Transgressing Authority – Authors, Translators and Other Masqueraders

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The huge success of Walter Scott in Portugal in the first half of the 19th century was partially achieved by sacrificing the ironic take on authorship his Waverley Novels entailed. This article examines translations of his works within the context of 19th century Portugal with a focus on the translation(s) of Waverley. The briefest perusal of the Portuguese texts reveals plentiful instances of new textual authority, which naturally compose a sometimes very different author(ship) -- an authorship often mediated by French translations. Thus a complex web of authority emerges effectively, if deviously, (re)creating the polyphony of authorial voices and the displacement of the empirical author first staged by the source texts themselves.

Keywords: authorship, literary translation, translation history, translatability

L’immense succès connu par Walter Scott au Portugal dans la première moitié du XIXe siècle se doit en partie au sacrifice de la dimension ironique de la voix auctoriale dans sa série Waverley. Cet article examine les traductions des œuvres de Scott dans le contexte du Portugal de l’époque en portant une attention particulière aux traductions de Waverley. Même un très bref aperçu des textes portugais révèle de nombreux exemples d’instances nouvelles d’autorité narrative, lesquelles créent une voix auctoriale parfois très différente de celle du texte original à cause souvent du rôle médiateur des traductions françaises. Un tissu complexe de voix auctoriales émerge ainsi, bien que par le biais d’artifices, créant la polyphonie des voix auctoriales et le déplacement de l’auteur empirique, mis en scène d’abord par les textes originaux.

Mots clés : statut de l’auteur, traduction littéraire, histoire de la traduction, traductabilité

The author, so long and so loudly called for, has appeared on the stage, and made his obeisance to the audience. Thus far his conduct is a mark of respect. To linger in their presence would be intrusion.

Walter Scott, Chronicles of the Canongate

The starting point of this article is the suspicion that historically the established author of best-selling books has had little occasion to dwell upon – let alone interfere with – translations of his work. This may indeed remain partially true today due to the pressures of the book market and marketing, although most best-selling authors nowadays engage an entourage of literary agents and editorial assistants who often show some concern – however slight – about translation(s). For the purposes of the present reflection, however, I would like to delve into the very beginnings of the book industry as such in the 19th century. At that
time, the demands of the new industry may very well have hindered successful authors from exercising any form of control over translated texts. The advance in the professionalisation of the activity of writing and the development in book technology, in many instances, had the paradoxical effect of leaving less time for the careful revision of the work prior to publication. Thus, an interesting phenomenon may have occurred: the more popular the book, the less supervised its publication, and by the same token, its translation(s), as many of them were published in quick succession to the source text.

However, this situation often produced new forms of highly creative – but hidden – authority in translation. The issue is further compounded whenever the topic of authorship is central to the source work. This is certainly the case with a writer such as Scott who, as one of the most famous personalities of his time, was paradoxically conspicuous for and keen on his ‘disappearance’ from the public eye, and who enjoyed confronting the reader with a form of authorship which builds its authority on a ‘disappearing act.’ “If I am asked further reasons for the conduct I have long observed [i.e., the insistence on anonymity], I can only resort to the explanation supplied by a critic as friendly as he is intelligent: namely, that the mental organization of the Novelist must be characterised, to speak craniologically, by an extraordinary development of the passion for delitescency!”¹ In such a poetics, authorship becomes a Protean movement, always displaced, ever unstable – an ever-evolving form of translatability.² The case in point is Walter Scott, the novelist rather than the poet.

I would like to argue that the huge international success of Walter Scott in the first half of the 19th century³ was partially achieved by sacrificing in the translated texts the ironic take on authorship and authority his Waverley Novels entailed. In the following pages, I discuss Scott’s understanding of authorship as masquerade as well as the translations of his works in 19th century Portugal in order to examine the (trans)figurations of authority and authorship in
both source and target texts. For reasons that will become apparent later, I focus primarily on the work of a particular translator: André Joaquim Ramalho e Sousa.

The briefest perusal of the Portuguese texts by this translator reveals plentiful instances of new authority, which de/re/composes a different author(ship) – an authorship often mediated by French translations and authority. The voices of Auguste-Jean-Baptiste Defauconpret and Albert Montémont, both translators of Walter Scott, are heard distinctly throughout the paratexts of the Portuguese translations. Thus a complex web of authority emerges – with the editors chiming in as well – effectively, if deviously, (re)creating the polyphony of authorial voices and the displacement of the empirical author first staged by the source texts themselves. In having different agendas, translators have managed to attain what could be called identity in difference: even if authorship remains intact as the locus of polyphony, the multitude of voices results from the palimpsestic quality of the translation rather than from adherence to Walter Scott’s highly sophisticated paratextual strategies.

**Transgressing the Poetics of Authorship – Inventing Authors and Authority**

“Fiction is the most impure and the most modest and the most human of the arts” – Flannery O’Connor’s assertion in *Mystery and Manners* (1969) sums up quite satisfactorily the poetics of the most celebrated of 19th century European novelists: Walter Scott.

