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## Preface

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## PREFACE

For well over fifty years, the late G. Ross Roy (1924-2013) was widely recognized as among the leading Burns scholars of his generation. He is best known to Burnsians for his authoritative and still-standard edition, *The Letters of Robert Burns*, 2 vols. (Clarendon Press, 1985), a thorough revision of J. DeLancey Ferguson's edition of 1931. Burns scholars also know Ross Roy's edition of *The Merry Muses of Caledonia* (University of South Carolina Press, 1999), a facsimile with introduction of the very rare 1799 edition that he had purchased in 1965, now in the Roy Collection. And, of course, he founded the journal *Studies in Scottish Literature*, the first scholarly journal in the field, and edited it with his wife Lucie for nearly fifty years (1963-2007).<sup>1</sup>

Less well known is the range of writing about Burns that Ross Roy published between the early nineteen-sixties and his death in February 2013. A few months before he died, he had agreed that I and his longtime friend, the late Kenneth Simpson, might edit a selection from these writings, and he had enjoyed discussing, in person with me and by phone with Ken, the general plan for this volume. We soon asked Elizabeth Sudduth to join us in editing the book, and following Ken's death later that year, she and I decided to continue with the volume, as a

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<sup>1</sup> For Ross Roy's career, see, e.g., Kenneth Simpson, "G. Ross Roy, A Tribute," in *Robert Burns & Friends*, ed. Scott and Simpson (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Libraries, 2012), 1-4; Ian Campbell, *The Scotsman*, February 20, 2013; Frank Shaw, *Robert Burns Lives!* 164 (February 20, 2014); Lesley Duncan, *Glasgow Herald*, February 28, 2013; Bill Dawson, *Burns Chronicle* (Spring 2013), 4-5; Patrick Scott, *Eighteenth-Century Scotland*, 27 (Spring 2013), 10-11, *Book Collector*, 62:2 (Summer, 2013), 343-344, and *Studies in Hogg & His World*, 24 (2014), 1-2; Carol McGuirk, "Ross Roy and *Studies in Scottish Literature*," *Studies in Scottish Literature*, 39 (2013): xi-xvi; Gerard Carruthers, *Burns Chronicle 2014* (2014): 6-8; Bill Dawson, *ibid.*, 8-10; and Ronnie Young, *Scottish Literary Review*, 6:1 (Spring-Summer 2014): 97-98.

tribute both to Ross and Ken. The focus of the volume is on Ross Roy's more accessible general essays, rather than on his specialized bibliographical scholarship. His specialized work is available to the academic researcher in libraries, and a full list of his publications through 2011 was included in the festschrift that Ken Simpson and I edited for Ross, *Robert Burns and Friends* (University of South Carolina Libraries, 2012); a few addenda are noted in an appendix to this volume.

One of the aspects of Burns studies that Ross particularly enjoyed was interaction with Burnians who were not professional academics, and several of the pieces included here began as talks, or conference addresses, or introductions to reprints, aimed at the non-specialist reader. This less formal but characteristic voice is particularly present in the first and last essays, which both originated as interviews. The opening item, "Encountering Robert Burns," has been edited from a wider-ranging series of autobiographical interviews that Ross recorded in spring 2012 with Andrea L'Hommedieu, the University Libraries' oral historian; it also incorporates a few passages from his closely-related memoir of his grandfather, written for Frank Shaw's web-site *Robert Burns Lives!* The volume concludes with a second interview, focused on "Collecting Burns," that Ross and I recorded late in 2008, for the University of Glasgow's conference in January 2009, about his great Burns collection, now in the University of South Carolina's Irvin Collection of Rare Book & Special Collections.

With the exception of some minor adjustment to references (for instance, in moving endnotes to footnotes, and in standardizing references to the *Poems* and *Letters*), we have printed the essays as Ross Roy himself saw them into print, with some inevitable minor duplication of material. Over the course of fifty years, Ross came to have a number of topics, often relating to items in his own Burns collection, on which he had developed effective well-honed riffs. In most instances, cutting these occasional repetitions would have harmed the individual essays in which they recur. We have, though, added an editorial note (in square brackets, and signed "Eds.") where a more recent discovery, as for instance of a new Burns manuscript, makes the original text potentially misleading to the unwary. In one instance I have amended a comment in the text itself. Perhaps, in Jeffrey Skoblow's memorable phrase, *Dr. Currie, c'est moi*. My instinct, however, is that Ross would have agreed with these decisions.

The original publication details and permissions on each essay are noted under Sources and Acknowledgements (pp. 199-201 below). We have made every effort to confirm that copyright lay with the author, or to obtain relevant permissions; if any claim has been omitted, we would be

pleased to hear from the rights owner. The illustrations in the volume come from items in the G. Ross Roy Collection, courtesy of the University of South Carolina Libraries.

I should like to thank Elizabeth Sudduth, Associate Dean for Special Collections, and Director of the Irvin Department, for her collaboration and encouragement in bringing this volume to publication, for expanding the index, and for help with the editorial issues and copyediting issues that some essays posed; she knew Ross Roy for the last twelve years of his life, and she has unrivalled knowledge of the Roy Collection, developed when she was preparing *The G. Ross Roy Collection of Robert Burns, An Illustrated Catalogue* (University of South Carolina Press, 2009). Once the contents had been settled, we were fortunate to have Jo DuRant to help, not only with the first stage of turning a heap of offprints and Xeroxes into editable text, but with proofing and the first stab at harmonizing text and references that had originally been produced in a startling variety of citation formats for publication in several different countries over a period of fifty years. Jo also drafted the index.

I wish to thank Mrs. Lucie Roy and Alex Gillon, Ross's nephew and executor, for their approval of the project's continuance and their interest in its progress. Lucie Roy's many years of support for Ross's work and for the journal are recognized in the dedication of this volume.

The South Carolina Scottish Literature Series in which this volume appears supplements *Studies in Scottish Literature* by making available research based on or closely related to the Roy Collection. Publication of this book in print format has been made possible through donations to the *Studies in Scottish Literature* Fund., University of South Carolina Educational Foundation.

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