

Self-Curation, Self-Editing and Audience Construction by Eighteenth-Century Scots Vernacular Poets

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Abstract: This article analyses paratextual and self-editing practices in the work of three eighteenth-century Scots vernacular poets: Allan Ramsay, Robert Fergusson and Robert Burns. Taking the theories of paratext articulated by Gerard Genette and J. Hillis Miller as its starting-point, the article considers the varying ways in which these three poets fashioned their own literary personae and, simultaneously, their audience, through prefaces, footnotes and glossing practice. It also explores the relationship between the three poets, analysing the ways in which Burns learned from both Ramsay and Fergusson, and how each navigated his place as poet in the literary market-place.

Keywords: Scots vernacular poetry, paratext, Allan Ramsay, Robert Fergusson, Robert Burns

Following the Union of 1707, certain Scottish commentators became increasingly engaged in questions of linguistic standardisation and the need for Scots on the make to expunge so-called ‘Scotticisms’ from their speech and writing.¹ Concurrently, the ‘triumvirate’ of Scots vernacular poetry, Allan Ramsay (1684-1758), Robert Fergusson (1750-1774) and Robert Burns (1759-1796), were excelling in and preserving Scots as a poetic medium. In traditional Scottish criticism the relationship between Ramsay, Fergusson and Burns has been portrayed as one of post-Enlightenment, stadial ‘improvement’, in which Ramsay initiates the ‘revival’ and opens the wellspring of eighteenth-century Scots vernacular poetry, Fergusson refines his Scots literary inheritance and Burns constitutes its apex as, in Henry Mackenzie’s words, the ‘heaven-taught ploughman’.² The enduring representation of this literary relationship, which A. B. Grosart describes as one of ‘pseudo-apostolic’ succession,³ led, in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, to an overemphasis on the ‘authentic’ (read: Scots) aspects of their oeuvres and the assumption, as Susan Manning has argued, of a synthetic distinction between ‘natural’ Scots and artificial sterility in English which has not been altogether eradicated.⁴ This critical distinction allows a perception of Ramsay, Fergusson and Burns as inspired autodidacts: as untutored geniuses who nevertheless capture the imaginations of their knowledgeable reading publics. Thanks to external forces and their own complicity, Ramsay, Fergusson and Burns thus become strangely passive geniuses, whose fits of inspiration at the wigmaker’s, bookseller’s, legal copyist’s and farmer’s drudging labours delight aristocratic patrons and lettered readers alike. As a result, and despite the fact that essentialist linguistic binaries have been challenged in recent criticism, there have been few studies of how these three, different-but-the-same poets negotiated their positions in the rapidly evolving British literary market-place.⁵ To that end, analysis of their paratextual practices reveals a great deal about the ways in which these authors saw their poetic roles, actively constructed and maintained their literary personae, communicated

with and, in effect, defined their audiences and brought Scots vernacular vocabulary, forms and genres into the mainstream British literary market. This article offers three case studies taken from the publishing histories of Ramsay, Fergusson and Burns to demonstrate the crucial roles played by prefaces, footnotes and glossaries in each poet's career, and in the development of eighteenth-century Scots vernacular poetry.

If some nineteenth- and twentieth-century Scottish critics have been slow to respond to the cultural, political and literary implications of Scots vernacular poetry, the study of paratext is itself a relatively novel critical phenomenon, often seen as emanating from the prominence of Gérard Genette's *Paratexts* (1987), with its definition of textual apparatus as constituting a formal 'threshold' that is laden with critical meaning.⁶ With this definition, Genette draws a distinction between his theory of paratext and that of J. Hillis Miller, who argues that it draws a 'boundary line' that is reminiscent of the relationship of a 'guest to host, slave to master'.⁷ In Miller's version, prefaces, footnotes and glossaries are in permanent servile pose at the feet of the masterful text; for Genette, far from building a border, they enable additional layers of meaning for author and reader.

Paratext may be secondary in the Scots vernacular publications discussed here, but it is nevertheless powerfully active, particularly in the construction of Ramsay's, Fergusson's and Burns's poetic personae and, in the case of Burns, as evidence of his understanding of antecedents in the literary canon he would come to inhabit fully as self-proclaimed 'Scotch bard'. Perhaps because of his skilful use of paratext, not to mention his position on the threshold of Romanticism's blossoming, Burns's work has garnered some attention from this critical perspective.⁸ The self-editing practices of his predecessors Ramsay and Fergusson have attracted next to no consideration.⁹ While paratextual scholarship has been particularly fruitful in early modern contexts,¹⁰ women's writing¹¹ and Romantic literature,¹² and has been utilised to consider eighteenth-century English identities,¹³ it is also instructive in an analysis of the navigation of the literary market-place by Scottish authors who were seen by some as deliberately indulging in, as a contemporary 'review' of Ramsay's work puts it, 'Scotticisms, which perhaps may offend some over-nice ear'.¹⁴

I. Allan Ramsay

Ramsay, Fergusson and Burns all benefited from the transformation of reading that took place throughout the eighteenth century. As John Brewer has argued, this 'revolution' came about thanks not only to rising literacy but also to a widening variety of reading sources: by this time books 'could be bought, hired or borrowed either from commercial establishments and institutions or from individuals'.¹⁵ Moreover, Richard B. Sher emphasises the 'vibrant cultural space that nourished the Edinburgh Enlightenment' during the century.¹⁶ With his circulating library and literary hub/bookshop, Allan Ramsay was at the centre of the reading 'boom' in eighteenth-century Edinburgh. He would, through the course of his lifetime, publish his work in Edinburgh, London, Dublin and beyond. His was a modern authorship: an examination of his shrewdly pitched paratext adds further credence to Murray Pittock's argument that the poet is 'an avatar of Romanticism in the British Isles',¹⁷ while his career structure and publishing strategies would soon be emulated in part by his Scots vernacular 'successors' Fergusson and Burns. Owing to the modes of his early publication, it took time for Ramsay to develop an in-print dialogue with his audience, and to begin the process of self-curation. Ramsay's earliest publications took the form of pamphlets, including 'The Battel: or, Morning Interview' (1716), the 'Elegies on Maggy Johnston, John Cowper and Lucky Wood' (1718), 'Lucky Spence's Last

Advice' (1718) and 'Tartana: or, the Plaid' (1718). These pamphlet publications appear to situate Ramsay's audience in Scotland's capital city.¹⁸ In fact, far from limiting himself to a local Edinburgh audience, Ramsay's later self-editing practice shows him to be acutely and astutely aware of the new opportunities presented by a post-Union, British reading public. He was, at this early stage, operating more shrewdly than has been previously allowed. Although it was once assumed that Ramsay was instrumental in publishing these pamphlets of the 1710s – and, by extension, in gathering them in an early attempt at a collected works around 1720 – there is evidence that he did not always authorise these cheap publications and, indeed, took action against their printers via Edinburgh's town council.¹⁹ Moreover, the edition of c.1720 is essentially a bound copy of existing pamphlets which, considering Ramsay's formal action, is not certain to have been approved. Although this edition contains a table of contents and appends a detailed glossary of 'the Scots words us'd by the Author, which are rarely or never found in the modern English writings',²⁰ it contains no preface and next to no paratext save the title pages, which have apparently been retained from the original pamphlet publications.²¹ This suggests that the edition was hastily prepared, perhaps using remainder pamphlets, and that its printers were confident of a ready-made audience for Ramsay's work. Ramsay, in turn, capitalises on this confidence with the first official publication of his works the following year.

