Prelims, Preface to SSL 39: G. Ross Roy and Susan Manning

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PREFACE TO SSL 39: TWO FAREWELLS
G. Ross Roy (1924-2013)
Susan Manning (1953-2013)

This is the second volume of Studies in Scottish Literature to be issued in the new series, and the third in the new format. Like SSL 38, it opens with a symposium of invited contributions, this time on the topic of editing Scottish literary texts. While SSL 38 offered a good range of articles and contributors, SSL 39 demonstrates more clearly the journal’s commitment to the full scope of Scottish literary studies. This year, the chronological range is wider: there are contributions on pre-1707 topics in the symposium, articles, and review section, and there are contributions on 20th/21st century topics in both the symposium and among the articles. SSL 38 included articles raising issues of gender and of race; this volume offers the first SSL article drawing on disability studies and interdisciplinary articles on post-Waterloo politics and contemporary vernacularities. In restarting the journal, inevitably most contributions came from scholars already known in the field; this volume includes contributions from graduate students and emeriti, as well as from scholars of all generations in between, with eight contributors from the U.S., eight from Scotland, two from elsewhere in the U.K., and one from Australia. As in SSL 38, the new format has allowed inclusion of relevant illustrations both in articles and in the section of Notes and Documents. And this second volume of the new series offers at least fifty per cent more material than last year.

When the journal was relaunched in September 2012, we added a free digital version alongside the traditional print volume. Support from the University of South Carolina Libraries allowed initial digitization of 22 back volumes (vols. 13-34, 1963-2008), in addition to the new volume. Volumes 35-37 have recently been added to the digital version, and the
remaining early volumes should be available later this year, funded by donations in memory of Ross Roy. In the first year of the digital SSL, the 500 items from the first release have had well over 40,000 full-text downloads. The distribution of interest was remarkably even across topics and volumes, with 150 different articles getting over 100 downloads each, and with SSL 38, which was featured on the journal’s front page, drawing just under six per cent of the downloads. SSL’s top fifty downloads for the year included four articles each on Robert Burns, James Hogg, and Robert Louis Stevenson, three on Walter Scott, and two each on Alasdair Gray and Muriel Spark, but also single items on authors from Duns Scotus and Urquhart of Cromarty to Edwin Morgan, Tom Leonard and Kathleen Jamie.

This is the first regular volume to appear since the death of SSL’s founding editor, G. Ross Roy. Opening this volume is Carol McGuirk’s appreciation of Professor Roy’s editorial achievement. A personal tribute by Kenneth Simpson, summarizing his career, was included in the Roy festschrift, now available in this series as SSL 37, and other aspects of Ross Roy’s career and accomplishments have been recorded in the several obituaries already in print. But one mark of his editorial achievement is surely in the statistics above, which document the continuing value and interest of the articles he saw to publication.

Susan Manning joined the SSL Advisory Board in 2011, as we began to plan for the editorial transition, but she first contributed to SSL, on Ossian and Scott, in volume 17 (1982). She had visited South Carolina just last year for the Eighteenth-Century Scottish Studies Society conference to give a paper on “Metaphors and Mediation in Scottish Rhetoric” and to host a roundtable discussion on her recent co-edited collection, Character, Self and Sociability in the Scottish Enlightenment (2011). Professor Manning’s scholarly achievements have been celebrated in the many memorials published – in print and on the web – since her death in January of this year. Let us just add that her important contributions to both American and British literature and her field-defining work in Scottish and Transatlantic Studies made her the very model for SSL’s new series, which aims to promote, as Susan’s work did, an expanded sense of the field and both a national and a global frame for considering Scottish literature.

Patrick Scott
Tony Jarrells
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