WALTER SCOTT’S WAVERLEY DISTORTED TRANSLATION BY THE BRAZILIAN ROMANTICISM: THE CASE OF CAETANO LOPES DE MOURA

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RESUMO: Primeiro tradutor brasileiro de Walter Scott, o médico baiano radicado em Paris Caetano Lopes de Moura, partiu tanto da obra original do romancista escocês quanto da versão em francês de Auguste-Jean-Baptiste Defauconpret para levar a cabo sua própria tradução de Waverley (1814), lançada em Paris em 1844, pela Aillaud. A versão para o francês – “língua franca” para a cultura do século XIX, conforme aponta Pascale Casanova – foi responsável por legitimar a influência de Scott em âmbitos continental - de que são exemplos as obras de Honoré de Balzac, Victor Hugo, Alessandro Manzoni e Alexandre Herculano – e mundial - como se vê no norte-americano Fenimore Cooper e no brasileiro José de Alencar. No entanto, Lopes de Moura se distancia tanto do original em inglês quanto da tradução francesa ao produzir uma versão bastante particular de Waverley, esvaziando uma de suas premissas centrais, que é a crítica contumaz da convenção romanesca. Isso se nota, por exemplo, na supressão do fundamental capítulo I, que faz a crítica dos romances de cavalaria. Seria tal versão enviesada, que subverte completamente o papel que Scott atribui ao herói na dinâmica narrativa, que os nossos escritores românticos leriam, em especial Alencar.


ABSTRACT: Walter Scott's first Brazilian translator, the Paris-based Bahia physician Caetano Lopes de Moura, started from both the original work of the Scottish novelist and the French version by Auguste-Jean-Baptiste Defauconpret to carry out his own translation of Waverley (1814), launched in Paris in 1844 by Aillaud. The French version - the “língua franca” for nineteenth-century culture, as Pascale Casanova points out - was responsible for legitimizing Scott's influence in continental contexts - examples of which include the works of Honoré de Balzac, Victor Hugo, Alessandro Manzoni and Alexandre Herculano - and worldwide - as seen in the American Fenimore Cooper and the Brazilian José de Alencar. However, Lopes de Moura distances himself from both the English original and the French translation by producing a rather particular version of Waverley, emptying one of his central premises, which is the contumacious criticism of the romanesque convention. This can be seen, for example, in the suppression of the fundamental chapter I, which criticizes the romances of chivalry. It would be such a distorted version - that completely subverts the role that Scott attributes to the hero in the narrative dynamic - that our Romantic writers would read, especially Alencar.


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The overwhelming influence of the Scottish writer Walter Scott on a large part of the novelists of the first half of the 19th century is well-known, no matter where we look. Its inflection point was in France, where it had a direct impact on the entire literary system – not only writers and critics but also on the reading public. “His novels are some of the most widely read books in reading rooms”, a sign of the “veritable passion” they arouse among French readers, having become the object of a “processus de canonisation collective” (RAULET-MARCEL, 2013, p.27, 28). Among critics and prose writers, from Sainte-Beuve to Balzac, from Alfred de Vigny and Charles Nodier to Victor Hugo and Alexandre Dumas, all of them read and absorbed Scott’s writing to a greater or lesser degree. In the view of the author of *Lundis*, who moulded and astonished an entire generation, this was “une époque où l’imitation de Walter Scott est presque une contagion nécessaire, même pour de très hauts talents”; for Nodier, Scott represented “toute la littérature d’un siècle” (RAULET-MARCEL, 2013, p.28). And Scott would still remain inescapable for many years: in his recent *The historical novel in Europe* (2009), Richard Maxwell says that “there is a huge accumulation of evidence that writers of fiction between, say, Alfred de Vigny and Marcel Proust not only knew Scott’s novels and poems well but expected their readers to do so” (MAXWELL, 2009, p.13). In the case of Victor Hugo, *Notre-Dame de Paris* (1831) openly betrays Scott’s influence, both in the medievalizing depiction of Paris as, to mention another example, in the siege of the castle in the book’s final pages, evoking the siege of Torquilstone castle in *Ivanhoe*, as Maxwell reminds us (2009, p.19).

