Robert Burns, 1759-1796

ARCHIVED ONLINE EXHIBIT

Originally exhibited March-May 1996 at the Thomas Cooper Library, University of South Carolina
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Curated by G. Ross Roy, with assistance from Jamie S. Hansen

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A Bicentenary Exhibition from the G. Ross Roy Collection
1 originally exhibited March-May 1996
2 curated by G. Ross Roy, with assistance from Jamie S. Hansen

Foreword

The University of South Carolina is marking the bicentenary of Robert Burns' death in 1796, not only with an international research conference on "Robert Burns and Literary Nationalism," but with a major exhibition of works by and about the poet, showing selected highlights from the G. Ross Roy Collection of Burns, Burnsiana and Scottish Poetry.

This extensive collection, acquired from Professor Roy through a generous gift-purchase agreement in 1989, is now widely recognized as among the best Burns collections anywhere in North America, and it regularly attracts to the University researchers from around the world. It is a special pleasure to me to see the Roy Collection displayed for the bicentenary, as its acquisition was one of the first goals to be realized after I became director of the University of South Carolina Libraries.

The present exhibition, curated by Prof. Roy himself, represents of course only a very small part of the whole collection, which covers Scottish poetry from the eighteenth to the twentieth centuries, with some earlier items. On-line entries for items in the collection are available through the University's USCAN catalogue, and through the World Wide Web, and a full printed catalogue of the Burns items is now also in preparation, with Prof. Roy's help. This exhibit catalogue gives a sample of what is to come and provides an informative commemoration of the University's Robert Burns bicentenary celebrations.

George D. Terry
Vice-Provost and Dean for Libraries and Information Systems

A Note on the Exhibit and Catalogue

The items chosen for the University's Robert Burns bicentenary exhibit had been selected from over four thousand items in the Roy Collection on Burns alone. In making the selection, the aim has been not only to display some of the outstanding high points and the rarest items (the Kilmarnock edition, the 1799 Merry Muses, the letter to Clarinda), but also to represent some of the different strengths of the collection, as for instance in sections on the early editions, on the development of Burns scholarship in the nineteenth century, on Burns chapbooks, on Burns and Scottish song, and on Burns translations. For the display, but not in this catalogue, I also included some items, such as postcards, banknotes and postage stamps, to illustrate the poet's popular reputation. The great majority of items have
now been transferred with the Roy Collection to the University of South Carolina Libraries; a few items on display, notably manuscripts and artifacts, are from my personal collection, and the postcards were from the collection of Thomas E. Keith. The items on Burns in America, originally displayed as part of a small separate exhibit in South Caroliniana Library, have here been integrated with the main exhibit sequence.

While I have selected the items and provided the descriptions, I should like to thank Jamie S. Hansen, who coordinated the exhibit for Special Collections, my wife Lucie who helped with the exhibit planning and with this catalogue, and Patrick Scott who helped in mounting the exhibit and in editing. Thanks are due to the South Carolina Humanities Council, a state-level agency of the National Endowment for the Humanities, for support of the Burns bicentenary project, and to the Thomas Cooper Society, for generously funding this exhibit catalogue.

G. Ross Roy

This handsome full-length statue of Burns, in bronzed plaster, is based on the most familiar image of the poet, Alexander Nasmyth's full-length oil-portrait, painted in 1828.
THE EARLY EDITIONS OF BURNS

Robert Burns, 1759-1796

Poems, chiefly in the Scottish dialect
Kilmarnock: Printed by John Wilson, 1786.
Modern dark red morocco, stamped in gold, by Riviere.

Although he had never published anything before, Burns decided in 1786 to publish a volume of his poems. Subscription bills were circulated and the printer John Wilson of Kilmarnock engaged to produce the volume. This appeared late in July in an edition of 612 copies. They evidently sold well, because on November 15 Burns was able to send Mrs. Frances Dunlop only five of the six copies she had requested. The volume has now become a high spot in the world of books, listed in the Grolier Club's One hundred books famous in English literature (1902). An informal census has located fewer than seventy extant complete copies.

Egerer 1

An act for rebuilding the bridge across the river of Ayr, at the town of Ayr
London: Eyre and Strahan, 1785.

"The Brigs of Ayr" first appeared in the 1786 edition of Burns. This is the act that authorized the construction of the New Brig.

Unsigned review
in English Review [London], 9:2 (February 1787), 89-93.

There were six reviews of the Kilmarnock edition. This review was probably written by John Logan.

Robert Burns

Poems, chiefly in the Scottish dialect
[Edinburgh: Bell, Fowler & Co., 1913].
Original dark blue wrappers.

Among the facsimiles of the Kilmarnock edition, all except this one bear a statement on the verso of the title-page giving the name of the printer and the real date of printing of the edition. Furthermore, this edition bears a bookplate which suggests that the volume at one time belonged to Burns. Nothing, in fact, is farther from the truth, because this book was printed in 1913. Nevertheless, there have been copies of it sold to the unwary as an original Kilmarnock edition. Not in Egerer
Encouraged by the success of his Kilmarnock edition, and especially by a letter from an Edinburgh minister, Dr. Thomas Blacklock, Burns gave up his planned emigration to Jamaica and set off for Edinburgh on November 27, 1786. A review of his poems had already appeared in the October issue of the Edinburgh magazine, but it was Henry Mackenzie’s review in The Lounger of December 9 which made Burns a celebrity. A new edition was agreed upon and William Creech issued proposals for it. Initially the printing was to be 1,500 copies, but when the proposals came in, it was discovered that a larger printing would be necessary, so the book was reset. Numerous differences are to be seen in the two states; most notably the word "skinking" (watery) in "Address to a Haggis" became "stinking," to the amusement of subsequent generations.

