

William Alexander, Earl of Stirling. His family was originally a branch of the MacDonald's - Alexander MacDonald, their ancestor. obtained from the family of Argyle a grant of the land this of Menstry in Clackmannanshire where they (*indecipherable*) their residence and took their surnames from the Christian name of the predecessor. Our author was born in the reign of Queen Elizabeth and during the minority (*?It definitely ends in ity*) of James VI of Scotland he gave early specimens of a rising genius and much improved the fine parts he had from nature by a very polite and extensive education.

He first travelled abroad as tutor to the Earl of Argyle, and after his return, being happy in so great a patron as the Earl, he was cared for by the persons of the first fashion (?), while he yet moved in the sphere of a private gentleman. Mr Alexander, having a strong propensity to poetry, declined entering upon any public employment for some years, and dedicated all his time to the study of the current poets upon whom he formed his taste. Although King James had but few regal qualities yet he certainly was an encourager of learned men. Accordingly, he soon took Mr Alexander into favour and accepted the poems our author presented to him with the most condescending (*that seems like an odd word here but it looks like that*) marks of esteem.

In the year 1614 he created him a Knight and gave him a place of Master of the Requests (*? Indecipherable*).

Charles 1st also bestowed on him great marks of the royal favour and made him Secretary of State for the Scotch affairs in place of the Earl of Haddington, and a peer by the title of Viscount Sterling, soon after which he raised him to the dignity of an Earl, by letters patent, dated 14th of June 1633, upon the solemnity of His Majesty's coronation at the palace of Holyrood House in Edinburgh.

His Lordship enjoyed the place of secretary with the most unblemished reputation for the space of 15 years, even to his death which happened on the 12th of February 1640.

(Undecipherable word) under the head of Alexanders.

Works

in a list of Alexander's different works see Lowndes Bibliography manual, under the head of Sterling. A few however, are noticed here as the accounts given by different bibliographers are very unsatisfactory.

The Bibliotheca Anglo Poetica number 645, says "Julius Caesar and the Alexandrian tragedy first appeared in the present edition, but Croesus and Darius were printed in 1604, as well as in the enlarged volume of 1607". Ye and Malone makes the same (assertion? *indecipherable*) in reference to Julius Caesar.

On the other hand the (Biogs?) ... Drama gives the following additions: Darius 1605. Croesus 1604. Julius Caesar 1604. The Alexandrian Tragedy 1605. is followed by Lowndes. who is still more explicit. This list contains:

The Tragedy of Darius. (Ediub?) by Robert Waldegrave. 1605 (Steevens??) no 1217 date 1602

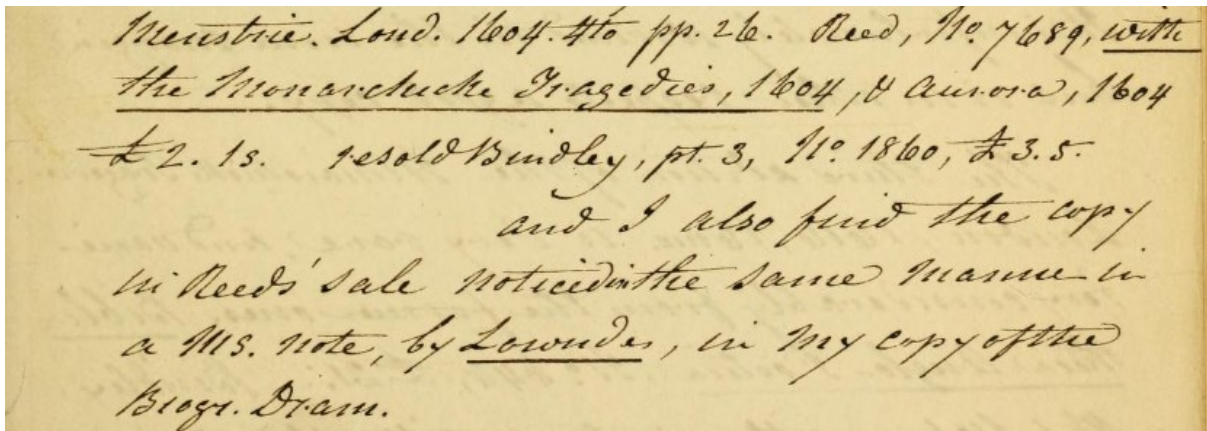
Roxburghe no 5908 £2.2s – London 1604

Julius Cesar 1604, Croesus 1604

The Alexandrian Tragedy 1605

A Para.... (second half of the word is indecipherable) to the Prince by William Alexander of Menstrie, London 1604. No 7689 with The Monarchicke Tragedies 1604, aurora, 1604 £2.1s resold.....