But the greatest example of Scott’s presence in a writer, both in his significance and in the dimension of his work, is Balzac, whose first novel published under his own name – in other words, the first “signé Balzac” – follows the model of Scott’s novels. Thus in its very title *Les Chouans, ou la Bretagne en 1799*, from 1829, evokes the first of Scott’s Waverley novel series: *Waverley, or tis sixty years since* (1814). But *Les Chouans* also evokes the Waverley novels in its subject matter, dealing as it does with a revolt that takes place in a remote province – Brittany, in the case of Balzac, and Scotland, in Scott’s – against a centralizing power seated in Paris, in one case, or in London.

For the entire 19th century, France was a sounding board of European and, to a large extent, Western culture as a whole and played a decisive role in spreading the concepts and movements coming from other nations in the continent, even those meaning to affirm themselves against the ideas she embodied. One emblematic instance of this was the Romantic movement in Germany, which opposed Corneille and Racine’s notions of classic tragedy as regards the units of time, action and space, but nevertheless only acquired a truly European dimension when it was propagated by Madame de Staël. Walter Scott, however, represents the most significant case, for the French translations of his works played a vital role not only in spreading and strengthening his image and writings in the whole continent – as exemplified by the Portuguese Alexandre Herculano and the Italian Alessandro Manzoni – but were also read outside Europe, being well-known in the Americas, as exemplified by the North-American Fenimore Cooper and the Brazilian José de Alencar. The magnitude of the so-called “Walter Scott phenomenon” increased with the success of his writings among the public, making him the first best-selling author with international reach.

The construction of this phenomenon took place partly due to somebody seldom mentioned in literary histories but who has nonetheless shown himself to be essential, since he adapted Scott to the tastes of readers quite different from those of the English language, with highly particular expectations and forms of representation. Indeed, as Paul...
Barnaby has shown, the French translator Auguste-Jean-Baptiste Defauconpret reached such high stature that Walter Scott’s London editor would send him the original English proofs as soon as they came off the press, so that his new novel could be published almost simultaneously in both languages. “Consequently, even fluent readers of English (like Stendhal or Vigny) could turn first to the translation” (BARNABY, 2006, p. 31), highlighting once again the importance of the painstaking task Defauconpret took on of translating the 24 volumes of the Waverley Novels.

Barnaby makes a detailed analysis of Defauconpret’s translation of *Old Mortality* (1816), the first of the novels to come out in France, and explains several arbitrary choices made by him, starting with the title, that became *Les puritains d’Écosse* (1817). But there are other examples Barnaby underlines from the French version: “In many respects, the 1817 *Puritains* is a typical ‘belle infidèle’. Descriptive passages are radically reduced. Flashbacks are suppressed and expository passages [are] inserted to secure unity of action. Authorial digressions and passages where characters engage in introspection are sacrificed for rapid forward movement. Language is stripped of local colours or figurative boldness and rendered as smooth Classical French” (BARNABY, 2006, p. 37).

The most serious choice, however, are two innovations committed by Defauconpret: the drastic abridgement of the “Preface” by Jebediah Cleishbotham, one of Scott’s alter egos, and the suppression of the novel’s first chapter (BARNABY, 2006, p. 38). These changes have obvious consequences for the personages’ ideological and religious characterization, by deprivning the narrative of the strict ethics ascribed to the Puritans, labelling them as religious fanatics and reducing their “complex religious and civil conflicts” to “a battle between knights and Cavaliers” (BARNABY, 2006, p. 40, 39). Thus *Old Mortality*, in Defauconpret’s translation, not only has its title changed but acquires a melodramatic form and rhythm that are foreign to it, based on “Manichean conditions between Good and Evil”. In the place of historical forces, its characters embody violent and superhuman passions.

