Charles Kean's revivals of Shakespeare's plays at the Princess's Theatre in the 1850s are now widely known for the historical accuracy with which he produced the plays, and scholars have so far paid attention to his method of recreating the past on the stage. Kean's passion for archaeological correctness, of course, permeated the productions of history plays, but it also had a great influence on the way in which he produced other plays, particularly, The Winter's Tale in 1856. Dennis Bartholomeusz and M. Glen Wilson, using the abundant sources such as Kean's own edition, promptbooks, stage designs, letters and reviews, have examined how the play was produced on his principles, and taken an overview of its characteristics. This production started on the 28th of April and it enjoyed so much popularity that it ran 102 times without a break. As Kean pointed out in the preface to his edition, Shakespeare's The Winter's Tale has a lot of "Chronological contradictions" (Kean v): the oracle of Delphi, the Christian burial, Russian emperor, and Giulio Romano, an Italian Mannerist painter and architect of the sixteenth century. Kean excised these descriptions except the Delphic oracle and gave the play a Grecian period setting.

The pivot on which the story revolves, is in fact the decision pronounced by the oracle of Delphi; and taking this incident as the corner-stone of the whole fabric, I have adopted a period when Syracuse, according to Thucydides, had, from a mere Doric colony, increased in magnificence to a position in no way inferior to that of Athens herself, when at the summit of her political prosperity. (Kean v)

Moreover, if the historical incongruity was to be removed completely, Kean needed to solve another problem, that is, to change the setting of Bohemia, since Bohemia did not exist in the world at the period mentioned above. He, therefore, adopted the emendation made by Thomas Hanmer (1677-1746), who was one of the editors of Shakespeare's works in the eighteenth century and substituted "Bithynia," an ancient kingdom in Asia Minor, for "Bohemia" in his edition published in 1743-4. Through this emendation, Kean could fix the period in the play and retain historical correctness, and at the same time he could solve still another problem, the geographical contradiction in Shakespeare's The Winter's Tale.

As is widely known, Shakespeare, in writing The Winter's Tale, depended heavily on Robert Greene's pastoral romance Pandosto, as a main source. Although he followed the original for the major part of the plot, the setting of the two countries Bohemia and Sicilia was reversed, and thus Leontes became the King of Sicilia and Polixenes that of Bohemia. This change, however, led to a geographical contradiction in the play. In 3.3, Antigonus manages to reach Bohemia in bad weather, in order to abandon the princess Perdita, under threat of his life by the king Leontes. Antigonus says, "Thou art perfect, then, our ship hath touched upon / The deserts of Bohemia?" (1-2).

Because Bohemia is, of course, an inland country and doesn't face the sea at all, this "The deserts of Bohemia" never existed in the real world. Regarding this problem, Hanmer pointed out the possibility that Shakespeare might have "removed this impropriety and placed the scene in Bithynia, which the ignorance and negligence of the first Transcribers or Printers might corrupt and bring back again to Bohemia" (502n). The editor, thus, replaced Bohemia in the play with Bithynia, a historical place which was, according to Kean's own note, "a county of Asia Minor, once a powerful kingdom, bounded on the west by the Propontis (Hellespont), and on the north by the Euxine (Black Sea), stretching towards Sinope (the birth-place of Diogenes, the cynic philosopher, and the capital of Pontus, under Mithridates)" (27).

But, as Furness observed in his New Variorum Edition, Ben Jonson, in conversation with William Drummond, a poet in Scotland, mentioned the Bohemian setting in 1619, before Shakespeare's First Folio was published (Furness 139-141; Jonson 138). It is clear from this that Hanmer's assumption was wrong and, most later editors did not adopt Hanmer's emendation. Consequently, although Kean's adoption of Bithynia about 100 years after Hanmer enabled him to remove both the chronological and geographical contradictions in the play, it also resulted in one of the most exceptional performances in the stage history of The Winter's Tale. Moreover, his obsession with archaeologically authentic representation of the country intensified the peculiarity of his production. But both Bartholomeusz and Wilson do not fully discuss these points. In this paper, therefore, I will focus on the representation of Bithynia in Kean's production of The Winter's Tale and his method of creating a setting which did not exist in the original, and
consider how his production was specifically developed, or differentiated. In order to grasp the characteristics of this production, to begin with, I would like to consider the changing taste of the nineteenth century audience, and its impact on Kean’s principles, together with the role of his edition as an educational material. Then, I will analyze Kean’s way of reproducing the Bithynian world on the stage, referring to Kean’s edition, the promptbooks, reviews, the scene-paintings and other sources.