Because Scott is nowadays, as Fiona Robertson aptly puts it, “the most central of marginalized figures,”4 a rather gentle way of saying he is half-forgotten, I will engage in a brief introduction of “that protean scribbler whose inveterate mimicry rapidly becomes contagious.”5 A well-known and highly successful poet from the 1800s onwards, Walter Scott decided in 1814 to turn to prose fiction. The choice was far from obvious for different reasons. Firstly, Scott had already published a string of influential and hugely popular poems: *The Lady of the Last Minstrel* (1805), *Marmion* (1808), *The Lady of the Lake* (1810), *The Vision of Don Roderick* (1811), *Rokeby* (1813) and *The Bridal of Triermain* (1813). According
to Kathryn Sutherland, “Marmion, his second long poem, was the best-seller of 1808 – 2,000 copies in the first month, and 11,000 in the first year, despite the exorbitant price of 31s 6d.”

Even though Rokeby did not do as well as his previous poems, Constable, his publisher, “offered him £5,000 for the copyright of an unwritten poem called The Nameless Glen (which eventually came out as The Lord of the Isles).” Its success was unmistakable. Narrative fiction was nonetheless still considered a minor and effeminate genre at the beginning of the century, and respectable authors did not otherwise feel tempted by it.

While the reasons for his turn to prose remain partially obscure, as Walter Scott always shied away from discussing his penmanship seriously, two may be proffered here. The traditional – and insufficient – reason, often referred to as part of 19th century lore, is illustrated here in Walter Bagehot's formulation: “When Scott, according to his own half-jesting but half-serious expression, was ‘beaten out of poetry’ by Byron, he began to express in more pliable prose the same combination which his verse had been used to convey.” The second, and most probable, is that Scott discovered the novel was more akin to his disposition and to his “extempore style of writing,” as Carlyle, one of his fiercest critics, would put it some time later. Scott himself seems to concur with this view of “his perilous stile,” when he offers, in his usual self-deprecating way, a glimpse into his working habits:

I am just in the same case as I used to be when I lost myself in former days in some country to which I was a stranger – I always pushd for the pleasantest road and either found it or made it the nearest. It is the same in writing. I could never lay down a plan – or having laid it down I never could adhere to it; the action of composition always dilated some passages and abridged or omitted others and personages were renderd important or insignificant not according to their agency in the original conception of the plan but according to the success or otherwise with which I was able to bring them out. I only tried to make that which I was actually writing diverting and interesting, leaving the rest to fate. I have been often amused with the critics distinguishing some passages as particularly labourd when the pen passed over the whole as fast as it could move and the eye never again saw them excepting in proof. […] It is a perilous stile I grant but I cannot help [it] – when I chain my mind to ideas which are purely imaginative – for argument is a different thing – it seems to me that the sun leaves the landscape, that I think away the whole vivacity and spirit of my original conception, and that the results are cold, tame and spiritless.

As this extract from his journal shows, Scott privileges an understanding of narration which remains close to its origins as an oral form, as this allows him to create a geography for lost
worlds, different languages, improbable people – a landscape where multiplicity and polyphony are not only possible but mandatory. E. M. Forster would later translate this conception in his *Aspects of the Novel* (1927) as follows: “Scott’s fame rests upon one genuine basis. He could tell a story. He had the primitive power of keeping the reader in suspense and playing on his curiosity.” Further on, Forster clarifies his understanding of the role of the story and storytellers:

What the story does do in this particular capacity, all it can do, is to transform us from readers into listeners, to whom ‘a’ voice speaks, the voice of the tribal narrator, squatting in the middle of the cave, and saying one thing after another until the audience falls asleep among their offal and bones. The story is primitive, it reaches back to the origins of literature, before reading was discovered, and it appeals to what is primitive in us.

What Forster reads, and dismisses, as the “primitiveness of the storytelling” may very well represent the possibility of understanding narration as “the ability to exchange experiences.” Seen as such, fiction becomes a place of and for translatability, i.e., a geography where past and present, various authorial voices, a wealth of characters and places can effectively meet. Translatability is, then, movement, a multiplicity of trajectories forstered by narrative itself.

For fiction, as Wolfgang Iser has demonstrated in his “Fictionalizing: The Anthropological Dimension of Literary Fictions,” always entails a double act. While, on the one hand, it transgresses reality, on the other it represents it in a new fashion: “[W]hen we describe fictionalizing as an act of overstepping, we must bear in mind that the reality overstepped is not left behind: it remains present, thereby imbuing fiction with a duality that may be exploited for different purposes.” This duality necessarily involves transience, thus constituting a borderland given, as Gloria Anzáldua reminds us in her seminal book *Borderlands/La Frontera*, that “the Borderlands are physically present wherever two or more cultures edge each other, where people of different races occupy the same territory, where under, lower, middle and upper classes touch, where space between two individuals shrinks with intimacy.” Where there is a border, there must necessarily be the presupposition of movement and translation or at least the possibility of translation. In other words, Iser’s
duality includes, I argue, moments and processes of translatability and translatedness, for the process of overstepping necessarily entails the negotiation of difference(s).

Scott has arguably developed a narrative framework that illustrates Iser's point rather well. Belonging to a fictional subgenre, the historical novel, that喂s on claims of truthfulness, his novels may be said to embody duality in more ways than one. Published to a great extent anonymously, the Waverley Novels17 are a monument to successfully blending playfulness and scholarship, conflating in the novel the seriousness of historical narrative, the drama of romance, and the irony of an unparalleled, luxuriant and mischievous paratextuality, where authorship and authority are constantly displaced to further realms of fictionality and effectively deconstructed.