It should be noted, however, that Defauconpret’s role as the legitimator of Scott’s fiction in Europe has been challenged, and he has been accused of taking France as his focal point; this was done by the Portuguese scholar Maria Ambrósio Lopes, who argues that the role ascribed to the French translator has been overstated ever since Paul van Tieghen’s now classic study, *Le Romantisme dans la littérature européenne*, whose ideas, according to her, were reproduced without many changes by Pascale Casanova. According to her, several translations to the Portuguese were made that point to a less enthusiastic view of the importance of Defauconpret to the dissemination of Scott’s work, and she refers specifically to translations made by the Portuguese Ramalho e Sousa (LOPES, 2010).

**The Brazilian case**

However, notwithstanding the Portuguese critic’s observations, Defauconpret’s versions of Walter Scott’s writings are essential for the analysis of the Brazilian case, since it was they that our first and most important translator of Scott, Caetano Lopes de Moura, from the state of Bahia, chose to emulate. It could be said that, on a more modest scale, Lopes de Moura played the same role for Brazilian Romantic fiction as Defauconpret did in France. He moved to France as a young man with the intention of studying medicine and spent most of his life in that country, becoming a translator at an advanced age so as overcome growing financial difficulties. Of the many authors whose
works he translated for the French publishers Aillaud, such as Bernardin de St. Pierre, Mme. de Genlis, Marmontel, Chateaubriand and Fenimore Cooper, Walter Scott was the one with the largest number of titles – six⁵ –, in a strategy certainly due to the repercussions caused by Defauconpret’s work.

Taking advantage of the success achieved by the Scott “brand name”, Lopes de Moura made a point of having the words “tradutor das obras de Walter Scott” (translator of the works of Walter Scott) printed on the covers of his books.

It can be taken for certain that the translation he made of Waverley in 1844 is based not on the original work (from 1814), but on Defauconpret’s French version, from 1826. There are several indications pointing to this. The first one is the dominance of the French language we mentioned above, especially considering that Lopes de Moura had settled in Paris and acquired friends not only among Brazilian writers and intellectuals, but also, obviously, among French ones, such as for instance Ferdinand Denis, who was to play an essential role for the first generation of Brazilian Romantic writers.

The second clue was brought to light by his biographer, Claudio Veiga, also a native of Bahia. To quote a passage from his biography: as “it was above all the French language he [Lopes de Moura] was fluent in [...], it was only natural that, anxious in face of the volume of translations he had to work on and the consequent pressure of time, he should have resorted to the French versions, according to custom and to his own abilities”⁶.

However, a contrastive study, based on essentially textual indications found in Lopes de Moura’s translations, allows us to state that in his translations he did in fact follow versions penned by Defauconpret more than the originals of Walter Scott himself. What is even more surprising, however, is that Lopes de Moura found solutions of his own, straying both from the original in English and from the French version⁷.

He follows the lead of Defauconpret already in the titles he gives to Scott’s novels, all of them following the Frenchman’s lead to the letter. Thus Old mortality becomes Les puritains d’Écosse and, in Portuguese, Os puritanos da Escócia; The heart of Midlothian is converted into La prison d’Édimbourg and, in Portuguese, into A prisão de Edimburgo. In the case of the translation of Waverley, whose title was unchanged in any of the languages it was translated into, probably because of being the book that gave name to Scott’s entire cycle of novels, it is particularly relevant precisely because it reiterates both Lopes de Moura’s dependence on the French translation and the fact that it was not contingent on them. Thus, although both the French and the Portuguese versions present literal translations of most of the chapters’ titles, in some cases Defauconpret strays from the original and is closely followed by Lopes de Moura. For instance, “To one thing constant never”, a quote taken from Shakespeare’s Much ado about nothing and used as the title of Waverley’s chapter LIV, becomes “Toujours inconstant” and “Sempre inconstante”; “Comparing notes”, the title of chapter LXIII, becomes “Mutual explanations” in the two versions; “Castle Buildings”, chapter IV, is turned into “Châteaux en Espagne” and “Castelos de vento” (“Castles in the air”).

