

THE OGSTOUNS AND THE ADVOCATES' LIBRARY

IN AN EARLIER ISSUE OF THIS JOURNAL R H Carnie performed a useful service by assembling evidence for the careers of members of the Ogstoun family engaged in the Edinburgh book trade in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries.¹ This note draws attention to additional evidence collected during research into the history of the Advocates' Library, Edinburgh, in the period 1682 to 1752.²

Alexander Ogstoun

In his speech delivered at the formal opening of the Library on 15 March 1689,³ Sir George Mackenzie excused excessive expenditure on the Library's bindings: 'Quod nimio forsam sumptu libros decoravimus, nobis ignoscendum est, qui Jurisprudentiam tanquam scientiarum imperatricem veneramus & colimus. Legislatoris enim est regnare, & regnantes fulgere decet auro, arte nobilitato; justumque credimus in hos aurum impendere, quibus aurum debemus.'⁴ It is appropriate, then, considering the impression made by his surviving bindings,⁵ that Alexander Ogstoun shares with George Mosman the distinction of being the first binder employed by the Faculty of Advocates. The *Treasurer's Accounts* record, 14 February 1683, the sum of £210-16-0 Scots paid to Alexander Ogstoun 'bookbinder' for binding a parcel of the Faculty's books, and £219-2-0 Scots to George Mosman 'bookbinder' for another parcel.⁶ The similarity between these sums suggests a conscious sharing of the work, a view supported by the evidence of the two binders' joint donation of four volumes (bound in three) of Conrad Gesner's *Historia animalium* (Tiguri, 1551-1558), inscribed 'Hunc Librum cum duobus fratribus, Alex(ande)r Oigstounus et Georgius Mosman facultatis juridicae Biblioepegi peritissimi Bibliothecae facultatis predict(ae) dono dederunt'.⁷ As Ogstoun and Mosman refer to themselves as the Faculty's bookbinders, the donation post-dates the award of the contract, but was early enough to be included in a catalogue of the Library's holdings begun, and most probably completed, in January 1683.⁸ If this donation had survived in its original state, we would now be debating the roles of the two craftsmen: unfortunately, the volumes are in twentieth-century bindings.

The *Treasurer's Accounts* enable us to follow Alexander Ogstoun's dealings with the Faculty, sums paid to him being recorded under the following dates (amounts all in pounds Scots): 14 February 1683 (£210-16-0 for binding), 28 December 1683 (£109-8-0 for binding), 21 April 1684 (£23-16-0 for books), 24 January 1685 (£12-8-0 for books), 15 December 1685 (£178-4-0 for binding), 21 April 1687 (£72-13-0 for books and binding).⁹ As Mrs Ogstoun's prices in 1702-1704 (see below) ranged from £0-12-0 Scots for an ordinary octavo with gilt back to £1-4-0 Scots for exceptional books, we can see that these sums represent a fairly large quantity of binding work, though, taking a hint from Mackenzie's remarks, we should bear in mind the

possibility that the Faculty's bindings were more extravagant, and the unit cost therefore higher, in the 1680s than they were later.

The accounts specify no titles of books bound; and as there were three other binders - George Mosman, John Mein and William Paterson - employed in this period, it might be difficult to identify an Ogstoun binding even if we could find a volume known to have been bound for the Library in these years.¹⁰

Nor do the accounts specify the titles of books bought, and so we do not know what types of books he handled. In this connection, however, it may be worth noting that in 1688, the year when the Dean and Faculty appointed 'that the Journall des Scavants, la Republique de letres, l'Histoire Abridge d'Europe the pastoral Letters, as also the acta Lipsensia and the wholl Gazette be sent for monethely and weekly for the use of the bibliothecque',¹¹ Alexander Ogstoun, in partnership with William Johnston, published *Bibliotheca universalis, or an historical accompt of books, and transactions of the learned world begun anno Dom. MDCLXXXVIII*,¹² making available to English readers the contents of some of the foreign 'bibliographical' journals. This demonstrates an interest in foreign books.

