

Antiquaries in the Age of Romanticism: 1789-1851

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Antiquaries in the Age of Romanticism: 1789-1851

Rosemary Hill

Queen Mary, University of London

Submitted for the degree of PhD

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I confirm that the work presented in this thesis and submitted for the degree of PhD is my own.

Rosemary Hill

Abstract

The thesis concentrates on the work of fourteen antiquaries active in the period from the French Revolution to the Great Exhibition in England, Scotland and France. I have used a combination of the antiquaries' published works, which cover, among other subjects, architecture, topography, costume history, Shakespeare and the history of furniture, alongside their private papers to develop an account of that lived engagement with the past which characterised the romantic period. It ends with the growing professionalisation and specialisation of historical studies in the mid-nineteenth century which left little room for the self-generating, essentially romantic antiquarian enterprise.

In so far as this subject has been considered at all it has been in the context of what has come to be called 'the invention of tradition'. It is true that the romantic engagement with history as narrative led to some elaboration of the facts, while the newness of the enterprise laid it open to mistakes. I have not ignored this. The restoration of the Bayeux Tapestry, the forged tartans of the Sobieski Stuarts and the creation of Shakespeare's Birthplace are all considered. Overall, however, I have been concerned not to debunk but as it were to 'rebunk', to see the antiquaries in their historical context and, as far as possible, in their own terms.

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Figure 1: *The Antiquary*, by Richard Parkes Bonington, 1826

Chapter One

Don Quixote to Jonathan Oldbuck: the Image of the Antiquary

Definitions

By 1628, when John Earle in his *Micro-Cosmographie* defined him as ‘one that hath that unnaturall disease to bee enamour’d of old age, and wrinckles’, the antiquary was already a figure of dubious appeal and obvious comic potential.¹ *The New Dictionary of the... Canting Crew* in 1699 had him down as ‘a curious Critick in old Coins, Stones and Inscriptions, in Worm-eaten Records...also one that affects and blindly doats, on Relicks, Ruins, old Customs Phrases and Fashions’.² By the end of the eighteenth century, on the eve of the period with which this thesis is concerned, it seemed to the antiquary Francis Grose that it had ‘long been the fashion to laugh at the study of Antiquities, and to consider it as the idle amusement of a few humdrum plodding fellows, who, wanting genius for nobler studies, busied themselves in heaping up illegible Manuscripts, mutilated Statues, obliterated Coins, and broken pipkins!’³

When it came to the antiquarian personality Johnson’s *Dictionary* defined an antiquary in neutral terms as ‘a man studious of antiquity; a collector of ancient things’.⁴ Yet in a letter to Boswell Johnson remarked that ‘a mere antiquarian is a rugged being’⁵ and he defined rugged as ‘full of unevenness and asperity...not neat, not regular...savage of temper; brutal... turbulent... sour, surly, discomposed...shaggy’.⁶ These accumulated

¹ Earle, *Micro-Cosmographie*, p.13.

² Johnson, Samuel, *Dictionary*, London, 1755.

³ Quoted in Brown, *Hobby-Horsical Antiquary*, p. 11 and see pp 15-17 for a survey of parodies from Earle to Pope. See also Sweet, *Antiquaries*, p. xiii.

⁴ Johnson, *Dictionary*, 1755.

⁵ *Boswell’s Life of Johnson*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, new edition, 1953), p.937.

⁶ Johnson, *Dictionary*, 1755.

characteristics were all still present in the romantic period. They can be observed in varying degrees in **Walter Scott's** Jonathan Oldbuck, the eponymous *Antiquary*, with whom, in 1816 this peculiar figure might be said to have broken the surface of the popular imagination.⁷

There was more to Oldbuck, as there had been to his predecessors, than the caricature, but its salient features merit consideration. So does another equally long-standing if less often and less pithily expressed image of the antiquary which casts him as an altogether more subversive figure. From John Stow, author of the *Survey of London*, first published in 1598, who had his library searched by the authorities and was reported to Sir William Cecil for the possession of 'thirty-nine objectionable titles'⁸ to Sir James Clerk of Penecuik, who in 1779 found his house surrounded by an angry mob threatening to smash his antiquities as 'an abomination of the scarlet whore', the antiquary's access to arcane knowledge, where it was not ridiculous, might seem sinister.⁹

My thesis concentrates on the work of fourteen antiquaries active in the period from 1789 to 1851.¹⁰ I have chosen them to represent as wide a range of types and subject matter as possible and the definition I have applied is that of a man or, most unusually, a woman, who studies the past by means of its material remains. These remains may include, but are not confined to, written records and may also extend to human subjects in the form of oral history. I have limited my selection to antiquaries who were interested in the local, national and medieval past, rather than in classical antiquity. This is partly for reasons of space and coherence but more importantly because the shift towards these areas of enquiry was one of the most striking features of the period.

⁷ To indicate the antiquaries who form the principal focus of my study I have highlighted the first reference to each.

⁸ Beer, L. Barrett, 'Stow, John (1524/5–1605)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004. [<http://www.oxforddnb.com.ezproxy.londonlibrary.co.uk/view/article/26611>, accessed 15 Feb 2011].

⁹ Quoted in Brown, *Hobby-Horsical Antiquary*, p. 7.

¹⁰ See Appendix.

It was a change of emphasis that was closely related to the determining characteristic of antiquarianism in the romantic period, which was that it became self-conscious, self-critical and self-referential. The romantic antiquary, like the romantic poet, was understood to be to some extent his own subject, implicated whether he liked it or not, and men such as **Robert Willis** and **John Lingard** disliked it very much indeed, in a narrative view of the past in which the teller was part of the tale. Also like the romantic poet the antiquary was more often than not an outsider. The study of local antiquities did not require a university education or funds for extensive travel or the acquisition of *objets de vertu*. All of my subjects, with the significant exception of Willis and the arguable but not absolute exception of Walter Scott, were placed at one remove from the mainstream of intellectual life either by class, religion or sex.

Antiquarianism before 1789

The history of antiquarianism is part of what Keith Thomas has called the growing awareness of anachronism, that ‘evolving consciousness’ of the difference between ourselves and our ancestors.¹¹ One of the recurring themes of my thesis is this shift in sensibility towards the past, but it is a shift which is, as Thomas notes, ‘not possible to date precisely...its development seems to have been fitful and uneven’.¹² Hence it is not possible to fix a moment for a beginning to antiquarianism. The first antiquary has traditionally been identified, according to Rosemary Sweet, as the Roman Marcus Terrentius Varro.¹³ In England and Scotland there was, as Stuart Piggott writes, ‘a certain amount of conscious antiquarianism’ in the later Middle Ages.¹⁴ Yet it is not unreasonable to identify the first major ‘fit’ of British antiquarianism with the Reformation. In England, between 1535 and 1539, the dissolution of the monasteries that ‘unparalleled catastrophe’, recast the landscape, destroyed buildings and shattered

¹¹ Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic*, p. 509.

¹² Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic*, p. 509.

¹³ Sweet, *Antiquaries*, p.1.

¹⁴ Piggott, *Ruins in a Landscape*, p.6.

irrevocably social structures that had previously changed little over centuries thereby awakening the sense of a past that was irrevocably cut off from the present.¹⁵

By this account the first true English antiquary was perhaps John Leland (1503-1552), who was commissioned by Henry VIII to tour the monastic libraries during the dissolution and search out important books.¹⁶ Leland did this and much more. He collected manuscripts, noted architectural remains and became increasingly interested in topography. In this move beyond the literary sources he set the pattern for later antiquarianism. He was also typical in less fortunate ways. An arch procrastinator despite years of note-taking his planned *De Antiquitate Britannica* failed to appear and in 1550 he lost his reason never to recover. The path from eccentricity and compulsive note-taking to actual insanity was to be much travelled in succeeding generations. Joseph Ritson (1752-1803), the principal collector of material on the Robin Hood stories became deranged in the last months of his life, setting fire to his notes, while Lord Buchan (1742-1829), founder of the Scottish Society of Antiquaries, was notorious for, among other things, appearing ‘dressed as Apollo, attended by nine young girls as the Muses and a naked small boy as Cupid’.¹⁷

Leland’s papers lay, unpublished, in the Bodleian Library for 160 years. It is William Camden (1551-1623), author of the *Britannia*, who is generally regarded as the father of British antiquarianism and by the time of Camden’s death the figure of the antiquary already possessed many of the essential characteristics that would survive into the Georgian age. Intellectually he was cast as a compulsive researcher who followed the will o’ the wisp of curiosity from subject to subject, many of them worthless, compiling endless notes, and never finishing. Earle’s definition goes on:

A great admirer hee is of the rust of old Monuments, and reads only those characters, where time hath eaten out the letters. Hee will goe you forty miles to see a Saint’s Well, or a ruin’d Abbey; and if there

¹⁵ Evans, *History of the Society of Antiquaries*, p.2.

¹⁶ My account of Leland is based on that in Parry, *Trophies of Time*.

¹⁷ Elizabeth Grant of Rothiemurchus, quoted in Brown, *Hobby-Horsical Antiquary*, p. 46.

be but a Crosse or stone footstool in the way, hee'l be considering it so long, till he forget his journey.¹⁸

Obsessive yet absent-minded, full of facts, yet knowing nothing of real worth, the antiquary of satire remained the unclubbable in pursuit of the illegible. The kernel of truth from which the caricature sprang is evident two centuries later in **Edward Willson**, as he murmurs to himself in his memoranda:

Local note by Parishes and Wapentakes...Quaere how these towns came into the possession of the Danes? By Doctor Henry's History it would seem that King Alfred gave them up as places of refuge to the Danes who remained in England...Quaere whether this is expressly recorded in any good authority...Inscription on a sword, found in the River Witham...the larger spur was found amongst some old brass in an ironmongers shop here...it will be several months yet before I get my treatise on the proportions of bells finished... I suppose that the incident of the skeleton was only an imaginary circumstance...¹⁹

The amiable eccentric was, however, still shadowed by the darker figure of the subversive. The antiquarianism of the sixteenth century had been born out of social crisis and in succeeding centuries antiquarianism continued to have political implications. Leland was, whatever else, a government agent. James I 'took a little mislike' to the first Society of Antiquaries on account of its views of the house of Stuart and it seems to have disbanded as a result in about 1607.²⁰ George III was to be no more enthusiastic about its successor.²¹ The greatest of the Stuart antiquaries was William Dugdale (1605-86). Dugdale was with the Royalist army at the Battle of Edgehill. His politics were inseparable from his scholarship and were reflected in his greatest work the *Monasticon Anglicanum*. A highly tendentious defence of the English Catholic church in which the Reformation serves as an ante-type for the civil wars, its implications were still well understood when it was re-edited and republished in the early nineteenth century on the eve of Catholic Emancipation.²²

¹⁸ Earle, *Micro-Cosmographie*, p.14.

¹⁹ Society of Antiquaries, Willson Collection, 786/1 and 786/3.

²⁰ Henry Spelman, quoted in Evans, *History of the Society of Antiquaries*, p.14.

²¹ See Chapter 5.

²² A new enlarged edition of the *Monasticon* was published from 1817-1830. It was edited between London and Oxford and the long list of subscribers includes no fellows or colleges from Cambridge.

Until the later eighteenth century, however, the antiquary was a relative rarity in fact and scarcely visible in literature, with two telling exceptions. Neither have, I believe, previously been considered in this context, yet both were to resonate with the antiquarianism of the romantic period. The first is *Don Quixote* published in 1605. The distinguishing characteristic of Cervantes's hero is of course his peculiar and obsessive interest in chivalry. With his antique lance on the rack and his old shield to hand, he spends his days and nights in his study absorbed in medieval romances while his estate is neglected. His obsessive reading so exhausts him that 'at last he lost the use of his reason'.²³ In his delusion he seems to elide the division between past and present, to enter into the world of his books until he actually inhabits history as a personal narrative.

His eccentricity is that he has failed to develop the proper sense of anachronism, the fitfully dawning awareness of the past as separate from the present which, across Europe, marked the waning of the Middle Ages. This kind of behaviour, so characteristic of the romantic relationship with history, was not in the seventeenth century an aspect of antiquarianism. Indeed it might be said that in his inability to understand the otherness of history, to grasp the fact that the past was over, Quixote was to his contemporaries the antithesis of an antiquary. Yet Scott's Jonathan Oldbuck claims Quixote directly as an ancestor 'the most determined as well as earliest bibliomaniac on record' and this chapter will return to him.²⁴

Scott was also interested in a more obscure seventeenth-century predecessor, the Perth poet Henry Adamson (1581-1637). Adamson's posthumously published works included two poems probably written in about 1620, 'The Inventory of the Gabions in Mr George Ruthven's Cabinet' and 'The Muses Threnodie'. Both feature Ruthven, an antiquarian friend of Adamson, apparently in his nineties by the time the poems were written, who used the word 'gabions' to refer to the curiosities in his collection.²⁵ A gabion is a wicker or wire basket filled with stones or earth and used to make an

²³ Cervantes, *Don Quixote*, p.9.

²⁴ Scott, *The Antiquary*, p.34.

²⁵ 'Memoir of Henry Adamson', in Marshall, *History of Perth*, pp. 489-495.

embankment or fortification. Perhaps in deploying it here Ruthven was appropriating the caricature of the antiquary as a collector of miscellaneous rubbish. Adamson's 'Inventory' certainly has a humorous, teasing tone, implying a shared joke, a warmth that later appealed to Scott and is quite different from Earle's cool mockery. It lists Ruthven's motley collection:

Of uncouth forms, and wond'rous shapes,
Like Peacocks, and like Indian apes;
Like leopards, and beasts spotted,
Of clubs curiously knotted;
Of wond'rous workmanships and rare
Like eagles flying in the air...
Some carv'd in timber, some in stone,
Of the wonder of Albion;
Which this close cabin doth include,
Some portends ill, some presage good.

...Neptune gave first his awful Trident
And Pan the horns gave of a Bident...

This cabin contains what you wish-
No place his ornaments doth miss;
For there is such varietie,
Looking breeds no satietie...
This is his storehouse, and his treasure;
This is his paradise of pleasure;
This is the arcenal of gods-
Of all the world this is the odds²⁶

The antiquary, surrounded by objects mysterious, fabulous and numinous, here takes on something of the character of the alchemist and this, too, was to become a leitmotiv in later images of antiquarianism, but it would appear to be unusual at this date. Even more unusual is the 'Muses Threnodie' in which Adamson writes in the person of

²⁶ Adamson, *Muses' Threnodie*, pp.1-2.

Ruthven mourning their mutual friend John Gall who had recently died. In ‘The Inventory’ comparisons of the objects with birds or animals suggests an affinity with living creatures. Here, as Ruthven addresses his gabions and calls on them to lament with him one who had admired and understood them, they actually come to life:

Now must I mourn for *Gall*, since he is gone,
And ye my Gabions help me him to mone...
Who now shall pen your praise and make you knowne,
By whom now shall your virtues be forth showne...
With dust and cobwebs cover all your heads,
And take you to your *matins* and your *beads*²⁷

It is an extraordinary and touching image, in which the animation of the gabions makes explicit a reciprocity in the relationship between antiquary and antiquities. Without an understanding eye upon them the gabions turn back from treasure into rubbish, the meaning of the individual objects and of their relation to one another lost. A collection, *qua* collection, may die with its collector or, as here, a sympathetic interpreter. This idea too caught Scott’s imagination when he came to consider his own antiquities in the face of his impending death and it will be discussed in more detail in a later chapter.²⁸

For the present Adamson’s poems serve to suggest that like antiquarianism itself, what may be called the romantic relationship with historic artefacts, one in which they form part of ‘a specific lived relationship to the past’ has no certain beginning.²⁹ Indeed, as Krzysztof Pomian writes, the concept of objects as ‘intermediaries between the onlooker and the invisible’ is as ancient as humanity.³⁰ Yet most usually, in a pre-romantic age, these were publicly designated and communally owned objects, religious relics or symbols of the state whose meaning was shared. They were invested with abstract rather than historical values. It was not until the later part of the eighteenth century that such a metaphysical connection between the individual and the artefact as

²⁷ Adamson, *Muses’ Threnodie*, p17.

²⁸ See Chapter 4.

²⁹ Bann, *Inventions of History*, p.102

³⁰ Pomian, *Collectors and Curiosities*, p.23.

part of the understanding of the past gained currency at the same time as the figure of the antiquary developed in fact and emerged in fiction.

The Antiquary in the Age of Romanticism: image, illusion and authenticity

In discussing the lives and work of the fourteen individuals I have considered in detail, as well as some others whose activities contrast or overlap with theirs from time to time, my object is to demonstrate that the period from 1789 to 1851 saw the rise and decline of a particular phase of antiquarianism. During this time, as Hugh Trevor-Roper wrote in *The Romantic Movement and the Study of History*, ‘the philosophy of the eighteenth-century historians -Hume, Robertson, and Gibbon’ was transformed into ‘the philosophies of their nineteenth-century successors- Macaulay, Michelet, Ranke’.³¹ In discussing how this came about Trevor-Roper gives full weight to the influence of Walter Scott, the importance of a developing empiricism and a growing interest in local, social and medieval history. What he does not consider, in saying that Scott was ‘not a scholar’ but someone who, in Carlyle’s words ‘knew what history meant’ is that he was an antiquary, a self-described and enthusiastic antiquary at that and that his methods and preoccupations were typical of the antiquarianism of these years.³²

It was in fact antiquarianism that bridged the divide between Hume and Macaulay in a period which saw another spurt in the fitful growth of the sense of the past. The Romantic period allowed and indeed fostered a relationship with history in which the antiquary’s peculiar combination of imagination and empiricism brought antiquarianism into the cultural mainstream as never before or since. It flourished to such an extent that by the mid-nineteenth century it was to some extent contributing to its own decline. A greatly increased body of knowledge and general public interest led to professionalisation

³¹ Trevor-Roper, *The Romantic Movement and the Study of History*, p.1.

³² Trevor-Roper, *The Romantic Movement and the Study of History*, p.7.

and specialisation among historians working in museums and universities. From these institutions the antiquary and antiquarian methods were excluded.³³ In 1851 the arrangement of objects at the Great Exhibition in the Crystal Palace reflected a very different approach to the ordering and interpretation of material artefacts from the ‘uncouth’ gabions of Ruthven and Oldbuck.

There are obvious (and, as will become apparent some less obvious) reasons for starting this discussion in 1789. As the Norfolk banker and antiquary **Dawson Turner** wrote:

The French revolution may well be compared to an earthquake: it swallowed up every thing, ingulphing some so deep that they are lost for ever, but leaving others, like hidden treasures, buried near the surface of the soil, whence accident and labor [sic] are daily bringing them to light.³⁴

Turner’s simile embraced a literal truth. The Revolution gave rise on the one hand to the loss of historic artefacts on a devastating scale and on the other to a booming trade in antiquities of every sort and size, which were swept across the Continent and imported en masse into Britain. These were objects sold by or looted from the dispossessed church and aristocracy or captured in the Napoleonic wars. Both as a force for destruction and for acquisition the Revolution had far-reaching effects on antiquarianism on both sides of the Channel.³⁵ Yet still the date is arbitrary. It was in the early 1770s that a gradual change in attitudes to the past, especially the local and medieval past, and hence to the antiquary as a figure in the cultural landscape, began to emerge.

In June 1772 at the Theatre Royal, Haymarket, in London, Samuel Foote’s comedy *The Nabob* put a meeting of the Society of Antiquaries on the stage, probably for the first but certainly not for the last time.³⁶ The satire reflected changes already underway at the Society where a predominantly aristocratic membership, interested in

³³ For a detailed account of the later part of the century see Levine, *The Amateur and the Professional*.

³⁴ Turner, *Tour in Normandy*, 1, p.44.

³⁵ See Chapter 3.

³⁶ Antiquaries were popular subjects of satire in late Georgian pantomime, featuring for example in the Harlequinade in *Gog Magog* at Drury Lane in 1822.

classical antiquity, was increasingly diluted, as some saw it, by a less genteel contingent whose enthusiasms were for the vernacular.³⁷ The Nabob of Foote's title is Sir Matthew Mite, a coarse and pompous man, newly elected to the Society. The meeting begins, as meetings still do today, with the acknowledgement of gifts. Mite's mites are all items relating to British history, marking him out as a man of limited education and poor taste. They include 'a pair of nut-crackers presented by Harry the Eighth to Anna Bullen...the wood supposed to be walnut', from which one of the antiquaries solemnly deduces that it can now be proved that 'before the Reformation walnut-trees were planted in England'.³⁸ Another offering is 'a tobacco-stopper of Sir Walter Raleigh's, made of the stern of the ship in which he first compassed the globe; given to the Society by a clergyman from the North Riding of Yorkshire'.³⁹

Here we have still the footling subjects the vulgar objects, the pointless deductions familiar since the seventeenth century and with the additional class distinctions of the eighteenth, for in the clergyman from Yorkshire we are expected to recognise a provincial nobody. The high point of Foote's satire is the paper Sir Matthew delivers to the Society on the subject of his own researches. He confirms his limitations as he announces: 'Let others toil to illumine the dark annals of Greece or of Rome my searches are sacred only to the service of Britain!'⁴⁰ His particular topic is 'the great Dick Whittington, and his no less eminent cat'.⁴¹ He goes on to define his terms, including 'cat' ('a domestic, whiskered, four-footed animal') and to explain that 'cat' could also mean a kind of light cargo boat (which it does) and to suggest that Whittington had used such a boat for the coastal trade on which he built his fortune and so the legend had arisen from a slippage in terminology.⁴² The audience at the Haymarket tittered appreciatively at this buffoonery but Horace Walpole, a fellow of the Society of Antiquaries, was not amused.

³⁷ See Evans, *History of the Society of Antiquaries*.

³⁸ Foote, *The Nabob*, p.104.

³⁹ Foote, *The Nabob*, p.104.

⁴⁰ Foote, *The Nabob*, p.105.

⁴¹ Foote, *The Nabob*, p.105.

⁴² Johnson, *Dictionary*, 1755, and 'Cat, n, s, a sort of ship'

Walpole's irritation was directed not at the play but at the Society, because the satire was in fact an accurate paraphrase of a lecture that a clergyman, Samuel Pegge, had actually given to the Antiquaries the year before and which they had since published. The attack piqued Walpole for he was not only an antiquary but a pioneer of the taste for the medieval as a manifestation of sensibility, a somewhat outré and private gentleman's pursuit. To see it presented as the vulgar hobby horse of a social climber was unpleasant. He would not, as he put it, be answerable 'for any fooleries but my own'.⁴³ He resigned from the Society. The episode marked a collision of sensibilities, a moment of cultural shift at which one man's cutting edge was still another's lunatic fringe, and it was indicative of both a change in taste at the most superficial level as the art of the Middle Ages began to be appreciated once more, and of a deeper change in the perception of individual consciousness in relation to the past and the nature of knowledge. It was another of those fits which would propel antiquarianism into a new phase and infuse it with romanticism.

In 1773, the year after *The Nabob*, Johann Gottfried Herder, 'the philosophic founder of cultural history', published the essay on Shakespeare which became a manifesto of the Sturm und Drang movement and one of the founding texts of European romanticism.⁴⁴ In so far as something so large and imprecise as a shift of sensibility can be caught on record, Herder's essay epitomises that change which was to come over the understanding of history. Specifically Herder argues for vernacular drama against French classicism and he justifies this in terms of historical consciousness. Shakespeare, Herder writes, is a creature of sixteenth-century England; he is not to be judged by the rules of Aristotle's Greece. In making his case he develops an idea of anachronism, one that requires not just an acknowledgement of the distance between past and present but demands an intellectual and aesthetic adjustment in the individual as part of an engagement with history. In order to understand the past Herder says we must enter to some extent into it; to achieve an understanding of Shakespeare's art as a transcendent, ahistorical reality, its historical context must be understood. The plays should therefore

⁴³ Quoted in Evans *History of the Society of Antiquaries*, p. 168. It was the climax of a long series of disputes between Walpole and the Society.

⁴⁴ Trevor-Roper, *The Romantic Movement and the Study of History*, p.10.

be performed in historic costume. ‘All illusion’ Herder writes, ‘is accomplished by means of... authenticity.’⁴⁵

It is a seeming paradox that is, in the theatre, a simple truth. Beyond the theatre however, and the romantic rediscovery of history extended well beyond the theatre, it proposes a subjective interaction with the past in which truth may be found anywhere on a scale from complete authenticity to the purest illusion. Scott, as a young man, learned German in order to read the Sturm und Drang poets. Later, Schlegel’s writings on Shakespeare were widely read in Britain and are cited by **John Britton**, writing for a popular audience in 1818.⁴⁶ This thesis is less concerned, however, to establish the extent of direct influence from Herder and the German school as to suggest the ethos which enabled antiquarianism in the romantic period to run the full gamut from fact to fiction.

Romantic antiquarianism might be many things; comical, tragical, sinister, scholarly, political, pedantic, mystical, bohemian, even occasionally female. This was an age when the antiquary could be anyone from an utterly respectable clergyman, such as John Lingard, to, in the case of the brothers who became known as the **Sobieski Stuarts**, fraudulent claimants to the British throne and when, as in these instances, it was the clergyman who was denounced by the Poet Laureate, Robert Southey, as an enemy of the state, while the pretenders’ book was bought and much enjoyed by Queen Victoria. The Sobieski Stuarts’ next production, a supposedly autobiographical novel *Tales of the Century* opens with an epigraph that is a reverse variant of Herder and which relies heavily (too heavily in the event) on the power of artistic truth to create historical authenticity: ‘It is credible, because it is improbable’.⁴⁷

⁴⁵ Herder, p. 49.

⁴⁶ Britton, *Remarks on the Life and Writings of William Shakespeare*, p.9.

⁴⁷ Sobieski, John and Charles Edward Stuart, *Tales of the Century*, p. xii.



Figure 2 *Don Quixote*, Richard Parkes Bonington, 1826

It was, one might say, a Quixotic relationship to the past as personal narrative and indeed it was in these years that the Don was co-opted into the ranks of the antiquaries. Jonathan Oldbuck's claim to kinship was echoed by Bonington who painted Quixote in the same year and in a very similar pose to his *Antiquary* [figs: 1 and 2]. In both pictures the subject's abstracted stare suggests a figure somewhere between Earle's obsessive and Adamson's more affectionate portrait of the antiquary in mystic communion with the objects of his study. Bonington borrowed historic armour from a real antiquary, Samuel Rush Meyrick (1783-1848), for the picture so that his Quixote might be as authentic as Quixote himself could desire. The Don's appeal extended far beyond the world of antiquarianism. After Shakespeare, Cervantes was the favourite author of the romantic critics. For Hazlitt in 1824 Quixote was Everyman: 'who is there that does not own him for a friend, a countryman and a brother?'⁴⁸ A comparison of a typical seventeenth-century illustration of the text [fig: 3] with Doré's of 1863 [fig: 4] makes plain the

⁴⁸ Quoted in Noon, *Richard Parkes Bonington*, p.428.

transformation. The eccentric, observed from the outside, has become the romantic creator whose imaginative, self-generated vision flows out until it is part of the world.



Figure 3 Don Quixote illustrated in 1687



Figure 4 *Don Quixote*, by Gustave Doré, 1863

In so far as the antiquary resembled the errant knight he, too, became a more popular and appealing figure. For just over half a century Hazlitt's description was virtually true. Quixotic antiquarianism, as a lived engagement with history, was a national preoccupation in England, Scotland and France, reaching its climax perhaps in 1839 with the Eglinton Tournament [fig: 5], in which real knights, dressed in real antique armour jousted in real Scottish rain.



Figure 5 The Eglinton Tournament, James Henry Nixon, 1839

As a fully-realised literary character the antiquary emerges, conveniently, in 1789 with Robert Burns's 'An Ode on the Late Captain Grose's Peregrinations thro' Scotland Collecting the Antiquities of that Kingdom'. Grose had been researching his *Antiquities of Scotland* when he met Burns who reported that he had:

Never seen a man of more original observation, anecdote and remark ... His delight is to steal thro' the country almost unknown, both as most favourable to his humour and his business...⁴⁹

Burns's portrait of Grose is full of particularity. The 'fine, fat fodgel wight / O'stature short but genius bright' bursts as he clearly did in life [fig: 6] with energy and good humour.⁵⁰ There are many echoes, possibly conscious, of Adamson, including the teasing tone and the accumulation of such impossible objects as the 'broomstick o' the witch of Endor' and 'Auld Tubalcain's fire-shool and fender' along with some Burnsian ribaldry in 'that which distinguished the gender of Balaam's ass' and a sly satirical poke at the 'Antiquarian trade'.⁵¹ The overwhelming impression, however, is of the vitality of a man in whom stealth is combined with exuberance and, in the right circumstances, clubability, a unique variant on a now recognisable theme.

⁴⁹ Burns, *Letters*, 1, p.423.

⁵⁰ Burns, *Complete Poems*, pp. 260-62.

⁵¹ Burns, *Complete Poems*, pp. 260-62.

But wad ye see him in his glee,
For meikle glee and fun has he
Then set him down, and twa or three
Gude fellos wi' him:
And *port, O port!* Shine thou a wee,
And THEN ye'll see him!⁵²

Burns and Grose enjoyed a real friendship, enshrined in the second volume of Grose's *Antiquities*, for which Burns wrote one of his greatest poems, *Tam 'o Shanter* as well as contributing notes to the entries on Ayrshire. The poet and the poetry are integrated with the antiquarian text as thoroughly as the antiquary is incorporated in the poem.



Figure 6 Francis Grose

In Walter Scott the figures of poet and antiquary met in one man. In *The Antiquary* Jonathan Oldbuck made manifest a figure by now widely familiar if latent in the public mind. The book was written almost at a single stretch and composed in the weeks immediately after Scott returned from his first trip abroad, during which he had visited the field of Waterloo. Set in 1794, *The Antiquary* is not an historical novel, rather it is a novel about history, some of it very recent, and its effect on the present, as realised through antiquarianism. Events in France and the threat of invasion are the backdrop to Oldbuck's pursuit of the more distant past. Although there are several suggested models the character is, by general consent, largely a self-portrait and the book as a whole

⁵² Burns, *Complete Poems*, pp. 260-62.

presents a series of reflections on the individual's engagement with the narrative of history, on authenticity and illusion.

Oldbuck has the well-established characteristics of the Antiquary. He 'measured decayed entrenchments, made plans of ruined castles, read illegible inscriptions, and wrote essays on medals in the proportion of twelve pages to each letter of the legend'.⁵³ Socially too he is typical. We learn that: 'the country gentlemen were generally above him in fortune, and beneath him in intellect'.⁵⁴ But between these broad familiar outlines are delicate self-referential touches that tie Scott and his alter ego together into the antiquarian tradition. Oldbuck's home 'Monkbarns', plays in its name on Scott's own house, Abbotsford. While Abbotsford had no connection to a monastic building beyond the name, which Scott had given it himself, the fictional Monkbarns does. It incorporates the remains of a monastery. It rises like antiquarianism itself from the ruins of the Reformation. Oldbuck is highly conscious of the tradition to which his house links him. And so through his fiction Scott allies himself in fact, to ' "The learned Leland...who lost his sense on witnessing the destruction of the conventual libraries in England" '.⁵⁵ Oldbuck, like his hero Quixote, is the pivot, between past and present, fact and fiction.

He is also, naturally enough, involved in pedantic and occasionally bad-tempered correspondence in learned journals. His particular bugbear in 1794 is the dispute about *Ossian* and its authenticity or otherwise. Oldbuck is with Johnson against what he calls 'that stuff of Macpherson's'.⁵⁶ Yet of course he himself is the fictional creature of a still anonymous author who is inserting epigraphs in the text entitled 'Old Song' which he knows perfectly well he has written himself in a farmhouse to which he has given a monastic name to imply a fictitious history. Scott's presentation of Oldbuck's hostility to *Ossian* is a tease not a denunciation, a pun on the layers of reflective meaning, illusion and authenticity that Scott himself is deploying and which by this date are more

⁵³ Scott, *The Antiquary*, p.25.

⁵⁴ Scott, *The Antiquary*, p.25.

⁵⁵ Scott, *The Antiquary*, p. 162.

⁵⁶ Scott, *The Antiquary*, p.292.

interesting to him and his readers than the simpler view of authenticity taken by Oldbuck's generation.

The Antiquary captured most exactly the prevalent image of late-Georgian antiquarianism and remained a model for the rest of the period. There were variations, however. In E W Cooke's popular painting 'The Antiquary's Cell' [fig: 7], not least in the use of the word 'cell', there is a suggestion of a more imposing semi-mystical figure, the magus, or at least the alchemist, hinted at already by Adamson. At the same time the



Figure 7 *The Antiquary's Cell*, by E.W.Cooke, 1835

antiquary might also still, as Lingard discovered, be seen as a political and religious subversive. And while the old associations lingered there was potential to colonise a new and specifically romantic social type, the Bohemian. **E H Langlois** was one who did. These, however, are subjects for later chapters. Meanwhile the antiquary in his more usual variant forms was now pretty well established in the public mind.

Thomas Rowlandson's satire on social types, *The English Dance of Death*, with verses by William Combe, appeared in the same year as Scott's novel. It features Fungus the Antiquary among the characters of modern life about to meet his end [fig: 8]. The Dance of Death was a popular subject for antiquarianism in the period, both Langlois and

Francis Douce, worked on it. Scott made use of the theme in his poem ‘The Field of Waterloo’, which is discussed later.⁵⁷ ‘Tam O’ Shanter’ is a kind of comic dance of death and indeed the danse macabre could stand for antiquarianism itself, the ultimate, fatal engagement with the passage of time. As Fungus breathes his last, or as Combe has it, finally gets Death’s dart for his collection he havers even now as to whether cremation or mummification is more suitable. He is the parodic antiquary of Earle’s *Microcosmographie* not much changed, but much more widely recognised.



Figure 8 Fungus the Antiquary, by Thomas Rowlandson from *The English Dance of Death*, 1815

Not surprisingly perhaps many antiquaries became ambivalent about the term itself, which tended to be prefaced, as it had been since Johnson’s day by the adjective ‘mere’. Edward Willson, asserting the progress that he and his subject matter had made by 1831 wrote that ‘the study of ancient architecture is not now confined to the mere antiquary, but has become almost a part of polite education’⁵⁸ while E A Freeman, equally anxious eighteen years later to put antiquarianism back in its place as he developed a new view of architectural history argued that it was better to err with a dubious theory than ‘to be correct with the merely antiquarian school’.⁵⁹ Many who were members of the Society of Antiquaries strenuously rejected the term and when it came to calling somebody else an antiquary, one had to be careful. Douce, who in addition to his study of the Dance of Death was the author of a work on topical references in Shakespeare’s plays, advised the

⁵⁷ See Chapter 3.

⁵⁸ Willson, ‘Remarks’ in *Examples of Gothic Architecture*, p.xi.

⁵⁹ Freeman, *History of Architecture*, p.xvi.

actor Charles Kemble on historic costume. Douce suggested Kemble should make the scenery historically consistent, as well as the clothes and later told **James Robinson Planché** that Kemble was appalled by the idea. ““He exclaimed...in a tone almost of horror, ‘Why, if I did, sir, they would call me an antiquary.’ And this to me, sir! ... to *me*, who flattered myself I *was* an antiquary.””⁶⁰

Elsewhere, however, romantic self-consciousness allowed antiquaries to take satire and even insults into their own hands. Many did it as individuals, as their correspondence shows, but in 1828 the society of Noviomagus was founded to do it collectively. A kind of Anti-Antiquarian Society, made up of members of the Society of Antiquaries it met in London but named itself after a site at Keston in Kent which the members affected to believe was the location of Noviomagus, the Romans’ first city in Britain. It was a dining society pledged to support ‘mutual Friendship and good fellowship’.⁶¹ As well as ‘promoting the study and knowledge of Archaeology’ aspiring members had to demonstrate that they were ‘well versed in all the sciences comical and gastronomical’ and the meetings ‘on a convenient Thursday each month’ (though sometimes on a Wednesday) combined discussion of discoveries with a good dinner ‘the quantity of wine to be...confined to a pint for each person’.⁶²

Members not infrequently came in costume, as Planché recalled:

Upon particular evenings the officers of the society, consisting of a president (Crofton Croker), a vice-president, a treasurer, and a secretary, a lord chancellor, a high admiral, a father confessor, a physician, and a Chinese professor, received orders to attend in full costume, and the table certainly presented a most extraordinary sight to the visitor who for the first time had been honoured by an invitation. Croker generally made his appearance in the full-feathered and elaborately beaded costume of a North-American Indian chief, mocassins [sic] and all, the lord chancellor in gown and wig, and the rest in every imaginable

⁶⁰ Planché, *Recollections*, 1, p.54.

⁶¹ Wellcome Library, ms 5303, ‘Laws of the Society of’.

⁶² Wellcome Library, ms 5303, ‘Laws of the Society of’.

and incongruous attire, conspicuous amongst which, in those days, were ‘the garb of old Gaul’, and the *pink* and top-boots of the hunting field.⁶³

The late Lord Buchan and his attendants would have passed without comment. Thus accoutred the members took pleasure in presenting and discussing their findings, genuine and jovial. A list of those presented to the meeting on 27 May 1835 would have left Foote little room for parody:

A Chinese order of merit, with a likeness of the late Emperor Kien Long –A rosary composed of fruit stones elaborately carved with heads of saints etc from a convent in Spain –A very elegant seal belonging to Marshal Ney-and two ancient rings from the collection of the late Sir Mark Masterman Sykes Bart.⁶⁴

Half a century after *The Nabob*, however, there was no difficulty, even in such eccentric surroundings, in taking these items seriously, as the members took seriously the remarkable group of seven Tudor paintings of Saxon kings, found at Keston by the Noviomagean Vice President John Alfred Kempe, and later presented to the Society of Antiquaries, in whose rooms in London they are still displayed. Those Noviomageans whose home addresses are noted lived in Holborn, the New Kent Road and other modest parts of town. They were the equivalents of Foote’s Yorkshire clergyman but they and their interests had triumphed. They rejoiced in their status and lack of it and were never happier than when considering a potato with a shoe buckle apparently growing inside it, on which James Robinson Planché was asked, when newly elected, to address the meeting.

The Society lasted until the middle of the century and its existence spanned a period in which antiquaries could take possession of their image, seesawing enjoyably on an edge of irony that would have been impossible in the 1770s. In a letter of 1833 to the President, the self-styled Father Confessor of the Society William Jerdan gave his

⁶³ Planché, *Recollections*, 2, pp. 115-116.

⁶⁴ Wellcome Library, ms 5303.

considered view of Noviomagus, that ‘Never-lasting City, whence our name’, a subject on which he began to entertain ‘very serious doubts’.⁶⁵

The result, unquestionably of my profound researches into the subject. For I beg thee to observe, my beloved son, that the deeper we antiquaries delve, the deeper we get into obscurity and darkness... Antinous frons laeta parum et dejecto lumina vultu, was probably a very beautiful youth, but I do not believe that he wrote an Itinerary of Britain, or in truth ever travelled in our country. It cannot be on his authority, therefore, that Burton in his Commentary (see page 373) endeavours to establish the site of the city called Noviomagus at or near Croydon (the Creden of the Cockneys) tho Talbot inclines to the same opinion Dr Stukeley, indeed, was wiser, for albeit in his Itinerarium Curiosum he stood out for Croydon for a while, he by and by came over with Talbot to the negative ...Camden, Gale and Horsley swear that it was at Woodcote... I come to the obvious and certain inference, de non apparentibus et de non existentibus (Ropers Latin passim) eadem est natio, that it never had any existence at all, except in the noddle of the Vice President.⁶⁶

Like the outpourings of Don Quixote’s agitated brain the Noviomageans could picture themselves as figments of their friend’s imagination and in that capacity they happily acted out a parodic antiquarianism, delving in the dark, referring always to predecessors in order to quibble, quarrel and come to no conclusions of consequence. In June 1839 on the annual outing the members went to Keston ‘in due state’ to ‘ruminate upon the foundation of their City of NOVIOMAGUS’.⁶⁷ Here, it was announced,

The Citizens will perform a solemn Dance around the site of the Temple of the Winds, beneath the mighty War Bank adjacent to the great encampment of Caesar! Pouring libations upon the hallowed spot from the meandering waters of the Ravensborne, whose ever flowing streams supplied the Roman Legions –nay the mighty Caesar himself- eighteen centuries ago!⁶⁸

After which they adjourned to dinner at Bromley.

⁶⁵ Wellcome Library, ms 5303, undated letter from Jerden to Croker.

⁶⁶ Wellcome Library, ms 5303, undated letter from Jerden to Croker.

⁶⁷ Wellcome Library, ms 5303, printed programme for the 11th anniversary outing.

⁶⁸ Wellcome Library, ms 5303, printed programme for the 11th anniversary outing.

In this looking-glass version of the Society of Antiquaries members spoke and wrote, like Jerdan, in order to establish their ignorance or, as in the case of Thomas Croker, on 22 March 1837, their stupidity. The minutes of that meeting tell a variant on the familiar story of the antiquarian mistake.

The President...stated that he possessed a relic found on the coast of Kerry, which was said to be the shield of an ancient Irish King –he observed that the last Battle of any consequence in that part of Ireland was the Battle of Ventry, near where ...the shield [was] found- the shield bore the form of the moon, flattened –He had received the present with great zest, in blessed and innocent ignorance, believing he had acquired an ancient relic of Irish warfare –he enjoyed the possession of such a precious specimen; and when a learned Brother Antiquary from the sister country called on him, he looked with a loving and an anxious eye on his treasure, waiting for his friends extacy when his eye shd glance upon it –when it did, his friend said “D__n it Croker, where did you get that cover of an old warming pan”. The great Croker fired, and kicked his impertinent friend out of the House, however, it gave him a hint to look more carefully at his relic, and after much and deep study, he found on it the wide spread arms of Holland, (which he had before overlooked) and the date 1619 (which he had also overlooked), and he came to the opinion that it must be the top of a suterkin, a utensil for burning charcoal, used by the Danes, and Dutch for warming their feet, and particularly tucked under the ladies’ peticoats [sic] to warm all up –on the article being produced, it was generally pronounced to be the top of an old warming pan.⁶⁹

The account is not written in the conventionally neutral tones of a minute, but with a conscious literary sense of narrative, timing and comic effect as the language moves from the grandiose to the bluntly conversational until the final juxtaposition of the obscure, pretentiously antiquarian ‘suterkin’ with the bathos of the warming pan effectively pulls the rug from under the last of the President’s pretended dignity. The Noviomageans, with their omnibus outings, river trips to Richmond, picnics and Christmas entertainments were almost indistinguishable from their fictional contemporaries in the Pickwick Club and indeed Mr Pickwick was something of an antiquary. Chapter Eleven of *The Pickwick Papers*, recounts the discovery of a stone with a ‘very old inscription’, which the reader is allowed to see reads ‘BIL STUMPS HIS MARK’.⁷⁰ Pickwick triumphantly buys it for ten shillings from an amused old man,

⁶⁹ Wellcome Library, ms 5303, minutes, 22 March 1837.

⁷⁰ Charles Dickens, *The Posthumous Papers of the Pickwick Club*, London, 1836, pp.104-5.

replaying the episode in *The Antiquary* in which Oldbuck expounds an elaborate theory on the meaning of the letters A D L L carved into what he takes to be the remains of a Roman fortification, only to be told by Edie Ochiltree that it stands for ‘Aiken Drum’s Lang Ladle’ and that Edie remembers it being carved.⁷¹

The story was already an old one when Scott told it, Earle’s definition notes of the antiquary that ‘beggars cozen him with musty things’.⁷² More remarkable is the extent to which on the eve of the Victorian age the antiquary might be found so far from a cell or even a chaotic study, embodied in Dickens’s comic Everyman, his clubbable Quixote. There is less subtlety, however, in the Pickwick episode than there is in *The Antiquary* or in the Noviomageans’ minutes. Pickwick’s mistake is simply that, a joke against him, not one ironic layer in a densely woven interplay of parody, illusion and authenticity. With the Society of Noviomagus the antiquaries overtook the popular image that had dogged them since the *Microcosmographie*, first appropriating it and then giving it a life of its own. Yet by the later 1830s the end of the age of romantic antiquarianism was in sight. The image of the antiquary was becoming, as Dickens’s use of it suggests, a cliché and the reality was under threat not from satire but from academic specialisation and High Victorian taxonomy in an age when if ‘Bentham’s name was being forgotten...[yet] his language was in everybody’s mouth’.⁷³

While it lasted, however, romantic antiquarianism was vital and mutable and the following chapters pursue it thematically in its various contexts drawing largely on primary sources. There have been few previous accounts of the subject as a whole. Rosemary Sweet’s work deals principally with an earlier period, and Philippa Levine’s with a later one.⁷⁴ Iain Gordon Brown’s *The Hobby-Horsical Antiquary* of 1980, though rich in detail and wide-ranging in its analysis is short, a self-described ‘essay’ and confines its scope to Scotland. Three years later Hobsbawm and Ranger’s collection of

⁷¹ Scott, *The Antiquary*, p.44.

⁷² Earle, *Micro-Cosmographie*, p.13.

⁷³ Halévy, *History*, 4, p.404.

⁷⁴ Sweet, Antiquaries and Levine, *The Amateur and the Professional*. I am nevertheless most grateful to Rosemary Sweet for many useful conversations and general encouragement.

essays *The Invention of Tradition* in particular Trevor-Roper's contribution, 'The Highland Tradition of Scotland' had a greater scope and influence and continues to generate debate.⁷⁵ This has tended, however, to emphasise the extent to which romantic antiquarianism introduced ideas and indeed objects that have since come to be regarded as bogus. It is true that widely received opinions about Shakespeare, the Bayeux Tapestry and tartan, among other things, might now be different without the efforts of antiquaries during this period and these questions will be addressed. My aim, however, is not to debunk but, as it were, to 'rebunk', to see the antiquarianism of these years in its context and as far as possible on its own terms as its meanings shifted in relation to the particular material, religious, historical, architectural or narrative subject matter with which it engaged, to understand it as a form of romantic enquiry in pursuit of the variable compound of illusion and authenticity.

⁷⁵ See in particular Kidd, 'Lord Dacre and the Politics of the Scottish Enlightenment' and the subsequent exchange between Kidd and Ferguson.

Chapter Two

‘To stones a moral life’¹: antiquaries and Gothic architecture

Medieval architecture was the subject to which arguably the greatest quality and certainly the greatest quantity of antiquarian effort was directed in the period. There were more publications on this than on any other antiquarian subject with the possible exception of topography and there was a considerable overlap between the two areas, particularly in the earlier decades.

In its engagement with Gothic architecture romantic antiquarianism was both at its most typical and its most ambitious. This chapter sets out in microcosm much that characterised the period as a whole, particularly the relationship between antiquaries and institutions, which should be seen as a background to the chapters that follow. One notable shift, highlighted in the debates about architecture, was the marginalisation of the Society of Antiquaries of London, which lost the dominance it had enjoyed in the earlier eighteenth century. The Society’s decline was in part a reflection of the fact that, as Samuel Foote had noticed, antiquaries were becoming more socially diverse and individualistic. This in turn contributed to a more widespread movement within antiquarianism from the largely passive documentation of monuments and artefacts, to an active engagement with interpretation and conservation. The study of the Gothic saw antiquaries branching out, becoming journalists, publishers, campaigners and, not infrequently, turning architect themselves. By the mid-nineteenth century however, the enterprise was losing some of its momentum. The way in which it fragmented and was re-organised along more institutional and socially hierarchical lines was also typical of the wider change that came over antiquarianism in the High Victorian years.

¹ ‘even the loose stones that cover the high-way,/I gave a moral life, I saw them feel/Or linked them to some feeling’. William Wordsworth, *The Prelude*, (1805), Book 3, ll 125-7.

Their interest in medieval architecture was one of the areas that most obviously brought antiquaries close to the heart of popular taste and mainstream culture and it was a field in which antiquarianism was widely influential. By the end of the period the Gothic Revival had transformed British architecture. Gothic was no longer the taste of a gentlemanly elite, it had become a national, public style and new Gothic buildings were expected to reflect an informed understanding of historic precedents. Thus the investigation of medieval architecture had a wide, visible effect on contemporary culture. It also demonstrated that fusion of imagination with information that characterised romantic antiquarianism. While architectural history has conventionally seen this as a period in which a ‘romantic’ view of the Gothic was overtaken by a more historically informed understanding, I would suggest that here, as elsewhere, the two were interdependent, that the desire for greater authenticity often arose out of the pursuit of a purer illusion in the sense of the quest for a more profound and personal aesthetic or spiritual experience.

The relationship of antiquarianism to architecture has been discussed most extensively as an aspect of the development of architectural history into an academic discipline.² There have also been some studies of individual antiquaries³ and Paul Frankl’s great survey *The Gothic: Literary Sources and Interpretations through Eight Centuries*, deals with late Georgian and Victorian antiquarianism in his chapters on ‘The Period of the Turn Toward Gothic’ and ‘The Scientific Trend’. Most of these discussions, with the important exception of Alexandrina Buchanan’s work on Willis, are interested in establishing how ‘right’ the various antiquaries were, that is how close they came to the factual and critical understanding of medieval architecture in the writer’s own period.

² See most notably Pevsner, *Some Architectural Writers of the Nineteenth Century*, especially chapters 3-8; Watkin, *The Rise of Architectural History* and Buchanan, ‘Robert Willis and the Rise of Architectural History’, which takes issue with Watkin.

³ Crook, ‘John Britton and the Genesis of the Gothic Revival’; Crook, *John Carter and the Mind of the Gothic Revival* and Buchanan, ‘Robert Willis and the Rise of Architectural History’.

Within architectural history there were in the twentieth century broadly two views of architectural antiquarianism. The first was largely dismissive. John Summerson's attitude to John Britton in his *Architecture in Britain 1530-1830*, is typical in being both intellectually and socially condescending, though it reflects a view of himself that Britton encountered frequently in his lifetime:

The Cathedral Antiquities of Great Britain (1814-35), [Britton's] most important work and one which, as an architectural survey of the British cathedrals, has still not been superseded...attains a very fair level of accuracy and some of the engravings... are admirable. Britton published many more works, his last being an autobiography in which we see him as something of a vulgarian with a vast opinion of his achievements and a singular flair for a marketable line in architectural literature.⁴

Britton's lack of formal education, his tendency to self-promotion and the fact that he was a populariser who earned a living from his work all clearly made Summerson uneasy. The antiquary, journalist, draughtsman to the Society of Antiquaries and occasional architect John Carter (1748-1817), author of *Ancient Architecture of England* (1795) is also disparaged, despite having 'a mind capable of analysis', for representing, 'a type which becomes familiar as the century advances –the introverted creature who, in boyhood, has his imagination set on fire by the mystery of time past'.⁵ Imagination and 'romanticism' trouble the architectural historians. The entire antiquarian enterprise, especially when it began to affect architecture directly, was distasteful to Summerson. Concluding his survey he summed up:

The story of English architecture comes, in 1830, to a natural halting-place; scarcely, however, a place where one would wish to halt long, for at no moment, perhaps, in the whole period we have traversed was English architecture so feeble, so deficient in genius, so poor in promise. Why was this? The answer lies in the whole drift and texture of English society...in the rapid expansion of the class to which, rather than to the state or to the elder aristocracy, architecture had come to look for patronage... the next generation... found standards of its own... standards confused and debilitated by the literary antiquarianism which, in Regency England, marched in step with the sentiment of patriotism on the one hand and the bourgeois

⁴ Summerson, *Architecture in Britain*, 1530-1830, p. 523.

⁵ Summerson, *Architecture in Britain*, 1530-1830, p. 522.

adulation of ancestry on the other. A love of antiquarianism is much easier to acquire than an eye for classical proportion, and in the 1820s it was antiquarianism which carried the day.⁶

English architecture was certainly not at its best in the early 1830s and ‘antiquarianism’ in the sense of a growing interest in the Gothic did carry the day.⁷ The new patrons were not, however, generally more bourgeois than the old.⁸ The influence of antiquarianism on architecture was more complex and gradual. At the end of the period, twenty years on from Summerson’s stopping place, the shift was not so much from aristocratic to middle-class patron, but from antiquary to professional architect as protagonist. Summerson’s book, however, first published in 1955, was reissued in 1993 and remains the standard text. David Watkin’s *The Rise of Architectural History*, gives a brief and largely neutral account in his chapter on ‘English Antiquarians and the Gothic Revival’. He is appreciative of Britton’s ‘thorough and beautiful’⁹ survey of cathedrals, though his assertion that from the 1740s onwards ‘Cambridge assumed a dominant position in the study of mediaeval architecture’ is highly questionable and again underestimates the contribution of antiquaries who by education, religion or other circumstances were remote from the universities.¹⁰

Within the other predominant school of twentieth-century architectural history, led by Nikolaus Pevsner and represented also by Paul Frankl, the antiquaries fared better. Frankl, quoting Kenneth Clark in *The Gothic Revival*, on Britton that he ‘“had no natural interest in architecture”’ and that his autobiography was ‘“written with the egotism of a millionaire”’, commented that ‘I should like to say in his defense [sic] that he rose to his task, and his later books became in many respects increasingly more scientific’.¹¹ Like Frankl, Pevsner had none of Summerson’s and Clark’s social anxieties. He found ‘the

⁶ Summerson *Architecture in Britain, 1530-1830*, p. 535.

⁷ I have used Gothic as an elastic term to cover all pre-Reformation architecture in a period when Saxon and Norman were not infrequently included in ‘Gothic’ and when all three categories were constantly under revision.

⁸ The myth of the philistine industrialist corrupting the flow of architectural taste is dealt with conclusively by Paul Thompson in *William Butterfield*, (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1971), pp.3-6.

⁹ Watkin, *The Rise of Architectural History*, p.60.

¹⁰ Watkin, *The Rise of Architectural History*, p.53.

¹¹ Frankl, *The Gothic*, p.496.

workings of this little commonweal of medieval archaeologists' to be 'gratifying' not least in their internationalism.¹² Arcisse de Caumont (1801-1873), and Henry Gally Knight (1786-1846), were among the antiquaries he took seriously and his account of Willis, whose paper on vaults Pevsner believed 'established a standard of insight and meticulous accuracy which has never since –in England or anywhere else- been surpassed'¹³ was a direct stimulus to later research on antiquarianism.¹⁴ Yet Frankl and Pevsner were concerned to establish hierarchies of their own, albeit intellectual rather than social.

For Frankl, who saw in the antiquaries' aesthetic response to medieval architecture something more than an infatuation with 'the mystery of time past', their writings were nonetheless valuable chiefly as signposts or 'piles driven into the morass, so that on them could be raised the structure of modern aesthetics and stylistic theory'.¹⁵ Britton was to Pevsner 'a populariser rather than a scholar'¹⁶ while Willson, as an untrained architect, was merely 'One of that breed ...spawned by the historicist writings of Walpole and Essex'.¹⁷ Pevsner was committed to a teleological view of the Gothic Revival, seeing it as moving towards an ever greater degree of 'correctness' and assessing antiquaries and antiquarian architects on the 'maturity' or otherwise of their work for its date.¹⁸ Thus Willson's church of St Mary Louth, in Lincolnshire of 1833 'is in rather enervated pre-Pugin Gothic', while 'at the Anglican St Mary Hainton , Lincolnshire (1847-8) he is already using an archaeologically correct style'.¹⁹ Pevsner's view also remains influential.

Nevertheless, more recent studies, though few in number, have been concerned to see the architectural antiquarianism of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries

¹² Pevsner, *Some Architectural Writers of the Nineteenth Century*, p.44.

¹³ Pevsner, *Some Architectural Writers of the Nineteenth Century*, p.54.

¹⁴ Ex inf. Alexandrina Buchanan who cites Pevsner's remarks as the starting point for her own work.

¹⁵ Frankl, *The Gothic*, p.446.

¹⁶ Pevsner, *Some Architectural Writers of the Nineteenth Century*, p.27.

¹⁷ Pevsner, *The Buildings of England, Lincolnshire*, p. 69.

¹⁸ Pevsner, *Some Architectural Writers of the Nineteenth Century*, p.23, referring to Georg Moller.

¹⁹ *The Buildings of England, Lincolnshire*, Nikolaus Pevsner and John Harris, 2nd edition revised by Nicholas Antram, Harmondsworth, 1989, p. 69.

more nearly on its own terms. The last substantial overview, Chris Brooks's *The Gothic Revival*, considers its subject as a cultural rather than narrowly architectural movement and is more appreciative of the 'remarkable'²⁰ John Britton and the 'substantial'²¹ contributions of **John Milner**, though it has space to notice them only briefly. The relationship of antiquaries to architecture has been considered by Rosemary Sweet as an aspect of antiquarianism, though chiefly in the eighteenth century.²² For the antiquaries themselves in the late Georgian and early Victorian years debates about nomenclature and the origins of Gothic loomed large in their discussions. These debates have been dealt with by several authors since Frankl but they are of only incidental concern here.²³ Charles Eastlake's view, surveying the Gothic Revival in 1872 at a moment when it appeared to have triumphed absolutely over classicism, was that 'the origin of the Pointed Arch has proved a subject of as much fruitless discussion as the authorship of Junius, or the identification of the Man in the Iron Mask.'²⁴

The discussions were not fruitless but in the present context their interest derives as much from the ways in which the arguments were cast as the views they supported. I will refer to them only in passing as the background for a discussion of the work of John Britton, **Sara Losh**, John Milner, Robert Willis and Edward James Willson, with brief reference to Walter Scott. I shall also argue against Frankl's concept of 'the scientific trend', in so far as that implies that more accurate information militated against a sentimental response to Gothic architecture. On the contrary the criteria of the romantic Picturesque as derived, often explicitly, from the works of Uvedale Price and Payne Knight, were a motivating force in the work of several of the antiquaries, with the important exception of Robert Willis, whose arrival marks the change of direction in the study of medieval architecture with which the period ends.

²⁰ Brooks, *The Gothic Revival*, p.134.

²¹ Brooks, *The Gothic Revival*, p. 135.

²² Sweet, *Antiquaries*, pp. 238-72

²³ See Sweet, *Antiquaries*; Buchanan, 'Robert Willis and the Rise of Architectural History', 'The Science of Rubbish', 'Science and Sensibility: architectural antiquarianism in the early nineteenth century' and 'Interpretations of Medieval Architecture'; and Bradley, 'The Englishness of Gothic: Theories and Interpretations from William Gilpin to J H Parker'.

²⁴ Eastlake, *A History of the Gothic Revival* p.120.

Salisbury Cathedral and Wyatt ‘the Destroyer’²⁵: the spur to action.

If there was one key site in the great debate about Gothic it was Salisbury Cathedral. The beau idéal of the Decorated style, one of the few cathedrals to have been built virtually in a single campaign, it was all but completed in the fifty years following its consecration in 1220, and it became a symbol for John Constable, the Conservative as for Cobbett the Radical, and for many more of their contemporaries, of all that the Middle Ages could tell the present about what was right and what, especially, was wrong, with modern England. It was at Salisbury in 1789 that a great debate began. It started in the *Gentleman’s Magazine*. Since 1780 the magazine had been largely under the editorship, shared with David Henry, of the publisher and antiquary John Nichols (1745-1826). Its reviews editor was Richard Gough (1735-1809), Director of the Society of Antiquaries. The magazine accordingly gave considerable prominence to antiquarian subjects and increasingly these were medieval: ‘From 1780 onwards’ (the year Nichols assumed principal responsibility for the editorial content), Kenneth Clark noted that ‘Giant Fungi and Greek Inscriptions begin to yield to Gothic architecture as a subject of the illustrations; and in the 1783 volume there is an article on Gothic practically every month’.²⁶ These articles were chiefly descriptive or loosely discursive. Readers also wrote in with personal observations. The even tenor of these modest contributions was violently interrupted, however, in October 1789 by a letter from ‘RG’, Richard Gough, which made ominous use of the past tense.

I know no cathedral in Great Britain in which the imagination and taste of an Antiquary might have been indulged with more extent and advantage, than that of SALISBURY. The architecture was of the boldest and lightest style, the design uniform and elegant, the execution equal to its situation, and the lofty spire the wonder of the kingdom....Such was Salisbury cathedral till the middle of the present century.

²⁵ Neither Alexandrina Buchanan nor I have been able to discover who first applied this epithet to Wyatt. It is used, without source in Crook, *John Carter and the Mind of the Gothic Revival*. p. 27.

²⁶ Clark, *The Gothic Revival*, p.72.

I have lived Mr Urban,²⁷ to see the range of monuments which lined the choir shut out by a wainscoting of stalls, in a style of Gothic which the members of the chapter now begin to be ashamed of, and overloaded with heavy galleries; and those tombs which could be seen only from the side ailes, [sic] shut up in wainscot presses. But this year has completed the plan, which, under pretence of giving uniformity to the building, by laying the Lady Chapel into the choir, already of a length adapted to every purpose, has removed the monuments from the chapel... I am sensible that the profession of the Antiquary is an object of the contempt and obloquy of modern connoisseurs; but I have the pleasure to inform you, Mr Urban, and you may proclaim it to the world at large, that what is doing to this fabric, and what be *done away* from it, shall live as long as printing or engraving can contribute to its immortality.²⁸

The subject of Gough's fury was the alterations taking place under the auspices of the architect James Wyatt (1746-1813). The precise details of Wyatt's interventions have been discussed elsewhere and will be described in more detail later.²⁹ What is significant about Gough's letter in this context is the shift that it marked in the role of antiquary who now steps out, self-consciously, from the limited sphere assigned to him in late eighteenth-century culture. With Gough's acknowledgement of the antiquary's lowly status, both intellectually and socially inferior, like Foote's Matthew Mite, to the 'connoisseurs', comes a refusal to accept such constraints. In attempting to intervene directly Gough was clearly aware that he was over-stepping the mark of what was considered proper to the antiquary but it was not his first excursion.

He had floated the idea that antiquarian knowledge might be applied in such a way the year before in another letter to the *Gentleman's Magazine* that has been described as 'perhaps the most neglected milestone of the early Gothic Revival, and the first coherent preservationist manifesto'.³⁰ In it he suggested that instead of being content, or at least resigned, to recording monuments the antiquary should take positive steps to preserve them. It was 'a critical moment of transformation' in the perception of historic buildings, arguably in the perception of history itself.³¹ Gough hoped that if the custodians and owners of buildings were better informed about them they might desist

²⁷ 'Sylvanus Urban' was the editorial pseudonym.

²⁸ *Gentleman's Magazine*, 59, (1789), p. 873

²⁹ Most importantly in Buchanan, "'Wyatt the Destroyer': a vandal at Salisbury Cathedral?"

³⁰ Frew, 'Richard Gough, James Wyatt, and Late eighteenth-century Preservation', p. 367.

³¹ Buchanan, "'Wyatt the Destroyer': a vandal at Salisbury Cathedral?", p. 123.

from altering them in ways destructive to the historic fabric and he proposed a system for doing it.

I think the *Society of Antiquaries* might be of great use in this behalf. An opinion of theirs, laid before the owners of antiquities, would certainly be heard in many instances, and would tend greatly to the preservation of those objects which it is the business of the Society to explore and explain.³²

With this suggestion its director unwittingly set the Society on a collision course with some of the most energetic and effective of its members.

As he predicted Gough attracted ‘contempt and obloquy’. It was not long before ‘An Enthusiastic Admirer of Salisbury Cathedral’, who was almost certainly William Dodsworth,³³ one of the cathedral vergers and a keen supporter of the latest interventions, wrote in to contradict him at length.³⁴ The row rumbled on but it was only in 1797 that matters came to a head. By then Wyatt had, to the dismay of Gough and others, worked his way through Lichfield and Hereford cathedrals and was busy at Durham, where John Carter was campaigning to stop him from demolishing the twelfth-century Galilee porch. Wyatt had also recently reported on Ely. He was now the clergy’s favourite architect. As Charles Eastlake reflected ruefully: ‘Artistic reputation has a rapidly accumulative quality. Everybody had employed him and therefore everybody continued to do so.’³⁵ Wyatt was also Surveyor General to George III, who was patron of the Society of Antiquaries. In 1797 Wyatt was proposed for membership of the Society. To the fury and astonishment of his sponsors, led by the Earl of Leicester, Carter and his allies blackballed Wyatt. The King was insulted, the Society embarrassed. Knowing that Wyatt would be proposed again, John Milner one of the opponents, wrote a paper outlining the reasons why he believed the Surveyor General should not be elected and submitted it to the Society who promptly confiscated it. They refused either to let Milner read it or to

³² *Gentleman’s Magazine*, 57, (1788) pp.689-691.

³³ This plausible suggestion is made in Buchanan, “Wyatt the Destroyer”: a vandal at Salisbury Cathedral?, p. 127.

³⁴ *Gentleman’s Magazine*, 59, (1789), pp.1064-6.

³⁵ Eastlake, *A History of the Gothic Revival*, p.93.

give it back to him even after a second, more carefully organised ballot had seen Wyatt successfully elected.

It was this underhand behaviour which included, according to Milner, several antiquaries going into ‘booksellers shops and other places’ and telling people that his paper had been ‘*kicked out of the Society*’ as insufficiently scholarly that provoked him into publishing it as *A Dissertation on the Modern Style of Altering Antient Cathedrals as exemplified in the cathedral of Salisbury*.³⁶ The dissertation was printed ‘by and for John Nichols’, who was the Society’s printer as well as the now sole editor of the *Gentleman’s Magazine*. Nichols with Gough, who resigned the directorship of the Society of Antiquaries in protest at Wyatt’s election and John Carter now formed, with Milner, the nucleus of the new, interventionist, school of architectural antiquarianism. Although all were and remained members of the Society they operated largely and most effectively outside it posing an implicit challenge to its authority. In 1798 Carter, writing as ‘An Architect’, made the first of his two hundred and twelve campaigning and often splenetic contributions to the *Gentleman’s Magazine* on the subject of medieval architecture and the interventions of the ‘modern architect’. The momentum of the architectural debate among antiquaries had moved outside the Society and it would not return.

John Milner and the sacred Picturesque

Milner wrote in his *Dissertation*, ‘I consider the present as a critical period for the Science of Antiquity and even for the credit of its students and admirers.’³⁷ He was right for several reasons. On the one hand the Revolutionary Wars, which made Continental travel all but impossible, encouraged interest among a polite public confined to domestic tourism in those hitherto despised subjects encompassed by local and national history. At the same time antiquarianism, like the rest of the culture, was permeated by the

³⁶ Milner, *A Dissertation on the Modern Style of altering Antient Cathedrals*, p.ix.