A few lines have not been transcribed here but they are just about book prices

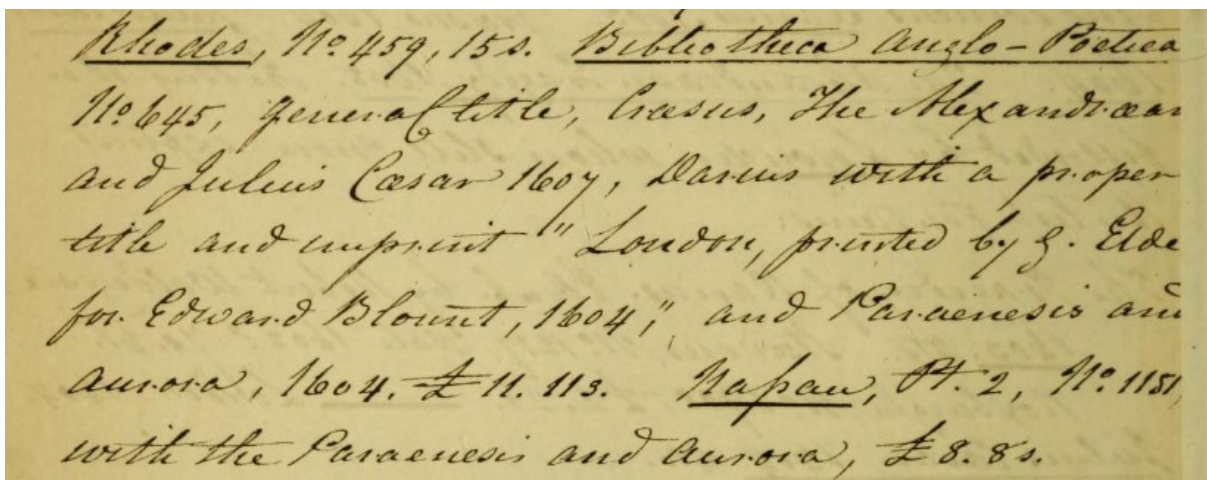


Menstrie. Lond. 1604. 4to pp. 26. Bred, No. 7689, with
the Monarchicke Tragedies, 1604, & Aurora, 1604
£2. 1s. resold Bindley, pt. 3, No. 1860, £3. 5.
and I also find the copy
in Needs' sale noticed in the same manner in
a MS. note, by Lowndes, in my copy of the
Biogr. Dram.

The Present Edition

The Monarchicke Tragedies, Croesus, Darius, The Alexandrian, Julius Caesar. Newly enlarged by William Alexander, Gentlemen of the Princes palace Chamber. London 1607.

Then this detail



Rhodes, No. 459, 15s. Bibliotheca Anglo-Poetica
No. 645, general title, Croesus, The Alexandrian
and Julius Caesar 1607, Darius with a proper
title and imprint "London, printed by J. Elde
for Edward Blount, 1604," and Paraenesis and
Aurora, 1604. £11. 11s. Napau, Pt. 2, No. 1151,
with the Paraenesis and Aurora, £8. 8s.

The present copy, which is in every respect similar to the one described in the Bibliotheca Anglo-Poetica, cost price £3.10s It is unfortunately wormed in the (*indecipherable*) margin but is in other respects a good copy.

The third edition of the Monarchicke Tragedies, London 1616 is very rare and varies very considerably from the former ones.

More book prices and conditions

very considerably from the former ones. Bibli-
theca Anglo-Poetica, N^o 646, £ 21. Burdley,
Pt. 1, N^o 69, with a portrait with the motto
'aut spero aut sperno', Morocco, £ 32. 11s. Inglis,
N^o 11, with the portrait, £ 14. 10s.

