

Handicraft versus Chivalry: Town Community and Historical Progress in the Later Novels of Walter Scott¹

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Abstract. The article is devoted to two novels by Walter Scott in which the writer demonstrates his vision of the late Middle Ages having taken France and Scotland as bright examples. In these works, Scott, both at the level of the general concept, which reflects his understanding of historical progress, and at the level of the images of the novels and their narratives, reconstructs socio-political and moral-psychological role of the standoff between chivalry and town communities in the dynamic of the time. The novels convincingly show the peculiarity of the late stage of Scott's creative work, when the narrative importance of the love-adventure knot in the plot increases, as does the role of real historical figures. In the after 1819 Scott's novel, more obvious is the writer's desire to embody his understanding of historical laws, based on a mixture of conservative and progressive assessments of the dynamics of history. He does it with the help of both the narrator's comments and digressions, often constructed as a talk between a historian, an expert in the times under analysis, and a reader, and the central images of the novels. For the ideological and artistic wholeness of the works, the collective images of Liege and Perth, presented by means of a 'general plan' and bright individualized images of citizens, are fundamentally important. Colourful and at the same time super important for the historisophical idea of the novels are the images of the 'outgoing class' – chivalry: in each of them, the degree of 'falling out' of the dynamics of history is emphasized and becomes character-forming. At the same time, the article accentuates, especially in *The Fair Maid of Perth*, the author's idea of changing not only economic but also moral leader in the late Middle Ages: the defining role is gradually passed on to the townspeople. In this respect, the image of Catharine Glover, the titular heroine, acts in the novel as the writer's 'Reasoner'. The article also traces the nature of the coexistence of romantic and adventurous (in relation to the novel about Perth – romantic and Gothic) and socio-psychological principles of creating the 'image of the era'.

Key words: historical novel; historical narrative; medieval Scotland; medieval France; medieval culture; medieval town community; historical progress.

Walter Scott (1771–1832) is one of the writers whose creative work has been a subject of deep academic interest since the very beginning of his career. This interest has had its ups and downs but it never stopped, especially in Scotland where Scott studies are of permanent character. When you look at the

world *Scottiana* you quite soon realize that there is no piece of Scott's literary works which has not been touched upon by Scott researchers, who approach to the writer's artistic world from various academic points of view. Yet, actuality, and even necessity to study the work of Scott are high due to the fact that

historical narratives are among the most widespread ones in world literature for two and a half centuries. Jerome de Groot is right when he remarks that any bookshop's Historical Fiction section in any country demonstrates a spectacular range of genres, types of writer, periods of history depicted [de Groot 2010: 2]. The genre which Scott generated is full of amazing survivability, generic rules he laid down are both of the greatest interest and a serious challenge for many writers who dare to enter the area of the historical novel. Any researcher of the contemporary state of the genre has to return to Scott's experience, to the core generic code which emerged from his creative consciousness. The actuality of Scott studies is also obvious when we think of the development of such a feature of literature as historicism – an integral part of any realistic narration whether it is about the past or the present.

So, when we start studying the ways Walter Scott depicts the standoff between chivalry and burghers in his *Quentin Durward* (1823) and *The Fair Maid of Perth, or Saint Valentine Day* (1828) we may assert that from such a research angle the two novels together and in comparison have not been yet looked at, while such an approach allows us to analyze the very interesting results of Scott's depiction of the main social conflict in the late medieval social milieu: the novels transfer us into the period of the European history called 'The Mature Middle Ages' – XIV – XV centuries. It is also worth noticing the peculiar places of these two novels in the works of the writer; it will help us to understand the grounds and the ways Walter Scott thinks of this conflict and of the development of the European history on the whole.