Because his novels purport to be historical and erudite, Walter Scott redeems narrative fiction — and the novel — of its inferior standing in the hierarchy of the arts, conquering in the process a larger, more serious (and masculine) readership.18 Terry Eagleton amusingly notes that “it was certainly Scott, with his pop-idol-like fame throughout Europe and America, who played a major role in establishing the novel as a genuinely ‘serious’ literary genre.”19

His achievement — again a form of translatability20 — rests on two pillars. First, the insistence on the verisimilitude of the historical novel, achieved by means of copious paratextual information, frequent recourse to the European canon and sources, and the sometimes highly intricate ruse of the found manuscript, most of which set it apart from earlier novels, so much so that, in 1825, the critic William Hazlitt describes Scott's singularity, and the appreciation he received, in the following terms: “Sir Walter has found out (oh, rare discovery) that facts are better than fiction; and that there is no romance like the romance of real life; and that if we can but arrive at what men feel, do, and say in striking and singular situations, the result will be 'more lively, audible and full of vent', than the fine-spun cobwebs of the brain.”21 He goes on to say that Scott “is only the amanuensis of truth and history.”22
Second, Scott builds his Waverley Novels around what I would call a poetics of anonymity. In fact, when *Waverley* is published in 1814, it appears anonymously. The reasons seem straightforward enough at first: “Indeed, one factor at least in the early stages of the anonymity was his sense that to write fiction was to practice a trade, to engage in activities not quite becoming a gentleman.”23 However, while this is quite understandable in 1814, it becomes increasingly more puzzling as the years go by and his popular, and critical, success becomes unprecedented. Anonymity is preserved long after the fear of exposure and loss of face would otherwise justify, for *Waverley* is a tremendous success, both in Britain and in most European countries:

Hardly any literary reputation ever rose so high in our Island; no reputation at all ever spread so wide. Walter Scott became Sir Walter Scott, Baronet, of Abbotsford; on whom Fortune seemed to pour her whole cornucopia of wealth, honour and worldly good; the favourite of Princes and Peasants, and all intermediate men. His ‘Waverley series’, swift-following one on the other apparently without end, was the universal reading; looked for like an annual harvest, by all ranks, in all European countries.24

Notwithstanding this, Scott remains committed to preserving anonymity, which will last until 1827. The reasons for this are again obscure and object of much speculation. Judith Wilt summarises them thus:

What Scott understood of his motives he told the reader directly or dramatically through the alter-egos of his introductions, explanatory chapters, and eventually his ‘magnum opus’ prefaces and notes. He wanted the private peace of anonymity, the personal delight of the elaborate trickery, the freedom to disown his mistakes and lapses, the more mysterious freedom to disown successes. He wanted the extra sales that came with the intrigue, and the special glow that came with being not only the most productive author of his time but the most productive *two* authors. The critical truism that Scott is his own best (or at least first) critic Scott accepted; indeed, he invented it, creating out of himself complaining antiquarians, antagonistic historians, keen-eyed editors and literary philosophers of the realistic and romantic schools, the criminal author of Waverley himself, who gaily admits all charges.25

I would like to argue that both verisimilitude and anonymity purposely target a playful staging of the absence of originality – the stories are true because they have been found, rather than invented – and the displacement of authorship.

Indeed, from the very first edition of the texts, the anonymity is supplemented by a plurality of authors-narrators who appear in rapid succession before, around and after each novel, and who push the question of ‘true’authorship to ever further realms. Each novel is either
preceded or followed by prefaces, introductions, postfaces, and these are authored by fictional characters who are often endowed with a proper name and biography, who appear in more than one novel, and claim the authorship of given novels. Jedediah Cleishbotham, Peter Pattieson, Dr Dryasdust, Captain Clutterbuck, Chrystal Croftangry are just a few of these characters who sometimes even attempt to compete with the Eidolon for authorship of the novels. In turn, “Eidolon,” the term used in the paratexts of the Waverley Novels to refer to the unnamed author behind all compilers, antiquarians, editors and narrators, is a ghost-like presence in many of the paratexts. Patricia S. Gaston reflects on this concept and its import for the novels as follows:

This designation is often applied to the Author and is a curious one indeed. The Greek term *eidolon* means ‘specter’ or ‘image;’ to these definitions, English usage adds ‘phantom.’ To call the Author the Eidolon, then, may be a forerunner to announcing the death of the author; indeed, the term suggests that the authority which an author has over a text is a fading, illusory thing and that the author as presented here is merely an image, not a viable being.26

Thus, Scott appears as an unlikely forerunner to Foucault, in announcing and enacting the disappearance of the author from the text. The Eidolon is yet another displacement for the empirical author, as ghost-like and “papery” as “The Author of Waverley,” the only name appearing on every novel from 1815 to 1827. Even more striking, however, is the purported overall confusion of layers of authorship. Some examples must suffice here.

