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ADAM FOX

‘Little Story Books’ and ‘Small Pamphlets’ in Edinburgh, 1680–1760: The Making of the Scottish Chapbook

ABSTRACT

This article considers the development of the ‘chapbook’ in Scotland between 1680 and 1760. Chapbook is here defined as a publication using a single sheet of paper, printed on both sides, and folded into octavo size or smaller. The discussion focuses on production in Edinburgh which at this time was the centre of the Scottish book trade. While very few works were produced in these small formats in the city before the last quarter of the seventeenth century, the three generations thereafter witnessed their emergence as an important part of the market. This chapbook literature included ‘penny godlies’ and ‘story books’, poems and songs, which had long been staples of the London trade. Indeed, much output north of the border comprised titles pirated from the south. It is suggested, however, that an independent repertoire of distinctively Scottish material also began to flourish during this period which paved the way for the heyday of the nation’s chapbook in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. The Edinburgh trade is shown to be much more extensive than has been appreciated hitherto. Discovery of the testament of Robert Drummond, the Edinburgh printer who died in 1752, reveals that he produced many such works that are no longer extant. It demonstrates not only that a number of classic English chapbooks were being reprinted in Scotland much earlier than otherwise known, but also that an indigenous Scottish output was well established before the reign of George III.

Chapbooks formed a staple component of ephemeral literature and a fundamental part of popular culture in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Scotland. In this period the small, unbound pamphlets that were hawked around the country for just a few pence came to represent one of the most familiar and ubiquitous expressions of the printed word in Scottish life. The eclectic diet they offered of traditional songs and historical stories, religious precepts and moral tales, variously provided entertainment, instruction and edification for young and old alike. From the time, in the later Victorian period, when they began to lose

something of their place in the mass market, these little books have been the subject of both antiquarian curiosity and scholarly research.¹

This academic interest has naturally focussed on the heyday of the Scottish chapbook in the second half of the eighteenth and first half of the nineteenth centuries. The concern of the present discussion, however, is with what constituted a formative era in the emergence of popular print in Scotland, between about 1680 and 1760. The eighty years before the accession of George III witnessed the adoption and adaptation of the chapbook in Scotland as part of a general expansion in the range and depth of the nation's popular press. This period saw significant developments in the production of Scottish newspapers, with the appearance of various new titles such as *The Edinburgh Gazette* issued briefly in 1680 and re-launched in 1699, *The Scots Courant* (1705–20) and *The Scots Post-Man* (1708–12), and later the long-lived *Edinburgh Evening Courant* (est. 1718) and *Caledonian Mercury* (est. 1720), among others.² The periodical magazine arrived north of the border with a Scottish version of *The Tatler* edited by Robert Hepburn in 1711, which was followed by publications such as *The Thistle* (1734–36) and most notably *The Scots Magazine* (est. 1739).³ At the same time an outpouring of broadside ballads and 'last dying speeches', almanacs and advertisements, elegies and epithalamiums, represented a transformation of the nation's market for cheap print.⁴

This essay argues that, as in the case of newspapers, periodicals and other forms of popular print, the Scottish press drew at first on influences from the English market but over the course of this period began to develop and diversify in independent ways. As such,

¹ The pioneering study was J. Fraser, *The Humorous Chap-Books of Scotland* (New York, 1873), and this was followed by W. Harvey, *Scottish Chapbook Literature* (Paisley, 1903). Some of the most well known texts were reprinted in *John Cheap the Chapman's Library: The Scottish chap literature of the last century classified*, 3 vols (Glasgow, 1877–8). For more recent discussion, see James C. Corson, 'Scott's Boyhood Collection of Chapbooks', *The Bibliothek* 3 (1962) 202–218; F. W. Ratcliffe, 'Chapbooks with Scottish Imprints in the Robert White Collection, The University Library, Newcastle upon Tyne', *The Bibliothek* 4 (1963–66) 88–174; G. Ross Roy, 'Some Notes on Scottish Chapbooks', *Scottish Literary Journal* 1 (1974) 50–60; J. Morris, 'Scottish ballads and chapbooks', in P. Isaac and B. McKay (eds), *Images and Texts: Their production and distribution in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries* (Delaware, 1997), 89–119; E.J. Cowan and M. Paterson, *Folk in Print: Scotland's chapbook heritage, 1750–1850* (Edinburgh, 2007).

² J.P.S. Ferguson, *Directory of Scottish Newspapers* (Edinburgh, 1984), 35–42; W.J. Couper, *The Edinburgh Periodical Press*, 2 vols (Stirling, 1908), i. 21–38; S.W. Brown, 'Newspapers and magazines', in S.W. Brown and W. McDougal (eds), *The Edinburgh History of the Book in Scotland, Volume 2: Enlightenment and expansion, 1707–1830* (Edinburgh, 2012), 353–68.

³ N.T. Phillipson, 'The Scottish Enlightenment', in R. Porter and M. Teich (eds), *The Enlightenment in National Context* (Cambridge, 1981), 19–40 at 26–7; H. Mathison, 'Robert Hepburn and the Edinburgh *Tatler*: a study in an early British periodical', *Media History* 11 (2005) 147–61.

⁴ J.W. Draper, *A Century of Broadside Elegies* (London, 1928) 199–219; W.R. MacDonald, 'Scottish seventeenth-century almanacs', *The Bibliothek* 4 (1966) 257–322; A. Fox, 'The emergence of the Scottish broadside ballad in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries', *Journal of Scottish Historical Studies* 31 (2011) 169–94.

the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries represent an innovative phase in the making of ephemeral literature in Scotland. While fine work has been done on the Scottish book trade in the later eighteenth century and excellent studies have illuminated the nation's flourishing print culture in the age of the high Enlightenment, far less is known about output at the lower end of the market in the preceding generations.⁵

The present focus is on production in the city of Edinburgh which was at this time the biggest centre of publishing in Scotland. Only later did Glasgow's Saltmarket emerge as the major source of the nation's popular literature.⁶ The discussion seeks to demonstrate that an awareness of trends in the late Stuart and early Georgian period is essential for an understanding of the nature of cheap print as it emerged in modern Scotland. It is suggested that the Edinburgh trade was by no means immune from the influences of London publishing and, indeed, drew strength from following metropolitan commercial trends. At the same time, however, it created distinctive features of its own which established a particularly Scottish repertoire in reading matter for mass consumption.

From the late seventeenth century, Scottish printers began to produce materials aimed at this market to a much greater degree than ever before. The cheapest imprints involved the use of a single folio sheet of paper. Most portable was a little pamphlet in one of three forms: octavo format, where this sheet was folded into eight leaves to make sixteen pages when printed on both sides; duodecimo, where it was folded into twelve leaves making twenty-four pages, or sixteenmo, where sixteen leaves gave thirty-two pages.⁷ Contemporaries tended to refer to productions in one of these formats simply as 'small books'. In the 1680s they cost about 2d. sterling in England, while in Scotland their retail price was very similar, at anything up to 3s. Scots.⁸

Of the 15,300 extant titles known or believed to have been printed in Edinburgh between 1680 and 1760, just under 700, or less than 5% were

⁵ See, for example, R.B. Sher, *The Enlightenment and the Book: Scottish Authors and their Publishers in Eighteenth-Century Britain, Ireland and America* (Chicago, 2007); D. Allan, *Making British Culture: English Readers and the Scottish Enlightenment, 1740–1830* (London, 2008).

⁶ The annual total of all surviving Glasgow imprints is just five from 1680, twenty-five from 1720, fifty-eight from 1760, and 151 from 1799. On the development of the Saltmarket, see A. McNaughtan, 'A century of Saltmarket literature, 1790–1890', in P. Isaac (ed.), *Six Centuries of the Provincial Book Trade in Britain* (Winchester, 1990), 165–80.

⁷ P. Gaskell, *A New Introduction to Bibliography* (Oxford, 1972), 81; V.E. Neuburg, *Chapbooks* (London, 1972 edn.), 1. The umbrella term 'chapbook' has been used to describe publications of various different formats and types. Only the cheapest imprints, those made from a single sheet, printed on both sides, and folded into octavo or smaller, are considered here.