³⁷ Milner, *A Dissertation on the Modern Style of altering Antient Cathedrals*, p.50.

philosophy of the Picturesque which developed, in the 1790s, into a sophisticated and wide-ranging system of ideas.³⁸

Aesthetics were of the essence for both sides at Salisbury. What Wyatt did at the cathedral, under the aegis of the bishop, Shute Barrington, was classed as ‘improvement’, a distinct category from repair, though repair, as the antiquaries noted, was much needed. It should be pointed out that Wyatt was not responsible for everything he was charged with. As Eastlake put it: ‘No English architect has perhaps been so much overrated by his friends, or so unfairly abused by his enemies.’³⁹ The details are less important to the argument here, but the essential facts are as follows. With the funds enthusiastically raised by Barrington, Wyatt had demolished the free-standing medieval bell tower (one of the last to survive). He also took down the Beauchamp and Hungerford chantry chapels. He removed screens and replaced the altar on the east wall of the Lady Chapel into which there was now a clear view from the nave, opening up the whole length of the cathedral. To accomplish this, floors had been lowered, tombs and bodies moved, including that of St Osmund, founder of the first cathedral, grave slabs cut up for paving and medieval wall paintings whitewashed. He also removed some of the stained glass to lighten the interior.

The aim of these improvements was not to impose classical taste on Gothic architecture so much as to show the Gothic to supposedly greater advantage, albeit in line with Georgian taste, which preferred the classical criteria of symmetry, clarity and light. As the Enthusiastic Admirer put it the lengthened vista through the nave into the Lady Chapel was ‘infinitely more beautiful’ than before.⁴⁰ The obliterated paintings had been ‘wretched daubing’ of ‘uncouth disproportioned figures’ while the new whitewash created ‘harmony, propriety and effect’.⁴¹ The Antiquary would not be so despised, the letter continued, if he were not so indiscriminate in wanting to retain ‘every antient

³⁸ For the development of the Picturesque see, inter alia, Ballantyne, ‘Genealogy of the Picturesque’ and Townsend, ‘The Picturesque’.

³⁹ Eastlake, *A History of the Gothic Revival*, p.93.

⁴⁰ *Gentleman’s Magazine*, 59, (1789), p.1064.

⁴¹ *Gentleman’s Magazine*, 59, (1789), p.1064.

record, every ivied ruin' with 'no standard to judge by... but his opinion or their antiquity'.⁴²

Significantly Gough's protests, anticipating just these objections no doubt, had already engaged his opponents on their own ground. His letter had pointedly defended the cathedral as an object of beauty by the standards of contemporary taste, an example of the 'boldest and lightest style... uniform and elegant'. Milner's treatise, as might have been expected, defended scholarship, as distinct from opinion. He did not want to retain everything that was old. Like many of his contemporaries, including antiquaries, Milner disliked Elizabethan and Jacobean architecture and would happily have had examples of it, such as the Gorges monument at Salisbury, removed. But he too emphasised aesthetics, taking on the 'modern connoisseurs' for their bad taste as much as their ignorance. 'PROPRIETY, CONVENIENCY, and BEAUTY' were to be his criteria. In fact these were for Milner, as they were now becoming for antiquarianism, fluid categories which constantly ran into one another, or formed aspects of the same idea.

For Milner the effect of, and to some extent the motive for, gathering factual information about the Middle Ages was the creation of a heightened aesthetic response to its architecture. The purer the objective truth, the more intense the subjective experience. It was a challenge to Walpole's widely shared view that 'one must have taste to be sensible of the beauties of Grecian architecture; one only wants passion to feel Gothic'.⁴³ Informed taste was now to be a criterion for Gothic too, without losing any of the passion. That this change of sensibility in the last years of the century was not confined to an antiquarian clique is underlined by the fact that Walpole himself, who had always enjoyed a turbulent relationship with the Society of Antiquaries and thought little of Richard Gough even before he finally gave up the attempt to give the antiquaries 'a little wrench towards taste' with his resignation in 1774, wrote a letter of support to Gough

⁴² *Gentleman's Magazine*, 59, (1789), p.1064.

⁴³ Walpole, *Anecdotes of Painting*, 1, pp. 107-8.

about his protests at Salisbury, a letter that Milner triumphantly reprinted in his *Dissertation*.⁴⁴



Figure 9 Salisbury Cathedral after Wyatt's alterations

Milner's own position is most apparent in the way he dealt with the opening up of the interior of the building, which he judged to amount to '*the destruction of the proportions and of the due relation of the different parts of the Cathedral*'.⁴⁵ The arguments of Shute Barrington, supported by William Gilpin, founding father of the early Picturesque, whose ideas had not developed as Walpole's had, were for the sublime effects of open vistas.⁴⁶ It was to achieve these that the screens had been removed. Milner countered with his own, more sophisticated, reading of the concept of the 'artificial infinite', quoting directly from Burke: "Succession and uniformity are necessary to constitute this artificial Infinite, because, if the figures of the parts should be changed, the imagination finds a check; you are presented with the termination of one

⁴⁴ Evans, *A History of the Society of Antiquaries*, p.137 for his opinion of Gough and pp.166-69 for the final rupture with the Society.

⁴⁵ Milner, *A Dissertation on the Modern Style of altering Antient Cathedrals*, p.16.

⁴⁶ See Buchanan, "Wyatt the Destroyer": a vandal at Salisbury Cathedral?', p.129. It seems that Wyatt was not in this instance following his own inclinations.

idea, and the beginning of another.”⁴⁷ As Milner pointed out the effect of looking from the nave into the much lower Lady Chapel, a space always intended to be discrete, provided just such a check to the imagination. [fig: 9]The East end of the nave was no longer a terminal point but ‘a mere vacuity, round which the eye anxiously wanders, and finds that the most essential part of the building is there wanting’.⁴⁸

In making this argument Milner was explicitly rejecting the very concept of ‘improvement’, the assumption that modern taste was to be preferred, that it was even capable of ‘correcting’ proportions. Assumptions of progress and historical development in art were giving way to a new awareness of the past and a sensitivity to anachronism. Nevertheless Milner comes last to the point which a later age would make first, that historic fabric should be respected for its own sake. As he put it: ‘Those who could plan and build Salisbury Cathedral are not hastily to be condemned for a want of judgement and taste in what relates to the beauty of the most essential part of their whole work.’⁴⁹ Scholars who, like Milner, understood liturgical history also knew that medieval churches were composed of separate areas that were used and conceived in particular ways. To see this design disturbed was as aesthetically distasteful as it was historically offensive. Thus the correct, original, proportions were for Milner an intrinsic part of the ‘propriety’ and ‘conveniency’ of the building as much as its beauty. It would, in his terms, work better if it looked better for its essential function was the creation of a personal response within the individual. The criterion for Milner ‘by which we are to judge of the construction and alterations of Churches, and particularly of Gothic Cathedrals’ was, ‘as they are more or less calculated to impress the mind with a religious awe’.⁵⁰

Milner’s argument is not always consistent. Beauty is sometimes invoked and sometimes specifically discounted as a criterion. Perhaps it was coming to seem to him, as to Knight and Price, a category of limited use. Certainly his ideas were still molten. But it is not true that, as Alexandrina Buchanan says, there exists a fundamental ‘conflict

⁴⁷ Milner, *A Dissertation on the Modern Style of altering Antient Cathedrals*, p.48.

⁴⁸ Milner, *A Dissertation on the Modern Style of altering Antient Cathedrals*, p.37.

⁴⁹ Milner, *A Dissertation on the Modern Style of altering Antient Cathedrals*, p.47.

⁵⁰ Milner, *A Dissertation on the Modern Style of altering Antient Cathedrals*, p.48.

within Milner's position'.⁵¹ Her suggestion is that he could not argue purely on aesthetic grounds because: 'For [him] art could not and did not exist for its own sake. The true value of Salisbury lay in its historical and religious significance.'⁵² But for Milner and his fellow antiquaries, as the Burkean Sublime became infused with the romantic Picturesque, quite specific and subjective associational values were intrinsic to aesthetic pleasure. That these associations might be spiritual and religious was a new idea, but one that later in the nineteenth century, in the writings of A W N Pugin (1812-1852), directly inspired by Milner, and in the development of ecclesiology would become widely accepted and influential.

Throughout Milner's treatise scholarship and historical fact are drawn into a reciprocal relationship with aesthetic experience. Discussing the opening of graves, the removal of bodies, including those of Bishop Poore and St Osmund, and the cutting up of gravestones Milner was concerned to appeal to his readers' sensibilities as much as to Canon Law and indeed invoked both in the space of a few pages. Having set out the legal objections to such interference and listed the graves he passes on to Gray's *Elegy* with its conception of the duty that the living owe to the dead, a conception that is, for a Catholic priest, strikingly unorthodox.

Ev'n from the tomb the voice of Nature cries:
Ev'n midst our ashes live our wonted fires⁵³

Milner's experience of the architecture of Salisbury is essentially different from that of Wyatt and Barrington because, he argues, he has better taste, which derives from better understanding. He points out that the 'brassless slabs' cut up for paving stones because there was nothing legible written on them, were in fact comprehensible to those who knew how to read them.

⁵¹ Buchanan, "Wyatt the Destroyer": a vandal at Salisbury Cathedral?, p.131.

⁵² Buchanan, "Wyatt the Destroyer": a vandal at Salisbury Cathedral?, p.131.

⁵³ Milner, *A Dissertation on the Modern Style of altering Antient Cathedrals*, p.31.

In vain did a learned Antiquary demonstrate, on the spot amongst the devoted tombstones that an inscription which was illegible to a verger, or a modern connoisseur, might easily be read by a man of real learning.⁵⁴

The point is driven home in his attack on the patching together of ‘various ornaments selected from the chapels removed’.⁵⁵ Dodsworth considered that by reassembling some of these pieces into an organ screen ‘their beauties are now brought to view, and by their judicious arrangement [they] form an exquisite piece of workmanship’.⁵⁶ To Milner this bricolage, like the assembly of ‘coffins, rings, chalices, patens, crosiers’ and other grave goods now set out ‘for the inspection of the curious’ elsewhere in the cathedral was aesthetically as much as morally offensive.⁵⁷ The lumping together of ‘all the heterogeneous articles and ornaments which could not be made use of in the late alterations’⁵⁸ offends an educated eye which from ‘an arch, a canopy, a niche, a pinnacle, a moulding or a painted figure’ can always deduce some ‘useful information’⁵⁹ and by the same token cannot be unaware of the context from which objects have been taken, their different dates and former functions. Seeing these preserved remains the antiquary experiences not the evocative *mélange* enjoyed by the modern connoisseur but a cacophony of deracinated fragments.

St Peter’s, Winchester: Milner’s ‘beloved chapel’⁶⁰

Between the outbreak of hostilities in the *Gentleman’s Magazine* in 1789 and the publication of his treatise, Milner had given a practical demonstration of what he believed

⁵⁴ Milner, *A Dissertation on the Modern Style of altering Antient Cathedrals*, p. 27.

⁵⁵ Dodsworth, *A Guide to the Cathedral Church of Salisbury, with a particular account of the improvements there*, p.36.

⁵⁶ Dodsworth, *A Guide to the Cathedral Church of Salisbury, with a particular account of the improvements there*, p.36.

⁵⁷ Milner, *A Dissertation on the Modern Style of altering Antient Cathedrals*, p.29.

⁵⁸ Milner, *A Dissertation on the Modern Style of altering Antient Cathedrals*, p.25.

⁵⁹ Milner, *A Dissertation on the Modern Style of altering Antient Cathedrals*, pp.18-19.

⁶⁰ Quoted from Milner, without source, in Bogan, *Beloved Chapel*.

about Gothic architecture and its meaning by building his own chapel in Winchester, consecrated on 5 December 1792. It was not the first church in the Gothic style to be built since the Middle Ages but Kenneth Clark was surely right to describe it as the first to be built from ‘what we might call Gothic Revival motives’.⁶¹ Previous post-medieval Gothic churches had been rare and they derived in most cases either from a general sense of historic appropriateness or a specific desire to incorporate the estate church ‘within the larger strategy of the landscaped park’.⁶² The church of St Mary at Tetbury in Gloucestershire, by Francis Hiorne of 1777-81 is perhaps the only predecessor of Milner’s chapel in the sense of being a parish church independent of a private patron, but there the motive seems to have been simply the replacement of a ruinous medieval building with a successor in the same style.

The fact that Milner’s was a Roman Catholic chapel, built the year after the passage of the Second Catholic Relief Act had made such a thing legally possible, gave it one highly particular meaning, which will be discussed elsewhere.⁶³ From the point of view of architectural antiquarianism it is significant principally in other ways. The first is simply the fact that Milner built it at all. He was not an architect, indeed he relied on Carter to develop it from his initial drawings, so why should he want to put up a building? He was certainly not the first antiquary to realise his understanding of the past in three dimensions, even before the eighteenth-century Gothic Revival. William Stukeley created a Druid garden and there had no doubt been other examples.

It was only with this generation, however, that antiquaries began with some regularity to translate their ideas into buildings. It was part of a twofold change that came about in the later eighteenth century. First there was a shift from predominantly secular to religious buildings. Secondly, unlike Walpole at Strawberry Hill, a gentleman who loved his house for its rarity and distinction, the more middle-class, campaigning antiquaries of this period wanted to propagate the Gothic as widely as possible, reviving it with what they believed were its intrinsic qualities, as a part of the broader culture. Churches are,

⁶¹ Clark, *The Gothic Revival*, p.102.

⁶² Brooks, *The Gothic Revival*, p.101, which also gives a list of comparable examples.

⁶³ See Chapter 5.

importantly, public buildings. Even Robert Willis, whose interest was more strictly confined to questions of dating and construction and who eschewed almost entirely the romantic associationalism of his contemporaries, built a little cemetery chapel at Wisbech in Cambridgeshire in the Gothic style, while for Sara Losh and Edward Willson, as will become apparent, building was at the heart of their antiquarian activities.

Milner's intentions for his chapel can be read from the relationship in which he placed it to its actual, intellectual and historical surroundings. It stood in St Peter's Street on the spot where, 'except during a few stormy intervals' there had always been a catholic chapel⁶⁴ but it was in marked contrast to its predecessors and to the 'modern style' of catholic chapels 'which are in general square chambers, with small sashed windows... hardly to be distinguished... from common assembly rooms'.⁶⁵ As in Salisbury cathedral, albeit on a miniature scale, the purpose was to produce 'a certain degree of those pleasing and awful sensations' aroused by the Gothic and appropriate, for Milner, to a state of spiritual elevation.⁶⁶ An important part of this was the chapel's connection to the past, and not merely the associations of its particular site. It was to be approached, quite literally, by way of its historic origins. On St Peter's Street itself, leading into the churchyard, stood a 'Saxon portal' which Milner had reconstructed after it had been removed 'by piecemeal, from the church of St Magdalen's hospital' which, Milner was careful to point out, had been allowed to fall into ruin and the fragments legally sold off.⁶⁷ This 'exceedingly good specimen of the Saxon style; the mouldings, undercut and pillars, with their capitals and bases... both well designed and well wrought' was to be admired for itself but 'Its chief merit... is, that it is a genuine antique'.⁶⁸ The intrinsic quality of antiquity was what gave it its resonance.

⁶⁴ Milner, *The History Civil and Ecclesiastical and Survey of the Antiquities of Winchester*, 2, p.340.

⁶⁵ Milner, *The History Civil and Ecclesiastical and Survey of the Antiquities of Winchester*, 2, p.241.

⁶⁶ Milner, *The History Civil and Ecclesiastical and Survey of the Antiquities of Winchester*, 2, p.241.

⁶⁷ Milner, *The History Civil and Ecclesiastical and Survey of the Antiquities of Winchester*, 2, p. 242.

⁶⁸ Milner, *The History Civil and Ecclesiastical and Survey of the Antiquities of Winchester*, 2, p. 242.

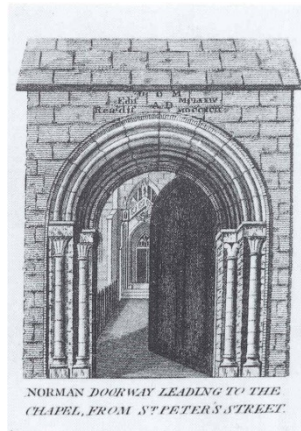


Figure 10 St Peter's Chapel, Winchester

One of the three illustrations of his chapel [fig:10], which Milner published shows it through this open doorway, framed by the arch, which is now described as ‘Norman’.⁶⁹ It is a typically romantic picturesque composition, showing the view from one space into another, discrete but semi-visible space. This was exactly the configuration to which Payne Knight attributed to the particular effect of Gothic, ‘dim and discoloured light diffused...through unequal varieties of space, divided but not separated... thus effects more imposing have been produced, than are, perhaps to be found in any other works of man’.⁷⁰ This was precisely what Wyatt had destroyed at Salisbury. The image is also in a simple way symbolic. We are to understand the modern chapel through its antecedents. In its co-dedication to St Swithun and St Birinus (as well as St Peter), saints who had local associations with Winchester and again in its details, ‘illustrative of different antiquities relating to this city’ Milner was seeking to weave his chapel seamlessly into the fabric of the past.⁷¹ When he published the description of it in his *History of Winchester* he placed it at the end of the second volume, as a continuation of the ‘Survey of Antiquities’. From a chronological point of view it belonged at the end of Volume One, the *History Civil and Ecclesiastical*, which concluded with the latest buildings in the city, the ‘several neat and elegant houses and shops’ in what Milner caustically dismissed as the ‘the bow-window- style’ and the new gaol.⁷² But for him it belonged with the cathedral and with

⁶⁹ Milner, *The History Civil and Ecclesiastical and Survey of the Antiquities of Winchester*, 2, p.242, and plate between pp. 240-241.

⁷⁰ Knight, *An Analytical Enquiry into the Principles of Taste*, p.177.

⁷¹ Milner, *The History Civil and Ecclesiastical and Survey of the Antiquities of Winchester*, 2, p.240.

⁷² Milner, *The History Civil and Ecclesiastical and Survey of the Antiquities of Winchester*, 1, p.448.

the hospital of St Cross, a humble member of that same community of architecture, imbued with the metaphysical power of the Gothic.



Figure 11 St Peter's Chapel, Winchester, interior

As for the building itself it fell short, inevitably, of Milner's ambitions. Kenneth Clark, having quoted Milner's description of it, to illustrate his 'enthusiasm', a word Clark never used with unreserved approval, went on to add that 'unfortunately St Peter's chapel still stands'.⁷³ It is now much altered but as Milner Hall the shell survives and we may consider this fortunate for while the building, like the views of it published in Milner's lifetime [fig:11], confirm that it was small and what a later generation would consider flimsy and even vulgar in its imagery, the very distance it displays from Milner's vision serves to underline how intense that vision was for the late Georgians. Keats, at the consecration of the Gothic chapel at Stansted in Sussex in 1819, another building composed in part of older fragments, conceived, from looking at the antique armorial glass in the nave windows, the 'dim emblazonings' of St Agnes's Eve. By 1965 the effect of the chapel on Ian Nairn, writing the Sussex volume of the *Buildings of England* was very much what Wyatt's Salisbury had been on Milner. He was prepared to find the chapel 'delightful' and 'pretty' but saw its Gothic as 'purest fantasy'.⁷⁴ No later generation will experience what Keats and Milner did, but half a century after Nairn the qualities of Georgian Gothic may be more sympathetically understood.

⁷³ Clark, *The Gothic Revival*, p.103.

⁷⁴ Nairn and Pevsner, *The Buildings of England, Sussex*, p.335.

In addition to his *Dissertation* and his chapel, Milner made other, more direct contributions to the continuing debate about the nature and origins of Gothic and the classification of styles. His *History of Winchester*, his essay ‘On the Rise and Progress of the Pointed Arch’ of 1802 and his *Treatise on the Ecclesiastical Architecture of England* of 1811 were all important works. They have been discussed by Frankl and others and there will be more to say in this context about Milner’s account of Winchester cathedral in comparison with Willis’s.⁷⁵ Milner’s principal importance for this study, however, is for the turning point his work represents in architectural antiquarianism from the passive to the active and in the annexing of subjective and aesthetic criteria to the antiquarian cause, uniting taste with passion and both with scholarship.

In 1803 Milner was appointed Vicar General of the Midland District and Titular Bishop of Castabala. He left Winchester and had less time for antiquarian pursuits. After 1817 he seems to have given them up altogether although the fact that he left money in his will to build a Gothic chapel at Wolverhampton suggests he never changed his mind. By the time of his death in 1826 the view of Gothic architecture that he had developed was widely shared.

John Britton: Popularising Gothic

It was in 1789, that momentous year for antiquarianism, that John Britton met Edward Brayley (1773-1854) in the shop of their mutual friend Mr Essex who ‘obtained a very respectable livelihood by... painting the figures, &c. on watch faces’.⁷⁶ Essex, like Britton and Brayley relieved the routine of trade by literary pursuits and his shop seems to have been something of an informal salon. Britton and Brayley took an instant liking to

⁷⁵ Frankl, *The Gothic*, pp.445-447; Pevsner, *Some Architectural Writers of the Nineteenth Century*, p.16 and Buchanan, ‘Robert Willis and the Rise of Architectural History’, Chapter 1.

⁷⁶ Britton, *Auto-biography*, (1825) p.26.

one another and their first collaboration was a ballad, *The Powder Tax, or a Puff at the Guinea Pig*, a satire on the new tax on hair powder which despite being ‘ridiculous in the extreme’ generated considerable sales.⁷⁷ Its success was marred, however, by the fact that the song was pirated by a printer in Covent Garden whose illegal version far outsold the authors’. The experience was indicative. Commercial difficulties and popular success would continue to characterise their partnership, which lasted more than sixty years.

It was for their topographical and architectural publications that they became best known and the story of Britton’s career has been well told, not least by himself.⁷⁸ He brought, eventually, a much higher standard of accuracy to the description and especially the illustration of medieval architecture and by the sheer quantity as well as the quality of his publications, from the first version of the *Beauties of Wiltshire* in 1801 to the revised edition of his study of Wells cathedral in 1847, he contributed enormously to the popularity of Gothic architecture as a topic of polite interest. As well as Brayley, Britton collaborated with Edward Willson and, less happily, with A C Pugin (c1768-1832).

Unlike Milner, who, having benefited from a thorough, formal education, came to his subject with a profound and fully-formed understanding which developed through his life but never changed fundamentally, Britton was a self-educated man whose continuing education is both an implicit and at times an explicit theme of his published work. The author of two autobiographies he was a master of the confessional style of antiquarian writing. His doubts, triumphs and quarrels all flow through the pages of his books creating a reciprocal, if not always harmonious, relationship with his readers. He was candid about his disappointments and those of his subscribers, typically informing the restive readers of his *Chronological History... of Christian Architecture* that:

⁷⁷ Britton, *Auto-biography*, (1825) p.27.

⁷⁸ Apart from Britton’s own works Crook ‘John Britton and the Genesis of the Gothic Revival’, is the best and fullest account of his career. For a more detailed appreciation of his contribution to architectural history see Buchanan, ‘Robert Willis and the Rise of Architectural History’, pp.100-1.

Bright and cheerful mornings are not unfrequently the harbingers of cloudy and stormy days: the ardent mind commences a new and favourite task with eagerness and confidence, but is often thwarted in its progress, and disappointed at the conclusion...

At its commencement I promised more than has been, or ever could be well performed; and have consequently given umbrage to some persons whom I would gladly have secured as friends. I have, however, deceived myself much more than others.⁷⁹

Britton's was, as he saw it himself, a progress towards ever greater knowledge and accuracy in the description of topographical and architectural subjects. It is not true to suggest, however, that he, any more than Milner, considered scholarship as the antithesis of sensibility. His career did not represent 'the triumph of archaeology over romanticism'.⁸⁰ What Britton popularised was exactly that understanding of Gothic architecture that Milner had developed which saw it as a subjective, sentimental experience, intensified by historical knowledge. One of Britton's most original contributions was deliberately to introduce the romantic Picturesque to architectural antiquarianism.

Part of the reason why he was such a successful populariser and so engaged with his readership, was that his arduous self-improvement meant that he was only ever one step ahead of them and heading in the same direction. He had neither Milner's scope nor his inclination to be a maverick. It was in 1798, the year of Milner's *Dissertation* and Carter's first contributions to the *Gentleman's Magazine*, that Britton, who had escaped from the drudgery of his job as a cellar-man only to endure 'seven years of vicissitudes, privations, and hardships...occasionally relieved by occupations which produced a bare livelihood...' ⁸¹ began 'to feel and perceive a prospect of fixing [on] ... a specific pursuit'.⁸² He had had an offer from a publisher for a book about Wiltshire, his native county, and so applied himself to study topography and archaeology.

⁷⁹ Britton, *Chronological History and Graphic Illustrations of Christian Architecture in England*, pp.i-ii.

⁸⁰ Crook, 'John Britton and the Genesis of the Gothic Revival', p.99.

⁸¹ Britton, *Autobiography*, (1850), 1, p.73.

⁸² Britton, *Autobiography*, (1850), 1, p.135.

His researches were discouraging, however, for he found all the standard works, Camden's *Britannia*, Gough's *Magna Britannia*, King's *Munimenta Antiqua* and the rest 'dull and uninviting. They seemed to trifle on trifling matters, and affected much parade of learning... I became rather bewildered than enlightened'.⁸³ Repelled by the dry pedantry that he, like most people, associated with antiquarian writing, it was the popular literature of the Picturesque that awoke his enthusiasm as it did that of so many of his contemporaries. Starting with *A Walk Through Wales, in August 1797*, by the Reverend Richard Warner, an immensely successful book that rapidly went through four editions and generated the unimaginatively titled sequel, *A Second Walk Through Wales in August and September 1798*, Britton discovered a genre unencumbered by 'technical terms... dull details of genealogy, manorial and parochial history, and useless lists of rectors and vicars'.⁸⁴ Mr Warner's 'fluent, familiar, and pleasing style; clear and vivid in its descriptions, entertaining in its anecdotes' was much more to his taste.⁸⁵

He went on to read Gilpin and the works of Knight, Price and Humphrey Repton as they appeared, indeed he became so caught up in the controversy that broke out between the latter three that, typically, he decided to go and visit all the 'literary belligerents' personally.⁸⁶ The 'pedestrian tour' he made in the summer of 1798 was the first of many strenuous journeys undertaken in the production of books that combined popular picturesque topography with architectural antiquarianism.⁸⁷ It was a project that would occupy Britton for the rest of his life. In time, like his audience, he became more demanding. The details came to seem less dull, but the anecdotes were still of interest and sensibility was of the essence.

Britton's self-propelled trajectory took him and Brayley from topography towards an ever closer focus on medieval architecture. The series of the *Beauties of England and Wales*, (1801-16) which they wrote for the publishers Vernor and Hood, soon became a

⁸³ Britton, *Autobiography*, (1850), 1, p.135.

⁸⁴ Britton, *Autobiography*, (1850), 1, p.136.

⁸⁵ Britton, *Autobiography*, (1850), 1, p.136.

⁸⁶ Britton, *Autobiography*, (1850), 1, p.137.

⁸⁷ Britton, *Autobiography*, (1850), 1, p.137.

running battle between the proprietors, who wanted the usual hack compilation of ‘fine seats, picturesque scenery &c’ copied from secondary sources,⁸⁸ and the authors who were increasingly convinced of the ‘necessity of visiting places, in order to describe them, and of studying and analysing every account’.⁸⁹ They were also determined to include the ‘antiquities’. Eventually Britton left the *Beauties* to produce his own series of *Architectural Antiquities* (1805-14), returning to the *Beauties* only when his editor was dead. As he did not scruple to point out his sense of the market was justified and the *Beauties*, with their breadth and depth were ‘singularly successful’.⁹⁰ The attempt to chronicle every county in this way was not repeated until Pevsner began on the *Buildings of England*. Britton’s last major series was *The Cathedral Antiquities* (1814-35), which was a great critical success and, eventually, a financial one.

A brief comparison, among the dozens of volumes Britton produced, of two of his treatments of Salisbury cathedral, that touchstone for the antiquarian debate of the period, serves to show how much ground he covered intellectually, how circumspect he was obliged to be personally and how thoroughly the Picturesque continued to permeate his ideas. Both accounts appeared in 1814, one in the Wiltshire volume of the *Beauties*, Britton having returned to the series as it neared its end, and the other constituting the first part of the *Cathedral Antiquities*. The passage in the *Beauties* is, naturally, shorter and was undoubtedly written some considerable time before. The plate that illustrates it dates from 1811 and the text probably dates from before 1805, the year Britton quit the project. It presents the cathedral in its topographical context, embedded in the description of Salisbury ‘Or NEW SARUM...a City of peculiar interest and importance, in the topographical annals of this county and of England’.⁹¹ More than twice as much space is given to the monuments as to the building itself which is described briefly and unsystematically with much emphasis on the height of the spire and details of the modern stained glass. These are the concerns of the passing tourist rather than the serious antiquarian visitor. Most telling of Britton’s still uncertain ideas, is the way in which the

⁸⁸ Britton, *The Beauties of England and Wales*, 1, p. xxxvi.

⁸⁹ Britton, *The Beauties of England and Wales*, 1, p. xxxv.

⁹⁰ Britton, *The Beauties of England and Wales*, 1, p. xxxvii.

⁹¹ Britton, *The Beauties of England and Wales*, 21, p.97.

cathedral is illustrated [fig:12]. Having informed his readers that the remarkable thing about Salisbury is its unity of design, Britton then chooses to illustrate it from the north side where trees and houses break up exactly this ‘uniform, regular and systematic’ and hence un-picturesque appearance.⁹²



Figure 12 Salisbury Cathedral from *The Beauties of England and Wales*

In *The Cathedral Antiquities* Britton has matured. Salisbury is presented in splendid isolation from its immediate locality, both intellectually and visually. As he now admitted: ‘Whilst most of the other great churches of England are obscured and almost enveloped with houses, trees, and walls, that of Salisbury is detached from all extraneous and disfiguring objects.’⁹³ This time, instead of trying to intrude these objects to make the scene conventionally picturesque as Gilpin would have described it, Britton’s more developed eye and understanding found the qualities he admired within the architecture itself, which now appeared in much fuller detail [fig: 13]. In the process the cathedral ceases to be a feature in a picturesque landscape but becomes instead a landscape in itself. Approached from the north-east, as Britton shows it:

⁹² Britton, *The Beauties of England and Wales*, 21, p. 166.

⁹³ Britton, *The Cathedral Antiquities*, 2, p. 66.

It constitutes at once a beautiful and picturesque mass. A series and succession of pediments, pinnacles, buttresses, windows and bold projections, crowned with the rich tower and lofty spire, are embraced at one view, and fill the eye and mind as a homogeneous whole.⁹⁴

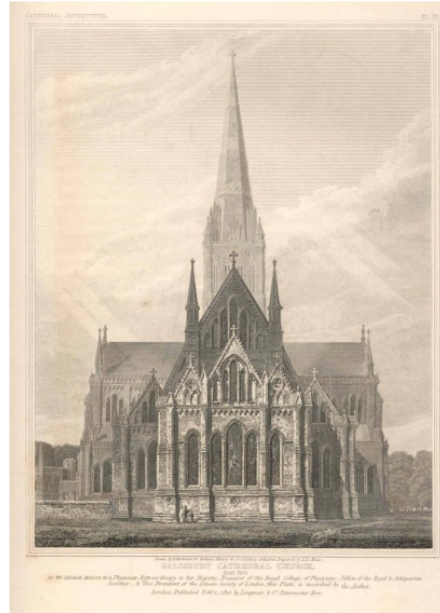


Figure 13 Salisbury Cathedral from *The Cathedral Antiquities*

Comprising plans, sections, details and elevations as well as perspectives the plates illustrate not merely the cathedral but the interplay in its treatment between accurate, measured drawing and artistic sensibility. Plate VIII [fig: 14], showing the view from the cloisters is based on Turner’s watercolour of c1802 [fig: 15] and deploys again, like Milner’s view of St Peter’s, Knight’s quintessence of Gothic, the view from one space to another through a partial screen. In Plate XVIII the West end is by contrast anatomised, shown in plan, section and elevation like an *écorché*. As Britton explained in his introduction both aspects mattered: ‘Whether contemplated as objects of grandeur, science, art, or history, [the cathedrals] alike claim the attention and admiration of all persons of taste and learning.’⁹⁵ While the ‘architectural antiquary’ goes into details, ‘examines their construction, and their various styles of architecture; inquires into their history, epochas of enlargement and alteration; and, finally, scrutinizes their architectural

⁹⁴ Britton, *The Cathedral Antiquities*, 2, p. 67.

⁹⁵ Britton, *The Cathedral Antiquities*, 2, p.vi.

details with ceaseless zeal and perseverance’, it was necessary also to ‘associate them with the sublimity and benignity of the Christian religion’, in order to achieve a full appreciation of these ‘wonderful edifices’.⁹⁶ It was perhaps peculiar to Britton however to choose the combination of ‘neatness and sacredness’ as their defining characteristic.⁹⁷



Figure 14 Salisbury Cathedral cloisters in *The Cathedral Antiquities*



Figure 15 Salisbury Cathedral, by J M W Turner, c1802

There can be no doubt that Britton remained intensely ‘romantic’, as much committed to the subjective as the architectural experience of the Gothic even if, in his anxiety to stimulate his readers’ sensibility, he left almost nothing to their imagination. His insistence that they should derive every last element of benefit from the cathedral might have struck even Dr Syntax as pedantically prescriptive. Dealing with the obstinately uniform and ‘monotonous’ north front he explained how it could still be enjoyed in a carefully timed visit:

When the morning sun lights up one side of the tower and eastern sides of the transepts, and tips the pinnacles and other projections with sparkling gleams of brightness. At this time also the recesses are dark and solemn, which enhances the grandeur, and augments the magnitude of the edifice. In the twilight of evening, or when the moon is about forty-five degrees above the western horizon, and displays her silvery

⁹⁶ Britton, *The Cathedral Antiquities*, 2, p.vii.

⁹⁷ Britton, *The Cathedral Antiquities*, 2, p.77.

face amidst solemn azure and fleecy vapours, then the effect is still more awful and impressive; the enthusiastic spectator is riveted to the scene; his mind wanders in reveries of delight; and his enraptured imagination ‘darts from heaven to earth, from earth to heaven’, in rapid and daring flights.. Should the deep-toned organ sound at such a moment, and reiterate its solemn music through the ailes [sic], the effect would be infinitely augmented.⁹⁸

In his text for *The Cathedral Antiquities* Britton went to greater length and into more detail than had been possible with the *Beauties*, backing his account with an academic apparatus that included footnotes, an index and a bibliography. The result was a synthesis of existing material. There was, however, no speculation on the questions of origin and nomenclature of the Gothic such as preoccupied Milner, Willson and many others at the time. Britton was rigorous about the information he presented but made no claims to original scholarship. It was the quality of the plates, for which Britton was responsible in the sense of recruiting and in some cases training, the most talented artists he could find as well as the engravers John and Henry Le Keux, the accessibility of the text, with its anecdotes of the famous people buried in the cathedral and the presentation of the work as a serial publication, covering all the cathedrals, that ensured its value and its success, from which ‘the proprietors ultimately derived a considerable profit’.⁹⁹ It was aimed at that polite public, who would be as bored as Britton by too many technicalities or speculative antiquarian debate on the origins of the pointed arch, but who now required more than a generalised perspective view to satisfy their taste and curiosity.

If it was polite, however, Britton’s writing was not bland. It was always personal and markedly so on the subject that first brought Salisbury to contemporary antiquarian notice, the notorious ‘improvements’. Britton’s vacillating attitude to these may show a real change of mind, it certainly shows a developing aesthetic, but it no doubt also reveals the practical constraints on the professional antiquary. In his first description of Salisbury in 1801, in a book confusingly entitled *The Beauties of Wiltshire*, but not part of the series of *Beauties*, Britton heartily endorsed the alterations, claiming, as Shute Barrington and Dodsworth had, that the removal of the screens enhanced the sublime effect of ‘space,

⁹⁸ Britton, *The Cathedral Antiquities*, 2, p.68.

⁹⁹ Britton, *Autobiography*, (1850), 2, p.127.

and lengthened perspective'.¹⁰⁰ To bolster his opinion that 'there are no *sufficient reasons* for the intrusion of complaint' Britton cited Gilpin's endorsement of the 'able hands' of Mr Wyatt.¹⁰¹ He also noticed, without comment, the removal of the Hungerford chantry which he believed, wrongly, to have been done by 'the present Earl of Radnor', who had in fact only removed the screens.¹⁰² Since, however, this was the very same Earl of Radnor to whom Britton's book was dedicated and whose 'attention to the general interests of literature' had been so beneficial to Britton in particular, it was not to be expected that his presumed architectural interventions would be censured.¹⁰³

Dependent on vergers, clergymen and wealthy patrons to allow him into buildings and archives to gather the material for his books and then for support to get them into print, Britton could not afford Milner's principles. In the *Beauties* of 1814, however, he changed his mind about Salisbury, attacked the organ screen as 'a discordant piece of patchwork'¹⁰⁴ and lamented the removal of the tombs which had 'suffered greatly ... as in re-erecting them various portions of the same, or of separate monuments, have been so confounded, or blended with each other, that it is difficult to appropriate them to their respective possessors'.¹⁰⁵ He now, like Milner, found the 'heterogeneous mass of the most dissimilar style' of reassembled fragments, offensive.¹⁰⁶

Britton was by this time better informed and this no doubt influenced his opinion, but he had also changed his mind about Dodsworth, who was still verger. The income which Dodsworth derived from showing the 'splendid and interesting Cathedral' to visitors, enabled him to live 'in a genteel style' as Britton noted somewhat sourly and in his considerable leisure time he was working on a book which appeared in 1818, directly 'in opposition' to Britton's own proposed publication.¹⁰⁷ This caused a predictable strain in relations not least as Dodsworth had poached some of Britton's artists. As late as 1850

¹⁰⁰ Britton, *Beauties of Wiltshire*, (1801),1, p.58.

¹⁰¹ Britton, *Beauties of Wiltshire*, (1801),1, p.58

¹⁰² Britton, *Beauties of Wiltshire*, (1801),1, p.65.

¹⁰³ Britton, *Beauties of Wiltshire*, (1801),1, dedication page

¹⁰⁴ Britton, *Beauties of England and Wales*, 21, p.170.

¹⁰⁵ Britton, *Beauties of England and Wales*, 21, p.171.

¹⁰⁶ Britton, *Beauties of England and Wales*, 21, p.171-2.

¹⁰⁷ Britton, *Autobiography*, (1850), 2, p.123.

Britton could not resist pointing out that the book, which appeared under Dodsworth's name, was in fact the work of a Mr Hatcher, 'who wrote, in a very able manner, the entire volume'.¹⁰⁸ The possibility that personal animus as much as critical judgement informed Britton's remarks about the cathedral is borne out by the fact that when he came to write the *Cathedral Antiquities*, at which time he and Dodsworth were on speaking terms again, Britton found that the removal of the tombs had been 'advisable', merely noting that 'there are persons who have reprobated this proceeding' without including himself in their number.¹⁰⁹ This self-protective side of Britton caused some contemporaries as well as later commentators such as Clark and Summerson to shudder. Since his tour of 1798, however, when he 'was introduced to, and formed acquaintance with, many public persons, whose friendship and correspondence proved valuable in after life' Britton had never lost sight of the necessity of patronage and the need on occasion for popular antiquarianism to seek a commercially expedient compromise with informed opinion.¹¹⁰

The *Beauties* and the *Architectural* and *Cathedral Antiquities* floated to success on a sea of other popular publications. As well as numerous individual local histories there were ever more books and periodicals for the general reader. Edward Brayley founded, although he quickly lost control of, *The Antiquarian and Topographical Cabinet*, which, from 1807 offered readers accurate, if miniature, depictions of subjects, by far the majority of which were medieval and architectural. In 1815 Volume One of *The Antiquarian Itinerary, comprising specimens of architecture, monastic, castellated, and domestic; with other Vestiges of Antiquity in Great Britain*, first appeared. It was written by James Storer, co-author since Brayley's departure of *The Antiquarian Cabinet*. The quality of the text was sufficient for Dawson Turner to rely on it and, significantly, the title put the emphasis explicitly on architecture, rather than topography. By 1826, the year when Milner's death and that of John Nichols marked the passing of a generation of antiquaries, popular interest in medieval architecture was rising steadily. As well as

¹⁰⁸ Britton, *Autobiography*, (1850), 1, p.123.

¹⁰⁹ Britton, *Cathedral Antiquities*, 2, p.87. Relations were not so greatly improved, however, that Britton could forbear from pointing out that Hatcher's book was typographically 'remarkable, by the meagre and careless composition of every page' [Britton, *Autobiography*, (1850), 2, p.126n].

¹¹⁰ Britton, *Autobiography*, (1850), 1, p.139.

publications such as Storer's there were also the works of Walter Scott. His *Border Antiquities*, 'that lumbering Essay' as he later decried it, appeared in 1814, the same year as the first *Cathedral Antiquities*.¹¹¹ Scott's second venture into documentary antiquarianism, the *Provincial Antiquities*, was published in 1826. Between the two, however, had come the novels. *Ivanhoe*, *The Abbot*, *Woodstock* and *The Monastery* had all appeared and it was these (with *The Fair Maid of Perth*, published in 1828) that Eastlake later thought Scott's most important contribution to stimulating interest in Gothic architecture, bringing to it in fictional form exactly that combination of 'reality' and 'romance', authenticity and illusion that Britton offered:

[Gothic architecture] forms the background to some of the most stirring scenes which the author depicts. It invests with a substantial reality the romances which he weaves. It is often intimately associated with the very incidents of the plot.¹¹²

By 1826 John Constable had already embarked on the series of paintings of Salisbury Cathedral that would culminate in the view exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1832, showing it under a stormy sky with a rainbow, a symbol of the Church of England menaced by Reform [fig: 16].¹¹³ The cathedral had now become much more than a focus for antiquarian argument, it had come to symbolise something of England itself. That same year William Cobbett on his rural rides reflected the now frequently heard view that the Age of Improvement was not all it might be that, as Milner had suggested, the past held lessons for the present and that these could be read in its architecture:

For my part, I could not look up at the spire and the whole of the church at **Salisbury** without feeling that I lived in degenerate times. Such a thing never could be made *now*. We *feel* that, as we look at the building. It really does appear that if our forefathers had not made these buildings we should have forgotten, before now, what the Christian religion was!¹¹⁴

¹¹¹ Scott, *Journal*, p.362.

¹¹² Eastlake, *A History of the Gothic Revival*, p.112 .

¹¹³ The significance of the image to contemporaries is discussed in Vaughan, *John Constable*, pp.63-70.

¹¹⁴ Cobbett, *Rural Rides*, p.397.



Figure 16 *Salisbury Cathedral from the Meadows*, by John Constable, 1831

Reviewing Britton's *Cathedral Antiquities* in the *Quarterly Review* Robert Southey now poet laureate saw the new interest in the past as in itself an endorsement of the present. The word 'improvement' occurs often in his essay though not in connection with the Wyatt style of intervention. Alterations of that sort were undertaken, Southey wrote, 'in the spirit of those times when alterations of Shakespeare were perpetrated, not merely with impunity, but with applause, by Shadwell, Nahum Tate and Colley Cibber'.¹¹⁵ Wyatt was now dead and just months before Southey's review appeared, in December 1825, the tower of his fantastic house for William Beckford, Fonthill, in Wiltshire had collapsed, taking with it, not entirely justly, the last of Wyatt's reputation. It was an incident Southey did not forbear to mention. He was willing only to concede that something had been learned from the 'injury' done to Salisbury, admiring by contrast the 'beautiful' and more sensitive restoration work now taking place at Winchester, directed by William Garbett.¹¹⁶ Renewed pride in the architecture of the Middle Ages was for Southey 'one proof of national improvement in feeling as well as in taste and knowledge'.¹¹⁷

As far as Britton's publications were concerned it was in the illustrations that Southey found the most 'surprising improvement', 'as much more faithful as they are

¹¹⁵ 'Britton's Cathedral Antiquities', *Quarterly Review*, 34, (1826), pp. 305-49, p.306. The article is unsigned but Britton attributes it to Southey in his *Autobiography* (1850), [1, p.247] and there is no reason to doubt him. Southey was a principal contributor to the *Quarterly* at the time.

¹¹⁶ Southey, 'Britton's Cathedral Antiquities', p.348.

¹¹⁷ Southey, 'Britton's Cathedral Antiquities', p.305.

more beautiful' than the earlier attempts in the works of Browne Willis and Francis Grose.¹¹⁸ Both qualities, beauty and accuracy, were of the essence, 'so far have the artists been from sacrificing exactitude to picturesqueness'.¹¹⁹ Southey also endorsed the emotional, inspirational power of the Gothic in which 'exactitude' might be a flexible concept. 'Chatterton would have been a poet, wherever he might have been born and bred, but it was Redcliff Church that made him call up the ghost of Rowley.'¹²⁰ The essay also illustrates the movement now underway towards the idea of the Gothic as a national style, not merely in a loose associational way but as public, official policy. 'It should seem that these *national* monuments, for such pre-eminently they are, ought, as such, to be under *national* superintendence' Southey concluded.¹²¹ Less than forty years after Richard Gough's suggestion that the clergy should not be allowed to alter medieval buildings with impunity had been greeted as impertinence from a typically crack-brained antiquary, the poet laureate was advocating state control as a civic responsibility. Westminster Abbey, he wrote, in his final paragraph, had once been described as 'part of the constitution. We cannot conclude better than by leaving the reader to reflect upon the serious truth which is conveyed in that lively expression'.¹²²

Southey extended this conception of the value of the Gothic quite naturally from the conservation of historic buildings to the construction of new ones. Poets had been more successful so far, he noted, in their emulation of medieval models. If architects had failed to achieve as much that must, he thought, be due to lack of opportunity. 'Otherwise the same feeling which induces and enables antiquaries to describe and artists to delineate the great monuments of elder times would surely take this direction.'¹²³ Britton agreed. While he was unable, or unwilling, to venture into architecture as a practitioner he was concerned that his works should be read by architects and that the study of medieval architecture should lead to its revival. In 1819 he was the moving force behind the foundation of the Society of Architects and Antiquaries of London. As Honorary

¹¹⁸ Southey, 'Britton's Cathedral Antiquities', p.315.

¹¹⁹ Southey, 'Britton's Cathedral Antiquities', p.315.

¹²⁰ Southey, 'Britton's Cathedral Antiquities', p.308.

¹²¹ Southey, 'Britton's Cathedral Antiquities', p.348.

¹²² Southey, 'Britton's Cathedral Antiquities', p.349.

¹²³ Southey, 'Britton's Cathedral Antiquities', p.308.

Secretary he addressed the third session in 1821, urging members to make the buildings of the past better known and to promote architecture which was ‘less honoured’ than the other arts.¹²⁴ With its emphasis on this being a union of ‘Gentlemen’ and the characteristic reference to the ‘jealousy and envy’ the society had so far attracted in some quarters, the address suggests that personal and professional advancement for the members and the achievement of some sort of official recognition were motivating factors.¹²⁵ There were only, in 1821, sixteen full members. Although the several honorary and corresponding members included Dawson Turner, the sculptor Canova and the Franco-German architect Hittorff, the Society seems to have fizzled out soon afterwards. Britton, however, had by now found another avenue down which to pursue his architectural campaign in the works he produced with Edward Willson.

Edward Willson: Gothic Architecture and Modern Imitations

Willson was in many ways the model of the popular type of the antiquary. His typicality extended to his character as an author, in which he much resembled Jonathan Oldbuck who ‘like many other men who spend their lives in obscure literary research...had a secret ambition to appear in print, which was checked by cold fits of diffidence, fear of criticism, and habits of indolence and procrastination’.¹²⁶ This temperament, combined with periods of ill-health, prevented Willson from achieving any great independent reputation. Although his qualities were recognized to some extent by both Eastlake, who realised that his work had ‘never been thoroughly appreciated’¹²⁷ and by Pevsner, who found what Willson had to say ‘interesting in its own right’ his

¹²⁴ Britton, *An address read before the Society of Architects and Antiquaries of London at the first meeting of their third session*, p.11.

¹²⁵ Britton, *An address read before the Society of Architects and Antiquaries of London at the first meeting of their third session*, p. 3.

¹²⁶ Scott, *The Antiquary*, 135.

¹²⁷ Eastlake, *A History of the Gothic Revival*, p.90.

published works have largely been subsumed in a marsupial relationship to those of his collaborators, the over-powering John Britton and the more famous A C Pugin.¹²⁸

As the son of a master builder who became a craftsman and architect without serving formal articles (something which was far from uncommon at the time), Willson arrived at the same position as Britton and Milner but from the opposite direction, that is he came to antiquarianism via architecture rather than the other way around during a period when the borders between the two occupations were fluid. A chance meeting some time between about 1800 and 1807 with Britton in Lincoln cathedral, where Willson was ‘occupied in carving some of the fine stall work’ led to a friendship.¹²⁹ Willson was already steeped in the history of the cathedral and the neighbouring antiquities and Britton, with characteristic condescension took him under his wing. ‘The young topographer and his younger pupil’ remained in touch and Britton encouraged Willson to try his ‘inexperienced pen’, thereby securing some scholarly material for the *Beauties* which Britton ‘revised for the press.’¹³⁰

Willson’s writings, as Pevsner recognised, made a genuine contribution to the debates on origins and terminology of the Gothic. His account of medieval architecture is quietly authoritative, revealing a wide knowledge of current theories and a clear, unpolemical but critical intelligence. Writing in the 1820s and ’30s as the ‘battle of the styles’ between Greek and Gothic architecture got under way Willson was notably unpartisan, wishing not that modern Gothic should triumph, simply that it should be good. Beyond the factual discussion of dates and architectural details Willson’s writings reveal a thoughtful, religious and intellectually subtle character. The notion of him as simply one of a kind, ‘spawned’ as Pevsner puts it by this phase of the Gothic Revival, does him less than justice.

Willson wrote the text and introductory essays for the two volumes of *Specimens of Gothic Architecture* which appeared in 1821 and 1823. The illustrations comprised

¹²⁸ Pevsner, *Some Architectural Writers of the Nineteenth Century*, p.25.

¹²⁹ Britton, ‘Edward James Willson’.

¹³⁰ Britton, ‘Edward James Willson’.

measured details of medieval buildings made by A C Pugin and his pupils intended, specifically, for copying. There were no perspectives or picturesque views in these books. Britton, who claimed to be the originator of the idea, though Pugin later contested this, was the overall editor. He wrote in his Preface that ‘It is hoped and believed that every form and member here represented can easily be executed, either on a scale equal to the original, and for similar purposes, or reduced to any other scale’.¹³¹ Both volumes were dedicated to eminent practising architects, John Nash, George IV’s favourite architect, for volume one and Robert Smirke for volume two.

The title of Willson’s essays, ‘Remarks on Gothic Architecture and on Modern Imitations’ underlines the theme of a direct connection between past and present. Willson was a Roman Catholic. His view of medieval Gothic and its decline was, like Milner’s, tendentious, and will be discussed elsewhere.¹³² The greater part of the first essay, however, deals with post-medieval architecture. Willson wrote both as an antiquary and as an architect evaluating his peers. He shared the general contemporary dislike of Wren and Hawksmoor’s attempts at Gothic and saw everything since, rather as Pevsner did later, as an unsteady progress towards archaeological accuracy or, as Willson put it, towards James Essex, ‘the first professional architect whose works displayed a correct taste in imitations of ancient English Architecture’.¹³³ Willson had no qualms about condemning Wyatt’s interventions at Salisbury or indeed, in the second volume of *Specimens*, which was not dedicated to John Nash, Nash’s own palace for George IV, ‘highly decorated with cupolas and minarets of eastern taste [*rather oddly designated ‘The Pavilion’ at Brighton]’.¹³⁴

If John Carter was arguably the first architectural critic in the modern sense then Willson, in a more minor key, was perhaps the second. He voiced the complaint that was to become general later in the decade about the novelty styles, popular since the Regency,

¹³¹ Pugin and Willson, 1821-23, *Specimens of Gothic Architecture*, 1, Preface, np, unsigned but apparently written by Britton, as editor.

¹³² See Chapter 5.

¹³³ Pugin and Willson, *Specimens of Gothic Architecture*, 1, p. xvi.

¹³⁴ Pugin and Willson, *Specimens of Gothic Architecture*, 2, p. xix and footnote.

of which the Pavilion was the apogee and, though less combative than Carter, he stoutly defended the right of ‘each one to publish his opinion’.¹³⁵ Willson also brought his knowledge of restoration work on historic buildings to bear, lamenting the loss of craftsmanship and arguing, as Ruskin would more than twenty years later, that the quality of medieval carving owed much to the fact that, as he believed, the decorations were ‘designed and executed’ by the same person.¹³⁶ He was also no doubt drawing on his own experience as a carver when he complained that the artisan was too lowly regarded to be able to develop his skills: ‘The artificer capable of executing the best parts of Architecture,... ought to be encouraged to acquire a better education’ Willson argued ‘...and his pay ought to be proportionally higher... so that a clever man, though not possessed of a capital to enable him to become a master, might support himself.’¹³⁷

Willson was extending Gough’s once daring principle of antiquarian intervention from the conservation of medieval buildings with which it began into a critique of contemporary architecture and furthermore to suggestions for improving the architecture of the future, chiefly by urging that ‘more attention must be paid... by architects and their patrons’ to the difficult details of Gothic.¹³⁸ This prescriptive aspect of his thinking was developed in a third essay, an introduction to *Examples of Gothic Architecture*, published in 1831. This was a work in the same format as the *Specimens*, produced by Willson and A C Pugin after the latter had fallen out with Britton. Its usefulness to the profession as Gothic architecture gained in popularity is borne out by the subscription list which included nearly every eminent architect of the day, Smirke, Barry, Cockerell, Basevi, Nash and Decimus Burton among them. Sir John Soane, a friend of the slighted Britton, is a notable absentee. It is unlikely that many of those who bought the *Specimens* and *Examples* for use in architects’ offices ever read the text. If they did read *Specimens*, however, they would have found among the details the by now familiar combination of

¹³⁵ Pugin and Willson, *Specimens of Gothic Architecture*, 2, p. xix.

¹³⁶ Pugin and Willson, *Specimens of Gothic Architecture*, 2, p. xxi.

¹³⁷ Pugin and Willson, *Specimens of Gothic Architecture*, 2, p. xxi.

¹³⁸ Pugin and Willson, *Specimens of Gothic Architecture*, 2, p. xix.

exhortations to accuracy and appeals to the ‘excitement of imagination’ as well as references to Payne Knight.¹³⁹

In the *Examples*, however, Willson took a different tack. The highly coloured evocations of the past in relation to specific buildings disappeared. The individual *Examples* are not summoned up as Hampton Court is in the *Specimens*, with that ‘train of affecting incidents, which crowded almost two centuries of history’ and so on.¹⁴⁰ These flourishes, in Britton’s style, were surely among his revisions for the press. Left to his own devices Willson developed quite a different line of imagery, one he had put forward at the end of his first essay, where he compared Gothic to a dead language, which could only be learned by working from ‘original examples’.¹⁴¹ This need not, he added, mean mere imitation for just as a scholar might put forward an original argument in Greek so an architect, once steeped in medieval sources, might make an original modern building. It was a subtle variant on the image of the building as text, put forward by Thomas Kerrich and later much elaborated by Victor Hugo in *Notre Dame de Paris*.¹⁴² In 1831 Willson pursued the analogy, comparing the *Examples* to the rest of the antiquary’s stock in trade: ‘personal memoirs, original letters, wills, or other documents of genuine history’.¹⁴³ Modern books of Gothic designs were, on the other hand, he wrote, ‘fictitious narratives’ and while Willson was careful to say that he wanted no ‘invidious competition’ between the two, the clear implication is that he prefers the genuine to the fictitious.¹⁴⁴ What this meant in his case was not a diminution of sensibility, the triumph of archaeology over romanticism, but the complete fusion of the two, for as an architect Willson could speak and compose in the language, he could write the books as well as read them.

¹³⁹ Pugin and Willson, *Specimens of Gothic Architecture*, 2, p. xviii.

¹⁴⁰ Pugin and Willson, *Specimens of Gothic Architecture*, 2, p.1.

¹⁴¹ Pugin and Willson, *Specimens of Gothic Architecture*, 1, p. xx.

¹⁴² See Buchanan, ‘Robert Willis and the Rise of Architectural History’, p.185 for the origins of the image which later became current among antiquaries.

¹⁴³ Pugin and Willson, *Examples of Gothic Architecture*, 1, p.vii.

¹⁴⁴ Pugin and Willson, *Examples of Gothic Architecture*, 1, p.vii.

The proof of this came with his practice. Willson worked on several medieval churches, restoring and largely reconstructing a number of them with great tact, notably Holy Trinity Messingham in 1817-18 and St Mary Hainton, both in Lincolnshire, where he worked in 1846-7 and where he chose eventually to be buried. Where possible he incorporated the remains of the older fabric within the new. In his own buildings he was able, at least once, to realise a piece of modern Gothic developed straight from the *Examples*. The first subject in Volume Two, which was published, after much delay, in 1836 Willson having taken five years to produce the text, was the Slipper Chapel at Houghton in Norfolk [fig: 17]. This small building, dating, as Willson knew, from the mid-fourteenth century was ruinous in the 1830s having been converted at one point into a cottage and then used as a barn. Willson wrote with something approaching tenderness about the ‘curious little fabric’ with its ‘beautiful west window...the ramifications of its mullions being adjusted very gracefully’.¹⁴⁵

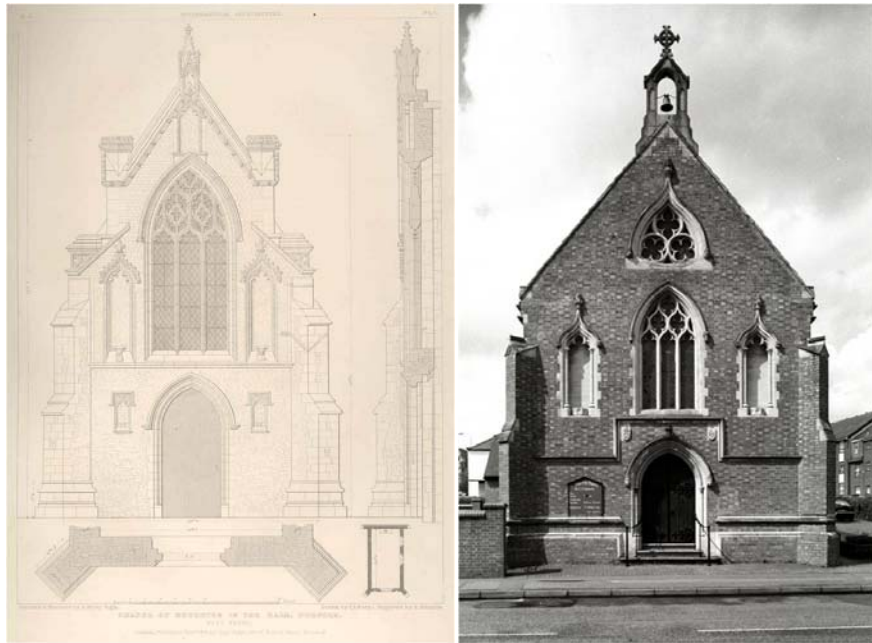


Figure 17 The Slipper Chapel at Walsingham and (right) Willson's church at Melton Mowbray

¹⁴⁵ Pugin and Willson, *Examples of Gothic Architecture*, 2, p.2.

Some years later in 1840, when he was commissioned to build a small Roman Catholic church at Melton Mowbray in Leicestershire he resurrected the Slipper Chapel in a building of substance and integrity that marked a tremendous advance, in Willson's own terms of historical accuracy, on Milner's chapel of 1792. [Fig 17] It represented also, I would argue, an intensification of the reciprocity between objective and subjective, building and sensibility, for here the Gothic did not merely act on the beholder, it actually came into existence out of those same impressions that it created. The architect, inhabiting the Gothic, speaking the dead language, animated it from within. Willson, following his own precepts, did not copy the Slipper Chapel exactly but made variations on the theme. Having widened the west front, presumably for practical reasons, in proportion to the height, he put in an upper window in the spherical triangle form borrowed from Lichfield cathedral to balance the top and added a hood mould to the lower level to avoid a blank expanse. Where, perhaps, he doubted his masons' skills he simplified rather than risk failure as in the mouldings around the empty niches. In the interior the corbel heads are portraits, as medieval corbels sometimes were, and may well represent John Exton, patron of the church, and Willson himself, physically incorporated into that revived Gothic for which he argued.

1841: Annus Mirabilis

By the early 1830s 'Antiquaries', as Eastlake wrote, 'no longer stood alone'.¹⁴⁶ Their interest in the Gothic and its revival was shared 'by many professional architects of ability and repute', inspired by the antiquaries' efforts.¹⁴⁷ Subscribers to the *Specimens* and *Examples* now found that 'by turning over the leaves of a convenient volume' they could produce a more convincing looking Gothic building than ever before.¹⁴⁸ The results were not, usually, however, so happy as Willson's efforts at Melton Mowbray and often 'the consequence' as Eastlake also wrote, was that 'an age of ignorance was

¹⁴⁶ Eastlake, *A History of the Gothic Revival*, p.111.

¹⁴⁷ Eastlake, *A History of the Gothic Revival*, p.111.

¹⁴⁸ Eastlake, *A History of the Gothic Revival*, p. 89.

succeeded by an age of plagiarism'.¹⁴⁹ The chimneys of Hampton Court, the oriel from Magdalen College and the chapel windows of All Souls College, Oxford began to appear all over the country with monotonous and often incongruous regularity.

Perhaps the most significant architectural product of this cut and paste phase of the antiquarian Gothic Revival was Toddington Manor in Gloucestershire, then the home of Charles Hanbury Tracy, Lord Sudeley (1777-1858), and now that of Damien Hirst [fig: 18]. It was begun in 1819 and finished, externally, by 1840. A substantial house it was supposedly designed by Tracy himself although the 'draughtsman' who assisted him was J C Buckler (1793-1894), who was in reality an able antiquarian architect and no doubt gave considerable support to his noble patron. Toddington, with its windows copied from Christ Church, Oxford, its vestibule based on the Red Mount Chapel at Lynn in Norfolk and the ceiling from Crosby Hall in London, all of them illustrated in various Britton publications, marked clearly the distance between what an antiquarian architect like Willson understood about propriety in Gothic architecture and the point which his polite readership had reached. Toddington's design used ecclesiastical sources for a secular building, with the details of a chapel deployed for a hallway, exactly the sort of solecisms Willson condemned. He was also insistent that, in line with the precepts of Price and Knight, a building should reveal its function, whereas at Toddington the principal, south, front was designed to look like a two-storey chapel, within which were, in fact, a library and bedrooms.

¹⁴⁹ Eastlake, *A History of the Gothic Revival*, p. 89.



Figure 18 Toddington Manor, Gloucestershire

Toddington was in architectural terms a mixed success but it occupies an important position in the converging course of antiquarianism and architecture for Tracy was not only an enthusiast for the Gothic, he was also an MP and in 1835 he became Chairman of the Royal Commission to judge entries for the competition to rebuild the Palace of Westminster after the fire of 1834 [fig: 19]. It had been decided that the style of the new building should be Gothic or Elizabethan and that all the judges should be connoisseurs rather than professional architects. The choice of the style and the eventual selection of Charles Barry's design, detailed by A C Pugin's son, A W N Pugin (1812-1852), marked the point where antiquarianism, architecture and polite culture all drew level. Tracy and his fellow committee members looked at the competition entries and admired the ones in which they saw, as in a mirror, their own taste, formed over decades by Britton's *Beauties* and *Antiquities* reflected back to them.¹⁵⁰ Barry, a subscriber to the *Examples* had, like Tracy, looked to the late Gothic for his scheme, specifically at Somerset church towers and the turrets of Henry VII's chapel at Westminster Abbey. With his victory in the competition the Gothic was carried to the heart of public architecture. Its triumph went to show, according to Britton, that 'more has been achieved

¹⁵⁰ The best account of the competition is M.H. Port, 'The Houses of Parliament Competition', in *The Houses of Parliament*, ed. by M H Port, (London and New Haven: Yale University Press, 1976), pp. 20-52.

within the last half century, in England, in the arts and sciences, than during any one, or even five, centuries before'.¹⁵¹



Figure 39 The New Palace of Westminster

Britton made this remark in the book he produced about Tracy's house, *Graphic Illustrations with Historical and Descriptive Accounts of Toddington, Gloucestershire, the Seat of Lord Sudeley*, published in 1840. This 'full and impartial review of the architectural character of the New House at Toddington', which was largely paid for by Tracy and boasted a subscription list headed by Queen Victoria, found, unsurprisingly, that the house was 'eminently successful'.¹⁵² Britton pointed out that it was expressive of its function in so far as it could not possibly 'be mistaken for a church or a prison, for a manufactory or for a farm-house' and Tracy had not been so jejune as to call it an Abbey or a Priory.¹⁵³ Even Britton must have squirmed at trimming his antiquarian sails so drastically and having made these references and given a description of the details of Toddington village and the new house, he seems to have been at something of a loss to fill more than fifty pages. As so often he turned to himself as a subject of abiding interest and to the 'Architectural Antiquities [which] ... have engaged my especial attention and

¹⁵¹ Britton, *Graphic Illustrations with Historical and Descriptive Accounts of Toddington*, p.xiii.

¹⁵² Britton, *Graphic Illustrations with Historical and Descriptive Accounts of Toddington*, p. 33.

¹⁵³ Britton, *Graphic Illustrations with Historical and Descriptive Accounts of Toddington*, p.3.

study of the last forty years' offering his thoughts at the start of a new reign on the changes those decades had brought.¹⁵⁴

Looking back on his early meetings with the eminent figures such as Nash, Repton and Wyatt who first inspired his enthusiasm Britton found that 'those times, and those men, were exceedingly unlike any of the present age'.¹⁵⁵ He still admired Gilpin, 'this once popular author and estimable man' but found his works 'now seldom referred to'¹⁵⁶ while Nash, dedicatee of the first volume of the *Specimens* but dead since 1835, was an architect in whom there was 'very little to praise', having shown 'a lamentable want of taste [and]... an equal lack of good sense and discretion' in his work'.¹⁵⁷ Britton, a bellwether for popular opinion, was reflecting the general revulsion that the early Victorians felt for the Regency. Now, when it came to Wyatt's restorations, he was prepared to damn him at least at Durham, though he was still coy about Salisbury having perhaps at last decided that discretion might be the better part of valour on a subject so peculiarly vexed within his own oeuvre.

In the place of the discredited Georgians, the new age offered, Britton believed, improvements in both topography and architecture. The dull books that had so discouraged him at the beginning of his career, works in which 'the topographer rarely noticed either the dates or the architectural features of ancient buildings' concentrating instead on 'tomb-stone inscriptions ... [and] the number of bells in parish towers'¹⁵⁸ had given way to the 'erudite topographers of the present age' such as himself, whose works comprised 'valuable and authentic materials... as well as profound reflections and deductions'.¹⁵⁹ While placing himself prominently in this picture of improvement Britton looked out more broadly and declared, with some justice, that 'a new architectural era has recently commenced in England'.¹⁶⁰ The Institute of British Architects had received its

¹⁵⁴ Britton, *Graphic Illustrations with Historical and Descriptive Accounts of Tuddington*, p. xi.

