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# The Bottle Imp

Issue 4, November 2008  
New Publications

## Scotnote for *But n Ben A-go-go* by Matthew Fitt

by Christine Robinson

*Association for Scottish Literary Studies,  
October 2008*

The Scotnote booklets are a series of study guides to major Scottish writers and literary texts for students at the level of high school senior and beyond. Scotnotes provide students with valuable aids to the key writers and major texts within the Scottish literary tradition. There are now twenty-four titles in this series, ranging from the fifteenth-century poetics of William Dunbar to the present-day writings of Iain Banks, Liz Lochhead, Edwin Morgan, Ian Rankin, and more.

The Scotnote for *But n Ben A-go-go* is a very recent publication and is currently only available from ASLS – but will soon be available from Amazon websites. Contact us for more information or to order your copy.

*But n Ben A-go-go* is set in a distinctly unbonnie future-Scotland. The novel's dangerous atmosphere and psychologically-malkied characters weave a tale that both chills and intrigues. Matthew Fitt takes the allegedly dead language of Scots and energises it with a narrative that cracks and fizzles with life. With strong characters and a gripping plot, the well-defined settings create an atmosphere of paranoia and danger. The exciting denouement has a surprising twist! The introduction includes a section on how to read the Scots in this book, Matthew has made the spelling as straightforward as possible for a population used to English spelling conventions.

## The Ruins of Experience: Scotland's "Romantick" Highlands and the Birth of the Modern Witness

by Matthew Wickman

*University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006*

There emerged, during the latter half of the eighteenth century, a reflexive relationship between shifting codes of legal evidence in British courtrooms and the growing fascination throughout Europe with the "primitive" Scottish Highlands. New methods for determining evidential truth, linked with the growing prominence of lawyers and a formalized division of labor between witnesses and jurors, combined to devalue the authority of witness testimony, magnifying the rupture between experience and knowledge. Juries now pronounced verdicts based not upon the certainty of direct experience but rather upon abstractions of probability or reasonable likelihood. Yet even as these changes were occurring, the Scottish Highlands and Hebridean Islands were attracting increased attention as a region where witness experience in sublime and communal forms had managed to trump enlightened progress and the probabilistic, abstract, and mediated mentality on which the Enlightenment was predicated. Matthew Wickman examines this uncanny return of experiential authority at the very moment of its supposed decline and traces the alluring improbability of experience into our own time.

## Kailyard and Scottish Literature

by Andrew Nash

*Rodopi (Scottish Cultural Review of Literature  
and Language (SCROLL) series) 2007*

For more than a century, the word 'Kailyard' has been a focal point of Scottish literary and cultural debate. Originally a term of literary criticism, it has come to be used, often pejoratively, across a whole range of academic and popular discourse. Historians, politicians and critics of Scottish film and media have joined literary scholars in using the term to set out a diagnosis of Scottish culture. This is the first comprehensive study of the subject. Andrew Nash traces the origins of the Kailyard diagnosis in the nineteenth century and considers the critical concerns that gave rise to it. He then provides a full reassessment of the literature most commonly associated with the term – the fiction of J.M. Barrie, S.R. Crockett and Ian Maclaren. Placing this work in more appropriate contexts, he considers the literary, social and religious imperatives that underpinned it and discusses the impact of these writers in the publishing world. These chapters are succeeded by detailed analysis of the various ways in which the term has been used in wider

[www.thebottleimp.org.uk](http://www.thebottleimp.org.uk)

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discussions of Scottish literature and culture. Discussing literary criticism, film studies, and political and sociological analyses of Scotland, Nash shows how Kailyard, as a critical term, helps expose some of the key issues in Scottish cultural debate in the twentieth century, including discussions over national representation, popular culture and the parochialism of Scottish culture.

### **Guest Profile:**

#### **The Scottish Text Society**

The Scottish Text Society is a major publisher of important texts from Scotland's literary history. Since 1882 it has played a significant part in reviving interest in the literature and languages of Scotland. The Society's editions are both scholarly and accessible.

To date, the Society has published some 150 volumes, covering poetry, drama, and prose, from the fourteenth to the nineteenth centuries. The majority of its editions are in the high period of Older Scots literature, from 1500 to 1700, although the Society has also published significant items from the eighteenth century, such as the poems of Robert Fergusson, and *The Song Repertoire of Amelia and Jane Harris*. The Society has also published the most detailed account of Older Scots philology, *Older Scots Vowels*, by A. J. Aitken and C. Macafee; and has very recently collaborated with the National Library of Scotland to produce a DVD of the Chepman and Myllar prints, with full transcriptions.

