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'The Book of Maybees is very Braid!': Ramsay's *Collection of Scots Proverbs* and Enlightenment Print Culture

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**‘The Book of Maybees is very Braid’: Ramsay’s *Collection of Scots Proverbs* and Enlightenment Print Culture<sup>1</sup>**

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**Abstract**

This article assesses the importance of Allan Ramsay’s *Collection of Scots Proverbs* (1737) in relation to his creative output and in the context of Enlightenment print culture, taking in later commercial and chapbook publication. The *Scots Proverbs* was Ramsay’s final printed book in 1737, and was reprinted within his lifetime, yet it also had a significant afterlife following his death in 1758. Although previous editors of Ramsay have been dismissive of the proverbs as a commercially oriented collection of largely recycled sayings, Ramsay’s *Scots Proverbs* is an important part of his oeuvre for a number of reasons. The first printing of the *Scots Proverbs* formed part of Ramsay’s post-Union editorial and, more broadly, cultural project, particularly through a preface addressed ‘To the Tenantry of Scotland’. This article explores how Ramsay’s preface constructs a Scots pastoral image of labouring class auto-didacticism, and indeed positions its audience in a manner which is both consistent with and dependent on earlier works by the poet. In this context, the collection emerges as an act of cultural assertion, preservation and reinvention linked to the wider processes by which Ramsay (and indeed later writers) construct a synthetic post-Union literary vernacular and an assertively patriotic Scots print culture. The *Collection of Scots Proverbs* also experienced a significant afterlife, being republished across Scotland, and even further afield, throughout the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Moving into the nineteenth century, I examine both the repackaging and reassessment of Ramsay’s collection in Scottish print and in relation to the shifting concerns of paremiography during the Enlightenment, as shown by William Marshall’s altered approach to the study of proverbs.

In 1737, Allan Ramsay published *A collection of Scots proverbs, more complete and correct than any heretofore published*. As the final publication of the poet, collector, and cultural impresario, it is a curious work, quite different in kind to his earlier collection and editing of Scottish culture in the *Tea-Table Miscellany* and *The Ever Green*. From editing and reworking important collections of song and poetry, Ramsay turned to the comparatively minor business of paremiography, capturing the popular sayings of the Scottish tenantry, to whom he dedicated the collection. Although a relatively uninfluential work in the Ramsay canon, it is nevertheless a revealing one which offers further insight into Ramsay's patriotic print agenda, complementing his attempts elsewhere at Scots cultural assertion and preservation.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, the collection shines further light on the print cultural construction of popular tradition and the processes by which Ramsay reinvents a demotic conception of Scottish culture. His approach here is in many respects consistent with his wider recalibration of literary tradition to refocus it upon ordinary life. For example, in *The Ever Green*, Ramsay takes 'courtly, elitist and highly stylised' sources such as the Bannatyne manuscript and turns them into what Alexander MacDonald terms a 'demotic, naïve, libertarian' construction of vernacular culture, while his translation of Horace into low Scots also, as Jeff Strabone suggests, plays to a demotic idea of Scottish social life.<sup>3</sup> Through its equally curious publication history and afterlife, the *Collection of Scots Proverbs* further reveals how Ramsay was read and reprinted in relation to shifting Enlightenment tastes and modes of publication and as paremiology develops as a discipline. In this paper, then, I consider the specific cultural significance of Ramsay's *Collection of Scots Proverbs* within the context of its initial publication, tracing its influence through later reprints.

## I. THE FIRST EDITION OF THE SCOTS PROVERBS

The *Collection of Scots Proverbs* was first published as a 90-page octavo volume, consisting of 84 pages of proverbs arranged alphabetically and divided into 34 chapters, topped and tailed by important paratextual elements that are as culturally resonant as the proverbs themselves, particularly Ramsay's dedication, a closing Advertisement, and Glossary – sections I will return to shortly. The proverbs themselves reveal what one might expect from such a collection, that is colloquial sayings and general maxims which

reveal, and revel in, the peculiar modes of expression employed by labouring and merchant-class Scots at the same time as they link to a wider corpus of collected wisdom. The collection ranges from well-known proverbs such as ‘Mony Hands make light Wark’,<sup>4</sup> although Ramsay Scottifies such sayings to capture particular Scots pronunciation, through to proverbs which seem more particular to Scotland, for example:

‘Keep as muckle of a Scots Tongue as will lick an Inglis Man’s Arse’ (p. 41)

‘Kiss my Arse Kilmarnock, De’il a Penny I aw you’ (p. 42)

‘Lick your Loof and lay’t to mine, dry Leather jeegs, ay’ (p. 44)

Despite appearances, many of Ramsay’s Scots proverbs are, as commentators have recognised, Scots variants of sayings used in other countries: for instance, while the first two examples above seem localised in their treatment of cultural relations, the last is simply a variation of a well-known saying descriptive of the ritualistic closing of deals with handshake and saliva – ‘spit and shake on it’, as we might say today. Yet, the existence of cross-cultural variants notwithstanding, Ramsay foregrounds the particularity of Scots expression, as in this instance of a rhythmic alliterative phrase with a distinctly trochaic opening: ‘Lick your Loof and lay’t to mine’.

While many of the proverbs collected by Ramsay are moral and religious in nature – as in ‘Rackless Youth makes a ruefou End’ (p. 54) or ‘The Deil’s ay good to his ain’ (p. 61) – the collection appears most celebratory when listing the more bawdy or obscene Scots sayings:

‘As lang as I like I’ll fart at my a’n Fire side.’ (p. 8)

‘Claw ye my Arse and I’ll scart your Elbuck.’ (p. 14)

‘Dirten Arse dreads ay.’ (p. 16)

‘He that wrestles with a Turd will come foul aff, / whether u’most or  
nowmost.’ (p. 31)

‘I’ll no creep in his Arse for a Week of his fair Weather.’ (p. 33)

‘Mony Excuses pishes the bed.’ (p. 48)

‘Never kiss a Man’s Arse till he let down his Breeks.’ (p. 51)

They show a cultural vitality in their rhetorical construction and poetic and linguistic exuberance, as in the frequent uses of zeugma, parallelism, and rhyme:

‘A Spoonfu’ of Skitter will spill a Potfu’ of Skink.’ (p. 9)

‘He that’s fear’d for a Fart will never bide Thunder.’ (p. 28)

‘Love and raw Peas breaks the Heart and bursts the Wame.’ (p. 46)

‘He that anes a good Name gets / May pish the Bed and say he sweats.’ (p. 27)

The inclusion of such sayings is not simply gratuitous nor is it aimed simply at capturing some characteristically Scots humour; rather Ramsay’s collecting of ‘coarse’ expressions helps fulfil his project to produce a ‘more complete’ collection than predecessors and to distinguish his collection from rival collections and their prudish approach to obscenity, as we will see in what follows.

What makes Ramsay’s published collection of proverbs particularly significant to the literary scholar is its paratextual material. The collection is dedicated ‘To the Tenantry of Scotland, Farmers of the Dales, and Stores, Masters of the Hills’ and it is these ‘Worthy Friends’ that Ramsay constructs as his intended reader (‘Dedication’). I say ‘intended reader’ because it is not clear whether the reality of bookselling in early eighteenth-century Edinburgh gave such an audience easy access to his work. The title page is quite revealing in this respect (fig. 1).

As we can see from the publication details in figure 1, Ramsay offers favourable terms to travelling book sellers: ‘all Chapmen who incline to dispose of them, selling Profit shall be sufficiently allowed by the Publisher’ (Title page). Presumably wholesale in this fashion would allow wider distribution throughout the Central Belt as Chapmen travelled from place to place. The physical dimensions of the volume makes it more accessible than rival collections such as James Kelly’s bulkier volume of Proverbs (discussed below) in the sense that Ramsay’s collection would be easier to slip into the pocket of a labourer’s garment.<sup>5</sup> Yet there is no mention of price and, as Steven Newman points out, the advertisement of other publications sold at Ramsay’s bookshop adjacent to the title page includes works that would be out of the price range of the tenantry, such as four- and five-shilling collections of songs and poems respectively and the ‘*Gentle Shepherd, best Paper, I sb*’.<sup>6</sup>

In fact, as we will see later in this article, Ramsay’s collection may not have truly reached a popular audience until much later in the century when affordable abridged editions start appearing around the turn of the century in line with the growth of the chapbook industry in Scotland. It was biblio-

