

Mathew and Henry Carey, Archibald Constable,  
and the Discourse of Materiality in the Anglophone Periphery

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British and American literary publishing were not separate affairs in the early nineteenth century. The transnational circulation of texts, fueled by readerly demand on both sides of the Atlantic; a reprint trade unregulated by copyright law and active, also, on both sides of the Atlantic; and transatlantic publishing agreements at the highest level of literary production all suggest that, despite obvious national differences in culture and circumstance, authors and booksellers in Britain and the United States participated in a single literary field. This literary field cohered through linked publishing practices and a shared English-language literary heritage, although it was also marked by internal division and cultural inequalities. Recent scholarship in the history of books, reading, and the dissemination of texts has suggested that literary producers in Ireland, Scotland, and the United States occupied analogous positions as they nursed long-standing rivalries with England and depended on English publishers and readers for cultural legitimation. Nowhere is such rivalry and dependence more evident than in the career of the most popular author in the period, Walter Scott, whose books were printed in Edinburgh but distributed mostly in London, where they reached their largest and most lucrative audience. Scott's early Waverley novels are indelibly marked by England's dominance through their repeated dramatization of an Englishman's journey north as he discovers Scottish culture along with an implied reader who shares his nationality. Scott's novels thematize the uneven dynamics of a London-centered book trade that historians are currently laboring to reconstruct; this essay joins the effort by considering the transatlantic publication of Scott's work as a case study in the perils and promises of publishing in the periphery.<sup>1</sup>

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Many thanks to James N. Green, Cassandra Good, and the research staff at Boston Athenaeum.

<sup>1</sup> On transatlantic book history see the multi-volume projects on the history of the book in Britain, Scotland, and America, which contain copious bibliographies of recent scholarship: John Bernard, David McKitterick, I. R. Willison, ed., *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain*, 6 vol. (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1999-2009); Bill Bell, ed., *The Edinburgh History of the Book in Scotland*, 4 vol. (Edinburgh: Univ. of Edinburgh Press, 2007-2009); and David Hall ed., *A History of the Book in America*, 5 vol. (Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 2000-2010). Other work of particular importance in discussing the relationship between Ireland, Scotland, the

In important scholarship on Scott and his Edinburgh publisher, Archibald Constable, Jane Millgate has called the difficulty of distributing books in England “the problem of London” and demonstrated the strategies that Constable developed in order to solve it.<sup>2</sup> For Mathew Carey in Philadelphia, London presented a problem of its own as he sought to gather British books to reprint in the United States. In this period, London remained the distribution center of most books that American publishers, unrestricted by copyright, wanted to print – even those, like Scott’s, that were issued first in Scotland. Millgate’s work suggests that one of the strategies Constable pursued in dealing with “the problem of London” directly affected Carey’s ability to reprint Scott during the hectic years when the demand for the Waverley novels overwhelmed literary publishers in the United States.<sup>3</sup> The American demand for British literature was not only a domestic concern of relevance to publishers in Philadelphia; it proved of concrete importance across the Atlantic as Constable used it to his own advantage. The frenzy over Scott put Carey’s and Constable’s firms in a triangular relationship to the London marketplace and, eventually, into a direct relationship that after some tension and confusion proved mutually beneficial. Though marked by definite inequality – Scott belonged to Constable, after all, not Carey – the two provincial publishers became allies in the literary field.

In exploring the relationship between these two houses, the most important publishers at the time in their respective capitals, this essay considers the importance of English readers to

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United States, and England, includes William St. Clair, *The Reading Nation in the Romantic Period* (New York: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2004); Richard Sher, *The Enlightenment and the Book* (Chicago: Chicago Univ. Press, 2006); and Charles Benson, “Printers and Booksellers in Dublin, 1800-1850,” in *Spreading the Word*, ed. Robin Myers and Michael Harris (Winchester, England: St. Paul’s Bibliographies, 1990), 47-59. On the London-centered literary field in the early nineteenth century see my dissertation, “Tales from Elsewhere: Fiction at a Proximate Distance in the Anglophone Atlantic, 1800-1850” (UCLA, 2009).

<sup>2</sup> Jane Millgate, “Archibald Constable and the Problem of London: ‘Quite the Connection We Have Been Looking For’” *Library* 18 (1996): 110-23.

<sup>3</sup> On reprinting and the book trade in the early United States, and especially the importance of Scott, see James N. Green, “The Rise of Book Publishing” in *An Extensive Republic: Print, Culture and Society in the New Nation, 1790-1840*, ed. Robert Gross and Mary Kelley (Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 2010), 75-147.

Constable; the difficulties Mathew Carey and his son, Henry, faced in monopolizing the market for Scott; the epistolary exchange that brought Constable and Henry Carey together as associates; and discourse about the transatlantic book trade within printed sources on both sides of the Atlantic. In the early 1820s, Henry Carey was forced to publicly defend himself from angry consumers who were frustrated with errors in his hastily printed Scott editions. In the early 1830s an anomalous episode in the transatlantic transmission of Scott's novels near the end of his life led him to shape his last fictionalized preface around the issue of American reprinting.