¹⁵⁵ Britton, *Graphic Illustrations with Historical and Descriptive Accounts of Tuddington*, p. xiii.

¹⁵⁶ Britton, *Graphic Illustrations with Historical and Descriptive Accounts of Tuddington*, p. 22.

¹⁵⁷ Britton, *Graphic Illustrations with Historical and Descriptive Accounts of Tuddington*, p. 21.

¹⁵⁸ Britton, *Graphic Illustrations with Historical and Descriptive Accounts of Tuddington*, p. 41.

¹⁵⁹ Britton, *Graphic Illustrations with Historical and Descriptive Accounts of Tuddington*, p. 42.

¹⁶⁰ Britton, *Graphic Illustrations with Historical and Descriptive Accounts of Tuddington*, p. xiv.

Royal Charter in 1837 and two years later the Cambridge Camden Society (CCS) and the Oxford Architectural Society (OAS) came into being. These Britton hailed with ‘exultation’ as well as welcoming the various other, more modest, provincial societies that were springing up across the country.¹⁶¹

The year after *Toddington* appeared, 1841, was later hailed by Pevsner as the ‘annus mirabilis of the story of the Gothic Revival in England’.¹⁶² For him this was signalled by the publication of A W N Pugin’s *True Principles of Pointed or Christian Architecture*, the first volume of the CCS journal *The Ecclesiologist* and by the moment when Robert Willis ‘turned to the English cathedrals’ where, Pevsner noted, ‘he was to achieve his greatest glory’.¹⁶³ From the point of view of architectural antiquarianism *per se*, the early 1840s marked the point at which those traditions of study and practice, passive and active involvement with the buildings of the Middle Ages, that had been converging since 1789, met and fused into the broader movement that was the Victorian Gothic Revival. The resulting compound had its own particular constitution. It was more organised, as Britton noted, better established in the universities, where the CCS and to a lesser extent the OAS wielded influence far beyond their numerical weight, in the public mind with the New Palace of Westminster and institutionally in the Institute of British Architects of which Britton was a fellow.

A great enthusiast for institutions, a member of many, the founder of the Wiltshire Topographical Society which was another product of 1841, and an advocate for greater official recognition for the ‘Literary Profession’, Britton’s hope was that these and other professional bodies would provide the sort of structure and respectability for lack of which he had struggled in the early years of his own career.¹⁶⁴ He was to be in some degree disappointed, however, by the developments he hailed so enthusiastically. The architectural antiquarianism of the mid-century, which marked the start of a movement

¹⁶¹ Britton, *Graphic Illustrations with Historical and Descriptive Accounts of Toddington*, p. xiv.

¹⁶² Pevsner, *Some Architectural Writers of the Nineteenth Century*, p.54.

¹⁶³ Pevsner, *Some Architectural Writers of the Nineteenth Century*, p.56.

¹⁶⁴ Britton, *Graphic Illustrations with Historical and Descriptive Accounts of Toddington* , p. ix.

towards academic architectural history, was to be, if more dignified, then also more intellectually and socially exclusive than the old.

Sara Losh and the creation of analogous sensations

Before discussing the implications of this new phase there is one more antiquarian architectural project to be considered, one which must stand alone but which can, nevertheless, stand for much else. This is the church of St Mary at Wreay in Cumbria, designed by Sara Losh as a memorial to her sister Katherine (1788-1835). Losh is the only woman to figure in this thesis. Even among the small number of female antiquaries of the time she is a rarity. The pursuits considered as suitable for women in the field generally excluded any kind of manual work or anything that involved collaboration with men except with a husband or father. Even libraries seem to have been out of bounds. Although the Reading Room of the British Museum was open to women, only one woman is known to have used it in the whole of the eighteenth century.¹⁶⁵ Ballad collecting and folklore studies were the most usual topics for those unusual women who were counted as antiquaries. Losh has not previously been considered as such, indeed it is only recently that she has been admitted to be an architect.¹⁶⁶ The reluctance to consider her in either category undoubtedly came from considerations of gender and to some degree class, for as a gentlewoman her contemporaries would not have cared to associate her with a trade or profession and women were not admitted to the Society of Antiquaries.

The eldest child in a well-established and close-knit gentry family, Losh was born at Wreay probably in 1786. She was a gifted girl whose abilities were encouraged by a

¹⁶⁵ Sweet, *Antiquaries*, pp. 69-79 gives an excellent account of the scope for female antiquarianism and its limitations.

¹⁶⁶ Losh's professional standing has improved through the literature. Pevsner, 'Sarah Losh's Church', p. 67 states that 'Miss Losh ... had no architect.' Wood, 'A Memorial to Two Sisters', p.1230, calls her a 'gifted amateur architect'. The Oxford Dictionary of National Biography describes her simply as 'architect'.

father who was ‘liberal in politics and strong in the advocacy of religious liberty’.¹⁶⁷ The men of the Losh family, like their Midland contemporaries in the Lunar Society, were part of an informal but extensive intellectual network embracing scientific study as well as literary pursuits. Losh’s uncle James was a friend of Wordsworth, who visited the family home at Woodside, a fellow of the Society of Antiquaries and from 1813 one of its Vice Presidents. His niece was educated ‘far beyond the reach of her own sex, and, indeed of most men’, a classicist, a linguist and a mathematician.¹⁶⁸ Losh and her sister Katherine made a long Continental tour in 1817 with another Uncle, William Losh. By then the family’s wealth had been considerably augmented with the profits from an alkali works established by the sisters’ father and uncles on Tyneside.

Losh never married and by her late twenties the deaths of her parents and her only brother’s mental incapacity left her, after 1814, in an unusual situation for a woman. She was intellectually, personally and financially independent and socially in the position of the local squire. She used this role to pursue her interest in architecture, designing at least eighteen buildings, of which the parish church was the most significant.¹⁶⁹ The case for her as an architect is therefore self-evident. Her character as an antiquary can be established from her own notes which show her proceeding by typical antiquarian methods, analysing physical remains from internal evidence, taken in the context of documentary sources where relevant, and going on to use her findings to reanimate the past with fresh meaning for the present.

St Mary’s [figs: 20, 21 and 22], was consecrated in December 1842. It is a remarkable building through which, as through Losh’s life, many currents of contemporary thought and feeling flow. It has, however, been discussed largely in terms of its style, which is, I would suggest, its least interesting aspect. Losh herself wrote that: ‘The unpolished mode of building adhered to in the new chapel, most approximates to early Saxon or modified Lombard, which was preferred to a more improved style, as less

¹⁶⁷ Lonsdale, *The Worthies of Cumbria*, p.148. Lonsdale’s is the first and still the fullest biographical source for Losh.

¹⁶⁸ Lonsdale, *The Worthies of Cumbria*, p.201.

¹⁶⁹ Drew, ‘Sara Losh and the “chapel of ease”’, gives a list of known and attributed works.

expensive and elaborate.¹⁷⁰ That definition will do as well as any in this context for, as those who have considered the question agree, it does not fit precisely any style, nor is it Gothic, but it draws on a variety of pre-Gothic sources from more than one national tradition.¹⁷¹ The result is unique and it is precisely in its individuality that Sarah Losh's church embodies the essence of the romantic antiquarian enterprise.



Figure 20 St Mary's Wreay, West door

The project began when the existing church at Wreay was found, according to Losh's notes, to be 'in a very dilapidated condition' and a committee was formed to consider restoration of the chancel.¹⁷² Losh offered instead 'to furnish a new site for the chapel and to defray all the expenses of its re-erection, on condition that I should be left unrestricted as to the mode of building it'.¹⁷³ The grateful parishioners accepted this generous, if highly conditional arrangement and so the results can be confidently seen as a reflection of Losh's ideas and wishes. She in fact made no attempt to re-erect the old

¹⁷⁰ Document in the Jackson Collection, Carlisle Library, unnumbered pages.

¹⁷¹ See Pevsner, 'Sarah Losh's Church', and Bullen, 'Sara Losh'.

¹⁷² Document in the Jackson Collection, Carlisle Library.

¹⁷³ Document in the Jackson Collection, Carlisle Library.

church, though she supervised its careful dismantling. Archaeology had ‘many and lasting attractions’ for her and she analysed the building as it was taken down largely on the basis of the fabric itself.¹⁷⁴ ‘The destruction of an ancient structure, however necessary, must always afford cause for regret,’ she wrote, adding with perhaps a touch of self-justification that ‘the chapel at Wreay had apparently little claim to respect, either in an antiquarian or an architectural point of view.’¹⁷⁵

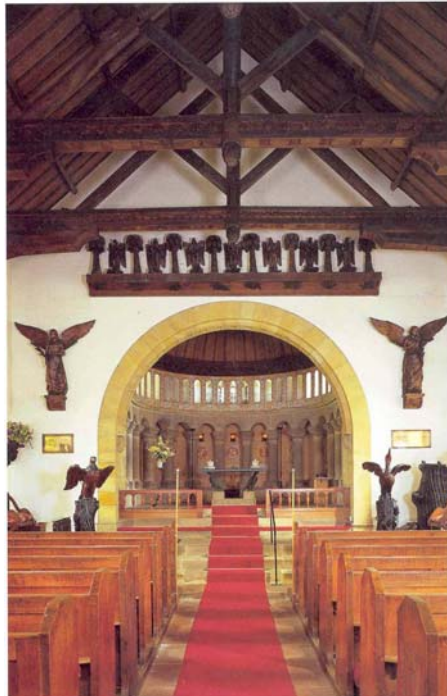


Figure 21 St Mary's, Wreay

The original church was thought, she recorded, to date from the reign of Edward II (1307-27), but having found no coins in the course of demolition, one of the easiest and surest ways of dating a building, Losh had her doubts. The ‘old’ window she noted ‘resembled the common coupled windows of the Tudor period... of square form containing two round headed lights’.¹⁷⁶ Buildings of this late, ‘debased’ Gothic were not so much to be regretted in the early 1840s. More significant for her was the discovery of

¹⁷⁴ Lonsdale, *The Worthies of Cumbria*, p.206.

¹⁷⁵ Document in the Jackson Collection, Carlisle Library.

¹⁷⁶ Document in the Jackson Collection, Carlisle Library.

a small doorway in the south east corner ‘a specimen of the flat headed corbel arch so common in the time of Edward 1st.¹⁷⁷ It is clear from her comments and the terminology she uses that Losh had read enough of the many publications on Gothic to feel confident in making such judgements. Having analysed the dates of the various parts of the fabric and noticed interventions, such as the blocking up of an original west door and the replacement of the stone surrounding it with brick, she summed up:

Discrepancies in the style of the building, added to the apparent great age of its timber, (which had plainly been worked over & differently disposed at some remote period) suggest the probability that the late chapel had been built at a time comparatively recent, from the remains of the original edifice, of which the western doorway & part of the gable may have been left standing, but marred and spoilt by unskilful hands.¹⁷⁸

Moving on to the site chosen for the new church she discovered, as foundations were dug, a set of flagstones, the base of an older building on a considerable scale, from which she was prepared to extrapolate further, drawing on the evidence of local history and place names, a popular resource for antiquarian investigations.

It is probable that a square tower may have anciently occupied this place, adjoining to which is a field still denominated the guards. Some sort of defence must have been required at a manufacturing village, as Wreay formerly was, especially exposed to aggression by its proximity to Englewood forest, the noted retreat of desperate outlaws. There was indeed a tower or constable house, till recently standing at Wreay Hall, where it would afford protection to the Potteries on the banks of the Petteril, but there is no reason from hence to infer that no other tower subsisted in the vicinity, & it was not unlikely that such should be placed at Wreay, as the intermediate station betwixt Carlisle & Melguards, as this latter was the middle post betwixt Carlisle & Penrith. Some persons may conjecture that the foundation in question had been that of some cell or other edifice connected with the chapel, but of such there is no record, on the contrary it is an established fact that a monthly service was performed there by one of the monks of St Mary’s Abbey which owned the tythes of the chapelry it served prior to its consecration by Bishop Fleming for a school also.¹⁷⁹

Losh was clearly well-versed in the history and geography of the border country where her family had lived for generations. Her grandfather, John Losh, known as The

¹⁷⁷ Document in the Jackson Collection, Carlisle Library.

¹⁷⁸ Document in the Jackson Collection, Carlisle Library.

¹⁷⁹ Document in the Jackson Collection, Carlisle Library.

Big Black Squire, had been among the last to take part in the cross-border raids that terrorised the countryside until 1745. That turbulent past was still easily discernible, as Scott described in his *Border Antiquities*, in the ‘numerous castles left to moulder in massive ruins’ amid ‘fields where the memory of ancient battles still lives among the descendants of those by whom they were fought or witnessed’.¹⁸⁰ Losh was one such. In her musings on the origins of the paving slabs she writes in the self-referential style of Edward Willson, E H Langlois and Jonathan Oldbuck, thinking as she goes, interrogating each piece of evidence, making connections with other information, raising and answering possible objections and refining her conclusions on the page. Her antiquarianism fed directly into her architecture and St Mary’s was built, literally, on the foundations of the past for the old flag stones were reburied at greater depth, with the exception of one small piece which was taken ‘as a specimen of the rest’ and set at the gate of the local schoolmaster’s house which she had designed.¹⁸¹ It was a compromise between preservation and the propagation of knowledge, both of pre-eminent concern to the antiquarian enterprise, with economic use of materials, for which Losh was also an enthusiast.

Antiquarianism was essential, too, to the design of the new building. The decoration and the furnishings of the church mark, in a very different form, that fusion of personal experience and historical knowledge that Willson invoked at Melton Mowbray. Unlike Willson, however, who was seeking to make a new argument in an old language, Losh was creating her own, individual, idiom drawn from the full range of imagery that her travels and her remarkably extensive education placed at her disposal. She also had the advantage of complete independence. More widely read and travelled than Milner, Britton or Willson, Losh was nevertheless perhaps closer to them in her sources as well as her methods than might at first appear. The surviving extracts from the journal, (the original is lost), that she kept of her travels in Italy suggests that she had a dislike and, probably, a doctrinal mistrust of religious imagery.

¹⁸⁰ Scott, *Border Antiquities*, pp. iv-v.

¹⁸¹ Document in the Jackson Collection, Carlisle Library.

Her criticism of Michelangelo's *Last Judgement* is revealing. She wrote: 'It is after all but painting, and the more wonderful it is the more it convinces one that the utmost faculties of man are inadequate to portray or even conceive the things of a future existence.'¹⁸² It was too literal. She preferred art, she wrote, that did not attempt to 'fix the clouds and embody the sunrise' but instead created 'analogous' sentiments in the mind, an art of symbols rather than of representation, an art closer to the primal experiences of humanity.¹⁸³ Losh used an extraordinary number and variety of symbolic forms, from the plan of the building itself to its external and internal furnishing and decoration. All relate to the theme of death and resurrection reflecting both the heart of the Christian faith and her own project, the memorialising of her sister, to whom she had been especially attached and from whose early and unexpected death she seems never entirely to have recovered.

Losh's education left her well supplied with suitable, if non-Christian, motifs, some quite conventional, such as the pomegranate which features in several places, and the pine cone. The concept of images that awake 'analogous sensations' implies, however, something more complex than the gracefully decorative classical allusions of a well-stocked mind, something closer to what her uncle James's friend Wordsworth, in the Preface to the *Lyrical Ballads*, meant by:

A certain colouring of imagination, whereby ordinary things should be presented to the mind in an unusual aspect; and, further, and above all, to make these incidents and situations interesting by tracing in them, truly though not ostentatiously, the primary laws of our nature.¹⁸⁴

That is what is achieved at Wreay, where the familiar, in the form of a country parish church is transformed by a personal metaphysic.

Losh certainly knew Wordsworth's work and may have known him personally.¹⁸⁵

Moreover, although it is impossible to prove, it seems likely that she knew Richard Payne

¹⁸² Quoted in Lonsdale, *The Worthies of Cumbria*, p.212.

¹⁸³ Quoted in Lonsdale, *The Worthies of Cumbria*, p.213.

¹⁸⁴ Wordsworth, *Lyrical Ballads*, 1, p.vii.

¹⁸⁵ Drew, 'Sara Losh and the "chapel of ease"', Appendix III, lists books from the family library, which includes an early edition of the *Lyrical Ballads* as well as works by several important antiquaries.

Knight's *The Symbolical Language of Ancient Art and Mythology, an inquiry*, first published in 1818. Pevsner could find no other word for Knight's views on recurring forms in art than 'psychoanalytical'.¹⁸⁶ Whether she knew it or not, Knight's introductory essay might stand as a description of what Losh achieved at Wreay, the intersection in a symbolic building of a private experience with the divine:

The religion of every person is included in his ideal of the Absolute Right. Every man's conception of the Deity is the reflection of his own interior character... true in essence, superior to the forms of worship... the heavenly principle and Supreme Order have been the constant faith of mankind... Religions were born from the human soul, and not fabricated. In process of time they evolved a twofold character, the external and the spiritual. Then symbolism became the handmaid to worship; and the Deity in all his attributes was represented by every form that was conceived to possess significance.¹⁸⁷

There follows a glossary of symbols and their meaning. If Losh read it she would have known that the pine cone and the lotus, the two most prominently recurring images inside her church, are symbolic in classical imagery not only of rebirth but of male and female respectively, 'the exterior emblems of sex'.¹⁸⁸ Whether such sexual imagery was comprehended in her view of the creative power of nature is not possible to know, but it is a possibility. What certainly is implicit is a view of religion as something wider, older and perhaps deeper than Christianity. On the night before her father's funeral in 1814 James Losh recalled that she spoke to him 'with great candour and energy upon many most deeply interesting subjects – she seems to suffer from those doubts and anxieties which are but too common to minds of much sensibility and deep research'.¹⁸⁹ By the 1840s such doubts were becoming more pressing throughout Victorian society and yet, with Darwin still to publish, it remained possible and indeed common to see a divine plan in nature that embraced both faith and those geological and scientific discoveries which so interested and also enriched the Losh family.

¹⁸⁶ Pevsner, 'Richard Payne Knight', p. 297.

¹⁸⁷ Knight, *The Symbolical Language of Ancient Art and Mythology*, pp. xiii-iv.

¹⁸⁸ Knight, *The Symbolical Language of Ancient Art and Mythology*, p. xiv.

¹⁸⁹ Journal of James Losh, quoted in Kemp, *Woodside*, p. 119.

The iconography of the east end of St Mary's is the most powerful and original in the church and is surely intended to represent in every sense the architect's conclusion. In the apse are the seven lamps that stand before the throne of God in the Book of Revelations, the culmination of the Christian gospel. Below them thirteen niches stand for Christ and the apostles while above, depicted in stained glass, are fossils. These are not generalised images but representations of specific fossilised ferns found in the coal-measures of Northumberland, the mines from which the Losh family fortune derived. They include, according to Losh's friend and biographer Henry Lonsdale (who was himself a doctor and a man of science) *Neuropteris*, *Pecopteris heterophylla*, *Spheopteris* and *Sphenophyllum Schlotheimii*. Lonsdale's interpretation of their significance is that the culmination of the church in natural rather than explicitly Christian imagery makes it 'a kind of pantheistic temple' in which 'the light passing through the ante-diluvian forest' strikes the marble lotus flower Losh designed to place on the altar.¹⁹⁰



Figure 42 St Mary's Wreay, apse, (with later wall paintings)

There are many more symbols inside and outside the church at Wreay and there is neither space nor time to consider them all, however, a few examples are worth noting.

¹⁹⁰ Lonsdale, *The Worthies of Cumbria*, p. 231.

The marble font just within the west door is one of several fittings carved by Losh herself and decorated with lilies, butterflies, vines and pomegranates, all emblems as Lonsdale noted, of ‘purity, transition to a new life, the ineffable union betwixt Christ and His Church’, but all with similar, pre-Christian meanings.¹⁹¹ The Greek word for butterfly, for example, as Losh would have known, is ‘psyche’ or soul. The top part of the font is carved in a neo-Norman zig-zag, its base decorated with Greek fluting. The combination of styles is certainly not accidental. It might be taken to imply the idea of Christian truth growing out of pre-Christian beliefs.¹⁹² In the stained glass in the nave there are Egyptian scarabs, pomegranates, a bird eating a frog –which may refer to another Egyptian reincarnation myth and various others. There are also fragments of French medieval glass and Italian woodwork which will be discussed in a later chapter.¹⁹³ Overall the meaning, however, is coherent. It is not exactly pantheistic, for nature and the religions of the past are held, literally and metaphorically, within a Christian, indeed a specifically Anglican framework. But it is a Christianity that excludes ideas of death and punishment in favour of renewal out of the forces of nature.

This symbolism extends to the plan of the building itself. St Mary’s is designed like a pre-Reformation church, with the focus on the altar at the East end, rather than a Protestant Georgian ‘preaching box’ with the emphasis on the pulpit. Here again, in the year after the first publication of *The Ecclesiologist*, Losh was using historical consciousness to make a statement that was peculiar and topical, personal and universal. ‘Ecclesiology’, the study of the form of churches, was strongly promoted by the Oxford and Cambridge societies, particularly the latter, as a matter of historical correctness in the conservation of old and the construction of new church buildings. Behind the avowed objective of a formally appropriate context for the liturgy of the Anglican Church, however, lay a barely concealed programme to revive the rituals of the pre-Reformation Catholic church for which medieval buildings had been designed. For the ecclesiologists

¹⁹¹Lonsdale, *The Worthies of Cumbria*, p. 225.

¹⁹² A similar combination of classical and Gothic, which may be susceptible to a similar interpretation, occurs in John Cosin’s remarkable furnishings for Durham Cathedral in the 1660s, including the font and canopy. Losh would almost certainly have seen these and possibly Cosin’s other furniture designs.

¹⁹³ See Chapter 4.

a church was a symbolic building, a series of sacred spaces imbued with religious meaning. A Camdenian church had a western baptistery, representing entry into both the mystical and the physical church. The nave ended with the rood screen, separating it from the chancel, secular from sacred, which partially concealed and partially disclosed the climax of the building, the altar, site of the mystery of the sacrament. It was a diagram of belief, a space designed to be experienced sequentially, the parts understood in relation to the whole. It was a sacred version of a programmatic picturesque walk through those discrete spaces which Milner had fought in vain to preserve at Salisbury.

Losh was well aware of these ideas. Her friend, neighbour and fellow antiquary Philip Howard of Naworth had just commissioned the little Roman Catholic church of Our Lady and St Wilfred at nearby Warwick Bridge, from A W N Pugin. It was that church which for Pevsner marked a period in the Gothic Revival, another product of the *annus mirabilis*: 'It is here and more or less precisely in 1841 that archaeological accuracy begins in English church design' he wrote.¹⁹⁴ Our Lady and St Wilfrid is a perfect example of ecclesiological correctness. In Losh's church the same principles are present, adapted to her own unorthodox ecclesiology. Over the chancel arch, where in a medieval church the doom would have been painted, depicting the last judgement, the subject she found so unsuitable for representation, even by Michelangelo, she placed instead a choir of carved angels between trees, while under the arch the north and south corbels are carved to represent two heads, a man and a woman.

The transition from nave to chancel is marked not by the rood, the crucified Christ with Mary and St John under the doom, portraying between them the Four Last Things: death, judgement, heaven and hell or by a screen. At Wreay the communicant passes instead between human figures. The male and female principles, perhaps, which recur in many religions. In Losh's church there is no sudden division between this world and the next, no death and no judgement. Arguably the most striking aspect of the symbolism of St Mary's is the symbol that is missing, there is no depiction of Christ crucified.

¹⁹⁴ Pevsner, *The Buildings of England, Cumberland and Westmorland*, p.198.

When St Mary's Wreay was consecrated in December 1842 it was just as well, perhaps, that 'Bishop Percy and his episcopate supporters', 'hardly comprehended' the building they came to open.¹⁹⁵ Just three years later, after John Henry Newman's defection to Rome, as factions within the established church fought out their theology over the erection of rood screens, the position of altars and the use, or not, of candles, it would have been much more difficult to get such an unorthodox piece of architecture past the church authorities. As it was Losh created a work of art that could not perhaps have been produced at any other moment in which the sensibility of the early Victorian age, its profound faith and equally profound doubts were filtered through one woman's engagement with history.

Robert Willis and the birth of Architectural History

If Losh represents one end of the spectrum of architectural antiquarianism in the fusion of subjective and objective, Willis represents the other. He was the antithesis and, in the event, the nemesis of the romantic antiquary. He had a scientific background, a conventional if distinguished university education at Cambridge and no interest in illusion of any sort. In 1821, having inspected Wolfgang von Kempelen's automaton which, it was claimed, could play chess, he published an exposé of the fraud, an account later passed off by Edgar Allan Poe as his own.¹⁹⁶ In 1837 Willis became Jacksonian professor of natural and experimental science at Cambridge. It would be wrong to depict him as dry, or an unimaginative pedant. He was a talented musician and a compelling lecturer who appealed to general as well as university audiences, but he was not, by any definition, a romantic.

¹⁹⁵ Lonsdale, *The Worthies of Cumbria*, p.230.

¹⁹⁶ Ben Marsden, 'Willis, Robert (1800–1875)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, Oct 2009. [http://www.oxforddnb.com.ezproxy.londonlibrary.co.uk/view/article/29584, accessed 2 March 2011].

Willis became the first academic and ‘probably the greatest’ architectural historian England produced.¹⁹⁷ With him the study of Gothic architecture reached an unprecedented level of scholarship. His success, which combined erudition with a reputation as a popular lecturer, was based on his analysis of buildings. ‘He treated a building as he treated a machine’ his nephew later wrote in the introduction to Willis’s history of Winchester cathedral, ‘he took it to pieces; he pointed out what was structural and what was decorative, what was imitated and what was original; and how the most complex forms of mediaeval invention might be reduced to simple elements’.¹⁹⁸ The moral, religious or emotional implications of the buildings he analysed should not, he believed, be any of his concern. In 1841 he resigned his vice-presidency of the Cambridge Camden Society in protest against the tendency ‘in some quarters... to convert the Society into an engine of polemical theology, instead of an instrument for promoting the study and the practice of Ecclesiastical Architecture’.¹⁹⁹ He was by no means indifferent to aesthetics or religion but for Willis subjective engagement was inimical to scholarly integrity. The distinction between ‘the aesthetic character, mechanical arrangement & the symbolism of a building should be very clearly understood’ he wrote, in notes left unfinished at his death, ‘for the want of this classification has been the source of an error unhappily too prevalent in the present day and which leads to the most fatal consequences’.²⁰⁰ As Buchanan observes, ‘what Willis meant by history was pure chronology’.²⁰¹

He was not the first architectural antiquary to think in this way. Neither Thomas Rickman (1776-1841), who established the chronology and the terminology still generally used to describe Gothic architecture, nor George Whittington (1781-1807) who successfully traced the elusive origins of the pointed arch to the Abbé Suger’s St Denis, had apparently much involved themselves in those emotional and spiritual experiences of the Gothic that Milner, Britton, Losh and Willson, entertained. Willis, however, was

¹⁹⁷ Watkin, *The Rise of Architectural History*, p.65.

¹⁹⁸ Willis, *The Architectural History of Winchester Cathedral*, p. ii.

¹⁹⁹ *The Ecclesiologist*, 1, (1841), p.25.

²⁰⁰ Mss notes left unfinished at Willis’s death, quoted in Buchanan, ‘Robert Willis and the Rise of Architectural History’, Appendix A, p. iv.

²⁰¹ Buchanan, ‘Robert Willis and the Rise of Architectural History’, p.368.

influential on a far greater scale. His method was immediately seen as innovative and as J H Parker (1806-84) the Oxford publisher recalled it was Willis who ‘first brought the system into such thorough order, that it became quite undeniable to any educated person who takes the trouble to follow his steps and examine the evidence’.²⁰² Rickman was not an educated person. He had, as Parker admitted, pointed the way but he was ‘not a learned man, not well acquainted with history, or the use of records. Willis... made architectural history complete, thorough and undeniable’.²⁰³

As this suggests Willis’s dominance was not unconnected with a sense of his social as much as his intellectual superiority to most of his predecessors and contemporaries in the field, but it would be unjust to suggest that it was not mostly attributable to his brilliance, the concentrated focus of a trained mind and the ability to organise and communicate his findings that he brought to the subject. Willis himself was respectful in his writings of Britton and Milner, even when he disagreed with them and used Pugin and Willson’s *Specimens* for his own studies. Nevertheless he represented a new generation in antiquarianism and a new approach that would in time eclipse the old.

From 1835, when he published *Remarks on the Architecture of the Middle Ages, Especially of Italy*, which drew attention to the important but neglected Italian gothic, Willis had been a respected author on the subject. After 1837, when a legacy gave him financial independence, his interest in Gothic architecture developed, manifested in one or two built projects, including the cemetery chapel at Wisbech and in his paper *On the Construction of the Vaults of the Middle Ages*, read to the Institute of British Architects, of which he was a fellow, in 1841 and published the following year. Significantly Willis was never a fellow of the Society of Antiquaries and probably never considered becoming one.

It was in 1844, with the foundation of the British Archaeological Association and the delivery of the first of the series of lectures on the history of individual cathedrals to

²⁰² Quoted in Buchanan, ‘Robert Willis and the Rise of Architectural History’, with no source, p.160.

²⁰³ Quoted in Buchanan, ‘Robert Willis and the Rise of Architectural History’, p.161.

its annual congress that he began to attract a wider following and to challenge the old order. The Association was broadly antiquarian in its terms of reference. The modern definition of archaeology as the study of the physical remains of the pre-historic past had been proposed by Willis's friend, William Whewell (1794-1866), in 1837, but the older meaning of the word as simply the study of the past still co-existed. 'Archaeological' was a more attractive term by the 1840s than 'antiquarian' when, in addition to the general opprobrium that the word had always attracted, the Society of Antiquaries was felt by many, including John Britton, to have slipped so far from the centre of the debate as to be in the grip of 'a long and morbid fit of apathy and uselessness... constitutionally unfitted to administer to the reasonable demands of the majority of its fellows'.²⁰⁴ It suited better the ethos of the new reign and the foundation of the Association, like that of the RIBA, which received its royal charter in 1837, marked a step towards specialisation and professionalisation.

At the first BAA congress, in Canterbury, Willis, as President of the architectural section of the Association, read his paper on Canterbury cathedral. It was to be his first and last appearance. A dispute over the publication of the proceedings which it was felt by some members should not be undertaken for profit, led to the secession of Willis and others and the formation of the rival Architectural Institute, to which the rest of Willis's cathedral studies were delivered. The true reasons for the schism were thought by some of the participants to be social and it was remembered by one of them that 'there was a small clique of ignorant persons who set up poor old John Britton as a rival to Willis' and that 'Willis's friends and pupils could not stand such nonsense'.²⁰⁵ Willis himself, according to Buchanan, prevented Britton from speaking.²⁰⁶ The following year both the rival societies met in Winchester. The BAA was addressed by Edward Cressy (1792-1858), who had been a member of Britton's short-lived Society of Antiquaries and Architects of London. Like Willis he was an authority on Italian medieval architecture but unlike him was also a working architect, currently employed in the important but ungentle capacity of sewerage consultant to the City of London.

²⁰⁴ Britton, *Autobiography*, (1850), 2, Appendix, p.103.

²⁰⁵ Quoted in Buchanan, 'Robert Willis and the Rise of Architectural History', p.104.

²⁰⁶ Buchanan, 'Robert Willis and the Rise of Architectural History', p.104.

Willis's history of Winchester cathedral was set out on the same plan as his Canterbury, its intention:

To bring together all the recorded evidence that belongs to the building, excluding historical matter that relates only to the see or district; to examine the building itself for the purpose of investigating the mode of its construction, and the successive changes and additions that have been made to it; and lastly, to compare the recorded evidence with the structural evidence as much as possible. A complete delineation and description of the building must not be expected, any more than a complete history of the see. The first have been most admirably supplied in the plates and text of Mr Britton's well known volume, and the able and copious work of Milner contains every particular that can be required for the second.²⁰⁷

This acknowledgement of Milner and Britton and their methods was a backhanded compliment. He did not wish to duplicate their work but neither did he try to develop it. Much of Britton's and all of Milner's efforts were, to him, of little value. He went on to explain that the cathedral could be 'disentangled with advantage from the mass of local information in which it is enveloped'.²⁰⁸ Architectural history was to be extracted from topography once and for all and purified of anecdotes. Willis's account of Canterbury appeared in 1845 as *The Architectural History of Canterbury Cathedral*, apparently the first book to define itself as 'architectural history'.

Willis's focus on the structure combined with his skill as a lecturer and his novel method of conducting a tour of the building he was discussing, ensured success on both scholarly and popular fronts. His research was systematic; his frame of reference effortlessly broad. Along with the tangle of local facts Willis shook off Georgian antiquarianism. He understood the fabric of Winchester better than Milner, who had thought some of it Saxon. Milner's lack of comparative sources and his deep attachment to the cathedral had allowed him to think that it was first truly Gothic structure, the much sought-after primary site. By the 1840s he was known to be factually wrong and increasingly such local affections seemed naïve. Willis's approach was not universally

²⁰⁷ Willis *The Architectural History of Winchester Cathedral*, p.1.

²⁰⁸ Willis *The Architectural History of Winchester Cathedral*, p.1.

admired, however. His lack of interest in social context and aesthetic appeal was disliked by E A Freeman (1823-1892), the historian who in 1849, published what seems to have been the first book to call itself *A History of Architecture*. Freeman specifically criticised the purely factual approach of Willis and Whewell:

Though of equal merit in their own line, I cannot consider that line quite such a high one; at all events it is not the same, nor so directly connected with my own view. Their writings treat as much of building as of architecture; their aim is to exhibit the mechanical rather than the artistic view.²⁰⁹

Ruskin's *Seven Lamps of Architecture*, published the same year, reinvented the picturesque sensibility for the Victorian age. But neither Freeman nor Ruskin was an antiquary. The two elements that had combined to create romantic antiquarianism, the sentimental and the analytic, were drawing apart.

In 1849 the Archaeological Institute held its annual congress at Salisbury. Exactly sixty years after Gough's attack on Wyatt the meeting marked 'a memorable epoch', as Britton noted, 'not only for the city but for the county'.²¹⁰ It was an epoch too in the history of antiquarianism. The Institute, like its parent and rival the BAA, was, as Britton also commented, 'zealous, active, full of ability' if 'unfortunately distracted and weakened by personal divisions'.²¹¹ Given the circumstances Britton may well have exaggerated the difficulties under which the two societies laboured, and he failed to mention the considerable rivalry between them. His remarks came in the context of a doomed attempt to seize back the initiative in architectural antiquarianism with an appeal for a 'National Historical, Archaeological, and Topographical Institution: for the preservation of vestiges of antiquity, manuscripts, books etc'.²¹² Such a body would, Britton argued, draw together members of the various societies in the interests of 'efficiency and centralization'.²¹³ That same year he attempted to reinvigorate the Wiltshire Topographical Society, which had been languishing, by changing its name to

²⁰⁹ Freeman, *A History of Architecture*, p.xiii.

²¹⁰ Britton, *An Address from John Britton*, p.2.

²¹¹ Britton, *Autobiography*, (1850), 2, Appendix, p.103.

²¹² Britton, *Autobiography*, (1850), 2, Appendix, p.103.

²¹³ Britton, *Autobiography*, (1850), 2, Appendix, p.103.

the Wiltshire Archaeological and Natural History Institute, ‘with a view and in the hope of rendering it more popular, and consequently more useful’.²¹⁴ Archaeology had indeed overtaken topography in the popular mind as a way of looking at the landscape of the past, but Britton, in ill-health and nearing the end of his life, was too late to catch this particular bandwagon, it had rolled beyond his reach.

The mid century did not see the end of the antiquarian endeavour in architecture or elsewhere.²¹⁵ The Wiltshire Archaeological Society still exists as does the Society of Antiquaries, which awoke from its slumbers later in the century although its prominence has been more notable in the field of archaeology (as understood in the modern sense) than in architectural history. Both the British Archaeological Association and the Archaeological Institute also survive; the latter, significantly, is now Royal under the patronage of Her Majesty the Queen. Both hold their lectures in the rooms of the Society of Antiquaries. Antiquarianism per se, however, was never again so closely involved with architectural history and its fate on this front was indicative.

²¹⁴ Britton, *An Address from John Britton*, p.1.

²¹⁵ See Buchanan, ‘Robert Willis and the Rise of Architectural History’, p.377, for varying views on the status of antiquarianism in the later nineteenth century.

Chapter Three

Revolution to Restoration: cross-Channel antiquarianism

There were, throughout the period, strong links between antiquarian endeavours in Britain and France, particularly between English antiquaries and their counterparts in Paris and Normandy. Contrary to what might be expected revolution and war were no absolute obstacle, they were indeed in some ways positive incentives to collaboration. By the same token the co-operation that characterised the Napoleonic era and its immediate aftermath, tailed off after the July Revolution of 1830, diminishing noticeably towards the middle of the nineteenth century.

This chapter considers the ways in which Anglo-French antiquarianism developed and, while it included a considerable interest in historic architecture, moved beyond it into the broader area of social history, the ‘manners and customs’, to use a popular contemporary phrase, of the past. This antiquarian interest in what Walter Scott called the ‘vie privée’ of earlier times fed directly into the arts, especially those of fiction and painting, and artistic concerns were reciprocally felt in antiquarian writing and activity.¹ The material remains of the past, including those of the recent past, assumed in this context unprecedented importance. In the relations between England and France we see the fusion of romance and reality emerging into antiquarianism as narrative, not only a subjectively lived but a publically enacted relationship with history.

There is also to some extent in the period a reversal of roles between France and England. At the end of the eighteenth century French antiquaries, in so far as they existed at all, envied the English the resources and the social and cultural support available to them. By the mid-nineteenth century the position had shifted with many of the English feeling that antiquarian matters were better managed in France. At the same time the trade in ‘salvaged’ antiquities which were pouring into Britain from the Continent put a strain on relations between the two

¹ Scott, *Ivanhoe*, p.8

countries. By the 1850s it is apparent that the reciprocity that marked the high point of Anglo-French antiquarianism in the 1820s and early 1830s had been not so much a convergence of ideas as a brief intersection, a crossing of paths that were to lead in different directions. Until the later 1840s, however, England and France each found in the other a mirror, or a sounding board, against which it created its own relationship to a national, and to some extent a shared, past. Anglo-French collaboration was also the context in which the Society of Antiquaries of London, so generally torpid at this date, made its most important contribution with the initiative to document the Bayeux Tapestry.

Anglo-French antiquarianism has never, as far as I am aware, been considered as a discrete subject. There have been studies of Walter Scott's influence in France² and of neo-Norman architecture in England,³ both of which will be considered further here as part of a larger pattern. The Society of Antiquaries' analysis of the Bayeux Tapestry has also been studied, in the context of the Tapestry's longer history although the most recent account, as I shall argue, misreads the nature of the antiquarian collaboration and misses one of the most enduring, if not perhaps the happiest of antiquarian contributions to modern understanding of the past.⁴ The individual antiquaries who feature in this chapter are Francis Douce, Walter Scott, Dawson Turner and E H Langlois, with brief mention of John Gage, John Britton and John Milner. None of them, with the exception of Scott, has been considered specifically in terms of the relations between French and English antiquarianism.

The French Revolution and the war: 1789-1814

To say that the Revolution did for French antiquarianism what the Reformation did for English, is to oversimplify, but there is a great deal in the comparison and it has been made, recently, by

² I have relied chiefly on Wright, 'Scott's Historical Novels and French Historical Painting' and Noon, *Constable to Delacroix*. See also: Bann, *The Clothing of Cleo and Painting History* and Dargan, 'Scott and the French Romantics'.

³ Notably Mowl, 'The Norman Revival' and Stamp, 'High Victorian Gothic and the Architecture of Normandy'. See also Boucher-Rivalain, 'Attitudes to Gothic in French architectural writings'.

⁴ Hicks, *The Bayeux Tapestry*.

at least one French scholar.⁵ There had been antiquaries in France before 1789 as there had been antiquaries in England before 1535. There were, most notably, the five volumes of Bernard de Montfaucon's *Monumens[sic] de la Monarchie Française*, published from 1729-33. The age of the encyclopédistes had laid the ground work for a more systematic investigation of the past, but this was still embryonic.⁶ There was no substantial body of antiquarian knowledge, no community of antiquarian activity. The Revolution therefore posed both a challenge and an opportunity to the preservation of the past, or rather it presented first an opportunity and then a terrifying and urgent challenge.

One of the first acts of the French Constituent Assembly after the Revolution was the annexing of church property, which it effected on 2 October 1789. The property of the émigrés and of the Crown was soon added. Thus in France, as in England, 1789 saw the beginning of that process of development from passive to active antiquarianism, but on a much more dramatic scale and at accelerated speed. It was, in one sense, accomplished overnight. As Françoise Choay, puts it:

Du jour au lendemain, la conservation iconographique abstraite des antiquaires cédait place à une conservation réelle. [From one day to the next the virtual preservation of monuments by illustration gave way to actual preservation.]⁷

The project to document all this newly-acquired state property began at once and on 11 December 1790 the antiquary and naturalist Aubin-Louis Millin presented the first volume of his account of the *Antiquités nationales ou Recueil de Monuments*, a work in which the phrase 'monument historique' was used for the first time, to the National Assembly.⁸ Lest anyone should doubt where his sympathies lay Millin's first subject was the Bastille, which he characterised as France's most important monument: 'par la terreur qu'inspiroit son existence, & par la joie universelle qu'a causée sa chute.' [For the terror that its existence inspired and the joy that was occasioned by its fall.]⁹

⁵Choay, *The Invention of the Historic Monument*, p.60.

⁶ Choay, *The Invention of the Historic Monument*, p.50 makes a detailed comparison of England and France at the beginning of the eighteenth century.

⁷ Choay, *L'Allégorie du Patrimoine* pp. 77-78. As elsewhere, unless stated, the translation is my own.

⁸ Choay, *L'Allégorie du Patrimoine*, p.77

⁹ Millin, *Antiquités Nationales ou recueil de monumens*, unnumbered first page.

After which he went on to give a detailed and unexceptionable account of the building, its statuary and the various documentary sources for its history. This first volume was well received and the project eventually ran to five, the last of which appeared in 1799. By that time, however, Millin had spent a year in prison. What had begun as an academic exercise primarily to document the monuments of France, not so different from the passive or iconographic antiquarianism of earlier years, turned with the events of the Terror into an active and hazardous attempt to preserve them from destruction. It was not the 14 July 1789, but 20 June 1791, the day on which the flight of the French royal family was intercepted at Varennes, launching a wave of violent destruction, that pitched French antiquaries into an active, not to say dangerous relationship with their subject matter. This was the beginning of the ideological iconoclasm for which the Abbé Gregoire coined the word ‘vandalisme’ when, at St Denis, the Benedictine Dom Germain Poirier watched while ‘en trois jours on a détruit l’ouvrage de douze siècles’ [in three days they destroyed the work of twelve centuries].¹⁰ It was to be in what E-H Langlois later called ‘l’impitoyable creuset révolutionnaire’ [the merciless crucible of the revolution] that modern French antiquarianism was forged.¹¹

At this point most British antiquaries could do no more than read their newspapers with growing curiosity and alarm, but on a collector as rich, well-placed and intrepid as William Beckford (1760-1844), the opportunities of such upheaval need not be lost. Beckford was in Paris, with only occasional breaks, from October 1790 until May 1793, shopping. ‘Happy, aye thrice happy are those who in this good Capital and at this period have plenty of money’ he wrote, ‘their kingdom is come, their will is done on earth, if not in heaven.’¹² Only after the outbreak of war between England and France was his progress impeded when he was arraigned before the Committee of Public Safety and was lucky to escape with his life. Agents and dealers, however, continued to buy for him for the rest of the decade. Exceptional as Beckford was in most ways, his activities demonstrate the fact that the antiquarian enterprise never entirely stopped. The collection and dispersal of *objets d’art* and antiquities continued to some extent throughout the Terror and the revolutionary wars. For the French themselves activity was

¹⁰ Réau, *Histoire du Vandalisme*, p.288.

¹¹ Langlois, *St Wandrille*, p.295.

¹² Quoted in Wainwright, ‘Lucifer’s Metropolis’, p.83.

centered on the Louvre as it was transformed into a public art gallery and on Alexandre Lenoir's state-funded Musée des Monumens [sic] Français where the tombs from St Denis and other displaced monuments were gathered. Of both museums there will be more to say later, for they came to exert a powerful fascination on British antiquaries. For the moment, however, France was inaccessible to them. Significant Anglo-French collaboration began with the arrival in Britain of antiquarian exiles.

One of the most productive of these was the Abbé Gervais de la Rue (1751-1835), who was among about a hundred French clergy to sail from Le Havre for England on 7 September 1792. An antiquary from Caen, with a particular interest in Norman and Anglo-Norman literature, de la Rue's years in England were fruitful. He was in London until the summer of 1796, returning to France via the Netherlands sometime before May 1798. Working in London and Oxford he assembled the Beaumont Charters, a sequence of documents relating to Norman Abbeys (now in the John Rylands Library, Manchester University).¹³ Equally importantly he established relationships with English antiquaries which were to have far-reaching implications. He got to know, among others, Isaac d'Israeli, Joseph Banks, the naturalist whose antiquarian friends included Dawson Turner and the great bibliophile John Ker, third Duke of Roxburghe, though de la Rue found, as did others, that 'sa grace est un peu sauvage' [his grace is somewhat ill-tempered].¹⁴

De la Rue was elected a fellow of the Society of Antiquaries and it was probably via the Society that he gained his first introductions in England.¹⁵ The most significant of his friendships was with Francis Douce. De la Rue and Douce shared an interest in 'manners and customs' and their correspondence, now in the Bodleian Library, which lasted until a few months before Douce's death, ranged over de la Rue's work on the Anglo-Norman poet Marie, his study of the early troubadours, the works of Walter Scott, Gothic architecture and the Bayeux Tapestry.

¹³ Hicks, *The Bayeux Tapestry*, p.116 gives an outline of De la Rue's career.

¹⁴ Douce/de La Rue letters. f19. Caen 18 vendemiaire an XI (10 October, 1802). The letters reveal much about his and Douce's range of acquaintance. I have preserved de la Rue's spelling, including his cavalier attitude to diacritical marks.

¹⁵ Evans, *History of the Society of Antiquaries*, p.198 describes Dom François Philippe Gourdin, an honorary fellow, writing to the Society from Rouen in 1792, warning that he may soon need to take refuge in England. He arrived shortly before de la Rue and may well have furnished introductions.

There are, apparently, only two letters to Douce surviving from de la Rue's time in England, for some of which at least the Abbé was staying with Douce and his wife and would have had no need to write. It is the subsequent correspondence (of which only de la Rue's letters are known to survive) that continued, precariously, through the war years and after that gives an insight into the two men's relationship and the ways in which English and French antiquarianism supported and stimulated one another.

Douce and de la Rue had strong and sharply varying political opinions, which divided along the absolute opposite of nationalist lines. Douce was a great admirer of Napoleon. De la Rue was not, referring to him as 'notre tyran' [our tyrant].¹⁶ They agreed, however, that war was bad for 'notre correspondance Litteraire' [our literary correspondence] although this was only partly true for de la Rue who found that international hostilities brought him an embarrassment of riches.¹⁷ In May 1798 he was writing from Paris to London of the enormous quantity of manuscripts flooding into the French national archives from the territories conquered by the revolutionary armies. He was waiting with particular impatience for those sequestered, or looted, from the Vatican as he knew that they would include many offering valuable points of comparison with the early French romances that interested him. He was finding examples of the songs of Marie unrepresented in the manuscript collections that his exile had allowed him to study in England.

By July 1799, however, with fifty thousand manuscripts in front of him and 'point de catalogue' [no catalogue] he was feeling somewhat overwhelmed.¹⁸ In addition to this there were dangers in corresponding with the enemy. He did not, at first, sign his letters to Douce and was anxious that when his work was published by the Society of Antiquaries his title should not be added to his name as 'cela me feroit inquieter ici' [that would cause trouble for me here].¹⁹ Despite which difficulties the most striking thing about his correspondence with Douce is the consistency with which, for good and ill, the antiquarian endeavour was prosecuted. The only hostilities in which de la Rue took part were scholarly. His discovery in Paris of several Anglo-

¹⁶ Douce/de la Rue letters, f44, 25 April 1814.

¹⁷ Douce/de la Rue letters, f4, 12 May, 1798.

¹⁸ Douce/de la Rue letters, f6, 2 prairial an 7, (21 May 1799).

¹⁹ Douce/de la Rue letters, f5, 12 May, 1798.

Norman troubadour manuscripts of the twelfth century, the authors of which had English names was a point, he noted to Douce, against Thomas Percy (1729-1811), compiler of the popular but academically flawed *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry* of 1765. De la Rue noted it as a point for ‘votre ami son antagoniste’ [your friend his enemy] who was probably Joseph Ritson.²⁰

Between them Douce and de la Rue managed to get the Abbé’s paper ‘On Anglo-Norman Poets’ read (by Douce) to the Society of Antiquaries on 29 March 1798 and it was eventually published in the Society’s journal, *Archaeologia*, although not before de la Rue had complained several times of the delay adding:

A quoi bon tirer des tenebres des hommes qui honorerent l’angleterre, pour que la societe des antiquaries les y replonge en ne faisant pas imprimer mes dissertations. [What is the point of drawing from obscurity these men who did honour to England, only for the Society of Antiquaries to submerge them again by failing to publish my work.]²¹

Douce, who managed with great difficulty to get a copy of the published article through to de la Rue in Paris, may have been irritated when the Abbé expressed disappointment at receiving only one.

As these instances of his correspondence suggest de la Rue was as pugnacious as the next antiquary but not in any narrow sense a nationalist, neither French nor, despite his gratitude to the country that had given him refuge, English. He made up his mind on the basis of the evidence and confided in friends as he found them. Thus he was willing to share with Douce his latest researches while playing his cards rather closer to his chest with M Le Grand, librarian at the Bibliothèque Nationale who was always trying to draw him out about his theories. ‘Je reste boutonné’ he told Douce [I keep the stopper in].²² Writing in 1813, from Caen about the new catalogue of manuscripts in the British Museum by Henry Ellis (1777-1869), another friend of Douce, de la Rue was highly critical, (as were many others) accusing Ellis of misdating texts and of ignoring thirteenth-century Anglo-Norman writers in order to give a longer history to English

²⁰ Douce/de la Rue letters, f4, 12 May, 1798. Ritson maintained a long campaign against Percy, accusing him of manipulating his sources.

²¹ Douce/de la Rue letters, f12v, 15 fructidor, an 8 (2 September 1800).

²² Douce/de la Rue letters, f4, 12 May, 1798.

poetry. If de la Rue had a prejudice it was, perhaps, in favour of the ‘Anglo-Norman’ period, reflecting as it did a cross-Channel collaboration of the sort he himself enjoyed, but it is quite wrong to describe him as having ‘a strongly anti-French intellectual agenda’, or as far as I can see any ‘agenda’ at all.²³ More generally the reception of his papers at the Society of Antiquaries, submitted as they were over eighteen years from a country with which Britain was throughout at war, indicates how little national hostilities weighed with the antiquarian community.

The Douce-de la Rue letters, with their many references to mutual antiquarian friends, enemies and acquaintances on both sides of the Channel also show how correspondence was piquing mutual curiosity. De la Rue had at this time no outlet for his researches comparable to the meetings of the Society of Antiquaries and *Archaeologia*, while Douce and his fellow antiquaries were tantalized by the material flowing into Paris. It was this support network that made possible the most prominent Anglo-French antiquarian project of the period, the documentation of the Bayeux Tapestry and the associated debate as to its date and origins. This was a truly bi-lateral effort which, though it involved fierce disputes on points of history, demonstrated that what Hicks calls ‘the basic French-English antipathies’, far from dominating the discussion, barely marked it at all.²⁴ The Tapestry, which had been the subject of several studies in English, notably in Andrew Ducarel’s *Anglo-Norman Antiquities* of 1767, was taken from Bayeux to Paris in 1803 and used to great effect as propaganda by Napoleon, who displayed it in the Louvre (then the Musée Napoléon) encouraging obvious analogies between the Conquest and his own forthcoming invasion of Britain.

This led to an exchange of letters in the *Gentleman’s Magazine* between 1803-4, at the height of the invasion scare, which was indeed conducted on nationalist rather than scholarly lines, and added no new information. The serious, antiquarian debate began with de la Rue’s paper, which was read to the Society of Antiquaries, by Douce, on 12 November 1812 and published in *Archaeologia* in 1814. It expounded de la Rue’s view that the Tapestry was made in England, some time after the events it depicted. There, for the moment, the discussion had to

²³ Hicks, *The Bayeux Tapestry*, p.117.

²⁴ Hicks, *The Bayeux Tapestry*, p. 134.

rest, for the Tapestry remained inaccessible to the English for by 1814 the Continent had been largely closed to the British for over twenty years. Impatience and curiosity had been rising steadily in many sections of society. Paris, despite being the enemy, exerted a fascination. It was admired as a source of fashion and cultural brilliance, the capital of the most powerful nation in Europe and now the depository of many of its greatest art treasures.

Among antiquaries the Bayeux Tapestry was one focus of interest. The other, even greater, was Gothic architecture. Not only had it been widely and deeply investigated over the previous decades, the question of its origins, whether in England, France or Germany was hotly contested but the debate was difficult to conclude without the opportunity to compare examples at first hand. The brief Peace of Amiens from 1802-3 permitted some cross-Channel exchanges, and was probably the spur for the discussion of the Bayeux Tapestry in the *Gentleman's Magazine*. A more observant traveller on that occasion, however, was George Whittington, who had managed to make a tour of France and Italy in the company of George Hamilton Gordon, 4th Earl of Aberdeen. Whittington, who died in 1807 at the age of twenty-six, wrote an important treatise based on his tour, *An Historical Survey of the Ecclesiastical Antiquities of France; with a view to illustrate the rise and progress of Gothic architecture in Europe*. It was seen through the press by Aberdeen in 1809.

If the book was not quite on the scale that the title suggested, having been left incomplete at Whittington's death, it displayed an analytical power and breadth that would surely have made the author a rival to Robert Willis had he lived. Arguing that the Gothic should be defined by more than the pointed arch and analyzing by eye and by comparison with surviving documents half a dozen of the most important Gothic churches of Paris, Rheims and Amiens, Whittington deduced that the Gothic should properly be said to derive from Abbot Suger's alterations to the chevet of St Denis in 1140. This conclusion, which all subsequent research has supported, directly contradicted Carter, Milner and, as Aberdeen pointed out in the Preface, the official opinion of the Society of Antiquaries, all of whom held that Gothic was English. Whittington was not an antiquary indeed he moved in gentlemanly circles where such pursuits were regarded as somewhat *infra dig*. His friend the Earl, Byron's cousin, 'Athenian'

Aberdeen,²⁵ had excavated the amphitheatre on the Pnyx in Athens and noted discouragingly in his Preface to Whittington's book that 'The subject [of Gothic architecture] is not in itself very generally interesting'²⁶, while the anonymous editor's note at the end suggested that:

It may excite some degree of regret, perhaps, that a writer, possessed of the qualifications which distinguished the author of the foregoing work, should have confined his talents to a discussion of so limited and partial an interest as the progress of Gothic Architecture.²⁷

Emanating from such an alien milieu Whittington's treatise might have sunk without trace and indeed the Society of Antiquaries seems to have paid little attention to it. By now, however, the subject was, whatever Whittington's friends thought, of immense and widespread interest far beyond the Society. His book was much discussed. Dawson Turner for one took it with him when, at last, France was once again accessible.

All London in Paris: 1814-15

The Treaty of Paris, which brought an end to the war, was signed on 30 May 1814. That very morning Dawson Turner set off from London with his wife, two of his daughters and two friends, including Charles Lyell the geologist, for Paris, where they arrived on 10 June.²⁸ Historic art and architecture were, at this stage of his life, not Turner's principal interests, botany had until now been his main occupation. This visit to France sparked the beginning of a new commitment to antiquarian enquiry. His copy of Whittington's *Survey* in hand he inspected St Denis and the Ste Chapelle. 'Nous voici donc a Paris' he wrote in his journal, 'in the midst of the wonders of the world, full of expectations & hope & anxiety & bent upon acquiring information.'²⁹ He and his party were interested in and observant of everything from theatre scenery to table manners but among their main objectives were the Louvre and Lenoir's Musée

²⁵ The account of Aberdeen's career is taken from the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*.

²⁶ Whittington, *An Historical Survey of the Ecclesiastical Antiquities of France*, Preface, p. xiv.

²⁷ Whittington, *An Historical Survey of the Ecclesiastical Antiquities of France*, p.172.

²⁸ Turner, 'Journal of a Tour to France, 1814'.

²⁹ Turner 'Journal of a Tour to France, 1814', f107.

des Monumens Français. They were not alone. On their first visit the Louvre was too crowded to see much. All of London, as the popular song had it, was in Paris.³⁰



Figure 23 Le Musée des Monumens Français

The attraction of the Louvre for the English, apart from seeing the art itself, lay in the very idea of a public gallery. There was no such thing in Britain. With his orderly, botanical mind, however, Turner was disappointed by the looseness of the categories in the various rooms. He found the sculpture ‘too crowded & not arranged by any system’.³¹ The ‘Salle des hommes illustres’, for example, included statues of Minerva and Mercury, while the Venus de Medici was dwarfed. Over a number of visits Turner and his friends debated the morality of the French acquisitions from conquered nations and the quality of various paintings. Yet whatever they thought of its arrangement and its legitimacy, neither they nor any of the other tourists had any doubt about what kind of objects they were discussing. These were works of art, created, displayed and debated as such. At the Musée des Monumens Français, however, the case was less clear and much more significant for that particular relationship to the artefacts of the past represented by antiquarianism [fig: 23]. Housed in the former convent of the Petits-Augustins the museum had been known in Britain for some time. The first volume of the catalogue was translated into English in 1803, and visitors over a decade later were agog to see the reality.

³⁰ Grimaldi sang: ‘London now is out of town/Who in England tarries?/Who can bear to linger there/When all the world’s in Paris’. Quoted in Mansell, *Paris Between Empires*, p.38.

³¹ Turner, ‘Journal of a Tour to France, 1814’, f149.

This, in so far as it could be categorised, came closer to the antiquarian category of ‘curiosity’ than to art. By the very act of displaying in a museum the funerary monuments and architectural fragments he had ‘rescued’, along with reliquaries, busts, plaster casts and pieces of armour, Lenoir was redefining them, creating a new context, both physical and cultural, for objects, which, however aesthetically conceived, had never been designed to be viewed as discrete works of art. Lenoir has been a controversial figure, ever since the Revolution, both a hero and a villain.³² A great deal has been written about the Musée both in the context of the Revolution and as part of the history of public museums.³³ Francis Haskell, whose discussion of Lenoir in *History and its Images* comes closest to my concerns and gives a full and nuanced account of reactions to the Museum, nevertheless perpetuates the idea that between Lenoir’s interest in history and his attempt to create an atmospheric sequence of rooms calculated to appeal to the visitor’s sensibility, there lay a contradiction. Lenoir, Haskell says, ‘did all he could to encourage a historical, and not merely an artistic, approach to the monuments in his charge by sprinkling his catalogue entries with biographical anecdotes and summaries of colourful episodes’.³⁴ Yet Lenoir, like so many of the antiquaries of his generation, saw the historical and the artistic, the aesthetic and the factual, as mutually reinforcing.

He presented himself, naturally enough, as a hero defying the revolutionary vandals and to some extent he was. He lost a finger preventing the demolition of the tomb of Cardinal Richelieu [fig: 24]. Others nevertheless accused him of vandalism himself, of acquiring objects for the Musée that were not in any (other) way threatened. In the context of antiquarianism, however, for good or ill, Lenoir is a pivotal figure. His reclassification of the objects he acquired was initially largely pragmatic, indeed redefinition was as vital to their survival during the Revolution as the preservation of their physical integrity. The royal tombs from St Denis represented monarchy and Christianity, both of which were at that time illegal. Lenoir’s presentation of them as works of art moved them back into the category of the permissible. The

³² Choay, *The Invention of the Historic Monument* pp.67-69 and Poulot, Dominique, ‘Alexandre Lenoir et les musées des monuments français’.

³³ Notably: Courajod, *Alexandre Lenoir*; Poulot, ‘Alexandre Lenoir et les musées des monuments français’; Haskell, *History and its Images*, pp.236-252.

³⁴ Haskell, *History and its Images*, p.250.

result, albeit unintentional, was that by presenting his collection as a history of art, Lenoir brought the material artefacts that had been the subject matter of private antiquarian enquiry into the public realm as a legitimate means of understanding history. However accidentally it came about it was a development in keeping with the spirit of the age. The Musée was immensely popular from the beginning.



Figure 24 Lenoir at St Denis

As Dawson Turner discovered it was also more rigorously organised than the Louvre, for it was presented as a chronological account of French architecture and sculpture. Most visitors, however, French or foreign, did not, could not, assess its contents simply in aesthetic terms. With the passage of time, as the Terror receded, both Lenoir and his public accepted that the interest of the collection was due in part to the associative qualities of objects which carried with them something of the time and place from which they had been uprooted. What Lenoir offered in his galleries and the extensive catalogue that accompanied them was not, in fact, pure chronology but a narrative, however fragmentary. Reactions to the Musée accordingly varied depending on the visitors' receptiveness to a view of the past that was evocative as well as documentary; on whether they wanted to engage in a reciprocal relationship with the collection or simply to study and observe it. The contrasting reactions of George Whittington, classically educated fellow of St John's College, Cambridge and Dawson Turner, largely self-educated polymath and budding antiquary, are revealing.

Whittington was prepared to give Lenoir credit for his courage and enthusiasm in salvaging the objects and to some extent ‘the taste which he has displayed in their arrangement’.³⁵ His reservations, however, were grave:

The spectator of the Museum will still have to regret the want of that judgement in its disposition, which might have converted an interesting exhibition of authenticated remains of antiquity, into a sensible lecture on the progress of the arts, which, without ceasing to please as an object of curiosity, might have conveyed instruction in the most easy and forcible manner.³⁶

In some of his detailed criticisms Whittington seems extraordinarily naïve about the circumstances in which Lenoir’s collection was formed, complaining that certain periods are under-represented and that there is not enough space. If Lenoir’s catalogue did harp somewhat on the peculiarly French character of the art, involving a certain ‘bragging nationality’, it was on those terms alone that he had been able to argue for its preservation.³⁷ Whittington’s fundamental and reasonable objection, however, was that Lenoir was not well-enough informed. The objects were often wildly misdated. In addition to this Whittington also disliked the introduction of modern works of art to supply certain gaps and over one of the most celebrated exhibits, the tomb of Abelard and Heloise, he found Lenoir’s ‘sensibility’, as evinced in the catalogue description, an example of that ‘vanity and affectation which perpetually expose him to ridicule’.³⁸

Standing in the first gallery, the former convent chapel, Dawson Turner felt quite differently.

The entrance is by a spacious hall containing a general outline of French art, from some rude Gallic altars whose dates go back to the earliest periods of the Roman Empire, thro’ a variety of gradations to the very summit of perfection in sculpture, the beautiful mausoleum of Diane de Poitiers; (this tomb was actually broken to pieces by the Democrats but M Lenoir has with great skill and judgement caused it to be restored) ...the whole of this room is

³⁵ Whittington, *An Historical Survey of the Ecclesiastical Antiquities of France*, p.163.

³⁶ Whittington, *An Historical Survey of the Ecclesiastical Antiquities of France*, p.173.

³⁷ Whittington, *An Historical Survey of the Ecclesiastical Antiquities of France*, p.169.

³⁸ Whittington *An Historical Survey of the Ecclesiastical Antiquities of France*, p. 169.

calculated to produce effect & to impress a stranger with a feeling of awe, which the consciousness that all around is sacred to the dead & the general solemnity of the building are equally fitted to encrease [sic].³⁹



Figure 25 Lenoir's Jardin Elysée, the tomb of Abelard and Heloise on the right

Turner was not entirely pleased. He thought Lenoir's wall decorations unsuitable to the funereal atmosphere but in the convent garden or Jardin Elysée he was once again captivated. Here Lenoir had assembled the salvaged tombs of Descartes, Molière, the great antiquary Montfaucon, La Fontaine and others. The 'leading feature of the garden', however, was the tomb of Abelard and Heloise [fig: 25].⁴⁰ This tomb, which does indeed contain the remains of the lovers, is a composite. The figure of Abelard lies next to a figure of the same date but otherwise unconnected with Heloise. From this sculpture Lenoir had the original face removed and replaced with a copy by a modern artist of a portrait said to be of Heloise herself. Over the tomb he constructed a canopy made up from fragments of a chapel he had rescued from St Denis [fig: 26]. Whittington no doubt wondered, as one might, what exactly this object was, ancient or modern, real or fake. To most of the visitors, however, such questions were not troublesome. They accepted it as Lenoir presented it and indeed it has entered history on its own terms. It is today one of the most visited tombs in Père Lachaise cemetery and has recently been restored. It is also a monument to that phase of antiquarianism where association, the experience of an object or of a setting, weighed equally with authenticity.

³⁹ Turner, 'Journal of a Tour to France, 1814', f 174 and note, in brackets, 173v.

⁴⁰ Turner, 'Journal of a Tour to France, 1814', f 175.



Figure 26 The tomb of Abelard and Heloise at the cemetery of Père Lachaise

Lenoir was quite explicit in his catalogue about what he had done with the various elements of the tomb, while encouraging that sensibility Whittington found so ridiculous by telling visitors what they might expect to hear in the imagination as they stood beside the lovers' grave. 'Des soupirs de tendresse et d'amour; l'air est frappé de leurs doux accens, et le plaintif Echo répète de tous côtés: Héloïse! Abélard.' [Sighs of tenderness and love; the air resounds to their gentle tones, and the plaintive echo repeats on all sides: Heloise! Abelard.]⁴¹ He had given it a suitably picturesque setting, 'embosomed in a thicket of large cypresses' as Turner put it. He and his party, knowing that this combination of objects and setting dated back little more than a decade, nevertheless cut sprigs of greenery 'for presents to our friends at home'.⁴²

The experience was slightly spoiled, however, as Turner noted by the presence beside the tomb of 'a young French officer' who was 'humming a tune & cutting capers'.⁴³ This was not the right figure for this particular landscape which required a Werther to complete it. Indeed, as Turner wrote: 'Had we been but a week or two sooner, we might have seen some sentimental German sighing or even weeping on the spot.'⁴⁴ There is no question that the engagement with the past most visitors enjoyed at the Musée des Monumens Français was as much dramatic, narrative and subjective as it was educational, informative and objective. The Musée itself did

⁴¹ Lenoir, *Musée Impérial des Monumens Français*, p.185.