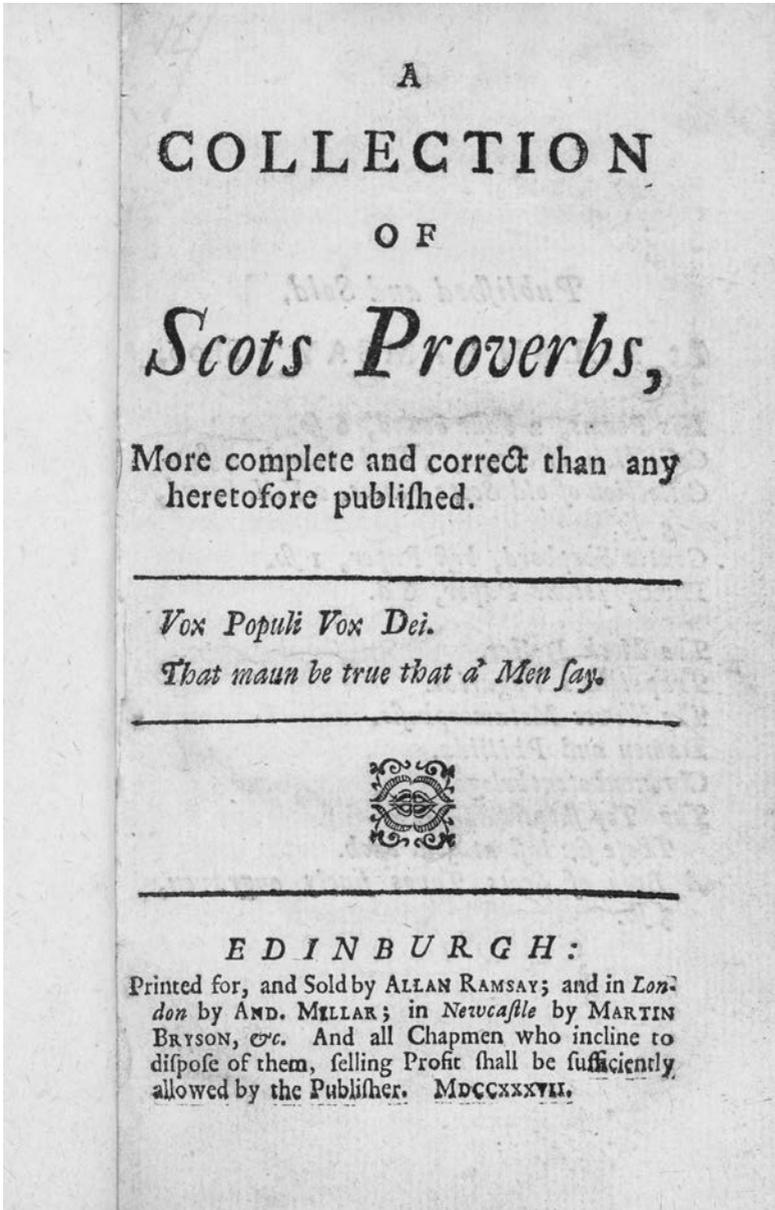


FIG. 1: Title page to the 1737 edition of *Scots Proverbs*, NLS RB.s.1393.

grapher Burns Martin's view that these later editions of the *Scots Proverbs* would, like similarly-priced editions of *The Gentle Shepherd*, have been mainly purchased by 'Country people' as 'one of which appealed by its pleasing picture of shepherd life to their simple idealism and piety, the other to their hard common sense'.<sup>7</sup> Whether or not the Scots tenantry actually bought Ramsay's first edition is another matter, yet the key point to be made with regards to his rural dedicatees is that Ramsay actively imagines them as readers in the dedication. Bearing in mind the ways in which Ramsay frequently positions his audience within his poems and paratexts,<sup>8</sup> we see him construct an imagined scene in which the agricultural worker plays the part of Doric shepherd engaged in the act of reading for self-improvement. He even envisions the book being kept on the farmer's person (entirely feasible given its physical dimensions) and, when leisure permits, removed from his 'pouch', going so far as to depict the actual act of reading as a Scots pastoral:

On a spare Hour, when the Day is clear, behind a Ruck, or on the green  
Howm, draw the Treasure frae your Pouch, and enjoy the pleasant  
Companion. Ye happy Herds, while your Hirdsell are feeding on the  
flowery Braes, you may eithly make your sells Masters of the haleware.  
(‘Dedication’)

Of course, the pastoral construction of ordinary Scottish life immediately evokes *The Gentle Shepherd*, particularly Patie's reading habits as outlined by Symon in response to Sir William's question about where a lowly shepherd 'gets he Books to read?':

*Sym.* Whene'er he drives our Sheep to *Edinburgh* Port,  
He buys some Books of History, Sangs or Sport:  
Nor does he want of them a Rowth at will,  
And carries ay a Poutchfu' to the Hill.<sup>9</sup>

The reading matter may differ here in that Patie reads English works held to 'raise a Peasant's Mind' (Shakespeare and other Jacobean writers such as Jonson and Cowley) as well as Scottish, yet the *Scots Proverbs* similarly envisages the role of print in labouring-class auto-didacticism even while its nod to a popular readership descends into bucolic fantasy.

While the dedication pitches the collection at a popular audience, other aspects of the work suggest that Ramsay was shrewd enough to cast a far wider commercial net. The *Scots Proverbs* were also sold in Newcastle and London. Ramsay had set up associations with Martin Bryson of Newcastle with the 1726 edition of *The Gentle Shepherd*, sold by Bryson and Aikenhead there.<sup>10</sup> The *Scots Proverbs* also saw him once again working with the leading publisher of Scots authors in London, Andrew Millar in the Strand, who had already published editions of *The Tea-Table Miscellany*, the result of a previous association set up between Ramsay and Millar's old master James McEuen.<sup>11</sup> It made good business sense for Ramsay to be working with Millar once more, given their previous association and the possibility that this outlet would gain him some reward for work published in London – Ramsay already had a considerable reputation in the capital by this time but some of this had spread through the pirate editions that had been appearing there since 1719.<sup>12</sup> The collection, then, shows Ramsay selling to an audience well beyond the Scots peasantry, as also suggested by the inclusion of a five-page Glossary which offered 'Explanation of the Words less frequent amongst our Gentry than the Commons' (p. 85). Whether Ramsay means Scottish or British gentry more generally here is not clear, although one wonders if the Northern gentry would be in as much need as the Southern for explanation of such simple terms as 'Anither', 'Auld' or 'Brae'. Either way, the *Collection of Scots Proverbs* reveals the role of the collector of oral culture as mediator engaged in commercial acts of transcription and translation for a genteel book-buying audience. Even though Ramsay packages the collection for ordinary Scots as their own heritage preserved, he also exercises what was no doubt good financial sense in punting the same work to an expanded British audience.

Ramsay's twentieth-century editors Alexander Kinghorn and Law took a particularly scathing view of this publication, signalling out 'blatant commercialism' as the 'sinister motive' for publishing and criticising Ramsay's 'patronising' tone in relation to his supposed audience:

The only original contribution [to collecting Scots Proverbs] made by Ramsay was, therefore, his Dedication; it is an interesting revelation of its authors desire to claim a limited self-identification with 'The Tenantry of Scotland' while at the same time allowing his aristocratic pretensions to govern the elevated tone in which he

addresses them. The result of this is a high-flown mingling of pulpit English with the vocabulary of the Scots peasant so that Ramsay achieves, in the very words with which he denounces Kelly's collection, 'A Stile neither Scots nor English'.<sup>13</sup>

The editors were particularly concerned with his assault on, yet unacknowledged indebtedness to, James Kelly MA, who had published his *Complete Collection of Scottish Proverbs Explained and made Intelligible to the English Reader* in London 1721.<sup>14</sup> Indeed, Ramsay – who titles his own work as being 'more complete and correct' than previous collections – specifically targets a 'late large Book', which Kinghorn and Law identify as Kelly's collection, although Ramsay is more circumspect. Ramsay begins his dedication:

The following Hoard of *Wise Sayings*, and Observations of our Forefathers, which have been gathering through mony bygone Ages, I have collected with great Care, and restored to their proper Sense, which had been frequently tint by Publishers that did not understand our Landwart Language, particularly a late large Book of them, fou of errors, in a Stile neither Scots nor English. ('Dedication')

Ramsay therefore attempts to create distance between himself and Kelly; yet, through collating the texts, Kinghorn and Law argue that Ramsay may have relied on Kelly more than his dedication admits. Where, for example, Kelly prints the anglicised saying 'A Whore, in a fine Dress, is like a dirty House with a clean Door' with accompanying gloss for the English reader, Ramsay simply restores the phrase to the Scots 'A brow Whore, is like a dirty House with a clean Door'.<sup>15</sup> However, to write-off Ramsay's collection for unoriginality is perhaps to miss the point. Besides the problematic nature of using 'originality' as a criterion for evaluating the collection of oral culture – in the sense that sources for common sayings must ultimately have been anonymous – there remains the related problem of how to deal with folk-cultural variants. For example, Kinghorn and Law's collation would seem to suggest that Kelly is Ramsay's main source for Scots sayings, yet even a spot comparison of entries shows that there may be something more going on than Ramsay 'correcting', 'restoring' or Scottifying phrases found in Kelly, as the examples in figure 2 suggest:

<b>Kelly, <i>Scottish Proverbs</i>, 1721</b>	<b>Ramsay, <i>Scots Proverbs</i>, 1737</b>
‘Claw me, and I’ll claw thee.’ (p. 76)	‘Claw ye my Arse and I’ll scart your Elbuck’ (p. 14)
‘Hunger is good Kitchin Meat’ (p. 127)	‘Hunger is good Kitchen’ (p. 32)
‘Never take a Stone to break an Egg, when you can do it with the back of your Knife’ (p. 266)	‘Never take a Fore hammer to break an Egg when ye can do’t with a Pen knife.’ (p. 51)
‘Never take the Taws, when a Word will do the Turn’ (p. 266)	‘Never use the Taws when a Gloom can do the Turn’ (p. 51)

FIG. 2: Comparison of select proverbs in Kelly’s and Ramsay’s collections.