In what follows, I pay particular attention to the discourse of materiality, or the language of the book trade, both as employed by booksellers and businessmen like the Careys and Constable and also in the many texts that emanated from their practices. In constructing this transatlantic narrative, I have synthesized the work of bibliographers and historians who, working in discrete national traditions, have established some of the facts I discuss and located many of the sources, including Jane Millgate, David Kaser, William B. Tood and Ann Bowden, James N. Green, David Randall, and Earl Bradsher.<sup>4</sup> I argue, however, that the contours of the book trade – the importance of London, the tense alliances in the periphery – can be understood only by attending carefully to the language used to constitute it. The actors in this drama were a writerly and bookish crew, as evidenced by their chosen profession and their status as readers and consumers of literature. Far from a means to an end, the discourse of materiality was a phenomenon in its own right, both when it saturated traditionally literary sources, like Scott's last preface, and when it shaped the relations between publishers, their partners, and their public.

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<sup>4</sup> Jane Millgate, "The Problem of London" and "Making it New: Scott, Constable, Ballantyne, and the Publication of *Ivanhoe*," *Studies in English Literature* 34.4 (1994): 795-811; David Kaser, *Messrs. Carey & Lea of Philadelphia: A Study in the History of the Booktrade* (Philadelphia: Univ. of Pennsylvania Press, 1957), especially 91-116; and "Waverley in America" *Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America* 51 (1957): 163-7; William B. Todd and Ann Bowden, *Sir Walter Scott: A Bibliographical History* (New Castle, DE: Oak Knoll Press, 1998); James N. Green, "Ivanhoe in America," *The Annual Report of the Library Company of Philadelphia for the Year 1994* (1995): 8-14; David Randall, "Waverley in America," *The Colophon* 1.1 (1935): 39-55; and Earl Bradsher, *Mathew Carey: Editor, Author and Publisher: A Study in American Literary Development* (New York: Columbia Univ. Press), 1912.

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Walter Scott always needed more money. Throughout his career, ambitious and reckless capital investments soaked up the profits from his busy pen, as he underwrote his Edinburgh printer, James Ballantyne, encouraged costly publishing ventures, and built his vast medievalist castle and estate at Abbotsford. Such investments and entanglements made Scott, Constable, and Ballantyne extremely vulnerable to the fluctuations of the market, factors that led to bankruptcy of the Waverley machine in 1826. Even at the height of his popularity Scott could be short on cash, as was the case in the summer of 1819 when unforeseen delays in the publication of *Ivanhoe* (1819) and the receipt of its profits led Scott to go behind Constable's back and seek revenue elsewhere. The delay with *Ivanhoe* had to do with various complications, including difficulties with paper supply and arrangements with its London publisher. *Ivanhoe* was eventually published in late December, 1819, by Constable and his joint partners Hurst, Robinson, a new firm that Constable helped establish in London in an effort to control the distribution of his books in England. Such efforts included a huge trade sale he orchestrated in London in November 1819, which featured the advance sale of *Ivanhoe* and the launch of the collected series *The Novels and Tales of the Author of Waverley*. Too impatient to wait for this, however, in August Scott promised and sold the next two Waverley novels to Longman & Co., a venerable London publisher that had been the partner in some of Scott's previous productions but with whom Constable had considerable difficulties. Constable was still to be the Edinburgh publisher of these next novels, *The Monastery* (1820) and *The Abbot* (1820), but Longman got top billing on their title pages. At the height of his popularity, if Scott found himself a bind he could appeal directly to a capital-infused London house, which in this instance promised him "£5000 in Longmans beautiful and dutiful bills," as he wrote with apparent relief to Ballantyne.

This paid his debts in 1819, even though similar measures could not stave off the bigger crisis years later.<sup>5</sup>

Longman could provide money for Scott, in Edinburgh. For Mathew Carey, in Philadelphia, he could provide books. As a reprinter Mathew Carey supplied readers in America with cheap editions of British titles, a practice that grew with the increased involvement of Henry with the business. In the late 1810s, eager to invest capital to the best advantage, the Careys sought out pecuniary relationships with London publishers to assure the speedy delivery of new books by familiar authors, like Scott, who were already market-tested in the United States. The direct shipment of new books helped them preempt the publication of the same books by rival printers in New York and Philadelphia. In 1817, Henry Carey, newly granted partner status in his father's firm, wrote to Longman with this proposal:

We are very desirous to make some arrangement by which we should receive such new works that come out as may be likely to bear publication in this country. If you can make any such arrangements for us we will allow Two hundred fifty dollars per annum, provided the person will forward them first vessel from London or Liverpool in order that we may receive them first.... Our booksellers are so very active that it would require very considerable attention to forward them by first and fastest sailing vessels. We should wish to receive every new work of popularity and particularly those of Miss Porter, Lord Byron, Miss Edgeworth, W. Scott, Leigh Hunt, Author of Waverley, Moore, Miss Burney, Mrs. Taylor, Lady Morgan, Dugald Stuart, etc. etc.

