers of *Poetry; Original and Selected* (and its three associated uniform pamphlets), *The Poetical Miscellany* and *The Polyhymnia* accounted for close to all of the small, i.e. eight- and sixteen-page poetry pieces to come out of Glasgow between 1795 and 1800. There is little left, and particularly so in terms of similar size, pagination, layout and small format as displayed within the three series above, though what does remain includes a small number of titles provisionally dated to 1795: *Gil Morrice: an Old Scottish Ballad*, printed for James Lang,²² John Pomfret's *The Choice, a Poem* (printed for Alex. Cameron, bookseller, Glasgow), and *Monimia: an Ode*, printed for and sold by Cameron and Murdoch. A year later, in 1796, Stewart & Meikle offered Dryden's *The Wedding. An Humorous Parody on Alexander's*

²¹ In the period 1795-1800 inclusive, the printing of theological material by Chapman (& Lang) based solely on imprint information, dropped to c.20% of their output.

²² This ballad was something of a favourite and appeared several times in various formats from the 1750s. It was available in chapbook form, and also published in a smarter edition by the Foulis firm.

Feast, and in 1799 there were two short works by Rev. Hamilton Paul, *Paul's First Epistle to the Dearly Beloved the Female Disciples*, with no seller given other than 'the booksellers',²³ and *Paul's Second Epistle...* printed by James Mundell for the booksellers'.

The 1790s in Glasgow saw a number of periodicals appearing, none of which lasted very long. The weekly *Culler*, which kept going over the second half of 1795 offered the rather standard fare of biographical extracts, history, stories, and anecdotes was printed for Alexander Cameron. After trying *The Phoenix*, 1792-94, weekly at 1d., William Bell the printer then attempted *The Asylum*, which, in overall general content was not markedly different from *The Culler*, began in 1795 and continued into spring 1796, though not without its planned weekly publication rate stuttering. All these serials, as was fairly typical of literary miscellanies, included poetry in their various issues. But neither the poetry nor their attempts to extend readers' sensibilities and discernment could save them. In its comments within the concluding issue, the editor of *The Culler* accepted that judgements were being made on the quality of its writing, and then made an intriguing remark that perhaps reflected readers' expectations for something more than the purely verbal: 'If my successors' merit shall appear to be greater than mine, let them enjoy their fame [...] all I ask is, that a fair comparison be made, and that no *engraving* be taken into the question.'²⁴

Summarily then, it would be fair to say that the production of these poetry pieces lay in the hands of a numerically small group of Glasgow booksellers acting as publishers and distributors and that the great majority appeared over the last few years of the eighteenth century: 1795 or 1796 to 1799. The book trade in Glasgow had, unsurprisingly, developed in

²³ John Murdoch was advertising *Paul's First Epistle*, price 6d., in the *Glasgow Courier*, 9 March 1799. Hamilton Paul himself was an early editor of Burns's works, a contributor to the earliest (and subsequent) Burns Suppers, and almost certainly one of the anonymous contributors to *The Polyhymnia*.

²⁴ *The Culler*, no. 20 (December 1795), p. 307.

the historical centre of the city - the High Street, the Saltmarket and Trongate - so that no one firm in the Glasgow book trade in this period was far from another. And in the case of the booksellers and the printing firm under present consideration, they were particularly close. Robert Chapman's works premises were at 'M'Nair's Land, first close East from the Head of King Street'.²⁵ A variant of this address is sometimes given as 'M'Nairs Back Land, Trongate', from which we can place his printing house in one of the many highly congested passageways near the Tron Steeple. Brash & Reid also had their premises in the Trongate as did Stewart & Meikle and, for a time, Cameron & Murdoch. When their partnership broke in 1798 Alexander Cameron moved along to Argyll Street (an extension of the Trongate) where Richard Scott was also located. John Murdoch himself set up shop in M'Nair's Land where, apart from Robert Chapman, there was also a bookbinder - John Jones - and a firm of pocket book makers - William Fisher & Greenshield. And, by 1801, the printers Niven, Napier & Khull had set up their office in the Post Office Court, Trongate.

A feature shared by a number of the booksellers concerned was that of unstable business partnerships, or of short-lived individual existence as a firm, as laid out in Table 1 below.²⁶

Table 1

Partnership	Partners / proprietors	Timespan	Previous and subsequent activity
Cameron & Murdoch	Cameron, Alexander Murdoch, John ²⁷	1795-1798	John Murdoch, 1799-1800 A. Cameron, bookseller, 1795

²⁵ Address from imprint of the *Glasgow Mercury*.

²⁶ Information brought together from the *Glasgow Directory*, the Scottish Book Trade Index, imprints, and Jung, *Publishing and Marketing*.

²⁷ In spite of diversifying into the role of a Lottery Office keeper, his estate was sequestrated, December 1800. James Gillies, Glasgow bookseller was appointed administrator. The *Glasgow Advertiser*, 8 December 1800, p. 775.