For example, Kelly’s gloss for the first entry above (fig.2) shows that it is a saying derived from the Latin ‘*Manum manus fricat*’ (p. 127), or as a well-known variant still in contemporary use might run, ‘you scratch my back and I’ll scratch yours’. For the second example, Kelly again reveals the existence of further variants such as the English ‘*Hunger is good Sauce*’ from the Latin ‘*Optimum condiementum fames*’ (p. 127); after which, Ramsay produces yet another variation upon the same theme. In the last two examples, we could similarly ask whether Ramsay is dependent on Kelly as source here or whether both collectors are publishing different variants of a common saying. If nothing else, these examples suggest that any judgement upon Ramsay’s debt to Kelly would probably require a more exhaustive collation of texts than previous editors have provided.

Kinghorn and Law also argue that as paremiographers, neither Kelly nor Ramsay ‘were influential; both were popularisers’.<sup>16</sup> By 1737, there was a long-standing print-history of Scots proverbs, and Ramsay seems to signal some awareness of previous collections beyond Kelly in noting those that are ‘frequently tint by Publishers that did not understand our Landwart Language’. Collections of Scottish proverbs had appeared in print throughout the seventeenth century, most notably with the publication of the work of sixteenth-century paremiographer David Fergusson, and later with collections by Pappity Stampoy and John Ray.<sup>17</sup> In many ways, then, the publication of proverbs during the period reveals the culture of the reprint, something which is continued throughout the long-eighteenth century. Indeed, by the turn of the nineteenth century, it is not uncommon to see Ramsay’s proverbs reprinted as part of larger collections that contain other collections from other nations.<sup>18</sup>

It is not in his ‘originality’ as a paremiographer, then, but in his significance as a ‘populariser’ that the value of Ramsay’s collection lies, particularly the cultural and political importance of his response to Kelly and the reframing of vernacular sayings within a wider reinvention of Scots tradition centred upon the vulgar and demotic. Kelly had set out with the explicit intention to explain the sayings of the country of his birth to a new British readership, and in so doing presented a Post-Union collection of anglicised sayings which collapsed cultural distance by uncovering a commonality in proverbial wisdom:

When I first began to think of publishing this my Collection, I proposed to my self four Things:

I. To write down none but those which I knew to be Native, Genuine, Scottish Proverbs; but as I proceeded, I found it impossible strictly to distinguish the Scottish from the English. For both Nations speak the same Language, have constant Intercourse the one with the other; and no doubt borrow their Proverbs the one from the other. (Kelly, ‘Introduction’)

Ramsay, by contrast, addresses the common people of Scotland to preserve cultural *distinctiveness*, to ‘restore’ their sayings ‘to their proper Sense’ (‘Dedication’). Another main way in which Ramsay responds to Kelly is in restoring what Ramsay calls ‘coarse Expressions’. Kelly censored his collection on moral and religious grounds, only including for the main part those proverbs that ‘carried in them some moral Instruction’ (with a few notable exceptions). Otherwise he censored a whole range of sayings:

*First*, All Superstitious Observations [. . .]. For these are apt to fill Men’s Minds with panick Apprehensions, and debauches their Sense of, and dependence upon Almighty God.

*Secondly*, I have omitted all proverbial Imprecations with which *Scots* abound, As [. . .]

*Dee’l piss in your Arse, and make Twa-peny Tape of it* [. . .]

For these are abominable and wholly inconsistent with the Christian profession: yet I have retained some proverbial ill Wishes, because they are comically expressed, and commonly used without Malice.

*Thirdly*, I have left out all those which are openly obscene, and these are very many, pat, and expressive. But since it does not become a Man of Manners to use them, it does not become a Man of my Age and Profession to write them. (Kelly, ‘Introduction’)

Kelly does permit a number of cruder sayings, yet his approach is to reassure a polite audience that his proverbs have been screened for moral offensiveness and to make excuses for those common sayings that pass the censor on account of their comical expression.

In outlining his approach, Ramsay makes no such concessions. By celebrating rather than censoring obscenity, Ramsay celebrates Scots as a vulgar tongue, in all senses of the word. He explains to the reader that

Having set them [Kelly's Proverbs] to Rights, I could not think them better bestowed than to dedicate them to YOU, wha best ken their Meaning, moral Use, Pith and Beauty. Some among the Gentle vulgar, that are *mair nice than wise*, may tattle at the Braidness, or, (as they name it) coarse Expressions. But that is not worth our tenting; a brave Man can be as meritorious in Hodden-gray as in velvet. ('Dedication')

Coarseness of expression is just a low garb ('hodden-gray') in which real merit is disguised. In other words, the lowest vulgar expression can be seen to possess a moral value beyond genteel expression. In his dedication, therefore, Ramsay explicitly links the demotic and the bawdy in an economy of folk wisdom. Here, we see some of the same social inversions that can be seen in other 'popularisations' of Scots by Ramsay – 'Lucky Spence's Last Advice' for instance – whereby obscenity is justified by its paradoxical moral use.

There are of course presentiments of Robert Burns here, not only in the justification of bawdy expression as a vehicle for true morality founded in the common sense of ordinary people, but also in the foreshadowing of Burns's political popularism. Burns's celebrated radical song 'A Man's a Man for a' That', of course, uses a remarkably similar term to Ramsay's 'a brave Man can be as meritorious in Hodden-gray as in velvet' to make a remarkably similar point – that it is not the superficial trappings and refinement of status that matter but the inner moral value beyond the external signs:

What though on hamely fare we dine,  
Wear hoddin grey, and a' that.  
Gie fools their silks, and knaves their wine,  
A Man's a Man for a' that.

For a' that, and a' that,  
Their tinsel show, and a' that;  
The honest man, though e'er sae poor,  
Is king o' men for a' that.<sup>19</sup>

As Steven Newman shows, the usage of the term 'hoddin gray' (a humble gray cloth), links Ramsay's *Gentle Shepberd*, Poetic Sermons and Scots Proverbs with both Fergusson and Burns in a pastoral, poetic and proverbial re-mediation of Scottish culture.<sup>20</sup> Burns was of course drawing from a similar pool to Ramsay in order to synthesise a literary Scots and an idiom for popular self-understanding. Ramsay's proverb 'Fair fa' good Ale, it gars fowk speak as they think' (p. 18) and Burns's 'Fair fa' your honest, sonsie face'<sup>21</sup> at least have this much in common. While the links between Scots paremiography and dialect poetry requires further research, there are intriguing contemporary examples where the two were treated as similar expressions of the common tongue, such as in the title *A Select collection of Scots poems chiefly in the broad Buchan dialect: to which is added a collection of Scots proverbs*, which appended David Fergusson's proverbs to an anthology of Scots dialect verse for publication in 1777<sup>22</sup> (reprinted in 1785, the year before Burns's own *Poems, chiefly in the Scots Dialect*). Furthermore, proverbial wisdom becomes a framing context for understanding Burns's dialect poetry in its first public appearance. In the first published notice of Burns – attributed to bookseller James Sibbald – in the *Edinburgh Magazine* for October 1786, Sibbald dramatises the young poet introducing himself and describing his own genius using one of the proverbs collected by Ramsay, 'An Ounce of Mother-wit is worth a Pound of Clergy' (p. 6):

I have not looked on mankind through the spectacle of books. An ounce of mother wit is worth a pound of clergy; and Homer and Ossian, for any thing that I have heard, could neither write nor read.<sup>23</sup>

Sibbald, who at that time was coincidentally the owner of Ramsay's old circulating library,<sup>24</sup> turns to Ramsay's proverbs to make sense of Burns's untutored genius, echoing themes that Burns himself had explored in such early poems as his 'Epistle to John Lapraik'.

