

William Hamilton Reid (fl. 1784-1827)

## Description

The first—and indeed most—of William Hamilton Reid’s poems were published in *The Gentleman’s Magazine*. Little is known of his life prior to his contributions to the *GM*. As Arthur Sherbo notes, his output in the *GM* “displays a wide-ranging knowledge of languages, both classical and modern” (*ODNB*), despite being “a minor poet, born in Glasglow of humble parents” (245). In fact, he was compared in the *GM* to Robert Burns, as both were of humble origins. Among the works he was known for was a book on Napoleon, essays on society, and, of course, poetry; he also worked on translations of poetry from numerous languages despite no record of formal education (*ODNB*). Although considered to be a “Grub-street hack,” his poems display a keen command of language on a variety of topics.

The poem “The Panic; or a Meditation supposed to be written upon the Discovery of the Plague” first appeared in *The Gentleman’s Magazine* in 1789. It was later published in *The Scots Magazine* in September 1789.

## Works Cited

Sherbo, Arthur (1996) “William Hamilton Reid (fl. 1786-1824): A Forgotten Poet,” *Studies in Scottish Literature*, (29:1): 245-57.

Sherbo, Arthur “William Hamilton Reid.” *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. Ed. H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison. Oxford: OUP, 2004.