⁴² Turner, 'Journal of a Tour to France, 1814', f175.

⁴³ Turner, 'Journal of a Tour to France, 1814', f176.

⁴⁴ Turner, 'Journal of a Tour to France, 1814', f176.

not survive for long. It was dismantled in 1816. Its legacy, however, was significant on both sides of the Channel and the attitude to history that it proposed, narrative, reciprocal, involved in the ‘manners and customs’ and personalities of the past, was prescient and influential. Jules Michelet (1798-1874), in his *Histoire de la Révolution Française* (1847-53) recalled its effect on himself and his contemporaries:

Que d’âmes ont pris dans ce musée l’étincelle historique, l’intérêt des grands souvenirs, le vague désir de remonter les âges! Je me rapelle encore l’émotion toujours la même et toujours vive, qui me faisait batter le Coeur, quand, tout petit, j’entrais sous ces voûtes sombre et contemplais ces visages pales, quand j’allais et cherchais, ardent, curieux, craintif, de salle en salle et d’âge en âge... je cherchais quoi? Je ne sais; la vie d’alors, sans doute, et le genie des temps. [How many souls were struck in that museum with the spark of history, the appeal of great memories, the vague desire to go back through time! I still remember the emotion, still the same and still immediate, that made my heart beat faster when, as a child, I entered under those dark vaults and gazed upon those pale faces, when I went looking, ardent, curious, fearful, from room to room and from century to century... what was I looking for? I don’t know; the life of those times, certainly, and the spirit of the age.]⁴⁵

In sensibility the French and the English had much at this point in common and they would continue to do so for decades to come. There were differences, however, and Turner put his finger on precisely those that would have, eventually, the largest implications for antiquarianism. During one of several return visits that he and his party made to the Louvre before they left Paris on 28 June they fell into conversation with a French army officer. The officer found it difficult to believe that in Britain most art works remained in private hands. ‘This it is in its various ramifications,’ Turner noted, ‘that seems to constitute one of the leading points of difference between France and England.’⁴⁶

In the former country everything is the property of the nation & the Government is the principal, if not the only, spring that puts in motion the energies of artists & men of letters, & gives birth to public institutions. In the latter it is quite the contrary; the Government is exclusively confined to its own affairs; in the arts, the sciences, even in hospitals & often in roads, individuals do all, have all, & are all. Thus more splendor [sic] is in France, more enjoyment in England.⁴⁷

⁴⁵ Quoted in Choay, *The Invention of the Historic Monument*, p.67.

⁴⁶ Turner, ‘Journal of a Tour to France, 1814’, f 190 .

⁴⁷ Turner, ‘Journal of a Tour to France, 1814’, f 190 .

An observable difference still, this distinction would determine the differing fortunes of French and English antiquaries as the nineteenth century wore on.

Before leaving Paris Turner bought some missals ‘of great beauty & at a low price’ but was otherwise disappointed that there were not more antiquarian bargains to be had.⁴⁸ With the collector’s callousness he remarked that he had been expecting ‘considering how much France has of late years been convulsed, how many opulent families reduced to poverty & how many monasteries plundered that articles of this description would be abundantly on sale’.⁴⁹ In time a whole tide of antiquities would be loosed but not for the moment. Dealers and others were perhaps holding onto their stock, aware that times were still uncertain. The Abbé de la Rue was certainly of that mind. In April 1814 he warned Douce that the English had made a mistake in sending Napoleon no further than Elba. ‘Il se retournera en tout sens pour troubler l’Europe ... il faudroit Milton pour peindre le genie infernal’ [He will return from every direction to trouble Europe... it would take Milton to depict his demonic genius].⁵⁰

De la Rue of course was right and from March until July 1815 England was once again at war. After the final victory of Waterloo there was a rush across the Channel on an even greater scale than the year before. Dawson Turner held back until September. Walter Scott, however, who, despite the fact that his wife was French had never before been abroad, set sail in August for Belgium and was among the first British civilians to see the battlefield. His account of it dwells heavily, one might say shockingly, on the quest for material souvenirs. It has been suggested, by Stuart Semmel, that the often-remarked and in some ways puzzling failure of the British to erect a monument in London, or anywhere else, to one of the greatest military victories in their history, despite numerous schemes and competitions, was due to the fact that a trade in ‘found objects –relics’ satisfied the need for a material focus for the event.⁵¹ One might go further and say that the more personal, reciprocal and subjective relationship to the past and its artefacts, represented at the Musée des Monumens Français and in the reactions to it, was not merely content with personal souvenirs, but positively preferred them. The field of Waterloo,

⁴⁸ Turner, ‘Journal of a Tour to France, 1814’, f 237.

⁴⁹ Turner, ‘Journal of a Tour to France, 1814’, f237.

⁵⁰ Douce/de la Rue letters, f46, 25 Avril, 1814.

⁵¹ Semmel, ‘Reading the Tangible Past’, p.24.

strewn with debris, was Lenoir's Museum writ large, a whole landscape of resonant fragments, equally densely populated by the time Scott arrived with parties of sightseers.

He got his guide to take him to the precise spot where Napoleon had stood and found that 'there was a deep and inexpressible feeling of awe in the reflection, that ...[this] was the identical place from which he, who had so long held the highest place in Europe, beheld his hopes crushed and his power destroyed'.⁵² There was not long, however, for quiet contemplation. Almost at once:

Men, women, and children rushed out upon us, holding up swords, pistols, carabines, and holsters... the great object of ambition was to possess the armour of a cuirassier... A relique of greater moral interest was given me by a lady, whose father had found it upon the field of battle. It is a manuscript collection of French songs, bearing stains of clay and blood, which probably indicate the fate of the proprietor.⁵³

In his published account of this journey, *Paul's Letters to his Kinsfolk*, which was a popular success in 1816, Scott reproduced these blood-stained ballads in his own translation. They were not, he wrote, particularly ancient or distinguished but, he explained, 'I cannot divide them from the interest which they have acquired by the place and manner in which they were obtained'.⁵⁴ 'The Troubadour' and the 'Romance of Dunois' were, if not themselves ancient, then followed medieval themes and written, by the time Scott had finished with them, in a medievalising style. Dunois was a crusader, the Troubadour a gallant wandering minstrel whose refrain rang variants on the lines:

My arm it is my country's right
My heart is in my true love's bower
Gaily for love and fame to fight
Befits the gallant Troubadour⁵⁵

⁵² Scott, *Paul's Letters*, pp.196-7.

⁵³ Scott, *Paul's Letters*, p.209.

⁵⁴ Scott, *Paul's Letters*, p.213.

⁵⁵ Scott, *Paul's Letters*, p.211.

These verses, as Scott employed them, were to poetry what the new face of Heloise was to Lenoir's tomb, a grafting of the present onto history in order to create emotional effect and this process characterised quite explicitly all of Scott's account of Waterloo. Trivial as the ballads were, he wrote in *Paul's Letters*, imagine how interesting it would be if such fragments had survived from Crécy or from Agincourt. In 'The Field of Waterloo', the poem he himself wrote about the battle, Scott went further towards fusing past and present. The narrative of the verse might be said to mirror the military victory on a literary and antiquarian level, overwhelming the French narrative with the forces of Scottish myth and history. It opens on the night before Waterloo, an echo surely of Richard III's dream before Bosworth, with 'grey Allan' lying sleepless waiting for the dawn.

There are sounds in Allan's ear
Patrol nor sentinel may hear,
And sights before his eye aghast
Invisible to them have pass'd
When down the destined plain,
'Twixt Britain and the bands of France,
Strange phantoms wheel'd a revel dance,
And doom'd the future slain-
Such forms were seen, such sounds were heard,
When Scotland's James his march prepared
For Flodden's fatal plain⁵⁶

Allan is killed in the battle and buried at Waterloo, 'far from his Highland heath', but it might equally be said that he has brought the Scottish heath with him and implanted it forever on the battlefield. Twenty-five years later, when Scott's novels had taken the French reading public by storm, replacing the classical myths as subjects for French artists, Thackeray wrote, as he looked at the Paris Salon of 1840 with its many Waverley-inspired paintings that: 'Walter Scott from his Castle of Abbotsford, sent out a troop of gallant young Scotch adventurers, merry outlaws, valiant knights, and savage Highlanders who... did challenge, combat and overcome the

⁵⁶ Scott, *Complete Poetical and Dramatic Works*, p.534.

heroes and demigods of Greece and Rome.’⁵⁷ Here, as early as 1815, we can see him doing almost literally that, invading the Continent with his characters.

When he got to Paris, Scott visited Lenoir’s celebrated museum. It inspired mixed feelings in him. His reservations were not Whittington’s, he was perfectly satisfied that Lenoir had arranged his collection in ‘the best and fittest order’ of chronology.⁵⁸ It was on the associational level that he was dissatisfied. For the novelist the narrative was too fragmentary, he was too aware of the context from which the exhibits had come, comparing them to prints taken from a book to make up a scrap album. It was the original book he wanted, the whole story and he was later to supply it in *Ivanhoe* and *Quentin Durward*. For the moment, however, he returned to Scotland and, within months, had completed *The Antiquary* the novel in which the idea of antiquarianism as a lived relationship between past and present, enacted through artefacts, emerged for the first time as a theme in literature.

The argument that relics, souvenirs and debris were the focus for British commemoration of Waterloo is borne out not only by Scott’s experience, which Semmel discusses, but further underlined by Dawson Turner’s. Turner hurried across the Channel in September when he heard that the contents of the Louvre were being dispersed. On arrival in Dieppe he ran into Mr Palmer, a cutler by trade and also:

Proprietor of the Waterloo museum in London,⁵⁹ who was now returning from a most successful expedition to Paris, where he had collected more than 20 boxes containing, as he assured us ‘everything belonging to Napoleon’ besides the carriage & wardrobe of the king of Rome, the colors [sic] made for the national guard of Elba, the Eagles for the regiments there, a number of medals...articles, in themselves neither rich nor rare, but curious as having appertained to the great man.⁶⁰

⁵⁷ Quoted in Wright, ‘Scott’s Historical Novels and French Historical Painting’, p.287.

⁵⁸ Scott, *Paul’s Letters*, p.319.

⁵⁹ This was at 97 Pall Mall. There were several other displays of Napoleonica nearby. See Altick, *Shows of London*, p.239.

⁶⁰ Turner, ‘Journal of a three weeks tour’, 1815, f10.

Gradually the immediate flurry of activity and souvenir hunting died down. Peace became, at last, an established fact and sustained Anglo-French collaboration in antiquarian investigations became possible.

The Bayeux Tapestry

The documenting of the Bayeux Tapestry was, as has already been explained, the Society of Antiquaries' principal contribution to the active antiquarianism of the period. The Abbé de la Rue's paper, published in *Archaeologia* in 1814, prompted one member, Dawson Turner's Yarmouth neighbour, friend, business partner, fellow antiquary and MP, Hudson Gurney (1775-1864) to join the cross-Channel rush and go to Bayeux to inspect it for himself. He reported to the Society on 4 July 1816 that he had found the Tapestry, with some difficulty, and that it was kept 'coiled round a machine, like that which lets down the buckets to a Well'.⁶¹ He had had an opportunity to study it for several hours 'drawing it out at leisure, over a table'.⁶² His conclusion was respectfully different from that of 'our very learned and distinguished correspondent' de la Rue.⁶³ He believed that the Tapestry was of the same date or made very soon after the events it depicted. The Abbé had based his argument that the embroidery was later and made in England largely on documents, including the negative evidence of wills and historical accounts that should, he thought, have mentioned it if it had existed. He had also argued, drawing on his expertise in literary history, that the fables of Aesop which are worked into the borders were not known in northern Europe at the time of the Conquest.

Hudson Gurney, reflecting his own, typically British antiquarian preoccupations, started from the architecture depicted in the various scenes, applying immediately the other observations he had made on his visit to Normandy. 'In the many buildings therein portrayed there is not the trace of a pointed arch...but there is the square Norman buttress flat to the wall, and the square

⁶¹ *Archaeologia*, 18,(1817) p.359.

⁶² *Archaeologia*, 18, (1817), p.359.

⁶³ *Archaeologia*, 18, (1817), p.361.

tower, surmounted by, or rather ending in a low pinnacle constantly repeated.’⁶⁴ Gurney also used his knowledge of armour and costume, the fact that there is no heraldry in any of the scenes and other instances of ‘manners and customs’, social details of the past borne out by the internal evidence of the Tapestry itself and relied on that in preference to the documents that supported de la Rue. He concluded by suggesting that further discussion would be fruitless until a reliable copy of the Tapestry was published, all those available at present being ‘very insufficient’ and deriving from the sketches made for Montfaucon.⁶⁵ Within days the Society of Antiquaries had commissioned their draughtsman, Charles Stothard (1786-1821), to go to Bayeux and make accurate drawings to be engraved.

Stothard’s work has been adequately discussed in the context of the Tapestry’s longer history and the details do not require repetition here.⁶⁶ The project is revealing in this context for what it shows in detail of the relations between antiquaries, which developed along personal, intellectual and methodological lines rather than national prejudice. It shows, too, the way in which the discussion reflected the growing interest in costume and customs of the past and, while it was conducted on quite different principles from Lenoir’s arrangement of his museum, the documenting of the Tapestry had a not dissimilar result in creating an artefact that owed as much to early nineteenth-century sensibility and the prevailing interest in narrative as it did to the historic evidence.

On the personal level the project got off to an uneven start. Such was the speed with which Stothard was dispatched that nobody thought to tell de la Rue, now living once more in his native Caen, that he was coming. The Abbé was predictably put out and assured Douce that, misconceived as the project was, he would in no way interfere with it, he certainly would not be giving Stothard any introductions, which might prove a difficulty since the Tapestry was now the property of the town of Bayeux and the Mayor would be most unlikely to give permission to draw it to anyone arriving ‘sans titre ni qualité [with no qualifications or locus standi]’.⁶⁷ Douce hastily wrote a letter of introduction for Stothard to take to the Abbé who then graciously

⁶⁴ *Archaeologia*, 18, (1817), p.359.

⁶⁵ *Archaeologia*, 18, (1817), p.361.

⁶⁶ See Hicks, *The Bayeux Tapestry* Chapter 11, and ‘Stitched Up: Eliza Stothard and the Bayeux Tapestry scandal’.

⁶⁷ Douce/de la Rue letters, f94, 29 November 1816.

arranged everything and got Stothard a convenient room to work in, with, in due course, a fire to keep off the winter chill. De la Rue was determined to defend his position on the Tapestry ‘envers et contre tous’ [towards and against everybody]⁶⁸ especially the ‘ignorant’⁶⁹ Gurney, though he was somewhat mollified by a letter from Gurney so ‘honnête et infiniment aimable’ [frank and infinitely kind]⁷⁰ that he could not but reply to reassure him ‘que si nous n’allons pas par la même route, nous tendons cependant au même but qui est la vérité’ [that if we do not go by the same route, we are nevertheless tending towards the same end, which is the truth].⁷¹ This tone and attitude is, I would suggest, more typical of the way that the controversy over the Bayeux Tapestry was conducted among antiquaries than nationalistic sniping.

Stothard worked on the Tapestry, taking wax impressions of it to increase the accuracy of his representations, until March 1819, although some of his ‘striking and elegant delineations’ were on show at the Society of Antiquaries premises by February of the preceding year, sparking more debate about the date and origin of the work.⁷² Of these the most significant contribution was Stothard’s own, read to the Society on 25 February 1819. He made many of the same points as Gurney about facial hair, armour and heraldry. The use of this internal evidence was an example not so much of what Hicks calls ‘minor feuds’ over trivialities, but of the increased interest in treating artefacts, as Lenoir treated them, as pieces of social history. The Tapestry was ‘a true picture’ as Stothard put it, ‘of the time when it was executed’.⁷³ Stothard’s main point in arguing that the Tapestry was Norman and was worked soon after the Conquest, was derived from the details, which were much more specific he suggested on the Norman than the English side as if the authors were more familiar with Normandy than Britain.

His subtlest argument, however, one which is as revealing of Stothard as it is about the Tapestry, concerned the date. On this he observed that medieval art does not represent past events historically, that it shows people and places as they looked at the time the work of art was

⁶⁸ Douce/de la Rue letters, f100, 29 November, 1816.

⁶⁹ Douce/de la Rue letters, f94, 29 November, 1816.

⁷⁰ Douce/de la Rue letters, f111, 20 January, 1818.

⁷¹ Douce/de la Rue letters, f111, 20 January, 1818.

⁷² *Archaeologia* 19 (1821), p.88 ‘Observations on an Historical Fact supposed to be established by the Bayeux Tapestry by Thomas Amyot esq. F.S.A. in a letter addressed to Henry Ellis esq. F R S Secretary’ dated February 24, 1818.

⁷³ *Archaeologia*, 19, (1821), pp.184-91, p.186.

made, not at the time depicted. Since the events of the Tapestry depict the time of the Conquest that was probably, he argued, when it was made. As well as being a logical deduction based on comparison, Stothard's remark was a tacit acknowledgement of the changing attitude to the past that his own age was experiencing, that fitful dawning of the sense of anachronism. Medieval architecture, since the debate that began at Salisbury, was now more often treated on its own terms, seen in its historic context. A similar shift in approaches to historic literature, painting and drama was also taking place and will be discussed later. The medieval understanding of the past, which treated it as an undifferentiated continuum, had survived in late Georgian Britain, which imposed modern dress on Shakespeare and sash windows on Gothic churches. Only as that ethos began itself to pass into history did it become visible and so available as a tool for argument.

Most of Stothard's paper, however, was given over to explaining his own method in documenting the Tapestry and 'what licences' he had taken.⁷⁴ Where the stitching was missing, as it was in many places, the condition of the embroidery having deteriorated markedly since Montfaucon's time, Stothard relied on the needle holes. 'On attentively examining the traces thus left, I found that in many places minute particles of the different coloured threads were still retained; a circumstance which suggested to me the possibility of making extensive restorations... I have succeeded in restoring nearly all of what was defaced.'⁷⁵ One scene that he 'restored' in his drawings has become the most famous in the whole Tapestry and one of the most instantly recognised images of history, King Harold fatally wounded with an arrow in the eye.



Figure 27 The Death of Harold in the Bayeux Tapestry

⁷⁴ *Archaeologia* 19, (1821), p.184.

⁷⁵ *Archaeologia* 19, (1821), p.184.

There is no contemporary evidence that Harold died in this way. As an earlier correspondent to *Archaeologia* had noted Giraldus Cambrensis in his twelfth-century *Itinerarium Cambriae*, refers to Harold being wounded in the eye at the battle and surviving.⁷⁶ That story had been repeated with variations many times since but the conventional account of the events depicted in the Tapestry, as given in Ducarel's *Anglo-Norman Antiquities* derived from Montfaucon and later in the discussion in the *Gentleman's Magazine* debate of 1803, was that Harold's death is represented only once, not twice as Stothard argued, and that the figure to which the text 'Harold Rex interfectus est' refers shows him prone, being wounded in the thigh. [fig: 27] The needle holes Stothard interpreted as an arrow moving towards the figure to the left might as easily be seen to represent a spear which is being thrown. Stothard's interpretation was, to say the least, highly questionable. It was also, however, dramatic, attractive and anecdotal. It did not just fill a physical gap in the fabric but an imaginative one in the narrative. The 'restorations' Stothard described were made only in his drawings and the later engravings but when the embroidery was prepared for exhibition at a new, specially created, museum in 1842 some 'new sewing' was done to fill in the blanks.⁷⁷ [fig 28] This seems to have been based on Stothard's graphic reconstruction. Although scholars continue to debate the point visitors to Bayeux today can buy a post card of this scene confidently captioned in three languages as 'Harold's Death/La Mort d'Harold/Harold's Tod'. Like the much-visited tomb of Abelard and Heloise the object of cultural pilgrimage is certainly an antiquarian extrapolation, if not an actual fiction.

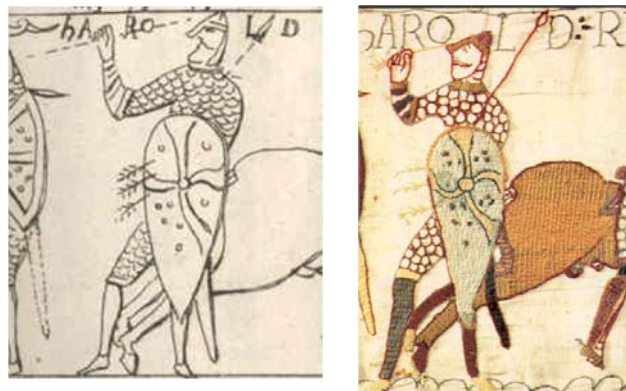


Figure 28 The Tapestry as illustrated in Montfaucon (left) and as it is today

⁷⁶ See Grape, *The Bayeux Tapestry*, p.24.

⁷⁷ Hicks. *The Bayeux Tapestry*, p.138.

The British in Normandy: architecture, topography and antiquarian connections after 1815

By the time Britain's enforced isolation ended in 1815 antiquarian curiosity about the Continent was at fever pitch. For one thing, as the *Quarterly Review* pointed out, antiquaries were running out of domestic material:

Every nook in our island has now been completely ransacked... the humbler antiquary of the Ancient Borough ekes out his octavo with chronicles of Shreeves and Mayors... It would be difficult to name any structure of the 'olden time' which has not been transmitted into the portfolio and the library.⁷⁸

Furthermore the great architectural debate on the national origins of Gothic had been largely stymied, as far as publications were concerned, since Whittington's *Survey*, though this had been vigorously refuted by Milner and Carter.⁷⁹ The brief visits of 1814 had done little more than whet appetites. Even Douce, whose interests were not primarily architectural, seems to have been asking de la Rue for information about French Gothic which the Abbé was sure he could provide.

Vos antiquaires paroissent disputer beaucoup sur les differens styles d'architecture... il est facile de saisir les differences de style suivant les differens ages, et comme je puis les fixer par des dates certaines, il ny aura je crois rien a repliquer sur ce que j'en pourrais dire. [Your antiquaries seem to argue a great deal about the different styles of architecture, it is easy to fix the differences of style by the various periods and as I can ascertain them according to secure dates I think there will be no possibility of disputing my conclusions.]⁸⁰

De la Rue was to say the least over-confident on this point for, as he did admit, 'on a tres peu travaille en france sur ce sujet.' [Nobody has done much work on this subject in France.]⁸¹

In the years that followed Waterloo English antiquaries invaded Normandy, extending the

⁷⁸ *Quarterly Review*, 25 (April 1821), p. 113.

⁷⁹ Milner, *Treatise on Ecclesiastical Architecture*, Chapter 4, and Carter, *Gentleman's Magazine*, 79, (1809), pp. 523-526 and pp. 627-630.

⁸⁰ Douce/de la Rue letters, f60v, 24 October, 1814.

⁸¹ Douce/de la Rue letters, f38, 28 March, 1813.

debates and disputes that had begun at home, engaging with the emerging antiquarian network in France and drawing in their wake considerable numbers of tourists. Among the most important authors were Turner and Britton, whose approaches were contrasting but complementary. Before discussing them, however, it is important to consider what Normandy meant to the English and indeed to the Normans in the early nineteenth century.

This was, in one sense, another antiquarian rescue project amid the ruins of the Revolution for, legally, Normandy no longer existed. As an official entity it had been dissolved in 1790 to be replaced by five departments.⁸² The French and English antiquaries of the post-war period were to give it ‘une identité retrospective’ [a retrospective identity], weaving back together what time and war had torn apart and creating, once again a narrative as well as a documentary account.⁸³ The story was one of shared history and rivalries too ancient to be painful. As far as architecture was concerned Dawson Turner’s future son-in-law, Francis Cohen Palgrave(1788-1861), reviewing his prospective father-in-law’s *A Tour in Normandy*, (anonymously), in the *Quarterly Review* in 1821, wrote that: ‘It is in Normandy, that the first pages of the architectural annals of this island must be read.’⁸⁴ This was at one level a simple truth for, in the decade since Milner’s *Treatise on Ecclesiastical Architecture*, it had become increasingly apparent that most of the British buildings antiquaries had described as ‘Saxon’ dated in fact from after the Conquest. Beyond and beneath Palgrave’s statement of historical fact, however, lay the patriotic view of the Normans, that they were, in all important senses, British. Palgrave could state playfully enough as an antiquary that:

[Normandy is] the most important of *our* transmarine provinces. The French King must not be offended... My Lord Coke⁸⁵ has given an opinion, in his fourth Institute, that the King of England has not lost his legal right of entry on the Duchy of Normandy... this, perhaps, is a state-affair, and ... we do not choose to meddle ... but it is quite certain that in Normandy an Englishman feels himself as much within the pale of English history as if he were in Yorkshire.⁸⁶

⁸² Seine inferieure, l’Eure, Calvados, Manche and l’Orne.

⁸³ Laspougeas, ‘La Normandie au Temps d’Arcisse de Caumont’, p.11.

⁸⁴ ‘Normandy –Architecture of the Middle Ages’, *Quarterly Review* 25 (April 1821), pp.112-147, p.117.

⁸⁵ Sir Edward Coke (1552-1634) *The Fourth Part of the Institutes of the Laws of England concerning the jurisdiction of courts*, London, 1648.

⁸⁶ ‘Normandy –Architecture of the Middle Ages’, *Quarterly Review* 25 (April 1821), pp.112-147, p.113. Unsigned article identified in Shine and Shine, *The Quarterly Review under Gifford*, p.268.

Dawson Turner could set out the same sentiment in more earnest terms as, at the end of his two-volume *Tour* he put down his pen:

Happy, if by my correspondence during this short tour, I have been able to impart to you a portion of the gratification which I have myself experienced, while tracing the ancient history, and surveying the monuments of that wonderful nation, who, issuing from the frozen regions of the north, here fixed the seat of their permanent government, became powerful rivals of the sovereigns of France, saw Sicily and the fairest portion of Italy subject to their sway, and, at the same time that they possessed themselves of our own island, by right of conquest, imported amongst us their customs, their arts, and their institutions, and laid the basis of that happy constitution, under which by the blessing of God, Britain is at this moment the pride and envy of the world!⁸⁷

According to this view of history any peculiarities of the French, their Corsican emperor or the recent conflict need not disturb the harmony of ancient Anglo-Norman relations.

Francis Palgrave's review dealt with four new books on Normandy, including the Abbé de la Rue's recent history of Caen. The twenty-five years after 1815 saw many more, some devoted exclusively to architecture, others following the model of the topographical tour. Among the most important, other than Turner's and Britton's which will be discussed in more detail, were Eliza Stothard's *Letters Written During a Tour of Normandy* (1820),⁸⁸ Thomas Frognall Dibdin's *Bibliographical Antiquarian and Picturesque Tour of France and Germany* (1821), William Whewell's *Notes Written During an Architectural Tour in Picardy and Normandy* (1835) and Henry Gally Knight's *An Architectural Tour in Normandy* (1836). Thomas Rickman, who had accompanied Whewell, published his 'Letters on the Ecclesiastical Architecture of France' as a paper in *Archaeologia* in 1834.

In general the literature divided along the same lines as its domestic counterparts with Whewell and Rickman interested in facts and dates, Dibdin and Stothard more anecdotal and atmospheric with the latter two appealing to a larger, more popular audience. The battle over origins was carried on with Whewell determined to refute 'Whittingham' as he called him, on

⁸⁷ Turner, *Tour in Normandy*, 2, p. 294.

⁸⁸ Eliza was the widow of Charles who died in 1821 from a fall while making drawings of stained glass in the church of Beer Ferrers in Devon. Her account of their tour of 1818 ranged beyond Normandy into Brittany.

French precedence in Gothic.⁸⁹ Rickman meanwhile, appealed to his readers for more information on French fonts. The efforts of Turner and Britton, whose *Architectural Antiquities of Normandy* appeared in parts from 1826-28, were among the most scholarly and between them spanned the range from the purely architectural to the broadly topographical. Turner's *Tour* was based on his visit of 1815 and subsequent trips in 1818 and 1819. He conjured up for a genteel but unspecialised readership as much as he could of every aspect of the experience, choosing, like Scott, the more gentlemanly literary form of the letter, writing to an unidentified friend at home in Norfolk, over the workmanlike essays on individual buildings that made up Britton's volume.

Turner's book followed his own interests, ranging beyond architecture into costume, customs and naturally the Bayeux Tapestry. By this date antiquarian literature was so much part of polite culture that antiquaries were well-enough known among Turner's readership for him to drop their names. Much of the *Tour* is written as a dialogue not so much with his supposed correspondent as with other authors including Andrew Ducarel, ('the doctor') whose *Anglo-Norman Antiquities* he was finding increasingly unsatisfactory. 'It is our fate to be continually at variance with the doctor, till I am half inclined to fear you may be led to suspect that jealousy has something to do with the matter.'⁹⁰ He was better pleased with the work of Millin, whom he had met in 1815, while Douce had 'furnished us with some curious remarks' on the Feast of Fools and its representation on misericords.⁹¹ Turner never left or arrived at a town without informing his readers of its situation in the landscape, the picturesqueness or otherwise of the approach and the receding view.

His observations on architecture combined as much factual information as he could ascertain with a desire, sometimes frustrated, to revive the spirit of the past in buildings that had been stripped in many cases not only of their contents but also of their function. At Caen the Conqueror's palace was in use as a grain store and even Scott's poetry could not re-animate it.

⁸⁹ Whewell, *Architectural Notes on German Churches*, p.144 .

⁹⁰ Turner, *Tour in Normandy*, 2, p.67.

⁹¹ Turner, *Tour in Normandy*, 1, p.196.

You remember how admirably the *Lay of the Last Minstrel* opens with a description of such a hall, filled with knights, and squires, and pages... I tried, while standing by these walls, to conjure up the same pictures to my imagination, but it was impossible; so desolate and altered was every thing around, and so effectually was the place of baronial assemblage converted into a granary.⁹²

In addition to his own volumes Turner commissioned the artist John Sell Cotman (1782-1842), who had been acting as drawing master to his daughters in Norwich, to make a tour of Normandy for a separate publication. Cotman seems to have had rather a thin time of it never managing, Turner's wife noted, to finish anything before the party moved relentlessly on. The Abbé de la Rue gave a discouraging report to Douce of

Mr Coteman qui parcourt la province pour dessiner des antiquites normandes... cet homme va bien vite pour produire quelque chose de bon... Mr Coteman ne parle pas francois ... cet homme ne me paroît pas avoir l'instruction, c'est un artist pour la main, mais n'a nullement l'esprit d'un antiquaire. [Mr Cotman who is travelling through the county to draw Norman antiquities... this man goes too fast to produce anything good...Mr Cotman speaks no French.. [he] appears to me to know nothing, he has an artist's skill but none of the mentality of an antiquary.]⁹³

Cotman's *Antiquities of Normandy*, for which Turner wrote the text, was published in 1822 and despite the Abbé's reservations has always been an admired and sought-after work. Cotman combined his artistic skill with architectural detail to create images that exactly met the appetite for accuracy with atmosphere that characterised contemporary antiquarianism. For those who required more technical information Britton's *Architectural Antiquities of Normandy*, which followed the model of his *Specimens of Gothic Architecture*, began to appear four years later, with plates drawn from sketches made on the spot by A C Pugin and his pupils. Britton, who was prevented by illness from visiting Normandy himself, compiled a text from the work of several authors and from information from various antiquarian friends including Turner.

The book was not a commercial success, partly because Britton got into financial difficulties and was sued by Pugin and the engravers John and Henry Le Keux, after which all four of them lost the rights to the work. Even without this complicating factor, however, it would

⁹² Turner, *Tour in Normandy* 2, p.206.

⁹³ Douce/de la Rue letters f108, 25 July, 1817.

probably not have been as popular as the *Specimens*, for the influence of Normandy was not, yet, much felt in British architecture. Norman, as an historic style of the eleventh century was never greatly in demand though there were some startling exceptions, notably Thomas Hopper's Penrhyn Castle, Gwynedd, begun in about 1821 for George Hay Dawkins.⁹⁴ In the 1840s the medieval buildings of Normandy began to exert an influence when the (half-French) architect A W N Pugin had 'the laudable courage'⁹⁵ to put a Norman roof on the church of St Marie's Rugby in Warwickshire, but not until the 1860s did this amount to a significant movement among British architects.⁹⁶ The British investigation of Norman architecture in the 1820s and 1830s was most immediately effective in contributing to the pressure within France to conserve and restore buildings devastated by war and revolutionary iconoclasm. It was also instrumental in creating an antiquarian network in France similar to and indeed at first explicitly modelled on, that of England and Scotland.

If there was something grudging in Stendhal's remark that 'Notre archéologie nous est venue de l'Angleterre, comme la diligence, les chemins de fer et bateaux à vapeur'. [Our archaeology came to us from England, like the diligence, the railways and the steamer.]⁹⁷ It was no more than the truth. In a footnote to his history of the church of St Wandrille, E H Langlois praised the great tradition of antiquarian draughtsmanship in Britain in a list that began with Wenceslas Hollar and went down to the present day to include A C Pugin and John and Henry Le Keux. Writing in 1972 Pevsner seems to have been surprised that the works of Carter, Milner and the other English antiquaries, so 'minor in scale and value' should have made 'an impact on France, stronger than their quality and extent would make one expect'.⁹⁸ One is reminded of Whittington's criticisms of Lenoir.

The situation the French antiquaries faced was desperate. They had to deal not only with the devastation of the Revolutionary period, but with a post-war environment in which many

⁹⁴ For reasons why neo-Norman was never widely embraced see Mowl, 'The Norman Revival'.

⁹⁵ *Ecclesiologist*, 9 (1849), p.370.

⁹⁶ See Stamp, 'High Victorian Gothic and the Architecture of Normandy'. Britton and Pugin's *Antiquities of Normandy* was re-edited by Richard Phené Spiers and republished in 1874, when it seems to have received more attention from architects.

⁹⁷ Quoted without a source in Pevsner, *Some Architectural Writers*, p.91.

⁹⁸ Pevsner, *Some Architectural Writers*, p.16.

historic buildings were either put to use as factories, granaries or other purposes uncondusive to their preservation or, like the abbey at Jumièges were simply being dismantled for the stone. The destruction was in some cases worse after 1815 than before. Langlois, describing the Abbey of St Wandrille in 1832 noted that since 1825, when he and his daughter made most of the illustrations he was now publishing

La ruine de l'église a marché avec une rapidité telle, qu'il ne reste, dit-on, aujourd'hui, de ce beau monument, que des tas de pierre et d'informes debris. [The church's ruin has progressed so rapidly that I believe all that is left of this fine monument today is a pile of stones and shapeless rubble.]⁹⁹

There were few published texts to work from and no useful organisation for communicating research. The French naturally admired the British and welcomed all the information and advice they could get from them.

It is impossible now to know exactly who knew whom, but the evidence of personal and scholarly exchange that survives suggests that connections were many. Langlois, whose attempt to document the buildings of Normandy, begun in 1817, came to a halt soon afterwards for lack of patronage, met Turner when he was on one of his tours and provided him with drawings of a capital from the Chapter House of the Abbey of St George, Boscherville, for the published version. 'Normandy does not contain a more ardent admirer of her antiquities,' Turner wrote in a footnote to his *Tour* and his wife engraved Langlois's self-portrait as one of the illustrations [fig: 29].¹⁰⁰ Langlois assisted A C Pugin with documents while he was drawing in Rouen¹⁰¹ and sent a copy of his *Hymne à la Cloche* to John Gage inscribed: 'A Monsieur John Gage Temoigne de souvenir de haute estime et d'affection de son dévoué serviteur et confrere'. [To Mr John Gage in testament to the high esteem and regard of his humble servant and colleague].¹⁰² Despite the difficulties of their situation the Normans were not slow to follow the example of their British counterparts in publishing their research and setting up more formal means of sharing

⁹⁹ Langlois, *St Wandrille*, p.233, n1.

¹⁰⁰ Turner, *Tour in Normandy*, 2, p.12.

¹⁰¹ A letter from A. C. Pugin to Langlois dated September 1 1827 thanks him for providing a plan of St Ouen. Present whereabouts unknown, this letter was in the possession of the bookseller Etienne Bertran of Rouen in October 2006.

¹⁰² Volume in a private collection.

information. By 1825 De la Rue, who was still in Caen, working on his counter-arguments about the Bayeux Tapestry as well as his history of minstrels, was reporting to Douce that ‘un jeune homme secretaire de notre societe des antiquaries de normandie’ [a young man who is secretary of our society of antiquaries of Normandy] was working with a colleague on a study of historic monuments.¹⁰³



Figure 29 E H Langlois, self-portrait engraved by Mary Turner

The young man was Arcisse de Caumont (1801-1873). He had been largely instrumental in founding the Society of Antiquaries of Normandy the previous year. Modelled on the London Society it soon recruited many British members including A C Pugin, Britton and Douce. De Caumont translated Gally Knight’s *Tour in Normandy* and noted in 1832 that he had entertained ‘M Wewhel and M Riekmann’.¹⁰⁴ His *Cours D’Antiquités Montumentales* began appearing in 1830. A synthesiser rather than an original mind de Caumont was highly effective in organising men and materials.¹⁰⁵ He was also able, as Turner noted, to take advantage of the mechanisms of the post-war, Napoleonic state. Born more than a decade after the storming of the Bastille de Caumont was part of what Turner identified as ‘a new generation...to whom the horrors of the revolution live only in the page of history. But its advantages are daily felt in the equal nature

¹⁰³ Douce/de la Rue letters, f168, 22 September, 1825.

¹⁰⁴ Lewis, ‘Les rapports avec les antiquaires anglais’, p. 273.

¹⁰⁵ See Frankl, *The Gothic*, pp.519-22.

and equal administration of the laws'.¹⁰⁶ As the idea of 'patrimoine' or national heritage began to take hold over the following decades and the state set up provincial museums and moved to protect historic buildings, de Caumont and his contemporaries would be well placed to profit from developments. For others, those like Langlois, who remembered the horrors of war and iconoclasm or could like Victor Hugo imagine them, the interaction of past and present was to play a more troubling and complex role in the recreation of the new France.

Walter Scott, E-H Langlois and the antiquarian dance of death: 1815-1837

In France, as in Britain, interest in the material remains of the past now ranged far beyond the well-established territories of architecture and topography into the social history of 'customs and manners'. Painting, fiction and fashion all reflected aspects of antiquarianism and increasingly a desire to inhabit and reanimate the world of the past as narrative. Here, too, the model came from Britain with the novels of Walter Scott. Within these widely shared enthusiasms, however, there were broad national differences which Scott and E-H Langlois could be said to embody. To put simply a difference whose complexity will become clear as this chapter goes on, Scott's was the benign view of the olden times, a vision of 'merrie England' where if there were battles, betrayals and grisly murders, there was also a happy ending for anyone who deserved one or at worst a romantic death.

For Langlois, as for Victor Hugo, whose shadow looms over French antiquarianism as Scott's does over British, the past was a darker, more dangerous place, its barbarities more resonant with recent history. The mass of the French people had experienced the violence of the Revolution and its aftermath at first hand, while for most of the British there had been, in the event, no more than the noise of war. The difference is evident in the use that Scott and Langlois made of the quintessential antiquarian theme of the Dance of Death. Scott, having used it in 'The Field of Waterloo', invoked its imagery again in the preface to *Ivanhoe* while Langlois devoted a two-volume study to the subject. There could be no more apt metaphor for the narrative

¹⁰⁶ Turner, *Tour in Normandy*, 1, p.97.

antiquarian enterprise than the image of the dead reviving and moving once more among the living, but the effect is very different in the two authors. In Scott's poem the ghostly visitants the night before the battle are more poignant and melancholy than frightening. Their function is to cast the reader's mind back in time and to broaden the field of action to Scotland and to Flodden. In Langlois's account, which will be discussed in more detail later, the dead are macabre. They populate the streets of Rouen and invade the present. In this part of my study I shall first consider Scott and his catalytic influence on France and then, by way of Victor Hugo and Langlois, the developments in France itself.

It was four years after his first trip across the Channel that Scott published *Ivanhoe*. It appeared in Paris in 1820. All nine of his previous novels had been translated and proved popular but this one marked the beginning of the great French vogue for Scott, which peaked in 1835.¹⁰⁷ *Ivanhoe* was the first of Scott's prose fictions to be set in the Middle Ages and the first to be set in England rather than Scotland. It no doubt owed much of its popularity in both Britain and France, however, to the fact that it dealt with just that Anglo-Norman past on which antiquarianism was now shining such intense illumination. It is set during the reign of the absentee Richard I, a period when an older generation of brave but savage Saxons was still resisting the proud but savage Normans under the regency of Prince John, while the younger generation, as typified by the Saxon knight Wilfred of Ivanhoe were content to be loyal to King Richard. The happiness of the ending is not only in the marriage of Ivanhoe and Rowena but in a union symbolic of 'harmony betwixt two races, which, since that period, have been so completely mingled, that the distinction has become utterly invisible...the Normans abated their scorn, and the Saxons were refined from their rusticity'.¹⁰⁸ The story reaches this happy conclusion with the help of Robin Hood, Friar Tuck and the mysterious Black Knight who turns out, inevitably, to be the Lionheart himself.

Ivanhoe expressed that view of Anglo-Norman history that so appealed to the English and was espoused by Dawson Turner and Francis Palgrave, and it was also, for Victor Hugo, the

¹⁰⁷ For details of Scott's publications in France and their relative popularity see Dargan, 'Scott and the French Romantics'.

¹⁰⁸ Scott, *Ivanhoe*, p.398.

‘veritable épopée de notre âge’ [the true epic of our time].¹⁰⁹ Its influence on *Notre Dame de Paris* will be discussed later, but its peculiarly contemporary character was, I would suggest, due largely to its use of a past already familiar by way of antiquarianism, its conscious deployment of the antiquarian repertoire of references and its development of that vocabulary into narrative. With its knights and tourneys, castles, archery contests and elaborate costumes *Ivanhoe* must have seemed to its first British readers as if the popular topography of the age had come to life, as if they were walking through Britton’s *Architectural Antiquities* in three dimensions. (Conisburgh Castle, which sees the climax of the action and is described in considerable detail in *Ivanhoe*, features in Volume Four of the *Antiquities*, published in 1814.)

Scott emphasised this relationship to antiquarianism quite deliberately, introducing readers to the story by way of it. This was, not, however, antiquarianism as Dawson Turner invoked it, citing the actual works of Douce, Ducarel or other modern authors. Scott led his readers into his novel via a labyrinth of intertwining fictions, all of them his own. Writing still anonymously as the Author of *Waverley* he took for the introduction or ‘Dedicatory Epistle’ to *Ivanhoe* an alias, Laurence Templeton.¹¹⁰ The Epistle is addressed to Dr Dryasdust FAS, whom readers would remember from *The Antiquary*. It assures Dryasdust that what follows is not to be a mere fiction, one of the ‘idle novels and romances of the day’ such as the one in which Dryasdust’s ‘learned northern friend, Mr Oldbuck of Monkbarns’ was so unlucky as to feature.¹¹¹ It is ‘a work designed to illustrate the domestic antiquities of England’¹¹² and its lost ‘traditions and manners’.¹¹³ The work of the antiquary, Templeton suggests, is to reanimate the past and he returns to the imagery of ghosts and battles, suggesting that Robin Hood’s name ‘if duly conjured with’ would summon him up although, he concedes, to raise the English past is more difficult since it is more remote from present day life than the Scottish.¹¹⁴ The Scottish antiquary could, like Lucan’s witch walking over the battlefield, ‘select for the subject of resuscitation... a body whose limbs had recently quivered with existence’.¹¹⁵ In lighting on such

¹⁰⁹ Quoted in Dargan, ‘Scott and the French Romantics’, p 605.

¹¹⁰ This was true only in Britain. In France his work was published from the beginning under his own name.

¹¹¹ Scott, *Ivanhoe*, p.5.

¹¹² Scott, *Ivanhoe*, p.5.

¹¹³ Scott, *Ivanhoe*, p.6.

¹¹⁴ Scott, *Ivanhoe*, p.6.

¹¹⁵ Scott, *Ivanhoe*, p.7.

an image Scott was surely thinking of his own antiquarian souvenir hunting on the field of Waterloo.

As the Epistle continues it develops a justification in the face of Dryasdust's imagined objections for 'intermingling fiction with truth', the literary equivalent of the witch's supernatural resuscitation. The reasoning here is pragmatic. While Templeton will use the work of antiquaries, Joseph Strutt (1749-1802), whom he names, and Joseph Ritson, whom he omits, but who was Scott's principal source for the Robin Hood legends, he will also take those liberties with the material requisite to make it readable, for the same reasons that he will not write in Norman French or have the text printed in black letter. 'It is necessary, for exciting interest of any kind, that the subject assumed should be, as it were, translated into the manners as well as the language of the age we live in.'¹¹⁶ Manners and customs, like Gothic architecture in the 1820s, were still to be adapted to Georgian taste, the sense of anachronism needs to be modified by art. And so the narrative will use the same licence as the landscape painter. The principal features and the 'general colouring' will be taken from reality, the rest will be at 'the artist's disposal'.¹¹⁷ Yet this apparently plain statement of method and intent was, of course, placed in the mouth of one fictional character addressing another. Narrative is already welling up around the argument, ready to float it off the rocky ground of historical fact into romance.

At the end the Epistle retreats once more into multiple narrative layers. The main source for what follows is, Templeton explains, not Strutt but the 'Wardour Manuscript', another fictional artefact borrowed from *The Antiquary*. This 'singular Anglo-Norman MS., which Sir Arthur Wardour preserves with such jealous care in the third drawer of his oaken cabinet' Templeton has persuaded Sir Arthur to let him read.¹¹⁸ It is cited from time to time in special Gothic lettering, at Sir Arthur's request, throughout the text. The device of the manuscript known only to the author had a long and suitably ambiguous history. From Geoffrey of Monmouth, who cited a book belonging to his friend Walter the Archdeacon as the source of some of the more unlikely information in his *Historia Regum Britanniae* (c1136) to Macpherson's claims to own the originals of the Ossian poems, it signalled, like the reference to Ossian in *The Antiquary*, to

¹¹⁶ Scott, *Ivanhoe*, p.9.

¹¹⁷ Scott, *Ivanhoe*, p.11.

¹¹⁸ Scott, *Ivanhoe*, p.12.

Scott's complicit audience that they were entering the twilight world of Lenoir's Jardin Elysée. This was a narrative experience in which gaps in the historical material were filled by the creative imagination of the artist and the subjective experience of the visitor-reader was to take precedence over the acquisition of information. Disbelief was not so much to be suspended as to be risen above, despised as the pedantic response of a Dryasdust.

Throughout *Ivanhoe* the story is dressed, propelled and contextualised by antiquarian detail, from the armour at the tourney, to the jester Wamba's stockings, all buoyed up by occasional footnotes to explain what an 'arblast' was (a steel cross-bow) or how Gothic fortifications were arranged. The dry bones of antiquarian research live again as modern fiction. In *Quentin Durward*, which appeared in both Britain and France in 1823 and was his greatest and most influential French success, Scott used the same techniques of historical detail and layered narrative. His first Continental novel, it is set during the reign of Louis XI, the period that saw the emergence of modern France as the first European nation state. By now the Anglo-Norman balance of power had been reversed, with the French struggling to drive the English out of Calais.

The novel follows the fortunes of the eponymous hero, a Scottish archer in the service of the King. This story, as the reader is told in another contextualising Introduction, has also survived in a manuscript. This one is in the possession of the Marquis de Hautlieu whom the unnamed Scottish author, who is not, he explains, Sir Walter Scott, has met during a sojourn in France. Once again the way into the narrative is via British antiquarianism with which the Marquis, like many of his contemporaries, is thoroughly up to date, having read the work of Dibdin and John Hughes's *Itinerary of Provence and the Rhone* of 1819. This time, however, the background, out of which the narrative will be pieced together, is not more fiction, as in *Ivanhoe*, but the facts of the Revolution, the great propelling event for the antiquarian enterprise of reconstruction. The narrator tells us that he has studied the manuscript in the library of the Marquis's ruined chateau, to which it has been returned by the good offices of the Curé having

been, like the rest of the Marquis's books and papers, carried off 'in mere spite by the ruffians who pillaged the castle' during the Terror.¹¹⁹

By 1830, the year of the July Revolution, a third of all the novels published in France were by Scott.¹²⁰ His influence was vast and diffuse and it has been much discussed.¹²¹ Here there is scope only to consider it in relation, briefly, to painting and at slightly more length, its connection with the Duchesse de Berry's costume ball of 1829 and as an inspiration for Victor Hugo's *Notre Dame de Paris*. Scott had described himself as imitating the technique of the painter and it was not long before artists were returning the compliment and illustrating scenes from Scott's novels. Between 1827 and 1833 an average of twenty-five pictures a year on themes from Scott were shown in the French salons.¹²² Not all the influence flowed one way, however. It was in France that the 'Troubadour painters', who had emerged from the studio of David, developed a style of historical genre painting which was ideally suited to the depiction of literary episodes and was quickly adopted in Britain. The admiration was mutual. There were British salons at the Louvre in 1824 and 1827, years which saw crises in the confrontation between classicists and romantics, in which the influence of British art was a considerable factor. The French also exhibited their work at the Royal Academy. Delacroix's *Massacre de l'évêque de Liège*, a scene from *Quentin Durward*, was a particular success in 1830.

The rise of romantic history painting and Scott's part in it on both sides of the Channel have been thoroughly examined, notably by Roy Strong in *And when did you last see your father?* by Beth Segal Wright in 'Scott's Historical Novels and French Historical Painting' and by Patrick Noon in *Constable to Delacroix: British Art and the French Romantics*. It is worth emphasising, however, in this context the consciously antiquarian aspect of the French artists' work. While it may be true, as Segal Wright suggests, that the most successful painters, notably Delacroix, moved beyond an exact adherence either to the plot of a particular novel or to the historical details of furniture, architecture and costume, there is evidence that they took such

¹¹⁹ Scott, *Ivanhoe*, p.20.

¹²⁰ Wright, 'Scott's Historical Novels and French Historical Painting', p.270.

¹²¹ The notes in Wright 'Scott's Historical Novels and French Historical Painting' give a fair overview of the literature up to 1981. See also Noon, *Constable to Delacroix*.

¹²² Wright, 'Scott's Historical Novels and French Historical Painting'.

details seriously. Delacroix was among the painters to visit Douce's friend Samuel Rush Meyrick, 'the father of the systematic study of arms and armour' in 1825 to inspect and sketch his collection.¹²³ This has long been known, but a study of the visitors' book from Meyrick's house, recently acquired by the Wallace Collection, has added to the list of French painters who used Meyrick's armour as source material.¹²⁴ Géricault visited the collection in 1820 at a period when he was, briefly, interested in the depiction of armour, especially horse armour and Paul Delaroche, Hippolyte Bellangé and Eugène Lami all, it now appears, came to see the collection in 1822. As Meyrick wrote in the *Gentleman's Magazine* in April 1826: 'There now exists a feeling for correctness of costume and accessories [sic], both here and on the Continent, in painting...that cannot retrograde.'¹²⁵

From reading about the past and depicting historic episodes, actual and fictional, it was but a single step to enacting them in real life, the ultimate engaged antiquarianism, the dance of death as a dance of life. Scott was expert at this, a fact reflected probably in his choice of a hero, Quentin Durward, who was a Scottish archer. While the Scottish Company of Archers was a medieval institution it was also a modern one having just been revived by Scott himself for George IV's visit to Scotland in 1822. A fuller account of 'the King's jaunt', as it became known, belongs to the discussion of politics in a later chapter and it was probably the most extensive and consequential enactment of the past during the period. It was certainly not the only one, however. The Eglinton Tournament of 1839 would never have happened without *Ivanhoe*. Indeed by the end of the 1820s past and present, fact and fiction, had achieved almost complete reciprocity in the antiquarian imagination, which was now, largely, the same thing as popular taste.

While an interest in topography and natural scenery might always have led to an increased appreciation of history and mythology, the reverse was also now possible. The antiquarian narrative could be projected back onto the physical landscape. It was Dawson Turner's friend and travelling companion, the naturalist Joseph Banks, who 'discovered' the remarkable geological formations on the Hebridean island of Staffa in 1772. Staffa thereafter

¹²³ Duffy, 'French Artists and the Meyrick armoury', p.284.

¹²⁴ Duffy, 'French Artists and the Meyrick armoury'.

¹²⁵ Quoted in Duffy, 'French Artists and the Meyrick armoury', p.285.

became a popular sight for picturesque tourists including Keats and Scott himself. At some point it acquired the name Fingal's Cave, after the hero of *Ossian*, and entered not only guide book literature but music in 1832 when Mendelssohn renamed his overture of 1830 the 'Hebridean'. Similarly, in the Louvre Salon of 1845, a picture by François-Alexandre Pernot of the waterfall at Inversnaid was accompanied by a detailed catalogue note explaining that Rob-Roy's cavern was beneath the cascade and referring readers for more details to '*Waverley et Rob Roy* par sir Walter Scott'.¹²⁶ Fiction and fact were here as interdependent as in the introduction to *Ivanhoe*, the novel had become the authenticating text for the accuracy of the picture. In France the most spectacular instance of 'lived antiquarianism' was the case of the Duchesse de Berry, whose Quadrille de Marie Stuart took place at the Tuileries on 2 March 1829. Scott was possibly a direct influence, having told part of Mary Queen of Scots's history in the *The Abbot* in 1820. He was certainly an indirect influence as the chief inspiration for the French historical fiction which began to emerge in the 1820s. Alexandre Dumas père's first play, *Henri III et sa Cour* was also published in 1829.¹²⁷

Marie-Caroline de Bourbon-Sicile, Duchesse de Berry (1798-1869) was the mother of the heir to the French throne, the Comte de Chambord, known as 'l'enfant du miracle' because his birth, after the assassination of his father the Duc de Berry in 1820, had assured the male succession in the Bourbon line. She was a figure therefore of both social and political significance, a cultivated woman, a collector, a patron of the arts and glamorous, a leader of fashion.¹²⁸ Fashion in the 1820s and '30s was also responding to the passion for the past, drawing 'the thinnest line' between modern dress and historical costume.¹²⁹ It was what Harriet Granville described to her sister Lady Carlisle as 'the present ancient style of dress'.¹³⁰ French fashion in particular was dominated in the 1820s by 'le gothique corsage à la Marie Stuart'.¹³¹

¹²⁶ Quoted in Wright, 'Scott's Historical Novels and French Historical Painting', p.286.

¹²⁷ Charlotte Gere cites Scott as an influence (personal communication) but Jacqueline du Pasquier, 'La Duchesse de Berry, arbitre de la mode et reine du style troubadour', in Kremers, *Marie Caroline de Berry*, pp. 124-137, p.128 is no doubt right to suggest that Dumas's play was the immediate inspiration.

¹²⁸ My account is drawn from Kremers, *Marie Caroline de Berry* and *Entre Cour et Jardin: Marie-Caroline, Duchesse de Berry*.

¹²⁹ Charlotte Gere, personal communication.

¹³⁰ *Letters of Harriet Countess Granville 1819-1845*, edited by the Hon F Leveson Gower, 2 vols, London, 1894, p.204.

¹³¹ du Pasquier, 'La Duchesse de Berry, arbitre de la mode et reine du style troubadour' in Kremers et al, *Marie-Caroline de Berry*, pp.124-137, p.135.

Costume balls were wildly popular but the Duchesse's Quadrille went yet further into that territory between life and art that antiquarianism had opened up.

The Duchesse and her guests re-enacted a specific episode from Mary Stuart's life, a visit from her mother, Marie of Lorraine, Queen Mother of Scotland. The costumes were based on historic sources found in the Bibliothèque Royale and the whole affair was recorded in a book of lithographs by Eugène Lami, one of the artists who had visited Meyrick and who may therefore have had some practice before he came to draw the armour worn by M le Comte de Rosambo in the character of the Duc de Guise. The tragic Queen of Scots was 'played', there is no other word for it, by the Duchesse herself [fig: 30] with Lady Stuart de Rothesay, wife of the British ambassador, as her mother. (The Rothesays had already gothicised themselves in real life by adding the 'de' to their name purely for romantic effect.)



Figure 30 The Duchesse de Berry as Mary Queen of Scots, by Eugène Lami

More than just an extravagant party, the Duchesse's Quadrille had serious implications at the time and was soon to acquire still more resonance. It was an exercise in inhabiting, reviving rather than merely impersonating the past, and this was something that, under Charles X, the Bourbons were determined to do. The King's elaborately staged Gothic coronation at Rheims in 1825 was an attempt, like the Quadrille, to reconnect modern France with its past across the fracture of the Revolution. The ball did not strike everyone as successful. Some in court circles,

including the Comtesse de Boigne thought it tasteless for the Duchesse, a niece of Marie-Antoinette, to dress as a beheaded Queen in the home of another, more recent, victim of the same fate.¹³² The Bourbons, however, took famously little account of recent history. The following year brought another revolution which saw the Duchesse driven into exile. Here too she followed in the footsteps of Mary Stuart, taking ship with her family for Scotland. The implications were spelled out in the portrait of her by an unknown artist, now in the Bordeaux museum of fine arts [fig: 31]. Dressed in a highland bonnet and a present-ancient, sixteenth-century style dress in Legitimist white satin, the Duchesse looks her last on France. On the stool beside her are papers dated 1561, the year of François II's death and his widow Mary's return to Scotland. The identification with the past has translated easily from fancy dress to iconography, from evening party to party propaganda.



Figure 31 The Duchesse de Berry sailing into exile, unknown artist

Caroline de Berry's fall from power deprived many artists and writers of a patron. Both Victor Hugo and Langlois, for whom she had intervened personally to obtain a permanent teaching post in Rouen, had benefited from her support, although Hugo had already broken with her by 1830. In the longer term the consequences of the July Revolution in the reign of Louis-Philippe were to prove beneficial for French antiquarianism, setting it on the course that would take it, by the mid-century, in a decisively different direction from the British. For much of the

¹³² Nicoullaud, *Mémoires de la Comtesse de Boigne*, 3, p.244.

1830s, however, the exploration of the past as fact, fiction and antiquarian narrative continued to play on the same themes on both sides of the Channel, albeit with local variations. In Victor Hugo, as author, campaigner and collector, the colossus of French romanticism, we see the macrocosm, in Langlois, living and struggling to work in poverty in Rouen, the microcosm.

Hugo's *Notre-Dame de Paris*, begun two days before the July Revolution and finished in four months after it, was his own attempt to write the epic of the age. It was directly influenced by Scott and it made Hugo's reputation in England, but it was no mere homage to the author of *Waverley*, rather, as Hugo had suggested in a long review of *Quentin Durward*, it was to supply the wants in what seemed to him Scott's too pallid, too prosaic view of the past.¹³³ Hugo's novel like *Quentin Durward* is set during the reign of Louis XI. It also shows, I would suggest, the influence of *Ivanhoe* in the character of Esmeralda, the gipsy. Like Rebecca the Jewess in *Ivanhoe* Esmeralda is a member of a despised and outcast race who falls victim to the frustrated lust of a powerful man. Rebecca is rescued by Ivanhoe, who acts as her champion in the lists. Esmeralda is publicly hanged in front of the cathedral, an ending that is more lurid, more likely and in its dark view of the past much more typically French. *Notre Dame* was rooted in a mixture of antiquarian research and Hugo's personal experience. Like Michelet, who congratulated him on creating in the novel a work as solid as the cathedral itself, Hugo had been influenced by Lenoir's Museum.¹³⁴ He had actually lived, as an adolescent, in the Couvent des Petits Augustins soon after the collection was dismantled, his mother using the former chapel, where the display so impressed Dawson Turner, as a bedroom. Although Graham Robb is wrong to suggest that Hugo would have seen the royal tombs from his window, they had been removed soon after 1816, he is surely right to sense the influence of the Jardin Elysée in the poetry Hugo wrote at the time with its vision of 'entire societies disappearing into time but recoverable by the imagination'.¹³⁵

Notre-Dame, as its first critics were quick to point out, was not scholarly in its use of history, it was, however, both antiquarian and prescient in its use of Gothic architecture as a symbol linking past and present. While Scott, as Eastlake had written, used medieval buildings

¹³³ Discussed in Sturrock, 'Introduction', *Notre Dame de Paris*, p.14.

¹³⁴ Sturrock, 'Introduction', *Notre Dame de Paris*, p. 8.

¹³⁵ Robb, *Victor Hugo*, p.69.

as an evocative background for his novels, Hugo used a single building to unify the plot and to carry the argument. In doing this he closed the emotional distance between his material and the expectations of his contemporaries that Scott, in his introduction to *Ivanhoe*, made no apology for keeping open. Hugo thereby overtook, in a single stride, the British, Georgian view of Gothic, arriving at once at that fusion of fabric and meaning that would come to English architecture with the work of A W N Pugin later in the decade. ‘ΑΝΑΓΚΗ’, ‘Fate’ is literally the writing on the wall in the cathedral. Every part of it speaks. ‘Vaste symphonie en pierre, pour ainsi dire; oeuvre colossale d’un homme et d’un peuple, tout ensemble une et complexe.’ [Great symphony in stone, as it were, the colossal work of one man and of a people, a unity, both one and complex.]¹³⁶ Meaning is embodied in the very stones and it is communicable. Notre Dame can, like a sentient creature, comfort Esmeralda as she takes sanctuary:

L’église, cette vaste église qui l’enveloppait de toutes parts, qui la gardait, qui la sauvait, était elle-même un souverain calmant. Les lignes solennelles de cette architecture, l’attitude religieuse de tous les objets qui entouraient la jeune fille, les pensées pieuses et sereines qui se dégagèrent, pour ainsi dire, de tous les pores de cette pierre, agissaient sur elle à son insu. [The church, that vast church which enfolded her on every side, which protected her, which saved her, was itself an unfailing calmative. The solemn contours of that architecture, the religious aspect of every object that surrounded the young girl, the pious, serene thoughts that were, so to speak, exhaled from every pore of that stone, worked on her, unsuspected.]¹³⁷

In Hugo’s vision all of the material past, from the cathedral downwards, could be made to speak, if one had the requisite, antiquarian, knowledge. ‘Quand on sait voir, on retrouve l’esprit d’un siècle et la physionomie d’un roi jusque dans un marteau de porte.’ [When you know how to look you may find the spirit of an age and the likeness of a king in a door knocker.]¹³⁸

In *Notre-Dame* the concept of the Gothic as a metaphysical force, an idea that grew in England from the 1790s onwards, arrives fully formed, as does the concept of the Renaissance as a falling off, a death rather than a rebirth or, in Hugo’s words: ‘Ce soleil couchant que nous prenons pour une aurora.’ [This sunset we mistake for dawn.]¹³⁹ The sentence comes in the

¹³⁶ Hugo, *Notre Dame de Paris*, p.194.

¹³⁷ Hugo, *Notre Dame de Paris* p.530.

¹³⁸ Hugo, *Notre Dame de Paris*, p.229.

¹³⁹ Hugo, *Notre Dame de Paris* p.292.

chapter that Hugo omitted from the earliest editions of the book ‘Ceci Tuera Cela’ [‘This Will Murder That’]. It embodies the argument of the novel and also demonstrates the ways in which Britain and France differed in their attitudes to the past in general and to Gothic architecture in particular. The premise of ‘Ceci Tuera Cela’ is that in the late Middle Ages the printing press usurped architecture as the primary expression of culture. The same point is made, almost in passing, in a few paragraphs in *Quentin Durward*.¹⁴⁰ It is not implausible I suggest that Scott’s brief episode was the spark for Hugo’s whole novel. Typically what is period detail for Scott becomes the cue for a traumatic rupture in history for Hugo.

In Hugo’s fiction the past is both closer and further away than in the Waverley novels. It is closer in its implications, the spring for an arc of history that was completed in 1789. As the novel moves to its conclusion Louis XI sits in his private chamber in the Bastille watching the rioters burning Paris. The hosier, Coppenole, tells him that if he succeeds in suppressing this unrest it means only that ‘l’heure du peuple n’est pas venu’ [the people’s time is not yet come].¹⁴¹ It will come, however:

Quand le beffroi bourdonnera, quand les canons gronderont, quand le donjon croulera à grand bruit, quand bourgeois et soldats hurleront et s’entre-tueront, c’est l’heure qui sonnera.’ [When the belfry tolls, when the canons thunder, when the keep falls with a great crash, when the citizens and soldiers are screaming and killing each another, then the hour will have come.]¹⁴²

Louis, patting the walls of the Bastille reassures himself: ‘tu ne crouleras pas si aisément, ma bonne Bastille?’ [You won’t fall so easily, good old Bastille?].¹⁴³ The symbolism of 14 July 1789, present from the first page of post-Revolutionary French antiquarianism in Millin’s *Antiquités nationales* here completes the journey from documentary account to narrative.

¹⁴⁰ Scott, *Quentin Durward*, pp. 154-55. Martiville the astrologer warns Louis that in ‘this new-fashioned art’ he saw another tree of knowledge which would bear fruit ‘as fatal, yet as precious, as that of the Garden of Eden’. He reassures the King, however, that this will not happen in his time and the theme is dropped.

¹⁴¹ Hugo, *Notre Dame de Paris*, p.632.

¹⁴² Hugo, *Notre Dame de Paris*, pp. 632-33.

¹⁴³ Hugo, *Notre Dame de Paris*, p.633.

Thus the present casts long shadows over history. Yet at the same time the medieval world is further away in *Notre Dame* than it is in *Ivanhoe*, irretrievable, murdered by the printed word, cut off forever on the far side of the Revolution it is never to return. For Hugo as for many of his contemporaries the Revolution was ‘a telluric event’.¹⁴⁴ There was to be no comparable Gothic Revival in French architecture, no substantial attempt to rebuild the present in the physical image of the past. Hugo’s account of the architecture of Notre Dame in his novel typifies the way in which the French, once they had managed to save their medieval buildings, would seek to understand and to restore them, as perfect models of proportion rather than examples to be followed. Hugo played a major part in the restoration movement that will be discussed at the end of this chapter but its principles are set out already in *Notre Dame*. Following in the rationalist tradition of Laugier and Cordemoy the French looked to the underlying structure of medieval buildings for a proportional system, rather than embracing, as the British did, the inconsistencies and peculiarities of individual examples.¹⁴⁵ While Hugo relished the grotesque in the Gothic he was equally concerned with underlying order, setting out in Book Three of his novel the principles on which Viollet-le-Duc would later work when restoring, or radically recasting, medieval buildings

Ce que nous disons ici de la façade, il faut le dire de l’église entière; et ce que nous disons de l’église cathédrale de Paris, il faut le dire de toutes les églises de la chrétienté au moyen-âge. Tout se tient dans cet art venu de lui meme, logique et bien proportionné. Mesurer l’orteil du pied, c’est mesurer le géant. [What we say here about the façade may be said of the whole church and what we say of the cathedral church of Paris may be said of all the churches of Christendom in the Middle Ages. Everything has its place in this self-generated art, logical and well proportioned. To measure the big toe, is to measure the giant.]¹⁴⁶

The second translation of *Notre Dame de Paris* into English, which appeared in 1833, changed the title to *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*. This is how it is still usually known despite the fact that, as John Sturrock writes, it changes the emphasis ‘from the book’s strengths to its weaknesses, from its ideas to its plot’.¹⁴⁷ The enduring popularity of the alternative title perhaps derives from the fact that it also shifted attention from what was peculiarly French in the attitude

¹⁴⁴Sturrock, ‘Introduction’, p.21.