Using the same title as for the Kilmarnock volume, Poems, chiefly in the Scottish dialect, the Edinburgh edition appeared on April 17, 1787. To it Burns added seventeen poems, and also five new songs, pointing the way in which the poet’s genius was to be directed for the remaining nine years of his life.

Egerer 2 ("stinking" issue)

A copy of the Edinburgh edition exactly as it was issued on April 17, 1787. Few such remain because most owners had the book rebound, usually in leather.

Egerer 2 ("skinking" issue)

Burns had remained in Edinburgh for ten months after the publication of his poems without getting a settlement from Creech. The figures Burns jotted down on the letter (shown in the original exhibit but not here), it can be argued, represent his calculation of the number of volumes printed, accounted for in the following manner: 1000—copies printed for the additional names that came on the subscription list (obviously an approximation); 500—the copies subscribed for by Creech; 1500—initial printing; 250—copies sent to London, the
relatively small number accounted for by the fact that A. Strahan and T. Cadell were to publish a third edition, which probably appeared in November. If this surmise is correct, then the printing of the Edinburgh edition was 3,250.

Robert Burns

*Poems, chiefly in the Scottish dialect*

The third edition

London: Printed for A. Strahan; T. Cadell in the Strand; and W. Creech in Edinburgh, 1787.

Original boards, leather spine.

The London (3rd) edition of 1787 was copied from the "stinking" state, suggesting that the copies of the Edinburgh (2nd), which were used as copy text for the London edition, were from the end of the print run.

Egerer 5

Robert Burns

*Poems, chiefly in the Scottish dialect*

Belfast: Printed and sold by James Magee, 1787.

Modern black morocco, gilt, by Bayntun (Riviere); signature of W. Chichester.

Piracies, works published without the authority of or payment to the author or legitimate publisher, flourished in the eighteenth century in Ireland and the United States. We are not surprised that publishers lost little time in producing a piracy of such a bestseller as *Poems, chiefly in the Scottish dialect*. The earliest of these came from the press of James Magee and appeared on September 24, 1787. Magee also pirated the expanded 1793 edition of Burns.

Egerer 3

Robert Burns

*Poems, chiefly in the Scottish dialect*

Dublin: Printed for William Gilbert, 1787.

Modern dark blue-green morocco, by Riviere.

William Gilbert of Dublin had an arrangement with Magee who shipped printed sheets of the text to him. Things went well for the two publishers, and they reissued their piracies in 1789 and 1790; when the 1793 edition of Burns' poems appeared in Edinburgh, Magee soon followed suit. While there was not a specific 1793 edition published in Dublin, copies of the second volume of the Belfast edition were sent to Dublin where they were bound with the
first volume of the Dublin 1790 imprint, thus making the full text of the 1793 edition available in Dublin.

Egerer 4

Robert Burns

**Poems, chiefly in the Scottish dialect**
Philadelphia: Printed for and sold by Peter Stewart and George Hyde, 1788. Contemporary sheep; inscription to Mark Pringle, 1788.

In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries the United States did not recognize copyright for books published in other countries, so American publishers had no difficulty printing editions of Burns's works. The success of the Edinburgh and London editions made it almost certain that an American firm would follow suit. The first American edition appeared on July 7, 1788, from the Philadelphia partners Peter Stewart and George Hyde. The book was printed on American paper of poor quality, hence the yellowing now visible. The printing must have been a small one because the book is now rare.

Egerer 10

Robert Burns

**Poems, chiefly in the Scottish dialect**

The second American edition appeared in mid-December 1788, issued by J. And A. M'Lean of New York. The paper in this edition is much superior to that of Philadelphia; it may have been imported from Great Britain. At the time of publication there was a brisk trade in imported British books, and this may account for the apparently poor sales of the New York edition. In 1799 there were still unsold sheets of the edition, which was issued with a new title-page. Some copies of the 1788 edition have an engraved frontispiece of Burns, which was probably copied from the 1787 Edinburgh portrait, with the result that the poet looks the opposite way (inwards) to the Edinburgh likeness.

Egerer 11

Robert Burns

**Poems, chiefly in the Scottish dialect**
The second edition, considerably enlarged
In April 1792 Burns answered a letter from William Creech who suggested a new edition of poems in two volumes. To those poems already published by Creech, Burns said he could add "about fifty pages" and would also "correct & retrench a good deal." All he requested in return were books to a value to be determined by Alexander Fraser Tytler, as well as a few copies of the published works for gifts. In his letter Burns asked that he be sent proofs in order that he could correct them himself, but in the end it was apparently Tytler who did so. The two-volume set was published on February 18, 1793, and consisted of the contents of the 1787 volume and eighteen poems published for the first time in book form. The best-known poem to join the Burns canon in the 1793 edition was, of course, "Tam o'Shanter," a work written for Francis Grose's *Antiquities of Scotland* of 1791.

Egerer 25

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Robert Burns

**Poems, chiefly in the Scottish dialect**

A new edition, considerably enlarged.


Contemporary tree calf; signatures of Eliza Sturt; Wm. Stuckley, 1795.

This is a reprint of the 1793 edition. Burns corrected a set of sheets of the 1793 edition for use in setting the 1794 edition, but does not appear to have proofread this edition, with the result that new errors crept in.

Egerer 29

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Robert Burns

**Poems, chiefly in the Scottish dialect**

A new edition, considerably enlarged


Original blue-gray boards, rehinged.

The first posthumous edition.