⁸ M. Spufford, *Small Books and Pleasant Histories: Popular fiction and its readership in seventeenth-century England* (London, 1981), 48, 50, 93; A. J. Mann, *The Scottish Book Trade 1500–1720* (East Linton, 2000), 208, 212. Note: 1s. Scots was equivalent to 1d. sterling.

printed in one of these most simple 'small book' formats, that is, in 8vo with sixteen pages or fewer, 12mo with twenty-four pages or fewer, and occasionally in 16mo with thirty-two pages or fewer. This figure excludes almanacs that may be considered as a separate category of publication for present purposes. Whereas no such 'small books' with Edinburgh imprints are known to survive from the year 1680, eleven are extant from 1700, seventeen from 1720, sixteen from 1740, and twenty-four from 1760.⁹ Given that little pamphlets such as these were rarely bound together or collected, they have survived far less well than lengthier works in larger formats and are often extant in copies of no more than one or two. It goes without saying that a count based upon surviving imprints will significantly tend to underestimate the proportion that such works contributed to overall contemporary production.¹⁰

Developments in the production of cheap print in this period were accompanied in Edinburgh, as in other major urban centres, by an increase in demand from an expanding, diversifying and ever more literate citizenry. With a population of between 25,000 and 30,000 in 1660, doubling to around 60,000 a century later, Edinburgh was Britain's second largest city. These years also witnessed its gradual awakening as a centre of artistic and cultural life. New educational establishments were founded, institutions of urban sociability began to emerge, and foci of polite commerce, like the book auction and the art exhibition, first made an appearance.¹¹ Against this background were growing levels of literacy, implying that by this time Scotland's capital already offered a potential mass market for street literature.¹²

I

In a well-known incident of July 1763 the young Scottish lawyer, James Boswell, paid a visit in London to 'the old printing-office in Bow Church-yard kept by Dicey, whose family have kept it fourscore years'. There he was

⁹ These figures are based on an analysis of the *English Short Title Catalogue* [ESTC], <http://estc.bl.uk>, accessed 30 Jun. 2013. Only nine works printed in Edinburgh, 1680–1760, were in 16mo with thirty-two pages or fewer, and two of these were almanacs.

¹⁰ In the footnotes that follow, copies are identified by their repository and shelf mark as given in ESTC or library catalogues. I have not inspected them in all cases.

¹¹ See, for example, M.W. Stuart, *Old Edinburgh Taverns* (London, 1952); D.D. McElroy, *Scotland's Age of Improvement: A survey of eighteenth-century clubs and societies* (Washington, 1969); D. Johnson, *Music and Society in Lowland Scotland in the Eighteenth Century* (Oxford, 1972); N.T. Phillipson, 'Culture and society in the eighteenth-century province: the case of Edinburgh and the Scottish enlightenment', in L. Stone (ed.), *The University in Society*, 2 vols (Princeton, 1974), ii. 407–48; R.A. Houston, *Social Change in the Age of Enlightenment: Edinburgh, 1660–1760* (Oxford, 1994); B. Findlay (ed.), *A History of Scottish Theatre* (Edinburgh, 1998).

¹² R.A. Houston, *Scottish Literacy and the Scottish Identity: Illiteracy and society in Scotland and northern England, 1600–1800* (Cambridge, 1985), 46–7, and 'Literacy, education and the culture of print in enlightenment Edinburgh', *History* 78 (1993) 373–92.

ushered into the world of literature *Jack and the Giants*, *The Seven Wise Men of Gotham*, and other story-books which in my dawning years amused me as much as *Rasselas* does now. I saw the whole scheme with a kind of pleasing romantic feeling to find myself really where all my old darlings were printed. I bought two dozen of the story-books and had them bound up with the title, *Curious Productions*.¹³

In a note penned inside this bound volume he confessed that, 'Having, when a boy, been much entertained with *Jack the Giant-Killer* and such little story-books, I have always retained a kind of affection for them, as they recall my early days'. By the time Boswell had finished collecting these 'old darlings' he had amassed a total of 83, bound up in three volumes.¹⁴

Boswell was born in Edinburgh in 1740 and grew up in the city, leaving only in 1759 briefly to study law at Glasgow University before fleeing to London the following year. Whether or not the London printshop of William and Cluer Dicey had been the actual original source of his beloved childhood reading, Boswell's nostalgia for this aspect of his youth is clearly apparent.¹⁵ During Boswell's formative years his native city had a thriving print trade which had long included the circulation and production of these 'small' wares. Of the 164 chapbooks, or 'histories', that the Diceys included in their trade catalogue dated 1754, fifteen are extant in Edinburgh editions of before that time.¹⁶

Thus, among enduring classics of the chapbook market there survives from the burgh's presses a copy of *Tom Thumb, his Life and Death* in an edition of 1682 and *The Life and Death of Tom Thumb, the Little Giant* from about 1720.¹⁷ Equally, *The Wonderful Prophecies of Old Mother Shipton* is extant in Edinburgh imprints of 1685 and 1700, while Robert Nixon's Cheshire prophecy is preserved in issues of 1730 and 1741.¹⁸ Among other famous titles are *The Merry Tales of the Mad Men of Gotam* in an edition of 1729 and *The Mad Conceits of Tom Tram of the West*, surviving

¹³ F.A. Pottle (Ed.), *Boswell's London Journal, 1762–1763* (London, 1950), 299.

¹⁴ The three volumes of Boswell's 'Curious productions' are now in the Houghton Library: Houghton Library, Harvard University, 25276.2*.

¹⁵ For Boswell's own account of his childhood, see F.A. Pottle, *James Boswell: The early years, 1740–1769* (London, 1966), 1–6. On the Diceys, see V.E. Neuburg, 'The Diceys and the chapbook trade', *The Library* 24 (1969) 219–31; S. O'Connell, *The Popular Print in England, 1550–1850* (London, 1999), 55–60; R.C. Simmons (Ed.), *The Dicey and Marshall Catalogue*, <http://www.diceyandmarshall.bham.ac.uk/refframe.htm>, accessed 30 Jun. 2013. William Dicey's brother-in-law, John Cluer, had set up the business in Bow Churchyard at the end of the seventeenth century.

¹⁶ *A Catalogue of Maps, Prints, Copy-Books, Drawing-Books, &c. Histories, Old Ballads, Broad-Sheet and other Patterns, Garlands, &c. Printed and Sold by William and Cluer Dicey, at their Warehouse, Opposite the South Door of Bow-Church in Bow-Church-Yard, London* (London, 1754), 41–44. Note: the dating of this catalogue is unreliable.

¹⁷ Edinburgh, National Library of Scotland [NLS], Ry.III.h.6; NLS, L.C.2811(1). *Tom Thumb his Life and Death* had been printed as a chapbook for Coles, Wright, Vere and Gilbertson in the late 1650s: Bodleian Library Oxford [Bod Lib], Wood 259(5).

¹⁸ NLS, Ferg.76; NLS, 2.325(18); British Library [BL], 1078.k.15(1); NLS, L.C.2810(3). Samuel Pepys had a copy of *Mother Shipton's Prophecies* printed for Joshua Conyers.

from 1722.¹⁹ To these old favourites could be added *A Pretty Dialogue betwixt Robin Hood and a Beggar*, together with parts one and two of *The King and Cobler*.²⁰ In *The Lover's Quarrel* remains a local production of the ever-green song of Tommy Potts and Fair Rosamond of Scotland, set to the tune of 'Flora's Farewell'.²¹ In *The Kentish Miracle*, or in *The Fortunes and Misfortunes, of Famous Moll Flanders*, are Edinburgh versions of morality tales both old and new, available in chapbook form by the mid-eighteenth century.²²

Given the perilously low preservation levels of these unbound and fragile pamphlets it is fortunate that such specimens have come down to us at all. It is likely that many other well-known 'histories' of the day were also printed in the Scottish capital during the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries but have left no trace behind them, despite being run off the press in their hundreds or even thousands at the time. This supposition would remain speculative were it not for a piece of evidence that makes clear that a far wider range of favourite English chapbooks were being produced in the Edinburgh of Boswell's youth than could ever be demonstrated by what survives. On 19 August 1752 the Edinburgh printer Robert Drummond passed away. The following February, when Boswell was still twelve years old, an inventory or 'testament' of Drummond's assets on death was drawn up for the Edinburgh Commissary Court. Drummond was a well-known producer of popular literature in the city of mid-century and, in addition to a wide range of books, he left behind a store of 'small pamphlets' and 'ballads'. Forty-seven titles of these were itemised, amounting to 'one hundred and eighty one reims and five quires, all which being printed on pot paper at six shillings per reim extends to fifty four pounds, seven shillings and sixpence, sterling'.²³

Some of the small pamphlets in Drummond's stock are relatively unsurprising, being titles already known to have been produced in Edinburgh by this time, although not specifically by him. Amongst his stock were famous 'story-books' of English provenance such as *The*

¹⁹ NLS, APS.1.78.235; NLS, L.C.2977. *The Merry Tales of the Mad-Men of Gotam* was published as a chapbook for Clarke, Thackeray and Passinger in the mid-1680s, and *Tom Tram of the West, Son-in-Law to Mother Winter* for Thackeray shortly afterwards: Pepys collected copies of both.

²⁰ Glasgow University Library [GUL], BG56-f.28; BL, 11623.a.26; Bod Lib, Douce PP 175 (1); and BL, 11621.b.31(2); BL, 12331.e.43(1); BL, 12331.e.43(2). Pepys owned a version of *The King and Cobler*, printed about 1670.

²¹ BL, 1076.1.10(1). This was first printed for Coles, Vere and Wright in the early 1670s; Pepys had a copy, under a slightly different title, published for Thackeray and Passinger; the Diceys listed two versions in their catalogue of 1754.

²² BL, 1078.k.26(2); NLS, RB.s.819(1). The *Kentish Miracle* story had appeared on broadside ballads of the 1680s: W.G. Day (ed.), *The Pepys Ballads*, 5 vols (Cambridge, 1987), ii. 54. The chapbook version of *Moll Flanders* was listed in Dacey, *Catalogue* (1754), 43. For reprints of these and other classic English chapbooks of the period, see J. Ashton, *Chap-Books of the Eighteenth Century* (London, 1882).

