Books Noted and Received

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This list covers books received or noted since publication of the last issue, *SSL* 43:1, in Spring 2017, together with some earlier titles not previously listed. Where available, books are noticed based on personal review, but some briefer entries are included only from the publisher’s description. Inclusion in this list need not preclude possible fuller discussion of a book in a subsequent review or review essay.

—This volume, by one of the longtime editors of the Scott edition, though advertised as an “approachable introduction to the Waverley Novels,” is clearly much more than that, tackling head on the “problem” of Scott’s elaborate literary style and narrative voice, and drawing on deep knowledge of Scott’s reading and library to explore the novels’ intertextual richness and complexity.

—This interdisciplinary volume considers Witcomb’s “dual allegiance to two localities, both in her fiction as in her life: South Africa’s Western Cape and the west of Scotland.” It includes an unanthologized essay by Witcomb herself, an interview, and photographs by Sophia Klaase, whose images of Namaqualand inspired Witcomb’s novel, *October*.

Both 19th century Edinburgh medicine, and the early years of Blackwood's, have been the subject of continued scholarly attention. Megan Coyer’s book explores the mutual influence between the two, examining several “previously neglected medico-literary figures,” to show “how the nineteenth-century periodical press cross-fertilised medical and literary ideas.” Authors discussed include D. M. Moir (“Delta”), Samuel Warren, W. P. Alison, and others, and topics include a background discussion of medicine in the Edinburgh Review, the medical tale of terror or horror, and the role of Blackwoodian contributors in the emergence of the public health movement.


—More substantial, and wider ranging, than many “Companions,” this book differs from much Gothic scholarship in giving equal attention to the role of Gothic in older canonical Scottish fiction as in extracanonical and contemporary writing. There are several more general essays, notably the book end pieces, the opening introduction to “Scottish Gothic” but the two editors jointly, and the last chapter, on contemporary feminist Gothic, by Monica Germana, and other essays tackle such broader topics as Celticism and Gothic (Nick Groom), Gothic Drama (Barbara Bell), Gothic poetry (Alan Riach), Calvinist Gothic (Alison Milbank), and Gothic in science fiction (Tim Baker). Between these is a series of essays, almost constituting a book in its own right, making the Gothic central to the traditional Scottish canon: Ossian (Nicholas Groom and Carol Margaret Davison), Burns (Hamish Mathison), Scott (Fiona Robertson), Hogg (Scott Brewster), the Blackwoodians (Robert Morrison), Stevenson (Roderick Watson), Barrie (Sarah Dunnigan), and Spark (Gerard Carruthers). Perhaps because of Stevenson, the two essay-streams come together to some extent in Duncan Petrie’s essay on the Scottish Gothic in film, a useful challenge to earlier anglocentric accounts. The volume is, therefore, something of a landmark in reopening a dialogue between the growing number of Gothic specialists and generalist literary history.


—This volume, with an introductory career-overview and fourteen essays on specific works or themes, is apparently the first ever wholly devoted to
the Scottish novelist Robin Jenkins (1912-2005). It is also helpfully timed to remind the critical and teaching community of the range of Jenkins’s achievement, as successive waves of very different contemporary Scottish fiction crowd libraries, bookshops and syllabuses. General awareness of his work is increasingly limited to a few titles or short stories, most notably his breakthrough novel *The Cone Gatherers* (1955); it was these that were the main focus for the ASLS Schools Conference in Glasgow in 2012. This volume is much more comprehensive. As Stewart Sanderson’s checklist here shows, between 1950 and his death, Jenkins published thirty books, with two further posthumous titles, including his last novel *The Pearl Fishers* (2007). They do not all get equally treatment here, but most of them draw at least some comment. The general tone of the volume is quite properly appreciative and celebratory, rather than sharply critical. The most tantalizing essay for me was the forensic interrogation by Michael Lamont and Professor Gifford of narrative gaps and inconsistencies in Jenkins’s extraordinary and ambitious later novel *Fergus Lamont* (1979), intriguing in themselves, but allowing the authors to suggest that Jenkins anticipates some of the narrative strategies usually credited to the post-modern Scottish fiction from Gray’s *Lanark* onwards. James Robertson collectors might also note that this volume opens with Robertson’s poem in memory of Gavin Wallace (1959-2013), one of the instigators of the project.


—The rise of political and cultural nationalism in Scotland, and even more of ethnic nationalism in Western Europe, has posed difficulties for Scottish studies, where commentators must criss-cross the ill-policed frontier or minefield between a steadily-growing academic discipline and a submerged essentialist discourse that in other contexts post-theoretical literary studies would reject. This first title in a new monograph series approaches the problem head-on, tackling a broadbased selection of contemporary Scottish fiction to show the obsolescence of earlier critical concepts of Scottishness, and arguing that recent novelists have provided “counter-narratives of the ‘imagined community’ that is the Scottish nation.” In particular, Hologa examines how such topics as racism, sexism, and the colonial legacy have been “negotiated” in works by Warner, Robertson, Welsh, Banks, Kay, MacLean and others. Hologa herself negotiates the minefield well, raising theoretical issues but also making clear her admiration for the imaginative power of individual novels. Her study deserves to read by Scottish critics as well as those outside Scotland,
for the comments and fresh perspective it provides on individual texts, as well as for its general argument.


