

11-30-2016

Books Noted and Received

Patrick G. Scott

University of South Carolina - Columbia

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarcommons.sc.edu/ssl>

 Part of the [Literature in English, British Isles Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Scott, Patrick G. (2016) "Books Noted and Received," *Studies in Scottish Literature*: Vol. 42: Iss. 2, 282–291.

Available at: <https://scholarcommons.sc.edu/ssl/vol42/iss2/12>

This Book Reviews is brought to you by the Scottish Literature Collections at Scholar Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Studies in Scottish Literature by an authorized editor of Scholar Commons. For more information, please contact dillarda@mailbox.sc.edu.

BOOKS NOTED AND RECEIVED

This list covers books received or noted since publication of the last issue, *SSL* 42:1, in May 2016. Inclusion in this list need not preclude possible fuller discussion of a book in a subsequent review or review essay.

Baxter, Jamie Reid, ed. *Poems of Elizabeth Melville, Lady Culross: Unpublished Work from Manuscript with Ane Godlie Dreame*. Edinburgh: Solsequium [an imprint of Private Book Sales], 2010. Pp. 132. Paper, £14.99. ISBN 978-0-956-603302.

--It should not be surprising, but it is, that, even after centuries of scholarly and editorial work, new poems and new poetic manuscripts are still being discovered in early modern Scottish literature. One of the most notable recent rediscoveries has been of poetry by Elizabeth Melville. Melville (ca. 1578-ca.1640) was the first published Scottish woman poet, and her *Ane Godlie Dreame* (1603) went through some 13 editions in the next hundred and thirty years. In 2014 a Melville marker was unveiled by Germaine Greer in Makar's Court, Edinburgh. Jamie Reid Baxter uncovered a large body of new manuscript verse, in 2002, and this selection prints previously unknown Melville poems from a manuscript in New College, Edinburgh, together with three published works. Dr. Baxter (who is editing a complete Melville) provides a biocritical afterword, and several pages of annotation. This paperback provides an accessible and welcome sampling to introduce Melville to contemporary readers. As noted in previous *SSL* reviews, important scholarship from small publishers often gets neglected by libraries, not only because it can go out of print before it is noticed, but because titles can be difficult to get through regular channels: this book came through what appears to be the sole current retail supplier, Word Power Books, of Edinburgh.

Blyth, Colin, ed. *Toronto Gaelic Society Ceilidh Song Book*. Kingston, ON: Iolair Publishing, 2016. Pp. iv + 61 [122]. No price stated. ISBN 978-0-9641804-6-8.

--This collection gathers sixty-one songs from the Toronto Gaelic Society ceilidhs in the years 1995-2000, with the Gaelic text in bold for singing, and interlinear or *en face* literal English translations for subsequent study, word-by-word, inversions and all, in very small print to avoid distraction during the events. Professor Blyth's brief introduction draws attention to several songs from the group called Òran Mór, closely related to pipe music, and to the limited discussion he has found of Òran Mór in the published literature. The source used for each song is noted, keyed to an introductory master-list with fuller bibliographical information.

Cairney, John. *The Tycoon and The Bard. Andrew Carnegie and Robert Burns. How the world's richest man was inspired by Scotland's greatest poet*. Edinburgh: Luath, 2016. Pp. 128. Paper, £9.99/\$18.95. ISBN 978-1-910021-96-5.

--This expanded lecture, nicely illustrated with old photographs, recounts Carnegie's life, and his Burns-related philanthropy, and usefully includes a short essay by Carnegie, "Genius Illustrated by Burns" (1891), together with the address Carnegie gave at the unveiling of the Burns statue in Montrose (1912).

Czerkawska, Catherine, *The Jewel*. Glasgow: Saraband, 2016. Pp. 336. Paper, £8.99. ISBN 978-1910192238.

--Catherine Czerkawska, originally best known as a poet, folklorist, and writer for radio and television, also has a well-established second reputation as a novelist. This book paints a largely positive, even romantic, picture of Jean Armour's relationship with Robert Burns, recentering the story found in Burns-centred sources and scholarship (which are extensively mined) with the fictional reimagination of Jean's feelings and experience.

Dellarosa, Franca. *Talking Revolution: Edward Rushton's Rebellious Poetics, 1782-1814*. Eighteenth-Century Worlds. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2014. Pp. xxviii + 238. Hardback £ . ISBN 978-1-78138-144-1.

