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“NOT IN EGERER”? (SOME OF) WHAT WE STILL DON’T KNOW ABOUT BURNS BIBLIOGRAPHY

Patrick Scott

For as long as anyone currently writing about Burns can remember, Burns scholarship could build on three pillars for research: Kinsley’s three-volume edition of the *Poems and Songs*, Ross Roy’s two-volume revised edition of the *Letters*, and Egerer’s bibliography. It comes as something of a shock to realize that Kinsley’s Clarendon edition is now nearly fifty years old, that he started work on it in the late 1950s, and that it incorporated research done by his predecessor on the Clarendon project, Robert Dewar, dating back to the 1920s, and perhaps before that.¹ The most recent of the three, Ross Roy’s *Letters*, is now more than thirty years old; Professor Roy’s own research started in the early 1960s, but he kept the basic pattern and many textual notes from Ferguson’s edition as published in 1931, and Ferguson’s research for that certainly dates back to the early 1920s.²

The third of the triumvirate, the Egerer bibliography, published in 1964, is also over fifty years old, and based on research started in the late 1930s.³ When Egerer worked on it, he was not at a major research university or in a major city, but at a liberal arts college in New Hampshire. Transatlantic research trips, by boat, not plane, were few, time-consuming, and expensive. Egerer had no email, no Xerox, no fax. He was working not just before ECCO, before ESTC, before COPAC, before OCLC, and even before NUC, but well before any library had imagined an online public access catalogue, and years before the NLS catalogue went

¹ James Kinsley, ed., *The Poems and Songs of Robert Burns*, 3 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968).

² G. Ross Roy, ed., *The Letters of Robert Burns*, 2nd ed. revised, 2 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985); J. DeLancey Ferguson, ed., *The Letters of Robert Burns*, 2 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1931).

³ J. W. Egerer, *A Bibliography of Robert Burns* (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1964; Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 1965). Most further references in parentheses in the text.

on microfiche or the British Museum catalogue was photographed by Mansell.

For many years I took Egerer for granted. For the early books through 1802, it is a descriptive bibliography, providing fairly full bibliographical entries, including collations, but without full contents lists.⁴ From 1803, it is enumerative, with much briefer entries in a traditional and minimal library catalogue-format, based on title-page information, without listing size or pagination. Both sections are arranged chronologically, and then within years, after the early years, by place of publication, rather than being arranged as in a modern descriptive bibliography, by families of typesettings, with impressions and states grouped under each new typesetting or edition.

Inevitably, given the passage of time, there are opportunities to revise particular Egerer entries, and the pace has been quickening since the launch of the Glasgow project for a new Burns edition. What is startling is that so many recent discoveries rest, not on new manuscripts, but on hard-nosed bibliographical investigation. One might start with Stephen Brown's use of watermarks to identify for the first time just who printed the 1799 edition of *The Merry Muses of Caledonia*.⁵ (It was William Smellie's son, Alexander). Almost equally breathtaking was Bill Dawson's analysis of how Grose's *Antiquities of Scotland* had first been published in parts; by working out the sequence of the parts, the article pushes back by at least two months the first appearance in print of Burns's "Alloway Kirk" or "Tam o' Shanter," so restoring Grose's text as primary, rather the reprint in an Edinburgh newspaper.⁶ A couple of years ago, I used type-ornaments to pin down the origin of the earliest chapbook version of *Holy Willie's Prayer*, dated 1789 but routinely ignored by biographers and editors.⁷ Egerer had never seen this chapbook himself, working instead from a photograph sent him by a Canadian collector who had been sold a facsimile as being the original. The type-ornaments show that the 1789

⁴ Craig Lamont's new bibliography includes the first full contents lists for all Burns books in the period 1786-1802; see his contribution above.

⁵ Stephen W. Brown, "Robert Burns, the Crochallan Fencibles, and the Original Printer of *The Merry Muses of Caledonia*," *Studies in Scottish Literature*, 38 (2012): 92-107: <https://scholarcommons.sc.edu/ssl/vol38/iss1/14/>.