¹⁴⁵For the French rationalist tradition see Middleton, ‘The Abbé de Cordemoy and the Graeco-Gothic Ideal’.

¹⁴⁶Hugo, *Notre Dame de Paris*, p. 194.

¹⁴⁷Sturrock, ‘Introduction’, p.11.

to the past, the abstract argument with implications for the present, to what was closer to the British pleasure in history, colourful characters and a well-paced sequence of dramatic events set in olden times.

By the time *Notre Dame* was published in 1831 E-H Langlois had been living in Rouen for fifteen years, struggling to pursue his antiquarian studies and support his alcoholic wife and their children by a mixture of teaching and illustration work. He had become, to English antiquaries, one of the sights of Normandy. A visit to his cold, cluttered and semi-ruinous apartments in the former Convent of the Visitation, was an essential stop on an antiquarian tour for ‘les étrangers de distinction, les savans anglais surtout, voyageant dans la Normandie’ [distinguished foreigners, especially English scholars, travelling in Normandy].¹⁴⁸ Described by Dibdin, who visited him, as ‘tout à la fois l’orgueil et la honte de la France’ [at once the pride and the disgrace of France] his efforts still went largely unrewarded by his fellow-countrymen.¹⁴⁹ After the intervention of the Duchesse de Berry had secured him a regular income he rose, as Charles Richard his friend and biographer put it, from destitution to mere poverty.¹⁵⁰

Langlois was only a minor player in the drama of French Romanticism, in which Hugo took the lead, but he had been close to its great events and his career embodied its contradictions, as well as much of the essence of active antiquarianism. He was a pupil in David’s studio in about 1798, at the time when a group of the students, disillusioned with David’s classicism and calling themselves the ‘Barbus’, ‘bearded men’, began growing their hair, dressing in cloaks and pantaloons and reading the works of Ossian. It was among these young artists that the Style Troubadour was conceived, emerging first in the salon of 1802. I have found no proof that Langlois was among the barbus but he must have known them and the fact that it was said later that ‘les fables d’Ossian étaient pour lui les chefs-d’oeuvre’ [the tales of Ossian were for him masterpieces] suggests he would have sympathised with them.¹⁵¹ His interest in the past seems

¹⁴⁸ Richard, ‘Notice sur E-H Langlois’, p.8.

¹⁴⁹ Quoted in Richard, ‘Notice sur E-H Langlois’, p.11.

¹⁵⁰ Richard, ‘Notice sur E-H Langlois’, p.74.

¹⁵¹ Jules Adeline, quoted in *E-H Langlois*, p.86.

to have begun, as it did for so many others, at Lenoir's museum, where he sketched the tombs before the collection was dismantled and he continued to know Lenoir.



Figure 32 *The Intervention of the Sabine Women*, by Jacques-Louis David, 1796-99

In the 1790s Langlois also played an almost literally pivotal role in David's own turn away from revolutionary ideals in the aftermath of Thermidor towards a more conciliatory political stance. The change of direction was signalled in David's art by *The Intervention of the Sabine Women* of 1796-99 [fig: 32]. Langlois modelled for Romulus, the central male figure in the picture, frozen forever in a moment of crisis between action and suffering. It is a resonant image for the similar painful ambiguity seems to have run through much of his life. There were in him it was said 'deux temperaments bien distincts' [two quite different temperaments].¹⁵² These were described by contemporaries in terms of the classical and romantic strains that met, or as some thought, clashed, in his art. The duality goes further, however, extending to a deep ambivalence that runs through all his writings. Langlois is at times scrupulously factual, evincing contempt for the credulity of the past. His discussion of the supposed tomb of the Enervés of Jumièges, for example, extends none of the imaginative sympathy for a synthesis of myth and material that might be expected from an aficionado of Lenoir's museum and is, instead, caustic about 'l'extrême crédulité de nos pères' [our ancestors' extreme credulousness].¹⁵³ Yet on other

¹⁵² Jules Adeline quoted in *E-H Langlois*, p.86.

¹⁵³ Langlois, *Les Enervés de Jumièges*. p.23. For the legend and its afterlife see Bussillet, *Les Enervés de Jumièges*.

occasions he wove fiction and narrative into his antiquarian writings with abandon. A man who was at times depressive to the point of reclusiveness and at others warmly hospitable, Langlois's swings of style and sympathy might reflect what would now be called a bi-polar condition. What he himself said was:

Je me trouvai, dès l'âge de vingt-trois ans, sujet à des accès de mélancolie, qui devinrent avec le temps plus intenses et plus fréquents; lorsqu'une foule de chagrins...vinrent irriter mes maux, je m'aperçus avec effroi que je manquais de la force nécessaire pour lutter avec avantage contre les tribulations de la vie. [I found myself, from the age of twenty-three, subject to bouts of melancholy which became worse and more frequent with time... when a host of troubles exacerbated my woes I realised, with terror, that I lacked the necessary strength to struggle successfully against the difficulties of life.]¹⁵⁴

Whatever his character might have been otherwise his experiences of the Revolution and as a soldier marked him deeply and they marked his view of history. He lived, after all, literally in its ruins. The discussion of Langlois's own antiquarian collection, in so far as it is known, belongs to the next chapter, but it was largely made up of debris from the Revolution. It included, for example, the death mask of Henri IV, looted, according to a nineteenth-century catalogue of the Rouen Museum, from a royal storehouse in 1793.¹⁵⁵ Langlois was sixteen at that time and probably not in Paris so it is unlikely that he acquired it first hand but in his researches in Normandy at Jumièges and St Wandrille, and at home in the Convent he was surrounded by fragments that reminded him of the potential of humanity for destruction. It oppressed him. Destruction and death are the themes that play through his writings sometimes as history, sometimes fiction and sometimes pivoting between the two. The most curious example is his prose poem *Hymne à la Cloche* [Hymn of the Bell] of 1832. Bells had always been a popular subject of antiquarian study for they are easy to date and hard to destroy. One of the most notable and comprehensive aspects of the revolutionary vandalism, however, had been the plundering of the church bells of France which were melted down for canon.

In his account of the Abbey of St Wandrille, also published in 1832, Langlois describes what he did not see, the breaking of the Abbey bells. The biggest one took the best part of a day

¹⁵⁴ Quoted, from an unidentified source, in Coutil, *Eustache-Hyacinthe Langlois*, p.5.

¹⁵⁵ *Catalogue du Musée d'Antiquités de Rouen*, p.116.

to destroy, resisting ‘avec des mugissements épouvantables, aux énormes coups de masses de fer que lui assénaient, en se relayant, les hommes les plus vigoureux.’ [with appalling groans the great blows of the iron weights with which the strongest men, working in relays, assailed it].¹⁵⁶ This awful resonating image of determined destruction, a perversion of the bell’s true purpose, so that it tolls for its own death, like an animal in agony (‘mugissements’ means literally ‘mooings’) is not dwelled on in *St Wandrille*. Its implications are brought out, however, in the *Hymne à la Cloche*, published the same year. The poem was finished, according to Langlois’s colophon [fig: 33] in the shape of a bell, on New Year’s Day 1831, exactly a fortnight before Hugo finished writing *Notre Dame*. It cannot therefore reflect Hugo’s influence; it can only demonstrate how similarly both men saw the potential of the material past for narrative.

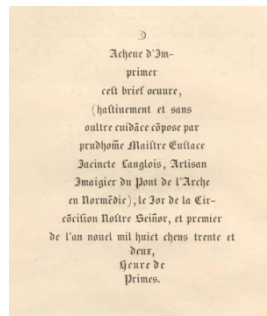


Figure 33 *Hymne à la Cloche*, colophon

In *Notre Dame* the bells are important. They give expression to Quasimodo, whose deafness makes him unable to speak easily, and they are the voice of Notre Dame. In Langlois’s prose poem the bell, which is supposed alone to have escaped the fate of the others in 1793, assumes a power and personality such as Hugo gives to the cathedral. Langlois imagines it at all times and all seasons, calling forth prayer, as Notre Dame bestows comfort on Esmeralda, but privy also to the grotesque aspects of the Gothic, causing witches to drop from the sky with the first note of the Angelus. The bell witnesses the events of All Hallows Eve when:

Les Morts, envelopés de leurs linceuls, surgissant de toutes parts dans l’église obscure et silencieuse: il sont pâles et tristes, mais calmes; car les feux du Purgatoire n’ont point d’action sur eux le jour de la Toussaint et le lendemain.

¹⁵⁶ Lenoir, *St Wandrille*, p.244.

[The dead, wrapped in their shrouds, rise from every part of the dark and silent church, they are pale and sad but calm, for the fires of Purgatory have no power over them on All Saints Day and the day after.] ¹⁵⁷

It is the mixture of fact and fantasy ‘la fusion de ses attributions surnaturelles avec les mystères d’un monde extérieur’ [the fusion of the supernatural with the mysteries of the outside world] that gives Langlois the opportunity in his prose poem to create what he calls a ‘vignette épouvantablement romantique’ [a terribly romantic vignette].¹⁵⁸ It is a phrase that catches the peculiarly self-mocking seriousness of the *Hymne à la Cloche* and much of his other work. Like Hugo he weaves the recent past back into the history of the bell which has rung for victories from Hastings to Austerlitz. In the introduction to the piece, which explains, in dialogue form, how it came to be written, there are notes about the history of real bells including that of Georges, Cardinal d’Amboise, the principal bell of Rouen cathedral, which was struck in 1500. In 1786, as it was being rung for Louis XVI on his visit to the town, it cracked ‘comme pour présager le sort de ce prince infortuné; elle fut mise en pieces en quatre-vingt-treize, et convertie en canons’ [as if in premonition of the fate of that unhappy prince; it was broken in pieces in ’93 and made into canon].¹⁵⁹

Langlois wrote on many subjects; architecture, calligraphy, stained glass and the stalls of Rouen cathedral among them. He was certainly of the ‘manners and customs’ tendency within antiquarianism and his classical training led him to look, like Sara Losh, for the Greek and Roman origins of Christian iconography and customs. One of the most persistent themes in his work, however, is an interest in sacred and profane rituals; carnivals, masquerades, the feast of fools and most importantly the Dance of Death. While he was insistent that these ‘profanations et ... desguisemens grotesques ou hideux dont nous avons fait le principal objet de nos recherches’ [profanities and grotesque or hideous masqueradings which we have made the principal object of our research] were in every way to be deplored there is no mistaking their fascination for him as he recounts the wild dancing in the sanctuary of Notre Dame at the feast of St Etienne, a scene that would have suited Hugo’s novel.¹⁶⁰ His study of the Dance of Death was a life-long project

¹⁵⁷ Langlois, *Hymne a la Cloche*, p.10.

¹⁵⁸ Langlois, *Hymne a la Cloche*, p. xiii.

¹⁵⁹ Langlois, *Hymne a la Cloche*, p. xii.

¹⁶⁰ Langlois, *Les Stalles de Rouen*, p.125.

and was published in full, suitably perhaps, only posthumously under a title that embraced the contrarities of Langlois's approach: *Essai historique, philosophique et pittoresque sur les Danses des Morts* [Philosophical, historical and picturesque essay on the Dances of Death].

Charles Richard describes his former master and friend arriving at the subject that was to preoccupy him, in terms that suggest that metaphor, narrative and the intertwining of fact and fiction were an accepted and admired characteristic of Langlois's method. During a 'promenade fantastique à travers notre vieille ville ressuscitée' [imaginary walk through our resurrected old town], in pursuit of Rouen's history, Langlois came, in his mind's eye, to the cemetery of St Maclou.¹⁶¹ Here, contemplating the dead and the futility of life, he awoke from his dream. 'Alors il sauté à pieds joints de l'illusion dans la réalité, et tombe au milieu de l'aître.' [Then he leapt with both feet together from fantasy into reality and landed in the middle of the churchyard].¹⁶² The cemetery at St Maclou is notable for the much mutilated but still decipherable Dance of Death carved round its interior walls. From here Langlois progressed to a study of the Danse Macabre as it appeared elsewhere in France and Germany. The starting point for his interest, however, the slide from present imagination to past reality, from nineteenth-century walk to medieval dance, was preserved in the published account, the first parts of which appeared in Langlois's lifetime from 1832. It is reflected in the illustrations from the first illuminated capital to the startling engraving that prefaces Volume Two of the final version [fig: 34] and in the text which begins with Langlois calling up the past like Lucan's witch on the battlefield:

A la classique melodie de la lyre d'Amphion, les murailles de Thebes se contruirent d'elle-memes: essayons de relèver nos ruines aux grincements romantiques du rebec de MACABRE.' [To the classical strains of Amphion's lyre the walls of Thebes rose up unaided: let us try to rebuild our own ruins to the romantic grinding of the rebec of the MACABRE.]¹⁶³

¹⁶¹ Richard, 'Notice sur E-H Langlois', p. 63.

¹⁶² Richard, 'Notice sur E-H Langlois', p.63.

¹⁶³ Langlois, *Essai Historique, Philosophique et Pittoresque sur les Danses des Morts*, p.3.



Figure 34 Frontispiece to Langlois's *Les Danses des Morts*

After which spine-tingling introduction Langlois takes his readers on that imaginary walk through the streets of old Rouen that he himself had taken, making them read the past in the carvings on the timber houses, enter into the minds and the society, of the house builders. Yet, as for Langlois, as for Hugo, this is a past that can return only in the imagination. It is cut off forever by the intervening age of reason, which culminated in Revolution, an irony that suits Langlois's sardonic taste.

Le XVIIIe seicle!!! Eh! N'est-il pas déjà tombé dans l'abîme des ages, en y entraînant avec lui ses innombrables morts et ses evenements immenses. Et nous qui lui survivons en propageant au sein des generations nouvelles son *heureuse* incredulité et ses *sages* disenchantements, nous, enfants gâtés de la raison, soyons positives comme elle, et laissons le Rouen de Louis XII et de Francois Ier redevenir celui de 1835. [The 18th century!!! Ugh! Has it not yet fallen into the abyss of time past, taking with it its countless dead and its great events. And we who survive it to sew in the breasts of new generations its *happy* scepticism and its *wise* disillusionment, we the spoiled children of reason, let us be positive as it was, let us leave the Rouen of Louis XII and Francois I and return to that of 1835.]¹⁶⁴

In 1835 Langlois had two more years to live. His agonising and lonely death after a long period of depression added to the legend that grew up around him. His reputation was to resound for decades. The year of his death however, 1837, saw also the end of Georgian England, the accession of Victoria and on both sides of the Channel a change of mood. Walter Scott's popularity declined after 1835 and the failure of Hugo's play *Les Burgraves* in 1843 marked the

¹⁶⁴ Langlois, *Essai Historique, Philosophique et Pittoresque sur les Danses des Morts*, p.16.

beginning of the end of the French Romantic Movement. French and British antiquarianism began to change and as they changed they began also to diverge.

Elginism

The sympathy between British and French antiquaries that survived the war and blossomed with the peace, was to diminish during the 1830s. In part this was because, as antiquarianism developed in France, it took on its own momentum. Also, with the passage of time the Revolution, the emigration and the initial impact of the British on France after 1815, passed out of living memory. There was also, however, reason for a certain mutual hostility. This was due to the enthusiasm that British and particularly English antiquaries, including Dawson Turner, evinced for taking advantage of troubled times to snap up items for their own collections. Beckford had been back buying in France as early as October 1814 when in ‘a kind of cut-throat quarter’ of Paris he ‘discovered and disenchanted the famous stupendous and purest Gerard Dou’.¹⁶⁵ Less intrepid and well-connected buyers, like Turner, had had to wait a little longer, but by the 1830s a flood of antiquities, particularly the ‘salvaged’ contents of French and Flemish churches and religious houses was pouring across the Channel. Carved wood, stained glass and architectural fragments were the most popular items. Some dealers chartered whole ships and filled them with plunder. Thus French antiquaries found themselves fighting on two fronts against the vandalism of their fellow countrymen and the ‘Elginism’ of the English. The latter it was believed was actively encouraging the former.

By 1832 the English menace was generally acknowledged. Langlois, who was trying to trace the stained glass windows removed from the Rouen Charterhouse, wrote to Lenoir to ask if he had ever had them. Lenoir confirmed that they had at one point been in his hands and he had tried to buy them: ‘A mon grand regret je n’ai pas réussi; je crois qu’ils sont passés dans le

¹⁶⁵ Quoted in Wainwright, ‘Lucifer’s Metropolis’, p. 84. This was ‘The Poulterer’s Shop’ of c1670, now in the National Gallery, London.

gouffre qu'on appelle *Angleterre*, où passent aujourd'hui tous nos objets d'arts.' [To my great regret I failed; I believe they have disappeared into the gulf called *England* where all our works of art now disappear].¹⁶⁶ For their part the English emphasised the fact that much of what they bought had been already removed from its original setting and might otherwise have been destroyed. Dawson Turner's observations on contrasting English and French attitudes in 1815 cast neither nation in a flattering light but they are revealing. Arriving at the church of Molineaux he remarked that while the building was derelict the stained glass windows were intact:

Either the antiquaries in France are more honest than in England, or they want taste, or objects of this kind do not find a ready market. We know too well how many an English church, albeit well guarded by the churchwardens and the parson, has seen its windows despoiled of every shield, and saint, and motto; and we also know full well, by whom, and for whom, such ravages are committed. In France on the contrary, where painted glass still fills the windows of sacred buildings, now employed for the meanest purposes, or wholly deserted, no one will even take the trouble of carrying it away; and the storied panes are left, as derelict utterly without value.¹⁶⁷

As Turner implied it was the antiquaries, who should have known better, who behaved worst. At Jumièges the statues were sold off by the new owner to Englishmen who, as Langlois put it, 'poussèrent si loin la spoliation, que si l'on ne s'y fût enfin opposé, on ne trouverait pas aujourd'hui dans Jumièges un seul fleuron de chapiteau'. [took the plundering so far that unless it had eventually been put a stop to there would not now be at Jumièges a single crocket of a capital left.].¹⁶⁸ He presumably did not know that his acquaintance A C Pugin, to whom he had been so helpful, had, with his pupils been responsible for sawing off and removing one whole capital.¹⁶⁹ At Caen the ducal palace had been virtually stripped of its encaustic tile floor by the time Dawson Turner saw it and asked Cotman to include some of the remaining fragments in his illustration. The Abbé de la Rue had happily collected an entire set of tiles, preserving them from the workmen who 'after the abbey was sold... [broke] them with their pick-axes'.¹⁷⁰ Four years after Turner's *Tour* was published the twelve-year old A W N Pugin noted excitedly in his

¹⁶⁶ Langlois, *Essai Historique et descriptif sur la peinture sur verre ancienne et moderne*, pp. 100-101.

¹⁶⁷ Turner, *A Tour in Normandy*, 2, p.102.

¹⁶⁸ Langlois, *Les Enervés de Jumièges*, p.14.

¹⁶⁹ Ferrey, *Recollections of Pugin*, p.20

¹⁷⁰ Turner, *A Tour in Normandy*, 2, p.206.

journal that he had brought back ‘some tiles from the Ducal Palace, Caen, and got some fragments of stained glass from the circular window at the end of Hall’.¹⁷¹ One can only hope that the tiles, now in the Victoria and Albert Museum, had already been removed from the floor, but given the behaviour of the rest of the Pugin party in 1824 it is impossible to be sure.

As the passion for the past spread beyond those who would call themselves antiquaries to anyone with money who considered themselves a person of taste, so the scale of the purchases grew. ‘Importation sales’, lasting for two or three whole days were held in London and purchasers would carry off their prizes to decorate their own homes or parish churches. The scale and nature of the trade have been explored and thoroughly discussed by Clive Wainwright in *The Romantic Interior* and by Charles Tracy in *Continental Church Furniture in England*. Tracy calculated that in 2001 there were 255 English churches containing continental woodwork, glass or paintings. One of these is Sara Losh’s church in Cumbria, which will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter. In the domestic context perhaps the most dramatic piece of souvenir hunting was the work of Sir Stuart de Rothesay, the English ambassador who appeared at the Duchessee de Berry’s quadrille. As well as some of the panelling from Jumièges he acquired for his home at Highcliffe Castle in Hampshire the great oriel window from Les Andelys, demolished in 1835. [fig: 35] It is still in situ and now belongs to Hampshire County Council.

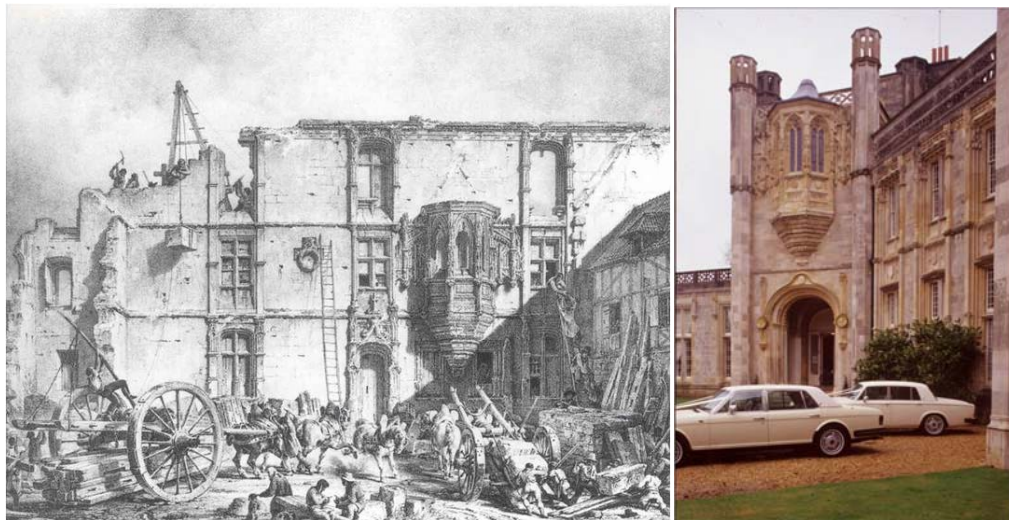


Figure 35 The oriel window from Les Andelys under demolition and at Highcliffe Castle, Hampshire

¹⁷¹ A W N Pugin, autobiographical notes transcribed in Wedgwood, *A W N Pugin and the Pugin Family*, p.24.

The demolition of Les Andelys was recorded in *Voyages Pittoresques et Romantiques*, a massive work of illustrated topography that appeared from 1820 onwards with lithographed plates. Edited by Charles Nodier (1780-1844) and the Baron Taylor (1789-1879) it was inspired by the British topographic tradition. In scale and the quality of the illustrations, however, the *Voyages Pittoresques* was more than a tribute it was a substantial technical and artistic advance. It also revealed the growing tensions between the former allies. Taylor abhorred the behaviour of the English and decried it in terms that emphasised the differences in national priorities:

Nous n'exprimerons pas de regrets aussi amers si toutes des productions des arts avaient été transportées en Angleterre pour en former un musée où nous pourrions aller admirer et étudier nos Antiquités nationales... Mais les oeuvres d'art sont allées orner quelques châteaux ou quelques parcs de lords où l'on joue au Moyen Age à la Walter Scott. [We would not feel such bitter resentment if all these works of art had been taken to England to make a museum where we could go to admire and study our national antiquities ... but these works of art have gone to decorate a few country houses or aristocratic parks where they play at the Middle Ages à la Walter Scott.]¹⁷²

Those houses and the business of playing at the Middle Ages are the subject of the next chapter. What Taylor's remark emphasises in this context is the continuation of the distinction that Turner had noticed between France and England. For the French the state was the driving force, while for the English it was the individual. At the beginning of the period this had given the British an advantage and been a cause of envy among French antiquaries for the state was in no position to support them. Millin complained to Dawson Turner in 1815 that he could not publish his research because it was impossible to raise money from private subscribers in France, government support, which was not just then forthcoming, was 'the mainspring of all, to an extent of which we happily have no idea in England'.¹⁷³ Under the Bourbons the situation had remained much the same. With the exception of royal palaces little effort was made to preserve national antiquities despite a rising tide of protest.¹⁷⁴

¹⁷² Nodier and Taylor, *Voyages Pittoresques*, Picardy, 1, f35

¹⁷³ Turner, 'Journal of a three weeks tour' f 48.

¹⁷⁴ See, however, Choay, *The Invention of the Historic Monument*, p. 80, which points out that more was done between 1796 and 1830 than is generally recognised.

Victor Hugo's appeal 'Guerre aux démolisseurs' [War on the Destroyers] was published in the *Revue de Paris* in 1829 and after the July Revolution official attitudes changed. In 1830 Guizot appointed Ludovic Vitet as the first inspector of historic monuments. Regional museums, national listings and the founding, by de Caumont, of the Société Française d'Archéologie, all marked the arrival of historic conservation as a state enterprise. De Caumont produced the first inventory of monuments, the *Statistique Monumentale du Calvados* in five volumes between 1846-67. Thus the intellectual legacy of the encyclopédistes was finally to be applied to antiquities: they were ordered, categorised and nationalised.

The balance of envy and admiration between England and France began accordingly to be reversed. In England there would be no equivalent support for historic buildings until the establishment of the Royal Commission on Historic Monuments in 1908, while museum displays continued to savour of the informal cabinet of curiosities and medieval antiquities were not displayed at all. Writing to Francis Douce in October 1833 Samuel Meyrick, who had just come back from Paris after his first visit since 1817, commented on the difference the intervening years had made. The city was much improved and so were the museums:

I wish most heartily our national collection of coins instead of being locked up in boxes in the Brit. Mus. was displayed in show-glasses arranged according to countries, with tickets to tell how long each King reigned... We have imitated the Jardin des Plants[sic] ... why not then the same with respect to the coins.¹⁷⁵

By the 1840s the English were openly acknowledging the superiority of the French system. In preparation for the establishment of the British Archaeological Association one of its founders, William Bromet, sent out a questionnaire to antiquaries which was based on Guizot's in order to try and establish a central list of monuments. He also wrote to de Caumont for advice, 'comme vous devez avoir tant de conaissance des demarches necessaires pour l'établissement d'une telle assemblé'. [As you must know a great deal about the necessary measures for the establishment of such an association.]¹⁷⁶

¹⁷⁵ Samuel Rush Meyrick to Francis Douce, 21 October 1833, Douce Papers, 39204, d.28 f168.

¹⁷⁶ Letter from Bromet to de Caumont quoted in Lewis, 'Les rapports avec les antiquaires anglais', p. 276.

It has been suggested that the effect of these national institutions, ‘a cog in the machine of centralisation’ as Choay puts it was bad for local antiquarianism, that government committees kept a stranglehold on conservation and excluded antiquaries.¹⁷⁷ This may well have been, in time, the effect but, by comparison with England, where, as was discussed in the last chapter, the relatively few formal or professional organisations were immediately antipathetic to antiquarianism, the impetus for organisation in France grew directly out of the antiquarian mentality. Victor Hugo’s article was only one of his contributions to the campaign for conservation. In 1835 he was appointed to the Comité de Monuments Inédits de la Littérature, de la Philosophie, des Sciences et des Arts, charged with producing a list of national treasures, the patrimoine, which the state should preserve. A year earlier the author Prosper Mérimée (1803-1870), whose *Chronique du règne de Charles IX* was ‘an “ideal”...imitation of Scott’ succeeded Vitet as national inspector of monuments.¹⁷⁸ The French idea of the ‘patrimoine’ developed out of the romantics’ view of the past. Medieval objects were displayed in the Louvre two decades before they were admitted to the collections of the British Museum.

Local museums were also established across the country. The one in Rouen opened in 1834 and managed, as will be seen in the next chapter, literally to accommodate Langlois, who was eventually, somewhat to his annoyance, awarded the Légion d’Honneur. It is impossible to imagine a similar distinction being offered to the much better-connected and socially assiduous John Britton. More clubbable antiquaries than Langlois seem to have had no difficulty assimilating to the new professionalism. The Abbé de la Rue’s letters to Douce tell a tale of constant promotion. He had been made Professor of History at the University of Caen as early as 1810. In 1815 he was elected as a corresponding member of the Institut de France and was an early and enthusiastic member of the Société des Antiquaires de Normandie. De Caumont grew up with the state system that he was also important in forming. If local antiquaries seem to disappear in France, as Choay suggests, that is not perhaps because they were frozen out as she concludes but rather the reverse. They merged with the academic establishment so seamlessly that the next generation neither perceived nor needed to make a distinction. By contrast in Britain antiquaries remained visible because they were excluded. Walter Scott, the only British public

¹⁷⁷ Choay, *The Invention of the Historic Monument*, p.79.

¹⁷⁸ Dargan, ‘Scott and the French Romantics’, p.609.

figure equivalent to Hugo might have spanned the gulf but he was dead and his popularity as an author, though still high, was waning.

In terms of cross-Channel relations it is no doubt true, as Carola Hicks and others have observed, that after Queen Victoria's marriage, in 1840, to Prince Albert of Saxe-Coburg Gotha, the imaginative pull of the Norman past gave way, in England, to an interest in the Saxon heritage. It was as Saxons that Victoria and Albert were portrayed by William Theed in his sculpture of 1863-7, commissioned at the suggestion of their daughter, Princess Victoria of Prussia to symbolise 'the ties between the German and English peoples'.¹⁷⁹ By 1843 when Caroline de Berry's son, the dispossessed Duc de Chambord, came on a self-promoting tour to Britain, the contrast with his mother's heyday and the quadrille could not have been more poignant. The change was not lost on the Viscomte Walsh who accompanied the Duc and was commissioned to write the official account. Walsh's description of the Bourbon pretender wandering through Abbotsford employs every technique of scenery, weather and atmosphere. Nearly thirty years after Dawson Turner and his family were moved and entranced by Lenoir's museum the novelty has worn off, the romantic melancholy given way to a more serious sense of loss. Abbotsford itself is a kind of Jardin Elysée, home of the dead. Walsh conjures up the ghosts of the living author and of his characters, fictional and historical, who join together in the antiquarian narrative of resurrection, a last dance of death.

Ce fut par un temps affreux, la neige et la pluie tombant sans relache, que Monseigneur arriva à Abbots ford [sic]; pas un rayon de soleil sur la demeure du poète et du romancier; le vent soufflant dans les arbres verts qui entourent le manoir et agitant les longs rameaux des saules qui pleurent sur les ondes du lac... Walter-Scott [sic] a souvent décrit la tristesse des demeures abandonées, celle d'Abbot's ford aurait été digne d'être redite par lui...

Monseigneur visita tout avec intérêt, et emotion... le genie ayant passé par là, il en reste quelque chose... A défaut du maitre du château, le jeune descendant de Robert-le-Fort pouvait évoquer, sous les voûtes des salles desertes, Richard Coeur-de-Lion, Rebecca, Philippe-Auguste, Louis XI, Elisabeth, Amy Robsart, Marie Stuart... Péveril du Pic, Miss Vernon, la jolie fille de Perth... et tant d'autres figures qui hantent Abbot's ford comme des esprits.

[It was in terrible weather, the snow and rain falling relentlessly, that Monseigneur arrived at Abbotsford; not a ray of sun on the home of the poet and novelist, the wind blowing through the evergreens that surround the house and

¹⁷⁹ Label on the cast of Theed's statue, currently on display at the National Portrait Gallery, London.

shaking the long branches of the willows that weep on the waves of the lake... Walter Scott often described the sadness of abandoned houses, that of Abbotsford was worthy to be described by him...

Monseigneur looked at everything with interest and emotion... genius having been there something remained... instead of the master of the house, the young descendant of Robert the Strong could call up, beneath the vaults of the deserted rooms, Richard the Lionheart, Rebecca, Philippe-Auguste, Louis XI, Elizabeth, Amy Robsart, Mary Stuart... Peveril of the Peak, Miss Vernon, the fair maid of Perth... and many other figures which haunt Abbotsford like spirits.] ¹⁸⁰

¹⁸⁰ Walsh, *Relation du voyage de Henri de France en Ecosse et en Angleterre*, pp.80-81.

Chapter Four

The Antiquarian Interior

Scavenging on the field of Waterloo or wandering through the Elysian garden at Lenoir's Musée des Monumens Français, antiquaries, and others, were drawn by the artefacts of the past into a narrative relationship with history. For most it was a narrative in which their role was that of reader or interpreter, following a story in which they played no personal part. Someone with a claim to historic significance in his or her own right, such as the Duchesse de Berry or the putative Henri V at Abbotsford, might collapse the imaginative space and become a character in the romance, but for most people, however closely they engaged with it, history remained in the past.

Antiquarianism offered, however, other kinds of narrative-through-objects which, while they drew on ideas about history, might approach more closely to theatre (which will be discussed in a later chapter) or to autobiography. In this latter case it was the spaces created by individuals, possibly in a single room or a whole house, sometimes in a church or even within a museum, that were the occasions for such self-reflexive antiquarian experiences. Furnished and occasionally entirely built out of a combination of old and new materials they are now generally known as 'romantic' or 'antiquarian interiors'.¹ These environments were the objective expressions of the personality, thoughts, feelings and beliefs of their creators. Indeed in some cases the creator was such an inextricable part of the creation as to become a living artefact, apparently the product, as much as the projector of his material context. Such symbiosis is a prominent theme in *Notre Dame* where Victor Hugo, who himself created spectacular romantic interiors in his homes in Paris and on Guernsey, describes Quasimodo's relationship to the cathedral in these terms:

¹ Wainwright, *The Romantic Interior*, was the first and remains the most authoritative monograph. It has given rise to the expressions which are in general use among art historians and curators.

C'est ainsi que peu à peu, se développant dans le sens de la cathédrale, y vivant, y dormant, n'en sortant presque jamais, en subissant à toute heure la pression mystérieuse, il arriva à lui ressembler... et il en semblait, non seulement l'habitant, mais encore le contenu naturel. [Thus, little by little, growing up in sympathy with the cathedral, living there, sleeping there, hardly ever going out, submissive always to its mysterious force he came to resemble it...and he seemed not only its occupant, but indeed its own natural content.]²

Like a snail or an oyster (and similarly physically unprepossessing) Quasimodo is the shape of his shell, impossible to understand without it and unable to exist for long apart from it. The relationship between the animate and inanimate is perfectly reciprocal.

Such cases in real life were rare, but they did occur and this chapter will consider one such. It will also return to Hugo and to his romantic interiors. It begins, however, with a consideration of the popular idea of the romantic interior and an overview of the antiquaries on which the thesis focuses considering the extent to which they were engaged, or not, in the creation of such places. It will consider the conception of these interiors in literature and in life, suggesting that they were often created out of an exchange between the two, while in France they contributed to the newly emerging idea of 'Bohemia'. The discussion will deal first with private, then public and finally sacred romantic interiors, concluding with a brief discussion of how such spaces changed during the period from 1789 to 1851.

The principal previous study is Clive Wainwright's *The Romantic Interior*. It comprises accounts of interiors that were for the most part on a much larger scale than those discussed here. Wainwright does devote two chapters to Walter Scott's home, Abbotsford, which will be considered below, but his principal concern is to document the construction and the contents of the house, not to interpret it in relation to Scott's persona as author or as antiquary. Tracy's and Harrison's studies are similarly devoted to descriptions of which objects went where and how the antiques trade functioned.³ All three represent pioneering studies of a subject long thought too poorly documented for serious analysis and I am indebted to them. I have nevertheless attempted to go further in my own particular direction, developing these factual accounts into a critical

² Hugo, *Notre Dame*, p. 247.

³ Tracy, *Continental Church Furniture in England: a traffic in piety* and Harris, *Moving Rooms: the trade in architectural salvage*.

study of the way in which such interiors functioned in relation both to their creators and to the wider cultural context.

The Antiquary's Cell

As suggested in the opening chapter the image of the antiquary in the popular imagination and in art supplied him with a characteristic setting, outlined in more or less detail. Bonington's *The Antiquary* [fig: 1] offers a typical jumble of miscellaneous objects and papers to contextualise the figures. E W Cooke's *The Antiquary's Cell* (1835) [fig: 7], however, goes further. It relies entirely on the context to evoke the character of the absent antiquary, whose personality and temperament are conveyed through the artefacts he has gathered around himself. When working on the picture, which is set in his own study, Cooke bought or borrowed props which he arranged with great care and made several preparatory studies, including one by candlelight.⁴ The individual elements include armour and a 'fine carved chair' that Cooke bought from Edward Hull's shop in Wardour Street in Soho, as well as various rolls of parchment.⁵

Armour, carved wood, (usually dark or darkened oak) and papers were the staples of the romantic interior, along with stained glass, which Cooke does not show, and, sometimes, tapestry. Beyond that details might vary, what mattered was the impression of profusion, mystery and disorder. Cooke referred to the 'olla podrida' of curiosities in his composition, which recedes into evocative gloom.⁶ The antiquary's empty chair is the focus of the painting, its drapery bears the impress of a recent occupant and it glows, not only with the red silk Cooke bought especially for it, but also with an implied inner power. The occupant of this seat we feel, when present, completes the picture. The description of the scene as a 'cell' reinforces the links between antiquarianism and both monasticism and magic. A kind of magus, the antiquary's galvanising

⁴ Wainwright, *Romantic Interior*, pp. 39-40.

⁵ Cooke's diary, quoted in Wainwright, *Romantic Interior*, p. 40.

⁶ Quoted in Wainwright, *Romantic Interior*, p. 40.

imagination will reveal the hidden order in the chaos, as a magnet draws iron filings into a pattern.

Interiors like this were not absolutely new in the late eighteenth century, but like every other aspect of antiquarianism in the period they grew in number and developed as a theme in polite culture. As the enthusiasm for the past extended from *objets de vertu* to ‘curiosities’ it was no longer necessary to be as rich as Horace Walpole at Strawberry Hill or William Beckford at Fonthill to use the artefacts of the past to create a home expressive of its owner’s personality. By the same token for those who were rich the great influx of looted (or salvaged) antiquities from the Continent offered unprecedented opportunities for purchase and display. As Clive Wainwright writes: ‘In 1780 [romantic interiors] were unusual and by 1850 so many existed that they constituted a major strand of taste in interior decoration.’⁷ By 1835, when Cooke painted *The Antiquary’s Cell*, the scene was instantly recognisable and popular with the public, while Soho in general and Wardour Street in particular had become synonymous with a lively antiques trade.⁸

The principal source for the image was, undoubtedly, Scott’s *The Antiquary*. Jonathan Oldbuck’s lair is clearly the inspiration for Cooke’s picture, it would have been in the minds of his audience and it resonated through the work of other artists and writers. The details are so exact that it is worth quoting the whole paragraph in which Scott introduces the reader to Oldbuck’s study, and thereby to much that is essential to his character. Lovel sees it for the first time through a haze of dust, the chambermaid having taken advantage of Oldbuck’s absence to attempt, much to his annoyance, to clean it.

It was, indeed, some time before Lovel could, through the thick atmosphere, perceive in what sort of den his friend had constructed his retreat. It was a lofty room of middling size, obscurely lighted by high narrow lattice windows. One end was entirely occupied by book-shelves, greatly too limited in space for the number of volumes placed upon them, which were, therefore, drawn up in ranks of two or three files deep, while numberless others littered the floor and the tables, amid a chaos of maps, engravings, scraps of parchment, bundles of papers, pieces of old armour, swords, dirks, helmets and Highland targets. Behind Mr Oldbuck’s seat (which was an ancient leathern-covered

⁷ Wainwright, *Romantic Interior*, p.25.

⁸ See Wainwright, *Romantic Interior*, and Harris, *Moving Rooms*, passim for the development of the antiques trade.

easy-chair, worn smooth by constant use), was a huge oaken cabinet, decorated at each corner with Dutch cherubs... the top of this cabinet was covered with busts, and Roman lamps and paterae, intermingled with one or two bronze figures. The walls of the apartment were partly clothed with grim old tapestry, representing the memorable story of Sir Gawaine's wedding, in which full justice was done to the ugliness of the Lothely Lady; although, to judge from his own looks, the gentle knight had less reason to be disgusted with the match on account of disparity of outward favour, than the romancer has given us to understand. The rest of the room was panelled, or wainscoted, with black oak, against which hung two or three portraits in armour, being characters in Scottish history, favourites of Mr Oldbuck, and as many in tie-wigs and laced coats, staring representatives of his own ancestors. A large old-fashioned oaken table was covered with a profusion of papers, parchments, books, and nondescript trinkets and gew-gaws, which seemed to have little to recommend them, besides rust and the antiquity which it indicates. In the midst of this wreck of ancient books and utensils, with a gravity equal to Marius among the ruins of Carthage, sat a large black cat, which, to a superstitious eye, might have represented the genius loci... the floor, as well as the table and chairs, was overflowed by the same mare magnum of miscellaneous trumpery, where it would have been as impossible to find any individual article wanted, as to put it to any use when discovered.⁹

As in Cooke's picture gloom and the profusion of objects in apparent chaos are the main impression, although Scott, typically, creates a little ironic distance by making the particularly dim atmosphere attributable to the commonplace in the form of dust. There, as in Cooke, are the armour and the dark carved wood. Scott also makes explicit two elements Cooke only implies; the suggestion of the occult in the shape of the cat and the dubious quality of some of the objects. Beyond that Scott also describes what cannot easily be conveyed in painting but is of the essence for the romantic interior, the conflation of old and new. The paintings on Oldbuck's wall are divided equally between the 'characters' from Scottish history (in what may be old pictures or modern pictures of old subjects) and the family portraits of Oldbuck's own forbears. Here the mingling of old and new within historic objects, as Lenoir practised it in his museum, is developed further to the point where the individual is himself inserted into history. Such claims of direct personal kinship with some chosen aspect of the past were typical of the antiquarian interior, a space where time was not so much suspended as in a manner rearranged to suit the occupant.

In Oldbuck's room the panelling is probably entirely old but in many such interiors old and new panelling imported from different sources was patched together and washed over with a

⁹ Scott, *The Antiquary*, pp. 31-32.

layer of dark stain to make it look homogenous. (Although oak darkens naturally with age the sooty blackness of most old oak today, of any age, is due to its having been stained in the nineteenth-century.)¹⁰ At Strawberry Hill Walpole hung his miscellaneous collection of armour in a dark part of the staircase to give the impression of a complete, ancestral collection.¹¹ At his own home, Abbotsford, one of the most important and enduring of antiquarian interiors, on 29 October 1812, Scott reported that he had ‘just finished a well constructed out of a few of the broken stones taken up in clearing the rubbish from Melrose Abbey...It makes a tolerable deception and looks at least 300 years old’.¹² This literal or figurative piecing together, the varnishing over of the cracks between past and present, self and other, were essential to the ethos of the romantic interior.

How knowing it was, whether, as in Scott’s case at this stage in his life, it was intended to deceive only at the level of art or whether, having been created, an interior took on a life of its own in which distinctions between the authentic and the fabricated were subsumed, depended on the creator. What was perceived as ‘forgery’ also varied and whether forgery mattered, was, as at Lenoir’s museum, a moot point. Scott’s deception with the well at Abbotsford is knowing and therefore acceptable to him. To be taken in by somebody else’s fabrication would be quite a different matter. Scott surely intends Sir Arthur Wardour’s surname as a reference to Wardour Street and the fact that Sir Arthur’s taste in antiquities was ‘neither very deep nor very correct’.¹³ The Soho brokers had a (deserved) reputation for selling furniture that was made up from old and new elements, a process known as ‘sophisticating’. The term itself, however, suggests an ambiguity, reflected in the attitudes of individuals, towards the propriety of such interference with historic objects and its consequences.

Before discussing particular interiors in more detail we might pause to consider how far the popular image of the *Antiquary’s Cell* reflected reality for the antiquaries under discussion in

¹⁰ Ex inf the late Clive Wainwright.

¹¹ See Wainwright, *Romantic Interior*, p.101.

¹² Scott to Mathew Weld Hartstonge, *Letters*, 3, p.185.

¹³ Scott, *The Antiquary*, p.52. Wainwright, *Romantic Interior*, p. 35, says that there were still no brokers in Wardour Street in 1817, though there were many cabinet makers. I think the coincidence with Scott’s character too remarkable to be chance and suggest that some at least of those describing themselves as cabinet makers were also occasional brokers or ‘sophisticators’.

this dissertation. It would be misleading to suggest that it was a necessary concomitant of antiquarian activity. The romantic interior required a suspension of disbelief and if its presence was expressive of the personality of its creator, so its absence would also be a reliable indicator of intellectual temperament. To some antiquaries this passion for imaginative interaction with the past by recreating it in physical form, appeared a positive menace to the historical enterprise.

On a continuum from scepticism to enthusiasm we must surely place John Lingard and Robert Willis at the former extreme. I have found no descriptions of the rooms in which they lived and worked. This in itself suggests that they were of no particular significance to their owners and it would be surprising, given their commitment to objectivity in their studies, if either of them viewed the notion of the romantic interior as anything other than absurd. Lingard's exasperation with A W N Pugin, who was building a new chapel in the Gothic style at the seminary at Ushaw in County Durham, of which Lingard had been President, reveals his impatience with Pugin's determination to reproduce what he imagined a medieval chapel would have been. Sending a donation to the building fund in September 1843 Lingard wrote briskly: 'One thing I will beg that you will not suffer yourselves to be bamboozled with Pugins whims, or build a church fit for monks of the 14th century instead of ecclesiastical students of the present.'¹⁴ This taken with his view of Macaulay's narrative history as 'abounding in claptrap' suggests that he was highly unsympathetic to the antiquarian interior.¹⁵

Towards the centre of the continuum Scott himself presents an unsurprisingly close match to the popular image. *The Antiquary's Cell* could be seen as an only slightly heightened version of his arrangements at Abbotsford. Indeed Cooke, and his audience, may well have had in mind William Allan's *Sir Walter Scott in his Study* [fig: 36] painted four years earlier. In Allan's painting Scott occupies the essential carved 'oaken' chair, he studies a parchment, in this case Mary Queen of Scots's proclamation of her marriage to Darnley, and is surrounded by armour and objects in which historical and personal significance combine by association with his

¹⁴ Lingard to the Rev Robert Tate, 27 September 1843, Typescript copy of 'Letters of John Lingard to Rev Robert Tate', Ushaw College, Durham.

¹⁵ Lingard to John Walker, 27 December 1848, quoted in 'J Peter Phillips, 'Lingard, John (1771–1851)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, May 2008 [http://www.oxforddnb.com.ezproxy.londonlibrary.co.uk/view/article/16727, accessed 18 Jan 2011]

novels and poetry; the sporran of Rob Roy, the keys of the old Tolbooth and some of the Napoleonica gathered after Waterloo are all objects that played prominent parts in his work and



Figure 36 *Sir Walter Scott in his study*, by William Allan, 1831

bind together history and romance through the person of the author. Scott's position in literature is suggested by his physical placement between the two writers he most admired, represented here by artefacts, the bust of Shakespeare and the neo-classical urn that was a present to Scott from Byron. The image is tamed somewhat by comparison with Oldbuck's study. The room is untidy rather than chaotic, the sinister cat has been replaced by the more comfortable presence of Maida, Scott's favourite stag-hound, but this is nonetheless a romantic interior, a speaking scene. Allan, in his account of the picture when it was shown at the Royal Academy in 1832, provided a detailed list of the objects portrayed.¹⁶

By comparison John Britton, Scott's admirer and close like him both by personality and experience to the theatre, inhabited what might be called, unkindly, a poor man's Abbotsford. In his home, as in his publications, Britton was just one step ahead of his public and his suburban villa at St Pancras showed how far and deep, a decade after Scott's death, the romantic interior had penetrated in middle-class society. In June 1843 Britton published a description of his house.

¹⁶ For the list and a full account of the painting see Russell, *Portraits of Sir Walter Scott*, pp.26-27.

This was in itself significant. Scott declined to publish an account of Abbotsford, even when it was one of the most famous houses in Europe, thinking that to do so would be in poor taste and that ‘Horace Walpole with all his talents makes a silly figure when he gives an upholsterer’s catalogue of his goods and chattels at Strawberry Hill’.¹⁷ That was in 1828. Fifteen years later Britton had no such reservations about publicising 27 Burton Street [fig: 37]. This was partly a reflection of his character but also, as his description makes clear, a factor of the change of taste. He too compares his home with Walpole’s but with none of Scott’s deference. To Britton that ‘“gew-gaw” that flimsy “paste-board house,” –that “Gothic toy-castle” ’ was self-evidently ridiculous, what an estate agent might talk up, Britton suggests, as the ‘most-to-be-admired example of modern domestic monastic architecture in Europe’.¹⁸ We might pause to note the fact that the concept of ‘modern domestic monastic’ as an architectural style had now become a plausible part of an estate agent’s vocabulary.



Figure 37 John Britton's account of his home and collection

Britton saw his house as more scholarly and more serious, morally as well as intellectually, than Walpole’s. Accordingly and anxious always for both publicity and respectability Britton permitted himself an antiquarian interior that expressed erudition and a plethora of important acquaintance, but stopped well short of anything that could be regarded as occult, eccentric, or even untidy. His Octagonal Cabinet Room, designed round the truly

¹⁷ Scott, *Journal*, 4 January 1828, p. 461.

¹⁸ Britton, *Autobiography*, (1850), 3, p.155.

remarkable Stonehenge Cabinet that Britton commissioned, is the epitome of suburban antiquarianism.¹⁹ Octagonal rooms had been a feature of Gothic Revival architecture since Fonthill.²⁰ Abbotsford, though not Gothic, also had one and as a centralised yet not a classical space it had many uses and could be successful even on a small scale. Britton's description of his room, however, somewhat justifies Scott's reservations about the tastefulness of such accounts:

It is lighted by a stained glass window, and contains a Cabinet of Celtic Antiquities, a series of Portraits of Antiquaries, with a small Collection of choice Books, some of which were *privately printed*, and are presents from their respective authors, while many of the others are presentation copies, with autographs and portraits of the donors... The miser repeatedly counts his money, and gloats over its amount and value; but is incapable of obtaining any other pleasure or advantage from it than the selfish exultation of possession. Not so the man who possesses choice works of art and of literature: these are calculated to impart other and more dignified feelings than ever can be known by the worshipper of Mammon... virtue, patriotism, glory, wisdom.²¹

Such powerful boasting is implicit in Britton's own portrait, [fig: 38] painted by John Wood in 1845 and possibly indebted to Allan's of Scott. Britton looms much larger, proportionately, than Scott does. He stares straight out rather than being absorbed in thought and his carved oaken chair is virtually a throne. Britton is nevertheless contextualised by objects: busts of William Camden, greatest of the early antiquaries, and Shakespeare, one of Britton's favourite subjects. The bust was also, as will be seen later, a product of one of his many commercial enterprises. Another great passion, Stonehenge, is the subject of the drawings on which his hand rests. In the background, under glass, is a model. The catalogue of the National Portrait Gallery, which now owns the picture, notes that this is 'yet to be identified'.²² I would suggest that it is Britton's design for a cenotaph to Chatterton, published in 1847.²³ More socially anxious than Scott and much less subtle, Britton was reluctant to let the objects do the talking. He dominates the scene. Yet his portrait, like his room, is testament to the belief that

¹⁹ For a full discussion see Chippindale, 'John Britton's "Celtic Cabinet" '.

²⁰ Notable examples include Alton Towers in Staffordshire (various architects, 1810-1852) and the central lobby of Charles Barry's New Palace of Westminster, 1835.

²¹ Britton, *Autobiography*, (1850), 3, p. 158.

²² Online catalogue of the National Portrait Gallery <http://www.npg.org.uk/collections/search/portrait> [accessed 10 April 2008].

²³ Illustrated in Britton, *Autobiography*, (1850), 3, between pp. 64-65.

artefacts can be expressive of character, social status and, indeed, morality and that Britton has made a self-conscious decision to deploy them to such effect.

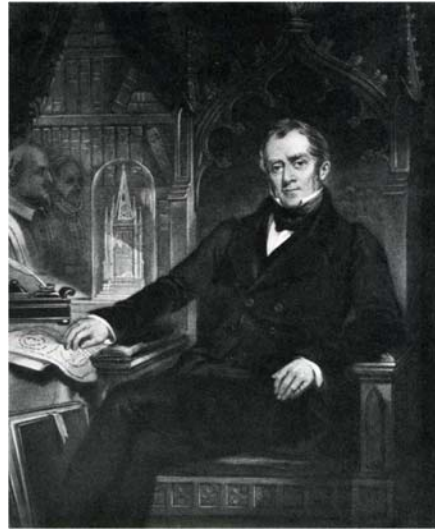


Figure 58 John Britton, mezzotint after John Wood, 1845

For some antiquaries, even those who were, unlike Lingard, collectors, the popular image of their natural habitat could be an irritant. Thomas Frognall Dibdin's breathless account of Francis Douce's rooms no doubt captures something of Douce's spectacular collection but owes as much to literary and artistic conventions as to observation.

It will delight you, I am sure, to hear that Prospero is yet in the full exercise of his 'enchanter's wand'...His maple-wood bookcases rejoice the eye by the peculiar harmony of their tint, -with the rich furniture they enclose. Here a bit of old bright stained glass -exhibiting the true long-lost ruby tint: -there, an inkstand, adorned in high cameo-relief, by the skill of John of Bologna...the rarest China cups... chess-men...used by Charles V and Francis I on their dining together... the very staff with which Regiomontanus used to walk on his house-top by moonlight... Magic lore, and choice Madrigals...and the parchment roll which Handel wielded in beating time on the first representation of the Messiah.²⁴

Apart from the maple-wood instead of the more usual oak this is a by-now familiar agglomeration, with old and new, the intrinsically valuable, the associationally interesting and the figure of the antiquary-as-wizard all combined in splendid chaos. So typical is it that it comes

²⁴ Dibdin, *Bibliophobia*, p.45.

close to accidental satire. The juxtapositions of high art and knick-knack teeter on bathos, the anecdotes strain credulity and the overall impression is not as far as Dibdin must have intended from William Combe's verses, published twenty years earlier, to accompany Thomas Rowlandson's 'The Antiquarian and Death':

Well I am going, (Fungus said)
As Lawyer Sly approach'd the bed...
To my old friend Sir Edmund Plumb,
I leave the Eighth King Harry's thumb:
'Tis well preserv'd; -in gold 'tis set,
At top and bottom tipp'd with Jet;
And I can prove, by word and date,
And other documents of weight,
That Cromwell, for he oft abus'd it,
As a Tobacco-stopper us'd it.²⁵

The staff of Regiomontanus is little more plausible than Henry VIII's thumb and Dibdin's description indeed proved easier to relate to literature than to life. 'All absolute Bedlam' was Douce's tart response when he read it, 'not one of these articles do I possess or know anything about them.'²⁶

Moving towards the other end of the continuum, past Scott as it were, (for the moment), we come to those for whom the inhabitation of the past through objects was more, or less, than art, those for whom there was no self-conscious or ironic distinction between their sense of self and their creation. Edward Willson may have been one such. His obituary in *The Builder*, written by Britton and largely devoted to Britton's own importance in Willson's career, refers to him as a 'bibliomaniac' who had 'filled his house –mostly through my agency and mediation- with tomes of all sizes and ages'.²⁷ The catalogue of his post-mortem sale in November 1854 lists three hundred and ninety five lots of books. These are followed by prints, paintings, 'ancient and

²⁵ Combe, *The English Dance of Death*, 1, p.15.

²⁶ Quoted in Joliffe, *The Douce Legacy*, p.20.

²⁷ Britton, 'Edward James Willson'.

mediaeval remains', 'antique porcelain' and 'miscellaneous'.²⁸ These are much less in number but cover an interestingly typical range:

- 449 An Oak Panel, with the Crucifixion carved in high relief, and three ditto, Heraldic badges
- 451 Various fragments of Stained Glass...
- 452 Carved Oak Arm chair
- 453 A Panel containing rich pieces of ditto, of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries...
- 455 A Demi-suit of Armour...
- 456 A Helmet and Breast Plate, and the Head of a Pole-axe...
- 461 An old Sheep Bell...
- 462 A very large Roman Urn, with narrow mouth, *faulty*...
- 464 A quantity of old Tapestry
- 468 A Large Number of Fragments of ancient Manuscripts...
- 469 A large Whip, known as a "*Caistor Gad*"
- 470 Bronze Head of an Indian Staff of Honour, and an embroidered Chinese Slipper
- 471 Cast of the Bust of Shakespeare at Stratford on Avon...
- 474 Sundry Vertebrae of the Ichthyosaurus with other Organic Remains²⁹

The list might be Cooke's for an assembly of props, a virtual checklist of antiquarian requisites, but these were the real contents of Willson's house. More modest and less voluble than his friends John Britton and A W N Pugin, it is impossible to know in any detail how Willson displayed or regarded his antiquities. A letter from Pugin, however, who had just created an antiquarian interior in his house in Ramsgate in 1834 invites Willson to stay with a promise of complete immersion which he clearly feels will appeal: 'Glad I shall be when I can Lodge you in an ancien [sic] [room] with tapestry hangings round the walls... and every thing en suite. You will then be able to fancy yourself transported back to the fifteenth Cent. and not discover your mistake till you Leave the roof of your sincere friend A Welby Pugin.'³⁰ Willson, however, may have been less romantic than his young correspondent. His portrait shows him looking more like the respectable JP which he also was than a Jonathan Oldbuck.

²⁸ *A Catalogue of the ... Collection...of the late Edward James Willson.*

²⁹ *A Catalogue of the ... Collection...of the late Edward James Willson*, pp. 24-25.

³⁰ AWN Pugin, letter to E J Willson, 6 November 1834, *Collected Letters*, 1, p.43.

With the Sobieski Stuart brothers, E H Langlois and Sara Losh we approach the far end of the spectrum, where artefact, identity and meaning are inextricably interfused. The interiors they created, in a house, a museum and a church respectively, require more detailed discussion. Scott also reappears for, at the end of his life, he seems to have come to a less detached view of his home and its possible meanings.

The Sobieski Stuarts and the death of Jonathan Oldbuck

The two brothers who came to be known as the Sobieski Stuarts began life as John Carter Allen and Charles Manning Allen [fig: 39]. They were the sons of Thomas Gatehouse Allen an English naval officer who, they claimed, was the legitimate son of Charles Edward Stuart, the Young Pretender. Accounts of their lives, not surprisingly, vary substantially. The most recent, an article by Steven Robb, published in 2003, purports to add more detail, although without any indication of its sources.³¹ The principal critical discussions of them are by Hugh Trevor-Roper. His essay 'The Highland Tradition of Scotland' in *The Invention of Tradition*, offers an analysis of their remarkable career, during which they created not only the concept of tartan as Scottish national dress, but also designed many of the tartans in use today, while claiming historical sources for them in their most famous, or notorious publication, the *Vestiarium Scoticum*, of 1842. Another version of Trevor-Roper's essay was published posthumously in 2008 as 'The Tartan', and covers essentially the same ground.³²

³¹ Robb, 'The Sobieski Stuart Brothers'.

³² Trevor-Roper, *The Invention of Scotland*, pp. 216-236.



Figure 39 The Sobieski Stuart brothers, self-portrait

There will be more to say about the brothers in the next chapter where they figure as Roman Catholic converts and Jacobites. In this context it is the use they made of historic artefacts and their associations that is most interesting, for without doubt this was an essential factor in their success. Both literally in the home that they made for themselves from 1839 on the estate of Lord Lovat in Inverness-shire, and literarily in their writings, they created a setting in which their claims appeared plausible. In both cases, in their house and in their pseudo-autobiographical fiction *Tales of the Century* published in 1847, the role of objects and their associations, their authenticity or otherwise is a constant theme, a shadow narrative to the brothers' own story.

Trevor-Roper's first essay, like the book of which it forms a part, was essentially, as discussed in the opening chapter, a debunking exercise. He was not unsympathetic to these 'engaging charlatans' who 'went the whole hog' but his predominant interest was in establishing what the brothers were not.³³ In 1980 Stewart and Thompson's unambiguously titled *Scotland's Forged Tartans*, established what the *Vestiarium Scoticum* was not. This having been so thoroughly accomplished my intention is to consider what the brothers were and to suggest that the *ODNB*'s one-word account of their occupation, 'impostors', is so inadequate as to be

³³ Trevor-Roper, 'The Invention of Tradition', p.232.

inaccurate.³⁴ What they themselves came to believe about their inheritance it is not possible to know, but they lived out their claims with complete integrity to the end of their lives and expressed them chiefly through antiquarian activities. That they were serious antiquaries, much of whose time was devoted to research is not in doubt.³⁵ In their writings, in their house and in their persons, however, they adapted history to serve their own needs in the present, physically inhabiting the identity that they claimed for themselves. Forgeries rather than fakes, no living creatures can have come closer in their relationship to the material remains of the past to the condition of Quasimodo.

In considering their career the uncontroversial part of the brothers' pedigree, which has attracted little previous attention, is not without interest. Their mother was Katherine Matilda Manning, a daughter of the Rev Owen Manning (1721-1801), vicar of Godalming in Surrey. He was a fellow of the Society of Antiquaries and of the Royal Society, county historian of Surrey and a distinguished scholar of Old English whose annotated translation of the will of King Alfred was published in 1788.³⁶ Their father, Thomas Allen, remarried after his first wife's death and having lost all his money in speculation lived in hiding from his creditors in Boulogne-sur-mer under his second wife's name, Salmond. He apparently took no interest in his sons' account of their ancestry (and his), but claimed for himself the Earldom of Erroll.³⁷ Something clearly ran in the family, even if it was not the blood of the Stuarts. The brothers grew up to combine their Manning grandfather's scholarly ability, learning Gaelic and making serious studies of Highland traditions, with their father's precarious chutzpah. They may best, I suggest, be understood as a manifestation of the popular antiquarian imagination. Their life and work were dependent not only on the artefacts they accumulated but on the context which had already been created for such objects by late Georgian antiquarianism in general and by Walter Scott in particular.

³⁴ K. D. Reynolds, 'Stuart, John Sobieski Stolberg (1795?-1872)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004. [<http://www.oxforddnb.com.ezproxy.londonlibrary.co.uk/view/article/26723>, accessed 18 Jan 2011]

³⁵ Extensive, unpublished, mss. survive in the National Library of Scotland for studies of subjects including firearms (ms. 2193) and, interestingly, 'Illustrations of Popular Delusion', (ms 2173).

³⁶ See *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*.

³⁷ See Robb, 'The Sobieski Stuart Brothers'.

In 1822, before the brothers made any claims to royal descent, they were present at George IV's 'jaunt' to Scotland, the progress, or 'charade' as Trevor-Roper has it, choreographed by Scott that may be said to have begun the modern 'Highland Tradition' and which will be discussed further in the next chapter.³⁸ Scott saw them there and they, perhaps, saw him.³⁹ That same year John Allen published a book of verse. *The Bridal of Caolchairn and other Poems* appeared in several editions in London and Edinburgh some of which gave the author as John Hay Allan, the Scottish version of 'Allen', while others appeared under the name of 'Walter Scott'.⁴⁰ These latter were actually produced by Scott's own publishers, Hurst, Robinson in London and Archibald Constable in Edinburgh. Quite how this first act of impersonation was achieved cannot be known but it was the beginning of a pattern in the brothers' lives. From now on, regardless of their other claims, the pedigree they might most truthfully claim for themselves was that of Waverley. They inhabited the space between fact and fiction, history and modernity that had been created by Scott in his novels. Scott himself, though he warned against taking these 'ingenious' young men and their 'exaggerating imagination, which possibly deceives even themselves' at face value, was powerless to stop their progress.⁴¹ It was as if two characters had escaped from his novels and could not be recaptured.

The questions of identity and anonymity, the interweaving levels of narrative with which Scott entertained his readers and himself were deployed by the brothers throughout their lives, to diametrically opposite purpose. Scott played with his identity, disguising it or inserting himself in his own works as a character (as in the Preface to *Quentin Durward*). Yet behind the games, giving them indeed their piquancy, the reality of Walter Scott was never in doubt. His identity as the author of Waverley was an open secret for many years before he declared it in 1827. The fact that he had not declared it in 1822, however, was what made *The Bridal of Caolchairn* possible. Out of the gaps between fact and fiction in the ironic narrative layers of Waverley, the Sobieski Stuarts emerged. In their *Tales of the Century or Sketches of the Romance of History*, they inverted the process Scott deployed in the Prefaces to *Ivanhoe* and *Quentin Durward*. In those

³⁸ Trevor-Roper, 'The Tartan', p.216.

³⁹ Scott to Sir Thomas Dick Lauder, 4 June 1829, Scott, *Letters*, 11, pp. 198-202. Scott discusses his doubts about the brothers at some length.

⁴⁰ See Todd and Bowden, pp. 999-1000.

⁴¹ Scott to Sir Thomas Dick Lauder, Lauder, *Letters* 11, p. 198.

novels a real manuscript is described as the source of the story but is understood by the reader to be itself part of the fiction. *Tales of the Century* uses the same framing technique of the Preface but to suggest that what is presented as fiction should really be understood as history. 'It is credible, because it is improbable', is the concluding sentence.⁴² At the centre of this hall of mirrors there is an empty space in which, out of the reverberating reflections, the reader is meant to deduce two real historical figures.

Before considering in more detail the relationship of *Tales of the Century* to antiquarianism and to Scott's writing, the Sobieski Stuarts' own living arrangements in their heyday deserve some attention. From 1839 until 1847 they were under the patronage of Lord Lovat who allowed them to choose a site on his land on which he would build for them a home. Lovat was not alone by the late 1830s in taking them seriously as the heirs to the Stuart line, as Elizabeth Grant of Rothiemurchus recalled, 'half the clans in the Highlands believed in them; for several years they actually *reigned* in the north country'.⁴³ The house that Lord Lovat built for them was, naturally, Gothic, its situation on Eilan Aigas, an islet in the Beaully River suitably picturesque. The brothers' self-portrait shows them at home surrounded by the usual profusion of oak, antlers, arms and miscellaneous curiosities. These may well include the genuine relics of Charles Edward Stuart which the brothers acquired, possibly from the Scottish revolutionary and adventurer Robert Watson (?1746-1838).⁴⁴ If there is a little less confusion or profusion of objects than in Cooke's painting or William Allan's portrait of Scott, if there is no gloom and no hint of the occult, that is perhaps because the brothers felt their claims to be shadowy enough as it was and wanted to present themselves without any suggestion of further obscurity.