This list of desirable authors, a high proportion of them Irish and Scottish, reveals much about American taste for British literature, not least through the irony of listing Scott twice, as himself and the anonymous Author of Waverley. In response to this request, Longman recommend they employ John Miller to acquire and deliver books. Miller became the London agent to Carey's house, and in the 1820s shepherded many American texts into transatlantic editions, including fiction by Catherine Maria Sedgwick, James Fenimore Cooper, and Washington Irving. Miller

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<sup>5</sup> Millgate, "Making it New" and "Problem of London." Scott to James Ballantyne, quoted in Millgate, "Making it New," 807. On Scott's bankruptcy see Edgar Johnson, *Sir Walter Scott: The Great Unknown* 2 vol. (New York: Macmillan, 1970), 941-1019.

shipped Carey new works as soon as they were available in the metropolis. The scene in London could be especially hectic as the latest Waverley novel arrived from Edinburgh. “The Smack Ocean, by which the new work was shipped, arrived at the wharf on Sunday,” Constable wrote to Scott about the delivery of *The Fortunes of Nigel* in 1822, “the bales were got out by one Monday morning, and before halfpast ten o’clock 7000 copies had been dispersed.”<sup>6</sup>

In America the demand for Scott was just as intense, and even a twenty-four hour advantage could result in enormous profits for the reprinter who could publish first. This led the Careys to pursue more innovative measures than their arrangement with Miller: the advance purchase of unbound sheets of Waverley novels before official publication. The first Scott novel to be received in Philadelphia early was *Rob Roy* (1817), dispatched in December, 1817, eight months after Carey wrote to Longman with his initial proposal. Between the receipt of this novel and an official arrangement between Henry Carey and Constable in 1822, the transatlantic reprinting of Scott presented many problems, including delays, misprintings, and a misunderstanding between the two publishers. While the exact circumstances of the sale of *Rob Roy* are unknown – we don’t know, for example, if Longman’s suggestion of John Miller led it or not – the dynamics of the London book trade made it possible.<sup>7</sup>

The advance copy of *Rob Roy* became available for transatlantic purchase as part of a deal Constable made with Hurst, Robinson to distribute his overstocked books. At this time Hurst, Robinson were established in Leeds (about halfway from Edinburgh to London), although after encouragement from Constable they moved directly to London, just around the time they were causing trouble with *Ivanhoe*. Constable sold them books to distribute throughout Britain, especially in London, and also overseas, including to America. Such stock included the

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<sup>6</sup> Kaser, *Messrs. Carey & Lea*, “The Reprint Trade” (91-116). Carey & Son to Longman & Co, April 5, 1817, quoted (and misdated) in Bradsher, 79. Constable to Scott, May 31, 1822, quoted in Todd and Bowden, 561.

<sup>7</sup> Kaser, *Messrs. Carey & Lea*; Millgate, “Problem of London.”

*Encyclopaedia Britannica* as well as the *Edinburgh Annual Register*, the latter of which Constable suggested they “print titles for the American market and say edited by Walter Scott, Esq – which is actually the fact.” American demand for imported books clearly helped Constable: the potential profits from their sale provided him with leverage while making the distribution deal with Hurst, Robinson. This was the case with *Rob Roy*, which Constable offered them as an incentive for purchasing more than 1,200 copies of the *Encyclopaedia* meant for the London market. Hurst, Robinson found a buyer in Thomas Wardle, an American living in London, who, like Miller, acted as an agent for American publishers. Wardle then sold *Rob Roy* to a bookseller in Philadelphia, probably Mathew Carey; though this fact remains unclear, it is certain that beginning with *Ivanhoe* Carey purchased sheets from Wardle, a practice that continued with *The Monastery*, *The Abbot*, *Kenilworth* (1821), *The Pirate* (1821), and *The Fortunes of Nigel* (1822). Wardle shipped each volume of a novel as soon as it was provided to him. Carey could therefore expect the three volumes of a single work to arrive on separate ships, sometimes over the course of a few weeks or months, and he printed each volume as it arrived. Beginning with *Kenilworth* Carey previewed each new Waverley novel in the Philadelphia paper *National Gazette* by printing excerpts when he received the first shipment. As insurance while dealing with Wardle, Carey continued to instruct John Miller to send complete copies of the novels from London when they were published. In a few cases the arrival of Miller’s copy proved crucial, since the arrangement with Wardle was tenuous and sometimes unreliable.<sup>8</sup>

A direct agreement between Henry Carey and Constable emerged out of a heated dispute between the two over this process of acquisition. The epistolary exchange that established this agreement is more significant than David Kaser, its only other commentator, suggested when he

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<sup>8</sup> Millgate, “Problem of London”; Kaser, *Messrs. Carey & Lea*; Green, “Ivanhoe in America,” Todd and Bowden. Constable to Robinson & Co., October 8, 1818, quoted in Millgate, “Problem of London,” 118.



considered it half a century ago. Not only did it bring Carey and Constable together, as Kaser notes, it also reveals dynamics and frustrations endemic to publishing in the periphery, as London remained a problem and professional alliances proved both alluring and troublesome. In the letters, Carey and Constable exhibited a fascinating combination of hostility and desire toward each other. The demand for Scott's novels lent urgency to the matter, while the lack of copyright regulations meant that honor, courtesy, and pride provided the rules of conduct. In the end, and after some frustrations, the two provincial publishers eventually circumvented the London marketplace to establish a direct Edinburgh/Philadelphia link that helped them both.<sup>9</sup>

In the spring of 1822, Constable heard a rumor that a reprinter in Philadelphia was acquiring advance sheets of the Waverley novels and assumed that someone in the Ballantyne printing house was selling them without his knowledge. In assuming this he apparently forgot his standing agreement that Hurst, Robinson could sell such sheets to whomever they chose. On April 27, he wrote to Carey & Sons to register his complaints. The letter is remarkably harsh in its tone and presumption of guilt:

We now address you in consequence of being put in possession of information, that you have for some years, and are now, in the way of procuring the sheets of the new works published by us from the pen of the Author of Waverly [sic!], through the means of some one of the workmen in the Printing Office where the productions of that Author are printed.

