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Deanna Delmar Evans

Scott's *Redgauntlet* and the Late Medieval Romance
of Friendship, *Eger and Grime*

Sir Walter Scott often found inspiration in earlier literature as he composed his novels. Scott "was emphatic about the value of old poetry, plays and romances commonly ignored by the general historian," James Anderson has observed and points out that the novelist once wrote that such literature contains "minute traces by which the peculiar habits of our ancestors may be traced."¹ Scott's fascination with medieval romance in particular is evidenced in his own lengthy essay on this subject.² Jerome Mitchell, in fact, contends that medieval romance is "the single most important literary source for the Waverley Novels, even more pervasive than Shakespeare (whose influence on Scott was great and profound)."³ While Mitchell's strong claim has been seri-

¹James Anderson, *Sir Walter Scott and History: with Other Papers* (Edinburgh, 1981), pp. 7-8; the Scott quotation is cited by Anderson as being from *Letters* XI, 85.

²Walter Scott, "Essay on Romance" in *The Miscellaneous Prose Works of Sir Walter Scott, Bart.*, 30 Vols., Vol. VI: *Chivalry, Romance, The Drama* (Edinburgh, 1834) pp. 127-216; all subsequent references to Scott's essay are from this edition.

³Jerome Mitchell, *Scott, Chaucer, and Medieval Romance: A Study in Sir Walter Scott's Indebtedness to the Literature of the Middle Ages* (Lexington, KY, 1987), pp. ix-x. Mitchell later argues that "medieval romance weighed most heavily because of his [Scott's] utter fascination with literature of this sort during his formative years" (p. 39).

ously challenged,⁴ it can, I believe, find some degree of validation in the case of *Redgauntlet*, a novel in which Scott's plot is built around the friendship of two young men. Scott's plot is reminiscent of several medieval romances of "sworn" or "wedded" brothers. Northrop Frye saw such a connection, for in summarizing the basic plot structure of this variety of romance, he noted a specific parallel in *Redgauntlet*:

In this type of story one brother goes out on a quest or in search of adventure, the other remaining home, though able to tell from some sign how his brother is faring, and going into action when help is needed. This structural device is still useful in displaced stories where the look-alike twins are replaced by close friends, as in Scott's *Redgauntlet*.⁵

Scott was familiar with several medieval romances of the sworn or wedded brother type, including *Amys and Amylion* which is found in the Auchinlech MS from which he edited *Sir Tristrem*.⁶ There is, however, another medieval romance of "sworn brothers," one included in Mitchell's useful list of romances known to Scott, that can be shown to have been of considerable interest to the novelist in the years before he wrote *Redgauntlet*, namely the romance of *Eger and Grime*. Close study of this romance, particularly as it exists in the so-called Aberdeen or Scots version (*The History of Sir Eger, Sir Grahame, and Sir Grey-Steill*), reveals that it has much in common with the novel *Redgauntlet*. In fact, a comparative study of the two suggests that the former may be deemed a primary source of influence on Scott's novel because there are a remarkable number of parallels, including similarities in setting, plot, characterization, and in the use of the Boethian theme of Fortune.

There are two known versions of the romance *Eger and Grime*. Both are faulty, and both, quite late. A parallel text edition of the two romances was published by James Caldwell in 1933.⁷ In his Introduction Caldwell expands on the theory of earlier critics that both "descend" from one or more earlier romances and that neither derives from the other. The only known MS version

⁴ See the lengthy review of Mitchell by Thomas Dale, *SSL*, 25 (1990), 262-9; while Dale warns that Mitchell's book should be studied with caution, he does indicate the value of the list of romances known to Scott in Mitchell's first chapter.

⁵Northrop Frye, *The Secular Scripture: A Study of the Structure of Romance*, (Cambridge, MA, 1976), p. 111.

⁶MacEdward Leach, ed., *Amys and Amylion*, EETS, OS, No. 203, (1937), p. cii, indicates that the Auchinlech contains the best manuscript of that English romance.