Ramsay's readers must wait until 1721 for this authorised publication's significant paratextual additions.²² The edition, which was printed in Edinburgh by the prominent editor and publisher Thomas Ruddiman (1674-1757), bears an ornate frontispiece, complete with an engraving of the author adorned with laurel leaves. Its title page features a quotation from Matthew Prior's 'In Imitation of Anacreon' (1708), in which 'The Herd of Criticks' is encouraged to 'censure', only for the poet to 'defy' them: for 'the Fair, the Gay, the Young/ Govern the Numbers of my Song:/ All that they approve is sweet,/ And all is Sense that they repete'. This is, as demonstrated by Ramsay's dedication and preface, an apt opening quotation: through it Ramsay defines his imagined, ideal audience, which is made up of women, young people and those who enjoy literary laughter. This rhetorical strategy is supported in Ramsay's dedication of the edition to his 'Fair Patronesses', 'the most Beautiful, the Scots Ladies' (p.iii). These 'Dear Ladies' are to 'pardon my Escapes, and honour me always with your indulgent Protection' (p.iv). Ramsay is here in apologetic and yet unapologetic mode; he insists that his work is 'less owing to my natural Genius, than to the Inspiration' of female 'Charms' (p.iii). Although he would continue to court his female audiences, for whom publications such as the *Tea Table Miscellany* (1724) would be deemed, by contemporary standards, to be suitable reading, this edition of *Poems*, which includes detailed, scatological descriptions of drunkenness and prostitution in poems such as 'Elegy on Maggy Johnston' and 'Lucky Spence's Last Advice', suggests that he saw no issue with women consuming such literary material.²³ Indeed, this dedication may be evidence of Ramsay's knowledge of the older Scottish canon, which often dealt in the body and bawdy, examples of which he published in *The Ever Green* (1724).

Ramsay's tone alters in his preface, which is as much a statement of literary self-justification as of supreme self-confidence. It was, in turn, influential on Burns's self-fashioning in direct but complex ways. Here Ramsay presents himself as an admirer of the then called neo-classical 'golden mean' of moderation, open-mindedness and balance. Just as the author tolerates differences in taste – 'I shall never quarrel with any Man whose Temper is the reverse of mine' (p.iv) – so he asks for acceptance of his own character and, by extension, his work: 'Every Man is born with a particular Bent, which will discover itself in Spite of all Opposition. Mine is obvious, which since I

knew, I never inclined to curb; but rather encouraged my self in the Pursuit, tho' many Difficulties lay in my Way' (p.vi). Immediately, Ramsay's rhetorical strategy calls for sympathy from his readers, particularly from those whose taste does not match his. Alongside this plea, however, lies an implicit belief that every 'Man' is equal, being born with their particular 'Bent' and talent.

Ramsay, aware of the rhetorical technique of *sprezzatura* or, in the Scottish context, the modesty topos (as practised by medieval authors including Robert Henryson and William Dunbar, whose work would appear in *The Ever Green*), continues by apologising for his shortcomings while simultaneously demonstrating erudition and linguistic elegance.²⁴ Although he ventures the belief that poetry is 'the most elevated, delightful and generous Study in the World', 'yet I am afraid, when the following Miscellany is examined, I shall not be found to deserve the eminent Character that belongs to the Epick Master, whose Fire and Flegm is equally blended' (p.iv). Just as he worries over his shortcomings as a literary man, Ramsay places himself, at least by aspiration, in the company of Homer.

Having previously proclaimed his audience to be made up of women, young people and humourists, Ramsay now asserts that his faults may be 'overlook'd by the Indulgence of my best Friends, for whom I write' (p.v). As is traditional with the modesty topos, which would be skilfully utilised by Burns some sixty-five years later, Ramsay makes grand claims on a small scale. His audience is, apparently, a local one, made up of his 'best friends'. At the same time it includes 'the Fair, the Gay, the Young'. It does not, however, include 'Pedants' who would dismiss him for a lack of classical education: those who 'confine Learning to the critical Understanding of the dead Languages, while they are ignorant of the Beauties of their Mother Tongue, do not view me with a friendly Eye' (p.vi). Although he admits this 'shortcoming', he and his supporters place Scots on a par with the ancient languages by reversing customary educational values: 'King *David*, *Homer* and *Virgil* [...] were more ignorant of the *Scots* and *English* Tongue, than you are of *Hebrew*, *Greek* and *Latin*.' His patrons' advice is simple: 'Pursue your own natural Manner, and be an original' (p.vi). This description of himself as an 'original' demonstrates self-confidence alongside literary humility. According to the *OED*, one of the definitions of the term in the early eighteenth century reveals that Ramsay saw himself, or at least wanted to present himself, as a 'person from which something springs or is derived; a source, cause; an originator; creator'.²⁵ Rather than bemoan his inability – or unwillingness – to fit the contemporary template for a 'learned poet', Ramsay presents himself, albeit subtly, as the wellspring of Scots vernacular poetry in the eighteenth century. This assertion is, however, characteristically complex. Although Ramsay is traditionally seen as the originator of what was once known as the 'Scots vernacular revival', he was also heavily influenced by sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Scottish poets, including Robert Sempill of Beltrees, Archibald Pitcairne and others, and he declared openly his indebtedness to an existing and recent tradition of Scots vernacular poetry. Rather than 'reviving' the Scots literary legacy, then, Ramsay can be seen as maintaining it for a new century of readers. In his patrons' encouragement of this vernacular 'originality', Ramsay sees himself as protected by his imagined audience: '*Thus shielded by the Brave and Fair;/ My Foes may envy, but despair*' (p.vi).

In Ramsay's preface Scots is justified as the appropriate linguistic vehicle for his poetic enterprise:

That I have exprest my Thought in my native Dialect, was not only inclination, but the Desire of my best and wisest Friends; and most reasonable, since good Imagery, just Similes, and all Manner of ingenious Thoughts, in a well laid Design, disposed into Numbers, is Poetry. –

Then good Poetry may be in any Language. – But some Nations speak rough, and their Words are confounded with a Multitude of hard Consonants. [...] These are no Defects in our's, the Pronunciation is liquid and sonorous, and much fuller than the *English*, of which we are Masters, by being taught it in our Schools, and daily reading it; which being added to all our own native Words, of eminent Significancy, makes our Tongue by far the completest. (p.vi-vii)

Not only does Ramsay justify his decision to write in Scots by pointing out that poetry can be written in any language; his argument is that Scots is the 'completest', particularly in comparison to less 'sonorous' languages. In Ramsay's construction Scots are bilingual 'Masters' of the dominant language of public life, also capable of full emotional and creative expression in their 'native Dialect'. This belief is supported strategically by Ramsay's glossing practice and remains a cornerstone of his literary activities, whether as poet, collector, editor or playwright, for the remainder of his career.

Despite his self-confidence, Ramsay's preface displays a need for justification of his linguistic decisions. It contains a long quotation from 'Dr. Sewel [*sic*]', who had provided an introduction to the London edition of Ramsay's pastoral dialogue *Patie and Roger* in 1720. While declaring that poem 'a true and just Pastoral', Sewell laments his 'own little knowledge of [Scots], since I meet with so many Words and Phrases so expressive of the Ideas they are intended to represent' (p.vii). This praise from an English critic leads Ramsay to explain that there are some 'standard' English poems in his collection but, 'tho' the Words be pure *English*, the Idiom or Phraseology is still *Scots'* (p.vii).

This combined self-assurance and need for public literary support are continued in the first section of the edition, which is made up not of Ramsay's work but of poems written to the author by various admiring critic poets, including 'To Mr. Allan Ramsay on his Poetical Works', by Josiah Burchet (p.ix-xiv), 'To the Author', by C. T. (p.xv-vi), 'To Mr. Allan Ramsay', by C. Beckingham (p.xvii), and 'To Mr. Allan Ramsay on the Publication of his Poems', by James Arbuckle (p.xviii-xx). With the publication of these works, which are placed before the customary list of subscribers, Ramsay (and his publisher, Ruddiman) is demonstrating the esteem in which the poet is held in literary circles, the eagerness of his patrons and the cultural and publishing networks within which he operates. All of this paratextual apparatus gives credence to Ramsay's decision to write in Scots, and bolsters his poetic persona as a Scots vernacular 'original'.