It may at present be sufficient to state, that we have taken means to put a stop to so irregular a proceeding, and if you suffer any disappointment in the matter, it will mainly arise from the course you have pursued being one of great uncertainty, to say nothing of the gross want of honesty in the person so transmitting early copies of the sheets to you.

Although it is the thief in the shop whom Constable accuses of gross dishonesty, the insult overflows onto Carey himself, embroiled as he allegedly is in such an "irregular" proceeding. Constable's arrogance is manifest in his certainty of Carey's guilt, his own ability to "put a stop"

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<sup>9</sup> Kaser is the only scholar I have found who discusses the exchange at any length; see "Waverley in America" and *Messrs. Carey & Lea*, esp. 102-104.

to the crime, and the implicit lesson he wishes to teach the American about how to behave like a gentleman bookseller. His anger derives not only from the apparent violation of Ballantyne's printing office – still closely guarded in order to protect Scott's anonymity – but, as quickly becomes clear, from the injustice of missing out on the transaction. He does not question the propriety of Carey procuring advance sheets, just his supposed method of acquisition. Constable wants the money himself:

[We] have no objections to treat with you or any respectable house for the privilege of any early dispatch we make of the sheets of any work of this author; there will be many more productions from the same pen, and if it is any object to you to have the early possession of such works surely it is to you greatly more certain to transact direct with the proprietors than through any disrespectable channel, but perhaps you are not aware of the source from which you procure the sheets being irregular.

The concession Constable makes at the end of this passage merely trades the presumption of dishonesty for one of ignorance and does little to mitigate the accusation that Carey is flouting common courtesies of the trade. In the absence of an actionable legal offence, Constable reasserts his ownership of the Waverley novels and resorts to shame as a disciplinary tactic.<sup>10</sup>

In the rest of the letter, he suggests that Carey purchase the sheets directly, an ironic move given his disdain for Carey's supposed methods. Constable reports that he initially heard of the stolen sheets because a publisher in Baltimore wrote with an account of them and offered to purchase subsequent sheets directly from Edinburgh. Constable passes over the request from Baltimore – an honorable one in itself, albeit couched in unfounded accusations – and offers the deal instead to the offensive Philadelphians, whose enterprising negotiation of the marketplace Constable seems, despite himself, to admire. “[I]f as that letter [from Baltimore] states you have successfully brought out many of these books in succession,” he writes, “we think there is a better chance of your understanding the matter than any person in a great degree unacquainted

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<sup>10</sup> Archibald Constable to Messrs. Carey & Son, April 27, 1822. Lea & Febiger Collection, Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

with it”; should they come to terms he can “forward any portion of any new work.” It is precisely within the apparent irregularity of Carey’s practices that Constable finds evidence of his competency. In showing his own preference for the experienced Philadelphia firm, furthermore, Constable betrays his own desire – quite outside economic motivations – that the Waverley novels receive a “respectable” edition in America.<sup>11</sup>

Henry Carey’s immediate concern is to defend his firm (now H. Carey & Lea), a simple task given the facts of the case but also an urgent one given the great potential of establishing a new relationship with Constable. The letter he wrote in response includes a full explanation of his actual practice, including the amount he paid Wardle for each novel “since *Ivanhoe*,” though he does not name Hurst, Robinson in order to avoid “any difficulty between you and them.” The letter is notable for its combination of offended pride and solicitation. The backhanded preference Constable showed for Carey over the gossipy Baltimore firm may have been an additional provocation over and above his actual innocence:

Had you known us at the time you wrote that letter we presume you would not have thrown out the ideas it contains with regard to our obtaining the books in the manner you speak of. Where we are known we do not imagine any such charge could be thought of as we have endeavored to conduct our business with as much regard to correctness as any house in this Country. Messr Longman & Co – Mr Miller... are our correspondents in London, to them you may refer for any information that you may desire respecting us. We mention these names from a desire that the impression you have received may be effaced. Had such a charge come from any person who had an opportunity of knowing us, we should hardly have considered it entitled to refutation.

Carey’s frustration at his firm’s obscurity is palpable in the repeated appeal, no less than three times in one paragraph, to epistemological language; had Constable “known” him as they do in London, then the scandalous accusation could have been avoided. Of course Carey is disingenuous to claim that Constable’s ignorance is the only reason he deigns to refute this charge. The stakes are quite high, as a direct arrangement with Constable could finally give him

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

the real advantage he wants in the reprint market and also solve continuing difficulties with his indirect London connection.<sup>12</sup>

However disguised, the high stakes are revealed in the measures Carey takes to vindicate his honor, including the invocation of his London agents, the detailed account of his dealings with Wardle, and his defense of the anonymous party Hurst, Robinson, who Carey well knew were Constable's London partners: "were we to mention the name of the house by which [the sheets] have been furnished you would be astounded to hear that such a house would be guilty of such conduct." "For ourselves," Carey writes, "we feel perfectly free from the slightest impropriety in the transaction & we presume you will be convinced of the same & regret having charged us as you have done." He is confident enough to call a witness on his own behalf in order to turn the tables on the Edinburgh publisher, who now plays the fool:

Since the receipt of your letter this morning we have seen the agent [i.e., Wardle] & he informs us that when he was last in London, one Vol of one of the works was rec'd & the head of the house assured him that it had that morning been put into his hands by *Mr Constable himself*.