⁷James Caldwell, ed., *Eger and Grime: A Parallel-Text Edition of the Percy and the Huntington-Laing Versions of the Romances with an Introductory Study*, Harvard Studies in Comparative Literature, IX (Cambridge, MA, 1933).

of the romance is found in the Percy Folio Manuscript (c. 1665) and bears the title *Eger and Grime*. It is an anglicized version consisting of 1,474 lines. Described in the fourth edition of Bishop Percy's *Reliques* (III, 1794), as "a well invented tale of chivalry, scarce inferior to any of Ariosto's," it was not available in print until 1867.⁸ The other version has survived in three nearly-identical Scottish black-letter editions, the earliest known extant copy being dated 1669,⁹ and in it the name of one of the heroes has been changed from *Grime* to *Grahame*. This romance is written in a Scottish or northern English dialect and contains 2,860 lines, making it nearly twice as long as the Percy version. It was reprinted by Scott's acquaintance David Laing in 1826 in his volume *Early Metrical Tales including the History of Sir Egeir, Sir Gryme, and Sir Gray-Steill*; Laing based his text on the 1711 publication of the romance by James Nicol in Aberdeen, and it was this version that Scott most likely knew.¹⁰

The two versions of the romance are quite distinct from each other, differing considerably in plot as well as in the names of principal characters and places. Matthew P. McDiarmid, who calls the Aberdeen version the "Scots" version, has argued that the two should be treated not as variants but as separate romances, an opinion with which I concur, and he has summarized their primary differences as follows:

There are the formal differences, the Scots tale being twice as long, not ending in happy marriages all round, introducing new characters, a figure of warning for Sir Eger, a hospitable burgess, his wife (we enter her kitchen) with an obliging son... A substantial difference, a stroke of genius, is the death of Sir Gryme [Grahame], the real hero...so that Sir Eger, standing with his wife Winliane of Bealm above his friend's grave, is moved to confess to her that it was Sir Gryme and not he that

⁸Caldwell, pp. 14-16, indicates that while George Ellis in 1805 provides an elaborate paraphrase of *Eger and Grime* based on the "Aberdeen Edition of 1711," the Percy MS version was kept from the public until 1867 when it was finally published by J. W. Hales and F. J. Furnival.

⁹Mabel Van Duzee, *A Medieval Romance of Friendship: Eger and Grime* (New York, 1963), p. 6 indicates her "discovery" of a 1669 printed edition of the romance in the British Museum Library after Caldwell's publication of the 1687 black letter printing which he had "discovered" in the Huntington Library; I have examined the 1669 edition and verify all that Van Duzee notes about it: the title-page indicates that it was printed by Robert Sanders in Glasgow, two of the leaves are mutilated, and it is "almost identical with that in the Huntington, and appears to have been an earlier edition of it."

¹⁰The copy Laing used was loaned to him by Francis Douce, Esq. and is now in the Bodleian Library; I have examined this early book and verify Van Duzee's note (p. 6) that on a flyleaf Douce has written, "I lent this little volume to Mr. Laing of Edinburgh to reprint part of it in his elegant work entitled 'Early Metrical Tales, 1826, 12°.'"

slew...Sir Graystiel; and she, who had proudly sworn never to wed a defeated knight, leaves him for a convent, while he goes to Rhodes to fight the invading Turk. When Wynliane dies he returns to share life with the also widowed Lillias.¹¹

There is no question that Scott knew about both versions of the romance. Mitchell indicates that, "as early as 1800 Scott had correspondence about this romance with Bishop Percy, who sent him an account of the version in the Folio MS" (p. 21). Scott himself mentions the romance in the Introduction to his edition of *Sir Tristrem* (1804), although his confusion there over names (calling it "the *History of Sir Edgar and Sir Grime*") and the setting ("in Carrick, in Ayrshire") suggests that he was not paying close attention to it. Yet in that Preface, Scott links it with two other Scottish romances and offers the opinion that all three were "compiled by Scottish authors from the Celtic traditions, which still floated among their countrymen," and that its "language is unquestionably Scottish."¹² A summary of the Aberdeen version "in plain prose" is included in George Ellis's *Specimens of Early English Metrical Romances* (1805), a work Scott reviewed in 1806. Subsequently the romance was transcribed by Henry Weber for *Metrical Romances* (1810) and shelved at Abotsford.¹³

Scott mentions the romance a few years later in his own "Essay on Romance," which was first published in 1819 (in the Supplement to the *Encyclopedia Britannica*). There he writes: "The very curious poem of *Sir Eger and Sir Greme*, which seems of Scottish origin, has no French original" (p. 209). Again, this is little more than a passing remark, but it is noteworthy that Scott believed the romance to be original and of Scottish origin. Moreover, his spelling of the second knight's name here is a variant spelling of *Grahame*, the name of the knight in the Scots version of the romance. Scott's interest in the variant spellings of the Grahame name bears fruit a few years later when he uses this information to develop a humorous episode in *The Fortunes of Nigel* (1822). There Nigel insists his name is *Grahame*, his mother's maiden name, while a Templar says it is *Grime* and then *Graam*.¹⁴

¹¹Matthew P. McDiarmid, "The Metrical Chronicles and Non-Alliterative Romances," *The History of Scottish Literature: Origins to 1660*, Vol. 1, edited by R. D. S. Jack (Aberdeen, 1988), p. 34.