Egerer 34

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Robert Burns

**Poems, chiefly in the Scottish dialect**

A new edition, considerably enlarged


Early 19th century gray-blue boards, uncut, rehinged.
Robert Burns

**Poems, chiefly in the Scottish dialect**  
A new edition, considerably enlarged  
Full red morocco by the Franklin bindery (another copy in original gray-blue boards).

Creech published two further editions of Burns' poems in this format: in 1798 and 1800. Creech was subsequently involved with Currie's four-volume *Works*. It is interesting to note how the likeness of Burns changed with successive editions. The frontispiece of the 1798 edition has been touched up, and we have a Burns who looks quite different to the one of 1793. As copyists redrew the poet in subsequent years, the likeness which emerges is almost unrecognizable as Burns.

Egerer 35, 48

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Robert Burns

**The works of Robert Burns; with an account of his life and a criticism on his writings**  
Original blue-gray boards, printed paper labels on spine.

Soon after Burns's death it was decided that a collected edition of his works should be undertaken, but it was difficult to find anyone to shoulder the task, which eventually fell to Dr. James Currie, a native of Dumfriesshire who practiced medicine in Liverpool. His main objective was to raise money for the poet's family, and so he felt he must not offend any of the people whom Burns had known or met. For this reason Currie deliberately omitted material from his biography that would have resulted in a more rounded portrait of his subject. The edition immediately became the standard biography and text for the poems and letters of the poet. This inaccurate biography and mangled text gave the world a woefully biased picture of Burns (for instance that he was a drunkard, when his letters and contemporary reports about him shed quite a different light on him), a picture which persisted well into this century.

Egerer 50

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Robert Burns

**The works of Robert Burns**  
4 vols. Philadelphia: Printed by Budd and Bartram for Thomas Dobson, 1801.  
Modern half-calf, marbled boards; signatures of Rebecca C. McLlvaine, 1803, and Elizabeth Wallace, 1829.
When James Currie published his four-volume Works of Robert Burns in 1800 it was not long before an American publisher followed suit. This first American collected edition was produced by Thomas Dobson of Philadelphia. It will be noted that Nasmyth's portrait of Burns is now facing outwards, as it was in the original Edinburgh edition, suggesting that this is a copy of a copy. As this copying continued, the likeness to the original became less and less accurate. In later editions one can barely, if at all, recognize the subject.

**Egerer 64**

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Robert Burns

**Reliques of Robert Burns**
Philadelphia: Bradford and Inskeep, 1809.
Modern green morocco, with inlay and foredge painting, by Tom Valentine of Falkirk.

Robert Hartley Cromek's *Reliques of Robert Burns: consisting chiefly of original letters, poems, and critical observations on Scottish songs* (1808) added a large number of poems and letters to the canon as established by Currie in 1800. Next to Currie, Cromek's is the most important early edition of Burns.

The Roy collection includes fine copies of the 1808 London Cromek, including one inscribed by Cromek to William Creech. This edition of Cromek was published in Philadelphia the following year. The front cover has an inlaid full-length likeness of the poet, and there is a fore-edge painting of the cottage in which Burns was born.

**Egerer 123**

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Robert Burns

**The works of Robert Burns**
Eighth edition
Blind-stamped purple publisher's cloth, c. 1835.

The octavo edition of 1820 is called the eighth edition, when in fact it is the ninth, because Cadell and Davies had published the true eighth edition, a duodecimo, in 1814. Sometime later yet another "eighth" edition appeared, this time with numerous plates dated 1814 or 1823, drawn by T. Stothard. Even later the "1820" edition was bound up in publisher's cloth in five volumes by the addition of R. H. Cromek's Reliques of Robert Burns, originally published in 1808 as a supplement to Currie. These sets can only be identified when in the original remainder binding. Judging from the cloth, the set exhibited here would appear to have been bound between 1830 and 1840.

**Egerer 242**
Burns's poems and songs were widely distributed through Scotland and beyond as simple chapbooks, often a single sheet folded to form eight pages, heavily represented in the Roy Collection. The exhibit included a selection of chapbooks containing Burns material, from Stirling, Glasgow, and Newcastle; with the items given individual description here is also grouped the items relating to "Tam o' Shanter."

Robert Burns
**The whistle**
Dumfries, 1791.
Modern burgundy crushed morocco.

The rare chapbook form of Burns's poem celebrating the drinking contest at Friar's Carse in 1789, won by Alexander Fergusson of Craigparoch.

Egerer 22 variant

Robert Burns
**Autograph letter, signed, to Robert Cleghorn, Ellisland [? October, 1791]**
Burns enclosed for Cleghorn one of his twelve proof-copies of "The Whistle."

Robert Burns
**Elegy on the year eighty-eight, Elegy on Puddin' Lizzie, Colin Clout a pastoral, etc., etc.**

Bound with

Alexander Thomson, 1763-1803, and Robert Burns
**Sonnets from the Robbers, by Alex. Thomson, Esq., The Pretender's soliloquy, Bruce's address, and The Lass of Ballochmyle, by Burns, The minstrel, &c., &c.**
Edinburgh: 1799.
Green morocco with Scottish wheel design, extra gilt, by D. Moncur.

Egerer 37 and p. 59, n. 7
Robert Burns

**Holy Willie's prayer, and epitaph**
Edinburgh: printed by T. Oliver, 1801.
Early 19th century boards, hand-lettered.

Not in Egerer

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Robert Burns and others

**Four funny tales: Alloway Kirk, or Tam o' Shanter, Watty and Meg, or the wife reformed, The loss o' the pack, and The monk and the miller's wife**
Air: printed by J. & P. Wilson, 1802.
Modern quarter calf, marbled boards, contemporary leather label.

The other poets represented were Allan Ramsay and Alexander Wilson.