Appropriately enough, the Society's other publications this year also reflect Chepman and Myllar's work. *The Poems of Walter Kennedy*, ed. Nicole Meier, includes *The Flyting of Dunbar and Kennedy* as well as his other, less well-known work; *The Knightly Tale of Golagros and Gawane* ed. Ralph Hanna, only survives in a Chepman and Myllar print. Other editions currently available include reprints of the Society's editions of the two great epic poems of the wars of independence, Barbour's *Bruce* and Hary's *Wallace*; a revised edition of *The Shorter Poems of Gavin Douglas*; and Sir David Hume's *History of the House of Angus*, which has not been available in print since the eighteenth century. A full list of publications is available on the Society's website.

Members of the Society are entitled to volumes in the main series published during their year of membership: for further details, see the Society's website:

[www.scottishtextsociety.org](http://www.scottishtextsociety.org)

Non-members wishing to buy editions should visit the website of the Society's distributor, Boydell and Brewer: [www.boydell.co.uk](http://www.boydell.co.uk)

### **The Scottish Text Society**

#### **New Publications**

#### **The Song Repertoire of Amelia and Jane Harris**

**Edited by E. Lyle, K. McAlpine and A. Dhu McLucas**

The Harris sisters' ballad collection is an important source for the Scottish song tradition. This is the first published edition of the full collection. It will provide academics, singers and lovers of ballads with a valuable body of songs and ballads from Perthshire and Angus, collected by two women who were aware not only of the cultural value of the ballad legacy they had inherited, but of that of other singers in the area. The collection was compiled in the nineteenth century, but the ballad versions frequently look back to much earlier material. Their sources can be traced to locations including Fearn, Tibbermore, Blairgowrie, Dron and Brechin, and the collection features fascinating versions of ballads such as "Johnnie Armonstrong" and "Tod Lowrie". The original music is reproduced, along with modern notation, and the volume supplies much commentary material.

10 digit ISBN: 1897976178

13 digit ISBN: 9781897976173

#### **Older Scots Vowels**

**Edited by A. J. Aitken and Caroline Macafee**

In this definitive treatment of the vowel phonology of Older Scots, the late A.J. Aitken adds considerable refinements to his existing authoritative works on the subject. Drawing upon his extensive knowledge of orthography and rhyme, as senior editor of *A Dictionary of the Older Scottish Tongue* (DOST), he also adds the evidence of recent textual studies and of modern dialectal variation. This work will be an essential tool for scholars and students of Older Scots, a valuable adjunct to DOST, and the indispensable starting point for all future investigations in this area. It was revised for publication after Professor Aitken's death, by his former student Dr Caroline Macafee.

10 digit ISBN: 1897976186

13 digit ISBN: 9781897976180

#### **The Chepman and Myllar Prints Digitised Facsimiles with introduction, headnote and transcription**

**Edited by Sally Mapstone**

In 1508 the partnership of Andrew Myllar and Walter Chepman brought printing to Scotland. Their early publications brought into print works by two of medieval Scotland's most celebrated poets, Robert Henryson and William

Dunbar; they also contain less well-known but important poems and prose in Scots and in English by other writers. The prints feature a wide variety of genres: romance; fable; advice to princes; chivalric treatise; lyric; dream vision; along with a classic example (by Dunbar and Walter Kennedy) of the Scots genre of 'flyting', a stylised but scurrilous exchange of poetic insults. In celebration of the anniversary of 500 years of printing in Scotland, the Scottish Text Society, in association with the National Library for Scotland, has published a DVD of prints produced by Chepman and Myllar in or close to 1508, containing digitised facsimiles of each of the twenty printed items. Each facsimile is accompanied by a headnote, explaining the print's literary significance and technical features, and a transcription. There is also an introduction by the general editor, Sally Mapstone, which sets the Chepman and Myllar press within the context of early sixteenth-century Scotland and Scottish book history. The DVD thus gives readers informative access to Scotland's earliest texts; easily navigable, it will become a vital teaching and research tool.

Contributors: Priscilla Bawcutt, A.S.G. Edwards, Janet Hadley Williams, Ralph Hanna, Luuk Houwen, Emily Lyle, Sally Mapstone, Joanna Martin, Nicole Meier, Rhiannon Purdie  
10 digit ISBN: 1897976305  
13 digit ISBN: 9781897976302

### **The Poems of Walter Kennedy** **Edited by Nicole Meier**

Walter Kennedy is best known as William Dunbar's feisty opponent in their celebrated Flyting, but his poetic talents, praised by such famous near-contemporaries as Gavin Douglas and David Lyndsay, extend far beyond this, ranging from short bawdy lyric to sustained devotional meditation. This first complete edition of all his surviving poetry offers parallel-text versions of all the textual witnesses for each poem, a full set of textual and explanatory notes, a substantial glossary, and appendices. An extensive introduction provides biographical information, and sets the text in its cultural and intellectual context. The book is thus both an invitation to Kennedy's poetry – the only extant medieval poetry from the west of Scotland – and a tribute to a significant poetic voice of the late middle ages.