Regarding Lopes de Moura distancing himself from his two matrixes, I would like to call attention to the kind of departicularisation of landscapes and characters that he brings about. Thus, the Highlands and the Lowlands, geographical regions that in the original work acquire a clear historical, political and cultural meaning, are translated most of the time as “high lands” or “mountains” and by “low-lying lands”. The Highlanders, that is to say the rustic and warrior inhabitants who resist the English occupation, are translated simply as “mountain people”, leading the novel, in its Brazilian Portuguese translation, to lose a whole range of complex meanings that have immense implications
for the construction of the characters and situations. In the same way, “Scotland” is
departicularised, translated as “homeland”, while “England” becomes “my native
country”, as follows:

Scott - “Woe, woe for Scotland, not a whit for me!” (p. 27)
Lopes de Moura - “Não sobre mim, mas sobre a pátria choro” (I, p. 95)

Scott - “A party of Catherans?”
“Yes, robbers from the neighbouring Highlands” (p. 68)
Lopes de Moura - “E que entende a Senhora por Cateranos?”
“É um bando de gente que vive de salto, e desce de tempos a tempos das montanhas
para roubar os moradores das terra chãs.” (I, p. 265)

Scott - “A Highland feast” (p. 95)
Lopes de Moura - “Um banquete nas montanhas d’Escócia” (II, p. 73)

Scott - “Highland Minstrelsy” (p. 93)
Lopes de Moura - “Música e poesia dos montanheses” (II, p. 105)

Scott – “I have told him you are eminent as a translator of Highland poetry” (p.
102)
Lopes de Moura - “Já lhe disse quão atilada sois em trasladar em Inglês as belezas
dos poetas cêlticos” (II, p. 105-6)

Scott – “‘Good God’, he thought, am I then a traitor to my country, a renegade to
my standard, and a foe, as that poor dying wretch expressed himself, to my native
England!” (p. 221)
Lopes de Moura - “‘Deus meu! é possível que tenha voltado as armas contra minha
pátria, desamparado minha bandeira, e declarado guerra a meu país natal, como
me dizia, estando para morrer, o infeliz Houghton” (III, p. 89)

However, the example of the translation of Waverley I consider most significant,
since it signals Lopes de Moura’s definitive distancing from his two matrixes, raising him
to an almost “authorial” status, is his deliberate suppression of two chapters. These two
chapters are fundamental not only to the understanding of Waverley but also to understand
the very concept of fiction that is latent to the corpus of Scott’s work. I refer to the initial
and final chapters – “Introductory” and “A Postscript, which should have been a Preface”.
Thanks to the position they occupy, both of them frame the novel’s intrigue, or its plot.
And, due to the second one’s title, they should be seen as interchangeable chapters, since
they do in fact contain reflections on the same subject: the nature of fiction. If we could
reduce the dense reflections they offer us to one common denominator, we could locate
it in the debate between “romance” and “novel”, or, in the terms set out by a critic such
as Northrop Frye, the debate between the romantic and realist modes in literature, which
has a long history and complex developments. I mention Frye because it was he who
pointed out Walter Scott as the modern writer who makes the most prolific use of the
“formulaic techniques” that characterise romantic literature, which he summed up in the
binomial “love and adventure”

However, it is precisely in these two chapters suppressed by Lopes de Moura that
Scott develops a lengthy critique of romance. To remember only one famous passage, the
narrator decides to name his hero “Waverley” because it is a “non-contaminated name”,

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so that his readers should not “make preconceived associations”, as would be the case if
the hero’s name carried “knightly epithets such as Howard, Mordaunt, Mortimer or
Stanley”9. By removing these chapters, Lopes de Moura offers Brazilian readers nothing
but Waverley’s plot, obviously rich in Romantic elements, but suppressing Scott’s acid
reflections against those very same elements.

There are other parts too in which, even if Lopes de Moura does not omit any
passage of the original, he provides an almost adulterated version, as can be seen in the
example below:

Scott - “My father has a strange defiance of the marvellous” (p. 61)
Lopes de Moura - “Meu pai, senhor Waverley, acudiu dizendo Miss Rosa, é muito
pouco credeiro” (I, p. 234),

in which the translator suppresses “marvellous”, a noun that receives a critical treatment
in Scott’s opening chapter and which is absent from the Brazilian Portuguese version.