⁶ Bill Dawson, "The First Publication of 'Tam o' Shanter'," *Studies in Scottish Literature*, 40 (2014), 105-115: <https://scholarcommons.sc.edu/ssl/vol40/iss1/11/>.

⁷ "The First Publication of 'Holy Willie's Prayer'," *Scottish Literary Review*, 7:1 (Spring 2015): 1-18. Further information about the 1789 satirical paratext from *The Scotch Presbyterian Eloquence Display'd* is given in *The Prayer of Holy Willie: the 1789 Kilmarnock Chapbook by Robert Burns* (Columbia: Scottish Poetry Reprints, 2015), and cf. also "William M'Gill's *Meditations and Prayers* (Kilmarnock: John Wilson, 1789)," *Book Collector*, 64:3 (Autumn 2015), 485-487.

chapbook was printed in Kilmarnock by the same John Wilson who had printed Burns's first book, as part of the campaign to defend William M'Gill against the onslaughts of the unco' guid. Along the same lines, a new image-recognition site, FLEURON from Cambridge University Library, will let us explore further John Burnett's discoveries about precursors for the Kilmarnock title-page.⁸ Allan Young and I are doing the first census of extant copies of the Kilmarnock.⁹ Craig Lamont and I have recently written on the relation between the two settings of the Edinburgh edition, and on the nature of the first Irish edition.¹⁰ Here in the NLS, Robert Betteridge has found a previously-unrecorded 1799 chapbook of *Holy Willie*, not in Egerer, that provides the missing link between the 1789 text and its republication by Thomas Stewart, so puncturing the idea that Stewart must have had a lost manuscript version.¹¹ And so on. Fifty years after Egerer, there is still more to find out, even about the early editions. No one yet knows if Burns made stop-press corrections while the Kilmarnock edition was being printed, but leaving aside the risk of damage from mechanical collation, no Scottish library with multiple Kilmarnocks has a working Hinman collator. Digitization reopens the question. Over the

⁸ Hazel Wilkinson, *et al.*, *FLEURON: A Database of Eighteenth-Century Printers' Ornaments* (Cambridge University Library, 2016): <https://fleuron.lib.cam.ac.uk/>; John Burnett, "'Kilmarnock and the Kilmarnock Edition,'" *Burns Chronicle for 2015* [vol. 125] (Kilmarnock: Robert Burns World Federation, 2014), 27-38, esp. p. 36; and cf. also G. Ross Roy, "A Prototype for Robert Burns's Kilmarnock Edition," *Studies in Scottish Literature*, 32 (2001), 213-216.

⁹ Now published as Allan Young and Patrick Scott, *The Kilmarnock Burns: A Census of Extant Copies* (Scottish Literature Series 3, 2017). Reports on the project include: Allan Young, *An Enquiry into the Locations of Extant Copies of ... the Kilmarnock Edition* (unpubl. reports, 2003, 2009); Allan Young, "612 Kilmarnock Editions: Where Are They Now?," *Burns Chronicle* (Summer 2011), 4-5; Patrick Scott, "Tracking the Kilmarnock Burns: Allan Young's Census and the Hunt for 'Lost' Copies," *Robert Burns Lives!* 230 (December 2015); Patrick Scott, "'At Whigham's Inn': Mrs. Provost Whigham's Lost Kilmarnock, the Allan Young Census, and an Unexpected Discovery," *Burns Chronicle for 2016*, 125 (November 2015): 81-86; Allan Young, "The Kilmarnock Burns: A Personal Perspective," *Robert Burns Lives!*, 258 (November 2017); Patrick Scott, "The Kilmarnock Burns and Book History," *The Bottle Imp*, 22 (November 2017). On the need for a census see, e.g., A.G. Hepburn, in *Studies in Scottish Literature*, 3:3 (1966), 177-179.

¹⁰ Patrick Scott and Craig Lamont, "'Skinking' and 'Stinking': the Printing and Proofing of Robert Burns's *Poems, Chiefly in the Scottish Dialect* (Edinburgh, 1787)," *Book Collector*, 65:4 (Winter 2016), 601-616; "The First Irish Edition of Robert Burns: A Reexamination," *Scottish Literary Review*, 8:2 (Autumn-Winter, 2016), 133-140.