²³ Edinburgh, National Records of Scotland [NRS], CC8/8/114/845-61. Drummond is not included in Neuburg's list of Edinburgh chapbook printers: Neuburg, *Chapbooks*, 66.

Merry Tales of the Wise Men of Gotham, and the two parts of *The Mad Conceits of Tom Tram of the West*. Also present were *The King and the Cobler* and *Tom Thumb*, together with *Robin Hood and a Beggar* and *The Lovers Quarrel*. In addition to these, however, were a number of other renowned titles that have only come down to us in Edinburgh imprints from the last decades of the eighteenth century or, in some cases, not at all. Significantly, Drummond's testament reveals that he had in stock two copies, probably parts one and two, of *Jack the Giant Killer*, specifically mentioned by Boswell, which are not extant in Edinburgh-produced versions before the early 1770s.²⁴ Among other classics that he printed, and which were also listed in the Diceys' London catalogue of 1754, were both parts of *The History of Thomas Hickathrift*, which do not survive in any contemporary Edinburgh editions.²⁵ He produced a chapbook version of *The Seven Champions of Christendom*, again not otherwise known to have been available in the city of this period.²⁶ He issued another famous title in *The History of the Learned Friar Bacon*, but only the copy printed by Richard Marshall in Aldermar Churchyard, London, gives an exactly contemporary idea of what Drummond's work may have been like.²⁷ In *The Friar and the Boy*,²⁸ *The Wife of Bath*,²⁹ *The Pleasant History of Rosewal and Lillian*,³⁰ and *The Merry Life and Mad Exploits of Captain Hynd*,³¹ Drummond produced four canonical chapbooks that do not survive in Edinburgh imprints until Alexander Roberston issued them from Niddry's Wynd in the following generation. In *The History of Jack Horner*,³² *Robin Hood's Garland*,³³ and *The Lover's Loyalty*,³⁴ he printed three more 'old darlings' of which no Edinburgh copy is extant. One broadside ballad itemised, *The Presumptuous Sinner; Or, A Dialogue*

²⁴ NRS, CC8/8/114/857, 858. *The History of Jack and the Giants* was printed and sold in Morrison's Close about 1771: NLS, RB.s.1735(6).

²⁵ NRS, CC8/8/114/858. The NLS now holds the only surviving copies of both parts one and two of *Thomas Hickathrift* that the Diceys printed around 1750: NLS, L.C.2975(1-2). (Dicey, *Catalogue* (1754), 44.)

²⁶ NRS, CC8/8/114/857. A small-format edition printed in Glasgow survives from 1784: NLS, L.C.2859(1).

²⁷ NRS, CC8/8/114/858. Marshall's copy is BL, 1079.i.13(3). Cluer Dicey and Richard Marshall were briefly in partnership and issued a catalogue together in 1764: *A Catalogue of Maps, Prints, Copy-Books, Drawing-Books, Histories, Old Ballads, Patters, Collections, &c. Printed and Sold by Cluer Dicey, and Richard Marshall, At the Printing Office, in Aldermar Church-Yard, London* (London, 1764).

²⁸ The earliest surviving Edinburgh copy is *The Merry Piper; or, the Popish Fryar & Boy. In Two Parts*, printed by Alexander Robertson in Niddry's Wynd in 1778: NLS, L.C.2811(4).

²⁹ Robertson printed *The Old Wife of Beith, by Chaucer* about 1778: BL, 11643.aa.58(1).

³⁰ Robertson's edition of about 1775 is NLS, L.C.2935.

³¹ Robertson's edition of 1782 is in Bod Lib, Harding A 114(1).

³² No Edinburgh imprints of this are extant. For Richard Marshall's contemporaneous edition, see BL, 1079.i.14(11).

³³ No Edinburgh imprint under this title is extant. It was produced as *The English Archer* and as *The Adventures of Robert Earl of Huntington* by various eighteenth-century Scottish printers, however.

³⁴ This was the sequel to *The Lovers Quarrel*. One of two extant editions from about the mid-1770s may be Scottish: Bod Lib, Douce PP 164(11).

between a noble Lord and a poor Woodman, is known to exist only in two copies, one printed by Richard Marshall and the other by Cluer Dicey. Here again Drummond's stock emphasises a hitherto unsuspected degree of overlap between London and Edinburgh publishing.

Furthermore, Drummond's testament reveals that he produced a number of small English 'godly' chapbooks, not perhaps to the young Boswell's taste, but an important part of the market nevertheless. Among those already well known to Edinburgh readers, and also listed in the Diceys' catalogue of 1754, were Richard Standfast's *A Dialogue Between a Blind Man and Death*, Joseph Stevens' *A Golden Chain of Four Links*, and Robert Russell's *Sin Against the Holy Ghost*. In addition he had in stock a number of historical 'godlies' long available in the city, such as *Jerusalem's Captivities Lamented*, *The Proverbs of Solomon*, and *An Historical Catechism*, a popular series of questions and answers that explained Bible stories in simple terms and bold woodcuts. To these he added moralising works like Samuel Smith's *David's Repentance*, John Hart's *A Godly Sermon of Peter's Repentance*, and Richard Baxter's *God's Call to Unconverted Sinners*.

Robert Drummond had set up his printing house in Swan Close, a little below the market-cross well on the north side of Edinburgh's High Street, in 1740, the year of Boswell's birth. For the next dozen years he printed and sold a stream of popular books, pamphlets and ballads from premises no more than a few hundred yards across from the Boswell family home in Blair's Land, Parliament Close.³⁵ It would be surprising if the young Boswell had not been aware of such a major supplier of literature, aimed in part at children, so close to his front door. Perhaps these 'story-books' circulated among the boys at James Mundell's academy in the West Bow where he attended from the age of five, or maybe John Dun, who tutored him at home between the ages of eight and twelve and would introduce him to Latin poetry and essays in *The Spectator*, had earlier awakened his delight in the popular fiction available at Drummond's shop?³⁶ Whatever the source of his acquaintance, it is perfectly possible that what the future man of letters discovered at the printing office in Bow Churchyard that summer day in 1763 were many of the titles that had been familiar in his childhood, but not necessarily their place of origin.

This raises the prospect that Edinburgh during this period was a much more diverse and dynamic centre in terms of popular literature than has previously been thought or demonstrated. If 'merry tales' such as *Tom Thumb* were already being printed in the city in the early

³⁵ H.R. Plomer, G.H. Bushnell and E.R. McC. Dix, *A Dictionary of the Printers and Booksellers who were at work in England, Scotland and Ireland from 1726 to 1775* (Oxford, 1932), 302; *National Library of Scotland: Scottish Book Trade Index [SBTI]*, <http://www.nls.uk/catalogues/scottish-book-trade-index>, accessed 30 Jun. 2013; J. Gilhooly, *A Directory of Edinburgh in 1752* (Edinburgh, 1988), 16, 64, 88.

³⁶ Pottle, *James Boswell: the Early Years*, 2–4, 15–18.

1680s, and by the middle of the eighteenth century much of what might have been found in Bow Churchyard was also available from Robert Drummond and others like him, the place of the Scottish capital in this aspect of the book trade deserves reassessment. Moreover, Drummond's stock raises another point of significance. The 'small pamphlets' and 'ballads' that he printed and sold were not merely reproductions of popular items from south of the border. He also issued a range of works in these popular formats that were distinctively Scottish and hint at the fact that the Edinburgh market was much more than just an environment for pirating what came from London.

For example, his output included two older Scots language poems, *The Cherry and the Slae* by the late sixteenth-century court poet Alexander Montgomerie,³⁷ and *The Meir of Collingtoun*, a humorous seventeenth-century verse set in the villages surrounding Edinburgh.³⁸ At the same time he clearly specialised in vernacular verse of more recent origin. Also among his stock was a no longer extant edition of Allan Ramsay's 'unco tale' in verse, *The Monk and the Miller's Wife*, which had initially appeared in a sixteen-page octavo about 1724.³⁹ One poem that he printed in small-book format that does still remain is his edition of *Gibbie and Wattie*, Thomas Blair's elegy on Alexander Maban, organ-maker of Edinburgh, first printed in 1734.⁴⁰ In *The Dominie Deposed* he produced a copy of William Forbes' poem at about the same time as the earliest extant edition that was probably printed in Aberdeen in 1751.⁴¹

Meanwhile in prose, he produced *Peter and Betterish. Or, the Woman's Spleen Abated*, a comic dialogue about a scolding woman and her henpecked husband which survives in a Glasgow duodecimo of 1716 and an Aberdeen sixteenmo of 1739.⁴² In *A Contest between the Gardeners and the Taylors, Concerning their Antiquity*, he was responsible for another item that may well have been first published in Aberdeen although is known to exist only in a Glasgow duodecimo of 1737.⁴³ And in his edition of *Henry Blyde's Contract* (1751), 'containing an account of the way and manner of his wooing his lass', he reprinted a comic story book

³⁷ The first extant edition of this is a fifty-six-page octavo printed by Edward Raban in Aberdeen in 1645: BL, C.57.a.38.

³⁸ Neither of these editions have survived. A twenty-four page duodecimo edition in black letter survives from 1695, possibly printed in Glasgow: NLS, Ry.II.g.13.