The arch tone is clearly a method, in itself, of earning credit in the eyes of his opponent, even one as formidable as the gatekeeper to the Waverley novels. Carey's honor is defined through its capacity to be thoroughly offended.<sup>13</sup>

Carey also proves as capable as Constable in making a proposal couched in condescension and negativity. He aims low in his offer for future novels, as anyone might while negotiating a price, but he emphasizes over and over again that advance sheets might be less valuable than Constable would wish. For most of the novels he paid either \$100 or \$200, Carey writes, and adds that "from these prices you may judge the value of the copies here," even, as he

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<sup>12</sup> H. C. Carey & I. Lea to Archibald Constable, June 8, 1822. *Letter Books*, Vol. 1. Lea & Febiger Collection, Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*

says, “where the agent has the opportunity of making arrangements with any or all the Booksellers in the country.” Without a middleman they might command even less of a sum, since in the current arrangement agent and supplier split the profits. As Carey pointedly phrases it, “we could not believe that a house engaged in so large a business as they [i.e., Hurst, Robinson] would be guilty of so much rascality for the thrifty compensation they receive.” The implication is that such a cheap bundle wouldn’t even be worth stealing. In this context his actual offer appears generous indeed: “We are willing to pay fifty five pounds (about \$250) for the first Copy of his future works.” Although this is more than twice what they paid for *Ivanhoe*, Carey feels it necessary to explain his low bid even further by mentioning that the swift arrival of the published books erases the advantage of advance sheets, since in such cases any bookseller “is sure of having the opportunity of taking part of an edition at cost of paper & print in less than 5 days after us.” He therefore insists that copies be sent from Edinburgh “via Liverpool,” not London, in order to make all this worth his while. Throughout the letter, Carey seems as interested in explaining the demand structure of the American book trade as he is in introducing himself as an honorable tradesman. In doing so he allows a hint of condescension, as if to assure the Edinburgh publisher that if he wants to profit from content that would otherwise be free he must know whereof he speaks.<sup>14</sup>

The establishment of this relationship was more urgent in Philadelphia than Edinburgh, and not only because Carey depended much more on profits from Scott’s novels than Constable did on fees from America. As he awaited Constable’s reply, problems resulting from Carey’s arrangement with Wardle and Hurst, Robinson caused glaring errors in editions of the two latest novels, *The Pirate* and *The Fortunes of Nigel*, issued, respectively, in February and July, 1822. As Kaser has shown, delays in the receipt of the advance sheets of these works and last minute

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

changes Scott made before official publication produced discrepancies between Carey's editions and the imported editions that soon arrived from London: *The Pirate* was missing a chapter and *Nigel* a preface. Carey had to distribute the missing chapter of *The Pirate* on its own and he belatedly printed the preface to *Nigel* in the second volume. The ensuing outcry meant that Carey had to publically defend himself from embarrassing errors at the precise moment while, in private, he was proudly appealing to the man who had the power to prevent them in the future. In late July, a sarcastic screed in the *Boston Daily Advertiser* complained about his editions, setting off a short dispute that illustrates just how *uncourteous* the reprint trade could be.<sup>15</sup> The printing errors that resulted from Carey's ambition to dominate the American market brought the discourse of materiality to the foreground, as the different parties argued about transatlantic reprinting and its effect on the integrity of texts.

The Boston complaint illustrates that, like Constable, they had heard their own rumors about Carey's London connection:

[We] have had the misfortune to see a copy of the Philadelphia edition [of *The Fortunes of Nigel*], in which *the whole introductory chapter is omitted*. This Philadelphia edition is from the same press that also gave us the *Pirate* without a chapter.... These enterprising publishers are said to have an agent in England, who forwards them the new productions, in sheets, as they come from the press. When it is about time for the whole work to reach the hands of other American booksellers, the publishers of these Philadelphia editions, it seems, reprint what sheets they have received, more or less, and if a very characteristic introduction has not yet come to hand, or a chapter is wanting in the middle, why it only increases the interest of the story, and, in the course of the season, the missing sheets will arrive – be reprinted – and sent (wonderfully liberally) *gratis*, to those who have bought the book.... We should not be surprised if these Philadelphia editions should rival the renowned *Irish* pirated editions abroad.

The Boston paper ridicules Carey for unacceptable results and for his pretensions to achieve insider status among English booksellers – just the kind of fool's errand an "Irish" printer might pursue. In thus insulting Irish publishers – who until copyright laws following the 1801 Act of

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<sup>15</sup> Kaser, *Messrs Carey & Lea*.