Quentin Durward is Scott's first 'fictional foray onto the European continent' [Alexander 2002: 239]. In *The Fair Maid of Perth* Walter Scott 'comes back' to Scotland; it is his last novel set in the writer's native country. In *Quentin Durward* Walter Scott primarily explores the historical role of Louis XI, and this exploration once again shows him as a solid historian. This aspect of Scott's creative work is well discussed in the world *Scottiana*: Herbert Grierson [Grierson 1938], George Young [Young 1958], David Delvin [Delvin 1969], James Kerr [Kerr 1989], Mark Spencer [Spencer 2011], and many others wrote convincingly and evidently about Scott as a profound historian, who is known to have influenced such prominent historians as Thomas Carlyle, Augustin Thierry, Thomas Macaulay, Prosper Barante, and who inspired their and many others' historical views. Remarkably, this influence is mostly connected with Scott's novels and only in the second turn – with his 'pure' historical works, such as *The Life of Napoleon Buonaparte* (1827), *The History of Scotland* (1829 – 1830), etc. As early as 1933 Thomas Preston Peardon in *The Transition in*

English Historical Writing, 1760 – 1830 wrote: 'Sir Walter Scott has generally been regarded as the chief link between nineteenth-century Romanticism and historiography' [Peardon 1933: 214].

In *Quentin Durward*, as Simon Edwards asserts, we see 'a profound and troubling representation of the passages of modernity' [Edwards 2001: 294]. The XV century is supposed to be the time when the Middle Ages were over, and a new, modern, age began. The formation of this new world took place mainly in towns which rapidly and inevitably gained economic and political strength with their republican type of inner city life and growing sense of community as a substantial element of republicanism (see more about it in [Город в средневековой цивилизации Западной Европы 2000, т. 3; Город в средневековой цивилизации Западной Европы 2000, т. 4; Lynch, Spearman, Steel 1988; Hall 2002; Denison 2017]). Jill Rubenstein argues, that *The Fair Maid of Perth*, among other aspects, should be seen as a story about the inevitable move in Scotland towards progressive bourgeois society, albeit with a peculiar and limited democracy [Rubenstein 1971: 135]. In relation to the Scottish medieval towns, the concept of democracy is more familiar, because, as historians note, in "Scottish towns there were far fewer craft-guilds" [Lynch, Spearman, Steel 1988: 12] which were, as a rule, the basis for social stratification of medieval townsmen and the source of oligarchism. In *The Fair Maid of Perth* Scott demonstrates his deep understanding of many social and moral processes which took place in medieval Scotland and gives his dramatic account of emerging new, modern, Scotland with the loss of the decisive role of clans in the Highlands and the formation of a bourgeois social and cultural paradigm of life in the Lowlands.

Here, we can't but agree with Scottish literary scholar Thomas Crawford who writes that Scott makes 'imaginative models of real historical processes and their inner conflicts' (quote from [Delvin 1969: 75]). It would be fair to remember here the words of Augustin Thierry, one of the founders of history as a science, who preferred 'this great writer' to 'petty and dull erudition of prominent modern historians' (quote from [Реизов 1956]). This observation brings us to the thoughts on distinctiveness of the later novels of Walter Scott as the reflection of his historicism's development.

The creative activity of Walter Scott as a novelist is usually divided in two parts and the year of 1819 marks the border. It is supposed that *Ivanhoe* (written in 1819, published in 1820) opens the new stage in Scott's novelistic art. In the later novels of Walter Scott we see expanding the subject matters and geographical coverage: the novels are set not only in the Scottish Highlands and/or Lowlands, but also in var-

ious parts of Europe and further – in England, Wales, France, Switzerland, Palestine. The writer, metaphorically speaking, dives into more distant times: into the XI century in *Count Robert of Paris* (1832), the XII century in *Ivanhoe* (1820), in *Bethroned* (1825) and in *The Talisman* (1825), the late XIV century in *The Fair Maid of Perth* (1828), the XV century in *Quentin Durward* (1823) and in *Anne of Geierstein* (1829), the XVI century in *Kenilworth* (1821), *Monastery* (1820) and in *The Abbot* (1820), the XVII century in *The Pirate* (1822), *Woodstock* (1826) and *The Fortunes of Nigel* (1822); the nearest XVIII century was already well explored by him in the Scottish novels of the first stage beginning with the most famous *Waverley* (1814).