—As footnoted in William Donaldson’s essay on Lang in *SSL* 43:1, 157-165, the two-volume Andrew Lang edition, edited by Andrew Teverson, Alexandra Warwick, and Leigh Wilson (Edinburgh University Press, 2015) was followed closely by this three-volume rival. Dr Hubbard is best known for his work in modern Scottish poetry and poetry translation, and Professor Ray is a anthropologist who has published extensively on Scottish-American cultural identities and their modern expression. Their Routledge edition, like the Edinburgh one, is a selection, not the kind of edition that includes full textual apparatus. The publishers emphasize the extensive paratext, suggesting that the lengthy general introduction and the separate volume introductions “offer a thorough overview of Lang’s work in an astonishing variety of fields,” and noting that “explanatory notes supply unique intellectual comment rather than merely factual information.” This approach isn’t for every likely user of the edition, and because many libraries will rely on access to the e-Book version rather than the print volumes the selections may well be accessed individually rather than in the interpretative context offered here. Only time will tell which, if either, of the two editions now in print becomes a standard reference on this important and often-neglected author.


—*Weir of Hermiston*, though short and incomplete, has always posed special problems for Stevenson’s editors, in assessing the extent to which any of the early published texts accurately reflects the details of Stevenson’s multiple manuscript drafts, the transcripts by his niece Belle Strong, and the typescripts he had made. The significance of this new edition, coming so early in the New Edinburgh Edition series, lies not only in the literary quality of the book, and its importance in Stevenson’s oeuvre, but in the detailed research it presents into the history of the text and the active editorial role played in its original publication by Charles
Baxter, Graham Balfour, and most importantly Sidney Colvin. The text itself is quite short (pp. 5-99), and this edition provides a general introduction (pp. xxvii-xlviii), quite full explanatory and historical notes (pp. 200-254), and a glossary (pp. 255-262), that will be helpful to students and future generations. Its lasting value however lies in the nearly-monograph-length section (pp. 101-172), giving a detailed history of the text, both to the extant sources and to the way they were used in producing the novel we now know. Because this story also examines in detail the relation between American and British publication, including the practical implications of the Chace Act on production, and the serial texts syndicated in American newspapers and in the British periodical *Cosmopolis*, this section provides a very useful case-study in the nitty-gritty of fiction publication in the 1890s. The list of emendations (pp. 173-188) that follows is mostly of minor points, but nonetheless is revealing of the kind of work that underpins the text itself. This volume certainly sustains the ambitions of this series to supersede earlier efforts and to become the standard scholarly edition for a long time to come.


—This wide-ranging study treats the full range of Walter Scott’s novels, and their links to other Romantic-era authors, arguing for the centrality of sex and violence, both physical and psychological, in the romance genre, to show “Scott’s residual sympathy for frankness and openness resisted by his publishers,” and how “towards the end of his career he increasingly used the freedoms inherent in romance as a mode of narrative to explore and critique gender assumptions.” Jackson-Houlston suggests that, “while Scott’s novels inherit a tradition of chivalric protectiveness towards women, they both exploit and challenge the romance-genre assumption that a woman is always essentially definable as a potential sexual victim, but also argues that Scott consistently condemns aggressive male violence, in favour of a restraint and domesticity,” not “exclusively feminine, but compatible with the Scottish Enlightenment assumptions of his upbringing,” to “enable the interrogation of gender convention.”


—The entry for this item in SSL 43:1 was unfortunately left incomplete, so is given here more fully. Lewis Grassic Gibbon is one of Scottish writers
who will benefit most from the recent efforts to shake the series up a bit, with more international, and sometimes younger, contributors. Gibbon’s *Sunset Song* is not only frequently taught in Scottish schools and universities, but also outside Scotland, and increased availability and interest in the rest of the *Scots Quair* trilogy, and in his other novels, make the fresh perspectives offered here particularly welcome. Refreshingly, besides the editor, only one of the nine contributors teaches in a Scottish university. The volume’s focus is shifted from Gibbon as elegist or regionalist or dialect stylistician to such wider issues as his relation to the modernist novel (a notable essay by Morag Shiach), to feminism (Glenda Norquay), to history (Tim Baker), and especially to political ideas (Hanna Tange, Uwe Zagratzki, Ryan Shirey, and Christopher Silver). Carla Sassi writes on the relation of Gibbon’s two literary selves, Gibbon and Mitchell, and Scott Lyall contributes not only an interesting general introduction, and the usual brief biography and reading lists, but a substantive essay on Gibbon/Mitchell’s science fiction, linking a perhaps-too-canonical figure from the older ScotLit curriculum to current critical and teaching interests.


