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**INTRODUCTION:
NEW DEVELOPMENTS IN
ROBERT BURNS BIBLIOGRAPHY**

Gerard Carruthers

On March 16, 2017, the University of Glasgow and the National Library of Scotland co-organised a symposium at the NLS on bibliographical matters concerning Robert Burns. The primary motivation for the symposium was to launch a new piece of pilot-research, undertaken by Dr Craig Lamont at Glasgow: a new online and free resource, *A Bibliography of Robert Burns for the 21st Century: 1786-1802*. This work stemmed from an awareness that over half a century had now passed since J. W. Egerer's *A Bibliography of Robert Burns* (1964), and the project was primed by research under way for the larger-scale Arts and Humanities Research Council-funded project "Editing Robert Burns for the Twenty First Century;" this research underpins the first phase of the new Oxford University Press edition of the collected works of Robert Burns. During the course of this latter work, it became more and more evident that, excellent though Egerer often was, his publication was not always a fully adequate tool for Burnsian textual and bibliographical research.

Craig Lamont's opening paper explains the methodology of *A Bibliography of Robert Burns for the 21st Century: 1786-1802*, and its potential for more fully opening up the Burns canon. It is important to emphasise that this opening up of the canon has potential critical implications well beyond "mere" print history. Patrick Scott's contribution to the symposium examines how useful and how limited Egerer was as a starting point for both the print-history and the precise publication-dating of Burns texts, as well as demonstrating how variants and revised texts need a much richer bibliographical description across several publication genres than Egerer provides. Iain Beavan provides insight into one particular type of contemporary Burns publication, chapbooks, that Egerer covered only very selectively, giving a preliminary survey of the frequency of such publication by place and year, and suggesting both problems and research opportunities within a corpus that

already totals at least 358 items. Robert Betteridge concludes the symposium by tracking the Burns print-holdings at the National Library of Scotland, revealing the contingencies of collections policy and giving glimpses of the many individual NLS items that will need proper treatment in future more detailed bibliographical work.

Every bit as much as literary criticism or textual editing, bibliographical studies need generational renewal. It is hoped that in future *A Bibliography of Robert Burns for the 21st Century: 1786-1802* might be expanded and extended as part of the new exhilarated state of Burns Studies in general.

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