			Possibly as A. Cameron (& Co.), 1798-1804
Stewart & Meikle	Stewart, Thomas ²⁸ Meikle [forename untraced]	1795/96-1800	Thomas Stewart (premises in Glasgow) 1801-1802/03. In Greenock, 1803- (A bookseller by name Thomas Stewart of Greenock occasionally listed in imprints to 1820).
[working alone]	Scott, Richard	1796-1799	
A. and J. Imray	Imray, A. Imray, James	1795-1797; 1797-1800/01	A. and J. Imray, 1795-97 J[ames] Imray alone, 1797-1800/01

The two firms that lasted more than a few years were that of Robert Chapman and Brash & Reid, and even the former had a short-term partnership in the form of (Robert) Chapman & (William) Lang, which began possibly as early as 1795 or 1796, and it was during the years of this partnership that the firm extended its activities to become booksellers and stationers as well as continuing as printers. Glimpses of their activities as booksellers in 1803 can be found in their advertisement for twelve titles in their edition of *Don Quixote*, and in their presence in the subscribers' list for the first edition of James Fisher's *A Spring Day; or, Contemplations on Several Occurrences* (Edinburgh: pr. by Thomas Turnbull for the author).²⁹ The partnership was dissolved in 1803, after which the firm again retreated from

²⁸ Thomas Stewart, bookseller, is correctly identified as the same individual who was partner in the firm of Stewart & Meikle. See, for example, J. W. Egerer, 'Thomas Stewart, Robert Burns, and the Law', *Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America*, 56:1 (1962), pp. 46-55 (p. 46). Two Glasgow editions of Burns's *The Kirk's Alarm* also provide independent evidence. One is 'printed for and sold by Stewart & Meikle' ESTC T91491; the other is 'printed by Chapman & Lang, for Thomas Stewart', ESTC T199536.

²⁹ The advertisement is first noticed in Jung, *Publishing and Marketing*, p. 132, n.1. It carried retail, not trade prices, and included standard histories, some poetry, a guide to Loch Lomond and an edition of

retail bookselling, but at times acted as wholesaler.³⁰ Chapman himself continued in business until his retiral in 1822; and a printer named William Lang is known to have been working independently from 1804.³¹ The partnership of Brash & Reid was formed in 1790. James Brash and William Reid, both of whom have attracted biographical notices, remained in partnership until 1817 when James Brash & Co. evolved, continuing into the 1840s, though the firm's name, 'Brash & Reid' is found in an 1819 imprint.³²

The Adventures of Baron Munchausen (the imprint of which is actually dated 1804). Amongst the Glasgow trade that subscribed to *A Spring Day*, Chapman & Lang took ten copies, Brash & Reid, thirty; and J. & M. Robertson no fewer than sixty. Cost per copy to subscribers, 5s. in boards. These Glasgow booksellers were undoubtedly in part acting on behalf of individuals who had submitted subscription papers via the firms. Thomas Bewick, who prepared engravings for the work, also subscribed.

³⁰ The partnership of Chapman and Lang was dissolved in September 1803, for which see Jung, *Publishing and Marketing*, p. 135, citing the *Glasgow Courier* of 21 January 1804.

³¹ Chapman's 'whole stock of printing types, presses &c.' were advertised for sale 'by private bargain', and 'a respectable Periodical Work [entitled] 'The Christian Recorder', now going on, may likely be continued with [Chapman's] successor'. *Glasgow Herald*, 12 April 1822.

³² William Reid, manager and editor of the *Glasgow Courier*, was a different individual to William Reid of Brash & Reid, though they may have been related. William Reid of the *Courier* died aged 71, on 2 April 1829 according to *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, 171 (June 1829), p. 818. (The Old Parish Registers give his date of death as 8 April.) See also 'The Last of the *Glasgow Courier*', *Glasgow Herald*, 9 Feb. 1866, p. 5. The possible confusion between the two individuals is made the more likely by William Reid & Co. being the printers of the *Glasgow Courier*; and Brash & Reid being named as one of the booksellers with whom orders could be placed for the newspaper. Advertisement dated 1 August 1791 in *The Star and Evening Advertiser*, 26 August 1791, p.1. William Reid, of Brash and Reid, was born in 1764, and died in 1831. He initially worked for the firm of Andrew Wilson, type-founders (whose designs and greek and roman type faces contributed to the clarity and overall appreciation of the quality of the productions of the Foulis brothers' press) and subsequently served an

Can imprints tell us anything useful?

If the now very widely accepted interpretation and meaning of imprints is adopted and applied to examples that include the name of Chapman (& Lang), there are at least four subtly different pieces of functional information to be gained about the firms listed within.³³

1. *The Invective: a Poem*. Glasgow: printed by Robert Chapman, 1796. Whoever funded this publication, no attempt was made to organise any wider distribution channel; or if it were,

apprenticeship with the Glasgow booksellers, Dunlop and Wilson, before finally entering into partnership with James Brash. A minor poet, his compositions were initially published anonymously. He is perhaps best known for his *Monody on the Death of Robert Burns*, which appeared as an instalment in Brash & Reid's *Poetry; Original and Selected*. He is named as composer of this piece in Robert Burns, *The Works*, ed. James Hogg and William Motherwell 5 vols (Glasgow: A. Fullerton & Co., 1839-41), V, pp. 281-82, which reduces it to eight stanzas, whereas the original appearance is substantially longer at twenty. See Arthur Sherbo, 'Reid, William (1764-1831), Poet and Songwriter', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: O.U.P., 2004) <https://www.oxforddnb.com> [accessed April 2022].