¹²*Sir Tristrem*, ed. Walter Scott, 2nd edn. (Edinburgh, 1806), p. liv.

¹³See Caldwell, p. 16 and Mitchell, pp. 6-9.

¹⁴Walter Scott, *The Fortunes of Nigel*, Vol. 1, Ch. XVII (Edinburgh: Constable and Jack, 1902), pp. 318-20; I am grateful to Professor Frank Jordan of Miami University (Ohio) for calling my attention to this passage when he heard my presentation of an earlier version of this

In addition to name changes in the two versions of the romance, Scott recognized other inconsistencies. In the Scots version, Sir Grahame is killed during the course of the romance; he is alive and planning a huge festive procession for a tournament in one scene, and then Sir Eger and Winliane are standing by his grave in the next. Scott recognized that an important episode had somehow been omitted from the hackneyed text, and in a letter written to Ellis (dated 29 November 1802), he purposed an explanation for what he believed was the missing portion of the narrative:

I have studied the Romance with great pleasure & I am by no means surprized at the high interest which it seems to have excited in Scotland for the situations are sometimes good and drawn with great force. The dying picture of Graysteel tearing up the grass in his agonies is horribly fine. I wish the conclusion had been less obscure. I think it probable that in the great tournament which Sir Graham had proclaimed in the land of Bealme he fell by the lance of his friend Sir Eger without their knowing each other. As for Graysteel his name seems to have past into a proverb for gallantry & courage.¹⁵

This explanation shows that Scott had read the romance with care. But that in itself hardly proves that it in any way influenced his conception of *Redgauntlet*, which does not even have a medieval setting. The novel seems to be set in about the year 1765, and its plot includes a fictional return of an older Prince Charles Edward Stewart to Scotland in a final attempt to gain the crown. There are, however, some parallels in Scott's use of the "sworn brothers" motif and in his depiction of those brothers.

The principal protagonists, Alan Fairford and Darsie Latimer, are friends as close as brothers. However, they are not knights, although Darsie does discover in the course of the novel that he is the descendant of an old Scottish feudal family and is, in fact, its hereditary "laird." Moreover, I believe, that Darsie and Alan can be seen as the knights of their period; that is, they both have been trained in the law (rather than in arms) so that they are prepared to spar in the modern arenas for property battles, the law courts. Property disputes are at the heart of the novel. The novel is filled with lawyers and, as Mark A. Weinstein observes, contains an "unusually large number of legal disputes...everything from the right to wear the crown of Great Britain to Sir Walter Scott's favorite example of Luckie Simpson's cow."¹⁶ Most of the

paper at the Fifth International Scott Conference, Aberdeen University, July 29–August 31, 1995.

¹⁵Herbert Grierson as quoted by Mitchell, p. 21.

¹⁶Mark A. Weinstein, "Law, History, and the Nightmare of Romance in 'Redgauntlet'" in *Scott and His Influence: The Papers of the Aberdeen Scott Conference*, 1982, ed. J. H. Alexander and David Hewitt (Aberdeen, 1983), pp. 140-41.

lawsuits in the novel focus on the ownership of property, and readers are reminded in several places that forfeiture of property was part of the punishment doled out to Scots involved in the Grand Rebellion of 1745, those lucky enough to escape with their lives.

