
The authors of this study, citing well-known work by W.J. Todd, D.F. McKenzie, and Philip Gaskell, point out that twentieth-century bibliographers have been sceptical about high press figures in eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century British books and 'have been reluctant to allow that a particular printing house may ever have possessed as many presses as press figures found in the volumes printed there would imply' (p. [1]). By collating the evidence of actual press figures in volumes produced by the Edinburgh printer James Ballantyne between 1804 and 1833 with external evidence derived from the letters of Ballantyne's partner Walter Scott, Jaboor and McMullin make a convincing case for accepting the equation of press figures and presses for this particular firm.

The non-bibliographical evidence comes from published sources, primarily Sir Herbert Grierson's twelve-volume edition of the Scott *Letters* (1932–37). The bibliographical evidence comes from examination of volumes in the University of Melbourne library — especially those in the remarkable Poynton Collection of Scott — supplemented by a few items from Canberra. Any hesitation one might have about extrapolating too much from these results derives from awareness that the evidence is largely based on the examination of single copies. Nevertheless, not only is a substantial body of bibliographical information assembled here, it is interrogated with a sophisticated awareness of actual print-shop practices, and laid out clearly and systematically both in the main text and in the important appendix listing the volumes examined and the actual press figures discovered.

The case made for estimating twenty as the likely maximum press complement in the Ballantyne shop up to early 1822 seems incontrovertible. It is unfortunate that evidence from the Scott *Letters* does not extend beyond 1822 while some of the most puzzling high press figures occur in 1823, but Jaboor and McMullin argue convincingly that the acquisition of several new presses around the end of 1822, the decommissioning but retention for occasional use of others, and the re-numbering of in-use presses satisfactorily account both for the presence of figures as high as twenty-five in 1823 and for the fact that '[a]fter 1824 the highest press figure to be found in Ballantyne's work is generally 18' (p. 7). The salutary warning derived from the Ballantyne case is that 'before conclusions can be drawn from the incidence of press figures in a particular volume a large body of volumes produced by the printer in question ought to be examined, for a high figure may obscure decommissioned or idle presses and may represent a transitory total, more a potential complement than an actual' (p. 7).

While identification of actual equipment is not the purpose of this study, it throws an interesting light on the vexed question of Ballantyne's possible acquisition of one or more printing machines in 1822. Citing an October 1822 Scott letter weighing the pros and cons of such a purchase, Jaboor and McMullin appear to conclude, albeit cautiously, that such a purchase probably occurred and that
'press figures were retained, for machines as well as hand presses' (p. 8). They also cite from Eric Quayle's *The Ruin of Sir Walter Scott* (1968) the statement, implicitly though not explicitly tied to 1822, that two presses of 'the latest steam-powered type' were purchased (p. 7). My own work on the Ballantyne and Scott archival record has produced no evidence of steam-press purchases in 1822, though early that year Ballantyne was certainly in London looking at 'a New Press to work by steam' [Robinson to Constable, 28 January 1822, National Library of Scotland MS 326]. It is true that the usually reliable James Glen claims in the preliminaries to the Grierson *Letters* that in 1822 'the firm installed a steam printing press' (I, p. lxxxix), but he may have been misled by the October 1822 Scott letter. Jaboor and McMullin's evidence is compatible with the acquisition in 1822 of either new hand or steam presses and all that seems certainly established by the archival record is that at the time of the financial disaster that ruined both Ballantyne and Scott in January 1826, the Ballantyne printing works contained no steam presses, and I think it probable that the first 'machines' to be acquired were those purchased for printing the *magnum opus* edition of the Waverley Novels early in 1830.

This is, in short, a valuable contribution to our understanding of early nineteenth-century printing and an emphatic reminder of the need for printing historians to test the evidence found in letters and other documents against hard bibliographical evidence derived from actual copies.

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Constantly haunted by the sense that he had not lived up to his own talents, Leslie Stephen took less satisfaction than he should have from his lengthy career as an eminent Victorian man of letters. With characteristic self-pity he complained that when the history of nineteenth-century thought was written he would be at best a footnote, when, with wiser use of his talents, he might have earned a paragraph or more. Posterity has turned out kinder to Stephen than he expected, and in recent years he has been the subject of many paragraphs, most of them, to be sure, focusing more on his role as 'the father of Bloomsbury' than on his writing itself. Posterity may grow kinder still now that we have Gillian Fenwick's splendid new bibliography, *Leslie Stephen's Life in Letters*, and for the first time we can see the true extent of what he accomplished over more than forty years of writing.

By any standards other than his own, Stephen's career was an impressive one. As Fenwick's comprehensive and painstaking research reveals, he wrote on a remarkable range of subjects: mountaineering, the history of ideas, biography,