In 1824, *Redgauntlet* offers a “Conclusion, by Dr Dryasdust, in a Letter to the Author of Waverley,” in which the Reverend Dryasdust presents his research to the author. And a year before, in the introduction to *Quentin Durward*, an unnamed “I” claims that:

I had next the common candour to inform my friend, upon grounds which no one could know so well as myself, that my distinguished literary countryman (Walter Scott), of whom I shall always speak with the respect his talents deserve, was not responsible for the slight works which the humour of the public had too generously, as well as too rashly, ascribed to him. Surprised by the impulse of the moment, I might even have gone farther, and clenched the negative by positive evidence, owning to my entertainer that no one else could possibly have written these works, since I myself was the author, when I was saved from so rash a commitment of myself by the calm reply of the Marquis, that he was glad to hear these sort of trifles were not written by a person of condition.”27
This polyphonous claim of authorship will later explode in the raucous and hilarious “Assembly of Authors” which precedes *The Betrothed* (1825):

A meeting of the gentlemen and others interested in the celebrated publications called the Waverley Novels, having been called by the public advertisement, the same was respectfully attended by various literary characters of eminence. And it being in the first place understood that individuals were to be denominated by the names assigned to them in the publications in question, the Eidolon, or image of the author, was unanimously called to the chair, and Jonathan Oldbuck, Esq. of Monkbarns, was requested to act as Secretary.28

The goal of the meeting is to find ways of legitimizing the authorship of the Waverley Novels and to approve the Eidolon’s proposal to create “a joint-stock trade in fictitious narrative, in prose and verse” and to submit it “to the Legislature for an Act of Parliament in ordinary, to associate us into a corporate body, and give us a *persona standi in judicio*, with full power to prosecute and bring to conviction all encroachers upon our exclusive privilege.”29 The irony is unmistakable.

This mischievous trespassing of expectations and the insistence on playfulness are emphazised with the publication, from 1829 onwards, of what came to be known as the *Magnum Opus* edition of the Waverley Novels. This constitutes the final step in the canonization process of the “Author of Waverley,” as the 26 novels are published as a huge macrotextual project unified by a single voice who writes copious introductions and notes in the first person singular: “The *magnum* clearly constitutes a separate version of Scott’s entire fictional canon, one in which the novels cohere together as part of a corporate entity, and in which individual novels are encompassed by the new editorial framework and include textual revisions that are a product of that final editorial enterprise.”30 However, this apparent self-canonizing gesture is again undercut by an unequivocal will to further compound the novels’ polyphonous authoredness, as the solemn I, who might be expected to replace the multiplicity of authorial voices in earlier editions, does not erase these, but rather is added to their number as – again – a nameless author: the “Author of Waverley.” Indeed, as Gaston remarks, “the Author, under whose name they are now for the first time collected’ is never named as other
than the Author of Waverley [...]. He denies us the use of an individuated proper name.”

Thus, the “Author of Waverley” is just one more voice, a masquerade designed to add one more layer to the textuality of the novels, while at the same time (re)inventing an œuvre in the form of a huge macrotext. In this way, as of 1829, the Magnum Opus creates yet another image of textual authorship, which provides a further frame for the single narratives: there is an author who presents the reader to compilers and editors, who then publish a story they have heard from someone else.

Published in 1830, the Magnum Opus edition of The Heart of Midlothian includes: (1) an Introduction presumably by the “Author of Waverley,” where the “author” states that “he received from an anonymous correspondent an account of the incident upon which the following story is founded,” (2) a Postscript, (3) a Dedication “To the Best of Patrons, A Pleased and Indulgent Reader” by Jedediah Cleishbotham who claims and discusses authorship, (4) an address to the reader and (5) a final comment entitled L’Envoy again by Jedediah Cleishbotham. All these paratexts convey distinct authorial voices, claiming authority over the text. To this another voice must be added, that of Peter Patieson, schoolmaster, who claims, in “Chapter 1: Being Introductory,” that the following novel is the result of him having written down an account he heard from two strangers, Mr. Halkit and Mr. Hardie, who, having to spend the night at Wallace Inn due to a carriage accident, oblige the first-person narrator-cum-author with a story: “The reader will not perhaps deem himself equally obliged to the accident, since it brings upon him the following narrative, founded upon the conversation of the evening.”

Many more instances could be adduced here to show how Walter Scott artfully evades the question of authorship and how he playfully oversteps expectations of authority in an ever expanding number of introductions, prefaces, dedications, advertisements, appendices,
postscripts and other paraphernalia, thereby creating an autophagic paratextuality – narratives on narratives on narratives – that keeps displacing both the empirical and the textual authors:

Scott would develop the authorial equivalent of multiple personality disorder, creating pseudo-authors such as Captain Clutterbuck, Dr Dryasdust, Chrystal Croftangry and even the mysterious Eidolon of Waverley. It is as if, in the process of converting Scotland into an imaginary place, Scott had to make himself into an imaginary author.  

It could be argued that splintering authority and fictionalizing anonymity are redundant in a novel, because the dethroning gesture only emphazises the fictional nature of the narration as a translational act, a carrying across of an authoredness that is created mainly in the dialogue with the reader. The impurity, modesty and humanity of fiction, as displayed in Scott's frame narratives of the Waverley Novels, illustrates rather well the instability of fiction and authorship, as Fiona Robertson points out:

The first editions of the Waverley Novels, taken as a series, are emphatically dialogic productions. What then happens when the author and his publisher decide to impose on them a new degree of uniformity, a new monologic frame for a diversely dialogic collection of works? In their Magnum Opus format the Waverley Novels at last find their single author, but they also find a whole new range of voices to add to their existing meddley. Their readers, meanwhile, discover that the end of the search for the ‘Author of Waverley’ merely leads into an increasingly complex search for the nature of authority.

