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Front Matter

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VOLUME XXX

*Studies
in Scottish
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Columbia, South Carolina

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Sej Harman

For

Lucie Roy

a brave little soldier


WR/38-817 28.10.1997

Daveni, Ullapool, Wester Ross
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Dear Ross, could you print the following somewhere within SSLXXX?

The cover designer, Alasdair Gray, realized too late that the motto Scotia

Redivivus on the truncated Scotch pine should be Scotia Rediviva, and begs the reader to attribute this to  **STIRLING** *Gallery* poor Latin rather than sexual misidentification.

ROSS ROY
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USA



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Preface

The bicentenary of the death of very few people indeed has been commemorated by two major scholarly conferences and several hundred dinners, as well as books, radio and TV programs, and also a set of postage stamps. Such is the fame of Robert Burns, whose "Auld lang syne" is probably the best-known non-political song in the world. Not only are Burns's works readily available to the reading public, they have, in fact, never been out of print in the two centuries since his death, and there are now also numerous recordings of his poems and songs.

The first academic conference to honor the bicentenary was held at the University of Strathclyde in January 1996, as an expanded version of the annual Burns gathering at that university. It was organized by Dr. Kenneth Simpson, and a selection of the papers has since been published with the title *Love & Liberty: Robert Burns: A Bicentenary Celebration*. Because of the difficulty of holding a meeting at a university during the summer months, it was determined that a North American meeting should take place in the spring. Home of *Studies in Scottish Literature* and of a major Burns collection, the University of South Carolina, in Columbia, was felt to be the most appropriate location for the conference, which was held here at the end of March 1996. We had hosted a triennial gathering of the International Association for Medieval and Renaissance Scottish Language and Literature in 1990, and had subsequently published the Proceedings of that conference in *SSL*. When plans for a Burns conference were set afoot I agreed also to dedicate a volume of this publication to the papers which were presented in honor of the poet.

Studies in Scottish Literature is devoted to all aspects of the literature of Scotland, and has never designated an entire volume to essays on a single author, but it was felt that only by including most of the talks which made up the conference could readers get a feel for the wide-ranging and international make-up of those papers. Naturally, not everyone in attendance participated in that manner; many came to hear speakers whose work they already knew and to get fresh insights into the work of Robert Burns. Notable among those in attendance was a substantial delegation from the Atlanta Burns Club.

Had there been no conference this volume would not have come into being, and so it seems appropriate to acknowledge those who made the meeting possible. Generous assistance was received from Dr. George Terry, Dean of the Division of Libraries and Information Services; Dr. Lester Lefton, Dean of the College of Liberal Arts; Dr. Robert D. Newman, Chairman of the Department of English, all of these at the University of South Carolina. The South Carolina Humanities Council, a state-level agency of the National Endowment for the Humanities, made a substantial contribution in support of the confer-

ence, and the Atlanta Burns Club underwrote the cost of bringing a speaker from Scotland.

Beyond this a particular debt of gratitude is owed to the University of South Carolina Venture Fund for awarding a grant to help defray the costs of producing this volume. Without it this number of *Studies in Scottish Literature* would not have had the cover which Alasdair Gray has designed for it. The Venture Fund has made the difference.

Thanks go to the Burns Federation for a grant towards production of this volume, and also to Peter J. Westwood, Editor of the *Burns Chronicle*, for his assistance in distributing the volume.

When we first began planning the conference and the publication of the papers, my colleague Patrick G. Scott and I decided upon a division of labor: he was to have overall responsibility for the meeting, I for editing the papers. Participants have attested to the success of the conference, and this volume attests to the quality of the papers presented. While I take full responsibility for the editing of this book, Patrick Scott has been helpful well beyond his agreed duties. Jamie Hansen, Sej Harman, Jason Pierce, Paul Schultz and Aaron Shaheen have helped with the volume in various ways. Jean Goode, of Whitston Publishing, was most helpful working out the details of the colored illustration on the cover. As always my wife Lucie has been both inspiration and prod, and I owe her my thanks.

A word about editorial decisions. There are several excellent editions of both the poems and songs and the letters of Robert Burns, so it seemed evident that a single text should be used for quotations. I therefore determined that the editions chosen should be the recognized scholarly ones of today. Thus the poems and songs were standardized on James Kinsley's edition of 1968, and the letters on my edition of 1985. Spelling, punctuation and footnotes were edited to conform to house style.

A book such as this is only as good as the essays it contains. Scholars, Burns enthusiasts and the reading public at large may be grateful for the insights and interpretations they afford in better appreciating the work of one of the world's greatest poets.

G. R. R.