Although admittedly an odd theme for a medieval romance, property is also of considerable importance in *Eger and Grime* (especially in the Scots romance). Graysteel, in both romances, obviously does not want strange knights crossing onto his land; he challenges and, until confronted by Eger and Grime/Grahame, kills those who so dare. When Graysteel is killed, the writer of the romance indicates that his lands pass to the heroine Lillias (the Lady Loosepine in the Percy MS) through her father. Moreover, in the introductory passage of the Scots romance, it is emphasized that Sir Eger needs to marry haughty Winliane, the daughter of his liege lord, because she is the wealthiest lady in the kingdom and he, a second son, cannot inherit property:

They called him Sir Eger,
And He was but a batcheler:
His eldest brother was livand,
And brooked all his father's land (ll. 19-22).¹⁷

Later in the same romance, Winliane abandons Eger for the convent after learning that he did not kill Graysteel; in this episode the narrator comments on how "wanton women change their will" and points out that Winliane "thought to live upon her seam" (ll. 2828, 2834). Clearly the narrator considers forfeiture of property a just punishment for a lady cruel and stupid enough to desert her husband. Then in the final passage of the Scots romance, Sir Eger, now a widower because Winliane apparently did not survive long in the convent, is reported to have married the widowed Lillias, and they endow each other with their worldly goods:

By that Winliane was laid in clay.
He took his leave, and passed hame,
Lillias had husband tane;
And they lived at so good concord;
Of her lands she made him Lord,
And he made her Lady of his.
A bishop made a band of bliss,
And wedded them both with a ring (ll. 2850-57).

¹⁷This and all further citations from the romance will be from *Early Scottish Metrical Tales*, ed. David Laing (London, Glasgow, 1889); it is this "Aberdeen" version edited by Laing that Scott most likely knew.

As can be seen, the distribution of community property is given as much attention as the wedding while the word *love* is never mentioned. Indeed the many property disputes of Scott's novel do have something in common with the materialistic emphasis of the romance.

There are other similarities as well. The conflicts in both works are set in the Borders. In the romance, Sir Grahame's quest for Graysteel takes him through a wild landscape:

He countered in the west-land,
Beyond the fell, the water fand,
And followed as he was bidden
And to the forest he is ridden,
And passed it in days three (*ll.* 1129-33).

Edith Rickert's study of the topography of the romance argues that it is set in the Border district above Solway between Esk and Sark.¹⁸ Critics of Scott's novel frequently emphasize the importance of its Borders setting. Kathryn Sutherland, for example observes:

Geographically placed between two countries, the immediate area on either side of the Solway is a testing ground where stable values disintegrate, *a priori* cognition is no longer verified, and events take on alarming new shapes.¹⁹

While on the subject of setting, it is worth noting that public inns serve as important centers for action in both works. In the Scots romance, a friendly innkeeper provides for the needs of Sir Grahame and also helps him arrange a meeting with Lillias after his fight with Graysteel:

Then to the ostler said the host,
'Dress well the steeds, spare not for cost,
Bed ye them well, and lay them soft,
Give to them meat, that they want nought,
And what costs that ye do to tha,
I shall it double, and mends ma.'
They set a chair then to the knight,
And off they took his helm so bright (*ll.* 1679-86).

¹⁸Edith Rickert, *Early English Romances in Verse Done Into Modern English: Romances of Friendship* (London, 1908), pp. xxi-xxii; I presented a more extensive argument in "Re-evaluating the Case for a Scottish *Eger and Grime*" at the Seventh International Conference on Medieval and Renaissance Scottish Language and Literature Conference, University of Strathclyde in 1993, forthcoming in *The European Sun*, the Proceedings of that conference.

¹⁹Kathryn Sutherland, Introduction, *Redgauntlet* (Oxford, 1985), p. ix; all my quotations from Scott's novel are taken from this edition.

In Scott's novel, Crackenthorp's inn is a location of considerable importance, for it is there that denouement is achieved.

The most important parallels between *Redgauntlet* and the Scots romance are found in characterization. In both, the two protagonists are not real brothers but friends as close as brothers. In the romance, they are said to be "brethren sworn" (l. 42). Eger is a successful knight betrothed to Winliane, the Earl's haughty daughter who will not marry a knight defeated in battle. One day he sets out on a quest "For to win honour mare" (l. 48), and this adventure leads to his unfortunate encounter with Graysteel, a battle that nearly costs him his life and does cost him a little finger. Worse yet, at least from a capitalist point of view, it makes his plans for a prosperous marriage to the earl's daughter Winliane appear doomed. But then his faithful friend, Sir Grahame, comes to the rescue. Disguising himself as Sir Eger, Sir Grahame seeks out and kills Graysteel, but only after having met the fair Lillias en route and losing his heart to her. Lillias, a mysterious lady in scarlet, had earlier saved Sir Eger's life after his nearly fatal fight with Graysteel by providing him with a magical green potion that temporarily healed his wounds until, as she tells him, "love makes you agast" (l. 405). Ever the materialist, the narrator points out that ministering to the wounded Sir Eger cost that lady twenty pounds (l. 378).