Transgressing Geographical Borders – (Re)composing Authority

[A] book, like any work of art, is a series of illusions, and however convinced you are by them, however much you see yourself in the characters and their dilemmas, there is another character behind all the others. This is the concealed author who is everywhere and nowhere, the dreamer himself, the trickster who played the trick, with whom you also identify.

Hanif Kureish, My Ear at his Heart

From 1816 onwards, Scottphilia sets in, and Scott’s works begin to be translated and read avidly on the continent. He is received variously as a historical novelist, a popular adventure writer, a suspicious Protestant in Catholic countries, or a nationalist. He is first translated into French (1816) but soon afterwards into German (1817) and later into Italian (1821) and Spanish (1825), with the French and German translations functioning as source texts for a number of other languages, such as Russian, Hungarian, Polish, and Danish. Portugal is rather late in translating the already famous novels mainly due to political constraints: first the
Peninsular War (1807-1814) and then the civil wars (1828-1834) which drove a great number of its intellectuals into exile. The first complete Portuguese translation only appears in 1835. That Scott’s translations appear in Portuguese after the author’s death in 1832 and, rather more importantly, after his reworking of the œuvre into a macrotextual enterprise proves of great import when studying the images Portuguese translations provide of authority and authorship. When questioning these images, at least three aspects should be taken into consideration: (1) the canonical status of an author who has been translated and retranslated into many European languages, most notably the prestige language prevailing in the Portuguese culture of that time: French (some argue that Scott’s success on the continent owes as much to the notorious translator Auguste-Jean-Baptiste Defauconpret as it does to the author himself); (2) the existence at the time of many different editions of the Waverley Novels in English that produce different images of both author and authorship, let alone the French translations by different translators with different translational projects (in Portugal the versions of Defauconpret and Albert Montémont vie for prominence); and (3) the individual and/or national agenda of the translator in the context of his own culture. Moreover, it is my conviction that Scott’s intricate poetics of anonymity and authority effectively precludes authorial intervention in translation, while – it might be argued – inviting further creativity on the part of the translator. Add to that the fact that translations into French were often published immediately after the source text. According to Paul Barnaby, Defauconpret negotiated “an agreement in 1822 with Scott’s London agents Black, Young and Young to receive proof sheets of Scott’s novels straight from the press […]. Defauconpret’s translations therefore appeared almost simultaneously with the original[…].” As a result, even though he knew French and German, Walter Scott could not have kept pace with his own success through the translations. Besides, how could one who so shrewdly and stubbornly kept his works polyphonic – i.e., anonymous – until 1827 intervene in the
translations of works he did not acknowledge having written? Having dispersed authorship by so many well-documented characters, could Scott have conceivably considered the authorial persona in the translations as just another masquerader? Be that as it may, no desire to intervene is known. Himself a translator, Walter Scott never, to the best of my knowledge, commented or attempted to influence his translators. It was still early days in the book industry, and a popular author who, in spite of his success, had to write for a living perhaps had other issues on his mind.38

The ironic playfulness between textual polyphony and the singular voice of authority results in a potential conflict that translators have to address, albeit discreetly, as is the case of one Portuguese translator: André Joaquim Ramalho e Sousa (1790-1857). Ramalho e Sousa first caught my attention, while I was perusing the newspapers of the time. I kept running into his name. References and reviews of his body of translations – all of which were novels by Walter Scott – were uncommonly laudatory at a time when translation was often seen as a bastardization of a sacred original. The reconstruction of his biography turned out to be an arduous affair and remains lacunal at best. Although he was a member of the cultural and political intelligentsia, a scholar and close to many of the most celebrated Romantic writers in Portugal, Ramalho e Sousa seems to have slipped into almost complete oblivion, thus sharing the fate of the majority of translators. What sets him apart, though, is the applause and recognition he received from his peers during his lifetime.

His work, undertaken with the awareness of someone writing an original work, takes him completely out of the field of speculation and sets him in the [field of] literature…39

The beautiful translations of Walter Scott’s novels by André Joaquim Ramalho e Sousa, the translation of Wieland’s Oberon by both Filinto and the Marquess of Alorna were the first dispositions towards Romanticism…40

Ramalho e Sousa, or Mr. Ramalho, as he was known among his contemporaries, translated five (or six) novels by Scott from 1837 to 1845, namely Ivanhoe (1838), Quentin Durward
(1838/39), *Kenilworth* (1840), *Anne of Geierstein* (1843), *Waverley* (1845), perhaps an unsigned *The Betrothed* (1837), and seemingly nothing else. Before setting out to translate Walter Scott, he had edited *O Independente* (1821-1822), an anti-Absolutist newspaper, was sent into exile for his liberal inclinations (1828-1834), fought in the civil war, held high public office (1835-38), and retired from public life in 1838. After that, and apart from a handful of references in various newspapers and essays, the only data available are his five translations and his 1857 death certificate.