Not in Egerer

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Robert Burns

**The soldier's return: a love song**
Boston: N. Coverly, [?1810].

"The soldier's return" was popular in Great Britain during the Napoleonic Wars, but it is more likely that the occasion of this American broadside, printed in Boston between 1810 and 1816, was the war between the United States and Britain of 1812-1814. This broadside with illustrative woodcut appears to be unique.

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Robert Burns

**Tam o'Shanter. A tale**
extracted from *The antiquities of Scotland* by Francis Grose
Nineteenth-century red straight-graon morocco.

Captain Francis Grose was already well known for his six-volume *Antiquities of England and Wales* (1773-1787) when he came to Scotland to work on a like project. Burns persuaded him to include a drawing of Alloway Kirk, which Grose promised to do if Burns would supply him with a ghost story to go with it. Burns sent him three stories of diablerie, one a prose precursor of "Tam o'Shanter." On December 1, 1790, he sent Grose the poem. It first appeared in *The Edinburgh Herald* for March 18, 1791, and somewhat later in volume II of Grose's *Antiquities of Scotland*. The poem as printed here contains four lines at the bottom of the right-hand column of page 200, beginning "Three Lawyers' tongues, turn'd inside out," but when Burns submitted the poem to Alexander Fraser Tytler before his
poems were published by Creech in 1793, Tytler suggested that these lines might give offense, and the poem appeared in Creech's edition without them.

In this copy, the pages with the illustration of Alloway Kirk and "Tam o'Shanter" itself have been removed from Antiquities of Scotland and separately bound. The item belonged to the great ballad collector William MacMath, who collaborated with Francis James Child. The Roy Collection also includes a copy of the full Grose volume.

Virgil
The XIII. Bukes of Eneados of the famose Poete Virgill translated out of Latyne verses into Scottish metir, bi . . . Mayster Gawin Douglas
London, 1553.
Modern russia, tooled in gold and blind.

Gavin Douglas's Eneados was the first complete translation of Virgil in Scots or English and was published in 1553, although completed in 1513, nine years before his death. Burns's epigraph to "Tam o'Shanter," which had been omitted from the Antiquities of Scotland version and did not appear until the 1793 edition of Poems, chiefly in the Scottish dialect, was taken from the Eneados: "Of Brownyis and of Bogillis full is this buke." The Oxford English Dictionary lists the earliest known use of the word "brownie" as that of Gavin Douglas in this work.

Robert Burns
Alloway Kirk; or, Tam o'Shanter: a tale
Glasgow: Brash & Reid, 1796.
Modern wrappers.

The popularity of "Tam o'Shanter" was immediate. The well-known firm Brash and Reid of Glasgow brought it out as the third of a series of ninety-nine chapbooks in 1795 and within a few years there were at least six printings of the tale.

Egerer 32
MEMOIRS AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF BURNS SCHOLARSHIP

Maria Riddell, 1772?-1808
Robert Burns, a memoir
Original light brown boards.

The first obituary of Burns was written by his friend Maria Riddell for the Dumfries Weekly Journal; unfortunately no copy of it is known. She revised her text for inclusion in Currie's edition of 1800, and again revised it for the second edition of 1801. It remains one of the most important assessments of the poet. In addition to his poetry, Mrs. Riddell says, Burns should be remembered for "the charm—the sorcery I would almost call it—of fascinating conversation; the spontaneous eloquence of social argument, or the unstudied poignancy of brilliant repartee." The edition displayed is no. 61 of 100 copies printed by Tom Rae.

Robert Heron, 1764-1807
A memoir of the life of the late Robert Burns
Edinburgh: Printed for T. Brown, 1797.
Half roan, marbled boards.

To Robert Heron goes the distinction of having produced the first booklet about Burns; Maria Riddell's essay appeared in a newspaper. Heron knew Burns, so why he chose to write about the poet as he did is puzzling. In his memoir we find such statements as the "disgrace and wretchedness into which he saw himself rapidly sinking," or "poor Burns did not escape suffering by the general contamination"—even as his end approached, Heron says that Burns yielded "readily to any temptation that offered." Thus began the legend of Burns the debauchee. Defenders of the poet may perhaps take comfort in the knowledge that Heron spent the end of his life in Newgate Prison.

Robert Burns
The works of Robert Burns
Later green straight grain morocco, with lyre design and portrait of Burns in gold; autograph annotations by James Hogg.

When James Hogg and William Motherwell began work on an edition of Burns in five volumes (1834-1836), of which one volume is a biography of the poet by Hogg, a set of Currie's Works of Robert Burns was used as copy-text. Representative of the annotations is a page in Hogg's hand showing a long note to Burns's "Logan Water," most of which appeared in the Hogg and Motherwell edition. Although their edition was successful, and
several times reissued, the work was overshadowed by Allan Cunningham's edition, which also appeared in 1834.

Egerer 151

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Thomas Carlyle, 1795-1880

**Burns**


Original light blue-green wrappers, printed in black.

When J.G. Lockhart published his study of Burns for Constable's *Miscellany*, it was reviewed by Thomas Carlyle in the *Edinburgh Review* (1828). Because of the fame of both author and subject the essay was frequently reprinted. This example was the first separate printing of this work.

Tarr A24.I

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Robert Burns

**The life and works of Robert Burns**


Original blue cloth.

William Wallace's edition was considered very important in its day, containing as it did both the poetry and correspondence. This copy is one of 250 on large paper. The set belonged to James Barke, author of six novels based on the life of Burns, with extensive annotations in Barke's hand. The Roy Collection also includes first editions of Barke's novels, in original jackets.

Egerer 893

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Robert Burns

**The poetry of Robert Burns**


Original quarter buff cloth, gray boards, paper labels on spine, unopened; publisher's presentation copy.

