

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

What has the Edinburgh Edition of the Waverley Novels achieved? The original version of this General Introduction said that many hundreds of readings were being recovered from the manuscripts, and commented that although the individual differences were often minor, they were ‘cumulatively telling’. Such an assessment now looks tentative and tepid, for the textual strategy pursued by the editors has been justified by spectacular results.

In each novel up to 2000 readings never before printed are being recovered from the manuscripts. Some of these are major changes although they are not always verbally extensive. The restoration of the pen-portraits of the Edinburgh literati in *Guy Mannering*, the reconstruction of the way in which Amy Robsart was murdered in *Kenilworth*, the recovery of the description of Clara Mowbray’s previous relationship with Tyrrel in *Saint Ronan’s Well*—each of these fills out what was incomplete, or corrects what was obscure. A surprising amount of what was once thought loose or unidiomatic has turned out to be textual corruption. Many words which were changed as the holograph texts were converted into print have been recognised as dialectal, period or technical terms wholly appropriate to their literary context. The mistakes in foreign languages, in Latin, and in Gaelic found in the early printed texts are usually not in the manuscripts, and so clear is this manuscript evidence that one may safely conclude that Friar Tuck’s Latin in *Ivanhoe* is deliberately full of errors. The restoration of Scott’s own shaping and punctuating of speech has often enhanced the rhetorical effectiveness of dialogue. Furthermore, the detailed examination of the text and supporting documents such as notes and letters has revealed that however quickly his novels were penned they mostly evolved over long periods; that although he claimed not to plan his work yet the shape of his narratives seems to have been established before he committed his ideas to paper; and that each of the novels edited to date has a precise time-scheme which implies formidable control of his stories. The Historical and Explanatory Notes reveal an intellectual command of enormously diverse materials, and an equal imaginative capacity to synthesise them. Editing the texts has revolutionised the editors’ understanding and appreciation of Scott, and will ultimately generate a much wider recognition of his quite extraordinary achievement.

The text of the novels in the Edinburgh Edition is normally based on the first editions, but incorporates all those manuscript readings which were lost through accident, error, or misunderstanding in the process of

converting holograph manuscripts into printed books. The Edition is the first to investigate all Scott's manuscripts and proofs, and all the printed editions to have appeared in his lifetime, and it has adopted the textual strategy which best makes sense of the textual problems.

It is clear from the systematic investigation of all the different states of Scott's texts that the author was fully engaged only in the early stages (manuscripts and proofs, culminating in the first edition), and when preparing the last edition to be published in his lifetime, familiarly known as the *Magnum Opus* (1829–33). There may be authorial readings in some of the many intermediate editions, and there certainly are in the third edition of *Waverley*, but not a single intermediate edition of any of the nineteen novels so far investigated shows evidence of sustained authorial involvement. There are thus only two stages in the textual development of the *Waverley* Novels which might provide a sound basis for a critical edition.

Scott's holograph manuscripts constitute the only purely authorial state of the texts of his novels, for they alone proceed wholly from the author. They are for the most part remarkably coherent, although a close examination shows countless minor revisions made in the process of writing, and usually at least one layer of later revising. But the heaviest revising was usually done by Scott when correcting his proofs, and thus the manuscripts could not constitute the textual basis of a new edition; despite their coherence they are drafts. Furthermore, the holograph does not constitute a public form of the text: Scott's manuscript punctuation is light (in later novels there are only dashes, full-stops, and speech marks), and his spelling system though generally consistent is personal and idiosyncratic.

Scott's novels were, in theory, anonymous publications—no title page ever carried his name. To maintain the pretence of secrecy, the original manuscripts were copied so that his handwriting should not be seen in the printing house, a practice which prevailed until 1827, when Scott acknowledged his authorship. Until 1827 it was these copies, not Scott's original manuscripts, which were used by the printers. Not a single leaf of these copies is known to survive but the copyists probably began the tidying and regularising. As with Dickens and Thackeray in a later era, copy was sent to the printers in batches, as Scott wrote and as it was transcribed; the batches were set in type, proof-read, and ultimately printed, while later parts of the novel were still being written. When typesetting, the compositors did not just follow what was before them, but supplied punctuation, normalised spelling, and corrected minor errors. Proofs were first read in-house against the transcripts, and, in addition to the normal checking for mistakes, these proofs were used to improve the punctuation and the spelling.