¹¹ On the textual significance of this discovery, see Scott, "First Publication," as in n. 8 above, pp. 6-7.

next year, if funding is forthcoming, we hope to examine multiple digitized Kilmarnocks using a different image-recognition software, PARAGON, developed by a South Carolina colleague.¹² Such discoveries can be exciting; indeed, it's becoming difficult to keep track. But after fifty years, some discoveries are surely to be expected. When Egerer started work on Burns, Charlton Hinman hadn't even started his war-time assignment examining aerial photographs, let alone applied its methods to the Shakespeare folios.

But that kind of specific reinvestigation of items that are in Egerer is not the only work that is now overdue. A much bigger issue is the kinds of material that Egerer deliberately left out. Though he admitted it was a chimera, Egerer's stated aim was completeness. Collectors, and book dealers, and even librarians, rejoice when they find an item "Not in Egerer." Nearly always, however, the rejoicing is mistaken, because Egerer's promise of completeness came with some small-print exclusionary clauses:

I have tried to include [he wrote] all the appearances of Burns's poetical and prose works in all media, *except anthologies and reprints of poems or prose works in periodicals*, between 1786 and 1802 (Egerer, p. vii, my italics).

He goes on:

After 1802, I have included ... only "formal" editions, that is to say editions which claim to be complete (*ibid.*).¹³

Which means that after 1802 he has NOT normally included selected editions, editions of single works, or works in non-standard formats or media. Egerer's preface also states, however, his criterion for noticing individual items:

If there has been any special endeavour on my part it is to emphasize the first appearances in print of Burns's writings. These occur not only in formal editions but in newspapers, magazines, chapbooks, biographies, books of criticism, and auction catalogues (*ibid.*).

First appearances in book form or other separate publication are noted under the relevant entry in the main bibliographical sequence, pp. 1-291, while first appearances in periodicals or auction catalogues are in a separate appendix on pp. 333-356.

Every criterion of coverage or inclusion is also a principle of exclusion. Egerer is not complete on books, but better on books than on the other

¹² David Lee Miller and Song Wang, "PARAGON," Center for Digital Humanities, University of South Carolina:
https://sc.edu/about/centers/digital_humanities/projects/paragon.php.

¹³ On the difficulty of applying this criterion, and Egerer's inevitable inconsistencies, see G. Ross Roy, *Modern Philology*, 64:4 (May 1967), 357-361.

formats. By themselves, books and first appearances give a skewed picture of how Burns was being read, even in the years up to 1802. Most Burns songs in chapbooks were not first printings, so Egerer excludes most chapbooks. Most of the Burns poems in pre-1802 newspapers were not first printings, so he excludes most newspaper appearances. Almost by definition, anthologies gather and reprint previously-published items; though he had commented on them in an earlier essay, in his bibliography Egerer excludes even the earliest Burns anthology appearances such as John Adams's *English Parnassus* (1789).¹⁴ By privileging first appearances, and not listing other occurrences, Egerer makes it very difficult to track down the variants or revised texts of a poem after it has once been published, or to track the origin or transmission of variant texts. Increasingly, over time, illustrations and facsimiles, and bindings, are all part of the Burns story, and so need to be adequately listed; such things hardly appear in Egerer. Several of the major 19th century Burns editions were first issued in parts, rather than volumes, so that Egerer's publication date can be misleading.¹⁵ And once Burns is a stereotyped standard author, multiple title-pages and reissues may conceal a single typesetting. Without format, page-size, and the number of pages, it is impossible to begin researching which editions separately listed by Egerer might be from a single set of plates.¹⁶ In short, Egerer remains immensely useful as a guide for collectors, but has significant limitations both for textual editing and in coverage of Burns and publishing history.