Their effect on visitors who saw them either in their home or at mass, to which they sailed from their island in a boat flying the Stuart standard, tended to reflect the level of faith or doubt in the beholder. The setting was, however, important to everyone. In 1842 A W N Pugin, refuting Trevor-Roper's boast that 'no Englishman seems to have taken them seriously', found

⁴² Sobieski Stuarts, *Tales of the Century*, p. xii.

⁴³ Grant, *Memoirs of a Highland Lady*, p.388.

⁴⁴ Suggestion made by Robb in 'The Sobieski Stuart Brothers'. A sale catalogue of 'interesting relics of Prince Charles Edward Stuart', sold after the death of Charles in 1881, survives in the National Library of Scotland, Adv.ms.50.3.10 ff. 135-138.

them entirely convincing and his account makes no attempt to separate them from their context.⁴⁵

I have dined with the two princes who are the descendants of the Stewarts. the Eldest is one of the most glorious men I ever knew. he is perfect in his ideas on Christian architecture...they Live on a most romantic Island surrounded by waterfalls & rocks –in a vast glen between the mountains. I was quite delighted.[sic] I could fight for him. he has fitted up a gothic room -& *really well done*. there is a prophecy in the highlands that the stewarts are yet to be restored.⁴⁶

Even the more sceptical Elizabeth Grant found these ‘strange brothers [who]...one day announced that they were Stuarts...astonishing’.⁴⁷ In the version of the story she had heard the brothers’ mother was Scottish and ‘her people had been in the service of the unfortunate Stuarts in Italy and who can tell if she had not some right to call herself connected with them?’⁴⁸ Being less persuaded than Pugin she remembered their context in a more humdrum way. The house she saw as a ‘villa’, their garden as ‘pretty’ and the waterfall as ‘small’.⁴⁹ She was struck, however, by the fact that Charles’s wife ‘played the harp like Flora McIvor’ and that ‘crowds went to visit them’.⁵⁰ In their own persons the brothers achieved a remarkable resemblance to their pretended ancestors. ‘They always wore the Highland dress, kilt and belted plaid, and looked melancholy and spoke at times mysteriously.’⁵¹ Unafraid of the new medium of photography, much admired for its veracity, Charles sat for his portrait to the Edinburgh photographers Hill and Adamson in about 1843 [fig: 40] and the result bears out the truthfulness at least of Grant’s description and the fact that if the camera does not lie it may certainly be too easily impressed.

⁴⁵ Trevor-Roper, ‘The Tartan’, p. 232.

⁴⁶ Pugin to the Earl of Shrewsbury, 6 August 1842, *Letters*, 1, p.373.

⁴⁷ Grant, *Memoirs of a Highland Lady*, p.388.

⁴⁸ Grant, *Memoirs of a Highland Lady*, p.388.

⁴⁹ Grant, *Memoirs of a Highland Lady*, p. 388.

⁵⁰ Grant, *Memoirs of a Highland Lady*, p. 388.

⁵¹ Grant, *Memoirs of a Highland Lady*, p. 388.



Figure 40 Charles Edward Stuart, calotype, c1843

Meanwhile the brothers were pursuing their work on the history of tartan. By the time Pugin met them in 1842 they were on the brink of publication. They were by now felt to have been ‘long and honourably distinguished for their devotion to the Antiquities of the Gael’, so much so that they were invited to contribute ‘a series of outlines of Highland Costume’ to the Abbotsford Edition of the Waverley Novels, which appeared that same year, the year of Victoria and Albert’s first visit north of the border.⁵² The Abbotsford Edition marked another stage in the integration of illusion and reality in and around Scott’s fiction. The editors had studied his home and its contents ‘with care’ in order to illustrate the novels with ‘a Series of Engravings, representing the Pictorial and Antiquarian Museum at Abbotsford’ thereby providing ‘the most instructive *graphic* commentary that the body of his Writings could receive from any one source’.⁵³ The romantic interior was to take on a new life in art. In addition to which further illustrations were taken from ‘the real localities of his scenes’ and ‘the real portraits of his personages have been copied’.⁵⁴

Here at the crux of fact and fiction the Sobieski Stuarts inserted themselves with their ‘invaluable’ researches which it was felt, fully justified ‘the expectations formed of their projected great Work’.⁵⁵ The *Vestiarium Scoticum* which appeared in the same year and will be discussed in the next chapter was indeed well received in most quarters. Five years later, however, with *Tales of the Century*, the brothers over-reached themselves. In making public and

⁵² Scott, *Abbotsford Waverley Novels*, 1, p.4. For the implications of the royal visit see Tyrell, ‘The Queen’s Little Trip’.

⁵³ Scott, *Abbotsford Waverley Novels*, 1, p.3.

⁵⁴ Scott, *Abbotsford Waverley Novels*, 1, p. 4.

⁵⁵ Scott, *Abbotsford Waverley Novels*, 1, p. 4.

specific their claims they exposed themselves to wider scrutiny and the *Quarterly Review*'s response to the book, an extensive essay by Professor George Skene of Glasgow University, cast as a late review of the *Vestiarium*, destroyed their credibility with many of their admirers.⁵⁶ The antiquarian relationship with history at its most imaginative had met the academic at its most rigorous and did not survive the impact. The brothers were forced to leave Scotland and spent the next twenty years in Austria. Yet if *Tales of the Century* will not stand historical analysis, it nevertheless repays consideration for the way in which it deploys the themes of the romantic interior, for its reliance on Scott and its relationship to Scott's last, long-unpublished work, which the brothers cannot have known, *Reliquiae Trotcosienses*.

Tales of the Century takes the conventional form of the nineteenth-century novel with a Preface and three volumes. Its subtitle, 'sketches of the romance of history between the years 1746 and 1846', is taken up in the first sentence, which is a quotation from Walpole: "'History'", says Lord Orford, "is a Romance which is believed; Romance, a History which is not believed."⁵⁷ It is on this delicate tightrope of what, in Scott, would have been irony, that the authors attempt to balance throughout the book and by and large, in literary terms, they succeed, if only because Scott had established such a successful precedent.

The Preface first traces the etymology of 'romance' back to the medieval 'Romaunt', which was synonymous with 'history'. History in the modern sense, the authors argue, is a much diminished thing. In 'the days of chivalry', amid 'the gloom, the rudeness and the magnificence of the Gothic arts, edifices, and manners', it retained the spirit of the Romance.⁵⁸ Now it has dwindled to 'the dry obituary of Princes and Prelates'.⁵⁹ This is the familiar argument in favour of antiquarianism as an historical enquiry that goes beyond the written records into the artefacts of the past, and especially those of the Middle Ages, but here it is deployed to suggest that the artefacts do not merely convey information about the past, they themselves shaped events and personalities. As the Gothic declined so 'the world...glided down into a dull and simple narration', towards the present and its 'Quakerism of the mind and body'. 'With the velvet and

⁵⁶ Skene, 'The Heirs of the Stuarts'.

⁵⁷ Sobieski, *Tales of the Century*, p. v.

⁵⁸ Sobieski, *Tales of the Century*, p. vii.

⁵⁹ Sobieski, *Tales of the Century*, p. vii.

the gold, the armour and blazonry, the cross and the sword of chivalry, vanished the heroism and the splendour, the great crimes and the *great virtues*, of the Middle Ages.’⁶⁰

Thus, with an account of history as the product of art, if not itself a work of art then certainly a story, even in these latter days still a ‘narration’, the authors prepare the space ‘between all extremes’, a ‘combination of veracity and exaggeration’ where from time to time a great figure, ‘a solitary shooting star’, may appear.⁶¹ This star is of course Charles Edward Stuart and the narrative space created for him would seem to be pretty exactly that which is occupied by Scott’s historical novels. Here, however, in a looking-glass version of *Waverley*, we are required to believe that this territory in fact lies within the realms of truth, that the ‘improbable’ is in fact the most ‘credible’ part of the story.

After the Preface the reader is tipped, in the first chapter of Volume One, straight into the world of antiquarian forgery. The epigraph to the first chapter, ‘Glasgerion was a king’s own son’ is ascribed to an ‘Old Ballad’. It was almost certainly the Sobieski Stuarts’ own invention, but then so were many of Scott’s similarly ascribed quotations. The action then begins, in the winter of 1831, in ‘Puffinwell’s auction-rooms’ where a sale of dubious and optimistically attributed if not downright faked paintings is taking place. ‘There is great pleasure in being cheated at an auction,’ the narrator remarks, ‘and I immediately turned in.’⁶² As the sale goes on one painting, apparently no better than the rest, attracts considerable interest and fetches ninety guineas. It is bought by an old man, Dr Beaton, an antiquary, a Scot and a Jacobite. ‘If you talk of tartan and *the prince*’ the narrator is informed, ‘he will tell you as many old stories as would furnish half a dozen series of tales to the author of *Waverley*.’⁶³ Beaton’s tales and the mysterious picture, floating as they do, explicitly, out of a world of Scott’s fiction and Soho forgery, open the way for the main story.

In the second part the narrative is propelled by similar forces. In a scene set in a broker’s shop in Wardour Street the narrator buys back the ‘Black Kist of Glen-Dulochan’, an heirloom of

⁶⁰ Sobieski, *Tales of the Century*, p. viii.

⁶¹ Sobieski, *Tales of the Century*, p. ix.

⁶² Sobieski, *Tales of the Century*, p. 1.

⁶³ Sobieski, *Tales of the Century*, p. 10.

his own family which his guardian sold off and for which he has long searched. In a variant on the familiar trope of antiquaries mistaking inscriptions, the broker spins a yarn about the Kist, claiming it to have been the casket which held the heart of St Clare, looted by the dealer himself when he was in Egypt with Napoleon's army. The narrator reveals its true source, hurries up Wardour Street with his trophy and when he gets the Kist home finds in it, in a secret compartment, a manuscript, which yields the next stage of the narrative. Truth, for a second time, is made to emerge from an environment of fakery and lies.

The imitation of Scott extends to the use of lengthy footnotes of the sort with which their author increasingly encumbered the Waverley novels in later editions. Indeed the Sobieski Stuarts' notes, at three hundred pages, are slightly longer than the narrative they supposedly support. Here, in the dialogue between two levels of text, there is another opportunity for truth and fiction to be presented in counterpoint. A series of notes on 'Antiques' deals with the various objects mentioned in the text, which include the Holy Grail and the Enchanted Spindles from the bed on King Solomon's ship. The authors deploy their antiquarian researches in a perfectly straightforward way to discuss the history and mythology of such curiosities, thereby adding yet another facet to their dazzling confection of truth and imagination. The spindles are dismissed as being 'among those fables which so unhappily intermix in the machinery of old romances'.⁶⁴ At this point the authors, one cannot help feeling, are sailing extremely close to the wind, though whether through audacity or in the hope of leaving open an escape route down which they could retreat under a plea of its all having been a clearly signalled fiction, is impossible to know. If the latter was the case, they failed. The note that purports to account for the 'missing years' in the life of Charles Edward Stuart, which covers Thomas Allen's supposed conception and birth, was judged by Skene and others to be as fabulous as the spindles and its effect on the machinery of this particular romance was fatal.

By the time *Tales of the Century* appeared Scott had been dead for fifteen years. The book would no doubt have exasperated him. Yet the brothers' complete identification with their romantic interior might not have seemed so alien to Scott in his later years when, towards the end of his life, he changed his mind about the advisability of publishing an account of Abbotsford

⁶⁴ Sobieski, *Tales of the Century*, p.186.

and its contents. He began work on what became *Reliquiae Trotcosienses* in 1830, after the first of a series of strokes which led up to his death two years later. It was never finished and the full text remained unpublished until 2004. It offers another portrait of the figure of the antiquary in literature and life, its main subject, however, is the house and the objects within it. These now, as Scott contemplated the end of his life, began to take on lives of their own. By different means he appears to come to the same end as the Sobieski Stuarts, perceiving himself as a construction of his own romantic interior. It is also possible that in his elaborate title he nodded deliberately towards the brothers and their dubious productions.

Reliquiae Trotcosienses or the gabions of the late Jonathan Oldbuck Esq of Monkbarns, is premised on Scott's familiar ironising of antiquarian method. The title, which means, 'of the relics of Trotcosey', refers back to Oldbuck's home on the lands that once belonged to the Abbey of Trotcosey. This was already a joke. A 'trotcosey' being a modern Scottish word for a hooded cape in which the wearer could trot, cosily, through the cold like a monk in a habit. The term 'gabions' derives from Henry Adamson's poem of 1638, *The Muses Threnodie*, whose place in the literary ancestry of the antiquary was discussed earlier. Scott amuses himself with mock-scholarly attempts to define the word which he uses, in effect, to mean 'curiosities' of little or no intrinsic value. Just a year earlier, in 1829, in the letter to Sir Thomas Dick Lauder, in which Scott tried, unsuccessfully, to urge caution towards the Sobieski Stuarts, he pointed out that the manuscript they claimed had been given to their father by Charles Stuart, and on which they claimed to have based the *Vestiarium Scoticum*, had a title in 'false Latin I should think not likely to occur to a Scotsman of Buchanan's age'.⁶⁵ In choosing false Latin for his own *Reliquiae* was Scott perhaps parodying their pretensions? It is possible and if so adds a certain reciprocity, or symbiosis to a relationship in which the Sobieski Stuarts are otherwise parasites. It is certainly the case that Scott's title places another layer of playful distance between author and subject, another nod to the reader not to take what follows literally.

In the Introduction to the published version of *Reliquiae* David Hewitt draws attention to Scott's distancing techniques, the delicate irony on which the Sobieski Stuarts played. Hewitt suggests that the various parts of the book therefore 'both are, and are not about Scott and his

⁶⁵ Scott to Sir Thomas Dick Lauder, *Letters*, 11, p. 201.

antiquarian activities, both are and are not about Abbotsford, and are or are not to be taken seriously'.⁶⁶ This is true so far as it goes but I would suggest that Scott was using the irony for rather different purposes here in a text that was not a novel (albeit as Hewitt points out given the three-volume format) but develops out of fiction into documentary fact and finishes as autobiography. The false scents laid in the 'Introduction', 'Proem' and 'Preface' through which the reader passes, like a series of air locks, before getting to the main text are there to protect the author who is, in the main text, unmistakably present in *propria persona*.

The most striking indication of this is in the unremarkable, and by Hewitt unremarked, part of the title, which Scott's lexicographic shenanigans concerning the rest of it effectively obscure, 'the late Jonathan Oldbuck Esq.'. Oldbuck, the original antiquary, Scott's fictional alter ego, is, we now learn, dead and it is the imminence of death hanging over the *Reliquiae* that gives it its powerful poignancy. Before he died, we are told, Oldbuck tried to get a friend to write about his collection, but the friend refused, as Scott had earlier refused, on the grounds that it would be ridiculous: 'Remember the fate of Woodward who brought every wit in London upon his head by his antiquarian essays.'⁶⁷ What we are presented with instead is supposedly the account he himself left of his gabions, yet the narrator explicitly distinguishes himself from Oldbuck. Who is this then, who has transferred the Oldbuck collection from Monkbarns to his own home and now takes the reader on a tour of it? It must, of course, be Scott though this is left unclear. The incoherence in the narrative mechanism at this point may be due to the author's failing health. It may also be a product of his reluctance, even after so much subterfuge, to emerge fully unmasked into his own text.

Despite and because of its weaknesses and incompleteness the *Reliquiae* is an affecting work. Beginning with extracts from Burns's verses on Grose then Adamson's *Threnodie* Scott is not only reprising the literary tradition of making play with antiquarianism, he is also selecting poems that are elegies, laments for individual antiquaries who, like Oldbuck, are dead. Everywhere in the text Scott's endemic cheerfulness is shot through with intimations of impending mortality. It is in his collection, his gabions that he will survive and they, in turn,

⁶⁶ Scott, *Reliquiae Trotcosienses*, p. xv.

⁶⁷ Scott, *Reliquiae Trotcosienses*, p.21.

require his text in order to be able to live to posterity. Here again is the symbiosis of antiquary and artefact. For Scott to have an afterlife in his collection he must provide a literary context for it. Otherwise the gabions will lose their meaning, which resides only ‘in the name of the persons to whom they have belonged, or the account of the deeds in which they have been employed’.⁶⁸

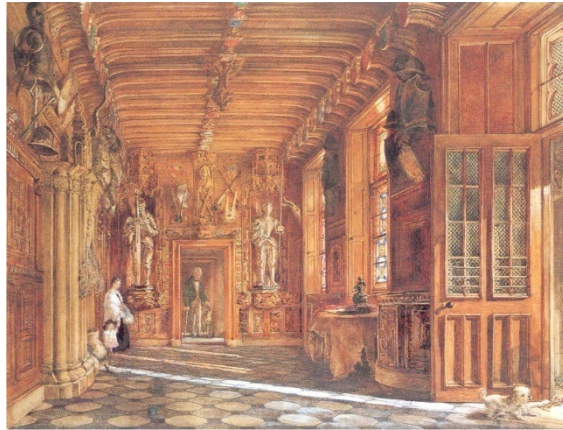


Figure 41 Walter Scott in the hall at Abbotsford, c1830

Scott’s quotations from Adamson in *Reliquiae* do not include the first muse’s speech, but its sentiments are everywhere. The gabions’ role is to speak for themselves and for their owner, master, muse in his absence. Scott holds back from the literal personification that Adamson deploys, invoking instead the classical idea of the memory theatre. This is surely more important to the structure of the last part of the text than Hewitt allows. Oldbuck, characteristically and ironically, cannot remember the origins of the Greek mnemonic system that uses an imaginary building and its contents as a sequence of prompts for a narrative and attributes it wrongly to Lucian.⁶⁹ Scott, however, clearly follows up the hint and tours Abbotsford in his mind’s eye, pausing at significant points to describe the furnishings, the objects and then by association their origin and context. As he goes on the fiction falls away. The characters who emerge from the text to inhabit Abbotsford are not the inventions of *Waverley* but Scott’s own friends and acquaintances, the donors or makers of his collection. The narrative turns into an autobiography-by-objects spoken in his own voice and recalling his own antiquarian feats:

⁶⁸ Scott, *Reliquiae Trotcosienses*, p.25.

⁶⁹ For an account of the development of the mnemonic system in Greece see Yates, *The Art of Memory*.

Before I quit the hall I ought to say that the end which terminates it upon the west or left side of the entrance is garnished with spoils from the immortal field of Waterloo, when I collected them in person very shortly after the immortal action.⁷⁰

The repetition of ‘immortal’ is one moment when the reader is aware of Scott’s failing concentration. With fitting irony Lockhart decided after Scott’s death that the *Reliquiae* would indeed show him in as poor a light as Oldbuck’s friend had predicted. He declined to publish it. Yet this is the ultimate consummation of the antiquarian relationship between object and text. Beneath its comic armour *Reliquiae Trotsosienses* is a tragic fragment, repeated, in *Tales of the Century*, as farce.

E H Langlois and La Vie de Bohème

Langlois, living in destitution in Rouen, was not lacking in a sense of the theatrical or in ironic humour, but he made use of neither in relation to the objects that he collected or rescued in the aftermath of the Revolution. His apartments in the former Convent of the Visitation were memorable, but not artful. Charles Richard recalled the experience of visiting him and his description should be quoted as fully as Scott’s of Oldbuck’s sanctum, for it makes a Gallic pendant to it, the similarities as striking as the differences.

C’était dans ce grand couvent... si desert, si glacial, si mélancholique, que le pauvre artiste était venu s’abriter, avec ses sept enfants et sa femme! Pour arriver à lui, il fallait entrer alors par la porte qui donne sur le cloître. On traversa une galerie humide et ruinée... Au bout de cette galerie, un escalier en bois, à jour... conduisait dans un grenier poudreux et délabré. Cette immense antichambre était occupée par une nombreuse famille d’oiseaux domestiques, qui se dérangeaient à peine pour laisser arriver les visiteurs jusqu’à la porte d’un cabinet de travail, seul recoin à peu près habitable dans ce vaste local où se croisaient tous les vents. Le Coeur se serrait horriblement en entrant dans cette pièce. Des objets d’art d’un grand prix, de riches et curieux manuscrits, étaient jetés pêle-mêle sur la table, sur la cheminée, sur les chaises, par terre. Lorsque c’était hiver, et que, gelé par la bise, vous étendiez votre main sur le poêle de fonte, le fer glaçait votre main, car il n’y avait pas de feu non plus dans la cheminée: vous voyiez s’agiter le

⁷⁰ Scott, *Reliquiae Trotsosienses*, p. 34.

chassis couvert de papier en lambeaux, qui cachait la tristesse de ce foyer désolé; les déchirures dont il était criblé laissaient échapper des bruits étranges, des grelottements plaintifs, des cris étouffés. C'étaient ses pauvres petits enfants qui couraient se cacher dans cette retraite, à l'arrivée d'un étranger, comme des souris dans leur trou; car ils étaient tous nus!... Et, au milieu de cette scène poignante, vous apparaissait un homme plein de grandeur, de stoïcisme et de sérénité.

[It was to the great Convent of the Visitation of St Mary, so deserted, so icy, so melancholy, that the wretched artist had come for shelter, with his seven children and his wife! To find him it was necessary to enter by the cloister door. The visitor crossed a damp and ruined gallery... at the end of this gallery a wooden stair case, in the open air... led to a dusty and decrepit attic. This vast antechamber was inhabited by an extensive family of pet birds which hardly moved to let the visitor through to the door of a study, the only more or less habitable corner in this vast space where the four winds met. The Heart contracted horribly on entering the room. Valuable works of art, rich and curious manuscripts, were cast higgler-muggler on the table, on the mantelpiece, on the chairs, on the ground. In winter when, frozen by the north wind, you put your hand on the stove, the iron froze your hand, for there was no fire. No fire in the grate either: the window frame quivered, covered with strips of paper to conceal the wretchedness of this desolate home; the shreds with which it was heaped gave off strange noises, plaintive shiverings, stifled cries. It was his poor little children who ran to hide themselves in this sanctum at the approach of a stranger, like mice in their hole, for they were stark naked!... and, in the midst of this affecting scene, you beheld a man full of dignity, of stoicism and serenity.]⁷¹

Some of this is familiar. The profusion of objects, the chaos, the mingling of the precious with the worthless, but overall the impression is very different from the home life of the English or Scottish antiquary. There is nothing staged about the way Langlois lives, nothing funny about him. The poverty is real. The cold is real and so is the nakedness of the children. Indeed in itself the obtrusion of family into what, in the British antiquarian interior, is a celibate male space inhabited by the antiquary alone or in occasional company with a like-minded friend, marks a significant contrast. The objects Langlois has around him have not been bought from brokers' shops in Soho but rescued from violent social disorder. As *Notre Dame* is to *Waverley*, more lurid more socially realistic, less polite, so is Langlois to Walter Scott. He is not domesticated, as the British antiquary is, both in art and in life. The Englishman Benjamin Ferrey noticed the difference when he met Langlois, remarking that: 'In [England]... things are rather different; it

⁷¹ Richard, 'E-H Langlois', 1840, pp. 8-10.

must be admitted that, in general, a man of talent unfortunately placed in M Langlois' circumstances, could not mix in society on equal terms.'⁷²

Yet while the circumstances are real, Richard's description of them is not without conscious literary effect. The gloom, the contractions of the heart, the emphasis on the contrast between the squalor of the room and the nobility of its occupant, rising above his sufferings, are also conventions. They are conventions not of antiquarianism as understood in Britain, however, but of Bohemia, a milieu well-established in the French popular imagination by 1840, the date of Richard's essay. Described by Richard as an artist, Langlois is starving in an attic. His misfortune, which would as Ferrey says be seen as a social disadvantage in England, is to Richard merely a dark background that sets his character off to greater advantage and marks him out as high-minded and a free spirit.

Son erudition était si profonde, si variée, si imperturbable, son imagination si vive et si colorée, sa parole si animée, si pénétrante, qu'il vous avait bientôt fait oublier le froid et sa misère, comme il les oubliait lui-même. [His learning was so deep, so various, so certain, his imagination so lively so colourful, his speech so animated, so perceptive, that he soon made you forget the cold and the poverty, as he forgot them himself.]⁷³

Although Langlois was indeed an artist, it is in his character as an antiquary that he is portrayed here. In France the idea of the Bohemian was born, like antiquarianism, directly out of the aftermath of the French Revolution, and the two categories overlapped.⁷⁴ In the case of Victor Hugo, who could afford to dress the set more artfully, they were entirely fused. Dickens, visiting Hugo in Paris in 1847, gives another measure, more detailed and suggestive than Ferrey's, of the difference between Anglo-Saxon and Gallic attitudes. With Scott's and indeed his own novels in mind, he could not take Hugo's romantic interior quite seriously. The rooms in the Place des Vosges, where Dickens met the Hugos, do not survive intact but the interiors of Hauteville House, which Hugo created later on Guernsey do and they suggest what it was that Dickens saw. He was, like Ferrey, mildly scandalised by this foreign variant of antiquarianism:

⁷² Ferrey, *Recollections of Pugin*, pp.18-19.

⁷³ Richard, 'E-H Langlois', p.10.

⁷⁴ For the development of the idea of 'Bohemia' in the aftermath of the French Revolution see Wilson, *Bohemians*.

A most extraordinary place, looking like an old curiosity shop, or the Property Room of some gloomy vast old Theatre. I was much struck by Hugo himself, who looks a Genius, as he certainly is, and is very interesting from head to foot. His wife is a handsome woman with flashing black eyes, who looks as if she might poison his breakfast any morning when the humour seized her. There is also a ditto daughter of fifteen or sixteen, with ditto eyes, and hardly any drapery above the waist, whom I should suspect of carrying a sharp poignard in her stays, but for her not appearing to wear any. Sitting among old armour, and old tapestry, and old coffers, and grim old chairs and tables, and old Canopies of state from old palaces, and old golden lions going to play at skittles with ponderous old golden balls, they made a most romantic show, and looked like a chapter out of one of his own books.⁷⁵

It is the objects that turn Hugo into a character from one of his own novels. If, as the passing allusion to the *Old Curiosity Shop* suggests, they were accidentally to propel him into one of his, Dickens makes clear that the effect would be mildly comic. Yet at the same time the dark drama that Dickens reads, half-seriously, into the scene and its implicit sexual edge, quite foreign to the world of *Waverley*, give a nervous undertow to his amusement. The Bohemian has been well described by Elizabeth Wilson as ‘not simply a creative individual’ but one who ‘created and performed an identity’ and that is what both Langlois and Hugo were engaged in, the uncompromising enactment of their own characters regardless or in defiance of social norms.⁷⁶ Their physical context is an extension, a dramatisation of this and its effect is correspondingly disconcerting to those used to the cosy clutter of Jonathon Oldbuck’s lair.

In August 1831 *Le Figaro* ran the first of a number of articles on the activities of Hugo’s supporters, ‘les Jeunes France’, coverage which by the middle of 1832 had established them as a ‘bohemian group’ with the paper’s bourgeois readership.⁷⁷ That same month, as the ‘vie de bohème’ was establishing itself in the culture, the Baron Dupont-Delporte, recently appointed head of the Département de la Seine-Inférieure, wrote to the Mayor of Rouen suggesting the establishment of a museum in the city to display the antiquities rescued or excavated in the region.⁷⁸ The proposed location was the Convent of the Visitation. Langlois was already living in the building in the spectacular squalor described by Richard. He was also giving his drawing classes there. This was clearly considered a positive advantage. Achille Deville, a tax inspector

⁷⁵ Dickens to the Countess of Blessington, 27 January 1847, *Letters*, 5, p.15.

⁷⁶ Wilson, *Bohemians*, p. 3.

⁷⁷ Wilson, *Bohemians*, p. 25.

⁷⁸ The account of the establishment of the museum is taken from Flavigny, *Musée Départemental des Antiquités*.

and enthusiastic antiquary who was appointed first director of the museum immediately requested and was granted permission to hire Langlois ‘pour l’aider dans la régie et l’administration du musée’ [to help him with the organisation and administration of the museum].⁷⁹ Having rejected the second floor of the building as being unable to take the weight of the architectural fragments he intended to display, Deville opted instead for the cloisters, where the collection is still displayed today.

As well as bearing out Ferrey’s puzzled observations about Langlois’s social standing in France, the creation of the museum around him suggests another permutation on the theme of the romantic interior. Langlois became, if not exactly an exhibit, then literally a living part of the museum, inhabiting it and ordering it from within. His own collection was absorbed into it during his lifetime, and not only the antiquities. Deville, who was obviously fond of Langlois personally, incorporated Langlois’s sword, left over from his military service, into the display.⁸⁰ Wandering through the cloisters in Rouen, as Quasimodo wandered through Notre Dame, Langlois would have passed through his own history, among objects that had characterised his career and to some extent formed him. After his death the museum remained, like the shell of a snail, its outlines describing the space his curious character once occupied.

The Sacred Interior: Sara Losh at Wreay

While it is difficult to imagine two less similar characters than Langlois and Sara Losh, they are neighbours at that end of the spectrum where the antiquarian space is inseparable from character and belief and where irony and comedy have no place. Losh’s church was remarkable in many ways. It has been discussed as symbolic architecture and there will be a little more to say about it in the next chapter. However, it can also be considered briefly as an unconventional part of a more conventional trend, well established by the 1840s, of incorporating historic

⁷⁹ Flavigny, *Musée Départemental des Antiquités*, p.15.

⁸⁰ Richard, ‘E-H Langlois’, p. 35.

fragments and objects not only into private domestic spaces, but also into ecclesiastical interiors. As any regular church visitor knows and as Charles Tracy's important study has recently made clear, the vast trade in Continental woodwork after 1815 included a significant quantity of ecclesiastical fixtures and fittings many of which were installed in English churches. Not far from Wreay, at Brougham Hall, was St Wilfrid's chapel, an interior exactly contemporary with St Mary's, fitted up with a spectacular array of panelling screens and a great triptych, all cobbled together by the architect L N Cottingham (1787-1847) for Lord Brougham. There was also a considerable traffic in stained glass.⁸¹ In both cases the historic material was often filled out, or filled in, adapted, mutilated or simply misunderstood in the established Wardour Street tradition, the usual coat of dark stain was then brushed over the wood in the hope of creating a unifying effect.

Often it was the local squire who effected these improvements and there was little explicitly religious or theological about the selection of pieces or their use. This may be taken to indicate the extent to which, in the Anglican communion, the interconnection of state and church allowed the gentry to feel that the parish church was an extension of their own property and indeed their own home. Such interiors were closer to the trend in interior decoration that Wainwright identified, than to the resonant, personal spaces created by individual antiquaries like Scott, Britton and the Sobieski Stuarts. Even pieces which clearly had religious meaning, and, almost inevitably, Roman Catholic iconography, such as carvings of saints, were incorporated without doctrinal demur. At the medieval church of St Leonard's, Old Warden, in Bedfordshire for example, Robert Henley, Lord Ongley, simply stuffed the building with a collection which, to an educated eye, presents a bewildering visual cacophony of dates and styles. When Nikolaus Pevsner visited he could hardly hear himself think:

There is nothing in ...[the] exterior to prepare for the shock in store upon entering. One can only just register the high unmoulded Norman tower arch...before going under in the mass of woodwork. It oppresses you from all sides; it is utterly disjointed, and can only here and there be read consecutively...one is all the time up against the Early

⁸¹ For the extent of the trade see 'Catalogue of a sale of stained glass in 1804'; Kent, 'John Christopher Hamp of Norwich'; Lafond, 'The traffic in old stained glass' and Rackham, 'English Importations of Foreign Stained Glass'.

Victorian connecting pieces...The many panels with the letters AC are said to come from the House of Anne of Cleves at Bruges. (What has Anne of Cleves to do with Bruges?)⁸²

Clearly the brokers of Soho had seen Lord Ongley coming and made him very welcome. Rather more discretion was observed at a nearby church, St John the Baptist, Cockayne Hatley. Here a wealthy incumbent, Henry Cust, son of Lord Brownlow, whose estates were just over the county boundary, found the church 'ruinous' when he arrived and left it 'an object of admiration to all, who appreciate Church decorations'.⁸³ Other members of the Cust family contributed to the stained glass and woodwork bought on the Continent and in London and combined to produce a celebratory publication which appeared in 1851. It gives details of the origin of pieces including the carved woodwork from the Abbey d'Alne, destroyed at the Revolution and the pulpit from St Andrew's, Antwerp, of which the sounding board, as it was 'not required for that purpose' was made into a front for the reading desk.⁸⁴ In his summing up Robert Needham Cust notes, with an air of pride, that 'the woodwork has been contributed by five celebrated Flemish towns'.⁸⁵

The fact that these 'contributions' were anything but voluntary and that the integrity of the material had been significantly compromised did not in any way detract from Cust's satisfaction. His interest, like, presumably Lord Ongley's, was chiefly in visual effect. The young John Keble, later a moving spirit in the Tractarian Movement, was happy to fill a church with salvaged fragments, untroubled by their religious implications. Charlotte M Yonge (1823-1901), whose father was the squire of Hursley and Otterbourne in Hampshire, recalled the two men's efforts after 1825 when Keble took charge of the parish of Hursley. Her account, written in the closing years of the nineteenth century looks back serenely on the steady march of improving taste. She is amused by the antiquarianism of her grandparents' generation, recalling the naivety of the previous squire, Thomas Dummer, who 'transported several fragments from Netley Abbey...and set them up in his park as an object from the windows'.⁸⁶ Keble and her father, by contrast, went to Soho and, 'in Wardour Street...succeeded in obtaining five panels representing

⁸² Pevsner, *The Buildings of England, Bedfordshire Huntingdon and Peterborough*, pp.130-131.

⁸³ Cust, *Some Account of the Church of Cockayne Hatley*, p.8.

⁸⁴ Cust, *Some Account of the Church of Cockayne Hatley*, p.8.

⁸⁵ Cust, *Some Account of the Church of Cockayne Hatley*, p.8.

⁸⁶ Yonge, *John Keble's Parishes*, p.83.

the Blessed Virgin and the four Latin Fathers, which are worked into the pulpit', thus marking 'a new era' in antiquarianism.⁸⁷ It is difficult to see from this account what, beyond taste, had changed.

For Roman Catholics, including John Milner and A W N Pugin, however, the use of historic objects, down to the reuse of individual ancient stones, in ecclesiastical interiors was redolent of religious significance, as will be discussed in the next chapter. Why this was not apparently the case for Anglicans is a moot point. The social confidence of the established church and its avowed catholicity may be factors. Whatever the reason, the use that Sara Losh made of such fragments in an Anglican church marks her out as unusual. While occupying the familiar role of squire, or patron to the parish, in command of considerable resources and building at exactly the same time as Lord Ongley and Lord Brougham, she nevertheless used antiquities sparingly. Those which she did introduce were subsumed in the larger symbolic programme of the whole and were imbued with personal as much as historic significance. Thus, perhaps uniquely, she brought the ethos of the private antiquarian interior into an Anglican church.

Among the few antiquities bought for the church is the medieval asperges bucket, brought back from Normandy.⁸⁸ A few other items were similarly private, individual purchases. The others were gifts from relatives. They include the Italian carved panels that comprise the backs of the chairs that serve as chancel stalls.⁸⁹ Depicting the nativity these panels are described by Drew as 'ebony', which is possible although it seems more likely that they were made of oak that has been washed with the ubiquitous stain.⁹⁰ The panels retain their discrete identity, the chairs making in effect frames for them. Perhaps the most interesting antique fragments in the church, however, are the pieces of medieval glass. These were brought back from France by Losh's cousin William. Drew, who assumes the glass was salvaged from the French Revolution, is puzzled about this as William was only a child at the time. Lonsdale, however, describes the

⁸⁷ Yonge, *John Keble's Parishes*, p.92.

⁸⁸ Lonsdale, *The Loshes of Woodside*, describes the interior of the church. There is also a list of 'Contents' in Drew, 'Sara Losh and the "Chapel of Ease"', Chapter 3. I have relied on these and my own observations.

⁸⁹ These chairs have been stolen since 2000, when I first visited Wreay and so further inspection was not possible.

⁹⁰ Drew, 'Sara Losh and the "Chapel of Ease"', p.40.

fragments as being from the Archbishop of Paris's palace, which was ransacked in the Revolution of 1830.⁹¹ This seems more likely. But what is most remarkable about the glass fragments is that they are just that, fragments.

The trade in Continental stained glass was as lively as that in carved wood and here too the English could make the dubious boast of having collected more than any other country. Today, in the 'churches, country houses and museums' of England 'one may see examples of glass-painting from most of the countries of Europe and of every period from the thirteenth century onwards'.⁹² Some collectors bought entire sets of windows others bought small roundels as 'cabinet pieces'. They chose them, like the carved wood, for their aesthetic qualities. What the Loshes had was a collection of broken glass, some pieces just a few inches wide and none amounting even to a whole figure or scene, probably picked up from the ground. These were incorporated by Sara into the borders of the semi-abstract windows she commissioned from the Newcastle glass maker William Wailes and had made to her own design. If their placement is not random, there is no discernable order. The effect is more subtle but not unlike that of the Waterloo souvenirs at Abbotsford, marking the point at which the life of the antiquary coincided with a great moment of history, which is then woven back into autobiography. It is also, perhaps, not fanciful to think that by rescuing these scraps of medieval glass from violence and placing them in her church there is a gesture towards healing or redemption, the giving of new life to artefacts as, in the church as a whole, resurrection and the life cycles of nature are the dominant theme.

The end of the Antiquarian Interior

Arguably the antiquarian interior never came to an end, indeed as 'interior decoration' developed in the second half of the nineteenth century into a significant element of middle-class

⁹¹ Lonsdale, *Worthies of Cumberland*, p.229.

⁹² Rackham, 'English Importations of Foreign Stained Glass', p.86.

domestic culture, more people than ever before could express their characters and ideas through the arrangement of objects in their homes. Wainwright quotes Charles Eastlake's advice in *Hints on Household Taste* 1868 that:

The smallest example of rare old porcelain, of ivory carving, of ancient metal-work...should be acquired whenever possible, and treasured with the greatest care...group them together as much as possible. A set of narrow shelves...forming part of a dining-room sideboard would be admirable.⁹³

Yet as Eastlake's detailed instructions make clear this was now anything but a spontaneous or personal activity it was rather, as Wainwright says, part of a popular even hackneyed fashion. By the mid-century the true antiquarian interior was vanishing. While the idea was absorbed into the mainstream, so the reality, in the sense that it has been described here, was on the wane, for the same reasons and to the same extent that antiquarianism itself, of this sort, was dwindling. Collections, such as Douce's and Langlois's, passed at their death into public museums. The flood of Continental antiquities dried up and native medieval objects began at last to attract the attention of professional curators. After years of complaints by antiquaries at the absence of Gothic art from national collections a royal commission of 1850 recommended the establishment of a collection of British antiquities. The British Museum duly appointed Sir Augustus Wollaston Franks (1826-1897), a moving force in the Archaeological Institute, to oversee its formation.

There was also a shift of sensibility. The earnestness of the High Victorians looked to a more subtle integration of past and present in architecture. A W N Pugin, who had begun by building ancient fragments into his early churches and had created in his first house a replica of the Middle Ages, ended by making clear distinctions between new and historic material. His last churches are plain and his last house for himself, while it contained his collections, was uncompromisingly modern in design. He had no desire now to transport himself or anyone else 'back to the fifteenth century'.

Some antiquarian interiors were dispersed when their owners died. Others, in country houses, survived undetected and as Wainwright points out are now often taken to be much older

⁹³ Quoted in Wainwright, *Romantic Interior*, p.287.

than they are. As distinctions between ‘true’ and ‘false’ in history hardened the antiquarian interior might seem naïve or bogus. The Sobieski Stuarts lived long enough to be marooned in an unforgiving age which merely tolerated them as eccentrics. After some years on the Continent they returned to England and lived in Pimlico, then a shabby part of south London. By 1868 they were fixtures in the Reading Room of the British Museum where they pursued their researches. Their ink wells bore the Stuart crest. As early as 1845 John complained in a letter that the brothers had been reduced to a ‘mere *dramatic* characters...in the *drawing Rooms* of Edinburgh’.⁹⁴ Arguably that is what he and his brother had always been, fictional creations who outlived the age when pure illusion might live in harmony with heightened truth.

⁹⁴ Letter from John Sobieski Stuart to Robert Chambers, September 10 1845, National Library of Scotland ms Dep.341 94, f51.

Chapter Five

‘Nothing but a Popish Cabal’:¹ religion, politics and antiquarianism

If George III did indeed use the words attributed to him in condemning the Society of Antiquaries for its refusal to elect James Wyatt, then it was a fine example of the old adage that just because you’re paranoid, it doesn’t mean they’re not out to get you. George III’s dislike of Catholicism and his resistance to attempts to remove civil disabilities from British Catholics are well known and amounted, arguably, to an obsession. He refused even to discuss Emancipation, regarding it as an ‘improper question’.² This might well account for his reaction. It was, however, true, whether he knew it or not, that one of the most active and articulate opponents of Wyatt’s election within the Society was the Roman Catholic priest, John Milner, Bishop of Castalba and Vicar Apostolic of the Midland District. As explained earlier Milner’s opposition to Wyatt had nothing directly to do with his religious beliefs, yet the connection between antiquarianism and Catholicism which came so readily to the King’s mind, was a well-established one. Since the Reformation itself an interest in the Middle Ages had been associated, often justifiably, with an interest in and hence perhaps a sympathy for the old faith and the social order that accompanied it.³

In the sixteenth century religion and politics were synonymous. In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries they were still intimately connected and if the Georgian antiquaries did not risk imprisonment, as some of their Tudor predecessors had, they might nevertheless encounter extreme opprobrium and censorship which has lasted in some cases even to the present. Norman Davies has described the Catholic priest and

¹ Quoted without a source in Crook, *John Carter*, p.58.

² Briggs, *Age of Improvement*, p.195.

³ For the history of this association see Hill, ‘“The ivi’d ruins of folorn Grace Dieu”’.

historian John Lingard as having now ‘fallen into that strange category of people, (once formalised by the censors of the Soviet Bloc) “who are not to be mentioned even to be denounced” ’.⁴ If this is perhaps putting it strongly, it is certainly the case that Lingard’s importance as an historian whose methods helped to change the writing of history in England, was deliberately obscured because of his Catholicism.⁵ Conversely antiquarian researches which generated politically and socially acceptable views of the past during this period, however insecurely based in fact, might acquire considerable longevity. The recent decision of the Scottish Parliament to establish an official register of tartans can be traced back directly to the questionable findings of the Sobieski Stuarts.⁶

As these examples suggest, the two areas in which antiquaries found themselves during this period most frequently entangled with politics were Catholicism and Jacobitism, issues which clearly overlapped but which evoked diametrically opposite responses. Catholicism, still more or less illegal in 1789, remained controversial and largely unpopular even after Emancipation in 1829. The successive convulsions sent through the Established Church by the Tractarian movement were followed by the re-establishment of the Catholic hierarchy in 1850, which in turn provoked the Papal Aggression crisis.⁷ The Broad Church Protestantism of Prince Albert made High Victorian England no very friendly place for Roman Catholics. Individual Catholic antiquaries, however, met with different receptions. They might be mistrusted in different ways or achieve a wide degree of acceptance, depending on their subjects and their methods. Jacobitism, by contrast, not only ceased to be a threat over this period, it became, largely due to the efforts of antiquaries, a romantic ideal, a part of Britain’s and indeed specifically England’s national self-image, expressed in a love-affair with the Highlands which reached its apogee at the mid-century, ten years after Victoria and Albert’s first visit, with their purchase in 1852 of Balmoral.

⁴ Jones, *John Lingard and the Pursuit of Historical Truth*, p. ix.

⁵ My assessment of Lingard’s importance as an historian is largely based on the account in Jones’s book. See also Levine, *The Amateur and the Professional*, p.138.

⁶ I am grateful to Hugh Cheape of the National Museums of Scotland for showing me his evidence to the Economy, Energy and Tourist Committee of the Scottish Parliament in April 2008 as part of the consultation on the establishment of the register.

⁷ See Halévy, *A History of the English People in the Nineteenth Century*, 4, ‘Catholics’, pp.365-376.

The first part of this chapter will consider the work of the Roman Catholics Lingard, Milner, John Gage and, in passing, Edward Willson, discussing the relationship between their faith and their work and the relation of both to their critical reception. Sara Losh, once again anomalous, provides a rare Anglican example of the quasi-mystical conception of historic artefacts more often expressed by Catholics such as Milner and Willson. The second part of the chapter returns to Walter Scott and the Sobieski Stuarts who used an antiquarian interpretation of the material past to recreate Jacobite history in a manner suitable, up to a point, for the Hanoverian present.

The Cabal: Milner, Lingard, Gage

John Milner, John Lingard and John Gage were all Roman Catholics, none of them converts. Milner and Gage were fellows of the Society of Antiquaries, Milner and Lingard were priests. Spanning between them one and a half generations they were all known to one another and had many interests in common. Each could be and sometimes was made to fit one of the popular Catholic stereotypes of the time; Milner the turbulent priest, Lingard the smooth-tongued agent of Rome, Gage the romantic recusant. Behind the caricatures lay significantly different approaches to the study of the past and its remains which were, I suggest, intimately linked to the way that they were perceived as Catholics and hence to the reception of their work. Before considering the differences in detail, however, it is instructive to consider them as a (loose) group as they emerge from the surviving correspondence of Gage.

Gage, who later took the name of Rokewode, was the son of Sir Thomas Gage, sixth baronet, of Hengrave Hall in Suffolk. He became Director of the Society of Antiquaries in 1829, the year of Catholic Emancipation, and retained the position until his sudden death thirteen years later. While his election might have confirmed George

III's worst suspicions about the Society, it might more reasonably be taken to suggest that for a layman and a gentleman who avoided religious controversy, Catholicism need be no great social obstacle. Gage's extensive correspondence shows him to have been on terms of scholarly friendship with almost every eminent antiquary of the day, with the interesting exception of John Britton, whom he seems to have kept at arm's length.⁸ Among the other antiquaries who are the subject of this study, as well as Lingard and Milner, he corresponded with Douce, Langlois, Dawson Turner and John Sobieski Stuart. He may well have known others. He also had a friendly relationship with Humphrey Davy. Davy enthusiastically analysed various substances which Gage discovered in graves, an activity that made Lingard, with slight disapproval refer to him, as a 'resurrectionist'.⁹

In the years before and after Emancipation the situation of English Catholics was naturally a topic in the correspondence with his co-religionists. Gage's own letters do not apparently survive in great numbers but the implication of his correspondents' tone to him is that, as in his published work, his style and character were moderate, agreeable and not without humour. Though trained as a lawyer, his antiquarian researches took precedence over most other interests in his life, despite which he had a wide circle of friends and was a sociable man, both in London and in the country. One exchange with Milner and one with Lingard might be taken to capture the essential character of the three men and their methods.

On 21 March 1821 Milner sent Gage a drawing which he thought might interest him of a carved pillar situated 'nearly opposite the western porch of Wolverhampton parish church'.¹⁰ In the accompanying letter Milner wrote:

I suppose that many of yr acquaintance are railing against me at a fine rate, while infinitely the greater part of Catholics are extolling me far beyond my deserts. But what then? Was it to be expected that I would

⁸ Gage's correspondence (the Hengrave mss) includes few letters from Britton and these are brief and are mostly notices of his forthcoming publications.

⁹ Lingard to Gage, January 14 1833. Hengrave mss 21/5/5.

¹⁰ Hengrave mss 21/1/83.

surrender my crozier into the hands of a knot of lawyers & fox hunters? ... Believe me, Dr Sir, a different mode of proceeding must be followed if Emancipation is ever to be gained.¹¹

In an undated letter sent apparently some months later, in which he reported that he was unable to find a priest for Gage's sister-in-law, Milner went on:

I am sorry that you prefer writing to me on trifling subjects of antiquity to the all-important & everlasting concerns of Religion...the last time I had the honour of hearing from you, there was question of our taking the Civil-Sword Oath, which proved to be what I then pronounced it the Oath of Supremacy for refusing which the great More lost his head.¹²

Milner's religious position was what was known as 'Ultramontane', that is he looked to Rome as the only source of ecclesiastical authority. His objection to the terms on which Emancipation was being offered in the bill presented to the Commons in March 1821 was that it required Catholics to subscribe in effect to the Oath of Supremacy, setting, as he saw it, the state above the church. He had lost no time in publishing a pamphlet, which appeared on 13 March and was intended to rally the Catholic population against the bill. To many of the laity, especially those of the gentry like Gage who were happy to reach an accommodation with the Established Church in secular matters, Milner's approach seemed unnecessarily divisive and inflammatory. By the time of this second letter to Gage the bill had fallen in the Lords but Milner was busy rousing the Irish clergy in support of his views. Gage had clearly chosen to ignore the whole subject, rather than risk a quarrel. It was a dislike of confrontation reflected in his antiquarianism. He was not passive. He was more than willing to enter into public controversy on a purely antiquarian matter, such as the alterations to York Minster, but on subjects of Catholic history and politics he sought to avoid dispute and to a great degree succeeded.

Thirteen years later, when Milner was dead and Catholic Emancipation a legal fact, Lingard and Gage were still in correspondence. Thanking Gage for a copy of his paper on Anglo-Saxon ritual on 22 April 1834, Lingard remarked, not for the first time,

¹¹ Hengrave mss 21/1/84.

¹² Hengrave mss 21/1/93.

on his friend's success in dealing with religious subjects: 'How you can prevail on the society to publish such papistical documents I cannot well conceive... you deserve the thanks of the catholic body, and have effected what no catholic before you probably ever attempted.'¹³ Lingard had reason to be surprised and perhaps envious. By now his own *History of England* had appeared. Published in eight volumes between 1819 and 1830, it proved immensely popular in the sense that it rapidly ran through several editions, and gained the support of such notable public figures as Lord Holland and Henry Brougham, but Lingard had also been widely and violently attacked, particularly for his account of the Reformation. Among others the *Edinburgh Review* and the Poet Laureate, Robert Southey had, perhaps predictably, challenged his version of events. Less predictably, to those outside the Catholic Church, his first and most active critic had been Milner, who found Lingard heterodox on many points and not only condemned him in print but went so far as to attempt to have his work put on the Index of books forbidden to Catholics.

That the writing of English history in the first half of the nineteenth century was closely related to contemporary debates about Catholic Emancipation is well-known.¹⁴ A preoccupation with the events and characters of the Reformation was therefore a recurring theme in the national self-examination that accompanied the various campaigns for religious toleration and it figured in the work of artists and writers including Southey, Cobbett, Mill and Carlyle. Antiquarianism made a considerable contribution to the mixture of history, theology and politics and in the process revealed different styles of antiquarian activity. Milner's antipathy to Lingard, I would suggest, had as much to do with a different attitude towards the nature of the past as with a different interpretation of its events, while Gage's ability to pass unscathed through the social and institutional minefield that faced many Catholic antiquaries was also due, largely, to his methods and his choice of subject matter.

For Milner, as for many of his contemporaries, especially those who read Scott, the past was all about him. Like Lenoir in his Museum, or like Oldbuck in his study,

¹³ Hengrave mss 21/6/73.

¹⁴ See in particular Jones, *John Lingard* and Drabble, 'Mary's Protestant Martyrs and Elizabeth's Catholic Traitors in the Age of Catholic Emancipation'.

Milner's relationship with history was lived out day by day inseparably from his existence in the present. It was typical of him to point out to Gage that the doctrine under dispute in 1821 was the one for which Thomas More laid down his life. More, who resisted Henry VIII's claims to supremacy over the English church, was one of the most resonant historical figures evoked on both sides of the debate by participants for whom any change in the contingent circumstances since 1535 was of no relevance. Southey, the most vocal popular opponent of Emancipation took a similar view. In his *Sir Thomas More or Colloquies on the Progress and Prospects of Society* of 1829, he agreed with Milner on the facts while coming to an exactly opposite conclusion. For Southey More 'the mild, the learned and the good' who died for his loyalty to the Catholic Church, offered the perfect argument against Emancipation.¹⁵

Romanists ought to be admitted to every office of trust, honour, or emolument, which is not connected with legislative power; but ... it is against the plainest rules of policy to entrust men with power in the State whose bounden religious duty it is to subvert, if they can, the Church.¹⁶

For Milner his experience of the past as seamlessly co-existent with the present led to a not merely personal but a religious identification with history. His antiquarianism and his theology were inseparable and are woven around each other throughout his major work, the *Antiquities of Winchester*. The book caused offence on both fronts simultaneously, to some antiquaries with its account of the origins of Gothic and to some Anglicans with its attack on the late low-church Bishop of Winchester, Benjamin Hoadly. In the ensuing pamphlet battle on the question of Hoadly's reputation Milner continued his assault by citing the bishop's monument in the cathedral which is cut deep into one of the shafts of the chancel arch. So, he argued 'it may be said of Hoadly' that 'both living and dying he undermined the church of which he was a prelate'.¹⁷

It was a good joke, but it was also indicative of the extent to which for Milner the fabric of the past and the faith of the present were interfused. His own chapel of St Peter

¹⁵ Southey, *Sir Thomas More*, p. iv

¹⁶ Southey, *Sir Thomas More*, p. iv.

¹⁷ Milner, *Letters to a Prebendary*, p. 216.

incorporated historic material partly, as discussed earlier, for ‘curiosity’ but also perhaps because of a power in the stones themselves, not unlike that ascribed in the Catholic Church to sacred relics. The ‘Saxon portal’ from the hospital church of St Magdalen that marked the entrance to St Peter’s connects the building to the martyrdom of Thomas Becket, another saint who died defending the Church from secular authority.¹⁸ Hence the inscription which Milner had cut into a stone in the centre of the arch to the effect that the gate was ‘built in the year of Christ 1174 Rebuilt... 1792’.¹⁹ It was the equal but opposite action to Hoadly’s intervention in the cathedral, here the interference with the fabric was constructive, the keystone, symbol of Christ, the link between past and present.

How far Milner took this belief in the connection between God and the Gothic into the realms of the supernatural is suggested by a later letter to Gage of 25 March 1824. Southey had just published his *Book of the Church*, an account of the Established Church written largely in refutation of Lingard. Still at odds with Gage and Gage’s friend the lawyer Charles Butler (1750-1832) in their attempts to achieve a compromise on Emancipation Milner wrote:

There is one place in which I should have no objection to meeting Mr Butler. It is in the Dead vault of Cossey Chapel. There with a glimmering taper placed upon poor Edwards leaden sealing I would pray that the Almighty would permit him to appear for a moment... & to declare whether I or his other Counsellor had advised him right... I do assure you Dr Sir, that often in the dead of the night I have looked without my curtains to see if God would permit me to see & converse for a minute with the spirit of Edward Jerningham.²⁰

Jerningham, who had died unexpectedly two years earlier, had been an ally of Gage and Butler and Secretary of the Catholic Board, a lay organisation. In public Milner had often found himself at odds with him but in private not only were they friends, but Milner had inspired and guided Edward and his father in the building of a Gothic chapel at the family seat, Costessey (pronounced Cossey) Park, in Norfolk. Now demolished, the chapel,

¹⁸ Milner, *Antiquities of Winchester*, 2, p.242.

¹⁹ Milner, *Antiquities of Winchester*, 2, p. 242.

²⁰ Milner to Gage, March 25 1824, Hengrave mss 21/2/7.

which Edward designed, was Gothic. It incorporated a great deal of medieval stained glass imported from the Continent in the manner familiar in Anglican churches of the date, but unlike them it was arranged in a considered iconographic programme, almost certainly prescribed by Milner. This was based on the doctrine of antetypes, of the Old Testament as an allegorical prefiguring of the New, another sacred expression of the co-existence of past and present.

The design of the chapel and the decorative scheme placed greatest emphasis on the sacrament of the mass. The result, as Mary Shepard, who first understood the meaning of this arrangement of glass, has argued, was a building that, like Milner's St Peter's but on a considerably more elaborate scale, made a symbolic statement of faith and renewal, not a mere reference to the past but something closer to a resurrection, the physical re-establishment of Roman Catholicism 'on British soil'.²¹ There is no proof but it is not, perhaps, unreasonable to see this kind of Catholic antiquarianism, so strikingly different from its usual Anglican counterpart, as an aspect of the Catholic belief not only in the power of relics, but in transubstantiation. The Real Presence of Christ in the mass is perhaps the ultimate expression of the fusion of material and immaterial worlds in a condition outside time. Thus Milner was perhaps only half fanciful in suggesting that in the vault of this Gothic chapel, the physical manifestation of transcendent faith, he might call up his friend again from the dead and ask him to adjudicate on the present.

A W N Pugin, who was much influenced by Milner, certainly had a similar belief in the power of artefacts at the beginning of his career. In his first church, St James Reading, in 1837, he helped his patron, the Catholic antiquary James Wheble, to incorporate stones from the ruins of the medieval Reading Abbey nearby.²² Edward Willson who had known Pugin from childhood exerted an even more important influence and for Willson, certainly, the stones of the old churches were imbued with sacred meaning. Although he never said as much in print, his request to be buried at St Mary Hainton, the medieval church he had restored and where his parents were buried,

²¹ Shepard, ' "Our Fine Gothic Magnificence" ', p.207.

²² Hill, *God's Architect*, pp.192-3.

suggests that he thought the Reformation a spiritual irrelevance and that the fabric of a Gothic church was ineradicably permeated with the truth of the old faith.

What, in detail, Sara Losh believed about the relationship between faith and artefacts it is impossible now to know. That her belief in such a connection was both more profound and different in character from those of the majority of her fellow Anglicans, including those who used antiquities in the furnishing of churches, was established in the previous chapter. Her use of symbolism, too, has been discussed in the context of the architecture of her church. Here it is perhaps necessary to do no more than remind ourselves that while the greater part of the religious debate in the first half of the nineteenth century revolved around the Reformation and the rights and wrongs of the Church of Rome, there was in Cumbria at least one antiquary whose relationship with the artefacts of the past led her beyond such relatively narrow historical concerns towards a more nearly universal spirituality.

If, however, there was a possible connection between Roman Catholic doctrine and a mystical view of the past, it was certainly not a necessary one. Nothing could have been more inimical to John Lingard. Lingard, like Milner, built his own chapel next to his house in Hornby, Lancashire but it was a simple, neo-classical building. Writing to his friend the Rev Robert Tate, a priest at the seminary at Ushaw, where Pugin was building a Gothic chapel Lingard was, as seen in the previous chapter, impatient with the attempt to reawaken the Middle Ages. Specifically he took issue with the rood screen, which was an essential element for nineteenth-century ecclesiologists in the symbolic arrangement of a catholic church on medieval principles. Of its supposed historic significance Lingard wrote:

I suspect that it was only after the monks had contrived for their own comfort choirs between the altar and the people that roods were introduced, and those frightful figures of the crucifixion stuck up over the entrance...that as the people were shut out from the sacrifice, they might at least have some object to entertain their thoughts with while it was performed.²³

²³ Lingard to Tate 30 May 1844, Typescripts of Letters of John Lingard to Rev. Robert Tate, f18.

From sacred emblem of the division between this world and the next to medieval draught excluder Lingard had no qualms about using the evidence of history to demolish the dearly held notions of the present. It was this which made him popular and unpopular with both Anglicans and Catholics.

Lingard was no sceptic in religion. Indeed he had begun, like Milner, as a controversialist but had come to realise that pamphleteering meant preaching always to the converted. He concentrated increasingly on the study of history in order to write something that Protestants too would read and out of which, he hoped, both truth and toleration might emerge. He was not, it must be said by his own account, an antiquary. Nor has he been seen by posterity as one. The 'Preliminary Notice' to the 1849 edition of his *History of England* specifically distinguishes between historians and other writers, including antiquaries. Lingard preferred, he said, to follow 'the stately and dignified march of the historic muse' rather than risk losing himself 'in a labyrinth of dry details'.²⁴ As discussed earlier it was not uncommon for authors to disavow antiquarianism even if they were fellows of the Society of Antiquaries, but Lingard really was not, in most usual senses, an antiquary. He had an avowed aversion to 'curious and miscellaneous subjects' and he was no collector.²⁵ Writing to Gage in 1831 he asked for advice about 'a carved piece of oak' from Furness Abbey which he owned and 'which as far as my knowledge goes, is a great curiosity, though such things may be common among collectors of antiquities'.²⁶ Clearly the presbytery at Hornby was no Abbotsford.

I would, however, argue that his method, as the first historian writing in English to apply textual criticism to original sources, was essentially antiquarian. Unlike Hume, his immediate predecessor, whose work he most particularly sought to contradict, Lingard took the past seriously on its own terms. In this he was like his antiquarian friends and correspondents. Where Hume, and most of his contemporaries held the Enlightenment view that the Middle Ages had been a period of barbarism, of which the

²⁴ Lingard, *History of England*, 5th edition, London, 1849, 1, p. xxvii.

²⁵ Lingard, *History of England*, 5th edition, London, 1849, 1, p. xxvi.

²⁶ Lingard to Gage, May 13 1841, Hengrave mss 21/3/41.

less said the better, Lingard, who had already written an account of *The Antiquities of the Anglo-Saxon Church*, began his *History* with the Roman invasion. He admired Bede. Where Hume's work was primarily philosophical, a critique of what had previously been said about that history of which he did treat, Lingard's went back to the original documents. 'My object is truth' he wrote in the Preface to *Antiquities of the Anglo-Saxon Church*, 'and in the pursuit of truth, I have made it a religious duty to consult the original historians. Who would draw from the troubled stream, when he may drink at the fountain head?'.²⁷

This decision, carried much further in the *History of England*, to work from primary sources was virtually unheard of among historians at the time.²⁸ It was a method Lingard had learned from the Maurist and Bollandist historians he had read at Douai but in England it was an approach understood only by antiquaries. Documents, parchments and illuminated manuscripts, seldom consulted by historians, were a natural part of their stock in trade. Lingard used his clerical contacts in Spain, France and Italy to penetrate archives, and was the first English writer to make use of many of them. At home, however, his most useful contacts were antiquaries who shared his interests and understood his methods. His letters to Gage often ask him, or Charles Butler, if they can find this or that document in the House of Lords or at the Tower of London, and his responses to Gage's inquiries about the possible interpretations of confessions by the gunpowder plotters show complete sympathy of approach. Gage was happy, when in the British Museum, to look up the mortality rate for the plague in the week from 25 July to 1 August 1665. Lingard reciprocated, trying to replicate for him the form of an early chasuble: 'I have just put on my cloak and pinned it together in front for an experiment.'²⁹

Where for Scott or Milner, however, such seriousness about the material remains of the past might lead them to identify emotionally or spiritually with it, Lingard's studies

²⁷ Lingard, *Antiquities of the Anglo-Saxon Church*, p. iv.

²⁸ See 'The Background to Lingard's work' in Jones, *John Lingard and the Pursuit of Historical Truth*, pp.1-17.

²⁹ Lingard to Gage, (undated) Hengrave mss 21/4/2.

revealed to him increasingly his distance from history. Establishing the circumstances for the events he described made him appreciate what could not be learned from the past. Writing to Gage in 1830 as the aftermath of the July Revolution and the campaign for electoral reform spread unrest throughout the country, he added ‘who can foresee the denouement. It seems to me that we cannot form any judgment from past events because we live in a state of society that never existed before’.³⁰ Not for Lingard the short step from Thomas More’s England to William IV’s. His pages were not peopled with colourful characters or rich in stirring moral lessons. ‘It is long since I disclaimed any pretensions to that which has been called the philosophy of history, but might with more propriety be termed the philosophy of romance’ he wrote in the Preface to the fifth edition of the *History*, ‘writers of history know nothing more respecting motives than the little which their authorities have disclosed, or the facts necessarily suggest.’³¹

When the *History*, which covers the period from the Roman invasion to 1688, first appeared in parts from 1819-1830 it was this resistance to the tide of popular romance as much as his Catholicism that caused Lingard to offend so many of his readers. From Milner, who could not bear the *History*’s coolness towards Thomas Becket, to Southey and the antiquary and philologist John Henry Todd (c1763-1845) who were horrified by Lingard’s suggestion that Henry VIII broke from Rome in order to marry Anne Boleyn when she was already pregnant, his opponents were drawn from all shades of religious opinion.³² Much might be, and has been, said of the individual points on which Lingard was correct or otherwise. It is no part of this thesis to discuss the rightness of its individual subjects in the light of modern scholarship, though it should in justice be noted that on balance Lingard is now held to have been right more often than wrong. A brief comparison, however, of Lingard with his most eminent opponent Southey, shows what more was at stake than facts in the battle for English history.

Southey’s *Book of the Church* of 1824 denigrated Lingard by implication as a showy pedant. ‘References have not been given’ Southey explained in his own work,

³⁰ Lingard to Gage, December 21 1830, Hengrave mss 21/2/176.

³¹ Lingard, *History of England*, 1842, 1, p. xxv.

³² See Southey, *The Book of the Church* and Todd, *A Vindication*.

‘because the scale is not one which would require or justify a display of research. [The author] believes, however, that there is not a single statement in these Volumes which his collections would not enable him readily to authenticate.’³³ Southey’s was a view of England and its independent church that lay close to the national self-consciousness. His book quickly went through three editions and was reprinted as late as 1885. It paid no lip-service to objectivity, preferring instead that ‘philosophy of romance’ which Lingard so disliked.

Manifold as are the blessings for which Englishmen are beholden to the institutions of their country, there is no part of those institutions from which they derive more important advantages than from its Church Establishment... I offer, therefore, to those who regard with love and reverence the religion which they have received from their fathers, a brief but comprehensive record, diligently, faithfully, and conscientiously composed, which they may put to children. Herein it will be seen...in what manner the best interests of the country were advanced by the clergy even during the darkest ages of papal domination; the errors and crimes of the Romish church, and how when its corruptions were at the worst, the day-break of the Reformation appeared among us: the progress of that Reformation through evil and through good; the establishment of a Church pure in its doctrines, irreproachable in its order, beautiful in its forms.³⁴

It was easy enough for Milner, writing as ‘Merlin’, to strike back at the Laureate on the grounds that ‘A degree of enthusiasm is requisite to constitute the character of a Poet’ and thus naturally ‘he raves, through the history of many centuries’.³⁵ Lingard, in a *Vindication* of his History addressed to several critics, including Southey and Todd, took a characteristically cooler but more damaging approach, tackling directly the preconceptions, national amour-propre and religious prejudice that disinclined Anglicans to believe his account of the role of Henry VIII’s divorce in the Reformation. Of the circumstances of the King’s second marriage to Anne Boleyn he wrote:

We are referred ... to the passage, in which I state that Henry was secretly married to Anne Boleyn on the 25th of January, in a garret at the western end of Whitehall. Mr Todd will not believe that the king of England ‘would condescend to celebrate his marriage in a garret’, nor is he the only critic whose ire has kindled at this unfortunate expression. The king’s object was certainly to conceal the ceremony from the

³³ Southey, *The Book of the Church*, 1, prefatory note.