By the time that Kean embarked on his Shakespeare’s revivals at the Princess’s Theatre, public taste had been steadily but greatly changed, and in grasping the image of the world that was described by words of the play, people no longer depended on their imagination as much as they used to do, but relied on and expected pictorial realization and spectacle. In other words, the audience were no longer satisfied with performance without visual impact and realistic approach.

According to Michael R. Booth, the taste for such elements in performance grew not only from the theatre, but also from external factors, and in particular, there was a great influence of “the product of new technology directed towards public and private entertainment” (4).

By the mid-nineteenth century, many kinds of visual stimuli had already been invented and introduced for the entertainment of people. For example, they had been enjoying the Eidophusikon, which was a miniature theatre that employed lighting, sound, 3-dimensional models and paintings; magic lantern shows which projected pictures and lecture slides; kaleidoscopes and stereoscopes; panoramas both still and moving; illustrated books, magazines and newspapers; realistic paintings; tableaux vivants; cameras; gas light and limelight. ³

Of these visual stimuli, I would suggest, the panorama and the tableaux vivant, in particular, had a great effect on Kean’s production at the Princess’s Theatre, for these visual arts were strongly connected with the theatre. In producing plays, Kean received great assistance from a group of scene-painters in his company. In the case of The Winter’s Tale, the scene-paintings were made as follows:

THE SCENERY under the Direction of Mr. GRIEVE, and Painted
by Mr. GRIEVE, Mr. TELBIN, Mr. W. GORDON,
Mr. F. LLOYDS, Mr. CUTHBERT, Mr. DAYES,
Mr. MORRIS, and numerous Assistants.
(Kean iv)

“Mr. GRIEVE” was Thomas Grieve (1799-1882), son of the famous theatrical scene-painter John Henderson Grieve (c.1770-1845); John, Thomas, and his brother William (1800-1844) produced scenery for operas, pantomimes, besides plays. In 1820, they produced a moving panorama for the Christmas pantomime Harlequin and Friar Bacon in Covent Garden, and this form of theatrical moving panorama was popular not only in Covent Garden, but also in Drury Lane (Merwe; Booth 7). Moreover, in 1850, Thomas produced The Overland Route to India, a hall panorama of a journey which showed exotic landscapes, with William Telbin (1813-1873), mentioned above as “Mr. TELBIN”.

It should also be noted that the Princess’s Theatre itself was once used for the show of panorama. As Hazelton said, the Princess’s theatre was originally built “as an exhibition house” and then turned into a regular theatre (68-7). In fact, it featured a panorama on journey by Clarkson Stanfield and David Roberts. As the audience in the theatre enjoyed the accurate representation and depiction of these panoramas, there is no doubt that such accuracy was gradually required in the scene-paintings used in plays, and in order to satisfy their desire for visual realization, Kean employed a lot of painters, including panorama producers. Therefore, I would suggest that his adoption of Bithynia and his effort to show the ancient exotic world would be an attempt to meet the demand of the audience on a level with that of people watching the exotic panorama.

The other kind of visual stimulus that seems really significant was tableaux vivant, which was also popular with the public. Tableaux vivants, or living pictures, are the representation of a subject in the history, myth or others, and, to be short, they are the theatrical realization of paintings. Costumes and properties employed were based on the archaeological research, and the audience enjoyed the accurate re-creation based on it. Kean, excising the chronological contradictions of The Winter’s Tale and fixing the ancient period as a time of his production, clearly states this source in the preface of his edition.