Ramsay's *Scots Proverbs*, therefore, reveal a set of formative assumptions about Scottish culture that also inform later 'vernacular' poets and collectors

such as Burns. Namely, that Scots is the honest expression of a specific class of people in whom the worth of the nation truly resides. In dedicating his collection to the tenantry of Scotland, rather than a wealthy patron, Ramsay notes:

Since Dedicators scantly deserve that Name, when they dinna gar the Praises of their Patrons flow freely through their Propine, I should be reckomed one of little Havins to be jum in that Article, when I have sic good Ground to work upon, and leal Verity to keep me frae being though a Fleecher; wherefore, since Lacking breeds Laziness, and Praises breed Pith, I scruple not to tell you that you are the Props of the Nation's Profit. ('Dedication')

His dedicating of his collection to the tenantry of Scotland is also a self-conscious rejection of aristocratic patronage. It may be relevant to note here that Kelly's 1721 collection was dedicated to James Hamilton, 5th Duke of Hamilton (1703–1743), the same young noble to whom Ramsay dedicated the *Ever Green* in 1724. However, with his later response to Kelly, Ramsay courts popular patronage through a flattering portrait of a Scots peasantry engaged in honest labour:

It is you that are the Store-keepers of Heaven's Bountiths. Frae your Barns and Byres we enjoy the necessaries of Life; ye not only nourish your sells, but a' the idle and insignificant; ye are the Bees that make the Honey, that mony a Drone licks mair of than ye do.

The metaphor of the worker as drone recalls Bernard Mandeville's poetic treatment of political economy in his *Fable of the Bees*, where Mandeville had asserted that from 'Private Vices' come 'Publick Benefits' as the elite pursuit of luxury stimulates industry;<sup>25</sup> yet Ramsay pointedly focuses on those who toil thanklessly to provide the goods that elite consumption demands. As he asks:

How nither'd and hungry wad the gentle Board look without the Product of your Riggs and Faulds? How toom was the Landlords Coffers be, if ye didna rug his Rent frae the Plough-gang and the green Sward? How naked wad we a' be obliged to skelp without your Lint-sheaf and Woo-pack? And alake, how fair wad it harden

the braw Lad and bonny Lass's saft Loofs, were they obliged to labour their ain Meat and Claiths? Ye take the Burden aff their Backs by laying ilka Thing to their Hand *like a peel'd Egg*, while they without Toil reap the Bennisons of your Care. ('Dedication')

The tenantry here are imagined as the true wealth providers of an agrarian economy, those who, as Burns later puts it 'gie fools their silks an knaves their wine'. As we saw earlier, the dedication started with the pastoral construction of this audience enjoying the collection '[o]n a spare hour, when the Day is clear, behind a Ruck' ('Dedication') and becoming tradition bearers by means of leisurely auto-didacticism, yet this bucolic fantasy of cultural memory soon gives way to a much more highly charged set of assumptions about the working culture of common Scots and their contribution to the nation's wealth.

Ramsay's demotic vision is summed up in his opening inscription 'Vox Populi Vox Dei / That maun be tru that a' Men say' ('Title page'). This saying – the voice of the people is the voice of God – underpins the construction a populist rather than philosophical notion of common sense. Kelly's inscription for his 1721 collection of proverbs had borrowed authority from Francis Bacon, with his assertion that 'The Genius, Wit, and Spirit of a Nation, are discovered by their PROVERBS'. Ramsay's inscription replaces the empirical Baconian outlook advocated by Kelly – which places cultural authority in the Enlightened paremiographer as observer – with a 'bottom-up' appeal to common sense, which sees people as the bearers of collective wisdom in the form of universal truths. Though presented as timeless truths, or 'auld Saws, that shine with wail'd Sense, and will as lang as the Warld lags' (Ramsay, 'Dedication'), the collection actually shows much of that wisdom to be culturally specific and frequently class-bound. The symbolism is mostly drawn from farming and rural life, with a corresponding preponderance of sayings featuring animals and livestock, although a number of sayings relate to mercantile activity (for instance, 'It is good Gear that pleases the Merchant' [p. 39]). As for class relations, the collected folk wisdom of Ramsay's Scots Proverbs does not promote deference as much as it exposes social tensions. It does so through raising social conditions to universal maxims ('A hungry Man's ay angry', p. 4; 'Beggars breed and Gentry feed', p. 11; 'New Lords have new Laws', p. 50; 'Poor Fowk are soon pish'd on', p. 53; 'Ye're the greatest Liar of your Kin

except your Chief that wan his Meat by't', p. 81), by using elements from fable to indulge in the imaginary inversion of status ('A twapenny Cat may look at a King', p. 9; 'A wee Mouse can creep under a great Corn stack', p. 9), and deflating the aristocracy ('Lickmydoup's a Court Post', p. 44). As one proverb pithily proclaims, 'Better the head of the Commons than the Arse of the Gentry' (p. 13). Ultimately, Ramsay's 1737 edition of the *Scots Proverbs* constructs a demotic vision of Scots vernacular culture through both its dedication and the proverbs themselves. Yet, as the glossary and other paratextual elements suggest, this vision was aimed at a readership beyond the narrow audience addressed at the opening of the work.

## II. LATER REPRINTS

So far, we have looked at Ramsay not as a populariser of Scots proverbs per se so much as a populariser of Scots vernacular culture more generally, in the sense that his *Collection of Scots Proverbs* aligns with the print cultural construction of Scottish common life evident elsewhere in his writing and plays into a wider post-Union aesthetic, shared by Ramsay and others, that increasingly saw moral value as residing in unsophisticated vernacular expression. Yet, taking into account Ramsay's attempts to sell to an audience beyond the ranks of the Scottish tenantry, we might reasonably question whether the collection was in any way popular. The history of its reprinting suggests a rather chequered afterlife for the collection, and one that frequently distorts Ramsay's cultural politics or removes the work from the context in which he initially conceived the collection.

Throughout the eighteenth century, the *Scots Proverbs* does not appear to have been wildly popular but neither did it sink into oblivion (Kelly, by contrast, does not appear to have been reprinted until 1818).<sup>26</sup> Ramsay himself ended his edition calling for further contributions, suggesting a plan for future editions:

### ADVERTISEMENT

ANY more Proverbs that are not in the foregoing Collection, and deserve a Place, shall be subjoined in an Appendix, as soon as they can be gathered. Whoever will please to be assisting, may send his Gleanings to the Publisher, and they shall be taken Care of. (p. 84)

However, there is little to suggest that this project was taken any further than 1737 and what turned out to be his final printed work. Nor do later editors and publishers seem to have supplemented his collection to any degree, other than a short list of Gaelic sayings appended to a couple of editions in 1776. Quite the reverse, in fact, as abridged later editions appear to be the rule, particularly as we enter the nineteenth century.

The second edition of the *Scots Proverbs* was at least relatively faithful to its source. This edition appeared as a slim octavo volume in 1750 sold by William Gordon in the Parliament Close and at Glasgow by the brothers Robert and Andrew Foulis of the famous Foulis Press. It shows the Foulis brothers doing what they do best – fairly good quality reprints (the Foulis Press had by this stage already reprinted three editions of *The Gentle Shepherd*).<sup>27</sup> Their edition of the proverbs foregrounds Ramsay's involvement with its modified title *A collection of Scots proverbs: According to the edition published by Allan Ramsay*,<sup>28</sup> and is content for the main part to use much the same entries as Ramsay's first edition, although there are some notable changes. Entries in the Foulis edition are the same as Ramsay's although the text has been polished, with Ramsay's erratic capitalisation of nouns corrected. More significantly, Ramsay's dedication has been removed suggesting an edition pitched higher than his imagined tenant-farmer readership.

Therefore, a second edition of the *Scots Proverbs* did appear within 14 years of the first publication of the Scots proverbs, yet it would take around another quarter of a century for the next editions to appear. Two editions were printed for John Wood in Edinburgh 1776, one of which was a self-standing edition, the other bundled with yet another eighteenth-century edition of perennial favourite *The Gentle Shepherd*.<sup>29</sup> Both texts are the same in content although they differ in type. Ramsay's dedication is restored, but the most significant change in this edition is that his glossary has been replaced by an appended list of Gaelic Proverbs (fig. 3).

Here the editors may have taken up Ramsay's call in his closing advertisement for supplementing his collection with an appendix of further proverbs: indeed, the appendix in the 1776 edition is inserted at exactly the place in the text where Ramsay's advertisement was in the original edition. The list of Gaelic proverbs may be a short 'specimen', but it is nonetheless significant in that it appends not lowland Scots proverbs but those from a very different language group in a juxtaposition of cultures that suggests an Enlightenment primitivist approach to Scotland's old languages. The list is