James Brash (b.1758, d.1835) is said to have trained in the Glasgow booktrade first with the Foulis brothers (possibly as an apprentice), subsequently with Robert Macnair, bookbinder and finally with James Duncan, bookseller. Also said to have been an occasional poet he apparently 'contributed several pieces to the Glasgow periodicals between 1782 and 1787, but...never affixed his name to any of them'. James Johnson, *The Scottish Musical Museum... with copious notes...by...William Stenhouse. With some additional illustrations*, ed. by David Laing and Charles Kirkpatrick Sharpe, 6 vols (Edinburgh: Blackwood, 1839), II, p. 214. Brash and Reid were separately listed as witnesses in the trial of Thomas Muir, and were said to have sold Painite material. *The Trial of Thomas Muir, younger, of Huntershill before the High Court of Justiciary at Edinburgh...1793 on a Charge of Sedition*, 2nd ed (Edinburgh: pr. for James Simpson...and J. Hamilton...London, 1793), pp. 17, 50, 58, 70.

³³ John Feather, *The Provincial Book Trade in Eighteenth-Century England* (Cambridge: C.U.P., 1985, repr. 1988), ch. 4.

then it was not explicitly recorded. Whoever wished to obtain a copy would have had to have applied to Chapman, either directly, or ask another bookseller to do so.

2. Thomas Gray, *The Poetical Works*. Glasgow: printed by R. Chapman, for Richard Scott, Bookseller, and sold by all the booksellers in Great Britain, 1798. Richard Scott is picked out as he undoubtedly represented the main distribution channel and wholesaler for this work. 'Sold by all the booksellers in Great Britain' was nonsense if taken as fact, but what it did do, was make it clear that any bookseller could apply to Scott for copies. Similar in form to this imprint are those found on the various instalments of Stewart & Meikle's *The Poetical Miscellany*, for example, Robert Burns, *The Jolly Beggars* (Glasgow: pr. by Chapman for Stewart and Meikle).

3. John Finlay's *Wallace; or, The Vale of Ellerslie*, first published in 1802, was 'printed by and for Chapman & Lang, sold by Manners & Miller, and A. Constable [...]' with a second edition in 1804 'printed by and for R. Chapman, sold by J. and A. Duncan, and Brash & Reid [...]'. The most precise interpretation of the phrase (and most confidently applicable in, say, the contexts the London and Edinburgh booktrades) 'printed by and for' would be that not only did Chapman (& Lang) physically produce the work, but that they also owned the copyright. This may have been the case, though it may also suggest that Chapman (& Lang) entered into some other arrangement with the author. However, it does also imply that for the first edition at least they acted as the major wholesale distributor around Glasgow and immediate area. Sales in Edinburgh were presumably handled by Manners & Miller and Archibald Constable.

James Denholm's *Historical Account and Topographical Description of the City of Glasgow* (Glasgow: printed by and for R. Chapman, and Stewart & Meikle, 1797) was evidently a success, and went into an expanded second edition a year later.³⁴ The imprint thus leads us

³⁴ James Denholm was variously described. In 1799 he was a 'writer' at M'Ausland's Land, Trongate', and by 1801 a 'miniature and landscape painter' at the same address. *The Glasgow Directory* for

to assume that the two companies shared the responsibility of the financing and distribution of the work, presumably including any payments to the author, the costs of physical production, and distribution. And it may well be that the overall costs and profits were indeed shared equally, but there are small hints that might cause pause for thought, particularly over the extent of the role or roles undertaken by Chapman (& Lang). The advertisement, partially transcribed from the *Glasgow Advertiser* of 15 June 1798 reads as though Stewart & Meikle and Robert Chapman were to be considered as joint publishers:

This day is published, price 5s. | By STEWART and MEIKLE, Booksellers | And ROBERT CHAPMAN, printer | [...] | THE SECOND EDITION | OF THE | HISTORY OF GLASGOW & SUBURBS.

Moreover, the work's dedication to James M'Dowal, Lord Provost of Glasgow, signed off by both Chapman and Stewart & Meikle, reinforce the importance of the role of the printer in the work's publication.

What might have been the extent of Chapman's role? We do not presently know either the size of the print run of Denholm's *Historical Account*, or the production costs, but Robert Chapman is likely to have been in a much better position financially, and also to have had greater experience than Stewart & Meikle, to judge what would have been the size of the production runs required both to break even and to make a profit. There is, then, a tempting alternative hypothesis that Chapman's role went beyond that of equally shared responsibility. It is possible, though currently unprovable, that the initial financing and production of the title was largely attributable to Robert Chapman, with Stewart & Meikle acting as both the wholesale and retail outlet for the work and taking their profit from sales.