Union supplied much of North America with cheap unauthorized reprints – the Boston paper invokes Mathew Carey’s well-known national origin and denigrates reprinting as a practice, despite the writer’s obvious desire that it prove effective. In this notice, authority resides in Britain, where the “whole work” issued in complete and unadulterated form. Through fashioning excuses for the error in an ironic language of aesthetic pleasure (“it only increases the interest of the story”), the complaint locates Carey’s highest offense in the destruction of the work’s unity. The “missing sheets” are the sign for the breakdown of the text as well as Carey’s commitment to its cultural value.<sup>16</sup>

Carey’s use of advance sheets proved more difficult to defend than the means he used to acquire them. His reply, printed in the *National Gazette* and reprinted in the Boston paper, included a defense of his father’s native land – “the same as Montgomery and Emmet,” but his excuses only confirm the unreliability of his practice and, worse, try to fashion his blatant commercial strategy as a public service. Volume one of *The Pirate*, he explains, “had the appearance of being complete,” but after examining “another English copy,” it was revealed “the author had *added* a chapter.” Regarding *The Fortunes of Nigel*, he says that they rushed to distribute its first volume “to guard against the edition, which... would be published in New York, immediately upon the receipt of the London copy,” but then he “found, upon receiving the remainder of the work, that there was an introduction,” and so he inserted it in volume two. He attributes all this to “a desire to benefit the public,” to “enable us *early* to lay before them the most interesting of the English publications,” and he trumpets “the pains we have taken and the expense we have incurred” to make this possible. Against all evidence to the contrary, but perhaps because of the Boston writer’s sarcasm, Carey implies the attack derives from envy about a London connection – as if it were doing any good:

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<sup>16</sup> *Boston Daily Advertiser*, July 23, 1822.

We trust it is not necessary to contend with an enemy who thus, without a name, shoots his poisoned arrows from his ambush, and would wound us even unto death for no other avowed reason than because we “have an Agent in England” who forwards us “the new publications, in sheets, as they come from the press,” to the end that we may as early as possible, gratify and inform our fellow countrymen.

Carey presumes his customers want to bring their experience up to speed with the literary scene in Britain; while readers would like to be informed by transatlantic publications, he insists they also want the gratification of not being far behind. Carey tries to deflect the controversy by trading one temporality for another: the time pressure of the fierce reprint trade – where one day can make the difference – for a broader temporal context that bridges the Atlantic. The *National Gazette* reinforced this broader temporality in a note appended to his defense that also avoids the issue of the edition’s actual integrity: “What could be more absurd and unjust, than to arraign them for their exertions to supply the American public with the new productions of the British literati, as early almost as the readers of London are supplied.” The provinciality of the American literary field is reflected in this entire exchange not merely by the evident demand for British literature, but more profoundly by the continual invocation of London and England as the center of literary commerce and the location that governs literary time.<sup>17</sup>

Not long after this domestic controversy, Carey received a letter from Constable that must have been extremely welcome. His self-defense was a resounding success, at least in establishing the facts about the “stolen” sheets. “[W]e have no doubt the fault is on this side of the water,” Constable conceded, suggesting too that Carey’s reply was successful because of its combative style:

[We] assure you, after such a letter it would ill become us to testify any other feeling than respect for the writers of it. The tone of candour throughout cannot fail to draw forth these feelings – and we hope we may have from time to time the pleasure of your correspondence –

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<sup>17</sup> *National Gazette and Literary Register*, July 31, 1822.



Even though flattery is standard on the occasion of an apology, in calling this “pleasure” Constable is clearly working hard to control the damage incurred by thus annoying his new associate.<sup>18</sup> He later provided a document certifying Wardle’s purchase of the novels since *Ivanhoe*, a confirmation for which Wardle traveled all the way to London to secure even though his services as a middleman were no longer required.<sup>19</sup>

While it was relatively straight forward to resolve this dispute over courtesy and honor, the negotiation over pricing proved more difficult, since Constable lost no time in claiming his own advantage as proprietor. While Carey had labored to demonstrate the generosity of offering £55 per volume, in London John Miller was unable to secure less than £75, or £25 per volume, for the next novel, *Pevekil of the Peak* (1823). “I could not make a better bargain with Constable & Co.,” Miller wrote, “they would not give way in the slightest degree.” Carey agreed to this, but *Pevekil* proved almost as difficult as *The Pirate* and *Nigel*: Scott wrote an extra volume and Constable insisted upon the increased price of £100. This made Carey furious, but to no avail. “We think the demands of Messrs. Constable as improper as any we have known,” he wrote to Miller, but still had little choice: “we hope,” he continued, “that you have made some arrangements with them; as it would be in the highest degree vexatious to us to be delayed.” The next novel, *Quentin Durward* (1823), was purchased and distributed easily and effectively, and Carey admitted that “the transmission of the sheets direct from Edinburgh to Liverpool is a great improvement.”<sup>20</sup>

Even so, Scott’s eleventh-hour addition of a postscript to *Quentin Durward* gave Carey the unwelcome task of defending himself yet again in the *National Gazette*, where he printed the

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<sup>18</sup> Archibald Constable to Carey & Sons, July 24, 1822. Lea & Febiger Collection, Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

<sup>19</sup> Kaser, “Waverley in America.”

<sup>20</sup> John Miller to Carey & Son, September 24, 1822; Carey & Son to John Miller, January 31, 1823; Carey & Son to John Miller, June 17, 1823; quoted in Bradsher, 129-130, 85.

extra text. On this occasion Carey revealed his new, direct, and costly arrangement with Constable; confidently attributed any faults of his edition to its source, which, now identifiable, was beyond reproach; and emphasized, once again, that his service to the public resides not in shutting out his own competition but in narrowing the transatlantic time delay:

The American publishers of Quentin Durward have this day received advice from Edinburgh, that a small addition... has been made to the work subsequently to the dispatch of their copy. Having paid Messrs. Constable & Co. a large sum to have the volumes forwarded several days previous to their appearance in London, those gentlemen were pledged to furnish them complete; and their high standing in society warrants the belief that they had no idea of an addition.... Under their present arrangement with the publishers, nothing but so extraordinary a circumstance as the present, could have caused such an error. They hope it will be received as an apology for the omission, that the work was published here in twenty-two days after the day fixed for publication in England, and that no copy except their's [sic] has yet been received in this country, nor will probably be received for eight or ten days, although published in this city a week since.