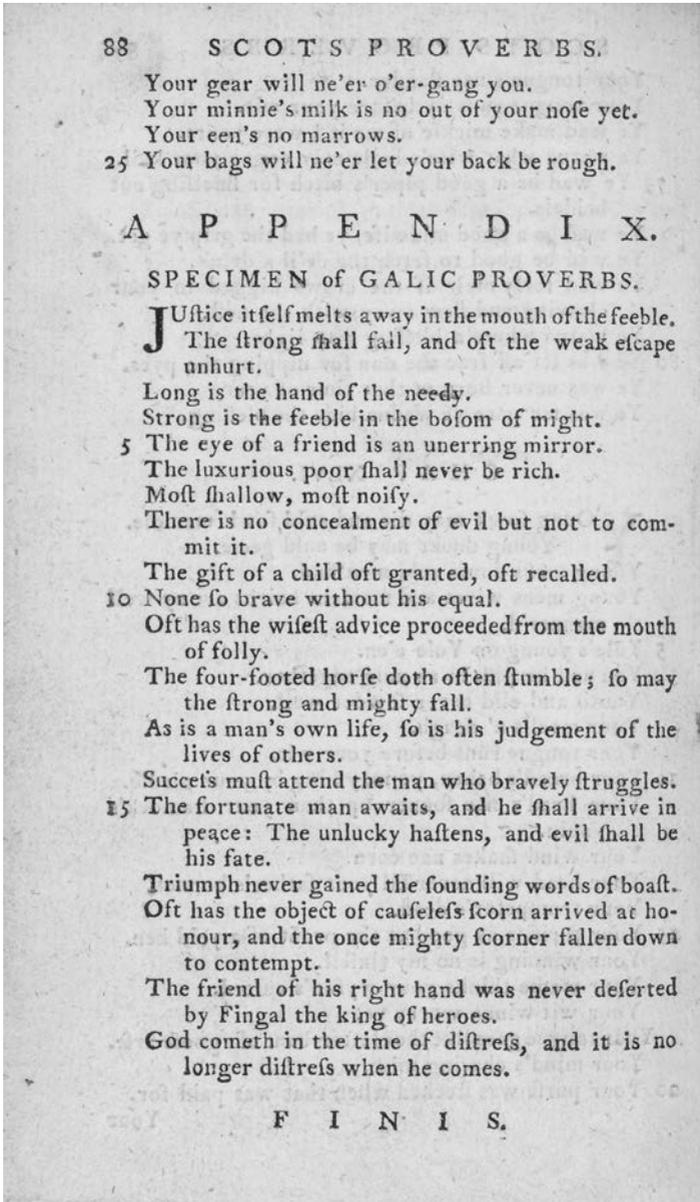


FIG. 3: SPECIMEN OF GAELIC PROVERBS APPENDED TO 1776 EDITION OF RAMSAY'S SCOTS PROVERBS. NLS HALL.191.J.3(3).

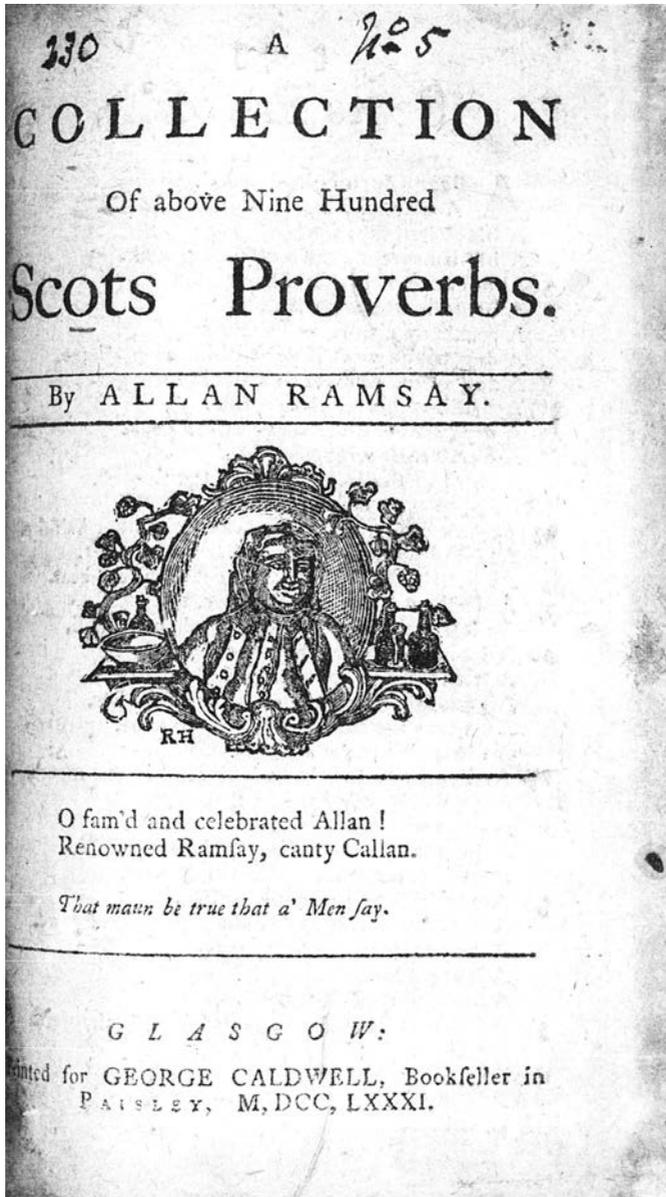


FIG. 4: Title page from 1781 Chapbook, NLS Mf.13(1[23]).

also distinctly Ossianic with such sayings as ‘The Friend of his right hand was never deserted by Fingal the king of heroes’. This edition appeared almost a decade before the major collection of Gaelic proverbs of the period, Donald McIntosh’s *Collection of Gaelic Proverbs, and Familiar Phrases: Accompanied with an English Translation, Intended to Facilitate the Study of the Language* of 1785, which was published with the backing of members of Scotland’s enlightened literati and aimed at assisting readers in understanding Ossian.<sup>30</sup> Like McIntosh’s later work, the Gaelic proverbs appended to the 1776 edition of Ramsay may simply reflect the growing interest in Macpherson’s Ossian among the Scots reading public.

Not long after Wood’s publications, what appears to be the first chapbook edition of the *Scots Proverbs* was printed for the Paisley seller George Caldwell in 1781.<sup>31</sup> As a rather cheap-looking edition with a poor quality stock woodcut on the title page ostensibly meant to represent Ramsay (fig. 4), it nonetheless may be important in marking the first truly popular edition of the *Scots Proverbs*. Its inscription is altered for the purposes of a popular audience, replacing Ramsay’s Latin line ‘Vox Populi Vox Dei’ with a couplet from the epistles Lieutenant William Hamilton of Gilbertfield sent to Ramsay in 1719: ‘O fam’d and celebrated Allan! / Renowned Ramsay, canty Callan!’<sup>32</sup>

This edition also boasts ‘above Nine Hundred Scots Proverbs’ in the title, which is a disingenuous way of admitting that it has cut Ramsay’s collection down to fit a mere twenty-four pages. Collation might tell whether this is one of the copy texts for later chapbooks but a 1785 Glasgow edition of the *Scots Proverbs* appears to be based on a similarly limited selection, and further twenty-four-page chapbook editions were published by the Caldwell dynasty in Paisley during the early nineteenth century.<sup>33</sup>

At the close of the eighteenth century, another edition of the *Scots Proverbs* appeared, printed for Archibald Constable in Edinburgh and Stewart and Meikle in Glasgow, 1797, who also published *The Gentle Shepherd* and a new edition of Ramsay’s Poems that same year.<sup>34</sup> This post-Burnsian publication was bundled with Ramsay’s patriotic post-Union poems ‘Verses on the Bannatyne Manuscript’ and ‘Tale of Three Bonnets’. It further foregrounds its patriotic credentials with a frontispiece engraved by Robert Scott (fig. 5) depicting the tartan-clad characters of the Ghost, Joukum, and Rose from the ‘Tale of Three Bonnets’ framed by thistles, lion and unicorn plus an inscription from Canto IV:

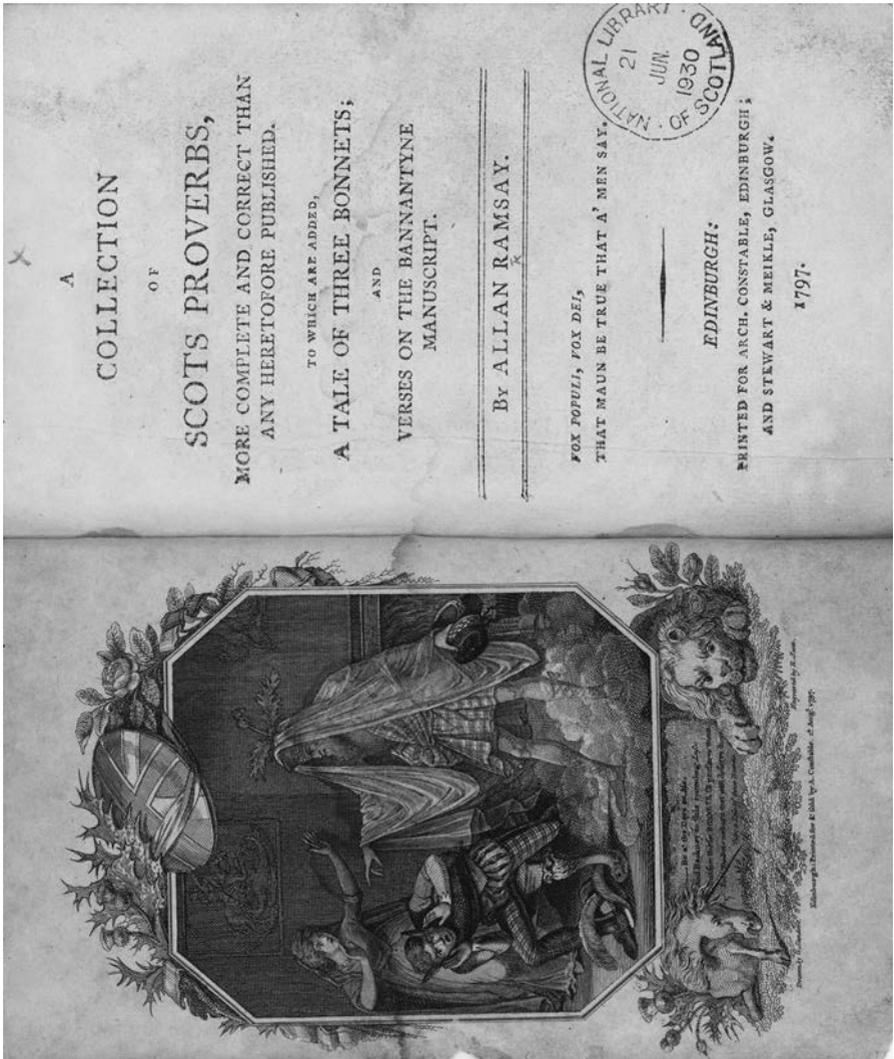


FIG. 5: Frontispiece and Title page from 1797 edition of *Scots Proverbs*, NLS Hall.197.i.1(2).