Focusing on one example of a text within *Poems* of 1721 demonstrates the consistency of Ramsay's approach. 'Lucky Spence's Last Advice', a deathbed poem featuring an aged brothel madam dispensing her last words and counsel to the young women in her charge, had been published as a pamphlet in 1718 with no paratext. It was, unlike his so-called mock elegies, published as a solo piece, demonstrating that it was deemed to have a sufficient, ready-made readership in Edinburgh. In the 1721 edition Ramsay provides heavy glossing and information-rich footnotes which reconcile the poem's local content and the universal 'lessons' of Lucky Spence's life. Ramsay's approach does, as Miller has suggested, draw a 'boundary' between text and paratext but, in so doing, it enlarges on the poem, opening Genettean 'thresholds' into new layers of meaning. It also allows Ramsay to utilise a different tone of voice from that of the poetry and yet similar to the preface, which in turn enlarges on his literary persona and 'brand'. As Michael Murphy has argued,

Ramsay uses glossing to extend his textual *persona* by adding a foot-of-page *persona* to his poetic one. This addition not only permits Ramsay to occupy more of the physical page but also to establish a less fictional, more conversational, narrative space within which he can

favourably mediate between his poetry and its readers, by acting as a friendly commentator on his own work.²⁶

The footnote is the place where Ramsay's urbane literary persona comes to the fore, providing information on his poetic references and about himself as a Scots vernacular 'original'. While they offer 'mediation', Ramsay's footnotes can be seen as constructing an extension of his poetic persona, rather than constituting an additional one. Furthermore, in the case of 'Lucky Spence's Last Advice', at least, Ramsay's footnotes demonstrate that the fictionality of the main text is in doubt. Indeed, rather than exposing the 'fiction' of Lucky Spence, the 'reality' of Ramsay's ostensibly non-fictional footnote voice powerfully reveals the poem's own concrete realities.

In the footnotes to 'Lucky Spence's Last Advice' Ramsay explains things further for an unfamiliar audience, but this paratextual space is not without humour; in fact, the footnote adds yet more layers of irony to an already ironic text and simultaneously offers more to his apparently in-the-know local audience. Neither are Ramsay's footnotes free of moral judgement. In his first footnote Ramsay describes Lucky Spence as 'a famous Bawd who flourished for several Years about the Beginning of the Eighteenth Century; she had her Lodgings near *Holyrood-House*' (p.33). On the surface this is a traditional explanatory footnote. However, alongside its explication is the unexplained and the implied: with his description of Spence 'flourishing' at her brothel near Holyrood House, Ramsay implies that her proximity to Edinburgh's Parliament House and law courts fuelled her trade.²⁷ His description of Spence's employees also offers something of a moralistic judgement-cum-joke: they are 'young Lasses that had a little Pertness, strong Passions, Abundance of Laziness, and no Fore-thought' (p.33). Getting by on looks alone is, as the poem states, unreliable for it is time-bound. By the same token, despite Ramsay's smiling frown at the women's career choices, his practice is democratic and inclusive. With 'Lucky Spence's Last Advice' Ramsay commemorates the seedy side of Edinburgh life and its real characters with human warmth and some pride; in so doing, he demonstrates that they are as worthy of literary memorial as the subjects of customary elegies.

Ramsay also offers knowing paratext when the poem enters the further realities of its bawdy territory. When Spence dispenses advice to her prostitutes for occasions when a client wants to 'light his Match/ At your Spunk-box' (l.27-8), Ramsay's footnote laughingly points to his *double entendre*, and implies that his work will survive to become tough fruit for future scholars: 'I could give a large Annotation on this Sentence, but do not incline to explain every thing, lest I disoblige future Criticks, by leaving nothing for them to do' (p.34). Similarly, when Spence advises on how to deal with customers who are also men of the cloth, Ramsay explains his terminology by highlighting pretended piety and hypocrisy: these men are 'Fellows who wear the wrong side of their Faces outmost, Pretenders to Sanctity, who love to be smuggling in a Corner' (p.35). While this is a recognisable, universal 'type', local readers might connect Ramsay's descriptions with real figures.

Despite his generosity in footnotes to local and wider audiences, Ramsay is not entirely giving in his explanations. In glossing the phrase 'But what'll ye say', Ramsay states: 'The Emphasis of this Phrase, like many others, cannot be understood but by a Native' (p.36). There is no attempt to explain any aspect of this expression, which was evidently in common use in informal, conversational Scots, or to give even approximate English equivalents. As argued below, Ramsay's glossary of 1721, which is full and rich with deeply

conveyed definitions, is nevertheless consistent with this footnote and its unspoken assertion that English translations lose something of the original meaning.²⁸

The footnotes also give further authority to the poem's contention that prostitutes are in a unique and ironically powerful situation in society. Despite their poverty, Spence and her women are well placed to detect and expose (male) hypocrisy. Although prostitutes were often scapegoats for petty crime in Edinburgh in the contemporary press, Ramsay reminds his readers that the sex trade depends on male desire for its existence. Although they are 'lazy' and lack 'Fore-thought', Spence and her employees exploit an eternally dependable market. In his gloss of 'Lest Conscience Judge' Ramsay quotes from Spence herself and implies that morality is in the eye of the beholder: 'If [customers] did any bad thing, said she, between GOD and their Conscience be't' (p.38). In this instance Ramsay's footnote – and, by extension, his paratextual practice in general – reveals hypocrisy and exploitation via the guise of a rational commentator of the early Scottish Enlightenment.

Ramsay's glossary is a long and detailed affair, and is described as containing an 'Explanation of the Scots Words us'd by the Author' (p.381). As well as offering explication of grammatical and spelling conventions in Scots and a number of illustrated rules of word endings and vowel changes between Scots and English, the glossary is designed to illustrate the argument of his preface that Scots is 'by far the completest' language for his mode of poetry. It is several pages long. On occasion a term is translated word for word, such as 'aboon' for 'above'. Far more regularly Ramsay's English translations are prolix in comparison to the original. For 'bang' Ramsay provides the following gloss: 'Is sometimes an Action of Haste. We say he or it *came with a Bang*. --- *A Bang* also means a great Number. *Of Customers she had a Bang*.' Ramsay glosses 'barken'd' thus: 'When Mire, Blood, &c. hardens upon a Thing like Bark' (p.383). For 'bucky' Ramsay has 'The large Sea Snail. A Term of Reproach, when we express a cross natur'd Fellow by *thrawn Bucky*' (p.384), thus introducing a further Scots vernacular term in an English gloss. For 'glamour' Ramsay has 'Jugling. When Devils, Wizards, or Juglers deceive the Sight, they are said to cast *Glamour* o'er the Eyes of the Spectator' (p.389). To 'maup' is 'To eat, generally used of Children, or of old People, who have but few Teeth, and make their Lips move fast, tho they eat but slow' (p.389). Ramsay glosses 'wreaths' rather poetically, as being 'Of Snaw, when Heaps of it are blown together by the wind' (p.389). Clearly he regards Scots as a supremely expressive language in which a one-word term needs two and three sentences of English translation to communicate the full extent of its expressive meaning. This rhetorical strategy opens up his text to non-Scots speakers and at the same time legitimises Scots as a literary language.