Other than the visibility he achieved as a translator during his lifetime, Ramalho is also remarkable for his sense of purpose as a translator. Most of his translations are dedicated to prominent figures in the liberal intelligentsia: a minister, a countess, a poet and novelist. For instance, *Waverley*, published in 1845, is dedicated to Alexandre Herculano (1810-1877), a leading figure in the 1st Romantic Movement in Portugal. Signed by “O TRADUCTOR” (the translator), the dedication is followed by a two-line quotation of a 16th century Portuguese poet: Diogo Bernardes (1520-1605). Thus “domestic intelligibilities and interests” translate into distinctive voices operating right from the outset. The dedications and some footnotes scattered throughout the novels are the translator’s most visible contributions in texts where he is mostly absent. One of the most striking features to emerge in these five translations is not only the translator’s broad absence, after the dedications, but also the almost complete disappearance of conflicting authorial voices. Scott’s playfulness, self-reflexivity, and hyper-textualization all get lost in translations that seem to follow the rather solemn and apparently univocal presence of the “Author of Waverley” in his last metamorphosis: that of the single author of the *Magnum Opus*. On the surface, the five translations present a unified and authoritative voice, which admits no dissension or irony.

This ‘tidying-up’of the author's image into a cohesive, authoritative persona was, I believe, a sign of the times. As part of the Romantic movement himself, Ramalho e Sousa emerges from
his translations as a man with an agenda. His is a project to bring about in Portugal the conditions necessary for a new subgenre, that of the historical novel, one which would conflate fiction with a flavour for erudition. The genre came to play an important role in a never fully accomplished literacy programme, as the first step in the dream of universal alphabetization in Portugal. On this matter, as on others, Ramalho is in full accord with his old friend, Alexandre Herculano who, in an 1837 newspaper article, defended the translation of historical fiction as a pre-condition to the development of any fully fledged literacy.\textsuperscript{42}

The translator was therefore a man of his time. This is also apparent in the selection of the translated novels which is anything but casual. Mr. Ramalho translates only one ‘Scottish’ novel – \textit{Waverley}. The other translated narratives are set in England, Switzerland, and France, during medieval times or the early Renaissance, and all of them display a common feature: they deal with legitimacy issues. This cannot but echo an urgency in the context of Portuguese politics and literature. In the 1830s, Portugal was recovering from invasion by Napoleonic France and civil war. The liberal and Romantic gesture towards creating a legitimate past for a nation which had rebelled against the Ancien Régime is all too apparent. It is thus little wonder that this translation project chose to recreate the image of the historical, erudite “\textit{Author of Waverley}” over the mischievious and elusive anonymity-seeking Scott. The goal is a cohesive and coherent narrative of the past, one which may anticipate the histographic gesture. It should be noted that many of the historical novelists of the period at a later stage crossed over into historiography. Retaining Scott’s paratextual playfulness would undermine the project’s seriousness.

The translator was also a man for his time. Here was a man who made such an enormous impact on Portuguese letters that many Romantic authors felt they had to publicly express their applause for the service he was rendering. His accomplishments were taken to be so
great that his abilities were often compared to those of the “original” author, Walter Scott, which, by Romantic standards, is no small achievement.

Nowhere is there to be seen greater literary rectitude or a more scrupulous and delicate awareness than that of our well-deserving writer [Ramalho e Sousa]. He reads his author in his own language, of which he has great knowledge; he studies him, dissects him to his very core, to his smallest molecule; gets hold of his English individuality; and being as rich in our language, as Walter Scott is in his, he seeks, and finds, the means to give us the faithful expression, the physiognomy, the peculiarities, the most imperceptible circumstances of that founder and prince of the historical novel.33

The emphasis is very much on faithfulness and Ramalho e Sousa’s mastery of the Portuguese language. His abilities make him a paragon of excellence to which all other translators – and many were attempting to translate Walter Scott (between 1837 and 1845 there were 15 different Portuguese translations of 10 Walter Scott’s novels) – had to measure up. Indeed, Ramalho e Sousa seems to have almost single-handedly, if one is to believe his contemporary critics, changed the expectations with respect to translation: “Fortunately, our assessment of translation has been proved wrong because in [the translation of Ivanhoe] we find purity of style, grace and beauty of syntax, and overcoming a thousand difficulties that only those who, like our translator, cultivate the tongue of Camões, may appreciate to the full [...].”44

The widespread and very public approval of Mr. Ramalho’s translations resulted from the fact that he was in tune with his time, and contributing in Portugal through his translated novels to opening up an entirely new path and different understanding of literature. He helped not only introduce and foster the conditions for a new sub-genre, the historical novel, but also created a public for it, thus making room for experiments in this field by writers of such renown as Alexandre Herculano, Rebello da Silva and many others. The historical novel became a fashionable trend in literature and fostered a deep interest in historiography amongst the still select reading community, an interest which encouraged many Portuguese novelists of the time to evolve into historians. This is achieved by sacrificing Scott's self-reflexivity and irony, in order to privilege his more canonical status. Ramalho's interest is in the image of the most celebrated and authoritative presence: Walter Scott, the Author of Waverley, and his poetics
as translator is one of authorship and authority, as becomes apparent in his manipulation of the paratextual apparatus.