¹⁴ See "'Not in Egerer?': Robert Burns in Some Early Anthologies," *Robert Burns Lives!*, 245 (October, 2016), to the examples in which can be added: "Address to the Shade of Thomson," in *The Poetical Farrago* (London: G. Stratford for J. Deighton, 1794), I: 58-59; and "To a Mountain Daisy" and "The Cotter's Saturday Night," both in *The Young Gentleman and Lady's Poetical Preceptor* (Coventry: M. Luckman 1794), 4, pt.21, pp. 244-246 and 283-284. For Egerer's earlier comments on anthologies, see his "Burns and 'Guid Black Prent'," in F. W. Hilles, ed., *The Age of Johnson: Essays Presented to Chauncey Brewster Tinker* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1949), 269-279.

¹⁵ See "Reading Burns in Installments: the Hidden History of Part Publication," *Robert Burns Lives!*, no. 256 (July 2017); Patrick Scott and Robert Betteridge, "The Part Issue of Hatley Waddell's *Life and Works of Robert Burns*," *Journal of the Edinburgh Bibliographical Society*, forthcoming.

¹⁶ One example is Egerer 1041, p. 301, Glasgow, n.d.: *The Poetical Works of Robert Burns ...* John S. Marr. Egerer's entry cites the 1959 *Mitchell Catalogue*, and Gibson, as listing six printings in 1867-1877; other sources note printings in 1859 and 1864. Egerer's format does not include the size (17 cm.), the subtitle *with Memoir, Prefatory Notes, and a Complete Marginal Glossary*, the editors John and Angus Macpherson, or the total pages (596 or 597 pp., depending whether the cataloger counts the unnumbered final page of text). These suggest that the same plates were also used for e.g. Egerer 1119, Egerer 895, and Egerer 923 (1902).

More detailed examples may perhaps make this blanket assertion seem less curmudgeonly. Last fall I needed to pin down the publication history of Burns's poem "Written in Friar's Carse Hermitage."¹⁷ Egerer entry 25 shows this as first published in book form in Burns's two-volume *Poems* (1793). Relying on Henley-Henderson, the Egerer appendix, item 1260, records the poem's first publication as in the Glasgow *Weekly Miscellany* for "November 31 1791" (Egerer p. 344), though on p. 39 Egerer has a small-print footnote to correct Henley and Henderson's improbable date to read November 30.¹⁸ Egerer also claims there was an untraced earlier appearance in a London magazine in 1789. What is not recorded anywhere in Egerer is that the poem had also appeared before its 1793 book appearance in chapbook form, to bulk out a chapbook of Burns's *Address to the Shade* [or Memory] of *Thomson*. That chapbook, the first separate publication of two Burns poems, does not get its own entry in Egerer, but is recorded by title (without contents, so without reference to "Friar's Carse") only in the notes section of Egerer entry 24, the entry for the Earl of Buchan's *Essays* (London, 1792), which had also included the "Address to ... Thomson"; Buchan's book gets long-form bibliographical description because it is a pre-1802 book that is wrongly assumed to be the first separate printed appearance of Burns's *Address*. Nor does Egerer catch that Burns's *Address to ... Thomson* had previously appeared in newspaper form, in the *Edinburgh Advertiser* for September 13, 1791, and then in several London magazines in November and December. Even its first separate appearance was probably not in the Earl of Buchan's *Essay*, but in the chapbook, so the chapbook should have rated its own formal entry and Egerer number. Moreover, the first newspaper appearance of "Written in Friar's Carse" was not in November 1791, or even in the *Weekly Miscellany*, but on September 17, in a different Glasgow newspaper, William Reid's newly-founded *Glasgow Courier*, as noted sixty years before Egerer, in the *Burns Chronicle* for 1901.¹⁹ Because Egerer made priority his criterion in selecting which items warrant bibliographical coverage, he has left the publication story patchy for both poems, creating gaps in the record of their textual transmission. An editor working on

¹⁷ Kinsley, *Poems*, I: 214-215. For a fuller discussion, see "William Reid and the First Newspaper and Chapbook Publication of Robert Burns's 'Written in Friar's Carse Hermitage,'" *Studies in Scottish Literature*, 42:2 (Fall 2016), 269-280.

