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The G. Ross Roy Collection of Robert Burns, Burnsiana & Scottish Poetry at Thomas Cooper Library, University of South Carolina

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THE G. ROSS ROY COLLECTION
of
ROBERT BURNS,
BURNSIANA
&
SCOTTISH POETRY

at
Thomas Cooper Library
University of South Carolina
With the addition in 1989 of the G. Ross Roy Collection, the University of South Carolina’s Thomas Cooper Library became a major international center for research across the broad range of Scottish literature. The core of the Roy Collection is (in the words of a recent visitor) “the best Burns collection in North America.” Around that core are holdings in depth for many other major (and minor) Scottish writers, from the Renaissance to the present day, supported by the resources of a nationally-ranked research library whose holdings now exceed three million volumes.

**The G. Ross Roy Collection**
The G. Ross Roy Collection of Robert Burns, Burnsiana & Scottish Poetry goes back to 1892, when Professor Roy’s grandmother, Charlotte Spriggings, inscribed an edition of the works of Robert Burns to “her friend” W. Ormiston Roy. The collection was inherited by the grandson in 1958 and since then has grown at least fivefold.

**Bums and Burnsiana**
By far the most specialized portion of the collection consists of editions of the works of Burns and items of Burnsiana. In this area are included not only separate editions of the poet’s works, but also editions with distinctive bindings and variants in layout made from the same plates. Books to 1825 containing selections from the poet were added. Notable among these were chapbooks, both 18th and 19th century, several apparently unrecorded. A concerted effort was also made in building the collection to obtain translations of Burns’s works into other languages. The Burnsiana in the collection includes almost every book-length study of the poet, as well as numerous pamphlets. Books which contain substantial sections about Burns have also been added.

Among the Burns highlights is a first edition of *The Merry Muses of Caledonia* (1799), one of only two known copies, and the only one with a complete title page. Of the so-called 1827 reprint of this work, the collection contains 19 of the 23 known variants. There is a splendid Kilmarnock edition of Burns (1786), and copies of both states of the 1787 Edinburgh edition, the 1787 London edition, James
Currie's edition of 1800, and R.H. Cromek's *Reliques* (1808); all but the first edition in original boards, uncut. Alongside these British editions are the two American piracies of 1788, published in Philadelphia and New York. Among books annotated by Burns are a volume of John Moore's novel *Zeluco*, a volume of *The Observer*, and a copy of *The World* with over 60 ascriptions and comments in Burns's hand. There are copies also of the major Scottish song collections, including Johnson's *Scots Musical Museum* and Thomson's *Select Collection* to which Burns himself contributed. Many of the editions of Burns and Burnsiana are association copies, several of them annotated. The University's Robert Burns bicentenary conference, in 1996, included an exhibition of highlights from the collection, since made available on the World Wide Web (see below).

**Scottish Anthologies**
The collection is rich in anthologies of Scottish poetry. These begin with the earliest Scottish miscellany, John Scot's *Delitiae Poetarum Scotorum* (1637). Eighteenth-century anthologies include James Watson's *Choice Collection of Comic and Serious Scots Poems* (1706, 1709, 1711, 2nd edition of the first part, 1713) and the rare *Edinburgh Miscellany* (1720). Eighteenth-century editions of earlier poetry are to be found in David Herd's *Ancient and Modern Scottish Songs* (1776), John Pinkerton's *Ancient Scottish Poems* (1786), and Laing's *Various Pieces of Fugitive Scottish Poetry, 1600-1707* (1825-53).

**Scottish Literary History**
The history of earlier Scottish poetry can be studied in George MacKenzie's *Lives and Characters of the Most Eminent Writers of the Scots Nation* (1708-22) and in the library's copies of Alexander Campbell's *Introduction to the History of Poetry in Scotland* (1798) and *Songs of the Lowlands of Scotland* (1799), formerly Joseph Ritson's copy with extensive manuscript notes.