³⁴ Southey, *The Book of the Church*, 1, Introduction.

³⁵ Milner, *Strictures on the Poet Laureate’s ‘Book of the Church’*, pp. 3-4.

prying eyes of his household; and what he would do, or would not do for that purpose, is more, I believe, than Mr Todd can inform us. However, I have no predilection for the word 'garret': any other of similar meaning will equally serve my purpose. Shall I substitute 'a room in the attic story?' this may be thought a more attic phrase and therefore more befitting the dignity of the subject. Or will 'a room in the western turret', be preferred? It was certainly at the very top of the house, 'editissima', and rose about the western end, 'quae parti occidentali supereminet'. On a subject of this immense importance, I shall be most ready to adopt any emendation, which may be thought the least degrading to the majesty of the English monarch.³⁶

The argument of the *Vindication*, in so far as it pertained to method, was unanswerable. Lingard's rhetoric worked steadily on throughout to separate 'romance' from 'history', sifting out motives, concepts of majesty, associations of ideas, everything but facts, from the documentary evidence, on which his balanced, Johnsonian prose, here bears down with irresistible force before, in the last sentence, he steps back and leaves the empty field to his opponent. Lingard's lack of romance was taken personally in some quarters as a criticism of the reader. It seemed, as Macaulay put it, that 'his great fundamental rule of judging is that popular opinion cannot possibly be correct'.³⁷ It was also the key to Lingard's popularity with the more open-minded, with Continental historians and with William Cobbett, who used Lingard's *History* as the basis for his own polemic, *History of the Protestant Reformation*, which was published in instalments from 1824-26.

Lingard upset fondly held notions not only about English history but also about Catholics. He was neither a polemicist like Milner, whose intemperance and association with the ever troublesome Irish confirmed popular prejudice, nor a gentleman like Gage. Lingard's Catholic education at Douai had given him an international perspective. By drawing on Continental sources, citing the dispatches of foreign diplomats at the Tudor courts, he showed the English understanding of its Established Church to be not only factually inaccurate in certain ways but, worse still, from the perspective of the Holy Roman Empire, provincial. For that he has never, quite, been forgiven. As late as 1984

³⁶ Lingard, *A Vindication*, pp. 81-82.

³⁷ Quoted in Jones, *John Lingard and the Pursuit of Historical Truth*, p. 11.

John Kenyon could complain that Lingard's alterations to later editions of his history were 'repugnant', showing the cloven hoof of Rome after 'his willingness initially to pander to Protestant prejudice' in the earlier versions.³⁸ This is not borne out by the evidence. Over the decades Lingard discovered more facts and put them in. His attitude to his more contentious findings is indicated in his letter to Gage in 1832. He had no wish to court additional controversy, but he was not devious:

I have extracts from the letters of Rosetti and Barbarini, but wish to see the whole of the letters so I may make no mistake...it is on a subject which will startle the orthodox: nothing less than a proposal for Archbishops Laud and Ussher to become catholics, if the pope would secure to them a certain provision in Rome...I intend to introduce the fact into the next edition of my history, without any remark, and as if it came naturally and of course in the narrative.³⁹

If Lingard, like Milner, was the wrong sort of Catholic antiquary to suit popular taste, there was, nevertheless, a right sort, for Catholic sympathies were not only a well-established but sometimes a quite acceptable part of the antiquarian persona. This ambivalence and the way it might be glossed over is caught at that moment in *The Antiquary* when, at the ruined Priory of St Ruth, Scott's staunchly Protestant protagonist waves his hand towards the old stones:

'There was the retreat of learning in the days of darkness, Mr Lovel...there reposed the sages who were aweary of the world, and devoted either to that which was to come, or to the service of the generations who should follow them in this. I will show you presently the library...And here I might take up the lamentation of the learned Leland, who...exclaims...like Rachel weeping for her children...to put our ancient chronicles, our noble histories, our learned commentaries, and national muniments, to such offices of contempt and subjection, has greatly degraded our nation.'⁴⁰

Oldbuck, who is proud of his descent from Aldebrand Oldenbuck, who printed the Augsburg Confession, is smartly challenged by Sir Arthur for this apparently Popish view of the Dissolution, but Miss Wardour tactfully breaks in 'to interrupt a conversation

³⁸ Quoted in Vidmar, 'John Lingard's History of the English Reformation', p.383.

³⁹ Lingard to Gage, undated, post marked 20 June 1832, Hengrave mss 21/4/167.

⁴⁰ Scott, *The Antiquary*, p.162.

so dangerous'.⁴¹ In a very similar way, in the minds of many Britons, any awkwardness in reconciling an admiration for the Catholic Middle Ages with loyalty to the Anglican faith, could usually be satisfactorily if not quite logically resolved. By extension contemporary Catholics, if they had been recusant since the Reformation, might be cast in a romantically melancholy light. In John Henry Newman's sermon, 'The Second Spring', preached in 1852, he recalled the mental picture of the old Catholics that he had imbibed as a boy when he was an enthusiastic reader of Scott: 'An old-fashioned house of gloomy appearance, closed in with high walls, with an iron gate and yews, and the report... that Roman Catholics lived there.'⁴²

Although Hengrave Hall in Suffolk is not particularly gloomy, the ancestral home of the Gage family, which provided Gage with the subject of his most substantial work, *The History and Antiquities of Hengrave*, near enough fitted the bill. A splendid Tudor mansion where Elizabeth I once stayed, it was begun shortly before the Reformation in about 1525 for a branch of the family that did not adhere to the Roman Catholic faith.⁴³ Gage himself, however, who took the family name of Rokewode when he inherited the baronetcy, could trace his pedigree back through generations of recusants to two notable Ambrose Rookwoods. The elder was executed in 1605 for his part in the Gunpowder Plot while the younger met the same fate at Tyburn in 1696 having been involved in the Barclay Conspiracy, a Jacobite attempt to assassinate William of Orange. All of this information, some of it researched in collaboration with Lingard, was included in the *Antiquities of Hengrave*. It was no wonder that Lingard, the son of a respectable builder whose family had never been known to threaten the British state in any way, was mildly incredulous at what Gage could get away with. But of course distance lends enchantment and Gage's long-dead ancestors could easily be absorbed into the romance of history, while Lingard's awkward facts could not.

The other key to Gage's success was his preference for the discrete subject rather than the broad overview. In 1832, in *Archaeologia*, he published 'A dissertation on St

⁴¹ Scott, *The Antiquary*, p.162.

⁴² Newman, 'The Second Spring', p.172.

⁴³ See Pevsner, *Buildings of England, Suffolk*, pp. 262-264.

Æthelwold's Benedictional, an illuminated MS. of the 10th Century, in the Library of his Grace the Duke of Devonshire'. The essay, which was followed by a transcript of the Benedictional, explained what it was and set it in its historical and liturgical context. Acknowledging the safe arrival of his copy Lingard noted:

I admire much the research and judgement which you display in your preliminary dissertation, but still more (without disparagement to you) that extraordinary change in the public mind, which has permitted the antiquarian society to publish under its auspices so papistical a treatise. Soon I hope religious bigotry will be entirely extinguished. ⁴⁴

The secret of Gage's success was not a decline in bigotry. On the contrary his work could easily be interpreted to suit anti-Romanism. A review of the Dissertation, which he kept among his papers, signed 'H. Y.' and from an unidentified publication, suggests how matters really stood. The writer praises Gage's scholarship and goes on:

As Englishmen we look back with love and reverence on the ancient national Church of this Kingdom, and lament, as often as we are reminded, that no remains of its peculiar rites have been suffered to descend to us. The old national Churches, which formed the great body of the Catholic Church, though they professed the same faith, and practised the same worship, still retained with pious respect several peculiar practices and ceremonies, which they had inherited from their apostolic founder: they were sisters all of the same family, yet distinguished from each other by certain features. ⁴⁵

This was the other way of accommodating the Catholic past to the Anglican present. The High Church tradition of the Stuart antiquaries, notably Dugdale, maintained that the English church had its own integrity, independent of both Rome and the Tudor reformation, stretching back before Augustine to a hazy past emanating from the first church of Joseph of Arimathea at Glastonbury. ⁴⁶ Lingard had specifically set out to counter this version of events in his *Antiquities of the Anglo-Saxon Church*, which argued that the early church in England was under the direct authority of Rome. This, like his

⁴⁴ Lingard to Gage, May 24 1832, Hengrave mss 21/4/129.

⁴⁵ Hengrave mss 21/4/116.

⁴⁶ See Hill, "The ivi'd ruins of folorn Grace Dieu" and Corbett, 'The Title-Page and Illustrations to the *Monasticon Anglicanum*'.

view of the Reformation, had caused much offence. Gage, whose scholarship Lingard endorsed, in no way supported the Glastonbury romance, but he was writing about a specific benedictional, which really was a local variant, pointing out that ‘it has even been a question with the learned, whether special benedictions of the people ever constituted part of the Roman Liturgy’.⁴⁷ Local variations are one thing, a fully independent church is quite another but here, as elsewhere, national mythology was allowed to cast a mist over the finer outlines of argument and so Gage’s findings proved acceptable.

Even more so was his transcript of another self-contained text, the *Chronicle of Jocelin of Brakelond*. The manuscript, from the Harleian collection, which Gage edited and published under the auspices of the Camden Society in 1840, was the perfect material for the Jonathan Oldbuck view of pre-Reformation monastic England. Comprising ‘the annals of the Monastery of St Edmund from the year 1173 to 1202’ it was interesting Gage noted not so much for its mention of historic events, as for its picture of ‘the variety of ordinary incidents detailed, from which often something is to be learnt touching our language, manners, and customs, or our system, civil and religious, particularly the monastic polity’.⁴⁸ ‘Manners and customs’, the meat and drink of both antiquarianism and historical romance, combined with questions of ‘polity’ so much discussed in the troubled 1840s, gave Carlyle the perfect starting point for *Past and Present*, his meditation on the Condition of England question, published in 1843. In it he gave Gage full credit for performing ‘his editorial function well’ adding:

Not only has he deciphered his crabbed Manuscript into clear print; but he has attended, what his fellow editors are not always in the habit of doing to the important truth that the Manuscript so deciphered ought to have a meaning for the reader. Standing faithfully by his text, and printing its very errors in spelling, in grammar or otherwise, he has taken care by some note to indicate that they are errors, and what the correction of them ought to be.⁴⁹

⁴⁷ Hengrave mss 21/4/116.

⁴⁸ Gage, *Chronica Jocelini de Braklonda*, Preface, p. vii.

⁴⁹ Carlyle, *Past and Present*, p.46.

Thus, without ever traducing his faith, Gage, practicing antiquarianism of the most conventional sort, concerned with local history and detail, was able to exert more influence beyond his co-religionists than Milner, with much less difficulty than Lingard.

'Tis Sixty Years Since

The rotting heads of executed Jacobites remained on Temple Bar in London for more than twenty-five years. Culloden, the last battle fought on British soil, and its bloody aftermath, were followed by the Highland clearances and the Disarming Act of 1746, which outlawed the wearing of Highland dress. These were indications, as Hugh Cheape, has written, of 'the serious fear and sense of political threat', felt by the British government about Jacobitism and specifically the wearing of the plaid.⁵⁰ It would be more than sixty years before George IV squeezed himself into one of the most expensive (and extensive) kilts ever made for his journey north of the border and a little over a century before his niece Victoria established herself at Balmoral. Even so it was a remarkably sharp change in the political wind.

How it came about and how it resulted in the 'Invention of Tradition', or even 'The Invention of Scotland', has been explored and debated widely. The legacy of Trevor-Roper's work is increasingly contentious with some authors claiming more and some less for the factual origins of present day perceptions of Scottish costume and culture.⁵¹ Here, my object is to see how antiquarianism, as practised by Scott and the Sobieski Stuarts, contributed to the creation of the Hanoverian Highlands. It was a process in which antiquarian activities, notably the use of oral history and the discovery,

⁵⁰ Cheape, *Tartan: the highland habit*, p. 39.

⁵¹ Cheape *Tartan: the highland habit*, p.12, accuses Trevor-Roper of 'shallow misapprehension' and an over-reliance on the 'bigoted badinage' of Dr Johnson. See also Kidd, 'Lord Dacre and the Politics of the Scottish Enlightenment'; Ferguson, 'A Reply to Professor Colin Kidd on Lord Dacre's Contribution to the Study of Scottish History and the Scottish Enlightenment' and Kidd, 'On Heroes, Hero-Worship and Demonology in Scottish Historiography: a reply to Dr Ferguson'.

re-discovery and presentation of historic artefacts to create emotional resonance, played a central part. As ever, the intention is to discover how and why certain ideas developed and either took root or did not, rather than to establish who was right.

While there is no doubt that the poems of Ossian, Johnson and Boswell's accounts of their journey to the highlands and Francis Grose's *Antiquities of Scotland*, had all reflected and encouraged a growing sympathetic curiosity about Scotland among the English, it is equally certain that it was Scott's first novel, *Waverley or 'Tis Sixty Years Since*, that opened the floodgates of popular taste to the point where by 1825 Hazlitt could complain that: 'It may be asked, it has been asked, "have we no materials for romance in England? Must we look to Scotland for a supply of whatever is original and striking of this kind?" And we answer "yes!"'⁵²

Waverley, though often considered as an historical novel, only just fits the definition. Begun, by Scott's account, in about 1805 and published in 1814, it deals with events still within living memory. 'Neither a romance of chivalry, nor a tale of modern manners,' it was based on Scott's own recollections of the stories his father's friend and client Alexander Steuart of Invernahyle in Argyllshire had told him.⁵³ Invernahyle had been 'out', as aficionados say, in both the '15 and the '45, and his tales, Scott recalled, 'were the absolute delight of my childhood'.⁵⁴ All of Scott's contemporaries who had had grandparents to tell them tales would have heard, from one side or another, about the Jacobite risings, the most dramatic events in domestic politics in their lifetimes. Thus they were able to share in that potent combination of national history and personal nostalgia that *Waverley*, evoked.

Oral history, what Willson noted down under the heading of 'notes collected from the remembrance of old people', was at this date a relatively new and peculiarly antiquarian field of study.⁵⁵ As collectors of ballads, folk customs and dialect words

⁵² Hazlitt, *Spirit of the Age*, p.106.

⁵³ Scott, *Waverley*, p. 4.

⁵⁴ Quoted in Claire Lamont, 'Introduction', Scott, *Waverley*, p. viii.

⁵⁵ Society of Antiquaries, Willson Collections, 786/13.

antiquaries sought out the elderly. Sometimes of course they were innocently misled or deliberately hoodwinked, or shown up by them. Oldbuck's relationship with Edie Ochiltree, the repository of real wisdom and debunker of Oldbuck's more elaborate theories, suggests the permutations of such relationships. In *Waverley* Scott was therefore, as so often, making use in fiction of aspects of his practice as an antiquary and later, during George IV's visit to Scotland, he was to deploy his skills as a novelist in the service of antiquarianism. In writing *Waverley* he did not make much attempt to check or expand his memory of what he had heard by comparison with written sources, as Lingard would have done. Indeed Scott's stated intention was the opposite of Lingard's. He wanted to prove that the past was not a foreign country. That 'Nature [is] the same through a thousand editions, whether of black letter or wire-wove and hot-pressed' was the chief of those 'moral lessons which I would willingly consider as the most important part of my plan'.⁵⁶

Scott's Scotland was thus a place where an Englishman could travel in perfect safety, while enjoying the frisson of vicarious danger. There was a revealing instance of the way this double-think worked in Scott's own mind, and no doubt many others, when the young Henry Fox visited him in Edinburgh in 1822, just five months before George IV's 'jaunt'. Scott told Fox of his own, emotional, Jacobitism, adding that many Scots felt the same to the point where 'it would still be unsafe for Madame d'Albanie, [widow of the Young Pretender], to come here'.⁵⁷ In fact the Comtesse, who had not been born at the time of Culloden, had already been to Britain several years earlier, had dined with the Prince Regent and Mrs Fitzherbert and gone home again without anyone turning a hair, let alone fomenting a rebellion. With so much slippage between the facts of very recent history and the feelings they evoked there was plenty of scope for intervention.

Apart from his writings, Scott's two principal contributions to the nineteenth-century re-imagining of Scotland were the orchestration of George IV's visit and, four years before that, the equally self-conscious staging of the 'discovery' of the Scottish

⁵⁶ Scott, *Waverley*, p.5.

⁵⁷ Quoted in Prebble, *The King's Jaunt*, p.19.

royal regalia. It was only in the loosest sense a discovery, for the regalia were found exactly where they were known to have been left in March 1707 after the Act of Union deprived Scotland of its sovereign status. Despite which Scott had ‘never been more pleased since the battle of Waterloo than with this discovery’.⁵⁸ Not indeed since then had he had his hands on objects of such significance in national history. The sixteenth-century crown, sceptre and sword of state were known to have been deposited in a chest in the Crown-Room of Edinburgh Castle. The chest was still there, but there had been persistent rumours that the regalia had been spirited away to England. At a meeting with the Prince Regent in 1815 Scott asked for permission to search for them and, as his published account described it: ‘In October 1817 his royal highness ... was pleased to give directions for removing the mystery which had so long hung upon the existence of the Scottish regalia.’⁵⁹ Less respectfully he wrote to John Morritt on 14 January 1818, ‘Our fat friend’s curiosity... goes to the point at once authorising and enjoining an express search for the regalia so my fingers long to be up and doing’.⁶⁰

Scott’s successive descriptions of the discovery gained in solemnity and drama as time went on. By 1826, in the *Provincial Antiquities* it was practically a short story. ‘The dust of a century was upon the floor; the ashes of the last fire remained still in the chimney’, after a vain search for keys a smith was sent for and at first it appeared that it was too late for ‘the chest seemed to return a hollow and empty sound to the strokes of the hammer’.⁶¹ The event was conceived from the beginning as dramatic, indeed scripted, to conform to the conventions of antiquarian enterprises. Writing to the Duke of Buccleuch, who was one of those charged along with Scott with the investigation, Scott promised to do it on a mutually convenient date: ‘The drama of the Iron Chest will certainly be postponed until your Grace can be one of the dramatis personae.’⁶² It was important, though, that the show should not flop. Scott explained to the Duke that

⁵⁸ Scott in a letter to William Dundas, 14 February 1818, quoted in Todd and Bowden, *Scott a Bibliographical History* p. 488.

⁵⁹ Scott, *Description of the Regalia*, p. 29.

⁶⁰ Scott to John Morritt, 13 January 1818, *Letters*, 5, p.50.

⁶¹ Scott, *Provincial Antiquities*, p. xxxviii.

⁶² Scott to the Duke of Buccleuch, 16 January 1818, *Letters*, 5, p.59.

We have agreed to say nothing of the precise day. It is possible we may have the fate of those sapient persons who went to the vault at Clerkenwell to speak with the Cock Lane ghost, of whose expedition Churchill has recorded

Silent, all three went in-about

All three turn'd, silent, and came out

On these occasions the fewer spectators the better.⁶³

Scott either could not contain himself or he elaborated afterwards for by his own account, on 4 February 1818 when the chest was broken open, while there were no spectators in the room, there was no mystery about what was going on. At the moment the regalia were found 'the royal flag was hoisted upon the castle, and greeted by the shouts of a numerous crowd assembled on the hill, who took a deep interest in the success of the researches'.⁶⁴ Scott's *Description of the Regalia of Scotland* appeared the following year to coincide with a public exhibition of the crown jewels in the room where they had been found, now 'handsomely fitted up' for the purpose.⁶⁵ The *Description* weaves Scotland's history of noble independence seamlessly into the modern union. It begins with the crown itself which, though sixteenth-century, contained within it Scott explained, an older diadem. 'Of its antiquity we can produce no precise evidence; but many circumstances induce us to refer it to the glorious reign of Robert the Bruce.'⁶⁶ Soon, by extension he is back at the coronation of Malcolm in 1057, from where he sweeps on through the depredations of Edward I, 'who took with him to England every monument of Scottish independence', through the regalia's narrow and dramatic escape from the Parliamentary forces to their long slumber in the Castle and so to the present.⁶⁷

⁶³ Scott to the Duke of Buccleuch, 16 January 1818, *Letters*, 5, p.60.

⁶⁴ Scott, *Description of the Regalia*, p.30.

⁶⁵ Scott, *Description of the Regalia*, p. 30.

⁶⁶ Scott, *Description of the Regalia*, p. 5.

⁶⁷ Scott, *Description of the Regalia*, p.6.



Figure 42 *The Honours of Scotland, the discovery of the Regalia*, by David Wilkie, 1822

From the individual objects themselves, through the events they witnessed, Scott tells the story of Scotland until somehow, after eight centuries of proud resistance to the forces of English oppression, the regalia, come to symbolise all that is best about the union.

The feelings with which we now view these venerable national reliques are of a nature less agitating than those of our forefathers... We, who now reap the slow but well-ripened fruits of the painful sacrifice made at the union, can compare with calmer judgment, the certain blessings of equality of laws and rights, extended commerce, improved agriculture, individual safety, and domestic peace, with the vain though generous boast of a precarious national independence, subject to all the evils of domestic faction and delegated oppression. With such feelings we look upon the Regalia of Scotland... blessing the wise decrees of Providence, which, after a thousand years of bloodshed, have at length indissolubly united two nations, who, speaking the same language, professing the same religion, and united by the same interest, seem formed by God and nature to compose one people.⁶⁸

Three years later it seemed quite natural for Scott's fat friend, now King, to make the first journey north of the border by a reigning monarch since Charles I, an unfortunate precedent with which it was important to avoid comparison. How Scott came to take charge, at short notice, of the arrangements in the summer of 1822, and the story of the visit itself are well-known.⁶⁹ It is worth emphasising, however, the importance of Scott's vision of history and specifically his antiquarianism in the success of what Lockhart, his

⁶⁸ Scott, *Description of the Regalia*, p.34.

⁶⁹ Prebble, *The King's Jaunt*, gives a full account.

son-in-law and biographer, so aptly called ‘Sir Walter’s Celtification of Scotland’.⁷⁰ Not only was George IV established as a popular and proper king for the Scots, but Scotland itself was offered a new, more picturesque version of its history, which was accepted with enthusiasm on both sides of the border. Scott undertook operations as part of a hastily convened committee of five, of whom three were antiquaries. The principal events they organised all relied on historic resonance for their effect though not one of them had any historic precedent. The first was a procession, in which the regalia were carried to Holyrood. This was followed by the King’s landing at Leith. Another procession, along the Royal Mile brought the King and the regalia together back to the Castle and the climax was a ‘gathering of the clans’ at the Assembly Rooms. One of Scott’s first acts was to augment the regalia with an item from his own collection, the Sword of Montrose, which he had lent to his friend the actor Daniel Terry in London. Terry, who advised on various aspects of the visit, was urged to return the sword which was later carried by Scott’s distant cousin Alexander Keith of Ravelston in the processions. Ravelston was, by Scott’s reckoning, heir to the Knights Marischal of Scotland and he duly promoted him to that role for the ceremony.



Figure 43 *The Entrance of George IV at Holyrood House*, by David Wilkie, 1828

George IV was thus conducted into his northern kingdom surrounded by historic artefacts that emphasized his place in Scotland’s continuous history. He was also accompanied not only by the newly promoted Knight Marischal but by another even more striking group of Scott’s walking fictions, the Company of Archers. Scott, as

⁷⁰ Quoted in Prebble, *The King’s Jaunt* p.18.

Prebble points out, was just about to start work on *Quentin Durward*, the story of a Scottish archer in the French royal bodyguard and there was doubtless a connection between his plan for the novel and his decision to transform the existing Company of Archers, a gentleman's sporting and dining club dating back to the later seventeenth century, into a band of medieval bowmen in Lincoln green, complete with quivers and arrows. There was at this point a complete symmetry in the exchange between fact and fiction.

The climax of the visit was the gathering of the clans, a 'Highland Ball' at the Assembly rooms. This was the single most influential event of the tour and its legacy was the most enduring. It was the Ball that forged a link between Scottish dress and tartan and promoted the idea, quite unknown in 1745, of individual clan tartans associated with particular families. As Prebble and Hugh Cheape have made clear this was the moment that established 'the kilt as the national dress of all Scotsmen, should they so desire' and established the fashion for individual named tartans.⁷¹ 'Highland dress' was a condition of entry. Yet the plaid was seldom if ever seen in Edinburgh at the time. Most lowlanders would never have thought of wearing it and it would have been regarded as outlandish by the citizens of the capital. As Lockhart wrote:

With all respect and admiration for the noble and generous qualities which our countrymen of the Highland clans have so often exhibited, it was difficult to forget that they had always constituted a small, and almost always an unimportant part of the Scottish population.⁷²

They were, however, the romantic, or as Lockhart put it the 'picturesque' part.⁷³ A Highland revival was already beginning in antiquarian circles and despite some initial demur Scott's effective creation of a Scottish national costume with the capacity for personal variants was soon wildly successful with both polite society and with manufacturers, for it gave new life to the foundering cloth industry in Scotland.⁷⁴ Well

⁷¹ Prebble, *The King's Jaunt*, p.103.

⁷² Lockhart, *Life of Sir Walter Scott*, p. 481.

⁷³ Lockhart, *Life of Sir Walter Scott*, p. 481.

⁷⁴ See Cheape, *Tartan: the highland habit*, pp. 63-69.

might the *Edinburgh Observer* conclude that: ‘We are now all Jacobites, thorough-bred Jacobites, in acknowledging George IV’.⁷⁵ The necessary sleight of hand had been accomplished; the antiquarian romance of history had adjusted the past to the needs of the present. England too was soon fervently Jacobite, in the *Edinburgh Observer*’s sense.

It was at this moment, probably, that the brothers who became known as the Sobieski Stuarts began their career. Although they later denied having been in Edinburgh in August 1822, Scott, as mentioned earlier, believed they were.⁷⁶ They were certainly in Scotland, something they also denied. According to the diary of Lady Elinor Campbell they were in Islay in August and stayed until 13 October, though whether continuously or not is not clear.⁷⁷ That year saw the birth of Lady Elinor’s son, Ian Campbell of Islay (1822-1885) who grew up to become a Gaelic scholar and folklorist. He thus knew the brothers from childhood and remembered them being responsible for dressing him, at the age of three, in his first kilt. Remaining fond of them he was torn, as his own researches into highland customs and traditions developed, between a desire to protect their reputation and a sense of responsibility to set the historic record straight. Unpublished notes that he kept in the 1870s, which survive in the National Library of Scotland, reveal Campbell’s touching struggle in the course of his investigation into ‘the origin of the luxuriant crop of tartans which now pervades all the world’ with his divided personal loyalties.⁷⁸ In the course of his researches and reminiscences a picture of the brothers’ gradual self-creation emerges. From the first both the novelty and the romantic resonance of their appearance was essential to their success.

On 22 March 1871 Mrs William Russell, formerly Miss Emma Campbell, told Ian Campbell that in 1827 she:

⁷⁵ Quoted in Prebble, *The King’s Jaunt*, p.123.

⁷⁶ In *A Reply to the Quarterly Review*, pp. 3-4, the brothers wrote that: ‘At the period mentioned, neither the Editor nor the MS of the *Vestiarium* were in Scotland, nor did he return to that country until four years afterwards.’

⁷⁷ Recorded in notes by her son Ian Campbell, National Library of Scotland, adv.ms. 50.3.9, f54.

⁷⁸ National Library of Scotland adv.ms.50.3.10 inside front cover.

First saw them from the window; two young, good looking men, crossing the green in front of Islay house, dressed in elaborate fanciful highland dresses, with kilts etc, which were then rarely seen in Islay. Many of the poor people, hearing that descendants of Prince Charlie were in the Island, and in the old dress, declared that they were ready to rise for Prince Charlie.⁷⁹

The brothers aroused, it would seem, the same combination of personal nostalgia and historic resonance as *Waverley*. An undated pamphlet of about 1842 by Monsieur le Vicomte d'Arlincourt describing a visit to the brothers on Eilean Aigais makes the same point.⁸⁰ D'Arlincourt takes them completely seriously and describes their dress as 'Highland costume; their tartan, like that of their grandfather, is red, with green squares, and the white rose is their symbol [sic]' adding that 'their personal beauty and their distinguished manners are such, that they could not travel through Scotland a few years ago without awakening the enthusiasm of the Highlanders; indeed there were some who only waited for a word from their mouths to rise'.⁸¹ Even the increasingly sceptical Ian Campbell noted, thirty years later, that 'They are exceedingly like portraits of Charles III'.⁸²

Since so much of the impression they created depended on their clothes and appearance, it was not surprising that for their first significant publication the brothers should have chosen the subject of highland dress. The *Vestiarium Scoticum* 'from the manuscript formerly in the library of the Scots college at Douay' by 'Sir Richard Urquhart' was published in 1842. It offered a catalogue of clan tartans for which it was, as an increasingly worried Ian Campbell noted, the only authority between 'Buchanan 1565 to 1822' yet, like the brothers themselves, it fulfilled romantic expectations.⁸³ That year, when Queen Victoria on her first visit to Scotland, went to stay with Lord Breadalbane, a founding member of the Highland Society of Edinburgh, at Taymouth Castle in Perthshire, she was greeted with immensely elaborate ceremonies, devised by Breadalbane himself in the style of Scott. She was also shown the Breadalbane copy of

⁷⁹ National Library of Scotland adv.ms.50.3.10, f19.

⁸⁰ D'Arlincourt, *A Romance of Real Life*.

⁸¹ D'Arlincourt, *A Romance of Real Life*, p.16.

⁸² National Library of Scotland adv.ms.50.3.10, f4v.

⁸³ National Library of Scotland, adv.ms. 50.3.9, f54.

the *Vestiarium* and at once ordered one for the Royal Library. The Scottish press was delighted by this news and congratulated the ‘editor’ on producing ‘a work...worthy of a place in the royal library’.⁸⁴ The Queen almost at once became an important patron of the tartan manufactures and her family and household were soon kitted out with ‘Victoria’ and ‘Albert’ tartans. Thus, if the Sobieski Stuarts’ antiquarian dream of themselves as princes had not come true, yet part at least of their vision of history was established at the English court.



Figure 44 The Marquis of Montrose from *The Costume of the Clans*, 1845

Their next work, *The Costume of the Clans*, was based on sounder premises and as their many surviving notes and manuscripts attest, they were both, John especially, assiduous and scholarly researchers. Most of their work, however, after the fiasco of 1847-8, remained unpublished and there is no doubt that their most enduring influence was exercised via the *Vestiarium* and its patterns, which fuelled a booming tartan industry. The individual patterns had acquired an unassailable validity. By 1874, Ian Campbell noted, ‘clan tartans’ were being ‘made and sold in exceeding abundance... I have been contradicted in Manchester by a shop boy’.⁸⁵ Yet, despite being ultimately convinced that clan patterns were ‘shams’,⁸⁶ and that ‘Sir Walter Scott and my friends the Editors of the *Vestiarium Scoticum*’ were almost solely responsible for their existence, Campbell did not, for a number of reasons, publish his research.⁸⁷

⁸⁴ Quoted in Tyrell, ‘The Queen’s “Little Trip”’, p. 66.

⁸⁵ National Library of Scotland adv.ms.50.3.9, f128.

⁸⁶ National Library of Scotland adv.ms.50.3.9, f128.

⁸⁷ National Library of Scotland adv.ms.50.3.9, f54.

An article he sent to *Mac Millans Magazine* in 1871 to coincide with a competition of pipers at the Crystal Palace was rejected. ‘Obviously anything which throws doubt on the authenticity of clan tartans would be unpopular’ he noted.⁸⁸ In the end he abandoned his study concluding that ‘It would be foolish to print it. It is good for trade to believe in clan tartans’.⁸⁹ He kept his notes, however, and his final verdict on the authors, ‘who first caused me to be arrayed in Highland Costume in 1825’ was added in 1873, the year after John’s death.⁹⁰ It is poignant, both as a record of a long, strange friendship and also as an epitome of the way in which affection, nostalgia and romance, as well as commercial interests, mingled with historic research to perpetuate the Sobieski Stuarts’ antiquarian interventions in Scottish history.

The Authors

Note. Anything here noticed about these gentlemen personally I wish not to be published. They are old friends, and I really have no proof that they are not grandsons of Prince Charles. They have never said to me that they are. It is vaguely understood that they are supposed to claim to be the rightful heirs to the throne, and people argue about their authenticity, and write about it. In looking to the authenticity of Campbell tartan, I was led first to the book, then to the author, and to the question of his descent. I have noted all that I heard but I wished only to get at the genuine Campbell Tartan. Therefore if anybody ever takes to printing this I beg the editor to avoid any injury to the authors of the Vestiarium, or to their memory.⁹¹

At this distance in time, after Trevor-Roper’s assault on them, perhaps Campbell’s wishes to honour their memory are better respected by publishing than by suppressing what he wrote.

⁸⁸ National Library of Scotland adv.ms.50.3.9, f3.

⁸⁹ National Library of Scotland adv.ms.50.3.9, f7v.

⁹⁰ National Library of Scotland adv.ms.50.3.9, f7.

⁹¹ National Library of Scotland adv.ms.50.3.9, f7.

Chapter Six

Walter Scott's 'mighty wizzard': the antiquaries' Shakespeare

In the instalment of his *Autobiography* first published in 1849 John Britton devoted a characteristically ambitious appendix to: 'Essays on the merits and characteristics of William Shakspeare also Remarks on his birth and burial-place, his monument, portraits and associations.'² In it he noted that:

Since the commencement of this century, it may be asserted that more has been written and published on the life and literary works of Shakspeare, than during the whole of the preceding period between the acting of his first drama and the year 1800.³

He might have added that more had also been painted and, in the case of the Birthplace, reconstructed and indeed constructed. But while it was undoubtedly true that the volume of writing about Shakespeare and his works increased enormously during that half century, the process of acceleration may be said to have begun a decade earlier, with the publication in November 1790 of Edmond Malone's edition of *The Plays and Poems of William Shakespeare*. In the theatre too 'the French Revolution... was ... productive of a revolution' in the presentation of the plays, 'on both sides of the channel', especially in the use of historic costume.⁴ Here, as in other areas of antiquarian activity, Anglo-French collaboration and mutual admiration persisted throughout hostilities, and 'the toga and the paludamentum found their way from the French stage to ours'.⁵ For Shakespeare studies, therefore, the decades covered by this thesis begin with the establishment of a new standard for textual scholarship and historically authentic costume and end, at the time of Britton's *Autobiography*, with the purchase of the Stratford Birthplace

¹ Scott, *Journal*, p.509.

² Britton, *Autobiography*, (1850), Appendix, pp. 1-48. There were several variant spellings at this date, I have not added 'sic' to each.

³ Britton, *Autobiography*, (1850), Appendix, p.43.

⁴ Planché, *History of Stage Costume*, p.172.

⁵ Planché, *History of Stage Costume*, p.172.

and the exhibition at the British Museum of the Kesselstadt death mask, a dubious artefact that was, if nothing else, the manifestation of an overwhelming and widely-felt desire to look beyond Shakespeare's works to find out the face and personality of the author, to see the genius 'so grandly stamped on his high brow and serene features'.⁶

At every point on this spectrum from Malone's ten volumes to Ludwig Becker's peculiar relic, from annotation and exegesis to romance and forgery, antiquarianism was at the heart of the enterprise. Thus it was as critically correct as it was historically implausible for John Faed, in his reconstruction of the company assembled at the Mermaid Tavern, to place William Camden, the founding father of British antiquarianism, directly opposite Shakespeare across the table, in an attitude of intense scrutiny [fig: 45].



Figure 45 *Shakespeare and his Friends at the Mermaid Tavern*, by John Faed, c1850

For antiquaries in this period Shakespeare's works were both a subject and a source, while he himself became a kind of patron saint. The post-Enlightenment rehabilitation of his works marked an acceptance of much of the material the antiquaries were concerned with: the local, the vernacular, the history of the Middle Ages. Personally too they could sympathise with an author who was not classically educated and whose lack of formal learning might be seen as his strength. It was his very ignorance of the Aristotelian rules of drama that had allowed his

⁶ Schoenbaum, *Shakespeare's Lives*, p. 469.

genius to develop freely, Scott suggested, without ‘access to any models of which the commanding merit might have controlled and limited his own exertions. He followed the path which a nameless crowd of obscure writers had trodden before him’.⁷

Exactly the same might be said of the mostly self-taught antiquaries who took their often oblique course along the byways of learning. Scott identified himself, and was identified by others explicitly with Shakespeare, and Britton did so by association. This chapter argues that the engagement with Shakespeare between 1790 and 1850 may be said to mark the apotheosis of romantic antiquarianism. Not only did the life, work and physical image of Shakespeare engage it in every aspect, but in its responses to Shakespeare antiquarianism entered into the mainstream of romantic thought. It might be argued that German idealism was an oblique influence on other areas of antiquarian enquiry, but in the study of Shakespeare it is a direct and acknowledged point of reference. The romantic critics, Schlegel and Coleridge in particular, were explicitly invoked by antiquaries while the critics in their turn, notably Hazlitt writing about Scott, addressed the effects of antiquarianism on the appreciation and performance of the plays.

The great departure in the Romantics’ criticism of Shakespeare, as it derived from German idealism, beginning with Herder’s essay of 1773, was the suggestion that his works should be seen in the context of history, measured by the standards of their own day, rather than those of classical Greece. A nation should, Herder wrote: ‘Create its drama out of its history, out of the spirit of the age, manners, opinions, language, national prejudices, traditions, and pastimes, even out of carnival plays and puppet plays.’⁸ Shakespeare had done this and his sources, by Herder’s account, were just those ‘manners and customs’ that were at the heart of the antiquarian enterprise. Shakespeare might therefore be established as an honorary antiquary. More important, however, was the underlying assumption that the past had its own criteria which should be understood and accepted as valid. It was the same principle which was applied in the antiquarian vindication of medieval architecture. Milner bemoaned Wyatt’s modifications to Salisbury cathedral in very similar terms to those in which Scott deplored the alterations made to Shakespeare’s texts as ‘interpolations and alterations’ that ‘marred and disguised’ the original in

⁷ Scott, ‘Essay on the Drama’, p.197.

⁸ Herder, *Shakespeare*, p.25.

order to satisfy the taste of a later age and which should be stripped away.⁹ Scott indeed draws an archaeological analogy, comparing the restored text to an ancient statue that had been excavated and ‘disencumbered from the rubbish in which it had been enveloped’.¹⁰ Southey too had made just that comparison.¹¹

The critics were of course, like everyone including the antiquaries, opposed to ‘mere’ antiquarianism, indeed Herder was ‘indifferent to antiquarian detail’.¹² In the study of Shakespeare, as elsewhere, however, one person’s pedantic footnote was another’s salient fact. Over the period the staging of Shakespeare favoured ever more historically accurate costumes and more realistic scenery. It was the completeness of the detail that sustained the theatrical illusion, ‘the time and place and the fullness of external circumstances that necessarily lends the whole story substance, durability, and existence’, as Herder put it.¹³ The point at which the detail was felt to overwhelm the substance would vary over time and according to taste among individual actors, critics, antiquaries and audiences. The counterbalance against which it was weighed was the corollary of the romantic account of Shakespeare, the timelessness which made him always of the present. ‘Nobody from reading Shakespear would know,’ Hazlitt wrote, ‘that Lear was an English king... There are no data in history to go upon; no advantage is taken of costume, no acquaintance with geography or architecture or dialect is necessary; but there is an old tradition, human nature -an old temple, the human mind’.¹⁴ The remarks come in the course of a critique of Walter Scott and Hazlitt drives his argument home on the point that while Lear is ‘a thousand or two years old... yet the tragedy has no smack of antiquarianism in it’.¹⁵

However, it is not the case as Hazlitt implies or as Nicola J Watson has recently argued, that antiquarianism belonged to only one side of the romantic account of Shakespeare, ‘historicised rather than timeless’.¹⁶ The other Shakespeare who ‘speaks the language of all ages, peoples and races of men’, a part of each successive age and therefore an expression of the

⁹ Scott, ‘Essay on the Drama’, p.218.

¹⁰ Scott, ‘Essay on the Drama’, p.218.

¹¹ See Chapter 2.

¹² Herder, *Shakespeare*, Introduction, p. xxxvi.

¹³ Herder, *Shakespeare*, p.40.

¹⁴ Quoted in Watson, ‘Kemble Scott and the Mantel of the Bard’, p.87.

¹⁵ Quoted in Watson, ‘Kemble, Scott and the Mantel of the Bard’, p.87

¹⁶ Watson, ‘Kemble, Scott and the Mantel of the Bard’, p.73.

romantic imagination, was also an aspect of the antiquaries' Shakespeare.¹⁷ The subjective, narrative engagement with the past, lived out in part at the Musée des Monumens Français, and in full by the Sobieski Stuarts, reached its apogee in the antiquarian treatment of Shakespeare, in Scott's shrine to him at Abbotsford and John Britton's romantic pilgrimages to Stratford.

Antiquaries were to be found everywhere where Shakespeare was studied or produced, behind and in front of the scenes in the theatres, in the green room, on the playbill, in the library and the museum. Of those antiquaries with which this thesis is concerned it was Britton, Douce, Planché and Scott who most interested themselves in Shakespeare. Douce confined his studies to the textual and historical and was only tangentially and somewhat uncomfortably in touch with the theatre, while his friend and protégé Planché, who began his career as a playwright, made the opposite journey from theatre to library and indeed might be said to have been turned into an antiquary by his experience of Shakespeare. Scott and Britton were the literary critics. One hugely influential the other, by his own account, most unjustly ignored. Both saw their own identities as intimately connected with that of Shakespeare, for whom they helped to create the face and the biographical context which the early nineteenth century demanded to have. This account starts with the works and moves on to the life, taking events in an approximately chronological order.

Francis Douce: 'authenticated wings...to Mustardseed'

Douce's *Illustrations of Shakspeare and of Ancient Manners: with dissertations on the clowns and fools of Shakspeare; on the collection of popular tales entitled gesta romanorum; and on the English morris dance*, appeared in 1807, the year of Douce's appointment as Keeper of Manuscripts at the British Museum. Neither of these ventures into public life was an unqualified success. Douce resigned from the Museum in 1811 and one remarkably hostile review of his book deterred him from publishing anything else for the next twenty-five years. He was a touchy man but his difficulties were indicative of more than his own temperament and the

¹⁷ Herder, *Shakespeare*, p. 32.

Illustrations of Shakspeare and its mixed reception are revealing of the ambivalent relationship between antiquarianism, public opinion and perceptions of Shakespeare at the beginning of the century.

The book was not Douce's first venture into Shakespearean commentary. George Steevens (1736-1800), had published some of his 'remarks' in the 1790s. Douce's methods were closer to those of Malone, however, who 'examined the records, transcribed the documents, and weighed the evidence' than the occasionally maverick Steevens.¹⁸ His antiquarianism was, like Lingard's, (and Malone's) literally conservative in that he sought to establish and preserve the integrity of his material, but radical in the seriousness with which he took that material, on its own terms. His dealings with Steevens, if nothing else, would have made him familiar with the controversies among Shakespeare scholars and between them and their enemies. Douce accordingly began his book with a Preface designed, if not to ward off hostility then at least to put up a pre-emptive defence by drawing that elusive line between pedantry and elucidation, or 'black-letter learning' and 'true scholarship and a laudable curiosity' as he put it, at a point convenient for his own purposes.¹⁹ Leaning on the short tradition at his disposal he quoted Steevens's remark that ' "If Shakspeare is worth reading, he is worth explaining" ' as summing up every necessary argument for exegesis. In spite of which he took a passing swipe at those who rejected any kind of commentary and who 'with all their affectation' were probably the least learned of readers and 'undoubtedly remain so'.²⁰

With his fellow commentators Douce was only slightly more irenic. He worked his way in the Preface through his predecessors, according praise to Steevens and Malone but only a certain respect to Johnson, whom he did not name and could not from his own point of view much admire, 'because he was certainly unskilled in the knowledge of obsolete customs and expressions'.²¹ Thus he positioned himself firmly with that romantic, post-Enlightenment view of Shakespeare as a man of his time, to be seen in his social and linguistic context. In order to establish this, Douce explained, he could afford no aesthetic squeamishness. This was not a

¹⁸ Schoenbaum, *Shakespeare's Lives*, p.178.

¹⁹ Douce, *Illustrations of Shakspeare*, 1, p.x.

²⁰ Douce, *Illustrations of Shakspeare*, 1, p.vi.

²¹ Douce, *Illustrations of Shakspeare*, 1, p.vii.

matter of taste and he would avail himself of any relevant source however vulgar, for ‘even the meanest productions of human intellect’ might be useful, if ‘like medicinal poisons, they be administered with skill’.²² Douce, the artful apothecary, ridding his subject matter of disorders contracted over time, was also obliged to see off the quacks. ‘Sometimes there has been a necessity for stepping in between two contending critics; and for showing, as in the case of many other disputes, that both parties are in the wrong.’²³ In fact Douce found himself in debate, and in dispute, with many parties, including, sometimes, Shakespeare himself. His approach, it will be seen, demonstrated a peculiarly antiquarian variant on that reciprocity between text and reader, actor and audience that was the essence of the romantic critique.

From the beginning Douce was intent upon getting as much out of the plays as he brought to them. In his life-long attempt to ‘augment the knowledge of our popular customs and antiquities’, he found that ‘the writings of Shakespeare’ offered ‘better hints, and ... ampler materials than those of anyone’.²⁴ He therefore expanded his notes with ‘digressions’.²⁵ These excursions into adjacent areas of folklore and history further wove the plays into their contemporary context and served, he hoped, to ‘operate in diminishing that tedium which usually results from an attention to matters purely critical’.²⁶ They did, although they also naturally opened him up to charges of irrelevance and wool-gathering. The range of material that he invoked for *The Tempest*, the first text he discusses, and its deployment, is typical of his method in the first part of the book, as he works his way through the plays.

Douce makes no general summarising comments; each point relates to a line or a speech and is included in the order in which it occurs. Thus his most far-reaching suggestion, a proposed re-dating of *The Tempest*, occurs in relation to Act I sc ii and Ariel’s reference to ‘the still-vest Bermoothes’.²⁷ By 1807 *The Voyage of Sir George Sommers* of 1609 had already been suggested as a *terminus post quem* for the play and, according to Malone, the ‘great tempest’ of 1612 was the likely inspiration for the title. Douce agreed with the first point but suggested that the play

²² Douce, *Illustrations of Shakspeare*, 1, p. x.

²³ Douce, *Illustrations of Shakspeare*, 1, p. ix.

²⁴ Douce, *Illustrations of Shakspeare*, 1, p. ix.

²⁵ Douce, *Illustrations of Shakspeare*, 1, p. ix.

²⁶ Douce, *Illustrations of Shakspeare*, 1, p. ix.

²⁷ Douce, *Illustrations of Shakspeare*, I, p. 5 and *Tempest* I ii l 239.

could be earlier and that the title and the theme related to the detailed accounts of Sommers's wreck such as that of an eye-witness Silvester Jourdan, published in 1610, in which the Bermudas are described as uninhabited because 'under the influence of enchantment'.²⁸ This might, Douce argues, be a likely source. (It is now known that the play does date from before 1612 and there was a performance at court on November 1 1611.) Similarly, on Caliban's lines:

As wicked dew as e'er my mother brush'd
With raven's feathers from unwholesome fen,
Drop on you both! A south-west blow on you.²⁹

Douce glosses the raven imagery with a reference to *Batman upon Bartholome his booke De proprietatibus rerum*, of 1582, in which it is said that ravens are fed on dew when they are young and that "the raven is called corvus or CORAX". 'Corax', Douce suggests, is the origin of 'Sycorax'.³⁰

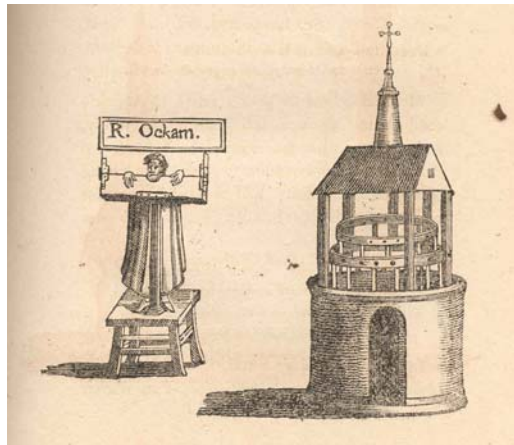


Figure 46 Pillories, from Douce's notes on *Measure for Measure*

From such solidly factual, text-based suggestions Douce moves out into arguments that depend on an understanding of Shakespeare's methods, his reading and so by implication his character and biography. To Malone's offering of 'a very apposite passage from Catullus' for

²⁸ Douce, *Illustrations of Shakspeare*, I, p. 6.

²⁹ Douce *Illustrations of Shakspeare*, I, p. 8 and *Tempest*, Act I sc ii.

³⁰ Douce *Illustrations of Shakspeare*, I, p.8.

Miranda's 'I am your wife, if you will marry me...' he tartly opposes 'the pathetic old poem of *The nut-brown maid*' as a more likely inspiration.³¹ On Steevens's objection to Ferdinand's 'This wooden slavery, than to suffer' (Act III sc i) as ungrammatical Douce backs Malone in arguing for it because it is: 'Shakespeare's language, and ought therefore to be restored. Mr Steevens objects on the score of defective metre: but this is not the case; the metre however rugged, is certainly perfect'.³² Shakespeare himself, a creature of the vernacular, more familiar with folk songs than Latin, is also, however rugged, to be respected, even when he arouses anxiety in an antiquary who likes his terms clearly defined. *The Tempest* sends Douce off down beguiling byways such as the 'rare old collection of songs...*Hunting, hawking, dauncing, drinking, enamoring*' one of which is the 'Urchins Dance' ('By the moone we sport and play,/With the night begins our day').³³ The inclusion of the verse also serves to get the commentator out of a difficult corner into which he has argued himself on the question of whether the urchins that Prospero sends to plague Caliban are sprites, or hedgehogs or whether the term is one of those which Shakespeare uses ambiguously and therefore 'should be taken in both or either of their senses'.³⁴

Douce's dislike of ambiguity and his determination to nail every last point caused him to give some hostages to fortune. Anyone wishing to satirise the antiquarian approach to Shakespeare needed only to quote him on Act IV, sc i: 'Mr Collins's note, it is presumed, will not be thought worth retaining in any future edition. His account of the barnacle is extremely confused and imperfect.'³⁵ At another moment, discussing *Midsummer Night's Dream*, his determination to bring to each disputed point the reasoned voice of scholarship tips him into inadvertent fantasy. Hoping to settle the dispute between Steevens and Ritson on the immortality or otherwise of fairies in the play, Douce comes down firmly in favour of Ritson's 'ingenious and *decisive*' argument for immortality, glossing Titania's reference in Act I sc ii to 'human mortals' as 'merely a pleonasm'.³⁶ Shakespeare, unlike Spenser, did not, Douce goes on, have

³¹ Douce *Illustrations of Shakspeare* 1, p.19.

³² Douce *Illustrations of Shakspeare* 1, p.18.

³³ Douce *Illustrations of Shakspeare* 1, p. 11.

³⁴ Douce *Illustrations of Shakspeare* 1, p. 11.

³⁵ Douce *Illustrations of Shakspeare* 1, p. 23.

³⁶ Douce *Illustrations of Shakspeare* 1, p. 185.

his own particular ‘fairy system’ and the speech should be perfectly clear.³⁷ ‘It is simply the language of a fairy speaking of men.’³⁸ It is a sentence that gives the reader pause. For a moment Douce himself seems to have entered a wood near Athens. The anonymous critic who complained, about a decade later, of the influence of antiquarianism on Shakespearean productions seems not far off the mark in predicting that at this rate there would soon be ‘legitimate authority produced for the dressing of Puck and authenticated wings allotted to Mustardseed’.³⁹

Much of Douce’s discussion of the plays takes this general form of a dialogue, sometimes courteous, sometimes querulous, with his fellow antiquaries. It ranges well beyond those who interested themselves specifically in Shakespeare. Thus on the meaning of ‘wassel’ in *Hamlet*, Act I sc iv, Douce cites Milner’s article in *Archaeologia* of 1794, ‘Observations on an antient cup formerly belonging to the Abbey of Glastonbury’ as an instance of the sort of Saxon vessel that would have been used.⁴⁰ The impression overall is of the whole body of antiquarian knowledge being brought to bear on Shakespeare as the fittest subject for it, being not more obscure than other writers, but ‘much better worth illustrating’.⁴¹ As the book goes on, however, and Douce moves beyond the individual plays to more general discussions his attitude changes.

The article that prefaces the dissertations is ‘On the anachronisms and some other incongruities of Shakspeare’. Here Douce the antiquary finds himself at odds with Douce the admirer of Shakespeare. In his former character he must of course condemn all ‘transgressions against the rules of chronology’.⁴² Like many of his contemporaries he was increasingly critical of Georgian stagings of the plays which took no account of historical dress. Garrick, for all his genius as an actor, played Macbeth ‘in a scarlet coat with broad gold lace like the uniform of a modern general’ while James Quin as Othello wore ‘a flowing powdered periwig’.⁴³ Such ‘absurdity ... or distortion of reality’ was a ‘disgrace’ to the stage and to an age that aspired to

³⁷ Douce *Illustrations of Shakspeare* 1, p. 185.

³⁸ Douce *Illustrations of Shakspeare* 1, p. 185.

³⁹ Quoted in Rosenfeld, ‘The Grieves’, p.109, from an unidentified cutting of a theatre review in the Enthoven Collection at the Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

⁴⁰ Douce *Illustrations of Shakspeare*, 2, p.209.

⁴¹ Douce *Illustrations of Shakspeare*, 1, p. xi.

⁴² Douce *Illustrations of Shakspeare*, 2, p. 281.

⁴³ Douce *Illustrations of Shakspeare*, 2, pp. 282-3.

see the past in its own terms. The logic of this position, however, meant that Douce had to apply the same criteria to Shakespeare himself. Knowing what he did about sixteenth-century drama he could not condone Pope's attempts to attribute the anachronisms to the publishers of the plays. 'Nothing... could have been less judicious' for Shakespeare if not 'more culpable in this respect than most of his contemporaries', nevertheless wrote in an age when antiquarianism was in its infancy and history was to be bent to the tastes and purposes of posterity.⁴⁴

In the notes that follow Douce often sounds like Shakespeare's irritated schoolmaster, pointing out the absurdity of mince-pies in *Troilus and Cressida* or a clock in *Julius Caesar* and, while he is prepared to overlook the Great Bed of Ware in *Twelfth Night* 'because it is referred to as in England' his paragraph on *King Lear* opens with a tetchy: 'We have here a plentiful crop of blunders.'⁴⁵ It is a moot point whether it is Shakespeare or his commentator who is in fact the promised 'object of amusement' at this point.⁴⁶ In the next essay, however, 'On the clowns and fools of Shakespeare', while Douce is critical of Shakespeare's failure to allocate his fools clearly to any of the nine historical categories Douce has worked out for them, his subject matter is so rich and the interdependence of documentary and literary sources so great that the balance shifts again. As Douce interweaves references from Middleton's *Mayor of Quinborough* with Shadwell's *The Woman Captain* and an inventory of goods from the 'ancient company of Saint George at Norwich' in his attempt to determine what fools wore, on and off stage, literature begins to serve antiquarianism.⁴⁷ The very fact that 'former theatrical managers exhibited with fidelity on the stage the manners of their own times' is no longer a fault but an asset, for theatrical records can supply a gap in the history of non-theatrical costume.⁴⁸ Here in the interplay between textual and documentary evidence in Douce's writings and later in Planché's, a new subject emerges. Theatre history is added to the antiquarian repertoire.

⁴⁴ Douce *Illustrations of Shakspeare*, 2, p.284.

⁴⁵ Douce *Illustrations of Shakspeare*, 2, p.295.

⁴⁶ Douce *Illustrations of Shakspeare*, 2, p. 284.

⁴⁷ Douce *Illustrations of Shakspeare*, 2, p. 319.

⁴⁸ Douce *Illustrations of Shakspeare*, 2, p. 317.



Figure 47 Douce's illustrations of fools and their accoutrements

Douce's engagement with Shakespeare is both detailed and abstract. He finds in the plays what best satisfies him as an antiquary, a source of information and a subject for enquiry, but he also has his version of the essential, transcendent Shakespeare. For Douce that transcendence over time was to be achieved by being securely located within it. The drama holds the mirror up not to nature but to history which was, for Douce, perhaps the same thing. He knew and admired John Philip Kemble, who had taken over Covent Garden the year before Douce's book appeared and had been responsible for introducing an unprecedented level of historical accuracy to productions of Shakespeare. Thus, Douce thought, 'by exhibiting to us times as they were' he was able 'to render the stage what it should be, a true and perfect mirror of history and manners'.⁴⁹ This was his version of Herder's 'all illusion is accomplished by means of ... authenticity'. If Coleridge saw in the character of Hamlet a reflection of himself as 'a paralysed romantic', then Douce at Kemble's Covent Garden also saw his own, antiquarian, world-view bodied forth with equally inspiring truthfulness.⁵⁰

⁴⁹ Douce *Illustrations of Shakspeare*, 2, p. 383.

⁵⁰ Bate, *The Romantics on Shakespeare*, p. 1.

In many ways Douce's view of Shakespeare, as both text and performance, was prescient and it was certainly influential, but the immediate reception of his book was severely discouraging. Its several favourable reviews were less prominent than the savaging it received in the *Edinburgh Review*, a particularly extreme, if not untypical, example of Francis Jeffrey's editorial practice. Having commissioned a piece from the lawyer and author Barron Field (1786-1846), who praised Douce's book, Jeffrey, for some reason, possibly a quarrel with Douce's publishers, Longman's, rewrote the article transforming what Douce had been assured was a 'skilful, honourable & gentlemanly'⁵¹ account into a withering attack on 'this petty sort of antiquarianism'.⁵²

Whatever inspired it, it was a thoughtful and well-aimed onslaught not just on Douce but on everything his book represented and it was imbued with social and intellectual condescension that pressed on all the tenderest points of antiquarian feeling. Antiquaries, Jeffrey implied, were presuming, daring to venture beyond the humble subjects that were proper to them in approaching the national poet. Hence 'that miserable erudition, which would otherwise have gone to enrich the Gentleman's Magazine, or to add weight to some county history is in danger of acquiring a more extended reputation'.⁵³ With the romantic-antiquarian contextualising of Shakespeare clearly in his sights Jeffrey picked on a slip in one of Douce's quotations, suggesting that this is what is to be expected of the sort of author who engages with the vulgar vernacular tradition, for 'if a man will stuff his head full of Gammer Gurton and Gabriel Harvey, he will soon find that he has no room for Milton and Virgil'.⁵⁴ There were, he concluded patronisingly, 'many little items of information' that a reader might find useful but overall his message was to warn the lowly, self-taught antiquary off the cultural high ground. 'We remain confirmed in our opinion that the commentators are "a feeble folk" and that they have no business to make their houses in the rocks which support the everlasting monument of Shakspeare.'⁵⁵

⁵¹ The story is told in Christie, *The Edinburgh Review*, p.41.

⁵² Jeffrey, 'Douce's Illustrations of Shakespeare', p.449.

⁵³ Jeffrey, 'Douce's Illustrations of Shakespeare', p.449.

⁵⁴ Jeffrey, 'Douce's Illustrations of Shakespeare', p. 459.

⁵⁵ Jeffrey, 'Douce's Illustrations of Shakespeare', p. 468.

Although Field demanded that his original copy be reinstated his only answer from the *Review* was a draft for ten guineas. Douce's editors and Henry Ellis at the British Museum told Douce what had happened but his literary confidence was shattered. In the theatre, though he was treated more kindly, he also met with demoralising reverses. He advised Kemble on costumes for some of his Shakespeare productions including the Roman plays for which Kemble was most celebrated. The scenery for these, however, as Douce pointed out, was anachronistic as it was based on the architecture of the Empire rather than that of the Republic. He urged Kemble to 'reform it altogether'.⁵⁶ It was on this occasion, as Douce relayed the story (told here in Chapter 1) to Planché, that Kemble tactlessly complained that if he did that he would be called an antiquary.

James Robinson Planché: enter an antiquary

James Robinson Planché belonged to a younger generation than Douce. Still a child when Douce's *Illustrations* were published Planché was, as he acknowledged, Douce's protégé and intellectual heir. A Londoner of Huguenot descent, the son of a watchmaker, Planché's long career in the theatre began in about 1818 when he was acting in private productions. That year he wrote his first play, *Amoroso, King of Little Britain*, a 'Serio-Comick, Bombastick, Operatick Interlude'. Two years later *The Vampire or the Bride of the Isles*, an adaptation of a French melodrama at the Lyceum, brought him critical success and introduced the popular stage effect known as the 'vampire trap'. The immensely prolific author of about 180 plays, farces and, his speciality, extravaganzas, Planché was also a librettist, impresario and sometime manager of Vauxhall Gardens. From 1822 to 1828 he was the house playwright for Charles Kemble at Covent Garden. Through the 1820s his interest in the history of dress and stage costume developed and in 1829 he was elected a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries. His antiquarian

⁵⁶ Planché, *Recollections*, 1, p.54.

and theatrical activities continued to preoccupy him about equally for some decades, but in the end antiquarianism won out and he ended his life as Somerset Herald.

Planché's career spanned the transition from the age of private collections and individual scholarship to that of public institutions and professional curatorship. In 1843 he was a founder member of the British Archaeological Association, to which he remained loyal after the great split, and in the 1860s he re-ordered the armoury at the Tower of London and arranged Samuel Rush Meyrick's collections of armour for display at the South Kensington Museum. Planché's was a humorous and agreeable temperament. He found in the prickly Douce a 'dear old man'⁵⁷ who was generous in his loans of books to the aspiring antiquary and in the bombastic John Britton a friend 'who had always an encouraging word and a helping hand for rising youth or struggling age'.⁵⁸ While much of Planché's work on Shakespeare was a development of Douce's, the trajectory of his career was the exact opposite. Douce's researches led him from his study to the green room, where, as his encounter with Kemble suggests, he was a somewhat incongruous and not entirely welcome figure. Planché who had an easier passage in his journey from theatre to library might be said to meet Douce as they passed at the stage door. The suggestion that it was Planché's existing 'standing as an antiquarian' that somehow 'authorised' his productions of Shakespeare misrepresents the order of events.⁵⁹

Both as a playwright and as an antiquary Planché's career was an expression of popular taste and was to some extent a product of it. If he was more successful than Douce in introducing historically accurate costumes to the stage, and if he made fuller use of Shakespeare and other literary sources, as a basis for an historical study of dress, that was largely because he belonged to the rising generation among whom the appetite for history was keener. Moreover in the theatre, in addition to the general enthusiasm for the past that swept through art and literature, the successively larger buildings at Covent Garden and Drury Lane bred 'the rage for melodrama and spectacle' which were in turn 'productive... of a still greater spirit of inquiry into ancient

⁵⁷ Planché, *Recollections*, 1, p.54.

⁵⁸ Planché, *Recollections*, 1, p.130.

⁵⁹ Watson, 'Kemble, Scott, and the Mantle of the Bard', p. 75. Watson also conflates the careers of John Philip and Charles Kemble.

manners and habits' to fill the larger stages with scenery and vary the costumes for longer processions and bigger crowd scenes.⁶⁰

Planché's greatest contribution to the process was, by his own account, persuading Charles Kemble to mount historically authentic productions of Shakespeare's history plays at Covent Garden, starting with *King John* in 1823. This remains his most widely-acknowledged legacy but, as has been pointed out, such productions remained relatively rare both in Planché's work and for some time in the repertoire in general.⁶¹ Moreover by the mid-century, when Charles Kean was putting on much more thoroughly historicised stagings of Shakespeare, Planché was showing signs of ambivalence about over-researched costumes and settings which weighed the drama down with 'gems culled from authority by taste'.⁶² As innovative as his *King John* was his production in 1844 of *The Taming of the Shrew* at the Haymarket Theatre, done with scarcely any scenery at all. A closer consideration of Planché's work makes it clear, however, that far from being paradoxical that he should have embraced such apparent extremes, they were in fact two aspects of the same endeavour. Planché, like Douce, indeed like Coleridge, whose criticism 'shifts uneasily between historicism and atemporality', was seeking out that elusive ground on which authenticity and illusion, the Shakespeare of history and the Shakespeare of eternity might meet.⁶³

In his *Recollections and Reflections* of 1872, an autobiography which, if it is generous to others, at times rivals Britton's in its generosity to the author, Planché gives himself full credit as the 'original cause' of a 'complete reformation of dramatic costume... upon the English stage'.⁶⁴ In fact the movement towards historical dress had been initiated, as Douce wrote, by John Philip Kemble and, as Jeffrey pointed out in his review of Douce, Charles Macklin could be said to have begun the process with his historical costume as Shylock as early as 1768. It had, however, been a piecemeal business. In many plays some characters wore historic dress and others modern and John Philip Kemble's re-dressing of Shakespeare had concentrated on the Roman plays. The

⁶⁰ Planché, 'History of Stage Costume', p. 173. See also, Kelly *The Kemble Era*, for a full account of the effect of larger theatres on the nature and staging of the repertoire.

⁶¹ See, Reinhardt, 'The Costume Designs of James Robinson Planché'.

⁶² Quoted in Wells, 'Shakespeare in Planché's Extravaganzas', p.114.

⁶³ Bate, *The Romantics on Shakespeare*, p. 17.

⁶⁴ Planché, *Recollections*, 1, p.57.

general prejudice in favour of classical subjects had left the history plays little altered and the changes Kemble had made ‘while they rendered them more picturesque added but little to their propriety’ as Planché noted, ‘the whole series, King Lear included, being dressed in habits of the Elizabethan era’.⁶⁵ To Planché, although he had at that point turned his attention ‘but little’ to the subject it was self-evident that:

Some change of fashion must have taken place in the civil and military habits of the people of England during several hundred years...It was not requisite to be an antiquary to see the absurdity of the soldiers before Angiers, at the beginning of the thirteenth century, being clothed precisely the same as those fighting at Bosworth at the end of the fifteenth.⁶⁶

The fact was indeed obvious, but what had changed since Douce’s day was that it was now a fact that mattered, anachronism had become absurdity. Among the general public, audiences and men of the theatre like Planché, the awareness of history had reached a point where historical inaccuracy interfered with the suspension of disbelief, as it had not done for their parents. Charles Kemble was persuaded that this was so and moreover, with that professional realism that so repelled Jeffrey, he ‘perceived the pecuniary advantage that might result from the experiment’.⁶⁷ Whereupon Planché remembered that ‘*gratuitously*...solely and purely for that love of the stage, which has ever induced me to sacrifice all personal considerations to what I sincerely believed would tend to elevate as well as adorn it’,⁶⁸ he embarked on what was to become his ‘most absorbing study’ of costume history.⁶⁹ With the assistance of Douce and Samuel Rush Meyrick and in the teeth of opposition from Mr Fawcett the stage manager as well as many of the cast who looked askance at the tin-plate replicas of medieval helmets, ‘which they irreverently stigmatized as stewpans!’ Planché designed costumes based on authentic models either observed at first hand or culled from antiquarian publications.⁷⁰ When at last the curtain rose:

⁶⁵ Planché, *Recollections*, 1, p.52.