The description of Rose Bradwardine’s virtues is connected to the domestic
qualities our hero is destined to become attached to at the end of the narrative and that
represent an antithesis of Flora MacIvor. The reason why Edward does not feel initially
attracted to Rose is her innate capacity of drying out the marvellous, that our hero is
drenched in. This aspect is lost in translation, as can be seen below:

Scott - “She [Rose] was too frank, too confiding, too kind; amiable qualities
undoubtedly, but destructive of the marvellous with which a youth of imagination
delights to dress the empress of the affections” (p. 66)
Lopes de Moura – “Era a filha do Barão sincera, ingênua e boa, qualidades sem
dúvida dignas do maior apreço, porém bem diferentes desse prestígio que fascina o
entendimento de um mancebo, revestindo de perfeições imaginárias o objeto de seu
afeto” (I, p. 255-56)

The same thing is repeated even more explicitly in the following passages:

Scott: “He had now time to give himself up to the full romance of his situation”;
“[...] what a fund of circumstances for the exercise of a romantic imagination [...]”
(p. 78)
Lopes de Moura - “Então pode o nosso herói dar rédeas ao pensamento” (I, 305);
era por ventura mister mais para esquentar uma imaginação já de si mesmo
inclinada a subir de ponto tudo quanto se lhe apresentava?” (I, p. 306)

Scott - “I am actually in the land of military and romantic adventures” (p. 72)
Lopes de Moura - “Eis-me no país das aventuras belicas, e próprias da andante
cavalaria” (I, p. 280)

Waverley’s initial wonder and his plunge into the Romantic are to a great extent
lost:

Scott - “[...] seemed to open into the land of romance” (p. 105)
Lopes de Moura – “[...] foi Waverley conduzido, como um cavaleiro andante”; [...] 
o sitio [...] parecia-lhe ser obra antes das fadas que da natureza” (II, p. 115)
The hero’s naiveté, which justifies his foolish attitudes as being in truth due to inexperience, is underlined in the English original, but once again lost in the translation:

Scott – “Captain Waverley’s character is so open – is, in short, of that nature that cannot be misconstrued, either in its strength or its weakness” (p. 131)
Lopes de Moura - “[...] porque sois vós dotado de um natural tão lhano e sincero, que basta praticar-vos uma só vez, para vir no conhecimento de vossas perfeições, e imperfeições.” (II, p. 217)

Scott - “Mr. Waverley, so new to the world” (p. 130)
Lopes de Moura - “Outro é o caso em que vós estais, Senhor Waverley, e não me está bem aconselhar-vos, vista a pouca experiencia que do mundo tendes” (II, p. 212)

Scott: – “And is this your every sober earnest, or are we in the land of romance and fiction?” (p. 133)
Lopes de Moura - “E a isso chamais vós falar sério? tornou-lhe Fergus; não sei se o devo acreditar, que me dá o que me dizeis ares de uma ficção” (II, p. 224-25)

Scott - “But surely youth, misled by the wild visions of chivalry and imaginary loyalty, may plead for pardon” (p. 163)
Lopes de Moura - “Aquele que, esporeado da ambição e da cobiça, ateou o fogo da guerra civil, esse deve pagar com razão os males de que foi causador, mas não assim os moços imprudentes que foram arrastados por ideias cavaleirosas, e falsas noções de fidelidade ao antigo governo” (II, p. 349-50)

The questions we must ask ourselves at this point are: 1) why did Lopes de Moura, seen by his contemporaries and by the owner of Aillaud publishers as highly competent, openly ignore these two crucial chapters of Waverley, creating an “author’s” translation of Scott, so to speak; and 2) one question that inevitably leads from the first is: what is the significance of this version of Waverley, which we could describe as “skewed”, to the reception given to Walter Scott by Brazilian Romantics, especially Alencar?

I’d like to propose some possible answers to these two questions. Regarding the first one, it could be said that, in the same way as in his work Scott deliberately nurtured the cult of the author – an “authorialisation”, a kind of game of hide-and-seek with the reader (RAULET-MARCEL, 2013, p.30), as Raulet-Marcel has pointed out – so does this cult of the author appear to have contaminated his most important and famous translator – Defauconpret, as seen above – and also Defauconpret’s more modest counterpart, one who was more fundamental in the Brazilian literary system – Caetano Lopes de Moura.