Individual volumes of early Scottish authors include a fine copy of Gavin Douglas's *Eneados* (1553), and several early works of the Latinist George Buchanan.
Eighteenth & Nineteenth Century Poets

Eighteenth-century poets in addition to Burns are represented by significant holdings. These include Allan Ramsay (over eighty 18th-century editions), James Thomson, James Beattie, Robert Blair, Robert Fergusson, and James "Ossian" Macpherson. There are complete or almost complete holdings of major and many minor poets of the 19th century, including James Hogg, and such best-sellers as Aytoun's Lays of the Scottish Cavaliers and Robert Pollock's The Course of Time.

Modern Scottish Writers

The Roy Collection also has major strengths in 20th-century poetry. There are important holdings of the works of Hugh MacDiarmid, including association copies, and other poets of the Scottish Renaissance. Among these are Maurice Lindsay, William Soutar, Alexander and Tom Scott, George Bruce, and Sydney Goodsir Smith. Notable modern manuscripts include papers of Hamish Henderson, including drafts for Elegies for the Dead in Cyrenaica. Among more recent publications, there are strong holdings of works by the novelist Alasdair Gray, several inscribed and decorated. Modern imprint collections include extensive holdings of the Porpoise Press, William MacLellan, Tragara Press, and Akros Publications.

Other Major Scottish Collections

Other major acquisitions include the Rodger L. Tarr Collection of writings by and about Thomas Carlyle, a wide-reaching collection of Scottish fiction gathered by Douglas Gifford, an extensive Robert Louis Stevenson collection, and a collection of modern Scottish poetry and little magazines amassed by David Morrison. These are backed up by steady Scottish purchases for stack holdings over the years, supporting scholarly research on most Scottish literary topics.

Catalogues and Web-pages

The Roy Collection, the Tarr Collection, and the other Scottish holdings are catalogued in the library's on-line catalogue (USCAN) and are available through the World Wide Web (at www.sc.edu/library/USCAN). In addition, catalogues have

### Other Publications

*Studies in Scottish Literature*, the foremost publication in its field, founded by G. Ross Roy in 1963, is edited by him from the University's Department of English. Since volume XIII, SSL has been issued in hardback as an annual volume. Two special volumes have been based on conferences held at South Carolina, *Early Scottish Literature and Language* (vol. XXVI, 1991) and *Robert Burns & Literary Nationalism* (vol. XXX, 1998, illustrated by Alasdair Gray). For subscription or back-issues, write: *Studies in Scottish Literature*, Department of English, University of South Carolina, Columbia, SC 29208.

The University also cooperates in a major editorial project, the Stirling-South Carolina Edition of the Collected Works of James Hogg. Based at the University of Stirling, under the general editorship of Prof. Douglas S. Mack, and published by Edinburgh University Press, the edition had published nine volumes through 2001, including Hogg's *Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner* (2001).

### Fellowship Support

Each year since 1990, the W. Ormiston Roy Memorial Fellowship has supported a visiting scholar for five weeks' research in the University of South Carolina Scottish literature collections. Roy Fellows have come from five Scottish universities, Canada, Italy, and the U.S. Proposals are reviewed once a year, with an application deadline of January 31. Inquiries
and applications (project description, brief curriculum vitae, and the names and contact information of two referees) should be sent to: W. Ormiston Roy Fellowship, Department of Rare Books & Special Collections, Thomas Cooper Library, University of South Carolina, Columbia, SC 29208, U.S.A.

**Study at the University of South Carolina**
The University of South Carolina's Department of English offers both the M.A. and Ph.D. degrees. Students at both levels regularly choose research topics in Scottish literature, drawing on the resources of the Roy Collection, and students may also elect Scottish literature as a special field for the Ph.D. For further information about these opportunities, contact: Director of Graduate Studies, Department of English, University of South Carolina, Columbia, SC 29208.

**Access, Hours, and Inquiries**
The G. Ross Roy Collection is housed on the mezzanine level of Thomas Cooper Library, on the main campus of the University of South Carolina. The materials are available for use under supervision in the Graniteville Reading Room by any *bona fide* researcher; identification and a picture ID are required for initial registration. Reading Room hours are currently Monday-Friday, 8 a.m.-4.30 p.m. (except major holidays and last week of December). Inquiries: Department of Rare Books & Special Collections, Thomas Cooper Library, University of South Carolina, Columbia, SC 29208; e-mail: spcoll@sc.edu; tel. 803-777-8154; FAX: 803-777-4661, attn. Rare Books.