The source for Mr. Ramalho’s translations is undoubtedly the *Magnum Opus* edition. The translations include some of the introductions and footnotes to the 1829-1832 edition. However, as I mentioned earlier, the *Magnum Opus*, while presenting a different conception of authorship, chooses emphatically not to erase the manifold early authorial voices. It simply adds, and somewhat ironically, one more voice to them: that of the learned, serious, and canonized author. On the contrary, Ramalho's translation project subtracts the greater part of these multiple layers of paratextual voices from the texts, thus projecting a graver, entirely serious and rather dogmatic image of authorship and deploying the persona of the undivided Author(ity).

True to this strategy, Ramalho e Sousa retains only (part of) the later paratexts to *Waverley* and *Anne of Geierstein*, those first included in the *Magnum Opus* edition. Every other preface or postscript in these and the other novels disappears. And so do both the dissenting, quarrelsome, parodical voices who, travelling from novel to novel, claim authorship and the characteristic textuality of the novels, i.e., “the awareness of a piece of writing of itself as a made object, a text, in contrast to the alternative stance of text as self-effacing, a mirror held up to reality by an invisible hand.”45 Thus, stripped of their original polyphony, the texts become ‘straightforward’ historical novels by Sir Walter Scott, with the translator electing monophony as a sign of authority. Thus, the Portuguese Scott conforms wholly to the Romantic ideal of the author as demiurge, as the undivided authority – the irony being, of course, that the latter is actually the translator’s construct.

Notwithstanding this, it would be quite wrong to think that the translated texts are devoid of polyphony. Whereas prefaces and postscripts of the early editions are excluded, the footnote gains prominence – a trait not unfamiliar to the *Magnum Opus* edition which promoted a
“symbiotic relationship between textual revision and editorial commentary.” In fact the translations are far from univocal, as they include (a) some of Scott's footnotes, (b) notes by the French translators (Auguste-Jean-Baptiste Defauconpret and Albert Montémont), (c) dissenting notes by French editors: “It is fair to note that, as far as Waverley is concerned […], the publisher and the translator should not be confused with one another; the responsibility for the notes is not shared either,” and (d) foot and endnotes by Ramalho e Sousa himself.

The result is the emergence, out of the multiplication of voices in the textual margins, of a unifying erudite voice of the translator who creates a transtextual and transcultural apparatus by referring the reader to his other translations and to Portuguese literary and historical events and works. Consequently, the translator’s paratextuality effectively constructs a different readership of/for the translations in Portuguese. Four examples must suffice here.

The first refers to the text proper – in which Ramalho e Sousa often makes incisions in the form of explanatory parenthesis – and concerns a discussion of Romeo and Juliet. In the source text, one can read: “‘And it was a shame,’ said Ensign Maccombich, who usually followed his Colonel everywhere, ‘for that Tibbert, or Taggart, or whatever was his name, to stick him [Mercutio] under the other gentleman's arm while he was redding the fray.’” This gets translated more or less verbatim with the following parenthetical addition cum correction: “‘[…] it was a shame, for that Tibberto, or Taggarto (he meant ‘Tybalto’).’”

The second example is an endnote which refers the reader to another work by Scott, The History of Scotland, should he/she need more information on the Engagers and the Whiggamores. This is all the more interesting as this text has never, to the best of my knowledge, been translated into Portuguese. Nonetheless, the translator seems confident enough to suggest further reading material whenever the novel gets too ‘Scottish’: “For the explanation of the different terms, see History of Scotland by our Author.”
While it could be argued that every footnote is an illustration of the fundamental textuality of the translated text, the third example completely shatters “the illusion of transparency and coincidence, the illusion of the one voice,” as the translator makes himself unequivocally heard by saying: “We would remind the reader that the author was Protestant.” The usage of “we” emphasizes the alterity of the novel, leaving no room for any doubt that what the reader is enjoying is a translation of a text by a foreign author, i.e., different to ‘us.’

The fourth and last example refers to a rift between the source and target texts, and again it is a matter of erudition. In the repartee “I can read my uncle's riddle,’ said Stanley; ‘the cautious old soldier did not care to hint to me that I might hand over to you this passport, which I have no occasion for; but if it should afterwards come out as the rattle-pated trick of a young Cantab, cela ne tire à rien,” the French phrase is changed in the translated text to “cela ne tirerait pas à conséquence,” which coincides with Defaucompret's rendering, and is followed by an asterisk. In the corresponding footnote, one reads: “The original has cela ne tire à rien.”

Hence, in a rather paradoxical way, the novels retain much of their previous authorial plurality, even while the voices are quite different from the originals. Thus, while the original textualization gesture compounded by the many authorial voices is irredeemably lost, as the novels in Portuguese are a monument to realistic fiction, plurality is preserved by including (1) multiple readings by different translators and editors and (2) the domestic intelligibilities and needs of the host culture: “Because translating traffics in the foreign, in the introduction of linguistic and cultural differences, it is equally capable of crossing or reinforcing the boundaries between domestic audiences and the hierarchies in which they are positioned.”

Concluding Remarks

This rather brief outline of an encounter between an author and a translator is evidence that Anthony Pym is right when he argues that translation history is “a story of wanderers, frontier
dwellers, children of culturally mixed families, human hybrids.” As such, it can never be transparent or devoid of a combination of traces, footprints, idiosyncrasies and idiolects.