— Be a' thy Days an Ass,  
And Hackney to this cunning Lass  
But for thee BONNETS, I'll preserve them  
For Bairns unborn that will deserve them.<sup>35</sup>

Here the editors evidently did not think Ramsay's original Scots quite 'braid' enough and opted to Scottify his proverbs even further, changing 'makes' to 'mak's' and 'never' to 'ne'er' (an editorial practice followed in some later editions of the *Proverbs*).

### III. SCOTS PROVERBS IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

While the eighteenth century saw sustained interest in the *Collection of Scots Proverbs*, the following century witnessed a remarkable explosion of reprints. I have identified somewhere in the region of thirty-four individual print appearances of the *Scots Proverbs* in the nineteenth-century alone, either as part of larger collections or in self-standing or chapbook form, including many not listed in Burns Martin's *Bibliography of Allan Ramsay*. While a new bibliography of Ramsay is much needed to capture titles not listed in Martin's 1931 publication,<sup>36</sup> a few cursory remarks can be made with specific regards to the nineteenth-century print afterlife of the *Proverbs*. Martin is correct to note that in term of reprints of the *Scots Proverbs*, the 'vast majority of editions were chapbooks, selling from twopence up' and that 'the greatest appeal for these cheap editions seems to have been from approximately 1780 to 1820.'<sup>37</sup> As ballad collector William Motherwell noted in the 1830s, Ramsay's collection 'has been frequently reprinted, and a very mean abridgement of it is a common penny stall book.'<sup>38</sup> It seems, then, that Ramsay's collection did finally reach a popular audience, but not until the nineteenth century when that tenantry addressed in his dedication had long passed. Such editions were published in the Central Belt, where chapbook production was concentrated, advantageously placed as publishers were there for wider distribution.<sup>39</sup> Accordingly we find abridged editions appearing in the first decades of the century not only in Edinburgh and Glasgow – for Oliver & Boyd and James and Matthew Robertson, for example – but also chapbooks of the *Scots Proverbs* printed in places such as Falkirk by Thomas Johnson and, after 1831, his son Archibald, and in Stirling successively by Charles Randall, his widow Mary, then William

MacNie, who had bought the Randall business in 1820.<sup>40</sup> Although they raise the typical bibliographical issues regarding the dating of chapbooks and, given the practices of chapbook publishers, even more editions may exist than at present accounted for,<sup>41</sup> there is a striking conformity in a number of these reprints. Beginning around 1810 the chapbooks tend to adopt a new subtitle which packages the *Collection of Scots Proverbs* as ‘*the Wise Sayings and Observations of the Old People of Scotland*’. While Ramsay had to some extent envisioned the collection as a way of transmitting popular wisdom from one generation to another, but as part of a *living* culture, by the early nineteenth century emphasis is firmly placed on cultural memory.

The proverbs were also published in more complete form throughout the nineteenth century, mainly within larger volumes and collections of Ramsay’s works such as the various editions of collected works printed by Edinburgh publishers in 1808, 1818 and 1819.<sup>42</sup> This period also saw the Proverbs bundled in with American editions of Ramsay’s works, namely within the second volume of *The Poems of Allan Ramsay: With the Life of the Author, and His Collection of Scots Proverbs*, a quality edition published by the somewhat ironically named Benjamin Chapman of Philadelphia in 1813, and the slightly later *Beauties of Allan Ramsay: Being a Selection of the most Admired Pieces of that Celebrated Author, Viz. the Gentle Shepherd; Christ’s Kirk on the Green; the Monk, and the Miller’s Wife; with His Valuable Collection of Scots Proverbs* published again in the United States in 1815. It is interesting to note that, there, editors evidently saw as much value in the proverbs as in the poems as to reprint them for a non-Scots-speaking audience.

Therefore, against the overwhelming tendency of publishers to produce cheap abridged editions of the *Scots Proverbs* in the first half of the nineteenth century, the collection did appear in larger quality editions. There is even one instance where the proverbs appear as part of a larger miscellany that tries hard to market itself as a ‘quality’ title, *The Edinburgh Budget of Wit and Amusement: Being a Select Collection of Anecdotes, Bon Mots, &c. of Celebrated Characters, &c. Containing also Allan Ramsay’s Scots Proverbs*, which was ‘printed for J. Moir, Royal Bank Close: and sold by all the respectable booksellers, 1808’.<sup>43</sup> While Ramsay had presented his first edition as a collection that might prove of use for social gatherings with ‘Friends at Kirk or Market, Banquet of Bridal’, enabling one to ‘keep up the Saul of a conversation that is baith blyth and usefou’, (‘Dedication’) this small fat 1808 miscellany of sayings would presumably act as a repository of wit for Edinburgh’s middle classes

rather than Ramsay's tenant farmer, and this change of audience possibly explains the editor's decision not to reprint Ramsay's dedication. Some of the racier proverbs are also missing, although this could be down to the choice of a late edition as base text rather than simply polite delicacy. Overall, Ramsay is very much an afterthought in this volume, and raised by the company he keeps – collected anecdotes concerning major European literary, historical and political figures, and bon mots from classical and modern authors.

Unsurprisingly, proverbial wisdom was seen to span cultures, as reflected in another trend within the reprinting of Ramsay's proverbs: the bundling of his list with sayings of other nations. In 1800, Ramsay's collection appeared within the distinctly European-flavoured *Proverbial sayings; or, A collection of the best English proverbs, Scots Proverbs, By Allan Ramsay. Italian Proverbs, Orlando Pescetti. Spanish Proverbs, By Ferdinand Munez. With the Wise Sayings and Maxims of the Ancients*. Ramsay's proverbs were also repackaged with a reprint of the paremiographical work of the seventeenth-century author and prebendary of Salisbury, Thomas Fuller, first published as *Gnomologia: Adagies and Proverbs; wise sentences and witty saying, ancient and modern, foreign and British* in London in 1732, just a few years before Ramsay's first edition (and quite possibly one of the collections Ramsay had in mind in his dedication), but reprinted in Glasgow 1814 as Thomas Fuller's *Aphorisms of Wisdom; Or, A Complete Collection of the most Celebrated Proverbs, in the English, Scotch, French, Spanish, Italian, and Other Languages; Ancient and Modern, Collected and Digested. to which is Added, Ramsay's Collection of Scottish Proverbs*.

Though such reprinting shows much of the commercially minded book-selling of the period, it also hints towards the comparative cultural framework which characterises the development of paremiology in the nineteenth century. Indeed, that century was to build on the tendencies mentioned by early paremiographers towards cross-cultural comparison, for example Kelly's observations that not only are the Scots proverbs impossible to distinguish from the English:

[. . .] but I found upon further Inquiry, that many of these Proverbs, were not only English, but French, Italian, Spanish, Latin and Greek Proverbs. For the Sense and Sentiments of mankind, as to the main Concerns of Life, are much the same, and their Observations about them, being often repeated, become Proverbs, which though differing in Words, express the same Thoughts. (Kelly, 'Introduction')

If we turn to the best account of Scottish paremiography from the early nineteenth-century, William Hamilton's preface to Andrew Henderson's *Scottish Proverbs* of 1832, the kind of cross-cultural comparison noted by Kelly has become the norm in paremiology. This approach comes at the price of the one thing Ramsay attempted to preserve in his collection – cultural distinctiveness – and thereby loses sight of the cultural politics expressed in his Ramsay's 1737 edition. In his introduction, Motherwell offers an accomplished survey of previous Scots paremiographers, including Kelly, and notes some of the republication history of Ramsay outlined above. As well as being aware of the many chapbook editions in circulation in his own time, Motherwell had in fact seen the 1737, 1750 and 1776 editions of the *Scots Proverbs*.<sup>44</sup> However, as yet another paratext to yet another collection of Scottish proverbs, Motherwell's introductory history of paremiography in Scotland has more in common with Kelly's cross-cultural Baconian project than with Ramsay's patriotic framing and moreover shows the manner in which collecting has developed and changed in the intervening period.