When the initial corrections had been made, a new set of proofs went to James Ballantyne, Scott's friend and partner in the printing firm

which bore his name. He acted as editor, not just as proof-reader. He drew Scott's attention to gaps in the text and pointed out inconsistencies in detail; he asked Scott to standardise names; he substituted nouns for pronouns when they occurred in the first sentence of a paragraph, and inserted the names of speakers in dialogue; he changed incorrect punctuation, and added punctuation he thought desirable; he corrected grammatical errors; he removed close verbal repetitions; and in a cryptic correspondence in the margins of the proofs he told Scott when he could not follow what was happening, or when he particularly enjoyed something.

These annotated proofs were sent to the author. Scott usually accepted Ballantyne's suggestions, but sometimes rejected them. He made many more changes; he cut out redundant words, and substituted the vivid for the pedestrian; he refined the punctuation; he sometimes reworked and revised passages extensively, and in so doing made the proofs a stage in the creative composition of the novels.

When Ballantyne received Scott's corrections and revisions, he transcribed all the changes on to a clean set of proofs so that the author's hand would not be seen by the compositors. Further revisions were prepared. Some of these were seen and read by Scott, but he usually seems to have trusted Ballantyne to make sure that the earlier corrections and revisions had been executed. When doing this Ballantyne did not just read for typesetting errors, but continued the process of punctuating and tidying the text. A final proof allowed the corrections to be inspected and the imposition of the type to be checked prior to printing.

Scott expected his novels to be printed; he expected that the printers would correct minor errors, would remove words repeated in close proximity to each other, would normalise spelling, and would insert a printed-book style of punctuation, amplifying or replacing the marks he had provided in manuscript. There are no written instructions to the printers to this effect, but in the proofs he was sent he saw what Ballantyne and his staff had done and were doing, and by and large he accepted it. This assumption of authorial approval is better founded for Scott than for any other writer, for Scott was the dominant partner in the business which printed his work, and no doubt could have changed the practices of his printers had he so desired.

It is this history of the initial creation of Scott's novels that led the editors of the Edinburgh Edition to propose the first editions as base texts. That such a textual policy has been persuasively theorised by Jerome J. McGann in his *A Critique of Modern Textual Criticism* (1983) is a bonus: he argues that an authoritative work is usually found not in the artist's manuscript, but in the printed book, and that there is a collective responsibility in converting an author's manuscript into print, exercised by author, printer and publisher, and governed by the nature of the understanding between the author and the other parties. In Scott's case

the exercise of such a collective responsibility produced the first editions of the *Waverley Novels*. On the whole Scott's printers fulfilled his expectations. There are normally in excess of 50,000 variants in the first edition of a three-volume novel when compared with the manuscript, and the great majority are in accordance with Scott's general wishes as described above.

But the intermediaries, as the copyist, compositors, proof-readers, and James Ballantyne are collectively described, made mistakes; from time to time they misread the manuscripts, and they did not always understand what Scott had written. This would not have mattered had there not also been procedural failures: the transcripts were not thoroughly checked against the original manuscripts; Scott himself does not seem to have read the proofs against the manuscripts and thus did not notice transcription errors which made sense in their context; Ballantyne continued his editing in post-authorial proofs. Furthermore, it has become increasingly evident that, although in theory Scott as partner in the printing firm could get what he wanted, he also succumbed to the pressure of printer and publisher. He often had to accept mistakes both in names and the spelling of names because they were enshrined in print before he realised what had happened. He was obliged to accept the movement of chapters between volumes, or the deletion or addition of material, in the interests of equalising the size of volumes. His work was subject to bowdlerisation, and to a persistent attempt to have him show a 'high example' even in the words put in the mouths of his characters; he regularly objected, but conformed nonetheless. From time to time he inserted, under protest, explanations of what was happening in the narrative because the literal-minded Ballantyne required them.