When he allows non-native readers into this Scots vernacular world with his often careful and always detailed glosses, their entry is on Ramsay's terms: while introducing Scots vocabulary, such as 'Snaw' and 'thrawn', into apparently English translations, Ramsay cultivates his role as a literary and linguistic gatekeeper. While he may be ignorant (or so he contends) of the ancient languages, his paratextual practice confirms the assertion of the preface that he is supremely knowledgeable about the variety and nuance of his 'Mother Tongue'. Through his humorous, ironic, erudite and knowing paratext Ramsay enlarges on his central texts by offering something more to an informed local audience, as well as to those readers who are ignorant of Scotland and Scots. In so doing, he sets the scene for those who will succeed him as Scots vernacular poets.

For Murphy, Ramsay's approach signals the 'growth of a more pervasive, extra-literary habit of thought, that of glossing all things Scottish, indicating that Scots were beginning to feel a need to explain, and have explained to them, their own country'.²⁹ By extension,

he asserts, glossing ‘signals a belief that one’s language and its concepts somehow fail to get to grips adequately with the real world, rendering one’s country and all that constitutes it alarmingly problematic. It is thus possible to see such glossing as a symptom of a crisis of confidence.’³⁰ Ramsay’s work can also prove the opposite case. In his text and paratext Ramsay repeatedly deals with ‘reality’, whether it be the country’s financial difficulties, its political turmoil, its moral hypocrisies or its alehouse- and brothel-keepers. Explanatory glossing may be required for Scottish and non-Scottish audiences, but the urbane voice of Ramsay’s text and paratext reveals superlative literary and linguistic confidence. As a result, Ramsay makes the case for the status of Scots as a literary language, while mediating meaning for non-Scots speakers through active paratext.

II. Robert Fergusson

The case of Robert Fergusson is in some ways comparable and in others dissimilar to that of Ramsay. Thanks, in part, to his early death at the age of twenty-four, Fergusson was less able to self-curate than Ramsay and Burns, and although the paratextual choices he did make reveal much about the self-creation of his poetic persona, Fergusson’s textual legacy is necessarily ‘curated’ by others. His literary approach was, however, a fundamental and indispensable influence on Burns. Fergusson began and maintained his career in the Scottish periodical press, becoming something of a Scots vernacular ‘house poet’ in Walter Ruddiman’s *Weekly Magazine, or Edinburgh Amusement* between 1771 and 1773, before his career was cut short by incarceration in Edinburgh’s Asylum for Pauper Lunatics, which preceded his death in 1774. Alongside his publications for the *Weekly Magazine* – as his literary career developed, he published poems in almost every issue – Fergusson’s work appeared in the *Perth Magazine of Knowledge and Pleasure* and the *Dumfries Weekly Magazine*.³¹ By publishing his poems in these well-read magazines Fergusson created, and could thereafter depend on, a large and diverse readership which had seen his establishment in the Edinburgh periodical press.³² Alongside his role as a periodicals poet, Fergusson published three texts in 1773: *Auld Reikie*, a long poem on the life of Edinburgh at daytime, night-time and worship time, a ‘Poem to the Memory of John Cunningham’ and one collection, his *Poems*, published by Walter Ruddiman (1719–1781), the nephew of Ramsay’s publisher, Thomas Ruddiman, and inheritor of the Ruddiman publishing empire. With his chief patron/publisher Fergusson was entering territory that had been prepared by Ramsay. Perhaps because he had served his time as poet-apprentice in the pages of the *Weekly Magazine*, and, conceivably because Ramsay had made the commercial and ideological case for a Scots vernacular poet in the eighteenth century, Fergusson makes no attempt to justify his approach in any of his publications of 1773. Annotation is light, prefaces are absent and glossing is practical.

Having said this, Fergusson’s *Poems* of 1773 features a meaningfully ornate title page with an appropriate engraving not of the poet’s portrait but of a shepherd playing his pipes on the banks of a river while a female personification swoops overhead, accompanying him on a horn. This image is a visual rendering of a stanza from one of Fergusson’s longest poems, ‘The Rivers of Scotland: An Ode’. Its pastoral image is of the poet, literary inspiration and youthful poetic confidence:

The list’ning muses heard the shepherd play,
Fame with her brazen trump proclaim’d his name,

And to attend the easy graceful lay,
PAN from *Arcadia* to Tweda came.³³

This evocative frontispiece and self-reflexive allusion to a major work contained in his *Poems* reveal that Fergusson felt no need to justify his role as a Scots vernacular 'original', and that he would place equal importance on his Scots and English output.³⁴ The careful reader would make the connection between the engraving and 'The Rivers of Scotland' and would be in a position to 'read' this paratext as Fergusson's statement of intent. If Fergusson is the poet-shepherd proclaimed by 'Fame', his landscape is at once pastoral and Scottish; to listen to his song Pan forsakes *Arcadia* and visits the banks of the River Tweed, where Fergusson makes his verse. While Ramsay argues that a deep knowledge of his mother tongue is ample replacement for his lack of classical learning, Fergusson places Scottish poetry and Scottish landscape into the classical, pastoral template. Ramsay asserts that Scots can sit alongside Latin and Greek as an expressive language; Fergusson contends subtly that Scottish poetry has a right to claim, and even surpass, the classical territory of pastoral, through a shrewd choice of paratext which builds a bridge to the text itself, and to Fergusson's poetic persona. Burns will continue this approach in subsequent decades in his development of the georgic.

There are few footnotes in Fergusson's *Poems* of 1773. When they do appear, they replicate the explanatory footnotes that were printed alongside individual poems as they appeared in the *Weekly Magazine*. In 121 pages of verse there are but three footnotes. These are factual, explanatory notes, with little of the irony or humour of Ramsay's. Two of the three footnotes are appended to poems in 'standard' English, with one required in the volume's selection of 'Scots Poems'. More importantly, the volume draws a demarcation between Fergusson's works in the two languages. At p.85 Fergusson's 'Scots Poems' are designated as beginning, and they occupy the remainder of the book. As this was the sole edition in which he had editorial input, this arrangement is noteworthy. Unlike Ramsay's collection, where Scots and English poems intermingle, Fergusson may be seen as offering two separate, linguistically distinct collections within one volume. A Scots-to-English glossary does feature in Fergusson's *Poems*, but it is plainer, more practical and less rhetorical than Ramsay's. Fergusson appears anxious, from the ordering of his work in his first full collection of *Poems*, to be seen as equally capable in Scots and English.

One of the volume's three footnotes appears in 'The Rivers of Scotland', at a reference to '*Caledonia*'s northern land':

Though Scotland and Caledonia are generally held as synonymous [*sic*] terms, yet there is a distinction: For of old, when the Picts inhabited this country, that part of it was only called Caledonia which lay to the northward of the *Tay*, which river is said to have been the boundary of the Roman conquests. (p.11)

Fergusson's footnote is knowledgeable in a different way from those of Ramsay; indeed, the remaining references in *Poems* are similarly explicatory in substance. In contrast to his predecessor, Fergusson is an openly learned poet: he had attended grammar school by bursary in Edinburgh and Dundee, and studied at St Andrews University. Having been trained in scholarly apparatus, he evidently regarded footnotes as a place for serious exposition. Although Fergusson does not utilise paratext in order to develop a literary identity in the mould of Ramsay's Scots vernacular 'original', his notes show the poet flexing his scholarly muscle and developing the persona of a learned Scots vernacular poet.