In *Redgauntlet* the principal protagonist is Darsie Latimer. At the onset he does not know his family origins, namely that his father was Redgauntlet's elder brother and had been hanged for his heroic action in the Jacobite Uprising of '45. Darsie, now an orphan receiving a large annuity from an undisclosed source, has grown up in the Edinburgh home of Saunders Fairford, a prominent lawyer, as a kind of foster brother to Fairford's son, Alan. When Darsie undertakes a journey into the Borders searching for his identity, he inadvertently becomes caught up in Redgauntlet's plot to put the exiled Stewart on the throne. A mysterious lady, "Green Mantel," comes to Alan and warns him that Darsie's life is in danger. Alan then sets off to rescue his friend and consequently puts his own life and career in jeopardy; it is, as several critics have noted, a kind of mythic journey.²⁰

In many friendship romances, distinctions in looks and personalities of sworn brothers are not always clear-cut. But in *Eger and Grime*, particularly in the Scots version, the protagonists have quite distinctive personalities. Sir Eger is impetuous and seeks the adventure with Graysteel with no reason to do so except to add to his renown; Winliane had already agreed to marry him. Sir Grahame is the older, more sensible one, able to see through the superficiality

²⁰Kathryn Sutherland, p. ix, describes Darsie's "holiday jaunt" to the Solway Firth as "A mythic quest...[that] proves a passage into a border world in every sense," and Mark Weinstein, p. 146, observes that the journeys of both young men illustrate practically all of the "formulaic techniques" described by Northrop Frye.

of Winliane; when the occasion demands, he is willing to risk his own life for the sake of his sworn brother. As he tells Lillias:

"The knight that was here is my brother,
And I am elder than the other.
A journey I must take for him,
Whether that I must tine [die] or wine [win]..." (ll. 1317-20).

Scott, a novelist, draws his characters more fully than the raconteur. His protagonists are also quite different from each other, and yet, at the most basic level, the personalities of Darsie and Alan correspond to those of the two knights in the Scots romance. Prone to Romantic daydreams, Darsie, like Sir Eger, is impetuous as his quest into the Borders demonstrates. Alan, like Sir Grahame, is older and more sensible. Just as Sir Grahame proves to be the better knight in the romance, so Alan is the better student of the law. Alan is willing to risk his life for his friend, and, more frightening to his bourgeois father, to jeopardize his promising legal career by doing so. To emphasize the depth of the friendship, Scott has made the crisis occur at the very moment Alan is proving himself at the bar for the first time. After a highly successful opening argument, Alan receives word that Darsie is in danger and abandons his client. He then sets out on a perilous journey in an effort to rescue his friend. The senior Fairford, who has had to work hard to achieve his position in the legal community, is appalled. It is not surprising that the narrator observes: "Bitter...were Saunders Fairford's reflections" (ch. II, pp. 156-7). Alan's act of abandoning his client places at risk all that his father has worked for, the family fortune and position in society. As David Brown explains, "The Fairfords' command to the legal machinery is symbolically important, as the law is the process whereby the new class's economic and political values are legitimized."²¹

Darsie, on the other hand, is a born aristocrat and has only "played at" the law while a student. In the opening paragraph of his first letter he confesses that he found his legal studies boring. In this way Scott differentiates between Darsie's aristocratic, although unknown, family origins and the social inferiority of Alan, who must earn his living as a lawyer to maintain a place in society. Darsie writes to Alan:

The disconsolate tone in which you bade me farewell at Noble-House, and mounted your miserable hack to return to your law drudgery, still sounds in my ears. It seemed to say, 'Happy dog! you can ramble at pleasure over hill and dale, pursue every object of curiosity that presents itself, and relinquish the chase when it loses interest; while I, your senior and your better, must, in this brilliant season, return to my narrow chamber and my musty books' (Letter 1, p. 13).

²¹David Brown, *Walter Scott and the Historical Imagination* (London, 1979), p. 152.

Darsie also indicates the high value he puts on their friendship by arguing that Alan should be willing, since they are friends, to share in his wealth: "Why, I say, should not all this be, except because Alan Fairford has not the same true sense of friendship as Darsie Latimer, and will not regard our purses as common as well as our sentiments?" Darsie insists that he will have "more than enough for both" (Letter 1, p. 13), having received double allowance for his twenty-first birthday.