Henley and Henderson's four-volume edition of the poems and songs of Burns remained the standard until James Kinsley's definitive edition of 1968. Even so, Thomas F. Henderson's meticulous and knowledgeable footnotes make this edition indispensable to the scholar. Henley's life, on the whole a judicious one, infuriated many Scots and even provoked a book-length reply from John D. Ross, *Henley and Burns; or, The critic*
censured. There were a number of issues of the Henley and Henderson edition. This set, presented by the publishers and dated March 14, 1896, may be a pre-publication copy.

Egerer 896

Robert Burns

The Glenriddell manuscripts of Robert Burns

Original pigskin; inscribed by John Gribbel to John Howel; with accompanying letter laid in.

The single most important Burns manuscript collection is the two-volume Glenriddell manuscripts which were prepared by the poet for Robert Riddell. After Burns’s death they were sent to Dr. Currie, who used them extensively in preparing his edition of 1800. After the death of Currie’s son in 1853 the volumes were given to the Liverpool Athenaeum. In 1913 they were sold to John Gribbel, a great Burns collector. When this became known a question was raised in Scotland as to the legality of the Currie family’s gift of the manuscript to the Athenaeum, the claim being made that the volumes had always been the property of the Burns family. In a gesture of unanticipated benevolence Gribbel gave the volumes to the Scottish nation, and they are now permanently housed in the National Library of Scotland. Before doing so he had 150 facsimiles privately printed, not to be sold, and all the known copies are presentations from this philanthropist. The present copy is inscribed to John Howell, the San Francisco book dealer.

Egerer 956

Robert Burns

The Geddes Burns

Boston: the Bibliophile Society, 1908.
Original calf.

Burns met John Geddes, Roman Catholic Bishop of Dunkeld, in 1787, and the two became fast friends. The bishop had a copy of the Edinburgh edition of Burns’s poems bound with several blank leaves at the front and back of the volume before returning it to the poet. Burns carried it with him on his Highland tour (August-September 1787) and then took it with him to Ellisland, returning it only in February 1789. Burns wrote several poems on the blank leaves, making the volume one of the most desirable of Burns items. In 1908 the Bibliophile Society reproduced it in facsimile, including the poems and Burns’s letter to Geddes returning the book. 473 copies were printed for members of the Society. To complete the American connection, the original is in the Huntington Library, San Marino, California.

Egerer 944
Burns' Reading

John Moore, 1729-1802
Zeluco, various views of human nature taken from life and manners, foreign and domestic
Modern brown morocco bevelled boards; Robert Burns's copy, presented to him by the author, and inscribed by Burns to Mrs. Dunlop.

Dr. John Moore was introduced to Burns's poetry when Mrs. Frances Dunlop sent him a copy of the Kilmarnock edition. The two men opened a correspondence, and one of Burns's letters was the famous long autobiographical one of August 2, 1787, which supplies important details about the poet's early life and reading. In his letters to the poet, Moore comes across as a bit pompous; he suggested to Burns that he use English rather than Scots, but as deferential as Burns was to Moore he wisely ignored this advice. The doctor sent him a copy of his novel Zeluco, and on Christmas morning 1793, Burns wrote to Mrs. Dunlop exchanging copies of the work, with these words, "Tell me, how you like my marks & notes through the Book. I would not give a farthing for a book, unless I were at liberty to blot it with my criticisms." At this point Burns has written, "A glorious story!" The inscription to his friend reads: "My much esteemed Friend Mrs. Dunlop of Dunlop—Robert Burns."

"Adam Fitz-Adam"
The world
With Burns's autograph annotations and his signature on title-page, surrounded by inscription: "The property of the late Edmund Kean Bt. at the sale 17 June 1834 at Robin's Rooms."

An avid reader of contemporary newspapers and collections of essays, Burns wrote to Mrs. Dunlop, "I had often read & admired the Spectator, Adventurer, Rambler, & World . . ." although he regretted that they were "so thoroughly & entirely English." In this volume of The world, Burns has written in the names of the authors of various entries. The Roy Collection has only one volume of the set. In another volume Burns wrote an eight-line poem on Robert Fergusson, which opens: "Ill-fated genius! Heaven-taught Fergusson!" echoing, perhaps unconsciously, the lines Henry Mackenzie used to describe Burns in The Lounger, when he called him "this Heaven-taught ploughman."

Allan Ramsay, 1685-1758
The gentle shepherd, a pastoral comedy
Glasgow: Printed by A. Foulis, 1788.
Modern half calf, marbled boards.
Allan Ramsay's *The gentle shepherd*, although not frequently produced on stage during the eighteenth century because of church opposition to the theater, was a bestseller for a century. Burns was particularly taken with the Foulis edition of the play which he called a "noble edit[i]on of the noblest Pastoral in the world."

Burns Martin 216, Gaskell 688

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Robert Blair, 1699-1746

**The grave, a poem**

London: Printed for M. Cooper, 1743.

Modern gray-blue wrappers.

Burns was very fond of Robert Blair's poem "The grave," which he quoted several times in his letters. More than once he cited the lines beginning "Dark as was Chaos" and elsewhere used the expression.

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Robert Fergusson, 1750-1774

**Poems**

Edinburgh: Printed by Walter & Thomas Ruddimann, 1773.

Part 1, original gray wrappers.