Fergusson's glossary is much barer than Ramsay's, being described as an 'Explanation of the Scots Words contained in the foregoing Poems' (p.123), and it predominantly offers word-for-word translations of Scots terms. Some translations are, however, affected, revealing something of the gap between Scots and 'high' English poetic expression, personified elsewhere in Fergusson's corpus by Samuel Johnson's lexicography,³⁵ and offering some ironic definitions. While 'blobs' are defined as 'globules', 'burns' are glossed as 'rivulets' (p.124). 'Graith' is 'accoutrements' (p.127), and 'parridge' is not 'porridge' but 'Pot-tage' (p.129). While maintaining the guise of the Scots scholar-poet, Fergusson is able to echo Ramsay's point that some of the meaning of Scots terms is lost in translation, but he goes a step further, offering a satire of the excesses of neo-classical poetic diction in a knowingly ironic glossary.

As noted, the Ruddiman edition of *Poems* of 1773 was the only full collection published during the poet's lifetime. Nevertheless, there was evidently a reliable market for Fergusson's work, for Ruddiman regularly produced volumes of Fergusson's *Poems on Various Subjects* throughout the 1770s and 1780s, while other publishers joined the fold by issuing editions from the 1790s. In these posthumous editions Ruddiman makes paratextual modifications and the editor becomes, in effect, the chief curator of Fergusson's textual legacy in the poet's absence. First, he adds his own obituary of Fergusson, which had been published in the *Weekly Magazine* in October 1774. In its new venue Ruddiman's obituary functions as an introductory 'Life' of the poet. Moreover, Ruddiman splits the volume into two parts, dividing each into sub-sections. In 'Part One' the first half is designated 'English Poems' and the second 'Scots Poems', while 'Part Two' places Fergusson's 'Scots Poems' first. They are followed by 'English Poems' and 'Posthumous Pieces'.³⁶

While Ruddiman retains Fergusson's explanatory footnotes from 1773, the 1782 volume closes somewhat differently from the 1773 edition, with a piece on the poet's premature death by fellow *Weekly Magazine* poet J. Tait, entitled 'The Vanity of Human Wishes: An Elegy, occasioned by the untimely Death of a Scots Poet' (p.149-51). Tait's piece is less about Fergusson's life and work than about the inevitability of death. Although Fergusson is described as the 'youthful BARD' of 'SCOTIA', and is warmly admired for 'the magic of his strains,/ Which often glow'd with fancy's warmest fire' (p.150), the poem's final thought is a universal one: 'genius, learning, health, and vigorous youth,/ May, in one day, in death's cold chains be bound' (p.151). The volume ends here, with no glossary and no index, but simply 'FINIS'.

If Ramsay and Burns were able to and shape their own poetic personae through textual self-curation, Fergusson's was unavoidably entrusted to his editors. While Ruddiman undoubtedly kept Fergusson in the reading public's awareness as he continued to print new editions throughout the 1770s and 1780s, he also began an enduring myth of the poet which praised his genius but also kept heavy focus on his perceived frailties and premature death. As the volume ends with Tait's saturnine lament, it begins with Ruddiman's obituary, which states that, with him, 'Scottish poetry now sleeps' (p.iii). For Ruddiman, 'His talent for versification in the Scots dialect has been exceeded by none, – equalled by few. [...] Had he enjoyed life and health to a maturer age, it is probable he would have revived our antient Caledonian poetry, of late so much neglected and despised' (p.iv). Alongside this admiration is, however, a warning: 'alas! these engaging, nay, bewitching qualities, proved fatal to their owner, and shortened the period of his *rational existence*' (p.v). Although well-meaning in posthumous editions, Ruddiman nevertheless modifies the carefully crafted persona of the scholarly Scots vernacular poet present in the 1773 edition, thus opening the door for nineteenth-century critics'

accusations of his proto-Romantic frenzied genius, psychosis, drunkenness and dissipation.³⁷ The ‘myth’ of Robert Fergusson was therefore born in these early posthumous editions, while their new paratextual materials assisted in the fossilising of Fergusson’s personal reputation.

III. Robert Burns

Burns’s paratextual practice is its own study. While Burns builds on ground already cleared and developed by Ramsay and Fergusson, and while he is indebted to their examples when fashioning his own literary persona and audience, Burns’s position as a poet of the 1780s and 1790s means that his approach is in some ways divergent from those of his predecessors. For Jeff Ritchie, Burns is a more anxious Scots vernacular ‘original’ than his forerunners, precisely because of his context: ‘Burns’s literary positioning [...] can be seen as Burns self-consciously creating and maintaining the role of the “ploughman poet” and the “Scotch Bard” as a result both of his desire to publish his poetry and his threatened national identity as a Scot in an increasingly Anglicised Great Britain.’³⁸ Burns’s self-consciousness is undeniable. However, his self-fashioning as ‘ploughman poet’ and ‘Scotch Bard’ is also a shrewd publicity device that both elevated Burns and exploited an existing market for Scots vernacular poetry, allowing his fame to rocket in the 1780s and 1790s, even if it stymied full critical understanding of his literary virtuosity.

To the first edition of his *Poems, Chiefly in the Scottish Dialect* (1786)³⁹ Burns adds a now celebrated preface which takes hints from Ramsay and Fergusson in its strategies of poetic self-construction, as well as its imagining of Burns’s own ideal audience.⁴⁰ Like Ramsay, Burns is open with his readers about his lack of formal, classical education, and his self-professed, ostensible position as an autodidact is present in his choice of motto for the title page: ‘The Simple Bard, unbroke by rules of Art, –/ He pours the wild effusions of the heart:/ And if inspir’d, ’tis Nature’s pow’rs inspire:/ Her’s all the melting thrill, and her’s the kindling fire.’ Immediately, at a first glance at *Poems, Chiefly in the Scottish Dialect*, the reader is confronted with the image of a rustic, untutored ‘Bard’, whose sole inspiration is nature. This persona is, however, only part of the story and, as Christopher Ricks has argued, ‘we sell Burns short if we begrudge him his skill with allusion’.⁴¹ Indeed, Burns’s preface demonstrates that Henry Mackenzie’s depiction of him as ‘heaven-taught ploughman’ came, as Fiona Stafford has argued, from Burns as much as from his critics.⁴²

Therefore, in the first sentence of the preface Burns presents his poetry as the ‘trifles’ of an individual who lacks ‘all the advantages of learned art’, but who nevertheless is able to cast ‘an eye to Theocritus or Virgil’ (p.iii). Like Ramsay’s, Burns’s introduction of himself to the literary world imagines his audience in an apparently humble manner. If Ramsay’s audience was at once made up of his ‘best friends’, young people, women and wits, Burns presents himself as encapsulating the voice of his own rural community: ‘he sings the sentiments and manners, he felt and saw in himself and his rustic compeers around him, in his and their native language’ (p.iii). Burns immediately expresses his regard for Scots as a poetic language, but also casts himself as a ‘rustic’ poetic spokesman for his community and social class. According to Ritchie, Burns presents himself as the mouthpiece of an ‘idealised stereotype of a nationalistic myth’ that is ‘essentially Scottish and patriotic’.⁴³ It is certainly the case that Burns paints himself as springing from and contributing to an idealised version of Scotland and even the regional specificity of Ayrshire but, despite his claims of ignorance, his own reading and, by extension, his poetry are also to be seen

in a British context. In one breath Burns casts himself, with ‘fear and trembling’, as ‘an obscure, nameless Bard’ (p.iv). In the next he quotes from the work of William Shenstone, describing the poet as a credit to ‘our nation’ (p.v; my italics). While introducing himself as ‘the Scotch bard, the unique spokesperson of Caledonia’,⁴⁴ he sees himself as part of a British tradition of poetry. While ‘kindl [ing] at the flame’ of ‘the genius of a Ramsay, or the glorious dawns of the poor, unfortunate Ferguson’ (p.v), he evidently sees ‘the Learned [...] and Polite’ as making up the majority of his readership, demonstrated through his plea that they ‘make every allowance for Education and Circumstances of Life’ (p.vi). Like that of Ramsay in his preface, Burns’s literary pride soars at one minute and plummets the next. With this rhetorical strategy he fashions the persona of a Scots vernacular poet who is at once apologetic about his shortcomings and immensely assured of his literary abilities. According to Nigel Leask, ‘the vernacular voice of the “ploughman poet” and his celebration of *carpe diem* are often at odds with the writerly decorum and didactic concerns of the georgic poet.’⁴⁵ For Ritchie, he also ‘converted the celebration of native culture into an economic activity through marketing a “people” to the public’.⁴⁶ As Corey Andrews has argued, Burns valued, albeit with reservations, the persona of ‘heaven-taught ploughman’ in ‘attracting a sizeable audience within (and without) Scotland’.⁴⁷ While promoting himself, then, Burns also enlarged and redesigned the expected audience for poetry in the 1780s.⁴⁸