Another character in Scott's novel with a slight parallel in the romance is the mysterious "Green Mantle." She is named Liliias (with one less *l*), the name of the mysterious lady in the Scots version of the romance, and this is surely more than coincidence.²² Both ladies are, in a sense, "healers." While the Lillias of the romance mixes a green potion to heal temporarily Eger's wounds, Scott's more modern Liliias wears a green mantle when she first meets Alan to warn him that Darsie is in danger. Not only does her warning result in the saving of Darsie's life, but she also "heals" Darsie's psychological wound of being an orphan by revealing to him that she is his sister and then provides him with the only family love he has experienced since the death of their mother. In addition, just as Lillias in the romance recognizes the worth of Sir Grahame and marries him, so Liliias in the novel marries Alan Fairford. The marriage, of course, symbolically makes Darsie and Alan wedded brothers.

There are more similarities in characters between the novel and the romance, for there are parallels between the two villains, Graysteel and Redgauntlet. Scott depicts Redgauntlet as the "last" Jacobite who holds dear the old feudal values. It seems appropriate that Scott used as a model for his antagonist the villain from a romance he believed to be Scottish and who bore a name that Scott contended had become "a proverb for gallantry and courage." (Note the Letter cited earlier.) In the scene where Darsie first encounters Redgauntlet, the landscape description of the event, written in Darsie's Romantic prose, suggests the romance description of Graysteel. Darsie writes:

When I reached the banks of the great estuary, which are here very bare and exposed, the waters had receded from the large and level space of sand, through which a stream, now feeble and fordable, found its way to the ocean. The whole was illuminated by the beams of the low and setting sun, who showed his ruddy front, like a warrior prepared for defense over a huge battlemented and turreted wall of crimson and black clouds, which appeared like an immense Gothic fortress, into which the

²²Mitchell, p. 170, points out the Lillias/Liliias name parallel, apparently finding that reason enough to declare that Scott "knew" the Scots romance; on the same page, he also mentions a Boethian element in Darsie's speech (ch. 8), a topic I will discuss more fully, but rather than linking it with *Eger and Grime*, Mitchell compares it with "the philosophical underpinning of much of the Knight's Tale."

lord of day was descending. His setting rays glimmered bright upon the wet surface of the sands (Letter IV, p. 32).

This description of the sun as a red knight recalls the romance descriptions of Graysteel. Sir Eger, for example, describes his initial encounter with Graysteel as follows:

I saw a knight ride on a sore, [sorrel]
With red shield, and red spear,
And all of red shined his gear (*ll.* 136-38).

Grahame describes a similar meeting:

A venturous knight full hardilie,
Came dressed soon and readily:
His gear was red as any blood,
His horse of that same hew he stood (*ll.* 149-152).

A further association between Graysteel and Redgauntlet has to do with the size of each. Graysteel appears to have been quite large, for when Sir Grahame rides out to meet him, he hears what appears to be “great horsemen ridand” and believes “there had been mo than one,” but “Looked, and saw but him alone!” (*ll.* 1496-8). Redgauntlet is also said to be quite tall. Darsie comments on “the tall fisherman...he and his sable horse looming gigantic in the now darkening twilight” (Letter IV, p. 34). He also remarks that Redgauntlet’s horse behaves in a somewhat unusual manner: “I was scare securely seated, ere he shook the reins of his horse, who instantly sprung forward; but annoyed, doubtless, by the unusual burden, treated us to two or three bounds, accompanied by as many flourishes of his hind heels” (Letter IV, p. 34). This action recalls the unusual horses in the romance who continue to fight after the knights who rode them are unseated:

He [Grahame] looked where he left his steed;
The steeds together have they run,
Fighting as they had first begun (*ll.* 1628-30).

Furthermore, there is, I believe, a hint of Graysteel’s name in Scott’s novel. In Chapter VI, the pompous Foxley reprimands Alan for speaking unkindly about Redgauntlet: “Why, man—eh—dost thou not know the charge is not a bailable matter—and that—hum—ay—the greatest man—poof—the Baron of Graystock himself, must stand committed? and yet you pretend to have been kidnapped by this gentleman, and robbed of property, and what not...” (ch. VI, p. 191). There is a similarity between this alias of Redgauntlet’s, *Graystock*, and Graysteel’s name.