--This is the first detailed study of the blind radical Liverpool poet Edward Rushton (1756-1814), whose extraordinary life and political involvement coincided with the Liverpool career of Burns's first biographer James Currie. While Rushton's elegy for Burns gets only the briefest mention, the range of Rushton's writing and interests (France, Caribbean slavery, Ireland and the United Irishmen, Haiti, America) provide important and provocative contextual material for the study of Scottish writing in the Burns period.

Gibson, Corey. *The Voice of the People: Hamish Henderson and Scottish Cultural Politics*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2015. Pp. viii + 232. Hardback, £14.99. ISBN 978-0-7486-9657-4.

--In his last years, and especially since his death in 2002, the late Hamish Henderson, who was in some ways marginal in his mid career, has been increasingly discussed as a major figure in Scottish cultural politics of the mid- and late-20th century. This study (based on an Edinburgh PhD dissertation that won the 2012 G. Ross Roy Medal) is the first full-length scholarly analysis of Henderson's significance. (*To be reviewed.*)

Gilkison, Bruce. *Walking with James Hogg: The Ettrick Shepherd's Journeys through Scotland*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2016. Pp. 192. Paper, £14.99. ISBN 978-1-4744-1538-5.

--This highly-original short book combines aspects of guidebook, scholarship, and hiking-journal. Bruce Gilkison, a descendant of Hogg's from New Zealand, set out to retrace, largely on foot, Hogg's journeys through the Borders, Highlands and over to the Hebrides, as brought together in Hans de Groot's edition (2010), Hogg's letters and other works, and Karl Miller's biography *Electric Shepherd*. The diary itself is interspersed with extracts from Hogg's journal, and shaded boxes provide helpful short essays on such topics as the *Statistical Account* of Etterick Forest or kelpies (and the *taniwha* of New Zealand) or class or sublimity and biodiversity or the Clearances or Hogg's *Confessions* or the St. Ronan's Games. A solid bibliography attests to the reading that lies behind the main text. In other hands, the result could have been awful (think Bill Bryson, though here without the whingeing), but Gilkison's self-deprecating curiosity succeeds remarkably well in channelling the well-attested charm of his great-great-grandfather, and in linking this benign "ancestor-worship" to his own twenty-first century appreciation for landscape and concern with ecology.

Lyll, Scott., ed. *Community in Modern Scottish Literature* (SCROLL: Scottish Review of Language and Literature, 25). Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2016. Pp. 286. Hardback €99, \$109. ISBN 9789004317444.

--Community, especially the attenuation, disappearance, destruction, or pastness of community, is a recurrent and treacherous theme in Scottish literature. Only the most adroit of literary critics can touch the topic without at least some risk of sounding Kailyardish, and even the tougher-minded historians can appear to idealize, if not sentimentalize, the sociability of Enlightenment Scotland. This book, based on what was clearly an unusually well-planned seminar series at Napier University, clears the ground for reexamining the way community is envisioned in Scottish literature of the 20th and 21st centuries. It opens with Scott Lyll's valuable roadmap to recent theories, notably the late Benedict Anderson's influential ideas of national community. The essays that follow discuss the treatment of community in such well-known authors such as MacDiarmid, Sorley MacLean, Kelman, and Galloway, but the more programmatic intent is to pluralize literary ideas of community, so there are also essays on island community, community in the counter-cultural sixties, the complexity of community for gay writing, the political ideal of folk community and the folk movement in Hamish Henderson, linguistic construction of community, identity and difference, and Scottish poetry by writers of south Asian descent. Most of the writers are established scholars, yet for the most part they are scholars who have come into the field in the past ten or fifteen years, and they still write with a sense of having new perspectives to offer. The publishers express the hope that the book "will unsettle and yet broaden traditional conceptions of community in... Scottish literature," and in many ways the volume succeeds in this ambition of connecting Scottish literary studies with wider critical trends.

Morrison, Robert, and Daniel S. Roberts, eds. *Romanticism and Blackwood's Magazine: "An Unprecedented Phenomenon."* Palgrave Studies in the Enlightenment, Romanticism, and Cultures of Print. Houndsmill: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013. Pp. xviii +290. Hardback \$100, e-Book \$79.99. ISBN 978-0-230-30441-3.