Burns’s footnoting practice lies somewhere in between that of Ramsay and Fergusson. While, for Burns, footnotes are often used to provide further contextual information, they are also often a site for irony and for the further development of his poetic persona. In the Kilmarnock edition of 1786 Burns provides footnotes to ten poems, with ‘Hallowe’en’ having its own mini-preface in which Burns explains that, for ‘those who are unacquainted with the manners and traditions of the country where the scene is cast, Notes are added’. He furthermore asserts that his portrait of ‘Human-nature, in it’s rude state’, ‘may be some entertainment to a philosophic mind [...] to see the remains of it, among the more unenlightened in our own’ (p.100). These are the words not of a ‘rustic bard’ who is ‘unbroke by art’ but of a rational and Enlightened commentator who, in the words of Andrews, ‘sized up potential readers and adapted his personae to meet both the writing occasion and the reader(s)’, while acting ‘as a participant-observer in the classic anthropological sense’.⁴⁹ Elsewhere in the Kilmarnock edition, Burns’s footnotes demonstrate the literary traditions into which he inserts himself. In his footnote to ‘The Twa Dogs, A Tale’, he explains that the ‘ploughman’s collie’, Luath, is named after ‘Cuchullin’s dog in Ossian’s Fingal’ (p.11). Similarly, in designating the cantos of ‘The Vision’ ‘duans’, Burns’s footnote explains that this terminology is also Ossianic, ‘for different divisions of a digressive Poem’ (p.87). Notwithstanding Macpherson’s literary counterfeiting, Burns’s elevation works in at least two ways. On one hand, it demonstrates Burns operating in an apparently ancient Scottish tradition of poetry. On the other, in his creative and learned use of Macpherson’s texts – as in ‘The Vision’, with its footnote reference to ‘Cath-Loda, Vol. 2. Of M’Pherson’s Translation’ – Burns also legitimises the Scottish canon by treating it, and by extension his own work, with scholarly *gravitas*.

Elsewhere, Burns’s footnotes highlight his familiarity with Shakespeare’s works, as in ‘The Holy Fair’ (p.51) and ‘A Dream’ (p.85), or are laughingly autobiographical and self-reflexive, as in his note to ‘The Author’s Earnest Cry and Prayer’, in which ‘Nance Tinnock’s’ is glossed as being ‘A worthy old Hostess of the Author’s in *Mauchline*, where he sometimes studies Politics over a glass of guid, auld *Scotch Drink*’ (p.35). In the ‘Epistle to Davie, A Brother Poet’, Burns reveals his indebtedness to Ramsay in a footnote (p.142),

while the 'Epistle to John R[ankin]'s' references reveal the way in which Burns relates to other poets within a cultural and literary network or canon (p.219). Retaining Ramsay's ironically knowing approach to footnotes, Burns's paratext retains aspects of Fergusson's scholarly apparatus. Taking cues from each of his predecessors, Burns is able to inhabit fully the role of erudite and knowledgeable 'Scotch Bard', despite his apparent confessions of ignorance.

The glossary included in Burns's Kilmarnock edition is strongly reminiscent of Ramsay's detailed and many-layered introduction of 1721, but it is also serious in intent, as its introduction intimates:

Words that are universally known, and those that differ from the English only by the elision of letters by apostrophes, or by varying the termination of the verb, are not inserted. The terminations may be thus known; the participle present, instead of *ing*, ends in the Scotch Dialect, in *an* or *in*; particularly, when the verb is composed of the participle present, and any of the tenses of the auxiliary, *to be*. The past tense and participle past are usually made by shortening the *ed* into *'t*. (p.236)

Although, according to Alex Watson, Burns complicates a straightforward concept of literary national identity with his branding the Scots vernacular a 'Dialect', particularly seen here in comparison to Ramsay's portrayal of the Scots 'language', his text and paratext allow Burns to present 'Scots as a living archive of a disappearing society'.⁵⁰ Therefore Burns's glossary echoes Ramsay's in its detailed definition of simple Scots terms. For 'blink', Burns has 'a glance, an amorous leer, a short space of time' (p.236), while he glosses 'toyte' as 'to walk like old age' (p.240). Among these poetic definitions are anthropological and agricultural insertions along the lines of 'Hallowe'en's' paratext, including 'braxie', which is 'a morkin sheep'; 'drummock', which is 'meal and water mixed raw' (p.237), and 'laggen', 'the angle at the bottom of a wooden dish' (p.239), as well as folkloric definitions, such as 'water-kelpies', which are 'a sort of mischievous spirits that are said to haunt fords' (p.240). For Watson, Burns's approach 'enables the poet and his readers to cross cultural and linguistic boundaries in ways that transcend and evade editors' narrow interpretative parameters'.⁵¹ Indeed, through his complex navigation of a Scottish and British market-place, Burns is at once part of the community of 'rustic compeers' he professes to speak for and to and an observer and reporter of it. He is at once the 'ploughman poet', inspired only by nature, and the rational, anthropological tour guide through the lives and habits of the ostensibly 'unenlightened'. He provides a nationalistic poetic voice, but his literary identity borrows from Scotland, England, Europe and the classics. According to Watson, he is a 'broker between Scots and English, existing on the margins between both'.⁵²

In the second edition of *Poems, Chiefly in the Scottish Dialect* (Edinburgh, 1787) Burns's approach alters profoundly. Gone is the self-effacing and yet self-assured preface, in which the poet apologises for his art at the same time as elevating it to the heights of literary achievement. It is replaced by a dedication 'to the Noblemen and Gentlemen of the Caledonian Hunt'⁵³ and a new, perhaps more straightforward authorial self-regard, seen most simply in the engraved portrait of the author, by Beugo and based on Nasmyth's painting, which adorns the book's frontispiece. In his address to 'My Lords, and Gentlemen', Burns immediately proclaims himself as 'A Scottish Bard, proud of the name, and whose highest ambition is to sing in his Country's service' (p.v). His self-fashioning

metaphors are similarly proud, with the description of his inspiration, which is presented in Biblical terms: ‘The Poetic Genius of my Country found me as the prophetic bard Elijah did Elisha. [...] She bade me sing the loves, the joys, the rural scenes and rural pleasures of my natal soil, in my native tongue’ (p.vi). With this imagery Burns capitalises on Henry Mackenzie’s review of the Kilmarnock edition, in which he famously described the poet as ‘Heaven-taught ploughman’, and maximises his marketability to a new audience in the Scottish capital and beyond.⁵⁴ More important than all of this, however, is Burns’s self-proclaimed place as an equal of his addressees. Just as Ramsay asserts that every person has his or her particular aptitude, here Burns states: ‘I come to claim the common Scottish name with you, my illustrious Countrymen; and to tell the world that I glory in the title’ (p.vi-vii). No longer is Burns a subservient apologist for his rustic roots; he is a poised ‘Scottish Bard’ who stands on an equal footing to ‘Lords and Gentlemen’ as a Scot. Subsequent to the dedication is a list of subscribers, which runs to some thirty-eight pages. With this evidence, and in the year between the Kilmarnock and Edinburgh editions, Burns had found a steady footing as a ‘Scottish Bard’.