⁶⁶ Planché, *Recollections*, 1, p.52.

⁶⁷ Planché, *Recollections*, 1, p.53.

⁶⁸ Planché, *Recollections*, 1, pp.53-54.

⁶⁹ Planché, *Recollections*, 1, p.52.

⁷⁰ Planché, *Recollections*, 1, p.56.

It discovered King John dressed as his effigy appears in Worcester Cathedral, surrounded by his barons sheathed in mail, with cylindrical helmets and correct armorial shields, and his courtiers in the long tunics and mantles of the thirteenth century, there was a roar of applause, so general and so hearty, that the actors were astonished...Receipts of from 400l to 600l nightly soon reimbursed the management for the expense.⁷¹

If the consequences were not quite as far-reaching and instant as Planché later claimed, it was certainly the case that the antiquarian approach now established itself as artistically valid and commercially profitable in the presentation of Shakespeare. This dialogue between theatre and antiquarianism was taken to a wider audience when the designs for *King John* were published immediately after the first performance with ‘biographical, critical and explanatory notices’ by Planché.⁷² In the notes Planché binds literary and antiquarian tradition together with epigraphs from Shakespeare and Chaucer and a quotation from Camden. The Chaucer in particular serves to bolster the antiquarian interest in customs and manners as an adjunct to the exposition of character:

Me thinketh it accordant to reson
To tellen you alle the condition
Of eche of hem, so as it semed to me,
And which they weren of what degree;
And eke in what araie that they were in.⁷³

Planché has, he explains, taken Camden’s advice and looked for ‘authorities’ for his costumes among tomb effigies, tapestries, royal seals and stained glass windows. His secondary sources are Douce and Meyrick, Gough and Stothard. He also considers the evidence of the King’s clothing as recovered from his body during the opening of his tomb in 1797.⁷⁴ This was perhaps the closest that antiquarian research could, or should, come to its source material. At the same time Planché’s notes are constantly making judgements that balance theatrical effect against authenticity. Almost none of his costumes were direct copies. The second costume for the King was based on his great seal, impressions of which, Planché explains, are ‘affixed to one

⁷¹ Planché, *Recollections*, 1, p.55.

⁷² Planché, *Costume of Shakespeare’s historical tragedy King John*.

⁷³ Planché, *Costume of Shakespeare’s historical tragedy King John*, epigraph.

⁷⁴ See *Making History*, p.97.

grant in Sir John Cotton's library; and to two in the chamber of the Duchy of Lancaster' which show different styles of helmet.⁷⁵ Having taken such trouble to establish the correctness of his source, however, Planché duly discards both forms of headgear in favour of a crown and '*coif de mailles*' as this is 'equally correct, and far better adapted for representation on the stage', presumably because it made the actor's face more visible.⁷⁶

On Shakespeare's own mistakes, which caused Douce such pain and irritation, Planché is pragmatic. He dresses Arthur as a child because it makes sense of the action even though, by this date, the historic Arthur was a young man, who had been 'knighted, married and commanded an army'.⁷⁷ By the same token he snaps up tempting irrelevances such as the costume shown in Stothard's drawing of an enamel depicting Geoffrey Plantagenet, who has no part in *King John*. Nevertheless Planché 'could not resist introducing this splendid and most picturesque costume' and he allots it to Chatillon, as 'an ambassador was the very person to display it with propriety'.⁷⁸ On the anachronistic presence of Leopold, Duke of Austria in the drama, Planché is content merely to remark that such errors 'are sufficiently notorious'.⁷⁹ The play, for Planché, was the thing. But like Douce he also saw Shakespeare as a source and a framework for his research. He published costume designs for several more of the history plays, not all of which seem to have been produced, and planned to complete an entire history of costume based on literary sources filling in:

The gaps which Shakespeare's plays may leave in particular ages, with illustrations of the best dramatic productions, ancient or modern, embracing those periods, and thereby to form a complete chain of authorities, for the civil and military costume of every nation, at every period... from the earliest ages, down to the present century, an attempt to which he has been invited and encouraged by one of the first antiquarians in this kingdom, whose advice and assistance he is proud to acknowledge.⁸⁰

It was no doubt Douce who was encouraging him to fulfil a project that was implicit in his own *Illustrations*.

⁷⁵ Planché, *Costume of Shakespeare's historical tragedy King John*, p. 14.

⁷⁶ Planché, *Costume of Shakespeare's historical tragedy King John*, p. 14.

⁷⁷ Planché, *Costume of Shakespeare's historical tragedy King John*, p. 30.

⁷⁸ Planché, *Costume of Shakespeare's historical tragedy King John*, p. 32.

⁷⁹ Planché, *Costume of Shakespeare's historical tragedy King John*, p. 35.

⁸⁰ Planché, *Costume of Shakespeare's historical tragedy King John*, p. 4.

Not surprisingly perhaps this ambitious scheme did not materialise in full. Over the next two decades, however, Planché pursued his studies and developed his career through a period when historical realism grew increasingly popular in the largest theatres and theatrical pageants and costume balls carried the drama off the stage, until the interpenetration of art and life was almost complete. The smaller theatres tried to keep up with the patent holders and antiquaries accordingly kept their eye on the stage. At the Coburg theatre, where a melodrama of the Battle of Hastings was billed with a ‘long and imposing’ list of authorities for its costumes Planché, who had taken a box in order to observe the competition, was interested to see ‘in the very centre of the pit, a most conspicuous object amongst the dingy denizens of the New Cut and St George’s Fields...the snow-white powdered head of the learned and highly respected Dr Coombe, the Keeper of the Medals at the British Museum’.⁸¹

In May 1825 Kemble sent Planché to Rheims to observe the coronation of Charles X, a ceremony designed to recreate the medieval ceremonies that had legitimated the Bourbon line through history. From Paris, where he was accorded ‘every facility ...of inspecting the regalia, the royal robes, the state dresses of the great officers, the magnificent uniforms of the “Cent Suisses” etc’, he went on to Rheims for the ceremony itself.⁸² He then hurried back to London with his notes and on 19 July Covent Garden put on ‘The Pageant of the Coronation of Charles X’. Thus a real antiquarian event, based on historic precedent, became an antiquarian drama based on recent history; past and present, art and documentary mirrored one another in a production in which it would be particularly hard to draw the line between truth and illusion, reality and representation. Having once put a living king on stage, it was a perhaps a natural progression for Planché, some years later in 1842, to turn a real monarch into an historical one. For the royal costume ball at which Queen Victoria and Prince Albert decided to appear as Queen Philippa and Edward III, Planché was called in to advise and dressed them and the most important of the guests. Letting daylight in on majesty was, he recalled, a delicate business, not least because daylight required another standard of realism from limelight. Planché had some trouble convincing the Earl of Cardigan that on this side of the footlights he would need real

⁸¹ Planché, *Recollections*, 1, p. 60.

⁸² Planché, *Recollections*, 1, p.65.

armour and that the spangled pantaloons he had obtained from a theatrical costumier in response to an order for chain mail would not do.

It is not surprising perhaps that in the years between his first *King John* and Victoria's *bal costumé* Planché increasingly came to see costume as history and history itself as the story of dress. In the introduction to the *History of British Costume* which he published in 1834 he wrote that 'the true spirit of the times is in nothing more perceptible than in the tone given to our most trifling amusements', a tone raised in the theatre in recent decades he believed by 'the research, intelligence, and industry' of those authors who had made historical studies popular.⁸³ Although they fall outside the scope of this discussion, it should be remembered that the improvements in costume had been matched by parallel developments in scenery and props. At Covent Garden the Grieve family were responsible for settings which enhanced Planché's and others' costumes and 'enraptured their contemporaries' with the mixture of antiquarian detail and spectacular effect.⁸⁴ A striking instance of the truth of Planché's claims for the increasingly educated taste of audiences was the Grieves' designs for Charles Kemble's 1831 production of *Henry VIII*, in which the west front of Westminster Abbey appeared as it looked in 1533, that is without the towers, which were added by Hawksmoor in the eighteenth century and would by then have been noticed and objected to as an anachronism.⁸⁵

By the same token, in Planché's account, the study of dress was valuable not only for its improving effects on the theatre but in itself, for it 'sheds light upon manners and rectifies dates, stamps the various events and eras in the most natural and vivid colours indelibly on the memory'.⁸⁶ This claim to popular acceptance was amply demonstrated by the fact that his *History* was published as a modestly priced volume in Charles Knight's Library of Entertaining Knowledge, 'Under the supervision of the society for the diffusion of useful knowledge', proof in itself that 'the days are gone by when archaeological pursuits were little more than the harmless but valueless recreations of the aged and the idle'.⁸⁷ Now 'the historian, the poet, the

⁸³ Planché, *History of British Costume*, p.xi.

⁸⁴ Rosenfeld, 'The Grieves', p.111.

⁸⁵ Rosenfeld, 'The Grieves', p.109.

⁸⁶ Planché, *History of British Costume*, p.xi.

⁸⁷ Planché, *History of British Costume*, p.xi.

novelist, the painter, and the actor, have discovered in attention to costume a new spring of information and a fresh source of effect'.⁸⁸ Thus the artist and the scholar, the creator and the recreator are, by this account, joined in a single endeavour.

Two years later Planché considered that endeavour again, in another of Knight's publications, *The Book of Table Talk*, to which he contributed an essay on the 'History of Stage Costume'. Here again Shakespeare was, by whatever far-fetched or comic association, the ultimate and superhuman point of reference:

If Stratford-upon-Avon be the Mecca of our dramatic world, Dunstable may surely be called the Medina, -the second sacred city in the estimation of the zealous play-goer; not that Shakspeare fled thither from the vengeance of Sir Thomas Lucy, *his* Abu Sophian...but because the little town of Bedfordshire, which is only famous in Gazetteers for the manufacture of straw hats and pillow-lace, has the honour of furnishing us with the earliest precise information concerning an English play and English theatrical wardrobe, through the medium of Matthew Paris.⁸⁹

And thus another new subject emerged, for although both Malone and John Payne Collier (1789-1883) had published details of historic theatrical costumes, Planché's seems to have been the first attempt to form a complete narrative of costume history, as a parallel to his history of dress.

Like Douce, however, Planché reached a point where the desire to praise Shakespeare, by setting his work in context, had to be balanced against the danger of burying him under historical detail. In his case it led to an apparent volte-face, the rejection to a great extent of the authenticity for which he had so long campaigned. Again as with Douce this was connected with the turn from Shakespeare as subject, to Shakespeare as source, and rather than any real change of purpose it should be seen as the exchange of one kind of authenticity for another, arguably more sophisticated, which Planché came to prefer. The shift came in 1843, when, after a campaign in which Planché had been active, the Theatre Regulation Act was passed. This removed the monopoly of the Patent holders, allowing Shakespeare and other spoken drama to be put on in any theatre. Sadlers Wells and in particular the Princess's Theatre under the management of Charles Kean, went on to base their new repertoire on Shakespearean

⁸⁸ Planché, *History of British Costume*, p.xi.

⁸⁹ Planché, *History of Stage Costume*, p.143.

productions, with Kean taking historical realism to unprecedented levels of antiquarian literalism. Kean's first production of this sort went on, soon after the passage of the act, at Drury Lane, where his *Richard III* opened in January 1844. In March and April of that year Planché mounted two dramatic critiques of Kean's approach, one explicit and the other implicit. He himself had left Covent Garden, for which he had been writing exclusively for three years, taking advantage of the Act, as he saw it, to escape from the commercial pressure to fill the huge auditorium at the expense of artistic concerns. He went to the Haymarket as stock author and one of his first productions there was *The Taming of the Shrew* which opened in March.

Planché was responsible for the scenery, costumes and the editing of the text for which he wanted to restore Shakespeare's original, in place of Garrick's adaptation, *Katherine and Petruchio*, which was still the usual performance version. To carry off this innovation, or restoration, Planché took the next logical step towards seeing Shakespeare in his time, by extending his antiquarian study of theatre history into his own practice as a dramatist. Rather than seek out a realistic, that is illusionistic, setting, he preserved Sly's Induction and dressed the rest of the action as a play within a play, performed by actors in Elizabethan costume. There were only two sets, the exterior of the tavern from which Sly is expelled and the Lord's Bedchamber in which the players perform. The restoration of the Induction, 'this gem', gave Planché as much 'pride and satisfaction' as anything in his career⁹⁰ and was 'eminently successful', by his account, 'proving that a good play, well acted, will carry the audience along with it...and in this case also, remember, it was a comedy in *five* acts, without the curtain once falling during the performance'.⁹¹ This was perhaps, another exaggeration for he seems to have had few immediate followers in this approach, but it is indicative of the direction that Planché and some at least of the public were prepared to take in the pursuit of the true and historic Shakespeare.

A month later, on 8 April 1844, also at the Haymarket, in his *The Drama at Home* Planché set out the argument behind his *Taming of the Shrew* in a skit on the Patent Theatres, the Regulation Act and what he hoped would be its beneficial influence in rescuing Shakespeare

⁹⁰ Planché, *Recollections*, 2, p.86.

⁹¹ Planché, *Recollections*, 2, p. 85.

from meretricious commercial productions. In this, not for the last time, Planché's sensitivity towards the Shakespeare of history was no bar to his making free with his characters and even his person for comic effect. His extravaganzas and burlesques were steeped in Shakespearean allusion and the contrast between historic authenticity, to which the audience was now accustomed, and modern dialogue gave added effect the satire.⁹² The characters on this occasion include 'The Drama (*in extremis*)', 'Ophelia (*quite crazy, and no wonder*)' and Puff, from Sheridan's *The Critic*, played by Charles Mathews.⁹³ Puff, represents not only the drama of the previous century, but also his creator Sheridan as the commercially voracious manager of Covent Garden. Planché's Puff is full of money-making ideas to save the theatre at the expense of the Drama. He suggests aquatic acts, particularly suitable for Ophelia, mesmerism, which could be tried on Lady Macbeth and Juliet, ('I've spoken to both those ladies on the subject –they...have offered themselves as subjects for experiment'), and other projects equally unappealing to the drooping Drama.⁹⁴ At last he casts her into a trance in which she is shown Drury Lane Theatre 'the stage is seen with a tableau from the play of *Richard III*, as lately performed there'. Drama briefly revives, only to be disillusioned once again.⁹⁵

Drama. Vision of glory! –I'm at Drury Lane

With Shakespeare, –"Richard is himself again!"

Puff. I told you so

Statue of Shakespeare over the portico. Awake!

Beware of fibbers!

That Richard's none of mine –'Tis Colley Cibbers!

[*portico closes –lights up*]

Drama. Hah! [*starts up*]

Puff. Rot that Shakespeare, he always speaks the truth! I wonder what the devil they stuck him up there for. There was a leaden Apollo with a lyre in his hand on the top of the old building-much more appropriate to the new one.⁹⁶

In bringing Shakespeare himself on stage to put his own case, Planché makes him a mouthpiece for the romantic antiquarian account of his work; truthful, speaking for the native not

⁹² See Wells, 'Shakespeare in Planché's Extravaganzas'.

⁹³ Planché, *The Drama at Home*, Dramatis Personae.

⁹⁴ Planché, *The Drama at Home*, p.8.

⁹⁵ Planché, *The Drama at Home*, p.9.

⁹⁶ Planché, *The Drama at Home*, p. 9.

the classical tradition, the patron of high drama, traduced by later alterations. Planché clearly expected his audience to be familiar enough by now with this line of argument to follow it in such abbreviated form and to spot ‘Richard is himself again’ as Cibber’s line, in the way that they could be relied upon to have spotted Hawksmoor’s additions to Westminster Abbey. Kean’s production, it is implied, puts historic details before textual essentials. It would be some time, however, before Cibber’s *Richard III* lost its currency (Laurence Olivier kept the line in the film of 1955) and Planché was soon to be one of the many who were disappointed by the effects of the 1843 Act. At this point, however, he was still optimistic. In *The Drama at Home* Shakespeare’s dispossessed characters are restored. Ariel rescues Othello, who has been reduced to advertising Warren’s blacking and Macbeth, who was modelling as a Highlander (another figure whose misappropriation owed much to antiquarianism) outside a cigar shop. In a second transformation scene the stage of the Haymarket appears, with Katherine and Petruchio from Planché’s recent production on it; a stage within a stage, showing a play within a play, the tableau represents the kernel of authenticity within the mirroring layers of illusion. This was the heart of Planché’s later understanding of Shakespeare, his comic representation of the essential Ding an Sich, where Drama finds she has ‘indeed a home then found! From which she ne’er will move’.⁹⁷

Walter Scott and ‘a Sensible Shakespeare’

If the study of Shakespeare was the apotheosis of romantic antiquarianism, then in Scott’s relationship with Shakespeare, both the man and his works, is to be found its quintessence. Scott’s writings are saturated with Shakespearean references, the British theatre of his lifetime was saturated with Scott, and antiquarianism gave a pervading tone and colouring to both. Dramatised versions of the Waverley novels, as plays and ballets, often appeared within weeks of the books themselves. In 1820 one of Planché’s first productions was an adaptation of

⁹⁷ Planché, *The Drama at Home*, p. 18.

Kenilworth, the novel in which Shakespeare appears as a character, at the Adelphi Theatre. One of at least sixteen stage versions, Planché's opened less than a month after *Kenilworth* was published.⁹⁸ There were Shakespearean connections too between Scott and Douce, who knew one another personally. Scott sent his fellow antiquary an encouraging letter about his 'curious and interesting' *Illustrations of Shakspeare* with some additional information on fools 'half-crazy and half-knavish' who had within living memory been, Scott told him, a familiar presence in aristocratic Scottish households.⁹⁹

Scott from time to time considered producing his own edition of Shakespeare, or contributing a 'Life and Times' to a collaborative edition. Neither materialised, but in discussing the possibilities with his publisher Archibald Constable he advocated a 'sensible Shakespeare in which the useful & readable notes should be condensed and separated from the trash'.¹⁰⁰ What that might have meant in practice is suggested by Scott's friendship with John Philip Kemble, with whom he had more success than Douce in offering advice on costume. Scott believed complete authenticity to be neither possible nor desirable in the theatre any more than in his fictions. 'It is sufficient,' he wrote in his *Life of Kemble*, 'if everything be avoided which can recall modern associations, and as much of the antique be assumed as will at once harmonize with the purpose of the exhibition and in so far awaken recollections of the days of yore as to give an air of truth to the scene'.¹⁰¹ Nevertheless, as he liked to recall, Scott had assisted Kemble with *Macbeth*, 'one of the first plays in which the better system of costume was adopted' in which the actor had been accustomed to wear 'the highland dress', or at least a version of it, accoutred with a bonnet topped with 'sundry huge bunches of black feathers which made it look like an undertaker's cushion'.¹⁰² Scott removed these and replaced them with a single eagle's feather 'sloping across his noble brow' which, the actor later told him, 'was worth to him three distinct rounds of applause'.¹⁰³

⁹⁸ Ford, *Dramatisations of Scott's Novels*, p.27.

⁹⁹ Scott to Douce, 9 February 1808, Scott, *Letters*, 2, p.16.

¹⁰⁰ Scott to Constable, 25 February 1822, Scott, *Letters*, 7, p.79.

¹⁰¹ Scott, 'Life of John Philip Kemble', p.226.

¹⁰² Scott, 'Life of John Philip Kemble', p.226.

¹⁰³ Scott, 'Life of John Philip Kemble', p.226.

In other words Scott applied the same principles to Shakespeare that he applied in his own writings where, as discussed earlier, he used history modernised and clarified sufficiently to reconcile what was historically authentic in his material with contemporary taste. He met his readers on ground where, while all was, according to Hazlitt, ‘new and startling’ yet, as in Planché’s *King John*, all was comprehensible and there was therefore a ‘general air’ rather than a literal representation of truth.¹⁰⁴ The effect, as Hazlitt describes it, is very much what Herder and Schlegel describe in advocating an historical view of Shakespeare, the accumulation of fact in the service of ‘romance’ until ‘Nothing is wanting –the illusion is complete’.¹⁰⁵ A great deal has been written about the relationship between Scott and Shakespeare and most of it lies beyond the scope of this thesis.¹⁰⁶ What is of concern here is the reciprocity that Scott and his contemporaries perceived between the two as authors which, in turn, became involved with that other antiquarian project, the creation of a personality, a home and a face for the Bard, a living, individual William Shakespeare who was ‘sensible’ in every way, knowable as a man, feeling, breathing and responsive.

It was Scott himself, for all his later disclaimers, who first made the comparison in an anonymous review of his own book, *Tales of my Landlord*, in the journal he had helped to found, the *Quarterly Review*, in 1817.¹⁰⁷ ‘The characters of Shakspeare are not more exclusively human, not more perfectly men and women as they live and move, than those of this mysterious author’ he wrote.¹⁰⁸ Despite being an abuse of editorial privilege on a par with Jeffrey’s at the rival *Edinburgh Review*, Scott’s assessment of his work was not far removed from his contemporaries’. The romantic critics’ ‘supremely empathetic’ approach to Shakespeare celebrated him as the creator of individual characters from every walk of life, embodying both the essence of human nature and at the same time, the expression of another age.¹⁰⁹ The analogy with Scott was natural and Hazlitt was not unconscious of the parallels indeed he made them explicit.

¹⁰⁴ Hazlitt, *The Spirit of the Age*, p.104.

¹⁰⁵ Hazlitt, *The Spirit of the Age*, p.107.

¹⁰⁶ Most recently Garbin, ‘“Not fit to ties his brogues”’ which gives an account of the literature.

¹⁰⁷ See Garbin, ‘“Not fit to ties his brogues”’, p.142.

¹⁰⁸ Quoted in Garbin, ‘“Not fit to ties his brogues”’, p.142.

¹⁰⁹ Bate, *The Romantics on Shakespeare*, p.8.

Sir Walter has found out... that there is no romance like the romance of real life, and that if we can but arrive at what men feel, do, and say in striking and singular situations, the result will be “more lively, audible, and full of vent” than the fine-spun cobwebs of the brain...Our author has conjured up the actual people he has to deal with...in “their habits as they lived”...ransacked old chronicles... invoked the spirits of the air...and...has enriched his own genius with everlasting variety, truth and freedom.¹¹⁰

If the quotation from *Coriolanus* is not entirely flattering in its implications, it is nevertheless an embedding of Shakespeare within Scott, while the reference to Ben Jonson’s *The Fortunate Isles* further attaches him, and specifically his antiquarian interest in ‘manners and customs’ to the greatest ‘olden times’ of English literature.

Two years after Hazlitt’s essay was published Scott formally announced his authorship of the Waverley novels in a speech to the Edinburgh Theatrical Fund, in which he identified himself with two Shakespearean characters, Macbeth, ‘another Scottish criminal of more consequence’ and Prospero, ‘it is your breath that has filled my sails’.¹¹¹ In public he left it to others to identify him with Shakespeare himself, which they did a few weeks later as Scott recorded in his journal. In a revival of James Townley’s comedy, *High Life Below Stairs*, during the exchange on the subject of ‘Shikspur’, Lady Bab’s favourite author, in which ‘Kitty’ asks ‘who wrote it’ and gets the answers ‘Ben Jonson’ and ‘Finis’, the actor William Murray settled the dispute with an ad lib: “It is Sir Walter Scott; he confessed it at a public meeting the other day.”¹¹² The joke was based on the real and widespread comparison which persisted to the mid-century and saw Scott, after his death, enshrined with Shakespeare in the literary pantheon. Thomas Faed’s painting, [fig: 48] is thought to have been conceived as a pendant to his brother John’s [fig: 45] which it mirrors. The authors are drawn into sympathy as individuals, the Scott of living memory bringing the Shakespeare of history nearer to the present.

¹¹⁰ Hazlitt, *The Spirit of the Age*, p. 107.

¹¹¹ Quoted in Garbin, “Not fit to ties his brogues”, p.141.

¹¹² Scott, *Journal*, p. 323.



Figure 48 Walter Scott and his Literary Friends at Abbotsford by Thomas Faed, 1849

Scott's own identification with Shakespeare expressed itself less directly. In a letter of 1822 to Heinrich Voss, on the question of annotations, and possibly with Douce in mind, he wrote that the 'great fault' of many commentators was that:

They must & will have everything completely & accurately explained [sic] without considering that Shakespeare like all other poets who write in a hurry very frequently uses a form of words the meaning of which is clear enough when the full sentence is considered although it may be very difficult to dissect the sentence grammatically and apply the special and separate meaning to each branch or word in it.¹¹³

Scott, who always wrote in such a hurry that Hazlitt wondered if he ever re-read his work, is clearly here aligned with the author against the antiquaries. It was an antiquarian enterprise, however, the cast of Shakespeare's memorial bust, undertaken by John Britton, which allowed Scott the fullest scope for empathy with the person of Shakespeare, establishing the Bard as one of the most resonant of the gabions in the memory theatre of Abbotsford.

By 1814 the search for an adequate image of Shakespeare had already been a long one. The greatest sculptors of the eighteenth-century, Roubiliac, Rysbrack, Cheere and Scheemakers

¹¹³ Scott to Heinrich Voss, March/April 1822, Scott, *Letters*, 12, p.450.

had created monuments for Garrick's Shakespeare Temple, for Stratford-on-Avon, Westminster Abbey and various private collections. These portrait busts and statues were, however, much developed from the tomb effigy and the Droeshout engraving, improved to accord with a predominantly classical taste, like Cibber and Garrick's versions of the plays. For the next generation of antiquaries, who unearthed the original texts, adjusted Macbeth's bonnet and opened King John's tomb, this would not do. Britton called them 'caricature statues'.¹¹⁴ A more authentic image was an imperative. The Stratford monument, however aesthetically unsatisfactory was more acceptable, both historically and emotionally. It was as Britton put it in his *Autobiography*, 'a family record' and 'as a memorial raised by the affection and esteem of relatives... This invaluable "Effigy"' was :

Attested by tradition, consecrated by time, and preserved in the inviolability of its own simplicity and sacred station. It was evidently executed immediately after the poet's decease; and probably under the superintendence of his son-in-law, Dr Hall, and of his daughter; the latter of whom, according to her epitaph, was "witty above her sexe", and therein resembled her father.¹¹⁵

As Britton moves unhesitatingly from the bust to its commissioning a narrative begins, a family group gathers round the tomb, with Britton himself among them. Yet the bust has, he adds, been either neglected 'or treated slightly or superciliously' by previous Shakespeare scholars, the worst of whom in this regard was Malone, who whitewashed it.¹¹⁶ 'In this very act', Britton thought 'our zealous annotator has passed an irrevocable sentence on his own judgment.'¹¹⁷

Britton, who states with embarrassing candour the extent to which his own 'personal acts and literary tributes' to Shakespeare 'have been wholly neglected by the generality of Commentators on the works of the Bard of Avon' no doubt felt by 1849 a certain protective sympathy for the unjustly overlooked bust.¹¹⁸ In 1814, however, he was filled with antiquarian enthusiasm for 'the most authentic and genuine Portrait' as well as a (misplaced) confidence in

¹¹⁴ Britton, *Autobiography*, (1850), Appendix, p. 22.

¹¹⁵ Britton, *Autobiography*, (1850), Appendix, p. 12.

¹¹⁶ Britton, *Autobiography*, (1850), Appendix, p. 13.

¹¹⁷ Britton, *Autobiography*, (1850), Appendix, p. 14.

¹¹⁸ Britton, *Autobiography*, (1850), Appendix, p. 4.

the commercial possibilities of casts and engravings of it.¹¹⁹ He persuaded the antiquary and furniture maker George Bullock to take a cast, in the course of which Bullock was convinced that he saw on the face ‘evident signs’ that it was taken from either a life or death mask, bringing it still closer to the physical presence of Shakespeare himself.¹²⁰ Once back in London Bullock invited Britton to a celebratory breakfast viewing at his home in Tenterden Street off Hanover Square, with Scott, Benjamin West and Dr J C Spurzheim, one of the pioneers of phrenology. The cast was ‘deeply scrutinized and commented on’.¹²¹ West endorsed the view that it was taken from life, while Scott’s conversation brought it to life.

The Scotch Poet...seemed to have known him; to have lived and breathed in the same atmosphere with him; to have drank of the same sack with him at the “The Mermaid” in company with Jonson, Beaumont, Selden, and the rest of the glorious fraternity who conferred immortality on that famous hostel. Oh, that I possessed the capacious and retentive memory of the Scotch Novelist!¹²²

For once the reader too regrets that Britton cannot supply more detail. It would be interesting to know how and how far Scott inserted himself into the narrative, for that he did so was clear, and that his comments on the works spun, like Britton’s into an account of Shakespeare’s life and personality. He could repeat ‘almost every striking passage in the plays and poems... and applied many of them to characterize their author’.¹²³ Of the bust itself Scott said less, indeed he ‘scarcely noticed’ it at first, his chief remark being a suggestion that the length of the top lip seemed ‘unnatural’ and must be a mistake.¹²⁴ Bullock, however, pointed out that Scott’s features were in this regard identical, using compasses to prove his point. That same morning Bullock took a cast of Scott’s head, ‘the first he sat for’.¹²⁵

Scott carried a copy of the Stratford bust back to Scotland. In Edinburgh he found it improved on acquaintance:

¹¹⁹ Britton, *Autobiography*, (1850), Appendix, p.6.

¹²⁰ Britton, *Autobiography*, (1850), Appendix, p.6.

¹²¹ Britton, *Autobiography*, (1850), Appendix, p.7.

¹²² Britton, *Autobiography*, (1850), Appendix, p.7.

¹²³ Britton, *Autobiography*, (1850), Appendix, p.8.

¹²⁴ Britton, *Autobiography*, (1850), Appendix, p.8.

¹²⁵ Britton, *Autobiography*, (1850), Appendix, p. 9.

The more I look at it the more I feel that it must have resembled the Bard much more than any of the ordinary prints, unless it be that in the first folio edition, which has all the appearance of being taken from it. The forehead is more expanded, and has not a narrow, peaked, and priggish look inconsistent with the dignity of Shakespeare's character, and which strongly marks all the ordinary portraits.¹²⁶

Scott was willing to read the mind's construction in the face, unlike Wordsworth, who wrote, in a tactful but tepid letter of thanks on receipt of a copy of the engraving Britton commissioned of the cast that, 'the mighty genius of Shakspere [sic] would have placed any record of his physiognomy under considerable disadvantages for who could shape out to himself features and a countenance that would appear worthy of such a mind'.¹²⁷ It would be unfair to suggest that Scott was so jejune as to like the bust more because he had found it resembled himself, but he clearly warmed to it and it took on a profound associative resonance.

George Bullock made a special cabinet for it to stand on when it was enshrined at Abbotsford. In this, Scott kept the 'small unadorned snuff-box' one of many made from the Stratford mulberry tree said to be Shakespeare's.¹²⁸ This one had the additional interest of having belonged to Garrick and had been given to Scott by the actor Robert Bensley, thereby completing a chain of thespian friendship that might be seen stretching from the Globe to Drury Lane. Scott's identification with Shakespeare was more comradely than self-aggrandizing and in this important gabion and its presentation he suggested a personal, all but reciprocal relationship, one that was consummated when, at Scott's death, the Shakespeare bust was moved and Bullock's cast of Scott put in its place. In the posthumous portrait [fig: 49] of Scott at Shakespeare's tomb, the two writers gaze at one another for the last time in that archetypical romantic antiquarian setting, the dimly lit chancel of the medieval church, over which the stained glass casts a melancholy twilight gleam.

¹²⁶ Scott to J B S Morrit, 22 November 1816, Scott, *Letters*, 4, p. 295.

¹²⁷ Britton, *Autobiography*, (1850), Appendix, p. 17.

¹²⁸ Scott, *Reliquiae Trotcosiensis*, p. 47.



Figure 49 *Walter Scott at Shakespeare's Tomb*, possibly by William Allan

John Britton's Penates

John Britton was neither urbane nor disingenuous enough to make any secret of his passionate desire to attach himself personally to Shakespeare. The Bullock cast appears in the background of his portrait and in the Appendix on the poet in the *Autobiography* he includes 'A Farewell Tribute to the Memory of Shakspeare' in which he announces that the poet's reputation is unchanging, like 'the tides of the sea, or the alternation of the seasons'.¹²⁹ Britton's undoubted enthusiasm for poetry was not matched by his judgement either as a writer or as a critic and it is typical of him to have chosen as images of permanence two natural phenomena that are characterised by cyclical change. It was as an antiquary and an autodidact anxious to escape his origins and enter the world of learning that he loved and cared for Shakespeare, whom he seems to have experienced as an almost supernatural presence:

My penates are the Writings and the Bust of Shakspeare –both of which I often contemplate and admire with honest devotion; for the latter has my confidence, whilst the former have a Divinity within them which is devoid of all sectarianism, and independent alike of climate, country or creed.

Time cannot wither them, nor custom stale

¹²⁹ Britton, *Autobiography*, (1850), Appendix, p.5

Their infinite variety.¹³⁰

It conjures up a vision perhaps more touching than Britton intended, this apostrophe in which the writings and the portrait are given equal weight and sentience, as presiding gods in the Burton Street household, the bust receiving in its plaster ear the confidences of the aging and in some respects disappointed antiquary.

The Shakespeare Appendix guilelessly weaves Britton's own life into his subject through accounts of his various expeditions to Stratford-on-Avon and his, mostly unsuccessful, Shakespearean ventures, starting with his earliest tour of England when, as a young man, he sought to acquaint himself with the notable sights. At Stratford:

It is true that I saw the outside and the inside of the house in Henley Street (then a real butcher's-shop) –the Church-the Bust- and other popular objects; but I was young, and alone, -was uninformed, and had not a friendly and enlightened prompter to give the “the cue” to inquiry and remark.¹³¹

The lonely young man was replaced some years later by the flourishing and slightly less likeable antiquary who had ‘associated with actors and authors, and had written on Topography, Antiquities, Criticism and Fine Arts’, and who returned to Stratford, like Shakespeare himself, crowned with laurels.¹³² Britton's account of his altered view on this second visit is an apologia for that romantic antiquarianism which, while it opens up the past through knowledge, also heightens the sensibility in the present, enabling it to enter into a deeper subjective relationship with the material remains of history. Not only had his eyes had ‘the film removed from them’ but ‘the heart had acquired new powers of susceptibility and sympathy, and the objects which only a few years before had been seen with comparative apathy, were now invested with meaning, beauty, and interest’.¹³³

Britton's several engagements with Shakespeare included a biography, which he contributed to a cheap popular edition of the plays published in 1814 and enlarged four years

¹³⁰ Britton, *Autobiography*, (1850), Appendix, p. 5.

¹³¹ Britton, *Autobiography*, (1850), Appendix, p.36.

¹³² Britton, *Autobiography*, (1850), Appendix, p.37.

¹³³ Britton, *Autobiography*, (1850), Appendix, p.37.

later.¹³⁴ It was, Britton admitted, no more than ‘a discriminating summary of former Essays on the subject’ and it leaned heavily, for the critical part, on long quotations from Schlegel.¹³⁵ At the time, however, he announced his ambition to readers ‘of eliciting some new and original light [on] the life of the bard of Avon!...of concentrating the scattered rays into such a vivid and focal point, as to afford a more familiar and specific Memoir than has hitherto been given, in a small compass’.¹³⁶ It is Britton himself, however, whom the spotlight picks out most clearly in his Preface, both in his business-like concern to promote the ‘newly engraved print from the bust at Stratford’ that he was trying to sell, and in his important new persona as biographer: ‘Having thus unpremeditatedly become associated with the greatest genius that ever honoured and illumined the literary world: being thus retained in the retinue of the prince of dramatic poets.’¹³⁷

The biography was not a particular success. It was in more conventionally antiquarian activities, in establishing the physical context for the cult of Shakespeare, that Britton was best engaged. Apart from the bust his most preoccupying venture was the restoration of the chancel of Stratford parish church, for which he helped to raise funds in 1835. Reading between the lines of the *Autobiography*, which gives lengthy footnoted accounts of the various committees, delays and disputes that surrounded the enterprise, including ‘some captious comments in the Leamington Spa Courier’ about his proposals, it seems that Britton’s interventions were not entirely welcome and that the Royal Shakspeare Club and others in Stratford somewhat resented what was seen as outside interference.¹³⁸ The restoration nevertheless went ahead, although the *Courier* stopped Britton from having the arms of the subscribers (presumably including his own) painted on the roof. In the process Britton, like Planché and Douce, had to face the fact that Shakespeare belonged to an age of what now appeared to be questionable judgement.

¹³⁴ Britton, *Remarks on the Life and Writings of William Shakespeare*.

¹³⁵ Britton, *Autobiography*, (1850), Appendix, p.10.

¹³⁶ Britton, *Remarks on the Life and Writings of William Shakespeare*, p.v.

¹³⁷ Britton, *Remarks on the Life and Writings of William Shakespeare*, p.v.

¹³⁸ Britton, *Autobiography*, (1850), Appendix, p.29.



Figure 50 Shakespeare's monument at Stratford

Britton's view of architecture, like Douce and Planché's of drama, was that it was valuable as social history and as 'a dial indicative of a certain age, of a particular state and stage of science, of art, and of civilization'.¹³⁹ He was therefore obliged, in addition to stripping away the Georgian whitewash, which everyone now agreed was an abomination, to deal with the fact that the chancel had already been spoiled by pre-Georgian monuments and other tactless interventions. Even the sacred bust, viewed from this point of view, jammed in front of tracery, was 'most tastelessly inserted in the wall and window' [fig:50].¹⁴⁰ The lack of respect for the facts of medieval history which Shakespeare displayed in his works was paralleled in the attitude towards historic architecture expressed in the placing of his monument. Britton, like the other antiquaries, was forced to compromise and meet the Bard halfway. He did not attempt to move the bust but its surroundings were restored until they were 'reformed, revolutionized' and the flat Georgian plaster ceiling replaced with a new timber one true to 'the general spirit of the original roof', much as Kemble's costumes and Scott's novels were true to their respective historic inspirations.¹⁴¹

¹³⁹ Britton, *Autobiography*, (1850), Appendix, p. 30.

¹⁴⁰ Britton, *Autobiography*, (1850), Appendix, p. 26.

¹⁴¹ Britton, *Autobiography*, (1850), Appendix, p. 29. Later nineteenth-century restorations have removed all trace of this campaign.

During the decades of Britton's visits the demand for more tourist sites associated with Shakespeare grew. Britton expresses the need. He writes of his 'pilgrimages' to Stratford using the term barely figuratively, for, after establishing his position on Popery via a brief digression on the evils of superstition in the Dark Ages and the much improved facilities afforded to the 'independent modern traveller', he reverts to the term, dwelling on the stages in his own life and development each visit marks and on the 'excitement and association' arising from them.¹⁴² In 1819 with his friend the poet Henry Neele they 'visited every place and object which at all assimilated with the presumed haunts and habits of the Poet, whose inspired writings must have derived much of their origin and hues from the natural and peculiar attributes of these localities'.¹⁴³ Shakespeare himself is thereby recast as a romantic, absorbing the spirit of the place and reflecting it in his work.

Conversely, by reciprocal sympathy, familiarity with the places will bring the visitor closer to the author. The stages of Britton's pilgrimage included Charlecote, site of the supposed poaching incident, Shottery, home of Anne Hathaway and more peculiarly Mr Bisset's Museum in Leamington where as well as collecting various antiquities Bisset had adopted a girl called Iliff, who was thought to be a direct descendant of Shakespeare. A kind of living exhibit or relic, she was a manifestation perhaps, like the Sobieski Stuarts, of an intense and widespread imaginative identification with the past. In Stratford itself that past was intensely present to the sensitive antiquary:

Crowds of reflections and associations press on the mental faculties, and give exercise and pleasure at once to Memory and Imagination... Houses shops and everyday personages are unheeded...the whole intellect is unloosed, and expands all its perceptive and susceptible powers. It 'calls up spirits from the vasty deep' of former times...What would we not give to be enabled to realize this vision –to grasp the hand, to hear the voice, to listen to the inspired language of the Bard...and to stroll with him to Charlecote.¹⁴⁴

Britton, as usual, was in step with popular feeling and taste. The need for some more material monument at Stratford was becoming urgent. Britton's own immensely elaborate scheme for a theatre, library, lecture room, saloon and gallery came to nothing but the acquisition of Anne Hathaway's cottage, the full restoration of the parish church, a serious, but thwarted,

¹⁴² Britton, *Autobiography*, (1850), Appendix, p. 37.

¹⁴³ Britton, *Autobiography*, (1850), Appendix, p. 37.

¹⁴⁴ Britton, *Autobiography*, (1850), Appendix, p. 40.

attempt at an antiquarian excavation of the grave and, finally, the purchase of the house in Henley Street that became the Birthplace, were all carried out during the years of his pilgrimages.¹⁴⁵ Britton, according to his *Autobiography*, was involved, at least on the fringes, of some of them, but he had little direct influence. It is the light that his love of Shakespeare casts on him and on romantic antiquarianism that is most revealing. He saw Shakespeare as not just a household god but an entire world, laid out, like a landscape, before him. Scott, similarly, in his essay on 'The Drama', had related the effect of the plays to the aesthetic of the Picturesque, displaying the text book qualities of variety and irregularity translated into human form.

Where all is elegant, nothing can be sublime...The touches of nature which Shakespeare has exhibited in his lower and gayer characters, like the chastened back-ground of a landscape, increase the effect of the principal group. The light and fanciful humour of Mercutio, serves, for example, to enhance and illustrate the romantic and passionate character of Romeo.¹⁴⁶

Britton's critical assessment of Shakespeare was not so sophisticated. It was summed up in the assertion that 'on men and manners, and on subjects of religion and philosophy, his sentiments are uniformly appropriate'.¹⁴⁷ In the experience of architecture and landscape, however, he came to the same picturesque epiphany. We might leave him, near the end of his *Autobiography*, gazing on Stratford at sunset, like Caspar David Friedrich's *Wanderer Above the Fog*, when, having just left 'the smoky worldly, hammering town of Birmingham',¹⁴⁸ he was overwhelmed by the appearance of a scene which answered every popular requirement of art, nature and association and which 'the imagination invested with the presence of persons who were contemporary with Shakspeare, either occupied in rural labours, or in festive amusements' until he seemed to pass into it and lose himself:

A slight shower, from a dense black cloud, had just passed over; everything was calm; Nature seemed to be reposing, after some electric conflict in the mid-regions of space; and rain-drops were hanging from every bough, branch, and leaf, catching and reflecting myriads of fairy-like prismatic rays. In front, the tall and delicate spire of Stratford Church was relieved against a dark mass of trees, which united with a heavy black cloud to the east; whilst the chimney shafts, gables, and grey, curling smoke from the houses in the town were also brightened by the setting

¹⁴⁵ See Schoenbaum, *Shakespeare's Lives* and Michell, *Who Wrote Shakespeare?* pp.62-66.

¹⁴⁶ Scott, *Essay on the Drama*, pp.186-87.

¹⁴⁷ Britton, *Remarks on the Life and Writings of William Shakespeare*, p.12.

¹⁴⁸ Britton, *Autobiography*, (1850), Appendix, p. 40.

sun. Arching over the Church were two rainbows, vividly relieved by the dark cloud and sunshine, and losing their lower limbs amidst the saturated woods.¹⁴⁹

In my copy of the *Autobiography* a contemporary hand has pencilled in the margin ‘twaddle’, so perhaps Britton did not speak for all, but he spoke for many. He may certainly stand for the romantic antiquary as a figure in the Shakespearean landscape.

‘Smug and New’, Shakespeare and the Antiquarian Interior

Had any of the schemes for the purchase of the house in Henley Street with which Britton was associated succeeded, he might not have been so emphatic on the point that ‘there is no proof that the Bard was born in this particular building’.¹⁵⁰ As it was, although Britton was on the London branch of the Shakespeare Birthplace Committee, established in 1847 to secure the premises for a permanent and public monument, he took no leading part. He therefore felt quite at liberty to detail the tenuous connections with the poet, the fact that the ‘birthplace’ tradition was of ‘comparatively modern origin’ and the very mixed history of the building which, he wrote, had been partially rebuilt by a previous owner Thomas Court who had bought miscellaneous ‘curiosities’ to furnish it.¹⁵¹ Britton, accordingly, ‘attached no very high value’ to the ‘alleged Birthplace, or...any of the relics it contained’.¹⁵² More surprisingly Planché, who was more socially confident than Britton and was prominent on the Birthplace Committee, in his equally self-congratulatory memoirs, also passes swiftly over the Henley Street house, with merely a couple of sentences about its acquisition. Perhaps, by 1872, as *Somerset Herald*, he too was uneasy about it.

Writing in 1864 as part of the tercentenary celebrations of Shakespeare’s birth, the Reverend J M Jephson, FSA, noted of the Birthplace:

¹⁴⁹ Britton, *Autobiography*, (1850), Appendix, p. 39.

¹⁵⁰ Britton, *Autobiography*, (1850), Appendix, p. 33.

¹⁵¹ Britton, *Autobiography*, (1850), Appendix, p. 33.

¹⁵² Britton, *Autobiography*, (1850), Appendix, p. 34.

I was not prepared to see it look so smug and new. Many of the old timbers remain and the house is, indeed substantially the same house as it was; but new timbers have been inserted where the old were decayed, everything has been scraped and polished up, and the place looks as if it had been “restored”, a word to strike terror to the heart of an antiquary, not to speak of a man of taste.¹⁵³



Figure 61 The house in Henley Street before restoration



Figure 72 The restored Birthplace in the 1860s

¹⁵³ Jephson, *Shakespeare: his birthplace, home, and grave*, p.36

By the second half of the nineteenth century, as we have seen, authenticity mattered more in the study of the past, imaginative reconstruction and expressions of romantic empathy, counted for less than in the first. By the time such distinctions hardened, however, Shakespeare's Birthplace, like Charles Stothard's interpretation of the Bayeux Tapestry and the Sobieski Stuarts' tartans had become lodged, apparently immovably, in the popular mind, on the side of authenticity.

The tradition of private spaces dedicated to Shakespeare that may be said to have begun with Garrick's Palladian Temple of 1757 and to have entered the antiquarian repertoire with Scott, Britton and Sir John Soane, who arranged a Shakespeare alcove in his home for his copy of the Bullock cast, culminates in the Birthplace. There is, however, a notable coda in Isambard Kingdom Brunel's scheme for a Shakespeare Room.¹⁵⁴ A dining room in his house at 17 Duke Street, St James's, London, it was designed to contain paintings of Shakespearean scenes that Brunel commissioned from a number of leading artists including Landseer, Clarkson Stanfield and Augustus Egg. The scheme has been well described by Faberman and McEvansoneya but here it is worth noting the arrangement of the room itself, as planned and partially realised in about 1848-9. The setting for the pictures was an interior decorated in the Elizabethan style, with a pendant ceiling and panelling, all done in plaster grained to imitate oak, with dark red velvet drapery, a Flemish cabinet carved with figures and Venetian mirrors. In a sketch for the installation of the pictures Brunel showed them arranged around an elaborate niche with candelabrae, enclosing a full-length statue of Shakespeare. Brunel's brother-in-law, the artist John Callcott Horsley, recalled the room as the setting for many happy meetings of friends, 'lighted up on one of the many festive gatherings... a scene which none will forget who had the privilege of taking part in it'.¹⁵⁵ The scene that rises in the mind today resembles nothing so much as Faed's Mermaid Tavern, with its red velvet, its (possibly plaster) panelling and carved overmantel, a Victorian antiquarian fusion of past and present which meets in the figure of Shakespeare.

¹⁵⁴ A full account is given in Faberman and McEvansoneya, 'Isambard Kingdom Brunel's Shakespeare Room'.

¹⁵⁵ Quoted in Faberman and McEvansoneya, 'Isambard Kingdom Brunel's Shakespeare Room', p.110.

It was in 1849, when Brunel's Shakespeare Room came as near completion as it was ever destined to be that the so-called Kesselstadt death mask was displayed at the British Museum. The mask had been brought to London by a German artist from Darmstadt, Ludwig Becker. Becker, having made it widely known that he was looking for the mask, which was said to have belonged to Count Kesselstadt, duly found it in a broker's shop in Mainz.¹⁵⁶ It was greeted with great interest in London, met with a wide degree of acceptance and was shown at Stratford in 1864. Visitors for the rest of the nineteenth century could buy stereoscopic photographs of it. Its status as an image of the Bard, or even as a death mask, was undermined, however, in the twentieth century and it has failed to establish itself so successfully as the Birthplace. Yet the story of its discovery, ripe with possibilities of deception and forgery between artists, brokers and seekers after improbable truths, is so irresistibly reminiscent of the opening of *Tales of the Century* that it must be accorded a place in any account of romantic antiquarianism.

¹⁵⁶ See Schoenbaum, *Shakespeare's Lives*, pp. 468-70.

Conclusion

Each chapter of this thesis has indicated how, for reasons cultural, biographical and institutional, antiquarianism was transformed at the mid-century. There is a coda to the Shakespeare chapter, however, which summarises something of that intangible shift that took place in the relationship of past to present.

While Douce, Britton, Planché and Scott were pursuing Shakespeare the man and the author along their several avenues of enquiry, another antiquary, John Payne Collier, was making even more substantial contributions to the subject. Collier might have been a subject for this thesis had his career not been so exhaustively investigated already, and had not his combination of scholarship, forgery and self-deception placed him at a point on the spectrum of antiquarian activity so close to the Sobieski Stuarts.¹ Like them he found the second half of the nineteenth century less comfortable than the first and his downfall, which was more public and more complete than theirs, coincided exactly with the change of sensibility that marked the arrival of the High Victorian age.

Doubts that were cast first in the 1840s on the authenticity of Collier's discoveries were voiced ever more loudly and began to emerge in print in the next decade. In April 1860 a series of letters to *The Times* exposed the 'Perkins Folio', one of Collier's greatest supposed discoveries, as a forgery and in 1861 Clement Ingleby's *Complete View of the Shakespeare Controversy* destroyed Collier's reputation for ever.² Like the Sobieski Stuarts he outlived his disgrace by many years but his forgeries, unlike theirs, died with their author's reputation and were rooted out and abandoned. It was as if at the mid-century the music stopped and what had been already accepted continued to be taken seriously (Ingleby was a trustee of the Shakespeare Birthplace) but those subjects on which the light of new scholarship was cast were subject to more rigorous or at least different kinds of interrogation.

¹ Freeman and Freeman, *John Payne Collier*.

² Schoenbaum, *Shakespeare's Lives*, pp. 352-356 tells the story of Collier's downfall.

While Alexandrina Buchanan is certainly right to question the extent to which antiquarianism was simply mown down by a ‘scientific revolution’³ it is undoubtedly true that the ‘impulse... to classify and taxonomise’ that characterised the later nineteenth century was inimical to the antiquarianism of the romantic age.⁴ In 1851 the organisers of the Great Exhibition divided more than 100,000 exhibits representing all the works of all the nations into thirty distinct classes. The years that followed saw the institutionalisation and categorisation of much that had previously been of interest only to antiquaries. In 1851 work began on the building of a Public Record Office. The Royal Commission of 1850 led to a reorganisation of the British Museum as a result of which, in 1866, the Department of British and Medieval Antiquities was opened. In 1869 the Historic Manuscripts Commission was established, two years later the School of History was founded at Oxford and in 1873 the History Tripos was initiated at Cambridge.

It was, however, a pyrrhic victory for antiquarianism. Its subject matter was being taken seriously, but it was also being taken away. Lingard had shown the inadequacies of Hume yet he was still not read in the universities for it was, ‘far from desirable that English History should be taught [...] by a Roman Catholic’.⁵ More generally to those who, like Alfred Dunkin, a Kentish printer speaking at the first meeting of the British Archaeological Association, believed that ‘the true antiquary does not confine his researches to one single branch of archaeology but... aims to bring in every object to serve the great end and purpose of a knowledge of man and of his habits and customs in past ages’, these developments were at best a mixed blessing.⁶ Academic disciplines, museum classifications and archival categories not only divided subject matter into discrete areas and periods, they helped to create or enforce social divisions. What Burns had called ‘the Antiquarian trade’ was despised by the new professions, as the split between the British Archaeological Association and the Archaeological Institute had already demonstrated by 1850.

³ Buchanan, ‘Science and Sensibility’, p. 171.

⁴ Auerbach, *The Great Exhibition*, p.99.

⁵ M. Burrows, ‘Inaugural Lecture’, 1862, quoted in Levine, *The Amateur and the Professional*, p.138.

⁶ Quoted in Levine, *The Amateur and the Professional*, p. 13.

The change of sensibility found expression in fiction. In *Coningsby* Disraeli had declared that ‘the age of ruins is past’ and if it was not quite past in 1844 it had certainly gone by 1860.⁷ Charlotte M Yonge, who looked back with such amusement to the Georgian squire setting up fragments of Netley Abbey in his park as an eye-catcher, summed up the change in her novel *Hopes and Fears*:⁸

Honor had grown up among those who fed on Scott, Wordsworth, and Fouqué, took their theology from the British Critic, and their taste from Pugin...Lucilla and Phoebe were essentially of the new generation, that of Kingsley, Tennyson, Ruskin and the *Saturday Review*. Chivalry had given way to common sense, romance to realism...the past to the future.⁹

It is an interesting list of names and distinctions. While Tennyson and Ruskin are certainly different from Scott and Wordsworth it is not, at this distance in time, their realism and certainly not their common sense that seems to distinguish them. They were, like John Henry Newman, George Gilbert Scott, the Pre-Raphaelites and all the other Victorian leaders of thought and taste, the children of romanticism. If their eyes were fixed on the future, on change and regeneration it was a future often visualised through the past, whether Ruskin’s Venice or Tennyson’s Camelot. That past, however, was now internalised, digested, it informed the present from within but it no longer compelled many people to dress up in armour or fill their houses with oaken furniture. If they wore tartan or left a rose on Abelard’s tomb it was usually because they were, if anything, less realistic than their parents’ generation and believed more literally in these things.

As Macaulay had observed in an essay of 1828, ‘history begins in novel and ends in essay’.¹⁰ His *History of England* appeared in 1848 and demonstrated how true this had been in his lifetime. It undoubtedly had its origins in the novel, particularly the work of Scott, but it was also part of a new philosophy of history in which personal narrative was

⁷ Benjamin Disraeli, *Coningsby or the New Generation*, (Paris, 1844), p.85.

⁸ See Chapter 4.

⁹ Charlotte M. Yonge, *Hopes and Fears or scenes from the life of a spinster*, 2 vols, (London, 1860), 2, p.281.

¹⁰ Macaulay, ‘History’, p. 233.

to have no acknowledged part.¹¹ Thus the Victorians carried the past into their new institutions, closing the doors behind them on the romantic antiquary, who dwindled once more into caricature. By the time George Eliot wrote *Middlemarch*, when the late 1860s looked back to the early 1830s, Jonathan Oldbuck had gone and in his place was only the unlovely figure of Edward Casaubon.¹²

¹¹ See Trevor-Roper, *The Romantic Movement and the Study of History*, for a detailed account of Macaulay's debt to Scott.

¹² Colin Kidd's unpublished seminar paper 'Mr Casaubon and the Antiquaries', read at All Souls College, Oxford on 21 February 2011, explored George Eliot's view of antiquarianism in the earlier part of the century.

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Appendix

John Britton (1771-1857)

Topographer, author and publisher, Britton began working life as a cellarman in Clerkenwell. He became a solicitor's clerk and worked at night providing the commentary –and songs- for de Louthembourg's light show, the Eidophusikon. In the meantime he educated himself, reading widely in history and topography. In 1789 he met Edward Brayley and their professional partnership lasted for the rest of Brayley's life. Britton was the organising force, Brayley the quieter presence, who did more of the writing. Britton assembled an unbeatable team of artists, including the leading watercolourists of the day to illustrate their publications. With **E J Willson** and A C Pugin he produced the first books from which architects could copy Gothic architecture exactly and he wrote the first attempt at a chronological history of English Gothic. Britton's career, its triumphs liberally larded with financial crises and violent quarrels with publishers and authors runs like a spine through the antiquarian activities of the period.

Francis Douce (1757-1834)

Douce, the son of an attorney and briefly an attorney himself, gave up the law to pursue antiquarian interests when his father's death gave him a sufficient income to do so. He never went to university but had a brief flirtation with the professional world as Assistant and then Keeper in the manuscripts department of the British Museum from 1807-11. He resigned out of impatience with the 'fiddle faddle' of administrative life. The purpose of his own collections was to illustrate the manners and customs of the past from coins, prints and medals. He was a pioneer of social history in many fields of which this thesis considers only three; Shakespeare, Anglo-French antiquarianism and the medieval Dance of Death. Douce also assisted **Walter Scott** with his *Sir Tristrem* and

Thomas Warton in his *History of English Poetry*. He was a friend of Isaac D'Israeli and of **Dawson Turner** and his London home with its vast collections of manuscripts and antiquities was a popular resource for other scholars to whom he was generous. He could be difficult but Bulkeley Bandinel then Bodley Librarian cultivated him tactfully and as a result his collections were bequeathed, largely, to Oxford.

John Gage (1786-1842)

Gage, the youngest son of Sir Thomas Gage of Hengrave Hall in Suffolk took the name of Rokewode when he succeeded to the baronetcy. He is the only one of my subjects who belonged to the gentry. As a Catholic, however, he remained something of an outsider, unable to attend university. He studied law but his antiquarian interests were his main preoccupation and he was Director of the Society of Antiquaries from 1829-42. Gage specialised in the history of Suffolk, publishing his *History and Antiquities of Hengrave* in 1822 and *History and Antiquities of Hingoe Hundred* in 1838. He also edited the *Chronicle of Jocelin of Brakelond* which was published by the Camden Society and formed the basis of Carlyle's *Past and Present*. His correspondence, in the Cambridge University Library, reveals him as an amiable spider at the centre of an extensive web of antiquarian connections. He knew most of the subjects of this thesis and is the only one who seems to have been on terms of close friendship with **Langlois**.

E-H Langlois (1777-1835)

Born at Pont de l'Arche near Rouen, Langlois was the son of an official in the Royal Department of Woods and Waters. His career was determined by the Revolution. When his father lost his job in 1793 he allowed Langlois to fulfil his ambition to go to Paris and become a painter. He studied with David, was briefly imprisoned under Napoleon, conscripted into the army and finally returned to Rouen after the war with a wife and children. Living in an abandoned convent in terrible poverty Langlois assembled a collection of antiquities and fragments from buildings destroyed in the Revolution. He wrote a number of books but found it difficult to complete his work. Most

were published posthumously. His main contribution to the architectural debate was the coinage of the term ‘flamboyant’, still in use, to describe late French Gothic. Although deeply troubled by his experience of the Revolution and subject to prolonged depressive episodes Langlois had many admirers in England and France and his museum became an important point on the antiquarian tour of Normandy.

John Lingard (1771-1851)

A Catholic priest and historian, the son of a builder and carpenter, Lingard’s scrupulously documentary methods mark one end of the scholarly spectrum embraced by antiquarianism. He would not have liked to have been called an antiquary but his use of primary sources marks him out as one. Among the last generation of priests to study at Douai (he was forced to leave when it was captured by the commissaries in 1793) he never sought high office in the church preferring to live quietly in his parish of Hornby in Lancashire and concentrate on his historical work and his many friendships. Lingard’s *Antiquities of the Anglo-Saxon Church* (1806), and his *History of England* (1819-30) were controversial though they attracted some eminent admirers. He was the first English historian to make use of original documents in the Vatican and the archives of the Holy Roman Empire in Spain. He was made a corresponding member of the Academie Française.

Sara Losh (1785/6-1853)

The only woman in my study she has not previously been considered as an antiquary although her few surviving notes suggest that her methods were thoroughly antiquarian. The eldest child in an old Cumbrian gentry family, Losh used her unusually wide education, her substantial means and her freedom as a single woman to develop a career as an architect. Her buildings were all in or near her native village of Wreay and the only one discussed here is the church, St Mary’s, in which she expressed a view of time and creation that was both personal and metaphysical. The church was dedicated in

1842 and in its iconography and very conception it reflects the hopes and anxieties of a generation on the eve of Darwinism.

John Milner (1752-1826)

A Catholic priest and bishop of the Midland district from 1803 Milner offers a strong contrast to **Lingard** whom he criticised severely. He too had been educated at Douai and was a vigorous polemicist both for the Catholic Church and for Gothic architecture. Appointed to the mission at Winchester in 1779 he began his antiquarian studies there. His *History of Winchester* was his major work in that field and his *The End of Religious Controversy* (1818) his best-known doctrinal polemic. Among Catholics he was the scourge of the old school of gentry recusants and insisted on the authority of Rome. Antiquaries found him equally vigorous and satirical in defence of his views. Yet Milner had close and lasting friendships and felt a passionate attachment to Gothic architecture. In his own chapel, built with the help of his friend the antiquary John Carter, and in the *History of Winchester*, Milner outlined the associations between Gothic and the Catholic faith that were to inspire Pugin and the next generation of architects to see a mystical and national significance in the buildings of the Middle Ages.

James Robinson Planché (1794-1880)

Planché was the son of a watchmaker of Huguenot extraction. Articled briefly to a bookseller he became a prolific playwright and in later life a Herald. His first play went on at Drury Lane in 1818 and he had a hit a few years later with *The Vampire or The Bride of the Isles*, an adaptation of a French melodrama which introduced the popular ‘vampire trap’ effect. From 1822-28 he was the house author at Covent Garden and in 1823 persuaded Charles Kemble to put on a production of *King John* in period costume, designed by Planché from historical sources. Planché was also consulted by the Royal Family on ball costumes and was soon a recognised authority on the history of costume and on the use of costume in the study of social history. In 1847 he was appointed to the committee to purchase Shakespeare’s ‘Birthplace’. With **Britton** he was active in the

foundation of the British Archaeological Association and in 1842 he brought out a new edition of Strutt's *Complete view of the dress and Habits of the People of England*. The author of a pamphlet appealing for the establishment of a national theatre Planché was also responsible in 1869 for re-arranging the armour collections in the Tower of London in chronological sequence.

Walter Scott (1771-1832)

By far the best-known of the subjects in this thesis, much has been written about Scott. His career as an antiquary has not, however, been so much discussed. His boundless energy found outlets in antiquarian publications and activities as various as theatre design, architecture, decoration and the antiquarian re-invention of the Hanoverians in Scotland. Most importantly he gave both to antiquaries themselves and to the reading public an image and a narrative for antiquarianism in this period.

John Sobieski Stolberg (?1795-1872) and Charles Edward Stuart (?1799-1880)

Born John Carter Allen and Charles Manning Allen and generally known as the Sobieski Stuarts, they were the sons of an English naval officer, Thomas Allen but claimed to be the grandsons of the Young Pretender. The *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* dismisses them as 'imposters', which is misleading. They undertook serious antiquarian research as well as a certain amount of forgery. In 1829, with Sir Thomas Dick-Lauder, the antiquary and novelist, they developed the *Vestiarium Scoticum*, finally published in 1842, a study of highland dress, supposedly based on a late fifteenth-century manuscript, which was never forthcoming. In 1845 they published *The Costume of the Clans* which remains a controversial work. Described by Hugh Trevor-Roper as a brilliant mixture of 'scholarship and forgery', it has more recently been defended by Scottish historians as an accurate record of early Highland dress. To an extent the brothers' claims, however false in origin, became true with time. Many of the tartans in use today have no other source than their work and their sister and two of Charles's children married into the aristocracy.

Dawson Turner (1775-1858)

A banker and botanist from Great Yarmouth, the son of a banker and merchant, Turner, like Scott, had an abbreviated university education, leaving Cambridge on the death of his father without taking a degree. His scientific interests caused him to be elected a Fellow of the Royal Society in 1802 and it was only later that he took to antiquarianism. With the help of his wife, Mary Palgrave who, like several of their eleven children was an able artist, he documented his travels in Normandy in the years immediately after the end of the Napoleonic wars. His vast correspondence shows Turner to have been part of an extensive antiquarian network. Among his friends were **Britton**, **Gage** and **Langlois** and he also knew the Pugins. From 1812-23 John Cotman was drawing master to the family and travelled with them in Normandy. Turner sponsored Cotman's *Architectural Antiquities of Normandy* which appeared in 1822, two years after his own *Account of a Tour in Normandy*. He published much on Suffolk and in 1848 a *Guide to the Verification of Manuscripts*. My account of him is confined to his place in the Anglo-French antiquarian network.

Robert Willis (1800-1875)

Willis, the son of an eminent doctor, became Jacksonian Professor of Natural and Experimental Philosophy at Cambridge. He was a polymath, a public figure in his lifetime, whom thousands (including Karl Marx) came to hear lecture. A pioneer in the reproduction of mechanical speech, an inventive engineer and a geologist, his place here is as the inventor of architectural history. Beginning with his *Remarks on the Architecture of the Middle Ages, chiefly of Italy*, published in 1835, Willis was an extraordinarily observant and analytic commentator on Gothic architecture, an influence on Ruskin and a founding Vice President of the Cambridge Camden Society. He was never a fellow of the Society of Antiquaries, becoming instead a leading member of in the Archaeological Institute, which broke away from the British Archaeological Association two years after its foundation in 1845, with the intention of professionalizing and gentrifying the study of historic architecture. The only one of my subjects to take a degree and to achieve

distinction in the universities, Willis represented the future for architectural history and the nemesis of romantic antiquarianism.

Edward Willson (1771-1854)

A Catholic and the son of a Lincoln builder, Willson became an architect and restorer, with a special sympathy for Gothic architecture. For many years he was Lincolnshire County Surveyor and he was a sensitive restorer of buildings including Lincoln Castle, Lincoln Cathedral and several local churches. His writings, for the publications of **Britton** and A C Pugin reveal him to have been deeply read and a subtle propagandist for the Gothic and its Catholic and mystic meanings. Although he did produce several pamphlets on his own account he was inclined to procrastinate and became somewhat estranged from A C Pugin's son, A W N Pugin who was exasperated by his slowness as a collaborator. Nevertheless Willson had been a formative influence on the young Pugin's thinking. Willson's papers survive –some in the archives of the Society of Antiquaries and others in the Lincolnshire Archives. With his collections of antiquarian fragments, his endless notes and unfinished treatise on bells he is, intellectually, the very type of the Waverley antiquary, digging up Roman remains and opening tombs, though in person Willson was neat and well-organised. He was also happily married to Mary (née Mould) with whom he had two surviving sons.