³⁹ BL, 11621.aaa.57(2).

⁴⁰ BL, 1077.c.6(2), and Bod Lib, 2702 f.6(23).

⁴¹ NLS, APS.1.78.50. This is described as 'the tenth edition'. Forbes had been schoolmaster in Peterculter, near Aberdeen, 1725–33. His *The Dominie Deposed* was printed together with Ramsay's *The Monk and Miller's Wife* in a chapbook (24-page duodecimo) of 1771: NLS, RB.s.84.

⁴² GUL, BG56.f.27; NLS, RB.s.405. Editions also survive printed by James and John Duncan in Glasgow around 1750 and by Alexander Robertson in Edinburgh about 1785: Bod Lib, Opie C 256/2; NLS, RB.s.451(17). Internal evidence suggests, however, that this work was originally of English provenance. I am grateful to Dr Iain Beavan for identifying this item for me.

⁴³ NLS, RB.s.2169(2). The dedication is signed by Adam Gardner and dated 'Aberdeen, Feb[r]uary 17. 1711'; this edition was printed by William Duncan and 'sold in his shop in the Salt-market in Gibson's Land'.

in the Scots vernacular that is an important text in the making of the distinctively Scottish chapbook.⁴⁴

Drummond's stock also included some rather more political items in small-book format that contribute to this sense that the repertoire of cheap print in Scotland contained distinctive elements. In *An Account of the Particular Soliloquies and Covenant Engagements of the Worthy Lady Earlstoun*, he produced a well-known collection of Covenanter testimonials relating to the Rye House Plot attributed to Janet Hamilton who died in 1696.⁴⁵ Another work listed as *Scotland's Lamentation* may well have been a tract relating to the Jacobite rebellions of either 1715 or 1745–6.⁴⁶ Meanwhile, he had in store a range of 'godly' chapbooks of particularly Scottish provenance. Among these was the *Blindman's Prophecy* which was probably those warnings of the divine judgement to be visited upon the unrepentant in Scotland contained in *A[n] Account of some Strange Apparitions had by a Godly Man of Kintyre, who hath been Blind Six Years*, which survives in editions of 1734.⁴⁷ Drummond's other 'godlies' included reprints of perennially popular works in north Britain. Among them were sermons such as Samuel Rutherford's *An Exhortation to a Communion to a Scots Congregation in London*, first preached in 1656 and much reprinted thereafter;⁴⁸ edifying exempla like Archibald Deans' enduringly popular account of *The Last Words of Christian Kerr* who died in Edinburgh during her eleventh year in 1702, 'ravished with the assurances of her interest in Christ, and the hope of heaven';⁴⁹ and devotional manuals akin to *The Mother's Catechism*, penned by John Willison, minister in Dundee until 1750.⁵⁰

The scant survival of such titles only hints at what was clearly a brisk trade in cheap print in late seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century Edinburgh. If Drummond had in stock 181 reams (480 sheets) and five quires (24 sheets) of pot paper (15½ x 12¼ inches) printed and ready to make up small pamphlets and broadside ballads alone, this would imply, assuming single-sheet publications, that he had 87,000 copies of these works waiting for sale on his death.⁵¹ If similar levels of stock were

⁴⁴ Copies in BL, 1076.b.12(11) and BL, 12330.b.22. It was earlier printed by Robert Fleming in 1734: NLS, RB.s.407; and later by Alexander Robertson in 1784: BL, 12331.b.34(12) and Bod Lib, 2702 f.1(9).

⁴⁵ The copy printed in Edinburgh for George Ramsay in 1751 is probably Drummond's: NLS, H.2.e.17. The first extant specimens of this pamphlet date from the beginning of the eighteenth century.

⁴⁶ Compare, NLS, Blk.416, *Scotland's Lament, Confabulation and Prayer* (Perth, 1715) and NLS, Blk.629, *Britain's Lamentation, and Hopes of Triumph* (Edinburgh? 1746?).

⁴⁷ NLS, L.C.2810(2).

⁴⁸ Drummond's edition does not survive, but a copy printed by Robert Fleming in 1749 may be found at NLS, Ry.IV.g.48.

⁴⁹ Again, Drummond's issue of this perennial work is no longer extant, but Fleming's edition of 1748 is now in the Henry E. Huntington Library [HEHL], 310868.

⁵⁰ In lieu of Drummond's imprint, see the copy of this much issued title printed by James Chalmers in Aberdeen in 1749: NLS, L.C.2896(2).

⁵¹ Gaskell, *A New Introduction to Bibliography*, 59, 75. This makes Drummond's stock of chapbooks very similar in size to that held by the bookseller Charles Tias at the sign

held by his Edinburgh contemporaries who also catered for this market, a sense of the amount of cheap print then available in the city can be gained.

II

It is often difficult to identify precisely the activities of Drummond's contemporaries and predecessors in the production of cheap literature since so much of it was issued without date or publication information. Orders of the Edinburgh council in 1703 and 1708 that no printer should 'presume to print any papers or pamphlets without affixing their names thereto as printed by them' were never strictly observed.⁵² Nevertheless, sufficient numbers are attributed such that the major contributors to this market can be discerned. An important early figure in the development of the 'small book' in Scotland was clearly Agnes Campbell, the widow of Andrew Anderson who had been granted privileges as the King's Printer in Scotland under a patent of 1671. After her husband's demise in 1676, Agnes and her son James continued to exercise and defend the terms of this warrant.⁵³ A total of eleven titles in one of these small formats are extant bearing dates between 1696 and 1715, the year before Agnes' death, that can be positively identified as having been printed by 'the Heirs and Successors of Andrew Anderson'. Most were reprints of popular 'godly' works from England, such as Thomas Robins' *The Schollars Winter Garment*, Richard Alleine's *The Christians Daily Practice of Piety*, or James Clark's *Memento Mori*, together with catechisms for the young.⁵⁴ But also surviving is a little guide to economic management of the household, *The New Art of Thriving*, and a short account of 'the conduct and measures of Scots Tories'.⁵⁵

Meanwhile, between 1682 and 1716, one of Agnes Campbell's apprentices, John Reid, was printing on his own from premises in Bell's Wynd, on the south side of Edinburgh's High Street near the Tron kirk.⁵⁶ Among other examples of cheap print are eight surviving small books that can definitely be identified as his. Their range suggests that Reid was a significant promoter of the early Scottish chapbook. His repertoire encompassed small 'godlies' like James Clark's *A New Years-Gift or the Christians Pocket-Book*, together with 'last dying speeches' such

⁵¹ (*Continued*) of the Three Bibles on London Bridge in the 1660s. See Spufford, *Small Books and Pleasant Histories*, 98.

⁵² H. Armet (ed.), *Extracts from the Records of the Burgh of Edinburgh 1701 to 1718* (Edinburgh, 1967), 63, 147.

⁵³ M. Wood (ed.), *Extracts from the Records of the Burgh of Edinburgh 1665 to 1680* (Edinburgh, 1950), 355; H.R. Plomer, *A Dictionary of the Printers and Booksellers who were at work in England, Scotland and Ireland from 1668 to 1725* (Oxford, 1922), 5–6; A. Mann, 'Book commerce, litigation and the art of monopoly: the case of Agnes Campbell, Royal Printer, 1676–1712', *Scottish Economic and Social History* 18 (1998) 142–3.

⁵⁴ Glasgow, Mitchell Library [MLG], 98615; NLS, 2.325(2); NLS, 2.232(18).

⁵⁵ BL, 8247.aa.5; NLS, 2.287(3). For other small books by Campbell, see MLG, 98614; NLS, 1.22(185); NLS, 2.325(5).

⁵⁶ On Reid, see Plomer, *A Dictionary of the Printers and Booksellers*, 250–1.

as an account of the life and death of Sir John Johnston executed at Tyburn in 1690, and verses including *The Golden Island*, a poem or song in praise of the Scots venture at Darien, published in 1699.⁵⁷

Meanwhile, another John Reid, perhaps a nephew of his namesake, was also at work from various print shops in the city, most notably in Liberton's Wynd between 1699 and 1719 and in Pearson's Close, on the north side of the High Street a little above the market cross, from 1714 until at least 1723. Reid junior was among the most prolific producers of ephemeral literature in early eighteenth-century Scotland. Fifteen extant small books are certainly his work. Among these were versions of renowned English titles such as *The Wonderful Prophecies of Old Mother Shipton* extant in an edition of 1700, or *The Mad Conceits of Tom Tram of the West* surviving from 1722, together with popular conversion narratives like *An Account of the Admirable Conversion of One Sarah Howley* (1704).⁵⁸ On the title page of one seventeenth-century sermon that he reprinted in an eight-page octavo of 1715, Reid junior advertised his premises in Pearson's Close, 'where are to be sold choice of little books and ballads', while the colophon on a broadside ballad emanating from this address in the same year made clear that from here could be had 'all sorts of Story Books, and Ballads'.⁵⁹

Another early figure of importance in the making of the Scottish chapbook was the Church of Scotland minister Andrew Symson who ran a printing shop at the foot of Horse Wynd in the Cowgate for almost fifteen years before his death in January 1712.⁶⁰ Seven of the godly and didactic books that he produced in small formats are extant and his output seems particularly aimed at children. As well as editions of the catechism and 'ABC', he specialised in tales of juvenile conversion such as *The Life and Death, of a Notorious Wicked Child, who was Taken up from Begging and Admirably Converted*.⁶¹ A similar diet of material was produced by Symson's contemporary, James Watson, son of an Edinburgh printer of the same name, who worked from a number of centrally located venues on the north side of the High Street from 1694 until his death in 1722.⁶² He reprinted a number of popular late seventeenth-century 'godlies' such as Baxter's *Divine Precepts* and Standfast's *A Dialogue Between and Blind Man and Death*, together with up-to-date works like Stephens' *A Golden Chain of Four Links*, Russell's *A Sin Against the Holy Ghost*, and Wilson's *A Word to all Christian Families in Scotland*, all of which appeared in 1700.⁶³

⁵⁷ NLS, 2.232(21); NLS, Ry.1.6.235; NLS, H.29.e.15.