1799 and 1801. He apparently also taught geography, astronomy, drawing and painting. Royal Institute of the Fine Arts (Glasgow), *Exhibition Illustrative of Old Glasgow, 1894* ([Glasgow]: Royal Institute of the Fine Arts, 1894). He undertook other work for Chapman & Lang as he supplied the drawing for the plate to the fourth volume of Robertson's *History of the Reign of Charles V.*

Certainly Stewart & Meikle were to have been regarded as the major distributor, as the advertisement for the second edition carries at its foot the names of sixteen booksellers, all but one based in Scotland, from whom copies could have been obtained, and starting that list was Stewart and Meikle, their name prominently picked out. Generally, whilst Chapman (& Lang) as a firm and its predecessor could call on accumulated creditworthiness and reliability built up over several decades, there is no real evidence that could suggest the same for some of the Glasgow 'poetry' publishers, including Stewart & Meikle - excepting however, Brash & Reid.

4. A large percentage of the poetry pamphlets under consideration carries a very concise imprint of the general form, 'printed for and sold by X' – typical examples of which are William Cowper, *The Facetious History of John Gilpin* (Glasgow: printed for A. Cameron) and *New-year's Day: a Poem* (Glasgow: printed for and sold by Brash & Reid). No printer is recorded in the imprint. Taking the three major poetry series together, there are over one hundred and twenty-five separate titles. And many of the titles were reprinted as new, separate editions, not just new issues. If it can convincingly be shown that this considerable undertaking was carried through by Chapman (& Lang), then it is reasonable just to keep in mind the possibility that the printers had something more than a subordinate contractual role in their production.

From imprints to evidential ornaments

If, as previous scholars have fully appreciated, imprint information in itself cannot finally answer the question as to who undertook the printing of the various series under consideration, to what other feature(s), within the pamphlets themselves, might researchers turn? The printer of the small Glasgow poetry texts took care over the typographical layout, which, although not at all unusual in itself, was considerably better than that frequently exercised by chapbook printers. The paper – at least that used in the Brash & Reid

publications – was of a reasonably good standard.³⁵ And the paper used for *The Polyhymnia* and *The Poetical Miscellany* is considerably better quality than the coarse, fibrous, often greyish variety often used by chapbook printers. That said, one late nineteenth-century assessment of Chapman's typographical skills now reads like faint praise, 'the example [...] set by the Foulises was not universally followed. Chapman and Lang, however, endeavoured to do so to a certain extent', and 'R. Chapman [...] continued to be one of the chief printers in Glasgow for some years. His style of printing gradually became modernised, the long s was given up, and the type became rounder and fuller'.³⁶

It would have been – for bibliographers at least – fortuitous if an already identified printing firm X had in its type founts a conveniently broken letter or damaged ornament that could be associated with X and no other, and that the particular damaged individual sort or ornament appeared in the printed poetry pieces under consideration. Such would have supplied very strong evidence indeed to justify any claim that X printed the Glasgow poetry sets in question. But such specific evidence does not seem to exist. The ornaments and fleurons used within the various Glasgow poetry series were almost certainly commercially available metal cuts and demonstrably so in some cases. As such, some of the ornamental pieces within the poetry series constitute strong evidence that whoever printed the poetry pamphlets had bought stock from a commercial foundry, for example, that of William Caslon, but poor evidence as to which particular printer it was. The statements by Robert Chapman of his intentions to abandon newspaper production and publishing and concentrate instead on more general printing, given the year of his announcements, 1796, constitute moderate but ultimately circumstantial evidence. There are, however, particular circumstances that

³⁵ Ewing, 'Brash and Reid, Booksellers' pp. 5-6; Iain Beavan, 'The Small Poetry Publications of 1790s Glasgow: Definitions, Descriptions and Doubts', *Burns Chronicle*, 131:1 (2022), pp. 37-59.

³⁶ John Ferguson, *The Brothers Foulis and Early Glasgow Printing* (London: pr. at the Dryden P. by J. Davy & Sons, 1889), p. 15. Reprinted from *The Library* for March 1889.

would allow the commercially available metal cuts to be considered evidence that pointed strongly towards one particular printing firm, and such was the case in 1790s Glasgow.