Alexander Ogstoun certainly did a fair amount of business with the Faculty. This should cause no surprise, because, as Carnie explains, it was the legal profession which recommended him to Edinburgh Town Council to be made burgess, an honour accorded to him on 13 February 1680. In fact, soon after this his marriage was to strengthen his links with the Faculty and in particular with the Advocates' Library.

Martha Ogstoun

In April 1680 Alexander Ogstoun married Martha Stevenson, about whose own family Carnie provides no information. When James Stevenson, who had succeeded James Naismith as Keeper of the Advocates' Library in 1693, died in office in 1702, there ensued a long drawn-out controversy about the formalities concerned with his handing on intact the contents of the Library.¹³ In early 1704 it was reported to the Faculty that Stevenson's representatives were pressing for a discharge.¹⁴ Eventually, in March 1707, the Dean and Faculty 'exonerated and discharged Marthew Stevenson, relict of Alexander Ogstoun bookseller and burges of Edinburgh, and all other representatives of the deceased Mr. James Stevenson Advocat of all that they can be charged with upon the account of books or other things pertaining to the Faculty that were under the said Mr James Stevenson's trust when Library keeper to the Faculty'.¹⁵ The mention by name of Martha Stevenson suggests that she was his closest surviving relative, and the chronology would be consistent with her being his sister.¹⁶ James Stevenson is himself a shadowy figure.¹⁷ He seems to have been admitted an advocate in 1683,¹⁸ and to have served as one of the two Curators of the Library in 1686.¹⁹

Payments to Mrs Ogstoun occur fairly regularly in the *Treasurer's Accounts*, and after 1702 her dealings with the Faculty can be better documented from the *Register of the Proceedings of the Curators and Keepers*.²⁰ Payments are recorded as follows (all amounts in pounds Scots): 29 November 1690 (£25-14-0 for books and binding), 1691 (£25-4-0 for binding); 29 January 1696 (£73-18-6, not specified), 12 March 1697 (£54-15-8, not specified), 1 March 1699 (£118-7-0 for books and binding), 22 August 1700 (£87-0-0 for books and binding), 31 December 1701 (£42-3-0, not specified), 26 July 1704, for bills running from 10 March 1702 (£217-8-0 for books and binding), 31 July 1707 (£103-9-0 for books and binding), 27 July 1708 (£120-6-0 for books and stationery), 2 November 1709 (£42-12-0 for books and stationery).²¹

The accounts recorded in the *Register* specify some of the books bound with details of the binding and other comments. Some examples follow (prices again in pounds Scots):

‘Hesiodus cum notis Graevii 8^o gilt back’ (£0-12-0)

‘Bound Ciceronis Orationes Graevii in 3 voll, every vol. being bound in 2 parts which makes six voll binding, being extraordinary large thick 8^{os}, gilt back at 20^{ss} per piece’ (£6-0-0) ‘Bound 4 folios lettered on the back at 36^s p(er) piece viz Lesly's Embassy MS. Gronovii orationes, and 2 voll of Collection of pamphlets, these being very troublesome’ (£7-4-0)

Elsewhere too pamphlet volumes are mentioned as being ‘troublesome’, and one receives the impression - it is no more - that Mrs Ogstoun was herself involved in the binding work.²²

It has proved possible to identify nearly all the volumes specified in Mrs Ogstoun's accounts as bound by her. The greater part are in more recent bindings, a few have what seem to be original boards,²³ and one seems to have survived as she bound it but unfortunately never had a ‘gilt back’.²⁴

James Ogstoun

James Ogstoun, one of Martha Ogstoun's sons, appears in the Library's records only once, when according to the *Register of Proceedings* he signed the receipt for payment of his mother's account on 17 February 1714 (£5-19-6 sterling for Samuel Clarke's folio edition of Caesar, London, 1712).