Burns read widely as we know from his correspondence and from the fragmentary list that was published when his library was sold after his death. Robert Fergusson played an important role in Burns' development as a poet. The elder poet's poem "Hallow-fair" no doubt influenced Burns' "The holy fair," as Fergusson's "The farmer's ingle" influenced "The cotter's Saturday night." In 1787 Burns gave Rebeccah Carmichael a copy of Fergusson's poems, inscribing the volume with an eight-line poem, two lines of which read: "O thou, my elder brother in misfortune, / By far my elder brother in the Muse."
The Holy Bible, containing the Old and New Testaments
Contemporary Scottish wheel binding in red morocco, gilt; leather library label of
James Balfour, 1747.

The Bible in which the eighteenth-century Scottish family kept its records was usually a
folio-sized book, and not suitable for taking to services on Sunday. While it was not
obligatory to do so, families often did. These Bibles were frequently nicely bound. On
display is a mid-eighteenth century Bible with a rather simple Scottish wheel binding. The
fact that the tooling on the two volumes is different, as are the end papers inside the
volume, suggests that this set probably belonged to a family of modest means, which could
only afford to have one volume bound at a time.

Robert Burns
Burns and the Bible; a series of parallels
Selected by W. D. Fisher
Glasgow: Printed and published by William McLellan, 1926.
Original dark blue wrappers.

That Burns knew his Bible very well is evidenced in the number of references there are to it
in his poems; his correspondence, too, is filled with references to and quotations from the
Bible.

Fergus Ferguson, 1824-1897
Should Christians commemorate the birthday of Robert Burns?
Edinburgh: Andrew Elliot, 1869.
Late 19th century calf.

Because of poems such as "Holy Willie's prayer" the ultra-religious formed the opinion that
Burns was an atheist (or at best a deist, which is a possibility) although it would not have
been possible to openly admit this in the Scotland of his day. To Mrs. Dunlop he was
equivocal: "Religion . . . has not only been all my life my chief dependence, but my dearest
enjoyment. . . . A Mathematician without Religion, is a probable character; an irreligious
Poet, is a Monster." As late as 1869 the Revd. Fergus Ferguson preached a sermon about
celebrating the birthday of Robert Burns, which he then published in pamphlet form. The
thrust of the sermon and the pamphlet, entitled Should Christians commemorate the
birthday of Robert Burns?, was that we should not do so. We cannot, Ferguson said,
extract from the poet's works "the sweet and wholesome from the poisonous. . . . They have
one influence, and that influence we believe to be evil." This statement, of course, opened a
lively debate in various Scottish newspapers. Uncharacteristically even Queen Victoria
voiced an opinion on the topic. As reported in the North British Mail, the Queen expressed
"at considerable length to her fondness for Burns . . . [and] also alluded with some force of words to the bad taste and folly of the attack made upon the memory of the poet by the Rev. Fergus Ferguson." Bound in with the pamphlet are several newspaper cuttings concerning the controversy.

William Burnes, 1721-1784
*A manual of religious belief*
Kilmarnock: Printed and published by McKie & Drennan, 1875.
Original blue boards, printed buff paper spine; no. 486 of 600 copies.

The Bible and the Church of Scotland played very important roles in the life of Robert Burns. He grew up at a time when the "New Lichts" (new lights, more liberal) were becoming more powerful in the cities, but the "Auld Lichts" (old lights, very conservative) still held sway elsewhere. William Burnes, the poet's father, while more tolerant than most in his area, deeply resented his son attending dancing classes, this pastime being considered the work of the Devil. To further the Christian education of his family William composed a short catechism which was taken down by the children's tutor, John Murdoch, but passed to Gilbert Burns. The manual was not published until 1875. It shows Burnes to have been a moderate. This copy is inscribed from Burns' two nieces, Agnes and Isabella Begg, to their nephew John Begg. Tipped in is a fragment containing accounts for the year 1772 in the hand of William Burnes.

Robert Burns
*The cotter's Saturday night*
Boston: Bibliophile Society, 1915.
Original red morocco.

From its first publication in the Kilmarnock edition of 1786, "The cotter's Saturday night" has been a favorite, frequently separately published or anthologized. The Bibliophile Society of Boston published this finely produced edition in 1915, limited to the number of members of the society, in this instance 475 copies. The book is unusual in that it is engraved throughout, from copper plates, designed and engraved by Arthur N. MacDonald.
Burns and Clarinda

Robert Burns
Letters addressed to Clarinda
Glasgow: Printed by Niven, Napier and Khull; for T. Stewart, 1802.
Original salmon-colored wrappers, uncut, stabbed; signature of Wm. Finnie, 1802.

During his stay in Edinburgh Burns met Mrs. Agnes Craig M'Lehose in December 1787. It was love at first sight for both of them. In addition to numerous visits, the couple carried on what has been termed a "hothouse romance" by correspondence. The two soon decided to use "Arcadian names" as Burns called them: she was Clarinda, he Sylvander. Marriage was of course impossible, and the correspondence dwindled once Burns left Edinburgh. Mrs. M'Lehose loaned John Findley, who claimed to be writing a biography of the poet (which was apparently never written), Burns' letters. Some of them were published without her permission in 1802.

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Robert Burns
Autograph letter, signed, to Agnes M'Lehose ("Clarinda"), Edinburgh, 12 January 1788.

A letter of January 12, 1788, from Sylvander to Clarinda, the second that day. There is a suspicious-looking mark on the paper where the poet has written, "I have read yours again: it has blotted my paper." It is left to the viewer to decide whether or not he or she is looking at the dried remains of a teardrop.

Agnes Craig M'Lehose, 1759-1841
Autograph letter, signed, to Allan Cunningham, Edinburgh, 18 October 1834.