There is no reason to assume that the lack of printer's name in the imprint of so many of these 1790s poetry publications was in any way intended to keep it intentionally discreet or hidden. The Glasgow book and printing trades were together centred in a small geographical area and who was undertaking what work is likely to have been well enough known. And, assuming the booksellers and printers to have been broadly familiar with each other's type stock, then it is entirely plausible that the appearance of a particular ornament - or combinations thereof - would have been recognised as, or seen as direct evidence of, the work of an identifiable printing firm.³⁷

The ornamental stock that appears in the 1790s Glasgow poetry sets, although commercially available, appears not to have been used to any great extent by any other printer within the region and during the relevant years. Good examples are the 'doves and branches' and the 'scrolled finis' ornaments (figs (a) and (b) below).³⁸ The 'doves and branches' vignette was used at least thirty-five times across the individual parts of Brash & Reid's *Poetry; Original and Selected* and Murdoch's *Polyhymnia*, but it was also used in the *British Poetical Miscellany* of Silvester Sikes & Co. of Huddersfield. The 'scrolled 'finis'' vignette appeared at least twenty-three times in *Poetry; Original and Selected*. But, crucially, the appearance of these ornaments and vignettes is not confined to titles without a named printer. They can be found in other Glasgow-printed works - and the printer is Robert Chapman (& Lang). Of the eighteen fairly distinctive ornamental rules that appear across the three major poetry sets, twelve can be tied directly to material printed explicitly by Chapman (& Lang) because, quite simply, the imprints say so. Similarly, of the fourteen identified vignettes used within the same sets, eleven can similarly be tied to Chapman (& Lang).

³⁷ Philip Gaskell, *A New Introduction to Bibliography* (Oxford: Clarendon P., 1972, repr. 1974), p. 39.

³⁸ The 'doves and branches' vignette plays a prominent role in Lamont, 'Stewart & Meikle'.



fig (a)



fig (b)

However, considerable care does need to be taken against assuming too much respecting some of the ornaments – particularly the ornamental rules. The short rule below was used very frequently by Chapman (& Lang) but it would be hazardous in the extreme to rely *solely* on that rule as an indicator of Chapman (& Lang's) printing as it is to be found in the work of other Glasgow printers of the period.³⁹

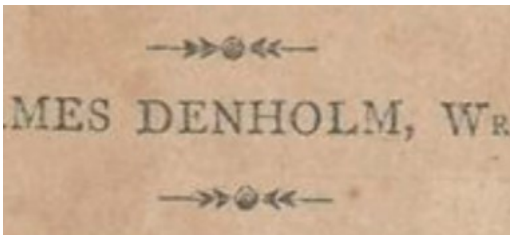


fig (c)

But it is the combination and intensity of use of the ornament stock that can very often point towards Chapman (& Lang) as printers.⁴⁰ Burns's *The Tooth-ache: a Poem* was printed for and sold by Brash & Reid, and was incorporated in the fourth volume of *Poetry; Original and Selected*. It carries six different typographical ornament pieces. Whilst some of the ornamental pieces within it are found elsewhere, as with the short rule above (fig (c)), the

³⁹ Very tempting though it is to attribute the printing of Edward Young's *The Complaint or Night Thoughts [...]* (Glasgow: pr. for Rich[ar]d Scott, 1798) to Chapman, the only typographical evidence is the use of a few ornamental rules, copies of which Chapman certainly owned – but so did other printers.

⁴⁰ This point is compellingly made for the early-modern period, see Juliet Fleming, 'How to Look at a Printed Flower', *Word & Image* 22:2 (2006), pp165-87 (p.168).

appearance of the 'doves and branches' vignette ties it down to a Chapman (& Lang) production.

Chapman's own collection

In the present context the significance of a set of three volumes of *Poetry: Original and Selected*, now part of the Lauriston Castle Collection in the National Library of Scotland, cannot be underestimated.⁴¹ Each volume carries an overall title-page headed *Poetry; Original and Selected*, and the imprint is given as 'Glasgow, printed by R. Chapman 1799'.

The overall letterpress title-pages of these three volumes under consideration closely resemble those of Brash & Reid's four volumes of *Poetry; Original and Selected*. But a significant difference resides in the imprint: the overall letterpress title-pages for the sets published by Brash & Reid say so: they state, 'printed for and sold by Brash & Reid' whereas Chapman's composite three volumes, brought together in 1799 refer to what was in common to all the pamphlets in his set: the printer.

⁴¹ National Library of Scotland, L.C. 2398, 2399, 2400.

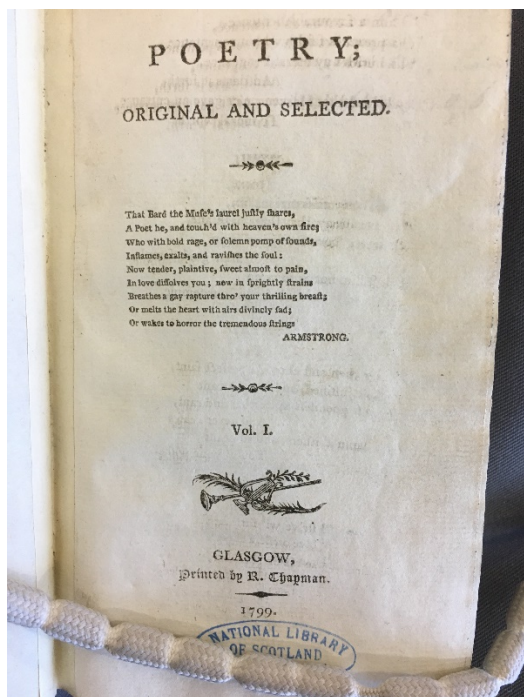


Fig (d)