--This wide-ranging volume follows the emphasis in most recent Blackwoodian studies by focusing on the early years, from Maga's founding in 1817 through to the death of William Blackwood in 1834, seeing its generic transgressions and inventiveness as critical to the emergence of a distinctive late Romantic culture. The twenty-one

substantial essays include contributions by many of those who have been involved in recent scholarship on Blackwoods, and their topics include not only authoritative reassessment of Wilson, Lockhart, De Quincey, Hogg, and Maginn, but also less-recognized concerns such as science, sport, politics, gluttony, violence, allusiveness, orientalism, and Blackwoodian responses to Mary Shelley and Felicia Hemans.

Pittock, Murray. *Culloden. Great Battles.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016. Pp. xxii + 192. Hardback £18.99/\$29.95. ISBN 978-0-19-966407-8.

--This short account of the Jacobite defeat at Culloden in April 1746 corrects the conventional story in a number of ways, notably debunking the lingering idea that the Jacobite forces were a primitive Highland horde confronting an enemy that was more sophisticated, better-equipped, and better disciplined. It provides a detailed narrative of the battle, but its greatest strength lies perhaps in the first and last chapters, unpacking the myths about Culloden that still resonate in later Scottish (and British) historiography.

Renton, Ronald W., and Ian MacDonald, eds. *Ainmeil Thar Cheudan: Presentations to the 2011 Sorley MacLean Conference.* Sleat, Isle of Skye: Clò Ostaig, 2016. Pp. xiv + 183, with DVD. Paper. No price given. ISBN 978-0-9562615-4-0.

--This important volume provides a lasting record of the MacLean centenary conference held in 2011 at Sabhal Mòr Ostaig on the Isle of Skye. Contributors include Douglas Gifford on MacLean and war, Emma Dymock on MacLean's correspondence with Douglas Young, Timothy Neat discussing his film *Hallaig* (filmed with MacLean's cooperation in 1978-84), Murdo MacDonald on MacLean and the visual arts, Hugh Cheape on MacLean as poet-historian, and critical assessments by and interpretations by Alan Titley, Peter Mackay, Neat, John Purser, Norman Bissell, and others. With two exceptions, the thirteen talks are all presented here in English, with translations accompanying quotations from MacLean's poetry. The volume closes by interviewing Christopher Whyte at length about his experience editing and translating MacLean's poetry, especially in recovering for publication in 2001 the controversial longer early version of *Dàin do Eimhir*, which MacLean had significantly rewritten before its original publication in 1943. The accompanying DVD includes contributions from MacLean's daughter and others, with additional visual material.

Richardson, Scott. *Dorothy Dunnett's Lymond Chronicles: the Enigma of Francis Crawford*. Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 2016. Pp. xiv + 266. Hardback, \$50. ISBN 978-0-82622081-3.

--This book is notable as the first full-length critical study of the bestselling Scottish historical novelist Dorothy Dunnett (1923-2001), and of her six-book sequence *The Lymond Chronicles*, from *The Game of Kings* (first published in the U.S. in 1961) through to *Checkmate* (1975). The series tells the adventures of a sixteenth-century Scottish aristocrat Francis Lymond, not only in Scotland, but in France, the Mediterranean, Russia, and England. In a later, eight-novel sequence, *The House of Niccolò* (1986-2000), Dunnett provided a kind of prequel, centred on fifteenth-century Italy, spreading the adventures of her new hero into Spain, West Africa, the Black Sea, Egypt, and Palestine. Aside from relatively brief comment in the relevant catch-all chapters of literary histories or companions, and notably appreciative comment in Judith Wilt's recent *Women Writers and the Hero of Romance* (2014, quoted by Richardson), there seems to have been almost no mainstream critical discussion since the original reviews, outside the Dorothy Dunnett Society's own journal *The Whispering Gallery* (in which some sections of the present book first appeared). Yet Dunnett is memorialized in Makar's Court, and her archives are in the National Library of Scotland, of which she was a trustee. Scott Richardson, a classicist and comparatist at St. John's University and the College of St. Benedict, Minnesota, got hooked on Dunnett when shortly after her death a student urged him to read the first Lymond novel; it will have taken considerable courage and commitment to devote more than a decade to this project. The result is a close, appreciative, intrinsic reading of Dunnett's novels, heavy on theme and narrative art, with cross-reference to parallels in classical and medieval literature and in espionage fiction, with only the briefest biographical introduction. Richardson is not concerned to relate Dunnett to Scottish historical fiction (the index shows no reference to Scott, and only one each to Stevenson and Buchan, as against fourteen for James Bond and 56 for John Le Carré), but as the first study of its kind his book is surely an important acquisition for Scottish libraries.