When Allan Cunningham was preparing an edition of Burns, he asked Mrs. M'Lehose for permission to use Burns's letters to her. In a letter shown in the original exhibit, she reiterated her unwillingness to give Cunningham access to them, mentioning that some of them were previously published without her permission and in an inaccurate transcription. The letter is dated October 18, 1834; Cunningham's edition appeared in eight volumes in 1834. Agnes M'Lehose died in 1841, and two years later her grandson, W.C. M'Lehose, republished the twenty-five letters that had appeared in 1802 and added twenty-three more. The edition also included letters from his grandmother to Burns. An earlier owner has combined this letter with a copy of the edition of 1843 in a sumptuous tooled binding.
Silhouette of Agnes Craig M'Lehose ("Clarinda")

John Miers, an Edinburgh silhouettist, cut likenesses of both Burns and Agnes M'Lehose. On February 7, 1788, Burns wrote, thanking Agnes M'Lehose for going to him for a silhouette, saying: "I want it for a breast-pin, to wear next my heart." Though they parted, and Burns happily married his Bonny Jean, the lovers never forgot each other. Three years after they had parted Burns wrote a song which contained these words:

Had we never lov'd sae kindly,
Had we never lov'd so blindly!
Never met--or never parted,
We had ne'er been broken-hearted.

Forty years after they parted, Clarinda wrote in her diary on the anniversary of their last meeting, "This day I can never forget. Parted with Burns . . . never more to meet in this world. Oh, may we meet in Heaven!"

Max Beerbohm, 1872-1956

Robert Burns, having set his hand to the plough, looks back at Highland Mary
from The Poet's Corner
London: W. Heinemann, 1904.

This Beerbohm cartoon is inspired by the Scriptural injunction, "And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God" (Luke, 9: 62).

Hart-Davis 206
Burns and Scottish Song

Allan Ramsay, 1685-1758
The tea-table miscellany
Contemporary calf, gilt; signature of Mary Watton, 1745.

In his work for Johnson and Thomson, Burns scoured earlier books for songs that he felt should be included in the two works. One of his principal sources was Allan Ramsay's Tea-table miscellany, which had appeared in four volumes between 1723 and 1737. The tenth was the first collected edition of the Miscellany.

William Thomson, ca.1684-ca.1760
Orpheus caledonius: or, A collection of Scots songs
Modern brown half calf, marbled boards.

William Thomson's Orpheus caledonius supplied Burns with words and music for several selections. He owned the two-volume set (1725-1733). This copy has a letter from the scholar C.K. Sharpe concerning the work.

James Oswald, ca. 1711-1769
The Caledonian pocket companion
7 vols. In one. London: Printed for the author, [?175-].
Contemporary mottled calf, rebacked.

One of the sources which Burns used for Scottish airs was James Oswald's Caledonian pocket companion. He wrote to Johnson, "I was so lucky lately as to pick an entire copy of Oswald's Scots Music, & I think I shall make glorious work out of it."

David Herd, 1732-1810
Ancient and modern Scottish songs, heroic ballads, etc.: collected from memory, tradition and ancient authors
Contemporary calf.

David Herd, following a not unusual practice of his time, issued Ancient and modern Scots songs in one volume in 1769 and expanded the set to two volumes in 1776.
James Johnson, ca. 1750-1811
The Scots musical museum
Edinburgh: Printed & sold by Johnson & co., 1787.
Contemporary half calf, marbled boards, top cover wanting; signature of Thomas Ruddiman on title-page.

Although Burns included three songs in his 1786 edition, he became seriously involved in writing, collecting and editing Scottish songs in the spring of 1787 when he met James Johnson, who was busy printing and editing The Scots musical museum. The first volume, consisting of one hundred songs, contained only three by Burns, but the next five volumes contained another 174 known to be by Burns; there may be others. In addition he touched up and collected songs taken from the oral tradition, chapbooks and earlier collections. There were several published eighteenth-century Scottish song collections, and Burns wrote words for many of these airs. From the second volume Burns was the de facto editor of the Museum, although he did not see the fifth volume, published in 1796, some time after the poet's death. Without Burns' enthusiasm it took Johnson until 1803 to issue the final volume of the set. Burns knew how important a work the two of them had produced, and less than a month before his death he wrote to Johnson, "Your Work is a great one . . . I will venture to prophesy, that to future ages your Publication will be the text book & standard of Scottish Song & Music." He was unerring in this judgment. This copy is one of the three first Johnson editions in the Roy Collection. In 1803 when volume six was published, it and the earlier five volumes had completely redesigned title-pages.

Egerer 8

George Thomson, 1757-1851
A select collection of original Scotish airs
Contemporary half calf, marbled boards.

Despite his involvement with Johnson's Scots musical museum, in September of 1792 Burns agreed to collaborate with George Thomson in another musical undertaking, A select collection of original Scotish airs, which appeared in five volumes between 1793 and 1818. Thomson's collection was aimed at a middle-class audience; it had accompaniments by Ignaz Joseph Pleyel, Johann Anton Kozeluch and eventually Haydn and Beethoven. Thomson fancied himself as both poet and musician, with the result that there were arguments with both Burns and Beethoven; it must be said, however, that in challenging Burns, Thomson forced him to examine his song-writing in a way which Johnson did not do.

Egerer 28, and appendix II
Robert Burns

The merry muses of Caledonia, a collection of favourite Scots songs ancient and modern selected for the use of the Crochallan Fencibles
Printed in the year 1799.
Nineteenth-century tree calf, rehinged.

Although Burns made no secret of his interest in bawdy poetry and song, most editors of his works have sought to hide this from readers. To a friend, Robert Cleghorn, the poet wrote, "there must be some truth in original sin.—My violent propensity to B[aw]dy convinces me of it." Three years after his death a collection that contained six of Burns's erotic poems along with other material was published as The merry muses of Caledonia. From then on the collection was always associated with Burns—although he was the author of but a small portion of the contents—and most subsequent editions bear the words "By Robert Burns," implying that he wrote the entire contents of the volume.