The provenance of these three volumes appears secure, as the first volume demonstrates. They were evidently Chapman's own, and later acquired by 'Wm Macdowall 1820 [...] Bot. at Chapman auction @ 10/6'.⁴² James Ewing thought this purchaser was possibly the William Macdowall of Garthland. According to Ewing these three volumes were subsequently acquired by James Barclay Murdoch of Capelrig, a noted Scottish book collector and antiquarian,⁴³ and then later by John Fairley, whose own collections were added to those of

⁴² So inscribed on the title-page of *Poems; 1. The Pursuit of Health [...]*, the first item bound in L.C. 2398.

⁴³ Corroborated in Thomas Mason, *Public and Private Libraries of Glasgow* (Glasgow: pr. for subscribers and [...] private circulation [by] Thomas D. Morison, 1885), p. 343. The date of 1820 is almost certainly a simple mistake for 1822 as 'Poetry, Original and Selected, containing many Poems not to be found in any other Collection, 3 vols, Glas. 1799' is item 55 on p. 13 of the *Catalogue of the Library and Prints of Mr. Robt Chapman, Printer, Glasgow...to be Sold by Auction...on Monday March 4 1822 and Ensuing Evenings* (Printed by R. Chapman, Glasgow, 1822).

Lauriston Castle, which went to the National Library of Scotland in 1926, and now carry the pressmarks, L.C.2398 to L.C.2400 inclusive.

It may be useful to provide a summary of the contents of these three composite volumes, particularly so, as it casts a light on some otherwise overlooked pamphlets.

The first volume of Chapman's set, L.C. 2398, contains thirty-four of the pamphlets that make up Brash & Reid's *Poetry; Original and Selected*; a full set (i.e. the seven parts) of Stewart & Meikle's *The Poetical Miscellany* and a further four titles evidently printed by Chapman (& Lang), not belonging to any known larger set or series. These four titles are listed in Table 2, below.

Table 2

Peter Pindar (John Wolcot), *The Royal Sheep. A Tale [...] To which is added. The Adventures of Young Whipstich. A Tale* (Glasgow: printed for and sold by Stewart & Meikle, Booksellers and Stationers, Trongate). 8p. ESTC T119244 provisionally dates to 1795

Peter Pindar (John Wolcot), *A Poetical Epistle to the Pope* (Glasgow: printed for and sold by Stewart & Meikle), 8p. ESTC T202597 provisionally dates to 1799

Ode to Mr. Pitt. An Humorous Parody on Alexander's Feast. To which is added, Man. A Poetical Epistle. 8p. No imprint. ESTC T185882 provisionally dates to 1799

A Poem; or, Tam and John's Observations, Occasioned by the Providential Translation of J-n R-I, Preacher in the ch-I, at Kil-ck, for the Latent Causes (Glasgow: printed by Chapman and Lang, 1799). 8p. ESTC T196973.⁴⁴

Comment:

The Jolly Beggars (Glasgow: printed for and sold by Stewart & Meikle),⁴⁵ casts light on the first three titles. The advertisement therein (p.16) notes that 'Stewart & Meikle intend publishing original and select pieces of merit, at one pence and two-pence each' and that

⁴⁴ It is tempting to identify the preacher as Rev. John Russel, who was satirised by Burns.

⁴⁵ Lamont, 'Stewart & Meikle', p. 65: Lamont title variant [a]. ESTC N31604 provisionally dates to 1799.

they already have for sale six titles, all at 1d.: *Christ's Kirk; An Unco Mournfu' Tale; An Ode to Mr Pitt and Whipstich; The Royal Sheep; A Comic Epistle to the Pope; The Monk and Millar's Wife.*

Composite volume L.C.2399 is given over entirely to the poetry pieces that were included in Brash & Reid's *Poetry; Original and Selected*. Each composite volume of *Poetry; Original and Selected* as published by Brash & Reid had twenty-four numbers, adding up to ninety-six across the four volumes to which should be added a further three poetry pamphlets, in all respects uniform with the other parts, to a final total of ninety-nine. The two volumes, L.C.2398 and L.C.2399 do not contain all the ninety-nine titles – there are fifteen absent - but assuming that the creation of these composite volumes was not a fraudulent or otherwise dishonest exercise by Chapman, then we can say that solely on their contents he was responsible for the physical production of c.85% of Brash & Reid's publishing series. The third volume, L.C.2400 demonstrates a broader range of Chapman's activities. It contains nothing published by Brash & Reid, nor Stewart & Meikle, but largely concentrates on what was printed for Cameron and Murdoch, as a partnership and separately. It contains a full set of the twenty parts of *The Polyhymnia* that was printed for and sold by John Murdoch. Goldsmith's *The Village* (Glasgow: printed by Robert Chapman for A. Cameron, [1796]) is one title within L.C.2400 that is already identifiable as Chapman's work, but several others not so. For those titles within L.C. 2400 not hitherto readily associated with Chapman (& Lang) as printers, See Table 3 below.