The editors of modern texts have a basic working assumption that what is written by the author is more valuable than what is generated by compositors and proof-readers. Even McGann accepts such a position, and argues that while the changes made in the course of translating the manuscript text into print are a feature of the acceptable 'socialisation' of the authorial text, they have authority only to the extent that they fulfil the author's expectations about the public form of the text. The editors of the *Edinburgh Edition* normally choose the first edition of a novel as base-text, for the first edition usually represents the culmination of the initial creative process, and usually seems closest to the form of his work Scott wished his public to have. But they also recognise the failings of the first editions, and thus after the careful collation of all pre-publication materials, and in the light of their investigation into the factors governing the writing and printing of the *Waverley Novels*, they incorporate into the base-text those manuscript readings which were lost in the production process through accident, error, misunderstanding, or a misguided attempt to 'improve'. In certain cases they also introduce into the base-texts revisions found in editions published almost immediately

after the first, which they believe to be Scott's, or which complete the intermediaries' preparation of the text. In addition, the editors correct various kinds of error, such as typographical and copy-editing mistakes including the misnumbering of chapters, inconsistencies in the naming of characters, egregious errors of fact that are not part of the fiction, and failures of sense which a simple emendation can restore. In doing all this the editors follow the model for editing the Waverley Novels which was provided by Claire Lamont in her edition of *Waverley* (Oxford, 1981): her base-text is the first edition emended in the light of the manuscript. But they have also developed that model because working on the Waverley Novels as a whole has greatly increased knowledge of the practices and procedures followed by Scott, his printers and his publishers in translating holograph manuscripts into printed books. The result is an 'ideal' text, such as his first readers might have read had the production process been less pressurised and more considered.

The Magnum Opus could have provided an alternative basis for a new edition. In the Advertisement to the Magnum Scott wrote that his insolvency in 1826 and the public admission of authorship in 1827 restored to him 'a sort of parental control', which enabled him to re-issue his novels 'in a corrected and . . . an improved form'. His assertion of authority in word and deed gives the Magnum a status which no editor can ignore. His introductions are fascinating autobiographical essays which write the life of the Author of Waverley. In addition, the Magnum has a considerable significance in the history of culture. This was the first time all Scott's works of fiction had been gathered together, published in a single uniform edition, and given an official general title, in the process converting diverse narratives into a literary monument, the Waverley Novels.

There were, however, two objections to the use of the Magnum as the base-text for the new edition. Firstly, this has been the form of Scott's work which has been generally available for most of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries; a Magnum-based text is readily accessible to anyone who wishes to read it. Secondly, a proper recognition of the Magnum does not extend to approving its text. When Scott corrected his novels for the Magnum, he marked up printed books (specially prepared by the binder with interleaves, hence the title the 'Interleaved Set'), but did not perceive the extent to which these had slipped from the text of the first editions. He had no means of recognising that, for example, over 2000 differences had accumulated between the first edition of *Guy Mannering* and the text which he corrected, in the 1822 octavo edition of the *Novels and Tales of the Author of Waverley*. The printed text of *Redgauntlet* which he corrected, in the octavo *Tales and Romances of the Author of Waverley* (1827), has about 900 divergences from the first edition, none of which was authorially sanctioned. He himself made about 750 corrections to the text of *Guy Mannering* and

200 to *Redgauntlet* in the Interleaved Set, but those who assisted in the production of the Magnum were probably responsible for a further 1600 changes to *Guy Mannering*, and 1200 to *Redgauntlet*. Scott marked up a corrupt text, and his assistants generated a systematically cleaned-up version of the Waverley Novels.

The Magnum constitutes the author's final version of his novels and thus has its own value, and as the version read by the great Victorians has its own significance and influence. To produce a new edition based on the Magnum would be an entirely legitimate project, but for the reasons given above the Edinburgh editors have chosen the other valid option. What is certain, however, is that any compromise edition, that drew upon both the first and the last editions published in Scott's lifetime, would be a mistake. In the past editors, following the example of W. W. Greg and Fredson Bowers, would have incorporated into the first-edition text the introductions, notes, revisions and corrections Scott wrote for the Magnum Opus. This would no longer be considered acceptable editorial practice, as it would confound versions of the text produced at different stages of the author's career. To fuse the two would be to confuse them. Instead, Scott's own material in the Interleaved Set is so interesting and important that it will be published separately, and in full, in the two parts of Volume 25 of the Edinburgh Edition. For the first time in print the new matter written by Scott for the Magnum Opus will be wholly visible.

The Edinburgh Edition of the Waverley Novels aims to provide the first reliable text of Scott's fiction. It aims to recover the lost Scott, the Scott which was misunderstood as the printers struggled to set and print novels at high speed in often difficult circumstances. It aims in the Historical and Explanatory Notes and in the Glossaries to illuminate the extraordinary range of materials that Scott weaves together in creating his stories. All engaged in fulfilling these aims have found their enquiries fundamentally changing their appreciation of Scott. They hope that readers will continue to be equally excited and astonished, and to have their understanding of these remarkable novels transformed by reading them in their new guise.

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