Swenson, Rivka. *Essential Scots and the Idea of Unionism in Anglo-Scottish Literature, 1603-1832*. [Transits: literature, thought, and culture, 1650-1850.] Lewisburg, PA: Bucknell University Press, 2016. Pp. xviii + 327. Hardback \$70. ISBN 978-1-61148-678-0.

--This ambitious book offers an alert and lively examination, not of Anglo-Scottish writing as a whole, but of the idea and representation of unionism in a series of specific authors or case-studies. Part I, on the eighteenth-century, starts enterprisingly by going back to Francis Bacon on the Union of the Crowns in 1603, before moving on to Defoe and 1707, Smollett and his travelling Scots (a particularly readable chapter), and Dr. Johnson and Ossian (a quite persuasive reading of Johnson's sympathy with Highland Scots). Part II takes on the tension between unionism and the individual in romantic-era writing, in the novel through Susan Ferrier's *Marriage*, and (the longest chapter, at nearly sixty pages) in a major cultural event through Robert Mudie's account of George IV's Edinburgh visit in 1822, before a brief conclusion (ten pages) discussing Walter Scott. For Swenson's argument, Scott is surely the crucial author, and one hopes that she will carry her argument on to a fuller examination in another book. The argument here is largely self-contained, but its context is the discussions of 18th century Britishness and romantic-era Scottish writing by such writers as Kate Trumpener, Ian Duncan, and Murray Pittock. Even those who disagree with its larger claims about narrative, or with its particular interpretations, will find this a book stuffed with good and provocative quotes and ideas.

Verweij, Sebastiaan. *The Literary Culture of Early Modern Scotland: Manuscript Production and Transmission, 1560-1625*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016. Pp. xviii + 306. Hardback £55, \$90. ISBN 978-0-19-875729-0 (also available as an e-Book and in Oxford Scholarship Online).

--This new study of early modern Scottish literature includes comment on a number of commonly-taught writers (Dunbar, Henryson, Alexander, Fowler, Alexander Hume, Montgomerie, and others), but its importance is making coherent the picture of Renaissance Scotland that has been emerging in recent approaches to manuscript studies or book history, both for cultural production and circulation. The starting point is the Scottish royal court, particularly the manuscripts of James VI, with subsequent chapters dealing with manuscripts in relation to patronage, devotion, courtship, and urban and regional manuscript cultures, notably in the Maitland manuscripts, and the verse miscellanies of Murray of Tibbermuir and Robertson of Lude. The book has much to offer specialists, but it also helpfully makes accessible to generalists some longer-term developments in how the Scottish renaissance is now studied.

Whatley, Christopher A. *Immortal Memory: Burns and the Scottish People*. Edinburgh: John Donald, an imprint of Birlinn, 2016. Pp. xii + 244. Paper, £14.99. ISBN 97819110900086.

--Christopher Whatley's new book on what used to be called reception history may seem secondary to the study of Burns himself, and its major focus, on public statuary, may seem limiting, but it has a distinctive perspective to offer, as well as bringing to the table a large number of new case studies of the Victorian memorialization of Burns. Accounts of Burns's 19th century popularity, of how he was read, published, collected, depicted, viewed, commemorated, in short used, are not lacking: one thinks of Donald Low on the critical heritage, James Mackay on Burnsiana, Robert Crawford and others on the American reception, more recently Carol McGuirk and Corey Andrews on the construction of Burns as literary icon, Thomas Keith on American Burnsian statuary and Mauchline ware, Whatley's own major project with Murray Pittock on the Burnsian material heritage (on which this book draws), and much else besides. The opening pages, an awe-struck account of the huge crowds at the 1877 unveiling of the Glasgow Burns statue, illustrate the risks of this kind of study; as the evidence piles up, the impact of even the hugest crowd diminishes. The main historical phenomenon is surely known, and some readers may perhaps feel it unlikely that the picture will be significantly altered by accumulating further detail.