There are, of course, considerable differences in the depictions of these villains as well. Graysteel is a folk villain; there is no explicable reason for his hatred of knights or for his fetish of cutting off their little fingers as trophies. Redgauntlet, on the other hand, only appears to be a villain during the early part of the novel. He is Darsie's uncle, and his intention has been to coerce his nephew into joining the Jacobite cause. His villainy is actually Jacobite fanaticism. When he finds no support for his cause, not even from his old compatriots, Redgauntlet comes to realize, as he says with great emotion, "the cause is lost forever!" (ch. 23, p. 396). At this point, he resigns himself to his fate, leaving Darsie in charge of the family property. Redgauntlet then retires to a monastery where, according to Dr. Dryasdust at the Conclusion of the novel, he lived a most saintly life and would have been canonized had he not "worn perpetually around his neck a lock of hair" (p. 401), a symbolic vestige of his lingering fidelity to the Jacobite cause. Redgauntlet's act of resignation is very different from Graysteel's death throes, except in tenacity. While Redgauntlet's lock of hair indicates his inability ever to dissociate himself from his cause entirely, the romance villain hung on to life with severed throat:

Gray-Steel unto his death thus thraves;
 He walters, and the grass updrawes;
 His armes about him could he cast,
 He pulled herbes and roots fast:
 A little while then lay he still (*ll.* 1611-15).

Redgauntlet's resignation at the end of the novel may also be compared with that of another character in the romance, the proud Winliane who had been determined to marry a knight undefeated in battle. When she realizes that she was deceived, that Sir Grahame and not her husband had killed Graysteel, she abandons Sir Eger and retires to a convent apparently broken in spirit. Winliane, however, garners little sympathy, for pride cometh before a fall. Redgauntlet's resignation, however, evokes feelings of both sadness and respect, for Scott has treated the lost cause sympathetically and Redgauntlet's dedication to it, heroically.

Redgauntlet's feudal values contrast sharply with those of his nephew and Alan Fairford. The two young men represent the values of an emerging modern capitalistic society. As David Brown states, "Just as Redgauntlet epitomises the old, feudal world of Scotland, so the young men epitomise the new, liberal culture of the middle classes who have displaced the old world."²³ The conflict is perhaps best illustrated near the center of the novel, in chapter 8. Here Redgauntlet, disguised as Herries, reveals to Darsie his identity and ex-

²³David Brown, p. 161, who goes on to argue that "the impact between the opposed cultures is dramatised in the scene of Darsie's ideological argument with his uncle," in ch. 8; my explication of this critical dispute is indebted to Brown's study, pp. 161-62.

plains that Darsie had been cut off from the paternal side of his family by the “ignorance of a doting mother, who was incapable of estimating the arguments or feelings of those who prefer honour and principle to fortune, and even to life” (p. 212). For Redgauntlet, who takes a feudal view of the world, “honour and principle” are more important than life. Darsie, on the other hand, is “appalled” at what he has learned and argues that he is self-sufficient: “Misfortune—early deprivation—has given me the privilege of acting for myself; and constraint shall not deprive me of an Englishman’s best privilege.” Herries scornfully labels Darsie’s response, “The true cant of the day,” thereby indicating his own alienation from the “modern” and *English* world with which Darsie identifies. Redgauntlet then reveals his own personal philosophy:

The privilege of free action belongs to no mortal—we are tied down by the fetters of duty—our moral path is limited by the regulations of honour—our most indifferent actions are but meshes of the web of destiny by which we are all surrounded (p. 212).

This passage clearly illustrates the central conflict of values in the novel. It also provides, I believe, a further connection between the novel and the Scots romance in its employment of the medieval theme of Fortune. This philosophical idea, usually associated with the philosophy of Boethius, is at the very heart of Redgauntlet’s value system:

‘Nothing,’ he said in an earnest yet melancholy voice—‘nothing is the work of chance—nothing is the consequence of free-will—the liberty of which the Englishman boasts, gives as little real freedom to its owner, as the despotism of an Eastern Sultan permits to his slave.... Yes, young man, in doing and suffering, we play but the part allotted by Destiny, the manager of this strange drama...and yet we mouth about free-will, and freedom of thought and action (pp. 212-13).