—Colin Manlove has been a dominant figure in MacDonald studies for fifty years, in such pioneering studies as his *Modern Fantasy* (1975), *Christian Fantasy* (1992), *Scottish Fantasy Literature* (1994), and separate essays and articles. His new book provides an overview of MacDonald’s development as a fantasy writer, with detailed discussion of his major works in that genre, here recharacterized as “visionary romance.” Indeed, the book introduces a more general argument of interest beyond the sometimes cloistered world of MacDonald specialists, that MacDonald’s work drew on and represented a continuing visionary strain in Scottish fiction (and poetry) that has for many critics been neglected or marginalized because the language and generic expectations of novel criticism have often been unsympathetic to the kind of supernatural fantasy that is evident in some of Hogg’s work and is a recurrent element in 20th century Scottish writing. But Manlove is making larger claims also: the jacket illustration for the book is from William Blake, and the book closes with the argument long central to Manlove’s case:

MacDonald is no mere Victorian, to be remembered only as a period piece; nor a sectarian Christian of outmoded views.... The incomprehension with which MacDonald’s own contemporaries greeted *Phantastes* and *Lilith* ... is equally one’s first experience in reading Spenser’s *Faerie Queene*, Pope’s *Dunciad*, Blake’s *Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, or Joyce’s *Ulysses*.

These are bold and thought-provoking claims, and there can be no critic better-qualified to present them.

—This very solid *festschrift* for Sally Mapstone was presented to the honoree during the recent 15th International Conference on Mediaeval and Renaissance Scottish Languages and Literatures. Sandwiched between a preface from Priscilla Bawcutt and an afterword by Ralph Hanna are an editorial introduction and fifteen scholarly essays, all focused on the theme of kingship and governance in medieval and early Renaissance Scotland, and to an impressive degree dominated by contributors who were themselves Professor Mapstone’s doctoral students. In due course, the volume will get full and qualified attention in the relevant medieval and historical journals, but in the meantime serious libraries will want to acquire it.


—This study follows up Tom Mole’s earlier collection on Romantic celebrity authorship by examining how “the Victorian media ecology” conditioned the celebrity images of five Romantic-era authors: Byron, Scott, [P.B.] Shelley, Hemans, and Wordsworth. Alongside discussion in terms of book history and anthologization, Mole also explores several other aspects of material commemoration, notably the Byron statue in Trinity College, Cambridge, and the Scott monument on Princes Street (but not the Basil Champney’s Shelley Memorial at University College, Oxford, with Edward Onslow Ford’s controversial statue of a nude reclining Shelley). One less-material chapter raises interesting questions about the way some Victorian religious commentators subsumed Byron and Shelley to Christian orthodoxy. While readers of *SSL* may regret the notable omission of Burns, surely the prototypical celebrity author, Mole’s book provides a useful series of case-studies, applicable to other celebrity authors, in how approaches to reception studies, and book history, have been broadened in recent years.


—The entry for this item in *SSL* 43:1 was unfortunately left incomplete, so it is given here more fully. The past twenty years or so have seen a remarkable growth in the breadth of scholarship on Macpherson’s Ossian,
quite a lot by Dafydd Moore himself and one might be forgiven for expecting little from a new essay collection. Yet this volume has much new to offer, in part because Macpherson’s international influence, and his relevance to translation theory, make his work particularly appropriate for this retitled series. Contributors come not only from Scotland (Murdo MacDonald), England (Robert Jones, Sebatian Mitchell and Moore himself), and the United States (Paul deGategno), but from Denmark (Robert W. Rix), Germany (Cordula Lemke), Iceland (Gauti Kristmannsson), and Ireland (Lesa Ní Mhunghaile). The result is a genuinely fresh volume, rather than worthy recycling of the expected topics. I was particularly struck by Kristmannsson’s essay on eighteenth-century translation, by deGategno on Macpherson’s correspondence, by MacDonald on Ossian and the visual arts, and by Jones on Macpherson’s historical and political writings, but each of these essays earns its place. Moore has put together a genuinely impressive volume that deserves wide readership among those working in the long eighteenth-century.


—This important collection, which first appeared when SSL was not reviewing new books, aims to counter dominant 20th-century critical approaches to late 16th- and early 17th-century Scottish literature, which typically contrasted “Scotland’s rich medieval culture” with the “anti-aesthetic tyranny” of Scottish Calvinism. These essays, largely avoiding easy alt-Prot revisionism, treat the religious interests and beliefs of the period sympathetically, more perhaps in reassessing known authors (Lyndsay, Knox, Montgomerie) than in finding new ones, and largely deliver on the editors’ promise of a “new interpretation of the complex relationships between literature and religious reform in early modern Scotland.”