In the later period we notice Scott's increasing trend of generalizations though he continues to believe that 'bygone ages of the world were actually filled by living men, not by protocols, state-papers, controversies and abstractions of men' [Delvin 1969: 72]. At the same time, as John Raleigh reasonably remarks, Scott's 'recreated past was peopled not only by concrete individuals but by historical forces as well' (quote from [Delvin 1969: 85]). Avrom Fleishman rightly noticed that historical novels, and Scott's ones too, are characterized by "the active presence of a concept of history as a shaping force" (quote from [Shaw 1983: 28]). The art to show the fates of his historical personages (mostly fictitious) as the results of the work of historical forces is a generally recognized manifestation of Scott's genius to combine human nature and human passions with the dynamics of historical process. In the later novels the scenery, quite often placed in the author's *Introductions* or in frequent digressions, is not so amazingly (and quite often tediously) plentiful, so earnestly (and sometimes annoyingly) didactic and *kulturträgerisch*, once the author prefers to give the spirit of the reconstructed epoch with the help of the adventures and psychological dilemmas of his personages (increase of the intricacy, including moral and psychological ones, in later novels of Scott is a well-known observation). The tradition to have Author's *Introduction* does not disappear in his later novels; they still carry on some serious research attributes. Of our two novels, it is obvious in *Quentin Durward*, where, as it was already mentioned, Scott gives an expanded explanation as to why, for the sake of the adequate picture of the late Middle Ages' role in European history, he chooses the figure of Louis XI.

It is obvious, that along with, metaphorically speaking, going beyond the frames of Scottish history, there is the writer's wish to understand certain laws of history in general. One of the consequences is the notable increase in Scott's famous historical anachronisms for which he was and is severely criti-

cized by professional historians. Anachronism, as many of us know, is a deliberate mixing characters, artifacts, events, etc. of various (but close) historical times for the sake of a more obvious and convincing delineation of the historical development vector. At this point, we have to stress Scott's serious interest in the progressive direction of the vector of history, his wish to catch the spirit of the definite time both in peculiar details and in the aspect of its place on this vector and to show both the process of this spirit's formation and the consequences this spirit produces in the context of the future. That is why Scott's protagonist (quite often despite the narrator's ironical presentation of him) traditionally embodies if not the future, at least the trend of the future that has begun to be signified. Thus, Scott's protagonist (in this case, these are, in addition to the titular heroes, medieval towns, collective heroes; fuller in *The Fair Maid of Perth*, as an outline in *Quentin Durward*), as a rule, belongs simultaneously to the time of 'here and now' and to some future (which has already happened, taking into account the distance between the historical time and the time of the reader). Let us remember *Ivanhoe*, *Quentin Durward*, Sir Kenneth (*Talisman*), Markem Everard (*Woodstock*). The anachronisms are directly connected, in their turn, with Scott's increased attention to the laws of history, to historical patterns, their formation and operation; it is the reflection of his understanding history as a progressive advance, as a headway.

This increasing interest in generalizations does not lead to the impoverishment of descriptions of everyday life, or to sparse accounts of antiquity; Scott was known as a passionate lover of antiquity (he was an ardent member of the Scottish Antiquarian Society, of which see more [Лазарева 2009]). We know how scrupulous the writer was when depicting geographical, ethnographical, cultural, economic and political aspects of the times represented in the novels. Nevertheless, in his later novels Scott reduces his efforts to reconstruct the settings for the sake of clearer and speedier understanding of the inevitable cultural and political changes in the historical process (i.e. the work of the laws of history); in the case of the novels being considered here, another, more progressive, historical paradigm emerges within the one which is under scrupulous view.