An opportunity is thus afforded of reproducing a classical era, and placing before the eyes of the spectator, tableaux vivants of the private and public life of the ancient Greeks, at a time when the arts flourished to a perfection, the scattered vestiges of which still delight and instruct the world. (vi)

It is apparent that one of the aims of Kean’s production was to reproduce the past as precisely as “tableaux vivants,” which educated the public through the authentic depiction of a world with the aid of the costumes and properties.
This is why Kean had an obsession with the methods of producing the costumes, scene-painting, and properties. Furthermore, the Great Exhibition in 1851, of course, intrigued the Victorian people and cultivated their interest in Middle Ages in particular, as exemplified by the unrivaled popularity of the Mediaeval Court. Accordingly, it can be argued that Kean, responding to the Victorian medievalism, attacked the revivals of Shakespeare in the 1850s, in which he developed and established his way of producing.¹

The principle on which Kean produced the plays during his management of the Princess’s Theatre was clearly stated in the curtain speech at his final performance at the theatre on 29 August in 1859, when he produced Henry VIII. Recollecting his management there, he explained to the audience that he had always “the conviction that ... historical accuracy might be so blended with pictorial effect that instruction and amusement would go hand in hand, and that the more completely such a system was carried out so much more valuable and impressive would be the lesson conveyed” (The Times, 30 Aug. 1859). It is evident from this statement that in producing the play, Kean had always tried to unite the two elements, namely, the instructive value and the worth as an entertainment. Furthermore, he added, “In fact, I was anxious to make the theatre a school as well as a recreation”. Considering this principle, the educational and recreational materials consisted not only of the performance, in which spectacular scenes entertained the audience while the accuracy of recreating the past educated them, but also of his own editions which he published before and after the production. It can be said that Kean’s publishing his own editions was, in itself, an attempt to educate the reader, and that his meticulous comments and notes were a manifestation of Kean’s passion for education.

According to Wilson, Kean’s edition of The Winter’s Tale was “on sale at the theatre on April 21” (Wilson 1985, 2), a week before the performance started. This meant that the spectators could learn what was represented on the stage by reading it, as well as by seeing the acted performance. This edition has the dramatis personae; a list of people who engaged in the production; and a preface, where Kean explains the process, reason and points of his alteration, and where he expresses his thanks to the authorities who helped him with archaeological representation of the play. Moreover, at the end of each act, the text has historical notes to each act, with details on historic matters related to the play and the names of the authorities which Kean consulted. For example, the historical note on the place of Act 2 scene1 “COURT OF THE GYNECONITIS, OR WOMEN’S APARTMENTS” (31) is as follows:

In a Greek family the women lived in private apartments, allotted to their exclusive use. The first scene of the second act represents the Gynaeconitis, or women’s apartments, which had porticoes round only three of its sides, while the Andronitis, or men’s apartments, was surrounded on all four sides by porticoes. The Peristyle or Court was a space open to the sky in the centre.-Vide “Smith’s Dictionary of Greek Antiquities.” (45)

As Kean selected the ancient period as a time of the play, he consulted William Smith’s Dictionary of Greek and Roman Antiquities (1842), and found the proper names of the apartments for Greek men and women (423-4). In such ways, Kean gives a lot of sources which he consulted, such as Peter Austin Nuttall’s A Classical and Archaeological Dictionary of the Manners, Customs, Laws, Institutions, Arts, etc. of the Celebrated Nations of Antiquity, and of the Middle Ages. and John Potter’s Archaeologia Graeca, or, the antiquities of Greece.

In addition, the edition also has “NOTES ON GREEK VASES” (102), which explains the costumes of characters and all their sources (103-5). The model of the first costume of Leontes was, for example, the Lycian King Jobates on a vase in the Hamilton Collection, and his second costume was a black himation, which was mourning apparel “among the Greeks of the most refined period” (103). Antigonus’ costume was from a picture of Priam on a vase in the Vatican Museum, and Camillo’s from a Pedagogos on a vase which belonged to the Duc de Blacas, in Paris. The costume of Mamillius was taken from a vase in the collection of Mr. Rogers, and that of Hermione, from a picture of the marriage of Hercules and Hebe on a vase in the Royal Museum at Berlin.

