Steven J. Reid and David McOmish, eds.


There is some unevenness in the quality and depth of research undertaken into the neo-Latin literature of Europe’s different countries and regions. Scotland is amongst the countries for which some significant and very useful general works and detailed studies have now been produced. A research project at the University of Glasgow (Bridging the Continental Divide: Neo-Latin and Its Cultural Role in Jacobean Scotland), which focused on research into the _Delitiae poetarum Scotorum huius aevi illustrium_ and which gave rise to a series of accompanying works, marked a milestone in recent neo-Latin studies in Scotland. The volume to be reviewed here also ties in closely with this research project, which goes some way to explaining the selection of authors and texts reviewed.

St. J. Reid begins his introduction by lamenting the fact that nobody has produced a reliable, in-depth overview of neo-Latin literature in Scotland despite some initial forays in the past. The situation has only begun to improve in the past decade, he claims, with key texts being edited, projects funded and bibliographies compiled. The University of Glasgow project mentioned above organized a conference that produced the articles collected in this volume. Reid then proceeds to outline some fundamental features of Scotland’s neo-Latin literature: its close ties to France and other centres of continental Europe, its love of Greco-Roman antiquity, its blossoming in the decades following 1603—why this year was chosen as starting points, is never explained—and its decline in the late seventeenth century. All the articles in the volume relate to these key themes. The admission is made that it is not yet possible to provide an overview of the neo-Latin written by hand; many questions, such as those concerning the impact of Scottish texts on international circles, have to remain unanswered for now.

In his article “France through the Eyes of Scottish Neo-Latinists: Snapshots from the _Delitiae Poetarum Scotorum_” (10–39), St. J. Reid looks at the literary contacts between Scotland and France as illustrated by the collection _Delitiae poetarum Scotorum_ for the second half of the sixteenth and the start of the seventeenth century. He looks at writers active at the time of Charles IX (r.1560–74) (Patrick Adamson, Andrew Melville, Thomas Maitland), Henry III (r.1574–89) (James Halkerston, Hercules Rollock) and Henry IV (r.1589–1610) (George Crichton, John Scot of Scotstarvit).

D. McOmish’s piece, “A Community of Scholarship: Latin Literature and Scientific Discourse in Early-Modern Scotland” (40–73), asks what role the sci-
ences, particularly astronomy, played in early modern Scotland. He opens with a discussion of probably the most famous work, George Buchanan’s didactic poem *De sphaera*, and points to the educational reforms of Andrew Melville and the poetry of Thomas Craig as being two areas that show clear traces of a general academic debate about astronomy going on in Scotland. He then goes on to talk about a circle of scholars in Edinburgh that was alluded to primarily in letters and academic publications. This group devoted themselves to an in-depth study of astronomy up until the 1620s and played a key role in guiding the debate, including at a European level.

L.B.T. Houghton’s piece in the third chapter, “The Scottish Fourth Eclogue” (74–99), traces the reception of Virgil’s *Eclogue* 4 in Scotland. He begins by addressing the text’s political implications, which make it the perfect blueprint for a prince as ruler (Golden Age), drawing on works by George Buchanan, Andrew Melville, and Robert Ayton to substantiate this interpretation of its reception. He goes on to investigate the influence that *Eclogue* 4 had on Scottish pastoral poetry in general and on Barclay, Anderson, Aidie, and Leech in particular, concluding with a look at the theme of the return of the good king, which James Philp, for instance, borrows from *Eclogue* 4 in his epic poem *Grameis*.

In the fourth chapter, “Peter Goldman: A Dundee Poet and Physician in the Republic of Letters” (100–25), W. Poole charts the intellectual biography of Dundonian doctor Peter Goldman, who studied in St Andrews and Leiden and was then active in Paris and Oxford before returning to his home country. As well as being involved in academic correspondence, he is also known for penning several poems (most notably *Lachrymae* [Paris, 1614], an elegy on the death of his brother, written from the perspective of his grieving mother), which are covered in more detail at the end of the article.

In the fifth chapter, “The King Returns: The Muses’ Welcome (1618)” (126–62), R. Green discusses *The Muses’ Welcome to the High and Mightie Prince James*, the extensive poetry anthology of 1618. King James VI travelled across Scotland between May and August 1617, being welcomed to various towns and cities with speeches and poems in Latin (and, very occasionally, in English as well), later ordering many of these to be collected together and published. In his article, Green covers the entire collection, which impressively contains over 130 poems alone (plus speeches and university lectures), in order to conclude by addressing the problems encountered in the edition—some elements of the collection had already been published separately while the king’s visit was still ongoing.

In Chapter 6, “Andrew Melville, the ‘Anti-Tami-Cami-Categoria’ and the English Church” (163–81), R. Cummings discusses an ode in fifty-one Sapphic