In the Author's *Introduction* to *Quentin Durward*, chiefly devoted to Louis XI and his role in French history of the XV century as Scott understood it, the French king is characterized as 'none was better able to sustain and extol the superiority of the coarse and selfish reasons by which he endeavoured to supply those nobler motives for exertion which his predecessors had derived from the high spirit of chivalry. In fact, that system was now becoming ancient, and had, even while in its perfec-

tion, something so overstrained and fantastic in its principles, as rendered it peculiarly the object of ridicule, whenever, like other old fashions, it began to fall out of repute; and the weapons of raillery could be employed against it, without exciting the disgust and horror with which they would have been rejected at an early period, as a species of blasphemy. <...> The principles of chivalry were cast aside, and their aid supplied by baser stimulants [Scott *Quentin Durward*: electronic resource].

Having given an adequate historical portrait of Louis XI, Scott also stresses the role of ‘the large trading towns of Flanders’, which Louis ‘aided and encouraged’ [ibid] and which played a serious role in the political struggle of the King of France and the Duke of Normandy. We realize that this conflict has not only political and local connotations, it was the conflict of the outgoing era (the era of feudal strife which is represented in the novel by the Duke) and the incoming era – the era of centralized power (at that moment – the power of a monarch); and townspeople, burghers, were on the side of a monarch as this kind of power guaranteed them a peaceful and prosperous existence due to its predictability and stability. According to Scott, the townspeople in *Quentin Durward* defended and carried on the future, despite the ironical tone of the depiction of the city of Liege and its people in Chapter XIX; this tone is used because narratively we are within the perspective of the hero, a Scottish high-born highlander for whom the mercantile spirit is completely unacceptable. Though, to stress the novelistic mastery of Scott, it should be said that the burghers, whom Quentin Durward disdained, helped him to gain his love and happiness. Any reader of the novel easily notices the changes of tone in depicting Messier Papillon, the Syndic of Liege (the Head of Town community), who, though a burgher perceived by Quentin Durward ironically, even with slight snobbery and disgust, out turned to be ‘a terrestrial philosopher, entirely busied with the things of the earth’ [*Quentin Durward*; electronic resource], a very hospitable master of the home and a person of intelligence and resolution in a difficult socio-political situation.

In *The Fair Maid of Perth* Scott expresses the idea of the future belonging to towns and its people more definitely and richly, through the whole artistic system of the novel and not just in the *Introduction* and several chapters as in *Quentin Durward*. Even more striking, in this first novel about medieval Scotland, of three forces, the tensions among which determine the historically true conflict – chivalry, townsmen and highlanders – the triumph is with the townsmen, and it is not by chance that Scott gives such a title to his novel and nominates as the spokeswoman of reason, the young and beautiful Catherine Glover who is firm in her beliefs and con-

viction. It is not difficult to notice how Scott frames the plot with two extremely important scenes where the titular heroine, the Fair Maid of Perth Catharine Glover, preaches high moral qualities first to the gunsmith Henry Smith (Chapter II), a townsman whose belligerent pugnacity, by her understanding, does not meet the vocation of a human being and makes him look like idly chivalry, and then to the Duke Rothsay (Chapter XXXII), rebuking his violence and urging him to devote his ardour to duty to the motherland.

In Chapter II we read:

“My dearest father,” answered Catharine, “your words contradict themselves, if you will permit your child to say so. Let us thank God and the good saints that we are in a peaceful rank of life, below the notice of those whose high birth, and yet higher pride, lead them to glory in their bloody works of cruelty, which haughty and lordly men term deeds of chivalry. Your wisdom will allow that it would be absurd in us to prank ourselves in their dainty plumes and splendid garments; why, then, should we imitate their full blown vices? Why should we assume their hard hearted pride and relentless cruelty, to which murder is not only a sport, but a subject of vainglorious triumph? Let those whose rank claims as its right such bloody homage take pride and pleasure in it; we, who have no share in the sacrifice, may the better pity the sufferings of the victim. Let us thank our lowliness, since it secures us from temptation. But forgive me, father, if I have stepped over the limits of my duty, in contradicting the views which you entertain, with so many others, on these subjects” [The Fair Maid of Perth; electronic resource].