In trumpeting their “*present* arrangement,” Carey insists that his current circumstances are more reliable than before, even though they still resulted in an incomplete edition. Once again, he trusts that ample compensation for the error lies in his publication of the novel more than a week earlier than would have been possible without the “large sum” he now sacrifices for the occasion.<sup>21</sup> Things went more smoothly for Carey after this, and once Scott avowed authorship of the novels in 1826 Carey dealt with him directly, agreeing to pay £295 for an advance copy of his nine-volume *Life of Napoleon* (1827).

Almost a decade after the initial agreement was solidified, a remarkable episode brought the relationship between the Edinburgh and Philadelphia publishers into one of Scott's novels, his last work, *Tales of my Landlord, Fourth Series* (1831), which contained both *Count Robert of Paris* and *Castle Dangerous*. In the preface to *Count Robert*, Scott commented on the American editions of this novels by alluding to the initial 1822 dispute between Constable and Carey and directly registering his complaints about a recent fiasco that annoyed him and his current

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<sup>21</sup> *National Gazette and Literary Register*, July 28, 1823.

Edinburgh publisher, Cadell (Constable died in 1827). Delays with the book's Edinburgh edition meant that Carey excerpted the first volume of *Count Robert* in the *National Gazette* a full five months before the entire work was published in London. This gave the Philadelphia paper plenty of time to reach Britain, and the excerpt, published first in July, was reprinted in a few London newspapers in August.<sup>22</sup> In a headnote to the excerpt, the editors of *The Athenaeum* explained to readers the origins of the traveling text. Scott's novels, they write, "are regularly transmitted across the Atlantic, and the American bookseller, less cautious or less particular than Mr. Cadell, has given the following very copious extract to the *National Gazette*, a literary Philadelphia paper, for a copy of which we are indebted to [a] friend."<sup>23</sup> This scoop in the London press was unwelcome, not least because the text of the original sheets had been revised since they were dispatched to America. Scott found humor in the situation, however, and when he wrote his preface that October he made the transatlantic publication of his work its subject and subtext.

The novel's fictionalization of the episode considers transatlantic reprinting in a number of registers. First, Scott openly ridicules American printers who go to press with early versions of novels that do not include his final corrections and additions. The "Introductory Address" is narrated by Jedediah Cleishbotham, of Gandercleugh, the fictional character who has edited and prepared the previous *Tales of my Landlord* – including *Old Mortality* (1816), *The Heart of Mid-Lothian* (1818), and *The Bride of Lammermoor* (1819), all of which derive from manuscripts written by Jedediah's late antiquarian associate Peter Pattieson. Jedediah has recently found two additional manuscripts, *Count Robert* and *Count Dangerous*, but leaves them aside until Peter's surviving brother Paul shows up in Gandercleugh demanding them for his own use. Paul is a schemer and a rascal, and the manuscripts are in terrible shape, but Jedediah nevertheless

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<sup>22</sup> Todd and Bowden, 720.

<sup>23</sup> Quoted in *John Francis, Publisher of The Athenaeum: A Literary Chronicle of Half a Century* 2 vols (London, Bentley, 1888), vol. 1, 492.

employs him to prepare the texts and agrees to split the profits. At one point Jedediah approaches Paul to complain about his progress, and the latter bursts out with this revelation: “our hopeful scheme is entirely blown up. The tales, on publishing which we reckoned with so much confidence, have already been printed; they are abroad, over all America, and the British papers are clamorous.” Jedediah, astonished, asks “whether this American production embraces the alterations which you as well as I judged necessary, before the work could be fitted to meet the public eye,” and, receiving a negative answer, declares he would have never “remit[ted] these manuscripts to the press” unless “they were rendered fit for public perusal.”<sup>24</sup> In this story, Scott has changed the offense from the transmission of one single chapter to the printing of an entire novel. This increase in scale invokes the incomplete American editions of the early 1820s and allows Scott to emphasize his control over the texts as author. Jedediah’s complaint echoes those Carey faced at home from customers frustrated with faulty editions and, like those complaints, reinforces the superiority of authorized British publication over piratical American reprints.

Paul is not just a harbinger of bad news, however; he is also a suspect. Jedediah accuses him of selling the manuscripts during an argument that resembles the initial dispute between Constable and Carey over this same issue. Now Jedediah stands in for Constable, not Scott, and Paul is the falsely accused agent for Carey and also his defender:

“I must of necessity suspect you to be the person who have [sic] supplied the foreign press with the copy which the printers have thus made an unscrupulous use of, without respect to the rights of the undeniable proprietors of the manuscripts...”

“Mr. Cleishbotham, in the first place, these manuscripts... were never given to any one by me, and must have been sent to America either by yourself, or some one of the various gentleman to whom, I am well aware, you have afforded opportunities of perusing [them].” (xvii)

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<sup>24</sup> *Tales of my Landlord, Fourth Series* (Paris: Baudry’s Foreign Library, 1831), xvii-xviii. Further citations parenthetically in the text.