Just as Burns enlarges on his poetic persona with the Edinburgh edition of 1787, so too does he enlarge on the voice found in his footnotes. As well as retaining the notes already printed in the Kilmarnock edition, Burns adds others that confirm his complex position as a national poet. In ‘The Holy Fair’ Burns adds the explanation that the poem’s title is ‘a common phrase in the West of Scotland for a sacramental occasion’ (p.40), while ‘The Brigs of Ayr’ now abounds with further particulars of the poem’s local, urban landscape (p.73-4). For ‘The Ordination’ Burns gives heavy hints as to which ministers are under discussion in his footnotes and itemises his Biblical references one by one (p.85-6). To ‘The Vision’, a poem already positioned in the Kilmarnock edition as the supreme work of a Scottish bard, Burns adds more footnotes which focus on ancient Scottish history and his own role as tradition-bearer (p.133).

In the short time between the first and second editions of *Poems, Chiefly in the Scottish Dialect*, Burns is presenting himself and being seen as a national poet who could garner new and diverse readerships well beyond his west of Scotland roots. Now a marketable commodity, Burns demonstrates what Christopher Flint has described as the eighteenth-century writer’s ‘awareness that authorship derives as much from the material processes of print culture as from the individual writer’s legal or philosophical self-definition’.⁵⁵ As if to confirm this view, Burns’s enlarged glossary is now moulded for a wider, non-Scottish and, presumably, learned audience, with its discussion of the rules of Scottish ‘diphthongs’ and, most significantly, the sounds of ‘the Scots language’ (p.345). Here is Burns, the Scottish bard, who writes no more in a ‘dialect’ but now, as Ramsay did before him, in Scotland’s ‘language’, and with pride.

IV. Conclusion

These case studies demonstrate that an analysis of paratext offers ‘thresholds’ to new critical perspectives on three poets traditionally seen as the triumvirate of eighteenth-century Scots vernacular poetry. Through their often shrewd, ‘standard’ English prefaces, footnotes and glossaries, Ramsay, Fergusson and Burns define their audiences, develop and maintain their own literary personae and deftly navigate the British literary market-place by explaining and defining – not only their linguistic terms but their own particular place in that market-place – where it is deemed necessary. While Ramsay’s paratext cultivates him as the Scots vernacular ‘original’ of the newly dawned century who nevertheless

transmits a living Scottish literary culture into the 1700s, Fergusson engineers the persona of the scholarly Scots vernacular poet who wears his learning with quiet pride before his 'myth' is engineered and curated by others. Burns, always and fully aware of the canon in which he writes, takes aspects of both of his major Scots vernacular predecessors and makes his own persona of the Scottish bard, who sings proudly of his nation but at the same time displays a 'fluid sense of selfhood that contrasts with the fixity of national identity'.⁵⁶ While some critics have viewed this quality as evidence of Burns's position as a 'proto-Romantic', eighteenth-century Scots vernacular poetry's paratext demonstrates that Ramsay and Fergusson share Burns's role as participant/observer and sponsor/satirist who brings the concerns of the local to the national literary stage. These three Scots vernacular poets' use of paratext, for which they choose to utilise 'standard' English, demonstrates not only their awareness of the possibilities of the Scottish and British marketplaces and the role that Scots poets might play therein but also their varying levels of control over their own poetic personae and particular brands.

NOTES

The author gratefully acknowledges the support of the Arts and Humanities Research Council in the preparation of this article. Details of the award are as follows: 'The Edinburgh Works of Allan Ramsay' (Principal Investigator Murray Pittock; Co-Investigators: Rhona Brown, David McGuinness and Steve Newman); funded by a major research grant, project AH/PO15093/1, 2018-22.

1. See James G. Basker, 'Scotticisms and the Problem of Cultural Identity in Eighteenth-Century Britain', in John Dwyer and Richard B. Sher (eds), *Sociability and Society in Eighteenth-Century Scotland* (Edinburgh: Mercat, 1993), p.81-95.

2. See Henry Mackenzie, *The Lounger* 97 (9 December 1786). Robert Crawford describes Fergusson's reception as that of 'Burns's John the Baptist', in his Introduction to *Heaven-Taught Fergusson: Robert Burns's Favourite Scottish Poet* (East Linton: Tuckwell, 2002), p.2.

3. A. B. Grosart, *Robert Fergusson* (Edinburgh: Oliphant, Anderson and Ferrier, 1898), p.38.

4. Susan Manning, 'Robert Fergusson and Eighteenth-Century Poetry', in Crawford (ed.), *Heaven-Taught Fergusson*, p.88.

5. See Ian Jackson, 'Approaches to the History of Readers and Reading in Eighteenth-Century Britain', *The Historical Journal* 47:4 (2004), p.1041-54.

6. See Gérard Genette, *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation*, trans. Jane E. Lewin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

7. J. Hillis Miller, 'The Critic as Host', *Critical Inquiry* 3:3 (1977), p. 441; repr. in Harold Bloom et al. (eds), *Deconstruction and Criticism* (New York: Seabury, 1979), p.219.

8. See, for example: Corey E. Andrews, 'Footnoted Folklore: Robert Burns's "Hallowe'en"', in *Studies in Scottish Literature* 37:1 (2013), p.24-37; Jeff Ritchie, 'Robert Burns and William Wordsworth: Positioning of a Romantic Artist in the Literary Marketplace', in *Studies in Scottish Literature* 30:1 (1998), p.129-36; and Alex Watson, 'Thirteen Ways of Glossing "To a Haggis": Disputing the Borders of Robert Burns's Paratexts', *International Journal of Scottish Literature* 6 (2010), p.1-24, <http://www.ijsl.stir.ac.uk/issue6/watson.htm> [accessed 24 October 2017].

9. For an exception, see Michael Murphy, 'Glossing Allan Ramsay Glossing', *Bulletin de la Société d'Etudes Anglo-Américaines des XVIIe et XVIIIe Siècles* 43 (1996), p.75-80.

10. See: Helen Smith and Elaine Wilson (eds), *Renaissance Paratexts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011); S. K. Barber and Brenda M. Hosington (eds), *Renaissance Cultural Crossroads: Translation, Print and Culture in Britain* (Leiden: Brill, 2013), p.1473-1640; and Terence

Cave (ed.), *Thomas More's Utopia in Early Modern Europe: Paratexts and Contexts* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2008).

11. See Patricia Pender and Rosalind Smith, 'From Paratext to Epitext: Mapping the Authorial Apparatus in Early Modern Women's Writing', *Parergon: Bulletin of the Australian and New Zealand Association for Medieval and Renaissance Studies* 29:2 (2012), p.193-201, and Gillian Wright, *Producing Women's Poetry, 1600-1730: Text and Paratext, Manuscript and Print* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013).

12. See Alex Watson, *Romantic Marginality: Nation and Empire on the Borders of the Page* (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2012).

13. See Isabel Karremann and Anja Müller (eds), *Mediating Identities in Eighteenth-Century England: Public Negotiations, Literary Discourses, Topography* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011).

14. G. Sewell, Preface to Allan Ramsay, *Patie and Roger: A Pastoral* (London: Printed for J. Pemberton and T. Jauncy, 1720), p.v.

15. John Brewer, *The Pleasures of the Imagination* (1997; repr. Abingdon: Routledge, 2013), p.145.

16. Richard B. Sher, *The Enlightenment and the Book: Scottish Authors and Their Publishers in Eighteenth-Century Britain, Ireland, and America* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2007), p.110.

