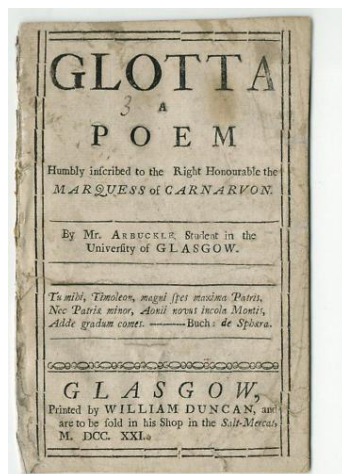


Valuable Book Group, LLC
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“Glotta: A Poem”

Who much is an early mention of golf in a pamphlet worth? Try \$50,400.

Glotta: A Poem is a pamphlet published in 1721. The author of the poem was James Arbuckle, a student at the time at the University of Glasgow. The 22 page pamphlet sold on *eBay* in January. The copy that sold had a few superficial tears to the title-leaf which were neatly restored and it was dis-bound. Our congratulations to the lucky seller in New Haven, Connecticut who has done well for himself. Apparently, the seller was a professional who had done his research prior to listing it for sale.



ARBUCKLE, James, Student in the University of Glasgow. *Glotta, a Poem, humbly inscribed to the Right Honourable the Marques of Carnarron ...* Glasgow, Printed by William Duncan, and are to be sold in his Shop in the Salt-Mercat, 1721. (Foxon A 281, D & M 160, D & J A9090).

The first edition of Arbuckle’s best-known poem is often cited as ‘Glotta, or the Clyde, a Poem’, but that is merely the unauthorized title attached to it by a reprint of 1810. Born in Belfast, Arbuckle was crippled from childhood. He flourished as an undergraduate and divinity trainee at the University of Glasgow in 1716-24; later he returned to Ireland, where he became a leading newspaper journalist, political essayist, Shaftesburian philosopher, and writer of ‘some witty and ingenious pieces in the poetical way’. He died in 1742.

From the Donovan and Jerris bibliography, “Arbuckle penned this poetic description of a journey along the River Clyde (“The Glotta”), tracking its course from the uplands to the sea and describing the various cities and towns along the way. A short section of the poem is devoted to Glasgow Green, where Arbuckle observes an idyllic gathering of golfers at play in the winter months. Of particular significance are the allusions to match play, feather balls, and long nose woods.”

According to golf bibliographers Cecil Hopkinson and Donovan/Murdoch, this poem constitutes “the first important contribution to the literature of golf.” It precedes, by no less than twenty-two years, of Thomas Mathison’s more celebrated ‘heroi-comical poem’ *The Goff*.

Glotta is legendary among golf-book enthusiasts: Richard Donovan in 1987 admits to ‘having not, to this day, seen a copy of it’. *The English Short Title Catalog* (ESTC), a database of holdings by major institutions records just ten copies including those held at the British Library, the Bodleian Library at Oxford and the National Library of Scotland. This previously unrecorded copy stems from the collection of Douglas Grant, the first Professor of American Literature in the UK, and Chair of the department at the University of Leeds and was obtained at an uncatalogued auction in North Yorkshire, England in 2010.

Apparently there is money to be had in old golfing poetry. The last *Glotta* to come up for auction was in 1985 and sold for £5500. A copy of the third edition of *The Goff* published in 1793 sold at auction in 1990 for \$70,000.