This fascinating study examines Samuel Richardson’s letters as important works of authorial self-fashioning. It analyses the development of his epistolary style, the links between his own letter-writing practice and that of his fictional protagonists, how his correspondence is highly conscious of the spectrum of publicity, and how he constructed his letter collections to form an epistolary archive for posterity. Looking backwards to earlier epistolary traditions, and forwards to the emergence of the lives-in-letters mode of biography, the book places Richardson’s correspondence in a historical continuum. It explores how the eighteenth century witnesses a transition, from a period in which an author would rarely preserve personal papers to a society in which the personal lives of writers become privileged as markers of authenticity in the expanded print market. It argues that Richardson’s letters are shaped by this shifting relationship between correspondence and publicity in the mid-eighteenth century.

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SAMUEL RICHARDSON AND THE ART OF LETTER-WRITING

LOUISE CURRAN
For Joe and Mary Curran
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Figure 3 Letter from Lady Bradshaigh to Samuel Richardson, 5 March 1751, FM xi, f.21r, © Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

Figure 4 Joseph Highmore, Samuel Richardson (1750), © National Portrait Gallery, London, 1036, oil on canvas, 20 ¾ in. × 14 ½ in. (527 mm × 368 mm).

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Figure 6 Joseph Highmore, Samuel Richardson (1747), © National Portrait Gallery, London, 161, oil on canvas, 30 1/8 in. × 25 in. (764 mm × 635 mm).

Figure 7 Thomas Loggan, The remarkable characters who were at Tunbridge Wells with Richardson in 1748, from a drawing in his possession with references in his own writing, colour aquatint reproduced in The Correspondence of Samuel Richardson, ed. Anna Laetitia Barbauld, 6 vols. (London: Richard Phillips, 1804), vol. 3, © Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

Figure 8 Detail from image of Loggan, Tunbridge Wells with Richardson, © Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

Figure 9 Joseph Constantine Stadler after Susannah Highmore, ‘Mr. Richardson reading the Manuscript of Sir Charles Grandison in 1751 to his Friends in the Grotto of His House at North End, from a drawing made at the time by Miss Highmore’ (1804), © National Portrait Gallery, London, Ds810, coloured aquatint.
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Prefatory note

Quotations from Samuel Richardson’s (SR) early works and Pamela I and II are taken from the relevant volumes in the new Cambridge Edition of the Works of Samuel Richardson, 12 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011–), cited separately in the Abbreviations list. For Clarissa and Sir Charles Grandison, not yet available in this edition, I cite the first editions of 1748–1749 and 1753–1754. As for the correspondence, the volumes that are already published in the Cambridge Edition are cited: Volumes 1, 2, 3, and 10 covering SR’s letters with Aaron Hill and the Hill family; George Cheyne and Thomas Edwards; Sarah Wescomb, Frances Grainger, and Laetitia Pilkington; and correspondence primarily on Sir Charles Grandison (1750–1754).

The remaining letters are cited from manuscripts where they exist or early printed versions where this is the only copy-text available; details of these are given in the footnotes. References to the folios of manuscript letters refer to the place from which the quotation is taken (rather than the first leaf of the letter in question). In my own transcriptions of manuscript letters, square brackets ([ ]) enclose editorial points unless specified (as SR was fond of using them), pointed brackets (< >) enclose SR’s deletions, and interlined letters and words are enclosed within diagonals (/ /). Where a reading is conjectural I have enclosed it within square brackets preceded by a question mark. All year formats have been normalised to a year beginning on 1 January, according to the reformation of the calendar and the introduction of New Style dating in 1750.
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There would be no book without the various kinds of support that my parents and family have provided over the years. The dedication registers my debt. Thanks also need to be recorded for ‘The Circuit’ and ‘Fram Thread’. You know who you are.

This book has been on my mind for a long period of time. It attempts to respond to some of the questions about Richardson that I first had on encountering him in print, and have explored with students since. I owe a deep debt of gratitude to Fred Parker who introduced me to eighteenth-century literature in the first place and taught me the value of a mode of scepticism that is unfailing curiosity. My last note of appreciation is for my kindest reader in so many ways: Adam Rounce.
### Abbreviations

- **Barbauld**  
  *The Correspondence of Samuel Richardson, Author of Pamela, Clarissa and Sir Charles Grandison; selected from the Original Manuscripts bequeathed to his Family. To which are prefixed, a Biographical Account of that Author, and Observations on his Writings*, ed. Anna Lætitia Barbauld, 6 vols. (London: Richard Phillips, 1804)

- **Clarissa**  

- **CECSR**  

- **Dictionary**  

- **Eaves and Kimpel**  

- **EW**  

- **FM**  
  Victoria and Albert Museum, London, National Art Library, Forster Collection, MSS. xi±xvi (48E5–48E10) [Samuel Richardson’s correspondence]

- **OED**  
  *Oxford English Dictionary*

- **ODNB**  
  *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*
List of abbreviations

Pamela 1
Samuel Richardson, Pamela; or, Virtue Rewarded [1740], ed. Albert J. Rivero (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011)

Pamela II
Samuel Richardson, Pamela in her Exalted Condition [1741], ed. Albert J. Rivero (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012)

Grandison

SR
Samuel Richardson