Compared to Kean’s editions of other plays, the notes and comments are much longer and closer, which seems to indicate that Kean made a greater effort in doing a research before producing the play.³ As we have seen, these notes are based on authorities, that is, on historical and archaeological research, but Kean’s antiquarianism derived not only from the general trends in the nineteenth century, but also his educational background. Kean was born on the 18th of January 1811 in Ireland, the only surviving child of the famous actor Edmund Kean (1787-1833). Edmund decided to make his son enter Eton College as an oppidan on the day when he had great success as Shylock in 1814. Although his school days did not last for long, they may have influenced Charles’ later great success in the theatre. Ellen Terry (1847-1928), who was actress and played the part of Mamillius in
Kean’s *The Winter’s Tale* 1856, reminisced about it and referred to the influence of his education at Eton on his historical accuracy and management of the theatre, in her autobiography:

Well, Charley did go to Eton, and if Eton did not make him a great actor, it opened his eyes to the absurd anachronisms in costumes and accessories which prevailed on the stage at that period, and when he undertook the management of the Princess Theatre, he turned his classical education to account. (9)

According to Wilson, Kean’s “aristocratic contacts as a student at Eton” lasted long and made the elite of society come back to the theatre (Wilson 1974, 47-8; Hazelton 84). With this in mind, it was a crucial and important point in his life, as a factor of establishing his principle, that he had a good education and wide friendship at Eton.

4

In order to create the setting that was not in the original, what Kean did in the first place was, of course, to change Bohemia in all the lines, into Bithynia: thus, “the King of Bohemia” was emended as “the King of Bithynia” (1.1.5). In addition to this simple alteration, the representation of Bithynia was formed through three points: scene-paintings, costumes and animated animals.

All of the Bithynian scenes in Kean’s edition are in Act 4, which is composed of four scenes: scene 1 in “A DESERT COUNTRY NEAR THE SEA” (60); scene 2 in “A ROOM IN THE PALACE OF POLIXENES” (65); scene 3 on “A ROAD NEAR THE SHEPHERD’S FARM” (66); scene 4 in “A PASTORAL SCENE IN BITHYNIA, WITH A DISTANT VIEW OF THE CITY OF NICÆA, ON THE LAKE ASCANIA; Together with the chain of lofty Mountains, known as the Mysian Olympus” (69). As I have mentioned, the scenery was painted by a group of painters under the direction of Thomas Grieve, but according to the preface of the edition, Kean owed “the greatest possible assistance and information” to Sir George Scharf (1820-1895), who had explored Asia Minor twice and published drawings on his journey. Scharf became a fellow of the Society of Antiquaries, F. S. A. in 1852, five years before Kean himself was elected F. S. A. too, and in 1854, when the Crystal Palace was moved to Sydenham, he wrote “the Handbook to the Greek and Pompeian Courts at the Crystal Palace” (Kean ix). The vegetation painted in the scenery of Bithynia was based on the private drawings of Scharf, who actually drew them on the spot during his exploration of Asia Minor.

Of the four scene-paintings of Act 4, the most striking example that may have served to give the audience an exotic impression was the scenery of a room of Polixenes’ Palace (Figure 1). In the centre of the watercolor image, a figure was depicted on the wall. From such features as the spear in his hand, a quiver for arrows, a tunic and the figure’s sideways position, it seems that this figure is a Persian guard, as seen in the Persepolis in Iran, a city of ancient Persian Empire, founded by Darius 1 in 518 B.C. The sideways figures in the Persepolis are Persian guards called “immortals,” who guarded the king, holding a spear and a quiver for arrows on their shoulders, and it should be noted that they were drawn in the book which Kean consulted as one of the authorities in producing costumes: Thomas Hope’s “Costume of the Ancients” (Kean 102). Moreover, it may be pertinent that such a guard was painted on the wall of Bithynian Palace, since Persia once ruled the countries of Asia Minor. Considering the reviews of the production, this typical decoration seems to have succeeded in creating an oriental ambiance: “the decorations of his walls, in the Persian style, are formal and imposing, without a touch of playful fancy about them” (*The Times* 1 May 1856).