As with his collecting of song, Motherwell was a very different editor to Ramsay: more the scholar, and less the enthusiast with popular political agenda to push. Where paremiography had for Ramsay been a pro-active reflex of cultural assertion in post-Union Scotland, the collection of Scots proverbs has by Motherwell's time become a comparatively elegiac study of folk-cultural memory and, with it, the problem of 'forgetting':

There is no surer sign of the oral knowledge of a people being on the wane, than the attempts to secure it from oblivion by collecting its fragments and printing them in books. Whenever either the National songs, the popular tales, or prudential maxims of a country are curiously and diligently gathered, and transferred to another ark of safety than that of the living voice, it may be safely inferred, that changes in the character and habits of feeling and thinking, of the people themselves, are in progress deemed inimical to their longer preservation in a pure, accurate, and authentic form. Betwixt man and oblivion there is a perpetual warfare.<sup>45</sup>

Motherwell resumed this theme when referring to Ramsay's image of the shepherd reading in his dedication to the *Scottish Proverbs*, a 'pastoral' invention which Motherwell seems to take as an actual cultural history of

a people with whom Ramsay was acquainted and a folk ritual killed by modernity and radicalism:

From his acquaintance with pastoral life, Ramsay has been able to enrich his collection with many proverbs peculiar to the sheep districts of Scotland, which are not to be found in either Ferguson or Kelly. In his dedicatory letter, he alludes to what appears to have been a custom among shepherds, of exercising their memories, by keeping up a conversation with 'these guid auld says' [. . .]. Among old and young in Scotland, not many years ago, it was a common country pastime of a winter's night to while time away by repeating proverbs, telling tales, and reciting songs and ballads; but these good old fashions are fast disappearing since the schoolmaster and politics were let loose upon the country.<sup>46</sup>

Motherwell fails to notice how Ramsay's account of auto-didacticism is as much literary pastoral as social historical. When subject to the demands and distortions of literary genre, cultural memory may not be as straightforward as Motherwell suggests. As a reformed radical and zealous Tory,<sup>47</sup> Motherwell was keen to uphold a depoliticised sense of 'tradition', yet, the other thing that he 'forgets' is precisely the political structures of popular feeling that Ramsay expresses in his dedication. This is because, for Motherwell, the paremiologist starts from the 'important fact, that however much nations may be separated from each other by difference of language, or of climate, still the vast body of their proverbs, is in effect almost the same' and that the uniformity of the human mind ensures a universal form across proverbial sayings.<sup>48</sup> Motherwell has in other words learned his lessons on the natural history of man from the Scottish Enlightenment well: that beyond the diverse appearances of different cultures, there is an underlying uniformity to human nature. Again failing to take the specific circumstances of specific societies into account, Motherwell indulges in a comparative history of mankind in which slaves in the Dutch and then British colony of Guyana become evidence of how the primitive mind in general forms proverbs:

Among rude and infant communities, therefore, we must look for the manner in which aphoristic wisdom first germinates and unfolds itself, and it gives us pleasure that a friend of our author has put into our hands, a psychological study of this sort, strikingly illus-

trative of our subject. It is a few proverbs, common among the negroes in the colony of Demerara, which we transcribe, with an interpretation into the Buckra man's language.

Hungry dogs nam ra carn [. . .]	Hungry dogs will eat raw corn
Buckra man nam crab:	White men eat the crab:
Crab nam buckra man.	And the crab eats the white man. <sup>49</sup>

Motherwell's 'pleasure' in his scholarly discovery masks a failure to even recognise that these proverbs express much about specific, historically determined social relations – in this case the hierarchical relations between coloniser and colonised within a socio-economic structure that provides for the one but not for the colonial 'other'. Yet Motherwell's oversight underlines the point that his employment of a characteristically Scottish Enlightenment 'stadial' theory and comparative history loses sight of the cultural politics of collecting proverbs. As he says 'The identity of human nature has necessarily produced a correspondence in the proverbs of every nation. Savage or civilized, ancient or modern, this affinity and resemblance can be most distinctly established.'<sup>50</sup> Therefore, although Ramsay is an important part of Motherwell's survey of Scottish paremiography, the approach of the modern paremiologist has begun to lose sight of the historical context of specific collections by shifting towards comparison and a cross-cultural fascination with recurring form as expressive of 'universal' human nature. In doing so, paremiology loses site of the cultural significance of Ramsay's first edition and indeed its later print appearances.

As we saw when dealing with the initial publication of the *Scots Proverbs* in 1737, that significance was precisely the decision to frame a simple collection of proverbs as the peculiar and characteristic expressions of a specific class of people at a time of increasing political and cultural assimilation within the larger British state, even when both the comparative tendencies of paremiographers and commercial interests of publishing would seem to mitigate against a nativist approach. In this commercial act of cultural preservation, Ramsay's approach as paremiographer was not so much an original collection and authentic transcription of Scots expressions but an active print-cultural reinvention of vernacular culture as a demotic space, a repository of common sense and wisdom of the people, though not one that was published exclusively for the people.

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## Notes

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- 1 This article is based on a paper delivered at the ASLS annual conference in Edinburgh and the Second World Congress of Scottish Literatures in Vancouver, both in June 2017. My thanks to the organisers of each conference.
- 2 See Murray Pittock's point that 'Ramsay was an early avatar of the primitivists and folklorists of the 1760s and thereafter, who wrote and collected at a time when it may yet have seemed possible to him that the preservation and defence of the culture of his native land might serve a political purpose rather than a cultural or literary one.' Murray G. H. Pittock, 'Ramsay, Allan (1684–1758)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, May 2010 [www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/23072](http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/23072) [accessed 30 June 2017].
- 3 Alisdair A. MacDonald, 'The Revival of Scotland's Older Literature' in *The Edinburgh History of the Book in Scotland, Volume 2: Enlightenment and Expansion, 1707–1800*, ed. by Stephen W. Brown and Warren McDougall (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012), pp. 551–58 (pp. 553–54); Jeff Strabone, 'Horace Dressed in Scots: Allan Ramsay's Theory and Practice of Imitation' (Unpublished paper delivered at the Second World Congress of Scottish Literatures, Vancouver, June 2017). My thanks to Jeff for sending me a copy of his article.
- 4 Allan Ramsay, *A collection of Scots proverbs, more complete and correct than any heretofore published* (Edinburgh: Printed for and Sold by Allan Ramsay, 1737), p. 48. Further references to this edition will appear in parenthesis in the main text.
- 5 I am indebted to Barbara Bell for pointing out the link between size and accessibility.
- 6 See Steven Newman, "'Hodden-Gray": Enlightenment Re-Mediation, Pastoral, and The Proverbial Allan Ramsay' in this edition of *SLR*. I am grateful to Steven for sending me an advance copy of his article.
- 7 Burns Martin, *Bibliography of Allan Ramsay* (Glasgow: Jackson, Wylie and Co., 1931), pp. 6–7.
- 8 Rhona Brown, 'Self-Curation, Self-Editing and Audience Construction by Eighteenth-Century Scots Vernacular Poets' (Forthcoming). My thanks to Rhona for sending a draft of her as yet unpublished article.
- 9 Allan Ramsay, *The Gentle Shepherd*, III. 4, in *The Works of Allan Ramsay*, edited by Burns Martin and John W. Oliver, vol. 2 (Edinburgh: William and Blackwood & Sons), p. 250.
- 10 Allan Ramsay, *The Gentle Shepherd; A Scots Pastoral Comedy. The Second Edition* (Edinburgh: Printed by Mr. Thomas Ruddiman for the Author, 1726). See Burns Martin, p. 44.
- 11 Richard B. Sher, *The Enlightenment and the Book: Scottish Authors and Their Publishers in Eighteenth-Century Britain, Ireland and America* (Chicago & London: University of Chicago Press, 2006), pp. 279–80.
- 12 Martin, *Bibliography*, p. 7.
- 13 Alexander M. Kinghorn and Alexander Law (eds), *The Works of Allan Ramsay*, vol. 4 (Edinburgh and London: Scottish Text Society, 1970), pp. 159–60.
- 14 James Kelly, *A Complete Collection of Scottish Proverbs, Explained and made Intelligible to the English Reader* (London: William and John Innys, 1721). Further references to this edition will appear in the main body of text.
- 15 See *Works of Allan Ramsay* 4, p. 158.

