



PRESS RELEASE - 20 Feb 2012

**Walter Scott's *Minstrelsy* Project Team Welcomed by the
German Consul General in Scotland**

An AHRC/DFG funded project on Walter Scott's *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border* (first edition 1802-3) has been officially welcomed and endorsed by the German Consul General in Edinburgh. Professor Sigrid Rieuwerts from the University of Mainz and Dr Katherine Campbell from the University of Edinburgh stress the importance of Scott for Scotland and Germany. The ballads of the *Minstrelsy* – dealing with topics such as love and war, family loyalties and betrayal – entered into the psyche of Scotland and are still part of Scotland's cultural memory today. With the *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border* Scott made a notable contribution to the Romantic movement throughout Europe, especially in Denmark and Germany, as Rieuwerts points out: “To us in Germany, Scott is not only the great Scottish author of historical novels but the collector and editor of Scotland's stories and oral traditions. Small wonder therefore that the Brothers Grimm regarded Walter Scott as a soul-mate and friend.”

The three-year project, which will undertake research on the *Minstrelsy* as focus for literary, musical, historical, critical and cultural analysis received funding of over € 500,000 thanks to a bilateral agreement between the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) and the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG) of the Federal Republic of Germany. The DFG and AHRC welcome, encourage and support applications that cut across their national boundaries and involve collaborative teams of UK- and German-based researchers. The scheme aims to “strengthen European co-operation in the field of social sciences” and recognises that “some of the best research can be delivered by working with the best researchers internationally.”

The project began in April 2011 and involves two teams of researchers: one based at Celtic and Scottish Studies at the University of Edinburgh, and the other at the Department of English and Linguistics at Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz. The Principal Investigator of the project, Professor Sigrid Rieuwerts has also recently established the “Society for Scottish Studies in Europe” at Mainz, whose aim is to promote an academic focus on Scottish literature and culture.

The *Minstrelsy* Steering Group – which involves international experts drawn from both countries – will meet at the Consulate General later this month. The German Consul General, Mr Wolfgang Mössinger, is delighted to endorse this Scotland-Germany research collaboration, which highlights our common European heritage and the importance of Scott in both cultures: “Walter Scott is an outstanding literary figure. This international project does not only strengthen the bilateral relations between Scotland and Germany, but also emphasizes Scott's importance for world literature.”

Members of the press are invited to attend a press conference on 25 February 2012, at 11am, at the German Consulate General in Edinburgh. For further information and to register your attendance, please contact Saskia Smellie on saskia.smellie@diplo.de or 0131 3479 862.