GENERAL INTRODUCTION

The Edinburgh Edition of the Waverley Novels is the first authoritative edition of Walter Scott's fiction. It is the first to return to what Scott actually wrote in his manuscripts and proofs, and the first to reconsider fundamentally the presentation of his novels in print. In the light of comprehensive research, the editors decided in principle that the text of the novels in the new edition should be based on the first editions, but that all those manuscript readings which had been lost through accident, error, or misunderstanding should be restored. As a result each novel in the Edinburgh Edition differs in thousands of ways from the versions we have been accustomed to read, and many hundreds of readings never before printed have been recovered from the manuscripts. The individual differences are often minor, but are cumulatively telling. The return to the original Scott produces fresher, less formal and less pedantic novels than we have known.

Scott was the most famous and prestigious novelist of his age, but he became insolvent in 1826 following the bankruptcy of his publishers, Hurst, Robinson and Co. in London and Archibald Constable and Co. in Edinburgh. In 1827 Robert Cadell, who had succeeded Constable as Scott's principal publisher, proposed the first collected edition of the complete Waverley Novels as one way of reducing the mountain of debt for which Scott was legally liable. Scott agreed to the suggestion and over the next few years revised the text of his novels and wrote introductions and notes. The edition was published in 48 monthly volumes from 1829 to 1833. The full story of the making of the Magnum Opus, as it was familiarly christened by Scott, is told in Jane Millgate's *Scott's Last Edition* (Edinburgh, 1987), but for present purposes what is significant is that the Magnum became the standard edition of Scott, and since his death in 1832 all editions of the Waverley Novels, with the single exception of Claire Lamont's *Waverley* (Oxford, 1981), have been based on it.

Because Scott prepared the Magnum Opus it has long been felt that it represented his final wishes and intentions. In a literal sense this must be so, but all readers who open the pages of any edition published since 1832 and are confronted with the daunting clutter of introductions, prefaces, notes, and appendices, containing a miscellaneous assemblage of historical illustration and personal anecdote, must feel that the creative power which took Britain, Europe and America by storm in the preceding decades is cabin'd, cribb'd, confin'd by its Magnum context. Just as the new matter of 1829–33 is not integral to the novels as they were originally conceived, neither are the revisions and additions to the text.

'Scholarly editors may disagree about many things, but they are in general agreement that their goal is to discover exactly what an author wrote and to determine what form of his work he wished the public to have.' Thus Thomas Tanselle in 1976 succinctly and memorably defined the business of textual editing. The editors of the Edinburgh Edition have made this goal their own, and have returned to the original manuscripts, to the surviving proofs, and to other textually relevant material to determine exactly what Scott wrote; they have also investigated each British edition and every relevant foreign edition published in Scott's lifetime. They have discovered that ever since they were written, the Waverley Novels have suffered from textual degeneration.

The first editions were derived from copies of Scott's manuscripts, but the pressure to publish quickly was such that they are not wholly reliable representations of what he wrote. Without exception, later editions were based on a preceding printed version, and so include most of the mistakes of their predecessors while adding their own, and in most cases Scott was not involved. There was an accumulation of error, and when Scott came to prepare the Magnum Opus he revised and corrected an earlier printed text, apparently unaware of the extent to which it was already corrupt. Thus generations of readers have read versions of Scott which have suffered significantly from the changes, both deliberate and accidental, of editors, compositors and proof-readers.

A return to authentic Scott is therefore essential. The manuscripts provide the only fully authoritative state of the texts of the novels, for they alone proceed wholly from the author. They are for the most part remarkably coherent; the shape of Scott's narratives seems to have been established before he committed his ideas to paper, although a close examination of what he wrote shows countless minor revisions made in the process of writing, and usually at least one layer of later revising. We are closest to Scott in the manuscripts, but they could not be the sole textual basis for the new edition. They give us his own words, free of non-authorial interventions, but they do not constitute the 'form of his work he wished the public to have'.

Scott expected his novels to be printed, usually in three volumes, and he structured his stories so that they fitted the three-volume division of the printed books. He expected minor errors to be corrected, words repeated in close proximity to each other to be removed, spelling to be normalised, and a printed-book style of punctuation, amplifying and replacing the marks he had provided in manuscript, to be inserted. There are no written instructions to the printers to this effect, but his acceptance of what was done implies approval, even although the imposition of the conventions of print had such a profound effect on the evolution of his text that the conversion of autograph text into print was less a question of transliteration than of translation.

This assumption of authorial approval is better founded for Scott

than for any other writer. Walter Scott was in partnership with James Ballantyne in a firm of printers which Ballantyne managed and for which Scott generated much of the work. The contracts for new Scott novels were unusual, in that they always stipulated that the printing would be undertaken by James Ballantyne and Co., and that the publishers should have the exclusive right only to purchase and to manage the sales of an agreed number of copies. Thus production was controlled not by the publishers but by James Ballantyne and his partner, Walter Scott. The textually significant consequence of this partnership was a mutual trust to a degree uncommon between author and printer. Ballantyne was most anxious to serve Scott and to assist him in preparing the novels for public presentation, and Scott not only permitted this but actively sought it. Theirs was a unique business and literary partnership which had a crucial effect on the public form of the Waverley Novels.