Paul's defense proves less effective than Carey's, however, and Jedediah walks away absolutely convinced that he was "directly at the bottom of the Transatlantic publication, and had in one way or another found his own interest in that nefarious transaction" (xviii). Most readers of this preface would be unaware, of course, that in reality the "Transatlantic publication" was authorized by the "proprietors of the manuscripts" in an arrangement of many years standing. The denial of this fact, in addition to the repeated characterization of Paul in negative terms – "seedy," "rusty," "obstina[te]," "impuden[t]," "odious," and "destitute of... amiable qualities" (x, xvii, xviii) – betrays a desire to denigrate American publishers, a group that after his disastrous bankruptcy Scott may have come to view more as parasites than gentlemen. The overall tone of the preface supports this characterization, and so the once-vindicated Philadelphians appear offensive all over again.

But Scott is a great ironist, and nowhere is this more evident than in the prefaces to the Waverley novels, where we meet editors, antiquarians, legal scholars, roaming storytellers, royal ancestors, and any number of characters like Jedediah Clieshbotham who serve as unreliable sources for the novels that follow. It is impossible, therefore, to take Jedediah entirely at his word, and at times the preface suggests a more complicated view of Paul Pattieson and a more generous take on reprinting. In employing Paul to edit the manuscripts, Jedediah has angered the people of Gandercleuch, who consider it an inexcusable act of neglect; as his wife reports, the gossips believe he "spends all his time in tipping strong drink with the keeper of the public house," and leaves "book-making, and a' the rest o't, to the care of his usher" (xiii). Indeed, when Jedediah first reveals he has discovered *Count Robert* and *Castle Dangerous*, he provides no good reason for ignoring them before he "threw the manuscripts into my drawer" (ix). He is not careful in accounting for the texts, and after handing them over to Paul held "a sincere

confidence that all was going on well” (xii). Scott prepares us to observe him in the same mistake Constable made with Carey and thus undermines the certainty that Paul sold the sheets to America.

A suggestive passage in which Jedediah considers the risks of confronting Paul offers an implicit reconsideration of the relationship between Carey and Constable that the preface explicitly misrepresents. Even though this occurs before the revelation about the American editions, Jedediah’s ratiocination about Paul invokes the circumstances of Constable’s negotiation with Carey:

I began to perceive that it would be no light matter... to break up a joint-stock adventure... which, if profitable to him, had at least promised to be no less so to me, established in years and learning and reputation so much his superior.... I resolved to proceed with becoming caution on the occasion, and not, by stating my causes of complaint too hastily in the outset, exasperate into a positive breach what might only prove some small misunderstanding, easily explained or apologized for, and which, like a leak in a new vessel, being once discovered and carefully stopped, renders the vessel but more sea-worthy than it was before. (xvi)

The parallels are striking, if not exact. The “joint-stock adventure,” in which Constable provided sheets and Carey payment, was indeed “profitable” to Carey and “no less so” to Constable; Constable certainly considered himself “established in years and learning and reputation so much [the] superior” of his Philadelphia colleague; his initial “complaint,” with its combination of both reprimand and solicitation, labored to avoid a “positive breach”; the issue of the stolen sheets proved a “small misunderstanding, easily explained or apologized for”; and the “leak” Constable supposedly discovered in his print shop was indeed “carefully stopped” by the arrangement with Carey, which provided revenue that “render[ed]” his company “more sea-worthy than it was before.” The passage issues a more balanced view of transatlantic publication than Jedediah’s subsequent remarks and casts his own confidence in Paul’s guilt in terms just as

faulty and presumptuous as Constable's original charge. The resonances suggest the preface as a whole is more generous with transatlantic publication than it seems.

The eventual fate of the manuscripts brings a fascinating twist to Scott's consideration of his American publishers, which in the end amounts to something of an homage: he casts his own novel as a transatlantic reprint derived from the American edition. For a moment Jedediah considers amending the text by "introducing into a copy, to be instantly published at Edinburgh, adequate corrections of the [text's] various inconsistencies," but decides, in an allusion to Scott's own declining condition, that "the state of my health" would make such an exertion "imprudent" (xix). So he lets the American edition stand for itself, with all its imperfections; "the last 'Remains' of Peter Pattieson must be accepted," he writes, "as they were left in his desk" (xix). Scott has used the story of transatlantic publication as a literary device to apologize for faults of in his own composition, as elaborate a performance of authorial humility as any in the history of romance. But as Jedediah pointedly phrases it, this novel is "probably... the last child of mine own age" (iv), and there is a sense that the fictional editor's relief in being freed of his responsibly expresses, however subtly, Scott's palpable relief in finding a clever way to abdicate his own. In having Jedediah attribute to reprinters the lack of judgment his readers will inevitably trace only to himself, Scott allies himself with American publishers, gleaning benefits from them in the literary realm just like his late publisher, Constable, gathered profits from them as a bookseller.

Scott's preface was inspired by the unprecedented way his last Waverley novel found the London marketplace – via Philadelphia. The surprising geography of the episode provides a fitting conclusion to the story of the Careys and Constable, whose relationship suggests that literary producers in Britain and America inhabited an interconnected literary field whose uneven

contours and dynamics have yet to be fully described. Both of these provincial publishers negotiated the problem of London throughout their careers; after a rocky start to their own direct relationship, they went a small way towards solving it by forging an Edinburgh/Philadelphia channel for the distribution of Scott's novels. In the process they produced and provoked wide-ranging articulations of the discourse of materiality, in private letters, in public prints, and in the Waverley novels themselves.