- 16 *Idem*, p. 160.
- 17 See for example David Fergusson, *Scottish Proverbs* (Edinburgh: Printed by Robert Bryson, 1641); David Fergusson, Sydney Richardson Christie-Miller, and John A. Fairley, *Nine Hundred & Forty Scottish Proverbs* (Edinburgh: Christopher Higgins, 1659); Pappity Stampoy, *A Collection of Scotch Proverbs* (London: Printed by R. D., 1663); John Ray, *A Collection of English Proverbs: Digested into a Convenient Method for the Speedy Finding any One upon Occasion; with Short Annotations. Whereunto are Added Local Proverbs with their Explications, Old Proverbial Rhythmes, Less Known Or Exotick Proverbial Sentences, and Scottish Proverbs* (Cambridge: W. Morden, 1670); *Nine Hundred and Forty Scottish Proverbs: The Greatest Part of which were at First Gathered Together, by David Fergusson, and Put into an Alphabetical Order when He Departed this Life, Anno 1598 the Rest being since Added, and Now More Correctly Printed* (Edinburgh: printed & sold at the foot of the Horse-Wynd, 1706).
- 18 *Proverbial sayings; or, A collection of the best English proverbs, Scots Proverbs, By Allan Ramsay. Italian Proverbs, Orlando Pescetti. Spanish Proverbs, By Ferdinand Munez. With the Wise Sayings and Maxims of the Ancients* ([n.p]: [n. pub.], 1800), Edinburgh University Library, Zs.10.112. and Thomas Fuller, *Aphorisms of Wisdom; Or, A Complete Collection of the most Celebrated Proverbs, in the English, Scotch, French, Spanish, Italian, and Other Languages; Ancient and Modern, Collected and Digested. to which is Added, Ramsay's Collection of Scottish Proverbs* (Glasgow: R. Chapman for R. & D. Malcolm, 1814).
- 19 Robert Burns, 'For a' that and a' that', in *The Poems and Songs of Robert Burns*, edited by James Kinsley (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1968), II:763 (K482).
- 20 Newman, op. cit.
- 21 Burns, 'To a Haggis', in *Poems and Songs*, I:311 (K136).
- 22 *A Select collection of Scots poems chiefly in the broad Buchan dialect: to which is added a collection of Scots proverbs* (Edinburgh, 1777).
- 23 [James Sibbald], 'Unsigned notice' in *The Edinburgh Magazine, or Literary Miscellany*, October 1786, reprinted in *Robert Burns: The Critical Heritage*, ed. by Donald A. Low (London and New York: Routledge, 1974), pp. 63–64.
- 24 Low, *Critical Heritage*, p. 63; Warren McDougall, 'Sibbald, James (1747–1803)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, Sept 2011 [www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/25495](http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/25495) [accessed 30 June 2017].
- 25 Bernard Mandeville, *The Fable of the Bees: or, Private Vices, Publick Benefits* (London: J. Roberts, 1714).
- 26 See James Kelly, *A complete collection of Scottish proverbs* (London, 1818).
- 27 See Martin, *Bibliography*, pp. 52–53.
- 28 *A Collection of Scots Proverbs: According to the Edition Published by Allan Ramsay* (Edinburgh: sold by W. Gordon, at Glasgow by R. and A. Foulis, 1750).
- 29 *A Collection of Scots Proverbs: By Allan Ramsay* (Edinburgh: printed for J. Wood, and the other booksellers, 1776); *The Gentle Shepherd: A Scots Pastoral Comedy. Adorned with Cuts, the Overtures to the Songs, and a complete Glossary. By Allan Ramsay* (Edinburgh: Printed by Robert and Richard Wilsons, For J. Wood and W. Darling Booksellers, 1776).
- 30 Donald McIntosh, *A Collection of Gaelic Proverbs, and Familiar Phrases: Accompanied with an English Translation, Intended to Facilitate the Study of the Language; Illustrated with Notes. to which is Added, the Way to Wealth, by Dr. Franklin, Translated into Gaelic.* (Edinburgh: Donaldson, Creech, Elliot, and Sibbald et al, 1785) digital. [nls.uk/early-gaelic-book-collections/archive/76282509](http://nls.uk/early-gaelic-book-collections/archive/76282509) [accessed 30 June 2017]; Gerald M. D. Howat, 'Macintosh, Donald (1743–1808)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*

- (Oxford University Press, 2004) [www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/17542](http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/17542) [accessed 30 June 2017].
- 31 *A Collection of Above Nine Hundred Scots Proverbs: By Allan Ramsay* (Glasgow: printed for George Caldwell, bookseller in Paisley, 1781).
  - 32 See James Grant Wilson, *The Poets and Poetry of Scotland: From the Earliest to the Present Time* (London: Blackie & Son, 1876), p. 93. I am grateful to Duncan Jones of the ASLS for suggesting the significance of removing Latin for a popular audience.
  - 33 *A Collection of Scots Proverbs: By Allan Ramsay* (Glasgow: printed and sold by J. & M. Robertson, 1785); See also *A Collection Of Scotch Proverbs, Containing All The Wise Sayings And Observations Of The Old People Of Scotland* (Paisley: Printed And Published By G. Caldwell, [n.d.]), four copies of which are held in the Fisher chapbook collection, University of Toronto (Chap 00002; Chap 00006; Chap 00020; Chap 00023). Although these versions are undated, Martin, *Bibliography*, p. 102 notes the British Museum's suggested date of 1840 for the later Paisley publications, which would be consistent with George Caldwell Jr's active period of publishing chapbooks.
  - 34 For Ramsay titles published by Stewart and Meikle, see Martin, *Bibliography*, pp. 74–75.
  - 35 *A Collection of Scots Proverbs: More Complete and Correct than any Heretofore Published. to which are Added, A Tale of Three Bonnets; and Verses on the Bannantyne Manuscript. by Allan Ramsay.* (Edinburgh: printed for Arch. Constable; and Stewart & Meikle, Glasgow, 1797) (Frontispiece); cf. p. 115, where the poem itself has an alternate version of these lines.
  - 36 For example, Martin does not list the self-standing 1776 edition of the *Scots Proverbs* published by J. Wood listed above, although the other 1776 publication of the *Scots Proverbs* by Wood within an edition of *The Gentle Shepherd* is listed on Martin, *Bibliography*, pp. 63–64 (entry 186). As further example of the limitations of Martin's bibliography, one of the Oliver & Boyd chapbooks from the early 1800s listed as an undated edition in Martin, *Bibliography*, p. 101 (entry 266), actually gives enough details on the Title page about place of publication to date it to after 1808–09, the dates when, according to the *Scottish Book Trade Index*, Oliver and Boyd published together in the Netherbow, Edinburgh. See [www.nls.uk/catalogues/scottish-book-trade-index/nelson-oliver](http://www.nls.uk/catalogues/scottish-book-trade-index/nelson-oliver) [accessed 30 June 2017].
  - 37 Martin, *Bibliography*, p. 6.
  - 38 William Motherwell, 'Introductory Essay' in *Scottish Proverbs, Collected and Arranged by Andrew Henderson* (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1832), p. xxix.
  - 39 On chapbooks and distribution see John Scally, 'Cheap Print on Scottish Streets', in *The Edinburgh History of the Book in Scotland*, pp. 372–81 (p. 375).
  - 40 Details on publishers from the *Scottish Book Trade Index* available online at [www.nls.uk/catalogues/scottish-book-trade-index](http://www.nls.uk/catalogues/scottish-book-trade-index) [accessed 30 June 2017].
  - 41 Edinburgh's Oliver and Boyd, for example, who published a number of the chapbook editions of the *Scottish Proverbs*, found it lucrative, according to Beavan and Dougall, to produce chapbooks and keep them in print. See Iain Beavan and Warren McDougall, 'The Scottish Book Trade', in *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain, volume V 1695–1830*, ed. by Michael Suarez and Michael Turner (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), pp. 352–65 (p. 364).
  - 42 *The Works of Allan Ramsay; Containing His Poems, Songs, Proverbs, &c. also, the Original Music of the Gentle Shepberd* (Edinburgh: 1808); *The Poetical Works of Allan Ramsay: To which is Prefixed Memoirs of the Author; a Collection of Scottish Proverbs; and an Improved Glossary, Containing Words Not Explained in any Former Edition.* 3 vols. (Edinburgh: printed by James Keggie, for MacRedie, Skelly, and Co. and Alexander MacKay,

- 1818); *The Poetical Works of Allan Ramsay*, 3 vols (Edinburgh: Printed by James Keggie, for James Robertson, 1819).
- 43 *The Edinburgh Budget of Wit and Amusement: Being a Select Collection of Anecdotes, Bon Mots, &c. Containing also Allan Ramsay's Scots Proverbs* (Edinburgh: J. Moir, 1808).
- 44 Motherwell, 'Introductory Essay', p. xxix.
- 45 *Ibid.*, pp. x–xi.
- 46 *Ibid.*, pp. xxviii–xxix.
- 47 Hamish Whyte, 'Motherwell, William (1797–1835)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford University Press, 2004) [www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/19419](http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/19419) [accessed 30 June 2017].
- 48 Motherwell, 'Introductory Essay' p. xlv.
- 49 *Ibid.*, pp. lvi–lvii.
- 50 *Ibid.*, p. lix.

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