⁵⁸ NLS, 2.235(18); NLS, L.C.2977; NLS, 2.325(15).

⁵⁹ NLS, L.C.2786.A(22), *A Sermon Preached by Mr James Rows* (1715); NLS, 6.365(2), *In Heriot's Walks, &c* (1715).

⁶⁰ W. J. Couper, 'Andrew Symson: Preacher, Printer and Poet', *SHR* 13 (1916) 47–67.

⁶¹ NLS, ABS.1.83.50; NLS, ABS.1.83.53(1); NLS, L.C.2801(1); NLS, 2.286(9).

⁶² W. J. Couper, 'James Watson, King's Printer', *SHR* 7 (1910) 244–62.

⁶³ NLS, Hall.195.i; Bod Lib, 8 o U 255 Th; NLS, 2.232(6); NLS, 2.232(7); NLS, 3.2817(22).

Among the generation of printers that began work in the reign of Queen Anne was John Moncur, operating from the foot of Bull Close on the north side of the High Street opposite the Tron kirk between 1708 and 1715, at the *Scots Arms* a little above the Luckenbooths, 1719–25, and at the head of Bank Close in the Lawnmarket, 1726–9. He was an important figure in the development of early Scottish newspapers, printing *The Scots Post-Man* in 1709, before it was taken on by John Reid junior, and *The Evening-Post* from 1710 to 1712.⁶⁴ Among his small books were useful little tracts like *A Description of the Most Remarkable High-Ways, and Whole Known Fairs and Mercats in Scotland, with Several other Remarkable Things*, and populist pieces such as *The True Fortune-Teller. Discovering to Young Men, Maids, Widowers and Widows, their Good and Bad Fortunes*. The testament drawn up after Moncur's death in July 1729, which makes reference to the unbound books then in his warehouse and shop, 'including catachismes, ballads and story books', suggests that he produced many more of these publications than can now be identified with him.⁶⁵ Meanwhile, Margaret Reid, the daughter of John Reid senior, was certainly printing on her own account by 1714, and perhaps earlier since she seems to have moved into the shop at the foot of Horse Wynd vacated by Andrew Symson on his death in 1712.⁶⁶ She followed her father in producing a representative range of chapbook fare including *The Stewartton Wonder*, a remarkable tale of a minister from the west of Scotland who recovered from a death-like trance, *The Last Speech of Mr Robert Ballie of Jereswood*, the words of a man executed in Edinburgh a generation before, and an edition of *The Life and Death of Tom Thumb*.⁶⁷

Another of the more significant producers of small books in this generation was Robert Brown, based in the middle of Forrester's Wynd between 1713 and 1733.⁶⁸ Sixteen titles in these formats are positively identifiable with him. These include typical works of popular eschatology such as *An Hundred Godly Lessons that a Mother on her Death-Bed Gave to her Children*, together with *Memento Mori: or, a Word in Season to the Healthful, Sick, and Dying*, and *Cognitions upon Death; or the Mirrour of Mans Misery*. By the early 1730s at least, he was also issuing classic 'histories' such as *The King and Cobler*, and songs like *The Squire and Susans Garland*.⁶⁹

The most prolific producer of small books in the following generation, and indeed the entire period to mid-century on the evidence of surviving copies, was Robert Fleming. Fleming had been an

⁶⁴ Couper, *The Edinburgh Periodical Press*, i. 35.

⁶⁵ NLS, APS.1.82.58; NLS, 5.3533(11); NRS, CC8/8/97/311.

⁶⁶ A single sheet verse by John Cook, *A [P]rophesie for the Year One Thousand Seven Hundred and Fifteen Years*, was printed by Margaret Reid in 1714. See NLS, Ry.III.c.34(37).

⁶⁷ NLS, Gray.718(7); NLS, Ry.1.5.106; NLS, L.C.2811(1).

⁶⁸ Couper, *The Edinburgh Periodical Press*, i. 27.

⁶⁹ NLS, L.C.2800(6); BL, 4401.k.35; NLS, Ry.III.d.23(3); BL, 11621.b.31(2); Folger Shakespeare Library [FSL], PR976.S7 Cage (10).

apprentice to Andrew Symson and thereafter was in partnership with Walter and Thomas Ruddiman until 1722. On the death of John Reid junior, about 1724 he may well have moved into his old premises in Pearson's Close, since around that time he began to print from this address, already well renowned as a place of chapbook production and sale.⁷⁰ Between 1724 and 1749 fifty small books are extant bearing Fleming's name or the Pearson's Close imprint. An important part of this output was a group of enduringly popular 'godlies' that he repeatedly reprinted over these twenty-five years. Among them were Baxter's two works, *Christ the Pearl of Great Price*,⁷¹ and *God's Call to Unconverted Sinners*,⁷² and a pair of favourites erroneously attributed to John Bunyan, *The Riches of Christ*,⁷³ and *Rest for a Wearied Soul*.⁷⁴ Issued with equal regularity from his shop were a couple of sermons by Robert Russell, *The Saint's Duty and Exercise*,⁷⁵ and *The Sin Against the Holy Ghost*.⁷⁶ Similar perennials included James Clark's *Christian's Pocket Book*,⁷⁷ and Stephens' *Golden Chain*.⁷⁸

Among other classic 'godlies' emanating from south of the border, Fleming produced an edition of *The Black Book of Conscience* by Andrew Jones⁷⁹, and Standfast's *A Dialogue between a Blind Man and Death*, published in combination with *The Great Assize, or Christ's Certain and Sudden Appearance to Judgment*, falsely attributed to John Bunyan.⁸⁰ But he was also responsible for more light-hearted fare such as *The Merry Tales of the Mad Men of Gotam* extant in an edition of 1729, and the two parts of *The King and Cobler* surviving from 1734.⁸¹ At the same time, he produced a number of collections of ballads, including the pair that comprised *The Handsome Cobler's Garland* printed in 1739, an edition of the well-known *Factors Garland* in 1740, and a little collection of four new songs in 1743.⁸²

⁷⁰ Plomer, Bushnell and McC. Dix, *A Dictionary of the Printers and Booksellers*, 306.

⁷¹ BL, 4474.aa.88(11); BL, 4409.bbb.6; GUL, RB2583(1); University of California, Los Angeles, Special Collections [UCLA], 1800 1744 B33c; NLS, 5.2337(10); HEHL, 309924.

⁷² NLS, NE.30.a.33(8); UCLA, 1800 1744 B33g; HEHL, 309873. Included among the 'histories' in Dicey, *Catalogue* (1754), 42.

⁷³ BL, 4403.c.16; UCLA, 1800 1742 B88r; BL, 04411.d.15; NLS, L.C.2802.A(6).

⁷⁴ BL, 1570/1328.

⁷⁵ Yale University, Beinecke Library, Mhc8 1726 R91; BL, 4405.bbb.6.

⁷⁶ University of Toronto Library, Knox pam. 017; University of California, Los Angeles, Clark Library, X9.354.8C83; Congregational Library London [Cong Lib], 41.3.13(3); Dicey, *Catalogue* (1754), 44.

⁷⁷ BL, 4403.c.12; BL, 1607/2441; NLS, NE.30.a.33(9).

⁷⁸ Aberdeen University Library [AUL], DL.As; UCLA, 1800 1743 S84g. Included in Dicey, *Catalogue* (1754), 42.

⁷⁹ Cong Lib, 41.3.13(4); Dicey, *Catalogue* (1754), 41. The twenty-fourth edition had been produced in Edinburgh about 1666: MLG, 98611.

⁸⁰ Bod Lib, 8* U 255 Th; Ashton, *Chap-Books of the Eighteenth Century*, 459–60. *A Dialogue* was printed in Edinburgh both by James Watson and Robert Brown before Fleming produced a copy: NLS, L.C.497(4); BL, 4403.c.17.

⁸¹ NLS, APS.1.78.235; BL, 12331.e.43(1 and 2).

⁸² BL, 1078.k.26(1); NLS, Hall.272.h; Bod Lib, Harding A 1(3).