While Scott could have found passages on Fortune in a great many medieval works, including the Middle Scots *Kingis Quair* and Hary’s *Wallace*, it seems of some significance that the theme is present in the Scots romance (it is not present in the Percy MS version). An example of this theme occurs in the passage where Sir Grahame anxiously awaits his battle with Graysteel and is reminded by Lillias that Fortune will decide the victor:

I trow to God ye shall do well:
And if that ye do win the gree,
It is but fortune, and not ye;
And fra fortune against him rin,
There is no more defence in him.
.....
If ye have hap the knight to slay,
I trow to God ye shal do swa! (ll. 1370-74; 1377-8)

Fortune is referred to again when Graysteel meets his death:

In world there is no bale nor bliss,
Of whatsoever that it is,
But at the last it will overgang,
Suppose that many think it lang:
This tale I tell by Sir Gray-Steel,
That fortune long had led him well (*ll.* 1619-24).

If Scott is in some way reshaping the central characters of the romance in *Redgauntlet*, it seems appropriate that he keep the theme of Fortune in the mixture for the one who is the most medieval.

As this brief comparative study demonstrates, there is good reason to believe that Scott, who is known to have been keenly interested in medieval romance, found inspiration for *Redgauntlet* in the romance of *Eger and Grime*, particularly in its Scots version. Why he would wish to do so, however, is perplexing. Clearly this is not a case of what Harold Bloom has called the “anxiety of influence.” Yet I believe that Scott provides a clue in his own “Essay on Romance” where he links the creation of romance with history:

The European Romance, wherever it arises, and in whatever country it begins to be cultivated, had its origin in some part of the real or fabulous history of that country.... But the simple tale of tradition had not passed through many mouths, ere some one, to indulge his own propensity for the wonderful, or to secure by novelty the attention of his audience, augments the meagre chronicle with his own apocryphal inventions (p. 148).

Certainly *Redgauntlet* is the narrative of an “apocryphal” invention of its author. Its plot hinges on an event that never took place, and yet that fictitious event crystallizes the collapse of the Scottish Jacobite cause. After reading the Waverley Novels one can have little doubt that Scott had considerable interest in the Jacobite cause that had so affected his native land just over three-quarters of a century earlier. As A. O. J. Cockshut points out, *Redgauntlet* can be seen as “the last of [Scott’s] three highly distinguished and beautifully contrasted meditations on the meaning of the Jacobite rebellions.”²⁴

One trend in recent criticism of *Redgauntlet* has been to link Scott’s purpose in the novel with his desire to understand the Jacobite cause and, in the process, to reconstruct history. H. B. de Groot, for example, describes the novel as “Scott’s exploration of the ‘what if’ question,” and finds “the point of Scott’s invented history” to be “that, if Charles Edward Stuart had returned to Britain in 1765 to lead the third Jacobite rising, his return would have made no

²⁴A. O. J. Cockshut, *The Achievement of Walter Scott* (London, 1969), p. 193.

difference whatsoever.”²⁵ James Kerr points out that Scott had no pretensions about writing a faithful historical account:

Historical romance for Scott is a field in which perceived contradictions in history can be recreated and resolved. It is a zone of freedom, the limits of which are prescribed by the author's imagination, where the ugly facts that history throws in the way of the writer can be made into appealing, or at least consoling, stories about the past.²⁶

Such critics, I believe, can help us understand why Scott might have turned to a romance like *Eger and Grime* as he imagined the novel. Why would he not wish to “reconstruct” history along the lines of an earlier romance, a literary medium affording him that “zone of freedom” from “the ugly facts” of history?

As has been demonstrated in this essay, Scott believed the romance of *Eger and Grime* to be Scottish in origin and, considering his familiarity with the Aberdeen edition of 1711, most likely perceived it to be among the last of the Scottish “living” medieval romances (“living” in the sense that textual changes had occurred so late). Moreover, as I also have noted, in his Preface to *Sir Tristrem*, he links it with romances of Celtic origin “which still floated among their countrymen.” How appropriate then that Scott should choose to borrow from this “last” of Scottish medieval romances both the basic plot structure and the character templates for his own Scottish “romance,” a romance in which he portrays the death rattle of the Jacobite cause, and, in the process, finds as model for his “last Jacobite” a hero-villain whose name he believed “past into a proverb for gallantry and courage.” In creating the “romance of *Redgauntlet*,” Scott describes not only the end of the Jacobite cause but also what he perceived as the collapse of the chivalric code in his native land.

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²⁵H. B. de Groot, “History and Fiction: The Case of *Redgauntlet*,” in *Scott in Carnival*, ed. J. H. Alexander and David Hewitt (Aberdeen, 1993), p. 368.

²⁶James Kerr, “Fiction against History: Scott's *Redgauntlet* and the Power of Romance,” *Texas Studies in Language and Literature*, 29 (1987), 256.