During her bold rebuke to the Duke in Chapter XXXII she exclaims: “Once more, my lord,” resumed Catharine, “keep these favours for those by whom they are prized; or rather reserve your time and your health for other and nobler pursuits – for the defense of your country and the happiness of your subjects. Alas, my lord, how willingly would an exulting people receive you for their chief! How gladly would they close around you, did you show desire to head them against the oppression of the mighty, the violence of the lawless, the seduction of the vicious, and the tyranny of the hypocrite!” [The Fair Maid of Perth].

In *The Fair Maid of Perth* Scott does not simplify the standoff of three counterparts in the historical process in Scotland of the end of the XIV century. It is obvious, to begin with, in his irony: grim and sarcastic towards Scottish chivalry of that time, and quite amiable and welcoming towards burghers, and also – in his grievous and tragic irony concerning his beloved highlanders’ leaving the vanguard scene of history. The latter is stressed in his *Preface* written in August of 1831 and devoted to a famous battle of

two highland clans on the Inch of Perth in front of King Robert III, his court and the crowds of townsmen; the battle which, according to Scott, meant the decline of the original culture of the Highlands, that formed the basis of Scottishness. The image of Conachar, a young highlander fleeing from the battlefield of two clans, is a metaphorical embodiment of this idea. No doubt, to express more clearly his sorrow, Scott deliberately chooses the scene of the funeral of Conachar's father, chief of the Clan Quehele, to give his usual ethnographical account of the Highlands customs and traditions. In Chapter XXIX Glover becomes the witness of the dramatic talk of Conachar (Eachin MacIan), the young Quehele clan chief, with his mentor Torquil about the future battle of two clans and Conachar's premonition of great tragedy as the end of it. Glover, previously prejudiced against Highlanders, is amazed by the sincerity of feelings of the two and concludes:

"The wild mountain heart is faithful and true. Yonger man is more like the giants in romaunts than a man of mould like ourselves; and yet Christians might take an example from him for his lealty" [The Fair Maid of Perth: electronic resource].

Scott's regrets about the end of the glorious history of the clans and the coming era of cities are embodied in the words of the shepherd Niel Booshaloch when Glover complains about new chief of the Quehele clan's being impolite towards him, the guest of the clan: "His father knew better," said the herdsman. "But where should he have learned manners, poor thing, and bred up among your Perth burghers, who, excepting yourself, neighbour Glover, who speak Gaelic as well as I do, are a race incapable of civility?" [The Fair Maid of Perth].

Nonetheless, Scott's refusal to portray 'noble savage' in the ways he did it before (remember *Rob Roy*, for example) is reflected, as John Raleigh rightly stresses, in the fact that '*The Fair Maid of Perth*, of all the Waverley novels, is more 'depressing', and 'strikes for the grimness of its subject matter and tone' [Raleigh 1966: 247] and for 'the grisly atmosphere' [Raleigh 1966: 249]. The events which take place in the late XIV century and the perspectives they open do not cause Scott's delight. The same happens with Scott's depicting of the Scottish nobility of the time when, once again, a new, modern, bourgeois paradigm emerges, and this paradigm is totally connected, by Scott-the-historian, with the Scottish Lowlands, and the city of Perth is its symbol. Structurally the narrative in *The Fair Maid of Perth* by and large is organized as alternate pictures of nobility and townsmen with two parallel centres: King Robert and his son, Duke of Rothsay, on the one hand, and townsman Glover and his daughter Catharine on the other, with culminating scenes of

her abduction by Rothsay, her rebuke to him and her moral triumph over him, her reconciliation with Henry Smith, whose unjustified belligerence and craving for the violent resolutions of disputes on any occasion she does not accept, and her happy marriage to him; these moments are not only the necessary codes of a romance (the loose structure of this genre exists in the novel) but they emblemize the victory of the ideas and policy of the community of Perth as one of the economic, moral and political pillars of this emerging new bourgeois Scotland.