Table 3

William Cowper, *The Facetious History of John Gilpin* (Glasgow: pr. for A. Cameron). ESTC T185805 provisionally dates to 1796.

Dryden, Pope, Gray, *I. Alexander's Feast. An Ode. by Dryden. II. Ode on St. Cecilia's Day. By Pope. III. The Bard. By Gray* (Glasgow: pr. for and sold by Cameron & Murdoch). ESTC T161438 dates to 1796.

Edward and Emily. A Tale (Glasgow: printed for and sold by Cameron & Murdoch, 1796). ESTC T182587.

Essay on the Temple of Cloacina. 2nd ed. (Glasgow: printed for and sold by Cameron & Murdoch). ESTC T182077 dates to 1796.

Benjamin Franklin, *The Way to Wealth, and a Letter on Early Marriages* (Glasgow: printed for & sold by Cameron & Murdoch, booksellers & stationers, 1796). ESTC T192917.

George Barnwell. An Old English Ballad (Glasgow: printed for and sold by Cameron & Murdoch). ESTC T184508 dates to 1796.

Gil Morrice. A Scottish Ballad (Glasgow: printed for and sold by Cameron & Murdoch) ESTC T185320 dates to 1796.

Robert Lochore, *The Foppish Taylor; or, Francy Disgraced*. (Glasgow: printed for and sold by Cameron & Murdoch, 1796). ESTC T182310.

Robert Lochore, *Willie's Vision; or, The De'il Personified* (Glasgow: printed for and sold by Cameron & Murdoch). ESTC T176509 dates to 1796.

Monimia. An Ode (Glasgow: printed for and sold by Cameron & Murdoch, booksellers & stationers). ESTC T129177 provisionally dates to 1795.

Robert Blair, *The Grave*. No imprint. ESTC T166257 dates to 1799.

William Drummond, *The Man of Age: a Poem. To which is added, The Sighs of Genius: an Elegiac Ode, Occasioned by the Death of Robert Burns, the Ayrshire Poet*. 2nd ed. (Glasgow, 1798). ESTC T172553.

Even if the significance and implications of the facts regarding Robert Chapman's change of business direction, and, separately, the importance of the data regarding the use of particular metal-cast ornaments was minimised, it is difficult to see how, beyond some systematic scepticism, the direct evidence of Chapman's own three composite volumes could be denied. Very many of the parts of *Poetry; Original and Selected* went through more than one edition. This fact might allow a determined sceptic just sufficient room to claim that maybe Chapman did not print all the editions, and that perhaps at least one edition was carried out by another Glasgow firm. But such an approach is not remotely sustainable.

Some of the titles incorporated in Chapman's composite volumes only went through a single edition. And Chapman certainly printed those as we have, in the very formation of the composite volumes, something close to his own testimony that he produced them.⁴⁶ And of the titles in *Poetry; Original and Selected* that did go through more than one edition? When these multiple editions of individual titles are compared, there are many indications that one single firm printed them, including format and pagination, and overall typographical layout. But some problems as to who printed what, fade but do not entirely disappear. The assertion that Chalmers (& Lang) printed *Poetry; Original and Selected* and *The Polyhymnia* is secure, but there is still some doubt as to whether they did the work for titles such as Alexander Cameron's edition of Pomfret's *The Choice* and Stewart & Meikle's edition of Dryden's *The Wedding*. And, from the perspective of Burnsian scholarship we cannot quite prove that Chapman printed the Stewart & Meikle 1796 edition of Burn's *An Unco Mournfu Tale*. Chapman probably did, but in so saying we are having to rely on the facts of stylistic similarity, and that the printer did so much work for the booksellers in question. Again, in spite of advances in our knowledge of the printing of Brash & Reid's poetry series, the evidence that Chapman printed all their editions of Burns's *Aloway Kirk*, in particular those labelled State A and State B by G. Ross Roy, is not quite conclusive, though some support for the claim can be adduced.⁴⁷ Chapman included both Lochore's *Foppish Taylor* and the anonymous *Poems, 1: The Pursuit of Health* in his own composite volumes. And in this context, these titles are significant as both are ornamented with a rather undistinguished inverted triangle of small typographical crosses (fig (e) below). And this same typographical pattern also appears in Burns's *Aloway Kirk* (Ross Roy States A and B). But these typographical ornaments were widely available commercially, so whether states A and B

⁴⁶ Three examples: Bürger's *The Freebooter*, Burns's *The Tooth-ache*; and *Cheap Whisky; a Familiar Epistle*.

