Robert Mayer, *Walter Scott and Fame: Authors and Readers in the Romantic Age.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017. Pp. xi, 221. £55.00; $90.00. ISBN 9780198794820.

Those who study Scott's letters, or his home at Abbotsford, are amazed by the constant intrusions on his time and goodwill. Admirers show up from Melrose to America, sometimes bearing just an eager assurance that the author is accessible and welcoming. Missives pour in from friends, colleagues, business contacts and optimists convinced that Scott can somehow meet their needs. Remarkably, Scott often rose to the occasion.

Scholars have long benefited from the trove of Scott's letters referenced by Lockhart for his memoir of his father-in-law, from Grierson's collected volumes, and from Corson's index. Millgate's Union Catalogue has made letters to Scott searchable. Today, letters to and from Scott are recognized for the resource they are, both by his cultural studies-minded critics, and by scholars of his period. Robert Mayer uses these letters as his primary resource to interrogate contemporary "fame."

Scott's archive is extensive. With the example of Byron's memoirs (posthumously destroyed), and the need to recoup Scott's finances after his death, Scott's family, together with the Advocates' Library, and now the National Library of Scotland, have proved trusty stewards of the author's correspondence. Mayer ranges through these letters, tracking writers and recognizing through their exchanges Scott's "intimates," "colleagues," "clients," and "fans."

Among the intimates are friends like J. B. S. Morritt and Lady Louisa Stuart. Author colleagues include Southey, Wordsworth, Baillie and Edgeworth. "Clients" number lesser authors seeking support or recognition, such as Thomas Pringle (from neighbouring Blaiklaw, editor of Blackwood's first journal, and secretary of the Anti-Slavery Society in London). "Fans" include eccentrics like Macdonell of Glengarry and absolute nonentities—people who beseech recognition in material form or simply by virtue of the contact they presume they have established with greatness. Lady Abercorn, alternately posing as patron and supplicant, insider and needy outsider, points to a weave of relationships constantly under negotiation.

Mayer's book, then, is a trove of information. But more, it engages issues of value within publishing and personal relations of the time. By tracking Scott's exchanges with Wordsworth and Southey against those with Baillie and Edgeworth, Mayer demonstrates Scott's concern with the book trade in its full extent, and the role of the writer on the cusp of industrial and social change. We can appreciate the rarefied aesthetic of a Wordsworth or a Southey alongside the moral responsibility recognized by a Scott who considered poets to have obligations not just to their art but to their families. Comparison also brings out the rivalries between male poets and sets them against the collaborative and collegial relation between Scott and women authors. Baillie, Edgeworth and Scott form a society of mutual appreciation and criticism, of professional support, not competition. And through such cases, Mayer provides important insight on established arguments. Ina Ferris's *The Achievement of Literary Authority* comes into sharper focus when we consider Scott's unusual recognition of and support for women writers; Romantic claims on an audience that is fit, though few, look self-serving when we consider the necessity of funds to meet family responsibilities.

A new Scott, one with an eye to the needs of publishers and readers, and also to writers in their human context, appears through Mayer's research. A more thorough understanding of the shifting relations between readers, texts and authors emerges. Scott begins to look modern—

significant in the move to a financial and social economy of print. This book, then, adds to the scholarship of publishing dynamics, and to recent work on literary celebrity.

Of course, a Scott scholar will want to know the role Scott's sort-of anonymity played in the negotiation of these relationships—how it affected his value in the discourse of exchange. We might wonder about a limit-case like Thomas Carlyle, who notoriously did not manage to negotiate his way close to Scott. There is more, too, to be made of the King's visit to Edinburgh, when Scott solicited numerous clans to participate using the same flattering language to each. But such queries speak to the extent of Scott's archive, the materials and questions that remain to pursue on the basis Mayer provides.

The strength of this book is its appreciation for and study of relationality around the circumstance of fame. In addition, viewed through his exchanges with the few and the many, Scott stands forth as an even more significant mediator of the contemporary cultural conversation. Indeed, study of Scott's correspondence changes our understanding of his period. Yet even as our understanding of fame shifts, it becomes evident that we are pursuing a general case on the basis of a unique circumstance. There was only one Scott. Moreover, archives like Scott's, capacious to begin with and carefully maintained today, are few to find. Still, Mayer's intriguing book inspires us to realize that the work on Scott's archive can yield rich results, and has only begun.

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