The next factor that Kean used to create an exotic appearance is costume. The costumes in this play, as we have seen, were made after the model of those painted in ancient Greek Vases mentioned in “Notes on Greek Vases,” as Kean thought highly of costume as an effective way to express the two nations.

The Phrygian dress presents a marked distinction between the two races that constitute the chief actors in the drama, while at the same time scope is afforded for the introduction of customs common to both. (Kean, vii.)

Kean attempted to show the difference between the two races by introducing the Phrygian costumes to some characters in Bithynia. These costumes were used in Act 4, especially in the pastoral scene and were illustrated in detail in M. Trenchensky’s *Costumes in Shakespeare’s Play of The Winter’s Tale 1856*, which was published with the permission of Kean himself. In Plate 16 of this book, Florizel and Old Shepherd are wearing Phrygian dress holding a shepherd’s crook, or a sheep hook in their hands. According to the list of the sources in Kean’s edition, these costumes were produced on the model of Arys, a mythical Phrygian shepherd. All these characters wear a Phrygian cap, or a Phrygian bonnet, which is a cross between a hood and close-fitting cap. As Hope notes, the Phrygian cap prevailed widely in Asia Minor in ancient times, bordering on the Black Sea and the Aegean Sea. Therefore, although Phrygia was, as Kean explained in his historical note on Bithynia (27), an adjacent country to
Bithynia, it should be possible that some Bithynian people wore the Phrygian cap like Florizel and Old Shepherd.

Finally, I would like to consider the introduction of animals onto the stage, in terms of their role in the theatrical visualization of Bithynia. According to his wife, Kean employed the real animals in the pastoral scene in Act 4: they "had two Portland sheep for Perdita's lambs" and a "goat from the Zoo Gardens for the Festival of Pan" (Wilson 1980, 19). Obviously, showing real animals in the theatre was an effective way to satisfy the audience's taste for reality, but as both sheep and goats are not peculiar to the East, this did not contribute to creating an exotic impression. In the scene where Antigonus "Exit pursued by a bear" in 4.1, Kean exemplified such a case of encountering wild bears in Asia Minor, by taking an incident in the Bible as an example. (Kean 87) Even so, the image of the bear is not particularly connected with the East. In order to visualize the oriental world on the stage, the most impressive and unique device was likely the introduction of camels to the stage. In the pastoral scene, Polixenes disguises himself with a rustic costume and visits the shepherd's house, where his son Florizel exchanges tender vows with his lover Perdita. Shakespeare's folio text doesn't have any stage directions about animals here, but, according to the promptbook, Kean added two camels to the scene, having Polixenes and Camillo ride them. Although these camels were not real living animals, this must have presented a really exotic spectacle. In the Great Exhibition of 1851, a Turkey Court had been set up, with a great number of items and contributions; a golden saddle for riding camels was also displayed there, as recorded in the official catalogue. (Plate 292) Therefore, Polixenes and Camillo riding the animated camels would have played a great part in creating an oriental atmosphere and giving the audience the impression of a non-European country in Asia Minor, as we may associate camels with Turkey even today.

As I have considered, Kean's *The Winter's Tale* was produced in line with his passion for accurate characterization and realization based on historical and archaeological research, which he followed not only for entertainment but also for the education of spectators. In order to make the realization as complete as possible, after he selected the Grecian period as a time of the play, he purposely took advantage of an erroneous emendation by Thomas Hanmer. The representation of the ancient oriental world was made possible not just by the alteration of words, but also through the elaborate designs of scene-paintings and character's costumes, and the introduction of animated camels to the stage. His great success was acclaimed in
the reviews: “The revival continues its unprecedented success, and if possible, increases in effect and attraction with every performance.” (The Illustrated London News. 10 May 1856)