Other important printers of small books up to the mid-century period were Thomas Lumisden and John Robertson who were in business together from 1722 and soon operating from premises in the Fish Market until 1747 when imprints became Thomas Lumisden and Company, presumably following the death of Robertson.⁸³ Among their small books were editions of the *Strange and Remarkable Prophecies and Predictions* of the seventeenth-century archbishop of Armagh, James Ussher, and *A Wonderful Prophecy of One Called Nixon*, attributed to the famous sage of Cheshire said to have lived in the reign of James VI and I.⁸⁴

Even without the evidence of his testament, the twenty-one small books that survive bearing Robert Drummond's imprint betray his important place in this market. Extant are a number of examples of his reprints of long popular 'godlies'.⁸⁵ At the same time, there remain specimens of the ballads he collected in *Five Excellent New Songs*, and in *The Irish Boy's Garland*.⁸⁶ Also extant is his edition of *The Factors Garland*, a typical example of chapbook escapism and romance, and a gripping story of divine judgement in *The Wonderful Works of Providence, Shown to the Widow and Fatherless*.⁸⁷

In the relatively small and confined city that Edinburgh was in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century, the centrally located premises of the printers would have been well known to most citizens. The print shops served not only as the places of production of small books and other forms of cheap print but also of their wholesale and retail sale. The address of the printer given on imprint information was clearly intended to provide specific instructions as to where the publication might be found and purchased. Thus, for example, 'printed and sold by James Watson in Craig's Close, and Sold at his Shop, next Door to the Red-Lyon, opposite to the Lucken-Booths'.⁸⁸

At the same time, there were clearly some among Edinburgh's sizeable body of booksellers from whom small books could be bought. James Wardlaw, who for twenty years after 1691 had various retail premises along the High Street, within the Luckenbooths, and in Parliament Close was one such purveyor.⁸⁹ Another group of works suggests the importance of his contemporary, John Crosby, as a seller of small godly works printed for him by James Watson.⁹⁰ Perhaps the most clearly identifiable purveyor of small books in the period was Alexander Davidson who occupied a shop 'at Virgil's Head, opposite to the Guard, North-side of the Street' between 1721 and 1733, as well as apparently

⁸³ Plomer, Bushnell and McC. Dix, *A Dictionary of the Printers and Booksellers*, 325–6, 347.

⁸⁴ NLS, APS.1.95.32; NLS, L.C.2810(4); HEHL, 321580(24); NLS, L.C.2810(3).

⁸⁵ NLS, L.C.2802(4); NLS, 5.2339(29); BL, 4475.aa.102; NLS, L.C.2802.A(12).

⁸⁶ Bod Lib, Harding A 1(2); Bod Lib, Harding A 1(1).

⁸⁷ Bod Lib, Harding A 1(4); BL, 1078.k.26(3).

⁸⁸ BL, 3504.b.34.

⁸⁹ BL, 1037.a.46.

⁹⁰ NLS, 2.232(7); NLS, 2.232 (8); NLS, Hall.195.i; NLS, L.C.2800(3).

selling from his house ‘in the first Fore-Stair within Bell’s-Wynd’. In 1722 he began printing and retailing the light-hearted periodical, *The Blyth Man’s Vade Mecum: or, An infallible way to be merry. To be continued weekly*. Alongside William Preston’s poem, *To the Divine Majesty*, which he sold in 1733, he also advertised ‘several of the Author’s Poems, and other curious new Pamphlets’ available at the Bell’s-Wynd store.⁹¹

In addition, a ready way to purchase these small books, together with other kinds of ephemeral literature, was clearly from street sellers, or ‘paper criers’ as they were known. An expansion in the number of these itinerant vendors during the reign of Queen Anne is implied by the act of the burgh council in 1714 to incorporate all of the ‘cadees, errand-men, news-cryers, or pamphlet-sellers in Edinburgh’ into a company limited to twenty in number, or more at the discretion of the magistrates. Officials were empowered to apprehend ‘all persons, that shall be found crying ballads or other papers upon the streets of Edinburgh, except those that are incorporate in the Society of Paper Criers’.⁹²

The paper criers bought their various wares direct from the printers. Around mid-century David Gray produced *The Whole [P]rophesies Prophesied by Thomas Rymer* in a sixteen-page duodecimo which he advertised for sale from his shop in Bull Close from ‘where chapmen may be furnished with a great variety of sermons, story-books, and ballads’.⁹³ Some insight into their price is afforded by the burgh council’s prescription of a fixed rate for their wholesale purchase in 1710: ‘each quair of new papers or pamphlets sixteen shillings per quair, ballads seven shillings per quair, storie books of one sheet five shillings per dozen’. At the same time street sellers were required to pay ‘six pennies Scots for each new print’ to the stationer James Wardlaw, who was appointed to regulate and oversee their activities.⁹⁴

These ‘storie books of one sheet’ were the chapbooks, and their supply from the printers at 5s. Scots for a batch of twelve represents a wholesale cost of 5d. Scots per copy, and thus perhaps a retail price of around a Scottish shilling, or the equivalent of an English penny. Other evidence confirms that the epithet of ‘penny books’ was not unjustified. Thus the small ‘godly’, *A Three-Fold Alphabet of Rules Concerning Christian Practice*, produced by John Mosman and Company in 1721, had ‘Price a Penny’ imprinted on the title page. Another chapbook of 1746, purporting to convey the lamentations of Bonnie Prince Charlie on his defeat at Culloden, also had ‘Price one Penny’ printed on it. Equally, an eight-page octavo of the same year recounting the recent destruction of the church on St Ninian’s Isle off Shetland, advertised itself at ‘one

⁹¹ NLS, 5.1072 (30); NLS, 5.1072 (31); NLS, 5.916(41).

⁹² W. Maitland, *The History of Edinburgh from its earliest Foundation to the Present Time* (Edinburgh, 1753), 326–7; *Some Remarks... to be Observed by all who are Permitted to Cry Gazettes and other Papers... upon the Streets* (Edinburgh, 1734).

⁹³ NLS, NG.1176.d.22.

⁹⁴ Armet (ed.), *Extracts from the Records of the Burgh of Edinburgh 1701 to 1718*, 199–200.

penny', while a 'godly' chapbook of around 1750, telling the exemplary but short life story of Emelia Geddie, announced that 'this little penny book is printed for a widow and her family'.⁹⁵

III

Whether James Boswell's juvenile reading actually originated from the Diceys' shop in Bow Churchyard or was in fact bought locally from the likes of Robert Drummond, he and other readers of chapbooks in mid-eighteenth-century Edinburgh could readily find much the same diet of material as was available to the London consumer. Indeed, many of the small books printed in the Scottish capital at this time simply recycled material that derived from the metropolitan market. Across the range of chapbook contents much of what was offered to the consumer in 'north Britain' merely followed English trends.

Thus, when Boswell recalled how, at an early age, his pious Calvinist mother had 'put in my hands a little book in which I read of the conversions of very young children',⁹⁶ it may well have been something like *An Account of the Admirable and Wonderful Conversion of a Poor Child, born in Newington Butts in Sussex*, written by the London minister James Janeway and printed in an eight-page octavo by John Reid junior in 1704. As with works such as *An Account of the Holy life, and Joyful Death of one Elisabeth Alder. Daughter to a Holy and Reverend minister in Kent: how she was Awakened and Converted, when she was between Seven and Eight years old, with a Whole Account of her Dying Speech and Triumphant Death* (1719), these didactic works with English settings almost certainly appeared in London before being reissued in Scotland.⁹⁷

The same reproduction of metropolitan titles is evident in other 'godlies', such as those illustrating heavenly miracles and divine wonders. Among them was *The Kentish Miracle*, a story set near Maidstone telling of a poor widow who rejected the temptations of Satan and was relieved by an angel. It had been published in quarto format in the English capital at least as early as 1684 before being reprinted as an octavo in Edinburgh in 1741.⁹⁸ Equally, *A Wonder of Wonders, or the Dumb Maid in London, in Wapping, Restored to her Speech Again*, began life as a London broadside put out by Thomas Milbourn in 1694, but was reprinted as a chapbook in Edinburgh in 1709.⁹⁹ Other small books such as *A Wonderful Relation of a Hellish Monster Brought Forth by Mary Boss* printed by Andrew Symson in 1709, a Worcestershire tale, or *The Atheist Converted* printed and sold by Archibald Martin around 1760,

⁹⁵ NLS, 2.253(5); Bod Lib, Vet.A4e.1940; NLS, Ry.1.5.307; NLS, F.7.c.33. For other examples of prices printed on the title page, see GUL, Bh13-d.17(1); NLS, Blk.424; BL, 1490, 136.

⁹⁶ Pottle, *James Boswell: the Early Years*, 2.

⁹⁷ NLS, 2.232(15); NLS, 2.286(16).

⁹⁸ GUL, Sp Coll Ferguson, Ah-d.55; BL, 1078.k.26(2). See also Ashton, *Chap-Books of the Eighteenth Century*, 34.