Alexander's tragedies of Darius and Julius Caesar considered as Shakespearean

Darius. In a note to a passage in The Tempest Act IV "and like the baseless fabrick of this vision" (Steevens or Heevius? *Indecipherable*) observes – "the exact period at which this play was produced is unknown; it was not, however, published before 1623. In the year 1605, The Tragedy of Darius by Lord Sterling made its appearance, and there I find the following passage:

"Let greatness of her glascie scepters vaunt;
"Not scepters, no, but reeds, soon bruist, soon broken:
"And let this worldlie pompe our wits inchant,
"All fades, and scarcele leav behind a token.
"Those golden Palaces, those gorgeous halls,
"With furniture superfluouslie faire:
"Those stately Courts, those sky-encountering walls
"Evanish all like vapours in the aire."
Act IV. scene 2.

Lord Stirling's play must have been written before the death of Queen Elizabeth Which happened on the 24th of March 1602, as it is dedicated to James VI King of Scots. Steevens (? *Indecipherable*)

Lee Boswells edit Vol XV P. 145

It is to these lines in Darius that Chalmers (?) evidently alludes in his Apology:-

"The Monarchicke Tragedies of Lord Stirling, Which must be allowed to have sentiments that sparkle, through 110 words that burn, were entituled to the honour of James's acceptance, and to the higher owner of Shakespeare's adaption?"

Julius Caesar. A question has been raised whether Shakespeare was or was not indebted to Alexander in the formation of this play ... (official ? *Two important but indecipherable words here*)

On this point Malone observes: - "William Alexander, afterwards Earl of Stirling, wrote a tragedy on the story and with the title of Julius Caesar. It may be presumed that Shakespeare's play was posterior to his, for Lord Sterling when he composed his Julius Caesar was a very young author and would hardly have ventured into that circle within which the most eminent dramatic writer of

England had already walked. The death of Caesar, which is not exhibited, but related to the audience, forms the catastrophe of this piece. In the two plays many parallel passages are found which might perhaps have proceeded only from the two authors drawing from the same source. However, there are some reasons for thinking the coincidence more than accidental.

A passage in *The Tempest* ("the cloud cap't towers") seems to have been copied from one in *Darius*, another play of Lord Stirling's printed at Edinburgh in 1605. His *Julius Caesar* appeared in 1604, at a time when he was little acquainted with English writers, for both these pieces abound with Scottishisms which in the subsequent folio edition, 1637, he corrected. But???(indecipherable) neither *The Tempest* nor the *Julius Caesar* of Shakespeare was printed until 1623.

It should also be remembered that Shakespeare has several plays founded on subjects which had been previously treated by others. Of this kind King John, King Richard 11, the two parts of King Henry 1V, King Henry V, King Richard III, King Lear, Antony and Cleopatra, Measure for Measure, The Taming of the Shrew, The Merchant of Venice and, I believe, Hamlet, Timon of Athens, and the Second and Third Part of King Henry VI, whence, no proof has hitherto being produced that any contemporary writer was presumed to ... (*indecipherable word*) recorded a story that had already employed the pen of Shakespeare. **On all these grounds it appears more**

probable that Shakespeare was indebted to Lord Stirling than that Lord Stirling learned from Shakespeare. If this reasoning be just, Shakespeare's

Julius Caesar could not have appeared before the 1607. I believe it was produced in that year in an attempt to ascertain the (*Indecipherable*) of Shakespeare plays." Volume II. Malone

"Preliminary remarks to *Julius Caesar* and the life of Shakespeare, Boswell's edition volume 2 page 446.

Malone further observes, "Lord Stirling's *Julius Caesar*, though not printed till 1607, might have been written a year or two before and perhaps its publication in that year was in consequence of our authors play (Shakespeare's) on the same subject, being then first exhibited"

It is clear that Malone knew nothing of the edit of Stirling's *Julius Caesar*'s 1604 and from the lack of Boswele (?) having added (*two indecipherable words*) though it would have strengthened Malone supposition, we may doubt the existence of this edit notwithstanding the testimony of Lowndes and (*Indecipherable*) Dram

B