Hugh Ogstoun

Another son, Hugh Ogstoun, who according to Carnie was in the bookselling business on his own account between 1716 and 1732,²⁵ appears frequently in the *Register of Proceedings* in the years 1716-1720, with payments received as follows (all in pounds sterling): 7 May 1716 (£5-17-6), 7 August 1716 (£7-7-0), 11 September 1716 (£2-10-0), 19 December 1716 (£3-19-6), 20 August 1717 (£4-14-6), 10 February 1718 (£1-4-0), 9 July 1718 (£4-15-0), 12 August 1718

(£4-2-0), 9 December 1718 (£58-6-4), 31 January 1719 (£8-17-6), 11 August 1719 (£0-14-0), 30 February 1720 (£4-19-0). He handled books of all sorts, British and foreign. The large payment in December 1718 was the result of an agreement made on 24 June 1718 that he should supply to the Library some 58 volumes, mostly folios, listed in a letter of 3 December 1717 from the Amsterdam booksellers R. and G. Wetstein.

The most interesting account is that receipted 31 January 1719. A note in Ruddiman's hand in the margin says `NB. That Eachard's History of England voll 2d & 3d mentioned in Mr Ogstoun's Account 9 July 1718 were returned to him, & therefore the price being £2:15:0 was deducted off this Account 31 January 1719, so that he received only £6:1:6 Sterl: the said two voll being received into the Library by the late Act of Parliament in favour of Libraries & c.' It seems, then, that it was only after the earlier account had been settled that the deposit copies in question arrived,²⁶ and so perhaps in returning the two volumes the Library was taking a liberty. Ogstoun's account of 31 January 1719 actually includes `Eachard's History of England 2 voll. gilt' as volumes bound. Did the Library, then, take the even greater liberty of returning books not only supplied by Ogstoun but already bound by him, while paying him the costs of binding by the account of 31 January 1719? Unlike most other books in the 20 November 1718 copyright list, Eachard's *History* is not included in George Stuart's binding account of 29 January 1719. Therefore the copies of Eachard's *History* vols. 2-3 retained by the Advocates' Library were those bound by Hugh Ogstoun. One might suppose that the Library returned the copies supplied by Ogstoun, but, by way of compensation almost, gave him the deposit copies to bind - work which would normally have been the privilege of the Library's copyright agent George Stuart. In fact, the copies retained have the date `9 July' on the fly-leaf, and this might be taken to mean that they were the copies supplied by the account of 9 July 1718.²⁷ Perhaps, then, the copies returned to Ogstoun were the deposit copies.

In the account of 31 January 1719, £4-17-6 sterling was for the binding of 35 volumes. With the exception of Eachard's *History*, these can be identified as books supplied to the Library by Hugh Ogstoun by the account of 9 December 1718. As with George Stuart and copyright books, then, so Ogstoun enjoyed the privilege of binding the books he supplied. As usual, most of these volumes have since been rebound in whole or part, but fortunately the only item in the account described as done with 'gilt back' does preserve, albeit laid down on new leather, most of the original spine compartments, richly decorated in gilt.²⁸ If in 1689 the Advocates' Library had shelf after shelf showing so much gilt, we can appreciate why Sir George Mackenzie felt constrained to apologize for it.

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NOTES

1 R. H. Carnie, Alexander Ogstoun and his family', *BSANZ Bulletin* 6(1982), 141-8.

2 A sketch of this period in the history of the Advocates' Library is in preparation for inclusion in a book of essays planned by the National Library of Scotland for publication in 1989 to mark the three hundredth anniversary of the formal opening of the Library. The non-legal collections of the Advocates' Library were transferred to the National Library of Scotland on its foundation in 1925; the Advocates' Library survives as a private legal library for the use of the Faculty of Advocates.

In the course of this period Library accounting used both pounds Scots and pounds sterling (£1 sterling = £12 Scots), and I have retained these as found.