⁹⁹ University of Texas, Austin, Ak B677.694wb.

in which the eyes of Yorkshireman, Mr Willis, who 'would not suffer his children to go to church' were miraculously opened, were no doubt English titles originally, although the Edinburgh imprints represent the earliest surviving copies.¹⁰⁰

Meanwhile the seam of popular print in England that had long reported cautionary tales of the retribution wrought by divine providence, either on the sins of the nation or the wickedness of individuals, was adopted and reproduced by Edinburgh printers.¹⁰¹ Works of the sort of *Warning for England: or Divine Cautions from Heaven* was printed in London and reprinted in Edinburgh in 1705.¹⁰² *Eight Dreadful Examples of Gods Immediat Judgement on Wicked Persons*, was another typical example of an English chapbook replicated north of the border in 1710.¹⁰³ In such cases the lack of local relevance seemed of less importance than the appeal of accounts that illustrated the inevitability and the power with which the Almighty punished sinners. Titles such as *Heaven's Judgment on Gamesters, Drunkards and Seekers of Revenge. Being a Full and True Account of one Mr John Gibbs, near the City of Bristol*, of about 1710, and *God's Dreadful Judgments, on Wicked and Prophane Swearers. Or, Fair Warning to Murderers, Swearers, or Jealous Persons of Either Sex. A Full and True Account of one John Chambers of the Town of Simer; in the County of York; who was hanged on the 6th of May 1725*, were typical of London imports attributed to specific English locations. *The Wonderful Works of Providence*, printed by Drummond in 1744, which described the miserable end met by a cruel churchwarden who failed to relieve a poor widow with four children, was a tale from Newport, Isle of Wight.¹⁰⁴

Allied to this theme in popular literature were the accounts of mysterious signs and strange portents that issued warnings of divine intervention or prophesied future events. Here again, much that ran off the Edinburgh presses simply pirated that which had initially come from the English capital. Thus, *The Embassadour of Peace, being a Strange and Wonderful Relation of a White Dove Seated on a Rain-bow* (1696) was a tale from Carlisle first printed by J. Bradford in New Street without Bishopsgate, and then reprinted by the Heirs and Successors of Andrew Anderson in Edinburgh.¹⁰⁵ *A Great Vision, seen in Turkie Land* was another 'wonderful prophetic' printed in London by 'J.B.' before being reissued in Edinburgh in 1702.¹⁰⁶ Similarly, *A Warning to England: being a True and Wonderful Relation of a Flaming Sword which was seen in the Air, in an Amazing Manner, on Monday last between Two and Three in the Morning, near Stretham in Surry*, was originally a London imprint but was reproduced

¹⁰⁰ NLS, 2.286(10); NLS, RB.s.1559(2).

¹⁰¹ A. Walsham, *Providence in Early Modern England* (Oxford, 1999).

¹⁰² BL, 175.aa.101(13).

¹⁰³ BL, 4903.c.12.

¹⁰⁴ NLS, L.C.2800(5); NLS, Newb.1028(6); BL, 1078.k.26(3).

¹⁰⁵ NLS, 1.22(185).

¹⁰⁶ NLS, L.C.2950.

by James Watson in 1698.¹⁰⁷ In the case of *Scotland's Timely Remembrance. Or Warnings from Heaven. To Vile Sinners on Earth*, produced in Edinburgh in 1717, the variety of both English and Scottish versions makes it difficult to determine where it had its first incarnation.¹⁰⁸

Equally, among the forty or so extant small-book publications produced in Edinburgh between 1680 and 1760 and carrying a ballad or a collection of songs, a significant number were obviously English reprints. Such, for example, was *The New Gloustershire Garland* printed by John Reid in 1704, in which the first part was set to 'The Tune of Wandring Lady, or Admiral Ponti', or *The Amusement*, a garland of five English love songs, probably issued about 1730.¹⁰⁹ *The Squire and Susans Garland*, a 'Tragical new Song' printed and sold by Robert Brown in 1733, *The Handsome Cobler's Garland*, the work of Robert Fleming in 1739, and *The Factors Garland*, a song or poem in four parts also printed by Fleming 1740 and later by Drummond, were all English compositions, although here again the Edinburgh imprints provide the first extant versions.¹¹⁰ *The Constant Sailors Garland* was another English song in three parts 'To the Tune of Unconstant Woman', surviving only in a copy 'Printed at the foot of Fowlse's Closs'.¹¹¹

In the case of the reported 'last dying speeches' of criminals executed at the gallows, much of the material printed in Edinburgh was also adopted from the metropolitan market. Such was the case history and confession of Henry Jackson of Horsham in Sussex, who 'murdered his own mother, and robb'd the house', which was 're-printed for John Crosby in the year, 1701'.¹¹² No less typical was *The Berkshire Tragedy, or, the Whittam miller who most barbarously murder'd his sweet-heart: with the Whole Trial, Examination and Confession; and his Last Dying Words at the Place of Execution*, of which the printing by Drummond for John Keed in 1744 was presumably not the first.¹¹³

Despite this reproduction of popular titles of London provenance, however, the Edinburgh chapbook trade during this period was far from being merely derivative of the English market that had long been so much more developed. At the same time a more indigenous repertoire

¹⁰⁷ NLS, RB.s.451(27).

¹⁰⁸ NLS, 2.286(14). In the Edinburgh edition, the first known, of this account of the 'holy life' and remarkable death of Richard Brightly, he is described as 'minister of the gospel near Salcraig in the south of Scotland'. This may adapt an earlier English version, however. It was printed as *England's Timely Remembrance*, both in Aldermary Churchyard and by Larkin How in Petticoat Lane about 1750. Here, Brightly appears as minister of Waltham in Leicestershire. In the second half of the eighteenth century it was published in a variety of Scottish and English locations as *England's Timely Remembrancer* and by about 1800 as *Britain's Timely Remembrancer*. I am grateful to Barry McKay for information on this title.

¹⁰⁹ Bod Lib, Harding A 4(1); FSL, PR976.S7 Cage (1).

¹¹⁰ FSL, PR976.S7 Cage (10); BL, 1078.k.26(1); NLS, Hall.272.h; Bod Lib, Harding A 1(4).

¹¹¹ Bod Lib, Harding A 1(20).

¹¹² NLS, L.C.2800(3).

¹¹³ BL, 1078.k.26(13). A copy printed at York in 1744 for John Keed also survives.

of material was beginning to develop which marks out the Scottish capital as a quite distinctive publishing environment: one that had compositions, subjects and perspectives all of its own. In Presbyterian Scotland, where edifying works occupied such a prominent place in popular print, its characteristic types were all well represented by local examples. Thus, among the conversion narratives of children, the *Last Words of Christian Kerr* was produced in small format alone by a least four different printers before 1760.¹¹⁴

Other types of 'godly' written specifically for an audience in 'north Britain' included miraculous tales such as *The Elgon Wonder* of 1717 which described how Mr John Gardner, the minister from 'near to Elgon of Murray in the north of Scotland', had fallen into a trance in January that year and was believed dead, until a noise was heard from his coffin and he was discovered alive, upon which he 'related many strange and amazing things, which he had seen in the other world'.¹¹⁵ Meanwhile, the workings of divine providence were illustrated through titles such as *An True Account, of Wonderful Signs of God's Judgements, Against Mockers and Slighters of God's Ministers* (1714), in which the sins of James Shearer of Stannos near Hamilton were punished when his mare and hen both gave birth to half-human offspring just as the local minister had predicted.¹¹⁶ The appetite for accounts of witchcraft was catered for in a pair of duodecimo pamphlets that John Read junior printed in 1704 telling of Betty Laing 'the grand witch' of Pittenweem and 'the wicked and terrible confederacy' of her kind that had notoriously bewitched fishing vessels from this Fife coastal village.¹¹⁷

Another popular strand within the chapbook repertoire that found its own distinctive voice north of the border was that of prophesies. In Thomas the Rhymer, the thirteenth-century laird of Erceldoune, Scotland had its own native prophet. His prognostications had circulated in print since at least the Union of the Crowns when Robert Waldegrave included them in *The Whole Prophesie of Scotland, England, & some-part of France, and Denmark*, a publication that was reissued in numerous versions over the following two centuries. But Rhymer also appeared in a chapbook when John Reid printed *A Strange and Wondrous yet True Relation* in 1715, and forty years later when *The Whole [P]rophesies Prophesied by Thomas Rymer, Containing Many Strange and Marvelous Matters, not before Read or Heard of* gave him title billing.¹¹⁸

At the same time the prophetic spirit was often described moving in less celebrated countrymen. Typical were *A Most Strange and Wonderful Prophecy. In the year 1684. By Mr. Alexander Pedan late minister of the Gospel in the west of Scotland*, first surviving in an imprint of about 1714 and much circulated thereafter, or *A Wonderful Vision or Prophesie, which was*

¹¹⁴ NLS, 2.325(16); BL, 4955.a.1; HEHL, 310868; NLS, L.C.2786.A(25).

¹¹⁵ NLS, 2.283(4).

¹¹⁶ NLS, 2.286(13).

¹¹⁷ NLS, Ry.1.2.127(14 and 15).