The image of the armourer Henry Smith and his uncompromising nature bring some complexities into this conception of the triumphant middle class of Scotland and the pastoral collective image of the community of Perth. His cockiness and pugnacity, determined, as Scott explains it, by his professional and growing class pride, no doubt, is an alternate parallel to the empty pride and braggadocio of the chivalrous in the novel. The clearest example is the image of Ramorney, violent and brutal courtier of Rothsay who is a Scottish replica of William de la Marck, the freebooting 'Boar of the Ardennes' in *Quentin Durward*. The hand of Ramorney, severed by Smith when the knight was trying to sneak into Catharine's bedroom on St. Valentine Night, and nailed by the order of Perth's Magistrate to the doors of the Church becomes a horrid evidence of the feudal chivalry's outrageous behaviour, violence and brutality; it marks the class of no future, for Walter Scott. At the same time, to stress once again, the bourgeois future (which by the time of the novel's release has been already 'the present') was not appraised by Scott as an absolute good.

One of the marks of this narrative atmosphere which is rather new for Scott is a remarkable turn of the plot in *The Fair Maid of Perth*. Usually in Scott's novel a very important role is played by a comic plot line, which brings into the narrative the feeling of living life; it is enough to remember Gurth, Wamba and Friar Tuck in *Ivanhoe*, Cuddie Headrigg in *Old Mortality* (1816), Andrew Fairservice in *Rob Roy* (1817), the semi-comic personages, they are very close to earthly life and the practical side of it. Such a plot line and such personages show Scott's mastery in realistic reconstruction of the time, its morals and its everyday flow; they enliven the narrative and deprive it of excessive pathos. In the novel under analysis this realistically comic personage is the hatter Oliver Proudfoot, who sets off the image of Henry Smith in a peculiar way being practically his contrast in all, to start with the appearance up to behavior, especially when it comes to non-ostentatious bravery and courage. These contrasts bring vitality to both images. While in other Scott's novels, this comico-realistic line is preserved

to the end and even participates in the resolution of the general conflict (*Ivanhoe*, for example), in *The Fair Maid of Perth* the author 'kills' his central comic personage, Proudfoote, practically in the middle of the book, in Chapter XVI, and thus Scott enhances the none too cheerful atmosphere of the novel and makes his readers be serious enough to grasp the main ideas of the narrative. There is another image of a townsman who is depicted in absolute contrast, in a sinister tone which spoils the idyllic unity of the town community of Perth. This is the image of apothecary Henbane Dwinning. He is given as a town version of Ramorney: they are two villains, embodiments of the villany, peculiar to their social stratum. It proves Walter Scott's tendency to be objective and to douse any excessive romanticism of the narrative. It proves, also, Scott's suspicion of certain chivalric and burgher values. It is extremely important, in terms of Scott's attitude to the social processes in Scottish medieval towns, that his protagonist, Catharine Glover, in Chapter XXXII, which contains the moral culmination of the novel, gives a furious rebuke to Dwinning's behaviour which is unworthy of a true townsman, according to her beliefs.

In this respect the image of Henry Smith is very emblematic: his craftsman's behaviour is not at all less noble than that of knights and courtiers, and he embodies a new type of nobility and chivalry of universal, not of class, origin. And his risky decision to replace one of the Highlanders on the battlefield of two clans only seems to be a continuation of his inherent militancy, fervently condemned by Catharine. It is something new in him and in a town community: after all, if the battle does not take place, then the enmity of the clans, which brings so much trouble to the Highlanders and Lowlanders, to whole Scotland, will not end. Remarkably, Conachar flees the battlefield, not daring to fight it just with Smith, his rival in love with Catharine. To a great extent, Henry Smith is Scott's traditional 'middle hero' which usually in terms of plot belongs to both conflicting forces of the novel or 'exists' above the collision.