Unless otherwise stated all shelf-marks cited are for books or manuscripts in the National Library of Scotland.

The Library records here used are included in the records of the Faculty of Advocates (here cited as *Faculty Records*) which are deposited in the National Library of Scotland.

I am grateful to Mr Ian Cunningham for his assistance with the *Faculty Records*, and also to Mr John Morris for helpful discussion.

3 *Oratio inauguralis habita Edenburgi Id. Mar. 1689*, London, 1689. See F. S. Ferguson, 'A bibliography of the works of Sir George Mackenzie', *Edinburgh Bibliographical Society Transactions* 1(1935-1938), 1-60, at pp.42-3. There is an English translation in J. H. Loudon, 'Sir George Mackenzie's speech at the formal opening of the Advocates' Library Edinburgh 15 March 1689', *Edinburgh Bibliographical Society Transactions* 2(1938-1945), 273-84.

4 'Our rather sumptuous style of binding is a fault to be forgiven in us who venerate jurisprudence and worship her as queen among sciences. The part of the lawgiver is to rule, and it befits rulers to be resplendent with gold and richly wrought ornament; we thought it right to bestow gold on the books that win it for us' - Loudon, p.284; another translation in Ferguson, p 6.

5 See M M Foot, 'A binding by Alexander Ogstoun, c. 1680', *The Book Collector* 29(1980), 255-7.

6 *Faculty Record* 40.

7 Am.1.1-3. The inscription is taken from the fly-leaf of vol 1; the other two volumes have similar inscriptions. Cf. D T Bird, *A Catalogue of Sixteenth-century Medical Books in Edinburgh Libraries*, Edinburgh, 1982, nos 1064, 1066, 1069, 1075.

8 Copies of the catalogue: H.35.d.1(5) and MS.549. The donations are recorded, without date, in the registers of donations, *Faculty Record* 116b (Ogstoun and Mosman are designated 'Bookbinders to the Facultie') and Ruddiman's copy, *Faculty Record* 139 (designation changed to 'Bibliopolae').

9 *Faculty Records* 40 and 40a.

10 The only acquisition I know of belonging to this period that can be documented as reaching the Library unbound is Robert Johnston, *Historia rerum Britannicarum*, Amsterdam, 1655. This title, described as 'unbound', is mentioned in a note of additional acquisitions on p 47 of H.35.d.1(17) - a marked-up copy of a catalogue of an auction held in Utrecht in 1683 - as shipped to Leith by Captain Frazer in October 1683, along with books bought at the auction. This copy survives (R.293.a), but its boards are not seventeenth-century and more recently it has been rebacked.

These early acquisitions are now scattered, the legal books in the Advocates' Library, the non-legal at a variety of locations in the National Library of Scotland. It has not yet proved possible to assemble a sufficient quantity of intact contemporary bindings to allow any inference to be drawn.

11 *Faculty Minutes*, 5 June 1688, printed in J M Pinkerton (ed), *The Minute Book of the Faculty of Advocates*, vol 1, The Stair Society, Edinburgh, 1976, p 84.

12 Aldis 2749; Wing L813.

13 *Faculty Minutes*, 8 July 1702 -, pp 237ff.

14 *Faculty Minutes*, 4 January 1704, p 247.

15 *Faculty Minutes*, 8 March 1707, p 267.

16 One could assume that they were born in the 1650s or early 1660s. A Ogstoun, A *Genealogical History of the Families of Ogston*, Edinburgh, 1876, p 95, describes Martha Stevenson as 'some relation, apparently, of Alexander Stevenson of Montgrennan, W S, Edinburgh.' Cf. *Register of the Society of Writers to Her Majesty's Signet*, Edinburgh, 1983, p 303: Alexander Stevenson of Montgrennan, son of Hugh Stevenson, married in 1711, was admitted W S in 1712, and died in 1755. Perhaps Martha was sister to James and Hugh (see next note) and aunt to Alexander.