⁴⁷ Roy, 'Brash and Reid Editions', *passim*.

should unhesitatingly be assigned to the Chapman press becomes a matter of nice judgement.



fig (e)

Chapman (& Lang) may have been busy printing the various series of poetry, but it would be incautious to conclude that they were primarily committed to the production of such and similar material. It is certainly correct that they were heavily involved in the printing of two editions of *Ossian*. The 1796-97 edition was issued in parts, the first of which was announced in November 1796.⁴⁸ Its imprint states that it was printed for Cameron & Murdoch, but the colophon makes it clear that it was printed by Robert Chapman. And even if the colophon were absent, the ornamentation used would point towards Chapman as printer. A further Glasgow edition was produced in 1799, this time for James Imray, though in this instance Chapman & Lang were named in the imprint as the printers. However in 1799 - a busy year with *The Polyhymnia* and *The Poetical Miscellany* and *Ossian* - they also produced a two-volume octavo edition of Buchanan's *History of Scotland* probably in two states: one on fine paper at 12s and one on lesser quality paper at 8s, both on boards.⁴⁹ One year later, in 1800, Chapman & Lang set editions of two of the major titles of the historian, William Robertson, a leading Scottish Enlightenment figure. A call for subscriptions for Robertson's *History of the Reign of the Emperor Charles V*, in four volumes, 12^o, price 12s, appeared as part of a larger advertisement on the last page of Stewart & Meikle's

⁴⁸ First noticed by Jung, *Publishing and Marketing*, pp. 35, 44-45, 62, n.86.

⁴⁹ On the use of 'state' rather than 'issue' see Gaskell, *New Introduction*, pp. 315-16. Advertisement in Chapman & Lang's edition of *Don Quixote*, 4 vols (1803) IV, p. 312. On the production of this edition, Jung, *Publishing and Marketing*, pp. 129-30.

edition of Burns's *Kirk's Alarm*.⁵⁰ Robertson's *History of Charles V* actually came out under the imprint 'Glasgow, printed by and for Chapman and Lang, 1800'. And there was a similar occurrence with the printing of Robertson's *History of Scotland*, three volumes, at 2s per volume. Subscriptions were sought in a notice on the last page of Stewart & Meikle's publication of Burns's *Extempore Verses on Dining with Lord Daer*. In this instance the work was subsequently issued as 'printed by Chapman and Lang for J. Imray, Bookseller'.⁵¹ It is again worth noting that the wording of the imprint, 'printed by...for' should not be read as implying ownership of copyright: Robertson's texts, originally published in 1759 and 1769 had fallen into the public domain. Both these Robertson titles are lengthy and major pieces of book printing: textually, they demanded serious and sustained attention, and were presumably aimed primarily at those of the educated groups in Glasgow and area who had only modest means at their disposal.

Robert Chapman continued as printer in Glasgow until 1822, and spent sixteen years in retirement, first in Douglas, Isle of Man and latterly in Dunning, Perthshire.⁵² A fuller and final assessment of Robert Chapman (& Lang) could be made if details of the firm's various author-publisher and printer-publisher arrangements agreements come to light, but we can, as did J. C. Ewing a century ago, attribute to Chapman not just a steady, but a consistent and major role in the production of the poetry pamphlets of 1790s Glasgow. His was the firm

⁵⁰ Lamont, 'Stewart & Meikle', p. 66: Lamont title variant [c].

⁵¹ It is difficult to decide quite who was seeking the advance orders, and that may have been intentional. The names of both Chapman & Lang and Stewart & Meikle appear on the advertisement page in *The Kirk's Alarm*. In the case of Robertson's *History of Scotland* neither the names of Chapman & Lang, nor James Imray actually appear within the notice in Burns's *Extempore Verses*, and again there is an unavoidable, and unanswered question as to who exactly was behind the announcement.

⁵² Mitchell Library, Glasgow: Special Collections. MS 101.

with which the bookseller / publishers chose to work, and this role ought properly be recognised.

Abbreviation

ESTC. *English Short Title Catalogue*. <http://estc.bl.uk>

Acknowledgements

Thanks and appreciation for much assistance must go to:

The Mitchell Library, Glasgow: Special Collections

University of Glasgow Library: Archives and Special Collections

The National Library of Scotland: Special Collections

Photographic credits

By permission of University of Glasgow Archives & Special Collections. Fig. (a):

Hector Macneill, *The Lammy* (Glasgow: pr. for and sold by Brash & Reid)

Sp Coll Mu25-f43(2)

Images reproduced by permission of the National Library of Scotland through the Creative Commons Attributions 4.0 International License. Figs (b-e):

(b) Thomas Boston snr, *A View of the Covenant of Grace* (Glasgow: pr. by R. Chapman for J. & A. Duncan, 1797). ABS.1.79.108

(c) James Denholm, *An Historical Account and Topographical Description of the City of Glasgow and Suburbs* (Glasgow: pr by and for R. Chapman, and Stewart & Meikle, 1797). ABS.1.87.107

(d) Overall title page to the first of Robert Chapman's own bound composite volumes entitled, *Poetry; Original and Selected*. L.C. 2398.

(e) Nathaniel Cotton, *Health: a Poem* (Glasgow: pr. for and sold by Brash & Reid) ABS.1.77.5(5)