The images of Catharine, Glover, Smith, Rothsay, Conachar, etc. should be looked at in the context of the type of Walter Scott's historicism with the roots in German historical thought and its dominant idealistic concept: the basis of historical progress is improvement of moral and ethical standards and the growth of the spirituality of society. The latter Scott does not at all connect with religion and church: it is obvious in both novels under consideration; in *Quentin Durward* and in *The Fair Maid of Perth* the church fails in carrying spiritual leadership in the given fictional situations; and it corresponds with church's decreasing role in the life of medieval town communities in the XIII–XIV century, as historians

argue (see [Город в средневековой цивилизации 2000, т. 3: 35]). Walter Scott moves further and sees the growth of national wealth as a very important condition for the evolution of the society, though it is more fair for *Quentin Durward*, because in *The Fair Maid of Perth* the writer stresses the role of the medieval town community as wholeness, as a unity, and we may definitely attribute to Scott's artistic merits the collective image of this community (conclave of citizens, first of all) along with his masterly images of individual townsmen – Simon Glover, Oliver Proudfoote, Bailie Craigdallie and others. Beyond any doubt, despite irony and sometimes even satire, used to depict the life of a medieval town community, the natural intelligence, natural sense of justice and natural self-esteem which, in one form or another, appear in the images of the townspeople in both novels, and the obvious degradation of the chivalric code towards inexplicable cruelty and social hatred reflect a global historical failure of the knighthood as a class.

Summing up, Walter Scott's views on history are known to be a mixture of conservative and progressive ideas with Edmund Burke's and William Godwin's influences simultaneously. In Scott's novels after 1819 we see an increase in real historical figures among the characters of the novels; more explicit emphasis on exploring the laws of historical process and on inevitability of the history movement and changing of eras, which become the "underlying plot" of Scott's novels. *Quentin Durward* and *The Fair Maid of Perth, or Saint Valentine's Day* are examples of Scott's approach to medieval towns' and its communities' coming into the history vanguard in Western Europe in the XIV–XV centuries and demonstrating their decisive social and political roles in history. The novels deal with the struggle of towns for their rights and privileges, and this struggle is shown by Walter Scott as the phenomena of unstoppable progress.

Endnote

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Ремесленничество против рыцарства: городская коммуна и исторический прогресс в поздних романах Вальтера Скотта

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Аннотация. Статья посвящена двум романам Вальтера Скотта, в которых писатель демонстрирует свое видение эпохи зрелого средневековья на примере двух стран – Франции и Шотландии. В произведениях как на уровне общей концепции, отражающей его понимание исторического прогресса, так и на уровне образных систем романов и повествования Скотт реконструирует роль противостояния рыцарства и городских сообществ в социально-политической и нравственно-психологической динамической реальности двух стран. Романы убедительно показывают своеобразие позднего этапа творчества Скотта, когда повышается значимость любовно-приключенческого узла в сюжете произведения, как и роль реальных исторических лиц в повествовании. Более очевидным становится стремление писателя в сюжете, в авторских комментариях и отступлениях, нередко построенных как беседа историка, знатока воспроизводимого времени, с читателем, в центральных образах романов воплотить свое понимание исторических законов, базирующееся на смешении одно-

временно консервативных и прогрессистских оценок динамики истории. Для идейно-художественной целостности произведений принципиально важны собирательные образы Льежа и Перта, подаваемые при помощи как общего плана, так и ярких индивидуализированных образов горожан. Колоритны и одновременно идееносны образы «уходящего класса» – рыцарства: в каждом из них акцентируется и становится характерообразующей степень «выпадения» из динамики истории. Одновременно в статье акцентируется, особенно в части, обращенной к «Пертской красавице», авторская идея смены не только экономического, но и нравственного лидера в эпоху позднего Средневековья, когда определяющая роль постепенно переходит к горожанам; в этом отношении принципиален образ титульной героини «Пертской красавицы» Кэтрин Гловер, писательского «резонера». В статье прослеживается также характер сосуществования романтико-приключенческого (в отношении «Пертской красавицы» – романтико-готического) и социально-бытового и психологического начал при создании «образа эпохи».

Ключевые слова: исторический роман; историческое повествование; средневековая городская община; средневековая Шотландия; средневековая Франция; исторический прогресс.