

Both the new printers were already known at court. Myllar was originally a bookseller who had supplied books to the king. He had also printed in Rouen two books for the English market in 1505 and 1506 respectively. Chepman, a merchant who provided the money and the commercial know-how, was a former member of the royal household. Of the books we think were printed in 1508, their first year of business, all were in the Scots vernacular (a rarity in itself for an emergent national printing trade in those times), all could be said to have had a popular appeal, and all were in a portable (15 cm high) format. They included a translation of *De regimine principum bonum consilium* (Book of good counsel to the king), political commentary wrapped up in seven-line rhyming stanzas, and works by two of Scotland's most significant poets, Robert Henryson (d. 1490) and William Dunbar (c. 1460–1520).

Henryson, represented by his reworking of the legend of Orpheus and Eurydice as a Christian allegory and by two lesser poems, was probably a schoolmaster.

Below: Title page of Henryson's tale of Orpheus and Eurydice, with the device of Chepman incorporating the tree of knowledge, a standard symbol for printers of the time. The title reads, 'Heire begynnys the traitie (treatise, poem) of Orpheus kyng and how he yeid (went) to hewyn & to hel to seik his quene'.