¹⁸ W.E. Henley and T.F. Henderson, eds., *The Poetry of Robert Burns* [The Centenary Edition], 4 vols. (Edinburgh: T.C and E.C. Jack, 1896), IV: 107; Egerer, pp. 344 and 39 n.

¹⁹ W. Innes Anderson, "The Centenary Edition, A Correction," *Burns Chronicle*, 1st ser., 10 (1901), 38-39.

these poems who relied on Egerer would end up collating only half the relevant printed texts.

A second example also involving chapbooks shows the complexity of dating early Burns texts, the difficulty of determining priority, and the problems caused by variant titles. In the year 1799-1800, Burns's song, "The Chevalier's Lament," appeared in multiple formats.²⁰ On p. 47, Egerer, using its first line "The small birds rejoice" rather than the more usual title, credits its first publication to George Thomson, in his *Select Collection*, part 4 (Egerer 28d), which Egerer dates to September 3, 1799, based solely on an advertisement for part 3 in Reid's *Glasgow Courier*. Because of that prior publication, Egerer does not include the song in his list of contents for James Currie's *Works*, volume II, which had significant textual variants and was the basis for most 19th century editions. But on p. 64, Egerer credits a different publication from Thomson for the song's first appearance, the eighth of Stewart and Meikle's Burns chapbooks, *The Passage of Mount St. Gothard*. As he does for Brash and Reid, Egerer gives Stewart and Meikle the full treatment, in entry Egerer 45, dating publication to the first week of September 1799, and listing "The small birds rejoice" among the original material appearing there for the first time. Which was first, one wonders, Thomson or Stewart and Meikle?

But the song had actually appeared that same year in two chapbooks, the one published in Glasgow, and a different one published in Edinburgh, which used a different song title. The Edinburgh chapbook was *Sonnets from the Robbers*, published by George Gray. This very rare item had been noted by Henley and Henderson, but Egerer had never seen it. In the Stewart and Meikle entry, Egerer 45, he has a parenthetical note referencing Henley-Henderson for the song, and cross-referencing his own entry at Egerer 39. If you turn to item 39, you find, not *Sonnets from the Robbers*, but the other "Gray tract," *Elegy on the Year Eighty-Eight*, which Egerer hadn't seen either but which he described based on a photocopy shared by Davidson Cook. For information about *Sonnets*, the second Gray tract, which he gives in a footnote, Egerer had relied on Craibe Angus's 1899 Burns bibliography, so that Egerer ends up footnoting and so indexing the Edinburgh chapbook appearance not under "The small birds" (as in Thomson) or "The Chevalier's Lament" (as in Currie), but under a third title "The Pretender's Soliloquy."

Only the very patient or very motivated researcher will get the three titles connected, and once you connect them, Egerer is no help on establishing priority or analyzing the relationships among them.

²⁰ See more fully "Burns and Broadside Publication: 'The Chevalier's Lament' at Auction in Macon, Georgia," *Robert Burns Lives!*, no. 216 (November 2016).

Mysteriously, while in most respects the other three versions (Thomson, Currie, Stewart & Meikle) share the same key textual variants, the Gray tract also shares a few distinctive readings with the Thomson version that don't occur in the Glasgow chapbook or in Currie. Without basic publication facts, one can't even speculate usefully on the back-story to this textual conundrum.

So far in documenting this short song, because he doesn't specify its inclusion in Currie, Egerer has hit just two out of the four recorded early appearances. Last year, however, a fifth early printed source for the same song turned up at auction.²¹ It was a broadside, probably dating from 1798-1799, and probably printed in Liverpool. On the broadside, Burns's song is used to fill up the page under a new song, "The Maniac," by the blind Liverpool radical poet Edward Rushton (1756-1814), about government repression after the Irish rising.²² Correspondence survives in the Home Office files, dated January 1, 1799, well before the known publication date for any of the other early appearances of Burns's song. denouncing a broadside of the Rushton song as possibly seditious.²³ Perhaps, as the auction house barely dared to hint, the Liverpool broadside, "Not in Egerer," is the first printing of "The Chevalier's Lament."²⁴

