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Series editors' preface to SSL 46.2

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SERIES EDITORS' PREFACE TO *SSL* 46:2

This issue of *Studies in Scottish Literature*, guest-edited by Professor Murray Pittock and Dr. Craig Lamont, both of the University of Glasgow, is, as they note, the first-ever collection of essays devoted to Allan Ramsay's work published outside Scotland. The essay-collection was included in initial planning for Professor Pittock's major AHRC-funded Ramsay project, and we are grateful to him and Dr. Lamont for their collaboration in bringing it to *SSL*, and the efficiency with which this component in their project has been brought to its scheduled completion.

Its subject would have been of special interest to this journal's founding editor, Ross Roy, who built up a significant Ramsay collection, with over 100 editions dated between 1718 and 1800, planning to produce in his retirement a new descriptive bibliography of Ramsay's work. Over past years, beginning in 1964, *SSL* has included at least a dozen articles on Ramsay, one of Ramsay's editors A.M. (Sandy) Kinghorn served on *SSL*'s editorial board, and more recently *SSL*'s Scottish Poetry Reprints series published the first modern edition of Stuart's *Musick for Allan Ramsay's Collection of 71 Scots Songs* (1724-26), with an introduction by Professor Kirsteen McCue, also of Glasgow.

However, as its title signals, this special issue, like the Ramsay project itself, represents a new phase in Ramsay research and activity, aiming to map out the future of Allan Ramsay studies. Along with new research on specific aspects of Ramsay's achievement, the issue also explores the significance of Ramsay for such wider issues in early 18th century studies as sociability, improvement, and the visualization of a print vernacular. The editors themselves contribute an introduction and essays that look at Ramsay's public reputation, not only in traditional critical reception, but in terms of cultural memory, literary topography, and the recent active curation of "Ramsay Country." The synergy between scholarly research and its public effects is one of the distinctive features of the AHRC Ramsay project, and this strand is worth attention by those planning or

funding large-scale research on other Scottish authors and topics. Most responsible major funded projects now, quite properly, include a dissemination component, but often primarily directed to segments of the public already interested in their topic. What has been undertaken by the Ramsay project, through its emphasis on cultural memory, both in Edinburgh itself and in the Borders-Pentlands country just south of Edinburgh, is something more deliberate, with the potential to create a different and wider public image of Ramsay, perhaps one closer to his importance for contemporaries than to his quite specialized reputation as “vernacular precursor of Burns” in recent Scottish literary studies.

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The portrait of Ramsay, used on the cover of the print volume and also reproduced on p. [2] below facing the guest-editors’ introduction, deserves special notice. The portrait itself was painted by William Aikman (1682-1731), and engraved in mezzotint by George White (?1684-1732). The engraving is found with the bottom title-panel in two forms, one with only the painter’s and engraver’s names in the top corners flanking the much larger “Allan Ramsay” (as in the British Library and South Carolina copies) and the second adding “Sold by Sam^l Sympson at his Print Shop in Maiden Lane Covent Garden,” tucked in under the swashes from the A and y (as in the Scottish Portrait Gallery copy). Sympson, who moved his shop to Maiden Lane in 1732, bought copper-plates from a number of engravers, including from White’s collection, at or shortly before his death that year. The mezzotint is reproduced here from a fine example donated to the University of South Carolina Libraries in 2001 by Roger Mortimer, formerly head of rare books, in memory of George D. Terry, the former Vice-Povost and Dean of Libraries, and in honour of Ross and Lucie Roy.

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