Whatley's special contribution, however, is to write as an historian, alert to the wider currents of social change within which Burns became a very malleable national icon. The main narrative, with adroit summaries of major celebrations and speeches, often rely heavily on newly-accessible newspaper evidence, and its interpretative distance from the Victorians themselves is more through quiet irony than direct discussion, but the narrative is based in often surprisingly granular understanding of locality and specific historical moments, and the endnotes reveal how much Whatley's account is underpinned by recent historical scholarship, not as is common in literary-historical studies by older syntheses. It is worth noting that Whatley's study focuses solely on the memorialization of Burns in Scotland itself, rather than globally, but the level of historical context he gives would be dissipated if he had widened the focus to the Scots diaspora.

The story Whatley tells is centred on the continuing tension between Burns as the icon of the common man and Burns as icon of a class-effacing Scottish identity, between the huge crowds of working men who flocked and processed to each unveiling, and often contributed money to

the projects, and the earnest committeemen, and civic fathers, and wealthy patrons, from whose uneasy interaction the statues emerged. Chapters explore the way Burns was claimed or fought over in the successive waves of Chartism, mid-century liberalism, and late Victorian socialism. A brief and elegiac concluding chapter, on Burns in the 20th and 21st centuries, contrasts the continuing use of the Burns brand for tourism and other commercial purposes, and the unquestioned use of Burns as an almost-nonpartisan national icon (in, for instance, the reopening of the Scottish Parliament in 1999) with the relative neglect of the still-ubiquitous Burns statuary, as being emblematic that Burns no longer holds the public imagination; this chapter seems the most likely to attract debate or dissent from other cultural historians.

It is an important book, readably written, and based on wide research. For Burnsians, for the most part, this book fills out, rather than altering, was already known about about 19th century Scottish attitudes to Burns, though every Burnsian reader who perseveres will find material that is new. Whatley may have more to say, indirectly, to those engaged in the reassessment of other Victorian Scottish writing than to specialists in the Burns period. The book should, however, be required reading for those interested in or teaching modern Scottish history or cultural studies, because distributed through it is a story of the recurrent strength of the people's voice in 19th century Scotland, even when excluded from formal political power.

Wickman, Matthew. *Literature after Euclid: the Geometric Imagination in the Long Scottish Enlightenment*. Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016. Pp. viii + 293. Hardback, \$69.95, £45.50. ISBN 978-0-8122-4795-4.

--Those who recall childhood geometry in the U.K. as a happy combination of protractors, compasses, and Q.E.D., or geometry in the U.S. as a soft landing on the way to calculus, have usually passed quickly over the late George Elder Davie's claims for its intellectual centrality to the 18th- and 19th-century Scottish university. In this book, Matthew Wickman is not concerned with Davie-esque partisanship so much as with the geometric visual or spatial reasoning that was, as he demonstrates, present either explicitly or close below the surface in many major Scottish Enlightenment texts. Indeed, he argues that the shadow or threat of geometric rationalism was a major determinant in the emergence and character of Scottish Romanticism (which "creatively adopted and distorted mathematical ideas in areas that are not formally

mathematical”). Substantial chapters explore this case in the works of James Thomson and Robert Burns, and Wickman also discusses Joanna Baillie, Adam Smith, Walter Scott, and many others. This is an ambitious book aiming at quite major revision of dominant literary ideas of figurative language; it will be difficult to integrate with other literary-historical narratives, and it deserves fuller consideration. (*To be reviewed.*)

Wilson-Costa, Karyn. *Robert Burns: le poète et ses doubles*. Lyon: Presses Universitaires de Lyon, 2014. Pp. 313. €26. ISBN 978-2-7297-0883-2.

--It is always interesting to look at how authors whom one perhaps takes for granted are viewed from a different academic tradition. In the late 1950s, Ross Roy was refused permission to write his Paris doctorate on Burns because the topic had already been used up by Angellier's dissertation in 1893. Roy turned to Canadian literature for his degree, though producing two extended bibliographical articles on Burns's French reception. Fifty years further on, this book, still the first French doctoral dissertation on Burns since Angellier, explores dualities, not only in Burns himself and his self-conscious personae, but imposed on him by early critics and biographers, and in French responses to him as ideal peasant or Jacobite or radical. It also provides what is apparently the first extended French discussion of Burns's bawdry. Wilson-Costa argues that Burns, "formé par les Lumières écossaises," and on "les frontières linguistique, culturelles et littéraires," is "sans doute, le premier des grands poètes romantiques."