Now Egerer is hardly to be blamed for not including in 1964 a broadside first recorded in 2016, but the example highlights the artificiality of basing a Burns bibliography on book publication, with only minimal reference to publication in other formats. As far as I can see, the only early Burns broadsides Egerer describes are the ones that were known to earlier collectors, and so listed by Gibson, Craibe Angus, and Ewing: "The Ayrshire Garland" from 1789 (Egerer 15), and the Heron election ballads from the mid 1790s (Egerer 31 a, b, c, d).²⁵ There must have been more. If

²¹ Addison and Sarova, *Sale 1014: Rare and Fine Books* (Macon, Georgia, November 5, 2016), lot 226:

²² This song was the second of three "Mary le More" songs that Rushton wrote in 1798 or 1799 about government reprisals. It was published in the *Monthly Magazine* (January 1800), and then in Rushton's *Poems* (Liverpool: printed for T. Osetll ... By J. M'Creery, 1806). For a recent appraisal of Rushton, see Franca Dellarosa, *Talking Revolution: Edward Rushton's Rebellious Poetics, 1782-1814* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2014).

²³ See Clive Emsley, "The Home Office and Its Sources of Information and Investigation, 1791-1801," *English Historical Review*, 94:3 [no. 372] (July 1979): 532-561 (p. 541 and n. 4); Dellarosa, pp. 84-85.

²⁴ This broadside was subsequently acquired by the National Library of Scotland: see Robert Betteridge, *Robert Burns Lives!*, no. 255 (June, 2017).

²⁵ James Gibson, *The Bibliography of Robert Burns, With Biographical and Bibliographical Notes* (Kilmarnock: M'Kie, 1881; repr. New York: Kraus, 1969); William Craibe Angus, *The Printed Works of Robert Burns: A Bibliography in*

you search for broadsides with Burns poems or songs in Bodleian Ballads Online, you get 196 hits, though most of course date from the 1810s and 1820s, not before 1802.²⁶

With that in mind, take as a third example, Burns's song for the Dumfries Volunteers, beginning "Does haughty Gaul invasion threat."²⁷ Egerer records its first publication in book form twice, under different titles, once on p. 26 as "The Dumfries Volunteers," in part 6 of the *Scots Musical Museum* in 1803 (Egerer 8f), and a second time, on p. 76, as "Does haughty Gaul," in volume 4 of the *Currie Works* in 1800 (Egerer 50d). Neither entry refers to the other one, and as they have been scrupulously indexed, each under its own title, they were presumably counted as separate first appearances. A researcher in a hurry might easily miss one or the other.

But the song had appeared years before in a number of newspapers, and on p. 346 (indexed only under the first line, not the title) Egerer records the song as first published in the *Edinburgh Courant* for May 4, 1795 (Egerer 1267). Kinsley, following Henley and Henderson, also records newspaper appearances in the *Dumfries Journal* for May 5, and the *Caledonian Mercury* for May 7. There were certainly other early appearances, as for instance in the *Scots Magazine*.²⁸ Henley and Henderson note publication in Currie, and their collation includes two footnotes by Burns in the *Courant* identifying Dumfries places, but Kinsley (who doesn't mention Currie) states firmly that the footnotes "are in the Philadelphia MS only." (Incidentally, the footnotes are in the other newspapers and the *Scots Magazine*).

Yet if ever there was a poem crying out for immediate broadside distribution, it was surely this song, and sure enough, there is a letter from Burns to James Johnson which, after discussing a different printing job, thanks him for "the copies of my Volunteer Ballad," and praises them as "chaste and beautiful."²⁹ James Dick states that "the ballad *The Dumfries Volunteers*, with music by Stephen Clarke, was printed in a sheet in March 1795, for circulation among the volunteers."³⁰ Burns's letter to Johnson is undated, and has often been given the date May 1795, though recent

Outline (n.p.: privately printed, 1899). Ewing, J. C., *Bibliography of Robert Burns, 1759-1796* (Edinburgh: privately printed, 1909).

²⁶ Bodleian Ballads Online (Oxford): <http://ballads.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/>

²⁷ Kinsley, *Poems*, II: 764-765.

