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the Fin de Siècle*

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## Series Editors' Preface to SSL 48.1

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## **SERIES EDITORS' PREFACE TO SSL 48:1**

The background and scope of this special issue on Scottish cosmopolitanism, guest-edited by Matthew Creasy of the University of Glasgow and Michael Shaw of the University of Stirling, is explained in Dr. Creasy's introduction. Sixty years ago, when *Studies in Scottish Literature* was founded, most later 19th century Scottish writing drew little critical respect. At that time, Scottish literature in the decades before the modern Scottish renaissance often seemed an overpopulated black hole, a dream for anthologists perhaps, but a nightmare for literary historians. Of course, many people knew better, fiction was never wholly neglected, and there has been much good work done since on all genres, but the pre-MacDiarmid period is often still stigmatized in the lecture room or classroom, as also by reviewers.

The essays here, exploring the international context and cultural ambition of some quite varied Scottish writing, contribute to the ongoing reappraisal of that older picture. The essays all originated in a recent series of research workshops on Scottish cosmopolitanism, funded by the Royal Society of Edinburgh. The Royal Society has also been funding similar workshop series on Scottish little magazines and on the idea of literary revival from the 1880s to the 1950s, and together these projects constitute a significant attempt to interrogate long-dominant disjunctive accounts of modern Scottish literary history. We are grateful to Drs. Creasy and Shaw and to their contributors for the opportunity to publish these essays.

The cover-image for the print-version of this issue, John Duncan's "Anima Celtica," from *The Evergreen*, 1 (1895), might seem to fit the older picture better than the reappraisal. Duncan's head-piece "Envoy," from *Evergreen* 4, the following year (p. 104), points more clearly towards modernism. But, as Murdo Macdonald and Michael Shaw have suggested, Duncan's "Anima Celtica" is packed with multiple cultural allusions, both Scottish and non-Scottish, to Celticism in the Ossianic figures, standing stones and strapwork, and to Jacobitism in the dirk, bonnet and knotted ribbon, but also to Blake in the drawing of the bard, and to the Pre-

Raphaelites and Beardsley in the pose of the youthful central figure.<sup>1</sup> As that youthfulness suggests, the *fin de siècle*, at least in the circle round Patrick Geddes, saw art, and Celticism, not as escapist or retrogressive, but as opening a future of imaginative freedom. In *The Evergreen*, Duncan's image was paired with this verse-epigraph on the facing page:

The visioned stories read, the book is closed—  
 The Past has been and shall not be again.  
 She dreams! . . . Yet comes to her, disarmed, deposed,  
 A wide new kingdom in the minds of men.

Nothing parochial or backward-looking about that.

\* \* \*

For the next issues, we return to our regular issue format. *SSL* 48.2, the fall issue, will have an opening symposium of papers from last summer's Medieval and Renaissance Scottish Literature conference, guest edited by Tricia McElroy and David Parkinson, followed by articles on Esther Inglis's *Octonaries* by Jamie Reid Baxter, with a text of the poem, on Scott by Graham Tulloch, on the first decades of Scottish PEN by Helen Stoddart, and on Liz Lochhead by William Donaldson, concluding with several shorter notes and reviews. *SSL* 49.1, for spring 2023, will also be a regular issue. We welcome the opportunity to consider well-researched submissions from scholars at any stage of their career, and we try very hard, with the help of the advisory board and other specialist referees, to provide timely responses to the articles we are offered. The journal accepts submissions across the full range of Scottish literary topics and periods, including scholarship on the relations between Scottish and other literatures and on interdisciplinary topics substantially involving literature.

Patrick Scott  
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<sup>1</sup> See Murdo Macdonald, "'Anima Celtica': Embodying the Soul of the Nation in 1890s Edinburgh," in Tricia Cusack and Síghle Bhreathnach-Lynch, eds., *Art, Nation and Gender: Ethnic Landscapes, Myths and Mother-Figures* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003), 29–37; and Michael Shaw, *The Fin-de-Siècle Scottish Revival* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2020), 205–206 (and fig. 4.4).