It was his sensitivity to the taste of his audience that led to such a great success of the production, and the performance continued 102 times. In his edition of King Richard II, which was produced a year after The Winter's Tale, Kean clearly stated what he thought of the public preference:

An increasing taste for recreation, wherein instruction is blended with amusement, has for some time been conspicuous in the English public; and surely an attempt to render dramatic representations conducive to the diffusion of knowledge – to surround the glowing imagery of the great Poet with accompaniments true to the time of which he writes – realizing the scenes and actions which he describes – exhibiting men as they once lived – can scarcely detract from the enduring influence of his genius. Repeated success justifies the conviction that I am acting in accordance with the general feeling.

In this passage, Kean emphasizes the words “true” and “realizing”, which indicates how he attaches great importance to authentic realization. And as he states, the public at large longed for such an element in the theatre, which was caused and deepened not only by the tendency of productions in the eighteenth and early nineteenth century, but also through the development of visual stimuli outside of the theatre. For Kean, the play and its production were textbooks of his “school,” so their accuracy was most important of all. As he said in his retirement speech: “Why should I present to you what I know to be wrong, when it is in my power to give what I know to be right?” (The Times, 30 August 1859) In fact, he had been producing the plays on the principle of such a kind: “I may safely assert that in no single instance have I ever permitted historical truth to be sacrificed to theatrical effect.”

Victorian actor-managers sought to represent a past as accurately as they could, and in the case of The Winter's Tale, John Philip Kemble partly introduced Grecian taste to his production in 1802 and Samuel Phelps first gave the play a Grecian setting in 1845. But it was Charles Kean who was more thorough about historical accuracy and established a style of producing The Winter's Tale as a Greek play, and who had the greatest influence on later productions of the play in the 19 century. Moreover, in the long stage history of The Winter's Tale, none of the productions have ever had as strong educational aspects as that of Kean, so one of his original characteristics lies in this feature of instruction. Kean was passionate for “amusement” and “instruction” in the production of a play, through changing the characteristics of the Romances. In other words, he added the educational value to this entertainment. In the process, he created a Bithynian world that was not in the original, not as a target of racism, but as an object of antiquarianism, which a lot of Victorian audience as well as Kean were interested in. In this way, The Winter's Tale in 1856, which entertained a lot of the mid-Victorian people, was originally developed, or differentiated by the hand of Kean.

Notes
1 During his management of the Princess’s Theatre between 1852 and 1859, Kean produced some of Shakespeare’s history plays such as King John (1852), Henry VIII (1855 and 1859), Richard II (1857), and Henry V (1859). On Kean’s historicism and his antiquarian details in these plays, see Schoch 1998, and Foulkes 1986, 39-55.
2 Hanmer’s emendation was adopted in some adaptations, such as Macnamara Morgan’s The Sheep-Shearing: or Florizel and Perdita (1754) and David Garrick’s Florizel and Perdita, A Dramatic Pastoral (1756), although Garrick restored Bohemia when he published the edition in 1758. See Morgan 1969, and Garrick 1969, and Bartholomeusz 1982, 32.
3 On the details of these new products, see Booth’s meticulous explanation. (1981, chapter 1) On the paintings of the scenes of Shakespeare’s plays, see Poole. (2004, chapter 2, “The Visual Arts”). On the statues and sculptures of Shakespeare and the characters of his plays, see Pettitt.
4 Richard Foulkes points out the aspect of business reason, as one of the motivations by which Kean selected the history plays. See Foulkes 2004, 132.
6 See the plate of Persepolis in Hope 1982.
7 As Robert Speaight said in his introduction to Trentsensky’s book, we must be careful that the engravings there “should not be regarded as authoritative records of Kean’s production,” for they were for use in a toy theatre. However, comparing the engravings with photographs of characters, and with the costumes described in the notes of Kean’s edition, we will find a lot of costumes in the plates are depicted rather accurately. For example, see the picture of Polixenes wearing 2nd dress in Byrne’s article and the 2nd dress of Polixenes in Plate 14 (Trentsensky).

Works Cited