As to the second question, we must first consider that there were other versions of Waverley available in the Portuguese language. In an always remembered study of the central role played by Parisian publishing houses for the Portuguese language translations, Victor Ramos (1972) does not mention any Portuguese translation of Waverley. But A. Gonçalves Rodrigues (1951), who widens his search the include the entire corpus of Scott’s works published in Portugal, takes note of several translations of his works. However, since his research reaches only to the year 1843, Waverley is necessarily absent, for its translation in Portuguese was only to come out in 1845, signed by Ramalho e Sousa – and Lopes de Moura’s translation was previous to it, being dated 1844.
Regarding Alencar (1829-77), one fact worth reflecting on was his fluency in other languages. As far as English goes, we have no evidence that can prove it except for the fact that his wife’s father was an English doctor. But we know for certain that he had a good command of French, not only due to the importance of French to cultural life, but also by what his biographers have told us. We can also take as evidence his famous autobiographical text “Como e por que sou romancista” (How and why I am a novelist, written in 1873 and published in 1893), in which he tells us he read all of Balzac’s works in the original when he was still a law student in São Paulo. In this same piece, however, we find out that his first contact with Scott took place at home, when he was still a child in Ceará, in Brazil countryside, which suggests strongly that the version of Scott that he read was neither Scott’s original nor Defauconpret’s translation, nor yet another Portuguese version, but the “skewed” version, so to speak, produced by Lopes de Moura.

It is known that from his childhood Alencar was an insatiable reader of novels and that Walter Scott did not escape his interest, as he himself declares in his autobiographical piece: “I devoured Walter Scott’s and Cooper’s seafaring novels one after the other; [...] but nothing for me surpassed the magnificent sea stories of Scott and Cooper or Marryat’s heroic battles”. Further ahead, he points out the Scottish author’s importance in painting a landscape: “Walter Scott provided the model for these landscapes drawn with a pen, that are part of local colour” (ALENCAR, 1953, p.65,70). But, beyond the explicit biographical allusions, Scott is present in the construction of novels such as O guarani, as has quite often been pointed out by critics, and above all in As minas de prata, in which the composition of the hero, Estácio, clearly contains the signs of Waverley’s “passive hero”, according to the analysis of the Waverley Novels made by Alexander Welsh (1992[1963])

To conclude, if it was indeed through Lopes de Moura’s version of Waverley that José de Alencar came in touch with an author as seminal as Walter Scott, we need to reflect on the effect that this “distorted” version may have had on the concept of fiction that the future writer, still being formed, was beginning to outline. And, on a wider level, we will also need to reflect on the consequences of this to Brazilian Romantic fictional production as a whole.
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NOTES


The only biography of Lopes de Moura is Claudio Veiga’s *Um brasileiro soldado de Napoleão*. São Paulo: Ática, Brasília: INL, 1979, which is based on his researches made in Paris, and on *Biografia de Caetano Lopes de Moura escrita por ele mesmo* (org. Alberto de Oliveira), Revista da Academia Brasileira de Letras (8): 277-93, (9): 75-96, (10): 205-30 (October 1912). All the biographical information on the Brazilian translator mentioned in this article comes from those two sources.

They are: *Os puritanos da Escócia* (1837), *O talisman ou Ricardo na Palestina* (1837), *O misantropo ou o anão das pedras negras* (1838), *Quentino Durward ou o escocês na corte de Luís XI* (1838), *A prisão de Edimburgo* (1844) e *Waverley ou há sessenta anos* (1844), all of them published by J.-P. Aillaud.

“[Como] é sobretudo a língua francesa que ele domina [...], é natural que, angustiado pelo volume de traduções a realizar e a consequente urgência de tempo, recorra, conforme o costume e a sua habilitação, a versões francesas”. In Veiga, op. cit., p. 120.


On the “passive hero” in Alencar’s *As minas de prata*, see Peres, Marcos Fláminio “O herói passivo em Walter Scott e José de Alencar”. *Agalia* 113 (2016), not yet published.