²⁸ "The Dumfries Volunteers, A Ballad," *Scots Magazine*, 57 [n.s. 2] (May 1795), 313.

²⁹ Roy, *Letters of Robert Burns* (1985), II: 378.

³⁰ James C. Dick, *The Songs of Robert Burns* (London: Henry Frowde, 1903; Hatboro, PA: Folklore Associates, 1962), 452.

editors have reassigned it to March 1796. This separate printing of Burns's song is certainly "Not in Egerer," and as far as I know neither Egerer nor anyone else has ever seen it. Bibliographical coverage of broadsides is nearly always collection-based rather than author-based, many extant examples are lone survivors in under-catalogued local collections, and broadsides remain a publishing phenomenon for which bibliographical knowledge is patchy.

With broadsides, so also with facsimiles. Before digitization, and before Xerox, getting hold of earlier facsimiles was a standard part of any big editorial project. Popular interest in Burns means there are many more facsimiles of Burns manuscripts than there are of (say) Wordsworth's. The major separately-published ones (the First Commonplace Book, the Glenriddell Manuscript, the Geddes Burns, the St Louis Burns Club Collection) all get brief entries in Egerer, though because they were all published after 1802 he doesn't specify which facsimiled items they include. But facsimiles of individual poems or letters, whether published separately or tipped into a book, are not covered in Egerer. He doesn't even have an entry for the handsome *Cotter's Saturday Night* facsimile published by Dick of Irvine in 1840. A few get entries in the Mitchell Catalogue, and a few more in Elizabeth Sudduth's Roy Collection catalogue.³¹ For letters, Ferguson and Roy mention facsimiles when they'd used one because the original manuscript of a letter was untraced. For poems, the *Index to English Literary Manuscripts* notes illustrations in auction catalogues, though these are commonly limited to one attractive page even if the manuscript itself had several pages.³² But through successive technologies—engraving, lithography, photogravure, and then downhill to modern offset photo litho from Xerox copies—Burns facsimiles must number in the thousands, and we have no real bibliographical grip on the phenomenon.

Late last year, in the Roy Collection, I stumbled onto a small collection of Burns facsimiles bound up for Robert Chambers. Based on the cloth, I'd guess it was bound about 1860.³³ The second item in this volume is a very early Burns letter to Thomas Orr, from Mossgiel in November 1784.³⁴

³¹ Joe Fisher, et al., *Catalogue of Robert Burns Collection, the Mitchell Library, Glasgow* (Glasgow: Glasgow City Libraries and Archives, 1996); Elizabeth Sudduth, *The G. Ross Roy Collection of Robert Burns, An Illustrated Catalogue* (Columbia, SC: Univ. of South Carolina Press, 2009).

³² Margaret M. Smith and Penny Boumelha, comps., "Robert Burns," in *Index of English Literary Manuscripts*, vol. III, Part I (London and New York: Mansell, 1986), 93-193.

³³ *Fac-Similes of Letters and M.S.S., 1784-1790* [collected by Robert Chambers] ([ca. 1860]), in Roy Collection SL PR4330.5 .C5.

³⁴ Roy, *Letters*, I: 24.

Egerer, like Ferguson and Roy, says it was first published by Scott Douglas in 1877, but none of them mention Scott Douglas's comment that the letter "was printed and circulated in *fac-simile* many years ago by Mr. Dick, Bookseller, Irvine."³⁵ Ferguson had relied for his text "on a facsimile in the collection of Mr. J. C. Ewing."³⁶ Fifty years later, in the Roy *Letters*, the manuscript itself was still unlocated. If you look in Peter Westwood's *Definitive Illustrated Companion*, there's a rather murky Xerox of the letter credited to Edinburgh University Library, but that seems to be from the facsimile.³⁷ Mr. Dick's facsimile is as far as I can see still the most authoritative extant source for any new edition. And, of course, the facsimile was fully available years before the first appearance that Egerer listed.

