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The Manuscript of Ramsay's Gentle Shepherd

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NOTES AND DOCUMENTS

by general literary importance and in part primarily for service to *DOST*, are as follows:

Robert Henryson: *Fables* (Text, with variant readings, based on the Bassandyne print).

Orpheus (Chepman & Myllar text only).

Testament of Cresseid (Text, with variant readings, based on the Charteris print).

The Bannatyne Manuscript (4 vols., S.T.S. Edition).

The Asloan Manuscript (2 vols., S.T.S. Edition).

The Maitland Folio Manuscript (Vol. I, S.T.S. Edition).

The Reidpeth Manuscript (portions included in Vol. II of the S.T.S. *Maitland Folio Manuscript*).

Gilbert of the Haye's Prose Manuscript (2 vols., S.T.S. Edition).

Treatment of manuscript abbreviations and other palaeographic features and of modes of reference are as for *DOST*.

Anyone interested in using, or in supplementing, the archive, should write to The Editor, Dictionary of the Older Scottish Tongue, 27 George Square, Edinburgh 8.

A. J. AITKEN

PAUL BRATLEY

THE UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH

The Manuscript of Ramsay's

Gentle Shepherd

In June 1964, Mrs. John Cowie presented to the National Library of Scotland a part of her late husband's collection of manuscripts and printed books. This collection (now National Library of Scotland Acc. 3670 and 3733) is of considerable literary importance, containing, as it does, a number of letters and poems of Robert Burns (1786-91, n.d.), correspondence and papers of Sir Walter Scott (1811-30, n.d.), and letters of other literary figures such as Allan Cunningham and William Motherwell. The collection is also rich in manuscripts of Allan Ramsay, since it includes not only the autograph manuscripts of three of his poems (*Wealth, or the Woody, Mouldy Mowdiwart*, and *Verses ad-*

STUDIES IN SCOTTISH LITERATURE

dressed to the Mavis Well), but also the original manuscript of *The Gentle Shepherd*.

This last is a folio manuscript of 105 pages, in its original green and gilt embossed covers. It has on the titlepage a note in Ramsay's hand: "This is the Originall Manuscript from which the Coppys were Printed; Presented to my Patroness March 2d 1737." According to a note on the inside of the front cover, written by Sir Alexander Boswell of Auchinleck in 1804, the Countess of Eglinton presented it to his father, James Boswell. Ramsay also comments on the various editions of Edinburgh, London, Dublin and Glasgow, expresses his hope that posterity will welcome the work, and notes that the additional songs (which do not appear in this manuscript) were added to the fourth edition in about 1732. Another note at the end of the manuscript reads "finish'd the 29th of Aprile 1725 just as eleven a'clock at night strikes."

The text shows a few variations from the first edition of 1725. There are a number of Ramsay's corrections and deletions, and also some of the drawings of heads and grotesque creatures, with which he often decorated his manuscripts. This copy of *The Gentle Shepherd* is of considerable interest, both in itself, and for its provenance, and is a valuable addition to the Ramsay items already in the National Library of Scotland.

ELSPETH YEO

NATIONAL LIBRARY OF SCOTLAND

Maga and the Ettrick Shepherd

Two unpublished letters of William Blackwood

The family of the late Robert Gilkison of Dunedin, New Zealand, have kindly sent me photostats of two letters of William Blackwood to the Ettrick Shepherd in 1821 and 1825. When Mr. Gilkison deposited most of his grandfather's literary remains in the National Library of Scotland in 1935, these letters (now given by the family to the National Library also) were left in New Zealand as of no importance. But the first communication partially modifies Mrs. Margaret Oliphant's picturesque presentation of Hogg in her *William Blackwood and His Sons* (Edinburgh, 1897, 2 vols.); and the second pleasantly illustrates