Scott expected his novels to appear in the form and format in which they did appear, but in practice what was done was not wholly satisfactory because of the complicated way in which the texts were processed. Until 1827, when Scott acknowledged his authorship, the novels were published anonymously and so that Scott's well-known handwriting should not be seen in the printing works the original manuscripts were copied, and it was these copies, not Scott's original manuscripts, which were used in the printing house. Not a single leaf is known to survive but the copyists probably began the tidying and regularising. The compositors worked from the copies, and, when typesetting, 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. 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 and removed close verbal repetitions; he told Scott when he could not follow what was happening; and when he particularly enjoyed something he said so.

These annotated proofs were sent to the author, who sometimes accepted Ballantyne's suggestions and 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 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 revises were prepared. Some of these were seen and read by Scott but by and large he seems to have trusted Ballantyne to make sure that the earlier corrections and revisions had been correctly 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.

One might imagine that after all this activity the first editions would be perfect, but this is far from being the case. There are usually in excess of 50,000 variants in the first edition of a three-volume novel when compared with the manuscript. 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 known, made mistakes; they misread the manuscripts from time to time, 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. And James Ballantyne continued his editing in post-authorial proofs; his changes may have been in the spirit of Scott's own critical proof-reading, but it is probable that his efforts were never inspected by the author.

The editors of the Edinburgh Edition of the Waverley Novels have studied every single variant in the first editions of all the novels they have worked on to date. There are a large number of small verbal differences, and the editors have come to the conclusion that the words originally written by Scott, though subsequently changed by the intermediaries, are nearly always justified by colloquial, dialect, or period usage. Similarly the punctuation supplied at times misinterprets the sense of the manuscript or the rhythm of speech, and the substitution of synonyms for repeated words was often effected too mechanically, changing meaning or spoiling rhetoric. It is not surprising that the intermediaries should make mistakes when translating the manuscripts into print. Even James Ballantyne's knowledge of language and history was limited compared to Scott's. He was a trusted and competent editor; he was honest about his likes and dislikes and was useful to Scott in giving voice to them. But his annotations and suggestions show that he did not appreciate the full variety of Scott's language, objected to any suggestion of the indelicate, and tidied the text by rule. Above all, his comments were made as Scott wrote, and without knowing the outcome of the story, and thus he was inevitably unaware of the architectonics of the complete

work of art. His views were sometimes wrong, and Scott was sometimes wrong to give way to them.

The editors have normally chosen the first edition of a novel as base-text, for the first edition usually represents the culmination of the initial creative process, and, local failings excepted, usually seems closest to the form of his work he wished his public to have. 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 have incorporated into the base-text readings which were lost in the production process through accident, error or misunderstanding. In certain cases they have also introduced into the base-texts revisions from printed texts which they believe to have emanated from Scott, or are consistent with the spirit of his own revision during the initial creative process. Only revisions which belong to the process and period of initial creation have been adopted. In addition, they have corrected 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. The result is an ideal text, which the first readers of the Waverley Novels would have read had the production process been less pressurised and more considered.

The 'new' Scott will be visible not only in the text but also in the context. The Magnum introductions and notes are not integral to the novels as they were originally conceived, and are therefore reserved for separate publication in the final volumes of the edition where they will be treated as a distinct, final phase of Scott's involvement in his fiction. Thus the novels appear as they were first presented. The Edinburgh Edition of the Waverley Novels offers a clean text; there are no footnotes or superscripts to detract from the pleasure of reading. It does not remove Scott's own introductions only to replace them with those of modern editors; the textual essays appear at the end, where they will be encountered only after reading Scott. The essays present a detailed history of the genesis and composition of the novel, a history of the evolution of the old text, and a description of the distinguishing features of the new. The textual apparatus does not include a full list of variants because for one of the major early works there would be at least 100,000 to record. Instead, the textual essays analyse and illustrate the evidence gleaned from the collation of the manuscripts and proofs (where these are extant) and of all relevant editions published in Scott's lifetime. All variants from the base-text are listed in the emendation list (but as variants from the Magnum are not, the scale of the change from old editions to the new is not immediately apparent).

And finally, there are explanatory notes and a glossary. Scott's reading was wide and voluminous, he was immensely knowledgeable in a

range of disciplines, and he had a considerable understanding of the social organisation, customs and beliefs of contemporary and historical societies. Few readers are likely to appreciate the full extent of his learning without some assistance, and the notes at the end of this volume draw on a greater variety of expertise, and are more comprehensive, than any previously published. They are informative rather than expository; for instance, they identify all quotations, from the most obvious passages in the Bible and Shakespeare through to the truly recondite, but they leave the reader to consider their significance in each context. And the glossary for the first time attempts to cover comprehensively all Scott's period, dialectal, foreign, and obscure words.

The Edinburgh Edition of the Waverley Novels aims to provide an authoritative text of Scott's fiction, to give the reader the support required to appreciate the intellectual richness of his work, and to allow a new audience to share the excitement that the novels generated when they were first published. The editors are confident of fulfilling the first two aims. The reader must be judge of their success in the third.

DAVID HEWITT