10 digit ISBN: 1897976283  
13 digit ISBN: 9781897976289

### **The Knightly Tale of Golagros and Gawane** **Edited by Ralph Hanna**

*The Knightly Tale of Golagros and Gawane*, the finest of all Older Scots romances, was written during the last quarter of the fifteenth century. It uses the thirteen-line alliterative stanza to vivid effect. Its greatest sophistication, however, lies in its thematic engagement with matters of sovereignty and chivalry, in its persistent interest in negotiated exchanges rather than outright warfare, and in its moving depictions of the limitations of an aristocratic ethos fundamentally dedicated to destructive violence. For this new edition, the text has been re-edited from the sole witness, the version published by Scotland's first printers, Chepman and Myllar, in 1508. The introduction and notes show how the poet works from two Arthurian adventures he derived from a prose continuation of the Old French *Perceval*, following a Scottish tradition of rehandling prose material into verse. It also reveals, however, the poem's extensive knowledge of an earlier romance likely composed on the borders of north-western England, *The Awntyrs of Arthur at the Tarn Wadling*, and thus situates *Golagros* against traditions both French and English. Beyond this, much light is shed on early print culture in Scotland.

10 digit ISBN: 1897976291  
13 digit ISBN: 9781897976296

### **The Shorter Poems of Gavin Douglas,** **revised edition**

#### **Edited by Priscilla Bawcutt**

This edition, first published in 1967, was revised and updated by its editor, Priscilla Bawcutt in 2003, and includes substantial additional notes and bibliography. It contains Douglas's *Palice of Honour*, the major dream-vision poem he composed a decade before his *Eneados* translation. The *Palice* is a spritely and learned poem, responsive both to Chaucerian and to Ovidian influences, but also inventively independent of them. Its yoking of poetics and the pursuit of virtue shows Douglas to be a significant early Renaissance writer. The volume also contains revised editions of two poems associated with Douglas, though unlikely to be his, the short poem *Conscience* and the lengthier and still neglected allegory of desire and self-government *King Hart*.

10 digit ISBN: 1897976194  
13 digit ISBN: 9781897976197

## **David Hume of Godscroft's The History of the House of Angus, 2 vols.**

**Edited by D. Reid**

David Hume of Godscroft's informed, racy, and opinionated *History of the House of Angus* is the second part of his history of the house of Douglas. Written during the reign of James VI and I, it was first published in 1646; this is the first modern edition. This work deals with the Red Douglases, but for Hume family history is a regular trajectory into a historiographical narrative engaging with the major political dramas of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, in particular the deposition of Mary Queen of Scots. David Reid's excellent introduction and notes reveal Hume's work as a politicised piece of Presbyterian historiography that achieves striking variations on materials inherited from Buchanan, Calderwood, and others.

Vol 1: 10 digit ISBN: 1897976240

13 digit ISBN: 9781897976241

Vol 2: 10 digit ISBN: 1897976259

13 digit ISBN: 9781897976258

## **David Hume of Godscroft's The History of the House of Douglas, 2 vols**

**Edited by D. Reid**

Commissioned by the tenth earl of Angus in the late sixteenth century, the work offers colourful cameos of a succession of noted or notorious Douglases, but it also engages in dialogue with previous historiographers, notably George Buchanan. Anxious about the potential in monarchy for tyranny, but equally concerned about the dangers of self-seeking (and non-Douglas) noble subjects, Hume's *History* is a telling ideological document.

Vol 1: 10 digit ISBN: 1897976135

13 digit ISBN: 9781897976135

Vol 2: 10 digit ISBN: 1897976135

13 digit ISBN: 9781897976135

## **The Poems of Robert Fergusson**

**Edited by M. P McDiarmid**

This print-on-demand title is the only complete edition of Fergusson's poems in print. It contains all his Scottish and all his English poems, along with extensive biographical and critical materials and notes. Fergusson is a major poet in a Scots literary tradition running from Dunbar, to Burns, and on to Hugh MacDiarmid. He can be both lyrical and delicate, bawdy and satirical, sometimes within the same poem. The broadly chronological arrangement of this invaluable edition enables the reader to see that even towards the end of a life that ended in personal tragedy, Fergusson remained wonderfully irreverent.

As in his splendid translation of Horaces 11th ode, which commences, *Neer fash your tumb what gods decree/To be the weird o you and me, and concludes The day looks gash, toot aff your horn/Nor care yae strae about the morn.*

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