Drawing on Iser’s discussion of the act of fictionalizing, I have shown here how the duality of (historical) fiction necessarily entails translatability as its pre-condition, with fiction best understood as a borderland where such difference is negotiated. As such, fiction does not essentially differ from translation, as both presuppose transience and plurivocality. Scott’s fictional writing is best illuminated by a plural, decentered approach, as it uncovers an intricate poetics that highlights “the importance of margins and boundaries (imaginative, hermeneutic, and historical as well as generic)” and thrives on the translatability of stories, traditions, and voices. Walter Scott never interfered – could never have interfered – with the translations of his novels published in his lifetime. He simply did not have the time, given that he “comes to locate the work of fiction within the world of production and exchange, and to incorporate metaphorically the pressures of literature’s industrialization in an age of mass reading.” However, I argue, this practical impossibility was matched by Scott’s playful conception of an authorship imploding in multiple garrulous voices competing for an ever displaced centrality. No wonder then that Scott’s novels have resonated in translation, forever finding new voices and new layers of meaning in the gesture towards the other.

Notes


3 Scott’s popularity is to some extent unimaginable to us but he probably represented the first ever best-selling author by contemporary standards. See Annika Bautz, *The Reception of Jane Austen and Walter Scott* (London and New York: Continuum, 2007).
Here translability refers back to etymology. It is well known that to translate means to carry over, and the act of carrying over implies movement, fluidity, the perpetual crossing of boundaries. I am indebted here to the insights of a number of scholars from different areas who, over the last three decades, have been discussing the concept of “border” as a place of exchange and not only of exclusion, a place of/for translatability, both in the literal and the figurative sense. Geography, anthropology, sociology have recently acknowledged the value of translation as process and metaphor, and it is my conviction that translation studies has much to gain from some of its outputs. See Anzaldúa, Mignolo, as well as Bhabha’s approach to translation and culture: Gloria Anzaldúa, Borderlands/La Frontera. The New Mestiza (San Francisco: Aunt Lute Books, 1987), Walter Mignolo, Local Histories, Global Designs. Coloniality, Subaltern Knowledges, and Border Thinking (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2000), and Homi Bhabha, The Location of Culture (New York: Routledge, 1994).
Avrom Fleishman describes one form of the novels’ translatibility as the impetus “to interpret the experience of individual men - both actual or imaginary - in such a way as to make their lives not only felt by the reader as he would feel his own existence were he to have lived in the past, but understood as only someone who had seen that life as a completed whole could understand it.” See Avrom Fleishman, *The English Historical Novel* (Baltimore and London: The John Hopkins Press, 1971), p. 12-13.


Judith Wilt summarises them thus: “What Scott understood of his motives he told the reader directly or dramatically through the alter-egos of his introductions, explanatory chapters, and eventually his "magnum opus" prefaces and notes. He wanted the private peace of anonymity, the personal delight of the elaborate trickery, the freedom to disown his mistakes and lapses, the more mysterious freedom to disown successes. He wanted the extra sales that came with the intrigue, and the special glow that came with being not only the most productive author of his time but the most productive two authors. The critical truism that Scott is his own best (or at least first) critic Scott accepted; indeed, he invented it, creating out of himself complaining antiquarians, antagonistic historians, keen-eyed editors and literary philosophers of the realistic and romantic schools, the criminal author of Waverley himself, who gaily admits all charges.” See Judith Wilt, *Secret Leaves. The Novels of Walter Scott* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1985), p. 186.


Gaston, *Prefacing the Waverley Novels*, p. 49.


For more detailed information on Scott’s impact on 19th-century Europe, see *Reception of Sir Walter Scott in Europe*, ed. Murray Pittock (London and New York: Continuum, 2006).

It should not be forgotten that Scott faced dire financial circumstances after 1826 when his publishers and printers went bankrupt in the aftermath of the 1825 financial crisis. As a partner of James Ballantyne and Coy, the printers, “Scott himself was held responsible not only for his private debts of £20,000, but also for the entire debts of the concern, which amounted to nearly £100,000.” The Journal of Sir Walter Scott, ed. W. E. K. Anderson (Edinburgh: Canongate Classics, 1998), p. xxix. As a result, Scott had to write not only for a living but also for paying off his debts.

“O seu trabalho, feito com a consciência com que se escreveria uma obra original, o tira completamente do campo da especulação, para o collocar no da literatura....” Waverley ou ha sessenta annos, Novella de Sir Walter Scott. Traduzida pelo Sr. Ramalho,” in O Correio das Damas, vol. VI, no. 24 (December 31, 1845) p. 192.


40 “As belas traduções dos romances de Walter Scott por André Joaquim Ramalho e Sousa, a tradução de Oberon, de Wieland [sic], por Filinto e pela marquesa de Alorna, foram as primeiras disposições para o romantismo.” Teófilo Braga, História da Literatura Portuguesa, vol. V: O Romantismo (Mem Martins: Publicações Europa-América, s.d.), p. 331 [1872].


46 Millgate, Scott’s Last Edition, p. 82.


Breaking “through the surface of the text speaking for itself,” as Theo Hermans clearly puts it in “The Translator's Voice in Translated Narrative” (Target, vol. 8, no. 1 (1996), p. 27), the translator’s footnote unmistakably draws attention to the textuality of the novel as it disrupts the world of illusion created by the text.


“Pedimos ao leitor se lembre de que o autor era protestante.” Scott, Waverley ou Ha Sessenta Annos, vol. IV, p. 95.


Bibliography