This original edition of The merry muses is of great rarity; only one other copy is known. Though the title-page date is 1799, some sheets are watermarked 1800. When acquired in 1965 the volume included a number of obscene illustrations by Thomas Rowlandson, but as they bore no relationship to the poetry of The merry muses, they were removed and bound separately.

Egerer 51

Robert Burns

The merry muses, a choice collection of favourite songs gathered from many sources
London: John Camden Hotten, 1827 [1872].

Because it remained illegal to publish the material in The merry muses until 1964 in the United States and 1965 in Great Britain, publishers resorted to various subterfuges in producing editions. Since it was a more serious offence to publish such a work than it was to sell it, one enterprising dealer, John Camden Hotten, apparently switched the last two digits in the date when he produced this edition (1872) and dated it 1827. This idea gave rise to a numerous progeny.

Egerer 311

Robert Burns

The fornicator's court
S.l.: s.n., s.d. [?1823].
Modern half calf, marbled boards.
The spuriously dated “1827” editions of *The merry muses* were not the only bawdy verses of Burns to be published. The fornicator’s court first appeared c.1810. This edition was probably published in 1823.

Egerer 273, variant issue

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Robert Burns  
**A unique relic of Burns (circa 1800)**  
London: John S. Farmer, 1904.  
Original black half morocco, maroon cloth.

This calligraphic edition of *The merry muses* was limited to 50 copies. Although the editor, John S. Farmer, claims it to be an exact copy of the edition of 1799, there are, in fact, numerous differences.
TRANSLATIONS OF BURNS

The Roy Collection contains translations of Burns's poems in a variety of languages. In addition to the items separately described here, the exhibit displayed translations into Norwegian, Spanish, Polish, Italian, and English; a poster from the Moscow 1975 Burns conference, with Samuil Marshak's translation of "For a' that;" and a broadsheet with a French translation of "Auld lang syne," by the French-Canadian Benjamin Sulte.

James Grahame, 1765-1811

Poems in English, Scotch, and Latin
Paisley: Printed by J. Neilson, 1794.
Modern boards, paper label on spine.

Apparently the earliest translation of a poem by Burns into another language was made by James Grahame, who included in his Poems in English, Scotch, and Latin a Latin version in parallel text of "To a mouse."

Robert Burns

The principal songs of Robert Burns translated into mediæval Latin verse
Original green cloth, beveled boards, gold-stamped.

The Victorian taste for Latin was exemplified by three translations of Burns into that language. The present one is, however, the only book-length collection.

Egerer 1225

Robert Burns

Poésies complètes de Robert Burns
Original yellow printed wrappers.

Interest in Burns was high in France during the 19th century, and there were a number of translations by various hands published in journals. In 1826 a slim volume of translations appeared, but it was not until Léon de Wailly's edition of 1843 that a substantial number of poems appeared in one volume in French.

Egerer 1187
Robert Burns
**Burns traduit de l'Écossais**
Rouen: E. Cagniard, 1874.
Original blue-gray printed wrappers; inscribed by the translator to Adam Wilson.

Richard de la Madelaine's translation into French underlines the difficulty of creating the rhymed poetry of one language in another language retaining the rhyme; de la Madelaine's prose version attempted to retain the essence of the poem, but at the price of sacrificing its lyric quality.

Egerer 1188

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Robert Burns
**Lieder und Balladen**
Braunschweig: George Westermann, 1840.
Original purple cloth.

Translations of Burns into German abounded in the second half of the 19th century. The earliest book of translation appeared in 1839, and was followed a year later by this collection, the work of Heinrich Julius Heintze.

Egerer 1194

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Robert Burns
**Robert Burns' Lieder und Balladen**
Leipzig: Philipp Reclam, 1875.
Original buff printed wrappers.

The Leipzig publisher Philipp Reclam specialized in producing inexpensive editions of standard works of literature. L. G. Silbergleit's translation of Burns was one of this series, first in 1875, and then frequently reprinted.

Egerer 1202

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Robert Burns
**Robert Berns v perevodakh**
Moscow: Khudogestvenni Litteraturi, 1947.
Original dark green cloth; inscribed to G. Ross Roy by the translator's son, 1975.

Samuil Marshak's was the most notable of the Russian translations of Burns. Of this first edition, although published in 15,000 copies, almost no copies made their way outside
Russia. Marshak increased the number of translated poems, eventually producing a two-volume edition.

When this copy was presented, the translator's son Immanuel was Curator of the Marshak Museum, set up in Marshak's apartment after his death in 1964.

Cf. Egerer 1231

Toshio Nanba, 1910-1987
Poems of Robert Burns

Although not the only person to translate Burns into Japanese, Toshio Nanba (also transcribed "Namba") devoted most of his academic career to the task of producing several volumes of translations. He also published The life of the poet Robert Burns (1977).

Robert Burns
Bardachd Raibeirt Burns an gaidhlig
Original blue pictorial wrappers, comb-bound.

This is the first translation into any language of the complete works of Robert Burns. The reason that it took so long for this to occur is that no earlier translation could legally print the bawdy material; after 1964 this could be included, and Roderick Macdonald's translation into Gaelic did so. The initial edition was twenty-five copies, of which this is No. 10. Further copies have since been produced.

Robert Burns
50 poemas
Original pictorial wrappers.

To Luiza Lobo, who holds her doctorate from the University of South Carolina, belongs the honor of producing this first book of translations of Burns into Portuguese. In Brazil the edition was ingeniously packaged with a small bottle of whiskey.