17 Cf. F J Grant, *The Faculty of Advocates in Scotland 1532-1943*, Scottish Record Society, Edinburgh, 1944, p 199, noting only his date of entry as 20 February 1683 and 'brother to Hugh Stevenson, writer, Edinburgh.'

18 *Faculty Minutes*, 3 February 1683, p 61.

19 *Faculty Minutes*, 12 January 1686, p 72.

20 *Treasurer's Accounts* (no accounts survive for 1692-1696): *Faculty Records* 40a and 41. *Register* (covers 1702-1724): *Faculty Records* 117.

21 After 1702 the dates given are those of the Curators' precepts, ie their instructions that the payments are to be made.

22 She is designated a book-binder in an advertisement in the *Edinburgh Gazette* 8-12 February 1700: 'Mistris Ogstoun Book-Binder, since the late Fire, keeps her Shop at the Advocates Clothead, opposite to the Old Kirk Site'. Note also that David Sinclair, mentioned as one of Mrs Ogstoun's apprentices in 1694 (Carnie, p 145), is recorded in the *Treasurer's Accounts* as receiving payments 'for books and binding' on 1 March 1699 (£121-2-0 Scots) and 19 December 1699 (£202-5-0 Scots). Presumably he learnt the craft of binding while apprenticed to her.

- 23 *The History of the Works of the Learned*, vols 3-6. London, 1701-1704 (U.6), J Gronovius, *Regia auspicia Academiae Lugduno-Batavae*, Leiden, 1689 (U.4.6, bound with six other works by the same author), and *The Monthly Register*, vol 2, London, 1704 (E.110.a.8), all have boards with no decoration save a border of a plain double fillet and, on the edges, a figured roll of a formalised floral design; the turn-ins are plain, and the endpapers of fine white paper. Hesiod, *Opera*, Amsterdam, 1701 (K.4.e) is in plain boards with the same roll on the edges. Ovid, *Opera*, 4 vols, Leiden, 1689 (K.76.a) again has these tooled edges, but its boards, which have no border, are decorated with a roll running vertically adjacent to the spine.
- 24 *The History of the Works of the Learned*, vol 5, London, 1703. The label (now missing) 'WORKS / LEARNED / VOL V' was within a rectangular frame formed by a dog-tooth roll. Other spine compartments have a horizontal double rule at top and bottom.
- 25 An advertisement in the *Caledonian Mercury* 13 February 1728 reads: 'Mr. Ogstoun, in Parliament Close, leaving off business; books, bibles, paper-books, paper, quills, wax, letter cases, & c. will be all sold at under-rates, till every thing is sold off.' *Caledonian Mercury* 11 November 1728 records this sale as still in progress. Eventually, *Caledonian Mercury* 10 January 1729 reports: 'To be sold Mr. Ogstoun's Shop, Parliament close . . .' (These references derive from the National Library of Scotland's files on the eighteenth-century Scottish book trade.)
- 26 They are included in the list of 'Books brought from London 20 November 1718' in *Faculty Record* 117.
- 27 The majority of the items bound by the account of 31 January 1719 are books supplied by the account 9 December 1718 (see text below) and are inscribed with that date, but the significance of these dates is obscured by the presence of several items certainly supplied by the account of 9 December but inscribed '12 August', precisely the date of the previous account.
- 28 Bernard, Saint, *Opera*, 2 vols, Paris, 1690 (Y.1). Echard's *History*, vols 2-3 (C.18.a.3-4), described as 'gilt' in the account, has been rebacked but preserves its original boards. It is a blind-tooled mirror binding; the edges are decorated with little scrolls, the turn-ins are plain, and the endpapers are of plain white paper. J B Cotelerius, *Ecclesiae Graecae monumenta*, 3 vols, Paris, 1677-86 (ee.1/1.1- 3) is in a well-preserved neat binding of vellum-covered boards, which might date back to 1719.

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