¹¹⁸ BL, 1607/1239; NLS, NG.1176.d.22.

revealed to William Rutherford, farmer in the shire of the Merse near Duncie. Upon the 19th of March 1719, with a discription of what shall befall Great-Britain especially Scotland. In similar vein was *A[n] Account of some Strange Apparitions had by a godly man in Kintyre, who hath been blind six years: containing some visional predictions and several judgments to befall these three kingdoms, particulary Scotland, and mor especially some towns therein*, printed in 1734, and *An account of the remarkable predictions of Mr. David Imrie, minister of the gospel at St. Mungo in Annandale. Wherein he foretels, that universal wars, famine, pestilence, bloodshed, and other terrible judgments are immediately to infest the Earth* (1754).¹¹⁹

Meanwhile a number of popular songs, printed either singly or in garlands, were no less distinctively Scottish, either of a traditional character or of more recent invention. In 1718, for example, Allan Ramsay produced the first edition of his *Scots Songs*, a collection of seven compositions in a sixteen-page octavo, among them 'The Lass of Peatties Mill' which, in addition, is preserved as a broadside ballad of the period. *The Loyal Scotsman's Garland, Containing Three New Songs*, printed in 1726, included 'The Bonny Boatman' and 'Lochaber no More', the second of which is also extant on a contemporary broadside. Another garland of four songs printed by Fleming in 1743 included 'The Lasses of Kinghorn' surviving also on a single sheet. One song appealing for Scottish independence from England at about the time of the '45, set 'To the Tune of Auld Lang Syne', was printed as a small book of four pages as well as on a broadside.¹²⁰

Indeed, the Jacobite risings of the mid-1740s gave rise to a variety of chapbooks carrying songs both for and against the Young Pretender. For example, *The Battle of Preston*, a Jacobite ballad which was also issued on a broadside, was printed together with Allan Ramsay's *The Monk and the Miller's Wife* in a small book entitled *Two Excellent Songs*, as well as being included in *Four new Songs, and a Prophecy*, a garland championing the cause of the Stewarts and freedom from England.¹²¹ On the other side, a group of small-format publications disseminated songs loyal to the Hanoverian regime. One contained three anti-Jacobite compositions including 'a new play-house song' from London set to the tune of 'Lillibullero'. Another celebrating the way in which the rebels were chased out of England was set 'To the Tune of Rodger and Jean', while the anti-Jacobite *The Plaid Hunting* was sung to the famous 'Packington's Pound'. Meanwhile, a number of garlands contained lyrics singing the praises of the Duke of Cumberland.¹²²

¹¹⁹ NLS, L.C.2786.A(20); NLS, 2.286(15); NLS, L.C.2810(2); NLS, L.C.2982.

¹²⁰ University of Indiana, The Lilly Library, PR3291.A1L9235; NLS, Hall.197.e; Bod Lib, Harding A 1(3); NLS, BCL.AA509(19). For the four broadsides, see, NLS, Ry.III.a.10(9, 46, 59, 71). See also Alexander Stuart, *Musick for Allan Ramsay's Collection of Scots Songs* (Edinburgh, 1725?), 20–1, 38–9, 80–1.

¹²¹ HEHL, 321580(22); NLS, Ry.1.2.86(24).

¹²² Bod Lib, Harding A 1(5); HEHL, 321580(9); NLS, Blk.67(3); NLS, Blk.465; NLS, MS.488.f. 64 and 72. In total, around thirty 'small books' from this period contain apologia, in verse or prose, either for or against the Jacobite cause.

Alongside such songs, poetry both for and against the Jacobite cause appeared in chapbook format.¹²³ Indeed, verses of various kinds provided a large part of the material that appeared in small-book productions. About 15% of the chapbooks extant from the eighty-year period under review are poems of some kind: a reflection of the fact that verse was a common vehicle for topical and political comment, as well as for entertainment and edification. As in the case of songs, poetry may have provided a ready and mnemonic form of communication to a diverse audience and perhaps some of it was also intended for oral performance: 'Come all loyal Britons to me give an ear', begins one anti-Jacobite *Poem on the Rebellion*.¹²⁴

Many of these lyrics were written by local authors and reflect on the Edinburgh environment or are couched in a Scottish idiom. In the thirty years between 1718 and 1748 Allan Ramsay issued more than twenty of his poems in small-book format, making them as widely accessible as possible. Most spoke to a local audience about Edinburgh people, and addressed them in the Scots vernacular. Some were elegies or tributes to well-known characters in the city recently deceased. They ranged from the tavern keeper Maggy Johnston and the inn-keeper Lucky Wood, or the kirk-treasurer's man John Cowper and the brothel keeper Lucky Spence, all the way up to the son of Sir John Clerk of Penicuik and Lady Margaret Anstruther.¹²⁵

A number of other chapbooks contained a variety of humorous verses about familiar people and places. Works such as *A Facetious Poem in Imitation of The Cherry and Slae* (1701) was a comic composition in the style of Montgomerie's well-known work, described as 'giving account of the entertainment, love and despair, got in the Highlands of Scotland; revealed in a dream to one in pursuit of his stoln cows'.¹²⁶ *Frazer's Adventure, or, a Sade and Bloody Fight, at Whittingham in East Lothian, upon the 13th. April 1721*, was a bawdy knock-about penned in the name of one 'Humphry Candlesticks, Professor of Poetry at Pishwanton'. Ramsay's *An Address of Thanks from the Society of Rakes, to the Pious author of An Essay upon Improving and Adding to the Strength of Great Britain and Ireland by Fornication* (1735) was a satirical comment on standards of morality in Edinburgh alluding to local characters and making reference to 'worthy wives, like Lucky Spence, or usefu' Mother Needham'.¹²⁷

¹²³ NLS, Blk.395(1); NLS, Blk.629; NLS, MS.488.f.68; NLS, ABS.2.85.47(11); NLS, Blk.44(1); NLS, Hall.195.f.4(8); NLS, Blk.473; NLS, Crawford.ET.s.1747/27.

¹²⁴ NLS, MS.488.f.68.

¹²⁵ NLS, RB.s.1306(5); NLS, F.5.b.9; BL, 1078.h.23; New York Public Library, Berg Coll 77-779; BL, C.175.l.1. Elegies of Lucky Wood, Lucky Spence and John Cowper were also published as broadsides: NLS, Ry.III.a.10(112, 113); NLS, Ry.III.c.36(135, 136); RB.I.106(99).

¹²⁶ NLS, 2.286(2).

¹²⁷ BL, 11622.df.9; NLS, L.C.3083.

As for prose ‘story books’, *Henry Blyde’s Contract*, first known in 1734 was an important precursor of a distinctively Scottish repertoire.¹²⁸ By the end of this period more such work was beginning to appear, and with it the emergence of the country’s secular chapbook tale. The figure of Dougal Graham (1724–1779), the ‘skellat bellman’ of Glasgow, was clearly instrumental in this. He may have been the author of the jestbook, *The Merry and Entertaining Jokes of George Buchanan*, extant in an Edinburgh edition of 1758, a collection of comic stories penned in the name of James VI’s celebrated tutor.¹²⁹ He certainly wrote at about this time, *The History of John Cheap, the Chapman* and then *The Comical Tales of Pady from Cork*, which were to become favourites of the Scottish chapbook market in the second half of the eighteenth century and beyond.¹³⁰

IV

The years between about 1680 and 1760 were formative ones in the making of the Scottish chapbook. It was in this period that small pamphlets using a single folio sheet folded into octavo or duodecimo format began to be produced in significant numbers in the Edinburgh print trade. Moreover, the printing of ‘little story books’ and godly tracts in the city was clearly far more extensive and dynamic during this period than has hitherto been appreciated. To the evidence of fugitive surviving copies can now be added Robert Drummond’s inventory of stock that suggests just how much more of this ephemeral literature was then produced than is now extant. At this time the Edinburgh presses were evidently running off many of the merry tales, pleasant histories and penny godlies that had long been staples of the London market. Thanks to Drummond’s testament we know for the first time that celebrated English chapbooks such as *The History of Thomas Hickathrift*, or *The History of the Learned Friar Bacon*, were printed in eighteenth-century Scotland. Many other equally famous titles can now be significantly predated in Scottish editions. Whether the young James Boswell acquired his renowned juvenile reading from Bow Churchyard or not, it can be demonstrated that he might just as easily have purchased it across Edinburgh’s High Street.

Furthermore, contemporary Edinburgh was not just a shadow of the London scene, but an important printing hub with its own characteristics and distinctive tastes. These years saw the emergence of a range of works that originated in ‘north Britain’ and were aimed principally at an audience from it. Most of these native titles comprised eclectic pieces of popular piety, songs, or poems on local themes.

¹²⁸ NLS, RB.s.407.

¹²⁹ Trinity College Cambridge, K.11.120(4). This work is twenty-four pages in octavo, however, and thus made of one and a half sheets.

¹³⁰ *The History of John Cheap, the Chapman* (Glasgow?, 1750?): Bod Lib, Douce PP 168(6). An Edinburgh edition of *John Cheap* by Alexander Robertson is extant from 1772, and of *Pady from Cork* from 1785: NLS, RB.s.1702(1); Bod Lib, 2702 f.1(12).

But they were already being supplemented by prose stories in Scots, culminating in the works of Dougal Graham, which would pave the way for the future. Long before the English antiquary Joseph Ritson collected and bound twenty-seven small works in his *Scottish Merriments, in Prose and Verse* in 1793, the independent Scottish chapbook had come of age.¹³¹

¹³¹ *Scottish Merriments, in Prose and Verse* (London, 1793): BL, 12331.b.34(1). The first editions of eight of these twenty-seven chapbooks can be dated before 1760.