Here's a final example of why facsimiles matter. In March 1787, Burns wrote to Lady Harriet Don, enclosing a group of manuscript poems.³⁸ The first Burns editor to include the letter was Ferguson in 1931, based on a manuscript in private hands, though contrary to his usual practice Egerer doesn't itemize first appearances in the Ferguson edition.³⁹ Roy relied on Ferguson. But the letter had been reproduced in facsimile, with transcription, in 1902, in A.H. Joline's *Meditations of an Autograph Collector*.⁴⁰ Until the manuscript turns up, Joline's facsimile is not only the first publication but also the most authoritative source.

Egerer compiled his bibliography in a very different world from ours. Even with the small-print disclaimers, the task he took on, making a complete listing of Burns editions, from 1786 to 1960, was massive. For

³⁵ William Scott Douglas, ed., *The Works of Robert Burns*, 6 vols. (Edinburgh: Paterson, 1877-79), IV [1878]: 51.

³⁶ Ferguson, *Letters* (1931), I: 12.

³⁷ Edinburgh University Library Centre for Research Collections Shelfmark La[ing].II.210, item 6; Peter Westwood, ed., *The Definitive Illustration Companion to Robert Burns*, 8 vols.[15 parts] ([Irvine]: privately published in conjunction with the Distributed National Burns Collections Project, 2004), 4: 2442 (as from EUL CL/50 III(19)). I am grateful to Daniel Spittle of CRC User Services for locating and checking the Edinburgh item.

³⁸ Roy, *Letters*, I: 103-104.

³⁹ Ferguson, *Letters*, I: 83; Egerer, pp. 288-289 (item 972).

⁴⁰ Adrian Hoffman Joline, *Meditations of an Autograph Collector* (New York: Harper Brothers, 1902), after p. 78. Some earlier autograph guides pose particular problems of authenticity, because the "facsimiles" will often have been engraved or drawn to combine distinctive features from several parts of a manuscript; see "A Neglected Source for Burns Manuscripts? Some Old Guides for Autograph Collectors," *Robert Burns Lives!*, 260 (December 2017). For the role of a facsimile in showing that a song manuscript relied on by Kinsley and others was an Antique Smith forgery, see "Robert Burns's Hand in 'Ay waukin, O'," *Studies in Scottish Literature*, 43: 1 (Spring 2017): 137-151 (pp. 143-144).

the early years, up to 1802, his work remains useful, though overdue for revision. But Egerer's remains a collector bibliography, the lineal descendant of M'Kie, Gibson, the *Memorial Catalogue*, Craibe Angus, Ewing, and the Mitchell *Catalogue*, set up so its users could check off the books they own, like postage stamps or baseball cards. It is still essential to scholars, but it was not designed for the questions they want answered. Because it focused on books and first appearances, not on reprints or non-book formats, it omits too much of Burns's early publishing history and it provides a very selective view of how Burns's poetry was first encountered by his contemporaries. Egerer's exclusions also make him a treacherous guide for the unwary textual editor tracing the transmission lines or interrelations among the early printed texts.

To sum up: What we now need is not only thorough revision of what Egerer did, but thorough reconsideration of what he didn't do, refocusing on the additional kinds of information now required by textual editors and cultural historians. There are still discoveries to be made by bibliographical analysis, both traditional and using modern tools. For textual editing, we need much more comprehensive lists that include all early texts and their contents, not just books and first appearances. For both textual editing and publishing history, we need to cover all publication formats, including newspapers, chapbooks, broadsides, anthologies, and facsimiles. A number of scholars have fished in different parts of this murky lake, but when they haul up their catch it only makes us more aware how much more is still to be found.⁴¹ And we need not just to retrieve and enumerate single items but to track their interrelationships, showing where texts came from and what sources they shared or introduced into the story. Future Burns bibliography is likely to be incremental and collaborative, and the desiderata noted above won't happen with a single project or grant. But it is exciting to think that so much serious work and thinking is now in progress.

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⁴¹ See, e.g., "Dr. John Mackenzie in the *Irvine Miscellany*," *Editing Robert Burns for the 21st Century* (November 2017), on the first publication of Burns's verse invitation to a Masonic dinner (Kinsley, I: 270, K114; cf. Egerer, item 365B).