17. Murray Pittock, 'Allan Ramsay and the Decolonisation of Genre', in *Review of English Studies* 58:235 (2007), p.316. See also Murray Pittock, *Scottish and Irish Romanticism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), p.32-58.

18. For studies of Scottish chapbook culture, see Adam Fox, "Little Story Books" and "Small Pamphlets" in Edinburgh, 1680-1760: The Making of the Scottish Chapbook', in *The Scottish Historical Review* 92:2 (2013), p.207-30, and Edward J. Cowan and Mike Paterson, *Folk in Print: Scotland's Chapbook Heritage, 1750-1850* (Edinburgh: John Donald, 2007).

19. In Town Council Records of 26 August 1719, Ramsay describes himself as 'prejudged in his Interest and Reputation and that the Leidges are abused by some Printers Ballad Cryers and others by Printing & Causeing to be Printed Poem's of his Composure without his Notice or allowance upon False and Uncorrect Coppies'. He asks for limits to be placed on the profits of these pirate publishers, as well as fines to be levied and papers to be confiscated. See Town Council Records SL1/1/47, 26 August 1719, 43-44, in Edinburgh City Archives. I am grateful to Helen Smailes of the National Galleries of Scotland for accessing this document.

20. See Allan Ramsay, *Poems* (Edinburgh: Printed for the Author, c.1720), p.365.

21. There is debate about the accuracy of the dating of this publication to 1720, not least because many of the pamphlets bound therein are dated 1721 and even 1722; see R. W. Chapman, 'Allan Ramsay's Poems 1720', *The Review of English Studies* 3:11 (1927), p.343-6. Copies of this text vary. The issue consulted for this article can be found in the Eighteenth-Century Collections Online database with the bibliographic number/identifier T154560 (ESTC).

22. Allan Ramsay, *Poems* (Edinburgh: Ruddiman, 1721). Subsequent references to this edition are cited in parentheses within the text.

23. For an account of Edinburgh's literary market-place in the eighteenth century, see Warren McDougall, 'Developing a Marketplace for Books: Edinburgh', in Stephen W. Brown and Warren McDougall (eds), *History of the Book in Scotland*, vol II: *Enlightenment and Expansion, 1707-1800* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012), p.118-32.

24. It is likely that Ramsay would by this point have seen the Bannatyne Manuscript, from which he sourced his extracts from medieval and Renaissance Scottish poetry for *The Ever Green*. He had published his *Christ's Kirk on the Green* in 1718 (and perhaps earlier, in 1716), which was also sourced from the Bannatyne MS.

25. 'original, adj. and n.', *Oxford English Dictionary* online [accessed 25 October 2017].
26. Murphy, 'Glossing Allan Ramsay Glossing', p.75.
27. This implication is also made in Ramsay's 'Elegy on Lucky Wood' and his portrayal of the protagonist's alehouse business suffering irreparable damage with the removal of Scottish Members of Parliament to London following the Union of 1707.
28. Ramsay's most famous text, *The Gentle Shepherd*, also encouraged linguistic debate when it was translated into English later in the century. In a review of W. Ward's 1785 translation of the text, an *English Review* commentator states that 'the sense is either totally perverted, or if at any time preserved, becomes flat, ridiculous or disgusting by the language in which it is conveyed' (*English Review* 5 (February 1785), p.193-6).
29. Murphy, 'Glossing Allan Ramsay', p.79.
30. Murphy, 'Glossing Allan Ramsay', p.80.
31. For a full analysis of Fergusson's career as a periodicals poet, see Rhona Brown, *Robert Fergusson and the Scottish Periodical Press* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2012).
32. Having the *Weekly Magazine* as his patron periodical gave Fergusson a bigger audience than many contemporary poetry editions would receive. Bob Harris states that it 'claimed a circulation of 3,000 in the late 1770s'. See Bob Harris, *Politics and the Rise of the Press: Britain and France, 1620-1800* (London: Routledge, 1996), p.11.
33. Robert Fergusson, *Poems* (Edinburgh: Ruddiman, 1773), p.9. Subsequent references to this edition are given in parentheses within the text.
34. Fergusson had early made a name with songs for operas, including *The Royal Shepherd* and *Artaxerxes*, both of which were performed at Edinburgh's Theatre Royal in 1769. 'The Rivers of Scotland' was set to Scottish airs by John Collett.
35. Samuel Johnson was a favourite target for Fergusson's satire. See, for example, 'To Samuel Johnson: Food for a New Edition of his Dictionary', which was published in the *Weekly Magazine* on 21 October 1773. Here Johnson is described as 'verbal potentate and prince' (l.38), 'whose potent Lexiphanian stile/ Words can PROLONGATE, and inswell his page,/ With what in others to a line's confin'd' (l.35-7).
36. See Robert Fergusson, *Poems on Various Subjects*, 2nd edn (Edinburgh: Ruddiman, 1782).
37. For Fergusson's biographical construction, see Rhona Brown, 'The Biographical Construction of Robert Fergusson, 1774-1900', *The Drouth* (2010), p.53-63. For a medical perspective, see Rhona Brown, 'The Construction of Robert Fergusson's Illness and Death', in Megan J. Coyer and David E. Shuttleton (eds), *Scottish Medicine and Literary Culture, 1726-1832* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2014).
38. Ritchie, 'Robert Burns and William Wordsworth', p.130.
39. Robert Burns, *Poems, Chiefly in the Scottish Dialect* (Kilmarnock: Wilson, 1786). Subsequent references to this edition are given in parentheses within the text.
40. See Kenneth G. Simpson, 'Wraiths, Rhetoric and "The Sin of Rhyme": The Shaping of the Burns of the Kilmarnock Edition', *Studies in Scottish Literature* 39:1 (2013), p.104-14.
41. Christopher Ricks, *Allusion to the Poets* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), p.51.
42. Fiona Stafford, 'Burns and Romantic Writing', in Gerard Carruthers (ed.), *The Edinburgh Companion to Robert Burns* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009), p.100.
43. Ritchie, 'Robert Burns and William Wordsworth', p.133.
44. Ritchie, 'Robert Burns and William Wordsworth', p.132.
45. Nigel Leask, *Robert Burns and Pastoral: Poetry and Improvement in Late Eighteenth-Century Scotland* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), p.6.
46. Ritchie, 'Robert Burns and William Wordsworth', p.133.
47. Corey Andrews, *The Genius of Scotland: The Cultural Production of Robert Burns, 1785-1834* (Leiden: Brill, 2015), p.35.

48. For the political ramifications of Burns's 'heaven-taught ploughman' persona in the nineteenth century, see Gerard Carruthers, 'Robert Burns's Scots Poetry Contemporaries', in David Sergeant and Fiona Stafford (eds), *Burns and Other Poets* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012), p.47.
49. Andrews, 'Footnoted Folklore', 1.30, 34.
50. Watson, *Romantic Marginality*, p.105.
51. Watson, 'Thirteen Ways of Glossing "To a Haggis"', p.2.
52. Watson, 'Thirteen Ways of Glossing "To a Haggis"', p.11.
53. Robert Burns, *Poems, Chiefly in the Scottish Dialect* (Edinburgh: Printed for the Author and Sold by William Creech, 1787), p.v.
54. Henry Mackenzie, review of *Poems, Chiefly in the Scottish Dialect* (1786), in *The Lounger* 97 (9 December 1786), p.388.
55. Christopher Flint, 'In Other Words: Eighteenth-Century Authorship and the Ornaments of Print', *Eighteenth-Century Fiction* 14:3-4 (2002), p.635.
56. Watson, *Romantic Marginality*, p.115.

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