—A selection of papers from the First World Congress of Scottish Literatures held in Glasgow in 2014.

—in addition to the editor, contributors to this volume include James McGonigal, Dorothy McMillan, David Kinloch, Cairns Craig, Adam Piette, Robyn Marsack, Ernest Schonfield, John Corbett, Anne Varty, and Hamish Whyte.


—This ambitious Companion volume tackles a much broader topic than most of the titles in the series, and has correspondingly fifty per cent more pages, but also sets out deliberately to juxtapose for each period poetry in Scots or English with poetry in Gaelic. It is divided into three parts, the first historical, the second based on poetic forms, and the third on “Topics and Themes.” The first section opens with separate chapters on the three languages of early Scots poetry: Thomas Own Clancy on Gaelic poetry to 1500, Ronnie Jack on what must be one of his last publications on Scots poetry of the 14th and 15th centuries, and Roger Green on poetry in Latin. Subsequent chapters however are all co-authored to allow both Scots and Gaelic to be treated together. With an average of ten pages per chapter, there is not much space to treat, for instance, the poetry of even one language for “The Poetry of Northern Scotland” (Roberta Frank and Brian Smith), “The Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries” (Sim Innes and Alessandra Petrina), “The Eighteenth Century” (Ronald Black and Gerard Carruthers), “The Nineteenth Century” (Ian Duncan and Sheila Kidd), “The Poetry of Modernity” (Emma Dymock and Scott Lyall.), and “Contemporary Poetry (1950- )” (Attila Dósa and Michelle Macleod). The contributors do their best, and the result is a series of expert sketch-maps, though for those new to the field these may be difficult reading, and seem little more than reading lists with brief comments. For those who know some period well, the comments are often acute, even where they have been squeezed down into passing allusions. The three chapters on poetic forms (William Gillies on Gaelic, Derrick McClure on Scots, and Suzanne Gilbert on Ballad) are more clearly focused, like good undergraduate lectures, if equally having to be selective in the examples offered. The contributions in the third section, on topics and themes, with less pressure to be encyclopaedic, can be more relaxed and essay-like. Here too, several of the chapters get co-authors, as
for “Nation and Home” (Carla Sassi and Silke Stroh), “Protest and Politics” (Wilson McLeod and Alan Riach), or “Faith and Religion” (Meg Bateman and James Mc Gonigal). Others fly solo, as with “Nature and Landscape” (Louisa Gairn), “Love and Erotic Poetry” (Peter Mackay), or “Scottish Poetry as World Poetry” (Paul Barnaby). The final chapter, by Robyn Marsack of the Scottish Poetry Library, differs from the others by introducing a sense of the publishing and institutional contexts in which contemporary poetry is produced and recognized. I am not confident that the volume will be accessible to the students at whom this series is generally aimed, but it could prove a useful reference tool for them. Nonetheless the book represents something of a landmark in its ambitious, pluralist, multilanguage definition of the field.


—This volume with an introduction and ten essays (six on Cunningham Graham, and four on Scottish contemporaries treating similar themes) takes the surge of recent scholarly interest in Scottish colonial and imperial involvement forward from the period of the Caribbean slave plantations into late nineteenth-century South America. R.B. Cunninghame Graham (1852–1936) is now perhaps best remembered as one of the founders of the Scottish Home Rule Association and the National Party of Scotland and as first president of the SNP. He was also a radical member of Parliament, from 1886-1892, as a unconventional Liberal and a pioneer socialist, and he was imprisoned in Pentonville in 1887 for involvement in the protest demonstrations of Bloody Sunday. But earlier he had spent some ten years, after he left Harrow, as a cattle-rancher and adventurer in the Argentine, and had travelled widely elsewhere. After he left Parliament, he drew on this experience in a bewildering variety of essays, articles, stories, biographies, and other books. This volume presents him as “an outspoken critic of injustice and inequality,” whose writings are marked by “appreciation of the demands and customs of diverse territories and contrasting cultures,” arguing that his work “effectively represents the complex interaction between imperial and revolutionary discourses.”


—A much revised and expanded edition “with dozens of additional primary sources,” “a completely new concluding section,” and updated references to relevant scholarship, of Spencer’s influential collection first published in two
volumes by Thoemmes Press in 2002. The American responses reprinted here, dating between 1758 and 1850, are gathered under four broad topics: Hume’s *Essays*; his Philosophical Writings; his *History of England*; and his Character and Death.


“‘This study is the first modern attempt to track down how many copies of Robert Burns’s first book still survive, describing the present appearance of each of the surviving copies, noting any inscriptions, and tracing, as far as possible, their previous ownership and its significance, to document Burns collecting over the past two hundred years.’”